



Caledon Countryside Alliance

Sustainable Caledon

For Immediate Release

Growth, Growth and More Growth...Do we need 27,000 more people in Caledon?

(Caledon, October 29, 2007) Once again Caledon is on the "Growth Merry Go Round". It feels like we have been here so many times before as we spin around and around.

In 2006, Caledon Council deliberated on the growth issue and made a decision. But not before, a study team of consultants and Town staff examined the issue and gave their professional opinion. Not before, all residents, all local businesses and all organizations like the Caledon Countryside Alliance had a chance to give their opinion. It was an all inclusive public process that ended with elected Council making a decision.

Now, a developer isn't happy with the decision made in 2006 and they have asked for a different decision or an exemption - an exemption which would bring 27,000 more people to south east Caledon. So once again Caledon is involved in an expensive and time consuming process.

To put things into perspective... this is at a time when Southern Californian's battle out of control wild fires in areas of rampant urban sprawl that likely should never have been built. But, the developments seemed like a good idea at the time. Why would anybody not want to live in such a picturesque environment? Now at the time of reckoning, when the municipality and homeowners are left to pay, only the tough questions are left. How will the municipality pay for: temporary services for evacuated residents; clean up and rebuilding of municipal infrastructure; and, adequate future fire and evacuation services? And, how will homeowners pay for their replacement homes and possessions? Make no mistake, at the end of the day it is the municipality and the residents who are ultimately responsible for their community.

So, what bearing does this situation have on Caledon? How will we be responsible for our unique town with an abundance of prized natural capital? What are they key factors we need to consider?

For starters, here are the facts:

- According to the 2006 Census, the Town's current population is 57,050.
- In 2006, the Town of Caledon approved population growth figures of 108,000 people by 2031. Previous approved growth figures of 84,444 by 2021 were maintained.
- Early in 2007, Solmar Development Corp. asked the Town to review their population projections to include a new development for an **additional 27,000 people to be located in South Albion-Bolton.**

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P.O. BOX 69 STN. INGLEWOOD, CALEDON ON, L7C 3L6

Tel: (905) 584-6221 Email: cca@caledoncountryside.org

Website: www.caledoncountryside.org

Artwork supplied by Lyndia Terre©

-On November 6th, 2007, Council will decide whether to reconsider the population projections.

What do Council and the residents who elected them, need to consider from the perspective of the Caledon Countryside Alliance (CCA) and Sustainable Caledon?

1. Population figures adopted in 2006 are based on a manageable rate of growth for installing and maintaining infrastructure (read: water, sewers, roads, schools) by the Town and Region. One only needs to travel south to the road chaos of Brampton to wonder if they have had a manageable rate of growth. Will this become the trademark of Caledon also?
2. Population figures adopted in 2006 are based on a financially manageable rate of growth for the Town's municipal budget. As municipalities grow, so do the required services. One only needs to look south to Toronto to be acutely aware of budget woes and what can happen to services in the days of budget overspending. The Town of Caledon currently has a balance budget. Will the budget be balanced with an additional 27,000 people?
3. Population figures adopted in 2006 are based on high but hopefully manageable rate of grow for Caledon's natural capital. Natural capital can loosely be defined as renewable and non-renewable natural resources, environmental resources (air and water) and land. What will we be compromising with additional development in the short term?
4. How can we move our Town forward on a path of sustainability, where environmental, economic, social and cultural factors are all considered equal?

The questions are very simple. Does Caledon need 27,000 new people in addition to the 108,000 population already slated for our Town by 2031? Can we manage all this new growth? Can we afford all this new growth? Will this growth compromise our municipal finances and result in tax increases? Can our natural capital withstand the growth? And, by the way, what is the hurry? Does Caledon have to look like the mass of development to the south of us?

On November 6th, Town Councillors will be faced with these questions. They were elected to represent all of who live in Caledon. They need to hear what you think on this critical issue. Please let your local representatives and all of Council know what you think. You can email or call them. Contact information is available from the Town at www.caledon.ca or 905.584.6221. You can also look on the Caledon Countryside Alliance's website at www.caledoncountryside.org for contact information. Let's all work together to build a Sustainable Caledon.

As a final note, we at the Caledon Countryside Alliance have the utmost respect for our business community and we urge everybody to shop or use Caledon businesses first and whenever possible. Local support makes a huge difference to their viability and long term success in our community. Growth is not the only way to support our business community.

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For more information on the CCA, please call 905.584.6221 or check the website (www.caledoncountryside.org) or email cca@caledoncountryside.org

For further information on this release please contact:

Karen Hutchinson

Executive Director

Caledon Countryside Alliance

905.584.6221

karen@caledoncountryside.org

The **Caledon Countryside Alliance (CCA)** is a non-profit organization that runs membership and community programs in Caledon and the Headwaters Region to promote environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability. Programs include: Weedgee Kidz™, Building a Local Food System, Eat Local, Buy Local, Caledon Community Map, Caledon Dufferin REEP, Idle Free Caledon, Ecological Footprint, Caledon Speaker Series, Weekly Hikes and CCA E-News. For more information on the CCA, go to their website at www.caledoncountryside.org.