



# The Corporation of the Town of Milton

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Report To: Council

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From: Barbara Koopmans, Commissioner, Planning and Development

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Date: June 24, 2019

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Report No: PD-030-19

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Subject: 'We Make Milton' - Launching the New Official Plan Project

**Recommendation:** THAT Council endorse the proposed work plan for 'We Make Milton' - a New Official Plan Project, as outlined in Report PD-030-19;

AND THAT Council direct staff to launch 'We Make Milton', commencing with Phase One - Listening and Learning, as outlined in Report PD-030-19.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Milton's current Official Plan was approved in 1997 and has served the community well in guiding and managing a rapidly growing community. However, despite significant changes in Provincial policy and a very different context for growth, an Official Plan update has not been completed in more than two decades. A modern land use vision and policy framework is now required to guide change in Milton over the next 20 years.

This report introduces '**We Make Milton**' - a New Official Plan project, which is to be launched this summer and will involve the development of contemporary, strategic, and forward-looking policies for Milton. Project goals, an overall work program, information about engagement, and anticipated timelines are detailed in this report.

## REPORT

### Background

#### MILTON'S CURRENT OFFICIAL PLAN

The 'Town of Milton Official Plan' is more than 20 years old. Originally adopted by Council in August 1996, and approved by the Region of Halton in 1997, the current Official Plan has served the community well by:

- Providing direction for significant urban expansion;
- Managing rapid growth as a result of the 'Big Pipe';
- Welcoming a young, educated, and diverse population;
- Facilitating active and healthy lifestyles; and
- Protecting what is valued and fostering civic pride.

However; in recent years, Milton's Official Plan has become less relevant and effective in managing growth and change. New Provincial plans/updates (i.e., the Greenbelt Plan, the Growth Plan, and the Provincial Policy Statement) have been introduced - and only a portion of new policy direction has been implemented. One Regional Official Plan update has been completed (for the 2031 planning horizon), and another one (for the 2041 planning horizon) is underway.

As well, many local Official Plan amendments have been adopted to accommodate new population/employment/mixed-use growth in Boyne, Bristol, Sherwood, the Highway 401 and Derry Green Business Parks, and - most recently - along the Trafalgar Corridor.

Furthermore, as mandated by the Planning Act, the Council of a municipality is required to prepare a new Official Plan every ten years, or revise an existing Official Plan every five years after it comes into effect. Despite Planning Act requirements, and several efforts by Milton staff, an Official Plan update for Milton has not yet been completed.

## Discussion

### So What?

The effect of an Official Plan that is no longer current, and has undergone numerous amendments over several decades, is a fragmented policy document that is not always easy for Milton staff, local residents, or stakeholders/potential investors to understand or implement. The existing Official Plan has met Milton's needs for many years, and we now require a new, strategic, and forward-looking policy document to be prepared. In particular, a new Official Plan should:

- Reflect our community's aspirations and ideas for the future of Milton;
- Set the stage for growth and development in Milton to the year 2041;
- Conform with the Planning Act, the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement, and current Provincial Plans (as amended); and
- Align Milton's local policy directions with the on-going Regional Official Plan Update.

Once complete, Milton's new Official Plan will establish policies that are:

- Current and contemporary;
- Easy to read and understand;
- Based on a modern community vision for the future;
- Responsive to the current growth and development context; and
- Appropriate for 21st Century challenges and opportunities.

## WHAT EXACTLY IS AN OFFICAL PLAN?

Milton's Official Plan is a legislated and overarching planning document that establishes policies for how land is to be used, based on a twenty-year planning horizon. An Official Plan should be a visionary document that describes the community's goals for development, and establishes directions for municipal decision-making, including:

- A growth strategy;
- Land use designations and policies for permitted uses;
- Infrastructure and road requirements;
- Mobility and transit delivery methods;
- Built form and design requirements; and
- Protecting Milton's resources.

Once Milton's new Official Plan is adopted by Council, it will provide direction on land use planning matters - including criteria for evaluating new development proposals and a process for obtaining public input on planning applications. The new Official Plan will also guide the creation and use of contemporary planning instruments, such as zoning regulations, site plan requirements, urban design guidelines, incentive programs, and other municipal tools.

## BIG QUESTIONS. LOCAL DECISIONS

The new Official Plan project is an important opportunity to understand the community's current vision for the future of Milton. This project will pose big questions to elected officials, Town staff, members of the public, and local stakeholders about options for future growth. Through an innovative and fulsome engagement strategy, Milton will update its land use planning policies to address contemporary land use matters and emerging trends such as:

- On-going population growth, infrastructure needs, environmental conditions, quality of life, and resource-related costs/benefits that need to be managed;
- The growing preference for urban living, and 21st Century opportunities to provide for high-quality urban neighbourhoods and revitalize existing urban areas;

- Housing prices, and the need for more affordable housing types, forms, and tenures;
- Demographic shifts, such as a growing senior's population and the emergence of new demands/preferences from the millennial cohort;
- Job opportunities in knowledge-based industries, technology start-ups, and higher education;
- New information, communication, and transportation technologies (i.e., smart cities, artificial intelligence, and self-driving cars) which are rapidly emerging; and
- Climate change impacts, including the increase of frequency of severe weather events.

