



WE MAKE MILTON

Growing in Milton
Big Questions:
Policy Considerations



Growing in Milton Big Questions: Background & Information

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Introduction

This is the We Make Milton Policy Considerations Report for the theme of Growing in Milton. It has been prepared as a part of Stage 3, Big Questions, of the [New Official Plan project – We Make Milton](#). It focuses on the six Big Questions about where and how Milton will grow and presents some of the planning ideas and concepts related to the Big Questions.

The Background and Information Report for Growing in Milton complements this document. The Background and Information report explores the current context for Growing in Milton and some of the planning opportunities and challenges related to this theme. It links to thoughts and ideas we heard in our previous We Make Milton consultation and engagement work.

The background review has informed and identified six Big Questions about how the new Official Plan can facilitate and manage growth to the year 2051, in keeping with our new land use planning vision: Choice Shapes Us.

For each of the six Big Questions, this report identifies a set of Policy Considerations for discussion. They are the focus for further consultation and engagement. The Policy Considerations are intended to answer the Big Questions and will be used to formulate draft policies in the next stage of the We Make Milton project (Stage 4 - New Official Plan). The Big Questions and Policy Considerations link back to the Vision and Guiding Principles established through Stages 1 and 2 of the We Make Milton New Official Plan Process.

What is an Official Plan?

It's a document that establishes how land is to be used in a municipality. It sets out a vision for how Milton will change over the next 30 years. An Official plan is prepared under the Planning Act, and will be adopted by Milton Council. It must conform to applicable provincial policy. Once adopted, an Official Plan becomes legally binding. This means that Town staff must implement it, all public works must conform to it and it cannot be changed without a formal public process.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS respond to BIG QUESTIONS.

BIG QUESTIONS focus on how to manage change and achieve our Council endorsed land use vision, Choice Shapes Us, to the year 2051.

The Big Questions have no simple "right answer," and different planning approaches and tools are available to address them.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS focus on potential land use planning approaches and tools for Milton's new Official Plan. For each Big Question, Policy Considerations fall into three categories:

- 1) Things that **MUST** be done to conform to/be consistent with upper-tier policies;
- 2) Things **SHOULD** be done because they implement current/best practices; and
- 3) Things we **COULD** do because they are innovative and respond to specific local needs, opportunities, or challenges.

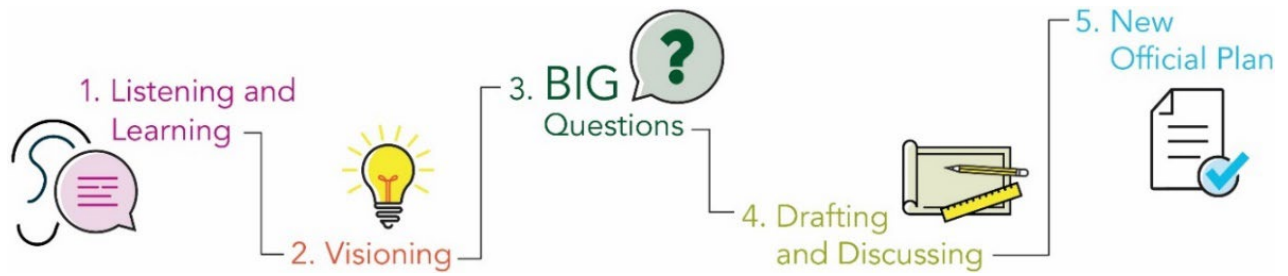


Figure 1. Milton’s Official Plan Review Process from engagement to policy.

Milton 2051: Choice Shapes Us

In 2051, Milton offers a diversity of options for how and where we live, work, move and grow. As we evolve, choice is what shapes us.

We Make Milton Vision

The [We Make Milton Visioning Report](#) set out Milton’s new Official Plan Vision as: Choice Shapes Us. This means that as Milton grows, and implements the new Official Plan, the Town will become a community that offers diverse options for how and where we live, work, move and grow.

When it comes to **Growing in Milton**, our community and community building partners will have a lot of choices to support where and how Milton grows. In some parts of Milton, we will grow up, with higher density development and intensification. In some parts of Milton, we will grow through new complete communities, and in other parts of Milton, growth will support revitalization or retention of character.

The choices made when crafting the new Official Plan will shape how Milton will address a growing population, changing demographics and the needs of current and future generations. Growth will be managed to provide long-term certainty about land use and development while adapting in a flexible and innovative way as the needs of the community change over time.

The Big Questions were formed to dive deeper into the idea of choice, how to deliver viable choices, and how to build the land use planning framework for Milton’s new Official Plan to fulfil the Vision and Guiding Principles.

“When we think about future growth we need to think about increasing the density and mix of uses in urban areas in order to protect agricultural spaces”.



Guiding Principles

In Stage 2 of the We Make Milton project – which related to visioning, guiding principles and developing a land use vision (Choices Shapes Us) – the process established 12 guiding principles for the new Official Plan. The Guiding Principles will guide future land use decision making to achieve sustainable development and complete and healthy communities. They are used to provide direction to and evaluate the Policy Considerations, as they are developed to answer the Big Questions.

The Guiding Principles cover all of the four theme areas: living, moving, working and growing in Milton. Some themes will cover specific Guiding Principles more than others.

The Big Questions and Policy Considerations for the Growing in Milton theme are strongly tied to the Guiding Principles of: Be Creative and Provide Choice; Collaborate; Mix of Uses; and Prioritize the Public Realm. Other Guiding Principles are still relevant to the Growing in Milton Policy Considerations. They are also further discussed and supported through the exploration of the living, moving and working themes.



Figure 3. Growing in Milton’s Guiding Principles Hierarchy.

Within the Guiding Principles, sub-themes were also developed. The chart below highlights the sub-themes that have are being discussed through the Growing in Milton Big Questions and Policy Considerations.

