

# Appendix 11 A

Planning Advisory Committee

a. Consolidated Presentation

# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW

Agenda:

- Planning Advisory Committee
- County Official Plan
- Discussion Topics
- Next Steps

17 February 2022



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# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE


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# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**MISSION** provide information, perspective and recommendations to Council on broad planning matters

**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



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# 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

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

**CHAIR** of the Committee shall be elected at the first meeting of the Committee for the term of council



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# OFFICIAL PLAN

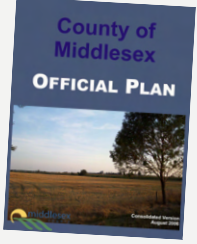

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# WHAT IS AN OFFICIAL PLAN?

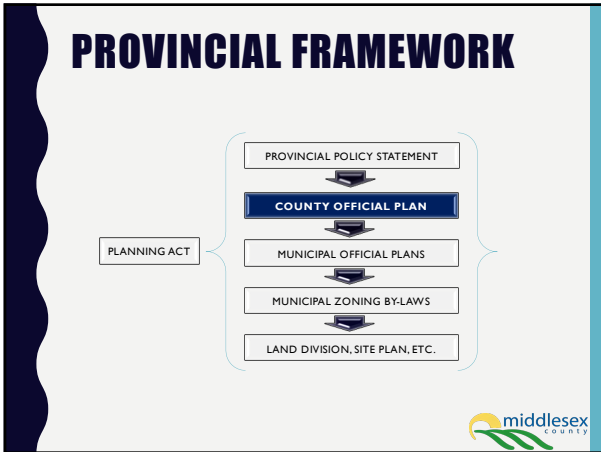
A municipal policy document created under the Planning Act that sets out a land use policy vision based on long-term goals and objectives

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

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## 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

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## OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW

- The Official Plan is being reviewed and updated to ensure that policies stay current and reflect changing needs
- The Official Plan update is a multi-year process to:
  - > incorporate new Provincial legislation, regulations, and policies
  - > implement new County policy initiatives and plans
  - > guide growth over a 25-year period from 2021–2046
- The process has been started – and paused – but the timing is right to conclude in 2022 during this term of Council

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## OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW

- Significant background work has been undertaken and consolidated into a Draft Working Copy Official Plan Amendment:
  - <https://www.middlesex.ca/departments/planning/official-plan-update>
- This background work and the outstanding matters have been summarized into ten review topics for consideration by PAC and County Council and for the purposes of consultation
- A Draft Official Plan Amendment will be created based on the feedback received related to the ten review topics

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## REVIEW TOPICS

1. Provincial Change
2. Transportation
3. Agriculture
4. Population and Housing Forecasts
5. Drinking Source Water Protection
6. Natural Heritage
7. Economy
8. Development
9. Housing
10. Other Considerations


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# PROVINCIAL CHANGE

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## PROVINCIAL CHANGE

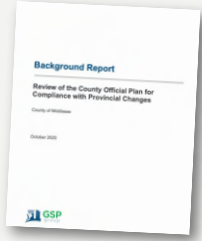

- The County Plan acts as a 'bridge' between Provincial Policy and local municipal official plans by providing guidance to local plans but at a level of detail reflective of upper tier policies
- Changes must be undertaken to ensure legislative requirements are met but without otherwise disrupting the function of the Official Plan
- GSP Planning were engaged to undertake a 'Review of the Official Plan for Compliance with Provincial Changes'



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## PROVINCIAL CHANGE


- Background Report completed summarizing the changes based on thematic areas:
  - Agricultural
  - Housing
  - Employment Areas
  - Growth / Density
  - Natural Heritage / Resources
  - General
- 'Fact Sheets' completed for each legislative change to inform local official plan updates

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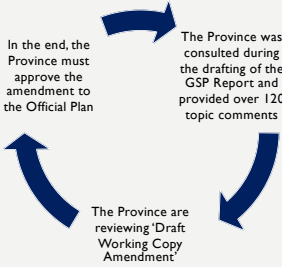
## PROVINCIAL CHANGE

|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| Planning and Conservation Land Statute Law Amendment Act | Green Energy and Green Economy Act                        | Strong Communities through Affordable Housing Act                  | Guidelines for New Development in Proximity to Railway Operations |
| Smart Growth for Our Communities Act                     | Promoting Affordable Housing Act                          | Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas | Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Document                        |
| Aggregate Resources and Mining Modernization Act         | Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act | More Homes, More Choice Act  | Provincial Policy Statement                                       |



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## PROVINCIAL CHANGE



In the end, the Province must approve the amendment to the Official Plan

The Province was consulted during the drafting of the GSP Report and provided over 120 topic comments

The Province are reviewing 'Draft Working Copy Amendment'



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# TRANSPORTATION



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## 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

A review of the Transportation System policies found in Section 2.4.2 was undertaken and recommendations were endorsed by County Council


Cycling Strategy was undertaken and recommendations were endorsed by County Council

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# TRANSPORTATION

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| active transportation  | walking and cycling   | healthy communities   | coordination between municipalities and other levels of government |
| promote land use compatibility for lands adjacent to planned and existing corridors                            | 'transportation system' approach  | road widening may be taken from both 'severed' and 'retained' parcels | efficient corridor management controls                             |
| encourage development patterns that are safe and that facilitate both physical activity and social interaction | encourage the consideration of safety for all road users in road design | roundabouts   | Guidelines for New Development in Proximity to Railway Operations  |




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# TRANSPORTATION

Discussion – Challenges

- Ensuring transportation policies both promote healthy economic growth and preserve the needs of agricultural economy
- Impact of large urban centre (City of London) contributing high volumes of traffic through the region
- Managing expectations / impact of more urban residents moving to a County setting and experiencing a rural transportation network vs urban (subdivision) streets

**Discussion ?**



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# AGRICULTURE

"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).



