

The Regional Municipality of Halton

Submission to the Minister of Finance
2019 Federal Pre-Budget Consultation

January, 2019



Introduction

Halton Region is a vibrant and growing community with more than 570,000 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.

We welcome the opportunity to provide comment on the development of the 2019 federal budget through the *Your Budget* consultation process. Halton Region shares the federal government's priorities of continuing to strengthen the economy and investing in the creation of good and well-paying jobs for Canada's middle class.

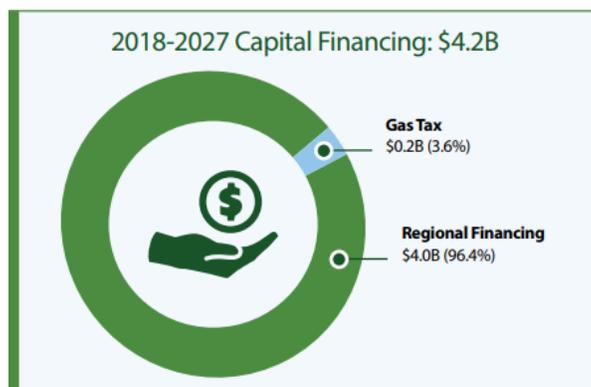
Halton's prosperous business community helps support a strong Canada. Multinational companies such as Amazon, Lowes and Siemens have chosen to call Halton home. However, in order to maintain a strong regional economy, a strong partnership with the federal government along with a number of critical supports are needed. These include the following:

- Long-term financial commitments to support infrastructure and the movement of people and goods
- Long-term funding to support community resiliency and climate change mitigation
- Ensuring housing affordability and newcomer support
- Supporting agriculture and the rural community through a National Agricultural Strategy and access to universal broadband internet
- Investments in the economic prosperity of our community

Halton Region is looking forward to continuing to work with the federal government in investing in our residents and businesses to ensure a Strong Halton for a Strong Canada.

Commitments to Support Infrastructure

Halton Region is committed to creating complete communities that ensure a high quality of life for residents and a competitive economy. Investments in infrastructure support 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 infrastructure is a priority for Regional Council. Halton's 10-year capital infrastructure program is budgeted at \$4.2 billion, of which \$.2 billion 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 the business community.



In order to maintain a competitive edge by investing in local businesses and the communities in which they are located, Halton is requesting long-term sustainable federal commitments for infrastructure funding. Investing in municipal infrastructure will support the federal government's goals of building a stronger economy for the future and the foundations required to create and maintain high quality jobs.

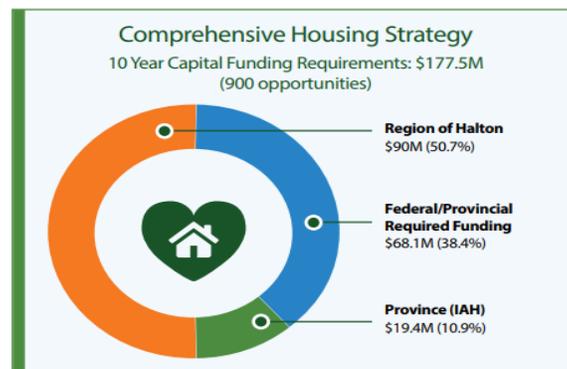
Supporting Community Resiliency

Weather patterns are changing and communities across Canada are continuing to see an increase in severe weather events. This has led to displaced families, damaged property and economic disruption. Halton Region is committed to adapting to climate change and mitigating risks by ensuring its infrastructure and services are resilient. As a result, Halton Regional Council has committed \$85 million to flood mitigation strategies. To ensure the continuous strength and resiliency of our community, Halton Region is requesting long-term funding and climate change mitigation support.

Housing Affordability and Newcomer Support

Halton Region is committed to ensuring access to safe, affordable and accessible housing for all our residents. 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 the effective planning and delivery of safe, affordable and accessible housing.

Halton Region strongly believes that residents should be able to stay and prosper in their own communities. To be able to effectively provide a wide variety of housing options, Halton Region will invest \$90 million in our social infrastructure through our 10-year Comprehensive Housing Strategy (CHS) (2014-2024) which provides government-assisted housing options for low income residents.



While the housing-related funding that has been provided to the Region to date is appreciated, \$68.1 million is required from the federal and provincial governments to achieve the outcomes of our CHS. Long-term sustainable funding to match the Region's commitment to housing investments will allow us to more effectively plan and deliver greater housing opportunities for the Halton community.

Halton Region is committed to making it easier for newcomers and refugees to build successful lives in Canada. Requests for social services assistance for asylum seekers in Canada has increased over the last few years. Halton continues to respond to gaps in settlement services in our community and has assumed the unfunded costs. Federal funding to reimburse Halton Region for transitional costs associated with asylum seekers is required.

Supporting Agriculture and Universal Access to Broadband Internet

Halton's agricultural and rural community is an integral part of, and contributes significantly to, the Region's economy. Strong rural businesses anchor healthy rural communities and productive agricultural operations support the large agri-food sector that is based in the Golden Horseshoe.

A National Agricultural Strategy that recognizes the importance of agricultural land to food and water security, economic development and humanitarian aid is needed. This would enhance the viability of our rural and agricultural community and recognize its importance to economic development.

High-speed internet access is critical to rural businesses and residents. Although the CRTC has declared broadband internet a basic telecommunications service, many rural areas within the region remain under serviced with limited options and access to broadband internet.

The failure of the telecommunications market to provide uniform broadband access to rural areas of Halton is a deterrent to business development. Improved broadband connectivity will encourage investment and business growth while enhancing the live/work, access and lifestyle needs of communities throughout the region. In addition, 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 a more equitable funding opportunity needs to be created and made available.

Investing in the Economic Prosperity of our Community

Halton 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 skilled workforce and high quality of life, all of which contribute to a stronger Canada. Investing in and supporting our business sectors to create high quality jobs allows for a stronger economic position for the region, province and country.

Federal support for the Halton Global Business Centre will assist Halton-based small and medium-sized enterprises to obtain the programs and services they need to enter the international marketplace. This is a priority for our Economic Development Plan. Federal support is also required to ensure cross-border competitiveness and that access to the United States' markets is maintained.

With the evolving United States trade landscape, it is important that our local companies maintain their competitive edge to stay successful. Halton Region is committed to helping local businesses achieve this. Halton is requesting federal support for Halton businesses to access international markets, including the United States and to diversity into new export markets.

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 2019 Federal budget. If you would like more information about Halton's advocacy priorities, please visit [Halton.ca/advocacy](https://www.halton.ca/advocacy).