Table 1. Guiding Principles Descriptions and Intentions.

| Principle | Definition |
|--|--|
| 1. Be Creative and Provide Choice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for creativity in the development process while meeting provincial and regional planning requirements. • Ensure safe and affordable housing options for all generations of Miltonians. • Provide reliable and equitable mobility choices, including lower-impact options, such as transit, walking and cycling. • Ensure a range of options for growth and development at different heights, scales and densities. • Balance infill and intensification in appropriate and strategic locations, new greenfield development and urban expansion. • Plan for a vibrant business environment that offers a range of economic and job opportunities so that more Miltonians can choose to live and work here. |
| 2. Mix Uses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create complete communities that will support a high quality of life and provide for healthy, sustainable and active lifestyles. • Provide a diverse mix of housing types (like rental, live-work and supportive housing) and forms (like single/ semi-detached, townhouses and apartments). • Mix housing with stores, restaurants, live-work buildings, certain types of employment, community services and places of worship. • Enhance and revitalize main streets, corridors, nodes and other existing mixed-use areas. • Create and sustain new mixed-use areas to accommodate forecasted population and job growth. |
| 3. Move Efficiently and Safely | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link land use plans with local, regional and provincial transportation plans. • Integrate transport modes, whether for passengers or goods, for greater efficiency. • Advocate for enhanced GO Transit service, new transit stations and a regional transit governance structure. • Where possible and appropriate, encourage transit oriented development forms. • Maintain, improve, integrate and grow existing mobility infrastructure, including roads, trails, paths and parking. • Increase the availability of lower carbon impact transportation options such as public transit and multiuse path systems. • Ensure that all mobility options are designed and operated in a way that protects the health and safety of all Miltonians and enhances quality of life. |
| 4. Diversify and Prosper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect employment lands to balance job growth with residential growth, and provide opportunities for investment and growth. • Provide local opportunities for post-secondary education and training. • Support Milton’s traditional sectors and attract new industrial development, including manufacturing, warehousing and logistics. • Balance job growth in traditional sectors with the growth of knowledge-based employment uses, including research and development, and other emerging sectors. • Attract innovative entrepreneurs, employers and highly-skilled niche talent to Milton. • Create infrastructure and partnerships to attract new employment assessment. • Take advantage of Milton’s proximity to significant transportation corridors and growing technology clusters. |

| Principle | Definition |
|---|--|
| 5. Prioritize the Public Realm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and sustain quality public spaces and gathering places throughout Milton to support social connectedness and safety, and to create a sense of place and character. • Design public spaces that are safe that are safe, integrated and create a sense of place and character. • Achieve design excellence through site/building design and streetscaping techniques. • Protect and promote Milton’s outstanding public views, vistas and destinations. |
| 6. Support Arts, Culture, and Recreation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote local art resources and businesses/creative industries and invest in public art. • Protect, enhance, develop and promote Milton’s unique identity, cultural assets and heritage resources. • Provide recreational and social programming that is inclusive, appeals to a diverse population and supports community building. • Distribute and integrate facilities and services throughout Milton so that all neighbourhoods and residents are well-served. • Celebrate and share Milton’s history, accomplishments, assets and community pride. |
| 7. Make Connections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect Milton to municipalities across the GTHA, Ontario and beyond. • Make best use of access to 400-series highways and proximity to ports, air and rail, as well as the Canada-U.S. border. • Enhance linkages between urban and rural Milton. • Improve internal connections by enhancing paths and trails and encouraging a modified grid system of streets in new neighbourhoods and redevelopment areas to maximize ease of mobility. • Plan and implement infrastructure and technology for a ‘smart city’. |
| 8. Protect our Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance Milton’s natural heritage. • Ensure that new development is integrated with the surrounding environment. • Promote the enjoyment and responsible use of Milton’s many natural areas and assets. • Recognize linkages between our environment, economy and quality of life. • Reduce greenhouse gases and respond to the impacts of climate change. |
| 9. Support the Rural Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance the livability and character of rural Milton. • Provide for a competitive, diverse and flexible agricultural economy. • Promote local food production and enhance the agri-food network. • Ensure the wise use and management of resources, including mineral aggregates. • Provide for healthy, integrated and viable hamlets and rural areas. • Manage the agricultural and urban interface. |
| 10. Encourage Good, Green Design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire, plan and design attractive built form in a variety of typologies and scales that reflect the unique identity, geography and context of Milton. • Implement green infrastructure and low impact development strategies. • Encourage design initiatives that improve air and water quality, support energy efficiency and conserve water and other resources. • Improve the sustainable performance of new development in Milton. |

| Principle | Definition |
|-----------------------|--|
| 11.Collaborate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include and engage all Miltonians in planning processes and use input to inform planning decisions. • Work collaboratively with other administrations, agencies and sectors. • Support timely and coordinated infrastructure investments from all levels of government. • Partner to deliver long-term, predictable and well-timed infrastructure funding. • Use funding tools and incentives to support local businesses and new development. |
| 12.Think Local | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support existing businesses, including local stores, services, restaurants and farms. • Attract new retail development to support a growing population. • Revitalize downtown Milton, our villages and other commercial areas. • Celebrate and promote Milton through local programming and events. • Work with the appropriate agencies to ensure Miltonians have local access to high-quality community services. |

Legislation

The documents highlighted in Table 2 below are statutory documents that that must be adhered to and considered when drafting policy considerations – and, eventually, new Official Plan policies – related to the Growing in Milton theme. These documents can be at a federal, provincial or regional level. Figure 4 displays the current hierarchy of planning policy in Ontario.

