

BUDGET DEPUTATION, JANUARY 17, 2023

Dear Chair and Councillors,

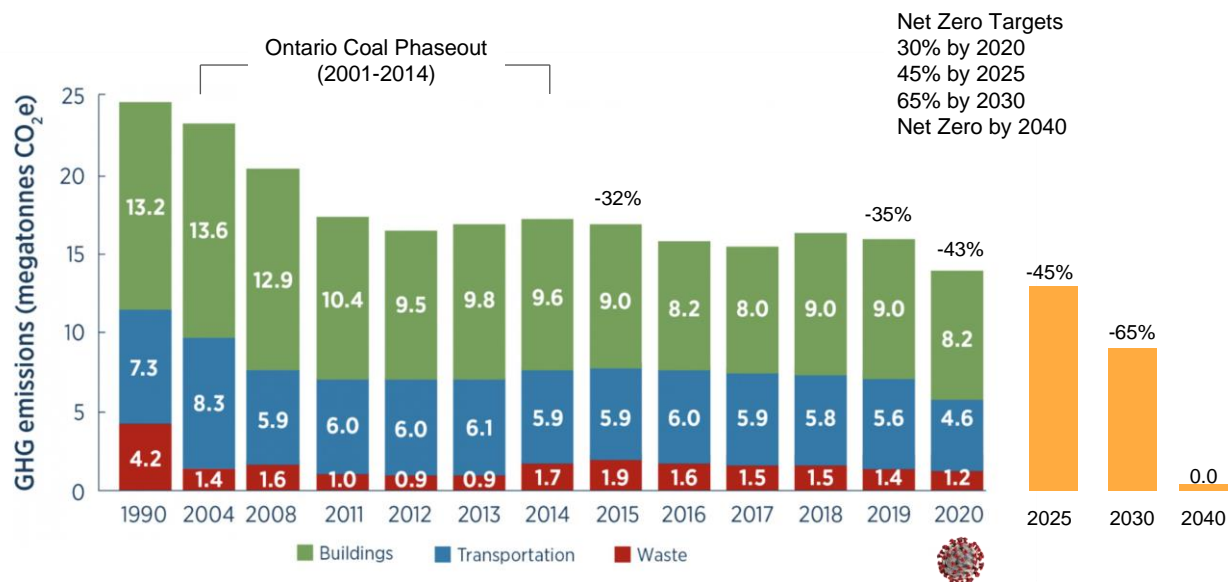
My name is Lyn Adamson and I live in Toronto St. Paul's, Ward 12. I am Co-Chair of ClimateFast, a community-based climate organization with just under 3000 members. We have been following and supporting the evolution of TransformTO, the city's climate plan, since its beginnings in city-wide consultations in 2015. We were very pleased when Council unanimously endorsed TransformTO in 2017, heartened in 2019 when the city declared a climate emergency and asked staff to report back on an accelerated program that could achieve Net Zero by 2040, and proud when City Council adopted this more ambitious strategy in 2021. If this program is fully implemented, Toronto would truly be a leader doing our part to keep temperature rise below 1.5 C. But implementation is not proceeding at the pace required to reach our goal.

The Mayor has described this as a balanced budget. However it is not a balanced budget if it is generating a massive liability for the city in the form of costly climate damage to individual health, property, and the liveability of our city. It is not balanced if it is not meeting our community needs at the current moment and if it is stealing a safe climate future from those who are young now.

I want to address five concerns that must be resolved to make progress.

1) Our emissions are not declining

Toronto Greenhouse Gas Emissions (CoT)



For the last several years progress has stalled. It's taken us 30 years to drop emissions by 43%. Most of this drop was due to the coal phaseout that the province carried out. To achieve

a 65% drop by 2030 means we will need to cut emissions 20% in 5 years, from 2025 to 2030. And look at how steep that drop is from 2030 to 2040 - to drop 35% in that one decade. Those last emissions will be the hardest to eliminate so we should be front-loading our action, not delaying.

