

Other regional shopping centres won't be allowed

• from EXACTLY on page 3

To encourage pedestrian movement, wide, comfortable walkways and linkages to areas such as the Mill Pond and Rotary Park will likely appear.

But a successful downtown core hinges upon giving people a reason to go downtown, said Ms Martin.

And for that reason, public facilities such as the library, Town Hall and an arts and cultural centre should ideally be located on or very near the main strip.

Currently, Milton's downtown retail sector is dotted with service providers such as lawyers and accountants, many of whom own the buildings they work from.

In an ideal situation, those sectors would remain, as they draw people to the core.

Open up to shoppers

But when the retail sector starts heating up, it may be both timely and lucrative for these professionals to relocate to a second-floor space, opening the main floor up to shoppers.

"That's an evolution that would happen over time," said Ms Martin. "If we're conscious of how we want things to look over the long haul."

In other areas, the addition of an ever-expanding ring of subdivisions frequently led to the strangulation of downtown cores.

But Milton hopes to circumvent this by not adding any new large scale malls to the mix, said Ms Martin.

"The Town's made a bold decision not to bring other regional shopping centres in," she said.

Other developments

What there will be is small, neighbourhood-oriented commercial developments outside of the business area, suitable for businesses such as convenience stores, dry cleaners and maybe a local watering hole, said Ms Martin.

And big box outlets, such as Wal-Mart, could be relegated to areas such as near Hwy. 401, if they set up shop at all.

For planning ideas, other successful downtown cores have been eyed, with Oakville usually fingered as the best, most

achievable model.

"I think everyone looks to downtown Oakville, and I don't think it's outside the bounds of possibility or reality," said Ms Martin.

Don't expect boutiques

But residents shouldn't expect to see high-end boutiques, specialty shops and pedestrian throngs in Milton quite yet.

"Until you have the population that can support specialty shops and restaurants, you take baby steps," said Ms Martin. "Everything evolves over a period of time."

And in spite of the challenges, Ms Martin is hopeful Milton's Main Street will evolve into a thriving retail and commercial hub.

"I've always loved the downtown and this town has so much potential to be a mecca for downtown shopping," she said. "Do I think there's tremendous potential? You bet."



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Sally Ann needs gifts for teens

While Christmas is the most hectic time of year for the Salvation Army food bank, it's also the time of the year volunteers endeavour to do a little extra for families in need.

About 140 families in Milton rely on the Salvation Army food bank to make ends meet every month, according to spokesperson Janice Tansey.

December can be especially difficult for these families, with added financial burdens such as Christmas, heating costs and outfitting children with winter clothing.

Christmas hampers are put together for families, including two large boxes of canned goods and other non-perishables. Furthermore, the food bank hosts a toy store, where parents can come and pick out a toy for their child.

"It's for the dignity of the mother and father," Tansey said.

Local businesses and organizations collect food and toys for the Salvation Army during the Christmas season. Furthermore, the ever-recognizable Christmas kettles are set up at Milton Mall, the Loblaws and the LCBO.

However the need is always great. "We don't have a enough tin fruit or vegetables."

Furthermore, lunch items such as juice boxes and granola bars are always welcome. The food bank is also in need of suitable gifts for teens. "We have an over abundance of teenagers," Ms Tansey said, adding the age group is often overlooked by donors. She suggested gift certificates as a great idea for the teens.

Residents wanting to make donations can do so at the food bank itself, 100 Nippissing Rd., unit 5, until December 24.

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