

Town of Milton

Council-Staff Work Plan 2020-2023



Planning for Growth



Increasing Revenue Potential



Community Attractiveness and Competitiveness



Service Innovation

Table of Contents

Message from the Mayor 3

Message from the Chief Administrative Officer 4

Executive Summary..... 5

Desired Future State for the Town of Milton 6

Defining the Challenge: A Matter of Scale 7

 Focus Area #1: Planning for Growth..... 8

 Focus Area #2: Increasing Revenue Potential 9

 Focus Area #3: Community Attractiveness and Competitiveness..... 10

 Focus Area #4: Service Innovation..... 11

Acknowledgements 12

Methodology 13

Appendix 1: Future Vision for Milton 14

Appendix 2: Challenges and Opportunities 16

Appendix 3: Employee Engagement Summary 18

Appendix 4: Community Feedback Summary 20

Appendix 5: Pandemic Analysis..... 22

Message from the Mayor

On behalf of Town Council, we are pleased to present the Town of Milton's 2020-2023 Council-Staff Work Plan.

We have a long-term vision for the future of Milton. It is a future where Milton has emerged stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic as a healthy, vibrant community and thriving business network that is a leading economic engine within Ontario. We envision a future where there are abundant economic opportunities for our residents and educational opportunities for our youth. We envision a community that is a leader when it comes to sustainability, diversity and inclusion.

Our 2020-2023 Council-Staff Work Plan sets clear priorities to make this vision a reality. We are investing in customer service and innovation, and mobilizing through various strategies to support growth in various sectors of our economy. We are focused on securing postsecondary opportunities at the Milton Education Village and Innovation Centre. We continue to work with federal and provincial officials to advocate for Milton's fair share of investment. We are following public health directives to deliver our valued municipal services in a way that prioritizes health and safety for our residents and employees. We are securing Milton as a complete community.

Now, more than ever, we know that uncertainty is the only thing that is certain. We will remain proactive and adapt our strategies as new realities unfold. We will continue to deliver the services that matter to residents and ensure the financial health of our community. Above all, we will listen to our local residents and businesses and, together with our employees, we will continue to ensure Milton is a great place to work and raise a family. Please visit our website at www.milton.ca to follow our progress and get involved.

Gordon Krantz
Mayor



Message from the Chief Administrative Officer

The Town of Milton is a municipal organization that is adaptive and flexible, and capitalizes on change. We are thinking smarter about the way we scale our business to adapt to unprecedented levels of growth in Milton. We are driving that change rather than reacting to it.

We are focused on innovation. The Town of Milton is an agile, responsive organization and a municipal leader in financial management. From accelerating digital service delivery and providing customers with efficient, safe, accessible options, to automating business processes, we are committed to building an organization that supports the community and adapts and succeeds in the wake of extraordinary change.

We are fostering a local economy that competes on a global stage. Working collaboratively with our partners and business community, we are completing the Milton Education Village and Innovation Centre that establishes Milton's strong position in the innovation corridor. We are keeping pace with increasing demands for supply chain and logistics space and working with prospective employers to understand their needs for investment, growth and expansion in a post-pandemic world.

We are planning a community with exceptional quality of life. As we welcome more and more residents to Milton, The Town of Milton is committed to their environmental stewardship for the generations to come through sustainability initiatives and mitigation of climate change impacts. We plan to minimize Milton's environmental footprint and work to ensure new and existing neighbourhoods are supported with infrastructure and community amenities.

I would like to thank the outstanding team of employees at the Town of Milton, whose feedback and ideas have been integral to the development of the Council-Staff Work Plan. The commitment of our employees to our community and the resilience they have demonstrated in defining our new normal has been nothing short of exceptional. We are prioritizing employee engagement, empowering our teams with the tools they need and building a strong culture of customer service along the way.

With leadership and guidance from Town Council, we are excited to advance this work in the coming years. I am confident that together we will succeed.

Andrew Siltala
Chief Administrative Officer



Executive Summary

The Town of Milton is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada. It is truly a place of possibility, located in a world-class technology cluster with access to outstanding natural assets and community infrastructure, and home to a highly skilled workforce. Its family-oriented neighbourhoods, location and labour pool makes the community one of the top places for real estate investment in the province.

While increased growth is exciting, high levels of growth also present challenges for the municipality. Land use and infrastructure planning must occur in tandem with rapid levels of development. More employment land is required to accommodate local opportunities and diversify the property tax base. Service requests and expectations are increasing based on residents' experiences with adjacent large urban municipalities. At the same time, the Town has limited resources to deliver and respond to the increased service demand.

Because growth is driving Milton's challenges and opportunities, the Town is setting priorities to position the municipality for success during what is expected to be a continued period of high growth. This Council-Staff Work Plan sets a road map for how the Town of Milton may continue to accommodate growth while ensuring the financial sustainability of the organization and the community. Together with staff, Members of Council have set four goals:

1. We will plan and build our community to accommodate growth while managing new service and infrastructure demands and balancing taxpayer affordability.
2. We will achieve sustainable new revenue streams.
3. We will improve Milton's attractiveness for prospective talent and investment.
4. We will deliver services that address increased expectations and service requests and manage the need for new investment.

Under each of these goals, Council has established both general strategies and specific priorities for the current term. These priorities emphasize sound community and financial planning, increased employment, accelerated automation, strong community connections and recognition of employees as the foundation for exceptional service.

The objective of the Council-Staff Work Plan is to address the specific needs that Council is hearing from the community and build a collective set of priorities that will guide Town budgets and activities to 2023, and support transition to a new term of Council. While not initially contemplated as part of the Council-Staff Work Plan, over the course of this project new realities and challenges emerged for the municipal sector as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the Town of Milton has considered initiatives that will help the community emerge stronger from COVID-19.



