



Happy Birthday to our mother. She is kind, patient, loving and our very best friend. Mom, you truly are the most genuine and honourable person we know. Thank you for helping us grow into someone as beautiful as you. We wish you happiness today and always.
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'Growth will be Georgetown versus Milton'

Region outlines Durable Plan

CYNTHIA GAMBLE
Staff Writer

Will the Durable Plan give the Town of Halton Hills control of its own fate?

That was the key question posed by Wards 3 & 4 Regional Councillor Jane Fogal to Halton Region's Manager of Long Range Planning during his presentation on future growth at a recent council meeting.

The Durable Plan is the moniker given to a planning exercise that will involve the Region, its four municipalities— Halton Hills, Milton, Oakville and Burlington— developers, and residents on how this region will grow in the next 25 years to 2031.

It is in response to the Province's Places to Grow Plan which decrees that Halton Region will double its size from 400,000 to 800,000 by 2031.

"This is the first time in many years that the Province has come out with very strong planning policies," said Wong. "In terms of the population targets, you (the Region and municipalities) have very little room to manoeuvre. There is the target you have to do planning for. It doesn't necessarily mean that by 2031 we will have 800,000 people but we have to do planning for that."

Some of that new population will be housed in new developments within existing urban boundaries in intensification zones. In fact, had growth continued at the same pace and at the same density (single detached homes), all lands would have been gobbled up within 50 years, but with the new intensification rules— mainly in downtown urban centres such as around the GO station in Georgetown— open land is expected to remain for another 120 years.

But the building will continue. The majority— six of every 10 new developments by 2015— will be located in expanded urban boundaries within the 30,000 hectares of prime soil in south Halton Hills and Milton. Many developers have already bought most of those lands— in Halton Hills they are from 10 Sideroad to Steeles Ave. and from Tenth Line to Trafalgar Rd. No urban expansion (for example in

Acton) can occur above the Escarpment due to the restrictive policies in the Province's Greenbelt Plan.

"Basically growth will be Halton Hills (Georgetown) versus Milton," said Wong, adding the percentage of division occur depends on what unfolds with the Durable Plan. "This will basically be your last chance to say what the future will be like in the next 50 to 100 years in Halton Region and Halton Hills."

"Not all of the 30,000 hectares (dubbed the White Belt) will be needed in the next 25 years and we do have choices now if we want to protect our green space and open agricultural space," he said, adding only one quarter to one-third of those hectares will be needed to accommodate the addi-

tional 400,000 people depending on the densities chosen.

While the Province has provided the foundation for planning for the future, there will be site specific issues in each municipality and that's why people should be involved in the process so they have a say, Wong urged residents.

While the process has already begun, the decision-making year will be 2008, with implementation in 2009 with new Official Plans and a financial plan. The public will have a chance to have their say during public meetings to be scheduled next year.

For more information about the Durable Plan go to Halton Region's website, www.halton.ca

(Cynthia Gamble can be reached at cgamble@independentfreepress.com)

Mayor's letter to premier worries councillor

Wards 3 & 4 Regional Councillor Jane Fogal fears a Town letter sent to the Province as a "shot across the bow" could end up sinking the ship.

Fogal questioned Mayor Rick Bonnette's announcement at an October council meeting that he planned to send a letter to Premier Dalton McGuinty questioning the population numbers in its Places to Grow plan.

The mayor explained he had a recent meeting with Wellington-Halton Hills MP Michael Chong, who suggested through discussions with Bonnette's counterparts in Wellington, that these numbers were not "etched in stone."

The Places to Grow Plan is a provincial document that decrees Halton should plan on doubling its population from 400,000 to 800,000 by 2031— with a lot of that growth likely to come to Milton and Halton Hills.

As a result, Bonnette decided to write to the Premier, and his ministers responsible for various components (infrastructure, waste management) of the plan, asking:

- if all ministries are using the same numbers
- if the numbers are etched in stone and their distribution across the GTA

and Golden Horseshoe

• and, will the bulk of population be going to the primary growth centres designated in Halton— Milton, Oakville and Burlington. It is not clear in the Plan how many will be directed to Halton Hills.



JANE FOGAL

"Hopefully we can get some clarification," said the mayor.

But Fogal warned the mayor to take care how he worded the letter.

"Is this an opening shot across the bow?" asked Fogal. "It'll be interesting to see the wording on the response when it comes back (from the Premier), and do we really want it to be circulated (to

other ministries)? Because if it comes back as something we don't want, we may not want it disseminated to every person out there."

Fogal said the Town's position to the Province will be much clearer, and stronger, once council does a new Strategic Plan in the next term, and perhaps the letter could be sent then.

"It'll be more than an opening shot," said Bonnette, who was reluctant to wait that long. "I think it's important we stake our ground and get these numbers confirmed."

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer

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