

TOP 20 CHANGES IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT FOCUS AND APPROACH

Issue	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
1. Property taxes	Tax them	Tight budgets, unhappy taxpayers, greater demands for services	Three choices: doing more with more, more with less, or less with less
2. Attitudes toward civic government	Respectful	Distrustful of all governments	Regain public trust
3. Civic projects and service delivery	Tightly controlled	Public-private partnerships	More new and outside partnerships with business and community groups
4. Communication	Minimal public outreach	Effort to reach out	Open, honest two-way communication using new and social media, with city hall as trusted source
5. Management structure	Strictly hierarchical	Flattened management structure	Flexible administration system
6. Technology	Slow to embrace	IT department rule	New communication and information systems will change how cities function
7. Economic development	Fight your neighbours	Regional partners / thinking	Global strategic planning
8. Unions	Strong union presence	More private sector	Weakened union influence
9. Revenue generation	Property taxes	Property taxes	New sustainable revenue sources
10. Financial status of city	Secure, comfortable	Threats to fiscal sustainability	Greater concern over on-going economic viability
11. Business regulations	Tight, inflexible	Transition time ...	More open business climate, flexible approach to business needs
12. Public safety (police, fire ...)	Sacrosanct	Growing concern about cost	Changes in arbitration system and alternative service delivery will force changes in spending
13. Working at city hall	Rigid rules for employees	Desire for innovation	No silos, many staff working at home, self-managing, smaller core staff at city hall
14. Community - building	Narrow focus, protective	Respond to community wants	Building a creative city for future
15. Social structure	WASP	Multi-cultural	Cosmopolitan Canada
16. Public pensions	Pensions for life	Public resentment	Reform of "gold" pension system
17. Employment	Jobs for life	Boomers retiring as big changes hit city hall	Accommodate needs of new, younger workers
18. Innovation agenda	Same old, same old ...	Community engagement	Constant change and improvement becomes routine at city hall
19. Public engagement / outreach	Minimal	Effort to reach out	Develop community partnership approach with resident
20. Political clout	Federal	Provincial	Municipal

If the opportunity is lost, then we risk communities falling behind and facing a declining quality of life. Much of the difference between winners and losers in these municipal battles – and understand clearly, there will be winners and losers – will be determined by our local elected and appointed officials,

through the decisions they make and the paths they choose to follow.

This interaction with local citizens, this opportunity to help shape your local community, is what sets local government apart from all other orders of government. There are direct and relatively immediate connections and results. You

can take on city hall, and win ... that's what people have figured out.

If all politics are local, then local is where the decisions are made and the impact is most apparent. That is also why local government will become the most important order of government for most people most of the time. [MW](#)

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