



**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN
ALIGNMENT WITH
OFFICIAL PLAN**

FINAL REPORT
DECEMBER 2021

2021
COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX



Contents

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Recommended Official Plan Policies	4
2.1 Support for Broadband Infrastructure	4
2.2 Support for Agriculture/Agri-Business Opportunities	5
2.3 Support for Employment Lands	5
2.4 Support for Economic Diversity/Economic Prosperity	7
2.5 Support for Arts, Cultural and Tourism	7
2.6 Support for Quality of Place and Cultural Heritage.....	8
2.7 Support for Affordable and Accessible Housing.....	9
2.8 Support for Community Improvement Plans	10
Appendix 1 – County of Middlesex Steering Committee Presentation October 2021	11
Appendix 2 – County of Middlesex Steering Committee Presentation December 2021.....	22



1. Executive Summary

Middlesex County recently completed the County Economic Development Strategic Plan and is currently in the process of updating the County Official Plan. Significant work in updating the Official Plan occurred in the first part of 2021 and a working document showing potential amendments to the Official Plan for the purpose of further consultation was completed on September 9, 2021.

The County engaged the services of MDB Insight to ensure that there is alignment between the recently completed County Economic Development Strategic Plan and the forthcoming update to the County Official Plan. MDB Insight examined how other upper-tier municipalities have approached the modernization of policy language that more effectively supports sustainable economic growth in a rural setting.

A review of relevant background documents revealed a range of themes that could/should be addressed in the forthcoming Middlesex Official Plan update. The Main Themes identified in discussion with County Planning staff and reviewed against a select number of County Official Plans are listed in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Main Themes

- Support for Broadband Infrastructure
- Support for Agriculture/Agri-Business Opportunities
- Support for Employment Lands
- Support for Community Improvement Plans
- Support for Economic Diversity/Economic Prosperity
- Support for Affordable and Accessible Housing
- Support for Arts, Cultural and Tourism
- Support for Quality of Place and Cultural Heritage

In consultation with County Planning staff seven municipal official plans of County's within Ontario were identified and reviewed. These County's were selected based recent updates to their Official Plans and the similarities between the County's and Middlesex County:

Figure 2: Comparative Official Plans

- Norfolk County (2021)
- County of Wellington (2021)
- Prince Edward County (2021)
- County of Lambton (2020)
- County of Perth (2020)
- Huron County (2015)
- County of Elgin (2015)



MDB Insight met with County Planning staff and the Economic Development Strategic Plan Steering Committee on two occasions to discuss the Main Themes and proposed draft policies for inclusion in the County Official Plan update. It was determined that in some areas the Official Plan Amendment Draft (September 2021) contained sufficient modernized policy language, and this is presented within this report under each of the Main Themes. Where MDB Insight suggested changes to the policy framework, this was discussed with staff and the steering committee to ensure a level of agreement with the approach. During discussions with the Steering Committee, it was recommended that definitions within the Official Plan should be updated based on the recommended policies listed below. For example, Indigenous history should be added to the definition of *Cultural Heritage* within the Official Plan update.

The recommended draft policies under each Main Theme are based on the background research and consultation with the County's Steering Committee and represent alignment with the County Economic Development Strategic Plan.

2. Recommended Official Plan Policies

2.1 Support for Broadband Infrastructure

The *Communication and Transmission* Infrastructure section of the Amendment Draft is relevant and speaks to the location of infrastructure and mitigating negative impacts within sensitive areas. However, it is recommended that the proposed draft policy statement be added to section 2.4.3 of the Official Plan to illustrate the importance of reliable broadband in attracting and retaining businesses within the County:

Relevant sections of the Middlesex County Official Plan Amendment Draft September 29, 2021:

Section 2.4.3 Communication and Transmission Infrastructure

"The County's Strategic Plan encourages the construction of scalable, equitable broadband infrastructure. The location of communication and transmission infrastructure can have a significant impact on the Natural Heritage System as well as the built environment. It is important that these facilities be designed and located to minimize negative impacts wherever possible."

2.4.3.1 I) "Require the installation of broadband infrastructure within new developments."

2.3.4 Economic Development

"b) cooperate with local municipalities, the business community and other agencies to ensure that employment centres are served by modern infrastructure systems including road, rail, and telecommunications networks."

Proposed Draft Policy

The following proposed draft policy should be added to section 2.3.4. Economic Development:

2.3.4 h) Broadband infrastructure will be supported within the County as a means to encourage future employment opportunities including home-based businesses, self-employment, attraction of new businesses (particularly those within the creative and knowledge economies) and ensuring the commercial viability of existing businesses particularly within our towns, villages and hamlets. The



County supports the provision of reliable, consistent, high quality and affordable telecommunications throughout the County.

2.2 Support for Agriculture/Agri-Business Opportunities

Agriculture is a significant sector within the County of Middlesex and the Official Plan Amendment includes language that address on-farm diversified uses. On-farm uses can vary significantly therefore clear provisions and definitions will need to be added to the Official Plan. As well, in the interest to manage on-farm uses they should be subject to zoning provisions and site controls with consideration of an approval process that address the size, scale of the use and off-site impacts.

Relevant sections of the Middlesex County Official Plan Amendment Draft September 29, 2021:

2.3.4 Economic Development

“g) support opportunities to create a stronger and sustainable agricultural sector including the local agri-food system”

3.3.5. Agriculture-Related and On-Farm Diversified Uses

“Agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses directly related to, and supportive of, agricultural operations, including feed mills, grain drying, abattoirs, kennels, stables and veterinary clinics may be permitted providing the following policies are considered:”

This section has working policies a) through h).

