



# Middlesex Centre Official Plan Review

## Background Report



**October 2020**

FINAL

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1	Study Work Program.....	1
1.2	Purpose of Report.....	1
2	PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT.....	2
2.1	Planning Act.....	2
2.2	Provincial Policy and Legislation.....	4
2.2.1	Provincial Policy Statement, 2020.....	4
2.2.2	Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas, 2016.....	5
2.2.3	Minimum Distance Separation Document, 2017.....	5
2.2.4	Source Protection Plan.....	6
2.2.5	Conservation Authorities.....	8
2.3	Middlesex County.....	10
2.3.1	County Official Plan.....	12
2.3.2	Cycling Strategy.....	14
2.3.3	Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan.....	14
2.3.4	Community Improvement Plan Primer.....	15
2.3.5	Middlesex Natural Heritage Study.....	15
2.3.6	Economic Development Strategies / Reports.....	15
2.3.7	Other Studies and Initiatives.....	17
2.4	The Municipality of Middlesex Centre.....	17
2.4.1	Official Plan.....	17
2.4.2	Zoning By-law.....	19
2.4.3	Urban Design Guidelines.....	20
2.4.4	Site Plan Manual.....	20
2.4.5	Trails Master Plan.....	20
2.4.6	Ilderton Community Improvement Plan.....	21



2.4.7	Investing in Middlesex Centre .....	21
2.4.8	Infrastructure Improvements.....	21
2.4.9	Development Charges By-law .....	22
2.4.10	Arva Community Wastewater Treatment Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (In Progress) .....	23
2.4.11	Strategic Plan (In Progress).....	23
2.4.12	Official Plan Amendments to be Consolidated .....	24
<b>3</b>	<b>KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Discussion Papers .....</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1.1	Growth Management.....	28
3.1.2	Infrastructure .....	29
3.1.3	Natural Heritage and Hazard .....	30
3.1.4	Provincial and General Policy.....	31
3.1.5	Economic Diversification.....	32
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Engagement Initiatives to Date.....</b>	<b>33</b>
3.2.1	Section 26 Special Meeting of Council .....	33
3.2.2	Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #1 .....	33
3.2.3	Vision Workshop .....	34
<b>4</b>	<b>NEXT STEPS .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Pre-Consultation Meeting .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Discussion Papers .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Draft Directions and Recommendations Report .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Advancement of Community Engagement Strategy.....</b>	<b>39</b>

# 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 the 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 the 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 required 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.

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## 1.1 STUDY WORK PROGRAM

The OPR is being undertaken in four phases, including:

- Phase 1 – Project Initiation
- Phase 2 – Background Reports and Studies
- Phase 3 – Directions and Recommendations Report
- Phase 4 – Official Plan Amendment(s)

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## 1.2 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this Report is to provide an overview of the planning policy context in which the Official Plan will be reviewed and to identify some key issues and opportunities that may be addressed through this review in consultation with the Province, County, stakeholders and the public. In accordance with Section 26(3)(b) of the *Planning Act*, before making revisions to the Municipality’s Official Plan, the Municipality is required to hold a special meeting of Council to discuss the revisions that may be required. This meeting took place on August 12, 2020.

# 2 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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## 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. Sections 16(1) and 16(2) respectively describe what an official plan must contain, and what it may include.

An official plan must include:

- goals, objectives and policies established primarily to manage and direct physical change and the effects on the social, economic, built and natural environment of the municipality;
- policies and measures that support the adequate provision of affordable housing;
- measures and procedures for informing and obtaining the views of the public in respect to:
  - proposed amendments to the official plan or proposed revisions of the plan,
  - proposed zoning by-laws,
  - proposed plans of subdivision,
  - proposed consents under section 53; and
- other matters as may be prescribed. 2015, c. 26, s. 17; 2017, c. 23, Sched. 3, s. 5 (1).

An official plan may include:

- a description of the measures and procedures proposed to attain the objectives of the plan; and
- a description of the measures and procedures for informing and obtaining the views of the public in respect of planning matters not mentioned in clause (1) (b); and such other matters as may be prescribed. 2015, c. 26, s. 17.

Part I (Section 2) of the *Planning Act* identifies matters of Provincial interest that municipal councils “shall have regard to” when carrying out their responsibilities under the *Act*, including the preparation and adoption of an official plan. These matters include:

- the protection of ecological systems and agricultural resources; the conservation and management of natural resources and the mineral resource base, and; conservation of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific features of interest;
- the supply, efficient use and conservation of energy and water; the adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services; and waste management systems, and; the minimization of waste;
- the orderly development of safe and healthy communities;
- the accessibility for persons with disabilities to all facilities, services and matters to which this *Act* applies;

- the adequate provision and distribution of educational, health, social, cultural and recreational facilities; a full range of housing, including affordable housing; and employment opportunities;
- the protection of the financial and economic well-being of the Province and its municipalities;
- the coordination of planning activities of public bodies, and resolution of conflicts involving public and private interests;
- the protection of public health and safety;
- the appropriate location of growth and development, and promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, transit-friendly and pedestrian-friendly;
- the promotion of built form that is well-designed, encourages a sense of place, and provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant; and
- the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to a changing climate.

The matters of Provincial interest listed above are a summary of the 20 matters of interest listed in the *Planning Act*. They are presented in no particular order and are not intended to indicate that Provincial interests have varying levels of importance. Further direction on how to address matters of provincial interest is provided by policy statements issued under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*; however, municipal Official Plans are the primary tools for implementing these Provincial interests and the direction of PPS in a manner that is appropriate and meaningful to the Municipality.

The *Planning Act* has been amended several times since the current Official Plan was approved. The most recent major amendments include:

- *Strong Communities through Affordable Housing Act, 2011* (Bill 140)
- *Smart Growth for our Communities Act, 2015* (Bill 73)
- *Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016* (Bill 7)
- *Aggregate Resources and Mining Modernization Act, 2017* (Bill 39)
- *Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017* (Bill 139)
- *More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019* (Bill 108)

Section 26 'Updating official plan' states that a municipality shall revise the official plan as required to ensure that it conforms with provincial plans or does not conflict with them, as the case may be, and that the plan has regard to matters of provincial interest. The *Planning Act* goes on to state that council shall review the plan no less frequently than every ten years after it comes into effect as a new official plan, and every five years thereafter, unless the plan has been replaced by a new official plan.

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## 2.2 PROVINCIAL POLICY AND LEGISLATION

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### 2.2.1 PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT, 2020

The current PPS, effective from May 2020, replaced the PPS issued April 2014. 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 concerning the creation of healthy communities, wise use and management of resources, and protection of public health and safety.

Policies focused on Ontario's long-term prosperity, environmental health and social well-being are organized under three key sections within "Part V" of the PPS. Section 1, Building Strong, Healthy Communities, contains policies which relate to the management of land use to promote efficient development and land use patterns.

Ontario's diverse communities must be supported by a coordinated, integrated and comprehensive approach to: the protection and preservation of employment lands; an appropriate range and mix of housing options; healthy, active communities; adequate infrastructure and public service facilities; and, integrated transportation systems.

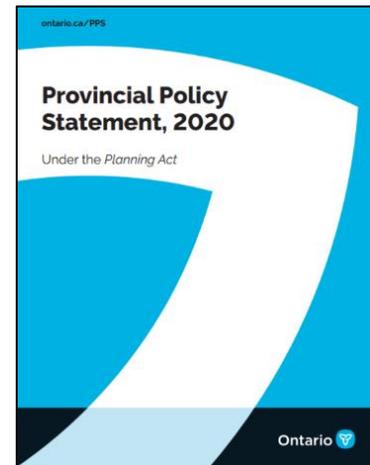
Section 2.0, Wise Use and Management of Resources, contains policies which support conservation of biodiversity, protecting the health of the Great Lakes, and protecting natural heritage, water, agricultural, mineral, cultural heritage and archaeological resources.

Section 3.0, Protecting Public Health and Safety, contains policies focused on mitigating potential risk to public health or safety or of property damage from natural hazards, and not creating new or aggravating existing hazards.

Policy 4.6, under 'Implementation and Interpretation' states:

*"The official plan is the most important vehicle for implementation of this Provincial Policy Statement. Comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning is best achieved through official plans."*

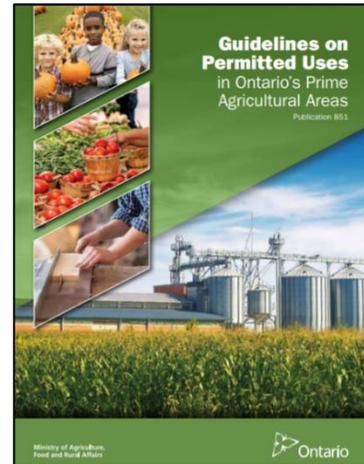
The PPS also states that official plans shall identify provincial interests and set out appropriate land use designations and policies. Official plans should also coordinate cross-boundary matters, and shall provide "clear, reasonable and attainable policies" which ensure development is appropriately located and provincial interests are protected. The PPS explains that planning authorities shall keep their official plans up-to-date with the PPS, and that the policies of the PPS will continue to apply after the adoption and approval of an official plan.



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### 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), 2016, to assist decision-makers, farmers and others in interpreting the PPS and to outline the range of uses that may be permitted in prime agricultural areas. Prime agricultural areas are the Province’s most fertile areas where the majority of crops are produced. The PPS defines prime agricultural land as specialty crop areas and/or Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, and 3 lands, as amended from time to time, in this order of priority for protection. Section 2.3.1 of the PPS states that prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture.



The Guidelines are based on the policy direction of the PPS and revolve around two key objectives: maintaining the land base for agriculture; and supporting a thriving industry and rural economy. The Guidelines are intended to help decision-makers balance these objectives through ensuring all applicable criteria are met for permitted uses.

The PPS currently permits agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses in Ontario's prime agricultural areas. The Guidelines provide direction on how to define these uses and considerations that should be made when assessing planning proposals. Other uses such as industrial operations, residential development or wedding and event venues are strongly discouraged or subject to restrictions by the Guidelines.

The OPR will need to consider these Guidelines since much of the Municipality's land is comprised of agricultural lands. The Official Plan should establish policies to permit an appropriate range of agricultural, agricultural-related, and on-farm diversified uses in prime agricultural areas, and appropriate criteria to accommodate agricultural-related and on-farm diversified uses.

