Dan Leckie Forum 2015
Transformation Toronto 2050 – Mapping the Pathway to an 80% Reduction

Group Advice Received in Response to the Breakout Group Questions

What advice do you have on the best way to undertake a long-range greenhouse gas modelling exercise?

Make it a Process

- Establish a good baseline (a base year picture and/or a projected business as usual scenario)
- Get an accurate picture
- Identify some "game-changers"
- Identify gaps in data and in activity that need filling
- Get story-tellers involved to identify and re-tell the "stories" the data model is revealing
- Ensure that there is a feedback method to allow for continuous improvement of the model/data inputs

Be Mindful of Scope

- Retain a consciousness of the implications of "upstream" or full lifecycle emissions impacts
- Current GHG inventories don't look at consumption but this aspect is important
- Be conscious of how local circumstances/demands may change
- Integrate models regionally and with other types of models – like economic models

Integrate Cost-Benefit Analysis

- Track flows of money to be able to make a good business case for emission reduction options
- Target key GHG emission areas – make a business case for addressing these even if the cost is high

Link with Other Models/Initiatives

- Engage academia and large corporations – look at their models and try to synergize
- Link adaptation to mitigation
- Access others' intelligence on what software, models, techniques – ie there Ted Sheldon of the BC Climate Action Secretariat has peer-reviewed a variety of different GHG modelling tools.
- Seek data compatibility to other cities – Global City Indicators

Take an Incremental Approach

- Take a "layer cake" approach – get an adequate data picture to reveal key priorities, then use this to "seed" dialogue and engagement/community conversations, and then improve the data and deepen the analysis as you go, adding in or comparing data from different sources to draw the full picture.
- Do the GHG modelling sector by sector

Accept the Inherent Imperfection of Modelling

- Acknowledge the imperfection of models and then embrace the ambiguous aspects of the exercise as part of the overall process
- "All models are wrong, but some are useful." – George E. Box
- Don't get too hung up on specific details of the data – do the best with what you have – consider how much data refinement is needed to draw a clear directional picture – then refine over time

What advice do you have on the best way to integrate analysis of the impacts of low-carbon scenarios on other urban objectives, such as public health, mobility, prosperity, social justice?

Integration is a Must

- Do it
- Involve people early on
- Integrate GHG considerations into the city budgeting process, into city planning, city building, and resilience efforts

Make it Relevant to the Public

- Focus on economics
- Talk to "normal" people – average citizens – to get their views
- Be mindful of key issues – issues of importance to the broader public
- Meet people where they are – poverty agenda, Jobs
- Most people are focused on their own lives – we have to make this matter to them

But Don't Diminish the Importance of Addressing Climate Change

- Avoid overselling the co-benefits to GHG reduction – remind people of the inherent importance of carbon reduction
- Do cost-benefit analysis but be mindful that a lot of important elements are not quantifiable but still need to be acknowledged/valued in some way
- Figure out how to have a "grown-up" conversation about trade-offs
- Communicate trade-offs with story-telling

Take a Marketing Approach

- Do marketing campaigns

- Use language of emotion
- Leverage extreme weather as a motivator
- Don't visualize mitigation as "taking something away" – promote "eco-bling" instead

Invite/Incorporate Others' Experience

- Seek out lessons provided by others cities, especially around on-line models
- Make a web version of the modelling tool available /accessible to students/groups
- Integrate the work across cities

Who are the community stakeholders that should be engaged in developing and analyzing the scenarios?

- Public schools
- Media
- Academia
- Utilities
- MPs/MPPs
- Chambers of Commerce
- Other municipalities
- CFOs
- NGOs
- Champions
- Health
- Social Justice
- Those who may be opposed

What is the best way to mobilize community participation and knowledge-sharing?

- Identify high profile champions and engage them early
- Identify possible opponents and engage them early
- Curate the engagement – grease the wheels – be proactive
- Create "pods" of inter-disciplinary advisors to oversee various components of the work – but also create a mechanism to align all the various components
- Create focus groups or citizen panels to help reflect on solutions
- Make connections with current Mayoral priorities
- Get the public engaged to help build political support
- Go where people are rather than creating too many new entities
- Work with large corporations – especially those strongly identified with Toronto ie TD Bank or those companies with head offices in Toronto or who are planning to stay here for the long term – to share their foresighting data/info as "plug-ins" to the Transformation 2050 work – ensure integration of others' models with the design of the carbon model