



OLIVIA CHOW MAYOR

July 21, 2026

Making Grocery Prices Fair: Banning Surveillance Pricing in Toronto

Dear Members of the Executive Committee,

Torontonians are struggling with rising costs, making tough choices to make ends meet. At the same time, big tech and retail giants are capitalizing by monitoring our activity and using the information to extract maximum profit. Surveillance pricing – also known as algorithmic personalized pricing – uses your personal data to change the price of groceries and other items. The goal is simple: to charge the customer as much as possible using personal data to determine what each individual will pay. That means the shelf price of an item can change based on who you are, where you are, or what time it is.

Manitoba introduced [legislation](#) to [ban this practice](#). Recently, the federal government committed to explore strengthening privacy protections against this as part of the federal Artificial Intelligence (AI) strategy.

The City of Toronto is taking action to reduce costs for people, especially when it comes to groceries. We've expanded school food programs to reach every student by this fall, saving families with two children \$900 a year off their grocery bill. In March, Council passed a motion directing City staff to explore municipal levers to bring grocery costs down. That includes supporting independent grocers, developing a municipal grocery pilot that leverages Toronto's public food terminal, public markets, and community partners in food security, and working with other levels of government to ban anti-competitive land covenants.

There is more we can do. The *City of Toronto Act* provides authority to regulate for the purpose of consumer protection and the economic well-being of Torontonians. This motion directs staff to explore every legal mechanism within the City of Toronto's power to ban surveillance pricing on groceries.

The City should address these emerging predatory practices to protect Torontonians and make life more affordable. As the level of government closest to peoples' daily lives, we cannot ignore these practices or simply wait for the federal or provincial governments. We must do what we can to ensure large companies don't take advantage of Torontonians.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. City Council direct the City Manager, in consultation with the City Solicitor and Executive Director Municipal Licensing and Standards, to identify all possible mechanisms for the City of Toronto to ban and regulate surveillance pricing that increases prices on groceries, including those sold online and delivered within the city, and report to the new term of City Council in the first quarter of 2027 with options for consideration.

Sincerely,



Olivia Chow
Mayor



Alejandra Bravo
Chair, Economic & Community Development Committee
City Councillor, Ward 9 - Davenport