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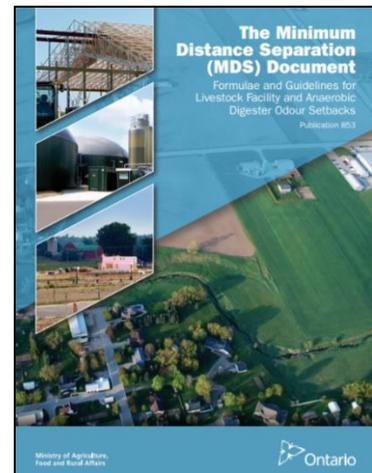
### 2.2.3 MINIMUM DISTANCE SEPARATION DOCUMENT, 2017

On March 1, 2017, the Ontario Ministry of Food and Agriculture’s (“OMAFRA”) Minimum Distance Separation (“MDS”) Formulae Document and Guidelines for Livestock Facility and Anaerobic Digester Odour Setbacks (Reference Publication Number 853), took effect. The objective of MDS is to prevent land use conflicts and minimize nuisance complaints related to odour. The MDS Document establishes a two-way approach, made up of two separate but related formulae, which 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 another land use.

**MDS I** – applies when a new sensitive land use, like a residential development, is proposed adjacent to any existing livestock barns, manure storages and/or anaerobic digesters.

**MDS II** – applies when new, enlarged, or remodelled livestock barns, manure storages and/or anaerobic digester are proposed adjacent to an existing or approved sensitive land use, like a residential development.

The calculated setback distances will vary based on five factors, and will result in unique distances for different types of operations in different circumstances and locations. 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. References to MDS are to be included in municipal planning documents such as zoning by-laws and official plans. Before a land use planning approval can be given, or a building permit can be issued, conformity to MDS setbacks must be demonstrated.



The 2017 revisions to the MDS Formulae Document are minor and technical in nature, align the document with the PPS, 2014, and clarify or elaborate on existing MDS Guidelines and provisions. In many instances, the 2017 revisions affect when and how the MDS Formulae is applied, and from where it is measured. The 2017 revisions to the values associated with the various factors in MDS are relatively minor, and the changes in the calculated MDS setbacks required between most land uses and livestock facilities are not extensive. The one significant exception to this statement is changes to MDS I setbacks related to the elimination of tillable hectares as an input to calculated setbacks and its replacement with a percentage increase based on livestock operation size and lot size.

The Municipality's Official Plan will need to ensure that planning decisions are consistent with the PPS, and appropriately implement the Province's MDS Formulae to comply with the MDS requirements.

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#### 2.2.4 SOURCE PROTECTION PLAN

The Ontario government passed the *Clean Water Act, 2006* to protect existing and future sources of municipal drinking water throughout Ontario. A key deliverable required under the *Act* is a source water protection plan, which is undertaken to: protect existing and future drinking water sources in the source protection area; and for every area identified as an area where an activity is or would be a threat to drinking water, ensure the activity never becomes a threat, or ceases to be one. Section 40 of the *Act* requires municipalities to bring their Official Plan into conformity with the relevant policies and map schedules of those Source Protection Plans that regulate their municipal drinking water systems.

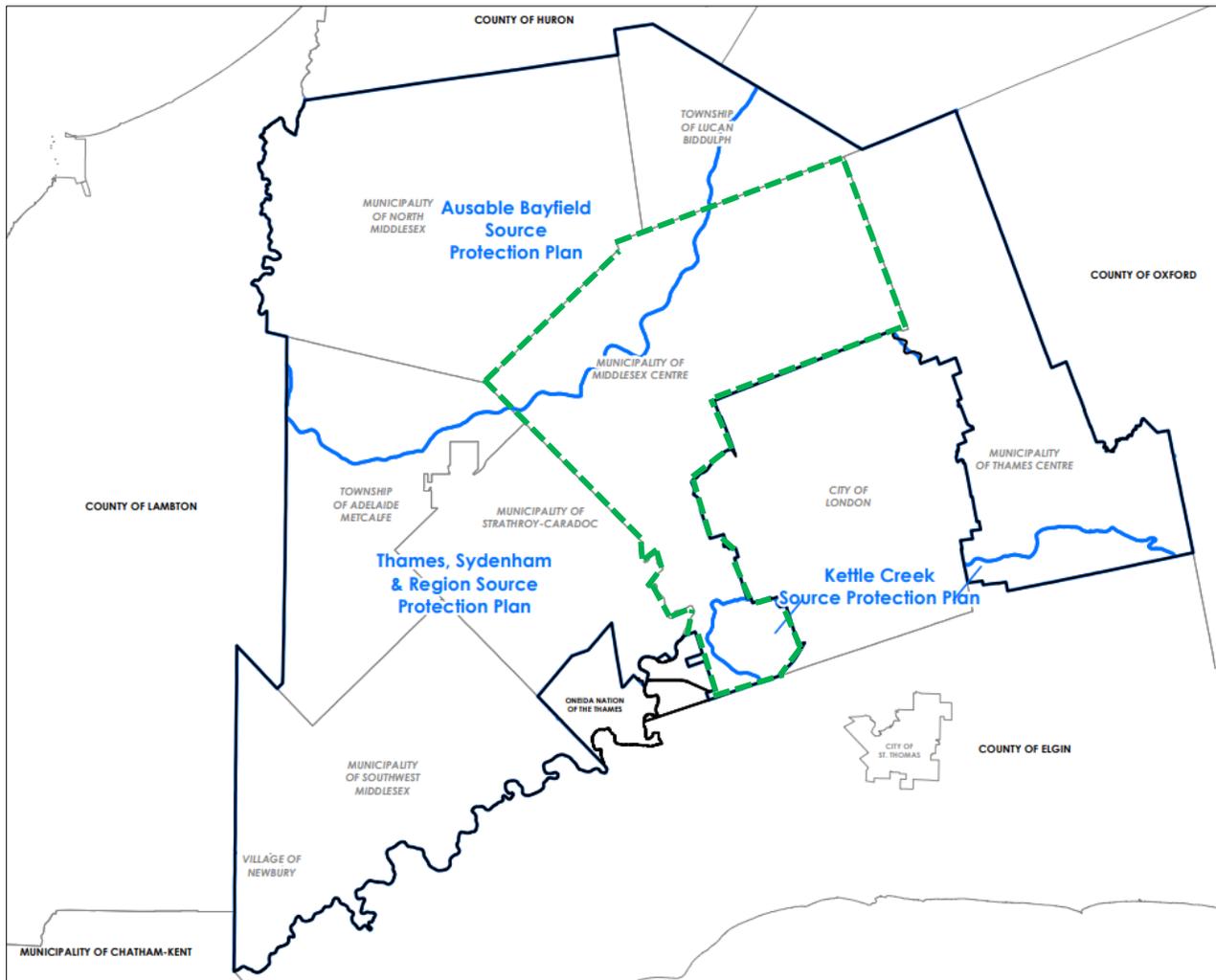
In 2017, a Background Report on Source Protection Plan Implementation was completed by the County. The purpose of the Report was to form the basis of future amendments to the County

Official Plan, and to the Official Plan and Zoning By-laws of lower-tier municipalities that have municipal drinking water systems regulated by a Source Protection Plan.

The following Source Protection Plans are applicable to Middlesex Centre:

- Thames-Sydenham and Region Source Protection Plan
- Kettle Creek Source Protection Plan
- Ausable Bayfield Source Protection Plan

**Figure 1** identifies the Source Protection Plan areas that apply to Middlesex Centre.



**Figure 1: Source Protection Plan Areas (Background Report Source Protection Plan Implementation, 2017)**

There are four Municipal Drinking Source Water Systems that have Wellhead Protection Areas (“WHPA”) located throughout the County. Two of the Wellhead Protection Areas, Birr and Melrose, are owned and operated by the Middlesex Centre and are regulated by the Thames-Sydenham and Region Source Protection Plan.

The Source Protection Plans identify three different types of vulnerable areas that affect drinking water quality within Middlesex County including:

- **Highly Vulnerable Aquifers (“HVA”)**, which are areas underground that are highly saturated with water – enough water that it can be drawn for human use;
- **Intake Protection Zones (“IPZ”)**, which are the areas on the water and land surrounding a municipal surface water intake; and
- **Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas (“SGRA”)**, which are areas on the landscape that are characterized by porous soils, such as sand or gravel, that allows the water to seep easily into the ground and flow to an aquifer.

The 2017 Background Report on Source Protection Plan Implementation for Middlesex County generally outlines the roles municipalities have in implementing the source protection policies. The implementation of Source Water Protection Policies and Regulatory Framework from the Report were incorporated into the Municipality’s Official Plan in 2019 via Official Plan Amendment (“OPA”) 44. The County is currently undertaking Source Protection Plan implementation in conjunction with its Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) under Section 26 of the *Planning Act*. As such, Middlesex Centre may not need to update the Source Protection Policies until after the County’s MCR is complete.

