



# Midland – Penetanguishene Joint Urban Node TASK FORCE REPORT

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*“Moving Forward Together”*



**MAY 17, 2011**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES .....	2
GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	3
PROCESS.....	5
REPORTING AND COMMUNICATION.....	7
FLEXIBILITY.....	8
ENDORSEMENT.....	9

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late 2010, the Mayors and Councils of the Towns of Midland and Penetanguishene decided to explore, with the input of the residents of both communities, what a “Joint Urban Node” means and how the two Towns can capture the opportunities provided by the Proposed “Joint Urban Node” designation in the Growth Plan Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Two community consultation meetings were held on January 19 and February 17, 2011 where the participants identified a broad range of services, departments and program areas that the Towns should explore for further collaboration and cooperation to the benefit of both communities.

The Joint Urban Node Task Force has provided recommendations on how the two Towns can and should move forward with these initiatives. The recommendations of the Joint Urban Node Task Force include:

- Endorsing this report as the “blue print” for the Towns exploring the opportunities of a Joint Urban Node designation for further collaboration and cooperation to the benefit of both communities.
- Directing senior staff of both Towns, lead by the respective CAOs, to prepare a detailed **Implementation Plan**.
- Defining a series of Guiding Principles for the Joint Urban Node implementation process.
- The establishment of a new **Midland-Penetanguishene Joint Efficiency Task Force** to oversee the Implementation Plan and defining a reporting and decision making process.
- Establishing a new, dedicated website as the main vehicle to communicate and report on the progress of the **Midland-Penetanguishene Joint Efficiency Task Force** to the residents of the two communities.

## SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES

The first public consultation meeting was held on January 19, 2011 at the Brian Orser Hall in Penetanguishene. The meeting attracted approximately 60 members of both communities along with members of Council and staff from both Towns and was intended to gather initial public input from both communities. The second meeting, held on February 17, 2011 at Midland Secondary School, was organized to facilitate discussions focused on the ten (10) issues that were identified at the initial meeting.

The reports from the January 19, 2011 meeting and the February 17, 2011 meeting have been provided to both Councils, all staff and are available to the public on the Town's websites.

The following summarizes, in no order of priority, the opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between the Towns that were identified by the community members at the February 17<sup>th</sup> consultation meeting and are described in detail in the "Joint Urban Node Consultation: Comments and Feedback from Meeting #2 February 17, 2011" report:

1. Integration of all administrative services and functions including staffing, central purchasing function, payroll, etc.
2. Two municipal offices – different departments at each
3. By-law and Building Depts. should be merged
4. Joint cultural events, heritage and arts programming
5. Joint economic development promotion and development policies
6. Walk-in clinics
7. Health care training facility/centre
8. Coordinated shelter plan & homeless centre
9. Joint Library board (one library – 2 locations)
10. One Police Service
11. One Fire Department
12. Joint Services Board for Water and Sewer
13. Shared Road Maintenance
14. A single Integrated Transit System

The community felt that as the Towns prioritize and undertake these integration projects, the Towns should look first for better or more efficient services and in the second instance, look for cost savings. The community believes that the Towns should look for inherent efficiencies in new structural arrangements in recognition of the Joint Urban Node. It was the consensus of those who attended the community consultation meetings that by having the Towns working together they will be more effective and more efficient than having addressed these issues on their own. The overriding message was..... "*there is really nothing that could not be merged.*"

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

It was clear from the results of the two consultation meetings that the public has clear expectations that the two municipalities will work together for the benefit of both communities.

The guiding principles have been developed to support local decision making about the Midland-Penetanguishene Joint Urban Node. This includes decisions on the way we do business and how we provide services to our two communities. The principles are designed to cover decision making across the full range of services, departments and program areas.

Local decisions about cooperative and collaborative efforts between the Towns must be made in the context of, and be consistent with, these principles, local priorities, provincial legislation and policies and local governance frameworks. Decisions should take into consideration levels of service and cost effectiveness relative to how the service or program is currently being provided.

The Council of the Town of Midland and the Council of the Town of Penetanguishene agree to establish the following as the guiding principles for the Joint Urban Node implementation process:

- 1) The Towns agree to work together in common cause to find efficiencies and effective means to organize and administer our two communities;
- 2) The Towns agree to work with our collective staffs to implement the opportunities identified through the Joint Urban Node Consultation Process and identify new opportunities for our municipalities to work together where there are clear benefits to both communities;
- 3) The Towns agree that the process of working together will occur in an open, transparent and accountable way and include, where appropriate, opportunities for public consultation and public input;
- 4) Once an opportunity is identified, the Towns authorize and direct our collective staffs to work together and to bring forward implementation recommendations in accordance with the required processes and those recommendations may include various forms of consultation.
- 5) The Towns agree to work together to ensure that they report publicly on their collaborative efforts using clear, consistent, and transparent reporting policies. Furthermore, the Towns will work together with their communities to monitor and evaluate the impact of their collaborative efforts.
- 6) The Towns agree to work together to develop partnerships that are predictable in nature. To this end, long-term and sustainable arrangements should be developed in which cost,

need, and support are identified and all related agreements and processes are defined early in the process for effective implementation.

