



# PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025



# AGENDA

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Review and Discussion

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Growth & Development

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Agriculture (Continued)

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Next Steps

# REVIEW AND DISCUSSION



# REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Review and approval of previous meeting minutes.



Any questions of Committee Members.



# GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT





# PROVINCIAL CHANGE

Removal of the Municipal Comprehensive Review requirement to expand a settlement area

Municipalities to consider allocation or potentially reallocation of unused servicing capacity to accommodate projected needs for housing

Municipalities to plan for a minimum 20-year horizon but not more than 30 years

Require municipalities to base growth forecasts on Ministry of Finance population projections

# SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY EXPANSIONS

*In identifying a new settlement area or allowing a settlement area boundary expansion, planning authorities shall consider the following:*

- a) the need to designate and plan for additional land to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses;*
- b) if there is sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities;*
- c) whether the applicable lands comprise specialty crop areas;*
- d) the evaluation of alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas and, where avoidance is not possible, consider reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in prime agricultural areas;*
- e) whether the new or expanded settlement area complies with the minimum distance separation formulae;*
- f) whether impacts on the agricultural system are avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated to the extent feasible as determined through an agricultural impact assessment or equivalent analysis, based on provincial guidance; and*
- g) the new or expanded settlement area provides for the phased progression of urban development.*

[PPS 2.3.2]

# SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY EXPANSIONS

Recent changes to the Planning Act and PPS have removed the requirement for a Municipal Comprehensive Review to expand settlement areas and now permit privately initiated applications for boundary expansions, which applicants can appeal to the OLT.

The removal of the MCR process may lead to uncoordinated development, loss of agricultural land, and the loss of municipally led long-term planning for growth.

The Official Plan **could** be amended to provide a framework that will:

- Guide how privately initiated boundary expansions can be evaluated based on criteria;
- Require applicants to demonstrate consistency with County/Municipal planning objectives;
- Ensure efficient use of infrastructure, protection of agricultural lands, and alignment with growth management goals.





# PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS

The Official Plan **could** be amended to encourage local municipalities to adopt policies that consider allocation or potentially reallocation of unused servicing capacity to accommodate projected needs for housing

The Official Plan **must** be amended to update population, housing and employment forecasts to align with the Ontario Population Projections by the Ministry of Finance. Watson and Associates has undertaken updated Population, Dwelling and Employment Projections based on the Ministry of Finance projections in accordance with the PPS





# Middlesex County 2025 Growth Analysis Update

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Planning Advisory Committee Meeting  
May 14, 2025

# Middlesex County

## Terms of Reference

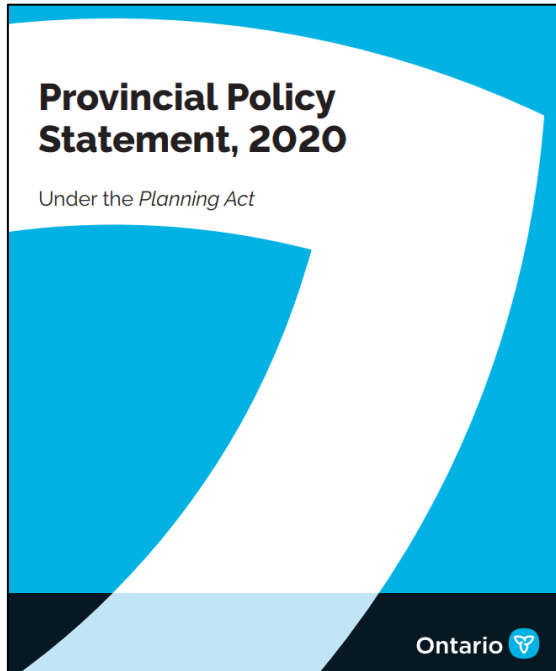


- As part of the Middlesex County Official Plan Review (O.P.R.) exercise, Middlesex County is now embarking on a Growth Projections Update and Land Supply Analysis, which requires an update of the County's long-term growth projections and allocations by Area Municipality.
- The results of this analysis are intended to guide decision-making and policy development specifically related to planning and growth management, urban land needs, master planning, and municipal finance.
- This study is particularly significant, as the economic and demographic landscape has changed since the onset of COVID-19 and other trends since the 2020 growth projections were completed.



# Changes to Policy Framework

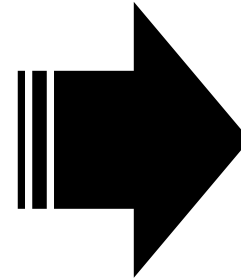
## Overview



Provincial Policy Statement (P.P.S.) – Entire Province



Growth Plan – G.G.H.



## *Integrated Policy Document*



Provincial Planning Statement

# Economic and Demographic Growth Model

## What Drives Population and Employment Growth?



### Economics

Local and Regional  
Economic Outlook



Economic Drivers of  
Population and  
Employment Growth by  
Area



Labour Force Growth  
within the Commuter  
Shed



Forecast Employment  
Growth by Sector



### Demographics

Net Migration and  
Natural Increase



Middlesex County  
Population Growth by  
Age, 2021 to 2056



Middlesex County  
Housing Forecast,  
2021 to 2056



Allocation of County  
Growth Forecast by Area  
Municipality,  
2021 to 2056

# Macro-Economic Trends



# Impacts of Economic Headwinds on Population & Housing Growth



## Immigration Policy Changes

- N.P.R. National Share: 7.3% (2024) → 5.0% (2026)
- 35% international student permit reduction (364,000)
- Permanent Residents: 500,000 (2025 & 2026) → 395,000 (2025), 380,000 (2026) and 365,000 (2027)



## US Protectionism Policy

- US protectionist policy through tariffs resulting in global economic uncertainty
- Potential downturn in near-term economic growth in Canada and Ontario



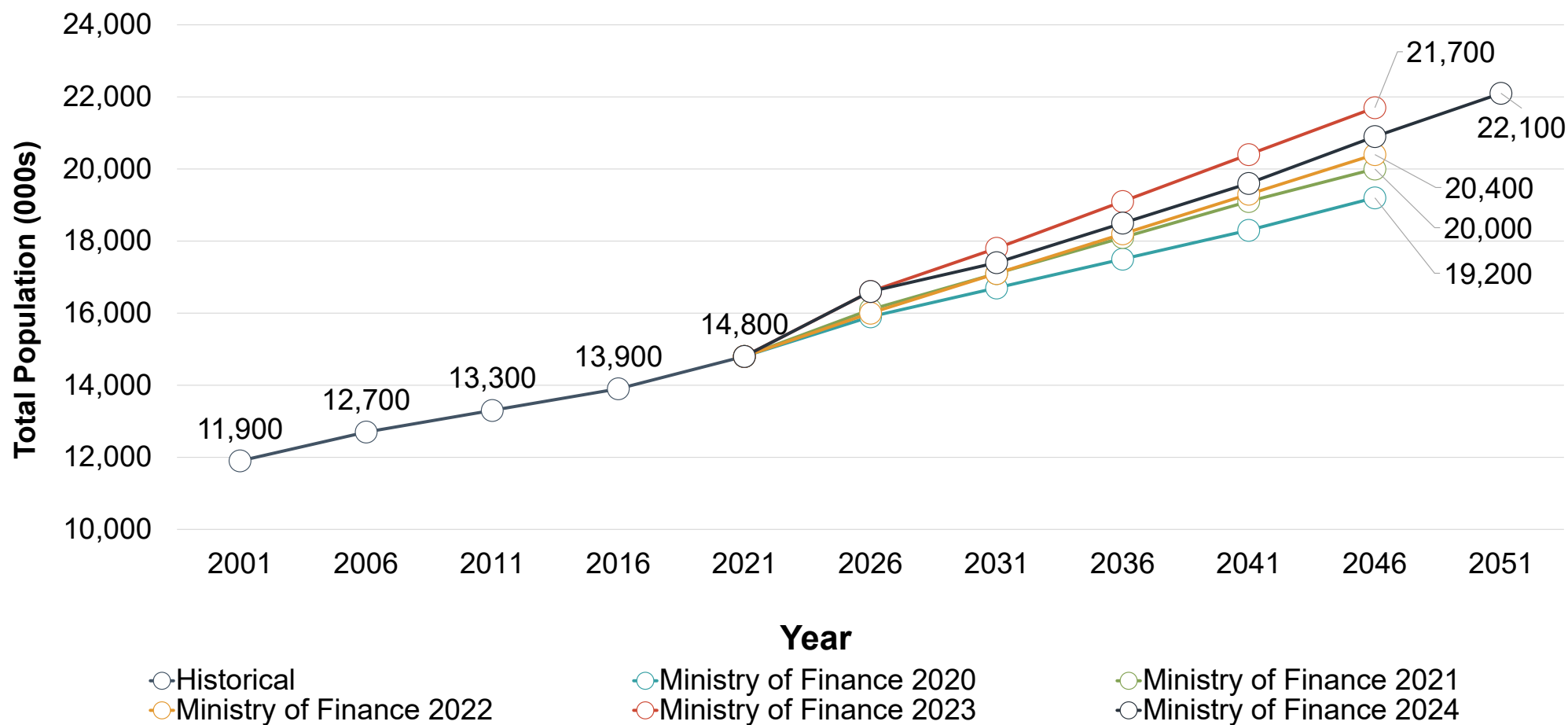
## Slowing Regional Housing Market

- Higher interest rate environment since 2022
- Slowing housing demand resulting from lower net migration, slowing provincial/regional economic growth, increased economic uncertainty

# Provincial Growth Trends

# Economic and Demographic Trends

## Ministry of Finance Population Forecasts for Ontario



M.O.F. Annual  
Growth Rate:

2020: 1.1%

2021: 1.2%

2022: 1.3%

**2023: 1.6%**

**2024: 1.3%\***

2024  
Ontario  
Population:  
**16.1  
million**

Note: Population includes net Census undercount. Figures have been rounded. Fall 2024 M.O.F. projections extends to 2051.

Source: Historical derived from Statistics Canada Census, 2001 to 2021, and Ministry of Finance Projections from Spring 2020 and Spring 2021 and Summer 2022, 2023 and Fall 2024 releases, by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