2) Lack of revenue

We are not going to realize this plan without the funds required. It just isn't going to happen. And to not realize this plan would be grossly irresponsible to the coming generation of Toronto residents. TransformTO has a plan, staff know what to do, but the Mayor and Councillors have not rallied sufficient financial support to fund it.

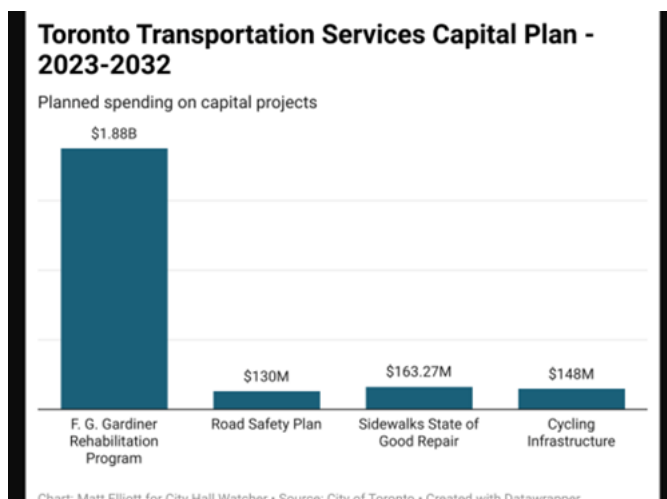
Therefore, we urge city council to explore all possible revenue options, including the Commercial Parking Levy and the Vehicle Registration Tax, a congestion tax, a percent of income tax or sales tax (with rebate to lower income residents), and to implement them as soon as possible. An option to look at for the future that other cities have implemented is a dedicated climate fund. It is the responsibility of our elected Mayor and Councillors to find the necessary revenue. It is you who are guiding this program.

3) Need for Vision and Ambition

It is going to take vision and ambition to get back on track. In the capital budget for Greenhouse Gas Emissions, in the midst of an impressive list of climate purchases and plans, there is reference to the kind of investments we need to make in bike lanes and EV chargers. The report suggests that commuter behaviour can only be partially influenced by the city. However we know that by building infrastructure and incenting changes, people WILL change. For example, Paris changed its travel patterns in a very dramatic way between 2012 and 2020 (photos below) and Montreal, which is smaller and colder, puts in 30 km of new bike lanes ever year. What it takes is the political will.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=291390925396064>

Council's decisions influence the choices people make. If we continue to give cars the advantage, such as by spending the vast majority of the transportation capital budget on the Gardiner rebuild, then people will drive cars. If we build for new travel patterns, we will see those patterns emerge.



4) Progress and tracking

We are concerned that the budget overstates its investment in climate finance. The city is counting the whole of an investment that has a partial component related to reducing emissions as if the whole is a climate investment. This misrepresents the financial commitment of the city to emissions reduction.

We do need to have an easy tracking system to see how emissions are reducing. The gap between what we need to spend and what we are spending is huge. The Net Zero by 2040 plan shows a requirement for investment of \$8.5B per year, or a total of approximately \$150B over the next 17 years to achieve this target. This year's budget attributes \$2B to climate investment, where is the \$6.5B that is needed for this year? And every other year going forward?

We note that \$48B has been found for 200 more police officers at the same time as other budgets are being cut. The city is raising transit fares and cutting service, underfunding ravine strategies and underfunding Vision Zero road safety measures. These all have implications for emissions. The lack of funding for the State of Good Repair, allowing it increase from \$10B to \$19B over the coming decade shows it is not a priority to maintain our infrastructure in a state of good repair. The long-term costs of this backlog are enormous, and it makes the city more dangerous and less inviting for active transportation.

5) Communication and engagement.

TransformTO needs to have more presence in the city. Right now few people can name the city's climate plan. We need a level of engagement many times what we have right now and this will mean greater funding for community engagement and marketing.

