

2024 CITY OF KINGSTON CLIMATE REPORT CARD

In summer of 2024, a coalition of Kingston community groups worked with non-profit organizations and independent experts to analyze the City of Kingston's track record of action and inaction on the climate crisis.

This report card summarizes what we learned: where Kingston is making progress, and where it is falling short of its own commitments and the scientific consensus on action.

For more information and upcoming events, visit climatecoalition.ca



INADEQUATE

CLIMATE TARGETS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Summary: Climate science is clear: the world needs to reduce carbon emissions 50% by 2030, but Kingston City Council is only targeting 30% and has repeatedly deferred deciding whether to raise that target.

Action Needed: Council should immediately adopt binding, science-based targets for GHG emissions cuts. They should treat carbon budgeting as seriously as financial budgeting, apply a climate lens to all decision-making, and fulfill the commitments they have already made.



PROMISING

TRANSPORTATION

Summary: Kingston Transit has purchased electric buses and expanded transit routes, but more support for active transit, improved access, and car-free streets are key to cutting emissions and improving liveability.

Action Needed:

Expand fare-free transit, increase car-free and one-way streets with more room for safe cycling, accelerate municipal fleet electrification, and improve bike and active transit pathways.



HARMFUL

VULNERABLE PEOPLES

Summary: City Council has aggressively displaced people who are unhoused from public areas. They have also stalled action on a proposed adequate temperature bylaw to protect tenants from extreme heat.

Action Needed:

- Cease displacement of people without houses; people will stop living in encampments when housing is available to meet their needs.
- Pass an adequate temperature bylaw for all rental units.



GREEN SPACES & BIODIVERSITY

Summary: City is supporting community and pollinator gardens, tree planting, and is exploring “shovel-worthy” planning. More investment, improved tree protection, and a holistic blue-green approach is needed. Natural assets should be tracked in municipal asset management plan.

Action Needed: Holistic green-blue infrastructure, protection of natural assets including trees, natural areas, wetlands, and forest stands. Endorse “3-30-300” tree equity. Dark skies policy to limit light pollution. Local food procurement policies to support sustainable agriculture in our region.

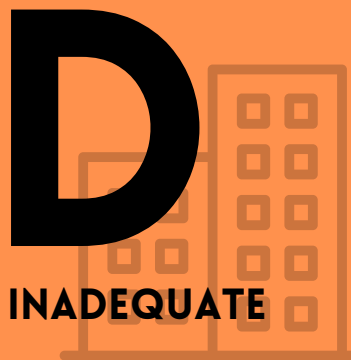


PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL ADVOCACY

Summary: The City often blames provincial and federal policy for lack of action. Council has passed resolutions against fossil gas plants and subsidies, examples of leadership. But more is needed, especially from the Mayor, since climate was not a priority in his pre-budget request.

Action Needed:

Council should speak loudly and clearly for improved climate legislation and funding, build credibility by proactively meeting its own climate goals, and set a precedent by adequately regulating the private sector.



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Summary: Urban planning has been shaped by the needs of developers, not the needs of present and future residents. Some progress has been made on energy retrofits, but Better Homes Kingston is a federally funded program. Council is now considering allowing more costly urban sprawl.

Action Needed:

Assess developments through a climate justice lens; stop making exceptions for developers constructing very tall buildings; do not expand the urban boundary, focus on smart densification; ban gas in new builds.



REGULATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Summary: The City of Kingston as an organization represents a small part of Kingston’s overall emissions, but that’s what Council has focused on. They have failed to exercise regulatory powers to reduce emissions in residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional settings.

Action Needed:

Ban fossil gas connections in new developments. Set higher standards for green building. Demonstrate leadership by meeting or surpassing science-based targets so other sectors will follow.

The Kingston Climate Justice Coalition’s current membership includes:

350 Kingston; 50by2030Kingston.ca; Healthcare Providers Against Poverty; Just Futures Kingston; National Farmers Union Local 316; OPIRG Kingston; Providence Centre for JPIC; Queen’s Backing Action on the Climate Crisis; Seniors for Climate Action Now!; Yellow Bike Action.

Follow us on Instagram and Facebook at @climatecoalitionca and visit climatecoalition.ca to get involved!