

Loss of revenues could force Town into huge tax increase

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- a loss of revenues, \$653,000;
- the last year of the five-year pavement management program, \$445,000;
- the building of the two fire stations in Georgetown, \$275,000 (the 1.2 per cent levy);
- contributions to various reserves, \$138,000;
- growth-related programs and services such as new roads and parks operations, \$161,000;
- materials and supplies, \$112,000.



ED DeSOUSA

The loss of revenues include a decrease in assessment growth from an anticipated 3 per cent to 2.1 per cent (\$500,000), which means a loss of \$180,000, and the elimination of \$150,000 in funding that had Town received in past years as a result of the Halton Region downloading of roads to the local municipalities. Lost revenues were also a result of a reduction in planning fees (\$98,000), mainly as a result of a council decision in 2007 to discount fees by 50 per cent on non-residential and non-profit community applications.

Corporate revenues budgets (Subdivision Agreements, Supplementary Taxes and Town Surplus/Deficit) were also lowered by almost \$225,000 to allow a cushion in future years when, due to the current servicing constraints (no water for new homes and businesses) the dollars may not be generated to match the required dollars in the base budget.

Combined, these revenue losses translate into approximately 2.9 per cent of the base budget increase (or \$29).

The Town has added \$162,000 in staffing, as a result of growth pressures. Presidents of both Acton and Georgetown seniors' centres made requests at the meeting for more hours for centre staff due to rising memberships, declining volunteerism and increased program

needs, but no action on those requests was taken by the budget committee that night.

DeSousa did not paint a rosy picture for taxpayers when making projections for the 2009 and 2010 operating budgets, saying that 4 to 5 per cent increases on the base budget are expected. Again, that's due to decrease in assessment growth (resulting from the servicing constraints), reduction in revenues, topping up of an under-funded Public Works vehicle reserve, new parks and roads costs, staffing costs, utilities and fuels, materials and infrastructure funding.

Budget committee will begin debate on the proposed 2008 operating budget, beginning at 6 p.m. in the Halton Hills council chambers on Monday, Jan. 14.

The following night has also been scheduled as a budget discussion night.

Town backs MPP's bid to ban smoking in cars

Ward 3 Councillor Moya Johnson recently requested Mayor Rick Bonnette send a letter to the Ontario legislature supporting an MPP's bid to ban smoking in cars with children under age 16 as passengers.

Council approved the motion.

According to an Ontario Medical Association letter to the Town, research has shown that exposure to second-hand smoke can be 23 times more toxic in a car than a house because air circulation is restricted within a confined space.

The OMA says children exposed to second-hand smoke are at higher risk of asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, sudden infant death syndrome and increased incidence of cancer and heart disease in adulthood.

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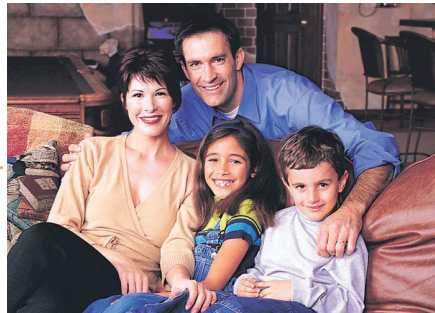
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