

ACTION PLAN FOR THE 2022 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

FEBRUARY 6, 2022



Each election cycle, Labour Council works to support the election of progressive candidates for city councils and school boards across Toronto and York Region. Toronto City Council races have had the highest profile. In previous municipal elections, Labour Council has been successful in growing support to win votes on a number of important files. Working with our affiliates and community partners, we pushed back on the privatization of Toronto Hydro and solid waste collection, and achieved many issue-based wins working with our Councillors.

In 2018, we started with a real opportunity to elect a generation of progressive, young, diverse candidates across Toronto – but this was sidelined by Doug Ford’s Bill 5, which reduced Toronto City Council to 25 Councillors plus the Mayor. Nonetheless, eight of 25 City Councillors elected were endorsed by the Labour Council, maintaining an important base, but many incumbent right-wing candidates were also re-elected. We contributed to important fights on issues including stopping the upload of subways to the provincial government, stopping further privatization of waste collection, getting workers at the table for Transform TO’s climate ambitious plans, and keeping many City workers on the job during COVID.

The 2022 Election presents a challenge. With no major progressive mayoralty campaign anticipated at this moment, the bulk of our focus in Toronto will be supporting candidates running for City Council and the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). In 2018, the late entry of Jennifer Keesmaat offered hope, and the Labour Council found her to be a suitable candidate to endorse. In 2022, Labour Council will assess candidates who show promise as progressive, pro-labour leaders, when potentially strong campaigns emerge.

A number of factors may significantly help or hinder us in creating a progressive shift in Toronto during this election:

- There will be 25 Council seats up for election. Incumbency will be powerful. Campaigns need to be strategic, well-funded and highly organized to create movement in these super-sized wards. The number of individual conversations required to create movement will be great in each race.
- The Provincial election may see a number of current City Councillors run for provincial parties.
- The departure of Joe Cressy and expected retirement of at least one somewhat labour-friendly seat will leave races in those seats with no incumbents. Possible retirement of other right-leaning councillors may also leave seats open.
- A number of the labour friendly TDSB Trustees may not be running again in 2022.
- As we experienced in 2018 with Bill 5, and since then with the pandemic, we cannot rule out the possibility of major disruptions.

- Progress Toronto is a key ally on municipal issues and organizing, and has become an established city-wide force through 5 years of on-the-ground capacity building.
- Personal and collective challenges of COVID have shaped voters' everyday lives and their interactions with their municipal government, possibly for the better.

All of these factors will present unique opportunities and difficulties for City Council and TDSB races. This may result in a change in voting behaviour. In York Region, we are still in the early stages of building capacity on municipal and school board races. The same is true for the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- To solidify the re-election of labour-endorsed candidates; retain Spadina-Fort York (Ward 10) as a progressive stronghold by ensuring the election of a suitable replacement for Joe Cressy; and significantly increase seats on Toronto City Council for labour-endorsed candidates.
- To solidify the re-election of labour-endorsed Trustees at the TDSB and win a majority of seats held by labour-supportive Trustees.
- Increase the number of labour-endorsed candidates elected to the TCDSB.
- In York Region, the goal is to broaden the base of labour-endorsed candidates at both the municipal and school board levels with a specific emphasis on York Region Council, with consideration to endorsing candidates in one or two local elections where strong targets are available.

ROAD TO ACHIEVING GOALS

- Ensure labour endorsed Councillors and Trustees have strong teams on the ground and are doing their pre-election work.
- Identify and recruit strong progressive candidates in key areas with a specific eye to diverse candidates.
- Identify and provide solid training to skilled campaign workers from diverse communities.
- Mobilize union members to support and vote for labour-endorsed candidates

GAME PLAN

- Assess what is happening on the ground in key wards in Toronto and York Region.
- Work with affiliates, key political staff and individuals and like-minded organizations such as the Campaign for Public Education, Progress Toronto, Diverse Workers Networks, Social Planning Council of York Region (SPCYR), York Communities for Public Education (YCFPE), and others to assist in identifying and recruiting strong candidates. Establish a York Region planning committee in collaboration with local affiliates.
- Develop training curriculum for potential candidates and workers.
- Deliver training in the winter and late summer of 2022.
- Prepare endorsement information and engagement tools for affiliates to share with their members based on a postal code/ward breakdown.