



2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION OUTCOMES

The Toronto & York Region Labour Council welcomes the election of progressive voices across Toronto and York Region Councils and School Boards on October 22nd. Despite the unprecedented interference in the Toronto elections by the Ford government, voters chose to elect many candidates who are determined to defend the interests of Torontonians over the next four years.

There were some disappointing results – a number of stalwart champions for social justice will no longer be at City Hall. Under the original 47 seat model many new diverse candidates were poised to become part of a renewed Council. They were sidelined by the reduction of seats to 25, which is a real setback to the goal of equity and inclusion in our City. While the balance of forces on Council would seem to be roughly the same across the political spectrum, the defeat of Giorgio Mammoliti is a welcome change. But there will be far less accountability to local residents, and a missed opportunity to be more reflective of Toronto's population.

We congratulate Mayor John Tory on his re-election, and hope that he will work with Council to defend public services and safeguard public assets. We thank Jennifer Keesmaat for her spirited campaign and taking on the immense task of running for Mayor. She raised important questions about housing affordability, transit planning and the approach to youth violence that need to be addressed. We want to acknowledge the vital contributions of those Councillors who are not returning to office – Augimeri, Davis, Doucette, Fragedakis, Mihevc and Shan – and thank them for devoting so much of their personal life to the cause. We thank all progressive candidates who stepped up to run in these elections, investing an immense amount of time and energy in trying to make democracy meaningful.

The election alone does not determine how the city will work. Toronto residents will have to organize in many different ways to ensure their interests are served in many crucial areas – transit, infrastructure investment, finances and tax fairness, community safety, economic development, affordable housing, and climate action. The city can only prosper if there is a strong foundation of public services, recognition of the growing economic disparities that must be addressed, and a strong commitment to equity.

Trustees across all School Boards in Toronto and York Region will have to navigate the challenge of providing quality education across widely diverse communities despite a flawed funding formula and expected interference by the Ford regime.

For York Regional Council, the outstanding issues of rapid growth and democratic accountability must be addressed. Urban sprawl is contributing to traffic congestion and a commuting nightmare, while resident engagement in municipal issues is often limited.

Looming over all municipalities and school boards will be the uncertain relationship with the Ontario government. Reckless decision-making from Queen's Park could have a severe impact on the quality of services and the ability of local governments to do their job effectively. Our elected representatives have their work cut out for them, but it's up to all of us to be engaged and build a better future for Canada's largest urban centre.

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