

**City of Toronto**  
**Climate Advisory Group (CAG)**  
**Meeting #4: June 8, 2023**  
**2:00 pm - 5:00 pm**



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## **Agenda Item 1: Remarks from Councillor Diane Saxe and Councillor Jamaal Myers**

### **Discussion/Notes**

- Councillor Saxe is a member of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee (IEC), which receives TransformTO progress reports that will be informed by the advice, input and recommendations from the CAG.
  - Councillor Myers is a member of the Planning and Housing Committee.
  - Councillors underlined the importance of CAG's advice based on the diverse sectors and experiences represented in the group.
  - Councillor Saxe highlighted the opportunity for the CAG to provide feedback on the upcoming budget process.
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## Agenda Item 2: Update from CAG Co-Chairs

### Discussion/Notes

- CAG Co-Chairs Lyn Adamson and Maggie Chang have been conducting one-on-one conversations with members to learn more about their interests and experiences and to support the establishment of CAG working groups.
- Co-Chairs suggested implementing a community-building activity to enable CAG members to get to know each other more.
- Co-Chairs suggested creating a monthly newsletter with working group updates.

### Outcomes/Next Steps

- The Co-Chairs/ Secretariat will share a spreadsheet to collect CAG members' bios.
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## Agenda Item 3: Communication on climate issues

**Description:** Presentation from Valerie Cassells, City of Toronto Strategic Public and Employee Communications team and facilitated discussion.

### Discussion/Notes

- Valerie Cassells delivered a presentation about the City of Toronto's climate communication work from 2022 until today and future challenges. The presentation addressed the following:
- There has been a 43% reduction in GHG emissions in Toronto since 1990, but the reductions have plateaued somewhat from about 2010.
- To achieve the targets, there needs to be a 50% reduction of emissions by 2030, representing a major challenge to the City.
- Another challenge is that the City of Toronto Corporate emissions, the emissions within City's control, represent only 5% of the total emissions. 95% of emissions are community-based and require the participation of all sectors and stakeholders.
- The City of Toronto has been taking leadership through policy and actions to reduce Corporate emissions.
- The 2021 climate perceptions survey showed that 42% of residents don't know how they can address climate change.
- The City of Toronto uses a variety of media and communication tools to get the word out about climate change initiatives, including the LiveGreen website, newsletters, via local Councillors, social media, community meetings and major climate action campaigns.
- Valerie highlighted three recent campaigns:

- Top 3 ways homeowners can address climate change. This campaign is slated to relaunch in the fall of 2023. CAG was invited to provide feedback on the brochure during the discussion period.
- Active transportation campaigns that included social media posts and public posters.
- A mass market campaign about climate action that included four sponsored content segments with Global News.
- After the presentation, CAG Members discussed the following questions in small groups:
  - What have you seen as effective communication on climate issues for your sector or community?
  - What kinds of attitudes or perceptions have you noticed in your sector or community with regard to the climate crisis and the actions people need to take?
  - What suggestions do you have for the City to better communicate the urgency of the climate challenges and the actions residents and stakeholders can take?
  - What specific feedback do you have on the materials (brochure, website) that have been presented?
- CAG members were asked to include a discussion on how to embed the principles of equity across all questions.
- All feedback was submitted to the Strategic Communications team.

## Outcomes/Next Steps

The following is a summary of the key points that came up from the discussion across all questions.

### **A. Go beyond climate: speak to people where they're at and what they care about**

The strongest message from the advisory group was to focus the communication on the issues that people find relevant and motivating. This means moving away from messaging that only centers the climate challenge, but connecting intersectionality across different issues based on what matters most to different audiences.

People have busy lives and a lot of priorities, so it is important to frame the issues around tangible benefits for them and their lives to ensure it stands out. There are also a diversity of ways to act on the climate challenge outside of EV vehicles and retrofitting homes. It is important to tell a variety of stories that would resonate with different people.

### **B. Use a diversity of channels to reach diverse audiences**

CAG members provided several recommendations for outreach and communication to people from diverse communities, especially those that have experienced marginalization.

