

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Community Planning

Phase 1 Comprehensive Review Study – Updated County and Area Municipal Growth Forecasts and Land Need Analysis

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That Oxford County Council receive the draft Phase 1 Comprehensive Review study, prepared by Hemson Consulting Ltd., dated April 3rd, 2019, for information purposes;**
- 2. And further, that Oxford County Council authorize Planning staff to circulate the planning report and draft study to the Area Municipalities for their review and comment and undertake other consultation measures as outlined in Report No. CP 2019-104.**

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The purpose of the Draft Phase 1 Comprehensive Review study is to provide up to date growth forecast and land supply information to inform the County's growth management policies and various other County and Area Municipal projects and initiatives.
- The draft study indicates the County will continue to experience substantial population, household and employment growth over the 30 year forecast period (2016-2046). All eight Area Municipalities in the County are forecast to experience residential and employment growth and some are expected to require additional land to accommodate that growth.
- The draft study was prepared in consultation with a Technical Advisory Committee consisting of County and Area Municipal staff who provided a broad range of input and feedback on local concerns, trends, initiatives and other considerations.
- The draft study will be circulated to the Area Municipalities for further review and comment and made available for public information, prior to bringing a 'final' draft of the study to County Council for approval.

Implementation Points

Once finalized, the updated population, household and employment forecasts will be incorporated into the County Official Plan to provide updated information necessary to inform growth management and other policies. The forecasts will also serve to inform a range of other County and Area Municipal initiatives and projects, including development charges, servicing studies, housing strategies and potential settlement area expansions, where required.

Financial Impact

This study will have no direct financial impacts beyond those approved in the current year's budget. The Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

Risks/Implications

There are no risks or other implications anticipated as a result of this study beyond those outlined in this report and those that can be reasonably expected from any subsequent amendments to the Official Plan.

Strategic Plan (2015-2018)

County Council adopted the County of Oxford Strategic Plan (2015-2018) at its regular meeting held May 27, 2015. The initiative contained within this report supports the Values and Strategic Directions as set out in the Strategic Plan as it pertains to the following Strategic Directions:

3. ii. **A County that Thinks Ahead and Wisely Shapes the Future** – Implement development policies, land uses and community planning guidelines that:

- *Strategically grow our economy and our community*
- *Actively promote the responsible use of land and natural resources by focusing on higher density options before considering settlement boundary expansions*
- *Provides a policy framework which supports community sustainability, health and well-being*
- *Supports healthy communities within the built environment*
- *Supports and protects a vibrant and diversified agricultural industry*

DISCUSSION

Background

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) indicates that sufficient land shall be made available to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of employment, housing and other land uses to meet projected needs for a time horizon up to 20 years. Further, the PPS requires that the upper tier municipality, in consultation with the lower-tier municipalities, shall identify, coordinate and allocate population, housing and employment projections for lower-tier municipalities.

In this regard, the County has retained Hemson Consulting Ltd. to undertake a Phase 1 Comprehensive Review study to update the population, household and employment forecasts and land supply analysis for the County and eight Area Municipalities. The findings from this study will serve to inform the County's growth management policies and various other County and Area Municipal projects and initiatives.

Hemson has recently completed a draft of the updated forecasts and land supply analysis in consultation with a Technical Advisory Committee, comprised of select County staff and staff representatives from each of the eight Area Municipalities. As such, the findings in the draft report take into account a broad range of County and Area Municipal staff input on local concerns, trends, initiatives and other considerations relating to growth.

The draft Phase 1 Comprehensive Review study, which presents the findings from the study process to date, is attached to this report as Attachment No. 1 and is summarized below.

Comments

The growth forecast component of the draft Phase 1 Comprehensive Review study addresses the amount, type and location of population, housing and employment growth for the County and eight Area Municipalities for the 30 year period 2016 to 2046. The land supply analysis component of the draft study provides an assessment of the adequacy of the residential and employment land supply in the County and each of the eight Area Municipalities, including the potential need to designate additional land for residential and/or employment purposes to accommodate the forecast demand for the current 20 year planning period (2019-2039). The forecasts in this study will serve to update the previous County and Area Municipal growth forecasts completed in 2014.

The following sections provide an overview of the key findings from the draft study.