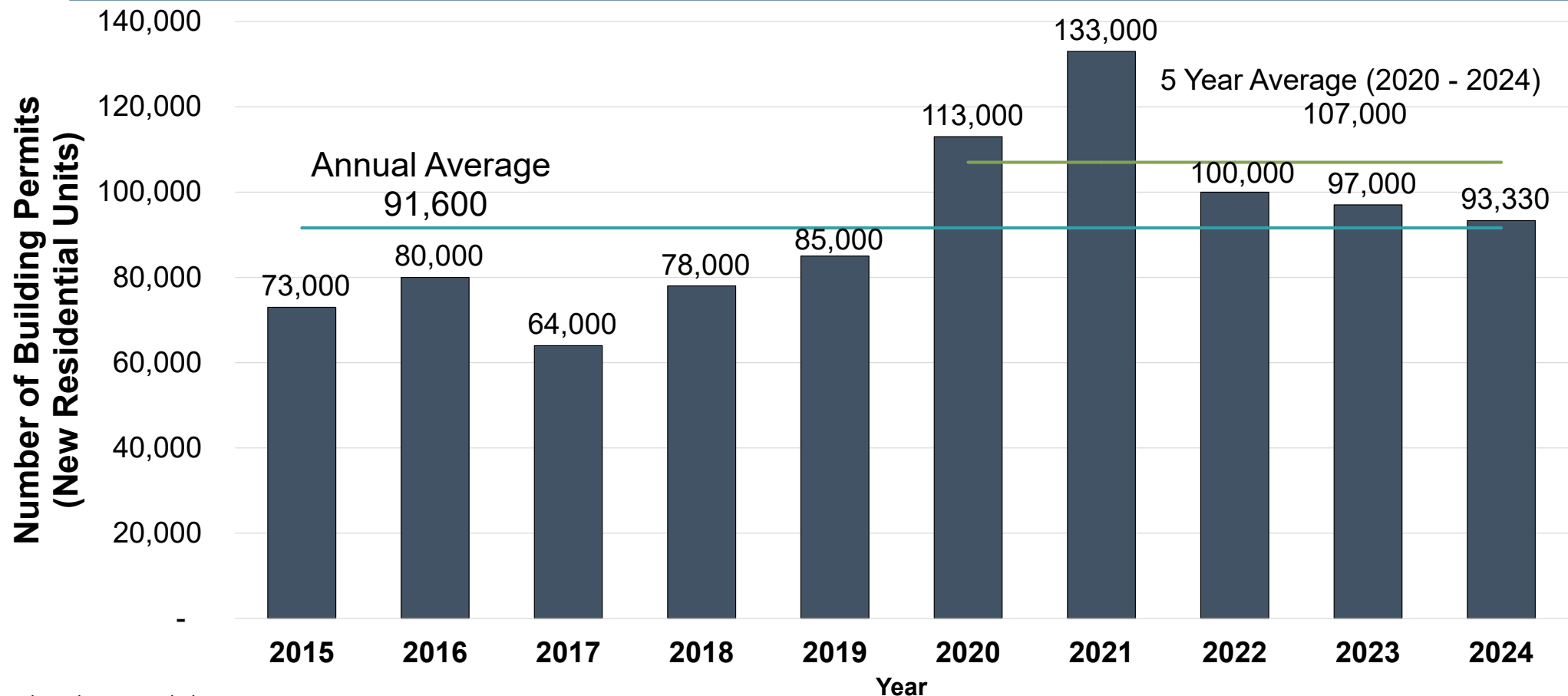


# Ontario – Residential Development Activity

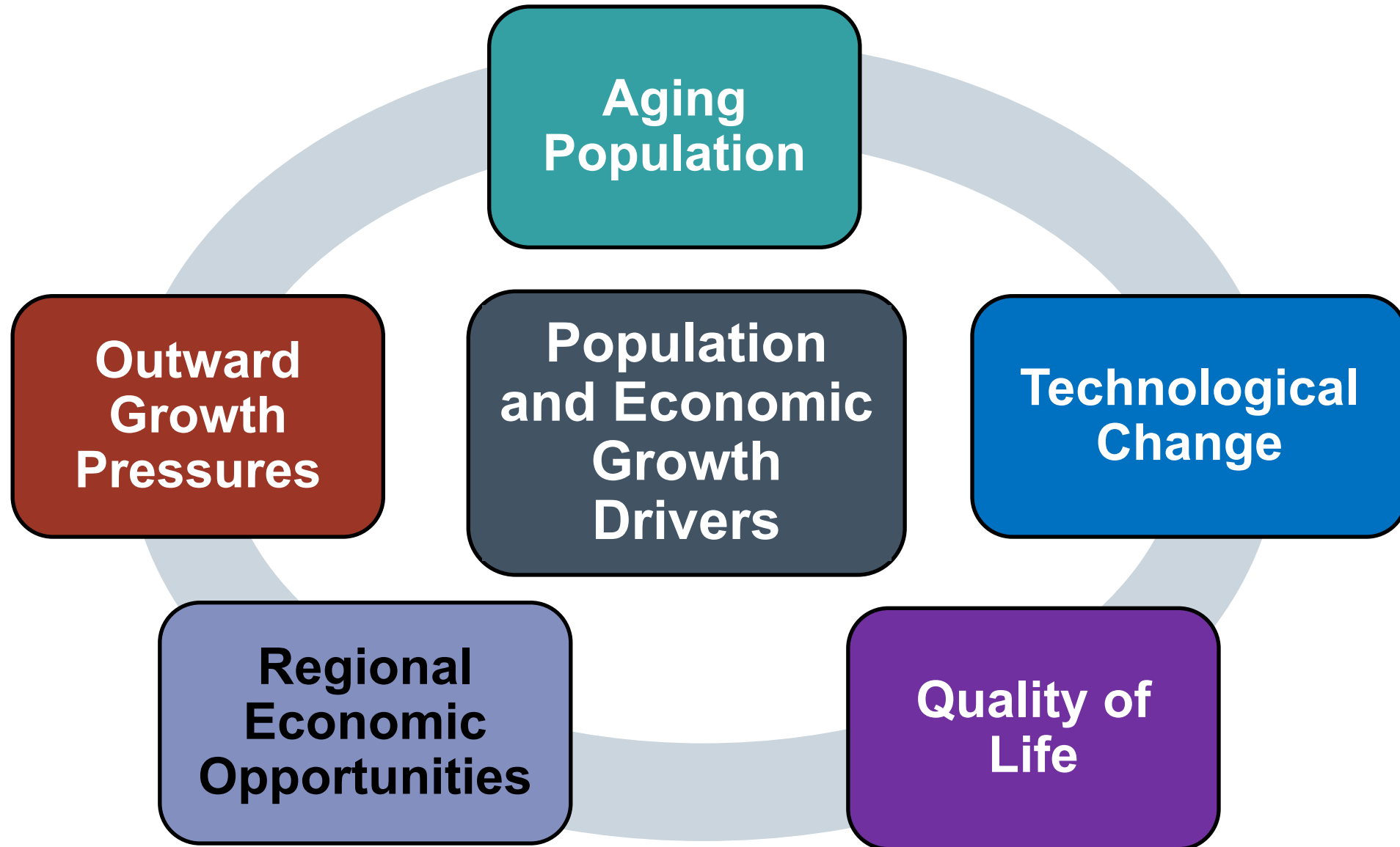
## Historical Trends



Province-wide housing development activity will need to ***increase by about 50%*** to hit the ***target of 1.5 million homes over the next decade***

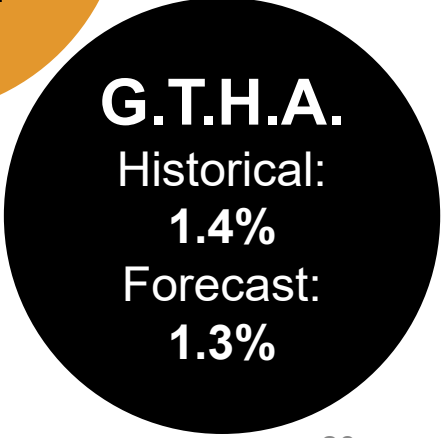
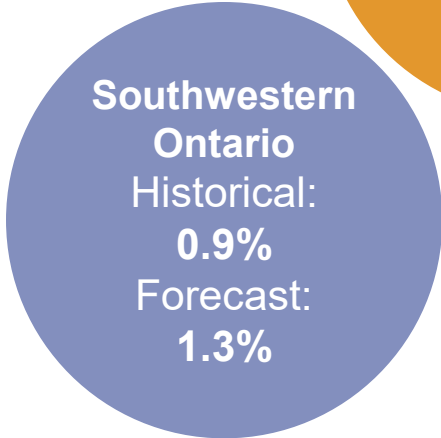
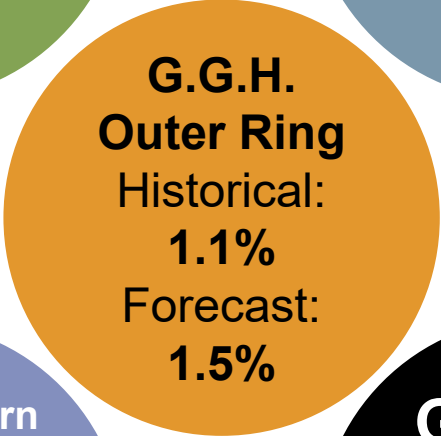
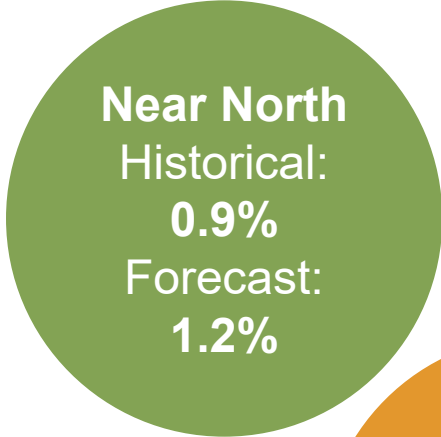
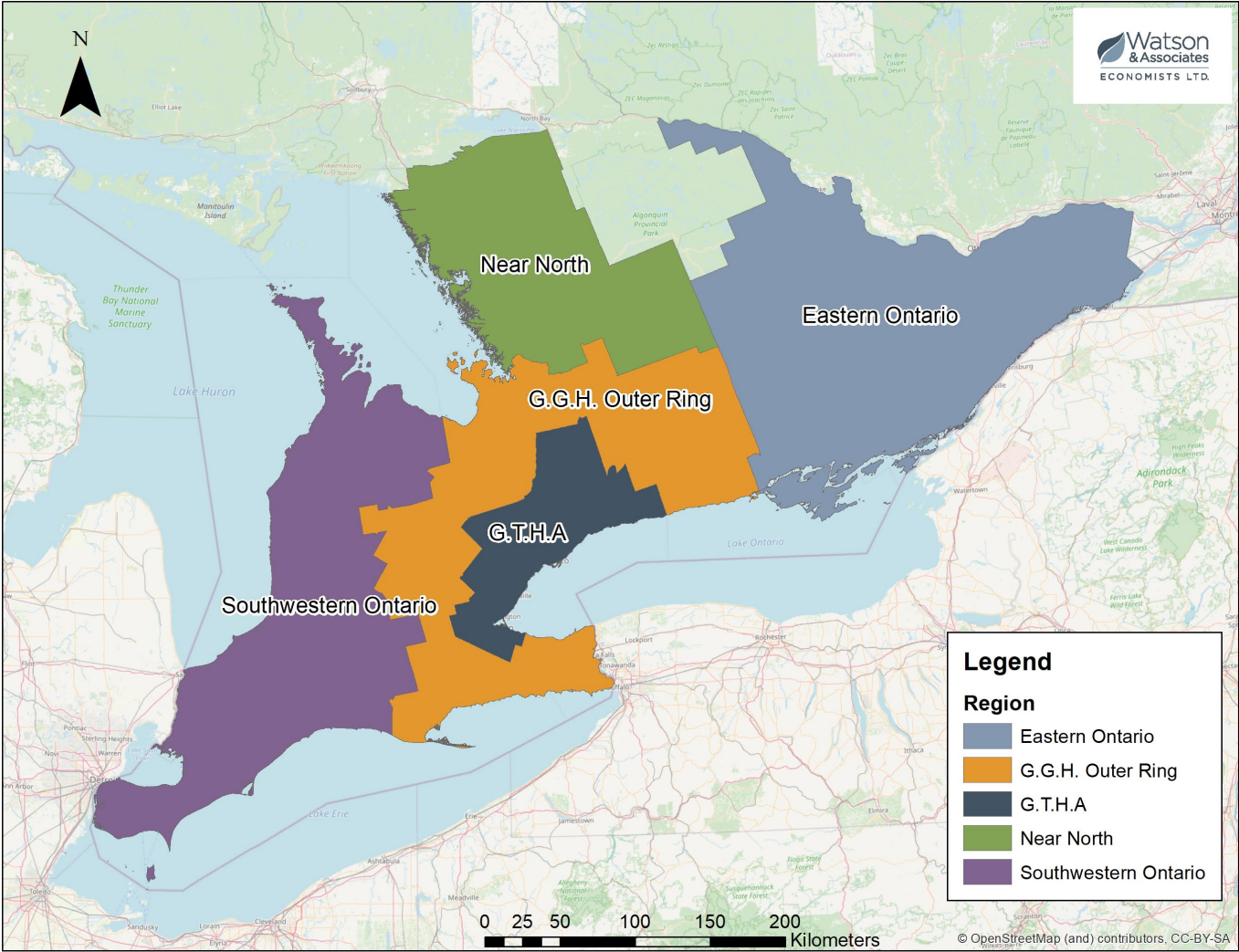