**Minimum Farm Size**

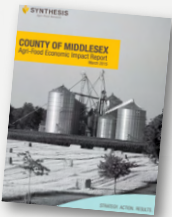



**Surplus Dwellings**

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# AGRICULTURE


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


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# AGRICULTURE

## MINIMUM FARM 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)
- The planning policies that seek to limit smaller farm parcel creation are an attempt to ensure that viable agricultural parcels are available to support current and future farming practices



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## AGRICULTURE MINIMUM FARM SIZE

- 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 ?



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## AGRICULTURE MINIMUM FARM SIZE

### Provincial Policy Statement (Policy 2.3.4.1a)

"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"

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



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## AGRICULTURE MINIMUM FARM SIZE

### Provincial Guideline Document

"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."



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## AGRICULTURE MINIMUM FARM SIZE

### County Official Plan (policy 4.5.3.4b)

"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"



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## AGRICULTURE MINIMUM FARM SIZE

- Most nearby official plans contain a 40 ha minimum size however:
  - Oxford 30 ha,
  - Chatham-Kent 20 ha, and
  - Lambton 30 ha or 38 ha depending on the local municipality.
- Lambton also has an allowance for further study:
 

"a different minimum farm parcel size for local municipalities may be considered through an amendment to this 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"



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## AGRICULTURE MINIMUM FARM SIZE


- Stovel and Associates Inc. undertook an Agricultural Parcel Size Analysis
  - 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.



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## AGRICULTURE MINIMUM FARM SIZE

- Observations
  - Diverse and healthy agricultural system
  - Local 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




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## AGRICULTURE MINIMUM FARM SIZE

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>                           |




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## AGRICULTURE MINIMUM FARM SIZE

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>                           |



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## AGRICULTURE MINIMUM FARM SIZE


- 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 - basically, these provisions provide flexibility




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## AGRICULTURE MINIMUM FARM SIZE


- 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

**Discussion** 




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## 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**
- Farm operations have increased in size (greater than 250 acres average) and decreased in numbers (3,162 in 1991 - 2,335 in 2016) resulting in farmers acquiring multiple farm dwellings
- Intent of policy is to facilitate the severance of farm dwellings where they are not needed for an expanding farming operation



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## AGRICULTURE SURPLUS DWELLINGS

### Provincial Policy Statement (Policy 2.3.4.1.c)(Definition)

- Lot creation in prime agricultural areas is discouraged and may only be permitted for: a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation, 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 residential dwellings are prohibited on any remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance. The approach used to ensure that no new residential dwellings are permitted on the remnant parcel may be recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches which achieve the same objective
- Residence surplus to a farming operation: 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)



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## AGRICULTURE SURPLUS DWELLINGS

### County Official Plan (Policy 4.5.3.4.a)(Definition)

- Consent to sever a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation may be permitted, provided the residence was built prior to January 1, 1999, and provided that new residential dwellings are prohibited on any vacant remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance
- Residence Surplus to a Farming Operation: means a 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).



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## AGRICULTURE SURPLUS DWELLINGS

- The Official Plan **must** at a minimum be updated to reflect the PPS:
  - that the surplus dwelling lot be “limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services” and that the dwelling be “habitable”
- The Official Plan **should** be updated to advance the 1999 cut off date
- There are other areas where the Official Plan **could** be updated, or those matters could be left to local official plans



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## AGRICULTURE SURPLUS DWELLINGS

### Cut-Off Date

- The Official Plan requires a surplus dwelling be built prior to 1999
- This date was put in place as a result of a settlement before the (at the time) Ontario Municipal Board - essentially allowing those dwellings in place prior to the changed policies to be eligible to be severed
- The concern was (and remains) that without a date someone could build a new farm dwelling, then shortly cause farm consolidation to occur, thereby ‘manufacturing’ a surplus dwelling for non-agricultural use
- As time has passed, 1999 is increasingly seen as an unreasonably long time



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## AGRICULTURE SURPLUS DWELLINGS

### Cut-Off Date

- It would appear that there are four primary options:
  1. No Date: remove the date and use PPS wording
  2. Status Quo: maintain the 1999 date
  3. Establish a New Date: with the year to be determined
  4. Sliding Scale Date: that a dwelling must be at least X years old

Discussion ?



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## AGRICULTURE SURPLUS DWELLINGS

### Barns / Size of Severed Lot

- The PPS requires that the new lot be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services
- Generally, barns are not included with the severed surplus dwelling but there is pressure to maintain well constructed non-livestock (or decommissioned livestock) buildings associated with surplus dwellings
- This is generally discouraged to limit the loss of agricultural land, given that the surplus dwelling property is no longer an agricultural use, and related to concerns for future non-residential uses within such structures



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## AGRICULTURE SURPLUS DWELLINGS

**Barns / Size of Severed Lot**

- Ontario Barn Preservation organization wrote to municipalities discouraging the demolition of heritage barns for reasons including:
  - historic landmarks on countryside
  - potential to reuse / repurpose
  - cultural value that conveys a sentiment / image of farm community
- Their opinions are not completely aligned with the PPS or the Official Plan; for example the keeping of livestock on surplus dwelling lots and discounting MDS
- Municipalities have generally been hesitant to designate barns under heritage legislation as this impacts owner's ability to alter such structures

**Discussion ?**




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## AGRICULTURE SURPLUS DWELLINGS

**Other Considerations**

- There is sometimes debate as to what a qualifying 'farming operation' is and if there must be a 'home farm' in order to sever a surplus dwelling
- The Official Plan could further describe what a farming operation is or that could be left to local official plans
- There may be other areas to be considered

**Discussion ?**




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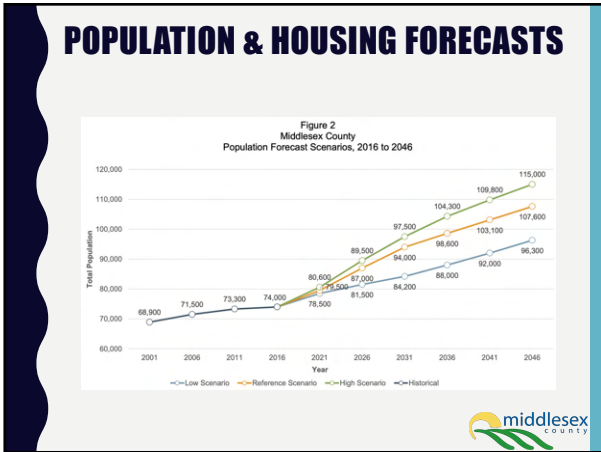
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## POPULATION & HOUSING FORECASTS