(a) Background Review

Extensive background review was undertaken to develop an understanding of the overall demographic and socio-economic context for the County and Area Municipalities in order to inform the updates to the population, housing and employment forecasts. From that review, a number of key factors were identified as having a significant impact on population and employment growth in the County and Area Municipalities over the next 30 years, including:

- **Age Structure** - Age structure is a key influence on the forecast. The population in the County is aging, with the aging of the 'baby boom' being the largest driver of overall aging. The significant out-migration of young adults, combined with an unusually large in-migration of older seniors to the County, further impacts the overall age structure. Housing growth has been out-pacing growth in population, in large part due to the aging population and resulting gradual decline in household size. With an aging population, the population would stabilize and begin to decline without net in-migration.
- **Migration** – The recent high levels of growth in Oxford County have largely been driven by migration from the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH). A review of growth and development trends over the last decade indicates a changing role for the County within

Southwestern Ontario. The County's adjacency to the rapidly growing GGH has resulted in the provision of increased housing for commuters to Waterloo Region and other nearby areas. London-oriented growth is also occurring in the westerly parts of the County. The future outlook for Oxford is for higher growth than in recent decades and prior forecasts, with a continuation of relatively high levels of net in-migration compared to past periods

While overall the County has experienced population growth generated by in-migration, there has been a continued out-migration of young adults seeking education and employment opportunities elsewhere (a common pattern throughout the Province). That said, some young adults are still moving into Oxford. With higher levels of future growth, it is expected that the net outflow of this age group is expected to diminish over time;

- Employment Growth and Economic Shifts - Oxford experienced net employment growth even during the 2006-2011 period when most municipalities in Southwestern Ontario experienced a significant decline associated with the 2008-09 recession, particularly in manufacturing and related industries.

The County has a significant number of in-bound commuters from Waterloo Region, Middlesex and Elgin Counties, particularly to the auto plants and other industrial activities in Woodstock, Tillsonburg and Ingersoll. Much of the rapidly growing industrial base is also oriented to relationships with the GGH.

Industrial growth in the County has been strong, particularly in the City of Woodstock. That said, almost all of recent manufacturing growth was related to the two auto plants. The remainder of the employment growth in the County has been related primarily to the provision of goods and services to the resident population (e.g. commercial and institutional type uses). Such population-related employment is expected to represent a gradually increasing share of future employment growth in Oxford relative to its past, owing to higher levels of residential growth and the continued shift in the broader economy to service-based sectors.

- Growth Distribution - The distribution of growth within Oxford continues to reinforce historic patterns. The majority of the residential growth since 2001 has been in Woodstock, Tillsonburg and Ingersoll, with considerable residential growth also occurring in a number of the Townships. While all municipalities added households over the 2001 to 2016 period, some still declined in population, likely due to the aging population. The distribution of employment growth over the 2001 to 2016 period varied, with several municipalities experiencing decline, despite overall County wide growth.

The long-term pattern of growth and the existing concentrations of households and employment in the County are expected to general continue and all Area Municipalities are expected to experience growth in population, households and employment over the forecast horizon.

b) Population and Housing Forecast 2016-2046

The County is forecast to experience substantial population growth over the 2016-2046 period, driven primarily by relatively strong levels of net migration.

Oxford County experienced robust population growth from 2011-2016 and, based on housing construction and permits since 2016, the outlook for 2016-2021 is for the highest absolute population growth for a five-year period since the restructured County was formed in 1975. However, population growth over the remainder of the forecast period is not expected to be sustained at that level, due to factors such as the aging of the population in Oxford and Ontario as a whole.

By 2046, the County's population is forecast to grow by approximately 47,100 and the number of households by approximately 18,300. All of the Area Municipalities are forecast to experience substantial housing growth during the forecast period, with such growth concentrated primarily in Woodstock, Tillsonburg and Ingersoll and, to a lesser extent, the five Townships.

The following tables illustrate the draft population and household forecasts for the County and Area Municipalities over the forecast period.

Draft Forecast - Total Population (2016-2046)

Municipality	Total Population by Area Municipality							Growth 2016-2046
	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	
Woodstock	42,040	46,620	50,480	54,470	58,480	62,250	65,950	23,910
Tillsonburg	16,310	17,380	18,280	19,240	20,240	21,220	22,150	5,840
Ingersoll	13,110	14,240	15,130	16,090	17,070	18,030	18,960	5,850
Blandford-Blenheim	7,600	7,980	8,300	8,650	9,020	9,400	9,760	2,160
East Zorra-Tavistock	7,330	7,940	8,420	8,930	9,450	9,940	10,400	3,070
Norwich	11,310	11,850	12,320	12,820	13,360	13,890	14,390	3,080
South-West Oxford	7,880	8,140	8,380	8,650	8,910	9,120	9,330	1,450
Zorra	8,360	8,740	8,990	9,250	9,530	9,830	10,120	1,760
Oxford County	113,940	122,890	130,300	138,100	146,060	153,680	161,060	47,100

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd. 2019

Notes: Population figures include Census Net Undercoverage. Figures may not add precisely due to rounding.

