

**EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT
TO THE
TORONTO & YORK REGION
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
THURSDAY, AUGUST 3, 2007**



A FAIR DEAL FOR OUR CITY!

The ongoing debate about the City of Toronto's fiscal woes continue, after a razor-thin vote to defer consideration of new revenue tools until after the provincial election. The conservatives on City Council are boasting about "beating the mayor" on his proposal for a land transfer tax, and are furiously trying to build a wave of anti-tax sentiment. It's no accident that John Tory's key staff were present throughout the city hall debate, as the provincial Tories see this as an opportunity to feather their own political nest.

Since that vote, the Mayor has asked every department and agency to find cost savings. Right wing Councillors have floated a variety of proposals – from the calls for privatization and contracting out, to "Denzil Days" off for employees, to gutting the Fair Wage policy. But we all know that cuts are not the solution. The fundamental problem lies with lack of revenue and the continued downloading of provincial services onto Ontario's municipalities.

A coalition of community, environmental, labour, and social justice groups is coming together to demand a fair deal for our city and its residents. Each year, billions in taxes go from Toronto to Queen's Park and Ottawa, yet the City gets only six cents of every tax dollar to deliver all of its services. Police, fire, emergency services, transit, social services, housing, recreation and parks, roads... all of this must come from just six cents on the dollar.

The provincial government has not restored fair funding for public transit, continues to download social service costs onto property taxpayers, and refuses to fix the broken funding formula for education.

Contrast this with our vision of what it takes to make a great city. People who have come here from around the world with their skills and their dreams, good jobs creating wealth in a wide range of sectors, affordable transit and housing, strong public services, quality childcare and education, a healthy environment, and a future that our young people can believe in.

We want to invest in a city that plays a leadership role in sustainability, equity, and a decent quality of life for all residents. But Toronto cannot achieve those things when it doesn't have the financial resources to succeed. Or when it has to carry the burden of hundreds of millions in unfairly downloaded costs.

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Between now and October 10th, the coalition will be mobilizing across Toronto demanding that every candidate for provincial election commit to immediately resolving this unjust situation. After October 10th, we will continue to pressure the newly elected provincial government to provide a fair deal for municipalities across Ontario.

The Executive Board recommends that:

- a) Labour Council work to build a powerful coalition to fight for a Fair Deal for Toronto and other cities from the government of Ontario which includes uploading the costs of social services, restoring the traditional funding formula for public transit, and fixing other unresolved issues left over from unjust actions of the Harris regime.
- b) Labour Council work with front line municipal unions and community allies to mobilize public opinion around investing in a city which supports a good quality of life for all and plays a strong role for social, environmental and economic justice.