

DATE: March 27, 2001

TO: Chairman and Members of the Planning and Development Committee

FROM: Thomas S. Mokrzycki, Commissioner of Planning and Building

SUBJECT: **Mississauga: A City of Many Cultures**
MEETING DATE: April 17, 2001

ORIGIN: Planning and Building Department

BACKGROUND: International immigration is the driving force behind the growth of Mississauga. With fertility rates below replacement level, without international immigration Canada would not maintain existing population levels, let alone continue to grow. The Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)¹ is Canada's major immigrant receiving centre, and, as such, is growing while parts of the country not attractive to immigrants, are experiencing declining population levels.

The importance of immigration to Mississauga and the implications it has for the cultural diversity of the City has been recognized in the Strategic Plan. One of the vision statements in the Strategic Plan is that *"Mississauga will offer a diversity of cultural opportunities."* Attached under separate cover, is a study titled *"Mississauga: A City of Many Cultures."* The study reports on the characteristics of Mississauga's population, with particular focus on the immigrant population, which accounted, in 1996, for 43% of the City's residents. The study is based on data from the 1996 Census of Canada. It was prepared to

¹ The boundaries of the Toronto CMA include all of the new City of Toronto and the Regions of Peel and York, and portions of the Regions of Halton and Durham and the Counties of Dufferin and Simcoe.

increase understanding and awareness of the characteristics of Mississauga's diverse population and provide information that will assist decision-makers and service providers in meeting the needs of the City's residential population and achieving the vision of the Strategic Plan.

The focus of the study is on immigration to Mississauga - number of immigrants, countries of origin and where immigrants have settled in Mississauga.

COMMENTS

Some highlights from the study "*Mississauga: A City of Many Cultures*," are as follows:

- By the end of the 20th Century, immigration accounted for over half of Canada's population growth. Most immigrants came from the United Kingdom and the United States at the beginning of the century, however, the number of European immigrants increased after World War II. With changes in immigration policy over the years, the number and cultural diversity of immigrants has increased so that Canada is now receiving immigrants from all regions, particularly Asia;
- Following the original settlement period, in the 19th Century and the early part of the 20th Century, and since Canada's transformation from a rural agricultural and resource-based economy, immigrants have flocked to Canada's urban areas. Postwar immigrants were an important source of unskilled labour, but now comprise a mix of service workers, and skilled and professional workers. Recently, they have been important contributors to the emerging high technology, knowledge-based economy;
- Ontario has become a "mecca" for immigrants so that by 1996, 55% of all Canadian immigrants lived in Ontario. The continued population growth of urban areas now depends on net migration. Immigrants are sustaining the continued

population growth of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA);

- As of the 1996 Census, almost 40% of the 4.6 million people in the GTA were foreign-born – the highest level in Canada, and the highest proportion among all North American urban regions, including Miami, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles;
- Immigration has become increasingly a suburban phenomenon. Mississauga's share of the Toronto CMA immigrant population is approximately 13%;
- By 1996, Mississauga's immigrant population reached 43% of the total population, and 24% of those immigrants had arrived between 1991 and 1996;
- The visible minority population² in Mississauga is three times the national rate and slightly higher at 33.9%, than the Toronto CMA rate of 31.6%;
- Although Mississauga's total immigrant population is diverse, the East Southeast Asia, Southern Europe and South Asia world regions were the highest contributors to Mississauga's total immigrant population by 1996 with over 50% of the total, with East Southeast Asia and South Asia also contributing most of the recent immigrants. Recent immigrants from East Southeast Asia accounted for 27.6% while South Asia was the region of origin for 25.3% of recent immigrants;
- Immigration from India, Poland, the Philippines and Hong

² *The Canadian Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as persons other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. Under this definition, the regulations of the Act specify the following groups as visible minorities: Chinese, South Asians, Blacks, Arabs/West Asians, Filipinos, Southeast Asians, Latin Americans, Japanese, Koreans and Pacific Islanders.*

Kong continued strongly in the 1991 to 1996 period. Immigration from Pakistan almost doubled as did recent immigrants from Sri Lanka and China. In contrast, immigration from earlier immigrant source countries, the United Kingdom, Italy and Portugal showed little or no recent growth;

- Some immigrant groups tend to concentrate in particular areas of the City, while other immigrant groups tend to live with other cultural groups in neighbourhoods across the City. The degree of concentration depends upon how recently each group has immigrated, as well as cultural preferences;
- Recent immigrants were more likely to be adults in the 25 to 44 age range;
- Recent immigrants were better educated than immigrants who arrived earlier. The unemployment rate tended to be higher for new immigrants, reflecting their recent arrival, however, immigrants who arrived between 1961 and 1990 had participation rates, and employment to population ratios approaching or exceeding those of the non-immigrant population;
- Immigrant incomes generally rose according to the length of time in Canada. The incidence of low income, among immigrants was most pronounced among those who immigrated between 1991 and 1996, and those who immigrated prior to 1961, who would be of retirement age;
- Adults in the immigrant population were more likely to be married. The divorce rate rose with length of time in Canada. A somewhat larger percentage of immigrants were lone parents, 5% compared with about 3% in non-immigrant families;

- Households of recent immigrants tended to be larger than those of non-immigrants and immigrants who arrived earlier. For some this may be a result of “doubling up” while new immigrants get settled, while for others it may reflect a preference for living in extended family structures. Mississauga’s immigrant households have tended to move quickly (in terms of number of years) from rental housing to home ownership. Over time, immigrants follow the same housing preferences as non-immigrants. Over 50% of recent immigrants lived in apartments in 1996, and only 17% of those who immigrated prior to 1961;
- Canada’s large metropolitan areas, particularly the GTA, have a crucial role to play in the new global economy. Immigrants are ensuring the continued population growth of the GTA, and bringing a wide variety of employment skills to the Toronto and Mississauga economies, including the skills demanded by the burgeoning high tech industries, and the knowledge of cultural and business practices of their home countries, required by Canadian business in order to participate in global trade.

CONCLUSION:

Immigrants have transformed the GTA over the past 50 years to a multicultural society, rich in architectural variety, retail diversity, international product availability, range of entertainment and community events, and varied, international cuisine. Children are becoming “citizens of the world” because of the opportunity to be educated alongside others from around the world.

Planners and municipal politicians have important roles to play in fostering understanding across cultural groups, encouraging participatory resolution of different community interests, and assisting in the building of strong communities. This is particularly important in Mississauga, which has grown so quickly, and is literally a cultural microcosm of the world.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report titled "Mississauga: A City of Many Cultures" dated March 27, 2001 from the Commissioner of Planning and Building, be received for information.

Original Signed By:

Thomas S. Mokrzycki

Commissioner of Planning and Building