

# Town okays plan to levy tax to pay for road repairs

## \$57 million needed to fix roads 'now'

The town's focus will be on road repair over the next five years, and an annual two per cent tax levied on taxpayers will ensure there's enough money to pay for it.

At a recent meeting, council approved sending a recommendation to the 2004 budget committee that a two per cent yearly tax increase (2004-2008) be dedicated to fund a proposed road resurfacing program. Next year's council will ultimately decide on the proposal, but unless there is wholesale change to the council membership after the Nov. 10 municipal election, it will likely pass—the current council voted unanimously for it.

"It's something that's probably long overdue," said Wards 1/2 Regional Councillor Rick Bonnette. "It's important to realize that we will be able to resurface at three times the rate we could do reconstruction. ... At least the taxpayers will see that money is earmarked for roads ... and the average taxpayer will accept that."

Acting Chief Administrative Officer Bob Austin, the town's

Engineer, said Halton Hills is far behind in its road repair program as a result of provincial cutbacks and council focus on other big money projects. Since the early 1990s there has been a 50 per cent cut in the roads budget.

"It's time more attention be paid specifically to rehabilitation before we have to do expensive reconstruction. So it's a straight financial decision," said Austin.

Based on a study of all of the town's roads, it's estimated that \$5.7 million must be spent on resurfacing on roads designated in the study as "Now" (requiring work). By utilizing the dedicated tax, by 2010 only 15 per cent of the town's roads will be below the minimum pavement quality index (a measurement of the pavement quality) as compared to 30 per cent if the town continues the status quo. The dedicated tax

will enable the town to spend a total \$8.8 million on roads by 2010.

However Ward 4 Councillor Ron Chatten said he was hoping to see a balance between the wards for the selected works each year. He said that would be an "easier sell" to the taxpayers.

As it stands now in 2005 the focus will be the old Georgetown area (Ontario St. and Moore Park area), in 2006, it moves to Acton streets (downtown area and west Acton), in 2007 to the mall area neighbourhoods, in 2008 back to Acton (same area different streets) and in 2009 to east Georgetown (Raylawn, Rosefield and Armstrong).

