

Committee of the Whole

City of Vaughan
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May 02, 2022.

Re: Committee of the Whole Agenda Item 6.1 – Sustainability Metrics Program Update

Dear City of Vaughan Committee of the Whole Members,

The Atmospheric Fund (TAF) is a regional climate agency based in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) supporting a net-zero future. TAF is pleased to see Vaughan moving forward with its Sustainability Metrics Program. The program follows Vaughan's 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration. Given that buildings account for [46% of carbon emissions](#) in York Region, it is vital to ensure future buildings are designed to meet energy efficiency targets that account for the future impacts of the climate crisis and population growth.

We thank staff for engaging us and for their important work on developing these metrics. We are encouraged to see the harmonization of metrics across multiple cities and the use of absolute targets.

However, as drafted, **Vaughan's Sustainability Metrics program will have little or no impact on the city's carbon emissions.** The critical issue is that there are no minimum energy or carbon performance requirements. Without strengthening these metrics, Vaughan will not be able to reduce its carbon emissions from buildings before 2030 or achieve other city priorities, like improved health and resilience.

Excluding minimum energy and carbon requirements puts Vaughan at risk of misaligning with surrounding jurisdictions such as Brampton as well as other leading jurisdictions such as Whitby, Ajax, and Toronto. As a result, developers will be subject to inconsistent standards in the region. Alignment with other municipalities in Peel and York regions to harmonize sustainability metrics would greatly benefit all stakeholders. **TAF strongly recommends Vaughan set minimum energy performance requirements.** Making energy efficiency requirements voluntary will not lead to significant emissions reductions, undermining the broader purpose of the Sustainability Metrics program.

TAF recommends implementing scheduled updates for the program, similar to Brampton's. The City of Brampton intends to increase its energy efficiency requirements in 2024 and 2028. Other jurisdictions, such as Whitby and Toronto, also have scheduled updates outlined in their green standards. Publishing a clear update schedule will allow for industry to adjust to the new requirements and prepare for increased efficiency requirements over the coming years.

TAF also recommends strengthening the program's EV charging targets. The program's EV charging targets lag behind those outlined in other leading GTHA green standards. Ajax recently set a minimum standard for EV ready parking of 50% for mid- to high-rise residential projects with over 20 parking spots. Toronto similarly set requirements of 100% EV ready parking spots in all new residential developments. We recommend the city report back to Council in 2023 on the possibility of setting a more ambitious EV charging requirement to keep Vaughan aligned with leading jurisdictions in the GTHA. A recent [study](#) found that it is about **five times more expensive** to retrofit buildings for EV charging than to include it at the point of construction. Further, the federal government announced in its [2022 budget](#) that it plans to introduce an EV sales mandate requiring 20% of new light-duty vehicle sales be zero emission vehicles by 2026 and 60% by 2030. Thus, future buildings must be built to accommodate the coming EV transition.

TAF strongly recommends altering Vaughan's proposed Sustainability Metrics to include mandatory minimum energy performance standards. These standards are essential to ensuring an effective policy that will reduce carbon emissions. Given the urgency of climate change, now is the time to act and take bold leadership. TAF is eager to support Vaughan in updating the City's Sustainability Metrics as you undertake this exciting project. If you have any questions, we're happy to help.

Sincerely,

Bryan Purcell



VP of Policy and Programs
The Atmospheric Fund

About the Atmospheric Fund

The Atmospheric Fund (TAF) is a regional climate agency that invests in low-carbon solutions for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) and helps scale them up for broad implementation. Please note that the views expressed in this submission do not necessarily represent those of the City of Toronto or other GTHA stakeholders. We are experienced leaders and collaborate with stakeholders in the private, public and non-profit sectors who have ideas and opportunities for reducing carbon emissions. Supported by endowment funds, we advance the most promising concepts by investing, providing grants, influencing policies and running programs. We're particularly interested in ideas that offer benefits in addition to carbon reduction such as improving people's health, creating local jobs, boosting urban resiliency, and contributing to a fair society.