
City of Toronto's 2021 Budget

1 message

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Hi Jasmine,

I hope you are doing well.

We haven't had the opportunity to connect yet, but I'm the Mayor's Director of Budget and Finance, having started in the role last April.

I saw your articles in the Sun ([here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) and wanted to provide clarifying information regarding a few points you raised:

- First, you note that shelving the proposed Rail Deck Park project of \$1.7 billion "would more than cover the city's [2021 operating budget] shortfall" of \$856 million. However, shelving that project would not offset the City's 2021 operating budget shortfall because it is not funded at this time. The City's 10-year capital plan includes under \$2 million in funding for planning work on the project in 2021 and 2022. The rest of the Rail Deck Park project – around 99.9% of the \$1.7 billion cost – is unfunded. So there is no funding set aside for the proposed Rail Deck Park that could be used to fill the \$856 operating budget shortfall.
- Second, in response to some of your comments about the need for workforce-related savings, I note that the City was able to find savings last year of \$500 million through spending constraints, cost avoidance, and workforce restraints – including freezing non-union, management, and Councillor salaries; implementing a Voluntary Separation Program; cancelling pay for performance bonuses; and introducing a hiring slowdown. The City is continuing those workforce savings measures into 2021, which will provide an estimated \$147 million in salaries and benefits savings this year.

Let me know if you'd like to discuss any of the above, and feel free to reach out if you have any questions or need any information from the City. Beyond that, I'm happy to discuss (and would appreciate) any input you may have on the City's budget and finances.

Thanks,

Louis

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