

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION



PLANNING ISSUE #6: ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION + COMPLETE STREETS

DISCUSSION, DIRECTIONS + RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
REVISIONS TO THE OFFICIAL PLAN

MIDLAND OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW

The Planning Partnership
Municipal Planning Services
Plan B Natural Heritage
urbanMetrics
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Purpose

The Active Transportation and Complete Streets report will identify issues and options with regards to providing an effective active transportation network and associated facilities and to ensure that the Town's streets meet the needs of all users. The Province has identified encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation as a priority for meeting sustainability goals, improving quality of life and reducing congestion. It will therefore be critical that the appropriate infrastructure is considered in the Official Plan policies.

This report will review and summarize the relevant policies in Provincial planning, the Simcoe County Official Plan, the County Transportation Master Plan Update, Midland's 2012 Transportation Master 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

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION means any form of human-powered travel, including but not limited to, walking, cycling, in-line skating, and movements with mobility aids, including motorized wheelchairs and other power-assisted devices moving at comparable speed.

COMPLETE STREETS means a public right-of-way where the transportation facilitates and adjacent land uses are planned, designed and constructed to accommodate users of all ages and abilities including pedestrians, cyclists, transit vehicles, automobiles, and freight traffic.

Provincial Policies

Policy Reference - Provincial Policy Statement (2014): Section 1.5 (Public Spaces, Recreation, Parks, Trails and Open Space); Section 1.6.7 (Transportation Systems); Section 1.6.8 (Transportation and Infrastructure Corridors); and Section 1.8 (Energy Conservation, Air Quality and Climate Change).

- The PPS states that “healthy, active communities should be promoted by planning public streets, spaces and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of pedestrians, foster social interaction and facilitate active transportation and community connectivity” (Section 1.5.1 a)).
- The PPS calls for the provision of safe, efficient, and multi-modal transportation systems that meet projected needs.
- The PPS recognizes the connection between land use patterns and transportation choices, and calls for integrated planning that minimizes the length and number of vehicle trips, and supports transit and active transportation (Section 1.6.7.4).
- The PPS also requires planning authorities to plan for and protect corridors and right-of-ways for infrastructure, including transportation and transit.
- Major goods movement facilities and corridors, in particular, are required to be protected for the long term (Section 1.6.8.2).
- To reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, the PPS calls on planning authorities to “Promote the use of Active Transportation and transit in and between residential, employment (including commercial and industrial) and institutional uses and other areas” (Section 1.8 b)).

Growth Plan Policies

Policy Reference - Growth Plan, Office Consolidation, June 2013: Section 3.2.2 (Transportation); and Section 3.2.3 (Moving People).

- Under Section 3.2.2 Transportation – General of the Growth Plan, the transportation system will “offer a balance of transportation choices that reduces reliance upon any single mode and promotes transit, cycling and walking” (Section 3.2.2 1. b)).
- Further, under Section 3.2.3 Moving People, the Growth Plan states that:
 3. Municipalities will ensure that pedestrian and bicycle networks are integrated into transportation planning to –
 - a) Provide safe, comfortable travel for pedestrians and bicyclists within existing communities and new development
 - b) Provide linkages between intensification areas, adjacent neighbourhoods, and transit stations, including dedicated lane space for bicyclists on the major street network where feasible

County Policies

Policy Reference - Simcoe County Official Plan, Modified as per Approval August 31st, 2015 (Updated March 10, 2016): Section 4.8 (Transportation).

- The County's OP identifies the need to provide safe pedestrian and cycling movement in settlement areas, identifying opportunities for active transportation and “Complete Streets.”
- Under Section 4.8 Transportation, a number of the objectives of the County are to plan for access to transit and active transportation, consider needs of pedestrians and cyclists in road design, and plan for active transportation as a mode of transportation that supports healthy living, economic development, and tourism opportunities.
- Policy 4.8.12 states that “Local municipalities should seek to reduce traffic congestion and minimize the length and number of vehicle trips through traffic management techniques, support current and future use of transit (where applicable) and Active Transportation in their Official Plans, through the designation of areas of higher density and mixed land use.”
- Under the Design of Development section, Policy 4.8.40 notes that in areas of high pedestrian and vehicular traffic, such as main streets, downtown areas and in the design of public facilities and streetscapes, complete streets shall be incorporated, where appropriate.

