

The Halton Region Citizens' Reference Panel on the 2011-2014 Strategic Work Plan



Final Report March 2011
Prepared for the Regional Municipality of Halton

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Introduction

Each new term, the newly elected Halton Regional Council develops a strategic work plan that sets out its priorities and establishes its strategic direction for its term of office. The strategic work plan provides a framework for decisions that need to be made relating to the Region's budget and how the Region delivers important programs and services. It is an integral part of ensuring that Halton continues to be sustainable, healthy, and a great place to live.

Regional Council creates a plan for its term of office by taking into consideration the many challenges and opportunities that will be faced by Halton Region over the next four years and beyond. Regional Council must manage competing pressures and make determinations about which issues, services and programs matter most to the people who live and work in Halton. As such, Regional Council seeks the ideas, perspectives and advice of Halton residents on these important matters. This report from the Region's first Citizens' Reference Panel represents a key part of the input to be received from Halton residents.

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Planning for Growth: The 2011-2014 Strategic Work Plan

In considering plans for the future in Halton Region, growth and development are at the forefront. The Places to Grow Plan, the provincial growth plan, has set the population and employment targets that Halton Region must plan to achieve. Specifically, Halton must plan for a total of 780,000 people and 390,000 jobs by 2031. Sustainable Halton or Regional Official Plan Amendment 37 & 38 (ROPA 37 & 38) is Halton Region's growth management and land use response to the province's Places to Grow Plan.

As Sustainable Halton is implemented, the Region will have to plan for communities where urban sprawl is minimized, where infrastructure is maximized, where natural heritage is protected and natural spaces and farmland are preserved. Regional Council's strategic work plan will provide a framework for the fiscal and operational matters that will set the directions for these plans and determine how Halton communities grow and prosper.

In planning for growth and making decisions about the programs and services the Region provides to its residents, in addition to many competing interests, economic realities must always guide decisions. This is particularly important for services delivered at the Regional level of government where services are primarily funded through property taxes or in the case of water and wastewater services, user rates. The cost of property taxes or user rates directly impacts on the affordability of people to live in their home regardless of their income.

For this reason, decisions must be fully informed and take account of all interests including financial implications. For example, how can urban expansion be designed to support healthy, sustainable communities? What kind of infrastructure development is most beneficial and affordable to current and potential Halton residents while preserving natural heritage? How can the need for and benefits of new affordable housing units or subsidized housing be reconciled with any additional burden to the property tax base? Which transportation investments completed at what time will best serve the community? And, how can decision-makers ensure that the public can meaningfully contribute to answering these questions?

The priorities established in the strategic work plan with input received from Halton residents and businesses will assist Council in its planning and decision-making through its term.

A NEW WAY TO WORK TOGETHER

Committed to involving the public in decisions that affect their everyday lives, Halton Region is pioneering a public consultation process to seek input in developing Council's new strategic work plan. A key part of this consultation process is the first Halton Region Citizens' Reference Panel. The Panel brought together 36 randomly selected Halton residents to learn about the Region's programs and services and make informed recommendations for Regional Council to consider. The Panel is a new tool for decision-makers to involve citizens in public policy. It provides Regional Council with a clearer sense of the Halton community's priorities and values.

While opinion polls and surveys can provide decision-makers with a snapshot of the public's thinking on a current issue, they can't capture how their opinions might change with additional information. The Citizens' Reference Panel model differs from traditional methods of public consultation. It gathers a representative group of the public for several daylong sessions over one or two months, and provides opportunities for informed discussions and reflection on the competing factors that accompany difficult decisions. Following a dedicated curriculum, the panellists come to a common understanding of the key issues and identify priorities on behalf of their communities. They deliberate on the implications of these priorities, and make informed recommendations to decision-makers. In this way, the Citizens' Reference Panel gives citizens the insights and tools to translate their opinions and ideas into credible advice that decision-makers can use to inform their choices. The process allows citizens to speak for the shared interests of their community, and not just from the position of their own personal experience.

In addition to the Panel, Halton Region is seeking public input through public forums, surveys, and web-based applications. The results of these consultations will help Regional Council develop its new strategic work plan and set priorities for the next four years.

THE SELECTION PROCESS: A LETTER FROM CHAIR CARR

"It was thrilling to get picked to participate."

The members of the Panel were selected through a Civic Lottery. Ten thousand households across the Region received a letter from Regional Chair Gary Carr and an invitation to nominate one member of the household to volunteer to serve on the Panel. The households that received the letter were selected through a randomly generated list of Halton postal codes. Saying yes to this invitation required volunteers to

give up four full Saturdays within five weeks, and yet over 550 residents volunteered. Another 500 expressed interest in the process but were not able to commit to the full four days. From the pool of respondents who said yes, 36 were blindly selected to fulfill certain attributes, including age, gender, geographic location, whether they rented or owned their homes, and short or long-term residency in the Region. Together, they represent a diverse group of people from across Halton, including a retired farmer who moved to Milton 61 years ago, a Grade 12 physics teacher, a mother of four, and a newcomer who had made Oakville his home just 100 days earlier.

THE PANEL HAD THREE TASKS:

1. To learn about the programs and services offered by the Region;
2. To consider the challenges and issues facing Halton in the years ahead;
3. To identify common values and priorities, and make recommendations based on those values and priorities to inform Halton Regional Council's development of their four-year strategic work plan.

THIS REPORT

This report is divided into two sections. First, it reviews the process of the Panel, describing what happened on each of the four days.

This description includes a brief overview of presentations made to Panellists (all available for download at www.halton.ca/citizens-panel). The second section is the report of the Panel's conclusions, which they drafted during the fourth session. In small groups, they listed points to include in various sections — Who we are, What we learned, Finding common values, Recommendations, Observations, and Conclusion. An editor translated these points into the report that appears in Section II, modified only for clarity and consistency. Before publication, Panel members reviewed both sections of this report. Their feedback was instrumental in helping us present an accurate depiction of the Panel's events.

Section I: The Panel Process

DAY ONE: SATURDAY, JANUARY 8, 2011

When the 36 panellists met for the first time on January 8th, 2011, it wasn't long before they discovered that what they had in common was a keen desire to serve the community they each call home. Chair Carr and Chief Administrative Officer Pat Moyle welcomed Panellists, explaining that the Panel was a pilot project to discover new ways to engage residents in strategic planning. While it was a new process for Halton Region, they were confident that Panel members would make an important and useful contribution.

