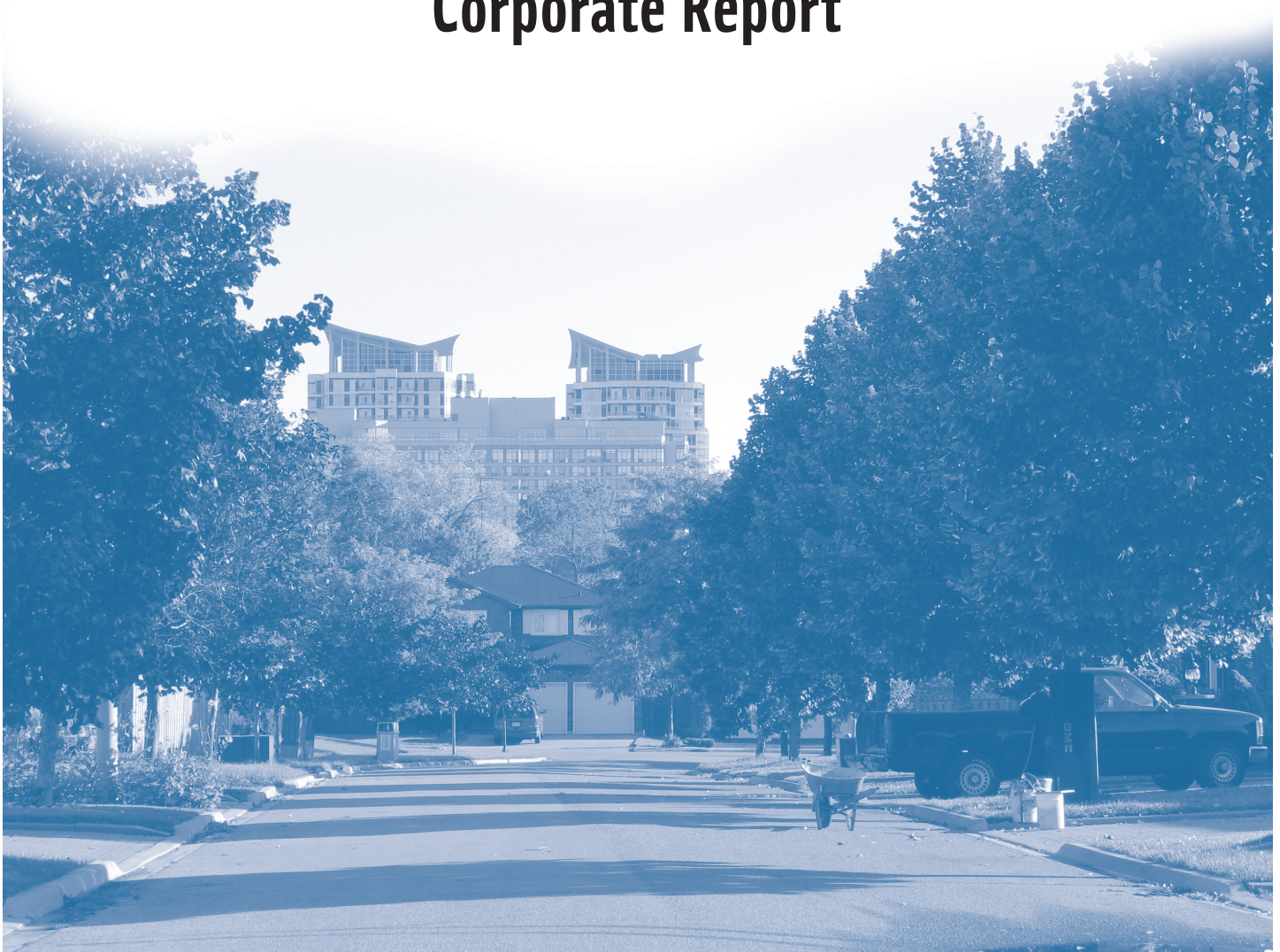


Provincial Elections 2007 MississaugaMatters

Provincial Election 2007: Summary of Key Issues for the City of Mississauga Corporate Report



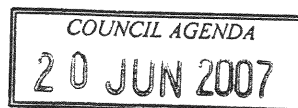


Corporate Report

Clerk's Files

Originator's
Files

R-5



DATE: June 12, 2007

TO: Mayor and Members of Council
Meeting Date: June 20, 2007

FROM: Janice M. Baker, CA
City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: **Provincial Election 2007:**
Summary of key issues for the City of Mississauga

- RECOMMENDATION:**
1. That the report entitled "Provincial Election 2007: Summary of key issues for the City of Mississauga" dated June 12, 2007 from the City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer, being one in a series of corporate reports regarding matters of importance relating to the upcoming October 10, 2007 provincial election, be received for information.
 2. That Council endorse the engagement strategy for the Provincial election in October 2007 as outlined in the report entitled "Provincial Election 2007: Summary of key issues for the City of Mississauga" dated June 12, 2007 from the City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer and that staff be directed to implement.

