



September 18, 2013

Anthony Perruzza, Chair, and Members of the Community Development and Recreation Committee  
10<sup>th</sup> fl., West Tower  
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- Service Units

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- 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**

Dear Councillor Perruzza and Members of the Community Development and Recreation Committee:

**RE: CD23.10 2014 Service Level Review**

**Affordable Housing Office, Children’s Services, Community Recreation (PFR Division), Emergency Medical Services, Fire Services (Cluster B), Long-Term Care Homes & Services, Office of Emergency Management (Cluster B), Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, Social Development, Finance and Administration, Toronto Office of Partnerships**

The Service Level Review before the Committee today must be regarded as a budget-driven Review, not a community-needs-driven Review.

Service Levels for 10 Divisions are on the agenda. There are challenges in each and every Division and questions abound about what exactly are the adequate staffing levels required to maintain, and in some cases increase, service levels.

The Review is prefaced by the financial pressures being exerted on the 2014 Budget. With the pressing financial imperatives facing the City, Divisions and front-line staff who deliver the services are being pressured too.

It really is a matter of great concern that the budget pressures are being added to by the insistence on reducing revenue streams like the Municipal Land Transfer Tax (MLTT) and residential property taxes. A 10 per cent reduction is proposed in the case of MLTT and \$6 million in lost revenue is anticipated from a 0.25% reduction to the residential property tax increase.

To be clear: inadequate staffing levels put pressure on the City’s workforce and staffing levels directly relate to service levels. But I would like to speak today about all the pressures being brought to bear on City services.

**Affordable Housing Office**

One of the challenges pointed out in the Review is that the “limited funding commitments and inconsistent start and stop nature of federal-provincial funding fails to meet Toronto’s affordable housing demand”. Financial stewardship of federal-provincial and city funds has decreased dramatically but the pressure of additional policy initiatives has also increased Key Service Levels. In 2011 there was only Housing Opportunities Toronto (HOT), but the 2013 and proposed 2014 service levels include HOT plus Housing makes Economic Sense, Putting People First and Close the Housing Gap Campaign.

## **Children's Services Division**

With the pressure of over 20,000 children waiting for spaces and families waiting for fee subsidies the budget squeeze in this Division is totally unfair. I don't know how they've managed to maintain the service levels they have with so little funding. Once again the province is to blame for starving Toronto's child care system of funding indexed to inflation but the City must do its part. When the 2012 Budget surplus was allocated to shore up reserve funds, Children's Services didn't get a cent put into its reserves. Yet every year the Children's Services Division is under threat of exhausting its ever-diminishing reserve funds. There must be direction in the budget to see that any budget surplus going into the City's Reserve Funds includes Children's Services.

## **Community Recreation (Parks, Forestry & Recreation)**

Once again adequate staffing levels and service levels are in question. At the end of last year there were 162.5 vacant positions in Parks, Forestry and Recreation. The Service Level Review makes scant reference to the service levels identified in the budget and does not describe how or whether gapping has impacted those service levels. According to the Operating Variance, PF&R, as a Division, was on course to post a positive variance due largely to delays in filling permanent and seasonal positions. Yet, service demands are expected to increase for Welcome Policy registration and participation and instructional programs. Further, three new facilities will open in 2014 (Parkway Forestry Community Centre, York Community Centre, Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre) that will "require significant resources and programming".

## **Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**

In July 2013, the City Manager's Service and Organizational Review recognized that Toronto Central Ambulance Communication Centre (CACC) staffing must be part of the overall EMS response to patient events. City Council recommended that the City Manager and Toronto EMS consult with the Ministry of Health to secure funding for additional staffing for the CACC to meet dispatch and paramedic response time targets.

