

Tuesday, June 16, 2020

Mayor John Tory
City Hall, 2nd Floor
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Tory,

As you may know, the Climate ACT advisory committee is a collaboration of leading sustainability academics at Toronto's four universities, organized and facilitated by Ontario's former Environment Commissioner to assist Toronto City Councillors to implement Toronto's climate emergency declaration. This committee was organized at the invitation of several councillors, led by Councillor Mike Layton. The senior representatives of each university are listed below.

We know that you are aware of the urgency of making the recovery from this pandemic a green recovery, and we congratulate you on the ambition of TransformTO.ⁱ However, we have noted a substantial gap between TransformTO's ambitious targets and the pace of implementation, while the climate crisis accelerates.

One key reason appears to be the absence of a formal climate lens when Council makes material decisions. The most effective way to redress this is for Council to ask questions such as the following. In turn, this would require staff to ensure that these questions are explicitly asked and answered in each major briefing package:

1. Is this decision **consistent with our city's climate and environmental targets/budget**?
 - a. Are we counting everything? For example, have we taken embodied carbon into account? Full life cycles?
 - b. What impact will this decision have on the carbon/environmental footprint of our organization? Of our community?
2. How will this decision make the **transition to a low carbon economy** faster, easier, less expensive and more equitable, especially for the most vulnerable?
3. What are the **other benefits** of this decision **for equality, public health and well-being**? Have we quantified and disclosed those benefits and given them weight in our decision?
4. What do leading organizations do in this circumstance? Are we using **best practices**? Are we setting a good example?
5. **What options do we have** to reduce the carbon/environmental footprint of this decision? Could we make this decision better by better consultation? By collaborating with partners?
6. Is this decision designed to allow **improvements later**?

7. What will be the **consequences if we delay** this decision?

To assist the City, the Committee members have voluntarily undertaken multi-jurisdictional research on best practices that would help Toronto achieve its TransformTO goals. We are optimistic that preliminary results will be available in early fall.

We would be happy to provide further information at your convenience.

Yours very truly,



Climate ACT advisory committee

Senior members of the committee

Professor	University	Title	Focussing on
Dianne Saxe	Senior fellow, Massey College, University of Toronto	Climate lawyer, former Environmental Commissioner of Ontario	Policy and coordination
John Robinson	University of Toronto	Presidential Advisor on the Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability	Buildings
Steve Easterbrook	University of Toronto	Director, School of the Environment	Buildings
Ravi da Costa	York University	Chair, President's Sustainability Council	Waste
Kernaghan Webb	Ryerson University	Director of the Ryerson University Institute for the Study of Corporate Social Responsibility	Energy
Maya Mahgoub-Desai	Ontario College of Art and design	Chair of Environmental Design	Transportation

c.c. Councillors
Jim Baxter
Linda Swanston

ⁱ We trust you are aware of the excellent [municipal green recovery proposals](#) of the Climate Caucus, the non-partisan network of climate-focussed mayors and councillors across Canada.