# Summary of Key Population and Economic Growth Drivers



# Population Growth Rate Comparison by Sub-Region – Southern Ontario

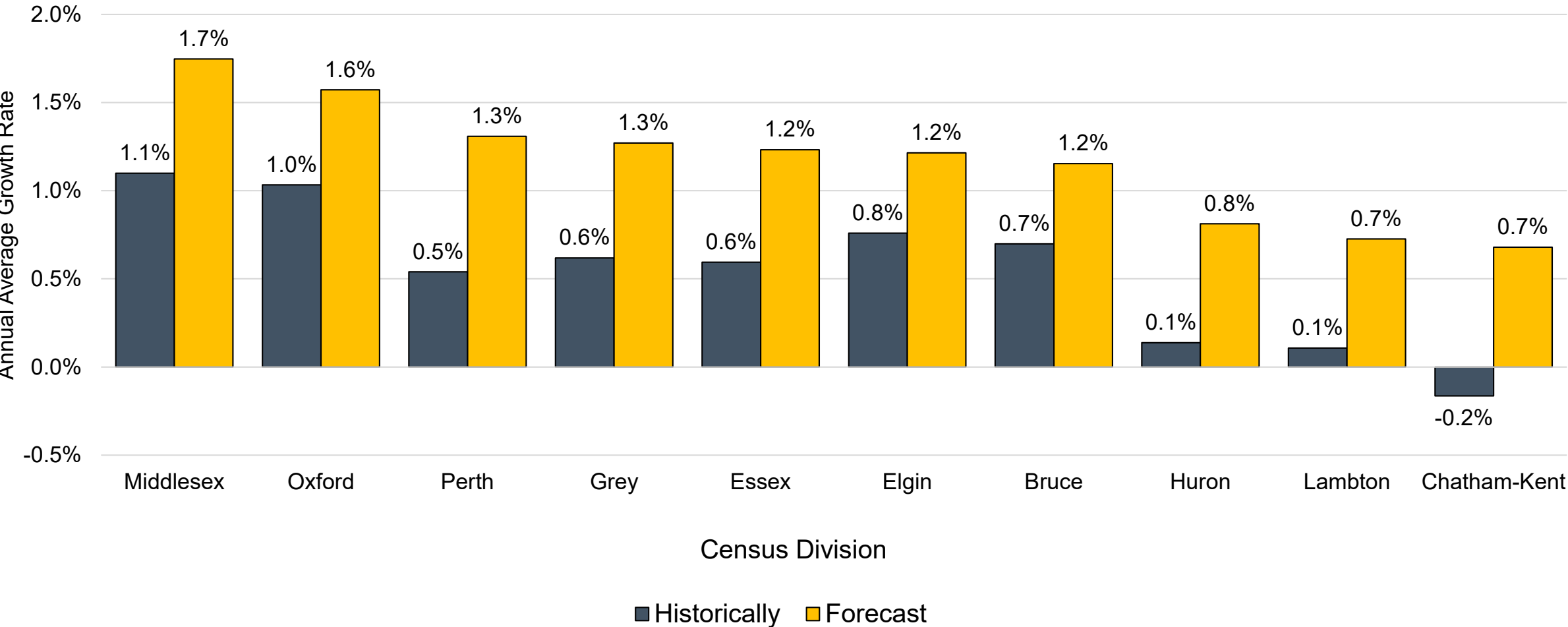
Historical: 2001 to 2021 vs. Forecast 2021 to 2051



# Population Growth Rate Comparison in Southwestern Ontario



Historical: 2001 to 2021 vs. Forecast 2021 to 2051



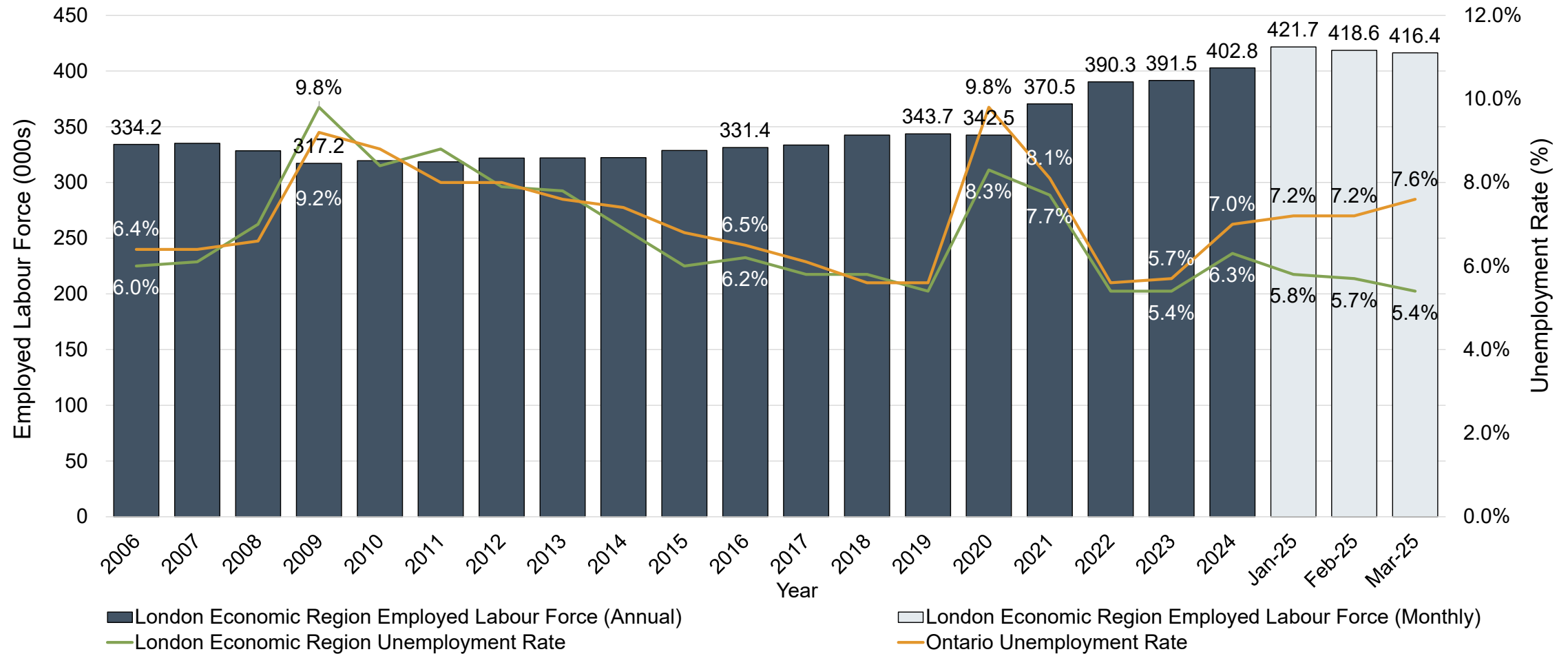


# Middlesex County

## Growth Trends

# Economic and Demographic Trends

## London Economic Region Labour Force Trends, 2006 to Year-to-Date 2025

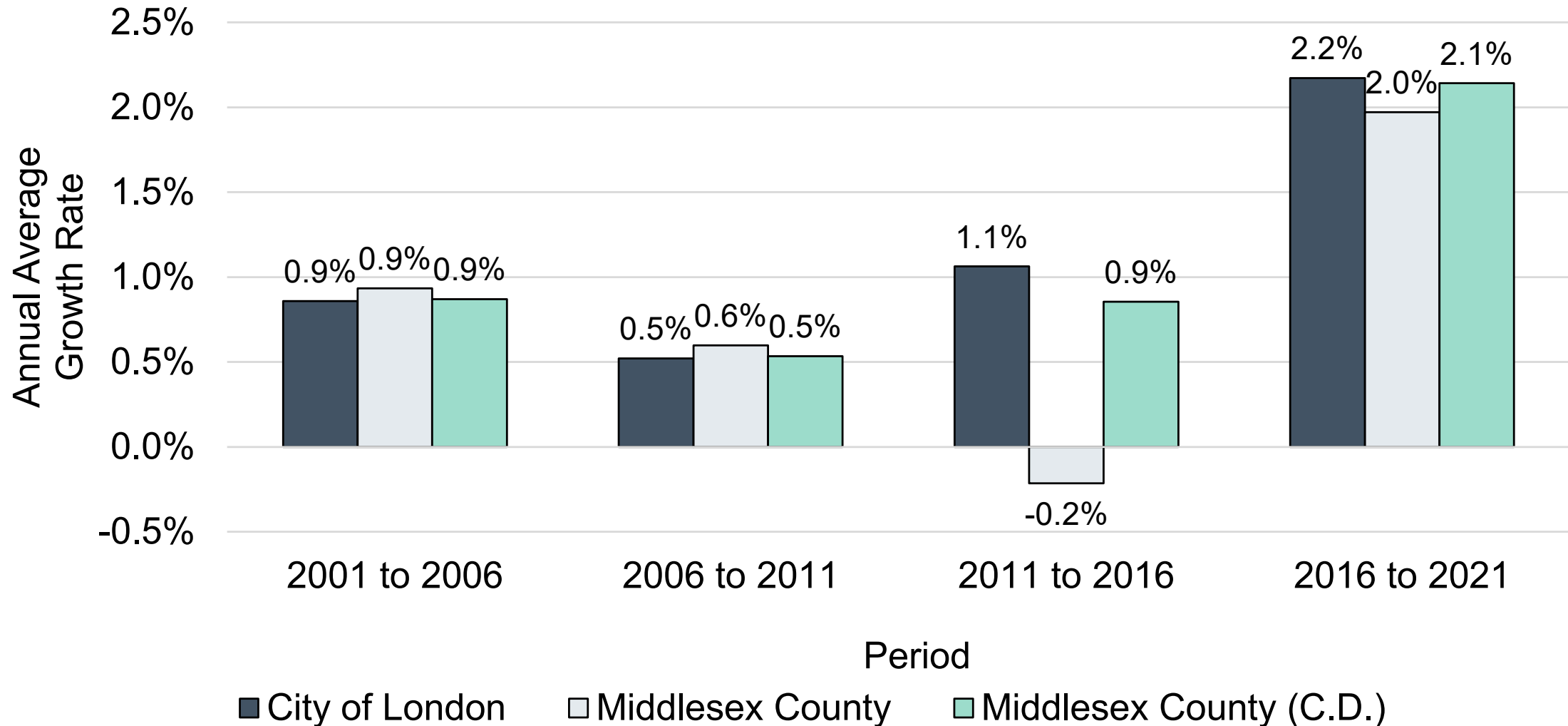


Note: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey and Census labour force statistics may differ.

Source: London E.R. employed labour force and unemployment rate from Statistics Canada Table 14-10-0393-01, Table 14-10-0462-01. Province of Ontario unemployment rate from Statistics Canada Table 14-10-0323-01. Derived by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County & City of London

## Historical Annual Population Growth Rates, 2001 to 2021



Note: Population figures include net Census undercount.