Next, Panel members were invited to stand up and spread out across the room as if it were a large map of the Region, standing in the approximate location of their hometown. Twelve Panellists were from Burlington, another twelve were from Oakville, and there were six each from Milton and Halton Hills, a composition that roughly corresponded to the proportional composition of Regional Council. Panellists introduced themselves and talked about why they had volunteered to be a part of the Panel.

"I moved here 35 years ago looking for a place to start my family and we just love it. I want to learn more about the Regional government. A lot of people don't know what they're responsible for," said one member. "I was really excited to get the phone call to sit on the Panel. I'm hoping to help plan for the future of my children and everybody's children," said another. A third member told the group, "I have seen a lot of change recently, and I wanted to see how the Region plans to deal with it."

Panellists talked about why they enjoyed living in Halton. They lauded its small-town feel, and strong sense of community, coupled with all the perks of living next to Canada's biggest city. Other major strengths were the Region's good schools, and ample parks and green spaces with lots of outdoor recreation spots nearby, like the Bruce Trail. Panel members also noted what could be improved. Some called for more jobs, others richer cultural amenities, while Milton and Halton Hills residents complained about their difficulties accessing Regional services from the north — much to the surprise of those from Oakville and Burlington. And already debates were sparked over the merits of bringing more colleges and universities to the Region and how well

Halton scored on economic development. It was clear this diverse group of Panel members had a lot of passion, energy and ideas.

This first day emphasized learning. After an introductory presentation on the division of responsibilities between levels of government, Panel members completed an activity to familiarize themselves with the services and programs offered by Halton Region. Next, Graham Loughton, Vice-President of Ipsos Reid Public Affairs, presented highlights of the 2010 Service Optimization Survey. The results were positive — 98 percent of residents, when asked about the Region’s quality of life, reported that it was good or very good, and 45 percent feel the economy is improving. The residents also reported a high degree of satisfaction with Regional services, are very happy with the quality of drinking water, ambulance services and waste management. Asked to select from a range of services provided by the Region, residents place the highest priority on planning for future infrastructure and maintaining current infrastructure.

Panellists spent the balance of the afternoon hearing presentations from each of the following Regional staff:

- Mark G. Meneray, Commissioner, Legislative & Planning Services & Corporate Counsel
- Ron Glenn, Director of Planning Services & Chief Planning Officer
- Jane MacCaskill, Commissioner of Corporate Services & Regional Treasurer
- Mitch Zamojc, Commissioner of Public Works
- Dr. Bob Nosal, Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health
- Sheldon Wolfson, Commissioner of Social & Community Services.

Each presentation included an overview of how the Department works, its responsibilities, and the challenges of providing services in a tight fiscal environment to a changing population. Panellists found the Planning Department’s presentation fascinating. They learned that “saying no” to growth is not an option in the face of legislation from Queen’s Park, despite an earlier suggestion from one member. Sustainable Halton, the Region’s growth management plan, will guide the Region as it juggles enhancing the quality of life for an ever-growing number of Halton residents, preserving the Region’s natural heritage, and ensuring resources are used efficiently and sustainably.

Panel members were impressed by how far-reaching the issue of growth was — it came up in every presentation that day.

Paying for growth was another topic that sparked many questions. Panellists quizzed Jane MacCaskill, Regional Treasurer, on the potential household or ratepayer impact associated with anticipated growth. The Region is shouldering an increasing share of the cost of service delivery as contributions from the Provincial government decline. Panellists realized that paying for services and growth-related infrastructure is tricky and will leave either residents, or developers, on the hook.

Panellists were surprised to hear about the prevalence of poverty in Halton — 8.5 percent of Halton’s population is considered low-income. They engaged in an animated discussion with Sheldon Wolfson, Commissioner of Social and Community Services. The Region has several programs in place to help those in need, such as affordable and assisted housing, job training and targeted health services. Unfortunately, increasing demand for these services, resulting from the combined pressures of population growth, the economic downturn, and declining Provincial support, also challenges the Region. Panellists began to realize they were facing some tough choices in their upcoming deliberations.

After a long day of learning, panellists gathered at their small tables to discuss what issues struck them as important for discussion over the next few Saturdays. Each table was lively with hands flying and heads nodding as panellists deliberated the merits of intensification plans, expressed frustration over infrastructure lags, and wondered how Provincial cutbacks would affect Regional services. After an intense discussion, some popular issues were identified by most of the tables: the aging population and service delivery for seniors, the pressures that a growing population could put on Regional finances, how to manage the influx of both Canadian and international families to the Region, and the infrastructure and financial needs related to Regional growth. As panel members pulled on their coats to head for home, they were still talking about the future of their community.

DAY TWO: SATURDAY, JANUARY 15, 2011

One week later, the Panel was back, kicking off with two presentations from community experts. Joey Edwardh, Executive Director of Community Development Halton, presented the Panel with an overview of the Region’s social profile, based on socio-demographic characteristics of Halton residents. Looking at the changes between 2001 and 2006, census data shows that although Halton’s population continues to age, growth will come from migration and immigration,





and that these new Halton residents will mainly be young families. Panel members also learned that Milton is the fastest-growing municipality in Canada, and that Halton is becoming increasingly diverse. Finally, the presentation reviewed the implications of poverty in the Region, and emphasized the reality and seriousness of the needs of low-income residents and families.

Tom McCormack, founder of the Center of Spatial Economics in Milton, presented an overview of economic development in the Region. The presentation included details on employment in the Golden Horseshoe and in Halton Region and competitiveness and non-residential tax assessment as it relates to projected population growth and land use planning.

After a short break, Panel members gathered in groups of seven or eight at small roundtables. They shared and then recorded what they liked and valued about their communities on a long list and then reported back to the group. As Panel members shared their lists, they eliminated any duplication and asked each other questions to clarify the meaning of suggested values. They agreed on five values to put forward to Regional Council for consideration during their strategic planning process. These values later became criteria for assessing the Panel's own recommendations, ensuring that they broadly supported members' expectations for their communities. The results are detailed in Section II — The Report of the Halton Region Citizens' Reference Panel.

Panel members spent the afternoon identifying and deliberating on important challenges for Regional Council to address in the next four years. First, they gathered in small tables to create a long list of potential challenges facing the Region, drawing on the information they had learned through the presentations by Regional staff and community experts. They recorded these challenges on coloured cards. Each table shared the results of the discussion with the rest of the room, discovering several similarities. The challenges corresponded to five themes: Economic Issues, Environmental Issues, Social Issues, Transportation Issues, and Quality of Life Issues.

