



Middlesex Centre Official Plan Review

Discussion Paper 4

General Policy

Winter 2020



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre has retained WSP and Watson and Associates to undertake the review and update of its Official Plan. The Official Plan is a strategic planning document that will help manage growth and change in Middlesex Centre over a 25-year horizon.

This Discussion Paper provides an overview of relevant provincial policy and general policy that will help inform changes and updates to the Official Plan.

Section 1 introduces the Discussion Paper, its purpose, and provides an overview of the overall study work program.

Section 2 provides an overview of the planning policy context and the key planning legislation and documents that pertain to the Discussion Paper. This includes discussion of provincial, county and local planning policies with a focus on agricultural land uses, housing and homelessness, urban design guidelines, community improvement and development charges.

Section 3 identifies key issues and opportunities that should be considered, based on findings from the background review study and ongoing consultation with Municipal and County staff, stakeholders and the Public. These include:

- Consistency and consolidation including updating policy for consistency with Provincial policies, updating and adding defined terms, consolidating OPAs where appropriate and improving the readability and accessibility of the document.
- Ensuring that policies for Agriculture-Related and On-Farm Diversified Uses reflect provincial direction and address local concerns and priorities.
- The diversification of housing options to ensure current and future residents can access a full spectrum of housing options including owned and rented single-detached houses, semi-detached houses, townhouses, apartments and more.
- Providing clear and consistent policies for surplus farm residence severances.
- Supporting village vitality through the enhancement of walkability, cultural heritage and diversification of the local economy.
- Working towards more sustainable growth within the Municipality to reduce impacts on the environment and municipal finances.

Section 4 provides a conclusion and identifies next steps in the process, which will include the preparation of a Draft Directions and Recommendations Report.

This Discussion Paper is one of five Discussion Papers that will serve as a basis for understanding the key policy issues and opportunities that exist within Middlesex Centre through incremental research, analysis and outreach. Findings from this Discussion Paper

will be considered in the Draft Directions and Recommendations Report, which will outline the structure and format for the proposed Official Plan update. The Discussion Papers are a critical component to the Official Plan Review process, and will be instrumental in the development of land use policy decisions in the updated Official Plan.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre (“the Municipality”) is undertaking a review and update of its Official Plan. The Official Plan is a long-term planning policy document that guides growth, development, and overall use of land within the Municipality. It also establishes goals, objectives, and land use policies to ensure that the future needs of the Municipality and its community are met.

The Municipality’s current Official Plan was adopted in 2000 and approved with modifications in 2002. Since then, there have been a total of 52 amendments. The last municipal comprehensive review and major policy update to the Middlesex Centre Official Plan occurred in 2011. The primary purpose of this Official Plan Review (“OPR”) is to ensure consistency and conformity with applicable Provincial and County policies and legislation. A review of the Municipality’s Official Plan is required to identify updates necessary to implement the Provincial Policy Statement (“PPS”), and the Middlesex County Official Plan in accordance with Section 27 of the *Planning Act*. It is not the intent of the OPR to consider requests for site-specific amendments to the Municipality’s Official Plan, since each request would need to be assessed on its individual merits – a process that can typically take several months. Through the OPR process it may be determined that there is a need to expand settlement areas, in which case the most appropriate locations for expansions will be assessed and addressed as part of the update.

In accordance with the *Planning Act*, all updates to the Official Plan must be consistent with the PPS in effect at the time of adoption. This report represents the policies in effect at the time of its writing, and may be supplemented with update memos at later dates.

1.1 STUDY WORK PROGRAM

The Official Plan Review is being undertaken in four phases, as follows:



Phase 1

Project Initiation



Phase 2

Background
Reports & Studies

WE ARE HERE



Phase 3

Directions &
Recommendations
Report



Phase 4

Official Plan
Amendment(s)

This is one of five Discussion Papers that form part of Phase 2 – Background Reports and Studies. Following the completion of the Discussion Papers, a draft Directions and Recommendations Report will be developed and shared with the community and stakeholders in Spring 2021. Together, the draft Discussion Papers and Directions and Recommendations Report will inform changes to the Official Plan which will be introduced through one or more Official Plan Amendments for consideration by Council.

The Municipality is simultaneously undertaking a Strategic Plan Review (“SPR”) which is part of a joint-projects initiative comprised of the SPR, OPR and review of the municipal annual budget. Once adopted, the Strategic Plan will set the overall vision for the Municipality over the next five years. Section 3.0 of this Discussion Paper includes insights gathered through the collaborative efforts and shared findings of the Municipality, SPR Project Team, and OPR Project Team.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS DISCUSSION PAPER

The purpose of this Discussion Paper is to provide an overview of the general policies of the Official Plan, and to identify updates that may be necessary for the implementation of the PPS and County Official Plan. As many sections and policies of the Official Plan are interrelated, it should be read and interpreted in its entirety.

The *Planning Act* and PPS contain provisions related to process and interpretation that must be reflected in the Official Plan. The PPS is concerned with broad themes such as coordinated and efficient growth management, adequate servicing, housing and jobs, wise use and management of resources, and protection of public health and safety. The PPS identifies municipal official plans as the most important vehicles for implementation of the PPS and for achieving comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning. As such, Official Plan policies must be clear, reasonable and attainable to protect provincial interests and direct development to appropriate areas.

The Municipality’s current Official Plan contains general policies throughout the text that will need to be updated to conform with Provincial policy, the Middlesex County Official Plan, and relevant studies and reports.

It is not the intent of this Discussion Paper to outline all the issues and specific policy changes to be made, but rather outline key issues and changes that are required, based on the Background Report, public consultation and input from Municipal staff and stakeholders. Additional necessary changes to policies will be explored across the various Discussion Papers and as the OPR advances.

This Discussion Paper is organized to address General Policies of the Middlesex Centre Official Plan. The following topics are addressed in this Discussion Paper:

Section 2 – Provides a general overview of the key planning policy documents, studies and reports that inform the OPR.

