

CITY OF HAMILTON MOTION

Climate Change Advisory Committee: September 24, 2024

MOVED BY LUCIA IANNANTUONO

SECONDED BY

Recommendation for the Adoption of More Ambitious Green Building Standards

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton unanimously passed the motion “Support for the Decision of the Ontario Energy Board to End the Gas Pipeline Subsidy” to express the City’s support for fiscally prudent and environmentally sustainable development practices that are priced appropriately to disincentivize future risk to residents;

WHEREAS installing efficient, low-emissions, dual-purpose home appliances for space heating and cooling, such as heat pumps, is on cost parity with the initial installation costs of separate, less efficient, higher emissions, conventional gas-burning heating and AC cooling appliances;

WHEREAS efficient technologies like heat pumps can provide benefits to residents by lowering energy use and associated utility bills, and benefits to everyone in society by drastically reducing methane pollution and greenhouse gas emissions;

WHEREAS the cost of retrofitting homes after construction is prohibitively expensive for the average household, and prohibitively expensive for the City of Hamilton to fund at scale through municipal incentives;

WHEREAS there is less of a burden to Hamilton taxpayers to regulate efficient new development through Green Building Standards;

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to adaptation and mitigation as outlined in Hamilton’s Climate Action Strategy;

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton is projecting a 40% increase in population by 2051, and by adopting ambitious Green Building Standards for new buildings the emissions from buildings as a whole in the City of Hamilton can be greatly reduced compared to continuing business-as-usual;

WHEREAS maximum greenhouse gas intensity (GHGI) thresholds of 3-5 kg CO₂e/m²/yr would be needed to prevent the new installation of gas-burning heating for air and water in buildings and require new buildings to use more efficient technologies like heat pumps; and

WHEREAS the City of Toronto has adopted Version 4 of their Green Development Standards for new buildings with all Tier 1 standards being mandatory, and Tiers 2 and 3 eventually becoming mandatory in 2025 and 2028 respectively, with Tier 3 GHGI capped at 3,4 or 5 kg CO₂e/m²/yr, depending on the type of building; and

WHEREAS the City of Toronto's Green Development Standards utilize a framework that phases in the tiered standards over time so that measures begin as voluntary and become mandatory, successively introducing more stringent limits and reducing new building emissions; and

WHEREAS the proposed Green Building Standards for Hamilton do not currently outline a framework that phases in successively more stringent tiered standards over time; and

WHEREAS the proposed Green Building Standards for Hamilton do not currently apply emissions limits that are sufficient to require new buildings to transition to efficient, low-emissions technology now or in the future;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. That the Climate Change Advisory Committee recommends that the staff report to Planning Committee regarding Green Building Standards currently on the agenda for the meeting on October 1st, 2024, be delayed to a future meeting in 2025 so that;
 - i. The newly formed Climate Change Advisory Committee Technical and Governance Working group can provide a comprehensive recommendation report to address significant gaps in the proposed Green Building Standards; and
 - ii. The Climate Change Advisory Committee Technical and Governance Working Group will have the opportunity to engage with City staff and external experts to create a Citizen Community Report on the topic of Green Building Standards that can provide specific technical recommendations and include background information, analysis, and rationale for Planning Committee and the public; and
 - iii. The Climate Change Advisory Committee including the co-chairs and members of the Technical and Governance Working group can be updated as to when and at what Committee the recommendation(s) in the Citizen Committee Report on Green Building Standards will be tabled so that they can speak to the matter formally at that time; and

B. That the Climate Change Advisory Committee recommends the General Issues Committee forward this motion and any relevant communications as correspondence to the Planning Committee regarding Green Building Standards.