

# Appendix 6

Middlesex County Planning Advisory  
Committee Consolidated Meeting  
Presentations





# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025



# AGENDA

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Planning Advisory Committee

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Background to the Official Plan

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Official Plan Update

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Next Steps



# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE



# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**MANDATE** provide information, perspective and recommendations to Council on broad planning matters as required from time to time; to review the provisions of the County Official Plan and related policy, and recommend to Council general amendments thereto which would be in the best interests of the County and to advise Council on general land use planning issues of County significance.

**OBJECTIVES** provide assistance, guidance and recommendations to Council in circumstances where the Committee's involvement can benefit Council deliberations and decisions with respect to policy issues directly related to land use planning.

# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**MEETINGS** the Committee shall hold meetings as directed by the Warden.

**PROCEDURE** meetings will be conducted in accordance with the County Procedural By-law and practices, and guided by the Clerk.

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST** members shall disclose any pecuniary interest and remove themselves from meetings for the duration of discussion with respect to that matter.



# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**INTRODUCTIONS** if members of the Committee would introduce themselves.

**CHAIR** of the Committee to be elected at the first meeting of the Committee.

**QUESTIONS** if there are any questions concerning the Mission, Mandate, Objectives, or operation of the Committee.





# BACKGROUND TO THE OFFICIAL PLAN

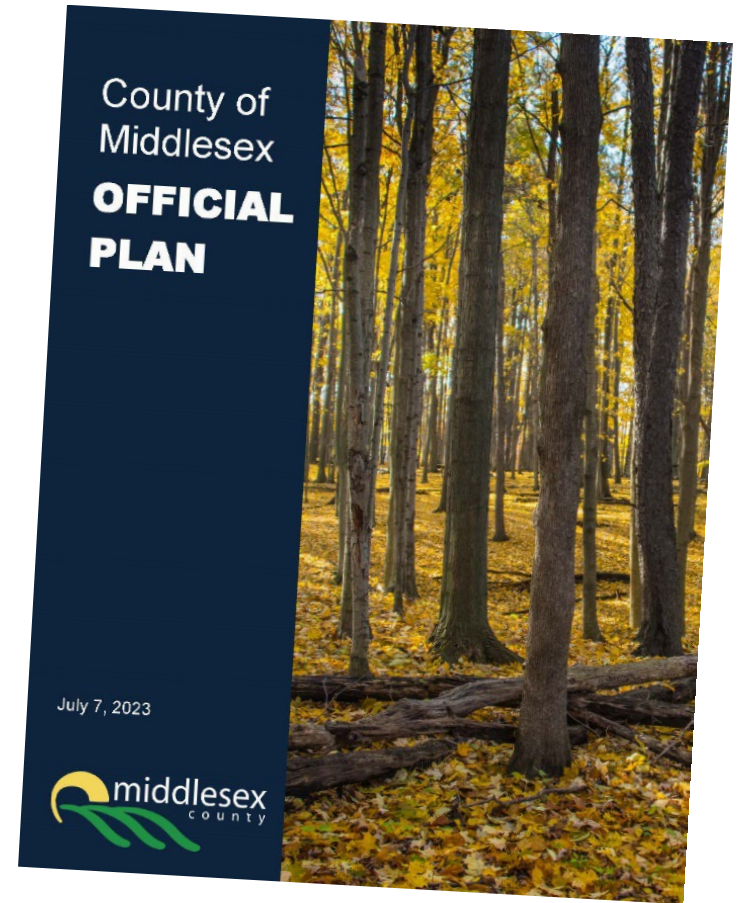


# WHAT IS AN OFFICIAL PLAN?

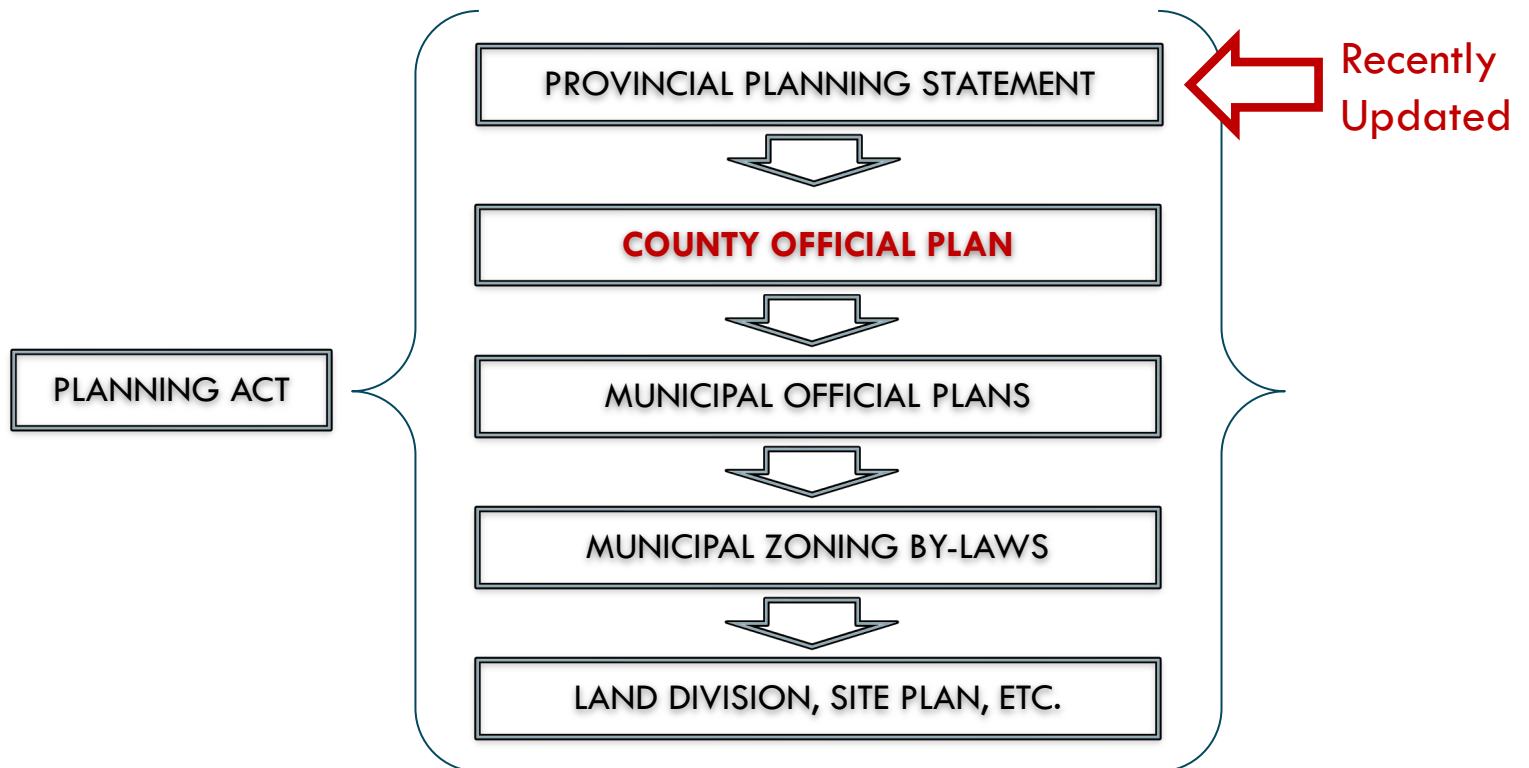
A municipal policy document created under the Planning Act that sets out a land use policy vision based on long-term goals and objectives.

Council's primary tool for making land use decisions and managing physical change.

The Planning Act states that no public work shall be undertaken and no by-law shall be passed that does not conform to the official plan.



# PROVINCIAL FRAMEWORK





# COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

Directs and guides land use policy and physical planning on a broad basis by primarily dealing with issues of Provincial and County interest.

Recognizes the planning powers and authorities vested in local municipalities and does not set out detailed local policies.

Provides a policy framework for issues such as Settlement Areas, Agricultural Areas, Resource Management, Growth Management, the Natural Environment and the provision of Physical Services.

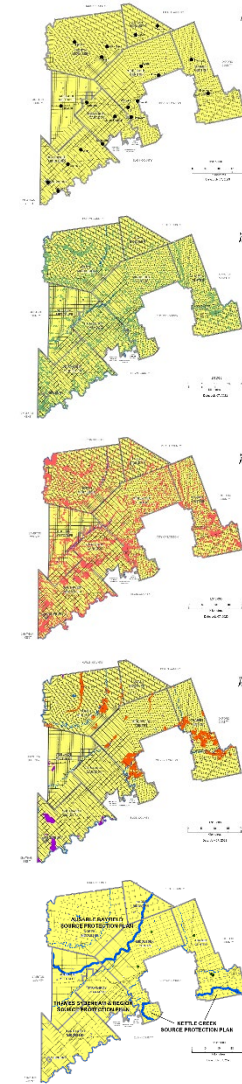
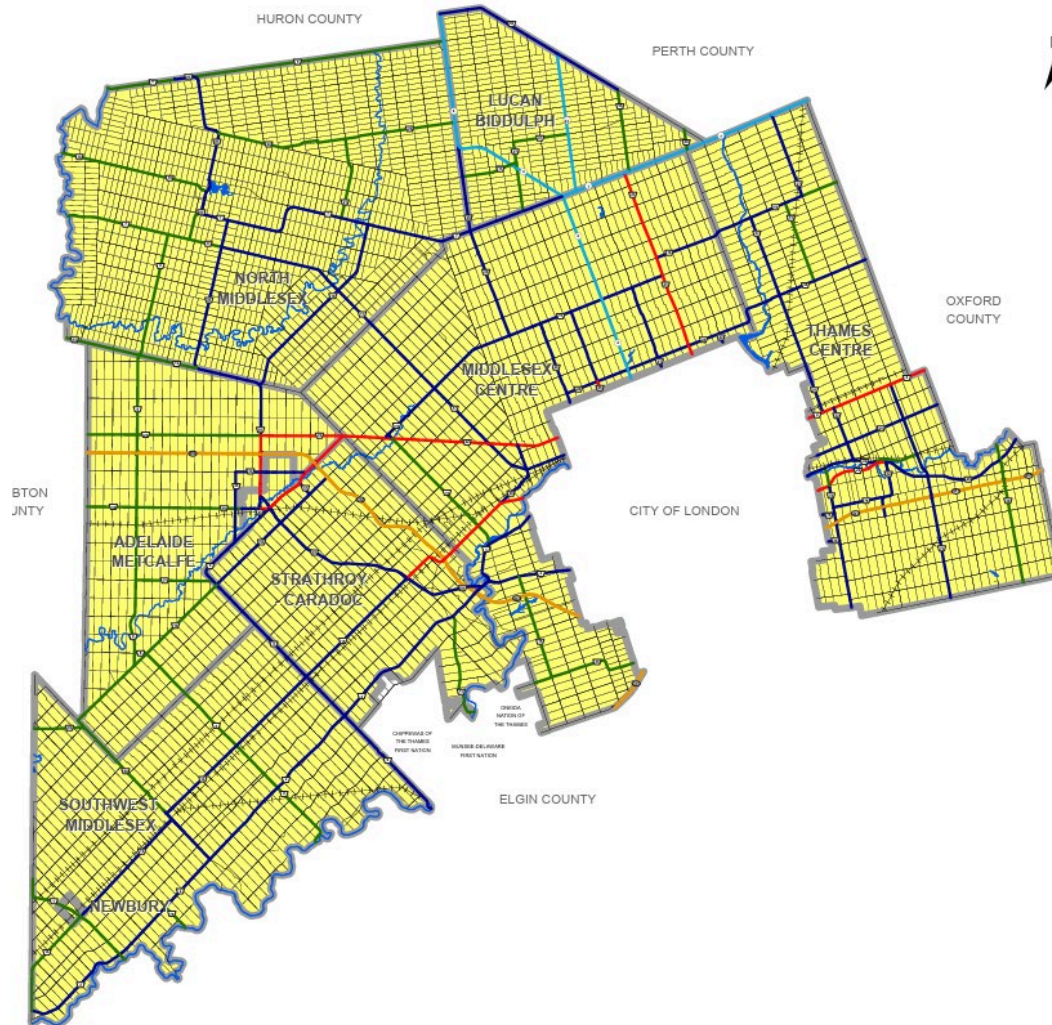
Provides a way to evaluate and settle conflicting land uses while meeting local, County and Provincial interests.

# COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

Natural Heritage	Agriculture	Aggregate Resources	Archeology
Forecasting Growth	Economic Development	Housing	Settlement Areas
Natural Hazards	Transportation	Development Applications	Servicing
Water Resources	Infrastructure	Community Improvement	Local Planning



# COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN



# 'MIDDLESEX 2046' UPDATE

A comprehensive review of the Official Plan was undertaken to:

- Align with new Provincial legislation and policies
- Ensure consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement
- Implement new County initiatives, including:
  - Cycling Strategy
  - Corporate Strategic Plan
  - Economic Development Strategy Update
  - Plan for growth until 2046

# 'MIDDLESEX 2046' UPDATE

## Key milestones:

- July 19, 2022: County Council adopted Amendment No. 3 to the Official Plan.
- July 7, 2023: Amendment No. 3 approved with modifications by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Questions concerning the Official Plan or the last update?



# RESOURCES

the new **Provincial Planning Statement**

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/provincial-planning-statement-2024>

the current **County Official Plan**

<https://www.middlesex.ca/sites/default/files/documents/Middlesex%20County%20Official%20Plan%20July%202007%202023%20consolidated%20FINAL.pdf>

the previous Official Plan update **Middlesex 2046**

<https://www.middlesex.ca/departments/planning/middlesex-county-official-plan>





OFFICIAL PLAN UPDATE

# OFFICIAL PLAN UPDATE

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 County Council directed staff to undertake the update to the Official Plan in accordance with Section 26 of the Planning Act.

The Official Plan should be updated to align with Provincial policies, stay current, and meet community needs for the next 30 years.

The Official Plan recently underwent a significant multi-year update process; this update will therefore be scoped and focused.

# PROVINCIAL CHANGE

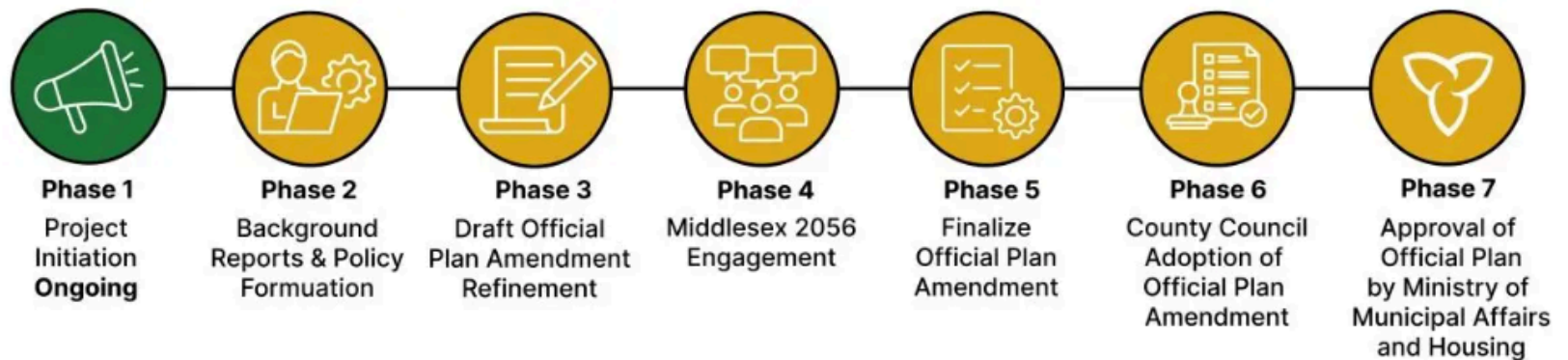
The County Plan acts as a 'bridge' between Provincial Policy and local municipal official plans by providing guidance to local plans but at a level of detail reflective of upper tier policies.

Updates must be undertaken to ensure legislative requirements are met but without otherwise disrupting the function of the Official Plan.

New Provincial Planning Statement as of October 20, 2024.

More fulsome overview of Provincial Changes to be provided through background reports.

# PROCESS



Questions on the Process



# REVIEW TOPICS

The Official Plan Review is proposed to be focused on four topic areas:



Housing



Agriculture



Economy



Growth & Development





HOUSING

# ATTAINABLE HOUSING REVIEW

Housing challenges are a significant issue for many residents in Middlesex County, as in other communities.

The County initiated an Attainable Housing Review to:

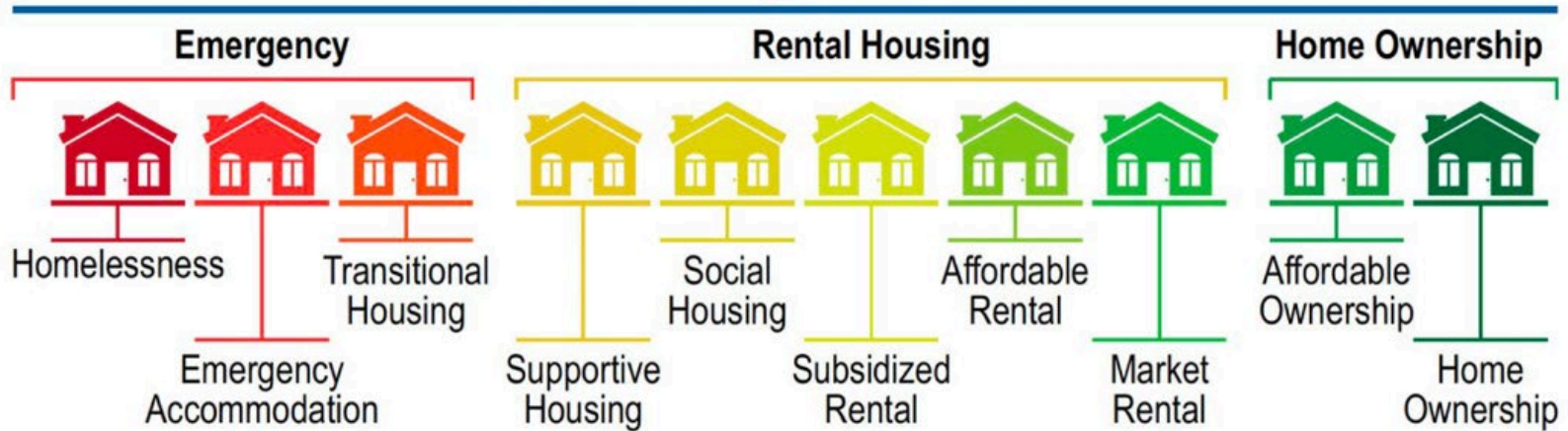
- Assess the current housing supply and demand.
- Develop strategies to address the full spectrum of residents' housing needs.

Project vision *'Every Middlesex County resident has the opportunity to access the type of housing they need in their community'*.



# ATTAINABLE HOUSING REVIEW

## The Housing Continuum



# ATTAINABLE HOUSING REVIEW

The reports completed as part of the Housing Review included:

- (1) What We are Hearing Consultation Summary Report
- (2) Local and Comparator Municipal Engagement
- (3) Housing Needs Assessment
- (4) Housing Best Practices
- (5) Rental Housing Resource Guide
- (6) Attainable Housing Review Final Report
- (7) Attainable Housing Review Implementation Report

Additional Resources

<https://www.middlesex.ca/living-here/attainable-housing-review>



# HOUSING TOPICS TO BE CONSIDERED

Implementing recommendations of Attainable Housing Review.

Conformity exercise to align general policy direction and updated definitions with PPS.

Additional Residential Unit (ARU) policies in Settlement Areas and Agricultural Areas.

Attainable Housing Review Planning Consultant will assist.







AGRICULTURE

# AGRICULTURE

The predominant land use within the County and an important component of the economy and culture:

- over 1.2 billion economic impact
- 7,800 jobs (290 million wages and salaries)

Important locally and provincially: favorable climate and soils, accessibility to Canadian and US markets, and a diverse agricultural system (operations, supporting business, processing, etc).



# AGRICULTURAL TOPICS TO BE CONSIDERED

PPS changes including implementing an Agricultural Systems approach.

County Council motion *“THAT staff be directed to include consideration of agriculture parcel size as part of the OPA”*

Additional Residential Units (ARUs).

Residence Surplus to a Farming Operation.

On-farm Diversified Uses (OFDUs).

**Agricultural Consultant will assist.**





ECONOMY

# ECONOMY

Middlesex County economic development activities are focused on four key sectors: Agri-Business, Manufacturing, Small Business and Tourism.

CBRE Tourism Consulting (in partnership with County Economic Development, Planning and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming) undertook an inventory of tourism assets, review of attractions, and developed guidelines for land use planning.

Focus on three opportunities:

- Glamping and Outdoor Adventures
- Small Hotel or Retreat Centre
- Microbrewery





# ECONOMY RELATED TOPICS TO BE CONSIDERED

PPS and Planning Act changes pertaining to Employment Areas.

CBRE Tourism Toolkit land use recommendations.

Renewable Energy.

Regional Economic Opportunities.

Employment Projections.

County Council Strategic Plan.

Economic Development Department will assist.





GROWTH AND  
DEVELOPMENT

# GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Middlesex County is located in one of the fastest growing regions in Canada.

Development across the County has increased (from different baselines) and across all types of applications.

Accelerating regional housing market.

Growth presents both opportunities to enhance communities and challenges that require thoughtful planning and collaboration to address effectively.



# GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT RELATED TOPICS

Population, Housing & Employment Projections based on Ontario Population Projections published by the Ministry of Finance.

Intensification & Redevelopment.

Policy direction pertaining to local Settlement Area Boundary Expansions following the removal of Municipal Comprehensive Reviews.

Consulting Economist will assist.



# ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Committee may identify further areas or questions that could form part of the review.







NEXT STEPS |



# NEXT MEETING

The next agenda will likely include Housing related matters and seek the Committee's input on the Engagement Plan.

Canvas the Committee for potential meeting dates.







# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025



# AGENDA

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Review and Discussion

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Engagement

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Housing

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Transportation

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Economy (if time)

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Next Steps



# REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

# REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Review and approval of previous meeting minutes.



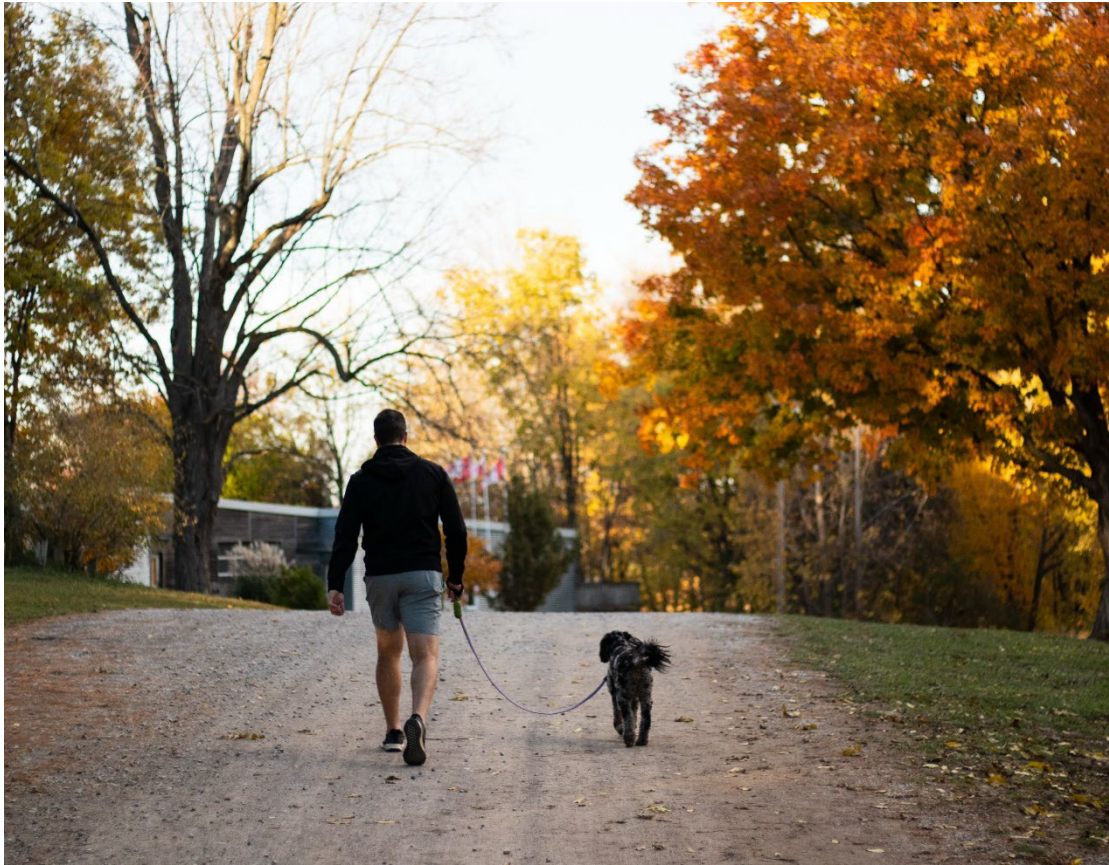
Any logistics or questions of Committee Members?



Committee feedback process.







ENGAGEMENT



## **Middlesex County Official Plan**

### *Engagement Approach*



# Engagement Principles

*Middlesex County Official Plan: Engagement Approach*

*Quarry's engagements ensure all participants are brought along through the process and see themselves as contributing to the overall success of the project.*

Public engagement activities are conducted in a meaningful way and ensures that those affected by decisions have a voice in the process, influencing outcomes by recognizing and addressing the needs of all participants.

- ✓ *active engagement*
- ✓ *informed contribution*
- ✓ *clear communication*

# Your Engagement Team

This engagement will be delivered by Quarry's senior team of stakeholder engagement and strategic planning experts.



**Lynn van der Linder, CMC**  
**CLIENT EXECUTIVE**

Lynn van der Linde will serve as the Client Executive throughout all phases of this engagement and will be the main point of escalation for the project team and primary point of contact for the project sponsor. Lynn has more than 25 years of experience across a range of industries in both public and private sectors.



**Kristina Ireland, MBA, PMP**  
**SENIOR STRATEGIC PLANNING**  
**ADVISOR AND PROJECT LEAD**

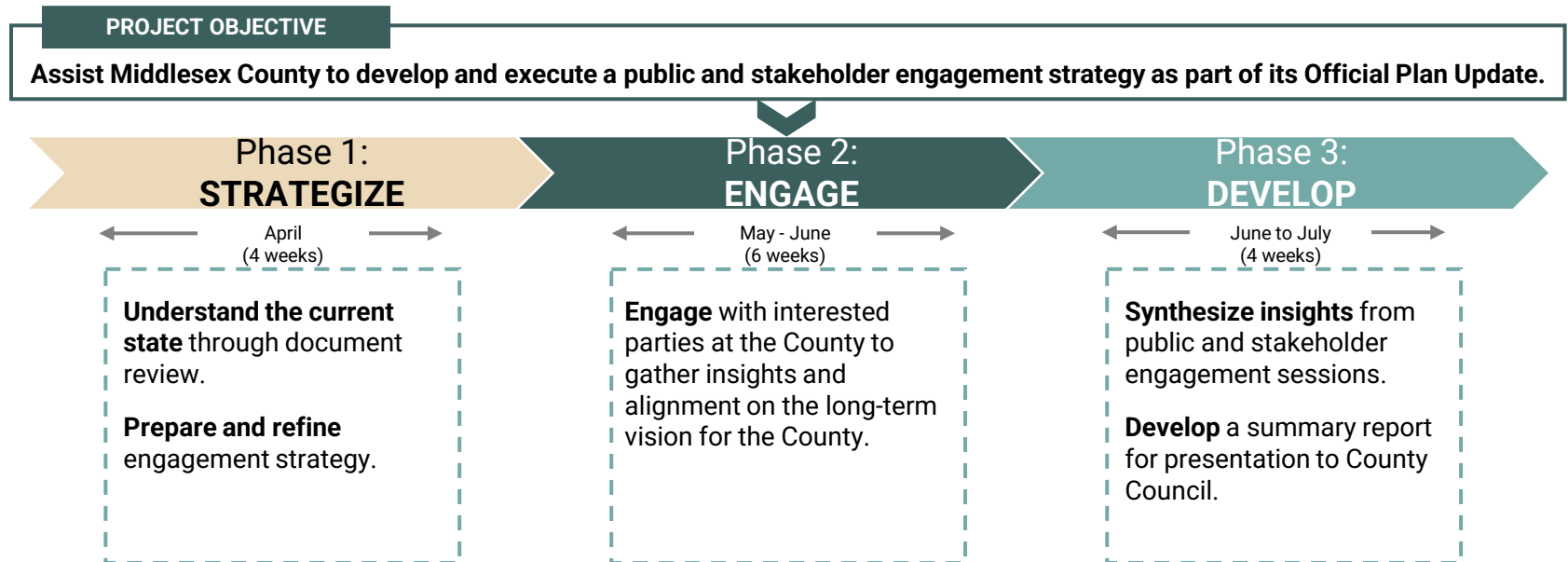
Kristina will serve as a Senior Strategic Planning Advisor and Project Lead throughout all phases of the project, offering support to the team from a strategic planning perspective. Kristina has more than 25 years of experience across a range of industries in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.



**Erik Lockhart, MBA**  
**SENIOR FACILITATOR**

Erik will serve as the Senior Facilitator, leading team and public engagement sessions throughout the project. Erik has more than 35 years of experience providing facilitation services across a range of industries in both the public and private sectors.

# Project Objective and Timeline



# Communication Methods



Website, Social Media & Newspaper Promotion



Stakeholder Consultation



Community Questionnaire



Workshops



Open House



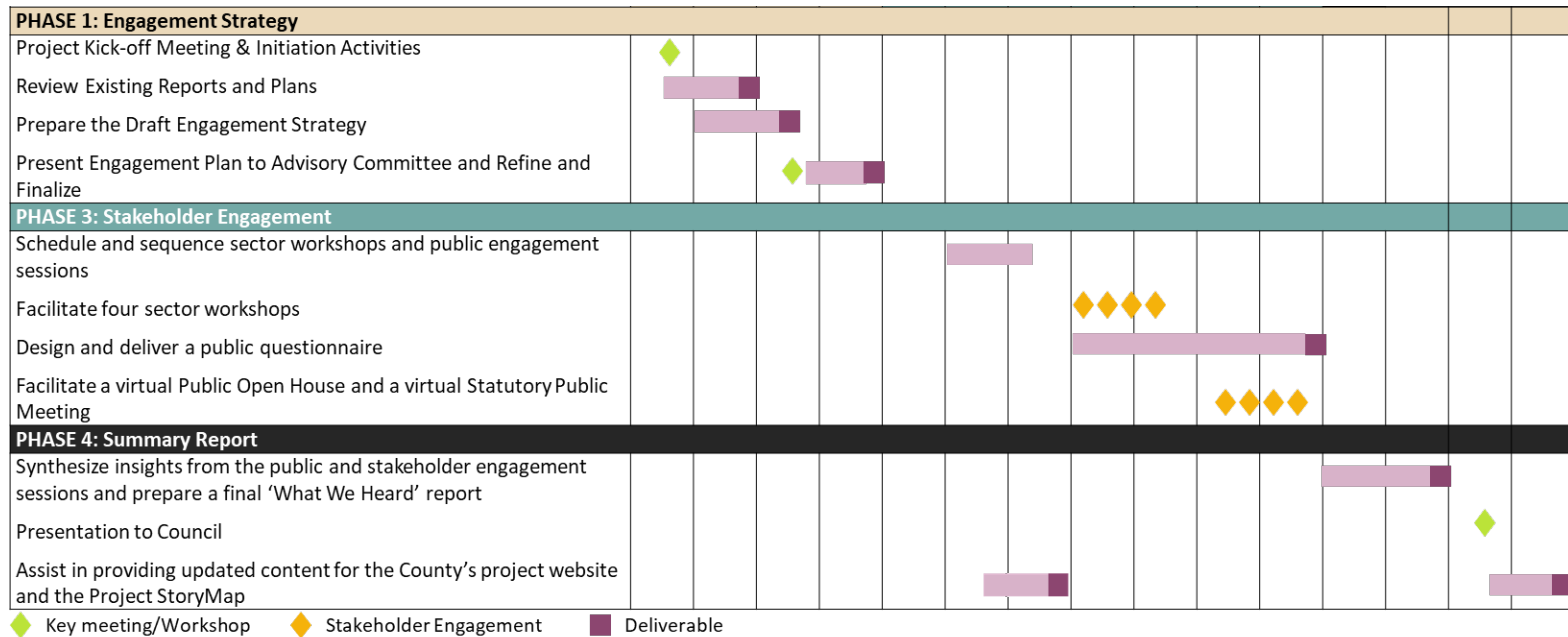
Public Meeting



County Council Meetings



# Key Milestones



# ENGAGEMENT

The County will be relying on the experience and expertise of Quarry Consulting.

