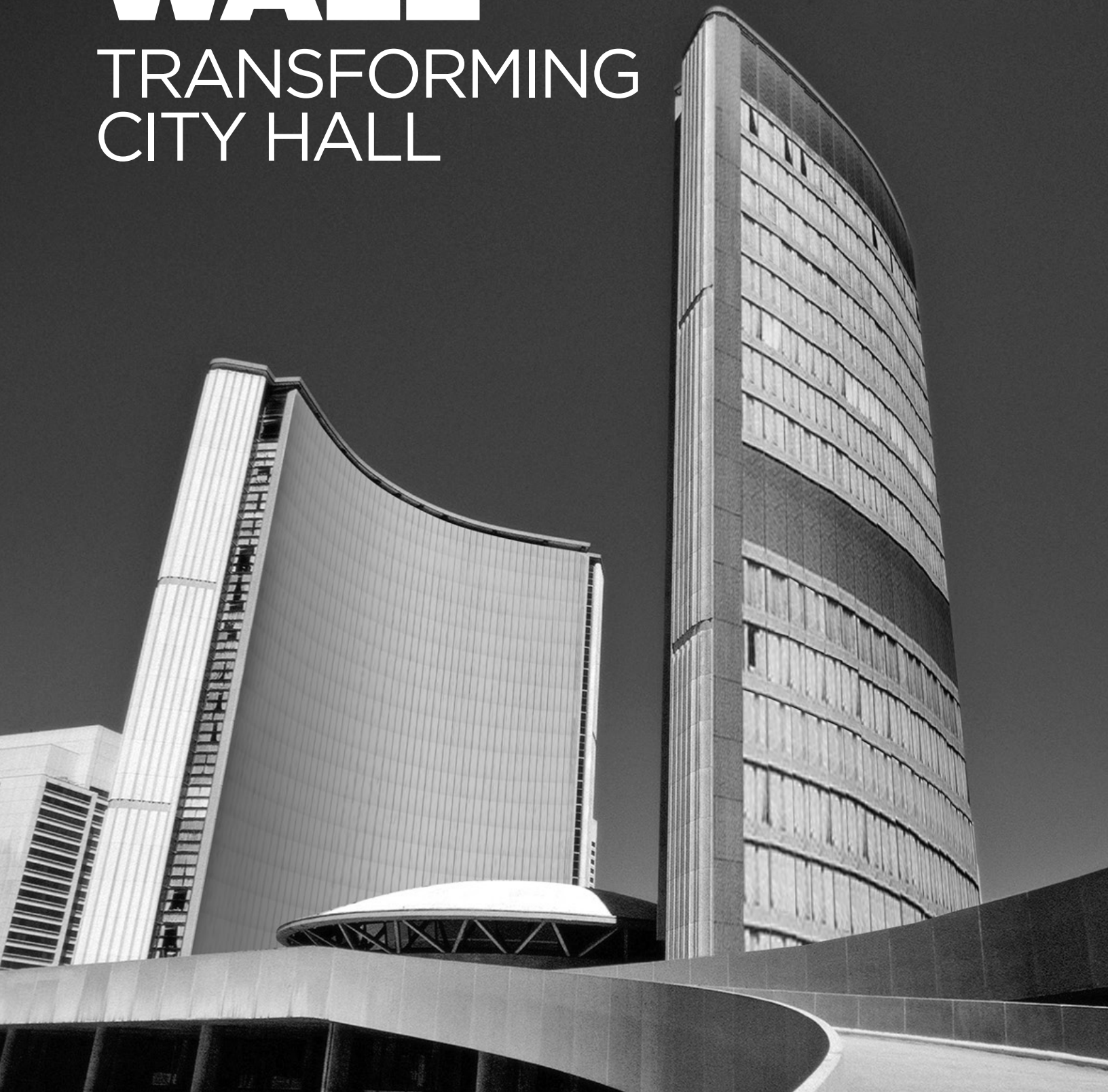


# THE FOURTH WALL

TRANSFORMING  
CITY HALL



**THANK YOU TO:**

**Urbanspace  
Gallery**

The Atkinson  
Charitable Foundation

**MASSLBP**

**CURATOR:** DAVE MESLIN  
**RESEARCH:** HILARY BEST  
**DESIGN:** ADAM ZINZAN-HARRIS



## **WINDOWS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Have you ever noticed that all the windows on our City Hall towers face inward? Nine hundred and sixty windows looking at each other and zero facing outwards. This can serve as a metaphor for the state of public engagement in Toronto. Many citizens feel that their voices aren't heard at City Hall and many don't even know when, where or how to interact with the democratic process. Casting a ballot once every four years is just the beginning. In between elections, citizens can play a major role in shaping our city.

## **THE FOURTH WALL**

In theatre and film, the 'fourth wall' is a term used to describe the imaginary barrier separating an audience from the stage. When an actor speaks directly to the audience, or an audience member interacts with the cast, the fourth wall has been 'broken'.

City Hall also has a fourth wall. Most residents are simply spectators, passively witnessing local politics through headlines and soundbites. How can we break this fourth wall and create a culture of local citizen engagement? How can we open the doors to meaningful dialogue and participation, allowing us to collectively build the city we want to live in?



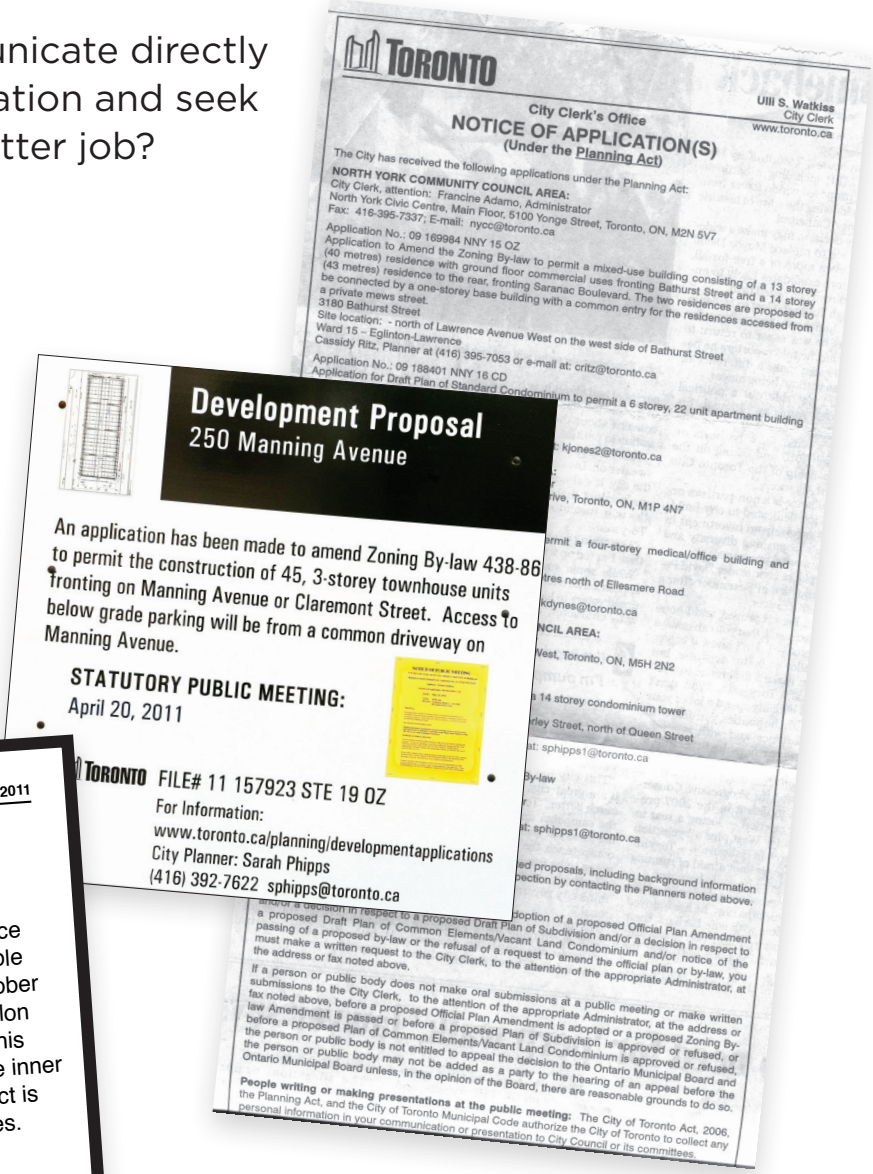
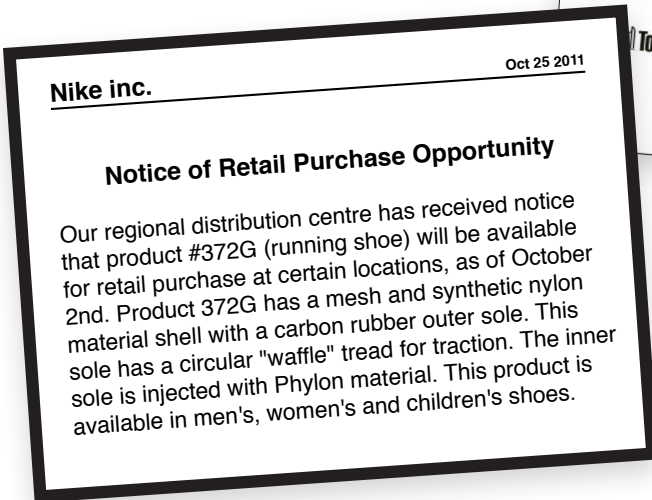
# REACHING OUT

The City often tries to communicate directly with citizens, to share information and seek opinions. Could they do a better job?

