



2021 - 2024
STRATEGIC PLAN

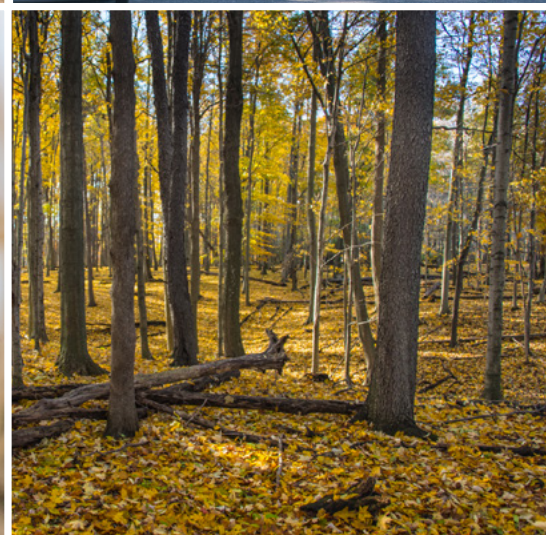




2021 - 2024

THE MIDDLESEX
INITIATIVE

BREAKING
NEW GROUND



GREETINGS FROM THE WARDEN

On behalf of Middlesex County Council, I am pleased to present our **2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan**. The development of this plan was a priority of mine when I became Warden for the County of Middlesex. This year has been a year unlike any other in recent memory; however, I am very thankful that staff and Council were able to embrace the challenge!

I would like to thank my Council colleagues for their participation and enthusiasm throughout the strategic planning process. When we first started discussing the development of the strategic plan at the beginning of the year, I did not imagine that we would be working through the process using video conferencing. However, I couldn't be happier with the process and, of course, the result! We have been able to develop a plan that will guide Council and staff decision-making through meaningful and deliberate action over the course of the next few years.

The work that Council and staff have put into the plan can be seen in this final document. We were able to genuinely discuss and debate our strategic priorities, goals, objectives and guiding principles in a way that developed a thoughtful and relevant strategic plan for our community.

It is an exciting time for Middlesex County. We have been able to accomplish a lot over the years and I look forward to seeing what can be accomplished with a defined strategic focus.

Thank you to all of those who contributed their time, expertise, and talent to developing this important document and to those who continue to be champions and ambassadors of our Middlesex County!

Cathy Burghardt-Jesson
Warden, Middlesex County



THE MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY

Middlesex County is an ideal mix of rural and urban living. The County is strategically located in the heart of Southwestern Ontario and covers a sprawling area of over 2,800 square kilometres. The county is home to the municipalities of North Middlesex, Adelaide Metcalfe, Strathroy-Caradoc, Southwest Middlesex, Thames Centre, Middlesex Centre, Lucan Biddulph, and the Village of Newbury.

The County of Middlesex is an upper tier municipality that provides a range of services to residents including, roads, social services, economic development, emergency services, long term care, libraries, and planning.

Our Community offers both rural and urban opportunities with vibrant downtown cores, a dynamic and diverse population, economic diversity, high quality of life and bountiful recreation and cultural choices in a picturesque setting.

KEY COMMUNITY FEATURES

- Part of a growing, prosperous region with a population in 2019 of approximately 77,000 residents. Based on recent planning data in 2020 the population is expected to grow by 7%.
- Strategic location for business and industry due to its proximity and access to major highways including the 401 and 402 highway corridor, airports and railway lines, lower commercial business rents, and land values compared to large urban areas and regions.
- Diverse economy, including a strong foundation in agriculture, agri-food, healthcare professional services and manufacturing and growing retail, logistics, construction and service sectors.
- Highly skilled, educated and ready workforce with a reputation for quality and a strong work ethic. In 2019 there is an estimated 40,538 people who are part of the Middlesex County labour force.
- Affordable, relaxed and family oriented lifestyle which is enhanced by the proximity of quality healthcare and urban opportunities.
- Variety of licensed child care, early years programming and educational institutions, including close proximity to renowned Western University, Fanshawe College and Lambton College.
- The unique villages, towns and rural communities have great attractions for residents and tourists, including museums, parks, nature trails, golf, historical buildings, campgrounds, sugar bushes, crafts, entertainment and much more.



Lake Huron

HURON COUNTY

PERTH COUNTY

**LUCAN
BIDDULPH**

● Lucan

**THAMES
CENTRE**

● Thorndale

OXFORD COUNTY

● Parkhill

● Ailsa Craig

**NORTH
MIDDLESEX**

● Ilderton

**MIDDLESEX
CENTRE**

● Dorchester

402

**ADELAIDE
METCALFE**

● Strathroy

● Komoka-
Kilworth

City of London

401

LAMBTON COUNTY

**STRATHROY-
CARADOC**

● Delaware
● Mount
Brydges

First Nations

**SOUTHWEST
MIDDLESEX**

● Glencoe

ELGIN COUNTY

◆ Newbury

● Wardsville

CHATHAM-KENT

Lake Erie

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THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic plan will establish a clear direction and focus for the County for the four year period of 2021 to 2024. As the community is constantly growing and changing, strategic planning will assist in developing the right goals and targets to help everyone focus their efforts into achieving them. It will also ensure that the County of Middlesex is well positioned to capitalize on future opportunities that arise.

The discussions regarding the strategic planning process started in January 2020 and the 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan was approved by County Council in September 2020.

