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Regional Municipality of Halton

Submission to the House of Commons  
Standing Committee on Finance

2015 Federal Pre Budget Consultation

August 2014



## Introduction

Halton Region is a vibrant and growing community with more than 520,000 residents and four distinct communities – Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville. Recognized for its high quality of life and proximity to Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment, Halton Region is committed to ensuring that its future is strong and stable.

The Provincial Places to Grow Act mandates that Halton Region's population grow to 780,000 by the year 2031. To facilitate this growth there are a number of critical supports required from both the Provincial and Federal governments in order to maintain the high quality of life that is currently enjoyed in Halton.

Many multinational companies like Target, Lowes and Siemens are choosing to call Halton home. Halton's prosperous business community helps drive the Province's economic engine. A **Strong Halton** helps build a Strong Ontario, and a Strong Canada.

Ensuring that growth pays for itself is imperative to the future vitality of Halton Region and is of critical importance to Regional Council. Halton's strong financial position and AAA credit rating are key elements to our foundation. We will not compromise these to accommodate growth.

Some of the key challenges currently facing Halton and the main focus of our submission to ensure a more prosperous Canada are to:

- Meet Halton's community infrastructure needs of today and tomorrow
- Partner with all levels of government to create real and affordable housing solutions
- Support Halton Region's Strategic Economic Sectors
- Obtain support from the Federal government with respect to strategic cluster development and business infrastructure development

Halton Region has developed an *Advocating for a Strong Halton* campaign to put forward specific asks of the Provincial and Federal governments on the issues identified as important to our community. In the submission that follows and through the attached link, [halton.ca/advocacy](http://halton.ca/advocacy), you will find an outline of our advocacy priorities that we hope will be considered as part of the 2015 Budget preparation.

Halton Region is advocating for support from all levels of government in the form of long-term, predictable funding and legislative changes to ensure that Halton's taxpayers are not burdened with the cost of growth and that our communities continue to prosper. By working together we can ensure that Halton remains a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire.



## Meeting Halton’s community infrastructure of today and tomorrow

Halton Region has been mandated to grow under the *Provincial Places to Grow Act*. In order to accommodate this growth, we require adequately funded community infrastructure. Investments in transportation (including highways), schools and hospitals are necessary to meet the needs of our growing community and are becoming increasingly important.

Currently, schools are being built and soon after, they are requiring portables. Our four municipal hospitals have outgrown their capacity and need to be expanded to accommodate current and future population demands. Meeting our community’s infrastructure needs, including roads, is vital to maintaining our quality of life, and aligns with the Federal government’s 2015 budget theme, *to ensure prosperous and secure communities, including through support for infrastructure*. Supporting Halton’s infrastructure would also result in an increase in local jobs, another priority for the Federal government’s 2015 budget. We can assist each other in meeting our mutual goals.

Transportation continues to be the number one issue of importance to Halton residents. Halton Region has invested a great deal of money into our infrastructure to ensure that people and goods are able to move around and through the Region efficiently. Halton Region has continued to deliver a roads capital improvement

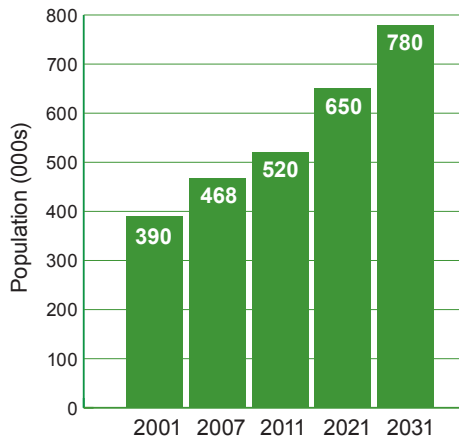
program which invests, on average, more than \$120 million every year towards ongoing or new construction projects. In 2013, Halton committed \$289 million to Regional roads, an increase from \$50 million in 2006, and has committed \$177.1 million for 2014. Not only is investing in infrastructure important to our residents, it also attracts businesses to our region which helps keep our economy strong. We cannot, however, continue to do this alone. We require long-term, predictable investments in our infrastructure from the Federal government to keep Halton prosperous.

