

Date: March 7, 2022	Originator's files:
To: Chair and Members of General Committee	
From: Paul Mitcham, P.Eng, MBA, City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer	Meeting date: March 30, 2022

Subject

Mississauga Matters: Summary of Priority Issues and Engagement Strategy for the 2022 Provincial Election

Recommendation

1. That the report dated March 7, 2022 from the City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer entitled "Mississauga Matters: Summary of Priority Issues and Engagement Strategy for the 2022 Provincial Election" be endorsed as the City of Mississauga's priority issues pertaining to the potential 2022 provincial election.
2. That the engagement tactics recommended in the report dated March 7, 2022 from the City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer entitled "Mississauga Matters: Summary of Priority Issues and Engagement Strategy for the 2022 Provincial Election" be approved for implementation.

Executive Summary

- The Ontario general election is scheduled to be held on June 2, 2022.
- The Government of Ontario is an important partner in ensuring the City of Mississauga meets its objectives, realizes its vision, and achieves its city-building priorities, specifically through proper funding mechanisms and legislative authority.
- In February 2022, the City of Mississauga submitted its annual provincial pre-budget submission containing 12 recommendations, organized into three themes: City Building, Community and Culture, and Local Economy.
- For the 2022 provincial election, staff recommend engaging in another "Mississauga Matters" campaign, similar to those undertaken during the 2018 provincial and the 2019 and 2021 federal elections.

- A provincial election affords the City of Mississauga the opportunity to engage with political leaders and candidates on key issues. While there are many issues of importance between the City of Mississauga and the provincial government, it is recommended that the City focus on four in our engagement strategy: investments in public transit, housing affordability, sustainable operating and infrastructure funding for municipalities, and targeted supports for business and the local economy.
- Mississauga Matters campaigns showcase the City's provincial priorities and call on all candidates to pledge their support for the City's priorities. The campaigns utilize of a variety of tactics including earned and paid media; social media; information materials for stakeholders, residents and businesses; and engagement forums to provide information to the community on the City's priorities.
- The total budget for this campaign will not exceed \$40,000 and will be funded through the existing Mississauga Matters Advocacy Campaign capital budget (PN22861).

Background

The Province of Ontario's next general election is scheduled to take place on June 2, 2022. The writ period is anticipated to begin on May 2, 2022.

The City of Mississauga is an important stakeholder to the Province and our residents will be directly affected by the outcome of the 2022 provincial election. It is important that the City of Mississauga not only makes its top priorities known to the local candidates and party leaders, but also engages residents, businesses and key stakeholders to demonstrate the importance of Mississauga's priorities and why Mississauga matters to them. The City is home to six (6) provincial ridings.

Over the past many provincial and federal election cycles, the City of Mississauga has developed and deployed advocacy and engagement strategies. These previous engagement strategies have informed residents, businesses, and stakeholders about important municipal priorities and enlisted them as supporters of the City's message. They have also informed local candidates from all parties running in the six (6) local ridings about the City's priorities and what our expectations are for the party that forms the next provincial or federal government. The City's election engagement strategies are known as, "Mississauga Matters" and have typically included a mix of earned and paid media tactics, as well as significant social media activity.

Over the last three Mississauga Matters campaigns staff have consistently used a variety of tactics to reach our targeted audiences. This included significant presence on social media, information and advocacy materials (printed and digital), videos and visual materials, earned and paid media, as well as programmatic advertising.

The results and reach of each Mississauga Matters have increased steadily with each campaign as we learn and develop best practices:

	2018 Provincial Election	2019 Federal Election	2021 Federal Election
Total Reach	397,906	1,013,728	3,866,321

The purpose of this report is to summarize the City's priority issues for the 2022 provincial election and outline an engagement strategy that targets stakeholders, candidates, and provincial parties while capitalizing on the successes of previous campaigns.

Pre-Budget Submissions

In February 2022, the City of Mississauga submitted its provincial pre-budget submissions, which contained 12 recommendations organized into three themes: City Building, Community and Culture, and Local Economy. These recommendations were approved by Council and form the foundation for the City's year-round advocacy efforts.

Comments

The strategy for the Mississauga Matters campaigns relies upon keeping the number of priorities streamlined, limited, and specific. If the strategy has too many messages or too many priorities, it will be difficult to engage our target audiences, deliver our message effectively, and ensure that our most important priorities are considered.

