**City of Toronto**
**Climate Advisory Group (CAG)**
**Meeting #10: December 5, 2024**
**9:30am - 12:30pm EST**

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## Agenda Item 1: Update on the Net Zero Strategy Action Plan (2026-2030)

**Description**: Presentation and discussion of progress in developing the Net Zero Strategy Action Plan (2026-2030), including technical modelling and the public consultation process underway from October 2024 to January 2025.

Presenters:

- Lindsay McCallum, Program Manager, Environment and Climate Division, City of Toronto
- Nicole Swerhun, Managing Principal, Third Party Public
- Stephanie Quezada, Associate, Third Party Public

## Discussion/Notes

City of Toronto staff presented a refresher and an update on the Net Zero Strategy. This presentation addressed the following points.

- The Net Zero Strategy long-term goal is to achieve net zero emissions by 2040 and the interim target is a 65% reduction in emissions by 2030 (from the 1990 baseline).
- The Action Plan will include a set of actions to be implemented across various sectors, designed to help achieve the ambitious goals and targets set out in the strategy.
- The Net Zero Strategy has eight guiding principles, with a strong focus on equity..
- The implementation of the Net Zero Strategy will create additional co-benefits, including healthier residents and natural habitats, improvement in affordability and livability, and investment in the local economy and jobs.
- The Net Zero Strategy 2026-2030 Action Plan development includes City of Toronto internal engagement,

technical modelling, stakeholder engagement, public consultation, and ongoing engagement with the Climate Advisory Group. The Action Plan will go before the Infrastructure and Environment Committee (IEC) and City Council in June 2025.

- Staff provided an update on where community-wide emissions are currently at, relative to the Net Zero targets (based on data from the 2021 sector-based GHG emissions inventory). The 2022 inventory will be released soon.
- Staff provided a brief update on how the City of Toronto will be reporting on the current Action Plan (2022-2025) based on the feedback provided on annual reporting received from the CAG in May 2024.
- Staff provided a brief update on the Net Zero Modelling progress using the Local Emissions for Net Zero (LENZ) model in collaboration with ESMIA.

Third Party Public, the consulting team retained by the City to conduct the Public Consultation for the TransformTO Net Zero Strategy Action Plan (2026-2030), presented an update on the public consultation process, addressing the following:

- The public consultation objectives and approach as well as how the approach has been shaped by the feedback provided by the CAG in September 2024. For example, based on CAG feedback, the process has included 'pop-up' events in neighbourhoods across the city, prioritizing equity-deserving areas and located in community hubs. In addition, the materials focus on renters along with homeowners, and on all forms of transportation, such that any resident can provide relevant feedback.
- Public consultation activities undertaken to date, including an online survey, 2 public webinars, 18 community-led group discussions, and 5 pop-up events in malls and community centres; and
- Early input received through the consultation process: approximately 70% of respondents feel the effects of climate change, 70-80% of respondents want to learn more and do more, a slightly lower percentage feel able to do more, and barriers to taking acting including affordability, lack of incentives, lack of control over decision making, too busy, lack of information.

Climate Advisory Group members provided the following comments and feedback about the public consultation process:

- There were several questions about the scope of the outreach efforts and turnout at the public events.
- Based on the early finding of 61% of people surveyed not planning to take action, it was suggested to explore deeper what's holding people back. The City has identified that this could be a potential action as part of the 2026-2030 Action Plan. The City also has more research on barriers around the adoption of specific actions, such as EV vehicles, which can inform further conversations about the Action Plan.
- There was a question about how the modelling is taking into consideration assumptions around population change and economic growth.
- There was a concern that the survey is covering only a marginal percentage of the Toronto population and that only those who are already concerned or interested in climate are responding. CAG members felt that there is a need to shift from conducting surveys to educating people about the actions they can take. The City recognized the need for ongoing public engagement throughout the year. It was also shared that the City does a more extensive representative climate survey conducted by Ipsos every few years. The next one is scheduled for 2025.
- Several CAG members noted that surveys may not be the most effective way to engage. Other engagement ideas included social media polls (quick engagement with one question at a time), and engaging contractors and real estate agents on their observations about the uptake of buildings-related emissions reduction actions.
- CAG members underlined the pressure to start moving faster to achieve the goals and to act on the already known pain points and barriers.
- There were several ideas around how to get individuals interested in participating in the consultation process:
    - Individuals need to understand how their tangible actions contribute to the goals, "every time you do this, you help achieve this collective goal."
    - There is a disconnect between pointing out increased wild weather and the actions to mitigate or reduce GHG emissions. This gap can be closed by focusing on "future-proofing" and adaptation.
    - Air quality is another impact that could be communicated to the public to make the conversation relevant.
- It was recommended that the focus should not be only on replacing cars with EVs but on discussing other forms of transportation, including e-bikes. Staff noted that the survey does include all forms of transportation.

## Outcomes/Next Steps

- The CAG Secretariat will share recordings of the public consultation webinars with the CAG members.
- The City is planning an in-depth workshop with the CAG in February/March 2025 to review the potential actions for the Net Zero Strategy Action Plan (2026-2030) based on public consultation and modelling.
- CAG Secretariat will share an overview of the proposed workshop and a survey to gather CAG members' input on its design. The Communications and Engagement Working Group will be involved more extensively in shaping this workshop.

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## Agenda Item 2: Climate Change Reports: City of Toronto & Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

**Description**: Presentation and discussion of the City of Toronto and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority December 2024 Climate Change Report, Toronto's Current and Future Climate.

Presenter: Lisa McTavish, Project Lead - Resilience, Environment and Climate Division, City of Toronto

## Discussion/Notes

The presentation addressed the following:

- The context for the report as part of the City's refreshed approach to climate resilience as articulated in the 2024 Staff Report, which includes developing and providing access to information to guide climate resilience work;
- The needs addressed by the report Toronto's Current and Future Climate include providing updated climate data to support climate, adaptation planning, understanding climate risk, climate literacy and enabling action;
- An overview of the collaboration between the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the City of Toronto's Environment and Climate Division (E&C) in analyzing recent and projected future climate data for

the City of Toronto and summarizing results for staff and the public;
- An overview of IPCC climate scenarios;
- Report methodology:
    - reviewing one medium and one high emissions scenario to understand the range of the potential futures and analyzing the impact that this would have on Toronto's local climate conditions; and
    - reviewing how global warming might impact a list of climate variables on a local level (eg., temperature change, extreme heat, precipitation, etc.);
- Results presented in the report on the climate trends and what Toronto's future climate could look like:
    - under both scenarios, annual temperatures are expected to increase compared to the 1980s;
    - extreme heat is expected to become more frequent and intense;
    - heating demand for buildings is expected to decline while cooling demand rises;
    - under both scenarios, annual precipitation is expected to increase compared to the 1980s;
    - seasonal precipitation is anticipated to increase on average, with wetter and drier conditions possible; and
    - extreme precipitation is also anticipated to increase, including maximum precipitation falling in a day;
- How the climate data can be used:
    - to support learning about Toronto's current and future climate;
    - to consider future climate conditions in informing policy, programs, asset management, operations, planning and as an input to specific projects;
    - to educate City staff, leadership and the public - to communicate and inspire climate action; and
    - to support the work on GHG emissions reductions and climate resilience.

The Climate Advisory Group discussed and provided input on the following questions:
- What stands out to you in this new data?
- How can the City best use this data to communicate and engage the public on the importance/challenges/ opportunities in climate and resilience?
- What other benefits could this data offer for climate and resilience work?
- How might you (or your organization) use this data/information in your work and/or to engage with others?

The Climate Advisory Group provided the following advice about the value and potential benefits of climate data.

