



Office of the Regional Chair
Halton Region
1151 Bronte Rd
Oakville, ON
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May 29, 2020

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier
premier@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Ford,

On behalf of Halton Regional Council, I am writing to express our disappointment and deep concerns regarding the Provincial Government's decision to cancel procurement for the Halton Region Consolidated Courthouse project. The courthouse has remained a long standing and important issue to the Halton community, and its approval which was officially announced by the previous government and reconfirmed support by your government was welcome news for this urgently needed facility.

As you know, the state-of-the-art facility was designed to replace the aging Milton and Burlington courthouses and serve one of the fastest growing regions in the country. The consolidated courthouse was expected to resolve the legitimate health and safety concerns that have been raised by the judiciary, crown attorneys, police officers, and members of the public regarding the deficiencies and dangers associated with Halton's current court operations. Considering that your government had been informed about these serious issues and had committed to the project, it was my understanding that Infrastructure Ontario and the Ministry of the Attorney General would be awarding the contract to their preferred bidder and construction could begin as early as fall 2020.

The decision to cancel the courthouse has come at a time when Halton Region and its local municipalities are facing an imminent crisis due to unprecedented revenue losses stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. This important infrastructure project was expected to create close to 600 jobs in our community and provide significant economic stimulus for our regional economy. Cancelling this project will adversely affect Halton residents and undoubtedly plunge our economy into a deeper recession in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. Consequently, I am urging you and Cabinet to reconsider your decision and request instead only a postponement of this much needed facility.

Halton Regional Council stands united with both the Halton County Law Association and the Halton Regional Police Service, which have expressed interest in engaging with the Provincial Government to discuss alternatives to the full cancellation of this important project.

The following resolution was passed by Halton Regional Council at its meeting on Wednesday, May 20, 2020 to demonstrate our opposition to the Provincial Government's recent decision:

WHEREAS the Halton Consolidated Courthouse Project was shovel-ready for a state-of-the-art facility and would have brought much needed economic stimulus along with 600 jobs for Halton Region and the Province of Ontario;

WHEREAS the project had the full support of Halton Region, its four municipalities and stakeholders across the Province;

WHEREAS The Honourable Geoffrey B. Morawetz Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Justice has acknowledged that the cancellation of the Halton Consolidated Courthouse Project is an access to justice issue and underscores the overall lack of functional courtrooms in the Central West Region;

WHEREAS in a press conference, Regional Senior Justice Peter Daley stated that Milton's courthouse is so dilapidated the province is spending \$2.6-million to rid it of mould;

WHEREAS the Toronto Star reported that as a result of the lack of resources and courtrooms at the Milton courthouse, criminal cases that are taking too long to get to trial are being thrown out due to delay;

WHEREAS in a letter to Premier Ford, Halton Police Chief Stephen Tanner wrote the main court facility for Halton Region has been completely inadequate and in fact dangerous, and is beyond repair and beyond renovation;

WHEREAS there are ongoing security issues in the holding areas in the Milton courthouse and with respect to the movement of prisoners throughout the building that pose risks to visitors, staff, and other people in custody;

WHEREAS the Halton Consolidated Courthouse Project was selected as one of five Community Benefits Agreement pilot projects by the Province, these agreements provide workforce development, the purchasing of goods and services from local businesses and supplementary community benefits;

WHEREAS cancelling the project will result in costly fees which will further reduce the government's ability to promote economic stimulus and recovery;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT Halton Region calls upon the Province of Ontario to postpone rather than cancel the Halton Consolidated Courthouse project so it will be ready to go as a federal-provincial infrastructure stimulus project as we continue to reopen and reinvigorate our economy;

THAT the Province of Ontario use the Halton Consolidated Courthouse project to aid economic recovery and further job creation;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Premier Ford, Minister Doug Downey, Minister Laurie Scott, Minister Sylvia Jones, MPPs Effie Triantafilopoulos, Stephen Crawford, Jane McKenna, Parm Gill, Ted Arnott, AMO, FCM, and be made publicly available.

I would ask that you reconsider this decision, and instead postpone this critical project. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and I look forward to healing from you.

Sincerely,

Gary Carr
Halton Regional Chair

CC: The Honourable Doug Downey, Attorney General of Ontario
The Honourable Laurie Scott, Minister of Infrastructure
The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General
The Honourable Ted Arnott, MPP, Wellington-Halton Hills
Jane McKenna, MPP, Burlington
Parm Gill, MPP, Milton
Stephen Crawford, MPP, Oakville
Effie Triantafilopoulos, MPP, Oakville North – Burlington
Brian Rosborough, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Brock Carleton, Federation of Canadian Municipalities