Each table was assigned one theme. Panel members gathered up all the challenge cards that fit under their theme and worked to eliminate duplication and cluster similar challenges to create a short list of challenges for each theme. Finally, panellists plotted these refined challenges according to high and low priority for the Region, and whether they felt the challenge should be addressed in the short or long term. This was the first in a sequence of prioritization exercises panelists would complete over the next few weeks as they considered the challenges and created recommendations for Regional Council.

DAY THREE: SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 2011

Panel members returned energized from a two-week break and used the first hour to ask questions and seek clarification about presentations from the first two sessions. They wanted more information about commuting patterns, employment sectors, and wait lists for assisted housing in Halton. The Strategic Planning and Policy Division provided this additional information and hosted a question and answer session to ensure everyone felt comfortable with the vast amount of information they had received.

John Sawyer, President of the Oakville Chamber of Commerce, made the final community expert presentation. He spoke about the role of small business and economic development, the need for attracting jobs in the Region, and stressed that above all, the Region needs to strike a balance between financial, environmental, and social sustainability. Part of finding this balance, Mr. Sawyer told the Panel, is ensuring that different levels of government “stick to their core business” — meaning that taking on additional services administered by other levels of government could destabilize economic development by increasing property taxes and the costs of development.

The Panel’s next task was to revisit the list of challenges they had identified and prioritized during Day Two. Splitting into their theme-based working groups, Panel members explained unclear challenges, noted and in some cases eliminated challenges that were outside of the Region’s responsibilities, and looked carefully to see if any important issues were missing. Finally, each group re-prioritized their challenges to account for any changes.

In the final activity of the morning, panellists drafted recommendations to Regional Council based on their top challenges. In partners or groups of three, Panel members crafted three to five recommendations for each challenge. They discussed options that were within the Region’s jurisdiction, reviewed how the options supported the group’s values, and decided between recommending swift action or further study of the issue. Facilitators at each table collected these recommendations to distribute for revision during Day Four.

After a short lunch, panellists gathered in the auditorium of the Regional Centre to welcome more than fifty Halton residents to the Public Roundtable Meeting. Fifteen tables were assigned one of the five themes for a total of three tables per theme. As members of the public filed in they were asked to sit at a table with a theme that interested them. Two or three Panel members were at each table to greet the community members and help facilitate the discussion. Chair Carr gave the participants a warm welcome, and Peter MacLeod, the Roundtable leader, provided an overview of the Citizens’ Reference Panel process to date. He explained the task for the afternoon — each table held several

activity cards outlining individual challenges for that particular theme, and participants were to discuss whether these challenges made sense, and to add their own thoughts.

For two hours, the auditorium buzzed with the energy of different conversations that were underway. Every 30 minutes, the participants were given the opportunity to switch tables and begin a new conversation. Participants talked about their experiences living in Halton Region and expressed their hopes for the future. Panel members facilitated the conversations and had the chance to ask participants what they thought about the Panel's chosen priority issues. The Roundtable gave Panel members an opportunity to hear back from the wider public on the work they had completed thus far.

When the Public Roundtable meeting concluded, Panel members assembled in their meeting room to talk about what they heard. While there were several strong interest groups represented at the tables, overall, the panellists were extremely pleased with the fresh viewpoints from the public. They found there was general agreement on many of the challenges and added some concerns raised that day.

DAY FOUR: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2011

"I achieved my goal of learning about the Region."

At the last meeting, the Panel was given their most important task: to produce final recommendations for Regional Council to consider during Council's strategic planning process. First, Panel members spent time in their themed working groups, revising their priority recommendations. Next, each table identified a member to visit a different working group to hear their recommendations, while one panellist remained at their table with a facilitator to hear feedback. Panel members were excited to learn about what other tables had been working on, and had useful suggestions for combining, clarifying and strengthening the language of the recommendations. When everyone resettled at his or her table, panellists reported what they had heard at other tables and listened to the feedback received on their recommendations. They had 20 minutes to rewrite any unclear recommendations. Before the lunch break, Panel members had crafted 49 recommendations corresponding to 22 priority areas.

After lunch, panellists returned to see their recommendation sheets, organized by theme, taped up on the walls. Now it was time to vote on their personal top priorities. Each member received 24 red 'dots' that represented 24 votes. They walked around the room in silence, reading through each priority and subsequent recommendations carefully, and placing their votes. Panellists could only vote for each recommendation

once, and they were not forced to ‘spend’ all 24 votes. Prior to this voting exercise, a 12-vote threshold was set, meaning that one third of the panelists had to support the recommendation for it to be considered broadly supported. The results of this exercise are detailed in Section II of this report, along with the Panel members’ observations.

Finally, panellists broke into small groups to write their report. Panel members spent a busy hour capturing their thoughts in point form notes. Their report, edited for clarity and consistency but otherwise left largely in the words of the Panel members, appears in Section II.

Wrapping up, Chair Carr and CAO Pat Moyle thanked the panelists for their immense contribution to their community, presenting each member with a Certificate of Public Service and a book about Halton’s natural heritage. Panellists returned the sentiment, noting how surprised and impressed they were with the Region’s Strategic Planning and Policy Division staff, Commissioners, and Chair Carr and Mr. Moyle, who remained with the Panel or on call each Saturday. “I’ve gained bragging rights to my friends for being lucky enough to have been selected,” said one panellist. “As a group, we were able to achieve a lot in four days. I’m impressed by the cross-section of Halton residents that were able to find common values and priorities,” said another Panel member. “We looked like brain surgeons during our deliberations — everyone was so engaged,” joked a third. The Panel adjourned — members were all smiles for a group photo, and then had a small celebration to mark the completion of a momentous task.

Section II: Report of the Halton Region Citizens' Reference Panel

WHO WE ARE

We are a randomly selected group of Halton residents who represent a diverse cross-section of our community. We call ourselves “diverse by design.” Although we were chosen at random, when we got together for the first time, we realized that we roughly mirror the makeup of the Halton community. We vary in age, gender and ethnicity, and we come from a variety of large and small communities across the Region. Our experience living in Halton ranges from 100 days to 61 years. We are concerned citizens, curious about our Region and willing to volunteer our time to help provide direction to our elected officials. We don't belong to any special interest groups or cliques, and consider ourselves a cohesive group of individuals who happily refrained from breaking into factions.

WHAT WE LEARNED

We spent close to 40 hours learning about and deliberating on the challenges and opportunities facing our communities. Initially, some of us weren't sure what the Regional government did — or that it was useful — but once we learned about Halton Region's programs and services, we realized it was integral to our community's well being.

