

# Zoning for Low-Carbon Technologies

Community Consultation Meeting

March 2 and 5, 2026



# Land Acknowledgment

The land I am on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. Toronto is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. I acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and that Scarborough is part of the lands governed by the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa nations.

# African Ancestral Acknowledgement

The City of Toronto acknowledges all Treaty peoples – including those who came here as settlers – as migrants either in this generation or in generations past – and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly those brought to these lands as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. We pay tribute to those ancestors of African origin and descent.

# Conduct

- We are here to serve the public and believe that everyone has the right to be heard, understood and respected.
- Language or actions that may cause staff or members of the public to feel afraid, threatened or abused will not be tolerated.
- Examples of unacceptable behaviour include racial or sexual harassment, threats, verbal abuse, derogatory or insulting remarks, rudeness, profanity and yelling. It may also include excessive calls, emails or other communications.



# Meeting Agenda

- Introduction
- Study Background
- Recommended Zoning Approach
- Question and Answer Period
- Conclusion



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# *Study Background*

# Purpose of the Study

Zoning for Low-Carbon Technologies is a comprehensive review of Toronto's City-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013 with a focus on climate action.

The study provides an opportunity to update and modernize the city-wide zoning rules to support the implementation of Toronto's climate strategy, TransformTO, and contribute towards the City's goal of being net zero by 2040.



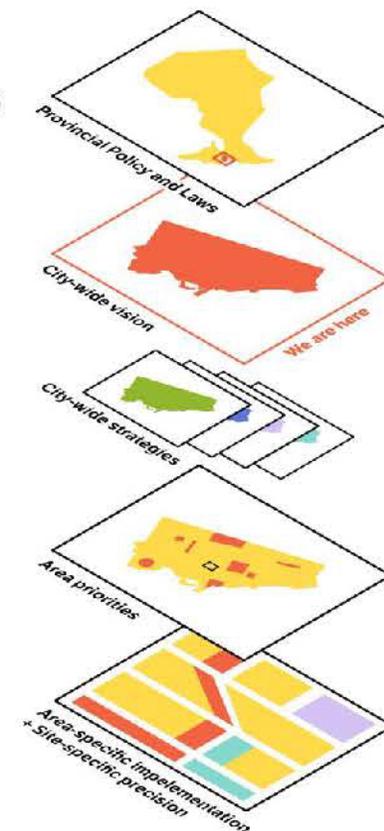
Scan the QR Code  
to learn more!

# Policy Framework

- Action on climate change and its impacts is a **planning priority** in the Official Plan:

The City of Toronto is committed to using planning as a tool to achieve net zero emissions throughout our city, applying a climate change lens to all aspects of planning, and becoming resilient and adaptable to the future impacts of a changing climate.

- **Policy 3.4.1** encourages city building activities and changes to the built environment (i.e. public works) to be environmentally friendly and address environmental stresses caused by the consumption of natural resources by reducing:
  - energy consumption and greenhouse gases
  - reliance on carbon-based fuels for energy
- **Policy 3.4.19** supports and encourages advanced energy conservation and efficiency technologies and processes that achieve a net zero emissions in new development and building renovation through:
  - renewable energy systems including wind, solar power and geothermal
  - small local integrated energy solutions (combined heat and power and energy storage)



# Policy Framework

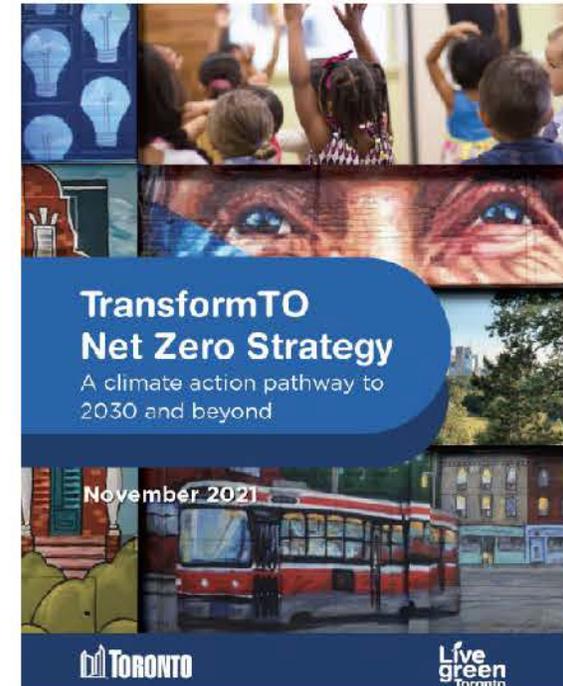
Supported by directions from the **TransformTO Net Zero Strategy Action Plan**

## Actions for implementation 2022 - 2025

#6 Address barriers and develop strategies to increase the deployment of renewable energy and storage technologies, including but not limited to solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, waste heat recovery and heat pumps

## Actions for implementation 2026 - 2030

#4 Facilitate installation of new renewable energy capacity and storage and promote innovative practices.



