

Milton studies Omagh heritage

MAINTAINING CHARACTER

By Leah Wong

With **Halton Region** planning to realign one of the regional roads running through Milton, the town is taking the opportunity to study the possibility of re-designating lands to bring cohesion to a historic village.

To better understand the heritage value of this village, last week council approved a heritage conservation district study of Omagh. Located around Britannia Road and Fourth Line, Omagh is the only one of Milton's villages from the former Trafalgar Township that has retained much of its original character.

"Omagh is kind of like the lost, forgotten township [in Milton]," Milton Ward 1 councillor **Robert Duvall** told *NRU*. "A lot of these little areas lose their character in a 30-year time period, but this one has kept a lot of its original buildings."

None of the buildings in the study area presently have heritage designation, but about half are included on the town's list of heritage properties. As part of the study staff will expand the inventory and evaluate what building features contribute to the village's character.

Halton Region plans to re-align Britannia Road, which currently runs through the village, to a by-pass south of Omagh, avoiding the village. Britannia Road

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Natural asset management

RECOGNIZING VALUE

By Leah Wong

Recognizing the value of its natural capital, such as forests, grasslands and wetlands, enables municipalities to understand how natural assets can support grey infrastructure to reduce the impacts of climate change.

An 18-month pilot project being conducted in the Town of Oakville and four other Canadian municipalities—three in B.C. and another Ontario municipality yet to be announced—seeks to create a municipal toolkit to guide the incorporation of natural capital into asset management plans.

"[Municipalities] need to look at how they actually [include] natural assets and manage natural assets in municipal plans," **Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation** program director **Shelley Petrie** told *NRU*. "For grey infrastructure there are whole programs built for how municipalities do that. In the case of natural capital, nothing like that exists for municipalities."

Oakville's participation in the project was approved by council earlier this year and will be led by senior staff from finance, development engineering and environmental departments, as well as Conservation Halton.

"We need to record the value of these assets to be able to protect them for future generations," Oakville mayor **Rob Burton** said in a press release. "The policies

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UPCOMING DATES

SEPTEMBER 6

Markham Development Services Committee, 9:00 a.m.

Hamilton Planning Committee, 9:30 a.m.

Clarington General Government Committee, 9:30 a.m.

Caledon Planning & Development Committee, 10:00 a.m.

Richmond Hill Committee of the Whole, 4:30 p.m.

Scugog Council, 6:30 p.m.

Aurora General Committee, 7:00 p.m.

Whitchurch-Stouffville Council, 7:00 p.m.

Ajax Community Affairs & Planning Committee, 7:00 p.m.

Whitby Planning & Development Committee, 7:00 p.m.

Oakville Planning & Development Council, 7:00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 7

Mississauga General Committee, 9:00 a.m.

Durham Region Committee of the Whole, 9:00 a.m.

Hamilton General Issues Committee, 9:30 a.m.

Halton Region Planning & Public Works Committee, 9:30 a.m.

East Gwillimbury Committee of the Whole, 10:00 a.m.

Vaughan Committee of the Whole, 1:00 p.m.

East Gwillimbury Council, 3:00 p.m.

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GREATER TORONTO AREA EDITION

Councillors call for limit on OMB jurisdiction

REFORM MINDED

By Geordie Gordon

Calling for Ontario Municipal Board reform ahead of a provincial consultation paper expected this fall, a group of Ontario councillors is again asking the province to limit the jurisdiction of the OMB to questions of law.

Aurora councillor **Tom Mrakas** launched the initiative earlier this year when he put forward a motion to Aurora council regarding the importance of the province addressing issues concerning both the scope and power of the OMB. Along with councillors from Burlington, Whitby, Welland, Kitchener, Guelph, Georgina, Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Newmarket, Uxbridge, Cambridge and Markham, Mrakas participated in a summit in May that resulted recommendations released yesterday.

First and foremost among the recommendations is the request that when an official plan is appealed, the OMB be required to uphold the municipal council's decision, unless the decision is found to be contrary to legislation.

Mrakas told *NRU* that the councillors anticipate a fall release of the provincial consultation paper. The group wants to make its position known to the province ahead of the release of the paper so that its recommendation can be taken into account at an early stage in the process.

"[The idea] was to get everyone together, all on the same page, and define that recommendation that we can all agree on,

present it to the minister and the province before they initiate their consultation papers so therefore they can take what we do into account... We're hopeful that [the province does] take a hard and serious look at the recommendation that we put forward," he said.

The group agreed that that recent changes to the *Planning Act*, brought about by the *Smart Growth for Our Communities Act*, including limits on official plan appeals within the first two years of adoption, were a good first step, but do not go far enough in limiting appeals.

