

The Regional Municipality of Halton

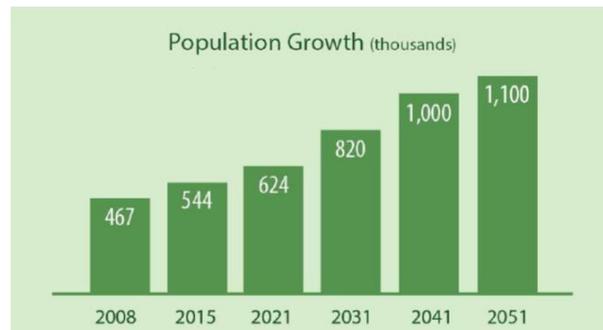
2022 Federal Pre-Budget Consultation
Submission to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
Finance

February 25, 2022



Introduction

Halton is home to more than 610,000 residents in four communities. Along with its Local Municipalities (City of Burlington, the Town of Halton Hills, Town of Milton, and Town of Oakville) Halton Region is an effective two-tier government recognized for its strong financial position, safe communities, natural environment, progressive approach to urban development, and citizen-focused reliable services. Halton Region is one of the quickest growing communities in Canada, with an expected population of 1.1 million by 2051.



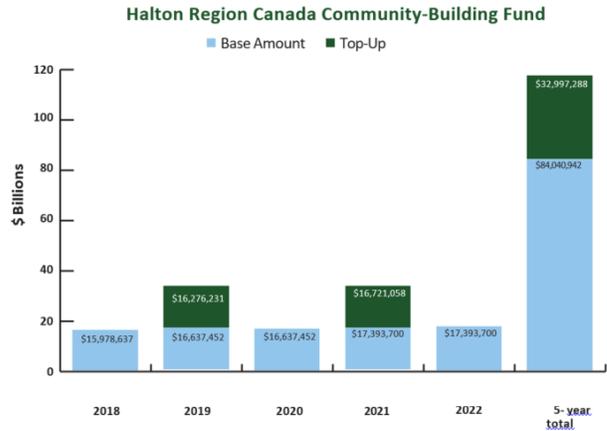
Halton Region continues to benefit from a strong partnership with the Federal Government to ensure the ongoing delivery of essential services and a safe and strong recovery, while providing a continued response to COVID-19. Halton Region shares the Federal Government's priority and commitment of protecting the health and safety of Canadians while focusing on strengthening the economy through creating jobs, and building greener, competitive and resilient communities. In order to support a strong future, Halton is requesting the Federal Government to ensure:

- Supports for a strong recovery for businesses and municipalities
- Consistent supply of vaccinations
- Investments in roads and infrastructure
- Supporting safe, affordable and accessible government-assisted housing
- Addressing climate change and supporting resilient communities
- Immediate access to broadband internet
- Finalizing a national child care plan for Ontario
- Protecting the health and safety of Halton residents

Investments in roads and infrastructure

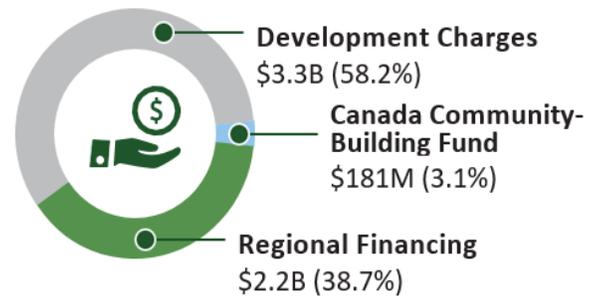
Transportation and infrastructure continue to be priority issues for Halton residents. Halton Region is committed to creating complete communities that ensure a high quality of life for residents and a competitive economy. Investments in infrastructure make Halton Region a desirable place to live and do business.

Making significant investments in infrastructure is a priority for Regional Council. In March 2021, the Federal Government proposed an additional \$2.2 billion through the Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF) to address short-term infrastructure priorities in municipalities and First Nation Communities. In August 2021, Halton received \$16.7 million of the \$2.2 billion one-time funding from the Federal Government, which was welcomed and will be critical in supporting the Halton community.



While Halton Region is appreciative of the Federal Government’s Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan, our 10-year capital infrastructure program totals \$5.7 billion, including \$2.4 billion to fund the state of good repair. Funding for necessary infrastructure together with outdated funding tools that do not provide long-term sustainable funding continues to be a challenge for our growing community.

