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Summit culminates in a renewed commitment to build collaborative solutions

Elected officials from across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and Hamilton who attended a summit held today in Burlington, Ontario, have achieved a common understanding of the financial challenges facing municipalities when it comes to paying for growth. The “Building Complete Communities” Summit was presented by the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) and Halton Region, in conjunction with the GTA & Hamilton Mayors and Chairs group.

“Today’s summit has been successful because elected officials from all three levels of government have shown a real commitment to working together to solve our infrastructure challenges,” said Halton Regional Chair Gary Carr.

“We have taken a first step in developing long-term strategies to keep our economy strong and thriving while we address the municipal infrastructure and services deficit in partnership with the senior levels of government,” said Burlington Mayor Cam Jackson.

The summit culminated in a renewed commitment on the part of representatives from the municipal, provincial and federal orders of government to find long-term, sustainable solutions to financing growth. The challenge of financing growth is expected to continue as the GTA grows to meet population projections.

The first half of the summit featured a keynote address by CUI President and CEO Glen Murray, who spoke about what it means to build complete communities.

“Municipalities in the GTA and Hamilton face many challenges to building communities that are both functionally and financially sustainable,” said Mr. Murray. “Infrastructure costs are increasing. Planet change is accelerating. Our economy is in transition. Demographic shifts present new lifestyle needs and preferences. To meet these demands, our communities will have to become more compact, efficient and accessible places for people to live, work and play.”

Other presenters in the morning included Jane MacCaskill, the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Regional Treasurer for Halton Region and John Farrow, CEO of LEA Group Holdings Inc. Carol Layton, Deputy Minister of the Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal presented the Province’s plan for provincial-municipal partnerships. John Forster, Assistant Deputy Minister – Policy and Communications of Infrastructure Canada, discussed the new Building Canada initiative.

Presented by the Canadian Urban Institute and the Regional Municipality of Halton
in conjunction with the GTA & Hamilton Mayors and Chairs



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BUILDING COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

A Summit to Explore New Ways to Afford Sustainable Growth

Janice Baker, CAO of the City of Mississauga, presented a case study highlighting innovations in urban design that make the most efficient use of existing infrastructure. Bruce Macgregor, CAO of York Region, and Shirley Hoy, City Manager of City of Toronto, talked about the collaborative approach used to finance the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension, which is expected to be completed by 2015-16.

The summit wrapped up with comments from local elected officials, including Hamilton Mayor Fred Eisenberger, Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion, Burlington Mayor Cam Jackson, and York Regional Chairman Bill Fisch.

Glen Murray outlined next steps in his final remarks, saying that the GTA and Hamilton Mayors and Chairs will continue to work with their partners from the other orders of government. They will work towards finding solutions to the infrastructure deficit to ensure the economic vitality of the region. Attendees then showed support for a motion to hold an Innovation Round Table to look at options for building a more sustainable and creative GTA and Hamilton region. Chair Carr closed the summit by thanking the attendees for starting this important conversation.

For more information about the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI), visit www.canurb.com.

The Regional Municipality of Halton serves more than 430,000 residents in the City of Burlington, the Town of Halton Hills, the Town of Milton, and the Town of Oakville. For more information, visit Halton Region's website at www.halton.ca.

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Backgrounder and photos available upon request.

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