

TORONTO LEADS AGAIN

Climate & Sustainability

Protect households, restore nature, cut emissions and make Toronto greener, cleaner, more beautiful and more resilient.

Campaign Policy Proposal - Not a City of Toronto Publication



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People first. Families first. Machines serve. Democracy decides. Nature sets the constraint. Art gives the future meaning.

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Why this matters

Climate action people can see and feel

Climate adaptation should visibly improve the city. Shade trees, native planting, restored ravines, rain gardens, cleaner streets, better parks, attractive transit corridors, coordinated street furniture and artist-designed public infrastructure can reduce heat and flood risk while making daily life more beautiful.

Nature sets the constraint

Growth should work with the urban forest, ravines, water, biodiversity and climate conditions rather than treating them as leftover space after development decisions.

Climate resilience should improve everyday beauty

Beautification is part of climate adaptation and civic care. A shaded street can reduce heat exposure. A rain garden can absorb stormwater. A restored ravine can support biodiversity and flood resilience. Cleaner parks, native planting, coordinated utilities, attractive transit corridors, public art and well-maintained street furniture can make climate investment visible in everyday life.

- Expand shade where heat exposure is highest, using the right tree in the right place and protecting mature canopy.
- Use native and pollinator-supporting planting where appropriate, with maintenance plans that survive beyond installation.
- Make green stormwater infrastructure legible and beautiful: rain gardens, bioswales, permeable areas and better tree pits.
- Coordinate road work, utility work, accessibility, lighting, seating, cycling and planting so streets are rebuilt as complete public spaces.
- Partner with Toronto Creates so public artists and designers help climate and infrastructure projects strengthen civic identity.
- Measure maintenance: a planted street that is not watered, cleaned or repaired is not a successful climate project.

Executive Summary

Climate & Sustainability builds forward from TransformTO and Toronto's existing environmental work. The campaign's contribution is to connect emissions reduction with adaptation, household resilience, nature, infrastructure and the everyday quality of streets and neighbourhoods.

Beautification is treated as functional city-building. Tree canopy, shade, native planting, ravines, rain gardens, permeable surfaces, clean streets, attractive transit corridors, seating and well-maintained public space can cool neighbourhoods, manage stormwater, support biodiversity and make daily life better at the same time.

The first term focuses on measurable heat, flood, canopy, building and public-realm actions while keeping long-range decarbonization aligned with utility capacity and affordability.

Major commitments

- Reconcile the campaign program explicitly with TransformTO: continue, accelerate, integrate or add.

Beautiful, Green and Resilient Toronto

- Treat tree canopy and ravines as living infrastructure with maintenance standards.
- Expand heat-resilience actions for homes, towers, schools, libraries and public spaces.
- Advance green stormwater infrastructure and household flood resilience.
- Coordinate climate investments with Toronto Creates so infrastructure can strengthen civic identity and beauty.

How this fits the governing program

Financial treatment: first-term actions in this report must reconcile to Report 03. Unsigned partner funding and unverified technology savings are not booked in the municipal base case.

How to read commitments and numbers

Status	Meaning
OFFICIAL BASELINE	Current public evidence or an inherited program.
ADOPTED CITY TARGET	A target already approved by the City; not a new campaign promise.
CAMPAIGN COMMITMENT	A first-term action proposed by the campaign, subject to lawful Council/budget authority.
CAMPAIGN TARGET	A measurable result the campaign proposes to pursue.
PLANNING ASSUMPTION / SCENARIO	A decision-support input, not a guarantee.
PARTNER-DEPENDENT OBJECTIVE	Requires another government, agency, utility, institution or private partner.
LONG-RANGE ASPIRATION	Part of the 25-year direction; future Councils retain

Status	Meaning
	democratic authority.

Key public baselines and planning anchors

Indicator	Value	Date / status	Use in this report
TransformTO GHG target	65% below 1990	2030 Official target	Toronto's adopted net-zero target is 2040.
Tree canopy target	40%	2050 Official target	The cited 2018 canopy estimate is approximately 28.4%-31%.
Basement Flooding Protection Program estimate	~\$22B	2026 program estimate Official program estimate	Rate-supported, multi-decade program.
Don River/Central Waterfront stormwater program	>\$3B	Current program Official program scale	Major enabling resilience infrastructure.
Port Lands Flood Protection	~\$1.35B	Project scale Official project cost	Future dredging and operating/maintenance costs remain relevant lifecycle considerations.
Households experiencing food insecurity	24.7%	2024 Official source report	Roughly one in four households.

