

# COUNCIL REPORT CARD

## GOING IN CIRCLES MAPPING ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS AT CITY HALL

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# MAPPING ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS AT CITY HALL

In February 2010, TEA released six environmental priorities - endorsed by over 40 community groups - that set a course for Toronto's City Council to build a greener city for all.

**Over two years later, it's time to see where City Council has taken Toronto's environmental agenda.**

This report reviews the direction Council was expected to take for each priority, the direction Council ended up taking, and the direction Council needs to take next.

**The good news is that we're still pointed in the right direction to build a greener city. The bad news is that we've mostly been travelling in circles, and we've done very little to solve the important environmental problems facing Toronto.**

Travelling in circles, however, is not always bad – especially when we could have been moving backwards. Some on Council made it their priority to cut city programs and services, including important environmental ones. Transit City was declared dead, and through the Core Service Review and budget process, waste diversion services, bike lanes, pollution regulations, the entire Toronto Environment Office, and the Sustainable Energy Strategy were up for cuts. Not surprisingly, City Councillors talked a lot about whether or not to support this new direction.

*This report recommends Council stop travelling in circles and once again chart a course towards building a greener city for all.*

**Thankfully, Council did not head in a direction that sacrifices the environment.**

As this report shows, City Council largely rejected attempts to cut important environmental programs. This is a reason to celebrate. But, there is still much to do. This report recommends Council stop travelling in circles and once again chart a course towards building a greener city for all.

**For Torontonians, this report offers an important tool they can use to talk to their Councillors.** If Toronto is to become a greener city for all, it will happen because we, together, make it clear to our elected officials that this is the direction we want them to take. That is why we encourage you to contact your Councillor and tell them you want action on the six environmental priorities outlined in this report.

***Enter your address at [app.toronto.ca/wards](http://app.toronto.ca/wards) to find out what ward you live in, and how to contact your councillor.***

# HOW DID COUNCIL DO?

<p><b>1</b> Build Transit City &amp; Fund It</p>		<p><b>We're going in circles.</b> Council took us on a roller coaster ride – we're back where we started in 2010. Council must chart a smoother course towards a sustainably funded and expanding transit system.</p>
<p><b>2</b> Achieve 70% Waste Diversion by 2012</p>		<p><b>We're going in circles.</b> Waste diversion is stuck at 50%. Council must roll-out green bins to apartments and fully fund waste diversion initiatives to reach the 70% target as soon as possible.</p>
<p><b>3</b> Buy &amp; Support Locally-Produced Green Products</p>		<p><b>We're going in circles.</b> Council stopped plans to keep the City from buying local. Now it's time to change course and move towards green initiatives that support local manufacturers, jobs, and food.</p>
<p><b>4</b> Build Transportation Infrastructure Everyone Can Use</p>		<p><b>We're heading in the wrong direction.</b> Council got rid of bike lanes. This is bad for the environment, people's safety, and the economy. Council must change direction towards building streets everyone can use.</p>
<p><b>5</b> Implement the City's Sustainable Energy Strategy</p>		<p><b>We're going in circles.</b> Council stopped attempts to cut the Sustainable Energy Strategy. Now it must chart a course to allow staff and Toronto Hydro to deliver energy conservation and green energy.</p>
<p><b>6</b> Provide Tools to Prevent Pollution</p>		<p><b>We're heading in the right direction.</b> Council and staff provided Torontonians and businesses with tools to prevent pollution. Council needs to stay on course and provide staff with more resources to clean our air and water.</p>

# LOOKING BACK

## 2010 MUNICIPAL ELECTION ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES



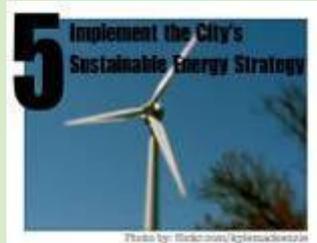
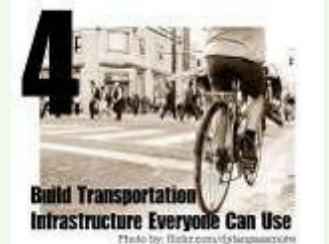
“By 2011, the new Mayor and Council must work with the TTC and upper levels of government to develop an affordable, equitable and long-term funding strategy which covers at least half of the TTC's operating costs.”

“The next Council must ensure that all apartment buildings in Toronto have Green Bin collection service by the end of 2011. One year later, other waste diversion programs must be in place so that the City meets its 70% diversion target by 2012.”



“The next Council must require City purchases of green products to give priority to local workers and local manufacturing.”

“The next Council must develop and implement a ‘Complete Streets’ policy by 2014, fully implement the Toronto Bike Plan by 2012, and launch a public education campaign targeting all road users about road sharing and responsibilities.”