- 7) The Towns agree that they will work together to ensure that their public information processes will accurately reflect the collaborative efforts and respect all affected stakeholders, including staff. The Towns will collaboratively plan their *communications strategies* in advance if possible, taking into consideration each organization's policies, procedures, and communication needs.
- 8) The Towns agree to work together to ensure that all of their collaborative efforts are aimed at meeting identified needs and respect the culture, customs, and structures of both communities. The Towns agree that their collaborative efforts should not have unintended consequences and should not result in lower service levels or increased costs, without a full consultation and decision process that weighs the benefits of the integration proposal. Furthermore, both parties will try to make their collaborative efforts be as flexible as possible in order to redirect them to areas of greatest opportunity where required.
- 9) Where appropriate, the Towns agree that they will work together to engage the County and Province as much as possible in their collaborative efforts. However, the commitment of the Towns to these collaborative efforts is irrespective of any decisions that may be made by either upper level of government.

The purpose of these Guiding Principles is, therefore, to ensure a consistent and accountable local decision making process and to assure residents of both communities and staff of both organisations that there will be a clear and rational framework within which such decisions will be made.

## PROCESS

As noted in the previous section, the Towns require a consistent and accountable local decision making process that would provide assurance to the residents of both communities and staff of both organisations that there will be a framework, guided by a clear set of principles, within which decisions will be made respecting further collaboration and cooperation between the two Towns.

### Implementation Plan

The required elements of the implementation process are:

- Clear direction on what issues will be investigated, who will be involved in the investigation, and when they should be reporting on the opportunities to the two Councils.
- A decision framework for the review of the opportunity reports and how these reports will be brought forward for formal Council decisions in each municipality.
- How those recommendations and decisions would be reported to the two communities.

The Councils of the Towns, on the approval and endorsement of this Task Force Report, will refer the list of services, departments and program areas from the February 17<sup>th</sup> Consultation Meeting and as summarized earlier in this report, to the senior staff of both Towns to develop an **Implementation Plan**. The Implementation Plan will include the establishment of Work Teams for each issue or program area, who is to comprise the Work Teams to undertake the investigations and reporting on the identified issues, when those Work Teams should report on the opportunities for further collaboration and coordination, and the need for any further consultation and dialogue with the Province and/or the County.

Senior staff, comprised of the Department Heads of both Towns lead by their respective CAO's, would be given six (6) months to prepare the **Implementation Plan** for the Joint Urban Node opportunities. Where appropriate, and as identified by the two CAO's, an Interim Report may be prepared and submitted identifying issues that require further direction from the Task Force and the two Councils.

