

# Residents have their say on 'Sustainable Halton'

*Opinions offered on all growth-related issues at Region's workshop meeting*

By Steve LeBlanc  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Warren Nelson isn't against growth — he'd just like to see a little diversity thrown into the mix.

One of nearly 100 attendees of the latest public information meeting on Sustainable Halton — a framework for dealing with the region's population boom until 2031 — the longtime Miltonian described the town's new subdivisions as "replicates" of those in surrounding communities.

And that concerns him.

"I hear you talking about mixed development, but I don't see it happening," Nelson said Wednesday night at the Milton Sports Centre, referring to a lack of housing diversity. "Yes, everyone wants the big house with the two cars in the driveway, but that makes for a completely unsustainable community."

"It's like I already know what the next subdivisions are going to look like. Don't be afraid to try something different."

His comments related to just one of a myriad of issues discussed during the workshop-style open house, designed to gain feedback for phase two of Sustainable Halton — which is in the preliminary stages of development and focuses on regional growth management options and scenarios.

The meeting touched on just about everything related to growth, including some debate over how much land is necessary to accommodate Halton's residential and commercial surge.

**More space allotted than necessary?**

Sustainable Urban Development Association General Manager John Stillich — who's been following the process closely — suggested the 3,000 hectares allotted for growth between 2021 and 2031 is way more than enough.

"Our numbers suggest 2,100 hectares would be sufficient, so my question is 'Can you do better?'" he inquired.

Stephen Robichaud — manager of long-range planning and transportation services for the Region — said the 3,000 hectares is more of an estimate than an exact figure, and has actually been scaled back in an effort to meet the provincial government's demand for growth intensification.

In order to curb urban sprawl, the Ontario Places to Grow plan calls for 50 residents or employees per hectare of new development — a significant increase from previous figures.

Looking to create what's been repeatedly referred to as "complete communities," Sustainable Halton's phase two blueprint — which residents still have a chance to help shape — features four key goals, which are as follows:

- Foster complete, healthy and sustainable communities
- Protect what is valuable
- Ensure sustainable infrastructure to support growth
- Promote health for all.

Under those main components lie a host of more specific

objectives, everything from locating new employment areas with direct access to inter-regional transportation networks to addressing concerns of diminishing farmland.

The latter issue met with strong opinions on both ends of the spectrum.

Refusing to give his name, one man described Milton's ongoing growth as "a total destruction of nature" while viewing the maps and other visual aids on display before the meeting.

In stark contrast, urban planner Peter White — of Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel — questioned why there's such a desire to preserve agricultural land since so few young people are getting into the industry.

"We're saving this farmland for who? It's not being used."

Meanwhile, Ward 3 Councillor Cindy Lunau — one of several elected officials present — expressed a few concerns.

Among them was the need for "soft infrastructure" like hospitals and daycare facilities, since much of Milton's new population is comprised of young families.

"It's fine to build roads and schools, but there's a demand for soft infrastructure as well," she said. "And what are we doing to address the homeless situation, because if people think this isn't a problem here they're kidding themselves."

But much like most in attendance, the rural councillor seemed focused on offering suggestions rather than just criticism.

She stressed, "It's (growth) mind-boggling, but the minute you start being negative you're doomed."

Those not at Wednesday's meeting can still get in on a consultation process. Workbooks are available on-line at [www.halton.ca/PPW/Planning/SustainableHalton/](http://www.halton.ca/PPW/Planning/SustainableHalton/) and can be sent back with comments by either e-mail at [sustainable@halton.ca](mailto:sustainable@halton.ca) or fax at (905) 825-8822.

Feedback will be accepted over the next few weeks and a number of phase two options will be put together in the coming months. A short list of preferred strategies are expected to be recommended to regional council in June.

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## Turner meeting to discuss childcare crisis

Halton MP Garth Turner is gearing up for his next round of Town Hall meetings, with the topic this time around being Halton's childcare crisis.

Milton's session will be held Wednesday, Feb. 20 at the Milton Sports Centre at 7 p.m.

Turner said the lack of available childcare locally is a major hurdle for working parents to deal with.