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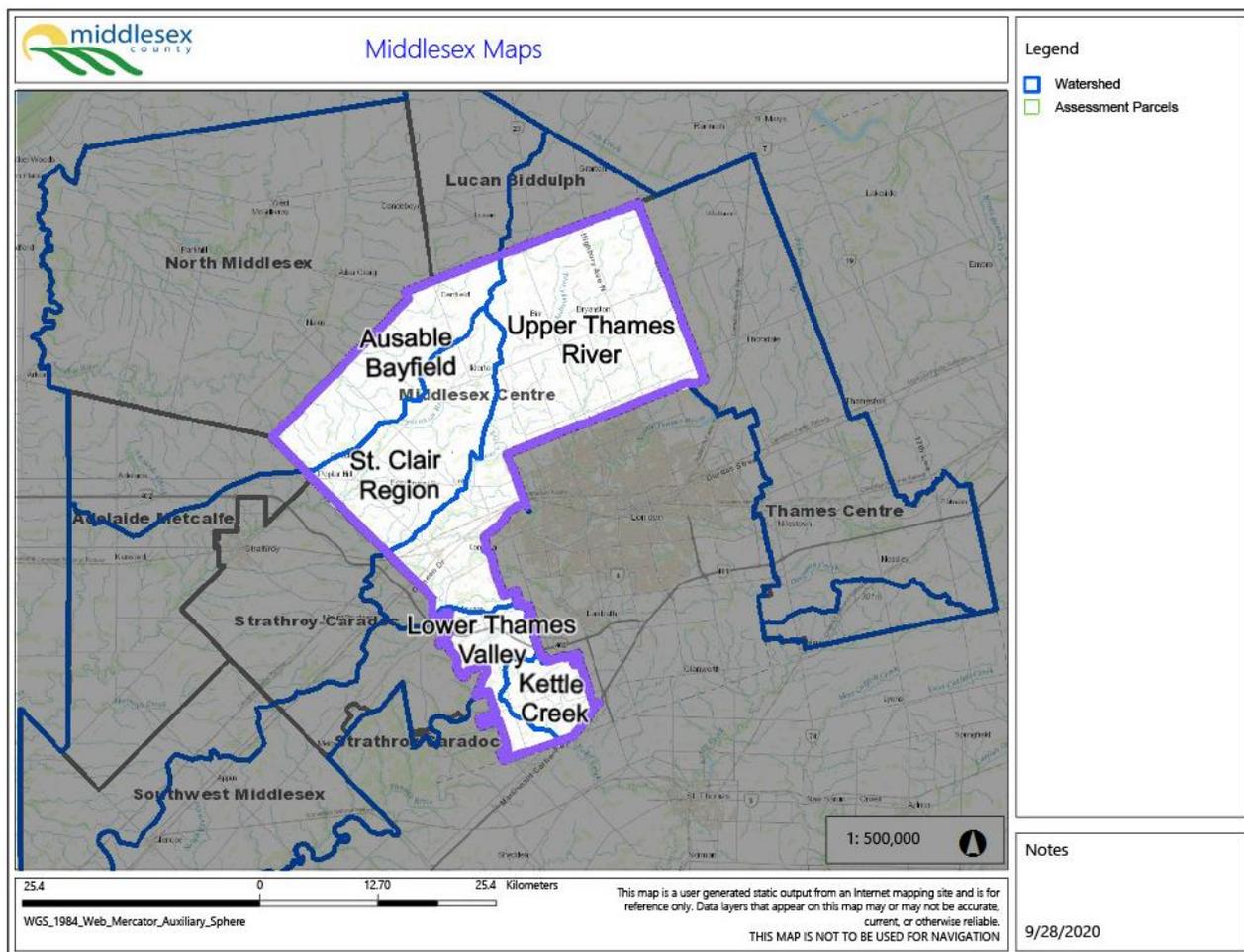
### 2.2.5 CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

Conservation Authorities are public sector organizations that develop and implement programs and services that further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources in watersheds in Ontario. Conservation Authorities are governed under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, which is administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF). Conservation Authorities provide advice to municipalities on natural hazard management and help to regulate development and other activities in areas affected by water-based natural hazards through a permit process.

Natural Hazard lands located within Middlesex Centre fall under the jurisdiction of several Conservation Authorities, which include:

- Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA)
- Kettle Creek Conservation Authority (KCCA)
- Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA)
- St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA)
- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)

**Figure 2** (next page) identifies the Natural Hazard Lands, Watercourses and Conservation Authority boundaries.



**Figure 2: Middlesex Centre Official Plan Schedule ‘C’ – Natural Hazard Lands**

The following additional documents were reviewed as recommended by County staff, which pertain to the OPR.

### 2.2.5.1 UTRCA ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY MANUAL

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (“UTRCA”) Environmental Policy Manual was approved in 2006. The purpose of the Manual is to provide local Upper Thames watershed policies which will guide development and site alteration while protecting, preserving and enhancing the natural environment. The policies are based on the interrelationship between environmental, physical and social factors that impact land use planning and development in the watershed. The Manual serves as a tool to UTRCA Board of Directors and Staff, watershed municipalities, the land development industry, and the public.

As a technical review agency, the UTRCA is circulated on planning documents such as Official Plans and Area Studies as well as planning applications and provides comments from a watershed perspective. Section 3 of the Manual outlines policies that must be read in conjunction with the Environmental Planning Areas of Interest outlined in Section 2.

#### *2.2.5.2 LTVCA OPERATIONAL GUIDE*

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (“LTVCA”) Operational Guidelines were issued in 2014. The Guidelines pertain to development, interference with wetlands and alteration to shorelines and watercourses regulation. The Guidelines are used by Staff in reviewing applications under the Conservation Authority’s Regulation and either recommend approval or denial.

#### *2.2.5.3 SCRCA REGULATIONS AND PLAN REVIEW POLICIES AND GUIDELINES*

The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (“SCRCA”) Wetland Regulation Policy was approved in 2016. The SCRCA’s regulation policy pertains to development, interference with wetlands and alteration to shorelines and watercourses regulation. Section 1.4 of the document include guidelines for implementing the SCRCA’s Regulation with respect to wetlands and “other areas”; acknowledging its role through the planning process, and ensuring that while reviewing applications, to ensure that development can occur outside / be set back an appropriate distance from wetland feature boundaries.

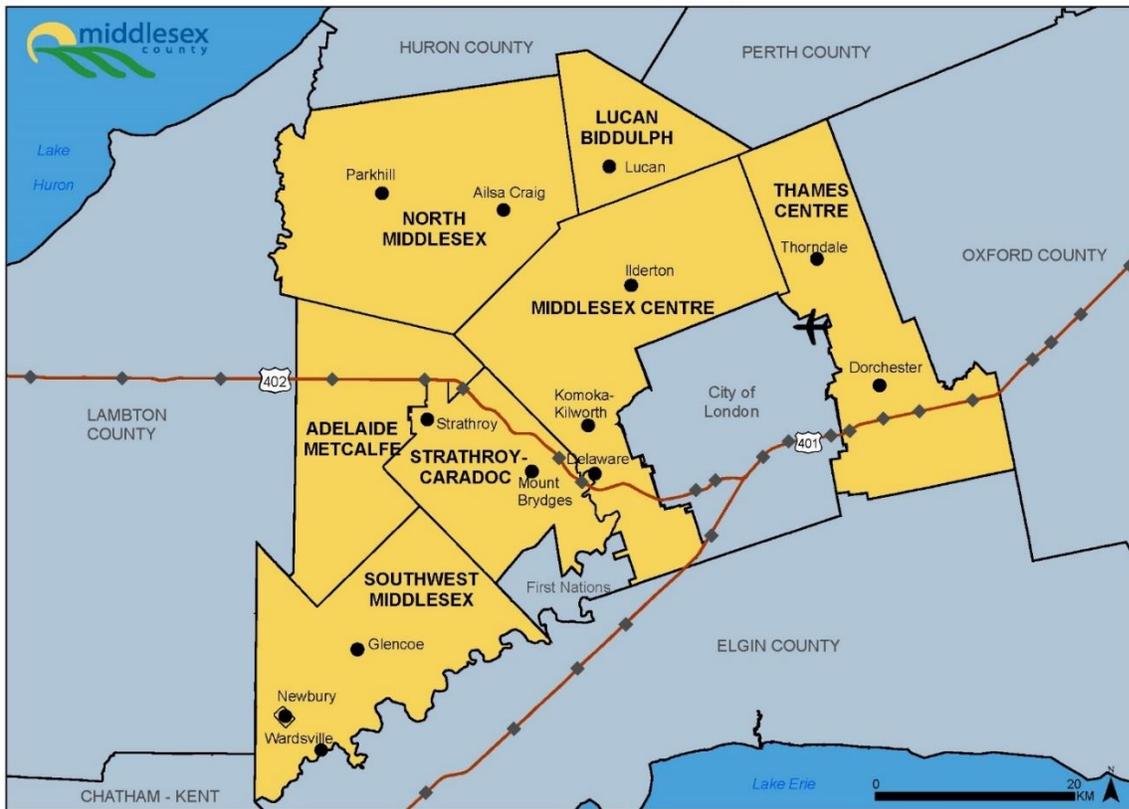
#### *2.2.5.4 WATERSHED REPORT CARDS*

Ontario’s Conservation Authorities prepare Watershed Report Cards every five years to measure the environmental health of our regions and report on watershed conditions. Report cards provide information to protect and enhance watershed resources, which are based on standards that were developed for consistent reporting across Ontario. The ABCA, KCCA, LTVCA, SCRCA and UTRCA all issued Watershed Report Cards in 2018. The report cards help measure groundwater quality, surface water quality, forest conditions and wetland conditions, and provide a grading score for different areas within the Conservation Authority’s jurisdiction.

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## 2.3 MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Middlesex County is a largely rural upper-tier municipality located in southwestern Ontario. It is surrounded by Huron County and Perth County to the north, Oxford County to the east, the City of London, Elgin County and First Nations Territory to the south, Chatham-Kent to the southwest, and Lambton County to the west. The County has a population of approximately 73,000 people and a total land mass of 3,300 km<sup>2</sup>.



**Figure 3: Map of Communities in Middlesex County**

The County is comprised of eight lower-tier municipalities which include:

- Township of Adelaide Metcalfe
- Township of Lucan Biddulph
- Municipality of Middlesex Centre
- Municipality of North Middlesex
- Municipality of Southwest Middlesex
- Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc
- Municipality of Thames Centre
- Village of Newbury

The County is the approval authority for the Middlesex Centre Official Plan update. The County has the authority to approve, modify and approve or refuse to approve all or part of the Official Plan update.

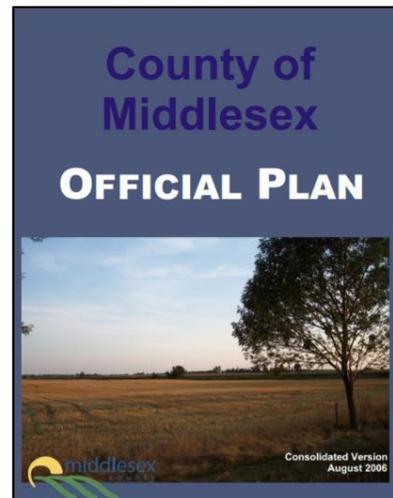
The following documents will be discussed further within this Section:

- County Official Plan
- Growth Management

- Cycling Strategy
- Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan
- Community Improvement Plan Primer
- Middlesex Natural Heritage Study
- Economic Development Strategies / Reports
- Other Studies and Initiatives, including Class Environmental Assessments

### 2.3.1 COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

The Middlesex County Official Plan (“County OP”) was adopted in 1997 and approved in 1999. It was then amended by Official Plan Amendment No. 2 in 2006. It 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 agriculture as the predominant land use and economic mainstay in the County. The County faces development pressures as a result of its close proximity to the City of London. A balanced approach to managing growth while protecting and preserving the natural environment, the agricultural community, and the countryside landscape is sought by the County.

