

Halton Regional Council approves 0.4 per cent tax reduction for 2014 budget



By Regional Chair Gary Carr

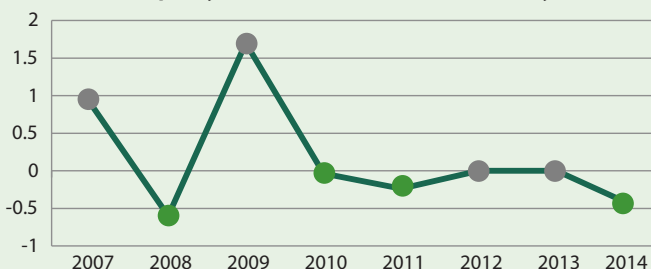
Halton Region is committed to being an effective, fiscally responsible and transparent government residents can rely on for high quality services. **Over the past eight years, we have either reduced or frozen taxes** — this is an incredible achievement.

In December, Halton Regional Council approved the Region's 2014 Budget and Business Plan, marking the fourth time in the last eight years (2008, 2010, 2011 and 2014) that Halton Region has achieved a property tax reduction for Regional tax supported programs and services. We are one of the few municipalities in all of Canada that has actually reduced or frozen taxes while maintaining and enhancing service levels in our growing community! This is great news for residents and businesses in Halton. By maintaining our AAA rating and keeping our taxes low, we ensure Halton is competitive which attracts jobs and investment to our community.

Strong Fiscal Policy

Halton Region's strong fiscal management policies ensure we can deliver high quality services for our residents. Our AAA credit rating demonstrates to Halton taxpayers and the business community, Regional Council's commitment to fiscally responsible decision making. Halton Region's winning combination of a high credit rating and reduction in taxes attracts companies such as Target, Siemens, Toronto Premium Outlets and Gypsum Technologies Inc., making Halton a business hotspot.

Property tax reductions: 4 times in 8 years!



The 2014 Budget continues to deliver the priorities identified in *The Citizen's Priorities: Halton Region's 2011-2014 Action Plan*, developed through a comprehensive public engagement process and approved by Regional Council in 2011.

At Halton Region, we strive to maintain and enhance service levels with minimal impact to Regional taxpayers. I'm pleased to report Halton Region has a 97 per cent satisfaction rating from Halton residents. Our 2014 Budget demonstrates the high value we place on planning for and strategically investing in future infrastructure needs, while maintaining current infrastructure. This year's Budget ensures the Region can continue to deliver programs and services that contribute to a high quality of life for Halton residents.

Planning for the Future

Our 10-year capital budget totals \$3 billion. The 2014 capital expenditure program of **\$389.1 million will be used to upgrade, expand and rehabilitate Halton's infrastructure**, including roads (\$177.1 million), water and wastewater plants and distribution systems (\$167.6 million) as well as waste management sites (\$2.2 million). A key principle of the financing plan is that growth must pay for growth. Under the plan all capital costs related to residential development are funded through development charges.



Water and Wastewater Rate Budget

Regional Council also approved the rate-supported water and wastewater 2013 budget in December, with a combined rate increase of 4.3 per cent for Halton residents and businesses. Of this increase, 0.9 per cent supports operations and maintenance at Halton water and wastewater treatment facilities to keep our drinking water safe. The remaining 3.4 per cent of the increase is allocated to the Region's State of Good Repair Capital Program to support strategic reinvestment in our water and wastewater infrastructure to ensure it is reliable in the years ahead. This equates to a \$35 annual increase per typical household. Water and wastewater services are not paid from property taxes but through users who are billed by the local hydro companies based on the volume of water they consume.

To view the 2014 Budget and Business Plan visit www.halton.ca/budget.

Highlights in the 2014 Budget

Key strategic investments in 2014 include:

- \$177 million in **transportation** capital investment
- \$405,000 to create additional **child care** subsidies
- \$721,000 to maintain service levels for **waste management services**
- \$300,000 to increase the number of **SPLIT passes** available in the community (subsidy for bus passes for low income residents)
- \$65,000 to support the development of an **Agri-tourism Program** to attract more tourism to Halton's rural communities
- \$195,000 for **Locates (Ontario One Call)**, a new underground infrastructure notification system
- \$600,000 to support initiatives outlined in the **Comprehensive Housing Strategy**
- \$320,000 for **assisted housing programs** including continued implementation of subsidies for low income residents

Halton Regional Meeting Schedule

Jan 28 9:30 a.m. Health & Social Services Cttee.
Jan 29 9:30 a.m. Planning & Public Works Cttee.
Jan 29 1:30 p.m. Administration & Finance Cttee.

Meetings can be viewed at www.halton.ca/meetings



Please contact us as soon as possible if you have any accessibility needs at Halton Region events or meetings.

This page has been donated by this newspaper to communicate important information to Halton residents at no cost to taxpayers.