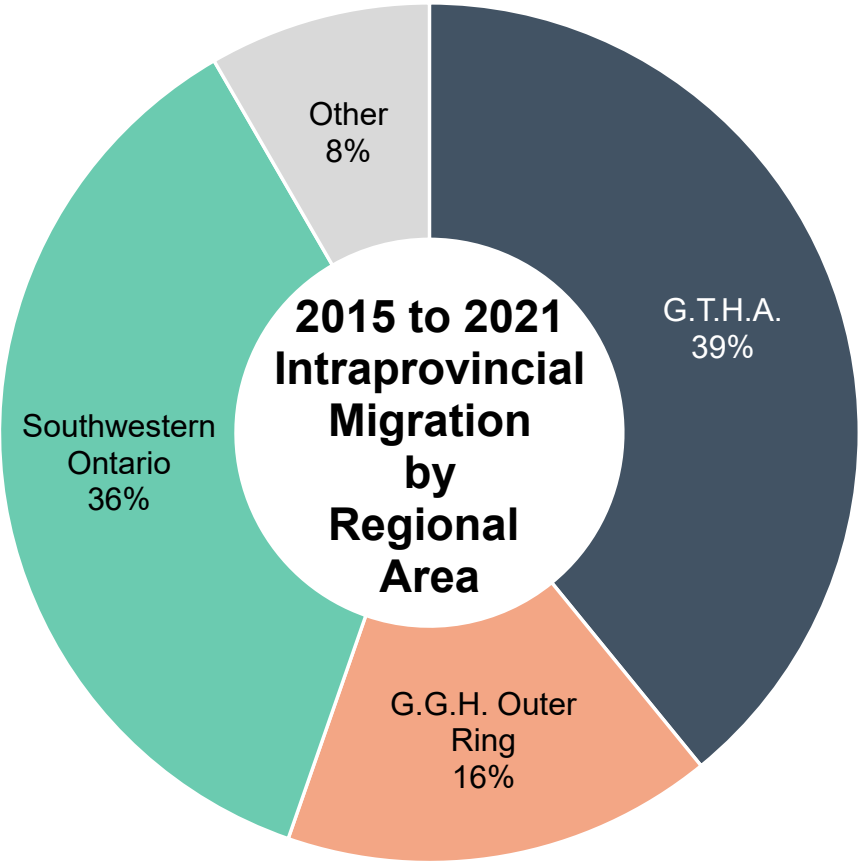
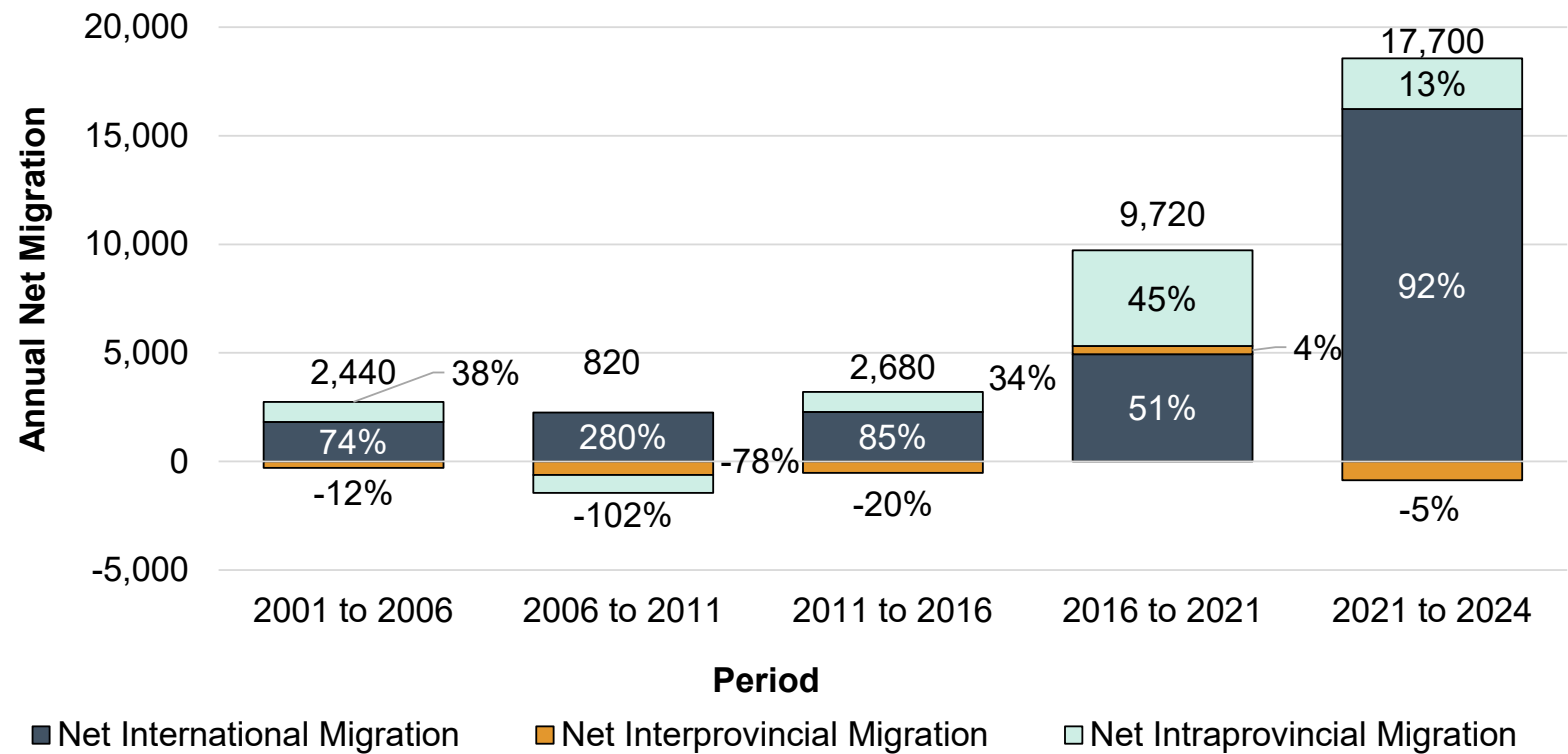
Source: Historical 2001 to 2021 data derived from Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0152-01 summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County & City of London

## Historical Migration Patterns, 2001 to 2024



Migration by Type

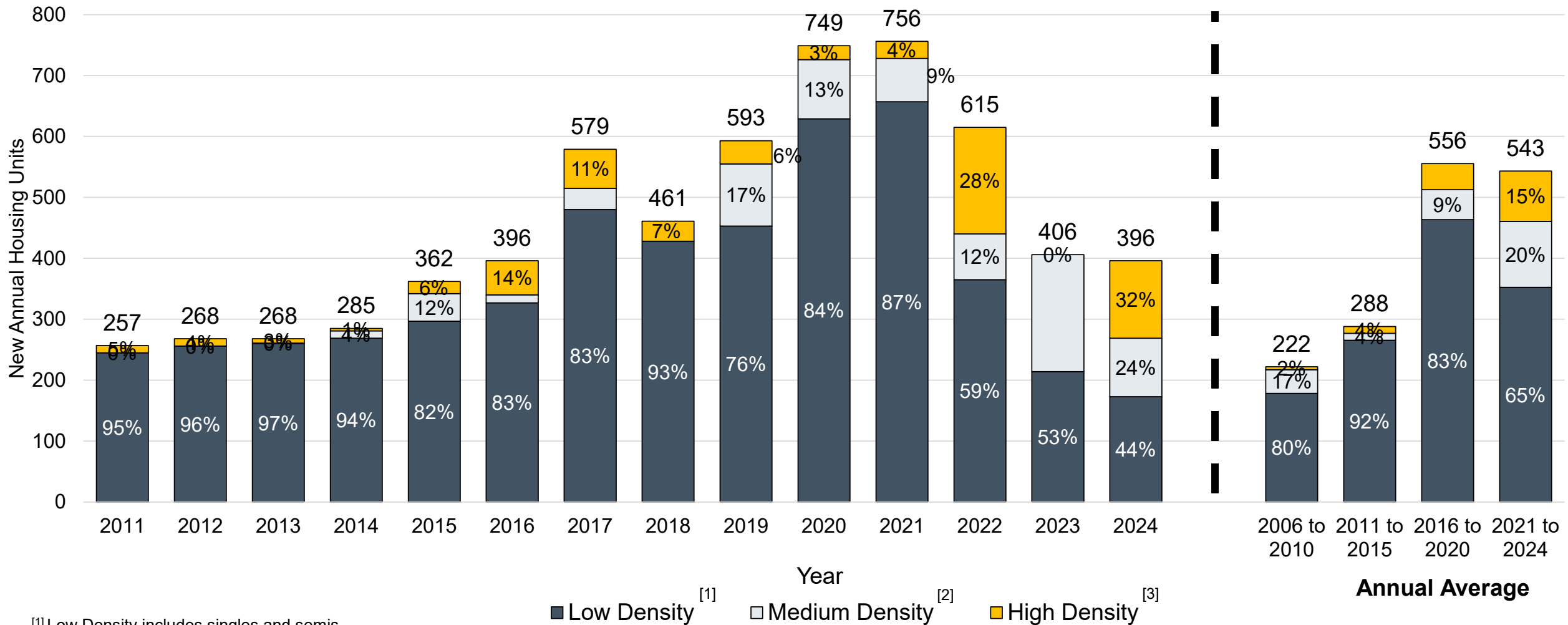


Note: Figures for Middlesex County include the City of London, include net Census undercount and have been rounded.  
Source: Historical 2001 to 2021 data derived from Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0152-01 summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.  
Intraprovincial migration by Regional Area derived from Statistics Canada custom datatable summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.



# Middlesex County

## Annual Building Permits, 2011 to 2024



[1] Low Density includes singles and semis.

[2] Medium density includes townhouses and apartments in duplexes.

[3] High Density includes bachelor, 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom + apartments.

Note: Figures have been rounded and exclude the City of London.

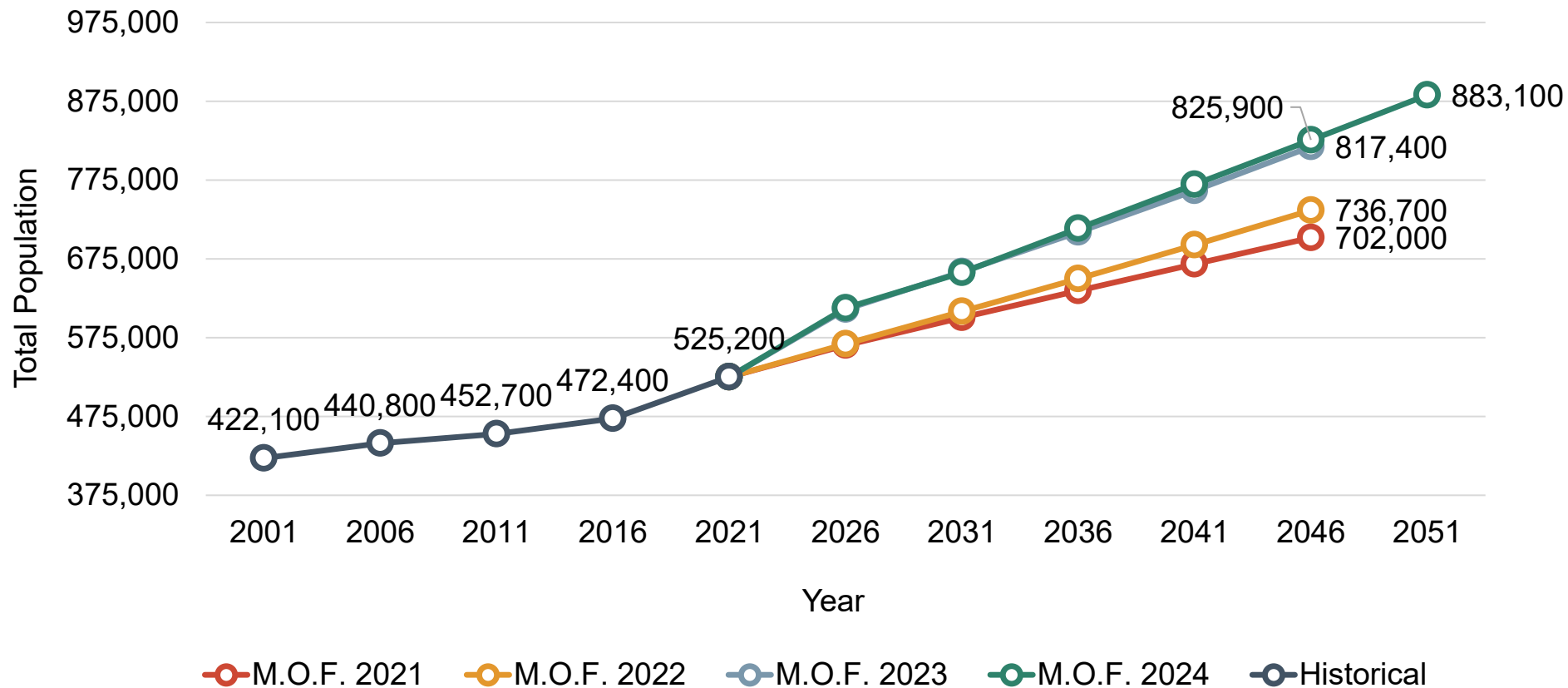
Source: Historical building permit data provided by Middlesex County, summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County

