

Planning Issue # 1

GROWTH MANAGEMENT



Understanding the Planning Issue

The Town of Midland is expected to grow to a population of 22,500, with 13,800 jobs by 2031. That growth will be accommodated within an urban structure, and will include Greenfield Development opportunities as well as through Intensification. In addition to accommodating projected growth, it is recognized as a service centre for the surrounding smaller and more rural municipalities.

- *Greenfield Development Opportunities* – New development on primarily vacant lands that is located within the Midland Municipal Boundary, but that is not within the defined built-up area. Greenfield Development Opportunities may include new Employment Areas, new residential neighbourhoods and new retail commercial areas.
- *Intensification* – Intensification is new development that is accommodated within the defined built-up area. It is typically defined as the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:
 - redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites;
 - the development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;
 - infill development; or
 - the expansion or conversion of existing buildings.

Key Questions/Concerns

1. Should the Downtown and Waterfront be the focus for new, intensified development?
2. Where should Intensification initiatives be focused? AND where should it be avoided?
3. Is there enough land in Midland to accommodate economic opportunities – retail commercial uses, business parks and industrial areas?
4. How can Midland better integrate the delivery of community services with adjacent municipalities?
5. What policies are needed to preserve the rural areas from encroaching development?

Planning Issue #2

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Understanding the Planning Issue

Based on the amended Growth Plan employment allocations, the Town of Midland is expected to accommodate 1,800 new jobs by 2031. Under the existing Official Plan, the Town has designated five areas that are designated as 'Employment Area'. It is estimated that the Town has enough vacant employment land supply to meet the targets allocated by the Growth Plan and County.

- *Employment Area* - Areas designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic activities including, but not limited to, manufacturing, warehousing, offices, and associated retail and ancillary facilities (Growth Plan).
- The type of commercial and employment lands that are desired by businesses are changing in response to changes in the economy, lifestyles, and community design.
- Tourism and recreation are important drivers for the Midland economy.

Key Questions/Concerns

1. What role should the rural area play in economic development?
2. What policies and permitted uses are needed in the new Official Plan to ensure a diverse and strong local economy given the limitations to employment growth?
3. How can Midland better attract new business opportunities?
4. What are the Town's key tourism related attributes, and how can they be enhanced? Are there other tourism based strategies, businesses and attractions that should be considered in the new Official Plan?

Planning Issue #3

WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT



Understanding the Planning Issue

The waterfront area is located along the shorelines of Georgian Bay, Midland Bay and Little Lake. Direction and guidance for development and improvement to parts of the waterfront areas were provided in the 2013, Unimin Waterfront Lands Master Plan. In 2015, the Downtown Master Plan & Community Improvement Plan provided recommendations for the development of the waterfront park area along Bayshore Drive in the Downtown.

- The Waterfront area should be a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, accessible neighbourhood.
- Improved public access to the waterfront, enhancements to the waterfront trail, a larger network of parks and open spaces, and reinforced key views to the water are also issues that need to be addressed.
- The Official Plan designates the parcels along the edge of waterfront 'Employment Areas', 'Residential District' and 'Open Space District'.

Key Questions/Concerns

1. What policies are needed to implement the recent Downtown Master Plan, and to ensure that this central location continues to support the community for the next 20 years?
2. What policies are needed to encourage additional development along Midland's waterfront?
3. What sites along the waterfront should be the focus for new development?

Planning Issue #4

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



Understanding the Planning Issue

The Downtown is a regional hub with tourism and recreation activities. Midland has invested in the historic downtown in the past few years with the Midland Cultural Centre and the expansion of the Midland Public Library. The recent Downtown Master Plan & Community Improvement Plan identifies 20 key initiatives and 9 priority projects for the Downtown to be completed over the next 20 years.

- The current Official Plan states: "*A strong and energetic Town Centre is essential in promoting community growth and prosperity. This occurs in terms of economic well-being, community pride and character... To encourage business retention and growth, the quality and amenities of the Town's urban core should be constantly developed, strengthened and improved [through] the encouragement of compatible residential uses and the promotion of the area as an events center will secure the future success and investment confidence in the Downtown District.*" (Section 3.2 Downtown District).

Key Questions/Concerns

1. Should the Official Plan continue to state that Downtown is the retail/commercial focus for the Town?
2. Should the Official Plan include a special policy framework for the Downtown, including policies that promote revitalization and/or intensification?
3. How can the Downtown build on Midland's role as a regional service hub?
4. What opportunities are available for year round tourism in the Downtown?
5. What types and scales of uses/built form are compatible in the in the Downtown?

Planning Issue #5

NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPROVEMENT



Understanding the Planning Issue

The neighbourhoods in Midland are comprised of primarily single-detached homes, on tree-lined streets. These neighbourhoods are considered stable, and have remained so over many years. It is understood that some new growth will need to be accommodated through intensification, which may include changes within the existing stable neighbourhoods. The goal will be to ensure that any new development is compatible with the character of the existing community.

- *Compatible Development* - Compatible development means development that may not necessarily be the same as, or similar to, the existing buildings in the vicinity, but, nonetheless, enhances an established community and coexists with existing development without causing any undue adverse impact on surrounding properties.

Key Questions/Concerns

1. If intensification is to occur within the stable neighbourhoods, where should it be located, and what criteria should be used to evaluate proposals?
2. Are there any specific stable neighbourhoods that should be protected from intensification?
3. What types of neighbourhood improvement strategies would be appropriate in Midland?

