

YMCA of Greater Toronto's Climate Resilience Strategy Sets an Example

Mantle's years-long climate advisory partnership has helped position North America's largest YMCA Association as an emerging climate leader.

CHALLENGE

For over 170 years, the YMCA of Greater Toronto (the Y) has been delivering programs to “ignite the potential in people, helping them grow, lead, and give back to their communities.”

With this mission and equally strong vision—“vibrant communities where everyone can shine”—it’s not surprising that it was almost a decade ago now that the Y started to look seriously at the impact of climate change.

Recognizing that climate change poses serious risks to our health and communities, the Y sought to adapt to the social, physical, and economic challenges of climate change, as well as provide leadership in developing community resilience throughout the Greater Toronto Area.

The Y engaged Mantle to help them answer the following questions:

1. How do we develop a climate strategy?
2. How can we enhance the climate resilience of our local communities?

APPROACH

Mantle has worked with the Y since 2015 when Mantle 314 (Mantle’s predecessor) helped the Y develop its first environmental targets to reduce emissions, water use, and land impacts.

From the beginning, this has been a true partnership.

Mantle first worked with the Y’s Senior Vice President of Property Development to create their **Climate Resiliency Strategy**. Published in 2019, this foundational document gave the Y a clear roadmap to guide all subsequent climate plans and activities.

One of the earliest initiatives was to enhance the Y’s owned and operated facilities to provide the community with safe and welcoming spaces, particularly in times of emergency or climate crisis.

Mantle plays a key role in helping the Y manage climate risk and identify new opportunities. This includes exploring resilient practices, clean technologies, and low-carbon, energy-efficient solutions. These are intended to serve the Y itself—and to be a model for other organizations across the Greater Toronto Area.

The YMCA at The David Braley Vaughan Centre is LEED Platinum certified. Using mass timber instead of concrete for the swimming pool ceiling reduced the building's embodied carbon even further.



Two new LEED Platinum-certified buildings opened in 2022, and more are in the queue.

SHALLOW
WATER
NO DIVING

Carbon reduction targets:

↓ **33%**
5 years ahead of schedule

↓ **54%**
by the end of 2023

RESULTS

With Mantle's ongoing counsel, the Y continues to make steady progress on its climate journey, setting an example of climate resilience for the local community.

Specific sustainability-related achievements include:

Carbon Reductions: The Y met its 33% reduction target for its owned and operated facilities five years ahead of schedule. By the end of 2023, the organization had reduced its carbon emissions by a whopping 54% relative to its 2008 baseline.

Green Building Certifications: Achieving LEED (Platinum or Gold) or ZCB (Zero Carbon Building) and meeting the latest Toronto Green Standards (TGS) are now standard requirements for all new YMCA-owned facilities. Two new LEED Platinum-certified buildings opened in 2022, and more are in the queue.

Community Resilience: Across its owned facilities, the Y has implemented clean technologies, with an initial focus on renewable backup power.

Cooper Koo Family YMCA is LEED Gold certified. It features an accessible green roof to offer 11,000 square feet of healthy outdoor space.

Reporting: Since establishing its Climate Resiliency Strategy, the Y has produced annual Climate & Sustainability Reports following the guidance of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Sustainability Reporting Standards and the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD).

Over time, Mantle has become the Y's trusted climate advisor and extended sustainability team.

Mantle continues to partner with the Y to:

- update its climate strategy, targets and reporting
- innovate with new low-carbon approaches to construction and property management
- keep the forward-looking organization up to date on emerging climate trends across policy, industry and technology.



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We build climate leaders.

