



DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

## **PLANNING ISSUE #4: NEIGHBOURHOODS**

DISCUSSION, DIRECTIONS + RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
REVISIONS TO THE OFFICIAL PLAN

### **MIDLAND OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW**

The Planning Partnership  
Municipal Planning Services  
Plan B Natural Heritage  
urbanMetrics  
August 12, 2016

# Table of Contents

<b>Purpose</b> .....	1
How this report is laid out .....	1
<b>Policy Background</b> .....	2
Definitions .....	2
Provincial Policies .....	2
Growth Plan Policies .....	3
County Policies .....	5
Existing Midland OP Policies .....	6
<b>Public Comments</b> .....	7
<b>Discussion</b> .....	8
<b>Directions and Recommendations</b> .....	10



## Purpose

The Town of Midland has a number of identifiable neighbourhoods predominated by lower density housing, and changes within these neighbourhoods may need to occur through intensification to accommodate new housing opportunities. However, it is expected that residential intensification will play a limited role in accommodating the short-term growth projections for the Town based on the slow rate of growth, and the adequate supply of development opportunities that remain available in the Town.

Ensuring that community services and amenities are easily accessible to people of all incomes, ages and abilities, both in terms of their design and location, should be an objective of the Official Plan. Centrally locating community services within development areas on full municipal services supports the vitality of communities and the efficient use of infrastructure.

This report will focus on residential intensification opportunities, the provision of community services and amenities and public realm improvements. This report will also review and summarize the relevant policies in Provincial planning, the County Official Plan, and the existing Town Official Plan.

## How this report is laid out

This report, and all “planning issue” reports for this phase of the Midland Official Plan Review (OPR), are structured to provide a clear understanding of the policy background and basis for the various matters to be addressed in the OPR.

The reports begin with the policy background consisting of the relevant definitions in a grey inset box, and the applicable Provincial, County and municipal policies and reports in a blue inset box. The policy background is followed by the public comments received on each planning issue. These sections then feed into a discussion of the issues, through which guiding Directions are identified, and the consultant recommendations for the OPR based on these Directions.

## Policy Background

### Definitions

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES** include emergency services, libraries, schools, health care facilities, municipal buildings, and public recreation facilities. (County OP)

**COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE** refers to lands, buildings, and structures that support the quality of life for people and communities by providing public services for health, education, recreation, socio-cultural activities, security and safety, and affordable housing. (County OP)

**INTENSIFICATION** means the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:

- a) Redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites
- b) The development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas
- c) Infill development
- d) The expansion or conversion of existing buildings (County OP)

### Provincial Policies

Policy Reference - Provincial Policy Statement (2014): Section 1.4 (Housing); and Section 1.6 (Infrastructure and Public Service Facilities).

- The PPS calls on municipalities to provide an appropriate range and mix of housing types and densities to meet projected requirements of current and future residents of the regional market area. To do so, planning authorities are required to:
  - Maintain at all times the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 10 years through residential intensification and redevelopment and, if necessary, lands which are designated and available for residential development
  - Maintain at all times land with servicing capacity to support at least a three-year supply of residential units available through lands suitably zoned to facilitate residential intensification and redevelopment, and land in draft approved and registered plans
  - Establish minimum affordable housing targets
  - Permit and facilitate the development of special needs housing

- Permit second units
  - Direct new housing to locations served by existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities
  - Promote residential densities that use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities efficiently, and support the use of active transportation and transit in areas where it exists or is to be developed
  - Establish development standards for residential intensification, redevelopment and new residential development that minimize housing costs and facilitate compact form (Sections 1.4.1 & 1.4.3)
- The PPS requires that “Infrastructure and public service facilities should be strategically located to support the effective and efficient delivery of emergency management services” and that “Public service facilities should be co-located in community hubs, where appropriate, to promote cost-effectiveness and facilitate service integration, access to transit and active transportation” (Section 1.6.4 and 1.6.5).

## Growth Plan Policies

Policy Reference - Growth Plan, Office Consolidation, June 2013: Section 2.2.2 (Managing Growth); Section 2.2.3 (General Intensification); Section 2.2.7 (Designated Greenfield Areas); and Section 3.2.6 (Community Infrastructure).

