



Simply Halton

Your Halton
Connection
January '06

On January 1, 2006 we will officially transition to a new, easier-to-remember Web address
www.halton.ca

2005 Accomplishments

- Maintenance of the AAA Credit Rating
- Opening of two new Long-Term Care Homes: Post Inn Village and Creek Way Village
- Opening of Salvation Army Lighthouse which provides shelter to 25 homeless adults and youth in Halton
- Receipt of an award from the Canadian Public Relations Society for the communications work surrounding the *Simply Local* initiative
- Receipt of the Government Finance Officers of America Distinguished Budget Award Designation as Top 100 Employer for 2005 by *Maclean's* magazine
- The continuation of the Halton Physician Recruitment Initiative that has helped to bring 35 family doctors to Halton in the program's first two years
- Designation of Access Halton as a "world class" call centre according to the findings of a major customer service satisfaction survey
- The development of a 10-year Emergency Medical Services Master Plan
- Opening of two new EMS stations at Post Inn Village in Oakville and Creek Way Village in Burlington
- Expanding the Blue Box Collection program to BIA areas
- Implementing the GreenCart demonstration program
- Adopting the Regional Tree By-law
- Approving the Master Plan for the Regional Forests
- Approving the GTA Agricultural Action Plan

Halton Meetings & Events

January Meetings at Regional Headquarters

Tuesday, January 10
9:30 a.m. Health & Social Services Committee

Wednesday, January 11
9:30 a.m. Planning & Public Works Committee
1:30 p.m. Administration & Finance Committee

Wednesday, January 18
9:30 a.m. Regional Council Meeting

2006 Budget: Transparent and Accountable



Joyce Savoline
REGIONAL CHAIRMAN

On December 14th Halton's Regional Council approved the 2006 Operating and Capital Budget. The development of the budget is a lengthy and detailed process and I commend staff for their expertise and diligence in putting it together. I also wish to recognize my colleagues on Council who engaged in healthy public debate and raised questions which is in keeping with our efforts towards being a transparent and accountable government.

The 2006 budget includes a property tax increase of 2.6 per cent for Regional programs and services and a 6.0 per cent increase for police services for an overall property tax increase of 3.6 per cent. The Budget also includes a 7.2 per cent rate increase for water and sewer utilities.

For a homeowner with a property assessed at \$300,000, the property tax increase is estimated at \$24.15 for Regional programs and \$24.09 for police services for an overall increase of approximately \$ 48.24 per year. The combined water and sewer bill will increase by approximately \$43.62.

The Region's Strategic Plan provided the basis for determining our 2006 priorities. The priorities driving the tax-supported budget include:

- \$65.3 million for the Transportation capital program focused on improving our regional road system, minimizing impacts on the environment and encouraging alternate methods of transportation;
- \$1.4 million to annualize the operating costs of Creek Way Village in Burlington, our newest long-term care

facility. Through our long-term care facilities, Halton now provides 572 long-term beds; and

- \$1.9 million for ambulance Services which includes implementation of the Emergency Medical Services Master Plan with an additional 5.4 FTE paramedics for the Creek Way Village EMS station to increase service coverage from 12 to 24 hours per day.

The 2006 Budget also supports the Region's continued commitment to reaching the provincial waste diversion target of 60 per cent through the approval of a five-year Draft Solid Waste Management Strategy. At the conclusion of the Organics pilot project, Council will consider approval for implementing the program Region-wide in late 2006.

Reserve balances and strategies are reviewed annually during the budget process, to address impacts within the current year, and also in the context of long-term budget pressures over the 10-year forecast. The use and balance of reserves are among the factors considered by credit rating agencies in reaffirming Halton's credit rating at AAA.

As Chairman, I'm proud to have supported this budget which is based on sound financial planning, transparency and accountability with a focus on areas critical to our residents: public health, planning and public works infrastructure, and social and community services. The 2006 budget is both realistic and practical, predicated on Halton's solid financial practices of upholding the quality of life of our residents while planning for our community's future.



COURTESY OF HALTON REGION MUSEUM ARCHIVES.

Our 2006 Regional Budget Reflects Sound Financial Management



A. Brent Marshall
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

With the approval of our 2006 Operating and Capital Budget, I'm pleased to report that once again Halton Region has developed a solid business plan that is financially sustainable for our community and delivers on the programs and services

Halton residents have come to expect and depend on.

In developing our budget, we looked to continuing our tradition of strong fiscal stewardship, which has been recognized through the reaffirmation of our AAA credit rating by two independent agencies, Moody's Investor Service and Standard & Poor's Rating Services. This assessment is a testament to Halton's sound financial practices and that of our local municipalities. As well this year, we earned the Government Finance Officers of America Distinguished Budget Award for exemplary budget

preparation - further testament that our processes are well developed.

Halton's portion of the Federal Gas Tax money was also incorporated into the budgeting process and will be allocated to strategic capital projects that meet the program criteria of sustainable municipal infrastructure. The Federal Gas Tax Agreement is a cost sharing initiative that will see more than \$30 million directed to Halton Region over the next five years to support environmental initiatives based on the criteria of improving the quality of the environment and contributing to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, clean water or clean air through investments in public transit, water systems, wastewater systems, solid waste, community energy systems and local roads, bridges and tunnels and or other active transportation infrastructure. Halton's projects will include road widening to alleviate traffic congestion through the implementation of high occupancy vehicle lanes and cycling facilities.

Creating the annual operating budget and business plan requires dedication and commitment of all involved. Once again Council and Regional staff have created a fair and fiscally sound budget that continues the tradition of service excellence while building the infrastructure necessary to uphold the quality of life we all enjoy.

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
Regional Municipality of Halton • 1151 Bronte Rd., Oakville, Ontario L6M 3L1