

## NEWS RELEASE

### Widespread support for bold action and new investments in Budget 2016

**TORONTO** (December 14, 2015) - On the eve of the 2016 Toronto Budget release, residents and city-building organizations across Toronto have come together to urge City Council to implement the city's recently adopted Poverty Reduction Strategy and kick-start action in four priority areas: jobs, children, housing and transit.

[In a letter](#) signed by leaders from over 50 civic organizations, including United Way Toronto & York Region, CivicAction, Toronto Foundation, **and endorsed by the Toronto Region Board of Trade**, groups urged Mayor John Tory and members of Toronto City Council to move on 49 recommendations that will advance the city's Poverty Reduction Strategy. The recommendations came from hundreds of residents and community groups taking part in consultations through the Commitment 2 Community coalition and other networks, and by people who are seeing the impact of poverty on the ground and know what it's going to take to tackle it.

Implementing these actions in 2016 would have concrete outcomes, including:

- Providing supportive housing for 1,000 individuals and families and making rents affordable for 7,000 households at risk of homelessness.
- Providing access to subsidized childcare for 1,500 children and families.
- Freezing adult fares until a low-income transit pass is introduced in 2017.
- Ensuring that people delivering city services, either directly or through contractors, have decent, stable jobs.
- Creating opportunity for people with lived experience to guide and work in city programs to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

[As city councillors debate the budget, community leaders say it is critical that funding for poverty reduction build on programs that serve our communities, without cutting to the proven, effective services we need. City government should continue to work with the private sector, labour groups, and community organizations to restore hope, fairness, and opportunity for everyone in our city.](#)

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*Our thanks to CNW Group for sponsoring this announcement.*

**For more information, please contact:**

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## **What business and community leaders and advocates are saying**

- “Improving the economic success of everyone and creating stronger communities are crucial to the success of the Toronto region’s economy. Poverty reduction is a critical ingredient of a prosperous Toronto region where no one is left behind.” Janet De Silva, President and CEO, Toronto Region Board of Trade.
- “United Way research shows there is a growing divide within our city. Bold, collaborative action is needed to unite our city with access to opportunities and investments in our neighbourhoods.” Susan McIsaac, President and CEO, United Way Toronto & York Region.
- "No one is more invested in ensuring that every dollar expended on poverty eradication is used wisely and to best effect than those who want to work and contribute to the prosperity of the city. We will be vigilant in our oversight and identification of what is truly effective, always conscious of public accountability." Pat Capponi, award winning mental health and poverty advocate.
- “We understand that decisions need to be made within the broader backdrop of the city’s fiscal situation, but our most vulnerable people can’t fall to the background.” Sevaun Palvetzian, CEO, CivicAction.
- “We need a poverty screen for the budget to look at each decision and ask, does this help reduce poverty in our communities, or does it make more of us vulnerable?” Leila Sarangi, Community Program Manager of Women’s Habitat Etobicoke.
- “City Council made history and sent a strong message last month when it unanimously adopted the Poverty Reduction Strategy. But now, we are looking for continued leadership from the city and real action on the ground.” Sean Meagher, Executive Director of Social Planning Toronto.

December 11, 2015

John Tory  
Mayor, City of Toronto

City Hall, 2nd Floor  
100 Queen St. W.  
Toronto, ON  
M5H 2N2

Re: *TO Prosperity* and City Budget 2016

Dear Mayor Tory and Members of Toronto City Council,

We are writing today to congratulate you on your leadership that led to **Toronto City Council's** unanimous support for **Toronto's first ever poverty reduction strategy, *TO Prosperity***. This comprehensive strategy has the potential to be a real game changer by mobilizing the city and its partners' resources towards a coordinated, measurable and sustainable plan that builds one Toronto for all residents.

It will take **Council's** continued leadership to successfully implement this strategy. Poverty is a complex issue that cannot be addressed with simplistic, short-term solutions. It will take partnerships, new approaches to programs, strategic planning and investments to achieve what has been set out in *TO Prosperity*.

And it could, and should, start with Budget 2016. It is the first and crucial opportunity to make a down payment on this recently adopted strategy so that it takes off with determination and goodwill.

Commitment 2 Community, a network of more than 75 community groups, has been holding consultations on *TO Prosperity* across the city over the last year and has compiled a list of recommendations for the first year of the strategy. The recommendations correspond to the items in *TO Prosperity*. As you will see from the attached list, two-thirds of these recommendations require no monetary investment in 2016; simply new approaches to planning and coordination by staff. The remaining third would take up to \$75 million in new investments in 2016 to make real headway on core priorities like childcare, affordable housing and access to transit.

Implementing these actions in 2016 would have concrete outcomes, including:

- Providing shelter and supportive housing spaces for 1,000 individuals and families and make rents affordable for 7,000 households who are at risk of homelessness.
- Providing access to subsidized childcare for 1,500 children in families that currently lack affordable childcare.
- Freezing adult fares until a low-income transit pass is introduced in 2017.

- Ensuring that workers delivering city services, either directly or through contractors, are not precariously employed but have good, stable jobs with decent wages.