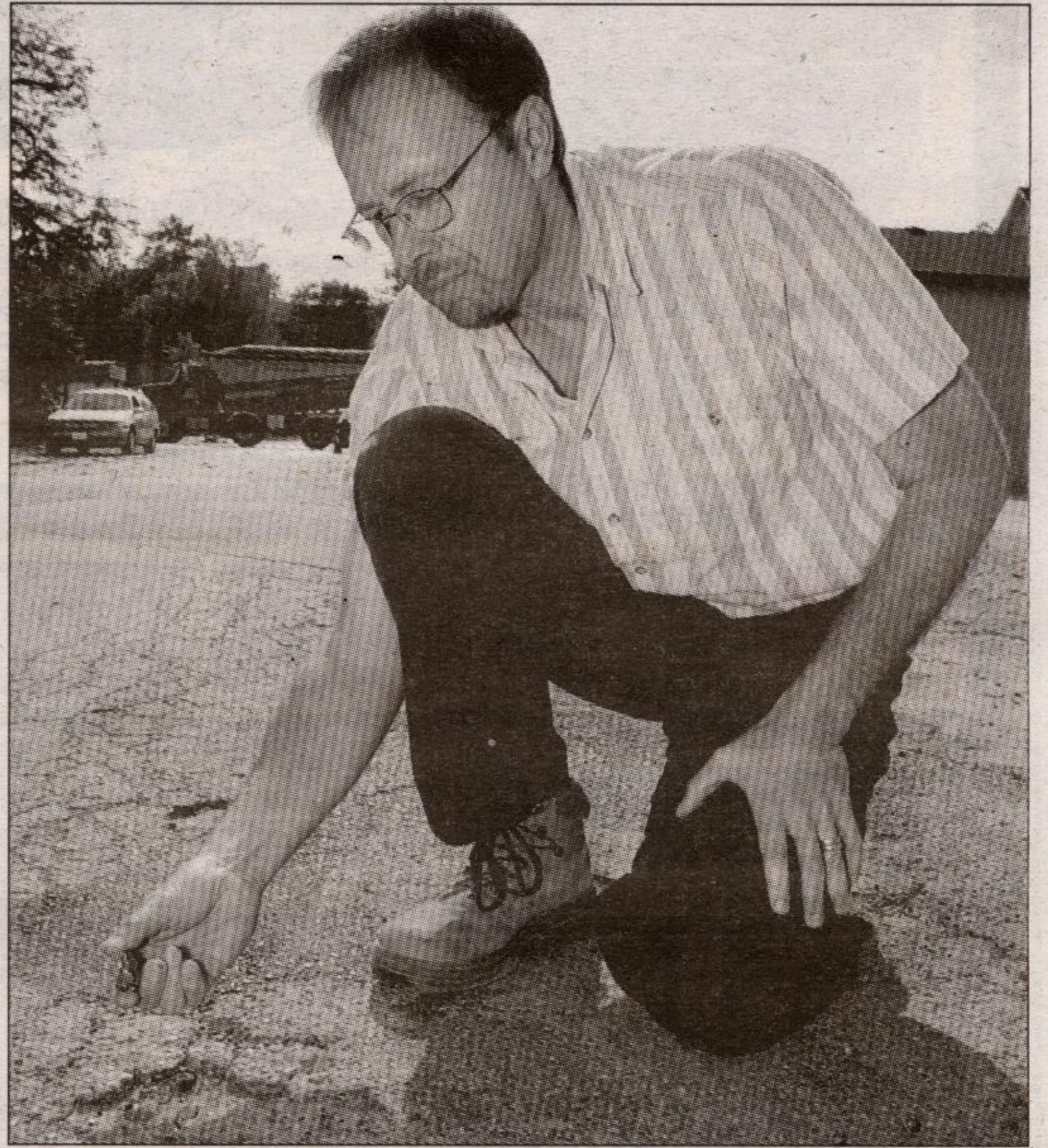
Acting Town Engineer Rick Henry said that was done to save money by keeping labour and equipment in the same area instead of moving back and forth across the town to various streets.

Budget committee will consider the pavement tax during discussions in January.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer



BOB AUSTIN



Kevin Chalmers, senior capital works technician with the Town of Halton Hills Engineering Department, looks at some of the broken pavement on Wilbur Street in Acton. Data Chalmers helps collect is used to target streets requiring attention, as part of the new 2 per cent pavement tax which has been proposed to be used specifically for upgrading streets and roads in the town. Photo by Ted Brown



## Isabel packs weak punch

Halton Hills escaped the wrath of Hurricane Isabel with little more than a few isolated incidents. Residents at 3 Dayfoot Drive in Georgetown had an old willow tree topple over beside their house, while a lone tree on the Tenth Line ended up in the ditch opposite Sheridan Nurseries.

Photos by Ted Brown

## Sidewalk a possibility

The laying a sidewalk on the north side of Guelph St. from Durham St. to Maple Ave. is a step closer to reality.

This summer, the Durham St. seniors' apartment had sent a petition to the town requesting a "desperately needed" crosswalk, which was removed when the traffic lights in front of Georgetown District High School were installed. But staff advised council at an August meeting the logical thing to do would be install a sidewalk on the north side of Guelph St. to Maple Ave. However, even though the town owns the land, the owner of Armstrong Garage had objected to the sidewalk installation when the road was reconstructed several years ago because it would not give him enough room to park a car in front of his building.