Using the 2022 provincial pre-budget submission as a guide (Appendix 1), the overall message to provincial parties and candidates will be:

"Mississauga needs a committed provincial government partner to provide consistent, predictable, and long-term funding so that Mississauga can recover and build a thriving world-class city that is accessible, affordable, and equitable to all."

This overarching message will underpin the entire strategy and shape the messaging of each of the priority areas: investments in public transit; housing affordability, sustainable operating and infrastructure funding for municipalities, and targeted supports for business and the local economy.

Mississauga Matters – Priority Issues

It is recommended that the 2022 Mississauga Matters campaign focus on the following four themes:

- Investments in Public Transit
- Housing Affordability
- Sustainable Operating and Infrastructure Funding for Municipalities
- Targeted Support for Business and the Local Economy

These themes are in line with the 12 recommendations of the City's 2022 provincial pre-budget submission.

Investments in Public Transit

The City of Mississauga has a strategic vision that is only achievable if a reliable, efficient and sustainable inter-regional transit system is built. The City continues to make significant investments in public transit locally, but we require additional investment from the provincial (and federal) government to realize our long-term transit objectives. It is critically important to Mississauga that the next provincial government be committed to continuing to work with the City to build a 21st century transit system that is multi-modal and regionally focussed in order to move people into and out of the City.

Mississauga requires investment in critical transit infrastructure and services in order to meet our economic and development goals. This is especially important in the coming years as all three levels of government work to regain our economic losses and create jobs.

The following are the priority transit projects that will be featured in the campaign:

- **Building the Downtown Loop as part of the Hurontario LRT:**

In March 2019, the Ontario government announced scope changes to the project that removed a key component of the Hurontario Light Rail Transit (HuLRT), the downtown loop. In order to help the City realize the full potential of Downtown Mississauga, the downtown loop must be considered a funding priority.

Currently thousands of jobs, businesses and housing units are located along the Hurontario corridor and a major mixed-use development by Oxford Properties will be built in Mississauga's Downtown Square One District. The downtown is set to accommodate another 40,000 units in the years ahead, necessitating a rapid transit solution.

Moving forward, building the downtown loop will be a major step towards a multi-modal interconnected regional transit system that our residents and businesses within the downtown are depending on. The Hurontario LRT project will not be complete without The Loop.

- **All-Day, Two-Way GO on the Milton Corridor:**

The Milton GO Rail Corridor is a key local and regional rapid transit corridor that, with increased two-way all-day service, will help respond to growing traffic congestion, meet the demand for inter-regional transit service and support economic development. Despite being the second busiest corridor in the GO Transit network, serving over 20,000 passengers per day, six stations, and 77,000 jobs along this corridor in Mississauga, all-day, two-way GO service on the Milton Corridor has not yet been committed to by the Province. In addition,

the federal government recently announced support for increased service on the Milton GO line. While these are positive steps towards realizing increased service on this critical rail line, the City encourages the Province to continue discussions and develop a plan for implementing increased passenger service on the Milton GO line.

Housing Affordability

Mississauga is facing a housing affordability crisis and proactive intervention by all levels of government is imperative to ensure that our communities continue to thrive.

Mississauga is doing what it can to protect existing affordable housing supply and remove current regulatory and administrative barriers to the development of affordable housing such as:

- Zoning approval for approximately 20,000 units which have not yet been built
- Permissions for “unlimited heights and densities” in our Downtown Core which streamline and bring certainty to the development process, and could support the creation of tens of thousands of new units in the Core.
- Protecting our existing affordable stock through our Rental Housing Protection By-law and Demolition Control By-law
- Developing an inclusionary zoning framework to require developments in Major Transit Station Areas to incorporate affordable housing units
- Securing revenue through density bonusing and seeking additional revenue sources to incentivize affordable rental housing
- Prioritizing City surplus land for affordable housing development by non-profit housing providers

Even with these actions, Mississauga’s middle-income earners (\$58,000 - \$108,000 household income) are unable to compete in our current housing market. According to recent reports, the average cost of a home in Mississauga continues to be over \$1 million and it is becoming increasingly difficult to rent or purchase in Mississauga.

In recent months, the provincial government has assembled a Housing Affordability Task Force which delivered a report that included 55 recommendations focussed on increasing supply. Mississauga has serious concerns with a number of the recommendations that limit local input and control of planning, impose a one-size-fits all province-wide planning regime, undermines the collection of development charges and cash-in-lieu of parkland, and places the onus of the housing crisis on municipal processes and slow approvals.

