

# **Regional Municipality of Halton**

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

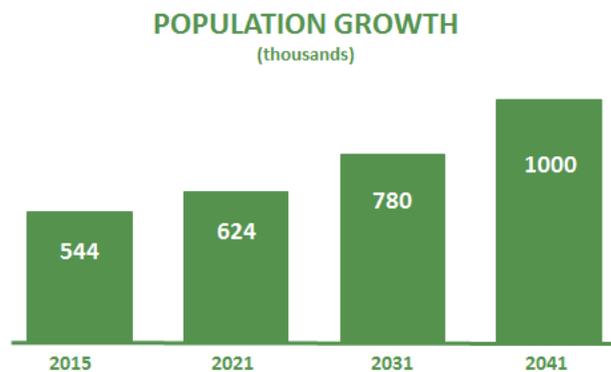
January 2018



## Introduction

Halton Region is a vibrant and growing community with more than 540,000 residents and four distinct communities – Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville. Recognized for a high quality of life and close proximity to Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment, Halton is committed to ensuring that our future is strong and stable while continuing to be a great place to live.

The Provincial *Places to Grow Act* mandates that Halton Region’s population grow to approximately 1 million by the year 2041. To facilitate this growth, there are a number of critical supports that Halton Region requires from other levels of government in order to maintain the high quality of life and support Halton’s economy.



The Region plans for communities where urban sprawl is minimized, infrastructure is maximized, natural heritage is protected and natural spaces and farmland are preserved. The overall goal is to enhance the quality of life for all people of Halton, today and into the future.

Ensuring that growth pays for itself, and that we work with other levels of government in a collaborative manner, is imperative to the future vitality of Halton Region. Halton’s strong financial position is a key element to our foundation as we work to ensure that our communities are inclusive and complete, in order to provide the programs and services required to meet the needs of Halton residents.

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 taxes, strong financial position, proximity to highways, a highly skilled workforce and high quality of life, all which contribute to a stronger Ontario.

The Provincial government’s main areas of focus in *Budget Talks*, their consultation process, of child care, seniors, small business, students and healthy living, represents some of the programs and services that Halton Region provides to the community and aligns closely with the priorities of Regional Council. We look forward to continuing to work with the Provincial Government to invest in our residents to create a dynamic, innovative environment where businesses thrive, all while providing the services that our residents need.



Halton Region's shared priority issues with the Provincial Government that are highlighted in this submission include:

- Growth Management
- Infrastructure
- Economic Prosperity
- Community Wellbeing

### **Growth Management: Growth Plan**

The Greater Golden Horseshoe is one of the fastest growing regions, experiencing tremendous pressure from population growth and urban and suburban development. Halton Region provided a response to the provincial consultation on the Four Plan Review and we were pleased to see that a release of the comments and revised plan has been complete.

Halton's concerns focus on the ability to successfully implement the plan, potential impact on approved development and preservation of strong planning principles already embedded in Halton's Official Plan. In addition, the timeliness of the revised guidelines and tools are critical. Halton cannot achieve the Growth Plan targets without support from the Province.

#### **Halton Requests:**

- Timely release of guidelines and tools in consultation with municipalities
- Growth funding for infrastructure

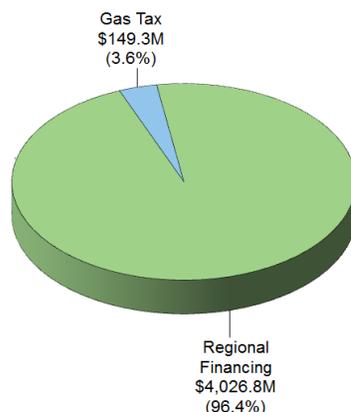
### **Infrastructure: State-of-Good-Repair**

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. The Plan demonstrates sound stewardship of existing assets to support services at desired levels and to ensure financial sustainability. It also supports decision-making for future investments regarding the construction, operation, maintenance, renewal, replacement,

expansion and disposal of infrastructure assets while minimizing risk and cost to the Region and residents.