A consensus was reached among group members that appeals of council decisions should be strictly limited. Some argued that appeals should not be allowed unless "proponents can demonstrate that the proposed changes to the official plan or zoning by-law fulfill a changing community need or in some way better the community." Under those circumstances, if a council found that an application did not improve the community, it would be rejected without the ability to appeal.

The councillors also expressed concern that the current legislative process does not appropriately reflect the complexity of the planning process in most municipalities. They said that decision timelines of 180 days for development proposals is inadequate, saying "[It] is not good planning. This is ineffective and inefficient public planning." **NRU**

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CITY OF TORONTO • GREATER TORONTO

Brampton studies impact of health centre

LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITY

By **Geordie Gordon**

Although not expected to open until early next year, the Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health and Wellness is already generating interest in the development industry. Keen to leverage the added economic value of the new centre, the city is exploring opportunities to attract millennial workers and create linkages with other institutions.

Brampton central area planner **Paul Aldunate** says that when the Peel Memorial Hospital was torn down in 2012 professional offices and employment uses began to leave the area. With **William Osler Health System's** new health centre now under construction, some of those uses are starting to return, together with nearby residential development.

“From a residential perspective, we’ve already got a couple of applications before us for high-rise residential development within walking distance of the new Peel Memorial. I’m pretty sure that a lot of them are looking to take advantage of the momentum that the hospital is bringing, and the potential jobs and employment that is going to be generated by the hospital,” he said.

To better understand the economic development potential of the Peel Memorial Centre, the city has commissioned an economic development opportunity study of the area between Etobicoke Creek and Highway 410 along the Queen Street corridor. Aldunate says that the interest in residential and office development would not exist without the new Peel Memorial Centre so the city wants to ensure it is able to capture the value added by the new centre.

“[The study] will give us some answers in terms of what we can do as a city to try and capture that value, [and] define the role of the local government effecting the incremental economic growth,” he said.



Rendering of William Osler Health System's Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health and Wellness

SOURCE/ARCHITECT: RTKL ARCHITECTS CANADA, DIAMOND SCHMITT ARCHITECTS



Location of Peel Memorial Centre and economic development study area.

SOURCE: CITY OF BRAMPTON

The study, which is being carried out by **MDB Insight**, is intended to measure the economic impact of the health centre, define the roles of local and provincial governments in effecting incremental economic growth, and formulate an implementation plan for attracting targeted investment and capitalizing on the Peel Memorial Centre. The study is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.

The consultants have been directed to figure out how to attract and retain millennial workers in Brampton—a younger generation of workers that may just be starting out.

“[Millennials] have these new innovative ideas, how do we capture that? ... Now that we have the hospital coming, and [I’ve] had a few people contact me, but how do you

do it? I think there’s an interest for the younger generation to not necessarily move to Toronto... [Peel Memorial Centre] can have an impact on providing education service or institutions [and jobs] in the area,” said Aldunate. Part of the consultants’ work is to identify potential linkages with a college or university, for example.

“We have a population that’s going to reach 800,000. Right now it’s 500,000 and change, and we don’t have a university. We have a very young population, with a lot of students who go elsewhere to get their education. If you can create those type of environments for them where they can learn here within the city, [offer] those institutions, I think that’s great for the city, it’s great for our youth,” he said.

Once completed the first phase of the Peel Memorial Centre is expected to bring 750 to 850 direct jobs. There is also the potential for a second and third phase of the project, which would result in between 3,000 and 5,000 jobs, both direct and indirect, Aldunate says.

“We just got an application in for a

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LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITY

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seven-storey medical office building within a couple of blocks of the hospital,” Aldunate says. “There’s going to be some linkages, you might see some doctors, some practitioners work out of both [hospital and office] buildings if they can.”

Part of the development interest in the Peel Memorial Centre is that it is based on a new model of health care delivery. While the Peel Memorial Hospital had been a traditional hospital

with overnight beds and emergency services, the new centre is focussed on chronic and preventative care and will include services such as urgent care, day surgery, high-tech diagnostics, community health, mental health and addiction services.

“There’s not going to be any overnight beds. The idea is to have people come in for the treatments and then leave the same day,” Aldunate said. [nru](#)

RECOGNIZING VALUE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and practices we develop here with this innovative project will help other communities protect their natural heritage too.”

Oakville and most of the other pilot municipalities will focus on stormwater conveyance. Petrie noted that municipalities are experiencing the effects of climate change on their stormwater systems and how to prevent flooding continues to be a concern.

A project team, comprising **Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, Sustainable Prosperity, David Suzuki Foundation, Town of Gibsons, B.C. and Brooke and Associates**, is supporting the pilot project. It will help the municipalities identify their natural assets and calculate the economic value of these assets. The municipalities will explore various scenarios to determine how these natural assets can help mitigate stormwater flows. These scenarios will then help to flesh out the associated capital and operating costs of using natural assets and to assess whether they would be more beneficial than an engineered option.

