

The Regional Municipality of Halton

Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee
on Finance

2018 Federal Pre-Budget Consultation

July 2017



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 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 process. Halton Region is committed to working with the federal government to invest in our residents in order to ensure they have every opportunity to succeed and be productive, and to ensure that the economy is competitive and works for our community's families.

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

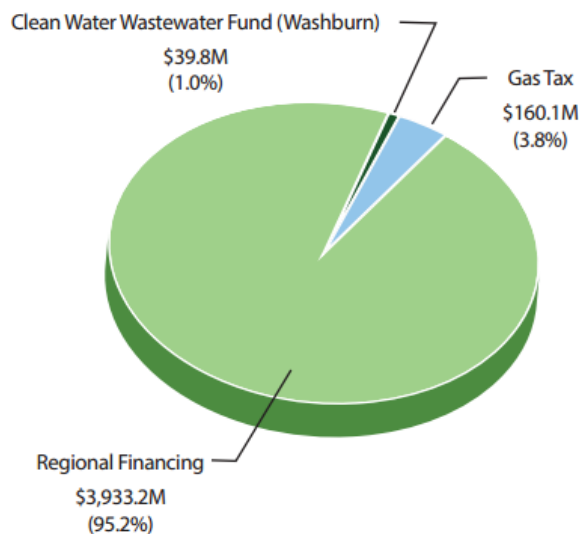
- Infrastructure
- Community well-being
- Economic prosperity
- Complete communities

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 totals \$4.1 billion, including \$1.9 billion to fund the state of good repair. By ensuring our hard infrastructure is sustainable and adequately maintained, we are investing in the future of our residents and in the business community.

2017-2026 Capital Financing

\$4,133.1M



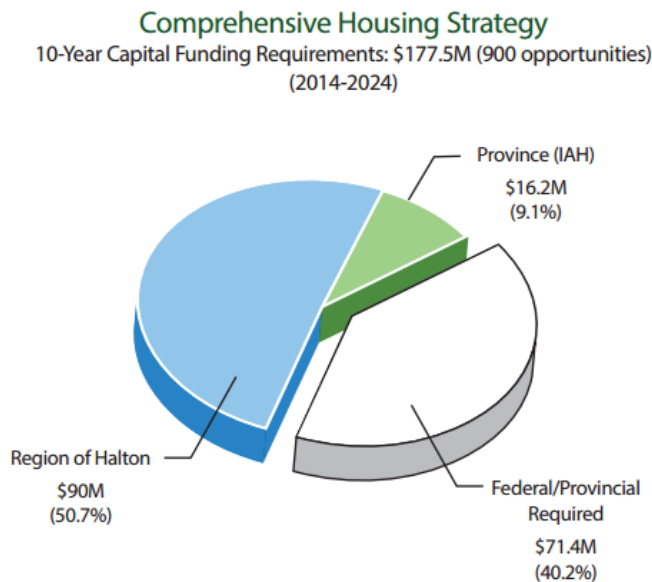
In order to maintain a competitive edge while unlocking the economic prosperity of the region, Halton is requesting long-term sustainable Provincial and Federal commitments for infrastructure funding, removal of the incrementality requirement for current infrastructure programs and the inclusion of municipal 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 in achieving its central priorities of boosting Canada’s economic growth and production while creating opportunities and a competitive economy.

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 opportunities such as the National Disaster Mitigation Program are appreciated, in order to develop resilient communities, Halton Region is requesting 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, accessible housing for all, 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 the planning and delivery of and access to safe, affordable, accessible housing.

Halton Region is committed to delivering complete communities where residents can prosper and stay in their 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 government-assisted housing options for low income residents. As a result of our own investments, by the end of 2017 Halton will have created 1,466 new government assisted housing opportunities since 2008. \$71.4m 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.



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 for residents and businesses to effectively live and work in a competing digital world. However, rural areas within the Region remain under serviced with limited options and access to broadband internet. High-speed internet access was deemed to be an important service 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 help influence investment and business growth while serving to enhance the live/work, access and lifestyle needs of communities throughout the Region. Recently announced federal funding programs such as Connect to Innovate are not applicable to our Region, and therefore a more equitable funding opportunity needs to be created and available. Universal access to broadband internet is integral to the prosperity of our Region.

Investing in the Economic Prosperity of our Community

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, all which contributes to a stronger Ontario. By investing our economic sector and unlocking the economic potential of our region, it allows for greater prosperity and competition within the region, provincial and Canadian market.

The need for Federal 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 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 US 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. Halton 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.

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.

By working together, to meet the needs and priorities of our residents, fund and deliver the programs and services they need, and create 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. With the mutual goals of investing in sustainable and social infrastructure while creating a dynamic environment and economy and providing high quality services and programs to our residents, Halton is committed to working with the federal government to create a Strong Halton and, in turn, a Strong Canada.

Thank you for your consideration and for 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.