Population and Household  
Forecast by Area Municipality

# Economic and Demographic Trends

## Ministry of Finance Population Forecasts for Middlesex County & City of London



### M.O.F. Growth Rate:

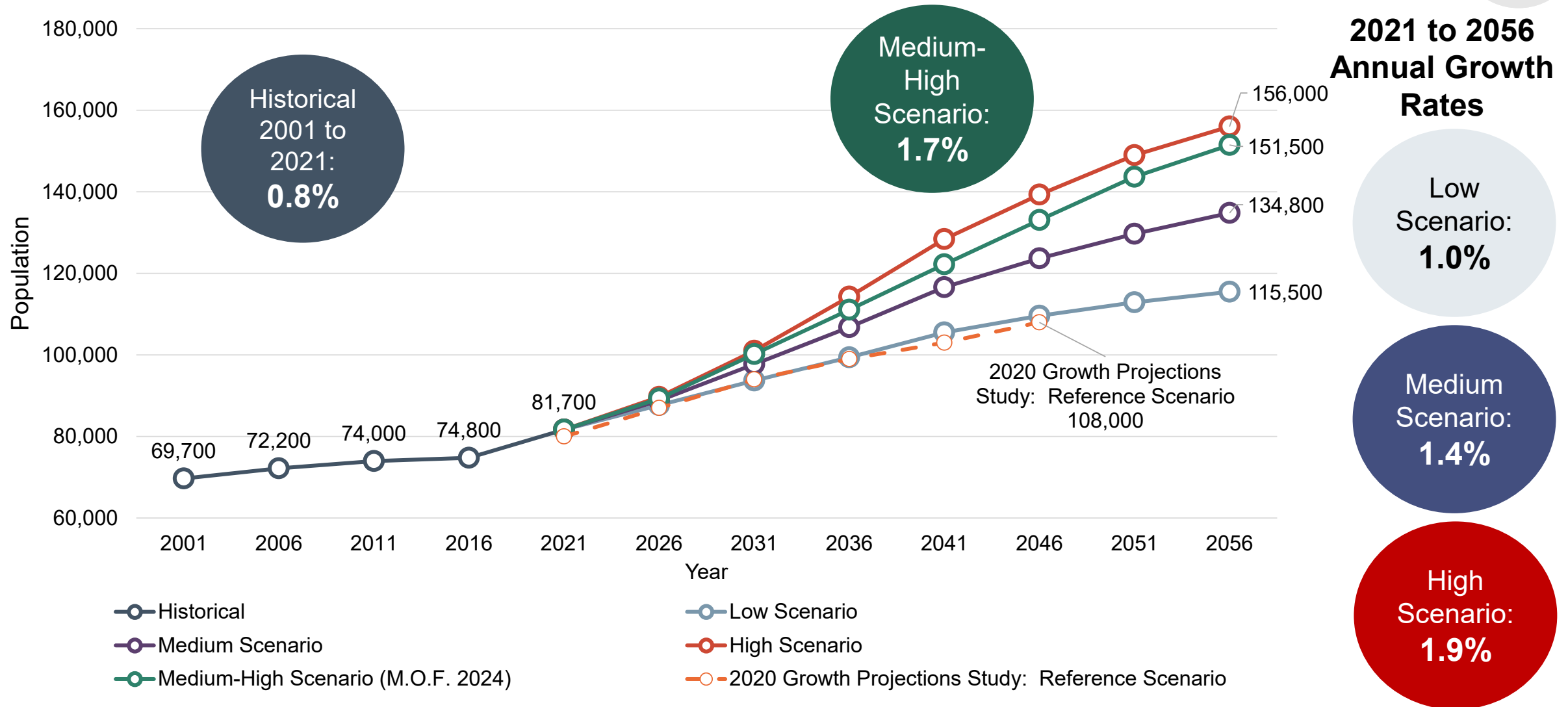
2021: 1.3%  
2022: 1.4%  
2023: 1.8%  
**2024: 1.7%**

Note: Population figures include net Census undercount estimated at 4.38% and have been rounded. Population figures for Middlesex County include the City of London.

Source: Historical 2001 to 2021 data derived from Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0152-01, 2021 to 2046 forecasts derived from Spring 2021 Ministry of Finance Projections, Summer 2022 Ministry of Finance Projections, and 2023 Summer, Fall 2024 Ministry of Finance projections for Middlesex County.

# Middlesex County

## Historical and Forecast Population Scenarios, 2001 to 2056



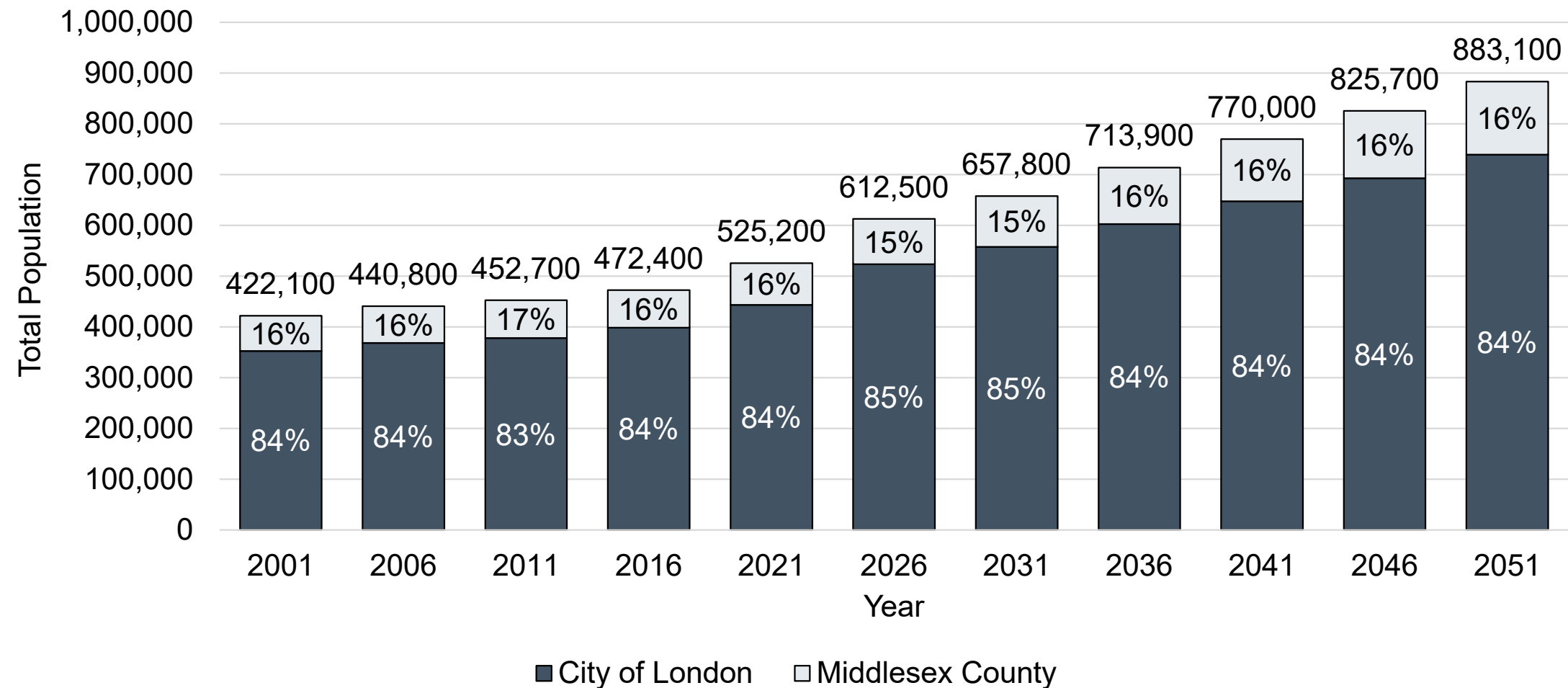
Note: Population includes net Census undercount. Figures exclude the City of London.

Source: Historical derived from Statistics Canada Census and Demography Division data, 2001 to 2021. 2021 to 2061 forecast by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.



# Middlesex County & City of London

## Historical & Forecast Population, 2001 to 2051

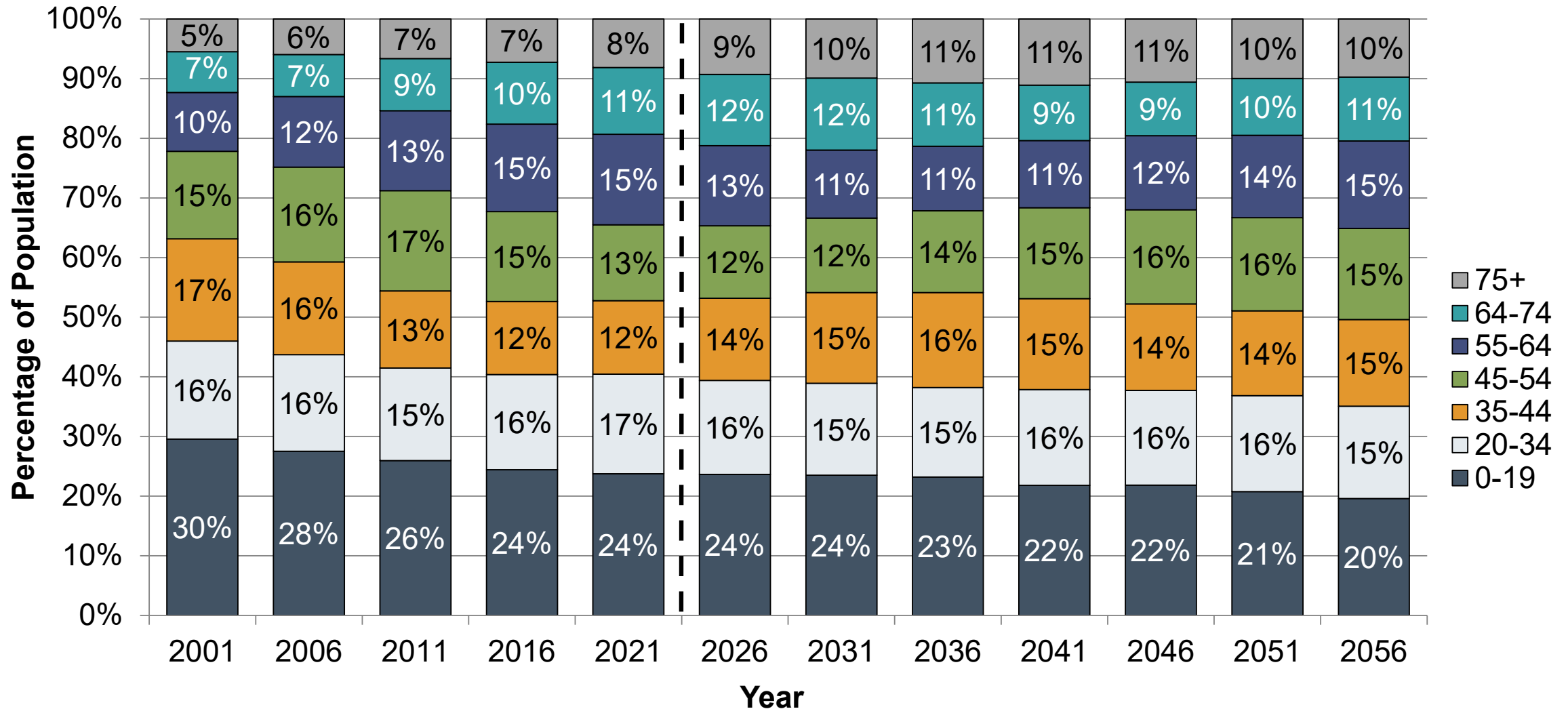


Note: Figures include net Census undercount estimated at 4.3%.

