Citizens' Task Force on the Future of Mississauga

SECURING OUR FUTURE

Final Report

May 2002

Citizens' Task Force on the Future of Mississauga

FINAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The recommendations in this report are made by citizens who care about the future of Mississauga and the Greater Toronto Area.

The 18-member volunteer Task Force, appointed in February 2001 by Mayor Hazel McCallion, comprises representatives from each of our City's nine wards. Members come from many professional and volunteer backgrounds (see Appendix A). We were requested to examine and bring forward recommendations on governance in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), including the role of Mississauga. The Task Force reviewed a considerable body of previous research and analysis (see Appendix B), and our numerous deliberations have been thought-provoking and wide-ranging.

On December 31, 2001, the provincial government dissolved the Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB). The province subsequently created a Central Zone Smart Growth Panel to provide advice on planning and related issues. The Panel's geographical coverage is much larger than the Greater Toronto Area. The Task Force conducted much of its work prior to these developments, but we carefully reassessed each of our recommendations and revised the document accordingly. We feel strongly that the guiding principles and specific proposals made in this document are solid.

We are proud to live in one of the world's great urban areas. We value its diversity, prosperity, safety, and social conscience. That is why we are concerned that not enough is being done to address some very real, very pressing problems affecting the 5.1 million residents of the GTA – the worsening traffic congestion, lack of controls on urban sprawl, the loss of valuable natural and agricultural lands, and deteriorating air quality. There is inadequate investment in, and poor coordination of, transit, social services, and physical infrastructure.

Our recommendations address several key areas:

<u>Governance</u> - The provincial government must create a Coordinating Body specifically for the Greater Toronto Area, consisting of all local municipalities in the currently-defined GTA. Provincial legislation must clearly define the authority and responsibilities of the GTA-wide Coordinating Body and ensure that it is given the tools and resources necessary to perform meaningful, effective, and assertive planning and coordination.

The regional governments must be phased out within five years of the creation of the GTA-wide Coordinating Body. This is the next logical step in the evolution of municipal and inter-municipal governance.

The City of Mississauga must remain as a separate local municipality, with expanded authority to deliver local services. We expect that Mississauga will be a full and active member of the new GTA-wide Coordinating Body.

<u>Services</u> - The functions and services of the regional governments would be allocated among the local municipality, the GTA-wide Coordinating Body, and, in some cases, inter-municipal special purpose authorities or the provincial government.

The GTA-wide Coordinating Body must immediately proceed to develop (and promptly complete) a strong and comprehensive GTA growth management strategy. It must likewise take on the challenges of coordinated transportation/transit planning. The strategies and plans must have teeth! They must be sustainable and environmentally conscious. They must be binding on member municipalities and duly enforced.

Funding - Adequate and consistent sources of funding from the federal and provincial governments are critical if the GTA is to continue as an economic engine for this country. Our recommendations seek much-needed investment, stability, and equity.

In addition, we are calling for a wide-ranging independent study to develop long-term solutions to problems of funding and intergovernmental fiscal relations.

<u>Representation</u> - In keeping with the principle of democratic accountability, the GTA-wide Coordinating Body must consist only of officials who have been elected to municipal councils. Moreover, the principle of representation by population must be reflected at all levels of government.

* * *

We recognize that our recommendations will not automatically overcome every challenge. Nor do we believe that simply restructuring governments will, by itself, make a positive difference. Reforms must be accompanied by genuine and sustained commitment to the public good and to future generations. We, as citizens, must consistently make an effort to be politically aware, involved and prepared to hold our governments accountable.

INTRODUCTION

On December 31, 2001 the Government of Ontario dissolved the Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB). The province subsequently established advisory Smart Growth Panels, including one for Central Ontario - with a geographical area extending well beyond the GTA. The Panels will develop recommendations on planning and growth-related issues. The Task Force had undertaken much of its work prior to these developments, but we carefully revisited each of our recommendations and made various revisions to the document. We believe strongly in our report's priorities, principles and proposals, including the need for an effective GTA-wide Coordinating Body.

The City of Mississauga is a part of one of the most dynamic urban areas in the world. The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is, in general terms, prosperous, safe, culturally diverse, and socially conscious. We are proud of these qualities and accomplishments. We value the quality of life that most residents enjoy.

