

From: Ben Cowie (London Bicycle Cafe)

Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2020 7:53 AM

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Subject: [EXTERNAL] This is the Climate Budget

Dear Mayor and Council,

As you know, we are in the midst of our civilization's greatest-ever emergency. The climate crisis has already affected many aspects of our economy, health, agricultural production, and natural environment, and we've only reached the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Without urgent action, climate disruption will result in the breakdown of our society, and threatens the extinction of our species in the near-term future. I only wish for my daughter's sake that the preceding sentence was hyperbole.

To avoid this fate, we have ten years to cut our emissions in half, and limited resources with which to achieve that goal. As you begin budget deliberations this month, please remember that time and rate of change are the critical variables in this problem: the faster and deeper we cut our emissions, the greater benefit to future generations. We do not have another year, let alone four years, to squander by thinking and studying how to take action. The answers are clear, and we have the technology today to achieve the required major reductions in emissions. To succeed or fail at meeting our climate goals is a choice, not just a dream. Put simply, this year's budget is our city's make or break moment that will determine whether we are taking the climate emergency seriously enough for children born today to have a future similar to what we've enjoyed ourselves.

The budget presented by staff in December was heartbreaking. It contains obvious examples of projects and spending that will increase our carbon emissions, with utter disregard for council's climate emergency declaration last May. For example more than \$200M is allocated to capital expenditures on road widening in the next four years. The science is clear that widening roads increases traffic congestion, and increases carbon emissions. As we have limited resources before the 2030 deadline to cut our emissions in half, that \$200M is badly needed for carbon reduction efforts, and will be fully wasted by expanding our road capacity for cars. We must never widen another road in this city until we have reached net zero emissions. We simply cannot afford that future path.

As you know, the Cycling Advisory Committee, of which I am a member, has also recommended a moratorium on all road widening, and an urgent investment in a city-wide network of protected bike lanes. By my math, and the math that's been done in other cities, there is not another single investment that would provide greater return on investment in terms of public health, economic growth, and mitigation of climate disruption than enabling children, seniors, and people who are not confident cyclists to choose a bike for short trips and errands. The data also shows that more than 50% of Londoners want to ride a bike more often for transportation, but don't, because they don't feel safe on our streets. By diverting the \$200M from road widening to cycling infrastructure, in four years we could transform our city and make real progress in the fight to preserve our civilization.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Dr Benjamin Cowie
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