

City of Toronto

Climate Advisory Group (CAG)

Summary Notes

Meeting #4: November 28, 2025

9:30-12:30

Present:

Lyn Adamson (Co-Chair), Andria Babbington, Chris Ballard, Sarah Buchanan, Maggie Chang (Co-Chair), Kristen Evers, Lidia Ferreira, Shivani Chotalia, Colin Guldemann, Richard Carlson, Rosemarie Powell, Zamani Ra, Jeff Ranson, John Robinson, David Campbell, Marine Sanchez, Jack Zhou, Lindsay Walker, Chris Warren, How-Sen Chong, Cara-Lynne Wade (represented by Jenna Bentley), Jenn Vetter (represented by Alicia Roberge)

Regrets:

Maria Constantinou, Joe Ogilvie, Lanrick Bennett, Jr.,

City of Toronto Staff:

Jessica Chow, Meaghan Davis, Megan MacLean, Alice Xu, Cecilia Fernandez, Sarah Gingrich, Andrew Plunkett, Robin Connelly, Evan Artis, Noemie DeVuyst, Stephanie Mah, Stephanie Gower, James Nowlan

Facilitators:

(BMG): David Buwalda, Nicholas Liznick

Agenda

1. Resilience reporting update
2. Presentation on Net Zero Strategy Action Plan (2026-2030)
3. Discussion with Q and A on Net Zero Strategy Action Plan
4. Other Business & Updates

Meeting Objectives

- Update on Resilience reporting
- Information sharing on Net Zero Strategy Action Plan (2026-2030) report and attachments
- Facilitate CAG questions and discussion on Net Zero Strategy Action Plan (2026-2030) report and attachments

1. Resilience Reporting

Description: Meaghan Davis, Incubation & Design, ECF presented an overview of the upcoming Climate Resilience Staff Report, which will be presented to Executive Committee on December 9th, alongside reports on extreme heat. The report will be published online on December 2nd and will include an analysis of Toronto's top climate risks, particularly extreme heat and flooding, as well as recommendations for action across city divisions. CAG members discussed provincial responsibilities in relation to municipal authority and the need for coordinated action between different levels of government.

Discussion/Notes

- CAG members raised questions about coordination across different City departments. Staff confirmed that various division leads have been working together and receiving senior leadership support.
- TCAG members discussed provincial responsibilities in relation to municipal authority and the need for coordinated action between different levels of government.
- CAG members discussed the importance of addressing both climate mitigation and adaptation actions, as well as the need to move beyond risk and vulnerability thinking to an asset-based approach.

Outcomes/Next Steps

- Staff to share report with CAG Members

2. Presentation on Net Zero Action Plan

Description: Sarah Gingrich and Andrew Plunkett, Policy & Data, ECF presented the Net Zero Strategy Action Plan for 2026-2030, highlighting key messages such as the city's commitment to net zero, the impact of climate change, and the need to balance climate action with economic constraints. Presentation of the Net Zero Action Plan to the CAG before it is brought forward to City Council is a requirement of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 669, and this presentation and the discussion following the presentation with the Executive Director, ECF (the City Manager's designate), satisfies the bylaw requirement.

Staff also presented sector-based inventory results showing a 1% increase in greenhouse gas emissions from 2022 overall, but interestingly, the lowest emissions per capita since 1990. The City of Toronto's climate action plan highlights key sources of greenhouse gases and outlines critical steps and high-level actions to reduce emissions.

The plan includes actions on reducing fossil natural gas use in buildings, energy, low-carbon transportation, waste and wastewater emissions, carbon accountability, and cross-cutting areas such as equity and reconciliation.

Discussion/Notes

- Discussion was confined to clarification of points, information presented. Members were asked to write down, hold-on, to their Discussion questions to address in a high-level discussion (agenda 3).

Outcomes/Next Steps

- Presentation slides to be distributed to CAG members.

3. Discussion and Q & A

Description: The discussion focused on the City of Toronto's Net Zero Strategy Action Plan and the Climate Advisory Group's role in informing and supporting it. Members were given the opportunity to discuss the Action Plan with James Nowlan, Executive Director, ECF. James explained that the City decided to defer the introduction of Building Emission Performance Standards [BEPS] due to various challenges, including timing, affordability, and uncertainty around legal interpretations and provincial authority. He emphasized that the decision was not a simple one and acknowledged the significant work done by staff, external partners, and City teams. James and other City staff present highlighted the importance of ensuring that any standards are adoptable and supportable, and he noted that while the City believes the standards can be legally applied under the City of Toronto Act, there remains some uncertainty.

Discussion/Notes

- The meeting discussed CMHC's increased energy efficiency requirements for their program, rising from 40% to 70% by September 2026.
- The group debated whether CAG should take a position on BEPS.), with several members suggesting they could support the idea while acknowledging the political sensitivity.
- Other members expressed concerns about the financial implications for building owners and tenants of climate action, and the financial feasibility of plans.
- Several members agreed that the exception of BEPS in the Net Zero Strategy was a disappointment and an issue. City staff described that its exception was not an indefinite deferral. The Council and Committee still have opportunities to discuss it.
- The group discussed crafting a statement regarding the City's climate action plan, with emphasis on the City's need for a coherent roadmap for decarbonizing

buildings while expressing caution about mandating policies prematurely. Others suggested creating general language that could unite the advisory group. The group agreed to draft a statement highlighting the plan's strengths and deficiencies. It is understood that this would be a statement from CAG members who have signed it and not a unanimous position from the CAG.

- Members and staff agreed that communication strategies around 'climate change' need to be updated to focus on the individual or household experience 'to meet people where they are' avoiding technical language. The discourse of 'resilience and adaptation' were preferable as a way of communicating that 'protecting residents' and understanding 'pocket-book issues' is vital to a pragmatic approach which recognizes realistic outcomes.

Outcomes/Next Steps

- Several members volunteered to draft a statement in response to the Net Zero Action Strategy to circulate among members.

4. Other Business or Next Steps

Description: At the outset of the meeting City staff provided a CAG membership update and welcomed new members. At the end of the meeting there was a brief reflection on the year 2025 and the first 3-year term of the CAG was held with opportunity for members to offer feedback and City staff to honour the effort of all members.

Staff and CAG members acknowledged and thanked outgoing members Joyce McLean and Sarah Buchanan for their service to the first term of the CAG.

Discussion/Notes

- Members noted that the earliest CAG meetings provided lots of information and the later meetings have provided more opportunities to respond and discuss information.
- Recruit 3 new CAG members for next term starting January 1st, including one dedicated youth member, with interviews in January.

Outcomes/Next Steps

- Next CAG meeting set for late Q1, 2026.
- Special CAG meetings in January and February focused on the Environment, Climate & Forestry Budget and the Sector-Based Emissions Inventory.

End Summary Notes