

Transit, growth need to be considered in Peel's Official Plan review: Mayor

By Rob Paul

The Region of Peel's Official Plan (Peel 2051) review's public engagement is underway with virtual sessions open to the public to ask the planner.

The sessions run Thursday, July 29 at 7 p.m., Wednesday, August 4 at 7 p.m., and Wednesday, August 18 at 7 p.m. and no registration is required.

To reach more Peel residents and hear their concerns, the Region is also running a community survey to get more input on the future of the area (ca.research.net/r/peel2051).

In keeping with the Provincial Government's Planning Act, the Region must update its Official Plan every five years. The mandatory update ensures that official plan policies stay current with the Provincial Plan and policy changes while reflecting changing community needs.

The Province of Ontario released Amendment 1 to A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the GGH that includes changes to the total population and employment forecasts for Peel, the planning horizon (from 2041 to 2051), and other policies. Future updates to reflect the amendment will then build on work completed under Peel 2051.

As the Official Plan review continues, Caledon Mayor Allan Thompson has highlighted what he would like to see addressed in the plan as the Town continues to grow.

Over the next 30 years Caledon will be experiencing tremendous growth in our Whitebelt area which represents 20 per cent of Caledon, 80 per cent will remain green so, I like to say we are both 'Green and Growing,' he said. 'We have engaged and consulted with the public extensively over the last few years with our Whitebelt Visioning and Future Caledon engagement platforms.'

With growth comes the need for accessibility both in Town and for those who commute to and from Toronto and that's why Thompson believes transit—specifically a GO Station that reaches Union Station in Toronto—must be addressed for the area.

Transit will be a key priority and so I want to see the Region identify MTSA (Major Transit Station Areas) as a priority—an example is the Bolton Go site,' he said.

As Caledon grows and develops, Thompson wants to see more emphasis put on building the businesses sector, especially as the Town works to economically recover from the pandemic.

Key employment areas and infrastructure to support them must be included in the OP. To sustain our green and protected areas, we must increase our commercial/industrial tax base,' he said. 'At present we are 80 per cent residential and 20 per cent commercial/industrial, we need to get closer to 60/40.'

One more thing Thompson wants to see addressed is the development of under-used spaces in urban areas of Caledon.

Another priority is infill development in our existing urban areas such as Bolton,' he said.

To stay informed and get involved with Peel 2051, email Regional Planning and Growth Management (www.peelregion.ca/scripts/mailto.pl?mailto=iplanning) to join the stakeholder list to stay up to date on upcoming meetings and to submit comments.