Source: Historical population figures derived from Statistics Canada 17-10-0152-01 summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. Middlesex County (Census Division) forecast derived from 2024 Ministry of Finance Fall projections, Middlesex County and City of London forecast prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County

## Population Forecast by Age Group, 2001 to 2056

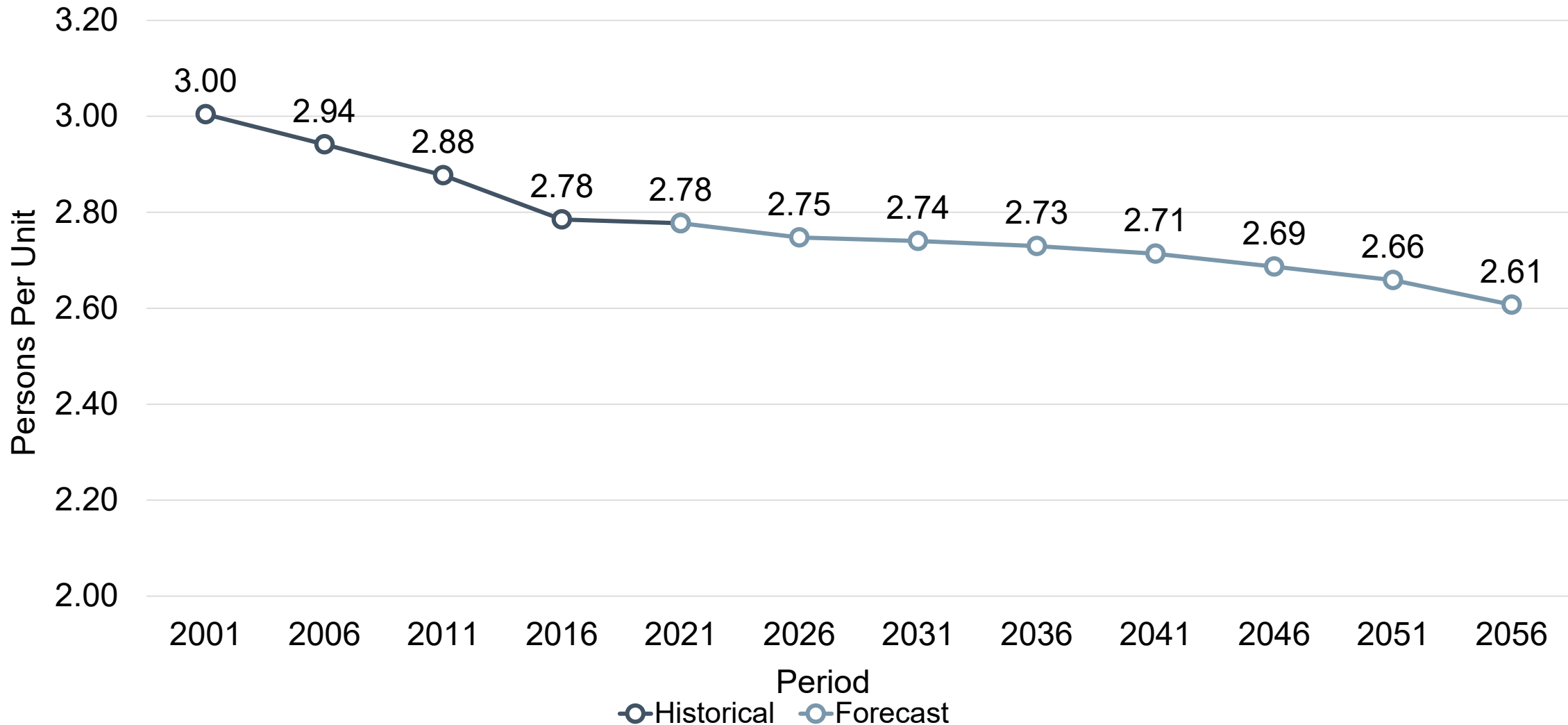


Note: Population includes net Census undercount.

Source: Historical derived from Statistics Canada Census and Demography Division data, 2006 to 2021. 2021 to 2056 forecast by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County

## Historical and Forecast Persons Per Unit, 2001 to 2056

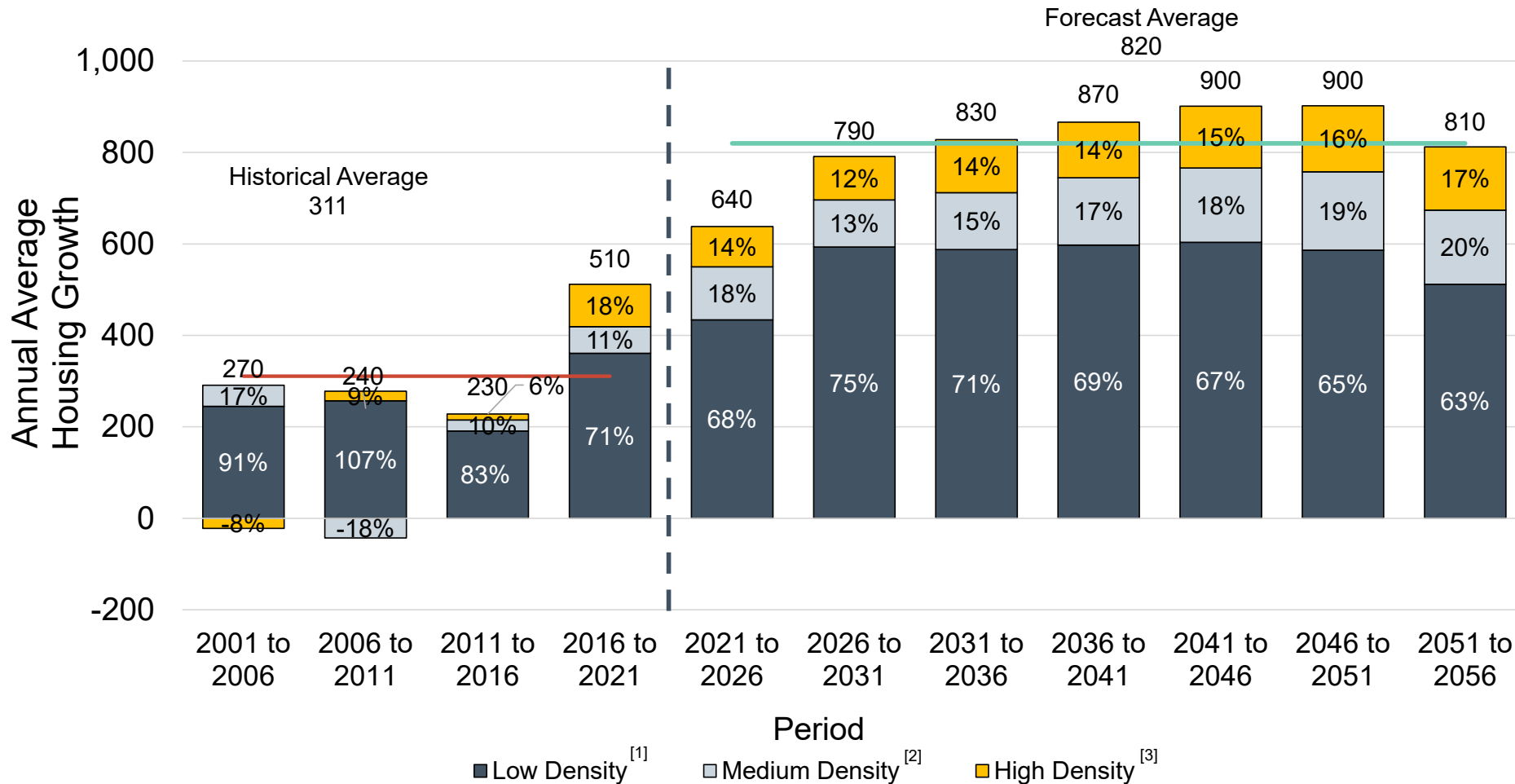


Note: Population figures include net Census undercount estimated at 4.3%. Figure excludes the City of London.

Source: 2001 to 2021 derived from Statistics Canada Census data. 2021 to 2056 by forecasted prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County

## Historical and Forecast Housing Growth, 2001 to 2056



2021 to 2056  
Total Housing  
Growth:  
**28,700  
units**

2021 to 2056  
Housing Mix:  
**Low: 68%**  
**Medium: 17%**  
**High: 15%**

<sup>[1]</sup> Low Density includes singles and semis.

<sup>[2]</sup> Medium density includes townhouses and apartments in duplexes.

<sup>[3]</sup> High Density includes bachelor, 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom + apartments.

