

# Looks like regional taxes are going up, as well

By **JASON MISNER**

*The Champion*

Halton taxpayers could be hit with a double whammy next year.

Regional staff are forecasting as high as a 4.9 per cent tax hike – or about \$43 per household – on an average-assessed home of \$220,000, as well as a 8.5 per cent increase – or \$43 per household – on water and sewer rates.

All totalled, that would add some \$86 to residents' overall annual bills over the previous tax year.

But that doesn't include the impact of the Halton Regional Police budget, pegged temporarily at a 7.4 per cent hike. Factor that in, and the ultimate regional tax impact rises to 5.6 per cent, or \$67 per household (excluding water and sewer).

To further muddy the waters, Halton police haven't yet approved their budget and are considering an even bigger increase of 12 per cent.

That means residents' overall tax bills would grow to 6 per cent (excluding water and sewer).

Combining base taxes and police budget impacts, the tax bill averaged \$1,206 for 2003, resulting in a 2 per cent hike.

"We still have a lot of work we have to go through," cautioned the Region's treasurer and commissioner of corporate services Jane MacCaskill, about possible changes as staff works diligently to bring a recommended budget for councillors to mull over in late November. The budget is slated for official approval January 22.

In addition to the 4.9 per cent increase, Ms MacCaskill said staff will also present a budget with a 3 per cent tax increase as per councillors' request.

But the forecast so far shows the Region will have to fork out about an extra \$10.2 million in 2004 to accommodate a number of financial pressures.

"These impacts are largely not related to new programs but rather additional budget requirements," a finance report on the 2004 tax forecast stated.

## Lots of pressures

Specifically, the pressures include:

- Costs to fight West Nile virus through the Region's larviciding program.
- The opening of two new long-term care facilities, one each in Burlington and Oakville, as well as opening ambulance centres at those facilities.
- Salary and benefit adjustments for staff.
- Road responsibilities, especially for improvements along Highways 5 and 25. These two roadways were downloaded from the Province to the Region in 1998.
- Funding for Conservation Halton, and the Grand River and Credit Valley authorities.
- Higher insurance premiums.

And while not an issue specific only to Halton, impacts from a slower-than-predicted growth rate for Canada for 2003 will likely add stress to the Region's tax base.

Originally it was anticipated to hit 3.3 per cent but has since been revised and is expected to reach only 2.3 per cent due to a sluggish economy, the war in Iraq, a surging Canadian dollar and the sting of SARS and mad cow disease hurting the tourism industry.

Said Ms MacCaskill: "We're very influenced by the economy."

Councillors were wary of the potential tax hikes.

Milton Mayor Gord Krantz said he supports a hike only as high as the rate of inflation.

He said he can't control the budget of police services, but "anything I have control and jurisdiction over won't go over the rate of inflation."

Oakville Regional Councillor Allan Elgar said  
• see **DONWLOADED** on page 15

# GET MORE THIS SUMMER

## DURING NISSAN'S SUMMER SALES EVENT



### 2003 PATHFINDER "CHILKOOT EDITION"

**\$359** per month lease for 48 months with \$5,150 down.  
INCLUDES DESTINATION AND DELIVERY.

Or finance the purchase of your vehicle for **0.9%** for 36 months.\*

- 240-HP 3.5-litre DOHC engine • 4-speed automatic with overdrive
- "All-Mode" 4-wheel drive • 150-watt Bose® CD audio system with in-dash 6-disc autochanger • 8-way adjustable driver's seat • Air conditioning
- Electronic compass & outside temperature display • Remote rear liftgate glass release • And much, much more...

