



City of Toronto 2017 Budget Deputation

Tuesday, January 10, 2017

Thank you for providing COTAPSA the opportunity to participate in Toronto's 2017 budget process. We are 51 years strong and remain the unified voice of the over 4000 non-union employees of the City.

Toronto continues to be one of the most populous metropolitan areas in North America and also has an international reputation as one of the most livable and economically competitive cities in the world.

In order to retain this enviable reputation and meet the extraordinary demands of a City of its size, the City must continue to invest in the services and infrastructure required to support the current and future demands of those who live and work in it and additionally address the unique challenges Toronto faces including homelessness, affordable housing, unemployment, aging infrastructure, reliable public transit, and many more.

The City Manager continues to highlight that there remains a persistent gap between the cost of delivering the services demanded by citizens and the revenue the City collects. Even with the service level reductions already included in the preliminary budget, a modest 2% residential property tax increase, assessment growth, and bridging strategies there remains a \$91 million gap.

Faced with this dilemma, Council is being asked to consider additional service cuts, additional tax increases and/or new revenue sources.

COTAPSA continues to contend that the City cannot achieve long-term fiscal sustainability and meet current and future service demands through further expenditure reductions, staff reductions, one-time fixes, or the misguided belief that "yet to be found" service efficiencies will solve our long term fiscal problems.

The preliminary budget already includes \$10 million in service reductions and the elimination of over 400 positions. How can this strategy not affect the delivery of current services let alone meet future service demands, particularly from those people in the

most need? It is folly to believe an additional \$73 million in expenditure and staff reductions will not affect services!

Therefore we encourage Council to address the budget shortfall through those measures put forward for consideration that do not affect service delivery, including the MLTT harmonization, increasing TPA income share, elimination of the vacant commercial tax rebate, and hotel tax. These measures are sustainable and will result in revenue that could exceed the \$91 million shortfall. This would allow the City to reverse some of the service cuts put forward in the preliminary budget and consider other service enhancements that are mandated by Council, particularly those related to community housing and poverty reduction.

Our members are loyal employees who support the City's objectives and continue to provide value for money. They are continually asked to do more with less and this is simply not sustainable. Our members will continue to find efficiencies, make program adjustments and redeploy existing resources to meet Council's objectives. However, in order to build a great City, we contend that Council must consider increasing its revenue from sustainable revenue sources.

Thank you for your time.



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