

**locations**

1884 Davenport Road
601 Christie Street, Barn 4

contact

t 416-652-7867 f 416-652-2294

e general@thestop.org

w thestop.org

mailing address

P.O. Box 69, Station E
Toronto, Ontario M6H 4E1

Charitable # 1191-92763-RR0001

BU41.1.114

To the Budget Committee,

I write today to express the urgent need to include in the 2018 budget several key programs and services that will address long-term challenges facing our city, as well as dramatically improve the quality of life of millions of Toronto residents.

Before the budgeting process, plans were approved to increase access to affordable housing, recreation, and child care, to build strong neighbourhoods, and to promote social inclusion for newcomers, seniors, youth and children, among other vital endeavours. These initiatives have already been approved by City Council. However, the City of Toronto's 2018 preliminary budget fails to include these commitments to create a healthier, inclusive and equitable city for all.

Social Planning Toronto has identified [10 key City Council commitments](#) that are not included in the preliminary budget. These include the full funding of TO Prosperity (the poverty reduction strategy that was unanimously endorsed by City Council), the creation of 1,000 permanent shelter beds and 1,000 affordable housing units, the introduction of a low-cost transit pass for low-income residents, and the implementation of the Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism and the development of the Indigenous Affairs Office at City Hall.

Council has substantial revenue tools at its disposal to fund the \$41 million required for these initiatives, including:

- adopting one or more of the revenue tools available under the City of Toronto Act,
- reducing the funds taken from the operating budget and put into the capital budget
- and aligning property tax rate increases with the GTA average.

We disagree that these vital initiatives are “nice to haves.” Indeed, housing, transportation, and equity are fundamental priorities for our city. Funding programs and services in these areas will meet the immediate needs of millions of Torontonians that are struggling to thrive in an increasingly unaffordable city, while also serving as a long-term investment in our city's future.

The events of the last few weeks demonstrate the critical need for long term strategy to prevent future crises. We cannot build a strong and healthy city by being reactive. Now is the time for the Mayor and City Council to deliver on its commitments.

Sincerely,

Rachel Gray
Executive Director, The Stop Community Food Centre