

## **Middlesex Centre 2018 Budget Survey**

### **You Asked and We Answered!**

In August/September of 2017, the Municipality posted a budget survey on the website and had copies available at the municipal office. 89 people responded to the survey. There were opportunities for people to make comments and ask questions in the survey.

All comments, concerns and questions from the survey were compiled and distributed to the appropriate department to provide answers. A few of the most common questions/comments were presented and discussed in the budget presentation made to Council on September 20, 2017. We want to make sure our residents have all the information they need so we've compiled a summary of all questions, concerns and comments.

If the comment, question or concern made was specific in nature or related to municipal employees, the information was provided to the appropriate Director and will not be included in this document. Staff encourage all residents who have a concern to contact the Municipal office to speak to the appropriate department.

If you had provided a comment that you do not feel was answered, please contact Tiffany Farrell [farrell@middlesexcentre.on.ca](mailto:farrell@middlesexcentre.on.ca) or at 519-666-0190 ext. 224.

### **General Administration Questions:**

1. *The division of support is not equal between all communities in Middlesex Centre. Why aren't all settlement areas serviced in Middlesex Centre, for example there is no wastewater services in Delaware or water and wastewater services in Poplar Hill.*

The Official Plan provides direction in terms of servicing (water/wastewater); we must look at the financial cost to install these services. The Ministry of the Environment and Energy has allowed for limited development on septic for Delaware and we have projected the costs of infrastructure in Delaware in our development charges background study. At this point in time, the provision of full municipal services (wastewater) is cost prohibitive due to a lack of sustainable funding from senior levels of government. Such projects supported solely by the municipality's users would further drive an increase in the current water/wastewater rates.

2. *Middlesex Centre's taxes are too high and continuously increasing, over double in the last ten years.*

Middlesex Centre taxes are the second lowest in the County. Please refer to the chart below.

| <b>Municipality</b>      | <b>2017 Tax Rate</b> |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Thames Centre            | 0.00457471           |
| Middlesex Centre         | 0.00569587           |
| Lucan Biddulph           | 0.00606900           |
| Strathroy                | 0.00676308           |
| Southwest Middlesex      | 0.00756948           |
| Adelaide Metcalfe (2016) | 0.00729800           |
| North Middlesex          | 0.00804130           |
| Newbury (2016)           | 0.00995619           |

Middlesex Centre's tax rates over the last 10 years have increased 22%. Please refer to the chart below.

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Rate</b> | <b>Increase</b> | <b>% Increase</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 2017        | 0.00569587  | 0.0001          | 2.38%             |
| 2016        | 0.00556346  | 0.0002          | 3.00%             |
| 2015        | 0.00540142  | 0.0001          | 1.70%             |
| 2014        | 0.00531112  | 0.0001          | 1.57%             |
| 2013        | 0.00522886  | 0.0001          | 2.60%             |
| 2012        | 0.00509633  | -               | 0.00%             |
| 2011        | 0.00509633  | 0.0001          | 2.50%             |
| 2010        | 0.00497203  | 0.0001          | 2.00%             |
| 2009        | 0.00487454  | -               | -4.76%            |
| 2008        | 0.00511823  | 0.0005          | 9.95%             |
| 2007        | 0.00465505  | 0.0005          | 12.27%            |

3. *Property taxes are too high based on services rendered.*

When Council develops the municipality's budget, they seek a balance between the fiscal pressures within the community and the facilities and services that our residents rely upon and use. Simply put, they must effectively manage the associated costs while providing significant value to taxpayers.

As with all municipalities, the Municipality strives to strike the right balance for its residents: maintaining existing services, programs and infrastructure and providing new services, while minimizing tax increases. In a climate of increasing costs, this can be a challenge. Middlesex Centre's residential property taxes remain below the group average when compared to other municipalities in our County.

Understanding the relationship between assessment and taxes is extremely important as property tax remains the largest and most important revenue source for municipalities. It is the only tax that municipalities have the authority to collect.

The two components required for determining property taxes are:

- 1) The current assessed value of the property and;
- 2) The tax rate applied to the property class.

