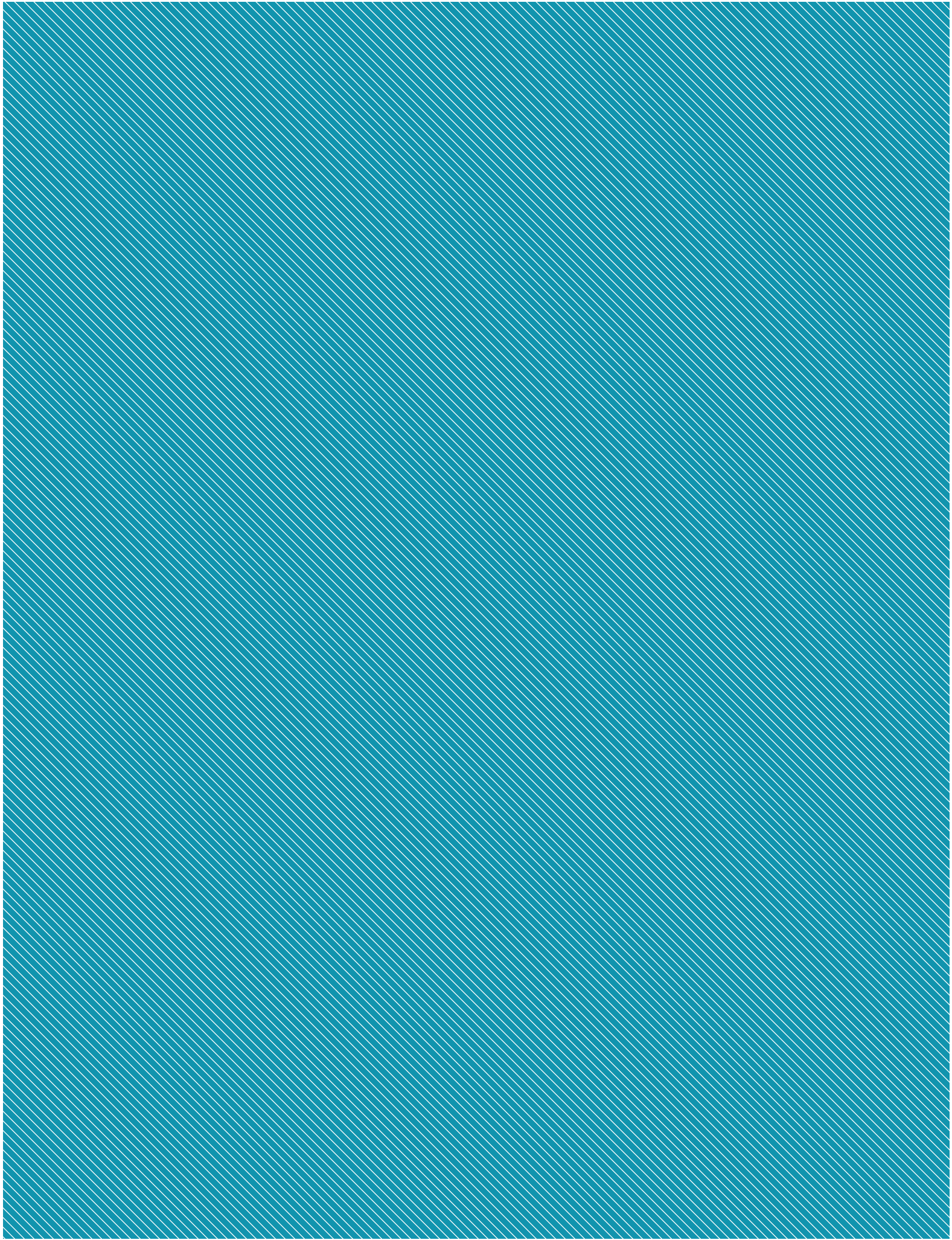


Summary of

TransformTO Public Meeting August 8, 2019



Summary of TransformTO Public Meeting: August 8, 2019

A public meeting regarding the City of Toronto's TransformTO Climate Action Strategy took place on August 8 at the Scarborough Civic Centre. TransformTO is the City's strategy to reduce Toronto's greenhouse gases by 80% of 1990 levels by 2050. The meeting was one component of a larger process to gather public input on what actions the City should include in the forthcoming TransformTO Implementation Plan 2021-2023.

In addition to 65 members of the general public, the meeting was also attended by 12 Panelists from the TransformTO Reference Panel. The TransformTO Reference Panel was a randomly selected group of Toronto residents also tasked with making recommendations on the content of the Implementation Plan 2021-2023. Panelists attended the meeting to gather public input to help inform their deliberations and ultimate recommendations.

