

Toronto After a Decade of Austerity

THE GOOD, THE BAD,
AND THE UGLY



January 2020

ABOUT SOCIAL PLANNING TORONTO

Social Planning Toronto is a nonprofit, charitable community organization that works to improve equity, social justice, and quality of life in Toronto through community capacity building, community education and advocacy, policy research and analysis, and social reporting.

Social Planning Toronto is committed to building a “Civic Society,” one in which diversity, equity, social and economic justice, interdependence, and active civic participation are central to all aspects of our lives — in our families, neighbourhoods, voluntary and recreational activities, and in our politics.

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Toronto After a Decade of Austerity: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

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Toronto After a Decade of Austerity

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY
HIGHLIGHTS

KEY NUMBERS: HOUSING

51.9

The social housing wait list has grown by 51.9%

0

The City has met its shelter occupancy standard 0 times

3.8x

The wait list for supportive housing has almost quadrupled

KEY NUMBERS: PUBLIC TRANSIT

24.9

The cost of the monthly pass has increased by 24.9%

1/2

Half of us are still using vehicles, not transit or active transportation, to get to work

25

25 subway stations need retrofits to be accessible by 2025¹

KEY NUMBERS: CYCLING & WALKING

2x

More than twice as many
pedestrians were killed
in 2019 than in 2010

129

129 cyclists
were “doored”
in 2019²

1,100

In 2019 alone, over
1,100 pedestrians were
hit by a vehicle³

KEY NUMBERS: CHILD CARE

17K

17,282 kids are waiting
for a subsidized child
care space

3

As of 2018, 3 wards
met the City’s goal of
providing 50% of kids
under 4 with child care

#1

We have the most
expensive infant &
preschooler fees in
Canada

RESOLUTIONS FOR A BETTER NEW YEAR

Increase

MLTT

for luxury homes

Introduce

**Vacant
Home
Tax**

Re-introduce

VRT

Toronto After a Decade of Austerity

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to 2020! As we look ahead to a new decade and the launch of Toronto's 2020 budget, we decided to take stock of Toronto at the end of the '10s, so that we may learn from the past and chart a new path forward.

Recent reports have made it clear that rising income inequality is creating an increasingly divided city.

In May 2019, United Way Greater Toronto released its "Rebalancing the Opportunity Equation" report, which illustrated that growing income inequality is undermining the promise that "diversity is our strength":

The opportunity equation—individual effort plus access to opportunity equals success—is working for some but not for all. Young people, immigrants, racialized people, and women are seeing that their circumstances—the things about themselves that they cannot control (such as their age, immigration status, whether or not they belong to a racialized group, their gender, and even their postal code)—are barriers to their success in today's GTA. These groups have to work harder to achieve the income needed to thrive, and the situation is worse in the Toronto region than it is in the country as a whole.⁴

A few months later, the Toronto Foundation released its 2019–2020 "Vital Signs" report. It too confirmed Toronto's status as Canada's income

inequality capital, with net worth for the bottom 20% increasing by only \$2,100 between 1999 and 2016, while the top 20% enjoyed an average increase of more than \$600,000. The report pointed out that even though Toronto "is on a roll" economically, rising income inequality is at the root of disturbing trends. As stated in the report:

When we probe the numbers more closely, we see a profound pattern of maldistribution. Despite our self-image, Toronto does not work for all. In fact, for a growing majority, life in the city poses a serious struggle, and the trend lines suggest things will get worse before they get better.⁵

Most recently, the Metcalf Foundation's "The Working Poor in the Toronto Region" report showed a significant increase in working poverty from 2006 to 2016 despite strong 2016 employment figures. It too points to growing income and wealth inequality, and illustrates what this means for our quality of life as Torontonians:

The convergence of low pay, multiple insecure jobs, long hours, and gruelling transit trips, all in the face of higher costs for necessities, push the working poor to a life on the precipice of vulnerability where few have any sort of financial cushion.⁶

In the lead up to the City of Toronto's 2020 budget, ***Toronto After a Decade of Austerity: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*** looks at how our city

has progressed, declined, or stagnated over the past decade in three key areas: housing; child care; and public transit, cycling, and walking. We assess the current state of the city after a decade of austerity budgets using 20 quantitative indicators and offer resolutions to build a better city by continuing to address our funding needs in the years to come.

Our report echoes many of the concerns raised in the reports mentioned above. Toronto at the end of the '10s has significant challenges. We have an affordable housing crisis that is a daily struggle for hundreds of thousands of renters, a homelessness crisis that is taking lives, child care that is often hard to come by and the most expensive in the country, and a public transit system that requires substantial investment to meet the needs of our communities today and tomorrow.

Toronto's population increased by 10.5% between 2010 and 2018, little more than one percent per year.⁷ However, the trends highlighted in this report outpace population growth significantly in most areas, illustrating that our challenges have continued to worsen over the past decade due to the choices we have made, and are not merely a consequence of increased population.

We need to make different choices as a city — toward investments in closing the gap between the haves and the have nots, and away from austerity budgets that pretend to make life better for the average Torontonian while cracks in our city continue to widen.

The City of Toronto, other orders of government, and non-governmental organizations have offered important policy, program, and practice recommendations to make progress on these substantial issues. We have included resources on that fine work in the appendix.

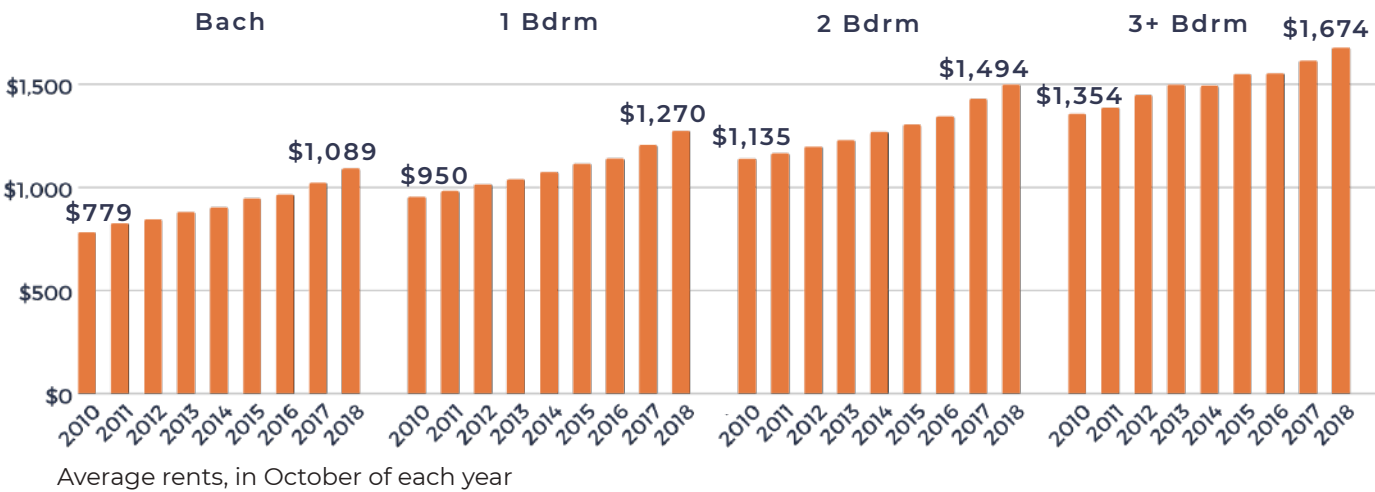
There is one common denominator that unites all of these issues, and that is proper funding. By all means, the City of Toronto and every order of government should do all it can to improve our communities using existing resources — but that's not going to build a better city. Years of austerity budgets illustrate the point; years of doing more with less have left us with deepening challenges, widening inequities, and mounting crises in our communities.

Every order of government has a responsibility to address the big challenges described in this report — for Toronto and for all the communities within their purview. The City of Toronto cannot go it alone, but that should not be used as an excuse for inaction.

We applaud the Mayor's leadership in recently championing a property tax levy to increase the City Building Fund, and the majority of Council who recognized the need to raise revenues for critical infrastructure. It's a change in direction that moves the city forward, and it is long overdue. There is much more to be done, and it's time to turn the page, away from austerity budgets and toward critical investments in social infrastructure to build a city that works for us all.

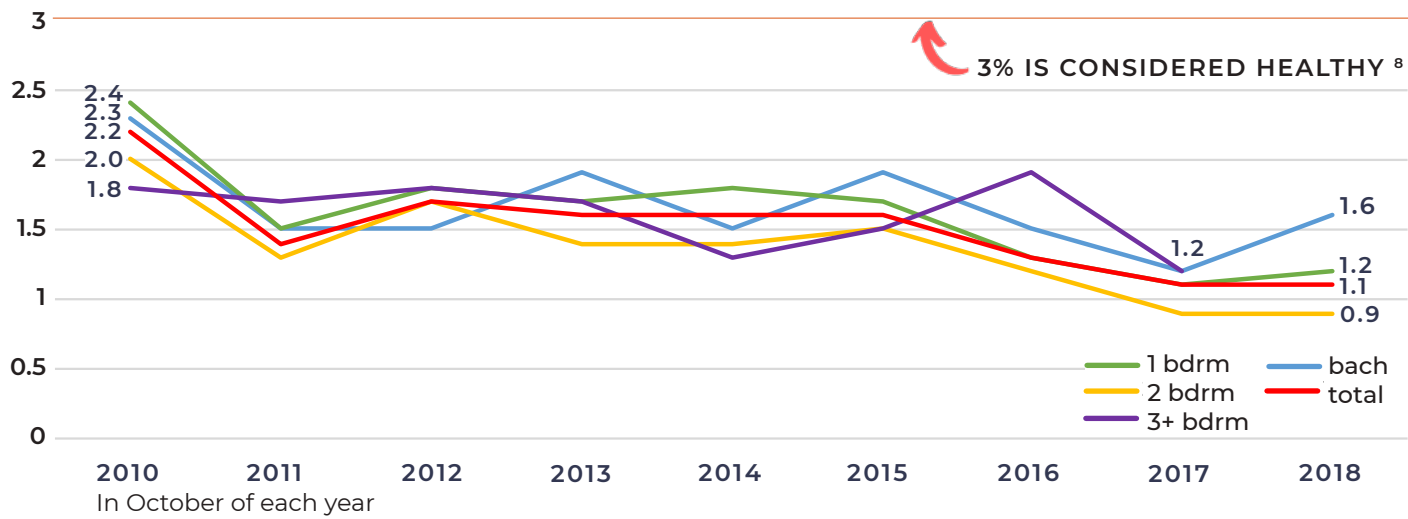
HOUSING by the Numbers

Rents keep climbing



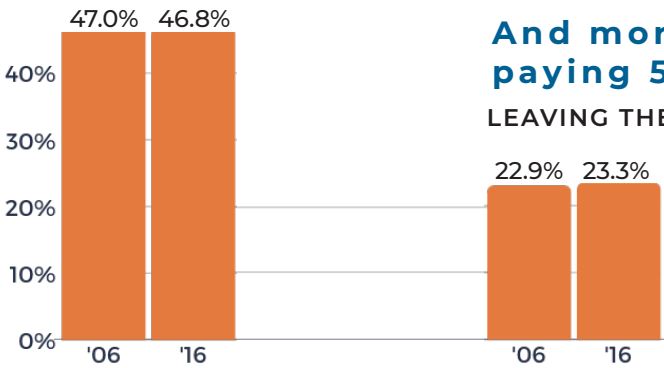
Rental housing vacancy rates are worse

OUR VACANCY RATE HAS BEEN “HEALTHY” IN ONLY 6 OF THE LAST 20 YEARS—AND 0 IN THE ‘10s



Almost half of tenant households are paying 30% or more of their income on shelter

