



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: Land Use Service Delivery Review (Official Plan Best Practices)

Staff Recommendation:

That the Land Use Service Delivery Review (Official Plan Best Practices) - Final Report be endorsed; and,

That the 27 recommendations be endorsed to inform the process for developing the new Bruce County Official Plan and to continue service delivery improvement through the land use planning transformation.

Background:

When the Province of Ontario announced additional opportunities for Modernization Funding late last year, the County seized the opportunity to apply for funds to support the updating of its Official Plan. Updating the County's Official Plan was one of the key strategic initiatives started in 2018 as part of the Land Use Planning Transformation work. The goal in undertaking this work was not only to improve service delivery but also to modernize the Plan to make it more effective, relevant, and accessible.

To that end, StrategyCorp Inc. (SCI) was retained to undertake this project, to review policy approaches in Bruce County, compared to other jurisdictions and make recommendations to address the County's most recurrent application types. As part of this effort SCI was also tasked with highlighting where there are opportunities or best practices that the current Plan is silent on or has not approached due to its age. SCI's final report (attached) is the summation of their review, study, assistance and reporting on recommendations, intent on improving the County's land use service delivery, facilitating a modernized and effective Official Plan, that addresses current realities and future possibilities.

Key components of the project methodology were a) to review and document the current situation along with key results and documents produced through the Bruce GPS community engagement work; b) to interview Bruce County staff, CAOs and several senior staff of local municipalities, Conservation Authority staff members, and individuals in the development community; c) compare Bruce County with 5 other Counties (Grey, Wellington, Simcoe,

Northumberland and Huron) while drawing from other jurisdictions when something relevant could be seen as a leading practice.

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

StrategyCorp Inc. Opportunities:

SCI identified eight opportunities for which they reported on:

- What we heard;
- What others are doing, including:
 - o What other comparator municipalities are doing;
 - o Any leading or emerging policies beyond the comparators; and
- SCI's advice.

For ease of reference, the eight opportunities and SCI's advice (27 recommendations) are summarized below:

- 1. Link the diverse areas of Bruce County in a coordinated planning framework**
 1. Policies should create coordinated Countywide planning approach for settlement areas and hamlets, while remaining sensitive to local contexts.
 2. The Official Plan should have increased specificity on growth management policies designed with local municipal input.
 3. The new plan should provide flexibility to respond to unforeseen shifts in population growth and send market signals of where it may choose to expand if a substantial and unforeseen increase in demand arises and cost-effective municipal servicing permits.
- 2. Supporting Agriculture and Agri-Business**
 4. Bruce County should use an agricultural system approach to plan for its agricultural communities, including the use of Agricultural Impact Assessments.
 5. Clear the path for modest increases in on-farm housing to support farmers in every stage of life.
 6. Provide for modest increases in on-farm housing to support farmers as they age.
 7. Clarify permitted uses and provide maximum flexibility for agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses.
- 3. Focusing on flexible planning policies and tools that are up to date**
 8. Include provisions to help local municipalities keep planning documents in conformity with the County.
 9. Consider a more unified Official Plan framework to ensure consistency.
 10. Ensure that modern policies prevail when there is conflict with local plans that are out of date.

4. Climate Change

11. The anticipated impacts of climate change on the County's local environment should be illustrated in the plan.
12. Work with local conservations authorities to identify economic and environmental hazards resulting from climate change.
13. Include measurable goals to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

5. Addressing Transportation

14. A stronger role for the County in planning for, implementing, and maintaining a regional transportation network.
15. The County should consider adopting policies in its official plan that would establish a mobility-based transportation planning which includes transit and active transportation.
16. Consider implementation of "steps" to a transit network as Innisfil has done.
17. Ensure provisions exist in the new official plan to support more efficient use of existing transportation resources.
18. The County should consider active transportation corridors as a means of linking communities and settlement areas together while providing alternatives to private vehicle use.
19. The new official plan should put in place some of the land use building blocks required for the county to one day implement a transit system.

6. Addressing Housing

20. Apply intensification and density targets for local municipalities according to population allocation, land supply, future transit provision, and existing conditions.
21. Introduce a community planning permit system focused on heritage preservation and new housing.
22. Support local governments to bring in policies that would lay a foundation to implement the province's new community benefits charge.

7. Indigenous community engagement

23. At the minimum, the County Official plan must be updated to Provincial requirements.
24. The County Plan should go beyond the minimum requirements and should enthusiastically include Indigenous Peoples in the official plan update process.

8. Creating an accessible, inspiring document

25. The Official Plan should be written with a narrative that it speaks to the context of the residents and businesses within the County.
26. Policies and their intents should be explained in plain language as much as possible.
27. The final document should be designed to be a visual document.

Next Steps:

This Official Plan Best Practices Review, now complete, will serve as another foundational piece that builds on and enables the eight Guiding Principles established by the Bruce GPS work, supporting and facilitating a modernized and effective Official Plan. Not only does this work support improvement land use planning service delivery, it supports advancement of the County in key elements like Agriculture, Transportation, Housing, Climate Change, etc.

Consistent with the “Plan the Bruce Restart” information report presented to Planning and Development Committee in September, the Request for Proposals to retain a consultant to develop the new Official Plan will be released in Q3 2021. The new Official Plan is scheduled to be brought forward for adoption by County Council in the Q3 of 2022.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

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

Interdepartmental Consultation:

Staff from Planning and Development have been working to date with the Office of the CAO. Several County department staff were interviewed; and the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services provided comments on the draft report.

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

Goal 4 - Find creative new ways to ways to involve all staff in our future
Element C - Invest in expanding the knowledge and skills of our staff.

Goal 5 - Eliminate our own red tape
Element A - All work processes designed for the fewest steps and the easiest completion.

Goal 7 - Stimulate and reward innovation and economic development
Element A - Streamline and simplify our Planning Processes

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Approved for Submission:



Sandra Datars Bere
Chief Administrative Officer