Individual Submissions & Comments

Comment 1

At COP21 the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna, committed Canada, its Provinces and Territories to limit the global average temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius, as well as pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees. She stated that: "We need to do this to avoid the harshest impact of climate change on our geography, livelihoods and health."

More recently, the Ontario Minister of the Environment and Climate Change has committed Ontario and its communities to Ontario's five year plan – the Climate Change Action Plan - to fight climate change, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollution.

The Ontario plan allows for a transition to:

- a low-carbon economy;
- a low carbon future;
- clean renewable energy production; and,
- energy efficiency that targets low/net zero carbon energy solutions.

Transform TO must embrace Canada's commitment and Ontario's Plan including its timelines and Actions not featured in the Plan.

I was fortunate to hear Chair of the Sustainable Canada Dialogues (SCD), Dr. Catherine Potvin, from McGill University, present the SCD ideas at a recent Summit on the Environment held by the Muskoka Watershed Council on May 27 and 28, 2016. Canada's commitment on Climate Change, Ontario's five-year Climate Change Action Plan and the Sustainable Canada Dialogues from 62 Canadian Scholars from across Canada have finally brought together action plans that we can all work on together to achieve a sustainable and equitable future for all.

The Canadian Scholars identified 10 policies in their Executive Summary and Position Paper – Acting on Climate Change: Solutions from Canadian Scholars illustrated by actions that could be immediately adopted to kick-start Canada's necessary transition towards a low-carbon economy and sustainable society.

For me the following 10 policies (see below) represent a summary of what I expect Toronto through Transform TO to support, to act on, and to fund for implementation and action. This may mean that Toronto through Transform TO may have to find additional municipal funding mechanisms for implementation of solutions in addition to measuring, reporting and verifying GHG and pollution reductions as Toronto meets timelines and achieves successes.

POLICY 1

Put a price on carbon nationally.

POLICY 2

Include aggressive goals and targets for low-carbon electricity production in federal and in provincial climate action plans and support interprovincial electricity transportation infrastructure.

POLICY 3

Integrate the oil and gas production sectors into climate policies and the low carbon economy, eliminate all direct and indirect subsidies to the fossil fuel industries and develop a clear regulatory framework coherent with the transition to a low-carbon economy.

POLICY 4

Adopt a national multi-level energy policy with energy efficiency and with electrification at its core in the transition to a low-carbon energy future. Ensure national efficiency standards and government procurement policies. Implement energy use efficiency targets for extractive industries.

POLICY 5

Rapidly adopt low-carbon transportation strategies...update emissions standards, support fuel diversification and new models of transportation. Favor active transportation. Electrify road transport. Improve and increase intercity and intermodal transportation.

POLICY 6

Integrate landscape, land use, transportation and energy infrastructure planning policies at multiple scales to ensure climate change mitigation. Integrate climate change into the heart of territorial and urban planning and identify new avenues for financing. Acknowledge the importance of and support for green infrastructure and "smart growth" planning.

POLICY 7

Support evolution of the building sector toward the transition to a carbon neutral or carbon-positive sector. Adopt ambitious targets for energy demand and efficiency of buildings. Include climate change mitigation in national building codes. Invest in ambient and renewable energy for new and existing buildings.

POLICY 8

Safeguard biodiversity and water quality during Canada's transition to a low-carbon society, while aiming for net positive approaches.

POLICY 9

Support fisheries, forestry and agriculture practices offering opportunities to limit GHG emissions, enhance carbon sequestration and protect biodiversity and water quality.

POLICY 10

Facilitate the transition to a low-carbon society through the implementation of more participatory and open government institutions.

ADDITIONAL NOTES from the Canadian Scholars: Climate simulations, carried out by the consortium OURANOS based on mitigation scenarios of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, show that immediate global action would successfully limit temperature increases in Canada.

Because renewable energy resources are plentiful, the Canadian Scholars believe that Canada could reach 100% reliance on low-carbon electricity by 2035. This makes it possible, in turn,to adopt a long term target of at least 80% reduction in emissions by 2050.