Proposed Draft Policy

The following proposed draft policy should be added to section 2.3.4. Economic Development to address opportunities for on farm home-based businesses and providing for additional value-added business to existing farming operations:

2.3.4 i) Home businesses are home occupations and home industries that are secondary to the principal use of the property and may be allowed, subject to zoning provisions, as a means of supplementing farm incomes and providing services in agricultural areas and may include: small home occupations conducted from the main residence with employment normally limited to the occupants of the property – examples include bed and breakfast, day care, hairdresser, and professional services.

2.3.4 j) Farm businesses are small scale businesses that provide value-added products from the farm and may be allowed subject to zoning provisions – examples include: farm vacation enterprises; cottage wineries; value-added processing or packing; sales outlets for agricultural products produced on the farm; seed cleaning, pick-your-own, catch-your-own operations.

2.3 Support for Employment Lands

In an effort manage future growth within the County it is recommended to add the proposed draft policies to section 2.3.4 of the Official Plan. The Middlesex County Economic Development Strategy 2021-2025 and the Middlesex County’s Strategic Plan 2021-2024 both address the importance of



employment lands to enable the attraction and retention of businesses, talent and investment.

The proposed draft policy sets timeframes for designating the supply of and maintaining an inventory of lands for future employment in the County.

Relevant sections of the Middlesex County Official Plan Amendment Draft September 29, 2021:

2.3.4 Economic Development

“2.3.4. a) Monitor the supply of employment land to ensure that a sufficient supply is available throughout the County and particularly in those municipalities with access to provincial highways and major arterial roads;

2.3.4. b) Cooperate with local municipalities, the business community and other agencies to ensure that employment centres are served by modern infrastructure systems including road, rail, and telecommunications networks”

3.2.3 Local Official Plans

“To achieve some consistency of approach, the County encourages local municipalities to include general development policies in their local official plan dealing with the following issues: g) employment area preservation and conversion policies.”

Proposed Draft Policy

The following proposed draft policy should be added to section 2.3.4. Economic Development:

2.3.4 k) The County will require municipalities to designate up to a 25-year supply of employment lands providing for a mix of employment opportunities,

2.3.4 l) The County will regularly update a municipal inventory of employment lands (industrial and commercial) to facilitate time sensitive responses to potential investors on the availability of suitable sites,

2.3.4 m) Where possible, the County will encourage multi-modal access to employment lands such as walking and cycling trails,

2.3.4 n) Rural Industrial Lands are intended to provide locations for business activities that may be better served by sites outside urban areas,

2.3.4 o) The County encourages municipalities to designate Rural Industrial Lands to accommodate industrial, manufacturing, and creative rural economy uses that typically require a larger building, larger lot, or outdoor storage area than is appropriate within the County’s rural context. These uses often require separation from sensitive land uses to ensure compatibility and minimize off site adverse impacts. Example: Truck stops, warehousing, transport terminals, visitor information centres and vehicle refueling centres,

2.3.4 p) Rural Industrial Lands shall be industrial and limited commercial uses which do not use significant amounts of water in their operations, and which do not produce significant amounts of effluent, consistent with rural servicing levels which rely on private water and sanitary sewage systems.



2.4 Support for Economic Diversity/Economic Prosperity

It is recommended that the County consider adding the following proposed draft policies to section 2.3.4 of the Official Plan. The draft policies encourage employment diversity by balancing agriculture and industrial uses and promoting mixed-use spaces where appropriate. The draft policies provide the opportunity for the County to repurpose their own land as an economic stimulus when typical market drivers are weak and there is little to no investment in the County.

Relevant sections of the Middlesex County Official Plan Amendment Draft September 29, 2021:

2.3.4 Economic Development

“Economic development is an important component of the County’s Growth Management policy framework. Many long-term goals and objectives including those identified in the County’s Strategic Plan depend on economic activity and the opportunity for residents to live and work in the County.

Agriculture has been an economic mainstay in the County for many years and will continue to evolve as changes to the agricultural industry take place. In this time of change it is important that the County develop diversity in its economic base. The policies of this Plan are intended to protect the agriculture community while fostering new economic development opportunities.”

“a) monitor the supply of employment land to ensure that a sufficient supply is available throughout the County and particularly in those municipalities with access to provincial highways and major arterial roads”

“e) support local municipalities to promote economic development opportunities adjacent to Provincial 400 series highways where justified through an amendment to the local official plan”

Proposed Draft Policy

The following proposed draft policy should be added to section 2.3.4. Economic Development:

q) To meet the needs of small-sized businesses (particularly those with 10 or fewer employees) Municipalities are encouraged to promote the development of small and medium format commercial, multi-tenanted commercial and industrial facilities, and flexible use space options.

r) If municipal properties are deemed surplus or if they are underutilized, Municipalities are encouraged to zone the land for their potential to be re-purposed. An example would be lands zoned to permit a multi-tenanted facility with shared workspaces which could serve as incubators for new business. Example: repurposing institutional properties

2.5 Support for Arts, Cultural and Tourism

The current Official Plan Amendment is silent on the role of Arts, Culture and Tourism in the local economy. However, this theme is reflected in part under the Definitions section of the OP and within 2.3.9 Agricultural Area Policies. The proposed draft policy provides for promotion of this sector and particularly enhancing agri-tourism opportunities.

Relevant sections of the Middlesex County Official Plan Amendment Draft September 29, 2021:

2.3.9 Agricultural Area Policies



“Agriculture is the cornerstone of the County’s economy and culture.”

“Definition: ON-FARM DIVERSIFIED USES: means uses that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products.”

Proposed Draft Policy

The following policies should be added to Section 2.3.4. Economic Development:

2.3.4 s) A vibrant, dynamic arts and culture community contributes to the growth, prosperity and vibrancy of the County. Arts, Culture and Tourism adds to the uniqueness of the County and provides significant and vital contributions, both directly and indirectly, to economic development, quality of place, community sustainability and tourism.