Current value assessment is the amount of money that a property would sell for, if sold at arm's length by a willing seller to a willing buyer. The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) is responsible for setting assessment values for all properties in Ontario. The Current Value Assessment is based on the valuation date of January 1, 2017 and is phased in over 4 years (2017 – 2020). The residential tax rate is determined by dividing the budgetary needs by the total assessment base. Tax rates are set for each property class.

Every municipality is unique with respect to their assessment base and budgetary needs. For each municipality, the total property tax revenue collected is based on the tax rate and the assessment for that municipality. The challenge for Middlesex Centre vs a larger municipality like the City of London would be the number of properties and the types of properties (Commercial, Residential and Multi-residential have higher tax rates and normally higher assessed values, whereas Farm properties pay 25% of the residential rate).

4. *Why do we have an infrastructure gap?*

This is why the Municipality is concentrating on making our Asset Management Plan a living document. We have been under-investing in our assets to date which is building an infrastructure deficit for the Municipality.

Asset management planning is the process of making the best possible decisions regarding the building, operating, maintaining, renewing, replacing and disposing of

infrastructure assets. The objective is to maximize benefits, manage risk, and provide satisfactory levels of service to the public in a sustainable manner. Asset management requires a thorough understanding of the characteristics and condition of infrastructure assets, as well as the service levels expected from them. It also involves setting strategic priorities to optimize decision-making about when and how to proceed with investments. Finally, it requires the development of a financial plan, which is the most critical step in putting the plan into action.

5. *Were the assets and budgets mismanaged in the past, why is a plan just being done now?*

Prior to 2009, municipalities would expense capital purchases each year. In 2009, a change to Public Sector Accounting required all municipalities to record all assets in the statement of financial position, similar to how you would see it on a balance sheet for a business. Municipalities populated this list with the information they had available. This information was all done at historical cost value and then depreciated each year to determine a net book value. Then in 2013, the Municipality was required to create an asset management plan. The municipality took the historical asset data that was identified in 2009 and analyzed these assets to determine their actual useful life (not accounting useful life) and determined a replacement value. This information populated the asset management plan, and this analysis indicated the value of our assets and what will be required in the future to pay for maintaining, replacing and rehabilitating them. Not all of our current assets presently require maintenance, but at some point in the future, all assets will require maintenance, rehabilitation or replacement. This is a tool that assists Municipalities in identifying priorities and creating a strategy to address these assets to ensure we are meeting the levels of service as directed by Council.

6. *Crime and vandalism in Middlesex Centre is an issue.*

The Municipality does not have its own police department and uses the services of the OPP. The OPP is responsible for ensuring adequate policing coverage in the areas they serve; the municipality has very little control over this. The OPP has certain tips on how to prevent break-ins as this is a matter that is difficult for us or the police to control. Please check out this website, there is some great information that can help you.

<http://www.opp.ca/index.php?id=115&entryid=570bf1a58f94ac983906709c&lng=en>

7. *The biggest concern is that the Municipality should be controlling costs.*

The Municipality is doing many things to control/decrease costs. Specifically:

- a. Rates & Fees Study for Community Services was completed in 2013 to assist staff in understanding our costs and assist in developing rental rates of our facilities. This will be reviewed in 2018.

- b. Marketed unused ice time by creating a 'Last Minute Ice Booking' rate to bring in additional revenue.
- c. Joined the Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford Purchasing Group to achieve better pricing for products and services.
- d. Joined the Vendor of Record program to achieve better pricing for services/purchases.
- e. Partner when we can on community capital projects.
- f. Use of inspection zones and timing schedule for building department inspections to reduce travel time/costs. Technology is used on site to enter inspections electronically for increased efficiency, accuracy and improved documentation.
- g. Conducted a building permit fee review and the building department now uses full cost recovery fee schedule. Development pays for development.
- h. Water and Wastewater Services Agreement with American Water Canada cancelled in an effort to stabilize water and wastewater rates.
- i. Review of current processes.

9. *Concerns on employee remuneration.*

Middlesex Centre has a policy wherein our wages are reviewed every 5 years. The Municipality believes it is important to be "in the market" in terms of wages so that we can attract and retain the excellent staff that we have.

10. *Concerns on staffing levels.*

The Municipality reviews service levels each budget year and we are always looking at how to deliver our services more effectively and efficiently.

