City of Toronto
Climate Advisory Group (CAG)

Summary Notes

Meeting #2: Sept 22, 2026
9:30am-12:30pm – Union Station, Montreal Boardroom, Zoom (hybrid)

Attendance

Present:
CAG Members: Maggie Chang (Co-Chair), Maria Constantinou, Shivani Chotalia, Richard Carlson, Rosemarie Powell, Zamani Ra, Jeff Ranson, John Robinson, Jack Zhou, Jenna Bentley, Chris Warren, Jenn Vetter, How-Sen Chong, Ed Ho, Michela Reinink, Miha Isik, Tyjana Connolly, Tessa Soltendieck, Andria Babbington, Colin Guldimann

Delegates: Emmay Mah (Lidia Ferreira)

City of Toronto: Evan Artis, Megan MacLean, Janice Alvares, Alice Xu, Christina Barnes, Philip Szwiec, Shilpa Mandoda, Andrew Plunkett, Sarah Gingrich

BMG: David Buwalda, Kristine Kjeldsen

Regrets: Joseph Ogilvie, Lanrick Bennett Jr., Lidia Ferreira (delegate) Lyn Adamson, Marine Sanchez, Hannah Flores

Agenda

- Welcome & Icebreaker
- Updates + Hot Topics:
    - New Online Resource
    - Black-led Climate Action Grants – Recap of July Meeting
- TransformTO:
    - Climate Adaptation Action Planning
    - Sustainable City of Toronto Fleets Plan
    - TransformTO Net Zero Progress Report
- Roundtable: Other Business & Member Announcements
    - Member discussion
    - Member announcements of events, activities
    - Meeting reflection

Resources

- **Q2 Meeting Summary**

- **Progress and Priorities for Enhancing Toronto's Climate Resilience**
- **Toronto's Climate Risks: Understanding Vulnerability Today, Preparing for Tomorrow (Summary Report)**
- **Climate Change Resilience Workplan**
- **Sustainable City of Toronto Fleets Plan**
- **TransformTO Net Zero Strategy Progress Report 2022-2025**

Welcome & Icebreaker

David Buwalda (BMG) welcomed new member Tessa Soltendieck from Humber Polytechnic

1. Updates

Update #1: New Online Resource

Description: Megan MacLean (ECF) introduced a new, private CAG members-only online hub designed to be a convenient one-stop shop for meeting schedules, document libraries, news, and member discussions.
Link: https://haveyoursay.toronto.ca/climate-advisory-group

Discussion/Notes:

- All documents on the hub are public documents and can be shared outside of the CAG.
- Members can submit events or news items for the online hub via the form on the hub site or via email to Megan MacLean
- Members can continue to submit items for future CAG meetings using the Request Form.

Update #2: Black-led Climate Action Grants – Recap of July Meeting

Description: Evan Artis (ECF) presented an update on the new Black-led Climate Action Grants program. The initiative was developed through a comprehensive six-month co-design process featuring 18 key informant interviews and multiple community sessions involving over 100 participants. The resulting framework provides $200,000 in annual funding divided across three grant streams ranging from $10,000 to $50,000 per project. Since launching on August 26, program staff have been facilitating information sessions, providing application support, and recruiting external review committee members. As the pilot year progresses, the program is actively seeking CAG and community advice on long-term sustainability, future funding sources, and strategic partnerships.

Discussion/Notes:

Q: Must organizations meet all B3 criteria to qualify?
A: Yes, applicants must be Black-led, Black-serving, and Black-mandated as requested by the community.
Q: What specific activities or projects do these grants fund?
A: The definition of climate action is approached holistically; the program is looking to fund initiatives such as circular economy/waste reduction programs, climate education, heat relief, community resilience, green workforce skills training, environment/cultural connections, youth mentorship, etc..
Q: What are the project timeline requirements for the funds?
A: Funding is project-based for work occurring within the 2027 calendar year.
Q: How onerous is the reporting process for grantees?
A: The program offers flexible reporting formats tailored to the group/community preferences, including written options, sharing circles, or group presentations to reduce administrative burden.
Q: How will outcomes and learnings from reporting be shared?
A: The team is developing a framework to capture community impact beyond numerical outputs, helping tell the broader story of climate resilience and inform future prospective applicants.