Section 3 – Explores the key issues and opportunities to be addressed through the OPR as they relate to Provincial policy and general policy in the Official Plan.

Section 4 – Discusses the next steps in the OPR and how the Discussion Paper will be leveraged in subsequent phases of the Project.

2 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 PLANNING ACT

The *Planning Act* provides the legislative basis for, among other things, preparing official plans and planning policies that will guide future development in Ontario. Section 16(1) states that an official plan shall contain goals, objective and policies to manage and direct physical change and the effects on the social, economic, built and natural environment of the municipality. Under Section 16(2), an Official Plan may also contain a description of procedures for attaining the objectives of the plan and a description of the procedures for engaging the public.

Other sections of the *Planning Act* require planning authorities to include specific direction on certain key issues such as additional dwelling units, community benefit charges and parkland dedication fees among other things.

In preparing an Official Plan, and when making decisions under The *Planning Act*, municipal councils “shall have regard to” the 20 matters of provincial interest listed in Section 2 of the Act.

The *Planning Act* gives municipalities relatively broad authority to adopt policies to address land use planning matter through their Official Plan. These policies are then implemented through the Zoning By-law and other By-laws of Council which are required by the *Planning Act* to conform to the Official Plan.

2.2 PROVINCIAL POLICY AND LEGISLATION

The Background Review Report provided a general overview of the various policies, plans, strategies and reports that inform this Official Plan Review. This section takes a closer look at the specific direction provided by the Provincial, County, and local documents as they relate to Provincial policy and general policy that will need to be updated as part of the OPR. The Official Plan must be consistent with the PPS and conform to Provincial plans. Provincial guidelines have also been included in this subsection as they provide the Province’s preferred approach to implementing the PPS and land use regulations.

2.2.1 PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT, 2020

The PPS is issued under the authority of Section 3 of the *Planning Act* and provides direction on matters of Provincial interest related to land use planning and development. It sets out policies for building strong, healthy communities (Section 1.0), the wise use and management of resources (Section 2.0), and the protection of public health and safety (Section 3.0).

The PPS, 2020 includes a number of new policies relative to the PPS in effect at the time of the last comprehensive review and update to the Middlesex Centre Official Plan. Major changes include:

- Improved recognition of the diversity of rural and northern communities, which may face different challenges related to population, economic activity, rate of growth and physical and natural conditions;
- The incorporation of the interests of Aboriginal communities through improved coordination, consultation and protection of cultural and archaeological interests;
- Encouraging an increase in the range and supply of housing options, including new development and residential intensification;
- More explicit consideration and promotion of healthy communities and transportation choices, which prioritize active transportation and transit options before other modes of travel;
- More explicit consideration and planning for the impacts of climate change;
- Recognition and protection of goods movement facilities and corridors; and
- Requirements for prime agricultural areas and provision for further diversification of on-farm uses such as agri-tourism, and flexibility for larger-scale agricultural uses to support farming communities.
- Part II of the PPS includes direction that comments, submissions or advice that affect a planning matter that are provided by the council of a municipality, a local board, a planning board, a minister or ministry, board, commission or agency of the government shall be consistent with the PPS

In reviewing the Official Plan, it will be necessary to update general policies and consider changes to mapping, designations and terminology for consistency with the following subject matter addressed by the PPS:

Settlement Areas (Section 1.1.3)

- An official plan time horizon of up to 25 years to ensure sufficient land is made available to accommodate a range of land uses to meet projected needs (1.1.2);
- Settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development (1.1.3.1);
- Opportunities to promote transit-supportive development, provide a range of housing options (through intensification and redevelopment) shall be identified by planning authorities (in appropriate locations) (1.1.3.3);
- Minimum targets for intensification and redevelopment shall be established by planning authorities (1.1.3.5); and
- New or expanded settlement areas must be brought forward during the comprehensive review process (1.1.3.8).

Rural Areas and Rural Lands in Municipalities (Sections 1.1.4)

- Healthy, integrated and viable rural areas should be supported through initiatives such as building upon rural character, promoting opportunities for regeneration and redevelopment, accommodating an appropriate range and mix of housing in rural settlement areas, leveraging historical, cultural and natural assets, conserving biodiversity and promoting opportunities for economic activities and tourism (1.1.4.1);

- Rural settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted (1.1.4.2); and
- When directing development in rural settlement areas, rural characteristics, the scale of development and provision of appropriate service levels shall be considered (1.1.4.3).

Coordination

- A coordinated, integrated and comprehensive approach should be used within municipalities, across municipal boundaries, and with other orders of government, agencies and boards, when dealing with planning matters (1.2.1);
- Engagement and coordination with Indigenous communities shall be undertaken on land use planning matters (1.2.2);
- Major facilities and sensitive land uses shall be planned and developed to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate any potential adverse effects (1.2.6.1) and 1.2.6.2); and
- Emergency management and other economic, environmental and social planning considerations should be coordinated by planning authorities in support of efficient and resilient communities (1.2.3).

Employment

- Planning authorities shall promote economic development and competitiveness (1.3.1);
- Employment areas and necessary infrastructure shall be planned for, protected and preserved for current and future uses and needs (1.3.2.1);
- Industrial and manufacturing uses shall provide for separation or mitigation from sensitive land uses to enable the planned uses and function of these areas, maintain compatibility and include appropriate areas of transition (1.3.2.2 and 1.3.2.3);
- Planning authorities may permit conversion of lands within employment areas to non-employment uses through a comprehensive review (1.3.2.4); and
- Employment areas in proximity to major goods and movement facilities and corridors shall be protected (1.3.2.6).

Housing

- An appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities shall be required to meet projected requirements of current and future residents (1.4.1); and
- Planning authorities should meet projected market-based and affordable housing needs of current and future residents of the regional market area (1.4.3).

