

EX7.1 - Updated Long-Term Financial Plan

Deputation from The Neighbourhood Group Community Services
City Executive Committee

August 24, 2023

The Neighbourhood Group Community Services is a multi service agency with 31 locations throughout the City of Toronto. We work daily with people who need the full range of services our city government works hard to fund. Our participants depend on a strong library system, recreation programs, public transit including Wheel-Trans, shelters, public health programs, youth drop ins and more.

We welcome the City of Toronto's new report on progressive revenue tools to maintain these important services. This funding helps create a safe and livable city and makes programs more affordable and widely available. We need progressive taxation measures that don't harm the many low income communities in our city.

Our Member Advocacy Committee, a group of advocates who live in poverty and have been homeless and face other barriers, recently wrote to the new mayor requesting the city explore new revenue tools. In particular they asked for a commercial parking levy and reintroduction of the vehicle registration tax. They also want to see road tolls.

Progressive revenue tools are important, given that for more than a decade new revenue has been obtained largely at the expense of those who have the least. This includes higher TTC fares and more user fees, especially those charged for recreation programs. Many of our participants cannot obtain city recreation programs as they fill up quickly, cost too much and there is very limited access to the city welcome policy. We also note that there is pressure on Wheel-Trans to cut service for those who require it, the city is lagging on social housing commitments and the TTC is struggling to provide extensive quality service.

Our organization is happy to engage in a larger conversation with our many program participants to help build a participatory democracy and fair budgeting process going forward. We want to build on the engagement and interest we experienced with our participants during the mayoral byelection.

We agree that the City of Toronto must put its house in order by funded needed services. We also know you can't do it alone. The Province and the Federal Government need to act as well. A well funded city

for all helps creates a stronger tax base for other levels of government. TNG does not want the city to keep falling behind, as we all pay the costs when people are driven towards costly emergency services.

We urge you to stay the course and keep programs funded. In the long run we will find savings through this funding and together build a safe and livable city for all.

Thank you.

Helen Armstrong on behalf of The Neighbourhood Group Community Services