



Township of Adelaide Metcalfe Official Plan Review

Discussion Paper: Employment
Policies

December 2023

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INTRODUCTION

Employment lands are areas designated to accommodate clusters of business and economic activity including industrial, rural industrial and business parks. Employment lands generally include a broad range of industrial-type land uses such as manufacturing, warehousing, distribution and associated offices, retail and other ancillary uses. Employment lands provide opportunities for a diversified economic base, and can provide direct and indirect benefits not only within the Township but also on a Regional scale.

This discussion paper has been prepared to provide members of Council and the public with information regarding the current employment-related policy framework to be considered during the Township's Official Plan Review. This discussion paper highlights topics of interest related to existing employment lands in the Township, a land balance analysis that considers supply and demand, a discussion on regional inter-provincial trends, makes recommendations and outlines next steps for the Official Plan Review.

POLICY CONTEXT

Employment policies that will be used to inform and guide the policies of the Township's Official Plan come from the direction of the Province through the Provincial Policy Statement and Middlesex County's Official Plan. Additionally, staff will refer to the Economic Development Strategic Plan Alignment work done by MDB Insight during the County's recent Official Plan Review.

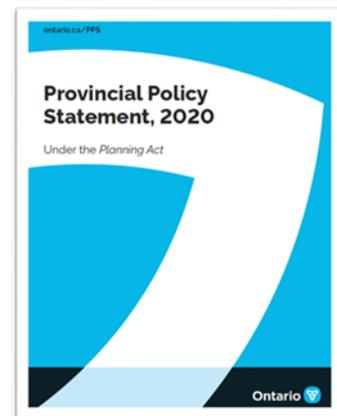
The purpose of the Economic Development Strategic Plan Alignment exercise was to review Middlesex County's Economic Development Strategic Plan, Corporate Strategic Plan and the County's previous Official Plan. Through this review, policy topics were identified that should be addressed and supported by the County's Official Plan through draft policy recommendations.

Provincial Policy Statement (2020)

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), issued under the Planning Act, lays out the foundation for land use planning in Ontario with respect to matters of provincial interest. The policies that are set out in the PPS pertain to building strong and healthy communities, the wise use and management of resources, and protecting public health and safety. As an implementation vehicle for the policies of the PPS, the Adelaide Metcalfe Official Plan is required to be consistent with the PPS.

Municipalities are required to plan for, protect, and preserve employment areas and to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is provided to support current and projected needs. This includes the need to assess employment lands in official plans to ensure that this designation is appropriate for the planned function of the employment area. The PPS requires that municipalities plan for industrial and manufacturing uses in a manner that provides separation or mitigation from sensitive land uses as a means to maintain the long-term operational and economic viability of these areas.

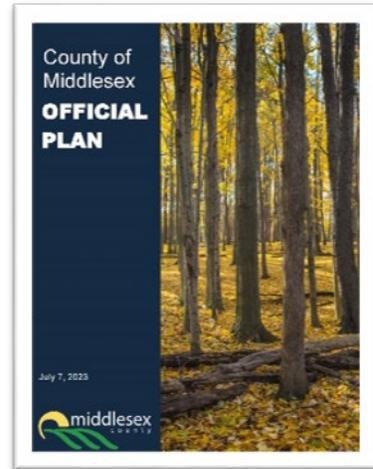
The PPS requires that sufficient land shall be made available to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses to meet projected needs for a time horizon of up to 25 years. For the



long-term protection of employment areas, municipalities may plan beyond the 25-year planning horizon by identifying but not designating future employment areas.

County of Middlesex Official Plan

The County of Middlesex Official Plan directs land use planning policy on a broad basis and is intended to provide a foundation to guide local municipalities in the development of their Official Plans and Zoning By-laws. The County's current Official Plan was approved with modifications by the Province on July 7, 2023, following the Middlesex 2046 Official Plan update.