It is important that Mississauga takes a targeted approach to housing affordability during the 2022 provincial election to ensure that the commitments made by political parties have a tangible and real effect on housing affordability. With in this in mind, it is important that the Government of Ontario work with municipalities to:

- Build complete communities and respect the importance of local input and municipal decision-making in planning; and
- Increase housing affordability through effective legislation and policy changes, including:
 - a) Permitting Inclusionary Zoning everywhere the market can support it (e.g. large greyfield sites) and permit cash-in-lieu of inclusionary zoning.
 - b) Leveraging provincially-owned land by requiring a minimum of 20 per cent affordable units be provided when selling surplus land to developers.
 - c) Discouraging investor-owned residential real estate through mechanisms such as capital gains tax (excluding principal residences) and improvements to the Provincial Non-resident Speculation Tax.

The Mississauga Matters campaign will continue the campaign already underway in response to the Ontario Housing Taskforce Report recommendations that began in March 2022.

Sustainable Operating and Infrastructure Funding for Municipalities

The quality of life for Mississauga residents depends on both the high quality of municipal services (fire and emergency response, transit, winter maintenance, and recreation and cultural programming etc.) and infrastructure (roads, bridges, parks, trails, community centres and other amenities) being in a state of good repair. Mississauga needs a dedicated provincial partner to provide ongoing Safe Restart funding to help municipalities recover from the lingering operating pressures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as sustainable infrastructure funding so that municipalities can build and maintain 21st century cities. Our priorities include:

- **Ongoing Safe Restart Funding**

Despite declining revenues due to COVID-19, the City of Mississauga is still expected to provide services to residents. Ontario has faced the longest and most widespread public health measures in all of North America. These lockdowns have put a strain on municipal revenues by decreasing transit ridership (fares), air travel (Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILTs) paid by the airport), and program enrollment (fees from Recreation and Culture programming, fitness memberships, swimming lessons, etc.).

After significant advocacy throughout the pandemic, the federal and provincial governments developed the Safe Restart Program, which provided funding to municipalities in Ontario to offset revenue losses (POA, transit, recreation, etc.,) and to ensure municipalities could weather the pandemic and continue to provide critical services.

Under the Safe Restart Program, the City of Mississauga has received \$141.5 million in total to offset operating shortfalls. This program is a good example of

how three levels of government can work together to support municipal service delivery. While the focus of the federal and provincial governments has traditionally been on capital investments, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the need for ongoing investments in the operation and delivery of critical municipal services.

- **Infrastructure Funding**

In 2022, Mississauga has an estimated \$13.6 billion worth of infrastructure assets including \$3.1 billion in roads, \$5.3 billion in storm water systems, and \$973 million in bridges.

Cities receive only nine cents of every tax dollar collected by governments in Canada, but are responsible for 60 cents of every dollar spent on infrastructure. The math does not add up. The City's current funding does not fully support all capital requirements, but balances the need to maintain our infrastructure, fund new projects as required, and minimize debt. As a result, the condition of some of our assets is starting to decline and will require increased investment the longer they are allowed to deteriorate.

With an average annual infrastructure gap of approximately \$40-45 million, the City continues to struggle with funding shortfalls. Historically, Mississauga has managed because of our financial strength and the policies and practices Council has adopted over the years, such as the implementation of an infrastructure levy. While the two per cent infrastructure and debt repayment levy assists, additional funding from other levels of government is required.

The City of Mississauga cannot maintain or grow its infrastructure on the local tax bill alone. In order to continue to build Mississauga into a world-class city, we need long-term, predictable and sustainable funding models for infrastructure renewal projects.

Ongoing Targeted Support for Business and the Local Economy

The City of Mississauga has a strong local economy, comprised of a highly diverse business community that reaches across a wide variety of sectors. Home to over 94,000 businesses, with a GDP of \$60 billion, the City is a major contributor to the Greater Toronto Area economy. It is imperative that we remain responsive to the needs of the business community as recovery takes hold.

As provincial and federal governments assist the municipal sector, they must also continue to help our business community. While the City of Mississauga has and will play an ongoing role in helping the local economy, especially those hardest hit, we need active and engaged provincial and federal partners to work with the City and our local businesses to build back better; and adopt an inclusive, whole community approach that leaves no one behind.