Are there additional communication options that should be taken into account or that are worth exploring?





HOUSING

# INTRODUCTION

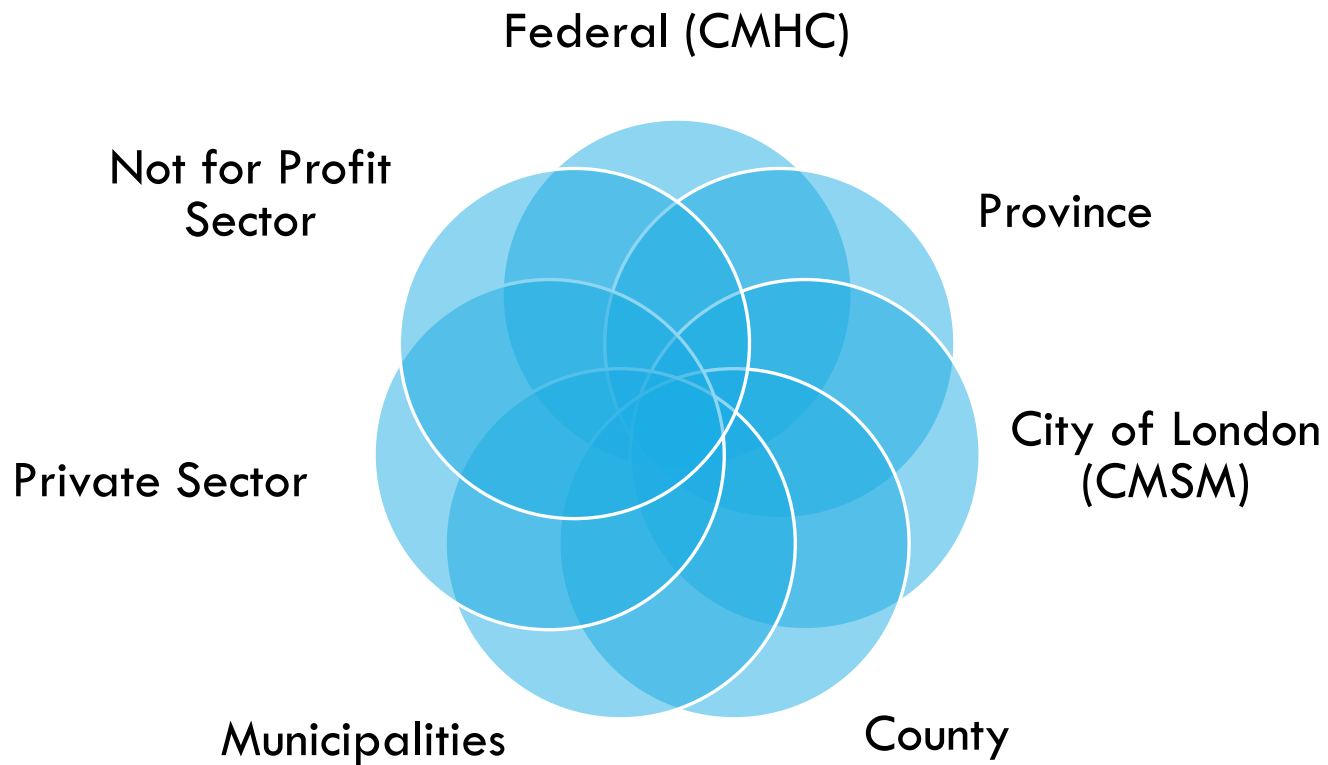
Housing is a complex issue that has important implications for communities.

The provincial government has passed at least 8 housing related bills over the past 4 years with a stated aim of increasing housing supply.

In October of 2024, the new Provincial Planning Statement was implemented with changes primarily focused on housing supportive policies.

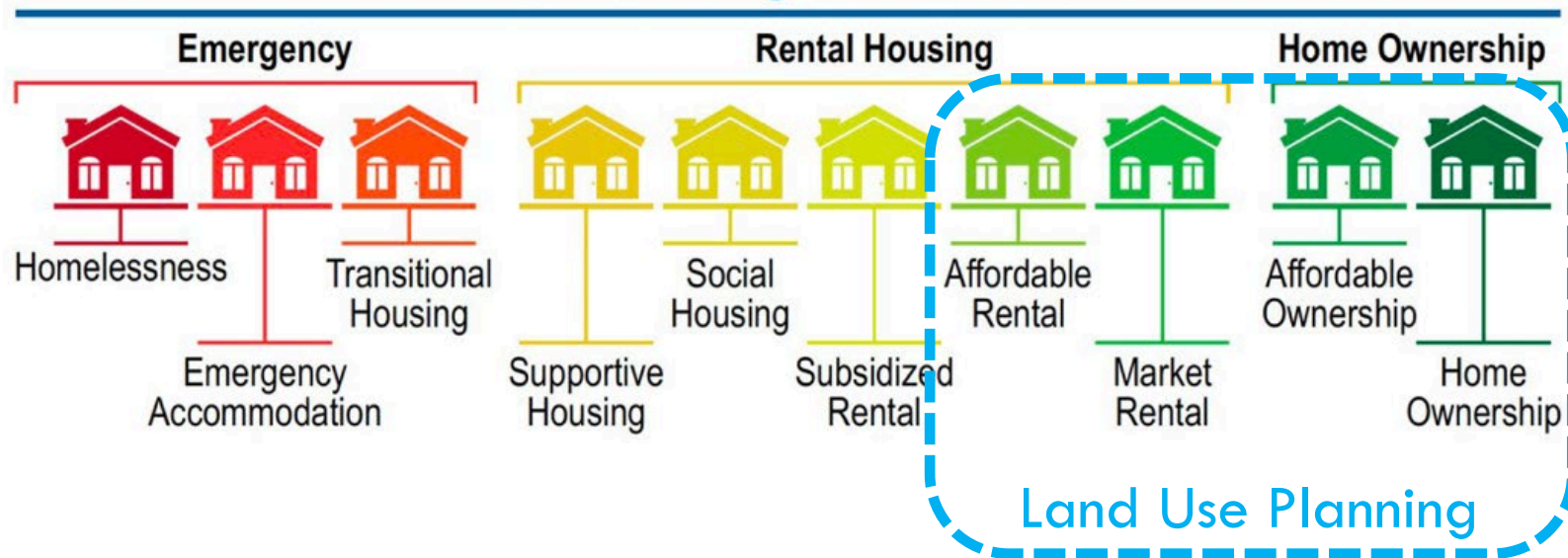


# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



# BEYOND LAND USE PLANNING

## The Housing Continuum





# PROVINCIAL PLANNING STATEMENT

Encourages the achievement of complete communities by accommodating an appropriate range and mix of land uses including housing options to meet long-term needs, improving accessibility for people of all ages and abilities by addressing land use barriers which restrict their full participation in society, and improving social equity and overall quality of life for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes, including equity-deserving groups.

Municipalities must provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected needs of current and future residents of the regional market area.

[Policies 2.1.4 and 2.1.6]



# PROVINCIAL PLANNING STATEMENT

Municipalities must establish and implement minimum targets for the provision of housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households, and coordinate land use planning and planning for housing with Service Managers to address the full range of housing options including affordable housing needs

Municipalities must permit and facilitate

1. all housing options required to meet the social, health, economic and wellbeing requirements of current and future residents, including additional needs housing and needs arising from demographic changes and employment opportunities
2. all types of residential intensification, including the development and redevelopment of underutilized commercial and institutional sites for residential use, development and introduction of new housing options within previously developed areas, and redevelopment, which results in a net increase in residential units

[Policies 2.2.1 a) and b)]



# PROVINCIAL PLANNING STATEMENT

Defines housing options:

“means a range of housing types such as, but not limited to single-detached, semidetached, rowhouses, townhouses, stacked townhouses, multiplexes, additional residential units, tiny homes, laneway housing, garden suites, rooming houses and multi-residential buildings, including low-and mid-rise apartments. The term can also refer to a variety of housing arrangements and forms such as, but not limited to, life lease housing, co-ownership housing, co-operative housing, community land trusts, land lease community homes, affordable housing, additional needs housing, multigenerational housing, student housing, farm worker housing, culturally appropriate housing, supportive, community and transitional housing and housing related to employment, educational, or institutional uses, such as long-term care homes.”



# PROVINCIAL PLANNING STATEMENT

Defines affordable:

“a) in the case of **ownership housing**, the least expensive of:

housing for which the purchase price results in annual accommodation costs which do not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or housing for which the purchase price is at least 10 percent below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the municipality;

b) in the case of **rental housing**, the least expensive of:

a unit for which the rent does not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or a unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the municipality”



# 'AFFORDABLE' OWNERSHIP HOUSING

'Affordable purchase price of a detached house', 'Average purchase price of a detached house' by 'Municipality'



# 'AFFORDABLE' EXAMPLES

Middlesex Centre - 2 bedroom 2 bathroom located in 55+ adults only resort-style park listed at \$379,900

North Middlesex - 1 bedroom 2 bathroom former ambulance station listed at \$399,900

Southwest Middlesex - 2 bedroom 1.5 bathroom townhouse condo listed at \$294,900





# 'AFFORDABLE' RENTAL HOUSING

**Table 27. Income Decile and Rental Affordability for Middlesex County 2021**

Income Decile	Decile	Average Rent (CMHC)	Average Rent (MLS)	Average Rent (Other)
Lowest Decile	\$13,600	\$1,191	\$2,804	\$2,363
Second Decile	\$28,500	\$1,191	\$2,804	\$2,363
Third Decile	\$39,800	\$1,191	\$2,804	\$2,363
Fourth Decile	\$51,600	\$1,191	\$2,804	\$2,363
Fifth Decile	\$63,900	\$1,191	\$2,804	\$2,363
Sixth Decile	\$77,100	\$1,191	\$2,804	\$2,363
Seventh Decile	\$93,100	\$1,191	\$2,804	\$2,363
Eighth Decile	\$113,600	\$1,191	\$2,804	\$2,363
Ninth Decile	\$143,800	\$1,191	\$2,804	\$2,363
Highest Decile	\$232,700+	\$1,191	\$2,804	\$2,363

A recent report for the City of London that an average monthly rent for two-bedroom unit \$2,161 requires an after-tax income of \$86,440.



# ATTAINABLE HOUSING REVIEW



**Examined the needs  
across the entire  
housing continuum**



**Identified gaps in  
the provision of  
housing**



**Prepared a  
municipal strategy  
to meet current and  
future needs**



# ATTAINABLE HOUSING REVIEW

Community engagement across multiple stakeholder groups, identified the following housing issues:

**Attainability** **Support services**  
**NIMBY** **Homelessness** **Availability**  
**Affordability** **More housing diversity**  
**Long waiting lists for subsidized housing**  
**Workforce housing**  
**No emergency housing**  
**Lack of serviced land**



# ATTAINABLE HOUSING REVIEW

The reports completed as part of the Housing Review included:

- (1) What We are Hearing Consultation Summary Report
- (2) Local and Comparator Municipal Engagement
- (3) Housing Needs Assessment
- (4) Housing Best Practices
- (5) Rental Housing Resource Guide
- (6) Attainable Housing Review Final Report
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Additional Resources

<https://www.middlesex.ca/living-here/attainable-housing-review>



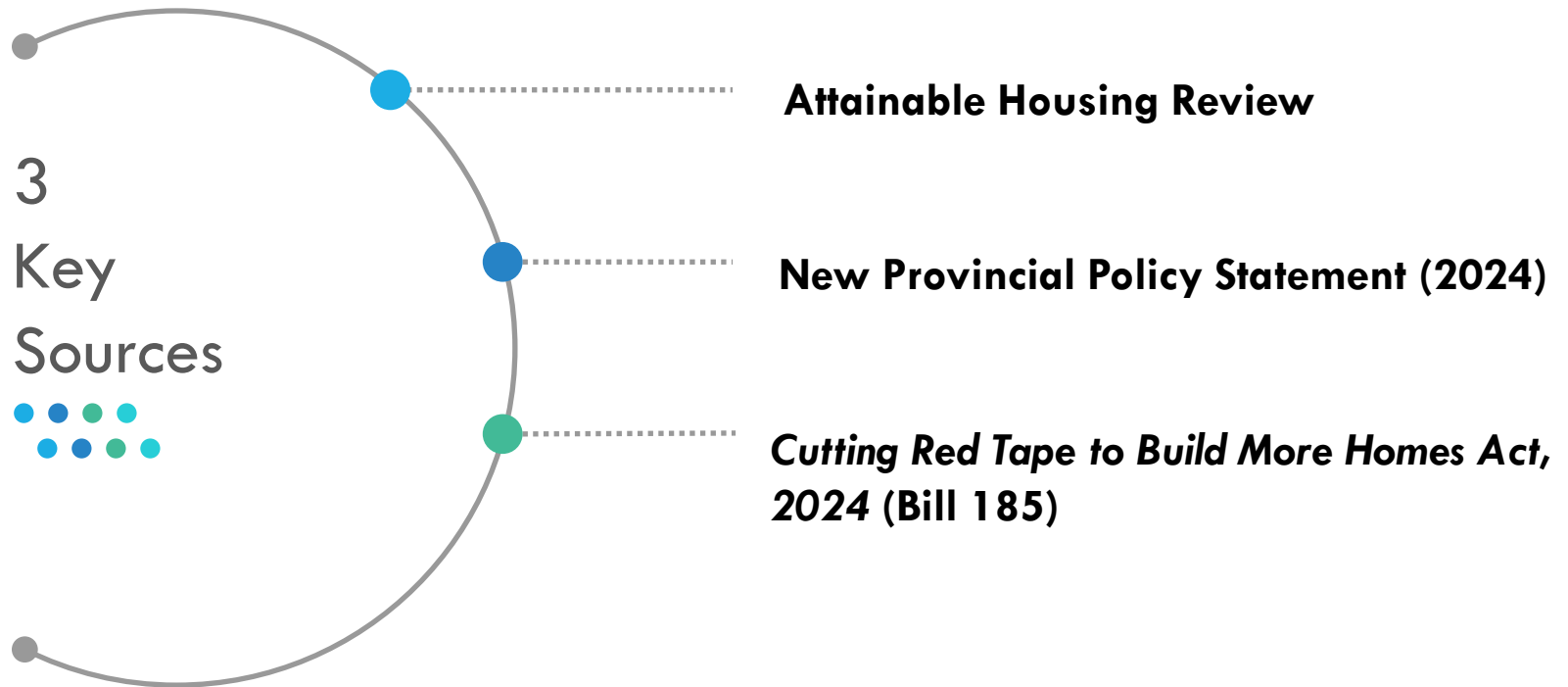
# LAND USE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adopt Housing Targets
- Adopt Policy to Maintain Adequate Housing Supply
- Implement Zoning Solutions to Reduce Land Costs and Increase Density
- Adopt Policies To Encourage Range of Housing Options
- Revise Policies that Restrict Access for Certain User Groups
- Update Policies to Support Streamlined Planning Applications
- Include Definition of Affordable Housing
- Establish Modified Standards for Affordable Housing
- Prioritize Planning Approvals for Affordable Housing
- Rental Retention Policies





# BASIS FOR THE RECOMMENDED OP AMENDMENTS



# COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

Addresses housing within Section 2.3.7 and local official plans are to have policies that encourage a range of housing types, sizes and tenures to meet projected demographic and market requirements of current and future residents.

The Official Plan sets an affordability target of 20% and requires that 15% of all development occur by way of intensification and redevelopment, primarily within Settlement Areas where an appropriate level of servicing is available.

Official Plan directs local municipalities to include criteria for intensification and redevelopment and includes a placeholder policy that speaks to the at that time not yet completed Attainable Housing Review.



# RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

## **Revise section 2.2.5 (Policy Framework) Cultural Heritage and Archeology:**

- To allow municipalities to waive Heritage Impact Assessments for housing projects of significant public interest or those aligned with provincial priorities where the development is not situated on significant built Heritage Resources or Cultural Heritage Landscapes



# RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

## **Revise section 2.3.1 (Growth Management) Introduction:**

- To provide direction that local municipalities shall consider opportunities to allocate, and re-allocate if necessary, the unused system capacity of municipal water services and municipal sewage services to support efficient use of these services to meet current and projected needs for increased housing supply.

## **Revise section 2.3.4 Economic Development:**

- To state that surplus land will be first considered for affordable housing projects rather than being considered for affordable housing alongside other objectives



# RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

## Replace section 2.3.7 Housing Policies:

- Current version indicates that “The County supports...”, whereas the recommended version indicates “The County and local municipalities will”...
  - Meet targets for Affordable Rental Housing, Affordable and Attainable Ownership Housing, purpose-built rental units, and multiple units or apartment dwellings
  - Permit and facilitate all Additional Needs Housing
  - Remove references to special needs housing, boarding or rooming houses, and group homes
  - Prioritize and permit and facilitate residential intensification
  - Promote densities for new housing which efficiently use land and resources
  - Promote the retention of rental housing





# RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

## **Replace section 2.3.7 Housing Policies (CONTINUED):**

- The County will prioritize surplus land for affordable and/or supportive housing
- The County will prioritize planning approvals for affordable housing, and local municipalities are encouraged to do the same
- Local municipalities are encouraged to remove references to minimum separation distances for shared housing and permit in all areas where residential dwellings are permitted
- The County and local municipalities will take a coordinated approach to planning for housing with the City of London
- Local municipalities will have consistent definitions of affordable housing as the County's OP



# RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

## **Revise section 2.3.7.2 Number, Range and Mix of Housing Units**

- Remove reference to local municipalities establishing the mix of types and tenure in their OPs (as targets have been prescribed)
- Add examples of policies that may reduce housing costs
- Add examples of policies that support a range of housing options
- Require local municipalities to adopt targets that are consistent with or greater than the County's targets



# RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

## **Revise section 2.3.7.3 Intensification and Redevelopment**

- Add policy that County and local municipalities will support compact built forms
- Add additional examples of housing intensification, redevelopment and compact built forms
- Add that local OPs shall address minimum densities



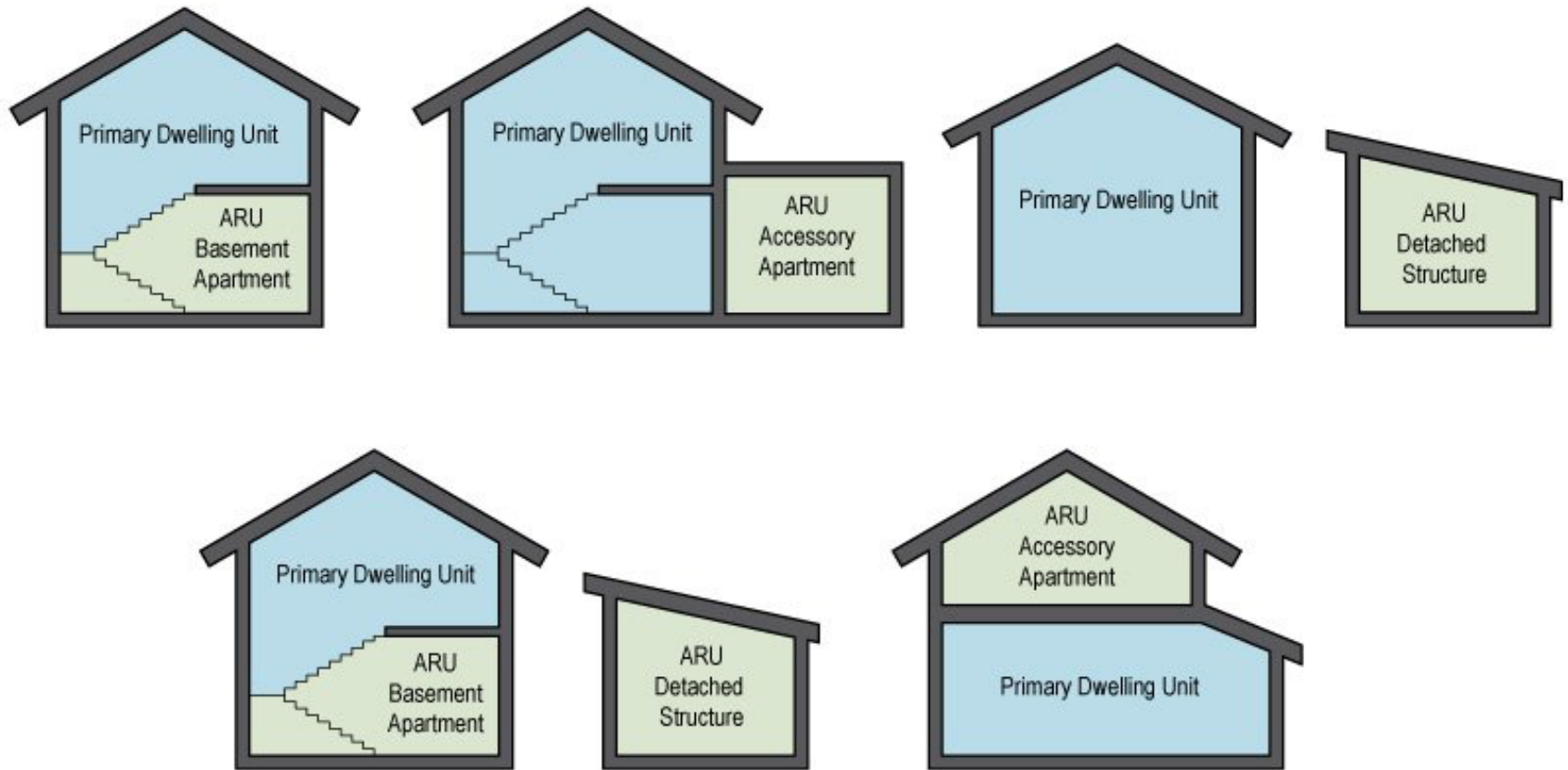
# RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

## **Revise section 2.3.7.4 Additional Residential Units and section 3.3.3 (Agricultural) Permitted Uses**

- Expand permissions for additional residential units from Settlement Areas with full municipal water and sewage services to all areas where a residential unit is permitted, and clarify that two additional residential units are permitted on a lot in Agricultural Areas in addition to farm worker housing permitted as an agricultural use.
- Add additional criteria for additional residential units, such as that the units shall be compatible with, and would not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations, have appropriate sewage and water services, address any public health and safety concerns, minimize land taken out of agricultural production



# ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS





# PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS

## Additional Residential Units (ARUs)

- Permitted as-of-right in fully serviced settlement areas by the Province.
- PPS (2024)
  - Where a residential dwelling is permitted on a lot in a prime agricultural area, up to two additional residential units shall be permitted in accordance with provincial guidance, provided that, where two additional residential units are proposed, at least one of these additional residential units is located within or attached to the principal dwelling, and any additional residential units:
    - a) comply with the minimum distance separation formulae;
    - b) are compatible with, and would not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations;
    - c) have appropriate sewage and water services;
    - d) address any public health and safety concerns;
    - e) are of limited scale and are located within, attached, or in close proximity to the principal dwelling or farm building cluster; and
    - f) minimize land taken out of agricultural production. Lots with additional residential units may only be severed in accordance with policy 4.3.3.1.c).



# PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS

As municipalities have dealt with ARU proposals, implementation matters have been identified:

- Reverse (can the existing dwelling become the ARU if a new larger dwelling is constructed)
- Clustering (buildings and maximum separation distance)
- Servicing (co-serviced or separately serviced)
- Size (relative to size of primary dwelling and / or property)
- Official Plan vs Zoning (policy vs regulation)
- Others?



# RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

## **Add to section 2.3.8 Settlement Areas**

- Add that local municipalities will plan Settlement Areas to achieve Complete Communities, Compact Built Form, mixed-use development, and support an appropriate range and mix of housing, including affordable, accessible, and equitable housing.

## **Add to section 2.3.8.1 Urban Areas**

- Add that local municipalities shall adopt zoning standards that promote higher density within Urban Areas



# RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

## **Revise section 3.2.3 (Detailed Land Use Policies) Local Official Plans**

- To remove reference to special needs housing and replace with additional needs housing, shared housing, and accessible housing



# RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

## 4.0 Implementation Policies

### Revise section 4.4 Local Zoning By-Laws

- To add that municipalities shall keep their zoning by-laws up-to-date with their official plans and the County official Plan by establishing permitted uses, minimum density targets for new or expanded Settlement Areas, heights and other development standards to accommodate growth and development.
- And add that local municipalities are encouraged to permit triplexes and multiplexes without requiring rezoning applications.





# RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

## **Appendix A: Glossary of Terms**

### **Add the following definitions to Appendix A: Glossary of Terms**

- Additional Needs Housing
- Affordable and Attainable Ownership Housing
- Affordable Rental Housing
- Compact Built Form
- Complete Communities
- Shared Housing
- And revise the definition of Housing to remove “housing for people with special needs” and add shared housing, additional needs housing and other housing forms



# COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN COULD GO FURTHER

There may be a need to include policies that have regard for housing market pressures and changing demographics to increase housing options that are suitable for young adults and the aging population.

The Official Plan could set higher density targets for new residential development occurring in greenfield areas where full services are available and require a certain percentage of new builds to be 'ARU ready'.

The Official Plan could include a policy that either requires or encourages proponents to demonstrate how matters pertaining to market-based housing needs including affordability and attainability are addressed through their proposal.





TRANSPORTATION

# TRANSPORTATION

A strong and efficient Transportation System has been a key long-term priority of Middlesex County and therefore represents an important component of the Official Plan.

The Transportation Department maintains and enhances the County's infrastructure, ensuring the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, enhancing the quality of life for County residents, and supporting regional economic development.

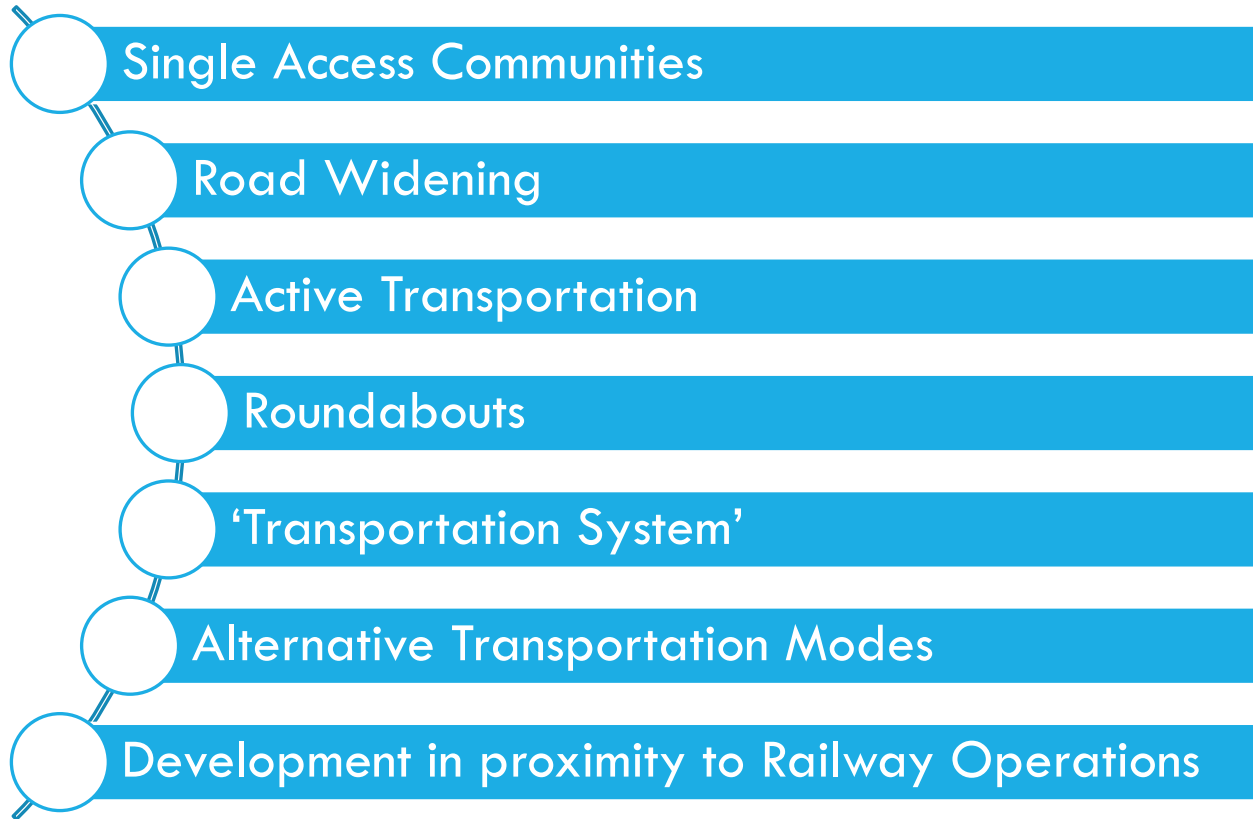
# TRANSPORTATION

The Department oversees the maintenance, operation, and capital works of over 1,700 lane kilometers of roads and more than 250 bridges and culverts.

This encompasses a wide range of activities including winter maintenance, road and bridge maintenance and construction, and supporting sound asset management practices.

