



2021 Federal Election Information Session

The City of Mississauga held a virtual information session on Monday, September 13, 2021 to share an overview of the City's key election priorities with residents and registered local candidates.

Due to time constraints, not all questions were answered during the session. Below is a summary of responses to unanswered questions by themes.

For more information, or to watch a recording of the information session, please visit the MississaugaMatters.ca website.

Transit

Q: When can we expect all-day, two-way service on Mississauga transit lines?

A: It remains a top priority for the City, but as the corridor is owned by CP Rail and GO Transit operates the service, it is important that the province develop and implement the plan. The City continues to advocate to the provincial and federal governments to fund the GO Expansion Program on the Milton Corridor and put all-day, two-way service in place as soon as possible.

Q: What is the current status of the Downtown LRT Loop?

A: At present, the downtown loop has been removed from the Hurontario LRT project. The City feels that it is an important element of the project and a catalyst for economic growth and the future of our downtown core. The City continues to advocate to the federal and provincial government to fund the addition of the loop back into the project.

Q: What is the City doing to relieve the issue of traffic congestion?

A: The City continues to invest in MiWay public transit and to building a rapid transit network that gets people moving and seamlessly connects business with highly skilled talent. Our goal is to reduce congestion and gridlock. Investing in transit remains a priority for the City, but requires all three levels of government to help fund these important projects.

Q: Many years ago, as part of the Mississauga Cycling Advisory Committee, we reviewed a project to enhance public transportation in Mississauga, especially a LRT along Hurontario from Port Credit up to Brampton. I don't see very much progress in this project. What is slowing it down?

A: The Hurontario LRT project has been in active construction since early 2020. Currently there are a number of segments of the corridor under construction with the initial focus on the relocation of underground utilities to facilitate the ultimate widening of the corridor and the construction of the guideway.

In Port Credit, the Mary Fix Creek flood works are well underway as is the preparation of the new portal under the CN tracks that will provide the critical access point into the new Port Credit underground LRT station. The construction of the Hurontario LRT continues to proceed on schedule for its planned completion in late 2024.

Q: When will Phase 3: Refine & Present Recommendations from Clarkson Transit Station Area Study be available?

A: The Clarkson Transit Station Area Study has been delayed due to the need to conduct an Air Quality Study resulting from background analysis work during previous phases. The Air Quality Study is almost complete with the consultants working on preparing the final report. Staff plan to conduct a community meeting, hopefully before the end of the year, to present the results of the air quality study. After this, Phase 3 work will resume to prepare a Preferred Land Use Plan.

Sustainable Infrastructure

Q: What is the City's plan to increase green space in our communities amongst all the new building developments?

A: Mississauga currently has 219km of park trails, 265 playgrounds, 18 pools, 374 sports fields, and over 387km of multiuse trails, bicycle lanes, and signed bike routes.

In order to maintain this infrastructure as well as continue to build more accessible public spaces and recreational amenities, we need the federal government to commit to providing long-term, predictable and sustainable infrastructure funding. Cities plan our capital budgets 10 years in advance. We need certainty that the money will be there to build the projects we have planned.

Q: How is the City addressing the climate change crisis? Does the City have a goal to reduce carbon emissions?

A: The City recognizes that it has an important role to play in combatting climate change. In 2019, Council approved the City's first comprehensive climate change action plan. This plan is both a mitigation and adaptation plan, which means it focuses both on decreasing greenhouse gases (GHGs) and increasing the city's resilience to climate events. Our goal is to decrease GHGs 80% by 2050, with a long-term goal of becoming a net zero community. The plan includes 89 actions to help us achieve our goals.

Q: How does the City plan to keep our current infrastructure in a state of good repair as well as creating new infrastructure in a sustainable way?

A: The City is developing comprehensive Asset Management Plans for all city-owned infrastructure such as roads, bridges, community centres and libraries. These Plans will ensure that the right dollars are spent at the right time in order to keep infrastructure in a state of good repair and maximize the life of the asset. Regarding funding for new infrastructure – the City is applying to the various infrastructure funding programs established by the federal and provincial governments, such as the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program to fund projects such as the Lakeshore BRT.

But the bottom line is we only receive 9 cents of every tax dollar collected in this country, but cities own 60% of all the infrastructure in this country. The math does not add up. We're being asked to build 21st Century Cities with 19th Century tools.

The math doesn't add up. Cities need a partner in the federal government who make long-term, predictable investments in our infrastructure so we can build the communities people want to call home. City building is nation building.

Q: This year more than any has shown us the peril of climate change in cities. Is the City of Mississauga prepared for the kind of deluge that we have seen in recent months in Germany, China and the Eastern Seaboard of the United States?

A: In 2019, Council approved the City's first comprehensive climate change action plan. This plan is both a mitigation and adaptation plan, which means it focuses both on decreasing greenhouse gases and increasing the city's resilience to climate events. The plan includes 89 actions to help us achieve our goals. Some of our current initiatives include:

- Updating green standards for new buildings: we are working to update our green standards for new buildings in the city. These will likely include requirements around energy efficiency, GHG emissions, and resilience. These standards will get more stringent over time. We are working to have these standards in place by 2023.
- One Million Trees Program: we continue to implement the One Million Trees program, with the goal of planting one million trees by 2032.
- Urban Agriculture Study: we are developing an urban agriculture strategy that will help identify the City's role in supporting urban-scale food production across Mississauga. Through the strategy, the City will work to encourage healthier lifestyles, empower the community to learn new skills about growing and harvesting produce, and support local businesses with ties to urban agriculture.

