

Long term cash for infrastructure urgently required by municipalities

Calls for a long-term plan for municipal infrastructure funding plan endorsed by Halton Hills and Halton politicians

The only way municipalities like Halton Hills can deal with multi-million dollar infrastructure needs is through federal and provincial support. Both the Town and Regional councils have endorsed a motion to endorse a Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) campaign to prompt Ottawa to keep its commitment to develop a long-range plan for municipal infrastructure funding. Two years from now, the \$2-billion Building Canada Plan – federal money for municipal infrastructure – will expire, leaving Canadian municipalities with a combined infrastructure deficit of \$132-billion.

When Regional/Acton Councillor Clark Somerville – who is also an FCM board member – asked his colleagues for support of the motion, he detailed the needs in Halton Hills which include \$51-million for roads, sidewalks, bridges, storm water management and culverts, and \$48-million related to recreation and parks facilities.

“It’s interesting when you look at the number that we have in there for Halton Hills’ needs – its \$99-million, and when you consider that’s about three-and-a-half times our annual budget is – that would just be to get caught up...” Somerville told Halton Hills Council recently, adding Canada’s municipal infrastructure is at risk, with more than half of municipal roads in need of significant repairs, and one in four wastewater treatment plants requiring major upgrades. He also noted that in Montreal there are freeway on-ramps that are closed because the city can’t afford to fix them.

“As I said before, municipi-

ties own 60 per cent of Canada’s core infrastructure but only collect eight cents out of every tax dollar and we don’t have the resources to solve this on our own,” Somerville said, adding other interesting statistics show that Canadian municipalities annually invest \$13-billion in infrastructure, but with a \$123-billion infrastructure deficit four years ago, they are still not getting caught up.

Regional Ward Two Councillor Jane Fogal wanted some local context, asking, “Where are we at if this doesn’t come through – what sort of a pickle are we going to be in?” Steve Grace, the Town’s Manager of Design Engineering, said he didn’t have any figures at this point, and although they do an annual condition survey of roads and bridges, and staff are reviewing a comprehensive asset management program which would provide those figures.

“We might know that we need money, but we don’t really have a financing plan to actually address the needs without at least having some idea of where the federal government is going to play a role in this because we just can’t afford it,” Fogal said, asking Treasure DeSousa, “Is that where we’re at?”

DeSousa said they need both the provincial and federal governments to participate in long-term infrastructure funding because even with the Town earmarking \$100,000 annually for roads, they still have a \$51-million deficit for infrastructure, like roads and sidewalks.

Both Town and Regional Councils unanimously endorsed the FCM motion, which also calls for the Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to work with FCM to make sure the new plan meets the needs of cities and communities.



FUNDRAISING TOURNEY: Approximately \$6,000 was raised at the recent 3 Musketeers golf tournament at Acton Golf Club. More than 100 golfers teed off at the 10th annual event. The proceeds will be donated to the Town to help pay for an outdoor ice surface in Acton. Winners included, from left: Ken Smith, Gary Ferguson, Gord Toth (organizer) Mike Cunningham and Glen Ostrosser. – Submitted photo

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From The Three Musketeers Memorial Golf Tournament Committee

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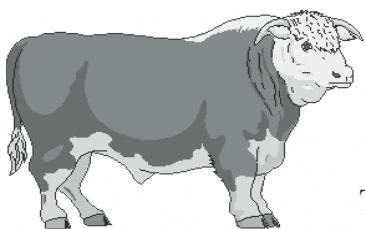
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What’s Your Beef?

Put it in a letter to the Editor!



It’s better than just chewing your cud!

Deadline is Tuesday at noon.

This year we raised over \$6,000 which will go towards our goal of building an outdoor rink in Acton.

Special Thanks to all our golfers and volunteers for your continued support!