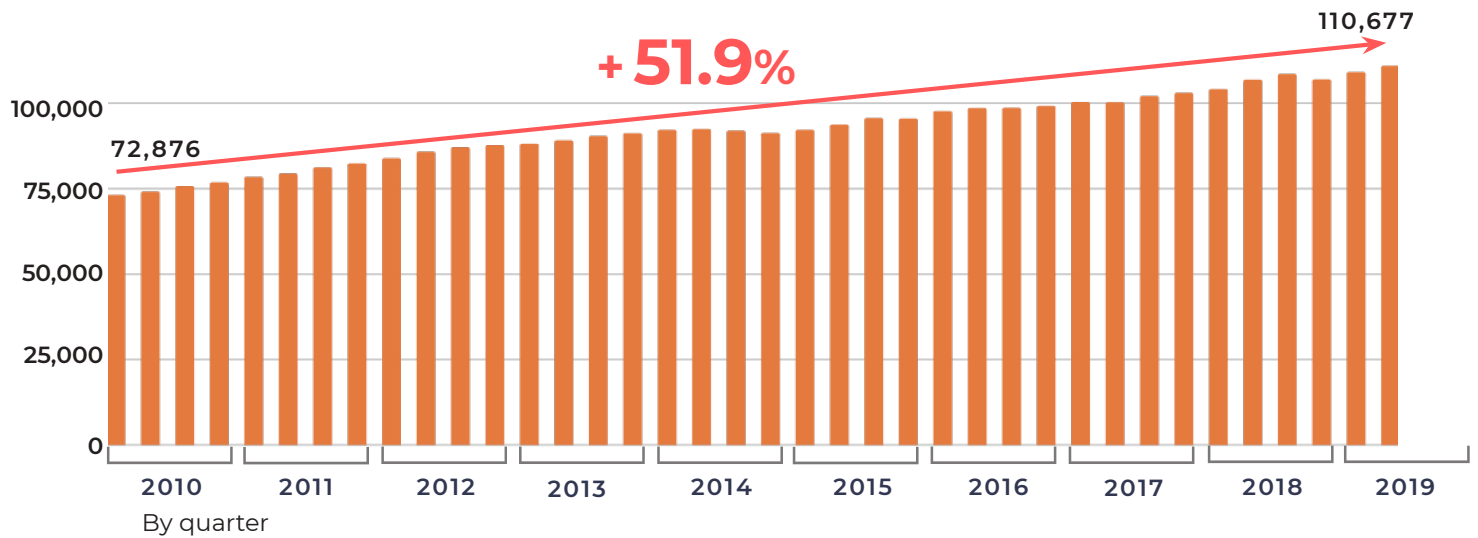
AND THERE’S BEEN NO CHANGE IN A DECADE



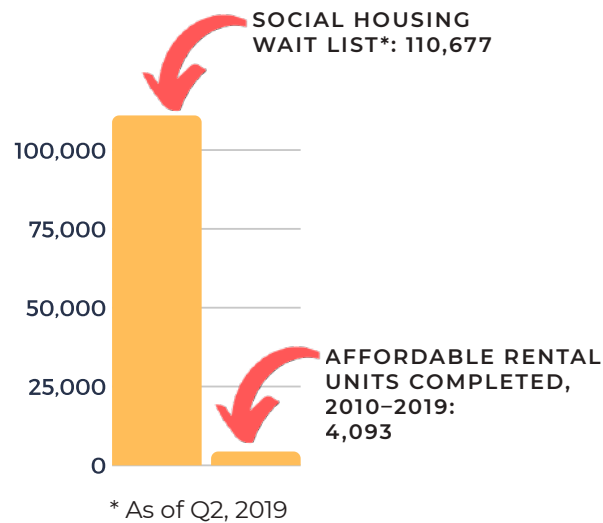
And more than 1 in 5 are paying 50% or more

LEAVING THEM AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

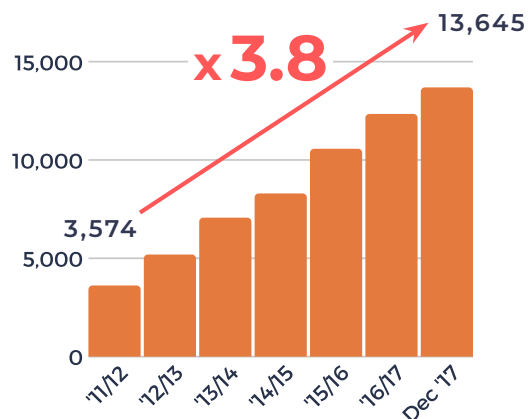
More and more households are waiting for social housing



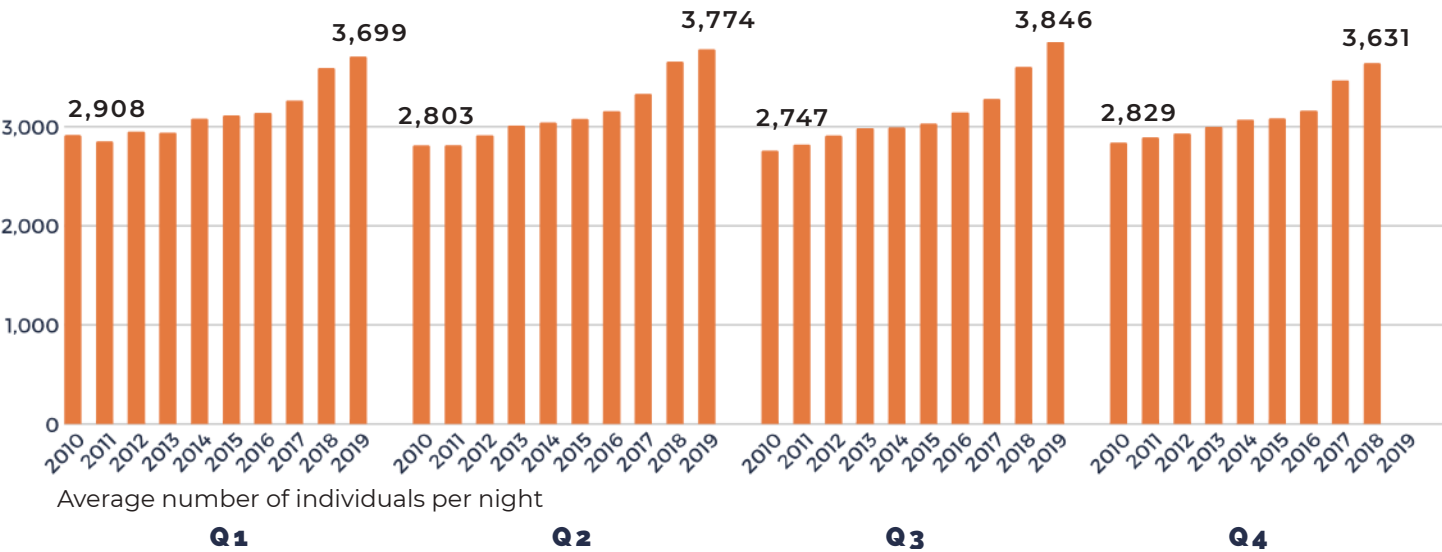
The number of affordable rental units completed is a drop in the bucket of what's needed



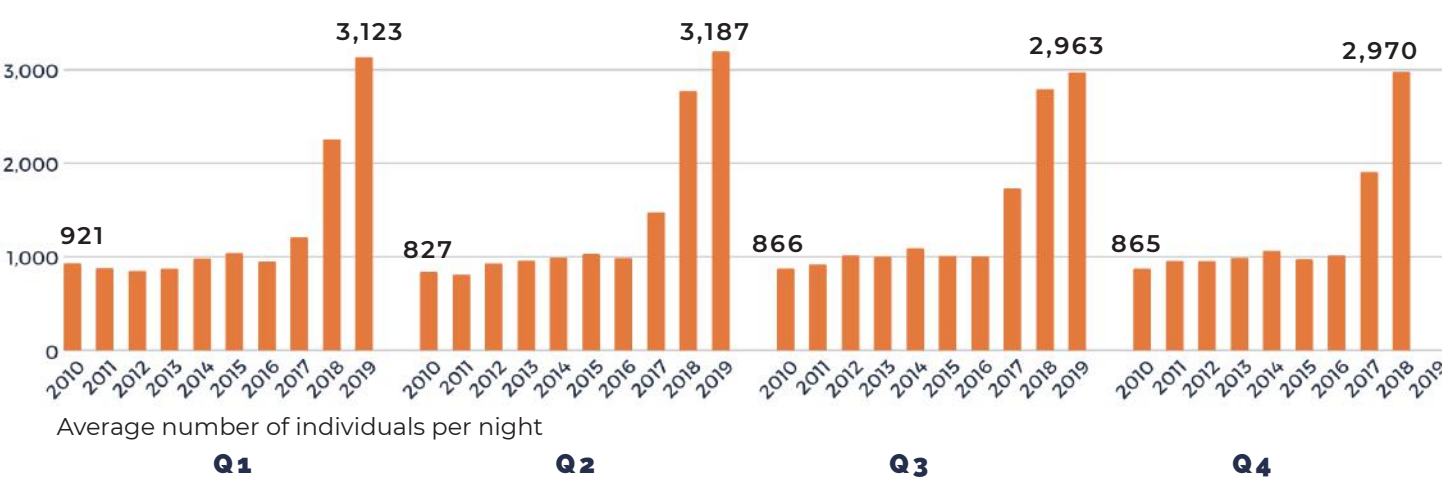
And more people are waiting for supportive housing



More and more singles are using shelters



And use of family shelters has more than tripled



51.9

The social housing wait list has grown by 51.9%

0

The City has met its shelter occupancy standard 0 times

3.8x

The wait list for supportive housing has almost quadrupled

HOUSING: A CRISIS WE CAN'T IGNORE

Safe, decent, and affordable housing is a human right, essential for everyone. For decades, it has been increasingly hard to find in Toronto and across the country. Lack of access to affordable housing is a struggle for many residents. It disproportionately affects Indigenous communities, newcomers, racialized groups, lone mother-led families, the LGBTQ community, younger adults, seniors, low-income residents, and people with disabilities, mental health issues, and addictions.⁹

A heavy reliance on the private sector to provide affordable housing has failed to deliver on this basic right. Governments have not adequately invested in affordable housing, including various forms of social and supportive housing and related supports. The absence of rent control on vacant and newly constructed units has ensured soaring rental costs.¹⁰ As well, the widespread financialization of housing, that is, permitting housing to be used as an investment vehicle to generate wealth rather than provide for human need, has intensified the problem. As a result, Toronto and other cities have been the site of an ever-expanding homelessness and housing crisis.¹¹ Lives have been lost, and more will be without a bold change of course.

The following metrics demonstrate the mounting affordable housing and homelessness crisis experienced by Toronto residents over the decade and the urgent need for action.

Average Rents & Vacancy Rates

The high cost of rental housing, climbing rents, and low vacancy rates tell the story of a rental housing market that is failing to provide affordable housing for hundreds of thousands of renters in the city. Data from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's annual Rental Market Survey show average rents have risen by 39.8% for bachelor units, 33.7% for 1-bedrooms, 31.6% for 2-bedrooms, and 23.6% for 3+ bedrooms between 2010 and 2018.¹² In comparison, the inflation rate over the same time period was only 13.62%.¹³

In October 2018, average monthly rents in Toronto were \$1,089 for a bachelor unit, \$1,270 for a 1-bedroom, \$1,494 for a 2-bedroom, and \$1,674 for a 3+ bedroom.¹⁴ However, those figures reflect rental housing costs for all units. Toronto's average "asking rents" for units available for rent are much higher. For example, market research firm Urbanation reported the City of Toronto's October 2019 average rent for recently leased or available units at \$2,515.¹⁵ According to rental housing search website PadMapper, the December 2019 average asking rent for the Toronto area was \$2,300 for a 1-bedroom and \$3,000 for a 2-bedroom.¹⁶

In addition, vacancy rates for available rental units have been at historic lows, making it hard for renters to find a place to live, much less an



adequate and affordable home. Housing experts consider a healthy vacancy rate to be 3–5%.¹⁷ Throughout the decade, Toronto’s vacancy rates have been well below that threshold. Recent vacancy rates are 1.6% for bachelor units, 1.2% for 1-bedrooms, 0.9% for 2-bedrooms, and 1.2% for 3+ bedrooms.^{18, 19}

Percentage of Household Income Spent on Shelter Costs

Rental housing affordability is commonly measured based on the percentage of income a household spends on shelter costs. Due to the high cost of rental housing and low and stagnant wages among renters in Toronto, tenant households end up spending a large portion of their incomes on rent, leaving too little for all other expenses.

