

## 2018 Municipal Elections Online Special Report

### Mayor

#### Rick Bonnette

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1. What new measures would you bring forth to insure that Halton Hills is an open for business minded community?

Halton Hills has always been open for business. The 2017 Employment Survey (the most recent data available), states Halton Hills added 35 new businesses and almost 500 jobs. In fact, over \$200 million of investment landed in the Premier Gateway Employment Area alone in the past one or two years. Add to that, the historic \$30 million investment by Futura in Acton or manufacturer Freshouse Foods coming to Georgetown. We also have a number of condo projects investing millions of dollars in Halton Hills.

2. How can we attract employers that offer full-time, non-retail jobs to our community?

Our location makes our Town very attractive for businesses. Retail jobs are important as they not only provide jobs, including our youth, but also the convenience of having local shopping options. If we have less retail more people will have to travel outside of town and we will lose that investment and jobs.

We need to continue to focus on diversifying our economy.

Lastly, we will continue to assist businesses that are here with existing programs to support them with expansions and job attraction.

3. Please name the most important step the next Town Council can take to support economic growth in Halton Hills.

Support our small businesses with programs like the Community Improvement Plan which provides financial support for things like façade improvements. We have already invested over \$300,000 to support businesses through this program.

Work with our business partners such as the BIA's, Halton Region and Chamber. The closer we work together the better.

Transit is a major challenge for businesses retaining employees. We are exploring opportunities for a “Made in Halton Hills” solution through the Transit Strategy. We need to continue to keep our taxes low.

4. What would you do to control the municipal budget and if you plan any cuts where would they be?

I’ve advocated and supported a Town budget that is balanced, responsible for the taxpayer. I am committed to the efficient and effective delivery of the services that our residents and businesses rely on every day. For the past three years the increase has been 3.9% while responding to pressures such as higher operating costs and the need to deliver additional services. A reminder, this is the Town portion and when combined with School Board and Halton Region the tax increase is about 2.4% overall.

5. What are your views on “Places to grow” give us your opinion on what issues good and bad may arise with this type of growth and how would you approach these issues?

“Places to Grow” is Provincial Legislation. I didn’t support this when it first came out in 2007/8 I felt the Province should let Municipalities decide how to grow not the Province dictating. Now it is done we can’t turn back the clock. The good side is there is an increase on high densities which will support Public Transit. New growth will bring housing options, generate new jobs.

Dealing with higher densities and intensification can bring challenges in terms of compatibility with existing land uses and residents.

6. Some of our members are struggling to get both entry level and skilled workers. How would you attract and retain a strong and vibrant workforce in Halton Hills?

I recognize the challenge. This is a problem just not to Halton Hills but throughout the GTA. When the Transit Strategy is completed there should be some relief for employees making it to our industries. I think we also need to work with the Chamber to engage the business community and jointly develop and implement solutions that will be effective.

We need to ensure that there are affordable housing options. We need to continue to market the Town as a great place to live and work.