The County Official Plan Section 2.3.8 contains policies for Settlement Areas which shall be the focus for future growth including residential, commercial and industrial development. The County categorizes Settlement Areas into Urban Areas or Community Areas. Urban Areas either provide or demonstrate a strong potential to provide full municipal services and contain the highest concentration and intensity of land uses. Community Areas are meant to serve the surrounding Agricultural Areas and provide a more limited range of land uses and activities than Urban Areas. The Municipality of Middlesex Centre includes five Settlement Areas: Ilderton, Arva, Komoka, Kilworth and Delaware.

Hamlets located within Agricultural Areas, while not considered Settlement Areas, are identified as having the potential to accommodate some future development. The Agricultural Area comprises all lands not designated Settlement Area or Natural Environment Area.

The County Official Plan is intended to establish an upper-tier policy framework to guide local municipalities in preparation of local Official Plans. Local Official Plans complement the County Plan by providing more detailed strategies, policies and land use designations for planning and

development at the local level. Section 3.2.3 of this report provides a list of issues related to general development policies that the County encourages lower tier municipalities include in Local Official Plans. This section also provides a list of issues related to implementation policies that Local Official Plans shall contain.

#### 2.3.1.1 *GROWTH MANAGEMENT*

Growth Management policies are contained within Section 2.3 of the County Official Plan. The County recognizes that it will experience population and employment growth over the projected planning period until 2026. While growth is both necessary and critical, it must also be managed to minimize adverse impacts to agriculture and the Natural System. The majority of growth shall be directed toward the Settlement Areas and must be phased to coincide with the availability of appropriate types and levels of services. The County Official Plan intends to ensure that adequate lands be available to accommodate the projected growth, however development phasing, efficient use of existing infrastructure and the logical extension of services are required in the future.

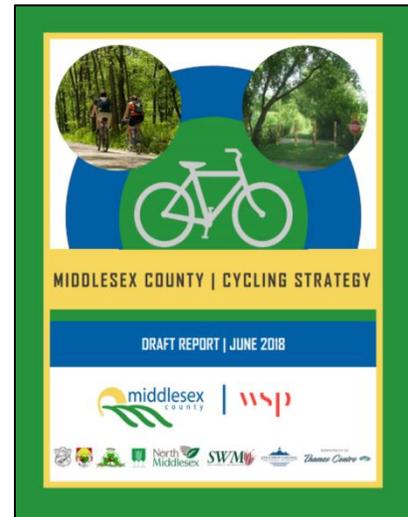
Growth projections to 2026 were made for each local municipality within the County as part of the Official Plan. Population projections for Middlesex Centre were completed for a 20-year period of 2006 to 2026, with an anticipated 34% increase in population to 22,939 people. In 2005, the County determined that sufficient vacant land for residential and commercial development was designated in local official plans to accommodate anticipated growth patterns. The County recognizes that unanticipated circumstances may arise in the future, and if over a planning period, a local municipality cannot accommodate population projections outlined in the County OP, that nothing in the Plan shall restrict other municipalities from accommodating that growth provided that appropriate services can be provided.

As part of the Municipality's OPR, the need for additional land to accommodate growth to 2046 is being assessed. At the same time, the County is initiating a review of its Official Plan, which would extend population forecasts and identify a new planning horizon. Upon completion of the County's new Official Plan, the Municipality may undertake another review of its Official Plan to determine if further updates are required due to the implications of growth identified by the County and the available land supply.

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### 2.3.2 CYCLING STRATEGY

In 2018, the County developed a Cycling Strategy to guide the planning, design, implementation and operation of cycling infrastructure and programming over a 20-year horizon. The Strategy aims to create a plan for a connected and continuous network of cycling routes, make cycling more convenient and enjoyable for people of all ages and abilities, enhance the County as a cycling destination, and serve as a resource for County and Municipal staff to assist with decision-making related to cycling. The Plan contains 18 recommendations and additional guidelines related to processes, policies, resources, tools and programs to support the active transportation network. The Official Plan may implement the recommendations of the County-wide Cycling Strategy.



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### 2.3.3 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 Plan supports and aligns with a number of other strategic initiatives and plans, including the Middlesex County Homeless Prevention Housing Plan (included in Appendix D of the Plan) and the London Middlesex Community Housing Regeneration Plan. The Plan recognizes the strong partnership with Middlesex County, as responsibilities related to homelessness are delivered in the County through contracted service agreements with the County. Further, the alignment of strategies and actions of Middlesex County and the City of London are identified by way of an asterisk throughout the Plan (\*) which identifies the need to retain existing and create new affordable housing stock through the implementation of tools, policies and programs that increase affordable, quality and mixed housing options.

The Middlesex County Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan Report 2019 – 2024 issued November 26, 2019 provides an overview of the strategies and actions that will guide the County's efforts to addressing housing and homelessness in the County. The Plan identifies two major priorities, housing and homeless prevention; each with their own vision, strategic priorities, goals, and a strategic initiatives evaluation table aimed at measuring success over the next 5-years.

The updated Official Plan should consider policy to increase and support affordable housing options, and make reference to County and other applicable housing and/or homelessness plans.

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#### 2.3.4 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN PRIMER

The purpose of the County's Community Improvement Plan ("CIP") Primer is to provide an overview of the role of CIPs which serve as a tool to municipalities that can help improve economic health and vitality of their communities. The Primer seeks to provide a general overview of what a CIP is, how it works, and provide guidance on how local municipalities can approach the creation of their own. Section 28 of the *Planning Act* outlines the authority and means with which CIPs can be undertaken by municipalities, and generally states that where there is a local official plan in effect within a municipality that contains provisions respecting community improvement, a municipal council may designate (by by-law) all or part of the area covered by the official plan as the CIP Area or CIPA. Council may then prepare and adopt a CIP to help facilitate the improvement goals of the municipality. Section 17 of the *Planning Act* outlines the process a municipality must follow to adopt a CIP. The Primer is currently in draft form, with an anticipated completion date of late Fall 2020.

The Municipality is in the process of bringing forward an updated CIP for the Village of Ilderton in 2021.

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#### 2.3.5 MIDDLESEX NATURAL HERITAGE STUDY

In 2003, the Middlesex Natural Heritage Study ("MNHS") was undertaken by the County and served as the primary source for the woodland mapping on Schedule C of the County Official Plan. In 2014, the UTRCA, in cooperation with the Middlesex County Conservation Authorities, prepared an update to the original MNHS (2003). The purpose of the update was to incorporate updated requirements in the PPS (2014) to identify Natural Heritage Systems. Under Section 2.1 of the PPS, general directives for municipalities related to planning for natural heritage were included. In addition, areas in the County that are considered to be "significant" were identified through new mapping technology.

The County's current Official Plan relies on the 2003 MNHS to define significant woodlands and the Conservation Authorities have worked with the County to develop Development Assessment Report ("DAR") guidelines and confirmation criteria to assist with implementation. It is recommended that Middlesex Centre work closely with the County during the review of its Official Plan to ensure that the updated Official Plan accurately reflects updated definitions, policy, and mapping in the MNHS (2014). It is the County's view that the 2014 MNHS update constitutes a Systems Study as required by the PPS.

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#### 2.3.6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES / REPORTS

##### 2.3.6.1 EMPLOYMENT LAND NEEDS STUDY

In 2012, an Employment Land Needs Study was completed by the County. The purpose of the Study was to provide insight into a number of key employment issues, including: the likely types and amount of employment land demand in the County over the next 20 years; the current supply

of employment lands and the quality of the employment land inventory to accommodate demand; and the initiatives that can be undertaken at the County and local levels to encourage investment in employment lands.

The Study provided an assessment of the County's market potential, a review of vacant employment land inventory, population and employment forecasts and resulting employment land demand, and a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the employment land inventory ability to meet future demand. The Study outlined three thematic areas of recommendations including: 1) market choice and employment land protection; 2) targeted marking of employment areas; and, 3) longer term planning and development. The Study also highlighted sections of the Middlesex Centre Official Plan which contain employment land policies, including Sections 5.3.1, 5.6, 7.2, and 9.2. The Study recommends that the County and lower-tier municipalities develop more detailed provisions and policies related to flexibility and market choice, as well as the protection of employment lands from non-employment uses. Appendix II of the Study further outlines a land use and economic policy review of key documents, including the Middlesex Official Plan.

#### 2.3.6.2 *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN*

In 2014, an Economic Development Strategic Plan was completed by Middlesex County. The purpose of the Plan is to inform residents, businesses and elected officials on the challenges and opportunities facing the County in the future, and the actions required to ensure sustainable economic growth and strengthen the County's competitive position. The Strategic Plan developed three goals including: 1) a supportive environment for business and investment; 2) a proactive and targeted approach to business attraction; and, 3) a commitment to community sustainability and growth. Each goal has an objective and list of strategic actions designed to help achieve the goal, which are further outlined in Section 4.3. Section 4.4 contains key considerations in the implementation of the proposed strategy, identifying how the strategy is to be resourced.



As a partner to the County, the updated Middlesex Centre Official Plan should consider policies which support the County's efforts to achieve the action items identified in Section 4.4, that ultimately contribute toward an enhanced competitive advantage, attracting new business opportunities, and building community capacity for economic growth and development.

The County is currently reviewing and updating the Economic Development Strategic Plan which is anticipated to be completed in 2021.

#### 2.3.6.3 *AGRI-FOOD ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT*

The Agri-Food Economic Impact Report was completed in 2015. The purpose of the Report was to gain an understanding of the economic impact of the Agri-food sector, identify agricultural sub-sectors with the highest potential for creating and sustaining employment and investment; identify key strategic priorities to support and grow the agricultural sector; and identify potential partners

and opportunities to work in collaboration with on common agricultural issues. The Report is part of the first phase of developing an Agri-food Sector Strategy. As the largest employer in the County, the Agri-food industry accounts for 15.2% of total employment. The Report provides a comprehensive overview of different types of production, the Agri-food industry in the County in relation to neighbouring Counties, complementary and support services, and the overall economic impact of the Agri-Food Industry. Report findings should be considered when reviewing and updating Agriculture and Economic Development related policy during the Municipality's OPR.