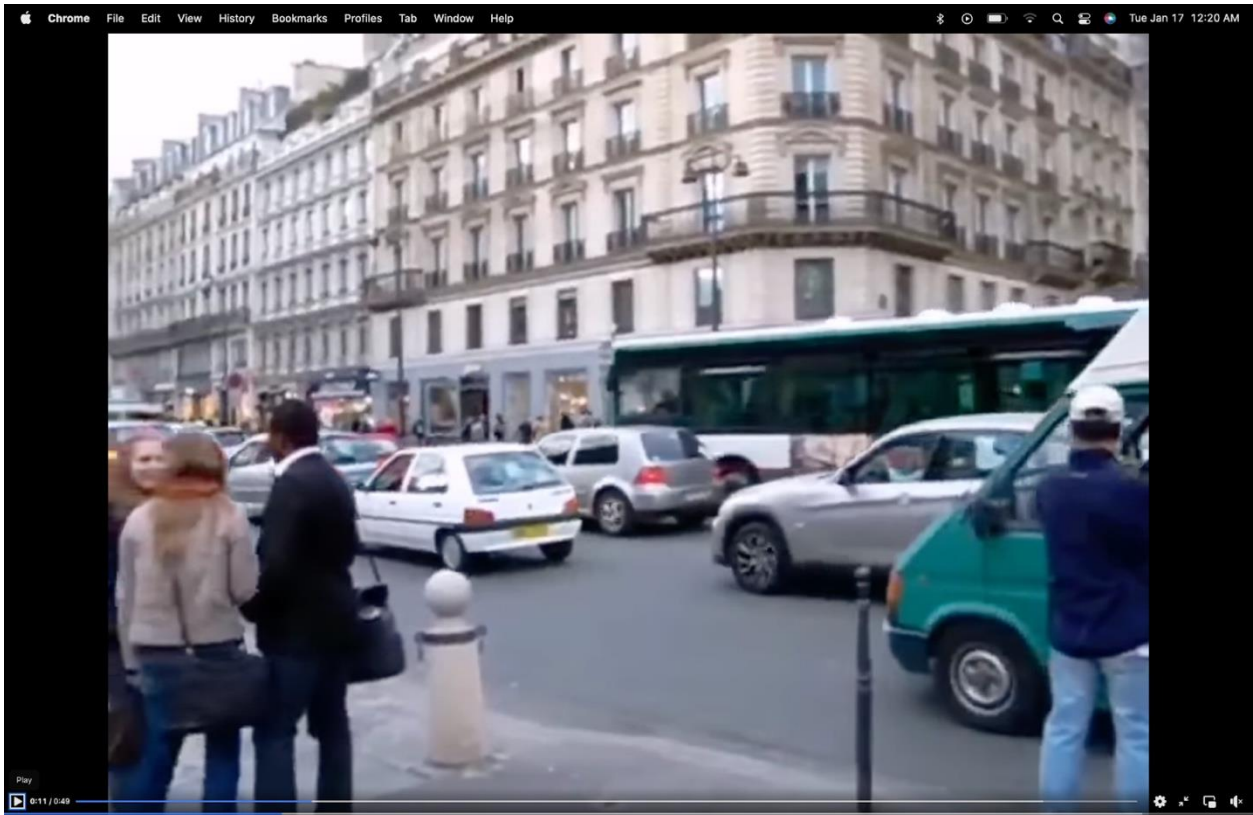
The City has set up a Climate Advisory Group. I am on it. It is our job to help the city meet its climate targets. This is going to require an honest assessment of where we are at, and it requires that we bridge the gap between the current investment and the investment that is required if we are to meet our Net Zero by 2040 target.

We must maintain the city operations, including meeting the social needs of the city, and fully fund the transitional projects that are needed to get us to a low-carbon future. We must hold the vision of the future we want in our hearts and minds and work together to achieve it.

This is part of our ClimateFast submission. Other presenters will address building retrofits, community engagement, greening communities, and how the city addresses social issues.



Lyn Adamson
Co-Chair, ClimateFast
60 Lowther Ave.
Toronto M5R 1C7
lyn@climatefast.ca
www.climatefast.ca



PARIS IN 2012



PARIS IN 2020