



The Corporation of the Town of Milton

Report To: Council

From: Jill Hogan, Commissioner, Development Services

Date: June 20, 2022

Report No: DS-060-22

Subject: Update on We Make Milton and Recommended Policy Directions for Living in Milton

Recommendation: That Council receive Report DS-060-22 for information;

AND THAT the recommended policy directions for the theme of Living in Milton be endorsed by Council and that they be used to guide subsequent stages of We Make Milton.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We Make Milton is the Town's new Official Plan project, which was launched through report PD-030-19. In 2021, based on extensive community engagement, a new land use planning Vision Statement and set of Guiding Principles were endorsed by Council, which was our first major project milestone culminating Stage Two of the work program (Visioning). Shortly after, Stage three (Big Questions) was launched and policy staff have been undertaking research focusing on the four themes of Living, Growing, Working, and Moving in Milton.

The purpose of this Report is to provide an update on the progress of Stage Three of We Make Milton and to share our research through a series of recommended policy directions for the theme of Living in Milton. This information is presented in three separate reports, which are attached:

- An 'Introduction to Stage Three' Report, which explains our process;
- A 'Living in Milton Background and Information' Report, which provides an overview of the planning context and leads to a series of 'Big Questions' based on input from our stakeholders and the public; and
- A 'Living in Milton Big Questions' Report, which explores the 'Big Questions' and identifies policy ideas and options that could be included in the new Official Plan.

Engagement is an important part of We Make Milton and Stage Three provides significant opportunities for the community to stay involved. Next steps in the work program are outlined in this report, and additional opportunities for community input are identified.

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We Make Milton Summary of Stages One and Two

We Make Milton is a multi-year initiative that was launched in July 2019 and includes five project stages, as displayed in the figure below.



One of the initial steps of the new Official Plan project was to determine if the existing planning vision, as established in Milton's current Official Plan, still reflects the ideas of the community. As such, early stages of our new Official Plan project focused on:

- Listening and learning about the community's ideas on planning issues, opportunities, and challenges (Stage One); and
- Undertaking a community visioning exercise and creating a new Vision Statement for land use planning (Stage Two).

The work undertaken in Stage One and Stage Two resulted in the creation of a new land use planning Vision Statement and Guiding Principles that were endorsed by Council in February 2021 through Report DS-005-21. They will be used as important building blocks for the drafting of a new Official Plan in Stage Four.

We Make Milton Introduction to Stage Three

Following Council endorsement of the new planning Vision Statement and Guiding Principles in February 2021, Stage Three of We Make Milton was initiated. The purpose of Stage Three is to investigate and understand the current planning context of Milton in more detail and to explore specific land use planning matters raised by the community so far, including how they can be addressed by our new Official Plan.

The Big Questions, which emerged from the feedback of stakeholders and the community through extensive engagement in Stages 1 and 2, focus on identifying the direction of local policy opportunities. These policy directions will guide the development of the new Official Plan in Stage 4 (Drafting and Discussing).

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To organize information and explore community ideas about key land use planning issues, a series of We Make Milton reports is being prepared. The reports are focused on four themes (Living, Growing, Working, and Moving), as shown below. However, it is noted that there is crossover between themes, and these crossovers will be identified and discussed in our Stage Three reports. An 'Introduction to Stage Three' Report has also been prepared to explain our purpose and intent for this part of the work program, and is provided as **Attachment A**.

Living in Milton



Working in Milton



Moving in Milton



Growing in Milton



For each theme, two separate reports are being prepared, for the purpose of facilitating additional discussion with the community. This includes:

1. A '**Background and Information**' Report, which provides an overview of the planning context of Milton as well as an analysis of community and stakeholder input received so far. It leads to a series of Big Questions about how to manage change and provide more choice to the year 2051, in accordance with our new land use planning vision statement, endorsed by Council.
2. A '**Big Questions**' Report, which provides an exploration of the Big Questions by looking at current provincial, regional, and local plans/policies, as well as current planning practices from municipalities in other jurisdictions. This leads to the identification of various policy considerations that could be used in our new Official Plan to address the Big Questions and provide more choice as Milton evolves.

To-date, the 'Background and Information' and 'Big Questions' Reports for Living in Milton have been prepared and are the focus of the remainder of this update to Council.

Engagement, Engagement, Engagement

As set-out through the Council-endorsed work plan, there are several overall project goals for We Make Milton, including: "Engagement, Engagement, Engagement". Specifically, it is our goal to generate specific land use focused questions as part of a



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broader discussion about the future of Milton. Throughout the entire process, consultation and engagement is intended to be unique, innovative, and extensive.