11. *The Municipality needs better community engagement.*

The Municipality is actively working to engage the public by posting information on our website, social media, electronic signs, and newspapers. All community engagement is advertised. Some specific events in 2016 & 2017 to engage the public:

- a) September 7, 2016 Council meeting was held at the Delaware Community Centre. After the meeting the CAO and Directors stayed for an additional hour to meet with community members to obtain feedback, answer questions, however no one showed up.
- b) November 30, 2016 Council meeting held in Ilderton, 12 people showed up.
- c) Budget 2017 survey online in September 2016 and 2018 survey in August 2017.
- d) Two informal budget sessions in the fall of 2016, however only 3 residents participated.

- e) November 2, 2016 community roundtable exercise on the 2017 budget, only 2 residents participated. Community Roundtable scheduled for October 25, 2017 for 2018 budget.
- f) Community events for the Ilderton Skateboard Park held, minimal participation. Municipality changed the approach and created online Facebook group and received some feedback.
- g) In addition to these events, the Municipality creates a magazine that is sent out by mail to all residents in Middlesex Centre and available at the Municipal office and local businesses two times a year.
- h) Monthly inserts are included in water, wastewater and stormwater bills.
- i) Inserts are sent out with interim and final tax bills.
- j) Printed posters such as Canada 150.
- k) Capital project signs for large municipal capital projects.
- l) Third party Villager magazine as written by Councillors.

Twitter/Facebook:

The Municipality averages approximately 1 post every 2 days. Additionally, every day the channels are monitored and community groups/local agency posts are shared/retweeted.

The Municipality has 693 followers on Twitter, from January 1<sup>st</sup> – September 8<sup>th</sup>. The posts resulted in a total of (44k impressions or views).

Middlesex Centre has 560 followers on Facebook, and average approximately 400 views per post.

12. *Middlesex Centre should be video recording of public meetings so as to make them more accessible to citizens who want to go to meetings but find it difficult to attend.*

The Municipality is always looking at new technologies to help us to be more transparent as required by the Municipal Act but we must be sure to also take a look at other legislation like accessibility and providing captioning and also the cost to deploy this type of technology. Video recording of public meetings may be cost prohibitive at this time.

13. Middlesex Centre should host town hall meetings.

In 2016, the municipality hosted 2 Town Hall sessions and unfortunately, they were not well attended. Staff want to be sure that we are sharing information to the residents/community while also understanding what the issues are within the community. We will continue to research ways in which we can get information out while at the same time understanding what the issues are within Middlesex Centre.

14. *Middlesex Centre is losing the rural appeal.*

Middlesex Centre continues to follow the Provincial Policy Statement as it relates to the preservation of Agricultural lands. Also, Middlesex Centre supports the County of Middlesex's efforts to support agriculture as part of the strategic plan.

### **Economic Development**

1. *What is the Municipality doing to bring jobs to the Community?*

We currently do not have a lot of industry and the municipality does not own any industrial land to try to promote business to locate in Middlesex Centre. Middlesex Centre does support commercial businesses as much as we can.

The County of Middlesex is very active in economic development for all lower tier municipalities in the County. Please visit the following website:

[www.investinmiddlesex.ca](http://www.investinmiddlesex.ca)

2. *What can the Municipality do to assist in building our settlement areas with businesses?*

The different settlement areas are at different stages with commercial businesses. For example, we are seeing considerable interest and development plans within Kilworth/Komoka. In Ilderton, we have interest from commercial businesses but there is limited land to purchase for commercial developments. The Municipality is doing what we can to assist with commercial development but if we don't own the lands then we are limited in terms of what we can do.

3. *More industry is needed here in Middlesex Centre.*

Ideally, the Municipality should own industrial lands so that we can better respond to any enquiries that might come our way. There is a cost factor when looking at purchasing land.

4. *What can be done to improve main streets with curb appeal?*

We are currently working with the County on the Environmental Assessment for Glendon Drive. As part of this project, we are looking at a plan to design this main street in Kilworth/Komoka with amenities such as bike paths, walking paths, garbage receptacles, banners, decorative street lights, etc. In Ilderton, we plan to undertake the same exercise with the County for Ilderton Road.

