

DATE: June 3, 2004

TO: Mayor and Members of Council
Meeting date: June 9, 2004

FROM: Janice M. Baker CA , Acting City Manager

SUBJECT: **One City One Voice Campaign:**
Citizens' response to Pledge Cards and Envirionics Poll

ORIGIN: City Manager's Office

BACKGROUND: The City of Mississauga has resolved to become a Separated City which would remove it from the current Regional government structure and have one-tier government. Core reasons for this declaration are:

- Mississauga taxpayers are currently subsidizing Brampton and Caledon for programs delivered by the Region of Peel
- Duplication and overlap of services that exist between the City and the Region is additional bureaucracy and wasteful of Mississauga taxes
- Representation of the taxpayers of Mississauga at the regional level is not proportionate to the assessment base or population

A campaign was launched in December, 2003 called 'One City One Voice'. The purpose of this campaign was to educate the citizens of Mississauga to the existing inequities of the two-tier governance model and to gain public support for this initiative. The campaign included a variety of approaches such as media releases, news conference, posters, polls, community meetings and resident newsletters.

Over the months of April and May, 2004 the corporation undertook two specific initiatives to gauge the resident support for a Separated City. One was a mail-back pledge card which was part of a 'Mayor's Update' newsletter delivered to all homes in Mississauga; the other was a statistically valid telephone survey conducted by Environics.

The purpose of this report is to share the results of both of these initiatives.

COMMENTS:

Pledge Cards

The 'Mayor's Update' newsletter was delivered to all Mississauga households during the week of April 26th, 2004. It included a pledge card for residents to show their support to City Council for Mississauga becoming a Separated City from the Region of Peel. As of May 31st, 2004, over 20,000 pledge votes have been tabulated. The full results by Ward are attached as Appendix A.

Ninety-nine percent of the pledge votes tabulated were in favour of the City of Mississauga's goal of becoming a Separated City, no longer part of the Region of Peel.

Many pledge cards had words of encouragement for either the 'One City One Voice' campaign or for the Mayor and Councillors specifically (Appendix B). There were a significant number of comments, questions and remarks written on returned pledge cards (20 percent of cards received), and direct emails and phone calls to Councillors' offices. The questions were generally regarding one of the following topics: social and health services, school boards, transition costs, taxes, other solutions, Brampton and Caledon's situation. Staff responded to specific inquiries with returned phone calls and emails, and developed a 'Frequently Asked Questions' list which was mailed and made available on the City's web-site (Appendix C). To date the City's web-page for 'One City One Voice' has been viewed 16,000 times since its inception mid-February, 2004.

The response received was extremely high with the even distribution of returned cards per ward suggesting broad support throughout Mississauga and not just in a few areas.

The high rate of those interested in receiving future information regarding this campaign also suggests more than just a passing interest in the topic.

Although an overwhelming response was received, an analysis of the pledge cards alone cannot conclusively determine community support for the 'One City One Voice' campaign, therefore the City conducted a statistically valid survey through Environics.

Statistically valid survey

The telephone survey was conducted among 400 adult residents of the City of Mississauga between May 18th and 22nd, 2004. The margin of error for a sample of 400 is plus or minus five percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The survey finds widespread awareness of and solid, strong support for the idea of Mississauga becoming a Separated City, no longer a part of the Region of Peel government.

Eighty-one percent of Mississauga residents have heard about the City of Mississauga's goal to become a Separated City. A total of 71 percent of all residents support Mississauga becoming a Separated City, no longer a part of the Region of Peel government. The strength of the support is also evidenced by the fact that the proportion who strongly support the initiative (47 percent) is twice that who only somewhat support it (24 percent). Just 12 percent are opposed and 18 percent offer no opinion.

Support is even stronger among those who were aware of the issue prior to being phoned for the survey. A total of 81 percent of aware residents support Mississauga becoming a Separated City, no longer a part of the Region of Peel government. Again, the proportion who strongly support the initiative (54 percent) is twice that who only somewhat support it (25 percent). Just nine percent are opposed and 11 percent offer no opinion.

Support for the initiative is largely based on the feeling that Mississauga should not have to share its tax revenues and services with other municipalities and a desire to put Mississauga taxes to

work within Mississauga. Support is also based on respect for the leadership of Mayor McCallion and on feelings that the City will be better off financially and taxes might be lower.

The full results of the telephone survey are attached as Appendix D.

Further evidence of support

Environics' 2004 FOCUS ONTARIO spring survey flash report, which asked 400 Mississauga residents their opinion on the 'Most Important Problem', found that, for the first time, residents indicated "top-of-mind" separation or self-government as one of the most important problems facing Mississauga today. This is significant given the fact that the pollster did not mention the issue, but rather the respondent.

CONCLUSION:

The pledge cards and Environics poll, which were conducted through April and May, 2004 as a method to gauge the support of Mississauga residents for the 'One City One Voice' campaign were successfully completed. Ninety-Nine percent of the pledges were in favour. In a statistically valid poll conducted by Environics, 71 percent were in support of Mississauga as a Separated City. This issue has been identified by the 2004 FOCUS ONTARIO poll as being one of the most important problems that Mississauga faces.

Irregardless of the method of gauging support, there clearly exists solid, strong support by the citizens of Mississauga for the goal of Mississauga becoming a Separated City, no longer a part of the Region of Peel government .

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report dated June 1, 2004 from the Acting City Manager, detailing the results of the pledge cards and Environics poll for a Separated City, be received for information.

Janice M. Baker CA,
Acting City Manager