



Adapting to Climate Change in Toronto

Decision-Makers Workshop

June 26, 2006 · Metro Hall

This was the second workshop organized by the Clean Air Partnership (CAP) to discuss the impacts of climate change on the City of Toronto and to address what actions could be taken to reduce the city's vulnerability.

CAP's Adaptation Project

The workshop is one of several tasks undertaken for the Adapting to Climate Change in Toronto project, which also includes:

- A scan of the likely impacts of climate change on Toronto;
- A report on adaptation strategies in other cities, highlighting lessons for Toronto; and
- A menu of adaptation strategies for two key areas of climate impact on Toronto.

June 26, 2006 Workshop

More than 50 representatives from the City of Toronto and other municipalities, the provincial and federal governments, utilities, the insurance industry and other organizations participated in CAP's June workshop. The morning agenda included the following presentations:

Introduction to the Adapting to Climate Change Project

Eva Ligeti, Executive Director of CAP presented an outline of CAP's adaptation project and its collaborators.

Climate Change Impacts

Don MacIver, Director of the Adaptation & Impacts Research Group, Environment Canada provided a wide-ranging review of the expected impacts of climate change, the contributions of science to understanding these impacts and the implications for municipal infrastructure and biodiversity.

A Scan of Climate Change Impacts on Toronto

Ireen Wieditz, a CAP Researcher, presented a summary of the findings of CAP's popular new publication, *A Scan of Climate Change Impacts on Toronto*.

Adapt Now!

Ian Burton, Scientist Emeritus, Meteorological Service of Canada and Lead Author, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, made the case that climate change adaptation is everybody's business, and urged workshop participants to incorporate climate change impacts into current planning and programs.

King County's Adaptation Program

Doug Howell, Special Projects Manager, King County (Washington) Climate Initiative, described the development of King County's climate programs, and the current status of its adaptation initiatives, including a forthcoming book to guide other local governments in the development of an adaptation program.

Lessons from Early Adapters

Jennifer Penney, Director of Research, CAP, discussed the findings of CAP's research into adaptation programs undertaken by some leading international cities (report forthcoming). Adaptation programs in London, New York and Halifax were highlighted.

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In the afternoon, workshop participants broke into three groups to discuss the following questions:

- How to engage the City on adaptation issues;
- Structures that would facilitate this work;
- Skills and knowledge needed to incorporate adaptation into City planning and programs.

workshops and conferences as these are not being used to their full potential

Engaging the City on Adaptation Issues

Participants identified several strategies to engage the City on climate change adaptation to include:

- Identify and cultivate a high-level champion who will work to get adaptation onto the agenda
- Hold a major conference in Toronto to generate public and media interest and concern
- Educate City staff and politicians, focusing on the potential costs of not adapting to climate change
- Develop a pilot project that highlights various adaptation strategies (ie. water management, planting for a warmer climate)

Structures to Facilitate Climate Change Adaptation within the City

Participants suggested the following models and partnerships to support the City in its effort to engage in climate change adaptation:

- Seek avenues within the current administrative structure, such as the Roundtable, to bring climate change issues to the fore
- Establish a committee of Council to address climate change issues and coordinate action amongst departments
- Develop partnerships with conservation authorities, non-governmental organizations, health advocacy groups, and universities to broaden and build support for climate change adaptation
- Work with industry, business, and labour groups to devote resources to climate change research, mitigation and adaptation

Skills and Knowledge Needed to Incorporate Adaptation Planning into City Planning and Programs

The following gaps in skills and knowledge were identified as barriers to further action on adaptation at the City level:

- City staff and politicians need more locally specific information (with a higher degree of certainty) about the impacts of climate change
- City staff need to develop skills on how to incorporate climate risk assessments into their programs and planning
- Insufficient use of tools that already exist (NRCan's Adaptation Guide, C-CIARN tools). Participants recommended more

Next Steps

In the fall of 2006, the Clean Air Partnership will be working with advisory groups to develop a menu of adaptation strategies for two key areas:

- Heat
- Urban trees and green spaces.

The advisory groups will include City staff who will help to identify areas of vulnerability, take stock of what action is currently being taken to deal with climate and weather, and identify ways in which further climate change adaptation strategies can be incorporated into programs and planning.

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