Comparing Census data over a decade, we found almost no change in either the percentage of tenant households lacking affordable housing (paying 30% or more of household income on shelter costs) or the percentage at risk of homelessness (paying 50% or more of household income on shelter costs).

Almost half of tenant households spent 30% or more of their income on shelter costs (47% in 2006 and 46.8% in 2016), and over one in five spent 50% or more (22.9% in 2006 and 23.3% in 2016).^{20, 21}

New “Affordable” Rental Housing & the Social Housing Waiting List

Over the past decade, the number of households on Toronto’s social housing waiting list has grown by 51.9%, from 72,876 households in the first quarter of 2010 to 110,677 in the second quarter of 2019.²² Meanwhile, the City’s Affordable Housing Office projected that 4,093 affordable rental homes would be completed between 2010–2019²³ — hardly a drop in the bucket com-

pared to the real need. It is also less than half of the modest target of 10,000 new affordable rental units set by Toronto City Council in “Housing Opportunities Toronto,” its 10-year (2010–2020) housing plan. In addition, the City defines affordable rents based on average market rental costs, which are out of reach for many households. In the end, many of the units constructed were not affordable to low-income households.

The Supportive Housing Waiting List

Similarly, Toronto’s supportive housing waiting list has skyrocketed. Based on the most recent publicly available statistics, the waiting list has almost quadrupled, with 13,645 individuals on the list in 2017 compared to 3,574 in 2011/12.²⁴ Individuals on the supportive housing waiting list are some of the most vulnerable people in our community. They require not only affordable housing, but also supports for mental health and addiction issues. Most are homeless, including many left to manage within Toronto’s overcrowded emergency shelter system.

Shelter Use

The failure of governments to address the affordable housing crisis has had predictable outcomes, evidenced by the deepening of the homelessness crisis. Toronto’s emergency shelter statistics paint a grim picture. Over the decade, shelter use among singles and families has increased dramatically.²⁵ For singles, the average number of individuals per night staying in a shelter increased by between 27.2% and 40%, varying by quarter.²⁶ For families, shelter use over the decade increased enormously. In 2019, the average number of individuals per night staying in a family shelter was more than three times higher than in 2010.^{27, 28}

Throughout the decade, shelter occupancy rates have consistently exceeded the Council-approved standard of 90% for each sector of the shelter system (i.e., men's, women's, youth, and family). Despite opening several new shelters in the latter part of the decade, the City of Toronto has never achieved its own shelter occupancy standard. Each time a new shelter has opened, it has quickly filled to capacity, demonstrating the large unmet need for emergency shelter.

As we enter the new decade, each night, hundreds of people who are homeless cannot access a shelter in Toronto. Instead, they are left to try to find space in Out-of-the-Cold programs, respite centres, 24-hour drop-ins and the City's assessment and referral centre — which are not equipped to function as shelters, do not meet the City's shelter standards, and are also often at capacity — or resort to sleeping rough in the city's streets, parks, ravines, and abandoned places.

Recent government commitments offer hope for people struggling with the housing and homelessness crisis. In 2017, the federal government introduced the National Housing Strategy, a 10-year, \$55 billion plan aimed at reducing chronic homelessness by 50% and ending core housing need for 530,000 households over the next decade.²⁹ As part of the strategy, in December 2019, the federal and Ontario governments committed \$1.4 billion for the creation of the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit, a program intended to reduce the cost of rental housing for eligible households.³⁰

On the municipal level, Toronto City Council introduced a new housing plan. Adopted in December 2019, HousingTO 2020–2030 aims to improve the housing situation of over 341,000 Toronto households.³¹ Targets include the development of 40,000 new affordable rental units, including 18,000 units of supportive housing.³² In 2018, Toronto City Council started the process by committing “11 City-owned sites for the development of affordable housing within mixed-in-

come, mixed-use, transit-oriented communities” through its Housing Now initiative.³³ As well, in recent years, the City has substantially increased the number of affordable rental units in development. For example, in 2019, a projected 3,700 new rental units received approval for development — more units in 2019 than had been approved in the first eight years of the City's previous housing plan combined.

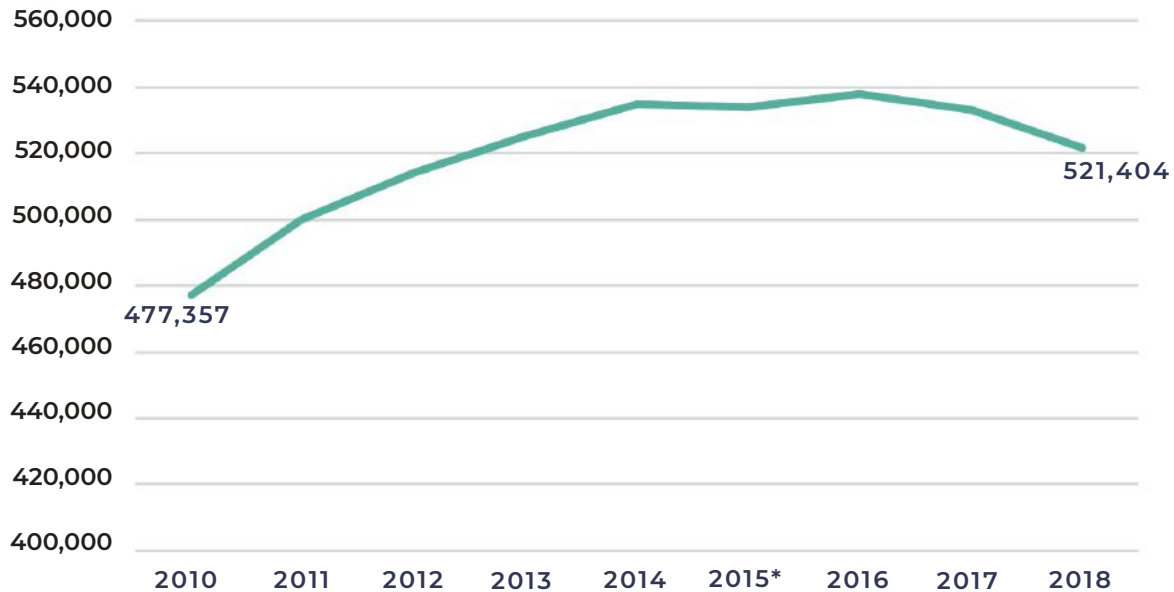
Regarding the Housing Now Initiative, advocates have questioned how the plan will meet the needs of residents with very low incomes who require deep subsidies, as initial plans included few deeply affordable units.³⁴ The City has adopted many ambitious plans in the past, often without much to show for it at the end of the day. Groups taking a deep dive into the planning process have raised several questions about the feasibility of the City delivering on its goal and within the established timeline.³⁵

Toronto's housing and homelessness crisis requires urgent action. HousingTO 2020–2030 is a strong first step in the right direction, and the City now needs to remain focused on delivering on its commitments, particularly for those who are hardest hit by the housing crisis.



PUBLIC TRANSIT, CYCLING, & WALKING by the Numbers

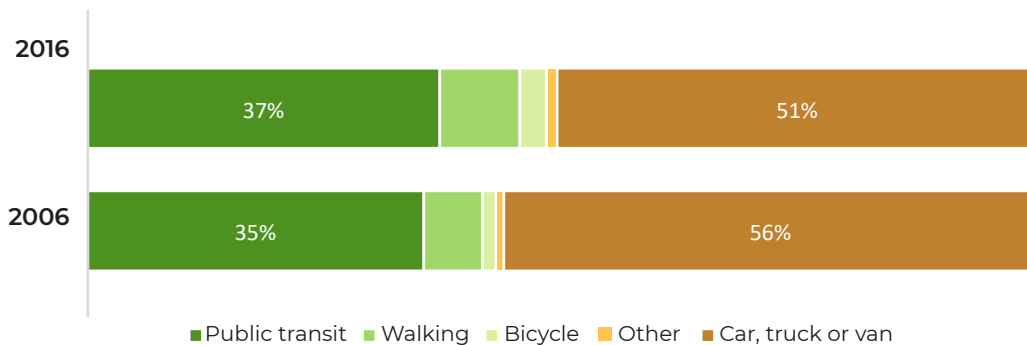
TTC ridership growth has flatlined



* results for 2015 exclude free rides for Pan Am & Parapan Am games

Half of us are still using vehicles to get to work

DRIVING IS STILL OUR MOST COMMON WAY OF COMMUTING



24.9

The cost of the monthly pass has increased by 24.9%

1/2

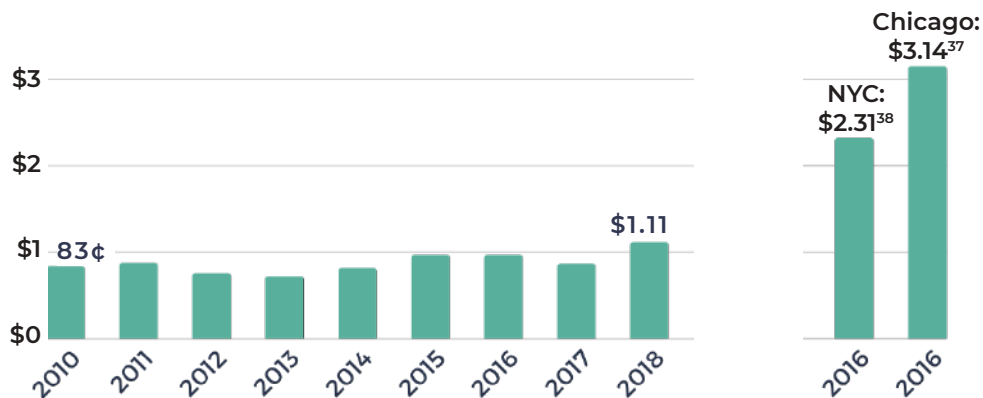
Half of us are still using vehicles, not transit or active transportation, to get to work

25

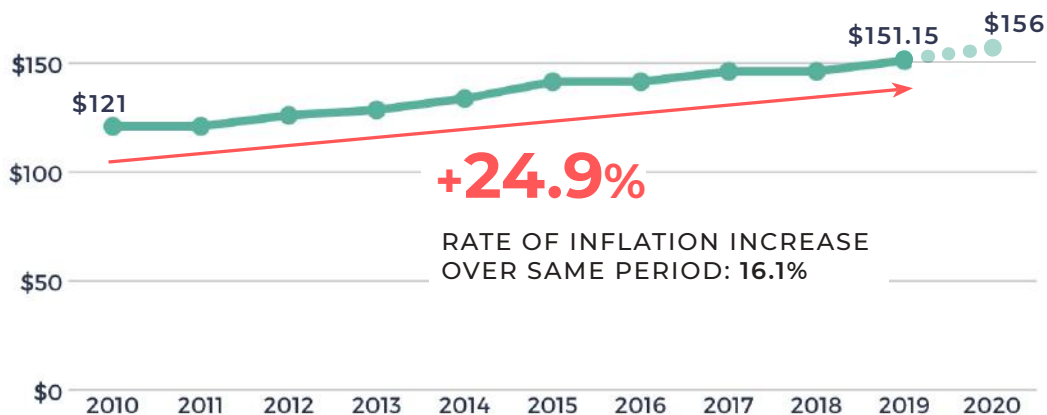
25 subway stations need retrofits to be accessible by 2025³⁶

The City's funding per TTC rider is way below other big cities'