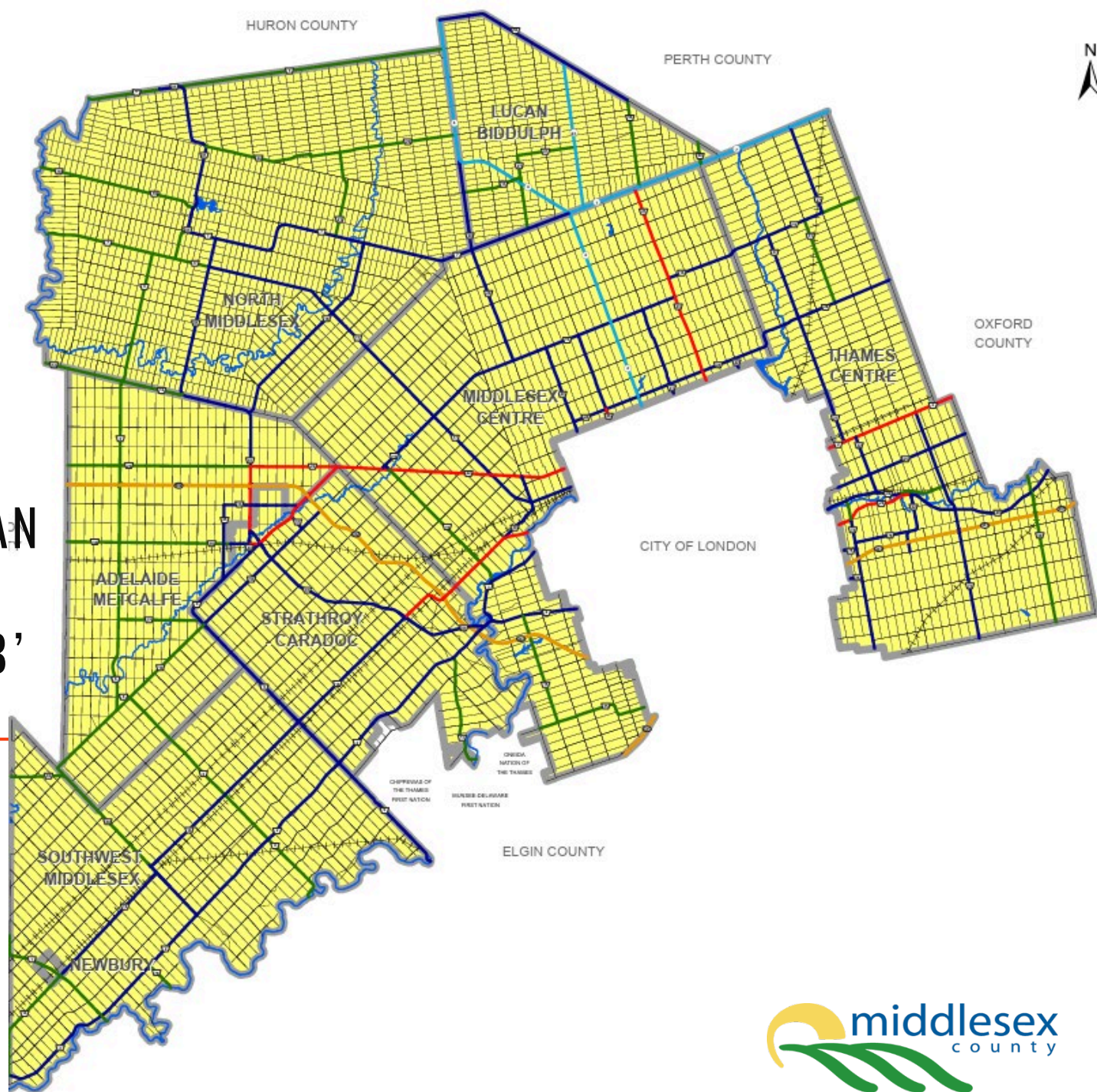
The last update of the Official Plan included a comprehensive review of the Transportation System policies and extensive changes.

# PREVIOUS OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT





# PREVIOUS OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT SCHEDULE 'B'



# TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

Road Widening Policies



Update on Major  
Construction Projects



Areas for Discussion

# ROAD WIDENING POLICIES

The Official Plan policies provide for the taking of widening along County Roads from the 'severed' and 'retained' lands where the right-of-way is less than the required width.

Policy has been effective in securing necessary road widening to accommodate future road works, utility needs and to accommodate and maintain bridges, ditches, culverts and other road infrastructure.

Provincial exemption from site plan control for residential developments of 10 or less units does limit this policy in certain circumstances.



# GLENDON DRIVE ROUNDABOUT

The first roundabout constructed by the County at the intersection of Glendon Drive, Jefferies Road, Vannek Road and Coldstream Road.

After extensive planning and site preparation initial construction undertaken September to November 2024.

Final works to be undertaken summer 2025 for an estimated 6.2 million project budget.





# GLENDON DRIVE ROUNDAABOUT STAGE ONE





# GLENDON DRIVE ROUNDAABOUT STAGE TWO



# GLENDON DRIVE ROUNDBOUT STAGE THREE

---



# AREAS FOR DISCUSSION

## County Road Entrances

- Permit Process can be triggered by land use planning process, but often independent.
- Intended to preserve infrastructure, efficiency, and safety.
- Operational scale can matter more than the use.
- Agri-business Entrances.
- Farm gate Entrances.

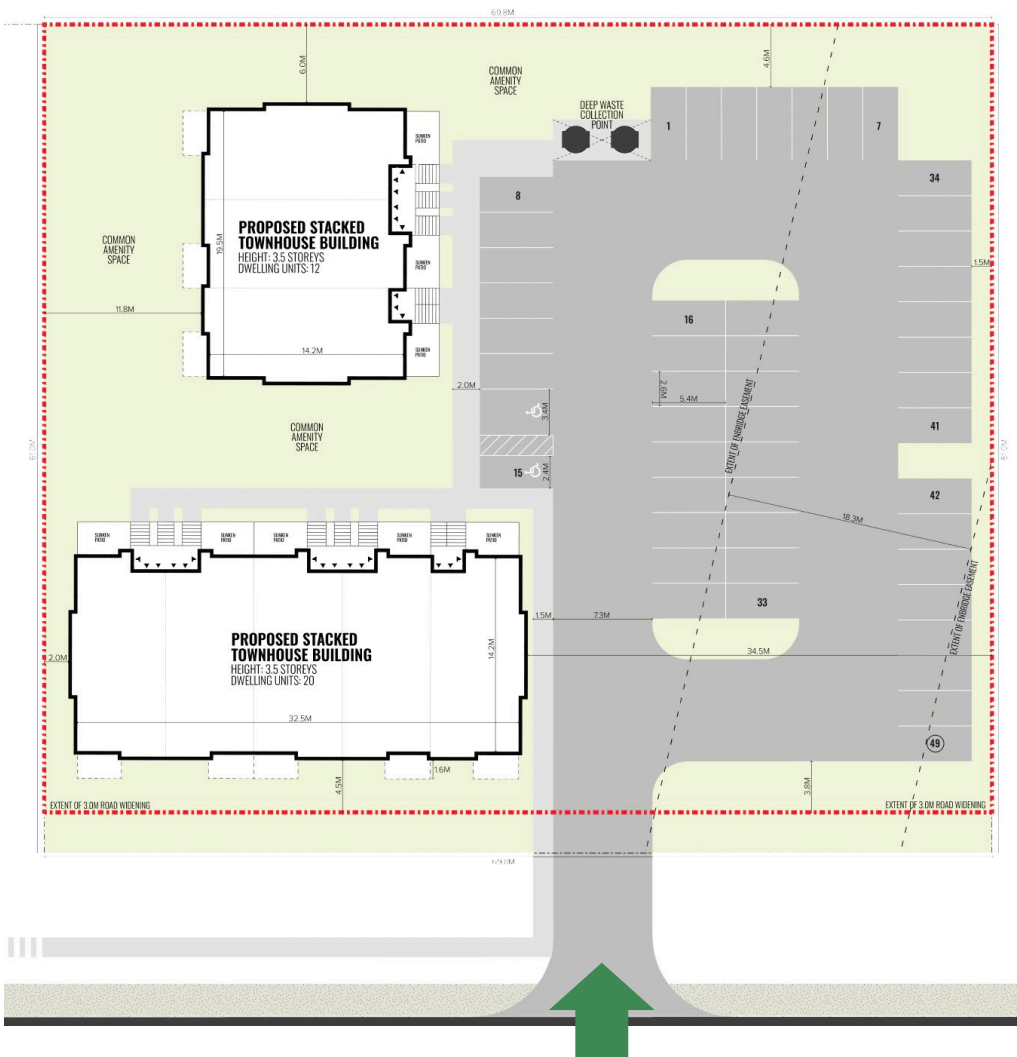


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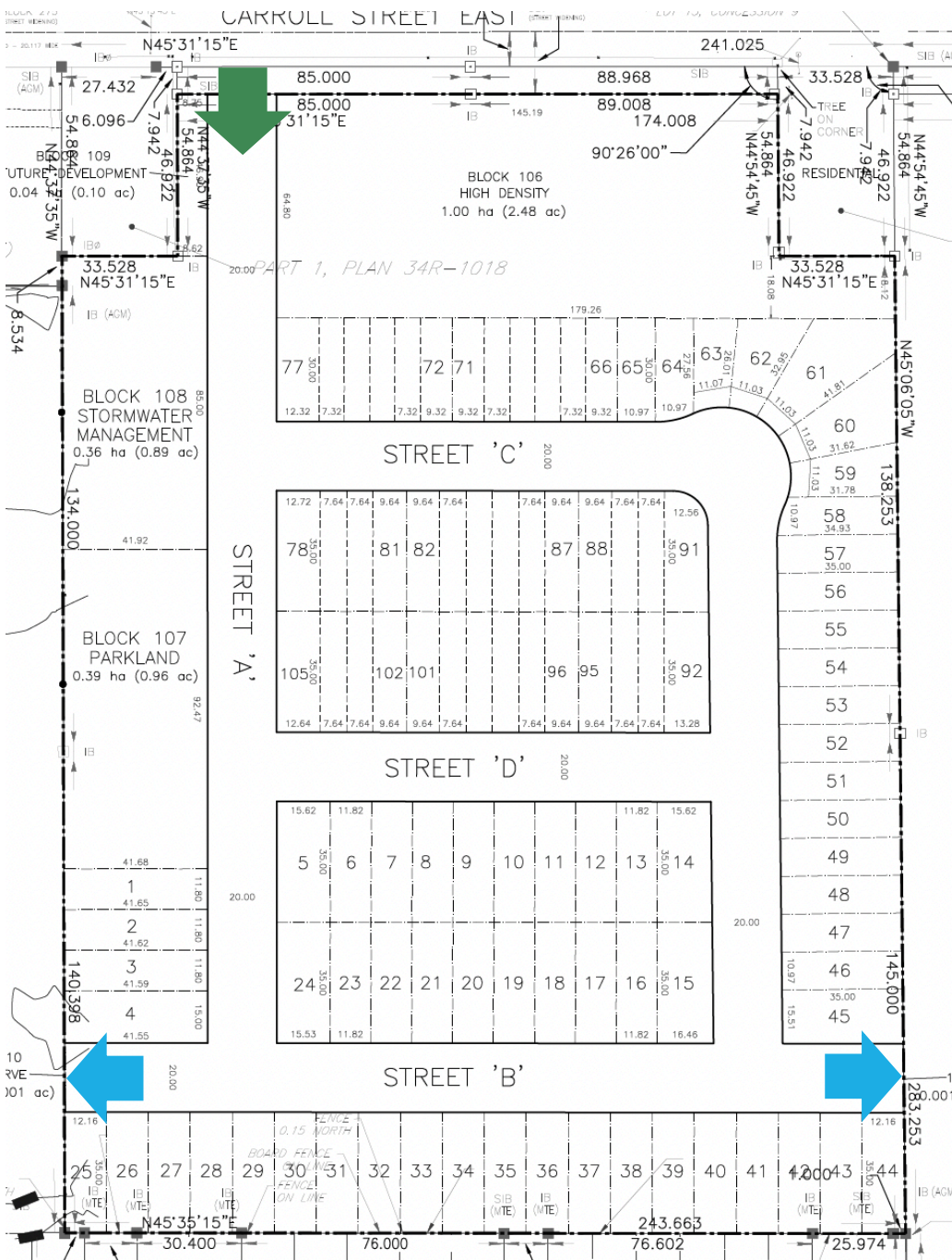
## Single Access Community Policy

- “The layout of all new residential developments shall provide a minimum of two access points to the existing road network. Exceptions to this policy shall be considered if the proposed street pattern is approved by the local Municipality, emergency service provider(s) and the County Engineer, where applicable”
- Intended to preserve access for emergency services and not land lock residents during road and service maintenance and construction or potential blockages of a single entrance road.
- Considered during review of site-specific proposals.





# AREAS FOR DISCUSSION



# AREAS FOR DISCUSSION

# AREAS FOR DISCUSSION

Any other questions of the County Engineer?

Are there additional Transportation matters that should be taken into account or that are worth exploring?







# ECONOMY

(if there is time)



# TOURISM TOOLKIT

Other topics will be considered within the Economy framework at future PAC meeting, but the Middlesex County Tourism Toolkit will be introduced if time allows at this meeting.

CBRE Tourism Consulting (in partnership with County Economic Development, Planning and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming) undertook an inventory of tourism assets, review of attractions, and developed guidelines for land use planning.

Founded on a shared vision of overall growth for Middlesex County and its tourism economy, ensuring prosperity for all communities, while recognizing individual community needs and strengths.



# INTRODUCTION

An inventory of existing tourism assets of Middlesex County.

Gap analysis to identify products & experiences that best benefit and support Middlesex County.

Assessment of potential sites for new tourism investment.

Outline of actions related to land use planning for tourism operators and investors.

Summary of best practices and case studies related to successful tourism business development and expansion in Ontario.

Identify inconsistencies between Middlesex County's tourism development goals and planning policies and regulations.





# MARKET ASSESSMENT

## **Resident Market**

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Including the City of London, the primary resident market featured 530,000 residents.

## **Visitor Market**

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76% same-day visitors and 50% travel in Q3.

## **Accommodation Market**

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# MARKET ASSESSMENT

## Visitor Activity Participation in Region 1

Activity	Visitor Participation
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Source: Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport, 2021



# TOURISM ASSET INVENTORY

313 tourism assets in Middlesex County – 36% culinary (restaurants).

Agri-tourism, nature & outdoors, and sports & recreation are highest performing assets.

Arts & culture and culinary establishments are gaining notoriety.

Some heritage venues are market ready but need better promotion as a cluster of activities.

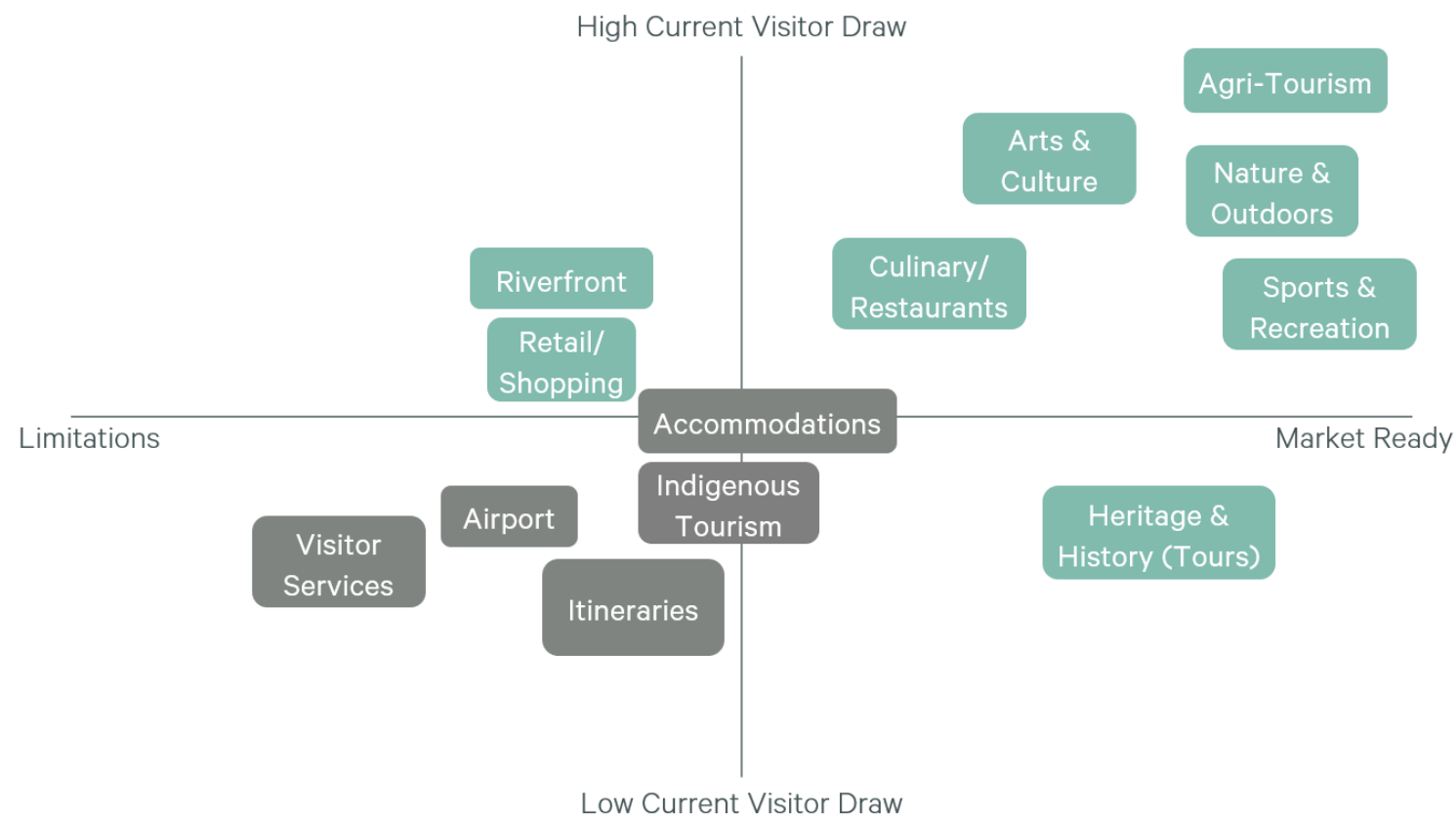
Private sector itineraries and Indigenous tourism experiences are available, could draw higher demand with additional experiences and promotion.

Riverfront experiences and boutique retail need supportive infrastructure.





# TOURISM ASSET INVENTORY



# TOURISM INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## Key Evaluation Criteria

- Private Sector Investment Potential
- Site Considerations
- Market & Financial Feasibility
- Tourism Destination/ Appeal Factors

## 12 Investment Opportunities Evaluated

- Small Hotel/Corporate Retreat with Meeting Space
- Unique Accommodations (ex. Farm Stays)
- Transient Accommodations on Golf Courses
- Hotel & Indoor Waterpark
- Multi-Use Event Centre
- Glamping and Outdoor Adventures
- Tourist Commercial Businesses on Thames River
- Immersive Light Experiences/Art Installations
- Microbrewery, Cidery or Distillery
- 4-Season Farmers Market
- History and Heritage Venue
- Sport Tourism Venues and Experiences



## Top 3 Opportunities

1. Glamping & Outdoor Adventures
2. Small Independent Hotel/Corporate Retreat Centre
3. Microbrewery



# GLAMPING & OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

**Concept:** “glamorous camping”, upscale establishment featuring 10 geodesic dome-style structures, on a 3-acre site, that is serviced and zoned appropriately

**Target Markets:** families, couples, individuals, corporate groups, and those attending special events

**Capital Costs:** \$665,000 (est.)

**Utilization:** 1,360 occupied nights in Year 1, increasing to a stabilized demand of 1,500 occupied nights or 2,000 guests per year (double occupancy staying an avg. 2 nights)



# SMALL INDEPENDENT HOTEL

**Concept:** 50-room upscale hotel with conference facilities, could be used for corporate retreats, small conferences and weddings - would fill several gaps in the existing market (multi-use event space and overnight accommodations)

**Target Markets:** corporate travellers, meeting/conference delegates, leisure groups (weddings, sports, etc.), leisure independent travellers and government/discounted.

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**Utilization:** 11,900 occupied room nights going up to 12,800, for stabilized occupancy of 70.2%



# MICROBREWERY

**Concept:** microbrewery with a small retail area and 20-seat taproom, and a potential partnership with a local restaurant to offer light foodservice

**Target Markets:** younger demographic (millennials and Gen X), higher-income people who value artisanal products and “unique” brews

**Capital Costs:** \$900,000 (est.)

**Utilization:** unit sales and generate 66,100 covers by its third and stabilized year of operation or 82% occupancy





# POLICY REVIEW REPORT FINDINGS

County's Official Plan and the Strategic Plan are strongly aligned with economic development objectives re: tourism as an economic driver.

Lands outside of settlement areas are Prime Agricultural lands with a few site-specific designations, thus provincial (PPS) policies are limiting towards encouraging larger-scale, recreational and tourism-oriented opportunities = barrier to tourism uses which are outside of on-farm diversified uses.

Each local municipality has a unique approach with regards to the use of land use planning tools to achieve tourism and economic development objectives.







# POLICY REVIEW REPORT FINDINGS

Available tourism policies activate existing assets and predominantly focus on areas within the agricultural designation (i.e., agri-tourism uses).

Local official plans could concentrate greater policy language towards the promotion of commercial tourism beyond agri-tourism (e.g., creative, cultural heritage, eco-tourism, etc.).

Further consideration of County Official Plan language at future PAC meeting.







# NEXT STEPS

Economy, Growth and  
Development, and  
Agriculture





# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025



# AGENDA

---

Review and Discussion

---

Economy

---

Agriculture

---

Next Steps

# REVIEW AND DISCUSSION



# REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Review and approval of previous meeting minutes.



Any questions of Committee Members.





# ECONOMY

---

- 1 Economic Development Department Update
- 2 Tourism Investment Toolkit
- 3 Provincial Change
- 4 Regionally Significant Employment Areas
- 5 Renewable Energy
- 6 Other Considerations



# INTRODUCTION

Integrating Planning and Economic Development ensures that land use decisions align with local economic goals.

The previous amendment to the Official Plan (County OPA3) included several policy changes including support for agriculture-related, agri-tourism, on-farm diversified uses and Rural Employment Areas.

Since then, work has continued and Economic Development Department will update Committee on current initiatives.

# Economic Development



Cara A. Finn, BBA, M.Ad.Ed.  
Director of Economic Development and Tourism  
[cfinn@middlesex.ca](mailto:cfinn@middlesex.ca)





# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2021

2022

2023

2025

2025

## Strategic Objective 1:

Invest in people and places via rural revitalization

## Strategic Objective 2:

Entice talented workers and entrepreneurs to relocate here

## Strategic Objective 3:

Attract investment in technology-based manufacturing, food production, and agriculture technology

## Strategic Objective 4:

Advocate for investment readiness and implement improvements in business development services

**Note:** Middlesex County is currently undertaking a new Strategic Plan. Economic Development continues to be a key area of focus.





# COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN PARTNERSHIPS

- In 2024, we reimbursed to local municipalities a total of **\$62,400** across **23 CIP** projects. Those projects represented a total of **\$735,624** in local investment.
- Seven CIPs have now been developed across Middlesex municipalities; each with 50% funding pledged from the County. A review and report on CIP offerings was completed the County Economic Development office and shared with each local municipality in 2024.
- Funding is available for 50% reimbursement of local municipal contributions to the implementation of Community Improvement Plan projects that are completed in 2025. County staff are also looking at creating an additional funding program to assist specifically with housing.
- 2025 CIP Application Forms have been shared with all local municipalities.



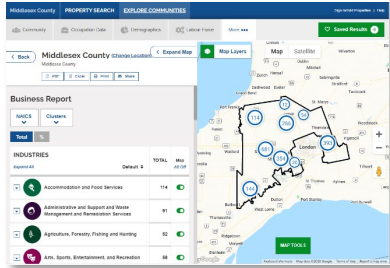


# Industrial Land Development

- Inventory of industrial lands across the County have been setup on GIS and shared with the Province.
- Business Parks [page](#) on website:
  - Looking to add new privately held commercial/industrial subdivisions to the mix
- [County Loan Program](#) was revamped in 2024 to focus on industrial development by partnering with local municipalities
- Certification and marketing of development-ready industrial lands – [contact us](#) re: how to access County and Provincial funding (can apply to both public and private parcels).

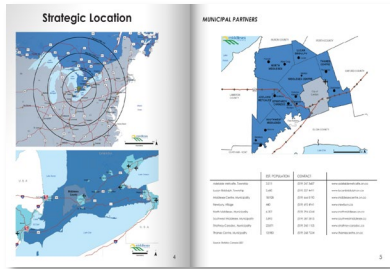


# MIDDLESEX COUNTY RESOURCES OF INTEREST



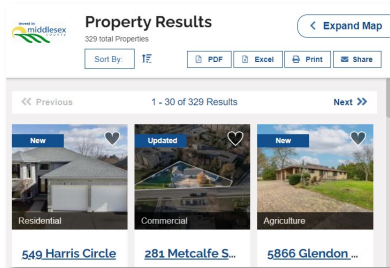
## Business Directory

- Local municipality business visitation opportunity (Middlesex County Support).
- User-friendly platform for investors and developers.
- Ability to sort business industries per municipality.



## Investor's Guide

- Information on skilled workers, world class education and research facilities, low start-up costs and shovel ready sites.
- For BR&A - how their business will be appreciated in Middlesex County.



## Available Properties

- Synced with the London and St. Thomas Association of Realtors property listing data.
- Facilitates the site selection process, providing accurate and up-to-date property information.

# TEAM MEMBERS



**Cara Finn**

*Director of Economic  
Development and Tourism*



**Paul Napigkit**

*Tourism Officer*



**Demetri Makrakos**

*Economic Development Officer*



**Kelly Hunt**

*Economic Development  
and Tourism Coordinator*



# WE'RE HERE TO HELP....

[www.investinmiddlesex.ca](http://www.investinmiddlesex.ca) [www.visitmiddlesex.ca](http://www.visitmiddlesex.ca) [www.workinmiddlesex.ca](http://www.workinmiddlesex.ca)

## Follow along:



Visit Middlesex  
Invest in Middlesex  
Work in Middlesex



@VisitMiddlesex  
@workinmiddlesex



Invest In Middlesex  
Work in Middlesex



# TOURISM INVESTMENT TOOL-KIT

## PURPOSE

- Encourage tourism investment.
- Attract new tourism businesses that support and align with municipal values and market demand.
- Identify sites for new tourism development.
- Provide best practices and guidelines for land use planning.

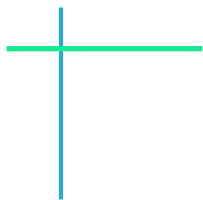
## PROGRESS

- Worked with CBRE Tourism Consulting Team.
- Consultants toured various businesses in the County.
- Held a Stakeholder, and a Municipal Roundtable in Spring 2024.

## FINAL REPORTS

- Reports completed and presented to County Council on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- Reports include a public-facing tool-kit and gap analysis for internal use.
- Invited by Ministry to pitch properties in Dragon's Den Investment Event in November 2024.





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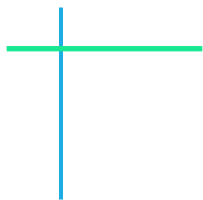
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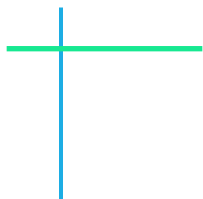
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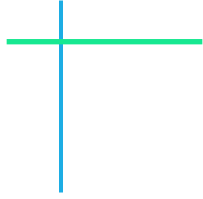
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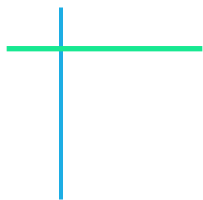
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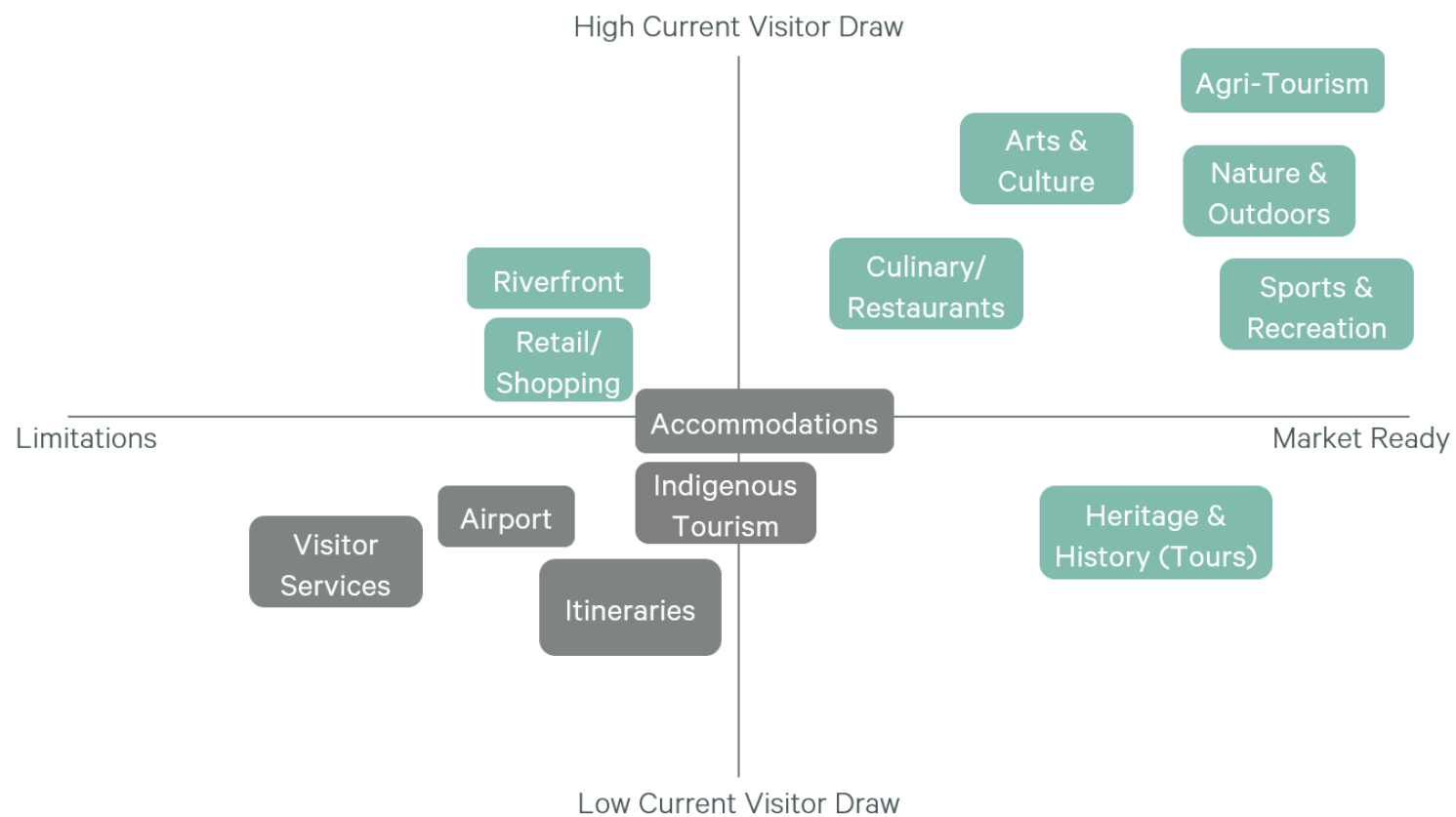
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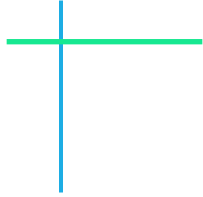
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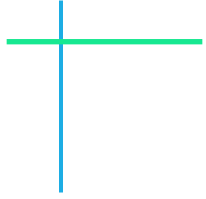
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Local official plans could concentrate greater policy language towards the promotion of commercial tourism beyond agri-tourism (e.g., creative, cultural heritage, eco-tourism, etc.).