The Scholars examined how Canada can reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by:

1. producing electricity with low carbon emissions sources;
2. modifying energy consumption through evolving urban design with a transportation revolution; and,
3. linking transition to a low-carbon economy with a broader sustainability agenda, through creation of participatory and open governance institutions that engage the Canadian public.

Their proposal takes into account Canada's renewable energy assets and are based on the well-accepted "polluter pays" principle. Canada's renewable energy assets are presented in detail on a map included in their documents. The map can be downloaded from the SCD website.

In the short term, the policy orientations that could trigger climate action include:

- implementing a national carbon price;
- eliminating subsidies to the fossil fuel industry and fully integrating the oil and gas production sectors into climate policies; and,
- integrating sustainability and climate change into landscape planning at the regional and city levels to ensure that, amongst other goals, maintenance and new infrastructure investments are consistent with the long-term goal of decarbonizing.

Access to the two Sustainable Canada Dialogues (SCD) documents and the map are included in the accompanying attachment in the e-mail.

I would like to comment on the SCD by adding that they have included the preservation of the environment and its biodiversity as critical components of sustainability. Transform TO must do the same.

Transform TO must really be about engaging individuals in everyday living and in making their transition to a low carbon future accessible and equitable.

Transform TO is about Prosperity TO - matching the plan to the creation of good employment.

Transform TO is about Healthy Design – ensuring that local land use planning is creating healthy and safe communities with accessible green spaces, public transit and healthy food, water and air.

Transform TO is about working together to accomplish the targets and goals set by Toronto, Ontario and Canada.

Transform TO is about measuring, reporting and verifying reductions in GHG emissions and pollution and the reporting of Toronto's successes and how Toronto is meeting climate change commitments, targets and timelines in the transition to a low-carbon economy and low-carbon future.

Comment 2

T-Notes Proposal

Project:Launch a complementary currency1 in Toronto, called T-notes, to help foster a healthy city by linking local, small-scale, sustainable agriculture with people in need of affordable, healthy food choices, thereby reducing the environmental damage and high costs of non-local food sourcing."

Background:

There are reportedly over 4,000 complementary currencies worldwide. Meant to link unmet needs with unused resources, these currencies have a range of focuses to remedy such issues as a scarcity of central currency, currency being extracted from a community by global chain stores and inflation/deflation. In Canada one such currency is the Calgary Dollars (C$$) system, which focuses on helping local businesses attract customers, as well as funding local charities. C$$ circulate among dozens of local businesses, and the City of Calgary accepts up to 50 per cent of business licence payments in C$$. The City of New York's Healthy Bucks program increases the buying power of people on social assistance at local farmers' markets. In Germany, the Chiemgauer currency helps boost employment for students and the unemployed by paying them in this "turnover credit"2 used solely for the exchange of goods and services. T-notes' focus is to increase healthy food choices by connecting local food suppliers (underused resources) with people in need of affordable, healthy food (unmet needs) while increasing employment opportunities, as farm workers could be paid in T-notes, and reducing greenhouse gases linked to importing from outside the local area or even country.

Pilot Project Design:

A grant would be sought to create a buy-local campaign, which would include vendor and consumer education, start-up administration and creating a supply of T-notes, securely printed by a company such as Canadian Bank Note Company that would be issued by the City of Toronto to volunteers in exchange for work done by them (i.e., at libraries, parks, events, etc.). The notes would be accepted by participating vendors at local farmers' markets, food co-operatives, etc., throughout the city at a value of $1 per T-note (what portion of sales in T-notes they accept will be left to the discretion of the vendors). Volunteers wishing to do so could donate their T-notes to one of the city's food banks.

Vendors could circulate the notes they receive by using them to purchase products from other participating vendors and to compensate farm workers, as well as pay 50 per cent of the cost of their business licences from the City of Toronto. For direct exchange, T-notes would be accepted back at an exchange rate of one T-note to $0.95 Cdn. (the five per cent difference would go toward administration of the project by local credit unions or non-profits and, if the program expands, could be used to tie in a low-cost local business loan program).

