

# Halton Region eyes 1.9 per cent tax increase for 2018

by **Marta Marychuk**  
Oakville Beaver Staff

Halton Region is looking at a 1.9 per cent increase for its 2018 budget — on the regional portion of the municipal tax bill.

The increase would have a tax impact of \$6 per home, for every \$100,000 in current value assessment, explained Mark Scinocca, Treasurer and Finance Commissioner for Halton Region.

Scinocca presented Halton Region's Budget and Business Plan for 2018 to regional council on Wednesday, Nov. 15.

The plan excludes Halton Region Police Services, which approved its 2018 budget earlier

this year. The police budget includes a 2 per cent increase in spending in 2018, or \$150 million.

The 2018 rate supported budget includes \$255 million in net spending, after expenses, overheads, taxes, and interest payments are deducted.

Scinocca pointed out the budget impact is below the current rate of inflation, maintains existing service levels, protects the Region's AAA credit rating and provides for growth — as outlined in the Region's budget directions report that was approved by council in July of this year.

Budget highlights include \$1.8 million in paramedic spending, or a 9.9 per cent increase over 2017, to address increasing call volumes

and maintain levels of service.

Another \$1.7 million will be added to the 2018 budget for road operations, or a 3.3 per cent increase from 2017, to address rising state-of-good repair needs and road maintenance.

Another \$1 million will be added to planning services, an 8.5 per cent increase over last year, for Greenland securement. This includes acquiring properties in the Burlington Beach strip, Scinocca added.

Non-program costs account for \$4.6 million in spending, a 32.3 per cent increase in the Region's budget from 2017 to 2018.

This spending reflects a reduction in supplementary taxes, an increase of tax appeals, mainly big box power centres and shopping malls, vacant property tax rebates and a one-time transfer of \$2.2 million for assessment shortfall in 2017.

"We re-allocated a lot of resources," said Scinocca.

"We just didn't ask for more money."

For the rate-supported portion of the budget, water and wastewater rates will increase in Halton Region by 3.8 per cent in 2018, or a \$35 increase based on 250 cubic metres of annual consumption.

The regional portion of the municipal tax bill was 21 per cent in 2017, with Halton Regional Police Services accounting for 13 per cent. The municipal portion of the tax bill is 37 per cent and education accounts for the remaining 29 per cent. "We are just one component," Scinocca added.

Standing committees will review their budgets the first week of December. Health and Social Services committee meets Tuesday, Dec. 5. Planning and Public Works Committee meets Wednesday, Dec. 6, and Administration and Finance meets Thursday, Dec. 7.

Council plans to approve the 2018 budget on Wednesday, Dec. 13.

## 'We are so happy that she is safe'

by **Louie Rosella**  
Metroland Media South

After a search that lasted more than a week and as panic and fear worsened for a worried family, Soleil Fleury was found.

Peel Regional Police said late Tuesday (Nov. 14), the 15-year-old was found in Toronto.

Const. Bally Singh said the girl's father found her at a TTC subway station. She has since been reunited with her family.

Soleil had been missing for nine days, disappearing late on Sunday, Nov. 5 from her father's home near Dundas Street and The

Credit Woodlands in Mississauga.

The frantic search included thousands of posters being distributed and teams of people setting up different searches across Mississauga. There was also concern for her well-being.

Mario Fleury, Soleil's dad, always maintained hope the teen, a Grade 10 student at École secondaire catholique Sainte-Trinité in Oakville, would be found alive and that hope was realized late Tuesday.

"We ask that you please respect her need for privacy at this time," according to a statement from the family on Facebook.

"We are so happy that she is safe."



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