Agriculture

- Prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture. Specialty crop areas shall be given the highest priority for protection, followed by Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, and 3 lands, and any associated Class 4 through 7 lands within the prime agricultural area, in this order of priority (2.3.1);
- Planning authorities shall designate prime agricultural areas and specialty crop areas in accordance with guidelines developed by the Province, as amended from time to time (2.3.2);

- Permitted uses within prime agricultural areas include: agricultural uses, agricultural-related uses and on-farm diversified uses. For agricultural-related uses and on-farm diversified uses, they shall be compatible with surrounding agricultural operations (2.3.3.1);
- New land uses in prime agricultural areas, including the creation of lots and new or expanding livestock facilities, shall comply with the minimum distance separation formulae (2.3.3.3); and
- The creation of new residential lots in prime agricultural areas shall not be permitted, except in accordance with policy 2.3.4.1(c). (Section 2.3.4.2).

Minerals and Petroleum and Mineral Aggregate Resources

- Minerals and petroleum resources and mineral aggregate operations shall be protected for long-term use. Operations for these uses shall be identified to protect them from development and activities that would preclude or hinder their expansion or continued use, or which would be incompatible from a public health, public safety or environmental standpoint (2.4.1, 2.4.2.1, 2.5.1 and 2.5.2.4);
- Rehabilitation to accommodate subsequent land uses shall be required after extraction and other related activities have ceased (2.4.3);
- Extraction shall be undertaken in a manner which minimizes social, economic and environmental impacts (2.5.2.2);
- Mineral aggregate resource conservation shall be undertaken, including through the use of accessory aggregate recycling facilities within operations, wherever feasible (Section 2.5.2.3);
- Existing mineral aggregate operations shall be permitted to continue without the need for official plan amendment, rezoning or development permit under the *Planning Act*. Where the *Aggregate Resources Act* applies, only processes under the *Aggregate Resources Act* shall address the depth of extraction of new or existing mineral aggregate operations. When a license for extraction or operation ceases to exist, policy 2.5.2.5 continues to apply (2.5.2.4); and
- In known deposits of mineral aggregate resources and on adjacent lands, development and activities which would preclude or hinder the establishment of new operations or access to the resources shall only be permitted under certain circumstances (2.5.2.5).

Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

- Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved (2.6.1);
- Development and site alteration shall not be permitted on lands containing archaeological resources or areas of archaeological potential unless significant archaeological resources have been conserved (2.6.2);
- Development and site alteration on adjacent lands to protected heritage property shall not be permitted except where the proposed development and site alteration has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that the heritage attributes of the protected heritage property will be conserved (2.6.3);

- Planning authorities shall engage with Indigenous communities and consider their interests when identifying, protecting and managing cultural heritage and archaeological resources (2.6.5); and
- Archaeological management plans and cultural plans should be considered and promoted to conserve cultural heritage and archaeological resources (2.6.4).

Implementation and Interpretation

- The official plan is the most important vehicle for implementation of the PPS, which are best achieved through comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning. Official plans shall be kept up to date with the PPS (4.6); and
- Performance indicators should be used for measuring the effectiveness of some or all of the policies. Municipalities are encouraged to monitor and report back on the implementation of official plan policies (4.8 and 4.9).

2.2.2 GUIDELINES ON PERMITTED USES IN ONTARIO'S PRIME AGRICULTURAL AREAS, 2016

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (“OMAFRA”) released the Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas (Publication 851) in 2016 to assist decision-makers, farmers and others in interpreting the PPS. The Guidelines provide direction on planning for the uses permitted on Prime Agricultural lands as set out in the PPS: Agriculture, Agriculture-related and On-farm Diversified uses.

The Guidelines provide examples of specific uses that fall into these three categories, potential exceptions or areas of flexibility, and recommended approaches to policy and decision-making.

Table 1 (next page) summarizes the PPS direction related to these uses including development criteria, specific uses and activities that may occur and other considerations.

The Official Plan should implement the recommendation of the Guidelines by updating definitions and providing clear policies to encourage and facilitate appropriate development and diversity of economic activities in prime agricultural areas.

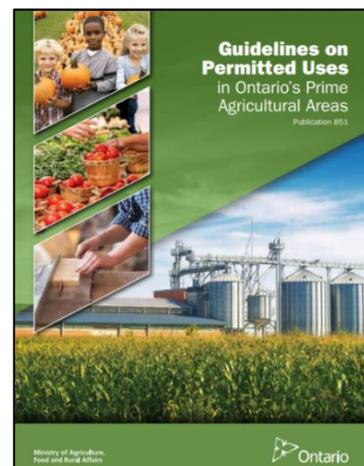


Table 1: Criteria for permitted uses in prime agricultural areas (OMAFRA, 2016).

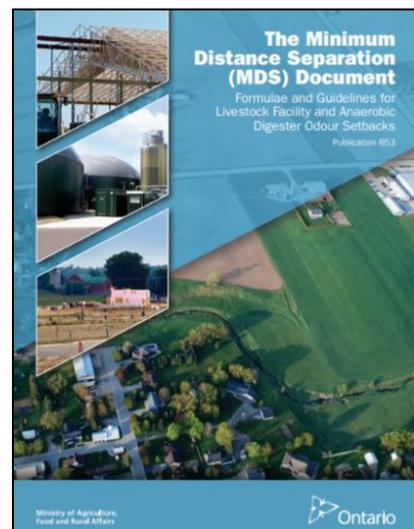
Type of use	Criteria as provided by PPS policies and definitions
Agricultural	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The growing of crops, raising of livestock and raising of other animals for food, fur or fibre 2. Includes associated on-farm buildings and structures, including, but not limited to livestock facilities, manure storages, value-retaining facilities, and accommodation for full-time farm labour when the size and nature of the operation requires additional employment 3. All types, sizes and intensities of <i>agricultural uses</i> shall be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards 4. <i>Normal farm practices</i> shall be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards
Agriculture-Related	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses 2. Shall be compatible with and shall not hinder surrounding agricultural operations 3. Directly related to farm operations in the area 4. Supports agriculture 5. Provides direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity 6. Benefits from being in close proximity to farm operations
On-Farm Diversified	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Located on a farm 2. Secondary to the principal <i>agricultural use</i> of the property 3. Limited in area 4. Includes, but is not limited to, home occupations, home industries, <i>agri-tourism uses</i> and uses that produce value-added agricultural products 5. Shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations

2.2.3 MINIMUM DISTANCE SEPARATION DOCUMENT, 2017

The Ontario Ministry of Food and Agriculture’s (“OMAFRA”) Minimum Distance Separation (“MDS”) Document provides land use planning tools for determining a recommended separation distance between a livestock barn, manure storage or anaerobic digester (where they are permitted) and other, more sensitive land uses such as residential dwellings.

In rural and prime agricultural areas, the PPS, 2020 requires that new land uses, including the creation of lots and new or expanding livestock facilities, comply with the MDS Formulae. New or expanding settlement areas must also comply with the MDS Formulae.

Both the MDS Formulae and Implementation Guidelines should be referenced in the Middlesex Centre Official Plan to help ensure clear understanding of development requirements. It is particularly important to include MDS calculations as a requirement for a complete application to ensure any issues are identified



early in the planning process. The Zoning By-law may also establish minimum MDS setbacks in all zones where livestock facilities and anaerobic digesters are permitted.

Prior to a land use planning approval being granted, or a building permit can be issued, conformity to MDS setbacks must be demonstrated. MDS I setbacks for building permits on existing lots and MDS II setbacks for building permit applications to renovate existing livestock facilities must adhere to the MDS Document requirements.

2.3 MIDDLESEX COUNTY

2.3.1 MIDDLESEX COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

The Middlesex County Official Plan (“County OP”) sets out the planning framework, general policies and land use policies for the County, with a planning period to 2026. The policy framework provides direction to lower-tier municipalities on matters including managing growth, protecting resources and natural heritage, and coordination between municipalities on cross-boundary (inter-municipal) issues such as servicing and infrastructure. All lower-tier Official Plans are required to conform to the County Official Plan.

The County Official Plan recognizes the planning powers and authorities vested in the local municipalities through the *Planning Act* and other legislation. The County Official Plan provides the framework for more detailed planning by local municipalities, and trusts that detailed planning matters are most appropriately dealt with by local municipalities.

Given that Middlesex County is in the midst of a Municipal Comprehensive Review and update of the County OP there may be opportunities to align the Municipality’s Official Plan with the draft County OP.

The following provides an overview of direction provided by the County OP as it relates to general planning policies. Note that the County OP pre-dates the current PPS and some policies may no longer be appropriate in the current policy context:

Agriculture

- Agriculture-related commercial and industrial uses shall only be permitted in the Agricultural Area where they are essential to the agriculture economy, require a location in close proximity to agriculture or cannot be located in identified Settlement Areas (2.2.2.2);
- Non-agriculture related development in the Agricultural Area shall require an Official Plan Amendment (“OPA”) which must also adhere to criteria set out in Section 2.2.2.2;
- All farm parcels shall remain sufficiently large to ensure flexibility and economic viability of the farm operation. The creation of parcels of land for agricultural uses of less than 40 hectares shall generally not be permitted (3.3.2);
- All new barns with a capacity for greater than 5 nutrient units and expansion of existing barns shall comply with the MDS II formula and the *Nutrient Management Act*; and

- Consents in the Agricultural Area shall only occur in conformity with the policies of Section 4.5.3.4.

Aggregate Resources

- All licensed aggregate resource extraction operations and known significant deposits shall be identified and protected from incompatible uses through local official plans (2.2.3.2);
- Where supporting documentation is provided that demonstrates that the aggregate resource is of secondary quality and extraction is neither practical nor economically feasible, the subject lands may be used for a land use other than agriculture provided such land use conforms with the local official plan (2.2.3.2);
- Prior to making a decision on an amendment to a local official plan or zoning by-law to permit a new extractive use (pits and quarries), or to allow the expansion of an existing extractive use, the local municipality shall consult with the County, the Conservation Authority and the Province to ensure that the effects on any Natural System Elements are properly considered. Consultation may include studies related to ground and surface water impacts, noise and dust impacts and other matters that may affect the natural environment and adjacent residents. Local municipalities shall include policies in their official plans to address the impact of new pits and quarries. Such policies shall address visual impact, proximity to residential uses; impact on Natural System Elements; and site rehabilitation (2.2.3.3); and
- Applications for new pits and quarries should also ensure that criteria set out in Section 2.2.3 are addressed. Section 2.2.3.4 sets out the site plan requirements for applications for a permit to operate a sand or gravel pit or quarry.

Growth Management

- Every attempt should be made to make efficient use of existing infrastructure while creating and/or protecting opportunities for future infrastructure needs. Whenever possible, future development should proceed based on the provision of full municipal services (2.3.1);
- Population projections are intended to be used by the County and local municipalities as a guideline for managing growth and will be monitored throughout the planning period. (2.3.3);
- The County acknowledges that unanticipated circumstances may result in alterations to the expected growth patterns during the planning period – which may require additional land for development (2.3.3);
- Local municipalities shall define the limits of Settlement Areas in their official plans. Where a Settlement Area is not an incorporated municipality the limit of the Settlement Area shall be the urban development boundary established in the local Plan (2.3.5);
- Local municipalities shall develop Growth Management Strategies and Settlement Capability Studies as parts of their official plans to rationalize the type, amount, location and timing of growth and development and to establish the basis for the provision of the services and the necessary infrastructure (2.3.5);
- In order to expand the limits of an existing Settlement Area, local municipalities shall prepare a Comprehensive Review which provides information to justify the expansion. Criteria for this review process is included in Section 2.3.5 a) through g) and Section 2.3.6 (Settlement Capability Study);

- Local municipalities, through their official plans or secondary plans, shall prepare detailed policies to guide redevelopment of areas in transition or land that is under utilized (2.3.5); and
- If required, a Settlement Capability Study shall be prepared as part of a Comprehensive Review in support of the expansion of existing Settlement Areas (2.3.6).