Desired Future State for the Town of Milton

Early in the work planning process, Members of Council and the Strategic Management Team described the type of community they see as successful in two decades. Common themes during these discussions included:

- A balanced, complete community where residents can live, work and play.
- A post-secondary partnership that is fully operational in the Milton Education Village and Innovation Centre.
- A community that is affordable for residents.
- Infrastructure that is in a good state of repair across neighbourhoods.
- Thriving businesses in new office space and business parks.
- A vibrant, safe, and healthy community with adequate schools, hospitals, parks, and innovative recreational facilities.
- A community that is a sustainability leader with walkable neighbourhoods and green technologies.
- Strong municipal services and high resident satisfaction.

Members of Council and the Strategic Management Team also described their views on how Milton might achieve the desired future state. These discussions emphasized a careful balance between the need to invest in community amenities, services and facilities, and maintaining reasonable tax increases, at or near the rate of inflation.

"If we are always talking about scarcity that's what we will get. We need to be in the business of abundance."

"If we focus too much on low taxes, we could find ourselves in a race to the bottom. People are willing to pay more if they trust they will get good services."

"We can't spend our way to prosperity. We need to distinguish our wants from our needs and serve the best interests of the majority."

"We need to get the municipality on a financially sustainable path."



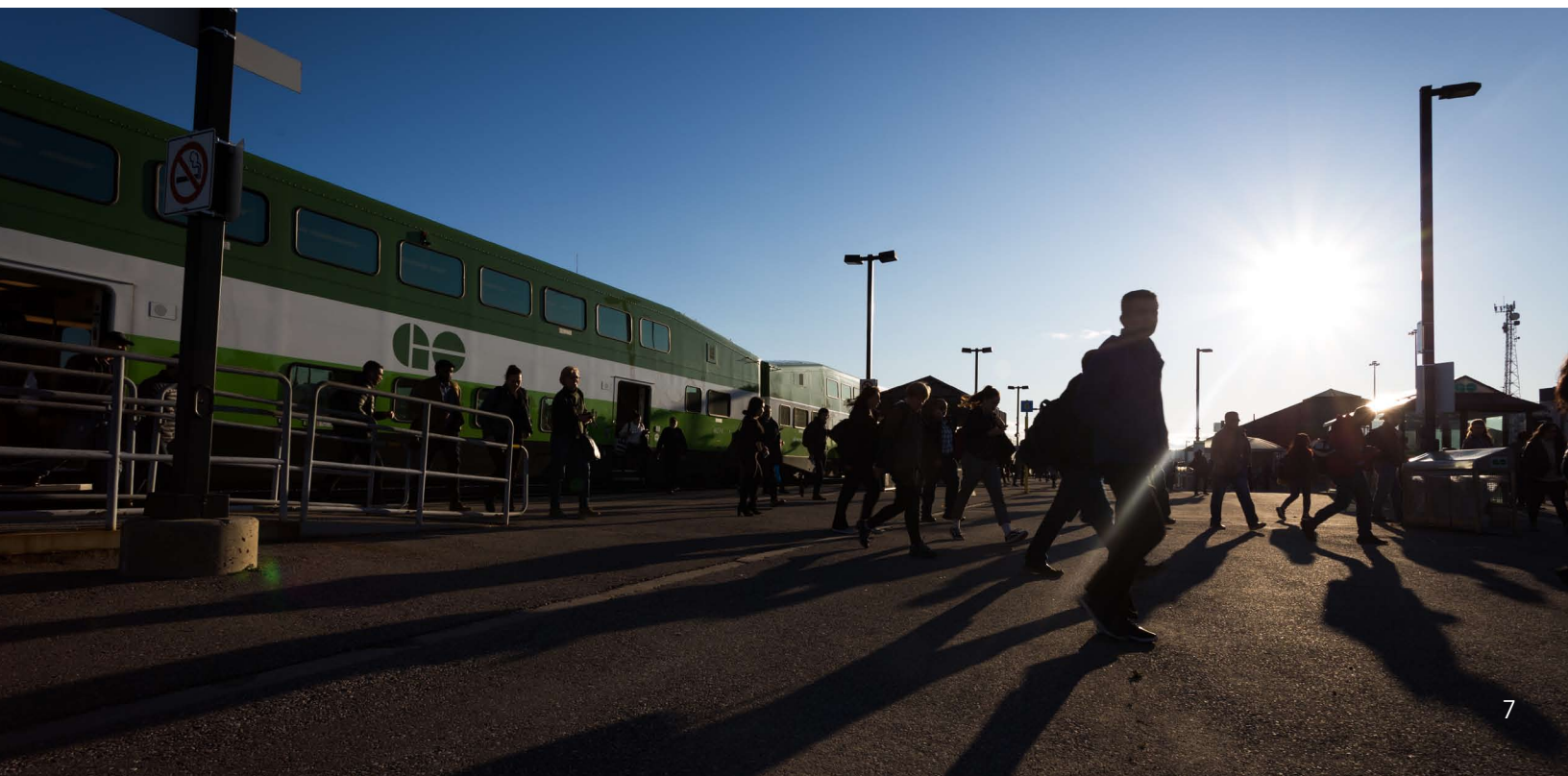
Defining the Challenge: A Matter of Scale

Milton is a high growth community, among the fastest growing communities in the province and the sixth fastest growing community in Canada. In interviews with Members of Council and the Strategic Management Team, many individuals cited growth as both a challenge and an opportunity, noting “growing pains” and “a period of transition” for the Town that requires careful planning in order to “get it right.” Because growth is driving Milton’s challenges and opportunities, the Town is setting priorities in a manner that positions the municipality for success over what is expected to be a continued period of high growth.