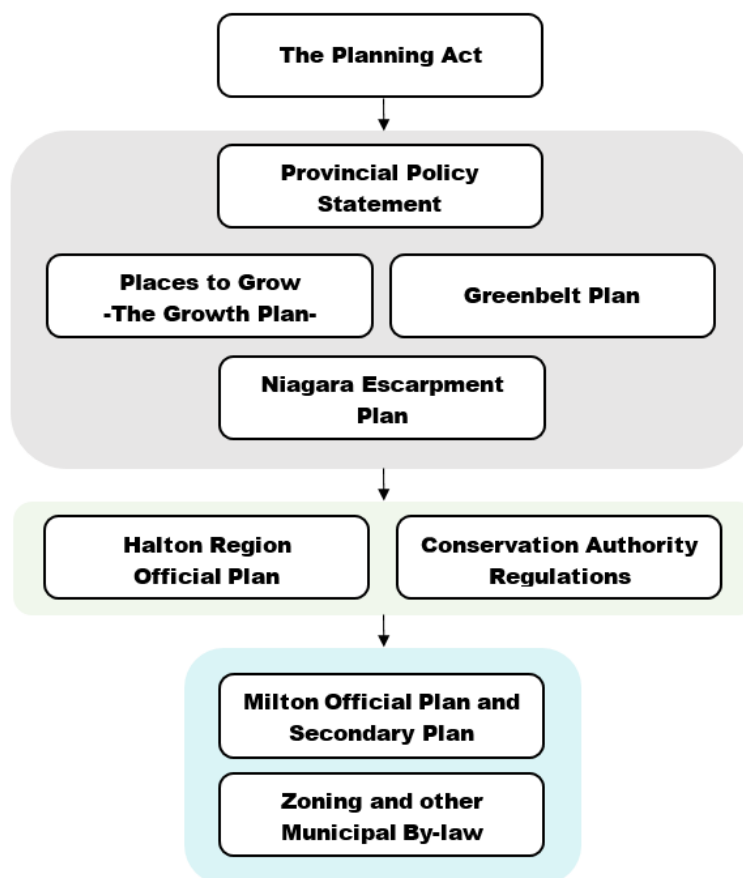


Figure 4. Planning legislation hierarchy from federal to local level.

Table 2. Legislation Applicable to Milton.

| Provincial and Regional Plans | Purpose and Direction |
|--|--|
| <u>The Planning Act, 1990</u> | <p>The purpose of the Planning Act is to provide planning processes that are fair by making them open, accessible, timely and efficient. It integrates matters of provincial interest into provincial and municipal planning decisions; recognizes the decision-making authority and accountability of municipal councils in planning; and establishes tools that can be used to achieve local growth and development goals.</p> |
| <u>Provincial Policy Statement, 2020</u> | <p>The Provincial Policy Statement (P.P.S.) is a consolidated statement of the government’s policies on land use planning, issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act. It gives provincial direction on key land use planning issues that affect Milton, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient use and management of land and infrastructure; • The provision of sufficient housing to meet changing needs, including affordable housing; • The protection of the environment and resources including farmland, natural resources (for example, wetlands and woodlands) and water; • Opportunities for economic development and job creation; and • The appropriate transportation, water, sewer and other infrastructure needed to accommodate current and future needs. |

| Provincial and Regional Plans | Purpose and Direction |
|---|--|
| <p><u>Proposed changes to the P.P.S. (2023) and merging of the Growth Plan (currently under consultation)</u></p> | <p>Bill 97 proposes a merging of the Provincial Policy Statement, which informs provincial, regional and municipal authority regarding planning practices. The merging of this bill will change the way that planning is practiced in the province of Ontario and aims to provide an efficient, streamlined framework for planning on the provincial, regional and municipal level. Some of the proposed changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing new defined terms such as “Large and Fast Growing Municipalities.” • Directing municipalities to make sufficient land available to accommodate an appropriate range of mixed land uses; to meet projected needs for at ‘least’ 25 years. • Allowing municipalities to set population and employment targets and intensification targets based on minimum requirements provided by the Province. • Allowing municipalities to establish timing and location of settlement area expansions. • Removing the requirement that directs planning authorities to implement minimum intensification targets for development within the built area. • Encouraging but not requiring the use of the provincial agricultural mapping system. |
| <p><u>A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019</u></p> | <p>The Province’s A Place to Grow Act is to plan for growth and development in a way that supports economic prosperity, protects the natural environment, and helps communities achieve a high quality of life. Its purpose is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) to enable decisions about growth to be made in ways that sustain a robust economy, build strong communities and promote a healthy environment and a culture of conservation; b) to promote a rational and balanced approach to decisions about growth that builds on community priorities, strengths and opportunities and makes efficient use of infrastructure; c) to enable planning for growth in a manner that reflects a broad geographical perspective and is integrated across natural and municipal boundaries; and d) to ensure that a long-term vision and long-term goals guide decision-making about growth and provide for the co-ordination of growth policies among all levels of government. <p>2005, c. 13, s. 1.</p> |

| Provincial and Regional Plans | Purpose and Direction |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Greenbelt Plan, 2017</p> | <p>The Greenbelt Plan aims to protect against the loss and of agricultural land, protect the natural heritage and water resource systems that sustain ecological and human. Its purpose is to provide for a diverse range of economic and social activities associated with rural communities, agriculture, tourism, and recreation to build resilience while helping to mitigate the effects of climate change. The plan lists the following components as its main areas of enhancement and promotion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural viability and protection • Environmental protection • Culture, recreation, and tourism • Settlement areas • Infrastructure and natural resources; and • Climate change |
|---|---|

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017</p> | <p>The Niagara Escarpment Plan (N.E.P.) serves as a framework of objectives and policies to strike a balance between development, protection and the enjoyment of this important landform feature and the resources it supports. The purpose of the Plan is to provide for the maintenance of the Niagara Escarpment and lands in its vicinity, and to ensure development is compatible with the natural environment. Its main objectives are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) to protect unique ecologic and historic areas; b) to maintain and enhance the quality and character of natural streams and water supplies; c) to provide adequate opportunities for outdoor recreation; d) to maintain and enhance the open landscape character of the Niagara Escarpment in so far as possible, by such means as compatible farming or forestry and by preserving the natural scenery; e) to ensure that all new development is compatible with the purpose of the Plan; f) to provide for adequate public access to the Niagara Escarpment; and g) to support municipalities within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area in their exercise of the planning functions conferred upon them by the Planning Act. |
|--|---|

| Provincial and Regional Plans | Purpose and Direction |
|---|--|
| Halton Region Official Plan, 2022 Consolidation | <p>The Halton Region Official Plan outlines a vision for Halton’s physical form and community character. The plan intends to be a direct reflection of aims and aspirations for the future fostered within Halton. The plan sets out targets for development density in settlement areas. The plan seeks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide a diversity of housing types to meet different, physical, social and economic needs. b) Provide urban services, through master plans that accommodate development while protecting the environment. c) Set growth targets by working with local municipalities and the province. <p>The plan clarifies and assists the delivery of regional services and responsibilities as defined in the Planning Act, Municipal Act and other Relevant Provincial Legislation.</p> |

Sources: in References Appendix

Guidance Documents

In addition to legislative documents, there are various federal, provincial and regional guidance documents that are intended to guide planning and development processes and can assist in the development of new policies in relation to the Growing in Milton theme.

