

Meeting Notes

Community Information Session

Monday Sept. 16, 2013

6:30 pm

Cultural Centre - Theatre



Introduction provided by Glenn Pothier from GLPi. Glenn introduced the Mayor, members of Council and project team.

Councillor Johnson provided some introductory remarks as Chair of the Vision Georgetown Steering Committee.

A PowerPoint presentation on the Planning Context and an Overview of the Project components and timelines was delivered by Steve Burke, Manager of Planning Policy for the Town of Halton Hills and Nick McDonald of Meridian Planning Consultants.

Tara Buonpensiero, Senior Planner – Policy for the Town of Halton Hills provided an overview of the next steps, including the details of the next public event, a Visioning Session scheduled for Sat. Nov. 2, 2013 from 1:30pm to 4:30pm at the Gellert Recreation Centre.

Q & A Session:

Glenn facilitated the question and answer period. A panel of Nick McDonald (Meridian), John Linhardt (Director of Planning Development and Sustainability) and Steve Burke (Manager of Planning Policy) responded to the questions. Details of the question and answer period are as follows:

Question #1

Appreciate the need for an increase in population in Halton Hills of 20,000 and appreciates that the increase in population is not 40,000, but why is all the growth in Georgetown? What about Acton?

Response

The urban areas in Halton Hills are Georgetown, Acton and along the 401 Corridor. The 401 Corridor is to accommodate primarily employment uses, and because Acton is surrounded by the Provincial Greenbelt Plan, there is no opportunity to expand the Acton boundary to accommodate any growth. Therefore the greenfield growth has to be accommodated in Georgetown. (Note: The existing built-up areas of Acton and Georgetown will also accommodate some growth through intensification.)

Question #2

How was the mix of density determined?

Response

The % of housing types was determined based on the density that the province requires which is 50 residents and jobs per hectare. The density would not be met if only single detached dwellings were built on the subject lands. The mix was determined based on an equation that considers the number of people per household and the size of the lots.

Question #3

By developing higher density, the property value is less and therefore there is less taxes paid on these properties.

Response

As part of the study, we will be working through the density. By integrating different housing types we do not concentrate one type of residential unit.

Question #4

What is the status of the appeals to Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 38 (ROPA)?

Response

There were 41 appeals to ROPA No. 38. Through mediation the growth allocation and location of growth to Halton Hills has been confirmed for the most part. The only matters left to be addressed through an Ontario Municipal Board hearing pertaining to development of urban lands in Halton Hills is the phasing of development, the Regional Natural Heritage System and Transportation matters related to the GTA West Environmental Assessment. The hearing is scheduled to commence in October 2013 and anticipated to be completed by June of 2014.

Question #5

How do the 2041 numbers impact this project?

Response

The Province recently released Amendment No. 2 to the Growth Plan which allocates population and employment to upper tier and single tier municipalities to the year 2041. No work has been completed to determine how these new forecasted numbers will be allocated within Halton Region. The Vision Georgetown study is not impacted in any way by the release of the new numbers.

Question #6

Is there a by-law or a mechanism available to ensure this process proceeds through the election process, if there are changes to Council?

Response

There is no need for a by-law to ensure the Vision Georgetown project proceeds. This study is a 3 year study anticipated to be completed in 2016.

Question #7

Does the study consider woodlots and larger trees?

Response

The Region of Halton has identified a Regional Natural Heritage System which identified areas to be protected using a systems approach, which not only identified woodlands, wetlands and other environmental features, but also buffers to those areas and linkages between them. Through the environmental work being done through the Vision Georgetown Study, these areas will be looked at in more detail. The details of the environmental features will be discussed at future meetings.

Question #8

Will seniors housing be considered?

Response

Through the study we will be looking at a wide range of housing types including medium density, which is typically the type of housing geared to seniors.

Question #9

There are a large number of rural residential homes outside of the study area on well water. Will studies be done to ensure the new development does not harm the wells?

Response

Studies are done on the wells, but they are usually done later on in the planning process, at the detailed subdivision stage (i.e. as a condition of draft plan of subdivision approval the proponent would have to address any impacts on adjacent private wells).

Question #10

Traffic along Trafalgar Road is already busy. Will there be entrances to the new area off of Trafalgar Road?

Response

Yes, it is fully expected that there will be mid-block entrances off of Trafalgar Road into the study area; however, locations have not been determined at this time.

Question #11

Why does development stop at 10 Side Road and not continue down to 5 Side Road to save money.

Response

Council wants to maintain a moderate pace of growth in the Town. The area selected is close to the existing urban area, and has a firm boundary of 10 Side Road. Other options were considered but this area was preferred.

Question #12

Focus of development is on cars and this new development could double the number of cars. Has anyone considered a rail system? The full day GO Train service was removed. We need all day train service before 2021.

Response

Noted

Question #13

Will development of this area be forward thinking including considering urban agriculture and siting to take advantage of solar opportunities etc.