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### 2.3.7 OTHER STUDIES AND INITIATIVES

#### 2.3.7.1 CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

##### **GLENDON DRIVE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

The Glendon Drive Streetscape Schedule C Municipal Class Environmental Assessment ("EA") Study was completed in 2018. The purpose of the Study was to assess potential improvements to Glendon Drive; an east-west arterial road that provides local connectivity between Kilworth and Komoka, inter-County traffic, and serves as a main commuter route to the City of London to the east and Highway 402 to the west. Recommendations were developed for different sections of the route, which have different associated timeframes and costs. An amendment to the Middlesex Centre Official Plan transportation schedule should be reviewed as a result of the completed EA.

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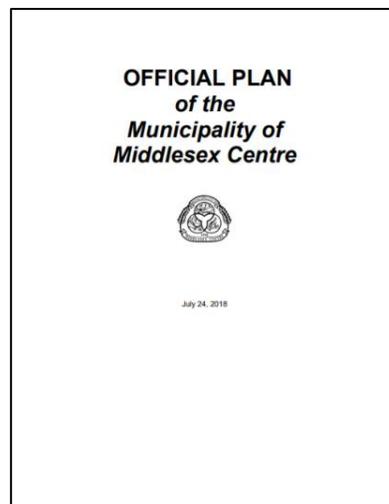
## 2.4 THE MUNICIPALITY OF MIDDLESEX CENTRE

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### 2.4.1 OFFICIAL PLAN

In 1998, the three former Townships of Delaware, Lobo and London were amalgamated to form the Township of Middlesex Centre. Shortly after amalgamation, the new Council adopted a Strategic Plan in 1999 which included the following Municipal Mission Statement:

*Middlesex Centre is a community of urban and rural communities, woven together by the strength of our agricultural base, community spirit, and positive vision. Through innovative planning, financial responsibility, and strong partnerships, we will sustain our unique character while ensuring a strong future for our citizens.*



This Mission Statement along with other directives in the Strategic Plan helped act as a guide in the establishment of the Official Plan. The Official Plan was adopted by the Township of Middlesex Centre Council and County Council in 2000. The Official Plan uses a 20-year planning horizon

from 2011-2031, with the intention that the Official Plan be continually monitored, reviewed and amended if necessary every five years to ensure its continued applicability, relevance and appropriateness. In 2007, the Township was renamed the Municipality of Middlesex Centre. The last Municipal Comprehensive Review occurred in 2011. The most recent consolidation of the Official Plan is dated July 24, 2018.

Section 1 of the Official Plan provides an introduction to the plan and description of the planning approach for the Municipality, including the municipal mission statement, general principles and major land use concept. The legislative context for the Official Plan and its relationship to the County Official Plan is also discussed.

The Municipality's Official Plan is intended to address local issues, unique characteristics and special objectives and goals of the Municipality. Section 1.7 provides a list of 21 general principles of the OP, which are based on a consistent theme raised during public consultation for the Strategic Plan related to the recognition and preservation of the traditional physical and social character of Middlesex Centre's settlement and agricultural areas. Section 1.8 identifies the 9 general components of major land use concepts which are illustrated in the land use schedules of the OP, acknowledging that agriculture (and agricultural related purposes) will continue to be the predominant use of land within the Municipality, and that the majority of growth will be directed to Urban Settlement Areas.

Sections 2 through 8 of the Official Plan provide goals and approach, permitted uses and related policies for each land use designation.

Section 2 of the Official Plan 'Policies for Agricultural Areas' sets out policies that support the Municipality's intent to protect agricultural and resource uses and enhancement of the agricultural economy. Policies are designed to avoid land use conflicts and the prevention of non-agricultural urban uses outside the settlement area.

Section 3 of the Official Plan 'Policies for Natural Areas and Natural Hazard Areas' sets out policies that aim to protect, and wherever possible enhance, significant natural features and functions for the long term from adverse impacts. The Official Plan states that policies related to these designations prioritize the prevention or reduction of risk to public safety and property from natural hazard processes including flooding and unstable slopes.

Section 4 of the Official Plan 'Policies for Aggregate and Petroleum Resource Areas' sets out policies that acknowledge the importance of aggregate resource deposits with the Municipality, and the long-term protection of these resources. Policies aim to mitigate or prevent unreasonable land use conflicts and ensure the progressive and appropriate rehabilitation of associated resource sites.

Section 5 of the Official Plan 'Settlement Area Policies and Land Use Designations' is concerned with policies for the Municipality's Settlement Areas, which are intended to accommodate the majority of growth in the future. The Municipality has three levels of Settlement Areas including Urban, Community and Hamlet. The Official Plan identifies 11 Settlement Areas.

Section 6 of the Official Plan ‘Municipal Design Policies’ contains policies which relate to physical design issues including urban form, public realm, public spaces and high-quality subdivision and site plan design. The Municipality has also prepared Urban Design Guidelines separate from the Official Plan to supplement policies contained within this section.

Section 7 of the Official Plan ‘Rural Commercial and Industrial Areas’ contains policies for commercial-related and industrial uses in areas outside of settlement boundaries. The Official Plan recognizes that the County does not permit the establishment of new or additional Rural Commercial or Rural Industrial areas outside of settlement boundaries.

Section 8 of the Official Plan ‘Parks and Recreation Areas’ contain policies for the Municipality’s parks, open space areas, conservation areas, municipal trails and walkways, arenas and recreation areas, and private recreation opportunities.

Section 9 of the Official Plan contains general municipal policies pertaining to a number of municipal issues including the planning of institutional uses, the facilitation of economic development, the provision of appropriate municipal infrastructure and services, the establishment of a safe and efficient transportation system, the provision of a well-planned and distributed parks and recreation structure, and identification and protection of cultural and heritage features.

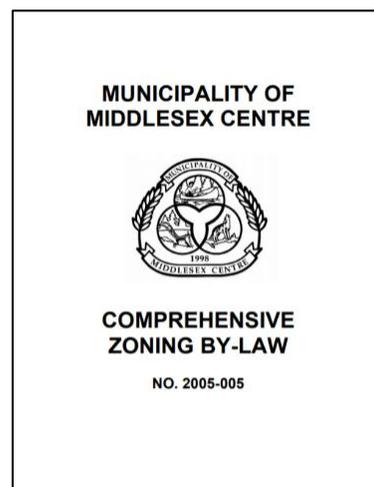
Remaining Sections of the Official Plan address ‘Implementation and Interpretation’, ‘Special Policy Areas’ and ‘Glossary of Terms’.

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#### 2.4.2 ZONING BY-LAW

The Municipality’s Zoning By-law 2005-005 (office consolidation May 2005) 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 constitutes a consolidated version of Zoning By-law No. 2005-005, the comprehensive Zoning By-law of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre. It incorporates all amendments to the Zoning By-law, all temporary use by-laws, all amendments to remove the Holding (“H”) symbol, and all minor variances/permissions granted by the Committee of Adjustment in full force and effect.

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.



Section 26(9) of the *Planning Act* states that no later than three years after revision of an official plan coming into effect, a municipality shall amend all zoning by-laws currently in effect to ensure conformity with the official plan.

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### 2.4.3 *URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES*

Urban Design Guidelines (“UDG”) for Settlement Areas in the Municipality were completed in 2019. The purpose of the Guidelines is to 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 are organized to address urban design issues raised by redevelopment and infill in existing residential neighbourhoods, the creation of new neighbourhoods, and the design of multiple dwellings. Guidelines for non-residential areas are included for settlement commercial areas, employment areas and institutional areas. While the Guidelines acknowledge the unique, distinct characteristics of each Settlement Area, it also notes a number of common qualities and potential urban design concerns that can be addressed through the Guidelines. The Guidelines acknowledge that they are to be read in conjunction with the relevant policies of the Municipality’s Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and Site Plan Manual.

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### 2.4.4 *SITE PLAN MANUAL*

The Site Plan Manual was completed by the Municipality in 2019. The purpose of the Site Plan manual is to assist applicants with the requirements related to the Site Plan Control process, which is required prior to the issuance of building permits for many types of development. The Manual enables the Municipality to examine proposed site development to ensure compatibility with surrounding areas, and that it meets technical requirements of municipal standards such as parking and loading, grading, servicing, landscaping and buffering, and waste storage.

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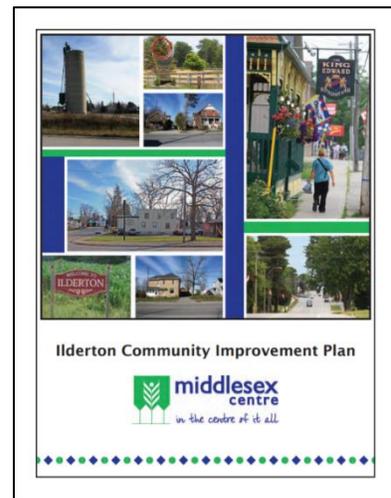
### 2.4.5 *TRAILS MASTER PLAN*

The Trails Master Plan was adopted in 2017 and approved in 2018. OPA#39 introduced policies related to the establishment, protection and enhancement of multi-use trail opportunities in the Municipality. The Trails Master Plan introduced a new series of schedules (E through E-7) which illustrates the existing and proposed trail networks and introduced a new Section (9.4.6) in the Official Plan to address multi-use trails. Nine principles were developed to serve as a guide when planning, constructing and maintaining multi-use trails. Policies for multi-use trails are further outlined in Section 9.4.6 b).

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#### 2.4.6 ILBERTON 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 CIP aims to incent property owners and tenants in Ilderton’s downtown to initiate or expand their businesses and stimulate private investment in the village. The CIP also acknowledges the Municipality’s commitment to improving the streetscape of Ilderton’s downtown through the downtown Master Plan’s street improvement recommendations. Section 28(2) of the *Planning Act* enables municipal councils to designate CIP project areas via by-law provided that their official plans contain policies that allow the establishment of such areas. Section 10.18 of the Municipality’s Official Plan contains CIP policies.