- Section 2.2 of the Growth Plan sets forth a number of policies for where and how to grow. Under Section 2.2.2 Managing Growth, it states that residential intensification will be accommodated by:
  - c) Directing a significant portion of new growth to the built-up areas of the community through intensification
  - d) Focusing intensification in intensification areas
  - h) Encouraging cities and towns to develop as complete communities with a diverse mix of land uses, a range and mix of employment and housing types, high quality public open space and easy access to local stores and services
  - j) Directing major growth to settlement areas that offer municipal water and wastewater systems and limiting growth in settlement areas that are serviced by other forms of water and wastewater services
- Further under 2.2.3 General Intensification, the Growth Plan states that a minimum of 40 percent of all residential development be within the built-up area and directs all municipalities to develop and implement a strategy and policies in their official

plans to achieve intensification and the intensification target. The strategies and policies will:

- Encourage intensification throughout the built-up area
- Identify intensification areas to support achievement of the intensification target
- Facilitate and promote intensification
- Identify the appropriate type and scale of development in intensification areas
- Plan for a range and mix of housing, taking into account affordable housing needs
- Encourage secondary suites in the built-up area (Section 2.2.3 6.)
- The Growth Plan affirms that intensification areas will be planned to:
  - Attract a significant portion of population and employment growth
  - Provide a diverse and compatible mix of land uses, including residential and employment uses, to support vibrant neighbourhoods
  - Provide high quality public open spaces
  - Support active transportation
  - Achieve higher densities than the surrounding areas
  - Provide an appropriate transition of built form to adjacent areas (Section 2.2.3 7.)
- Section 2.2.7 of the Growth Plan states that the designated greenfield area of each upper- or single-tier municipality will be planned to achieve a minimum density target that is not less than 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare and that development occurring in designated greenfield areas will contribute to the creation of complete communities which support a range of transportation options.
- Under Section 3.2.6 Community Infrastructure, the Growth Plan encourages:
  - The coordination of community infrastructure planning, land-use planning, and community infrastructure investment
  - Efficient and effective planned community infrastructure
  - An appropriate range of community infrastructure to meet the needs resulting from population changes and to foster complete communities

- The development of a community infrastructure strategy to facilitate the co-ordination and planning of community infrastructure with land use, infrastructure and investment

## County Policies

Policy Reference - Simcoe County Official Plan, Modified as per Approval August 31st, 2015 (Updated March 10, 2016): Section 3.1 (Growth Management Strategy); Section 3.2 (Population and Employment Projections/Allocations); Section 3.5 (Settlements); and Section 4.2 (Community Facilities and Services).

### Intensification

- Midland is identified as a primary settlement area in the Simcoe County OP and is considered an area suitable for intensification. The OP Growth Management Policy 3.5.6 states that "...Municipalities with primary settlement areas will, in their official plans, identify primary settlement areas, identify and plan for intensification areas within primary settlement areas and ensure the development of high quality urban form and public open spaces within primary settlement areas through site design and urban design standards that create attractive and vibrant places that support walking and cycling for everyday activities and are transit-supportive."
- Under Policy 3.5.24 Intensification, "it is a policy of this Plan that local municipalities will plan to achieve the following minimum percentages of all new residential units occurring annually to be developed within the built boundaries of settlement areas by the year 2015 and for each year thereafter." The minimum intensification target for new residential units that has been allocated to Midland is 40%.
- It is the policy of the County that each local municipality "shall develop an intensification strategy and implement the strategy through its Official Plan in order to phase in and achieve the intensification targets in Section 3.5.24 of this Plan." The strategy will:
  - Promote efficient use of land in built-up areas
  - Identify intensification areas
  - Promote the development of mixed use areas within settlements
  - Identify areas for revitalization and redevelopment
  - Identify the type and scale of development appropriate for the intensification areas
  - Identify means to mitigate the effects of intensification on stable residential areas

- Identify means to protect stable residential areas outside of intensification areas
- Develop cost-effective and land efficient development standards
- Identify a program for monitoring the achievement of the intensification targets (Policy 3.5.25)

The Simcoe County Official Plan establishes a target that a minimum of 10% of all new housing units will be affordable housing, to be achieved with the support of local municipalities in revising their Official Plans and by-laws to encourage affordable housing.

### Community Facilities and Services

- Under Policy 4.2.1, the County directs community facilities and services to settlements and public service facilities should also be directed to settlements, but may be located outside of settlements.
- Further Policy 4.2.2 states “Community facilities shall be connected to municipal sewage services and municipal water services or private communal sewage services and private communal water services where available.”
- Policy 4.2.3 promotes opportunities for adaptive reuse of public service facilities, where feasible and subject to local municipal official plans. Prior to developing new infrastructure and public service facilities, opportunities for adaptive re-use should be considered, wherever feasible.
- Policy 4.2.4 states that “Community facilities and public service facilities should be co-located in community hubs, where appropriate, to promote cost-effectiveness and facilitate service integration, access to transit and active transportation.”

### Existing Midland OP Policies

Policy Reference - Town of Midland Official Plan (2002): Section 2.3 (Housing Policies); Section 2.4 (Community Design); and Section 3.3 (Residential District).