The following policies should be added to section 2.3.9 Agricultural Area

2.3.9 t) The County will promote the development of agri-tourism and will work with member municipalities and agricultural representatives to form a clear explore options for the development of local agri-tourism, including identifying strengths, unique local attributes, opportunities, and potential links with value-added agriculture, local foods, potential new product markets, local heritage, recreation opportunities, and natural heritage and identifying the facilities, infrastructure, and resources necessary to support an agri-tourism industry. The development of agri-tourism must not interfere with agricultural operations.

2.6 Support for Quality of Place and Cultural Heritage

The amendment draft Official Plan is relevant and the proposed draft policy is intended to address retaining and attracting residents and businesses. A definition of cultural heritage should be developed that includes recognition of local Indigenous history.

Relevant sections of the Middlesex County Official Plan Amendment Draft September 29, 2021:

2.3.4. Economic Development

“d) encourage local municipalities to promote a high standard of urban design to create healthy vibrant communities which attract investment

f) support the retention of educational, health, recreational, cultural and religious facilities to ensure that the County’s communities are provided with those opportunities that facilitate growth and well-being. Such facilities provide a vital role in small communities and add economic vitality and a sense of place and community where quality of life is considered a major attraction for growth and development.”

Proposed Draft Policy

The following policies should be added to Section 2.3.4. Economic Development:

u) This Plan acknowledges quality of place and cultural heritage as necessary for retaining existing and attracting new residents, entrepreneurs, skilled labour, and business.



v) Local municipalities shall support strong urban design and revitalization where needed in downtown cores as a means of enhancing the quality of place.

2.7 Support for Affordable and Accessible Housing

Section 2.3.7. of the current Official Plan Amendment Draft is relevant and should remain. The following proposed draft policy should be added to address specific growth timelines and the promotion of higher residential densities.

Relevant sections of the Middlesex County Official Plan Amendment Draft September 29, 2021:

2.3.7 Housing Policies

“It is the policy of the County to encourage a wide variety of housing by type, size and tenure to meet projected demographic and market requirements of current and future residents of the County. These policies may be elaborated upon within local municipal official plans.

a) intensification and redevelopment, primarily within Settlement Areas, and in other areas where an appropriate level of physical services is or will be available in the immediately foreseeable future and subject to the policies of Section 2.3.6. In this regard, the County will require that 15 percent of all development occur by way of intensification and redevelopment.

b) the provision of alternative forms of housing for special needs groups, where possible.

e) housing accessible to lower and moderate income households. In this regard the County will require that 20 percent of all housing be affordable.”

2.3.7.2 Number, Range and Mix of Housing Units

“Local municipalities are encouraged to develop affordable housing targets that are generally consistent with the County’s target which provides the opportunity for housing accessible to lower and moderate income households.”

Proposed Draft Policy

The following policies should be added to Section 2.3.7. Housing Policies:

2.3.7 f) An adequate supply of appropriately scaled affordable housing forms in locations where community services and amenities are currently located or anticipated to be located in the future.

2.3.7 g) That residential growth can be accommodated for a minimum of 10 years through residential intensification, redevelopment and if necessary, land and lands which are designated and available for new residential development.

2.3.7 h) The County will maintain at all times where new development is to occur, land with servicing capacity sufficient to provide at least a 3 year supply of residential units available through lands suitably zoned to facilitate residential intensification and redevelopment, and land in draft approved and registered plans.



2.8 Support for Community Improvement Plans

The Official Plan Amendment Draft speaks to legislation regarding Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) however the proposed draft policy provides a rationale for the promotion of CIPs to encourage redevelopment and address the supply of affordable housing within the County.

Relevant sections of the Middlesex County Official Plan Amendment Draft September 29, 2021:

Section 4.8 Community Improvement

“May generally be described as including activities, both private and public, which work towards maintaining, conserving, rehabilitating, and redeveloping the existing physical environment to accommodate the economic, cultural, and social priorities of the community.

Section 28 of the Planning Act allows upper-tier municipalities to pass by-laws designating the whole municipality or subject areas as community improvement areas. “

The following policies should be added to Section 4.8. Community Improvement:

Proposed Draft Policy

Where appropriate, Community Improvement Plans will be encouraged within lower tier municipalities:

- *when there is a specific area that is in need of improvement, remediation, rehabilitation or redevelopment,*
- *to facilitate and encourage community change in a coordinated manner,*
- *to address a lack of supply of sufficient affordable housing, and*
- *to stimulate private sector investment resulting in non-residential growth.*

If there is a desire to offer incentive programs aimed at redeveloping and/or marketing a commercial area, a prerequisite shall be the development of a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) within the local municipality. The Community Improvement Area (CIA) must have a viable or potential commercial function and the boundary must not be so broad as to dilute the CIP's effectiveness.



Appendix 1 – County of Middlesex Steering Committee Presentation October 2021



County of Middlesex OP Alignment Exercise

Steering Committee Discussion

Presented by: Lauren Millier, Schaun Goodeve, MDB Insight

Date: October 19, 2021



County of Middlesex OP Alignment Exercise

Agenda



Purpose of Exercise



Key Themes to Consider



Policy Research of Seven County Official Plans



Discussion



Next Steps

Steering Committee Discussion

2



Purpose of Exercise

- Review the objectives of the Economic Development Strategic Plan, Corporate Strategic Plan on the current Official Plan
- Identify the range of policy topics that should be supported by and reflected in the Official Plan
- Reflect on the County's current policy framework and compare to other relevant Official Plans
- Provide a matrix of policy statements that compare the County's current policy direction against the approach others have taken to address similar issues
- Prepare draft policy recommendations



Corporate Strategic Plan Objectives

- Connecting Through Infrastructure
 - Encourage and advocate through partnerships, the construction of scalable, equitable broadband infrastructure recognizing our unserved and underserved areas
- Strengthening our Economy
 - Support opportunities to create stronger and sustainable agriculture sector
 - Create an environment that enables the attraction and retention of businesses, talent and investment
 - Support the development and prosperity of downtown core areas



