

# BUDGET LOOKS TOWARD INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

HERE'S A LOOK AT THE HIGHLIGHTS OF HALTON'S 2021 BUDGET, WRITES GARY CARR



GARY CARR  
Column

Halton Regional Council recently approved the 2021 Budget and Business Plan.

While we continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and keep our community safe, our 2021 budget also looks toward the future by investing in critical program enhancements and services that our residents and businesses rely on to maintain a high quality of life.

The budget also achieves council's objective to keep property tax increases at, or below, the rate of inflation, with a 1.5 per cent property tax increase for regional services.

When combined with a 2.5 per cent tax increase for the Halton Regional Police Service, the overall regional property tax increase is 1.8 per cent.

It also includes a utility rate increase of 2.6 per cent for water and wastewater services.

Some of the key investments include:

- COVID-19 Response: \$12.3 million for additional costs in public health,

paramedic services, long-term care and housing, as well as facility and technology-related costs, with strategic investments to meet ongoing staffing requirements.

The majority of this investment is funded by the federal and provincial Safe Restart Agreement and additional provincial funding, resulting in a net cost to taxpayers of \$1.2 million;

- State-of-good-repair program: \$8.0 million increase in transfers to support the water and wastewater state-of-good-repair capital program;

- Strategic Investments: \$2.5 million to support the objectives, outcomes and actions identified in the Region's 2019–2022 Strategic Business Plan, and address pressures driven by growth and increased demand for services;

- Children's services: \$1.0 million to maintain the current number of subsidized child-care spaces as a result of provincial funding reductions; and

- Halton Region Community Investment Fund: \$500,000 to meet new and emerging community needs, pivot to virtual service delivery models, respond to public health directives and address Community Safety and Well-Being issues.

To learn more about the Region's 2021 Budget and Business Plan and the investments we are making to keep Halton a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire, please visit [halton.ca](http://halton.ca).

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## THREE STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL INVESTING

FINANCIAL PLANNING DOESN'T HAVE TO BE COMPLICATED, WRITES PETER WATSON



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Column

Successful investing starts with understanding your needs and understanding the characteristics of the investment being considered.

That informs your decision on whether a particular investment is suitable for you.

A simple three-step process can be your formula to successful investing.

### ONE - KNOW YOURSELF

Whether you self-manage or have a financial adviser, the starting point is

understanding yourself.

What are your ultimate objectives, and how comfortable are you with normal investment risk? What risks should you consider taking, based on your personal and financial circumstances?

What is your time frame?

Is this money going to pay for your children's post-secondary education that starts in two or three years? Or is this money going to help you prepare for a comfortable retirement a decade or more away?

### TWO - UNDERSTAND THE INVESTMENT

Investments have many different characteristics. These include expected returns, anticipated volatility, liquidity, risk and costs.

You are buying an investment. Use the same skills as when you are buy-

ing a house or any other significant asset.

What are the pros and cons of a specific investment option?

Before you can make an informed decision, you should understand exactly what you are buying.

### THREE - SUITABILITY

The final decision is whether or not a particular investment is suitable.

This will rely heavily on the first two steps. The better understanding of the first two steps will make the decision both easier to make and better for you.

The issue is whether this "good investment" is good for you.

*Peter Watson, MBA, CFP, R.F.P., CIM, FCSI, of Watson Investments, offers a weekly financial planning column, Dollars and Sense. He can be contacted through [www.watsoninvestments.com](http://www.watsoninvestments.com).*

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