



for Greater Toronto

Working Together for Climate Action

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GREENPRINT FOR GREATER TORONTO:

Working Together for Climate Action
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the CHALLENGE

"Imagine you have a decent life, working hard, raising your family, with a home on the edge of a town and the forest," says heavy equipment operator Ken Smith. "Then one day, a forest fire breaks out and threatens to engulf your home. You grab everything you can in your two arms and flee with your family. The fire continues to follow, until as you run you come to a river. You have only two choices: to perish or to discard everything you own and swim across. Or, if you had started earlier, you could have built a bridge."

Ken Smith, speaking at United Nations COP21 forum, December 2015

Only months after he spoke, metaphorically, of the need to build a bridge to avoid disaster, Smith, an Alberta oil sands worker and local union president, was evacuating his own family from the epic fire in Fort McMurray. He has no doubt: climate change is real, and its impact on working people will be immense. Here in Toronto, we have no doubt, either.

Since 1871, our labour movement has fought for justice for working people in the Toronto region. While the basic objective of a union is economic justice for its members, the Toronto labour movement has advocated for decades for racial justice and gender equality as well.

In recent years, climate justice (the need to tackle climate change with fairness and equality in mind) has also become a key objective of our movement. And we recognize that we have limited time to take steps to keep our planet inhabitable.

If our Earth is to be sustained for future generations, we must examine how we carry on our daily lives, and what impact we have on the environment. What we consume and produce, where we live, how we move from place to place, and how we spend our leisure time – all these factors add up to our personal and collective footprint on the Earth.

Climate change is a threat multiplier, meaning it affects not just the environment, but it can also make worse other threats to human security, such as increasing extreme weather events, chronic illnesses, and food shortages. In Toronto, intense periods of heat, increased variability of precipitation and other related weather events are placing a greater strain on our emergency services and basic infrastructure. Health and safety activists and healthcare workers alike are increasingly identifying climate change as a health issue.

Toronto, Canada's largest urban centre, is an amazingly complex and sophisticated space. Every day, 2 million commuters use public transit. Every day, power comes on to run offices, factories, and thousands of other workplaces. Every day, clean water arrives at a million homes. Every day, a thousand schools teach our children and adult learners. And every day, millions of tons of CO₂ are emitted into the air. What are we going to do?

A JUST TRANSITION: A FAIR PATHWAY TO PROTECT THE CLIMATE



Addressing global climate change is critical to the economic, social and environmental interest of all peoples of the world. Ambitious mitigation action is fundamental if we want to leave our children a sustainable world and a chance

A JUST TRANSITION TOWARDS A LOW CARBON ECONOMY IS POSSIBLE, AND CAN MAKE CLIMATE ACTION A DRIVER FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

for social and development goals to be achieved. These actions must be fairly shared and distributed between and within countries: responsibility

and capacity must be the guiding principles for burden sharing.

A just transition towards a low carbon economy is possible, and can make climate action a driver for sustainable economic growth and social progress.

We need to transform the economy; we therefore ask for a process aimed at transforming every economic sector into a sustainable one.

The international trade union movement is committed to supporting ambitious actions aimed at combating climate change while shifting growth towards a truly sustainable development, where social welfare and broader environmental challenges are also addressed.

Just transition is a tool the trade union movement shares with the international community, aimed at smoothing the shift towards a more sustainable society and providing hope for the capacity of a "green economy" to sustain decent jobs and livelihoods for all.



what has **BEEN DONE**

In the last quarter century, Toronto and surrounding municipalities have responded to environmental concerns in a variety of ways. The City of Toronto has been a global leader in many initiatives. It created the Toronto Atmospheric Fund (taf.ca), which seeks ways to lessen the city's carbon footprint, and the Better Buildings Partnership, which helps building owners, managers and developers to achieve energy efficiency goals.

Toronto has an organic waste diversion program, green building standards and green roofs, and district heating and cooling for buildings in downtown Toronto. For years, before cutbacks, the Toronto Transit Commission ran an award-winning service that was the envy of North America.

Major building owners have adopted programs to reduce waste and to cut energy use. Factories have dramatically reduced electricity and water consumption. Municipal operations have been re-vamped with the same goals. The GTA's first net zero-carbon public building has been completed in Stouffville. Bombardier's Q400 aircraft, built in Toronto, burns 40% less fuel than a jet equivalent.