5. *Increase to assistance of small businesses in the municipality.*

Middlesex Centre currently has one Community improvement plan (CIP) in the Ilderton settlement area. Middlesex Centre is very supportive of assisting businesses in any way we can. Of course any kind of financial support needs to consider carefully to ensure that the municipality has the funds and that it is fairly distributed.

6. *Why do we have grass route tourist signs?*

This is a County initiative and we can certainly pass this comment onto Middlesex County. Please see informative link below.

<https://www.investinmiddlesex.ca/key-sectors/tourism>

7. *Multiple Businesses failed to thrive in Kilworth Business Park and the Municipality lacks access to stores for everyday needs.*

As a municipality, we would also like to see commercial stores locating in every settlement area. With residential growth, we will certainly see an increase in commercial development but it is up to commercial businesses to conduct their business case/market analysis to see if they will start a business here.

8. *Middlesex Centre needs more rural internet services at a reasonable cost.*

Middlesex Centre and the County sees this as an urgent need. As we don't provide this service ourselves, we are somewhat reliant on those companies who are in the business of providing internet services and they are looking at the business case for extension of services.

## **Transportation and Waste Management**

1. *New trucks being purchased when not needed.*

Municipal fleet is replaced based on several evaluation factors like the annual operating cost, condition assessment, total mileage, age of asset, residual resale value, etc. On average, municipal fleet is replaced approximately every 8-10 years with front-line fire apparatus being replaced every 20.

2. *Terrible roads and roads being resurfaced for no reason.*

The selection of roads for the Municipality's Road Resurfacing Program is based on the Municipality's most recent Road Needs Study (2014) prepared by MMM Group Limited who was retained to carry out an inventory and condition appraisal of the Municipality's road network and at-grade railway crossings. Such report provides the Municipality with a prioritized 10 and 20 year rehabilitation inventory and is one of several inputs to establishing its roads maintenance and capital expenditure

program. Other contributing inputs include, traffic counts, geotechnical evaluation of the underlying road structure, etc.

The Municipality has elected to be proactive in its road maintenance which equates to less costly re-investments and minimizes its road safety liabilities.

3. *Green bin program, large item curb side pick-up, yard waste pickup*

Curb side waste pick up at the present time is simply cost prohibitive due to the Municipality's small population. The Municipality's Enviro Depot offers residents the ability to discard items which are otherwise unable to be picked up at the curb side for a minimal fee.

4. *Repairing and replacing sidewalks – sidewalks in Ilderton in bad condition*

The Municipality initiated an Annual Concrete Replacement Program in 2015 to address substandard and deficient sidewalks throughout our communities. The Municipality follows the provincially prescribed standards for sidewalk maintenance (Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways, O. Reg. 239/02). Substandard sidewalks which still exist in Ilderton and Arva will be the focus of priority over the next several years.

5. *Great Job at Winter Road maintenance!*

The Municipality works hard to deliver the services you need and expect.

6. *Snow plowing – what is the logic behind the Municipal practice?*

The Municipality's Winter Maintenance aims to provide safe roads and sidewalks during the winter season at an affordable price. The Municipality's has a 24/7 response team equipped with:

- 13 pieces of combination road plowing and de-icing equipment
- five road plowing graders
- two front-end loaders, and
- three rubber tired backhoes

This response team maintains the Municipality's 583 kms of roadway, and 24 kms of sidewalks. The Municipality also tracks weather conditions and deploys road temperature sensors outfitted to its fleet which monitors our roads for snow and ice detection.

We have an established plan and routes for clearing snow, and ask that you refrain from calling during the first day of a snow event. After the snowfall ends, it can take:

- 8-12 hours to clear priority roads, and
- For all Municipal roads approximately 24 hours.

A larger or continuous snowfall event may extend the time necessary to clear snow from local streets and cul-de-sacs. Our contracted sidewalk snow removal service is done using mechanical equipment and while sidewalks are able to be cleared to a snow packed condition, the equipment does not allow for clearing down to bare pavement.

The Municipality follows the provincially prescribed standards for winter maintenance (Minimum Maintenance Standards for Municipal Highways, O. Reg. 239/02). Roads are categorized into five main classes. Class 1, 2 and 3 or priority roads, which include arterial and some secondary collectors, take first priority. Classes 4 and 5, which include local streets and cul-de-sacs, have less priority.

