

## **Staff Report 2022-0247**

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Meeting Date: June 21, 2022

Subject: Strategic Growth Direction for the Town of Caledon

Submitted By: Antonietta Minichillo, Chief Planner/Director of Planning and Andrew Pearce, Director of Engineering Services

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Growth Management and Phasing Plan, including a Fiscal Impact Study, be added as a new Capital Project in the amount of \$400,000 funded \$244,520 from the DC Studies Reserve and \$155,480 from the Tax Funded Capital Contingency Reserve for the work outlined in Staff Report 2022-0247;

That staff be directed to communicate with stakeholders and partners that applications will be processed in accordance with Staff Report 2022-0247; and

That staff be directed to bring forward a report in July identifying those applications which require Council direction and identifying Secondary Plans to be initiated within the approved ROPA 30 2031 settlement area boundary.

### **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- Caledon is welcoming and preparing for an unprecedented amount of growth in our community and it is important to do so responsibly, strategically and while delivering strong customer service to our industry partners.
- The Official Plan is actively being advanced to establish a policy framework that better enables the Town to accommodate growth until 2051.
- The Town has seen an increase of privately-led Official Plan Amendments for site-specific development or proposed secondary plans within Caledon. Development pressures have led to an increase in requests for the use of Ministerial Zoning Orders that work largely outside of the municipal planning process.
- To proactively manage growth, staff are proposing to:
  - Continue to comprehensively review all applications deemed complete;
  - Prioritize growth and initiate Secondary Plans in the 2031 settlement boundary, including the Bolton Residential Expansion Study (BRES) area;
  - Undertake a Town-Wide Growth Management and Phasing Plan including a Fiscal Impact assessment to establish development phasing.
- Proactive planning through Secondary Plans allows for the Town to provide appropriate infrastructure and services, fiscal responsibility and acquire the right amount of land in the right location for all needs including recreation, parks, trails, fire and operational needs.

- Establishing a clear planning and servicing framework facilitates seamless implementation of growth and aids in timely service delivery to the community builders.
- Caledon will not be able to effectively plan Caledon until we take a more proactive approach to growth management.
- Town staff see this growth as an opportunity to plan communities which are sustainable, complete and well-designed neighbourhoods. This is an exciting time in Caledon's history, where planners together with our partners, can plan distinct and vibrant communities and the Town can be at the forefront of leading-edge planning.

## DISCUSSION

### Background

Every municipality has an Official Plan that provides an overall vision, goals and objectives for the growth and development, protection of resources and construction of infrastructure for sustainable communities.

The Region of Peel's recently adopted Official Plan and the Town's draft Official Plan directs growth to an area identified as the Settlement Area Boundary Expansion (SABE) to 2051, being approximately 4,400 ha (10,872.6 ac) in size. The SABE is generally located across the southern portion of the Town (south of the proposed GTA West Corridor) and surrounding Bolton.

In the Region's New Official Plan, the SABE has a total of 4,400 ha (10,872.6 ac) consisting of:

- 2,870 ha (7,019.9 ac) of Community Area
- 1,530 ha (3,780.7 ac) of Employment Area

The new Region of Peel Official Plan, adopted by Regional Council on April 28, 2022, requires that all greenfield areas (areas currently outside of existing settlement areas, but included in the SABE) be implemented by the Town through secondary plans. Building on Regional direction and our own needs assessment, the Town's new draft Official Plan will require Secondary Plans be Town-led.

Secondary Plans can be best understood as a second layer to the Town-wide Official Plan. They set out detailed land use policies to guide growth and development for our communities and provide a framework for appropriate development including, the vision and character for an area with land uses, urban design, street and block pattern; adequate municipal servicing and infrastructure and to determine the appropriate mix, location and intensity of certain uses.

### Current Conditions

Since 2019, the Town has and continues to receive an increasing number of privately-led Official Plan Amendments for site-specific development or secondary plans. Development pressures have also led to an increase in requests for the use of Ministerial Zoning Orders (MZOs).

