



Equity and Municipal Climate Change Policy

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Agenda

1. Disproportionately Exposed/Vulnerable Communities and Climate Equity
2. Municipal Powers
3. Equity Frameworks
4. Stakeholder Engagement
5. Mapping
6. Extreme Heat Measures
7. Green Space Measures
8. Next Steps

Project Goal

1

Consolidate past student research on municipal climate change policy and equity

2

Create a toolkit of municipal “best practices” that address equity in climate change policies

3

Identify where CELA and partner clinics can advocate for equity in municipal climate change policy



Disproportionately Exposed/Vulnerable Communities

- The elderly
- Children
- Individuals with low socio-economic status
- Individuals with pre-existing medical conditions
- Racialized individuals
- Individuals without housing
- People with disabilities
- Immigrant communities
- Indigenous peoples
- Outdoor workers



Climate Equity

“The principle of **fairness** in burden sharing and is the basis for understanding how the impacts and responses to climate change, including costs and benefits, are **distributed** in and by society in more or less equal ways. It is often aligned with ideas of equality, fairness and justice and applied with respect to equity in the responsibility for, and distribution of, climate impacts and policies across society, generations, and gender, and in the sense of who participates and controls the processes of decision-making” (IPCC, 2018).

Municipal Powers and Responsibilities

- **Ontario's Health Protection and Promotion Act and the Healthy Environments and Climate Change Guideline, 2018** calls for Public Health Units to assess, monitor and mitigate climate change health impacts
- **The Municipal Act (and City of Toronto Act)**
 - **Scope of powers (section. 8 (1)):** "The powers of a municipality under this or any other Act shall be interpreted broadly so as to confer **broad authority on the municipality** to enable the municipality to govern its affairs as it considers appropriate and to enhance the municipality's ability to respond to municipal issues."
 - **By-laws (section 10(2) and 11(2)):** municipalities "may pass by-laws...respecting the...economic, social and environmental well-being of the municipality, including respecting climate change" and "health, safety and well-being of persons."
- **R. v. Hydro-Quebec, SCC**
 - Para 127: "the protection of the environment is a major challenge of our time. It is an international problem, one that requires action by governments at all levels"
- **Spraytech v. Hudson, SCC**
 - Para 3: "...law-making and implementation are often best achieved at a level of government that is not only effective, but also closest to the citizens affected and thus most responsive to their needs, to local distinctiveness, and to population diversity."





Equity Frameworks

- Few municipalities have developed an equity framework in climate change decision-making
- **Examples:**
 - City of Vancouver's Climate Emergency Action Plan
 - City of Halifax's Climate Action Plan (HalifACT)
 - City of Richmond Hill's Community Energy and Emissions Plan



Equity Frameworks

[City of Vancouver Climate Energy Action Plan](#)

- Identifies “Equity Implications” and “Equity Milestones”
- Developing equity indicators
- Consulted with the Climate and Equity Working Group
- Developing a Climate Justice Charter

[City of Halifax’s Climate Action Plan \(HalifACT\)](#)

- ”Equity” is a guiding principle

[City of Richmond Hill’s Community Energy and Emissions Plan](#)

- Equity is a co-benefit indicator



Equity Frameworks

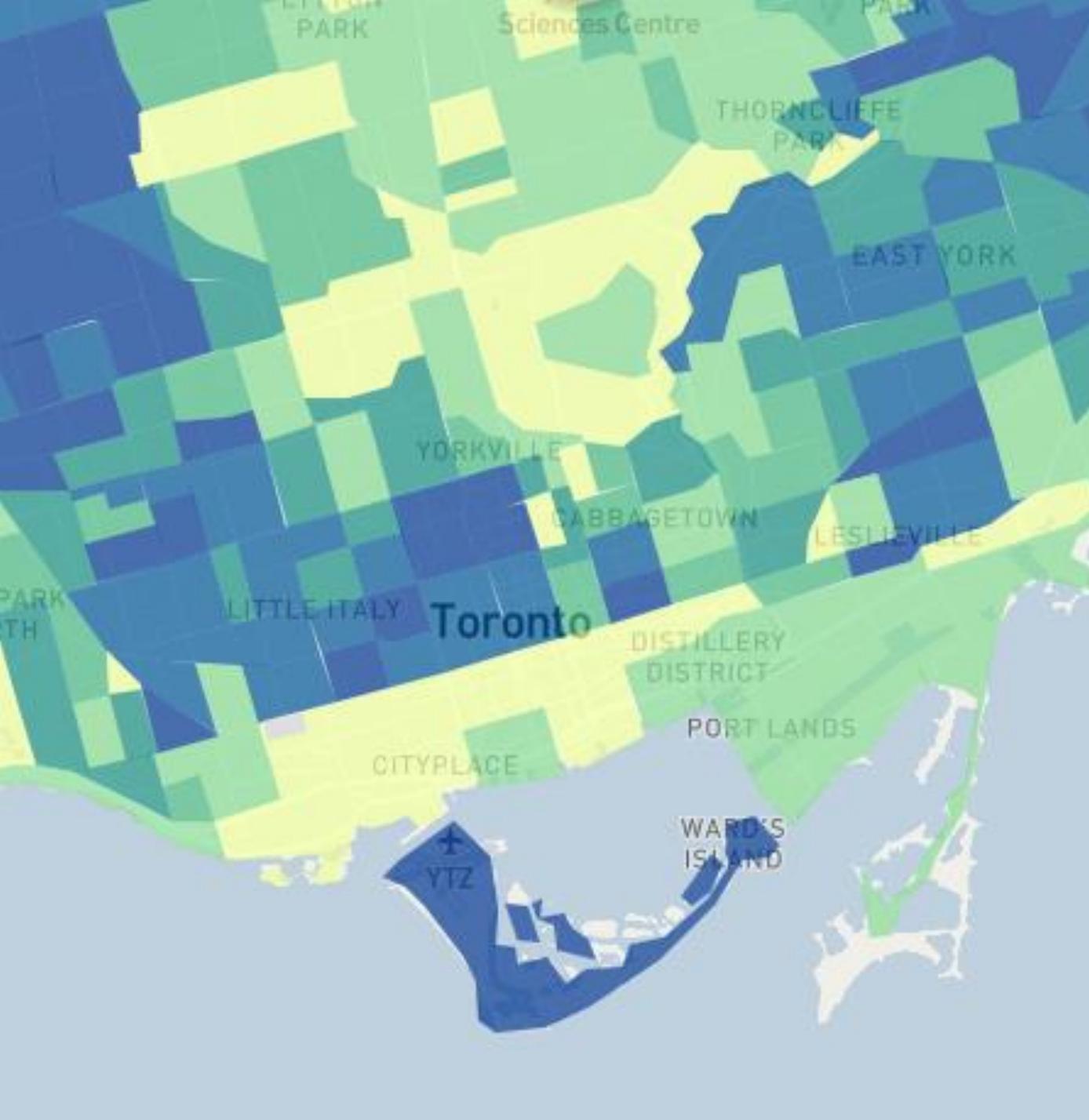
[Applied Economic Clinic's Social Equity Framework](#)