The County Official Plan requires that local municipalities designate up to a 25-year supply of employment lands to provide for a mix of employment opportunities. Further, the Official Plan encourages local municipalities to designate Rural Employment Lands to accommodate industrial, manufacturing, and creative rural economy uses that require a larger building, lot, or outdoor storage area than is typically appropriate within the County's rural context. The County's Official Plan provides that Rural Employment Lands are intended to provide locations for business activities that are better served outside of urban areas and often require separation from sensitive land uses to ensure compatibility and minimize off-site adverse impacts. Permitted uses on Rural Employment Lands are generally limited to industrial and limited commercial uses, which do not use significant amounts of water in their operations, and which do not produce large amounts of effluent, consistent with private rural servicing systems.

Adelaide Metcalfe Official Plan

Adelaide Metcalfe's Official Plan recognizes the importance of business attraction and retention as a means to provide employment opportunities and short and long-term employment stability. However, the Plan currently contains limited policy direction as it relates to employment. Schedules A-1, A-2 and A-3 identify 'Priority Employment Areas' within the Commercial Corridor and Industrial designations. Lands identified as Priority Employment Areas are intended to provide the greatest opportunity for commercial and industrial employment.

The Township's Official Plan provides locational criteria for light industrial uses including that they do not utilize lands designated for agricultural purposes. Further, the Plan attempts to regulate sensitive land uses to ensure adequate separation between industrial and non-industrial uses. These policies are in place to ensure the viability of existing and future industrial areas.

TOPICS OF INTEREST

This section explores topics of interest related to employment policies, including the review of current policies and the proposal of new policies to be considered to help inform the Official Plan Review.

Vacant Employment Land Supply

Limited vacant designated employment land exists in the Township. Agricultural Special Policy Areas 4a and 4b generally meet the PPS definition of employment lands given that the policies provide for a number of industrial-type land uses. Further, the policies contain criteria that new development proposals must meet, including the requirement for Site Plan approval, which is

consistent with Provincial policy. Although the Township's Official Plan identifies Priority Employment Areas, the majority of the lands are occupied or would otherwise not be suitable for industrial development, save and except for limited employment opportunities within the Commercial Corridor designation. Agricultural Special Policy Area 4a comprises a single unserviced parcel that is located within the Agricultural Area east of the Hamlet of Napier. Agricultural Special Policy Area 4b also comprises a single unserviced parcel within the Agricultural Area on the northern border of the Hamlet of Cairngorm.

Employment Forecast

As part of the Adelaide Metcalfe Development Charges Background Study undertaken by Watson & Associates, an employment forecast was included that generated the number of additional jobs projected until 2041. By 2041, Adelaide Metcalfe's employment base is projected to total approximately 1,552 jobs, which translates to an increase of 327 jobs from 2021 or approximately 16 jobs per year. To calculate this projection to the 25-year horizon of 2048, staff added 16 jobs for every year past 2041 totaling an additional 112 jobs.

A)	Employment Growth	439
B)	Work from Home	44
C)	Employment Growth Accommodated on Existing Employment Lands⁴ Through Intensification (1%)	
D)	Employment Growth Excluding Work from Home & Intensification (D=A-B-C)	391
E)	Density Assumption (number of jobs / net hectares)	10 jobs/ha
F)	Land Required (D/E)	39 ha
G)	Vacant Employment Land Supply (Net)	59 ha
H)	Vacant Employment Land Need (Net) – (F-G)	0 ha

Table 2 provides a summary of the projected employment land needs for the next 25-years. Adelaide Metcalfe is anticipated to require 39 hectares of designated land to satisfy projected employment. The Township currently has a vacant land supply of designated employment land totaling 59 net hectares. The Township's supply of vacant designated employment land exceeds the demand with a surplus of 20 hectares.

Consolidating Employment Lands and Strategic Employment Areas

Looking forward, employment lands will form a vital component of the Township's land use structure and form an integral part of local economic development and growth potential. Among other benefits, employment lands can contribute to balanced growth, quality employment opportunities for residents and, on a broader scale, provide fiscal benefits such as contributions to the assessment base.