Town staff have been monitoring privately-initiated Official Plan Amendments and Secondary Plans and approximately:

- 24% (679.8 ha) of SABE Community Area lands have initiated the development approvals process (i.e. Pre-Consultation (DART) Meeting), with 9% (261.7 ha) of the total SABE Community Area lands having submitted formal development applications
- 25% (375.1 ha) of SABE Employment Area lands have initiated the development approvals process (i.e. Pre-Consultation (DART) Meeting), with 20% (304.7 ha) of the total SABE Employment Area lands having submitted formal development applications

If the Town continues to grow at this pace, based on development applications received within the last year, our 2051 allocation will be utilized by approximately 2026 for employment lands and 2031 for community lands. In other words, our employment lands and community lands will be primarily planned and accounted for within 5 years and 10 years, respectively. This pace is unreasonable as it does not allow Caledon to plan Caledon. As a result, the Town is receiving applications that are not yielding positive community outcomes:

- Applications are not located adjacent to existing settlement areas, resulting in a “leapfrog” effect to growth.
- Appropriate infrastructure (i.e. water, wastewater) and transportation networks are not in place to service the development.
- Community needs such as community centres, parks, firehalls, libraries, and works yards, are not addressed creating situations where the Town is not well equipped to serve the community.
- The diversity of employment and housing needs of Caledon are not being considered and strategies for co-location and clustering of supporting employment uses are being missed. For instance, there continues to be a significant developer-led interest for large-scale warehousing, where the Town has identified needs for a range of employment types with higher job densities.
- The lack of proper planning results in longer processing and implementation times for development applications and the need for more resources per application.
- Planning and development is undertaken on a reactive instead of a proactive approach, putting staff in a challenging position with a limited ability to meet the needs of the community for services and related infrastructure.

## **Growing Strategically**

Town staff recommend taking the following actions to grow strategically. As part of this plan, communication will occur with our industry partner through the Peel Chapter of BILD.

### Town-Wide Growth Management and Phasing Plan

To provide clear guidance and direction on where, when and how to grow, the Town requires the completion of a Growth Management and Phasing Plan, including a Fiscal Impact Study. This important work is a critical step to advance strategic, cohesive and fiscally responsible growth.

This Plan will:

- Establish criteria to evaluate and prioritize areas for growth, leveraging the policy framework of the Town's draft Official Plan, Caledon's Growth Concept and proposed phasing policies;
- Consider and provide recommendations on infrastructure capacity (i.e. water, wastewater), transportation networks, public transit, and community supportive infrastructure needs;
- Include a Fiscal Impact Study and will consider the Town's evolving tax base and financial obligations/requirements/state; and,
- Consider appropriate community and employment lands phasing to 2051 within Caledon, to provide a phasing plan with clear direction on where and how to grow.

A sample of potential criteria has been included in Schedule 'A', attached.

Town staff are requesting Council direction to initiate this Plan in the summer of 2022 so that the recommendations can be brought forward in the new term of Council.

### Town-Led Secondary Plans

Going forward, Secondary Plans will be led by the Town. Town staff are excited by the opportunity to lead the planning process in Caledon with all agency and industry partners as equals around the table. This will result in a more comprehensive, creative and community driven outcome. The Town-led Secondary Plan process is how the *Planning Act* intends for planning matters to unfold and is normal practice. This exciting time provides an opportunity for the Town to be proactive, complete proper land use planning and allows the Town to be innovative while partnering with the development community, stakeholder groups and external agencies to create leading edge communities.

### Applications Deemed 'Complete'

Development applications which have been submitted, deemed complete, circulated and in many cases, have had public meetings, will be continued to be processed. There is still a need to elevate these applications and in order to do so staff will implement new terms of references, peer reviews, design charettes and other tools, as deemed appropriate, to ensure that Caledon plans Caledon. As per the usual process, a Staff Report with a

recommendation for either approval or refusal, will be brought forward for Committee and Council consideration.

### Other Applications

Where an application for urban uses outside of a settlement area is submitted without an approved secondary plan, the Town will deem the application “incomplete” and bring forward a recommendation report to Council to refuse the application. This approach aligns with the Regional Official Plan direction on this matter and helps the Town undertake comprehensive planning. This will ensure appropriate servicing, fiscal responsibility and other public infrastructure (such as parks, community centres, roads, trails, libraries, schools, firehalls, works yards), as well as providing for a strong, thriving local economy. As per normal practice, Council’s decision on these applications is subject to appeal.

Even with implementation of this approach, the Town will still grow significantly in the immediate future. The Town currently has over 300 development applications under review, proposing over 6,700 residential units and over 3,000,000 square feet of employment use. In addition, the Town will initiate the Secondary Planning process for those lands approved by Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 30 (ROPA 30) for the Bolton Residential Expansion Study to 2031. This will add approximately 279.58 ha (690.9 ac) of land for development of residential and employment land uses (in addition to those applications in process).

