4 Vision

4.1 Introduction

The vision for Mississauga is that it will be a beautiful sustainable city that protects its natural and cultural heritage resources, particularly the Lake Ontario waterfront, Credit River and other valley corridors, and its established, stable neighbourhoods. The City will plan for a strong, diversified economy supported by a range of mobility options and a variety of housing and community infrastructure to create distinct, complete communities. To achieve this vision the City will revitalize its infrastructure, conserve the environment and promote community participation and collaboration in its planning process.

Figure 4-1: Mississauga is situated near the centre of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, one of the fastest growing regions in North America.

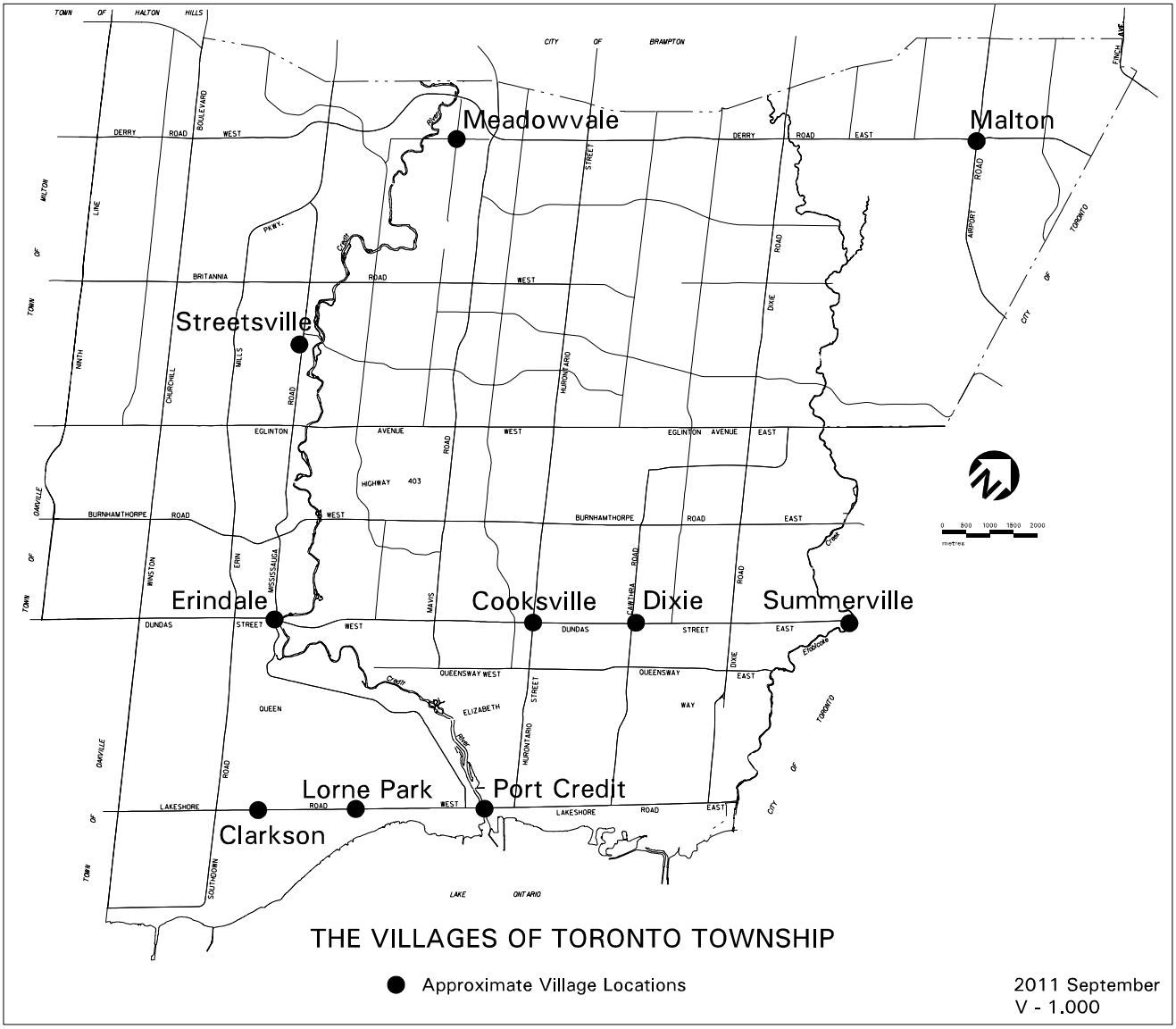

Figure 4-2: At the beginning of the 19th century, many hamlets and villages were established in the Toronto Township area. As fortunes declined in the late 1800's, some villages like Summerville disappeared. Later in the 20th century, other new settlements were formed and villages such as Erindale and Malton experienced a resurgence.

Mississauga is strategically located at the heart of the Greater Golden Horseshoe - one of the largest and fastest growing urbanized regions in North America. The region's economic output accounts for over half of the provincial gross domestic product and represents two-thirds of Ontario's population, with most residing within a 100 km radius of Mississauga's Downtown Core.

Mississauga is located on the shores of Lake Ontario and as a waterfront community, the lake is a significant element of the city's identity. In addition to the Lake Ontario shoreline, Mississauga has a Natural Areas System that is characterized by many river valley systems and natural areas. Protection, enhancement and restoration of these features are essential to the City's vision for the future.

Mississauga is known for its safe, high quality neighbourhoods, excellent schools and valued community amenities. It is a location of choice for employers and citizens. During the Our Future Mississauga community visioning exercise, thousands agreed that Mississauga is a great place to live, learn, work and play. The objective of this Plan is to build upon our successes and guide future development so that Mississauga will continue to be a great place.

