

City of Toronto

Climate Advisory Group (CAG)

Summary Notes

Meeting #2: June 12, 2025

9:30am - 12:30pm

Present

Cara-Lynne Wade, Chris Ballard, Jeff Ranson, John Robinson, Joyce McLean, Julius Lindsay, Kristen Evers, Lanrick Bennett Jr., Lindsay Walker, Lyn Adamson, Maria Constantinou, Marine Sanchez, Maggie Chang, Richard Carlson, Rosemarie Powell, Sarah Buchanan, Shivani Chotalia, Zamani Ra, Jennifer Murphy, Lidia Ferreira.

Regrets

Christopher Warren, Joseph Ogilvie, Jack Zhou, Annemarie Baynton (City of Toronto), Alice Xu (City of Toronto).

City of Toronto Staff

Andrew Plunkett, Cecilia Fernandez, Kim Stemshorn, Sarah Gingrich, James Nowlan, Sourabh Jain, Rae-Anne Miller, Da Huo, Sarah Rodrigues, Farrell Tunney, Stephanie Gower, Andrea Bastien.

Facilitator

(BMG): David Buwalda

Agenda

1. Welcome and Updates
2. Buildings Emissions Performance Standards (BEPS)
3. Indigenous Community Engagement
4. Next Steps

Meeting Objectives

- Facilitate CAG input on Buildings Emissions Performance Standards (BEPS)
- Provide introduction to Indigenous engagement process for TransformTO

1. Welcome and Updates

CAG updates from CAG Facilitator:

- 2024 Annual report is finalized and will be published on Transform TO website.
- The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 18th (TBC) to review the final Action Plan after it has gone for approval, and December 4th for a year-end gathering, with lunch after the meeting. Dates may change for both.
- Christopher Warren was introduced as the new representative for the Toronto Board of Trade, replacing David Campbell.
- The advisory group survey, with a 66% response rate, is ongoing, and members are encouraged to confirm their continued participation. Several members are considering. Recruitment to begin in September for new members.
- Working groups will be activated after the Net Zero Action Plan is approved in September, with staff and group leads coordinating with the CAG facilitator this summer to determine meeting agendas and topics.

Updates on Net Zero Annual Report & Action Plan

- The annual report was favorably received by the Infrastructure and Environment Committee and recommended for Council's information.
See it at: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.IE22.9>
- Key messages included the city's progress and challenges in emission reductions, with a need for collaboration on key emission sources.
- The action plan, informed by Climate Advisory Group feedback, will be presented to Council in Q4, aligned with the building emissions performance standards report.
- The group discussed the complexity of addressing consumption-based emissions and the need for clear communication on potential policy conflicts.

Significant dates for BEPS

- June 24-25 & July 8-9 (tentative) - Town halls as part of BEPS process
- September (date TBD) - CAG meeting includes walk through of final Action Plan after it is published in Infrastructure & Environment (IEC) agenda, before it is considered by IEC (as per Municipal Code Chapter 669).
- September 26, 2025 - IEC meeting
- October 8-10 - City Council meeting

2. Buildings Emissions Performance Standards

Sarah Rodrigues, Senior Program Manager BEPS

Sarah Rodrigues, a senior project manager with the Building Emission Performance Standards (BEPS) team, presented an overview of the proposed policy to the advisory group. The BEPS team is now ready to broaden the conversation to the public about building emissions performance standards, types of buildings covered, and the proposed approach. The policy aims to reduce emissions from building operations and energy purchases, with flexibility pathways for certain building types. There is a need for further consultation with some building categories, such as colleges, hospitals, and long-term care homes. The team is also considering how to support affordable housing providers through the policy and how to prepare for upcoming public town halls.

It was noted during the presentation that:

- Gross floor area (GFA) of each sector would be more helpful than the number of buildings in reporting.

Discussion:

The following three questions were proposed by BEPS and discussed during the meeting. Question one responses are from the meeting participants attending in-person. Question two responses are collected from discussion from the meeting's Zoom participants. Question Three responses are collected from all participants. All responses are collected from discussion notes made during the meeting, from the group chat, or taken verbatim from the meeting transcripts/video.

