

TOWN OF HALTON HILLS



INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

2024

BUDGET & BUSINESS PLAN



COMMUNITY PROFILE

Welcome to Halton Hills

The Town of Halton Hills is located on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit and the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee. With a population of approximately 63,000, Halton Hills consists of two urban centres, Georgetown and Acton, Esquesing Township, the Halton Hills Premier Gateway employment area, three hamlets – Glen Williams, Stewarttown and Norval – and several smaller settlements.

Halton Hills has long been recognized for its natural beauty, active agricultural community, high quality of life and proximity to major centres, including Brampton, Mississauga and Toronto.

The Town prides itself on maintaining a small-town feel while offering residents the amenities of larger municipalities. The slogan 'small town living at its best' is reflective of the Town's exceptionally high quality of life. Maintaining balance while ensuring the Town's long-term prosperity and high quality of life becomes particularly important as the Town prepares to meet provincial growth targets of an additional 20,000 people by 2031 and significantly more by 2051. Central to the municipality's approach to growth planning is its strong interest in energy conservation and sustainable development; in particular the need to take urgent action on climate change. This interest is reflected in the [Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy](#) (also known as "Imagine Halton Hills"), which based on extensive community engagement, and outlines a vision to 2060 for a more sustainable Halton Hills. The Strategy is organized into four pillars:

Cultural Vibrancy:

A culturally vibrant community where culture is integrated with our economic, social and environmental lives and offers an opportunity for individual fulfillment through access to sports, recreation, arts, culture and heritage.

Economic Prosperity:

A community where economic prosperity is based on a green, diversified and resilient economy, and the strengthening of the existing industrial base.

Environmental Health:

A community where integrated, thriving natural systems are valued, actively protected, and enhanced for long-term health and enjoyment.

Social Well-being:

A healthy and safe community based on an ethic of caring and social equity.

In addition to the brief highlights on the following pages, additional information on initiatives implemented in 2022 that assisted in advancing the four pillars of the Community Sustainability Strategy, can be found in the departmental Business Plans.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

► CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and Truth and Reconciliation



The Town is committed to advancing Truth and Reconciliation and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – both as an employer and a provider of public services. To actively promote an equitable, inclusive, diverse and welcoming community the Town has:

- Launched the first phase of the development of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy & Action Plan.
- Endorsed the Halton Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Charter and joined the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities.
- Recognized and provided associated programming and education campaigns for significant dates including Black History Month, Indigenous History Month, Pride, Emancipation Day, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and Treaties Recognition Week.
- Raised the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Every Child Matters flags permanently at Town Hall, the Library and Cultural Centre, and the Acton Arena and Community Centre. These flags will also be flown at the Acton Arena and Community Centre.
- Included land and treaty acknowledgments at the beginning of Council meetings and some public consultations, events and programming.
- Installed land and treaty acknowledgment plaques within thirteen Town facilities.
- Installed an Indigenous crosswalk in Glen Williams in honour of the indigenous children who did not return home from residential schools, to show support for the survivors who did and to serve as a daily reminder of the important Truth and Reconciliation work that needs to be undertaken in Halton Hills and across the country.

COMMUNITY PROFILE



CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and Truth and Reconciliation (continued)

- Developed a process in consultation with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation for formal consultation as the Treaty Holders for development projects, plans and studies.
- Increased specialized transit service and enhanced accessibility by improving cross-boundary locations for better access to neighbouring municipal and regional transit services. ActiVan riders have expanded options to destinations and transit connections in Milton, Oakville, Brampton, and Mississauga.
- Provided inclusive recreation through one-on-one inclusion support for children in summer day camp by hiring a team of professional instructors with specific expertise and skills in this area. In 2023, 8% of total summer registrations were supported by Inclusion professionals.
- Launched a pilot program for youth and young adults ages 20 – 35 years with exceptionalities at the Acton Youth Centre.
- Presented diverse and inclusive programming year-round in coordination with the Halton Hills Public Library and community partners to ensure the community has access to a wide range of perspectives and voices.



