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Questions
for
Electors
1980



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CIVIC AFFAIRS IN BRIEF

Municipal elections across Ontario are scheduled for Monday, November 10, 1980. To continue our tradition, the Bureau is presenting what we feel are the most important issues being faced by municipal representatives.

This year we have covered issues for Metropolitan Toronto and London. We are presenting our assessment of what the issues will be for the new councils as well as providing some background information.

This Civic Affairs is presented to help voters assess their municipality, its problems and the candidates that come forward.

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I METROPOLITAN TORONTO

GENERAL OUTLINE OF METRO ISSUES

Housing

The issue is "affordable housing" for both ownership and rental housing. The Province has delegated to municipalities the responsibility of producing housing for low income groups and in Metro Toronto, has recently turned over management of its local OHC housing (public housing) to a newly created body called Metro Toronto Housing Authority (established August 1, 1980). In order to produce housing, a municipality must form a non-profit housing corporation and under the program, is eligible for subsidies from federal and provincial governments. Private developers (for-profit producers of housing) are also eligible for density bonuses from the municipality if they include assisted housing in their project. To qualify they must include 25% of total rental units for tenants whose rents will be geared to income.

There now is a crucial shortage of housing in Metro Toronto, with rental vacancies at below 1.0%. Government has produced publicly assisted housing at only 25% of its quota and production of assisted housing has lagged in the private sector. According to a recent Metro Planning Department study 90,800 Metro households are forced to pay far in excess of what they can afford for housing and are getting no assistance. What is required first and foremost is a coherent effort by all three levels of government, since the present subsidy program is not reaching those most in need. The only municipalities which have taken on the task of producing housing is the City of Toronto, via its Non-Profit Housing Corporation, also known as "Cityhome", and the Borough of York which is producing a small number of housing units for senior citizens. Metro is not building family housing because other area municipalities are opposed.

Social Services

A report published in September 1980 by the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto called "Planning Agenda for the Eighties, Part II: Metro's Suburbs In Transition" calls for dramatic shifts in public planning

and priorities of social services. Metro's suburbs now face the same kinds of problems which had been concentrated in the City in the late '50's and '60's - i.e. an influx of immigrants with concomitant needs for special services, low income and single parent families, unemployed youth and youth in crisis. Provision of social services has been neglected in the years of expansion to the suburbs in favour of concentration on hard services (water and sewers, roadways, refuse collection, etc.) and the physical environment. Reassessment of social problems and planning for needed services has begun in Scarborough, North York and Etobicoke where special committees have been struck to consider policies and goals as suggested by the report. Issues which have become particularly prominent are day care, group homes, minorities and race relations, and youth in crisis.

(a) Day Care

Child day care is of concern to those most directly affected - i.e. increasing numbers of families in which both parents must work and the single parent family. It should also, however, be considered a legitimate social necessity by employers whose staff will be more productive when freed from anxieties about child welfare during the working day.

Metro's publicly sponsored day care services were threatened with cut-backs of subsidies by the Province recently, which would have meant that existing subsidized spaces could not have been kept open. The Province has now announced that it will provide the 14% increase over last year's subsidy, which will prevent any loss in present day care spaces.

Metro presently operates 33 day care centres, and has 1,400 children on the waiting list for subsidized day care. Action Day Care, an organization advocating day care, reported last fall that 2,500 children were in compromise day care arrangements. Furthermore, Metro's Children's Services Committee has reported that there were spaces for only 8% of the 251,000 children nine years of age and under. Metro's Day Care Advisory Task Force recommended the creation of 1,100 new day care spaces for low income children in June of this year, which would have the effect of allowing single mothers to work rather than to remain on welfare rolls. Metro passed a motion on October 7th to create 500 new day care spaces this year. The question which remains open is - who will pay? An interesting statistic is that for every \$1.00 spent on day care, Metro saves \$2.00 in general welfare assistance.