2022-2031 Capital Financing: \$5.7B



Halton requests:

- ❑ In addition to Development Charges, the Federal Government needs to develop updated funding tools and mechanisms for delivering long-term sustainable infrastructure funding and investments to support municipal infrastructure planning.

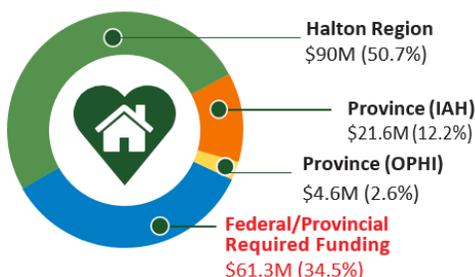
Supporting safe, affordable and accessible government-assisted housing

The provision of safe, affordable, accessible housing is a critical component of fostering healthy communities. For many residents, affordable homeownership remains out of reach. Through Halton’s Comprehensive Housing Strategy, Halton Region has made tremendous progress in preserving existing housing stock and creating new housing opportunities for residents, including:

- An average of 3,600 new housing units delivered annually for the last 10 years;
- Over 30,000 units available for development in the Region in the near term; and
- Achieving 30% housing affordability in 6 of the last 10 years.

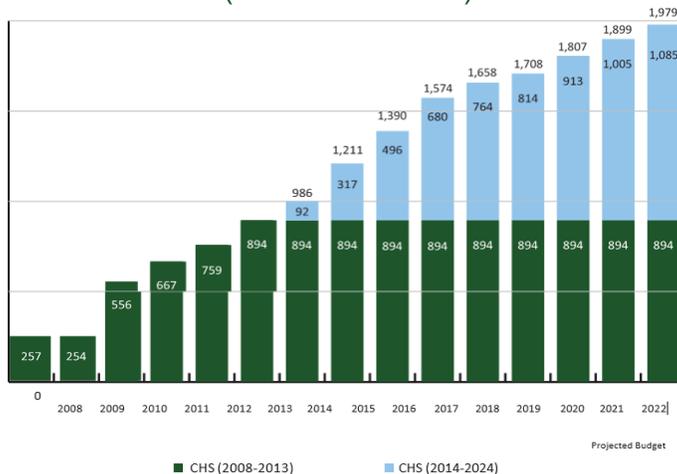
Halton Region is investing \$107 million in our social infrastructure through the 10-year Comprehensive Housing Strategy (2014-2024) to provide government-assisted housing options to low income residents.

Comprehensive Housing Strategy
 10Year Capital Funding Requirements: \$177.5M
 (900 opportunities)



By the end of 2021, Halton will have created a total of 1,899 government-assisted housing opportunities since 2008. Halton is projecting to have 1,979 government-assisted housing opportunities by the end of 2022.

New Assisted Housing Opportunities in Halton
 (Total Cumulative)



Halton Region's portfolio of housing opportunities can create up to 600 new units over time with estimated costs of \$451 million. Inclusive of the 2021 contribution of \$7 million (for supportive housing units in Burlington), the Region's Comprehensive Housing Strategy financing plan provides for \$174 million to 2031. Federal and provincial commitments are required to make up for the \$270 million funding shortfall.

Halton requests:

- Federal funding of approximately \$270 million over 10 years to ensure the success of all projects in Halton Region's housing portfolio.
- Predictable long-term, sustainable, allocation based federal/provincial funding to match the Region's commitment, in affordable and assisted housing.

Immediate access to broadband internet

Reliable access to broadband internet drives economic investment, job creation, and enables small businesses to effectively compete in a digital world. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical need for universal access to broadband internet services to support online learning, mental health resources, family and government support services, and working from home capabilities.

Halton Region continues to advocate to the Provincial and Federal Governments to increase broadband connectivity in Halton's rural and urban communities which has resulted in over 15 rural Halton applications for Provincial and Federal broadband funding. To date, eight projects have been awarded, addressing 1,410 or 31% of the approximately 4,631 underserved rural Halton homes and businesses.

In addition, Halton continues to plan for the coordinated implementation of next generation digital access technologies, including 5G, to ensure affordable and equitable access for Halton rural and urban homes and businesses. Halton appreciates the Federal Government's commitment to ensure that all Canadians will have access to broadband by 2030, but this is too far in the distant future, immediate access to connectivity is needed.

