

NEWS BRIEF



BUREAU OF
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BETTER GOVERNMENT THROUGH RESEARCH

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QUESTIONS FOR ELECTORS, 1969

In this News Brief, the Bureau of Municipal Research draws attention to important issues facing voters in the 1969 municipal elections. The Bureau believes first, that candidates, whether independent or party affiliated, ought to have informed opinions on these subjects and ought to be able to express their views to the electorate; and second, that these issues and the candidates' responses to them ought to assist voters in choosing their representatives.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

- (1) What does citizen participation mean?
 - voting at elections?
 - providing advice and information to elected officials?
 - actively participating in decision-making?

- (2) Under what conditions should elected representatives vote in accordance with the views of their neighbourhood constituents?

- (3) Does the introduction of political parties at the local level assume that party affiliated councillors will vote in accordance with party policy? Under what conditions might this not be so?

- (4) Are neighbourhood groups an adequate vehicle for citizen participation?

- (5) In what circumstances is it useful and justifiable for citizens to sit on special Committees of Council?

QUALITY OF LIFE

- (1) What action should be taken by local government to combat noise, air, and water pollution in Metro?

- (2) Should some downtown streets be closed to motor vehicle traffic and opened as pedestrian malls?

- (3) Are Metro and the area municipalities providing a sufficient number of parks in a variety of places?

- (4) Has sufficient attention been given to the impact of new development on the street scene and skyline?

- (5) What steps should be taken to control the effects of additional expressways that feed into the downtown area on the communities and environment in the City core?

- (6) What should be done to ensure a sufficient variety of housing at a reasonable price?

PLANNING, LAND USE, URBAN RENEWAL

(1) Does the present system provide for adequate citizen participation in planning?

(2) Should Metro adopt an Official Plan?

(3) Should zoning regulations throughout Metropolitan Toronto be standardized as to zoning categories, permitted uses in each category, property setbacks, open space, etc.?

(4) Under what conditions can spot-zoning (the re-zoning of small pockets of land of an otherwise uniformly settled area) be justified?

(5) Where an area is to be developed or redeveloped, should the municipality leave the entire project to private enterprise or expropriate the land in order to:

- sell it to private developers?
- rent it to private developers?
- develop or redevelop the land itself?

TRANSPORTATION

(1) What are the priorities for a transportation system in Metropolitan Toronto?

(2) What steps should be taken to ease the problem of traffic congestion in the downtown area?

(3) Should the provision of subway parking and downtown parking controls be used to divert passenger traffic from private cars to public transit?

(4) Is an expanded bus system suitable or desirable in suburban areas primarily served by private cars?

(5) Should public transit systems be used as a form of subsidy for the needy?

(6) How can airport development proceed in a manner compatible with the interests of nearby communities?

TAXATION AND FINANCE

- (1) How can assessment on improved properties be adjusted to encourage improvement?
- (2) Should tax-exempt properties (such as educational, religious, charitable, and municipally-owned public utilities) remain tax-exempt?
- (3) To what extent should municipal councils control school budgets?
- (4) To relieve the burden on the property tax, what combination of alternative sources of revenue should be utilized?
- (5) Should municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto pool their resources to form a common tax base from which all can draw?

GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION

- (1) Should the City and Boroughs in Metro be reorganized and/or amalgamated?
- (2) Should municipalities in Metro adopt a "strong mayor" form of government by granting that official wider authority and responsibility than the other members of council possess?
- (3) What steps should be taken to better co-ordinate the collective bargaining agreements negotiated separately for Metro, the City of Toronto, and the Boroughs?
- (4) Should the Chairman of Metro Toronto be elected directly by the people?
- (5) Should the municipalities in Metro each appoint a Chief Administrative Officer to co-ordinate and direct the activities of the various departments in that municipality?
- (6) Should a majority of those appointed to the Police Commission be elected officials?
- (7) Should school boards be replaced by a Committee of Council responsible for education?
- (8) Should planning boards be replaced by a Committee of Council responsible for planning?
- (9) Should the Toronto Transit Commission be replaced by an integrated Metro transportation department?
- (10) In what way can the existing standing committee structure of municipal councils be reorganized to permit greater specialization?