(b) Group Homes

Persons coming from an environment of total institutionalization (such as mental hospitals and prisons) require a period of social adjustment and reorientation prior to being able to fully integrate themselves into the community. Others, such as the mildly retarded, or persons struggling to free themselves from drug or alcohol addiction, require the support and assurance of others in like situations as well as professional assistance. Total institutionalization has been found to be unnecessary, costly and stigmatizing in these cases and group homes integrated into the community appear to fulfil a special need. In both instances, partial or eventually full integration into the community is the goal. The usual citizen reaction to group homes in their own neighbourhood is rejection.

In order to set up group homes, the usual procedure by local municipalities has been to seek exemptions from residential zoning by-laws in each individual case. This is a cumbersome and time-consuming procedure and individual municipalities are now seeking to establish by-laws which deal exclusively with group homes.

(c) Minorities and Race Relations

As the immigrant population in Metro increases, problems of minorities being absorbed into the community increase. The problems have been documented over the past two years in a number of reports, including the Pitman report. This report placed the largest hope for solving the problems on the school boards (see School Board section, page 8). Most people feel that the municipality and Metro have the largest responsibility, however.

The Province has asked all six mayors to set up citizens' committees to deal with race relations. The committees would include a cross section of the community and report to the mayor. One of the main functions would be to have the community help find jobs for young members of visible minorities. Some municipalities already have a basis for this. For example, North York has a task force on race relations; Etobicoke has undertaken to have groups

work with police in Rexdale; East York has an advisory committee on multiculturalism.

The Provincial suggestions and the present programs do not seem to be enough to most community leaders, however. The problems are not related to the "high risk areas" as Metro says. They are everywhere and the solutions have to be everywhere. Unemployment, lack of social services, lack of public understanding, and housing discrimination need to be tackled through a realignment of Metro policies and programs, better public information and better contact between police and community. To date, visible results have failed to materialize on minority relations from the Metro Multicultural Relations Office.

Police

Since the beginning of 1979, issues involving the police have become more apparent. A number of incidents have caused this, including the shooting of Albert Johnson in the summer of 1979 and the build-up of racial tensions. Regardless of the cause, there are three areas which have received attention: independent complaint procedures against the police; police and racial relations; and representation on the police commission.

(a) Complaint Procedures

When a citizen has a complaint against a police officer the complaint is handled by a Complaints Bureau within the Metro Police Department. By the fall of 1979, it was obvious to the Metro Toronto Police Commission, as well as the Mayors from across Metro, that this system was not working. They asked the Province to introduce legislation that would provide a greater citizen involvement in the review of citizen complaints.

The Provincial proposal provided for an initial investigation into the complaint by the police. If the individual complaining was not satisfied with the investigation and results, it would then be referred to an outside commissioner for review.

The supporters of the Provincial plan saw it as a good compromise between eliminating police involvement and having total investigation by police. This way citizen review would be done only in those cases where the people complaining were not happy with the police probe.

This proposal was not passed at the Ontario Legislature, however, since most members and the public did not feel it went far enough. The main criticism that many individuals across Metro had was that it still had the police initially handling the complaints. What they felt was needed was an independent body which would both investigate and review citizen's complaints. The only role of the police would then be to provide information. Under this system of an independent body, citizens would feel freer to bring complaints.

Although no changes have been made in the complaint structure, the issue of an independent complaint bureau is one which is important and will surface again in the next two years in response to citizen pressure.

(b) Race Relations

Throughout the summer of 1979, there was growing tension between various races and the police. The tension resulted in a feeling that the police commission was not as responsive to citizens, particularly minority groups, as they should be. In September 1979 the Toronto City Council passed a vote of "no confidence" in the Police Commission saying it no longer reflects the mentality of an ethnically mixed city. That same month Cardinal Carter was appointed by the Police Commission to mediate. Cardinal Carter's report said that there definitely was racism in Toronto and that the Police Commission should undertake a number of activities to help alleviate this. Some of the recommendations were:

- a committee to form a link between commission and visible minorities should be established
- more foot patrols should be used as a measure of preventive policing
- the height and weight requirements for the police should be changed to allow for participation in the force of minority races whose characteristics fall below certain height and weight

- independent civilian review of complaints should be implemented

A number of these items have been done by the Commission. An individual has been appointed from within the police to liaise with minorities. More foot patrols have been instituted in areas across Metro. Most recently (October 1980) the Commission approved a new point system for police recruitment which does not rely on the old height and weight requirements. With this reform, more minorities will have the option of joining the police.