TORONTO ATMOSPHERIC FUND

As the federal and provincial governments struggle to hammer out a pan-Canadian carbon price, I wonder whether they've overlooked a potential partner that could slash emissions nationwide: Canada's cities. Take Toronto. Despite robust economic and population growth, city-wide emissions have dropped 24 percent since 1990. The City's own emissions — from over a thousand buildings, a fleet of vehicles, and waste management — are down 46 percent. By contrast, Canada's emissions grew 20 percent, driven by fossil fuel extraction. Behind much of Toronto's remarkable achievement was adoption of innovative technologies, GHG reduction programs and policies incubated by a small special-purpose agency: Toronto Atmospheric Fund (TAF). *Founding Director Phil Jessup writing on the 25th anniversary of TAF*

what NEEDS to be DONE

Most environmental plans focus on three key areas: buildings, energy and transit. But there is a fourth area that will be key in winning the race against climate change: **workplace transformation.**

Workplaces are not just the source of income, products and services, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. They are also an essential part of our social interaction. For the labour movement, they are the source of both membership and transformative power. And if humankind is to survive, transformation will be essential.

At the Paris Conference on Climate Change in 2015, every nation was called on to take real, measurable steps to reduce GHG emissions and limit the increase in global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Canada's Prime Minister was joined by provincial premiers and many mayors in making this pledge. Since then, Ontario has launched an ambitious Climate Change Action Plan that projects a dramatic change from the business-as-usual scenario.

The next two decades will see a major transformation of the economy due to environmental imperatives, as well as technological advances. But there is a crucial question that needs answering: Will this change bring more prosperity for workers, or greater precarity and income inequality? For young people in particular, who are facing double digit levels of unemployment in the GTA, we need to find the right answer.

The United Nations Brundtland Report, *Our Common Futures*: provides a succinct definition of the challenge. "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."



WORKPLACES

What happens in workplaces contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. Yet, current thinking mainly focuses on large industrial emitters. There are many examples of dramatic workplace improvements around energy use, waste reduction and product substitution to lessen toxics in the workplace. There is a lot more to do. Innovative research and the teaching of best practices, in collaboration with community colleges and universities, could drive new levels of sustainability in every sector of the economy.

Develop Environmental Advocates

For the labour movement, the workplace is ground zero for our activism. The Labour Council is proposing to establish a network of environmental advocates to power the climate change agenda both within workplaces and in society as a whole.

These representatives would function in much the same manner as health and safety reps do under current Ontario legislation. They would be recruited and then trained by their union or a specialist agency, and supported in their role identifying actions and programs that would improve the environmental practice and sustainability of their workplace. Joint Environment Committees would engage workers and management in achieving the lowest possible carbon work process.

Some unions in Britain and Canada already have union environmental representatives. Their responsibilities include, but aren't limited to: waste audits; supply chain reviews; reviews of the movement of materials; identifying ways to re-use excess energy or heat; suggesting improvements around staff commuting.

Most major industry associations have suggestions on sector-specific green initiatives. From hospitals to airports, from schools to film sets, concepts about greening the workplace have been sketched out at some level. But few of these ideas are being systematically applied across the sector.

Most often a program is developed by an individual green champion and not fully embraced across the organization. Unions can help make sustainability part of the ongoing workplace culture in the same way labour's efforts led to health and safety committees, WHMIS requirements, and mandatory safety training of supervisors.

A life-cycle analysis of the costs for any work operation reveals the advantage of adopting sustainable work practices. For a small investment in capital or human resources, the payback can be significant. For instance, the early energy retrofits of commercial buildings yielded utility cost savings of up to 40% year after year. The Redpath Sugar refinery in Toronto's port lands reduced costly water use by over 30%. The Canadian Forces Base in Halifax virtually eliminated the cost of food waste disposal by setting up a vermiculture program that resulted in valuable organic fertilizer.