Draft Forecast - Total Occupied Households (2016-2046)

Municipality	Total Households by Area Municipality							Growth 2016-2046
	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	
Woodstock	17,150	19,140	20,750	22,330	23,870	25,220	26,510	9,360
Tillsonburg	7,130	7,640	8,050	8,450	8,850	9,200	9,540	2,410
Ingersoll	5,080	5,580	5,950	6,320	6,690	7,020	7,330	2,250
Blandford-Blenheim	2,730	2,890	3,010	3,140	3,270	3,380	3,490	760
East Zorra-Tavistock	2,710	2,990	3,210	3,440	3,660	3,840	4,020	1,310
Norwich	3,710	3,940	4,120	4,300	4,480	4,640	4,780	1,070
South-West Oxford	2,700	2,810	2,900	2,990	3,080	3,150	3,220	520
Zorra	3,070	3,240	3,340	3,440	3,530	3,620	3,710	640
Oxford County	44,280	48,230	51,330	54,410	57,430	60,070	62,600	18,320

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd. 2019

Notes: Figures may not add precisely due to rounding

c) Employment Forecast 2016-2046

The forecast employment growth for the County is based on a comprehensive review of employment growth potential within the County’s commuter-shed and an assessment of other key growth drivers. Based on this analysis, total employment in the County is forecast to increase by approximately 21,100 by 2046, a substantial increase from past forecasts. All Area Municipalities in the County are expected to experience some employment growth over the forecast period.

While it is anticipated that the County will continue to maintain a large proportion of employment land employment (e.g. industrial), population related employment (e.g. commercial and institutional) represents the bulk of forecasted employment growth for most of the Area Municipalities due to a continued broader shift to a service based economy. There is also forecasted to be modest growth in rural based employment, primarily in agriculture and agricultural related and primary industries (e.g. aggregates, forestry).

The following table illustrates the draft employment forecasts for the County and Area Municipalities over the forecast period (2016-2046):

Draft Forecast - Total Employment (2016-2046)

Municipality	Total Employment by Area Municipality							Growth 2016-2046
	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	
Woodstock	25,430	28,440	30,040	31,690	33,720	36,050	38,730	10,620
Tillsonburg	8,580	9,060	9,320	9,600	9,950	10,360	10,810	1,780
Ingersoll	8,990	9,710	10,080	10,470	10,950	11,510	12,150	2,520
Blandford-Blenheim	1,820	1,910	1,950	1,990	2,050	2,120	2,210	300
East Zorra-Tavistock	2,800	2,950	3,020	3,100	3,200	3,320	3,450	520
Norwich	4,050	4,200	4,280	4,360	4,470	4,600	4,740	550
South-West Oxford	2,850	2,920	2,960	2,990	3,040	3,090	3,150	240
Zorra	2,800	2,890	2,920	2,960	3,010	3,080	3,150	280
Oxford County	57,300	62,100	64,600	67,200	70,400	74,100	78,400	21,100

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd. 2019
 Note: Figures may not add precisely due to rounding

d) Land Needs Analysis

A draft land needs analysis was completed based on an updated 2019 County Vacant Land Inventory that was prepared by the consultant taking into account such considerations as County GIS data, intensification potential, building permits, approved plans and known development interest and input from County and Area Municipal staff. Environmental and other constrained lands were removed from the land inventory to determine the gross developable land area. Further adjustments were then made to account for:

- roads, stormwater management facilities and other necessary infrastructure and public services and, in the case of residential lands, neighbourhood serving commercial and institutional uses (e.g. churches);
- vacant industrial parcels which may not develop over the long-term or remain underutilized; and

- Other site specific considerations and refinements identified through review by County and Area Municipal Staff.

Underutilized portions of developed lands were also identified. However, these lands were not attributed specific growth potential for the purposes of the land needs assessment given the uncertainty surrounding the ultimate likelihood and timing for potential future development.

From the above review a net developable land area for residential and employment uses was identified. Their capacity to accommodate growth was then tested by applying a density estimate to the net vacant developable supply in order to identify a number of units on residential lands, or jobs on employment lands, that could be accommodated in the County's fully serviced settlement areas. These estimates were then compared with the forecasted growth in housing and employment on industrial lands to provide an indication of land need.

