

MEDIA ADVISORY -- October 14, 2010

## **One Third of Toronto Candidates Pledge to Make the City's Budget Process More Open, Inclusive and Participatory**

A full 96 candidates have responded to the Toronto Open Budget Initiative's (TOBI) call-out to build a better City budget process for all Toronto residents. These candidates endorsed the TOBI Declaration – a set of principles, values and recommended actions for transforming the City's budget process.

“We are very encouraged by the strong show of support from Toronto candidates, including several incumbent councillors and two out of three mayoral front-runners,” commented Melissa Wong, TOBI co-chair. “The call to open the City's budget process has attracted candidates across the political spectrum who share a common interest in transforming the budget process in the interests of the people.”

At present, the City's budget process includes just two opportunities for public input into the budget, both only after the real decisions have all been made. TOBI formed in response to the lack of legitimate community engagement in the budget process, bringing together a broad-based network of residents and community groups looking for a change in the system. The TOBI Declaration was developed to provide a starting point for engagement with residents, community groups and political decision-makers.

The TOBI Declaration lays out six principles and values inherent to an open budget process: inclusiveness, accessibility, integrity and transparency, influence, accountability, and flexibility and transformation. Recommended actions described in the TOBI Declaration include changes that would increase public input from the beginning of the process, programs that would increase public understanding of the budget process, and structures that would engage more diverse voices in the decision-making.

With a \$9.2 billion operating budget, the City of Toronto's budget is larger than that of several provincial governments in Canada. How City Council chooses to spend those dollars has a profound effect on the lives of Toronto residents. Yet residents have a limited understanding of, access to and avenues for meaningful input into the City's budget process. TOBI offers a way forward to make positive change to our democratic systems, one embraced by many Council hopefuls. We look forward to working together to begin the job of opening the City's budget process for the benefit of all.

### List of Endorsers (alphabetically):

Councillor	Paul	Ainslie	Ward 43 - Scarborough East
Mr.	Scott	Aitchison	Ward 7 - York West
Ms.	Enza	Anderson	Ward 27 - Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Mr.	George	Babula	Mayoral Candidate
Mr.	Drago	Banovic	Ward 10 - York Centre
Mr.	Kevin	Beaulieu	Ward 18 - Davenport
Mr.	Ben	Bergen	Ward 27 - Toronto Centre-Rosedale

Mr.	Ted	Berger	Ward 1 - Etobicoke North
Mr.	Howard	Bortenstein	Ward 28 - Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Mr.	Brian	Bragason	Ward 17 - Davenport
Mr.	Eric	Brazau*	Ward 28 - Toronto Centre - Rosedale
Mr.	Jon	Burnside	Ward 26 - Don Valley West
Councillor	Sandra	Bussin	Ward 32 - Beaches-East York
Mr.	Chris	Caldwell	Ward 29 – Toronto Danforth
Councillor	Shelley	Carroll	Ward 33 - Don Valley East
Ms.	Isabelle	Champagne	Ward 37 - Scarborough Centre
Mr.	John	Chiappetta*	Ward 5 - Etobicoke-Lakeshore
Mr.	Peter	Clarke	Ward 23 - Willowdale
Mr.	Keith	Cole	Mayoral Candidate
Mr.	Gus	Cusimano*	Ward 9 - York Centre
Councillor	Janet	Davis	Ward 31 - Beaches-East York
Mr.	Fank	de Jong	Ward 18 - Davenport
Ms.	Diane	Devenyi	Mayoral Candidate
Mr.	Peter	D'Gama	Ward 1 - Etobicoke North
Mr.	Mohamed	Dhanani	Ward 26 - Don Valley West
Mr.	Joel	Dick	Ward 27 - Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Ms.	Joanne	Dickins	Ward 25 - Don Valley West
Ms.	Sarah	Doucette	Ward 12 - York South-Weston
Mr.	David	Epstein	Mayoral Candidate
Mr.	Michael	Erickson	Ward 14 - Parkdale-High Park
Mr.	Brad	Feraday	Ward 32 – Beaches-East York
Ms.	Vilma	Filici	Ward 12 - York South-Weston
Mr.	Selwyn	Firth	Mayoral Candidate
Councillor	Paula	Fletcher	Ward 30 - Toronto-Danforth
Ms.	Mary	Fragedakis	Ward 29 - Toronto-Danforth
Ms.	Susan	Gapka	Ward 27 - Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Mr.	Samuel	Getachew	Ward 43 - Scarborough East
Mr.	Abdullah-Baquie	Ghazi	Mayoral Candidate
Mr.	Howard	Gomberg	Mayoral Candidate
Mr.	Ed	Green	Ward 35 - Scarborough Southwest
Councillor	Suzan	Hall*	Ward 1 - Etobicoke North
Mr.	Bryan	Heal*	Ward 40 - Scarborough-Agincourt
Mr.	Ryan	Hobson	Ward 14 - Parkdale-High Park
Mr.	Dennis	Hollingsworth	Ward 28 - Toronto Centre Rosedale
Mr.	Mike	Ihnat	Ward 33 - Don Valley East
Mr.	Nawab Salim	Khan	Ward 26 - Don Valley West
Mr.	Michael	Laxer	Ward 6 - Etobicoke-Lakeshore
Mr.	John	Letonja	Mayoral Candidate
Councillor	Peter	Li Preti	Ward 8 - York West
Mr.	Jim	Likourezos	Ward 19 - Trinity-Spadina
Mr.	Victor	Lucero	Ward 7 - York West
Mr.	Marvin	Macaraig	Ward 36 - Scarborough Southwest
Mr.	Roy	Macdonald	Ward 16 - Eglinton-Lawrence
Ms.	Brenda	MacDonald	Ward 31 - Beaches-East York
Mr.	Dean	Maher*	Ward 20 - Trinity-Spadina
Mr.	Benjamin	Mbaegbu	Ward 43 - Scarborough East
Councillor	Pam	McConnell	Ward 28 - Toronto Centre-Rosedale

