



To: Members of Toronto Budget Committee
From: Toronto Public Space Committee
Date: January 26, 2021
Re: BU27.1 - Public Presentations on the 2021 Operating and Capital Budgets

Dear Members of the Budget Committee,

The Toronto Public Space Committee is a volunteer collective of people who are passionate about public space. Through advocacy, direct action, and creative interventions, we hope to encourage more people to be a part of the city-building process and imagine new possibilities for public space.

The importance of public space, revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic, cannot be understated. It is essential for physical, mental, and spiritual health. It is a place where we can be together with friends and family safely or be alone with others. It's also a space of survival.

We're asking you to invest in public space for everyone. This means:

- Reallocating funds from Toronto's billion dollar police budget to support community mental health, poverty reduction, and overdose prevention programs.
- Stopping encampment evictions and working with volunteers to ensure everyone has access to safe, dignified housing and basic sanitation services like washrooms and running water.
- Improving accessibility by providing city-wide sidewalk snow removal and maintaining public paths and trails.
- Public washrooms for all! The city must retrofit existing washrooms in public parks to function year round and look at other ways to increase supply. The lack of public washrooms amid COVID-19 is a serious public health problem and limits accessibility for vulnerable folks.
- Maintaining public space infrastructure like fixing sidewalks, installing curb cuts, and expanding Toronto's network of separated cycle paths.

We envision a city where all city-dwellers are city-builders. We urge members of council to help us create more inclusive and accessible public spaces by investing in public space for all.

Sincerely,

Toronto Public Space Committee
www.publicspace.ca