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June 1, 2020

Whitby Council, Town of Whitby  
575 Rossland Road East  
Whitby, ON L1N 2M8

## RE: Whitby Green Standards

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

***The Atmospheric Fund (TAF) strongly supports the adoption of the proposed Whitby Green Standards, which will put Whitby on the pathway to near zero emissions in new construction.***

Staff have undertaken a robust research and consultation process over the past 18 months, culminating in the proposed Whitby Green Standards. The proposed standards respond to the Town's priorities as outlined in the Whitby Official Plan, as well as the commitments outlined in the Town's Climate Emergency Declaration. The Standards provide sound, evidence based minimum performance standards for new developments today, while laying out a roadmap that clearly signals the levels of sustainability performance that will be needed in the years ahead.

## The Importance of achieving Near Zero Emissions in New Construction

As Whitby continues to grow, it's imperative to get emissions from new construction under control if the Town is to reach its 2050 climate target. That's why ***one of the key commitments in Whitby's Climate Emergency Declaration is continuous improvement in sustainability guidelines for new development.***

Just how important is the near zero goal? While retrofitting existing buildings is a big priority as well, Whitby's population is projected to grow by over 30% by 2031, and to continue growing through 2050. That means a massive build-out of residential and commercial real-estate that must be highly energy efficient. ***If built to current standards, these future buildings would consume Whitby's entire 2050 carbon budget!***

Simply put, ***if Whitby does not transition to near zero emissions in new construction, any progress made in retrofitting existing homes and buildings will be offset by growth.*** That's why the number one action identified in the [Durham Community Energy Plan](#) is transitioning to near zero emissions in new construction through sustainable development standards.

## Creating a Pathway to Near Zero Emissions

TAF has a long history of collaboration with municipalities in developing green development standards. TAF has partnered with the City of Toronto on the development and refinement of its green development standards since they were first introduced in 2010. Over a decade of successful implementation, we have seen first-hand how municipal green standards can drive transformative change in sustainable development.

In preparation for the latest update, TAF and the City of Toronto commissioned a [global review of best practices](#) in energy and carbon standards for new construction. One of the key recommendations from that study was to develop a long-term vision and goals to guide the evolution of the standard and provide clear, long-term direction to industry.

The proposed Whitby Green Standards are based around this global best practice, embodied in the proposed four tiers of performance. The idea is to start with a vision of where we need to end up in terms of sustainability performance and work backwards from there in a series of ambitious yet achievable steps. ***With a series of targets and a clear timetable in place, the buildings industry will have the regulatory certainty it needs to focus on optimizing the technologies and design approaches to cost-effectively deliver a low carbon future.***

## Transitioning to a Performance Targets Approach

***One of the other key recommendations from our global review of best practices was to transition to the use of clear performance targets*** directly related to sustainability objectives. The proposed Whitby Green Standards also adopt this best practice, introducing absolute energy and climate performance targets as a compliance option in Tier 1 while transitioning to a fully target-based approach in higher tiers. This is a practical approach, allowing the industry the flexibility to transition to absolute performance targets at its own pace.

***Drawing on best practices from around the world, the Whitby Green Standards are based on a set of three performance metrics that are directly related to the Town's core objectives.***

- **Thermal Energy Demand Intensity** targets ensure buildings have better envelopes (i.e. walls, windows, and roofs), which will ***result in long-lasting energy savings and enhanced resiliency*** by extending the length of time buildings can remain habitable during power outages or HVAC system failures.
- **Total Energy Use Intensity** targets ensure ***lower overall energy use and costs*** across all building systems and ***enhanced affordability for owners and operators***.
- **Greenhouse Gas Intensity** targets encourage the use of lower carbon fuels while allowing flexibility to use natural gas as long as the total GHG target is achieved. ***Since the policy priority is achieving near zero emissions, GHG targets are absolutely critical.***

The shift from percentage above code to the proposed performance targets is absolutely critical to achieving predictable progress on Whitby's core objectives, and getting onto a pathway to near zero emissions. ***The proposed performance targets will result in enhanced resiliency, improved affordability, and most importantly reduced emissions.***

## **Green Development is Cost Effective and Will Generate Net Economic Benefits**

All four proposed performance tiers can be achieved using materials and technologies that are available on the market today. Buildings built to these standards will benefit from lower energy costs resulting in net lifecycle cost savings over the life of the buildings. Compliance with the standards will also reduce municipal costs in areas such as water and sewage infrastructure and solid waste collection and management. Additionally, ***all homes built to the proposed energy and climate standards will qualify for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Green Home mortgage insurance rebate program, creating instant savings for new home buyers!***

## **Conclusion**

New buildings approved today will be part of our region for the next century. Building them efficiently is far more cost effective than retrofitting them down the road. The proposed Whitby Green Standards will result in cost effective buildings with enhanced resiliency, lower energy costs, and dramatically reduced emissions. ***TAF strongly recommends adoption of the proposed Whitby Green Standards, which will put in place the first major policy to deliver on Whitby's Climate Emergency Declaration.***

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bryan Purcell', written in a cursive style.

Bryan Purcell  
Vice President of Policy and Programs  
The Atmospheric Fund