



TOWN OF
HALTON HILLS
Working Together Working for You!

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Chris Mills, CAO

DATE: September 18, 2023

MEMO NO.: ADMIN-2023-003

SUBJECT: Work Schedule – Responding to Provincial Initiatives

PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM:

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline for Council a proposed work schedule and the timelines for the Town in responding to recent Provincial initiatives. Namely, the appointment of Provincial Facilitators to oversee a Regional Review, the Provincial Housing Pledge and Strong Mayor Powers.

BACKGROUND:

Regional Review

On November 16, 2022, the Province tabled the *Better Municipal Governance Act, 2022* which established the authority for the Province to appoint provincial facilitators to assess Durham, Halton, Peel, Niagara, Waterloo, and York Regions. At that time, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing indicated that provincially appointed facilitators would assess the municipal governments in the designated regions to determine the best mix of roles and responsibilities between the upper and lower-tier municipalities in those regions, and ensure they are equipped to deliver on the government's commitment to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years.

In August, at the 2023 Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference (AMO), the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Steve Clark, clarified the role of provincial facilitators and announced that the appointment of regional facilitators in Durham, Halton, Niagara, Waterloo, York and Simcoe County would occur by September 11, 2023.

Minister Clark stated, “These facilitators will be tasked with assessing local governance structures in these communities to ensure they are prepared to support future growth and meet the needs of their residents, particularly when it comes to building homes and housing-enabling infrastructure.”

On September 11, the recently appointed Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Paul Calandra, announced that he will be reviewing the previously stated intention to appoint facilitators to assess regional governments. The Minister further stated he will provide an update on next steps by the end of September.

Council will recall that an entirely separate process is being undertaken respecting Peel Region regarding Provincial legislation dissolving Peel Region. *Bill 112, Hazel McCallion Act (Peel Dissolution)*, received Royal Assent on June 8, 2023. A five-member transition board appointed by the Province is tasked with overseeing the dissolution of Peel Region by January 2025.

Housing Pledge and Strong Mayor Powers

On August 21, 2023 at the AMO Conference the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing also announced that the provincial government is launching the Building Faster Fund, a new three-year, \$1.2 billion program that provides new funding based on performance against provincial housing targets. It was stated that to ensure more municipalities have the tools needed to build homes and to expand eligibility for the Building Faster Fund, the province is also expanding strong mayor powers to municipalities projected to have populations of 50,000 or larger by 2031 that commit to meeting their provincial targets. A letter was sent from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to Mayor Lawlor indicating that the provincial housing target for the Town of Halton Hills was 9,500 units by 2031 (copy attached to this memo).

The Province has stated that:

- The 29 municipalities assigned housing targets in 2022 and the 21 municipalities with newly assigned housing targets represent more than 88 per cent of the provincial target of 1.5 million homes.
- Municipal housing pledges should identify the tools and strategies that municipalities intend to use to achieve their housing targets as part of the ongoing work to increase housing supply. Municipalities with housing targets must submit a pledge to access the Building Faster Fund.
- An eligible municipality would receive no funding if it is below 80 per cent of its annual assigned target. However, it would receive up to 100 per cent of allocated funding if it is on track to meet its target and could receive potential bonus funding if it exceeds that.

Housing Target

The Provincially mandated housing target of 9,500 units by 2031 was set by the Province without any consultation or input from the Town. Town staff are still assessing

the rationale for the quantum of the target and determining what is needed in order for this target to be achieved by 2031. Certainly, the Town does not control all the steps necessary for this target to be achieved.

Staff propose to bring to the October 10, 2023 Council Meeting a staff report outlining the Town's understanding of the target and what is needed to achieve the target.

Strong Mayor Powers

The Province has announced it is extending strong mayor powers to 21 more municipalities, including the Town of Halton Hills, that are projected to have populations of 50,000 by 2031 and whose heads of council are committed to a provincially assigned housing target. Municipalities with targets will be given strong mayor powers if their head of council has committed to meeting these targets, in writing, by October 15, 2023. These municipalities will then receive strong mayor powers by October 31, 2023 and will be eligible for the Building Faster Fund.

Under The Province's *Bill 3, Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022* special powers and duties are extended to Mayors under Part VI.1 of the Municipal Act, 2001.

These include powers to:

- Appoint and dismiss the Chief Administrative Officer;
- Hire and dismiss various department heads (excluding the prescribed list);
- Establish prescribed committees of Council, assign their functions, and appoint the Chairs and Vice Chairs of committees of Council, (a prescribed committee consists solely of members of Council);
- Propose the Municipality's annual budget subject to Council amendments, a Mayoral veto, and a Council override process;
- Budget shall be prepared on or before February 1. If not, Council shall prepare and adopt the budget;
- Submit matters for Council's consideration, or veto by-laws, if the Mayor believes it will advance a prescribed Provincial Priority; and
- Direct Municipal Staff in writing.