## CASE STUDY

When a new development is proposed for a neighbourhood, members of the community are invited to provide feedback. This requires the city to inform the neighborhood using signage, posters or mailings. But do these materials really work?

With small type, no colour, lousy graphics (if any), and a lot of bureaucratic gobbledegook – it’s no wonder that people feel uninformed. Imagine if businesses used the same technique in their advertising:



**FUN FACT!**  
From 2003 to 2010, the City placed all their public notices in the Toronto Star, the highest-circulation newspaper in the city. In October 2010, a decision was made to switch all public notices to the Toronto Sun, exclusively, despite the Star’s readership being twice as high. The decision lasts until 2015.

Believe it or not, we aren’t the first ones to raise this issue. As far back as 1972, the Bureau of Municipal Research published a report called “Municipal Gobbledegook”



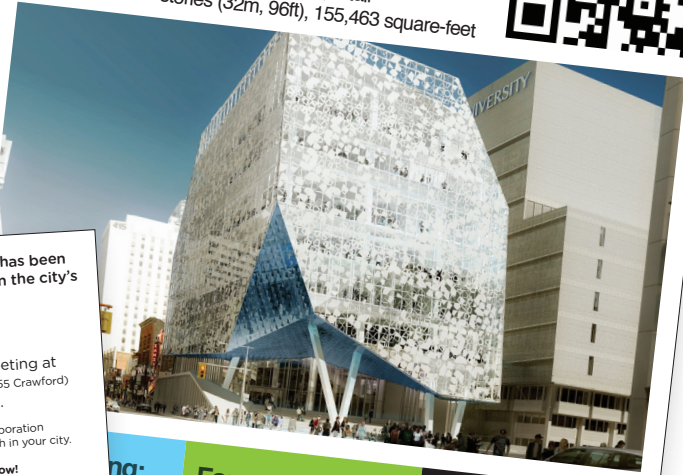
**February 1972**  
**‘MUNICIPAL GOBBLEDEGOOK’**  
“Public notices, rather than clearly informing people of decisions that are pending, may only confuse or perhaps frustrate or even antagonize them. It is too easy to view the notices as mere legal formalities. But they are much more. These notices not only convey specific information to particular individuals, but also are an important mechanism through which citizen participation may be encouraged and informed or discouraged and possibly nipped in the bud”.

## WE CAN DO BETTER

Residents should expect notices that are engaging, inviting and effective. We asked local designers to re-imagine a better public notice. Here's what they came up with:

### Proposal: 8-storey student centre

**Address:** 347 Yonge Street  
**Applicant:** Ryerson University  
**Building Type:** education, mixed-use, retail  
**Building Size:** 8-stories (32m, 96ft), 155,463 square-feet



A 45-unit townhouse development has been proposed at **250 Manning Avenue** in the city's Little Italy neighbourhood.

**What do you think? Let us know!**

**?** Join us for a community meeting at **Trinity Recreation Centre** (155 Crawford) on 20 April 2011 at 7:00 pm.

The City of Toronto is the public corporation responsible for guiding urban growth in your city.

Use your voice and help the city grow!

**Can't make it? We still want to hear from you!**

416.392.7622

[sphippis@toronto.ca](mailto:sphippis@toronto.ca)

City of Toronto Public Consultation Unit

**For more info:**

- ▶ [toronto.ca/build/ry2](http://toronto.ca/build/ry2)
- ▶ call **311**
- ▶ [build-ry2@toronto.ca](mailto:build-ry2@toronto.ca)

**TORONTO**  
Building Toronto. Together.

# WE'RE LISTENING.TO

*A seven storey building has been proposed for 1234 Bathurst Street.*

PHONE US  
416 123 4567

[info.ca](mailto:info.ca)

PUBLIC MEETING  
Oct/12/2011 City Hall, 7pm

ONLINE INFO  
[www.toronto.ca/1234bathurst](http://www.toronto.ca/1234bathurst)

means you.  
all ears.

*We're listening to* **YOU.**

### DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

A new 7-story mixed-use building is proposed at **1234 Davenport Street**.  
 The application amends the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law 24-68 to permit mixed uses.

**WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD?**  
Please let us know what you think:

**PUBLIC MEETING** 416-123-4567  
 Thursday, September 22 [1234Main@toronto.ca](mailto:1234Main@toronto.ca)  
 Glenn Gould Hall, 6 pm [www.toronto.ca/1234Main](http://www.toronto.ca/1234Main)

DEVCO DEVELOPMENT CORP

# SPENDING OUR MONEY

Cities around the world are finding new ways to engage citizens directly in their annual budget process.

One of the most important roles of Toronto's City Council is to collect our money – and spend it. From libraries and daycare to transit and parks, the budget process shapes the city around us. Each year, the City provides an opportunity for public input but the process often feels rushed, polarized and simplistic. At times, the public consultation even feels like a formality, a secondary thought that has no influence on

the budget process whatsoever.

Meaningful participation in the budget process would ensure that City services match the expectations of residents in all neighbourhoods. It would also give residents a deeper understanding of where their money goes – knowledge which would reduce simplistic arguments about 'waste'.

There is much to learn from other cities' efforts to increase budget

outreach, education and participation. Some City Councils are even experimenting with 'Participatory Budgets' where citizens vote directly on specific budget items. Globally, more than 1,200 municipalities have initiated some form of participatory budgeting in an effort to fully engage residents in monetary decisions affecting their neighbourhoods.



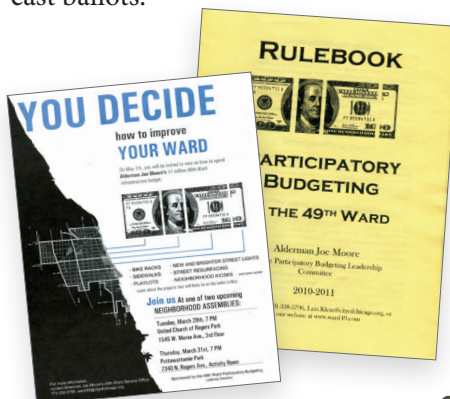
Municipal budget information painted on a wall in Brazil

## 1 PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL

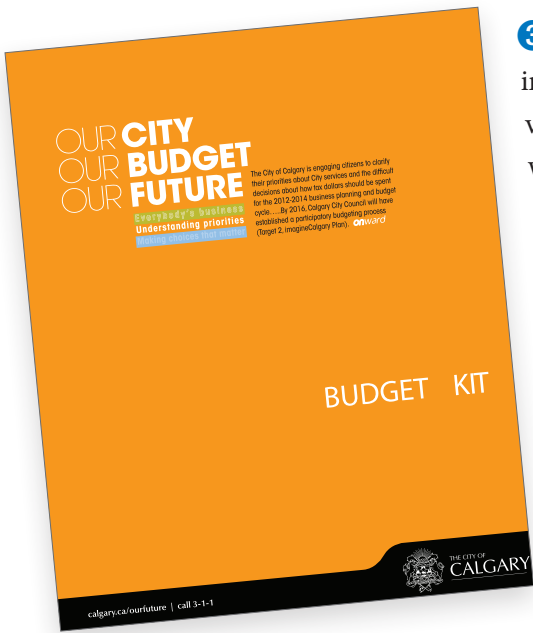
hosted the world's first full participatory budgeting process in 1989 and continues to do so annually. Tens of thousands of citizens participate each year, the majority of whom are low income individuals. Through this process, citizens allocate roughly \$200 million (over 20%) of the city's total budget.

**2 CHICAGO** Alderman Joe Moore recently initiated a participatory budgeting project in his district, making the 49th Ward the first political jurisdiction in America to do so. All ward residents over age sixteen, regardless of citizenship or voter registration status, are invited to research, propose and select projects to be funded with the ward's \$1.3 million in discretionary funds.

In 2010, more than 1,600 citizens cast ballots.



Chicago's 49th Ward participatory budget



**3 THE CITY OF CALGARY** initiated a review of core services in 2011, inviting citizens to weigh in on their priorities for city services and budget allocations. During the four month process more than 250 events

were held and over 24,000 individuals participated via workshops, surveys, community conversations and social media platforms. Calgary City Council has also adopted a plan to establish a participatory budgeting process by 2016.



**4 TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING**, the second largest housing authority in North America, has been practicing participatory budgeting since 2001. Each year, tenants decide how to allocate roughly \$9 million in capital funds.



Toronto Community Housing



**HAVE YOU MET TOBI?**  
The Toronto Open Budget Initiative (TOBI) advocates for the addition of new opportunities for public input, increased access to information, increased public education and the exploration of long-term changes towards a more participatory budget process.



# THE NEXT GENERATION

“An educational system isn’t worth a great deal if it teaches young people how to make a living but doesn’t teach them how to make a life.”



“It’s great that Ontario’s curriculum contains a mandatory civics unit. But as a half-course, in a single year, there is simply too much material to cover. We’re just scratching the surface. And as you might expect, the topic of local government is often overshadowed by the provincial and federal content”.

