



AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION LOCAL 113

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January 12, 2024

Via email only

Her Worship Olivia Chow
Mayor, City of Toronto
City Hall, 2nd Floor
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Madam Mayor,

Re: Briefing Note: 2024 Budget Recommendations

We are writing to provide you, the City Council, and the Budget Committee with our recommendations for the 2024 Budget.

The task ahead for the City to meet the shortfalls of previous and current governments at all levels, the current and future needs of Torontonians and getting Toronto back on track to be a thriving city is no mean feat.

Our recommendations support the efforts of the City Council and are rooted in the belief that Toronto is a great, diverse, resilient, and formidable city.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations.

Sincerely,

Marvin Alfred
President/Business Agent

MA:rc

cc. City Council
The Budget Committee

Encl.



AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION LOCAL 113

To: **The Mayor
Toronto City Council and
The Budget Committee**

From: **Marvin Alfred, President ATU Local 113**

Date: **January 12, 2024**

Re: BRIEFING NOTE: BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Contents

Executive Summary	2
1. Creating the Toronto Transit Workers' Apprentices Program	2
A. Background	2
B. Objectives	3
C. Proposed Program Elements	3
D. Implementation Considerations and Timeline	5
2. Culture Change and Reinvestment: Potential Cost Savings through TTC Arbitration Costs	5
A. Background	5
B. Objectives	5
C. Proposed Program Elements	6
D. Implementation Considerations and Timeline	6



Executive Summary

ATU Local 113 has reviewed the proposed budget plan by the City Staff announced on January 10, 2024, and we believe there is a real opportunity for the city to act to ensure

1. **A long-term positive social and economic impact on Toronto communities**
2. **Improved Organizational Culture and Labour Relations Practices at the TTC, that can result in real cost savings to be reinvested into public transit operations and maintenance**

Local 113 recommends the following:

1. **Creating the Toronto Transit Workers' Apprentices Program**
2. **Culture Change and Reinvestment: Potential Cost Savings Through TTC Arbitration Costs**

1. Creating the Toronto Transit Workers' Apprentices Program

As part of the City's Budget for **Transit Services & Environmental Sustainability**, our recommendation is to include establishing a City-managed Apprentices Program as a tripartite partnership between the City, the TTC and workers unions including Local 113, with outreach to community groups and high schools.

A. Background

- It is imperative for the TTC and the City to consider the transit system's mid-term to long-term capacity to provide service levels that meet the city's current and future needs.

In the TTC's Maintenance Department, a significant proportion of the workforce is made up of very senior employees (in other words, employees with 20 or more years of service). We expect that, within the next five to ten years, this will result in a large proportion of maintenance employees retiring. As a result, there will be a shortage of necessary skilled trade workers in the Maintenance Department and resulting incapacity to meet service needs.

The framework to address this shortage must be addressed in the 2024 Budget.



AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION LOCAL 113

- The TTC needs to continue to build internal capacity, maintain control and retain institutional knowledge. If the City and TTC do not work now to address the growing gap between service needs and an employee complement sufficient to meet those needs, there is a present and real threat of contracting out good public transit jobs to private companies that prioritize profits over the people who rely on the system. Good public transit jobs help bring stability to generations of families and communities.

B. Objectives

1. **Workforce sustainability:** A proactive approach to hiring now will help alleviate these gaps and impending workforce shortages, as well as address and protect the future growth of public transit.
2. **Scale-up Current Apprenticeship Program & Assessment:**
The current pilot TTC Apprentice Programs are a step in the right direction, but on their own they are not enough to address the current and future pressures on Toronto's public transit system. We recommend a significant increase in the recruitment to this Apprenticeship Program, along with a broader expansion of the current programs.
3. **Local economic impact:** This proposed Apprenticeship Program dovetails with the City's strategy on poverty reduction in Toronto. The program will benefit local communities and their members, as well as those who live in community housing and those who rely on the City's social programs, which are all part of the City's pressing problems.
4. **Skills Development:** The infrastructure through our current training department is already in place and should be leveraged to provide a clear path for apprentices to transition to full-time, permanent employment at the TTC.

