

# Towns participate in Earth Day 20-Minute Makeover

By SARAH O'ROURKE

Inspired by the highly successful Toronto 20-Minute Makeover that occurred last year, the Town of Halton Hills and the Town of Milton will each be launching their own 20-Minute Makeover this upcoming Earth Day. At 11:00am in Milton and 2:00pm in Halton Hills on April 22nd, businesses, schools, and residents are encouraged to stop what they are doing and head outdoors to clean up their grounds and to remove any litter that has accumulated over the winter months.

It is hoped that by devoting a mere twenty minutes to this initiative that individuals will become more conscious of just how rampant the litter problem has become. "The goal is to increase awareness of litter clean up in the community," said Hazel Carlin, Coordinator of Marketing & Communications for the Town of Milton. "At this time of year with the snow melting there's lots of evidence of litter that has collected over the winter, so the timing is appropriate. The object of the Makeover is to preserve and enhance the beauty of Milton that we are very fortunate to have. Twenty minutes isn't a long time, but it's enough time to put the message out there and to get people to think about it even after the date so that it's not a one shot event but a continual message to clean up litter."

Town of Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette argues that the "Don't be a litterbug" message has somehow become lost to today's generation, and he points to the removal of highway signs stating litter fees and the dwindling number of anti-litter ads as proof. "One thing that is important is that we all grew up with 'Don't be a litterbug,' and we lost that in the last ten years or so," commented Bonnette. "It [littering] is a mindset, and we have to get away from that mindset. By having people come out for twenty minutes of their day, they might realize first of all just how despicable it is to look at all of this garbage that people have trashed, but also if they are any of the guilty parties they can see what trouble it is to pick it up."

Twenty minutes might seem like a relatively small sacrifice, but the ultimate goal of the 20-Minute Makeover is to begin instilling anti-litter attitudes that will produce far greater results. "We are looking at changing behaviour," explained Jane Fogal, Regional Councillor for the Town of Halton Hills and Chair of the Litter Free Task Force Committee. "In addition to doing the clean up, we'd like to change the behaviour and prevent or reduce the amount of littering that is going on, but it takes time and effort to change people's attitudes, to make it socially unacceptable to be doing these things."

Both Fogal and Bonnette point out that it takes little effort to hang onto our garbage until we can properly dispose of it, but it takes substantially more time, effort and resources to remove litter once it has been carelessly tossed. "Hopefully we can someday put ourselves out of a job," laughed Fogal. "There's no way we could ever have staff go out to do all of this clean up. The town simply couldn't afford it, and that's sort of condoning what people are doing. It's like saying 'you can throw it out and staff will pick it up.' It's like expecting your mother to pick up after you at home."

Large groups or organizations wishing to participate in the 20-Minute Makeover are being asked to register so that special garbage pick-ups can be arranged and so that participation can be tracked. For the

Town of Halton Hills, please contact the Public Works Department at 905-873-2601 ext. 2610. For the Town of Milton, please call 905-878-7252 ext. 2165.

The Town of Halton Hills will be providing free garbage bags and gloves for participants that can be picked up beginning April 15th at the following locations: the Chamber of Commerce Office, the Acton and Georgetown BIA offices, and the Town Works Yard. Free garbage bags and gloves will also be supplied by the Town of Milton at the following facilities: the Town Hall, the Leisure Centre, the Sports Centre, and Nipissing Yard.

Both the Town of Halton Hills and the Town of Milton stress that the 20-Minute Makeover is just one of many anti-litter initiatives that individuals can become involved in. On April 23rd the fifth annual Halton Hills Clean-Up Day will take place, with particular attention paid this year to the natural area Hungry Hollow in Georgetown. Throughout April and May the Town of Milton will be supporting several Clean-Up events including: the Good Neighbours Community Day, the Nassagaweya Rural Road Clean-Up Day, and the Brookville Operations Yard Spring Clean-Up Week. For further information about any of the above initiatives, visit the Town of Halton Hills' website at [www.haltonhills.ca](http://www.haltonhills.ca) or the Town of Milton's website at [www.milton.ca](http://www.milton.ca).

## Earth Day Open House

On Conservation Halton's

## Draft Strategic Plan

**Thursday, April 21, 2005  
6:30 - 9:30pm**

Boardroom, Administration Centre  
2596 Britannia Road W.,  
Burlington, Ontario

- Exhibits on Conservation Halton
- Strategic Plan Presentation - 7:30pm
- Comments/Questions from Audience

**RSVP Margaret @ 905.336.1158, ext. 0  
by Friday, April 15, 2005**

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