**STEPHEN KAGANSKY-YOUNG,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CIVICS  
EDUCATION NETWORK.**



**C**ivics  
**E**ducation  
**N**etwork



inner-workings of local democracy and city-building. Guest presenters include City staff from 15 departments including Transportation Infrastructure, Land Use Planning, Community Services and the Mayor’s office.

Building a culture of civic engagement begins in our schools. If students aren’t introduced to the basics of local democracy, they are less likely to participate later in life.

## 1 CITY HALL SCHOOL

What can we learn from other cities? In Calgary’s City Hall School, students from grades three to nine spend an entire week in a classroom at City Hall learning about the

## 2 CIVICS IN OUR HIGH SCHOOLS

Ontario’s grade ten Civics course attempts to squeeze municipal, provincial, federal and global politics into one semester. And while Civics is all about changing the present and future, this half-course is inexplicably found within the ‘History’ curriculum, where it’s the only half-course offered – even *American History* gets a full course.

# VOTE<sup>TO</sup>16.CA

### SWEET SIXTEEN

Another way to get high school students interested in politics might be allowing them to vote! If they are responsible enough to drive a car, and mature enough to serve in the Canadian Military Reserves – aren’t they ready to vote?





### ③ MAXIMUM CITY

Maximum City is a pilot project at University of Toronto Schools giving high school students hands-on experience in urban planning, civic engagement and “the inner-workings of our municipal government.”



“While children and youth account for one third of city dwellers, scant formal educational opportunities exist for them to learn about and engage in how we plan, build and live in cities. Students are ready to get involved in community and city-building projects and have fresh and innovative ideas for improving our city—we just have to invite them to the table and start the conversation.”

**JOSH FULLAN,**  
DIRECTOR, MAXIMUM CITY



### FUN FACT!

In 1978, Gloria Lindsay Luby wrote a paper for the Toronto Bureau of Municipal Research called “Teaching Local Government: A Responsibility of the Educational System”. Twenty-two years later, she was elected to Etobicoke City Council and is still a City Councillor today in Toronto.

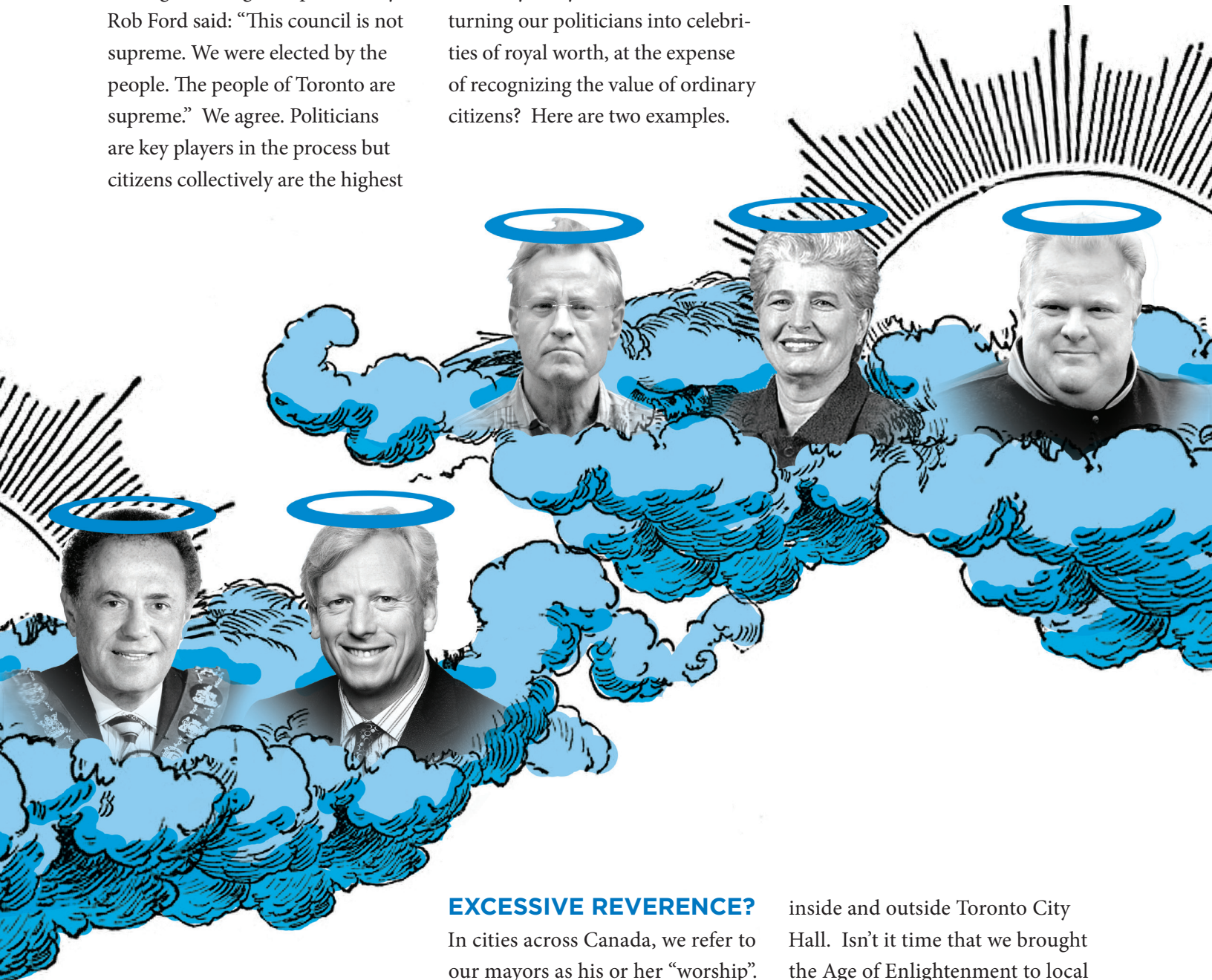


# ELEVATING THE CITIZENRY

If our goal is to elevate the role of ‘citizen’ in our local democracy, let’s start by taking a look at how we culturally rank all of our political players.

During his inaugural speech, Mayor Rob Ford said: “This council is not supreme. We were elected by the people. The people of Toronto are supreme.” We agree. Politicians are key players in the process but citizens collectively are the highest

authority. Why then do we insist on turning our politicians into celebrities of royal worth, at the expense of recognizing the value of ordinary citizens? Here are two examples.



## EXCESSIVE REVERENCE?

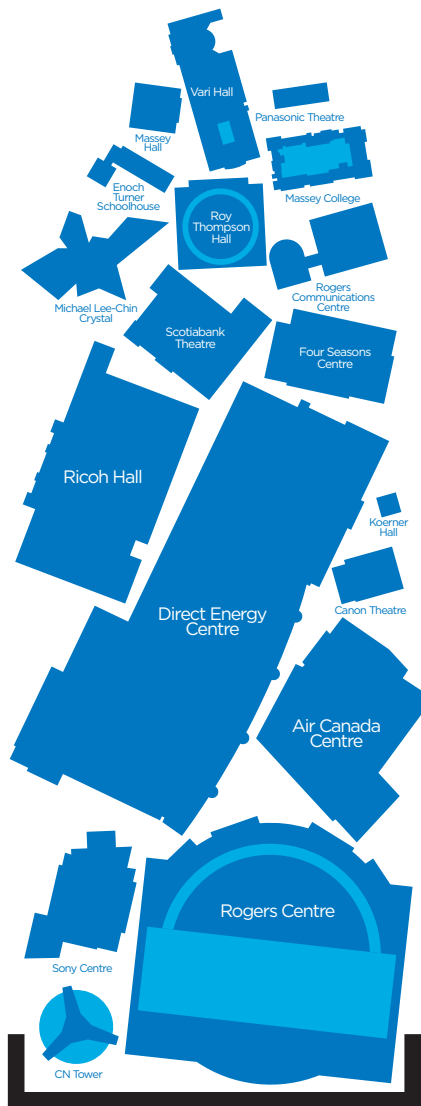
In cities across Canada, we refer to our mayors as his or her “worship”. Nothing in our official bylaws or protocol requires the use of this title, yet it’s frequently used both

inside and outside Toronto City Hall. Isn’t it time that we brought the Age of Enlightenment to local government? The mayor is just a dude. Not a god.

