

Building a Mixed-Use, Compact City

This paper is the third in a series of eight discussion papers.

It was 1971. City Council held their first meeting in the new City Hall on Dufferin Avenue on April 5, 1971. Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau visited on November 11, and later that year became the father of a new baby named Justin. Council was also in the process of adopting a new Official Plan.

In 1961, the City annexed large areas of London Township, including the neighbourhoods north of Huron Street and Oakridge and Byron to the west. The new 1971 Official Plan included these lands. The plan suggested that the lands within the 1971 boundary could accommodate a population “in excess of 500,000”. Wow! We have really strayed from that 1971 objective.

So, where are we in 2013? The fact is that we’ve already surpassed the former 1971 city boundary and we’re only at a population of 366,000. What does this mean? At the densities we’ve been growing at since 1971, we estimate we’d need another 6,500 hectares of land to reach that 500,000 population number.

How much additional land is this? Well, it’s equal to the entire land area of the City of Waterloo!! Compared to our expectations in 1971, we would need to add lands equal in size to all of Waterloo to accommodate 500,000 people. In other words, over the past 40 years we’ve been growing in a very spread-out pattern and we’re consuming much more land than we ever dreamed we would need when we set our plans in 1971. If this doesn’t concern you... it should!

3

We estimate that in the next 50 years our population will grow by more than 50%, with an additional 200,000 people calling London home.





We estimate that in the next 50 years our population will grow by more than 50%, with an additional 200,000 people calling London home.

Where will they live? How much are we prepared to pay for it? How will we move around a city of that size? Do we push out our boundaries, consuming some of Canada's most valuable farmland along the way? Or, do we look to a new more balanced vision? At what point do we draw that proverbial line in the sand and say, "the old approach just will not work anymore".

There are alternatives to how we grow in the future. The need to better conserve our lands as we grow is something that you have told us. While still offering plentiful options for suburban growth, do we want to also look inward and upward, rather than just focusing outward?

But it's not just about changing our pattern of growth; it's also about looking towards new mixes of land use as we grow. Traditional planning techniques, such as zoning regulations, focus on separating uses from one another, which results in subdivisions that offer large tracts of houses that are similar in lot area, similar in height, similar in building size, similar in style. These traditional planning techniques often result in neighbourhoods with little variety, or where different housing types and different uses are not found.

It's time, now, to take stock and look at how we do things. The decisions that we make and actions that we take now will have an impact on future generations of our families. These impacts include: How we will live? How we will work? How we will move? How we will adapt to climate change? How will this affect our ability to attract talent and investment? How much it will cost us?

We have heard much from Londoners about how you would like to see growth in the future. We've also heard from our development community and they want to work with us to develop the London of the future.

Good News About Growth in London

There's lots of good news relating to growth and development in London. While our pattern of growth has generally been at lower densities than were imagined in 1971, over the past 40 years, development densities have jumped by 20% in single family homes over the past 10 years. Additionally, over the past 10 years, almost 40% of all our residential units have been developed within the built up area of the City – that's what we would call "infill development". That means 40% of our residential development didn't occur on new Greenfield lands.

As well, more attention is being paid to urban design, placemaking, and sustainability. The development community is integrating affordable housing and sustainable green technologies in their development projects. London's longest-standing developer, Sifton Properties, in association with the London Home Builders Association, recently constructed a Green Home that demonstrates how new green technologies can be incorporated into new houses constructed in London. Sifton is also developing a new model for mixing retail, office and residential uses in the Riverbend Heights area. This development which incorporates the potential for district energy and a new form of integrated "main street" mixed-uses.

We are doing things differently:

We've seen affordable housing play an important role in doing things differently as well. While meeting an important need in the community, affordable housing has also led the way for green technologies, quality design, and revitalization. The project at Nelson and Adelaide is a high quality building that incorporates roof top solar panels. A project on Dundas Street in the Old East Village mixes commercial uses fronting the street, with mid-rise apartments above and high-rise apartments behind. This project, which will play a big role in revitalizing the Old East Village Corridor, also incorporates geo-thermal energy.

In the Old East Village, Medallion Corporation has introduced a new form of high rise development in London, complete with a ground level podium of garden apartments that access directly onto the street. Meanwhile, Tricar has had a huge impact on Downtown revitalization by adding hundreds of new apartment units in the core – complete with rooftop amenity area and public art. Drewlo is planning an innovative form of mid-rise apartment building in the City's north-east and York Developments has built some recent infill projects taking advantage of vacant or underutilized sites within London's existing built up area.

Two more recent projects highlight the change that is occurring in the development landscape. Hampton Group recently developed a mixed-use mid-rise building in Wortley Village, which has commercial on the ground floor and luxury apartment buildings above. This project has turned a long-time vacant lot into an urban use that adds vitality and quality form to one of London's favourite streets. Meanwhile, Old Oak has revolutionized the mid-rise market in London by introducing "Nuvo", a completely new form of garden apartment unit that has direct access to the street, and creates a very urban feel in a suburban location. They've also developed a neighbourhood centre complete with private gym and a cafe that extends out onto the adjacent park.

