



**Canadian Union of  
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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*

December 2, 2013

Councillor Di Giorgio and Members of the Budget Committee  
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Councillor Di Giorgio and Members of the Budget Committee:

**RE: BU49.1 - 2014 Capital and Operating Budgets – Public Consultation**

The recommended 2014 Operating Budget seems to be a good start document, but a better budget needs to be built before the budget process concludes in January. Recommended Budgets for Divisions tend to settle for maintaining service levels from 2013 rather than investing in new services to help build our city, or undoing the damage of cuts. There are some service enhancements, which are good, but across the board this budget could do more for Toronto's communities.

The budgetary insistence on a 0% increase in 2014, keeping Divisional resources at 2013 levels, effectively means service cuts. The Divisions have had to budget without factoring in inflationary costs. This is a cut and it means further reductions in services. The Divisions have met their budget targets mostly through vacancies, gapping and delays in hiring.

It's a fact that the City's population is growing faster and faster with each passing year, and the needs of people and communities continue to grow too.

To effectively deliver services, the City needs to be appropriately staffed – and right now it's not. Every year since this administration was elected; there have been job cuts, which have meant significant damage to programs and services. City staff has been asked to do more and more, with less and less.

In September, CUPE Local 79 participated in the Service Level Reviews conducted by the Standing Committees. At the Committees, we pointed out that in Division after Division, budget targets were being met through gapping and staff vacancies. Staff vacancies mean service cuts. This budget and its promise to see vacancies filled is a good start, but the end result must be front-line jobs filled – not just promises.

In many instances the 2014 Operating Budget refers to aggressive hiring policies in order to fill the vast number of vacant positions; it remains to be seen what the actual staffing levels are this time next year.

For example:

- Municipal Licensing & Standards – 50 positions need filling;
- City Planning has significant increases in its service levels for 2014 and projects only 12 new positions – this comes after years of an extremely high numbers of vacancies;
- and Information & Technology has 171 vacant positions projected for the end of 2013. Quite a startling figure.

The Staff Recommended 2014 Operating Budget appears to be a ‘status quo’ budget with some targeted enhancements in Economic Development and Culture for Museums, and in Parks, Forestry & Recreation with the addition of 16 new Priority Centres and two new Community Centres opening in 2014 and 2015.

Again, the stated commitment to fill vacancies plus targeted service enhancements make this recommended budget a good start.

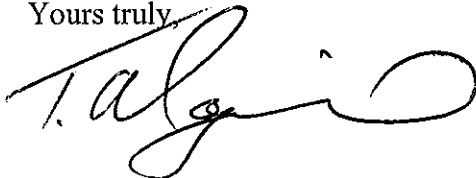
However, there are other issues that could be addressed to make the 2014 recommended budget a better budget. Here are some of these areas:

- in Children’s Services, 19,000 children remain on the waitlist for subsidized spaces, and even though there was a \$20 million increase in funding from the province, there is still nothing in this budget to address the waitlist. This problem is made worse by the fact that the City continues to dip into reserves to make up an ongoing shortfall in provincial funding. Children’s Services reserves are going to run out in 2015;
- in order to meet the severely restricted budget targets, many Divisions are dipping into reserve funds or not contributing at all to the reserves;
- in Engineering & Construction Services contracting out remains a major issue. Long-term investment in municipal infrastructure is needed and, just as important, we need a workforce capable of overseeing the building of that infrastructure. Rather than contracting out, staff must be hired.
- The 2014 recommended budget for 311 Toronto states that the key challenges for 311 Toronto are the Council approved elimination of any new development and integration initiatives and trying to maintain service levels with no additional Customer Service Representatives budgeted. Council approved a staffing level of 182.0 positions at the outset of 2013 but the actual projected number of staff at year-end is 161 – 21 vacant positions (11.5%). Once again City Council approved a certain staffing level which has not been filled.
- According to the recommended 2014 Operating Budget for IT, a primary focus for the Division is on the IT workforce, capacity and capability, retention and career planning. The staffing levels in IT are extremely low, and the number of vacant positions is extremely high. The 2013 Budget approved 748 positions, but the year-end tally of actual positions filled is only 577 - 171 vacant positions.

- In the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA), the City is failing to invest resources to build up its own capacities. This, despite the fact that City-run hostels have an excellent reputation and provide award-winning services. For example, the City Manager announced a new 30 bed women's shelter to help relieve pressure from increasing demand. At this point the City plans to provide that shelter as a 'purchased service'. In other words, rather than operating the shelter in-house, they will contract it out to a community agency. The City also plans to purchase 172 flex-beds – contracting them out to community agencies. It is important to say that Local 79 supports the work of community agencies and are happy to work with community networks on a number of issues, but we nonetheless believe that City-run shelters are best positioned to provide the highest quality services for some of Toronto's most vulnerable citizens, while also ensuring that the staff providing them benefit from high quality jobs.
- Social Development, Finance & Administration (SDFA), is another example of Divisions failing to invest in order to build Toronto's communities. In fact, Council directed SDFA to increase investment in the Community Partnership Investment Program, but staff are recommending against that increase in this budget. By refusing to make this investment the Division is only maintaining 2013 service levels. This is particularly concerning because the Division as a whole is responsible for some of the most important programs Local 79 has been advocating for over the past year. In particular, Council requested the Quality Job Assessment Tool and Living Wage be developed for the end of 2013 -- we have yet to see it. This and similar measures such as the Social Development Dashboard and the Strong Neighbourhoods matrix are essential for ensuring City policy invests in communities. The good news in this Division is that a new Community Development Officer position will be added to the staff complement in both 2014 and 2015.

In closing, I want to point out that a flat-lined budget is not a City building budget, it leaves us well behind where we should be. We have seen the cumulative impact that staff gapping and budget squeezes have had on our ability to deliver services to communities. City Council should *invest* in the programs and services our communities need, and Council should take those *needs* into consideration before deciding what to budget.

Yours truly,



Tim Maguire  
President