

SUMMIT TO PROBE FOR ANSWERS TO MUNICIPAL FISCAL CHALLENGES

Elected officials from all levels of government will gather at the Burlington Convention Centre on June 6 to explore ideas for how to pay for the implementation of the provincial Growth Plan.

“While we plan for how our communities will grow over the next 25 years, financing the infrastructure needed to accommodate growth presents a significant challenge,” said Halton Regional Chair Gary Carr. “Growth is not paying for itself in Ontario, but all three levels of government can work together to find solutions.”

The Canadian Urban Institute is hosting the one-day conference, “**Building Complete Communities: A Summit to Explore New Ways to Afford Sustainable Growth**,” in partnership with the Regional Municipality of Halton and in conjunction with the GTA & Hamilton Mayors and Chairs. The summit will feature a keynote address by CUI President and CEO Glen Murray. He will also moderate the day’s discussions.

“This session is billed as the beginning of a constructive conversation aimed at gaining a common understanding of the immense fiscal challenges facing municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe,” Murray stated. “But we will also be talking about opportunities. The last six months has seen unparalleled levels of interaction between provincial and municipal staff, and this is an opportunity to give a variety of complex issues a public airing.”

In addition to presentations from senior regional and local municipal staff from Halton, York Region, the City of Mississauga and the City of Toronto, Public Infrastructure Renewal Deputy Minister Carol Layton will discuss progress made by a provincial-municipal working group looking into issues related to the funding of municipal infrastructure, which is expected to report in the near future.

To round out the debate about roles and responsibilities for financing growth, Infrastructure Canada Assistant Deputy Minister John Forster will discuss issues related to the infrastructure deficit. A panel will present municipal case studies, and delegates will also hear about innovative approaches to financing growth used in other countries.

“This is not just about sewers and roads. Meeting the challenges of financing ‘complete communities,’ which includes schools, hospitals and libraries, will demand not only the adoption of new tools but the re-examination of existing ones, such as development charges,” added Glen Murray. “We need to define infrastructure more broadly and view these expenditures as investments that lead to uplifts in tax revenue.”

Media kits will be made available before the June 6 meeting. For more information on registration for the event, contact Linda Varekamp at 416-365-0816 ext. 221.

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