Scale refers to the capacity to cope and perform under increasing workloads. In a municipal setting, the concept of scale can be considered as the challenge of accommodating growth in a manner that is financially sustainable over a long time horizon. In this context, central questions for the Town of Milton include:

- **Planning for Growth:** How might we plan and build our community to accommodate growth while managing new service and infrastructure demands and balancing taxpayer affordability?
- **Increasing Revenue Potential:** How might we uncover sustainable new revenue streams such as building a stronger commercial and industrial tax base and securing stable, predictable support from governments and partners?
- **Community Attractiveness and Competitiveness:** How might we improve our attractiveness for talent and investment compared to neighbours and other comparator communities?
- **Service Innovation:** How might we deliver services in a manner that satisfies increased expectations and service requests while managing the need for incremental investment?

These questions form the basis for the Town of Milton’s Council-Staff Work Plan.





Focus Area #1: Planning for Growth

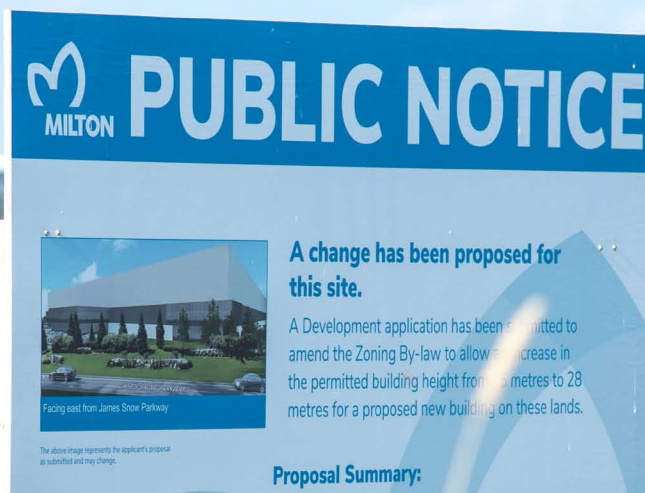
Goal: We will plan and build our community to accommodate growth while managing new service and infrastructure demands and balancing taxpayer affordability.

General Strategies:

- Plan for mid-density and high-density, mixed use neighbourhoods to make the most efficient use of land and municipal services and provide affordable options for residents.
- Work with developers and provide policies that encourage sustainability in neighbourhood development.
- Encourage greater infill and neighbourhood intensification.
- Provide transportation options that alleviate congestion, reduce driving and mitigate demands on municipal infrastructure.
- Complete a robust asset management plan and evidence-based approach to the repair, rehabilitation and replacement of municipal assets that considers full lifecycle costs.
- Create long-term capital forecasts and budget planning to ensure municipal infrastructure remains in a good state of repair.
- To the greatest extent possible, ensure services are in place (roads, schools, hospitals) as residents move into new neighbourhoods, advocating to other levels of government where necessary.

2020-2023 Priorities:

- Asset Management Plan
- New Official Plan
- Mobility Hub Study
- Secondary Plans, phased according to market conditions:
 - Trafalgar Secondary Plan
 - Agerton Secondary Plan
 - Milton Education Village Secondary Plan
 - Britannia Secondary Plan
 - Derry Green Corporate Business Park (implementation)
- Government Relations Strategy:
 - School and hospital planning
 - GO Transit advocacy
 - Access available funding programs





Focus Area #2: Increasing Revenue Potential

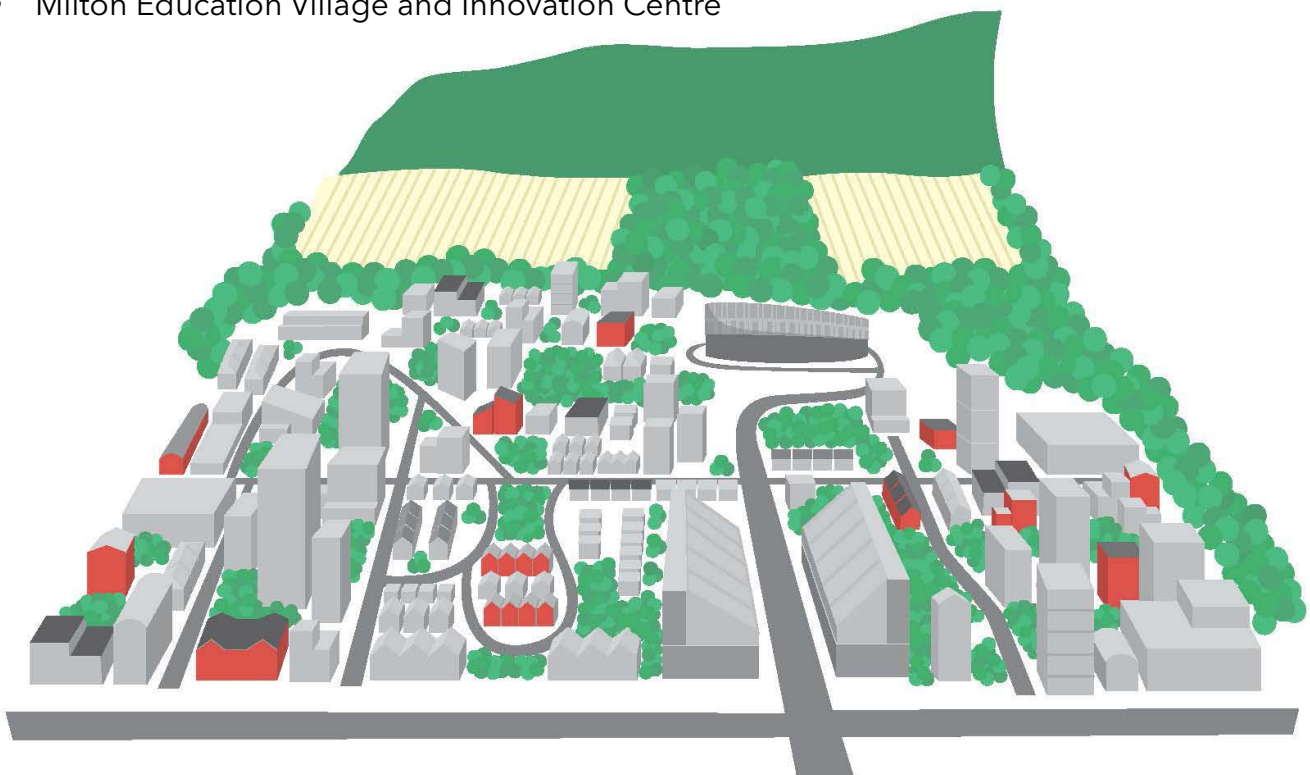
Goal: We will achieve sustainable new revenue streams.

