



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 CONTEXT TO THE OFFICIAL PLAN

The Municipality of North Middlesex was inaugurated on January 1, 2001. Its formation was one of several significant restructured municipalities within Middlesex County, bringing together the former Townships of East Williams, McGillivray and West Williams, the Town of Parkhill and the Village of Ailsa Craig. The Municipality constitutes most of the northern area of Middlesex County. North Middlesex is abutted to the north and the west by the Town of Lambton Shores within Lambton County, to the south by the Township of Middlesex Centre and to the east by the Municipality of Lucan-Biddulph. Also to the east and north lies Huron County. The Municipality covers approximately 60,000 hectares and is located in the Ausable River watershed.

In February of 2002, the Municipality of North Middlesex began a process to prepare a new Official Plan and Zoning By-law. A comprehensive review and update of long-term planning was required to respond to a number of specific issues, as well as to establish an appropriate planning framework to address the many challenges facing the newly amalgamated Municipality. The Official Plan provides a consistent policy framework for the five former municipalities. The Plan guides Council in the consideration of their responsibilities, and provides direction and certainty to the citizens of North Middlesex.

### 1.2 PURPOSE OF THE OFFICIAL PLAN

The purpose of this Official Plan is to:

- a) Provide an overall policy framework to guide the maintenance, rehabilitation, growth and development of the Municipality of North Middlesex in order to ensure a sustainable living environment that meets the needs of the community over a 20-year planning timeframe/horizon.
- b) Promote the orderly growth and economic development of North Middlesex through the logical and cost effective distribution of land uses that will safeguard the health, convenience and economic well-being of residents, businesses and visitors.
- c) Reduce uncertainty in the public and private sectors regarding future development by establishing clear development principles and policies, and land use designations.



- d) Provide guidance to Council in determining the appropriate future actions relating to physical change, development and improvement within the Municipality.
- e) Recognize the financial position of the Municipality and promote a satisfactory long-term balance between residential and farm assessment, and commercial and industrial assessment.
- f) Establish goals, objectives and policies to: reconcile existing conditions; maintain the ability of the Municipality to provide appropriate services; and respond to local aspirations in light of variables such as population and economic change.
- g) Define the means of implementing the policies and schedules of this Plan, including such matters as secondary plans, community improvement plans, the Zoning By-law, plans of subdivision, zoning by-law amendments, severances and consents, site plan control and servicing.

### **1.3 BASIS FOR THE OFFICIAL PLAN**

The basis for the Official Plan is outlined as follows:

- a) This Plan is based on background information and analysis relating to growth management including transportation, housing, community facilities and servicing issues; land use; agriculture; economic development; commercial and industrial activities; built heritage and the natural environment.
- b) This Plan is based on the results of a comprehensive public consultation program that provided residents and other stakeholders with the opportunity to review and comment on the background reports and draft versions of this Plan, produced during the course of preparing the Plan.
- c) This Plan is based on a 20-year planning period from the year 2003 to the year 2022. However, in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*, the Municipality will review the Plan at 5-year intervals to determine if amendments are required.
- d) The Municipality's 20-year population target of approximately 7,600 (2022) is based on past trends and the County's population projections provided in the Middlesex County Official Plan.
- e) Vacant land designated for future residential development around Parkhill, Ailsa Craig and Nairn represents a logical extension of existing development within the Municipality and is adequate to meet



the anticipated demand for undeveloped land. Demand for additional undeveloped land may be evaluated at the 5-year review of this Plan.