BACKGROUND: A provincial election is a critical event which causes us to reflect on past achievements and look to the future to better understand and articulate actions that are required to ensure the Province of Ontario continues to flourish and be a premier location for businesses and residents.

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For the first time in Ontario, the province has set a fixed election date, of October 10th, 2007, and this allows key stakeholders, such as the City of Mississauga, to structure their approach to influencing political party policy.

This is the last in a series of papers that has been brought forward to articulate the critical issues that impact the City of Mississauga where most attention needs to be paid.

The purpose of this report is to summarize the key issues identified and outline the next steps towards engaging key stakeholders and provincial parties with the view to favourably influencing provincial policies on issues of major importance to the City of Mississauga.

While there are many issues that the City of Mississauga has with the provincial government ranging from Pit Bull legislation to a review of the Library Act, staff has outlined the major issues where policy needs to be set. Other issues will continue to be monitored and reports prepared to Council at the appropriate time.

COMMENTS:

The Province of Ontario continues to grow at extremely high rates. With 5.2 million people today, the GTA is the fifth largest city-region in North America. The Ontario Places to Grow Strategy refers to growth of an additional two (2) million more people in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

At the forefront of this growth has been the City of Mississauga which has grown by approximately 480,000 citizens in the last 33 years and through the Places to Grow Act has been identified as an area for added growth.

While the City of Mississauga has been supportive of the intent of this legislation, and funding for initiatives such as the construction of the Bus Rapid Transit system being a very good example of required investments that must accompany the legislation, the City's track record of success is in jeopardy should future governments not take action in the areas outlined in this report.

Mississauga is Canada's sixth largest city with a population of more than 700,000. With well-established infrastructure and state-of-the-art facilities, the City is considered to be an employer of choice,

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delivering quality municipal programs and services to its citizens. Mississauga is a dynamic, diverse and progressive municipality known for its economic strength and for being Canada's safest city.

Summary of Key Issues

Mississauga, being the largest "905" community is the first to be entering this next stage of development, and as such, the Province has a special interest in ensuring that Mississauga succeeds so that the rest of the 905 communities can develop in this way.

This is the fifth and final report in the series of reports outlining the key issues for the City of Mississauga as we move forward.

The issues identified in these reports were:

- Investment in Transit and Transportation Systems (Appendix 1)
- Current Value Assessment, Airport Payment in Lieu of Taxes and Tax Increment Financing (Appendix 2)
- Fiscal Imbalance: Underfunding of Municipal Services (Appendix 3)
- The Status of the City of Mississauga within the Region of Peel (Appendix 4)

The detail behind each issue is contained in the original report, in the appendices as noted above.

Further to these reports, Council resolved that any party wishing to govern Ontario needs to commit to the City of Mississauga and other municipalities that it will:

Investment in Transit and Transportation Systems

1. Provide a steady stream of sustainable funding for transit and transportation infrastructure that will allow all Ontario municipalities to reach the overall goals of an integrated transportation system;

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2. Eliminate the requirement to make gas tax payments to GTA municipalities conditional on municipal funding of one-third of GO Transit's capital expansion;
3. Make the necessary amendment to the *Development Charges Act, 1997* which includes:
 - changing the determination of transit from a "soft service" to a "hard service", thereby eliminating the need for a 10% discount,
 - making revisions to the calculation methods from historical averages to planned transit service levels
 - eliminating the excess capacity restrictions.
4. Ensure that the GTTA proceeds with the implementation of the smartcard initiative and takes a strong leadership role on GTA fare integration and service coordination;
5. Commit itself to a process that will allow for a more open and constructive interaction between itself and the federal government. While the federal government is hesitant to involve itself in provincial matters, especially as it relates to local municipalities, the time has come that, if Canada as a whole is to maintain its prosperity, the barriers of each government must be broken down for the collective good;
6. Commit towards working with the federal government to establish a National Transit Strategy as outlined in the report from the City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer, dated March 20th, 2007 and as promoted by the Big City Mayors' Caucus of FCM.
(Appendix 5)

Current Value Assessment, Airport Payment in Lieu of Taxes and Tax Increment Financing

1. Maintain current value assessment as the basis upon which property taxes are calculated;
2. Implement and maintain a four-year reassessment cycle with phase in of reassessment related increases and decreases*;

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3. Eliminate the non-residential property tax cap and clawback and extend a four-year phase-in of reassessment increases to the non-residential classes;
4. Eliminate the per passenger formula used to calculate the GTAA payment in lieu of taxes on exempt airport property and implement a payment in lieu of taxes calculation based on the current value of the property at the applicable municipal tax rate;
5. Consult with municipalities for the purposes of amending the current legislation and implementing meaningful and effective tax increment financing tools.

* the resolution on the original report was amended to reflect decreases also as per Council's direction.

