

**February 16, 2010**

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR COUNCILLOR SHELLEY CARROLL AT  
THE INTRODUCTION OF THE  
2010 STAFF RECOMMENDED OPERATING BUDGET**

Thank you Mr. Mayor

In a few moments we will hear from the City Manager and Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer as they introduce the staff recommended 2010 Operating Budget.

First some comments on behalf of the Committee. To achieve a balanced 2010 Operating Budget, staff have had to very carefully review all possible options for expenditure reductions and also take a look at those areas from which the City should legitimately be raising the revenues it needs to deliver the services we know residents and businesses want.

The City's budget is complex and several factors affect our ability to control costs and raise revenues.

I want to thank the staff that have worked for months on the various reviews, analysis and other preparations required to present the recommended budget before you today.

I also want to extend my greatest appreciation to the Members of the City's Budget Committee that have participated in the reviews of the various budgets and worked very diligently to examine potential cost savings and revenue options for the City, before providing their advice to staff.

As the City's costs continue to outpace our revenues – even after expenditures are reduced and controlled wherever possible – we are left with some tough choices.

The balancing strategy this year does not provide the City with the permanent solutions it needs to forever end what has become an annual budget issue. However, the mixture of solutions that the City will rely upon does protect residents and businesses from major service cuts or tax increases that go beyond what can reasonably be afforded.

The City has balanced its budget by cutting costs, making use of surplus revenues from cost controls, drawing on reserves and increasing revenues. These actions have been taken to ensure City services remain protected during a time when the world and our community continues to recover from the global financial crisis.

The recommended budget contains service level adjustments. However, wherever possible the staff recommendations seek to minimize disruption to residents and to business.

The City has done considerable work to reduce costs, absorb annual inflationary increases and find efficiencies in how it delivers services. The City has achieved several significant elements of its plan to resolve the annual operating budget shortfall. As this year's public budget process begins we will continue to examine how best to deliver the services our residents and businesses most want and still remain affordable and competitive.

The recommended budget maintains Toronto's support to the business community in particular. This support has been particularly strong over the past several years and Council's programs demonstrate the importance we have placed in ensuring the vitality of our business community.

This is the start of the public operating budget deliberation process.

Members of the public are invited to let the Budget Committee or their local Councillor know their thoughts about the proposed budget.

We will hold TWO public meetings this year to hear directly from the public. They will be held on March 1 and 2 here at City Hall and details about the meetings are available on the City's website or by calling 311 – anytime of the day or night. The City is placing several advertisements in community, neighbourhood and ethnic media to inform residents about the public meeting dates.

Members of Council will also have several opportunities to participate in the process.

In addition, staff will be providing all Members of Council with a presentation kit to use for Councillors that wish to make presentations on the budget within their wards. As always I am happy to attend any of these meetings.

The recommended budget contains many reductions to spending and other efficiency measures. Given the need to consider reductions in all areas of the City's budget I will be recommending to Budget Committee that Councillor office

budgets be reduced by 5%. While the total amount that would be saved by such a measure is not the single most significant savings in the budget - it is an important contribution to the City's overall budget reduction strategy.

All those things being said, I will now turn it over to City Manager Mr. Pennachetti.