

Police budget get \$12M boost

BY ROY GREEN
Staff Writer

York Region homeowners can expect a tax hike of 5.3 per cent or \$85 to pay for police, roads, transit and social services, as regional council approved a \$1.5-billion budget Thursday.

The regional portion of taxes for a home assessed at \$336,422 is \$1,719. The final 2005 tax bill will also include municipal and education costs, which, in most cases, have not yet been finalized.

The increase was trimmed from a projected 8.9-per-cent hike.

"This has been one of the most challenging budgets in recent memory," regional chairperson Bill Fisch said.

Council will also cap its 2005 GTA pooling contribu-

tion to 3 per cent over the 2004 rate of \$79.5 million and called on the province for legislative and funding changes to address the growing fiscal gap between municipal needs and financial resources.

Services to receive budget boosts include:

- York Regional Police: more than \$12 million (\$151 million total) including 67 new officers and 35 civilian support staff;
- Viva rapid transit: more than \$11 million of a \$14 million total;
- York Region Transit:

more than \$7 million of a \$44 million total;

- Roads, transportation: more than \$3 million (\$54 million total) including more than 90 kilometres of additional lane construction, 60 km of resurfacing and improvements to 12 bridges and 29 intersections; and
- Solid waste: more than \$1.6 million (\$18 million budget total) including opening of a new material recovery facility and the beginning of the source-separated organics program.

Crash victim remains in hospital

York Region Police are interviewing witnesses to a collision in Thornhill Friday morning that left a woman in hospital.

Police said a 44-year-old woman was struck by a car at the intersection of Bayview Avenue and Romfield Circuit around 7:30 a.m. Friday.

The woman was rushed to hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

Police Venturers coming to Markham

The York Regional Police Venturers are headed south.

POLICE DIGEST

The youth group that has spent the past 11 years bringing together Scouts Canada and local cops in Newmarket is expanding to Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan this year.

The Police Venturers program, which normally runs from September to June, combines scouting with leaders, field trips and speakers designed to teach youth about police work.

An information and registration night will be held at the 2 District police station at 171 Major Mackenzie Dr. in Richmond Hill March 9 from 7 to 9 p.m.

BUDGET BREAKDOWN

A partial breakdown of the \$85 budget increase sees:

- \$20 for police services
- \$18 for Viva rapid transit
- \$12 for regular transit
- \$11 for GTA pooling
- \$5 for roads
- \$4 for the Ontarians with Disabilities Support Program
- \$2 for solid waste management
- \$2 for health and EMS services
- \$2 for community services and housing
- \$1 for Municipal Property Assessment Corporation
- And the balance for other regional programs.



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