

# Council approves Region's \$276 million budget

*Taxpayers will see 3.1 per cent rise in regional taxes next year*

By RICHARD VIVIAN

The Champion

Halton residents can expect a 3.1 per cent jump on their regional tax bills next year.

Regional council approved the increase during budget finalization discussions Wednesday.

"This is a responsible budget," Regional Chair Joyce Savoline told The Champion.

"Nobody likes to see an increase in taxes, but staff and council handled it (budget discussions) well. If there was anything else to take out, it would have been done."

However, support of the \$276 million budget wasn't unanimous. Burlington Councillor Jack Dennison voted against it, suggesting with a few changes the increase could be lessened or eliminated.

"With the difficult economic times, I think we should have taken a harder line on trying to get those numbers (taxes) down," he told

council.

At the budget review committee meeting Monday, Mr. Dennison recommended taking a private sector-style approach to debenturing construction costs related to the Burlington long-term-care facility budgeted for 2002.

Under the approved schedule, construction costs will be debentured over 10 years, showing the facility to operate at a loss for the first several years.

If the facility were privately owned/operated, the cost would be debentured over 20 or 25 years, Mr. Dennison said, receiving the support of fellow Burlington Councillor Mike Wallace.

"The private sector makes a profit on it (long-term-care facilities). Why are we doing it and losing money?" he questioned Regional staff.

Stretching the debenturing reduces flexibility for future projects, said Dave Birkett, Halton's director of budget and fiscal policy services.

With the extended debt, there's less money available to build additional long-term care facilities — something that will likely be needed because of the aging population, Mr. Birkett said.

## Police get extra \$4 million

Mr. Dennison's recommendation aside, several contributing factors have led to the tax increase — not the least of which is an additional \$4 million for Halton Regional Police.

With a budget of \$56.6 million — which includes the \$4 million boost — the force will be able to hire 12 new officers, something Chief Ean Algar said is "very necessary."

The 2002 Regional budget also includes a contingency for more than \$2 million in subsidy shortfalls from the provincial government.

Subsidies for several programs — most noticeably \$1.6 million for ambulance services — have yet to be collected from the Province.

According to Mr. Birkett, the contingency is needed to ensure adequate service levels are maintained.

A new waste collection contract is also a driving factor for increased taxes.


Since the current contract was signed six years ago, collection costs have risen 40 per cent.

The new contract will begin in February.

For the average homeowner — with a current value assessment of \$220,000 — the end result of the approved budget is a \$34.88 boost in Regional taxes.

The Town of Milton is currently looking at maintaining a zero increase in municipal taxes.

Councillors are scheduled to formally address the matter January 7.



**THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF MILTON**

TTY: 905-878-1657

905-878-7211

**MILTON ON-LINE**

<http://www.town.milton.on.ca>

**Municipal Public Facilities**

**Hours for the Holiday Season**

**Town Hall:**  
Please note that the Municipal Offices will be closed for the Holiday Season, from Monday, December 24th, 2001 until Tuesday, January 1st, 2002. The Municipal Offices will re-open on Wednesday, January 2nd, 2002 at 8:30 a.m. *For any Town of Milton Operational Service Emergency during this time please contact 905-878-7141.*

**Fire Department ADMINISTRATION ONLY**  
Please note that the administration for the Fire Department will be closed for the Holiday Season from Monday, December 24th, 2001 until Tuesday, January 1st, 2002. The administration for the Fire Department will re-open on Wednesday, January 2nd, 2002 at 8:30 a.m. *For Fire Service Emergencies please call 911.*

**Leisure Centre and Arenas:**  
Please note that the Leisure Centre, John Tonelli Arena and Milton Memorial Arena will be closed for the Holiday Season as follows:

**Leisure Centre Closures**

Closed	- Monday, December 24 at 1:30 p.m.
	- Tuesday, December 25, 2001
	- Wednesday, December 26, 2001
	- Monday, December 31 at 1:30 p.m.
	- Tuesday, January 1, 2002


Regular business hours for all other weekdays are 6:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.  
Saturdays 7:30 a.m. - 8:00 p.m., Sundays 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

**Memorial and Tonelli Arena Closures**

Closed	- Monday, December 24 at 4:00 p.m.
	- Tuesday, December 25, 2001
	- Wednesday, December 26, 2001
	- Monday, December 31 at 4:00 p.m.
	- Tuesday, January 1, 2002

For further information, on programs and operational schedules during this Holiday Season, please contact the appropriate facility, noted below.

Leisure Centre at 905-878-7946  
John Tonelli Arena 905-878-2671  
Milton Memorial Arena 905-878-4163



**Seniors Activity Centre:**  
Please note that the Seniors Activity Centre will be closed for the Holiday Season from Monday, December 24, 2001 until Tuesday, January 1st, 2002. The Centre will re-open on Wednesday, January 2nd, 2002 at 9:00 a.m. For further information or to find out more about our New Year's Eve event, please contact the Seniors' Activity centre at 905-875-1681.

*Mayor Krantz, Members of Council and the Staff would like to take this opportunity to wish all the residents of Milton, a holiday blessed with peace, prosperity, health and happiness and best wishes for the upcoming year.*

Are you interested, concerned and community oriented? Appointments to various local boards and/or citizen advisory committees provides an opportunity to all residents of Milton to volunteer their skills and contribute to our municipality.

## BOARD & COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Applications are now being accepted by the Town Clerk for appointments to the following Boards and Committees:

### HERITAGE MILTON LACAC (Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee) (members required for a three year term)

Heritage Milton is comprised of private citizens, elected representatives and municipal staff. The mandate of this committee is to provide advice and assistance to Milton Council, the Department of Planning & Development and private property owners on matters relating to the conservation of the community's historic building and architectural heritage.

\*The successful applicant must be a resident of Milton, or an owner or tenant of land in the municipality, or the spouse of such and owner or tenant, be a minimum of eighteen years of age on the date of appointment; or employees of a business located in the municipality or students attending a school located in the Town of Milton.

Please apply in writing, stating your qualifications and/or interest. Applications will be accepted until 4:30 p.m. on January 10th 2002. Further details may be obtained by contacting the Clerk's Department at 905-878-7211.

Helen Lisi, Town Clerk  
The Corporation of the Town of Milton

# GAMBLING PROBLEM?

If you or someone you know needs help with a gambling problem, please call the Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-888-230-3505, or in your community:

## ADAPT

Alcohol, Drug & Gambling  
Assessment Prevention & Treatment Services

Burlington 905-639-6537

Halton Hills 905-873-2993

Milton 905-693-4250

Oakville 905-847-6547

All services are free and confidential

