

# Priority Centres, 2014

The 2014 budget adds **16 new Priority Centres with free programs and community space**, which is very positive. We are concerned, however, that:

- Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) does not intend to set **baseline programming** for these community centres until 2015. In addition, they do not intend to make sure all new Priority Centres have **equitable hours**, with no centre losing hours, although this was previously approved by Council. Without the establishment of baseline programming or hours—or an inventory of current hours and programming in new Priority Centres—it is not possible for communities and Council to assess the degree to which these centres will add access to the system.
- The report states that new Priority Centres will **waive fees starting April 2014**, while the budget documents state that fees will be waived starting **September 2014**.
- PFR recommends that **Priority Centres in 'revitalized' neighbourhoods be revisited after ten years** to see if they should begin charging fees. If this measure is put in place, it will mean that gentrifying neighbourhoods will see the loss of public services entrenched *as a policy*. As the City intentionally builds mixed income neighbourhoods, it must ensure that these developments do not result in service loss and cater only to people with high incomes.
- While PFR lists 23 Priority Centres, it is important to note that **three of these are not centres, but pools** (Regent Park Aquatic Centre, Scadding Court Pool and Harrison Pool).

We ask that:

- Baseline programming and equitable hours, with no centre losing hours, be established for 2014.
- The 16 new Priority Centres begin waiving fees in April, 2014.
- The policy around revisiting Priority Centre status be revoked, with Priority Centres being expanded over time, not shuffled when neighbourhoods are gentrified.