

Her Worship Mayor Carolyn Parrish  
and Members of Mississauga City Council  
Mississauga Civic Centre  
300 City Centre Drive  
Mississauga, Ontario  
L5B 3C1

## **Re: Positioning Mississauga for economic success in the 2020s and beyond**

Dear Madam Mayor and Members of Council,

We write you in the context of choppy economic conditions domestically, a difficult political environment globally and uncertainty surrounding trade continentally. In this setting, the Mississauga Board of Trade (MBOT) seeks to engage with Council on how we can continue to lay the groundwork for economic success in the short-, medium- and long-term.

As the voice of business in Mississauga, MBOT is committed to building and maintaining a prosperous and resilient economy. With a membership of close to 1,000 businesses in virtually every sector of our economy, we have a long-standing, productive and respectful relationship with City Council and City staff.

During the past year, the economy has seen lots of ups and downs. One of the contributing factors among many is the political turbulence in Europe and the Middle East.

The Canadian economy is experiencing some positive numbers: a 6.5% unemployment rate and a 1.6% inflation rate. One of the challenges economically is uneven growth: quarterly annualized growth rates have ranged from -0.3% to 2.1% since Q3 2023.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, in recent years, it's worth noting that Mississauga's unemployment rate<sup>2</sup> has been consistently higher than the national unemployment rate.<sup>3</sup>

Long-standing challenges have faced the Mississauga business community, including labour shortages, supply chain disruptions, and an inadequate housing supply.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada historical data

<sup>2</sup> [www.investmississauga.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Economic-Indicators-1.pdf](http://www.investmississauga.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Economic-Indicators-1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [Unemployment rate falls to 6.5% in September](#)

This year, several additional challenges have been highlighted as key to limiting Canada's and Ontario's economy:

- In March, 2024, the Bank of Canada said that Canada has a productivity “emergency;”<sup>4</sup>
- In a study conducted by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce comparing real GDP per capita in 2023 between 10 Canadian provinces and 50 US states, 8 of 10 provinces ranked from 43<sup>rd</sup> to 60<sup>th</sup> amongst the provinces and states; and,<sup>5</sup>
- As of August, 2024, Ontario had a consumer spending level that was 5.5% below the national average.<sup>6</sup>

### ***Property Taxes***

In this context, where the local, provincial and national economic situation is mediocre, it will be challenging for businesses to afford a combined Mississauga-Peel tax increase above the 1.6% inflation rate recorded in September, 2024.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Economic Development, Visit Mississauga, IDEA Mississauga***

While there are some significant challenges facing businesses locally, there are many successes. These successes have been assisted by the great work done by the Economic Development Office (EDO). Mississauga would not be 5% of Ontario's population and 7% of the province's economic output were it not for the visionary leadership of the city's past and current economic development professionals.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Visit Mississauga continues to successfully attract events and tourists to the City of Mississauga. And, IDEA Mississauga continues to help entrepreneurs and innovators in the city. The good work done by Visit Mississauga and IDEA Mississauga is valued by MBOT. In light of these efforts, Council should continue its financial support of important players like EDO, Visit Mississauga and IDEA Mississauga in the marketing and growth of the city.

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<sup>4</sup> [Bank of Canada warns of low productivity 'emergency,' making it harder to control inflation - The Globe and Mail](#)

<sup>5</sup> Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Business Data Lab

<sup>6</sup> Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Business Data Lab

<sup>7</sup> [The Daily — Consumer Price Index, September 2024](#)

<sup>8</sup> Mississauga represents 5% of the province of Ontario's population and 7% of its economic output. See *Mississauga Economic Update*. (as presented to Budget Committee, January, 2023), p. 4

### ***Building and Development***

In a context of a severe shortage in housing supply, efficiency is vital in approving and processing development applications and building permits. Efficiency is important for any applications and permits, but especially for housing. If Mississauga is to continue to economically hit above its weight, business cannot be limited by red tape. No doubt, there needs to be governmental oversight of development. That said, the City of Mississauga should scrutinize its application approval process in consultation with the business community with a view to always optimizing efficiency.

### ***Housing Supply***

One of the biggest challenges facing governments today is housing. Work has begun locally to tackle the issue, including through the Mayor's Housing Task Force, but it is clear today that many residents of Mississauga no longer consider the city to be affordable. This is leading to situations where too many people are living in one home (and possibly living illegally). Council must consider all ways to increase housing supply with the obvious need to focus on high-rise residential and mixed use buildings while respecting public safety in the vicinity of the airport.