# PROVINCIAL CHANGE

Planning authorities shall promote economic development and competitiveness by:

- a) providing for an appropriate mix and range of employment, institutional, and broader mixed uses to meet long-term needs;
- b) providing opportunities for a diversified economic base, including maintaining a range and choice of suitable sites for employment uses which support a wide range of economic activities and ancillary uses, and take into account the needs of existing and future businesses;
- c) identifying strategic sites for investment, monitoring the availability and suitability of employment sites, including market-ready sites, and seeking to address potential barriers to investment;
- d) encouraging intensification of employment uses and compatible, compact, mixed-use development to support the achievement of complete communities; and
- e) addressing land use compatibility adjacent to employment areas by providing an appropriate transition to sensitive land uses.

[PPS 2.8.1]

# PROVINCIAL CHANGE

Require municipalities to plan for and protect “areas of employment”

Require municipalities to address transition and land use compatibility between areas of employment and sensitive land uses (300m)

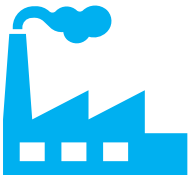
Encourage municipalities to preserve areas of employment close to goods movement corridors, coordinating across administrative boundaries

Allow municipalities to consider employment area conversions at any time to support the forms of development and job creation that suit the local context, provided that sufficient employment land is available to accommodate employment growth

# EMPLOYMENT AREAS

Defined as:

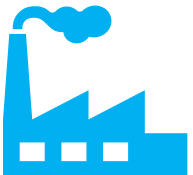
“areas designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic activities including manufacturing, research and development in connection with manufacturing, warehousing, goods movement, associated retail and office, and ancillary facilities. An employment area also includes areas of land described by subsection 1(1.1) of the Planning Act. Uses that are excluded from employment areas are institutional and commercial, including retail and office not associated with the primary employment use listed above.”



# EMPLOYMENT AREAS

The County Official Plan currently requires local municipalities to designate employment lands providing for a mix of employment opportunities and encourages municipalities to designate Rural Employment Lands to accommodate industrial, manufacturing, and creative rural economy type uses

The County Official Plan clarifies that Rural Employment Lands shall be for industrial and limited commercial uses which do not use significant amounts of water and do not produce significant amounts of effluent





# PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS

The Official Plan should be amended to include the changing policy direction in the PPS

Employment Area policies should set the framework for how local municipalities will plan for employment through local Official Plans and Zoning By-laws

- Employment Area conversions
- mitigation of sensitive land uses (300m)
- minimum density targets for employment lands
- land use compatibility between employment and non-employment areas
- consider including policy direction related to industrial plans of subdivision /condominium

# PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS – REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

A Regionally Significant Employment Area is an area set aside that is strategically important for accommodating major employment uses and supporting the regional economy and may include clusters of business and economic activities including manufacturing, research and development, warehousing, goods movement, and ancillary facilities

The Official Plan could be amended to set a framework for the establishment of Regionally Significant Employment Areas at the local level

The policies could generally provide that the establishment of a Regionally Significant Employment Area would be implemented through evaluation criteria such as location, municipal services, size, impact on agriculture, etc and implemented by way of an amendment to the Official Plan



# RENEWABLE ENERGY

*“Planning authorities should provide opportunities for the development of energy supply including electricity generation facilities and transmission and distribution systems, energy storage systems, district energy, renewable energy systems, and alternative energy systems, to accommodate current and projected needs.”*

[PPS 3.8.1]

Renewable Energy Source is defined as:

*“means an energy source that is renewed by natural processes and includes wind, water, biomass, biogas, biofuel, solar energy, geothermal energy and tidal forces.”*



# PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS - RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Official Plan could be updated to provide policy direction pertaining to development of such uses in accordance with OMAFA's permitted uses guideline and subject to criteria expected to be provided in future guidelines from the Province

The Official Plan should be updated to include the PPS definition of "Renewable Energy Source" and "Renewable Energy System"

Policies could be developed to guide consideration of larger renewable energy proposals within agricultural areas



# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Committee may identify any other topics for further discussion or analysis.





“The decisions made today will fundamentally affect options available to future generations. The ability to produce food, to regulate the system of production to reflect the values of society, to maintain the important economic contributions of agriculture, and to retain the important role that farmers play in managing the countryside is dependent on retaining farmers and the lands essential to their livelihood”

(Caldwell et al., 2017, p. 61).

# AGRICULTURE

---

- 1 Minimum Farm Parcel Size
- 2 Provincial change
- 3 Agricultural System
- 4 Residence Surplus to a Farming Operation
- 5 Settlement Boundary Expansions
- 6 Other Considerations



# MINIMUM FARM PARCEL SIZE

A key component of managing the agricultural resource is the general discouragement of lot creation to avoid the unwarranted fragmentation of agricultural land.

The Official Plan limits the creation of new farm parcels to ‘about 40 hectares’ (100 acres).

*County Council motion “THAT staff be directed to include consideration of agriculture parcel size as part of the OPA”*

# PROVINCIAL POLICY

“Lot creation in prime agricultural areas is discouraged and may only be permitted for: agricultural uses, provided that the lots are of a size appropriate for the type of agricultural use(s) common in the area and are sufficiently large to maintain flexibility for future changes in the type or size of agricultural operations”

[PPS 4.3.3.1]

The PPS does not specify a minimum farm parcel size however it has generally been the position of the Province that 40 ha is the minimum farm size unless otherwise demonstrated.

# PROVINCIAL GUIDANCE

“In general, the larger the farm parcel, the more adaptable it is to changing conditions and more efficient it is to run the farm. Keeping farms large enough to maintain flexibility is key to agricultural viability and to achieving the PPS requirement of protecting prime agricultural areas for long-term use in agriculture. Lot size may vary depending on the agricultural use. For traditional field crops, large lots are optimal. Higher-value specialty crops tend to be located on smaller parcels. In all cases, lots must still be large enough to maintain flexibility for future changes in the type or size of the agricultural operation.”

# CURRENT COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

“consents for new farm lots shall generally not be considered where the result is the creation of a farm lot less than a typical township lot of about 40 hectares. Consents for the creation of new farm lots shall be considered where both the size of the lands being severed and the lands being retained are appropriate to:

1. the type of agriculture being engaged in or proposed to be engaged in; and
2. the type of agricultural activity and farm lot size common in the area.

In general, farm lot size shall be sufficiently large to create large contiguous farming blocks and to maintain flexibility to adapt to future changes in agriculture and to avoid the unwarranted fragmentation of farmland. A minimum farm lot size shall be established in the Zoning By-laws of the local municipalities

(policy 4.5.3.4c)



# CURRENT COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN (OPTION)

“A different minimum farm parcel size for local municipalities may be considered through an amendment to the County Official Plan provided that a study is carried out by the local municipality with the guidance and assistance of the Province, to demonstrate that the different farm parcel size is appropriate for the type of agricultural uses common in the local area, yet is sufficiently large enough to maintain flexibility for future changes to the type or size of agricultural operations.”

(policy 4.5.3.4c)

This optional policy provides an opportunity for a local municipality to undertake an agricultural lot size study.

# ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST ...

It is argued that farming practices are supported by larger farm parcels:

- operationally more efficient (tile drainage, large farm equipment, etc)
- maintain greater flexibility
- more suitable for livestock
- less expensive on a per-hectare basis
- less likely to face non-farmer ownership competition

In contrast, it is argued that smaller farm parcels:

- less expensive to purchase
- support young farmers
- support speciality farm operations
- support local food initiatives
- support value added agricultural

**Discussion**



# AGRICULTURAL PARCEL SIZE ANALYSIS

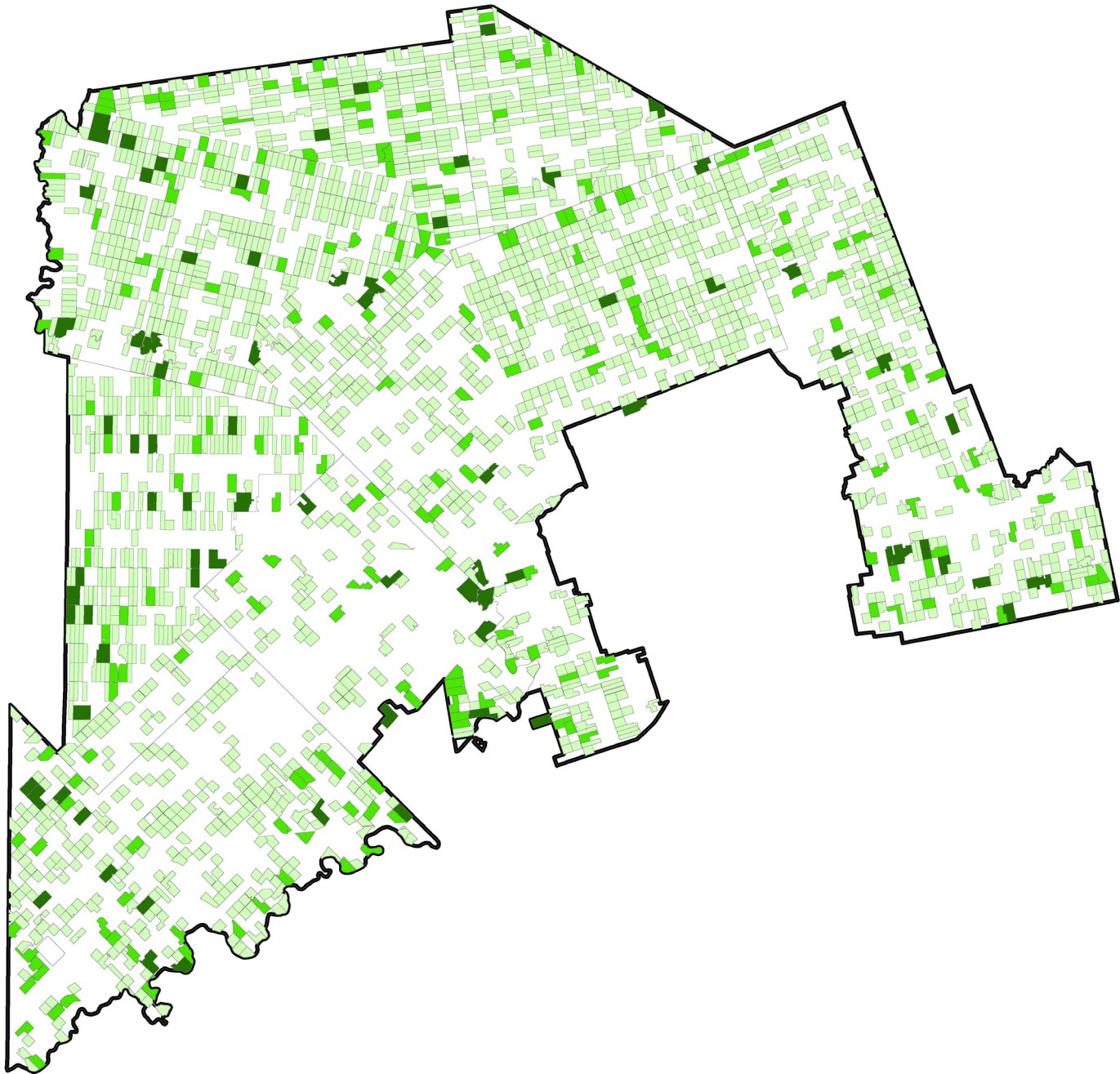
Stovel and Associates Inc. undertook an Agricultural Parcel Size Analysis in 2021

- Professional Planner and Agrologist with extensive experience on agricultural issues including AIAs and MDS Assessments.
- Experience on this topic including at the Ontario Land Tribunal (Lambton County vs Province)

County provided base mapping (parcels, soils, photography) and MPAC data

An iterative process that included review of assessment data, statistical analysis, review of aerial photography and zoning assessments

Stovel and Associates were retained in 2025 to review the previous analysis for applicability to the current Official Plan Review and to be available to engage directly with the Committee.

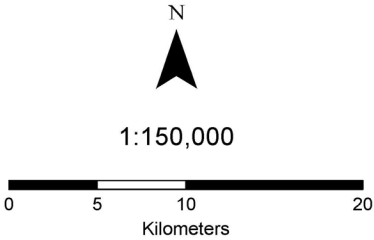


# Agricultural Land Use Areas

## Legend

- Parcels Greater than 200ac
- Parcels greater than 150ac
- Parcels greater than 100ac

Current Lot Sizes			
	> than 200ac	> than 150ac	> than 100ac
Adelaide Metcalfe	17	39	297
Lucan Biddulph	3	12	200
Middlesex Centre	9	50	442
Newbury	0	0	0
North Middlesex	21	81	667
Strathroy-Caradoc	5	25	96
Southwest Middlesex	11	49	315
Thames Centre	10	49	355
Middlesex County	76	305	2372



Prepared by: Planning Department  
April 8th 2025



# AGRICULTURAL MINIMUM FARM SIZE

Current Lot Sizes			
	> than 200 ac	> than 150 ac	> than 100 ac
Adelaide Metcalfe	17	39	297
Lucan Biddulph	3	12	200
Middlesex Centre	9	50	442
Newbury	0	0	0
North Middlesex	21	81	667
Strathroy-Caradoc	5	25	96
Southwest Middlesex	11	49	315
Thames Centre	10	49	355
Middlesex County	<b>76</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>2372</b>



# AGRICULTURAL PARCEL SIZE ANALYSIS

Agricultural Parcel Size Analysis in 2021 Overview of Parcel Size for Each Municipality

Municipality	Total # Parcels	Mean ~Acres	Mean ~Acres (remove 5-acre parcels)
Thames Centre	1412	64	68
Lucan Biddulph	575	67	76
North Middlesex	1806	75	79
Adelaide Metcalfe	1049	74	78
Southwest Middlesex (includes Newbury)	1468	64	70
Strathroy-Caradoc	1712	35	57
Middlesex Centre	1833	71	73
<b>County</b>	<b>9855</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>72</b>

# AGRICULTURAL PARCEL SIZE ANALYSIS

Agricultural Parcel Size Analysis in 2021 Overview of Parcel Size for Each Municipality with Agricultural Structures

Municipality	Total # Parcels	Mean ~Acres	Mean ~Acres (remove 5-acre parcels)
Thames Centre	457	81	82
Lucan Biddulph	138	85	85
North Middlesex	486	92	93
Adelaide Metcalfe	278	87	95
Southwest Middlesex (includes Newbury)	331	83	83
Strathroy-Caradoc	289	74	75
Middlesex Centre	431	87	88
<b>County</b>	<b>2410</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>86</b>

# AGRICULTURAL PARCEL SIZE ANALYSIS

## Observations

- Diverse and healthy agricultural system
- Farmers use all arable land available and parcel size is not a deterrent to cash crop or livestock farming
- The County has high quality soils and climate, cultivated for a variety of crops
- Variations in existing farm sizes can be attributed mainly to past and present agricultural trends and fragmenting factors such as railways, highways, and rivers (especially in certain locations)
- Averages heavily influenced by numbers of small often non-farm parcels

# AGRICULTURAL PARCEL SIZE ANALYSIS

## Observations

- In terms of the word 'common', the County has a range of farm parcel sizes and all arable parcels regardless of size are cultivated
- Flexibility is typically related to field size with larger parcels being more efficient to farm than smaller parcels
- Also, larger parcels are easier to manage manure and situate a livestock barn or manure storage facility, but this isn't as significant of a constraint since the Nutrient Management Act and the use of manure brokers



# AGRICULTURAL PARCEL SIZE ANALYSIS

Observations, in general:

- 5 of 7 municipalities in the range of 38 (94 ac) to 41 ha (100 ac)
- 2 of 7 municipalities in the range of 30 ha (74 ac)
- A 38 ha (94 acre) minimum is sufficient to provide opportunity to establish new livestock operations





# PROVINCIAL CHANGE

The PPS requires municipalities to implement an Agricultural Systems Approach.

Specifies one new residential lot per farm consolidation for a residence surplus to a farm operation is permitted.

Additional Residential Units (ARUs) in prime agricultural areas.

Amends the definition of on-farm diversified uses to include renewable energy.

Removal of the Municipal Comprehensive Review requirement to expand a settlement area.

# AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM

Defined as

*“The system mapped and issued by the Province in accordance with this Plan, comprised of a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector. It has two components:*

- 1. An agricultural land base comprised of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, and rural lands that together create a continuous productive land base for agriculture;*
- 2. An agri-food network which includes infrastructure, services and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector.”*

*“Agri-Food Network – Within the Agricultural System, a network that includes elements important to the viability of the agri-food sector such as regional infrastructure; on farm buildings and infrastructure; agricultural services, farm markets, distributors, and primary processing; and vibrant, agriculture-supportive communities.”*

# AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM

Agricultural system approach was previously implemented in the Greater Golden Horseshoe and recognizes that farmland and clusters of agri-food infrastructure, services and assets need to coexist and be compatible with growing communities

The desired outcomes of the Agricultural System approach are:

1. Active planning for agriculture and rural economic development based on reliable mapping, data and tools.
2. Improved viability of agriculture and growth of the agri-food sector.
3. Better protection of the agricultural land base.
4. Increased land use planning consistency and certainty across municipalities.
5. Reinforcement of the synergies between agricultural, natural heritage and water systems, as outlined in provincial policy.
6. Collaboration between the Province, municipalities, farmers and businesses with a common interest in a strong agri-food sector.

# AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM — PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS

The County Official Plan must be amended to implement an agricultural systems approach

This could include amending existing economic development policies to enhance support for the agri-food network and cross references to economic development programs (CIPs)

Policies could also set the framework for the inclusion of asset mapping or the inclusion of an agri-food network inventory in an official plan appendix

Staff are monitoring the ongoing guidance from OMAFA to support the implementation of the agricultural system policies



# AGRICULTURE SURPLUS DWELLINGS



In order to protect agricultural land for long-term agricultural use and to avoid land use conflicts, new residential lots are prohibited within the agricultural area with one exception - **Residence Surplus to a Farming Operation**

As farm operations have increased in size to often include several parcels, the intent of policy is to facilitate the severance of farm dwellings where they are not needed for an expanding farming operation

# SURPLUS DWELLINGS — PROVINCIAL PLANNING STATEMENT

*“Lot creation in prime agricultural areas is discouraged and may only be permitted for: **one** new residential lot **per** farm consolidation for a residence surplus to an agricultural operation, provided that: 1. the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services; and 2. the planning authority ensures that new dwellings and additional residential units are prohibited on any remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance. The approach used to ensure that no new dwellings or additional residential units are permitted on the remnant parcel may be recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches that achieve the same objective;”*

[Policy 2.3.4.1 c)]

Residence surplus to a farming operation is defined as:

*“means an existing habitable farm residence that is rendered surplus as a result of farm consolidation (the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation)”*



# SURPLUS DWELLINGS — COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## County Official Plan (Policy 4.5.3.4.a)

Consent to sever a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation may be permitted, provided the residence was built at least 10-years prior, the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services, and provided that new residential dwellings are prohibited on any vacant remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance.

The County encourages local municipalities to include policies in their local official plan addressing considerations including minimizing the loss of agricultural land, addressing the retention of outbuildings with the residence surplus to a farming operation including maximum building size and permitted uses, adequacy of services, and Minimum Distance Separation;

*“means a habitable farm residence that is rendered surplus as a result of farm consolidation (the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation).”*

# PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS

The Official Plan **must** at a minimum be updated to reflect the PPS: “one new residential lot per farm consolidation for a residence surplus to an agricultural operation”

There are other areas where the Official Plan **could** be updated, or those matters could be left to local official plans, including:

- additional policy concerning existing barns
- defining a farming operation
- other considerations



# SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY EXPANSIONS

Recent changes to the Planning Act and PPS have removed the requirement for a Municipal Comprehensive Review to expand settlement areas and now permit privately initiated applications for boundary expansions, which can be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

The removal of the MCR process may lead to increased farmland conversion to non-agricultural uses through Official Plan Amendments.

Policies could be included to:

- Guide when and how privately initiated boundary expansions can be evaluated;
- Require applicants to demonstrate consistency with County/Municipal planning objectives;
- Ensure efficient use of infrastructure, protection of agricultural lands, and alignment with growth management goals.



# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Committee may identify any other topics for further discussion or analysis.







# NEXT STEPS

Growth and  
Development and any  
other considerations.





# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025



# AGENDA

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Review and Discussion

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Growth & Development

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Agriculture (Continued)

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Next Steps

# REVIEW AND DISCUSSION



# REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Review and approval of previous meeting minutes.



Any questions of Committee Members.



# GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT





# PROVINCIAL CHANGE

Removal of the Municipal Comprehensive Review requirement to expand a settlement area

Municipalities to consider allocation or potentially reallocation of unused servicing capacity to accommodate projected needs for housing

Municipalities to plan for a minimum 20-year horizon but not more than 30 years

Require municipalities to base growth forecasts on Ministry of Finance population projections



# SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY EXPANSIONS

*In identifying a new settlement area or allowing a settlement area boundary expansion, planning authorities shall consider the following:*

- a) the need to designate and plan for additional land to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses;*
- b) if there is sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities;*
- c) whether the applicable lands comprise specialty crop areas;*
- d) the evaluation of alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas and, where avoidance is not possible, consider reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in prime agricultural areas;*
- e) whether the new or expanded settlement area complies with the minimum distance separation formulae;*
- f) whether impacts on the agricultural system are avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated to the extent feasible as determined through an agricultural impact assessment or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance; and*
- g) the new or expanded settlement area provides for the phased progression of urban development.*

[PPS 2.3.2]

# SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY EXPANSIONS

Recent changes to the Planning Act and PPS have removed the requirement for a Municipal Comprehensive Review to expand settlement areas and now permit privately initiated applications for boundary expansions, which applicants can appeal to the OLT.

The removal of the MCR process may lead to uncoordinated development, loss of agricultural land, and the loss of municipally led long-term planning for growth.

The Official Plan **could** be amended to provide a framework that will:

- Guide how privately initiated boundary expansions can be evaluated based on criteria;
- Require applicants to demonstrate consistency with County/Municipal planning objectives;
- Ensure efficient use of infrastructure, protection of agricultural lands, and alignment with growth management goals.



# PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS

The Official Plan **could** be amended to encourage local municipalities to adopt policies that consider allocation or potentially reallocation of unused servicing capacity to accommodate projected needs for housing

The Official Plan **must** be amended to update population, housing and employment forecasts to align with the Ontario Population Projections by the Ministry of Finance. Watson and Associates has undertaken updated Population, Dwelling and Employment Projections based on the Ministry of Finance projections in accordance with the PPS





# Middlesex County 2025 Growth Analysis Update

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Planning Advisory Committee Meeting  
May 14, 2025

# Middlesex County

## Terms of Reference

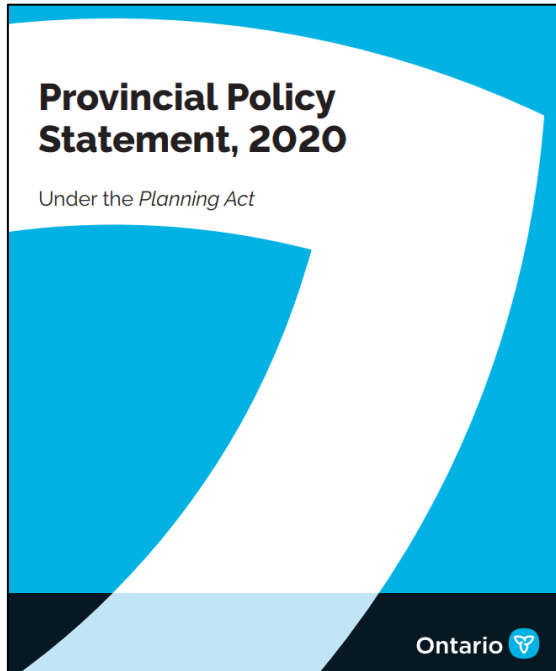


- As part of the Middlesex County Official Plan Review (O.P.R.) exercise, Middlesex County is now embarking on a Growth Projections Update and Land Supply Analysis, which requires an update of the County's long-term growth projections and allocations by Area Municipality.
- The results of this analysis are intended to guide decision-making and policy development specifically related to planning and growth management, urban land needs, master planning, and municipal finance.
- This study is particularly significant, as the economic and demographic landscape has changed since the onset of COVID-19 and other trends since the 2020 growth projections were completed.



# Changes to Policy Framework

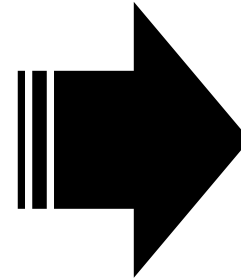
## Overview



Provincial Policy Statement (P.P.S.) – Entire Province



Growth Plan – G.G.H.



## *Integrated Policy Document*



Provincial Planning Statement

# Economic and Demographic Growth Model

## What Drives Population and Employment Growth?



### Economics

Local and Regional  
Economic Outlook



Economic Drivers of  
Population and  
Employment Growth by  
Area



Labour Force Growth  
within the Commuter  
Shed



Forecast Employment  
Growth by Sector



### Demographics

Net Migration and  
Natural Increase



Middlesex County  
Population Growth by  
Age, 2021 to 2056



Middlesex County  
Housing Forecast,  
2021 to 2056



Allocation of County  
Growth Forecast by Area  
Municipality,  
2021 to 2056

# Macro-Economic Trends

# Impacts of Economic Headwinds on Population & Housing Growth



## Immigration Policy Changes

- N.P.R. National Share: 7.3% (2024) → 5.0% (2026)
- 35% international student permit reduction (364,000)
- Permanent Residents: 500,000 (2025 & 2026) → 395,000 (2025), 380,000 (2026) and 365,000 (2027)



## US Protectionism Policy

- US protectionist policy through tariffs resulting in global economic uncertainty
- Potential downturn in near-term economic growth in Canada and Ontario



## Slowing Regional Housing Market

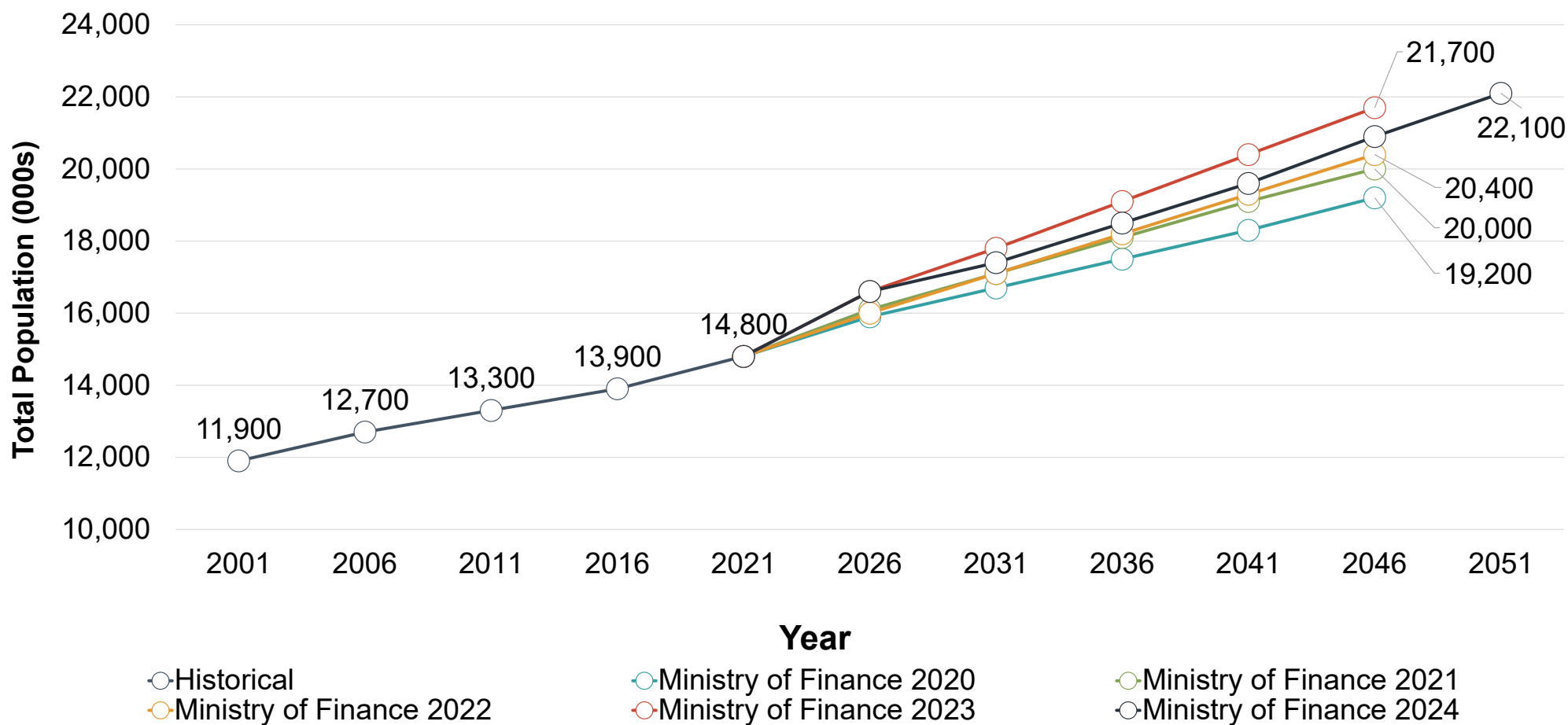
- Higher interest rate environment since 2022
- Slowing housing demand resulting from lower net migration, slowing provincial/regional economic growth, increased economic uncertainty

# Provincial Growth Trends



# Economic and Demographic Trends

## Ministry of Finance Population Forecasts for Ontario



M.O.F. Annual  
Growth Rate:

2020: 1.1%

2021: 1.2%

2022: 1.3%

**2023: 1.6%**

**2024: 1.3%\***

2024  
Ontario  
Population:  
**16.1  
million**

Note: Population includes net Census undercount. Figures have been rounded. Fall 2024 M.O.F. projections extends to 2051.

