

## Town, Region want federal debate on municipal issues

By **Melanie Hennessey**  
Special to The IFP

Both the Town of Halton Hills and Halton Region are joining the chorus of voices from across the country calling for the federal party leaders to take part in a debate on municipal issues.

Town council endorsed a motion to that effect at its July 6 meeting, throwing its support behind the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) campaign dubbed Hometown Proud. At its July 15 meeting, Halton

Region put its weight behind the motion from Halton Hills Wards 1&2 Regional Councillor Clark Somerville. Somerville is also the FCM first vice president.

Similar motions have been endorsed by municipalities across Canada including Vancouver, Winnipeg and Gatineau.

With a federal election slated for the fall, the initiative urges all party leaders to debate municipal issues such as infrastructure, transit and transportation, clean water, the environment and public safety. Somerville said a feder-

al issue like climate change could have a major effect on municipalities, pointing to the billions of dollars in damage from floods that have devastated cities such as Calgary and Burlington in recent years.

"They are national (issues) because they're common to cities and communities from coast to coast to coast. And they're national because the measure of a strong Canada lies in the strength of our hometowns," said Somerville, who also brought the motion forward at council.

Rail safety, movement of hazardous goods through towns, clean water, and the need to replace roads and bridges are other issues. He told council that so far the Liberal, NDP and Green parties have all committed to taking part in such a debate. The Conservatives, he said, are still negotiating.

The FCM has launched an online petition that local residents can sign to support its cause at [hometownproud.fcm.ca](http://hometownproud.fcm.ca). So far it has garnered more than 700 signatures.

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