Ms.	Mary-Margaret	McMahon	Ward 32 - Beaches-East York
Mr.	Glenn	Middleton*	Ward 38 - Scarborough Centre
Councillor	Joe	Mihevc**	Ward 21 - St. Paul's
Mr.	William	Molls	Ward 22 - St. Paul's
Councillor	Frances	Nunziata	Ward 11 - York South-Weston
Mr.	Sergio	Otoya Salazar	Ward 37 - Scarborough Centre
Councillor	Joe	Pantalone*	Mayoral Candidate
Councillor	Gord	Perks**	Ward 14 - Parkdale-High Park
Ms.	Jane	Pitfield	Ward 29 - Toronto-Danforth
Mr.	Eric	Plant	Ward 10 - York Centre
Mr.	Namu	Ponnambalam	Ward 42 - Scarborough-Rouge River
Mr.	Shamoon	Poonawala	Ward 42 - Scarborough-Rough River
Mr.	Joe	Renda	Ward 12 - York South-Weston
Mr.	Mike	Restivo	Ward 29 - Toronto-Danforth
Mr.	John	Richardson	Ward 29 - Toronto-Danforth
Mr.	Luciano	Rizzuti	Ward 2 - Etobicoke North
Mr.	Jonah	Schein	Ward 17 - Davenport
Mr.	Chris	Sellers	Ward 22 - St. Pauls
Mr.	Neethan	Shanmugarajah	Ward 42- Scarborough-Rough River
Mr.	Brian	Shifman*	Ward 10 - York Centre
Ms.	Patricia	Sinclair*	Ward 41 - Scarborough-Rouge River
Mr.	George	Smitherman*	Mayoral Candidate
Mr.	Arthur	Smitherman	Ward 8 - York West
Mr.	Robert	Spencer*	Ward 36 - Scarborough Southwest
Ms.	Stephan	Stewart	Ward 34 - Don Valley East
Councillor	Karen	Stintz	Ward 16 - Eglinton-Lawrence
Ms.	Karen	Sun	Ward 19 - Trinity-Spadina
Mr.	Ken	Sy*	Ward 40 - Scarborough-Agincourt
Mr.	Istvan	Tar	Ward 14 - Parkdale-High Park
Ms.	Eva	Tavares	Ward 15 - Eglinton-Lawrence
Mr.	Chris	Tindal	Ward 27 - Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Mr.	Ramnarine	Tiwari	Ward 8 - York West
Councillor	Adam	Vaughan*	Ward 20 - Trinity Spadina
Ms.	Hema	Vyas	Ward 18 - Davenport
Mr.	Daniel	Walker	Mayoral Candidate
Ms.	Kristyn	Wong-Tam	Ward 27 - Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Mr.	Ken	Wood*	Ward 18 - Davenport
Mr.	Mike	Yen	Ward 20 - Trinity-Spadina
Mr.	Edward	Zaretsky	Ward 10 - York Centre

The TOBI Declaration includes a set of principles and values, as well as, 2010/2011 recommended actions. Candidates were invited to endorse: 1) the principles and values only or 2) the principles, values and recommended actions. Candidates endorsing only the principles and actions were asked to describe what actions they would take to transform the budget process. As well, some candidates added additional comments to their endorsement form. Two candidates submitted their own statements regarding the budget process but did not endorse the TOBI Declaration.

