



BU29.1.145

**January 11, 2017**

Councillor Gary Crawford  
Members of the Budget Committee  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

**Dear Councillor Gary Crawford and Members of the Budget Committee,**

**Re: 2017 Budget Considerations – Access to Public Space**

The SPACE Coalition (Saving Public Access to Community space Everywhere) is a diverse group of city and provincial organizations, community groups and individuals that aims to maximize community use of public space.

The SPACE Coalition believes that public space is where the intrinsic value of cities is achieved: vibrant places for meeting and sharing ideas with others including cultural sharing and exchange, healthy active living, quiet reflective contemplation and learning. People around the world have voted with their feet by gathering in cities that enjoy these benefits and unleash human capacity.

Unfortunately access to these benefits varies across Toronto. Existing barriers include marginalization by low income, language, access to transit and necessary social services such as child care.

The SPACE Coalition urges that a thorough review of the full impact of budget decisions be undertaken to determine how they affect access to public space. We strongly recommend that measures be put in place to protect public space for current and future needs such as open green space and downtown schools. Viable spaces include the extensive assets held by the School Boards in the City of Toronto many of which are strategically located in residential neighbourhoods. We invite you to consider the following questions as you deliberate the 2017 budget: Is a collaborative approach to planning for use of those resources being undertaken? How will the ongoing comprehensive study being done via the TOcore initiative be reflected in current budget discussions? How will this budget ensure adequate community assets are provided where density due to high rise residential construction is occurring? Are there alternatives to increasing fees above inflation that will impact the lowest income group the most? Can we adjust the zoning and provide flexibility to allow community hubs to develop that both serve and incubate our 21<sup>st</sup> century economy and community services?

Thank you for considering the SPACE Coalition input to the 2017 budget process.

Sincerely,

John Ryerson

on behalf of the SPACE Coalition

[www.spacecoalition.ca](http://www.spacecoalition.ca)

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