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2026 BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Public Consultations on the 2026 Budget

1. ISSUE/BACKGROUND

In October 2025, Mayor Olivia Chow and Budget Committee Chair Shelley Carroll invited Toronto residents to contribute their ideas and priorities for the City's 2026 Budget. Coordinated by the City Manager's Office in partnership with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer and the Communications division, and supported by staff from multiple divisions, the consultations invited residents to:

- learn about City services, the City's Budget; and the funding relationship with the Governments of Canada and Ontario;
- discuss the current and 2026 fiscal challenges and pressures;
- identify how the 2026 Budget can help build a city that works for them;
- share thoughts on federal and provincial funding to support the City; and
- recommend actions they or the City could take to help Toronto achieve a strong financial future.

2. PURPOSE

This Budget Briefing Note summarizes the feedback received from all participation opportunities during the BudgetTO 2026 Consultations – including the online survey, City-led in-person and virtual meetings, and community-led meetings – to inform and support staff and Council Members' 2026 City Capital and Operating Budget decision-making.

3. CONSULTATION PLAN & PARTICIPATION

The 2026 Budget consultation from October 1-31, 2025 was designed to build on the success of BudgetTO Consultations in the previous two years. The City collaborated with community organizations, partners and external consultants to plan and deliver the following activities and events across the city:

- A) *Online Survey* – in 12 languages with 9,787 respondents
- B) *City-Led Consultations* – six meetings (four in-person and two virtual) with a total of 901 participants, facilitated in partnership with Barnes Management Group (BMG)
- C) *Community-Led Consultations* - 15 Community-led meetings, with 341 participants, focused on engagement with Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving residents, in partnership with Albion Neighbourhood Services (ANS), the Toronto Youth Cabinet (TYC) and Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC)

4. HIGHLIGHTS FROM PUBLIC INPUT

The qualitative analysis process focused on identifying recurring ideas through the documented participant inputs from all participation opportunities and synthesizing the insights shared during the various conversations and inputs into themes.

While this section provides key observations across the consultation methods, and does reflect input from a substantial number of participants, with a particular emphasis on engaging Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving communities, including youth and newcomers, the data should not be considered statistically representative of Toronto's population.

More fulsome results from the various consultation methods used for this summary can be found in the reports appended to this Budget Briefing Note.

A) Residents identified the following City services as **most important** to them for the 2026 Budget:

- **Provide affordable housing and shelters:** participants suggested the need to expand the supply of affordable housing, strengthen rent control and provide safe shelters to reduce homelessness.
- **Improve transit and reduce traffic congestion:** participants highlighted that an affordable, safe, and reliable transit system is essential for reducing traffic congestion and improving access to employment opportunities. Respondents also suggested that the City should take actions to reduce traffic congestion, including adding more traffic agents, enhancing the transit system, minimizing road closures, improve planning and coordination of road work, and implement measures such as congestion pricing.
- **Invest in social services and community well-being:** participants emphasized the need to prioritize public health, mental health, addiction recovery, and harm reduction programs, improve public amenities such as libraries, parks, childcare and recreation centers, and focus on youth programs, seniors programs, and employment services.
- **Invest in community safety:** participants expressed the importance of enhancing safety and accessibility on transit and within public facilities. Many called for greater investment in violence prevention initiatives and proactive measures to address crime, rather than reactive measures.

B) Residents identified the following City services as **least important** to them for the 2026 Budget:

- **Festival Funding:** participants suggested prioritizing core services and encouraging festivals to generate their own revenue.
- **Police Services:** across the survey, City-led, and community-led consultations, participants highlighted the need to find efficiencies in the police budget and to adequately fund violence prevention, community well-being and youth programs, including youth employment, to reduce the need for reactive measures. Of note is the mixed feedback received on the topic of policing in the survey - 30% of respondents identified Police Services as a least important service (ranked second), and 20% of respondents identified Police Services as a most important service (ranked fourth).
- **Animal Services:** Third-most identified as a least important service (same as in 2024). Perceived by respondents as less essential compared to other critical services.

A generalized theme during the topic of least important services was for the City to find greater efficiencies in all services. During the community-led consultations, the need to find greater efficiencies in the TTC budget was highlighted, with participants sharing some examples about increasing administrative costs without improvement in reliability and frequency. They also made distinctions between urgent needs like affordable housing and employment services, in contrast to services such as arts and culture and library services that are seen as nice-to-have. Suggestions included improving efficiency and utilizing technology more.

C) Property Taxes

Survey respondents showed no strong consensus on how property taxes should be adjusted in 2026. From the survey, 45% supported keeping property taxes low while maintaining most services with some reductions. A slightly smaller group, 42%, favoured increasing property taxes to enhance services and meet growing needs.

During City-led and community-led discussions, participants shared diverse views on municipal revenue tools and property taxes. They could be categorized as follows:

- **Keep Property Tax Low:** Many participants favored maintaining or reducing property taxes, citing rising living costs, impacts on rent, and concerns about housing affordability. They proposed alternative revenue sources like fines or taxing vacant commercial properties.
- **Increase Property Taxes:** Some participants supported raising property taxes to fund essential City services. For those who spoke in support, it often came from a recognition that increased property tax would mean more resources funneled into critical supports and services offered by the City of Toronto.
- **Progressive Property Tax:** Some saw a progressive property tax increase--where those that own the most expensive properties progressively pay more--as the fairest option, though others opposed it due to concerns about rent impacts and Canada's overall tax burden.
- **Unsure:** A small group lacked understanding of property tax implications, highlighting the need for better civic education.
- **Alternative Revenue Tools:** Many participants suggested diversifying revenue sources beyond property tax, such as congestion charges, commercial parking levies, visitor taxes, vacant commercial property tax, municipal bonds, and a share of sales tax. There was also advocacy for increased funding from provincial and federal governments and calls for greater transparency and community engagement in budgeting.

D) Support needed from the provincial and federal governments

A large majority of residents across all consultation methods agreed that the provincial and federal governments should work more closely with the City to fund the services they are responsible for, including:

- **Provincial support** to fund TTC construction, operations, and maintenance, to maintain roads and buildings, and to support rent subsidies. Residents also called for more funding for long-term care, mental health services, and strengthening programs like Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).
- **Federal support** to fund refugee/asylum seeker supports, and transit construction.

- **Shared support** is needed from both the province and federal governments for childcare, affordable housing, shelters, flood protection, along with increased investment in food banks, school meal programs, and community meals.

When funding gaps and shortages exist between orders of government, residents in the community-led discussions described a disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities. Residents also identified the need for revenue sharing to ensure long term financial stability for the City, including sharing a portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) with Toronto.

E) Engaging other orders of government

From the survey, almost three-quarters of residents surveyed expressed a strong willingness to take actions with their neighbours to support Toronto by engaging other orders of governments, such as signing a petition to the provincial and federal governments. Half indicated that they would speak directly with their MPP or MP, with two-fifths committing to engaging neighbours and/or attending federal and provincial budget consultations.

Participants from the survey and meetings expressed the need for:

- **Guidance on effective advocacy:** contacting officials, petitions, and participating in budget consultations.
- **Suggested resources:** workshops, newsletters, templates for letters/emails, and information from local councillors to support their ability to engage with other orders of government on these issues.

5. COMMUNITY-LED CONSULTATIONS

Supporting participation from Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving residents was a priority objective of this consultation. In collaboration with multiple community partners including Albion Neighbourhood Services (ANS), Toronto Youth Cabinet (TYC), the eight higher education institutions within the CivicLabTO program, and the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC), 15 meetings were held with 341 participants to ensure voices and perspectives were heard from communities that are often under-represented in public consultations, and to build community awareness and interest in the annual City Budget process.

A) Equitable Engagement through the Community Coordination Plan

In collaboration with the City's Community Coordination Plan, the City provided resources to Albion Neighbourhood Services (ANS) to facilitate 12 meetings with a total of 279 participants, with participants drawn from the Community Coordination Plan's 10 Geographic Clusters as well as the Newcomer and Black Resilience Clusters. Participants included Black and racialized communities, newcomers, seniors, youth, people with disabilities, and multilingual participants (translation offered in 10 languages). There was also a strong presence of racialized women and intergenerational dialogue.

Participants in the ANS-led sessions highlighted a number of priority areas for investments, including Affordable Housing, Employment and Social Services, Long-Term Care & Seniors' Services and Childcare, Public Health.

Participants also highlighted areas that could see decreased investment, mainly focused on finding efficiencies and reprioritizing funding for these services, including Police Services, TTC & Wheel-Trans, Libraries, and Arts & Culture.

Black Resilience Cluster

Top priorities included affordable housing, employment/business/education support, mental health services, and affordable childcare. Less important services included Police Services and libraries. Respondents also showed strong support for intergovernmental collaboration and highlighted the need to improve TTC and fire service efficiency; keep property taxes low; and want to receive workshops/training on city processes and information that is accessible.

Newcomer Cluster

Top Priorities include affordable housing, small business support, employment, childcare, and community safety. Lower priority services included parks/recreation, libraries, animal services, bike lanes. Participants also showed strong support for intergovernmental collaboration and highlighted the need to improve TTC, fire, and police efficiency; keep property taxes low; and want workshops/training on city processes and information in multiple languages.

See Appendix 1 for further information on the ANS led meeting locations and community partners. To read ANS's full report, please see Appendix 5.

B) Youth Engagement

In partnership with the Toronto Youth Cabinet and the CivicLabTO program (a partnership between the City of Toronto and eight higher education institutions in the city), City staff organized two meetings and engaged 42 participants, with a majority of youth under age 25 and a high proportion of visible minorities.

Participants identified public transit, community well-being and youth programs, affordable housing, and youth employment as their priorities. They also identified areas of improvement for TTC, including the need to reduce wait times, improvements to the affordability of transit services for youth, and securing safety on transit especially at night. Some suggested moving part of the police budget to fund traffic agents, youth programs, and mental health services, while others supported encouraging higher densities in suburbs to increase City revenue. Other highlights included a desire for more support for small businesses, bike lanes, libraries, youth spaces, and the environment.

A majority of participants supported more collaboration between all orders of government, with a particular emphasis on the other orders of governments giving Toronto more autonomy and enabling sustainable ways to generate revenue. There was also strong support for more engagement with youth, more education for youth on the Budget, and finding more ways to have their voices heard.

C) Indigenous Engagement

City staff organized a meeting in partnership with the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC) to engage Indigenous organizations and individuals. Twenty TASSC member organizations participated. This meeting was intended to create ongoing dialogue on the Budget

year-round, with potential mechanisms to be determined through continuing conversations between the City, TASSC and Indigenous communities.

Participants highlighted Indigenous-focused affordable and supportive housing and shelters as important services. They identified the need for greater support from federal and provincial governments for urban Indigenous communities, supported more investments in Indigenous non-profit organizations and community centers for Indigenous communities, and promoted the development of a First Peoples, First Priority framework. Some participants suggested investing more in social programs to prevent crime and reduce the need for police and emphasized the need for a long-term and holistic view on the issues. Others identified the need to ensure fair taxation, including, for example, taxing vacant commercial properties.

In TASSC's position paper to the City following our meeting, they highlighted four main areas for improvement and focus: 1) TASSC-City Relationship; 2) Proportionate, dedicated and sustainable resourcing for Indigenous social and community services; 3) Municipal Engagement with Federal and Provincial Government and Indigenous community leaders; and 4) Future Engagement Principles and Doing Better: Beyond BudgetTO 2026 and the Toronto Indigenous Prosperity Plan. To read more details of TASSC's position, please refer to their submission in Appendix 6.

6. ATTACHMENTS

This Budget Briefing Note and the attached documents include data and feedback collected through the 2026 BudgetTO Consultation process, including the online survey, City-led in-person and virtual meetings, and community-led discussions. Unless otherwise specified, all quotations, summarized feedback, and engagement highlights are drawn directly from participant submissions and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the City of Toronto.

- Appendix 1: Consultation Plan & Participation
- Appendix 2: Budget Consultation Presentation Slides
- Appendix 3: Survey Report
- Appendix 4: City-led Budget Consultation Report
- Appendix 5: Community-led Consultation Report
- Appendix 6: Indigenous Engagement Briefing

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Appendix 1:
Consultation Plan & Participation

Appendix 1: Consultation Plan & Participation

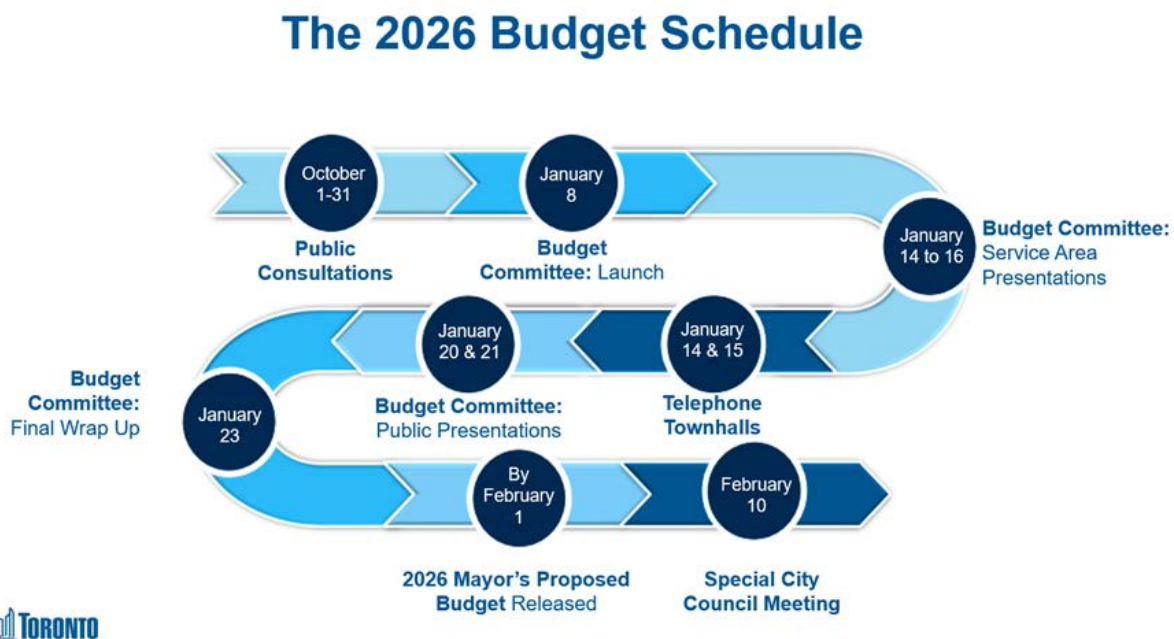
The 2026 BudgetTO consultation was designed to build on the success of BudgetTO consultations in the previous two years. The consultation period commenced October 1, 2025, and included public meetings, an online survey, and targeted outreach to Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving communities. The City collaborated with community organizations, partners and external consultants to plan and deliver these activities and events across the city.

Consultation as Part of the 2026 BudgetTO Process

The consultation was timed to engage the public as part of the City's annual Budget process prior to launch of the Budget on January 8, 2026. The purpose of the consultation was to gather insights and ideas from residents to help inform the development of the proposed 2026 Budget.

This report will support Council Members' consideration of public input along with public deputations, input from councillor town halls and submissions to the Budget Committee that occur during the Budget process. Figure 1 summarizes the consultation and review process for the 2026 Budget.

Figure 1: 2026 City Budget Milestones



Opportunities for Public Participation

By providing a range of online, in-person and community-led consultation opportunities, residents were invited to engage in ways that suited their circumstances and ability to participate. The following summary provides an overview of each consultation method.

Online Survey

- An online survey available between October 1 and October 31, 2025, that included:
 - multiple questions on City services, public priorities, and federal and provincial support;
 - an open-text field question allowing residents to contribute their ideas on the important actions the City can take to make Toronto affordable and livable for everyone;

- availability in 12 languages: English, French, Chinese-simplified, Chinese-traditional, Farsi, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil and Urdu;
- Participation:
 - 9,787 people responded to the online survey.
 - 8,178 responses received for the open-text question.

City-Led Consultations

- As illustrated in Table 1, 901 people participated in six City-led in-person and virtual sessions held between October 14 and October 29.

Table 1: Participants in City-led public meetings.

Area	Date	Time	Venue	Participants
Downtown	October 14	7 to 9 p.m.	St. Lawrence Market North	250
Etobicoke	October 18	noon to 2 p.m.	Etobicoke Olympium	88
North York	October 22	7 to 9 p.m.	North York Civic Centre Memorial Hall	180
Scarborough	October 23	7 to 9 p.m.	Scarborough Civic Centre	190
Virtual #1	October 27	noon to 2 p.m.	Online	98
Virtual #2	October 29	7 to 9 p.m.	Online	95
Total Participants				901

Community-Led Consultations

- 15 community-led meetings (Table 1), with 341 participants, to increase engagement with Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving residents:
 - Partnered with Albion Neighbourhood Services (ANS), the Toronto Youth Cabinet (TYC) and Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC);
 - Supported with funding from the City, participant materials, and community kits;
 - Participation:
 - Albion Neighbourhood Services (ANS) facilitated 12 meetings with 279 residents from equity-deserving communities across the city to gather feedback between October 2 and October 30.
 - In partnership with the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC), City staff organized a meeting with 20 TASSC member organizations on October 29 to create ongoing dialogue on the Budget year-round, with potential mechanisms to be determined through continuing conversations between the City, TASSC and Indigenous communities.
 - To ensure youth voices are heard in the Budget consultation, City staff partnered with the Toronto Youth Cabinet for a Budget focused meeting with 30 youth on October 30. City staff also partnered with CivicLabTO to host a meeting on November 7 with 12 students from Toronto universities and colleges.

Table 2: Community-led meetings.

Community Cluster/Partner	Date	Location / Partner	Participants
North Scarborough	Oct 2	Malvern Family Resource Centre	28
Black Creek / Humber Summit	Oct 7	Center for Spanish Speaking People	30
York / Weston / Pelham East	Oct 8	Davenport Perth Neighbourhood & Community Health Centre	22
North Etobicoke	Oct 9	Somali Women's and Children's Support Network	23
South Scarborough	Oct 10	Dorset Park Community Hub	21
East York / Don Valley	Oct 14	Thornccliffe Park Community Hub	31
Newcomer	Oct 15	Sojourn House	20
South Etobicoke	Oct 16	Daily Bread Food Bank	23
Downtown East - Youth and high school students	Oct 23	Dixon Hall	21
Downtown West	Oct 25	West Neighborhood House	26
Black Resilience (Federation of Black Canadians)	Oct 29	CEE Centre For Young Black Professionals	12
North York - Harvest Food Bank	Oct 30	Herb Carnegie Arena	22
Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC)	Oct 29	660 Dundas St E	20
Toronto Youth Cabinet	Oct 30	City Hall	30
CivicLabTO	Nov 7	City Hall	12
Total participants:			341

Advertising and Promotion

An extensive communications and advertising strategy promoted the multiple opportunities for the public to participate. Communications tactics included print, online and out-of-home advertisements, retail radio, organic and paid social media, Councillors, Agencies & Boards and Partner toolkits, articles in City e-newsletters, toronto.ca/budget webpages and employee communications. Print and digital ads were translated for media outlets serving newcomers and

communities for whom English is not a first language. Additional social media posts were geo-targeted and boosted to promote each of the four in-person consultations.

Media interest was significant, generating 281 stories between October 1 and 31, with an audience reach of 258,638,571. Coverage peaked following the October 2 media launch event and again after the media availability with Mayor Chow and Councillor Carroll at the first in-person consultation. Media coverage remained overwhelmingly neutral at 81 per cent (228 stories), with 14 per cent positive (39 stories) and 5 per cent negative (14 stories).

Annual Consultation Comparison

Table 3 outlines key metric comparisons between the consultations for the 2024, 2025 and 2026 Budgets. Compared with previous years’ metrics, more participants were engaged at City-led and community-led meetings, indicating increased public interest in in-depth conversations. Also, compared to last year where approximately half of survey responses were collected near the end of the campaign period, this year’s survey saw a more even distribution of survey responses throughout the month of October, with spikes during media coverage for the launch, the first City-led public meeting, and during newsletter promotion.

Table 3: 2024-2026 Budget Consultation Metric Comparisons.

	Consultation on 2024 Budget	Consultation on 2025 Budget	Consultation on 2026 Budget
Timeline	November 1-30, 2023	October 1-31, 2024	October 1-31, 2025
Online Survey Responses	10,802	12,001	9,787
City Led Meetings	8 meetings (5 in-person, 3 virtual)	6 meetings (4 in-person, 2 virtual)	6 meetings (4 in-person, 2 virtual)
City Led Meeting Participants	661	763	901
Community Led Meetings	15 meetings	13 meetings (11 in-person, 2 virtual)	15 meetings (all in-person)
Community Led Participants	314	331	341
Total Number of Participants	11,777	13,095	11,029

Demographics

During the Budget consultations, the City engaged with a diverse cross-section of Toronto residents. This was in part achieved through focused promotion methods, including placing multi-lingual ads in local language newspapers and on digital platforms, ensuring City-led consultations were spread across the city offering differing times and virtual options, and through community-led consultations. Additionally, specific outreach methods were utilized to engage Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving communities across Toronto.

Full demographic details for each consultation method can be found in the reports in the appendices.

Appendix 2:
Budget Consultation Presentation Slides

Appendix 2: Budget Consultation Presentation Slides

How the City plans and spends money



Municipalities must balance their operating budgets. Cities cannot spend more than they have.

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Why Toronto matters – and why it's facing big challenges



TORONTO IS THE ECONOMIC ENGINE OF THE COUNTRY

- Accounts for **1 in every 5 jobs** in Ontario.
- Responsible for **60% of public infrastructure** and majority of services people rely on daily, across all orders of government.
- Powers a diverse economy, with over **1.3 million employed residents** across a wide range of industries.
- Toronto Region alone contributes to **20% of Canada's GDP**.
- Attracts **more than 26 million visitors** annually.

TORONTO IS THE LARGEST CITY IN CANADA WITH OVER 3 MILLION PEOPLE AND GROWING.



Toronto operates Canada's biggest transit system – buses, streetcars and subways



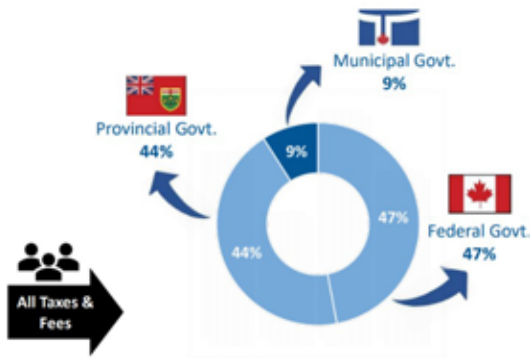
Toronto oversees the largest social housing portfolio in Canada



Toronto has the largest municipal first responder service in Canada

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Where your taxes and fees go



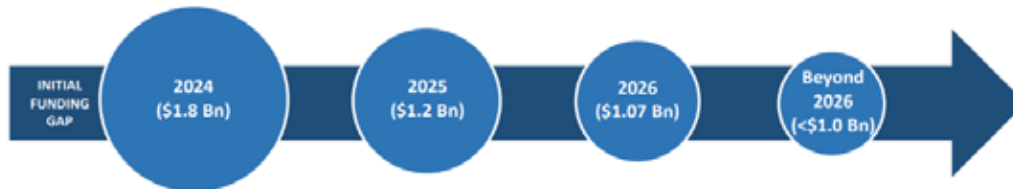
City Revenues (2025)

30%	Property Tax and dedicated levies \$5.64 B
25%	Federal/Provincial funding for services delivered by the City \$4.78 B
24%	User Fees (transit fares, recreation program fees, water charges, etc.) \$4.50 B
21%	Other (land transfer tax, reserve funds, investment income, etc.) \$3.93 B

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Toronto's multi-year journey to a stronger financial future

OUR CHALLENGES ARE TOO GREAT TO BE SOLVED IN ONE YEAR



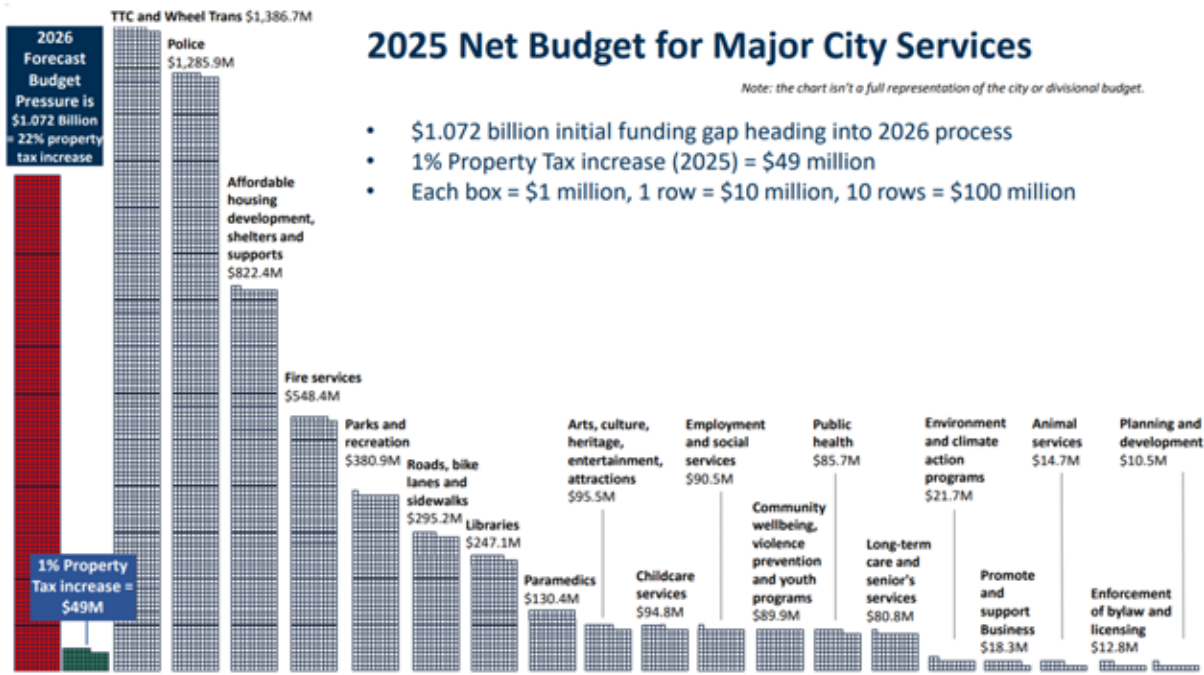
What We've Done:

- Strengthened the City's multi-year approach to financial stability.
- Identified \$620 million in 2024 and \$680 million in 2025 through reductions and offsets.
- Secured \$1.23 billion in **operating support** over three years (2024–2026) through the New Deal with the Province.
- Achieved a credit rating upgrade to AA+ in 2024—the first increase in decades.