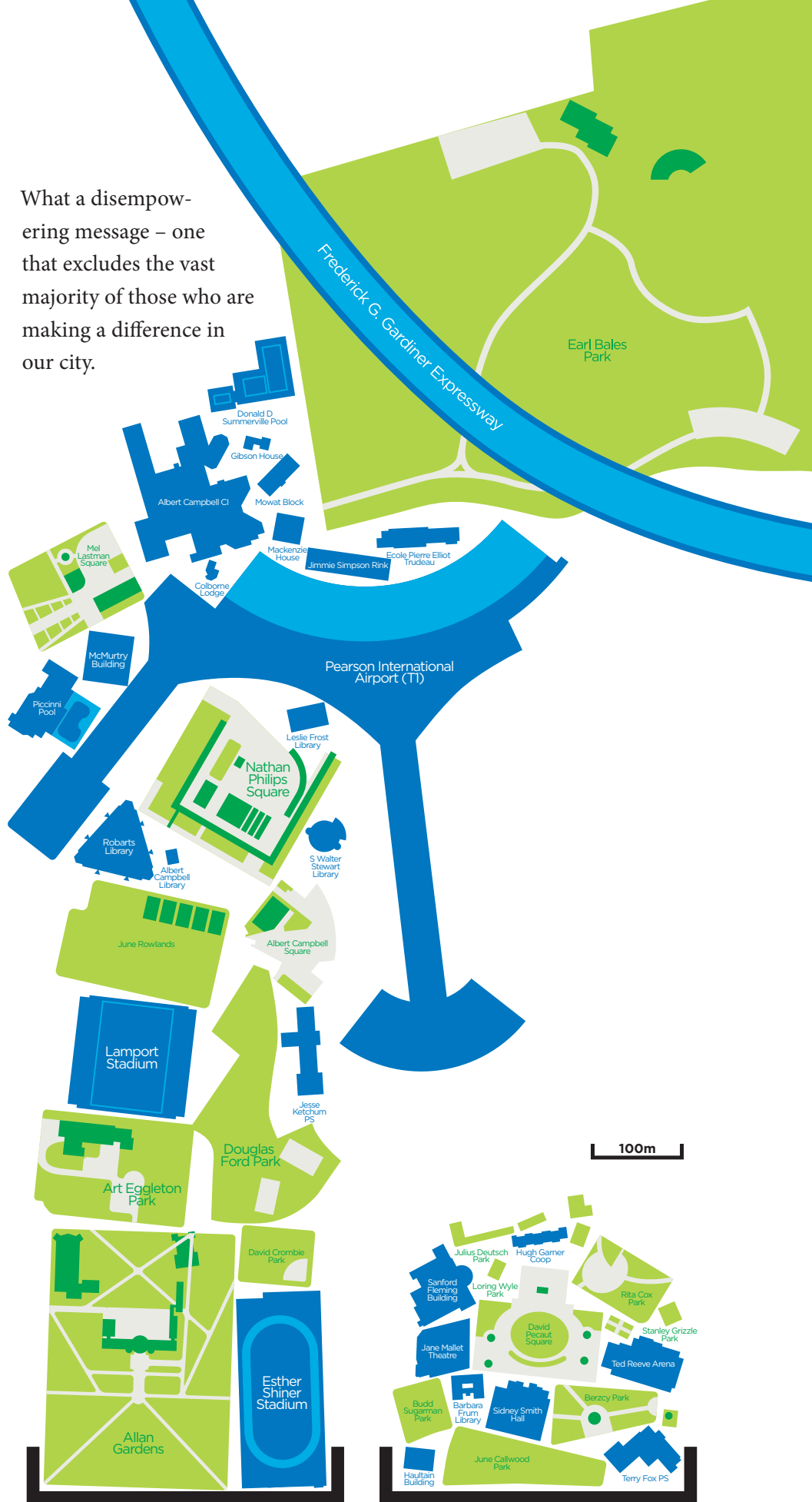
## HONOURING COMMUNITY LEADERS

We can learn a lot about a city by looking at who its parks, buildings and squares are named after. The trend in Toronto is to name landmarks after politicians, corporations, celebrities or philanthropists. But what about average citizens who take a strong leadership role in city-building? Where is Jane Jacobs Square? Brent Hawkes Gardens? Dudley Lawes Arena? What about Tooker Gomberg or Wendy Babcock? It seems if you're not wealthy or elected, you're not important.

What a disempowering message – one that excludes the vast majority of those who are making a difference in our city.



CORPORATIONS AND  
PHILANTHROPISTS



POLITICIANS



THE REST OF US



# CITIZENS UNITE!!

In cities across the world, citizens have found ways to work together to give themselves a louder voice. Residents associations, urban leagues and voters unions have empowered residents to play a major role in policy development. Toronto has a strong history of resident organising, including recent examples of successful neighbourhood advocacy. But there is much room for improvement, innovation and growth.

## BRINGING BACK THE BUREAU?

As City Hall becomes increasingly polarised, Toronto's residents thirst for non-partisan voices to provide positive, balanced, research-based

solutions. Perhaps we can draw inspiration from the Toronto Bureau of Municipal Research? Founded in 1914, the Bureau produced dozens of reports on local issues for seven decades

The Bureau was also very engaged with elections, including this creative survey from 1919 trying to understand voter apathy in the city:



BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH



## THE STATE OF OUR RESIDENTS' GROUPS

Toronto has dozens of residents' associations, some of which are highly organized while others are inactive. These groups receive little support from the City and lack a city-wide organisation connecting them to each other and to the larger public. In fact, there is no comprehensive

list or map of residents' groups anywhere in Toronto. To their credit, City staff have made efforts to compile a list but the document is incomplete, isn't available online, and only provides snail mail addresses and phone numbers.

Contrast this with the structure of our Business Improvement Associations, who receive support

from dedicated City staff and have a central body (TABIA – Toronto Association of BIAs) that maintains a website, an updated list, and a map of all existing groups.

Some American cities have officially recognised neighbourhood associations who receive staff support, and in some cases, direct funding:



### LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBOURHOOD EMPOWERMENT

supports 90 elected Neighborhood Councils

### PORTLAND OFFICE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD INVOLVEMENT

supports 95 Neighborhood Associations

### MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

supports 81 neighbourhoods

**ENGAGED ONTARIO**  
We can also learn from nearby existing groups, as nearby as the Guelph Civics League, the London Urban League, or Citizens at City Hall (CATCH) in Hamilton.



*"Toronto's BIA model is a great example of how support from City Hall can help local grassroots groups flourish. It would be great to see the same level support going to our residents' associations. And imagine what these two sets of groups could do for our neighbourhoods if they were working together."*

**RAFAEL GOMEZ** Associate Professor at the Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, Author of the forthcoming book, "Small Business and the City"



# HOP TO IT! INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING

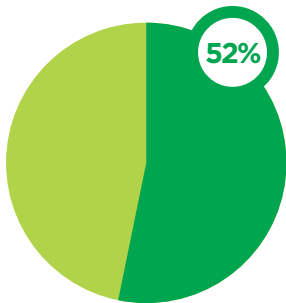
Bringing fair and friendly elections to Toronto.

Our local elections serve many purposes. They provide an opportunity to discuss and debate important issues, give citizens a chance to show leadership by putting their name on the ballot and are supposed to deliver a City Council that represents the views of voters – and the diversity of our city.

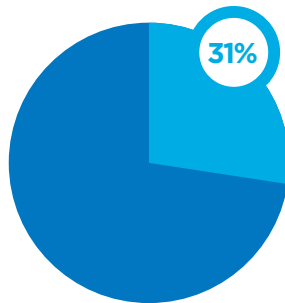
But using an obscure prehistoric voting system ensures that these goals are often thwarted. The ‘winners’ of each race often do

not represent a majority of voters – Councillors have been recently elected with as little as 17% of the vote. Important issues are often overshadowed by simplistic soundbites, negative campaigns and debates about ‘strategic voting’. Many citizens who want to run are pushed out of local races due to the threat of vote splitting and our elections consistently produce Councils that do not represent our cultural diversity:

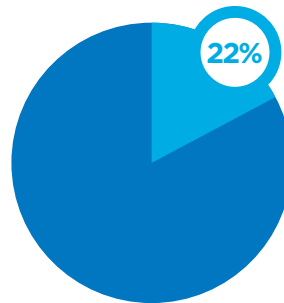
**WOMEN IN TORONTO**



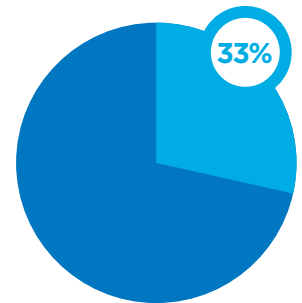
**WOMEN ON TORONTO CITY COUNCIL**



2003

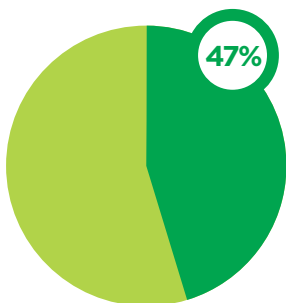


2006

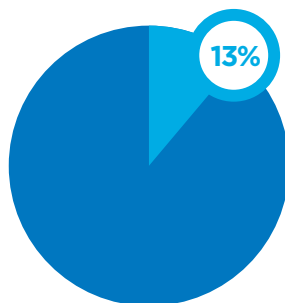


2010

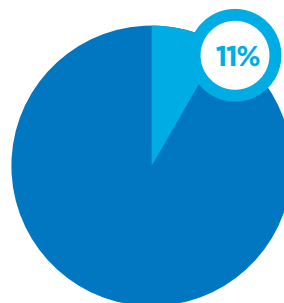
**VISIBLE MINORITIES IN TORONTO**



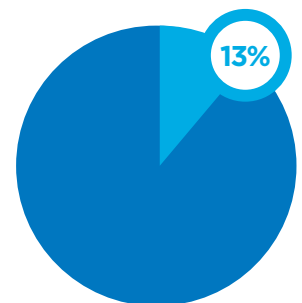
**VISIBLE MINORITIES ON TORONTO CITY COUNCIL**



2003



2006



2010



**THE RANKED BALLOT INITIATIVE OF TORONTO** proposes

Instant Runoff Voting for our City Council. It's a simple system that only allows someone to win a race if they have over 50% of the vote. If no candidate gets a majority on the first count, then the candidate with the least votes is dropped off

the ballot and voters get to choose again. This repeats until there is a winner. With a ranked ballot, this entire process happens in just a few minutes with no need for multiple voting rounds. That's why it's called an 'Instant Runoff'.