In line with this overall project goal, Stage three will provide a number of important opportunities for engagement and input from the community. A number of touch-point and feedback meetings are planned for the remainder of the year, which are intended to:

- Validating what we have already heard;
- Sharing policy ideas and options for the new Official Plan;
- Receiving feedback from our committee members and the broader community; and
- Identifying a set of recommended policy directions that will be used as 'building blocks' for the new Official Plan in Stage Four.

Engagement continues to be a focus of Stage Three so that we can collaborate on the identification of future policy directions, which will help us advance to Stage Four - drafting the new OP. Throughout the Big Questions Stage, we will undertake various consultation initiatives and receive feedback on all of the themes and the respective Big Questions. While there will be dedicated periods of engagement to highlight our work for each theme, our community is invited and encouraged to provide feedback during any part of the Stage.

Discussion

What do We Mean by Living in Milton?

The focus of Living in Milton is on land use planning matters related to our day-to-day lives in Milton (where we live, socialize, play, and worship) and how our daily needs are met. The Living theme also goes beyond the day-to-day and looks at how our new Official Plan can more broadly support a high quality of life and sense of community for Miltonians, while addressing current/future planning challenges, such as climate change, healthy living, and housing affordability.

In the context of our new planning vision, it is anticipated that many people will want to live and grow old in Milton because of the housing choices available. In 2051, residents will have options for where to live in Milton - a new townhouse with a view, a certified green condo close to a GO station, a basement apartment in Sherwood, a historic home near downtown, or a lot in the rural area. Through the development of complete communities, residents will also have more choice when it comes to services, amenities, and recreation.

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Big Questions for Living in Milton

As mentioned, the Living in Milton 'Background and Information' Report identifies a series of Big Questions on the topic of Living in Milton. It is provided as **Attachment B** to this report. The 'Big Questions' Report explores in detail each of these Big Questions from a Planning perspective, and is provided as **Attachment C**.

What are Big Questions? Big Questions are critical policy questions about how to manage change and achieve our land use vision Choice Shapes Us. They are open ended questions without simple or right answers that emerged from extensive community consultation and reflect what is important to the community. The Big Questions for the theme of Living in Milton are:

- **Big Question #1 Affordability and Housing Choice** - How can the new Official Plan enable a wider choice of housing types, tenures, and affordability to meet the diverse housing needs of Milton?
- **Big Question #2 Climate Change and Resiliency** - How can the new Official Plan promote climate change mitigation and adaptation in our communities and neighbourhoods? How can we offer environmentally friendly choices for living in Milton? How can we be more resilient to future environmental hazards and health risks?
- **Big Question #3 History and Cultural Heritage** - How can Milton's new Official Plan better acknowledge and respect the many layers of Milton's unique cultural heritage? How can we balance the need to conserve our cultural heritage resources with the need to adapt to modern lifestyle choices?
- **Big Question #4 Parks and Recreation** - How can the new Official Plan further support the availability of parks and recreational facilities across Milton's communities? Are there any other ways to encourage healthy and active lifestyles choices in Milton?
- **Big Question #5 Places of Worship** - How can the new Official Plan help address the land needs of Milton's diverse faith groups? How can we help provide more choice by facilitating and supporting the establishment of new places of worship?
- **Big Question #6 Rural Living** - How can Milton's new Official Plan recognize and support Milton's unique rural area? How can we improve livability, achieve more complete communities, and provide greater choice to rural residents?
- **Big Question #7 Urban Design** - How can the new Official Plan help achieve urban design excellence? How can we create a cohesive and memorable built environment



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and strong sense of place? How can we provide more accessible and equitable living choices for all Miltonians?

- **Big Question #8 Youth** - How can the new Official Plan help provide for the needs and choices of youth living in Milton today? How can we make Milton more youth and age-friendly?

For each of the Big Questions, our research focused on:

- Provincial Legislation and Policy Highlights:** What Milton **must** do in accordance with the Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement, Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan, and Niagara Escarpment plan, etc.
- Summary of Regional Policies and Plans:** What Milton **must** do in accordance with the the Halton Region Official Plan, other Regional Plans/Studies, and Guidelines.
- Local Policies and Directions:** What the current Milton Official Plan and other locally prepared Plans/Studies provide direction on in terms of the Big Question.
- Current Planning Practices:** What other comparable municipalities are doing through their Official Plans and other planning studies to address similar Big Questions in their communities.
- Policy Options to Explore for Consideration:** What Milton **could** do in response to our understanding of the needs and wants of the community, the tools available, and upper-tier directions.

The words **must** and **could** were carefully chosen and are used as a result of detailed, thoughtful, and thorough policy analysis, as documented in our attached Reports. We are making a distinction between what we must do, versus what we could do as a local municipality. We are emphasizing where we have room for community input and where we can craft policies based on what we hear from the community.

