

The Regional Municipality of Halton

Submission to the Minister of Finance 2018 Federal Pre-Budget Consultation

January, 2018



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 2018 federal budget through the *#YourBudget2018* consultation process. Halton Region shares the federal government's priorities of ensuring progress for the middle class, a strong economy of tomorrow, investments in learning and high quality jobs, as well as opportunities for all residents to succeed. Halton Region is committed to working with the federal government to invest in our residents and businesses to ensure a Strong Halton for a Strong Canada.

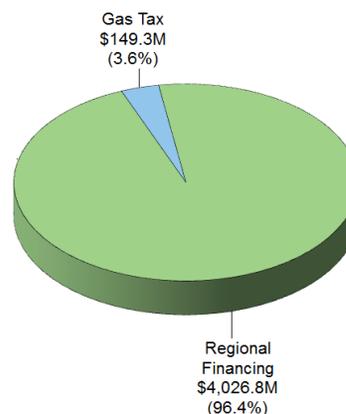
Halton Region's main issues of focus in this submission are:

- Investing in Infrastructure
- Investing in the Well-Being of our Community
- Investing in our Rural Community through access to Broadband Internet
- Investing in the Economic Prosperity of our Community

Investing in Infrastructure

Halton Region is committed to creating complete communities that ensure a high quality of living for our residents and a productive and competitive economy. Investments in infrastructure make for a strong economy and a desirable place to live and do business. Halton has a robust Asset Management Plan to ensure the state of good repair of our infrastructure. Making significant investments in our infrastructure is a priority for Regional Council. Our 10-year capital infrastructure program is budgeted at \$4.1 billion, of which \$149.3 million is derived from the Gas Tax. By ensuring our hard infrastructure is sustainable and adequately maintained, we are investing in the future of our residents and in the business community.

2018-2027 Capital Financing: \$4,176.1M



In order to maintain a competitive edge by investing in our local businesses and economy, as well as the communities in which they are located, Halton is requesting long-term sustainable provincial and federal commitments for infrastructure funding, and the inclusion of municipal priorities in the design of the Infrastructure Bilateral Agreement for delivery of Phase 2 of the Investing in Canada Long-Term Infrastructure Plan. Investing in municipal infrastructure will support the federal government's

goals of building a stronger economy for tomorrow, and investing in the foundations required to create high quality jobs. These infrastructure investments help build the middle class and create a community in which it is desirable to live and do business.

Over the past few decades weather patterns have changed and communities across Canada have seen an increase in severe weather events, which have led to displaced families, damaged property and economic disruption. Halton Region is committed to adapting to climate change and ensuring its infrastructure and services are resilient, and that risks associated with severe weather events are mitigated. As a result, Halton Regional Council has committed \$85 million to flood mitigation strategies. While project specific funding investments such as the National Disaster Mitigation Program are appreciated, in order to ensure the continuous strength and resiliency of our community, Halton Region is requesting long-term funding and climate change mitigation support.

Halton Requests:

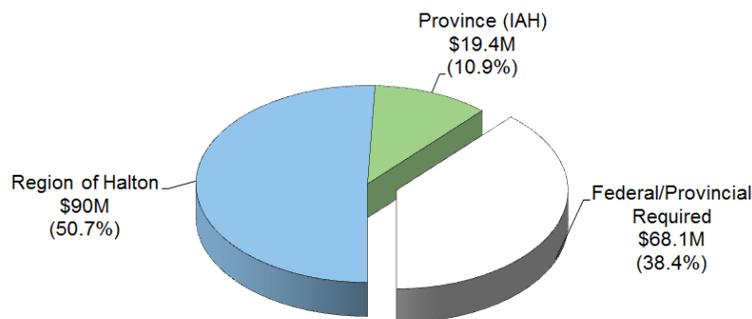
- Long-term, sustainable infrastructure funding
- Long-term funding and climate change mitigation support

Investing in the Well-Being of our Community

Halton Region is committed to ensuring access to safe, affordable and accessible housing for all our residents, 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. Long-term, sustainable investments will allow for effective planning and delivery of, and access to safe, affordable and accessible housing.

Halton Region is committed to ensuring that residents can prosper and stay in their own communities. To be able to effectively provide a wide variety of housing options, Halton Region plans to invest \$90 million in our social infrastructure through our 10-year Comprehensive Housing Strategy (CHS) (2014-2024), which provides \$177.5 million in government-assisted housing options for low income residents. It is expected that an additional 108 housing opportunities will be created in 2018, resulting in a total of 1,648 new opportunities since 2008. While we are very appreciative of the recent housing funding provided to the Region in 2017, \$68.1 million is required from the federal/provincial governments to achieve the outcomes of our CHS. Long-term sustainable federal/provincial funding to match the Region’s commitment to housing investments will allow us to more effectively plan and deliver greater housing opportunities for our community.

**Comprehensive Housing Strategy
10 Year Capital Funding Requirements - \$177.5M (900 opportunities)**



Halton Requests:

- Long-term sustainable federal/provincial funding to match the Region's commitment to affordable housing

Investing in our Rural Community through access to Broadband Internet

In December 2016 the CRTC declared broadband internet a basic telecommunications service. The urbanized areas of Halton Region have access to high-speed internet connectivity that allows residents and businesses to effectively live and work in a competing digital world. However, rural areas within the Region remain underserved with limited options and access to broadband internet. High-speed internet access is critical to rural businesses and residents. The telecommunications market has failed to provide uniform broadband access to rural areas of Halton. This is a deterrent to business development in the rural area. Improved broadband connectivity can encourage investment and business growth while serving to enhance the live/work, access and lifestyle needs of communities throughout the Region. Federal funding programs announced in 2017 such as Connect to Innovate are not applicable to our Region since by program definition Halton's underserved areas are not considered rural or remote. Universal access to broadband internet is integral to the prosperity of our Region and therefore a more equitable funding opportunity needs to be created and made available.

Halton Requests:

- Universal access to broadband internet

Investing in the Economic Prosperity of our Community

Halton Region is an economic hotspot and a location of choice within the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Businesses are choosing to locate here because of our competitive tax rates, strong financial position, proximity to highways, a highly skilled workforce and high quality of life, all which contribute to a stronger Canada. By investing our education and economic sectors and creating high quality jobs within our community, it allows for a strong economic position for our region, province and country.

The need for Federal support under the "Going Global Trade Strategy" for a Halton Global Business Centre will assist Halton based small and medium sized enterprises obtain the programs and services they need to enter the international marketplace. This is a priority for our Economic Development Plan. Federal support is required to ensure cross border competitiveness and that access to the United States markets is maintained. With the constantly evolving legislative changes by the American administration, it is important that our local companies maintain their competitive edge to stay successful and the Region is committed to helping local businesses achieve this. Halton Region is requesting Federal support for Halton businesses to access international markets, including the United States.

Halton Requests:

- Federal support for Halton businesses to access international markets, including the United States

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 to maintain a high quality of life for our residents and a strong economy for our local businesses.

By working together, to meet the needs and priorities of our residents, fund and deliver the programs and services they need, build complete and efficient communities while creating jobs, we are able to ensure a high quality of life for the Halton community, while creating a prosperous and competitive environment for our local economy. These measures will ensure a Strong Halton for a Strong Canada.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to provide input into the 2018 Federal budget. If you would like more information about Halton's advocacy priorities, please visit Halton.ca/advocacy.