4.2 Historical Context

Incorporated in 1974, Mississauga is a comparatively young city, but its long and rich history provides a context for better understanding the city's past and future.

The name "Mississauga", believed to mean 'river of the north of many mouths', is reminiscent of the Aboriginal peoples who once occupied the land. In the 1600s, European traders who encountered the Ojibwa tribe in the area around the Credit River Valley, named them 'Mississaugas' after the Mississagi River on the north western shore of Lake Huron. The Credit River continued to provide important functions for trading, transportation and fisheries.

Government officials from York, now known as Toronto, bought 34,000 hectares of the Mississauga Tract in 1805, and on August 2, 1805 this region was formed into Toronto Township. Some of the settled communities include Clarkson, Cooksville, Dixie, Erindale (called Springfield until 1890), Lorne Park, Malton, Meadowvale, Port Credit, Streetsville and Summerville. Many of the smaller communities were located near natural resources, waterways for industry and fishing, and routes leading into York. Most early villages served the farming community or local industries that processed natural resources including lumber, grain and farm products.

Figure 4-3: The City Council Chambers, the site of City Council meetings, has an extraordinary ceiling created by artist Sharon McCann illustrating the Ojibwa legend of the Great Bear and the Seven Hunters.

In 1820, the Crown made a second purchase and additional settlements were established. This led to the eventual displacement of the Mississaugas, who were relocated in 1847 to a reserve in the Grand River Valley near present-day Hagersville.

In light of the continued growth seen in this area, the Toronto Township Council was formed in 1873 to oversee the affairs of the various villages, which were unincorporated at that time.

Throughout much of the 19th and first half of the 20th century, most of present-day Mississauga, except for small villages, was agricultural land that included fruit-growing orchards. By the 1880's, cottages were being constructed along Lake Ontario as weekend getaway houses for city dwellers. After World War I, these became year-round residences from which to commute.

