



Committee Report

To: Warden Mitch Twolan
Members of the Planning and Development Committee

From: Kara Van Myall
Director of Planning and Development

Date: July 9, 2020

Re: Land Use Planning Role and Structure Review

Staff Recommendation:

That the Land Use Planning Role and Structure Review report be endorsed as a foundation to further advance the Land Use Planning Transformation; and

That the Modernization Funding for Land Use Service Delivery Review be used to update the Memoranda of Understanding for Local Planning Services and to undertake a Development Fees Review.

Background:

In April of this year, Planning and Development Committee approved the recommendation “That the Modernization Funding for Land Use Service Delivery Review project include a review of the Land Use Divisions role and structure to support service delivery.” Further to that direction, Stantec Consulting was retained to undertake this project, and have provided their final report which is attached.

Stantec’s report seeks to review and make recommendations for enhancements relative to the Division’s role, structure and service delivery model to realize an improved, comprehensive delivery of planning services.

Key components of the project methodology were a) to review and document the current situation along with key results and documents produced through the Land Use Planning Transformation to date; b) to interview local municipality staff who are involved in the planning process; c) compare Bruce County with 4 other Counties, including interviews with comparator Counties’ Planning Directors/Managers.

It should be noted that the cooperation of local CAOs and their staff was pivotal in this work advancing as quickly as it did, despite logistical constraints posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stantec's Recommendations:

For ease of reference, Stantec's Recommendations are listed below:

SERVICE DELIVERY AND DIVISIONAL STRUCTURE - DEVELOPMENT PLANNING	
No.	Recommendations
1	<p>That the County continue to take a continuous improvement approach to seeking for and making improvements and adjustments to the existing Service Delivery model; ideas could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Developing standard terms of references for technical studies to accompany Complete Applications; with communication that discussing and obtaining agreement on tailored terms of reference to fit situational needs is encouraged.b) Continue to monitor and report on the CityWorks digital application tracker for creating and sharing information on a public portal.c) Work towards expanded and more regular office hours for County Planning Staff within all local municipality offices.d) Continue to monitor the implementation of the recently updated "Delegation By-law" and the County's approach to streamlining application processing by delegating un-disputed applications to staff for certain application types. Identify additional opportunities for delegation of approvals to support additional areas of efficiency.
2	<p>That the County work with and assist local municipal staff, in delivery of some functions related to the Development Planning Application process to support streamlining the interface of service delivery between the local municipalities and the County. Specific function and roles should be agreed to and defined via updated Memorandums of Understanding.</p>

SERVICE DELIVERY AND DIVISIONAL STRUCTURE - LONG-RANGE/POLICY PLANNING	
No.	Recommendations
3	<p>Build capacity of all planners and technicians to support policy planning by providing opportunities to work part of their time on longer range policy type special projects (more on this in the Division Structure Section).</p>
4	<p>Reinforce and raise the profile and importance of policy planning; this can be done in a number of ways, for example, include long range policy planning initiatives/projects in annual Business Planning and annual reporting to County Council, and if possible, to local municipal Councils, including schedule objectives and monitoring of same.</p>
5	<p>Reinforce and clarify the process for communication between the County of Bruce and the Province on land use planning policy matters by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Identifying the Manager as having responsibility for providing timely reports and advice to County Council on major Provincial policy initiatives or policy issues between the County and Province; such reports would provide, subject to Council approval and where appropriate, the County's position to the Province; and,b) Identifying the Senior Policy Planners as having responsibility for consulting with appropriate Provincial staff as subject matter experts where needed to support County-specific policy development projects.

6	That the designation of two current senior planners to policy roles be maintained to drive the County's policy program going forward.
7	That the County explore opportunities related to integrating local official plan policies at the County level via 1) procurement of a legal opinion about the legislative basis for this approach, and; 2) engagement with local municipal stakeholders as part of the update process for the Memorandums of Agreements (MoAs).

