

July 21, 2025

To: Members of Toronto City Council

Subject: Item EX25.31 A Better Way to Replace your Furnace: Helping Homeowners Switch to Heat Pumps

The [Toronto Home Energy Network](https://thetnetwork.to) (THE Network) is a non-profit volunteer-based organization that works with Toronto communities to help homeowners reduce carbon emissions from their homes. We are currently funded by Toronto Hydro and TAF, who also appreciate the value of our community-based program to support home electrification and energy efficiency.

The building sector is by far Toronto's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, accounting for more than half the city's emissions. Within the building sector, single-family homes are widely recognized as the greatest challenge for decarbonization. And yet, if the City of Toronto is to meet its TransformTO emissions reduction targets, these emissions must be brought down. Replacing gas heating with heat pumps is the single most immediate and effective change to achieve this.

As you will appreciate, we were delighted to read Mayor Chow's letter to the Executive Committee, urging their approval of a proposed municipal program to help homeowners switch to heat pumps, and we were thrilled to learn that the Executive Committee had adopted this proposal at their meeting on July 16. We are now urging City Council to adopt the Executive Committee's recommendation in favour of EX25.31 - A Better Way to Replace your Furnace: Helping Homeowners Switch to Heat Pumps.

THE Network's team has been working directly with homeowners to help them switch from gas furnaces and boilers to heat pumps, electrify other home appliances and reduce their energy use for over 5 years—first as the [Pocket Change Project](#) in the city's east end, and now across Toronto as THE Network. Many of us have had personal experiences getting heat pumps installed and know that it is not a one-size-fits-all endeavour. Every house is different and requires individual attention.

We all know friends and neighbours who have had to replace an aging furnace. Replacing a furnace with another furnace is a quick and routine procedure that most installers will complete in a day. Currently, replacing a furnace with a heat pump is not. Even homeowners who want to switch to a heat pump are deterred by the additional complexity, difficulty, and expense of the process. To encourage homeowners to install a heat pump, the transition needs to become as straightforward as replacing a furnace.

If approved and adequately funded, the program before Council today will smooth the path to more homeowners successfully installing heat pumps by helping them:

- Become more familiar with heat pumps and recognize that they are probably suitable for their home,
- Choose the best option for their home,
- Find competent heat pump installers to provide quotes, and
- Arrange for affordable financing.

In the absence of adequate rebate programs, installing a heat pump remains more expensive than replacing a furnace. We have seen homeowners lose the opportunity to switch to a heat pump simply because financing was not available. We cannot afford to leave any household behind, and it is encouraging to see that this program has a mandate to assist low- and moderate-income households.

THE Network has been purpose-built to support homeowners on the path to a heat pump. We can say with authority that this is the program Toronto homeowners need. This wrap-around support system, offered by a City that is trusted by its residents and a leader in climate action, is the critical intervention to get our homes heated with clean electricity. THE Network looks forward to supporting this program with outreach and engagement to bring this bold and essential plan to fruition.

We urge Council to adopt this motion today so that we can accelerate and facilitate the home energy retrofits that are essential for the City to reach its climate goals for a net zero future.

Yours truly,

Eve Wyatt

Chair, Toronto Home Energy Network

Paul Dowsett

Vice-Chair, Toronto Home Energy Network