Even with these changes, there is still a question whether this will be enough to make the police more responsive and accountable to all citizens.

(c) Police Commission

Many of the problems the police are facing have been attributed to the leadership and accountability of the Police Commission. For example, Metro Council has asked for a police budget that reflects priorities in a meaningful way, but it has taken four years for the Police Commission to respond. Finally, in 1981, Metro will have a program budget from the Police Commission in order to assess its budget. The Commission is directly accountable to the Ontario Police Commission and the Province appoints three of its five members. This makes the lines of accountability to Metro and area Councils tenuous. As initiated by the Robarts Report, a number of Councils, including Metro Council, have voted to ask the Province to give to Metro the right to appoint a majority of the members.

Industrial Strategy

In times of provincial cutbacks in grants to municipalities and high unemployment, it becomes necessary for municipalities to concern themselves with retaining and expanding their tax base from the industrial and commercial community, to further the existence of jobs, and to promote accompanying spin-off effects for the growth of the local economy. North York is anxious to retain production of Dehavilland's Dash 8 airplane at Downsview and have the federal government locate planned expansion at the site. Scarborough and Etobicoke are involved in major commercial development schemes. Proposed projects on previously developed or vacant land are

accompanied by problems of service provision, in particular with regard to transportation planning and increased activity causing congestion, noise and competitive tensions for existing business. The Metropolitan Committee on Economic Development and its Technical Working Committee have been meeting since January to determine such issues as location of industry and offices across Metropolitan Toronto, and the development of a tourist and convention industry. Its findings are expected by the end of the year.

Should the Province intervene in encouraging industry to relocate or to remain in Toronto? The proposed site for a convention centre at the foot of the CN Tower has now been agreed upon by all three levels of government, and will be owned by Metropolitan Toronto. What advantages and disadvantages is this likely to have for the City? Should the Province be involved in fostering direct programs such as import replacement programs within an industrialized geographic area such as Southern Ontario's "Golden Horseshoe"?

Property Tax Reform

The Province's plan for property tax reform via reassessment based on 1975 market value of all properties across Ontario has now been abandoned. According to several area municipalities implementation of market value reassessment would mean intolerable tax burdens for lower income homeowners and cannot be put into practice until an improved Provincial tax credit scheme is worked out. However, municipalities have been given the opportunity of initiating reform under Section 86 of The Assessment Act. This section classifies properties and proposes the use of a common multiplier within each class which would alleviate inequities. The City of Toronto's Joint Committee on Property Tax Reform has recently published a draft report for public discussion. Other area municipalities have had or are awaiting the Province's report on assessment if Section 86 were to be adopted and the effects on its taxpayers.

SCHOOL ISSUES FOR METROPOLITAN TORONTO

Closures, Class Size and Curriculum

Shifting population and falling birthrates have resulted in declining enrolment. The question of school closures is one which has affected Toronto's suburbs and is particularly disturbing to parents of affected children.¹ Schools were built for large class sizes and different programs and have physically outlived the purpose for which they were originally intended. The shift in curriculum is to special education and individualized programs suited to the children involved. For example, an emphasis has been placed on: cultural programs and english as a second language for immigrant children; helping children with learning difficulties; accelerated curriculum for advanced pupils all within the classroom rather than in a segregationist manner.

Bill 82, an amendment to the Education Act, introduced by the Minister of Education in June is scheduled for a series of public hearings prior to third reading in the fall. It will provide tougher legislation for specialized education and force school boards to provide suitable programs of instruction according to need.

Declining enrolment ought to facilitate the development of individualized education and smaller class size. However, what has also happened and has received much publicity are teacher firings and school closures. The focus must be first on progress fostering learning ability and method of education, and on how to facilitate acceptance of these changes in the community without balkanizing the system.