Results:

The city grows healthier in multiple areas as farmers, co-operatives and the city can offer people coupons to increase purchasing power of healthy, local food. The city's economy is strengthened as local food providers attract more customers and are able to compensate local workers, thereby keeping currency from leaving the area. The environmental benefits from the reduction in fossil fuel usage linked to globally based chain stores.

Comment 3

I would like to voice my concern over the use of leaf blowers in my Deer Park neighbourhood. I have a home office and the noise coming from these nuisance, useless machines is deafening. There is also a distinct smell of gasoline that invades my home. What can be done to ban these noise and environment polluting machines, especially in our densely populated Toronto neighbourhoods.

Comment 4

Let's move Bike Month and Parks & Rec Month from Pride Month where they're overshadowed to May. And really promote Them. That way we may have a sustainable future.

Comment 5

1. **Limit the following characteristics of replacement homes or "newbuilds" in mature residential neighbourhoods:**

a) Gross floor area. This will reduce electricity and fossil fuel consumption for climate control;

b) Building height; This will reduce electricity and fossil fuel consumption for climate control;

c) Limit building footprint as a percentage of lot area. This will increase the amount of green space available for stormwater absorption, a critical concern when Toronto's aging sewer infrastructure is considered;

d) Limit pavement and driveway areas. These hard surfaces increase heat buildup which contribute to the "heat island effect";
Mature trees in Toronto's residential neighbourhoods must be retained at all costs when threatened by newbuild development. These mature trees provide shade and cool our neighbourhoods in the summer, they are a strong defence against climate change and help absorb stormwater and should no longer depend on local councils to vote on their survival. Increase the minimum fine for tree removal to a minimum of $250,000.00 per tree. To quote a recent Forestry Staff Report:

"Trees provide many economic benefits, including the enhancement of property values. Homes with mature trees have higher value when compared to similar types of homes in similar locations without trees. Mature trees are associated with reduced home energy consumption. Air conditioning costs are lower in a home shaded by trees and heating costs are reduced when trees mitigate the cooling effects of the wind in winter. Trees are a community resource, which can make the city more attractive to investors, tourists and prospective residents, thus contributing to growth and prosperity."

Although a) to c) above are covered in Toronto's zoning by-law, some provisions are too permissive and variances can readily be obtained at the Committee of Adjustment. Variances that are denied can be appealed to the OMB. The zoning by-law and Toronto's Official Plan must be strongly aligned with Toronto's climate change initiative so that variance approvals are more vigorous and the climate impacts considered.

1. **Ban leafblowers and other gas powered lawn maintenance equipment. To quote the Washington Post's September 16, 2013 article How bad for the environment are gas-powered leaf blowers?:** washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/how-bad-for-the-environment-are-gas-powered-leaf-blowers/2013/09/16/8eed7b9a-18bb-11e3-a628-7e6dde8f889d_story.html

"In leaf blowers, two-stroke engines have been shown to emit contaminants comparable to large automobiles. A 2011 test by the car experts at Edmunds showed that "a consumer-grade leaf blower emits more pollutants than a 6,200-pound 2011 Ford F-150 SVT Raptor." The company subjected a truck, a sedan, a four-stroke and a two-stroke leaf blower to automotive emissions tests and found that under normal usage conditions — alternating the blower between high power and idle, for example — the two-stroke engine emitted nearly 299 times the hydrocarbons of the pickup truck and 93 times the hydrocarbons of the sedan. The blower emitted many times as much carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides as well. The four-stroke engine performed significantly better than the two-stroke in most of the categories, but still far worse than the car engines."

In addition to the climate change, the noise and pollution these machines produce also adversely impact public health public health. There will be strong resistance to enact a ban since in practice business usually comes before the environment* and the general public's turf grass habit. One way to help prepare for this ban is encouraging homeowners to replace lawns with native plants that attract pollinators such as birds, bees and butterflies. Perhaps this could be easier than it seems since people are already planting milkweed in Toronto to attract monarch butterflies.