We also learned a lot about growth, and quickly came to the stark realization that we can't “just say no.” For example, we now know that the Ontario government has legislated, through its 2005 Places to Grow Act, that Halton will grow by over 300,000 people, and its job market needs to be ready. We also learned about the reality of poverty — a discussion that took a lot of us by surprise. We know that while plenty of young families are moving into the Region, not all of them are able to take advantage of all that Halton has to offer. We also know that our aging population will require special care, attention and resources. As independent members of the public tasked with making recommendations, it was especially important to us that the information we received was presented in a factual and neutral manner. While we felt that some presentations were less neutral than others, we appreciate the time and

effort of each the presenters — they certainly gave us bragging rights about our knowledge of Halton.

We faced some difficulties in our discussions. For example, we found the idea of separating into “themed” tables and working groups unsatisfactory, as we did not necessarily feel that the labels — Economic, Social, Environmental, Transportation, and Quality of Life — matched our priorities. There seemed to be overlap between Social Issues and Quality of Life Issues, which caused some confusion in the early stages of setting out important challenges. One suggestion would be to look at both the values and priorities we share as a group, and use them as the basis for themes that we could all feel comfortable with. We also found it difficult to think about short-term recommendations for long-term challenges. We understood our task as providing input on our priorities and values for the next four-year strategic work plan, but we learned to view the challenges of the Region — especially growth and the aging population — as ones extending beyond the mandate of the current Council. More information regarding targets for the next four years would have helped. Regardless, we came away from the Panel recognizing that the Region is in great shape to address changes coming our way.

FINDING COMMON VALUES

We came together not only to provide Council with input for their decisions, but also to build a shared understanding of our community. We recognize that as Panel members, we are here not just to share our opinions and experiences, but also to represent the views of our friends, neighbours, colleagues and families. It is our sense of community and public interest that lends legitimacy and credibility to our recommendations.

With this in mind, our first task was to identify shared values. Talking to each other about what we liked about Halton in small groups of about seven or eight, and reporting back to the larger group, we discovered common themes.

Many of us valued the safety of our towns, and how we felt a sense of community everywhere we went (including the grocery store). We appreciate our outdoor spaces, both in urban areas and in preserved sites, like the Bruce Trail. This appreciation, and our recreational use of these areas, gives us a strong value of conservation and environmentalism. We also like Halton for its farms and fresh food, its family-oriented festivals and events, and its cultural diversity. We want Halton to be more accessible by public transportation, and we hope our Regional government remains flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the community — in essence, to be “forward-thinking.” Finally, we value such attributes as economic efficiency in the actions of govern-

ment, the local autonomy of our elected officials, and transparency and access to our Councillors.

After identifying the shared values and hopes for our community, we agreed on the five values that we recommend Regional Council take into consideration while creating their strategic work plan. We also agreed that these values would help ground our conversations and final recommendations — that is, we assessed our recommendations to ensure they broadly upheld all five values.

TOP VALUES

Social Inclusiveness: Halton Region is a welcoming place where people have a sense of belonging and have an opportunity and the tools to succeed.

Affordability: It is important to be able to afford and responsibly deliver the services that make Halton Region an equitable place to live. This entails a commitment to sustainability, efficiency, and economic expansion.

Ecological Responsibility: Recognizing the value of sustaining and improving our use of our natural resources to keep Halton appealing and inviting to new and current residents.

Mobility and Accessibility: It should be easy for everybody to get around Halton Region via a region-wide integrated transportation system that balances economic efficiency and affordability.

Responsiveness and Adaptability: The ability to act on the input and adapt to changing local needs, through effective communication and engagement with local communities, neighbouring regions, and different levels of government.





OUR 49 RECOMMENDATIONS

Tasked with providing Regional Council with insight to our priorities for economic development, service delivery, growth management, regional mobility, public health, social supports, and civic engagement, we ran the risk of making so many recommendations that Council might not know where to start. To indicate where the majority of support lies within our 49 recommendations, we decided that those that received 12 or more votes (one third of the Panel) would be our strongest recommendations. This list, however, should not be seen as an outright ranking of recommendations. Instead Council should consider action on many issues simultaneously. Recommendations under the 12-vote threshold appear in “APPENDIX A: OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS.” Though they didn’t emerge as top priorities, they represent important opportunities for the Region as it plans for the next four years.

Top Recommendations (12 or more supporting votes)

| <u>Priority</u> | <u>Recommendation</u> | <u>Votes</u> |
|--|---|--------------|
| Child & Youth Services | We advise an increase in subsidized childcare, youth centres & services, to meet the needs of a growing population in the Halton Region. | 29 |
| Defining & Preserving Conservation Areas | We urge the Region to develop & maintain an aggressive plan to facilitate public use of designated conservation areas in an affordable manner. | 27 |
| Long-term/ Ongoing Road Planning for Growth | We expect that during road construction, milestones for development will be achieved on time & on budget, while allowing for ongoing roadway maintenance. | 25 |
| Co-ordination of Public Transit throughout Halton | We expect the Region to encourage the municipalities to integrate their respective transit schedules & fares. | 25 |

| <u>Priority</u> | <u>Recommendation</u> | <u>Votes</u> |
|---|--|---------------------|
| Attraction & Retention of Small Businesses | We recommend Regional Council take immediate action to restructure industrial & commercial development charges to be more competitive. | 24 |
| Affordable & Assisted Housing | We urge the Regional Council to adopt a comprehensive plan to address the urgent need for affordable & assisted housing, with a focus on: seniors, the disabled & any other individuals & families in need of such housing. | 23 |
| Responsible Use of Taxpayer Dollars | We recommend the Region explore out-sourcing services to businesses with preference to businesses within the Region. The priority should be to reduce the burden of taxpayers without limiting the accessibility of Regional services. Savings may be used to enhance or create services, prevent future tax increases, or reduce Regional debt. | 22 |
| Seniors' Services | We request that Regional Council focus on more affordable housing & retirement homes for seniors on fixed incomes. | 20 |
| Waste Management | We recommend the Region ensure that any waste management practices are implementable & mandatory in multi-tenant & new developments, including education measures for new residents. | 20 |

| <u>Priority</u> | <u>Recommendation</u> | <u>Votes</u> |
|---|--|---------------------|
| Public Engagement & Civic Literacy | We recommend the Regional Council increase the opportunities for citizen input in decision making processes in a way that prioritizes residents' input over special interest groups. | 19 |
| Seniors' Services | We recommend immediate focus on the improvement of eldercare services & care-giving programs, both in home & facility-based, due to the increasing aging population in Halton. | 18 |
| Promotion of Healthy Living | We recommend the Region provide opportunities for face-to-face public education of healthy living choices. | 18 |
| Efficient & Cost-effective New & Existing Infrastructure | We encourage Regional Council to seek internal or external expert input to develop a strategy for consolidating the existing water treatment plants based on expected trends in population growth. | 18 |
| Tourism Promotion | We expect that the Region enact a more aggressive publicity campaign to better promote & increase the visibility of tourism in Halton Region. | 18 |