OURS IS THE LOWEST SUBSIDY PER RIDER OF ANY MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM IN NORTH AMERICA



The cost of a monthly pass has risen well beyond the rate of inflation



The TTC has made good progress, but still has 25 subway stations to retrofit to make them accessible by 2025

2010

29 of 69 stations accessible³⁹

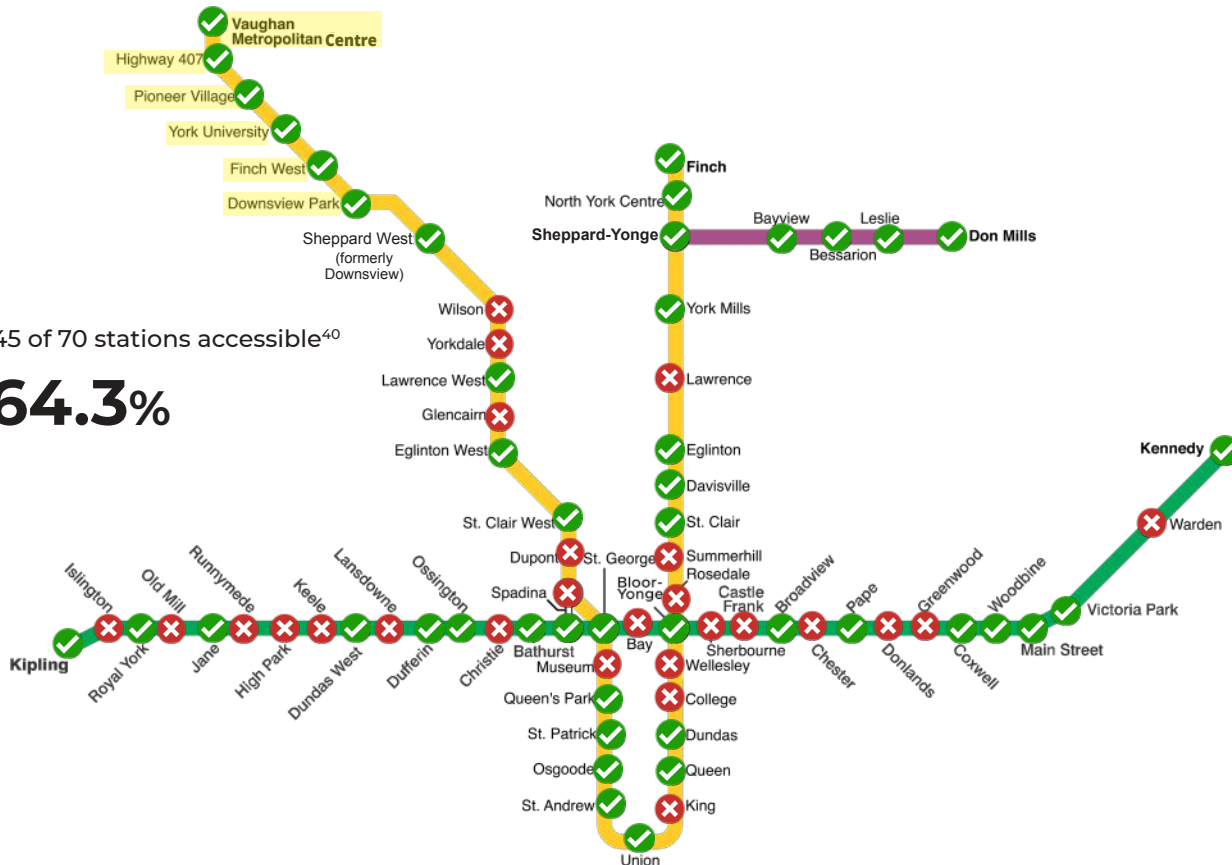
42%



2019

45 of 70 stations accessible⁴⁰

64.3%



Note: Scarborough RT not illustrated, as it will be shut down in coming years

PUBLIC TRANSIT: A DECADE OF LOST OPPORTUNITY

Access to fast, frequent, reliable, safe, accessible, and affordable public transit is essential to life in the city. Public transit is critical to the livability of our communities, vital to our health and well-being, and a prerequisite to advancing the human rights of people with disabilities. It fosters social inclusion and cohesion, supports the environment and sustainability, and bolsters the economy.

Investing in public transit is important from an equity perspective. Census data show that women, younger workers, newcomers, individuals from various racialized groups, and residents with lower incomes are more likely to use public transit as their main mode of commuting to work.⁴¹ As well, the accessibility of public transit, both conventional transit and Wheel-Trans, is a key equity issue as it pertains to people with disabilities. Building a better transit system is crucial to reaching our goals as a city, including delivering on commitments to equity.

Over the past decade, the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) has made some important advances to address the transit needs of Torontonians, such as free public transit for children aged 12 and under, introduction of the Fare Discount Pass Program, completion of the Toronto-York Subway Extension, subway station retrofits for accessibility, transit priority service on King Street, a 2-hour transit transfer, and discounted fares for passengers transferring between GO Transit and the TTC.^{42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48} These and other measures have been important steps to improving Toronto's transit system.

However, the system remained deeply underfunded. It was a lost decade in terms of addressing the mounting capital needs of the system due to decades of underfunding. Over the past decade, transit riders all too often experienced disruptive delays, long waits, unreliable service, and overcrowded conditions on the city's buses,

streetcars, and subway cars. In addition, they paid a hefty price for this service.

The following transit metrics help to tell the tale of transit challenges over the decade.

Ridership & Commuting Trends

In the early part of the decade, TTC ridership was on the rise, but levelled off by 2014 and has largely flatlined since then.^{49, 50} Census data over the decade show a slight increase in the proportion of Toronto residents using public transit as their main mode of commuting to work. In 2016, 37% of residents used public transit as their main mode of commuting to work, up from 35% in 2006.^{51, 52, 53} While the proportion of residents using a car, truck, or van to get to work has declined over the decade, the reliance on the personal automobile remains strong — contrary to social, environmental, and sustainability goals.

Challenges with the public transit system reduce its potential as an alternative to the use of personal vehicles. Mechanical breakdowns, service delays, inadequate and unreliable service, and overcrowding, coupled with the high cost of transit, act as barriers and disincentives to transit use.

The decade has been marked by a period of missed opportunity to build and expand the transit system. While the TTC did open the long-awaited Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension in 2017 — a significant accomplishment to be sure — transit expansion beyond the Line 1 extension has been slow in coming. Over the decade, transit riders were subjected to many transit expansion plans — some evidence-based, well-conceived and resourced, others not so much. However, political paralysis blocked progress on much-needed transit expansion.



In 2020, we reflect on what might have been had the City stayed the course to implement Transit City, a light rail transit and bus rapid transit expansion plan proposed in 2007 by then Mayor David Miller. The plan, fully funded by the provincial government at the time, called for new rapid transit lines on major corridors across the city, with several lines to open in 2020, including new light rail transit to replace the aging Scarborough RT.⁵⁴

Scarborough residents have ended up with the worst of the deal, left to wait a decade or more for the Scarborough subway extension, which will serve fewer residents at a greater cost and take longer to build than the proposed LRT. As well, once the Scarborough RT is no longer serviceable, residents will be left riding the bus while the subway extension is constructed.

The dramas of transit policy and planning continued to unfold at the end of the decade, with the provincial government threatening to take control of the TTC's subway system. In the end, Toronto City Council voted to endorse the Province's proposed Ontario Line in exchange for the Province

dropping its claim on the subway system.⁵⁵

Looking back at the end of the '10s, it is no wonder that ridership growth has failed to materialize. We can hardly attract more people to use public transit if we don't make the system work for transit riders.

Funding

Underfunding adversely impacts the experience of transit riders and the ability of the TTC to attract new riders. It restricts the capacity of the TTC to improve service levels, maintain the transit system in a state of good repair, and address capital needs such as purchasing trains, buses, and streetcars. Inadequate funding is a perennial issue for the TTC.

Notably, the Ontario government had contributed 50% of operating costs for the TTC until the mid-1990s. By 1998, the Province ended annual provincial operating subsidies for the TTC.⁵⁶ Since then, it has provided occasional one-time

operating subsidies, but has never returned to a reliable cost-sharing arrangement with the City. Most recently, the Province announced plans to freeze gas tax funding, which supports public transit, reversing a commitment made by the previous provincial government to increase this funding source for municipalities.⁵⁷

At the municipal level, the City of Toronto provides an annual operating subsidy, which partially supports the operation of the TTC. During the last half of the decade, the City of Toronto increased its operating subsidy to the TTC. As a result, City subsidy funding accounted for 33% of the TTC's operating expenses in 2019, up from 28% in 2016.⁵⁸ Despite increases in municipal funding, the TTC has the lowest subsidy level per rider among all mass transit systems in Canada and the United States.⁵⁹

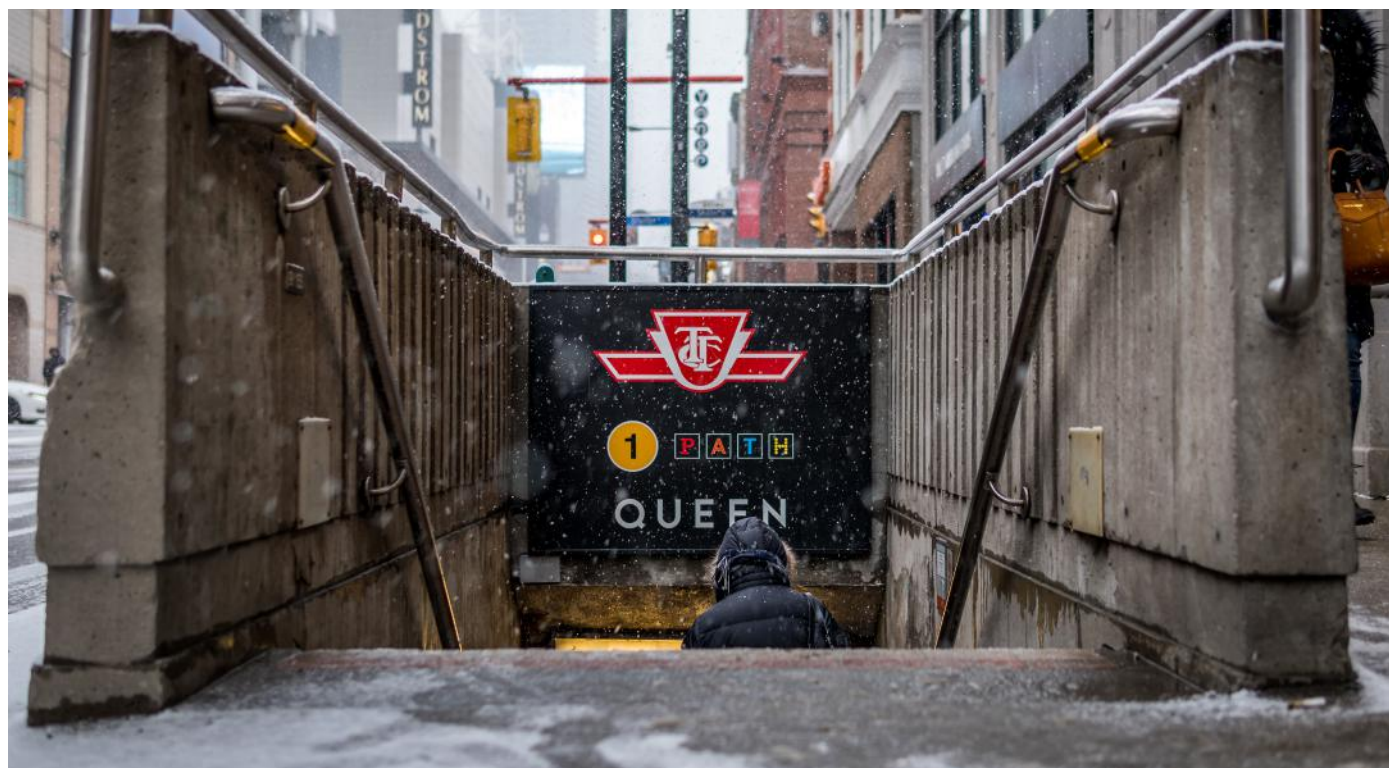
For most of the decade, the City of Toronto subsidy level was less than \$1.00 per passenger, rising to \$1.11 in 2018.⁶⁰ In comparison, large urban centres like Chicago and New York City had much higher subsidy levels, at \$3.14 CDN per

passenger for Chicago in 2016 and \$2.31 CDN per passenger for New York City in 2016.⁶¹

As a result of Toronto's low subsidy level, most of the funding used to run the TTC comes from transit fares. According to City budget documents, fares accounted for 58% of projected TTC operating expenses for 2019.⁶² Recent research shows the TTC has the highest "farebox recovery ratio" — the percentage of operating costs covered by passenger fares — among all mass transit systems in Canada and the U.S.⁶³ Relying so heavily on the farebox leaves our transit system deeply under-resourced, and the consequences are clear.

