

Your vote helps shape Halton's future



by Regional Chair Gary Carr

The October 6 provincial election is only days away. Through our advocacy platform, *A Strong Halton for a Strong Ontario - Partners for the Future*, Halton Region is informing the community and local candidates about the challenges facing the Region and what Halton requests of the next Provincial government.

Today more than 500,000 people live in Halton Region. The Provincial *Places to Grow Plan* mandates that Halton's population must increase to accommodate 780,000 people by the year 2031. When I talk to citizens in the community, I am often asked how Halton's Regional Council can help ensure that growth pays for itself. Throughout this campaign, we have been clear that the extensive growth targets set by the Province must have adequate funding for infrastructure.

The combined municipal-provincial infrastructure needs of Halton to 2031 are expected to reach approximately \$8.6 billion. Our position is that sustainable and long term predictable funding is needed - to build as well as to maintain our infrastructure - so that Halton taxpayers do not bear the burden of growth.

Ensuring provincial funding for public health and social services keeps pace with growth is another issue of critical importance to the Region. Administration and funding of services such as Emergency Medical Services (EMS), child care, housing and social assistance was downloaded to municipal governments in the previous decade. Regional Council advocated to upload the cost of services back to the Province and end GTA regional municipalities having to pay for Toronto social services from GTA pooling dollars.

The current Provincial government responded with the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review, agreeing that GTA pooling will be phased out, costs for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and drug benefits would be uploaded in 2011 and costs for Ontario Works and court security would be fully uploaded to the Province by 2018. Halton Region wants the next Provincial government to honour this commitment.

On October 6, please remember to vote - your vote helps shape Halton's future. Together we can ensure that Halton remains a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire. Visit our website www.halton.ca/ontarioelection2011 and read the responses from local candidates about how they would resolve issues facing Halton.

Halton's questions for provincial election candidates

Q: How will you and your government ensure that infrastructure funding programs are targeted to accommodate growth in Halton to 2031, as mandated by the Places to Grow Plan?

Q: What will you and your government do to ensure that sustained funding exists for regional infrastructure renewal in Halton, as well as infrastructure expansion for provincially funded institutions such as hospitals?

Q: How will you and your government work toward amending the *Development Charges Act* and otherwise ensure that Halton Region may recover the full costs of growth, including GO Transit development?

Q: How will you and your government honour and expedite the transit projects promised for Halton Region in *MoveOntario 2020* and the *Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan - The Big Move*?

Q: How will you and your government ensure the protection of the Niagara Escarpment and agricultural lands from quarry expansion and the Niagara-GTA and GTA West Corridors?

Q: What will your government do to ensure financing is secured and the clean up of Randle Reef is completed?

Q: How will you and your government assist Halton in attracting and retaining businesses while creating high quality jobs in Halton?

Q: How will you and your government work with Halton to resolve EMS offload delays, ensure that the 50:50 cost sharing between the Province and Municipalities is met and work toward the establishment of a municipally managed regional dispatch centre funded by the Province?

Q: Will you and your government honour the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review Agreement?

Q: How will you and your government move forward on the provincial commitment to consolidate housing and homelessness programs without incurring greater costs for Halton Region?

Q: How will you and your government work with the Federal government to ensure that the new *Affordable Housing Framework, 2011 - 2014* provides assistance for Halton Region to build and rehabilitate social housing?

Q: Will you and your government maintain or enhance the current level of Best Start funding to support Halton's children until the *Early Learning and Child Care* program is fully implemented? Will you and your government extend and sustain the *Early Learning and Child Care* program funding to meet Halton's future demand for child care spaces?

Q: Are you willing to vote against your party's platform on issues affecting Halton Region?

The candidate responses to these questions are posted online www.halton.ca/ontarioelection2011.

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We welcome your feedback. Contact Access Halton at accesshalton@halton.ca.

Halton Region Meeting Schedule

Oct. 5, 9:30 a.m. Regional Council
Oct. 10 Offices closed for Thanksgiving
Oct. 18, 9:30 a.m. Health & Social Services Cte
Oct. 19, 9:30 a.m. Planning & Public Works Cte
Oct. 19, 1:30 p.m. Administration & Finance Cte
Meetings can be viewed at www.halton.ca.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you will have an accessibility or accommodation need at a Halton Region hosted event or meeting.