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36 PAGES "Using Communication to Build Better Communities"



Sorting it all out

Retired Milton District High School teacher Brenda Trickey (left) helps sort donated books with Milton District High School student Navjit Kang in preparation for the 32nd annual Canadian Federation of University Women's book sale April 8 and 9 at Milton Mall. The group is still in need of books, CDs and audio tapes for the sale, which goes to educational causes at local schools.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Halton will grow to 800,000 residents

By MELANIE HENNESSEY
The Champion

Halton Region is expected to double its population by 2031, going up to almost 800,000 people.

This is one of the figures contained in the Province's draft Places to Grow plan that was the subject of a public forum hosted by the Region Wednesday evening.

The plan builds on the Places to Grow discussion paper released by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal (MPIR) last July. It's a document aimed at stopping urban sprawl and focusing compact development on 25 urban growth centres, including downtown Milton, midtown Oakville and downtown Burlington.

Hannah Evans, MPIR manager of partnerships

and consultation, explained some of the main differences between the draft plan and the earlier discussion paper.

She noted three new sections have been added covering a multi-year infrastructure strategy, sub-area growth strategies and the role of the citizen.

Halton Director of Planning and Transportation Jane Clohecy said the new draft accommodated most of the comments the Region submitted to the Province last September. She went on to detail staff's initial thoughts on the plan, which included both praise and criticism.

"The draft plan we find is generally sound. It will lead us to sustainable communities in the future," she said.

She added Halton's official plan already achieves 80 to 90 per cent of the Province's policy directions.

But she said staff has concerns with the sub-growth strategies, which are aimed at meeting the specific needs of an area.

"We have some concerns that it will result in some duplication (with regional plans)," Ms Clohecy said.

Halton has been included in a sub-area with the cities of Hamilton and Toronto and Durham, Peel and York regions.

This also raises a concern for staff, since Halton is a small part of the sub-area — seven per cent of its population and 12 per cent of its land area. In light of this, Ms Clohecy questioned how well the Region's issues would be reflected.

Only a few residents spoke about the plan at the meeting, including Oakville resident Hank Rodenburg. He asked whether a healthcare strategy — see RESIDENTS on page 5

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