

**The Regional Municipality of Halton**

Submission to the Minister of Finance  
2017 Federal Pre-Budget Consultation

**October 2016**



## Introduction

Halton Region is a vibrant and growing community with more than 550,000 residents and four distinct communities – Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville. Recognized for its high quality of life and close proximity to Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment, Halton Region is committed to ensuring that its future is strong and stable while continuing to be a great place to live.

Halton Region welcomes the opportunity to provide comment into the 2017 federal budget process. Halton Region is committed to working with the federal government to invest in our residents in order to ensure they have every opportunity to succeed, and to ensure that the economy works for our community's families.

Halton Region's main issues of focus in this submission are:

- Investing in Sustainable Infrastructure for a Resilient Halton
- Investing in Social Infrastructure through Government Assisted Housing
- Developing a National Agricultural Strategy

## Investing in Sustainable Infrastructure for a Resilient Halton

Halton Region is committed to creating planned, complete, active, safe and healthy communities. Investments in transportation including highways, bridges, transit and active transportation routes, water and wastewater services and weather related flood mitigation, are necessary to meet the needs of the Halton community and keep us resilient.

Halton Region has currently budgeted over \$3.7 billion in infrastructure capital over the next 10 years, of which Gas Tax makes up 4.3%, resulting in a significant infrastructure investment. Halton Region is committed to greener communities through investments in our water and wastewater infrastructure that reduce energy demands and improve the long-term sustainability of the services. Halton Region requests the Federal government's support and long-term financial commitment to continue to assist municipalities in delivering sustainable infrastructure. Investing in municipal infrastructure will support the federal government in achieving its central priorities of boosting Canada's economic growth and potential; fostering innovation; and mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Over the past few decades weather patterns have changed and many communities have seen an increase in severe weather events, which have led to displaced families, damaged property and economic disruption. Halton Region is requesting the development of a National Comprehensive Emergency Plan that allows Canada to better predict, prepare for and respond to weather-related emergencies and natural disasters. Federal financial investments in emergency preparedness, such as emergency generators for community warming centres, will also ensure that municipal infrastructure and services are resilient and that the risks associated with severe weather events are mitigated.

### **Investing in Social Infrastructure - Government Assisted Housing**

Halton Region is committed to ensuring access to safe, affordable, accessible housing for all, as this is vital for a healthy community. Housing is a joint responsibility that must be delivered with a long-term commitment from all levels of government. Dedicated permanent, predictable and sustainable federal investment in housing is needed to expand upon government assisted housing options for vulnerable residents and to repair/rehabilitate existing housing stock.

Despite critically needed social infrastructure funding for housing, which was announced in the 2016 federal budget, of pressing concern is the gradual decline of federal funds and the time limited nature of the investments received. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) have projected that by 2033, all federal funding commitments and agreements will have expired and declined to zero for both operating and capital. Reversing this trend is critical if the housing needs of Canada's most vulnerable individuals are to be effectively addressed. Halton requests a commitment to maintain the existing levels of investment in housing and that existing provincial funding mechanisms should be used to deliver any new investments. Funding flexibility from federal investments is critical in meeting the housing needs of our community. For this reason Halton Region recommends that local flexibility be provided to allow communities to use federal funding in a way that best meets local needs and priorities and leverages local expertise while supporting new innovative approaches across the Country, which will in turn help grow the economy.

### **Developing a National Agricultural Strategy**

Halton Region is committed to sustaining a prosperous and progressive agricultural and rural community as demonstrated through policies adopted in our Regional Official Plan and through the Region's Strategic Action Plan 2015-2018. Halton's agriculture community is an integral part of the Regional landscape and agriculture contributes significantly to the regional economy. Strong rural businesses anchor healthy rural communities and productive agricultural operations provide inputs into the large agri-food sector that is based in the Golden Horseshoe.

In order to ensure the protection of the Region's agricultural and rural community Halton Regional Council endorsed an extensive Rural Agricultural Strategy (RAS) on October 12, 2016. This strategy is a critical means by which to further enhance the protection of the Region's agricultural and rural community. Halton Region requests the development of a national agriculture strategy which recognizes the importance of agriculture and agricultural land to food and water security, economic development and humanitarian aid. This would complement Halton's RAS in protecting and enhancing the viability and success of our rural and agricultural community.

## Conclusion

Halton Region is a strong and fiscally responsible municipality that is advocating for support from all levels of government in the form of long-term, predictable funding, legislative and policy changes.

By working together, to meet the needs and priorities of our residents, fund and deliver the programs and services they need, and create jobs, we are able to ensure a high quality of life for the Halton community. With the mutual goals of investing in sustainable and social infrastructure while creating a dynamic environment and economy and providing high quality services and programs to our residents, Halton is committed to working with the federal government to create a Strong Halton and, in turn, a Strong Canada.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to provide input into the 2017 Federal budget. If you would like more information about Halton's advocacy priorities, please visit [Halton.ca/advocacy](http://Halton.ca/advocacy).