

## Toronto Party fielding municipal candidates

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John Laforet might be right when he says the Toronto Party is "ahead of its time" and represents the city's future.

The group of council hopefuls formed in 2006, saying the city government was in the grip of a mayor and downtown councillors loyal to the New Democratic Party.

But now, with Rob Ford leading the mayoral race and city politics apparently shifting right on a wave of suburban anger, the Toronto Party and its complaints of higher taxes and declining services seem a lot more mainstream.

At a campaign launch Wednesday, members' promises to slash councillors' office budgets, effect "line-by-line" city budget reviews and end the "discriminatory" vehicle registration and land transfer taxes weren't much different from the rhetoric of other candidates, including some council incumbents.

Moreover, the informal right-wing coalition, which says "trade union monopolies" add costs to Toronto City Hall, isn't proposing to lay city workers off.

Attrition as employees retire will produce much of the required cuts in labour costs, while other savings can be found without ruffling union feathers, party president Stephen Thiele said in Nathan Phillips Square.

"We're not looking for a fight, we're looking for solutions," he added.

The party – provincial law forbids formal association on a municipal level but members hope to change that – is also proposing a previously-released transportation plan so ambitious it includes not only three new subway lines, but arterial road extensions, off-road bicycle trails, covered highways and extending Highway 400 to the Gardiner Expressway, which would be housed in a new viaduct.

That's the 20-year plan, however. The next term of council would start by building a downtown relief subway line and completing the Sheppard Subway from Downsview to the Scarborough Town Centre, asking higher levels of government to help pay the \$4-billion cost, said John Laforet, running in Scarborough's Ward 43.

The group says it will field 12 candidates for council, though one won't register until Friday.

Laforet said the candidates are split on who to support for mayor, but all would work with whomever the voters choose.

The other Toronto Party members so far are Glenn Vaughan (Ward 4), Edward Zaretsky (Ward 10), Ron Singer (Ward 15), Bob Nahiddi (Ward 24), Joanne Dickins (Ward 25), Howard Bortenstein (Ward 28), Robert Walker (Ward 31), Sean Gladney (Ward 36), Glenn Middleton (Ward 38) and Danny Chien (Ward 41).

Most appeared at Wednesday's launch, where Laforet suggested the current council – which the group's website calls "a carton of unbroken eggs" that must be broken – is still run by incumbent New Democrats.

"There's a bloc at city hall. And it's the NDP bloc," Thiele said.



**Toronto Party fielding municipal candidates.** President Stephen Thiele, front, introduces the Toronto Party candidates for the upcoming municipal election, at City Hall on Wednesday.  
*Photo/MIKE ADLER*

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