Planning Issue #6

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES & AFFORDABLE HOUSING



Understanding the Planning Issue

It is typically a goal of every municipality to ensure that a range and mix of housing types and tenures is available to accommodate the changing needs of its population, and to attract new residents. Some of that housing needs to be considered as affordable housing to allow different income groups access to various types of housing.

- To support the development of affordable housing, the County requires each local municipality to achieve a minimum affordable housing target of 10% of all new development.
- *Affordable Housing* – Generally, affordable housing is housing for which the cost of rent/mortgage payments does not exceed 30 per cent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households.

Key Questions/Concerns

1. What is the right mixture of housing types that Midland should accommodate?
2. Are there any housing forms/types that the Town needs immediately?
3. How best can the Town encourage housing to be built that will meet the future requirements of an aging population and a population that will have a growing number of special needs?
4. What land use planning strategies should the Town consider to ensure the County's affordable housing target is met?

Planning Issue #7

NATURAL & CULTURAL HERITAGE



Understanding the Planning Issue

Midland is an historic Town and it includes a number of cultural heritage resources that have national, Provincial and more local significance. In addition, Midland has a number of natural areas, woodlots and parks, it also contains part of the Severn Sound watershed, which is under pressure from growth. An Official Plan provides planning policies that are intended to establish and protect a Natural Heritage System as well as for the key cultural heritage buildings, sites and landscapes.

- *Natural Heritage Features* - means features and areas, including significant wetlands, significant coastal wetlands, fish habitat, significant woodlands and significant valleylands, habitat of endangered species and threatened species, significant wildlife habitat, and significant areas of natural and scientific interest, which are important for their environmental and social values as a legacy of the natural landscapes of an area.
- *Cultural Heritage Features* - means a structures, spaces, archaeological sites or landscapes that have historic significance. They can be considered as individual buildings, heritage conservation districts or cultural heritage landscapes, any of which may be designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Key Questions/Concerns

1. How should Midland's Natural Heritage System be identified and protected in the new Official Plan?
2. How should Midland's Cultural Heritage Resources be identified and protected in the new Official Plan?
3. Are there particular cultural or natural heritage resources, features or areas that require specific recognition in the new Official Plan?

Planning Issue #8

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Understanding the Planning Issue

A high quality well-designed built environment is valued within the Town. As the Town grows, policies within the Official Plan (OP) may need to focus on design features that will achieve the principles of good community design including compatibility, a mix of uses, sense of place and accessibility.

Sustainable design can include solar orientation and Low Impact Development (LID) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

- Under provincial legislation, the design of all new public spaces/facilities will need to meet Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards beginning on January 1, 2016. In addition, there is a growing understanding that Official Plan policy can help to achieve key elements of sustainable design and the achievement of healthy communities.
- *Sustainable Design* - is the process and principles applied during the development review process that seeks to achieve energy and resource efficient, durable, barrier free and high quality buildings, site layouts, landscaping and off-site boulevard improvements.
- *Healthy Communities* - relates to initiatives to create age-friendly communities, communities connected to nature, post-carbon "transition town" communities, child-friendly communities, and inclusive communities; as well as broader initiatives to create green and sustainable communities. A healthy community is all of these; rather than being exclusive of each other, they all are needed for a truly healthy place.

Key Questions/Concerns

1. Are policies related to sustainable design and/or healthy communities necessary in Midland?
2. Should the policies be mandatory, or should they simply be encouraged?
3. Could these design initiatives be better captured through design guidelines and, potentially through architectural control?

Planning Issue #9

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & COMPLETE STREETS



Understanding the Planning Issue

Creating a high quality of life for its residents is priority for Midland. Providing access to safe walking and cycling facilities and places to walk/bike to contributes to healthier lifestyles and more complete communities. New planning research promotes the concepts of Active Transportation and Complete Streets. These initiatives work together to ensure that a community has multiple mode options (transit, cycling, and walking as well as travel by car) developed in a beautiful and safe way.

- *Active Transportation* - means human-powered travel, including but not limited to, walking, cycling, inline skating and travel with the use of mobility aids, including motorized wheelchairs and other power-assisted devices moving at a comparable speed. (PPS, 2014)
- *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. (Simcoe County OP)

Key Questions/Concerns

1. Are policies related to Active Transportation and Complete Streets necessary in Midland?
2. Should the policies be mandatory, or should they simply be encouraged?
3. Are there any other transportation related issues that need to be addressed in the Official Plan?

Planning Issue #10

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



Understanding the Planning Issue

Infrastructure, including water, wastewater and stormwater management, is the backbone of an urban community. Infrastructure is becoming greener (more sustainable) and is required to deal with issues that were not previously anticipated, particularly water shortages and the impacts of major storm events. Technology is also advancing – new approaches to sewage treatment and water purification, and new approaches to dealing with stormwater management.

- For example, major storm events are increasingly creating risks by overloading the Town's infrastructure with excess stormwater flow. Over time, these events can become more severe, by having green infrastructure options in place to manage the higher flows, disaster can be averted. Emerging SWM strategies include reducing the amount of paved surface to reduce run-off flows, and using natural corridors and Low Impact Development (LID) methods to increase infiltration in vegetated areas and SWM ponds before run-off reaches the Town's storm sewer pipes.
- *Low Impact Development Standards (LIDS)* - is a stormwater management strategy that seeks to mitigate the impacts of increased runoff and stormwater pollution.

Key Questions/Concerns

1. What policies are needed to start preparing Midland residents and the Town's infrastructure for the community adaptation changes that will be required in future years to deal with major storm events?
2. What stormwater management methods can the Town use? (e.g. bioswales, permeable pavements, green streets, green parking, green roofs, tree canopy etc.)