What We Need to Do:

- Focus on protecting and delivering critical services.
- Continue identifying budget reductions and offsets.
- Secure long-term funding commitments from the federal and provincial governments.

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Appendix 3: Survey Report

2026 BUDGET SURVEY RESULTS

Overview

From October 1 to 31, 2025, Mayor Olivia Chow and Budget Committee Chair Shelley Carroll invited Toronto residents to share ideas about the City's 2026 Budget in an online survey. The budget survey, along with the parallel consultation tactics of in-person and virtual meetings, was led by the City Manager's Office in partnership with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer and the Communications division and supported by staff from multiple divisions.

The purpose of the survey was to have participants:

- identify their priorities for the 2026 budget;
- share thoughts on federal and provincial funding to support the City; and
- recommend actions they or the City could take to help Toronto achieve a strong financial future.

The budget survey:

- included multiple questions on City services, public priorities, property taxes, and federal and provincial support;
- contained an open-text field question allowing residents to contribute their ideas on the important actions the City can take to make Toronto affordable and livable for everyone;
- was available in 12 languages: English, French, Chinese-simplified, Chinese-traditional, Farsi, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil and Urdu;
- received participation from:
 - 9,787 people across Toronto, and;
 - 8,178 responses for the open-text question.

What We Heard

Services Identified by Participants as Most Important

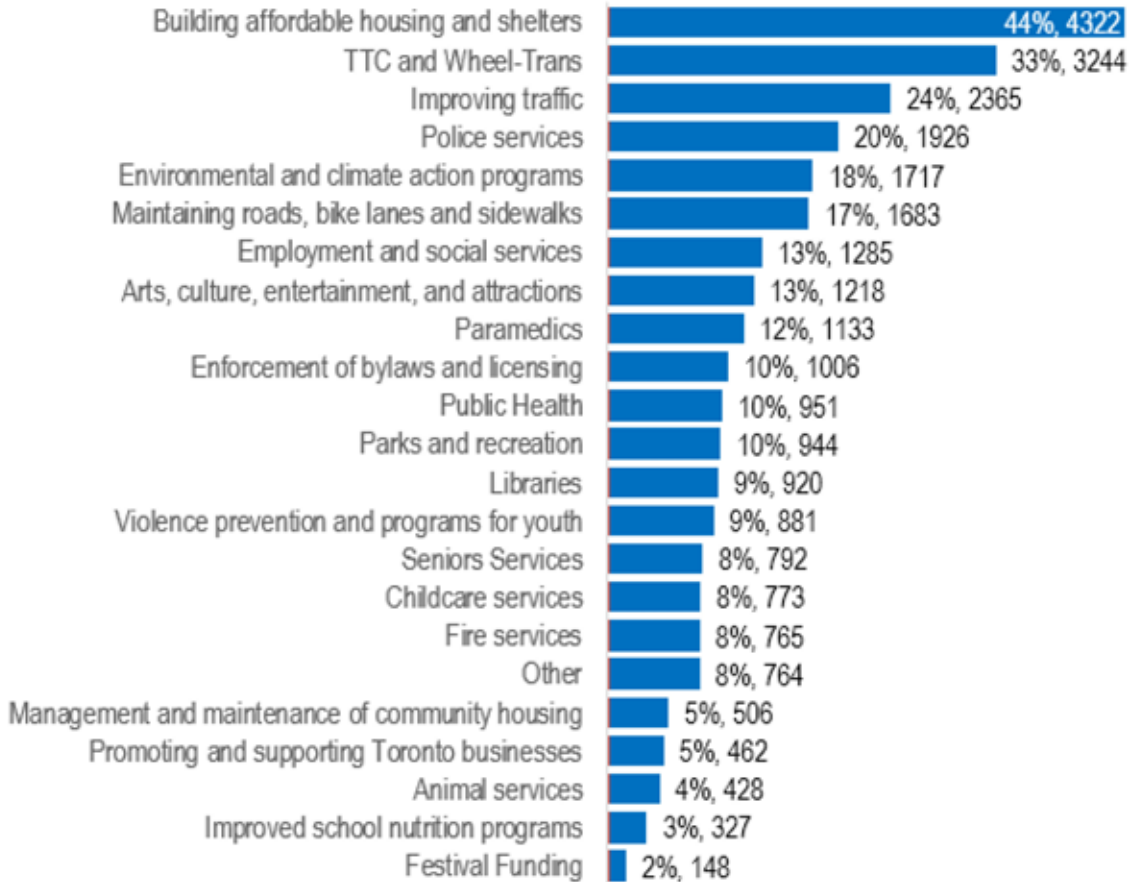
Survey participants were asked to identify the City services most important to them. Appendix 1 provides a sample of comments and summarized themes from all participants in the consultation.

Figure 1 shows the most important City services selected by survey respondents. The City services identified as most important were:

1. **Building affordable housing and shelters** remained the highest priority for survey respondents, compared with the result from last year. 44% of survey respondents identified this service as their priority. Many respondents suggested the need to expand the supply of affordable housing, strengthen rent control and provide safe shelters to reduce homelessness.
2. **TTC and Wheel-Trans** was selected as the second most important City service priority for survey respondents (33%) for the second year in a row, having also been selected second priority in last year's BudgetTO survey. Respondents emphasized that an affordable, safe, and reliable transit system is essential for reducing traffic congestion and improving access to employment opportunities.

- While the top two priorities remained the same as for the 2025 BudgetTO survey, **Improving Traffic** surpassed Environmental and Climate Action Programs to become the third most-identified priority this year from the survey. Respondents recommended that the City take actions to reduce traffic congestion, including enhancing the transit system, minimizing road closures, improving planning and coordination of road work, and implementing measures such as congestion pricing.

Figure 1 - City services selected by survey respondents as their top three most important services (N= 9725, % of respondents, number of respondents).



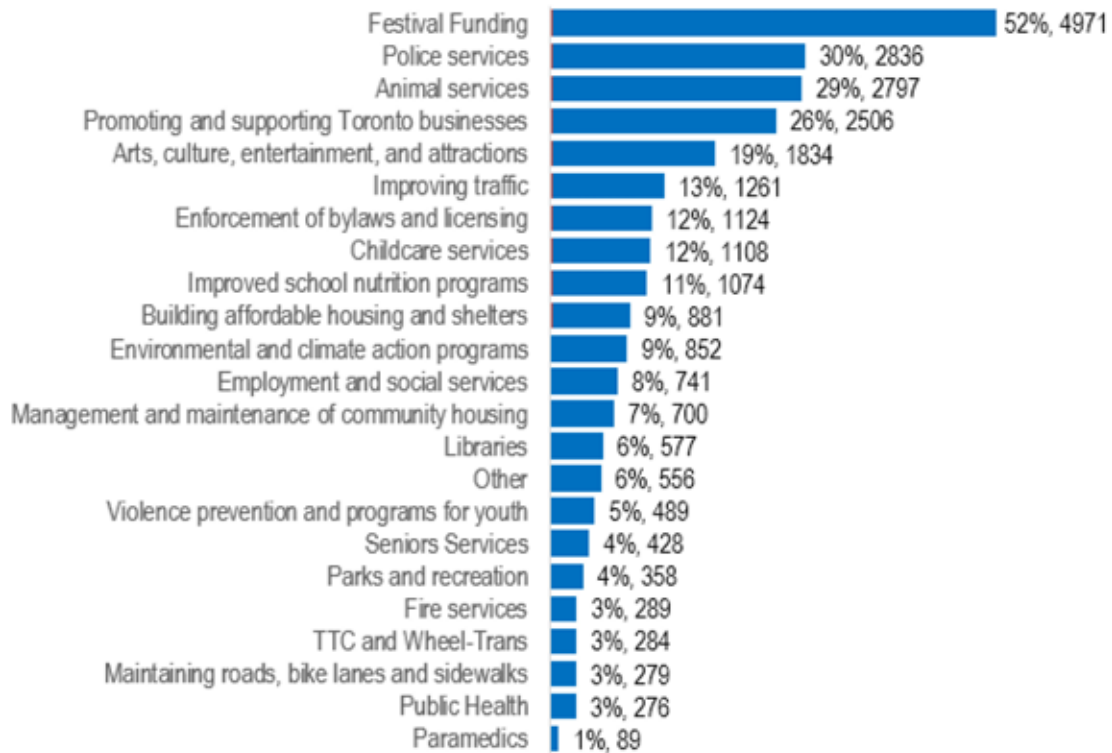
Services Identified by Participants as Least Important

The online survey allowed respondents to choose and rank three services they perceived as the least important. Figure 2 shows the City services selected by respondents in this year's survey. The City services selected most often were:

- Festival Funding – Most frequently selected as the least important City service. Some respondents suggested that the City should focus on core services before providing funding to festivals, while others suggested that festivals should generate revenue rather than relying on funding.
- Police Services – Second-most frequently identified as the least important service by survey respondents. Some respondents emphasized the need to find greater efficiencies in the Police budget, and others recommended redirecting funding to crime prevention and community well-being to reduce the need for additional policing.

- Animal Services – Third most-identified service selected as least important by survey respondents, repeating its survey result for the second successive year.

Figure 2: City services selected by survey respondents as their top three least important services (N= 9512, % of respondents, number of respondents).



Geographical Comparisons

Table 1 presents the top priorities identified by survey respondents across City Council’s four geographical Community Council District areas. The top two most important City services were in alignment across the city (building affordable housing and shelters, and TTC and Wheel-Trans). Compared with other areas of the city, a higher percentage of respondents from Etobicoke York identified environmental climate action programs as their priority, and a higher percentage of respondents from North York identified maintaining roads, bike lanes and sidewalks as their priority. Scarborough was the only area of the city to identify employment and social services within their top five priorities.

Table 1: Most important City services for survey respondents by geographic area.

Area	Top 5 Most Important City Services for Survey Respondents
Etobicoke York (N= 619)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building affordable housing and shelters 2. TTC and Wheel-Trans 3. Environmental and climate action programs 4. Improving traffic 5. Maintaining roads, bike lanes and sidewalks

North York (N=896)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building affordable housing and shelters 2. TTC and Wheel-Trans 3. Maintaining roads, bike lanes and sidewalks 4. Improving traffic 5. Police services
Scarborough (N= 789)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building affordable housing and shelters 2. TTC and Wheel-Trans 3. Improving traffic 4. Police services 5. Employment and social services
Toronto and East York (N= 3,916)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building affordable housing and shelters 2. TTC and Wheel-Trans 3. Improving traffic 4. Police services 5. Environmental and climate action programs
Location unspecified) (N= 3,567)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building affordable housing and shelters 2. TTC and Wheel-Trans 3. Improving traffic 4. Environmental and climate action programs 5. Police services

Table 2 presents the top five City services that participants in City Council’s four geographical Community Council District areas perceived as least important. Festival funding was consistently identified as least important across all geographical areas. A lower percentage of survey respondents from North York and Scarborough identified police services as least important, whereas a lower percentage of survey respondents from Etobicoke-York identified animal services as least important.

Table 2: Least important City services by geographic area.

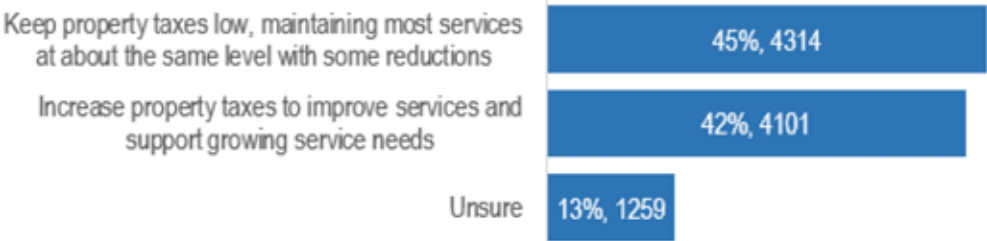
Area	Top 5 Least Important City Services for Survey Respondents
Etobicoke York (N= 619)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Festival funding 2. Police services 3. Promoting and supporting Toronto businesses 4. Animal services 5. Improving traffic
North York (N= 896)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Festival funding 2. Animal services 3. Promoting and supporting Toronto businesses 4. Police services 5. Arts, culture, entertainment, and attractions
Scarborough (N= 789)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Festival funding 2. Animal services 3. Promoting and supporting Toronto businesses 4. Arts, culture, entertainment, and attractions 5. Police services
Toronto and East York (N= 3,916)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Festival funding 2. Police services 3. Animal services 4. Promoting and supporting Toronto businesses 5. Arts, culture, entertainment, and attractions

Location unspecified) (N= 3,567)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Festival funding 2.Police services 3.Animal services 4.Promoting and supporting Toronto businesses 5.Arts, culture, entertainment, and attractions
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Participant Input on Property Tax

Participants provided inputs on how property taxes should be adjusted in 2026. Among survey respondents, 45% supported keeping property taxes low and maintaining most services at about the same level, with some reductions, while 42% supported increasing property taxes to improve services and support growing service needs (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Survey responses on how property taxes should be adjusted in 2026 (N= 9674, % of respondents, number of respondents).



Participant Input on Intergovernmental Relations and Funding

Survey participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the other orders of government should pay more for the services that are their responsibility.

There was a strong consensus that the provincial and federal governments should bear the costs of services they are responsible for:

- 88% of survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the provincial government should pay a fair share for services that are its responsibility (Figure 4).
- 89% of survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the federal government should pay a fair share for services that are its responsibility (Figure 5).

The top priorities for support from the provincial government by survey respondents include funding the operations of the TTC, funding TTC construction, and maintaining roads and buildings (Figure 6). On the support from the federal government, survey respondents identified housing, shelters and refugee support, flood protection, and sharing a portion of the existing HST as the most important (Figure 6).

Figure 4: Survey agreement with the statement that the provincial government should pay for services that are within its responsibilities. (N= 9052, % of respondents, number of respondents)

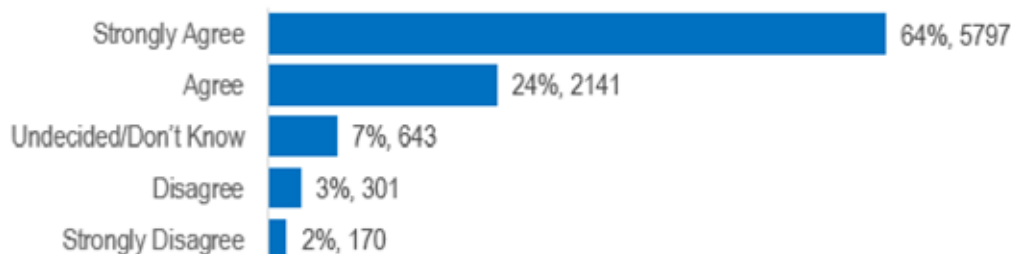


Figure 5: Survey agreement with the statement that the federal government should pay for services that are within its responsibilities. (N= 9041, % of respondents, number of respondents)

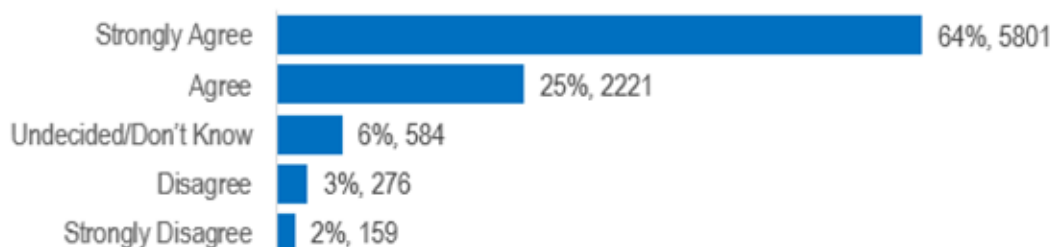
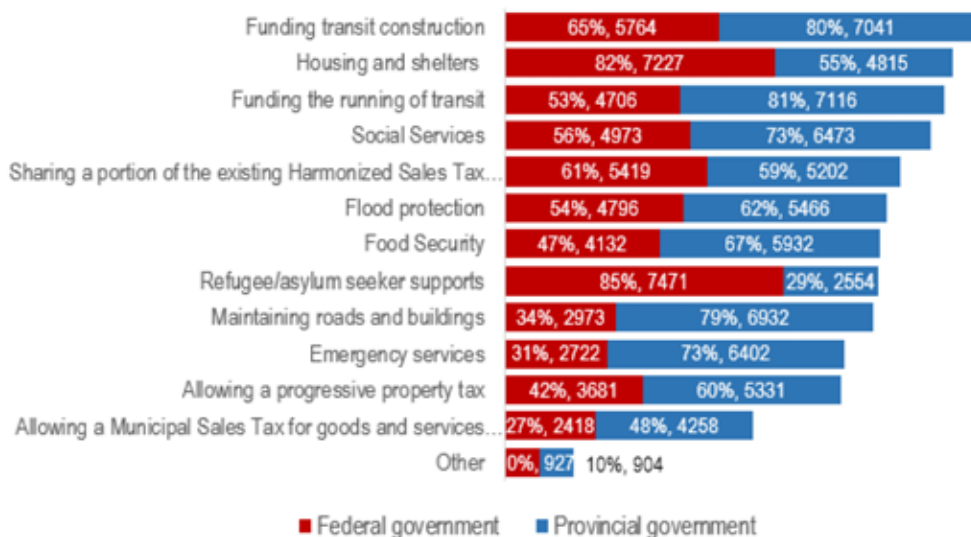


Figure 6. Top ranked services and programs participants want the provincial government and the federal government to provide greater support for. (N= 8830, % of respondents, number of respondents)



The consultation also included questions asking participants what action they would take to engage the provincial and federal governments to support Toronto and the supports they need to take the actions. About three-quarters (71%) of survey respondents expressed willingness to sign petitions and over a half (51%) of participants expressed willingness to meet with their local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) and Member of Parliament (MP) (Figure 7). To support

these actions, 62% of survey respondents identified the need for newsletter/email updates on upcoming opportunities to have input, and more than half (55%) of them identified the need for information from their Councillor (Figure 8).

Figure 7. The actions survey respondents indicated they would take to engage the provincial and federal governments. (N= 8793, % of respondents, number of respondents)

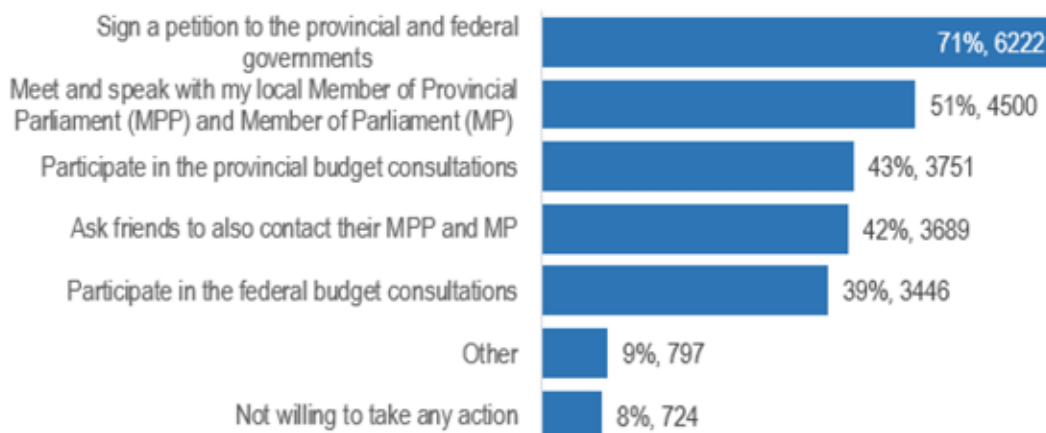
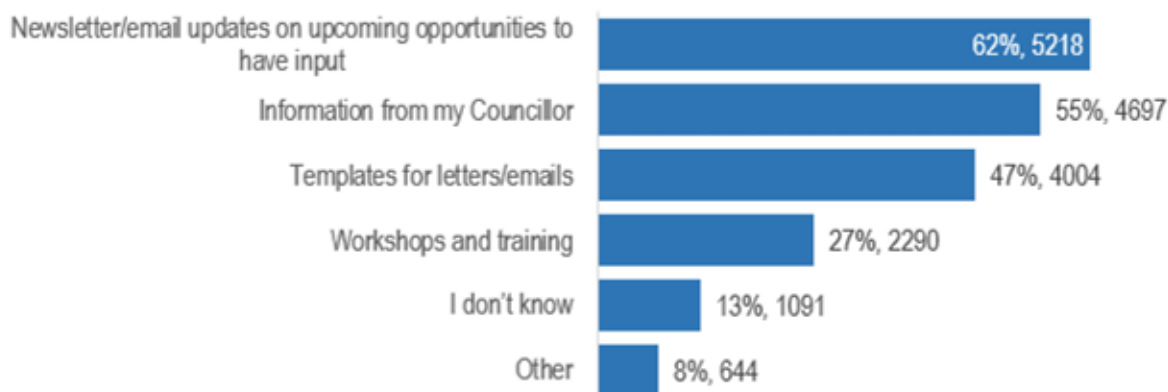


Figure 8. The supports survey respondents needed to take the actions. (N= 8463, % of respondents, number of respondents)



Actions the City Should Take

The online survey included an open-text question for residents' ideas on important actions the City can take to make Toronto more affordable and liveable for everyone. A total of 8,178 responses were recorded. Based on the frequency of open text responses, the following themes were identified as the priority actions the City should take:

- Provide Affordable Housing and Shelters
- Improve Transit and Reduce Traffic Congestion
- Ensure Fair Taxation
- Invest in Social Services and Community Well-being
- Promote Safety and Prevent Crime
- Support Employment and Businesses
- Enhance Government Collaboration
- Build Climate Resilience

Appendix 1 provides a sample of comments taken directly from the open text question, grouped by the most identified themes listed above.

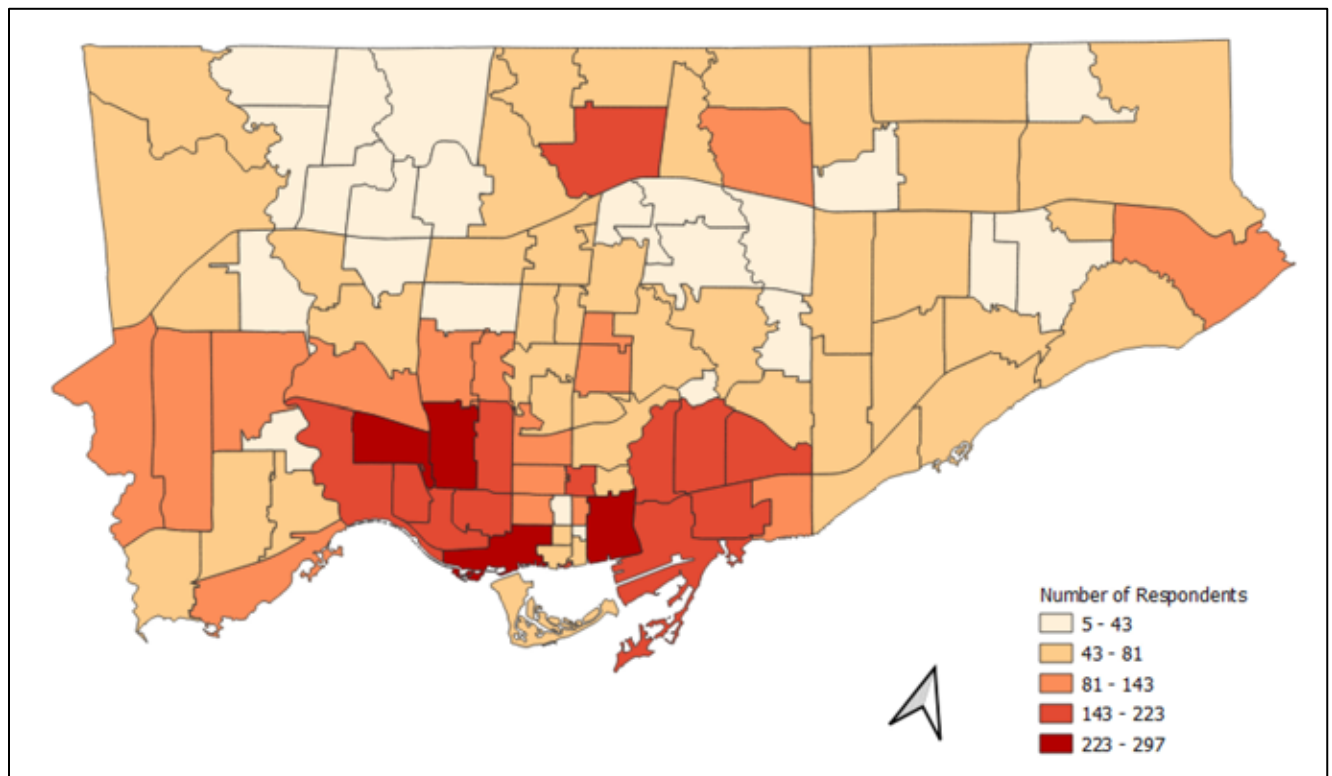
Methodology and Demographics

Online Survey Methodology

Residents were invited to respond to the key questions and contribute their ideas for making Toronto more affordable, livable and resilient through an online survey. The survey was offered in 12 languages that are most used by Toronto households¹, including English, French, Chinese-simplified, Chinese-traditional, Farsi, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil and Urdu.

The online survey received 9,787 responses; 308 participants responded in languages other than English. More than half (54%) of the participants had not participated in budget consultations in the past. Survey responses were received from across the city, with some areas in North York and Scarborough being slightly under-represented (Figure 9). The questions from the online survey are in Appendix 2.

Figure 9: Map of the number of survey respondents by Forward Sortation Area (FSA)



¹ The 12 languages that are most used by Toronto households are based on 2021 Census data.

Advertising and Promotion

Communications tactics to promote the survey (and wider consultation) included print, online and out-of-home advertisements, retail radio, organic and paid social media, Councillor, Agencies & Boards and Partner toolkits, articles in City e-newsletters, toronto.ca/budget webpages and employee communications. Print and digital ads were translated for media outlets serving newcomers and communities for whom English is not a first language.

Demographics

The survey included optional demographic questions. Respondents to the survey reported they were participating from across the city, with the greatest response rate from Toronto and East York (Table 3).

The survey respondents reflect a variety of age groups, gender identities and racial backgrounds. 2% self-identified as Indigenous to Canada, 17% self-identified as a person with a disability, indicating a broad demographic engagement. Compared to Census data (2021), age groups under 30 are slightly under-represented, women are slightly over-represented, and visible minority population is slightly under-represented.

Compared with the socio-demographic characteristics of survey respondents last year, in this year's survey:

- The percentage of respondents who self-identified as visible minorities increased 3%. However, visible minorities were still under-represented compared to the visible minority population of Toronto².
- The percentage of respondents who self-identified as living with disabilities and the percentage of respondents who self-identified as a member of the 2SLGBT+ community both decreased slightly (less than 2%).
- The self-identified as Indigenous to Canada remained the same. Similar to last year, the survey achieved good representation of respondents from Indigenous communities.