| <u>Priority</u> | <u>Recommendation</u> | <u>Votes</u> |
|---|--|---------------------|
| Poverty Reduction | We recommend that, as a result of an assessment of the current & forecasted poverty in Halton, the Regional Council make every effort to provide the necessary programs that are critical to alleviating poverty, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordable & assisted housing - Affordable child care - Job skills & training - Newcomer settlement services - Seniors' services | 17 |
| Active Transportation | We anticipate that the Region will build an active transportation plan & system with future growth in mind. | 17 |
| Efficient & Cost-effective New & Existing Infrastructure | We expect that Regional Council annually report to the public on the planning of maintenance & expansion of the infrastructure that will accommodate long-term growth within Halton. | 17 |
| Air & Water Quality | We recommend the Region encourage a proactive long-term plan for maintaining air & water quality in partnership with the provincial government. | 16 |
| Land Use Planning | We feel that the Region must continue seeking community input at all stages of the process in landfill site decisions. | 15 |
| Land Use Planning | We recommend the Region guarantee that existing recommendations on aggregate extraction be strictly & aggressively monitored. | 15 |

| <u>Priority</u> | <u>Recommendation</u> | <u>Votes</u> |
|---|--|---------------------|
| Promotion of Healthy Living | We recommend the Region to provide incentives for healthy eating, for example, subsidies for community-supported agriculture & accessible farmers markets. | 15 |
| Promotion of Healthy Living | We recommend the Region explore subsidies & support for municipal recreation programs so they are more affordable for all Halton residents. | 15 |
| Poverty Reduction | We recommend that Regional Council promote the awareness of poverty issues to the public so that they understand the need for financial support for services that help alleviate poverty. | 14 |
| Newcomer Settlement Services & Integration | We recommend that the Regional Council work in partnership with other levels of government & community organizations to support settlement services to newcomers with the objective of assisting their integration into the community & workforce. | 14 |
| Waste Management | We recommend the Region quickly implement consistent waste collection across the Region & across residential, commercial, & industrial areas/buildings. | 14 |
| Waste Management | We urge the Region to explore innovative, leading methods & models for managing waste from businesses. | 14 |

| <u>Priority</u> | <u>Recommendation</u> | <u>Votes</u> |
|--|--|---------------------|
| Affordable & Assisted Housing | We recommend that the Regional Council allocate sufficient funds to sustain the demand for affordable & assisted housing as outlined in the Official Plan & State of Housing annual reports. | 13 |
| Emergency Social Services | We recommend the Region assess the need for emergency social services, such as mental health & addiction programs, domestic abuse shelters & services, suicide prevention programs & services for those with special needs, & take action on reducing any gaps or deficiencies in the provision of these services. | 13 |
| Air & Water Quality | We expect the Region to produce & implement a detailed, long term plan to enforce water requirements for new growth. | 13 |
| Long-term/ Ongoing Road Planning for Growth | We urge the Region to build new roads with Bus Rapid Transit lanes & to incorporate bike lanes into existing roadways. | 13 |
| Air & Water Quality | We expect the Region to ensure that any Regional energy initiatives are economically feasible & environmentally responsible. | 12 |
| Communication & Public Awareness | We recommend the Region identify the high priority needs of new residents & make information about services that can help meet these needs accessible/easy to find. | 12 |
| Communication & Public Awareness | We recommend the Region consolidate Regional & Municipal newsletters into a single publication. | 12 |

OBSERVATIONS

Looking across the themes, priorities, and recommendations, we made the following observations:

1. The recommendations that garnered the most support (between 19 and 29 votes) are action-oriented. They include strong language and ideas that “touch the community” and are a “call to arms.” They aim to either maintain or improve upon what we love about Halton, and broadly indicate the need to take care of our youngest and oldest residents, as well as those in situations of poverty or underemployment.
2. The recommendations that call for studies or additional research settled lower on our priority list. We think this might be because the idea of study, research, and planning was thought to be implicit in some of the other recommendations, so Panel members opted for prioritizing those with stronger language and action.
3. We noted that several recommendations contain the idea of Regional government partnering with the public and community organizations. We take this as a strong indication of the need for transparent, accessible, and accountable relationships between public institutions and citizens.
4. Many of our recommendations account for a long-term vision. They involve the challenges of accommodating future growth in a manner that is cost-efficient, feasible and measurable. For example, we talked a lot about the future of mobility in our Region — how transit could be integrated and how bike lanes and trails should be present to provide options for healthy living and environmental sustainability. We thought about the long-term investment in our public infrastructure, preferring to invest properly at the outset of our growth plans rather than accommodating growth as it happens.
5. We noticed that ideas of affordability, economic competitiveness, and economic efficiency appeared throughout the recommendations. For example, we recommend affordable transit fares, seniors’ services and childcare. At the same time, we appreciate instances of cost-savings that the Region might be able to identify, and hope that the Region supports small businesses. One of our top recommendations was to explore the out-sourcing of some Regional services to local private enterprise. We ultimately see economic efficiency and competitiveness as ways to ensure there are sufficient funds to provide affordable and accessible services to all Halton residents.

There is an urgent need to ensure affordability in the face of provincial fiscal restraint.

6. Other strong recommendations include the call for more public education, awareness and engagement — in other words, Halton residents need more information and more input. We also prioritize opportunities to improve healthy living choices.
7. Recommendations that did not garner a lot of support include those that are too specific or encroach on another level of government's jurisdiction. We also noticed those lower on the list potentially provided the least return on investment. In other words, "we've been coached to look for the best bang for our buck." Additionally, there is a measure of repetition in some of the recommendations — so those lower on the list might have been touched upon in a recommendation higher on the list.

Conclusion

We'd like to thank Halton Region, Chair Carr, Mr. Moyle, and the Strategic Planning and Policy Division for giving us the opportunity to learn about and provide input for the next strategic work plan. We hope Regional Council recognizes that our recommendations are a result of a collective process, where citizens of different backgrounds and experiences came together to provide an accurate reflection of the Region's residents. We feel we represent the collective wisdom of the community and reflect their concerns and priorities. We 'left our baggage at the door' when we entered this room, and sought to make decisions on behalf of our neighbours, rather than ourselves.

