

# Toronto Smog Report Card

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**2001**

*Final Grade - D*

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## 2001

Subject	Results	Grade
Smog Prevention and Reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Voted against saving \$22 million annually in energy costs.</li> <li>x No Employee Trip Reduction program for City staff.</li> <li>x Raised TTC fares.</li> <li>✓ Bought some cleaner vehicles and cleaner gas.</li> </ul>	D
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Only 1/16 of Environmental Plan budget approved.</li> <li>x Missed opportunity to reduce energy costs and air pollution by investing in energy efficiency.</li> </ul>	F
Intergovernmental Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Hosted the Toronto Smog Summit.</li> <li>✓ Researched impacts of proposed provincial and federal policies on environmental health in Toronto.</li> </ul>	A
Smog Alert Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Record number of smog days means we need to shift from 'what to do on smog days' to 'what to do every day'.</li> </ul>	D
Public Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Not yet talking to the people who need to be reached.</li> </ul>	C
FINAL GRADE		D

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**S**ince drafting the original Toronto Smog Plan in 1997, the Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) has published annual Smog Report Cards to evaluate progress made by the City on reducing the environmental and health impacts of smog.

Toronto's municipal government has committed itself to act aggressively to reduce air pollution. The 1997 Smog Plan was the first municipal smog plan in Ontario and these commitments were re-affirmed in 1998 by the amalgamated City of Toronto. In 2000, Council unanimously endorsed an ambitious Environmental Plan and promised additional measures at the Toronto Smog Summit.

This year, TEA is awarding the City of Toronto a 'D' grade for their anti-smog actions, based on an assessment of how many of their clean air commitments have been honoured. This grade represents a step backward after three years of improving grades. In 1998, TEA gave the old City of Toronto a grade of 'D', while the former Metro government got an 'F'. The amalgamated city was awarded a 'D' in 1999, which increased to a grade of 'C-' in 2000.

## Toronto Smog Facts

The summer of 2001 will be remembered as the smoggiest on record.<sup>1</sup> The increasing levels of air pollution are cause for concern, as recent research has shown that:

- 1,000 Toronto residents die prematurely each year due to air pollution and another 5,500 are hospitalized.<sup>2</sup>
- In Ontario, 20% of hospital admissions for acute bronchitis, bronchiolitis and pneumonia in infants under the age of one can be attributed to ozone and very small particulate matter.<sup>3</sup>
- Toronto hospitals spend over \$150 million per year to treat the victims of air pollution and air pollution costs the Toronto economy at least \$128 million in lost productivity.<sup>4</sup>
- Ontario's levels of ground level ozone (a key smog component) are rising.<sup>5</sup> Driving this increase are the greater distances we drive (car use is increasing at about 2% per year in Toronto and in the absence of better public transit and more compact, transit-friendly urban planning will continue to rise) and our greater reliance on coal-fired generating stations (electricity production from coal has doubled in Ontario since 1995).

## How to Improve

To receive a better grade on next year's Smog Report Card, the Toronto Environmental Alliance is calling on the City to, at a minimum, re-invest the existing savings from energy efficiency (\$13 million per year) in:

- New conservation measures which will save the City an additional \$22 million per year;
- Purchasing 'green' electricity from renewable energy sources like wind and solar power;
- A 50% reduction in emissions from the City's fleet by 2005;
- Creating employee trip reduction program for City staff; and
- Improving public transit.

To go beyond honouring its existing commitments, Toronto should make the waterfront re-development a showcase of energy efficiency, district heating and cooling, and transit-based development.

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## Notes

- 1 The Ontario Ministry of the Environment issued 9 smog advisories covering 23 days in 2001. In 2000, there were 3 advisories covering 4 days and the previous high was in 1995 when there were 6 advisories covering 11 days. According to preliminary data from the MOE's website, air quality monitoring stations within Toronto have registered 'poor' air quality on 15 days this summer.
- 2 D. Pengelly et al., *Air Pollution Burden of Illness in Toronto*, (Toronto Public Health, May 2000).
- 3 Dr. John Last, Dr. Konia Trouton and Dr. David Pengelly, *Taking our Breath Away: The Health Effects of Air Pollution and Climate Change*, (The David Suzuki Foundation: October 1998).
- 4 Ontario Medical Association, *The Illness Costs of Air Pollution in Ontario*, (OMA: June 200).
- 5 Ontario Ministry of the Environment, *Air Quality in Ontario 1998*, (Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2001).