Table 3. Participation by geography comparison.

Area	Consultation on 2025 Budget		Consultation on 2026 Budget	
	Survey respondents	Survey respondents	Survey respondents	Survey respondents
Etobicoke York	844	715	619	
North York	1,222	1,061	896	
Scarborough	870	951	789	
Toronto and East York	6,510	6,791	3,916	
Location unspecified	1,356	2,483	3,567	
Total	10,802	12,001	9,787	

² This comparison is based on 2021 Census data.

Appendix 1: Major Themes from Online Survey

This table presents a sample of ideas submitted through the online survey in response to the question: What is the most important action the City should take to make Toronto affordable and livable for everyone? A total of 8,178 ideas were submitted through the survey. The examples below were selected based on a comprehensive analysis of key themes across all submissions. This process included grouping ideas using keyword coding and identifying those that were written as complete sentences, provided clear rationale, and represented a group of similar ideas. The ideas are shown verbatim as submitted by respondents.

Theme	Sample Ideas from Online Survey
Provide Affordable Housing and Shelters	<p><i>Build affordable housing and shelters:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and maintain affordable housing, nonprofit/nonmarket housing, and shelters. • Building affordable housing and using /renovating existing city properties that are vacant for years. • Providing more affordable housing units, making more room for shelter space for the homeless. Giving people on the wait list for housing a faster opportunity to get into the RGI program. Providing youth and adults with more jobs and programs to learn how to get a job and get resources. • The City should focus on expanding affordable housing and improving public transit. These two areas are essential to reducing costs for residents, supporting access to jobs and services, and making Toronto more livable for everyone. • Affordable housing is a crisis right now. The current system of subsidized housing also is not a solution, because the income cap to qualify for this housing is so low that you have to keep yourself and your family in poverty just to qualify for keeping affordable RGI housing. • The most important action the City should take is to expand affordable housing options for families. Many families in Toronto are struggling with rising rents, overcrowding, or the inability to find stable housing. The City should prioritize building more family-sized affordable units, protect existing rental stock, and strengthen partnerships with federal and provincial governments to secure sustainable funding for housing. Ensuring that families can live in safe, stable, and affordable homes will make Toronto a more livable and inclusive city for everyone. • Building city-owned apartment buildings with bachelor apartments for low-income individuals so their rent is returned to city instead of corporate income property mgmt.. Just as important is raising minimum wage so that a full-time worker can afford a 1-bedroom apartment with 50% or less of income. • The most important action the City of Toronto should take to make the city more affordable and livable for everyone is to dramatically increase the supply of diverse, affordable housing through zoning reform, public land development, and stronger tenant protections. This means legalizing more multi-unit housing in low-density neighbourhoods, fast-tracking non-profit and co-operative housing projects, and using city-owned land to build mixed-income communities. Coupled with rent control and enhanced support services, these steps would help reduce housing costs, prevent displacement, and create inclusive neighbourhoods where people of all incomes can thrive. • Mandate mixed-use housing, so developers aren't only building tiny condo units. Bring back rent control, not just for units built after 2018. Prioritize Canadian products and services by investing in the infrastructure and training

	<p>required - so we don't rely on other countries and shelter ourselves from price fluctuations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something to be done to help unhoused individuals or those with addiction and mental health issues off city streets and into places where they can be supported and cared for. • Support for unhoused people - provide safe housing first, not just shelters. <p><i>Support renters:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city should invest more in housing benefits. It should also implement policies to help unfair rent increments and unnecessary evictions and most importantly to make housing affordable because rent is high. • Rent control. People are spending an enormous amount of their pay cheques on rent, most of the time for subpar housing. There should be limits on rent being charged based on certain aspects buildings are lacking; if there's no elevator, if the building is old and has frequent maintenance issues, if the place is cockroach infested etc. • Regulate accommodation rent prices and reduce the rent cost. • Incentives for landlords to charge affordable rent; more tenant protections; more co-op housing and affordable rentals. Lack of safe and affordable housing is why we are seeing so many tents and unhoused people in Toronto, as well as an increase in violence. Give people safe and affordable housing (and by affordable, I mean rents that are under \$1000 a month) and you will see a decrease in crime and an overall improvement in mental health as well.
<p>Improve Transit and Reduce Traffic Congestion</p>	<p><i>Improve public transit:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city needs to find a way to make public transit more affordable and accessible. Streetcars are unacceptable in their current condition. Weekend service on the subway is lacking. Buses need priority lanes. • More reliable public transit/alternatives to driving to alleviate gridlock/reduce stress, pollution etc. not only in the downtown core but in the suburbs as well. • Improve transit service and add more bus only lanes. • Improve transit - complete LRT and new subway lines, reduce fares. • Transit improvements have to be the basis of any plan to make the city better for its residents. People being able to get where they need to go is absolutely fundamental. We need to consider all options, including priority bus lanes, and increased subway and light rail service. We could also implement congestion charges for driving downtown as many other cities have done and use the funds to improve the TTC. <p><i>Reduce traffic congestion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fix traffic congestion! Best way to do that is to invest in the TTC, especially in Scarborough, where public transit service is dismal. • Less traffic congestion, efficient and reliable public transit, fewer road closures to make getting around that much easier. • Reduce traffic congestion through congestion pricing. • Improve traffic flow and stop closing so many parallel roads at one time. Make transit safer and more efficient. • Resolve traffic congestion with better planning and coordination of road work and adopt better solution to have traffic moving in line with 21st century methods including AI and traffic lights synchronization, roundabouts and congestion tax for outsiders commuters. It is not good anymore to just add more Stop signs and traffic lights. Residential streets shouldn't have four stop

	<p>signs at every intersection. Instead, they should have a main street and have stop signs for side streets.</p> <p><i>Improve transportation infrastructure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making it possible for everyone to get around the city: funding the maintenance and operations of the TTC (that means not just fare enforcement), protecting bike lanes, traffic enforcement (ticket drivers for running red lights and blocking intersections) and clearing snow from sidewalks • More dedicated transit/bike and walking/biking corridors so that the gig workers (formerly called precarious workers) are able to walk, bike and move freely and more safely through higher traffic areas. Essentially, find ways to incentivize people to not take your car to work. • Improve transit and bike lanes. This will help make the city more liveable and also meet challenges of climate change and help reduce traffic congestion. It will make streets safer. Everyone wins if we improve public transit and the bike lanes. • Stop prioritizing parking on city streets and prioritize through-traffic (cars, buses, bikes). Encourage parking to be in buildings, lots, and underground structures. This would reduce congestion in so many places.
<p>Invest in Social Services and Community Well-being</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City should prioritize social investment, especially for vulnerable populations, by ensuring people experiencing homelessness receive not just shelter but also psychosocial support and training. • The City can take actions such as more community resources available to its members (ex. childcare, newcomer programs, violence prevention programs, services for individuals diagnosed / living with an intellectual disability and other impairments). • Programs for youth, young adults and newcomers to upskill so they can afford to be able live in Toronto. • Create more centres for senior activities and programs for the aging population which is fast growing. • Focus on the mental health, housing and drug crisis and these three components go hand in hand. • Stop encampment evictions and reinvest police funding into community services. • Build more community sports centres, playgrounds, indoor and outdoor pools and parks for children and adults. Take a special care of Toronto's waterfront. • Invest more money in public libraries so that librarians can be available to support residents access all the other services. Librarians also do work in youth violence prevention through the Youth Hub. They can also help with a lot of services if given the tools to do so. Another thing is to make daycare hours longer and more flexible for working parents.
<p>Promote Safety and Prevent Crime</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on youth crime prevention, advocate for stronger crime laws for higher levels of government, request more funding for social housing. • Ensure the safety of residents. • Make the streets feel SAFE. Be tough on crime and criminals, eliminate anti-social behaviours on the TTC, clean up trash on the streets, crack down on drugs and the homeless causing disruptions to ordinary residents and businesses. • Improve safety on streetcars with transit officers on the line. • Safety on the TTC. People won't take it if the violence and harassment continues.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve safety on the roads, subways. Transport is increasingly a scary space for women and young people that have to deal with aggressive behaviour and violence. Toronto was a great city. I frankly don't feel as safe anymore. • Enforcement against theft and violence. • Stop gun violence. • Crime is very high in Toronto, with car thefts, home break-ins and random acts of violence. Criminals should be punished and not be giving bail so that they can repeat the crimes. • By-law enforcement and traffic law enforcement. The streets and filthier (people littering and not picking up after dogs and dumping household trash). Homeowners aren't shoveling sidewalks or cleaning leaves. Drivers run red lights and stop signs and have stopped indicating. These are things that make a city a community and they aren't being prioritized or enforced.
Support Employment and Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting of small businesses. Creating areas which are more walkable or accessible via bike or public transport to those businesses. More small businesses leads to more jobs. More taxes earned by city. More people employed so less people on streets. Speed up the process. • Increase employment services for people on Ontario Works and Ontario Disability. There are no jobs! • The City should create more job opportunities for newcomers by offering training programs and providing them with hands-on work placements. • Promote new businesses to allow people to have a job so they can afford to have a better life. • The City should focus on creating more accessible job opportunities for all residents, particularly in underrepresented sectors. • Make it easy for businesses to flourish. Make Toronto the friendliest city in the world to do business by reducing taxes and red tape. This will generate investment and create much needed jobs. • Creating an environment that supports meaningful and durable employment in all sectors so that Toronto has a diverse economic foundation that doesn't require government funding or subsidy to exist. • Increase wages to reflect housing costs and inflation of life necessities such as food, heat, water, clothing.
Ensure Fair Taxation	<p><i>Property tax and alternative revenue tools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City must consider other options besides property taxes alone. • Property taxes should not be used to pay for items that are the responsibility of other governments. E.g. I believe in affordable housing and shelter but this should be paid for by the province and federal government. • Be innovative and creative and find other sources of funding that grow with the economy. The City must consider other options besides property taxes alone. Look at how other countries and cities do it and take the best of what they do and do it here! • Lower home property taxes for existing and new homeowners because our income wages aren't increasing, and we are falling into greater mortgage debt, and we shouldn't be expected to pay more than non-homeowners, for shared city services. • Lower property taxes for seniors so we can grow old in our homes. • Tax owners of multiple properties, tax vacant homes (better enforcement), put these funds directly into community and affordable housing + programs for youth. • The city should create revenue streams to generate more funds for its maintenance. For example, they could open small stores at subway stations,

	<p>establish a restaurant near the train tracks and bridges so people can enjoy food at the station and watch the trains, and set up food trucks at different spots in the parks, near schools or offices, sharing some of the earnings with the city, can arrange festival of different Canada made product at the city offices and open to the general people to enjoy and spend some money for the city, etc.</p> <p><i>Reduce cost</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find ways to streamline processes and operations, ensuring the city is running efficiently and delivering effective service. This focus will not only help to reduce taxes and costs, but it will give the city the resources it needs to invest in key priorities. • Stop wasting money on services/programs that are clearly the responsibility of provincial or federal governments unless those governments have promised, in writing, to reimburse that spending. • Stop increasing taxes. Reevaluate expansion of bike lanes - what is the true cost of these major projects across the city given the current economic situation. • Stop wasting money on initiatives that have little to no real impact, such as initiatives that are really only about virtue-signaling. • Cut the police budget and put that money towards social supports that would reduce the need for policing.
<p>Enhance Government Collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the federal government for fast mass rapid transit. It's a critical aspect to softening the housing crunch and access to work and community. • Continue to push for more power from the Provincial Government so that the Provincial Government lets the municipal government make decisions for city residents that city residents want. • Be innovative and creative and find other sources of funding that grow with the economy... • Coordinate with Provincial and Federal govt. to build government owned housing estates somewhat like the British model and institute a rent to own policy. • The provincial and federal governments must pay for housing and immigration and refugee services. Too much \$ needed for the basic services of the city are being diverted. • The City should work with the provincial and federal governments to ensure there is adequate affordable housing. • The City should advocate to the Federal and Provincial Governments to assist with the funding of major capital investments, public infrastructure and alternative energy solutions.
<p>Build Climate Resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in climate change resilience and prevention strategies, supporting transition for homeowners and businesses to green infrastructure. • Build public housing that is climate ready and resilient (fully insulated and powered by local renewable energy). This would create jobs for un or under-employed youth, provide a model for the green, healthy housing that we need, and keep people healthy, safe, and housed. • Green (strengthen our urban forests) and renewable energy initiatives and make sure we are more resilient when it comes to climate change. • Prioritize climate action solutions and emphasize the economic opportunities that go along with this focus including renewable jobs. • Invest in sustainable infrastructure to keep everyone moving and have a resilient city.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on environmental stewardship, climate mitigation and adaptation, reducing waste and funding for waste-heavy events in order to create a resilient future city.
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Appendix 2: Online Survey Questions

BudgetTO: Building a City that Works for You

The City is developing the 2026 budget to continue to build a more affordable, livable and resilient Toronto. Your input is essential to help us make informed decisions that reflect the priorities of residents across the city and build a city that works for you.

Through this survey, we want to hear from you about:

- What matters most to you in the 2026 City budget
- Your views on federal and provincial funding to support Toronto
- How residents can contribute to the City's long-term financial sustainability

Your feedback is anonymous and will be shared with the Mayor, City Council, and the public. Learn more about [the City's budget and services](#).

If you have questions about this survey or require accessibility supports, accommodations, or an alternative format, please email Jennifer McGowan, Manager, Public Consultation at engagement@toronto.ca.

Section A: What matters most to you in the 2026 budget

*Each year, City Council makes important decisions about the services you rely on every day. Some services get more money, some get less, and some stay the same. **By law, the City is required to balance its operating budget each year – it cannot spend more money than it brings in.** That's why your input is critical. We need to know what matters most to you to help City Council make informed decisions.*

Question 1

For 2026, which City services are the most important to you?

(Select top three choices and rank in order of importance to you. "1" is the most important.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Animal services (such as animal shelters and adoption)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arts, culture, entertainment and attractions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Building affordable housing and shelters
<input type="checkbox"/>	Childcare services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Employment and social services (such as distributing Ontario Works, training and skills development programs)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enforcement of bylaws and licensing (such as tenant protection, noise and property standards)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Environmental and climate action programs (such as flood protection, building energy and tree canopy)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Festival Funding
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fire services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Improved school food programs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Improving traffic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Libraries
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining roads, bike lanes and sidewalks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Management and maintenance of community housing

- Paramedics
- Parks and recreational services
- Police services
- Promoting and supporting Toronto businesses
- Public Health (such as food safety and immunization clinics)
- Senior Services (such as long-term care homes)
- TTC and Wheel-Trans
- Violence prevention and programs for youth
- Other, please specify: -----

Question 2

For 2026, which City services are the least important to you?

(Select top three choices and rank in order of least importance to you. "1" is the least important.)

- Animal services (such as animal shelters and adoption)
- Arts, culture, entertainment, and attractions
- Building affordable housing and shelters
- Childcare services
- Employment and social services (such as distributing Ontario Works, training and skills development programs)
- Enforcement of bylaws and licensing (such as tenant protection, noise and property standards)
- Environmental and climate action programs (such as flood protection, building energy and tree canopy)
- Festival Funding
- Fire services
- Improved school food programs
- Improving traffic
- Libraries
- Maintaining roads, bike lanes and sidewalks
- Management and maintenance of community housing
- Paramedics
- Parks and recreational services
- Police services
- Promoting and supporting Toronto businesses
- Public Health (such as food safety and immunization clinics)
- Senior Services (such as long-term care homes)
- TTC and Wheel-Trans
- Violence prevention and programs for youth
- Other, please specify: -----

Question 3

Property taxes are the main way the City pays for everyday essential services and infrastructure, such as transit, parks and emergency services. Property taxes are payments made by property owners to the City, based on how much their property is worth.

Unlike other orders of government, the City has very few sources of funding that grow with the economy. The City must consider how property taxes might change to keep services running and meet growing needs.

In your opinion, how should property taxes be adjusted in 2026? (*Select one*)

- Keep property taxes low, maintaining most services at about the same level with some reductions
- Increase property taxes to improve services and support growing service needs
- Unsure

Question 4

What is the most important action the City should take to make Toronto more affordable and livable for everyone? (*Please do not include any personal information in your response.*)

Section B: Your views on federal and provincial funding to support Toronto

Although the City is responsible for more than 60% of the services and infrastructure residents rely on daily, it receives only 9% of the total tax dollars paid to all orders of government—federal, provincial and municipal.

Question 5

Should the Province of Ontario work more closely with the City to fully fund the services it is responsible for in Toronto starting in 2026 and beyond? (*Select one*)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided/Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Question 6

Should the Government of Canada work more closely with the City to fully fund the services it is responsible for in Toronto starting in 2026 and beyond? (*Select one*)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided/Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Question 7

Which of the following areas do you think the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada should partner or collaborate with the City on to provide greater support for Toronto residents? (*Select all that apply*)

	Federal government	Provincial government
Funding transit construction		
Funding the running of transit		
Emergency services (police, paramedics, fire, Toronto Community Crisis Service)		
Flood protection		
Maintaining roads and buildings		
Refugee/asylum seeker supports		
Housing and shelters		
Food Security (such as support for school food programs, food banks, community meal programs)		
Social Services (such as childcare, long-term care, mental health services)		
Allowing a Municipal Sales Tax for goods and services purchased in Toronto		
Sharing a portion of the existing Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) with Toronto		
Allowing a progressive property tax, where more expensive properties are taxed at a higher rate		
Other, please specify:		

Question 8

What actions would you be willing to take, on your own or with your neighbours, to encourage the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada to work more closely with the City and better support Toronto residents? *(Select all that apply)*

- Meet and speak with my local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) and Member of Parliament (MP)
- Ask friends to also contact their MPP and MP
- Participate in the provincial budget consultations
- Participate in the federal budget consultations
- Sign a petition to the provincial and federal governments
- Not willing to take any action
- Other, please specify:

Question 9

To help inform our future work, what supports might you need to take any of the actions listed in Question 8? (Select all that apply)

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Workshops and training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Newsletter/email updates on upcoming opportunities to have input |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Templates for letters/emails |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Information from my Councillor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other, please specify:..... |

Section C: Optional Demographic Questions

The following questions will help us understand the needs of different population groups in Toronto. The questions are voluntary, and you can select 'prefer not to answer' for any question you don't want to answer.

Question 10:

Have you participated in any part of the City of Toronto budget process in the past? This could be through attending a meeting, completing a survey, participating in community activities, etc.

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Prefer not to answer

Question 11:

Which age group are you in?

- 16-19
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-54
- 55-64
- 65+
- Prefer not to answer

Question 12:

Gender identity is the gender that people identify with or how they perceive themselves, which may be different from their sex assigned at birth. What best describes your gender? Please select one only.

- Woman
- Man
- Trans woman
- Trans man
- Gender non-binary (including gender fluid, genderqueer, androgynous)
- Two-Spirited
- Not listed, please describe: _____
- Prefer not to answer

Question 13:

Indigenous people from Canada identify as First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit, Métis, Aboriginal, Native or Indian. Do you identify as Indigenous to Canada? Please select one only.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

Question 14:

Which race category best describes you? Please select one only.

- Arab, Middle Eastern or West Asian (examples: Afghan, Armenian, Iranian, Lebanese, Persian, Turkish)
- Black (examples: African, African-Canadian, Afro-Caribbean)
- East Asian (examples: Chinese, Japanese, Korean)
- First Nations (status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty), Inuit or Métis
- Latin American (examples: Brazilian, Colombian, Cuban, Mexican, Peruvian)
- South Asian or Indo-Caribbean (examples: Indian, Indo-Guyanese, Indo-Trinidadian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
- Southeast Asian (examples: Filipino, Malaysian, Singaporean, Thai, Vietnamese)
- White (examples: English, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Slovakian)
- More than one race category or mixed race, please describe: _____
- Not listed, please describe: _____
- Prefer not to answer

Question 15:

Disability is understood as any physical, mental, developmental, cognitive, learning, communication, sight, hearing or functional limitation that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society. A disability can be permanent, temporary or episodic, and visible or invisible.

Do you identify as a person with a disability? *Please select one only.*

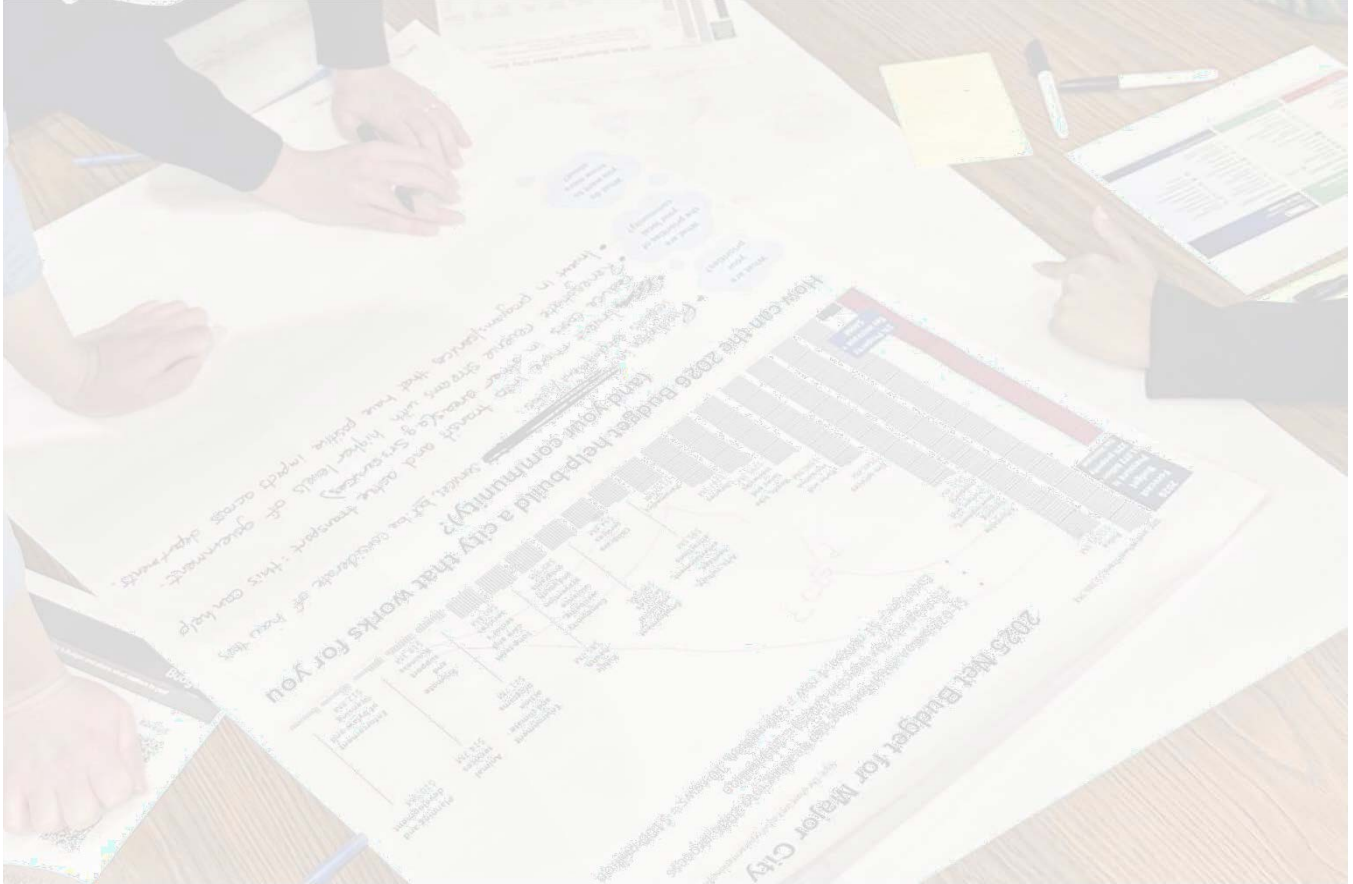
- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

Question 16:

Please provide the first three characters of your postal code (e.g., M5H)

Appendix 4:
City-led Budget Consultation Report

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2025 Public Budget Consultations Summary Report

- I. Project Overview
- II. Participation Overview
- III. Consultation Design and Facilitation
- IV. Findings Summary
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I Project Overview

In October 2025, Toronto organized pre-budget public consultations in venues across the city and online, to collect broad public input on the 2026 budget. This report is a summary of inputs received in writing or in discussion at those events. It describes the purpose, design and facilitation of the events; emergent themes and examples; illustrative quotes and statistics.

Mayor Olivia Chow and Budget Chair Shelley Carroll want to hear from you.

This is the third year of the city's public budget consultations. It followed a similar question strategy and design from previous years. In response to feedback from previous attendees, the organizing team selected larger venues; more volunteer break-out discussion facilitators; and more time for discussion at each table. Barnes Management Group (BMG) were contracted to facilitate the public consultations. They worked with the City Manager's office to follow on the success of previous years and to hear from attendees on the following questions:

We are building a city that works for you and creating a stronger financial future for Toronto.

- How can the 2026 Budget help build a city that works for you?
- What are your thoughts on federal and provincial funding to support the City?
- How can we help Toronto achieve a strong financial future?

Also in October, the City of Toronto launched a city-wide survey and series of community consultations with specific populations in the city. This report, and separate reports on the survey findings and community consultation reports, will be presented to the budget committee on January 8, 2026, to inform the Mayor's proposed budget. The Mayor's budget will be released by February 1, 2026.

This report is a high-level summary of the BudgetTO public consultations created by BMG.

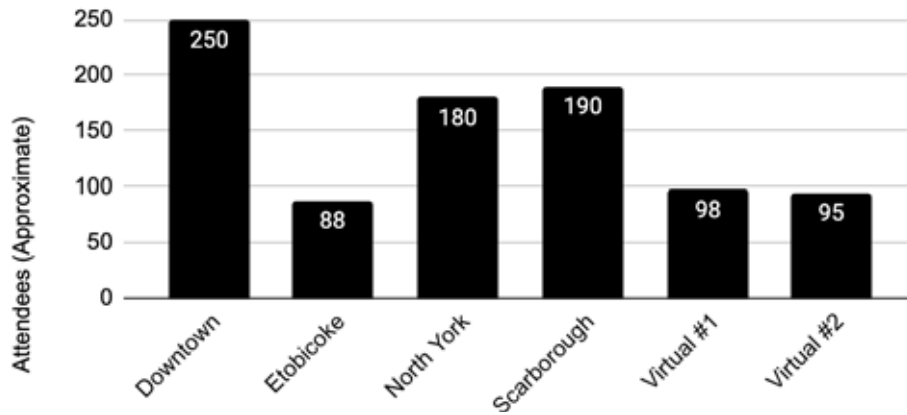
II Participation Overview

Four in-person sessions were scheduled in venues across the City to provide opportunity for many to join. Venues were selected for their accessibility, capacity and proximity to public transportation. Two virtual sessions using the Zoom Webinars Plus platform were also provided. A total of 901 attendees from different parts of the city participated in the six public consultation meetings between October 14 and October 29, 2025.