Several other developers in London are raising the bar. Richmond Village North, by Auburn Developments, is a good example. A pedestrian-oriented main street, centered on a village green is planned to be the focal point for the community. Placemaking concepts have been woven into the design of the community to create a distinct neighbourhood with character and identity.

For London to become the City that you told us you wanted it to be, our development community will need to lead the way and be an important partner as we explore new development approaches and sustainable technologies. The City also plays an important role by ensuring balance and variety of choice for Londoners.

Smart development won't happen unless it makes financial sense for a developer to build it. That's what we would expect from any investment or business enterprise and it's no different when it comes to investment in a development project – there needs to be an adequate return on that investment. What is encouraging though, is that we're moving in the right direction, showing that it is financially viable for us to achieve the goals of compact city, high quality urban design, placemaking features, and sustainability right here in London.

Growth is good! But not all growth is equal...

It's important that we, the Planner, clarify our opinion on the matter of growth. We believe that growth is good, and, in fact, critical for the long-term prosperity of London. In our pursuit of a prosperous London, growth can allow us to increase our tax base, reach populations adequate to support rapid level transit and other public services, bring new ideas and innovation to our community, enhance diversity, support quality arts and entertainment venues, social programs, and help generate economic activity and jobs for everyone. The development community employs a great number of people and supports an important job sector – in 2011, 14,700 people were employed in construction.

“...quality growth, smart growth, sustainable growth, and growth that contributes to our quality of life.” – Londoners

We definitely didn't hear messages from Londoners asking us to stop growth. Rather, we heard messages about quality growth, smart growth, sustainable growth and growth that contributes to our quality of life as a City.

We can't afford “dumb” growth...

You've heard the term smart growth. Well, perhaps it's crass to say so, but we believe that there is “dumb growth”. This is the kind of growth that yields us the same revenues to the City as smart growth, but costs us infinitely more to service. It's the kind of growth that disrespects natural heritage, unnecessarily consumes large tracts of farmland, is disconnected from active transportation, and offers little sense of community or identity. It's the kind of growth that



hurts our economic opportunities in the long term, by detracting from our goal of building a city that people want to live in and invest in.

This is not the kind of growth we're looking for in London's future!

Consider this example...

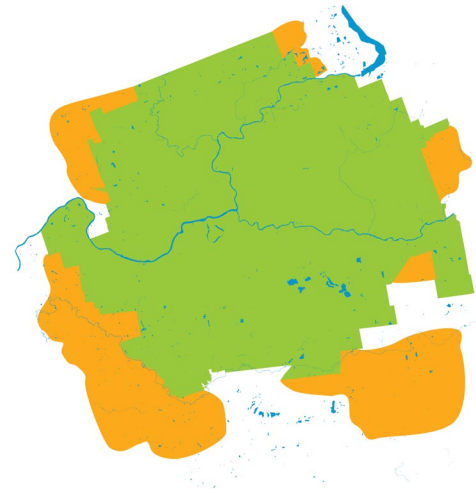
Let's do some visioning that can help us make this point. As we noted in this paper, we expect we'll add almost 200,000 people to our City over the next 50 years (that's a population increase of over 50%).

We've prepared three different example growth scenarios to illustrate different ways we could accommodate that new 50 year population – being a bit more precise it's just over 190,000 people. In each of these examples, the number of people, the number of jobs and the number of homes is the same. The intent of these options is to look at what kind of homes we build, at what densities, and where.

Scenario 1

Spread pattern of growth

- New population 191,000
- New employment – 116,500
- New residential units – 101,800
- 70% single detached houses;
- 15% townhouse and mid-rise;
- 15% high-rise;
- Broad majority of growth in greenfield areas; infill development is limited
- Residential densities are very low



Scenario 2

Compact pattern of growth

- New population 191,000
- New employment – 116,500
- New residential units – 101,800
- 30% single detached houses;
- 35% townhouse and mid-rise;
- 35% high-rise;
- Broad majority of single detached homes in greenfield areas, but majority of townhouses, mid-rise and high-rise are in built-out areas of City (infill)
- Residential densities are very high



Scenario 3

Hybrid pattern of growth

- New population 191,000
- New employment – 116,500
- New residential units – 101,800
- 50% single detached houses;
- 23% townhouse and mid-rise;
- 27% high-rise
- Broad majority of single detached homes in Greenfield areas, but half of townhouses, mid-rise and 90% of high-rise are in built-out areas of City (infill)
- Residential densities are slightly higher than recent history



Green represents the current area within the Urban Growth Boundary. Orange denotes the scale of expansion that would be required to accommodate the residential growth scenario. The location of this growth is for illustration only and does not represent support for any particular growth boundary expansion.

The differences are enormous...

