

City Council singing Our Tune...Almost City Budget 2010

This past week, women in the CAWI network presented our views to City Council by singing our City Budget 2010 song. [See video](#)

Our words echoed those presented by community partners and many residents.

When we heard the city budget decisions, we were pleased to hear City Council **singing our tune...almost**. See below the concerns they addressed and did not address.



Were your concerns heard? Is your City Councillor singing your tune?

In this election year, City Councillors will need your vote. Let your Councillor and the Mayor know you what you think about this year's budget.

Women's concerns:	City Council's decision:
<p>Council proposed: Reorganize and reduce some bus routes.</p> <p>Concern: Many women and their families rely on buses to get to work, childcare, school or shopping at irregular hours.</p>	<p>Council Singing Our Tune: Most bus routes and their hours were maintained.</p>
<p>Council proposed: Raise bus fares by 7.5% in April, rather than July as was projected in long range financial plan.</p> <p>Concern: The high cost of bus fares is making it unaffordable for many. This means fewer people take the bus which increases isolation and hurts the environment.</p>	<p>Council Not singing our Tune: City Council voted to raise the bus fare by 7.5% starting in March.</p> <p>Council Singing Our Tune: Council took small steps to make buses more accessible by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding 20,000 additional Para Transpo trips. • spending \$62,000 to reduce line-ups at OC Transpo sales offices.

<p>Council proposed: Eliminate Crime Prevention Ottawa.</p> <p>Concern: CPO has proven to be very effective in engaging the community in crime prevention initiatives, including addressing youth crime and violence against women, seniors and people with disabilities.</p>	<p><u>Council Singing Our Tune:</u> Crime Prevention Ottawa will be funded.</p>
<p>Council proposed: Raises in recreation fees.</p> <p>Concern: Recreation fees continue to climb making them unaffordable for many. Residents are not aware of the subsidies available for low-income residents or are ashamed to ask for them.</p> <p>The approved guidelines for the new Recreation Master Plan emphasize that barriers to recreation for youth and low-income families should be addressed.</p>	<p><u>Council Not singing Our Tune:</u> The guidelines in the New Recreation Plan were disregarded. Fees for summer camps increased by 5%; swimming membership by 4%; one-time swimming for kids by 1.7%, general program registration for all ages by 5%; learn to skate programs 3%, etc.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the per person subsidy amount did <u>not</u> increase - - in other years, the amount went up as a percentage of the raise in fees.</p>
<p>Council proposed: Raise property taxes by 3.9%.</p> <p>Concern: Taxes need to be raised by <u>at least</u> this much in order to meet the cost of inflation. It is better to raise property taxes than bus fares and user fees, as user fees affect all people the same regardless of their income or assets.</p>	<p><u>Council Almost singing our tune:</u> The tax increase was reduced to 3.77%. The public was prepared to pay the 3.9%. Could we not have put that .13% (about \$1.3 million) into funding a city service or reducing a user fee?</p>
<p>Concern: The \$18 million that the city will not have to spend on ODSP should go back into health and social services. In the 1990's, the provincial government "downloaded" the cost of social services (social housing, ODSP and public health) onto municipalities. The result: many health and social services have been under-funded as Ontario cities have not had enough money to fund them. The Ontario government has recognized this mistake so has started taking back the cost of these services ("uploading"). We need a commitment from City Council that those funds will go back into community services to reinvest in what has been taken from community services since the 1990's.</p>	<p><u>Council Almost singing our tune:</u> Only a small percentage of the \$18 million in savings was reinvested into community services.</p> <p>The Ontario government is committed to uploading more money next year. Will Council invest those savings in community services?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Let's keep singing as we move toward the fall election (Tune: When the saints go marching in) You took the time To hear our views Champion them and we'll vote for you We are women across this city Voting in our communities.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Our Views Matter! - Notre point de vue compte! City for All Women Initiative (CAWI) www.cawi-ivtf.org</p>	