2. TransformTO (Presentations and Discussions)

A. Climate Adaptation Action Planning

Description: The development of Toronto's Climate Adaptation Action Plan was established as a key priority within the 2025 staff report, which set a three-year work plan leading to a Council presentation in Q3 2027. Grounded in the citywide risk and vulnerability assessment, the plan addresses high-priority climate risks across five core focus areas. These priority areas encompass community health and safety, Indigenous relationship building, municipal operational alignment, nature and biodiversity, and resilient infrastructure. The adaptation planning process is guided by ICLEI’s Building Adaptive and Resilient Communities (BARC) framework, with the City currently advancing through its third milestone. To ensure the plan aligns with community needs, staff are organizing targeted focus group discussions and a broad public survey to gather resident feedback. Additionally, staff are requesting a half-day engagement session with CAG members in Q1 2027 to review the draft approach before it is finalized. A formal request along with additional background details will be sent to members later this fall. Ultimately, the finalized plan will outline the City's long-term commitments, address critical risks, and establish clear pathways for implementation and monitoring.

Discussion/Notes:

Q: Is the Climate Adaptation Action Plan a project-focused effort or an overarching strategy?

A: It is an overarching strategy that interconnects adaptation priorities across multiple City divisions to help Council decide on funding, resourcing, and direction.
Q: How were the five proposed priority areas selected?
A: They represent the City's internal priorities based on past resilience work and staff reports rather than a rigid external template, as the BARC framework guides process rather than specific content.
Q: How are adaptation and mitigation strategies linked in this plan?
A: Adaptation and mitigation are explicitly integrated, recognizing that actions like retrofits and energy efficiency serve both to reduce emissions and build resilience.
Q: What is the timeline for submitting the plan to Council?
A: The final plan is scheduled for Council submission in Q3 2027.

Outcomes/Next Steps:
Staff request a half-day CAG engagement session with CAG members in Q1 2027 to review the draft approach before it is finalized.

B: Sustainable City of Toronto Fleets Plan

Description: Shilpa Mandoda and Philip Szwiec (Fleet Services) presented an update on the Sustainable City of Toronto Fleets Plan, which aligns with TransformTO Action 9 to transition municipal vehicles to net zero by 2040. Fleet Services will be presenting a plan to City Council in June 2027, focusing on five core objectives: reducing GHG emissions, optimizing fuel use, building climate-resilient fleet facilities, strengthening sustainability leadership, and maintaining resilient ferry services. Staff are actively engaging internal and external stakeholders to gather feedback on draft actions and identify additional technologies or municipal best practices to accelerate fleet decarbonization.

Outcomes/Next Steps:
- **Stakeholder Engagement & Refinement:** Conducting additional external engagement sessions over the coming weeks to refine actions, gather feedback on proposed objectives, and secure buy-in across City divisions and agencies.
- **Targeted Ad Hoc Deep Dives:** Exploring the possibility of scheduling future CAG ad-hoc meetings for members interested in deeper discussions on supply chain equity, grid management, V2G/mobile storage, and domestic procurement strategies.
- **Training & Upskilling**: Developing dedicated EV training for City operators to encourage EV adoption over gas vehicles, as well as collaborating with local colleges to form customized upskilling and maintenance programs for mechanics and technicians.
- **Pilots & Asset Integration**: Launching the JUUL Battery Electric Storage Solution (BESS) fast-charging pilot next month, deploying new hydrogen fuel cell pilots, and onboarding two electric ferries (arriving in late 2026 and spring 2027).

- **Infrastructure & Fuel Site Planning:** Continuing coordination with Toronto Hydro and Facilities Management to upgrade high-priority yards/sites with electrical capacity, while exploring long-term options to repurpose existing city fuel sites into charging hubs or hydrogen fueling stations.
- **Operational Asset Alignment**: Reviewing asset management and "right-sizing" processes with divisions prior to vehicle procurement to ensure specialized specs fit operational needs, and evaluating data from electric fire truck pilots in North York for potential broader procurement.