There is a strong social and economic case for making these investments now.

- United Way research shows Toronto is at risk of becoming the income inequality capital of Canada. Inequality is growing faster here than in other major Canadian cities — and outpacing provincial and national averages.
- **Nearly 1 in 4 of Toronto’s children** aged 14 and under live in poverty and over 16,000 children are on the waitlist for subsidized childcare.
- Thousands of Toronto residents currently on Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program are desperately seeking work or education and training so that they can contribute to the life of the city.
- More than half of workers in Toronto and Hamilton are in precarious jobs and that is negatively impacting their wellbeing and that of their families and neighbourhoods.

*Closing the Prosperity Gap*, a report by the Toronto Region Board of Trade and United Way of Toronto & York Region, called for stable jobs with decent wages that would lead to increased consumer spending and healthier communities, benefitting our economy and our society. Research has also shown that for every dollar invested in affordable childcare, \$2 is returned to the overall tax-base due to the increased employment of the parents and reduced use of other social supports.

The development of *TO Prosperity* witnessed unprecedented outreach to residents who historically have not had a chance to inform public policy by sharing their life experiences. It also brought together advocates, the private sector, community agencies and policy experts who contributed their best advice, many in their official capacity as members of the Advisory Committee that the City formed in developing *TO Prosperity*. Now, through implementation, that excitement and momentum must be sustained.

**It’s time to take bold action now**, as you debate Budget 2016. **Together, let’s build a legacy of hope, fairness, and opportunity for everyone in our city.**

Sincerely,

(listed alphabetically by first name)

Adina Lebo  
Chair, CARP Toronto – Canadian  
Association of Retired Persons

Alan Broadbent  
Chair, Maytree

Anela Jadunandan  
Ontario Association of Islamic Schools

Angie Draskovic  
President & CEO, Yonge Street Mission

Anne Babcock  
CEO, WoodGreen Community Services

Arthur Bielfeld  
Rabbi Emeritus of Temple- Emanu-El

Brent Hawkes  
Metropolitan Community Church

Carolyn Ferns  
Ontario Coalition for Better Childcare

Catherine Sople  
Building Up Our Neighbourhoods

Colette Murphy  
Executive Director, Atkinson Foundation

The Most Rev. Colin Johnson  
Anglican Archbishop of Toronto

David Clemens,  
Eglinton St. George's United Church

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Debbie Douglas  
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Debbie Field  
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Jehad Aliweiwi  
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Joe Abbey Colborne  
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Executive Director, Stop Community  
Food Centre

Rahul K. Bhardwaj  
President & CEO, Toronto Foundation

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Samuel Kaharabata,  
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Scott McDougall,  
St. John's York Mills Anglican Church

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Executive Director, Social Planning  
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Sevaun Palvetzian  
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Silvia Samsa  
Executive Director, Women's Habitat -  
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Susan McIsaac  
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Stephen W. Hwang  
Director, Centre for Research on Inner  
City Health, St. Michael's Hospital

Tim Maguire  
President, CUPE Local 79

Virginia Mills,  
Eglinton St. George's United Church

Cc: Members of City Council  
Cc: Peter Wallace, City Manager

## Commitment 2 Community - Recommendations for City Budget 2016

PR S Report Issue	PR S Recommendation	Actions	2016 Operating Budget Cost (\$millions)	Rationale for costs estimates for 2016 Budget
<b>Jobs</b>	Improve the quality and access of income supports	Get more resources in hands of low-income people by ensuring savings from provincial uploading of social assistance costs are dedicated to paying individuals (not put in general revenue)	\$0.00	Review current allocation in 2106 for later implementation
		Provide programs that help low-income people navigate systems (e.g. the tenant hotline, financial literacy programs like Financial Empowerment and Problem Solving or FEPS)	\$2.10	\$1.5M for FEPS based on doubling their current capacity; \$0.6M for tenant hotline based on Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations estimate
	Create employment opportunities for low-income groups with high unemployment rates	Provide training and support that lead to jobs	\$0.00	Develop programs in 2106 for later implementation
		Review city job descriptions to remove unnecessary education requirements	\$0.00	Regulation change
		Remove barriers to city jobs such as unnecessary police checks	\$0.00	Regulation change
	Improve the quality of jobs	Create living wage and job quality standards for all city jobs and contracts	\$0.00	Planning in 2106 for later implementation
		Call on province to implement \$15/hour minimum wage	\$0.00	Advocacy
	Leverage the economic power of the City to stimulate job growth, support local businesses, and drive inclusive economic growth	Leverage city spending to create good jobs through social procurement	\$0.00	Planning in 2106 for later implementation
		Leverage city infrastructure projects to create jobs through Community Benefit Agreements	\$0.00	Planning in 2106 for later implementation
	<b>Housing</b>	Improve the quality of all affordable housing	Modernize by-laws for rooming houses and secondary suites	\$0.00
Increase power of property standards inspectors, expand Multi-unit residential Apartment Building audit program, stronger penalties on landlords that don't meet repair standards			\$0.00	Advocacy/ Regulation
Improve oversight of Toronto Community Housing Corp. (TCHC) repairs			\$0.60	Fund "Closing the Loop" program at TCHC per TCHC staff assessment
5,000 TCHC repairs per year			\$0.00	2016 investment funded by TCHC mortgage refinancing