Table 3. Documents Guiding Growing in Milton Directions

| Document | Purpose and Direction |
|---|--|
| Conservation Authority Regulations | <p>Conservation Halton is a regulatory authority, service provider, public commenting body, resource management agency, landowner and provincially-delegated reviewer for natural hazards. Conservation Halton is given its authority by the Conservation Authorities Act (1990).</p> <p>Permission from Conservation Halton is required to develop in an area regulated by Conservation Halton. If it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of Conservation Halton that the development, alteration or interference will not affect the control of flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches, pollution or the conservation of the area, Conservation Halton may grant permission.</p> |
| Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, 2022-2026 | <p>The Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, developed under the Federal Sustainable Development Act, brings sustainable development goals, targets, milestones and implementation strategies</p> <p>The FSDS uses perspectives from National Indigenous Organizations and Indigenous members of the Sustainable Development Advisory Council. These perspectives provide distinct examples sustainable development actions.</p> |

| Document | Purpose and Direction |
|---|--|
| Province of Ontario Transit Supportive Guidelines, 2012 | <p>The province has created Transit Supportive Guidelines that are intended to assist urban planners, transit planners, developers and others, working in communities of all sizes, in creating an environment that is supportive of transit and developing services and programs to increase transit ridership.</p> |
| Regional Official Plan Guidelines | <p>Regional Official Plan Guidelines are a set of documents that help implement the policies in the Halton’s Regional Official Plan, among others, the following are relevant for the Growing in Milton theme: Healthy Communities Guidelines (2022).</p> <p>The guidelines identify the attributes of healthy communities for the region and local municipalities to follow in order to achieve healthy communities.</p> <p>Land Use Compatibility Guidelines (2022)</p> <p>The document provides guidance on the implementation of the Regional Official Plan’s land use compatibility policies, which seek to minimize and mitigate potential conflict between non-compatible land uses.</p> <p>Regional Program for Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) Guidelines (2016)</p> <p>The guidelines identify the Regional Plan policies that may be implemented through local municipal CIP programs and outline the process and associated conditions applicable to a local municipality’s request for regional participation in these programs.</p> |
| Halton Region Rural Agricultural Strategy | <p>The Rural Agricultural Strategy (RAS) is a key part of achieving the community and region’s goal of preserving the rural areas for a diverse, balanced, economically strong and sustainable landscape. It identifies how the Region can strengthen and ensure the long-term viability of the agricultural and rural sectors in Halton Region. The strategy aims to growth the cluster, link food, farming and health, foster innovation, enable the cluster and cultivate new approaches.</p> |

Sources: in References

Ongoing Town Initiatives

In addition to the Official Plan, the Town has several other guiding documents and master plans which contribute to growth related policies and initiatives. The following is a summary of key secondary plans, policy-related studies and other town initiatives that have been completed or are currently underway.



Table 4. Local Secondary Plans

| Secondary Plan | Plan Details |
|---|---|
| Trafalgar Corridor Secondary Plan (pending appeal) | The Trafalgar Secondary Plan will guide future development of a transit oriented and walkable complete community. Town Council adopted the Secondary Plan in March 2019 and Halton Region approved the Secondary Plan with modifications in September 2022. |
| Agerton Secondary Plan (underway) | Agerton has been planned as a transit-supportive mixed of use area around a proposed GO Station and complementary employment areas. A recent draft plan was presented to Milton Council in July 2022. |
| Milton Education Village Secondary Plan (pending regional approval) | The MEV is planned as a dynamic innovation district anchored by leading post-secondary institutions. The MEV will connect residents, businesses, research and recreational opportunities, through a fully integrated green and blue network. Milton Council adopted the MEV Secondary Plan in December 2020. |
| Britannia Secondary Plan (underway) | The Britannia Secondary Plan is envisioned to develop as a complete community. The vision focuses on creating complete, walkable neighbourhoods and urban centres with a range and mix of uses. The Britannia Secondary Plan was presented to a statutory public meeting under the Planning Act in July 2022. |

Other Local Policy Related Reviews

Additional Residential Units Policies and Regulations Update (underway)

The Town is in the process of reviewing and updating its policies and regulations regarding additional residential units to align with the updated Planning Act. ARUs, as defined by the Planning Act, refer to a second and a third residential unit in addition to a primary residential unit, for a total of three, on a residential lot containing a detached house, semi-detached house or townhouse.

Housing and Non-Residential Needs Analysis Study (underway)

A Housing and Non-Residential Needs Analysis Study is being conducted to inform the new Official Plan project. The study will establish projections of the Town's future population and its characteristics to year 2051, then examine the full range of housing types to address different household needs. The study will also project future employment and non-residential space needs to 2051. The analysis and findings of the study will inform the development of the new Official Plan's growth strategy and policies. It is expected to be complete in the fall of 2023.

Transportation Master Plan Update (underway)

The Town is undertaking a Transportation Master Plan Update to provide key strategies that will inform the new Official Plan. It will provide a technical review of the impacts of upper level policy changes, such as the new Community Area and Employment Area that has been added to Milton's Urban Area through Regional Official Plan Amendment 49, and provide recommended infrastructure improvements in support of growth that must be recognized through the new Official Plan.

Milton Transit Five-Year Service Plan (2024-2029) (underway)

The Milton Transit Five-Year Service Plan being updated in 2023 is an important document that identifies current and future transit needs for Milton and provides detailed transit and operations planning. The plan needs to be coordinated with the new Official Plan to understand when and where growth is coming so that as the Milton grows the choice of convenient transit options is made. The Official Plan also needs to understand Milton's transit needs and how transit planning is being completed to be able to support growth.

2023-2027 Corporate Strategic Plan

The Town has implemented a corporate strategic planning process that carefully considers our long term community vision and subsequent land use planning policies. Each term of Council develops a four-year strategic plan setting out the Town's strategic objectives, which are intended to support our community growth and municipal service delivery.

The 2023-27 Corporate Strategic Plan lays a foundation for Milton's future as a diverse and welcoming community defined by higher densities enabled by transit. This foundation will include transit system advancements, prioritized infrastructure, quality facilities and a diverse range of housing types in varied neighbourhoods where people can live and work closer to nature. The Town will maintain its appeal and character for residents and employers while adjusting service, operations and development to reflect evolving resident preference, demographics and growth.