“The next Council must implement the City's Sustainable Energy Strategy starting with getting the partnership between the City, Enbridge, Enwave, and our publicly-owned Toronto Hydro working and home energy retrofits underway by 2011.”

“By 2011, the next Council must have in place the tools small businesses need to devise pollution prevention plans with clear reduction targets.”



The environmental priorities were endorsed by over 40 community groups across the city.

# 1 Build Transit City & Fund It



We're going in circles. Council took us on a roller coaster ride – we're back where we started in 2010. Council must chart a smoother course towards a sustainably funded and expanding transit system.

## Where We Planned to Go

- Continue building a Light Rail Transit (LRT) network into all parts of the city by 2020 to help clean the air, curb climate change, and relieve traffic congestion.
- Secure long term funding from other levels of government to pay for TTC operating costs.
- Keep transit fares affordable so that all Torontonians can use the TTC, regardless of income.
- Ensure public transit remains a public service.

## Where Council Took Us

In circles – Council took transit riders for a roller coaster ride this past year and a half:

- LRT expansion was declared dead in December 2010. It was then brought back to life 16 months later when the majority of City Councillors decided to get rapid transit back on track for Toronto.
- Despite record ridership numbers, many TTC bus routes were threatened with cuts in the 2011 and 2012 budgets. Thankfully, due to a huge public outcry, funding was found and most of the cuts were stopped.
- Transit fares were hiked and TTC riders now pay more for less service.

## Where Council Needs to Go

Recent events indicate the TTC might be getting back on track. However, City Council must solve the TTC's biggest problem: finding money to fund TTC operations and rapid transit expansion. Sadly, our city is still without an affordable, equitable and long-term funding strategy to cover our public transit costs. To make matters worse, the misguided idea that it's acceptable to regularly hike fares while providing the same or worse transit service remains entrenched in the TTC's annual budgeting. City Council must engage Metrolinx and the provincial and federal governments to work to identify new revenue sources to fund public transit costs and stop raising fares for TTC riders who already pay more than their fair share.

## 2 Achieve 70% Waste Diversion By 2012



Photo by: flickr.com/angelune

Waste diversion is stuck at 50%. Council must roll-out green bins to apartments and fully fund waste diversion initiatives to reach the 70% target as soon as possible.

### Where We Planned to Go

- City meets its 70% waste diversion target by 2012.
- Get Green Bin collection into all apartment buildings by 2011, for the nearly half of Toronto households who still don't have green bin collection.
- Say no to burning Toronto's garbage through so-called energy from waste or thermal technologies.

### Where Council Took Us

In circles - Toronto's waste diversion rate is stuck at 50%, falling short of our 70% target. This is in part because most high rise buildings in Toronto still don't have Green Bin service. As well, the focus on cutting services put waste diversion under attack:

- Instead of pushing ahead to reach 70% waste diversion, some proposed lowering the City target.
- The 2012 waste budget has delayed key capital investments such as Reuse Centres and a Mixed Waste Processing Facility that would increase our diversion rate by 10%.
- Fortunately, Council heard from Torontonians and rejected proposals to eliminate or drastically reduce Community Environment Days which provide access to waste diversion and hazardous waste collection services.

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### Where Council Needs to Go

Councillors must re-affirm the City's commitment to diverting 70% or more of Toronto's waste from disposal (in a landfill or by incineration) as soon as possible. The City needs to push ahead with the green bin roll-out in high rise buildings. Council needs to restore full funding and get back on track with key capital investments in diversion technology and systems that are essential for us to achieve high waste diversion.

## Buy & Support Locally-Produced Green Products

# 3

Photo by: flickr.com/portofsandiego

We're going in circles. Council stopped efforts to harm buy-local policies. Now it's time to change course and move towards green initiatives that support local manufacturers, jobs, and food.

### Where We Planned to Go

- City works with locally-based manufacturers to identify green manufacturing opportunities arising from the Sustainable Energy Strategy, the Tower Renewal Project, Transit City and other green initiatives.
- City adopts procurement policies to support local manufacturers, local jobs and the purchase of local food.

### Where Council Took Us

In circles - When Council discussed local green products it was usually in response to attempts to introduce new policies that would harm buy-local policies:

- In June 2011 some Councillors tried to eliminate the city's local food procurement policy. Thankfully, in July a strong majority of Councillors stopped this from happening and re-affirmed the city's commitment to buying local food.
- In March 2012 Council agreed to tell the Federal Government that it had reservations with a potential European free trade deal being negotiated because it could jeopardise local jobs and the environment.

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### Where Council Needs to Go

City Council needs to get serious about investing in the local green economy. The City has many opportunities to create good-paying green jobs that help the economy and the environment, such as implementing the Sustainable Energy Strategy and making purchasing locally produced green products a priority.