At the Public Roundtable Meeting, we encountered citizens with very specific agendas but were able to defuse resulting tensions and deflect charged opinions that could disrupt our task. We know some of us felt overwhelmed by these strong voices, but we also recognize the value of encountering different perspectives during our process.

While time was limited, and not all of our challenges were resolved, our 49 recommendations represent a significant body of work. We worked hard, and went home tired. Our commitment to returning for all four Saturdays was notable — as was the time taken by Regional staff, the Commissioners, Mr. Moyle, and Chair Carr to engage with us. We felt empowered by their attention, and were reassured that the Region will take our recommendations seriously.

Finally, we'd like to thank our fellow Panel members for bringing respect and dedication to each conversation — we were a diverse group, and while not without our disagreements, we arrived at recommendations that we all feel comfortable with. We are confident that they will be useful to Regional Council as they complete their plan for Halton's future.

Appendix A

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS (11 OR FEWER SUPPORTING VOTES)

| <u>Priority</u> | <u>Recommendation</u> | <u>Votes</u> |
|--|--|---------------------|
| Poverty Reduction | We recommend the Regional Council promote awareness of the available poverty alleviation and reduction services to prospective clients so they can take full advantage of them. | 11 |
| Addressing Social Exclusion | We request that Regional Council study the degree of social exclusion (for example, racism, poverty, and prejudice against the disabled) within Halton and lead a partnership with community-based agencies to promote social inclusion. | 10 |
| Co-ordination of Public Transit throughout Halton | We recommend the Region promote the use of public transit throughout the Region. | 10 |
| Active Transportation | We expect Regional Council to fund the building of trails and safe bike lanes on Regional roads in an effort to interconnect the municipalities. | 10 |
| Emergency Social Services | We recommend ambitious immediate action to create and distribute educational information on the Emergency Social Services currently offered by and available in the Region. | 9 |

| <u>Priority</u> | <u>Recommendation</u> | <u>Votes</u> |
|--|---|---------------------|
| Air and Water Quality | We advise the Region to conduct a thorough long term review of existing air and water quality management studies and their recommendations within the next two years. | 7 |
| Public Engagement and Civic Literacy | We recommend the Region promote existing opportunities, processes and mechanisms for public involvement in decision-making. | 7 |
| Tourism Promotion | We recommend the Region focus on promoting and clarifying the Region's brand. | 7 |
| Accessible and Equitable Service Provision | We expect the Region to proactively ensure that Regional services continued to be provided on an accessible and equitable basis to all residents, regardless of income, location and other socio-economic demographics. | 6 |
| Active Transportation | We hope that the Region will promote, educate, and encourage the use of these bike lanes and trails. | 5 |
| Co-ordination of Public Transit throughout Halton | In anticipation of an aging population, we recommend the Region investigate an accessible transit system for seniors and individuals who require special transportation (for example, incorporating a Wheel Trans system like the one found in Peel). | 5 |

| <u>Priority</u> | <u>Recommendation</u> | <u>Votes</u> |
|--|---|---------------------|
| Long-term/ Ongoing Road Planning for Growth | We recommend the Region be more proactive when planning and discussion of provincial highways is taking place in Halton Region, and to involve more public discussion in these issues (for example, the proposed Escarpment highway). | 5 |
| Seniors' Services | We hope that the Region will enhance specialized health centres and services for seniors, such as those that help with Alzheimer's and dementia. | 2 |
| Co-ordination of Public Transit throughout Halton | We urge the Region to engage in a study of public transit needs and corresponding demographic changes throughout the Region. | 2 |
| Communication and Public Awareness | We recommend the Region examine existing Regional newsletter distribution methods to determine opportunities for improvement. | 1 |
| Communication and Public Awareness | We recommend the Region partner to review and improve the effectiveness of the Welcome Wagon program. | 0 |

APPENDIX B

MEET THE PARTICIPANTS

Ahmed Assaad

My name is Ahmed Assaad. I hold a Bachelor of Commerce (accounting) from Alexandria University and I'm a Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA). My working experience is mostly in the banking field. Presently, I work at Scotiabank, Global Operational Risk, as a Senior Business Analyst. My wife Rasha works at Siemens Canada and we have two sons. Our older son Gamal is in grade 10. He goes to Iroquois Ridge high school and he is a competitive swimmer with the Oakville Aquatic Club. Our younger son Adham is in grade 7 at West Oak Public School and plays soccer with Erin Mills soccer club. My wife and I are very much involved in our kids' school and sports life; we drive them to practices and tournaments and we volunteer for their clubs and school activities. We have lived in Oakville since 2007.

Ahmed Hassan

I moved to Canada at the age of three. I grew up in Montréal and learned French. In 2005, I moved to Mississauga, then Oakville in 2006. I work for the federal government where I manage a team of Policy Coordinators for the Scientific Research & Experimental Development tax credit program.

Alexandra Styczynski

I am a recent graduate of the University of Waterloo and I work in the Audit and Assurance Group at Pricewaterhouse Coopers. I am currently pursuing a Chartered Accountant designation and just passed the Uniform Final Examination in 2010. I was born and raised in Burlington and attended St. Mark's Elementary School and Notre Dame Secondary School.

Anne McIntyre

I am married with three children. I was a teacher, teacher trainer and a vice principal with the Halton Board of Education for 34 years. I am retired and this allows me the time and opportunity to become involved with the Canadian Cancer Society, the Retired Women Teachers of Ontario and the North Halton Celtic Historical Society. For three years I have shared my love of music as director of a retirement community choir and by singing with an ensemble. I enjoy Canadian fiction, the Stratford Shakespearian Festival and travel.

Carol Williams

I was born to a large family and grew up in Prince Edward Island on a small farm. I graduated from high school and obtained a college business degree before moving to Ontario in 1968 in search of work. My husband and I have been long term residents in Oakville, having purchased our home in 1973 and raised our family here. Our son, his wife and our two grandchildren also live in Oakville. I have commuted into Toronto since entering the workforce in 1968. I have been employed with a major investment counseling firm since 1989, having responsibilities in global investment administration and the finance area as Assistant Controller. I volunteer with Branch 114 Legion assisting with social functions and fundraising. My hobbies are watching movies, traveling, enjoying our cottage and watching my grandchildren's hockey games.

Charles Stewart

I grew up in the Oakville area. I remember the vineyards and orchards in the Lees Lane vicinity. I currently live in Acton and work in Burlington as an active HAM radio operator. I hunt small game in the area and have spotted cougars in the Fourth Line area.