# Planning and Housing Committee Direction

In September 2024, Planning and Housing Committee (see [PH15.4](#)) directed City staff to review opportunities to modernize the Zoning By-law to facilitate the adoption of low-carbon technologies.

1. Endorsed the proposed work plan, as amended by Part 2 below, and directed staff to report back with a detailed proposals report in the first quarter of 2025.
2. Requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to review the zoning by-law in all zone categories, to identify whether there are zoning barriers, and make appropriate recommendations for zoning by-law amendments, regarding:
  - a. adding exterior insulation on existing buildings;
  - b. alternative low-carbon energy systems in and adjacent to parking lots;
  - c. the reduction of existing parking spaces to accommodate the installation of ancillary charging equipment for electric vehicles; and
  - d. solar panels, heat pumps, and energy storage devices.

# Timeline

**Preliminary Report**

September 2024

**Research and Analysis**

September 2024 to January 2026

**Public Consultation**

February and March 2026

**Refinement**

to Q2 2026

**Final Report**

Q2 2026

**Phase 2 Begins**

Summer 2026

read our report [HERE](#)

- ⊗ Industry Session #1: February 25
- ⊗ Industry Session #2: February 27
- ⊗ Public Consultation: March 2
- ⊗ Public Consultation: March 5

**we are here!**

# Phase 1 Scope of Work



Ground-mounted thermal energy devices



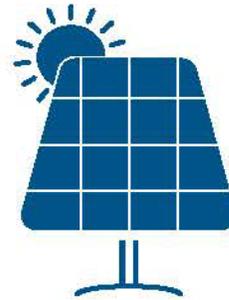
Building-mounted thermal energy devices



Energy storage systems



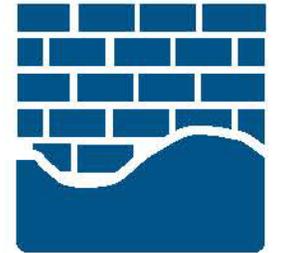
Roof-mounted solar energy devices



Ground-mounted solar energy devices



EV Equipment



Exterior Insulation (cladding)

Residential Zones

All Zones

# Background Research

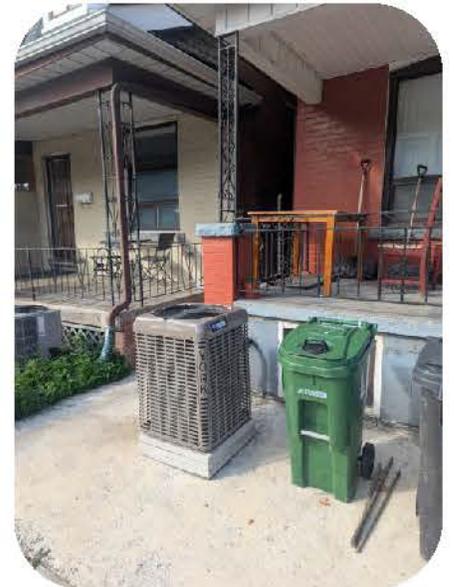
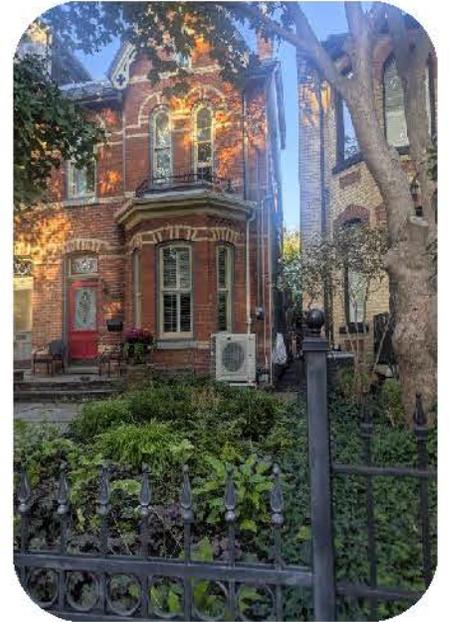
- Jurisdictional scan
- Review of Toronto's current approval process
- Policy review of Toronto's current zoning provisions
- Literature review
- Industry workshop
- Case study review



# *Recommended Zoning Approach*

# Thermal Energy Devices 101

- Thermal energy devices help heat and cool the internal temperature of a building.
  - [Heat pumps](#) and air-conditioning devices are most common types of thermal energy devices.
- Size of a device depends on how much space needs to be conditioned.
  - Width: 0.8m - 1.05m
  - Height: 0.5m - 1.4m
  - Depth: 0.2m - 0.9m



# Background Research Findings

- Broad support for location flexibility for these devices but some awareness around associated nuisances (i.e. noise, fanned air, condensation).
- Other cities in Ontario and Canada have clearer approaches to zoning for A/C units and heat pumps (e.g. Pickering, Vancouver).
  - Typically, combined with all heating and cooling equipment but can have direct reference to heat pumps.