The majority of growth in Mississauga occurred in post-World War II following the establishment of an extensive regional highway network, including the Queen Elizabeth Way and Highways 401, 427 and 403. These major transportation projects significantly improved access to different settlements and markets within the region. GO Train service was added along the Lakeshore Road railway line in 1967, but most of the communities created during this period were car oriented.

Port Credit and Streetsville became towns in 1961 and 1962, respectively. In 1968, the township settlements of Lakeview, Cooksville, Lorne Park, Clarkson, Erindale, Sheridan, Dixie, Meadowvale Village and Malton were amalgamated to form the Town of Mississauga.

Growth and development generally moved north and west from southern Mississauga with large scale developments such as in Meadowvale and Erin Mills being built in the 1960's and 1970's.

In 1974, the Town of Mississauga amalgamated with Port Credit, Streetsville and portions of the Townships of Toronto and Trafalgar to form the City of Mississauga.

Figure 4-4: The development of the Toronto - Lester B. Pearson, International Airport effectively prohibits new residential uses in the city's northeast due to requirements that sensitive land uses be distanced from higher airport noise levels. Although the airport has implications on land use, it is a major transportation hub that is vital to Mississauga's economy.

As the population grew from 33,000 in 1951, infrastructure improvements, residential expansion, and industrial and commercial development ensued. Lands were no longer developed into small town scaled parcels but instead large tracts of land were planned for residential and industrial subdivisions. In general, residential and industrial/employment uses were separated in the city.

Figure 4-5: Grid roads gave way to circuitous road patterns and cul-de-sacs to discourage traffic from cutting through neighbourhoods; tall noise walls were erected along major streets to shield neighbourhoods from traffic noise.

In the post-war period, as cars became the dominant mode of transportation, the economic and social function of main streets as the hub of commercial and social interaction was diminished. The primary function of major roads became the rapid movement of cars and trucks, resulting in higher traffic volumes and faster driving speeds. Many primary corridors became unfriendly environments for pedestrians and cyclists. Gradually, community designs focused on separating cars and noise from people. The resulting network of curvilinear local roads would present challenges for transit planners.

Over the past two centuries, Mississauga evolved from an agrarian society to one of the most multiculturally diverse and economically successful cities. It quickly became a popular and affordable place to live and invest.

The physical legacies of Mississauga's rapid expansion period are evident today and pose planning challenges in becoming the sustainable urban community envisioned by this Plan.

4.3 Current Context

As Canada's sixth largest city, Mississauga has been one of the fastest growing and most economically successful cities in the country. In 1976, the city had a population of approximately 250,000 and supported more than 130,000 jobs. In 2009 these figures increased to 730,000 people and 453,000 jobs.

Figure 4-6: Mississauga welcomes the more than 50% of its population born outside of Canada, in many cultural festivals throughout the year.

In terms of population and housing, Mississauga is ranked as the third most densely developed municipality in the region after Toronto and Hamilton. The Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe projects that an additional 3.7 million people will live in the region by 2031, accompanied by the creation of 1.8 million new jobs. During this time Mississauga's population and employment is expected to increase to approximately 805,000 people and 510,000 jobs.

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People of diverse backgrounds, ages and abilities are choosing to live, work and invest in Mississauga.

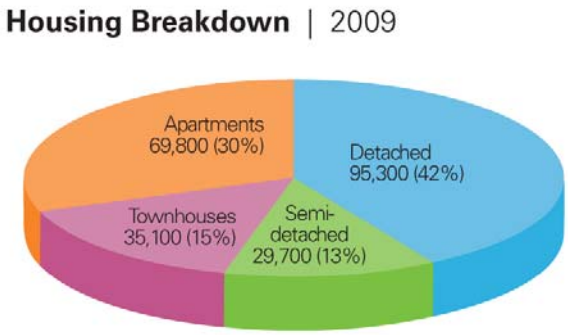

Figure 4-7: In Mississauga, housing choices are available for a range of household sizes and types, including working families, singles and seniors.

