Elect Socialists to City Council in 2026!

municipal socialist alliance





Socialism not Barbarism

Municipal Socialist Alliance Policy Platform

Across Ontario, workers, small business owners, and entire communities are being squeezed by rising costs, precarious work, and the devastating consequences of climate catastrophe. Doug Ford's unapologetic corporate agenda of austerity and privatization is only accelerating the surging crises. Rather than equipping municipalities to meet growing needs, his government has cut their funding and stripped their ability to deliver the public services on which communities rely. Public services — from mass transit to libraries— are defunded and left to decline while the private sector waits to fill the gap at a price. These conditions are not unique to Ontario. Provinces, territories and municipalities across Canada face the same conditions because they operate within the same political-economic order: capitalism– a global system controlled by capitalists that operates in their interests. The pursuit of private profit over public good pollutes the planet and neglects basic needs, blocking human, economic and ecological potential. The province-wide Municipal Socialist Alliance (MSA), together with Capitalism Can't Be Fixed, is challenging this arrangement. Our mission is to expose the injustices of capitalism, hold its administrators and beneficiaries accountable, and propose a genuine socialist alternative in City Hall that puts working people, communities, and the environment first.



Our policies aim to improve the lives of workers and strengthen communities immediately. We fight for more public housing, expanded public transit, and insist that no one goes hungry in one of the richest and most developed countries in the world. While pursuing gains within the liberal capitalist system does not tackle problems at their roots and can only, at best, provide relief, socialists fight for every improvement that strengthens the working class and our communities. The MSA considers the attainment of elected office at city hall not as an end in itself, but as a platform on which to agitate for material gains, to organize and support popular movements, and to raise political class consciousness by exposing the inherent limitations of capitalism.

Fight for Housing for All

First of all, the MSA platform demands housing justice. The basic human need for shelter has turned into a vehicle for financial extraction, creating a severe housing crisis that renders accommodations unaffordable and relentlessly in short supply. Roughly a third of Ontario residents are renters (some 50% in Toronto), many of whom pay exploitative rents beyond their means. Nearly 85,000 people in 2025 experienced houselessness – an 8% increase from the year prior. Successive governments pass and uphold policies that allow corporate landlords to dominate the housing market. Municipal governments can respond to the severity of this crisis by providing tenant protections, using zoning and tax powers to enable the production of more affordable homes, and by demanding housing justice legislation from the provincial government.



Housing for All

- Fix Rent to Income
- Repeal the provisions of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 608 that prohibit camping and temporary shelter in parks.
- Advocate provincial legislation to eliminate blind bidding in residential property sales.
- Expand or implement a 10% Vacant Residential Property Tax on the assessed value of residential properties that remain vacant for more than 183 days in a calendar year. Encourage the return of vacant homes back onto the market, thus generating revenue for public housing construction and essential municipal services.
- Advocate provincial legislation to give municipalities expanded authority to acquire persistently vacant residential and commercial properties for conversion to permanently affordable housing.
- Advocate provincial legislation establishing a 30% annual surtax on residential investment properties, excluding homeowners who rent out portions of their principal residence, and exempting primary residences.
- Advocate provincial legislation to enable all Ontario municipalities to implement inclusionary zoning at their discretion.
- Remove the current 5% cap on affordable housing requirements, and grant municipalities the authority to require up to 50% of units in new residential developments to be permanently affordable based on existing local housing needs.
- Create a public registry of property ownership, which includes the designation of primary/personal residence and secondary and investment properties to administer municipal housing programs and vacancy taxes.
- Advocate provincial legislation to promote beneficial residential property ownership and stronger measures to discourage financial speculation.

Foster Municipal Legal Frameworks to Protect Tenants

- Stop Renovictions!
- Evictions under the guise of renovations to bypass rent control is a major cause of the housing crisis.
- Require landlords to obtain a city license, provide a professional assessment proving vacancy is necessary, and cover moving costs and rent gap payments for displaced tenants
- Colour-coded health and safety rating system:
- To hold landlords accountable for health and safety violations, create a colour-coded city-issued rating sign for apartments that must be displayed at the building entrance..
- (Green is satisfactory - Yellow needs improvement - Red needs significant improvement).