- The Town OP under Section 2.3 Housing Policies states that “it is important to maintain and improve the existing housing stock and to allow for the appropriate intensification of new and innovative housing” (Policy 2.3.2).
- Further under Policy 2.3.5 the Town will “strive to maintain a minimum ten year supply of land designated and available for new residential development, and at least a three-year supply of draft approved or registered plans. This target may also provide for the redevelopment and intensification of older developed neighbourhoods.”

- An objective of the OP Community Design policies is to “encourage private and public developments to provide an integrated mix of uses, activities and experiences” (Policy 2.4.4.1).
- Under Policy 3.3.1 d), the Town encourages “innovative development, re-development and intensification, particularly in older established neighbourhoods, to satisfy market requirements.”
- Further, under 3.3.1 e), it is an objective of the Town to “foster and encourage the development of residential uses where appropriate community and commercial facilities can be provided.”
- The Town OP, under Section 3.3.3 d), states that the “provision of affordable rental accommodation can be enhanced through land use intensification in existing serviced residential areas. The conversion of single detached residential units into multiple dwelling units may be permitted through the implementing Zoning By-law.”
- Under Policy 3.3.10, the Town OP permits home occupations subject to the following:
  - a) The use is secondary to the residential use and does not involve any change to the external character of the dwelling unit, accessory building or property, such as outside storage or display areas
  - b) The use does not generate any adverse effect such as excessive traffic, noise, odour, any environmental impacts or parking problems, incompatible with the residential area

## Public Comments

- If intensification is to occur within the stable neighbourhoods, the character of mature neighbourhoods should not change. Commercial development should not be located within family oriented neighbourhoods. Mixed use and corner stores, small veggie markets. Need to have services, parks and transportation to support the intensification.
- Midland can better integrate the delivery of community services with adjacent municipalities through partnerships with the sharing of personnel and resources.
- Edgehill Park, parkland, ecological areas, Sumac Lane and neighbourhoods around Little Lake should be protected from intensification.
- The neighbourhood improvement strategies that would be appropriate in Midland include improved lighting in older neighbourhoods on the east side, allow for home occupations, allow for people to stay in larger homes, and increase educational facilities in each neighbourhood.

## Discussion

### Planning for community services and amenities

- It is an important objective of the Town to ensure that community services and amenities are easily accessible to people of all incomes, ages and abilities, both in terms of their design and location. Locating community services where transit is available or planned, or in proximity to residential communities, supports the vitality of those communities and contributes to the Town's quality of life/quality of place.
- The Town should also consider the introduction of policy language that prioritizes the development of lands that offer new residents convenient access to services and amenities, within walking distance.
- The Town could consider creative approaches to the development of facilities and delivery of services, with the Town participating in the co-design and co-delivery of services with government agencies, the private sector and/or non-profit organizations. The Town could also develop grant and planning fee rebate programs under a Community Improvement Plan.
- The Town should consider preparing a Community Facilities and Parks Master Plan. The Master Plan could address the following:
  - The distribution of parks, community gardens, boat launches, community centres, libraries and other community facilities, with the objective of minimizing travel distance for residents, and providing facilities in an equitable and sustainable manner;
  - Identifying and prioritizing servicing gaps that can be addressed by the Town, or other providers; and
  - Opportunities to co-locate and/or integrate social housing, special needs housing and emergency housing with community facilities and health care services.
- A **Guiding Principle** with respect to community design was established through the consultation process, as follows:
  - Achieve design excellence through high quality community design and streetscaping techniques
- Community improvement planning may be undertaken to achieve a number of benefits, including but not limited to:
  - Upgrading and maintaining municipal services, transportation systems, public utilities, and social and recreational facilities so that they meet or exceed minimum standards and are inclusive and accessible for people of all ages and abilities;

- Bolstering local community growth, including with regard to agriculture, arts and culture, tourism, commerce and industry;
- Encouraging a diversity of housing types to meet the changing needs of residents and affordable housing;
- Preserving, restoring, or adaptively re-using older buildings and buildings of cultural heritage value or interest;
- Addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation, such as through building retrofits for energy efficiency, renewable and district energy systems, water conservation and Low Impact Development strategies; and
- Revitalizing neighbourhoods through mixed use infill development and redevelopment, streetscaping, beautification projects, façade improvement, and the promotion of tourism activities.

### Accommodating intensification

- The Town of Midland has a number of identifiable neighbourhoods predominated by lower density housing and changes within these neighbourhoods may need to occur through intensification to accommodate new housing opportunities. However, it is expected that residential intensification will play a limited role in accommodating the short-term growth projections for the Town based on the slow rate of growth, and the adequate supply of development opportunities that remain available in the Town. The majority of intensification will occur within the Downtown District and the Mixed Use Districts.
- The Provincial and County planning frameworks require the Town to plan for a minimum of 40% of all new residential units through intensification initiatives within the defined Built Boundary.
- It is a goal of the Town to ensure that new development is compatible with the existing community. A **Guiding Principle** with respect to intensification was established through the consultation process, as follows:
  - Require that new mixed use development, intensification and revitalization efforts will be compatible with surrounding properties and neighbourhoods
- Further, the permissions for live/work and home occupations within the existing Neighbourhood Districts are seen as a key element of a broad based economic development strategy, providing important opportunities for new knowledge-based businesses, work at home and more typical service commercial uses. A policy framework in the OP should support the recent Home Based Business Review.