- Under Active Transportation Facilities, Corridors, Pathways, and Trails, in the County OP, local municipalities will ensure the provision of facilities to encourage active transportation (Policy 4.8.46).
- In addition to encouraging local municipalities to develop complete streets and transit-supportive guidelines (Policy 4.8.41), the County OP further states that, “local municipalities shall develop a municipal Active Transportation Plan as background to inform the local municipal Official Plans for primary settlement areas...” The Active Transportation Plan should include:
 - Active transportation system map
 - Sidewalks/trails in new development
 - Dedication of lands in new development to complete future connections
 - Cycling and pedestrian safety measures (traffic calming, signage, etc)
 - New sidewalks and trails in the built-up areas
 - AODA standards
 - Secure bike racks and shelters, connections to buildings (Section 4.8.47)

Policy Reference – Transportation Master Plan Update - “Moving Forward: A Multi-Modal Future”, 2014

- This Plan provides an update to the 2008 document to provide a stronger focus on building a County-wide integrated multi-modal transportation system to alleviate transportation-related issues such as traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions and negative impacts on quality of life.
- County Road 93 between Vindin Street and Yonge Street was one of five County corridors selected for a more detailed traffic operations analysis. Widening County Road 93 from County Road 25 to Highway 12 from two to four lanes was identified as medium term horizon project to be completed by 2031.
- The Plan recommends that new complete street cross sections (urban or rural) be implemented when renovations or upgrades are made to County Roads. The section of County Road 93 that was identified for a road widening is considered to have an urban context.

Existing Midland OP Policies

Policy Reference - Town of Midland Official Plan (2002): Section 4.5. (Streetscapes); and Section 4.9.15 (Recreational Trails).

- The Town OP lacks policy direction and support for complete streets.

- Recreational trails are encouraged for the use of local residents but also to create regional linkages and a multi-use trail system (Policy 4.9.15.1).
- Active transportation is discussed under Section 6.5 Pedestrian and Bicycle Traffic which outlines policies that encourage pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Within this section the following considerations are included:
 - Provision of pedestrian routes which link centers of activity within and beyond the subject sites
 - Pedestrian and bicycle routes should be dedicated and form part of the public right of way system
 - Safe and efficient movement will be a prime consideration in the planning and design of pedestrian and bicycle routes (Policy 6.5.1)
- It is the policy of the Town to promote public transit and ensure a coordinated system to service the Town in response to need, demand and the financial capabilities (Section 6.4).

Previous Plans and Studies

2012 Transportation Master Plan

The Transportation Master Plan was prepared as a background report for both the Official Plan and Development Charges updates. The purpose of the Plan is to review the existing road system network and operations, and identify road system improvements necessary to ensure future travel demands can be adequately accommodated.

The Transportation Master Plan established transportation needs for the short (0-5 years), medium (5-10 years) and long (10+ years) term. The categories were Land Use and Development, Road Section Improvements, Intersection Improvements, Pedestrian & Cyclist Network, Truck Route Network, and Travel Demand Management.

The report recommendations include:

Land Use and Development

The Plan recommends that land use permissions with respect to density, mix of land uses and the relationship of buildings to the street be used to promote alternative modes of transportation.

Road Section Improvements

Improvements to the Town's road network should be focused on optimizing the existing network to better serve the travel demands and extend its overall service life, as opposed to the implementation of new infrastructure. Improvements include altering

pavements markings to better delineate or restructure travel lanes, implementing new speed limits or installing speed humps, introducing bike lanes and/or shared lanes, road widenings and eliminating or restricting on-street parking. In particular, the Plan identified the following roads as requiring improvements: Fourth Street north of Yonge Street, Hugel Avenue, Manly Street north of Galloway Boulevard and William Street.