A commitment to environmental innovation will help assure the competitiveness of local business, and provide decent jobs for the future. For the public sector, environmental innovation would allow greater resources to go to frontline services. If a city, housing authority or school board saves millions on electricity and gas charges, that money can be used instead for its main mandate of serving the public.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Most city residents know little about the complex infrastructure that assures us of the essential elements of our daily lives. From clean water to safe sewage; from plowed winter streets to storm-water management; from playing fields to waste disposal – public infrastructure is a key part of our quality of life.

The increase in extreme weather events due to climate change shows the limitations of structures that were designed to handle normal load limits of the past. Our entire infrastructure needs upgrading. This upgrading effort needs to emphasize “life-cycle design” to ensure structural sustainability, and include an extensive grid of electric vehicle charging stations. Determining how to adapt to new levels of stress on our built systems is a growing science that must be incorporated into all public works planning and project execution.

WATER & SEWAGE

Everyone takes for granted access to clean water. Similarly, waste treatment is seldom considered by city dwellers. Nor is the use of energy in delivering water or treating sewage. But those represent the largest single uses of electricity by our municipal government.

Reduce water use via building codes

Building codes and building renovations should aim to reduce water use, as well as reduce waste water. Downspout-disconnect programs are worth continuing. Permeable surfaces are important to contain storm-water run-off.

Capture methane for energy

Capturing methane from wastewater treatment and landfills is an important energy source, and should be mandated for all municipalities.

THE ORGANIC WASTE DIVERSION STORY

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 416 led the effort to create an organic waste diversion program in Toronto. The union commissioned a study by the Toronto Environmental Alliance on the potential for a city-wide program that could divert a massive amount of waste from landfills and create hundreds of jobs. Today, the green bin program is followed by over 90% by homeowners, and is being pioneered in a number of high-rise buildings

WASTE REDUCTION & DIVERSION

The public infrastructure for organics diversion should be expanded. Much more can be achieved in the food services sector: restaurants, hotels, and grocery stores. Large institutions could use organic systems to create high quality compost for farms and gardens.

Municipal recycling efforts should continue to be expanded, but an aggressive program by the provincial government could also reap many benefits. The concept of extended-producer responsibility is fundamental to dealing with the glut of consumer products.

Reach a zero-waste goal

Producing, consuming and dealing with products and packaging are estimated to be responsible for 40% of all greenhouse gas emissions. Toronto and Ontario should aim to reach a zero-waste goal through regulations. Regulations are needed to cover imported goods as well as Canadian production.

ENERGY

DISTRIBUTIVE ENERGY

Alternative energy generation has now reached a price point that makes it an affordable option for the electricity needs of the Greater Toronto Area. Within the near future, energy storage will also be achievable at a mass scale.

Incorporate solar energy

Solar panels and solar building facades can be incorporated into any building design and become part of a distributed energy grid across the GTA.

Insist on public power

Public utilities could provide real value for our cities as energy generation and distribution methods evolve, with the revenues used to upgrade existing lines and transformers. Instead of allowing this work to be dominated by private companies, we need to protect and expand the role of public utilities.

Encourage green economic development

The region should capitalize on the market for new technologies, particularly storage, by helping locate green manufacturing industries within our jurisdiction. Green economic development should be a focus of municipal governments in greater Toronto, building on existing strengths in aerospace and research capacity in our universities.

DISTRICT HEATING & COOLING

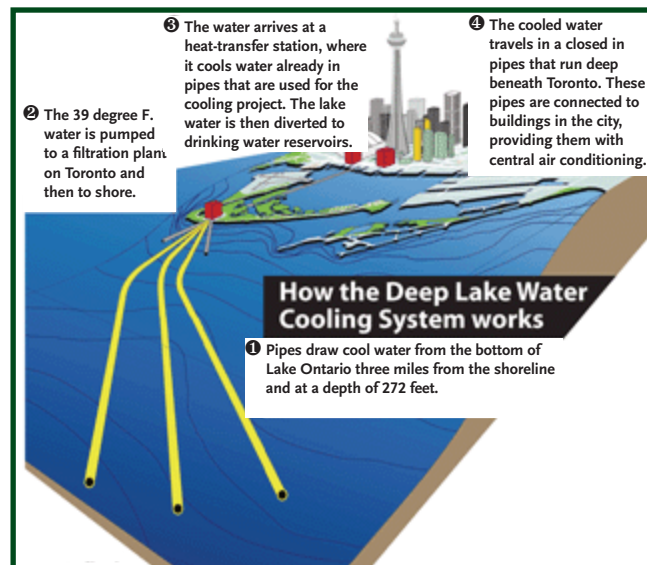
When City Councillor Jack Layton championed deep lake water cooling for downtown buildings, there were many skeptics. Yet, district cooling and heating have proved to be an important feature of Toronto's downtown core.