Minorities

The Pitman report on racism recommended that school boards undertake to deal with race relations. All six boards of education have made policy statements accepting responsibility for solving problems. All six have developed guidelines for principals to follow when handling tense racial situations. According to many, the next step is to learn to understand minorities.

¹See BMR Civic Affairs "The Politics of School Closures" to be published this fall.

CITY OF TORONTO

Housing

The Cityhome non-profit housing company has attracted much publicity in respect to its accumulated operating deficit of \$1.5 million. However, on the other hand, it has produced 3,000 (occupied) rental units to date and has another 1,100 under construction. In light of experience with OHC housing, is it important to attempt to achieve a socio-economic mix when housing low-income families? Should the Province and the Federal government be subsidizing non-profit housing to a greater extent than they do privately produced for-profit housing? Should housing be considered a public commodity or should its production be left entirely to the private sector? Should affordable housing be demanded to a greater extent from the private sector by requiring higher percentages of total production to be geared to income?

Should an existing community such as the island homes be allowed to remain, or should the city be provided with more parkland? Should private clubs be permitted to remain on public parkland or should public access be available to all parkland?

A recently passed holding by-law (applicable for two years) restricts the height of certain condominium and apartment buildings proposed for sites on which presently exist apartment complexes of 126 units or more. Is this adequate protection for tenants who live in the existing rental accommodation? Is legislation such as health and housing standards by-laws adequate protection for tenants living in existing, older rental accommodation? What can be done to prevent deterioration of standards of upkeep? At present, only the City subsidizes rooming house units for singles. Should housing for singles be eligible for subsidies from the Province as are family units? Are rent controls working satisfactorily?

Social Services

Difficulties in setting up day care centres have been encountered because of lack of coordination between various inspectors within the city and between municipal and provincial licensing authorities. Should this procedure for processing of day care applications be speeded up?

Is programming adequate in Toronto's recreation centres? Do we need different programs for youth or expanded services and programs for adults and seniors? Should the City continue to provide recreation programs free of charge or might a nominal charge for participation attach greater value to services?

Property Tax Reform

The City's Draft Report of the Joint Committee on Property Tax Reform has been published and comments and suggestions from the public are requested by October 31st. Tax reform is particularly significant for older properties and lower income homes whose share of the tax burden has been relatively heavy under the present system. Market value reassessment undertaken by the Province and implementation of Section 86 which taxes property according to classifications needs further refinements. The City's report on tax reform suggests a reformed tax system with improved relief for low and moderate income taxpayers. It also proposes assured direct participation by the City in assessment review and appeals and monitoring of assessments placed on major new developments, as well as City initiated appeals on under-assessed commercial properties. How does the proposed system fit in with industrial strategy designed to attract industrial and commercial property uses?

Parkland

Should existing ravine parkland be used for housing? The St. Michael's lands in Ward 11 are one example, as are the lands of the Cedarvale Ravine in Ward 5. The OMB has allowed rezoning for residential housing in the Cedarvale Ravine and has refused to designate the St. Michael's lands as open space. Toronto has existing parkland on Centre Island which has been cultivated into landscaped gardens and includes an amusement park for children. A second waterfront park has been created on the Leslie Street headlands known as the Leslie Street Spit. Should we assure a variety of open space by preserving a natural terrain such as has evolved on the Leslie Street Spit?

Pollution

Should industrial polluters who continue to violate levels of acceptable pollution be subject to heavier prosecution? The Canada Metals plant on Eastern Avenue in Ward 8 and the Junction Triangle industries in Ward 1 continue to be areas of repeated violation of acceptable levels of pollution.

Dredgings from the Keating Channel at the mouth of the Don River present a very serious hazard to the environment. The City has asked the Province for an environmental assessment hearing prior to any dredging being done. The Province has granted such a hearing but in the meantime is going to permit continued dredging. What should be done with sludge containing chemical contaminants whose full danger is not known? Should all dredging stop in the meantime? What should be done to prevent future build-up of such hazardous materials?

