

**EXECUTIVE BOARD STATEMENT TO THE  
TORONTO & YORK REGION LABOUR COUNCIL  
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2004**



**“A ‘NEW DEAL FOR CITIES’ should look like this”**

The need for a new deal for Canada’s cities is widely recognized. Billions of tax dollars flow to the provincial and federal governments, while municipalities rely desperately on property taxes for an overwhelming variety of services and programs. For Toronto, the massive costs of downloading from Queen’s Park has been compounded by limitations on its taxation powers and a restrictive legislative straightjacket.

Prime Minister Paul Martin and Premier McGuinty say they are committed to a fair solution, but there are powerful political and commercial interests that want to distort the outcome. Business lobbyists seek to tie funding to public-private partnerships, along with less accountable forms of decision-making. The provincial Liberals are now floating many of those same ideas.

In recent months, both Martin and McGuinty have backtracked, moving from recognition of Toronto’s key role in Canada to a watered down version that lumps major cities in with towns and villages. While the federal Liberals have removed the GST from municipal purchases, there are still huge gaps in housing, transit and immigrant settlement costs.

The framework of a new deal will, in part, determine the kind of cities we will have in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For the results to benefit working families, a new deal for cities should have:

- ★ A **foundation** of strong public services, publicly delivered and fully accountable to the residents of each community
- ★ A **framework** of democratic governance that enhances accountability and engagement of all residents of each community
- ★ A **reliable source** of revenues for the city government, transit authorities and local school boards
- ★ A **practice** of planning and decision-making that results in environmental sustainability in all aspects of both public sector and private sector activity
- ★ A **commitment** to the integrity of decent jobs with fair wages in every sector of the economy
- ★ A **goal** of social and economic equity that ensures the prosperity of our cities is shared by all

We are calling on the federal and provincial governments to respect these principles, and for local MPPs and MPs to advocate strongly for Toronto's needs in the coming months. Not long ago, labour and community activists came together to demand that our politicians Stand Up For Toronto. It is time to raise that demand once again, with the reminder that if they wont stand up for us, they should step down.

The Executive recommends that:

1. Labour Council adopt these six principles and work to have them incorporated in the final elements of a new deal for cities with the federal and provincial governments;
2. Labour Council work with the Canadian Labour Congress and labour councils across Canada to build the strongest possible political movement around these goals;
3. Labour Council circulate these six principles to all organizations involved in municipal and public education issues; and
4. Labour Council organize to pressure local MPs and MPPs to fight for new resources and restoration of funding for Toronto and its 2.5 million residents.