The goals of the strategic planning process were:

- Governance focus
- Actionable and timely
- Communication tool
- Identify new opportunities and issues
- Stimulate internal and external discussion
- Focus on key questions and less on mission statements

PHASE 1 DATA COLLECTION

SETTING THE STAGE AND GATHERING INFORMATION

The objective of this phase included planning, process development, collection of department data and business profiles, development of a survey and landscape review.



PHASE 2 REVIEW

REVIEWING, DISCUSSING AND CREATING FUTURE STRATEGIES

Council reviewed the information and created the strategic priorities, goals and objectives to be considered in the overall plan. Council also developed a list of guiding principles to be applied to program development, program review, and service delivery.

PHASE 3 APPROVAL

CONFIRMING AND FINALIZING THE PLAN

Council reviewed the draft version of the strategic plan and had significant and thoughtful discussion in regard to the strategic priorities, goals, objectives and guiding principles. Through this discussion, County Council's final strategic plan was developed and approved.



WHERE WE'RE GOING

2021-2024 is the time for Middlesex County to lead into the future. Growth and opportunity are at the heart of the county's future.

INNOVATION & READINESS

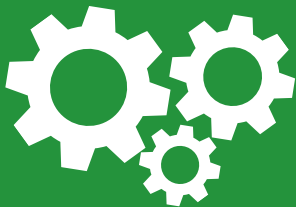


Innovation and collaboration are happening in Middlesex County, with numerous projects underway that we can leverage into the future. This readiness factor provides us with the ability to go where we want to go.

Innovation and collaboration in action in Middlesex County:

- Middlesex County Connect (Community Transportation)
- Community Safety and Well-Being Plan
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres
- Municipal modernization service delivery reviews
- Libraries shifting to community hubs and becoming a dynamic community destination
- Mobile COVID-19 testing provided by Middlesex London Paramedic Service
- Collaborative infrastructure projects with local municipalities

MODERNIZATION



The current environment surrounding all municipalities, including the County of Middlesex, has become focused on modernization and innovation. The Ontario government is looking to municipalities to examine all aspects of its work and to look for new ways to serve its residents.

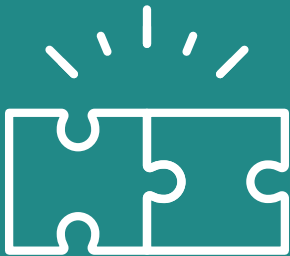
COLLABORATION & RELATIONSHIPS



The County of Middlesex has embraced an environment of collaboration, and is actively working with its local, neighbouring, and regional municipalities to achieve common goals. Some examples of this include:

- Provision of shared services (planning, IT, Legal) with local municipal partners
- Southwest Community Transportation – a transportation initiative involving County of Middlesex, Tillsonburg, Oxford County, Perth County, and Norfolk County
- Innovative economic development initiatives, such as: Our Hand to Your Table and the Middlesex County Economic Resiliency Task Force
- Unique Service Manager Agreements between the County of Middlesex and the City of London in relation to social housing, land ambulance, child care and Ontario Works services.

RESPONSIVE & RESILIENT



The COVID-19 pandemic has caused us to ask new questions and to leverage the learnings from the pandemic to encourage change, including how we support the prosperity of businesses in downtown cores, how we increase internet connectivity, and how we move forward with digital transformation and service provision in a changed environment.

Modernization of services, especially with the pandemic, has forced all organizations, including the public sector, to think differently about how to deliver services – embrace automation and new technologies.

VISION & LEADERSHIP



We are strategically focused and ready to respond and move into the future with a visionary council and expert senior staff.

“ County Council includes both progressive/modern ideas and attitudes, but also has a mind to the important history of the County.”

“ Our staff have a depth of knowledge and experience”

STRATEGIC FOCUS

GOALS

OBJECTIVES

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY VITALITY

Advance a diverse, healthy, and engaged community across Middlesex County.

- Promote and support community wellness
- Innovate social and community services
- Attract, retain, and engage youth in our community
- Champion and encourage active transportation and public transit opportunities

CONNECTING THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE

Ensure communities are built on a sustainable foundation that is connected and thriving.

- Encourage and advocate, through partnerships, the construction of scalable, equitable broadband infrastructure, recognizing our unserved and underserved areas
- Commit to a sound asset management strategy to maintain and fund critical infrastructure
- Use County infrastructure in an innovative way to provide a seamless service experience for residents

STRENGTHENING OUR ECONOMY

Encourage a diverse and robust economic base throughout the county.

- Support opportunities to create a stronger and sustainable agricultural sector
- Create an environment that enables the attraction and retention of businesses, talent, and investments
- Attract visitors to Middlesex County
- Support the development and prosperity of downtown core areas in Middlesex County

PROMOTING SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Innovate and transform municipal service delivery.

- Anticipate and align municipal service delivery to emerging needs and expectations
- Engage, educate and inform residents, businesses, and visitors of county services and community activities
- Strengthen our advocacy and lobbying efforts with other government bodies
- Collaborate with strategic partners to leverage available resources and opportunities
- Build organizational capacity and capabilities



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES ARE...

- 1 Balancing the rural-urban qualities of the County
- 2 Building relationships and working in a collaborative and supportive way
- 3 Leading through innovation, evaluation, and continuous improvement
- 4 Recognizing the uniqueness of our local municipal partners
- 5 Maintaining financial sustainability
- 6 Focusing on diversity and inclusion
- 7 Being flexible and responsive

FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION

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