They not only want to raise their families in the community but they also want to spend their senior years in communities that offer appealing amenities and healthy, urban lifestyle options.

At a city level, there is a wide range of housing choice in Mississauga. Given that the city is at the end of its greenfield growth phase, new residential development is expected to be accommodated in already developed areas in compact forms such as townhouses and apartments.

With a thriving and diverse economy, Mississauga boasts more than 60 "Fortune 500" companies representing a variety of employment sectors. Employment continues to remain strong, and Mississauga is expected to maintain its current role

Figure 4-8: Mississauga must continue to maintain a supply of traditional employment lands to maintain current and future needs.

as a net importer of labour in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. After Toronto, Mississauga is the leading player in the Greater Golden Horseshoe office market. While office growth is burgeoning and expected to maintain pace for years to come, it is necessary to maintain a stable inventory of industrial lands to preserve and attract a wide range of employment.

Mississauga's sustained population and employment growth will continue to present both challenges and opportunities that need to be addressed through an appropriate growth management strategy. In accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement, Provincial Growth Plan, and Region of Peel Official Plan, Mississauga will embrace sustainability in its future growth and land use decisions.

4.4 Guiding Principles

Figure 4-9: Mississauga is home to residents of all ages who thrive in their communities.

Mississauga Official Plan has been prepared to assist in the implementation of the long-term vision formulated through a comprehensive public engagement process known as, "Our Future Mississauga – Be Part of the Conversation" that resulted in a new Strategic Plan. The goals, objectives and policies of Mississauga Official Plan align with the City's Strategic Plan and focus specifically on the long term land use, growth and development plans for Mississauga.

Mississauga Official Plan will guide the physical evolution of the city through the management of growth and land development to 2031 and beyond. The Official Plan adopts a new approach to land use planning in Mississauga, with a focus on the strategic management of growth and change through the integration of land use, transportation and design objectives. It includes promoting growth in locations where it is financially sustainable and where it can be developed in compact efficient forms, supported by existing and planned infrastructure. This approach also includes the protection and enhancement of stable areas including the city's natural and cultural heritage resources and residential neighbourhoods.

In order to protect what is valuable and shape change responsibly, Mississauga Official Plan subscribes to the following key guiding principles for land use:

1. Mississauga will promote development decisions that support the sustainability of our natural heritage system and enhance the quality of life for our present and future generations.

2. Mississauga will protect, enhance and where possible restore distinct ***natural features, areas and linkages, including their ecological functions***, particularly those associated with the Lake Ontario waterfront and the city's river and valley corridor system.

3. Mississauga will preserve the character, cultural heritage and livability of our communities.

4. Mississauga will maintain and promote a strong and sustainable, diversified economy that provides a range of employment opportunities for residents and attracts lasting investment to secure financial stability.

5. Mississauga will provide a range of mobility options (e.g., walking, cycling, transit, vehicular)

for people of all ages and abilities by connecting people with places through coordinated land use, urban design and transportation planning efforts.

6. Mississauga will plan for a wide range of housing, jobs and community infrastructure resources so that they are available to meet the daily needs of the community through all stages of life.

7. Mississauga will support the creation of distinct, vibrant and complete communities by building beautifully designed and inspiring environments that contribute to a sense of community identity, cultural expression and inclusiveness.

8. Mississauga will be a city that promotes the participation and collaboration of all sectors including residents, employees, entrepreneurs, government, business, education and non-profit, to achieve this vision.

4.5 Achieving the Guiding Principles

Mississauga Official Plan will implement the guiding principles through the following strategic actions:

Direct Growth

Figure 4-10: Growth will be directed to areas identified for intensification such as the Downtown Core. The above model illustrates actual and potential development within the Downtown Core, helping to visualize how new growth will relate to existing structures.