The differences are staggering and they show how important our decisions on growth really are. The SPREAD scenario will require more than 6,400 ha of land outside of our current growth boundary to accommodate the 190,000 residents and 116,000 jobs that we expect in the next 50 years. This is equal to filling all of the land within our current growth boundary *and* adding a land area equal to the size of Waterloo in the next 50 years.

The COMPACT model would allow us to accommodate all of those new residential units and jobs with absolutely no addition to our current growth boundary. In other words, under this scenario we would be able to collect all of that new tax revenue and enjoy all of the advantages of growth without venturing beyond the limits of our current urban boundary. Think of the savings relative to the SPREAD scenario where we would have the same number of jobs and residential units, but would have to service an additional land area equivalent to the City of Waterloo – 6,400 ha (that's equal to the area of 10 Central London areas – the area bounded by Oxford, Adelaide and the Thames River).

The HYBRID model would develop beyond our current urban growth boundary over the next 50 years, but requires only 17% of the additional land area required (1098 hectares) under the SPREAD scenario.

Let's talk about costs...

The numbers demonstrate that it costs a lot more to grow in a spread development pattern. Remember, all of the scenarios allow for the same amount of growth in terms of new housing and employment. The only difference is the pattern of growth.

We estimate that the COMPACT model would require roads, sewers, storm ponds, and other services that would amount to over \$1.5 billion of one-time capital costs over 50 years.

The HYBRID model would cost us \$2.2 billion – that's about \$700 million or 45% more than the compact model over 50 years.

The SPREAD model would cost a whopping \$4.2 billion - and that's \$2.7 billion or 180% more than the compact model over 50 years. Think of it. \$2.7 billion of additional costs to the development community, the City, and the tax payer. It's an incredible sum!

But wait! These are just the initial costs to develop. We also need to talk about operating costs.

Over the 50 year projection period, the COMPACT scenario would cost approximately \$452 million. This climbs to about \$886 million for the HYBRID model – that's almost double the operating costs of servicing the compact model! What's more, it's estimated we'll spend about \$2.17 billion under the SPREAD model – about 4 times the cost of servicing the compact model.

These operating costs represent municipal tax dollars – money that comes from all our pockets. Depending on the way we grow, we could spend billions of dollars more – yes, that's a "B" for billions!

To drive the point home, in the 50th year, we estimate that the operating costs of servicing the 50 years of new growth in the SPREAD scenario would be about \$88.5 million per year. That's about 2.5 times or \$52 million more than the annual servicing costs of the HYBRID model.

Think about it. Every year, we would be paying an additional \$52 million to service this new growth than we would be paying under the Hybrid Model and \$70 million more than the compact model – that's staggering annual costs! What could our London of the future do with an additional \$50-\$70 million each year, every year!?

The results of our scenario analysis is consistent with the findings of a study comparing the cost effectiveness of a dispersed city versus one employing a compact growth model undertaken by the Canada

Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC). Their study concluded that compact growth plans generated life cycle savings of \$11,000 per household. As stated above, we expect about 200,000 people and 100,000 homes will be added to our City over the next 50 years. Using the CMHC assumptions, the potential savings using a compact approach as opposed to a dispersed approach would be \$1.1 billion in today's dollars for 100,000 homes.

Simply put, we can't afford to SPREAD, and this type of growth will certainly affect our tax rates. We need to continue to grow, but in a way that is smart and affordable. While still providing for reasonable outward expansion and some greenfield development, we need also look inward and upward as we grow in the future.

Let's talk about agriculture...

Did you know that according to a University of Guelph study, only 5% of Canada is classified as prime agricultural land? And, according to a Dalhousie University study only 0.5% of all Canada qualifies as Class 1 agricultural land according to the Canada Land Inventory.

Did you also know that 90% of the land that we annexed from surrounding municipalities in 1993 is Class 1 agricultural land (including sub-classes of this Class 1 land). We're sitting on one of Canada's and, in fact, the world's most valuable resources - rich, fertile land that will grow quality and plentiful crops. When we develop on this land, the topsoil layers that are rich in nutrients are often removed and, once we do, it's gone forever.

Only 0.5% of all Canada qualifies as Class 1 agricultural land. 90% of the land that we annexed from surrounding municipalities in 1993 is Class 1 agricultural land.

As we noted in the first discussion paper, things change quickly. Look at all those changes that have occurred over the past 20 years. We don't know with certainty what will happen over the next 20 or 50 years. It is possible, though, that climate change and the escalating cost of energy and transportation would make food grown close to our homes even more important. The loss of valuable farmland could have a major impact on our economic future.



Let's go back to our three scenarios. To accommodate the same population, housing and employment, we will need 5,300 hectares more land in the SPREAD scenario than the HYBRID scenario and 6,400 hectares more land in the SPREAD scenario than the COMPACT scenario. Just think, over the next 50 years we could be consuming 6400 hectares more of our precious agricultural land resource, simply based on our chosen pattern of growth.

Mixing it Up – The Case for Mixed-Use Development

Not only is our pattern of growth important, but so is the composition of this growth. Since the 1950's, planners have looked to separate land uses as a way to minimize land use conflicts between certain sensitive uses and uses that generate contaminant discharges, and to create "stability" within neighbourhoods.