Increasingly, however, there are serious concerns about the future:

- ! The Greater Toronto Area will be home to approximately 2.5 million *more* people by 2031, for a total of 7.6 million. This population growth can be a very good thing; it has the potential to strengthen the economy and otherwise enrich the GTA. We are concerned about the absence of an effective, comprehensive growth management strategy for the GTA. The current development patterns are consuming some of the province's most valuable agricultural and natural lands, and they are putting an enormous strain on our already overburdened transportation network. Continuing low-density sprawl will also make the replacement and upgrading of infrastructure very costly for all taxpayers.
- ! The neglect of transit, which is in large part a result of inadequate funding by the senior levels of government, has been detrimental to the residents and the economy of the Greater Toronto Area. Municipalities face a serious burden if a quality public transportation system is to be sustained. We are encouraged by the provincial government's pledge on September 27, 2001, to provide \$3 billion in transit funding over the next 10 years. This pledge assumes the federal government will contribute matching dollars. The Task Force strongly requests the Government of Canada to live up to its public transit commitment by contributing these funds.
- ! Residential subdivisions have evolved in a manner that often artificially separates people from commercial, business, institutional, and recreational spaces. The private automobile is, unfortunately, often required for minor or routine errands. This is not 'Smart Growth', and it is not environmentally conscious.
- ! We are concerned about local environmental problems; we need to be sure that our air and drinking water will continue to be safe and that adequate waste management plans are in place. Planning and development decisions must give priority to the environment.

! We are worried about the long-term effects of the downloading onto the local property tax base of some social service costs, such as those associated with welfare and public housing. These costs will rise significantly if the economy stagnates, and are much more appropriately covered by the (already pooled and more progressive) provincial income tax.

Unfortunately, the present lack of inter-municipal coordination in the GTA makes some of the problems seem all the more daunting. One analyst has succinctly likened the status quo to

....trying to build a house, but all planning and decision-making take place on a room by room basis. Each room is planned independently, with its own electricity system, its own water system, its own heating system. Corridors linking the rooms are developed on an ad hoc basis. Clearly this is not a wise or efficient way to build a house. Neither is it a wise way to build a region. (Blais, 2000)

Addressing these concerns will take considerable effort. It will require political will and ongoing public interest. It will compel us to take a GTA-wide perspective, while ensuring that local issues are adequately addressed. We cannot over-emphasize our hope and expectation that the provincial government's creation of Smart Growth Panels represents a commitment to *coordinated, sustainable* planning.

Indeed, we strongly believe that more coordination and cooperation are required among all levels of government and among the GTA municipalities. The provincial and federal governments must play an important role in ensuring the viability of the Greater Toronto Area, whose success benefits the whole country. We offer many specific recommendations aimed, among other things, at establishing an effective coordinating body for the Greater Toronto Areas, with the tools to develop solutions for the increasingly-integrated communities in this area. This new body must have more than advisory or ill-defined facilitative powers. Furthermore, it must be manageable, responsive, responsible, and accountable.

We recommend better ways to deal with common concerns and problems, while ensuring that those issues which are essentially local can be dealt with locally. We do not propose adding layer on top of layer. Governments must be accessible to the public and readily understood by citizens. As the GTA-wide Coordinating Body assumes its duties, the regional governments must be phased out. This is a logical next step in the evolution of governance in the GTA. We do not propose change for the sake of change, but we must acknowledge that the communities within the GTA have become very interdependent.

It is not yet too late to act. If the problems encountered by other large urbanized areas are any indication, we must take the initiative now to ensure that Mississauga and the Greater Toronto Area remain among the best places in the world in which to live and work.

THE GREATER TORONTO AREA - A Current Snapshot

The area known as the "Greater Toronto Area" consists of 29 municipalities, including four upper-tier regional governments. The estimated number of residents is 5.1 million, accounting for approximately 42 percent of Ontario's population and 16 percent of Canada's. The total landmass is 1.8 million acres, of which two-thirds are considered rural. The municipalities' populations vary dramatically — from 11,700 in the Township of Brock to the City of Toronto's 2.4 million. Mississauga is the GTA's most populous local municipality outside Toronto.



The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) - Local and Regional Municipalities

The following is a very brief synopsis of local governance as it relates to residents of Mississauga.

<u>The City</u> - Mississauga city council serves a municipality with a population of approximately 625,000. In addition to the Mayor, there are nine (full-time) Councillors, each representing a ward. There is no executive committee; council is both the executive and legislative body. Mississauga is responsible for services such as local parks, tax collection, local roads, by-law enforcement, local land-use planning, the fire department and local transit.

<u>The Region</u> - The City of Mississauga, the City of Brampton (pop. 325,000) and the Town of Caledon (pop. 51,000) are part of the Regional Municipality of Peel ("the region"). It was established in 1974, but with virtually the same boundaries as the 1867 county. The regional council includes all ten of Mississauga's elected municipal officials. Brampton has six seats (five directly elected Councillors, plus the Mayor), and Caledon is allocated five seats (four directly elected Councillors, plus the Mayor). In addition to these 21 members, there is a Chair appointed by the regional council. Mississauga has approximately two-thirds of the region's population but less than half of the seats on Peel Council. The region is responsible for services such as public health, ambulance, regional roads, water supply and distribution, sewage treatment, waste disposal, social housing, and police (through appointments to the police services board and budget approvals).