Intersection Improvements

Improvements to the Town's intersections are also recommended to optimize the existing infrastructure. A total of 15 intersections are identified and recommended improvements include: realignment for improved safety, implementing or altering traffic signal controls and introducing turning lanes. Most importantly, for the intersections at Bay Street and Fourth Street and William Street and Bayshore Drive, land acquisition by the Town is required to implement the recommendations. The Town will also have to work with property owners for the Yonge Street and Eighth Street intersection where restaurant parking and access will be impacted and at the Fuller Avenue and Harbourview Drive intersection where an alignment change to preserve the Designated Drummond Wall will impact the Midland Bay Estates plan of subdivision lands.

Pedestrian network

As per the Town's Official Plan, sidewalks should be provided on at least one side of all Town roads, regardless of designation as arterial, collector or local roads. For all new arterial and collector roads, sidewalks should be constructed on both sides of the road to better serve development and to minimize the need for pedestrian crossings. Sidewalks are also recommended along both sides of County Road 93 from Yonge Street to the Huronia District Hospital in addition to improved pedestrian facilities at signalized intersections. This is in consideration of the increased commercial development and activity along this road. The Plan identifies a number of missing sections where sidewalks should be added throughout the Town.

Cyclist Network

As stated in the Plan, cycling is already a viable mode of transportation in the Town of Midland - as per the 2006 Census data, walking/cycling accounts for 12% of all work related trips. In consideration of the increasing role of cycling both from a utilitarian and a recreational perspective, the Town is in process of expanding the existing bike route network within the Town to include dedicated bike lanes, shared travel/bike lanes, and off-road paths.

Truck Route Network

The Plan acknowledges the important role in an economically viable region played by truck movement and identifies the need to balance this form of traffic with maintaining a liveable community. The Plan identifies Yonge Street between King Street and William Street for consideration for designation as a truck route which would complete the grid

system already in place in the Town. The Plan also outlines several strategies for ensuring that truck movement does not unduly infringe on local roads and the Downtown.

Travel Demand Management

In a large transportation network, managing the demand for transportation can be a cost-effective alternative to increasing capacity. It also has the potential to deliver better environmental outcomes, improved public health and stronger, more prosperous and livable communities. The Plan recommends that the Town increase public awareness of TDM strategies, encourage the implementation of TDM programs by private employers and introduce a TDM program for Town staff.

Public Comments

- Policies related to active transportation and complete streets are necessary in Midland. There is an opportunity to create an active transportation corridor on Yonge Street. Policies to include bike lanes.
- The policies for active transportation and complete streets should be mandatory. There should be an Active Transportation Plan.
- The transportation related issues that need to be articulated in the Official Plan include:
 - Local transit to/from Midland, Penetanguishene, Tay Township, Barrie and Orillia
 - Build upon existing trail linkages/opportunities
 - Separated bike lanes
 - Bike facilities at key community service locations
 - Accommodation for park and ride

Discussion

Active transportation

- Provincial and County planning frameworks provide direction on the transportation elements of community planning. They state that “healthy, active communities should be promoted by planning public streets, spaces and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of pedestrians, foster social interaction and facilitate active transportation and community connectivity.” Overall, Provincial and County planning frameworks are reflective of up to date planning concepts related to

transportation systems that are multi-modal and multi-purpose. They recognize and raise the priority of pedestrians and cyclists, and promote and support transit. The Province and the County provide substantial direction to the Town to be included in the Town's Official Plan.