Increased reliance on the efficient movement of goods, the emergence of industry clusters on a broader regional scale (ie. automotive manufacturing in Elgin and Oxford Counties), access to

labour force, and availability of large, contiguous tracts of land to accommodate planned future expansions are examples of features that drive and contribute to the health and longevity of employment areas. In the context of Southwestern Ontario, these drivers are supported by access to Provincial Highways 401 and 402, diminishing supply and increased cost of industrial land in the Greater Toronto Area and more recent investments in technology-driven and knowledge-based industries in neighbouring municipalities (such as the Volkswagen battery plant). Given these factors, it is becoming apparent that future industry may have locational, built-form and space requirements that vary fundamentally from traditional sites that exist today.

The County's Official Plan recognizes economic development as an important component of the County's Growth Management policy framework. It further identifies that many long-term goals and objectives, including those identified in the County's Strategic Plan, depend on economic activity and the opportunity for residents to live and work in the County. The County's Official Plan notes that as the agricultural industry continues to evolve, it will be important to diversify the economic base through fostering new economic opportunities while continuing to protect the agricultural community. In order to achieve this, the County will support municipalities to promote economic development opportunities adjacent to Provincial 400 series highways where justified.

As noted previously, the Township's Agricultural Special Policy Areas 4a and 4b are the only vacant properties that could accommodate industrial and employment-type development. Regardless of a surplus of employment lands and given the location of SPAs 4a and 4b, it may be prudent for Council to consider if these locations are best-suited for industrial development or if employment uses are better suited in a consolidated manner within closer proximity to Highway 402.

Should Council wish to consolidate the Township's employment lands to a more strategic location, consideration for existing and proposed uses on both parcels would be required. More specifically, Council should have regard for the proposed site plan that would comprise approximately 4 hectares (9.5 ac) of the parcel that is designated Agricultural Special Policy Area 4a, as well as the portion of the lands that contain an existing industrial use and residential dwelling on the parcel designated Agricultural Special Policy Area 4b. There may be opportunity to scope these Special Policy Areas to only the portion of the parcels that are currently or proposed to be utilized for industrial type uses. In doing so, the Township would have approximately 53 hectares of employment to consolidate and designate in another location.

Identifying Future Employment Lands Beyond 2048

Despite the Township having a surplus of vacant lands designated for employment to satisfy its future growth needs to 2048, the PPS provides for municipalities to plan for employment areas beyond the 25-year horizon. This provision was introduced in the 2020 iteration of the document and is likely intended to assist municipalities in mitigating encroachment from non-industrial uses and support municipalities in attracting large-scale industry.

Subject to Council's consideration, it may be appropriate for the Township to identify and protect additional lands for future employment purposes. These lands would likely be subject to a special policy area and would form the next logical expansion to the Township's employment land base as part of a subsequent Official Plan review and comprehensive review process.

Conversion of Employment Lands

Currently, the Township's Official Plan policies lack direction regarding the conversion of employment lands to another land use. The policies need to be updated to reflect the PPS and Middlesex County's Official Plan, which both provide for the conversion of employment lands to an alternative land use through the undertaking of a comprehensive review, and only where it has been demonstrated that the land is not required for employment purposes over the long-term and that there is a need for the conversion.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

This discussion paper has provided a review and background of the current and potential future policies related to employment lands within the Township, and to help inform the draft Official Plan policies. The following recommendations are provided to ensure conformity with the Middlesex County Official Plan and consistency with the PPS:

- It is recommended that the vacant lands designated Agricultural Special Policy Area 4a and 4b be considered by Council in the context of the direction the Township wishes to take with respect to employment lands for the next 25-years.
- It is recommended that policy direction be provided to identify and protect lands for potential future industrial or employment purposes beyond the 25-year planning horizon.
- It is recommended that policy direction be included to allow the conversion of employment lands to an alternative land use subject to criteria as noted in the PPS and the Middlesex County Official Plan.
- It is recommended that the definitions within the Township's Official Plan be revised as necessary and include new definitions that are identified in the PPS and within the Middlesex County Official Plan.