<u>The former Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB)</u> - The GTSB, which was established by the province in 1999, was dissolved on December 31, 2001. The GTSB had been given an ineffective mandate to facilitate inter-municipal cooperation. Its one major area of responsibility was the Greater Toronto Transit Authority and the operation of GO Transit, which has recently reverted back to provincial control.

While the GTSB was in existence, its members included the Mayor or designate from each GTA municipality. The two largest municipalities had additional members: Mississauga had two representatives (including the Mayor), and Toronto sent eleven members of its Council. There was a weighted voting system, which was roughly based on each municipality's share of the GTA population.

<u>The Smart Growth Panels</u> - The members of the province's Smart Growth Panels are appointed by the government for one year. Mississauga is part of the Central Ontario Zone, which extends from Niagara Region to Haliburton County, and from Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay. The new Central Zone Smart Growth Panel has 19 members drawn from the municipal sector, the provincial government, the private sector, and non-governmental agencies and associations.

Transportation and waste management are key issues currently being studied by the Central Zone Smart Growth Panel.

<u>The Province of Ontario</u> - Provincial policies, regulations, legislation, and edicts often profoundly affect local governments. The province has full constitutional authority to create, dissolve, merge, and to limit or extend the powers and jurisdiction of municipal governments and other local authorities.

Although the province can and does command considerable authority, it has until recently been moving away from its traditional funding and regulatory functions, but now appears to be reassessing its role on some critical GTA issues.

THE FUTURE OF GOVERNANCE IN MISSISSAUGA AND THE GTA

The provincial government's creation of Smart Growth Panels is a possible first step toward coordinated, sustainable planning. The recommendations below more fully describe our proposed GTA-wide Coordinating Body, whose role, composition, and geographical coverage would differ from the Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel. We also outline what we see as necessary changes to the local and regional levels of government.

The provincial government must proceed promptly to create a GTA-wide Coordinating Body for the Greater Toronto Area, which would consist of all local municipalities in the currently defined GTA (map on page3).

Provincial legislation must clearly define the responsibilities of the GTA-wide Coordinating Body. This Coordinating Body must be given the authority, tools, and resources necessary to perform meaningful, effective and assertive planning and coordination.

As we discuss in more detail in the next section, the immediate priorities for our proposed GTA-wide Coordinating Body, of which Mississauga would be an active member, must be sustainable growth management as well as integrated transportation planning (which must be made fully consistent with the growth management objectives). The province must give the Coordinating Body a legislated mandate and financial means to tackle these priorities. The legislation must outline the means by which the GTA-wide Coordinating Body would, where necessary, coordinate its activities with adjacent authorities on common planning issues.

As the GTA-wide Coordinating Body assumes its duties, the regional governments should be phased out, as there would be too much fragmentation between the regional and local municipalities on the critical GTA-wide issues. The regions' geographical areas are too small to adequately address GTA-wide issues, as is their existing authority to act. If the regional level remains, we would have what amounts to three levels of local government - which would be excessive. Moreover, those politicians who would have to serve at all three levels could easily become overloaded.

The regional governments must be phased out five years after the creation of the GTA-wide Coordinating Body, as the next logical step in the evolution of municipal and inter-municipal governance. We assert this not because we believe that less government is always a good thing, but because government must be readily understood, and should, as much as possible, avoid bureaucratic entanglements that make it difficult to get things accomplished. Not only lawyers and experienced lobbyists, but individual citizens and local groups, should be able to navigate their way through the GTA governance structure. Therefore, the responsibilities of the regional governments should be allocated among the local municipality, the GTA-wide Coordinating Body, and, in some cases, inter-municipal special purpose authorities or the provincial government.

We believe that the above arguments are sufficient to justify the phasing out of the regions - even if it could be demonstrated that the financial savings would be minimal.

The City of Mississauga must remain a separate municipality within the GTA, and with expanded authority to deliver local services. We also expect Mississauga to be a constructive and active participant on the GTA-wide Coordinating Body.

SERVICES - Planning and Delivery

The Task Force devoted a great deal of time to considering the planning and delivery of the various services and functions which we, as residents of Mississauga and the GTA, require.