- f) This Plan encourages orderly and phased development, and discourages the undue extension of municipal services. The Urban Reserve Area Land Use Designation is identified to help guide the very long-term orderly development of land within the Municipality beyond the horizon of this Plan.
- g) This Plan promotes the maintenance and improvement of the Main Streets in Parkhill and Ailsa Craig as the predominant social, cultural and community foci of the Municipality. This Plan further promotes these areas as unique mixed commercial, office and residential areas in the Municipality.
- h) This Plan promotes and protects the predominately agricultural character and economy of the Municipality by providing for the continued viability of agricultural areas, the agricultural industry, and agricultural communities. This will be accomplished in part through the minimization of land use conflicts and the prevention of non-agricultural urban uses outside of the Settlement Areas.
- i) Land subject to environmental hazards and/or physical limitations such as poor drainage, organic soils, flood susceptibility, erosion, and steep slopes are to be protected in order to preserve and conserve the natural environment.
- j) The policies of this Plan have been developed within the context of the Provincial Policy Statement and the Middlesex County Official Plan.

#### **1.4 HOW TO USE THE OFFICIAL PLAN**

This Plan has several interrelated components, which must be read together in order to determine those components and policies that have an impact on any individual parcel of land within the Municipality of North Middlesex.

The Interpretation Section (Section 2) describes how the Plan is to be interpreted and provides an explanation of the Plan's effect.

The Plan promotes sustainable development, healthy community ideas and encourages economic vitality. The Goals and Objectives set out in Section 3 of the Plan provide the framework within which the other policies have been prepared. The Goals and Objectives should be read to understand what the policies are striving to achieve. The Goals and Objectives provide the basis for the Policies outlined in Sections 4, 5, 6 and 7.



Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and the associated Schedules “A”, “B”, and “C” designate all land within the Municipality with an appropriate land use designation and other denotations. By reading Schedule “A”, it can be determined what land use designation applies to any parcel of land and what impact the surrounding land use designations may have on the parcel. Reading the policies that apply to the corresponding land use designation will provide direction related to the development of land, within that designation. If the parcel is near the edge of the land use designation, the policies that apply to the adjacent land use designation should also be reviewed to determine if there are policies dealing with the interface area between the two designations that may have an impact on development.

Schedule “B” provides an illustration of the transportation system of the Municipality, which is described in the policies of the Plan. Schedule “C” illustrates the natural heritage considerations that are described in the policies of the Plan.

The Implementation Section (Section 9) indicates the types of planning tools, techniques and studies needed to implement the policies of this Plan.

In determining which land use designations, development constraints or policies affect a property or properties within the Municipality, the Municipality of North Middlesex should be consulted.

## 1.5 ORGANIZATION & APPROACH

All parts and schedules of the Official Plan, except Section 1, Section 3.1, Appendix “A” and Appendix “B”, constitute the Official Plan for the Municipality of North Middlesex. The Official Plan is organized into ten sections and two appendices:

**Section 1:** *Introduction*, contains the purpose of the Plan and the context, approach and basis on which it was prepared, and does not form part of the Plan.

**Section 2:** *Interpretation*, indicates how the policies and schedules are to be interpreted.

**Section 3:** *Goals and Objectives*, describes the long-term objectives for the Municipality, based on the strategic directions from the Municipal Strategic Plan. The goals and objectives of this Section apply to the Municipality as a whole.

**Section 4:** *General Policies*, provides general policies that apply to the Municipality as a whole, rather than any one land use designation.



- Section 5:** *Settlement Area Policies*, provides detailed policies related to the organization and land uses of the Settlement Areas in the Municipality.
- Section 6:** *Rural Area Policies*, provides detailed policies related to the land uses in the rural area of the Municipality.
- Section 7:** *Environmental Policies*, provides detailed natural environment and open space policies.
- Section 8:** *Infrastructure Policies*, provides policies regarding networks, corridors and facilities that can be generally described as physical infrastructure. This Section discusses the water and sanitary sewage systems, the transportation networks, as well as other networks, corridors and facilities that help define the Municipality's physical structure.
- Section 9:** *Implementation*, describes the mechanisms and processes to implement the policies in Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.
- Section 10:** *Schedules*, contains the maps/schedules that are described in the policies and enhance an understanding of the Plan.
- Appendix A:** *Definitions*, provides some terms used in the policies of the Plan.
- Appendix B:** *Subwatershed Areas*, provides a map delineating the subwatershed areas referenced in Section 7 of the policies of the Plan.