Economic Development

- The County identifies the importance of developing diversity in its economic base. Policies are intended to protect the agricultural community while fostering new economic development opportunities. The County outlines its approach to economic development in in Section 2.3.4, recognizing its collaborative partnership with local municipalities; and
- The policies are structured to ensure that the local municipalities have adequate opportunity to plan for growth while recognizing the need to: protect agricultural land and natural resources; prevent land use conflicts; and provide services commensurate with the level of growth anticipated (2.3.5).

Housing

- The County encourages a wide variety of housing by type, size and tenure to meet projected demographic and market requirements of current and future residents of the County. These policies may be elaborated upon within local municipal official plans (2.3.7);
- The County will require that 15% of all development occurs by way of intensification and redevelopment (2.3.7 a)) and 20% of all housing be affordable (defined as housing where the purchase price is at least 10% below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the regional market area) (2.3.7 e));
- Councils of the local municipalities are encouraged to keep a housing inventory outlining the mix of housing by both type and tenure to reinforce the County housing policies (2.3.7);
- In the preparation of local official plans, Councils of local municipalities shall include policies and designations to implement the policies of this Plan, and the criteria outlined in Section 2.3.7;
- It is the goal of the County that at least a 3-year supply of draft approved and registered plans of subdivision lots be maintained, based on the consumption rates of the local municipalities. At least every 5 years, local municipality shall provide the County a summary of the supply of vacant land designated for future residential development to allow the County to ensure that at least a 10-year supply of land designated for future residential development is maintained, based on the most recent population projections (2.3.7.1);
- Local municipalities shall include policies in local official plans that will encourage a range of housing types, housing densities and housing options to meet the needs of their share of current and future County residents (2.3.7.2);
- The County and local municipalities shall support opportunities to increase the supply of housing through intensification and redevelopment in appropriate locations that consider municipal services, transportation and environmental factors. In addition, local official plans should consider site specific characteristics for neighbourhood compatibility to address the physical character of redevelopment projects (2.3.7.3);

- Urban Areas and Community Areas shall be the focus for future growth including residential, commercial and industrial development. These areas are characterized by a range of land uses and have full services or where warranted, partial services, as described in Section 2.3.2;
- Agriculture is a predominant activity in the County, thus non-agricultural activities will be closely scrutinized and directed to Settlement Areas unless the activity is agriculturally related and a location in proximity to agriculture is necessary (2.3.9); and
- When an application for development is received that is within a Natural Heritage Feature, or within the adjacent lands of the elements as identified in Table 1 (Areas Subject to Development Assessment Report (DAR)) is being considered by Council, the appropriate Conservation Authority and the Province shall be consulted (2.3.10).

Detailed Land Use Policies for Settlement Areas in Local Official Plans

- The County encourages local municipalities to include general development policies in their official plan dealing with issues outlined in Section 3.2.3, including implementation policies also outlined in this Section.

Implementation of Local Official Plans

- The County Official Plan provides general guidelines for the preparation and implementation of detailed planning documents by the local municipalities. The County Strategic Plan and Section 1.2 outline how this is intended to be achieved (4.1);
- Regarding public participation, local municipal Councils shall ensure that the public is adequately notified, consulted consistently with the following events provided in Section 4.6. Processes and procedures for considering written and verbal submissions should also align with County directives in this Section;
- Development Charges By-laws may, from time to time, be passed in accordance with the *Development Charges Act*.

Through the County's Official Plan Review process, a new, 25-year planning horizon will be established which will determine population and employment projections and population allocations to the local municipalities. To the extent possible within the project timelines, the Municipal OPR will work with the County to align the policies of the two Official Plans.

2.3.2 HOMELESS PREVENTION AND HOUSING PLAN

In 2019, a 10-year Housing Stability Action Plan was prepared by the City of London to address housing stability and define the current environment and future needs of London and surrounding areas.

The Plan identifies the need for housing stability to ensure that everyone has safe, appropriate, affordable housing and housing supports.

The following actions, goals and measures should be considered when updating general principles and housing policies of the Official Plan as they relate to housing and homelessness prevention:

- To consider the implementation of unique opportunities to support rapid rehousing options (1.5.a.);
- To work with the private market to retain existing affordability in rental market units (e.g. condo conversion, demolition and short-term rental policies) (2.1.a.);
- To implement tools, policies and programs to create new affordable housing through a Community Improvement Plan, zoning by-law update, inclusionary zoning, bonusing, secondary units, etc. (2.1.c.);
- Explore opportunities to stimulate new affordable housing through government legislation (2.1.e.);
- Regenerate community housing and other social or community housing sites, maintain affordability, ensure long-term stability and include more housing options;
 - Municipalities should consider monitoring the number of official plan (and zoning by-law) amendments to allow for appropriate intensification of housing regeneration sites (2.2.a.);
- To support the non-profit sector in the creation of new affordable housing (2.4.d.); and
- Articulate a clear vision for the delivery of housing stability for all (4.1.a.).

The OPR provides the opportunity to promote and support affordable, available, supportive and coordinated housing in Middlesex Centre. Opportunities for redevelopment and incentives to help accelerate development approvals for affordable housing, can also be enabled through the Official Plan.

2.4 MUNICIPALITY OF MIDDLESEX CENTRE

2.4.1 OFFICIAL PLAN

As discussed in previous sections of this paper, there are certain policies the Middlesex Centre Official Plan must implement, and others where there is greater flexibility. It is also important that the Official Plan reflect the vision, goals and values of the Municipality. This section discusses the specific policies of the Official Plan that will need to be updated, and where opportunities exist to provide locally relevant policy direction.