One key set of recommendations was to collaborate with community leaders and champions in engaging people in discussing and sharing messaging on climate issues and action. CAG members highlighted that social networks are important and smaller one-on-one conversations can be very effective. Communication campaigns should also focus on sharing information about existing programs and initiatives that are already taking place in communities.

Another set of recommendations focused on using media that diverse communities engage with and trust, such as multicultural media, community centres and cultural spaces.

### **C. Situate and connect individual action in the context of system-level action**

CAG members underscored the need for political and policy leadership and for the city to be using the levers it can impact to accelerate progress towards our net zero goals. They suggested that communication should not only focus on individual action but should also make a connection to and share what's happening at the municipal, corporate and provincial levels.

### **D. Encourage and support collective action**

Building on the above, CAG members recommended including communication about the importance of collective action and that everyone has a role to play. This includes building awareness of different issues and opportunities for action and encouraging communities to identify actions that resonate for everyone and act together. This recommendation also connects to the suggestion of collaborating with community leaders on local outreach and initiatives.

### **E. Communicate the complexity of climate issues**

There was some discussion and a diversity of opinions about the 'negative' aspects of the climate crisis.

On the one hand, this approach can help to highlight the urgency of action and for some people anger and fear may be a driver of action. On the other hand, for some people, the negative may be demotivating and they need to hear about hope and solutions.

Some members recommended that the City can communicate on how the climate crisis will impact residents (e.g. air pollution, cost of insurance etc) and the city as a whole (e.g. infrastructure).

Members also recommended communicating honestly on the complicated truth about climate change and using the harm reduction approach by pointing out what we can do even on issues we cannot control, or channeling the 'negative' into action.

## **F. Address financial benefits and affordability**

CAG members highlighted that communication about financial aspects is important. Action pathways need to feel clear, easy and accessible for people. This includes being affordable and providing financial benefits.

Communication should highlight these elements including financial incentives. Making sustainability affordable is also important for the industry in different sectors, for example, residential construction.

## **G. Measuring the impact of communication on action**

The CAG members had multiple questions about how the City of Toronto measures the impact of communication and what metrics are used to ensure communication is reaching the target audiences, especially whether this includes people taking action. Similarly, it was highlighted that there are a lot of measures connected to different standards, but this hasn't led to creating a mass impact.

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# **Agenda Item 4: CAG Working Groups**

**Description:** Presentation of Working Group ideas and identifying next steps

## **Discussion/Notes**

- CAG members reviewed and discussed all working group ideas, assigned working group leaders and members, and identified next steps for establishing each group.

## **Outcomes/Next Steps**

- CAG Co-Chairs and Working Group Leads will be convening the working groups and finalizing the scope and deliverables for each group.
  - CAG Secretariat will provide support with engaging City of Toronto staff to participate as part of each working group
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## **Agenda Item 5: Public EV Charging Plan Update**

### **Discussion/Notes**

- Consultation on Public EV Charging is scheduled to be launched in late Summer/early Fall of 2023. This will include public drop-in events, a survey, and stakeholder workshops.

## **Outcomes/Next Steps**

- CAG Secretariat will share info about the planned outreach activities via email. Members are encouraged to participate and share with their networks.



**Present:**

Alienor Rougeot  
Andria Babbington  
Barnabe Geis  
Chris Ballard  
Christian Cianfrone  
Colin Guldimann  
Darnel Harris  
Derek May

Jack Zhou  
Jeff Ranson  
Joseph Ogilvie  
Joyce McLean  
Julius Lindsay  
Kristen Evers  
Lidia Ferreira  
Lyn Adamson

Maria Constantinou  
Marine Sanchez  
Maggie Chang  
Neil MacNeil  
Rosemarie Powell  
Sarah Buchanan  
Tinashe Kanengoni  
Zamani Ra

**Regrets:**

John Robinson

**Guests/Delegates:**

None

**City of Toronto Staff:**

James Nolan

Sophie Plottel

Andrew Plunkett

Valerie Cassells

**Facilitators (Groundswell Projects):**

Destiny Laldeo

Olga Semenovych

Ruth Silver