



**Subject: 2025 Toronto City Budget, Final Submission**

**10 February 2025**

Dear Mayor Chow and City Councillors,

As the Executive Director of Disability Justice Network of Ontario and a resident of Ward 12, I write to you regarding the City Budget process in 2025. Further to my letter on 22 January 2025, I wish to continue to express my deep concerns and hopes for the coming year's budget in light of the polycrisis impacting the City, across housing, transit, social wellbeing, city services, and wider affordability for families. As with all financial documents, City budgets are a political document that illustrate much more than dollars and cents, but your sense of direction for this City.

We broadly concur with the asks brought forward by organizations like Social Planning Toronto, TTCriders, the Federation of Metro Tenants, and the GTA Disability Coalition as they have actively made deep and impactful submissions in addition to our own previous letter—along with support for the grassroots voices that have and will continue to speak out for the betterment of Toronto.

It is important to note, however, that all of our concerns arise from a singular context: We are faced with an all-out polycrisis that impacts every aspect of our social system across Ontario and, indeed, Toronto is no exception. We have delegated across Ontario to make this point regarding the impact of a lack of strong social assistance, accessible housing, and many other areas of the parts of our system that support disabled Torontonians. We believe it is time for a massive reinvestment in our social systems—from housing to social assistance to home care to education and more—and we know that now is the time to do it. And now, more than ever, is the time to be pressing your Provincial and Federal peers for that reinvestment and providing you with the power to enact that reinvestment effectively.

We continue, however, to remind you of the extenuating need throughout our systems and a critical choice which is an unending burden to city finances without actual results for Torontonians. This choice remains that of the continued increase to the budget of Toronto Police Services. To reiterate from our previous letter, I urge you to reconsider this expense in particular and consider the following alternative areas to re-allocate this sizable portion of the city's budget. Some of these funds could, instead be allocated to:

- Assist in funding core infrastructure for Toronto Community and Toronto Seniors Housing, particularly in light of newly passed regulations for Accessible Housing;
- Maintain Toronto's system of overdose prevention sites and expand them in the face of Provincial regression;
- Further develop supports for unhoused disabled people throughout Toronto in consultation with unhoused communities;
- Increase service to the TTC, in particular Wheeltrans in light of the wider community's questions surrounding the concerns with and gaps created by the *Family of Services Model*;
- Ensure that the bare minimum standards set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act are met across the city and supporting active inspections to ensure that is the case at the local level; and,
- Expand accessible, community services through the Toronto Public Libraries;

Mayor and Councillors, I ask you *again* to resist the inertia of governance in this city and across the Province—resist simply giving more and more to punish the working class of this city and less to the core structures of our society that let us all thrive. You still have time to show the courage and determination to make this possible for all.

Respectfully,

Brad Evoy,

**Executive Director, Disability Justice Network of Ontario**