Runoffs are used in almost every American city for local elections. They are also used by every political party in Canada to choose their candidates and leader. That's because runoff voting ensures majority support, eliminates

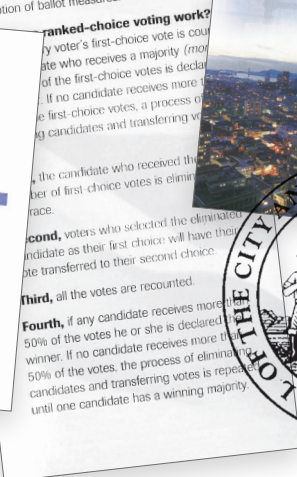
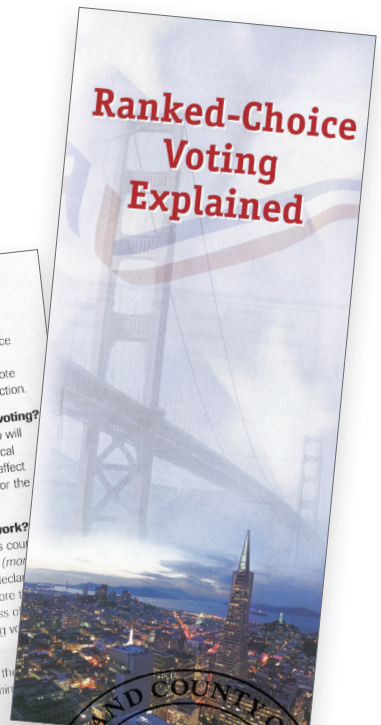
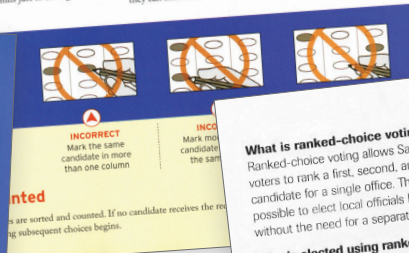
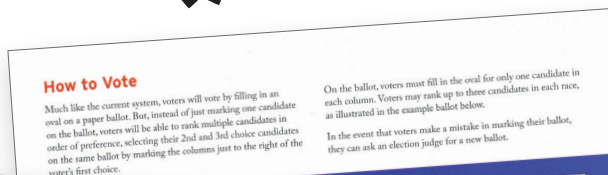
vote splitting and reduces strategic voting. Runoffs allow more candidates to run, encouraging more diversity on the ballot and increasing turnover. With runoff voting, campaigns tend to be more positive, with fewer attack ads, as candidates are seeking 'second choice' votes from their opponents' supporters.

So, why don't we use it in Toronto? Instant Runoff Voting is a small, simple change that would make Toronto's elections more inclusive, diverse, friendly and fair. Let's do it.

Ranked ballots are used by all Canadian parties, the Oscars (for Best Picture) and by the NHL and NBA for player awards.



Ranked ballot leaflet from the City of Minneapolis



**FUN FACT!**  
Toronto's official procedural bylaws mandates that City Councillors must use runoff voting to choose the Chairs of each Standing Committee. But if they're supposed to use runoffs it to pick their leaders - shouldn't we use runoffs to pick ours?



# CHOOSING WHEN WE CHOOSE

Civic elections in Toronto are not meeting our expectations. Voter turnout is low, new faces on Council are uncommon and City Council does not reflect the evolving demographic of our diverse population. What changes can we make to improve the situation? Let's start with timing.

## SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND, SIR?

There is a golden rule in event planning: If you want to maximize public attendance at a city-wide event, you should hold it on the weekend. A week-end election would likely increase voter turnout, especially in low income neighbourhoods. Both Montreal and Vancouver hold their city elections on the weekend. Why don't we?



MAJOR CITY EVENTS HELD ON **WEEKDAYS**



MAJOR CITY EVENTS HELD ON **WEEKENDS**



## THE PERPETUALLY EXPANDING TERM

Up until 1956, Toronto held municipal elections each year. A series of referendums asked voters if they supported a longer term for Council and almost every time, the answer was ‘No’.

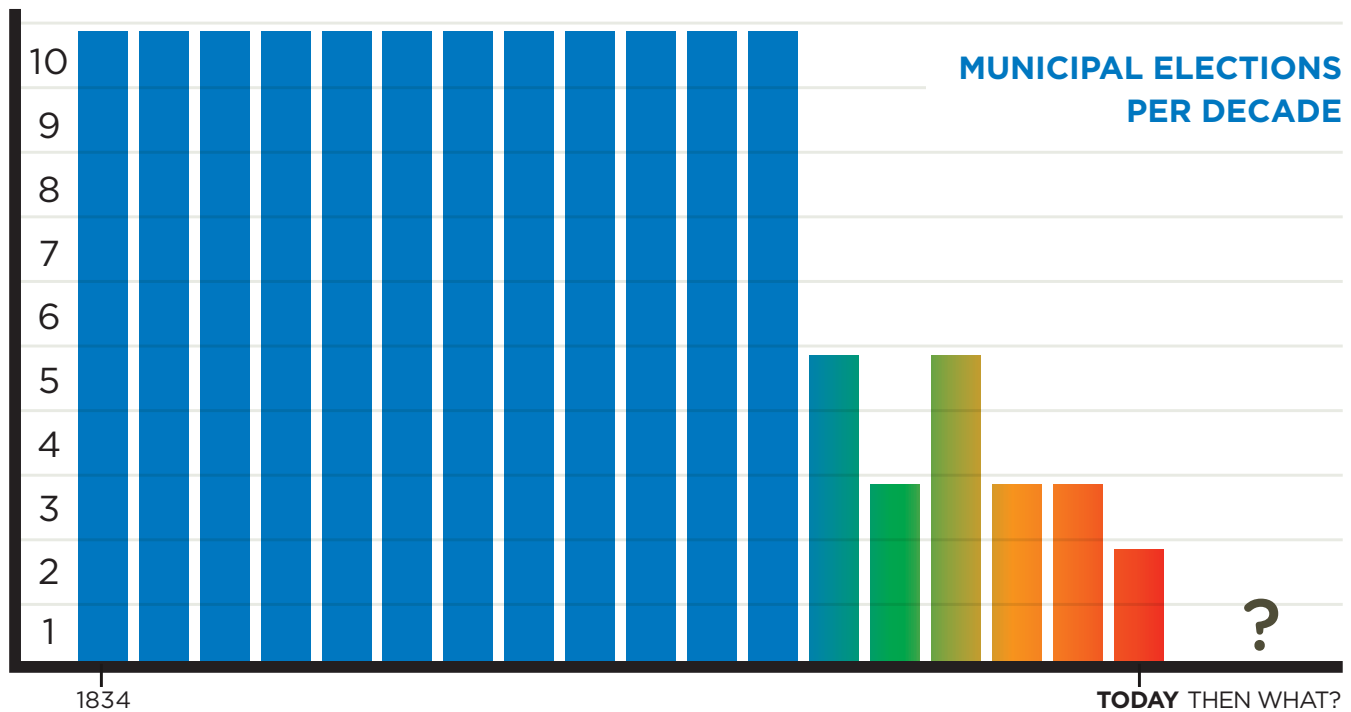
Eventually, the term changed to two years, then three. The most recent change, however, happened without any referendum at all. At the request of Councillors and Mayors from across the Ontario,

the provincial government changed the term to four years, with no consultation or debate. In fact, the change was buried as a minor note in a budget bill. It seems wrong that politicians are able to change their office terms without consulting their true employers: us.

At the local level in particular, four years is very long. Unlike minority governments at the provincial and federal levels, a City Council government can never fall on a confidence vote – even if their public

support has plummeted. Despite the often-heard argument that three years “isn’t enough time to plan anything”, we know that City Councillors built the Yonge Street subway, the Bloor Street Viaduct, our sewage system, and the R.C. Harris water plant – all with single year terms.

Longer terms mean one thing: less accountability. And the trend we’ve seen in the last five decades is unsettling:



### FUN FACT!

In 2006, Councillor Michael Walker put forward a motion at City Council AGAINST the introduction of the four year term, and requested a public referendum instead.

The motion was seconded by ten Councillors, including then-Councillor

Rob Ford and six members of his current inner circle: David Shiner, Cesar Palacio, Michael Thompson, Karen Stintz, Mike Del Grande and Doug Holyday.



