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Halton approves The Citizens' Priorities

Recently, Halton Regional Council approved "The Citizens' Priorities – Halton Region's 2011-2014 Action Plan" which sets out Council's work plan and agenda for the next four years. Included in the Action Plan are 25 priority areas ranging from fiscal responsibility, planning sustainable communities, protecting public health and public engagement, as well as measurable key initiatives and key actions. The plan serves as a framework for decisions on fiscal, policy and operational matters and forms the foundation to effectively align the priorities established within the Region's budget and business plan.

Halton Council undertook a uniquely different approach to developing its Action Plan by ensuring citizens and stakeholders were given an opportunity to have their voices heard. Immediately following last fall's municipal election, Council sought input in a number of ways including a telephone survey of over 1,000 citizens, focus groups with residents from each of Halton's local municipalities, input from Regional councillors, a public meeting, an on-line survey, and the first ever Halton Region Citizens' Reference Panel, a process that saw 36 randomly selected citizens providing recommendations for consideration to the elected officials. The Action Plan is the result of this extensive public consultation.

"By engaging the community early and in innovative ways, we were able to develop priorities, initiatives and actions that support what the community likes about living in Halton and what the community thought should be the focus to make

Halton even better," said Regional Chair Gary Carr. "That is why our Action Plan is called 'The Citizen's Priorities' as it reflects the thoughtful input we received from our residents about what is important to them. I want to thank our residents for the time and effort they put in to helping us develop this plan."

As part of the Action Plan there are specific, measurable key initiatives and annual actions connected to each of the priorities for Council's four year term. The Action Plan has been developed to be a living, responsive document that will be reviewed annually to reflect its progress. Regional Council will also use this annual review period to reflect any changes in the Region's economic outlook or changes in Federal or Provincial government policy direction.

"The Action Plan is a way to measure both Regional Council's and staff's performance and achievements," said Carr. "The annual report card also allows residents to clearly see what has been achieved for the taxpayers of Halton and whether Council and staff met the public's expectations. At the end of four years, the Action Plan will include a complete record and legacy of what Regional Council has done in this term of Council."

"The Citizens' Priorities – Halton Region's 2011-2014 Action Plan" including the key initiatives and key actions can be viewed online at www.halton.ca/ActionPlan. The website will also maintain the report cards outlining the annual progress. The first report card will be issued in early 2012 with another one each year until 2015. Residents are welcome to download the online documents or to call 311 to request a print version.

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