The meeting began with a welcome from Toronto City Councillor James Pasternak, followed by presentations about TransformTO from City staff, and a short question-and-answer session. Participants then joined small-table conversations, where they were asked to discuss one of three broad areas related to how the City can reduce its GHG emissions: Transportation, Existing Buildings, and Other Topics. Participants discussed the City's proposed ideas in each area, recommended new ideas, and discussed how the City could pay for these measures with new financial tools. Following table discussions, highlights from the discussion were shared with the room. Closing remarks were offered by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie.

The discussion has been synthesized and summarized below to reflect ideas that were frequently mentioned by participants, as well as other ideas that were mentioned less frequently.

Section 1 – Existing Buildings

Frequently Mentioned

- Build more green roofs on municipal properties and encourage private entities to do the same on private buildings. If a green roof is not possible, consider other ways of preventing heat from being absorbed by buildings, like reflective white roofing material.
- Create more permanent community hubs for e-waste and hazardous waste drop off, possibly located in or near existing City-owned buildings.
- Require retrofits of homes, condos, and commercial buildings to boost their energy efficiency. These upgrades should be interest-free, and the fee schedule geared towards income-based or payment plan options.
- Require the planting of a significant number of new trees and the retention of existing trees onsite when issuing permits for new building construction.

Sometimes Mentioned

- Build more pedestrian walkways between high-rise buildings—including elevated walkways to maximize space—to encourage walking for short trips.
- Transition all City buildings to more energy-efficient lighting.
- Install low-flow toilets and efficient showerheads in City-owned buildings.
- Penalize private apartment owners who don't stay up-to-date with energy-efficient appliances.
- Consider turning lights off in unused portions of City buildings at night, or put lights on a dimmer or timer.



- Ensure any warranty on new energy-efficient appliances articulates on the label how long the warranty (and its efficiency rating) is valid for.
 - Investigate the possibility of inaccurate energy efficiency labels on home appliances and the effect this could have on an individual home energy rating.
 - Ensure minimum efficiency standards for any equipment or appliances in City buildings or private apartment buildings.
 - Provide a certificate for owners selling a property to new buyers to prove the efficiency of new appliances.
 - Build more rooftop solar projects on municipal, commercial, and residential buildings.
- Reduce the interest rate on the Home Energy Loan Program. Generally, better incentives are needed to achieve energy efficiency because loans are not enough.
- Make energy audits an automatic component of a pre-sale home inspection, and hold a contractor accountable for the quality of the energy upgrades they conducted.
- Expand community energy planning to all neighbourhoods across Toronto.
- Remove barriers that keep neighbours in attached houses from sharing in the costs and benefits of installing rooftop solar panels.
- Have the City purchase solar panels or materials for energy retrofits wholesale to take advantage of economies of scale.
- Mandate the use of permeable materials in place of asphalt when replacing existing driveways, since many sewer upgrades lead to driveway repaving.
- Give residents of apartment complexes greater say in what energy efficiency upgrades are made in their buildings.
- Enforce downspout disconnections for private, single-family homes to prevent basement flooding and sewer overflow.
- Introduce stricter regulations and enforcement guidelines for greening existing buildings so owners feel obligated to take them seriously to avoid fines.
- Offer better flood protection for existing buildings.

Section 2 – Transportation

Frequently Mentioned

- Create more separated bike lanes and dedicated multi-use trails, and ensure they are maintained in winter.
- Invest in cycling infrastructure, including more dedicated bike traffic signals and better bike storage facilities at City properties.
- Expand Toronto's bike share program to new parts of the city.
- Pilot the creation of car-free zones throughout the city.
- Offer incentives to boost transit ridership, including free fares on the TTC for all riders.
- Offer more express TTC buses that stop only at the busiest stops on a route.
- Plan transit to enable more multi-modal trips, focusing on active transportation.
- Encourage the adoption of electric vehicles by adding charging stations and more EV-only parking spots in City-owned lots.

Sometimes Mentioned

- Resurrect Toronto City Council's Cycling and Pedestrian Committee.
- Encourage City staff and other private employees to bike to work with shower and better bike storage facilities.
- Increase visibility on roads, bike paths, sidewalks, and common areas surrounding City-owned apartment complexes to reduce risks faced by those commuting to work at night.
- Ask the province to update the drivers' education program and handbook to enhance awareness of how to drive safely around cyclists.
- Ensure that any future dedicated bus transit lanes include separated bike lanes automatically

built into the plan.