“Should we extend the term of City Council from one year, to two?” This referendum was held eight times in the City of Toronto:

	YES	NO
Jan 1, 1912	6,764	23,854
Jan 1 1940	29,978	74,053
Jan 1, 1941	28,189	58,527
Jan 1, 1947	48,547	51,403
Jan 1, 1949	50,440	73,250
Dec 4, 1950	63,863	104,109
Dec 1, 1952	50,278	69,320
Dec 5, 1955	47,958	33,742



# OUR ELECTIONS: BACK TO BASICS

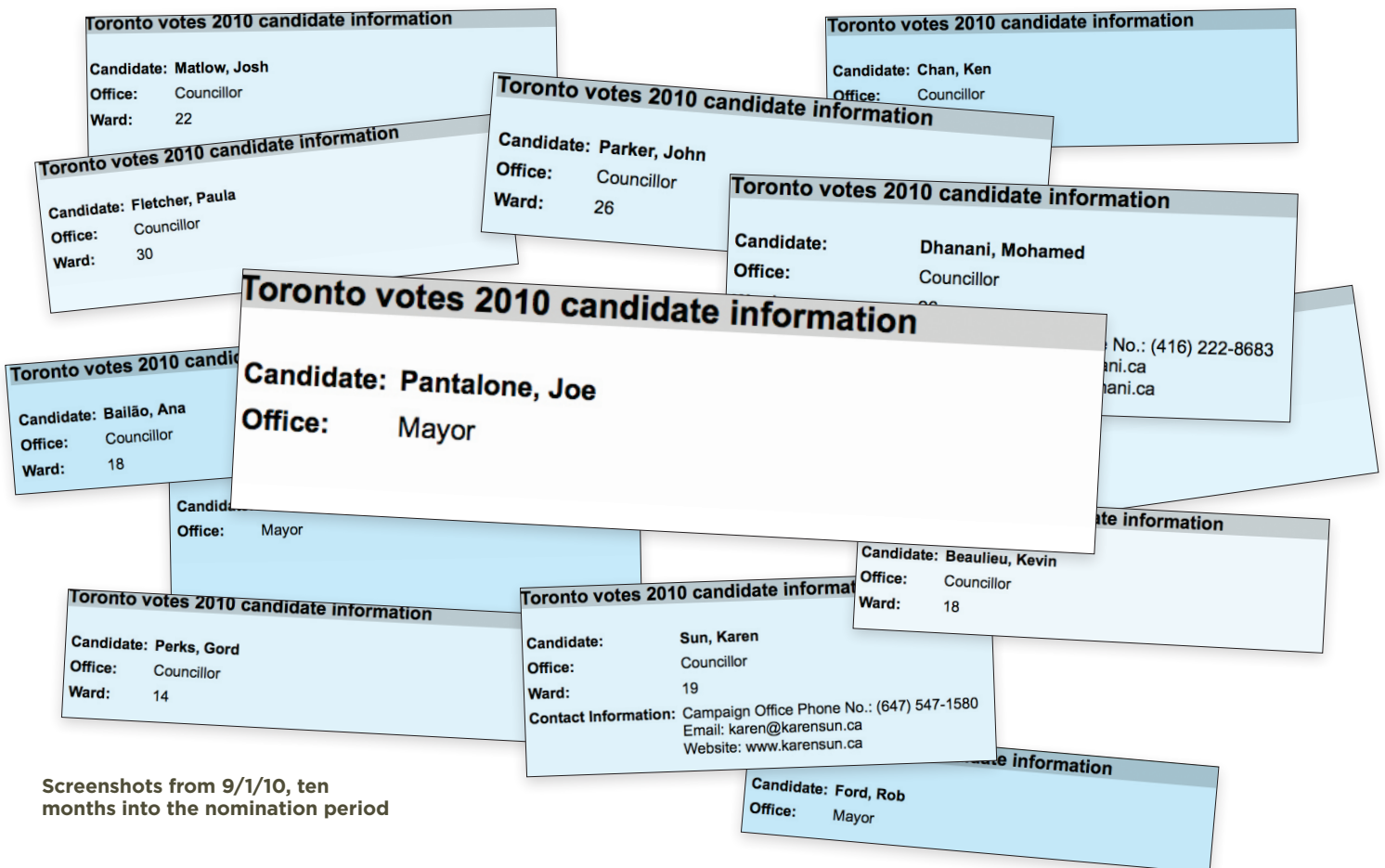
There are many innovative reforms that could improve our elections, including term limits, a lower voting age, proportional models, online voting and various finance reforms. But let's not forget about the basics too. Proper outreach and communication from the City is essential for our elections to be engaging and relevant to voters.

## IT'S TIME FOR A WEBSITE MAKEOVER

While some city departments are moving towards interactive 'Web 2.0', the City's election website is still working towards '1.0'. Some of the most basic information that voters need is not there. Ideally, we should

be able to enter our postal code and instantly be connected to a page listing our ward candidates, links to their websites, a map of campaign offices and a calendar of debates. Instead, we are faced with awkward navigation, incomplete information and no external links at all. Ar-

chaically, the City refuses to provide any hyperlinks to campaigns and will only provide information for campaigns who have filled out a special paper form – by fax, mail or hand-delivery. The result is that most campaigns have no information listed at all.



Screenshots from 9/1/10, ten months into the nomination period

## SEEKING CANDIDATES

One of the most significant ways for a citizen to engage at City Hall is to put their name on a ballot and run for Councillor, Trustee, or Mayor. It's an incredible opportunity that happens only once every four years. Each election there are 67 positions available

(44 Councillors, 22 Trustees and Mayor). In the private sector, if a company suddenly had 67 senior positions to fill, they would invest an enormous amount of energy to announce the job postings and hunt for a good crop of candidates. But at City Hall, when nominations open they do almost nothing.

Instead, we see a ten month campaign encouraging residents to 'VOTE' even though eight of those months are technically the 'Nomination Period'. How would an ordinary citizen even know that nominations are open to the public and only cost \$100?

**NOW OPEN!**

**GREEN TORONTO AWARDS**  
THE CITY OF TORONTO'S ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

# Call for Nominations 2010

**WHO'S THE GREENEST OF THEM ALL? YOU TELL US!**  
Nominations are now open for the City of Toronto's environmental awards of excellence—the Green Toronto Awards. Submit your nomination and help us recognize the people, organizations and companies leading the way to a cleaner, greener Toronto. Winners will receive a prestigious Green Toronto Award and \$5,000 to donate to the charity of their choice.

**AWARD CATEGORIES**  
Community Projects  
Youth  
Local Food  
Energy Conservation  
Green Design  
Green Roof  
Environmental Awareness  
Leadership  
Water Efficiency

**COME CELEBRATE!**  
Join Mayor David Miller, Deputy Mayor Joe Pantalone and special guests for an evening of awards, music and celebration.  
Friday, April 23, 2010  
7:00 pm–8:30 pm  
Main Stage of the Green Living Show, Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place

**Nominations close February 12, 2010**  
Get the details at [toronto.ca/greentorontoawards](http://toronto.ca/greentorontoawards)

Logos: TORONTO, Livegreen, greenliving, ARCADIS, Citytv, Mixed Sources.

**NOW OPEN!**

**TORONTO CITY COUNCIL ELECTION**

# Call for Nominations 2014

**JOB DESCRIPTION:**  
Malesuada sedlerisque tempor justo, non ullamcorper mauris seelerisque a. Nullam non nulla ligula, id gravida risus. Pellentesque commodo tempus orci in adipiscing Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per conubia nostra, per inceptos himenaeos. Proin sed sem et sapien malesuada aliquet. Sed imperdiet ante sed Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per.

**HOW TO SIGN-UP**  
Pellentesque commodo tempus orci in adipiscing Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per conubia nostra, per inceptos himenaeos. Proin sed sem et sapien malesuada aliquet. Sed imperdiet ante sed Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per.

**IMPORTANT DATES:**  
**JUNE 25, 2011:** Aliquam in tortor consequat felis laoreet tempor sit amet vel lacus.  
**AUG 1, 2011:** Duis ipsum neque, dictum quis volutpat quis, consectetur eget diam.

**Nominations close September 6, 2014**  
Visit [toronto.ca/election2014](http://toronto.ca/election2014)  
Call **311**

Logos: TORONTO, Citytv.

Strangely, the City seems more than able to promote other kinds of nominations in Toronto

This is the kind of ad we should see in Toronto

**Our Toronto**  
Building a great city — together

**VOTE 10.25.10**  
toronto.ca/elections  
Get on the Voters' List.

**WHAT'S INSIDE**  
September 2010  
Mayor's Report  
City Council  
City Services  
City Budget  
City Planning  
City Development  
City Environment  
City Culture  
City Parks  
City Transportation  
City Housing  
City Social Services  
City Health  
City Police  
City Fire  
City Public Works  
City Parks and Recreation  
City Library  
City Community Services  
City Elections  
City Information

The city's spring newsletter, seven months before the election. Not a word about nominations.



**FUN FACT!**  
During an election year, the City's nomination office is located in the far back hallways of City Hall - within the lottery office. At one single desk, you can request an application for a bingo licence, a raffle permit, or to run for mayor.



# MAKING MEETINGS MEANINGFUL

A wonderful biography of William Lyon Mackenzie (the first mayor of Toronto) was published by John Sewell (our 58th mayor) in 2002. In the last chapter, Sewell attempts to summarise Mackenzie’s political philosophy which was focused primarily on the mechanics of process and participation. His ‘principles of democracy’ include the following:

- 1 The public is entitled to full information concerning the issues and conduct of public business.
- 2 There must be appropriate opportunities for public discussion of public issues and the conduct of public business, and those elected to office have an obligation to ensure that these opportunities exist.
- 3 Interested members of the public will have opportunities to present their opinions to those elected to office.

150 years after Mackenzie, how are we doing? City Council does allow for public deputations at all Committee meetings, but there’s still much room for improvement:

## LAST-MINUTE TRICKS

When it comes to making information accessible, the City is doing quite well. In fact, the City Clerk’s Office recently won three awards for their new City Council website.

