



February 12, 2024

Re: City Council Meeting, February 14, 2024
Item 2024.MPB15.1 - 2024 Operating and Capital Budgets

Dear Mayor Chow and City Councillors,

We are writing to you on behalf of our organization out of concern that Toronto's draft 2024 Budget is not adequately resourced to prevent Toronto from falling further behind on its Net Zero by 2040 goals, specifically in terms of Buildings sector emissions, which comprise about 60% of our city's emissions.

To address this, **we strongly urge you to include in the 2024 Budget the following additional measures** identified by the City's Environment and Climate Division (Budget Briefing Note #21 – Jan 26) as its top three cost-effective options for accelerating emission reductions:

- **Implementing support programs to accelerate the City's Emission Performance Standards (EPS).** The Briefing Note identifies this as **"the most impactful action the City can undertake to reduce emissions from buildings."** While EPS by-laws are on-track for 2024 delivery, an acceleration of the supports currently planned would allow the City to take a number of steps needed to ensure success of the EPS. This would require \$0.9M in new operating funding.
- **Implementing a HELP+ loan program for modest-income homeowners.** This will ensure that homeowners who need to improve their homes for emergency, health, or safety reasons are also able to undertake modest retrofit activities to reduce their energy costs. This measure would build equity for them while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The operational cost is identified as \$0.08M.
- **Implementing HELP loans and net-zero pathways for 11,000 low-rise residential buildings classified as single-family homes.** This will cover an important category of buildings that are currently overlooked by utility and government retrofit programs (e.g. duplexes, triplexes, and residential units above commercial properties). This program would have an operational cost of \$0.16M and a capital cost of \$10M.

Like most Torontonians, we fully support the proposed 2024 increases to property taxes to ensure we can pay for our most essential City services and programs. ***Among the most essential and urgent is surely the work taking place under the city's Net Zero Plan to address the existential threat of climate change.***

Our non-profit community group, the Pocket Change Project, is well known in Toronto and across Canada for its leadership and success in supporting homeowners undertaking carbon emissions-reducing retrofits.

It is from this perspective that **we urge you to allocate \$1.14M in the operating budget and \$10M in the capital budget for the above high-impact initiatives.** This modest investment will have a transformational impact on Toronto's ability to meet its climate commitments and help to protect Torontonians from the future ravages of climate change.

Sincerely,

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cc: Councillor Paula Fletcher, Toronto-Danforth