



February 6, 2026

Dear Mayor Chow and City Councillors,

The [Centre for Independent Living in Toronto](#) (CILT) and the [GTA Disability Coalition](#) (GTADC) join many of our community sector partners in calling for a 2026 City Budget that invests in all communities, and particularly those known to be increasingly marginalized or underserved. This includes Toronto's over 570,000 disabled residents reported to live throughout this city and who belong to all its communities.

CILT and GTADC partners delivered eight deputations on the 2026 budget at City Hall, Etobicoke, Scarborough and North York Civic Centres. We have provided the links to a video clip of each deputation below as well as attached PDF copies of each. We advocated for a budget that more adequately funds the accessibility needs of disabled residents as an equity-deserving population, offering bold policy and funding recommendations that do not leave our community further behind than it currently is.

According to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, people with disabilities are two times more likely to live in core housing need and four times more likely to be to experience homelessness. Poverty levels among disabled Torontonians are also higher with many experiencing legislated poverty because of critically insufficient income support programs and a lack of accessible living-wage work opportunities.

We commend Mayor Chow for protecting investments in community services and advancing Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy programs. However, the city continues to invisibilize disability communities by not embedding disability and accessibility funding allocations throughout the budget, particularly within poverty reduction, housing and tenant supports programs and shelters.

Our key calls to city council for the 2026 budget are:

Transparency in Budget Reporting on the City's Disability Inclusion

Provide much greater transparency in budget reporting on disability inclusion. This includes an annual budget briefing note detailing all the budgeted services and investments that the City is undertaking that address access and inclusion for disabled residents, and the inclusion of adequate accessibility allocations with dedicated budget lines. (e.g. shelters, tenant supports, drop-ins, MURA etc.).

Accessible and Deeply Affordable Housing

Honour Council's commitment to building all new city-supported housing with universal design principles. Specifically, ensure that the city implements [Council's vote in October 2024](#) including the development of accessibility guidelines that surpass standards for accessibility on the Ontario Building Code that are to be applied to all City built housing. The October motion also called on the City to develop a clearer inventory of accessible units and to ensure that those units are used by disabled people.

Accessible Shelters

Ensure timely completion of TSSS's accessibility audit of its current shelter stock, identifying structural and other accessibility barriers for unhoused residents with disabilities. Then implement a plan for reducing primary gaps at targeted sites to increase shelter capacity for this underserved population, while the City's new shelter stock is built during the next seven years. In addition, commit to the city building at least 50% of new shelter spaces in the multi-year shelter building plan with universal design standards. Existing city shelters are inaccessible and require additional investment now to allow disabled Torontonians the ability to seek refuge when it is needed.

Disability and Housing Data

Allocate adequate funding for research and data collection that will assess the status of the City's accessible housing portfolio, including MURA sites, city housing properties and shelters. This research must include disabled Torontonians as well as the knowledgeable leadership of disability organizations.

Disability Inclusion within Public and Healthcare Spaces

Open up accessible library and other accessible recreation programming that addresses isolation – adding to what the city has introduced for seniors. As well, conduct an accessibility audit of Toronto's healthcare infrastructure including wayfinding and accessible communications so persons with sight-loss or who are blind or Deafblind have barrier free access.

Like many residents and community organizations, we worry that some councillors may vote for cuts or against enhancements to vital service areas in the proposed budget, like increased winter drop-in hours, shelter support services, TTC fare capping and the TTC fare freeze. Given how hard residents on the margins are being impacted by Toronto's affordability crisis, we join our many partners in saying 2026 is NOT a time for any service cuts. We urge you to show up for disabled residents and other marginalized communities with your vote and your voice, advocating for a budget that funds a fair, accessible, sustainable city for all.

Sincerely,



Wendy Porch, Executive Director
Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT)

**Centre for Independent Living in Toronto and GTA Disability Coalition's
2026 Deputations to Toronto Budget Committee**

Wendy Porch, CILT's Executive Director - Toronto Needs to Account for Accessibility

Kim Adlard, GTADC's Coordinator - Invest in Affordable and Accessible Housing

David Meyers, CILT's Senior Manager of Independent Living Programs - Toronto Needs Accessible Shelters

Aasiya Hussain, GTADC and Ecohesian - Fund Safer Accessible Affordable Homes

Keat Welsh, CILT and GTADC - Build New Accessible and Affordable Co-ops

Jennifer Chambers, GTADC and Empowerment Council - Funding Housing Resolves Crises

Dev Ramsawakh, CILT and GTADC - Improve Disabled Life in Toronto

Keya Osborne, GTADC - Make Healthcare Accessible