General Strategies:

- Create a balanced commercial and industrial tax base by:
 - Securing and enhancing competitive employment lands.
 - Economic development that facilitates the retention, expansion and attraction of business.
 - Mid to high density, mixed use development to accommodate an increase in office space.
- Continue to leverage user fees that are competitive and market-balanced to reduce service subsidies through the tax base.
- Explore increased opportunities for sponsorships, partnerships and revenue generation with municipal assets.
- Explore new technologies in municipal facilities to generate revenue.
- Leverage advocacy efforts of municipal and industry associations and participate directly where appropriate in order to ensure federal and provincial policies and program are responsive to municipal needs, including advocacy for new and expanded municipal revenue sources.
- Identify and pursue funding program opportunities to maximize Milton's share of available grant assistance.

2020-2023 Priorities:

- Advance projects that diversify tax base and accommodate increased employment:
 - Trafalgar Corridor
 - Derry Green Business Park
 - Agerton Employment Area
 - Increased local office space through mixed use development
- Economic Development Strategy
- Milton Education Village and Innovation Centre





Focus Area #3: Community Attractiveness and Competitiveness

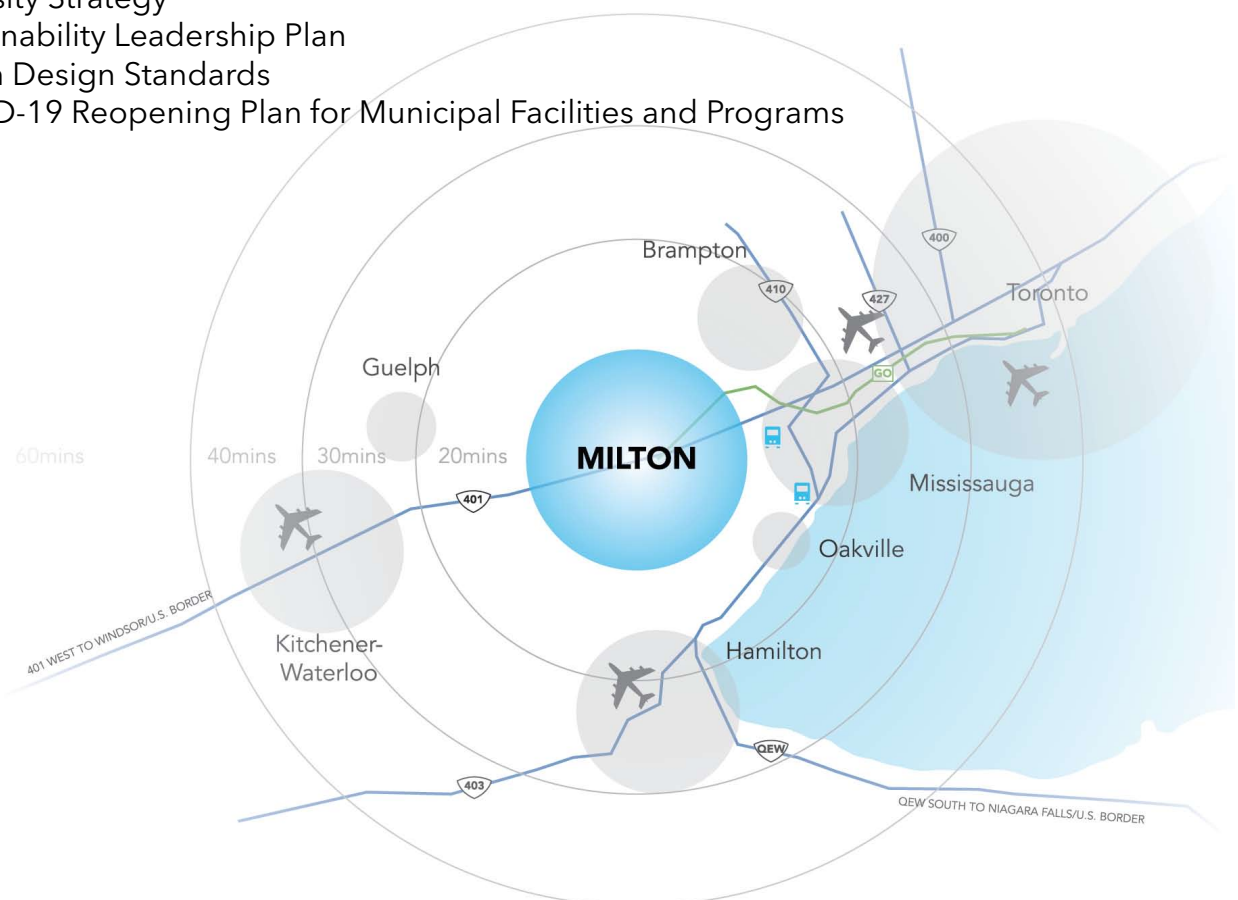
Goal: We will improve Milton's attractiveness for prospective talent and investment.