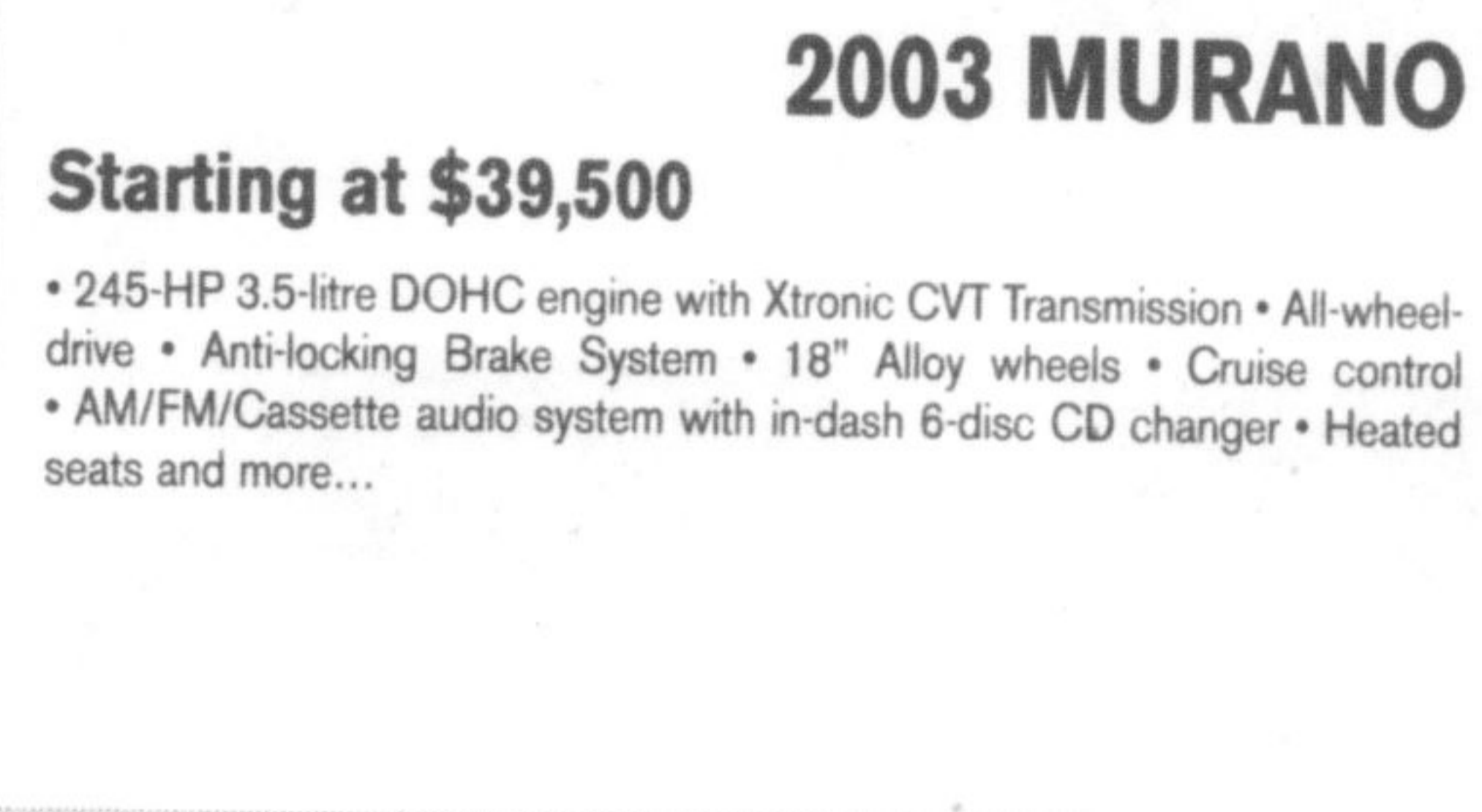


### 2003 ALTIMA 2.5S

**\$289** per month lease for 48 months with \$3,160 down.  
INCLUDES DESTINATION AND DELIVERY.

- 175-HP 2.5-litre DOHC engine • Air conditioning • AM/FM with CD audio system and 6 speakers • Power heated outside mirrors • 60/40 split rear seat w/lock • 8-way manual driver's seat • Tilt and telescope steering column
- And much, much more...

