



Climate Action

2024 Parkdale Community Planning Study

Assets (4)

1. Local network of community gardens fostering resident engagement with climate action
2. Foundations for equitable and climate-resilient development
3. Community climate actions and funding opportunities
4. Climate-forward political representatives

Needs (3)

1. Critical, anti-capitalist climate action
2. Protections for tenants and unhoused communities from the impacts of extreme weather
3. Coordinated local climate action efforts through coalition building

Directions (5)

1. Establish a climate coalition or hub in Parkdale with a focus on organizing and building solidarity with Indigenous-led climate leadership in Parkdale
2. Advocate for climate-resilient and equitable building standard policies
3. Organize and educate landlords on pathways

for sustainable building retrofits

4. Co-create a local climate emergency response plan
5. Advocate for sustainable transportation options

Climate action is the work of addressing the root causes of the climate crisis. It is well-documented that climate change disproportionately impacts working-class and racialized communities who experience the systemic implications of climate change that cut across housing, food sovereignty, transportation, and exposure to hazardous pollution. Some climate interventions can alienate working-class community members and contribute to displacement. Parkdale is the site of corporate-owned rental properties that are being gentrified by renovations, a tactic used to attract higher income tenants. Investing in retrofits and energy-efficient technologies can be used as part of this tactic to increase rental prices and displace working-class tenants.

To achieve climate justice, Parkdale community members spoke of the need to build new institutions grounded in stewardship and trust that enable the collective ownership of land, labour, and resources. There are existing strategies that local residents and organizations developed that can inform equitable and climate-resilient development processes for new and existing buildings. For instance, the *Parkdale Community Benefits Framework* outlines clear targets and demands for development proposals to consider, including investments in green space and climate retrofits. Another useful resource is Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust's *Social Procurement and Sustainability Action Framework*, which outlines a strategy to achieve community benefits through the management of its portfolio of 85 community-owned properties. It is critical that we outline specific demands for the percentage of decent work that should be allocated towards Parkdale residents when installing energy-efficient technologies in Parkdale properties.

The highest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Toronto are buildings (57%) with transportation (33%) coming in second. A majority of these transportation emissions (70%) comes from fuel-powered personal vehicles, indicating that trips taken in personal vehicles must transition to walking, cycling, or transit as much as possible. Data indicates that better cycling infrastructure in Parkdale, including safer connections to downtown, would increase cycling uptake. Funding for sustainable transportation options like public transit needs to be advocated for, especially free transit for those who need it the most.

Many South Parkdale residents live in older buildings that are unfit for extreme heat. Parkdale can revitalize PARC's Heat Registry of heat-vulnerable members that will enable organizations to reach out to individuals and provide support during heat waves. Risks of extreme cold are also concerning for unhoused communities, with Toronto's lack of safe indoor spaces contributing to risks of violence, poor health outcomes, and death for already marginalized groups, especially during extreme weather events. Developing a climate emergency response plan is a tangible way to build climate resilience.

The new Parkdale Hub at Cowan Avenue and Queen Street West is an opportunity for Parkdale residents to create and convene a climate hub, which can be leveraged to build greater climate action engagement. Community gardens have also been shown to be an easy entry point into climate change work by nurturing resident leadership, fostering climate-related discussion, and offering connections to community, land, and food. An engaged neighbourhood and political representation are key components of working towards achieving an

equitable, climate-resilient city.

Nyara, left, and her daughter, Sauda, right, at their garden plot at West Lodge Park Community Garden.

