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For 1990

Region proposes tax hike of 9.9 per cent

By DONNA KELL
the Herald

Halton residents could face the biggest tax increase in six years if a proposal to hike 1990 tax by 9.9 per cent is approved by Regional government.

Halton's finance commissioner Joe Rinaldo, last Wednesday released the 1990 proposed residential tax budget for 1990, suggesting an average property tax of \$271.18 a house, up from last year's figure of \$246.81 a household, in a budget of \$97.1 million.

This budget if approved would bring the price of all Regional service up 10 per cent from \$597.02 to \$656.66 for the average Halton household.

The tax budget will be reviewed

next week at three special budget meetings.

The tax supported budget falls closely on the heels of a rate-supported budget proposed at a six-per-cent impact on taxpayers. The rate-supported budget proposed in November and slated for review this month pays for water, sewer and waste disposal in Halton.

The proposed 9.9 per cent increase in the tax-supported budget compares to a much lower increase in 1988, a 7.8 per cent budget increase in 1989, and 1985, 1986 and 1987 increases under seven per cent, according to a Regional budget report.

"We're now starting to be above the level of inflation," Mr. Rinaldo

told councillors at a special budget presentation. But he said Halton's increases are lower than neighboring communities.

"We're doing well in comparison to other regions that have similar budgetary pressures to what Halton does," the finance commissioner said.

Halton could face even greater increases than 9.9 per cent in its tax-supported budget in 1991 because of provincial grants that are lower than Halton's growth rate, Mr. Rinaldo said.

The Regional headquarters slated for construction in the 1990s could also cause budgetary increases.

The proposed rate-supported budget increased sharply in 1990

because of skyrocketing tipping fees for waste that is transported and disposed outside Halton. But budgetary needs are expected to drop in 1992 when Halton is expected to open its Regional dump site on Highway 25 near Britannia Road, Mr. Rinaldo says.

The Milton site is now under protest from three groups, including the Town of Milton, but approval is expected following a February appeal hearing.

The largest chunk of the proposed \$46 million collected for the Regional tax budget in 1990 will go to the Halton Regional Police Force, with an expected budget of \$31.1 million in the coming year.

That represents an increase of 12.3 per cent over this year's \$28.2

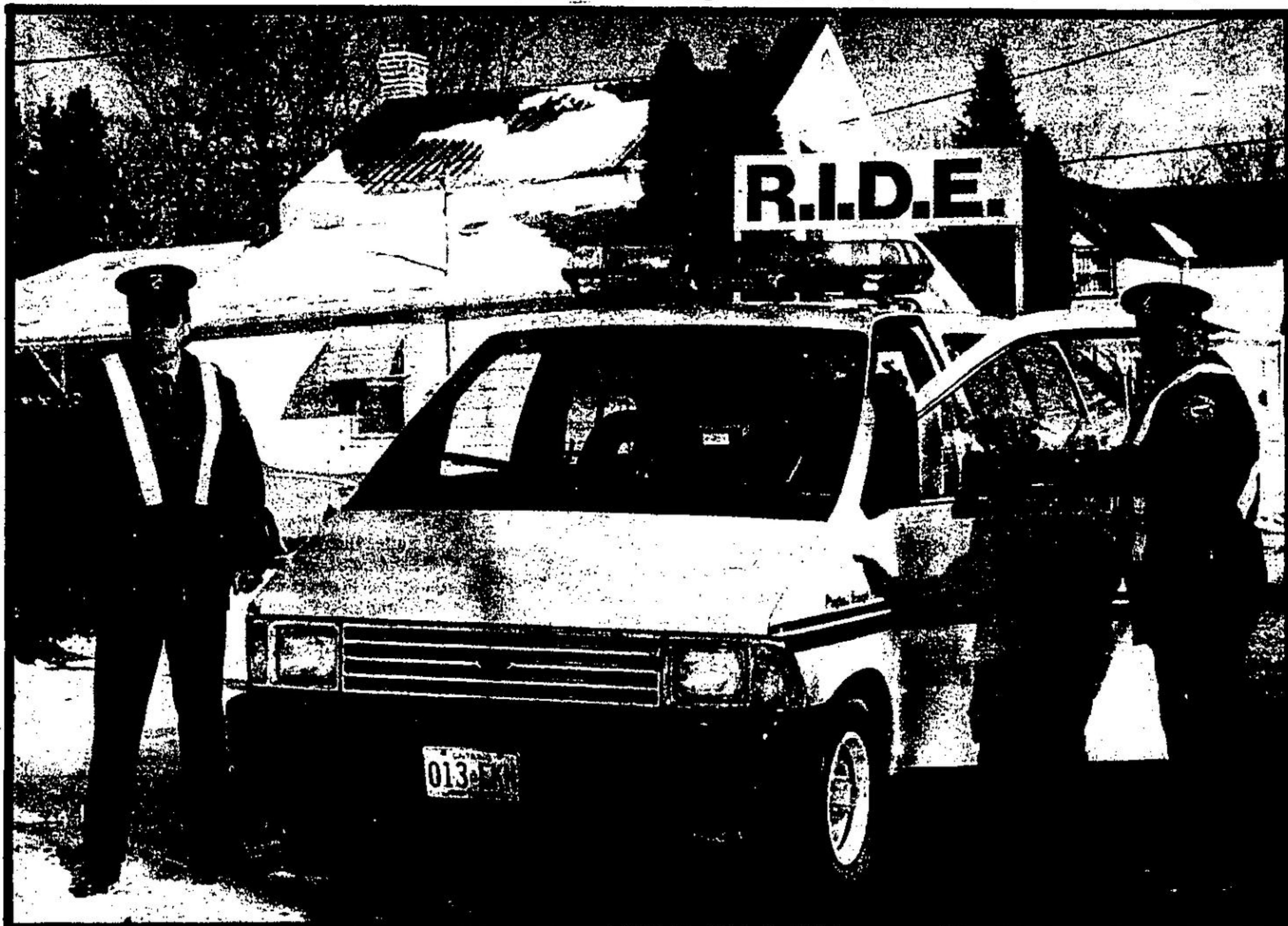
million budget.