- Population & Housing Projections are included within the Official Plan and are intended to be used by the County and local municipalities to assist in managing growth and development
- Watson & Associates Economists were engaged to undertake Growth Forecasts to reflect a 25-year planning horizon, Provincial projections, and the rapid development that is occurring within the County as best can be captured
- Council endorsed the growth scenarios as most likely to occur over the 25-year planning horizon



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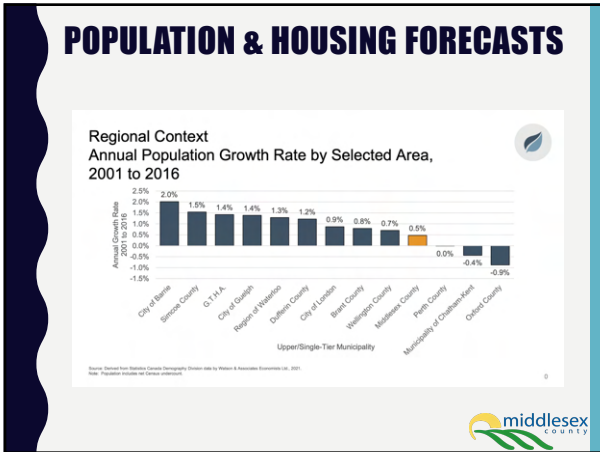
## POPULATION & HOUSING FORECASTS

| Growth Scenario | 2046 Population | Annual Population Growth | Annual Housing Growth |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| High            | 115,000         | 1.5%                     | 1.9%                  |
| Reference       | 107,600         | 1.3%                     | 1.7%                  |
| Low             | 96,300          | 0.9%                     | 1.3%                  |

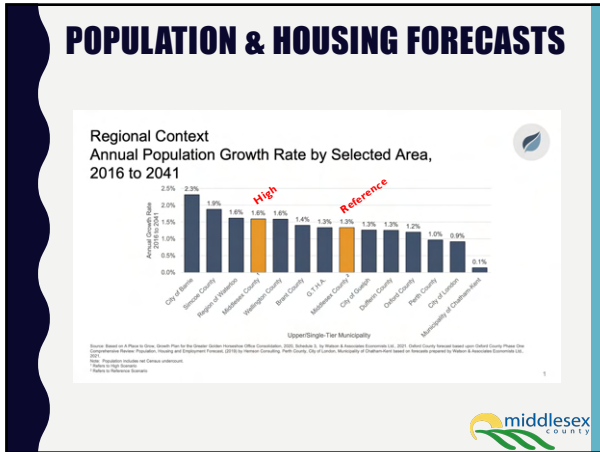
*In comparison Middlesex experienced an annual population growth of 0.5% between 2001 and 2016*



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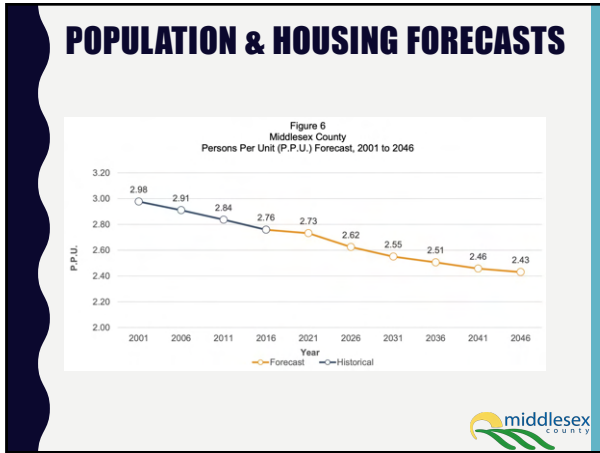
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### POPULATION & HOUSING FORECASTS

- The Provincial Policy Statement requires the County Official Plan to identify and allocate population and housing projections based on local municipalities
- The County Plan does not however constrain municipalities from realizing growth at a faster or slower rate than the projections
- It is not the intention of the County Official Plan to limit well planned housing and the Official Plan is flexible in this regard
- A ranged projection approach allows local municipalities the flexibility to select projections that suit local purposes

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### POPULATION & HOUSING FORECASTS

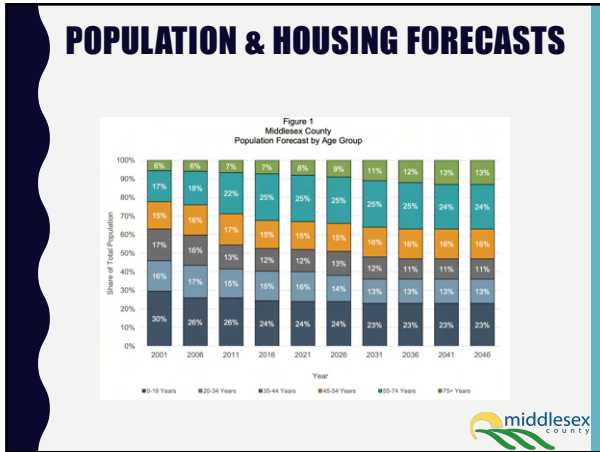
Discussion – Persons Per Unit

- The average PPU has steadily declined over the 15-year historical period, falling from 2.98 in 2001 to 2.76 in 2016
- This can largely be attributed to the aging of the County's population and overall household composition trends of less children per household and more single-person households

**What does that mean for Middlesex ?**

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## POPULATION & HOUSING FORECASTS

Discussion – Baby Boomers

- The average age in the County is getting older primarily due to the large concentration of Baby Boomers
- As the Baby Boom population continues to age, the percentage of seniors, particularly older 75+ seniors, is forecast to almost double, from 7% to 13%
- On average, seniors (especially 75+) have less mobility, less disposable income and have increased health care needs

What does that mean for Middlesex ?