- Provides guidance on how to consider social equity in climate planning
- Recommended as a starting point to meet climate and equity needs
- Includes an “Equity Checklist”, “Dimensions” and “Pitfalls”

Community Engagement

- Engage and consult with equity-seeking individuals to ensure that climate action/adaptation planning adequately addresses their needs and concerns
- **Example:** The City of Vancouver a Climate and Equity Working Group for their Climate Emergency Action Plan report; The City of Ottawa's Ambassadors Working Group for the (draft) Official Plan





Mapping

- Spatially mapping risk areas and vulnerable neighbourhoods can significantly inform municipal decision-making and set priorities for adapting and mitigating to climate change (i.e., cooling centre locations, green space priorities, energy retrofits, etc.)
 - **Example:** City of Ottawa's [Neighbourhood Equity Index \(NEI\)](#)
 - **Example:** The Canadian Urban Sustainability Practitioners' [Energy Poverty and Equity Explorer](#) tool

Extreme Heat

- Increased heat-related deaths and illnesses predicted in the future
- Vulnerable populations include young children and infants, outdoor workers, people who are active outdoors, those without the financial or social supports to protect themselves from the heat (i.e., houseless individuals), those with pre-existing health conditions



Extreme Heat

City of Mississauga, Adequate Temperature By-Law 0110-2018:

- S. 1 - “adequate and suitable cooling” means air temperature in the dwelling unit that does not exceed 26 degrees Celsius (26°C)

Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 629, Property Standards 629

- § 629-38. Heating and air conditioning
F. All air-conditioning systems shall be operated from June 2 to September 14 so as to maintain an indoor temperature of not more than 26 degrees Celsius.



Extreme Heat

City of Mississauga, Adequate Temperature By-Law 0110-2018:

- 4. (1) Every landlord of a rented or leased dwelling unit shall maintain adequate and suitable cooling in all areas of the dwelling unit.
- (2) Subsection 4(1) **does not apply** if:
 - (a) the rented or leased dwelling unit **is not equipped or furnished with an air conditioning system or unit**;
 - (b) a landlord and tenant **have expressly agreed** that the rented or leased dwelling unit will not be air conditioned by or at the expense of the landlord; or
 - (c) a tenant is able to directly regulate the temperature such that adequate and suitable cooling can be provided and maintained and such regulation of the temperature by the tenant has been enabled, if necessary, by the landlord.



Extreme Heat

Measures can include:

- Establish a vulnerable persons registry to proactively check on vulnerable persons during extreme heat events
 - **Example:** Durham Public Health's partnership with community partners and local municipalities
- Target outreach to vulnerable persons during extreme heat events
 - **Example:** City of Toronto's partnership with Fred Victor to engage with those experiencing homelessness; Sudbury's distribution of water to vulnerable populations with Salvation Army/Red Cross





Green Spaces

- Urban heat island effect
- Disadvantaged neighbourhoods tend to contain “less overall vegetation cover, less public parkland, fewer street trees, and lower plant species richness and vegetation abundance” (Shanahan et al., 2015)
- Green spaces can reduce health disparities for people living in vulnerable neighbourhoods



Green Spaces

Sample measures include:

- Incorporate equity as a key indicator/criterion during urban forest management planning/tree planting prioritization.
 - **Example:** City of Ottawa's Urban Forest Management Plan
- By-laws that require property owners who wish to renovate their roofs/build new roofs to install green roofs
 - **Example:** Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie's (East Montreal) zoning by-law on green, white, and/or highly reflective roofs; City of Toronto's Green Roof By-law



Next Steps

- Research more municipal policies/best practices that incorporate equity
- Further outreach with municipalities/public health units
- Follow-up on municipal policies to determine effectiveness
- Understand how equity can be better quantified for benefits/shortcomings (i.e., heat death tracking)

Contact us

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EQUITY. JUSTICE. HEALTH.



Thank you!