

Presented to ...

Thames Valley Board of Education

London Ontario

Annual Community Planning and Facility
Collaboration Opportunities Meeting.

December 17th, 2020



Submitted by ...

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Mayor of Southwest Middlesex.

December 2nd, 2020

Thames Valley District School Board

Planning Department

On behalf of the residents, members of Council, Administration, and the Staff, of Southwest Middlesex, I bring greetings to Thames Valley Board of Education. We thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Annual Community Planning and Facility Collaboration Opportunities Meeting.

Our Municipality is very much aware of the excess capacity that currently exists at Glencoe District High School. Following decades of limited growth, we are pleased to inform you, that Southwest Middlesex is now on its way to unprecedented expansion in terms of residential development. Southwest Middlesex has four housing developments - currently in an active planning stage. These subdivisions range in size from 14 units to 199 units and will culminate in approximately 330 new homes. Inquires for development opportunities are arriving weekly to our Municipal Office. We strongly believe that the student population will increase dramatically over the next 4- to 7 years.

As London's footprint migrates towards the west, Southwest Middlesex has become a highly recognized market for family living. Less expensive housing cost, and competitive taxation, are attracting both development and re-sale interest. We are a Full-Service Community, in that we boast of having attractive Parks and Recreation, a viable Business Community, and a well-maintained infrastructure and road network. Our Administration and Governance is both capable, hospitable, and development friendly. Our pro-activeness will lead to a comparatively prodigious increase in development.

In addition, the Municipality has recently developed 44.8 acres - M-1 General Industrial Land. These lands are recognized under the Ontario Certified Site Program and are currently being marketed throughout the Province. We receive inquiries regularly on these industrial lands.

The Challenges ...

The primary industry in Southwest Middlesex is Agriculture and subsidiary industries and businesses include - grain elevators, farm equipment dealerships, and crop analysis and research. Animal husbandry and livestock is significant in Southwest Middlesex as well. We are home to some of the best cattle, pork, lamb, and poultry operations and genetics in North America. The land mass is extensive – covering 427.88 square kilometers and currently has a modest population of 5,800 individuals but is destined for significant growth.

As a result of being a “Food Producer”, - we have often felt disadvantaged in the past by Provincial and Federal funding and planning formulas. At times we feel punished for feeding the nation. Farmers require fields and meat producers need barns and land for nutrient management practices. This agricultural component that we are most proud of – compromises student population. The meals that you eat daily come from communities like Southwest Middlesex. School capacity will always be a challenge for rural areas. It should not however be overlooked in having the need for post elementary education. We produce the food that you consume; this should not compromise our secondary school status.

In addition to our responsibility to help feed the nation, Southwest Middlesex has some geo-physical attributes that are worth mentioning in terms of understanding the human and student density issues we face. We have one of the most precious “Tree Canopies” in Southwestern Ontario, that we affectionately call “*Skunks Misery*”.

This tract of protected land, that approaches 3,000 acres in size – hosts a diversity of upland and wetland plants - is recognized by both naturalists and academics as one of the best Carolinian Forests in North America. Rare species of reptiles, insects, and animal life are found in this Southwest Middlesex feature. It does not however contain students !

When you add the flood plain areas of the Historic Thames River and the Sydenham River, combined with the woodlands and fields that have been previously mentioned; one realizes again, - that much of the 106,157 acres of Southwest Middlesex is unable to house student life.

It is probable that full capacity of Glencoe District High School will not be achievable in the distant future; but capacity approaching 60 to 75 per-cent is attainable within the next decade and is realistic to the vision of our governance in Southwest Middlesex.

The production of food, being stewards of the environment, and having 2 water sheds - compromises our ability to attain unrealistic student density numbers that the board may impose.

What Happens After The Moratorium Is Lifted ?

The *Ontario Alliance Against School Closures* has been an admirable citizens' coalition that was formed to combat the wave of school closures sweeping the Province.

I am both honoured and pleased that it has been Chaired by Mr. Doug Reycraft, - a resident of Southwest Middlesex.

They (and we) - are concerned for the availability of education facilities for rural Ontario. In addition, - our towns and villages look upon our secondary schools as avenues of cultural exchange, community hubs, and social interaction venues. Closure would have a negative impact on businesses and industry as a result of reduced access to places of learning. Should the school closing moratorium be lifted; are we to expect that up to 600 schools in Ontario, many of them in rural communities, would get “chopped” in the coming few years ?

The moratorium that the Province initiated - results in a false sense of security, in that, it could be lifted or expire at any time.



Southwest Middlesex is experiencing unprecedented growth, including, ... residential development, industrial inquiries, added childcare, improved infrastructure, and recreational development.

As Mayor of Southwest Middlesex, I am pleased for the opportunity to inform you of the bright future that awaits our Municipality. We ask that the growth that lies on our horizon be taken into consideration in your future planning criteria.

Mayor Allan Mayhew.