



## County Council

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**Meeting Date:** July 18, 2023

**Submitted by:** Bill Rayburn, Chief Administrative Officer  
Chris Traini, Deputy CAO/County Engineer

**Subject:** Decentralization Strategy – Governance & Administration Centre

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### **BACKGROUND:**

Over the past nine years, Middlesex County has made significant strides in its decentralization strategy. This has been achieved by successful investment in capital development projects throughout the County, effective use of peak market conditions, and the leading edge implementation of a hybrid work model. The aim of the decentralization strategy is to reduce the corporate footprint, create operational synergies, and invest in the provision of services closer to County stakeholders while efficiently utilizing infrastructure, land holdings and financial resources.

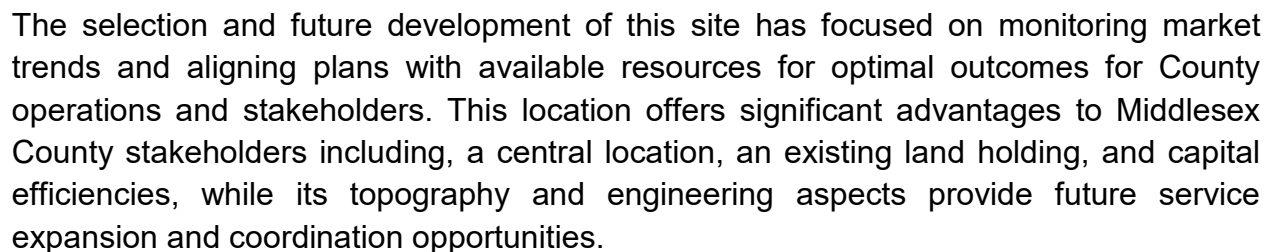
Key decentralization achievements include major renovations at the Middlesex County Primary Operations Centre on Gainsborough Road, construction of comprehensive library locations, and repurposing of space for social services, economic development and tourism services. These efforts have helped to integrate County services into community hubs, reducing transportation barriers and promoting local access.

The sale of the Middlesex County Administration Building in 2019 and vacant lands near Strathmere Lodge in 2021 have provided a financial boost for these initiatives, with proceeds of approximately \$36 million helping to stabilize the tax rate and fund decentralization initiatives.

Implementation of the next phase of the decentralization strategy - the construction of a new governance and administration centre - will enable Middlesex County to continue efforts to invest in the provision of services closer to County stakeholders and achieve additional operational efficiencies. It will also mark a significant milestone in the ongoing journey towards investment in a more effective and responsive local government.

Following analysis of operational needs and the successful decentralization of numerous service areas, Middlesex County is at the crucial stage of the creation of a new innovative purpose-built governance and administration centre.

To maximize investment in existing land holdings, this new facility will be constructed at 1035 Adelaide St. South, London, Ontario, on the same site as MLPS Headquarters.



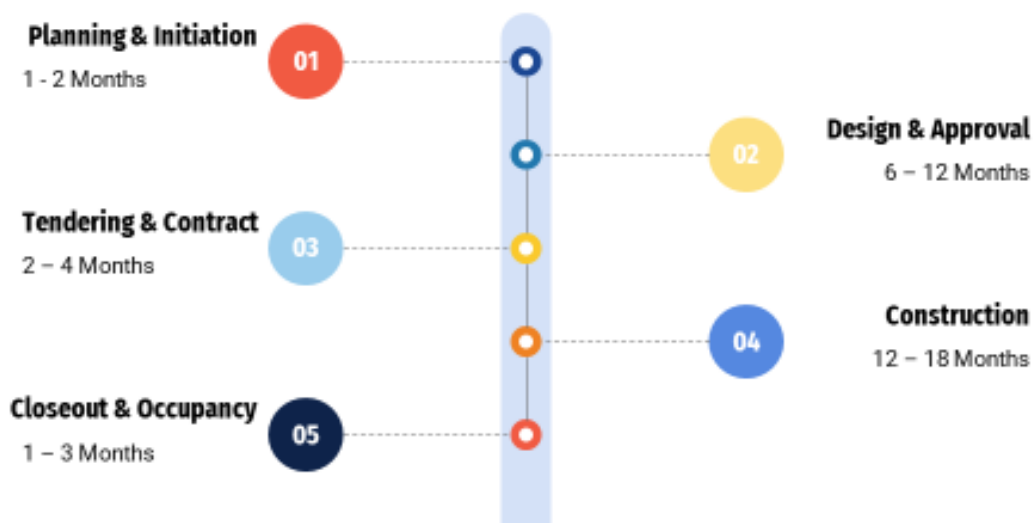
Governance & Administration Centre Travel Time Assessment			
Origin Location	399 Ridout St N	1035 Adelaide St S	Travel Time Difference
Glencoe	44 minutes	39 minutes	- 5 minutes
Parkhill	44 minutes	46 minutes	+ 2 minutes
Lucan	29 minutes	39 minutes	+ 10 minutes
Strathroy	36 minutes	31 minutes	- 5 minutes
Mt Brydges	27 minutes	21 minutes	- 6 minutes
Dorchester	29 minutes	16 minutes	- 13 minutes
Thorndale	30 minutes	26 minutes	- 4 minutes
Coldstream	28 minutes	31 minutes	+ 3 minutes
Ilderton	24 minutes	35 minutes	+ 11 minutes
Newbury	53 minutes	46 minutes	- 7 minutes
Net Time Difference			- 14 minutes

