



For Immediate Release

## **Cambridge Budget Highlights Wi-Fi Utilization Part of the City's Future**

Cambridge, Ontario. January 18, 2008...The City of Cambridge today kicked off the process to present the framework for the proposed 2008 Capital and Operating budgets for the Corporation.

The \$86 Million total budget includes a modest tax increase of 2.28 per cent at the base level and 4.34 per cent with the growth initiatives included in the mix. This compares to the current rate of inflation which is fluctuating at around the 2.5 per cent.

Assessment growth for new development such as residential, commercial and industrial resulted in 1.95 per cent growth in 2008.

The City of Cambridge continues to be debt free and looks to continue to be fiscally responsible while keeping a priority of serving our community," says Frank Gowman, Commissioner of Corporate Services. Gowman points to an example of a \$200,000 savings this year for hydro electric power. This was achieved by the city by the renegotiation of the contract that gained efficiencies through the introduction of market rates.

Careful consideration of the budget has kept the requests for growth or enhanced services to a minimum. The proposal included the addition of eight new full time and seven new part-time positions including two new legal positions that will bring the legal services in-house and offer overall efficiencies and service improvements to the municipality. Other areas such as Community Services, Transportation and Public Works, and Libraries are bringing forward requests for staff support. New crossing guards, a part-time staff person for the Cambridge Farmers' Market, and a person to assist with Cemetery operations are also in the growth area proposals for 2008.

The Corporate Services department which is responsible for the technical support of the computer network is seeking to bring on a specialist who will work on the new Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system which will optimize the transmission of voice through the Internet and ultimately bring down the costs of data transmission. The position will also support Wi-Fi services development for city staff to enhance the efficiency of field work.

"A series of "hot spots" in the city are a part of an expanding private sector network including Wi-Fi access at the new City Hall which will benefit the public and other key users of wireless technology," says Ben Tucci, Chair of the Budget Task Force.

The net impact of the budget per average household with a home valued at \$203,000 is \$20.59 at the base level and \$39.19 at the growth level. The city makes up about a third of the Cambridge homeowner's tax bill, with the region and schools boards making up the rest.

One area that will see a rate increase is water and sewer costs. These are projected to increase by 13.4 per cent or equating about \$70.78 per household. Much of this increase stems from impacts at the provincial level whereby wholesale water rates were passed on to the region.

The Capital budget proposed of \$28 Million includes approximately \$16 Million for tax supported and \$12 Million for non-tax supported capital projects. A number of key projects under consideration:

- \$1.4 Million for storm sewer repairs and upgrades
- \$1.7 Million for road construction between Ballantyne Avenue from McKay Street to Albert Street and McKay Street from Ballantyne Avenue to Stewart Street
- \$2.8 Million for reconstruction of Guelph Avenue from Hespeler Road to Scott Road/Baldwin Drive including installation of storm sewers and sidewalks
- \$1.5 Million for construction on Groff Mill Creek to alleviate the flood risk to abutting private properties and municipal infrastructure
- \$1.5 Million for conservation work to old City Hall including construction of external stairs and relocation of the elevator
- \$205,000 to support neighbourhood park development
- \$200,000 for improvements to trails and walkways
- \$7.9 Million for development of Boxwood Industrial Park

Community delegations such as the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, The Waterloo Region Small Business Centre, Doctor Recruitment Task Force and the Social Planning Council will bring their financial requests to council on January 22, 2008. Capital and Operating budget meeting dates are slated for Thursday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, Thursday January 31<sup>st</sup> and tentatively Friday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

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The City of Cambridge is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. It is strategically located astride highway 401 in Southwestern Ontario, part of Canada's Technology Triangle. In 2007, the population reached over 124,000 people with a multicultural mix and a strong foundation of support services. Cambridge has a diverse economic base with leading industries in manufacturing, automotive, high technology, pharmaceutical, business and financial services and hospitality/retail. The Corporation of the City of Cambridge is an employer with a work environment that offers the opportunity to provide service to the community through creativity and innovation, and with opportunities for career growth and advancement.

For more information on the area or the corporation visit [www.cambridge.ca](http://www.cambridge.ca)  
The City of Cambridge press room is located at <http://www.cambridge.ca/article.php?sid=176>

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