COMMUNITY PROFILE



CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Arts & Heritage

- The Town of Halton Hills boasts a thriving arts and culture community that contributed \$44.7 million to the local economy in 2020 (the latest year that data is available).
- Annual award-winning Culture Days celebrations engage residents and visitors in free and by donation cultural experiences - the 2023 edition offered 118 free in-person, digital and self-led activities.
- The “Under Wraps” and “Bell Box Mural Program” enliven the Town’s streetscape by exhibiting artwork on Town-owned utility boxes and Bell Boxes across Town.
- The Helson Gallery delivered Virtual School Programs, family-friendly drop-in art activities, community programs and extended its hours to increase public access.
- TIFF OnScreen at the JET brings the best of Canadian and international films to the community through a partnership between the Town, Halton Hills Public Library and the TIFF Film Circuit.
- Funded community arts-engaged projects through The Artist Next Door, supporting the on-going creation of links between individual artistic practice and the Halton Hills community.
- The Town has adopted its first Cultural Heritage Strategy to identify, protect, and celebrate Halton Hills’ rich and diverse cultural heritage resources. The final strategy can be found on letshalkhaltonhills.ca/CHMP.
- Cultural facilities include the Helson Gallery, John Elliott Theatre, and two Halton Hills Public Library branches.



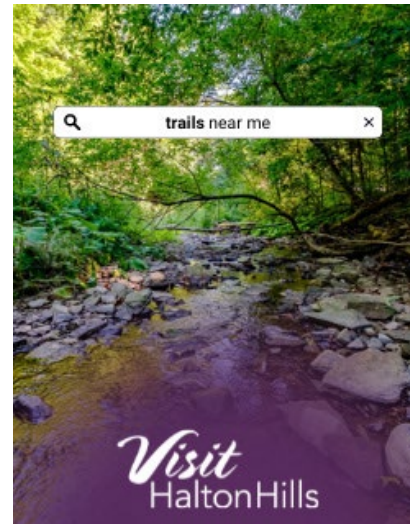
COMMUNITY PROFILE



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tourism

In 2023, for the first time since the onset of the pandemic, Economic Development was able to deliver tourism content and deliverables to visitor markets. This year was an opportunity to engage with tourists that have visited Halton Hills in the past, engage with tourism businesses and create brand recognition to help new visitors discover Halton Hills.



COMMUNITY PROFILE



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tourism

To actively promote an equitable, inclusive, diverse and welcoming community the Town undertook the following actions:

- Designed and distributed a new tourism brochure with the support of the RTO3 partnership fund.
- Attended local festivals and events to promote tourism sector and collected over 300 visitor surveys to better understand visitor spending and advertising awareness.
- Performed outreach to existing and new tourism stakeholders to reengage with local and regional opportunities.
- Launched a marketing campaign through Metroland Media targeting neighbouring municipalities and doubled traffic to VisitHaltonHills.ca compared to 2021.
- Continued membership with the Culinary Tourism Alliance; conducted outreach to food businesses and added 21 locations to the Halton Hills Great Taste of Ontario Passport; created printed advertising to reach a wider audience and engage restaurant staff.
- Tourism Advisory Committee continued to meet quarterly to provide insight into tourism deliverables.
- Created themed day trips and blogs geared towards target visitor markets featuring top tourist assets including: weekends in Glen Williams, canoeing at Fairy Lake, farm markets and harvest season, and Holiday activities.
- Grew @visithaltonhills Instagram audience through reels.
- Received government funding to create new tourism signage in high traffic pedestrian areas in 2023.



COMMUNITY PROFILE

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Local Economy

- To ensure Halton Hills' economic prosperity, the Town is implementing a comprehensive Economic Development and Tourism Strategy. This includes a focus on advancing a strong and diverse economy that includes the target sectors of advanced manufacturing, food and beverage processing, clean technology and agri-business.
- The Town offers existing and potential businesses a strategic platform for success, proximity to world-class markets, a distinct community with an ideal balance between urban and rural environments, and an outstanding quality of life.
- Halton Hills' Premier Gateway is a growing and thriving employment area, offering strategically located lands with easy access to major transportation linkages. A number of leading companies have already located in the Premier Gateway, and the area will continue to be the Town's main area of job growth through 2041, accounting for approximately 90 percent of all forecasted employment growth. The Town advocates to reduce corridor protection and extend regional servicing within the Premier Gateway to maximize use of the existing designated urban land.
- Halton Hills' Economic Development and Investment Attraction divisions provide a full suite of high-quality services and supports to the business community that help foster a prosperous economy and enhance quality of life. These include:
 - Financial incentives via the Community Improvement Plan (CIP)
 - Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) programming
 - Investment attraction, expansion and relocation
 - Business Concierge service
 - Site selection assistance
 - Market research
 - Industry engagement
 - Workforce development
 - Supporting and advancing affordable housing projects and initiatives
 - Amplifying tourism's economic benefits
 - Leveraging the arts and cultural sector and high quality of life to attract investment