- Make park infrastructure more accessible for those with physical disabilities.
- Ensure winter maintenance of sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-use pathways, especially in parts of the city where transit is poor.
- Explore ways of expanding downtown's PATH system, as it provides an accessible way to get around on foot in the winter.
- Regarding car-free zones:
 - Gradually increase the length of the closure to give drivers and communities a chance to acclimate.
 - Ensure that before any car-free zone is made permanent, transit options to and through the proposed car-free zone are improved.
 - Ensure that people requiring greater access to businesses within car-free zones — WheelTrans users, for example— aren't unduly burdened.
 - Ensure that businesses located in the car-free zone are not negatively impacted by the exclusion of vehicular traffic.
- Expand the streetcar right-of-way initiative currently operating on parts of King Street downtown to stretches of Queen Street.
- Dedicate lanes of large roads leading in and out of the city — Jane Street, Finch Avenue, Kingston Road, Eglinton Avenue— as priority bus lanes during rush hour. These dedicated lanes could also be made available to carpooling vehicles or EVs, similar to HOV lanes on some provincial highways.
- Build more Light Rapid Transit options to connect communities far from high-capacity transit options with existing transit hubs.
- Allow seamless fare integration between transit agencies.
- Reward residents for carpooling, and consider creating carpool-only traffic zones. City can also encourage large businesses to incentivize their employees to ride share or carpool to work.
- Offer incentives to buy hybrid vehicles or EVs.
- Ask the provincial government to reinstate car emissions testing for vehicles older than 10 years.
- Use less road salt in winter and switch to sand.
- Consider eliminating 'drive thru' options at fast food outlets to decrease emissions.
- Encourage corporate discounts for Presto and TTC Metropass.
- Replace all gas-powered City vehicles with EVs.
- Regulate ride-sharing services like Lyft and Uber to green their fleet as the City has done with traditional taxis.

Section 3 – Finance

Frequently Mentioned

- Reinstating the Vehicle Registration Tax.
- Increase fees for hourly and permitted street parking, and fines for on-street parking violations.
- Address equity considerations of any financial tools used to reduce GHGs. For example, if these tools increase the cost of driving, the City must address the fact that many low-income residents have no choice but to rely on their car to get to and from work, given high rents downtown and poor transit outside the downtown core. Any proposed tax increases/levies must be made equitably to ensure they are not disproportionately impacting the poorest people.
- Increase property taxes and use the money raised to aggressively fund transit and other GHG-reducing projects throughout Toronto.
 - Let homeowners know well in advance about property tax increases, how the money raised will be earmarked, and what it is hoping to achieve. Track the performance of the money raised through that tax increase and be transparent about its effectiveness.
 - Consider tying any income tax increase to how effectively people are able to reduce personal greenhouse gas footprint.

Sometimes Mentioned

- Consider a higher levy for drivers from outside of Toronto who use electric vehicle charging stations in Green P or private parking lots to offset cost.
- Ask the province to revise or expand the City of Toronto Act to provide City Council with more revenue tools to combat climate change.
- Create a levy for businesses that operate standalone parking lots and businesses that offer large parking lots (i.e., shopping malls, grocery stores).
- Charge property owners and renters who order food for delivery based on the higher emissions generated by in-home food delivery and include the small charge on the bill.
- Work with Toronto Hydro and other electric utilities to offer tax breaks for homeowners who install solar panels. Clarify any tax disincentives to installing solar panels and incentivize people to put excess solar power back onto the grid.
- Implement road tolls or a congestion charge for drivers heading into downtown Toronto, but bear in mind that many people who live outside of Toronto but work in the city are not supportive of a congestion charge or toll roads.
 - Look to London, UK, and other jurisdictions that have implemented similar tolls and charges for ways to use these pricing tools in an equitable way.
- Create tax rebates that help low-income communities engage in sustainable actions.
- Look at phasing out levies after GHG-reducing infrastructure has been paid for. In Iceland, the government financed an underwater tunnel and charged users a toll: the toll was removed once the tunnel debt was paid down.
- Implement a non-permeable surface fee to help pay for sewage costs (other municipalities around Toronto have done this). Properties with an abundance of concrete add more surface runoff to sewers than properties covered with more absorbent material like grass. This fee helps reduce flooding.
- Implement a stormwater management fee to more effectively address the costs of flooding and fund solutions.
- Incentivize residents to install sump pumps to prevent basement flooding.
- Create a dedicated climate emergency fund through equitable tools, including: a tax on large homes, a parking levy, or a one percent property tax increase (with a rebate for low-income homeowners).
- Add an environmental levy to the existing Land Transfer Tax and use that money to fund environmental initiatives.
- Improve enforcement of existing environmental policies to better ensure compliance, and levy fines against homeowners or landlords who fail to comply. These fines can be progressive and reflect the income of the owner.

Section 4 – Other Topics

Frequently Mentioned

- Introduce an equity lens through which the City will view all of its greenhouse gas emission reduction ideas.
 - Recognize that each community in Toronto is different, and that residents face different barriers to reducing their GHG emissions.
 - Reduce financial barriers that prevent residents from participating in activities that lower GHGs.
 - Help empower residents, neighbourhoods, and communities to take action at the grassroots to reduce GHGs.
- Facilitate a shift to a 'circular economy'.
- Create or enhance a tree planting initiative for the City, and encourage private residents to plant more native trees on their property where possible.



