

CUPE Toronto Locals Joint Statement:

As Torontonians, trade unionists and City of Toronto employees, we are compelled to speak out regarding the City's proposed 2012 operating and capital budgets tabled yesterday.

No one who cares about this City can sit quietly while this administration puts forward a budget of cutbacks and layoffs that that will jeopardize the services people depend on and hurt our city's most vulnerable. True to form, this budget lacks transparency, is reckless and irresponsible.

Before the last Municipal Election, Torontonians were promised, "No cuts to services—guaranteed." The budget proposed by administration yesterday includes deep cuts to transit, libraries, community centres, priority neighbourhoods, shelters, child care and a host of other critical services.

Torontonians were also promised, 'No Layoffs'. We learned from yesterday's budget that 2,338 positions will be eliminated, and City employees will indeed see pink slips. Each of these employees represents a vital public service Torontonians will no longer be able to rely upon.

None of this is necessary. Administration admitted yesterday that the \$774 million shortfall they have been claiming is overstated by more than a quarter-billion dollars. Administration's refusal to use all or part of the \$139 million (and growing) surplus from 2011 operations exposes this budget for what it truly is—a calculated ideological experiment that will disproportionately target those who can least afford it—the poor, the sick, the elderly and children.

Council needs to do the right thing and demand a budget which uses all or part of the accumulated 2011 surplus, keeps property taxes in line with inflation and effectively makes use of the tools provided under the City of Toronto Act. By doing so, Toronto can have a balanced budget without the irreparable damage that would be caused by cuts motivated by ideology rather than by what's best for the people of Toronto.

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