

April 28, 2004

## **Spending for impact**

Residents attending the *Listening to Toronto* pre-budget consultations provided valuable input about the City's budget and expressed their thoughts on what makes Toronto a great city in which to live and work.

The 2004 budget reflects what was heard at *Listening to Toronto*. It protects vital programs and provides modest enhancements for targeted areas where previous reductions have made reinvestment necessary to maintain services.

The budget for the three emergency services, police, fire and emergency medical services, includes increases to meet wage settlements for emergency services personnel and maintenance of emergency response infrastructure and equipment. In 2003 alone, more than one-third of all residential property taxes went toward funding the three emergency services. The police budget reflected the largest increase in the history of the City of Toronto.

A minimal increase to the Toronto Public Library's budget addresses significant increases in service levels. Since 1997, the TPL has experienced a 17 percent increase in circulation, a seven per cent increase in visits, a 1,000 per cent increase in virtual visits, and a 144 per cent increase in the use of the book reserve system, all placing demands on the system that require additional funding.

The Toronto Public Health budget will also increase to provide services such as the screening, timely identification and treatment of TB cases, a public awareness campaign for the new Pesticide By-law, a SARS Community Transmission and Quarantine study and to enhance support services for vulnerable elderly persons.

The City provides grants to community groups that are involved with local projects and facilities so that they can either provide programs directly or assist the City with program and service delivery for residents. In 2004, up to \$2.8 million in additional funds is being provided to a variety of groups involved in access and equity programs in addition to arts and culture initiatives in the city.

The grants review process provides regular monitoring of recipients to ensure city funds are being used in the best possible way.

For 2004, \$2.6 million has been budgeted for the Clean City/Beautiful City campaign that will clean up Toronto by placing additional resources into litter pick-up and prevention programs.