A preliminary review of the current Official Plan identified the following sections that will require updates to address the new policies and circumstance within the Municipality discussed in the preceding sections of this paper:

1.7 - Municipal General Policies – Traditional Town and Country Planning in Middlesex Centre

- Upon completion of the Municipality's new Strategic Plan (January 2021) it may be desirable to revise this text to reflect the findings of the consulting team's work and the text of the new Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan focuses on five themes with specific initiatives and goals associated with each theme, which will be implemented over a 5-year

duration. The Strategic Plan was developed in consultation with members of Council, municipal staff, community groups and associations, and the public.

2.0 – Policies for Agricultural Areas

- The Agricultural policies of the Official Plan may be revised to help direct residential development towards settlement areas and to support a strong and healthy agricultural economy;
- Clear direction regarding Agriculture-Related Uses and On-Farm Diversified Uses will help facilitate the establishment of new sources of income for farmers. This may include specific policies for particular classes of Agriculture-Related and On-Farm Diversified uses, and direction on how to zone for these uses; and
- Agri-tourism uses should be directly addressed to avoid land use conflicts and the conversion of farm properties to non-agricultural uses.

4.0 - Policies for Aggregate and Petroleum Resource Areas

- The relationship between resource extraction uses and agricultural uses should be clarified; and
- Any development standards or performance measures to be imposed on new Aggregate and Petroleum Resource applications should be addressed through the submission of a study required as part of a complete application.

5.0 – Settlement Area Policies and Land Use Designations

- Language supporting Provincial and County direction for growth to be directed to Settlement Areas should be provided throughout the Official Plan. Language and policy direction that could discourage act as a barrier to infill and intensification of settlement areas should be replaced;
- The PPS, 2020 now permits settlement area adjustments outside of a Comprehensive Review. The Official Plan should address this with policy that provides criteria for the acceptance of such proposals; and
- If the Municipality wishes to limit the potential for private communal services within settlement areas then additional criteria or conditions should be set out in the Official Plan such as the requirement for a plan of condominium and/or securities for the maintenance or replacement of the system if it is abandoned.

5.2 – Residential Areas

- New PPS direction to maintain a 15-year supply of designated residential land must be reflected in the Official Plan through policy and designations;
- To meet the 15% intensification target, ensure policies related to intensification allow for a full range and mix of housing options throughout the municipality;
- References to the housing affordability benchmark will need to be updated to reflect the current benchmark;
- Update the permitted uses within the Residential designation to include small-scale neighbourhood commercial to reflect direction for more complete communities and feedback received during the Visioning Workshop; and

- Policies related to specific housing types such as townhouses, duplexes and triplexes should be clarified to ensure development criteria is consistently assessed according to clear performance measures. For example, “compatibility” between residential dwelling types is often applied subjectively without clear criteria and can lead to conflict.

5.5 – Settlement Employment Areas

- The PPS, 2020 provides new direction related to the development of sensitive land uses adjacent to employment lands. Ensure Land Use Compatibility policies reflect provincial policy and guidelines and are appropriately tied to the evaluation of employment uses in proximity to sensitive land uses;
- If cannabis production facilities are to be permitted within employment areas then it may be desirable to provide specific policies related to these uses; and
- The PPS, 2020 permits the conversion of Employment Lands prior to a Comprehensive Review. The Official Plan should be updated to include policies establishing criteria for the consideration of such proposals.

8.0 – Parks and Recreation Areas

- Parkland dedication policies may require an update to address recent amendments to the Planning Act; and
- Updates should reflect the direction of the latest parks and recreation masterplan and trails master plan, including policies for the acquisition of land.

9.6 – Secondary Units

- The Secondary Unit policies of the Official Plan will need to be updated to reflect recent amendments to the *Planning Act* regarding Additional Dwelling Units.

9.7 – Existing Garden Suites

- The Garden Suite policies of the Official Plan appear to rely on an outdated definition of Garden Suites; and
- The Official Plan should be updated to reflect the current direction on Garden Suites provided by the Planning Act.

10.0 – Implementation and Interpretation

- New policies related to Pre-Application Consultation and requirements for a complete application should be added to the Official Plan to improve the planning application process. Requiring pre-application consultation can help ensure development proposals include all necessary information prior to the submission of a formal application, reducing the risk of delays in the review and approval process.

10.19 – Public Consultation

- The Official Plan should be updated to include new policies related to consultation with Indigenous communities.

10.20.3 - Types of Reports and Studies

- New policy should be added to indicate that the municipality may require a peer-review of any required studies or reports at the expense of the applicant; and
- The Official Plan should be updated with policy that states the municipality may require pre-application consultation.

11.0 - Special Policy Areas

- “Special Policy Area” has a specific meaning under the PPS. Consider changing this to “Site Specific Policy Areas” or “Policy Exception Areas”; and
- The Municipality should advise if any of these site-specific policies are redundant or obsolete.

2.4.2 ZONING BY-LAW

The Municipality’s Zoning By-law 2005-005 sets out the detailed regulations and controls for land use and development within the Municipality, and is intended to implement the objectives and policies of the Municipality’s Official Plan.

The Zoning By-law contains 25 Sections relating predominantly to the different zoning categories of the Municipality, each zone setting out the general use regulations, special use regulations, exceptions, and in some cases, temporary uses. There are five zone categories including Agricultural, Residential, Commercial, Industrial and Other, which contain a total of 19 zones.

The Municipality must also consider updating the comprehensive zoning by-law to implement the MDS Formulae in accordance with the PPS, and that MDS I or MDS II setback requirements are met before a building permit is issued.

Updated policy recommendations identified during the OPR process will be implemented through an updated Zoning By-law.