The new Official Plan project is an exciting opportunity for the community to explore what is desired to the year 2041 and to position Milton strategically. It will be a locally-driven process, which is focused on the future of our community and planning for tomorrow.

## **INTRODUCING 'We Make Milton'**

Today, there are more than 110,000 residents living in Milton, each of whom have something valuable to contribute to the new Official Plan project. As a community, we are diverse. We are young. We are educated and innovative. Collectively, **'We Make Milton'** - and this sentiment is the inspiration behind our proposed approach and work program for the new Official Plan project.

By naming the project **'We Make Milton'**, staff acknowledges that Milton's new land use planning framework must be crafted locally - with profound input from Milton's residents, stakeholders, and supporters. The new Official Plan project is intended to be an innovative, engaging, and inclusive undertaking through which all residents can find meaningful, equitable, and relevant opportunities to contribute.

### 'We Make Milton' Goals

On this basis, the following goals have been identified for **'We Make Milton'**:

1. **Engagement, engagement, engagement.** The new Official Plan project will generate specific land use focused questions as part of a broader discussion about the future of Milton. Consultation and engagement for the new Official Plan project will be unique, innovative, and extensive. It will be like no other engagement program undertaken in Milton to-date. It will result in a renewed vision for the future, which has support and buy-in from the public, stakeholders, and other departments/Milton staff.

2. **Creative Approaches to Achieve Local Priorities.** Even though much of what Milton is required to introduce through its Official Plan is established/required by the Province and Region of Halton, a goal for the new Official Plan project is to ensure that new policies are realistic for Milton and that a balance is achieved between the implementation of upper-tier policies and creative policy approaches, which will ensure that local goals and desires are met. The identification of creative and local policy approaches through **'We Make Milton'** will also help inform our participation in the Region's on-going Official Plan Review.
3. **New policies that are strategic - not reactive.** Since Milton's current Official Plan was approved in 1997, there have been many changes to the Planning Act, the Provincial Policy Statement, and other Provincial plans. There are new planning tools that enable local municipalities to be more strategic about growth objectives and land use policies (financial and non-financial incentives, for example) and the appropriateness of these tools will be explored.
4. **New policies that are flexible - not prescriptive.** There is also a goal to achieve more flexibility at the local policy level. While Milton's Secondary Plans, and more particularly the Zoning By-law, contain prescriptive regulatory measures, it is expected that policies in the new Official Plan will be performance or results-based, where appropriate, so that development applications can be evaluated in a flexible, but consistent manner, in order to enable good development.
5. **Contemporary, user-friendly, easy to interpret.** Through **'We Make Milton'**, the goal is to create a new Official Plan document that is streamlined and has improved formatting and organization. It will be in an accessible document that is easy to read and interpret, and will allow for frequent and new users alike to navigate and find information easily.

#### Proposed Work Program

A summary of the proposed stages and phasing for **'We Make Milton'** is shown in Figure 1 below. Additional information about the purpose, key tasks, and outcomes for each phase is summarized in Table 1.

*Figure 1: Stages of 'We Make Milton' - Overview*



*Table 1: Stages of 'We Make Milton' - Details*

Stage	Purpose	Key Tasks	Timing
<p><b>LISTENING AND LEARNING</b></p> <p>This stage represents the Project Launch.</p>	<p>i. Listen to ideas about issues, opportunities, and challenges in Milton; and</p> <p>ii. Spread the word about the project, generate awareness about land use planning, and local issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication Launch</li> <li>• Listening: Crowdsourcing, Surveys, Polls, Questionnaires</li> <li>• Learning: Podcasts, Blogs, Articles, Conversation</li> <li>• Presentation of Key Issues to Council (Section 26 Meeting)</li> </ul>	<p>Summer 2019/ Fall 2019</p>
<p><b>VISIONING</b></p> <p>This stage will establish a renewed vision for Milton's future.</p>	<p>i. Develop a land use vision and guiding principles for development to the year 2041; and</p> <p>ii. Document all of the background information/issues relative to key planning themes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Visioning Events</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Internal and External Committee Meetings</li> <li>• 2041 Vision and Guiding Principles</li> <li>• Themed Background, Information, and Issues Papers</li> <li>• Presentation of Findings to Council and Public</li> </ul>	<p>Fall 2019/ Winter 2020</p>
<p><b>BIG QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>This stage will identify and answer big questions about managing change to 2041.</p>	<p>i. Identify policy options to address key issues; and</p> <p>ii. Select the recommended policy directions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Options</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Internal and External Committee Meetings</li> <li>• Engagement on Policy Options</li> <li>• Recommended Policy Directions</li> </ul>	<p>Spring 2020/ Summer 2020</p>