Economic Development Strategic Plan – Key themes

- Lifestyle is a key differentiator
- Location spurs business growth and entrepreneurship
- Broadband, transit, and infrastructure gaps limit growth
- Challenges of attracting and retaining talent
- Lack of housing options to accommodate growth
- Focus on agriculture and technology-based development
- Potential for remote workers
- Targeted focus on main streets and rural tourism
- FDI should build on existing strengths
- Focus on cohesion and collaboration



Economic Development Strategic Plan – Key objectives

1. Invest in people and places via rural revitalization
2. Entice talented workers and entrepreneurs to relocate here by leveraging the pace of rural life and nearby urban amenities
3. Attract investment in tech-based manufacturing, food production, and ag-tech
4. Advocate for investment readiness and implement improvements in business development services



Key Themes for the Official Plan Review

- *Community Improvement Plans*
- Broadband Infrastructure
- *Employment Lands including Conversion Policies*
- Economic Diversity/Economic Prosperity
- *Affordable and Accessible Housing*
- *Agriculture/Agri-Business Opportunities*
- *Support for Arts, Culture and Tourism*
- Quality of Place and Cultural Heritage



Comparative Counties Official Plans

- Norfolk County (2021)
- County of Wellington (2021)
- Prince Edward County (2021)
- County of Lambton (2020)
- County of Perth (2020)
- Huron County (2015)
- County of Elgin (2015)



County of Middlesex OP Alignment Exercise

Comparative Approach

Official Plan	Community Improvement Plans	Employment Lands including Conversion Policies	Affordable and Accessible Housing	Agriculture/Agri-Business Opportunities	Arts, Culture and Tourism
Norfolk County (2021) (Single Tier)	<p>The County OP supports the use of CIPs to revitalize underutilized land and downtown areas. The OP supports the preparation and adoption of CIPs that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage a range of housing types and affordable housing - Improve tourism infrastructure including agri-tourism facilities <p>The County had a CIP for its urban areas and downtown cores and a Rural CIP that provides incentives and programs to promote investment in tourism, agri-business. These two CIPs have been combined and provisions now apply to urban, hamlet and agricultural areas</p>	<p>Stated objective to provide employment land with access to strategic transportation corridors</p> <p>Protecting agricultural activities and the agricultural land base from the intrusion of incompatible uses and providing opportunities for small-scale business opportunities that are secondary to farm operations</p> <p>The OP recognizes that the historic location of employment land may not satisfy the contemporary or future economic needs. Will consider applications to amend this Plan to re-designate land designated in industrial through a comprehensive review, consistent with the requirements of the Provincial Policy Statement, demonstrating that the land is not required</p>	<p>The County OP promotes affordable and accessible housing. The OP provides a definition of affordable housing where annual accommodations costs do not exceed 30% of gross annual income.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sets target that 25% of new housing is affordable - Set that 10% of new housing be affordable to low-income households - Add to non-traditional housing options by encouraging innovative design and adaptability characteristics 	<p>The County OP dedicates section 4.4 Promoting Agriculture to growth of farm businesses as a means of supplementary income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate the development of on-farm diversified businesses - Seeks to provide support to farm operators through small business consulting services and to facilitate training and the dissemination of information relating to best practices for farm operations 	<p>The OP encourages agri-tourism and ecotourism within the County. Ecotourism and on-farm accommodations are indicated as focus areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support ecotourism destinations that promote learning from and experiencing natural features and wildlife - Encourage the establishment of on-farm overnight tourist accommodations for visitors to the County's rural areas

Steering Committee Discussion

9



County of Middlesex OP Alignment Exercise

Comparative Approach

Official Plan	Community Improvement Plans	Employment Lands including Conversion Policies	Affordable and Accessible Housing	Agriculture/Agri-Business Opportunities	Arts, Culture and Tourism
County of Wellington (2021) (Upper Tier)	<p>The OP states that the County Council may participate in a municipality's Community Improvement Plan and may make grants and loans to the Council of a lower tier municipality for the purpose of carrying out a Community Improvement Plan</p> <p>Through a County-wide CIP, Wellington County provides leadership in community improvement planning by offering incentives to eligible owners and tenants of lands and buildings in key sectors and areas of economic activity. The County's Invest Well Programme works together with the Member Municipal Community Improvement Plans</p> <p>Priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Using Land Strategically -Providing Rental Housing -Improving Building Infrastructure -Diversifying the Economy -Promoting Tourism 	<p>Secondary agricultural areas can accommodate a broader range of residential, employment and community uses are allowed than in prime agricultural areas so long as the use does not adversely impact existing agricultural operations and is in keeping with the rural character of the area</p> <p>Rural employment lands are intended to provide locations for business activities that may be better served by sites outside urban areas</p> <p>Conversion of employment lands (Industrial, Highway Commercial and Rural Employment Areas) within employment areas to non-employment uses which, for the purposes of this sub-section includes major retail uses, may be permitted only through a municipal comprehensive review</p>	<p>The OP states that a minimum of 25% of new housing in the County will be affordable to low and moderate income households</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Garden suites are permitted on farm with in the OP - It is expected that affordable housing will be provided within urban centres - There is a need to diversify the housing inventory beyond single family dwellings 	<p>Prime agricultural land will be protected and normal farming operations should not be hindered. The County OP provides for home-based as well as small scale businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small scale commercial, industrial and institutional uses permitted if there is adequate infrastructure 	<p>The County OP provides for recreational areas for the purpose of cottages, tent and trailer parks, active and passive recreation and golf courses.</p> <p>The Greenlands System is also recognized as having spiritual value providing visual pleasure, tranquility, recreation and renewal essential to human health and well being</p>