	Assist low-income individuals and families to secure affordable housing	More coordinated transition planning for people leaving hospitals, violence, child welfare, corrections systems	\$1.50	\$1.5M for 50 beds/year for women fleeing violence; LHIN grants for supports form programs like "Home at Last", Fed grants for transition from incarceration	
		Build and maintain effective network of emergency shelter services	\$0.00	Funded with \$2.5 now allocated from 2015 and 210 new beds now in implementation from 2014 funds per City Shelter Support and Housing Staff analysis	
	Increase the supply of affordable housing	Enact inclusionary zoning	\$0.00	Advocacy	
		New taxation powers to create an affordable housing fund	\$0.00	Advocacy	
		Ramp up to 2000 new affordable rental homes by 2018	\$2.60	Carrying cost for \$42M in capital based on Housing Opportunities Toronto costing, 50% cost-shared with province	
		7,000 additional rent supplements per year	\$14.50	Based on Housing Opportunities Toronto 10 year costing, assuming 50% cost sharing with province	
		Supportive housing for 1,000 households per year	\$15.60	Based on Housing Opportunities Toronto estimate, 50% cost shared with province, plus carrying costs for half of \$29M capital per HOT estimate	
	Services	Improve access to high quality programs for children and youth	Review specific needs of each ward and implement programs for older children to meet need	\$3.61	Expanded After-School Recreation and Care (ARC) programs with 40 new programs to double access
			Capital for 1,000 new child care spaces	\$0.50	Carrying cost on \$20M capital, per city target
			Child care subsidies – 15,000 over 5 years	\$5.00	First year of 5 year implementation of 1,551 spaces with a larger share of infant and toddler subsidies
Stabilize youth outreach worker program and roll out 3 new youth lounges			\$1.90	Next year of 3 year roll out as per City estimate	



	Increase service access and availability	Make registration systems more accessible to low-income households	\$0.00	Planning in 2106 for later implementation
		Partner with school board to make better use of school space in off-school hours	\$0.00	Coordination
		Implement Recreation Service Review to expand access to recreation	\$0.00	Included in Recreation Service Review policies already adopted
		Expand Investing in Families program	\$6.30	Double current spending as per city Social Services estimate
		Implement Immigrant City policy to improve access to services and programs for settlement and economic success	\$0.00	Planning in 2106 for later implementation
		Begin to invest in settlement services not provided by other orders of government (e.g. English training for federally ineligible applicants)	\$0.00	Planning in 2106 for later implementation
		Train staff on Sanctuary City Policy, cultural issues, customer service, community engagement, information and access, collaborative service delivery	\$0.00	Coordination
		Reduce city staff gapping to 2%	\$0.00	Planning in 2106 for later implementation
		Expand Community Partnership Investment Program (CPIP) to fund eligible projects in high needs areas and complete asset needs analysis with phased in expansion in 2017 budget	\$1.00	Inflation cost for existing program for 2016
Transit	Make transit more affordable for low- income residents	Free TTC travel during extreme weather alerts and increased discount for bulk token purchase by social service organizations	\$0.00	Planning in 2106 for later implementation
		Fare reduction for OW and ODSP recipients by 2018	\$17.40	Reverse recent fare increases, defer other fare reductions until planning for fare reduction program with Presto system is completed
	Improve transit services in the inner suburbs	Call on province to reinstate 50% contribution to operating subsidy of TTC	\$0.00	Advocacy
		Call on federal government to invest in long term public transit strategy	\$0.00	Advocacy

<b>Food</b>	Eliminate Hunger	Time-based TTC transfers so people can make multiple stops when travelling to purchase healthy food	\$0.00	Planning in 2106 for later implementation
		Ensure food programs have access to schools/facilities	\$0.00	Regulation change
		Set hunger reduction targets	\$0.00	Advocacy
		Complete 5-year student nutrition roll-out	\$1.90	Next year of 5 year roll out as per City plan
		3-5 new staff to support development community food hubs and funds for small infrastructure	\$0.80	Toronto Food Policy Council estimate
	Increase access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food	"Food in Parks and Recreation Centre" policy	\$0.00	Regulation change
		Reduce licensing barriers and expand mobile, neighbourhood food markets	\$0.00	Regulation change
		Increase access to public space for community gardens	\$0.05	Toronto Food Policy Council estimate for new gardens
		Support City-funded agencies to procurement local food	\$0.00	Develop programs in 2016
		Fund youth social enterprise initiatives	\$0.00	Develop programs in 2016
		Hydro lands infrastructure for food growing	\$0.05	Toronto Food Policy Council estimate
<b>System Change</b>	Create a seamless social support system	Community Partnership Investment Program (CPIP) partners should participate on equitable and inclusive basis at joint planning tables on community services	\$0.00	Coordination
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$75.41</b>	