

Caledon holds Open House for potential Bolton South GO MTSA

Residents voice transit, density concerns

By Riley Murphy

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Town of Caledon held an open house for residents Tuesday night to learn and ask questions regarding the Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) for the potential Bolton South GO Major Transit Station Area (MTSA).

The potential Bolton South GO MTSA is envisioned as a mixed-use, high-density, multimodal community in the draft Bolton Secondary Plan being concurrently led by the Town.

On the Have Your Say Page for the Bolton Secondary Plan, it is shared that the CPPS will help streamline the development applications in the area and support the implementation of the Bolton Secondary Plan, which is being developed concurrently by the Town.

The CPPS is also part of the Town's initiatives under the Housing Accelerator Fund.

A draft Community Planning Permit (CPP) By-law has been prepared to implement the CPPS.

The CPP By-law will replace the Town's Zoning By-law as it applies to the area once it is in effect.

During the drop-in style open house, boards surrounded the room explaining the benefits of the CPPS, and how it compares to the current Zoning By-law.

The CPPS is a land use planning tool available to municipalities in Ontario.

It streamlines development approvals by combining zoning, site plan, and minor variance processes.

It also states that it allows for consideration of community benefits, including facilities and services.

It was shared that the current process takes approximately 180 days from submission to build, and with the CPPS, it can take approximately 75 days.

It states that the CPPS has greater certainty and transparency for the community, landowners, and developers on contemplated planning outcomes.

There are three approval classes in the CPPS: Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3.

Each class has a varying approval process.

For example, this includes whether or not the application has to involve council variation, which is seen in class 3.

It was also shared that a CPP By-Law allows for additional community benefits such as affordable housing, (referred to as facilities, services, and matters') in exchange for additional height or density.

Residents attended the meeting to have their concerns heard and questions answered.

Eugenia Yaromina is a property manager of one of the plazas that would be affected in the Bolton Secondary Plan. She attended to learn about the proposed changes' impact on the plaza, the existing development restrictions, and the status of the proposed GO station.

Resident Stacie Roberts expressed concern that "development is coming before transit."

"If we get this density in without any alleviation of traffic or improving our roads and making them accessible to pedestrians and cyclists, then we're just going to be sitting in traffic for the rest of our time here at our little town, which is now becoming a city," said Roberts. "My concern is that we're doing this to get the GO train as opposed to having transit in place before we make the density increase."

"I want to be able to still enjoy the town that I live in safely and be able to walk the streets and bicycle."

Roberts expressed her concerns to staff about adding large units without transit plans, which would increase the number of cars on the road.

Amanda Corbett from the Caledon Community Road Safety Advocacy group voiced concerns regarding notice requirements, as well as the lack of availability for public input when it comes to certain classes that do not get sent to Council for approval.

Corbett also noted the dry industrial areas adjacent to large residential units.

Regional Councillor for the area of the proposed plan, Councillor Mario Russo, said attending the open house allowed him to hear the questions that are bothering residents and their concerns on a "very complicated process that is very process driven."

Councillor Russo shared that open houses like this allow for residents' voices and concerns to be heard.

After hearing many questions revolving around traffic and transport, he said they are "continuously pushing to the province to get that GO" and that they are looking at options of public transit.

"How we land is based on some of the input that we get and some of the recommendations we get from the consultants as well."

Councillor Cosimo Napoli for Ward 6 shared that he, as well as everyone else, was interested to see what's "going on in Bolton."

"It's important to understand all of the timelines where we can expect development to happen and how that will be going forward," said Councillor Napoli.

"I think it's important for our residents to understand how this development is going to occur. A lot of people think that this is going to be happening overnight, which it's not the case. This is going to be years in the making," he said.

"We look forward to seeing what's going to be happening in the next few years, and it's important that we do have development so we can sustain our municipality because without growth at the end of the day it's going to fall on the taxpayer to maintain our infrastructure. Development will actually help us maintain our infrastructure with the development charges that we receive from the developers, and also, when homes are built, there'll be more residents paying taxes to help support our infrastructure."