- All sessions were open to pre-register using Eventbrite.
- The City of Toronto promoted the event across various media channels.
- Attendance increased by 138 attendees from consultations in 2024.

Area	Date	Time	Venue	Attendance
Downtown	October 14	7pm – 9pm	St. Lawrence Market North	250
Etobicoke	October 18	12pm – 2pm	Etobicoke Olympium	88
North York	October 22	7pm – 9pm	North York Civic Centre Memorial Hall	180
Scarborough	October 23	7pm – 9pm	Scarborough Civic Centre	190
Virtual #1	October 27	12pm – 2pm	Online Zoom	98
Virtual #2	October 29	7pm – 9pm	Online Zoom	95

Attendees by Event



III Consultation Design and Facilitation

The six public consultation events brought together City staff and public attendees in a highly informative and participative program. The events were designed to encourage discussion from an individual perspective and from a city-wide perspective. The city staff provided budget-related context and the attendees broadened that context in each discussion group and by voting on budget priorities.



All 6 events followed a similar design and facilitation approach using the same presentation materials, posters and materials. Events were coordinated by the City of Toronto with BMG leading the facilitation. The Mayor, Budget Chair, and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) presented. BMG and the City of Toronto organized between 15-25 volunteer table facilitators to lead small-group discussions at each event; with a total of over 60 City and 25 BMG volunteers. Over 100 Subject Matter Experts, made up of Senior City leaders from across divisions also attended the events to hear budget priorities directly from residents, to answer questions, and provide insight and clarification to small groups in discussion.

The event was designed and facilitated by a team from BMG, coordinated by the City of Toronto City Manager's Office and supported by Senior City Leaders and volunteer discussion facilitators. BMG worked closely with the City to design public consultations that would provide helpful context and insight into the city's budgeting challenges and the budget process. The sessions also offered a variety of ways to participate in discussion and reflection. The break-out or table discussions focused on the City's Budget priorities for 2026 and



provided space to discuss how to achieve a strong financial future for Toronto in the coming years.

All 6 public consultations were made public on the Eventbrite event registration platform (promoted on the City's www.toronto.ca/budget webpage) on October the 1st, two weeks prior to the first session. This provided an easy and trusted registration process as well as providing the organizer an estimate of attendees at each event and an email list of interested persons in Toronto.

Accessibility is important to the success of these events. Event venues were selected for their proximity to public transit and accessibility for the most participants. For virtual sessions, the Zoom Webinars + platform was used for its familiarity for the most users and its integration with Eventbrite for a comfortable registration experience. American Sign Language interpreters provided live interpretation at three of the four in-person events, and closed captioning was available for all virtual sessions. At the time of registration, participants were invited to request interpretation into 12 languages.

To further support the discussions, senior leaders from a variety of City divisions participated in the discussion groups as Subject Matter Experts; participating in dialogue, clarifying budget information, sharing context and answering questions. They, along with the Mayor, Budget Chair, Vice-Budget Chair, Executive Director Financial Planning, and CFO, were available at each event they attended to answer attendees' questions about the budget process, or specific budget areas. At the in-person events, Senior Leaders had the opportunity to listen-in to each of the small group discussions. At the virtual events, they were embedded in each breakout room and were more directly involved in the discussions.

Each consultation followed three parts to provide all attendees the opportunity to learn about the budget process, discuss the budget from many perspectives, and reflect on priorities for the Budget 2026.

- Part One provided the opportunity to hear directly from the Mayor, Budget Chair, and Chief Financial Officer about the Budget; how it works, its challenges, and its trajectory in coming years. Their joint presentation provided context.
- Part Two provided attendees approximately one hour to participate in a small-group discussion about the ideas shared in the presentation and their own perspectives.
- Part three was a chance to individually vote on what, from the 19 budget areas described in the presentation, was of highest priority, and then review the posters created by other breakout groups.
- Finally, Mayor Chow, Budget Chair Councillor Carroll, and Councillor Perks provided closing remarks based on what they heard during the discussion groups, and what they saw on the posters and voting charts.

Part One: Presentation	Part Two: Discussion	Part Three: Reflections
Welcome and Acknowledgements	Break-out group discussion lead by Volunteer Facilitators:	Dot Voting on Priorities
Mayor's introduction to the Budget 2026	Posters One	Gallery Walk of Posters
Presentation	Poster Two	Closing Remarks from Presenters

IV Findings Summary

The following high-level summary is based on an analysis of all recorded notes from the six events. The notes were summarized according to frequency of comments, sentiments, key phrases or common examples. Although there is a significant diversity of ideas and thoughts in the recorded notes, a few strong themes emerge:

- Affordable housing and essential services—such as transit, childcare, and health—are top priorities and commonly viewed as prerequisites for social and economic stability in Toronto.
- Public Transit and mobility requires improvement in many areas.
- Residents broadly support shifting funds from policing and administrative costs to social programs, violence prevention, and community wellbeing, reflecting significant concern over current budget priorities and calls for greater transparency in spending.
- Strong sentiment exists that the province and federal government should play a larger role in funding municipal essentials, especially as population and needs grow rapidly in and outside of Toronto.
- Quality, reliability, and maintenance of public infrastructure—including transit, roads, green spaces, and community facilities—need improvement, with participants expressing frustration at perceived underinvestment and inefficiencies.
- Participants seek a more inclusive, safe, and equitable Toronto, through universal access to employment opportunities, community spaces, health and social services, and public safety approaches rooted in prevention rather than response

The above themes were heard across all of the six sessions. More detailed summaries are available in this report. There was also some variation from each region or format of the events. In addition to contributing to the key themes summarized above, attendees in each region and in the virtual events focused on the following.

- Downtown: Finding revenue generating ideas with a high priority on affordable housing, climate change mitigation, multi-modal transportation options and social equity.
- Etobicoke: strongly emphasized better physical accessibility, especially for seniors; and a focus on transit infrastructure for all. Several infrastructure projects were cited.
- North York: Expressed a strong concern for rising crime, efficiency in government, and job creation. Attendees noted the need for AI training as an area for employment growth and for employment services tailored for already-trained professionals.
- Scarborough: Emphasized transit equity across Toronto, and community safety. Primarily focused on transit gaps and feeling "left behind" since

amalgamation.

- Virtual (1+2): Attendees paid great attention to violence prevention across the City, improvements and expansion of parks and recreation programs, access to transit and climate mitigation. Indoor air quality standards were uniquely cited as a vital health quality measure that need more focus in city health measures.

Dot Voting:

At each event, attendees were given an opportunity to vote on their five highest priority budget areas. Their 2692 votes were collected across the 19 areas described in the presentation. Three of these areas were voted the highest priorities in all six sessions:

1. Affordable Housing
2. TTC and Wheel Trans
3. Community Well-being & Youth Programs

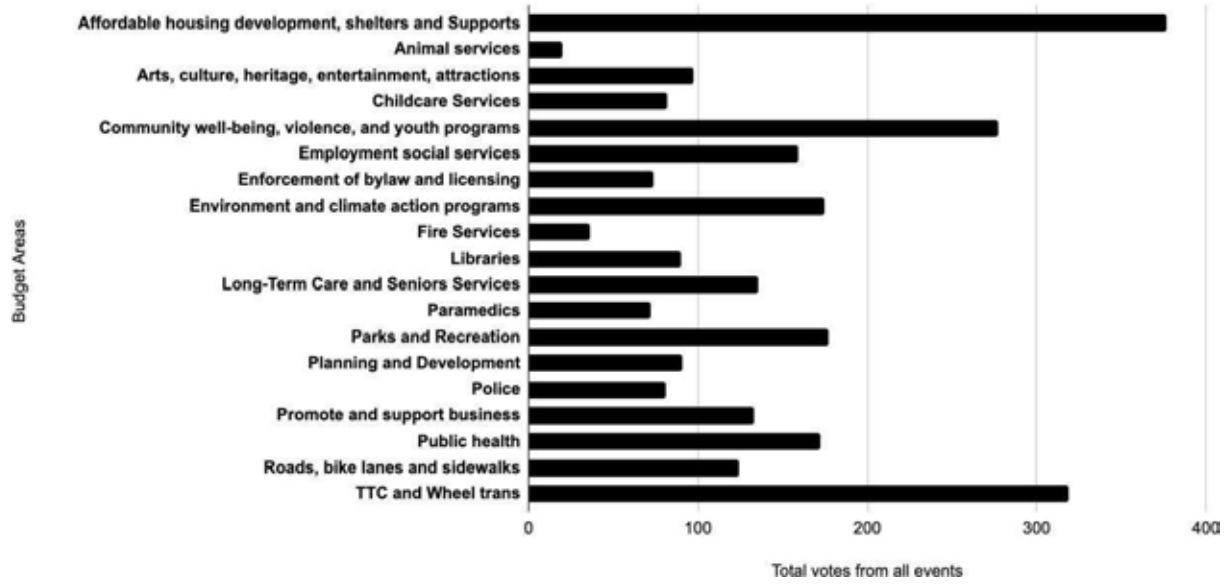
Some further insights:

- This poll was designed to support the discussion and experience of the event. It is not meant for the purpose of statistical analysis.
- Downtown had the largest number of attendees and votes.
- Different from other geographical areas, TTC and Wheel-Trans is identified as the top priority in Scarborough.
- Community well-being, violence prevention and programs for youth are considered a higher priority in Downtown and Scarborough than in other areas.

Note: The budget areas presented for this vote are those presented at each event for the purpose of explanation and discussion. They do not accurately represent the Toronto budget from year to year.

The chart and table below show the distribution of votes across budget areas and according to each event.

Total Votes per Budget Area



Budget Areas	Down town	Etobi-coke	North York	Scarb.	Virtual	Total
Affordable housing development, shelters and supports	124	43	53	62	95	377
TTC and Wheel trans	76	34	51	88	70	319
Community well-being, violence, and youth programs	84	25	38	63	67	277
Parks and Recreation	28	19	10	11	109	177
Environment and climate action programs	58	26	24	21	46	175
Public health	35	15	27	50	45	172
Employment social services	48	17	19	37	38	159
Long-Term Care and Seniors Services	29	17	17	36	37	136
Promote and support business	49	13	23	29	19	133
Roads, bike lanes and sidewalks	29	17	29	22	27	124
Arts, culture, heritage, entertainment, attractions	24	13	16	21	23	97
Planning and Development	26	11	5	14	35	91
Libraries	22	19	15	10	24	90
Childcare Services	16	8	4	27	27	82
Police	9	5	19	15	33	81
Enforcement of bylaw and licensing	25	12	4	21	12	74
Paramedics	21	3	20	10	18	72
Fire Services	4	1	11	6	14	36
Animal services	4	3	3	5	5	20

Top 3 Community Priorities by Location

Across all locations, Affordable Housing and Shelters consistently ranked among the top priorities. Scarborough placed higher emphasis on TTC and Wheel-Trans, while online respondents prioritized Parks and Recreation. Community well-being and youth programs also appeared frequently across regions.

Rank	Downtown	Etobicoke	North York	Scarborough	Virtual
#1	Affordable Housing & Shelters (17%)	Affordable Housing & Shelters (14%)	Affordable Housing & Shelters (14%)	TTC & Wheel-Trans (16%)	Parks & Recreation (15%)
#2	Community Well-being & Youth Programs (12%)	TTC & Wheel-Trans (11%)	TTC & Wheel-Trans (13%)	Community Well-being & Youth Programs (11%)	Affordable Housing & Shelters (13%)
#3	TTC & Wheel Trans (11%)	Environmental & Climate Action (9%)	Community Well-being & Youth Programs (10%)	Affordable Housing & Shelters (11%)	TTC & Wheel Trans (9%)

IV: Discussion Group Summary: What We Heard

Discussion was the heart of the public consultation events. Half of each event was dedicated to discussion groups led by volunteer facilitators who had participated in a pre-event training and briefings. They were instructed to use the posters and resources at each table or breakout room to facilitate discussion on two main questions and to summarize key discussion points on the posters provided in response to four questions:

Table Questions:

- Why did you want to join this event?
- What will you tell someone about this event?

Poster Questions:

- How can the 2026 Budget build a City that works for you and your community?
- What can be done to achieve a strong financial future for Toronto?

To summarize the large amount of notes of each discussion from 63 unique break out groups, BMG collected and entered all the comments from the posters and sticky note comments into a spreadsheet. These were then reviewed to determine the high-level themes based on the frequency of common sentiments, examples, and key phrases amongst all responses. These themes are summarized in the tables presented below along with relevant examples/suggestions and direct quotes. Cross-cutting themes and questions raised by attendees are also summarized here. An archive of all recorded responses has also been created for future reference.

What will you tell someone about this event?	
(Highest Frequency)	<p>“I learned a lot, but we need to generate more revenue.”</p> <p>“It was very informative.” “Eye opener.”</p> <p>“It’s beneficial — I met good people that explained what the government does.”</p> <p>“Very interesting and exciting — I learned about other perspectives than my own.”</p> <p>“They missed out on an interesting event where they would have learned a lot of great facts.”</p>
(High Frequency)	<p>“It’s a great way to make your voice heard.”</p> <p>“Use your voice and bond with the community.”</p> <p>“Feels like my thoughts are heard and opinions are taken into action.”</p> <p>“If you don’t participate, you don’t have a say in how the City runs itself.”</p> <p>“It exceeded my expectations — really productive.”</p> <p>“Come out and learn; people care about Toronto.”</p>
(Moderate Frequency)	<p>“Connect with other residents.”</p> <p>“Great facilitation — felt like I was listened to.”</p> <p>“Meeting of the minds is great.”</p> <p>“We got lots of info and met people from the City and community.”</p> <p>“Great discussion with the neighbourhood.”</p> <p>“You have a mix of ages — very promising.”</p>
(Low Frequency)	<p>“I would encourage them to come.”</p> <p>“More people, young people, should come.”</p> <p>“I’ll come back next year — maybe bring a friend.”</p> <p>“They should show up — it’s great!”</p> <p>“It’s fairly user-friendly — more interesting than you think.”</p> <p>“It was very accessible.”</p> <p>“Friendly, fun, and well organized.”</p> <p>“Facilitators did a great job — info was well presented.”</p> <p>“Great opportunity to share priorities for the City.”</p>

Table 1: Very High Frequency – **Affordable Housing (Including Homelessness)**

Topics	Comments
<p>Increase budget and investment in affordable, social, and supportive housing including full subsidies.</p> <p>Develop more shelter spaces that are year-round and safe to use.</p> <p>Prioritize deeply affordable rental housing.</p> <p>Improve transparency and accountability in housing authorities and enforcement.</p> <p>Integrate supports for unhoused and mental health services.</p> <p>Make housing accessible and affordable for seniors, families, and marginalized populations.</p> <p>Increase funding for affordable and supportive housing, including from upper governments.</p> <p>Expand affordable housing through mixed-density and public-supported projects, retrofit buildings, and change zoning for multi-unit buildings.</p> <p>Make property taxes and vacant home taxes more progressive and targeted to where need and capacity exist.</p> <p>Improve transparency and accountability of bodies administering housing and shelter programs.</p> <p>Invest more in preventive measures for homelessness (especially among youth and vulnerable groups).</p>	<p><i>"People need support not to be forcefully evicted"</i></p> <p><i>"Prioritize housing for families (larger units) - social housing needs to be built"</i></p> <p><i>"Investing more in housing development and affordable, supportive housing and shelter services."</i></p> <p><i>"Looking for a transfer and the time is too long, we only see condos but they are not affordable."</i></p> <p><i>"Supportive housing—wraparound services for seniors, youth, and people with addictions."</i></p> <p><i>"Emergency shelter optimization through use of under-used buildings (offices, malls)."</i></p> <p><i>"Help people stay in their homes"</i></p> <p><i>"Portable housing benefit - help fill the empty condos. Use it or lose it!"</i></p> <p><i>"More coop type housing leasehold (Vancouver)"</i></p> <p><i>"Federal funding should be 100%" [for refugee/asylum seekers]</i></p> <p><i>"More affordable housing - different areas. Services for specific group - intersectional approach"</i></p> <p><i>"All three levels of government talk a lot about affordable housing, but I don't see much action"</i></p> <p><i>"Shelter space – it is known there is not enough space – need year long additional shelter space that people will want to use – not just warming or cooling centres"</i></p>

Table 2: High Frequency - **Improve Transit and Reduce Traffic Congestion**

Topics	Comments
<p>Increase funding and improve efficiency of TTC with better reliability, frequency, and affordability including fare capping.</p> <p>Enhance safety and accessibility on transit and within public facilities.</p> <p>Affordable, reliable transit as a foundational service.</p> <p>Invest in public transit reliability and accessibility, with calls for dedicated bus lanes, fare caps, targeted maintenance, and expansion.</p>	<p><i>"Reduce TTC fares and freeze increases."</i></p> <p><i>"Reliable transit, frequency, more accessible routes, mobility issues."</i></p> <p><i>"Improve pedestrian and neighborhood safety, street/traffic calming."</i></p> <p><i>"Shorten waiting times and add waiting shelters for buses."</i></p> <p><i>"More technology will help boost TTC ridership."</i></p> <p><i>"Better TTC service especially outside the downtown core."</i></p> <p><i>"Increase bus and bike lanes and improve walkability."</i></p> <p><i>"Better snow clearing at bus stops for seniors."</i></p> <p><i>"Traffic reduction through transit options, remote work."</i></p>

Table 3: High Frequency – Invest in Community Well-Being

Topics	Comments
<p>Expand childcare services and workforce investment for accessibility. Improve public amenities such as libraries, parks, and recreation centers.</p>	<p><i>"Increase in child services can lead to reductions in police"</i></p> <p><i>"Support mental health services for sufferers family/diagnosed"</i></p>
<p>Enhance safety and accessibility on transit and within public facilities.</p>	<p><i>"Public health is a big thing to focus on; wait times, overcrowding, we need to be setting out standards and allocating budget for these things."</i></p>
<p>Prioritize public health, mental health, addiction recovery, and harm reduction programs, particularly in marginalized and immigrant communities.</p>	<p><i>"Extended Sunday service hours at 67 Toronto Public Libraries."</i></p>
<p>Food security programs and better access to healthy food.</p>	<p><i>"Funding for local arts, festivals and events that make our City special."</i></p>
<p>Address systemic equity gaps with targeted funding and support.</p>	<p><i>"Increase in child services can lead to reductions in police"</i></p>
<p>Support immigrant integration, language access, and culturally competent services.</p>	<p><i>Need more employment Programs"</i></p> <p><i>"Job creation programs for youth that AI can't take away"</i></p>
<p>Increase funding to social services, crisis prevention, community well-being programs and seniors services.</p>	<p><i>"Investment in employment services helping new graduates secure job in their field of study"</i></p>
<p>Enhance community hubs for youth, seniors, newcomers.</p>	<p><i>"Please support the capacity building of City staff more"</i></p>
<p>Food security programs and better access to healthy food.</p>	<p><i>"Employment programs are very important—we need more jobs for youth and recent graduates."</i></p>
<p>Support youth employment</p>	<p><i>"More childcare services"</i></p>

Table 4: Moderate Frequency – **Promote Public Safety**

Topics	Comments
<p>Investment in prevention over response Invest in violence prevention and youth programs.</p> <p>Holistic approaches that address interconnected social issues</p> <p>Increase investment in social supports, crisis prevention, and mental health programs for the purposes of crime prevention.</p> <p>Better enforcement of by-laws</p> <p>Investment in hiring and training for Paramedics as first responders</p> <p>Increase fines for by-law infractions</p>	<p><i>“Alternatives to police-led safety for mental health and homelessness.”</i></p> <p><i>“Increase funding for prevention in mental health and housing to reduce the police budget.”</i></p> <p><i>“Increase spending on crime prevention not reaction”</i></p> <p><i>“Invest in youth violence prevention programs.”</i></p> <p><i>“Youth programs, prevention instead of punishment.”</i></p> <p><i>“Prioritizing in-service police and community well-being programs over suspended police services.</i></p> <p><i>“Support more bylaw enforcement, especially regarding speeding.”</i></p> <p><i>“Design safer streets—pedestrian-only streets around schools and entertainment areas.”</i></p> <p><i>“TTC consistently competes with the funds dedicated to TPS budget every budget season”</i></p> <p><i>“Bylaw + licensing requirement upfront to avoid people taking advantage - new license are vulnerable to community crime”</i></p>

Table 5: Moderate Frequency – **Community Engagement**

Topics	Comments
<p>Increase community engagement with accessible consultation formats and greater representation of marginalized groups.</p> <p>Foster community involvement in budget consultations, making engagement more accessible, transparent, and reflective of diverse needs—including pop-up consultations in vulnerable neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Improve transparency, accountability, and community engagement in budgeting.</p>	<p><i>"More community involvement e.g. create more tenant boards and organization to run their own community clean ups"</i></p> <p><i>"Regular town halls - Open Communication (local Access)"</i></p> <p><i>"Increase ways that people can participate in the budget. Esp most vulnerable citizens - Meet people where they are"</i></p> <p><i>"Language on Budget is not easy to understand- make High School Level Program/Curriculum"</i></p> <p><i>"City should invest more teaching people about how \$ is spent/ how budget works"</i></p> <p><i>"Increase opportunities for in-person engagement"</i></p> <p><i>"Residents are not educated on how the budget is made up. Need education initiating"</i></p> <p><i>"More transparent about budget spending points; improve City communication to the public (better outreach)"</i></p> <p><i>"Citizen wants to see their Representative more often in community"</i></p> <p><i>"Continue with these budget consultations"</i></p>

Cross-Cutting Themes

- Preventive investment over reactive enforcement
- Affordable, reliable transit as a foundational service
- Deep affordability in housing (not just "affordable")
- Holistic approaches that address interconnected social issues
- Greater transparency in budget allocation and outcomes
- Equitable distribution of services across all neighborhoods
- Alternative revenue tools to reduce property tax dependence
- Stronger advocacy for federal/provincial funding
- Communication: Need to fight dissemination of disinformation
- Indigenous perspective (thinking about 7 generations ahead)

Questions Raised in Discussion Groups:

- Are we, as a City, trying to do too much?
- How much should we rely on other levels of government to pay for our services?
- Are we getting value for money in our procurement?
- How does the capital budget get planned (from conception to completion)?
- Why doesn't the Provincial/Federal government give more money to the City?
- What is the provincial/state - City relationship like for other cities?
- How much are we paying consultants/contractors rather than City staff/in house?
- What to do with people struggling from DRUG addiction?
- What is Toronto going to get out of FIFA revenue?
- How can Police budgets be more clearly understood?
- How would MPAC revaluations impact taxes?
- Why won't the LRT (Eglinton line) be finished? Explain WHY the LRT & other projects are delayed & over budget.
- Question the efficiency of amalgamation
- Garbage & Recycling - why are we being overcharged?
- Parking tickets revenue - where does the money go to?
- Who does the CMHC answer to?
- Can the Committee of Adjustment be more transparent?
- Why are there so many issues with repeated construction projects?
- Can we look at corporate sponsorship?
- Can Toronto be a 'Charter City' with more freedom to decide its fate, issue its own taxes and charge to pay for things beyond property tax?

Poster Two: What can be done to achieve a strong financial future for Toronto?

Additional prompting questions include: What should the Provincial and Federal governments do? What can you and your community do? What do you want to know more about? How are other big cities managing funding? What are some great examples that might work *here*? What are we missing?

The following tables summarize the discussion groups according to the top five themes based on the frequency of comments recorded in small-discussion group notes related to Poster Two.