# Detailed Smog Report Card 2001

## What Council Promised

## What was Actually Done – 2001

## Grade

### ***Develop a Plan***

To develop a comprehensive Air Quality Strategy for the City of Toronto that would:

- 1) assess the progress of and integrate current air quality initiatives;
- 2) set priorities for City action;
- 3) set targets where they do not now exist;
- 4) consider air emissions and their impacts;
- 5) identify areas where the City can be involved (such as promoting the City's own corporate smog reduction program within the Toronto business community, zero-emission City fleets, and promoting employer trip reduction programs) and how it can best apply its resources to maximum effect; and
- 6) facilitate monitoring and reporting to the public.

This commitment was made as part of the Environmental Plan, passed unanimously by Council on April 12, 2000. It replaces the (unfulfilled) 1998 Toronto Smog Plan commitment to develop an Anti-Smog Blueprint addressed in previous Smog Report Cards.

Sixteen months later, the development of this strategy is stalled due to a lack of leadership and resources. Unlike such previous initiatives, no one from the Chief Administrator's Office has been assigned to make this happen; instead it has been piled on top of existing duties. Meetings are held, but without a senior staff person to coordinate and direct the activities of the affected departments and without a financial plan, the initiative is floundering.

The June 2001 interim report *Moving Towards Cleaner Air: A Progress Report on the Air Quality Strategy for the City of Toronto* is a good summary of what the City has done on air quality, but doesn't have a vision or plan regarding where to go next.

**D**

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### ***Energy Efficiency***

Increase energy efficiency in City operations and facilities by 15%.

Conservative estimates show that the City could achieve its 15% target and save an additional \$22 million per year in energy costs for a one-time investment of between \$68 and 106 million (from *Opportunities for Budget Cost Savings in the City of Toronto's Corporate Facilities* prepared for the City of Toronto by the International Centre for Local Environmental Initiatives). The City already saves \$13 million per year as a result of investments in energy efficiency made since 1990. With a minimum 20% annual return on new investments, it is clear that eliminating the Environmental Plan budget line for energy efficiency in the last budget process was short-sighted. Toronto Hydro may pick up the slack, but the City should pursue these cost savings and dedicate them to other greenhouse gas and smog-causing emission reduction programs.

**F**

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**Green Power**

Purchase 25% of electricity from 'Green Power' sources (wind, solar, micro-hydro and landfill gases) by 2005.

To date, no purchase has been made, although Toronto Hydro issued a Request for Proposals for 15 megaWatts of green power in June 2000. The City should commit to making a green power purchase on the day the market opens to stimulate investment in renewable energy supply.

The Toronto Atmospheric Fund's financing of Toronto Hydro's capping of the Thackery landfill to produce green power from methane is a step in the right direction.

The City's support for the Toronto Renewable Energy Cooperative's community-based initiative to supply Green Power should be continued.

**B****Employee Trip Reduction (1)**

To undertake a survey of employee travel patterns every two years, to facilitate emission reductions and evaluate employee trip reduction initiatives.

The 1998 survey has only recently been analysed and released.

No new survey has been undertaken.

**F****Employee Trip Reduction (2)**

To develop and implement a program to reduce employee commuting emissions including:

- Effective Dec. 31, 1997 revise employee parking policy at all City work locations so that free commuting spaces become pay-for-parking;
- Establish a Clean Air Fund with \$100,000 in seed money and/or directed revenue from the employee parking facility;
- Seek other funding to provide incentives for employee trip reduction.

The parking policy has not been revised and parking revenues have not been dedicated for trip reduction programs.

The Employee Trip Reduction program remains on the backburner, primarily because there are no staff or other resources to develop or implement the necessary policies.

This is particularly regrettable, because a City-sponsored car-pooling, bike, transit and tele-commuting program could be a catalyst and provide central nodes for similar initiatives at nearby offices (similar to the *Black Creek Transportation Management Association* described below).

**F****Employee Trip Reduction (3)**

Develop with area employers a program to promote and facilitate smog-friendly commuting practices.

The City has played a leadership role in establishing the *Black Creek Transportation Management Association* ([www.bcrma.org](http://www.bcrma.org)), a partnership involving employers in the North-West of Toronto (Bombardier, Knoll Furniture, Apotex, York University and the Ontario Ministry of Transportation), the North York and Vaughan Chambers of Commerce, the TTC, GO Transit, TEA and local and regional governments.

The Transportation Management Association concept should be replicated in other parts of the City.

**A**

**What Council Promised****What was Actually Done – 2001****Grade*****Green Fleets (1)***

Evaluate adopting a Green Fleet target to reduce smog causing fleet emissions by 50% by 2005.

