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CHAIR, GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE  
CHAIR, SCARBOROUGH COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
CHAIR, BOARD OF MANAGEMENT OF THE TORONTO ZOO  
CHAIR, FEDERATION OF ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES  
NIGHT ECONOMY CHAMPION, CITY OF TORONTO

Date: April 21, 2026

To: Mayor Olivia Chow, Chair and Executive Committee

Re: Report on Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) Caucus meeting – February 6, 2026

### Recommendation:

1. Toronto City Council receive the Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) Caucus February 6, 2026, meeting update for information.

### Background

I am pleased to provide this update for your information following my attendance at the recent meeting on behalf of Mayor Olivia Chow. This report provides a summary of the strategic discussions and policy resolutions from the Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) caucus meeting held on February 6, 2026. The meeting focused on the 2026 Provincial Pre-Budget submission, healthcare system pressures, and municipal tax reform aimed at improving financial sustainability for Ontario's largest urban centers.

**1. 2026 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission:** OBCM engaged in a pre-budget discussion with the Minister of Finance to outline key municipal priorities. The 2026 submission emphasizes that Toronto's operating budget currently allocates over \$1.5 billion (27% of property tax funding) to housing and social services—a burden that continues to rise despite the Ontario-Toronto New Deal. Primary requests include:

- **Transit Operating Funding:** Addressing the unsustainable gap where transit has become the largest line item on the property tax bill, surpassing police services.
- **Supportive Housing:** Calling for a "housing-first" approach that pairs capital investments with guaranteed, long-term provincial operating funding for supportive housing projects.
- **Public Safety:** Establishing a sustainable, needs-based funding model for police services to address provincially mandated obligations and organized crime, including synthetic fentanyl production and extortion.

**2. Education Tax Reform:** A significant motion was brought forward calling for the Province to remove the property-based education levy. Currently, education funding in Toronto represents approximately 20% of a residential property tax bill and 39% of a commercial bill.

- Education is a provincial responsibility. Removing this levy would allow municipal property taxes to focus exclusively on core municipal services and infrastructure, such as water, transportation, and waste management.
- OBCM is advocating for a modernized system that improves tax fairness and affordability for lower-income households who are disproportionately burdened by regressive property taxes.

**3. Emergency Room and Paramedic Service Reform:** The caucus addressed critical delays within the healthcare system that directly impact municipal services.

- In 2023, Toronto Paramedics spent 60% of their time in hospitals, with 42% of cases exceeding the 30-minute offload target.
- OBCM passed a motion calling for "Finlay's Law" to set legal maximum ER wait times for children and mandated nurse-to-patient ratios.
- At my request, an amendment was included to specifically recognize that ER delays contribute to excessive ambulance offload times, straining the response capacity of municipal paramedic services across Ontario.

**4. Blue Box Transition Oversight:** The caucus reviewed the post-transition implementation of the Blue Box program under Circular Materials. While the City of Toronto officially exited recycling management on December 31, 2025, ongoing monitoring is required to address inconsistent collection and poor customer service responsiveness. OBCM remains a venue for aligned municipal pressure on Circular Materials to ensure they fulfill their operational and financial responsibilities to residents without further municipal intervention.

**5. Administrative and In-Camera Business:** The committee conducted its necessary administrative duties, including a review of internal policy frameworks and legislative updates regarding Municipal Freedom of Information (FOI). Per established protocol, all internal OBCM budgetary and financial planning remains confidential and was discussed in-camera to protect the strategic interests of the member municipalities.

Sincerely,



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