SCARBOROUGH

Housing

Scarborough is one of Metro's few municipalities that still has vacant, developable land within its boundaries. The issue is what type of housing should be promoted. Should single family houses surrounded by much space continue to be the type of housing to be built as in the past, or do somewhat higher densities make better sense? Scarborough Planning Board recently rejected an application to build single family housing on a six acre site and slated it for multiple family residences. Smaller lots and houses or multiple family housing means more affordable housing. On the other hand, should developers be allowed to build high rise apartment complexes replacing existing lower density housing where land values have increased in older, more established areas? Is Borough sponsored co-operative housing development expanding fast enough to fill the need for affordable housing?

Social Services

Scarborough's response to "Suburbs In Transition" has been a Human Needs Board which has identified four major areas of concern. It will serve as a policy group and give direction to area committees for social planning, priorities and improvement of existing facilities. Should implementation be given priority to areas containing OHC complexes which constitute areas of concentration of multiple social problems?

Industrial and Commercial Development

Scarborough is experiencing rapid growth of industrial and commercial development. Major projects are planned for large blocks of land in the areas of McCowan Road and Eglinton Avenue and Ellesmere and Markham. Mixed land uses help alleviate transportation problems, make for safer communities because a site is not abandoned during certain hours and encourage multiple use of open space. Should mixed land use incorporating commercial and residential uses be promoted? What impact are these major developments likely to have on existing roads and transportation and the surrounding community?

Transportation

The magnitude of the Town Centre development which will be served by Light Rail Transit for public transportation also has been thought to demand improved access by road. The Brimley Road and Highway 401 interchange is a proposed solution to expected traffic problems. Some public input has already taken place through meetings between Board of Control and citizens. A study is to investigate need for the interchange. Should citizen input also be part of the study? Should impact on the community also be a consideration?

Scarborough does not have adequate bus service in outlying areas such as the north-east of the Borough. Since the Borough was developed with the private automobile in mind, who should bear the cost of public transit in low density, high cost situations? The Borough, Metro or the Province?

Election Reform

Should the board of control continue to function and have control over spending and staff decisions?

NORTH YORK

Housing

Cooperative affordable housing at the Downsview Airport lands was turned down by Council. Who should take responsibility for building affordable housing? High rise developments and the OHC housing projects in the Jane-Finch area have brought multiple social and school problems. The suggestion of switching development of two further apartment blocks to the Dufferin and Finch location has been approved by Council in principle and now awaits Metro's decision because Metro Conservation Authority lands are involved. What measures need to be taken in order to prevent the same problems from arising at Dufferin and Finch or any other locations?

A by-law allowing group homes to be established for ex-convicts and juvenile offenders, but not for persons recovering from the effects of drug addiction, has been passed. Homes have been relegated to commercial areas only. Is this compromise a fair attempt at integrating group homes into the life of the community?

Social Services

Social problems have been encountered in the Jane-Finch area which holds high concentrations of OHC housing serving lower socio-economic groups with similar problems and the area accommodates a number of different immigrant groups.

What can be done to reduce the ghetto stigma that has attached itself to this area? Should priorities be placed on social services for this area?

The City's outline for social policies in response to the Metro Social Planning Council's study sets forth six social goal statements in a document entitled "Towards a Social Policy for the City of North York". This document was scheduled for public discussion in September. How concrete are its recommendations when compared to other suburban policy statements? What lessons can be provided for the "Mayor's Committee on Community Relations and Racism" which has been called for?

Property Tax Reform

Council has opted not to proceed with suggestions for reform according to Section 86 of the Assessment Act. It has asked the Provincial government to increase the \$150 education tax credit allowed to senior citizens to \$300.00 against a lien on their property. By not seeking wider provincial tax credits applicable to a broader segment of the population, does this action constitute a piecemeal approach?

Electoral Reform

Should electoral districts be redrawn in order to assure more equal representation at City and Metro? Should council members be required to publish election expenses and sources of election fund revenues? Should a Board of Control continue to have a monopoly on decision-making requiring a 2/3 vote by council for reversing decisions on matters of finance and staff?