C. Proposed Program Elements

The proposed apprenticeship program will include the following program elements:

1. **Collaboration:** Local 113 recommends that the City and the TTC to work collaboratively with Local 113 and the other unions that represent employees at the TTC to create a Toronto Transit Workers Apprenticeship Program.

- 2. The City's program should be tied directly to high schools and under-resourced/high-risk communities** by linking them directly to registered apprenticeship opportunities in the skilled trades within the TTC leading to long-term careers.

By using this approach, the City and the TTC can provide additional options and resources to those in high-risk communities, as well as lessen reliance on social assistance and community housing, thus saving the City and the province money. It will also have the impact of freeing up affordable housing units to address Toronto's worsening housing crisis.

For a direct benefit for high school students, the City would provide them the opportunity to work in a high-quality position that pays above city-average wages at a young age, right out of school. The program would give these students a clear path to full-time, permanent employment, in jobs where increasing the retention rate will be crucial in the coming years.

By engaging schools and community groups, the City can create a ripple-effect throughout under-resourced communities, connecting others to good paying public transit jobs.

- 3. Structured Training Modules and On-the-job training:** There is already an existing infrastructure for training through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) and the TTC's '*Steps to Construction*' and '*Steps to Transportation*' Apprenticeship Programs, and the *Enriched Co-op Summer Placement Program for Black and Indigenous Students*. These programs should all be scaled-up to increase the number of participants who can benefit from these programs.
- 4. Mentorship:** Local 113 is advocating for Mentorship to be an integral part of the apprenticeship programs. This is critical to the success of student apprentices as it enables them to interact with people who have similar lived experiences, who they can relate to, who understand them, and who can advise them on their concerns. Student apprentices – particularly those from marginalized communities – can benefit from their mentor's experiences and how they dealt with various challenges.
- 5. Certification:** Provide apprentices with information regarding industry recognized certifications to work in the skilled trades and the process for obtaining the certificate of qualification in their trade.
- 6. Program Evaluation:** The City should monitor and receive quarterly reports on the implementation of the program including the conversion rate (i.e. how many

apprentices in the program proceed to full-time, permanent employment at the TTC).

D. Implementation Considerations and Timeline

1. **Needs Assessment: (3-6 months)**
2. **Feasibility Assessment: (3-6 months)**

2. Culture Change and Reinvestment: Potential Cost Savings through TTC Arbitration Costs

A. Background

- ATU Local 113's Workplace Violence and Harassment Survey (2022) indicated that 73% of workers did not report incidents of workplace violence and harassment, often because they felt unsupported by management and feared reprisal. This demonstrates the current state of TTC's workplace culture and its labour relations.
- Local 113's arbitration costs run into the millions and these costs are borne by our members. However, the TTC's portion of the arbitration costs are financed by taxpayers. The TTC does not disclose their legal costs incurred in arbitration and there is a need for greater transparency with respect to the actual costs of the arbitration process.
- The TTC's lack of respect and engagement with critical stakeholders and in particular Local 113 has been an ongoing theme in recent years. Other stakeholders are aware of TTC initiatives before we are. We are not consulted and, despite being an important and main stakeholder with respect to public transit in Toronto, the TTC does not treat us as one. Recent examples include the operational budget for the Bus Division – where they consulted everyone except Local 113, which was confirmed during the December 2023 Board Meeting

B. Objectives

1. **Improving TTC's organizational culture and labour relations**



AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION LOCAL 113

2. **Improve transparency in costs, strategy planning, policy development, program implementation**
3. **Potential savings should be reinvested into TTC operations and maintenance, including increasing service levels to meet the needs of TTC riders and the broader community, and service levels already budgeted for**

C. Proposed Program Elements

1. **Improve transparency on arbitration costs:** The City should audit the TTC's legal costs related to arbitrations and determine any areas of potential savings.
2. **Consultations with the union in a timely manner: not last minute in the interest of better labour relations.** The TTC should provide Local 113 with reasonable notice, appropriate consultation, and the chance to provide meaningful input on key decisions being made.

D. Implementation Considerations and Timeline

1. **Audit to be conducted, as soon as possible**
 2. **Consultations with the union need to happen promptly, and the City should be advised regularly.**
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