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## POPULATION & HOUSING FORECASTS

Discussion – Millennials and Generation Z

- The majority of the County's existing and future labour supply
- A number of economic and socio-economic variables: relative housing costs, local and regional employment opportunities, technological disruption and advancement, fuel costs, lifestyle preferences, local amenities, community services, and perceived quality of life
- Retaining and attracting new skilled working residents to the County is necessary to ensure that economic growth is not constrained by future labour shortages

What does that mean for Middlesex ?





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## DRINKING SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

- The Clean Water Act is intended to ensure the protection of municipal drinking water sources and subsequently human health and the environment
- The Act sets out a risk-based process, on a watershed basis, to identify vulnerable areas and associated drinking water threats and issues through the preparation of Assessment Reports and Source Protection Plans

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## DRINKING SOURCE WATER PROTECTION


- Objectives of Source Protection Planning
  - Science-based Assessment Reports identify risks to municipal drinking water sources
  - Source Protection Plans put policies in place to protect municipal drinking water sources of
- Objectives of Source Protection Plans
  - Protect existing and future drinking water sources
  - Ensure that where an activity is or would be a significant drinking water threat that the activity never becomes a significant drinking water threat, or ceases to be a significant drinking water threat

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## DRINKING SOURCE WATER PROTECTION


- Three Source Protection Plans:
  - Thames-Sydenham and Region Source Protection Plan
  - Lake Erie Source Protection Plan
  - Ausable Bayfield Source Protection Plan
- Four Municipal Drinking Source Water Systems / Wellhead Protection Areas:
  - Thames Centre (Thorndale and Dorchester)
  - Middlesex Centre (Birr and Melrose)
  - Plus one within Central Elgin (Belmont) that extends geographically into Middlesex County

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## DRINKING SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

- Proposed changes to Official Plan include reference to the Clean Water Act, Source Protection Assessment Reports and Plans, direction for local municipal official plans and zoning by-laws, updated definitions, and a mapping schedule
- The detailed policies and mapping occurs within local municipal official plans and is regulated by local zoning by-laws



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# NATURAL HERITAGE

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## NATURAL HERITAGE


- The Natural Heritage system, made up of features such as woodlands, wetlands, valley lands, and watercourses, provides important environmental, social and economic benefits:
  - plant and animal habitat
  - recreation and enjoyment of nature
  - filtering pollution and sediment from air and water
  - reducing storm water run-off, flooding and erosion
  - reducing greenhouse gas emissions by storing carbon
  - contributing to the economy (forestry, maple syrup and tourism)
  - supporting agriculture by improving soil health and growing conditions
  - assisting with climate change / climate resiliency



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## PROVINCIAL POLICY


- The existing Official Plan contains strong natural heritage protection policies but with a focus on the protection of individual woodlands and wetlands
- The Provincial Policy Statement requires a move from the protection of natural heritage features to the protection of the natural heritage system
- PPS definition can be summarized as:
  - Natural Heritage System is made up of natural heritage features and areas, and linkages intended to provide connectivity and support natural processes which are necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species, and ecosystems



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## NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM STUDY


- Middlesex Natural Heritage System Study (MNHSS) undertaken to provide a scientifically based analysis of the Middlesex County landscape
- The study to be implemented through various means including the official plan update
- It is noted that the County has undertaken other initiatives that enhance the natural heritage system including:
  - County Forest stewardship
  - Woodlands Conservation By-law



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## COUNTY FOREST


- The County owns and manages the County Forest which consists of 1040 hectares (2500 acres) within 27 tracts in three areas: the Dorchester Swamp, the Big Swamp, and the Skunk's Misery / Bothwell Forest Complex
- The largest component is within the Skunk's Misery / Bothwell Forest Complex which is one of the largest and most significant forest blocks in south-western Ontario
- Council has established a Vision for the County Forest:
  - "The Middlesex County Forest will be managed to ensure the ecological sustainability of the Middlesex County Forest and their associated natural heritage features and social and economic values through the utilization of an integrated ecosystem-based approach to management."



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## WOODLANDS CONSERVATION BY-LAW


- Woodlands Conservation By-law passed under the Municipal Act to 'prohibit or regulate the destruction or injuring of trees' on private property unless it is a selective cutting / commercial timber harvest or as a result of an 'exemption'
- County Council has established a policy of 'no net loss' when considering 'Council Exemptions' and the enforcement of the By-law
- Any money realized as a result of enforcement of the By-law is paid into the Tree Bank Fund which Council has used to fund the Clean Water Program
- Clean Water Program is a rural water quality initiative providing technical assistance and financial incentives to improve and protect water quality on farms through landowner grants and stewardship activities often related to the establishment or enhancement of natural heritage features



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## NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM STUDY


- The five conservation authorities, with the Upper Thames River as the lead, completed the MNHSS on behalf of the County
- Project guided by a Steering Committee and a Technical Committee through workshops with expertise in ecology, biology, mapping and planning
- Peer Review of the science by a third-party consultant (hired by the County) built into the project





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## NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM STUDY

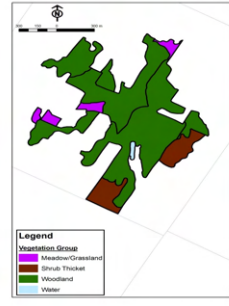
- Mapped vegetation polygons using ortho-imagery
- Landscape ecology analysis of existing vegetation inventories and vegetation information to develop landscape criteria
- Strong reliance on the landscape literature and past studies
- Used GIS to model patches that meet criteria





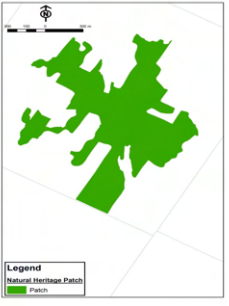
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## VEGETATION PATCH




**Legend**

- Vegetation Group
- Meadow/Graze
- Shrub Thicket
- Woodland
- Water



**Legend**



- Natural Heritage Patch



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## RESULTS


- 20% of Middlesex is naturally vegetated
- Features that meet one landscape criteria are considered significant
- Woodlands are the largest component
- There are also significant amounts of meadows, often found along major watercourses where water and ice scour limit the regeneration of woodlands