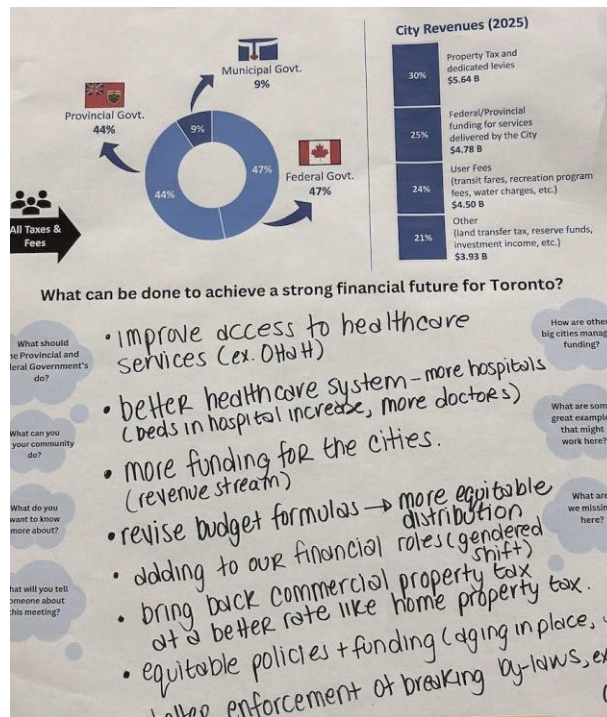


Table: 1: Highest Frequency – Fair Taxation

Topics	Comments
<p>Increase municipal independence with greater funding from provincial and federal governments, especially given Toronto's contribution to GDP.</p> <p>Adopt new municipal revenue tools: congestion/toll charges, commercial parking levies, municipal sales tax, higher vacant home and foreign buyer taxes, visitors/hotel taxes, income-based traffic tickets, fines, and shared HST/income tax revenue.</p> <p>Reduce reliance on property tax increases, with a focus on progressive taxation so higher-value properties and multiple-home owners pay more.</p> <p>Promote innovative partnerships: grants, loans, municipal bonds, and social enterprise funding.</p> <p>Improve procurement, oversight, and transparency in City spending to ensure effective use of existing funds.</p>	<p><i>"Focusing on Toronto getting a portion of the HST rather than allowing a municipal sales tax."</i></p> <p><i>"Tax over \$3M properties."</i></p> <p><i>"Seniors want to sell their houses but where do they go?"</i></p> <p><i>"Property tax already too high"</i></p> <p><i>"Less reliance on property tax - collect more City revenue"</i></p> <p><i>"Support Toronto as base for all Canadians"</i></p> <p><i>"Federal funding should be 100%" [for refugees]</i></p> <p><i>"Sustained funding for five years, should be operational"</i></p> <p><i>"Transit - Greater transit connections outside the City; shared spending."</i></p> <p><i>"Need increased funding from other levels of government for TTC."</i></p> <p><i>"What new revenue tools + models are being explored? - what are other cities doing?"</i></p> <p><i>"Commercial parking levy"</i></p> <p><i>"Vacant home tax - MURA"</i></p> <p><i>"visitor tax to raise revenue"</i></p>

Table 2 – High Frequency: **Enhance Government Cooperation**

Topics	Comments
<p>Increase funding for affordable and supportive housing, including from upper governments. Advocate for increased and equitable funding from provincial and federal governments reflecting Toronto's economic contribution.</p> <p>Support municipal autonomy and consider a special administrative status or charter City model.</p> <p>Increase municipal independence with greater funding from provincial and federal governments, especially given Toronto's contribution to GDP.</p> <p>Strengthen access to education, including better funding for school boards and advocacy for repairs and resources.</p>	<p><i>"Focusing on Toronto getting a portion of the HST rather than allowing a municipal sales tax."</i></p> <p><i>"Toronto must advocate for more funding from province and feds."</i></p> <p><i>"Toronto contributes 20% of country's GDP there should be more sharing of the funds. It would be an investment in the country's most productive City"</i></p> <p><i>"Federal funding should be 100%" [for refugee/asylum seekers]</i></p> <p><i>"All three levels of government talk a lot about affordable housing, but I don't see much action"</i></p> <p><i>"Support Toronto as base for all Canadians"</i></p> <p><i>"Federal funding should be 100%" [for refugees]</i></p> <p><i>"Need increased funding from other levels of government for TTC."</i></p> <p><i>"Transit - Greater transit connections outside the city; shared spending."</i></p> <p><i>"Increase funding and powers for healthcare, public health, and mental health services, particularly in marginalized and immigrant communities."</i></p>

Table 3: Moderate Frequency - **Community Investment**

Topics	Comments
<p>Increase funding and powers for healthcare, public health, and mental health services, particularly in marginalized and immigrant communities.</p> <p>Increase investment in social supports, crisis prevention, and mental health programs for the purposes of crime prevention.</p> <p>Preserve and expand essential services such as libraries, parks, and recreational facilities, focusing especially on equitable access and maintenance.</p> <p>Strengthen access to education, including better funding for school boards and advocacy for repairs and resources.</p> <p>Prioritize housing.</p>	<p><i>"Support mental health services for sufferers family/diagnosed"</i></p> <p><i>"Public health is a big thing to focus on wait times, overcrowding, we need to be setting out standards and allocating budget for these things."</i></p> <p><i>"Increase spending on crime prevention not reaction"</i></p> <p><i>"Funding for local arts, festivals and events that make our City special."</i></p> <p><i>"Invest in youth violence prevention programs." "More public childcare"</i></p> <p><i>"Invest more in preventing people from becoming homeless."</i></p> <p><i>"Community wellbeing/Senior care - trickle down effect (intersecting issues)"</i></p> <p><i>"Long term care + senior services across the City"</i></p>

Table 4: Moderate Frequency – **Think Long-term on Climate Action and Environment**

Topics	Comments
<p>Fully fund climate action strategies like TransformTO and Net Zero, advocating for bold climate investments as a legacy priority.</p> <p>Apply a climate lens to all City policies and prioritize climate resilience, adaptation, and disaster preparedness especially for vulnerable communities.</p> <p>Expand renewable energy initiatives, promote community gardens, increase tree planting, and support green spaces.</p>	<p><i>"Please fully fund the well-designed TransformTO!!! Please take bold climate action! This is our legacy!"</i></p> <p><i>"Apply a climate lens to all ity policies."</i></p> <p><i>"Implement a City-wide IAQ policy and bylaw for ventilation rates, MERV-13 filters."</i></p> <p><i>"More investment in active transit can improve health and reduce paramedics."</i></p>

Table 5: Moderate Frequency - **Support Business and Economic Development**

Topics	Comments
<p>Increase supports and incentives for small and local businesses, economic diversification, and social enterprises.</p> <p>Promote large events that stimulate the local economy but ensure revenue trickles down to City budgets.</p> <p>Streamline job creation and employment pathways, especially for youth and people facing barriers.</p> <p>Foster community involvement in budget consultations, making engagement more accessible, transparent, and reflective of diverse needs—including pop-up consultations in vulnerable neighbourhoods.</p>	<p><i>"Direct funding support small businesses"</i></p> <p><i>"Need a strategy to get people back into the economy and be able to open small biz"</i></p> <p><i>"Better access to information for local business supports."</i></p> <p><i>"Include students in job opportunities and support student job opportunities in the community"</i></p> <p><i>"Improve outreach to communities on available jobs, opportunities, training, education"</i></p>

Cross Cutting Themes:

- "City should get a portion of HST" (mentioned multiple times)
- Transit needs Provincial/Federal funding (overwhelming consensus)
- Progressive property tax (multiple mentions with various thresholds)
- No more property tax increases
- Federal responsibility for refugees/asylum seekers
- Housing & shelters as top priority
- Toronto contributes significantly to GDP, needs proportional funding
- Less reliance on property tax
- More accountability from upper levels of government

Questions Raised in Discussion Notes:

- "Should the province and federal government pay more for public transit operating costs, fare freezes, and expansion?"
- "What new revenue tools and models are being explored? What are other cities doing?"
- "How is funding allocated within the 19 categories—for example, staff versus programs in libraries?"
- "How much of affordable housing comes from federal revenue? How much is operating vs. capital?"
- "If 1% property tax only raises \$49 million, what would 1% of provincial or federal tax bring?"
- "Should more funds go to public health to address issues that can impact the TTC?"
- "Why did City Council give themselves a 24% increase if we're running a deficit?"
- "Should funding for child care, mental health, and long-term care come from higher government levels?"
- "Is property tax enough, or should Toronto get a cut of HST?"
- "What are the line-by-line pressures for different transit operations across the City?"
- "What does the City spend on emission reduction?"
- "Should Toronto have a municipal income tax or see more provincial/federal support for social programs?"

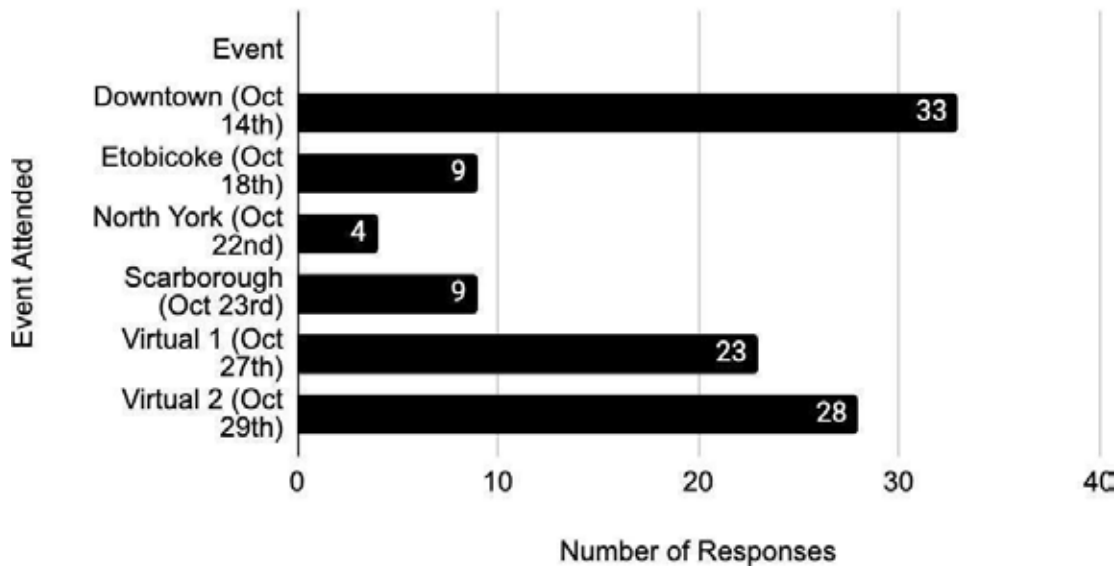
VI Consultants' Note

The consultants have prepared this report based on data gathered across public consultations in October, 2025. The themes, comments, and suggestions presented here are not generated by the consultant and do not represent the opinion of the City of Toronto. This report is a summary of the six public consultations held in October 2025. This report was developed by Barnes Management Group.

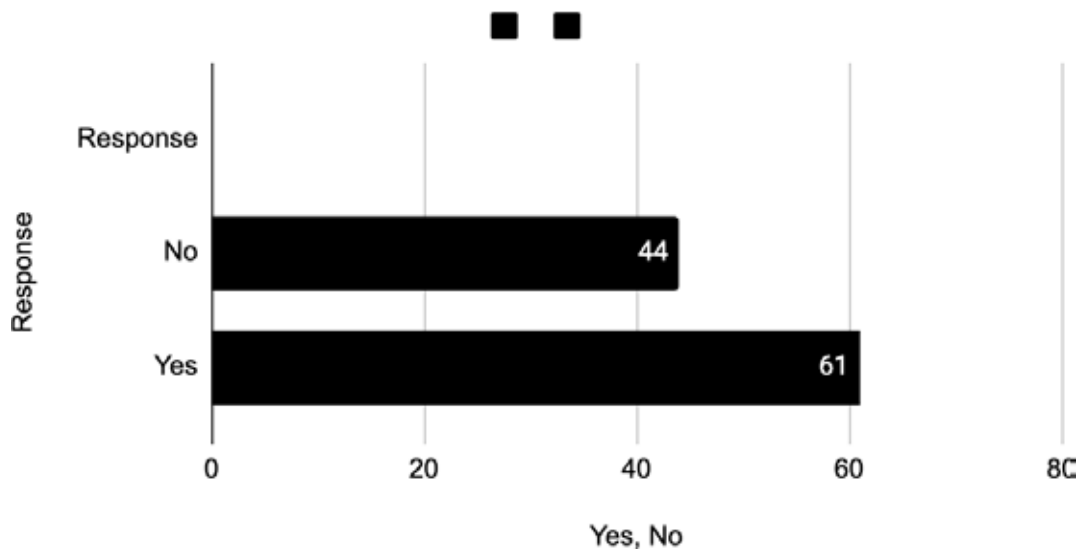
Appendix

A brief event evaluation was sent to all registered participants within 48 hours of each event. A summary of the evaluations is collected below.

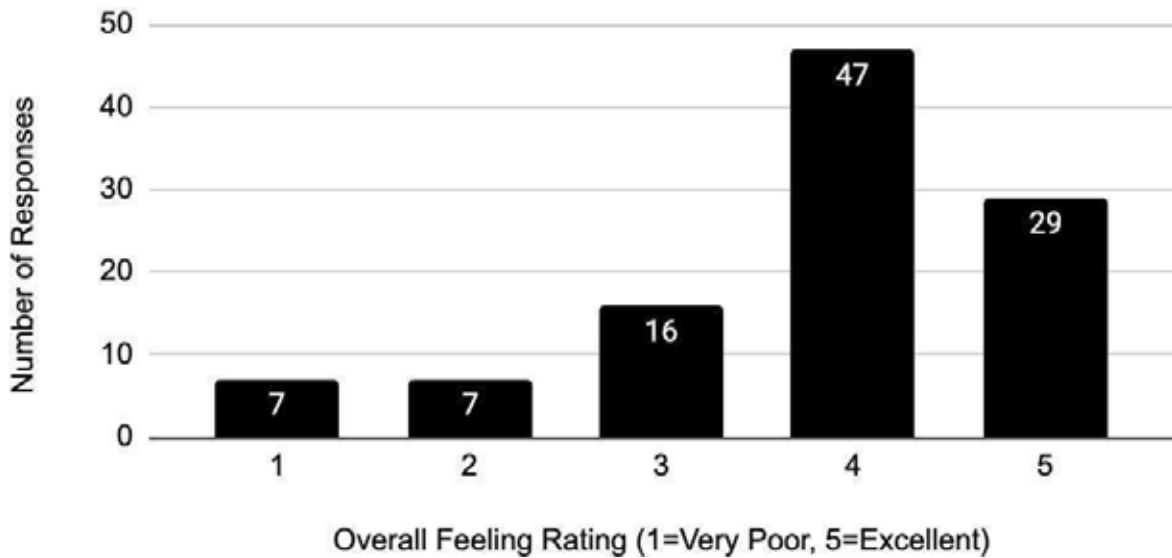
Distribution of Survey Responses by Attended Event



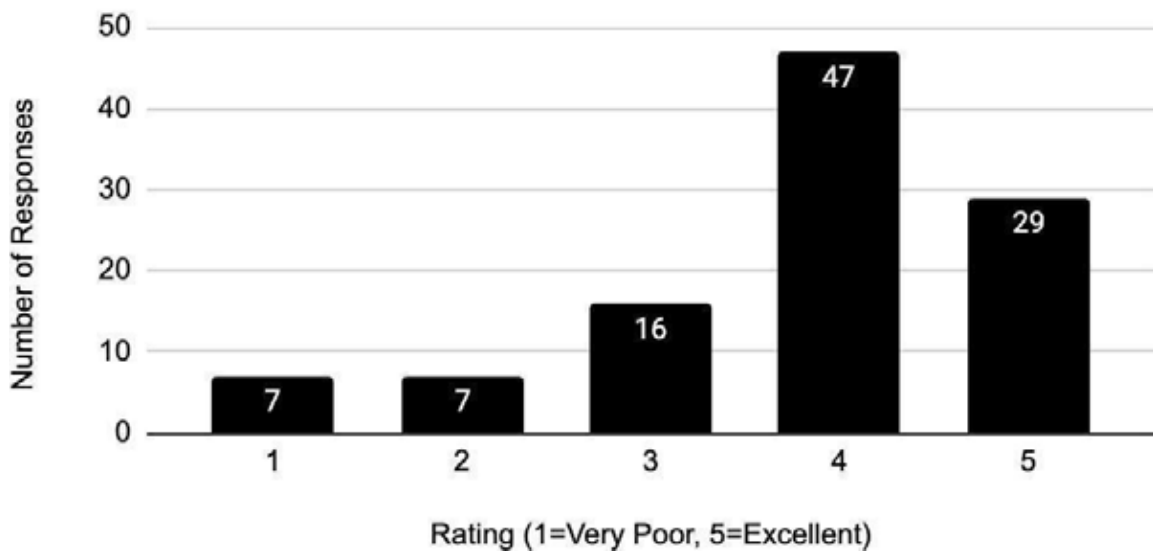
Did you complete a survey online?



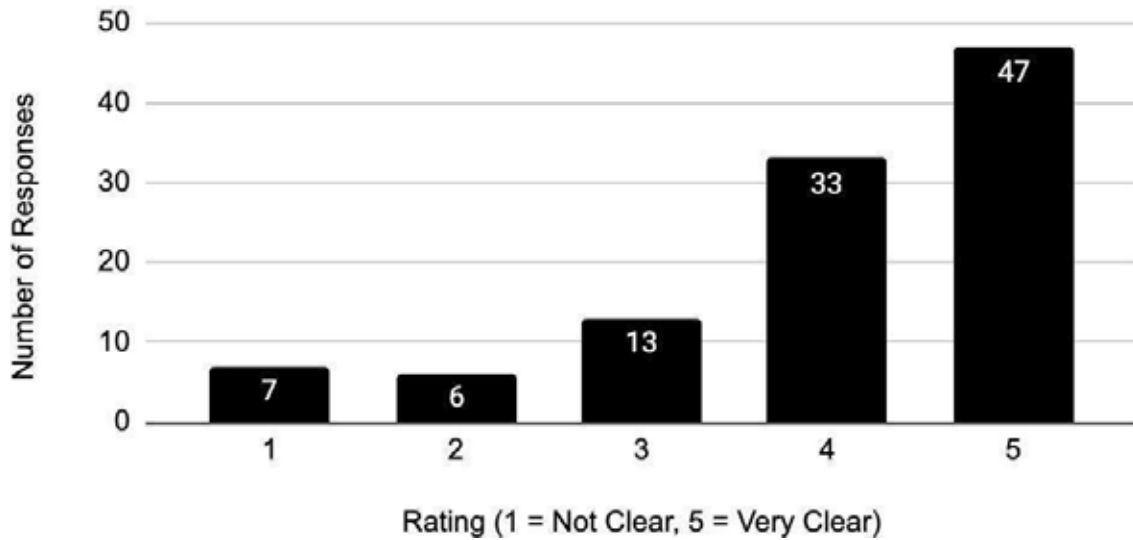
I learned something new about Toronto's Budget, funding and budget process.



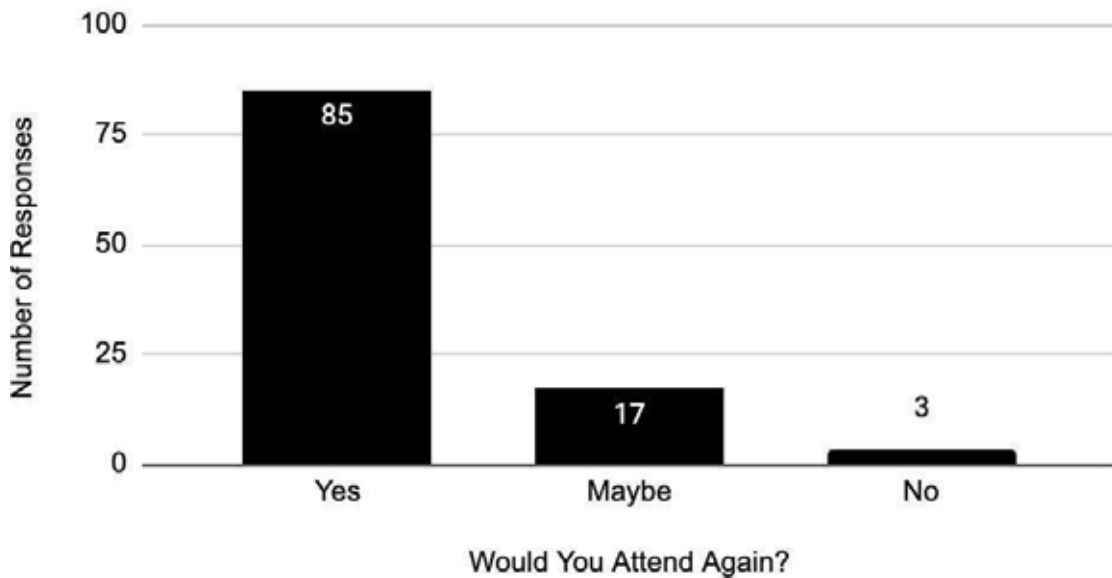
What was your overall feeling about the event you attended?



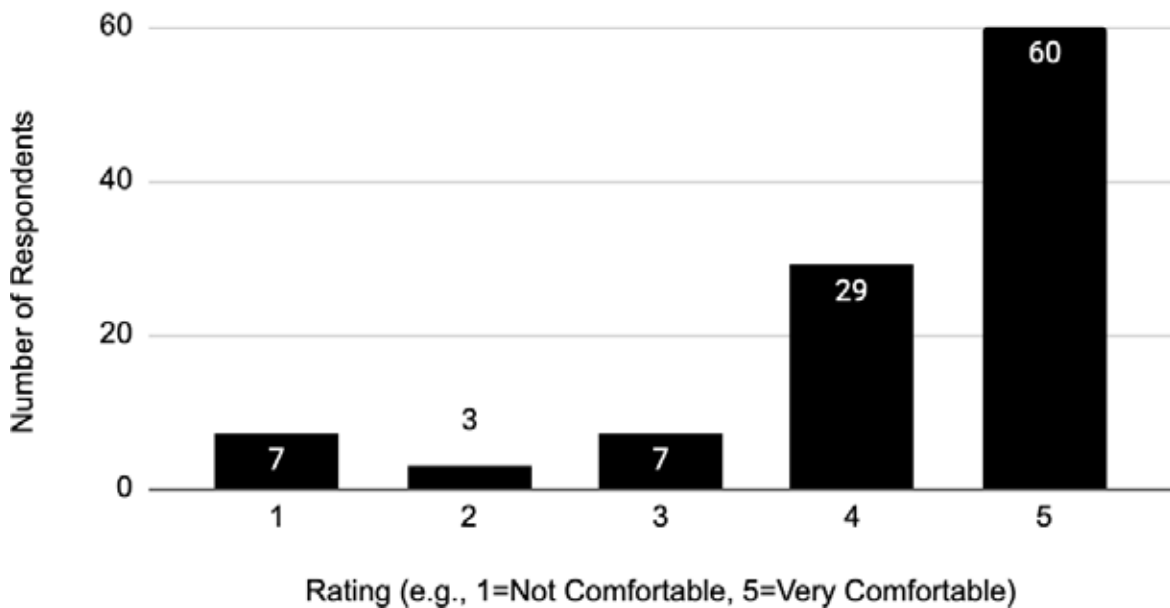
The purpose and process of the discussion were clear to me.



Likelihood to Attend Budget Consultation Next Year



I felt comfortable to participate in discussion



Open Comment Question: What about the budget consultation event you attended would you like to see improved for next year? (Summary of 77 Written Responses)

Timing (Highest Frequency)

- More time for breakout/roundtable discussions
- Time limits for participants (some dominating conversation)
- Not enough time to share all comments
- Ran out of time during discussions
- More time options/dates for sessions

Facilitation (Moderate Frequency)

- Facilitators should include everyone at the table
- Better opportunity to hear from all people instead of vocal few
- Time dominated by one individual
- Need moderators to limit speaking time
- Facilitators should encourage more participation
- More encouragement for attendees to speak

- Poor sound system/difficult to hear presenters
- Screens/slides not visible to audience
- Fonts too small on slides
- Virtual connection problems (audio/visual atrocious)
- Better sound system and speech training needed
- Larger screens needed for big venues

Information (Moderate Frequency)

- Budget breakdown line by line (especially police)
- More discussion of police budget and why it's so high
- Breakdown of Police funding
- Greater transparency needed
- Some modest breakdowns of larger budgets like Police and TTC
- Explanations of what smaller departments do

Other (less frequent) Comments

- More convenient locations, easier access by TTC
- More virtual consultations
- Consider community "pop up" locations at health centres
- Non-downtown locations should be more transit-accessible
- Transportation is a problem
- Felt useless/not fruitful
- Same questions as survey
- Impressed with large number of City staff
- Appreciated availability of City staff and councillors
- Would like to see more City councillors present
- Mayor should be present in all sessions
- Summary info in advance

Appendix 5:
Community-led Consultation Report

COMMUNITY-LED BUDGET CONSULTATIONS REPORT

2025



**NOVEMBER
2025**

Prepared by

**ALBION
NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICES**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In collaboration with the City of Toronto's Community Coordination Plan, the City provided resources to Albion Neighbourhood Services (ANS) to engage communities that are often under-represented in budget consultations. In October 2025, ANS facilitated 12 meetings with a total of 279 participants to gather feedback from equity-deserving communities across the city. Participants were drawn from the Community Coordination Plan's 10 Geographic Clusters as well as the Newcomer and Black Resilience Clusters. Participants included Black and racialized communities, newcomers, seniors, youth, people with disabilities and multilingual participants (translation offered in 10 languages). There was also a strong presence of racialized women and intergenerational dialogue.

Participants in the community-led sessions highlighted a number of priority areas, including:

- 1. Affordable Housing:** Participants identified an urgent need for more affordable housing and shelter spaces. They also sharing concerns about rising rents, long wait times for subsidized housing and fear of relocation away from their communities of support. Participants recommended rent subsidies, using vacant condos as affordable housing and innovative housing models as found in other countries.
- 2. Employment and Social Services:** Participants discussed barriers such as hiring discrimination (racial/religious), language challenges and a lack of well-paying jobs. They also identified a desire for programs addressing the needs of newcomers and increased job creation.
- 3. Long-Term Care & Seniors' Services and Childcare:** When discussing Seniors' Services, participants identified a need for better programs, infrastructure, safety and free transit. When discussing Childcare, participants identified a need for more affordable options, shorter waitlists, and extended subsidy age limits.

Participants also highlighted areas that could see decreased investment, including:

- 1. Police Services:** Based on participants' concerns about discrimination, lack of efficient use of resources and preference for community-based crime prevention.
- 2. TTC & Wheel-Trans:** Participants perceived inefficiency and top-heavy budgeting, while calling for reallocating funds to housing and social services.
- 3. Libraries, Arts & Culture:** While recognized as valuable services, participants called for a deprioritization compared to basic needs like housing and employment.



On conversations related to property taxes, there was no clear consensus. On the topic of collaboration with other orders of government, there was strong support for the province and federal government to fully fund programs and services that fall under their responsibilities.

The number of participants in nearly every consultation this year exceeded anticipated attendance, demonstrating strong community interest in taking part in community-led consultations. Key recommendations for future Community-Led Budget Consultations include expanding year-round civic education, increasing translation and accessibility supports, and beginning consultations earlier than City-led sessions. Overall, these consultations continue to highlight the value of community-led discussions and the importance of creating space for voices that are too often left unheard.



Consultations

12



Participants

279



Timeline

1 MONTH

PROJECT BACKGROUND



CITY BUDGET

The City Budget is a financial plan that describes how much money the City will raise and spend. It determines the level of service provided to Toronto residents and guides decisions on what city infrastructure will be built and repaired. The City Budget is made up of the following:

- The operating budget covers day-to-day spending on services and is funded through property taxes, grants, subsidies, user fees and other sources such as Municipal Land Transfer Tax. This budget must be balanced by law; deficits are not permitted.
- The capital budget funds the city's infrastructure to support service delivery and is primarily funded from reserves, development charges, other orders of government and borrowing funds. The City updates and presents a new 10-year Capital Budget and Plan each year as part of the budget process.
- Three rate-supported programs: Solid Waste Management Services, Toronto Parking Authority and Toronto Water. These programs are funded almost entirely by user fees.

Every year, City Council's Budget Committee reviews a staff-prepared budget and hears input from Toronto residents and businesses. The Mayor then presents the Mayor's budget by February 1, and Council considers that Budget within 30 days.



COMMUNITY COORDINATION PLAN

In March 2020, Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy activities were suspended as support was redirected to the City of Toronto's COVID-19 response efforts through the [Community Coordination Plan](#). The City of Toronto and United Way Greater Toronto developed the Community Coordination Plan to ensure coordination and communication with more than 350 community-based agencies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This new model of partnership implements service coordination and hyper-local solutions across ten geographic clusters and two population-based clusters to meet the needs of Torontonians (see Appendix A for a list of the Community Coordination Plan Clusters). The two population-based Clusters include a Black Resilience Cluster and a Newcomer Cluster. Today, the Community Coordination Plan is a central platform for non-profit sector collaboration and engagement. Its priorities are evolving to ensure the platform's resilience to future urban shocks and stressors.

The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy (TSNS) continues to be the City of Toronto's action plan for building partnerships in Toronto's neighbourhoods so they can succeed and thrive. The strategy supports city-wide community well-being by partnering with residents, community agencies and businesses to invest in people, services, programs and facilities, with tailored focus in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs), Emerging Neighbourhoods, communities undergoing rapid transformation and other communities of focus. The strategy strengthens the social, economic and physical conditions and delivers local impact for city-wide change.

Both the Community Coordination Plan and TSNS served as a bedrock for shaping and informing the Community-Led Consultation Model utilized throughout this project. Each space invited us to think about the boundaries of the various communities that make up the City of Toronto and the activities and strategies that work best to mobilize residents.

PAST BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

2024 City Budget

In October–November 2023, the City hosted early city-wide public consultations to collect feedback in advance of the staff-prepared budget. The consultations included:

- City-led consultations via eight in-person and virtual public meetings hosted by City staff and Members of City Council and an online survey.
- 17 community-led meetings hosted by local Community Coordination Plan Cluster organizations, the Toronto Youth Cabinet, and the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council.
- Ward meetings hosted by several City Councillors.