C. TransformTO Net Zero Progress Report.

Description: Andrew Plunkett (ECF) presented an overview of the TransformTO Net Zero Progress Report, which summarizes achievements from the initial four-year action plan (2022–2025). The City shifted toward a shorter, highly visual, photo-centric format based on municipal jurisdictional scans to serve as an accessible communication tool. Input from the CAG shaped this approach, balancing a public-facing visual document with detailed accompanying information available online. Launched during Toronto Climate Week and distributed through various City networks, the report is intended to be used continuously for public outreach. Moving forward, staff are seeking CAG feedback to refine future reporting formats, determine the frequency of multi-year narrative reports, and evaluate transitioning to regularly updated online dashboards and KPIs.

Discussion/Notes:

Q: What improvements are suggested for public engagement and accessibility?
A: Members suggested creating simpler, visual deliverables like infographics for broader public understanding, as well as providing open-source, interactive data tools (such as GIS shapefiles for solar suitability mapping) for researchers and data users. Advocacy groups find it challenging to promote the June 2026 progress report because the report focuses primarily on success stories without adequately highlighting where progress to climate goals is falling short. CAG Members noted that, transparent reporting is needed to drive political accountability, identify funding gaps, and engage both the public and private sectors in closing those gaps. Members indicated that information should be provided in various ways to reach different audiences and expressed support for dashboards.

Q: Why did staff change the format for this report compared to previous iterations?
A: Based on municipal jurisdictional scans (e.g., Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Metro Vancouver) and CAG feedback, staff shifted to a shorter, photo-centric, highly visual format to engage a broader public audience rather than publishing a long, text-heavy document.

Q: What key sectors and topics are covered in the report?
A: The report covers buildings, energy, transportation, circular economy and waste, community engagement, climate resilience, and the carbon budget process.

Q: What options are being considered for future progress reporting?
A: The City is exploring a transition toward regularly updated online dashboards for tracking of progress, KPIs, and resilience data, potentially reserving detailed, longer narrative reports for multi-year updates (e.g., every 2 to 5 years). Staff are collaborating

with a University of Toronto experiential education course to gain input on refining key performance indicators and developing a suite of metrics to potentially be posted online alongside the Net Zero Action Plan.

Outcomes/Next Steps:
Staff will refine future reporting formats based on CAG feedback, determining the balance between periodic multi-year narrative reports and regularly updated online dashboards.

3. Members Discussion

BMG facilitated a roundtable discussion to respond to the question: What climate resilience issues and initiatives are you currently focusing on this fall and into 2027? The following points were highlighted as issues or initiatives in response to the question:

- The Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN), in partnership with the City of Toronto and Toronto Hydro, launched the *Ready to Build Green* program to train 12 Black contractors (electricians, HVAC, carpenters) for certification in homeowner green building retrofits.
- The Clean AI Initiative is hosting the CleanAI Summit on November 4th in Toronto.
- Enbridge is navigating tariffs and counter-tariffs that impact construction costs, housing targets, and overall project affordability.
- Pollution Probe is monitoring regulatory energy efficiency decisions with Enbridge and working on Toronto Hydro's non-wire solutions case regarding funding and implementation.
- Humber Polytechnic is re-evaluating strategies for presenting climate challenges and fostering hope among staff and students in light of global temperature reports.
- The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is hosting the EcoSchool Secondary Student Leadership Conference to empower high school climate leaders, alongside a professional development conference for 175 teachers on October 27th.
- CEED Canada is engaging Toronto Community Housing residents in the North End on grassroots climate action, focusing on energy efficiency and waste management tailored to specific building needs.
- Toronto Food Not Bombs operates weekly Sunday grocery distribution drives at Allan Gardens for residents facing food insecurity.
- The Uptown Climate Futures Group is hosting an upcoming climate resilience event managed by Maggie Chang.
- The Youth Climate Lab is developing operational models for climate hubs to engage youth directly in localized education and municipal policy advocacy.
- Local organizing spaces and community partner resources were highlighted for ClimateFast and the Toronto Climate Action Network (TCAN).
- The YZD Doors Open 2026 event page serves as a reference for local architectural and community space planning initiative

Next Meeting:

The next full CAG is scheduled for November 24th at Union Station and on Zoom (hybrid). Members attending in person are invited to stay for an end-of-year catered lunch.

<End Summary Notes>