



Committee Report

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

From: Kara Van Myall
Director of Planning and Development

Date: October 15, 2020

Re: Plan the Bruce Agriculture - Interim Report

Staff Recommendation:

The Plan the Bruce Agriculture - Interim Report is for information.

Background:

The Plan the Bruce Discussion Papers are the next steps to set out a policy framework for our collective Vision and Guiding Principles for growth and development in Bruce County and form the backbone of the new Official Plan.

The Discussion Paper projects will be done in a staggered schedule over the next year. For most projects, due to their size and scope, we will develop the key documents in two steps:

- first, an Interim Report with background information and draft recommended directions as a base for broader community engagement; then,
- following community engagement and any needed additional analysis, a Discussion Paper with the key findings and final recommended policy directions for the Official Plan.

The Interim Reports will be in a traditional project report format, while the Discussion Papers will be in an accessible and engaging format to support broad communication. Throughout this process, the Plan the Bruce website will be the main platform for awareness and engagement.

Plan the Bruce: Agriculture is the first Guiding Principle project to advance an Interim Report (attached). The Interim Report was prepared through a collaborative effort between Planscape, a planning firm with experience in agriculture, and County planning staff.

Four meetings were held with the Plan the Bruce: Agriculture Advisory Committee who provided feedback on the initial data and issue discussion. The project overview and the list of topics to be reviewed were introduced at meetings with the Bruce County Federation of Agriculture and the Christian Farmers Federation of Grey Bruce.

Interim Report Recommendations:

The 14 recommended directions from the Interim Report are listed below and are offered to inform public consultation and policy development on the Plan the Bruce: Agriculture as it moves forward.

Topic	No.	Recommended Direction
Prime agricultural area mapping	1	Consult community for input on Prime Agricultural Areas and Potential Prime Agricultural Areas
Minimum size for new agricultural lots	2	No change to the baseline minimum size for new farm lots (100 acres in Agricultural, 50 acres in Rural)
	3	More policy detail to support proposed smaller lots
	4	Special Policy Area that allows 50-acre farm lots in the original 50-acre survey area
Surplus farm dwelling severances	5	Consider trade-offs between irregular vs rectangular lot shapes
	6	Consider removing bona fide farmer owner requirement for more applicant flexibility
New residential lots in woodlots	7	Consider continuing to allow new residential lots in woodlots in the Rural Area
	8	Review population decline with Hamlet growth in Plan the Bruce: Good Growth
Industrial and commercial uses on farms	9	Broaden permitted uses to reflect more flexible Provincial policy and guidelines
	10	Develop made-in-Bruce Agricultural System policy
Urban-Agriculture Edge Planning	11	Identify specific areas with urban-agricultural edge issues and opportunities
	12	Investigate potential to implement Farm Enterprise Zones
	13	Investigate benefits of Community Planning Permit system for edge planning
Cannabis production	14	Develop policies to address directing facilities to agricultural and rural vs industrial locations

Communication and Engagement:

In terms of communication and engagement, the approach will be to recognize public health considerations to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, while seeking to maximize awareness and involvement. More specifically, the communication tactics planned for the next phase of the Plan the Bruce: Agriculture project are:

- Information and tools on the project website at www.planthebruce.ca
- Social media posts to generate traffic to the project website
- Remote meeting with the Agriculture Advisory Committee
- Delegations to Local Councils, in accordance with protocols
- Pop up or virtual booths at community events, where possible.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There are no financial, staffing, legal or IT considerations associated with this report.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

None.

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

Plan the Bruce was identified as a major initiative and Council priority in the 2020 Planning and Development Business Plan.

Approved by:



Sandra Datars Bere
Chief Administrative Officer