The consultations enabled civic participation in the budget process and provided invaluable public input into the budget; the findings were included for consideration by the Budget Committee for the 2024 City Budget.

2025 City Budget

Similar to the previous year, between October and November 2024, the City of Toronto implemented a strategy of public engagement to collect insight and feedback in advance of the staff-prepared budgets. The consultations included:

- City-led consultations: In total, six City-led consultations were hosted. Two consultations were virtual, while four in-person consultations were hosted across the City.
- Community-led consultations: The City of Toronto engaged Albion Neighbourhood Services (ANS) to build on and expand the Community-led consultation process from the previous year. Working alongside various community organizations across Toronto, the ANS team conducted ten in-person consultations and two virtual consultations across Toronto.
- Ward meetings: Several City Councillors held and facilitated budget consultations within their wards to engage residents and identify key priorities.

Across the board, the network of consultations work to provide multiple points of input for residents of Toronto and to ensure accessible ways for residents' input and their voices are heard. The findings collected from each consultation process were summarized in both written and video reports and included for consideration by the Budget Committee for the 2025 City Budget.



PROJECT ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY-LED CONSULTATIONS

The Albion Neighbourhood Services (ANS) team that collaborated on this project consisted of the following people:

- Susanne Nyaga – Community Consultation Lead and Analyst
- Adebimpe ‘Dunsin’ Elegbeleye – Project Support and Engagement Worker
- Parastou Saberi – Project Lead & Visual Documentary
- Aryana Dukhcharan – Camera Assistant
- Khudaija Sheikh – ANS Executive Director

Consultation Preparation and Execution

To organize and prepare for the consultations, the ANS team was directed to collaborate with the ten geographic and two population-specific Community Clusters to coordinate the sessions. The City provided additional support for coordinating across clusters this year by identifying potential lead organizations in each cluster who had the capacity to host a consultation and support with outreach. The ANS team then narrowed down the lead organizations to one organization per cluster, ensuring to engage community-focused organizations new to the process, while balancing new organizations with others who had excelled in years prior.

As lead organizations were finalized in each cluster, the ANS Project lead would engage the lead organization to finalize the date, time and format for each consultation. Last year, the ANS team took the lead on securing food, translation and child-minding for each consultation as needed. Given that community organizations have a better understanding of their communities and needs (an observation from last year), to improve logistics and community collaborations, this year, ANS entered an MOU agreement with each lead organization to recruit 20 participants and provide space, food, community translators and childminding for the consultation session, and allocated a small budget to recognize the labour and costs of these collaborations. By giving more freedom to lead organizations to support their communities, this approach deepened community collaboration with lead organizations in the social service sector and allowed the ANS team to focus on the consultations. Together, the ANS team and each lead organization ensured that every consultation was tailored to the unique needs of the communities within each cluster. This year, the ANS team was engaged earlier to lead this work, and as a result, all consultation dates, times and lead organizations were finalized by the last week of September and consultation started on October 2nd, 2025.

While the consultations were customized to reflect the specific needs of each community, the following high-level details summarize their overall structure:

- **Format:** All 12 consultations were held in person in various community spaces across Toronto
- **Participation:** The City's target was 20 people per session (240 participants in total, that is double the 2024 target). Consultation attendance went beyond the set target, with the majority of the sessions having more than 20 participants. Due to high interest from community members and project budget limitations, consultation registrations forms were closed when amount of participants reached slightly above 20. A total of 279 residents participated in the month-long consultations, ranging from 12 to 31 participants per session (see Appendix A for breakdown of participation per cluster).
- **Translation:** Community translators, recruited by lead organizations, offered translation from English to ten other languages in seven consultations.
- **Food:** Offered at all in-person consultations.
- **Honorarium:** Participants received a \$50 physical gift card for groceries. Lead organizations (using their allocated budget) and ANS collaboratively covered the extra 39 honorarium (for over the target participants).
- **Transportation:** Two Presto Cards were provided to all participants.

39

Extra Honorariums



Consultation Facilitation, Documentation and Support

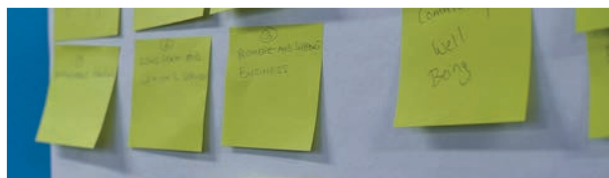
Each consultation was attended by 3-4 members of the ANS team, led by the Project Lead. The duties of the Project Lead included coordinating and overseeing the execution of the project, liaising with City staff and staff at the 12 lead organizations, budget and administration of the project, as well as leading the visual documentation of all sessions for the video report (supported by the Camera Assistant). The Project Coordinator conducted all facilitation duties (with oversight from the Project Lead); this included creating the slide deck, preparing supporting resources and materials, connecting with translators, facilitating the discussion and providing civic education at the beginning of the session to support participants in the discussion.

The Project Support and Engagement Worker was also present at all consultations, carefully documenting discussions to inform the final project report. This included designing and monitoring the registration, designing flyers, taking notes both on the key priorities identified by communities and the nuanced details at each session, along with supporting the documentation of outcomes from facilitation activities and providing rough notes to City staff after every facilitation. Additionally, the ANS Executive Director provided high level support to the team, ensuring the project deliverables are met, attending internal ANS team meetings and meetings with City staff.

Facilitation strategies remained consistent across all consultations, combining facilitated discussions with group activities to capture participant insights and feedback. For example, to ensure all participants could share their thoughts within the time constraints, they were invited to verbally answer the first question (see Appendix B for consultation questions) and provide their top three areas of budget priorities on sticky notes. This approach offered multiple ways for participants to provide input and guaranteed that key priorities were identified. It also directly supported the note-taking and documentation process. Translation and other accommodations were also made available at consultations to ensure equitable, consistent, accessible and inclusive opportunities for participation amongst all participants. In addition to participation by community members, the majority of consultations were also attended by TSNS Ambassadors, with the aim of elevating community voices and understanding the range of priorities in their communities. Overall, each consultation session lasted two hours, factoring in time for food and lengthy discussions.

Ultimately, by combining thoughtful planning, logistical support and active facilitation, the ANS team fostered an inclusive and responsive consultation process for all participants.





WRITTEN REPORT AND VIDEO REPORT

Lastly, members of the ANS team were responsible for delivering both a video report and a written report to the City, reflecting the priorities of the communities engaged throughout this process. This written report provides a comprehensive breakdown of key community priorities across all 12 clusters, working in tandem with the video report and the data sent to the City following each individual consultation. The data informing this report is primarily from the notes taken during each consultation and documentation gathered from facilitation activities.

Upholding the tradition of a video report, which was established last year, the Project Lead and Camera Assistant also collected footage at all twelve consultations. All participants were provided with a Media Consent Form and the choice of appearing or not appearing in the recorded content, with the videography team taking detailed notes of the participants requesting not to be recorded and collecting media release forms from those willing to participate on camera. During consultations, the videography team would also identify enthusiastic and vocal participants to conduct individual interviews with. The interviews were conducted after the consultation and worked to give a face and a voice to the priorities that diverse communities identified.

The purpose of the video report is to enrich the findings, needs and priorities of the communities by presenting them through a creative medium. The video serves to complement the data presented in the written report, offering a deeper exploration of individual experiences within Toronto's diverse communities. While a link to the full video report can be found embedded in the title of this subsection, you can also find the link and a scannable QR code in Appendix D, and on the ANS website.

TSNS COMMUNITY NETWORK AMBASSADORS

This year, TSNS recruited Community Network Ambassadors from neighbourhoods across the City of Toronto to present insight and feedback in consultation spaces. Community Network Ambassadors and Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy Ambassadors were asked to support the process by:

- attending both community-led and city-wide consultations,
- participating in roundtable discussions during city-wide sessions,
- and sharing key takeaways from the community-led consultations at the city-wide sessions.

As part of their role, each Ambassador was asked to attend a 1-hour training session to gather more insight on the various consultations taking place in Toronto and how they can best uplift priorities from their communities. In total, the role requires an approximate commitment of 12 hours; all ambassadors received honorarium.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION



 **16.2%**
More participants than anticipated

 **10**
Consultations offered translation

Over the course of the 12 city-wide Community-led consultations, we engaged a total of 279 participants. Individual consultation attendance ranged from 12 to 31 participants, with the East York Don Valley and Black Creek/Humber Summit clusters, hosted by the Toronto Neighbourhood Organization (TNO) and the Center for Spanish-Speaking People (CSSP) respectively, drawing the highest number of participants (see Appendix A for the full breakdown of the lead organization and number of participants per cluster)

The total number of participants across the consultations exceeded the initial project goal of 240 participants by an additional 39 individuals, representing a 16.2% increase and demonstrating community interest in the community-led consultation model. Collaborative flexibility in budget allocation allowed lead organisations to extend additional support such as honorarium for additional participants to amplify more community voices.

A key outcome of this community-led consultation process was to ensure that diverse Torontonians from across the city were provided with a platform to share their perspectives and priorities. While self-identification data was not collected from each individual participant, the information provided on the registration form and self-disclosures during the course of our discussions, provided us with additional insight into the various identities participants held. As a whole, the participants who took part in the consultation process represented some of the following BIPOC and equity-deserving communities:



*** Racial and Ethnic Diversity:** The consultations consisted of participants who represented both racial and ethnic diversity. Some racial and ethnic categories that participants self-identified as, include but are not limited to: Black, Latine, White, East Asian, Middle Eastern, African, Caribbean, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Eastern European, and South American.

Language Diversity: As identified previously, over 50% of these consultations offered translation from English to other languages by community translators. Languages spoken ranged from Somali, Pashto, Dari, Farsi, Spanish, French, Urdu, Tamil, Cantonese, Bengali, Portuguese, Arabic and Mandarin.



*** Age Diversity:** Each consultation had its own unique make-up of age representation; some consultations (such as the one at Dixon Hall) had a significant representation of younger youth, whereas other consultations (such as the one at Malvern Family Resource Center) had a significant representation of seniors. Across the consultations, we engaged with youth, seniors, young and middle-aged adults. Due to the content of the workshops we did not engage with participants under the age of 10.

Diverse Abilities: Participants who took part in the consultations identified as both able-bodied and people living with both visible and/or invisible disabilities.



* **Gender Diversity:** As self-identification data was not directly collected from all participants, it is not possible to fully define gender representation across consultations. However, across consultations, participants self-identified as women, men, and non-binary. The strong majority of participants were women and in particular racialized women.

The diversity reflected in the consultations offered a unique platform for diverse perspectives to be gathered both across and within communities. A true highlight of the diverse voices in some of the consultations was the intergenerational discussions taking place between youth, adults and seniors in those communities.





WHAT WE HEARD

From start to finish, participants were asked ten questions about various subjects in relation to the budget (see Appendix B). This section provides an overview of some of the key priorities we heard from communities across Toronto. Taking a step back from the specifics of each consultation, this section looks across the data to map out the critical needs for BIPOC and equity-deserving residents across Toronto.

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Each consultation discussion began with three important questions:

1. What is one budget priority for yourself or your community?
2. What budget categories are the most important to you and where would you like to see increased investments? (Based on the distribution of the budget reflected in Figure 1)
3. What budget categories are the least important to you and where would you like to see decreased investments?

Through large-group discussions and independent activities, we were able to gather both quantitative data, which allowed us to objectively pull the top priorities, and qualitative data, which provided more insight into the choices of participants and their everyday struggles.

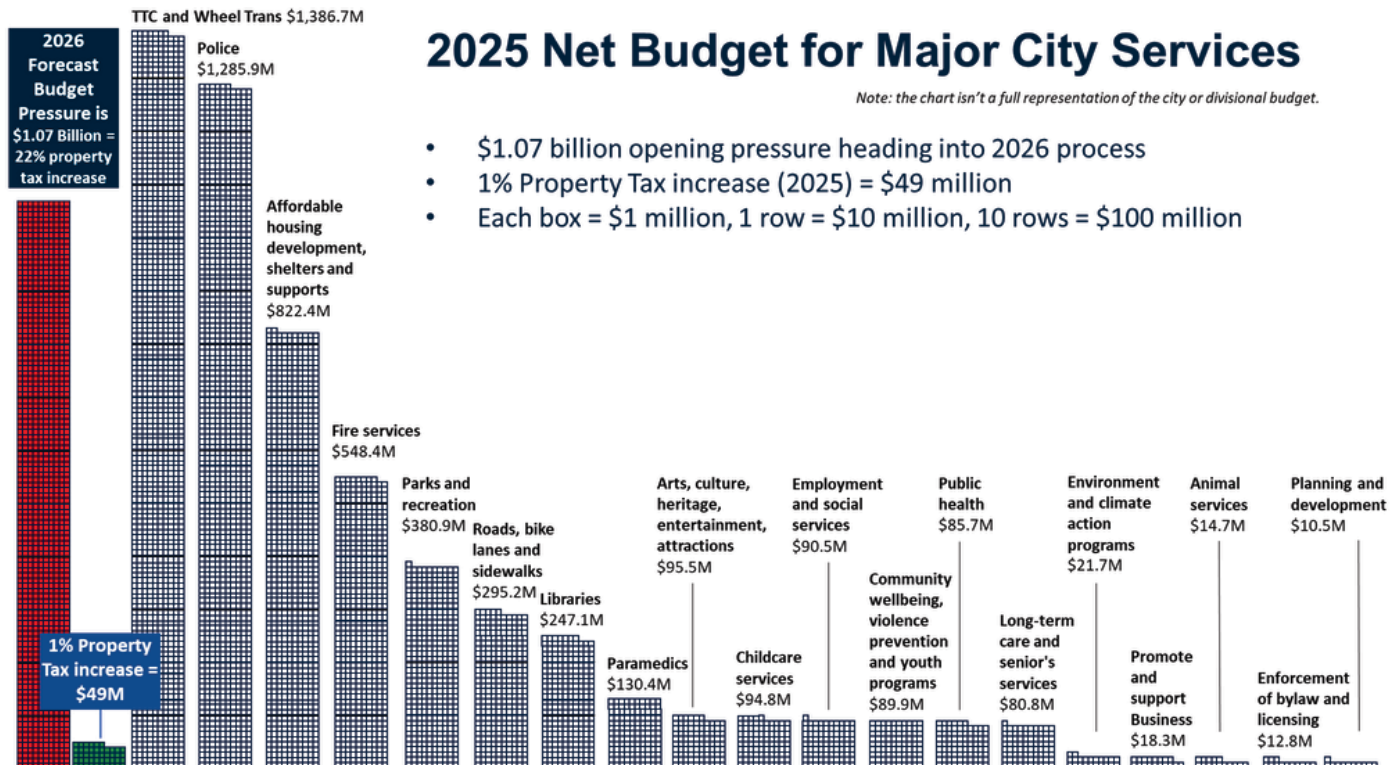


Figure 1: A bar chart of the 2025 Net Budget for major city services, identifying the distribution of funds.

IMPORTANT PRIORITIES/DESIRE FOR INCREASED INVESTMENTS

The top four areas, identified by participants as the most important budget priorities and categories for increased investments, include:

1. **Affordable Housing**

Affordable housing dominated most consultation conversations and became evident as a key priority across the city. Participants discussed various viewpoints from which the City of Toronto must think about and invest into affordable housing. Some of the viewpoints included:

- **Need for More Affordable Housing and Shelter Space:** Many participants expressed an urgent need for more affordable housing across the board; others identified specific populations that must be considered when shaping new affordable housing options. For example, one participant spoke to the need for affordable housing that considers families, while another spoke to the importance of safe, affordable housing, particularly for vulnerable community members. Numerous participants also referenced the increase of encampments and homelessness, informing their desire for affordable housing and their hopes of a better Toronto. One participant shared:



“There is so much homelessness in our community because there is limited housing and the available ones are very unaffordable. We do not just need more houses, we need affordable housing” - Resident, East York/Don Valley Cluster

It is clear that community members want a long-term solution to address the rising fears of experiencing homelessness and the increasing number of individuals experiencing homelessness. One community member affirmed that they would prefer a decrease in the police budget to reallocate funding to address housing, given that the lack of stable housing directly informs crime. In addition to long-term affordable housing solutions, some participants also identified the need for more shelter spaces, especially as Canada continues to welcome more asylum seekers.



- **Rent Control and Subsidy Programs:** As the cost of living continues to increase in Toronto, participants made it clear that there is a need for government intervention to support rent affordability. While the City of Toronto has a subsidized housing program (Toronto Community Housing Corporation - TCHC), many residents identified that the current programs do not meet the existing needs of residents. For some, the long wait times have made it unimaginable to access subsidized housing in their lifetime; while others expressed concerns about the lack of agency in subsidized housing programs that forces them to relocate. Particularly, some residents spoke to their need for subsidized housing and their fear of being placed in community housing that is located far from their community, due to availability of units. The fear of relocation is bigger than convenience for some participants; their communities are their lifeline, especially when there are language or physical barriers that make large parts of the city inaccessible to them.

Many participants identified affordable housing as a key factor for a better quality of life and less demand on other City resources. Some spoke to the connection between high rent prices and increased food insecurity, while others identified the connection between unaffordable housing and increasing mental health challenges. While building new affordable housing may require years of planning and construction, participants proposed rent subsidy programs as an alternative and hopefully more immediate possibility.

- **Thinking Outside the Box:** During our discussions, some participants offered up creative, alternative solutions or ideas to address the need for affordable housing. During one consultation in particular, participants named the best practices from various other countries and cities that have managed to substantially address or completely eradicate homelessness. Some participants expressed that funding may not be the issue, rather we need to reevaluate if the City’s current affordable housing model is capable of producing the desired and needed outcomes. In another discussion, a participant highlighted the vacant condo units and schools as “ready-built” options for affordable housing. Underscoring the need for both long-term and immediate solutions that can materialize outcomes quickly, especially as the cold temperatures of winter remain on the horizon and present a serious health hazard for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- **Interconnectedness:** Across consultations, participants continued to speak about housing through the recognition that having a secure home has a direct influence on other areas of our individual lives and collective experiences around the city. As one participant stated, “When we have a safe place to live, we can manage everything else” (Resident, Black Resilience Cluster). Other participants pointed to the interconnectedness between low wages, lack of job opportunities and security, as well as increasing rate of homelessness. Recognizing that when people cannot find work or are underpaid, residents underscored how maintaining housing becomes nearly impossible in the face of high rent costs. Another participant pointed to the connections between an aging population and the lack of affordable housing units for seniors, with some emphasizing the need for quality affordable housing options for seniors. Lastly, one participant identified that amongst the lack of affordable housing, residents are turning to parks as places to call home. Concluding that there is a need for affordable housing so parks can be reclaimed as parks.





2. **Employment and Social Services**

The need for more employment opportunities was a close second to affordable housing. When discussing challenges with employment, various communities identified key areas of consideration that should inform how and where the City invests into employment. These areas include:

- **Hiring Discrimination:** Some participants, primarily newcomers, spoke to the intricate barriers to employment that they have experienced and witnessed within their newcomer communities. In one consultation, where a large majority of the participants identified as having adult children and grandchildren, participants spoke about the ways in which racial discrimination and religious discrimination, particularly against Black and Muslim residents, continue to impede their adult children from finding stable and steady employment. For some participants, this means that without jobs, their adult children are unable to move out; the result is homes become overcrowded, as large families become reliant on precarious sources of income. In reference to racial discrimination, one participant shared how their family experiences barriers to employment even with the right credentials:

"I have 1 daughter and 2 sons, they have college degrees, they can't find jobs. It's very hard on us and them." - Resident, North Etobicoke Cluster

Meanwhile, another participant highlighted the realities of having to rely on low wages to support a whole family, due to issues of discrimination:

"I teach at a community centre, but it doesn't pay enough. My husband is unemployed. He has [a] university degree." - Resident, North Etobicoke Cluster

While hiring discrimination may not be a barrier for all participants, it remains a noteworthy area of focus as it often emerged as a point of discussion in the consultations with the highest number of racialized participants, newcomer participants, or participants who were religious minorities.

- **Language Barriers:** In some cases, participants identified language barriers as a source of their employment challenges. Some participants spoke to the limitations of language and employment programs, specifically for newcomers. One participant identified how existing programs often define the category of “newcomer” based on a certain number of years since arriving in Canada, which in turn, limit the eligibility of these programs. However, for some households, especially when a parent is expected to be the primary caregiver for young children, as the other focuses on securing employment, the primary caregiver may become ineligible to access critical newcomer language and employment programs once the children age and create an opportunity for them to step into the job world.

This points to an area, beyond job creation that could provide direct support to newcomers and address language barriers in accessing employment.

- **Interconnectedness:** Similar to housing, participants also discussed the interconnected nature between steady, secure and well-paying employment in relation to other aspects of their lives. For example, one participant drew this connection by naming that good jobs allow many other things to become affordable to individuals, ultimately decreasing the demand on governmental budgets. Another participant candidly stated, “If your job is better, you will not complain about the TTC raise” (Resident, North York Cluster). Many participants expressed a desire to work, but the challenge of few jobs and many applicants means that every position is highly competitive. Some more senior participants also spoke about their lived experience as seniors. Some senior participants identified the challenge between employment and education, particularly that the jobs they desire often require higher degrees. While another senior participant identified that many seniors would not be relying on the government to access long-term care if salaries and wages were raised, so that their children wouldn't struggle to make ends meet. Said simply, one participant summed it up by saying, “If people have jobs, they will be able to afford houses and safety will improve” (Resident, Downtown West Cluster)





3. Long-term Care, Seniors' Services and Childcare

The third key priority, across the twelve consultations, landed on a tie between the categories of 'Long-term Care and Senior's Services' and 'Childcare Services'.

In reference to Long-term Care and Senior's Services, participants discussed:

- **Need for Better Senior Services and Programs:** Participants who spoke to this identified both the need for better infrastructure across the city and a deep dive into the needs of an aging population. Some participants spoke to the connection between unreliable and expensive transit and the alienation of seniors. While other participants named the population of the City of Toronto as one that is aging, therefore, pointing to an increased demand for better senior programs and a budget that recognizes the need to take care of seniors. One participant provided a specific example by pointing to a need to improve the quality of long-term care homes, while another identified the need for free transit for seniors.
- **Lack of Safety:** One participant in particular spoke to the increased lack of safety experienced by seniors in Toronto, stating, "Many of us walk around in fear, especially seniors. Invest in our safety!" (Resident, York/Weston/Pelham Cluster).
- **Quality of Life:** In referencing a desire to improve their quality of life, one participant questioned why taxes collected from seniors are being invested in education when they should be directly invested in senior programs, especially as most seniors have contributed to educational programs for years. All in all, across consultations, senior participants called for support and services to improve their lived experiences. This ranged from more awareness of what is already out there to recognizing the unique challenges faced by seniors when navigating the increased costs of living. Weighted with desperation and disappointment, one senior participant stated,

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“As a senior, I have begun to expect less.” (Resident, North York Cluster)



Meanwhile, in reference to Childcare Services, participants discussed the following:

- **Free or Affordable Childcare:** Various participants shared personal stories of the limitations that the lack of childcare places on their ability to maintain or seek out employment. One grandmother spoke about her need to work and her desire to support her children by caring for her grandchildren, due to the high cost of childcare alternatives. On the other hand, a youth participant shared that their family's ability to access subsidized childcare enabled their mother to look for work. And if these subsidies were to be reduced or withdrawn, their mother would have to return home, directly impacting the family's income.
- **Difficulty Accessing Childcare Subsidies:** Some participants spoke to their experiences starting families in the City of Toronto, particularly the long waitlists that make quick and reliable childcare subsidies hard to access. Some communities, with more young families, called for a proportionate distribution of subsidies across the various communities within the city.
- **Expanded Age Limits:** For some participants, the age limitations of childcare subsidy programs also presented a challenge. One participant in particular spoke about the need to raise childcare subsidy programs to end at age 12, as that is the age when children can stay home alone.

One participant pointed out that ending childcare subsidy programs before the child turns 12 years old still forces families to choose between employment and providing care for their children.



3.

4. Honourable Mention - Public Health

Amongst the priorities in a handful of consultations, Public Health made it to the top of the list. However, after more discussion, it became clear that some communities were conflating public health with healthcare. While public health falls under the municipal budget with the City of Toronto, healthcare falls under the responsibility of the provincial budget with the Government of Ontario. The prevalence of this priority in many consultations points to two pieces, which will be discussed further within this report:

- Increased wait times and lack of access to specialists or family doctors is at the top of mind for some Torontonians
- Public civic education for the budget is critical to ensure communities are making informed recommendations



LEAST IMPORTANT BUDGET PRIORITIES/DESIRE FOR DECREASED INVESTMENTS

The top four areas, identified by participants as the least important budget priorities and categories for decreased investments, include:

1. Police Services

Similar to last year, participants identified the Toronto Police Services as the top budget category where resources can be decreased and divested from. Participants identified a variety of reasons as to why they believe the funding provided to the Toronto Police Services should be re-evaluated and invested into other areas. Some of those reasons include:

- **Questions of Police Productivity and Discrimination:** In a number of consultations, participants raised questions about the amount of funding received by Toronto Police Services and their level of productivity around the city. Some participants spoke of experiences with police where officers fail to intervene and address suspicious activity within their proximity, and others spoke to a lack of support from Toronto Police Services over the phone. For some participants, the police not only raise questions of productivity, but also actively represent a source of danger and discrimination. One participant shared their child's lived experience of continuous discrimination from the police:

"Kids feel nobody wants them around and they are always being watched. The police stopped my kids every day when he was driving my car." - Resident, South Scarborough Cluster

- **Alternatives for Crime Prevention:** For many participants, the recommendation to divest from police services took into consideration alternatives for crime prevention.

Particularly, some participants desired a budget that reflected a proactive investment into communities, addressing root causes of crime, rather than a reactive response through police services.



In reflecting on their own experience with police and the discussion they have had within their community, one participant emphasized the desire for further investment in crime prevention:

“It is very clear that people do not feel safe with police services, so if we can pull from that budget into community violence prevention that residents actually feel safer with and have a major impact that would be more meaningful.” - Resident, South Scarborough Cluster

Overall, these discussions pointed to a desire to address the social determinants of crime and safety. Some participants also noted that the list of responsibilities taken on by the Toronto Police Services continues to grow in a manner that overwhelms the police's ability to respond and falls outside the scope of the qualifications of police officers. Therefore, an investment in other crime prevention strategies, such as youth prevention, mental health crisis teams and affordable housing can work to reduce police responsibilities.