In addition to the challenges on the operating side, a TTC report released in January 2019 identified \$33.5 billion in capital needs over the next 15 years.⁶⁴ This comprehensive review calculated the funding needed to maintain the current system, excluding most expansion projects.

In December 2019, the TTC released its new 5-year service plan, which called for extensive service improvements. The plan projects a



steady growth in ridership to a total of 560,000 trips in 2024, up from 521,000 in 2018.⁶⁵ However, growth in ridership relies on transit improvements, which depend on substantial investment — the majority of which is unfunded. To implement the 5-year plan, the TTC requires \$779.5 million for streetcars, buses, and related infrastructure.⁶⁶ The plan is almost entirely unfunded.

All in, our transit system needs substantial, long-term, and reliable funding to deliver for transit riders and to meet broader goals of responding to the climate crisis, supporting community health, and advancing equity and inclusion.

Transit Fares

With transit fares making up the majority of operating funding for the TTC, it is not surprising to find that the TTC has some of the highest fares in Canada and the United States. In particular, the TTC has one of the most expensive monthly transit passes. Over the past decade, the monthly pass/Metropass has increased from \$121 to \$151.15, a 24.9% increase — well above the rate of inflation at 16.1% for the same period.^{67, 68, 69}

In December 2019, the TTC proposed more fare hikes for 2020. If passed by Toronto City Council, these increases would leave monthly passholders paying an extra \$4.85 per month, for a total of \$156 for a monthly pass.⁷⁰ The TTC board proposes an additional 10 cents per ride for all other fares except the adult single cash fare, which would stay as is at \$3.25 per ride. The 10-cent fare increase may not sound like much, but over the course of a year would amount to approximately \$50 more for a single adult. For monthly passholders, the proposed increase would cost an additional \$58.20 per year.

While transit fares continued to climb through the decade, the City of Toronto did take an important step to address the high cost of public transit for adults with low incomes. In April 2018,

the City introduced the Fare Pass Discount Program, a central component of the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy. The program provides discounted TTC fares for eligible residents, including a 21% discount for adult monthly passes and a 33% discount for adult single fares.⁷¹

The City devised a 3-phase plan for the implementation of the Fare Pass Discount Program. Phase 1 and part of Phase 2 have been implemented, making the program available for Toronto residents receiving Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program benefits who do not already receive transportation supports, and for residents receiving child care subsidies.

However, implementation of the program has stalled. In 2019, Phase 2 of the implementation plan was only partially completed, with expanded access for families receiving a child care subsidy but not for households receiving housing supports.⁷² In Phase 3, scheduled for 2020, the plan called for discounted fares to be made available to all other Toronto residents who meet the program's low-income criteria. However, City documents indicate that Phase 3 implementation will be delayed until 2021 in order to work out the logistical details for expansion of the program.⁷³

Access to discounted transit fares supports residents living in poverty. All efforts should be made to speed up the implementation process.

Transit Accessibility

In 2005, the Ontario provincial government passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).⁷⁴ The aim of the legislation is to make Ontario fully accessible for people with disabilities by 2025. Under the legislation, all levels of government, private businesses, and nonprofit organizations are mandated to take specific actions to make the province accessible.

Over the past decade, the TTC has implemented several changes to address accessibility issues on public transit, consistent with the AODA. Changes such as the purchase of accessible buses and streetcars, the addition of elevators and other accessibility features in several subway stations, transit stop upgrades, the addition of subway platform edges, audio-visual stop announcements, the use of blue priority seating in vehicles, and other measures have increased accessibility on the TTC.⁷⁵

Predating the AODA, the TTC first committed to make transit services and facilities accessible for all in the 1980s.⁷⁶ In 1989, the TTC introduced its Easier Access program, which aimed to deliver on this goal, including making all subway and RT stations accessible. The TTC's 2008 Accessible Transit Services Plan projected that all stations would be accessible by 2020.⁷⁷ However, due to funding constraints, the completion date was pushed to 2025.

In 2010, 29 of the TTC's 69 stations were accessible, just 42%.⁷⁸ Over the past decade, the TTC completed retrofits on 11 more stations, adding elevators and other accessibility features. With the opening of the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension in 2017, 6 new accessible stations were added to the system. At the end of the decade, 45 of its 70 stations⁷⁹ were accessible, or 64.3%.⁸⁰

While making progress on station accessibility, the TTC has been delayed in carrying out its own plans in this area. Several station upgrades outlined in the 2014–2018 TTC Multi-Year Accessibility Plan have not been completed on time for reasons such as budget constraints, design and procurement challenges, and construction challenges.⁸¹ According to the 2019–2023 TTC Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, the TTC is on track to complete retrofits on remaining stations, making all stations accessible by 2025.⁸²

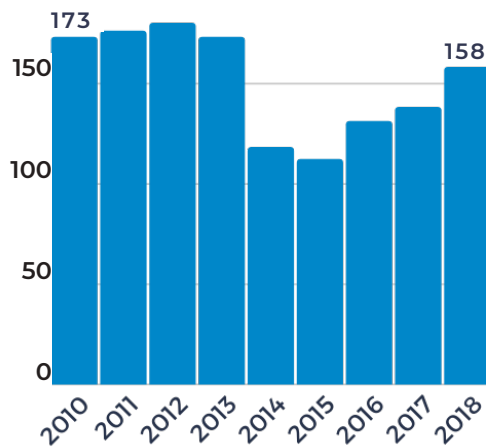
These plans are a hopeful sign. However, other factors impact accessibility beyond the physical properties of the stations. For example, frequent overcrowding in subway cars, buses, and streetcars presents a serious barrier to access for people with disabilities. As well, deficiencies in City services such as a lack of sidewalk snow removal services in the old City of Toronto also prevent accessibility. If sidewalks are not cleared of snow, people with mobility issues will not be able to make their way to subway stations or transit stops, regardless of how accessible the station or vehicle may be.

A variety of policy and funding decisions impact the accessibility of Toronto's transit system.⁸³ Meeting the AODA's 2025 deadline will require dedicated funds, policy and service coordination, and a commitment to addressing the interconnected issues that present barriers to accessible public transit.

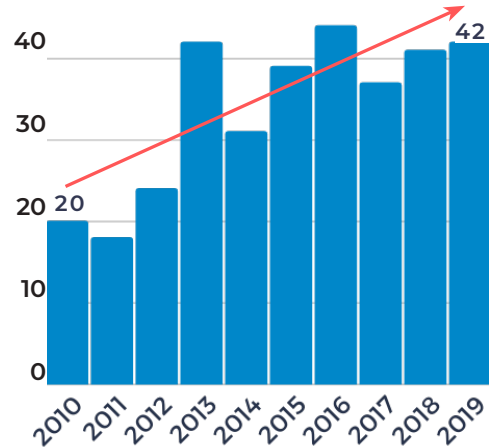
PEDESTRIAN & CYCLIST SAFETY IN JEOPARDY

The number of pedestrians killed on our streets has more than doubled, and serious injuries have risen in recent years

PEDESTRIAN SERIOUS INJURIES

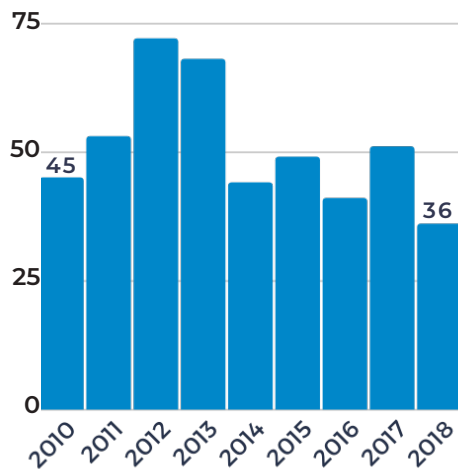


PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES

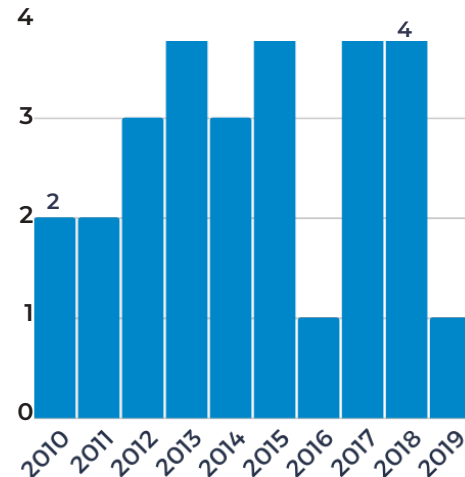


Road safety for cyclists continues to be a serious concern

CYCLIST SERIOUS INJURIES



CYCLIST FATALITIES



2x

More than twice as many pedestrians were killed in 2019 than in 2010

129

129 cyclists were "doored" in 2019⁸⁴

1,100

In 2019 alone, over 1,100 pedestrians were hit by a vehicle⁸⁵



Pedestrian safety on Toronto's streets has been the topic of increased concern with the rise in the number of pedestrians who have been hit by vehicles and, as a result, have experienced serious injuries or died on our streets.

Toronto Police Service data show that the number of pedestrians who have experienced serious injuries from collisions was highest in the early years of the decade. However, after a decline, those figures have been on the rise since 2015. In 2018, 158 pedestrians were seriously injured on our streets. The number of pedestrian fatalities has been especially high from 2013 onwards, with a high of 44 in 2016. In 2019, 42 pedestrians lost their lives on our streets. Recent media reports show that over 1,100 pedestrians were hit by a vehicle in 2019 alone.⁸⁶ Older adults are at greatest risk.

Road safety for cyclists remains a serious concern. The number of cyclists hit by vehicles who experienced serious injuries was highest in 2012 with 72 cyclists and 2013 with 68 cyclists seri-

ously injured. In 2018, 36 cyclists were seriously injured. Over the decade, the number of cyclist fatalities fluctuated between 1 to 4 per year. Four cyclists were killed each year on our streets in 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2018. One cyclist lost her life in 2019. Road safety issues for cyclists are further underscored by cyclist experiences of "dooring," that is, being hit by car doors. Recent media reports show 185 cyclists were doored in 2017, 132 in 2018, and 129 in 2019.⁸⁷

City of Toronto plans to address road safety include Vision Zero 2.0 and the Cycling Network Plan. Originated in Sweden, Vision Zero is an approach to road safety aimed at eliminating traffic deaths and ensuring the safety of road users, particularly pedestrians and cyclists, who are at greatest risk. In 2016, Toronto City Council adopted its Vision Zero road safety plan with the goal of eliminating "serious injury and fatal collisions and to provide further protection for vulnerable road users."⁸⁸ However, it was not effective in reducing serious injuries and fatalities on our streets. In particular, the number of

pedestrians incurring serious injuries continued to climb after the plan was introduced, and the number of pedestrian fatalities remained high.

