

Citizens for an Accountable Mega-hospital Planning Process

Comments on the Sandwich South Master Servicing Plan

Station #1: Study and Context: Issues that Matter

1. Is there anything you think is missing from the list of Issues that Matter from the public, or the stakeholders and technical team?

- **Windsor declared a Climate Emergency in November 2019. None of the City's climate change plans are referenced in the section *Integration with other Studies*.**
- **There is no mention of climate change in the *Issues That Matter*:** The greenhouse gas (GHG) impact of a hospital on greenfield land 13 km from the heart of Windsor needs to be quantified, particularly anticipated additional driving distances as well as the impact of converting active farmland to surface parking.
- **Linkage to Windsor's [Community Energy Plan \(2017\)](#) targets is missing from *Issues That Matter*:**
 - **Reduce per capita primary energy use by 40% from 2014 baseline by 2041**
 - **Reduce per capita GHG emissions by 40% from 2014 baseline by 2041**
- According to *Issues That Matter*, "Windsor was tied for the third fastest growing municipality in Canada in 2017, with a growth rate of 2.5%." Presumably this refers to a single year. Yet Station 1 **projects population growth of 8,000, which is just 3.7% over 20 years**. Which of these two projections is being used to inform this development plan?
- The panel indicates that the land in question was transferred in 2002 from the Town of Tecumseh "to accommodate growth." The significant decline in anticipated future growth since 2002 is not mentioned.
- The panel gives no indication how much future population growth is to be accommodated within existing neighbourhoods and how much is expected to be located in Sandwich South.
- It is difficult to imagine why population growth as slow as 3.7% over 20 years cannot be accommodated within existing neighbourhoods.
- The panel states that 6,900 new dwellings will need to be built to accommodate the city's population growth. It does not indicate how many will be required in Sandwich South.
- As of October 16, 2020, CAMPP identified development plans and proposals totalling **7,157 dwelling units in existing neighbourhoods, including 748 units in East Pelton** (link at <https://bit.ly/37au9H5>). This indicates the further development of Sandwich South is no longer supported by available evidence.

Station #2: Existing Conditions

2. Do you have any comments on the existing conditions? Or, is there anything missing you would like to add?

- The City of Windsor's 20 year [Strategic Vision](#) (2016) identifies biodiversity as a strength to build on. Station #2 identifies considerable Species of Conservation Concern, Species at Risk, as well as significant Wetlands and Woodlands. Further development of roads and buildings in this area contradicts the city's own Strategic Vision.
- The impact of waterfowl on stormwater management infrastructure close to Windsor Airport is concerning. While measures can be taken to reduce risks to aircraft and the safety of wildlife, this concern suggests unnecessary encroachment on the region's natural habitat.

3. Do you think anything is missing from the existing conditions presented that you would like to add?

- According to [Dianne Saxe](#), Ontario's former Environmental Commissioner, "Essex County..has the lowest rate of wetlands and woodlands in Ontario — only 3% of trees, and only about 1.5% of wetlands. **The minimum necessary for a healthy ecosystem and some kind of reasonable flood resilience is 30% woods and 10% wetlands.**"
- Downstream flood risks on the land described in this panel are an indication that its development will further erode the region's flood resilience.
- A more resilient and visionary approach to this large area of farmland would be to return it to its original woodland and wetland state, rather than developing it.

Station #3: Transportation

4. What do you like about the transportation options?

- The incorporation of the *Complete Streets* concept in the early planning stages is important to ensure roads are designed with cyclist and pedestrian safety (and usability) in mind.
- Active transportation options are critical to enable movement without dependence on cars. This is environmentally sustainable and supports healthy populations.

5. What do you not like about the transportation options?

- [Council Report S116/2020](#) (Page 17, September 23, 2020) discusses the desirability of a **net-zero neighbourhood in Sandwich South**. It references sustainability goals consistent with the City of Windsor's [Community Energy Plan](#) (2017). Wider roads to accommodate more vehicular traffic are incompatible with these sustainability goals.
- The large number of proposed roads to be widened and language around traffic congestion shows that automotive transportation is being prioritized. Wider roads are well-established to induce more car traffic.
- Only Option 2b emphasizes transit, cycling and walking. A clear risk exists that alternative modes of transit will be compromised if one of the other options is selected.
- It is unclear how Option 3 might impact access to a hospital on County Road 42.

