

ELECTING TO BUILD A LIVEABLE CITY – TOGETHER

September 1 2022



This October, voters across Toronto and York Region will go to the polls to elect mayors, members of council, and trustees. Let's ensure that we elect the best possible candidates to become the champions, caretakers, and activists we need for our communities.

It can be easy to overlook municipal elections, especially when we have so much happening in our day-to-day lives and other struggles at hand. And yet, local governments are the closest to the people, and stand to make the greatest impact on our daily experiences. From public spaces to public transit, access to work and recreation, affordable utilities and housing, and child care and public education, there is no doubt that the decisions that govern our communities also shape our lives.

The good news is that, through engagement, motivation, and mobilization, we as workers can create the changes we need to make Toronto and York Region liveable for all.

- Together, we can articulate a worker-friendly agenda for city and regional councils and for school boards.
- Together, we can support labour-endorsed candidates by ensuring they are known by our members and organizing ourselves to drop leaflets, erect signs, knock on doors, or make phone calls.
- Together, we can mobilize workers to **get out their vote** for labour-endorsed candidates on and before Election Day, October 24.
- And together, we will hold our elected local leaders to account to ensure they stand strong for workers' issues, now and throughout their terms.

The current context for municipal governance is a difficult one: Ontario municipalities, and Toronto in particular, have been subject to upheavals and austerity for several years. Incoming councils and school board trustees will be faced with compressed budgets, greater need for programming and services, and an unfriendly provincial counterpart in the Ford government.

Further, in Toronto, vast wards and fewer councillors mean intense pressure on each to perform and to make good choices for the whole city. Mayor Tory, the status-quo mayoral candidate with the greatest chance of re-election, will now also wield the threat of the "strong-mayor" veto that would undermine our democratic council. This wrong-headed "strong-mayor" power is not available at any other level of government in Canada.

That's why it is crucial that we support candidates who are not only strong community advocates, but who are also leaders on policies that will help all working people and our communities across the city. We need activists; champions who are willing to stand up and fight for what is right, and call out those who lack the courage or the will to do so. We need elected leadership who can rally their colleagues and their community toward a greater vision for a more liveable city.

We all must vote and volunteer for a strong progressive City Council – and for strong progressive trustees who will say no to cuts to education. We can fight for what we need now, and drive demand for change.

As we come together on September 5th to celebrate 150th years of marching together and our collective wins as a movement, we also want to articulate a vision of building a livable city - together.

Here's our vision of what we will win together for the next four years:

1. Public services in public hands, delivered by public workers;
2. Fair funding that provides accessible programs and services, and affordable transit, to create the livable city and region we want;
3. Climate justice goals and programs that centre workers and communities;
4. A united front against racism and continued insistence on community benefits for large development and infrastructure projects;
5. A minimum of ten percent of Toronto's police budget be redirected to more appropriate City services to deliver crisis response for mental health and other nonviolent incidents;
6. Accessible, affordable housing leadership by the City, the Region, and other levels of government;
7. Quality, publicly-funded and delivered education that gives students what they need to succeed and education workers what they need to help make that happen.

Finally, since so much that happens at the provincial level affects us at the local level, it is important to note the destructive policies Doug Ford's government is promoting in legislation and in practice regarding education and health care. Its bargaining with education workers does nothing to recognize either the hard work of these workers during COVID or the inflationary pressures we are all under. Its disrespect of health workers, pushing of elderly people into residences against their will, and privatizing of more health care services is shameful, if not surprising.

The Labour Council Executive Board resolves that:

- Call on affiliates to share endorsements and encourage your members to vote for labour-endorsed candidates;
- Call on affiliates and the Labour Council's Municipal EPC to support labour-endorsed candidates by ensuring they are known by our members and organizing ourselves to drop leaflets, erect signs, knock on doors, or make phone calls;
- Urge each one of us to mobilize workers to **get out their vote** for labour-endorsed candidates on and before Election Day, October 24;
- Demand that Doug Ford's Conservatives drop their plans to give "strong mayor" powers to Toronto's and Ottawa's mayors;
- Demand that the Conservatives drop their destructive education and health policies at the provincial level.