



**Canadian Union of
Public Employees**

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- Nurses & Paramedical
Units
- Service Units

City of Toronto
- Full-Time
- Long-Term Care Homes
& Services Part-Time
- Recreation Workers
Part-Time
- Unit B Part-Time

*Toronto Community
Housing Corporation*

**SERVING OUR
MEMBERS
SINCE
1942**

December 10, 2012

Councillor Mike Del Grande, Chair, and
Members of the Budget Committee
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Councillor Del Grande, Chair, and Members of the Budget Committee:

RE: BU35.1 – 2013 Capital and Operating Budgets – Public Consultation

Once again the City has sounded a false alarm with the 2013 Budget numbers, showing a very large so-called opening pressure. For years the Operating Budget has been calculated to scare people into thinking that without cuts to services the City will be in deep financial trouble.

The 'so-called' opening pressures on the Operating Budget have been calculated to scare people into thinking that without cuts to services the City will be in deep financial trouble.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

A few months down the road the City will, once again, report that they have found millions of surplus dollars. This has happened every year for a decade. After delivering a budget cutting jobs and services, the City miraculously finds millions of dollars in additional revenue. But the City never uses the surplus money to restore the cuts to services.

At the preliminary Budget Committee meetings we heard from City programs and Divisions that they're crying out for adequate staffing levels. There is a chronic identified need to recruit and hire front-line workers. The years of gapping, hiring slow-downs, hiring freezes, cuts, delays, deferrals, deletions, reductions, streamlining, restructuring, and consolidation have caught up with the City. Also, the Budget documents reveal although staff positions are approved by Budget Committee and City Council every budget year, these positions are often never filled. They remain vacant.

There is the potential of good news in some areas of the 2013 City Budget, with evidence of an acknowledgement that all the budget cuts have meant cuts to services. You can't have it both ways – you either provide adequate resources for programs and services, in order to maintain the level of service that residents in this City need – or you don't, the latter being unpalatable.

TM:DB:CO
/cope343

The City seems to have learned a lesson, by in some areas hiring to fill vacancies and in other areas turning temporary positions into permanent positions. However, in some areas the gapping continues. The staffing of Divisions, Agencies, Boards and Commissions must be brought back into balance and restored.

The one area where the service cut lesson seems unlearned is Parks, Forestry and Recreation. On the same day that City Council supported greater investments in recreation through its Recreation Service Plan, the City released a proposed 2013 budget which threatens to undermine these advancements. In effect 'right-sizing' is institutionalizing a hiring freeze, when other Divisions are beginning to restore services. Parks, Forestry & Recreation's 2013 budget has proposed \$6 million in cuts to programs. Recreation programs services are being cut by the equivalent of 65 full-time positions representing potentially hundreds of part-time jobs. The budget proposal suggests that these positions aren't needed. This is simply wrong. In parts of this City recreation services don't meet the needs of the community. More recreation workers and programs are desperately needed – not less. Recreation isn't just about exercise it's about community safety, inclusion, nurturing our young people, and preventing isolation.

During the presentation of the Budget by the City Manager's Office there was the recognition of the need to improve relations with City staff and their unions. This would be a positive development; however, the proof is in the pudding. Respect for workers who deliver valued City services and their representatives is at an all-time low.

One of the sorriest stories in this budget is what is continuing to happen to cleaners all across the city. Parks, Forestry and Recreation is exploring contracting out of washroom cleaning and the maintenance of waterfront parks. Facilities Management and Real Estate wants to expand the outsourcing of custodial work and contracting out.

Budget time is the time we should think about city-building, planning for the future, how to grow and see our residents thrive. We must not take a narrow view where everything is bottom-line, flat-lined and cold, hard cash. Budgets must also be about our shared values and our vision for the future. The Budget must reflect community needs.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Maguire', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Tim Maguire
President