General Strategies:

- Secure a post-secondary presence in Milton and increased education and youth opportunities.
- Provide innovative recreational facilities and programming.
- Provide quality and accessible parks and trails.
- Create attractive public spaces and programming to create vibrant gathering spaces.
- Develop programs and strategies to attract more professionals to the community.
- Increase available office space and housing choices.
- Develop a large-scale transit strategy in partnership with neighbouring municipalities, Halton Region, Government of Ontario and Metrolinx.
- Celebrate diversity and promote both inclusion and equity within the organization and community.
- Demonstrate leadership in sustainability.
- Increase community access to municipal programs, facilities and services according to public health directives.
- Attract quality retail outlets.

2020-2023 Priorities:

- Milton Education Village and Innovation Centre
- Integrated Transit Strategy (includes local transit, municipal partnerships and GO Transit integration)
- Diversity Strategy
- Sustainability Leadership Plan
- Urban Design Standards
- COVID-19 Reopening Plan for Municipal Facilities and Programs





Focus Area #4: Service Innovation

Goal: We will deliver services that address increased expectations and service requests and manage the need for new investment.

General Strategies:

- Invest in employee engagement to foster a strong customer service culture.
- Provide training and development that builds a customer-first approach across the organization.
- Investigate opportunities to modernize or automate processes that are outdated or subject to high service volumes.
- Explore integrated technology platforms that improve automation or self-serve options for customers.
- Engage external firms in objective service delivery assessments.
- Collect feedback from residents and businesses on their service priorities.
- Explore service delivery partnerships with neighbouring municipalities and/or local community partners.
- Build and enhance data and information to assist Council and staff in evidence-based decision making.
- Prioritize multi-use facilities and partnerships to realize efficiencies.

2020-2023 Priorities:

- Customer Service Strategy and External Communications
- People Strategy and Internal Communications
- Digital Service Delivery Strategy



Acknowledgements

The Council-Staff Work Plan involved contributions and collaboration from many individuals.

Thank you to Town of Milton employees who provided feedback during the work planning process. From discussions at the employee lunchtime event, to online survey and post card results, every single idea was reviewed and considered. Clear themes emerged regarding resources, flexibility, business processes, service delivery and communication, and the organization is committed to continuing to advance this work through initiatives such as the People Strategy.

Thank you to residents and businesses in Milton who have been engaged with the Town in municipal initiatives over the past year. From discussions with local Councillors, to feedback in the “We Make Milton” campaign, to the annual budget survey, to more recent conversations regarding COVID-19 response and recovery, these perspectives were included in the work planning process.

Thank you to the Strategic Management Team for thoughtful feedback, ideas and guidance. In the wake of a global pandemic, the team remained future focused and committed to leading a responsive, agile organization that prioritizes the health and safety of employees and customers.

Thank you to the Town of Milton Council for its leadership and collaboration. Collectively, the Mayor and Councillors spoke with tens of thousands of people during the 2018 election and continue to hear from local residents and businesses every day. These conversations have formed the basis for priorities contained within this Work Plan.



Methodology

The process for developing this Plan involved seven phases, as identified below:

Phase 1 - Building the Foundation (February 17 to March 2)

The purpose of Phase 1 was to better understand individual views of Council and the Strategic Management Team on their future vision of success and priorities that need to be addressed. This phase involved reviewing key Town documents, individual interviews with each Member of Council and each member of the Strategic Management Team.

Phase 2- Developing the Decision-Making Framework (March 2 to March 23)

The purpose of Phase 2 was to bring Council and the Strategic Management Team together to review the results of individual discussions and develop a decision making framework for setting priorities. This phase involved a Council workshop to decide on overarching goals and preliminary brainstorming on priorities that will most effectively move Milton toward these goals.

Phase 3 - Employee Engagement (March 16 to March 30)

The purpose of Phase 3 was to hear the views of employees - the people who are on the front lines, serving residents and businesses every day. Employees were invited to provide their views through post cards, an online survey and an in-person event with the organization's leaders on March 11. Feedback was summarized and presented to the Strategic Management Team and Council.

Phase 4 - Review Community Feedback (March 30 to April 6)

The purpose of Phase 4 was to leverage feedback and data obtained from residents and local businesses during the development of recent plans, studies and budgets. Feedback was summarized and presented to the Strategic Management Team and Council.

Phase 5 - Assessing COVID-19 Implications (May 27 - June 12)

The purpose of Phase 5 was to revisit the initial strategic framework in light of implications resulting from COVID-19. This phase included review of financial, service delivery, workforce and local economic and community impacts to provide additional considerations for priorities within the Work Plan.

Phase 6 - Determining Priorities (June 12 to June 28)

The purpose of Phase 6 was to reconvene with Council and the Strategic Management Team to review results obtained through the consultation process and develop consensus around priorities for the current term.

Phase 7 - Final Approval (July 20)

In Phase 7 the Council-Staff Work Plan was finalized and presented to Council for approval.

Appendix 1: Future Vision for Milton

Interview Results with Members of Council

Phase 1 of the work planning process involved individual telephone interviews with each Member of Council. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain individual views from elected officials on a desired future state for the Town of Milton. Members of Council provided the below feedback during these discussions in February 2020.

Question: What does success look like for Milton in 2022?
"We've gone beyond buzzwords and have collectively defined what we're working toward."
"We have a strategic vision in place and agreement on how much we are willing to pay to achieve it."
"We are proactively budgeting for the facilities and infrastructure that we need."
"Ground has been broken for a new post-secondary institution."
"There has been an increase in the number of businesses."
"We've made progress on the Trafalgar Corridor."
"A new Official Plan is in place."
"Britannia Road has been widened."
"We have successfully said NO to CN Intermodal."
"We have a visible advocacy program with provincial and federal governments."
"We are on a fiscally sustainable path."
"Core services reviews have uncovered efficiencies."
"We are moving toward a state of the art transit system with regional partners."
"We have determined how the Town can be leaders in sustainability and climate change."
"Council has access to information that will drive evidence-based decision making."
"We are encouraging tourism in rural areas."
"There is respect for heritage areas."
"We are listening to youth and what they need from our community."