The Task Force recommends the following principles regarding services:

- ! Coordinated but decentralized services. This means that services, especially cross-boundary functions such as transportation and growth management, would be coordinated at the highest appropriate level. (This would be the GTA-wide Coordinating Body, or occasionally the province or an intermunicipal special purpose body). The local municipality would usually *deliver* the services and be required to make its decisions *within* the parameters established by the Coordinating Body. Services would be delivered at the closest practical level to the citizens. It is our experience that the municipal (lower tier) government is generally the most responsive and efficient.
- ! Wherever possible, municipalities must be able to choose the manner in which they provide services. This may include special purpose bodies, but such bodies would not be mandated by the province (as is presently the case with library boards, for example).
- ! Services must be delivered effectively, with minimum duplication, to meet or exceed prescribed minimum standards.
- ! Economies of scale must be maximized (e.g. central purchasing of some goods and services).
- ! The GTA-wide Coordinating Body or the province must carry out (or provide the forum/agency to deal with) some functions which require special or costly expertise (e.g. certain police services and inter-municipal transit systems).
- ! Municipalities may choose separately, or in concert with other municipalities, to have some services (e.g. public health) provided by an independent or specially-commissioned non-profit, private or public body on a shared-cost basis.
- ! The GTA-wide Coordinating Body may provide certain services on a GTA-wide basis, either directly or through partnerships with the private or not-for-profit sectors. When this is done, municipalities cannot opt out of such GTA-wide services. This point must be specifically embedded in the legislation.

A report prepared for the Greater Toronto Services Board by Deloitte Consulting, released in February 2001, identified several models/mandates for the future coordination of functions in the GTA (see Appendix C). The Task Force endorsed the "Planning and Services Board" option and communicated this to Mayor Hazel McCallion in an April 2001 memorandum (see Appendix D), as part of the process for reviewing the GTSB. This option saw a GTSB whose main purposes would be the planning, coordination, and sometimes implementation of GTA growth management and infrastructure. Under this Deloitte model, the Board could also assume some responsibilities for actual service delivery.

The Task Force strongly recommends that the new GTA-wide Coordinating Body's immediate priorities must be the following:

! The development of a clear and assertive growth management strategy: There is currently a seriously fragmented approach, which is resulting in threats to resources, agricultural lands and environmentally sensitive areas. These are urgent problems. The provincial government must show leadership by providing a strong regulatory framework (in conjunction with the enabling legislation) which identifies and requires sustainable growth principles and targets for the GTA. The growth management strategy must take an eco-system approach; it must make the protection of the environment a key priority.

The Task Force believes that any viable growth management strategy must encourage urban intensification as an objective to guide future land use planning in urban areas. Intensification can be achieved through many forms, including infill and redevelopment of former industrial sites (brownfield development). Intensification policies should encourage the maximized efficiency of existing infrastructure and services to accommodate new growth, so as to minimize the consumption of open or agricultural land. These policies would also be encouraged in areas where infrastructure and community facilities/services have the capacity to accommodate growth while still achieving land use compatibility and community standards. Ensuring high quality-of-life standards for the community must always be at the forefront of these initiatives; creativity and care in developing intensification and infill plans must always be employed.

The GTA-wide Coordinating Body must immediately turn its attention to the development of the growth management strategy. It must be completed within one year. All local plans must conform to this growth management framework within 18 months after the strategy is accepted.

! *Planning and coordination of transportation/public transit:* There is a critical need for a coordinated transportation network with integrated services and infrastructure consistent with the growth management strategy. Greater emphasis on public transit must be a priority. The GTA-wide Coordinating Body must complete the integrated transportation/transit plan within one year of the growth management strategy being accepted.

The Task Force sees a role for the GTA-wide Coordinating Body in other areas, including:

- ! *Environmental protection and environmental infrastructure (e.g. water and wastewater treatment)*: There must be consistency in the protection of environmentally sensitive lands and the GTA-wide greenlands systems which cross municipal boundaries.
- ! *Social imperatives (social services, housing, etc.):* There must be an equitable plan to fund social housing within the GTA, as well as to better coordinate health and related services across municipal boundaries.
- *Economic development and tourism:* Although individual municipalities can and would continue to have a role, a unified approach (especially on the international stage) is important.

Provincial legislation must clearly specify the functions to be assumed by the GTA-wide Coordinating Body. These are not options that either the GTA-wide Coordinating Body or individual municipalities can choose to ignore. The legislation must, however, allow the GTA-wide Coordinating Body to assume the coordination

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of other services by consent of the member municipalities.

To repeat, we strongly recommend that sustainable, environmentally conscious growth management and transportation planning must be two areas of responsibility that are assumed by the GTA-wide Coordinating Body forthwith.

The following table shows how the various functions and services would be divided.