Climate change is a nation-wide problem and the biggest challenge we have ever had to confront. All three levels of government must work together to address climate change. This requires proper funding and the right legislation and programs.

Housing policy is climate policy. Transit policy is climate policy. Sustainable infrastructure is climate policy. There is no single solution to climate change. We must take a sustainable approach to everything we do.

Q: Will the government be helping people with disabilities with additional funds this year or in the future?

A: The City continues to work hard to identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities to create a Mississauga that is built for everyone – whether you're pushing a stroller, making a delivery, or using a walker or a wheelchair.

The City does not provide direct funding to individuals or organizations for accessibility but there are provincial opportunities, such as the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), that are designed to provide financial support to individuals.

The City has advocated for funds from the federal government to help make our facilities and public spaces more accessible and inclusive. We have also asked the federal government to consider providing grants for home renovations and rental units to improve accessibility and ensure that our aging residents and residents with disabilities will be able to remain in their homes.

Q: Is the City requesting additional revenue sources from the federal government such as a greater share of the federal gas tax?

A: On March 25th, 2021 the federal government announced Bill C-25, which would permanently rename the Gas Tax Fund to Canada Community-Building Fund and increase the transfer of funding by \$2.2 billion in 2021, almost double the allocation for this year, totalling approximately \$4.5 billion.

Housing Affordability

Q: What is the City doing to address the current housing crisis and increase housing affordability?

A: Mississauga has several initiatives underway to help improve housing affordability, such as developing an inclusionary zoning framework, developing an incentive program to encourage new affordable supply, and studying land use permissions in our neighbourhoods to see how we can increase housing options for residents.

However, we need to continue to work with the federal government to address the housing affordability crisis. Small changes to federal legislation and policy would make it easier for us to get developers to build housing that is more affordable, more often.

- More needs to be done at the federal level to create a shift in the housing market to a “housing as a human right” approach, so that individual homebuyers looking for a place to live are not competing with investors, speculators, house-flippers, and corporations buying up housing.
- The federal government should leverage existing federal lands within Mississauga by making them available to non-profit affordable housing developers. The cost of land is a significant barrier to entry.
- Mississauga encourages the federal government to continue and expand funding programs that realize developer timeframes and financial needs e.g. low cost loans, grants. Consideration should be given to taxation policies that incentivize affordable housing e.g. HST rebates, tax incentives for new or rehabilitated purpose built rental housing, tax credits and exemptions for affordable housing.
- Homebuyers need assistance through programs like shared-equity mortgage programs and income tax credits for second units.

Like all the issues we have discussed, housing affordability requires all levels of government to come to the table, using their powers and their pocketbooks, to address the root causes of skyrocketing housing prices, and develop solutions to address them.

Q: Is the City going to tax foreign investors?

A: The Region of Peel already has the Non-Resident Speculation Tax (NRST) in place for those foreign investors buying six or less units. The NRST is a 15 per cent tax on the purchase or acquisition of an interest in residential property located in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Region (GGH) by individuals who are not citizens or permanent residents of Canada or by foreign corporations (foreign entities) and taxable trustees.

We do understand that the parameters of the current program may not be adequate, however, four of the five major federal political parties in Canada have also included restrictions in their platforms on foreign investors in the Canadian housing market. Both the Liberals and the Conservatives and vowed two-year bans on foreign home buyers and the NDP and Green Party have both promised to implement taxes on foreign buyers.

Business and Community Support

Q: What is Mississauga doing to support the small businesses that were hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: The City of Mississauga has supported the small business community hardest hit by Covid-19 pandemic through a number of tactics such as deferring property taxes; supporting restaurants, bars, and other food and drink establishments through the temporary patio program; offering free business advisory services; business training and recovery webinars among other tactics.

The City recognized the need to provide timely and accurate information to the business community by developing and maintaining digital resources to help businesses access information, programs and funding support to support their response and recovery efforts.

For more information, I encourage you to visit our Economic Development Office at www.thefutureisunlimited.ca

However, it should be noted that the City of Mississauga has limited financial powers to provide support to the businesses hardest hit by repeated shutdowns. The federal government should continue to provide

programs like the Canadian Emergency Rent Subsidy and the Canadian Wage Subsidy Program until the country and the economy are fully re-opened, for good.

The federal government has the fiscal firepower needed to properly address the issues businesses and workers are facing.

Q: Does the City have a plan to revive the local economy?

A: In the summer of 2020, Council adopted the City's Recovery Plan Framework. The framework is designed to help Mississauga address all aspects of the recovery from COVID-19 and is divided into four pillars for recovery: Community, Economic, Finance and Corporate. The Economic Recovery Framework is one of four pillars guiding the City's overall recovery efforts.

The three economic recovery plans approved by Council can be found at www.thefutureisunlimited.ca

These plans include actions to support our business community through our economic recovery.

Q: What is the City's plan to restore Mississauga's vibrant tourism industry?

A: As part of Tourism Mississauga's strategy to support those hardest hit in our industry, TM has partnered with EDO and others in the #MississaugaMade awareness campaign, incentivized overnight stays with out 'It Pays to Stay' program and encouraged people to try their hand at outdoor adventure #ReelinaDeal Silver Salmon Fishing experience support. TM has also sponsored major events in order to further engage and encourage our audiences and to keep cultural events viable in such uncertain times.

Miscellaneous

Q: When was the open letter sent to federal party leaders? Did you follow up?

A: The open letter to federal party leaders was sent on August 18th, 2021. To date, we have received two responses from federal leaders Erin O'Toole and Justin Trudeau.