2014 Major Transportation Capital Projects (\$ millions)	
Project Descriptions	2014 Cost
Britannia Road - Widening	\$44.8
Tremaine Road - New Construction & Widening	\$38.0
New North Oakville Transportation Corridor	\$30.3
Dundas Street - Widening	\$27.4
Ninth Line - Widening	\$8.0
Regional Road 25 - Widening	\$7.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$155.5</b>

Schedule may not add due to rounding.

### Provincial Places to Grow Plan

Halton’s population doubles from 2001-2031



Source: Halton Region (2007)

## Meeting Halton's community infrastructure of today and tomorrow - cont'd

The Metrolinx Plan, *The Big Move*, had committed to delivering all-day GO service to Milton and Georgetown as well as the electrification of the Lakeshore GO line in the short term. Recently, Metrolinx indicated they may delay these projects, further exacerbating our transportation issues. These GO lines move a significant number of residents to and from Halton and other Greater Toronto Area locations daily for employment purposes. The reliability and frequency of these trains is vital to the Region's economic prosperity. A hindering issue is the CN Rail line on which GO operates. The Federal government's assistance in advancing GO Transit's desire to move forward with all-day service on the Milton line in their discussions with CN Rail would be most appreciated and could result in Halton acquiring the much needed all-day GO service to the fastest growing community in Canada.

The Province of Ontario is currently exploring investment and financing options to implement the recommended projects in *The Big Move*, but they cannot afford to do it alone. Federal investment is required to ensure a province that is able to easily move goods and people efficiently and sustainably.

### Halton Requests:

That the Federal Government provide predictable funding to keep Halton moving, meet the transportation needs of our growing community, deliver the committed projects through the Metrolinx Plan, *The Big Move*, and ensure a prosperous and secure community. Halton also requests the Federal government's assistance in facilitating discussions between CN Rail and GO Transit to ensure the implementation of all-day GO service to Milton, as outlined in *The Big Move*.



## Partner with all levels of government to create real and affordable housing solutions

Halton Region recognizes that the provision of safe, affordable, accessible housing is a critical component of fostering healthy communities. Housing is a joint responsibility that must be delivered with a commitment of long-term predictable funding from all levels of government. Halton Region invests \$26 million annually to provide assisted housing options for low income residents. Since 2006, Halton Region has invested \$19 million in partnership with the Federal and Provincial Governments and has built 265 new housing units in the community. Since 2007, Halton Region has built 894 new affordable/assisted housing units, a remarkable record.

Halton Region’s request of the Federal government to partner with us in delivering affordable/assisted housing for our community aligns with the Federal government’s 2015 budget theme of *supporting families and helping vulnerable Canadians*. Together, this can be achieved.

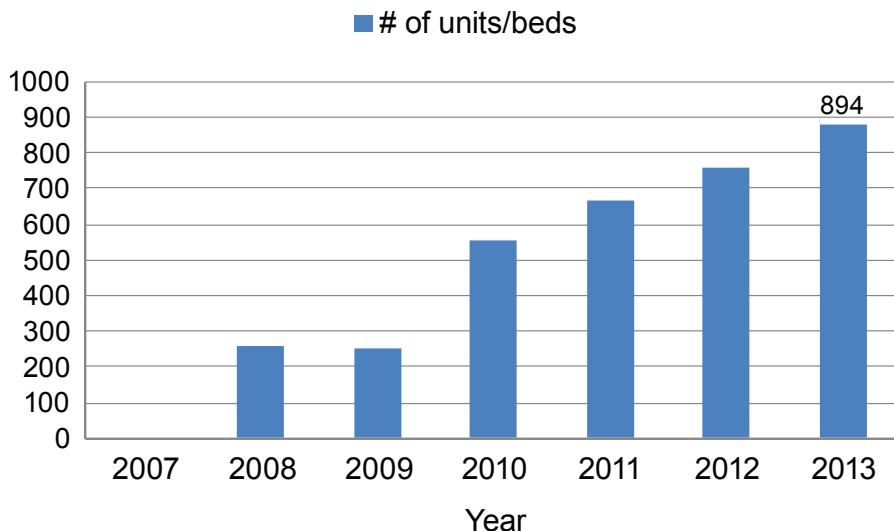
While past investments from other levels of government have been welcomed, funds have generally been time-limited and their availability has been unpredictable, making it difficult for the Region to plan accordingly. A planned, long-term, sustained investment, in partnership with all levels of government, is needed to continue to meet the demand for affordable and assisted housing in Halton.