The results of the draft land needs analysis are as follows:

i) Residential Land Need Analysis

The following table illustrates the draft findings from the residential land need analysis for each of the Area Municipalities for the 20 year planning period (2019-2039), based on estimated unit potential and forecasted housing growth.

Area Municipality	Estimated Unit Potential ¹ (# of units)	Forecast Unit Growth	Difference (Est. Unit Potential less Unit Growth)	Potential Surplus + or Shortage (-) (Net ha)	Estimated Land Need (Gross Developable Ha)
Woodstock	2,960	6,420	-3,460	(124)	225
Tillsonburg	3,110	1,650	1,460	66	-
Ingersoll	610	1,520	-910	(41)	75
Blandford-Blenheim	520	510	10	1	-
East Zorra-Tavistock	560	910	-350	(21)	35
Norwich	930	740	190	11	-
South-West Oxford	200	360	-160	(9)	15
Zorra	1,020	420	600	35	-
Oxford County	9,910	12,530			

Source: Hemson Consulting Inc.

Notes: 1. - Estimated unit potential for lands in fully serviced settlements

The draft residential land need analysis indicates that Woodstock, Ingersoll, East Zorra-Tavistock and South-West Oxford are expected to require additional residential land to accommodate the forecasted housing demand for the 20 year planning period.

ii) Employment Land Need Analysis

The following table illustrates the draft findings from the employment land need analysis for each of the Area Municipalities for the 20 year planning period (2019-2039).

Area Municipality	Estimated Job Growth On Employment Lands	Average Density Estimate	Estimated Land Need (Net ha)	Net Developable Industrial Land Supply (Net ha)	Difference (Land Need less Land Supply) Net ha	Estimated Land Need (Gross Developable ha)
Woodstock	4,940	12	412	222	-190	317
Tillsonburg	610	12	51	75	24	0
Ingersoll	1,210	12	101	37	-64	107
Blandford-Blenheim	70	7	10	16	6	0
East Zorra-Tavistock	100	7	14	7	-7	12
Norwich	150	7	21	34	13	0
South-West Oxford	40	7	6	17	11	0
Zorra	80	7	11	29	17	0
Oxford County	6,960		626	436		

The draft land need analysis indicates that Woodstock, Ingersoll, East Zorra-Tavistock are expected to require additional industrial land to accommodate the forecasted job growth for the current 20 year planning period.

iii) Further Study Requirements

Where the need for additional growth land is identified through the final Phase 1 Comprehensive Review study, additional study (e.g. Phase 2 Comprehensive Review, secondary planning and servicing studies etc.) will be required to address the full range of Provincial and local policy requirements, including demonstrating the most appropriate direction for such growth, taking into consideration various matters of Provincial interest and local objectives.

Next Steps

The draft study will be circulated to the Area Municipalities and the Province for their formal review and comment. To assist with the review, Planning staff are proposing to schedule an information workshop to provide an opportunity for both County and Area Municipal Councillors to hear a detailed presentation of the draft study findings by the consultant (Hemson) and ask related questions. Further, Planning staff will work with communications staff to undertake a campaign to inform various stakeholders and the broader public of the project and opportunities for questions and feedback. Once this consultation process has been completed, a staff report including a 'final' draft of the document will be presented to County Council for their consideration. It is currently anticipated that a final draft document will be brought before County Council in May 2019.

Conclusions

The draft Phase 1 Comprehensive Review study indicates that the County is expected to continue to experience substantial population, housing and employment growth over the next 20 plus years. The study further indicates that a number of the Area Municipalities in the County are expected to require additional residential and/or employment lands to accommodate forecasted growth for the current 20 year planning period. A number of the draft findings in the study may have implications for the programs and services provided by the County and Area Municipalities and, in some cases (i.e. where the need for additional designated growth land has been identified), will also require the County and/or Area Municipalities to undertake additional studies and investigations.

The forecasted continued strong demand for housing, driven largely by substantial in-migration from fast growing urban areas outside the County, also points to the potential importance of developing a comprehensive housing strategy to ensure the full spectrum of housing need in the County can be addressed. The findings from this study with respect to expected population and housing growth and related drivers are an important step in informing such a strategy. This base information can be expanded upon as necessary through further review/study (e.g. by comparing with household income, tenure, age and other key data) to develop a more detailed understanding of the full range of future housing need in the County.

The draft study will be circulated to the Area Municipalities for review and comment, as outlined in this report, to ensure there has been an opportunity to fully consider the overall study findings and discuss any concerns and implications with Planning staff, prior to bringing a final draft back to Council for approval.

SIGNATURES

Report Author:

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 – Draft Phase 1 Comprehensive Review study, April 3, 2019