Steering Committee Discussion

10



County of Middlesex OP Alignment Exercise

Comparative Approach

Official Plan	Community Improvement Plans	Employment Lands including Conversion Policies	Affordable and Accessible Housing	Agriculture/Agri-Business Opportunities	Arts, Culture and Tourism
County of Lambton (2020) (Upper Tier)	<p>No active CIPs</p> <p>Policy framework recognizes CIPs are a tool for creating affordable housing and remediation of contaminated sites</p> <p>The development of Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) is an encouraged means of implementing affordable housing plans in local municipalities.</p>	<p>To ensure planning for growth, municipalities can designate a 20 yr supply, also speaks to trails connecting EL.</p> <p>Commercial and industrial activities encouraged to locate within fully serviced employment areas within Urban Centres and Settlements, as well as Highway 402 Service Centres</p> <p>Establish business parks which allow prestige industrial and office based uses to locate in a setting with uses of a similar quality and orientation.</p> <p>The County will encourage the development of the potential Highway 402 Service Centre areas for land uses that are functionally dependent upon proximity to a controlled access highway</p>	<p>The County OP supports affordable housing as an important component of community development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to community services and facilities including public transit facilities is important - should be in proximity to downtown hubs and cultural nodes when possible. - secure, long-term housing as a foundation for quality of life 	<p>On-farm diversified uses are strongly encouraged in order to provide farmers greater opportunity to obtain additional sources of income and to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and business incubation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - home-occupations, home-industries, agri-tourism, and value-added agricultural products from the farm operation. 	<p>Agri-tourism is supported within the OP to help diversify farmers income.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - uses are to be primarily rooted in activities promoting enjoyment of and/or education in farm operation, rural culture and economy, food and crop production, livestock, unique local foods, and/or agricultural history.

Steering Committee Discussion 11



County of Middlesex OP Alignment Exercise

Comparative Approach

Official Plan	Community Improvement Plans	Employment Lands including Conversion Policies	Affordable and Accessible Housing	Agriculture/Agri-Business Opportunities	Arts, Culture and Tourism
Prince Edward County (2021) (Single tier)	<p>CIP planning may be undertaken to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bolster local community growth, including with regard to agriculture, arts and culture, tourism, commerce and industry - encourage a diversity of housing types to meet the changing needs of residents and affordable housing - address climate change mitigation and adaptation <p>Historically, PEC had a Creative Rural Economy CIP aimed at creative workers and entrepreneurs and focused on four targeted sectors of the local economy – gastronomy, creative industries, green business and healthcare & wellness.</p> <p>No active CIP</p>	<p>Ensure there are sufficient designated and zoned employment lands to meet the projected needs of the County's target industries.</p> <p>A Rural Industrial Lands (RILs) designation identifies existing rural industrial properties that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accommodate important employment generating businesses within the County - are expected to provide diversity to the land supply for business - do not use significant amounts of water in their operation and which do not produce significant amounts of effluent, consistent with rural servicing levels which rely on private water and sanitary sewage systems. 	<p>To create a livable community and diversify the mix of housing options</p> <p>Villages will, at a minimum, provide opportunities for all forms of affordable housing, community gardens and urban agriculture, and for local residents to meet their daily needs for shopping and recreation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordable housing considered important to support agricultural industry 	<p>Policy recognized as an important economic driver and employment source through primary and secondary activities</p> <p>Rural Industrial Land designation to accommodate industrial, manufacturing, and creative rural economy</p>	<p>The County seeks to leverage its natural amenities including "viewscape" and heritage architecture to along tourism corridors to promote tourism sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provisions to support the development of attractions, scenic overlooks, facilities along tourism corridors - Cultural landscapes also contribute to the pastoral quality that contributes to the County's unique character and distinct rural charm

Steering Committee Discussion 12



County of Middlesex OP Alignment Exercise

Comparative Approach

Official Plan	Community Improvement Plans	Employment Lands including Conversion Policies	Affordable and Accessible Housing	Agriculture/Agri-Business Opportunities	Arts, Culture and Tourism
County of Perth (2020 Consolidation) (Upper Tier)	Community Improvement policies have identified the need to consider both the rural and urban components of the County. No active CIPs	Serviced settlement areas will accommodate most of the on-farm related growth that is to occur in the County. Restrictions on use of agricultural land carried forward from previous plan To expand the employment opportunities available to the residents of the Municipality; (c) to encourage the development of light, dry industry which will not impose a burden on municipal service systems; Plan targets the development, attraction, and retention of small business investment, with a specific focus on downtown business districts	The County OP supports affordable housing and encourages secondary dwellings, low, medium and high density, special needs housing, infilling and intensification.	The County OP encourages the development of service-related businesses, value-added operations, secondary farm occupation opportunities, and technological improvements (including bio-technical advancements)	The County OP states that there is little potential for intensive recreational activities in the County of Perth. The predominance of agricultural activities and the relatively flat topography of the County are generally not conducive to intensive recreational activities.

Steering Committee Discussion 13



County of Middlesex OP Alignment Exercise

Comparative Approach

Official Plan	Community Improvement Plans	Employment Lands including Conversion Policies	Affordable and Accessible Housing	Agriculture/Agri-Business Opportunities	Arts, Culture and Tourism
County of Elgin (2015) (Upper Tier)	Local municipalities are encouraged to develop CIPs. The OP specifically backs the use of CIPs to promote and support agriculture and cultural heritage provided the local municipal Official Plan includes appropriate policies to support such programs. The Elgin Centives CIP is a County-wide framework for community improvement planning administered and funded by participating lower-tier municipalities in partnership with Elgin County. The Savour Elgin/Elgin Arts Trail Supplemental Grant, provides a bonus grant where the establishment of a new eligible use that will also meet the criteria of the 'Savour Elgin' and 'Elgin Arts Trail' programs.	Encourages local municipalities to provide for the broadest range of employment uses (depending on available servicing) in their employment areas Local municipalities are encouraged to focus new development in settlement areas, while permitting appropriate rural industrial and commercial growth in accordance with the County OP Proposals to convert lands within an Employment or Industrial designation in a lower tier Official Plan to another type of land use will be reviewed through a comprehensive review as defined by the OP	The County OP ensuring that housing is available to all ages, abilities, incomes and household sizes and encourages the use of surplus public lands. - located in areas near public transportation, jobs, and essential goods and services	Agriculture is recognized as an important industry within the County OP. - Recommends the creation of an agricultural advisory committee to provide advice and act as a direct and on-going liaison between the agricultural community and County Council - establish fiscal tools including innovative tax policies, reduced development charges, and venture capitals for innovative agriculture	The County OP leverages tourism amenities such as waterfront areas including ports. - scenic driving routes and other tourism destinations with settlement areas and the high volumes of potential tourist traffic along Highway 401