Mr. Rinaldo says the police budget is not subsidized by provincial government grants and will consume over 50 per cent of the tax-money collected.

The police budget for 1990 includes over \$200,000 for court room security, legislated to local police forces by the province this year.

Regional programs and services will get the biggest piece of tax pie at 38.8 per cent of the budget.

But Regional taxes in 1989 account for only 14 per cent of the charges levied on the average Halton household. Education costs are 57 per cent of the total average \$1,791 paid by each Halton household this year.



RIDE readies for New Year's Eve

Drivers take warning as the New Year's festivities approach because the Halton Regional Police Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere program will be in full force this weekend. Constables Scott Mason (left) and Doug MacIntosh of Halton Regional Traffic Bureau shown here will be among the RIDE program crew. So far, this

month police have stopped 5,023 vehicles in Georgetown, Acton and Milton. Seven people have had their drivers' licences suspended and four people have been charged with impaired driving. Halton police have stopped 14,255 vehicles throughout the Region in the RIDE blitz. (Herald photo by Ben Dummett)

Halton Hills celebrates New Year's Eve at Civic Centre

In keeping with the new Civic Centre's purpose as the focal point for Halton Hills the town will be holding only one New Year's Eve celebration this year to take place at the Civic Centre starting at 11:30 p.m. Sunday.

Previously, Acton held its new year celebrations at the Acton Town Hall while the Georgetown festivities were held at the Knox Presbyterian Church.

This year, residents from both Acton and Georgetown will be able to gather together over hot chocolate, coffee, apple cider and cookies and reminisce about the year gone by. They will also be treated with piano playing by town employee Bob Tracey and sing songs.

The bell ringing will occur at the stroke of midnight and the festivities will wind up about 30 minutes later.

The town will provide people from Acton free transportation to and from the Civic Centre.

Anyone who needs a ride from Acton can catch a bus at Main Street and Elizabeth Street, outside the Acton Town Hall, Church Street and Maria Street and at the Becker's Plaza, all around 10:45 p.m. To reserve a seat people should call Tyler Transport at 853-1553 or 853-1550.

New Year's Day Mayor Russ Miller and the town councillors will be at the Civic Centre to greet area residents between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. during the Mayor's Levee.

Refreshments will be served and Lou Darcy of St. John's United Church will be playing the piano.