Question: What does success look like for Milton in 2040?

"Milton Education Village and Innovation Centre is fully operational with Laurier University and Conestoga College."

"Milton residents have access to strong GO transit service."

"We are focused on our economy, supporting opportunities in technology including green technology."

"There are abundant employment opportunities and we have enabled this through increased office space and employment land."

"We have achieved higher densities in major nodes and corridors and continue to build up over time."

"Our growth is supported with timely delivery of infrastructure and amenities like schools and hospitals."

"Infrastructure is in a great state of repair across all neighbourhoods."

"Milton is an affordable place to live, with reasonable tax increases and a variety of housing options."

"We deliver great services that respond to our community."

"We are recognized leaders in sustainability and climate change."

"Every house has a park within walking distance."

"We create more opportunities for youth."

"We have line of sight to demographic changes and are supporting our community as residents age."

"We are changemakers and innovators."

"Milton is a vibrant, safe and healthy community, with a range of activities."

"We build innovative recreational facilities."

"Milton retains a strong sense of community."

Appendix 2: Challenges and Opportunities

Discussions with Senior Administrative Leaders

Phase 1 of the work planning process involved individual interviews with each member of the Strategic Management Team, the senior administrative leadership group for the Town of Milton. The purpose of these interviews was to understand operating pressures faced within each department and potential opportunities to improve the way the Town serves the community. Members of the Strategic Management Team provided the following feedback during these discussions in February 2020.

Question: What are the biggest challenges and pressures the administration faces in serving Milton?

- Rapid community growth challenges the corporation to maintain levels of service without additional resources.
 - Increasing volumes for services.
 - Increasing expectations and pressures on service levels.
 - Lowest taxes in the GTA.
 - Lower staffing levels.
 - Increasingly difficult to find efficiencies and service level reductions that would maintain taxes at the rate of inflation.
- Ensuring staff actions are addressing the collective will of Council.
 - Consensus on direction and willingness to pay.
- Planning for infrastructure renewal.
- Provincial tools and resources to assist Milton and other rapidly growing municipalities in the GTA.
 - Ample notice and consultation for major legislative and program changes.
- Building and maintaining a strong corporate culture.
 - Delivering on what employees indicated matters most to them in the development of the People Strategy.
 - Internal communication that addresses needs of part-time staff and those without Town email accounts.
- Corporation is outgrowing manual processes and falling behind other communities.



Question: What are some of the biggest opportunities to better serve Milton?

- Transformative community projects.
 - Milton Education Village and Innovation Centre, and partnerships with Laurier and Conestoga.
 - Addressing demand for office space.
 - Trafalgar Corridor and new GO station
 - Britannia Secondary Plan
 - Derry Green Business Park
 - New Official Plan
- Opportunity to build a strong, customer-service focused culture through high employee engagement.
 - People Strategy provides a road-map for moving forward.
 - Town is attracting enthusiastic employees.
- Innovation in service delivery.
 - Relying on non-traditional approaches to scale service delivery at the Town (for example, technology rather than increased bureaucracy).
 - Satisfying increasing resident demand for online and self-service options.
 - Expediting development processes through peer review alternatives.
 - Greater inter-municipal cooperation (for example, integrated transit solutions).
 - Greater community partnerships (for example, with school boards for provision of recreational services).
 - Process mapping.
 - Increased automation (for example, time and attendance systems).
 - Understanding opportunities for increased efficiency through core service reviews.
- Increased financial sustainability through increasing commercial and industrial development.
- Asset management planning and budgeting for long-term infrastructure needs.
- Engaged, highly educated community.
- Greater ability to invest in community and transform service delivery because Milton has the lowest taxes and more tax room than competitors.
- Achieving a greater understanding of shared Council objectives through the Council-Staff Work Plan initiative.



Appendix 3: Employee Engagement Summary

Phase 3 of the work planning process involved employee consultations with staff across the organization at all levels, from inside workers to operations staff, firefighters, management and employees across various Town facilities.

The employee engagement campaign involved the following tactics:

- An employee engagement kick-off event was held on March 11, 2020 over the lunch hour at the Sherwood Community Centre, led by the CAO and members of the Strategic Management Team.
- Postcard-style feedback forms were available at the kickoff event.
- Postcard forms were available at various municipal facilities from March 11 through March 30, 2020.
- An online survey link was sent to all administrative Town of Milton email accounts.

Both the survey and the postcard tool provided four questions as a prompt for employee feedback:

1. Do you have an idea that would improve the way we deliver services?
2. What is something the Town of Milton could do in the next three years to manage our growth and be more sustainable?
3. What could we do to improve your work at the Town of Milton?
4. What would make you more likely to recommend the Town of Milton as an employer?

A total of 104 responses were received from Town of Milton employees. Of these responses, 63 were received through the postcard method and 41 were received through the online survey.

Common themes that emerged through this feedback included:

Staffing: The majority of the comments related to staffing levels within the organization. Respondents indicated that community growth has resulted in an increase in the volume in service requests. There are also increasing demands associated with service expectations from new residents who are accustomed to higher service levels found in big cities. Respondents noted that, while they are passionate about their roles and want to serve the community, it is becoming increasingly difficult to meet expectations as resources are “spread too thin.”

Benefits and Work Environment: In terms of the work environment, respondents valued an open, honest and flexible workplace culture. Internal communication was cited as a gap in the organization - staff value meaning in their work and wish to connect their individual roles to the overall purpose of the Town of Milton. Respondents also requested more opportunities to collaborate across divisions and departments and break down organizational silos. Recognition and benefits were also important to respondents and, while there were a few mentions of competitive compensation, most comments in this category included: flexible work arrangements, fitness programs, mentorship opportunities, benefits coverage and increased appreciation and recognition, particularly for part-time staff.