Expand district heating and cooling

Expand this system of heating and cooling significantly into other areas of high density. New high-rise commercial and residential buildings should connect to district-wide systems wherever possible.

Support geothermal systems

In areas where new or existing buildings can't connect with a district heating and cooling network, geothermal systems should be encouraged and supported with government regulations and incentives.



The Economist: A Cool Concept

BUILDINGS & URBAN DESIGN

Expand the Better Buildings Partnership

The City of Toronto should ramp up the work of the Better Buildings Partnership, and secure new funding from the federal and provincial governments to expand the program's scope.

Re-launch Tower Neighbourhood Renewal

The much-heralded Tower Neighbourhood Renewal program should be re-launched, with the clear aim of upgrading the energy and water efficiency of over a thousand apartment buildings in Toronto as well as improving social cohesion.

Tackle Toronto Community Housing repairs

The \$2.6 billion backlog of repairs to Toronto Community Housing properties should be carried out to achieve maximum energy efficiency as well as building integrity.

Encourage home retrofits

The program to help individual homeowners retrofit their homes, with costs applied to future bills, needs to be popularized, and supported with the creation of a stable of qualified contractors who tax would be eligible for the program.

Undertake school repairs

School boards have identified an astounding list of overdue repairs to their properties. Older schools and post-secondary buildings across Greater Toronto should be a target for a special program funded by the provincial government. The aim should be for every educational facility in the Greater Toronto Area to be housed in net zero-carbon buildings by 2030.

worthREADING

THE BETTER BUILDING STORY

In 1994, the Toronto building trades unions worked with progressive city councillors to establish the Better Buildings Partnership as a catalyst for retrofitting office buildings and high-rise apartments. Money was set aside to secure loans for energy service companies to undertake major projects. City staff were assigned to assist in undertaking energy audits and monitoring results. Inspired by the pioneering work of environmental engineer Greg Allen and energy efficiency expert Tom Tamblyn, the build trades unions saw this as an exciting opportunity. The program put hundreds of jobless members back to work, including many apprentices whose training had stalled in the recession. By 2016 the program has completed 2,522 projects.



Retrofitted
Floor Area
552million ft²



Person Years of
Employment
45,962



Electricity
Savings
3,747,000MWh



CO²
Reduction
680,000 Tonnes



Cumulative
Cost Savings
\$375million

Tremendous strides have been made around the world in green building design. The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) designation has become part of mainstream architectural practice. In Europe, entire communities are being designed to have net zero-carbon emissions.

Improve Ontario's Building Code

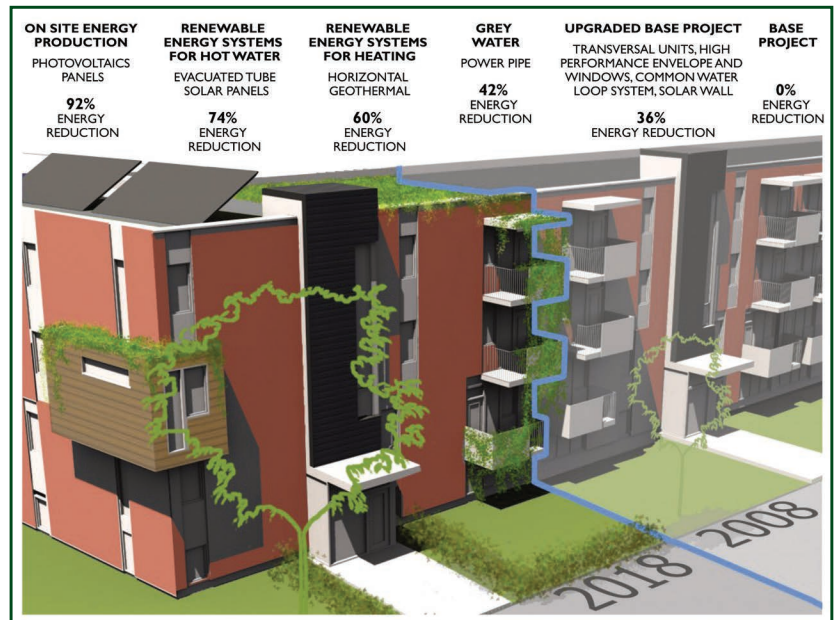
The Ontario Building Code is being slowly upgraded, but still needs significant improvement.