**0 SECURITY DEPOSIT AND 0 PAYMENTS FOR 90 DAYS ON ALL 2003 ALTIMA MODELS\***



### 2003 MURANO

Starting at **\$39,500**

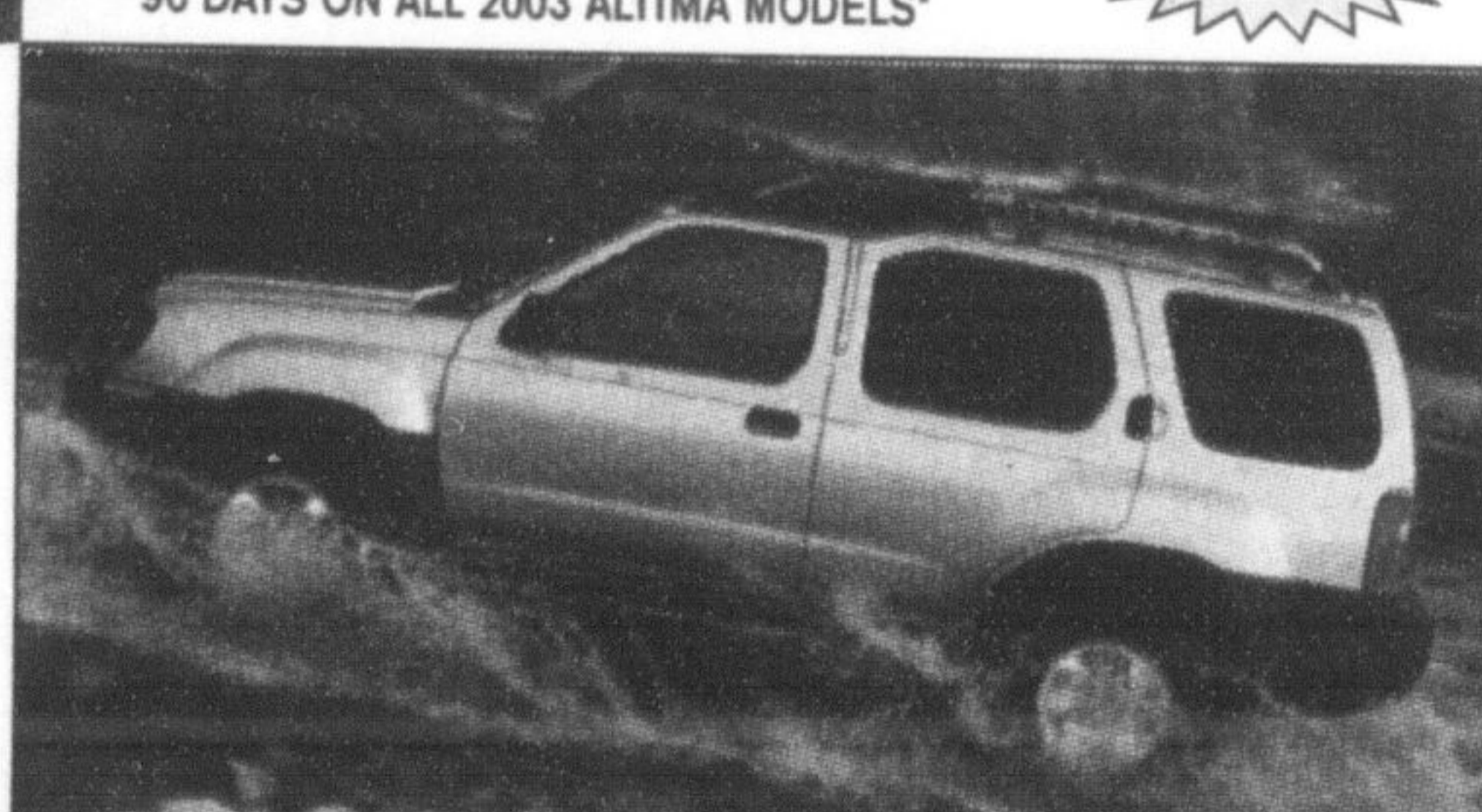
- 245-HP 3.5-litre DOHC engine with Xtronic CVT Transmission • All-wheel drive • Anti-locking Brake System • 18" Alloy wheels • Cruise control
- AM/FM/Cassette audio system with in-dash 6-disc CD changer • Heated seats and more...



### 2003 XTERRA XE

**\$338** per month lease for 48 months with \$4,600 down.  
INCLUDES DESTINATION AND DELIVERY.

- 180-HP 3.3-litre SOHC V6 engine • Power windows, mirrors, and door locks • Side step rails • Part-time 4-wheel drive system • Tubular roof rack with removable basket and wind deflector • Air conditioning • And more...