A number of development applications which will be impacted by this report. Staff will bring forward a subsequent report to the Planning and Development Committee in July which will speak to these details.

### **Collective Benefits**

This report represents the interests and needs of all departments from across the organization. There are a number of benefits to taking this approach:

- When development is phased in over time communities’ benefit from well-planned infrastructure resulting in high-quality services. Proactive planning allows for the Town to acquire the right amount of land in the right location for all needs including recreation, parks, trails, fire and operational needs to serve the community. A strategy can then be developed to acquire that land and maximize efficiencies.
- For Fire and Emergency Services specifically, the Town is not achieving the minimum standard. Growth and development has and will continue to impact the service level standard if not considered at the outset. Planning for and locating firehalls is critical for fire response times.
- Better planning and coordination of our road and infrastructure projects and centralized (shared) infrastructure.
- Improved outcomes as it relates to the protection and enhancement of the Town’s natural environment and ability to combat the impacts of climate change.

- Phasing plans ensure growth happens in a financially sustainable manner ensuring that development pays for development to the greatest extent possible.
- Positions the Town to capitalize on the pattern of growth that is predicted for the industrial and knowledge-based economy, in particular, for those businesses and enterprises focused on entrepreneurship and innovation.
- Allow the Town to focus on attracting higher density employment opportunities to ensure the Town's employment targets are achieved.

### Final Thoughts

With the exponential growth targeted for Caledon, it is critical that the Town prepares to grow responsibly and get it right. Many municipalities have experienced significant growing pains that can be both learned from and avoided. This time is an exciting one, where Team Caledon can plan and deliver leading-edge communities.

The SABE is designed to accommodate growth projected to 2051 and having such a high percentage of that area already accounted for is concerning. The growth is happening too quickly, sporadically around the Town, and not in manner that allows for good planning to unfold. Development should also be subject to the Town's new policy framework coming forward in our Official Plan and related studies which help guide growth.

Given the changing planning environment, significant growth pressures, and in order for Caledon to plan Caledon, the Town will need to invest in building capacity in the organization. The recommendations in this report will ensure staff will be responsive to our community builders, deliver on principles of smart growth and well-designed communities, and leverage tools available to grow innovatively and sustainably both fiscally and physically.

### Next Steps:

- 1) Town staff will prepare and issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Growth Management and Phasing Plan, including a Fiscal Impact assessment. Upon the contract being awarded, staff will work with the consultant to complete the Plan by Q2 2023.
- 2) Planning staff will communicate with stakeholders and partners that applications will be processed in accordance with this report.
- 3) Planning staff will ensure that appropriate implementing policies are included in the Town's New Official Plan.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In order to complete the studies outlined in this Staff Report additional funding estimated at \$400,000 is required for the Growth Management and Phasing Plan which includes a Fiscal Impact Study done in conjunction with the Region of Peel. Staff recommend that in order to complete the studies detailed in this report that a new Capital Project be

established in the amount of \$400,000, funded \$244,520 from the DC Studies Reserve and \$155,480 from the Tax Funded Capital Contingency Reserve. The Town will be able to recover \$114,000 of Tax funding from Development Charges once the Town's Development Charges Background Study is updated for population growth past 2031 since this growth study has a post period benefit in accordance with the Development Charges Act. This will result in \$358,400 of the study costs being funded from Development Charges. The current uncommitted balance in the Tax Funded Capital Contingency Reserve is \$7,616,949.

## **COUNCIL WORK PLAN**

**Sustainable Growth:** Advance proactive infrastructure development solutions for growth management; Pursue intensification in concert with accessibility and public transit, Bolton GO Station and other transit hubs

**Connected Community:** Discourage non-agricultural storage on rural land; Preserve heritage and natural areas

**Improved Service Delivery:** Improve roads and long-term planning that maintain road standards; Plan for improved stormwater management to reduce drainage issues; Build and maintain parks and green spaces; Plan and fund recreation infrastructure that meets the changing needs of the community; Improve and innovate business processes for better customer service and service delivery

**Good Governance:** Balance financial planning for both operating and capital budgets; push for policies that better cover the true cost of growth; manage reasonable community expectations

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Schedule A: Sample Prioritization Criteria