

COUNCIL SUPPORTS YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

PLAN PROMOTES YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

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A comprehensive plan developed to meet the needs and interests of Milton youth has received the backing of council members.

At their recent meeting, members unanimously approved staff's recommendations to endorse the Milton Youth Strategy report — in principle — with recommended service level adjustments as part of the annual budget process, and collaborative efforts between the town's community services department, other departments and youth organizations.

Delegate Ron Taylor, of Halton Families for Families, said the support from council causes his heart to

THE ISSUE:
INVESTING IN YOUTH LOCAL IMPACT:
MILTON YOUTH STRATEGY IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE YOUTH IN COMMUNITY BUILDING

"explode."

"The reality is that this is an investment ... it's too trite to say 'it's an investment in our future.' It's way more than that.

"This is literally funding that will find its way into a teenager's development," he said, adding that the investment will allow



Graham Paine/Torstar

The Town of Milton has approved the youth development strategy.

bridges to be built between generations, and between the young people themselves.

The latter is one of the objectives of the Milton Youth Strategy.

Other goals laid out in

the plan include creating a welcoming space for youth, removing barriers to youth engagement and fostering a community that allows young people to reach their full potential.

The report, which takes

into account feedback from young people, focus groups and events, also incorporates research and policies from all levels of government, as well as municipal best practices. The areas of focus of the strategy are infrastructure, communication, empowerment and collaboration.

"Youth are an integral part of the Milton community and it's important that we invest in spaces and opportunities that support their development and well-being," said Kristene Scott, the town's community services commissioner, in a news release. "The Milton Youth Strategy is our commitment to provide services and programs that support a youth-friendly community."

Some of the priorities include creating an advisory committee and holding more youth-focused seminars and programming.

As mentioned in the report, 2016 Statistics Canada census data shows that there has been "a significant increase" in the youth population — those under the age of 20 — in Milton.

Coun. Sameera Ali says council will continue to introduce "more ideas" to meet the growing needs of Milton's young citizens.

"The kids are saying, 'we have no place to hang-out, we have nowhere to go,'" she said, referring to their feedback on the report. "So they will find other avenues to push their boundaries."

"It's very important that we keep doing what we're doing and maybe take it up a notch," she added.

STORY BEHIND THE STORY

The Champion examines what the Town of Milton is doing to meet the growing needs of its youth.

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