

SUMMER TRAVEL

"There's a book that tells you where you should go on your vacation. It's called your checkbook." - Unknown

MISSISSAUGA OFFERS HOURLY CAR RENTALS Including Free Gas, Insurance & Parking?

Brian Chiasson

Do you need a car rental for two hours of shopping?
Or, perhaps a subcompact to pick up your daughter after a late night at work?

What about a ride along country roads on a Sunday to view the scenery before having a picnic by a lake?

If you live in downtown Mississauga, you've got two years to explore an hourly vehicle rental option.

Costs

Here are the costs to budget for:

- ▶ If you drive once or twice a month, it costs \$10.25 per hour - if under 150 km. This is cheaper than a taxi.
- ▶ If you travel three or more times each month, it's \$9.25 per hour - if under 150 km.
- ▶ After midnight, until 7 a.m., it's \$4.50 per hour - if under 150 km, or \$3.50 per hour if three or more times.
- ▶ Beyond 150 km, you must pay 13 cents, 20 cents or 25 cents per km, depending on the frequency and distance traveled.
- ▶ There is an application fee of \$29.00 so they can check your drivers abstract.
- ▶ Finally, there's a \$100 membership fee.

The cars were available for driving as of April 16 (more than a month ago) but if you applied before May 31 (too late now) AutoShare waived the membership fee.

In other words, if you visited the Local City Fun website www.localcityfun.com, between April 16 and May 31, you would have saved yourself \$100 if taking a membership.

AutoShare

The Transportation and Works Department, at Mississauga City Hall, proposed a two-year agreement with a company called AutoShare.

This company has established the first Mississauga "Car Share Service" although it was already established in other cities.

Additionally, the AutoShare website claims: "You are never charged for insurance or maintenance."

Accidents

If you are in an accident, the standard deductible for damage is \$750 if the member is at fault. However, a \$65 annual fee reduces your collision deductible to \$0. Members are also covered by \$2 million in third party liability - ten times the legal minimum.

The site also mentions: "Each month you will receive an itemized statement with the time and distance that you've driven, and will outline all the various charges and credits for the previous month. You'll even get automatic discounts of up to 55% on longer trips."

Rules

To be eligible, there are a few rules to consider:

- ▶ You must have a clean driving record.
- ▶ You must become a registered member.
- ▶ You must be 21 years or older to book an environmentally-friendly vehicle.



- ▶ You can only access it with a key card.
- ▶ You must return it to the same parking space.

Two autos will be parked downtown and available for business or pleasure if you meet the above rules.

Martin Powell, who is the Commissioner of the Transportation and Works Department, said, "The pilot project will determine the demand for car share services in downtown Mississauga."

He also said, "Car sharing will give residents, employees and students a viable alternative to driving regularly or occasionally."

Free Parking & Gas

In other words, if you don't need to drive much, he hopes you won't bother to buy a car and pay for monthly insurance premiums. Instead, you'll save lots of money by walking everywhere, unless you absolutely need a set of wheels for an hour or two, or for a day or two.

Another bonus is that you can sit at any parking metre in Mississauga for free and you don't have to fill the tank beyond half way when returning the car.

If you do fill the tank, you get a \$5 credit. Furthermore, the car includes an Esso card, so all your gas is free (paid for by AutoShare). If you pay yourself, send the receipt to AutoShare and they will reimburse the full amount.

Problems

Mississauga politicians want "a transit-oriented city" with a "vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown Mississauga."

That last sentence sounds odd. If downtown Mississauga becomes pedestrian-friendly, Square One might be empty, killing the local economy.

It's not like shoppers will ditch their cars to walk home with heavy shopping bags. And, if bags aren't heavy, business is not overjoyed.

Mississauga also has Parking Strategy goals:

- ▶ Reduce urban driving.
- ▶ Reduce parking demand.
- ▶ Reduce vehicles per household.
- ▶ Offer a range of transportation choices such as walking, cycling, public transit and driving a car, as outlined in the Downtown Master Plan.

Regarding that last goal, walking shouldn't even be listed as an offered transportation choice. What's the alternative - to remove sidewalks and ban walking?

Regarding cycling, this choice is a phenomenal one. The City needs to be congratulated for its contribution by providing all kinds of bicycle paths.

LRT Congestion

Regarding public transit, Mississauga might be making a huge mistake. They plan to put a Light Rail Transit (LRT) system along Hurontario, from the Lakeshore up and into Brampton, along Main Street.

Traffic is already a problem on Hurontario and street-cars will cause more congestion. If you remove the centre lanes to lay tracks, you can't compensate by making Hurontario wider unless you remove the sidewalks (hurting their "Parking Strategy ... range of transportation choices").

Subways & Money

In two decades we might rip out the tracks to add car lanes and, believe it or not, subways - not that we can afford it in twenty years.

We certainly can't afford it now.

Doesn't this sound familiar?

So, after the LRT, it might cost you three hours instead of two if you need to use Hurontario with your AutoShare rental.

LOCAL CITY FUN GOING RED TO BLACK FINANCIALLY

Local City Fun organized a business plan in the spring of 2008.

We published our first monthly paper in mid-November - the January 2009 edition.

We had six weeks to deliver so everyone had a copy in their hands before January 2009 started.

Since then, three years passed with multitudes of fun

events every month - never delivered late.

This year, 2012, we restructured. We had lost money and went \$25,000 in debt. We started with a \$20,000 surplus and the first edition also had a surplus, but a recession hit.

This year, we publish quarterly with each season (every three months) and we exceeded expectations.

Wonderfully, both the spring and summer editions were

paid for in advance. We now owe \$19,000 - down \$6,000.

We heavily thank all of our Corporate Subscribers on the back page. If they can meet your needs, call them.

If I can make a suggestion, cut off the back page and post it on your fridge. Also, you might consider paying for home delivery at \$5.25 a year: (905) 306-0100

INFLUENCE THIS PAPER BY TALKING TO ME



Hi. I am Brian Chiasson. I publish Local City Fun.

I'm introducing myself because I want to meet you.

If you live on a street listed at the end of this feature, you are valuable for three reasons.

1) You can influence this newspaper by revealing the fun topics you would like to read about.

Call me (905) 306-0100 and schedule a 30-minute meeting. I'll even visit your house if you wish.

2) Perhaps you have talented family members who want to access events that help develop their skills.

Here are some of the talents I seek to discover.

- ▶ Artists & Illustrators
- ▶ Photographers
- ▶ Dancers
- ▶ Team Leaders
- ▶ Event Organizers (parties, festivals, concerts)
- ▶ Cartoonists
- ▶ Musicians
- ▶ Athletes
- ▶ Administrators

3) We seek paper boys and paper girls.

Here are the streets that Local City Fun is currently focusing on:

- ▶ Acala Crescent
- ▶ Trisha Downs
- ▶ Any home on Mississauga Valley Blvd
- ▶ Rhonda Valley
- ▶ Voltarie Crescent

If you live in a condominium, on any street in Mississauga, that could also be helpful: (905) 306-0100

I would like to get to know many Mississauga residents, who can help to influence this newspaper.