Fiscal Imbalance: Underfunding of Municipal Services

1. End the provincial-municipal fiscal imbalance by taking immediate action to eliminate the Province of Ontario's reliance on the property tax system by uploading the costs of health and social services to the province over a three year period;
2. Recognize that the GTA Pooling Program (known also as the Toronto Tax) is unfair and complicated and commit to accelerating the elimination of the GTA Pooling Program by advancing the phasing schedule to three years, as opposed to the elimination over a seven year period;
3. Commit to forging better relationships between all three orders of government with the ultimate goal of ending the use of municipal property taxes to fund provincial programs and services and ensure appropriate funding of municipal infrastructure.

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The Status of the City of Mississauga within the Region of Peel

Council received this report for information. The report concluded that it was important that the provincial candidates in the upcoming election be advised that progress concerning the advancement of the service delivery reviews, recommended by Justice Adams and endorsed by the Province, has been unsatisfactory to the City of Mississauga and remains an outstanding issue.

Engagement Strategy

With the resolutions passed by Council, clarity has been brought to the key issues and changes required by any party wishing to govern the Province of Ontario.

Staff proposes a three fold approach to engaging official political parties and candidates in the October 2007 provincial election.

1. Distribute this series of reports and seek answers to key questions in writing,
2. Invite party leaders, or designates, to a town hall meeting on September 19th 2007,
3. Request the Mayor outline the key issues and answers received, in her newsletter to the taxpayers of Mississauga.

1. Seek answers to key questions in writing:

A copy of all five reports will be forwarded to each official party and all local candidates (of official parties) that are registered with Elections Ontario, by August 20, 2007.

Each party and local candidate will be asked to answer the following questions in writing by August 31st, 2007:

1. Do you commit to the measures outlined by the City of Mississauga regarding the need for investments in transportation and specifically, what additional measures and investments will you make in transportation in the next four years?
2. Will you make the commitments outlined by the City of Mississauga regarding current value assessment, airport payments in lieu of taxes and tax incremental financing?

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3. Will you make the commitments outlined by the City of Mississauga regarding the underfunding of municipal services, including the uploading the costs of health and social services to the Province from the municipal property tax over the next three years and the phasing out of the GTA Pooling Program completely over the next three years?

At the same time as posing these questions, each recipient will be advised that progress concerning the advancement of the Region of Peel service delivery reviews, recommended by Justice Adams and endorsed by the Province, has been unsatisfactory to the City of Mississauga and remains an outstanding issue.

All responses will be posted on the City's website, on a special provincial election page, which would also contain all the background reports.

2. Town Hall Meeting in September 19th 2007:

Each official party would be invited to attend a town hall meeting, held in the City of Mississauga Council Chambers, with an invited audience of key Mississauga stakeholders as observers, and run by an external moderator.

The format of the meeting would allow each party to speak to the key issues as outlined in this series of reports. The party leaders or designates would be invited to speak, not the local candidates (unless they are the designate). The moderator will ensure the set time for each speaker would be adhered to and the town hall will last approximately two (2) hours.

It also allows the opportunity for Members of Council to clarify each parties stand on these issues, and through a moderated session, the opportunity for questions on any other topic, that the parties or Members of Council might raise.

Rogers Cable would be requested to broadcast the town hall meeting live and the City would stream the event live on the web with podcasting available as well.

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3. Mayor's Newsletter:

The Mayor's newsletter is a popular and effective tool to communicate to residents. The Mayor would summarize the issues and the responses received by the parties in writing and distribute her newsletter to every Mississauga taxpayer. This affords the opportunity to inform the citizens of Mississauga of the key issues of importance to the City in a very timely manner.

The newsletter would be delivered approximately two weeks in advance of the election date.

CONCLUSION:

The Province of Ontario plays a critical role in ensuring the success of municipalities and has the power to correct deficiencies in existing legislation.

As the third largest city in Ontario and the sixth largest in Canada, the City of Mississauga, over the last 33 years, has regularly been identified as the best managed municipality in Canada. As Mississauga enters into the next stage of its development, it simply seeks the status and ability to continue to move forward in a positive direction over the next 30 years.

To do this, any party wishing to govern the Province of Ontario needs to commit to the measures outlined in these reports. Most of the measures requested are centred on ensuring that Ontario cities continue to have viable, sustainable business plans and are accountable in the delivery of them.

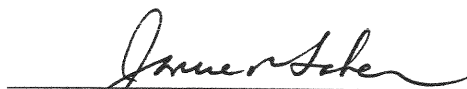
Sustaining municipalities and building strong, vibrant and liveable communities is critical to the economic success and quality of life of residents and businesses in the Province of Ontario.

Official parties and candidates should be engaged to establish their position on these issues, thereby enabling Mississauga voters to be well informed before the Provincial Election on October 10th, 2007.

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ATTACHMENTS:

- Appendix 1: Investment in Transit and Transportation Systems
- Appendix 2: Current Value Assessment, Airport Payment in Lieu of Taxes and Tax Increment Financing
- Appendix 3: Fiscal Imbalance: Underfunding of Municipal Services
- Appendix 4: The Status of the City of Mississauga within the Region of Peel
- Appendix 5: National Transit Strategy



Janice M. Baker, CA
City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer

Prepared By: Gary Kent, Director of Strategic Initiatives