By the Numbers (2021):



2,000+*
Businesses



21,487+
Jobs

\$2.5 Billion
in Gross Domestic Product

Top 5 Sectors by Job

4,961

Retail Trade

4,345

Manufacturing

1,663

Healthcare &
Social Assistance

1,405

Accommodation
& Food Services

1,405

Educational
Services

* with 1+ employees

COMMUNITY PROFILE

▶ ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Natural Assets Landscape:

Council has identified the environment and natural assets as key strategic priorities. To protect its natural assets and to address the impact of changing climate led and/or supported by Climate Change and Asset Management, the Town is implementing numerous initiatives, including:

- In partnership with CVC, developing a natural assets management strategy for different natural asset categories, such as wetlands, forests, rivers, meadows and open green spaces.
- Rolling out the Town's Climate Change Adaptation Plan and leveraging existing natural assets in Halton Hills, e.g., flood protection, recreation, carbon storage and sequestration, urban heat island reduction, air quality improvement and property value appreciation.
- Establishing a tree canopy management program to preserve, protect, and enhance the overall tree canopy recognizing that trees contribute to overall community beautification, well-being, air quality improvement and carbon storage and sequestration.
- Implementing Phase 1 of a Privately-Owned Tree Management Strategy to roll out education and incentives programs to support the community in taking care of trees.
- Conducted a natural assets vulnerability assessment to evaluate the risks of climate change on natural assets.
- Creating a Climate Change Adaptation video series, which includes a dedicated video for natural assets, to educate residents on the importance of natural assets and their contribution to the environment.
- Supporting community organizations in contributing to the goals of environmental stewardship and natural assets preservation through the Climate change Investment Fund and implementing projects to protect the environment and its ecosystem.
- Planting trees and supporting community tree plantings: in 2022, about 3,025 trees were planted through capital projects, donations, and community partnerships. An additional 1,200 trees were sold through the subsidized Earth Day Tree Sales program.
- Completed the Fairy Lake Water Quality Study Technical Report and initiated public consultation.
- Supported 17 community groups (including Trees for Halton Hills and SNAP) with advancing stewardship initiatives such as community gardens, wildlife guardianship, and the planting of 826 trees and shrubs.



COMMUNITY PROFILE

► SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Recreation

In 2023, Recreation and Parks continued to deliver greatly needed programs and initiatives that supported community wellness, active living and community vibrancy. Highlights from the past year included:

- Launched the 50+ Seniors Coalition - a network of service providers committed to addressing the needs of Halton Hills aging population.
- Launched a pilot program called “Friday Activity Night” a social program designed to support young adults ages 20 - 35 years with exceptionalities.
- Upgraded Splash Pad equipment at Prospect Park & Dominion Gardens.
- Implemented a full return to pre-pandemic Recreation Camp programming, achieving 95% of full capacity.
- Launched a Seniors Fitness Instructors Course (SFIC) to build capacity and enable residents (18+ years) to obtain fitness certification at no cost (Funded by the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility).
- Reviewed and updated the Community Grant Program (CGP).
- Recruited, trained, supervised, and recognized 400 volunteers to enhance recreation programs, advance stewardship initiatives, and contribute to Hillsview Active Living Centre activities with more than 17,500 service hours.
- Supported community groups with planning and delivering 64 community events (7 of which were new) that engaged 110,000 attendees.
- Delivered ‘Hey Neighbour’ programming consisting of 2 Open Streets events, 6 Play Streets, 20 community engagements, and a “Good Neighbour Day” special event (a national initiative).
- Hosted the Annual Hillsview Active Living Centre recognition breakfast as part of National Volunteer Week and awarded two volunteers for their exceptional contributions to the community (in partnership with Community Development Halton).