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**Table One: Number and Area of the 18 Vegetation Community Types**


| Vegetation Community                      | Number of Vegetation Communities | Area of Vegetation Communities (ha) | % Area of all Vegetation Communities (of 66,955 ha) | % Area of Middlesex Land Base (333,333 ha) |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Deciduous Woodland                        | 4928                             | 38413                               | 57.3  | 11.5                                       |
| Mixed Woodland                            | 822                              | 3252                                | 4.9   | 1.0  |
| Coniferous Woodland                       | 364                              | 632                                 | 0.9   | 0.2  |
| Mature Plantation                         | 492                              | 1326                                | 2.0   | 0.4  |
| Deciduous Swamp                           | 1961                             | 7843                                | 11.7  | 2.4  |
| Mixed Swamp                               | 189                              | 1299                                | 1.9   | 0.4  |
| Coniferous Swamp                          | 17                               | 47                                  | 0.1   | 0.0  |
| Plantation Swamp                          | 17                               | 6                                   | 0.0   | 0.0  |
| Upland Thicket                            | 1182                             | 2369                                | 3.5   | 0.7  |
| Wetland Thicket                           | 175                              | 333                                 | 0.5   | 0.1  |
| Young Plantation                          | 299                              | 532                                 | 0.8   | 0.2  |
| Young Plantation Swamp                    | 3                                | 1                                   | 0.0   | 0.0  |
| Upland Meadow                             | 3507                             | 7727                                | 11.5  | 2.3  |
| Meadow Marsh                              | 510                              | 759                                 | 1.1   | 0.2  |
| Water Body                                | 535                              | 1169                                | 1.8   | 0.4  |
| Major Watercourse                         | 119                              | 1150                                | 1.8   | 0.3  |
| Connected Vegetation Feature              | 125                              | 97                                  | 0.1   | 0.0  |
| Watercourse Bluff and Depositional Area * | Not mapped                       | --                                  | --  | --   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                              | <b>15,045</b>                    | <b>66,955</b>                       | <b>100.0</b>  | <b>20.1</b>                                |



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## CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

- The conservation authorities are important local partners when dealing with natural heritage land use planning matters
- The Official Plan Amendment Draft Working Copy included proposed wording to incorporate the MNHSS
- The CAs recently reviewed and provided comments:
  - policies could be further strengthened
  - re-work the Natural Hazard policies
- Staff would propose to work with CAs based upon two core principles





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## NATURAL HERITAGE AND AGRICULTURE

Core Principle One

- Natural heritage planning is not intended to, and should not, impact the ability of agricultural uses to continue
- The MNHSS recognizes that agriculture is the dominant land use in the County and that working agricultural fields can provide linkages between natural heritage patches (agricultural activity does not eliminate system connectivity)
- This can be described as a 'porous' landscape where, for example, wildlife move through agricultural fields in different ways depending on cropping patterns or the time of year

What does that mean for Middlesex ?



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## NATURAL HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT

Core Principle Two

- It is at the time of a potential land use change (ie agricultural to urban) that the impact of the change on the natural heritage system should be considered
- As noted in the MNHSS, "...if agricultural land is proposed to be converted to urban development, the system linkages that would have been provided in the working agricultural landscape may be disrupted or eliminated by the post development urban landscape"
- The Official Plan requires the completion of a Development Assessment Report / Environmental Impact Statement in support of such development applications

What does that mean for Middlesex ?



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# ECONOMY



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## STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

- County Council approved two significant strategic documents
  - Corporate Strategic Plan 2021 to 2024
  - Economic Development Strategy Update 2021 to 2025
- Important that the County's land use planning policies as expressed in the Official Plan are aligned with these strategic documents
- MDB Insight completed the Economic Development Strategy Update and undertook a planning policy alignment exercise




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## CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES (Related)



**Connecting Through Infrastructure**

Encourage and advocate through partnerships, the construction of scalable, equitable broadband infrastructure recognizing our unserved and underserved areas



**Strengthening our Economy**

Support opportunities to create stronger and sustainable agriculture sector

Create an environment that enables the attraction and retention of businesses, talent and investment

Support the development and prosperity of downtown core areas



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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

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



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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY THEMES



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



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## DEVELOPING POLICY

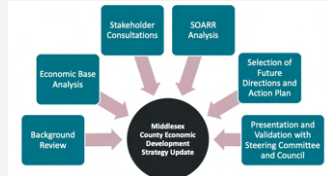

- MDB Insight identified a range of policy topics that should be supported by and reflected in the Official Plan
- Provided a matrix of policy statements that compare the County's current policy direction against the approach others have taken to address similar issues
- Prepared draft policy recommendations to modernize policy language that more effectively support sustainable economic growth in a rural setting

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## STEERING COMMITTEE

- MDB Insight worked with the Steering Committee from the Economic Development Strategy Update to build upon previous consultation and analysis
- Stakeholder representatives of County Council, local municipalities, OFA, Workforce Planning, CFDC, tourism, PAC and Economic Development

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## RECOMMENDED POLICIES SUPPORTING

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

*Policies in bold explored in following slides*



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## BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Draft Working Copy of the Official Plan includes wording to support the construction of scalable, equitable broadband infrastructure and requires the installation of broadband infrastructure within new development

Wording proposed to be added to 'Economic Development' policies:

*Broadband infrastructure will be supported within the County as a means to encourage future employment opportunities including home-based businesses, self-employment, attraction of new businesses (particularly those within the creative and knowledge economies) and ensuring the commercial viability of existing businesses particularly within our towns, villages and hamlets. The County supports the provision of reliable, consistent, high quality and affordable telecommunications throughout the County.*

**Discussion ?**



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## EMPLOYMENT LANDS

Wording proposed to be added to 'Economic Development' policies:

*Rural Industrial Lands are intended to provide locations for business activities that may be better served by sites outside urban areas.*