The Municipality is in the process of bringing forward an updated CIP for the Village of Ilderton in 2021.

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#### 2.4.7 INVESTING IN MIDDLESEX CENTRE

“Investing in Middlesex Centre: A Manual” was completed in September 2012. The purpose of the Manual was to serve as a guide on ways to invest in Middlesex Centre. The Manual provides a “snapshot” on information such as the history of the community, demographics, amenities, jobs, housing, the local economy, and development processes. Section 8.4 of the Manual provides an overview of the OPA process in the Municipality, acknowledging that additional information, studies, and/or reports may be required by the Municipality prior to approvals being granted.

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#### 2.4.8 INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

##### 2.4.8.1 SETTLEMENT AREA STORMWATER MASTER PLAN

A Stormwater Master Plan for the Municipality’s Settlement Areas was completed in August 2020, with a review period until October 1, 2020. The Municipality previously completed a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment following the Master Plan approach to identify storm drainage system improvements to provide better service to existing communities and a drainage service strategy to accommodate future growth in the Settlement Areas. The Study excluded the Delaware Settlement Area, which was assessed through a previous Master Planning process. Recommendations include upgrades to existing municipal drains, a mixture of Low Impact Development and traditional stormwater management facilities to address future developments, and the establishment of new stormwater outlets. Implementation of the Master Plan

recommendations will be identified through the capital planning process and as triggered by future development applications.

The Study will be referenced in the OPR Discussion Papers and considered in the Draft Directions and Recommendations Report.

#### *2.4.8.2 DELAWARE COMMUNITY SETTLEMENT AREA STORMWATER MASTER PLAN*

A Stormwater Master Plan for the Delaware Community Settlement Area was completed in 2016. The purpose of the Master Plan Environmental Assessment was to identify the necessary storm drainage system improvements to better service the existing community and to address future growth. Recommendations ranged from ditch improvements, storm sewer installation, outlet modifications and dry SWM ponds to address future development.

#### *2.4.8.3 ROAD NEEDS STUDY*

A Roads Needs Study was completed in 2020. The Study summarizes the road system survey conducted during Fall 2019, which included a review of the Municipality road network definition, assessment of current conditions and needs for each road segment, and development of budget scenarios and analysis related to the recommended improvements and related performance predictions of the road network.

#### *2.4.8.4 MASTER SERVICING PLAN*

A Master Servicing Plan Municipal Class Environmental Assessment was completed in 2010. The purpose of the Plan is to assist the Municipality with the overall planning for a period of up to 20-years for the five servicing areas of wastewater, water, solid waste, stormwater management and transportation. The Plan provides a summary of existing conditions for services, with recommended community-wide and municipal-wide recommendations, and implementation of servicing recommendations. An update to the Master Servicing Plan is anticipated in 2021/2022.

#### *2.4.8.5 COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN*

A Community Services Master Plan was completed in 2012. The purpose of the Master Plan is to provide an effective long-range strategic framework to guide decision-making and investments in municipal community services. The Master Plan examined local parks, recreation, trail opportunities, and consulted with the public and stakeholders to identify gaps and priorities, and develop an implementation framework. An implementation strategy was developed, which contains a summary of all recommendations with the preferred timing and level of priority for each.

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#### *2.4.9 DEVELOPMENT CHARGES BY-LAW*

In 2019, a Development Charges Background Study was completed to address the forecast 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. The Study provided recommendations relating to the establishment of a development charge policy for the Municipality pursuant to the *Development Charges Act, 1997, S.O., 1997, c. 27*. Designated Municipal Services under this By-law include Municipal-Wide Services (roads, public works, fire

protection, parks and recreation, library and administration) and Area-Specific Services (water and wastewater) for the Area-Specific Services Designated Lands of Komoka/Kilworth, Ilderton, Delaware and Arva. On July 17, 2019, the Development Charges By-law, 2019 was passed by Municipal Council, which will expire on July 17, 2024.

#### 2.4.9.1 *SECONDARY PLANS*

##### **KOMOKA-KILWORTH SECONDARY PLAN**

The Komoka-Kilworth Urban Settlement Area is one of the Municipality's primary areas targeted for accommodating urban growth. The area permits a wide range of uses including residential, commercial and employment, supported by parks and open space, schools, recreational and community facilities. Section 5.7 contains goals and policies specific to the Komoka-Kilworth area and applicable to lands shown on Schedule A-2. The Secondary Plan was implemented through OPA #28 on January 24, 2014.

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#### 2.4.10 *ARVA COMMUNITY WASTEWATER TREATMENT MUNICIPAL CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (IN PROGRESS)*

In April 2010, a Master Servicing Plan Class Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed in Middlesex Centre in accordance with the requirements of phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class EA process. The Study reviewed municipal services including water, sanitary, storm, transportation and solid waste for both existing and future developments in the Municipality. The Master Plan reviewed Arva's current wastewater treatment and identified that the cap on increased sanitary servicing in the current agreement with the City of London and the lack of an Arva wastewater treatment facility ("WWTF") both limit the total potential growth and rate of growth in Arva.

The preferred option recommended to amend the agreement with the City of London. Following significant work by Municipal staff and council, the City of London proposed a minor amendment to the agreement to remove the annual cap of 10 units per year; however, the agreement continues to cap growth at 50 units in each five-year period and did not include an increase to the permitted capacity. This will be discussed further in the Infrastructure Discussion Paper.

The Municipality is now proceeding with a Schedule C Municipal Class EA for a new waste water treatment facility to support future growth.

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#### 2.4.11 *STRATEGIC PLAN (IN PROGRESS)*

The Municipality is currently undertaking a Strategic Plan Review exercise concurrently with the OPR. The Strategic Plan will determine municipal priorities for all municipal operations, not just planning matters, for the next 5-years for a timeframe of 2020-2025. The Strategic Plan Review and OPR processes will take a joint-approach, with the opportunity for sharing of information, findings, and public engagement activities.

#### 2.4.12 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENTS TO BE CONSOLIDATED

Recent Official Plan amendments (including Municipal-wide and site-specific amendments) that have been approved since the Official Plan was prepared will be consolidated in the new Official Plan. In total, there are 52 amendments to date. The following list includes each Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to date, and the general intent of the amendment:

OPA 1	Redesignate from Agriculture to Natural Environment (Schedule A)
OPA 2	Redesignate from Settlement Employment to Residential (Schedule A-2)
OPA 3	General Amendment - Intensive Agricultural Uses subject to site plan control (Section 10.5)
OPA 4	Redesignate from Agriculture to Parks & Recreation, Natural Environment & SPA #12 – Golf Course
OPA 5	Redesignate from Settlement Commercial to Residential and from Rural Industrial & SPA #4 to Rural Commercial
OPA 6	General Amendment - Intensive Agricultural Uses subject to site plan control (Section 10.5)
OPA 7	Redesignate from Agriculture and Floodplain to Agriculture, Floodplain and SPA #13 (Schedule A-3)
OPA 8	Redesignate from Settlement Commercial to Residential (Schedule A-3)
OPA 9	Redesignate from Agriculture and FloodPlain & SPA #13 to Parks & Recreation, Floodplain and SPA #13 (Schedule A-3)
OPA 10	Redesignate from Agriculture to Agriculture SPA #14 (Schedule A)
OPA 11	Redesignate from Agriculture to Natural Environment (Schedule A)
OPA 12	Redesignate from Agriculture to Agriculture SPA #15 (Schedule A)
OPA 13	Redesignate from Settlement Commercial to Settlement Employment (Schedule A-1)
OPA 14	Redesignate from Residential to Village Centre (Schedule A-1)
OPA 15	Redesignate from Parks and Recreation to Settlement Employment (Schedule A-1)

OPA 16	Redesignate from Settlement Commercial to Residential and Parks and Open Space (Schedule A-1)
OPA 17	General Amendment - SPA #3 (Schedule A-4)
OPA 18	Redesignate from Agriculture to Agriculture and SPA #16 (Schedule A)
OPA 19	Redesignate from Settlement Commercial to Residential (Schedule A-2)
OPA 20	Redesignate from Agriculture to Agriculture and SPA #17 (Schedule A)
OPA 21	Redesignate from Settlement Employment to Settlement Commercial (Schedule A-4)
OPA 22	Redesignate from Parks & Recreation to Parks & Recreation and SPA #18 (Schedule A)
OPA 23	Extension of Aggregate Overlay
OPA 24	5-year Official Plan review
OPA 25	Redesignate from Agriculture to Parks and Recreation SPA#20 (Schedule A)
OPA 26	General Amendment
OPA 27	Redesignate from Hamlet to Agriculture and redesignate from Agriculture to Hamlet (Schedule A-9)
OPA 28	Comprehensive Review and Komoka-Kilworth Secondary Plan
OPA 29	Redesignate Komoka-Kilworth town centre to VC and SPA#22, MDR and SPA#23; P&R and SPA#25; P&R and SPA#22; VC and SPA#24
OPA 30	Amendment to SPA#1: permit mixed-use commercial development with stand-alone commercial buildings
OPA 31	Redesignate from Hamlet to Agriculture
OPA 32	Redesignate from Agriculture to Agriculture SPA#26
OPA 33	Severance of surplus farm residences
OPA 34	Redesignate from Settlement Employment and Special Policy Area #10 to Settlement Commercial and Special Policy Area #10

OPA 35	Redesignate from Residential to Settlement Commercial and SPA#27
OPA 36	Reduction of Aggregate Overlay, accommodate the proposed design of a draft plan of subdivision
OPA 37	Redesignate from Agriculture to Agriculture and Special Policy Area #28
OPA 38	Plan of subdivision on private services (Under Review)
OPA 39	Trails Master Plan
OPA 40	Permit a farm wedding venue on agricultural lands. Approved and ZBLA appealed to the LPAT.
OPA 41	SPA to permit year-round occupation of recreational dwellings
OPA 42	SPA for Second dwelling unit in accessory structure in agricultural area
OPA 43	Design for Happiness Wellness Centre - Medium Density mixed-used development
OPA 44	Implementation of Source Water Protection Policies and Regulatory Framework
OPA 45	Remove aggregate overlay, add collector road, redesignate to residential and medium density redevelopment (Under Review)
OPA 46	5-storey residential building for seniors (Under Review)
OPA 47	SPA for Second dwelling unit in accessory structure in agricultural area
OPA 48	SPA for Expansion of trailer sales into agricultural area
OPA 49	Permit a farm wedding venue on agricultural lands (Under Review)
OPA 50	Commercial to Medium Density designation to permit 54 units (townhomes, multiple unit dwellings) (Under Review)
OPA 51	13 lot plan of subdivision on private services (Under Review)
OPA 52	13 lot plan of subdivision on private septic (Under Review)
OPA 53	Apply 'Aggregate Resource Area' overlay to 24.7 ha (61 ha) of Strategic Employment and Settlement Employment areas (Under Review)

Implementation of any required house-keeping amendments, Official Plan Amendments to be consolidated, and other matters identified by Municipal staff, Council and the public, will be addressed as a part of the OPR.