Tighten up Green Building regulations

The City of Toronto's Green Building regulations should be updated and made mandatory through changes to the City of Toronto Act.

Apply a green lens to curriculums

Schools of Engineering and Architecture should be required to overhaul their curriculum to bring a green lens to every aspect of their disciplines. The College of Trades and union training centres can assist in implementing trades training and upgrading to embrace the latest technologies.



Credit: L'OEUF s.e.n.c

Urban sprawl is a major contributor to climate change. It causes long commutes, and creates difficulty in providing public transit. It's also the reason for the high costs of servicing suburban homes – spread out single-family buildings with wide frontages.

Encourage compact communities

There have been attempts to design suburban "healthy village" communities with minimal success to date, but that does not mean this approach should be abandoned. Protecting farmland is a key element of food security in the future. City planners, particularly in 905 municipalities, should insist on more compact urban forms of development, with neighbourhood-based recreational, educational and retail services. In Toronto, much of the inner suburban land which is still lightly populated could be targeted for infill projects.

Increase tree canopies

Trees are important assets that can significantly reduce the heat-island effect of urban buildings.

Implement inclusionary zoning

Inclusionary zoning requires developers to provide a portion of new residential projects for affordable housing. This would help ensure that low- and modest-income families could still live in the central city instead of being forced to move further away in order to meet the expense of accommodation.

Protect Employment Lands

It is vital that designated Employment Lands be protected from rezoning, in order to provide local jobs for the future. Vacant industrial buildings should be re-purposed for other employment uses.

TRANSPORTATION

The Toronto Transit Commission was once recognized as one of the premier transit systems in North America. But years of neglect and funding cuts have put it in desperate need of renewal. Public transit must be an essential element in the region's future.

The Ontario government is using Metrolinx, the provincial transit agency, for its investment in rail expansion projects in Toronto and across the GTA. These rail expansion projects are taking the form of public-private partnerships, in the design, building, financing, and in maintaining the operations for 30 years. Labour continues to oppose the P3 approach, while advocating for community benefits to be incorporated in all transit projects.

The federal government has pledged to invest billions in new transit – an important aspect of a national climate change plan. Labour supports expansion of public transit into the inner suburbs and areas with sufficient population density in the 905 region, as well as the proposed relief line in Toronto's east end. However, senior levels of government need to make a commitment to supporting the operating costs of transit, as well as capital improvement.

Make fares affordable

Transit fares must be affordable for all working families. Toronto's policy of free fares for children is a welcome advance, but too many poor people can barely afford to use public transit.

Make service reliable

Public transit's reliability must be dramatically improved if people are to count on the public system for their primary method of travel, instead of cars. This too will take a significant long-term investment by all levels of government.

Keep and expand public transit

The experiment with private transit operators in York Region has proven to be both expensive and unsatisfactory. The subsidy for each trip is many times the TTC rate, while transit workers are paid significantly less for the same work by these for-profit operators. York Region should abandon its practice of tendering to private corporations and create a truly public transit system across its full jurisdiction.



Any large urban centre needs a comprehensive plan for residents' personal mobility. Walking and cycling are healthy ways to get around, and they are environmentally friendly, too. At the same time, the number of cyclists and pedestrians who die in traffic incidents is shockingly high. Trucks in Ontario are not required to have safety guards, resulting in tragic deaths of cyclists drawn into wheel wells.

Prioritize funding for urban design

The design of city streets, bike lanes and urban form (a city's physical patterns, layouts and structures) are important aspects of environmentally friendly cities, and funding should be prioritized to pursue these measures.

Ensure vehicles for hire are all regulated

All vehicles for hire, whether taxis, limousines or Uber vehicles, should be governed by regulations that require fuel efficiency and, eventually, conversion to electric vehicles. This needs to be done while assuring drivers decent working conditions and a living wage.