Chris MacLean

I have been a resident of Halton for 35 years. I grew up in Milton and moved to Burlington in 1997. I have a wife and three children. I am university educated and run a family business in Milton with my father and brother. I have decided to become more involved in politics to ensure that my children have a better future.

Claudine Waddick

I have lived in Glen Williams, Georgetown, for six years. I am a stay-at-home mom with three children, ages nine, 11, and 12. I worked for 11 years at Union Gas. I have a Bachelor of Commerce and a Master in Business Administration. I am active in local sports: soccer, hockey and swimming. I am a long distance runner and a frequent user of the Bruce Trail System.

David Droppo

I grew up in Thunder Bay and moved to Halton 11 years ago. I have lived in Milton, Acton and Oakville during that time. I am a high school physics teacher in Mississauga.

Debbie Noble

I have lived in Oakville for over 30 years. I am married and have two daughters aged 18 and 22. I am a lawyer. I practiced corporate and securities law for approximately 20 years and retired in December 2004. I am a former Board member and current volunteer for the Oakville

Community Foundation, which builds endowed funds and connects donors to community needs, and a member of the Board of HIPPOY Oakville, a charity focused on helping parents provide home instruction for vulnerable pre-schoolers.

Eamon Kerrigan

I have been a certified engineering technician for the past 18 years. I have worked for over 20 years in the geo-technical and geo-environmental engineering fields as well as environmental regulation. I have worked in both the public and private sectors with Halton Region and engineering consulting firms. For the past nine years, I worked with Halton Region as an Industrial Monitoring Co-ordinator. I am currently looking for work in the environmental, civil engineering, regulatory compliance or engineering fields. I have always had a strong interest in environmental issues; primarily I am interested in the protection of water resources. Throughout my career these positions, which involved the preservation of our natural resources, have always given me a sense of accomplishment and pride. In 2010, I became a certified Laubach tutor volunteering with the Burlington Literacy Council. I look forward to the opportunity to share my perspectives and learn from others at the panel discussions.

Edward Wright

My name is Edward Wright (Ted). I am 79 years old and am in comparatively good health. My wife and I emigrated from England in 1957, living in the GTA the whole time, namely Scarborough, Toronto, Mississauga, and Oakville for the past 26 years. My wife and I have been together for 55 years. We have two children, a daughter and a son, as well as five grandchildren of whom we are very proud. I served two years in the Royal Air Force but most of my working years have been in wholesale textiles, both as a seller and a buyer. I have been retired since 2000.

Fazeela Rehman

I am privileged to be invited to the Halton Region's first Citizens' Reference Panel. I have been living in Canada with my husband and two daughters for almost 10 years. It is also special for me when I have been living in Halton Region ever since I first moved to Canada from New Jersey. Through my experiences here in Canada, it is a wonderful country to live and Halton Region is a wonderful place to raise your family. I was born, raised and educated in Pakistan where I got my Masters degree. As a kid, I really loved learning and still do. I also love opportunities like this one that let me get involved. I spent a couple of years volunteering helping kids. I have a kind heart, always urging me to donate to charities and to help those in need because I am so fortunate. I spend a lot of time taking care of my home, cooking and clean-

ing. I also work part-time in retail to keep myself socially engaged and busy during the day. If I have any extra time, I like to read and watch TV. I love new things and ideas. To become a member of the Citizens' Reference Panel – it is a wonderful new thing to try.

Geraldine Slark

I have been a Halton resident for around 30 years with brief stays in a few other places. I have lived in Georgetown for 10 years. I am married with three children and have worked in Halton and Peel schools and public libraries as a librarian. I currently work for the Brampton Library as a Person-In-Charge as well as being President of CUPE 1776. I am just finishing my Masters.

Gourav Suri

I have a degree in Computer Science and have been the project lead for two major projects in land and water transportation. I have volunteered with several City Reference Panels, Councils and Employer Diversity Groups.

Harry Harley

I was born in Weston, Ontario and attended primary schools there. I joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1944 and served until the war ended. I attended University of Toronto and graduated as a medical doctor in 1951. I served in the army between 1951-56, including one year in Germany (NATO). I had a general practice in Oakville from 1956-62. From 1962-68 I was elected to the House of Commons as a member from Halton and did not contest the 1968 election. From 1968-84, I joined Crown Life Insurance Co. as a medical officer and later moved to V.P. Human Resources from 1984-85 and then was a medical director at Grace Hospital in Toronto. I have been retired since 1989.

Heather Boudreau

I am 35 years old, married with two kids (4 and 2). I have lived in Halton since I was two years old, in Oakville, and then Burlington. My husband runs an electrical contracting business. I am his office administrator and I look after our kids.

Himadri Kaul

I am the mother of four young kids and am an Occupational Therapist by profession. I have been practicing my profession since 1998, providing health care services to people of all age groups in various health care settings including hospitals, outpatient clinics, long term care facilities, home care and private consultations. I love doing what I do. I have been living in Burlington since 2001 and all my children were born here. My priorities are to take care of my family by providing for them and keeping them safe while maintaining my professional expertise. I

like spending time with my kids, traveling, learning about the environment around, including its history, habitat and people. I also enjoy playing volleyball.

Joanne Knox

I was born and raised in Oakville and have lived here my entire life. My husband and I have raised two children in the public system. They currently attend McMaster. My mother has also lived her entire adult life in Oakville, for over 55 years. My husband works in Oakville and I work in Dundas, outside Hamilton. I have participated and volunteered over the years for local seniors, libraries, community groups and residents associations. I look forward to participating on this panel.

John Mitchell

I was born and raised in Toronto and moved to Halton Region in 1989. I have lived at my current address, just north of the little town of Brookville for the last 14 years. I am semi-retired, currently operating a breeding and boarding kennel. We breed, raise, train and show Labrador Retrievers and Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers. The kennel is registered with the Canadian Kennel Club and licensed by the town of Milton. My work history includes time spent in the transportation industry, life insurance and investment industries, manufacturing and 15 years at Queens Park with the Provincial government.

John Nurse

I am a farmer (grain, cash crops) for most of my immature 60 years. My farm/home is four miles South of Georgetown. Education, aside from experience, was a General Arts degree in Social Science at the University of Guelph. Sports are somewhat of an interest, particularly the CFL and Olympic-style events. Computer skills are somewhat lacking — I prefer a phone — but I hope to better them over the winter as well as learning more business skills. Other involvements are the Georgetown Fair, several Farm groups, and occasional charities. Favourite pastimes are driving, motorcycles, golf (now and then), photography, and always reading, mostly novels.

