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**Labourers' International Union of North America  
Local 183**

Submission to the City of Toronto Budget Committee  
2022 City Budget Consultation

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## **Introduction**

Local 183 of the Labourers International Union of North America (LiUNA) is proud to represent skilled trades workers across Toronto and the GTA. With more than 60,000 members and countless more retirees, Local 183 has proudly advanced the rights of labourers in Toronto and continues to advocate for safe, inclusive workplaces. As the city prepares to deliver its 2022 tax-supported budget, we urge the Budget Committee to consider prudent investments which support Torontonians and the infrastructure upon which they rely.

The following submission will discuss investments which offer long-lasting benefits to the city, while supporting its immediate goal of sparking a much-needed economic recovery. Based on LiUNA's experience, the city should place its support behind state-of-good-repair (SOGR) projects in addition to its ambitious capital infrastructure plans – both of which will inject immediate stimulus into the economy, advance economic opportunities for equity seeking groups, and render long-term benefits.

## **Recommendations**

1. That the City of Toronto increase its spending on SOGR projects as a means of creating economic activity and maximising the useful life of its assets.

2. That the City of Toronto increase spending on capital projects such as roads, cycling infrastructure, and transit as a means of preparing for future growth and accommodating current levels of demand.

## **State-of-Good-Repair Investments**

Taxpayers expect their municipalities to ensure that public infrastructure is safe, reliable, and accessible. From bridges to roads, regular investments into SOGR projects are critical to ensuring the safety of public infrastructure while maximizing the useful life of public assets. As asset maintenance is often a perceived indicator of municipal performance, damaged assets, such as roads laden with potholes, reflect poorly on government operations in the eyes of residents. As such, it's critical that the city address its backlog of SOGR work through increased investments into capital infrastructure maintenance.

SOGR projects prevent regular wear and tear to capital assets from becoming more serious – which usually requires more expensive and disruptive repairs or replacements. Regular maintenance limits the risk of long-term service disruptions which have large impacts on the municipality's coffers and mobility throughout Toronto. Moreover, the city can minimize the environmental impacts of capital works through maintenance rather than the replacement of assets which become unsafe prior to the end of their expected useful life.

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Moreover, SOGR projects employ thousands of workers – many from small and medium-sized business in the GTA. According to research by the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario, SOGR projects create more than 65,000 direct jobs in Ontario’s construction sector in addition to more than 32,000 jobs in the construction supply chain. Based solely on the magnitude of Toronto, the largest portion of the employment opportunities are created in the city and will be filled by its residents. The projects not only extend the life of the city’s assets, but also create immediate economic activity from which it will benefit.

Additionally, increased SOGR projects will contribute to the city’s goal of increasing employment opportunities for equity seeking groups. LiUNA is proud of its participation in the city’s Community Benefits Advisory Group and understands the importance of the group’s work advancing Toronto’s efforts to ensure equitable employment opportunities across all sectors with all municipal partners. With projects across the city, employers will be able to hire workers from neighbourhoods and socio-economic backgrounds which may be currently under-represented in that field’s workforce. LiUNA proudly works with organizations such as the Toronto Community Benefits Network to address the underrepresentation of equity seeking groups in the construction industry, provide free apprenticeship training, and create employment opportunities. These employment

opportunities offer well-paying, meaningful employment while supporting workers who contribute to their community's economy and success.

We strongly urge the Budget Committee to consider increasing spending on SOGR projects as a means of preventing future expenditures, creating immediate economic activity, and providing new job opportunities to equity seeking groups. The numerous benefits offered by SOGR work maximize value to taxpayers and will continue to provide lasting benefits to the city's capital assets.

## **Investments into Capital Infrastructure**

The 2022 fiscal year marks the start of ambitious new projects such as the Ontario Line. These bold capital infrastructure projects are critical to Toronto's long-term goal of becoming a connected, liveable, and world class city accessible for all of its residents. In order to continue to grow in a sustainable manner, the city must continue to invest in sufficient infrastructure to support growing public needs.

The city's aging infrastructure, such as the Gardiner Expressway, will be unable to support future demands for transportation routes which will be driven by Toronto's rapidly growing population. Demonstrated by the Gardiner and current subway system, Toronto's capital infrastructure is unable to handle current levels of demand and is ill-

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equipped for future growth. Without prudent capital infrastructure investments, the city's growth will be unsustainable, placing additional burdens on municipal services.

In order to support development and minimize disruption in Ontario's main economic hub, the city should increase spending on its much-needed capital projects, which should be integrated into its multi-year plans. The city's road networks are unable to handle current levels of demand, warranting further investments into enhancements to critical arteries like the Gardiner. Similarly, as the city continues to promote transit, it should continue to enhance its current transportation network to reduce crowding and expand ridership by being a convenient option. Projects like enhancements to roads, cycling infrastructure, and public transit will be critical to reducing gridlock across Toronto while ensuring that it is prepared for decades of future commercial and residential growth.

Investing in capital infrastructure is a tested, costed, and proven method for delivering economic stimulus and sparking recoveries. As the city looks to rebuild from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, such investments will prove critical to delivering stimulus funds in an expeditious manner, while creating tangible, assets for long-term public use. Such investments will provide long-overdue enhancements to capital infrastructure while creating new employment opportunities in the construction sector – which continues to serve as an economic driver throughout the pandemic.

Furthermore, projects like the Ontario Line will provide benefits to communities where construction takes place. Members of equity seeking groups are encouraged to consider the many apprenticeship opportunities which will be created by the Ontario Line project. Additionally, the city's Community Benefits Advisory Group has made similar recommendations to increase hiring across all skilled trades. Capital infrastructure investments can successfully accomplish many of the city's strategic goals. As such, LiUNA urges the Budget Committee to consider allocating funds in its tax-supported budget towards long-term investments.

## **Conclusion**

LiUNA members are proud to serve in Toronto and look forward to participating in its growth for years to come. We respectfully ask the Budget Committee to consider increasing its allocation of funds for SOGR and capital infrastructure projects as part of its 2022 tax-supported budget. Both investment streams will deliver immediate economic stimulus to the city, while rendering long term benefits for the public assets relied upon by residents. These investments are critical to both satisfying the needs of the city today while preparing for decades of planned growth in the future. Moreover, the city will have an opportunity to participate in the construction industry's efforts to address underrepresentation in the sector. LiUNA is grateful for the Committee's consideration and looks forward to participating in the city's economic recovery.