Unfortunately, in doing so, Planners have played a role in creating homogenous communities that lack diversity, character and often identity. What's more, these communities tend to support a demographic mono-culture, whereby it is really difficult to stay in the same neighbourhood when advancing through

different ages and stages of your life. Older adults feel it the most when they are no longer able to maintain a house and they seek alternative living like a townhouse or apartment. They often have to move outside of their neighbourhood to do so, leaving behind their long-standing friends and neighbours and familiar social connections they know and love.

By separating land uses, we've created a need to travel significant distances to get even the most basic of commercial goods within a neighbourhood. The result is that most often people are compelled to use their cars to "get out" of their neighbourhood to carry on basic neighbourhood functions such as picking up milk, getting their hair cut, receiving advice on their tax return, or dashing to the nearest grocery store for important ingredients to prepare their favourite meal.

You've told us so - at both the Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy sessions, and at the Age Friendly London Task Force and also during ReThink London that you want neighbourhoods that mix uses and mix different forms of housing. You want more complete neighbourhoods. We know that there are limits to this mixing of uses and it will have to be



handled with care to avoid real land use conflicts. We also know that not every neighbourhood will want or need to be different, but it is time that we start to break down the homogeneity of our neighbourhoods and in an effort to move more deliberately towards a greater mix of housing types and scales, and a reasonable mix of uses within communities.

Viability of Transit...

It's sometimes difficult for Londoners to imagine our City as a truly viable transit city. We aren't intensely urban and it's difficult, if not impossible, to afford frequent, convenient, quality transit services to all parts of the City. Transit can play a more significant role in serving Londoner's needs in the future if we are smart about the way we develop over the next 20 and even 50 years.

While a separate discussion paper will explore transportation choices and importance of transit in more detail, it's important to understand the impact of our growth patterns on transit viability in this paper, at least at a high level of discussion.

Our most recent Census tells us that there are over 85,000 people living within a 10-minute walk from our future bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor. The BRT corridor is a route planned by the Transportation Master Plan. Almost 50,000 people work within this same area.

Our most recent Census tells us that there are over 85,000 people living within a 10-minute walk from our future bus rapid transit corridor.

Under our 50-year growth scenarios, the SPREAD scenario would increase this residential population by only about 2,500 people over the next 50 years - that's not enough to support a rapid transit system!

The HYBRID scenario, though, would lead to more than 75,000 new residents within 10 minutes of a BRT route and another 85,000 new employees in that same area. The COMPACT scenario would lead to over 140,000 new residents and about 100,000 new employees within a 10 minute walking distance of the BRT.



Rapid transit needs ridership in order to be an affordable and efficient service. If we're serious about rapid transit in London's future, we need to grow in a way that will support it, and a SPREAD pattern of growth just won't do it.

Let's talk about air quality emissions...

Climate change is upon us. We don't know the full implications for London and the world yet, but smart, sustainable communities understand that climate change will be one of our greatest challenges in future years.

The good news is that London has reduced its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in recent years. Between 1990 and 2002 our GHG emissions increased

by 15%. However, after 2002 our GHG emissions stabilized and dropped by 18% to 2011 levels. Bravo London!

Since 2002, green house gas emissions in London have dropped by 18% to 2011 levels.

Can we keep up with this recent trend? Our pattern of growth will have a major impact on the production of GHG emissions – those gases that lead to global warming. Consider the SPREAD scenario. If we develop those 6,400 hectares of land beyond the urban growth boundary over the next 50 years, we'll be spreading out at a density that would make a viable transit system an absolute impossibility. The down-side of this spread will be further worsened if we continue to separate land uses and housing types with the same approach as we have in the past, because as we continue to grow in this way, we will be further separated from many of the other uses that we need every day.

Not only will transit viability struggle, cycling and walking will be less likely too. People will be compelled to use their cars for most of their trips.



With less public transit, less cycling and less walking comes a greater reliance on the use of the personal automobile. And, with that, there will be far greater generation of air emissions, including green house gases.

Much like we have done, the City of Calgary looked at three potential directions for growth in their City. They found that transportation air emissions could be as much as 33% lower depending upon the chosen pattern of growth – with a spread pattern generating much greater emissions than a compact pattern of growth.

The Federal government's Climate Change Action Plan for Canada calls for a 17% reduction in the 2005 greenhouse gas emissions levels by 2020. Meanwhile, Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan calls for a 6% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2014, 15% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. We can't hope to contribute to these Federal and Provincial targets if we follow a SPREAD pattern of growth.

Referenced in the Middlesex-London Health Unit's 2012 report entitled Health Index, Air Quality:

London was appreciably below the Ontario Ministry of the Environment Ambient Air Quality Criteria in 2010.

Ambient Air Quality levels in the City of London were observed to be completely lower than several other places in Southern Ontario.

Over time, the City of London reduced its average annual Ambient Air Quality concentration levels at relatively similar rates of change as other locations in Southern Ontario.