A more detailed discussion of any updates that may be required to By-law 2005-005 will be included in the draft Directions and Recommendations Report.

2.4.3 URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Urban Design Guidelines (“UDG”) for Settlement Areas in the Municipality assist in guiding the evolution of the urban fabric of the 11 Settlement Areas in terms of their residential neighbourhoods, commercial developments and principal streetscapes. The Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the relevant policies of the Official Plan, Zoning By-law and Site Plan Manual.

The Municipality’s current Official Plan contains policies for Settlement Areas (Section 5.0) and Municipal Design (Section 6.0) which should be reviewed and updated to consider opportunities to further support the maintenance and improvement of the physical design of the Municipality. Retaining the strong, defining rural character of the Municipality will be important as growth and change occur overtime.

2.4.4 ILDERTON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

A Community Improvement Plan (“CIP”) for the Village of Ilderton was completed in 2019 and adopted under Section 28 of the *Planning Act*. The purpose of the CIP is to implement the findings and recommendations of the downtown Master Plan “Retooling Downtown Ilderton (2012)”. The Municipality has identified the Village of Ilderton as a settlement area that is to be the focus of municipal revitalization and stimulate private investment.

The Ilderton CIP identified key opportunities supported by the CIP to improve the Village of Ilderton such as:

- A Façade and Signage Improvements Grant Program to enrich storefronts of businesses in Ilderton;
- A Development Charges Grant Program to help reduce redevelopment costs and stimulate construction;
- A Property Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program to encourage redevelopment and intensification while facilitating the highest and best use of properties; and
- A Municipal Streetscape Enhancement and Land Redevelopment Program that seeks active partnerships with community groups and other stakeholders to facilitate enhancements in the core.

The Municipality’s current Official Plan contains policies for Community Improvement Areas in Section 10.18. The updated Official Plan should consider opportunities to promote CIPs as a tool throughout different sections of the Official Plan (e.g. economic development and housing) and consider the addition of new mapping to identify the Ilderton Community Improvement Plan on a key schedule.

2.4.5 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF MIDDLESEX CENTRE

In November 2020, a proposed draft CIP for the Municipality of Middlesex Centre was presented to Council. The purpose of the CIP was to review the existing CIP for the Village of Ilderton and to comment on the Master Plan “Retooling Downtown Ilderton”. The document examines the existing catchment area to determine if the CIP for the Village of Ilderton could be expanded to include other parts of the Municipality. It also reviews existing incentives and identifies new potential incentives in accordance with planning legislation. A final CIP is anticipated for 2021, and will be reviewed and considered in the draft Directions and Recommendations Report.

2.4.6 DEVELOPMENT CHARGES BY-LAW

In 2019, a Development Charges Background Study was completed to address the forecasted amount, type, and location of growth, the cost of servicing that growth and a recommended approach to development charges to help pay for that servicing.

Alignment with the DC By-law may involve updated or expanded terms and definitions to ensure the Official Plan is consistent with the By-law and supports the increase of compatible uses to promote economic diversification. An example of this is the term “Greenhouse” defined as “a building or structure that is used for the growing, storage and/or processing of fruits, vegetables, flowers, plants, shrubs, trees or similar horticultural products in regulated temperatures and humidity” which is not included in the Municipality’s current Official Plan Glossary of Terms.

The Official Plan should also be updated to reference Services in Lieu. Section 7 of the By-law authorizes an owner, through an agreement under Section 38 of the *Act*, to substitute such part of the development charge applicable to the owner’s development by the provision at the sole expense of the owner, of services in lieu. Section 8.0 of the By-law includes Rules with Respect to Redevelopment in the case of the demolition of all or part of a residential or non-residential building or structure.

3 KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The preceding sections of this Discussion Paper have provided an overview of policies and guidelines to be incorporated through the Official Plan Review as well as specific changes that should be considered in the next phases of the project.

This section provides a summary of the key issues and opportunities that have been identified during the OPR process. These matters have been identified through the background review, public and stakeholder feedback, survey results, and the Strategic Plan Review exercise. These are likely to be the issues that spur the most discussion among stakeholders and should be clearly addressed in the draft Directions and Recommendations Report.

Key Issues	Opportunities
<p>Consistency and Consolidation</p>	<p>The OPR presents an opportunity to update the Municipality’s Official Plan to ensure it is contemporary, consistent and streamlined. This includes changes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating policy to be consistent with provincial planning direction; • Updating and adding defined terms which are relevant and appropriate; • Reviewing OPAs in the Municipality and consolidating these Amendments; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note that this will require a conscious effort that is informed by decision-making guidelines when determining which amendments should remain and which amendments may be deleted. The process should be well-documented and transparent. Consideration should be given to the form of notification from the Municipality of Middlesex Centre to land owners affected by the deletion or modification of the Amendment; and • Updating the Official Plan document to be more user-friendly and accessible, such as “linking” the table of contents in the digital document to the relevant section of the Official Plan.
<p>Agriculture-Related and On-Farm Diversified Uses</p>	<p>Section 2.0 of the Municipality’s current Official Plan contains policies for Agricultural Areas. The agricultural land base represents one of the Municipality’s most significant economic and community assets, with the majority of the Municipality considered prime agricultural land. Provincial policy and guidelines relating to agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses have evolved since the Municipality’s current Official Plan was prepared. The OPR presents an opportunity to update policy to expand opportunities and promote economic diversification of agricultural and</p>

