

MIRANET: Mississauga Residents' Associations Network

STATEMENT

March 4, 2009

MIRANET would like to offer the following comments to Mississauga City Council regarding the City's 2009 Budget.

Infrastructure Levy

Given the current economic circumstances, and in view of the concerns of those on a fixed income, MIRANET accepts Council's decision to hold the infrastructure levy to a maximum of 1% of Mississauga's 2009 municipal budget. The depletion of the reserve to fund infrastructure maintenance and renewal, as projected in budget planning documents, does not become critical for another 3 years. This period should provide adequate time for the economy to rebound and infrastructure funding options to be explored in cooperation with Provincial and Federal Governments.

We support the City's position that sustainable and predictable sources of infrastructure funding must be established. Mississauga must focus its continuing efforts on persuading the Provincial and Federal Governments of this, with the support of citizens through organizations such as MIRANET. As well, creative financing solutions that do not place the burden entirely on property owners should be developed with input from citizens.

Transparency and Accountability

MIRANET believes that it is essential that there be transparency and accountability of Mississauga's political and administrative processes. We believe this is particularly important in relation to the process of creating the City's annual operating and capital budgets. Taxpayers are far more likely to support tax increases for ongoing operating expenditures and levies for capital expenditures on infrastructure maintenance and renewal if they understand where their tax dollars will be spent.

In this context we urge the City to state its property tax increases as a percentage of the City's portion of the tax bill. This will enable citizens to better assess the reasons for the proposed changes and their acceptability. Increases in Mississauga taxes must be related to the City's budget, not those of Peel Region and the Education tax.

We request clear and transparent reporting on the funding status of the \$132 million worth of projects presented for approval during the recent Federal budget process, and on the disposition of the \$25 million from the "Build Ontario Fund".

We request annual updates on the status of the reserve fund.

Contact: Mike Giguere
Chair, MIRANET Municipal Finance Subcommittee
Vice President, Meadow Wood Rattray Ratepayers Association
mjiguere@arrayinc.ca

MIRANET: secretary@miranet.ca
Website: www.miranet.ca