Halton requests:

- The award of the remaining seven rural Halton broadband funding applications.
- Ensure awarded fiber investments through the UBF/ICON programs support 5G backhaul requirements and the 1Gbps target.
- Ensure that fiber investments include urban underserved pockets.
- The Federal and Provincial Governments and telecommunication providers ensure affordability of fiber and 5G service.

Finalizing a national child care plan for Ontario

Child care plays a key role in the economic and social recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic by allowing parents to return to work, supporting early childhood development, and improving educational outcomes. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a

decrease in the number of children enrolled in care, and licensed child care operators are struggling with the financial impacts of COVID-19 response and recovery.

The creation of accessible and affordable spaces for Halton families is critical to support parents' return to work and eliminates the financial barriers to high quality, inclusive child care. Halton Regional Council is encouraged by the Canada-wide early learning and child care plan and is eager for the agreement for Ontario to be signed.

The longer the negotiations take, the longer Ontario families have to wait for affordable child care. A national system of early learning and licensed child care services that are high quality, affordable, inclusive, and accessible for all families is in the best interest of all Canadians and an immediate equitable signed agreement with the Province of Ontario is necessary.

Halton requests:

- The Federal and Provincial Governments reach a timely and equitable child care agreement that acknowledges the provincial investment in full-day kindergarten and delivers affordable and accessible child care spaces for Ontario families.

Addressing climate change and supporting resilient communities

Halton Region is committed to responding to climate change by reducing the impacts to the environment, ensuring its infrastructure and services are resilient, and that risks associated with severe weather events are mitigated. Halton has committed \$85 million to flood mitigation strategies and continues to make this a priority as well as reducing our carbon footprint.

Halton requests:

- Ongoing, sustainable funding and climate change mitigation support to enable municipalities to deliver resilient communities.

Supports for a strong recovery for businesses and municipalities

Municipalities and businesses have experienced a significant increase in costs and large decreases in revenue while delivering critical services and responding to the new normal. Canada's economic recovery will rely on municipalities continuing to deliver economic stimulus, infrastructure projects, childcare, public health services, and water and wastewater treatment while addressing increased costs in long-term care and public health in the post-pandemic world. Halton Region's recovery relies on the Federal and Provincial Governments continuing to work together to address the long-term costs resulting from COVID-19 and beyond.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a negative impact on main street businesses. The survival of the small business sector is essential to the country's recovery efforts. Online and digital channels are important tools for main street businesses to interact with customers and generate revenue. The Digital Main Street Program has supported over 1,100 businesses in Halton and a long-term investment would allow more Halton businesses to benefit from this program.

In addition, workplace transmission of COVID-19 has highlighted the crucial need for paid sick time. In November 2021, the Federal Government introduced legislation that would provide ten days of permanent paid sick leave per year to workers in the federally regulated private sector. However, many workers outside of the federally regulated private sector still do not have access to paid sick days. This is a barrier to COVID-19 control measures, including testing and isolation, due to the fear of income loss and financial hardship.

Halton requests:

- The continued delivery of relief funding for 2022, to support ongoing COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.
- Renew funding of the expanded Digital Main Street program and Digital Transformation grants in 2022-23 to help Halton businesses benefit from this program.
- The Federal Government consult with provinces, territories, and other stakeholders to develop a national action plan to legislate paid sick leave across the country, while respecting provincial-territorial jurisdiction and recognizing the unique needs of small business owners.

Consistent supply of vaccinations

COVID-19 vaccinations continue to be an important step in Canada's response to reduce the spread of COVID-19, while keeping Canadians healthy, and avoiding further lockdowns that impact the economy. There continues to be a demand for vaccines particularly with the roll out of 5-11 year olds and third and fourth doses/boosters for eligible groups. A consistent supply and equitable distribution of vaccines is critical to continue to meet the needs of Halton residents.

Halton requests:

- The Federal Government procure sufficient vaccines to ensure adequate supply for vaccinating children and third and fourth doses/boosters for eligible groups.

Conclusion

Halton Region appreciates the Federal Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to share its priority of protecting the health and safety of Canadians while seeking to manage a safe and responsible re-opening of the economy. Strong, collaborative partnerships between all levels of Government remain imperative to strengthen and build a better economy and strong communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the 2022 Federal budget. For more information about Halton's advocacy priorities, please visit Halton.ca.