



## **Another city budget, another crisis. Why?**

**For most of the past ten years, Ottawa City Council insisted on zero per cent tax increases, guaranteeing crisis after crisis.**

**FACT:** This year, the city has targeted almost all its cuts or fee increases in three departments: Transit, Parks and Recreation, and Cultural Services & Community Funding. In fact, 71 per cent of the City's proposed budget cuts come from just 22 per cent of the departments (by budget size), cutting both their operations and capital budgets.

**QUESTION: This 70/20 split is completely inappropriate. Why is City Council cutting the departments that support Ottawas quality of life, with recreation programs, arts, culture and festivals, and more ecologically friendly public transit?**

**FACT:** The numbers tell the story. On the operational budget side, Transit accounts for about 15% of the budget but is slated to carry 32% of the cuts. Parks & Rec takes just 4% of the budget but gets hit with 22% of the cuts. Cultural Services & Community funding takes only 3% of the budget but is being forced to carry 17% of the cuts. Child care takes up just 2% but carries 5% of the cuts. Public health takes up 1%, gets hit with 5% of the cuts. On the other hand, the police budget is going up 5%, despite piles of evidence that community programming saves money in the long run.

**QUESTION: Why are social services carrying the brunt of the cuts?**

**FACT:** So-called hard services like Information Technology and Integrated Roads are seeing huge increases in capital spending (131% and 139%, respectively) while Cultural Services, Child Care and Parks & Recreation are seeing dramatic decreases. These social service departments are being starved of funding not only for their programs but also for their buildings and equipment.

**QUESTION: Why are social services being doubly punished?**

**FACT:** All of these cuts could be avoided for only \$9.62 per month per household. This is enough to save outdoor rinks in the winter and festival funding in the summer, along with a whole list of other new and existing programs.

**QUESTION: Doesn't Council think Ottawas quality of life is worth an extra ten bucks a month?**

**FACT:** The Draft 2009 Budget proposes a 4.9 per cent tax increase. But wait. The police take 1 per cent (*increasing their budget by 5 per cent*). Another 1.9 per cent goes to the capital budget. This leaves just 2 per cent for city programs. But then there's inflation, and for City expenses, the inflation rate is at almost 4%. So, a 2% increase means that the City would need to *cut* its global budget by 2%.

**QUESTION: When will the City face facts and at least keep program spending in line with inflation?**

**FACT:** Slashing arts and culture funding and stopping all funding for Ottawas multiple summer and winter festivals only saves \$1 per month. Instead of kicking 700 low-income children out of child care, taxpayers could keep them in care for only 48 cents per month. Keeping the outdoor neighbourhood rink program would only cost 17 cents per month.

**QUESTION: Council can avoid cuts to new and existing services for only \$10 per month on top of an inflationary tax increase. Does it have the will?**

**FACT:** The Province, over the next ten years, will slowly take back, or upload, the costs of some services downloaded in the past 13 years. While the process will be spread over a long timeframe, the City stands to save significant income. Unfortunately, at the same time as the province is uploading services, the City will be doing some downloading of their own. This year the City has started to download services without compensation to small non-profits and community organizations.

**QUESTION: Why is our City downloading its financial problems onto its local partners?**

**FACT:** This year the City will save over \$7 million because the province has started to upload Ontario Disability costs. Over the coming years, other provincial programs will also be uploaded. The savings, an uploading dividend, will be substantial. Instead of having these tremendous savings go to the general budget, they should be targeted to revive programs.

**QUESTION: Why won't the City channel this funding to where it should go, namely to support programs directly?**

**FACT:** A much more balanced approach is necessary if any cuts are to be made. Police services will increase their budget by over 6 per cent while subsidized child care spaces are slashed 10 per cent and outdoor rinks completely eliminated. Something is wrong with this type of unbalanced growth. **QUESTION: Why can't Council come up with a budget that balances all our community's needs?**

# Making a Difference

**City Councillors need to hear from you at the public budget consultations across the city. Its crucial that we go and ask the right questions:**

## **Wednesday, November 19**

7 to 9 PM

West Carleton Community Complex

5670 Carp Road

Councillor Eli El-Chantiry

## **Thursday, November 20**

6:30 to 8:30 PM

Orléans Theatre

255 Centrum Boulevard

Councillors Michel Bellemare, Rainer Bloess, Rob Jellett, Bob Monette

## **Monday, November 24**

7 to 9 PM

Lansdowne Park, Assembly Hall

1015 Bank St

Councillors Georges Bédard, Clive Doucet, Diane Holmes, Peter Hume, Christine Leadman

## **Tuesday, November 25**

7 to 9 PM

Jim Durrell Recreation Centre

Ellwood Room

1265 Walkley Road

Councillors Diane Deans, Steve Desroches, Peter Hume, Maria McRae

**Wednesday, November 26**

7 to 9 PM

Greely Community Centre

1448 Meadow Drive

Councillor Doug Thompson

**Thursday, November 27**

7:30 to 9:30 PM

Churchill Seniors Centre

345 Richmond Road

Councillor Christine Leadman

**Or, call your Councillor at 311. The Operator will be able to connect you.**