Halton Region’s 10 year capital infrastructure program (2018-2027) totals \$4.1 billion including \$1.8 billion to fund the state-of-good-repair. Halton Region contributes 96.4% to this program with the remaining funded from the Gas Tax.

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



The cost shared infrastructure programs (i.e. Clean Water and Wastewater Fund) require funding applicants to demonstrate that projects are new or accelerated (incremental) rather than projects funded and/or prioritized through asset management plans. Applicants are required to demonstrate that projects would not otherwise have taken place and/or would not have been undertaken without federal funding in order to meet the federal incrementality rules. In order to support sound infrastructure planning, it is essential that future funding programs acknowledge sound municipal asset management planning by providing greater flexibility for project eligibility to direct funding towards existing priorities while respecting existing fiscal plans.

**Halton Requests:**

- Long-term sustainable provincial and federal commitment to infrastructure funding
- The removal of incrementality requirement of current infrastructure programs

**Infrastructure: Growth Funding**

The *Development Charges Act* (DCA) limits the amount of money municipalities can collect to cover the costs of infrastructure and services to support growth. Halton’s development charge (DC) shortfall averages \$14.1 million per year as a result of restrictions in the DCA. Recent changes were made to the DCA, however, the amendments were far from being meaningful. The limited changes made to the DCA do not satisfy the “growth pays for growth” principle. Outstanding changes include:

- Remove all exemptions of municipal services
- Remove 10 year historic average service level limit
- Remove 10% discount for all services
- Provide Council with ability to determine exemptions – do not use DCs as a provincial policy tool.

- Permit Conservation Authority infrastructure DCs

**Halton Requests:**

- Meaningful amendments to the DCA consistent with the principle that growth pays for growth
- Recognition that the intent of DC revenues are to pay for required infrastructure and are not a Provincial policy tool
- Confirmation that Conservation Authority infrastructure is eligible for DCs

**Infrastructure: Coordinated Delivery**

Complete communities require the timely delivery of provincial infrastructure and services to keep pace with growth. Halton Region has currently budgeted \$4.2 billion in infrastructure capital over the next 10 years which includes over \$2.1 billion in water and wastewater investments and over \$1.6 billion in transportation investments. The Region's capital budget has also increased from \$1 billion in 2000 to \$4.2 billion in 2018, of which Gas Tax makes up 3.6%.

Delivery of community infrastructure such as schools, is not currently aligned with the timing of growth in Halton. Between 2018 and 2029, 14 new elementary schools and four high schools, as well as additions to other existing schools are required to accommodate growth within Halton.

Transportation continues to be a top issue of concern for Halton residents. In 2018, Halton's 10 year transportation capital program is \$1.6 billion, an increase of \$706 million from the 2008 ten-year capital program. Provincial highway congestion puts pressure on Regional Roads. Provincial investment in highways (401 and QEW), bridges, transit and active transportation routes are necessary to meet the critical infrastructure needs of the growing Halton community in order to help reduce gridlock for residents, employees, businesses and goods movement.

**Halton Needs:**

- Provincial infrastructure investment and timing to reflect the Provincial Growth Plan and be linked with Halton's plans
- Highways
- Schools
- Hospitals

**Infrastructure: Metrolinx**

Halton supports the vision of Metrolinx's discussion paper on the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), The Big Move, released in June 2016 in addition to recent announcements from Metrolinx for increased GO service levels through Regional Express Rail (RER) for 15 minute two-way, all day service on the Lakeshore West line and increased two-way off-peak service on the Kitchener Line (Georgetown service). However, Halton Region is eager for the full realization of Metrolinx commitments including all day, two-way GO service on the Milton and Kitchener lines as the reliability and frequency of GO train service throughout Halton is vital to the Region's economic prosperity.

Halton Region is preparing a Mobility Strategy to clearly identify short and long-term transit priorities. The Strategy will focus on mobility-as-a-service and meeting the Region's goals of dramatically increasing the modal share of public transit and active transportation modes, while considering the unique characteristics of all four local municipalities. The development of this Strategy will also balance the goals of the MTO Transportation Plan, the Big Move, and Metrolinx RER, in order to meet the Region's immediate and longer-term transportation needs through to the year 2041.

