



The Corporation of the Town of Midland

575 Dominion Avenue

Midland, ON L4R 1R2

Phone: 705-526-4275

February 3, 2023

Right Honourable Steve Clark,
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

**Re: ERO number 019-6113 – Consideration of County of Simcoe Official Plan
Amendment No. 7 – Request for Amendments**

Dear Minister Clark:

On behalf of the Corporation of the Town of Midland and further to previous discussions and meetings with the County of Simcoe, the Town of Midland respectfully requests the following considerations:

- 1. Inclusion of Criteria for removal of Natural Heritage Lands when applying the Provincial Policy Statement**
- 2. Additional population and employment allocation**
- 3. Potential future near term settlement boundary expansion where cost effectiveness of infrastructure servicing expansion is constrained by land supply and land use constraints**

Additional details on each request are provided in the attachment below and Town staff would be pleased to discuss further.

Regards

Andy Campbell, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Town of Midland

cc. Laurie Miller. Regional Director Municipal Services Office, Central Region

ATTACHMENT

1. Inclusion of Criteria for removal of Natural Heritage Lands when applying the Provincial Policy Statement:

The Town requests that a policy modification and/or introduction of a new policy be made that would, subject to similar criteria as are now proposed in OPA 7 to allow agriculture and rural lands be developed through policies 3.2.9, 3.2.10 and 3.2.11 and 3.2.27, as appropriate and reconciled with the next MCR, be extended to lands designated Natural Heritage (Town of Midland) where, through satisfaction of the Natural Heritage provisions and requirements of the Provincial Policy Statement and through supporting studies to the satisfaction of the municipality in consultation with related experts and/or regulatory authorities, those lands within its settlement area boundary may, on a case-by-case basis and subject also to demonstration of fulfillment of related criteria including but not limited to regarding their viability within the Town's urban structure be considered for development. A process for the appropriate removal of lands from the Natural Heritage designation with no demonstrated natural heritage features or related impacts would serve to increase land for additional housing supply and employment uses.

As part of its 2019 Official Plan the Town of Midland introduced a Natural Heritage (NH) designation within its Settlement Area. The intent of the NH designation was to implement related policies of the Provincial Policy Statement. The NH designation replaced the previous Official Plan policies governing those lands. The NH designation replaced previous designations and created the requirement for a 2 step OPA to support development applications where an Environmental Impact Study to the satisfaction of the Town demonstrated development potential. The effect was a loss of designated residential and employment lands from the municipality's urban structure (see graphic below) and constraints on other lands. The Town's OP further requires that the OP be implemented in zoning thereby creating an even more restrictive regime. An additional complication is that the choice of employing the term Natural Heritage has created some confusion with the Province's Natural Heritage System (outside Settlement Areas)_ which does not apply inside the settlement area thereby triggering complications resulting from the unintended consequences of any related Amendments.

The Town is concurrently exploring the simplification of its land use designations to ensure the implementation of the related PPS policies around protection of natural heritage while allowing for a more predictable development review/approvals process when it has been demonstrated there are no natural heritage features or related negative impacts.

Please see mapping of residential and employment land designations replaced by the Natural Heritage designation with adoption of the 2019 Official Plan below.

Also please see policies referenced above and excerpted from proposed OPA 7:

3.2.9 *The redesignation of lands in a settlement area that are designated for agricultural uses or rural uses to a designation in an Official Plan that permits development shall not occur if the effect of the redesignation is that the local municipality will exceed the population and/or employment forecasts set out in Sections 3.2.4 and 3.2.5.*

3.2.10 *Notwithstanding Section 3.2.9, lands can be considered for designation within a Category 1 or 2 settlement area through a local Official Plan Amendment if the additional lands and associated forecasted growth will be fully accounted for in the land needs assessment associated with the next municipal comprehensive review and the lands to be designated for development:*

- a) Satisfies a locally identified community need for the land use;*
- b) Represents infilling within already developed or planned development areas or is a natural extension of already developed or planned development areas;*
- c) Supports the efficient use of existing water and wastewater infrastructure capacity; and*
- d) Supports the development of complete communities.*

Local municipalities are encouraged to develop phasing policies in their Official Plans to provide guidance on the implementation of this section,

3.2.11 *Notwithstanding Section 3.2.9 and within delineated built-up areas, local municipalities may designate lands for development and/or plan for development beyond the horizon of this Plan for strategic growth areas that are delineated in this Plan and subject to minimum density targets, provided that:*