Steering Committee Discussion 14



Comparative Approach

Official Plan	Community Improvement Plans	Employment Lands including Conversion Policies	Affordable and Accessible Housing	Agriculture/Agri-Business Opportunities	Arts, Culture and Tourism
Huron County (2015) (Upper Tier)	Not currently enacted or utilized	No mention of E.L. or employment.	Not addressed in OP	No specific provisions	Not addressed in OP

Steering Committee Discussion 15



Steering Committee Discussion

A discussion of land use matters/concerns in the County

Steering Committee Discussion 16



Employment Lands including Conversion Policies

- What are the key issues for Middlesex County ?
- Based on what you heard today, what considerations need to be reflected in the Official Plan



Affordable and Accessible Housing

- What are the key issues for Middlesex County ?
- Based on what you heard today, what considerations need to be reflected in the Official Plan



Agriculture/Agri-Business Opportunities

- What are the key issues for Middlesex County?
- Based on what you heard today, what considerations need to be reflected in the Official Plan



Support for Arts, Culture and Tourism

- What are the key issues for Middlesex County ?
- Based on what you heard today, what considerations need to be reflected in the Official Plan



Community Improvement Plans

- Based on what you heard today how can this tool be used more effectively?
- What additional considerations need to be reflected in the Official Plan



Thank you!

Q+A



Appendix 2 – County of Middlesex Steering Committee Presentation December 2021



County of Middlesex *OP Alignment Exercise*

Presented By :
Lauren Millier, Schaun Goodeve

Date:
December 1, 2021



County of Middlesex OP Alignment Exercise

Agenda



Key Themes for Consideration



Comparing Existing Policies to Proposed Policies



Feedback



Next Steps

Steering Committee Meeting #2

2



Key Themes for the Official Plan Review

- Community Improvement Plans
- Broadband Infrastructure
- Employment Lands including Conversion Policies
- Economic Diversity/Economic Prosperity
- Affordable and Accessible Housing
- Agriculture/Agri-Business Opportunities
- Support for Arts, Culture and Tourism
- Quality of Place and Cultural Heritage



Comparative Counties Official Plans

- Norfolk County (2021)
- County of Wellington (2021)
- Prince Edward County (2021)
- County of Lambton (2020)
- County of Perth (2020)
- Huron County (2015)
- County of Elgin (2015)



Support for Broadband Infrastructure

Middlesex Amendment DRAFT September 29 2021	Proposed Draft Policy
<p>Section 2.4.3 Communication and Transmission Infrastructure</p> <p>“The County’s Strategic Plan encourages the construction of scalable, equitable broadband infrastructure. The location of communication and transmission infrastructure can have a significant impact on the Natural Heritage System as well as the built environment. It is important that these facilities be designed and located to minimize negative impacts wherever possible.”</p> <p>2.4.3.1) “Require the installation of broadband infrastructure within new developments.”</p> <p>2.3.4 Economic Development</p> <p>“b) cooperate with local municipalities, the business community and other agencies to ensure that employment centres are served by modern infrastructure systems including road, rail, and telecommunications networks.”</p>	<p>The current language from the OP Amendment Draft is relevant. However, it is recommended that the following policy statement be added to illustrate the importance of reliable broadband in attracting and retaining businesses within the County:</p> <p><i>2.3.4 g) Broadband infrastructure will be supported within the County as a means to encourage future employment opportunities including home-based businesses, self-employment, attraction of new businesses (particularly those within the creative and knowledge economies) and ensuring the commercial viability of existing businesses particularly within our towns, villages and hamlets. The County supports the provision of reliable, consistent and high quality telecommunications throughout the County.</i></p>



Notes: Support for Broadband Infrastructure

- Add “affordable” to draft policy
- There should be mention of agricultural business/agriculture and food processing supports in the policy
- Language within policy should be general enough to not be tied to a particular technology



Support for Agriculture and Agri-Business Opportunities

Middlesex Amendment DRAFT September 29 2021	Proposed Draft Policy
<p>2.3.4 Economic Development</p> <p>"g) support opportunities to create a stronger and sustainable agricultural sector including the local agri-food system"</p> <p>2.3.5. Agriculture-Related and On-Farm Diversified Uses</p> <p>"Agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses directly related to, and supportive of, agricultural operations, including feed mills, grain drying, abattoirs, kennels, stables and veterinary clinics may be permitted providing the following policies are considered:"</p> <p>This section has working policies a) through h).</p>	<p>In addition to Section 3.3.5. sub sections a) - h) of the current OP Amendment Draft the following should be added to address opportunities for on farm home-based businesses and providing for additional value-added business to existing farming operations:</p> <p><i>i) Home businesses are home occupations and home industries that are secondary to the principal use of the property and may be allowed, subject to zoning provisions, as a means of supplementing farm incomes and providing services in agricultural areas and may include: small home occupations conducted from the main residence with employment normally limited to the occupants of the property – examples include bed and breakfast, day care, hairdresser, and professional services.</i></p> <p><i>j) Farm businesses are small scale businesses that provide value-added products from the farm and may be allowed subject to zoning provisions – examples include: farm vacation enterprises; cottage wineries; value-added processing or packing; sales outlets for agricultural products produced on the farm; seed cleaning, pick-your-own, catch-your-own operations.</i></p>