1) What do you think about the overall proposed approach for the following BEPS components?

Emissions to be covered

- Do you need regulations on scope 2?
- Variable or fixed models?
- Toronto Hydro engagement?
- Energy use limit of particular scopes?
- Limiting peak energy demand?
 - Scope one - not just gas?
 - LIMITATION: Cannot regulate Energy Use

Electrification and Ditching Gas

- Built in market penalties of overuse: increasingly high costs
- Buildings see electrification as very costly, which is a barrier:
 - Better understand true needs/energy capacity - engage Toronto Hydro
 - Toronto Hydro has confirmed they can meet high energy demands
 - City support investments?
 - IRRP Scope 2 emissions consideration
 - Toronto Hydro future long-term plan

Covered and deferred building types:

- Colleges and Universities are interested in BEPS and have been leaders in the green building space in recent years.
- Process load - sub metering
 - Baseload vs process load
 - Data - must start tracking like Toronto Hydro Meters, but better

Compliance Timeline, phasing and cycles

- Support for the earlier timeline, people will defer (2028 is better)
- Building declaring a tear down/demo, not a retrofit or transaction of the building (sell, transfer)
 - Deferral for demo vs. transaction/transfer impacting compliance timelines.
 - They do get lots of time to plan
 - Worked into the sale price (BEPS requirement)
 - Requirement to report the score-impacting sale price for transparency of the BEPS process
 - You can't fake retrofits, but you can fake building management efforts.
 - Inspectors may catch it, however it could be missed by BEPS check-ins/ requirements
- **Would you make any changes to the content prior to the City presenting this to the public? Could it be clearer? What needs to be communicated?**
- Terminology: Needs to be clear.
- Cost? There isn't anything in this to address costs and that will weigh on many people's minds.
- The business case of this is not currently clear. How can we justify it vis-a-vis regulation?
- Want to hear more about how to answer tenants. What are a few options we could use to weigh in?
- What kind of exemptions? And what are the reasons for the exemptions?
- Tenants need to be on board: How will this impact my rent? How is the city designing to keep this in mind.

- There is a lot in this presentation. Initially, I think we could change the process to be like TCH, where every building understands it differently. Take time to leverage the work of other groups in different communities. Less is best until ready. It is more worthwhile to take time to present this right or it will go over many residents' heads.
- Good technical information. We should start with WHY is the city doing this. i.e. unless you measure what is happening in your building you can't reduce it. This needs to be a "Why buildings matter/CLIMATE 101" type of communication. The material is good.
- Setting up the need for regulation in this space.
- Why describes an opportunity. It needs to be clear that this is an opportunity. What's in this for everyone?
- Legality: is this presented as a bylaw?
- Something for everyone in this presentation. Where it applies to Affordable housing it needs to be very clear.
- Why are we concentrated on 8000, not the 400,000 Exemptions. Needs to be clear.
- Take the number of low-rise residential off the presentation or the conversation will be skewed.
- Exemptions, what other policies are out there that are already regulating these building types. Layer the information on top of other issues and explain how we are addressing them.
- Explain why timelines are as they are.
- City needs to be ready to answer re: costs passed along to renters.
- Show how other policies and programs are happening re: emissions and then concentrate on BEPS.
- It would help to know the context of the timelines.
- Recommend that staff go into communities that are least engaged and find out what is going on for them. This helps to see what lands most broadly for everyone.
- Some examples of good building owners already doing this. Assuming there are. Why, they are doing it. Anecdotal stories.
- Include success stories and examples from Green Will initiative and Deep Retrofit Challenge participants in public presentations.
- Revise presentation materials to include clearer context on "why buildings matter" and "why the city is doing this" for public town halls
- Develop clear messaging and solutions regarding how costs will not be passed on to tenants, particularly for affordable housing

