

2023 TORONTO MAYORAL ELECTION

GREENER CITY FOR ALL PLATFORM



2023 MUNICIPAL ELECTION PLATFORM

We know that a green, climate-resilient, healthy and livable city is possible. We're looking for Toronto's next Mayor to bring new energy and ideas to Toronto at a critical window for equitable environmental and climate action.

Many candidates will claim to be an "environmental leader" or a "climate leader." To earn this, a true environmental leader will implement bold solutions that also address the intersecting crises in our city around affordability, housing, transit, and food security, to name just a few.

TEA will be looking for mayoral platforms that propose feasible, effective and equitable policies alongside funding sources to realize them. We've created the following summary of ideas for candidates to consider as part of their platforms, which builds on our fall election platform's key themes.

We invite you to read the full platform and action areas for City Council's 2023-2026 term - and to help make this platform a reality - by championing these issues as a candidate or as a voter.

ABOUT THE TORONTO ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE: For over 30 years, the Toronto Environmental Alliance has campaigned locally to find solutions to Toronto's environmental problems. As a not-for-profit organization, we work with communities to advocate for a green, healthy and equitable city.

CLIMATE ACTION

Toronto City Council has committed to meet net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040 by implementing the TransformTO climate plan. This goal is achievable but currently jeopardized by funding and capacity issues. The next Mayor of Toronto must follow these actions to help steer the plan back on course.

1. Bring in dedicated, sustained and equitable climate funding to fully fund Toronto's TransformTO Net Zero Strategy.

In order for Toronto to meet its net zero targets, the City of Toronto must expand the funding available for climate action. The new Mayor must work with City Council to:

- Implement revenue tools already within the City of Toronto's authority, including a commercial parking levy
- Secure sustained, predictable funding from the federal and provincial governments that can be dedicated to climate action
- Negotiate enhanced power to expand the revenue tools available to the City of Toronto for climate action

2. Scale up green building programs that reduce emissions and increase the number of safe and deeply affordable housing units.

60% of Toronto's greenhouse gas emissions come from buildings. At the same time, the city is facing an enormous affordable housing shortage. The new Mayor must work with City Council to:

- Increase funding and effectiveness of the City's building retrofit programs, including the Hi-RIS and HELP retrofit programs for existing buildings while ensuring that renters are protected from retrofit-related renovictions and significant rent increases
- Acquire more land and resources for affordable housing, including funding for the city's Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition program (MURA)
- Deliver a low-carbon jobs strategy, as promised in Toronto's 2019 climate emergency declaration, that grows Toronto's green buildings workforce and enables more residents from equity-owned groups to participate in the local green economy

3. Speed up the transition away from fossil gas.

TransformTO calls for the City to transition away from fossil or 'natural' gas, a fossil fuel responsible for over half of the city's total emissions. The new Mayor must work with City Council to:

- Support and maintain the Toronto Green Standard, Toronto's world-class green development standard for new buildings, and actively fight provincial interference to limit its power and scope
- Oppose expansion of natural gas power plants and pipelines within the City of Toronto

- Ensure Toronto Hydro implements an effective plan to expand local grid capacity to support renewables and align with Toronto's net zero commitments

4. Invest in improved, expanded, and more affordable TTC service.

Torontonians need better, more frequent, affordable and accessible public transit in order to meet the city's climate goals and improve affordability. The new Mayor must work with City Council to:

- Implement an effective, equitable commercial parking levy as a dedicated new transit funding source
- Increase TTC frequency and service, especially in the inner and outer suburbs
- Improve TTC reliability by implementing all RapidTO bus and streetcar lanes in identified priority corridors
- Immediately end fare increases and expand access to riders with low incomes through the Fair Pass program, working towards the TransformTO goal of free transit by 2040
- Accelerate the timeline for zero-emission TTC fleets

5. Speed up pedestrian-first and cycling infrastructure, especially in communities where walking and cycling infrastructure are lacking.