The Mississauga Economic Development Strategy outlines three global drivers of change shaping economic competitiveness and prosperity:

1. Digital technology transformation
2. Emergence of sustainability as a business imperative
3. Competition for talent

In alignment with these drivers, Mississauga's Economic Recovery Plans for Broader Industry and Small Business outline a path to recovery that is connected to our strengths and focused on initiatives that will sustain long-term competitiveness. This means investing in business innovation and making strategic investments that support our innovative and high growth companies in accessing the skilled the talent and business opportunities they need to grow. Guided by on-going engagement and feedback from the local Mississauga business community, staff recommend the following areas of focus for the upcoming Mississauga Matters provincial election campaign:

- **Invest in local business innovation and competitiveness**

- a. Provide long term funding to incentivize the adoption of sustainable, advanced technologies and digitalisation for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) by:
 - Extending the funding for the Digital Main Street program recipients (up to 3 years) to support service continuity and retain skilled business advisors.
 - Expanding existing provincial and federal programs to support SMEs in assessing and adopting advanced and sustainable technologies.
- b. Enhance business opportunities for Ontario innovators to provide solutions to public and private sector challenges, as well as procurement and supply chain needs.

- **Invest in talent development and access**

- a. Advance alignment of workforce development programming and services with the needs of employers, particularly those within high value growth industries in Ontario, including Advanced Manufacturing, Life Sciences, Information & Communication Technologies, Financial Services and Smart Logistics by:
 - Expanding and funding programs that foster collaboration between education and training institutions and industry stakeholders to develop flexible, demand-driven education and training programs for SMEs.
 - Developing dedicated funding streams that address the gaps experienced by SMEs in accessing workforce development supports and resources.

- b. Expand workforce development supports focused on full and equitable participation within the labour market:
 - Build upon existing provincial and federal incentives for businesses to provide work opportunities for persons facing challenges to employment, including new graduates, long-term unemployed, newcomers and persons with disabilities.

Target Audience

The City of Mississauga's provincial election strategy will have three distinct target audiences:

- Political parties and party leaders;
- Local party candidates registered with Elections Ontario in Mississauga's six (6) provincial ridings; and
- Residents, businesses, and other key stakeholders in our City.

The overall messages will be tailored to suit each of these audiences in an effort to achieve maximum engagement from each group. For the vast majority of residents, basic messages and information will likely be sufficient. However, for those residents, stakeholders and candidates who wish to learn more, additional materials, technical documents, and reports will be made available on each of our priority issues.

Engagement Tactics

The provincial election is scheduled to take place on June 02, 2022. Government Relations staff will work with staff across the corporation to develop advocacy similar to those from previous Mississauga Matters campaigns and the 2022 provincial pre-budget submission. The engagement tactics are organized into three categories and may include the following:

1. General Engagement:

- News releases and media alerts
- Web information, including:
 - Information for candidates and residents on the City's priority issues
 - Downloadable and shareable information sheets
 - Videos and shareable content
 - Get out the vote' message
- Information links to candidates running in each riding
- Social media outreach and paid promotion
- Paid advertising in targeted publications
- Outreach to both mainstream and multicultural media
- Partnerships with the Region of Peel and other local municipalities where applicable
- Partnerships with other local agencies (i.e. MBOT, Region of Peel, United Way, residents' associations, etc.), as well as industry organizations like FCM and AMO

2. Targeted Resident and Stakeholder Engagement:

- Video(s) specific to each of the issues, designed to be easily shareable across multiple media platforms
- Standardized messages for residents and businesses to send tailored and targeted messages to candidates and parties in support of Mississauga's priorities.
- All stakeholder meeting to inform our key partners about the City's priorities
- Articles for Mayor and Council newsletters, websites, and email messages

3. Targeted Candidate Engagement:

- Open letter from the Mayor to all local candidates*
- Open letter with questionnaire to all party leaders
- All candidates information forum

** The City will only engage with official political parties and local candidates registered with Elections Canada*

Financial Impact

Total costs for this strategy will not exceed \$40,000 if all engagement tactics are deployed with costs funded through the existing Mississauga Matters Advocacy Campaign capital budget (PN22861).

Conclusion

The City should engage the political parties who wish to form the next provincial government on the City's key issues of importance. A robust engagement and advocacy strategy supports this goal.

Attachments

Appendix 1: 2022 Provincial Pre-Budget Submission



Paul Mitcham, P.Eng, MBA, City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer

Prepared by: *James Docker, Strategic Leader, Government Relations*