However, there are always loopholes and the system depends on the integrity and goodwill of City Councillors. For example, we’ve recently seen Councillors introduce controversial items at the last minute, depriving both citizens and Councillors of the relevant information in advance. This is done intentionally to avoid scrutiny, debate and public feedback.



John Sewell

*“Mackenzie believed that once people had information and the opportunity to discuss issues with friends and neighbours, they would have reasonable opinions worth expressing to those charged with making a decision. The governing process included setting aside time for people to be heard by those who had been elected to make public decisions.”*

*The job of an elected representative in a democracy is often said to be to represent, and there’s no more effective way of doing this task than listening.”*



*Hey, I know it’s last minute, but I propose we rip out a major bike lane.*

## MIDNIGHT MEETINGS

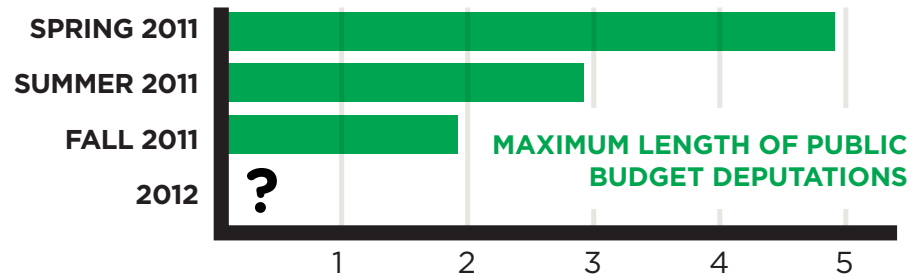
We've also seen the introduction of '24-hour meetings' which are seen to discourage participation by forcing deputants to attend Committee meetings in the middle of the night.

## DAYTIME MEETINGS

Most of the public consultations at City Hall and our Civic Centres are held during the daytime and the timing of each item is not announced. Often this means that Councillors only get to hear one side of the story. Private developers or billboard companies can afford to have lobbyists attend all day, but residents are not able to wait around for their item.

## SHRINKING DEPUTATIONS

The amount of time allotted to public budget deputations has been drastically cut back this year – from 5 minutes, to 3, and then 2.



## MOVING FORWARD

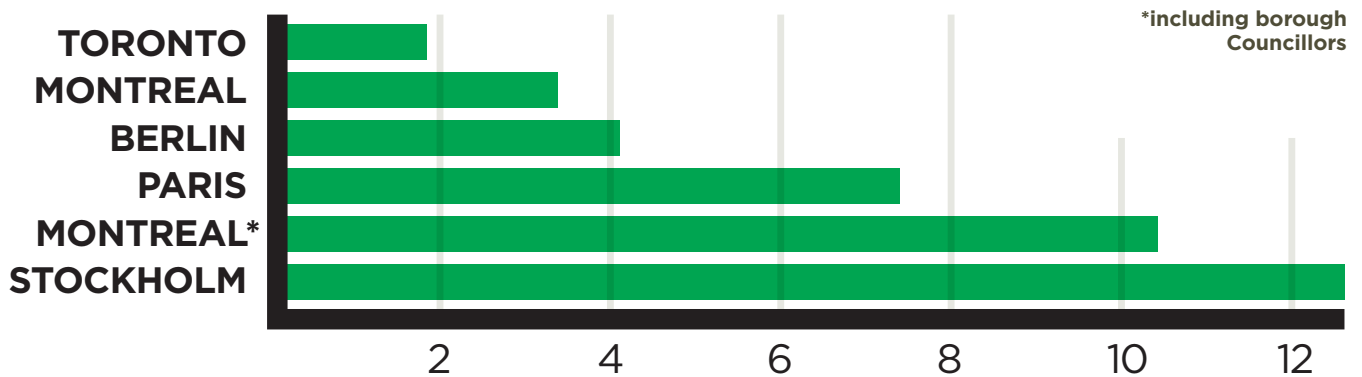
If we want to boost participation, we should explore:

- evening meetings (6-9PM)
- timed items with clear schedules
- on-site childcare
- provision of refreshments
- increased promotion of meetings
- clear plain language materials that explain the process including any required translations for Toronto's diverse communities



# BREAK IT DOWN

Education advocates often stress the importance of small classroom sizes. If a class is too large, the teacher can't provide adequate attention to individual students. The same theory applies at City Hall, where a Councillor's responsiveness is affected by the size of the ward. As Toronto has grown we've seen a steady reduction in representation with ratios as high as one Councillor per 88,000 citizens. This is a staggering number and inconsistent with many cities our size:



① While we still maintain 'Community Councils' in four regions of the City, these bodies have very little power, are not elected separately and don't have their own budget. Many cities our size have

some form of two-tier structure allowing for communities to engage at the local level.

These bodies can be directly elected with a wide range of delegated authority, as in Montreal, or they

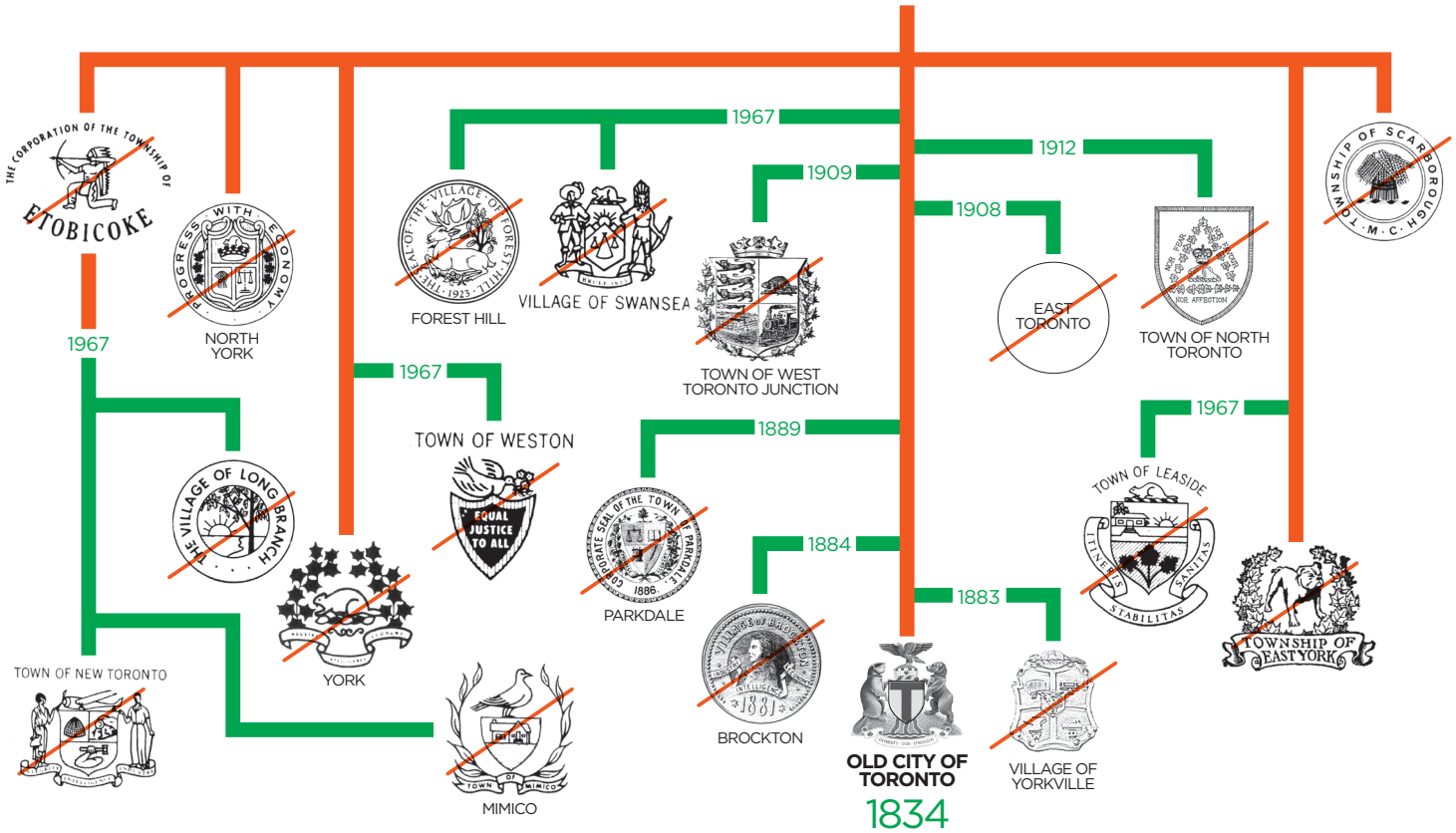
can be appointed advisory bodies, as in New York City. In either case, they represent areas much smaller than our current Community Councils and provide further opportunity for local citizen participation.



**NEW YORK CITY:**  
59 COMMUNITY BOARDS. MEMBERS ARE APPOINTED.



**MONTREAL:**  
19 BOROUGHS, WITH DIRECTLY ELECTED COUNCILLORS AND MAYOR.



② Not only has the ratio shifted, we've also seen a huge shift in the geography of political access. Fifteen years ago, residents in Malvern lived four kilometers from their City Hall in Scarborough. But after the forced amalgamation of

Metro, these residents now live over twenty kilometers from City Hall. The same goes for residents of Etobicoke, North York or any of the cities and towns that have been amalgamated over time. In fact, in the history of Toronto, we have

dissolved nineteen City Councils in the name of 'efficiency'. Each amalgamation has reduced access to local decision-making.

