



Simply Halton

Your Halton
Connection
March '07

2007 Budget focuses on providing quality programs and services to the community



by Regional Chair Gary Carr

On January 24, Halton Regional Council approved the 2007 Budget & Business Plan. Through Council's leadership and input from the community, we have prepared a financial plan that focuses on key priorities and commitments to service delivery, because we know so many of Halton's residents rely on Regional programs and services. It is a realistic budget built on the solid financial planning practices for which the Region continues to be recognized.

The approved 2007 Operating and Capital Budget resulted in a property tax increase of 0.9% (or \$7.44 for a typical homeowner) for Regional programs and services. The Budget increase for Halton Regional Police Services is 5.9%. The combined property tax impact for Regional and Police Services is 2.5% (or \$29.76 for a typical homeowner). The Budget also includes a 4.0% (or \$26.17 for a typical homeowner) rate increase for water and sewer utilities.

The major initiatives driving the 2007 Budget focus on both the physical and social infrastructure of our community, and include:

- Provide Affordable and Accessible Housing – \$2.7 million in capital expenditures to implement the first phase of the Region's Comprehensive Housing Strategy, to create 120 units of assisted rental housing.
- Manage Halton's Growth – \$2.0 million in capital costs to develop Halton's Response to the Places to Grow Plan (Durable Halton), which will result in a long-term planning vision for Halton.
- Improve Quality of Regional Roads – additional \$1.7 million in one-time funding to increase road repair and resurfacing expenditures.
- Improve Community Access – \$776,540 in gross expenditures to implement 211 and 311 telephone service.
- Expand Public Health Services – almost \$1.7 million (gross operating costs) in new Public Health Infrastructure to protect and promote the health of Halton residents.
- Support Vulnerable Citizens – an additional \$400,000 to improve the quality of life for residents of Halton's domiciliary hostels, for those affected by mental health illnesses and requiring ongoing care.

GTA Pooling was also a major consideration during Budget deliberations. The Province of Ontario requires Halton to provide funding to help offset costs for the City of Toronto, for providing social assistance and social housing to their residents. This GTA Pooling transfer payment, mandated by the Province in 1998, was intended to be temporary. For Halton residents, GTA Pooling is the second largest program in the Regional tax budget after the Halton Regional Police Service. On January 24, Halton Regional Council voted to freeze 2007 GTA Pooling payments at the 2006 actual funding level of approximately \$41.2 million dollars. This will help send a strong message to the Province to address the pooling issue and find an equitable solution for all GTA municipalities.

Halton Region is also concerned that Halton residents are receiving significantly less provincial funding for health and social services than the rest of Ontarians. The Strong Communities Coalition, led by United Ways of York, Durham, Oakville and Peel and the GTA/905 Healthcare Alliance, released the "Growing Pains" report, which highlights the growing funding inequities and urges the Province to take immediate action. The report shows that the annual funding gap for provincially-funded social services in the GTA/905 has grown over several years to more than \$550 million, while the health care gap is over \$900 million, placing enormous pressures on our social service and health infrastructure. By endorsing the recommendations in the report, Regional Council urges the provincial and federal governments to come up with solutions to fix the funding gap.

For more information on the 2007 Budget and Business Plan, visit www.halton.ca.

At Your Service

Water rates and billing

The 2007 Water Rates and Wastewater Surcharge will take effect on all bills issued on and after January 25, 2007. The combined impact of water and wastewater charges for 2007 result in an overall year-over-year billing increase of 4.0% relative to 2006 rates and charges.

Major capital projects in Halton in 2007

Burlington

- Watermain and wastewater main replacement, Lakeside neighbourhood – \$2.3 million
- Watermain and wastewater main replacement, Wellington neighbourhood – \$1.3 million

Halton Hills

- Acton Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion – \$1.5 million
- Georgetown Water Purification Plant Expansion – \$1.5 million

Milton

- Trafalgar Road widening two to four lanes – \$10.7 million
- James Snow Parkway new construction – \$8.0 million

Oakville

- Wastewater main on Upper Middle Road from Bronte Road to West of Third Line – \$12.1 million
- Watermain on Dundas Street, Proudfoot to Neyagawa – \$2.4 million

Local hydro companies bill water/wastewater charges on behalf of Halton Region. For residential customers the basis for billing is as follows:

- Monthly water and wastewater service charges, billed bi-monthly, based on meter size
- A water usage charge based on 100% of water consumption, and
- A wastewater volume charge based on 100% of water usage up to a maximum of 120 cubic meters every two months.

If you have questions about your bill, contact your hydro company's customer service department. If you have questions about Halton Region's water/wastewater billing rates and policies, contact the Region at 905-825-6000, or visit www.halton.ca.

March Meetings at Halton Region Headquarters

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| March 7, 9:30 a.m. | Regional Council Meeting |
| March 20, 9:30 a.m. | Health & Social Services Committee |
| March 21, 9:30 a.m. | Planning & Public Works Committee |
| March 21, 1:30 p.m. | Administration & Finance Committee |
| March 28, 9:30 a.m. | Regional Council Meeting |

We welcome your feedback. Contact Access Halton at accesshalton@halton.ca
905-825-6000 • Toll free: 1-866-4HALTON • TTY: 905-827-9833 • www.halton.ca
The Regional Municipality of Halton • 1151 Bronte Rd., Oakville, Ontario L6M 3L1

This page has been donated by this newspaper to communicate important information to Halton residents at no cost to taxpayers.