SERVICE or FUNCTION	CURRENT STATUS (Mississauga)	RECOMMENDED
Land use planning	Regional and Local	 Province - Provide strong regulatory framework within the enabling legislation for the GTA-wide Coordinating Body. This would identify and require <i>sustainable</i> growth. The legislation would include principles to be followed by the GTA-wide Coordinating Body GTA-wide Coordinating Body - Develop and have the authority to enforce a Growth Management Strategy. This must be a priority with a mandated time frame. Local - Zoning, Official Plans, neighbourhood planning, etc (in conformity with Growth Management Strategy)
Transportation Planning	Provincial - expressways, highways, GO Transit Regional and Local	 Federal Government - Cooperate with the province and the GTA-wide Coordinating Body to ensure coordinated transportation planning and funding. Province - Planning for provincial highways, expressways, and GO Transit (in conformity with Growth Management Strategy) GTA-wide Coordinating Body - Develop and have the authority to enforce a comprehensive transportation plan for the GTA (in conformity with the Growth Management Strategy) Local - Municipal roads (New projects must conform with Growth Management Strategy)
Transit	- Local transit - Regional (TransHelp) - Province (GO-Transit)	 Province - Capital funding, GO Transit, assist with operating funding GTA-wide Coordinating Body- Authority for the GTA-wide transportation agency for transit coordination, including much greater integration of transit systems (including paratransit services). Development of a comprehensive transit plan to be a key GTA-wide Coordinating Body priority. Local - Municipal transit and TransHelp service delivery

TABLE A - Division of Responsibilities

SERVICE or FUNCTION	CURRENT STATUS (Mississauga)	RECOMMENDED
Roads	- Provincial Expressways and Highways	Province - Capital works and maintenance of its expressways and highways
	- Regional Roads - Local Roads	GTA-wide Coordinating Body - Develop and enforce GTA- wide transportation plan. The plan must conform to the Growth Management Strategy.
		Local - plan and maintain all roads other than expressways and highways within the City's boundaries
Police	- Regional police force	Existing police services should remain in place, despite the phasing out of regional governments. (The police services boards would become inter-municipal bodies.) There must, however, be provision for the integration of specialized or major functions, especially vis-a-vis the investigation of major crimes. The province or the GTA-wide Coordinating Body should facilitate this.
Fire	- Local	Local - but more inter-municipal coordination of some specialized functions
Ambulance 911 call centre	- Regional	GTA-wide Coordinating Body - 911 call centre Local or inter-municipal - ambulance
Economic Development	- Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance (GTMA)	Local, but with a strengthened GTMA
	- Local	
Heritage and Culture	- Provincial legislation - Regional - Local	Local - Regional facilities or functions transferred to local level or to inter-municipal bodies. Provincial legislation to remain.
Libraries	- Local special purpose body	Local - special purpose body if the municipality so decides
By-law enforcement	- Local	Local
Street lighting	- Local	Local
Water distribution	- Regional	Local - but with a coordinating role for the GTA-wide Coordinating Body

SERVICE or FUNCTION	CURRENT STATUS (Mississauga)	RECOMMENDED
Water supply	- Regional	GTA-wide Coordinating Body - plans and coordinates
		Local - service delivery, with option for delivery by the GTA- wide Coordinating Body or inter-municipal special purpose body
Wastewater collection	- Regional	GTA-wide Coordinating Body - plans and coordinates
		Local - Service delivery, with option for delivery by the GTA- wide Coordinating Body or inter-municipal special purpose body
Sewage treatment	- Regional	GTA-wide Coordinating Body - plans and coordinates.
		Local - Service delivery, with option for delivery by the GTA- wide Coordinating Body or inter-municipal special purpose body
Waste collection	- Regional	Local - but with a coordinating role for the GTA-wide Coordinating Body
Waste disposal	- Regional	GTA-wide Coordinating Body - plans and coordinates
		Local - service delivery, with option for delivery by the GTA- wide Coordinating Body or inter-municipal special purpose body
Public health, welfare, social housing	- Regional (some provincially mandated and supervised special	Provincial - funding and setting of minimum standards (provincially mandated special purpose bodies to remain)
	purpose bodies, e.g. Children's Aid Societies)	GTA-wide Coordinating Body - some role for inter-municipal coordination
		Local - service delivery

FUNDING

Funding issues will present significant challenges to the future GTA-wide Coordinating Body and its member municipalities. Unless and until there are consistent sources of funding which are adequate to meet the expected responsibilities of the GTA-wide Coordinating Body and the GTA municipalities, the major problems will remain unresolved. It is imperative that these issues be addressed, in order for the GTA to continue as an economic engine for the country. Consequently, an important role for the new GTA-wide Coordinating Body will be that of negotiator and advocate.

We are concerned about the often fickle and ambiguous nature of intergovernmental fiscal relations and funding policies. Recent examples of downloading of costs, not to mention the constant uncertainty about whether (and from whom) various important services will receive funding, are serious impediments to moving forward. This over-entangled, unstable state of affairs undermines our public programs and compromises democratic accountability. We are of the strong view that a fundamental change in approach is required.