# 4



## **Build Transportation Infrastructure Everyone Can Use**

Photo by: flickr.com/dylanpassmore

We're heading in the wrong direction. Council got rid of bike lanes. This is bad for the environment, people's safety and the economy. Council must change direction towards building streets everyone can use.

### **Where We Planned to Go**

- Implement Toronto's Bike Plan by 2012.
- Launch a public education campaign for all road users to teach them about their responsibilities on the road and the importance of road sharing.
- Develop and implement a Complete Streets policy by 2014.

### **Where Council Took Us**

In the wrong direction – Bike lanes have become a political football used to score points with certain constituents and the media:

- In July 2011, a majority of Councillors voted to remove existing bike lanes from Jarvis, Birchmount and Pharmacy. Unfortunately, the discussion at City Hall around bike lanes and complete streets has been caught in political gridlock.
- Lost in the discussion is the fact that bike lanes are an important tool designed to get Torontonians out of traffic gridlock, exercising, and reducing pollution.
- However, City Councillors and staff did finally start discussing the possibility of building protected bike lanes into the city's bikeway network.

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### **Where Council Needs to Go**

Council must put the safety of Torontonians front and centre in any discussion about streets. Toronto is losing ground to other global cities that are quickly moving forward to build complete streets. Lost in the discussion at City Hall is the fact that bike lanes are an important tool designed to get Torontonians out of traffic gridlock, and to get them exercising and reducing pollution. Council needs to stop using bike lanes as a political football and see them for what they are: opportunities to build an economically vibrant, healthy, and greener city.



Photo by: flickr.com/kylemackenzie

We're going in circles. Council stopped attempts to cut the Sustainable Energy Strategy. Now it must chart a course to allow staff and Toronto Hydro to deliver energy conservation and green energy.

### **Where We Planned to Go**

- Deliver home energy retrofits across the city through Toronto Hydro and other energy providers in the city.
- Support Toronto Hydro in developing renewable power.
- Provide city staff with the resources to implement the City's Sustainable Energy Strategy.
- Keep Toronto Hydro publicly owned.

### **Where Council Took Us**

In circles - Too much effort was spent stopping attempts to undermine the Sustainable Energy Strategy:

- Council voted against 2012 budget recommendations to cut key staff positions required to implement the Sustainable Energy Strategy.
- Council also voted against recommendations to eliminate two revolving loan funds designed to promote sustainable energy and energy conservation in the city.
- The Executive Committee spent two meetings considering selling 10% of Toronto Hydro, instead of considering how Toronto Hydro can help its customers save on their electricity bills through energy conservation.
- While the decision to sell Toronto Hydro has been put off, it may still come back.

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### **Where Council Needs to Go**

Council is pointed in the right direction. However, very few of the recommendations in the Sustainable Energy Strategy are being implemented. Toronto has an incredible opportunity to deal with global warming and create significant economic activity that will help the local economy and local workers. Council can get us there by ensuring there are enough staff and resources to implement the plan. Council needs to focus efforts on recommendations that help us use less energy instead of focusing on selling off important city assets like Toronto Hydro.

# 6 Provide Tools to Prevent Pollution



Photo by: flickr.com/alex\_ford

We're heading in the right direction. Torontonians and businesses were provided with tools to prevent pollution. Council should stay on course and provide staff with more resources to clean our air and water.

## Where We Planned to Go

- Ensure the City is doing its part to achieve toxics reduction through the Environmental Reporting and Disclosure (ERD) Bylaw, passed in 2008.
- Provide tools for small businesses to develop pollution prevention plans with reduction targets.
- Ensure communities across the city have access to pollution data collected through the city's ChemTRAC program, showing which businesses use and emit the top 25 toxic substances.

## Where Council Took Us

In the right direction - Implementation of the ERD Bylaw has proceeded as planned under the management of Toronto Public Health. Despite budget cuts, City staff have:

- Developed the ChemTRAC program, with the first round of data to be publicly released in June
- Offered businesses a wide variety of tools including: free technical assistance to support their transition to chemical reporting; Pollution Prevention webinars to learn from green business leaders; sector-specific training sessions; and Pollution Prevention Guides for each sector.
- Launched [www.toronto.ca/chemtrac](http://www.toronto.ca/chemtrac) and offered ChemTRAC Toxics Reduction grants.

As well, Council:

- Unanimously supported a groundbreaking study done by the Toronto Environment Office that assessed the cumulative health impact of air quality in South Riverdale/Beaches, identified pollution prevention actions, and approved South Etobicoke as the next study area.
- Stopped attempts to remove water pollution penalties that keep industrial companies in check through the Sewers Bylaw and reward businesses that prevent pollution and conserve water.

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## Where Council Needs to Go

Council is going in the right direction. Council must ensure that city staff from various departments have the resources they need to help businesses and communities reduce pollution through the ChemTRAC program.