



To: Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild

July 15, 2020

ClimateFast is a signatory organization on the letter you will receive from Toronto Climate Action Network (TCAN), of which we are a member group.

We support the 24 recommendations in the [TCAN submission](#) and wish to reinforce several points which we hope the TORR report will emphasize.

1) Climate action is absolutely crucial, and it is extremely urgent. Every day we hear worsening news on the state of the planet - and the extent to which we are reaching or crossing tipping points. We are literally hanging on the edge of life and death for our children's future. In many parts of the world it is a matter of life and death right now, as famine and floods deny safety and food security to millions.

2) Climate change affects Torontonians right now, and its impacts will continue and worsen as the global temperature rises. As with COVID, the impacts of climate change will also disproportionately affect marginalized and racialized people in our city. Therefore, in responding to COVID, we need to address these inequities as we face the future challenges of the climate crisis which will be far, far worse. The climate crisis must be at the forefront of the City's work in building back better post-COVID.

3) Globally, the level of CO₂ in the atmosphere is at an estimated 417 ppm, whereas a level of 350 ppm is considered by many scientists as a safe level. We are over the limit, by far, and need to find ways not only to reduce the emissions we put out, but to draw down emissions that have already contributed to this excess, and are contributing to dangerous temperature rise. We are currently on track globally for at least a 3 degree Celsius temperature rise when we need to stay at a maximum of 1.5. A 3 degree temperature would have irreversible and catastrophic consequences for human life – intensifying droughts, floods, heatwaves and extreme weather events; rising sea levels; increasing risk of pandemic disease, and food and water insecurity. **To stay at 1.5 we need to reduce emissions by at least 7.6% every year from now through 2030.** As the climate crisis unfolds, every tenth of a degree between 1.0 and 1.5 will be measured in lives saved or lost.*

4) The current target for the TransformTO climate action plan is 100% zero-carbon by 2050. Following on the Climate Emergency Declaration, staff are reviewing whether we might be able to achieve this goal by 2040. Our interim target is a 65% reduction by 2030. Emissions by Canadians are among the highest in the world, three times higher than the average for G20 countries that are themselves the world's biggest carbon polluters. Cities are big producers of carbon emissions and also have many options to reduce emissions.

We commend the Mayor for signing the C-40 COVID-19 Recovery Task Force statement of principles. We urge City Council to take a leadership role and seek to accelerate emission reductions while responding to the COVID crisis. The Mayor's statement states: "**The recovery should not be a return to 'business as usual' - because that is a world on track for 3°C or more of over-heating**"

It is vital that we take action right now with the resources the City has on its own, and in partnership with other levels of government, to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, and to in fact to draw down GHGs through carbon negative programs like regenerative agriculture and urban greening.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1) Make sure the report emphasizes the absolute urgency of climate action. It is not just that it will cost more to take action later, and that there will be more damage, but that ***due to tipping points it may not even be possible to achieve the outcomes we need – to prevent runaway temperature rise – if we take action later.*** What we do in these next few years is of vital importance. We need to take heed of the scientific warnings and base our plans on responding to the urgency they indicate.

2) Take an area where change is not currently proceeding at the rate it needs to and **develop a comprehensive and ambitious plan for that work that will also help to meet the City's other post-COVID social and economic goals.** An ambitious building energy retrofit program would meet these goals, with co-benefits including many thousands of jobs, youth employment and training, and much needed safe, affordable and comfortable places to live. ***It is our understanding that we are currently only retrofitting buildings at about 1% of the rate that is needed to achieve the GHG reduction goal for housing.***

3) **Work with community groups**, such as green neighbourhood groups, to together build the capacity, the willingness, and the programs needed to implement GHG reductions, for example greening, gardening, urban agriculture and active transportation. **Education programs** such as Kitchen Table Climate Conversations and webcasts such as those ClimateFast has been putting together could help to build knowledge and connections for initiatives that community members are already working on.

4) ClimateFast is looking for ways to **support an acceleration deep energy retrofit activity** in the City. The City's most vulnerable populations live in aging, multi-residential buildings and retrofitting these buildings is key to achieving the GHG reductions targets for the City. A large, community-based initiative that engages players from the training, labour, design, financing, utilities, and trades sectors would create the basis for modeling a process for rapid rollout across the city. ClimateFast has a working group currently looking at what would be needed to plan a large-scale retrofit project for the City and would very much like to work with TORR on this program.

There is much more that can and should be done, much of it covered in the 24 recommendations in the TCAN letter.

We look forward to working with the City to meet the climate crisis and the COVID recovery challenge together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lyn', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Lyn Adamson,
671A Vaughan Rd. Toronto M6E 2Y4
Co-Chair, ClimateFast, lyn@climatefast.ca, www.climatefast.ca

References:

On the urgency:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/18/world-has-six-months-to-avert-climate-crisis-says-energy-expert>

*<https://theenergymix.com/2018/10/07/reaction-ipccs-science-combines-urgency-and-hope-but-every-0-1-is-a-choice-between-life-or-death/>

<https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/>

<https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/cut-global-emissions-76-percent-every-year-next-decade-meet-15degc>

<https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2019>

On emissions by Canadians:

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-canada-found-to-produce-most-greenhouse-gas-emissions-per-person-among/>

<https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/each-countrys-share-co2-emissions>

<https://www.c40.org/other/covid-task-force>

Very relevant on the opportunity side: C-40 Mayor's statement on COVID recovery

<https://theenergymix.com/2020/06/14/canadas-green-recovery-could-produce-6-7-million-job-years-cut-237-megatonnes-of-emissions-by-2030>

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/industry-news/property-report/article-federal-buildings-in-need-of-major-repairs-increasing-in-number-2/> "The amount of buildings we are retrofitting is well under 1 per cent of the existing building stock," says Brendan Haley, policy director for Efficiency Canada, which advocates for an energy efficient economy. By contrast, some European countries have set a target of 3 per cent a year.

Retrofit numbers at the City of Toronto

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/ie/bgrd/backgroundfile-134697.pdf>, p. 6.

Comprehensive 26 part climate emergency program developed by Guy Dauncey (this includes a section on what is needed for a mass retrofit program)

<https://guydauncey.files.wordpress.com/2020/01/pdf-climate-emergency-1.pdf>

Kitchen Table Climate Conversations:

www.climatefast.ca/kitchen-table-conversations

ClimateFast webcast programs: EarthDay2020 (April 20) Africa Climate Action Initiative launch (May 7) and Environment Day: Time for Nature- Biodiversity in the City (June 5)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIreo1EqWo4r6fcdU7-pUPg/playlists>