- Landlords should be obliged to inform tenants, and prospective renters, of the rating before signing a lease. Annually and upon request, city staff may conduct visits, issue fines or perform remedial repairs at the landlord's expense if receiving a red sign for two consecutive months.
- Hire more housing inspectors who are empowered to speak with tenants and inspect units.
- Create a public and accessible system for reporting landlord abuses.
- Expand the 311 service system in Toronto and province wide.
- Introduce mechanisms to more efficiently transfer property from landlord to city.
- Expand municipal ownership of housing by acquiring rental properties, and by supporting non-profit and co-operative housing providers.
- Advocate provincial legislation granting municipalities a right of first refusal on rental properties offered for sale.
- Fight for municipal expropriation powers not tied to paying market value -- which is often wildly inflated due to the financialization of real estate.
- Air conditioning for tenants:
- Expand or establish air conditioner assistance programs for low-income tenants.
- Require utility bill transparency between tenants and landlords who have utilities included in their rent.
- Ban landlords from charging extra fees for air conditioning to tenants.
- Advocate the establishment of Affordable Housing Tribunals at the municipal level across the province.
- Housing tribunals can protect tenants by reducing rent increases, mandate repairs, uphold tenant rights and ensure that rent is income tested with thresholds being no greater than one-third of income of tenants.
- For municipalities without housing tribunals, establish or expand Municipal Housing Stability Funds to provide rapid-response financial assistance to residents facing temporary financial crises that threaten their housing.
- These programs would complement existing county/provincial homelessness prevention initiatives by filling gaps where assistance has been exhausted or is unavailable, helping to prevent evictions, foreclosures, utility disconnections, and homelessness before they occur.
- Ensure guaranteed free legal counsel for tenants. Establish municipally funded tenant advocacy and legal support services so that every tenant has access to free legal assistance.

Fight for Housing Justice

- Fight for full rent control for tenants, an end to evictions, the right to organize, the right to conduct a strike of tenants.
- Advocate a rent freeze to the provincial government.
- Call for public housing control to be in the hands of its tenants.
- Advocate provincial legislation explicitly authorizing municipalities to expropriate persistently vacant residential properties to create permanently affordable housing.
- Advocate that the provincial government increase shelter allowance (within the ODSP) to be indexed to median rental costs.

Fight the Cuts and Improve Public Services

Municipalities administer public services like garbage collection, libraries and transit systems that are essential to the local economy. However, they suffer from budget cuts and austerity politics, often leading to the services being privatized or left to degrade. Public transit is an essential service for students, workers and the elderly, yet service is often unreliable, overcrowded or cut. Accessibility should be treated as a priority. Road repairs are often delayed and over budget. Libraries, the largest network of knowledge and community spaces, are increasingly overburdened and forced to act as social service hubs and crisis centers.
Our platform proposes investing back into the social and material infrastructure to meet our shared needs, to support working and oppressed people to live and work in dignity, but also to create the foundation for stronger social cohesion and shared prosperity.

Free and Expanded Public Transit

- Expand bus service with more routes and stops, especially along major transit routes during peak hours.
- Extend service hours.
- Consider the City of Waterloo transit system as a good example for providing low-cost services.
- Get Special Constables out of the public transit system, as they exist primarily to criminalize youth, minorities and the disadvantaged.
- Transit services should provide accurate and reliable transit times by hiring more staff as needed.

Make Streets Safer for Cyclists

- Bike lanes and rush-hour bus lanes should be expanded.
- Improve Traffic and Road Safety Issues
- Adjust fines and fees to be geared to income.
- Implement pedestrian-only zones along Sankofa (Yonge-Dundas) Square and further projects to include Bloor, Eglinton and other streets where there is high pedestrian traffic.



More warming and cooling centers

- The climate crisis disproportionately affects the working class, low income and physically challenged people. Extreme weather events like heat waves and floods can produce dangerous conditions for tenants in poorly maintained housing. Similarly, vulnerable people lack access to air conditioning and affordable heating solutions, while landlords impose barriers such as extra fees or an outright ban on cooling systems. At a minimum, municipalities must ensure that warming and cooling centers are available and accessible during extreme weather events.

Increase Accessibility in the City

- Ensure an Accessibility Committee at the municipality level for residents to bring issues and recommendations re: walking, cycling and accessibility. The committee should have representation from those with accessibility needs.

- Add tactical paving at key intersections that pedestrians with accessibility needs can detect through their feet or a mobility cane. Raised textures provide essential information to individuals with visual impairments.
- Snow-clearing should be prompt, with priority given to transit areas and sidewalks to be cleared.

Food for all

- Ensure that the city employs all possible means to ensure that no one goes hungry.
- Incentivize the distribution of otherwise discarded and excess food by building a pipeline from the private grocery store to the community kitchen.
- City to invest in community gardens on city-owned properties.
- Create more food programs.
- Increase accessibility to fresh and healthy food, especially for youth and the elderly.
- Advocate expropriation of private corporate-owned grocery stores to be run in the public interest within a no-profit framework.
- Increase funding to food banks.
- Create a municipal bread program to provide one baked ground loaf of bread per family, paid for by grocery price-gougers such as the Weston's Loblaws.

