

February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Members of Toronto City Council  
City Clerk

Re: EX 13.2 Capital and Operating Budgets

The Toronto and York Region Labour Council welcomes the 2020 Budget with appreciation for long overdue investments in transit and housing programs, but also calls on Members of Council to commit to increased public services.

The overdue expansion of housing and transit measures are good first steps towards building a better and more resilient Toronto. The Labour Council supports the increase in property taxes towards the City Building Levy to fund such goals and we encourage Council Members to support this action in order to invest in these core priorities of the city.

Toronto is growing, and the lack of transit is a major impediment to economic growth. The City needs to ensure that residents get the Eglinton East LRT, Finch West, Waterfront West and the Downtown Relief line (Ontario Line).

Investment in city services per capita has repeatedly fallen behind population growth and inflation, making programs less accessible and your staff overstretched. From recreation programs to childcare programs, to community development, the city needs to ensure there is growth in access to programming to meet the needs of our growing population.

Increasing Library hours is an important step however, there needs to be a deeper commitment towards ensuring Libraries are staffed adequately and that we do not increase hours simply by increasing staffless libraries.

Dedicated taxes have been used to ensure priority is given to necessary initiatives; however the City also needs to increase funding towards its current programs and services. Beyond property taxes, there are other mechanisms that are currently available to the city to gain new revenue. We highly encourage Members of Council to consider exploring a commercial parking levy, a luxury home tax and a vacant home tax. There is certainly a need for new revenues, and we hope Members of Council will explore the viability of such revenue streams to ensure we once again do not fall behind.

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

The city has a homelessness emergency, and we call on Council to declare it as an emergency and ensure that increased access to housing and services is made a priority in this budget.

Declaring a climate emergency in Toronto was an important step to increase the priority of work to be undertaken by the City. The Labour Council is encouraged by advancements and investments towards climate change work, and agrees with the need for additional staff, investments in renewable thermal energy and community projects. However, we need to treat our work on climate change as an emergency and invest much more than the city currently plans to. Retrofitting current building stock, and particularly investing in training staff who are maintaining buildings can dramatically reduce emissions, as shown by the SEIU "Green Supers" programs in New York City. This program trains building staff in finding green solutions to significantly decrease pollution.

The Toronto City budget is a large and complicated undertaking, and we are encouraged by the advancements and commitments that Councillors and Mayor Tory have made, however we do need to go further to ensure that everyone who needs to access public services has the opportunity to do so. Our city plays a critical role in the development and success of our residents and we hope to continue working with Members of Council and city staff to achieve such.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mohammed Hashim', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mohammed Hashim  
Senior Organizer,  
Toronto and York Region Labour Council