Encourage shipping by rail

Trucking has displaced rail and shipping as the primary form to move goods in the 21st century. Yet, trucking is a huge contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. The federal and provincial governments should determine policies, and enlist the support of key businesses, in order to increase the use of rail for the shipment of goods, as well as for commuting, along the Windsor-Quebec corridor.

Encourage environmentally-friendly trucking

The increase of internet retail sales has caused a spike in home delivery of packages. All of the truck fleets involved in delivering packages need to evolve to more sustainable, environmentally-friendly operations, with electric, natural gas and hydrogen-powered vehicles becoming the norm.



GREEN ECONOMY

For decades Ontario was the industrial heartland of Canada. While outsourcing and technology have eroded our share of industrial jobs in the Greater Toronto Area, manufacturing is still vital to our economy. Autos, aerospace and food production are key elements of GTA industry. There is real opportunity to expand production of alternative energy systems components, transit vehicles, and building supplies.

Focus on low-carbon-economy supply chain creation

City and provincial economic development departments should focus on creating supply chains for the next generation of products in a low-carbon economy.

Encourage new job opportunities

With the right political will, there will soon be an increase in design and IT functions for smart buildings, logistics and distributive energy systems, creating opportunities in a wide variety of occupations.

Encourage wise pension investment

Pension plans are a major source of invested capital. Employers, unions and workers have a role in steering these investments, and there are good financial and ethical reasons for pension fund managers to take the risks posed by climate change into account when making investment choices.

Discourage free trade deals and encourage democracy

Faulty trade deals, on the other hand, can undermine efforts to transform the local economy. The goal of the Green Energy Act to source the manufacturing of solar and wind components in Ontario was cut short by a ruling of the World Trade Organization. Democracy and sovereignty are vital elements of a green future.

POSTAL TRANSFORMATION

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers has created an outstanding strategy for just transition. In response to the reduction in letter mail, the union has not only fought off a short-sighted attempt by their employer to end home mail delivery.

It has countered with a comprehensive plan (deliveringcommunitypower.ca) for Canada Post to use its vast network of outlets to embrace postal banking, alternative energy generation powering a fleet of electric vehicles, and local food delivery programs in communities across the country.



JUST TRANSITION

The term “just transition” refers to policies that support workers in carbon-intensive industries when their jobs are being changed or eliminated. It includes the workers having a voice in decision-making and in retraining. It also includes income bridging and unemployment benefits, and community investment in the creation of good green jobs. The Canadian government was a strong ally in the effort to place Just Transition language in the 2015 Conference on Climate Change (COP21) agreement.

The greatest need for just transition will be for workers in the resource extraction and heavy industries. But this is an issue for all of us. Greater Toronto cannot ignore the impact of climate policies on workers in other parts of the country. Solidarity must extend to those in forest products, chemical, oil and gas and other sectors affected as low-carbon policies come into place.

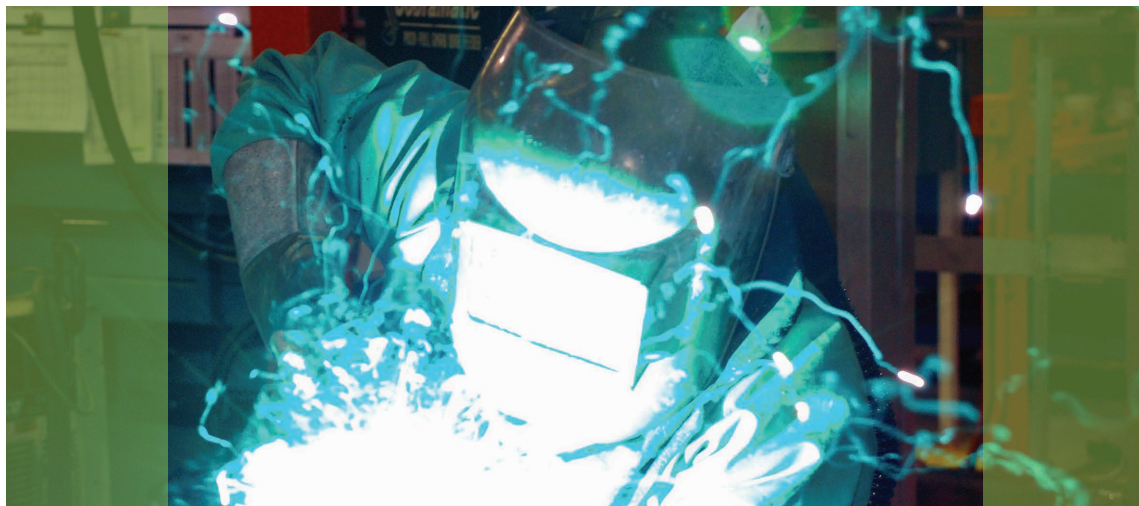
Just transition should be looked at as an all-encompassing strategy. While carbon intensive industries will be the primary area of concern, everyone should reassess how their daily duties could be completed in a way that decreases their carbon footprint. Our labour movement demands a comprehensive program that will provide an economic safety net for working families and their communities; and that will ensure their future participation in decent, sustainable jobs.

