

Budgets are about choices and making decisions about our priorities. I believe that the City Budget as it stands does not deliver a more affordable, livable, equitable and safe city. While there are some advances across priority areas, greater investments are needed to ensure that residents can thrive.

- After the launch of the very welcome **\$10/day childcare** program, made possible by the federal government, much work lies ahead to build a system that can deliver equitable access to childcare for families and good jobs for the undervalued childcare workers - a largely female and disproportionately immigrant workforce - caring for our children.
 - The investment in the childcare program is good news, but the sector is experiencing significant challenges that require ongoing support:
 - Over 17k children from low-income families are on the waiting list for a childcare free subsidy in Toronto. **There is no plan to expand childcare fee subsidies or address this backlog in the 2023 budget.**
 - There is a **severe HR crisis** driven by below-poverty wages and jobs that lack competitive compensation and benefits, that is also not addressed in the budget.
 - Inadequate capital funding to create the amount of **new childcare centres** to meet the City's target or future demand for childcare.
 - In addition to addressing funding gaps and the HR crisis, it's clear the city needs to increase the number of subsidies available, as well as update their growth strategy, in consultation with community partners.
- After years of public outcry, the city is also **increasing access to park washrooms** – more welcome news. However, there continues to be **little change to washroom access in the cold winter months**, despite years of public calls for winter access. It is essential that this be addressed in the city budget, as more and more people experiencing homelessness are unable to find shelter spots and are left out in the cold.
- The **Gender Equity Strategy** timelines were extended. It is expected to come to City Council in 2023. It is critical that the City invest sufficient resources into the Gender Equity Office and the upcoming strategy to address intersectional gender inequities in city programs, service delivery, outcomes, and workforce initiatives.
 - While considerable work has been undertaken to develop the strategy, City Council has yet to adopt the strategy. The budget process and documents do not appear to make any reference to the strategy as a priority to bring to the Council this year. **It's long past time to move the gender equity strategy forward.** Additional resources will be needed to carry out this work, as the Gender Equity Unit is severely under-resourced, with just two staff members.
- The budget also **proposes increases to property taxes and TTC user fees without delivering a better city.** Instead, it supports expansion of policing and security as a response to what ails the city. This is unacceptable.
 - The budget includes an **increased transit fare to fund inadequate service, alongside a decrease in service by 9%.** This will lead to more crowded vehicles and longer waits for service in a city that is **already known to have one the longest commute times in North America.**
 - A **lack of investment in communities** has left residents struggling with food security, housing affordability, and poverty. The preliminary budget fails to

respond with investments that are proven and effective – such as **well-resourced affordable housing, mental health supports, and violence prevention.**

- **Police budgets are prioritized instead**, despite several councillors issuing a statement that increasing police funding without also investing in social supports doesn't improve community safety. This is **unacceptable and directly contradicts what community members have shared in consultations** with their councillors and the City Council.
- **The City's Poverty Reduction Strategy is seeing the lowest levels of new investment since the launch of the strategy in 2016**, at a time of heightened crisis of low-income residents in the city. This strategy fails to deliver meaningful change when so many residents are struggling with the high cost of living and food insecurity.
- Although the city is increasing the Housing Secretariat's budget to expand the Eviction Prevention in the Community Program, it is estimated to assist 1,200 households. While this is an improvement, it is **far below the actual need – there were [over 20,500](#) formal applications for eviction filed within the city in 2018**. This number has likely increased with growing numbers of residents struggling to get by.
 - Additionally, the need for affordable housing in our city continues to grow. Nearly half of our residents rent, and many of them are struggling to make ends meet between the rising cost of food and continued high rent prices. **In addition to eviction prevention, our city needs more housing options for our community members.**
- This year, the city **is not including a cost-of-living increase in the community grants funding**. The community-based non-profit agencies supported by this funding play a critical role in supporting people living in poverty. This freeze ultimately represents a cut for these organizations and their communities at a time when [three-quarters](#) of non-profits are reporting high service demand. These organizations cannot afford to cover this funding cut, and their service users may face reduced access to services that provide support in an ever-increasingly expensive city. **At a time of increasing demands for services, now is the time for the city to increase its support for the sector, not make cuts.**