

## New Plan Guides Halton's Economic Development

by Regional Chair Gary Carr



A strong and innovative business community is key to ensuring that Halton Region can continue to prosper. More and more businesses, like Target, Siemens, and Canadian Tire Financial Services are choosing to call Halton home. Combined, the three companies are bringing 1,200 to 1,300 jobs to Halton. And they choose to locate here because of Halton's high quality of life and our excellent track record with keeping taxes low.

On December 14, 2011, Regional Council approved a new 10 year Halton Region Economic Development Strategic Implementation Plan that will guide Halton Region Economic Development, in partnership with our local municipal partners in Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville.

The Strategic Implementation Plan builds on the vision for economic development approved by Halton Regional Council last fall, that by 2021, Halton will be a preferred location for innovative businesses and entrepreneurs who need highly skilled talent, quality infrastructure and a positive business environment in order to contribute to sustainable regional economic prosperity.

The plan establishes direction for Halton Region's Economic Development services and programs and informs decision making for economic development within the Region.

One of the key Citizens' Priorities identified by Halton residents is to attract and retain jobs. To help achieve this goal, the Strategic Implementation Plan sets out 23 directions with specific actions, targets and performance measures.

In drafting the plan, Halton Region's Economic Development division worked with consulting firm Millier Dickinson Blais Inc. and Watson and Associates. The consultants created Discussion Papers respecting the key economic development pillars in Halton and facilitated discussions with staff from Halton Region and the Halton Local Municipalities of Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville. Further consultations were held involving elected officials and representatives from Halton's business community in north and south Halton. The result of these consultations and subsequent analysis was a Strategic Directions Report.

The report provides a vision and a series of directions for Halton Region to focus on and supports Halton Region's 2011-2014 Action Plan, as well as Sustainable Halton - Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 38. It provides directions in five key pillars supporting economic growth in the region (see sidebar).

We have already made progress in a number of the target areas. For example, one of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation actions laid out in the plan is to empower young entrepreneurs to start and grow their business in Halton. On Wednesday, January 25, Halton Region officially launched a new partnership between the Canadian

Youth Business Foundation (CYBF) and the Region's Small Business Centre.

Through the partnership, Halton Region's Small Business Centre will provide CYBF Entrepreneurs with pre-launch coaching including support with business planning, market research, operational planning and guidance during the CYBF application process. Since CYBF's inception in 1996, the Toronto-based organization has helped over 4,750 entrepreneurs across Canada aged 18-34 launch and sustain successful businesses by providing pre-launch coaching, start-up financing, resources and mentorship.



Related to Quality of Place, one action is to continue to support Halton Region involvement with physician recruitment, tourism and agriculture as priority areas for the enhancement of quality of life in Halton by supporting the permanent establishment of the Halton McMaster Family Health Centre in Burlington. The preferred location for this facility at Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital was

**VISION: By 2021, Halton will be a preferred location for innovative businesses and entrepreneurs who need highly skilled talent, quality infrastructure and a positive business environment in order to contribute to sustainable regional economic prosperity.**

announced jointly by Halton Region, the City of Burlington and McMaster University on Thursday, January 26. Incidentally, Halton Region's physician recruitment program received a 2011 Economic Developers Council of Ontario Award in January and was honoured as one of four finalists for The Lieutenant Governor's Award for Marketing Excellence in Ontario.

Later this year the Division will launch an online Regional data centre and starting this February the Small Business Centre will provide its "Consultant on Site" program of one-on-one consultations twice a month in each of Halton Hills and Milton. And this is just the beginning! The Strategic Implementation Plan positions us well to meet Halton Region's growth plan distribution of 140,000 new jobs established in Halton over the next 20 years, 55 per cent of which are to be created in the next 10 years.

The full list of background documents, strategic directions and supporting actions is available online at [www.halton.ca/EcDevStrategy](http://www.halton.ca/EcDevStrategy). Halton Region's Economic Development division will report back to Council annually on its progress in achieving the Strategic Implementation Plan.

### Strategic Directions – Five Key Pillars

- **Employment lands** – ensure sufficient supply of employment lands in Halton to meet Halton's growth forecast and fiscal objectives and monitor land absorption
- **Existing and emerging sectors** – undertake information gathering, liaison and support local sector-based strategies
- **Investment attraction and retention** – establish an investment attraction plan for office and export-oriented development, a "Regional investment response" team, an online data resource centre and ensure industrial tax rates and non-residential development charges are competitive
- **Entrepreneurship and innovation** – establish a north Halton Small Business Centre, empower young entrepreneurs and develop entrepreneurship programs for Newcomers
- **Quality of place** – support priority areas, e.g., physician recruitment, tourism and agriculture

### Halton Region Meeting Schedule

- March 20, 9:30 a.m.**  
Health & Social Services Committee
- March 21, 9:30 a.m.**  
Planning & Public Works Committee
- March 21, 1:30 p.m.**  
Administration & Finance Committee
- March 28, 9:30 a.m.**  
Regional Council
- Meetings can be viewed at [www.halton.ca](http://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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To learn more about the plan and about Economic Development in Halton, contact Halton Region or visit [www.halton.ca/business](http://www.halton.ca/business). You can find Halton Small Business on Facebook and on Twitter @HaltonEcDev, as well as Halton Tourism on Facebook and on Twitter.