

TOWN OF HALTON HILLS APPROVES BUDGET WITH 3.9 PER CENT TAX INCREASE

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Halton Hills town council has approved a net operating budget of \$50.6 million for 2019, which includes a 3.9 per cent property tax hike.

The 3.9 per cent increase hits the tax-hike limit for Halton Hills - a mandate the town has followed for a number of years.

When factoring in property tax impacts for the region and education, as well, Halton Hills residents can expect a total tax increase of 2.4 per cent (to \$849 per \$100,000 residential assessment, from \$829 in 2018).

"This is the fourth consecutive year coming in at 3.9 per cent," Mayor Rick Bonnette told council on Jan. 21. "We are maintaining the town's fiscal position, and this keeps us in line with our long term financial plan."

The town's operating expenditures are broken down to 12 per cent to fire services, 15 per cent to recreation for culture, five per cent to library services, three per cent for environmental services, six per cent for planning and development, 18 per cent

THE ISSUE:
HALTON HILLS IS INCREASING PROPERTY TAX HIKE BY 3.9 PER CENT FOR THE FOURTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR, THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED ACCORDING TO A TOWN MANDATE

LOCAL IMPACT: THE INCREASE WORKS OUT TO ABOUT \$849 TAX BILL PER \$100,000 RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT

for transportation and transit, three per cent for parks and open space, 21 per cent for capital and long-term planning, and 17 per cent for administration.

Budget highlights include an assessment growth of 2.8 per cent (\$1.4 million), \$1.7 million in salary and benefit increases, \$525,950 in contributions to reserves as per the long range financial plan, \$401,500 for corpo-

rate technology and strategic plan recommendations, \$444,700 for the acceleration for the fire services master plan, and \$153,500 for the expansion of youth services in Georgetown and Acton.

Taxation accounts for 68 per cent of revenue used toward the operating budget, with the remaining balance mainly funded by user fees, service charges and interest.

The 2019 capital budget is \$21.3 million, with a main focus on transportation and transit (51 per cent), recreation and culture (11.3 per cent) and administration (12.3 per cent).

Notable projects include the Halton Hills Drive extension, Armstrong Avenue reconstruction, and the rehabilitation of 5 Side Road from Trafalgar Road to Winston Churchill Boulevard.

While part of the funding for the capital program stems from reserves (35.6 per cent), the remainder is derived from development charges (19.9 per cent), debt (17.4 per cent), grants (15.7 per cent), tax levy (11.3 per cent) and recoveries and contributions (0.1 per cent).

STORY BEHIND THE STORY

Taxes helped pay for notable town projects such as the Halton Hills Drive extension and Armstrong Avenue reconstruction.

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