

Kemba Anderson-Golhor  
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To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the December 7, 2011 Budget Committee meeting on item 2011.BU19.1, 2012 Capital and Operating Budgets - Public Consultation

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:

Dear Chair Del Grande and Budget Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments in response to the 2012 Capital and Operating Budgets. My name is Kemba Anderson-Golhor. I am a Master of Social Work student at the University of Toronto and am presently completing my social work placement at St-Stephen's Community House.

As a resident of this city and as a student, I am greatly interested in issues of social justice and community development. I am very concerned with the potential impacts that the proposed budget cuts will have on low-income families in our city. The proposed cuts will affect all facets of families' lives, especially in single-parent households. Countless families rely on municipally-funded services such as public transportation, low-cost recreation centres, public libraries and student nutrition programs. Increases in service-user fees as well as the diminishing availability of such programs will further limit families' opportunities to prosper and impede on parents' ability to provide opportunities for growth and learning for their children.

As the child of a first generation immigrant to Canada, I greatly benefited from free and low-cost municipally-funded programs offered through community organizations and city initiatives. Access to community programming afford me with an exposure to different ideas and activities that contributed to my personal and educational development. I strongly believe that opportunities to learn, to engage with one's community and to have access to ideas and diverse experiences should not be limited to only those who can afford them.

The City of Toronto is regarded as a welcoming city by many, especially by newcomers to Canada. I fear that many of the proposed cuts to community grants and municipal services will not only have significant repercussions on the socio-economic well-being of resource-poor families, but they will also engender long-term negative impacts on the children and youth in our city.

With careful planning, I believe that costs to community programming and municipal services could be reduced through an increase in municipal taxes. Alternatively, the operating surplus from this year could be used to reduce the impacts of the cuts. Such measures would help to ensure that we continue to foster inclusive and dynamic communities in the present day and for future generations.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,

Kemba Anderson-Golhor  
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