	<p>farming practices. As outlined in the Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas (2016), wedding and event venues are strongly discouraged or subject to restrictions by the Guidelines when located in prime agricultural areas. Two proposals for wedding event venues have been recently submitted in the Municipality, and the OPR Technical Advisory Committee notes that permitted agricultural uses must be defined first before determining how to address these types of requests.</p> <p>The draft Directions and Recommendations report will present policy recommendations for agricultural, agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses for consideration by the Municipality, based on best practices and completed OPR work to-date. Policy direction for implementation will also be included in the draft Policy and Directions Report to ensure that a clear delineation is made between what is as-of-right vs. Official Plan Amendment applications. The draft Policy and Directions Report will also address optional areas of the MDS Guidelines.</p>
<p>Diversification of Housing Options</p>	<p>The PPS, 2020 defines “housing options” as:</p> <p><i>a range of housing types such as, but not limited to single-detached, semi-detached, rowhouses, townhouses, stacked townhouses, multiplexes, additional residential units, tiny homes, multi-residential buildings. The term can also refer to a variety of housing arrangements and forms such as, but not limited to life lease housing, co-ownership housing, co-operative housing, community land trusts, land lease community homes, affordable housing, housing for people with special needs, and housing related to employment, institutional or educational uses.</i></p> <p>Public and stakeholder engagement for the Municipality’s SPR and OPR process, has identified a strong need and desire to increase the diversity of housing options throughout the Municipality through built forms such as secondary suites, smaller homes such as townhouses and apartments, and the potential for medium density developments in settlement areas. Non-traditional housing forms such as tiny homes, may also be considered as part of the OPR. The draft Policy and Directions Report will also consider “where” and “how” additional housing units.</p>
<p>Surplus Farm Residence Severances</p>	<p>The severance of surplus farm residences to facilitate farm consolidation is permitted by the PPS, 2020 and the Municipal Official Plan, however there is an opportunity to provide greater direction related to these types of severances. For example:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a minimum age of the surplus dwelling to ensure the process is not exploited for development speculation • A definition of what is considered “consolidation” to clarify that farmland is not required to be contiguous to be consolidated; • The establishment of an appropriate minimum lot size for the remnant farm parcel. <p>Section 2.0, 10.0 and the Glossary of Terms will be reviewed to ensure consistency with Provincial direction and to ensure that the protection of prime agricultural land is upheld through the severance process.</p>
<p>Village Vitality</p>	<p>Middlesex Centre’s village centres are among the most highly valued assets identified by residents and businesses. A number of preliminary opportunities have been identified during the SPR and OPR process for consideration by the Municipality, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of the area of Komoka and Kilworth by increasing pedestrian safety and walkability, and seeking opportunities to animate and improve the main street; • Celebrate the historic and cultural identity of the villages, through initiatives such as beautification of the public realm; and • Promote additional incentives to further the community improvement of Ilderton. <p>Section 5.3 of the Municipality’s current Official Plan contains policies for Village Centres. Opportunities to expand these policies and leverage key tools such as Community Improvement Plans, should be encouraged and considered as part of the OPR.</p>
<p>Diversification of the Local Economy</p>	<p>Diversification of the local economy is a priority that has been identified by the Municipality as well as raised in public engagement sessions for the SPR and OPR projects. Some of the opportunities identified include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the new Strategic Plan, “Vibrant Local Economy” is identified as one of the five themes identified in the Strategic Plan. Findings from the Strategic Plan will be reviewed and considered in the draft Directions and Recommendations Report; • Middlesex County’s Economic Development Strategic Plan (“EDSP”) will be finalized in December 2020. Findings from the EDSP will be reviewed and considered in the draft Directions and Recommendations Report; • Promote new and expanding commercial and industrial businesses in the settlement areas as well as strategic locations and corridors (i.e. access to 400-series highways);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a transportation network that links communities throughout the County together and to the major centers; • To attract new economic ventures and opportunities throughout the hamlets that serve land support local residents; • Increased support for entrepreneurs, local businesses and farm-based small businesses; and • Promotion of the local economy and tourism should also be leveraged through expanded opportunities such as farm gate sales. <p>The Economic Diversification Discussion Paper provides a more thorough exploration of this issue.</p>
<p>Sustainable Growth</p>	<p>In order to contribute to the building of strong, sustainable and resilient communities in Middlesex Centre, a balanced approach to growth and development must be achieved.</p> <p>During the first Stakeholder Advisory Committee (“SAC”) meeting and the Vision Workshop, participants identified the need for balancing growth demands and liveability. In the new Strategic Plan, “Balanced Growth” and “Sustainable Infrastructure and Services” are two of the five themes identified in the Strategic Plan. Findings from the Strategic Plan will be reviewed and considered in the draft Directions and Recommendations Report.</p> <p>The updated Official Plan should consider the goals and priorities raised at these engagement events, along with the continued engagement feedback that will be received throughout the Project. As sustainability takes a holistic approach, several sections of the Official Plan may require updated general goals and policies to consider the lens of sustainability for the long-term, 25-year horizon.</p>

4 CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

This Discussion Paper provides an overview of a variety of policies, plans, and guidelines that relate to general policy areas of the Official Plan. This paper will help inform the draft Directions and Recommendations Report by focusing discussion in the next phases of the Official Plan Review project. Feedback on this Discussion Paper will provide direction for the development of recommended policies changes and ultimately, the preparation of the draft Official Plan update.

As part of our Communications and Engagement Strategy (“CES”), the following tasks will occur in the upcoming weeks:

- Finalization of the Discussion Papers and issuance to the public on the project website;
- TAC Meeting #1 will be held to review the role of TAC members, and initiate discussion and scoping of issues as identified in the Background Review Report and Discussion Papers;
- A virtual Policy Workshop will occur with members of Municipal Council. The purpose of the Workshop is to gain a better understanding of Council’s priorities and views of the existing Official Plan. Their insight regarding the existing Official Plan, as well as the future direction they would like to see, is valuable to ensure the OPR captures feedback from all stakeholders. This information will also help inform the draft Directions and Recommendations Report;
- Issuance of the Phase 1 & 2 Engagement Update on the project website and in the engagement summary section in the draft Directions and Recommendations Report; and
- WSP will continue to coordinate with the Municipality as the new Strategic Plan is finalized. It is anticipated that the new Strategic Plan will be presented in January 2021 for Council adoption.