

Town of Caledon discusses Rehabilitation Master Plan through virtual open house

By Riley Murphy, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Town of Caledon held a virtual open house on April 9 to discuss the new draft of the 2026 Rehabilitation Master Plan (RMP).

The purpose of the session was to provide participants and residents with an opportunity to offer input on the first draft of the 2026 RMP.

Joe Nethery, with Nethery Planning, is the Principal Project Consultant on behalf of the Town of Caledon, and they worked with Beacon Environmental to prepare the draft rehabilitation master plan.

It was explained during the presentation that the municipality hosts several existing, new, and/or expanding aggregate operations, and, in accordance with provincial policies and legislation, each operation is required to develop and implement a rehabilitation plan that is applied both during its active lifespan and after use following closure.

The 2026 RMP will build on the work of the previous version approved in 2021.

The plan works to create a master plan that serves as a model for high-potential resource areas, in 2021 two of the areas were addressed; the 2026 version addresses the remainder.

The 2021 RMP created an integrated vision for the rehabilitation of aggregate resource areas from a landscape perspective, and applied principles to Belfountain and Caledon Sand and Gravel Resource Areas; it was intended to serve as a model for the remaining high-potential mineral aggregate resource areas.

It was explained that the RMP intends to create a document that both proponents and the Town can review and be on the same page when applications are submitted and reviewed.

Kristi Quinn, Environmental Planner with Beacon Environmental, said that the goal of the RMP is to create a landscape consisting of compatible land uses, environmental features, recreational and tourism opportunities and linkages, while also promoting connectivity and considering alternative land uses for these areas following the extraction.

While the RMP applies to the remaining 10 areas, it is also understood that these principles could be applied to other areas within the Town.

Quinn explained the process behind the draft, saying they commenced with a background review of existing natural heritage layers and mapping previously prepared for the Town and its land use designations, and engaged in consultation throughout the process, reaching out to First Nations and Indigenous communities.

She said they also conducted a high-level site visit to each of the areas that were taken from the roadside.

With the information, they then considered alternative concepts for what could occur on those lands after extraction.

These ten study areas include Alton West, Orangeville, Mono Mills, Melville, Belfountain (bedrock resource), Caledon (bedrock resource), The Grange, Caledon East/Centreville, Inglewood, and Humber.

The RMP includes specific sections for each of the ten areas that show the final concept recommendations.

The potential land use alternatives that came out, building on the 2021 RMP, include natural environment protection and

enhancement, agriculture, recreation and social values, and community development.

?We haven't made any direct recommendations for lands to go into community development as we are very focused on rehabilitating the land to a more natural state, but, if a proponent were to choose community development they would have to go through a formal application process with the Town and it would be recommended that provincial and municipal regulations are applied as long as conservation authority regulations,? explained Quinn.

?We've tried to create an integrated landscape level approach for the rehabilitation of these areas. It's intended to be a high-level guidance document that supports planning for both the municipality and the proponents providing some guide rails of best practices and how they can be applied to post-extraction land uses.?

She added they plan for this document to help the Town provide comments and feedback on applications as they come in, as well as streamline the process.

Following the presentation was a Q&A period where participants raised concerns and questions, such as license owners going through the Environmental Registry of Ontario opposed to following the RMP, as well as the dilemma of licenses in general in relation to the plan.

?This is intended to provide a message out to operators, to people, looking to rehabilitate sites,? answered Nethery. ?It does not stop any proponent from altering their current licenses to do something else?.The province sets the rules and establishes the processes for continuing these things. This is one of many ways the town is attempting to provide some influence through those processes.?

The full draft plan is available on the Town of Caledon's Have Your Say page at haveyoursaycaledon.ca/supplementary-aggregate-resource-policy-study, where a survey is also available to provide feedback. Survey responses for the master rehabilitation must be submitted by 12 p.m. on April 27.