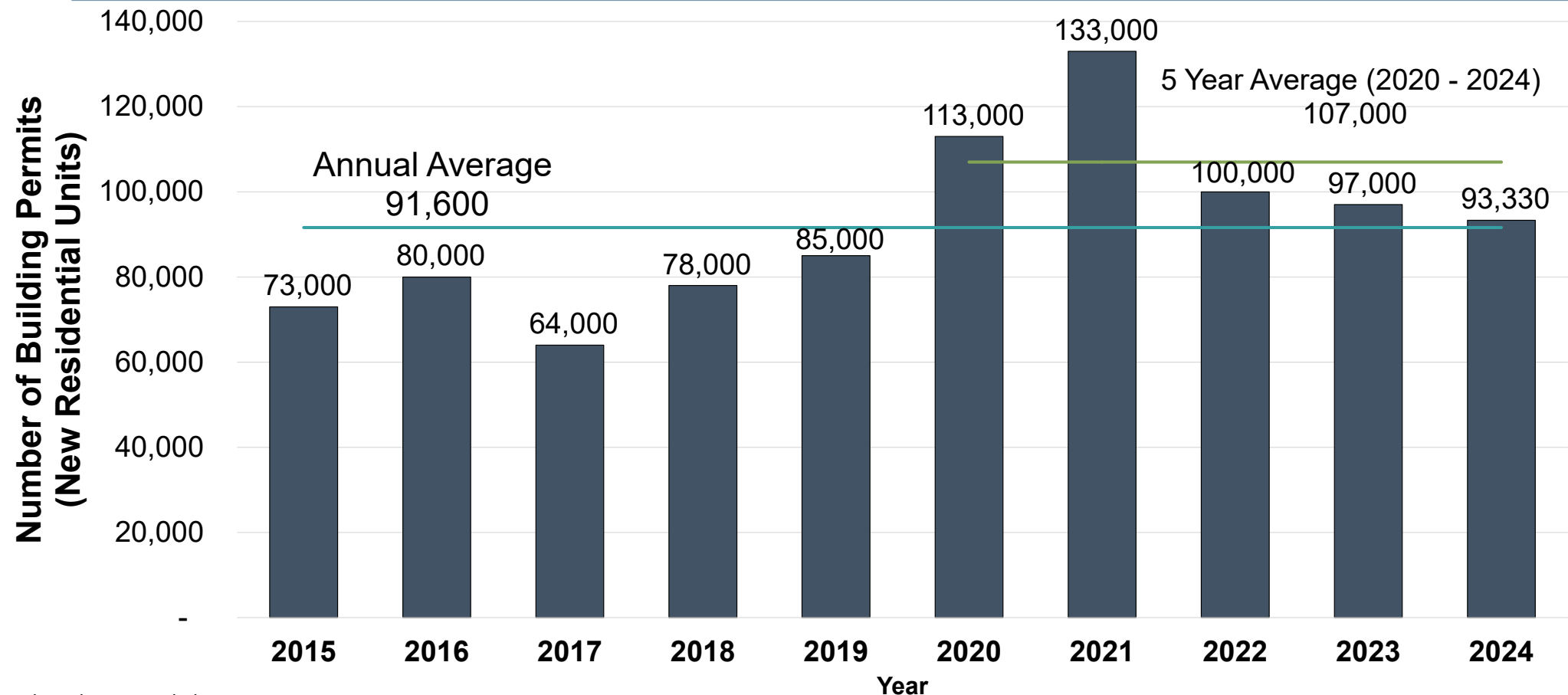
Source: Historical derived from Statistics Canada Census, 2001 to 2021, and Ministry of Finance Projections from Spring 2020 and Spring 2021 and Summer 2022, 2023 and Fall 2024 releases, by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Ontario – Residential Development Activity

## Historical Trends

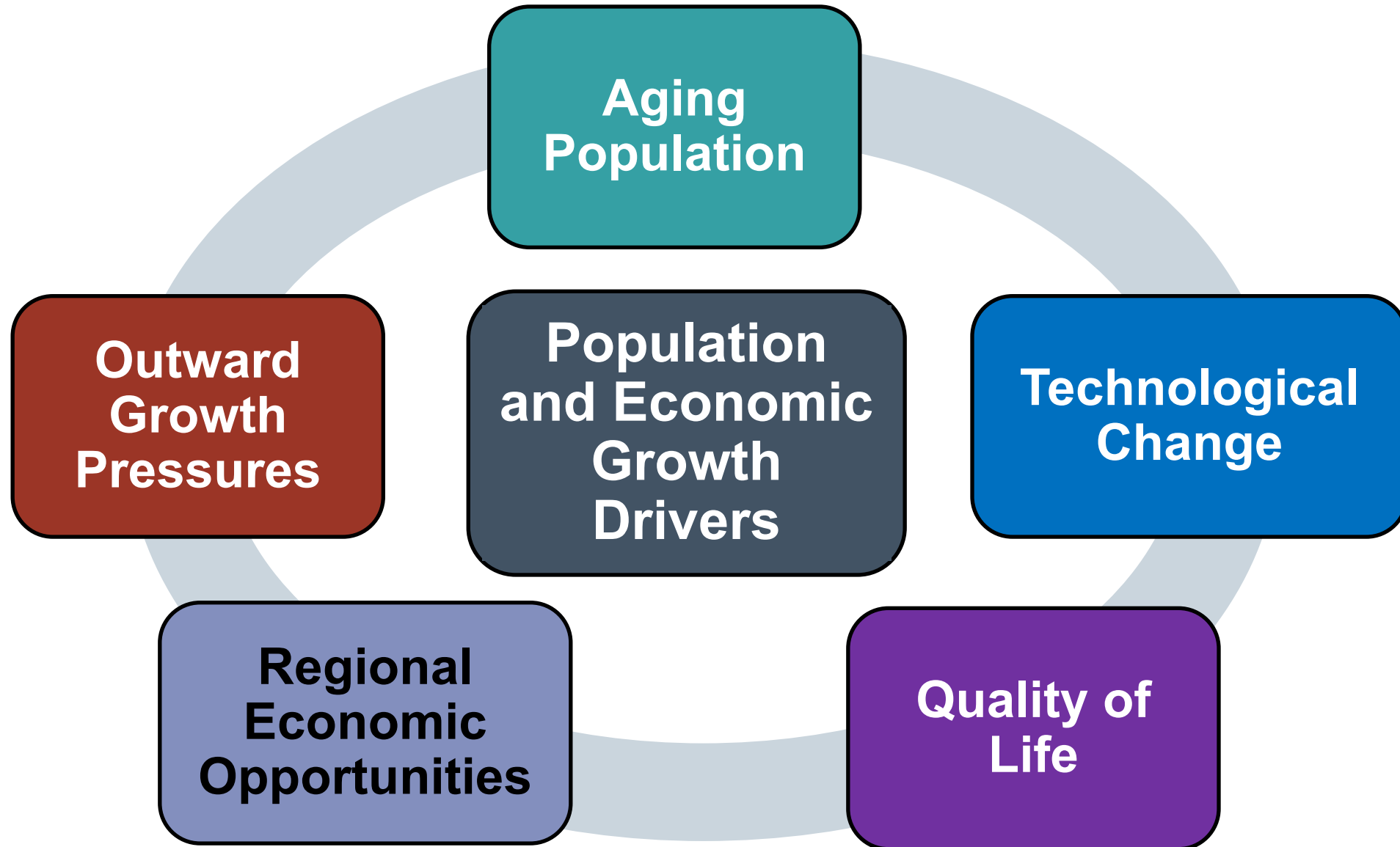


Province-wide housing development activity will need to **increase by about 50%** to hit the **target of 1.5 million homes over the next decade**



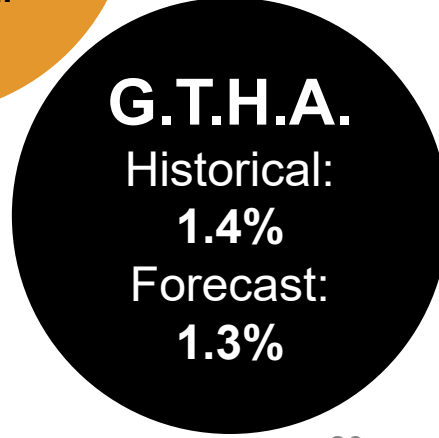
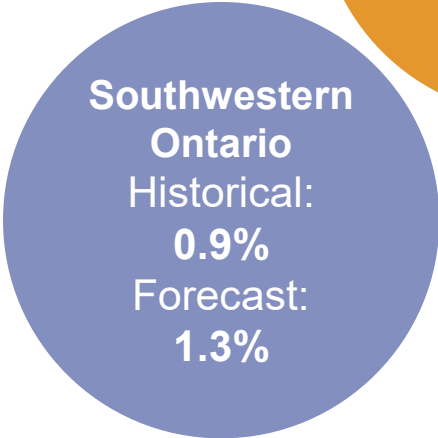
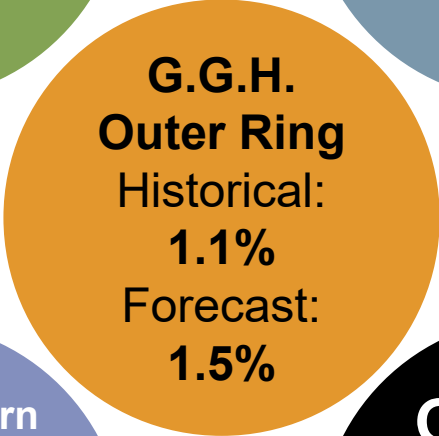
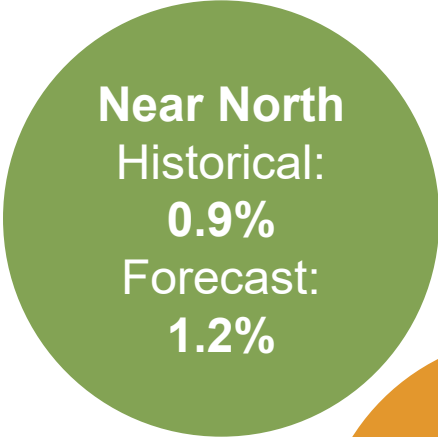
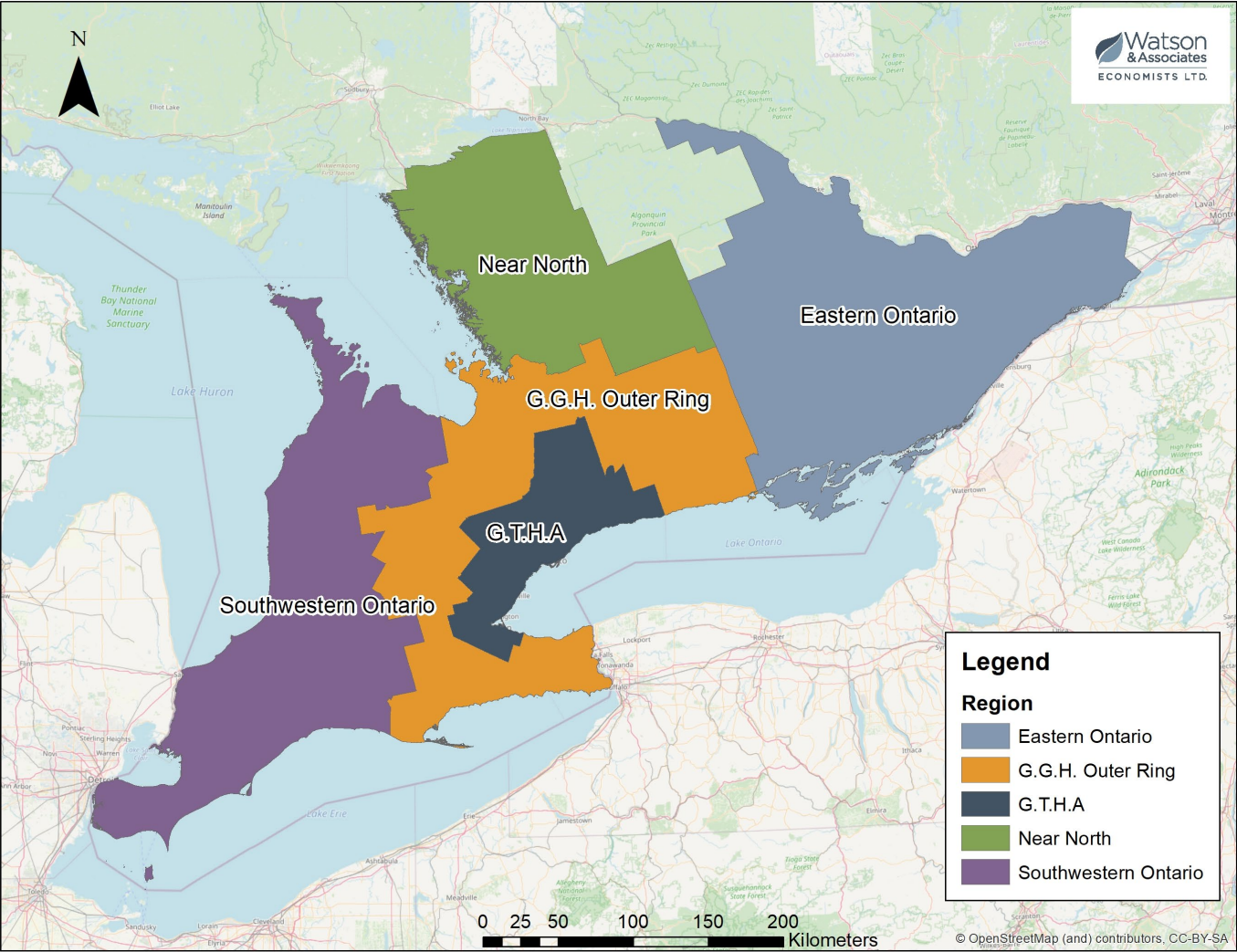
Note: Figures have been rounded.  
Source: Statistics Canada monthly building permit data

# Summary of Key Population and Economic Growth Drivers



# Population Growth Rate Comparison by Sub-Region – Southern Ontario

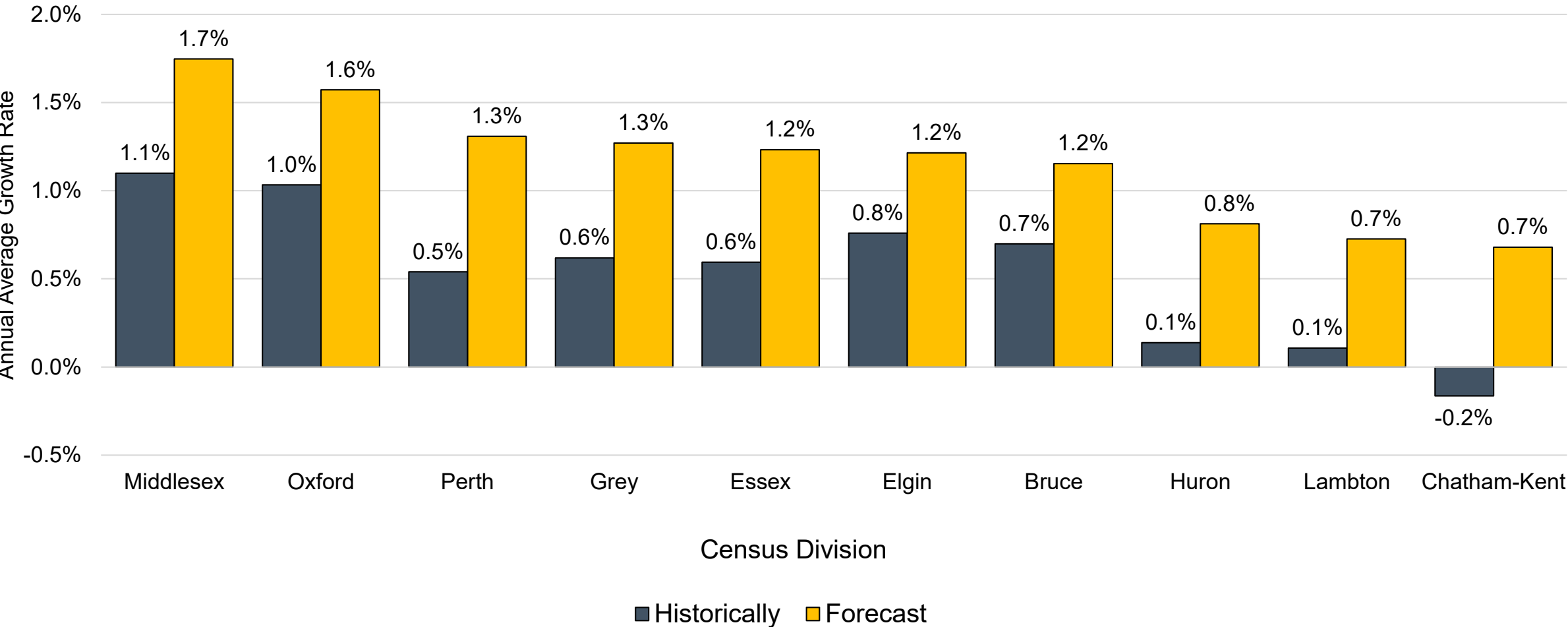
Historical: 2001 to 2021 vs. Forecast 2021 to 2051



# Population Growth Rate Comparison in Southwestern Ontario



Historical: 2001 to 2021 vs. Forecast 2021 to 2051



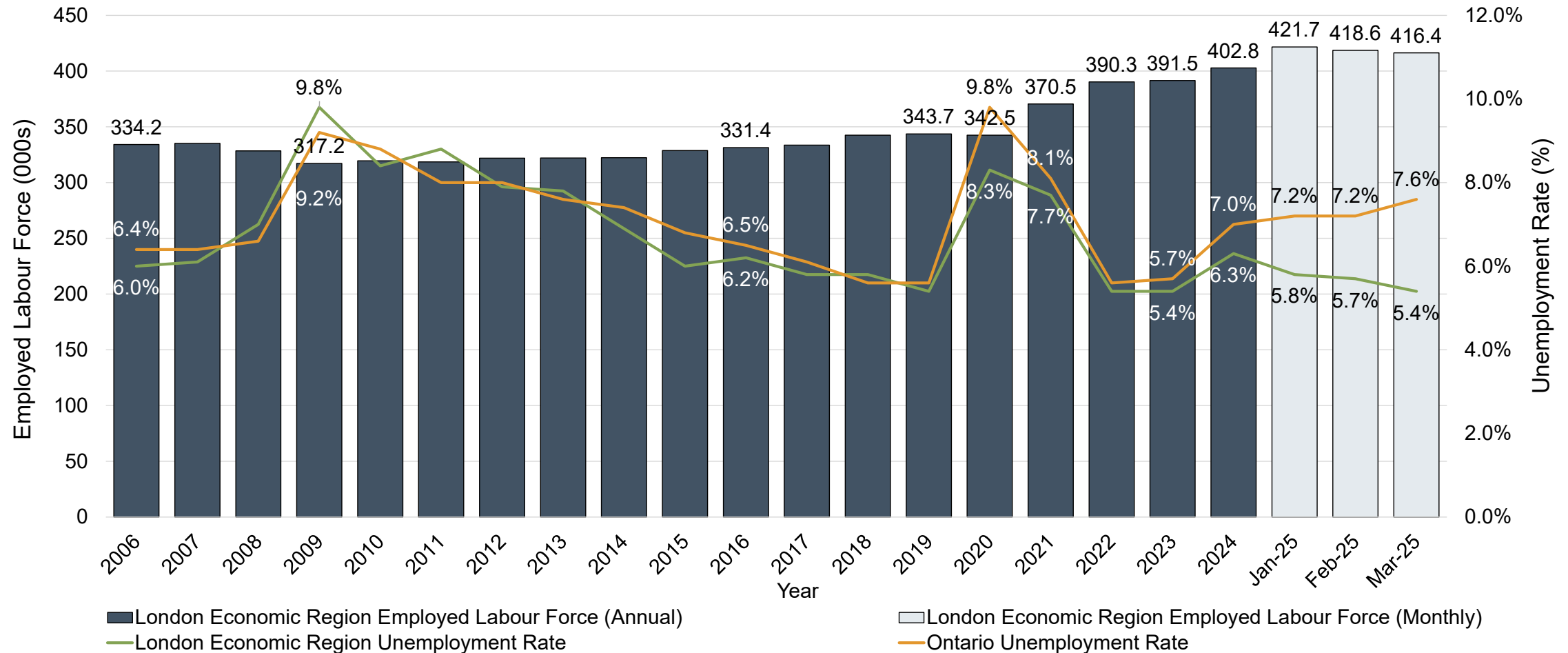


# Middlesex County

## Growth Trends

# Economic and Demographic Trends

## London Economic Region Labour Force Trends, 2006 to Year-to-Date 2025

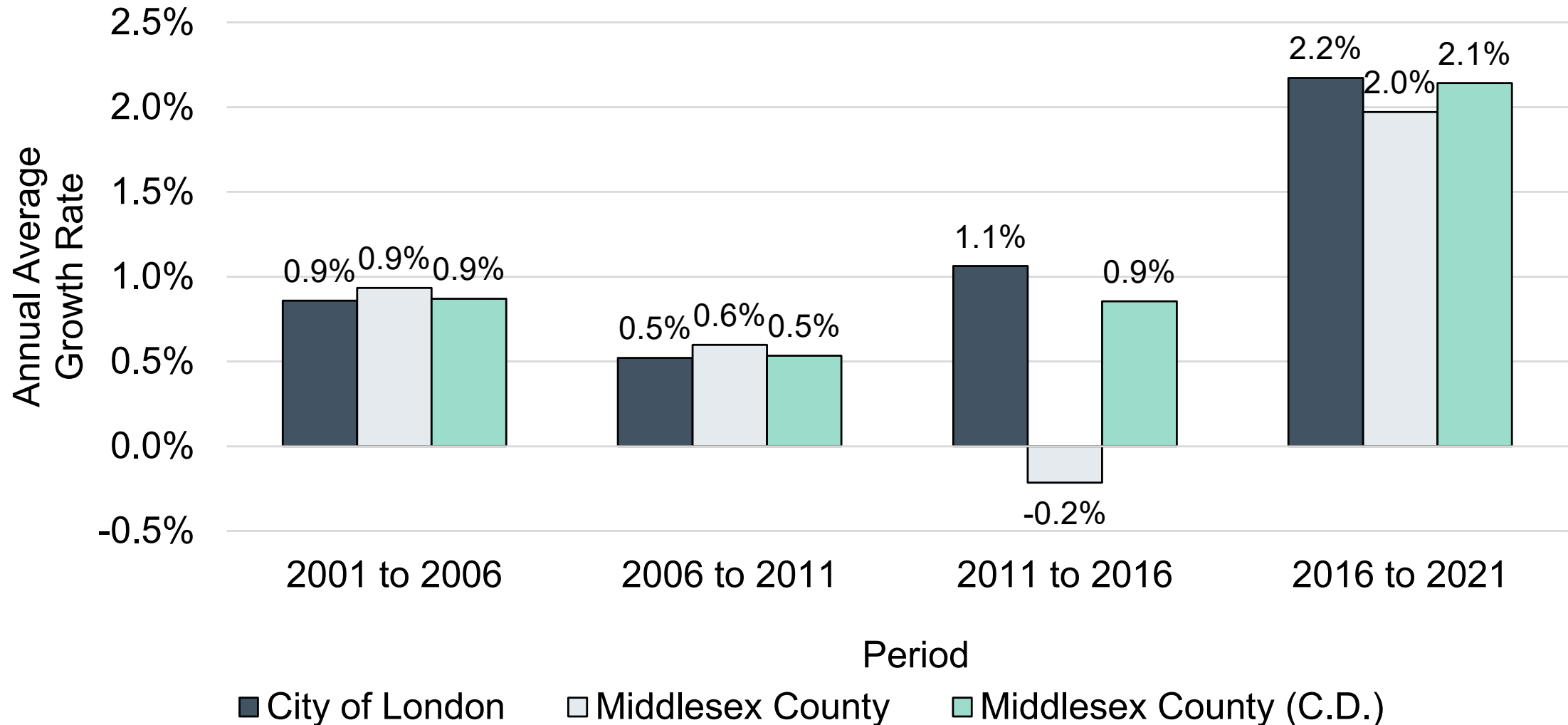


Note: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey and Census labour force statistics may differ.

Source: London E.R. employed labour force and unemployment rate from Statistics Canada Table 14-10-0393-01, Table 14-10-0462-01. Province of Ontario unemployment rate from Statistics Canada Table 14-10-0323-01. Derived by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County & City of London

## Historical Annual Population Growth Rates, 2001 to 2021



Note: Population figures include net Census undercount.

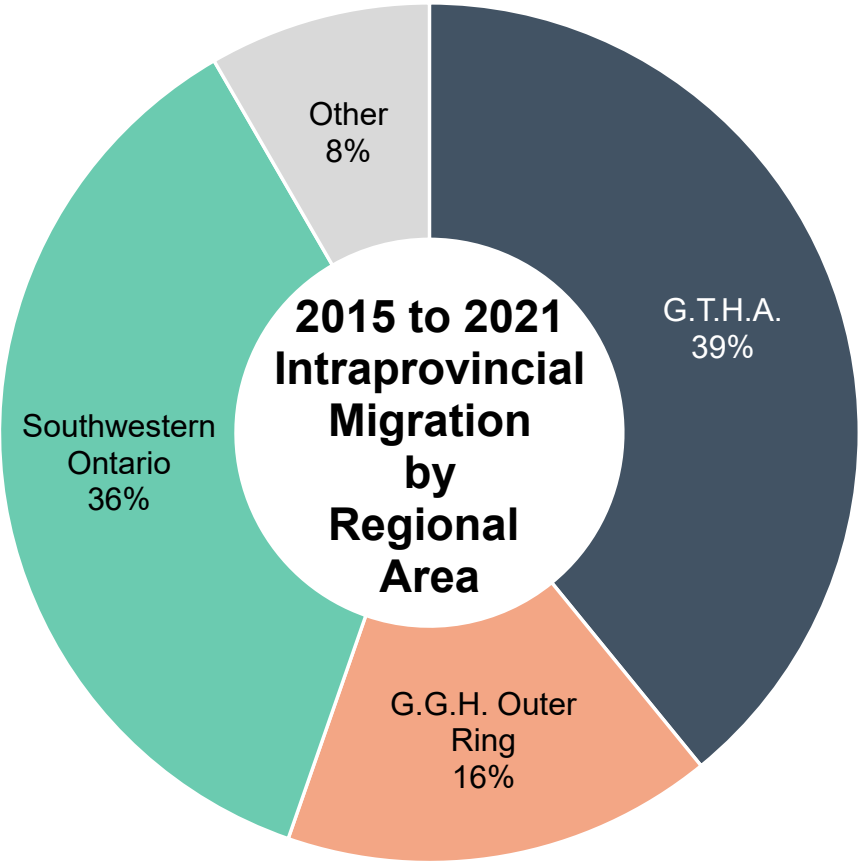
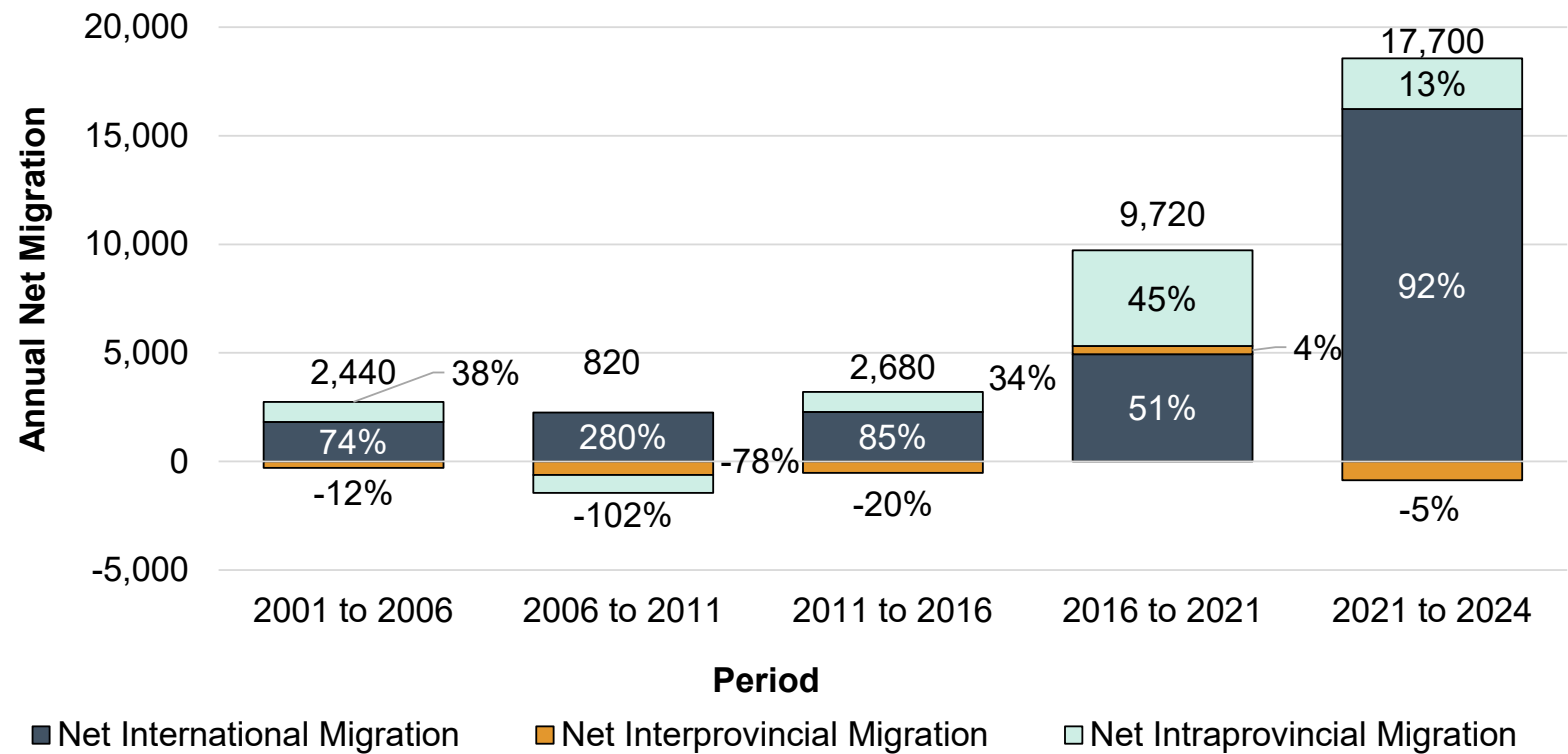
Source: Historical 2001 to 2021 data derived from Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0152-01 summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County & City of London

## Historical Migration Patterns, 2001 to 2024



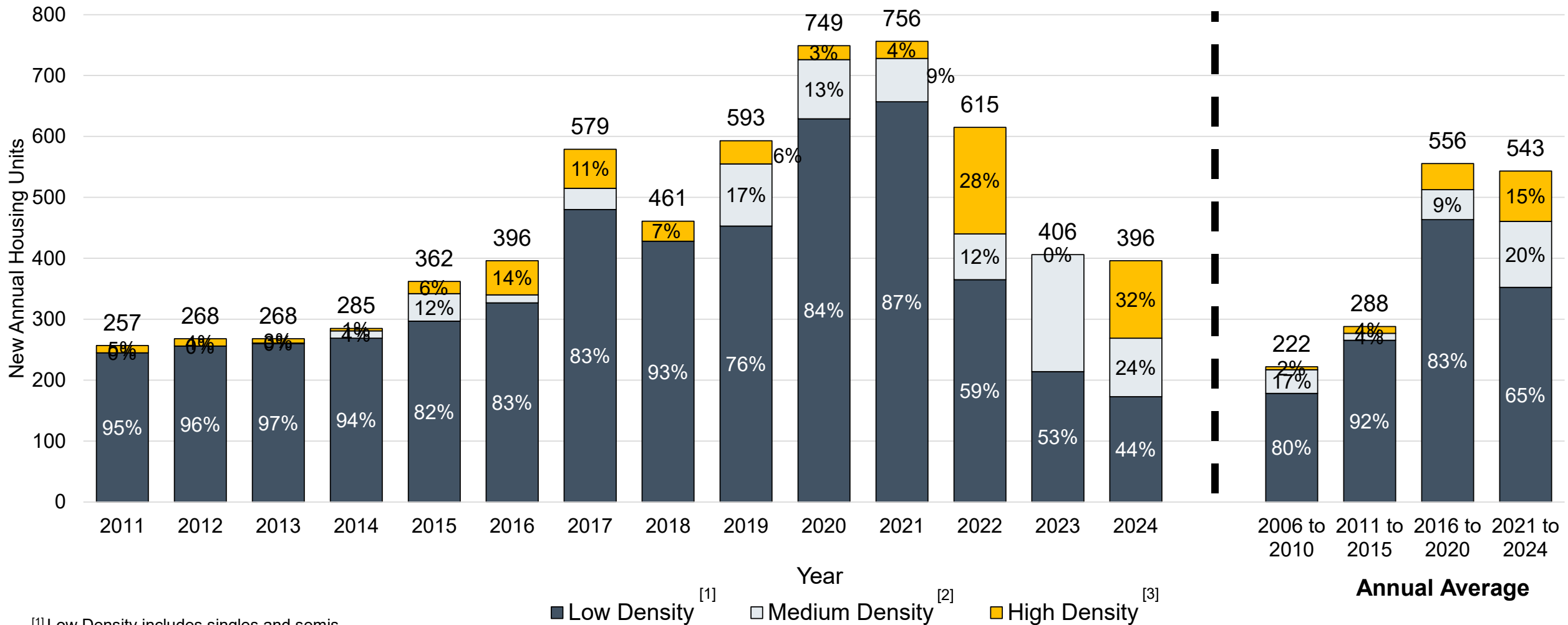
Migration by Type



Note: Figures for Middlesex County include the City of London, include net Census undercount and have been rounded.  
Source: Historical 2001 to 2021 data derived from Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0152-01 summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.  
Intraprovincial migration by Regional Area derived from Statistics Canada custom datatable summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County

## Annual Building Permits, 2011 to 2024



[1] Low Density includes singles and semis.