2022-2026 Economic Development Strategy

The Town of Milton has created a five-year plan for economic development within the town. The plan will support a fast-growing town and considers local and regional dynamics. The plan identifies four target industries that offer a strong foundation for Milton's Economic: professional, scientific

and technical services; green innovation; advanced manufacturing; and logistics. Six guiding principles serve as a framework to structure the development and implementation of the strategy:

1. Export cluster-driven approach
2. A focus on innovation and entrepreneurship
3. Private-sector and anchor engagement
4. Balanced development
5. Quality of place
6. Effective storytelling

Milton Culture Plan (2021)

The Milton Culture Plan was a collaborative planning effort involving Milton's artists, creative and cultural workers, non-profit organizations, the general public, and municipal staff. This plan aims to identify what culture means to Miltonians and how the Town can embrace culture over a 10-year span. The Culture Plan presents five avenues of action:

1. Foster a resilient and collaborative cultural sector.
2. Celebrate and share Milton's diversity.
3. Support Indigenous cultural resurgence.
4. Strengthen culture-led economic and social development.
5. Expand investment in infrastructure, including places and spaces.

Mature Neighbourhoods Character Study (2021)

Residents of Milton's mature neighbourhoods raised concerns that insensitive redevelopment and replacement of existing buildings may impact neighbourhood character. The Mature Neighbourhoods Character Study assessed, with community input, the elements that add to neighbourhood character and determined how new buildings may respect the character of mature neighbourhoods.

Major Transit Station Area Mobility Hub Study (2020)

The Town designates the Milton GO Station and its surrounding areas as a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) in the Official Plan. The Town completed a study in the summer of 2020 to determine key findings and recommendations for long-term development of the MTSA. The purpose of the study was to guide the transformation of the mobility hub into a pedestrian friendly, mixed-use designation that is a transportation hub for both locals and visitors. The study findings were divided into themes covering intensification, character and built form, urban greening and publicly accessible open space, transportation, servicing and implementation.

Downtown Study (2017)

The Downtown Study identified ways to revitalize and redevelop Milton's downtown and provided the foundation by which cultural and economic activity can flourish in the core of our community. Through a market analysis, Milton identified ways to revitalize the downtown through policy changes, partnerships and redevelopment of Milton-owned lands. As a result of the study, the Town implemented new zoning and local Official Plan policy changes for the downtown to create a flexible policy framework to help with revitalization.

Community Services Master Plan Update (2015)

The Community Services Master Plan is used in setting the provisions of programs and services, and the development and redevelopment of parks and facilities. In 2015, the Town commenced an

update to the master plan to make it a living document that is referenced on an ongoing basis, and addresses changing circumstances.

Big Questions and Policy Considerations

What are the Big Questions?

The Big Questions – Background and Information Report identifies six Big Questions for Growing in Milton. These questions are informed by analysis of the background information and extensive feedback from staff, stakeholders and community members in stages 1 and 2 of the We Make Milton project.

The Big Questions are used to evaluate various policy options and identify recommended Policy Considerations. They are framed by the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles of the new Official Plan, and inform policy directions that will guide the next project stages. These questions help ensure that the Policy Considerations being formed are responding to the right concerns and needs of the community as we plan towards 2051.

What are Policy Considerations?

Policy Considerations focus on potential policy approaches for Milton’s new Official Plan. The Policy Considerations answer the big questions while considering the Guiding Principles that have been established for Milton’s new Official Plan. For each Big Question, Policy Considerations fall into three categories:

- 1) Things that **MUST** be done to conform to/be consistent with upper-tier policies;
- 2) Things **SHOULD** be done because they implement current/best practices; and
- 3) Things we **COULD** do because they are innovative and respond to specific local needs, opportunities, or challenges.



Big Question #1

BQ1: Promoting a Local Approach to Growth

How can Milton's new Official Plan provide a local approach to managing growth? What are Milton's growth objectives and how do we achieve them?

Growing in Milton Policy Considerations for Big Question 1:

The following considerations have been identified as result of the above exploration of Big Question #1 for further discussion through We Make Milton:

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 1.1:

The new Official Plan should identify and describe the features that make the Town a unique place, reflect the new land use planning vision, Milton 2051: Choice Shapes Us, and address local Council and community priorities for future Milton.

The new land use planning vision statement and guiding principles for future planning and development are based on extensive feedback and input from the local community. Local planning themes and priorities that will guide the preparation of the new Official Plan, include:

- Balance population growth with the provision of housing choices and types, amenities and facilities, retail, education opportunities, and jobs.
- Ensure the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage resources.
- Enhance multi-modal connectivity within Milton and to other places.
- Safety and accessibility.
- Balance new growth and development, preserve town character, and enhance the sense of community and social connectivity.
- Prioritize intensification to make efficient use of land.
- Create smart, complete, mixed-use communities.
- Support agricultural and rural preservation, competitive agricultural economy and integrated hamlets.
- Encourage sustainable/green development.
- Address infrastructure needs.
- Improve building/site design standards and aesthetics.
- Support the vitality and prosperity of the Downtown and its revitalization.
- Engage the public in planning processes to inform planning decisions.

The locally focused policy outcomes, intentions and directions in the new Official Plan will also be informed by the strategic priorities established through the Council's Strategic Plan.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 1.2:

The new Official Plan must accommodate the Town's updated population and jobs forecast to the 2051 planning horizon of the Plan.

The Town's attractiveness as a place to live, work and play has made it increasingly important to focus on sustainable and planned growth over the longer term.

Forecasting growth in the new Official Plan is an important step to ensure the Town is prepared to accommodate future land use requirements. In 2022, the Regional Official Plan established minimum population and employment forecasts for Milton to 2051.

More recently in 2023, the Province assigned housing targets to 21 selected lower- and single-tier municipalities, including Milton with a target of 21,000 units. These selected municipalities will work towards achieving these targets by 2031.

The Town is currently undertaking a Housing and Non-Residential Needs Analysis Study that will establish projections of Milton's future population and employment base, and their characteristics with the current 2051 forecasts established through ROPA 49, as a minimum. This work will inform the policies on projected density targets, housing and employment mix and phasing of growth to 2051.

