

In this Together: Halton and Ontario

Focusing on Shared Priorities for a Safe Restart, Recovery and Future

Halton: A Snapshot



Halton Region is home to more than 595,000 residents in four communities. Along with its Local Municipalities (City of Burlington, the Town of Halton Hills, Town of Milton, and Town of Oakville) Halton Region is an effective two-tier government recognized for its strong financial position, safe communities, natural environment, progressive approach to urban development and citizen-focused reliable services.

Halton Region is a one of the quickest growing communities in Canada, with an expected population of 1 million by 2041. These high expectations of growth and increasing demands of services has not been met with the necessary legislation, regulation or funding to support the community's needs. By working in partnership with the provincial government we can narrow the gap to build strong communities for the people of Halton.

The pace of growth in Halton has been a key driver of increased costs for the Region and our Local Municipalities. It is essential that the Province provide municipalities the tools necessary to ensure growth pays for itself and that residents are not burdened with the cost of growth.

COVID-19 and an Approach Moving Forward

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Halton Region has remained committed to keeping our community safe and healthy through the continued delivery of essential services and by adapting service delivery models.

Shared Priorities

Communities across Ontario have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the Federal and Provincial Governments have taken unprecedented actions to respond to the crisis. Halton Region shares the Provincial Government's priority of protecting the health and safety of Ontarians while working toward a safe and responsible re-opening of the economy, and adapting to a new normal. Halton is requesting the Provincial Government to ensure:

- Support for a Strong Recovery for Businesses and Municipalities
- Resources to support COVID-19 Response
- Clear and Consistent Approach to Vaccinations
- Investments in Long-Term Care
- Universal Access to Broadband Internet
- Investments to Ensure Growth Pays for Itself
- Investments in and Coordinated Approach to Infrastructure Planning

Support for a Strong Recovery for Businesses and Municipalities

While facing unprecedented challenges, municipalities have played a vital role in supporting residents, non-profits, and businesses during the COVID-19 emergency. Municipalities and businesses have experienced significantly increased costs and large decreases in revenue while delivering critical services and responding to the new normal.

Ontario's economic recovery will rely on municipalities continuing to deliver economic stimulus, infrastructure projects, child care, public health services, and water and wastewater treatment while addressing increased costs in long-term care and public health in the post-COVID-19 world. Halton Region's recovery relies on the Federal and Provincial Government continuing to work together to address the long-term costs resulting from COVID-19 for 2021 and beyond.

Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on main street businesses and the survival of the small business sector is essential to the Province's recovery efforts. Online and digital channels have emerged as an important method for main street businesses to interact with customers and to generate revenues. The Digital Main Street Program has supported over 550 businesses in Halton and more could benefit, however applications are no longer being accepted.

In addition the rise in workplace transmission of COVID-19 has highlighted the crucial need for paid sick time. The lack of paid sick days, financial/income supports, and sick leave protection are known barriers to COVID-19 control measures, including testing and isolation, due to the fear of income loss and financial hardship.

Halton requests:

- The delivery of relief funding for 2021, to support ongoing COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.**
- Renew and expand the Digital Main Street program for 2 additional years, to help Halton businesses survive the recovery.**
- Expand the Digital Transformation Grant to those businesses outside of Business Improvement Areas.**
- The delivery of longer, better funded sick leave to help address the ongoing spread of COVID-19.**

Resources to support COVID-19 Response

Ensuring the health and safety of Halton residents has been a priority for the Region during the pandemic and will continue to be during the recovery period. As we continue to respond to impacts of COVID-19, case management and contact tracing remain critical to responding to potential outbreaks throughout the second wave and beyond. At the same time, Halton will need to continue to meet essential requirements under Ontario's Public Health Standards.

Halton requests:

- Support for resources, such as staffing, to ensure Halton's capability to continue to conduct timely case management and contact tracing while still being able to deliver programs required under Ontario's Public Health Standards.**
- Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) boundary realignment to ensure Halton is in one LHIN. This will enhance collaboration and better support an ongoing response to COVID-19 through the recovery period. The alignment of LHIN and municipal boundaries will be critical to ensuring improved coordination of, and access to, community care services beyond the recovery phase and into the new normal.**



Clear and Consistent Approach to Vaccinations

The Federal Government has responsibility for procuring and delivering COVID-19 vaccines for use in Canada. The Provincial Government receives the vaccine from the Federal Government and is responsible for the rollout of vaccines across the Province, this includes identifying priority populations and communities that receive vaccinations, however, there continues to be a lack of clarity regarding priority groups, availability and timing of vaccine distribution.

COVID-19 vaccinations are an important step in Canada’s response to reduce the spread of COVID-19, keeping Canadians physically and mentally healthy and avoiding lockdowns that impact the economy.

