

Council wants budget options

Budget offers "challenges and opportunities"

While Town staff has prepared preliminary budgets that would result in a 7.1 per cent tax hike for Town purposes, councillors want staff to prepare scenarios based on lower increases.

At the instigation of Mayor Rick Bonnette, budget committee members – all councillors and the mayor – instructed staff to report on the implications of budget increases of three, four, five or six per cent.

Bonnette said they can't expect the new council elected in October's municipal election to face a 7.1 per cent tax increase without some meaningful discussion.

"I think its incumbent on us to ask the staff to further

take a look at scenarios and different percentages... scenarios to reduce the tax base," Bonnette said, adding that other municipalities also face tough budgets and "misery loves company."

"Maybe at the end of the day, Council will still be looking at (a) seven per cent (increase), but we really have to really see what does a three per cent increase do, what does a four per cent (do) – where is the hurt, where is the pain, or where's the pressure?" Bonnette said, adding he's sure the newly elected council will ask for the same information, so they should start the process now.

Ward two Council-

lor Joan Robson agreed with the mayor, adding it would not be "proper" to tie a new council with a 7.1 per cent tax increase.

"I'm not saying that this is an irresponsible budget at all – I know staff has worked very hard on it and are coming forth with excellent ideas – I think they've done a great deal of research..." Robson said, adding the maximum increase she'd support would be five per cent.

If the Town's preliminary operating budget is passed as is, the 7.1 per cent tax increase for Town purposes would result in an additional \$25 dollars for each \$100,000 of assessment. With a 3.21 per cent Regional tax increase,

and an anticipated zero increase for education, the total tax increase would be 3.7 per cent, or an additional \$37 per \$100,000 of assessment.

The 7.1 per cent consists of the base budget – all costs necessary to continue existing operations or costs already approved – increase of no more than 4.3 per cent, with 1.2 per cent dedicated to a Fire Services Levy, one per cent dedicated to a Special Infrastructure Levy and 0.6 per cent earmarked for the Library Operating

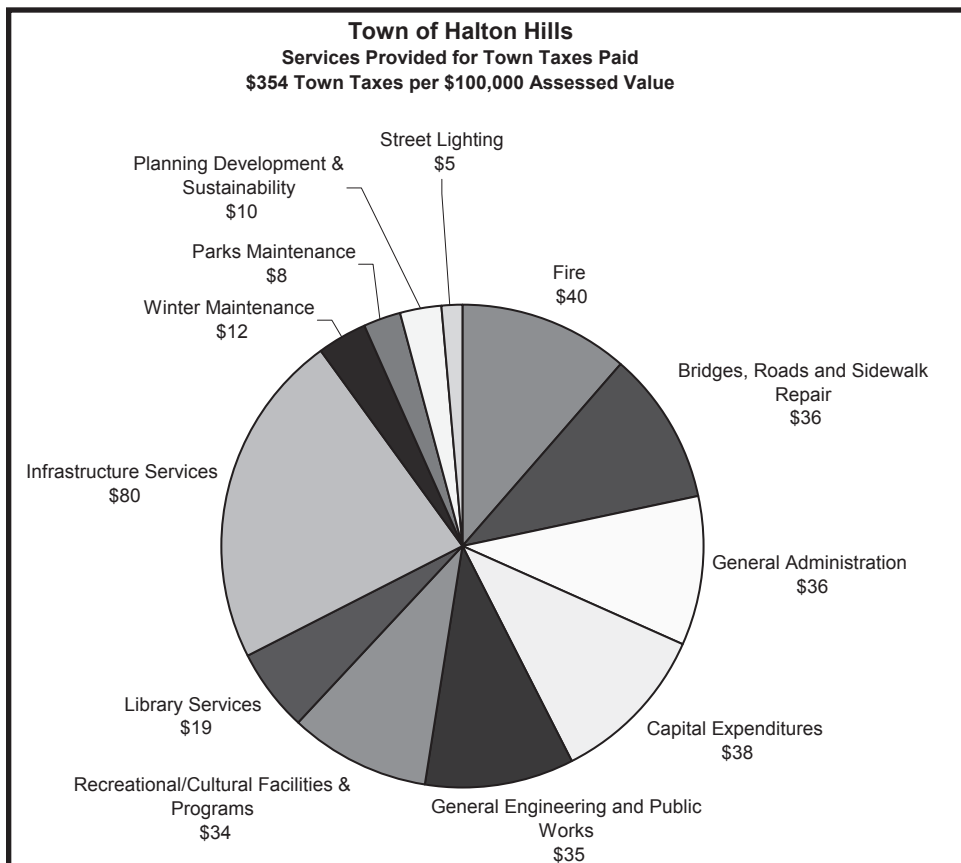
Levy.

In a report to Council, staff said the challenges for 2011 include limited assessment growth (at 0.5 per cent it is the lowest in 10 years), reductions in various corporate revenues, increases in wages, contracts and benefits, increases for general materials and supplies and increases in repair and maintenance of Town facilities.

The 2011 net operating budget levy, as proposed, is \$30.5-million, and projects in the proposed 2011

to 2020 capital budget forecast total \$130-million, with \$28.4-million for new arenas, including the proposed 2015 twinning of the Acton arena. Treasurer Ed DeSousa said that arena construction costs of \$11-million would have to be tax supported and the interest charges on the debt to build the arenas would push that figure to \$14-million.

Both the operating and capital budgets will be submitted to the new Council in January, following October's municipal election.



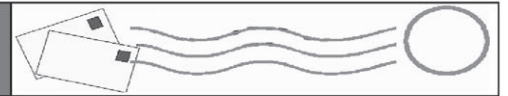
Total Property Tax Impact

TOWN OF HALTON HILLS
2011 PRELIMINARY OPERATING BUDGET
(Per \$100,000 of residential assessment)

	2010 Final Budget	2011 Preliminary Budget	\$ Change	% Change
Town	\$354	\$379	\$25	7.1%
Region	\$399	\$411	\$12	3.1%
Education **	\$241	\$241	\$0	0.0%
Total	\$994	\$1,031	\$37	3.7%

Notes: ** Education rates not yet known

Letters



Says thanks to neighbours

To the editor,

My dad and I plus eight of his co-workers and friends (Team DR.MS.) just completed a 75-km bike ride for Multiple Sclerosis in Niagara Falls on Sunday August 22. I would like to say thank you to the people on Birchway Place that were so kind in donating \$530 to sponsor me on my first MS Bike Ride. I raised a total

of \$733. I took a spill about 10 km into the ride, got hurt and almost gave up. People with MS don't give up and neither did I. I am so glad. I finished 75-km in about four and a half hours. I wanted everyone to know how happy I am to live on this street with so many caring neighbours and friends.

Thanks
Drake Slater

Slow Down

To the editor,

As a resident of Halton Hills for the past five years, and living between the Fourth Line and Coles Court on Highway 7, I have noticed a significant increase in speeders traveling east and west bound on Highway 7.

Just in the month of July within four days, between Fourth Line and Coles Court we have had two accidents and one of them closed Highway 7 for over an hour.

I am constantly seeing people driving or passing at high speeds.

I don't even feel comfortable walking on the sides of the roads anymore.

We need to remind people the speed limit is only 80 Kilometres.

I do occasionally see radar set up in the area, but maybe we need more of it to make people slow down.

Carrie



Happy
40th
Anniversary

August 29, 2010

Mamie & Papie

Love
Riley, Owen, Megan,
Jennifer, Mellissa & Dwaine

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