Proposed new Official Plan policies, and revisions and changes to the Milton's land use structure (discussed in BQ2) will respond to the anticipated growth.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principle 4, 11, and 12.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 1.3:

The new Official Plan should implement a balanced approach to growth by responding to provincial directions on growth and the future needs of the community, addressing residents' expectations and concerns and implementing the principles of complete community and sustainable development.

The new Official Plan must balance the need to ensure conformity to provincial policy directions and the way the community would like to live, work, and play in the future. Achieving this balanced approach to growth in Official Plan policy means:

- Directing a greater share of new development to built up areas to make better use of land, existing physical infrastructure, community infrastructure and human services.
- Establishing Town-wide appropriate intensification targets and designated greenfield density targets.
- Implementing phasing policies for intensification areas and new community and employment areas.
- Identifying where limited or no growth is anticipated.
- Encouraging sustainable forms of development.
- Building more compact, vibrant and complete communities with walkable neighbourhoods and a better mix of housing, employment, shopping and services.
- Providing direction on how to mitigate the impacts of development.
- Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the uniqueness of the Town, its neighbourhoods, rural lands, the escarpment, natural and heritage resources, etc.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 1, 8, and 10.

Big Question #2

BQ2: Establishing Milton's Future Land Use Structure

What does our future land use structure look like? What is the role of the Town Structure's components and how should they function in 2051?

Growing in Milton Policy Considerations for Big Question 2:

The following considerations have been identified as result of the above exploration of Big Question #2 for further discussion through We Make Milton:

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 2.1:

The new Official Plan should illustrate the physical make-up of the community's long-term structure for the municipality. The community structure could recognize components of the urban and rural environments that either already exist or is expected to emerge during the life of the plan.

For the overall geography of the Town, the new Official Plan should consider a holistic municipal structure, comprising the urban and rural systems. These systems are traversed by other networks including environmental, transportation, services, and social and economic community networks. Future land-use structure policies and schedules must support the community's long-term vision by providing high-level guidance for the equitable protection and enhancement of residents' health and well-being, the urban and rural lifestyles, economies, and environments that will be implemented through more detailed policy and mapping.

The municipal structure must also conform to provincial directions for building complete communities. The components of the high-level municipal structure and their goals and function should be the subject of public consultation to confirm the municipal framework in the new OP.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 2.2:

For the Urban Area, the new Official Plan should establish an urban structure and hierarchy of urban places with long-term policy outcomes, intentions and directions that will be foundational to planning for a complete, thriving and healthy community.

The purpose of the Municipal Urban Structure is to manage long-term conservation and development in the urban area. To achieve the overall community vision and specific outcomes, an integrated system and hierarchy of places, each with their own function, form, and requirements could be defined, while maintaining and enhancing the supporting environmental and community networks. The new Official Plan will establish an Urban Structure that could:

- Direct higher density development, including mixed uses and transit supportive land uses, to strategic growth areas and away from hazard lands.
- Support economic development and employment within the Town.
- Ensure development is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

The current Official Plan divides the urban area into “land use designations.” The new Official Plan could take a different approach by planning for the type of “place” that is envisioned (i.e. the Downtown Core, Uptown, MEV Innovation District, Mixed Use Centers, Employment Areas or Neighbourhoods).

The new Official Plan should plan for highly functional, well-integrated, and desirable places, and advance the local growth strategy. ‘Places’ are where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity, connection and purpose. New Official Plan policies will describe the role(s), form(s) and function(s) of each “Place type” that apply to the urban area over the long term to provide a variety of and choice of communities and destinations.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 2, 3, 7, 8, and 12.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 2.3:

The new Official Plan should ensure that the policies for approved secondary plans that cover stable built-out areas are consistent with and do not duplicate the Official Plan community goals, objectives and strategic policies.

The We Make Milton project represents an opportunity to advance a cohesive, integrated, less fragmented approach to secondary area planning, secondary plan policies and schedules, mainly those that cover stable built-out areas and are outdated. Where parent Official Plan policies can guide development for these areas, Secondary Plan policies could be streamlined and updated, including consolidation of definitions and policies, and removing significant repetition.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 11, and 12.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 2.4:

For the rural area, the new Official Plan must establish a local rural structure to provide places for businesses and amenities that serve the rural community while protecting the environment and natural resources.

The rural community has a distinct character as a result of its dispersed population, agricultural system, rural lands, hamlets and natural heritage system. The new Official Plan must confirm a future land use structure with supporting networks and policies that reflect the provincial policy direction and local input for rural lands, environment and natural resources, and meet the needs of rural residents and businesses.

A Rural Structure must identify and protect the agricultural land base, natural resources and rural areas in order to promote healthy rural communities and provide opportunities for appropriate economic development.

Overall, the policies could support a thriving and prosperous rural system.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 4, 7, 8, and 9.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 2.5:

The new Official Plan should develop legible and easy-to-understand text, schedules and figures that can assist the reader in understanding the plan’s land use directions and geographical references.

The current Official Plan is outdated. Over time, its policies, schedules and figures have become increasingly complex and convoluted, limiting its readability and effectiveness. The Town shall ensure that the new Official Plan reduces the need for duplication and that the text, schedules, appendices and figures can be easily used and interpreted by all. Generally, the new plan will be

more outcome-oriented. Policies will be honed to provide the specific directions required to achieve the desired community outcome.

In addition to the Official Plan being easier to understand, there may be opportunities for simplified language throughout the document to assist the reader in understanding to allow for greater engagement with all population groups.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 11 and 12.

Big Question #3

BQ3: Managing Growth within the Settlement Areas

How can the new Official Plan manage growth and provide a framework and guidance for where and how to intensify? What is our capacity for intensification?

Growing in Milton Policy Considerations for Big Question 3:

The following considerations have been identified as result of the above exploration of Big Question #3, for further discussion through We Make Milton:

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 3.1:

The new Official Plan must detail where and how the Town will grow within the urban area, integrating land uses and transportation and making efficient use of resources and infrastructure.

The new Official Plan must direct higher density transit supportive development, including a mix of uses to the Strategic Growth Areas and MTSA's in the Town.

The new Official Plan should confirm existing and planned focus areas and identify new ones. Within these Strategic Growth areas, it should establish the land uses, densities and built form typologies to accommodate population and employment growth.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 11 and 12.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 3.2:

The new Official Plan should provide direction to achieve a greater mix of housing choices, affordability and densities in proximity to services and amenities in strategic growth areas, existing neighbourhoods, and future community.

