

# Town Hall is likely to stay downtown, say councillors

By RICHARD VIVIAN  
The Champion

Milton's Town Hall is likely to stay put while a new library and an arts and cultural centre are built at the intersection of Thompson Road and Main Street, agree several council members.

Town staff and consultants are currently working on the Municipal Facilities Feasibility Study, which looks at multiple options for the future of the three facilities.

Space limitations at the library and Town Hall have led to calls for expansion or larger buildings. Demand for an arts and cultural centre has also been identified.

Location options being considered include renovations to Town Hall — for either expanded offices or an arts and cultural centre — and a range of construction possibilities at the Thompson Road site.

"With the Town Hall, I'd be less than honest if I wasn't to suggest that it makes more sense to stay and expand this building — but I've not got a closed mind on that," offered Mayor Gord Krantz, adding he's received "very minimal" feedback from the public on the issue.

"I'm sure many people are sitting back to see what we (council) do and will probably be more reactive to it than proactive."

Comments received by today will be considered in the staff recommendation to council — expected in February or March.

Councillors from both Ward 2 (which includes the existing Town Hall site) and Ward 4 (which includes the Thompson Road site) told The Champion they believe the best option is to build the library and arts and cultural centre on Thompson Road, while expanding Town Hall.

"It's (Thompson Road site) going to be the centre of the new community. People from the old community can get there easily and the people from the new community can get there easily. To me, it makes logical sense to have your active sights in that location — not at the Town Hall," said Ward 2's Wally Hunter.

Ward 4 Councillor John Challinor echoed those comments, adding the new facilities would complement the Milton Leisure Centre and Milton Memorial Arena, which neighbour the property. "Certainly both facilities need good visibility and easy access. The corner of Thompson Road and Main Street provides that kind of visibility and access."

Most councillors asked said they have received little input from the public on the matter — with the notable exception of the arts com-

munity.

"We would like to see an arts and cultural centre in our heritage area downtown. It is the heart of Milton, the core of Milton, even when Milton expands around it," said Laura Jeffrey, president of Arts Milton. "The voices were raised (at an Arts Milton meeting) and they were unanimous in saying where they wanted this facility to take shape."

The only councillor to say he has heard significant public feedback concerning the facilities said his constituents are questioning the need for an arts and cultural centre.

"The majority of the feedback I've been getting is that people are not supportive of getting an arts and cultural centre at this time," said Rick Malboeuf of Wards 2 and 4. "The ones who are in favour of getting an arts and cultural centre are split — they don't want to see the Town Hall move from the downtown core and they'd like to see an arts and cultural centre in the downtown core. Unfortunately, there's not enough space for both."

Disputing Mr. Malboeuf's comments was Ward 2's Art Melanson, who said there's a definite demand for an arts and cultural centre.

"The ones I've talked to, they want to get it going as soon as possible. They've been waiting a long time for a bit of an arts centre."

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