***Translating data into proactive action***
The value of climate data would be maximized when it is used to drive proactive action by the City, industry and community. A proactive approach would represent a shift in the current approach to resilience. This can include developing standards for future-proof infrastructure, influencing political decisions and creating economic tools and a business case to demonstrate the financial value of resilience.

***Connecting issues***
Climate data can be used to highlight the connections between mitigation efforts and resilience planning as well as to make connections among the key climate issues. It shows that we need to plan adaptation in the least carbon-intensive way, for example, rather than using air conditioners, investing in heat pumps, fans, and green sinks.

***Shifting narrative toward hope***
Climate data provides an opportunity to shift the narrative away from doom and gloom towards hope through collective action. There is a need to lay out the pathway to climate action and provide resources and tools that would support mindsets of action and show how collective action can lead to a better future.

***Specific uses for climate data:***

- By investors (private and public) and decision-makers to assess financial risks and inform budgetary planning. Climate data can help evaluate the vulnerability of assets to extreme weather, such as stormwater risks and overwhelmed infrastructure, enabling better management of financial exposure and guiding investments that account for climate impacts.
- To drive capital and resilience planning by building owners (condos, rentals, etc.) and at the community level. This can include pricing of capital plans with consideration for future climate impacts and informing purchasing decisions, or ensuring access to gas generators for power back-up and developing alternative plans for providing cooling spaces during power outages by using community centres and common spaces.

- To inform innovation around how we build, for example, by exploring new approaches to cooling. For example, instead of glass buildings that trap heat exploring opportunities for how heat can be controlled using ventilation and energy differently.
- To inform business and labour force planning. For example, there may be a need for considerations around hours of work and outdoor safety.
- For resident policy advocacy and informing equitable and thoughtful policy decisions. The data on temperature increase can be used to advocate for maximum summer temperature by-law for tenants by showing why it is necessary and by making a human rights-based argument. However, it would be important to ensure that this policy is implemented thoughtfully to avoid the risk of landlords acquiring cheap air conditioning that increases the load on building electrical systems or passing down the cost to the tenants. It will be important to ensure there is a strong stance on equity-focused access to Energy Star equipment.
- To collaborate with and support resident and tenant-led advocacy organizations through providing access to data and core funding, not only project-based.
- To support public engagement by illustrating future projections and empowering residents to envision the future they want to live in. By presenting data in relatable ways, communities can understand the rationale behind climate decisions, discuss priorities for spending, and explore strategies for cost reduction. This would help increase public trust. Climate data would be most impactful when it is used to support discussion and dialogue. For example, it can be used for hosting discussions and engaging with schools and resident groups.

***Demonstrating the need for new tools***

Climate data highlights the need for new tools to address emerging energy and infrastructure challenges. It reveals gaps such as the lack of cost transparency for hydro connections, the complexities of implementing urban-scale energy storage, and limitations in current revenue streams that prevent asset flexibility. Additionally, tools like power purchase agreements could play a crucial role in adapting to these demands and enabling more sustainable energy solutions.

***Communication opportunities using climate data to raise public awareness about future climate impacts and inspire action***

- Use comparison to other existing climates to demonstrate the future impact of weather changes: "Toronto's climate will become like Ibiza."
- Reminders about the extreme weather events that have happened already, such as the ice storm of 2003, flood on the DVP in 2024, blackout in 2020 and demonstrating how these events will happen five times a year instead of once in a century.
- Translating data into what it would look like in everyday life experience, for example, 68 days with temperatures of over 30 degrees by the end of the century, or showing the impact on an average energy bill.
- Bringing visibility to today's experiences of people who are being affected by climate impacts and making it clear that 10 years from now this will be everyone.
- Packaging data to make it relatable to different contexts and linking it to localized and relatable scenarios.
- Providing education to landlords and homeowners about the need to retrofit and build new ventilation.
- Demonstrating how the cost of the extreme events gets passed on to households and companies through taxes and in other ways.
- Connecting climate education to resilience planning for households, schools, etc. The CAG noted that when communicating climate impacts, it is always important to make a connection to what people can do and how they can take action on what is imparting them.