This target hasn't been evaluated. Staff changes within the Fleets Services division has meant that several key Green Fleets promoters are no longer with the city, although there is some hope that the new Fleets Director will act on greening. Actions have been taken, but haven't been part of an overall implementation plan.

**D*****Green Fleets (2)***

Develop and implement a program to reduce emissions from City vehicles including:

- Replacing motorized vehicles with non-motorized alternatives and more efficient systems;
- Substituting currently used fuels with less polluting alternative fuels, increasing fuel efficiency and optimizing motor vehicle technology.

The creation of the Better Transportation Partnership (BTP), with a mandate to reduce greenhouse gases by actively supporting the City of Toronto's official goal of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 20% relative to 1990 levels by the year 2005, is a step in the right direction.

The BTP helped finance the City's recent purchase of 94 natural gas vehicles and two electric hybrids. Nevertheless, the Fleets Services division maintains approximately 5,000 vehicles and we need a plan to address the whole fleet. More needs to be done to reduce vehicle-use and promote vehicle replacement with non-fossil-fuel-dependent forms of transportation.

Council is to be applauded continuing its purchase of low-sulphur gasoline for City vehicles.

**B*****Public Transit***

Encourage the Toronto Transit Commission not to cut any more of their services and to develop a strategy for Smog Alert Days.

The TTC fare hike will reduce ridership and the Commission will be looking at service cuts in the Fall.

**D*****Cycling***

Implement the Toronto Bike Plan, which will:

- Double the number of bike trips in Toronto;
- Decrease the number of bicycle collisions and injuries.

The City approved the Toronto Bike Plan in July 2001, and hence we haven't graded it yet. The Toronto Bike Plan includes creating a comprehensive, 1,000 km long bikeway network and other measures to make Toronto more bicycle friendly.

The real challenge will be to secure the \$73 million required over the next ten years to put this plan into action.

***No Grade***

## Budget

### **Environmental Plan**

In April 2000, Council unanimously endorsed the Environmental Plan and its 66 recommendations. This Plan included elements addressing air quality, energy use and sustainable transportation.

The Chief Administrator's Office calculated that it would cost \$4 million in 2001 to begin implementing the Environmental Plan.

Only 1/16th of the Environmental Plan budget was approved. The \$4 million figure was cut to \$973,000 as part of the budget-cutting exercise. Of this, only \$250,000 was approved: \$200,000 was drawn from the Fleet Reserve funds to purchase equipment to reduce pesticides in City parks and walkways, and another \$50,000 was allocated to smog and pesticide reduction measures. The latter was matched by \$50,000 from the Toronto Atmospheric Fund. The Budget Advisory Committee asked Toronto Hydro to undertake \$287,000 in energy efficiency retrofits. Toronto Hydro, however, faces a conflict of interest – why invest its money in energy conservation which will result in lower sales to one of its major customers in the future. Without clear direction from Council, it is unlikely that these efficiency measures will be incorporated into the ongoing negotiations over the City's power purchase agreement.

Given that the City is already saving \$13 million per year in fuel costs due to energy efficiency measures undertaken since 1990, the City should aggressively pursue these measures directly through its Office of Energy Efficiency and earmark the potential \$22 million in additional savings to new smog- and greenhouse gas-reduction measures. Savings from conservation are based on Opportunities for Budget Cost Savings in the City of Toronto's Corporate Facilities report prepared by the International Centre for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) prepared for the City of Toronto.

**F-**

### **Economic Benefits**

Develop a Plan to monitor economic benefits that result from City's actions.

The Ontario Medical Association has calculated that air pollution costs the Toronto economy at least \$128 million per year in lost productivity and that Toronto-area hospitals spend over \$150 million to treat the victims of air pollution.

No one knows how much the City spends on smog-reduction. In 2000, the Toronto Atmospheric Fund calculated that Toronto spends \$0.77 per capita on smog and climate change measures, compared to \$1.29 per capita in Vancouver, \$1.63 in Ottawa and \$4.53 in Los Angeles.

Many smog reduction measures will save money due to reduced fuel costs. Tracking reductions and the economic savings associated with them is vital, yet no such plan has been developed. The ICLEI report cited above is a good first step, but more needs to be done.

**D**

### **Public Transit**

Council committed to funding 20% of public transit operating costs.

While the TTC's budget wasn't cut this year, for the first time in many years, riders are paying 83% of the TTC's operating costs. Toronto's public transit system receives less governmental support than any other major city in North America. Renewed investment and improved service on the TTC and other forms of public transit are a critical part of any smog reduction strategy.