Toronto Today and Inherited Work

Current Conditions

This strategy begins from the programs, infrastructure and conditions Toronto already has. Existing work is identified as the inherited baseline; new campaign commitments are stated separately. Baseline facts that control the plan Baseline What the evidence says Emissions 2023 community emissions: 16.1 MtCO₂e; buildings 8.8 Mt (55%), transportation 5.7 Mt (36%), waste 1.5 Mt (9%). Natural gas heating and gasoline passenger vehicles are the largest fuel sources. [CLIM1] Targets 45% below 1990 by 2025, 65% by 2030, net zero by 2040. 2030 goals include near-zero-GHG new buildings, halving existing-building emissions from 2008, 50% community energy low-carbon/renewable and 25% commercial/industrial floor area connected to low-carbon thermal energy. [CLIM3] Heat/rain By 2040-50 Toronto could see up to ~44 days/year above 30C and maximum one-day precipitation up to 17% higher, depending on scenario. [CLIM2] Trees City target: 40% tree canopy by 2050; 2018 estimate

28.4-31%; urban forest ecosystem services estimated >\$55M/year. [CLIM4] Household flood protection Basement Flooding Protection Subsidy expanded to up to \$6,650/property as of May 2026. [CLIM5] Throughout this report, official baselines, campaign calculations, campaign proposals and partner-dependent decisions are identified separately.

Vision and Outcomes

Climate policy succeeds when Toronto becomes more resilient and more beautiful at the same time.

- A cooler, greener and more beautiful city.
- Lower climate risk for households and critical infrastructure.
- Ravines, trees and biodiversity treated as long-lived public assets.
- Streets rebuilt once to improve drainage, accessibility, shade, safety and public life together.
- Emissions reductions that remain affordable and aligned with grid capacity.

Visualizing the Strategy

Selected campaign visuals from the earlier reference reports are retained here because they explain relationships that are harder to understand in prose alone. They are explanatory illustrations; the surrounding text and tables define commitments, costs, authority and status.



A climate-ready city should also be a more beautiful city: shade, trees, planting, seating and walkable public space improve everyday life.



Maintenance is climate infrastructure: trees, drainage, litter, public space and streets require reliable operating capacity after capital projects open.



The public realm is where climate, cleanliness, mobility, commerce and community meet.

Strategic Priorities

The climate strategy concentrates on actions that reduce emissions and risk while making neighbourhoods healthier, greener and more beautiful.

1. Climate lens embedded in capital/business cases

Climate risk and emissions should be visible at the same point that major capital choices are made. Toronto would embed a concise climate lens in business cases for major City investments, identifying lifecycle emissions, heat and flood exposure, resilience requirements and opportunities to reduce operating costs.

The lens would build on TransformTO and existing City standards rather than create a parallel approval bureaucracy. It should help decision-makers compare options early, when design changes are still affordable.

2. Heat-resilient homes, schools, libraries and high-rise common spaces

Extreme heat is increasingly a housing, health and equity issue. The strategy prioritizes cooling and heat-resilience plans for high-rise homes, shelters, schools and community facilities, with special attention to older buildings and residents who cannot easily relocate during heat events.

City action would combine shade, building upgrades, cooling spaces, tenant protections, emergency protocols and provincial advocacy on building standards. Public reporting should track access to safe indoor temperatures as a resident outcome, not simply the number of plans produced.

3. Tree canopy and ravines as living infrastructure

Toronto's canopy, ravines and natural areas are living infrastructure. Trees cool streets, reduce stormwater runoff, support biodiversity and make neighbourhoods more beautiful and comfortable. Ravine health also depends on erosion control, invasive-species management and coordinated infrastructure work.