**HURRY IN FOR LOW LEASE RATES AND FINANCING AS LOW AS 0.9% FOR 36 MONTHS ON REMAINING 2003 SENTRA AND MAXIMA MODELS.**

**ALSO FOR 2003 SENTRA & ALTIMA ENJOY \$0 SECURITY DEPOSIT (O.A.C.) OR NO PAYMENTS FOR THE FIRST 90 DAYS.\***

### THE NEW 2004 SENTRA

Starting at **\$15,598\***

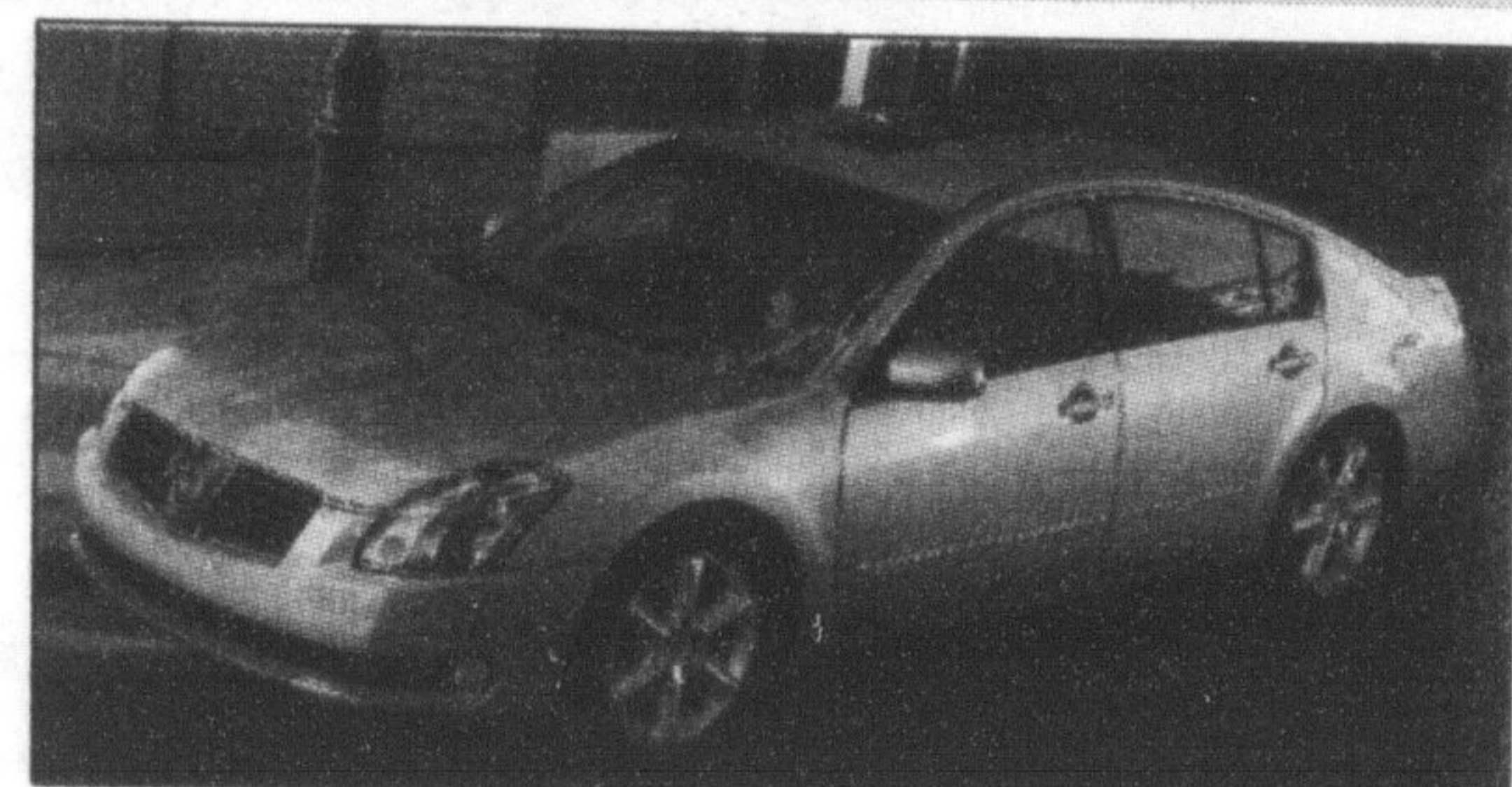
- 126-HP 1.8-litre DOHC engine • 15" Steel wheels • 8-Way manual driver's seat • Tilt steering • Dual air bags • 60/40 split folding bench seat • And much more...