### ***Downtown Mississauga***

Over the City of Mississauga's 50-year history, a vibrant, multicultural community has been established where thousands of people live, work and raise a family. This has happened because Council has established policies that have encouraged – and continue to support – new commercial development in the City Centre. Mississauga should consider the role of the private sector in public-private partnerships in the City Centre with an eye on densification to address housing supply issues, while continuing to plan for a vibrant downtown core (and other areas of the City) that can play a significant role in the attraction of top talent.

### ***Employment Lands***

In the context of a housing supply crisis, building housing must be done with the City's economic future in mind. Being the home of the country's largest airport, the Pearson Economic Zone is the second largest employment zone in the country. The airport generates or facilitates 6.3% of Ontario's economic output.<sup>9</sup> The airport's continued growth is essential to

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<sup>9</sup> [Economic Impact - Regional Employment | Pearson Airport](#)

Mississauga's future. MBOT is very supportive of efforts to increase the supply of housing; however, this should be done with every effort to preserve employment lands, especially near the airport. If employment lands are not preserved near the airport, there will be fewer opportunities for the airport to grow. With Pearson having a substantial advantage as a leading international point of entry in North America, it is well-positioned for future growth.

### ***Waterfront***

There is substantial potential for Mississauga's waterfront – as a place to live, work and visit. Currently, there are plans to redevelop significant parts of the waterfront, including major community building projects of Lakeview Partners and Brightwater. Now is the time to think big with these (and other) partners. Council should support development on the waterfront while contemplating how the province's housing supply needs will be met through this exercise. No doubt there are challenges associated with ensuring that there is adequate infrastructure to support an increased population on the waterfront. If we, as a community, remain focused on the big picture of building a waterfront that is accessible to everyone for decades to come, we must have the ability to address the challenges today.

### ***Addressing Congestion***

For Mississauga to succeed, it must address transportation issues. Improving all modes of transportation, including mass transit and transportation by vehicle. Additionally, integrating transit with neighbouring jurisdictions' transit systems is vital for economic success. Moreover, it is vital that there are stronger transportation connections to Toronto Pearson Airport supported by extending the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension to Toronto Pearson.

### ***Air Transportation***

Mississauga's proximity to Toronto, southern Ontario and markets in North America has been a tremendous contributor to the city's economic success. Being the home of Canada's largest airport is also an incredible economic driver, with the Pearson Economic Zone being home to approximately 400,000 jobs.<sup>10</sup>

Being the home for Pearson, there is an opportunity for Mississauga to advocate for policy and regulatory changes (where needed) to ensure that the airport continues to be the important economic driver that it is.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://prodwebsitestrbot.blob.core.windows.net/prod-medialibrary/bot/media/pdf/pez-infographic.pdf>

We urge Mississauga to:

- work with all levels of government and the GTAA to ensure that all transportation infrastructure continues to have efficient connections to Pearson; and,
- work with all levels of government and the GTAA and the Government of Ontario to extend the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension to Pearson.

### ***Environment***

MBOT is committed to contributing to Canada's efforts to achieve net zero targets. Indeed, MBOT members widely accept their responsibility to achieve this goal – and they do so whether they're environmental entrepreneurs or multinational corporations. MBOT and its members will continue working with city staff on environmental initiatives like the Mississauga Climate Leaders Program (MCLP) and we applaud the City for its leadership on this front. In this light, we encourage Council to continue supporting programs like the MCLP.

### ***Procurement***

Procurement policies for any government should be open, fair and transparent. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) released a detailed report on procurement policy in Ontario.<sup>11</sup> One of the challenges facing businesses is the lack of uniformity in bid processes. One recommendation offered by the OCC is that Supply Ontario work with municipalities to create uniform procurement processes across municipalities. MBOT encourages the City of Mississauga to collaborate with other municipalities and Supply Ontario to create standardized procurement policies. Additionally, policy that supports BIPOC, LGBTQ2S+, Indigenous and women-owned businesses to participate in the procurement process ensures that the goals of diversity, equity and inclusion are achieved.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://occ.ca/wp-content/uploads/OCC-Power-of-the-Purchase-Order.pdf>

Thank you for reviewing the enclosed. We look forward to an ongoing dialogue with policymakers in the City of Mississauga as we embark on the next 50 years in the City's history.

Regards,



Trevor McPherson  
President & CEO  
Mississauga Board of Trade