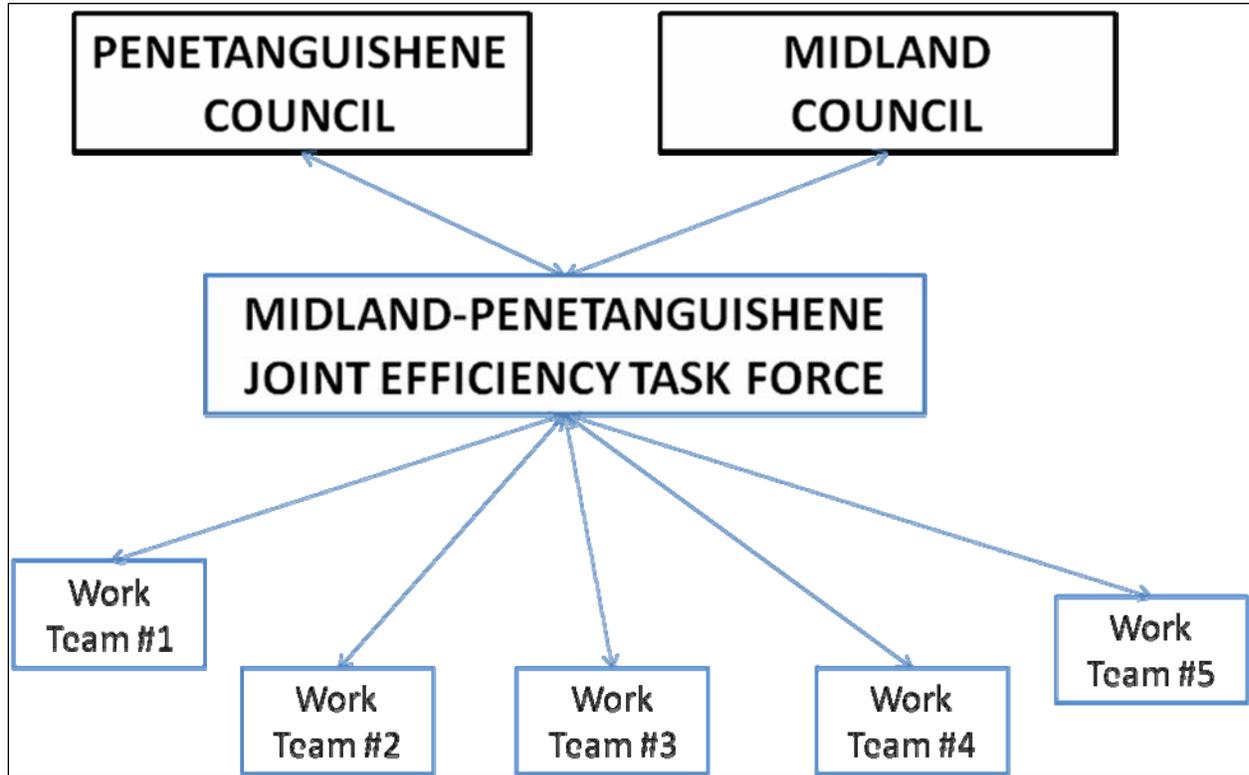
### Decision Process

A new **Midland-Penetanguishene Joint Efficiency Task Force** should be created, comprised of three (3) members of each Council and as selected by the respective Councils, along with the appropriate and required senior staff in support and administrative roles. The **Midland-Penetanguishene Joint Efficiency Task Force** would be charged with receiving, reviewing and vetting each of the Work Team reports regarding the selected issue or program area and to

make recommendations to the two Councils for final decisions in accordance with the approved **Implementation Plan**.

The decision making flow chart is set out below as Figure 1:

**Figure 1**



## REPORTING AND COMMUNICATION

As requested at the two consultation meetings held in early 2011, the residents of the communities expect to be kept informed and updated on the progress and decisions on the Joint Urban Node discussions. The following is recommended to ensure the Towns meet this request and obligation.

Once this Task Force Report is approved and endorsed by each Council, the third of the committed Public Meetings should be scheduled as soon as possible so that the public can be informed as to the content of this report, its approval by both Councils, and the way the two Towns intend to explore the further opportunities for collaboration and coordination presented by the Joint Urban Node designation.

In addition, the Task Force recommends that a new dedicated website be set up specifically for the “Joint Urban Node” project where all relevant and pertinent information would be posted. This would include minutes and records of the **Midland-Penetanguishene Joint Efficiency Task Force**, copies of all previous reports, copies of the Working Team reports that are recommended to the Councils for approval, Council final decisions, as well as opportunities for additional public participation in the process.

## FLEXIBILITY

The Councils of the two Towns engaged its residents in a series of consultation meetings to explore and identify the opportunities for further collaboration and cooperation presented by the Joint Urban Node designation.

While the participants in the two consultation meetings identified a broad range of services, departments and program areas as opportunities for further collaboration and cooperation, it is understood by the Task Force that these may not be the only opportunities for the two Towns to find efficiencies or cost savings in working together.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends that the process retain sufficient flexibility such that residents and/or staff of the Towns can identify additional opportunities and that these would be considered by the **Midland-Penetanguishene Joint Efficiency Task Force** for recommendation to, and the final decision of, the two Councils.

## ENDORSEMENT

This report and its Guiding Principles, Process, and Reporting and Communication recommendations require the approval and endorsement of the Council of the Town of Midland and the Council of the Town of Penetanguishene. The following motions are recommended by the Task Force for the consideration and approval of the two respective Councils:

### **Midland**

THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MIDLAND, TOGETHER WITH THE COUNCIL OF TOWN OF PENETANGUISHENE, APPROVE FOR IMPLEMENTATION THE “MIDLAND-PENETANGUISHENE JOINT URBAN NODE TASK FORCE REPORT” DATED MAY 17, 2011 TITLED ‘MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER” AS THE BLUE PRINT FOR THE TWO TOWNS TO EXPLORE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION TO THE BENEFIT OF BOTH COMMUNITIES.

### **Penetanguishene**

THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF PENETANGUISHENE, TOGETHER WITH THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MIDLAND, APPROVE FOR IMPLEMENTATION THE “MIDLAND-PENETANGUISHENE JOINT URBAN NODE TASK FORCE REPORT” DATED MAY 17, 2011 TITLED ‘MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER” AS THE BLUE PRINT FOR THE TWO TOWNS TO EXPLORE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION TO THE BENEFIT OF BOTH COMMUNITIES.

In addition to the above, the Councils of the two Towns must select and appoint 6 Council members (three (3) from each Council) to the **MIDLAND-PENETANGUISHENE JOINT EFFICIENCY TASK FORCE**.