COMMUNITY PROFILE

► SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Housing

- Council has identified affordable housing as a key priority. The Town is addressing this issue as follows:
 - Incorporated affordable housing in the Town's new Community Improvement Plan.
 - Amended the Comprehensive Zoning By-law and the Two-Unit House Registration By-law to permit accessory apartments (i.e. second units) in most single-family homes, and promoting the benefits of Two-Unit house creation.
 - Developed Secondary Plans for the Georgetown expansion (Vision Georgetown) and downtown Georgetown (Destination Downtown) areas, including policies to contribute to the 30 percent affordable housing regional target for new units.
 - Building relationships with higher orders of government and the private/non-profit sector to identify partnership opportunities for affordable housing development.
 - Completed a community engagement and awareness strategy for affordable housing which included public consultation through Let's Talk Halton Hills, a virtual Open House, and various school engagements.
 - Worked with the Affordable Housing Working Group to develop and recommend actions that address the Town's affordable housing needs.
 - Assessing and advancing Town-owned properties to facilitate the provision of additional affordable housing.
 - Advanced 17 Guelph Street, a Town surplus property, for a mixed-income affordable housing development with 12 units. Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments have been approved by Council. A Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) has been issued jointly with Halton Region
 - Put in place a new approach to continue to advance housing affordability through a cross-departmental approach and by leveraging Halton Region's expertise and role in delivering affordable housing.

Education by the Numbers

2 | Public High Schools

1 | Catholic High School

14 | Elementary Schools

5 | Catholic Elementary Schools



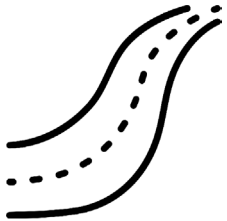
Housing Target

The Mayor committed to meeting the 9,500 homes Housing Target assigned by the Province to the Town to be constructed by 2031. A Housing Pledge was submitted to the Province setting out the Town led initiatives that demonstrate actions being undertaken by the municipality to meet the Housing Target by 2031, which include those intended to create more housing and affordable unit opportunities in Town.

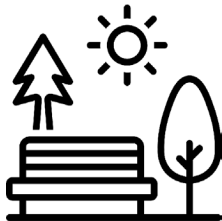
COMMUNITY PROFILE

▶ SNAPSHOT OF TOWN SERVICES

1,100 lane km
of roadway



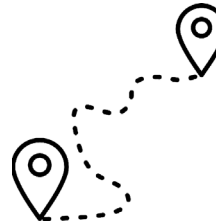
194 ha of managed parkland,
564 ha of open space land



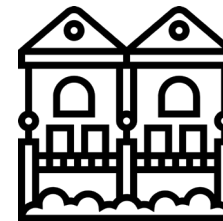
264 km
of sidewalks



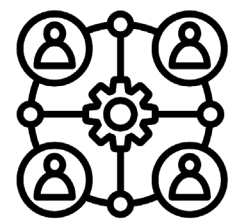
32 km
of managed trails



50 designated
heritage buildings



200+ culture
programs presented



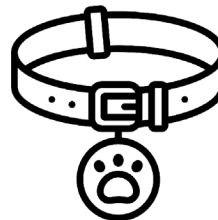
500,000+ materials
checked out



37,774 recreation participants



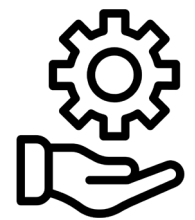
571 dog licenses issued,
247 new & 324 renewed



10,145 resident form
submissions (haltonhills.ca)