Steering Committee Meeting #2

7



Notes: Support for Agriculture and Agri-Business Opportunities

- Consider adding 'farm venues' such as weddings, outdoor concerts, play areas.
- Consideration of adding " subject to zoning provisions and site controls". Discussion was had around what are the size triggers and how best to manage the scale and size of these events
- Limitation of on-farm business to residence only – reflected within the provisions and definitions
- Noise and parking issues can be addressed by site plan and zoning bylaw approvals
- Add how larger scale operations will require zoning bylaw approvals

Steering Committee Meeting #2

8



Support for Employment Lands Including Conversion Policies

Middlesex Amendment DRAFT September 29 2021	Proposed Draft Policy
<p>2.3.4 Economic Development</p> <p>“2.3.4. a) Monitor the supply of employment land to ensure that a sufficient supply is available throughout the County and particularly in those municipalities with access to provincial highways and major arterial roads;</p> <p>2.3.4. b) Cooperate with local municipalities, the business community and other agencies to ensure that employment centres are served by modern infrastructure systems including road, rail, and telecommunications networks”</p> <p>3.2.3 Local Official Plans</p> <p>“To achieve some consistency of approach, the County encourages local municipalities to include general development policies in their local official plan dealing with the following issues: g) employment area preservation and conversion policies.”</p>	<p>The current OP Amendment Draft version sections 2.3.4 a) and b) are relevant. However, for the purpose of setting a growth timeframe, keeping an updated inventory of employment lands and ensuring accessibility for the labour force the following text is recommended:</p> <p><i>c) The County will require municipalities to designate up to a 25-year supply of employment lands providing for a mix of employment opportunities,</i></p> <p><i>d) The County will regularly update a municipal inventory of employment lands (industrial and commercial) to facilitate time sensitive responses to potential investors on the availability of suitable sites,</i></p> <p><i>e) Where possible, the County will encourage multi-modal access to employment lands such as walking and cycling trails.</i></p> <p><i>f) Rural employment lands are intended to provide locations for business activities that may be better served by sites outside urban areas</i></p> <p><i>g) The County encourages municipalities to designate Rural Industrial Lands to accommodate industrial, manufacturing, and creative rural economy uses that typically require a larger building, larger lot, or outdoor storage area than is appropriate within the County’s rural context. These uses often require separation from sensitive land uses to ensure compatibility and minimize off-site adverse impacts. Example: Truck stops, warehousing, transport terminals, visitor information centres and vehicle refueling centres.</i></p> <p><i>h) Rural Industrial Lands shall be industrial and limited commercial uses which do not use significant amounts of water in their operations and which do not produce significant amounts of effluent, consistent with rural servicing levels which rely on private water and sanitary sewage systems.</i></p>

Steering Committee Meeting #2

9



Notes: Support for Employment Lands Including Conversion Policies

- Suggestion to add reference to importance of "complete communities"
- Modify wording to be consistent such as Rural Industrial Lands throughout policy

Steering Committee Meeting #2

10



Support for Economic Diversity/Economic Prosperity

Middlesex Amendment DRAFT September 29 2021	Proposed Draft Policy
<p>2.3.4 Economic Development</p> <p>"Economic development is an important component of the County's Growth Management policy framework. Many long-term goals and objectives including those identified in the County's Strategic Plan depend on economic activity and the opportunity for residents to live and work in the County.</p> <p>Agriculture has been an economic mainstay in the County for many years and will continue to evolve as changes to the agricultural industry take place. In this time of change it is important that the County develop diversity in its economic base. The policies of this Plan are intended to protect the agriculture community while fostering new economic development opportunities."</p> <p>"a) monitor the supply of employment land to ensure that a sufficient supply is available throughout the County and particularly in those municipalities with access to provincial highways and major arterial roads"</p> <p>"e) support local municipalities to promote economic development opportunities adjacent to Provincial 400 series highways where justified through an amendment to the local official plan"</p>	<p>Section 2.3.4 of the current OP Amendment Draft is relevant. However, it is recommended that the County consider adding the following to encourage employment diversity and the opportunity for the County to repurpose their own land as an economic stimulus when typical market drivers are weak and there is little to no investment in the County.</p> <p><i>h) To meet the needs of small-sized businesses (particularly those with 10 or fewer employees) Municipalities are encouraged to promote the development of small and medium format commercial, multi-tenant commercial and industrial facilities, and flexible use space options.</i></p> <p><i>i) If municipal properties are deemed surplus or if they are underutilized, Municipalities are encouraged to zone the land for their potential to be re-purposed. An example would be lands zoned to permit a multi-tenant facility with shared workspaces which could serve as incubators for new business.</i></p> <p>Example: repurposing institutional properties</p>



Notes: Support for Economic Diversity/Economic Prosperity

- Suggestion that "rural" be added when referring to conversions
- Suggestion to change to "flexible use space options" instead of "incubators"
- Suggestion to add a hybrid model that addressed mixed-use spaces to help build community
- Discussion about balancing agricultural and industrial uses within Official Plan



