

Residents want town to grow at same rate: survey

By ROB KELLY
An early report stemming from an exhaustive study of potential growth patterns for Milton has determined that the largest percentage of local residents, though not the majority,

want Milton to grow at the same pace it has recently. Forty-one percent of those polled by Creative Research Inc. indicated Milton growth should remain consistent while 33 per cent wanted slower

growth and 26 per cent opted for accelerated development in town.

The findings were presented to Halton regional council's planning and public works committee Wednesday by Neal Irwin of IBI Group, the firm commissioned to perform the Halton Urban Structure Review.

The review is a Milton initiative adopted by regional council. With current residential growth virtually halted due to lack of sewage treatment capacity, Milton is pressing the region politically to define schemes which will outline local expansion plans into the next century.

The study is oriented to Milton, aimed at choosing how and in which areas of town Milton will expand urban services, that is, town water pipelines and sewage treatment.

Region-wide, only nine per cent of the 400 residents polled wanted to see their own communities grow faster. 52 per cent wanted growth at the same pace in northern Halton and 46 per cent favored current growth levels sustained in south Halton.

One hundred respondents were scientifically chosen (to represent general population trends) from each of the four area municipalities. Interpreting the study as meaning

that Miltonians favor the current residential development freeze is perhaps misleading. The majority of respondents, 64 per cent, have lived in their municipality for at least the last 10 years, and 70 per cent have lived somewhere in the fast-growing region for the last decade.

In that time, study co-ordinators have pointed out, Milton has grown dramatically. From 1971 through 1981, in terms of percentage growth, Milton was the fastest-expanding municipality in Halton.

While there have been no new residential subdivisions in the town since the early 1980's substantial service-oriented development has taken place, with new restaurants, expanded shopping facilities and large-scale infilling of the urban core.

More recently, the 401 industrial park growth in Milton has boosted that tax assessment substantially.

Milton councillor Bill Johnson also pointed out that there were some intangibles not addressed, from both sides of the question.

"What I'm concerned about is, what response was from the business community (generally pro-growth) and what other response was from (those) who want to be the last ones on the Florida Keys."

Burlington councillor Walter Mulkewich asked Mr. Irwin, "is it fair to say the public is very mixed, that there's no consensus?"

"I don't think that's far off the mark," Mr. Irwin replied.

Halton Hills councillor Pam Sheldon said that in the north, in Milton and Halton Hills, growth is more commonly perceived as improvement.

In the two northern communities, she said, where growth has been limited, "we're looking at static assessment and crumbling infrastructures. I think the people are clearly saying they are open to growth."

One issue on which residents were not divided at all was the quality of the environment. "Environmental issues came out very strongly," Mr. Irwin said.

When polled on 16 planning issues, 98 per cent of respondents listed good drinking water as their primary concern. Controlling air and water pollution came in second and general preservation of the environment was third.

The next report in the series is due in March. It will explore servicing options.

Oil banned from use as dust suppressant

When the dust settles in rural Milton this spring well, the dust might not settle at all.

That's because dirt rural roads are coated in waste oil to alleviate dust problems, such as used crankcase oil, and it may be unsafe, the provincial Ministry of the Environment contends.

In a letter to Town Council's general committee presented Monday night a large oil lubrication firm, Canam Oil Services of Breslau said it was "withdrawing our dust suppression services" in 1988.

Canam said their conclusion is that two years of testing have led them to the conclusion that "most waste oils are unsuitable for use as a dust suppressant."

Town public works director John Matthews said some sort of dust suppressant must be used, and named several alternatives, all more expensive.

"What is it going to cost Milton to make the change?" asked councillor Brad Clements. "Ten thousand dollars? Fifty thousand dollars? It's going to cost all the municipalities significant dollars. I don't think that

has been made sufficiently clear to the powers that be."

The "powers" Mr. Clements was referring to is the province. The province underwrites a substantial amount of road expenditures through Ministry of Transportation and Communications. Mr. Clements said if more costly measures must be taken to suppress dust, municipalities should ask the province for bigger road grants.

Councillor Bill Johnson disagreed, saying "we can't go on damaging the environment as we have the last many, many years."