***Opportunities for using climate data by different organizations connected to the CAG***

- Humber College can support the packaging of data in different ways for different uses through student projects.
- Toronto District School Board can learn from the experiences of the City of Toronto as it is dealing with many similar issues.
- Toronto Climate Action Network can use this information as part of its advocacy and education efforts.

- There is an opportunity to encourage City Councilors to support the next Net Zero Strategy Action Plan by building engagement across different wards.
- The City of Toronto has an opportunity to lead and inspire the rest of Canada and globally.

Following the meeting, the report, its appendices, associated data, and infographics were made available to the public at Becoming a Climate-Ready Toronto – City of Toronto.

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## Agenda Item 3: CAG Working Group Updates

**Description**: CAG members heard updates on the ongoing work of CAG working groups and discussed the establishment of new working groups.

## Discussion/Notes

- **Buildings and Energy Working Group:**

  The working group conducted a review of the Toronto Hydro/City of Toronto digital tool to support carbon awareness, education and engagement with Toronto residents that was introduced to the CAG at the September 2024 meeting. The working group saw this as a valuable tool to provide individuals with insights into their home energy use and to get information directly to residents without having to rely on experts. The working group recommended exploring how the energy data can be presented in simplified ways to make it more accessible, for example by connecting energy efficiency to savings, and how the tool can be made to be more responsive to unique individual household situations. They saw this tool to be potentially valuable as an entry point to the home retrofit journey.

  At future meetings, the working group will discuss Buildings Emissions Performance Standards and their application for low-rise residential buildings.

  The CAG had a brief discussion of the recently launched legal challenge against the Toronto Green Standard

(TGS) and the potential implications for Net Zero Strategy implementation.

- **Communications and Engagement Working Group:**

  The working group reviewed the Public Consultation for the 2026-2030 Net Zero Strategy Action Plan. The group will also be involved in shaping the CAG Staff 2026-2030 Net Zero Strategy Action Plan Workshop to be held in 2025. The group is focused on supporting ongoing public engagement around the Net Zero Strategy by connecting climate action to pre-existing agendas, priorities and values of Toronto residents.

- **Energy Working Group:**

  This is a new working group proposed by CAG members with a focus on discussing electricity demand and production. The working group proposal will be circulated to the CAG to identify members who want to join.

- Other working groups under development: transportation and resilience working groups are focusing on proposal development, waste/circular economy working group is pending the identification of a City staff to support the group.

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## Agenda Item 4: Co-Chair Nominations, Activities Planned for 2025 and Other Updates

**Description**:

- The CAG re-appointed Maggie Chang and Lyn Adamson as Co-Chairs.
- The CAG reviewed the 2025 meeting schedule and optional workshops being planned.
- The CAG is recruiting for two positions for 2025 to replace members who left the CAG in 2024.
- In 2025, the City of Toronto will be implementing a process to recruit members for the next term of the CAG. This will be shared at the upcoming meetings.

**Present:**
Andria Babbington
Jeff Ranson
John Robinson
Joyce McLean
Julius Lindsay
Kristen Evers
Lanrick Bennett Jr.
Lindsay Walker
Maria Constantinou
Marine Sanchez
Maggie Chang
Richard Carlson
Rosemarie Powell
Sarah Buchanan
Shivani Chotalia
Zamani Ra

**Regrets:**
Cara-Lynne Wade
Chris Ballard
Colin Guldimann
David Campbell
Joseph Ogilvie
Lidia Ferreira

**City of Toronto Staff**:

Alice Xu
Andrew Plunkett
Cecilia Fernandez
Kim Stemshorn
Lindsay McCallum
Lisa McTavish

**Guests:**
Nicole Swerhun, Third Party Public
Steffanie Quezada, Third Party Public

**Facilitators (Groundswell Projects)**:

Destiny Laldeo
Olga Semenovych
Ruth Silver