As Mississauga continues to evolve, growth will be strategically managed by determining the appropriate arrangement and balance of land uses, including population and employment densities. Growth will be directed to key locations to support existing and planned transit and other infrastructure investments. Growth will not be directed to areas of the city that need to be preserved and protected (e.g. stable residential areas, Natural Areas System and cultural heritage resources).

Mississauga will direct growth by:

- focusing on locations that will be supported by planned and ***higher order transit***, higher density, pedestrian oriented development and community infrastructure, services and facilities;
- protecting stable areas and natural and cultural heritage; and
- achieving balanced population and employment growth.

Value the Environment

Mississauga has natural areas of exceptional beauty and quality. Mississauga will serve as a steward of

Figure 4-11: Located on the scenic east bank of the Credit River, over two-thirds of Riverwood's 60+ ha will be preserved, to provide and protect the habitat for over 359 species of native plants and 46 species of birds and animals.

the environment by protecting, enhancing, restoring and expanding its Natural Areas System, making use of sustainable green infrastructure, and preserving and protecting trees.

Mississauga will value the environment by:

- promoting public and private community stewardship of the environment for present and future generations;
- protecting, enhancing and restoring Mississauga's Natural Areas System and its functions;
- protection of life and property; and
- promoting a culture of conservation and sustainable healthy lifestyles that minimize the impact on the environment through pollution prevention, public health and safety.

Complete Communities

Mississauga will contain healthy, vibrant communities that provide residents with a range and diversity of housing types and mobility choices; the ability to engage in healthy, safe and active lifestyles; access to daily needs within close proximity to where they live, work, study, shop, play and congregate; and a sense of belonging and community pride.

Mississauga will complete communities by:

- promoting an urban form and development that supports public health and active living;
- ensuring that communities include or provide easy access to a range of uses and services required to meet all or most of the daily needs of residents through all stages of their lives; e.g., housing, transportation, employment, recreation, social interaction and education;
- promoting expressions of art, culture and design to foster a distinct sense of community identity; and
- preserving the Natural Areas System and cultural resources to retain a connection to the past.

Figure 4-12: Complete communities preserve historic and cultural resources and support artistic expression and individual community designs that promote healthy lifestyles.

Create a Multi-Modal City

Mississauga will integrate land use and transportation planning and sustainable design so that new development is directed to locations that support existing and planned transit and ***active transportation*** facilities. The needs of all road users will be considered in the design and management of transportation infrastructure. To ensure that Mississauga is well served by efficient and higher order regional transit services, Mississauga will capitalize on provincial transit service initiatives to minimize dependency on cars for commuting.

Mississauga will create a multi-modal city by:

- developing and promoting an efficient, safe and accessible transportation system for all users;
- promoting a transportation network that connects nodes with a range of transportation modes, to reduce dependency on cars for local trips;
- promoting transit as a priority for moving people;
- implementing a viable and safe ***active transportation*** network for cyclists and pedestrians of all abilities;
- encouraging Transportation Demand Management practices;
- developing priority routes for the efficient movement of goods;
- exploring and promoting opportunities to improve multi-modal connections between the city's transportation network and the Airport to facilitate movement of goods to key markets and border crossings; and
- developing an integrated and seamless network of mobility transportation hubs and ***higher order transit*** stations.

Figure 4-13: Transit and ***active transportation*** is a priority for Mississauga's urban vision. (Houston, Texas)

Build a Desirable Urban Form

Mississauga will promote a strong civic identity and city of experiences that celebrate the attractive and vibrant waterfront, the Downtown and communities, the rich history and cultural diversity, high architectural standards and quality public art. Mississauga will promote green development building standards and technologies.

Mississauga will build a desirable urban form by:

- ensuring that the urban form of the city (e.g., buildings, streets, ***streetscapes*** landscapes, public spaces such as parks and squares, infrastructure) contributes positively to everyday living in Mississauga;
- promoting an urban form that will address the live, learn, work and play needs of present and future generations;
- creating vibrant mixed use communities; and
- using placemaking initiatives to support active living and improved public health, comfort and social interaction in the city.