# 3 KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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## 3.1 DISCUSSION PAPERS

The relevant research and data collected in this Report will be used to inform the preparation of Discussion Papers on the following topics:

- Growth Management (including Municipal Comprehensive Review);
- Infrastructure;
- Natural Heritage and Hazard;
- Provincial and General Policy; and
- Economic Diversification.

The following sections explore each Discussion Paper topic by highlighting general Provincial and County policy direction, relevant documents and studies, and key policy issues and opportunities that will be investigated in greater detail within each of the Discussion Papers.

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### 3.1.1 *GROWTH MANAGEMENT*

Growth management is a strategic approach for planning how and where growth should occur. It considers current and future needs, and aims to balance the pressure of growth and change with the preservation and protection of the character of its existing communities and natural environments.

The PPS sets out policies which aim to: build strong, healthy communities; manage and direct land use to achieve efficient and resilient development and land use patterns; and protect public health and safety. Planning authorities are required to ensure sufficient land is made available to accommodate a range and mix of land uses to meet housing needs for the next 25 years. Section 1.1.3 of the PPS directs that Settlement Areas shall be the focus of growth and development and shall accommodate a mix of land uses.

The County's current Official Plan recognizes that the County will experience population and employment growth over the projected planning period until 2026. While there is a need to assess additional land to accommodate growth to 2046, through the County's review of its Official Plan, population forecasts will also be extended and a new planning horizon will be identified. Should the need for expanded settlement areas be identified as a requirement to accommodate growth, a settlement capability study will need to be undertaken as required by the County Official Plan. The Municipality may need to undertake another review of its Official Plan upon the completion of the County's OPR to determine if further updates are required due to the implications of growth identified by the County and the available land supply.

The updated Official Plan will implement the direction of the PPS, 2020 based on the Middlesex County Official Plan approved in 1999 (currently under review), the Employment Needs Study

undertaken by the County in 2012, and interim findings of the background studies undertaken by the Project Team, including the Vacant Residential and Non-Residential Supply Analysis, a Residential and Non-Residential Demand Analysis, and an Economic Diversification Strategy.

Further review and analysis of projected growth needs and the Municipality's capacity to manage and accommodate this growth within its existing settlement areas will be required. Key issues to be discussed in more detail in the Discussion Paper include, but are not limited to:

- Analysis of projected growth and how it can be managed in accordance with the PPS and County Official Plan;
- The increase and promotion of a mix and range of housing types;
- Intensification and redevelopment within built-up areas;
- The importance and benefits of growth to local residents and businesses
- Explore policy examples from other municipalities who are experiencing “bedroom community” or “commuter-shed” related issues and potential policy solutions to help manage these changes and impacts to existing communities; and
- Identify preliminary opportunities and challenges of growth through feedback received through public engagement for the OPR and Strategic Plan Review processes.

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### 3.1.2 *INFRASTRUCTURE*

The Infrastructure needs of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre are tied to the amount, and location, of growth projected to occur during the life of the Official Plan. Roads, municipal sewer and water services, stormwater management and other hard infrastructure must be planned and appropriately sized to allow for the safe and efficient growth of the community.

Section 1.6.1 of the PPS, 2020 directs that “Infrastructure and public service facilities shall be provided in an efficient manner that prepares for the impacts of a changing climate while accommodating projected needs.”

The updated Official Plan will implement the direction of the PPS, 2020 based on the Settlement Area Stormwater Master Plan completed in 2020, the Delaware Community Settlement Area Stormwater Master Plan completed in 2016, the Road Needs Study completed in 2019, the Master Servicing Plan completed in 2010; and, plans/studies that are currently underway including the Master Servicing Plan (anticipated completion 2021/2022 and the Arva Community WWTF EA Study.

These documents help identify areas of the Municipality that may have capacity to accommodate additional growth, and areas where the impacts of growth may need to be mitigated further. Mapping in the Official Plan schedules may need to be updated to reflect the latest plans. This will help satisfy the comprehensive review requirements of the PPS.

The Middlesex County Official Plan also provides direction on the provision of infrastructure and servicing hierarchy for new development. If the Growth Management component of this OPR determines that an expansion to a settlement area is required to accommodate growth, then it will

be necessary to justify that expansion in terms of the County Official Plan's required settlement capability study.

High level design, timing and financial considerations will be provided based on the completed studies listed above and any new or expanded infrastructure that will be required to accommodate growth and development will be identified as part of the Infrastructure discussion paper.

Key issues to be discussed in more detail in the Discussion Paper include, but are not limited to:

- The Glendon Drive EA transportation schedule should be reviewed (as a result of the completed EA);
- Infrastructure capacity in each settlement area;
- Servicing hierarchy policies; and
- Subdivision design requirements for stormwater and transportation needs.

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### 3.1.3 NATURAL HERITAGE AND HAZARD

The Natural Heritage System is comprised of interconnected natural heritage features, areas and linkages that support natural processes which are critical to supporting environmental health and integrity. Natural heritage and watershed areas within the Municipality are protected in collaboration and partnership between the Municipality, the County, Provincial Ministries and Conservation Authorities. These efforts prioritize the prevention and reduction of risk to public safety from hazards such as flooding and erosion.

Section 2.0 of the PPS contains policies related to the wise management of Natural Heritage and Water Resources. These resources shall be protected for the long-term by recognizing linkages between and among natural heritage features and areas, surface water features and ground water features. Section 3.0 contains policies related to the protection of public health and safety in relation to natural hazards. Development and site alternation shall be directed away from areas of natural or human-made hazards where there are unacceptable risks to public health and safety, including risks that may be associated with the impacts of a changing climate.

The Official Plan review will identify those features and hazards that require protection and avoidance. The updated policies will implement the direction of the PPS, 2020 based on the Background Report on the Source Protection Plan completed in 2017, the Middlesex Natural Heritage Study completed in 2014, and various Conservation Authority documents and resources (included in Section 2.2.5 of this Report). The County is currently undertaking Source Protection Plan implementation in conjunction with its MCR under Section 26 of the *Planning Act*. As part of Middlesex Centre's OPR, the Municipality must ensure that Source Water Protection policies and schedules and Water Resources policies conform with the Source Protection Plan, the County Official Plan and the PPS 2020.

The Middlesex County Official Plan provides direction on resource management of the natural system and natural heritage features and hazards in the context of growth management. According to the Official Plan, growth must be managed to minimize adverse impacts on the

Natural System and agriculture and be phased to coincide with the availability of appropriate types and levels of services. Should it be determined that a settlement boundary expansion is required, the Municipality must consult with the County and the appropriate Conservation Authority to demonstrate how protection of the Natural System and existing and potential hazards shall be accommodated in a manner consistent with accepted engineering techniques and resource management practices and applicable provincial policies.

Key issues to be discussed in more detail in the Discussion Paper include, but are not limited to:

- Coordination with the County to gather updates on its MCR process as it relates to Source Water Protection policies and schedules and Water Resources policies. Review OPA 44 to ensure that policies conform with the PPS 2020.
- Areas experiencing growth / transition that may cause / be at-risk to causing increased negative impacts to Natural Heritage features or hazards;
- Identify gaps and opportunities for current Natural Heritage Systems mapping and policy updates;
- Develop list of priority policy changes and issues to be discussed further with the Province, County and Conservation Authorities; and
- Potential policy directions for climate change in accordance with the PPS and County Official Plan.

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#### 3.1.4 *PROVINCIAL AND GENERAL POLICY*

The Municipality's Official Plan provides general policies for each land use designations, and for the interpretation and implementation of the 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. In particular, the PPS is concerned with broad themes such 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 updated Official Plan will implement the direction of the PPS, 2020 and other Provincial policy and legislation including Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario (2016), Minimum Distance Separation Document (2017), Background Report on the Source Protection Plan (2017), and Conservation Authority documents and resources (included in Section 2.2.5 of this Report). In addition, all County-related documents contained in Section 2.3 and all Municipality-related documents contained in Section 2.4 will be reviewed to ensure consistency with policy recommendations and findings identified in each document.

The Middlesex County Official Plan includes general policies under Section 2, including the policy framework for resource management, growth management, and physical services and utilities. Section 3.0 contains general policies as it relates to detailed land use policies for settlement areas, agricultural areas, and natural environment areas. Finally, Section 4.5.3 outlines general policies for consent.

Key issues to be discussed in more detail in the Discussion Paper include, but are not limited to:

- Alignment with municipal document review as specified in Section 2.2 of the RFP, including Provincial legislative and policy changes and the Middlesex County Official Plan and review of additional special considerations identified by the Municipality;
- Identify general policies that require updates through consultation with municipal staff, the Technical Advisory Committee, Municipal Council and the public;
- Identify potential policy responses to issues raised by the public, Council and municipal staff; and
- Identify opportunities to improve readability and user-friendliness of Official Plan policy language.

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### 3.1.5 *ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION*

The Municipality is experiencing a demographic and economic shift that requires a re-evaluation of how economic development is addressed in the future. Economic diversification and incentivization will be required to promote opportunities for a range of services to support local residents, including accommodating a wide range of employment opportunities.

The PPS supports a coordinated, integrated and comprehensive approach when dealing with planning matters, including economic development strategies. Section 1.0 of the PPS recognizes that efficient land use and development patterns contribute to facilitating economic growth, among other factors. A critical component of long-term economic prosperity of communities is the vitality and regeneration of settlement areas, which must accommodate development effectively and efficiently. Municipalities must leverage opportunities in settlement areas to intensify, redevelop, and incorporate different housing, job and transportation options to promote “community investment-readiness”. The PPS also recognizes the role of rural areas as important contributors to the economic success of the Province and quality of life, and that rural assets must be leveraged and rural environments protected as a foundation for a sustainable economy.