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

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

**Discussion ?**



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## ARTS, CULTURAL AND TOURISM

Wording proposed to be added to 'Economic Development' and 'Agricultural Area' policies:

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

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

**Discussion ?**




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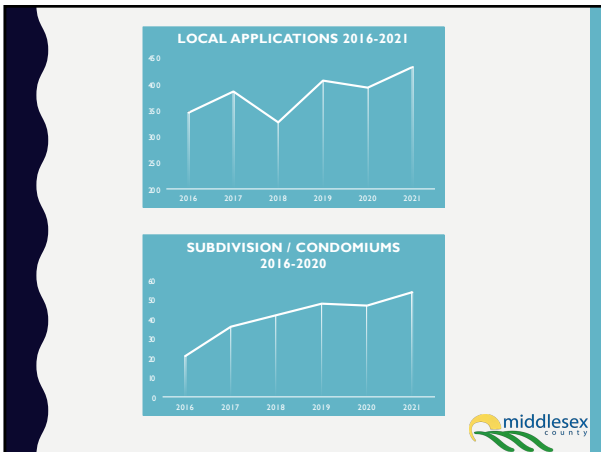
## BACKGROUND



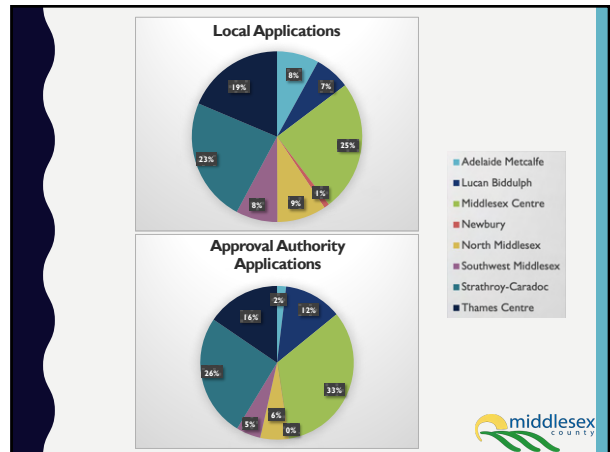
- Development across the County has increased (from different baselines) and across all types of applications
  - Development in the busiest settlements continues at even faster pace
  - Development occurring within settlements that have until recently experienced slower growth
  - Reactivation of dormant files
- Accelerating regional housing market



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## 2021 CENSUS

| POPULATION                | Census 2016 | Census 2021 | Census % Change | Annualized % Growth | Estimate 2022 | County Projections |                |           |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|
|                           |             |             |                 |                     |               | Low 2021           | Reference 2021 | High 2021 |
| Adelaide Metcalfe         | 2,990       | 3,011       | 0.7%            | 0.14%               | 3,015         | 3,100              | 3,200          | 3,170     |
| Lucan Biddulph            | 4,700       | 5,680       | 20.9%           | 3.86%               | 5,899         | 5,400              | 5,500          | 5,570     |
| Middlesex Centre          | 17,262      | 18,928      | 9.7%            | 1.80%               | 19,260        | 19,300             | 19,600         | 20,080    |
| Newbury                   | 466         | 440         | -5.6%           | -1.14%              | 435           | 490                | 500            | 500       |
| North Middlesex           | 6,352       | 6,307       | -0.7%           | -0.14%              | 6,298         | 6,600              | 6,600          | 6,610     |
| Southwest Middlesex       | 5,723       | 5,893       | 3.0%            | 0.59%               | 5,928         | 5,900              | 6,000          | 5,980     |
| Strathroy-Carleton        | 20,867      | 23,871      | 14.4%           | 2.73%               | 24,521        | 23,300             | 23,700         | 24,100    |
| Thames Centre             | 13,191      | 13,980      | 6.0%            | 1.17%               | 14,143        | 14,400             | 14,600         | 14,720    |
| Middlesex County          | 71,551      | 78,110      | 9.2%            | 1.77%               | 79,492        | 78,490             | 79,700         | 80,730    |
| London                    | 383,822     | 422,324     | 10.0%           | 1.93%               |               |                    |                |           |
| Middlesex Census Division | 455,526     | 500,563     | 9.9%            | 1.90%               |               |                    |                |           |

- The 2021 Census municipal population numbers were recently released




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## 2021 CENSUS

| DWELLINGS                 | Census 2016 | Census 2021 | Census % Change | Annualized % Growth | Estimate 2022 | County Projections |                |           |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|
|                           |             |             |                 |                     |               | Low 2021           | Reference 2021 | High 2021 |
| Adelaide Metcalfe         | 992         | 1,013       | 2.1%            | 0.42%               | 1,017         | 1,020              | 1,020          | 1,030     |
| Lucan Biddulph            | 1,785       | 2,115       | 18.5%           | 3.45%               | 2,188         | 1,970              | 2,010          | 2,040     |
| Middlesex Centre          | 5,983       | 6,695       | 11.9%           | 2.27%               | 6,847         | 6,550              | 6,650          | 6,760     |
| Newbury                   | 179         | 187         | 4.5%            | 0.88%               | 189           | 180                | 180            | 180       |
| North Middlesex           | 2,336       | 2,391       | 2.4%            | 0.47%               | 2,402         | 2,370              | 2,390          | 2,380     |
| Southwest Middlesex       | 2,354       | 2,407       | 2.3%            | 0.45%               | 2,418         | 2,390              | 2,390          | 2,400     |
| Strathroy-Carleton        | 8,294       | 9,453       | 14.0%           | 2.65%               | 9,704         | 9,050              | 9,180          | 9,320     |
| Thames Centre             | 4,924       | 5,186       | 5.3%            | 1.04%               | 5,240         | 5,240              | 5,290          | 5,350     |
| Middlesex County          | 26,847      | 29,447      | 9.7%            | 1.87%               | 29,996        | 28,770             | 29,110         | 29,460    |
| London                    | 163,140     | 174,657     | 7.1%            | 1.37%               |               |                    |                |           |
| Middlesex Census Division | 190,045     | 204,157     | 7.4%            | 1.44%               |               |                    |                |           |