Meeting climate goals means prioritizing carbon-free and accessible ways of getting around like walking and cycling. The new Mayor must work with City Council to:

- Accelerate the creation of complete streets for cycling/pedestrian safety and accessibility
- Reduce the cost, and increase the range and number of stations in the city's Bikeshare network
- Redirect funds from the planned billion-dollar plus realignment of the Gardiner Expressway towards other urgently needed city priorities

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Toronto needs a strong plan to help communities prepare for and respond to the impacts of extreme weather, including flooding and heatwaves. Toronto's First Resilience Strategy came with pages of recommendations in 2019, but no funding. Toronto's next Mayor needs to take action now to build community resilience and support all residents through escalating climate change impacts.

1. Keep residents safe, especially tenants, during extreme weather events.

Many residents experience potentially dangerous conditions during heat waves and other extreme weather events. New measures must be implemented to protect the health and safety of renters. The new Mayor must work with City Council to:

- Implement a maximum safe temperature for rental units
- Provide support and resources for communities to develop local emergency preparedness plans for extreme weather events

2. Improve and maintain green spaces to benefit communities.

More green space, parks, and urban forests will help absorb water and enhance resilience during extreme weather events. Green spaces also reduce the urban heat island effect, where paved surfaces increase heat in urban areas, while providing shade and cooling for residents with less access to cool indoor spaces. The new Mayor must work with City Council to:

- Expand local community access to parks, ravines, green spaces, and shade, prioritizing neighbourhoods where people have limited access to tree canopy and green space
- Expand access to critical amenities in public parks as places of respite, such as washrooms and water fountains, across the city and throughout the year
- Accelerate investment in tree planting and more equitable distribution of the urban forest to meet or exceed Toronto's tree canopy target of 40% tree canopy cover by 2050

3. Make polluters pay for stormwater reduction and flood-proofing projects.

More intense rainfall and storms leave many Toronto residents with flooded basements and expensive damage. As climate change escalates, the City needs tools to prevent flooding, manage stormwater, and reduce the amount of pavement which creates damaging stormwater runoff. The new Mayor must work with City Council to:

- Pass a fair stormwater charge which means the owners of large paved areas like parking lots will help pay the costs of managing the stormwater they create, instead of the current system which charges homeowners more than their fair share.
- Launch programs funded by a stormwater charge to incentivize flooding solutions such as green, porous surfaces for residential, commercial, and industrial properties, in addition to support for impacted residents

WASTE AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Reducing waste is more than just dealing with overflowing garbage bins and picking up litter. Toronto's Zero Waste and Circular Economy commitments will reduce waste, prevent pollution, create local jobs and avoid greenhouse gas emissions from extracting and wasting resources. This is critical to achieving the Net Zero climate plan. In order to protect communities, human health, and our shared environment, we call on the next Mayor to work with City Council to achieve the following actions.

1. Eliminate unnecessary single-use items.

Toronto has introduced the first phase of a Single-Use Reduction Strategy to address single-use plastic and disposables, but is falling behind. Other cities are passing bold strategies to shift to zero-waste reusable foodware instead of throwaway items. The new Mayor must work with City Council to:

- Pass regulations to eliminate unnecessary single-use items and require a shift to reusable foodware in businesses and City facilities

2. Maintain and expand public control and delivery of waste services.

Toronto's waste programs are important environmental services, and they need to be protected with strong public oversight and accountability. The new Mayor must work with City Council to:

- Maintain and expand public control and delivery of waste services (such as Blue Box collection and waste service for parks, small businesses and charities)

3. Focus on waste diversion and oppose waste incineration.

Incinerating waste is the most expensive and toxic form of waste disposal. The next Mayor needs to stay focused on diversion, and work with City Council because more than 2/3rds of the average garbage bag is recyclable or compostable waste. The new Mayor must work with City Council to:

- Maintain Toronto's commitment to waste diversion and not sending Toronto's garbage for incineration, which passes the burden of toxic pollution onto local communities

4. Ensure all Torontonians have the waste diversion tools they need.

Many buildings in the city, particularly multi-unit residential buildings, do not offer organics collection, and many businesses are not required to recycle. This slows down waste diversion targets. The new Mayor must work with City Council to:

- Create a plan to ensure that all Toronto residents no matter what building they live in, have access to waste diversion tools, including recycling and organics collection