



Wednesday, November 29, 2023

Budget Committee
c/o Matthew Green
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario, M5H 2N2

Submitted by e-mail to NewDeal@toronto.ca

Dear Members of the Budget Committee,

RE: Feedback About 2024 Budget Process

We appreciate the Chow Administration's approach to the 2024 Budget by launching public consultations earlier in the annual budget process. Given the City of Toronto faces a \$1.5 billion budget shortfall for next year, we support the City's call for a new deal with the provincial and federal governments to ensure its long-term sustainability and prosperity.

Our group – Community Bikeways – was formed in May 2020 to call for bikeways along subway lines and busy suburban bus routes to help essential workers get around during the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, our group is focused on holding City Hall accountable, amplifying community voices, providing policy solutions, and hosting fun events related to road safety and climate action.

During the October 2022 municipal election, we issued three road safety calls to action which include tripling the annual Vision Zero funding to \$75 million annually, lowering speed limits to 30 km/h on residential streets and 40 km/h on arterials, and finish the delivery of complete streets along the Yonge and Bloor-Danforth-Kingston corridors to the city limits by 2026. These calls to action were supported by twelve current councillors, as well as Mayor Chow during the June 2023 mayoral by-election when we also called for support for transparency regarding the Gardiner Expressway and fully funding the TransformTO climate action goals.

We believe the 2024 budget needs to take into account our calls to action to ensure Toronto meets its road safety and climate action goals. We would like to express our concerns with the lack of progress with bikeway installations in which the City never fully built their bike plans. The closest they came to this was during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 when a net 30 kilometres of bikeways were installed. It would be unreasonable to wait for another pandemic to take road safety and climate action seriously, while we call for an inquiry to determine the barriers against bikeway installations and how best to overcome them.

Some organizations such as TTC Riders and the Toronto Environmental Alliance have called for a commercial parking levy to help address the budget shortfall; something which we fully support. There are several other revenue tools we believe should be considered including a congestion charge which cities

such as London (UK) have pursued, reinstating the vehicle registration tax (VRT), and charging more for larger vehicles through permit parking fees (as Montréal has done) and the VRT.

We are disappointed the New Deal recently announced by Mayor Olivia Chow and Premier Doug Ford called for the uploading of the Gardiner Expressway and Don Valley Parkway. While we understand this move would help save the City hundreds of millions of dollars annually in capital expenditures, it effectively kills any chance of scrapping the Gardiner Expressway rebuild east of Cherry Street and makes Toronto an anomaly worldwide in rebuilding an elevated highway amidst the climate crisis. This move goes against our call for a full updated assessment of costs and foregone revenues associated with the Gardiner rebuild. However, we support the New Deal's proposal to fund the operating costs of the Eglinton Crosstown and Finch West LRT's, as well as the purchase of much needed TTC subway cars.

To recap our requests for the 2024 budget, we call on the City to triple Vision Zero funding, finish delivery of complete streets along the Yonge and Bloor-Danforth-Kingston corridors, and fully fund TransformTO. We also express our support for revenue tools such as a commercial parking levy, congestion charges, vehicle registration tax, and charging higher parking fees (and VRT) for larger vehicles.

We thank you for taking our feedback into consideration and please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,
Community Bikeways



Robert Zaichkowski



Mary Ann Neary

CC: Mayor Olivia Chow
Councillor Shelley Carroll (Budget Chief)
TTC Riders
Toronto Environmental Alliance
Walk Toronto
Cycle Toronto