The City of London met the Canada-Wide Standard for Ambient Air Quality for the period of 2008-2010.

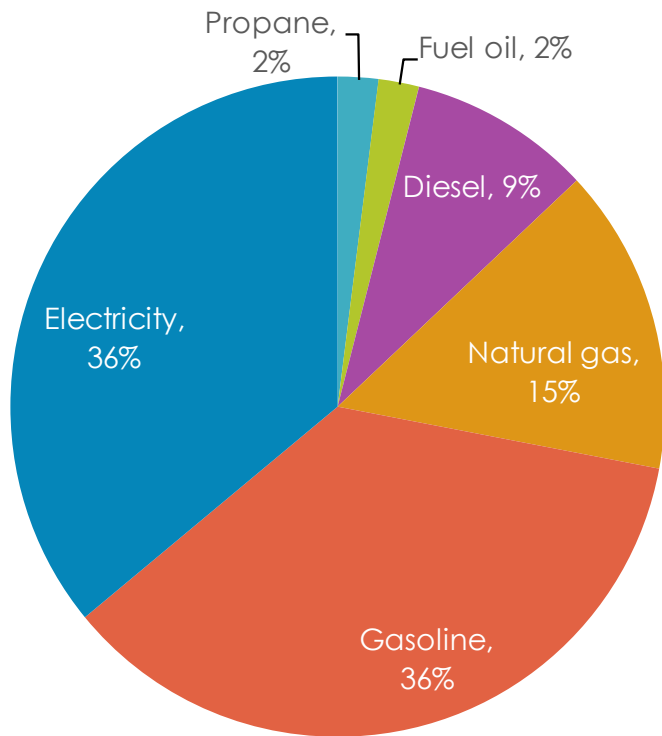
The increasing cost of energy...

There has been a lot of work done through London's ReThink Energy program over the past couple of years to understand how we are using energy and where we need to go in the future. The work has a lot to say about how we grow and the impact of this growth on London's energy consumption future.

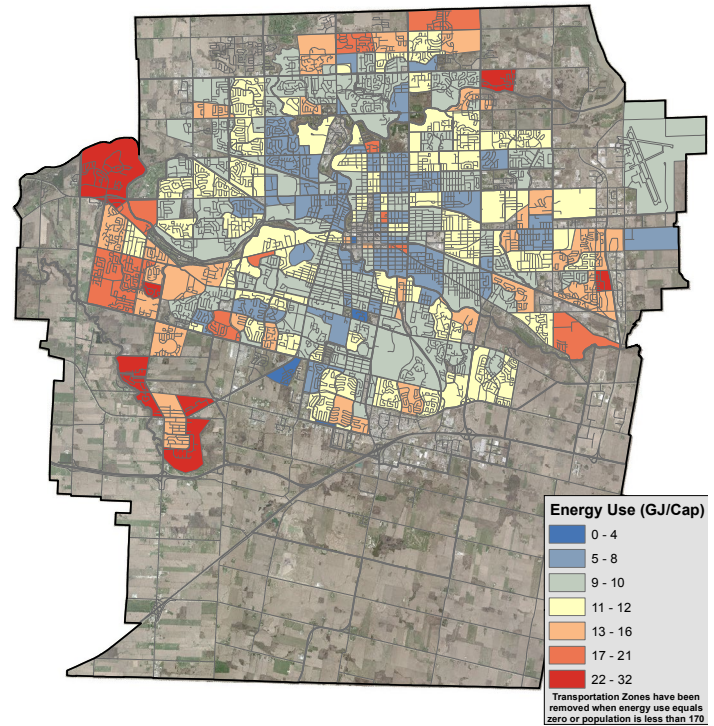
We estimate that Londoners spent about \$1.2 billion on energy in 2011.

We estimate that Londoners spent about \$1.2 billion on energy in 2011. We know that energy prices have increased dramatically in the past, and they will likely continue to increase in the future. As shown in the pie chart below, 36% of Londoner's energy consumption comes in the form of burning gasoline. A majority of this relates to the use of cars, buses, trucks and other vehicles.

The diagram below shows it quite clearly; the further a neighbourhood is from the core, the more likely that neighbourhood is to be a high transportation energy consumer. The situation gets even worse with the separation of land uses – particularly when



Transportation Energy, 2010



communities don't have the most basic of needs within easy and convenient walking distance of their home.

Take a look at the neighbourhoods of Riverbend, Byron, Lambeth and the out reaches of North London. Per capita transportation energy consumption is much higher than it is in core neighbourhoods, such as Old North, Old South, and Old East. The evidence is obvious. The outermost neighbourhoods use the most energy for transportation purposes – the further that you live from work, school or shopping, the more likely you'll need your car to get there.