7. *The Municipality needs bike lanes.*

This is a County initiative and a representative from the County will be joining Middlesex Centre at an upcoming council meeting to discuss.

## **Development**

1. *Why new housing development isn't enough of an increase*

Middlesex Centre is essentially comprised of subdivision developments with large residential lots; lacking any significant density, industrial, commercial or institutional customers to curb the significant expenses in servicing large residential lots.

2. *Development fees should cover all the costs of development; this should be managed to bring benefits to the community not costs.*

The purpose of Development Charges (DC) is to recover the capital costs associated with residential and non-residential growth within the municipality. The capital costs are in addition to what costs would normally be constructed as part of a subdivision (i.e. internal roads, sewers, water mains, roads, sidewalks, streetlights, etc.). Municipalities are empowered to impose these charges via the *Development Charges Act (DCA)*.

New developments are serviced at the expense of the developer. With new construction, development charges are collected to support several categories of municipal interest including; major roads, servicing (sewer and water), libraries, fire protection, parks and recreation, public works and major development related studies. These development charges are reviewed at least every five years, if not more frequently to ensure their accuracy. It is important to note that the Development Charges Act only allows for a 90% cost recovery not 100%.

Development Charge rates may be viewed on Middlesex Centre's website under the Building Division's homepage. Middlesex Centre has currently conducted a review of our Development Charges study and an amendment will be coming before Council on October 4, 2017.

3. *Expanding housing developments when the infrastructure is not there to support it (specifically wastewater management).*

Housing developments cannot proceed in the absence of wastewater servicing paid for by developers.

4. *Potential housing increase in Kilworth is an issue, specifically the size of lots.*

A municipality needs a variety of housing to be available for its residents, so that multiple generations can afford to live together. Development is important in order to share the costs of services and ensure financial security (a tax base) to the municipality.

Middlesex Centre lacks any significant density, industrial, commercial or institutional customers to curb the significant expenses in servicing large residential lots. A growing, thriving community comprised of various built forms where residents can sleep, work, eat and play is beneficial to the health and well-being of our community.

5. *Too much residential development.*

There are certainly different perspectives on this matter. Our planning documents do position us to grow in a controlled and responsible way. The municipality is experiencing pressure to lower water and wastewater rates and one of the ways we can do that is with increased customers connected to the systems along with additional density within developments.

Given the significant investments the Municipality has made in recent years with respect to infrastructure servicing, continued development in general is needed to pay for such investments. The Municipality desires a combination of development types, ideally of greater density, to continue in positive growth and vitality of our communities.

## **Fire Services**

1. *The construction of the Coldstream fire hall is exorbitant.*

The replacement of the Coldstream Fire Station has been discussed since 2010. There have been many changes in our world since then. For example, we are finding that energy prices are increasing dramatically. With the new fire station, we believe it's important to have energy sustainable features so that we can limit or better manage the energy costs. The design of the new fire hall is a basic

facility. The functional program designed for this facility is fairly straightforward. The amenities in the facility are typical of what you would find in a modern day volunteer fire hall. Typical construction costs for commercial buildings are anywhere from \$220 TO \$275 per square foot. The Coldstream project came in at \$232/sqft. These are realistic costs in today's market.

To date the following has been completed related to the Coldstream Fire hall:

- i. Selection of an architect through an RFP process
- ii. Development of a Functional Program
- iii. Class C estimate
- iv. Setting the budget including 'Total Project Costs' which include, design, engineering, construction, contingency, sustainable features
- v. Class C Estimate
- vi. Completion and approval of the Project Charter
- vii. Detail Design
- viii. Class B estimate
- ix. Tendered
- x. Construction contract awarded
- xi. Construction commenced
- xii. Project completion identified as December 2017.

Additionally, the Municipality received a grant from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for the construction of the fire of \$393,000.

## *2. Emergency service improvements are required.*

EMS services are provided by the County via Middlesex-London EMS.

A wide range of fire and emergency services are provided by the Municipality through a "Volunteer" or "Paid On-Call" service delivery/response model. This model utilizes a dedicated and highly trained group of firefighters to provide these service to all communities in Middlesex Centre - and provide them at or in most cases above current industry standards.

