



February 7, 2025

Dear Mayor and Councillors:

I am writing on behalf of [Toronto350](https://toronto350.org), a volunteer-led activist group focused on climate action, climate justice, and Indigenous rights and sovereignty in the interest of all Toronto residents. We are affiliated with other 350.org groups around the world.

I am writing to urge you to approve and fully fund the staff budget recommendations that will accelerate the pace and scale of our initiatives to address the climate crisis. We ask that you support continued investment in our public transit, cycling infrastructure, the Vision Zero road safety network, protection from heat and flooding, and support for decarbonizing buildings. As the largest city in Canada and the fourth largest city in North America, the actions we take not only protect the health and quality of life our citizens, current and future, but also set a bar for other cities to aim for.

'What is measured is managed' is an adage that I believe to be very true. We are very pleased that all city divisions are taking part in the city's Carbon Budgeting process. The successful development of a comprehensive and efficient emissions reduction strategy requires the efforts of all City divisions be aligned. Your decision to engage all departments in the Carbon Budgeting process provides a strong foundation for an effective budgeting outcome.

To help accelerate the pace and scale required to deal with the climate crisis, and to ensure that all residents are able to take part in efforts to reduce carbon emissions, we advocate for the following:

- 1) If Toronto is to see reduced emissions (a city report released in December noted that emissions continue to rise), we need long term revenue solutions. We ask Council to implement a levy on large commercial parking lots. We would like to see the revenue raised from this spent specifically on projects that have a direct impact on reducing emissions, such as public transit, cycling infrastructure, and energy efficiencies in buildings. A commercial parking levy would have the added benefit of eliminating the burden of funding for residential property owners. We strongly urge the city to pursue this source of revenue.
- 2) We support the city working toward a Municipal Sales Tax that includes exemptions on necessities and rebates for low-income households as a revenue tool.
- 3) We believe that better-informed Torontonians will rise to the challenge of emissions reduction and to that end we urge the city to fully fund the resources needed to report on emissions on a regular basis, our preference being for semi-annual updates.

- 4) With a reputation for being one of the greenest cities in North America, we ask that Council approve funds necessary to ensure the proper watering and maintenance of city trees. The Toronto Region Conservation Authority predicts hotter, wetter, and wilder weather for the City over the coming decades and now is the time to invest in the infrastructure to ensure that all parts of the city provide havens of green space for our residents.

This is a critical time in the global fight to address climate change and it is vital that this City make sound investments to protect our residents. We urge you to make the investments that will protect our City and make a leader in climate-justice focused budgeting.

Sincerely,

Sharon Bider,
On behalf of [Toronto350.org](https://toronto350.org)