

Future Caledon Official Plan in focus at Council

By Rob Paul

On Monday, Caledon Town Council held a special meeting to discuss the Future Caledon Official plan and staff presentations.

It was an opportunity for Councillors to review growth principles and issues to help inform land use decision in the future.

The growth allocation of Peel by 2051 is set to see the population of the Region go from 1,578,000 (2021) to 2,280,000 in the next 30 years with employment rising from 736,000 to 1,070,000. In Caledon, there is predicted be a 270 per cent rise in population (from 81,000 to 300,000) and a 362 per cent employment rise (from 27,000 to 125,000).

“Over the next 30 years, Caledon is to take 31 per cent of the total population growth plan for the Region of Peel and 29 per cent of the new jobs,” said Town Community Policy Planner Bailey Loverock.

“The growth plan gives the Region the responsibility to identify settlement area boundaries and identify areas for boundary expansion. The land required for expansion are determined by the Peel land needs assessment. This assessment identifies the amount of land required for employment and residential uses, which for 2051 is 3,400 hectares. The Region is responsible for designating employment areas, which the Town will have to conform to (and reflect in its Official Plan).

More detailed land use planning occurs at the Town level, so in secondary planning we will determine land use designations for those new areas identified for expansion.”

Currently, the Region has identified two options for Region boundary expansion, one with the GTA West corridor and one without. The Peel staff preferred option is without the GTA West corridor.

“As the Region's preferred option doesn't include the corridor, their draft Official Plan policies and mapping schedules do reflect that,” Loverock said.

Caledon Town staff will advocate for the Region to plan for and protect the GTA West corridor and identify a Settlement Area Boundary Expansion (SABE) that includes the GTA West corridor.

On the topic of developing land for the expected population growth and, in turn, employment growth, Mayor Allan Thompson said he wants to be strategic to ensure the land that is developed is actually taken advantage of by business.

“Employment land planning needs to be long and flat with access to major roads and you look at employment land that has yet to be developed, that's been there for years in Brampton and Mississauga but has been surrounded by residential communities,” said Thompson. “The communities don't want trucks driving through and there's no road access to get to those employment corridors so let's learn from those lessons and make sure where we have our key employment areas [are] where it gets movement, so we don't have trucks in residential communities.”

Staff also detailed urban structure principles for the Official Plan that will include having a strong sense of place and identity by building an urban structure that is supportive of vibrant centres, main streets, and downtown; conserve and strengthen heritage buildings, neighbourhoods, and business areas; protect prime agriculture areas; maintain, restore, and enhance the natural heritage system; recognize the important role that Indigenous communities play in the cultural landscape of our community; support and attract targeted businesses and employers that will provide long term prosperity for Caledon; avoid land use conflicts that may undermine both industrial and community amenity.

A piece of the Official Plan that has long been mentioned by Mayor and Council is potential Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)

as the population and employment grow in the Town. The Caledon GO (Bolton) is identified as a primary station (150 people and jobs per hectare) with Mayfield West identified as a planned station (160 people and jobs per hectare).

The 2051 preliminary transit system has identified the short-term priority areas as Mayfield West/planned MTSA, Bolton, and Tullamore with long-term priority areas/corridors as Bolton's residential expansion areas, the SABE, and the Caledon GO Station. The goal of the transit system expansion is to enhance continuity and connectivity within the Town.

Though a GO Transit service in Caledon is a goal, there was talk of working in the expansion of the local transit system to connect it to a community that already has an existing GO service.

?If we are going to look at running a local transit system?and I'm not talking GO Transit?we have to look at how we are going to use that local transit to connect,? said Councillor Annette Groves. ?It's to connect to other communities and one of the challenges we know is that quite frankly, I don't think we're going to see GO Transit here in Bolton for a long time, but we do have other communities with existing GO Transit services nearby. Are we looking at connecting our local bus service to connect folks to those existing communities that do have access to GO Transit??

With economic development, some priorities that have been identified are: protection of Prime Agricultural Lands and the agricultural systems that support the agricultural businesses in these areas; protection and designation of appropriately sized lots for the attraction and retention of priority business and community uses; recognition of cultural heritage assets to have a sustainable approach to tourism; protection of the Brampton-Caledon Flight Centre and the lands surrounding to protect its flight paths and the attraction of aerospace industry.

Members of Council also discussed the need for more employment lands and possible boundary expansions for more housing in Caledon Village and Inglewood. Traffic capacity and movement remains a key issue, while climate change is an overarching theme when discussing growth in Caledon.

The public is encouraged to provide input into Caledon's official plan review through the engagement opportunities such as: signing up to delegate at an upcoming Council meeting when planning is on the agenda; attending the Future Caledon official plan review Open House October 18, 2021; visiting HaveYourSayCaledon.ca to provide input on Caledon's official plan review; and taking the Future Caledon vision survey (haveyoursaycaledon.ca/official-plan-review/survey_tools/future-caledon-official-plan-vision-survey).