Stemming from these discussion points are two **Directions** which frame the policy recommendations below.

### Directions:

1. Community services and amenities should be located to promote efficient and cost-effective delivery and to be accessible (universal design principles) to all residents by a range of transportation modes.
2. New mixed use development, intensification and revitalization efforts must be compatible with surrounding neighbourhoods.

## Directions + Recommendations

**Direction #1:** Community services and amenities should be located to promote efficient and cost-effective delivery and to be accessible (universal design principles) to all residents by a range of transportation modes.

It is recommended that:

- a) The Town include a new section in Section 2 “General Development Policies” under the title of “**Community Infrastructure and Public Service Facilities**” where the Town will encourage:
  - Creative approaches to the development of facilities and delivery of services, with the Town participating in the **co-design and co-delivery of services** with government agencies, the private sector and/or non-profit organizations;
  - The coordination of community infrastructure and public service facility planning, land-use planning, and community infrastructure investment;
  - The development of an **appropriate range of community infrastructure and public service facilities to meet the needs of the Town** resulting from population changes and to foster complete communities;
  - The development of **community infrastructure and public service facilities in defined community hubs** that support transit use and active transportation initiatives; and
  - The co-location of community infrastructure and public service facilities to promote **cost-effectiveness and facilitate service integration**.

- b) The Town consider a **Community Facilities and Parks Master Plan**. The Master Plan could address the distribution of parks, community gardens, community centres, libraries and other community facilities, with the objective of **minimizing travel distance** for residents, and providing facilities in an equitable and sustainable manner. The Master Plan could identify and prioritize servicing gaps that can be addressed by the Town, or other providers, through a neighbourhood by neighbourhood assessment of parkland and community facility provision.

This policy initiative is not a requirement of the Province or the County, however, both include “encouragement” clauses within their respective planning frameworks. This recommendation is considered a minor change to the existing Official Plan.

- c) The Town update Section 8.10 to include the following:
- **Community improvement planning** may be undertaken to achieve a number of benefits, including but not limited to:
    - > Upgrading and maintaining municipal services, lighting, public utilities, and social and recreational facilities so that **they meet or exceed minimum standards and are inclusive and accessible** for people of all ages and abilities;
    - > Providing a diverse and compatible mix of land uses, including residential and employment uses, to support vibrant neighbourhoods;
    - > Providing high quality **public open spaces**;
    - > Bolstering **local community growth**, including with regard to arts and culture, tourism, commerce and industry;
    - > Encouraging a **diversity of housing types** to meet the changing needs of residents and affordable housing;
    - > Preserving, restoring, or **adaptively re-using older buildings** and buildings of cultural heritage value or interest;
    - > Addressing **climate change mitigation and adaptation**, such as through building retrofits for energy efficiency, renewable and district energy systems, water conservation and Low Impact Development strategies;
    - > **Revitalizing neighbourhoods** through mixed use infill development and redevelopment, streetscaping, beautification projects, façade improvement, and the promotion of tourism activities; and
    - > **Promoting active transportation** initiatives, complete streets and universal accessibility.

This initiative is considered a relatively significant change from the policy framework in the existing Official Plan.

**Direction #2:** New mixed use development, intensification and revitalization efforts must be compatible with surrounding neighbourhoods.

It is recommended that:

**a)** The Town include a **residential intensification target of 40% for all new residential development**. In addition, the new OP will:

- Direct intensification to the Downtown District and the Mixed Use Districts;
- Identify the **type and scale of development appropriate for each of the identified intensification areas**;
- Provide an **appropriate transition** of built form to adjacent areas and identify means to mitigate the effects of intensification on identified Neighbourhood Districts;
- Establish **design and development standards** for residential intensification in all locations, and most specifically where it is to be accommodated with the identified Neighbourhood Districts;
- Establish the concept of **“compatible development”** for all forms of intensification; and
- Support the recent Home Based Business Review.

**b)** The Town update its Section 37 height and/or density bonusing policy framework. These policies would permit increases in development height and/or density (greater than existing zoning provisions) in exchange for community benefits, such as:

- Affordable housing;
- Enhanced streetscaping;
- Parkland improvements; and
- Public art.

It is anticipated that the requirements of Provincial and County policy frameworks with respect to the issue of intensification will require relatively significant changes to the existing Official Plan, and will occur in multiple Sections of the Plan related to growth management, community design and the development standards within a number of land use designations.