

City staff has ballooned since amalgamation

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As of a January 2008 report, Hamilton had added the equivalent of 832 full-time positions - a 12 per cent increase - since 2000.

After an initial drop in staffing and \$25 million in savings after amalgamation, the city's numbers have increased. About half the added positions were provincially mandated, downloaded or assumed by the city when it took over an outside service. Another 450 positions were added through program enhancements approved by council.

A third of the new positions didn't add to the tax burden because they were paid for by the province, funded through capital or offset by new revenue.

This year's budget calls for another 128 full-time equivalent positions, bringing total staffing to more than 7,000.

The city's general manager of finance, Joe Rinaldo says this year's positions include 63 paramedics for ambulance service enhancement (the city is adding four ambulances and five paramedic response units to address a shortfall). Transit expansion added 16 transit operators. The Red Hill Valley Parkway and the assumption of Highway 6 from the province requires another 15 staff for maintenance and winter control. A new fire station in Ancaster requires an additional 11 firefighters. Eight staff are needed for the mayor's initiative to invest more into economic development and six staff members were added to the Public Health department for programs fully funded by the province, with no impact on property taxes.

In Toronto, from amalgamation in 1998 to 2007, full-time positions went from about 46,000 to 50,086 - a nine per cent increase.

In Burlington, without an amalgamation, full-time staff increased from 699 in 2002 to 825 in 2007 - or 18 per cent.

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