Business Processes: Respondents who offered suggestions related to business processes expressed opportunity to streamline existing processes through standardization, automation and technology. Payroll systems, scheduling and records management were identified as areas of need. Respondents also identified opportunities to streamline the development process, such as providing more straightforward, consolidated information online, reducing the back-and-forth created through incomplete applications, and standardizing policy positions, interpretations and approaches across management and with Halton Region.

Service Innovation: The majority of respondents indicated that the Town's greatest opportunity to innovate in service delivery is through increased online and self-serve options for residents. These respondents indicated there is an interest in these options from a young community demographic and online service delivery would reduce pressure on traditional service delivery channels. Respondents also suggested creating a comprehensive, consolidated knowledge base and enhanced training for Customer Service Representatives and other front line staff to provide access to a robust, accurate source of information to respond to a variety of inquiries from customers. Increased proactive external communication would also reduce incoming inquiries. Lastly, there is a need to identify core services and determine service levels to clarify expectations and plan resources accordingly.

Infrastructure Planning and Development: Comments related to infrastructure planning and development emphasized the need for proactive and long-term planning to manage growth and ensure community sustainability into the future. Extra care must be taken to ensure new development stands the test of time, is of a high calibre, and contributes to community sustainability. Respondents expressed excitement over a post-secondary presence in Milton and noted that arts and culture will be important to ensure Milton develops a unique identity and community soul. Some respondents expressed frustration with increasing congestion and traffic that is making road maintenance more difficult.



Appendix 4: Community Feedback Summary

In 2019 the Town of Milton conducted significant community engagement campaigns. The largest campaigns were the “We Make Milton” campaign as part of the development of the Town’s new Official Plan and a budget survey. During telephone interviews earlier in the work planning process, Members of Council identified issues that most commonly arise in their discussions with residents. The community input received through these channels has been reviewed and summarized as an input for the development of the Council-Staff Work Plan.

We Make Milton Campaign (Official Plan)

As part of the development of a new Official Plan for the Town, in 2019 Milton undertook a comprehensive community engagement campaign with over 400 participants and more than 900 engagements. The campaign involved social media comments, in-person meetings and Mayor’s Breakfast, an online crowd-sourced engagement platform, emails and staff engagement.

The most common themes cited throughout the engagement process included:

Accessibility and Connectivity (22 per cent of comments): Related to accessibility and connectivity, many of the comments pertained to active transportation, including cycling infrastructure, uninterrupted trail connectivity, and pedestrian friendly design and infrastructure. Several respondents identified pedestrian access to the GO station as a challenge and suggested that a pathway from Nipissing Road would be beneficial to improve access and promote active transportation to the site.

Parks and Recreation (16 per cent of comments): Related to parks and recreation, participants requested accommodation of additional activities such as splash pads, outdoor fitness infrastructure, basketball, pickleball, cricket, and an outdoor ice rink. In general, comments valued local parks, requested additional neighbourhood parks, and praised trails and local conservation areas.

Commercial and Retail Needs (11 per cent of comments): Related to commercial and retail needs, participants valued the restaurants and seasonal market downtown, and expressed the need for a greater variety of retail stores and boutiques. Participants in certain neighbourhoods expressed the need for retail closer to their homes in the form of grocery stores, gas stations and neighbourhood plazas. Several participants expressed the need for new and expanded shopping centres.

Transportation Planning (10 per cent of comments): Related to transportation planning, comments referenced frustration with increased traffic congestion and increased risk for motorist safety, offering specific locations for improvement. Comments also called for increased attention to pedestrian safety and walkability, and increased attention to traffic in local neighbourhoods where children are at play. Increased road maintenance was also cited as a need in certain locations.

Amenities and Facilities (10 per cent of comments): While feedback related to amenities and facilities varied, examples of comments included community gardens, new public libraries, schools, and an indoor farmers market. Comments included praise for existing libraries, schools and the local fairgrounds.

Budget Survey

In advance of the 2020 Budget Call Report, the Town of Milton engaged Nanos Research to undertake a public survey in 2019. The methodology involved a random telephone survey with 402 participants and an online survey with 415 participants.

Highlights from the survey results indicate:

- 60 per cent of participants in the telephone survey and 44 per cent of the online survey felt they receive good to very good value for their tax dollars.
- Participants were divided between increasing taxes to increase or maintain service levels or cutting services to maintain or decrease current levels of taxation.¹
- The vast majority of participants feel it is important or somewhat important to save for future infrastructure replacement (91 per cent of telephone participants and 93 per cent of online participants).

When asked to identify the level of investment in each service area, participants noted that the current level of investment should be maintained or increased in every service area. For services associated with the road network and economic development, more than 50 per cent of participants felt that levels of investment should be increased.

¹ It should be noted that while half of participants in the budget survey felt that services should be decreased to maintain or reduce taxation levels, no guidance was offered on service areas with opportunities to reduce investment.