Councillor Don McMillan, a rural Ward 3 representative, recommended tendering on an alternative oil product immediately before the price goes up because of a potential shortage in the spring. That motion lost.

Instead the committee opted to await a report on the situation from Mr. Matthews, who is scheduled to attend a large provincial roads conference next week. Mr. Matthews will report on the situation to the elected officials in two weeks.

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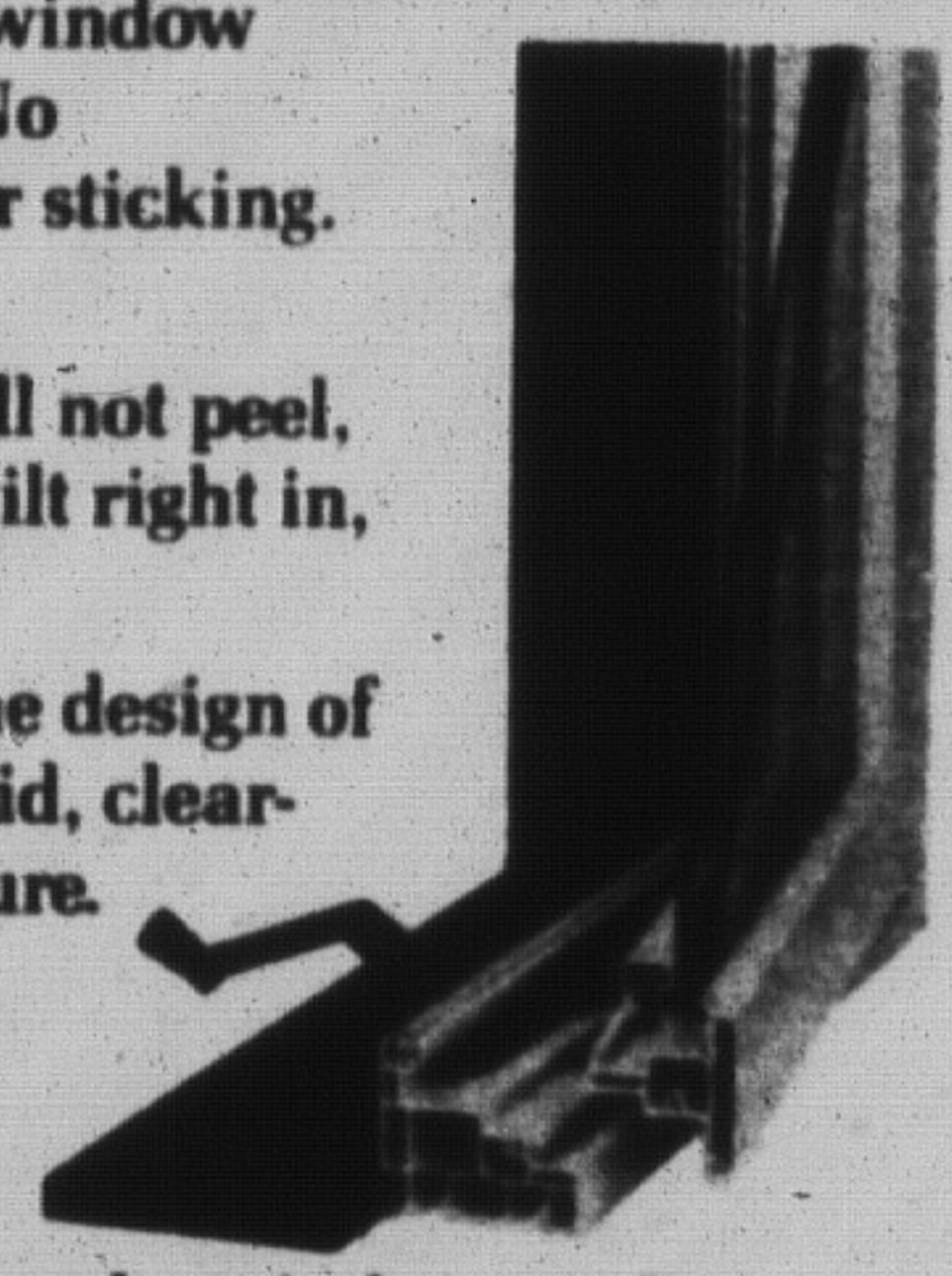


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