6. Do you have any comments about the transportation options?

- According to Windsor's [Transit Master Plan](#) (2019): *"A bus coming less frequently than every 20 minutes can add a lot of time to an individual's trip if they miss their connection or are a couple minutes late. This makes taking transit very inconvenient and undesirable for someone who has access to other transportation alternatives."*
- The Transit Master Plan shows no existing primary transit routes to the proposed new hospital. The proposed new routes to the area all culminate at the hospital site and only on-demand public transit service is contemplated for the neighbourhood beyond. Bus users who don't live along direct bus routes will need one or more transfers to reach their destinations. This will reduce the desirability of public transportation to and from Sandwich South for those living in other neighbourhoods.
- **5,000+ people work at Windsor Regional Hospital. The distance to Sandwich South from almost all existing neighbourhoods exceeds 5 km and in many cases exceeds 10 km.** As well, the arterial routes to Sandwich South around the Windsor Airport land are designed for vehicular traffic. The distance around the airport land and the design of the roads significantly reduces the feasibility of cycling or walking to the proposed new hospital.
- Have the projected energy and GHG impacts of projected vehicular traffic in Sandwich South been evaluated? The impact of a hospital on active farmland 13 km from the heart of Windsor, including the projected aggregate additional driving by the 5,000+ healthcare workers, many of whom live within walking distance of their workplace today, needs to be determined.
- What initiatives (e.g. additional tree planting) to offset the GHG impact of projected additional vehicular traffic have been identified?
- The impact on taxes of building and maintaining the expanded roads needs to be clarified, especially in light of uncertain future population growth. Is there a funding formula for neighbouring County municipalities to share these costs?

Station #4: Sanitary and Storm Sewers

7. What do you like about the sanitary and storm sewer options?

- The potential for active transportation facilities within open drain corridors will make the area attractive for recreational cycling and walking.

8. What do you not like about the sanitary and storm sewer options?

- Hospitals are exempt from paying Development Charges (DC). There is no clarity around incremental costs to taxpayers (in existing neighbourhoods) for sanitary and storm sewers attributable to the proposed new hospital. This should have been determined before making the site selection decision for the new hospital.
- There is no clarity about the property acquisition envisioned under Option 3. What is the anticipated purchase cost and how will this be paid? What will be the tax impact?
- Climate change is bringing about increased precipitation, as documented in Windsor's [Climate Change Adaptation Plan](#) (2020). There is no indication that expected future rainfall levels have been taken into account in developing the sanitary and storm sewer options to prevent future flooding.

9. Do you have any comments about the sanitary and storm sewer options?

- The cost of the sanitary and storm sewer options has not yet been determined. This makes it difficult to comment on the proposed options.
- The lifetime maintenance and replacement costs of these options are a concern, particularly given Windsor's uncertain anticipated population growth in the next 20 years.
- The ramifications of the bullet "*Review of potential sanitary sewer conflicts with other proposed infrastructure*" are unclear.
- The bullet "*Does not support natural linkage to other corridors*" presumably relates to the presence of the Windsor Airport between Sandwich South and sanitary and storm sewer corridors. This reinforces the way the development of Sandwich South, particularly during a period of uncertain projected population growth, is an over-complicated and costly way to develop.
- It would be helpful to see an alternative cost comparison that accommodates anticipated future growth within existing neighbourhoods instead of Sandwich South. Without this information, stakeholders have no way of knowing whether this plan is cost-effective.

Station #5: Flood Mapping and Stormwater Management Solutions

10. What do you like about the updated flood mapping and stormwater management solutions?

- The City of Windsor's [Climate Change Adaptation Plan](#) (June 2020) notes that more frequent and more extreme weather events are increasingly impacting our community. Updated flood mapping is a long overdue step to address Windsor's climate change vulnerability.

11. What do you not like about the updated flood mapping and stormwater management solutions?

- The planning of stormwater management solutions in Sandwich South prior to completing flood mapping suggests those planning this development are not taking climate change as seriously as required by the plans adopted by the City of Windsor.
- It also suggests an unwillingness to develop in the wisest and most cost-effective way possible. Instead, engineering measures at whatever cost necessary are being employed to ensure the safety of residents, particularly those living downstream from Sandwich South.

12. Do you have any comments about the updated flood mapping and stormwater management solutions?

- Given the uncertain projected long term population growth, a real risk exists that infrastructure needs in already-developed neighbourhoods will be compromised in order to pay for the necessary stormwater management solutions in Sandwich South.
- Without cost comparisons, it is impossible for the public to give meaningful input into the options presented.
- The planned construction of the region's only full service acute care hospital in an area that is prone to flooding reveals a deep flaw in the site selection process. The site selection criteria did not evaluate climate change priorities or flood risks.