ETOBICOKE

Housing

Determining appropriate densities, and affordable housing are issues. Council has not taken the initiative in the production of cooperative affordable housing. Who should produce such housing? Should cooperative non-profit housing be granted proportionately greater provincial and federal subsidies to produce low income affordable housing than for-profit housing?

At Kipling Avenue and Steeles, the site for a proposed housing development, the developer is proposing to revert to a 1972 OMB decision allowing high density housing. The developer wants to by-pass a 1974 agreement with Council for limited densities which permitted the property to be released from Parkway belt designations. A high density project in the north of the Borough is only half full because of attendant social problems with high rise concentrations. Should the Borough's general policy regarding housing densities be adhered to in housing development decisions?

Council voted against establishing a by-law permitting group homes and has established restrictive guidelines for individual applications for rezoning. This makes Etobicoke the only outer suburban municipality to veto outright the concept of integrating persons in need of social rehabilitation. Should Metro be responsible for designating the location of group homes to distribute a social responsibility equally among the area municipalities?

Social Services

The Task Force on Human Services issued a discussion paper in June 1980 in response to Metro Social Planning Council's report "Suburbs in Transition". It examines and makes recommendations on a number of specific issues that were known to exist and presented the report to Council and the community for review. A case study of an area of high density development on Kipling Avenue between Steeles and Albion Road containing OHC housing points to the specific needs of this and other such areas and makes recommendations for community development. These included recreation facilities, adequate parkland, planned social and recreational programs involving the members of the community, etc.

Should further development planned for this area or other locations be permitted without assuring the provision of social services and programs? Should developers of high or medium density apartment projects be required to provide certain space and facilities to house public social and recreational programs?

Commercial and Industrial Development

The motel strip of the lakeshore development area is zoned for high density commercial development and a rezoning application by one developer has been upheld by the OMB. However, no comprehensive development plan has yet been submitted. Should development be required to proceed according to official plan requirements? Or should developers be given concessions for higher densities in return for more landscaped areas for example?

A new regional shopping mall for the corner of Rexdale Boulevard and Highway 27 is proposed and before Council, as well as an expansion planned for Shoppers World at Albion Road and Kipling Avenue. The major development at Rexdale Boulevard and Highway 27 would have effects on the entire surrounding region, on nearby small merchants and on the activity of the Shoppers World Centre.

Should the effect of this major development be examined in terms of transportation needs and traffic patterns for the surrounding area? The new shopping centre would be located in an area zoned for industrial use. What are the implications of these land uses occurring side by side?

The Third Rail

A recent Canadian Transport Commission decision allows a third main railway track to be built through the Borough. The inclusion of an underpass was not stipulated. Should a federal grant be demanded for the construction of underpasses in crossings involving residential areas? What are the implications for residential areas adjacent to the railway tracks?

Organizational and Departmental Review

Council agreed in principle on an overall review of Borough Departments. Is the cost of \$200,000 to \$300,000 too high to be justifiable for an internal departmental review? Should an in-house body of experts be established to monitor municipal functioning on an on-going basis? Should the Board of Control be responsible for managing departmental and council liaison and procedure?

Should a Board of Control continue to exist and to have powers of decision-making in questions of spending and staffing?

The Etobicoke Olympium

The Olympium is a specialized sports facility and serves a wider community than the immediate municipality. It is incurring annual deficits (\$400,000 in 1979). Is the Etobicoke Olympium a regional rather than a local sports facility and should it be operated by Metro? (A forthcoming BMR Civic Affairs will discuss the philosophy of recreation.)

EAST YORK

East York's primary concerns lie with maintenance of a stable community and increasing its industrial and commercial assessment.

"The Ghost of Bayview"

Or, more recently, known as the "White Elephant". For years this illegally erected apartment building has been deteriorating and has constituted an eyesore as well as a danger to children. The municipality was given authority via a special act of the Ontario Legislature to demolish the structure and charge the cost to the owners of the property. This is being appealed to the Supreme Court and the owners have applied for designation of the property to allow apartments and stacked town house development at densities similar to Crescent Town. Should this land remain as part of the Don Valley open space? Should it be designated for single family housing?

