

City Council meetings of December 1-3 and 10, 2008

Capital budget meeting December 10

Council approves multi-year capital plans and 2009 capital budget

At a special meeting held December 10, Council approved a five-year, \$11-billion Capital Plan that includes a 2009 Capital Budget of \$1.6 billion investing in neighbourhoods and creating or protecting tens of thousands of jobs. The City also introduced its first-ever 10-year Capital Plan and Forecast, which outlines capital projects the City will undertake to develop, maintain and improve City assets such as transit, roads, bridges, community centers and libraries. The City's 10-year Capital Plan and Forecast of \$25.9 billion is expected to create or protect approximately 300,000 jobs over the next 10 years. More details: <http://www.toronto.ca/budget2009>

Regular Council meeting December 1 to 3

Policies to reduce packaging and waste

Council approved policies designed to reduce retail in-store packaging and to ensure that packaging materials are recyclable in the City's Blue Bin recycling program. Effective June 1, 2009, retailers will be required to charge a minimum of five cents for each single-use plastic retail shopping bag taken by a customer. Bags must be compatible with the City's recycling program by June 1, 2010. Council also voted to ban the sale of bottled water at the City's civic centres immediately and to impose a general ban (by 2011) on plastic take-out food containers that are not compatible with Toronto's blue bin program.

GO Transit to invest in Union Station revitalization

Council adopted motions to sell and lease various portions of Union Station to GO Transit. The sale is to include existing office space in the west wing as well as new concourses that the City plans to build. With partial ownership and as a significant user of Union Station, GO Transit will contribute to the City's revitalization efforts, including the proposed construction of a northwest underground PATH system aligned with York Street.

Management of Union Station

Council authorized City officials to assume hands-on management of Union Station from Toronto Terminals Railway Company next spring. Among its initiatives, the City intends to upgrade security as well as engage with Enwave to provide deep lake water cooling for Union Station.

Lobbyist Registry

Council approved the exemption of not-for-profit community services from registering with the City's Lobbyist Registry. Under the Municipal Code, not-for-profit organizations are generally exempt from registration but were required to register when applying for City grants, awards or other financial benefits and wanting to lobby about their application. Much of the information that the Lobbyist Registry collects is already made available through the grants funding process, which is public. More information: <http://www.toronto.ca/lobbying>

Committee appointments

Council approved the appointment of Council members to City committees, agencies and advisory bodies for the second half of the current four-year term of Council. The appointments take effect January 1, 2009. Details are available on the City's website via the November 14 Committee Report to City Council/Striking Committee: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2008/agendas/st.htm>

Bid to host 2015 Pan American Games

Council endorsed the City of Toronto's role as host city and participant in a bid to host the 2015 Pan American/ParaPan Games in Toronto and in surrounding communities. Council authorized the city manager to negotiate a Bid City Agreement on behalf of the City of Toronto with the federal and provincial governments, the Canadian Olympic Committee and the Bid Corporation to define roles and responsibilities. A more detailed report in 2009 will present a venue strategy and financial implications.

Toronto street food pilot project

Council approved setting up a one-year pilot project with eligible street food vendors to expand their menu selections to include healthier food choices. In addition, Toronto Public Health received Council's authorization to conduct a three-year "Toronto a la Cart" pilot project, starting with as many as 15 new street food vendors chosen for 2009. They will provide ethnically diverse foods to be sold from carts purchased from the City's contracted manufacturer for the project.

Extension of outdoor ice rink season

Council agreed to extend the ice skating season at 14 of the City's 49 outdoor artificial ice rinks by two weeks beyond the standard 12-week season – remaining open until mid March if weather permits. The 14 artificial ice rinks selected to remain open into March are located across the entire city. Online information about artificial outdoor ice rinks:

http://www.toronto.ca/parks/recreation_facilities/skating/outdoor_ice_rinks.htm

Eco-Roof incentive program

Council approved terms of reference for an Eco-Roof Incentive Program encouraging the installation of green and cool roofs. The City will provide incentive funding to eligible industrial, commercial and institutional property owners. The goal is to make Toronto's building stock more sustainable and better adapted to climate change. Green roofs support vegetation and cool roofs reflect the sun's thermal energy. This new program, an initiative of the City's action plan on climate change, clean air and sustainable energy, builds on the Green Roof Strategy and supports the Toronto Green Standard.

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

Official documentation: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2008/agendas/cc.htm>

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