

## **Engage and Influence – MBOT’s 2014 Election Readiness Strategy**

*Peter Nogalo, Vice Chair Policy*

With a municipal election set for November and a possible provincial election in the spring, 2014 promises to be a year of exciting political activity and engagement in our city, region, and province.

As the leading voice of business in our community, Mississauga of Board of Trade (MBOT) will be at the forefront in advancing important issues to business before, during and well after this year’s respective elections.

As in the past, MBOT will provide thought leadership on key issues affecting economic development, employment and the general business climate; as well as the quality of life for all of us who live, work, or study in Mississauga.

Over the coming weeks and months, MBOT will be providing more information on strategies and issues in advance of the coming votes. To inform and support these efforts, MBOT will be issuing a survey to members, with the aim of identifying and prioritizing issues of the greatest importance to the business community.

### *A New Day for Mississauga*

The upcoming mayoral and city council races will, undoubtedly, be the most exciting and competitive in years. After five decades in office, Mayor Hazel McCallion, a great supporter of MBOT and strong advocate for business, will be retiring. While it is unlikely that her successor will enjoy similar political longevity, this election will be critical in setting the course of the city for years to come. Equally important will be the relationship between the business community and the new mayor and council. In many ways, this will be a new day for Mississauga - one in which MBOT will be an active and engaged participant.

### *Make Your Vote Count*

Of particular note to business owners is the ability to vote where one owns or rents property. The rules governing municipal elections allow for “non-resident” voting. According to the 2014 Voter’s Guide, “if you live in one municipality, and own or rent property in another municipality, you are eligible to vote in each municipality’s election.” However, if you own or rent more than one property in the same municipality, you can only vote once, although in the ward of your choosing. Owners or renters must be individuals. This is a potentially important tool for business owners to engage in the election that has the most impact to them.

### *Ontario Votes 2014?*

While the next provincial election is not officially scheduled until October 2015, political observers are virtually unanimous in predicting that a spring 2014 election is a distinct

likelihood. While in the early days yet, the respective parties have begun to issue policies and whitepapers covering such things as jobs, growth, transit, and infrastructure. Historically, Mississauga and Peel have been ground zero in whether or not a party forms government. Similarly, the difference between a minority and majority government, and just who forms it, may very well be decided right here in Mississauga. In short, our votes count. Whether an election is called in 2014 or 2015, MBOT, along with our partners at the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, will be working to advance issues that will help support business and drive economic development.

Of course, none of this can be done alone. Any successful strategy requires the support of an engaged membership who will help make our voice heard in this most critical of election years. In addition to completing the upcoming issues survey, please watch this space for future updates on how you can become more involved. In the meantime, engage with your elected officials and candidates. Join MBOT's Policy and Government Affairs Committee to help set the agenda. Get involved so that we as the business community can help ensure Mississauga remains a prosperous and progressive community in which to live, work and invest.