London's ReThink Energy program set out three different scenarios that blended growth forecasts with assumptions relating to future fuels and fuel efficiency for personal and public transit vehicles. They found that annual fuel costs were more than double in the scenario that assumed a "business as usual" form of development, fuel efficiency, trip length, and transportation mode versus a more compact form of development, which showed greater fuel efficiency, lower number of trips and a higher number of transit trips. Greenhouse gas emissions were almost triple under the "business as usual" model!

The City we build today will have a big impact on whether we're an attractive City to live in and invest in should energy prices spike dramatically in the future. What if oil and gas prices shoot upwards? How will Londoners afford to get around if gas prices rise to, for example, \$4 per litre? If we can't make transit viable given our low urban densities and lack of land use mix, what are our alternatives? How will we compete with cities that are less reliant on the automobile?

It's easy to start seeing the linkages between how our prosperous future could depend on smart city-building.

How about our health...

We don't think about it often, but our pattern of growth has an impact on our health. How? Well, in many, many ways.

As we've described above, the pattern of growth, and the degree to which land uses are mixed, can have a significant impact on how you get around in a City. Spread out cities that separate land uses make it almost impossible for people to carry out their daily errands and routines without the use of the car – like going to stores, offices, services, restaurants and schools.

It's been shown that in communities designed primarily for travel by automobile, commuters spend 3 to 4 times more hours driving than individuals living in compact, mixed use communities. (The Health Impacts of Sprawl, V4 Ontario College of Family Physicians, 2005)

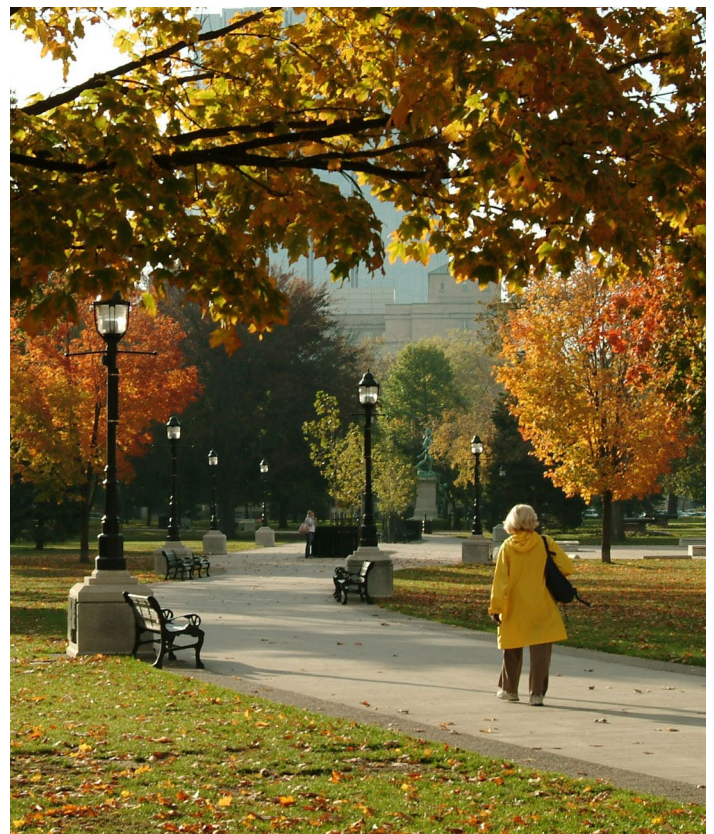
Think about all the impacts that using cars more, and using our bodies less to get around, has on our health.

Almost 50% of Canadians are overweight and 1 in 6 is obese. The number of obese children has tripled over the past 20 years and 10-25% of all teenagers have a weight problem.

Almost 50% of Canadians are overweight and 1 in 6 is obese. The number of obese children has tripled over the past 20 years and 10-25% of all teenagers have a weight problem. For the first time in Canadian history, today's children are, on average, expected to have a shorter life-expectancy than their parents. (Report on Public Health and Urban Sprawl in Ontario, College of Family Physicians, 2005)

Heart and Stroke Foundation research has found that each additional kilometer walked per day reduces the likelihood of becoming obese by nearly 5%. Each hour per day spent in a car increases the likelihood of becoming obese by 6%.

Obesity is killing us! It can lead to high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease. Furthermore, overweight people die prematurely as much as 2.5 times the rate of others and walking 10 blocks per day or more is associated with a 33% lower risk of cardio-vascular disease. (Understanding Sprawl, A Citizens Guide, 2003)



London's Child and Youth Network priority area of Healthy Eating and Healthy Activity is working hard on London's neighbourhoods to get families more active and making healthy food choices easier. Mixed-use neighbourhoods are places where kids can safely walk to school, where families can shop for healthy food and play and recreate more within their own neighbourhoods.