Dedicated full-time resources are required to support the planning, oversight and operation of the 2015 Pan Am/ParaPan Am Games, without impacting normal day-to-day service delivery and other special events and mass gatherings that occur in the City on an annual basis. WorldPride Week will replace the annual Pride Festival in 2014 with individual events to be held across the GTA. The number of visitors is anticipated to be greater than 1.2 million. This will put tremendous pressure on our emergency services. Nonetheless, Toronto EMS expects to provide dedicated medical support for this signature event as it has since the Pride Festival's inception, while continuing to maintain uninterrupted regular service delivery.

## **Fire Services**

In the 2013 Budget, Fire Services explicitly provided a staff reduction strategy to reduce costs. At that time the Division advocated a permanent deletion of 41.6 FTEs. This would entail removing three vehicles from service and reallocating staff. In 2012 Fire services deferred hiring 132 positions to achieve a 4% gapping target. Overall, the Service Level Review offers few insights into the relationship between staff and service levels.

## **Long-Term Care Homes and Services (LTCHS)**

The Service Level Review points out the significant challenges facing Long-Term Care Homes. Specifically, the acuity and complexity of resident care needs continue to increase and the demand for specialized services is increasing, but Long-Term Care funding is not adequate to meet the assessed needs of residents. Overall, the Service Level Review offers few insights into the relationship between staffing and service levels. For example, it lists beds and clients served, but does not indicate occupancy rates, wait lists or other measures that would allow us to judge how well the supply of services is meeting demand. The Long-Term Care Homes and Services Operating budget includes specific occupancy targets, but the Service Level Review gives no indication of how well those targets are being met.

## **Office of Emergency Management**

Earlier in September, the Operating Variance Report stated, “Emergency Management Services' net under-spending of \$1.494 million or 5.6% was primarily from savings in salaries and benefits for vacant paramedic and dispatcher positions which have yet to be filled and higher than anticipated attrition in non-paramedic positions.” More gapping.

## **Shelter, Support and Housing Administration**

The elimination of the provincial Toronto Pooling funding could close shelters, unless a solution can be found. As the Review states the impact on service delivery to some of the most vulnerable people in the City would be dramatic. This just can't happen.

In April 2013 emergency shelter beds were filled to capacity during a potentially life-threatening cold snap. The need for shelter services is acute.

There can be no option for this Committee and Council but to find budget resources to support this Division. Has the City been in talks with the Province to find some resolution to the elimination of the Toronto Pooling funding?

It is also baffling to see the recent Operating Variance forecasting year-end net under-spending of \$0.432 million or 1.2%, reflecting savings in salary and benefits and operations.” Vacant positions? Gapping?

## **Social Development, Finance and Administration**

Community safety issues are an essential part of the work of this Division and, according to the Review, there are increasing demands for crisis response supports coupled with increasing complexity of crisis events (Eaton Centre, Danzig, Dixon)

There is a significant increase in the demand for policy development/initiatives including, “Strong Neighbourhoods Implementation, Quality Jobs Assessment/Living Wage, Human Trafficking, access to City services, Youth Equity Framework, [and] Toronto Seniors Strategy implementation”.

## **Toronto Office of Partnerships (TOP)**

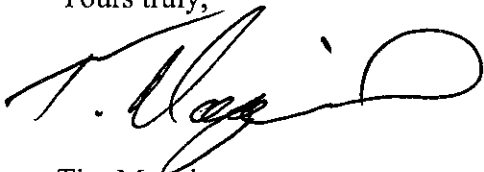
This program seems to be thriving and manages the corporate United Way program. The Review concluded that for every dollar spent on TOP, \$1.33 was secured from external partners, an annual 33% return on investment.

### **Conclusion**

Although Divisions are facing their own specific challenges, the overall direction is surprisingly consistent. Faced with mounting budget pressures, Divisions are resorting to gapping and not filling staff vacancies to meet spending targets. We know that this is having serious negative impacts on service levels.

Council and this Committee should commit to needs-driven service levels to ensure Torontonians get the services they depend on. This includes opposing reductions to revenue streams such as the proposed cuts to the MLTT and property tax increases.

Yours truly,

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

Tim Maguire  
President

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