**Halton Requests:**

- 15 minute service on the Lakeshore West GO train line
- All day GO train service to Milton
- All day GO train service to Georgetown
- 1st and last mile solutions to support increased transit ridership
- Metrolinx operated BRT along Dundas

**Economic Prosperity: Provincial Highways**

A strong transportation system and infrastructure attracts businesses to our region which helps keep Halton and Ontario's economy strong. Halton is committed to working with the Province to develop a strategy for new and redesigned highways and interchanges as investments in highways (401 and QEW) will enable the efficient movement of goods throughout the Region and across the GTA to support growth and economic development.

As the Province has announced the Greater Golden Horseshoe Multi-modal Transportation Plan to outline current transportation trends and future scenarios for the Greater Golden Horseshoe in the next 50 years, including details required for the next 30 years, Halton Region looks forward to participating and providing feedback as part of stakeholder consultation for future project phases in 2018.

To support Halton's Mobility Strategy, a comprehensive approach with the Province for highway access to unlock the potential of employment lands is required for the following areas:

- Midtown Oakville
- Prosperity Corridor in Burlington
- Trafalgar Corridor
- 401 Corridor

In October 2016, the Ministry of Transportation announced that a panel would be struck by the Minister to conduct a strategic assessment of transportation demand and infrastructure needs for people and goods in the GTA West Corridor Area following suspension of the MTO environmental assessment (EA) process in December 2015. As the Panel has completed its review and has submitted their final report to the Minister of Transportation, Halton looks forward to receiving an update in early 2018 and finalizing the EA process.

**Halton Requests:**

- Completion of the Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan in consultation with municipalities
- Investments in highways 401 and QEW to increase capacity

- A comprehensive approach to highway access to support the Provincial Growth Plan and linked to Halton's plans, to unlock the potential of employment lands
- Finalization of the GTA West EA

### **Economic Prosperity: Global Business**

Halton Region is an economic hotspot. Businesses are choosing to locate here because of our competitive taxes, strong financial position and high quality of life. Halton Region is committed to promoting the Region to attract new businesses and visitors to ensure we become even more innovative and competitive while developing a strong regional economy that supports high standards of living and quality public services.

Provincial support under the "Going Global Trade Strategy" for a Halton Global Business Centre (launched January 1, 2017) will assist Halton-based small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to obtain the programs and services they need to enter the international marketplace. Provincial support required to ensure cross border competitiveness and access to US markets is maintained.

#### **Halton Requests:**

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

### **Community Wellbeing: Public Health Funding**

Public Health core funding for mandatory programs is not keeping pace with growth. The Provincial Places to Grow Act has mandated that Halton Region plan to grow to 780,000 by 2031 and to approximately 1 million people by 2041, doubling Halton's population.

Halton Region's population of residents 18 years and under has increased by 8 per cent since 2011, resulting in increasing pressures on our children and youth program and service needs. Public Health implications of the growth in Halton include:

- Increase in number of residents to vaccinate
- Increase in number of students in schools to support
- Increase in number of businesses to inspect
- Increase in needs and demands of an aging population
- Increase in supports for babies, new mothers, and
- newcomers

Public Health mandatory program core funding from the Province has increased by 0 per cent since 2014. Over this same period, Halton Region has increased funding to Public Health by \$2.5 million to respond to the growing needs of the community, which the Province has not been funded. The Province has underfunded Public Health in Halton for many years. The expected provincial funding shortfall in 2018 for Public Health in Halton is \$9.3 million, which represents approximately 3.7% of the property tax bill for Halton residents. The \$9.3 million funding shortfall includes:

- \$6 million for mandatory programs
- \$1.8 for the North Halton Mental Health Clinic

- \$1.5 for Healthy Babies Healthy Children (funded by
- MCYS).

The *Patients First Act* has passed and while some of Halton's feedback was reflected, there are many unanswered questions such as the relationship between the Medical Officer of Health and the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), the relationship between the Board of Health (Regional Council) and the LHINs and whether a LHIN boundary review will be conducted.