OTHER AREAS OF PRIORITY

In addition to the first two reasons, almost every participant who recommended decreased funding for the Toronto Police Services budget argued that there were other budget categories that deserve more resources and should be prioritized. These categories include, but are not limited to:

- Childcare Services
- Employment and Social Services
- Community Programming and Community Organizations
- Job Creation and Development
- Youth Programs
- Violence Prevention Programs
- Care for Seniors
- Community Wellbeing and Mental Health Services
- Affordable Housing
- Enforcement of Bylaw and Licensing



2. *TTC and Wheel Trans*

As participants were provided with a City-produced chart (Figure 1) that displayed the distribution of the City of Toronto Operating Budget in 2025, TTC and Wheel Trans is the singular category which receives the most funding. While many participants spoke about the importance of effective and reliable transit, their calls to reduce and reinvest funding from the TTC and Wheel Trans emerged from:

- **Concerns About Top-Heavy Budgeting:** Throughout a handful of consultations, participants spoke to their understanding of the TTC and Wheel Trans budget as top-heavy. Particularly underscoring the idea that the majority of the transit budget goes towards administrative salaries and duplicated roles, while customers are left with increasing fares. One participant spoke to the constant upgrading of bus stops as an example of an unnecessary administrative decision that costs taxpayers and transit customers money, without addressing larger issues of reliability and efficient service. To emphasize their concern about the gap between the funding received by TTC and the service they receive, one participant stated, “TTC is not free yet it receives the highest amount of funding and has one of the worst services in the city” (Resident, East York/Don Valley Cluster)
- **Other Areas of Priority:** Similar to discussions around reducing funds in the Toronto Police Service budget, participants identified other areas of importance that should be prioritized over TTC and Wheel Trans, such as affordable housing, shelter services and employment services

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3. *Library Services and Arts & Culture*

Tied for third in reference to budget categories that participants would like to deprioritize or reduce funding towards are Library Services and Arts and Culture. While both provide different services and forms of support to the residents of Toronto, the justification from participants, regarding their recommendation, seemed to follow the same logic as in the case for TTC. Numerous participants emphasized the importance of these services, but when positioned against critical needs such as affordable housing and employment services, these categories seemed less relevant and dire. Across consultations, arts and culture was understood as a nice-to-have but not a necessary expenditure as so many Torontonians require support with their basic needs. Other discussions with participants pointed to technology, online platforms and e-readers as tools that call into question the necessity of libraries. As participants agreed it was not about reducing budgets down to zero, there was also a desire to place services that address basic needs (e.g. food, clothing, shelter, employment, youth programs, community wellbeing) over services perceived as nice-to-haves.

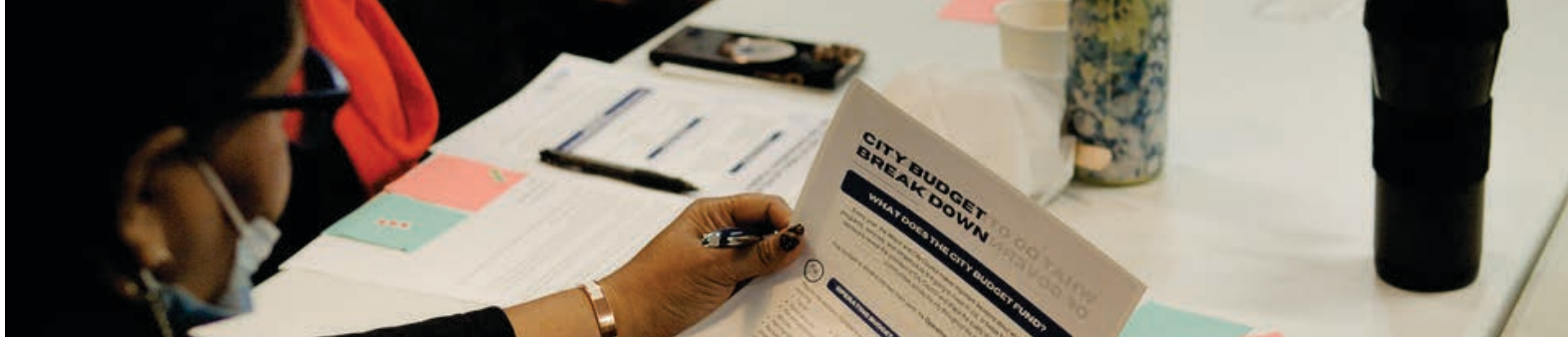
ADJUSTING PROPERTY TAX IN 2026

As depicted through the red bar in Figure 1, the City of Toronto forecasts fiscal pressure to the budget amounting to \$1.07 billion. Said differently, based on projected revenue and expenses, the City forecasts a demand to meet a revenue gap of over \$1 billion. During the community-led consultations, it was important to maintain a balance between inviting participants to speak to their ideal city and also give space to the real conditions and challenges that impact the City of Toronto Budget.



One of the challenges impacting the City of Toronto Budget is the limited revenue sources that the City is able to access in order to meet the demands of over 3 million residents. Therefore in addressing the forecasted budget pressure, property tax presents itself as one of the few viable revenue sources that the City is able to adjust to meet the needs of residents. The City acknowledges property tax alone cannot be relied on to fully address forecasted budget pressure, as that would result in a 22% increase in property tax. The question still remains around possibilities for adjustment in 2026 and beyond. This question was posed to participants, specifically asking them: How should property taxes be adjusted in 2026? We gave participants five options (keep taxes low, increase taxes, progressive tax increase, unsure, other).

While participants in some consultations were able to reach a consensus as to what approach would work best for them, there was no clear consensus across facilitations. The discussions with participants did offer the following answers and rationales.



1. Keeping Property Tax Low

When discussing the option of keeping property taxes low, many participants pointed to this as a favourable option, even when emphasizing that low property taxes may impact the City's ability to invest in supports and services. For some participants, there was a recognition that property taxes are deeply connected to the cost of rent. Therefore if property taxes were to increase, then rent prices would continue to worsen and make the city less livable.

Meanwhile, some participants not only called for low property taxes, but also advocated for a reduction of the current property tax.

Other participants pointed to alternative sources of revenue, such as fines for residents who fail to pick up after their pets. Participants expressed how overwhelmed they are in navigating a rising cost of living, and want low or reduced property tax to offset rising costs elsewhere. There was still an air of hesitancy as some recognized the impact that low or reduced property taxes could have on City supports and services. One participant stated, "I am for keeping it low but I am a bit bothered about what we will have to pay for to keep this low. How will this impact everything else?" (Resident, Black Resilience Cluster). Numerous participants expressed a desire for the City to explore additional revenue sources or options that would not put a strain on the individual budgets of residents, while ensuring sufficient funding for City supports and services is maintained.



"I am for keeping it low but I am a bit bothered about what we will have to pay for to keep this low. How will this impact everything else?" (Resident, Black Resilience Cluster).

2. Increase Property Taxes

As stated previously, there was no singular consensus across consultations that allowed a clear answer to emerge regarding how participants believe property taxes should be adjusted in 2026 and beyond. It is worthy to note that in almost every consultation there was at least one or two voices of dissent against the option of raising property taxes.

For some the rising cost of living continues to overwhelm their personal budgets, and they believe an increase in property tax would be unreasonable and unrealistic. For others, they believe an increase in property tax would discourage first-time buyers from purchasing homes and ultimately create more challenges in the current housing crisis.

However, in some discussions, a few participants stood out as outliers in support of a property tax increase. For those who spoke in support, it often came from a recognition that increased property tax would mean more resources funneled into critical supports and services offered by the City of Toronto. One senior participant put it frankly, “I will be willing to pay a higher rate if it means better services and a reduction in homelessness” (Resident, South Scarborough). As with the other option of keeping property tax low, participants still emphasized the City should explore other sources of revenue that do not require residents to reach further into their pockets.



3. **Progressive Property Tax Increase (more expensive properties are taxed at a higher rate)**

In a handful of consultations, this option shone through as the victor. For some, the idea of a progressive property tax meant softening the blow for residents who have tighter budgets, while those with higher incomes would be able to contribute more to ensure that the City doesn't have to compromise supports and services. One participant shared, “If you can afford a million-dollar home, you can afford a bit more taxes,” (Resident, South Etobicoke) while in another consultation, another participant shared, “If you are rich, pay more taxes, not us; taxes are too high. It's not fair” (Resident, North Etobicoke). Both participants invite us to reflect on who is feeling the pressure of rising costs of living and how those who are feeling less pressure can work to alleviate the burden off of others. For many, a progressive property tax increase presented the most equitable and fair option for all residents of Toronto.



“If you can afford a million-dollar home, you can afford a bit more taxes,” (Resident, South Etobicoke)

“If you are rich, pay more taxes, not us; taxes are too high. It's not fair” (Resident, North Etobicoke)

However, in other consultations, participants were against this option. Some participants emphasized a need for more government regulation of existing property tax systems, while others pointed to Canada as a country having one of the highest tax rates in the world. Other participants were hesitant to support this option as they were unsure the impact it would have on their rent. For those who live in large buildings or in more expensive properties, there was a fear that their landlords would fall in the higher brackets of a progressive property tax and offload the cost onto them and their families. Some participants emphasized that a progressive property tax must be accompanied by a blanket rent-geared-to-income system. That way, residents with lower incomes will be protected from absorbing high property tax rates from landlords.

While no clear answer was defined, it was clear that residents took seriously the consideration of a progressive property tax and desired a solution where the cost of living, especially for low-income

2. households, is not increased.

3.

4. **Unsure**

Some participants were unsure about how property taxes worked and impacted their cost of living in Toronto. While this group was a minority in most discussions, it pointed to the need for more civic education regarding property taxes.





4.

5. Other Options

This question encouraged some participants to think outside of the box and identify areas where they believed the City of Toronto can tighten regulations or explore alternative sources of revenue. Some options presented by participants, included, but are not limited to:

- **Exploring international examples of alternative systems:** Some participants shared their knowledge of property tax models in South America and Europe, where taxes are based on one's salary or income.
- **Progressive tax for foreigners:** One participant shared a desire for foreigners who buy property in Toronto to be taxed based on the amount of properties they have, increasing the rate of property tax with every property purchased. Meaning those with three or four properties would pay higher property tax rates than those with one or two.
- **Regulate rent:** As mentioned before, renter participants expressed concern about the impact of increased property tax on their rent. A few participants presented tighter rent regulations as the solution, particularly as one participant pointed to the exorbitant prices landlords are charging across the city for small or low-quality homes.
- **Cracking down on tax evasion:** Some participants expressed frustration with watching others evade taxes and experience no consequences while they try their best to follow the rules and are struggling to make ends meet.
- **Increase vacancy taxes:** In a few consultations, the discussion led to the topic of vacancy taxes. Participants expressed a preference for an increase in vacancy taxes over property taxes. One participant stated that vacancy taxes should also be extended to commercial landlords who price out small businesses.

One participant stated that vacancy taxes should also be extended to commercial landlords who price out small businesses.

WORKING WITH OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

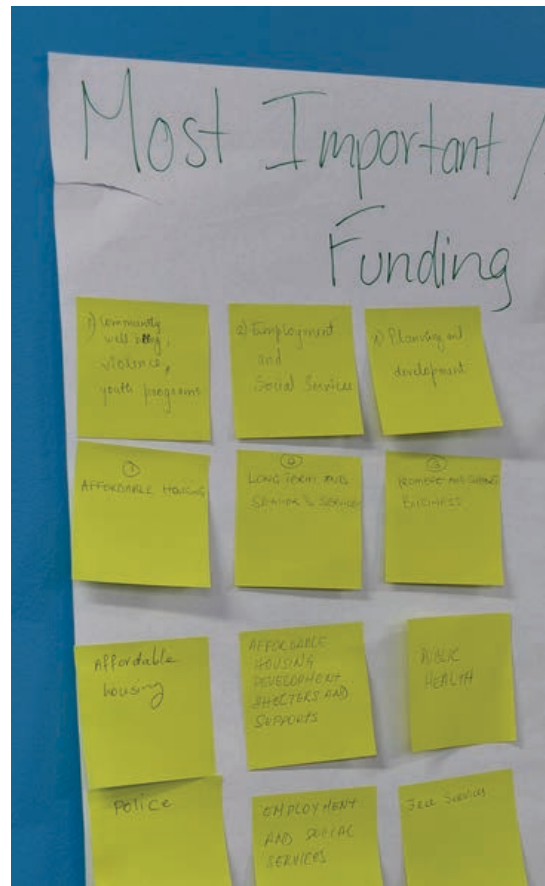
Each Community-led consultation sought to create an opportunity where community members can participate in a holistic and rigorous discussion about the City of Toronto's Budget. This meant creating space for participants to share from their lived experiences and through the viewpoints of the communities they are a part of, as well as, ideating alongside the context of the City of Toronto Budget. The reality is that the municipal budget and what is possible through the municipal budget is deeply impacted by other levels of government and their willingness to build a close relationship with the City of Toronto to address the needs of its residents. To explore thoughts around strengthening relationships with other levels of government, participants were asked:

- Should the Province of Ontario work more closely with the City to fully fund the services it is responsible for in Toronto starting in 2026 and beyond?
- Should the Government of Canada work more closely with the City to fully fund the services it is responsible for in Toronto starting in 2026 and beyond?
- Which of the following areas do you think the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada should partner or collaborate with the City on to provide greater support for Toronto residents?

1. Fully Funded Responsibilities

In most consultations, the two questions about other levels of government fully funding the services they are responsible for in Toronto proved to be a quick discussion.

Across the board, participants deeply agreed with the idea that all levels of government should provide the funding required to maintain and operate the services they are responsible for.



While agreement was expressed across consultations, some participants discussed what is motivating their agreement and expanded on the importance of a strong relationship between the City of Toronto, the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada.

Some of the rationales provided emphasized:

- **A need for a simple process to ensure Toronto received funding:** While in agreement with the general question, some participants expressed concerns about the various legislative and bureaucratic barriers that impede the journey of funding from the federal government to the City of Toronto. Suggestions were made to explore new processes to ensure funding is streamlined and actually reaches the City. For some participants, this meant ensuring processes of decision-making are transparent and accountable. For others, this meant creating systems where the City of Toronto has more independence from the Province of Ontario to make decisions that reflect the specific needs of Torontonians.
- **Vulnerable communities suffer the most from funding gaps:** In one consultation, participants engaged in a discussion that identified how funding gaps and shortages have a disproportionate impact on BIPOC communities. Participants discussed the need for the City of Toronto to hold other levels accountable to fully fund the services they are responsible for, and the need for creating room at the table for BIPOC community advocates to ensure that the needs of vulnerable communities are considered when decisions are made. One participant shared, “There are structured advocacy bodies that can help speak to these issues but we are not at the table” (Resident, Black Resilience Cluster).
- **Toronto is a large city and needs unique support:** For some participants, their support for stronger funding relationships with other levels of government came from the recognition of the sheer size of Toronto; Canada’s biggest, most populous and diverse city. Some noted Toronto as one of the largest cities not only in Canada, but also in North America.

Given this reality, the City requires more support and is up against more social demand than smaller municipalities in Canada. For some participants, this emphasized how important it is to have a strong working relationship among the City and other levels of government



“There are structured advocacy bodies that can help speak to these issues but we are not at the table” (Resident, Black Resilience Cluster)

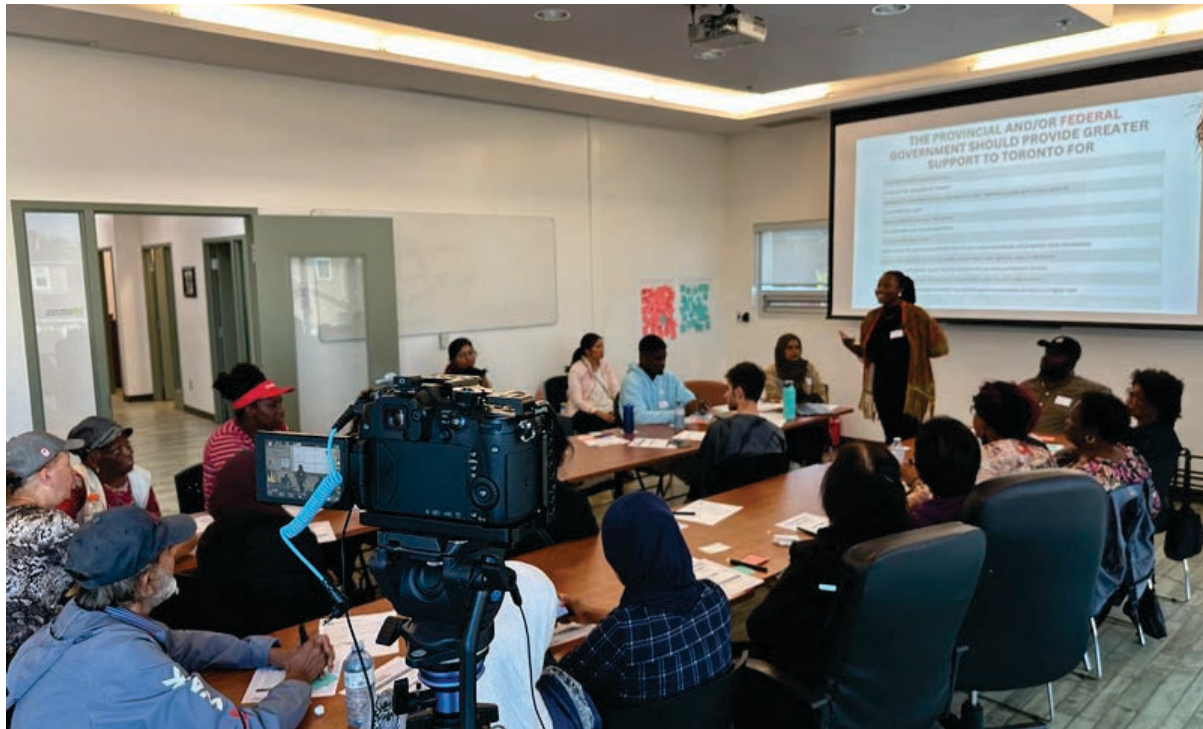
However, for some participants, the answer wasn’t so clear-cut. In some cases, participants chose to abstain from answering as they required more information about the potential impacts and the current context of these relationships. In one case, a participant disagreed with the idea of the other levels of government fully funding the services they are responsible for in Toronto. This resident saw stronger relationships as an opportunity for the other levels of government to get more involved in the City affairs, whereas the resident desired more independence for the City.



2. Areas in Need of Greater Support

As a consensus was generally reached around the City of Toronto needing more support from the other levels of government, participants were asked to identify what particular areas were a priority for them. Specifically, participants were asked to identify the areas where the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada can provide greater support to Toronto residents (see Appendix C). The top 4 areas identified by participants included:

- **Housing and Shelter:** Housing was a top budget priority that participants felt required all levels of government to support and invest in. From rent subsidy programs to more shelter beds to additional affordable housing units, it was clear that housing was at the top of mind for participants.
- **Food Security:** As the cost of living continues to increase, participants were in support of an increased investment (by other levels of government) into food banks, community meal programs, school meal programs and addressing rising food insecurity in Toronto.
- **Social Services:** Connected to the budget priorities identified by participants at the beginning of this report, there was a significant amount of support for increased investment into social services such as long-term care for seniors, childcare and mental health services. Some participants even identified the need to strengthen social services within the City of Toronto, in tandem to strengthening provincial and federal social services (such as Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, or Employment Insurance).
- **Sharing a Portion of HST:** As the discussion made it clear that the City of Toronto requires more resources to fully support Torontonians, most participants were hesitant to explore revenue options that increased taxes. Overall, participants were in support of a redistribution of HST that would allow the City of Toronto to access more revenue without raising taxes for residents.
- **Honorable Mention - Healthcare:** While healthcare does not fall under the responsibility of the City of Toronto, this continued to emerge as a hot topic where residents were devastated by long wait times in ERs, lack of access to practitioners or failures of OHIP coverage.



COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND ADVOCACY

Extending the previous discussion about working closely with other levels of government, each community-led consultation ended with a discussion exploring the participants' willingness to play an active role in advocating for the residents of Toronto and their needs. Participants were asked:

- What actions would you be willing to take, on your own or with your neighbours, to encourage the provincial and federal government to work more closely with the city?
- What supports might you need to take any of the actions listed in the previous question?

1. Willing Actions of Advocacy

Participants were provided with a list of potential actions (see Appendix B for full list) they could take to encourage other levels of government to hear the needs of Torontonians and provide support accordingly. Among the options provided, the three most popular included:

- Participating in a Provincial Budget Consultation
- Meeting and speaking with their local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) and Member of Parliament (MP)
- Signing a petition to the Provincial and Federal Governments

In some consultations, participants provided other alternative actions beyond the list of options provided. One participant suggested writing letters, while another recommended using social media campaigns and viral moments as a way of gaining attention from the public and local representatives.

While conversations around actions of advocacy demonstrated a willingness and openness across communities to amplify their voices, some pointed to the challenges they have experienced in the past. A handful of residents spoke to the difficulties they have navigated when trying to meet with their local City Councillor, MP or MPP. Another participant expressed frustration at the continuous calls to go to representatives, rather than representatives coming to the communities they are meant to speak on behalf of. This participant pointed to the very community-led consultation we were partaking in as an example of governmental entities going to local communities for input and perspective, recommending more representatives should adopt similar approaches. Overall, it is clear that with the right outreach, Torontonians are willing to stand up for their needs.

1.

2. Support to Strengthen Advocacy

While participants demonstrated a willingness to show up and speak out to other levels of government about the needs of Torontonians, the City of Toronto also expressed a willingness to support residents in their advocacy endeavors. Part of the discussion focused on the support participants would find helpful to amplify and elevate their advocacy to other levels of government. Across the board, participants identified workshops and training, newsletters/email updates for upcoming opportunities, templates for letters or emails to representatives, and information from their local City councillor as vital resources of support. Some participants spoke to their previous experiences with workshops and training that have helped them build more confidence in their current advocacy work, while others spoke to the importance of awareness from local representatives.



Beyond the options suggested, participants also identified other areas of support that would strengthen and enhance their advocacy efforts. Some of the suggestions include, but are not limited to:

- Building resident networks and coalitions
- Pop-up offices for local representatives across their wards
- More hybrid meetings to expand the accessibility of community spaces
- Increased awareness of City activities and opportunities to provide insight/engage in advocacy, particularly through the use of both social and traditional media
- Civic education about governmental processes embedded in all levels of school (from kindergarten to university/college)
- More community consultations and transparent communication to provide updates on the outcomes of consultations
- Multiple streams of communication across various channels and platforms from City councillors
- Translation support to ensure community members can speak to their representatives
- Accessible resources that explain governmental processes in plain language

For some participants, their previous attempts to advocate and organize within communities led to doubts and disbelief in the possible impact advocacy can achieve. One participant shared a desire for better engagement from their MP, as they felt local representatives only seem to be active during elections. Another participant discussed their experience working with communities to amplify local voices and hitting numerous walls, leaving them feeling hopeless in the possibility for community advocacy to actually enact real change. While discussions pointed to the difficulty and challenges of advocacy work, they also exemplified the hope, excitement and willingness of participants to rise to the challenge.



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BEYOND NUMBERS

In addition to naming budget priorities within the City of Toronto and in relationship to other levels of government, many participants also spoke about the need for transparent resources that outline how resources are used across City services and support. For some participants this brought up questions of efficiency, particularly with the budget categories that received the most funding.

Numerous participants spoke to both the transit budget and the Police budget as not a question of dollar amounts but a question of efficient systems and processes that allow both services to stretch the resources they are provided as far as possible. This points to a desire for more information about City spending activities that demonstrate both where the funds are going and how the funds are being used.

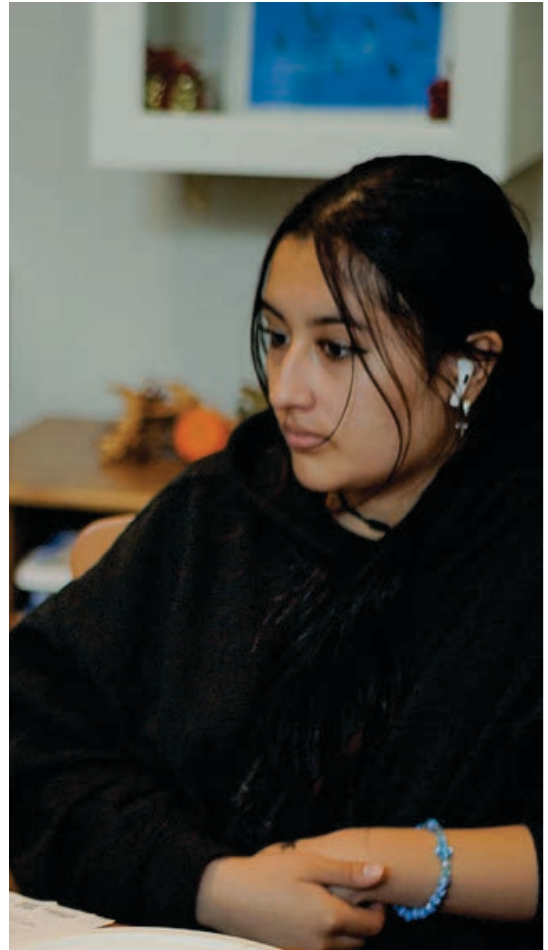
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COMMUNITY-LED CONSULTATION MODEL

Community-led consultation has a long history in democratic city-building. Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, planners and policy-makers across Europe, Latin America and North America began to recognize that municipal decisions were more effective, legitimate and equitable when grounded in lived experiences of residents. Early neighbourhood councils, advocacy planning and resident-led forums revealed that local knowledge is foundational, rather than supplemental, to urban governance.

The community-led Consultation model operates on three assumptions: 1) there is valuable knowledge housed in communities, particularly those who historically might not have access to particular spaces or opportunities; 2) communities are more willing to engage in democratic processes when governments or their representatives are willing to meet them where they are at, in their communities; and 3) the most fruitful conversation comes from those led by community members. These assumptions deeply shape the process, discussions and analysis employed throughout the community-led consultation activities.

Through the 1990s and into the 21st century, cities such as Porto Alegre, Barcelona, Paris and New York City formalized neighbourhood assemblies, participatory budgeting cycles and district-level consultations.



Over time, community-led consultation evolved into a widely recognized municipal strategy; one that strengthens budgeting, urban planning and policymaking by grounding them in the lived knowledge of communities.

Toronto's community-led consultation model sits within this international lineage while emerging from distinctly local foundations. For more than two decades the City has invested in neighbourhood-based engagement through initiatives such as Priority Neighbourhoods Strategy and later, the current Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy (TSNS), which have emphasized resident leadership, equity and neighbourhood-based solutions. As mentioned earlier, with TSNS and the Community Coordination Plan, the City built long-standing networks of trusted organizations across ten geographic and two population-based clusters. These clusters created the civic infrastructure needed for deep neighbourhood engagement. The City's recognition that residents in racialized, newcomer, low-income and equity-deserving communities are more likely to participate and share their voices when sessions are hosted locally, at organizations they trust, has been central to the model's success.