SERVICE DELIVERY AND DIVISIONAL STRUCTURE - DIVISIONAL STRUCTURE	
No.	Recommendations
8	That the County undertake a review of existing Memorandum of Service Agreements with the objectives of clarifying respective roles and responsibilities, understanding the addressing of long-range policy and other similar planning initiatives (e.g. local Official Plans, Community Improvement Plans, etc.) and the financial basis on which such service model is delivered.
9	That the County consider enhancing the role of the Applications Technician to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Play a stronger role with applicants, supporting them through the application process. b) Develop and empower them to undertake additional tasks in the processing of straightforward applications such as severances and minor variances. c) Provide technical support (land use analysis, data review, GIS, etc.) for long-range, land use planning projects in addition to the support being provided for development review.
10	That the planner function be elevated to take on a greater role in application processing (with oversight and mentoring from the Senior Development Planner). Also, that a portion of planner time be devoted to support long-range and policy planning functions to support skill development, job variety, and ultimately support staff attraction and retention.

SERVICE DELIVERY COSTS	
No.	Recommendations
11	That the County consider a review of planning application fees, increasing them to levels adequate to cover a greater share of the County's application processing service costs. The aim should be full cost recovery, however, given the profile of applications this may not be possible.
12	That the County begin discussions with lower tier municipalities, through the recommended update to Memorandums of Understanding, to refine the current funding model and practices for longer-range and policy planning services undertaken by the County on their behalf. This could include charges paid by the lower tier to support County staff management of Official Plan or Zoning Bylaw updates on a cost recovery basis. Municipalities not interested in the County playing this role/providing this service would not be required to support this function.
13	That, if the County establishes a Development Charge, it includes soft costs for growth-related plans or studies, where appropriate.

EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT	
No.	Recommendations
14	That the County consider addressing knowledge gaps with annual reporting to County and Local Councils on the services offered to them in the previous year, including summaries of application volumes and types, work and status on long-range planning initiatives, and, special projects, with an explanation of the fees/costs and achievement of timelines of those services, initiatives and projects; explanation of the planner's role and responsibilities in providing these services, including the ethical considerations in relation to professional responsibility and to realizing the "public good".
15	That the County work to communicate how policy planning and special policy projects are contributing to the realization of land use planning vision, goals and objectives and thereby helping to shape and retain the unique character of Bruce County and its local municipalities.
16	That the County, in concert with the local municipalities, consider the creation of citizen application guides explaining development application process, why it's important and what to expect (e.g. time frames of the Planning Act) in response to the community push back regarding processing timelines.
17	That the County and local municipalities consider providing clarity on websites for the appropriate land use/development contact information, by application type or policy/special project.
18	That the County work with local municipalities to improve the annual business planning process by making it more interactive and a shared process. The idea of improving this process would be to better understand and organize for the County's, and the local municipalities', goals, plans, work projects and directions in relation to land use planning, thereby contributing to a realistic and integrated Land Use Planning Division business plan.

Next Steps:

It is noted that another project funded by the Modernization Grant entitled Land Use Best Practices Service Delivery Review, led by StrategyCorp, has started and will produce recommendations for best practices for Official Plan policies and related measures to improve service delivery. The information in the Stantec report is expected to feed into and dovetail with a number of StrategyCorp's recommendations.

In the meantime, the main findings of Stantec's work can begin to be used as a basis to inform discussions to advance improvements to service delivery such as:

- updating the Memoranda of Understanding with local municipalities for planning services; and
- reviewing the fees for planning applications.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There are potential indirect financial, staffing, legal and IT considerations associated with this report.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

The project was managed through the Office of the CAO.

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

4. Find creative new ways to ways to involve all staff in our future
Item C. Invest in expanding the knowledge and skills of our staff.
5. Eliminate our own red tape
Item A. All work processes designed for the fewest steps and the easiest completion.
7. Stimulate and reward innovation and economic development
Item A. Streamline and simplify our Planning Processes

Written by: Mark Paoli, Manager, Land Use Planning, Planning and Development

Approved by:A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandra Datars Bere', written in a cursive style.

Sandra Datars Bere
Chief Administrative Officer