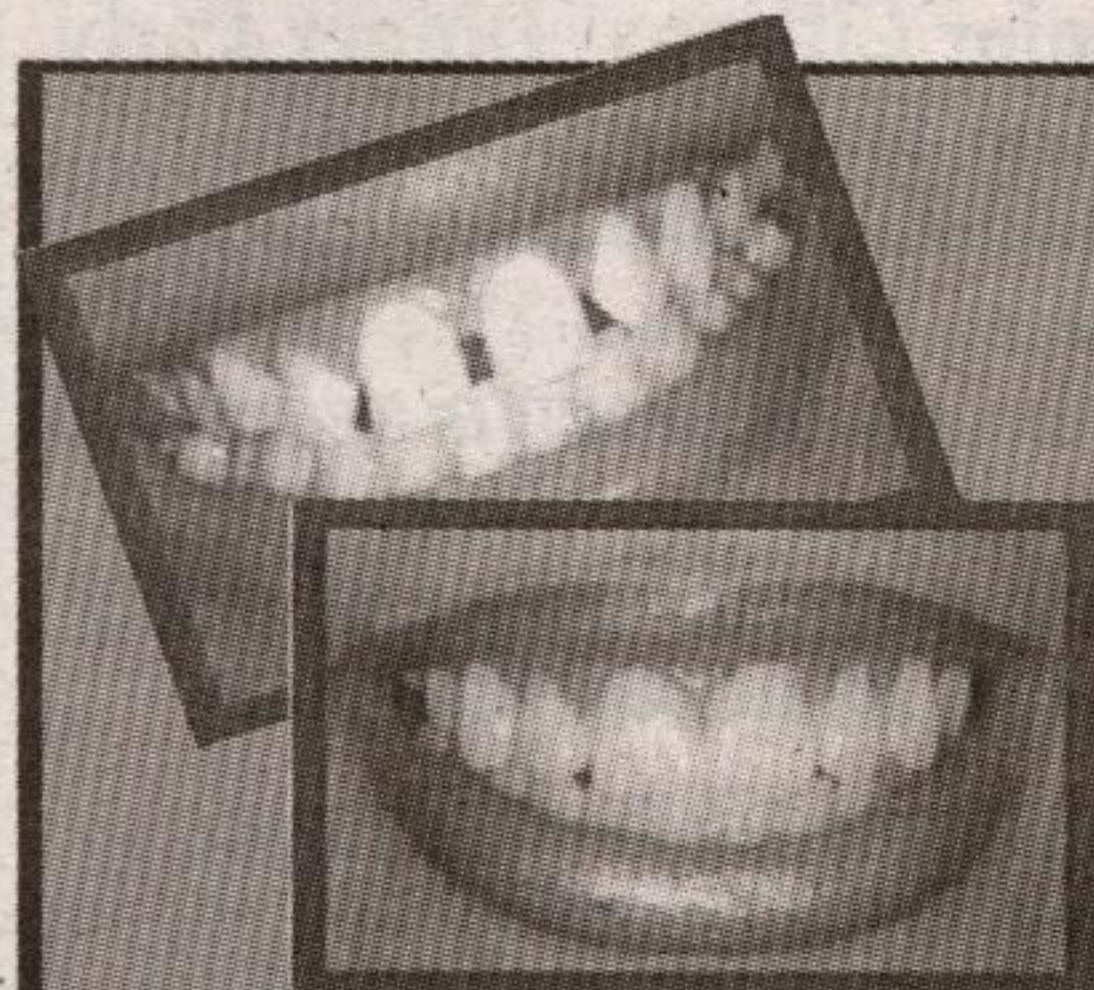
Council had accepted the staff recommendation that a controlled pedestrian crosswalk on Guelph St. between Maple Ave. and Albert St. not be installed, but both Ward 3 Councillor Jane Fogal and Wards 3/4 Regional Councillor John Day suggested that staff re-initiate negotiations with the garage owner.

At September's council meeting, Rick Henry, manager of design and development said discussions with garage owner seemed that he was more "amenable" to the sidewalk.

Henry said a preliminary survey must be done before a price can be estimated.

Fogal motioned to refer the matter back to staff, who are to report back to council with a recommended course of action.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer



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