Bring Garbage Collections back under Public Management

- Essential services should be under public ownership. Initial cost-savings quickly diminish as private corporations prioritize profit.
- Install recycling machines in grocery stores for convenient recycling incentives.

Youth Centers and Public Spaces

- Fund community centers, recreation facilities, and arts programs to support youth development and civic engagement.

Support Libraries as Critical Infrastructure for Communities

- Libraries are the largest network of knowledge and community spaces, yet they are increasingly overburdened, acting as social service hubs and crisis centers. With most funding from municipalities, the federal government must provide the resources libraries need to meet today's social, economic, and cultural challenges.
- Extend library hours
- Expand library offerings to become "maker's spaces", which have dedicated space and equipment for artists, including more spending on infrastructure, personnel, and technology.

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Create a Municipal Child Care Strategy

- Despite jurisdictional obstacles, we believe that high quality child care is critical to building a stronger, healthier and more vibrant community. We are for free, quality, 24-hour child care. Municipalities should become more significant players in boosting access to early learning and childcare, which would serve parents and provide high-quality unionized jobs.
- Review municipal zoning regulations to reduce land use barriers.
- Create city-run daycare at affordable rates.

Demand action from the province to repair our overcrowded schools and reduce class sizes

- The province must make real investments in schools for immediate repairs to reverse years of neglect and reduce class sizes to an average of 25 students per class.
- Build coalitions with organized working people in a broad array of social justice organizations, including the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) and others.

Solve Social Problems Through Social Services

In an unequal society where a small handful have the majority of the wealth and power, the police and the punishment bureaucracy are crucial to preserving the grossly inequitable status quo. The police exist to suppress any disruption to the capitalist order that arise from desperate conditions of poverty, inequality and neglect. They are thoroughly incapable of responding to the social crises of homelessness, mental illness, addiction, and social conflict. Funding should be directed away from coercive enforcement to social programs that provide housing, healthcare, and community support.

We need only to recall decades of ever-expanding police budgets and powers to recognize that more policing has not produced safer or healthier communities. We say slash the size and scope of policing, expand democratic oversight, and invest in the material conditions that make genuine safety possible. Policing is often the largest line item in a municipal budget. Slashing it would free up vast resources to meet human needs. We recognize that the Ontario Police Arbitration and Adjudication Commission will be an obstacle to making massive cuts to the police budget. However, this will not stop us from advocating this policy in the interest of the working class.

Slash Police Powers and Budgets

- Reduce police budgets and implement budget accountability through independent auditing. Stop the excessive police presence at social justice actions.
- End racial profiling.
- Stop the militarization of police. Dismantle the entrenched police culture of impunity.
- Advocate legislation to bar government or state use of commercial surveillance without the use of a warrant, similar to the use of search warrants.
- Stop the excessive and unjust use of non-lethal and lethal weapons.
- End the routine carry of lethal weapons.
- Redirect police funding to social workers and social services. Police are an inappropriate response to the growing number of social issue calls to 911.
- Place strong limits and oversight on the widespread use and abuse of AI tools, predictive policing, and surveillance technologies by police at all levels.
- Call on the Province of Ontario to implement a moratorium on the use of facial recognition technology by police, and direct Police Service Board members to oppose funding for the new acquisition of facial recognition systems.
- Keep police out of schools:
- Abolish School Resource Officer programs which make students less safe, less welcome, less engaged in learning and perpetuate systematic discrimination.

Defend Democracy, Justice and Activism in Local Communities

Democracy cannot be reduced to the act of voting every few years. It must be a living practice where working and oppressed people actively shape the institutions that govern them. The MSA calls for strengthening political power from below by expanding public participation in budgets, public consultation on local investments, and mobilizing to impact city hall alongside local organizing.

Implement a Participatory Budget Process

- City councillors and mayors should reject the "strong mayor" system, and seek its abolition.
- The MSA strives for the empowerment of the working class, racialized communities, marginalized and impoverished residents through a Participatory Budget process that is designed from below rather than handed down from above.
- As pioneered in Porto Allegre, Brazil starting in 1989, on an annual cycle, scores of regional meetings involving thousands of local people are convened to formulate the municipal budget through extensive input. Even though elites and other orders of government act to constrain them, self-organization of the grass roots is vital.

No Hyper-scale AI data centres!