Halton Region is committed to working with the Federal and Provincial Governments as well as our community partners to ensure the quick

vaccination of priority groups including our Long-Term Care homes. This is not possible without the adequate supply and equitable distribution of vaccines to meet with needs of Halton.

Uncertainty of supply of vaccinations from the Federal Government, including the redirection of vaccinations within the Province causes significant issues for Halton to plan and provide vaccinations within the Halton community.

Halton requests:

- The Provincial Government to clearly and consistently communicate publically the priority populations for receipt of COVID-19 vaccinations, the timing of delivery of COVID-19 vaccinations for each priority population, and the timing of delivery of COVID-19 vaccinations for the general population.**



Investments in Long-Term Care

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical need for long-term care reform and that there is an insufficient number of long-term care beds available to meet the needs of the current population. Care requirements at long-term care homes in Ontario are increasing as per the increasing Case Mix Index (CMI). Halton Region is also experiencing this reality. CMIs at all Halton long-term care homes exceed the current provincial average.

Halton Region is supportive of the Provincial Government’s decision to overhaul the “one-size-fits-all” funding model for long-term care homes and looks forward to working with the Province to accelerate the development of new and redeveloped beds within the region.

Halton requests:

- Additional long-term care beds in Halton to meet the growing needs of our aging residents and underserved communities.**
- Increased care, service and supports to those seniors whose needs cannot be safely or effectively managed with current service levels.**
- Participation and the ability to provide meaningful input into the transformation of the long-term care system, including the Independent Commission.**
- Assistance and support with ongoing long-term care resourcing including human resources and staffing, personal protective equipment and financial supports.**



Universal Access to Broadband Internet

Reliable access to broadband internet drives economic investment and job creation and enables small businesses to effectively compete in a digital world. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical need for universal access to broadband internet services to support on-line learning, mental health resources, family and government support services and working from home capabilities.

Halton requests:

- Increase the eligibility of rural Halton Region to all and any funding programs.**
- That the Province continue to incentivize and encourage investments, partnerships and innovation for broadband deployment in Halton.**
- Coordinate broadband funding and enhancements with the Federal Government.**

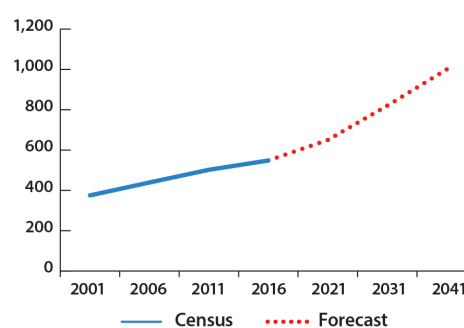


Investments to Ensure Growth Pays for Itself

Halton is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada, and is vital to the Ontario economy. Halton Region is mandated to grow to a population of 1 million by 2041 in order to meet the expectations of the Provincial Growth Plan.

Halton and the Local Municipalities experience a combined funding shortfall of approximately \$87.7 million per year as a result of limitations related to existing funding tools. Municipalities need appropriate funding tools that allow delivery of planned infrastructure to achieve provincial growth projections, while ensuring that growth pays for itself, which is critical to the long-term recovery of the community.

Halton Population Forecast (thousands)



Halton requests:

- Provincial investments and municipal funding tools to ensure that growth pays for itself.**



Investments in and Coordinated Approach to Infrastructure Planning

Halton Region and its Local Municipalities have long-term infrastructure plans to ensure that municipal infrastructure is available to support planned growth and grow the economy in a responsible way.

The reliability and frequency of GO train service throughout Halton is vital to the Region’s economic prosperity. The absence of a provincial multi-year, multi-ministry infrastructure plan focused on growing communities, including the delivery of schools, hospitals, highways, has resulted in obstacles to increasing housing supply and economic growth. This remains critical to the Halton community through the recovery phase.

Halton acknowledges and appreciates the recent announcement of funding that will be directed to building four new schools in the region. However, approximately 20 short-term Halton school improvements are

still required and enormous pressures are being placed on the region to increase school capacity.

Halton requests:

- A coordinated, multi-year, multi-ministry provincial infrastructure investment plan and funding connected to the Growth Plan for the delivery of schools, hospitals, transit, highways and housing. This would include commitments to:**
 - **Timing and delivery of all day, two-way GO service to Milton and Georgetown to support significant planned population growth.**
 - **Timing and delivery of a new GO station at Trafalgar and Highway 401 which is a key hub in Halton’s Mobility Plan.**
 - **Highway improvements to the 401 and QEW.**
 - **Continued approval and development of schools in high growth areas within Halton.**