What is Placemaking?

Placemaking is not just the act of building or fixing up a space, but a whole process that fosters the creation of vital public destinations: the kind of places where people feel a strong stake in their communities and a commitment to making things better. Simply put, Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, ultimately creating good public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being.

Figure 4-14: Streetsville is a vibrant mixed use community that has a rich history and a strong civic identity.

Foster a Strong Economy

Mississauga has a progressive and diversified economy. Maintaining its current strength, while further diversifying its base by affording the opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds to thrive, will be important for its future success. The City will foster innovative and creative businesses by capitalizing on a dynamic downtown, attractive corporate centres and hi-tech infrastructure, and by enabling the efficient movement of goods.

Figure 4-15: Mississauga's educational opportunities are important resources, providing talent to meet the needs of existing and future employers.

Mississauga will foster a strong economy by:

- continuing to support existing businesses and attract a diverse range of new employment opportunities including green businesses, particularly to accommodate those living in Mississauga;
- continuing to be a net importer of talent;
- supporting existing and future office, industrial, institutional and commercial businesses;
- maintaining an adequate supply of employment lands to meet future needs;
- ensuring there is adequate infrastructure to support development;
- promoting new office development in strategic locations; and
- attracting post-secondary educational facilities to stimulate investment and the development of talent to meet the needs of future employment opportunities.

Promote Collaboration

Mississauga will facilitate participation and collaboration among all sectors - residents, employees, government, business, education and non-profit - by providing opportunities to participate in shaping the city and neighbourhoods. Mississauga is committed to a multidisciplinary decision-making process to achieve desirable, meaningful outcomes.

Mississauga will promote collaboration by:

- ensuring that all stakeholders are afforded opportunities to participate in the land use planning process; and
- encouraging participation, collaboration, education and partnerships with stakeholders in the implementation of this Official Plan.

Figure 4-16: As part of the Strategic Plan public engagement process, connections were made with over 100,000 people. The Mississauga Official Plan implements the land use components of the Strategic Plan.

Conclusion

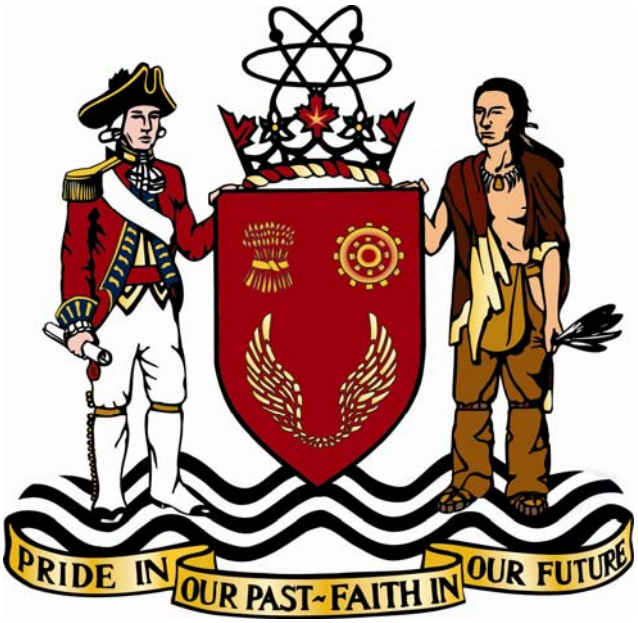

Figure 4-17: Through its various images, the Mississauga Coat of Arms conveys the past, present and future of a City proud of its growth and confident of its future.

Although there may be some variation to the sequence and approach to the implementation of the Strategic Plan as expressed through Mississauga Official Plan, the city vision and key guiding principles, upon which the Plan is based, will continue to remain intact. Through the sustainable management of growth and land, Mississauga Official Plan will guide the physical evolution of Mississauga where present and future generations will continue to thrive.