

**Notes for a Speech  
by His Worship Rob Ford, Mayor of Toronto  
on the Occasion of the  
First Meeting of Toronto City Council  
December 7, 2010**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. This is an exciting day.

Many of us here in this chamber have been looking forward to this day for a long time. It's a day we accept new responsibilities and begin new roles. It's a day full of hope and anticipation. It's also a day to say thank you.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Toronto for putting their faith in me. It is an enormous honour and privilege to serve as your mayor.

I'd like to congratulate each and every one of the 44 Councillors here today. You each engaged with your communities and won their confidence in a long and difficult campaign. Victory on October 25<sup>th</sup> marked the end of those campaigns, but the real work is just now beginning.

To the new members who are joining our council, I'd like to say "welcome." I can say from personal experience the job you're beginning is one of the most difficult and most rewarding jobs you'll ever have. You have an opportunity that few people ever enjoy. That's the opportunity to engage with people in your communities to answer their calls, to understand their challenges, to walk in their shoes, and to help them succeed.

When people ask why I return every phone call, the answer is because it's good customer service. I learned that from my dad. The truth is that it feels great to help people. I get to share in their lives in a tiny way. That's an amazing privilege. I encourage you to enjoy it.

To the returning members of council, I'd like to say "welcome back." Many things are the same, but much has changed. And, more will change.

To the people of Toronto who came out on Election Day in record numbers, I'd like to say "thank you." You were engaged in this election on a level we haven't seen in generations. You spoke with a clear, strong voice.

Every major candidate in the mayor's race ran on a platform of change. No matter who you cast your ballot for you voted for change. That's a sobering reality for those of us on this council to remember. It's worth taking a moment to think about that – to put it in perspective, to understand where we as elected officials fit into that equation.

Today, we are united in celebration. But in the days to come, this chamber will be the forum for many heated debates. Every time that happens, I believe it's important we remember one thing: that debate is not about us. It's about the people.

It's important we remember that this council is not supreme. The people are supreme. As the leaders of Toronto, we do not draw our power from the courts. We do not draw our authority from the Crown. A higher government did not appoint us. We were elected by the people. The people are the source of our power. The people of Toronto are supreme. Whenever we are in doubt, we should remember that.

The people spoke loudly and clearly. They are fed up with government leaders who feel "entitled." They can no longer afford annual tax increases. They will no longer tolerate wasteful spending. They want change. And, that is what this council will deliver.

We have listened to the people and our government will focus its agenda on four core priorities.

Our first priority is Customer Service Excellence. We will build a strong culture of customer service across every city department and agency. Customer service will be number one. All it takes is leadership. And leadership starts at the top – right here in this chamber.

Our second priority is to make government more Transparent and Accountable to the people. Hundreds of thousands of people engaged in our political process during this past

election. They want transparent government that is accountable. They want government to be effective and efficient.

Our third priority is to Reduce the Size and Cost of Government. Toronto taxpayers expect wasteful spending and annual tax increases to stop.

Our fourth priority is to create a Transportation City plan. Transportation is not just transit. We will expand our focus to include people who use transit, and also: motorists, commercial vehicle operators, cyclists and pedestrians.

Delivering on these four priorities will meet the expectations of the people of Toronto.

It's an ambitious agenda that will depend on this council for leadership. As members of City Council, we must lead by example. We must understand that every dollar we spend – whether it's on fire fighting, police services or council catering, is a dollar earned by a taxpayer. People work hard for their wages. As their government, we must work harder.

There is no bottomless pit of money. Every time we charge a tax, every resident must give up something they need or want in order to pay our taxes. To lead by example, we must be willing to give up some of our perks, privileges and “nice to haves.”

For years, we have asked taxpayers to give us more -- three percent more here, three percent more there. Now, it's our turn to give more. We will reduce our spending at council and across all city departments. It's only fair and just. It's time City Hall shared the burden we impose on taxpayers.

In closing, I'd like to add that Toronto's first mayor William Lyon Mackenzie was a bit of a rebel. He was a colourful character who was not accepted by the establishment because he fought against privilege and for the little guy. My plan is to be more successful than he was.

Today, we have a strong team of Councillors committed to moving forward and working hard doing what's right for the taxpayers. I encourage each and every one of you – whether you're elected to office, a leader in your community, or just a passionate resident of Toronto to join us in this cause.

After all, we are all in this together. And, together, we will succeed.

Thank you.