

LOWELL LO DESIGN INC., ARCHITECT

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Toronto City Hall Deputation – Jan 22, 2025

(On Subject of City Budget)

I request this deputation be recorded and archived for City of Toronto's record.

I will be deputing in-person on Jan 22 at North York afternoon session.

1. I am an Ontario licensed architect since 2003 and run my own small architectural practice for just over 20 years in the GTA doing mostly permit drawings for smaller commercial interior alterations and residential additions. The firm has been advocated for passive solar non-mechanical heating and cooling ideas and low-embodied carbon building methods following the Natural Building Materials movement in Ontario. I am staunch advocate for Urban Agriculture movement and had volunteered many years for the local permaculture movement.
2. Part of core-team member of the YouTube channel (FacingFuture.tv) for over a year from Jan 2023 where I met and conversed with Dr. Peter Wadhams – who may be world's oldest Arctic expeditionary scientist/physicist from the University of Cambridge U.K. travelling to the North Pole for over 40 years with over 50 trips. The book/ memoir called **Fairwell to Ice** published only in 2017 along with many videos promoting the book mostly in the U.K. discloses the, I think, decades old ice core findings amongst the Arctic scientists of his generation extracted air-bubbles from the ice cores through hydro-carbon dating that indicates the carbon content of earth's atmosphere going back 400,000 years. To give a very short conclusion summary, the findings show that the only period in which the carbon in our atmosphere was in 'remarkable equilibrium' as the period between roughly 10,000 B.C. to 1800 A.D. This meant that Climate / repetitive weather pattern was most stable year after year. The historians called this the *Holocene* or the Agrarian Era. I can elaborate on this finding more in anyone is interested in this topic.
3. Cause of Urban Agriculture as Climate Action

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-To give another condensed explanation here is that plants along with their above ground bio-mass their roots also sequester carbon from the atmosphere. In fact, it is the microbes, fungi and bacteria with soil that create and hold carbon via light and water.

The vision should be to educate and promote the catching of rainwater as opposed to runoff into underground drainage for use of plants on private yards or to seep back into the underground aquifers as Toronto has many ravines that I think even in my residence area the city is restoring the natural streams that lead to the almost completed revitalization of mouth of the Don river into Lake Ontario.

Imagine a summer initiative student program of installing the rain-barrel and building raised 1/2-ed food grade barrel planters to help suburban dwellers setup low-cost but essential urban garden elements. There is an existing non-profit downtown that picks fruit trees and divides the harvest amongst the local community members as you all may already know.

Image also, for apartment dwellers where their balconies, they should be encouraged by the City and their building management staff to grow local organic food where inexpensive sub-irrigated paint buckers and plastic bottles can be made via workshops as household community projects. There can also be participatory meetings/parties with free food and seedlings during the growing months are possible as learning opportunities for sharing proper growing tips. Passive shading with vines using wires to underside of balcony slabs can help with natural cooling the interior spaces beyond.

4. Home Composting

When done at home all year round much less chance of mixing with garbage at landfills minimizing methane release as a lowest hanging fruit solution according seasoned climate scientist. Indoor composting using red wigglers as initiative by Cathy worm lady in Bradford for many years I think. Outdoor warmer season composting is as easy as digging a big enough hole in the

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ground and covering with soil or tarp and marking the spot and letting the veggie scraps decompose over winter and rotating the compost with the garden bed soil each year.

5. Toronto's response to the call for Urban Agriculture has been minimal

The rain-barrel and raised planter bed initiative is a low-cost upcycling materials initiative that I have been pushing for at least 10 years. I brought a binder containing the previously installations I installed along with my DIY grow-light stands with repurposed plastic bottles art planters that work quite well in my small commercial space in Scarborough where I start seeds and nurturing the seedlings for months without much direct sunlight at all. Please pass the binder around and take a look yourselves!

Much thanks for your kind attention and support this new year in advance,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lowell Lo', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Lowell Lo B.Arch, OAA, LEED AP, Principal of Lowell Lo Design Inc. Architect