“[The pilot] will create some real municipal examples here in Canada, which we lack at this moment in time,” said Petrie. “We want to be able to have more examples and have municipal staff and councils that have experience [in natural asset management] and can help move the issue forward.”

The Town of Gibson, B.C., is a Canadian example of a municipality that has already adopted this approach for its infrastructure planning. Petrie said the town developed scenarios to decide whether to build a treatment plant for its water reservoir.

“When they went through the scenario they found that it would cost them less to invest in the environment to keep a high quality drinking water source than it was to build a treatment plant,” said Petrie. [nru](#)

She predicts municipalities will see similar results with investments in natural assets as a way to manage stormwater.

“Natural systems can be much more adept at being able to absorb the peak flows you get from extreme storms.” [nru](#)



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MAINTAINING CHARACTER

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will then be linked to the road system of the proposed subdivisions to the north or turned into a cul-de-sac.

One of the challenges in Omagh is that the north and south halves of the village have different zoning—the northern half is in Milton’s urban area while the southern half is in the rural area.

“Different zoning, official plan and regional official plan policies apply to either side of Britannia Road,” Milton development review director **Christian Lupis** said in an email to *NRU*. “This does not make it possible to plan for the future of the village in a comprehensive fashion.”

Lupis added that the re-alignment of Britannia Road and the HCD study create an opportunity for the town to explore official plan policy and zoning changes that would allow the agricultural lands within the village to be re-designated for residential use. Having both parts of the village designated residential will allow Omagh to be planned as a complete community spanning both sides of the road.

Duvall said he would like the character of the village maintained but agrees that the re-designation of the southern part would offer an opportunity to create a more cohesive design.

“When you’re driving around town you see a lot of buildings that have been torn down or that we’ve lost to fire, usually because they’ve been lost and forgotten,” said Duvall. “This [study] is our opportunity to make sure that doesn’t happen [in Omagh].”

Omagh is located within the town’s Boyne Survey Secondary Plan, which is targeted for the third phase of residential growth in Milton. Under the secondary plan, Lupis said that no development can occur in the Omagh area until the HCD study has been completed.

The HCD study will address cultural and natural heritage features. There is a creek and natural heritage system running through the village, requiring the town to assess the extent of the floodplain within the village in collaboration with **Conservation Halton**.

The town will launch a public consultation process in the fall to solicit feedback from residents about the HCD study. Staff will report to council on its recommendations about the heritage value of the area and any potential re-designation in spring 2017. [nru](#)



Above: Omagh Church of Christ

SOURCE: TOWN OF MILTON



Right: Omagh School bell

SOURCE: TOWN OF MILTON

Below: House in Omagh HCD study area

SOURCE: TOWN OF MILTON



GTA OMB NEWS

Whitby driveway variances refused

In an August 9 decision, board member **Laurie Bruce** dismissed two appeals by **Hoosain Suleman** against the **Town of Whitby** committee of adjustment, which had refused one minor variance application and added site alternation conditions to the other. Suleman sought variances for 113 and 116 Hunter Street to allow second driveways on each of the properties.

The board originally scheduled a January 6 hearing for the 116 Hunter Street driveway variance appeal but adjourned the hearing due to the illness of Suleman’s planning witness. At that time the board was advised that Suleman had a second property at 113 Hunter Street, for which he was seeking the same driveway variance, that would be coming before the board. The board agreed to hear the appeals together.

Planner **Steve Edwards (GHD)** provided evidence on behalf of Suleman in support of the appeal. He testified the applications meet the intent of the zoning by-law as the frontages are only modestly smaller than the required 25 metres for a second driveway. He said that given the two homes have accessory basement dwelling units, two driveways are necessary to prevent extra cars from parking on the street.



113 Hunter Street, Town of Whitby

Planner **John McDermott (McDermott & Associates)** provided evidence on behalf of neighbours **Alison and Brian Jimmo** in opposition to the appeal. He testified that the 24.08-metre frontage of the lots is insufficient to accommodate two driveways, given the need for drainage swales and other associated setbacks necessary to comply with zoning requirements. He said a frontage of at least 28.75 metres would be required to accommodate the two proposed driveways on each lot.

The board was persuaded by McDermott’s planning evidence and dismissed the appeals.

Solicitors involved in this decision were **Christopher Goldson (Christopher Goldson Barrister & Solicitor)** representing Hoosain Suleman and **David White (Devry Smith Frank)** representing Alison and Brian Jimmo. [See OMB Case Nos. PL150856/PL151163.] [nru](#)



116 Hunter Street. Town of Whitby

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