

# 3.6% tax hike in Region budget

Halton Regional Council unanimously approved the 2006 Operating and Capital Budget, resulting in a property tax increase of 2.6 per cent for Regional programs and services and a 6.0 per cent increase for police services for an overall property tax increase of 3.6 per cent.

The Budget also includes a 7.2 per cent rate increase for water and sewer utilities.

For a typical homeowner in Halton with a property assessed at \$300,000, the property tax increase will be approximately \$24.15 for Regional programs and approximately \$24.09 for police services for an overall increase of approximately \$48.24 per year.

The combined water and sewer bill will increase by approximately \$43.62 or \$16.08 per \$100,000 of assessment.

"In developing the 2006 Budget and Business Plan, we remained committed to balancing the needs of our community with the impacts to Halton residents," said Halton Regional Chairman Joyce Savoline. "In fact this summer Regional Council set the planning guidelines for the Tax Budget at a 3.3 per cent increase (excluding Police Services) and staff were successful in reducing the tax impact to 2.6 per cent after applying Halton's portion of the Federal Gas Tax money to identified capital projects that meet the program criteria of sustainable municipal infrastructure."

The Federal Gas Tax Agreement is a cost sharing initiative that will see more than \$30 million directed to Halton Region over the next five years to support environmental initiatives based on the criteria of improving the quality of the environment and contributing to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, clean water or clean air through investments in public transit, water systems, wastewater systems, solid waste,

## Water, sewer bill up by 16.08 per \$100,000 of assessment

community energy systems and local roads, bridges and tunnels or other active transportation infrastructure. Halton's projects will include road widening to alleviate traffic congestion through the implementation of high occupancy vehicle lanes and cycling facilities.

"This budget is based on sound financial planning, transparency and accountability," stated Chief Administrative Officer Brent Marshall. "This is a realistic and practical budget predicated on Halton's solid financial practices of upholding the quality of life of our residents while planning for our community's future needs."

The Region's three-year strategic plan provided the basis for determining the 2006 priorities. Priorities driving the tax supported 2006 budget include:

- \$65.3 million for the Transportation capital program, which focuses on reducing impacts on the environment, improving the regional road system and meeting travel demands using existing infrastructure and by providing facilities and services to encourage alternate transportation methods such as cycling facilities.
- \$1.4 million to annualize the operating costs of Creek Way Village, which opened in Burlington in September 2005. In total, including Allendale, Halton now provides 572 long-term care beds.
- \$1.9 million for Ambulance Services which includes implementation of the Emergency Medical Services master plan approved in 2005 and an additional 5.4 FTE paramedics for Creek Way Village to increase the service from 12 hours per day to 24 hours per day.

Priorities driving the rate supported 2006 budget include:

- \$1.1 million to implement process improvements to the South Halton Water Purification plants. The process improvements will consist of the further introduction of actiflow and ozonation technology in Oakville, which is currently being used at the Burlington Water Purification Plant.

- \$5.4 million to water and wastewater mains relating to QEW widening.
  - \$4.3 million for water and wastewater plant maintenance capital program.
  - \$3.8 million to upgrade the Oakville South-East Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- Halton Region is also responsible for the management and delivery of water and sewer services. These rates are separate from property tax bills, and appear on the bills provided by the local hydro providers.



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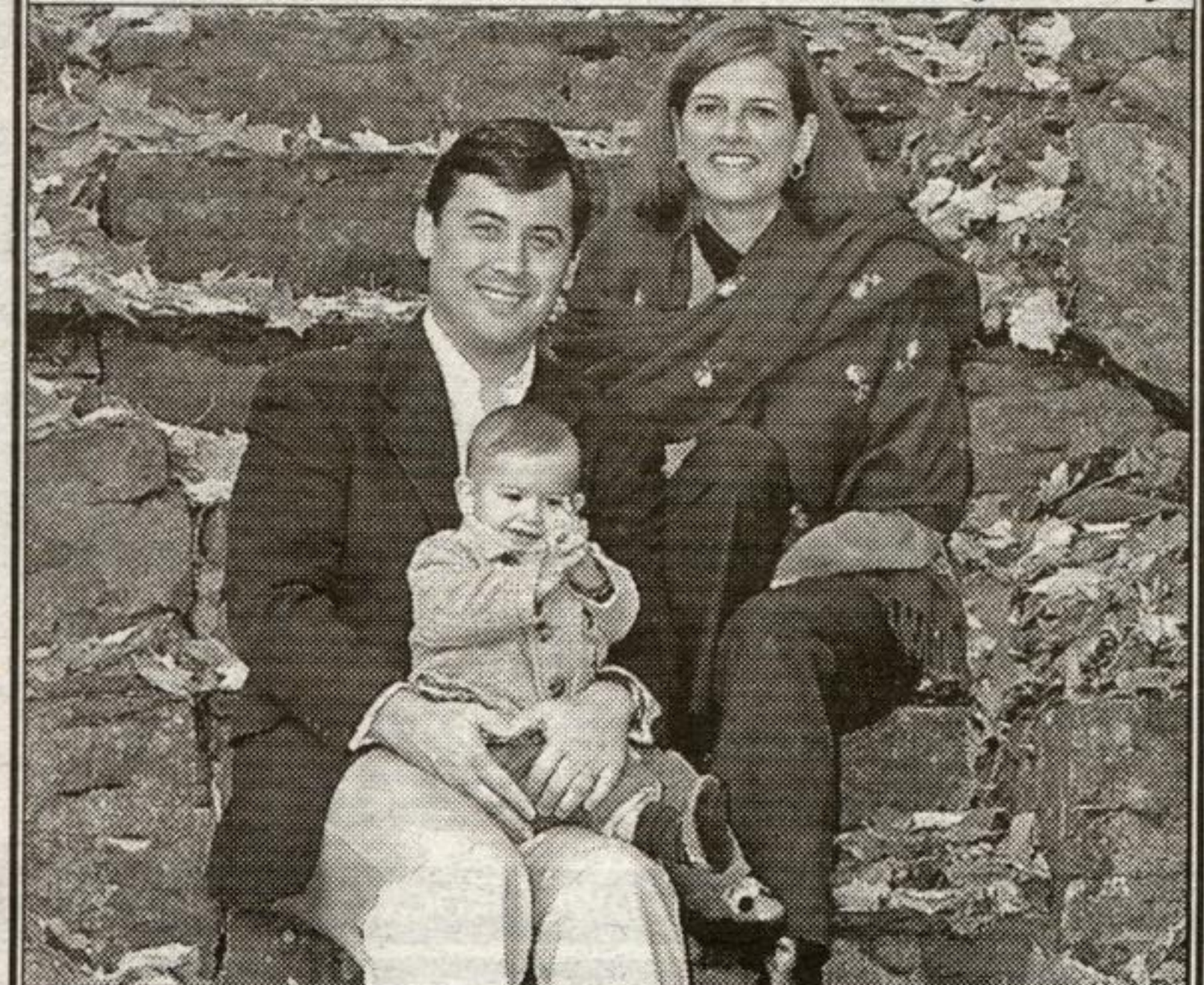
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*From our family to yours, all the very best for a joyous Christmas season and a wonderful 2006!*  
Michael Chong & Family



Authorized by the Official Agent for Michael Chong