- a) Integrated planning for infrastructure and public service facilities would ensure that the development does not exceed existing or planned capacity;*
- b) The type and scale of built form for the development would be contextually appropriate; and*
- c) The development would support the achievement of complete communities, including a diverse mix of land uses and sufficient open space.*

3.27 d) *In cases where development is proposed in a designated greenfield area, it shall be demonstrated through a secondary plan or other comprehensive planning process that:*

- i) The proposed development will generally serve as a logical extension to the existing delineated built-up*

area or already developed designated greenfield areas, is compact and has a mix of uses to allow for the efficient use of land, infrastructure and public service facilities;

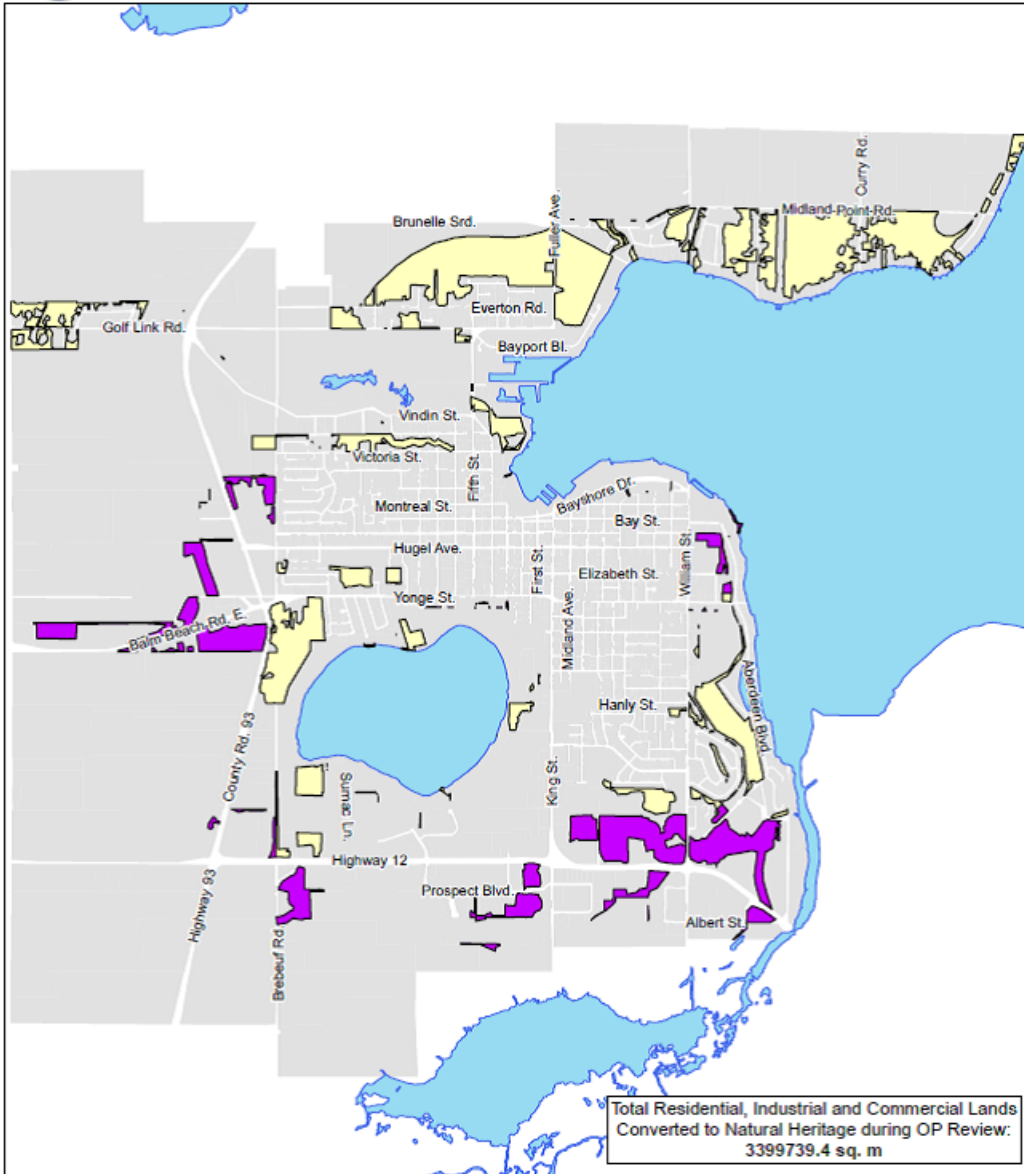
ii) The proposal will contribute to the availability of a range of housing choices (e.g. density, form, and price) in the designated greenfield area as a whole;

iii) All of the other infrastructure and public service facilities required to service the development is available or to be provided, with such infrastructure and public service facilities being used as efficiently as possible; and

iv) Access is provided in a manner that supports the provision of essential emergency services, active transportation, efficient transportation patterns, and/or linkages with adjacent existing or planned development.