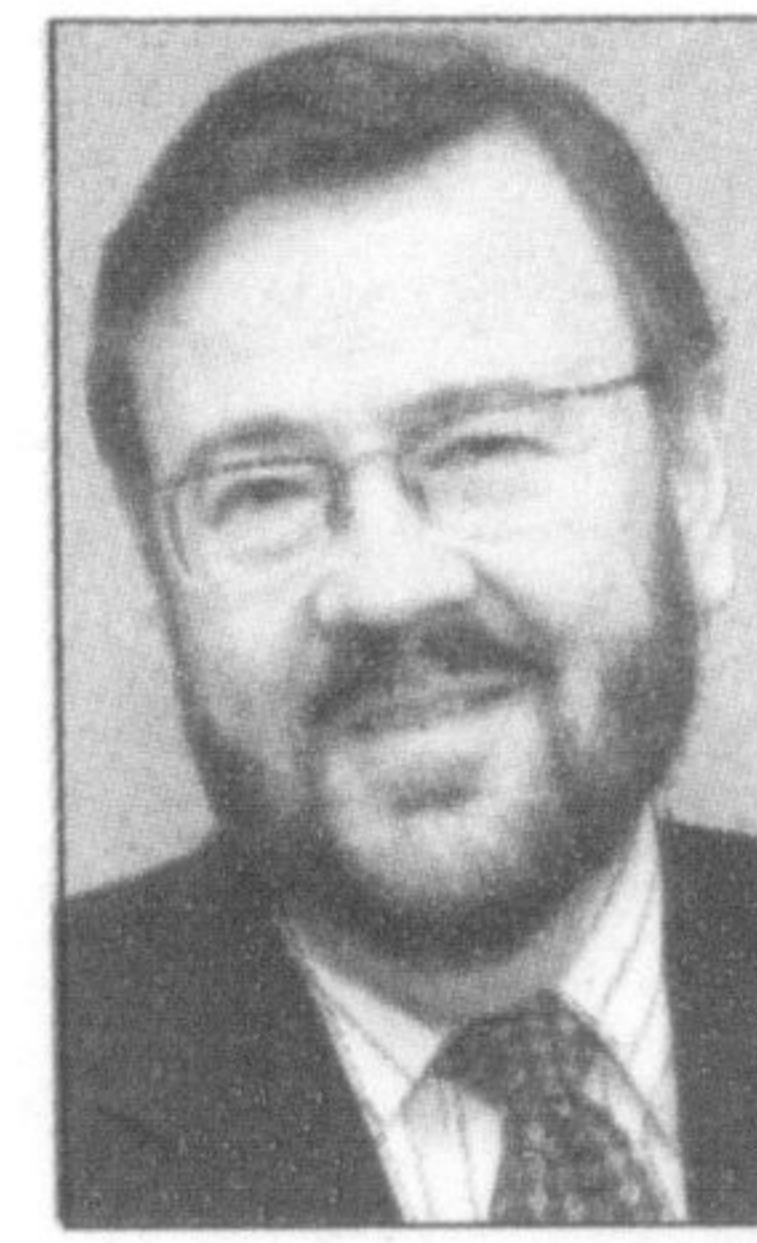
"It's important with a potential federal election possible this year that parents in Oakville, Milton and Burlington speak up now," he said.

"Politicians have yet to come up with a plan that is realistic and effective, and one which understands there's

a balance between the responsibility of parents and the goals of our country to have well-adjusted, well-cared-for and healthy kids. Who better to give me guidance than the families themselves?"

A press release from Turner pointed out that in the rapidly growing region there are 35,000 kids under age six and more than 46,000 under age nine.

But at the same time, there are just



Garth Turner

7,000 licensed childcare spaces available locally and a waiting list of 9,000 and growing.

Turner will be asking citizens attending the Town Hall meetings to come ready to discuss the childcare crisis, but the sessions will also be open to any topic of concern to constituents.

Since being elected as Halton's MP in January 2006, Turner has held more than 30 Town Hall meetings throughout the riding and dozens more across Canada.

For more information call Turner's office at (905) 693-0166 or visit [www.garth.ca](http://www.garth.ca).

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