

# Growth plan not fair for Halton

Halton residents may have seen recent media coverage about the launch of a "fairness campaign".

Halton Region, along with our four local municipalities— the City of Burlington, the Town of Halton Hills, the Town of Milton, and the Town of Oakville— are raising our concerns about the provincial *Places to Grow* plan directly with the provincial government. In fact, Halton's regional council adopted a resolution to press the case for fairness at regional council on March 7.

Our fairness campaign is all about advising the provincial government that we cannot accommodate the growth targets specified in the plan unless the Province commits to providing Halton with the necessary financial tools and funding commitments to address municipal infrastructure needs.

The provincial *Places to Grow* plan, approved by the Province in 2006, outlines the Province's vision for how, and where, municipalities will grow over the next 25 years. The *Places to Grow* plan envisions Halton Region to grow its population by 68 per cent over the next 25 years to 780,000 residents. Accommodating this growth will require more than \$8.6 billion to cover the necessities of our quality of life such as hospital beds, schools, emergency services stations, roads, transit and waste management.

Halton is a growing community committed to maintaining an excellent quality of life for its residents through the development of complete and healthy communities. The quality of life, character and the values of each community in Halton must be preserved through the Province's *Places to Grow* plan. The Province's plan requires Halton and its local municipalities to grow, but the Province has not delivered the necessary financial tools and provincial funding commitments to allow the Region to achieve

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these requirements. Without the necessary financial tools and commitments, Halton Region cannot meet the objective of the plan. The mayors of Halton's four municipalities and I believe it is unfair to expect Halton taxpayers to absorb the costs associated with a growth plan mandated by the Province.

To address the shortfalls, we are asking the Province to provide an enhanced municipal infrastructure funding program and make immediate changes to the Development Charges Act, address Greater Toronto Area pooling inequities, and provincial cost sharing requirements. Although the Province is engaged in a Municipal Fiscal Services Review, this review is not timely enough. We are calling for immediate action to allow Halton to address the current infrastructure deficits and respond to the objectives in the *Places to Grow* plan.

I urge Halton's taxpayers to visit Halton's web site at [www.halton.ca](http://www.halton.ca) to find out more about the *Fairness for Halton* campaign. On line you will find a postcard that you can forward to your local MPP and MP to support our response, or you can contact Halton Region at 905-825-6000, toll free 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-442-5866), TTY 905-827-9833 for more information.

—Gary Carr is the chair of Halton Region

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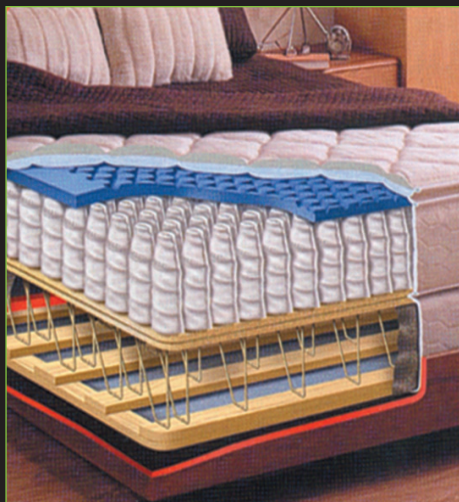
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