

Walking tours a 'great opportunity' for residents

Residents can share ideas on community services, local business, planning and more

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Caledon residents are being invited to join in a unique form of planning for community improvement.

This summer, the Town of Caledon is hosting 'Community Conversations: Walking Tours' in Southfields Village, Bolton, Caledon East, and Alton.

According to the Town, the walks are part of its economic development strategy and ongoing revitalization program. It said it's committed to hearing resident ideas for making their neighbourhoods more beautiful, active and welcoming.

Jason Schildroth, Caledon's Manager of Community and Cultural development, explained that in each walking tour, residents and Town staff will stop at a number of key locations and discuss priorities for said locations.

'This is a priority area and a way for staff to really get out there and engage with residents and business owners,' said Schildroth. He noted that Town of Caledon staff from many different departments such as planning, recreation, urban design, transportation and economic development will be attending each tour. With staff from across the Town's many departments attending the tours, the goal is to be able to answer as many resident questions as possible.

'It's a great opportunity for people in our community to ask staff a question and have someone available right there,' said Schildroth.

The walking tours planned by the Town are 1 to 1.5 kilometres in length and will include stops along the way to facilitate conversation. The Town has suggested some areas people may want to suggest improvements in: community services, local initiatives, attracting new businesses, planning and design, public space, and public art.

'It really is a non-traditional approach to community engagement' often we invite people to come to us,' said Schildroth. 'We're coming to the community for these walks.'

Another goal of the walks is to create relationships between Town staff and community members across Caledon. Schildroth said these relationships were key in revitalizing Downtown Bolton.

While a walking tour has already happened in Bolton, another is planned from 6 to 8 p.m. on August 10. It will start at the Humber River Centre.

Tours are planned in Southfields Village from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and 6 to 8 p.m. on August 1, and from 6 to 8 p.m. on August 3. They will start at the Southfields Community Centre.

In Caledon East, tours are planned from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and 6 to 8 p.m. on August 29, and from 6 to 8 p.m. on August 31. They will start at Caledon Town Hall.

Tours are planned in Alton from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and 6 to 8 p.m. in Alton on September 19, and from 6 to 8 p.m. on September 21. They will start at the Alton branch of the Caledon Public Library.

Residents interested in participating in a walking tour can register for one on the Town's community engagement website, haveyoursaycaledon.ca. Route maps for the walks are also available on the website.

In other revitalization news, the Town is now accepting applications for the Caledon East Revitalization Task Force. Application forms are available on the Town's website, caledon.ca, and the tentative last date to apply to the task force is August 4.

"We know there's a lot of people in the community with skills, experience and ideas," said Schildroth. "We're trying to generate interest? we're inviting their applications."

The Town plans to put the Caledon East Revitalization Task Force into action this Fall once recruitment is finished.