Section 2.3.4 of the Middlesex County Official Plan contains policies related to economic development, recognizing the long-term importance of economic activity and creating opportunities for residents to live and work throughout the County. The Official Plan identifies agriculture as the economic mainstay in the County, recognizing the importance of retaining its agricultural community, while finding new ways to broaden its economic base.

The updated Official Plan will implement the direction of the PPS, 2020 based on the draft Community Improvement Plan Primer (currently underway), the Employment Land Needs Study completed in 2012, the Economic Development Strategic Plan completed in 2014, the Ilderton

CIP completed in 2019, Investing in Middlesex Centre completed in 2012, and preliminary findings from the Strategic Plan Review process (currently underway).

Key issues to be discussed in more detail in the Discussion Paper include, but are not limited to:

- Identify ways of expanding and evolving the agricultural economy;
- Identify new opportunities to increase economic diversification in the Municipality;
- Identify opportunities and incentives in Middlesex Centre’s urban areas / villages to help retain and improve economic vitality; and
- Review of relevant documents to understand market projections and emerging industry, including the County of Middlesex Agri-Food Economic Impact Report, to capitalize on opportunities.

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## 3.2 ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES TO DATE

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### 3.2.1 SECTION 26 SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

A public meeting was held on August 12, 2020, in accordance with Section 26 of the *Planning Act*. The public meeting was hosted online and was broadcast on the Municipality’s YouTube channel as part of a larger Municipal Council meeting. A presentation was delivered by the WSP Project Manager to provide an overview of the role of the Official Plan, the purpose of the OPR, the guiding Provincial policy framework, and the project work plan and schedule. No questions were received from Council following the presentation; however, one deputation was received by a resident and several additional comments were received via email correspondence following the public meeting.

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### 3.2.2 STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #1

The first Stakeholder Advisory Committee (“SAC”) meeting was held virtually on September 30, 2020 via videoconference. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce members, provide an overview of the OPR process and schedule, review the Terms of Reference (“TOR”) and engage in a roundtable discussion on the Discussion Paper themes and other key priority topics.

Overall, growth management emerged as a top issue of interest among members. Some key topics raised during the roundtable discussion included:

- The importance of retaining local character / heritage amidst growth and change;
- The need for opportunities and incentives to attract new business, amenities, and beautification to support village vitality;
- The desire for more diverse, affordable housing types / options;
- Addressing global climate issues through local initiatives and strengthening people’s connection to nature / the outdoors;

- Create opportunities for economic development and diversification; such as leveraging the Municipality’s strategic geographic location (e.g. proximity to London and major provincial highways);
- The need for a balanced approach to growth that leverages the Municipality’s strengths: its diverse communities and citizens and a strong agriculture heritage; and
- Increased opportunities for farming and local food production.

This valuable input will help inform the direction of the Discussion Papers and the focus of the Official Plan. The next SAC Meeting will occur in Phase 3 of the Project.

### 3.2.3 VISION WORKSHOP

A Vision Workshop was held virtually on October 6, 2020 via videoconference. The purpose of the Vision Workshop was to provide an overview of the Project and process; to develop a shared vision; to develop goals for each of the discussion topics; and, to inform the community about how to stay involved.

In total, there were 39 registrants and over 20 participants in attendance.

In Activity 1: Developing a Vision, participants were asked to share words or phrases that come to mind when thinking about Middlesex Centre or how they would describe Middlesex Centre to a person outside of the community. Agriculture emerged as a central topic throughout the discussion. The following Word Cloud is a representation of key words that were shared during this open discussion period:



Figure 4: Vision Workshop – Vision Word Cloud

The feedback received from Activity 1 will be considered when reviewing the Municipality’s current Official Plan Mission Statement, which will be updated as part of the OPR process.

In Activity 2: Defining Goals, participants were divided into five small groups using the Zoom break-out session function. Each group was moderated by a member of the Project Team. Participants were divided based on their top three preferred themes, which they were asked to rank during the event registration process. **Figure 5** shows the different themes that were explored:

## Activity 2: Defining Goals – Break-out Groups



Figure 5: Vision Workshop – Break-out Groups

The following table summarizes the draft goal concepts that were developed for each theme:

Table 1: Vision Workshop – Draft Goal Concept Development

Theme:	Draft Goal Concepts
Growth Management	<p><b>Keywords:</b> Diversification, community connection, migration, population, capacity, settlement areas, mixed-use, agriculture, nature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To strike a balance between growth demands and livability.</li> <li>• To foster communities that are complementary to nature and surrounding areas (particularly within hamlets).</li> <li>• To achieve a balance between serviced and unserved communities.</li> <li>• To achieve affordability and mix of housing types that supports inclusivity, diversity and equality.</li> <li>• To strengthen existing settlement areas by fostering local character and culture while responding to changing needs over time.</li> </ul>

<p>Agriculture</p>	<p><b>Keywords:</b> Sustainability, preservation, diversification, tax vase, complementary, farmland, local, settlement areas, industry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support opportunities to diversify the local agricultural economy.</li> <li>• To protect valuable agricultural lands and assets through a supportive agricultural system.</li> <li>• To foster an agricultural hub in Middlesex Centre to service the Southwestern Ontario Region.</li> <li>• To recognize agricultural activity as the foundation of the community; which must not be compromised in any way.</li> <li>• To support the preservation of agricultural lands to achieve sustainability goals such as carbon credits or reimbursement for agricultural activity.</li> <li>• To encourage buy-local initiatives to support local business and strategies for resilience.</li> </ul>
<p>Economic Development and Transportation Connectivity</p>	<p><b>Keywords:</b> Village Centres, traffic, community, local business, diversification, transportation network, roadways, major centres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To apply a multi-pronged approach to economic development.</li> <li>• To support economic diversification by leveraging the strategic transportation networks and location of the Municipality in the context of the greater region.</li> <li>• To attract new economic ventures and opportunities throughout the hamlets that serve land support local residents.</li> <li>• To support a transportation network that links communities throughout the County together and to the major centres.</li> <li>• To invest in infrastructure to attract and retain business.</li> <li>• To support widespread internet connectivity across the Municipality.</li> <li>• To consider opportunities for public transit among major centres within and throughout the region.</li> </ul>
<p>Community Amenities / Services</p>	<p><b>Keywords:</b> Community centres, changing needs, village centres, services, activities, shopping, local business, recreation, views of nature, swimming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support the regeneration and revitalization of aging community centres / spaces.</li> <li>• To value community centres as centralized hubs and places of social, physical and cultural activity.</li> <li>• To cultivate and support partnerships with local community groups and organizations to create and sustain programming.</li> <li>• To celebrate and promote local businesses that are valued by the community and tourists alike.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve passive and active access to water in support of access to nature and healthy active living.</li> <li>• To provide year-round opportunities of recreation and leisure for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.</li> </ul>
<p>Natural Environment</p>	<p><b>Keywords:</b> Trees, native species, reduction, CO2, greenhouse gases, greenspace, partnership, environmentally-friendly, education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase the forest coverage through established targets over the next 5, 10, and 20+ years.</li> <li>• To develop and implementation / replacement plan for the loss of forest coverage that includes native species to the Southwestern Ontario and Carolinian forest.</li> <li>• To balance new development through the addition and maintenance of green space.</li> <li>• To establish targets to reduce greenhouse gases and carbon emissions specific to Middlesex Centre.</li> <li>• To create an implementation strategy to reduce waste that is developed in partnership with other local municipalities.</li> <li>• To develop road maintenance practices that are environmentally friendly.</li> </ul>

In addition, the theme of COVID-19 was raised among the groups in the context of business loss and struggle, resiliency, and community health and safety. A summary of Phase 1 and 2 engagement activities will be provided on the Municipality’s project website for public review.

## 4 NEXT STEPS

This Background Report provides a high-level overview of the policies, guidance materials and background information that will help inform the preparation of the Official Plan update for the Municipality of Middlesex Centre. The immediate next steps in the process will involve a more detailed review of the documents described above leading to the formulation of specific recommendations for updating the Official Plan.

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### 4.1 PRE-CONSULTATION MEETING

A meeting with Municipal, County and Agency staff should be organized to outline the study process, key issues identified to date, and obtain input on the key issues as well as critical paths for the project to follow. This meeting should take place prior to completion of the Draft Directions and Recommendations Report.

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### 4.2 DISCUSSION PAPERS

The drafting of the Discussion Papers is underway. Once complete, the Discussion Papers will be provided to Staff for review to help focus the direction of specific changes to Official Plan policy.

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### 4.3 DRAFT DIRECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

Based on the background information review, pre-consultation meeting and community input received to this point, WSP will prepare the Draft Directions and Recommendations Report which will provide recommendations on various policy matters, as well as guidance and justification for changes to policy, land use designations and mapping. Findings and recommendations from the Discussion Papers will be used to inform the Report, which will identify outstanding policy gaps or issues that need to be incorporated in the updated Official Plan. This Report will also address the growth management requirements of the Middlesex County Official Plan.

The Report will outline the structure and format for the proposed Official Plan update, through the preparation of a detailed and annotated Table of Contents to form the basis for the Draft Official Plan / Amendment.

The Draft Directions and Recommendations Report should be completed prior to focused community engagement activities and will provide a basis for feedback from the public.

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## 4.4 ADVANCEMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

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

- WSP will analyze survey results from the randomized mail-out survey and online survey, which will be provided by the Strategic Plan Lead Consultant Municipal Strategic Planning Associates (“MSPA”) and Municipal staff;
- Analysis and compilation of Look Ahead **survey** results, which will be provided in a Phase 1 & 2 Engagement Update on the project website and in the engagement summary section in the Draft Directions and Recommendations Report;
- 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 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 Discussion Papers and Draft Directions and Recommendations Report; and
- WSP will continue to work with MSPA to share insights and updates on the OPR and Strategic Plan Review.

Feedback received as a result of the CES will be documented and will help inform the Final Directions and Recommendations Report and subsequent amendments to the Official Plan.