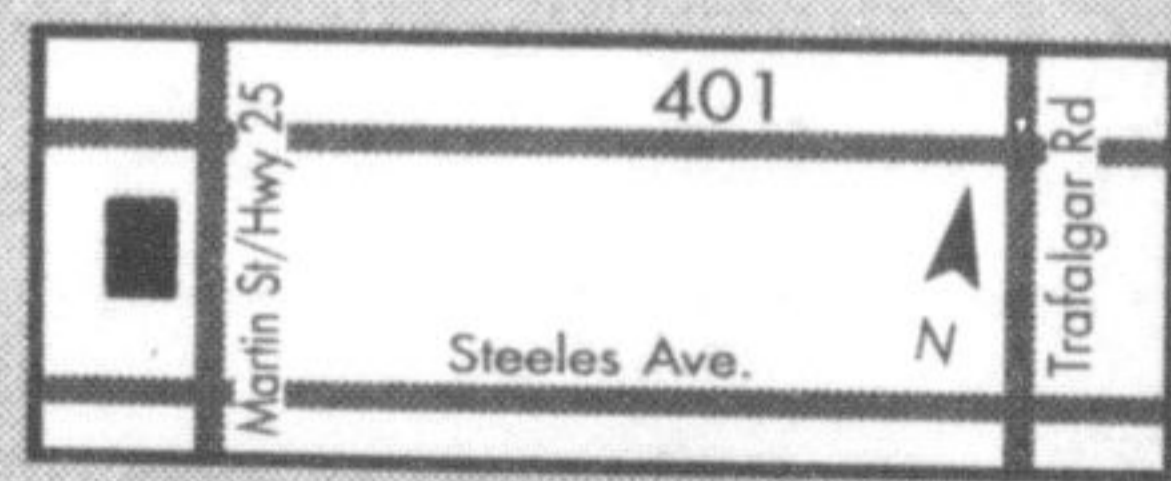
### THE NEW 2004 MAXIMA

Starting at **\$34,500\***

- 265-HP 3.5-litre DOHC V6 engine • 18" Steel wheels • ABS
- Halogen headlights • Skyview™ roof • 8-Way power driver's seat
- Heated front seats • 8-speaker Bose® audio system • AM/FM cassette with 6-disc in-dash CD changer • And much more...



Milton's  
**NORTH END NISSAN LTD.**



**610 MARTIN STREET, MILTON**  
**905-878-4137**

SALES DEPT. HOURS: Mon.-Thurs. 9:00 - 9:00  
Fri. 9:00 - 6:00  
Sat. 9:00 - 5:00



**SHIFT**  
www.nissan.ca

All offers are only on accepted credit, available for a limited time, and may change without notice on new 2003 Pathfinder "Chilkoot Edition" Automatic (5CRG73 AE00), 2003 Xterra XE (BCLG53 AA00), 2003 Altima S (T4RG73 AE00), 2003 Murano and all 2004 Sentra/Maxima models. Offers cannot be combined with any other offers and except where otherwise noted include destination and delivery (Excluded in 2003 Murano, 2004 Sentra/Maxima MSRP (\$981/\$868/\$972) \*\*MSRP for models shown; 2004 Sentra SE-R with Sport Package (C4SG74 RR00)/ 2004 Maxima 3.5 SE w/ option leather (U4SG54 LE00) \$24,398/\$37,200 Dealer may sell/lease for less. †First payment due 90 days after date of delivery on financed purchases on new 2003 Sentra. No interest for 60 days. \*48-month lease on 2003 Altima S/Pathfinder Chilkoot Edition/Xterra XE manual 5.2%/3.9%/5.2% ALR. Leases based on a maximum of 96,000 km with excess charged at \$0.10/km. If the cash purchase price are not taken, and the vehicle is financed, the effective interest rate is 3.86%/5.93% for Sentra/Maxima. Vehicles not exactly as shown and used for illustration purposes. Nissan, the Nissan Brand Symbol, "SHIFT." tagline, Z and Nissan model names are Nissan trademarks. See your nearest Nissan Dealership or www.nissan.ca for more information.

## USED VEHICLES

### 1998 NISSAN QUEST

- 7 Passenger • Fully equipped • Quad seating • 70,000kms

Sale Price:  
**\$14,990**



### 1999 TOYOTA TERCEL

- 4 door • Auto • Stereo • PS • PB • Only 51,000kms

Sale Price:  
**\$8,990**



### 1999 HONDA CIVIC SE

- 5 speed • Air • Stereo & much more • Only 83,000kms

Sale Price:  
**\$10,990**



### 2001 NISSAN PATHFINDER SE

- 4x4 • 5 speed • Fully equipped • Leather Interior • Only 62,000kms

Sale Price:  
**\$26,880**