This facility and location will facilitate effective communication and coordination among County service areas, promoting a synergy that is essential for a high-functioning administration. In alignment with this approach, the design and construction of the facility will prioritize lasting, efficient solutions, taking into account current needs and future growth projections. Pending Council design considerations, this facility will be approximately half the size of the existing County Administration Building at 15,000 ft<sup>2</sup>.

The current County Administration Building located at 399 Ridout St. North, London, Ontario is approximately 33,000 ft<sup>2</sup>. The Middlesex County lease for facilities at 399 Ridout St. North expires on August 8, 2025.

Construction will occur at a time with supply chains generally opening up, although a development and construction timeline of 22-39 months is anticipated.

### Governance & Administration Centre Implementation Schedule



Considering the development timelines, Council may consider sole sourcing the architectural design contract for the construction of the new governance and administration centre. This recommendation is made based on the time-sensitive nature of the project and is in line with section 11.1 of the Middlesex County Procurement Policy.

Middlesex County has only 25 months remaining on the lease of the existing facility at 339 Ridout St. North. The estimated timeline for the construction of the new facility ranges between 22 to 39 months. This timeline already presents a potential overlap issue where the construction of the new facility may not be completed before the expiration of the current lease. This overlap could potentially result in an operational disruption and additional transitional costs.

The usual procedure of tendering the architectural design contract would add to this timeline, potentially leading to 2-4 months further delays in the start of the construction.

To mitigate the potential risk of operational disruption and to avoid unnecessary additional costs, it is prudent to expedite the architectural design phase by sole sourcing the contract. This will allow Middlesex County to engage an architect immediately, accelerating the design phase and allowing for an earlier start to construction.

Matter Architectural Studio has proven experience and expertise in municipal works in Middlesex County. Most recently completing the Middlesex County Primary Operations Centre on Gainsborough Road. Matter Architectural Studio is already familiar with the specific manner in which Middlesex County operates and understands Middlesex County needs and requirements. Utilizing section 11.1 of the Middlesex Procurement Policy will assist in further expediting the project and ensure a high-quality outcome. This is seen as the most practical and effective way to manage the timelines and ensure the successful completion of the project.





Implementing the next stage of the decentralization strategy - the construction of a new governance and administration centre - is a significant step. It marks a pivotal moment in the Middlesex County perpetual investments towards a more effective and responsive local government. This milestone will symbolize Middlesex County's commitment to innovation, progressive thinking, and service excellence and aligns with the Middlesex County Strategic Plan, the Middlesex Initiative.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Architectural design services, for the purposes of site plan approval, provided by Matter Architectural Studio are estimated at \$28,500+HST and disbursements, with funding to be allocated from capital reserves.

## ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC FOCUS:

This report aligns with the following Strategic Focus, Goals, or Objectives:

Strategic Focus	Goals	Objectives
<p>Cultivating Community Vitality</p> 	<p>Advance a diverse, healthy, and engaged community across Middlesex County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote and support community wellness</li><li>• Innovate social and community services</li><li>• Attract, retain, and engage youth in our community</li><li>• Champion and encourage active transportation and public transit opportunities</li></ul>
<p>Connecting Through Infrastructure</p> 	<p>Ensure communities are built on a sustainable foundation that is connected and thriving</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage and advocate, through partnerships, the construction of scalable, equitable broadband infrastructure, recognizing our unserved and underserved areas</li><li>• Commit to a sound asset management strategy to maintain and fund critical infrastructure</li><li>• Use County infrastructure in an innovative way to provide a seamless service experience for residents</li></ul>
<p>Strengthening Our Economy</p> 	<p>Encourage a diverse and robust economic base throughout the county</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support opportunities to create a stronger and sustainable agricultural sector</li><li>• Create an environment that enables the attraction and retention of businesses, talent, and investments</li><li>• Attract visitors to Middlesex County</li><li>• Support the development and prosperity of downtown core areas in Middlesex County</li></ul>
<p>Promoting Service Excellence</p> 	<p>Innovate and transform municipal service delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anticipate and align municipal service delivery to emerging needs and expectations</li><li>• Engage, educate and inform residents, businesses, and visitors of county services and community activities</li><li>• Strengthen our advocacy and lobbying efforts with other government bodies</li><li>• Collaborate with strategic partners to leverage available resources and opportunities</li><li>• Build organizational capacity and capabilities</li></ul>

**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT staff be directed to utilize section 11.1 of the Middlesex County Procurement Policy to obtain architectural design services from Matter Architectural Studio for the design of a new governance and administration centre with funding provided from capital reserves.