# Ground-mounted Thermal Energy Devices

Current Rules	Recommended Changes
<p>Permitted in the front, side, and rear yards with conditions.</p> <p><b>Front Yard:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permitted if set back at least 6.0 metres from a front lot line.</li> </ul> <p><b>Side Yard:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The lesser of 0.9 metres or main building side yard setback.</li> </ul> <p><b>Rear Yard:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Device must be within 2.0 metres (6.5 feet) from a building's main wall.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permitted in front, side and rear yards.</li> <li>Removed the 6.0 m front yard setback.</li> <li>Permitted to encroach 0.9 metres into a front, side or rear yard setback.</li> <li>May be no closer than 0.3 metres to the lot line.</li> <li>Must be within 2.0 metres from a building's main wall or a platform.</li> </ul>
<p>No encroachment for heat pumps on ancillary buildings</p>	<p>Same allowances for laneway and garden suites.</p>





# Building-mounted Thermal Energy Devices

## Current Rules

Permitted in the side and rear yards with conditions

### Side Yard

- May encroach 0.9m if set back at least 0.3 from lot line
- Cannot be above first storey

### Rear Yard

- May encroach 0.9m if set back at least 0.3 from lot line

## Recommended Changes

- Permitted to be located on the front, side, rear building walls, and a roof.
- May encroach 0.9 metres into a front, side or rear yard setback.
- May be no closer than 0.3 metres to the lot line.
- Wall mounted devices are not permitted above the first storey within a front yard.
- Devices on a roof can project 2.0 metres above the maximum height of a building or ancillary building.
- Permission to locate an energy device on a balcony.



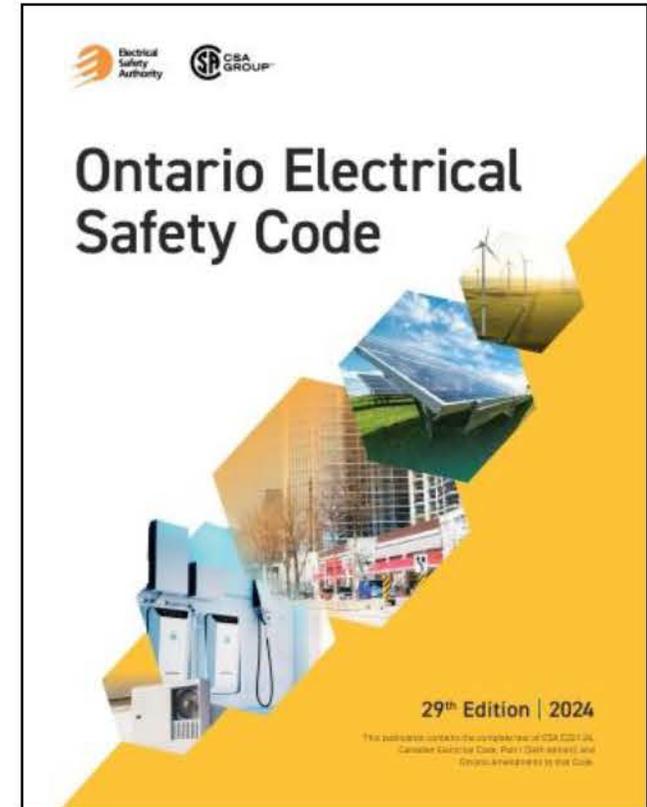
# Energy Storage Devices 101

- A system capable of storing energy and supplying electrical energy to local power loads or operating in parallel with other power sources.
- Physical size depends on the energy needs of a home.
  - Width: 0.5m - 1.1m
  - Height: 0.6m - 1.75m
  - Depth: 0.25m - 0.35m
- Can be wall- or ground-mounted.
- Typically located indoors, however, improvements in battery technology have made outdoor use more practical.