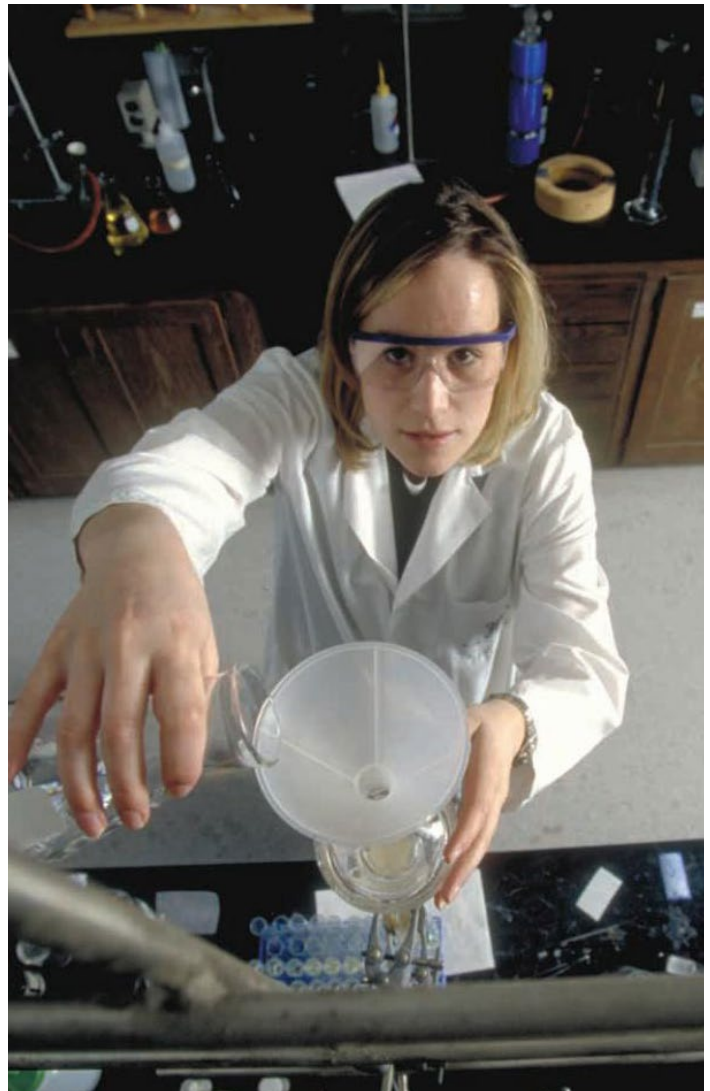
In 2005, the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) used an "Illness Cost of Air Pollution" model to estimate the impact smog and air pollution was having on the residents of the province. The model suggested that in 2005:

- 5,829 premature deaths could be attributed to effects of smog.
- 59,696 emergency room visits were the result.
- \$506,612,700 in health care costs, relating only to the effects of smog.
- \$374,342,400 in lost productivity.

The OMA report concluded that: "There is an abundance of evidence linking air pollution to increased rates of illness and premature death in populations. In Canadian cities, vehicle emissions such as nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide and fine particulates are an important factor in local air quality. By creating neighbourhoods that are far from the core and necessitate automobile travel, urban sprawl contributes to poorer air quality and its related impacts." (Urban Sprawl and Health, Alberta Health Services, 2009)

“There is an abundance of evidence linking air pollution to increased rates of illness and premature death in populations.”

– Urban Sprawl and Health, Alberta Health Services, 2009



Middlesex - London Community Health Status Resource , Middlesex-London Health Unit 2012

Nearly half the population reported being inactive during their leisure activities despite nearly 90% acknowledging that they knew the location of local recreational trails. Similarly, nearly half the adult population reported a body mass index that classified them as overweight or obese. In the same time frame, nearly a quarter of the adult population in Middlesex-London were current smokers and more than a third exceeded the low risk drinking guidelines. Over a third of the adult population reported having a sun burn in the year prior to the survey while only 40% reported taking protective measures such as applying sun screen. About one quarter of the population found life to be quite or extremely stressful and nearly 30% found work to be quite or extremely stressful on most days.

Housing that is Affordable

One of London's great strengths is that it offers a tremendous quality of life at an affordable rate. Housing costs are generally lower than most medium and large sized cities. Taxes and services are affordable and the cost of living overall remains reasonably low relative to comparator cities. As explained, above, we need to grow smart to keep London affordable and make wise planning decisions as we build our City of the future.

In addition, London has led the way, in many regards, on affordable housing programs in Ontario, such as:

The Community Plan on Homelessness, a "toolbox" of approaches ensures that all members of the community have access to housing that is safe, secure, and suitable to their needs and ability to pay.

The toolbox includes: a Convert-To-Rent/ Rehabilitation Program, new construction, housing supplements to landlords, down payment assistance for affordable homeownership, housing with supports and a renovation program that allows seniors and persons with disabilities to remain in their homes.

Since 2004, we have created 1,316 affordable units to-date, through the various City programs.

Approximately 400 units of these affordable units are located in the Downtown and Dundas East Corridor.

We heard many Londoners through the ReThink process speak about affordable and low cost housing. They want to see more affordable housing and they want it to be the kind of affordable housing that does not concentrate, or stigmatize low income families, but instead respects and values all members of the community equally.