- No new construction of data centers above 10 megawatt (MW) usage.
- Artificial Intelligence Data Centres drive climate change by emitting greenhouse gases (nitrogen oxides-NOx) and sulfur oxides (SOx).
- AI data centers consume 5-10 times more power than average processor racks.
- AI data centers produce disproportionately large amounts of infra-sound noise pollution, which are harmful to human health.
- Hyper-scale data centers can consume large amounts of public municipal drinking water for cooling, thus causing a major strain on municipal water systems.

Co-operative development first!

- All business zoning for newly built communities should favour co-operative entities and all residential zoning should favour co-operative models for ownership. This approach will create modern centers of co-operative socio-economic activity along key transportation hubs.

- Celebrate the cancellation of the proposed expansion of the Billy Bishop airport!
- We demand the provincial government return the land that it seized from Toronto, back to the city.
- Digital Consumer Transparency
- Use municipal business licensing to require businesses using individualized algorithmic pricing to clearly disclose this practice to consumers, while advocating provincial regulation to bar surveillance pricing.

Outlaw Support for Genocide in Palestine and war in West Asia

- Reject the anti-Palestinian International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism which is a broad, sweeping and abusive formulation. It is used as a political tool to silence or marginalize critics of Israel and opponents of Palestinian dispossession. The IHRA is employed to block the Palestinian civil society-led, peaceful Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions (BDS) movement.
- Reject and repeal "bubble zones" bylaws which criminalize solidarity and are an unconstitutional violation of the right to freedoms of expression and association under the Canadian Charter of Rights.
- Cut institutional ties with the Israeli government and its cities.
- Divest municipal contracts and pension funds from the Zionist state, its institutions, its companies, and international corporations that contribute to the perpetuation of ongoing Israeli apartheid and genocide.
- Boycott Israeli sports, academic, and cultural representatives.
- Denounce anti-Palestinian racism!
- Oppose the US-Israel war on Iran and the Zionist state military assault and occupation of Lebanon.

No NATO bank in our cities!

- The proposed NATO bank would further facilitate the militarization of society. Genuine security arises from funding homes, food and education. Security does not come from an economy built on war.

We Can Afford a Better Future

We inherit decades of the gradual dismantling of public services. Capitalists, together with their political representatives and media, inundate the working class with propaganda against government spending, warning of unbalanced budgets, government debt and inefficiencies that supposedly only the private sector can solve. The virtue of austerity is pounded into our minds. In reality, private services drive up costs because they are mandated to extract a profit, which is streamed to CEOs and shareholders. For example, the CEO of (Toronto west-side garbage collectors) GFL Environmental, Patrick Dovigi, enjoys a total compensation package of $230.7 million, with a base salary of $2.4 million. That's a lot of garbage!

Savings with Publicly Owned Services

- Privatization promised cheaper prices and/or more efficient services. Decades later, prices have increased and quality has decreased. It's well passed time to acknowledge this model doesn't work.
- Publicly owned services are less financially wasteful because profits are not siphoned off by private shareholders, contractors, or consultants, and revenues are reinvested directly into the services working and oppressed people rely on.

Saving on Social Costs

- On top of the moral obligation to fix social problems, the failure to meet basic needs entails a significant financial burden. It would cost less to solve these problems rather than provide ineffective short-term responses.
- 'Law and order' solutions fill prisons at taxpayers' expense. According to 2021 Federal Correctional Services data, the average inmate expenditure is $150,000 per year.
- Police budgets are consistently increased but a 2018 study found that up to 80% of police calls are not related to a criminal offense, but instead to social issues.
- Homelessness is significantly costly for society. In a 2024 study, someone experiencing homelessness for one year accrues $12,209 in healthcare costs compared to $1,769 for a housed person.

Increase Commercial Property Tax Ratios

- Municipal expenses are not fairly distributed between residential and commercial property taxes, thus unfairly burdening homeowners (and in-directly, tenants) with municipal expenses. Commercial property owners should pay more.

- The distribution of payments of municipal expenses should be decided by the elected municipal council. While they have the power to set the residential property tax rate, in many cases, the commercial property tax ratios are set by the higher tier of government– the County.

Implement a 10% Vacant Residential Property Tax

- Currently, in Ontario, the highest vacant residential property tax is 4%. An increase to 10% would incentivize homeowners to rent their properties and alleviate the housing crisis or pay the tax and fund a portion of municipal expenses for vital social programs.



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By spreading socialist ideas we can change the political discourse and prepare the transformation of society, from the bottom-up.



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Visit: www.socialistalliance.ca
E-mail: municipal@socialistalliance.ca

Phone: 647-986-1917

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