# The Corporation of the Town of Milton

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of Findings to Council and Public</li> </ul>	
<p><b>NEW OFFICIAL PLAN</b></p> <p>This stage will involve the preparation of/consultation on a first draft New Official Plan.</p>	<p>i. Develop new policies based on policy directions (stage 3); and</p> <p>ii. Undertake preliminary consultation on the first draft.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Draft New Official Plan</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Internal and External Committee Meetings</li> <li>• Engagement on First Draft New Official Plan</li> <li>• Revisions to First Draft</li> <li>• Presentation to Council and Public</li> </ul>	<p>Fall 2020/ Winter 2021</p>
<p><b>STATUTORY</b></p> <p>This stage will involve the preparation of/consultation on a Recommended New Official Plan.</p>	<p>i. Refine the draft New Official Plan based on input; and</p> <p>ii. Meet statutory requirements for adoption.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommended Official Plan</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Internal and External Committee Meetings</li> <li>• Statutory Open House and Meeting</li> <li>• Revisions</li> <li>• Council Adoption</li> </ul>	<p>Spring/ Summer 2021</p>

## Timing

As indicated in Table 1, **'We Make Milton'** is a multi-year project that will commence this summer, and is expected to take approximately 24-36 months to complete. It should be noted that since the Region of Halton is also undertaking its Regional Official Plan (ROP) Update at this time, changes to the timing of **'We Make Milton'** may be required based on the Region's work. Milton staff will continue to participate in the ROP update and will attempt to align both policy development processes, to the extent possible.

## Team

**'We Make Milton'** will be a Town-led process. Staff from the Planning Policy and Urban Design Team (led by the Director of Policy Planning and Urban Design) will be responsible for the preparation of the majority of work components throughout the project. More specifically:

- The Town's Senior Management Team (SMT) will serve as the **'We Make Milton' Steering Committee**;
- A **Project Manager** from the Town's Planning Policy and Urban Design Team has been assigned to implement/monitor progress of the detailed work program, coordinate input from all interested parties, and report to Council regularly;

- An in-house **Planning Team** will complete all of the required background and technical planning work/analysis, support from staff representatives from the appropriate Town Department(s);
- **Consultants** may be required throughout the new Official Plan project to provide topic-specific technical support and expertise for the completion of reviews and studies that support policy development;
- The Town will form a **Technical Committee (TC)**, which will include staff representatives from each of the Town's service departments, as well as representatives from Provincial ministries (MMAH, MTO), the Niagara Escarpment Commission, Halton Region, School Boards, and the conservation authorities; and
- The Town will also form a **Stakeholder Committee (SC)**, which will include representatives from the community and special interest groups, including (but not limited to) local businesses, resident groups/associations, Seniors/youth groups, developers/landowners, Milton Economic Development Advisory Committee (MEDAC), the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Business Improvement Area, Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee (HAAC), Halton Region Federation of Agriculture, Halton Housing Advisory Committee, and Heritage Milton.

As noted previously, significant community engagement is also planned, and will be undertaken in each of the proposed work plan stages.

## COMING SOON!

Following the presentation of this report to Council, the **'We Make Milton'** Project Team intends to proceed with the following key engagement and communications activities through Stage One (Listening and Learning) of the Work Plan:

- **'Meet the Miltons' Communication Launch:** an innovative and unique engagement strategy that focuses on fictional characters (i.e., 'The Miltons') will be introduced throughout the Town (online and in physical locations) to generate awareness, excitement, and interest in the project. 'The Miltons' are intended to communicate to the public that everyone has something important to contribute to the project;
- **Listening Activities:** a series of 'soft' and primarily online engagement activities (including as a Crowdsourcing Map, and surveys/polls/questionnaires via the 'Let's Talk Milton' platform) will be used to gather input on local planning issues, concerns, opportunities, and challenges;





# The Corporation of the Town of Milton

Report #:  
PD-030-19  
Page 9 of 10

- **Learning Activities:** a series of informational podcasts, blogs, newsletters, articles, and other conversation starters will be made available to spread the word about the project, generate awareness about land use planning in Milton, and describe key planning issues; and
- **Council Presentation:** Based on the input obtained during Stage 1, a presentation will be made to Council at a statutory meeting required under Section 26 of the Planning Act, which presents a summary of key issues to be addressed in subsequent phases of 'We Make Milton'.

It is anticipated that the above noted tasks will be completed in the fall of 2019.

## Financial Impact

Funding was approved through the 2016 capital budget for the Official Plan update through project C90011016. Approximately \$375,000 remains available to undertake Phase One (Listening and Learning) and Phase Two (Visioning) outlined in this report.

The full extent of funding requirements to deliver the work plan proposed in this report will be confirmed following the completion of Phase One and Two. It is anticipated that additional funds of approximately \$425,000 for the remaining phases will be requested through the 2020 Capital Budget and forecast.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Koopmans, MPA, MCIP, RPP, CMO  
Commissioner, Planning and Development

For questions, please  
contact:

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## Attachments

None



# The Corporation of the Town of Milton

Report #:  
PD-030-19  
Page 10 of 10

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CAO Approval  
Andrew M. Siltala  
Acting Chief Administrative Officer