**D**

## Inter-governmental Relations

***Develop legislation, policies, programs and partnerships with business, other levels of government, non-governmental organizations, individuals and international agencies required to implement the Anti-Smog Blueprint.***

The second Toronto Smog Summit, which took place in June 2001 and involved the participation of federal Environment Minister David Anderson, federal Transportation Minister David Collonette, Ontario Minister of the Environment Elizabeth Witmer and Toronto Deputy Mayor Case Ootes was a significant step toward raising the profile of smog and involving all levels of government in developing solutions.

**A**

The Medical Officer of Health's reports on transboundary air pollution, sulphur in diesel fuel, and the Nanticoke and Lakeview generating station have been very important in keeping this issue on the public agenda.

Unfortunately, the provincial government has chosen to promote smog by:

- Refusing to pay their share of public transit;
- Promoting new highway construction and new urban sprawl;
- Reneging on their promise to convert the Lakeview coal-fired generating station to high-efficiency natural gas;
- Proposing an emissions trading system that will increase pollution.

***To request Ontario Hydro reduce emissions at the coal burning Lakeview Generating Plant on forecast smog days.***

The Lakeview plant is the 6th largest source of air pollution in Canada. It is still used on smog days when demand for electricity is high due to the use of air conditioners, although it is one of the last plants to be brought on-line.

**B+**

The Toronto Board of Health is to be commended for asking the province to switch coal-fired electricity generating stations to high efficiency gas burners. The municipal governments of Toronto and Mississauga played a key role in convincing the provincial government to convert Lakeview to natural gas from coal starting in 2005. But the Province has reneged on its March 2001 commitment to switch to high efficiency turbines. Using old technology, the emissions of greenhouse gases and nitrogen oxides would be approximately two and four times greater respectively than the emissions from new, high-efficiency natural gas turbines.

The City does, however, need better follow-up on its policy recommendations to the provincial and federal governments.

## Smog Alert Response Plans

***On forecast smog days, the City reduce its own emissions by ensuring that City staff suspend the following polluting activities:***

- Pesticide spraying;
- The use of gasoline powered equipment (lawn mowers, leaf blowers, etc.);
- Use of oil-based paints, solvents, cleaners and other volatile organic compound (VOC) emitting products;
- All non-essential vehicle use;
- Street sweeping;
- Re-fuelling for all non-essential vehicles, at least until after dark;
- All road re-surfacing activities;
- Reset air conditioning units in municipal offices to warmer temperatures and allow staff to dress casually.

The record number of smog days in 2001 have caused problems for the City's Smog Alert Response Plan, as it has become increasingly difficult to delay 'regular' activities. Given that the most recent health studies show that there is no 'safe' level for the primary air pollutants and that significant health effects are experienced at levels will below those that trigger an air quality alert, the emphasis must now be on reducing air pollution everyday.

Rather than attempting to change behaviour only when a smog day is predicted, the City should:

- phase out the cosmetic use of pesticides on municipally and privately-owned land within the City limits;
- ban gasoline powered leaf-blowers and develop a trade-in program to promote cleaner lawn-mowers;
- always use low-VOC paint;
- implement a Green Fleets strategy to reduce vehicle use;
- use parking revenues to subsidize employee transit passes;
- permanently reset air conditioning units and encourage staff to dress appropriately.

c

***To examine reducing incineration at Main Sewage Treatment Plant, specifically on smog alert days.***

The incinerator was scheduled to be shut down permanently on January 2001, but has been delayed because the City's biosolids program is not yet fully operational. The City's focus on 'burn or pellitize' for sewage sludge is too narrow.

f

## Public Education and Communications

***Launch a public education campaign on smog.***

The City's social marketing campaign, *20/20 – The Way to Clean Air*, has been delayed by over a year due to a lack of funds. The initial work and focus group testing for the campaign has begun, but implementation of the campaign cannot be achieved without significant new resources.

**C**

The City has produced a new factsheet on air pollution and bus shelter ads, but the public education campaign needs to go beyond awareness raising and work with other partners to promote behavioural changes which reduce emissions.

***Promote the City's actions and challenge Toronto businesses to follow suit.***

Enbridge Consumers Gas and Toronto Hydro are the only companies to launch corporate smog plans to date. The Clean Air Partnership, an arm of the Toronto Atmospheric Fund, should take the lead in more actively engaging corporations in smog prevention.

**C**

***Develop a publicly accessible, manageable, and interpretable data base on air quality sources from beyond Toronto, ambient air quality within Toronto, and specific source problems within Toronto.***

The budget for this database was cut as part of the Environmental Plan process. The City is working with the provincial Ministry of the Environment on a database, but it is proceeding slowly.

**F**

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