The City would focus planting and maintenance where heat exposure and canopy deficits are greatest, protect mature trees where feasible, improve establishment survival rates and coordinate ravine restoration with flood and stormwater projects.

4. Basement/stormwater resilience with household tools and public works

More intense rainfall exposes the limits of sewers, grading and private-property protection. Toronto should combine public stormwater investments with clearer household tools, flood-risk communication and neighbourhood-scale green infrastructure.

Rain gardens, permeable surfaces, bioswales and tree systems should be used where they perform reliably, while larger sewer and flood-protection projects follow engineering evidence. The resident objective is fewer damaging floods and faster recovery when extreme events exceed design capacity.

5. District energy and Heat Loop business cases

Decarbonization will require more than electrifying each building independently. District energy, sewer heat, geothermal, waste-heat recovery and thermal storage can reduce peak demand and improve resilience in suitable dense districts.

The proposed Heat Loop program would identify high-value clusters and advance projects only after lifecycle, governance and reliability analysis. It links climate policy directly to Report 06's electricity-capacity strategy.

6. Circular procurement/material passports on suitable projects

The City is a major buyer of construction materials and equipment. On suitable projects, procurement can reward reuse, durability, repairability and lower embodied carbon without compromising safety or competitive value.

Material passports and deconstruction/reuse requirements would begin as bounded pilots where the supply chain can support them. Results would be measured in avoided waste, lifecycle cost and verified material recovery rather than symbolic targets.

7. Zero/low-emission fleet and transit integration

Fleet and transit decarbonization should be sequenced with charging infrastructure, grid capacity, route duty cycles and winter performance. The goal is dependable service with lower emissions, not technology adoption for its own sake.

The City and TTC would publish deployment assumptions, infrastructure dependencies and lifecycle costs, and use pilots or mixed technologies where operating conditions require evidence before full conversion.

8. Neighbourhood food resilience linked to affordability and logistics

Food affordability and climate resilience intersect in neighbourhoods. Crunch & Munch Toronto, community food infrastructure, local procurement, food-rescue logistics and resilient distribution can reduce waste and improve access while supporting healthier everyday life.

The strategy would prioritize practical delivery through community partners and existing institutions. Climate value should be measured alongside affordability, participation and nutrition outcomes.

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9. Beautiful Resilient Toronto

Climate adaptation should leave Toronto more beautiful. Streets rebuilt for drainage can also gain trees, shade, native planting, seating and safer walking; transit corridors can become greener civic avenues; utility work can be coordinated so public spaces are not repeatedly torn apart and patched.

A Beautiful Resilient Toronto program would join Urban Forestry, Transportation Services, Parks, Toronto Water, utilities and cultural partners around public-realm standards. Toronto Creates would help integrate art and design where appropriate, while maintenance funding protects the investment after the ribbon cutting.

Targets, Scenarios and Planning Assumptions

Planning Assumptions and Key Calculations

Show the arithmetic and its limitations so optimistic assumptions cannot quietly become promises. Calculation register Calculation / model Method / interpretation 2030 gap framing At 16.1 Mt in 2023 and 35% below 1990, implied 1990 emissions are ~24.8 Mt (16.1/0.65). A 65%-below-1990 target corresponds to ~8.7 Mt by 2030 - roughly 7.4 Mt below 2023. This is a simple arithmetic illustration; official inventories/target accounting control. Canopy gap Using the 2018 range 28.4-31% vs 40% target leaves ~9-11.6 percentage points of canopy cover to add/protect by 2050; progress must be measured with updated canopy studies. Flood subsidy leverage A \$6,650 maximum household subsidy is a targeted private-property resilience tool; it should be compared against avoided damage and sewer-system constraints rather than treated as a universal entitlement. Efficiency as capacity IESO says expanded

energy-efficiency programs reduce Ontario demand about 8% by 2050, equivalent to Toronto's annual electricity needs today. [GRID8] Planning arithmetic is used as decision support. Where official forecasts or project-specific engineering supersede a campaign screening calculation, the official or engineered value governs.

Implementation and Delivery

First 100 Days

The opening 100 days align the campaign with TransformTO, identify priority heat/canopy/flood gaps and launch integrated green-street and beautification work that can begin within existing planning processes.