# Background Research Findings

- Variety of standards and codes that are relevant to energy storage.
  - [Ontario Electrical Safety Code](#) (OESC) most impactful
- Some cities are ahead of Toronto in zoning for this technology, (ex. Ottawa and New York City).
- Relevant literature outlined the need for appropriate setbacks and clearances for the technology.
  - Stronger focus on larger-scale energy storage devices





# Energy Storage Systems

Current Rules	Recommended Changes
<p>Unclear language and relevant provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Equipment for the functional operation of a building” permitted on a roof.</li><li>• Wall-mounted “utility equipment” are permitted to project 0.6 metres into a side or rear yard setback.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce a new definition for residentially-scaled energy storage system.</li><li>• Permit them within a front, side, rear yard as wall- or ground-mounted.</li><li>• Require a minimum setback of 1.0 metre from a lot line.</li><li>• Inclusive of necessary protective equipment.</li><li>• Same allowances for laneway and garden suites.</li><li>• Consider opportunities to include direct references to complying with OESC standards.</li></ul>



# Solar Energy Devices 101

- A system capable of converting energy from the sun to produce electrical or thermal energy.
- Flush rooftop solar panels are the most common; however, there are circumstances that make them not practical.
- Other types of solar panel systems include:
  - Bracket-mounted
  - Pole-mounted
  - Carport-mounted
  - Pergola



# Background Research Findings

- The literature review found that:
  - Predictable review processes helps ease the risk of solar energy projects.
  - Ground-mounted solar projects require more regulations than building-mounted solar projects.
  - On-site capacity limits are not necessary because of the limited available space.
- Cities across Canada and USA are expanding allowances for diverse types of solar panel systems. (e.g. New York City, Calgary, Pickering).



# Roof-mounted Solar Energy Devices

Current Rules	Recommended Changes
Allowed on most roofs with some conditions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• compliance with main building setbacks</li><li>• cannot project 1.2m above maximum height.</li></ul>	No changes.
Outdated reference to former <i>Green Energy Act</i> .	Update the reference to the correct sections of the <i>Electricity Act</i> .
Unclear reference to the provincial exemption for most roof-mounted solar projects.	Provide clearer language regarding where to learn about which types of rooftop solar projects are exempt from municipal regulations.





# Ground-mounted Solar Energy Devices

Current Rules	Recommended Changes
Permitted in a side and rear yard.  Not permitted in the front or yard abutting a street.	No changes.
Must comply with ancillary building or structure requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maximum building height of 4.0 metres.</li><li>• Rear yard setback ranging from 0.3 to 1.8 metres.</li><li>• Side yard setback ranging from 0.3 to 1.8 metres.</li><li>• Included within lot coverage calculation.</li></ul>	Remove one size fits all approach and develop catered provisions for the technology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maximum permitted height of 2.5 metres.</li><li>• Maximum permitted lot coverage of 40.0 square metres.</li><li>• Rear yard setback of 1.0 metres.</li><li>• Side yard setback of 1.0 metres.</li></ul> Exempt from the lot coverage calculation.





# Solar Parking Canopies

Current Rules	Recommended Changes
In Residential zones, must comply with ancillary building or structure requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enable solar parking canopies above parking areas with multiple parking spaces.</li><li>• Direct reference to solar parking canopies</li></ul>
In all other zones, must comply with the principal building requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maximum height of 5.0 metres for all non-residential zones</li><li>• Maximum height of 4.0 metres for residential zones</li></ul>
Prohibited from being located in a front yard or side yard that abuts a street.	Exemption from location rules for non-residential zones.



# Over-cladding Permissions

Current Rules	Recommended Changes
<p>Residential, Commercial Local, Commercial Residential Zones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowed setback encroachment of 0.15m, if no closer than 0.3m from a lot line.</li> </ul> <p>Residential Apartment Zone category:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowed setback encroachment of 0.9 metres.</li> </ul>	<p>Permitted encroachment into a setback, provided it is no closer than 0.3 metres from a lot line:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential zones: 0.3 metre</li> <li>All other zones: 0.9 metre</li> </ul>
<p>Confusion about whether expansion is included in the FSI calculation.</p>	<p>Over-cladding increases would be exempt from FSI calculations.</p>





# Electric Vehicle Charging in Parking Lots

## Current Rules

The number of lawful parking spaces for a lawfully existing building may not be reduced.

## Recommended Changes

Establish permission for parking spaces to be reduced for the use of EV charging infrastructure, as long as it's not for a residential occupant or a required accessible parking space.



# *Question and Answer Period*

# Thank you for attending!



## How to be involved

- Participate in our upcoming sessions.
- Share your thoughts with us by email.
- Share your thoughts to your local councillor.
- Connect with us.



Scan the QR Code to  
learn more!



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# Helpful Links for Home Retrofits

- [SolarTO](#)
- [Home Energy Loan Program](#)
- [Furnance Upgrade Program](#)
- [Net Zero Guides + Video Series](#)