The Task Force calls for a comprehensive independent study on funding and fiscal relations. We call on all governments to act on the issues, observations, and conclusions that such a study would bring to the forefront. A key question for the study would be: How do we bring greater clarity, fairness, and stability to funding policies, especially as they affect local governments, while also establishing and maintaining national and provincial standards?

Until such a study has been completed and implemented, the Task Force recommends the following funding principles:

- ! The cost of services provided by the GTA-wide Coordinating Body, or under its auspices, must be borne by the municipalities on the basis of benefits received (i.e. consumption). This is a critical principle because it helps to ensure that urban municipalities like Mississauga will not subsidize costly low-density sprawl far from the urban core. It is this uncontrolled sprawl which is contributing to many of the problems discussed in this report.
- ! There must be no taxing powers for the GTA-wide Coordinating Body.
- ! To the extent that the GTA-wide Coordinating Body is to purchase assets it would have the ability to borrow, and there must be an assured source of funding for payments.
- ! The GTA-wide Coordinating Body must levy the municipalities to pay for its general administration costs. The levy must be calculated based on population or other reasonable and fair means.
- ! Individual municipalities may elect to provide services at levels in excess of prescribed minimum standards. If they choose to do this, they would pay the incremental costs.
- ! There must be reliable and consistent funding by senior levels of government for services provided by the GTA municipalities on their behalf, such as social services. Redistributive programs such as social assistance are more appropriately funded from the already-pooled provincial income tax rather than from the local property tax.

- ! The provincial government must pay the costs of provincial highways and expressways, social services, and hospital support.
- ! The provincial government must provide capital funds for public transit and individually approved capital infrastructure projects. The province must consistently assist with covering transit operating costs. The federal government must recognize its responsibility to the taxpayers with respect to transit funding needs.
- ! Long-term financing arrangements for capital projects must be entered into with, and supported by, the provincial government. These must not be subject to annual budgetary pressures.
- ! The GTA-wide Coordinating Body must have the authority to enter into long-term borrowing arrangements with governments and others.

REPRESENTATION

The Task Force recommends the following on representation and voting powers:

- ! The GTA-wide Coordinating Body would be composed only of representatives from elected members of the municipal governments within the GTA. This is in keeping with the principle of democratic accountability.
- ! We endorse the principle of "representation by population" for determining representation and the weighting of votes on the GTA-wide Coordinating Body.
- ! Municipal Councillors who are not on the GTA-wide Coordinating Body would be eligible to serve on its committees.
- ! Any eventual amalgamations of the small municipalities that might lead to a reduction of the size of the GTA-wide Coordinating Body is a concept endorsed by the Task Force.

<u>Representation on Mississauga and Peel Councils</u> - The Task Force is concerned about the disparity in the population of wards in the City of Mississauga (ranging from 43,000 in Ward 1 to 112,000 in Ward 6). Mississauga City Council must have better representation by population in time for the 2003 election.

Disparity also exists with respect to Mississauga's representation on Peel Regional Council. Mississauga has approximately two-thirds of the region's population but less than half of the seats on Peel Council. The principle of representation by population must, therefore, be reflected on Peel Regional Council for the 2003-2006 term, which would be the regional council's last term in office. The Regional Municipality of Peel Act must be amended accordingly.

<u>Geographical Coverage</u> - The Task Force recommends that a Coordinating Body be created specifically for the Greater Toronto Area, which would include all existing local municipalities within the currently-defined GTA (see map on page 3). A single Coordinating Body for the entire Golden Horseshoe or for all of Central Ontario would be too large and unwieldy - and would very likely be ineffective. It will be prudent to regularly review the area covered by the GTA-wide Coordinating Body.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Disputes involving municipalities, the GTA-wide Coordinating Body, residents, developers, and others will inevitably arise. The Task Force therefore puts forward the following recommendations:

- ! The need for the Ontario Municipal Board (the quasi-judicial provincial body to which municipal planning policies and decisions can be appealed) should be re-examined. To the extent that this board continues to function, the province should ensure that future decisions are made in the context of the future GTA-wide Coordinating Body's growth management strategy.
- ! A binding dispute resolution mechanism must be created within the GTA-wide Coordinating Body to handle conflicts between member municipalities, with no appeal available.
- ! Disputes between municipalities and the GTA-wide Coordinating Body can be sent to an *ad-hoc* independent arbitration process.
- ! Any municipality would be able to initiate the dispute resolution mechanism.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND TASK FORCE RESPONSE

The Task Force's Interim Report was released in November 2001. The subsequent public consultation process included meetings in Mississauga's wards, a very well-attended city-wide public meeting on March 26, 2002, and the opportunity for residents and groups to prepare written submissions.

