



TransformTO

ENVISIONING TORONTO'S LOW- CARBON FUTURE

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TransformTO will engage the community in designing a plan to reduce Toronto's greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. Using scenario modelling we will seek low-carbon solutions that support public health, our local economy, and social equity.



THE EVENT

On April 7, 2016, we invited 70 members of the environmental and social innovation community to reflect on pathways to deep carbon reduction in Toronto. Using a social innovation lens, we looked for leverage points in a complex system – where a small shift produces big changes. This report outlines the ideas that emerged.



Centre for Social Innovation
192 Spadina Ave, April 7, 2016



"How can social innovation support deep carbon reduction in Toronto?"



Participants were asked to reflect on the question:
What would your life look like if we were carbon-neutral in 2050?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

The facilitator asked participants to reflect on the question individually by writing or drawing in workbooks and on the wall, prompted by examples such as:

- What does our economy look like?
- What are the major health issues affecting you?
- How would our culture be different?





Participants developed ideas in facilitated groups, focusing on what systems need to change and what levers are required to make those changes.

SYSTEMS FRAMING

Participants formed groups representing the systems they wanted to change.

- **The Individual**
- **Government**
- **Technology**
- **Economy**
- **Ecology**

Two other systems emerged, **Culture** and **Institutions**, and are also summarized in this report.

WHAT EMERGED

Ideas from the individual and group reflections were captured and analyzed. The following summary provides key ideas. A full set of ideas is available in the [full event report](#).

SYSTEM: THE INDIVIDUAL

Be the change.

- Acknowledge the individual as the primary system upon which all other system change relies
- Reject the false perception of separateness
- Find/ create the “community” water cooler, the place in the broader community where people gather to exchange information, news, and ideas
- Promote change through choice vs change through crisis



“Acknowledge personal transformation as key to social transformation.”

SYSTEM: CULTURE

Normalize new ideologies and values to create new societal directions.

- Rethink current lifestyle and priorities like education, work hours, volunteer time, diet, art and culture
- Respect diversity, embrace transformational attitudes, question societal assumptions
- Focus on proactive choice – what we choose to value



“How do we get people to think of themselves as community members before tax payers and even before citizens?”

SYSTEM: GOVERNMENT

Lead by example, break down silos.

- Position government to help, not hinder, new societal directions.
- Engage the community
- Improve democracy – representative of the population
- Provide tax breaks for development of shared economy
- Encourage shared transportation
- Support housing and density that serves the diversity of our populations
- Set mandatory building retrofits
- Apply behavioural change science to the city's efforts to improve waste diversion.



“Promote change through choice vs change through crisis.”

SYSTEM: TECHNOLOGY

Leverage the exploding cloud-based knowledge sector to create new abundance, choice, and democracy.

- Amplify the voice of the populace digitally
- DIY knowledge from internet makes information accessible to individual – knowledge sector influences energy technology adoption
- Disrupt technology in the private vehicle sector
- Energy – smart grid, energy selection technology, climate engineering, renewable energy
- Focus on proactive choice – what we choose to value



“Use technology as a democratization tool to shift energy sector.”

SYSTEM: INSTITUTIONS

Challenge, engage, co-operate and reinvent institutions to lead new directions.

- Education – re-focus on community resilience skills
- Faith communities – leverage moral focus
- BIA and credit unions – leverage the distributed local level and community focus, encourage local participation and community investment
- Media – increase local media influence, re-tool techniques
- Infrastructure – cradle to grave project analysis, full cost accounting

“Take them over!”



SYSTEM: ECONOMY

The economy is like code – we can change it, create alternative economies.

- Embrace circularism as alternative to capitalism
- Curb overconsumption, embrace slow-growth economy
- Set new price signals, internalize costs
- Accelerate new economic activities with positive impact and sharing economy
- Divert investment and make it easier for individuals to invest in local communities
- Address wealth distribution and employment
- Economic incentives for change, collective consumption/ tax structures changed to be more equal



“Make economy personal to motivate behavioural change.”

SYSTEM: ECOLOGY

Keep human activity in balance with natural ecosystems.

- Eradicate waste – treat it as a valuable resource
- Work at the neighbourhood scale – urban villages with a vibrant village centre and easy access to amenities
- Densify urban areas and minimize development impact
- Cultivate human relationship with nature
- Incentivize local manufacturing, support localization of goods and services

A group of people are gathered in a meeting room. In the foreground, a woman with short grey hair is looking towards the left. Behind her, a woman with long curly brown hair and a man with a beard are looking at a whiteboard. The whiteboard has some text on it, but it is mostly illegible. The room has a white brick wall and a whiteboard on a stand. The lighting is warm and indoor.

**“The right to produce waste
should be challenged.”**

INSIGHTS

The blending of the ideas of social innovators – impact investing, internet technology, creativity, sharing – and the ideas of the environmental sector – renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste reduction, better land use planning, and the importance of addressing climate change – was a hallmark of this dialogue, and has resulted in some energizing thinking not just about the “what” we need to drive carbon reduction, but the “how”. The framing of this discussion in terms of systems within a long-term visioning framework promotes some new ways of thinking about climate change that transcends sectors – a key principle of the TransformTO initiative.

INSIGHTS

Our next step will be to expand our engagement of the broader Toronto community, making the issue and methods of deep carbon reduction broadly relevant, listening, and bringing community intelligence and resources to bear to co-create the future we want.

NEXT STEPS

- We welcome your comments on this summary report. Any key ideas missed? Let us know at transformto@toronto.ca by April 22, 2016.
- The outputs from this event will be one of the many community inputs that inform the TransformTO strategy, and will be posted publicly, provided to our project advisory group, and considered in the formulation of final recommendations.
- Contact us if you want to host your own Community Conversation
- Other upcoming conversation events - see toronto.ca/transformto



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