Services provided are largely dictated by legislation, regulation, bylaw and Fire Marshal directives. To further, it is important to note that the services provided are equivalent to that of a full-time fire department in all facets, albeit our firefighters do not staff our stations 24/7.

At this time, having a full-time or composite fire department for Middlesex Centre would be cost prohibitive.

## **Community Services**

1. *The Municipality needs an indoor pool.*

- a. We simply are not a large enough municipality to support our own pool. Typically, communities need to have a population of 40,000 or higher to justify the need for a pool.
- b. An indoor pool typically loses approximately a half a million dollars annually and are considered 'loss leaders'.
- c. Council could approve to move forward with one however we would need to be prepared to lose money on it. Costs are high due to:
  - i. The legislative requirement to waste 20 litres of water per bather per day as per the health code. I.e. if you had 500 bathers in one day you legally need to dump 10,000 litres that day as required by the health department which then needs to be heated and conditioned.
  - ii. Lifeguarding costs are high due to the ratios required by the health department.
  - iii. Costs to maintain over and above the need to lose water each day. Pools generate a lot of hydro to heat, dehumidify and run filter pumps etc.
  - iv. Middlesex Centre likely wouldn't see the numbers the bigger centres would see to fill programs in order to minimize some sort of cost recovery.
  - v. Pools are extremely expensive to construct and maintain over their lifetime.
  - vi. With St Mary's, City of London and YMCA facilities not that far away there really isn't a need at this time.

2. *Middlesex Centre needs recreational programs.*

Middlesex Centre does not run programs now, it is something we are looking into for the future. The Municipality does offer drop in programs like public skating, parent & tot skating, Shiny hockey etc. The Municipality did partner with the YMCA 3 years ago in offering some direct programming options in Delaware, Coldstream and Ilderton, things like yoga, boot camp, aerobics etc. Most programs failed as the participant numbers were not high enough. Some programs (yoga) still exist but these are located mainly in Ilderton.

Middlesex Centre does have a lot of great private businesses that offer all the same programs that the City of London's Spectrum program has to offer.

3. *The Municipality should implement non-resident fees.*

The Municipality does charge non-resident fees for pavilions and community centres. Staff have discussed charging non-resident fees for ice rentals, however this has not passed the Community Service Advisory Committee, therefore not implemented. Similarly, the Community Service Advisory Committee did not want to implement additional user fees for rentals to assist in paying for future capital improvements.

4. *Additional free use of the community wellness centre in Komoka.*

The Municipality already subsidizes the facility. No additional free time is being considered at this time.

5. *The Arena in Ilderton sits empty, can it not be utilized for other programs in the off season?*

Yes for the most part, the arena does sit idle throughout the day with a few daytime uses. The Curling Club however is full each and every day. We do offer daytime drop in programs, however the participation is very low (approximately 2 people). The Wellness Centre does have more throughout the week because it has other amenities to attract more people.

6. *While the upkeep is pretty good in the parks, there does seem to be a lot of dead and dying trees in the park which I would think is a safety issue.*

Middlesex Centre does have a number of dead ash trees everywhere and have been continuously removing hazard trees as needed. Although some are dead, they are considered safe up to a point.

7. *A lot of money was spent on The Wellness Centre which only a few residents use.*

This is not a true statement. The Wellness Centre is regularly full of activity and has a high usage rate. Not only is it used for skating, but it contains the YMCA as well as the County library. The YMCA provides many programs out of this location, specifically summer, March break and PA Day camps.

In Addition, within the survey there were many comments on reducing Community Service programs, buildings, services, etc. There appears to be two very conflicting views with respect to Community Services.

It is important to note that the Community Services Department is dedicated to the health and well-being of all residents in Middlesex Centre. Our highly trained and dedicated facility staff are responsible for the day-to-day operation and maintenance of all our facilities. Our Community Services Department works hard to assist various community groups that provide programs to residents. Through our grant program we are able to offer various groups financial assistance to help carry out their programs and services.

The Municipality works hard to improve the quality of life for residents in our community by promoting healthy lifestyles. We strive to build community partnerships, create accessible recreation, and offer the highest quality services.

## **Water, Wastewater and Stormwater**

### *1. High water and wastewater rates.*

Middlesex Centre is essentially comprised of subdivision developments with large residential lots; lacking any significant density, industrial, commercial or institutional customers to curb the significant expenses in servicing large residential lots.