- The 2021 Census dwelling numbers were recently released
- Represents occupied private dwellings by usual residence



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## TRENDS & OBSERVATIONS

- 25% increase in local applications (consents, zoning by-law amendments, minor variances, etc)
- More frequent housing infill and redevelopment within existing neighbourhoods
- Greater complexity of 'planning related' issues such as hydrological, environmental, servicing, and legal
- Average 44 applications annually to sever a residence surplus to a farming operation, however a declining trend
- Increased commercial development




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## TRENDS & OBSERVATIONS

- 100% increase in subdivision and condominium activity
- Larger subdivision phases being developed and less time between phase registration
- Annual average 11 plan registrations for 417 lots / units
- Subdivisions with greater mix of unit types (not just single detached)
- Greater volume and complexity of condominium developments




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## TRENDS & OBSERVATIONS

- Evolving building forms including apartment buildings and other infilling proposals – some forms that have not traditionally occurred within Middlesex
- It is not uncommon that residents express compatibility concerns when increased density / infilling / redevelopment is proposed
- There may be longer-term land use planning implications as a result of COVID-19
- Many such developments are in the early stages of approvals and building




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## NEW FORMS OF DEVELOPMENT







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## INTRODUCTION

**Ontarians on the Move, 2021 Edition, #1 - The Big Picture**

**Exodus from Toronto powers London-area's population growth**

**What an 'average' home looks like in your Southwestern Ontario city**

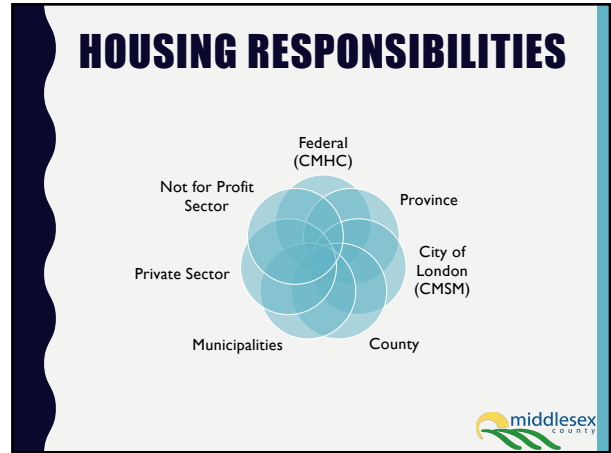
Housing is a complex issue that has important implications for local communities and is clearly in the midst of a period of rapid change ..

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## INTRODUCTION

- The recently updated County of Middlesex Economic Development Strategy Update, which involved extensive community and business engagement, identified that the lack of diverse and affordable housing is impacting the ability to attract and retain talent
- Residential development is occurring across the County at a much higher rate than in the past while at the same time housing purchase prices and rental costs are increasing at a faster rate relative to household incomes
- The survey in support of the Community Safety and Well Being Plan heard from residents that lack of affordable housing and lack of rental housing were the most pressing housing issues in Middlesex County

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## ATTAINABLE HOUSING REVIEW

- The County was recently successful in its application to receive Provincial funding to undertake an 'Attainable Housing Review' that will:
  - examine the Housing Continuum

- identify gaps in the provision of housing and corresponding strategies for attainable housing with an emphasis on the factors that can be locally influenced
- develop wording, in plain language, that summarizes the housing issues and options for the public so that they can gain access to information and services related to housing

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## ATTAINABLE HOUSING REVIEW

- The Attainable Housing Review will extend beyond the timing of the Official Plan update and will be subject to focused consideration by County Council
- It is recommended that the housing policy language be enhanced at this time while recognizing that more extensive changes likely will be undertaken in the future if recommended by the Review
- It is also recommended that the Official Plan public consultation note that the Attainable Housing Review will soon start and seek participants to register for the community engagement component of that project

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## PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT

- Encourages healthy, liveable and safe communities including an appropriate affordable and market-based range and mix of residential types
- Municipalities must identify targets for intensification and redevelopment; for the provision of housing which is affordable to low and moderate income households; and promote densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and support the use of active transportation and transit
- Municipalities must provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected market-based and affordable housing needs of current and future residents


[Policies 1.1.1.b), 1.1.3.2, 1.2.4.c), 1.4.3]



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## PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT


- Defines Affordable:
  - “a) in the case of ownership housing, the least expensive of: 1. 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 2. housing for which the purchase price is at least 10 percent below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the regional market area;
  - b) in the case of rental housing, the least expensive of: 1. a unit for which the rent does not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or 2. a unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the regional market area”



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## PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT


- Defines Housing Options:
  - “a range of housing types such as, but not limited to single-detached, semi-detached, rowhouses, townhouses, stacked townhouses, multiplexes, additional residential units, tiny homes, multi-residential buildings. The term can also refer to a variety of housing arrangements and forms such as, but not limited to life lease housing, co-ownership housing, co-operative housing, community land trusts, land lease community homes, affordable housing, housing for people with special needs, and housing related to employment, institutional or educational uses”



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## COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN


- Addresses housing primarily within Section 2.3.7 and directs local municipalities to create policies that encourage a range of housing types, housing densities and housing options
- The Official Plan sets a 20% affordability target and requires that 15% of all development occur by way of intensification and redevelopment and that this occur primarily within Settlement Areas where an appropriate level of servicing is available
- Official Plan further directs local municipalities to include criteria for intensification and redevelopment
- Includes language that does not appear to be reflective of the changing housing market



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## PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS



- There is a need to increase the diversity of housing options that are suitable and attainable for younger families and the aging population
- A planning response is to encourage alternative (to single detached dwellings) built-forms including townhouses, rowhouses, garden suites, apartments, tiny homes, additional residential units, etc
- Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) are another planning tool that allows municipal funding of projects to encourage revitalization or stimulate development and often support the provision of affordable housing
- The Official Plan should be connected and related to the County's Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan



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## PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTION ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS

- the Planning Act requires that municipalities include policies within Official Plans to permit Additional Residential Units (ARUs) essentially in all areas:
  - the use of two residential units in a detached house, semi-detached house or rowhouse, and
  - the use of a residential unit in a building or structure ancillary to a detached house, semi-detached house or rowhouse
  - for a total of three residential units on a property

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## ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS

- ARUs are self-contained dwellings with sleeping accommodation, kitchen, and bathroom facilities
- Often referred to as Secondary Units or Suites, Accessory Units, or Basement Apartments and may also include Tiny Homes
- Generally thought to be a cost effective and less intrusive way to increase the supply and diversity of primarily rental housing in communities
- Expanding housing options while making efficient use of existing resources and infrastructure while supporting income-integrated communities
- Often different policy approaches for urban vs rural areas

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## ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS

- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) completed a 'Housing Market Insite Report – Secondary Units in Ontario' for larger urban centres including London
- Their research generally concluded:
  - The percentage of secondary units varied greatly across municipalities,
  - 60% of secondary units were basement apartments
  - Single story homes were more likely to have a secondary unit
  - Municipalities with a large percentage of new homes tended to have a lower percentage of secondary units
- CMHC were able to provide data for Middlesex = 2.7% of ground-oriented homes within Middlesex contain a secondary unit for a total of 612



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## ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL UNITS

- The Draft Working Copy of the Official Plan Amendment includes reference to Additional Residential Units but would leave implementation to local official plans and zoning by-laws
- The Official Plan could provide more direction on this topic:
  - In fully serviced areas; as of right permission
  - In private serviced areas; subject to confirmation of servicing
  - In agricultural areas; clustered with primary dwelling
  - While being subject to Building Code, natural hazard avoidance, emergency access, etc.

**Discussion ?**


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## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- There are minor or technical changes to be made including:
  - update wording to reflect changed Provincial or other terminology
  - update mapping schedules to reflect newer information or oversights such as the inclusion of Kerwood and Newbury as Settlement Areas
  - clarification of numbering and notations that are duplicate or unclear
  - changes to dates, etc
- There are subject areas that are found throughout the Official Plan and are to be updated including:
  - references to Climate Change
  - references to Healthy Communities (based on MLHU input)




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## ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON AGRICULTURAL OUTBUILDINGS

- Committee requested that staff draft policy for public consultation that would require local official plans to provide more detailed direction on applications for the severance of a residence surplus to a farming operation

**Discussion ?**

*'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.'*



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## MANURE, BIOSOLIDS AND SEPTAGE STORAGE


- Committee discussed potential policy for public consultation

Stewardship by landowners is encouraged to support the wise management of agricultural and water resources and contribute to the protection, restoration and management of natural areas and the health and integrity of the environment. The safe and effective management of land-applied materials containing nutrients supports agriculture and safeguards the environment and protects surface and ground water sources.

Land application of manure, biosolids and septage is regulated by the Province in accordance with the Nutrient Management Act, the Clean Water Act, the Sourcewater Protection Act, and the Environmental Protection Act. Land application of manure, biosolids and septage shall follow the requirements of the above noted legislation, and the regulations made under those Acts.

The storage of biosolids, similar to traditional fertilizer, shall be stored in a manner that ensures the protection of surrounding properties, watercourses and the environment while mitigating conflicts with adjacent land uses. The processing and/or storage of predominantly non-agricultural source materials such as biosolids for the purpose of distribution are considered industrial uses and therefore subject to site plan control to mitigate land use conflicts and address matters such as stormwater management, setbacks, screening, buffering, etc.

**Discussion ?**




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## INADVERTENT MERGERS

- The Planning Act controls the division of land and is technical and legal
- This can lead to situations where abutting properties that were separately conveyable properties 'inadvertently merge' due to legal oversight as a result of being in the exact same name / ownership
- The Planning Act has recently been changed to deal with the inadvertent merger as a result of the death of a spouse but does not address an inadvertent merger due to legal oversight
- Consideration could be given to developing policy to deal with 'inadvertent mergers' due to legal oversight

**Discussion ?**




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## FARM LABOUR ACCOMMODATION

- On-farm outbreaks of COVID-19 among farm workers has been a significant public health issue and resulted in changes to the Federal Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program
- As a result, requests to build additional structures with independent eating / washroom / amenity facilities
- The Provincial Policy Statement recognizes accommodation for full-time farm labour as an agricultural use
- The Official Plan provides for 'Temporary residential units for farm help ...if grouped with the existing farm buildings'
- Some are reluctant to rely on Temporary Use given the capital required to construct such accommodation
- Official Plan could be updated to provide for permanent use and require that local official plans address matters such as location, size, services, access, MDS, etc.


**Discussion ?**



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## NEWBURY HYBRID PLAN

- The County and the Village of Newbury have agreed to a hybrid official plan
- Instead of having a separate local official plan, Newbury would rely on the County Official Plan existing policies for most topics such as agriculture and natural heritage
- Additional policies in a Newbury specific chapter would be developed to address local issues such as the main street, the hospital, etc
- At this time, it is proposed to include enabling language in the the Official Plan and then develop the local policies with the Village as a separate official plan amendment




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## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- The PAC may identify further areas or questions that should form part of the consultation and engagement plan

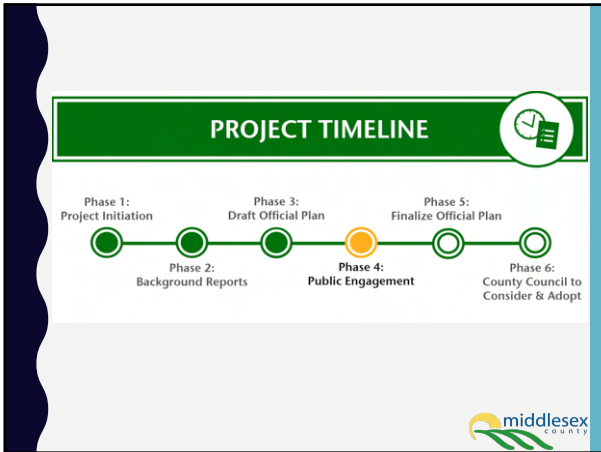
**Discussion ?**



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