

# City Summit helps to define us

By BRIAN CROMBIE

In September 2007 over 200 leaders in Mississauga gathered for a day long Summit to discuss the challenges facing the city. Through speeches, panels and roundtable discussions, 18 major issues were identified.

Over the following year an active steering committee put some detail to those issues and targeted four for greater study. In 2009 a second summit launched four taskforces to tackle these issues and arrive at a "Big Idea."

And idea to move the issue forward in Mississauga. These taskforces have met over almost two years—through research, debates, discussions, and votes—to finalize on one big idea that they think can make a difference to their city.

In 2010, the Mayor decided to hold a Job Summit, attended by over 350 Mississauga businesses, non-profits and residents, to address unemployment ultimately leading to the establishment of a fifth taskforce.

Over 1000 Mississaugans have been involved in the Summits and the Summit's taskforces.

All with an aim to improve our city.

On October 25th these now five taskforces presented their findings and their Big Ideas to the public at UTM. The public was invited to attend, listen, discuss and let us know if the taskforces got it right, and help us figure out how to implement them if they did. Results were not available at presstime.

Along the way many of the ideas discussed are underway, a community door bringing social agencies under one roof, a summer jobs challenge, the RIC Centre study on innovation, to name a few. But the ideas coming out will take money, community support and City Council, if not other governmental commitments, to initiate.

There are unquestionably lots of other good ideas that could solve these and other problems, but these are the five Big Ideas that more than a hundred Mississauga business people and residents have studied and recommend to their fellow citizens for their consideration.

Many commentators believe that cities become great based on community and civic

engagement. Comparables in Canada and across the globe suggest this is true. When residents and business, governments and non profits discuss, debate and decide on some priorities for their city, great changes can happen.

This is our hope. This is our objective.

**Issue – Post-Secondary Education:** Canada awards 30 per cent fewer doctoral degrees and 50 per cent fewer Masters degrees per capita than the USA. Countries around the world are investing in talent through advanced education in order to remain competitive. Mississauga must do the same.

**Mississauga Innovation Leadership Alliance** is designed to bring together industry, community and education to develop a post secondary offering that teaches innovation and ensures students are ready for the jobs of tomorrow.

**Issue – Unemployment** The economic downturn has hit Mississauga's residents particularly hard. Our unemployment rates were higher than the GTA, the province and the country as a whole. Youth, newcomers and middle career transitioning workers are disproportionately affected.

Foster entrepreneurship and ultimately job

creation by developing a business accelerator – a hub to support and nurture entrepreneurs, as well as overall support from all sectors for those looking for employment

**Issue – Lack of Social and Community Health Services:** Social and community health funding has not kept pace with our rapid population growth affecting quality of life. Mississauga's child poverty rate, for instance, is currently at 21 per cent - higher than both provincial and national averages.

The Neighbourhood Development Task Force is designed to strengthen our city – one neighbourhood at a time - by systematically building on neighbourhood assets and channeling supports where necessary. This will increase opportunities for economic prosperity and civic participation in all communities.

**Issue – Ensuring Mississauga is a Centre of Excellence for Diversity and Immigration:** We welcome 34,000 new residents every year yet system inequities across the city present barriers for many from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The Mississauga Council for Diversity and Inclusion is designed to ensure our city capitalizes on the potential of its global citizens, establishing Mississauga as an international example of lived diversity and inclusion.

**Waterfront Development and Sustainability:** Our waterfront and Credit River Valley are the city's hidden gems with most residents not fully aware of the vastness and opportunity it offers. The Mississauga Waterfront Development Corporation will build the waterfront as a vibrant place of diverse spaces, celebrated for its groundbreaking contribution to the environmental, economic, social and physical well-being of all residents.

The vision of the Summit is to build a brave, bold future for Mississauga together.

Learn more, get involved, join us in building tomorrow.  
[www.mississaugasummit.ca](http://www.mississaugasummit.ca)

Brian Crombie is  
co-chair of the  
Mississauga Summit



As part of GE Canada's 5th Annual Women's Network event, over 200 GE Canada employees created a human pink ribbon with Mayor Hazel McCallion of Mississauga in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. As part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month 2011, GE Healthcare is hosting 'GE Global Pink Ribbon' events during the month of October. GE employees from the US, Brazil, Canada, the UK, France, Germany, Turkey, UAE, India, China and Japan have come together to form 'human ribbons', helping to raise awareness for the issues surrounding breast cancer. In total, GE employees in 25 countries were expected to take part, drawing local, national and international attention to the disease.

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