

Advocating for Halton



by Regional Chair Gary Carr

Halton Region has developed an advocacy platform, *A Strong Halton for a Strong Ontario – Partners for the Future*, in advance of the October 6 provincial election. This document is available online at www.halton.ca/ontarioelection2011 and has been created to assist the community and local candidates to better understand the challenges facing the Region and what Halton requests of the next Provincial government.

Today more than 500,000 people live in Halton Region. The Provincial Places to Grow Plan mandates that Halton's population must increase to accommodate 780,000 people by the year 2031. Ensuring that growth pays for itself is of critical importance to Halton Regional Council. The extensive growth targets set by the Province for Halton must be matched with adequate funding for the infrastructure required to support it. The combined municipal-provincial infrastructure needs of Halton to 2031 are expected to reach approximately \$8.6 billion. Our position on this issue is that sustainable and long term predictable funding is needed – to build as well as to maintain our infrastructure – so that Halton taxpayers do not bear the burden of growth.

Halton Region is home to an active and vibrant farming community and has a rich and diverse landscape. The provincially designated Greenbelt running through Halton is home to the Niagara Escarpment – a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve- as well as prime agricultural land. The preservation of this natural heritage is threatened by proposals for quarry expansions and provincial highway routes. This summer, Halton Region successfully advocated to the Province on both the proposed Niagara to GTA corridor highway and the GTA West Corridor Study. The Minister of Transportation confirmed that the Niagara to GTA corridor will not proceed as planned, and the GTA West Corridor Study will be delayed to allow more time for public consultation.

Ensuring the protection of Halton's natural environment requires partnerships with all levels of government to address the traffic capacity deficiencies and explore alternatives that do not impact significant environmental features like the Niagara Escarpment and prime agricultural land. Regional Council is also advocating for the next Provincial government

to honour and expedite the transit projects promised for Halton Region in MoveOntario 2020 and the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan – The Big Move.

Halton's economic vitality is another area of concern for the Region. Provincial employment targets are set by the Places to Grow Plan for Halton at 390,000 employees and 50 residents and jobs combined per gross hectare by 2031. Halton requests that the next Provincial government ensure growth and prosperity by supporting the vision and protection of employment land use in strategic locations within the region along provincial highways beyond the planning horizon of 2031. Halton is also asking for enhanced support for small businesses through additional funding of the Small Business Enterprise Centres network across Ontario.

Ensuring services keep pace with growth is a critical element to ensuring the health, security and well being of Halton residents. Halton has seen a 52% increase in calls for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in the last decade. Circumstances beyond Halton's control – provincially administered dispatch and hospital offload delays – raise urgent concerns about the ability of Halton EMS to maintain its high standard while our communities continue to grow. Halton needs help from the Province to resolve offload delays and sustained 50:50 Provincial-Municipal cost sharing of EMS that meets ongoing and required system improvements.

Halton's population of children less than six years old grew 17 per cent between the Census years of 2001 to 2006, with 163 per cent increase in the Town of Milton. With continued population growth in Halton, demand for child care services will also remain strong. Child care service providers are already unable to meet demand because provincial funding for child care has not kept pace with population growth. Halton needs a commitment to extend and sustain Early Learning and Child Care funding from the Province to provide more child care spaces.

We are committed to working in partnership with other levels of government, Halton taxpayers and our community partners to promote economic vitality, fiscal responsibility, programs and services that meet the needs of Halton taxpayers and the protection of our natural environment. Together we can ensure that Halton Region remains a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire.

A Strong Halton for a Strong Ontario – Partners for the Future

In early September, provincial election candidates running in Halton will be asked to respond to a questionnaire to explain to voters how they would resolve critical issues facing the Region. The questions and responses received from candidates will be posted on Halton's website. I encourage everyone to visit the website, learn about Halton's issues and get to know how provincial election candidates will advocate in support of our community. www.halton.ca/ontarioelection2011

For more information about the October 6 provincial election, visit www.elections.on.ca.

Please remember to vote – your vote helps shape Halton's future.

Regional Services

Provincial policies can have significant impacts on the programs and services delivered by Halton Region. Through its departments, Halton Region provides such services as:

- Children's services
- Economic Development
- Emergency Medical Services (ambulance)
- Emergency preparedness
- Income & employment services
- Land use planning
- Ontario Works (social assistance)
- Public health services
- Regional Museum
- Regional roads
- Seniors' services (including long term care homes)
- Sewage (treatment and disposal)
- Water (treatment, supply and distribution)
- Waste (collection and recycling)

Halton Region Meeting Schedule

Sept. 5	Offices closed for Labour Day
Sept. 6, 9:30 a.m.	Health & Social Services Cte
Sept. 7, 9:30 a.m.	Planning & Public Works Cte
Sept. 7, 1:30 p.m.	Administration & Finance Cte
Sept. 14, 9:30 a.m.	Regional Council
Sept. 27 9:30 a.m.	Health & Social Services Cte
Sept. 28, 9:30 a.m.	Planning & Public Works Cte
Sept. 28, 1:30 p.m.	Administration & Finance Cte

Meetings can be viewed at www.halton.ca.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you will have an accessibility or accommodation need at a Halton Region hosted event or meeting.

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