

Budget Directions Report approved

On July 15, Halton Regional Council approved the 2016 Budget Directions Report projecting a 1.9 per cent tax increase for Regional services, which would continue Halton's track record of keeping tax increases at or below the rate of inflation. This document also describes the budget principles that will guide the preparation of the 2016 Halton Region Budget and Business Plan.

"The Budget Directions Report helps Halton create a transparent and cost effective Budget and Business Plan for the coming year," said Halton Regional Chair Gary Carr. "Under these guidelines, the 2016 Budget will preserve our strong long-term financial position and AAA credit rating while keeping taxes low. It is the first step in drafting a budget that promotes a high quality of life for everyone in Halton."

The Report is a key resource to ensure that the upcoming budget will align with plans, policies and targets approved by Regional Council. It also outlines how the budget will support the Region's commitment to governing for the future, a strategic priority area in the Halton Region Strategic Action Plan 2015-2018:

- Some Tax Budget priorities and pressures (from programs funded by property taxes) highlighted by the Report include:
- Investment in transportation and the state-of-good-repair capital program for Regional roads;
- Additional program needs identified in the Paramedic Services 10-Year Master Plan;
- Provincial funding shortfalls, including

those for dedicated offload nursing staff at hospitals in Halton;

- Launch of the Senior Tax Deferral Policy, which will help keep low-income seniors in their homes by enabling them to defer property taxes for as long as they remain eligible; and
- Assisting Credit Valley Conservation in addressing Emerald Ash Borer issues in Terra Cotta and Silver Creek Conservation Areas.

Some Rate Budget priorities and pressures (from programs funded by water and wastewater service fees) highlighted by the Report include:

- Expanding Regional water and wastewater infrastructure and increasing needs for system maintenance;
- Continued investment in the state-of-good-repair capital program for Regional water and wastewater infrastructure assets;
- Greater demand for locates (identifying buried infrastructure, such as electric, gas, water or wastewater systems) through the One Call program; and
- Implementation of the Region-wide Basement Flood Mitigation Study.

The 2016 Budget and Business Plan will be reviewed by standing committee between December 1 and 3, 2015. The Budget is scheduled for consideration by Regional Council on December 16, 2015.

To learn more about budgets at Halton Region or to review the 2015 Budget & Business Plan, please visit halton.ca/budget

Referral of CN Logistics Hub Project to an independent panel review welcomed

On July 20, the federal Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Leona Aqlukkaq, ordered that a panel review of CN's proposed Milton Logistics Hub project be undertaken. The Halton Municipalities (the Town of Milton, the Town of Oakville, the Town of Halton Hills, the City of Burlington and Halton Region) welcome the Minister's decision to refer this project to a panel. In accordance with federal environmental assessment legislation, a panel is composed of independent experts who review an environmental assessment, convene public hearings and make conclusions and recommendations on whether or not a project should proceed and if so, under what conditions.

"We are very pleased that the federal government has identified the significance of this project and the public interest in reviewing its many potential environmental effects," said Chair Gary Carr. "The Region very much looks forward to working with

the Minister on this environmental assessment. I also want to publicly acknowledge with thanks the support we received from our federal MPs on getting this independent review. This result is important to all of us living in the Region."

Previously, the Halton Municipalities had written to the Minister and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency expressing their joint interest in ensuring that there is federal-municipal cooperation in carrying out a full review of this rail-truck intermodal facility.


"This rail-truck facility affects federal and municipal responsibilities and needs assessment from both levels of government," said Milton Mayor Gordon Krantz. "The Minister's decision ensures that will happen."

The Minister's announcement also expanded the scope of Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines to be issued by Canada for the project. These changes respond

to several concerns raised by the Halton Municipalities in recent letters to the Minister and Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. In particular, the Minister expanded these information requirements to expressly include:

- municipal land use, including present and approved land uses;
- human safety in relation to motor vehicle safety and pedestrian/bicycle safety; and
- human health, including potential changes in air quality, drinking water quality and noise exposure in the Project vicinity.

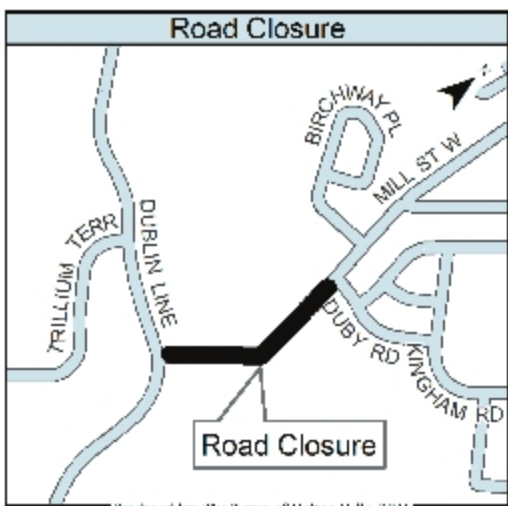
The Minister has also set timelines for the environmental assessment. The review panel is to be established within 150 days, (December 17th, 2015). The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency will be asking for comments from the public on the Terms of Reference for the establishment of the review panel, details of which will be announced at a later date.



TOWN OF HALTON HILLS

NOTICE OF ROAD CLOSURE

The Town of Halton Hills Planning and Infrastructure Department is advising of the temporary road closure of Mill Street West between Dublin Line and Duby Road in Acton. This closure is required to support the reconstruction of Mill Street West. The closure will take place from August 4, 2015 until the fall, 2015.



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