[2] Medium density includes townhouses and apartments in duplexes.

[3] High Density includes bachelor, 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom + apartments.

Note: Figures have been rounded and exclude the City of London.

Source: Historical building permit data provided by Middlesex County, summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

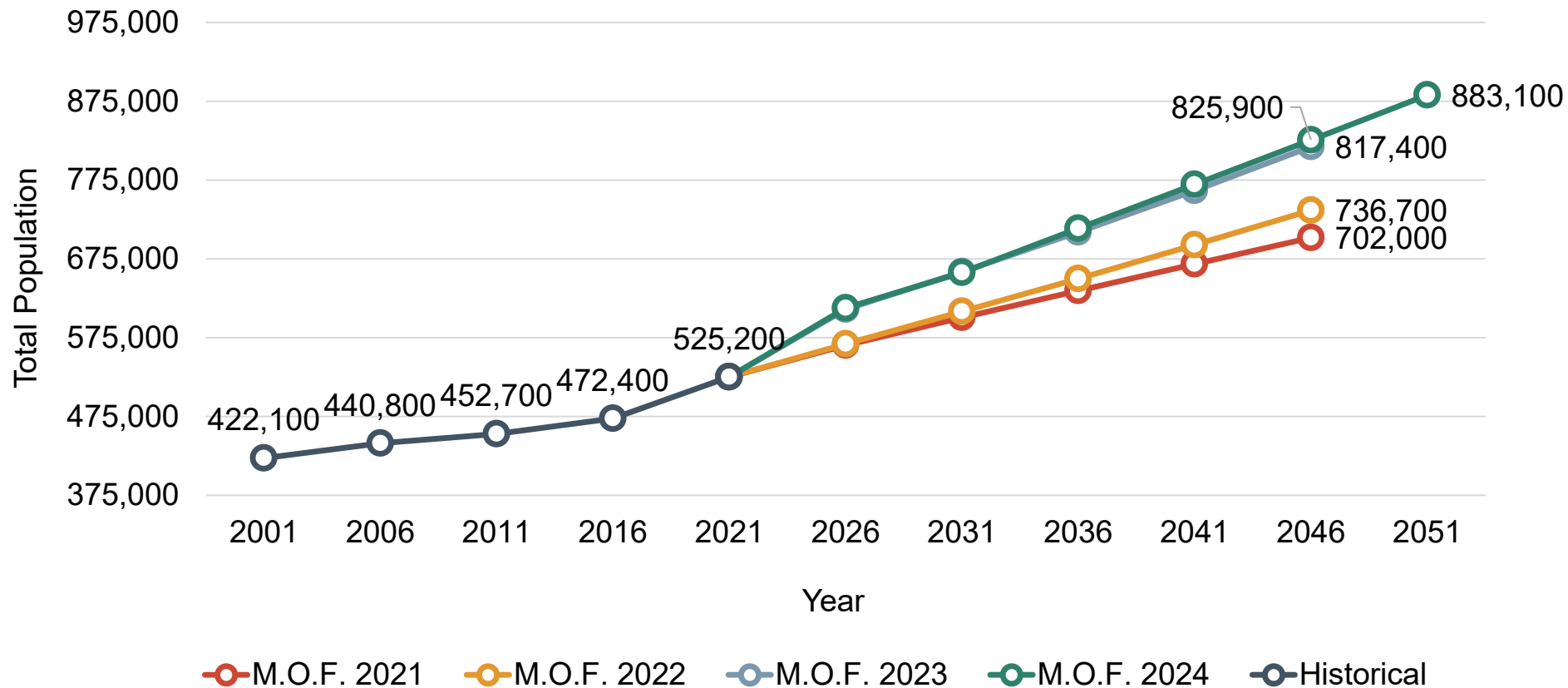


# Middlesex County

Population and Household  
Forecast by Area Municipality

# Economic and Demographic Trends

## Ministry of Finance Population Forecasts for Middlesex County & City of London



### M.O.F. Growth Rate:

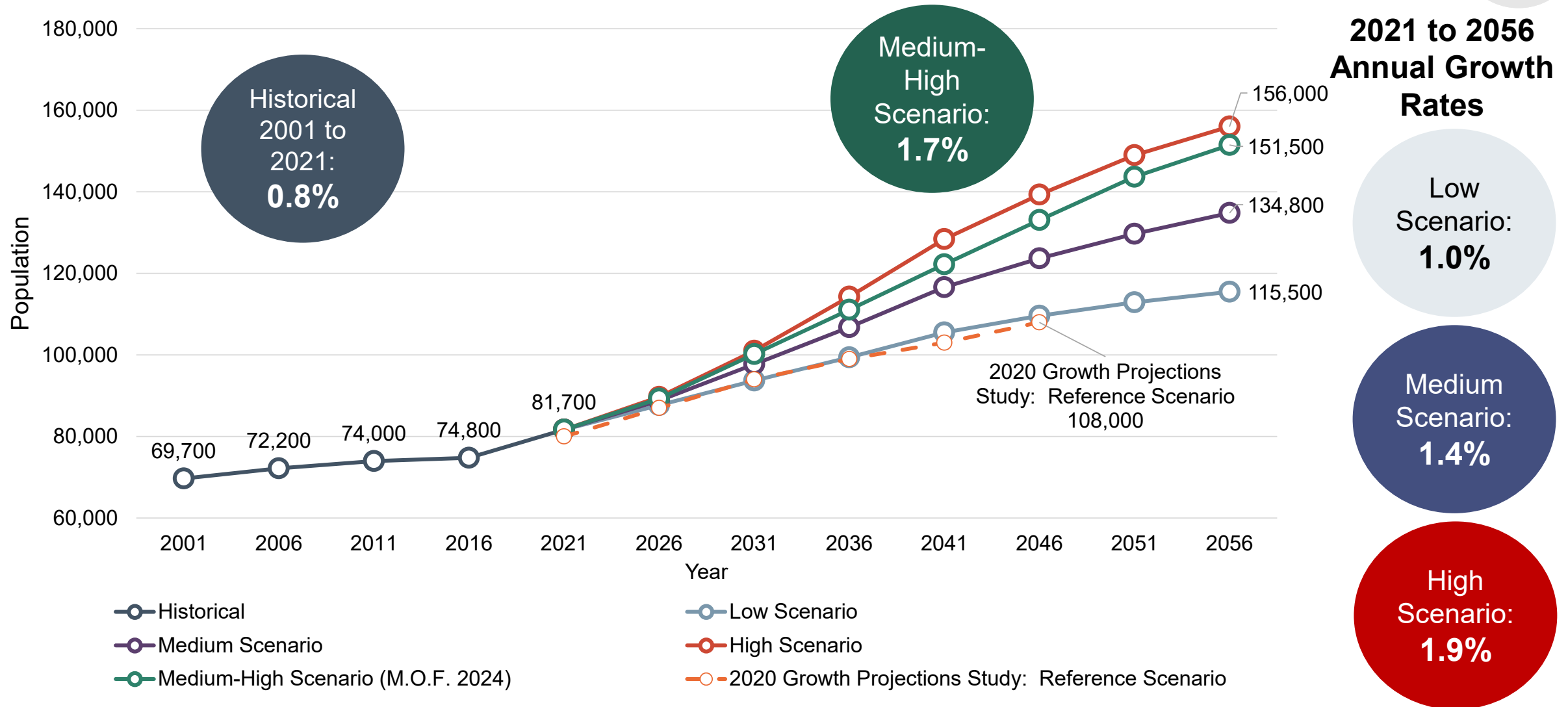
2021: 1.3%  
2022: 1.4%  
2023: 1.8%  
**2024: 1.7%**

Note: Population figures include net Census undercount estimated at 4.38% and have been rounded. Population figures for Middlesex County include the City of London.

Source: Historical 2001 to 2021 data derived from Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0152-01, 2021 to 2046 forecasts derived from Spring 2021 Ministry of Finance Projections, Summer 2022 Ministry of Finance Projections, and 2023 Summer, Fall 2024 Ministry of Finance projections for Middlesex County.

# Middlesex County

## Historical and Forecast Population Scenarios, 2001 to 2056

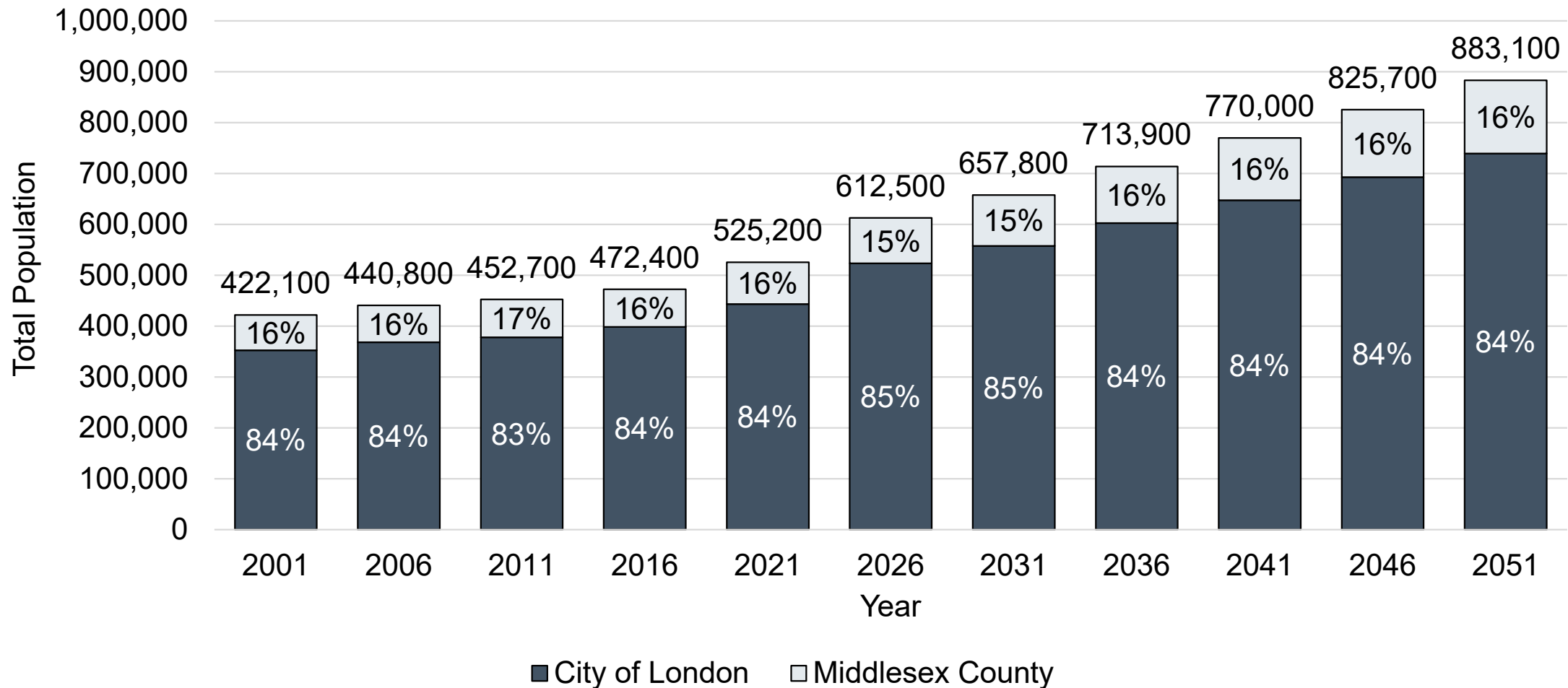


Note: Population includes net Census undercount. Figures exclude the City of London.

Source: Historical derived from Statistics Canada Census and Demography Division data, 2001 to 2021. 2021 to 2061 forecast by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County & City of London

## Historical & Forecast Population, 2001 to 2051

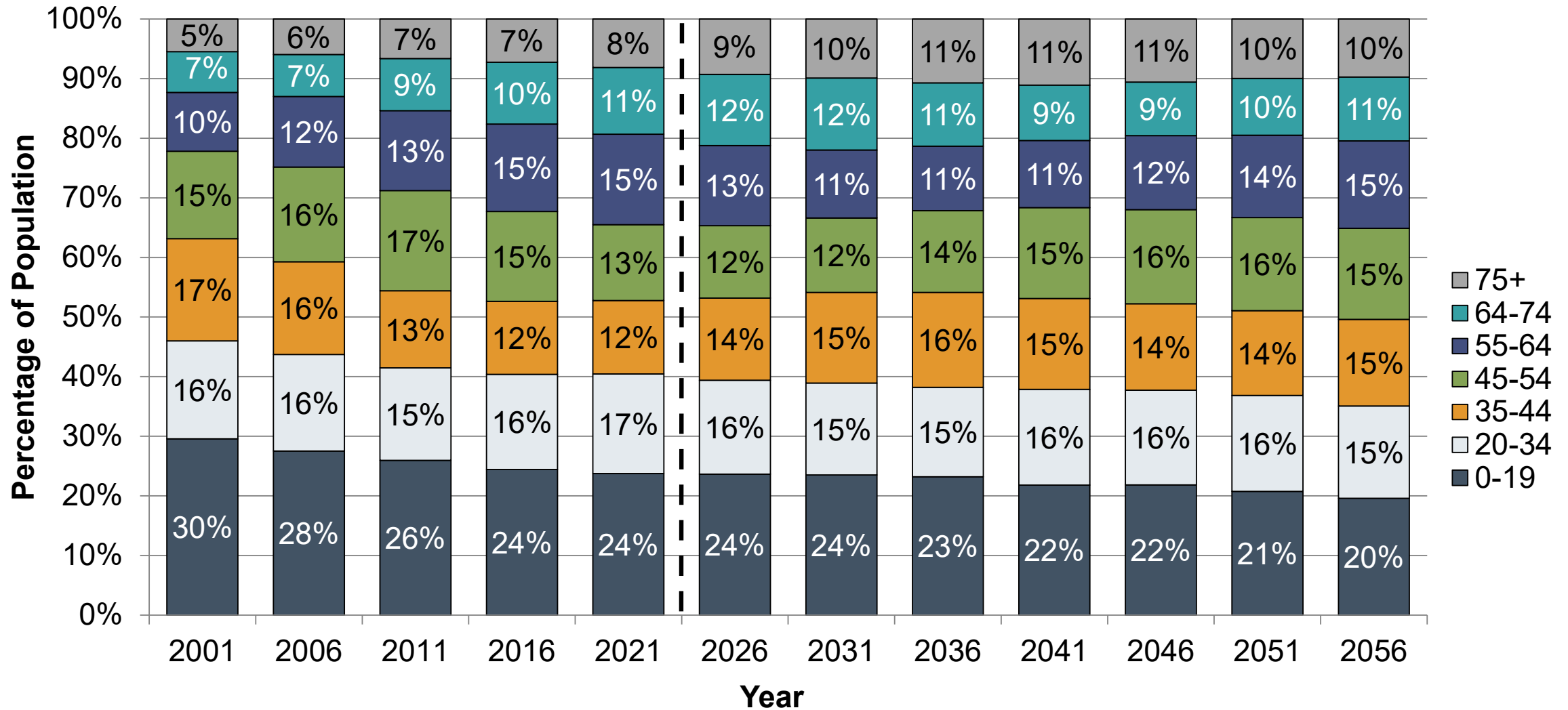


Note: Figures include net Census undercount estimated at 4.3%.

Source: Historical population figures derived from Statistics Canada 17-10-0152-01 summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. Middlesex County (Census Division) forecast derived from 2024 Ministry of Finance Fall projections, Middlesex County and City of London forecast prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County

## Population Forecast by Age Group, 2001 to 2056

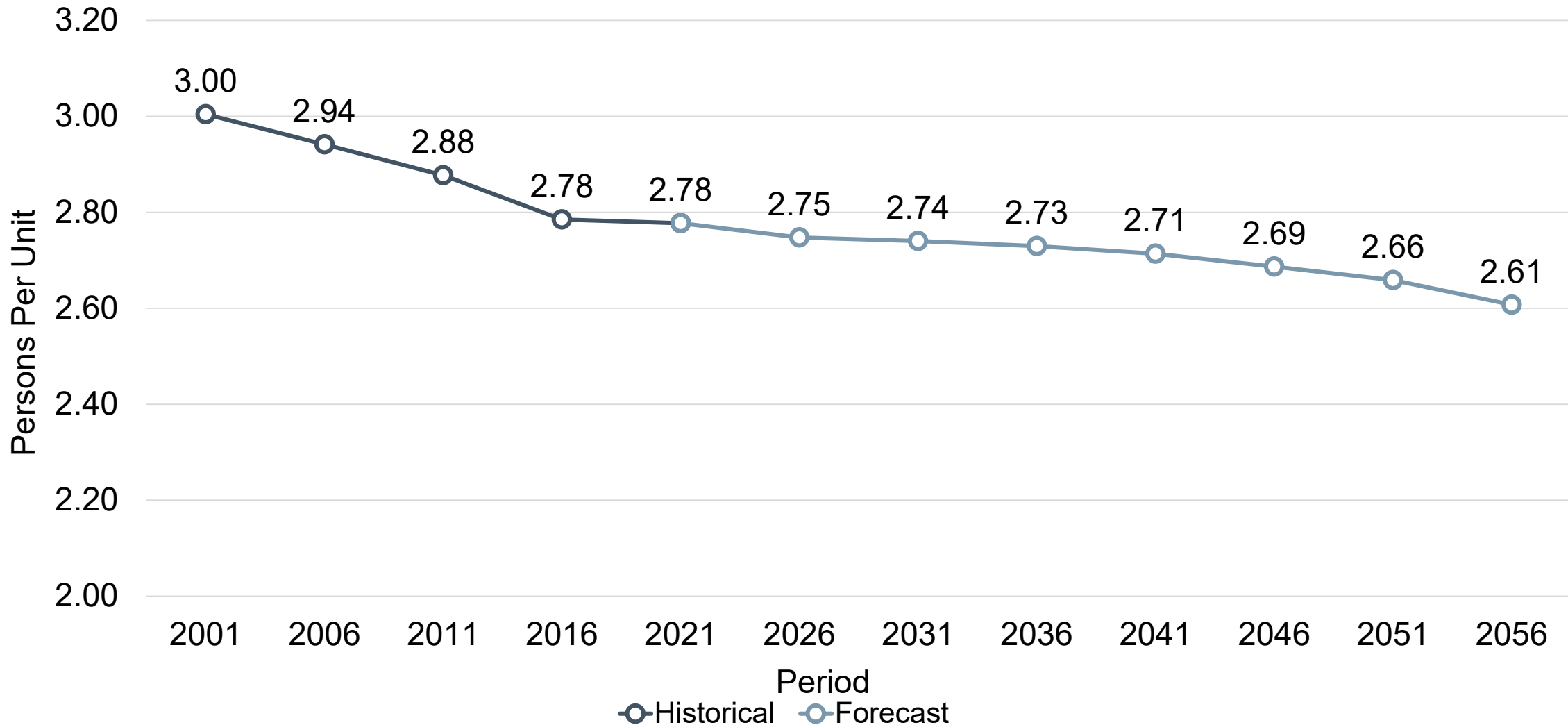


Note: Population includes net Census undercount.

Source: Historical derived from Statistics Canada Census and Demography Division data, 2006 to 2021. 2021 to 2056 forecast by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County

## Historical and Forecast Persons Per Unit, 2001 to 2056



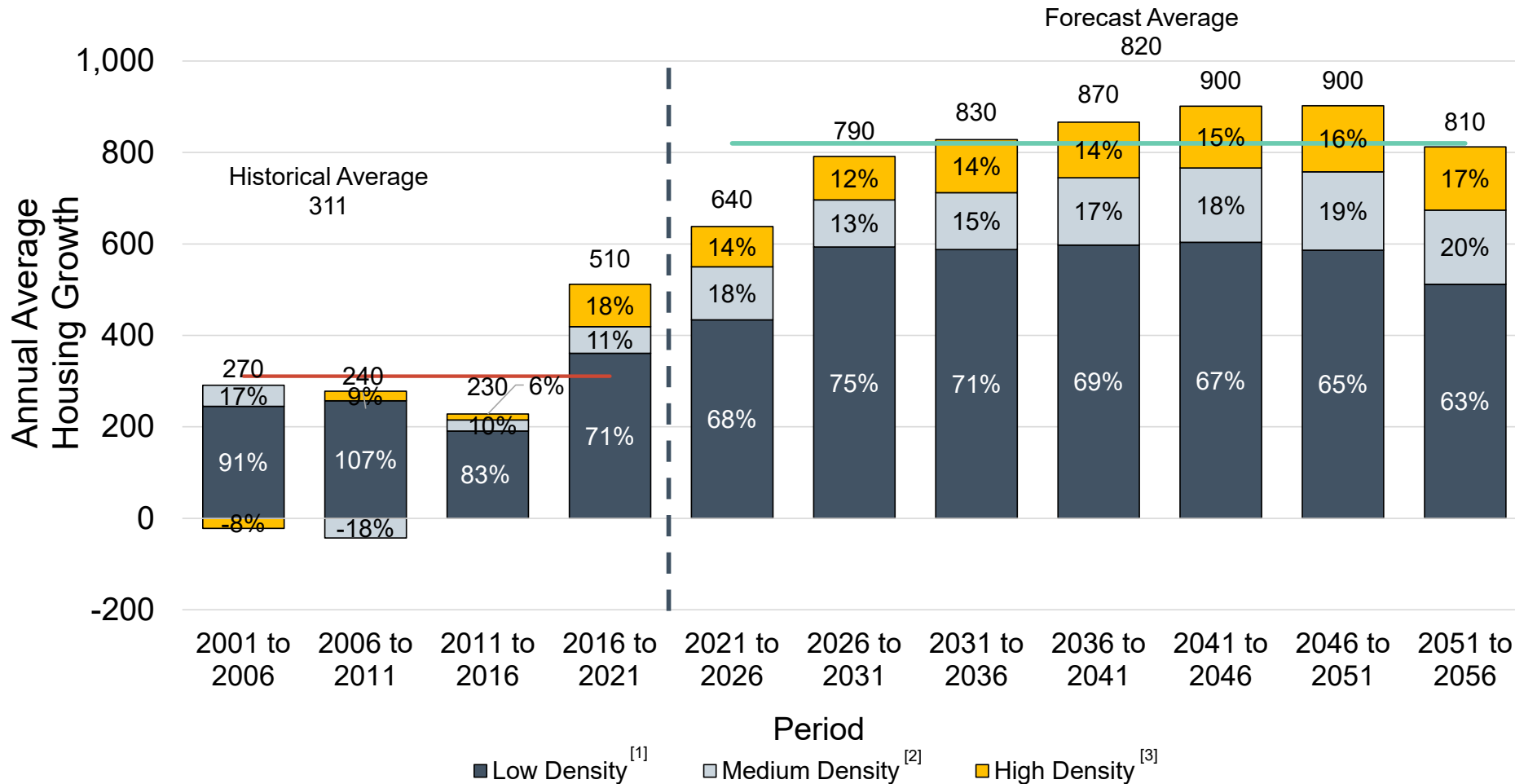
Note: Population figures include net Census undercount estimated at 4.3%. Figure excludes the City of London.

Source: 2001 to 2021 derived from Statistics Canada Census data. 2021 to 2056 by forecasted prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.



# Middlesex County

## Historical and Forecast Housing Growth, 2001 to 2056



2021 to 2056  
Total Housing  
Growth:  
**28,700  
units**

2021 to 2056  
Housing Mix:  
**Low: 68%**  
**Medium: 17%**  
**High: 15%**

<sup>[1]</sup> Low Density includes singles and semis.

<sup>[2]</sup> Medium density includes townhouses and apartments in duplexes.

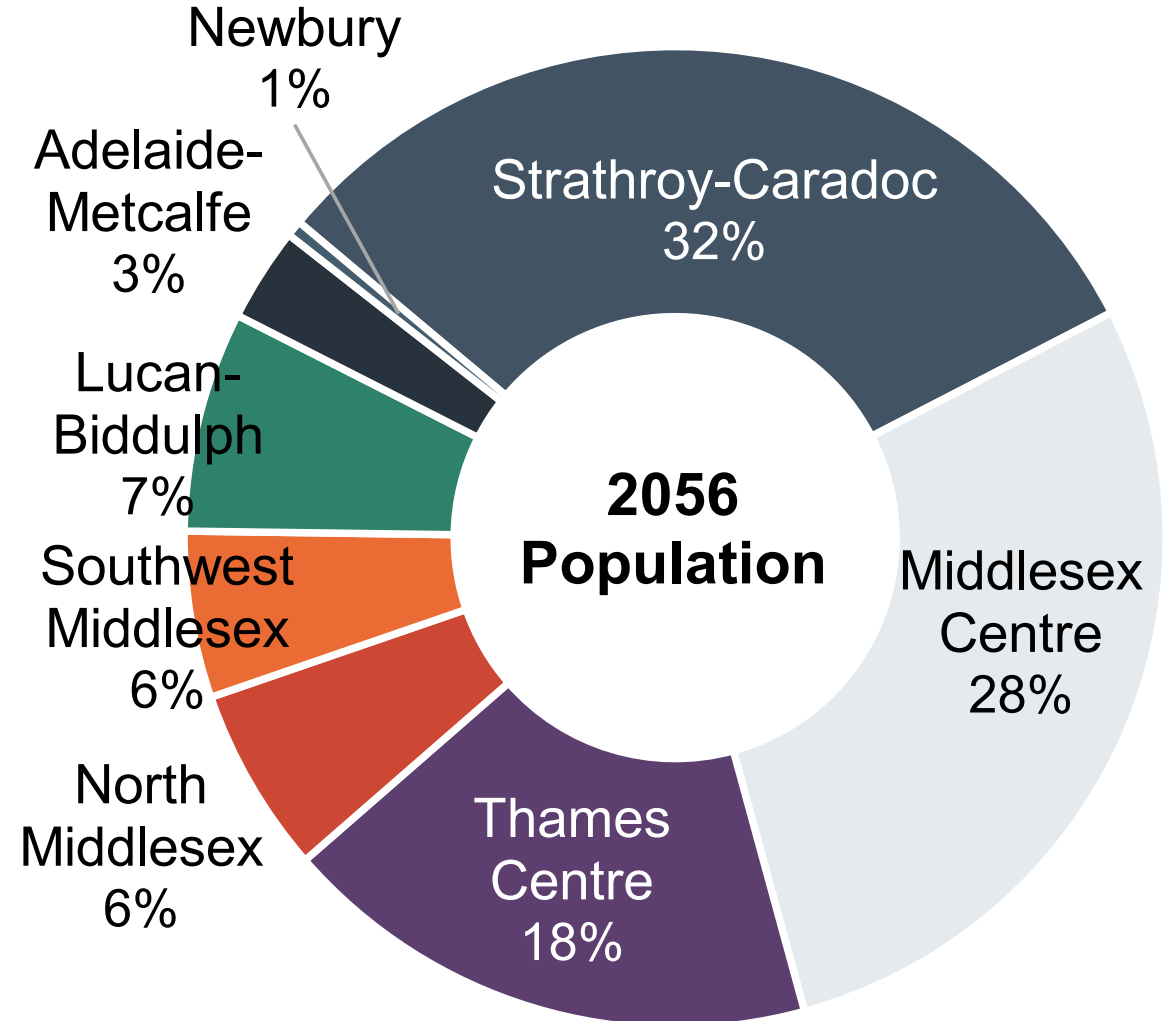
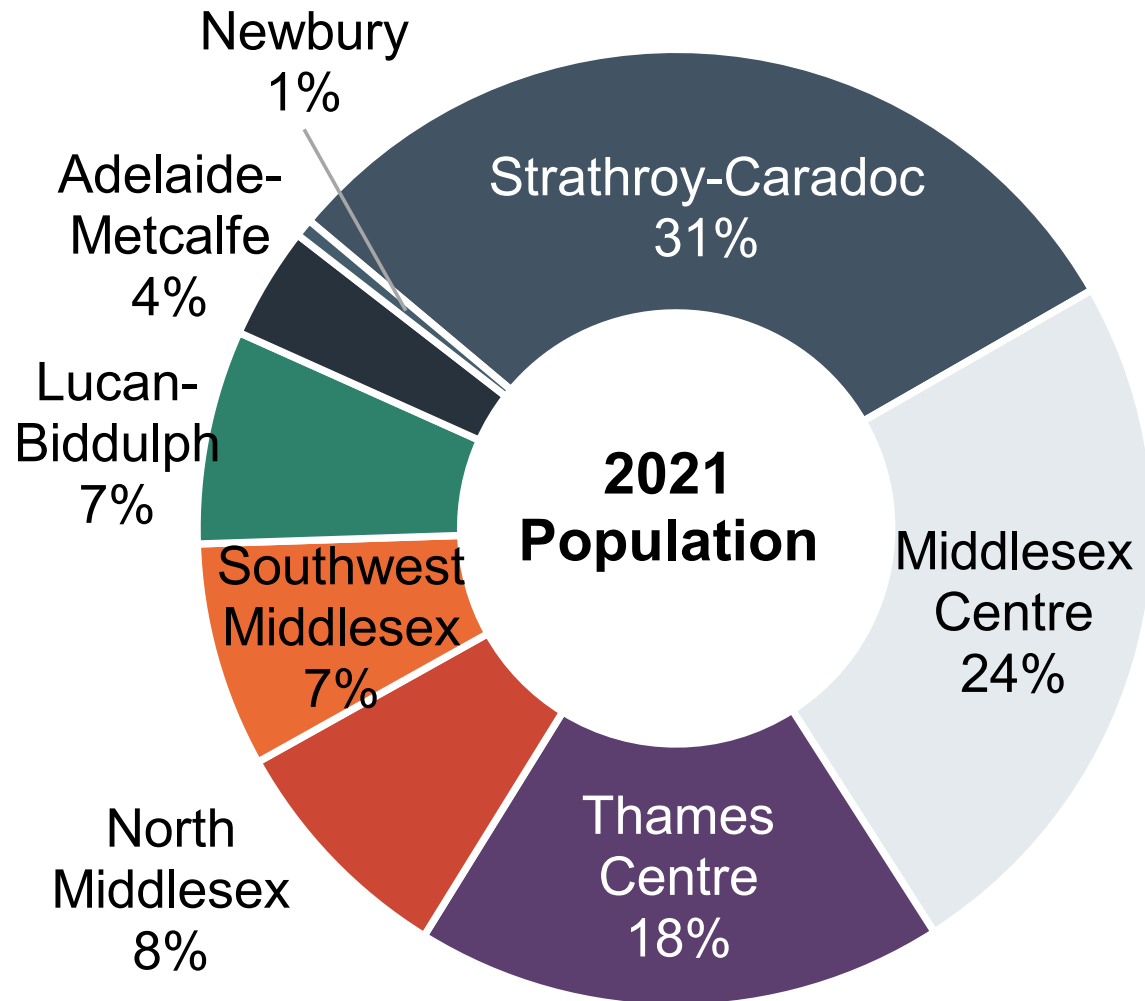
<sup>[3]</sup> High Density includes bachelor, 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom + apartments.