The new Official Plan must accommodate the majority of growth within its urban settlement area. By establishing a growth framework, the new Official Plan should prioritize where new development can be directed based on existing and planned infrastructure and service capacity, especially transit, water and wastewater, and local context. These focus areas can achieve a good mix of housing types and options in a more inclusive built form environment. A mix of uses, housing types and densities produces neighbourhoods that are more diverse. This increased population density and vibrancy support a broader range of services and jobs within a short walk or bike ride.

Strategic growth areas should be an important component of the growth management strategy. Specific directions in policy can help define and support the Town’s urban structure by linking these strategic growth areas and the urban design goals, objectives, and policies of the plan.

New policies could also prioritize increasing housing opportunities by adding gentle density and “missing middle” housing, where appropriate. As neighbourhoods continue to evolve, these housing options can have a positive impact on housing diversity and affordability, neighbourhood revitalization, and climate change adaptation.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 11 and 12.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 3.3:

The new Official Plan should guide opportunities for sustainable growth within the rural settlement areas (the hamlets) in order to ensure their long-term viability.

Although there is limited opportunities for growth in the hamlets due to the lack of available infrastructure capacity, the introduction of flexible policies to achieve additional housing units in our hamlets can contribute to housing affordability, sustain the vibrancy of the community, and help support local businesses and services. These policies must be balanced with the protection of the rural character, agricultural lands, and natural resources.

In addition to housing, the new Official Plan should recognize the rural culture and economy including the local businesses and services that are located in the rural areas. These businesses help to sustain the rural community, allowing residents to meet their daily needs. Appropriate and sensitive development that is compatible with the rural area in terms of scale, character, infrastructure capacity, and associated impacts on the enjoyment of the area could be encouraged.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 8, 9, 11 and 12.

Big Question #4

BQ4: Envisioning Growth and Promoting Good Development Practice

What will future growth look like in Milton? How can the new Official Plan accommodate growth in a manner that achieves a high quality of life and sense of place? How can we achieve more complete and healthy communities?

Growing in Milton Policy Considerations for Big Question 4:

The following considerations have been identified as result of the above exploration of Big Question #4 for further discussion through We Make Milton:

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 4.1:

The new Official Plan should establish direction in policy for the design and visual appearance of the built form typologies that will represent Milton’s urban environment over time, within the diversity of urban places and destinations.

The new Official Plan could function as a guide to placemaking, with policies that could inform the creation of destinations where people want to live, work, move, and play. They should support the preparation of plans and strategies promoting good quality urban environments, and public and private development that are well designed and can contribute to the sense of community and identity.

Policies should support patterns of growth and a mix of uses that will ultimately require less auto travel for everyday activities, and which encourage travel by transit, cycling, wheeling, and walking. As we grow and intensify, policies that sensitively integrate new intensification and infill development with existing neighbourhoods will be required.

Additionally, consideration should be given to policies that could result in buildings, neighbourhoods and communities that are designed to lower per capita greenhouse gas emissions, reduce people's exposure to dangerous climate-related extreme weather events, reduce disparities in climate-related health outcomes and advance social equity goals.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 2, 5, 6, 7, and 10.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 4.2:

The new Official Plan should promote a sense of place and interest by providing direction for the creation of memorable sites, buildings and public realm that people can connect and relate to.

Urban design and placemaking considers what community members feel as they experience or move through the urban environment.

As Milton continues to grow and intensify, thoughtful planning and urban design can create a network of public spaces that contribute to well-connected, walkable, safe and comfortable routes between origins and destinations throughout the Town.

To address these matters, policies in the new Official Plan could ensure that the enhancement of the public realm is a consideration of all new public and private development. Urban design policies for development, infill and intensification could be established to ensure that natural and built heritage resources, such as landmark buildings and green open spaces, streetscapes and view corridors be incorporated in the design of development as significant contributors to the overall sense of community.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11 and 12.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 4.3:

The new Official Plan should ensure the conservation and enhancement of character both in the rural and urban communities.

Character (as defined in the current Official Plan) means the aggregate of features that combined indicate the quality and nature of a particular area. The distinct features include built and natural attributes of an area. New Official Plan policies could include context-sensitive development criteria, consistent with the overall identifiable character of a place and integrated with the surrounding built and natural environment. The new Official Plan could encourage the protection of the existing or planned character at certain locations within the urban and rural areas that connects with the local history and nature.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, and 12.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 4.4:

The new Official Plan could promote sustainable community design and construction practice.

The new Official Plan could support the creation of more compact and connected communities to allow local access to jobs, services and amenities, including access to infrastructure such as cycling and transit facilities. By doing so, communities could be less auto-reliant, more socially, environmentally and economically sustainable, with better outcomes for human health and well-being.

New or enhanced policies could encourage the use of sustainable development guidelines, best management practices such as Green Development Standards (GDS), Low Impact Development (LID), climate mitigation, adaptation and resiliency.

Sustainable practices including: the adaptive re-use of buildings ; energy and water efficient design; green roofs; electric vehicle charging stations; on-site renewable energy generation; and nature based stormwater management solutions can result in both climate mitigation and adaptation benefits.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 8, 10 and 11.

Big Question #5

BQ5: Promoting Resource and Environmental Protection

How can the new Official Plan protect and enhance our natural resources and landscapes while balancing the need to accommodate growth in a safe, orderly and sensitive manner?

Policy Considerations for Big Question 5:

The following considerations have been identified as result of the above exploration of Big Question #5 for further discussion through We Make Milton:

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 5.1:

The new Official Plan must protect, improve, and enhance the natural heritage and water resources systems.

Protecting and enhancing the natural heritage and water resource systems is fundamental to human health and the resilience and livability of cities. Protecting these systems is important for climate change adaptation and mitigation. These systems also have the opportunity to improve resident quality of life by increasing physical activity, improving cardiovascular and respiratory health, preventing cancer and reducing stress.

Development has the potential to have a negative impact on the natural environment. The new Official Plan must ensure these natural systems remain connected, biodiverse and ecologically functional. The natural heritage system provides residents with access to nature for recreation, education and health benefits.