It's time that we looked at opportunities for better mix of housing types and integration of affordable housing into all neighbourhoods. This can come in many forms.

While there are many factors at play, it can be generally said that higher density housing improves the opportunity for low cost housing – as the cost of land is defrayed amongst more units.

A City form that relies less on the car helps with affordability, significantly reducing transportation costs.

Cities that lead to healthier life-styles lead to less illness that also helps with affordability.

Allowing for, and encouraging, a mix of different housing types within neighbourhoods not only allows for aging in place, but provides for housing that is affordable within different ages and stages of one's life.

Integrating affordable housing components into market-rate development projects is also critical to providing low cost housing to families and individuals that need it.

For us to maintain our outstanding quality of life at an affordable cost of living, we'll need to be deliberate in the way we build our City. Like other mid-sized and large cities in Canada, we'll need to think of intelligent ways to integrate affordable and low-cost housing seamlessly into our neighbourhoods.

Making it Happen

This discussion paper has been a long one. Why? Because we heard so much about the way we grow from Londoners and because our future depends so heavily on making smart choices about how we'll develop in the future. We need to build on the many successes we're currently experiencing and push the envelope on our new thinking. Our prosperity relies on it.

One of the best ways to achieve our goals is to establish an "urban structure plan". At a City-scale, this plan will identify growth centres and corridors where we'll encourage higher density housing such as row houses and apartments and a mix of office, retail and service uses. This plan for centres and corridors

will be linked to rapid transit so that we encourage a concentration of residents and businesses around these convenient transit services. This will help us to raise transit ridership and make rapid transit viable and affordable in London.

Most of the lands within these centres and corridors are already developed. This means that we'll have to take wise planning actions that allow for infill development on vacant lots and the re-development of strategically located properties over time. This is going to be tricky because we'll need to balance the concerns of existing neighbourhoods, with our needs to look inward and upward. We'll have to make these centres and corridors some of the most livable, connected and desirable neighbourhoods in the entire City.

Of course, there will continue to be a healthy amount of growth outside of these centres and corridors in lower density neighbourhoods. In lower density neighbourhoods, we will need to plan for new communities that are better suited to walking, cycling and using transit. We'll need to allow for a greater



mix of housing types, and also more deliberately plan for everyday shopping and service needs within our neighbourhoods. We'll have to think of street patterns, parks, social gathering places, and quality pedestrian environments that get people out of their cars and entice people to walk not only for recreation, but also for their every day routines.

The strong desire for using the car to get around and wanting a single family home are part of London's culture. It may even be the reason why some people choose to live in London. Some have suggested that we need to work harder as a community to develop townhome, mid-rise and high-rise housing forms that are of a quality that can be attractive alternatives to single detached housing. With housing prices comparably low in London, we need to assess how likely it is for Londoners to increase their demand for medium and high density forms of housing. Many point to the aging of the baby boomers and the demand for higher density housing forms that is being expressed by the Millennial population (those in their 20's) as a strong sign that there will be a greater mix of housing types desired in the future.

You may have heard of the NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) phenomenon. NIMBY does not relate to legitimate concerns regarding a proposed development project within a neighbourhood. Rather, it relates to a situation where residents object to any change in their neighbourhood, or where they support infill and intensification as a concept, but don't want to see it occur in their neighbourhood. NIMBY attitudes and political pressures could pose a major stumbling block for the type of London that we hear you're asking for - our ability to grow inward and upward, and to achieve an integrated mix of uses.

Our decisions on growth are paramount to address issues like climate change, increasing energy costs, preservation of agricultural land, impacts on our health, affordability, the need for a competitive tax structure, and our ability to retain and attract a quality workforce.

We know London is up to the challenge as a community just as other cities have been successful in growing smarter. In summary, we too can do a little more of this and a little less of that to make a difference.



More of this...

Strong and consistent growth

Compact growth – looking inward and upward

Quality infill and intensification to take advantage of existing services

Mix of housing types within neighbourhoods - allow live-work opportunities

Mix stores, restaurants, and services in an appropriate way within neighbourhoods

Build high density, mixed use centres and corridors linked to rapid transit

Less of this...

Slow and stagnant growth

Low density, spread out development

Reliance on greenfield development

Homogenous neighbourhoods

Separate out all non-residential land uses from residential neighbourhoods

Non-strategic “shotgun” approach to planning high density housing

More of this...

Build great public spaces and pedestrian environments that support walking

Continue to support and invest in a strong Downtown as the City's primary centre connected to other centres via rapid transit

Promote low cost and affordable housing in new and innovative ways; minimize costs of growth

Protect valuable agricultural land

Conserve natural heritage

Less of this...

Build primarily for the automobile, with walking, cycling and transit a distant second priority

Weaken the Downtown by spreading employment and residential density in non-strategic locations that are not linked to the Core by rapid transit

Increase housing costs & taxes and reduce affordability by growing in financially detrimental ways

Build on agricultural land when alternatives growth opportunities exist

Eliminate natural heritage elements and put severe pressure on those elements that are kept