Support for Art, Culture and Tourism

Middlesex Amendment DRAFT September 29 2021	Proposed Draft Policy
<p>The current OP Amendment is silent on the role of Art, Culture and Tourism in the local economy. However, this theme is reflected in part under the Definitions section of the OP and within 2.3.9 Agricultural Area Policies.</p> <p>2.3.9 Agricultural Area Policies</p> <p>“Agriculture is the cornerstone of the County’s economy and culture.”</p> <p>“Definition: ON-FARM DIVERSIFIED USES: means uses that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products.”</p>	<p>The following policies should be added to Section 2.3.4 Economic Development</p> <p><i>A vibrant, dynamic arts and culture community contributes to the growth, prosperity and vibrancy of the County. Arts, Culture and Tourism adds to the uniqueness of the County and provides significant and vital contributions, both directly and indirectly, to economic development, quality of place, community sustainability and tourism.</i></p> <p><i>The following policies should be added to section 2.3.9 Agricultural Area Policies</i></p> <p><i>The County will promote the development of agri-tourism and will work with member municipalities and agricultural representatives to form a clear explore options for the development of local agri-tourism, including identifying strengths, unique local attributes, opportunities, and potential links with value-added agriculture, local foods, potential new product markets, local heritage, recreation opportunities, and natural heritage and identifying the facilities, infrastructure, and resources necessary to support an agri-tourism industry. The development of agri-tourism must not interfere with agricultural operations.</i></p>

Steering Committee Meeting #2 13



Notes: Support for Art, Culture and Tourism

- No additional comments or revisions provided

Steering Committee Meeting #2 14



Support for Quality of Place and Cultural Heritage

Middlesex Amendment DRAFT September 29 2021	Proposed Draft Policy
<p>2.3.4. Economic Development</p> <p>"d) encourage local municipalities to promote a high standard of urban design to create healthy vibrant communities which attract investment</p> <p>f) support the retention of educational, health, recreational, cultural and religious facilities to ensure that the County's communities are provided with those opportunities that facilitate growth and well-being. Such facilities provide a vital role in small communities and add economic vitality and a sense of place and community where quality of life is considered a major attraction for growth and development."</p>	<p>In addition to section 2.3.4 within the current OP Amendment Draft we recommend adding the following sub-section:</p> <p><i>j) This Plan acknowledges quality of place and cultural heritage as necessary for retaining existing and attracting new residents, entrepreneurs, skilled labour, and business.</i></p> <p><i>d) Becomes e), and f) becomes g)</i></p>



Notes: Support for Quality of Place and Cultural Heritage

- Suggestion to include indigenous to the Definition of cultural heritage
- Suggestion to that "local municipalities support strong urban design and revitalization where needed in downtown cores"
- Discussion about Quality of Place and not Quality of Life



Support for Affordable and Accessible Housing

Middlesex Amendment DRAFT September 29 2021	Proposed Draft Policy
<p>2.3.7 Housing Policies</p> <p>"It is the policy of the County to encourage a wide variety of housing by type, size and tenure to meet projected demographic and market requirements of current and future residents of the County. These policies may be elaborated upon within local municipal official plans.</p> <p>a) intensification and redevelopment, primarily within Settlement Areas, and in other areas where an appropriate level of physical services is or will be available in the immediately foreseeable future and subject to the policies of Section 2.3.6. In this regard, the County will require that 15 percent of all development occur by way of intensification and redevelopment;</p> <p>b) the provision of alternative forms of housing for special needs groups, where possible;</p> <p>e) housing accessible to lower and moderate income households. In this regard the County will require that 20 percent of all housing be affordable."</p> <p>2.3.7.2 Number, Range and Mix of Housing Units</p> <p>"Local municipalities are encouraged to develop affordable housing targets that are generally consistent with the County's target which provides the opportunity for housing accessible to lower and moderate income households."</p>	<p>Section 2.3.7. of the current OP Amendment Draft is relevant and should remain. The following should be added to address specific growth timelines and the promotion of higher residential densities:</p> <p><i>f) An adequate supply of appropriately scaled affordable housing forms in locations where community services and amenities are currently located or anticipated to be located in the future.</i></p> <p><i>h) That residential growth can be accommodated for a minimum of 10 years through residential intensification, redevelopment and if necessary, lands which are designated and available for new residential development.</i></p> <p><i>i) The County will maintain at all times where new development is to occur, land with servicing capacity sufficient to provide at least a 3 year supply of residential units available through lands suitably zoned to facilitate residential intensification and redevelopment, and land in draft approved and registered plans.</i></p>



Notes: Support for Affordable and Accessible Housing

- Suggestion to work on the wording so that it addresses any interpretations that may not be aligned with the intent of the policy.



Support for Community Improvement Plans

Middlesex OP Amendment DRAFT September 29 2021	Proposed Draft Policy
<p>Section 4.8 Community Improvement</p> <p>“May generally be described as including activities, both private and public, which work towards maintaining, conserving, rehabilitating, and redeveloping the existing physical environment to accommodate the economic, cultural, and social priorities of the community.</p> <p>Section 28 of the Planning Act allows upper -tier municipalities to pass by-laws designating the whole municipality or subject areas as community improvement areas.”</p>	<p>The County encourages CIPs be implemented by local municipalities. Therefore, the County should maintain the current policy language that prescribes the type and rationale for lower CIPS and add the following to Section 4.8 of the current OP Amendment Draft.</p> <p><i>Where appropriate, Community Improvement Plans will be encouraged within lower tier municipalities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>when there is a specific area that is in need of improvement, remediation, rehabilitation or redevelopment,</i> b) <i>to facilitate and encourage community change in a coordinated manner,</i> c) <i>to address a lack of supply of sufficient affordable housing, and</i> d) <i>to stimulate private sector investment resulting in non-residential growth.</i> <p><i>If there is a desire to offer incentive programs aimed at redeveloping and/or marketing a commercial area, a prerequisite shall be the development of a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) within the local municipality. The Community Improvement Area (CIA) must have a viable or potential commercial function and the boundary must not be so broad as to dilute the CIP's effectiveness.</i></p>



Notes: Support for Community Improvement Plans

- Suggestion to revise the first sentence and speak to "implemented by local municipalities ...to manage growth"
- Revise a) and add 'specific need'
- Discussion to include references to County's Economic Development Strategy



Steering Committee Discussion

Thoughts on draft policies recommendations

Steering Committee Meeting #2 21



Thank you!

Q+A

Steering Committee Meeting #2 22