

January 22, 2016



**City of Toronto Budget Committee
City Hall
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto M5H 2N2**

Dear Members of the Budget Committee:

RE: CITY OF TORONTO BUDGET 2016

The City of Toronto Budget for 2016 presents some difficult challenges but also key opportunities to continue investing in a healthy and prosperous city. The Labour Council believes that City Council has made important decisions on issues such as the Poverty Reduction Plan which must be supported by funding allocations. We were signatory to a joint letter from over fifty major organizations with that message.

There are other key goals that should be achieved this year. The first is to improve service to the public by reducing gapping and precarious work at city and the Toronto Public Library. Both municipal CUPE Local Unions, as well as the Public Library Workers Union, have raised those two issues because of the impact on employees and because of the challenges to our municipal workers in delivering excellence in customer service. The spread of precarious and part-time work is simply unacceptable – the City should be acting as a model employer rather than contributing to a growing problem in our society.

The other key goal needs to be an ambitious plan to reduce greenhouse gas emission as part of Toronto's contribution to the recently signed United Nations COP21 Agreement. While there may be some limited cost implications with this work, it will pay off significantly in the medium to long term. The recent announcement by federal Infrastructure Minister Amarjeet Sohi bodes well for tackling some of the backlog of capital work, particularly Toronto Community Housing. Toronto should invest significantly in measures to reduce GHG emissions in all city operations and in the private sector through expanding programs such as the Better Buildings Partnership and other work outlined in the Clean Air Action Plan and Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

In order to find the money needed for that work and other important items, we would urge Council to adopt three measures:

- 1) Support Mayor's proposal for .5% dedicated fund for housing and transit
- 2) Move to harmonize residential and commercial rate increases in 2016 instead of continuing the 1/3 ratio of increases for commercial property
- 3) Introduce a commercial parking fee of \$100 per space/year, (possibly with exceptions for small strip malls)

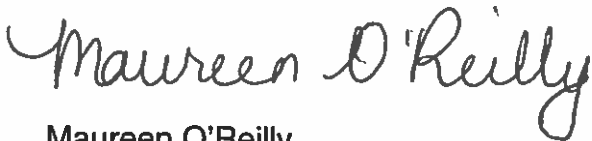
15 Gervais Drive, Suite 407
Toronto, ON, M3C 1Y8
416-441-3663 (tel) • 416-445-8405 (fax)
www.labourcouncil.ca

The fact is that most shoppers who support small independent stores pay street parking, and a penny an hour for parking spaces at the major malls and offices in Toronto will hardly pose a burden. It is a much better option than forcing homeowners to pay more every year while the wealthiest companies pay less.

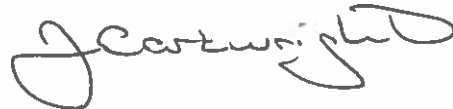
Toronto Hydro and the Parking Authority are both consistent revenue generators that contribute tens of millions of dollars annually to the city. We strongly oppose any privatization or sale of any kind of these key public assets. The loss of that revenue would force a dramatic increase in residential property rates to make up the difference in the operational budget. The loss of control of Toronto Hydro, which should be a central actor in Toronto's environmental plans, would be inexcusable.

We trust you will take the above points into consideration as you decide on the final version of the 2016 budget.

Sincerely,



Maureen O'Reilly
Chair, Municipal Committee



John Cartwright
President