Town of Midland Lands Converted from Residential, Industrial and Commercial Designations to Natural Heritage During Official Plan Review



- Lands Converted from Residential District to Natural Heritage (2450469.8 sq. m)
- Lands Converted from Employment Area to Natural Heritage (949269.6 sq. m)

2. Request for consideration of additional population and employment allocation

The Town requests further consideration of additional population and employment allocation.

Additional population and employment is consistent with longer-term infrastructure planning and the ability for the Town to fund infrastructure.

Certainty of land use as a result of additional population to support settlement boundary expansions provides for better certainty for long-term infrastructure investments. These expansions increase public and private investment that promotes more home and employment opportunities faster.

OPA 7, land needs assessment supported growth estimates for Midland are:

Residential Forecast			
	2021	2051	2021-51 increase
Midland	18250	24290	6040

Employment Forecast			
	2021	2051	2021-51 increase
Midland	10760	13170	2410

Notwithstanding the detailed LNA work completed in support of OPA 7, the Town has previously undertaken estimates of population increases and related land needs through its 2019 Development Charge Background Study and 2019 Water and Wastewater Master Plan exercises.

	2016 (Existing)	2018	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041
Residential Population	16,864	18,727	21,522	22,289	22,500	24,663	26,881
Employment Population	12,233	12,442	12,755	13,278	13,800	15,127	16,487
Total Population	29,097	31,169	34,278	35,566	36,300	39,790	43,368

Source: Town of Midland 2019 Water Servicing Master Plan

The development charges background study projects an estimated 171 units per year which would significantly exceed currently allotted residential population growth of 6040 residents and could see the Town meeting that growth well in advance of the 2051.

Development Forecast	2018 Estimate	General Services Planning Period 2019 - 2028		Engineered Services Planning Period 2019 - 2041	
		Growth	Total at 2028	Growth	Total at 2041
Residential					
Total Dwellings	7,781	1,709	9,489	3,919	11,699
Total Population Census <i>Population In NewDwellings</i>	17,410	3,009 3,600	20,419	8,175 8,059	25,585
Non-Residential					
Employment	11,013	2,087	13,100	5,474	16,487
Non-Residential Building Space (sq.m.)		131,260		344,290	

Source: Town of Midland 2019 Development Charge Background Study

The Town also carries draft plan approvals totaling more than 2000 units in a mix of single detached, townhouse and apartments. One of the limits to realizing development potential is the slow pace of development and the Town has seen draft plan approvals sit idle for extended periods. Additional development approvals would provide a more dynamic mix of development and contribute to greater stability and predictability of new units with the added benefit of supporting related infrastructure investment.

Similarly, the projected employment growth through the OPA is lower than anticipated given Midland’s role as both a primary settlement area and as a North Simcoe hub including for employment growth.

Relying on existing approvals is not delivering the units necessary to support diversity in the housing market and these existing approvals create a “self fulfilling prophecy” where the slow rate of construction results in lower than potential demand side growth numbers. Whereas, a more diversified supply of approvals spread across more than a select number of development interests with a stronger interest in bringing product to market has the potential to fuel greater demand and supports related municipal growth objectives.

Given the foregoing the Town is requesting more population to take it to the 2051 horizon and bring in more lands now for the purpose of long-term infrastructure planning and sufficient land supply.

3. Potential future near term settlement boundary expansion where cost effectiveness of infrastructure servicing expansion is constrained by land supply and land use constraints

Some of the Town’s significant expansion lands may be constrained by available land supply that may make the cost effectiveness of related infrastructure investments challenging. Of particular note are the Town of Midland southern expansion lands. A considerable investment is required to extend infrastructure to service these lands. A related policy consideration is requested here but may require further discussion.

The following maps, schedules to the Town’s 2019 Official Plan, show the Town’s Growth Areas and Land Use Plan demonstrating some of the servicing and land supply constraints.