A Strong Mayor is required to exercise these powers in writing and make them available to the public, subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. At the request of the Mayor, staff are researching how new powers can be delegated and exercised and this information will be presented to Council.

Building Faster Fund

The three-year, \$1.2 billion Building Faster Fund will provide up to \$400 million per year to municipalities that have committed in writing to achieve their overall 2031 housing target. Ten per cent of the overall funding will be reserved for small, rural and northern communities that have not yet been assigned a housing target by the province to support unique needs and circumstances.

For municipalities with targets, each municipality's portion of the \$400 million annually will be determined based on their share of the greater provincial housing supply goal, as well as their performance compared to their annual assigned targets. For example, if a municipality's target represents 10 per cent of the province-wide target, that municipality will be eligible for 10 per cent of funding through the Building Faster Fund.

Performance will be evaluated by comparing the municipality's number of housing starts and additional residential units created in a given calendar year against the annual target. Municipalities that are achieving 80 per cent or more of their annual target will be able to access a portion of their allocation. Those that exceed their target will be eligible to receive additional funding. Municipalities that are not achieving at least 80 per cent of their annual target will receive no funding.

COMMENTS:

The Province has stated that use of Strong Mayor Powers is contingent on heads of council adopting a municipal housing pledge based on a target provided by the province.

With regards to Housing Pledge and Strong Mayor Powers, work is underway by staff to:

- Identify what is necessary to achieve the targets identified by the Province in order to respond to the Housing Pledge.
- Understand the details associated with assuming Strong Mayor Powers as applicable in the regulation and how powers can be delegated or exercised.

In terms of preparing for Regional Review and engagement with provincially appointed facilitators, staff are:

- Preparing a briefing note outlining services currently provided by Halton Region.
- Awaiting announcement and further details regarding timing and the mandate of the facilitator, after which it will be brought to a Council meeting or workshop, timing tbd.

In line with the above actions and in order to respond to these recent Provincial initiatives, staff are proposing a work schedule and timelines. A preliminary schedule is attached for Council's information and is subject to change.

CONCLUSION:

Town staff will keep Council apprised as new information on these provincial initiatives is made available. Staff continue to work on the processes as planned that will develop a new Council strategic plan and a 2024 Budget & Business Plan.

Respectfully submitted by,

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer



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		Sept			October					November				December			
		11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25
Responding to Provincial Initiatives Work Schedule		Week of:															
Regional Review																	
Memo “Responding to Provincial Initiatives Work Schedule”	18-Sep	→	■														
Update on Provincial Facilitators (expected)	30-Sep			◆													
Briefing Note “Preliminary Information - Regional Services Review”	TBD						tbd				tbd						
Council Meeting or Workshop, Regional Review	TBD						tbd				tbd						
Housing Pledge																	
Memo “Responding to Provincial Initiatives Work Schedule”	18-Sep	→	■														
Housing Pledge staff report on Council Meeting Agenda	10-Oct					■											
Provincial deadline for Mayor commitment in writing to housing target	15-Oct					◆											
Provincial deadline for Housing Pledge with strategies and actions defined	15-Dec														◆		
Strong Mayor Powers																	
Memo “Responding to Provincial Initiatives Work Schedule”	18-Sep	→	■														
Provincial deadline for Mayor commitment in writing to housing target	15-Oct					◆											
Provincial date for assumption of Strong Mayor Powers	31-Oct								◆								
Strong Mayor Powers on Council Meeting Agenda	20-Nov											■					
Key Milestones - Strategic Plan and Budget																	
Strategic Plan Process																	
Strategic Plan Workshop (closed session)	20,21-Sept		■														
Preliminary review Strategic Plan workshop findings (in camera)	10-Oct					■											
First draft Strategic Plan (in camera workshop)	6-Nov									■							
Presentation DRAFT Strategic Plan to Council (public)	20-Nov											■					
Public Comment on Draft Strategic Plan	20-29-Nov											■	■				
Strategic Plan approval on Council Meeting Agenda	11-Dec														■		
2024 Budget *																	
Council Workshop to Review Budget	13-Nov										■						
Budget Committee	4,5-Dec														■		
*Budget process may depend on Strong Mayor Powers - TBD																	

■	Council Meeting
■	Task Plan Complete
◆	Deadline