Social Services

A preliminary draft of recommendations is being prepared by the Planning Department. It will be going to the Planning Board and then two further public hearings are expected to be held by the end of January, 1981. The recommendations will then go to Council. The process towards a decision has had much opportunity to reflect public opinion in East York. How much of this public opinion should be taken into consideration by Council vis-a-vis other social considerations when Council finally will vote on the subject?

Property Tax Reform

Successful assessment appeals by industries and apartment owners are causing total assessment to decrease and a shift in the tax burden to the home owner. Council has applied to the Province for a modified form of market value reassessment as outlined in Section 86 of the Assessment Act. Can and should anything be done to increase the industrial and commercial assessment base by actively recruiting for these to locate in the Borough as well as assuring that they pay their fair share?

YORK

York suffers from problems associated with a shrinking tax base due to a low level of industry and business in the Borough and high expenses connected with extensive upgrading of its storm sewer system which is now about 25% completed.

Social Services

In response to "Suburbs in Transition", the report by the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, a research committee was struck to examine needs, encourage citizen participation and to determine the most effective way of investing public and private funds. An Inter-Agency Research Committee was subsequently formed to consider the next steps to be taken. York is still struggling to supply physical services through its storm sewer project. How much emphasis should York place on human services? Should the private sector be asked to play a significant role in the provision of such needs?

Industrial Strategy

York's desire to foster an increase in commercial and industrial development has been frustrated on several counts. However, development of its civic centre at Eglinton and Keele is being considered vital to the life of the municipality by Metro planners. What steps must be taken to assure that this project becomes a reality? How important is it to create a focal point for the municipality? What should the development consist of?

Tax Reform

Should tax reform consist of equalized assessment across Metro so that industrial and commercial assessment would be shared among the area municipalities? What implications would this have for business and industry and the component municipalities in terms of location?

Transportation

Traffic congestion is another of York's problems. A joint York-North York study on transportation problems has been agreed as necessary by Metro planners and the Metro Chairman. Can anything be done in the meantime to limit or reroute traffic from congested roads?

II LONDON

GENERAL OUTLINE OF ISSUES

Transportation

(a) Transportation Plan

London has spent many years and considerable money developing a transportation plan. Despite this the Council has not adopted any plan and many people still question why it is necessary. In the meantime decisions are being made on a number of crucial transportation issues without looking at their implications on an overall level for London's future. (See a study the Bureau did in 1978 called "Transportation Planning in London: Can London Catch the Bus?" which pinpoints the issues and possible solutions.) The first issue that must be tackled is approval of an overall transportation plan which will look at roads and transit needs in a comprehensive way and will then form a basis for future decisions. At a recent council meeting (October 6, 1980), Phase II of the transportation study which was originally recommended in 1974, was approved. It will deal with road needs and traffic patterns, but will only be a start to developing an overall policy which would help prevent piecemeal decisions.

(b) Horton Street Extension

This extension has been debated since 1966. The extension of Horton Street from Ridout to Wharncliffe Road was first adopted in principle by Council in 1971. In 1975 it was defeated again by a 10-9 vote. In 1979 it was resurrected and rejected in July 1980. In October, 1980 by a vote of 10-9 the extension was approved again and placed in the 1981 capital works budget. The extension would cost approximately \$16 million and would cause the displacement of 40 homes. This stormy history indicates the controversy surrounding the extension. The proponents to the plan feel it will help to solve the problem of getting traffic into the downtown area, and is the best solution. The people against Horton Street cite a number of problems. The traffic caused at both ends of the Horton extension would be considerable and only cause more congestion. Other schemes such as an extension of Stanley Street would be less disruptive to the residents in the neighbourhood. Growth in West London will only make traffic worse - another solution has to be found. Advocates of public transit feel money should be placed into transit and not an extension which only causes more congestion.