Housing is a joint responsibility and all levels of government must come together with long-term funding commitments to create real and affordable housing solutions to ensure that Halton remains a great place to live, work raise a family and retire, resulting in a more prosperous Canada.

### Halton Requests:

Long-term, predictable, sustainable funding for affordable and assisted housing from other levels of government to meet the housing needs of the residents of Halton.

**New Affordable/Assisted Housing in Halton**





## Support Halton Region's Strategic Economic Sectors

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 has had eight consecutive years with a tax freeze and has made significant investments in infrastructure.

Halton Region and its local municipal partners, the City of Burlington and the Towns of Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville, have undertaken a strategic sector study to determine Halton's three strategic sectors and key business functions which will drive our collective investment attraction and local business retention and expansion efforts over the next five years. One of the sectors emerging as a priority area is Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering.

In support of this, Halton Region and its local municipal partners will be working with our non-profit regional innovation centre, HalTech, post-secondary institutions Sheridan College and McMaster University's DeGroot School of Business, regional entrepreneurship and angel funding networks, as well as a local anchor firm in the advanced manufacturing sector, to identify innovative, up-and-coming Halton-based small and medium-sized Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering companies

along with potential foreign firms that would contribute to Halton's overall competitiveness in the sector.

A holistic business support program will be developed to attract and support for these companies. This program will encompass commercialization, business strategy and export development assistance, peer-to-peer learning networks, access to angel investors and venture capital and investment attraction/site location assistance.

"Graduates" from the program would be more capable, investment ready and better able to make their own individual funding applications to programs such as the FedDev Ontario Advanced Manufacturing Fund.

Federal government support for this program will result in a stronger class of advanced manufacturing and engineering companies that can bring on new innovative products, sell into global markets and further strengthen southern Ontario's economy, resulting in a more prosperous Canada. This request for support aligns with the Federal government's priority *to increase the competitiveness of Canadian businesses through research, development, innovation and commercialization, resulting in a positive competitive advantage for the Canadian economy.*



### Halton Requests:

Support from the Federal government with respect to this Strategic Sector initiative as it pertains to the implementation of a business support program for the Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering sector in Halton.

## Obtain support for Halton Region’s Strategic Cluster Development and Business Infrastructure Development

Further work is required with respect to mapping clusters in Halton’s top three strategic sectors, including anchor firms, emerging companies, cluster supply chain characteristics and the identification of gaps and opportunities for investment attraction and growth of these clusters.

This work would also include human capital considerations, including the review of Halton Region’s current track record in attracting and retaining human capital, and particularly youth talent, and would assess the need for a regional talent attraction strategy. Work in this area will allow for a strengthened alignment between the key organizations offering business support services in Halton and better outcomes for their client companies.

Halton has an emerging entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem that has challenges of distance, urban and rural communities and the need for equitable access for residents and company owners to business support services across the Region.

Federal government support in this area would allow work to be undertaken to inventory and identify gaps in the business support infrastructure, which would include third spaces (e.g., coffee bars with Wi-Fi), community spaces, co-working spaces, business incubators and business accelerators, networking groups, peer-to-peer

industry groups and business membership groups.

This work would culminate with an outline of a balanced business model for the provision of business support services in Halton Region, noting the role of local and regional municipal government in the development, support and/or management of business support infrastructure, in particular business incubators and accelerators.

### Halton Requests:

Support from the Federal government with respect to strategic cluster development and business infrastructure development, as they relate to the Federal government’s priority to increase the competitiveness of Canadian businesses through research, development, innovation and commercialization, resulting in a positive competitive advantage for the Canadian economy.



## Conclusion

Halton Region is a strong and fiscally responsible municipality that is committed to working with the Federal government to achieve their goals of being fiscally responsible and sustainable, supporting families and helping vulnerable Canadians, increasing the competitiveness of Canadian businesses, ensuring prosperous and secure communities, and maximizing the number of jobs in our community. We encourage your government to consider Halton's requests as outlined in our submission, so that together we can strengthen Canada's municipalities and create a more prosperous Canada.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to provide input into the 2015 federal budget. If you would like more information about Halton's advocacy priorities please visit [halton.ca/advocacy](http://halton.ca/advocacy). We look forward to continuing to work with you to create a sustainable, prosperous and competitive Halton and Canada.