We carefully considered all of the comments, and we have made some changes to our Interim Report. The following is a brief summary of the recurring themes in the feedback provided by our fellow residents, as well as the Task Forces's agreed-upon responses. A detailed summary of residents' input is provided in Appendix E.

Governance

Public comments on the future structure of governance were many and varied, but we believe that our Interim Report's recommendations in this area were generally very well received. Some people who corresponded with the Task Force, at the public meetings or in writing, emphasized the need for better inter-municipal cooperation (on growth management, among other issues) as well as the importance of representation by population. Residents want current and future governance structures to be transparent and democratically accountable. As one citizen put it, any restructuring scheme is "doomed to failure" if it is unresponsive or remote from the citizens.

One organization expressed concern about the Task Force's recommendation to phase out the regional governments. The reservations were based in part on the escalating costs that seem to be associated with some of the recent provincially imposed municipal amalgamations. Moreover, some residents who agreed

with the Task Force's recommendation that the regional governments be phased out nevertheless called for financial and operational studies to be provided.

We emphasize that our report does require the amalgamation of local municipalities. We do recommend the elimination of the four GTA regional governments, in order to make room for a GTA-wide Coordinating Body with the authority and geographical coverage to deal with pressing issues affecting the municipalities in the Toronto area. We believe our case for this is strong - even if it can be demonstrated that there would be no financial savings.

Transportation and Public Transit

There is widespread concern about traffic congestion, and there is a great deal of support for much-improved public transit. We heard about the relationship between poorly controlled urban sprawl and worsening gridlock, about airport-related issues, about the need for more transitways and commuter rail projects, and about inadequate traffic signals, among other concerns.

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee emphasized how extensively young people depend on public transit. A representative of the Coalition for Persons with Disabilities made a strong case for an inter-regional TransHelp Service.

The Task Force agrees that much more attention must be accorded to transportation issues, especially to public transit. Our public officials must also recognize that poorly planned and badly managed development seriously undermine efforts to transport people quickly, efficiently, and safely from one place to another. Some residents offered detailed and/or technical transportation proposals. One submission (Mr. S. Szep) was especially thorough, and we have forwarded it directly to the Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel subcommittee on transportation and transit. We have elected, however, not to go into this level of detail in our report, preferring instead to continue to emphasize the principles, priorities, and structures that should be embraced if we are to address the public's concerns about transportation.

We have made an amendment to the 'Services - Planning and Delivery' section to clarify that our call for the much-greater integration of transit systems includes para-transit services.

Environment

The most impassioned public comments were about the environment - about the need to do much more to protect our air and water and to conserve our natural areas. Comments ranged from the very general and philosophical to the very immediate (such as controlling the distribution of junk mail). Some participants made a clear link between low-density urban sprawl and the degradation of the environment. One resident applauded some current brownfield redevelopment efforts, which are among the urban-intensification initiatives that are now being watched with interest.

We have made some changes to the report to more strongly articulate our concern for the environment. Furthermore, we emphasize that any planning and development initiatives that merely pay lip-service to the environment cannot be considered 'Smart Growth'.

Service Delivery

Many residents shared concerns or suggestions about particular services (police, waste management, parking, fire, hydro, education, etc.). Some participants emphasized that the restructuring of governance should not be driven by a cost-cutting motive; they emphasized instead that the quality of services must be maintained, if not improved. A few submissions underlined a need for GTA-wide standards. Some residents called for an operational plan to spell out the processes of service delivery that would follow our proposed restructuring.

The Task Force has decided not to go into significant detail about specific processes or quality-improvement initiatives for particular services. An attempt to evaluate the feasibility of some of the residents' suggestions would have taken the Task Force beyond its realm of expertise. Furthermore, a decision on our part to conduct research on services that we had not previously studied (such as education and airport issues) would have greatly delayed the completion of our final report, which includes many time-sensitive recommendations.

We are satisfied that our recommendations about services are reasonable and feasible - and in some cases very urgently needed (such as the development and implementation of a sustainable, environmentally conscious growth-management strategy and transportation plan).

Funding Issues

The public comments on funding were generally consistent with what the Task Force had proposed. Some deputations and submissions argued that adequate, properly structured funding mechanisms will be a prerequisite for any viable transportation and growth management policies. There was some apprehension about the lack of clarity and accountability in the present funding arrangements - and some questions about the extent to which our recommendations would address these problems. As indicated previously, we also heard a few requests for a financial assessment of our proposed restructured governance arrangements.