(c) Transit

Only 11% of Londoners ride public transit on a daily basis. This figure is declining. Whether the decline is a result of or the cause of a decrease in service is academic. Service on some lines has gone from a 20 minute wait to a 50 minute wait. At rush hour some buses are filled to capacity but the number of buses has decreased. As service gets worse fewer people ride the lines. The cycle will continue unless new initiatives are made in the transit field. There are presently no commitments on instituting more buses, more frequent service or better routes.

Development Fund

In 1972, City Council adopted a bylaw which created the development fund. The fund was viewed as an alternative way of smoothing development in London. Instead of Council making a list of capital works for each year and the developer having to wait until his number came up, the developer would build his own roads and sewers. When the work was completed he would claim the cost from the fund. The fund was to be financed through building permit and development charges. These fees would be collected and would sit in the fund to be drawn upon as the work was completed. The principle, according to most, was a good one. In November, 1979, City Council discovered that there was a backlog of \$10.4 million in claims and a possible \$8.2 million for work still to be done. The causes cited for this predicament were unrealistically low development fees and mismanagement. In March, 1980 one municipal official was fired and a number of them demoted for their role in the deficit. What will happen next to make the development fund viable is the issue. Many feel positive steps have to be taken to bring the fund out of its current problems.

Board of Control

A referendum will be included on this year's ballot which deals with whether the Board of Control should be continued. The Board is the group which has responsibility for such areas as financial management, personnel affairs, including dismissals, and acts as the intermediary between the administrators and the members of Council. The power which the Controllers have is considerable, and many feel that the Board makes the role of Council

questionable. The proponents of abolition note that only 5 municipalities in Ontario still have boards of control. Most other municipalities have already abolished them and substituted executive committees whose powers are decided by the Council itself. Under this system the major decisions are made by all of Council, not a small group of people and more accountability is apparent both within the Council and with citizens.

Recreation Facilities

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has stated that there will be no new major recreation facilities built for at least 5 years. In protest, a number of neighbourhoods have been indicating that they would like their own arenas and pools. Meanwhile, some pools have been closed rather than repaired since the use has dropped off considerably. The question arises - is there a need for new facilities? Would recreational needs be better served by less expensive alternatives such as softball and soccer fields which many areas do need?

Day Care

The need for day care in London has become evident over the last few years. As with most cities, as more women become employed, more day care facilities are needed. There are 59 municipalities across Ontario who provided some assistance. London is ranked 47th for its day care program which is considered very limited.

Shopping Malls

A number of shopping malls and developments have been proposed for the London area. Concern is growing that the City will soon reach its saturation point and further development will only adversely affect existing commercial developments. For example, Westmount and White Oak Malls are planning to expand. New malls are proposed at Fanshawe Park Road and Richmond Street and one at Southdale and Wharncliffe Road. Some people feel that it is inevitable that smaller malls will be hurt. Others say something should be done before the economy of some are undermined.

Street and Sidewalk Repair

Anyone who has walked or driven around London lately knows the state of repair or disrepair of streets, sidewalks, curbs and gutters. The situation will not be improving rapidly in the next few years under the present maintenance program. For example, there are currently about 250 streets on the waiting list for repair and replacement. Only 22 will be dealt with this year and these will not necessarily be the neediest. Priority is given according to: condition; whether there is sewer work or street widening planned within 5 years on that street (if yes, then the street gets bumped); and according to whether it is an arterial, collector or residential street (the money must be divided between these 3 categories). Repairs for the present waiting list will stretch out for 10 years. That means that each year the City will get further and further behind unless positive steps are made to reverse the trend.

Methane Gas

On March 21, 1978 a methane gas explosion levelled a house that had been built near a former landfill site, which was presumed to be the source of the gas. The City had the City Engineer compile a list of former dumps and landfill sites, and had a team of consultants conduct systematic tests for methane in and around these sites. The sites have been made public. A number of homeowners are concerned with the problems that may arise from this. To date, the City has not told the public of any problems with the sites as they come up. Many people feel more information needs to be made public.

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Mary Lynch, Executive Director
Ute Wright, Research Associate

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