Note: Figures have been rounded and exclude the City of London.

Source: 2001 to 2021 derived from Statistics Canada Census data. 2021 to 2056 by forecasted prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County

## Population Growth Shares of Area Municipal Allocation



Note: Figures have been rounded and population includes net Census undercount.

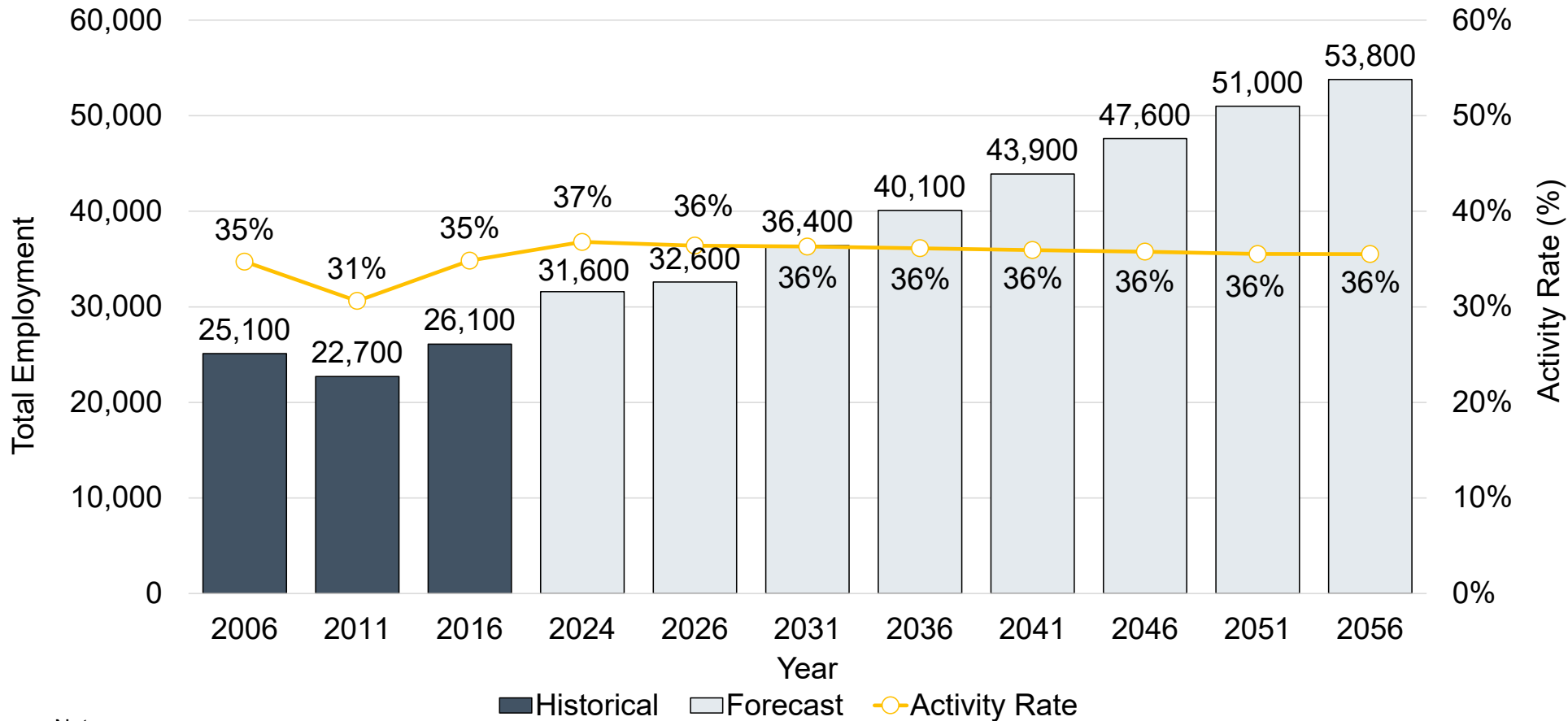
Source: 2021 derived from Statistics Canada Census data, forecast prepared and summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County

Employment Growth Forecast  
by Area Municipality

# Middlesex County

## Medium Growth Scenario, 2001 to 2056



### Notes

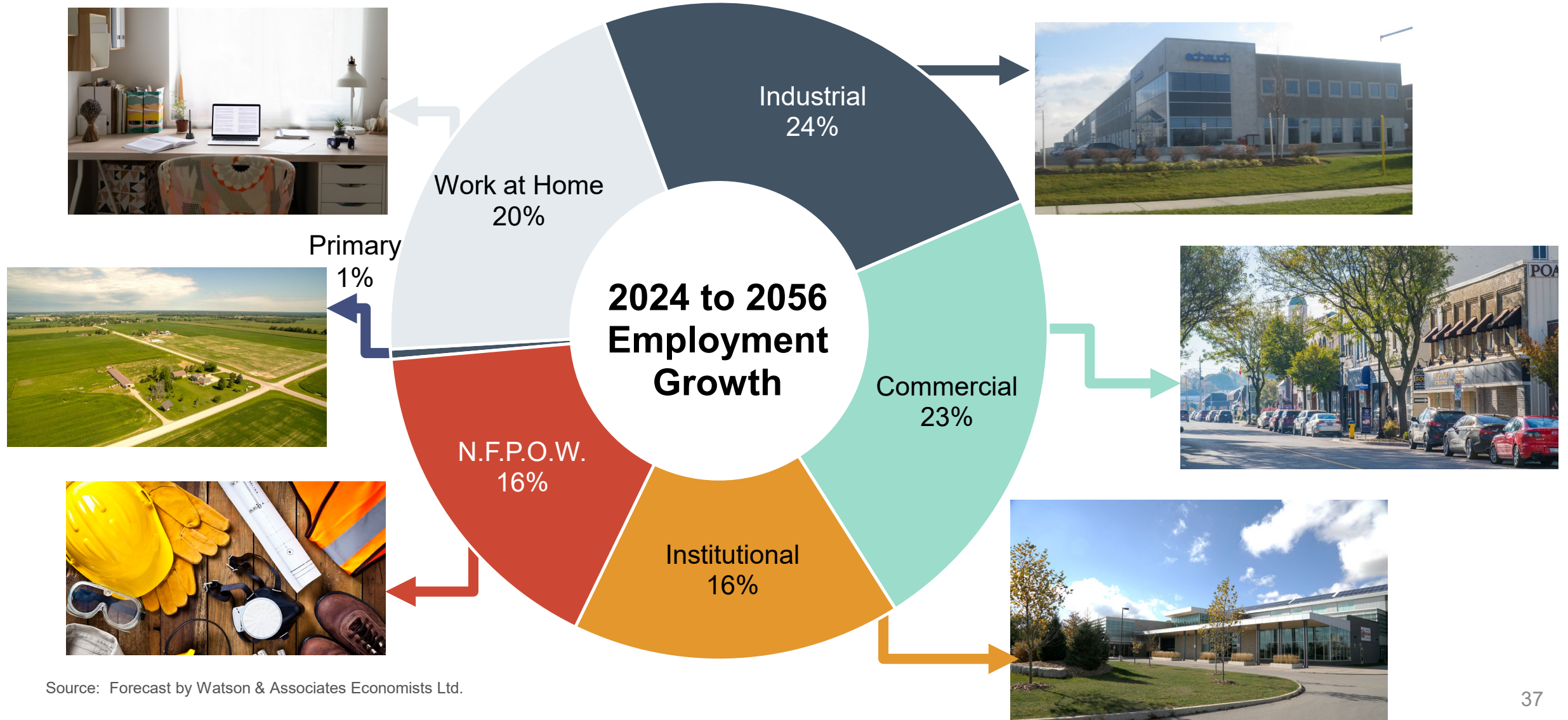
- Activity rate is calculated with population including the net Census undercount.
- Numbers have been rounded.
- Statistics Canada 2021 Census place of work employment data has been reviewed. The 2021 Census employment results have not been utilized due to a significant increase in work at home employment captured due to Census enumeration occurring during the provincial COVID-19 lockdown from April 1, 2021 to June 14, 2021.

2024 to 2056 Total Employment Growth:  
**22,200 jobs**

2024 to 2056 Annual Growth Rate:  
**1.7%**

# Middlesex County

## Employment Growth by Sector, 2024 to 2056

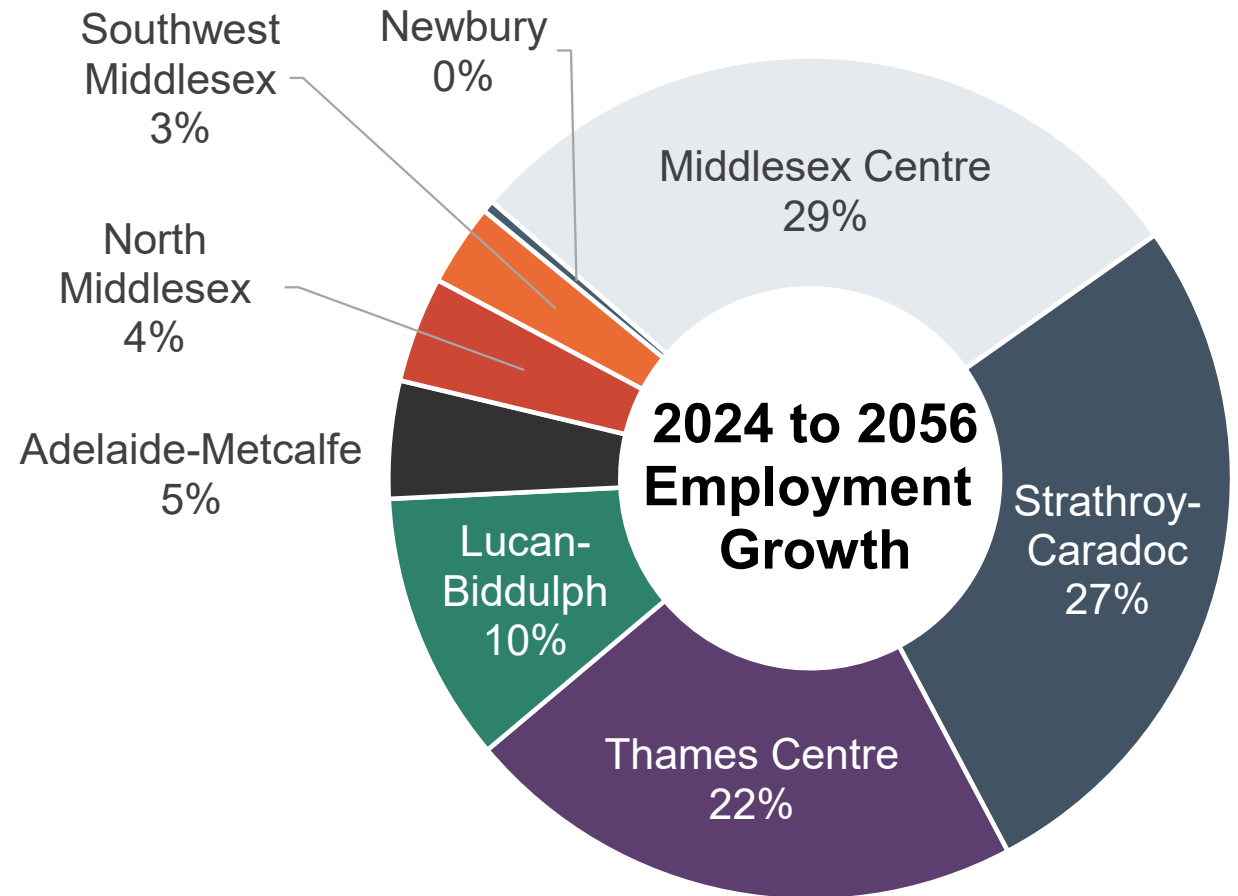


# Middlesex County

## Employment Growth Shares of Area Municipal Allocation



- 77% of the County's total employment growth is directed towards the larger urban areas.
- Townships and smaller urban areas account for 23% of the County's total employment growth, majority of which is population-related employment.



Note: Figures have been rounded.

Source: Forecast prepared and summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.



# Conclusions



- Middlesex County total population is forecast to increase from 81,700 in 2021 to 151,500 by 2056, representing an ***increase of 69,800 persons***.
- The long-term growth rate is expected to increase from historical rate to ***1.8%*** over the forecast period from 2021 to 2056.
  - This forecast has been derived from ***the Fall 2024 Ministry of Finance Projections***.
- County-wide housing growth is forecast to average ***820 new units*** annually between 2021 to 2056. Comparatively, this represents ***faster growth than the historical average*** (311 units annually) achieved between 2001 to 2021.

# Conclusions



- Larger urban areas including Middlesex Centre, Strathroy-Caradoc, and Thames Centre will experience more population and housing growth over the long-term planning horizon.

- Growing at a minimum ***annual rate of 1.8%***.

- The remaining municipalities are expected to achieve a similar annual housing growth as the previous study or slightly higher.





# Conclusions



- County is expected to add an additional 22,200 jobs, approximately 700 jobs annually.
- Similar to population and housing, the larger urban areas are anticipated to account for over three-quarters of the County's total employment growth.



Questions?

“The decisions made today will fundamentally affect options available to future generations. The ability to produce food, to regulate the system of production to reflect the values of society, to maintain the important economic contributions of agriculture, and to retain the important role that farmers play in managing the countryside is dependent on retaining farmers and the lands essential to their livelihood”

(Caldwell et al., 2017, p. 61).

## AGRICULTURE CONTINUED

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- 1 Provincial change
- 2 Agricultural System
- 3 Residence Surplus to a Farming Operation
- 4 Settlement Boundary Expansions
- 5 Other Considerations



# PROVINCIAL CHANGE

The PPS requires municipalities to implement an Agricultural Systems Approach.

Specifies one new residential lot per farm consolidation for a residence surplus to a farm operation is permitted.

Additional Residential Units (ARUs) in prime agricultural areas.

Amends the definition of on-farm diversified uses to include renewable energy.

Removal of the Municipal Comprehensive Review requirement to expand a settlement area.



# AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM

Defined as

*“The system mapped and issued by the Province in accordance with this Plan, comprised of a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector. It has two components:*

- 1. An agricultural land base comprised of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, and rural lands that together create a continuous productive land base for agriculture;*
- 2. An agri-food network which includes infrastructure, services and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector.”*

*“Agri-Food Network – Within the Agricultural System, a network that includes elements important to the viability of the agri-food sector such as regional infrastructure; on farm buildings and infrastructure; agricultural services, farm markets, distributors, and primary processing; and vibrant, agriculture-supportive communities.”*

# AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM

Agricultural system approach was previously implemented in the Greater Golden Horseshoe and recognizes that farmland and clusters of agri-food infrastructure, services and assets need to coexist and be compatible with growing communities

The desired outcomes of the Agricultural System approach are:

1. Active planning for agriculture and rural economic development based on reliable mapping, data and tools.
2. Improved viability of agriculture and growth of the agri-food sector.
3. Better protection of the agricultural land base.
4. Increased land use planning consistency and certainty across municipalities.
5. Reinforcement of the synergies between agricultural, natural heritage and water systems, as outlined in provincial policy.
6. Collaboration between the Province, municipalities, farmers and businesses with a common interest in a strong agri-food sector.

# AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM – PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS

The County Official Plan must be amended to implement an agricultural systems approach

This could include amending existing economic development policies to enhance support for the agri-food network and cross references to economic development programs (CIPs)

Policies could also set the framework for the inclusion of asset mapping or the inclusion of an agri-food network inventory in an official plan appendix

Staff are monitoring the ongoing guidance from OMAFA to support the implementation of the agricultural system policies



# AGRICULTURE SURPLUS DWELLINGS



In order to protect agricultural land for long-term agricultural use and to avoid land use conflicts, new residential lots are prohibited within the agricultural area with one exception - **Residence Surplus to a Farming Operation**

As farm operations have increased in size to often include several parcels, the intent of policy is to facilitate the severance of farm dwellings where they are not needed for an expanding farming operation

# SURPLUS DWELLINGS — PROVINCIAL PLANNING STATEMENT

*“Lot creation in prime agricultural areas is discouraged and may only be permitted for: **one** new residential lot **per** farm consolidation for a residence surplus to an agricultural operation, provided that: 1. the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services; and 2. the planning authority ensures that new dwellings and additional residential units are prohibited on any remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance. The approach used to ensure that no new dwellings or additional residential units are permitted on the remnant parcel may be recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches that achieve the same objective;”*

[Policy 2.3.4.1 c)]

Residence surplus to a farming operation is defined as:

*“means an existing habitable farm residence that is rendered surplus as a result of farm consolidation (the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation)”*

# SURPLUS DWELLINGS — COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## County Official Plan (Policy 4.5.3.4.a)

Consent to sever a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation may be permitted, provided the residence was built at least 10-years prior, the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services, and provided that new residential dwellings are prohibited on any vacant remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance.

The County encourages local municipalities to include policies in their local official plan addressing considerations including minimizing the loss of agricultural land, addressing the retention of outbuildings with the residence surplus to a farming operation including maximum building size and permitted uses, adequacy of services, and Minimum Distance Separation;

*“means a habitable farm residence that is rendered surplus as a result of farm consolidation (the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation).”*



# PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS

The Official Plan **must** at a minimum be updated to reflect the PPS: “**one** new residential lot **per** farm consolidation for a residence surplus to an agricultural operation”

There are other areas where the Official Plan **could** be updated, or those matters could be left to local official plans. Issues sometimes raised include additional policy concerning existing barns, defining a farming operation, and other general considerations.



# PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS - INADVERTENT LOT MERGERS

The Official Plan could be updated to include policy direction pertaining to lots that merged inadvertently due to common ownership subject to the following criteria:

- The severance would reflect the original lot configuration
- The subject property would be held in the same ownership as such when the inadvertent merger occurred
- the severed and retained parcels meet road access criteria

Applicants would be required to provide evidence through legal documentation that demonstrates that the lots were separate, legally conveyable lots prior to the inadvertent merger and are still held in the same ownership as when the inadvertent merger occurred



# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Committee may identify any other topics for further discussion or analysis.





A photograph of a forest in autumn. The ground is covered in a thick layer of yellow and orange fallen leaves. Several large, dark tree trunks are visible, some with fallen branches lying on the ground. The background is filled with more trees, their leaves also in autumn colors. The lighting is warm, suggesting a sunny day.

NEXT STEPS



# CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Community survey was launched on April 30<sup>th</sup> and will be online until May 30<sup>th</sup>

An initial Public Open House scheduled for May 20<sup>th</sup>

Upcoming virtual focus groups with municipal CAOs, Councillors, agricultural community members, and local businesses and investors in early June to capture a comprehensive understanding of our current challenges, opportunities, and potential priorities

Additional targeted outreach and engagement ongoing



# ANOTHER COMMITTEE MEETING

Are there additional matters that the Committee would like to examine.

The next meeting at the chair's discretion as the Official Plan process continues.







# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

# AGENDA

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Review and Discussion

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Quarry Consultation Summary

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Policy Discussion

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Next Steps

# REVIEW AND DISCUSSION





# REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Review and approval of previous meeting minutes.



Any questions of Committee Members.



# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #1

Project introduction with Committee including summaries of changes to be considered under four topic areas of Agriculture, Housing, Economy and Growth and Development

Provincial changes including Additional Residential Units (ARUs) and Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

Affordable housing

Agriculture, Agriculture-related and On-farm Diversified Uses

Bridging 'Solutions-Oriented' Planning approaches into the County Official Plan

# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #2

Housing Consultant attended the meeting to review land use recommendations of the Attainable Housing Review with the Committee

Reallocating servicing capacity / Use it, or Lose it

Density and intensification

Affordable Housing targets

Additional Residential Units (ARUs)

***“THAT** County Council consider including language in the OP to prohibit the severance of ARUs in rural areas and to address size, reverse ARUs and clustering.”*



# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #3

Director of Economic Development attended

CBRE Tourism Toolkit and Land Use Recommendations

Employment Areas and Regional Opportunities

Renewable Energy

Agronomist Consultant presented to the Committee on Agricultural Parcel Sizes

# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #4

Watson and Associates Land Economists presented Population, Employment and Housing forecasts that were prepared based on the Ministry of Finance projections

Settlement Area Boundary Expansions and matters that should be considered by Municipalities when assessing applications

Agricultural Systems Approach

Agricultural Surplus Dwellings

Inadvertent Lot Mergers

Policies to support farm-related business



# Middlesex County Official Plan

*Engagement Summary Report*

*June 2025*

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[www.quarryconsulting.ca](http://www.quarryconsulting.ca)



# Outline

## 1. Executive Summary

## 2. Methodology

## 3. Key Themes and Insights

## 4. Appendix:

- *Focus Group Results Summary*
- *Community Survey Results Summary*



# Executive Summary

## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The County is in the process of updating the Official Plan to bring it into conformity with the policies of the new Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) aimed at guiding land use planning and development across the province.

An important step in this multi-phase Official Plan Review process is the consultation with key sectors and community members who live and work in the County.

## APPROACH

Multiple approaches were used to gather input including open public house session, focus groups and a community survey.



3

Public Open Houses – May, Oct, Nov



33

Focus Group Participants



95

Community Survey Respondents

**Thematic key takeaways and insights have been summarized in this report to inform the refresh of the Official Plan.**

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

Expand affordable, diverse housing by easing barriers and using supportive policies

2

Preserve farmland through focused growth and sustainable practices

3

Enable streamlined processes and flexible planning for economic development

4

Align expansion with infrastructure, protect land, and modernize land use policy frameworks



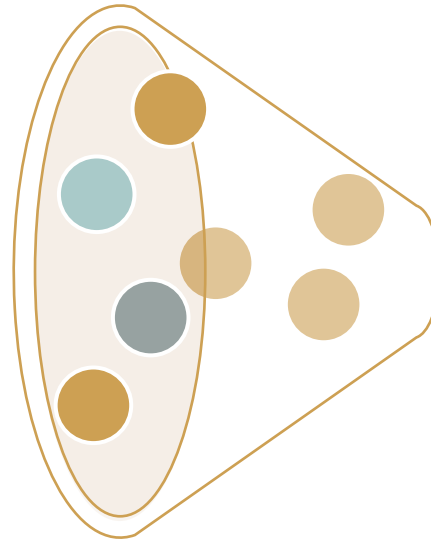
# Methodology

Multiple approaches were used to gather data from a broad cross-section of stakeholders. The output from the engagements were analysed and synthesised into key themes, insights and strategic questions for Middlesex County to consider.

## FROM OBSERVATION...



DATA COLLECTION



ANALYSIS and SYNTHESIS OF KEY THEMES








## ...TO INSIGHTS

Stakeholder Engagement Summary Report

### Key Themes and Insights: Summary

The results of the stakeholder engagement phase of this project have been aggregated into a set of key themes and insights, which provide County Council and Senior leaders a launching pad for the next strategic plan.

Key Theme	Insights
 Focus on Economic Development and Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Diversify the tax base to enable economic growth</li><li>Support growth with appropriate funding and scaling of support services</li><li>Make the key strategic choice regarding the future fiscal posture of the County</li></ul>
 Foster Collaborative Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Seek new models of collaboration between Council and local municipalities, London and the Province</li><li>Capitalize on efficiency opportunities between the County and local municipalities</li><li>Foster productive relationships with local First Nations communities to advance common interests</li></ul>
 Increase Education and Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Clarify and communicate the role of the County vs. local municipalities with ALL key stakeholders, including Council members and constituents</li><li>Improve and formalize Council on-boarding programs</li></ul>
 Build Internal Capability and Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prioritize modernization of technology and process, with a focus on finance as an early priority</li><li>Bolster the capacity of in-demand support services and design a fit-for-purpose model for each service/program area</li></ul>



KEY FINDINGS





## **Key Themes and Insights**

# Key Themes and Insights: Summary

The results of the engagement phase of this project have been aggregated into a set of key themes and insights, to ensure the refreshed Official Plan reflects the needs and aspirations of the people who live, work, and invest in Middlesex community.

## Key Themes



**Affordable housing on serviceable land**



**Protect Farmland and Support Agricultural Viability**



**Smart Growth Planning**



**Sustainable Land Stewardship**

## Insights

- Prioritize affordable, smaller homes and senior housing to meet changing demographics and preferences.
- Address barriers like zoning restrictions and limited infrastructure capacity.
- Use land use policies to support diverse housing options, redevelopment, and gentle density.

- Protect farmland by directing growth inward and supporting on-farm housing and diversification.
- Address farm succession challenges and improve rural infrastructure and services.
- Restrict non-farm development on prime agricultural land and promote sustainable practices.

- Focus on agriculture-related sectors, tech manufacturing, and robotics with clear, strategic priorities.
- Streamline regulations, incentivize job-creating projects, and strengthen regional partnerships.
- Support entrepreneurship, mixed-use development, and flexible land use policies.

- Expand settlement boundaries with adequate infrastructure, affordability, and alignment with County's vision.
- Protect agricultural/natural lands, ensure public consultation, and promote complete, accessible communities.
- Address barriers to support innovation, redevelopment, and economic vitality.



# Theme #1: Affordable Housing and Serviceable Land

## WHAT WE HEARD

- Partners and community consistently emphasize a growing **housing affordability crisis**, making traditional single-family homes increasingly out of reach for younger households. This demographic shift is coupled with changing lifestyle preferences, with many younger residents favoring **smaller, more manageable housing options** such as townhomes, semi-detached units, or apartments that align with their financial capabilities, evolving buying preferences and service needs.
- An aging population adds complexity, creating significant demand for **senior-appropriate housing**, including options that enable aging in place and foster community continuity. Current housing stock is insufficient to meet these needs, and many seniors may be forced to relocate outside the County without adequate local options.
- Barriers such as **restrictive zoning and complex, time-consuming planning approvals** hinder the ability of developers to deliver affordable and diverse housing types quickly and cost-effectively. Additionally, infrastructure capacity limits the feasibility of denser or new housing developments. The preservation of agricultural lands further restricts the availability of developable land, intensifying competition and pressure on housing supply.
- Stakeholders also highlight a disconnect between government policies and the **dynamic nature of housing demand**, with insufficient mechanisms to track and respond to changing citizen preferences. This gap underscores the need for ongoing monitoring and adaptive planning.

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Middlesex may need to leverage the Official Plan update to highlight the need to:

- **Revise policies to increase affordable housing options** that cater to younger generations' preferences for smaller, cost-effective homes, as well as senior housing to support an aging population.
- **Address barriers** such as zoning restrictions, infrastructure limitations, and approval processes by enabling higher-density development, additional residential units, and inclusive, universally designed homes.
- **Balance housing expansion with farmland protection** by encouraging development within existing neighborhoods and leveraging more brownfield through build-up and not out, while minimizing farmland conversion.



# Theme #2: Protect Farmland and Support Agricultural Viability

## WHAT WE HEARD

- Agriculture remains a cornerstone of Middlesex County's identity and economy, but it faces significant threats from expanding urbanization. Stakeholders articulate a clear preference for **directing growth inward**, maximizing density in communities rather than expanding settlement boundaries into prime farmland.
- The viability of farms depends on more than just land protection; **on-farm housing for seasonal and foreign workers** is critical to operational continuity, as is enabling **diversified agricultural uses** that allow farms to innovate and increase income streams beyond traditional farming.
- A particularly acute challenge is **farm succession**. Without proper planning and support, farms are often sold off or there is pressure to subdivide, resulting in the loss of agricultural land and heritage. This issue intersects with generational and economic factors, requiring supportive policies and community education.
- Stakeholders note infrastructure deficits in rural areas, such as limited transit and inadequate social support programs, which affect both farming operations and rural residents' quality of life. There are also tensions between farming and non-farming land uses, highlighting the need for careful land use planning and conflict resolution mechanisms.
- Environmental sustainability and climate resilience are growing concerns, pressing the need for green building practices and resource conservation integrated into agricultural and rural planning.



## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Middlesex may need to leverage the Official Plan update to highlight that:

- **Growth should be directed inward**, focusing on increasing density in communities to prevent urban sprawl onto valuable farmland.
- **Policies should support farm viability** through on-farm housing for seasonal workers, diversified farm uses, and improved farm succession planning to reduce farmland loss.
- **Cross-municipal coordination should be strengthened** to create clear frameworks for settlement boundary expansion to protect agricultural lands while accommodating rural housing needs.



# Theme #3: Smart Growth Planning

## WHAT WE HEARD

- The County's economic future is closely linked to its strengths in **agriculture and agri-business**, but stakeholders recognize the importance of diversifying into **high- and mid-tech manufacturing**, farm-to-table enterprises, construction and housing product manufacturing, food processing innovations, and emerging sectors like robotics.
- Middlesex County benefits from strategic transportation links and proximity to major markets, which are seen as key assets to leverage for attracting investment. However, economic development efforts suffer from fragmented coordination across government agencies, regulatory processes, and limited incentives for businesses to invest locally.
- There is a clear call for a more **focused, strategic approach** in the Official Plan that avoids trying to support every sector equally, instead prioritizing those with the highest growth potential and strongest regional fit. Stakeholders stress the importance of having an economic development champion to break down bureaucratic silos and better integrate initiatives.
- Flexibility in zoning and land use policies is needed to support **entrepreneurship, adaptive reuse**, and mixed-use developments that can nurture small businesses and startups. This is especially important for settlement areas where revitalization and innovation can create vibrant local economies.
- The County's relationship with regional partners like the London EDC is viewed as critical for attracting **foreign direct investment** and supporting more proactive business recruitment campaigns.

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Middlesex may need to leverage the Official Plan update to:

- **Prioritize attracting and retaining jobs** in agriculture, advanced manufacturing, agri-business, and emerging sectors like robotics and food processing.
- **Streamline regulatory processes**, reduce development fees, and foster partnerships with regional economic organizations to boost investment and competitiveness.
- **Encourage diversified commercial and industrial land uses**, entrepreneurship in settlement areas, and tailored precinct planning to stimulate local economic innovation and growth.



# Theme #4: Strategic Settlement Expansion

## WHAT WE HEARD

- Expansion of settlement areas must be managed carefully to **balance growth pressures with fiscal, environmental, and social sustainability**. Interested parties emphasized that new growth should align closely with existing or planned infrastructure capacity, especially low-cost servicing options, to avoid unsustainable future maintenance burdens on municipalities.
- Recent provincial policy shifts have changed the development approval landscape, giving landowners more direct influence over boundary expansions. This **increases the complexity and urgency for local governments to have robust, transparent, and expedited processes** to manage requests effectively while safeguarding community values.
- **Community input is critical** but often underutilized or rushed in these processes, risking developments that do not reflect local needs or preferences. Community members advocate for strong public engagement mechanisms and for new developments to contribute meaningfully to **complete communities** — places with accessible green space, affordable housing, transit options, and services.
- Affordability, accessibility, infrastructure service capacity, community needs, climate resilience, and employment land availability emerge as key principles to embed in any expansion strategy, ensuring long-term community health and prosperity.

