

ecoCaledon launches online action in support of green development standards

Caledon Council will be voting on implementing green development standards this spring

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A local non-profit is encouraging Caledon residents to show their support for implementing green development standards in town.

On April 1, ecoCaledon, in partnership with the David Suzuki Foundation, launched an online action inviting people to write letters supporting green development standards in Caledon.

The action is available at the following link: davidsuzuki.org/action/say-yes-to-green-development-in-caledon/

Caledon Council is set to vote on whether or not to implement green development standards this spring.

The Town of Caledon has been working on the standards for some time now, engaging community stakeholders ? such as the development industry, local non-profits, and conservation authorities ? in the process. Work began on the standards in January of 2022 and, last July, a draft of the standards was released for review.

Mandatory green development standards would aim to achieve net-zero emissions from all new buildings in Caledon by 2030.

Green development standards are sets of measures related to environmentally, socially, and economically-sustainable design created by municipalities that are required to be met in new developments.

The standards are meant to support energy-efficient buildings and renewable energy systems, create communities resilient to climate change; create complete and transit-oriented communities; provide a mix of housing options; create local jobs to reduce commuting; and protect local ecosystems.

Buildings account for 30 per cent of Caledon's greenhouse gas emissions. These emissions are likely to increase as Caledon is set to grow to a population of 300,000 by 2050.

According to ecoCaledon and the David Suzuki Foundation, Caledon's green development standards will ensure developers are held accountable so the Town grows in a sustainable manner that supports the community and the planet.

The two non-profits said supporting Caledon's green development standards can build more resilient communities; improve energy affordability for residents and communities; avoid costly retrofits; increase affordable housing supply, help Caledon meet its climate targets; and protect Caledon's natural heritage and agricultural land.

Lucrezia Chiappetta, co-chair of ecoCaledon, said she hopes the action launched by ecoCaledon and the David Suzuki Foundation will put a little bit of pressure on Caledon Council to pass the green development standards as soon as possible.

?We wanted to ensure that as many Caledon residents as possible were aware that the green development standards were going to be tabled at Council and understood the importance of these standards and the benefits? which are not just environmental ? there are social benefits and economic benefits,? she said. ?The online action is a way for Caledon residents to show support for the green development standards prior to Council voting on the standards.?

The David Suzuki Foundation and ecoCaledon partnered a short while ago, when ecoCaledon started a subcommittee to focus on

planning policy and advocacy. The David Suzuki Foundation then reached out to ecoCaledon as it has a lot of experience in the area.

‘They were happy to review [the standards] alongside us and give us some feedback on the different metrics that the Town is proposing,’ said Chiappetta. ‘It was a welcome collaboration to be able to have people who could do a deeper dive and analysis.’

Chiappetta said Town staff have been working hard to create a set of standards that reflect how Caledon wants to grow in the coming years.

‘We know that growth is coming and we know (development) applications are coming in and we want to get these standards approved so that all of the developers coming to Caledon have to follow these metrics,’ she said.

According to Chiappetta, Caledon's green development standards are reasonable, yet ambitious.

She noted that ecoCaledon will be at the upcoming Caledon Home & Lifestyle Show which runs at the Albion Bolton Community Centre from April 12 to 14. Chiappetta said ecoCaledon welcomes questions from residents about the green development standards.

‘We want to ensure that our community is growing in a way that benefits both the environment and the people,’ said Chiappetta. ‘We're not trying to stall development, we're just trying to ensure that it's done well.’