- Publish a campaign-to-TransformTO reconciliation table showing what continues, accelerates or is added.
- Identify priority heat-vulnerability and canopy gaps for Beautiful, Green & Resilient Toronto.
- Launch an integrated green-street design standard review covering shade, stormwater, accessibility, seating and maintenance.
- Identify first ravine, rain-garden and high-rise heat-resilience demonstration projects.
- Publish maintenance ownership and lifecycle expectations for new green infrastructure.

2027-2030 First-Term Action Plan

During 2027-2030, climate action becomes visible in neighbourhoods through heat resilience, canopy and ravine work, flood protection, greener streets, lower-emission fleets and well-maintained public spaces.

Phase	Action	Lead / authority	Resident result
Integrate	Beautiful, Green & Resilient Toronto standard	Environment / Transportation / Parks / Toronto Water	Climate projects also improve everyday public space.
Cool	Heat-resilient buildings and neighbourhoods	City / owners / Province where needed	Lower heat exposure for vulnerable residents.
Restore	Tree canopy, ravines and biodiversity	Parks / Urban Forestry / TRCA partners	Living infrastructure is protected and maintained.

Phase	Action	Lead / authority	Resident result
Manage water	Green streets, rain gardens and flood resilience	Toronto Water / Transportation / residents	More stormwater is managed before it becomes damage.
Decarbonize	Buildings, fleets and district energy in step with grid capacity	City / utility / partners	Emissions fall without creating avoidable reliability problems.

2031-2051 Long-Term Direction

Through 2051, climate policy should leave Toronto cooler, greener, less flood-prone, lower-carbon and more beautiful, with healthy ravines and public spaces maintained as enduring infrastructure.

- Increase canopy and ecological function as the city grows, with maintenance funding included.
- Use major street and infrastructure renewals to deliver climate, accessibility and beautification benefits together.
- Refresh emissions and resilience pathways as technology, climate projections and energy-system conditions change.

Risks and dependencies

Risk	Specific mitigation
Green infrastructure is installed but poorly maintained	Assign operating owners, maintenance standards and lifecycle budgets before installation.
Climate costs burden low-income households	Use targeted supports, public assets and program design that avoids regressive impacts.
Beautification becomes cosmetic	Tie projects to measurable shade, stormwater, biodiversity, cleanliness and accessibility outcomes.
Electrification outruns grid capacity	Coordinate with Report 06 capacity planning and phase loads accordingly.
Targets become detached from implementation	Publish annual action, budget and outcome tracking against adopted baselines.

Review and renewal

Climate measures will be reconciled with TransformTO updates, new climate-risk evidence and observed maintenance performance so programs can be strengthened or redesigned.

Accountability and Public Reporting

Performance framework

Climate reporting will track emissions, heat risk, canopy and tree survival, flood resilience, green-street delivery, ravine health, fleet progress and public-realm maintenance.

Metric	Baseline	Target / direction	Horizon	Responsible body	Reporting
Tree canopy and priority	Official/updated City	Increase canopy and reduce	Long term	Urban Forestry	Periodic/

Metric	Baseline	Target / direction	Horizon	Responsible body	Reporting
canopy gaps	baseline	priority gaps			annual program reporting
Heat-vulnerable sites with mitigation	Establish baseline	Increase	First term	Environment / partners	Annual
Green-street / stormwater interventions	Existing program baseline	Increase where lifecycle case is positive	First term	Transportation / Toronto Water	Annual
Public-realm cleanliness/maintenance in climate projects	Establish project baselines	Meet service standards	Ongoing	Parks / Transportation / Solid Waste	Quarterly
Community GHG emissions	Official TransformTO baseline	Track adopted City targets	2030/2040	Environment & Climate	Annual

Sources and Notes

Primary public sources are listed by organization and title. Campaign commitments, targets, scenarios and long-range aspirations are distinguished from adopted government policy throughout the report.

- [City of Toronto - TransformTO](#)
- [City of Toronto - Strategic Forest Management Plan](#)
- [City of Toronto - Ravine Strategy](#)
- [City of Toronto - Biodiversity Strategy](#)
- [City of Toronto - Circular Economy](#)