Further, the Toronto Police Service was criticized for reducing resources for traffic enforcement. In an analysis of a decade of traffic enforcement and fatalities data, University of Toronto epidemiologist Dr. David Fisman attributed the rise in pedestrian fatalities to the decline in traffic enforcement on Toronto streets.⁸⁹

In response to the failure of its Vision Zero policy, Toronto City Council adopted Vision Zero 2.0 in June 2019, expanding measures and committing additional funding to support road safety.⁹⁰ Vision Zero 2.0 measures include a speed management strategy, including reduction of speed limits on arterial and local roads, road design improvements, proactively addressing high risk mid-block crossings, proactively addressing turning collisions at signal red intersections, and an education and engagement plan.⁹¹

The Toronto Police Service has proposed a plan to increase resources on traffic enforcement.⁹² Contributing to those efforts, 50 photo-radar cameras are being installed in school and community safety zones to reduce speeding and support road safety.⁹³

The new plan has received support from pedestrian, cyclist, and road safety advocates as a positive step forward. However, advocates have challenged the City to do more to improve road safety, particularly for vulnerable road users. For example, groups have called for greater reductions in speed limits on arterial roads (40 km/hour) and local roads (30 km/hour), controlled crossings at all TTC bus stops, additional traffic calming measures, the elimination of right turns on red lights, serious penalties for drivers who violate related traffic laws, installation of sidewalks on all city streets, and increased funding to expedite the implementation of the plan.^{94, 95, 96, 97}



Adopted in 2016, the City's 10-year Cycling Network Plan advances a strong vision of a growing and connected cycling network across Toronto.⁹⁸ Like Vision Zero, the cycling plan has an emphasis on road safety. The 10-year plan included annual targets and timelines for network expansion. However, little progress was made on the expansion of the network.⁹⁹

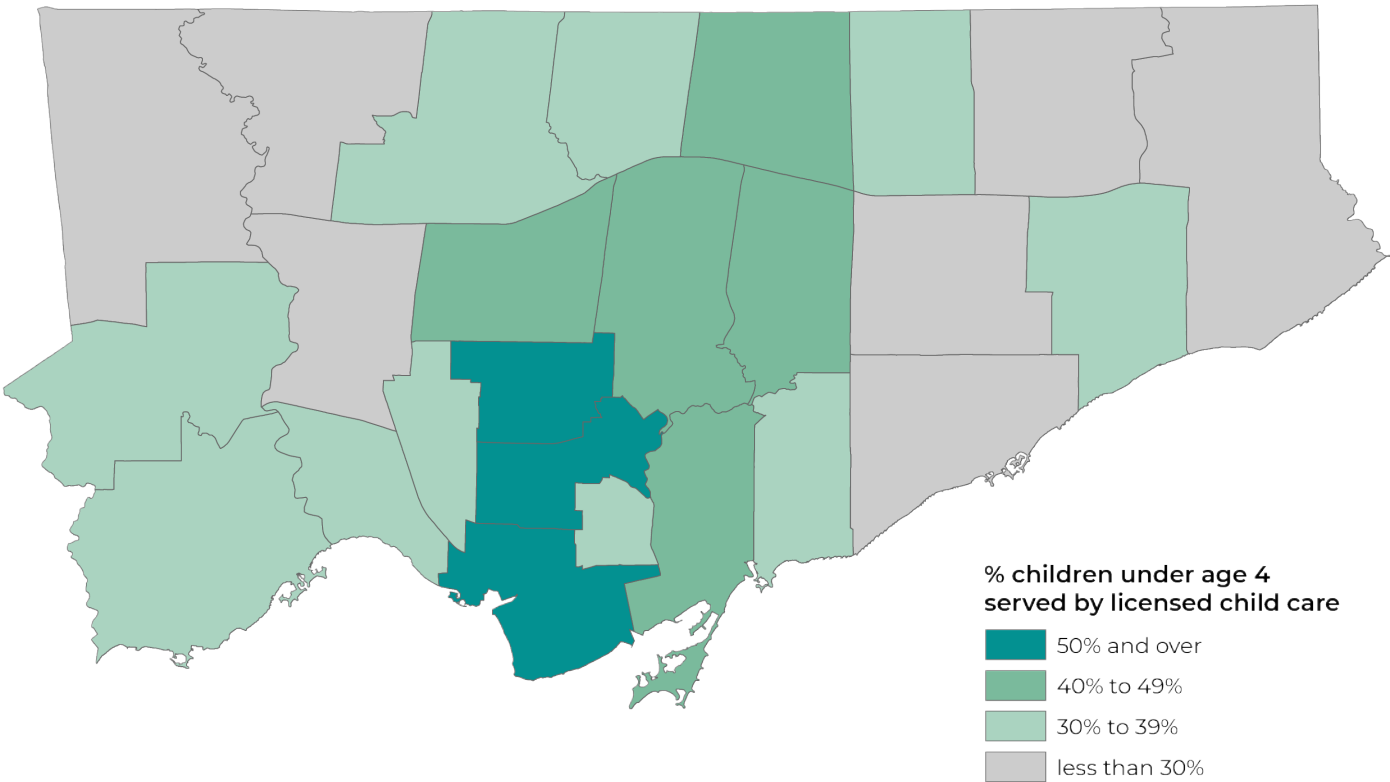
In 2019, Toronto City Council endorsed the Cycling Network Plan Update, a new focused and short-term plan that, if successful, will increase the cycling network by at least 120 km over the next three years.¹⁰⁰ Major projects include expansion of protected bike lanes on Bloor Street, bike lane pilot projects on Danforth Avenue, and possibly the addition of bike lanes on University Avenue as part of its "complete streets" makeover.¹⁰¹

CHILD CARE by the Numbers

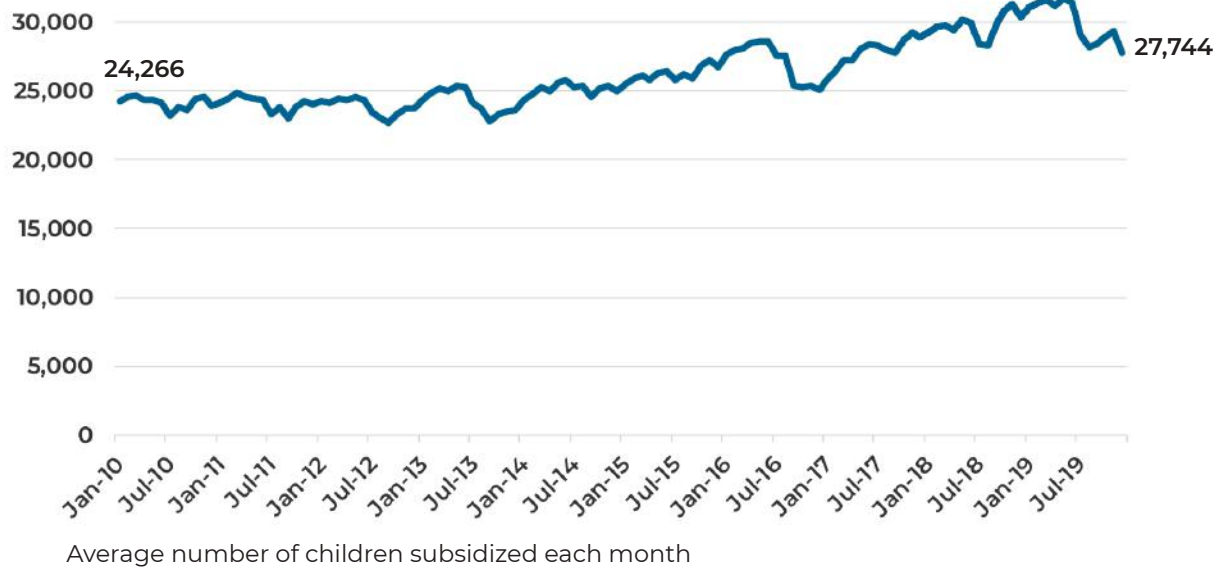
Progress! We have more licensed child care spaces



But as of 2018, only 3 wards met the City’s target of 50% of kids under age 4 having a space in a child care centre



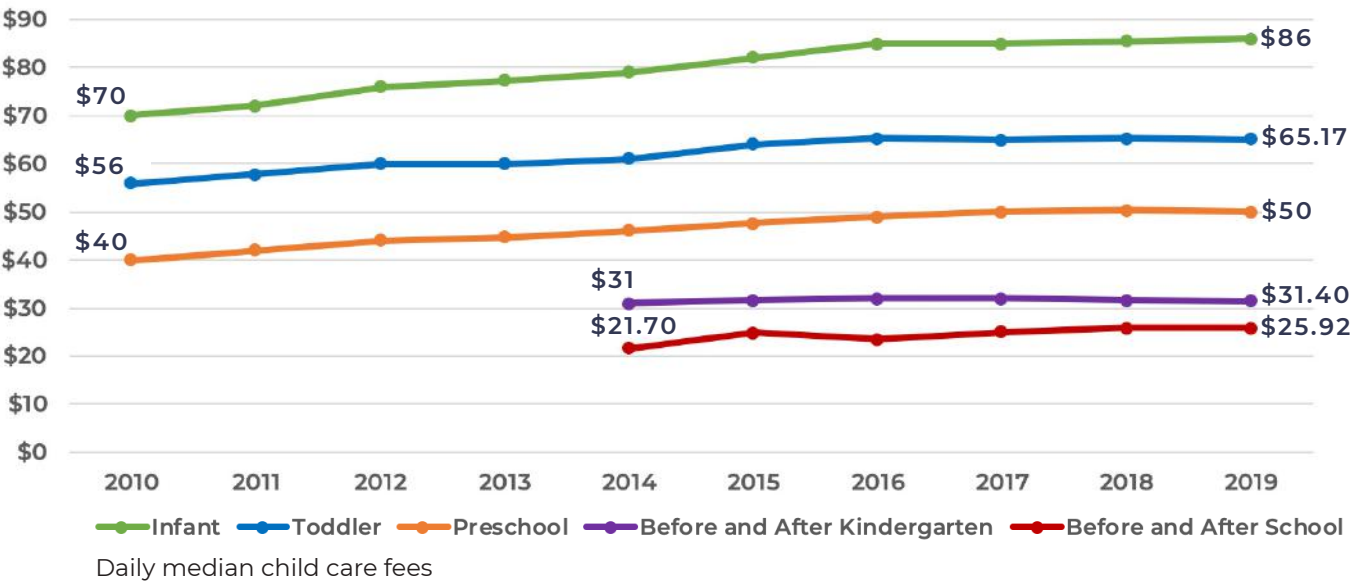
There are more child care subsidies



But the number of kids waiting for subsidized child care spaces is about the same as it was a decade ago



Efforts have been made to contain costs, but we continue to have the least affordable child care in the country



17K

17,282 kids are waiting for a subsidized child care space

3

As of 2018, 3 wards met the City's goal of providing 50% of kids under 4 with child care

#1

We have the most expensive infant & preschooler fees in Canada

CHILD CARE: A DECADE OF INVESTMENT, BUT MORE TO DO

Access to high quality, affordable child care is essential to families, supports children's social development and educational success, and produces social and economic benefits broadly.^{102, 103, 104} As women often play the role of primary caregiver, access to child care is a prerequisite for advancing women's equality, including supporting the economic security of women. Access to this vital service allows parents to take on paid employment, participate in educational and training opportunities, and take part in community and civic life. Child care is also recognized as a key component of poverty reduction.¹⁰⁵

Over the past decade, significant change has taken place affecting Toronto families and the child care community. For example, the introduction of Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) for children aged 4 and 5 in Ontario has had positive and lasting effects on young children and their families. However, this change also had a destabilizing effect on the child care sector as 4- and 5-year-olds moved from child care to FDK.¹⁰⁶ Resources to assist the sector with the transition were slow in coming, making for a challenging transition.

The decade was a good one for increased funding for child care. Senior orders of government provided substantial multi-year funding that allowed for the construction of new child care centres, expansion of child care spaces, greater availability of child care subsidies, and wage enhancements for child care workers.^{107, 108, 109}

However, a change in provincial government has brought a change in direction on child care and other public services. In the past year, the Ontario government has cut child care funding and changed cost-sharing arrangements, reducing provincial contributions and downloading costs onto municipalities. The provincial government has indicated it plans to review the child care funding formula and provincial child care plans,

raising more concerns about the future of child care programs in Ontario.

