

City Council meeting of April 29 and 30, 2009

City of Toronto's accountability officers

Council adopted a consolidated policy framework for Toronto's four accountability officers (auditor general, integrity commissioner, lobbyist registrar and ombudsman) that sets out their features of independence, accountability mechanisms to City Council, and the administrative and operational supports for their offices. Council approved the establishment of a new chapter in the Toronto Municipal Code for the accountability officers, which reflects their independent status in the City's government and reinforces their separation from the City's administration.

Compensation of non-union employees

Council amended the City's non-union staff compensation policy. Council set the cost of living adjustments for 2009 and 2010 at zero and one per cent respectively, and cancelled performance-based payments in 2009 and 2010 for non-union City employees who have reached their maximum salary rate. A motion was adopted to allow an exception for non-union employees who are retiring soon and meet certain criteria.

Homelessness and mental health

Council authorized the City's participation in a research project on the issue of mental health and homeless people. This project, part of a national program of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, will give 300 homeless people who have mental health issues access to housing with supports. The City's Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division will co-lead the four-year demonstration project with the Centre for Research in Inner City Health (part of Saint Michael's Hospital). Council also gave the division's Streets to Homes unit the go-ahead to provide training for demonstration projects in other participating Canadian cities.

Pilot project for wider public access to Internet

Council gave its approval, in principle, for a "Wired Canada" pilot project in Toronto. The local project, an initiative of the Oxford Group that will be financed by corporate sponsorships, is intended to give Torontonians free access to Internet-ready computers in public facilities. The City's priority neighbourhoods, specifically Toronto Community Housing complexes, will be the immediate focus of Toronto's pilot project. Low-income households are most vulnerable to being left out of today's digital-oriented economy.

Security at City facilities

Council adopted a comprehensive security plan and policy for City facilities, with the Corporate Security Unit responsible for protecting City assets and setting security standards for City-owned or operated facilities. Council directed the Corporate Security Unit to review security at any City agencies and facilities that do not have dedicated security management in place. Council also asked for a plan to ensure suitable protection of civic centres' chambers and the second floor of City Hall – which houses councillors' offices.

Support for recreational skating

Council approved the offer of a substantial financial donation from Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment – a total of \$2 million over the next few years starting this year – that will be used to refurbish City arenas and outdoor ice rinks. Many of Toronto's arenas and rinks are in need of repairs and upgrades.

Unpaid parking tickets

Council decided to discontinue the City's pilot program on the collection of payment for Toronto parking tickets placed on vehicles licensed outside Ontario. The cost of the program has exceeded its revenues. Council will ask the Ontario government to negotiate data exchange agreements with other provincial and state governments regarding defaulted payment of parking tickets, giving top priority to certain states and provinces whose residents account for many of the out-of-province-vehicle parking offences in Toronto.

Redevelopment of Kipling Acres facility

Council authorized steps to undertake the redevelopment of Kipling Acres Long-Term Care Home in northern Etobicoke. The City will start design work and apply to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for funding of the building project. Council also agreed to ask the ministry to increase funding for the support of long-term care homes in general. In addition, Council authorized the Long-Term Care Homes and Services Division to seek more provincial funding for the homemakers and nurses services program.

Special meeting – March 31, 2009

Approval of the City's 2009 operating budget

Council approved a 2009 budget that responds to the impacts of the recession and protects local services. The budget makes strategic investments in Council's priorities and enhances existing City programs and services. In addition, the 2009 budget provides tax-help programs for low-income seniors and people with disabilities, and directs funding to programming for job seekers, youth and seniors through Toronto Helps initiatives. Council also decided to freeze development charges and waste collection fees for 2009.

Budget details: <http://www.toronto.ca/budget2009/>

Toronto Helps: <http://www.toronto.ca/torontohelps>

Volume 12 Issue 3

Council Highlights, a summary of selected decisions made by City Council, is produced by Strategic Communications for readers' convenience.

Official documentation: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2009/agendas/cc.htm>

Questions about Council decisions: clerk@toronto.ca or 416-392-8016

Questions about distribution of this document: 416-392-1165

Council Highlights online: www.toronto.ca/council_highlights