The Task Force believes that its recommendations would, if implemented, enhance clarity and accountability. The important concerns about the present undemocratic system of inter-municipal pooling would be at least partly addressed by the establishment of the GTA-wide Coordinating Body, which would be make up of representatives of the respective elected municipal councils. The current pooling arrangements are problematic for other reasons. As we have noted, redistributive programs such as social assistance are more appropriately covered by the (already pooled and more progressive) provincial income tax. We reiterate our concern about the provincial downloading onto the local property-tax base of some social service costs.

We have added to our report the recommendation that an independent study be commissioned to bring forward comprehensive, long-term, just, equitable solutions to the many problems of funding and intergovernmental fiscal relations.

Ontario Municipal Board

We heard numerous concerns about the Ontario Municipal Board. Many residents, mostly executive members of ratepayers' groups, described instances where, in their view, the OMB disregarded city plans and ignored legitimate public concerns. All participants who commented on the OMB argued that it has too much power, as an unelected body, to shape the future of our communities.

Task Force members had varying opinions on the future of the OMB but feel the section on Dispute Resolution continues to reflect our basic consensus – that the need for, and role of, the OMB must be examined and that its decisions must be completely consistent with the new growth management strategy.

Public Participation

Residents' comments – and the consultation process itself – confirmed the importance of a public participation as a prerequisite to constructive change and to progressive governance. We have added a Postscript to elaborate on this issue.

CONCLUSION

Our report has argued that changes in government practices, structures and priorities for Mississauga and the Greater Toronto Area are required to facilitate solutions to pressing challenges — problems which cannot be ignored. Any reforms must also ensure that governance is accountable, accessible, responsive to residents' concerns, efficient, and easily understood.

Our key recommendations are:

- ! The provincial government must create a Coordinating Body for the Greater Toronto Area. It would consist of all of the local municipalities in the currently defined GTA.
- ! Provincial legislation must clearly define the authority and responsibilities of the GTA-wide Coordinating Body. This body must be given the authority, tools, and resources necessary to perform meaningful, effective, and assertive planning and coordination.
- ! Regional governments must be phased out five years after the creation of a GTA-wide Coordinating Body. This is the next logical step in the evolution of municipal and inter-municipal governance.
- ! The responsibilities of the regional governments would be allocated among the local municipality, the GTA-wide Coordinating Body, and, in some cases, inter-municipal special purpose authorities or the provincial government.
- ! The City of Mississauga must remain as a separate local municipality, with expanded authority to deliver local services. Mississauga must be a full and active member of the new GTA-wide Coordinating Body.
- ! The development of a comprehensive, eco-system based, growth management strategy, along with integrated transportation/transit planning and management, should be immediate priorities for the province and the GTA-wide Coordinating Body. Provincial legislation must identify and require sustainable growth principles and targets. The growth management strategy must be completed within one year of the creation of the GTA-wide Coordinating Body, and local plans must conform within the following 18 months. The integrated transportation/transit strategy must be completed within one year of the approval of the growth management strategy.
- ! Adequate, consistent sources of funding from provincial and federal governments are critical if the GTA is to continue as an economic engine for the country. It recommends that an independent study be commissioned to come up with comprehensive, long-term solutions to problems of funding and intergovernmental fiscal relations. The funding principles presented in this document must be implemented.

! In keeping with the principles of democratic accountability, the GTA-wide Coordinating Body must consist only of officials who have been elected to municipal councils. The principle of representation by population must reflected at all levels of government.

Our report primarily addresses structural issues. We emphasize, however, that without a clear sense of purpose and commitment to the public good by residents and all levels of government, changing the governance structures may not accomplish much.

We, as residents, have an ongoing responsibility - to be informed, to be concerned, to participate and to give considered input. Governments must also do everything possible, not only to operate transparently, but to cultivate new opportunities for civic engagement.

Our generation and future generations will benefit from sustainable and effective communities.

A POSTSCRIPT ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Task Force's deliberations, as well as the discussions at our public consultation meetings, have been a healthy, valuable exercise in democracy and community-building. We are gratified that many of our fellow citizens took the time to offer thoughtful comments. We sincerely thank them for their time, effort and concern.

Let us do what we can to build on that interest and momentum. We reiterate that the principles and priorities in our report depend on an active, attentive citizenry. If residents are apathetic and ill-informed, then there will be a political void - to the detriment of responsible, progressive governance.

This requires each of us to make a commitment to our community and to be sensitive to the needs and aspirations of all our fellow citizens. Nurturing an ethos of civic engagement also requires the cooperation and efforts of leaders in the public, non-profit, educational, and private sectors.

As one small step in continuing the dialogue and momentum on the important issues addressed in our report, we suggest that a public forum be held six months and one year after the release of this document to assess the progress on implementing our recommendations.