In contrast, the child care community is hopeful about federal action on child care based on strong child care commitments in the election platforms of a number of the federal parties.

Child care metrics demonstrate the progress made over the decade and the challenges that remain.

Child Care Spaces

With the support of senior orders of government, the number of child care spaces in Toronto has increased by 45% since 2013, from 55,204 in January 2013 (earliest date with available data) to 80,076 in September 2019. In 2018, Toronto's child care spaces served about 27% of children 0–9 years of age, up from 21% in 2010.^{110, 111}

The City has a ways to go to meet its child care goals. For example, the City's Child Care Growth Strategy aims to have child care spaces for 50% of children under age 4 by 2026.¹¹² As shown in the preceding map, as of 2018, only three of Toronto's 25 wards had spaces for 50% or more of young children in the ward. In contrast, the highest rates of unmet need are in North Etobicoke, Humber River-Black Creek, York South-Weston, Scarborough Southwest, Scarborough Centre, Scarborough North, and Scarborough-Rouge River.

In Toronto, many parents of newborns get on the waiting list as early as they can. Whether families can afford the cost of child care or not, just getting a space can be tough.

Introduced in 2012, the City's Middle Childhood Strategy aims to increase access to out-of-schooltime programs, such as before- and after-school programs, for children aged 6–12.

Historically, for middle years children — no longer early years and not yet teens — there has been only a patchwork of programs. According to the City of Toronto, only 14% of middle years children had access to out-of-schooltime programs in 2015.¹¹³

More recent statistics on access to out-of-schooltime programs for children 6–12 years of age are not publicly available. However, research shows that provincial legislative changes have had a positive effect on the number of schools providing before- and after-school programs for middle years children. Effective September 1, 2017, the provincial government mandated all school boards to provide before- and after-school programs for children in Grades 1–6 (aged 6–12) where demand was sufficient.¹¹⁴ The 2018 People for Education school survey found 80% of publicly funded schools in Ontario were providing these programs, up from only 55% in 2012.¹¹⁵

In Toronto, the City of Toronto, the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board formed a working group in order to take a collaborative approach to the provision of before- and after-school programs.¹¹⁶ Under the legislation, before- and after-school programs for middle years children may be provided by the school board or an authorized third party. In 2017, the working group identified that 28% of schools from the two boards did not have a middle childhood program. The group continued its work of investigating the demand and viability of providing middle childhood programs as well as programs for younger children. The 2017 City staff report notes that the Province, while increasing funding for child care for younger children, had not provided additional resources for middle childhood programs. Updates are needed on the City's Middle Childhood Strategy to assess progress and understand the issues affecting access to middle childhood programs at present.

Recent provincial education cuts raise serious concerns regarding the future of child care for children across the age spectrum, including before- and after-school programs.

Child Care Fees

A lack of affordable child care is a struggle for families across many income groups. Full fee child care is especially prohibitive for lower income families. Groups disproportionately affected include lone parents, particularly lone mother-led families, Indigenous families, newcomers, racialized groups, younger families, and families with members with disabilities.¹¹⁷

Recent studies have found Toronto has some of the most expensive child care in the country. In 2018, Toronto had the highest median child care fees for infants and preschoolers, and the second highest median fees for toddlers.¹¹⁸ Previous studies found similar results.^{119, 120} Average child care costs in Toronto are approximately \$22,000 a year for an infant and \$17,000 a year for a toddler.¹²¹ Research commissioned by the City of Toronto found that Toronto's child care fees are unaffordable for over 75% of families.¹²²

The City's Child Care Growth Strategy and Children's Services Service Plan recognize the barriers that families face in accessing high quality, affordable child care.^{123, 124} In recent years, the City of Toronto, with funding support from senior orders of government, has taken steps to contain child care costs and expand access to child care subsidies for families with low incomes. As shown in the preceding chart, median child care fees have largely flatlined in recent years. Child care fees in the high range¹²⁵ have either decreased (for before- and after-school programs) or increased at a rate that is less than the rate of inflation (for infant, toddler, and preschooler).

With support from senior orders of government, the average number of children receiving a subsidized child care space has increased over the second half of the decade. While the wait list has fluctuated over the decade, the demand for child care subsidies among families with low incomes continues to be high. In September 2019, there were 17,282 children on the wait list for a child care subsidy.



RESOLUTIONS FOR A BETTER CITY

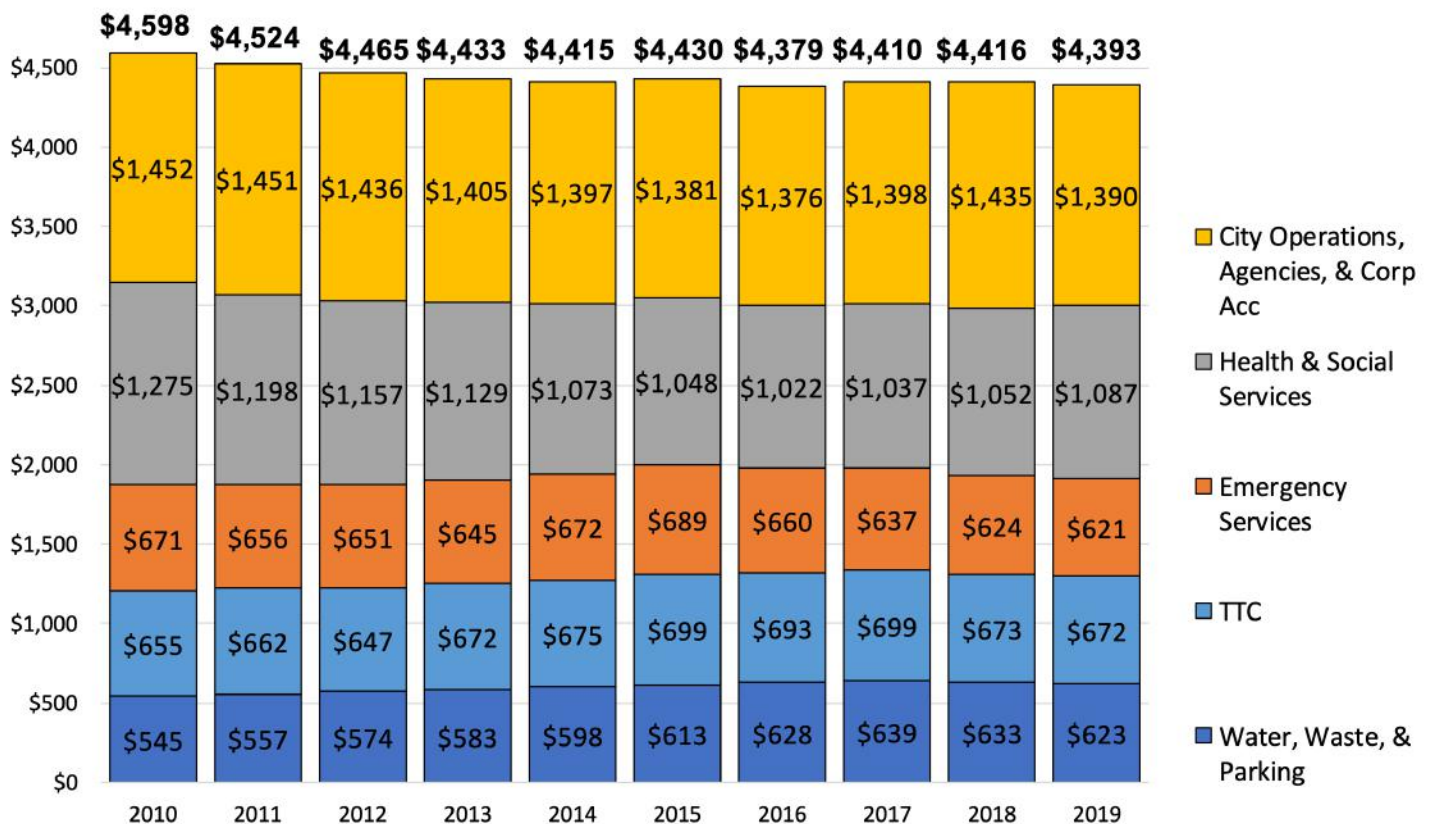
Toronto at the end of the '10s has significant challenges. We have an affordable housing crisis that is a daily struggle for hundreds of thousands of renters, a homelessness crisis that is taking lives, child care that is often hard to come by and the most expensive in the country, and a public transit system that requires substantial investment to meet the needs of our communities today and tomorrow. Risks to pedestrian and cyclist safety on our streets will not be solved with reflective armbands.

The City of Toronto, other orders of government, and non-governmental organizations have offered important policy, program, and practice recommendations to make progress on these substantial issues. We have included resources on that fine work in the appendix.

There is one common denominator that unites all of these issues, and that is proper funding. By all means, the City of Toronto and every order of government should do all it can to improve our communities using existing resources — but that's not going to build a better city. Years of austerity budgets illustrate the point; years of doing more with less have left us with deepening challenges, widening inequities, and mounting crises in our communities.

Every order of government has a responsibility to address the big challenges described in this report — for Toronto and for all the communities within their purview. The City of Toronto cannot go it alone, but that should not be used as an excuse for inaction.

CITY'S SPENDING ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION & POPULATION GROWTH¹²⁸



Source: City of Toronto (2019). Tax and Rate Supported 2019 Operating Budget and 2019–2028 Capital Budget and Plan Presentation to City Council

For the past decade, Toronto City Council has made the political choice to keep property taxes low — the lowest rate in the GTA, Hamilton, and Ottawa — and to reject other options to raise revenues. That choice has come at a cost to our city. It has starved our city of the necessary resources to create affordable housing, to end homelessness, to improve the public transit system, to increase access to high quality and affordable child care, to address pedestrian and cyclist safety, and to pay for the critical public services our communities rely upon.

Adjusted for inflation and population growth, City of Toronto per capita spending has declined over the decade. Decreasing support for vital public services has an impact, and we can see it in our city every day.

City Building Fund

Fortunately, the prospect for change began to take shape at the close of the decade. On December 4, 2019, Mayor John Tory made a bold move to publicly advocate to increase property taxes beyond the rate of inflation in 2020 and for the next six years.¹²⁶ The Mayor proposed increasing the City Building Fund, a property tax levy, to pay for public transit and affordable housing infrastructure. Toronto City Council voted in favour of the Mayor's plan. As a result, in 2020 the average residential property taxpayer will pay an additional \$43 on their annual bill.

The additional funds will allow the City to borrow \$6.6 billion over the next 6 years to invest in public transit and affordable housing — two areas of critical need in our city. At its December 2019 meeting, Toronto City Council passed a motion in support of the Mayor's plan.¹²⁷ It is an important move that turns a corner on 10 years of austerity budgets at the municipal level.

We applaud the Mayor's leadership in championing a tax increase and the majority of Council who recognized the need to raise revenues for critical infrastructure. It's a change in direction that moves the city forward.

PAYING FOR A BETTER CITY

Toronto City Council has taken an important first step in increasing revenues to fund needed infrastructure, but it would be a mistake to stop there. The City has considerable challenges and lots of ground to make up after a decade of austerity. Toronto City Council has options for increasing revenues, and we encourage Council to continue to raise revenues for important programs, services, and infrastructure. There are three immediate options.

1. Introduce a Vacant Home Tax

A vacant home tax is a tax applied to vacant residential units. According to the City of Toronto, the primary goal of a vacant home tax is to affect the behaviour of residential property owners to either sell or rent out vacant units, rather than to raise revenues for the municipality.¹²⁹ However, revenues raised can be used to fund affordable housing. In this way, a vacant home tax can be useful in improving access to housing, including affordable housing.

