



January 21st , 2025

To: City of Toronto Budget Committee - Scarborough Civic Centre
From: Brenda Librecz, Resident & Member of SCRO Economic Development Committee

Re: Scarborough Community Renewal Organization Input to the 2025 Budget Process

Good Morning Councillors. My name is Brenda Librecz, and I am representing Larry Whatmore, president of the Scarborough Community Renewal Organization, an all-volunteer organization that strives to bring thoughtful advocacy to Scarborough civic affairs, to create a more livable, dynamic, and prosperous Scarborough, where 650,000 Torontonians have chosen to call home.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our ideas to inform the 2025 budget. Our comments are focused on those investments that ***support transit, affordability for residents, state of good repair of our critical core services and the need to align our policies to support our economy, its businesses and of course jobs for residents.*** I do believe that for the most part our priorities do align with the budget committee's areas of focus.

Investing in Transit for Scarborough:

Let me start by saying thanks to Council for supporting the **Scarborough Busway** which we hope will be underway in 2025 to address the glaring needs of our residents after the closure of the SRT. Our ask related this project is that we urge Council to keep a close watch on the project management and timing so that it is not another victim of project construction delays.

We recognize City Council's strong support of the Eglinton East LRT extension with your commitment of \$1.2 billion toward the capital costs of the extension from Kennedy Station to the U of T Scarborough campus, and then to Malvern. The City is putting up serious money for this and we are grateful, especially our residents living in northern and eastern Scarborough who, even after the opening of the Scarborough subway extension, will continue to endure punishing commute times on congested buses or congested roads, to travel to jobs downtown or to other parts of Scarborough or to the U of T Scarborough campus.

We also recognize that we need the support of the provincial and federal governments to join you in the funding of this important project. Scarborough Community Renewal Organization has made numerous requests for their support and will continue to do so again this year.

Investments in State of Good Repair and Core Services

Recognizing the financial challenges that the City of Toronto has faced for a very long time which has translated into under investment in State of Good Repair of our roads, sidewalks, public spaces, and critical infrastructure. We were pleased to note the investments in this year's budget which will need to be continued for many years to catch up to years of under-investments. As taxpayers we value our services and want to ensure they are protected, evaluated for continuous improvement, and provide value for money. We also want to ensure that we can continue to afford to live here. Property Taxes, Water /Waste Utility charges, and user fees all impact us as taxpayers and need to all collectively be carefully considered with the lens of affordability which is a delicate balancing act for Council. Especially with the current cloud of uncertainty over the economic stability of Canada as a result of pending tariffs from our neighbour.

Supporting Toronto's Economy and Financial Wellbeing by Protecting our Employment Lands

Scarborough, and Toronto more broadly, is making an outsized contribution to the additional housing stock we need, with condos and purpose-built rentals sprouting on our avenues and many others now going through planning approvals. But housing alone isn't enough. Our residents need jobs. And that can only happen if we allow our employment areas to flourish. But rising land values are incentivizing developers to request rezoning of employment lands for housing. As guardians of the public interest, it's important that we push back against this, so that we don't end up solving one problem by creating another. Our residents can't pay rent or purchase their first home in this City if they don't have jobs.

Scarborough is on the cusp of significant changes in our housing, employment, and retail landscape. Let's make sure our planning policies enable Scarborough to evolve as a complete community over the coming decades, including a wide range of employment opportunities for all our residents.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our input into the 2025 City Budget. We recognize the many challenges the City faces and the enormous expectations of its residents. We appreciate the strides being made in this budget to address the needs of our residents. SCRO will continue to advocate for transit and other important policy improvements with both the provincial and federal governments.

Thank you.

Brenda Librecz

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