\* Candidates endorsing the principles and values only.

\*\* Candidates endorsing the principles, values and recommended actions with the exception of the recommended action that both capital and operating budgets be released before decisions are finalised on either.

Additional action plans/comments from candidates:

Brian Bragason	“Love your proposals! One more suggestion: The City budget and the TTC budget should be available online.”
Eric Brazau	Wants to study the issue before deciding on recommended actions.
Diane Devenyi	“In addition to my support for the recommended actions, I would also recommend a curriculum friendly (Grade 10 civics and Grade 12 political science) program to authentically engage students in the budget process.”
Richard Gosling	Did not endorse the TOBI Declaration. Submitted this statement: “I, Richard Gosling, support the initiatives of ensuring that the citizens of Ward 12 have input into the City's budget process. This is supported strongly in my contract with the community.” Contact candidate for contract.
Suzan Hall	“Believe City of Toronto to be more open in its budget process than most of the western world and other orders of Canadian government. Would support budget meetings reflective of those held early last term that were well attended by diverse populations. Would support budget recommendations coming to the standing committees to enable more discussion and public deputation.”
Bryan Heal	“My recommended actions would be similar to TOBIs. I am not yet ready to endorse the full 2010/2011 recommended actions because (a) we are still researching how best to make our budget process more inclusive and accountable, and (b) there are more immediate steps that need to be taken prior to some of the recommended items. For example, the City’s approach to public deputations needs to be more respectful and meaningful, and I would propose we reform the deputation process itself prior to promoting it as a way to improve the budget process.”
John Letonja	“All the City’s departments will have their own budget and cannot spend over their budget.”
Dean Maher	“I agree with both the principles and recommendations. However the recommendations would need to be discussed with the City to determine how they could be implemented. You have specific timeframes and procedures listed that may or may not work in the City’s eyes. So I agree with both and hope I can influence Council, if elected, to support the recommendations. That’s what I can promise. So that’s why I checked the principles and values, but I do support it all. I can’t say if Council would adopt your exact recommendations.”
Glenn Middleton	“More to follow.”
Joe Mihevc	“Note: I do not think the capital budget needs to be considered at the same time as the operating budget. They are very different projects. Other than that, this is a helpful statement.”
Joe Pantalone	“1. All budget committee meetings to be open and transparent by placing items online in a timely fashion. 2. All budget and standing committee meetings to be accessible (from away from City Hall) through webcam streaming, including being able to take deputations through webcam technology.”
Giuseppe Pedo	Did not endorse the TOBI Declaration. Submitted a modified statement based on the declaration. To be posted on TOBI website.
Gord Perks	He has concerns about releasing the capital and operating budgets before decisions are finalized on either. He is concerned that this action would delay the passing of the capital budget, which in turn would delay the City’s ability to put out tenders for capital projects and result in work not being completed within the construction season. The delay would cut into the construction season. If the operating budget was released earlier to avoid the delay in passing the capital budget, he is concerned that details on many operating expenses from the current year would not be available, which would prevent the City from being able to accurately project

Patricia Sinclair expenses for the budgeted year.  
“Although I support the recommended actions, the timeline for implementation is too short. Nothing in government changes/moves quickly and I have no desire to lie about being able to implement good recommendations for the upcoming fiscal year.”

George Smitherman “Many of your proposed actions are instructive as I plan to lead a transparent 100 day review of the books. Overall I am interested in a much more accessible process and want to work with you and all citizens to achieve that.”

Ken Sy “Councillors have to put the interests of taxpayers ahead of individual agendas, work as a team and set aside differences.”

Ken Wood “City budgets are an enormously complex process with many dependencies and timelines, so committing to your recommended timelines is inadvisable without further investigation. That said, I agree with the spirit of your recommendations. I would add a mandatory requirement for both a 5-year budget outlook, as well as an independent audit of budget to be released January 15 prior to any election with results public.”

The TOBI Declaration is available at [www.torontoopenbudget.ca](http://www.torontoopenbudget.ca)

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