Response

Yes

Question #14

Who is paying? The Province?

Response

The cost of the project is \$1 million. The cost is being front ended by the developers group and they may potentially be credited back the money through development charge credits.

Question #15

Is the whole development revenue neutral and therefore not result in a tax increase?

Response

Through the Sustainable Halton process, Hemson Consulting was retained to do a fiscal analysis and that study concluded that a 20,000 population increase as well as the allocated employment lands would have a positive fiscal benefit to the Town of Halton Hills. As part of the Vision Georgetown project, a more detailed fiscal assessment will be completed.

Question #16

Can the dates for the transportation improvements shown on the presentation be accelerated to deal with gridlock?

Response

The dates are based on the Region's Transportation Master Plan and are based on a forecast to 2031, and included the planned growth on the Vision Georgetown lands. They review the dates annually when completing their capital budget. Therefore, any changes to the timing of improvements would be up to Regional Council to decide.

Question #17

Are there special consultation opportunities for landowners that back onto the study area?

Response

Yes, Town staff and the project team would be happy to meet with you. You can also contact your

Councillor.

Question #18

Wants to understand what woodlots are protected. Previously work was done on the number of trees and the diameter of trees in the area.

Response

The Region of Halton conducted a Significant Woodlands Study, the details of which were included in ROPA 38 where the Region of Halton identified a Regional Natural Heritage System. The Town is now looking at the environmental features within the study area to a more refined level of detail.

Question #19

Which side of the road will the 8th Line main sewer line be constructed on?

Response

That has not been determined at this time.

Question #20

Is the big pipe coming? If so when?

Response

Yes – development of this area will be on lake based services and the services will be in place to develop these lands starting in 2021.

Question #21

How are you going to put 20,000 new people in this area and reduce dependency on cars?

Response

The provision of new employment areas may assist in this goal, because it will enable people to live and work in the same area. Although the planning exercise will not look specifically at the provision of transit, it will be designed in a transit friendly way so that it will be easy to implement transit in the future.

Question #22

Is the Winston Churchill By-pass identified in the presentation directly tied to this project?

Response

No, it is not tied directly, but the road system must be looked at as a whole.

PLENARY FEEDBACK SESSION:

Glenn facilitated the plenary session, the details of which are as follows:

Question #1 – What characteristics contribute to a great neighbourhood?

Attendees were encouraged to answer this question on their comment form and submit it to Town staff.

Question #2 – What communities are you aware of that have been well planned? What makes them so?

Responses

- The Beaches – low density with a maximum of 4 storey apartments with rental units on top, compact, small businesses close by, apartments above businesses on the main street.
- Rockwood – the creek, greenery and the small town feel.
- Glen Williams – large lots, walk to shops, small town feel, safe, houses not right at the street.
- Santa Fe, New Mexico

2a) What makes up the 'small town feel'?

Responses

- Not sterile;
- Diversity in types of homes;
- Space between homes;
- Different depths;
- Lots of trees;
- Public gardens;
- In Georgetown there are pockets of really great areas;
- Diversity in housing form, varying setbacks.

Question #3 – What are the positive attributes of Georgetown today – what are the strengths on which we want to build.

Responses

- Small enough to know people when you see them at the mall
- Small size and control over the size of the Town, in contrast to Milton
- The Glen (Glen Williams) – stays true to nature
- Neighbourhoods are structured to be neighbourhoods (example Munroe Circle – no through traffic). People can be neighbours without traffic flowing through
- Should limit the height of fences
- The country feel – keep out high rises and transit and keep forests and agricultural lands
- Independently owned small businesses, and hope that more will be in the new area
- Quick response from the Mayor and Council to public requests
- Maintain successful Georgetown downtown and farmers market to bring in local agriculture
- Be restrictive on where to put commercial – keep it in one part of the neighbourhood and not have commercial everywhere
- Quiet, low traffic residential neighbourhoods

Question #4

In developing this community, what do we want to avoid?

Responses

- Becoming a Milton or Brampton
 - Building houses first and then soft infrastructure later
 - To get rid of all existing trees – can we use existing trees to line streets?
 - Flat urban sprawl – make it look full
 - An area that is disconnected with the landscape. We should build using the natural contours of the land
 - Altering intermittent streams
 - High rise apartment buildings – Santa Fe has height restrictions which prevent high-rises
 - Overcrowding in existing schools and recreation centres. We need a new high school in a timely fashion
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- Low paying commercial/service jobs

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- New community that doesn't provide things for the youth to do
 - Putting larger buildings on the ground later. Put them in first and design them to reflect Halton Hills.

Question #5 – Complete this sentence: “I will know that this new community in Georgetown has been well designed if...”

Attendees were encouraged to answer this question on their comment form and submit it to Town staff.

Comment forms are to be submitted to the Town by October 18, 2013.

Notes prepared by:

TOWN OF HALTON HILLS

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Any errors or omissions in the above notes should be reported to the Author immediately