Katharina Trencs

In 1949, I immigrated to Hornby, Canada with my husband Steve. I worked on a dairy and vegetable farm as a greenhouse flower grower and then worked as a flower designer until 1982. I worked at EC Drury School for the deaf as a dining room supervisor for 15 years. I am now retired and love gardening!

Ketan Patel

I have lived in Halton Region for the last three years. Before planning to move to Milton, I had seen excellent growth as well as future growth of the town. This led me to move to Milton. I am working full time in a

well-known consumer electronics company, as well as owning a business in Milton.

Kristin Valles

I am the former chair of the Halton Regional Youth Advisory Committee. I was born and raised in Oakville and also lived in Prince Edward Island for one year. I am a University of Waterloo graduate in Health Studies. I am involved in Halton Strategic Planning since 2005 and work in e-health and marketing.

Lisa Gurusinghe

I have lived in Burlington for over 30 years, and having parents of different ethnic backgrounds has introduced me to a variety of foods, music and cultural traditions from an early age.

I graduated from McMaster University with a Combined Honours degree in English and Art History and then completed a post-graduate diploma in Journalism-Print at Sheridan College. I worked in Corporate Communications and now work in Marketing for a company in Milton. I volunteered as an English Tutor for adult learners at The Peel Literacy Guild and as a Gallery Attendant at the Burlington Art Centre. My hobbies include jewelry making, cake decorating, photography and painting.

I consider myself very fortunate to be a member of Halton's first Citizens' Reference Panel and I am excited about the future growth and development of the Region.

Lori Robinson

I have lived in Burlington all my life. I am married with a 12-year-old son. I commute to Hamilton for my full time job at RBC. I want to be more aware of how my Region operates, what it has to offer me and my family and where services can be improved.

Norah Bleazard

I'm 52 years old and was born and raised in Toronto. My husband Jason is a landed immigrant originally from Salt Lake City, Utah and has been living in Canada since 1997. We happily discovered Burlington quite by accident. Jason is a software engineer and currently works in Georgetown for CPI. In 2003, we were scheduled to move to Colorado as my husband was supposed to start work for one of the aerospace companies located there. We packed up our belongings, put them in storage, and hitched up our travel trailer to our truck and decided to camp at Milton Heights Campground while we waited for the "GO" to make the move to Colorado.

Unfortunately, the job didn't pan out as planned and we were now without a permanent home to move in to. We stumbled in to Burlington while looking for a place to rent and we fell in love with the community and have been happily living in the same apartment for the last 8 years. I worked in the computer industry for over 25 years and have been unable to work full time since my auto accident in 1998. I developed Fibromyalgia after the accident, which was then added to my already existing battle with Arthritis. I am currently on CPP Disability, but was still able to do something on a part-time basis. I decided to attend a Burlington school for alternative health care to see if I could learn how to help myself and possibly others battling the same or similar health issues.

Parisa Mahdian

I have lived in Oakville since 1997. I attended the White Oaks Secondary School, and after finishing my post-secondary education, I started working and living in the Oakville east, Clearview area. I obtained my Bachelor of Applied Science from University of Waterloo, and my Master of Engineering degree from McMaster University. I am currently involved with a couple of local community organizations such as Professional Engineers of Ontario Oakville Chapter, and enjoy the quiet life of Oakville as well as its accessibility to the largest city in Ontario.

Peter Koch

I am 71 years old. I did work for about 45 years for several insurance companies as a construction and safety inspector. I am retired, single and have lived in Milton for the past 15 years.

Rebecca Brookes

I am married and have lived in Burlington for 6 and a half years. Before that, I lived in Toronto where I went to school, but am originally from Jordan — a small town near St. Catharines. I have two boys — one in the public school system and one will be starting next year. I have been working in the pharmaceutical industry for over 11 years mainly as a project leader. Currently, I am exploring the possibility of starting my own consulting business. I have a B.A. in English and post graduate degree in book and magazine publishing. I love traveling and planning road trips. I enjoy art, books, movies and music.

Robert Ebel

I have lived in Halton for 11 years with my wife Melanie and two boys Christopher and Jonathon. We spent our first 10 years in Milton and the last year in Acton. I work in Mississauga and Melanie works in Milton at the Halton Community Rehabilitation Centre. In the summer, I enjoy golfing and in the winter we have recently taken up skiing at Kelso.

Rory Mahon

I came to Canada with my wife, Rosaleen, in 1967 from Ireland, where we were both born. I have lived in Halton since 1982 (Oakville, Burlington) and we have a daughter who lives in Burlington and a son who lives in Oshawa. I apprenticed as a machinist in the aircraft industry in England. After arriving in Canada, I attended evening classes at Blakelock high school to obtain my grade 12 diploma and then attended college evenings and weekends to obtain an Excellence in Manufacturing and Planning degree. I am employed as a general manager at Dual Machine Products, manufacturing precision machine parts. Before there, I was a production manager at Jancee Screw Products for 20 years. My hobbies are mainly reading, playing golf and attending my fitness club. I am a full time working senior who tried retirement too early and went back to work. I take great interest in politics at all levels.

Sean Balog

I am civic minded and interested in understanding the issues in Halton Region. I graduated from George Brown College Business Marketing Co-Op Program in 2010. I currently work for Gambles Ontario Produce as an Operations Specialist. My job duties include Strategic Planning, Procurement and Sales. I am a lifelong Oakville resident and have had opportunities to leave Halton for school and career but prefer to remain in Halton because of the lifestyle and community offerings.

Shaikh Abdullah

I am new to Oakville, residing on White Oaks Boulevard on the 21st floor of a condominium. I stay in a rented apartment with my wife and my only child, a 10-year-old son. He is in the 5th grade of Montclair Elementary School. I work with an inspection company in Mississauga. I am 51 years old and was born in Bangladesh. I have an MBA in Computer Science from the City University of New York, USA. I am a licensed Master Mariner for large ocean going ships, including tankers.

Steve Dely

I am a single male, caring for my aging mother, recently back in Burlington. I am interested in seeing how the panel works.

Victoria Lewis

As a longtime resident of Milton (since 1980), I have seen the changes in many aspects of town life. I am married and a mother of two grown children who attended Halton Public Schools from kindergarten to high school. I have recently retired as a teacher with the Peel District School Board after 35 years. Throughout our years in Milton, my family has regularly enjoyed Halton Region's conservation and natural areas.

I am looking forward to learning more about Halton Region and its future by participating in the Citizen's Reference Panel.

**The Halton Region Citizens'
Reference Panel on the 2011-2014
Strategic Work Plan**

MASSLBP