

## **2007 Tax Budget Process Begins**

The City of Hamilton's 2007 Tax Budget process is underway. A high-level corporate overview of the Operating and Capital Budgets was presented to Committee of the Whole (COW) today. The draft budget does not include any service or program reductions. Currently the draft budget presents a 3.5 percent increase on the average residential tax bill. COW will consider a number of options over the coming weeks aimed at reducing the overall increase. COW will also be asked to consider \$5 million dollars in enhancements that are not reflected in the current 3.5 percent increase. Staff has recommended pursuing \$17 million dollars in funding from the Provincial government to help offset the costs associated with the downloading of Social Service programs.

The General Managers are presenting overviews of their departmental budgets over the next few days. Public delegations will be heard on February 22 and the Boards and Agency budgets will be reviewed on February 27. As part of the public consultation phase, the Mayor's on-line survey is up and running and is also available in hard copy at Public Libraries and the Municipal Service Centres.

Budget deliberations are scheduled to begin in early March, with final approval of the budget expected by late March or early April.