The new Official Plan must identify a natural heritage and water resources system and appropriate measures to protect, restore and enhance the natural environment. The natural heritage system and water resources system must be properly integrated within the urban and rural areas.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 8, and 10.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 5.2:

The new Official Plan must protect, enhance and support the agriculture system and rural community by protecting farmland, agri-food networks and edge planning at the intersection of the urban and rural areas.

Milton's agricultural system is comprised of its agricultural land base and the agri-food network of businesses, services and infrastructure that agricultural operations depend on. The Official Plan must continue to limit the permitted land uses in prime agricultural areas. Recognizing that agricultural related uses and on-farm diversified uses are important components of the agricultural system, Official Plan policies should provide criteria to ensure these uses are compatible with surrounding agricultural uses. Provincial policy directs municipalities to identify and mitigate impacts of development on the agri-food network using tools such as agricultural impact assessments when making land use or infrastructure planning decisions.

Official Plan policies can help direct land use toward the rural-urban fringe areas, which can protect agricultural lands from urban development. The new Official Plan could implement edge planning approaches under sustainable principles to avoid and/or mitigate the impacts of urbanization in rural-urban fringe areas. Near these rural-urban fringe areas, the new Official Plan could consider:

- Development proposals could utilize design measures such as subdivision layout, site layout, and the incorporation of buffers such as treed landscape strips or public pathways to mitigate conflicts between urban and rural uses.
- Agricultural operations that may result in noise, odours, dust and other potential nuisances resulting from normal farm practices and urban activities that may disrupt agricultural operations could be identified.
- Impact mitigation measures and planning principles could be established.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 8, 9 and 11.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 5.3:

The new Official Plan must make mineral aggregate resource available for use while mitigating and minimizing potential adverse effects from resource extraction.

Municipalities are required to identify and protect mineral aggregate resources for long-term use. The Official Plan could do this by including mapping to identify the location of accessible resource deposits and policies to protect the resources from development that would preclude or hinder new operations from being established and existing operations from continued use.

Mineral aggregate extraction needs to be undertaken in a manner that minimizes social, economic and environmental impacts. The new Official Plan policies should establish the requirements to mitigate potential impacts on the local community during the life of the operation.

Since the Official Plan is a long-term document, the policies should consider final rehabilitation of extraction sites. Once extraction is complete, final rehabilitation of the lands to accommodate future land uses that are compatible with the surroundings should be encouraged through policy.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 8, 11 and 12.

Big Question #6

BQ6: Delivering Infrastructure and Community Services

How can the new Official Plan support the efficient, fiscally responsible and sustainable delivery and use of community infrastructure and services?

Policy Considerations for Big Question 6:

The following considerations have been identified as result of the above exploration of Big Question #6 for further discussion through We Make Milton:

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 6.1:

The new Official Plan must ensure the equitable distribution of existing and future community infrastructure, public service facilities and institutional needs are planned for as part of future growth.

Infrastructure must meet the needs of Milton's communities as they grow and mature and making efficient use of existing and new infrastructure to support this goal is important.

Planning for infrastructure and public service facilities should be coordinated and integrated with land use planning and growth management to ensure the necessary foundations are available for local communities to grow. This means that there is a need to co-ordinate investment in infrastructure and services, to service future growth in ways that are fiscally sustainable and linked to decisions about how these systems are paid for and administered.

Phasing the provision of infrastructure and services is also important to ensure that these are in place early in the establishment of a new community.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 4, 8 and 11.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 6.2:

The new Official Plan should promote partnerships, co-location and shared use of facilities to contribute to equitably accessible and cost effective operations.

Official Plan policies should be coordinated across all long-range municipal plans, including land use, transportation, transit, and climate change strategy, asset management plans, and the long-range financial plan to ensure a strategic, harmonized approach.

In addition, policies should promote co-ordination with the region and adjacent municipalities as well as partnership/co-location opportunities with agencies and community-based organizations to support integrated delivery of infrastructure and services. This can result in higher levels of service, greater accessibility, and improved cost-effectiveness.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 4, 8, 11 and 12.

Growing in Milton Policy Consideration 6.3:

The new Official Plan should provide direction for the Town to adapt against the challenges of climate change and build a resilient infrastructure.

The Living in Milton Policy Considerations articulated the need for a town-wide approach, goals, and objectives regarding climate change and community resiliency. To mitigate the impact of urbanization, the new Official Plan must identify opportunities to reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions that ensure a fair process and outcome for all people.

The new Official Plan should consider the potential impacts changes in climate may have on the Town's infrastructure, address the application of mitigation and adaptation measures accordingly, and provide direction to build resiliency of our infrastructure. In this sense, policies should:

- Encourage the implementation of climate resilient building design measures to reduce the risk of flooding, extreme heat, and other natural hazards.
- Guide the planning and construction of cost-effective infrastructure that is durable, adaptive and resilient.
- Provide direction to minimize the impact of extreme heat events and the urban heat island effect in public areas.

In addition, advancing opportunities for innovative green infrastructure is critical to promoting the sustainable future of the Town and managing growth through implementing innovative approaches to managing run-off, stormwater management systems, bioswales, green walls and roofs, etc.

This consideration relates to Guiding Principles 8, and 10.

What's Next?

Stage 4: New Official Plan Drafting

The development of the Big Questions and Policy Considerations concludes Stage 3 of the new Official Plan project for Growing in Milton. When Stage 3 is complete for all four themes (living, moving, working, growing), the We Make Milton new Official Plan project will enter Stage 4: New Official Plan Drafting. Through the next phase of the project, the Policy Considerations that have been developed for each theme will be used as direction to form draft policies for the new Official Plan.

How to stay involved!

We will be looking for your feedback on the Policy Considerations identified for each Big Question and there will be a number of opportunities to do so:

1. All community members are encouraged to visit the [New Official Plan web page](#) to learn about the project and find updates/opportunities to provide input.
2. All of our We Make Milton reports are available on the [Town of Milton's website](#).
3. You can register for email notifications and we will let you know when future We Make Milton documents are available.
4. We are always interested in talking to stakeholders and community groups to learn more about what you deem important and valuable. If you would like to be part of our stakeholder committee, please contact our We Make Milton planning team.
5. If you have any other questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact our We Make Milton planning team.



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