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Middlesex may need to leverage the Official Plan update to:

- **Ensure settlement area expansions are carefully evaluated** based on infrastructure capacity, economic servicing efficiency, and alignment with long-term municipal sustainability and vision.
- **Protect farmland and natural environments** by directing growth to designated settlement areas and prioritizing complete, accessible, and climate-resilient communities.
- **Engage communities meaningfully in planning decisions**, incorporate affordable housing targets in new developments, and balance operational costs of infrastructure and services.





# Community Survey: Key Insights

The Community Survey revealed relevant insights aligned to the themes from focus groups and open public house.



## Affordable Housing and Serviceable Land

- Middlesex must expand diverse and affordable housing options to meet shifting demographics, especially for youth and seniors.
- Land use tools, affordability targets, and surplus land conversion are essential to unlock supply.
- Tracking housing metrics is critical for responsive planning.



## Protect Farmland and Support Agricultural Viability

- Farmland is at risk; protecting it requires smart growth policies focused on density and infill in existing communities.
- Succession planning, farm viability, and rural infrastructure must be prioritized to sustain the agricultural economy.



## Smart Growth Planning

- Legacy zoning and approval processes limit growth; regulatory reform and flexibility are key.
- Supporting brownfield redevelopment, mixed-use areas, and protecting employment lands will drive innovation and attract investment.
- Housing supply and economic development must be planned together to support a strong workforce.



## Sustainable Land Stewardship

- Settlement expansion must be aligned with infrastructure capacity, cost-efficiency, and farmland protection.
- Community input, affordability, and complete communities must guide all development decisions.



# Appendix



# Focus Groups

Specific lines of inquiry were tailored to participants based on gather insights across the areas of economic development, agriculture, housing and growth and development.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	CAOs	AGRICULTURE	LOCAL COUNCILS	PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 11 Participants</li><li>• Representatives from:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning and Development</li><li>• Water Supply</li><li>• Construction</li><li>• Real Estate</li><li>• School Boards</li><li>• Manufacturing</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8 Participants</li><li>• Representatives across 6 municipalities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6 Participants</li><li>• Representatives from:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local farmers</li><li>• Greenhouse owners</li><li>• Ontario Farming community</li><li>• Agriculture advocacy agencies</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7 Participants</li><li>• Representatives from:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• North Middlesex</li><li>• Strathroy-Caradoc</li><li>• Middlesex Centre</li><li>• Lucan Biddulph</li><li>• Middlesex Centre</li><li>• Newbury</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 Participants</li><li>• Representatives from:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning and Development</li><li>• Agriculture Federation</li><li>• Service providers</li><li>• Real Estate</li><li>• Business owners/investors</li></ul></li></ul>





# Focus Group – Discussion Guide

Specific lines of inquiry were tailored to participants based on gather insights across the economic development, agriculture, housing and growth and development sectors.

Lines of Inquiry	Discussion
<b>Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What types of housing do you think our community needs more of to support residents of all ages and income levels?</li><li>• What are the barriers/key factors that need to be considered?</li></ul>
<b>Agriculture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can we best protect farmland while also supporting a thriving and modern agricultural sector?</li></ul>
<b>Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What kinds of jobs or businesses would you like to see grow or be attracted to our community?</li><li>• How can the Official Plan better support economic development and innovation?</li></ul>
<b>Growth &amp; Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What key factors should be taken into account when evaluating a request to expand a settlement area boundary?</li></ul>





# Focus Group: Results Summary

## Economic development

### Housing factors and challenges

1. Affordability
2. Servicing capability relative to growth
3. Good local jobs
4. Protection of Agriculture land
5. Aligning demand vs. supply

### Protect farmland by:

1. Increasing density in communities
2. On-farm housing
3. Continue to locate new schools within existing settlement areas
4. Zoned industrial land – high costs to service it

### Types of jobs/businesses to attract

1. Ag and Ag-related businesses
2. High tech mid manufacturing
3. Construction and housing related products, prefab

### Factors to support economic development

1. Clear direction & policy on partnership development
2. Focus, don't try to be everything, leverage strengths
3. Economic champion contact
4. Incentivize by reducing costs

### Factors in expanding a settlement area boundary:

1. Where is community services and infrastructure located?
2. Schools and other community services
3. Accelerate the process

## CAOs

### Gaps in current housing supply

1. Attainable and affordable
2. Additional residential units
3. Barriers: infrastructure limits, legacy zoning
4. Higher density compatible with existing housing

### Land use policy tools for agriculture...

1. On-farm diversified uses
2. Settlement boundary expansion application process
3. Address conflict between ag protection vs. building new housing
4. Ag impact studies & assessments

### Ways to support emerging sectors ...

1. Create business park nodes along major intersections
2. On farm diversified use policies
3. Expand definitions of commercial /industrial uses

### Criteria in expanding a settlement area boundary

1. Does it affect the urban boundary?
2. Infrastructure (can it be serviced?)
3. Impact on ag lands?
4. Transportation networks and proximity to community services

## Agriculture

### Housing factors and challenges

1. Servicing capability relative to infrastructure
2. Minimize using farmland for new housing
3. Lack of transit and social support programs

### Issues facing agriculture and rural

1. Create policies to attract support business who supply ag industry Infrastructure provided by municipality to allow ag to thrive
2. Aging farm population
3. Farm development and permitting process made easier

### Types of jobs/businesses we should attract:

1. Agri technology
2. Food processing
3. Construction and other ag related services

### How to balance growth with farmland protection

1. Encourage best use of land
2. Grow up not out (intensify)
3. Encourage mix of housing (not all family subdivisions)

### Factors in expanding a settlement area boundary

1. Community interest is the priority driver
2. Contiguous development is critical (not hopscotching)
3. Servicing capability

## Local Councils

### Housing factors and challenges

1. Lack of infrastructure servicing capacity
2. Lots of processes to get through (studies, engineering assessments etc.)
3. Zoning is a barrier
4. DCs can be costly

### How to balance growth with farmland protection

1. Limit expansion of towns & settlement areas
2. Engage with ag community stakeholders
3. Grow up not out, encourage infill

### Types of jobs/businesses we should attract...

1. Ag and Ag tech
2. Small to midsize manufacturing
3. Independent local businesses
4. Food processing industry

### Factors in expanding a settlement area boundary

1. Infrastructure capacity
2. Does it serve the interests of the community?
3. Timeliness and commitment to develop
4. Are there already lands in the settlement area unused?

## Public Open House

### Housing factors and challenges

1. Servicing capability
2. Shortages in land
3. Affordability
4. Densification

### Protect farmland by...

1. Intensification: Build up not out
2. Succession planning (farmers are older and difficult to entice next gen)

### Types of jobs/businesses we should attract:

1. Small-medium size business
2. Farm to table businesses
3. Food production
4. Agriculture support services

### Factors in expanding a settlement area boundary

1. How easy is it service the land
2. Is the investor serious about developing or speculating?
3. Protect our high-quality farmland

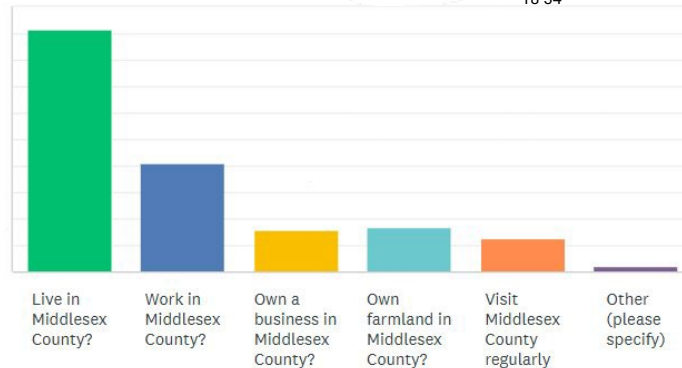
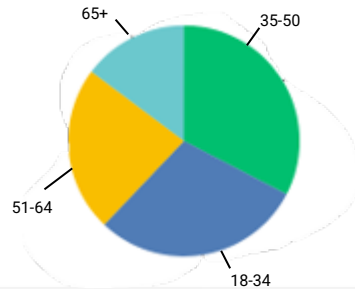


# Community Survey

95 survey respondents

## Demographics of respondents

39% Middlesex Centre  
22% North Middlesex  
9.5% Southwest Middlesex  
9.5% Strathroy-Caradoc  
7% Lucan Biddulph  
4% Thames Centre  
2% Newbury  
2% Adelaide  
5% Other (London, Hungry Hollow, Central Elgin, Lambton Shores)



## What makes Middlesex County a great place to live?

- **Rural Charm with Urban Connectivity:** Community members strongly value Middlesex County's rural character—marked by tranquility, natural beauty, and a small-town feel—while also emphasizing the importance of maintaining access to modern amenities. Proximity to London, the 401/402 corridors, and essential services such as healthcare, education, and shopping enhances the county's appeal by offering the best of both rural and urban living.
- **Community Strength and Safety:** Residents highlight a deep appreciation for the county's welcoming, friendly atmosphere and strong sense of community. Middlesex is viewed as a safe and supportive environment that attracts a diverse population, including young families and retirees, all drawn to the region's quality of life, independence, and close-knit social fabric.

## What would you like to see change/improve in the County over the next 10–20 years?

- **Smart Growth and Inclusive Planning:** Leadership should prioritize focused growth within serviced settlement areas, preserve farmland, expand housing options (including affordable and diverse types), and enhance local services, transportation, and amenities to support vibrant, connected communities.
- **Sustainable Economy and Responsive Governance:** Support economic diversification through business attraction and rural development incentives, protect natural and agricultural assets, and ensure transparent, community-informed decision-making processes.



# Community Survey



## Housing

### Priorities to enable affordable housing



### Top housing needs:

- 54% Single Detached Homes
- 46% Affordable Housing
- 35% Townhomes/Semi-detach
- 31% Seniors' Housing
- 27% Apartments & Condos

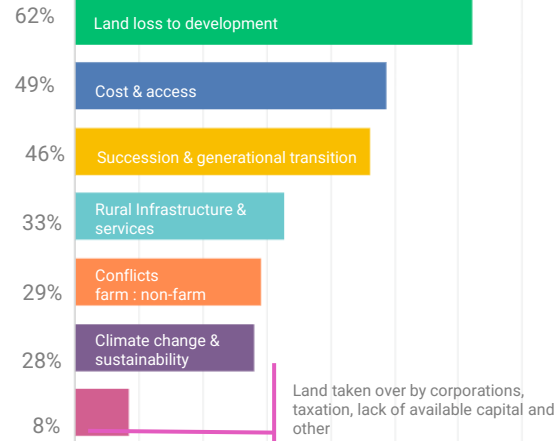
**69%** support new housing development near existing town/village centres

**53%** support higher-density new housing development



## Agriculture

### Top Agriculture or Rural Issues:



**50% Limit urban sprawl** by directing growth to designated Settlement Areas & **Restrict non-farm development** on prime agricultural land

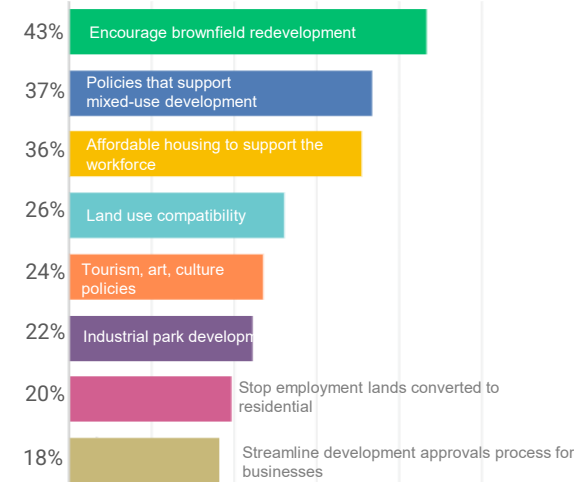
**>30% Support local food systems** and farm viability, Encourage higher-density development in existing Settlement Areas and encourage redevelopment or infill of underused properties

**>15% Implement a monitoring and reporting program** to assess land needs and inform



## Economic Development

### Priorities to better support economic development & innovation:



**17% Experienced barriers** starting or expanding a business such as high developmental costs, project delays, high land price, dominance of large corporations and cumbersome building approvals

**Awareness of planning policies and zoning regulations limiting economic development**

**40% was not aware any barriers**

**40%** lack of flexibility in permitted land uses

**22%** Development approval process



## Growth & Development

### Top considerations for expansion of settlement area boundary



**20%** Plan growth to balance long-term financial impacts, support active transportation, secure land for jobs, and promote sustainable, climate-resilient development.

Prioritize **cost-effective, serviceable** land for development to **keep DCs low** and avoid the high infrastructure costs of expanding beyond established urban centers





**QUARRY**  
C o n s u l t i n g

# POLICY DISCUSSION

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- 1 Settlement Area Boundary Expansions
- 2 Agricultural Matters
- 3 Additional Residential Units
- 4 Regionally Significant Employment Areas
- 5 Other Considerations



# 1. SETTLEMENT AREA BOUNDARY EXPANSIONS

The new Provincial Planning Statement removes the need for a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) to expand settlement areas.

Privately initiated Official Plan Amendments can now be considered for settlement area expansions.

A clear evaluation framework is necessary to assess proposals and uphold long-term planning objectives.

# SETTLEMENT AREA BOUNDARY EXPANSIONS – WORKING DRAFT

The County's Growth Management framework acknowledges that population and employment growth will occur over the planning horizon. To ensure it is sustainable, growth must be carefully managed to minimize impacts on the Natural Heritage System and the Agricultural System, and coordinated with the timely provision of appropriate infrastructure and services.

These principles are critical to supporting long-term environmental protection, agricultural viability, and the efficient delivery of municipal services. Settlement area boundary expansions must be considered within this broader context to ensure responsible, well-planned growth and to support the achievement of complete communities.

An amendment to the local Municipal Official Plan will be required to facilitate the expansion or identification of a designated Settlement Area. Prior to the identification of a new Settlement Area or the expansion of the limits of an existing Settlement Area, the applicant shall provide the necessary background information to justify the new or expanded Settlement Area, in addition to the requirements listed in Section 2.3.6 of this Plan. This information must address:

# SETTLEMENT AREA BOUNDARY EXPANSIONS — WORKING DRAFT

- a) the need to designate and plan for additional land to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses;
- b) if there is sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities;
- c) whether the proposal reflects a logical integration with local servicing master plans;
- d) whether the applicable lands comprise specialty crop areas;
- e) the evaluation of alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas and where avoidance is not possible, consider reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands;
- f) whether the new or expanded settlement area complies with the minimum distance separation formulae;
- g) whether impacts on the agricultural system are avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated to the extent feasible as determined through an agricultural impact assessment or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance; and
- h) the new or expanded settlement area provides for the phased progression of urban development



# SETTLEMENT AREA BOUNDARY EXPANSIONS — WORKING DRAFT

The population, housing, and employment forecasts in Appendix B of this Plan, along with the most recent Census data, shall form the basis for the determination of land needs.

Where full municipal services are planned or available, the use of private or communal wastewater treatment systems, including package treatment plants, shall not be permitted.

To support the coordination of growth management and infrastructure planning, local municipalities are encouraged to establish servicing capacity allocation policies. These policies should guide the allocation and, where appropriate, reallocation of available system capacity to ensure infrastructure is used efficiently and growth is directed to appropriate locations.

## 2. AGRICULTURAL MATTERS

The agricultural policies should be updated to reflect recent Provincial direction and to support a resilient agricultural system. Key changes include:

Implementing an Agricultural Systems Approach to protect the interconnected components of the rural landscape

Permitting additional residential units (ARUs) in prime agricultural areas (see previous)

Refining policies for surplus farm dwelling severances

Reviewing minimum agricultural parcel size

Potentially addressing inadvertent lot mergers

# AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM — WORKING DRAFT

Agriculture is a cornerstone of Middlesex County's economy, culture, and rural identity. The County is committed to protecting and promoting agriculture not only as an essential industry but as a way of life that supports local food production, the creative rural economy, and long-term economic sustainability. The County recognizes the importance of comprehensive planning for the agricultural land base and the agri-food network that together form the Agricultural System.

The Agricultural System supports the viability of agricultural operations, ensures access to agri-supportive services and infrastructure, and fosters a strong and resilient agri-food sector. The policies of this Plan are intended to protect the agricultural system by limiting the introduction of uses that are incompatible with normal farm practices, such as non-farm residential and other sensitive land uses.

The sale of agricultural products grown or produced on the farm shall be permitted on the same property as an on-farm diversified use, provided the scale and nature of the use remains accessory to the principal agricultural operation.

# SURPLUS FARM DWELLINGS — WORKING DRAFT

The creation of one new residential lot may be permitted for a residence rendered surplus to a farming operation as a result of a farm consolidation, ~~Consent to sever a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation may be permitted,~~ provided the residence was built at least 10-years prior, the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services, and provided that new residential dwellings are prohibited on any vacant remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance.

The County encourages local municipalities to include policies in their local official plan addressing considerations including minimizing the loss of agricultural land, addressing the retention of outbuildings with the residence surplus to a farming operation including maximum building size and permitted uses, adequacy of services, and Minimum Distance Separation

# MINIMUM AGRICULTURAL PARCEL SIZE — EXISTING

“Consents for new farm lots are discouraged where the result is the creation of a farm lot less than a typical township lot of about 40 hectares. Consents for the creation of new farm lots shall be considered where both the size of the lands being severed and the lands being retained are appropriate to:

1. the type of agriculture being engaged in or proposed to be engaged in; and
2. the type of agricultural activity and farm lot size common in the area. In general, farm lot size shall be sufficiently large to create large contiguous farming blocks and to maintain flexibility to adapt to future changes in agriculture and to avoid the unwarranted fragmentation of farmland. A minimum farm lot size shall be established in the Zoning By-laws of the local municipalities;

A different minimum farm parcel size for local municipalities may be considered through an amendment to the County Official Plan provided that a study is carried out by the local municipality with the guidance and assistance of the Province, to demonstrate that the different farm parcel size is appropriate for the type of agricultural uses common in the local area, yet is sufficiently large enough to maintain flexibility for future changes to the type or size of agricultural operations.”

# MINIMUM AGRICULTURAL PARCEL SIZE -STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on a review of the Agricultural Lot Sizes information presented to the committee by Stovel and Associates, staff recommend the following motion:

*“THAT County Council maintain the existing policy framework and minimum agricultural lot size of about 40 hectares (100 ac)”*



# INADVERTENT LOT MERGERS — WORKING DRAFT

Existing lots that merged inadvertently due to common ownership may be separated by way of consent, provided:

- a) The severance reflects the original lot configuration;
- b) The subject property is still in the same ownership as when such merging occurred; and
- c) The severed and retained parcels meet road access requirements.

Applicants are required to provide evidence or legal documentation which demonstrates that the lots are still under the same ownership as when the merging occurred. Once separated, the severed and retained parcels shall be considered a parcel of land that existed on the date of that the inadvertent merger occurred.

# RENEWABLE ENERGY — WORKING DRAFT

- a) Renewable and alternative energy systems shall be planned, designed, and constructed in a manner that avoids, or where avoidance is not possible, minimizes and mitigates adverse effects on surrounding land uses. This includes potential impacts from odour, noise, and other contaminants;
- b) All proposals shall prioritize public health and safety and demonstrate how risks will be minimized through appropriate design and siting measures;
- c) Sites for large-scale renewable or alternative energy systems must be of sufficient size to provide adequate setbacks from sensitive land uses, such as residential and institutional areas, in order to minimize potential impacts and ensure public safety;
- d) New or expanded renewable energy systems shall be developed in accordance with applicable provincial guidelines, standards, and procedures, and must demonstrate:
  - i. That potential adverse environmental and land use impacts are avoided or effectively mitigated;
  - ii. That risks to public health and safety are minimized; and
  - iii. That the long-term operational and economic viability of the facility is maintained.
- e) Large-scale solar farms shall not be permitted within the Agricultural Areas designation in accordance with Provincial Guidance.

### 3. ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS

The Provincial Planning Statement (2024) permits the establishment of Additional Residential Units (ARUs) within prime agricultural areas

While the County Official Plan currently provides high-level policy direction to guide the development of ARUs in agricultural areas, more detailed criteria are being considered through this Official Plan update

This includes related to the maximum size of ARUs, the clustering of buildings, and limitations on the severance of ARUs from the primary dwelling, among other considerations.

# ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS — EXISTING POLICIES

The development of additional residential units shall be permitted as a means of increasing the diversity and stock of rental and affordable housing, creating opportunities for aging in place, and providing homeowners with additional sources of income. Additional residential units shall be permitted within Settlement Areas with full municipal water and sewage services as follows:

- a) The use of up to three residential units in a detached dwelling, semi-detached dwelling or rowhouse; or
- b) The use of two residential units in a detached dwelling, semi-detached dwelling, rowhouse, and a residential unit in a building or structure ancillary to a detached dwelling, semi-detached dwelling or rowhouse.

For additional clarity, the intent of this policy is to allow up to a total of three residential units per lot, which includes the primary dwelling unit, on properties in Settlement Areas with full municipal water and sewage services.

# ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS — EXISTING POLICIES

Local municipal official plans and zoning by-laws shall address the following:

- a) the Building Code, Fire Code and all other Provincial, County, and Municipal standards,
- b) the provision of adequate access, including emergency access,
- c) that the additional residential unit(s) be clearly subordinate in scale and function to the primary unit, and
- d) not be permitted within hazard lands as defined and regulated by conservation authorities.

Specific to the creation of additional residential units outside of settlement areas, such uses shall be grouped with the primary dwelling, shall meet Minimum Distance Separation formulae, and shall be prohibited from being severed from the property unless as part of the severance of the primary dwelling unit as a residence surplus to a farming operation.

Garden suites, granny flats, and tiny homes or trailers are considered temporary uses and evaluated as such.

# ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS — PAC MOTION

***“THAT** County Council consider including language in the OP to prohibit the severance of ARUs in rural areas and to address size, reverse ARUs and clustering.”*



# ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS — WORKING DRAFT

## **Settlement Areas**

ARUs in settlement areas are largely regulated by the Planning Act and allowed on a ‘parcel of urban land’ as-of-right and as such it is only proposed to add the the following policies to provide flexibility for municipalities to exceed three total units should they wish.

“On a parcel of urban residential land, as defined by the Planning Act, local municipalities may permit more than two Additional Residential Units within a detached dwelling, semi-detached dwelling, rowhouse or building ancillary to a detached dwelling, semi-detached dwelling or rowhouse in locations deemed appropriate by Council(s). Where full municipal services are not available, a total of two Additional Residential Units are permitted on eligible parcels.”

# ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS — WORKING DRAFT

## **Agricultural Areas**

It is proposed to add additional language to guide the establishment of ARUs within Agricultural Areas.

The development of Additional Residential Units (ARUs) outside of settlement areas shall be encouraged, where appropriate, as a means to increase the diversity and availability of housing options while maintaining agricultural character, avoiding off-site impacts on surrounding agricultural operations and minimizing land taken out of agricultural production.

Where a residential dwelling is permitted on a lot outside of settlement areas, up to two additional residential units shall be permitted, provided that, where two additional residential units are proposed, at least one of these additional residential units is located within or attached to the primary dwelling. For additional clarity, the intent of this policy is to allow up to a total of three residential units per lot, which includes the primary dwelling unit, in Agricultural Areas.

# ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS — WORKING DRAFT

- a) A total of two Additional Residential Units are permitted on a lot outside of Settlement Areas where a residential dwelling is permitted, two Additional Residential Units are permitted within or attached to the primary dwelling, or one Additional Residential Unit within or attached to the primary dwelling and one in an accessory building.
- b) To mitigate potential impacts on surrounding agricultural operations and to minimize the amount of land removed from agricultural production, an Additional Residential Unit (ARU) located in an accessory building shall be clearly secondary and subordinate to the primary dwelling, and situated no more than 30 metres (98 feet) from the primary dwelling. The floor area of an ARU in an accessory building shall be based on the size of the primary dwelling as follows:
  - I. Where the primary dwelling has a ground floor area of 1 500 square feet (approximately 139 m<sup>2</sup>) or less, the ARU shall not exceed 75% of the ground floor area of the primary dwelling.
  - II. Where the primary dwelling has a ground floor area greater than 1 500 square feet, the ARU shall not exceed 50% of the ground floor area of the primary dwelling, to a maximum of 1,184 square feet (110 m<sup>2</sup>), whichever is less.

Notwithstanding the above, local municipalities may establish more restrictive provisions regarding the maximum allowable floor area or separation distance of ARUs located in accessory buildings.

# ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS — WORKING DRAFT

- c) An Additional Residential Unit in an accessory building shall be located in a rear or interior side yard and shall be located within the established residential area on the lot that is generally comprised of the primary dwelling and accessory structures, outdoor amenity space, the driveway and on-site services.
- d) An Additional Residential Unit shall use the same driveway as the primary dwelling and sufficient parking areas for occupant use and emergency services shall be provided.
- e) The conversion of a primary dwelling on a lot to an Additional Residential Unit as a means to construct a larger dwelling on the same lot will not be permitted. Where a temporary use by-law exists to authorize two single detached dwellings on a property for a specified period of time, applications to convert the older dwelling to an Additional Residential Unit will not be permitted.
- f) An Additional Residential Unit shall not be severed from a lot, except in accordance with Section 4.5.3.4 a) of this Plan.

# ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS — WORKING DRAFT

- g) The colocation of water and wastewater services is preferred. A municipality may require a well and septic report to demonstrate that the on-site water supply and septic system are adequate to serve the Additional Residential Unit.
- h) An Additional Residential Unit shall meet Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) I requirements and shall be located no closer to a neighbouring livestock operation than the existing primary dwelling unit.
- i) Additional Residential Units shall generally not be permitted where a lot or dwelling already contains other accessory residential dwellings (garden suites) and/or uses, including: a group home, boarding or lodging house; or a home occupation that is characterized by higher occupancy, such as a bed and breakfast, a farm vacation, short term rental, or other similar use. Notwithstanding this, Additional Residential Units shall be permitted on a lot in addition to farm worker housing.
- j) Local Municipalities may establish a process for converting existing temporary Garden Suites to Additional Residential Units.

## 4. REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYMENT AREAS

The County Official Plan could be amended to set the general framework for the establishment of Regionally Significant Employment Areas at the local level

Regionally Significant Employment Areas would constitute clusters of business and economic activities including manufacturing, research and development in connection with manufacturing, warehousing, goods movement, associated retail and office, and ancillary facilities

Regionally Significant Employment Areas would be established for large-scale investment that would have regional benefit that transcends municipal boundaries



# REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYMENT AREAS — WORKING DRAFT

Regionally Significant Employment Areas are large, fully serviced, contiguous tracts of land that may be established to attract large scale industry that will have regional benefits. Uses may range from traditional manufacturing, warehousing, goods movement, knowledge and innovation, and ancillary offices or office parks.

The County will support local municipalities to identify Regionally Significant Employment Areas. A local municipality will lead the process to identify and establish a Regionally Significant Employment Area, subject to the policies of this Plan and in consultation with the County. The identification of such areas shall be supported by appropriate planning justification and reflect alignment with County and Provincial policy objectives. Final designation shall be implemented through an amendment to the local Official Plan, including mapping on the applicable land use schedule.

The identification of a Regionally Significant Employment Area shall address the following:

# REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYMENT AREAS — WORKING DRAFT

- a) Consideration of the following key locational criteria to guide the identification of Regionally Significant Employment Areas:
  - i. Provincial Highways, County roads and connectivity between transportation infrastructure;
  - ii. London International Airport;
  - iii. Rail infrastructure;
  - iv. Transit;
  - v. Availability of municipal water and wastewater infrastructure; and
  - vi. Identifying areas of sufficient size to support economic opportunities;
- b) Whether the area is within a Settlement Area with full municipal services that are planned or available;

# REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYMENT AREAS — WORKING DRAFT

- c) Whether matters pertaining to land use compatibility can be achieved, including a 300 metre separation distance from sensitive land uses; and
- d) Whether impacts on the agricultural system are avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated to the extent feasible as determined through an agricultural impact assessment or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance;

Sensitive land uses that are not ancillary to the primary employment use shall be limited in employment areas and only permitted if such use can comply with D-6 Guidelines. More specifically, on lands within 300 metres of employment areas, development shall avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate potential impacts on the long-term economic viability of employment uses within existing or planned employment areas, in accordance with provincial guidelines. Detailed land use policies shall be implemented in the local municipal Official Plan.

## 5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the key topic areas, several other considerations were identified through ongoing discussions with the Committee. While these items may not fall under a specific theme or are more technical in nature, they remain important to the overall update. These include:

- Aligning with the updated provincial planning context

- Reflecting the County's updated Council Strategic Plan

- Applying a solutions-oriented planning approach

- Providing greater flexibility for local municipalities to rely on and implement the policies of the County Official Plan

# COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN — WORKING DRAFT

The County of Middlesex has developed a County Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan establishes a broad, long-term vision for the County and is structured around four strategic priorities that include goals, objectives, and outcome-based performance measures that provide the foundation for decision-making, guide resource allocation, and help ensure that all efforts are aligned with the County's long-term vision and values. ~~includes specific objectives that focus on developing goals and targets that will help ensure that the County is positioned to capitalize on future opportunities as they arise.~~

In short, the strategic priorities ~~objectives~~ established in the Middlesex County Strategic Plan as they pertain to land use planning emphasize the following goals:

Enhance overall economic well-being and community prosperity by fostering a sustainable and thriving local economy

Strengthen collaboration with local municipalities and regional partners to improve economic efficiency, enhance service delivery, and support regional development in alignment with community priorities.

Expand and upgrade critical infrastructure to enhance resilience, efficiency, and accessibility while prioritizing sustainability and longterm cost-effectiveness.

Modernize the County's administrative capabilities to strengthen decision-making, improve service delivery, and achieve better community outcomes.

# EXPLANATION OF POLICY CONTEXT — WORKING DRAFT

County Council acknowledges the role of the Province of Ontario in the planning process. The policies of this Official Plan have regard for the long-range land use interests of the Province as noted in Section 2 of the Planning Act, which will be listed in the draft Official Plan.

The policies of this plan are consistent with those expressed in the Provincial Planning Statement (2024). The land use planning framework is guided by a set of core principles aimed at supporting the development of complete, inclusive, and resilient communities, including:

Promoting a sufficient supply and mix of housing to meet a full range of needs and affordability levels

Supporting a strong, diverse, and competitive economy

Directing growth to settlement areas to optimize infrastructure and protect agricultural and natural systems

Encouraging compact, transit-supportive development where appropriate

Protecting public health and safety through hazard mitigation and climate resilience

Recognizing and supporting the role of Indigenous communities through early and meaningful engagement

These principles work together to ensure Ontario remains a prosperous, livable, and sustainable province for current and future generations.



# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS — WORKING DRAFT

“Recognizing that some proposals may not neatly fit within the existing planning framework, the County supports a structured, solutions-oriented approach to policy interpretation and implementation. This method ensures decisions are guided by the public interest, informed by policy objectives, and responsive to local context, while upholding transparency and procedural fairness. It emphasizes early issue identification, alignment with policy intent, consideration of process options, meaningful stakeholder engagement, and ongoing refinement. The overarching goal is to balance innovation and responsiveness with sound planning principles and regulatory integrity.”

“To ensure consistency and adaptability to change, Local Municipal Official Plans may rely on the County Official Plan as the applicable policy framework as an alternative to including the same policies within the Local Official Plan.”

# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Committee may identify any other topics for further discussion or analysis.



# NEXT STEPS

Thank you for your time and consideration as a member of the Committee!

Future meeting to be called by Chair as needed.