- Further, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, the Province and the County call on the Town to "Promote the use of Active Transportation and transit in and between residential, employment and institutional uses and other areas." The Province and County also recognize the connection between land use patterns and transportation choices, and call for:
 - > The provision of safe, efficient, and multi-modal transportation systems that meet projected needs;
 - > Integrated planning that minimizes the length and number of vehicle trips, and supports transit and active transportation;
 - > Protection of corridors and right-of-ways for infrastructure, including transportation and transit and for major goods movement facilities and corridors; and
 - > Integration of pedestrian and bicycle networks into transportation planning to provide safe, comfortable travel for pedestrians and bicyclists within existing communities and new development, including dedicated lane space for bicyclists on the major street network.
- The County Official Plan specifically states that local municipalities shall develop a Municipal Active Transportation Plan as background to inform local municipal Official Plans for primary settlement areas.
- The Town should incorporate the County requirement that new local roads have shorter block lengths that are generally less than 250 metres in length to encourage walking and cycling.
- The Town should also amend the Official Plan to recognize walking and cycling as viable modes of transportation for a variety of trips that are in the range of five kilometres or less. The OP should include policies to encourage the development of appropriate design guidelines and/or development standards for bicycle parking (including for all non-residential and multi-unit residential development) in accordance with the County OP requirement.

Complete streets

- Building on the active transportation focus, the Town should introduce references to design guideline documents for active transportation facilities and/or a complete streets policy and supporting design guidelines. These guidelines should be developed in consultation with the County and should also support the provision of

pedestrian and cycling amenities along streets (e.g. street trees, benches, bicycle racks, etc.).

- A complete streets approach should be required for the design of new streets, as well as the reconstruction, repair, and maintenance of all arterial, collector, and local streets.
- The Town should encourage but not require the provision of sidewalks on both sides of the road. Sidewalks should be required on both sides of the road for arterial roads, collector roads and local roads which are major pedestrian links to a school, neighbourhood centre, or retail. Sidewalks should also be required on at least one side of new condominium private roads to promote active transportation in all forms of development.

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

Directions:

1. The Town must better support the needs of active transportation users through policy language and infrastructure provision.
2. The creation of complete streets should be a priority in all road works.

Directions + Recommendations

Direction #1: The Town must better support the needs of active transportation users through policy language and infrastructure provision.

It is recommended that:

- a) Section 6.0 “Transportation” be revised to incorporate relevant policies/guidelines from the Town’s **2012 Transportation Master Plan**.
- b) **Walking and cycling be recognized as viable modes of transportation** for a variety of trips that are in the range of five kilometres or less. Other personal motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation (such as scooters and e-bikes) also need to be considered as viable within the Midland context.
- c) Schedule “B” be amended to include the Town’s **Active Transportation Network**.
- d) Section 6.0 “Transportation” be amended to **require the Town to prepare a Municipal Active Transportation Plan**. The Municipal Active Transportation Plan should include:
 - Sidewalks/trails in new development;

- Dedication of lands in new development to complete future connections;
 - Cycling and pedestrian safety measures (traffic calming, signage);
 - New sidewalks and trails in the built-up areas;
 - AODA standards; and
 - Secure bike racks and shelters, connections to buildings.
- e) The County requirement that **new local roads shall have shorter block lengths** that are generally less than 250 metres in length be incorporated to encourage walking and cycling.

Direction #2: The creation of complete streets should be a priority in all road works.

It is recommended that:

- a) A **complete streets approach is required** in the design of new streets, as well as the reconstruction, repair, and maintenance of all arterial, collector, and local streets.
- b) A **complete streets policy and supporting design guidelines are developed**, including requirements for the provision of pedestrian and cycling amenities along streets and the establishment of bicycle parking standards. All of this will be informed by the upcoming collaboration between the Town and the County.
- c) **Sidewalks be required on both sides of the road** for arterial roads, collector roads and major local roads which are important pedestrian links to a school, neighbourhood centre, or retail uses. Sidewalks on both sides of the road will be encouraged but not required for other roads. All roads shall have sidewalks on at least one side. Sidewalks will also be required on at least one side of new condominium private roads to promote active transportation in all forms of development. These policies should be included as part of the complete streets policy document/design guidelines or in an update to the Town Engineering Standards.

These changes to the existing Official Plan are significant, and most are required by Provincial and County Planning Frameworks.