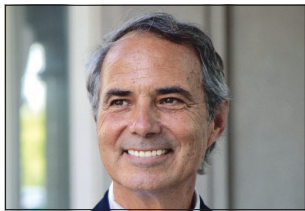


HALTON'S BUDGET AIMS TO KEEP QUALITY OF LIFE HIGH, TAXES LOW

BUDGET INCLUDES VARIETY OF PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES FOR YEAR AHEAD, WRITES GARY CARR



GARY CARR
Column

On Dec. 15, Halton Regional Council approved the 2022 Budget and Business Plan.

It outlines our upcoming investments in programs and services that our community relies on, as well as our ongoing response to COVID-19.

The 2022 Budget keeps property taxes low while preserving the high quality of life in Halton. Its combined property tax increase for regional and police services is 2.2 per cent, and its rate increase for water and wastewater services is 2.8 per cent.

Some key investments include:

- COVID-19 Response: \$13.9 million for additional costs in Public Health, Paramedic Services, Long-Term Care, Children's Services and Housing, as well as facility and technology-related costs. The majority of this investment is funded by the Federal and Provincial Safe Restart Agreement and COVID-19 Recovery Funding for Municipalities, and additional Provincial funding, resulting in a net cost to taxpayers of \$711,000.
- Public Health and Long-

Term Care: \$2.0 million to provide needed capacity in Public Health and Long-Term Care, partially funded by anticipated Provincial funding resulting in a net cost to taxpayers of \$751,000.

- Halton's Digital Strategy: \$1.3 million to enhance digital services by transforming business processes and services to ensure complete, high-quality online service delivery

- Strategic Investments: \$2.7 million to maintain service levels and support the objectives, outcomes and actions identified in the Region's 2019–2022 Strategic Business Plan;

- Housing Services: \$2.1 million increased investment in the Halton Rental Assistance Program to support an increased number of rent supplement units. This investment includes one-time funding resulting in a net cost to taxpayers of \$573,000 in 2022.

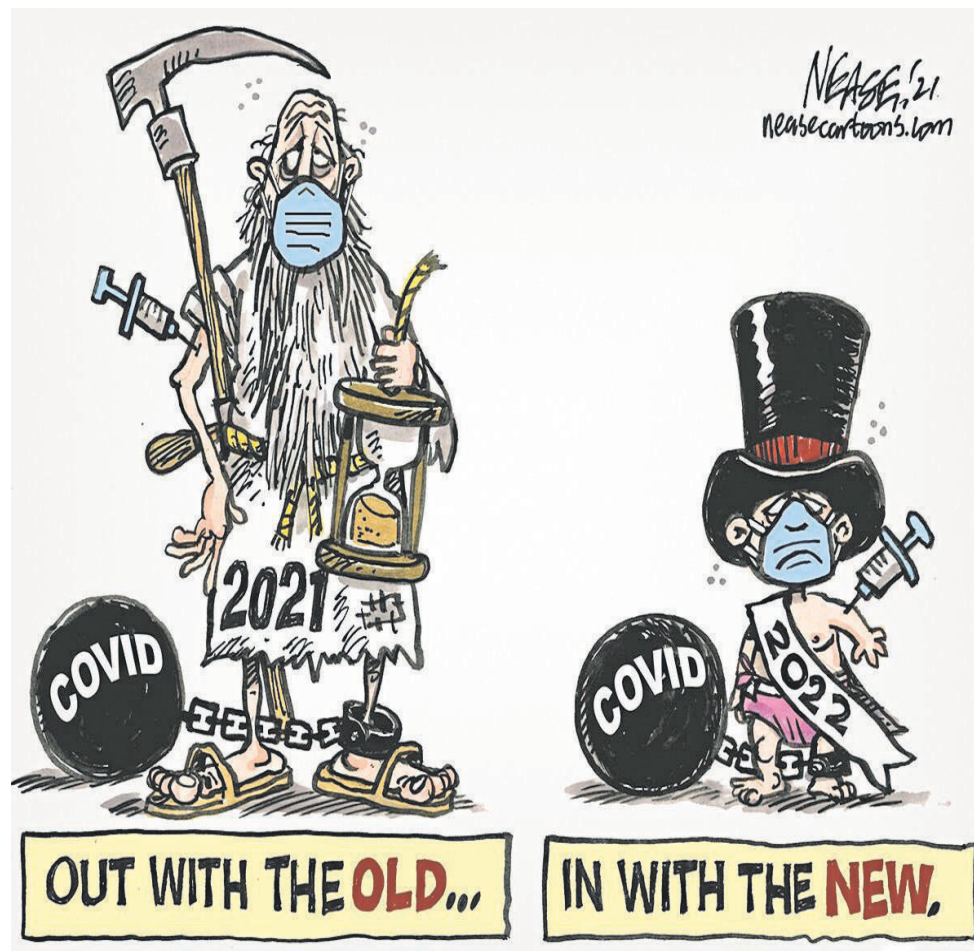
- Employment and Social Services: \$300,000 to increase food security for Ontario Works recipients and their families.

- Halton Region Community Investment Fund (HRCIF): \$250,000 to meet new and emerging community needs and to continue with recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- State-of-Good-Repair Program: \$6.4 million increase in transfers to support the water and wastewater state-of-good-repair capital program.

By making strategic investments in our community, we help keep Halton a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire.

Gary Carr is regional chair of Halton Region. He can be reached at gary.carr@halton.ca.



TIME FOR A CAREER CHANGE?

RETHINK YOUR CURRENT OCCUPATION TO SEE IF YOU SHOULD MAKE A CHANGE, WRITES PETER WATSON



PETER WATSON
Column

Financial success starts with your ability to earn an income.

Your employment is not just a job, it is your current livelihood and your future financial security.

It makes perfect sense to periodically evaluate your working life.

Consider making this your new year's resolution.

The idea for this column originated from hearing how hard it is for restaurants to hire staff.

The pandemic shut down that sector and staff

were laid off.

This provided some with the opportunity to rethink their careers.

Some have returned to school to upgrade their skills.

Others will use their multi-tasking ability, plus their strong personality, to apply those skills to a different job.

My recommendation is to invest some time and effort into rethinking your career to see if doing something different may enhance your life.

Break down all the plus-

es and minuses of your current employment.

Then consider your ideal job in terms of what you are good at, what makes you happy, location of employment and flexibility, including the ability to work remotely and your remuneration target.

I recommend capitalizing on our changing world to see if you can make a career upgrade.

Of all the hours you are awake, your job, including commuting, is likely the single task that takes up the most time.

Do you need to make a change?

Peter Watson, of Watson Investments MBA, CFP®, R.F.P., CIM®, FCSI offers a weekly financial planning column, Dollars & Sense. He can be reached through www.watsoninvestments.com.

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