**3) What supplementary programs or resources would be useful in helping building owners with undertaking retrofit measures to comply with BEPS?
(How can the City support under-resourced building owners and affordable housing providers?)**

- Something like Cap & Trade. The City can sell offsets
 - Carbon credits in BEPS policy
 - Early adoption
 - Redistribute fines into dividends

- BEPS coach to guide under resourced or uninterested communities;
 - A city concierge to help guide people through this
 - Do as much as you can for people
- Virtual decarbonization audits similar to BOMA
- Lending and Financing - extend LIC programs
 - Lenders tied to property not the owner alone
- Provide links to other programs supporting reducing emissions; regional and federal
- Transparency = ONE STOP shop. An all-encompassing website like TAF has
- Provide links in one place to all available programs
- Youth engagement for sector development, and also union engagement
- A beautiful map for a visual spark and to spark competition
- Be Ready! Have all this stuff in line before the law passes
- Sync with affordable housing and retrofitting.
 - Offer bonus time for BEPS for buildings with affordable housing
 - BEPS regulation only for market price units NOT affordable units (exempt for meeting another goal)
- Exempt program that buys and preserves affordable units. What is the program name?
- Financing options: How do you ensure the options are there to ensure remnants don't have to absorb the cost?
- Enhance the Better Buildings Partnership program to provide additional retrofit support
- BEPS Team: Include success stories and examples from Green Will Initiative and Deep Retrofit Challenge participants in public presentations

3) Indigenous Community Engagement

Farrell Tunney, Indigenous Youth Research Associate

Farrell presented research on Indigenous perspectives in municipal climate planning, highlighting how cities like Winnipeg, Calgary, and Vancouver successfully integrate Indigenous worldviews through long-term relationships, early engagement, humility, and truth-telling. She found Toronto lacks decisive action to implement Indigenous approaches despite recognizing their importance, suggesting better documentation of past engagements and focused, community-specific engagement would improve outcomes. The group discussed how to apply these insights to enhance advisory efforts, with suggestions to enrich the Climate Action Group experience with natural environment and Indigenous perspectives.

Brief Q&A

- Can we share your contact and your slides with all our members?
 - Yes.
- What is next for you and this research?
 - Stephanie Gower (Resilience Program Manager): Climate Resilience Team will be taking this forward. June 13th is the final day of Farrell's internship. This is part of a broader suite of work you will be hearing more about. We want to bring back more info in the Fall. Stay tuned.
- How can the CAG be a better advisor for having learned this?
 - At the Toronto Climate Action Group - Lyn Adamson arranged a Turtle Walk with the Protectors to introduce community to the Living Environment. Advises that we can enrich the CAG with the living environment perspective, and introducing the indigenous approach versus a Western approach. The big context for Transform TO is the living environment. We can enrich the CAG experience with the living environment thinking.
 - Thank you for the presentation and wisdom. It is an important reflection for us on this committee. You have planted a seed, we'll stay in touch.
- Indigenous Populations are broadly described here. Are these more specific for the context of different indigenous communities? Who has been participating?
 - The methods and terms are on behalf of the typical approach on environment by indigenous group.
 - The reason for a blanket term Indigenous is to be respectful.
 - Community members contacted through Indigenous lead Miranda Black who is connected to many groups. The contacts for engagement are supported through her office. It is very valuable to
 - There are layers to this question. Ongoing conversations that the City is very interested in. We want to hear from Indigenous communities from all collectives or individuals who are willing to engage.

• Next Steps

CAG Secretariat:

- Review, approve and send relevant links to CAG members including reports, summary notes, and links to BEPS Town Halls.
- Coordinate with Staff Leads and Working Group Leads to outline Working Group activities in Q3 and Q4.
- Confirm September #Q3 Meeting date

CAG Members:

- Review upcoming Net Zero Action Plan before it goes to Committee on September 26th
- Share information about upcoming BEPS public town halls with colleagues and community

**NOTE: The BEPS Public Town Halls were postponed from the original July dates. Future dates are yet to be determined.*

End Summary Notes