



# TO IMPROVE PUBLIC ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SPACES

VOTE ON  
October 24

**Affordable and equitable access to critical community services is key to ensuring Toronto is a liveable city for all residents.**

We rely on strong public and nonprofit sectors to deliver essential services like child care, youth and senior programs, recreation, drop-in spaces, and food banks. But although they have kept their doors open for communities during the pandemic, organizations are struggling.

**The upcoming municipal election is an opportunity for you to vote for greater investment in community services, facilities, and spaces.**

## What's the Problem?

### Essential Services Are in High Demand, yet Inaccessible

Free and subsidized community services offer a lifeline to low- and moderate-income households struggling to make ends meet, and demand is high. For example,

About **17,000** households are on the wait list for a child care fee subsidy

About **196,000** were waiting in 2018 for City recreation programs

In 2019 residents reported that inaccessible registration processes limited their access to swimming and recreation programs at their local free centres.

### The Pandemic Has Devastated the Nonprofit Sector

Nonprofit organizations have ongoing challenges with securing and maintaining stable and sufficient funding, and the pandemic exacerbated this financial instability — 80% of Toronto nonprofits had increased costs while demand for their essential programs and services increased.



The pandemic has also taken a significant toll on the sector's workforce — three-quarters of organizations cite burnout and stress as a major factor in an unprecedented human

resources crisis that is seeing organizations struggle to recruit and retain staff. The loss of human capital in the nonprofit sector is as devastating as the loss of nurses and other workers within our healthcare sector.

### Public and Community Spaces and Facilities Are Vital, but Access Isn't Equal

Community spaces such as community centres and green spaces provide meeting grounds for grassroots groups, locations for programs and services to operate, sites of civic participation, and much more.

Unfortunately, access to public spaces is not equitably distributed throughout the city. For example, park space per capita varies significantly by neighbourhood, and some neighbourhoods do not have adequate access to a community centre.



### Critical Amenities Are Still Missing From Many Parks

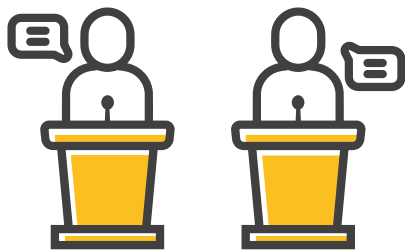
Toronto has over 1,600 parks, many of which are owned and/or operated by the City. There are 187 park washrooms, which operate from about 9am to dusk. In response to significant community demand, the City increased the number of winter washrooms from 64 to 143.

**However, longer operating hours, gender-neutral facilities, and access to drinking water are among the improvements still needed for parks to be welcoming and accessible to residents.**

# Take Action!

## 1. Ask Your City Council Candidates If They Will Commit to The Following Actions:

- Boldly invest in the expansion of nonprofit child care centres and actively work towards a publicly funded, licensed, universal child care system.
- Create more free spaces in recreation programs and ensure they are available to local children, youth, and adults who need them.
- Ensure geographic equity for parks and community centres across the city by prioritizing building new spaces in neighbourhoods with the least access.
- Support resident groups and the community sector with adequate space, facilities, and funding to respond to emerging community needs.
- Expand access to critical amenities in public parks, including washrooms and water fountains, across the city and in all seasons.
- Increase core funding provided to non-profit organizations through the [Community Services Partnership](#) (CSP) funding stream to account for increased costs and demand for services.



## 2. Learn More About the Candidates

[Attend an event](#) such as an All Candidates Debate to learn more about the election issues and where candidates stand.



## 3. Pledge to Vote

[Election day](#) is on October 24.  
[Advance polls](#) are from October 7–14.  
[Apply to vote](#) by mail from September 1–23.