The leadership of Albion Neighbourhood Services (ANS) has made this approach not only effective, but uniquely impactful. As a community-rooted organization, ANS brings both credibility and relational trust; residents are more comfortable speaking candidly in environments shaped by peer facilitators rather than municipal officials.

Trust is not incidental; it is the primary ingredient that allows residents to identify priorities, articulate frustration and propose solutions freely and safely. ANS's role also strengthens the community ecosystem itself; it has enabled local organisations to collaborate more deeply, builds grassroots capacity and supports a reciprocal relationship between City staff and communities. This trust-based, community-led approach ensures that consultations remain authentic and true to community voices.



The City's recognition that residents in racialized, newcomer, low-income and equity-deserving communities are more likely to participate and share their voices when sessions are hosted locally, at organizations they trust, has been central to the model's success.

The usefulness of this model is reflected in the richness of insights captured in our report and video, and the strong on-the-ground interest to participate in the consultations. Over the last three years, the City of Toronto has been shaping, adjusting and improving the community-led consultation approach used to understand and explore budget priorities, particularly from BIPOC and equity-deserving residents across the city. What is evident from Toronto and other cities is that the community-based model strengthens both residents and the City. For the residents, the most immediate benefits are but not limited to:

- Amplifying the voices of equity-deserving communities
- Creating safe spaces for intimate intergenerational discussions
- Building public civic knowledge about budget processes and city governance
- Making consultations more accessible to a diversity of residents
- Disseminating civic educational resources across various communities
- Offering space for community members to network and engage with local residents in their neighbourhood

The model provides City staff with a powerful planning tool, one that offers context-rich data, clearer understanding of community priorities and insights that enhance budget development, service design and long-term urban planning. International best practices have shown improvement in mobility (Barcelona), public space and social infrastructure (Paris) and gaining localized data on community needs beyond surveys (New York City).





RECOMMENDATION TO STRENGTHEN THE MODEL IN TORONTO

Building on this year's consultations and aiming to strengthen the impact of community-led consultations for years to come, below are the ANS team's recommendations, based on our observations and what we heard from residents across the clusters (see the video report in Appendix D):

- **Expand civic education:** Many residents need (and voiced their interest in) a stronger foundation before entering budget consultations. While the two-hour session per consultation provides some time for civic education, it is very limited. Confusion around public health vs. healthcare, or uncertainty about property tax, among some participants, points to the need for civic education about the budget to begin months before budget consultations begin.
- **Increase Accessibility (Translation):** For some consultations, our work was deeply supported by the work of the translators; however, tight timelines made it difficult to translate materials and resources supplied throughout consultations. This amplified language barriers and placed more labour on translators. Additionally, where English-speaking participants could take resources and share them with family and friends, those less fluent in English were unable to use the resources to a similar effect.
- **Start the Consultation Cycle Earlier:** The community-led consultations take place in October, the same timeframe as the City-led consultations. Conducting the community-led consultations before the City's public consultation will allow the City to have its report earlier and use it to inform both the structure and form of the City-led consultations. It will also provide staff with earlier insight as they engage in the process of shaping the staff-prepared budget.
- **Expand the Number of Consultations:** Throughout this process we received overwhelming interest from local organizations to participate as lead organizations for the community-led consultations. We also noted that the number of participants, in nearly every session, easily exceeded the limit of 20 participants. While flexible budgeting and collaborative spirits of lead organizations allowed us to accommodate for more participants, the eagerness from both local community organizations and community members to participate in consultations identifies a need for more consultations. Allocating more resources to increase the project team capacity for more sessions could result in rich and robust findings that will ultimately shape networks of input for the budget and beyond.

- **Accessible Youth Engagement:** Given that in today's policy and program lingo, the category of youth is defined very broadly (from 12 to under 30), in including youth into the consultation process, there is a need for more accessible approaches. This includes: 1) breaking down the broad category of youth into various age groups, such as 12-14 years old, 15-17, and 18-30, and 2) designing accessible materials and resources for various age groups. The current consultation material is accessible for those 15 and above.



EXPAND

Civic Education



MORE

Translated Materials



EARLIER

Consultation Cycle



EXPAND

Total Number of Consultations



CREATE

Accessible Youth Engagement

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WE WISH TO EXPRESS OUR THANKS TO THE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO PARTNERED AND PARTICIPATED IN THESE CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES:

- ACSA COMMUNITY SERVICES, *LAURA HARPER*
- CEE CENTRE FOR YOUNG BLACK PROFESSIONALS, *TRYNÉE HANCOCK*
- CENTRE FOR SPANISH SPEAKING PEOPLE, *ROSANNA ARAUJO*
- DAILY BREAD FOOD BANK, *BHUMIKA JHAMB*
- DAVENPORT PERTH NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE, *MARIELA SOTO*
- DIXON HALL, *KENNETH SLATER*
- MALVERN FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE, *LAUREN GALLACHER*
- NORTH YORK HARVEST FOOD BANK, *CHIARA PADOVANI*
- SOJOURN HOUSE, *FRANCISCO VIDAL AND DAN RUTEMBESA*
- SOMALI WOMEN AND CHILDREN SUPPORT NETWORK, *FARHIA WARSAME*
- THE NEIGHBOURHOOD ORGANIZATION, *KARMA S. LHAMO*
- WEST NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE, *JANANI VENKATESH*

WHILE THE COMMUNITY-LED BUDGET CONSULTATIONS MAY BE DONE FOR THE YEAR, THE BUDGET PROCESS IS STILL ONGOING. THERE ARE MANY MORE WAYS TO GET INVOLVED AND ENSURE YOUR PRIORITIES ARE HEARD.

Thank you to all who made these consultations possible. Funding support for the consultations was provided by the City of Toronto

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APPENDICES



APPENDIX A: Lead Organizations, Community Coordination Plan Clusters and Number of Participants

APPENDIX B: Full List of Consultation Questions and Answer Options

APPENDIX C: Resources Distributed During Consultations

APPENDIX D: QR Code and Youtube Link for the Video Report

APPENDIX A

Cluster Organizations: Spreadsheet consisting of consultation dates, cluster lead organizations, cluster name and total participants.

Cluster/ Session	Lead Organization	Date	Participants
North Scarborough	Malvern Family Resource Centre	2-Oct	28
Black Creek/Humber Summit	Centre for Spanish Speaking People	7-Oct	30
York/Weston/Pelham	Davenport Perth Neighbourhood and CHC	8-Oct	22
North Etobicoke	Somali Women and Children's Network	9-Oct	23
South Scarborough	ACSA Community Services	10-Oct	21
East York/Don Valley	The Neighbourhood Organization	14-Oct	31
Newcomer	Sojourn House	15-Oct	20
South Etobicoke	Daily Bread Food Bank	16-Oct	23
Downtown East	Dixon Hall	23-Oct	21
Downtown West	West Neighbourhood House	25-Oct	26
Black Resilience	CEE Centre For Young Black Professionals	29-Oct	12
North York	North York Harvest Food Bank	30-Oct	22
Total Participants - Consultations			279

APPENDIX B

Consultation Questions: The following questions were used to guide the group discussion.

Question 1: What is one budget priority for yourself or your community?

Question 2: What budget categories are the most important to you and where would you like to see increased investments? (Based on the distribution of the budget and categories reflected in Figure 1)

Question 3: What budget categories are the least important to you and where would you like to see decreased investments? (Based on the distribution of the budget and categories reflected in Figure 1)

Question 4: How should property taxes be adjusted in 2026?

- Keep property taxes low, maintaining most services at about the same level with some reductions
- Increase property taxes to improve services and support growing service needs
- Progressive property tax increase (more expensive properties are taxed at a higher rate)
- Unsure

Question 5: Should the Province of Ontario work more closely with the City to fully fund the services it is responsible for in Toronto starting in 2026 and beyond?

Question 6: Should the Government of Canada work more closely with the City to fully fund the services it is responsible for in Toronto starting in 2026 and beyond?

Question 7: The Provincial and/or Federal Government should provide greater support to Toronto for (select up to three priority areas):

- Funding Transit Construction
- Funding the Running of Transit
- Emergency Services (Police, Paramedics, Fire, Toronto Community Crisis Service)
- Flood Protection
- Maintaining Roads and Buildings
- Refugee/Asylum Seeker Supports
- Housing and Shelters
- Food Security (e.g. School Food Programs, Food Banks, Meal Programs)
- Social Services (e.g. Childcare, Long Term Care, Mental Health Services)
- Allowing a Municipal Sales Tax for Goods and Services Purchased in Toronto
- Sharing a Portion of the Existing Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) with Toronto
- Allowing a Progressive Property Tax (more expensive properties are taxed at a higher rate)
- Other

Question 8: What actions would you be willing to take, on your own or with your neighbours, to encourage the Provincial and Federal Government to work more closely with the city?

- Meet and Speak with my Local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) and Member of Parliament (MP)
- Ask Friends to also Contact their MPP and MP
- Participate in the Provincial Budget Consultations
- Participate in the Federal Budget Consultations
- Sign a Petition to the Provincial and Federal Governments
- Not Willing to Take Any Action
- Other

Question 9: What supports might you need to take any of the actions listed in Question 8?

- Workshops and training
- Newsletter/email updates on upcoming opportunities to have input
- Templates for letters/emails
- Information from my Councillor
- I don't know
- Other

Question 10: What is the most important action the City should take to make Toronto more affordable and livable for everyone?

For the youth-dominant consultation at Dixon Hall, questions were slightly adjusted for the demographic.

APPENDIX C

Materials and Resources Distributed During Each Consultation.

C.1: A 2-pager resource, co-created with Social Planning Toronto (SPT), to support civic education within community-led consultations and beyond.

C.2: Figure 1. Bar chart identifying the distribution of resources within the 2025 Net Budget for major city services.

CITY BUDGET BREAK DOWN

WHAT DOES THE CITY BUDGET FUND?

Every year, the Mayor and City Council makes important decisions about which critical programs, services, and infrastructure it is going to invest in, cut, or freeze funding for. Budget decisions reveal the priorities of City Council and shape the quality of life of residents and communities across the city throughout the year.

The budget is divided into two main parts: the **Operating Budget** and the **Capital Budget**



OPERATING BUDGET

Pays for the operation of programs and services, including:

- Transit
- Police services
- Fire and paramedic services
- Park maintenance
- Recreation programs (including programs for seniors, youth, and families)
- Arts and culture programming
- School food programs
- Congestion management and road maintenance
- Shelters and drop-ins
- Public health
- Toronto Employment and Social Services
- Public amenities (including park washrooms and drinking fountains)



CAPITAL BUDGET

The Capital Budget (a 10-year plan) pays for the development of infrastructure, including:

- Purchasing new buses, streetcars, and subways
- Building new libraries, community centres, fire stations and other public buildings
- The creation of new parks, roads, and bridges

There are also programs funded by service fees, such as: Solid Waste Management (garbage), Toronto Parking Authority, and Toronto Water (sewage and drinking water).

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE CITY BUDGET?

Different programs and services are funded by higher levels of government (provincial and federal), and are therefore not covered by the Toronto City Budget.

WHAT DO OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT FUND?



PROVINCIAL BUDGET

The following services and programs are the domain of the Government of Ontario:

- Ontario's health care plan (OHIP)
- Financial assistance programs and social services, such as: Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works
- Education
- Energy
- Driver and vehicle licensing
- Landlord and Tenant Board
- Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario
- Natural resources and environmental protection

Learn more about the provincial budget at budget.ontario.ca.

FEDERAL BUDGET



The following services and programs are the domain of the Government of Canada:

- Military and defence
- Postal service
- Banking
- Immigration and citizenship
- Census
- Foreign affairs
- International trade
- Agriculture
- Canadian Human Rights Commission

Learn more about the federal budget at budget.canada.ca

OVERLAP BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND BUDGETS

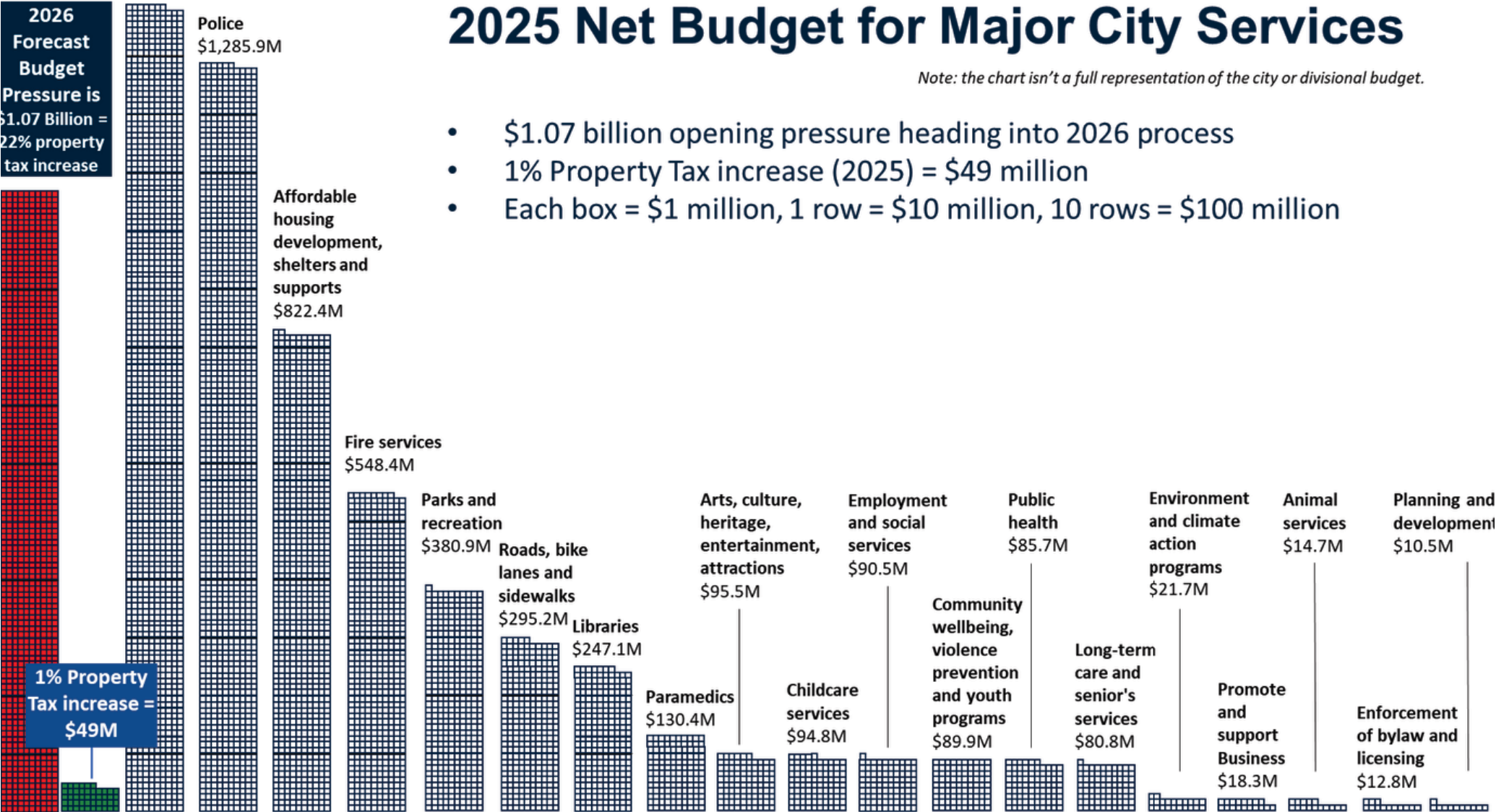
Some issues, like **housing**, are the responsibility of all three levels of government. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which is responsible for administering the National Housing Act, is primarily funded by the federal government. The Landlord and Tenant Board is funded by the provincial government. Zoning approvals, most community housing and shelters, and development charges are the responsibility of cities.

Higher levels of government provide funding to lower levels of government and have an impact on their budget. However, the budgets are developed independently.

2025 Net Budget for Major City Services

Note: the chart isn't a full representation of the city or divisional budget.

- \$1.07 billion opening pressure heading into 2026 process
- 1% Property Tax increase (2025) = \$49 million
- Each box = \$1 million, 1 row = \$10 million, 10 rows = \$100 million



APPENDIX D

Video Report

In addition to a written report, the ANS team also prepared a video report to capture the stories and experiences of residents across the City of Toronto. Scan the QR code below, or click on the link in the title, to access the video report and hear what participants had to say.



**Appendix 6:
Indigenous Engagement Briefing**

Appendix 6: Indigenous Engagement Briefing

SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET COMMITTEE BRIEFING TASSC BudgetTO 2026 Engagement Findings Summary – December 2025

On behalf of the Toronto Aboriginal Social Services Council (TASSC), this supplementary briefing presents the perspectives of the Council's Indigenous community leaders and summarizes the findings from TASSC's three-part **BudgetTO 2026** engagement process. TASSC is grateful for the support provided by the City and the City Manager's Office, which made this engagement possible. We also recognize that not all ideas and opinions shared through this process could be included in this submission to the City's Budget Committee.

TASSC's engagement activities included:

1. **A high-level policy review and analysis** of past TASSC research, recommendations and recurring themes related to the City's budget.
2. **An in-person engagement session**, held in collaboration with staff from the City Manager's Office (October 2025).
3. **A TASSC-led BudgetTO 2026 survey** of TASSC member agencies, conducted October 1–31, 2025, including data validation.

Across these engagement activities, four key themes consistently emerged as central to Indigenous community leadership:

- A. TASSC-City Relationship**
- B. Proportionate, dedicated and sustainable resourcing for Indigenous social and community services**
- C. Municipal Engagement with Federal and Provincial Government and Indigenous community leaders**
- D. Future Engagement Principles and Doing Better: Beyond BudgetTO 2026 and the Toronto Indigenous Prosperity Plan**

A. TASSC-City Relationship

A common theme across all engagement activity areas was the need to ensure the **meaningful inclusion of Indigenous community leadership** in all City engagement processes—including budget consultations—beginning early and supported with appropriate resources. Key sub-themes and recommended actions related to engagement and relationship-building included:

- Developing **consistent, proactive, and co-designed engagement strategies** with Indigenous community leaders
- Providing **appropriate resources to build leadership capacity**, leading to more meaningful and impactful engagement outcomes; including additional support for TASSC to coordinate on behalf of its members
- Increasing opportunities for **follow-up, accountability, and reporting back** on City-led frameworks and action plan implementation
- Continuing to rely on established and co-developed partnership models, such as **Meeting in the Middle**

Although TASSC has made some progress in partnership with certain City divisions and individual leaders, our engagement process shows that Toronto still struggles to properly address its unique relationship with Indigenous communities. This relationship should not be grouped within broader equity-seeking categories or treated as a small special-interest group. Instead, it must be recognized as a **distinct and foundational relationship** that requires appropriate and proportionate action to advance right-relations goals.



The TASSC-led survey results also recommended developing budget-planning tools that analyze and report on City-wide investments specifically allocated for Indigenous community purposes or benefits. Respondents further called for a review of the structures and operational costs of the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC) and the Indigenous Affairs Office (IAO), noting that these bodies have not consistently demonstrated effective community engagement. Some participants identified these areas as potential opportunities for cost savings and/or reallocation to the Indigenous Funding Framework (IFF) and other community-delivered programs and services.

Other ideas identified from the TASSC-led survey for shaping future relationships included:

- Establish a First Peoples, First Priority framework that could include a principles-based policy directive for city-wide investments that could:
 - enforce the City's Reconciliation Action Plan;
 - require city staff to consider Indigenous priorities and implications for all city investments;
 - include dedicated set asides to meet Indigenous community engagement and investment.
- Improve city coordination and capacity to conduct city-wide analysis and lead engagement strategies
- Convene dedicated tables with city staff to address specific service and planning matters
- Create pathways to transition to self-determined budget guidelines for all vetted Indigenous recipients

B. Proportionate, dedicated and sustainable resourcing for Indigenous social and community services

Through the TASSC-led survey, we aligned our questions with those used in the City's survey to better identify and validate TASSC members' priority areas for municipal investment. This approach was intended to clearly convey to the Budget Committee and the Mayor the most pressing concerns affecting many members of Toronto's Indigenous community. The results were unsurprising, as they were consistent across all engagement activities and reflect long-standing priorities that the Toronto Indigenous community has advocated for over several decades. The top priority areas, along with recommended actions for BudgetTO 2026 investments, include:

Fund Deeply Affordable Housing and maintenance of community housing

- Increase and accelerate dedicated resources to ensure, at minimum, the achievement of the affordable housing targets set out in the City's HousingTO 2020–2030 Action Plan.
- In collaboration with TICAB and Indigenous partners, invest in Indigenous community-led long-term housing solutions that strengthen community buy-in and stewardship while reducing reliance on for-profit developers and short-term affordability measures.

Increase Shelter Funding and Indigenous-led Crisis and Homelessness Response

- Indigenous shelters provide highly efficient and quality services, yet receive disproportionately low funding compared to mainstream shelters, despite continuing to serve all community members, including newcomers and refugees.
- Collaborate with Indigenous partners, improve Indigenous-led responses for unhoused people.
- Invest in trauma-informed, Indigenous-led holistic prevention and care services, as these initiatives help reduce the higher costs associated with emergency interventions, including paramedics, police, and other crisis services.

Increase the Indigenous Funding Framework (IFF)

- Proportionately and appropriately increase the level of support for Indigenous non-profits / social services through the IFF, particularly for Indigenous mental health services, employment supports, and childcare, and in recognition of the scope and scale of supports provided across the Toronto region.



Consistent across all engagement activities, TASSC members called for reductions in Police Services' operational budgets, reflecting the historical and disproportionate harms and the ongoing broken trust between Police Services and Toronto's Indigenous community. In the TASSC-led survey, Police Services was identified as the lowest priority for City investment. The findings also highlighted strong support for reallocating police budgets toward Indigenous service providers and expanding community-led safety initiatives. Other areas identified as lower priorities for municipal investment included Animal Services, festival funding, and traffic improvements.

TASSC members offered ideas for reducing the City's heavy reliance on property tax revenues and for exploring new revenue options with other levels of government, including:

- **Increasing property taxes for only the highest tax brackets, and re-directing funds to Indigenous land-back priorities;**
- **Increase the foreign-owned property tax on vacant residential properties and introduce a tax on vacant commercial real estate holdings; and,**
- **Re-evaluating tax exemptions for churches**

Additional ideas for new city investment for BudgetTO 2026 consideration included:

- **Investing in land back strategies near City Hall for ceremonial fires, in High Park or other large green spaces dedicated for ceremonial/community use**
- **Developing an Indigenous Recreation and Community Centre**
- **Creating mechanisms to introduce an Indigenous Councillor Office, an elected political office that would focus solely on addressing Indigenous community priorities as an integrated member of City Council.**

C. Municipal Engagement with Federal and Provincial Government and Indigenous community leaders

At multiple engagement points, TASSC members have emphasized their expectation that the City take a **leadership role in developing realistic, action-oriented, comprehensive strategies with federal and provincial levels of government on urban Indigenous priorities**. These strategies should outline key priorities to be addressed across multiple levels of government and advance new agreements that leverage appropriate resources from provincial and federal governments alongside municipal and Indigenous leadership. As part of the TASSC-led survey, members were asked to identify and prioritize areas where the City should engage with federal and provincial governments on issues affecting urban Indigenous communities.

Of particular concern, members highlighted the **impending pressures caused by the expiry of the Urban Programming for Indigenous People (UPIP) funding** in March 2026, as recently announced by Indigenous Services Canada. UPIP has been a primary federal funding source for essential urban Indigenous programs and the only dedicated federal support for urban Indigenous coalitions such as TASSC. The anticipated cuts in 2026-27 are expected to create significant service pressures on Indigenous service providers in the GTA, and, for some, may directly threaten their ability to continue delivering core services.

Other priority areas for federal engagement include:

- **Funding commitments for deeply affordable housing in Toronto**
- **Immigration and newcomer service policies and their impact on Toronto service providers, including Indigenous shelters**
- **Addressing the complex social determinants of health, including affordability and community safety, and their impact on the health and well-being of urban Indigenous populations**



Regarding engagement with municipal and provincial governments, Housing, Shelters and Shelter Services, Supportive Housing, Child and Family Services, and Health and Mental Health—including trauma-informed services—have consistently been identified as high-priority areas.

Indigenous shelters, in particular, continue to operate with some of the lowest funding levels in Toronto despite providing high-quality services. Meanwhile, rising demand for mental health supports, harm reduction services, and supportive housing highlights the importance of upstream investments that can reduce long-term crisis and emergency service costs.

With Ontario potentially renewing its poverty reduction strategy framework, there is a pressing need for **proactive municipal leadership to act on longstanding recommendations and commitments**. Strategizing now with Indigenous community partners can promote comprehensive, results-driven initiatives under a potential new provincial plan beyond 2025. This also provides an opportunity to reorient strategic investments toward initiatives grounded in Indigenous concepts of prosperity—initiatives that recognize quality of life and address the lasting impacts of multigenerational and systemic poverty.

D. Future Engagement Principles and Doing Better: Beyond BudgetTO2026 and the Toronto Indigenous Prosperity Plan

For over 30 years, TASSC has been Toronto’s leading non-profit organization dedicated to research, policy, and advocacy for Indigenous communities. Our mission is to enhance the socio-economic opportunities and cultural well-being of Indigenous peoples across the GTA, with our member agencies supporting more than 80,000 Indigenous residents who live, work, and access services throughout the region.

As champions of community-driven research and advocacy, TASSC has repeatedly reported on the needs and priorities of Toronto’s Indigenous community, including the conditions required to create a more livable, affordable, welcoming, and inclusive city. Most recently, community-led research engaging over 1,000 participants informed *To Higher Ground* (October 2024), a report produced through the Toronto Aboriginal Research Project (TARP).

The *To Higher Ground* report, along with the priority recommendations outlined in the Toronto Indigenous Prosperity Project and its accompanying action plan, continues to guide TASSC’s solution-focused strategies to support a stronger financial future for the Toronto Indigenous community. Many of the themes, strategies, and recommendations from the Toronto Indigenous Prosperity Project were also reflected throughout our broader engagement process.

TASSC survey results indicate that members continue to value ongoing engagement opportunities with the City beyond BudgetTO 2026, with particular interest in:

1. **Engaging earlier** in the budget and planning process
2. **Increased direct engagement** with City Councillors
3. **Access to additional resources** for civic engagement workshops and training to strengthen community capacity

Members also encouraged the City to begin budget planning and resource discussions as early as Spring 2026. A key measure of progress in TASSC’s relationship with the City will be the implementation of—and accountability for—the City’s Reconciliation Action Plan. Survey respondents emphasized the need to analyze the operational costs associated with the Plan’s implementation to identify opportunities to reallocate funds toward community-led initiatives, such as the Toronto Indigenous Prosperity Action Plan. As a starting point, City decision-makers are invited to consider the principles and recommendations of the Toronto Indigenous Prosperity Project and its Action Plan as a roadmap for collaborative, long-term solutions that benefit all residents of Toronto.