2,428 requests
for service



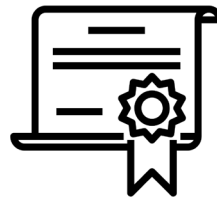
1,117 burn
permits issued



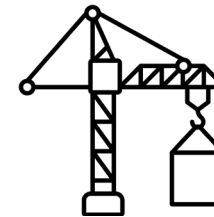
858 building
permits issued



564 business licenses
renewed, 184 new licenses



4M+ sq. ft. of business
concierge projects

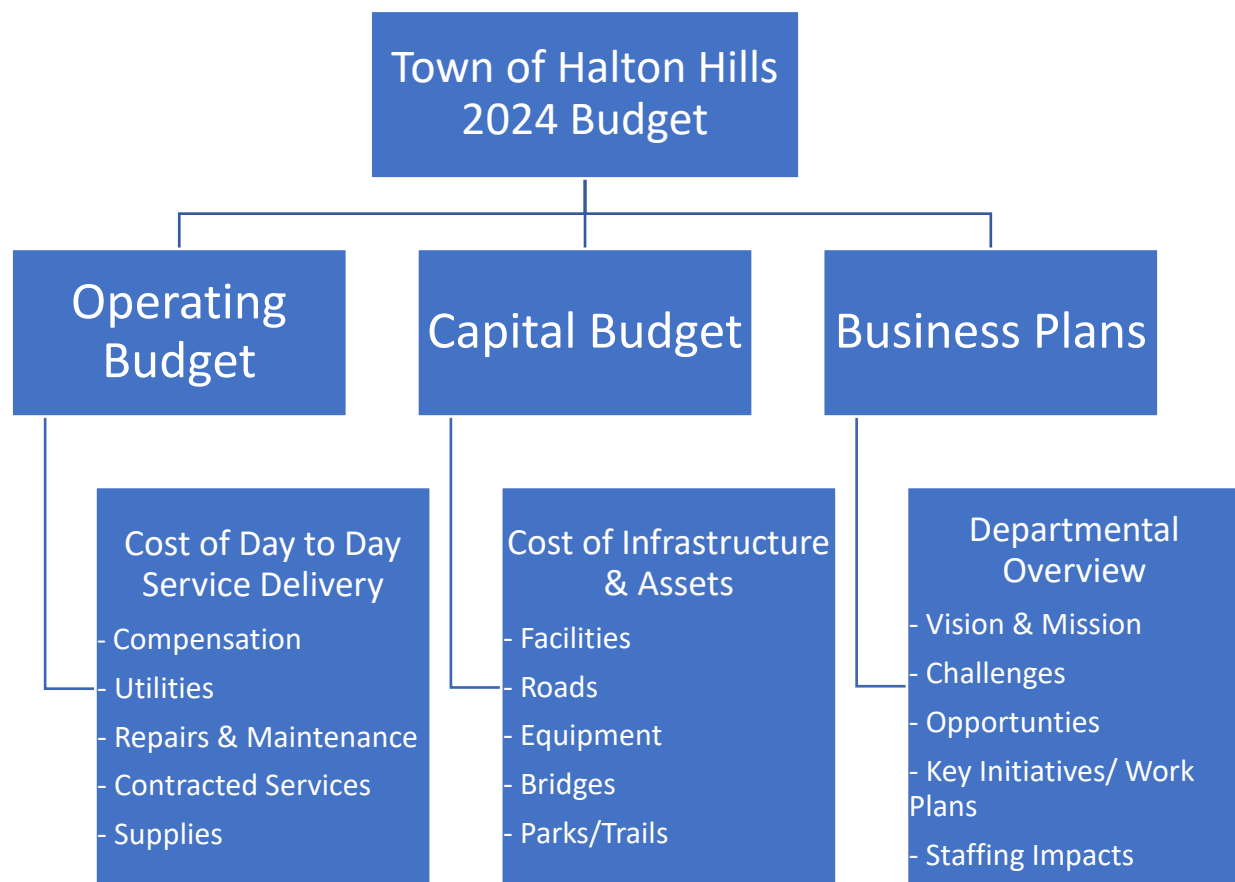


\$1.4M in CIP-related
investments



Introduction

In planning for a vibrant, healthy and sustainable community, the Town of Halton Hills is committed to providing community leadership on emerging issues and delivering a broad range of public services to its residents and businesses. The 2024 Budget and Business Plan is one of the Town's primary documents in supporting service delivery that is efficient, effective, and economical and is effectively split into three distinct sections, the operating budget, the capital budget and the business plans, each serving a very different purpose as outlined below:



In preparing the 2024 Budget, Town staff have considered departmental business plans, the Long-Range Financial Plan (LRFP), the Asset Management Plan (AMP), and the Corporate Energy Plan. Because the Council Strategic plan for this term of Council (2022 to 2026) is not yet finalized, staff have been monitoring its progress to-date, to align the 2024 budget as much as possible to this point.

The following guiding principles, while not new, provide a foundation for determining fiscal priorities. It is on this basis that staff develop work plans and budgets which are realized through the 2024 budget.

1. Restore appropriate funding for reserves to support long-term financial stability
2. Maintain current service levels for programs and staffing, leverage technology solutions to support efficiencies and productivity
3. Align capital programs with available resources while ensuring compliance with legislation and health and safety standards
4. Defer the growth-related capital program until development charges are received.

In addition, there is a five-step hierarchical framework for staff to consider when applying the guiding principles and preparing the operating and capital budgets and business plans.

Firstly, there is continued focus on supporting the Town's core services and Council priorities within the targets and mitigation measures set out in the LRFP and the financial policies approved by Council. Next, staff will consider the costs that are required to keep the Town's assets in a state of good repair. Staff then assess all non-discretionary costs related to mandatory or legislated changes, evaluates service level impacts from growth, and considers the implementation of new services or service enhancements based on community need. This framework is illustrated below:



The subsequent sections of the 2024 Budget and Business Plan will address in turn the operating budget, the capital budget (including a nine year forecast) and the departmental business plans.