Encourage auto companies' investment in green and local future

In the Greater Toronto Area, the auto industry plays a pivotal role in wealth creation, with assembly plants in Brampton, Oakville and Oshawa and parts plants across the region. All levels of government must insist that the auto companies invest in manufacturing facilities in Ontario, particularly for the next generation of electric and hybrid vehicles.

Maintain our ability to buy local

We must also maintain our ability to get our transit vehicles from Canadian manufacturers, and oppose any trade deals that would make it illegal for a city to favour Canadian-made buses or subway cars.



EDUCATION

The timeframe for transition to meet the COP21 goals is extremely tight. While there is broad consensus among opinion leaders today around the urgency of climate change, we have seen the aspirations of the Kyoto Accord dashed by a relentless campaign of sabotage and climate change denial. Humankind cannot afford further delay. Our schools could help, and many already are.

Provide evidence-based analysis

The entire education system, from elementary school to colleges and universities, needs to provide an evidence-based analysis of the threat to our future, combined with examples of solutions, and inspiration for action. Education unions and their members can play a key role in this vital work.

Adopt best eco-school practices

District school boards should adopt the best eco-school practices, and commit to renovations to bring all existing buildings to net zero-carbon status.

Build appreciation for the natural world

Community gardens, healthy food and outdoor education centres all build an appreciation by students for the natural world.

Use green lens on everything

Classroom supplies can be responsibly sourced, and fleets transformed to electric vehicles powered by solar installations at schools. Asphalt playgrounds can be changed to permeable surfaces.

Transform schools into community hubs

Transforming schools into community hubs that offer seniors' programs, newcomer settlement services and recreation leads to healthier communities.

Revamp core curriculum

The Ministry of Education should revamp the core curriculum to include environmental analysis across a variety of subjects, from math to physics and literature. Teacher federations could review professional development programs to cover these issues along with climate justice advocacy.

Colleges and secondary schools could integrate green technical skills into their courses. Universities could put greater emphasis on environmental studies, and integrate environmental competencies across all disciplines.

No student should graduate any level of education in Ontario without a keen sense of respect for nature and an understanding of the immense impact of climate change on our world.

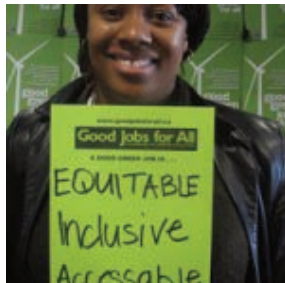


EQUITY

Racism and all forms of discrimination need to be tackled every day if we are to achieve any degree of fairness in our society. It is important to understand the effect of systemic barriers faced in the past by so many of our neighbours. Employment equity is a crucial aspect of sharing the prosperity of the future. When the Labour Council initiated the Toronto Community Benefits Network, the goal was to negotiate access to the jobs created by investment in mass transit for racialized communities and others who face barriers to entering the trades. For the first time in North America, the Community Benefits Agreement with Metrolinx included white-collar jobs as well.

The Ontario Government's Bill 6 applies the principles of community benefits to other large infrastructure projects across the province. Labour supports this measure, as well as proposals to include community benefits into the practice of other large public institutions.