## FUN FACT!

In 2006 a Toronto staff report recommended that "the City launch a community dialogue on reconnecting people with City government... that considers processes and structures to improve engagement at the neighbourhood, community, ward and City-wide levels and improve public participation in the decision-making process." ...This community dialogue never happened.



"Part of what we have lost through amalgamation is a viable political structure for planning and managing the complex web of local stewardship that makes cities work. The situation points to a critical need for strong subentities that work within the larger scale, beyond the very limited Community Council model. The key concept is getting to the ideal size and right degree of power and responsibility of "subsidiarity", an organizing principle which holds that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralized competent authority."

**KEN GREENBERG** Former Director of Urban Design and Architecture for the City of Toronto.  
Excerpt from "Walking Home"



# UPGRADING THE CLAMSHELL

City Hall is the heart of our local democracy. Yet only a small percentage of citizens have walked through its doors. Indeed, the public gallery which can hold 300 people sometimes sits empty during Council meetings. Many factors contribute to the general lack of awareness of City Hall's opportunities and resources. Here are two simple ideas that could help.

## SIGNAGE & INFORMATION

If a citizen walked into City Hall today looking for some information about our local democracy, they could be excused for thinking they were in the wrong place. The main floor of 100 Queen Street West is

currently configured primarily as a kiosk for developers and an information centre for tourists. For example, there are 144 different flyers and leaflets available in the front lobby and not a single one of them is about City Hall or mu-

nicipal government. No ward map. No meeting calendar. No printed materials about Community Councils, Standing Committees or public deputations.



Actual flyers from Toronto City Hall

## FUN FACT!

There used to be booklets available in the lobby of City Hall all about local democracy but they haven't been seen in years.



## Wi-Fi

Coffee shops have known for many years that providing Wi-Fi is a great way to attract customers. And universities, libraries and City Halls across North America have been installing Wi-Fi to increase accessibility and participation – since 1994:

- UNIVERSITIES
- BUSINESSES
- PUBLIC SPACES
- CITY HALLS
- CITY NETWORK



### CITY HALL Wi-Fi WOULD:

- 1** make it easier for citizens to attend meetings during work hours.
- 2** encourage citizens to interact with the proceedings by downloading reports, viewing agendas, tracking votes and submitting written deputations directly to the Clerk.
- 3** allow more citizens to use Facebook and Twitter at City Hall, raising public awareness about Council issues and procedures.

# THE GOOD NEWS

While the purpose of this exhibit is to identify problems, gaps and opportunities at City Hall, let's also take a moment to congratulate City staff on some positive initiatives and success stories:

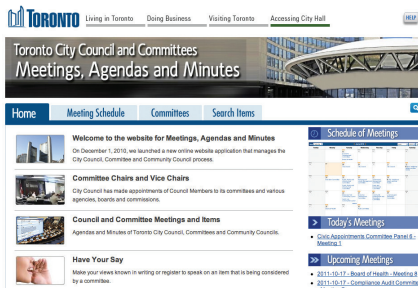
## [toronto.ca/open](http://toronto.ca/open)

— building a city that thinks like the web



### OPENING UP

Toronto Open Data launched in 2009. The goal of Open Data is to make the government more accessible and transparent by providing “unfiltered access to information”. So far, the program has released over fifty data sets including election results, bike counts, billboard applications and Councillors’ attendance records.

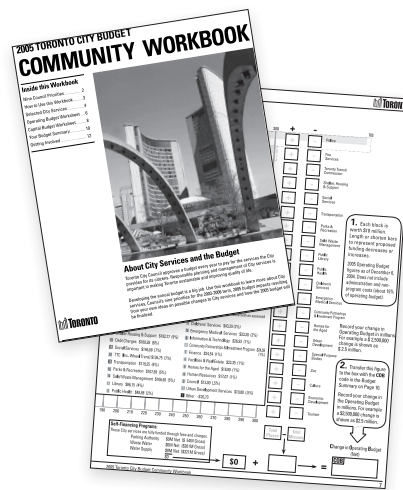


**The City’s award-winning Council portal**

### #WINNING

The City Clerk’s Office recently won three prestigious awards for their new web portal “Toronto.ca/council” which is designed to help Toronto residents have better, faster and more convenient access to information about Council proceedings. The new system allows the public to find agendas, background reports and

minutes quickly and improves the way the public can engage by providing simple feedback buttons.



### WATCH YOUR SPENDING

City staff have produced educational materials about the budget, including the Community Budget Workbook. This booklet invites citizens to explore the impacts of the re-allocation of capital and operational funds on City services.



### TAKING ACTION

Neighbourhood Action Teams have been established in each of the city’s thirteen priority neighbourhoods. These teams bring together

staff working locally from City of Toronto divisions and City boards to address local needs and “build community capacity”



**Student youth poster contest**

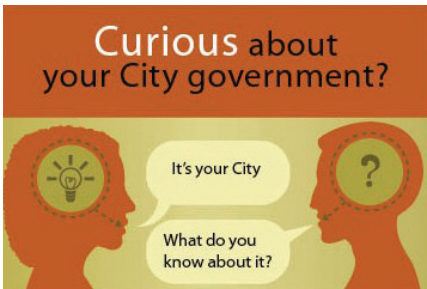
### TEACH YOUR CHILDREN WELL

Toronto Election Services has recently developed educational materials in collaboration with the Civics Education Network and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. During 2010, the materials were distributed to teachers and used by staff to educate youth about the upcoming election.



## CONNECTING THE DOTS

The City's Public Consultation Unit has been experimenting with Dot-Mocracy, an innovative method for participatory decision making with large groups.



## BACK TO SCHOOL

In 2009, 175 people took part in Civics 101, a six-part learning series about decision-making, finances, planning and elections. A web portal with video highlights and presentations, links to background material and learning exercises allowed the general public to follow along online. 950 people applied to participate but due to limited resources 80% were not able to participate. The program did not take place in 2010 or 2011 but will hopefully return in 2012.



## GETTING IN ON THE GROUND FLOOR

City Councillor **Paul Ainslie**, chair of the Government Management Committee, has recently introduced two motions related to increasing civic engagement. One calls for increased use of social media by Council and Committees and the other recommends the creation of a Civic Engagement office in the lobby of City Hall.

# A RECIPE FOR CHANGE

Here is a summary of thirty-six recommendations emerging from this exhibit.

## REACHING OUT

- 1 Public notices should be completely re-designed, as 'marketing' materials
- 2 The Ontario Planning Act should be amended to allow for public notice re-design
- 3 Public notices should be published in more than one newspaper

## SPENDING OUR MONEY

- 4 Let's explore participatory budgets for Toronto's neighbourhoods
- 5 The number of community information sessions across the city should be increased
- 6 The budget process should be promoted more widely, using plain language

## THE NEXT GENERATION

- 7 Our provincial curriculum should include a full course on municipalities and neighbourhoods
- 8 A 'City Hall School' should be created with a designated classroom at Toronto City Hall
- 9 Let's lower the voting age to 16

## ELEVATING THE CITIZENRY

- 10 It's time to retire the title of "worship"
- 11 Toronto should create tributes to non-elected (and unwealthy) community leaders
- 12 Citizens should decide in a poll who we name landmarks after, rather than politicians naming things after themselves

## MUNICIPAL RESPONSIBILITY

## CITIZENS UNITE!

- 13 The City should have several staff positions dedicated to supporting residents' groups
- 14 Let's create and support an active city-wide association of residents' groups

## HOP TO IT!

- 15 Let's bring ranked ballots and Instant Runoff Voting to Toronto

## CHOOSING WHEN WE CHOOSE

- 16 Our municipal elections should be held on a Saturday or Sunday
- 17 Let's dump the four-year term, since no one asked for it in the first place
- 18 Legislation should be created imposing a binding referendum on future term extensions

## OUR ELECTIONS: BACK TO BASICS

- 19 Our elections website needs a makeover including a fully integrated ward search function
- 20 Campaigns should be allowed to easily provide contact information online
- 21 The election website should include active hyperlinks to candidates' websites
- 22 The city should proactively promote the nomination process and encourage nominations

## MAKING MEETINGS MEANINGFUL

- 23 New regulations should restrict the introduction of controversial motions without notice

## PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 24 Overnight consultations should be banned due to inaccessibility

- 25 A minimum deputation length should be established, one that cannot be over-ruled

- 26 Let's explore the viability of evening meetings for Community Councils (6-9pm)

- 27 "Timed items" should be introduced more frequently to make attendance easier

- 28 Childcare opportunities should be explored for public meetings

- 29 Snacks and beverages should be provided at all public meetings

- 30 Meetings should be better promoted with good design, plain language and translations

## BREAK IT DOWN

- 31 Our ward boundaries should be redrawn to reduce the discrepancy in sizes

- 32 Let's explore new models of subsidiarity for Toronto's neighbourhoods and former cities

- 33 The proposed "Dialogue on reconnecting people with government" should be launched in 2012

## UPGRADING THE CLAMSHELL

- 34 Better signage and outreach/education materials should be created in our City Hall lobby

- 35 Free and open Wi-Fi should be immediately installed at City Hall and all Civic Centres

- 36 A "one stop" resource centre for citizen engagement should be created at City Hall

# THANK YOU!

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