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Star's selections for city council

Nov. 8, 2006. 01:00 AM

Candidates who win seats on Toronto City Council in Monday's municipal election will face a host of challenges in the coming years, including a chronic budget crisis, a stagnant waterfront and aggressive grassroots opposition to even the most badly needed change.

To deal effectively with these problems, Toronto needs leaders with city-wide vision and who work well with others, without greed or grandstanding. Some wards have been ill-served in this regard. Others are represented by councillors who deserve re-election but who can do better.

With that in mind, here are our choices for Wards 1 to 22:

Ward 1 Etobicoke North: Suzan Hall seems well-intentioned, but has not been a forceful voice on council. Residents of this ward, one of the poorest and most ethnically diverse, deserve more. They can find it by voting for Sonali Verma. She is energetic, has degrees in economics and political science and is dedicated to community work and public service.

Ward 2 Etobicoke North: No incumbent is a greater embarrassment than Rob Ford, a blustering politician who drunkenly abused fellow spectators at a Maple Leafs hockey game, handed out his business card and then lied about his conduct. Lawyer Kevin Mark is bravely taking on the rude-behaving Ford and fully deserves voters' support.

Ward 3 Etobicoke Centre: Doug Holyday can be tight-fisted and contrarian, but he's also hard-working and dedicated. He should be returned.

Ward 4 Etobicoke Centre: Gloria Lindsay Luby has done some good work chairing the economic development and parks committee and has pushed for initiatives such as bringing a community bus for seniors and the disabled to Etobicoke. She has earned another term on council.

Ward 5 Etobicoke Lakeshore: Incumbent Peter Milczyn is diligent and smart with a background in urban design. He should be returned, but should strive to play a bigger role at city hall.

Ward 6 Etobicoke Lakeshore: Mark Grimes has been uninspiring during his first term in office. Community activist Jem Cain is a better bet. This ward is losing jobs and needs her advocacy skills at city council.

Ward 7 York West: A master of grandstanding, and little else, Giorgio Mammoliti does not deserve re-election. Instead, voters should choose Larry Perlman, a financial analyst and equities trader with a social conscience. He has a record of service in charity and community work.

Ward 8 York West: We did not endorse incumbent Peter Li Preti in the last election and nothing moves us to do so now. An excellent alternative to this do-little councillor is Anthony Perruzza, a savvy and articulate former member of the Ontario Legislature. He deserves a chance to shine.

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Ward 9 York Centre: Maria Augimeri received only the most tepid of endorsements from the *Star* in the last election. We are rather more impressed with her performance now. She deserves to come back.

Ward 10 York Centre: Incumbent Michael Feldman is articulate when he chooses to speak, but speaks rarely. He gets a lukewarm endorsement.

Ward 11 York South-Weston: Fiery Frances Nunziata has a great deal of experience and has served with dedication. She should be re-elected.

Ward 12 York South-Weston: It is time to end Frank Di Giorgio's record of ineffective baffle-gab on city council. He should be replaced by Joe Renda, a neighbourhood activist who knows the city having worked in the community relations department of the Catholic school board.

Ward 13 Parkdale-High Park: Incumbent Bill Saunderson has not been a disaster on council, but he has failed to inspire. A better choice is David Garrick, former CN Tower president and local entrepreneur.

Ward 14 Parkdale-High Park: A field of 14 candidates is battling to represent this area, and several among them would be an asset to city council. If only other wards had so many bright alternatives. Our choice is Gord Perks, a well-known environmentalist and effective voice on public transit issues. Council needs his insight and lobbying skill.

Ward 15 Eglinton-Lawrence: Incumbent Howard Moscoe tried to sneak a pay raise past the public, was caught using city property for his private business, and was at the helm of the TTC when a one-day wildcat strike erupted. With such a sorry record, he should be replaced. Our pick is Ron Singer, an insurance agent who lives in the ward and has served residents well on various youth and community projects.

Ward 16 Eglinton-Lawrence: Mayor David Miller has endorsed lawyer Steve Watt, but we like incumbent Karen Stintz. Young, articulate, hard-working and smart, she is exactly the sort of opposition voice needed on city council to keep Miller on his toes.

Ward 17 Davenport: Cesar Palacio would not deserve re-election even if there were no controversy surrounding a charity he set up that owns the building where his ward office is located. He simply has not been a strong councillor, and there is a far better alternative here: Alejandra Bravo. She speaks Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and French and is a grassroots community activist of considerable intelligence and skill. She is our pick.

Ward 18 Davenport: Adam Giambrone is a bright and articulate leader who deserves re-election and should be appointed to chair the TTC.

Ward 19 Trinity-Spadina: Joe Pantalone has been effective, despite bad publicity concerning relatives on the public payroll. He has our nod.

Ward 20 Trinity-Spadina: One of the hardest fought battles in this municipal election is underway here between former councillor Olivia Chow's anointed successor, Helen Kennedy, and television journalist Adam Vaughan. Both are good, but Vaughan has our support. He knows local issues after years of covering city hall. And, although he can be strident, he will bring independence and insight to city council.

Ward 21 St. Paul's: Incumbent Joe Mihevc has come under attack for backing the St. Clair streetcar right-of-way and faces several challengers, including former mayor John Sewell. But he remains the best person to represent the area. Mihevc serves this ward well, but also speaks for Toronto as a whole. His stand on the St. Clair streetcar is the correct one. City council would suffer a serious loss if he were not returned to office.

Ward 22 St. Paul's: Maverick councillor Michael Walker has been an outspoken advocate of election law reform at the municipal level. He should be returned to continue to fight on this vitally important issue. Hopefully, real change will be won during the coming four-year term.

Tomorrow: Wards 23-44.

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