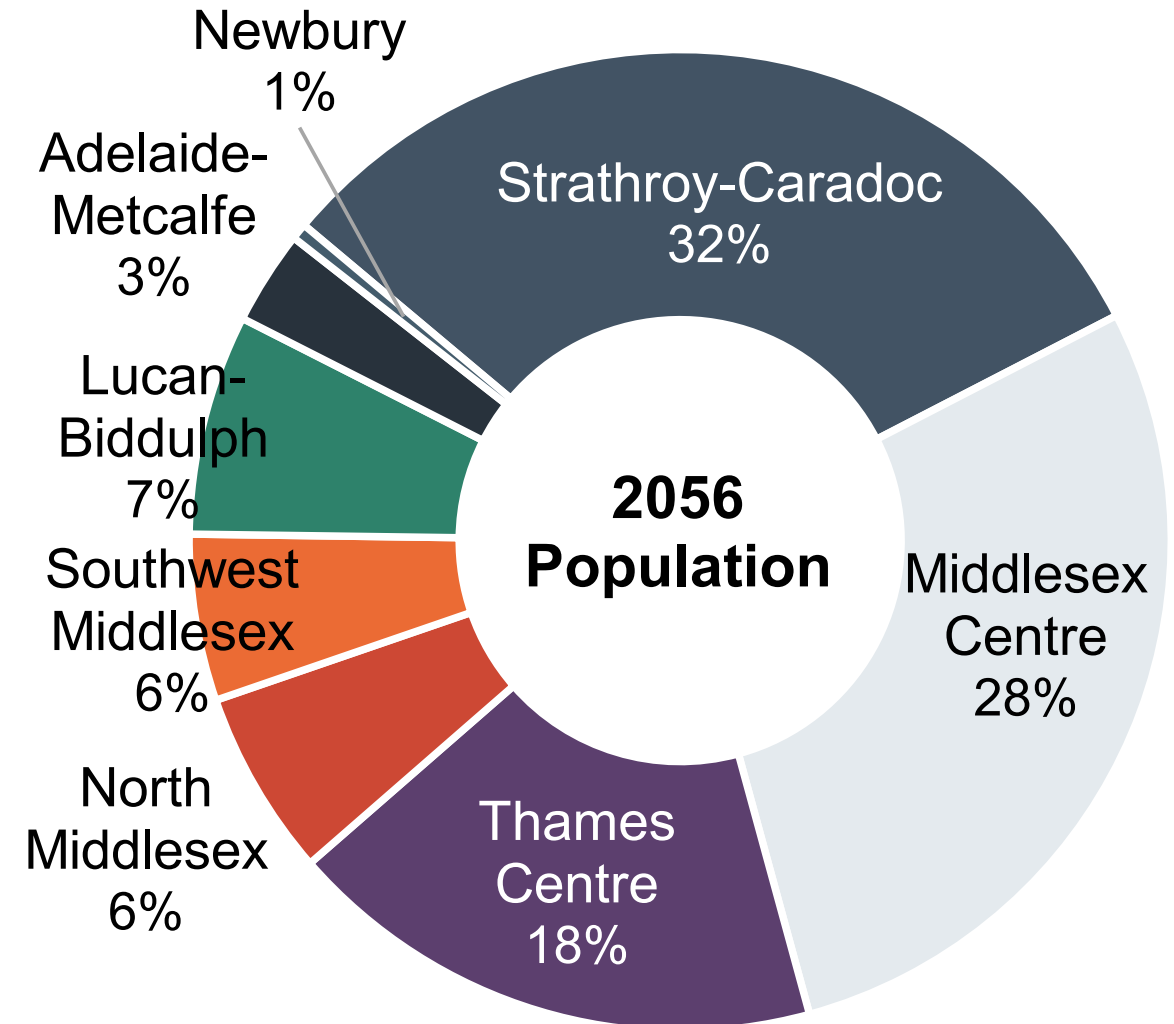
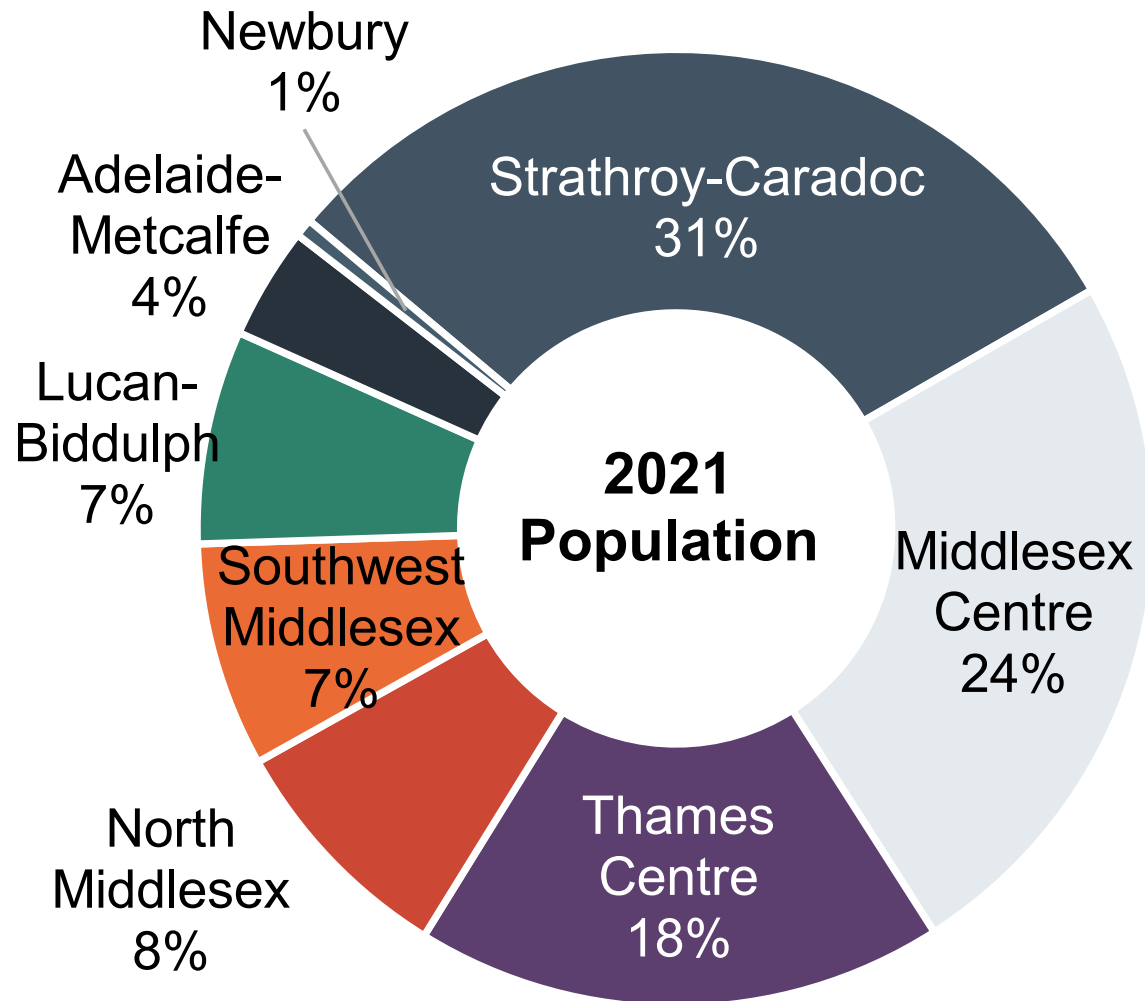
Note: Figures have been rounded and exclude the City of London.

Source: 2001 to 2021 derived from Statistics Canada Census data. 2021 to 2056 by forecasted prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.



# Middlesex County

## Population Growth Shares of Area Municipal Allocation



Note: Figures have been rounded and population includes net Census undercount.

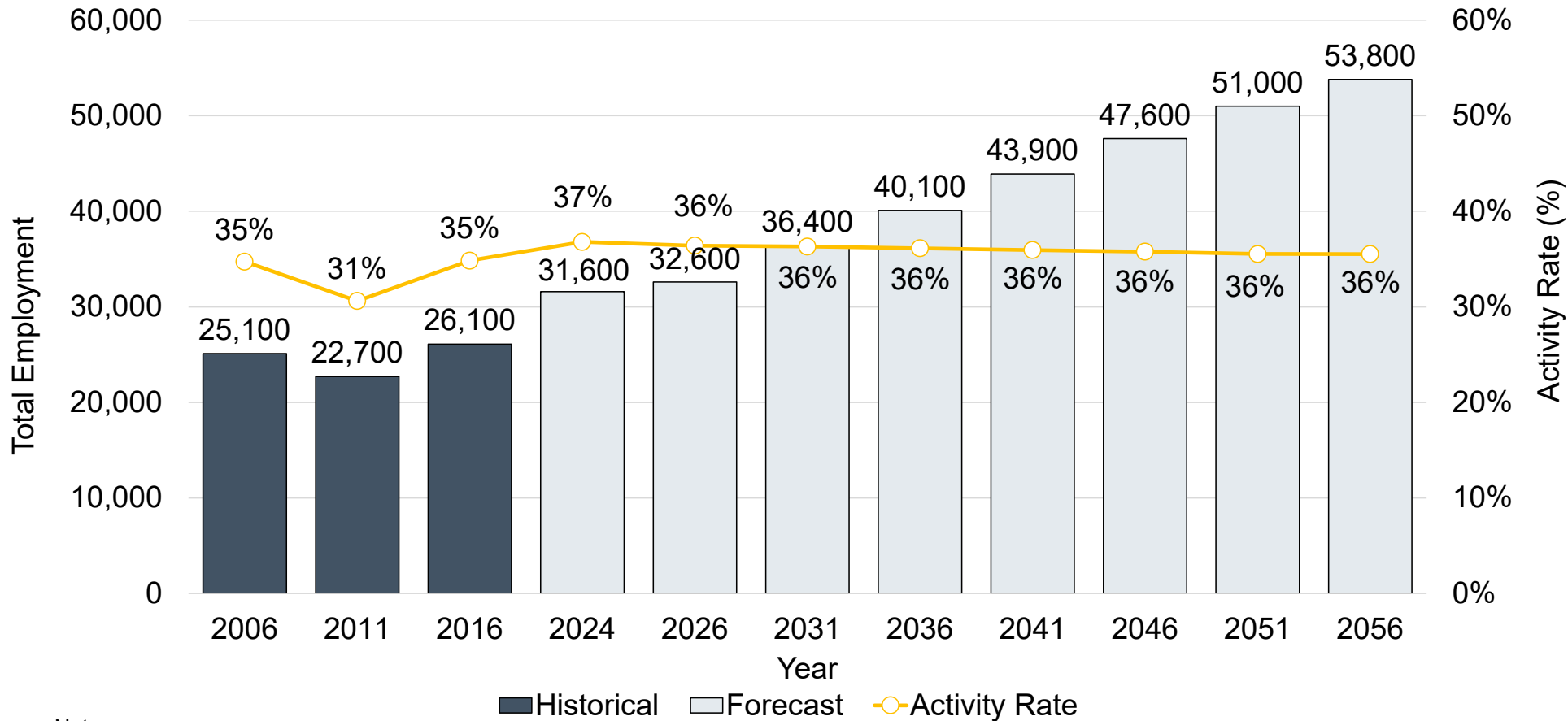
Source: 2021 derived from Statistics Canada Census data, forecast prepared and summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

# Middlesex County

Employment Growth Forecast  
by Area Municipality

# Middlesex County

## Medium Growth Scenario, 2001 to 2056



### Notes

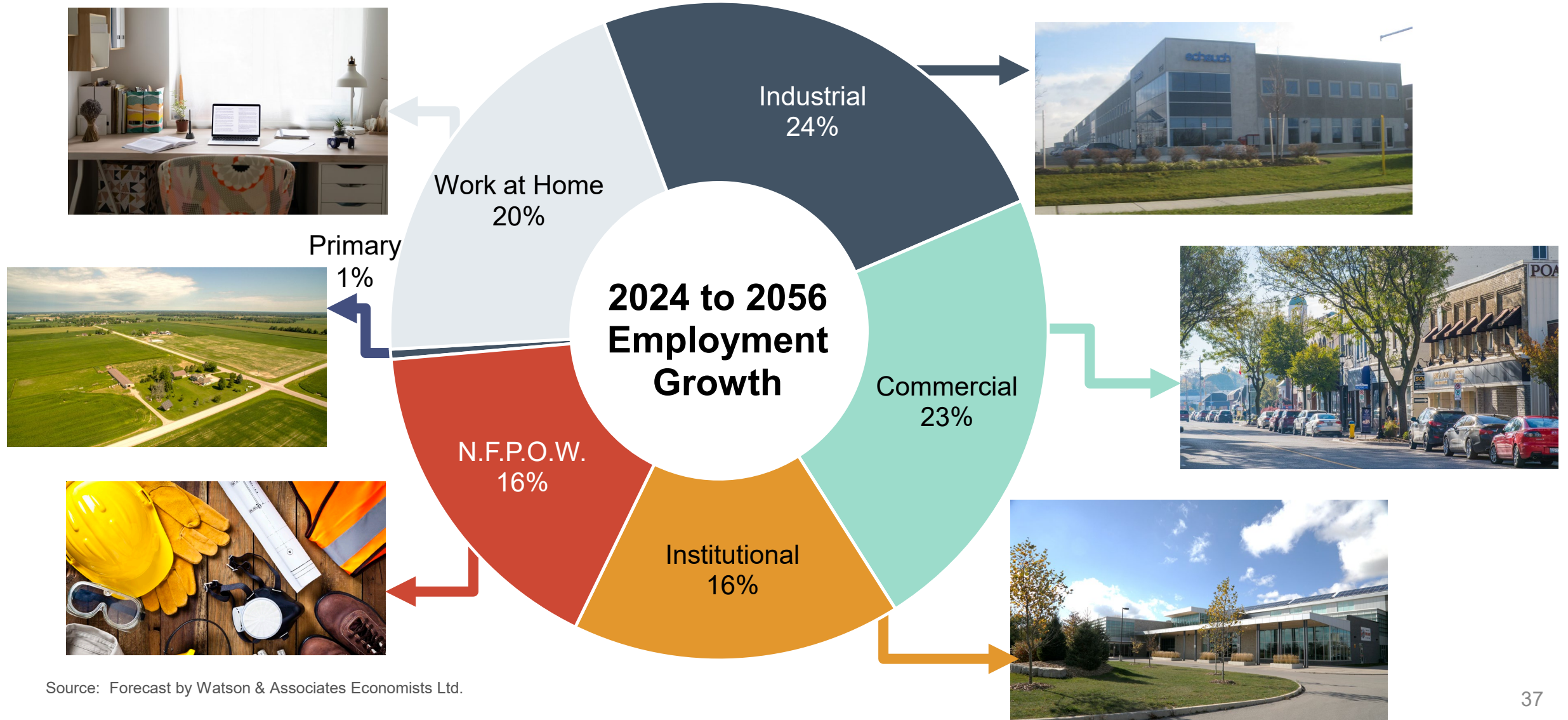
- Activity rate is calculated with population including the net Census undercount.
- Numbers have been rounded.
- Statistics Canada 2021 Census place of work employment data has been reviewed. The 2021 Census employment results have not been utilized due to a significant increase in work at home employment captured due to Census enumeration occurring during the provincial COVID-19 lockdown from April 1, 2021 to June 14, 2021.