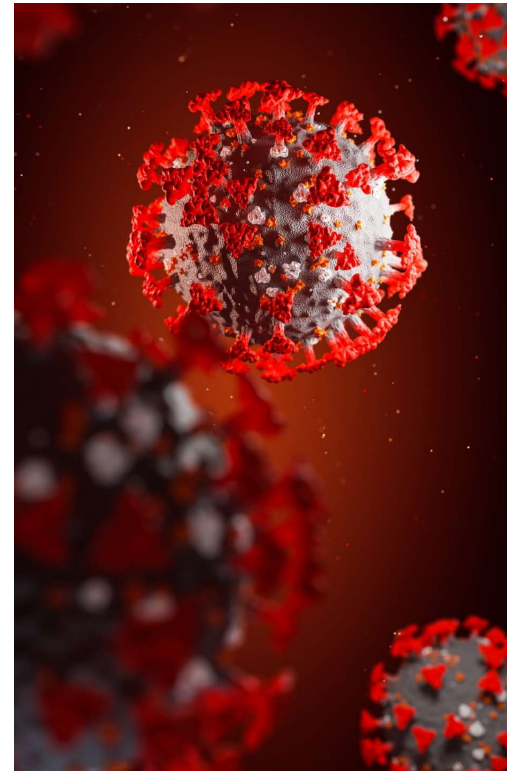
Appendix 5: Pandemic Analysis

Emerging Stronger from COVID-19

While not initially contemplated as part of the Council-Staff Work Plan, over the course of the project new realities and challenges emerged for the municipal sector as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The full impacts of COVID-19 are not yet known and will not be clear for some time. In the meantime, municipal governments are exploring potential opportunities to help their organizations adapt to remote environments and mitigate negative consequences in their communities.

The Town of Milton has been highly responsive, using a combination of proactive and reactive measures, requiring adaptability and flexibility, and a commitment to business continuity in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Council-Staff Work Plan, the Town of Milton is considering how it can move past response and through the recovery phase, with an objective of prioritizing projects, investments and initiatives that will help the organization and community emerge stronger from COVID-19.



To assess how the Town's initial COVID-19 experience might inform the Council-Staff Workplan, five themes were considered by with the Strategic Management Team and Council: financial sustainability, service delivery, workforce, local economy and community support.

Financial Sustainability

Municipalities across Canada are experiencing strain on their operating revenues. In Milton, operating pressures have been driven by property tax relief programs, loss of rental revenue and loss of program revenue. As early as March 2020 the Town of Milton responded quickly to these pressures, reducing operating costs and putting mitigation measures in place. Town employees continue to proactively identify opportunities to close the gap on operating revenues and as at May 2020 have identified approximately \$2.4 million in mitigation measures.

Town Council approved a property tax relief program in recognition of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to provide a grace period of no penalties and interest on payments until June 30. As of May 2020, tax revenues were approximate 5 per cent below the same time in 2019, suggesting that some taxpayers are opting to use this program.

While the Town of Milton continues to forecast COVID-19 impacts and seek mitigation measures, the Town has a solid plan to ensure the continued financial sustainability of the organization. Town staff continue to leverage relationships, through regional and provincial counterparts or community stakeholders, to identify and respond to advocacy opportunities. Staff are also providing fiscal impact analysis in conjunction with new growth studies.

Service Delivery

Throughout the pandemic, the Town has continued to deliver many of its services consistent with public health directives, health and safety measures, and legislative requirements. The Town has transitioned well to remote work and alternative service delivery. A range of services and programs are available by phone or online through remote locations.

In the coming months and years, the significance of digital service delivery and its importance for social distancing efforts will increase, as is being seen in the municipal sector and across industries like the financial services and retail sectors. Staff are committed to adapting service delivery as the pandemic evolves and continue to follow through on findings of current and recent service delivery reviews.

Workforce

People are the cornerstone of strong municipal service delivery and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic Town of Milton employees have risen to the occasion to adapt to the evolving COVID-19 situation. The staff have been flexible and adapted to the workforce changes as required. There has been a high level of responsiveness as business processes pivoted to respond and this continues into the recovery period. Like other Ontario municipalities, the Town of Milton has had to make difficult decisions due to reduction of services impacted by provincial orders. This has resulted in a 61 per cent reduction in the Town's overall workforce as of May 2020. The cumulative impact of health, safety, and uncertainty through COVID-19 across the municipal workforce will require careful consideration as employees transition back into the workplace or into a different kind of "new normal."

Local Economy

Through Milton's Economic Recovery Task Force the Town has been assessing local economic impacts of COVID-19, advocating for increased support, and gathering expertise and recommendations to strengthen the local economy. In Milton, firms involved in supply chain and logistics are doing well and demand for warehouse space is increasing. Applications received to May 2020 result in 46,303 square metres of new industrial gross floor area with a construction value of just over \$30 million. Milton has a strong employment base that is performing well during the pandemic, with large firms involved in food processing and medical manufacturing.

Demand for office space for professional workers had been increasing prior to the pandemic and provision of mixed-use development to fill this gap continues to be a focus within municipal plans and policies. With growing proportion of the workforce continuing to exercise their option to work from home, and global firms indicating their interest in exploring remote work on a permanent basis, careful attention to real estate investment trends and innovation in office space design to support a remote workforce will be required.

Results from the recent Business Impact Survey demonstrate that particularly in retail and business services, business are experiencing a strong negative impact as a result of COVID-19. To support businesses that have been significantly impacted by provincial orders as a result of COVID-19, the Town of Milton is working closely with Halton Region, the entity assisting Main Street businesses and facilitating connections to government support program.

Community Support

The last theme relates to community support. While there is no data to support specific pressures in Milton, reports from across the country indicate that Canadians are under significant stress and anxiety related to the health and wellbeing of individuals and families, stress associated with economic loss and uncertainty, and mental health concerns as a result of prolonged isolation. Schools, daycares, and organized sports have ceased and opportunities for exercise are limited.

Community services such as recreational and cultural facilities, parks and programs have been among the services most dramatically impacted by provincial orders associated with COVID-19. Town staff have mobilized to provide virtual “Recreation at Home” programming to encourage community connection and healthy lifestyles until such time that it is safe to open bricks and mortar facilities and offer in-person programs. Communication has also been organized on the municipal website to provide the public with real-time access on outdoor facility openings and guidelines for their use.

Staff continue to build outreach and collaboration with local stakeholders such as sports and cultural groups, the YMCA and Conestoga College.





MILTON

© 2020 Town of Milton

Prepared by the Town of Milton
Council and Staff, with thanks to
Boulevard Strategy Group.

milton.ca