#### **Halton Requests:**

- Additional annual provincial funding of existing Public Health mandatory programs totaling \$6 million
- Additional annual provincial funding of \$1.8 million for the North Halton Mental Health Clinic
- LHIN boundary realignment to ensure Halton is in one LHIN, to promote complete communities, leverage opportunities, and streamline administration

#### **Community Wellbeing: Paramedic Services**

Paramedic services are critical to our community and their performance is dependent on the Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC). Halton Region has had long-standing concerns with the MOHLTC operated CACC dating back to 2002. Since 2010, Halton Region has been advocating the Provincial Government with other GTA municipalities for reform to the ambulance dispatch system.

The CACC plays a significant role in Halton's ability to deliver responsive and timely paramedic services to our residents. Systematic and technological improvements to the MOHLTC operated CACC are critically necessary as they are putting our community at risk.

Response times experienced by the patient, overall system performance, costs and productivity, are greatly influenced by the CACC's use of Halton's paramedic resources. Despite the efforts of Halton officials for the past 10 years, Halton Region continues to receive a lower level of service from the MOHLTC CACC compared to CACCs in Niagara, Ottawa and Toronto.

Paramedic offload delays continue to be a significant issue in Halton particularly during flu season and other surges at the hospitals. Daily offload times at Halton's local hospitals have increased on average by over 30 minutes since December 13, 2016, with delays as high as eight hours. The Dedicated Offload Nurse program (DON) has reduced the impact of offload delays but there is a significant shortfall in provincial funding and uncertainty about the future of these resources.

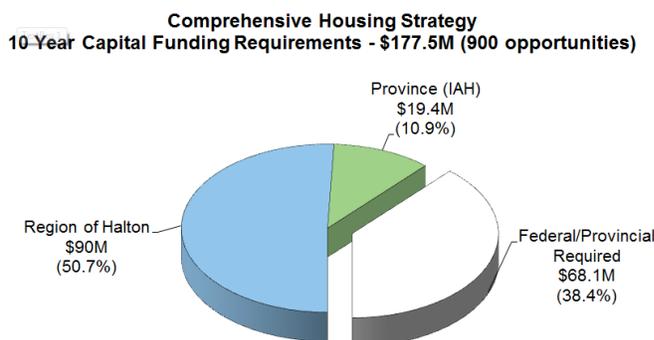
#### **Halton Requests:**

- The immediate delivery of new technology and triage tools for the Mississauga CACC
- Formal, enforceable performance agreements for CACCs
- Additional annual funding of \$600,000 to provide adequate Dedicated Offloading Nurse coverage at Halton's hospitals

## Community Wellbeing: Housing

Between 2008 and 2017, Halton has created 1,540 government assisted housing opportunities and provided sustainable rental assistance. 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. Long-term, sustainable investments are required for the planning, delivery of and access to safe, affordable, accessible housing.

Halton Region plans to invest \$90 million in our social infrastructure through our ten year Comprehensive Housing Strategy (CHS) (2014-2024) which provides government assisted housing options for low income residents. The Region’s Strategy outlines a target of 550-900 new opportunities for residents over the next decade in order to meet community need.



While recent funding announced under the Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH), Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF)/Social Housing Improvement Program (SHIP) and Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) programs has been welcomed, however, in order to realize Halton’s CHS upper target of 900 housing opportunities, a long-term investment and partnership with all levels of government is required.

### Halton Requests:

- Long-term sustainable Federal/Provincial funding to match the Region’s commitment
- Funding model needs to be sensitive to local real estate markets (GTA)

### 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, open communications and consultation in order to ensure that Halton’s taxpayers are not burdened with the cost of growth and that the quality of life of Halton’s residents is not impacted.

With the mutual goals of investing in and revitalizing public infrastructure, investing in our residents while creating a dynamic environment and economy and providing high quality services and programs to our residents, Halton Region is a major component to the success of Ontario’s economy. Working together, we can create a Strong Halton for a Strong Ontario.



Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to provide input into the 2018 Provincial budget. If you would like more information about Halton's advocacy priorities, please visit [Halton.ca/advocacy](http://Halton.ca/advocacy).