

City of Mississauga Corporate Report



Date: May 5, 2025 To: Chair and Members of Governance Committee	Originator's files:
From: Graham Walsh, J.D., City Solicitor and Commissioner of Legislative Services	Meeting date: May 12, 2025

Subject

Review of Public Petitions to Mississauga City Council

Recommendation

That the report dated May 5, 2025 from the City Solicitor and Commissioner of Legislative Services entitled, "Review of Public Petitions to Mississauga City Council" be received for information.

Background

At the April 2, 2025, Council meeting, a resident expressed concerns about the petition process and requested that improvements be made. As a result of the deputation Council directed staff to review the petition process.

Comments

Current Process for Petitions

The City of Mississauga Clerk's Office accepts petitions in electronic and paper formats from residents in accordance with the Petitions to Council Policy (see Appendix 1) and these in turn are provided to Council to decide to receive it for information or refer it to the appropriate department for review and prepare a report back on the petitioners' request. Between 2021-2024, the Clerk's Office received an average of 10 petitions per year (See Appendix 2), and 4 petitions to date in 2025.

Petition organizers may use the [template](#) provided on the City website to ensure that the petition includes a clear statement of purpose, a collection of personal information statement (as required by the *Municipal Freedom of Information Act and Protection of Privacy Act*) and note that the petition is a public document. However, petition organizers may create their own form providing the information previously mentioned is included.

In accordance with the City's petition policy, All petitions must:

- Be typed or legibly handwritten in pen
- Contain a clear statement
- Use an appropriate and respectful tone. It must not contain any improper or offensive language or information.
- Clearly disclose on each page that it will be considered a public document and that the information contained in it may be subject to the scrutiny of the City and members of the general public.

Instructions on how to submit a petition to City Council is provided on the City's website and easily searched by typing in "petitions", or "clerks office", or by contacting 311. Petitions can be completed with typed, electronic or original hand-written signatures and can be submitted electronically to the Clerk's Office email, or by mail, or in-person.

To enhance the options for residents, the Clerk's Office will replace the current PDF petition template with a downloadable Word document, along with more information about how the petition process at the City of Mississauga works. There is no financial impact related to this approach.

E-petitions

An e-petition is an electronic document that formally addresses a specific issue of public concern and utilizes an online platform to initiate, accept signatures and submit petitions. E-petitions make it easier for the public to be aware of issues and voice their concerns directly to City Council, and to sign petitions and make civic engagement more accessible. Several government jurisdictions are utilizing e-petitions that were built in-house and accessed through their government websites (see Appendix 3). These include: the House of Commons (Canada), the Province of Ontario, Quebec National Assembly, New Zealand Parliament, UK Parliament and Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly (third-party). However, there are risks with implementing an e-petition program that need to be considered such as: the potential for fraud, impersonation, management of personal information and signatories that reside outside of the City of Mississauga.

Should Council direct the establishment of an e-petition program, staff would need to be directed to prepare a budget submission for the budget approval process outlining the capital budget required to either procure a system or the feasibility of in-house software tools to develop a website, application business rules on how an e-petition program would work in Mississauga and amendments to the Procedure By-law and Petitions to Council Policy would be required.

Financial Impact

To implement an e-petition program similar to that of the House of Commons, it is estimated that at a capital cost between \$100,000-\$300,000, plus operating costs to maintain the program would be required. Budget approval for a new capital project to develop the program would be required, with an estimated implementation timeline of 12 months.

Conclusion

The benefits of the current system is the flexibility for members of the public to sign both electronically or the hard copy. Improvements can be made by providing a downloadable template and providing more information about the petition process. There are no costs related to these improvements.

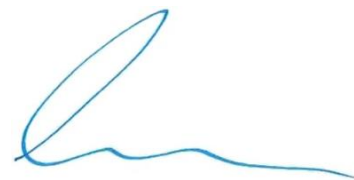
If Committee wishes to pursue an e-petition program, staff should be directed to submit a detailed budget submission for a new capital project.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Petitions to Council Policy 02-01-05

Appendix 2: Total Number of Petitions Receive by the City of Mississauga, 2021-2025

Appendix 3: Cross-Jurisdictional Scan Matrix



Graham Walsh, J.D., City Solicitor and Commissioner of Legislative Services

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