In 2017, the provincial government granted the City of Toronto powers to enact a vacant home tax. Since then, the City has been examining the potential of and mechanisms for implementing a vacant home tax. It has conducted research and public consultations on the proposed tax.¹³⁰ On the urging of Deputy Mayor Ana Bailão, the City's Executive Committee passed a motion at its November 14, 2019, meeting requesting City finance staff to bring forward a report on the vacant home tax as part of the City's 2020 budget process.¹³¹ The committee indicated that the report should include information on the consultation, public policy benefits of the tax, potential design of the tax, and an assessment of how the tax has been used in the City of Vancouver. This move is an important next step in Council's consideration of this potential tax.

In 2017, in response to its affordable housing crisis, the City of Vancouver introduced the Empty Homes Tax, the first vacant homes tax in North America. The municipality charges 1% of a vacant home's assessed value on an annual basis.^{132, 133} The tax has had two positive effects: the number of vacant units decreased by 22% between 2017 and 2018 (1,989 properties were vacant in 2018 compared to 2,538 in 2017), and the tax generated significant revenue for affordable housing (\$39.4 million in 2018; \$38 million in 2017).¹³⁴

The City of Vancouver conducted public consultations to identify priorities for the use of the funds. Funds are being used to "acquire or provide land and resources for affordable non-profit and co-op housing; grants to update, improve, and build co-op housing; increase supply and improve low income housing and shelter options; support for existing renters; funding for skills training & peer support in Supportive Housing; and emerging initiatives."¹³⁵ Some specific projects include the purchase of Ross House, a single room occupancy building for 24 residents to be operated by a nonprofit, the provision of renters' advocacy and services, and the expansion of social and co-op housing grants.

In 2018, the City of Vancouver had 1,989 vacant units, 1.1% of all residential units.¹³⁶ The number of vacant residential units in the City of Toronto is unknown. However, available data provide some indication of the scale. According to the City of Toronto, 15,000–28,000 residential units have low hydro and water consumption (2–4% of all residential units).¹³⁷ This does not mean that the units were necessarily vacant or available for use. For example, units could be under construction.

Other attempts to calculate the number of vacant homes in Toronto have produced higher estimates. Using 2006 and 2016 Census data, Point 2 Homes, a real estate market research site,

estimated that the City of Toronto has more than 66,000 vacant homes.^{138, 139} In another analysis, conducted in 2019, Toronto resident Jaco Joubert carried out an ingenious exercise, setting up a camera aimed at over a thousand units in 15 buildings surrounding his home in the College and Dovercourt area.¹⁴⁰ The camera took photos every 5 minutes from sundown to sunrise over a week. He performed the experiment twice over a few months. Using heat maps and custom filters, his results showed 5.6% of units were vacant; in one building, 13.5% units were vacant. Attention on vacant units has led to increased calls for a vacant home tax.

Toronto could generate considerable revenue to support affordable housing. In comparison to Vancouver, Toronto has about four times as many residential units (752,000 in Toronto¹⁴¹; 189,162 in Vancouver¹⁴²). In 2018, Vancouver's Empty Homes Tax raised \$39.4 million for affordable housing programs with only 1.1% of vacant units.¹⁴³ Toronto has almost four times the number of residential units compared to Vancouver. While the City of Toronto will need to crunch the numbers, if our situation is similar to Vancouver's, Toronto could generate considerably more funding than Vancouver has from a vacant home tax.¹⁴⁴

Every night in Toronto, more than 9,200 people are homeless — sleeping outdoors, in the city's shelters, respite centres, and health and correctional facilities.¹⁴⁵ It is appalling that we should have potentially tens of thousands of homes left empty. Vancouver's Empty Homes Tax offers an inspiring example of how municipalities can find solutions to address their affordable housing crises. It's time for Toronto to adopt a vacant home tax.

2. Re-introduce the Vehicle Registration Tax

For a short time, from September 2008 to early 2011, the City of Toronto had a Vehicle Registration Tax that generated tens of millions for public services and infrastructure.^{146, 147, 148} The annual personal vehicle tax was \$60 per vehicle and \$30 for motorcycles. When it was repealed in 2011, the City lost \$64 million annually in revenue.¹⁴⁹

Several attempts have been made to bring back the tax, without success. Councillors have proposed varying amounts, exemptions for seniors, and discounts for hybrid and electric cars.¹⁵⁰ They have recommended that funds be directed to a variety of City services and infrastructure including road repair, improvements and expansion of the TTC, work to ensure the TTC is AODA compliant, repairs to Toronto Community Housing, and expansion of subsidized child care — all to no avail.



In 2016, a consultant report prepared for Council estimated that an annual motor vehicle registration tax between \$20 and \$100 could generate \$18 to \$94 million for City services and infrastructure.¹⁵¹ It is an option that Council has not exercised. In 2019, the latest proposal was to re-introduce a \$60 annual registration fee that would generate \$55 million to be divided equally between road repair and transit improvement.¹⁵² The motion failed.

Since 2011, when the vehicle registration tax was cancelled, the monthly TTC pass has increased by 24.9%.^{153, 154} Adjusted for inflation, transit users are paying an additional \$175 a year, and more fare increases have been proposed for 2020.^{155, 156} As a group, transit riders tend to have lower incomes than drivers.¹⁵⁷ It doesn't seem to be asking too much for drivers to contribute an additional \$60 a year to improve public transit. We recommend the reinstatement of a Vehicle Registration Tax with revenues directed at supporting public transit and access to transit for residents with low incomes.

3. Increase the Municipal Land Transfer Tax (MLTT) for Luxury Homes

The MLTT is a municipal tax paid by homebuyers and property buyers, with some exemptions for first-time homebuyers.¹⁵⁸ The amount charged is a percentage of the value of the property, ranging from 0.5% to 2.5%. The top tier applies to properties with a value of \$2 million or more.

Toronto City Council introduced the MLTT in 2008 to raise revenues to pay for critical services and infrastructure. It has been an essential new revenue source for the City. Over the past decade, the City has generated over \$5 billion from the MLTT.¹⁵⁹

In 2019, Councillors Bradford, Bailão, and Cressy investigated the possibility of adding a new top tier to the MLTT of 3% for properties valued at \$3 million or more.¹⁶⁰ It was estimated that this new tier would raise an additional \$5.1 million annually. According to the Councillors, about

Increase

MLTT

for luxury homes

Introduce

**Vacant
Home
Tax**

Re-introduce

VRT

775 homes sell for \$3 million or more each year in Toronto. If the new tier was implemented, a homebuyer purchasing a \$4 million home, for example, would pay an additional \$5,000 in MLTT fees, for a total of \$91,500, up from \$86,500.

The Councillors wanted to use the funds to expand the City's housing allowance program for residents with low incomes. In particular, there were concerns that some funding sources were running out. In the end, a new arrangement with the Province provided the funding to maintain the program.¹⁶¹

We think the Councillors had a good idea in exploring a new top tier for the MLTT. The City's affordable housing and homelessness crisis is urgent, and all possible resources to support action are essential. There is a strong argument for "housing paying for housing." A new upper tier on the MLTT could generate revenue to contribute to the capital costs of new affordable and supportive housing.

According to a November 2019 report from real estate company Re/Max, the luxury real estate market in Toronto is doing quite well.¹⁶² According to the report: "Homebuyers at virtually all price points — including uber-luxe — are kicking the tires once again. As a result, momentum is building in the overall market, which is reflected in the escalation in sales at both the \$2 million and \$5 million price points."

On a related note, Toronto Foundation's 2019 "Vital Signs" report notes: "By many measures, Toronto is the city with the most inequality in Canada, and this inequality has grown extremely rapidly over recent decades."¹⁶³ The report goes on to describe the enormous gulf in incomes and wealth between the most and least privileged in our city, the gendered and racialized nature of the gap, and the serious consequences of inequality to health, well-being, and social cohesion.

The City of Toronto doesn't have the authority to introduce an income tax or a wealth tax. However, it can introduce a new upper tier to the MLTT or change the rates that are charged for luxury home purchases. Toronto is the inequality capital of Canada. The wealthy of the city should contribute more to address inequality in our city.

A new tier on the MLTT won't eliminate inequality in our city, but it is one action of many that the City should take to address the challenges, crises, and inequities in Toronto. We recommend that the City introduce a new upper tier on the MLTT and/or raise the MLTT rate for those purchasing homes at \$2 million or more. Funds should be used to support capital costs for the development of nonprofit affordable and supportive housing.¹⁶⁴

These are three options that the City can implement in the near future to increase revenues, recognizing that Torontonians are more likely to embrace these solutions when they are tied to specific city-building purposes. In addition, Toronto City Council should review its other revenue tools available under the City of Toronto Act. The City has choices, and it should exercise them.

Finally, there are tax options that the City of Toronto does not currently have the authority to enact. For example, the City has rightly advocated for a portion of the provincial sales tax. That is a decision of the provincial government. We must continue to strongly advocate for the tools needed to fund critical services and infrastructure. At the same time, Toronto City Council should utilize the tools already available to it.

A better city is possible. It is a political choice. Toronto City Council has taken the first step to raising revenues for needed infrastructure. For the people of Toronto, particularly those who are struggling, let's make sure that it doesn't take another decade for City Council to take the next step in building a better city.

DATA SOURCES

Housing

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- Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97-554-XCB2006039. Ottawa, Ontario.

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New affordable rental housing units: City of Toronto, Affordable Housing Office. https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/8dfa-access_AHO-Summary-for-HOT-TargetsCompletions-Q1-2019-Final.pdf

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Shelter use: City of Toronto, Shelter, Support & Housing Administration. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/toronto-progress-portal/>

Public Transit, Cycling, & Walking

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Main mode of commuting to work:

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Child Care

Number of child care spaces in licensed centres by month (2013–2019): City of Toronto, Children’s Services. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/toronto-progress-portal/>

Map of % children under age 4 with licensed child care by ward: City of Toronto, Children’s Services. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/council/2018-council-issue-notes/torontos-social-development/early-learning-child-care-and-middle-childhood-services/>

Median daily child care fees (2010–2019): City of Toronto, Children’s Services. Child care fact sheets. Provided by City of Toronto, Children’s Services.

Average number of children subsidized per month (2010–2019): City of Toronto, Children’s Services. Provided by City of Toronto, Children’s Services.

Number of children on wait list for subsidized child care by month (2010–2019): City of Toronto, Children’s Services. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/data-research-maps/toronto-progress-portal/>

APPENDIX: PLANS, STRATEGIES, & REPORTS

Housing

- [HousingTO 2020–2030 Action Plan](#)
- [Seeking Supportive Housing: Characteristics, Needs and Outcomes of Applicants to The Access Point](#)
- [National Housing Strategy](#)

Public Transit, Cycling, & Walking

- [TTC Ridership Growth Strategy 2018–2022](#)
- [Next Stop, Even Better 2020–2024 & Beyond](#) (TTC 5-Year Service Plan & 10-Year Outlook)
- [Making Headway, Capital Investments to Keep Transit Moving 2019–2033](#)
- TTCriders' [Better Transit Now](#)
- TTCriders' [Alternative Ridership Growth Strategy](#)
- [T.O. Health Check: An Overview of Toronto's Population Health Status](#)
- [Vision Zero 2.0 — Road Safety Plan Update](#)
- [Toronto Cycling Plan Network Update](#)
- [#BuildTheVisionTO Safe and Active Streets for All](#)

Child Care

- [Toronto's Licensed Child Care Growth Strategy for children under 4, 2017–2026](#)
- [Children's Services Service Plan 2015–2019](#)
- [Toronto Middle Childhood Strategy](#)
- [Child Care Canada, Childcare Resource and Research Unit](#)

ENDNOTES

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12. Data provided by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation using its annual Rental Market Survey.
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37. In CDN\$, using the Bank of Canada's Jan. 1, 2016, exchange rate of 1.324806
38. In CDN\$, using the Bank of Canada's Jan. 1, 2016, exchange rate of 1.324806
39. "Toronto subway diagram," by Andrew pmk, licensed under [CC BY-SA 3.0](#). Icons added.
40. [Original image](#) by AquitaneHungerForce, licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](#). Icons and highlighting added.
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