At the recommendation of the Director, Public Works and Engineering and supporting approval by Council, the Municipality's existing Water and Wastewater Services operating and maintenance contract with American Water Canada was terminated over the balance of the existing contract effective November 1, 2016, in favour of an in-house service delivery model similar to that in other neighboring municipalities which will result in savings for our customers. This is a continued effort to identify efficiencies and ultimately reach rate sustainability for our customers.

### *2. Storm water.*

Stormwater consists of the rain and melted snow that flows from local properties into the streets then to storm drains and eventually ends up in Ontario's lakes. Our stormwater infrastructure protects our water quality and helps lower the risk of flooding. In Middlesex Centre, our stormwater infrastructure includes stormwater ponds, storm sewers, catch basins, maintenance holes, oil grit separators, culverts and municipal drains. The inspections, repairs and maintenance of this infrastructure is currently funded through wastewater rates.

The benefits of shifting to a rate based funding mechanism include:

- A dedicated funding source for stormwater management costs which allows for sustainability, flexibility and adaptability to respond to issues and legislative changes.
- A more fair and equitable rate for each property based on the property's use and size as opposed to the tax rate which is based on the property value.
- A funding mechanism that would include all contributors to the stormwater management systems based on property use.
- Increased transparency and improved opportunity for customer awareness and education.

Middlesex Centre's stormwater infrastructure exists at various lifecycle stages and continues to age. As sediment is collected in ponds, and concrete structures/existing urban municipal drains continue to degrade, the ability of the infrastructure to provide adequate flood control decreases. The Municipality must conduct ongoing infrastructure monitoring, operate and maintain these services, and provide for capital replacement programs as required.

A comprehensive stormwater management program is very intensive and cannot be successful without a consistent, dedicated source of revenue provided by the stormwater charge. These charges will help ensure sustainable funding for stormwater management over the long term.

Council in their authority in accordance with the Municipal Act 2001 accepted staff subject report and authorized the regulation of the supporting bylaw. At that time many other municipalities consulted included (Strathroy-Caradoc, Thames Centre, City of London, City of St. Thomas, City of Kitchener, City of Waterloo, City of Cambridge, City of Guelph, the Municipality of Peel Region, City of Vaughan, City of Toronto, the Municipality of Richmond Hill, etc.

All properties situated within one of Middlesex Centre's settlement community boundaries as defined by the Municipality's Official Plan is required to contribute to the Stormwater Management Fund.

All properties situated external of one of Middlesex Centre's settlement community boundaries as defined by the Municipality's Official Plan is assessed its respective stormwater contribution in accordance with the Ontario Drainage Act 1990.

Municipalities across Ontario including Middlesex Centre are facing increasing infrastructure backlogs, funding gaps, and increased financial pressures of our stormwater infrastructure management. These challenges have been driven by aging infrastructure, environmental and public health issues, limited ability to raise funds from property taxes, resulting competition for resources from other municipal responsibilities, more rigorous regulatory and design standards for storm operations, and more severe frequent storm events wreaking havoc on our municipal infrastructure; highlighting that stormwater services are significantly underfunded.

The Municipality's Asset Management Plan, dated December 2013, estimated the replacement cost of the stormwater system at \$53.2 million. A stormwater management program is very capital intensive and projects often take years to complete and cannot be successful completed without a consistent, dedicated source of revenue on which it can rely.

The new stormwater infrastructure reserve fund will be drawn upon to address such aging infrastructure, undertake required annual Ministry reporting, maintenance, on-going operation, rehabilitation, improvements and upgrades to the Municipality's stormwater management infrastructure which includes but is not limited to roadside ditches, culverts, catch basins, oil grit separators, ponds, storm sewers, etc.

## **By-Law Enforcement**

### *1. Lack of By-law Enforcement & Communication*

By-Law Enforcement can be problematic due to resources and awareness of the issue. Predominantly, By-Law enforcement is conducted on a complaint-basis. Residents are encouraged to contact the municipality to report any issue and staff will follow-up on the complaint.

We are always looking for better avenues to communicate and educate residents with respect to By-Law enforcement issues, such as overnight parking, property standards and noise.