A New Consensus, then Table Discussions

First, let's take a few moments to...

Then, let's take a few moments to...

Finally, let's take a few moments to...

- Establish community environment days where residents can curb unwanted but working items for other residents to pick up.
- Create more flexible co-working spaces and help shift workplace culture so that employees feel comfortable working from home or telecommuting where appropriate or possible.
- Support the building of green infrastructure on City property.
- Support the creation of community-based energy projects.
- Encourage privately owned rental apartment buildings to do a better job promoting and ensuring the separation of garbage and recycling in their waste stream.
- Avoid privatized partnerships or contracts for waste management.

Sometimes Mentioned

City operations

- Create a low carbon procurement policy for all City projects.
- Explore other clean tech options —wind, tidal, geothermal heating— to power City buildings.
- Eliminate meat and dairy at City meetings, events, or consultations, particularly at climate action events. The meat and dairy industry is a large contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

Engagement and education

- Better incorporate Indigenous leadership into the debate over mitigating the impacts of climate change in Toronto.
- Help residents of Toronto make behavioural changes to help reduce overall consumption to reduce upstream GHG impacts.
- Strengthen community awareness of TransformTO and what individual residents can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Encourage residents and businesses to buy local.
- Create a digital tool that can help residents better understand how they can help reduce the city's emissions based on factors such as housing, income, or means, knowing that not everyone has the same capacity to consider household decisions through a climate lens.
 - Support efforts like Project Neutral that gamify the calculation of personal GHG emissions as a tool for increasing personal and community engagement in identifying ways of reducing GHG emissions.
- Conduct performance reviews for individual neighbourhoods so residents can better understand their community's GHG output and work towards reducing emissions.
 - Set benchmarks and rewards for local communities that lead in reducing their environmental footprint.
- Equip young people with the tools and training to conduct energy audits to help engage young people early on in promoting energy efficiency.
- Foster better partnerships with K-8 and high schools to involve children and youth in recycling, energy efficiency, cycling, etc.
 - Ask teachers or the province to strengthen educational opportunities about climate change and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Use public libraries and community centres to disseminate information or hold workshops on City GHG reduction initiatives, and to engage/mobilize local community groups.
- Expand the reach of Green Neighbours Network to every ward.

City Planning

- Change zoning bylaws to help eliminate food deserts.
- Couple green infrastructure with grey infrastructure solutions where possible.
- Rezone certain areas of the city to create more mixed-use neighbourhoods, since purely residential areas often lack retail, commercial, and transit amenities.
 - Encourage development of the 'Missing Middle', a term that encompasses all housing options between detached, single family homes, and mid-rise condo units (i.e., everything from two-unit duplexes to low-rise, live/work multiplexes).
 - Allow for laneway housing and tiny homes.



- Ensure new housing options do not promote urban sprawl.
- Increase resident empowerment in how neighbourhoods are built.
- Keep intensification of housing balanced to maintain affordability and not spur gentrification.

Waste management

- Capture energy-from-waste from sewage, trash, and compost.
- Require existing residential buildings to create compost chutes and all new buildings to include them in their design.
- Make it easier to recycle and compost for individual tenants in apartment buildings through digital tools and public education campaigns.
- Promote the TOWaste app.
- Increase opportunities for community-led composting initiatives in cooperation with local schools, community centres, libraries, and Councillors.
- Provide compost bins and rain barrels at no cost.
- Create incentives for residents who take recycling that can't be picked up by the City directly to central recycling facilities.
- Create a deposit system for recyclable plastic and metal containers.
- Ensure compliance for private companies the City contracts to handle waste management in its commercial buildings to minimize the risk of recyclable material ending up in landfill.

Miscellaneous

- Promote the establishment of green-certified businesses in Toronto.
- Include consumption emissions in GHG emission reduction forecasts.
- Ban plastic cups in restaurants.
- Pass a Municipal Green New Deal resolution.
- Declare a climate emergency at City Council.
- Be transparent about whether the City of Toronto intends to reduce its GHGs by relying on greater volumes of nuclear energy.
- Support the federal government in maintaining a price on carbon emissions.

Program Development and Facilitation

The TransformTO Public Meeting was commissioned by the City of Toronto as part of Phase One of the TransformTO Implementation Plan 2021-2023 engagement process. This process also included the TransformTO Reference Panel on Climate Action and a series of stakeholder roundtables. More information on this process and summary reports about each component can be found at toronto.ca/transformto.

Content for the public meeting related to the TransformTO Strategy and Implementation Plan 2021-2023 were developed and presented at the meeting by City of Toronto staff. The public meeting process was designed and facilitated by MASS LBP. MASS is a Toronto-based firm specializing in the use of long-form deliberative and participatory processes to shape public policy.