But transformation goes much further than new infrastructure. To be truly successful, every aspect of this work needs to have an equity lens applied from the first steps of analysis and planning. To transform the economy to be environmentally sustainable without ensuring racial and climate justice would be a hollow victory.



worthREADING

GOOD JOBS FOR ALL

In 2009, the Good Jobs for All coalition, based in Toronto, sponsored the most racially diverse environmental conference ever held in this country. Over 600 participants engaged in an important conversation about the need to address three crises facing greater Toronto: jobs, environment, and equity. Throughout the last decade of advocacy for climate action, the Toronto & York Region Labour Council has consistently demanded that the “next economy” serve everyone, including those who, in the past and still today, have been left out from any prosperous times.

MAKING *it* HAPPEN

Toronto's labour movement has built strong alliances to achieve key goals over its many years of activism. For this proposed greenprint to become a reality there will need to be a powerful chorus of voices calling for climate action. Some will be long-time allies in the environment, anti-poverty and racial justice movements. Others will be political leaders who we don't always agree with, or business leaders who may oppose our positions on labour law or trade deals. But such is the urgency of the task ahead that we will need to build coalitions with unlikely suspects, and they with us.

IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Labour needs to identify key leaders from many walks of life and become effective proponents of joint action. It doesn't mean we lessen our commitment to workers' rights or public services or decent jobs – union activists need to be fully aware of the class realities at play in our world. But it does require the courage of our conviction to explore new ground while holding true to our principles.

MAKING IT REAL

The Canadian Labour Congress has placed itself as one of the most progressive central labour bodies on the issue of climate change, while incorporating the demand for just transition for those workers and communities who are deeply affected by the dynamics of transformation. The Green Economy Network is advocating for a million green jobs in the coming years. These will be both inspiring and daunting challenges for all Canadians.

A greenprint for an urban centre like greater Toronto will be powered by three kinds of people: green leaders, green advocates, and green teachers. Green leaders will include politicians, scientists, CEOs, community leaders, and labour leaders. There will need to be thousands of green advocates – in workplaces, government, schools and NGOs, as well as in the media and in the arts. And there must be thousands more green teachers, those who will help provide young people and adult learners with a keen appreciation of the urgency of climate action and the need for sustainable living. Together, these leaders, advocates and teachers could build a mass movement that could change the course of history.

PARTNERSHIPS

The Green Economy Network is a coalition of labour, environmental, faith and social justice organizations working for the building of a green economy in Canada. It calls for a million climate jobs to be created in the next decade. www.greeneconomynet.ca

Climate Action Network Canada is a coalition of more than 100 organizations from across the country working together to advance solutions to managing carbon pollution through sustainable and equitable development. It is part of a world-wide movement of environmental NGO's. ClimateActionNetwork.ca

Adapting Canadian Work is a multi-stakeholder project housed at York University that is developing tools to green the workplace and work. ACW sets Canadian experience in an international perspective, with a public database of collective agreement language on environmental issues as well as training curriculum. adaptingcanadianwork.ca



There have been many reports published on climate change from a wide variety of sources. Some have helped shape policy and action, others have had little influence. At a time when all levels of government have committed to substantial action on the issue, the time is right to map out a plan of action and drive it forward.

Young workers will be key drivers of this agenda. The level of environmental consciousness is far higher among millennials than others, and their capacity to communicate through social and mainstream media will prove to be essential. At the same time, the lessons learned from past decades of struggle need to be shared through intergenerational exchange. Workers from newcomer communities provide an immense wealth of experience related to climate change and its impact on the Global South. That knowledge and analysis must form an integral part of our work.

The political strategy behind this effort will focus on identifying champions in every level of government, institution and enterprise, and creating a community of shared purpose around climate action. This will take skill, dedication and patience. It won't be simple, but it is essential.

In our labour movement's history of nearly a century and a half of working for justice, many of our goals took time to achieve. In some cases victories were decades in the making. Can we make this a priority?

That depends on how clearly we see the challenge.

The challenge is clear to oil sands worker Ken Smith, who spoke so eloquently at the United Nations COP21 Climate Change Conference in Paris. Here in Toronto we've made some headway on making changes towards a sustainable future for all. Let's heed Ken Smith's call and focus on building the bridge, while there's still time.



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labourcouncil.ca



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