2024 to  
2056 Total  
Employment  
Growth:  
**22,200  
jobs**

2024 to  
2056 Annual  
Growth  
Rate:  
**1.7%**

# Middlesex County

## Employment Growth by Sector, 2024 to 2056

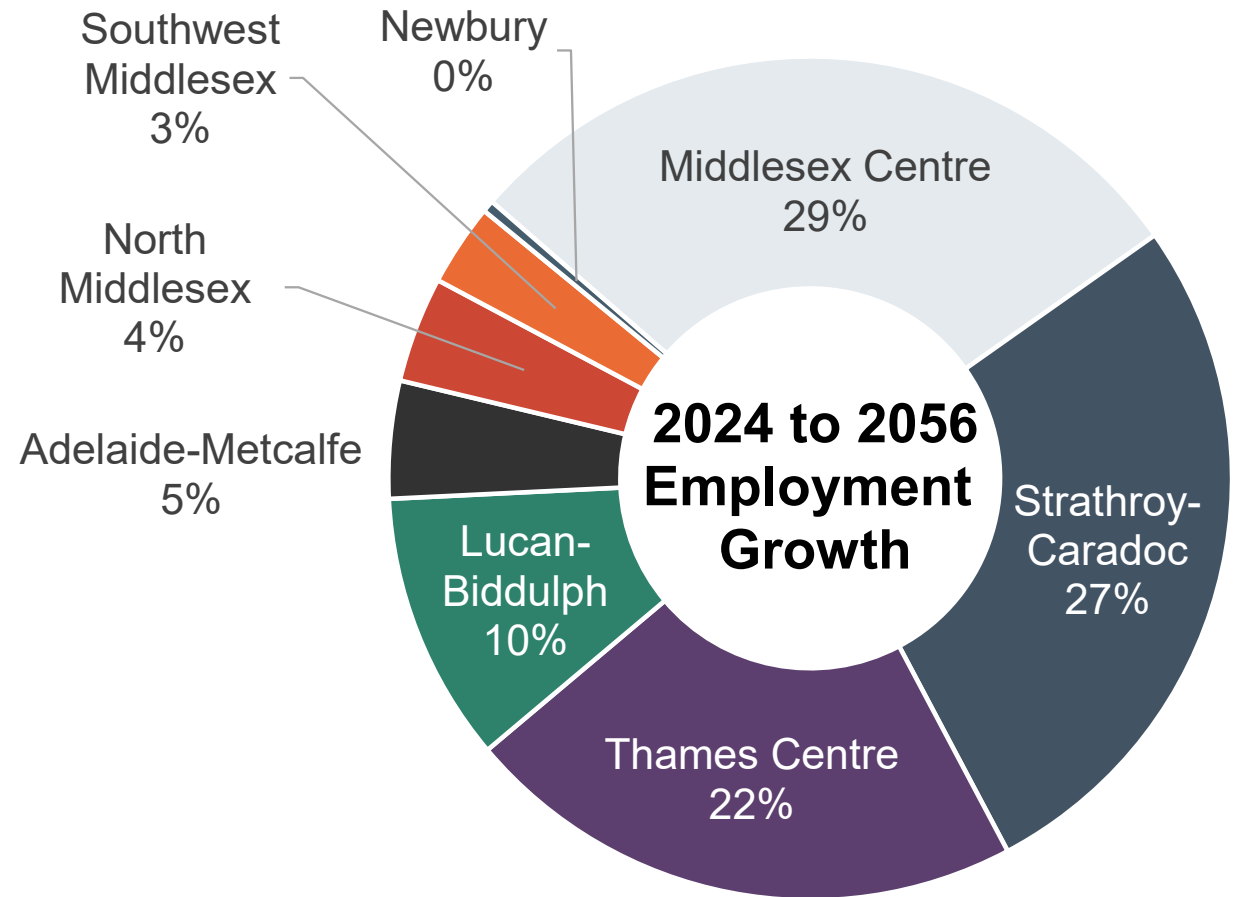


# Middlesex County

## Employment Growth Shares of Area Municipal Allocation



- 77% of the County's total employment growth is directed towards the larger urban areas.
- Townships and smaller urban areas account for 23% of the County's total employment growth, majority of which is population-related employment.



Note: Figures have been rounded.

Source: Forecast prepared and summarized by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.



# Conclusions



- Middlesex County total population is forecast to increase from 81,700 in 2021 to 151,500 by 2056, representing an ***increase of 69,800 persons***.
- The long-term growth rate is expected to increase from historical rate to ***1.8%*** over the forecast period from 2021 to 2056.
  - This forecast has been derived from ***the Fall 2024 Ministry of Finance Projections***.
- County-wide housing growth is forecast to average ***820 new units*** annually between 2021 to 2056. Comparatively, this represents ***faster growth than the historical average*** (311 units annually) achieved between 2001 to 2021.



# Conclusions



- Larger urban areas including Middlesex Centre, Strathroy-Caradoc, and Thames Centre will experience more population and housing growth over the long-term planning horizon.
  - Growing at a minimum ***annual rate of 1.8%***.
- The remaining municipalities are expected to achieve a similar annual housing growth as the previous study or slightly higher.



# Conclusions



- County is expected to add an additional 22,200 jobs, approximately 700 jobs annually.
- Similar to population and housing, the larger urban areas are anticipated to account for over three-quarters of the County's total employment growth.



Questions?



“The decisions made today will fundamentally affect options available to future generations. The ability to produce food, to regulate the system of production to reflect the values of society, to maintain the important economic contributions of agriculture, and to retain the important role that farmers play in managing the countryside is dependent on retaining farmers and the lands essential to their livelihood”

(Caldwell et al., 2017, p. 61).

## AGRICULTURE CONTINUED

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- 1 Provincial change
- 2 Agricultural System
- 3 Residence Surplus to a Farming Operation
- 4 Settlement Boundary Expansions
- 5 Other Considerations



# PROVINCIAL CHANGE

The PPS requires municipalities to implement an Agricultural Systems Approach.

Specifies one new residential lot per farm consolidation for a residence surplus to a farm operation is permitted.

Additional Residential Units (ARUs) in prime agricultural areas.

Amends the definition of on-farm diversified uses to include renewable energy.

Removal of the Municipal Comprehensive Review requirement to expand a settlement area.

# AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM

Defined as

*“The system mapped and issued by the Province in accordance with this Plan, comprised of a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector. It has two components:*

- 1. An agricultural land base comprised of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, and rural lands that together create a continuous productive land base for agriculture;*
- 2. An agri-food network which includes infrastructure, services and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector.”*

*“Agri-Food Network – Within the Agricultural System, a network that includes elements important to the viability of the agri-food sector such as regional infrastructure; on farm buildings and infrastructure; agricultural services, farm markets, distributors, and primary processing; and vibrant, agriculture-supportive communities.”*



# AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM

Agricultural system approach was previously implemented in the Greater Golden Horseshoe and recognizes that farmland and clusters of agri-food infrastructure, services and assets need to coexist and be compatible with growing communities

The desired outcomes of the Agricultural System approach are:

1. Active planning for agriculture and rural economic development based on reliable mapping, data and tools.
2. Improved viability of agriculture and growth of the agri-food sector.
3. Better protection of the agricultural land base.
4. Increased land use planning consistency and certainty across municipalities.
5. Reinforcement of the synergies between agricultural, natural heritage and water systems, as outlined in provincial policy.
6. Collaboration between the Province, municipalities, farmers and businesses with a common interest in a strong agri-food sector.

# AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM – PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS

The County Official Plan must be amended to implement an agricultural systems approach

This could include amending existing economic development policies to enhance support for the agri-food network and cross references to economic development programs (CIPs)

Policies could also set the framework for the inclusion of asset mapping or the inclusion of an agri-food network inventory in an official plan appendix

Staff are monitoring the ongoing guidance from OMAFA to support the implementation of the agricultural system policies



# AGRICULTURE SURPLUS DWELLINGS



In order to protect agricultural land for long-term agricultural use and to avoid land use conflicts, new residential lots are prohibited within the agricultural area with one exception - **Residence Surplus to a Farming Operation**

As farm operations have increased in size to often include several parcels, the intent of policy is to facilitate the severance of farm dwellings where they are not needed for an expanding farming operation

# SURPLUS DWELLINGS — PROVINCIAL PLANNING STATEMENT

*“Lot creation in prime agricultural areas is discouraged and may only be permitted for: **one** new residential lot **per** farm consolidation for a residence surplus to an agricultural operation, provided that: 1. the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services; and 2. the planning authority ensures that new dwellings and additional residential units are prohibited on any remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance. The approach used to ensure that no new dwellings or additional residential units are permitted on the remnant parcel may be recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches that achieve the same objective;”*

[Policy 2.3.4.1 c)]

Residence surplus to a farming operation is defined as:

*“means an existing habitable farm residence that is rendered surplus as a result of farm consolidation (the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation)”*

# SURPLUS DWELLINGS — COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

## County Official Plan (Policy 4.5.3.4.a)

Consent to sever a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation may be permitted, provided the residence was built at least 10-years prior, the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services, and provided that new residential dwellings are prohibited on any vacant remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance.

The County encourages local municipalities to include policies in their local official plan addressing considerations including minimizing the loss of agricultural land, addressing the retention of outbuildings with the residence surplus to a farming operation including maximum building size and permitted uses, adequacy of services, and Minimum Distance Separation;

*“means a habitable farm residence that is rendered surplus as a result of farm consolidation (the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation).”*

# PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS

The Official Plan **must** at a minimum be updated to reflect the PPS: “one new residential lot per farm consolidation for a residence surplus to an agricultural operation”

There are other areas where the Official Plan **could** be updated, or those matters could be left to local official plans. Issues sometimes raised include additional policy concerning existing barns, defining a farming operation, and other general considerations.





# PRELIMINARY POLICY OPTIONS - INADVERTENT LOT MERGERS

The Official Plan could be updated to include policy direction pertaining to lots that merged inadvertently due to common ownership subject to the following criteria:

- The severance would reflect the original lot configuration
- The subject property would be held in the same ownership as such when the inadvertent merger occurred
- the severed and retained parcels meet road access criteria

Applicants would be required to provide evidence through legal documentation that demonstrates that the lots were separate, legally conveyable lots prior to the inadvertent merger and are still held in the same ownership as when the inadvertent merger occurred



# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Committee may identify any other topics for further discussion or analysis.





A photograph of a forest floor in autumn. The ground is covered in a thick layer of yellow and orange fallen leaves. Several tree trunks of varying heights and thicknesses stand upright, and a few fallen logs lie on the ground. The lighting is warm, suggesting sunlight filtering through the trees.

NEXT STEPS



# CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Community survey was launched on April 30<sup>th</sup> and will be online until May 30<sup>th</sup>

An initial Public Open House scheduled for May 20<sup>th</sup>

Upcoming virtual focus groups with municipal CAOs, Councillors, agricultural community members, and local businesses and investors in early June to capture a comprehensive understanding of our current challenges, opportunities, and potential priorities

Additional targeted outreach and engagement ongoing



# ANOTHER COMMITTEE MEETING

Are there additional matters that the Committee would like to examine.

The next meeting at the chair's discretion as the Official Plan process continues.