Summary of Engagement

Engagement activities were undertaken over late 2021 and early 2022 to obtain feedback from Town staff, members of the public, stakeholders, community leaders, and local organizations, agencies, and advisory committees/task forces. The following is a description of who we consulted and how we obtained feedback:

1. Technical Advisory Committee Meetings:

- A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been assembled to obtain technical advice and knowledge throughout We Make Milton, and to assist with identifying and resolving planning issues.
- The TAC consists of Milton staff, Region of Halton staff, conservation authorities, the Niagara Escarpment Commission, school boards and other relevant agencies.



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- We Make Milton TAC Meetings for Stage Three have been held as follows to present the Draft Big Questions and proposed policy options/considerations: June 24, 2021; September 16, 2021; September 22, 2021; and December 12, 2021.
 - Some revisions to the Big Questions and Living in Milton Reports were made as a result of the input from the TAC, prior to further consultation.
- 2. Online Engagement and Living Survey (May to June, 2022)**
- The Let's Talk Milton website has served as the main platform for public engagement and input into the Official Plan project since its launch.
 - The Stage Three Reports (Introduction, Information and Background, and Big Questions) were shared on Let's Talk Milton respectively on May 25, 2022.
 - From May 25 to June 8, 2022, members of the public were invited to have their say about the options and consideration identified for each Big Question through an online Let's Talk Milton survey.
 - An introduction video and a series of eight 3 to 7 minute videos (one for each Living Big Question) that explain the context of planning in Milton and define key policy concepts accompanied the Living Survey, so that viewers could review and consider the information presented on their own time.
 - A record of the survey responses is provided in **Attachment D** of this Report.
 - The Town of Milton's social media platforms were also used to share the Living Survey and to support engagement. A campaign showcasing the Milton characters provided real life examples of what the policy options identified through the Big Questions could mean in terms of Living in Milton from a land use perspective.
- 3. Stakeholder Feedback Sessions (June 6 and 8, 2022):**
- Two Stakeholder Feedback sessions were held online during the afternoon of June 6 and June 8, 2022. The feedback sessions provided an opportunity for follow-up discussion with those who responded to the Living Survey.
 - The purpose of the sessions is to discuss policy directions for living in Milton and provide a space for stakeholders to elaborate on their Living Survey responses.
 - Since the session was online, there were various tools used to collect feedback, including: verbally sharing thoughts over Zoom; the live Zoom chat tool; and a virtual whiteboard (Jamboard).
 - Meeting notes and the Jamboard input from participants are available by request.
- 4. Public Feedback Sessions (June 6 and 8, 2022):**
- Two Public Feedback sessions were also held online during the evening of June 6 and June 8, 2022. The feedback sessions provided an opportunity for follow-up discussion with those who responded to the Living Survey.



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- Meeting notes and the Jamboard input from participants are available by request.

Engagement Results

1. **Online Engagement:** The following is a summary of We Make Milton participation on Let's Talk Milton during the 2-week period from May 25, 2022 to June 8, 2022:
 - 1,000 people visited the We Make Milton project page;
 - 114 people completed the survey; and
 - 137 people downloaded the reports.
2. **Survey Results:** As noted, 114 people completed the Living in Milton survey, and the results were overwhelmingly in favour of the policy options/considerations identified. As noted, a full record of survey results is provided in **Attachment D**.
3. **Meeting Participation:** All of the Stakeholder and Public Feedback Sessions received good representation from a reasonable cross-section of different stakeholders and community interests.

Recommended Policy Directions and Next Steps

Based on the input received, it is recommended that all of the policy options/considerations identified for the theme of Living in Milton be carried forward as recommended policy directions, and used to inform subsequent stages of the new Official Plan project. As we advance into Stage Four (Drafting and Discussing) there will continued opportunities for the community to help us draft, discuss, and refine new land use planning policies, based on these recommended policy directions.

In the coming months, we will undertake the same process for the themes of Growing, Working, and Moving in Milton and we look forward to collecting additional feedback and input on these important policy areas.

Financial Impact

None arising from this Report.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Hogan
Commissioner, Development Services



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For questions, please contact: Nancy Reid, Senior Policy
Planner

Phone: Ext. 2332

Attachments

Attachment A: Introduction to Stage Three Report

Attachment B: Living in Milton Background and Information Report

Attachment C: Living in Milton Big Questions Report

Attachment D: Results of the Living in Milton Survey (May 25 to June 8, 2022)

Approved by CAO
Andrew M. Siltala
Chief Administrative Officer

Recognition of Traditional Lands

The Town of Milton resides on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee people. The Town of Milton shares this land and the responsibility for the water, food and resources. We stand as allies with the First Nations as stewards of these lands.