



Committee Report

To: Warden Janice Jackson
Members of the Planning and Development Committee

From: Mark Paoli
Director of Planning and Development

Date: March 18, 2021

Re: Plan the Bruce: Communities Interim Report

Staff Recommendation:

The Plan the Bruce: Communities Interim Report is for information.

Background:

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

The Discussion Paper projects are presented in a staggered approach and are presented in a two-step process as follows:

1. The first step is an **Interim Report** which provides the background information and draft recommended directions as a base for broader community engagement.
2. The second step, which follows community engagement and any further needed analysis, is the **Discussion Paper** which will set out the key findings and final recommended policy directions for the Official Plan.

The Plan the Bruce: Communities Discussion Paper Interim Report (attached) provides an overview of:

- A definition of complete and healthy communities;
- A discussion of the role of environmental sustainability, economic realities, and social and cultural vitality;
- A discussion of current trends and challenges;
- An overview of the legislative/policy requirements from the Province for addressing healthy communities in Official Plans; and,
- A review of the existing County Official Plan, and other relevant documents to identify discussion points for policy options for the County of Bruce.

The Interim Report was prepared through a collaborative effort between The Planning Partnership / MDB Insight and County Planning & Economic Development staff.

Communities Interim Report Recommendations:

The Communities interim report focuses on 6 topics with 28 recommended directions which are listed in the table below for convenience.

Topic	No.	Recommended Direction
A Healthy Community		
<p>A healthy community consciously seeks to improve the health of its citizens by putting public health high on the social and political agenda. Physical, social, and mental well-being are the necessary components of public health, including access to healthy food, clean air and water, safe environments, and opportunities for physical activity.</p> <p>The built environment should be designed as a safe and welcoming setting to encourage residents to be physically active and socially engaged. A fundamental element of a healthy community is the inclusion of <i>active transportation</i> which refers to any form of human-powered transportation - walking, cycling, using a wheelchair, scooters, inline skating, or skateboarding.</p>		
1		Together with Plan the Bruce: Connecting, support an <i>active transportation</i> system that is highly integrated and connected within the community, the adjacent communities, the County, and to transportation systems that serve the broader region.
2		Design the community around pedestrian activity with a substantial number of destinations, including parks, cultural and community facilities, shopping, and restaurant opportunities within walking distance to promote walking and cycling that encourages daily physical activity and a lessening of the dependence on automobiles.
3		Ensure that the appropriate level of infrastructure and amenities are provided along <i>active transportation</i> routes to ensure pedestrian comfort, and enjoyable and safe environments through which to travel.
4		Plan for "age-in-place" facilities within the community that anticipate changing housing needs for an aging population.
5		Support opportunities for a sustainable local food system that may include local farmers markets, agri-tourism, Community Shared Agriculture programs (CSAs), diversity of agricultural uses (greenhouses, orchards), educational and on farm experiences, and community gardens. Urban agriculture should be part of a community's character and open space system, while also providing a transitional use between the natural and built environments, and traditional farm areas at community peripheries.
6		Provide the supporting criteria for when public health is circulated on planning documents to strengthen the role of public health in collaborating with municipalities to share knowledge and build capacity to promote the development of healthy communities.
7		Support accessibility for persons with disabilities in all land-use planning and development decisions to enable the County to fulfill its duty to accommodate persons with disabilities that applies to all forms of development within Bruce County.
8		Promote building and site design that assists in the reduction of the incidence of crime through the implementation of <i>Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design</i> (CPTED) principles.

Topic	No.	Recommended Direction
A Complete Community		
A complete community meets people's needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, local services, a full range of housing, including <i>affordable housing</i> , public services and community infrastructure including educational and recreational facilities.		
9		Together with Plan the Bruce: Homes, recognize the importance of providing the opportunity for residents to remain in the community for their entire lifecycle by accommodating a range and mix of housing types to allow for a range of choice.
10		Together with Plan the Bruce: Connecting, recognize the importance of opportunities for social interaction and where commercial and community services can be provided within easy walking and cycling distances to meet the needs of people of all ages, backgrounds, and capabilities throughout the various stages of their lives.
11		Ensure easy access for all residents to a wide range of uses including shopping and restaurants, parks and open spaces, employment opportunities, educational and cultural opportunities, live-work options, mobility options, a mix and diversity of housing types, and a range of community facilities, services, and amenities.
12		Together with Plan the Bruce: Good Growth, support higher density built forms and higher intensity land uses as a way of reducing land consumption and maximizing the efficiency and cost effectiveness of municipal service infrastructure.

Topic	No.	Recommended Direction
A Beautiful and High Quality Community		
A high quality and ultimately a beautiful community includes well designed buildings and <i>streetscapes</i> . A beautiful community protects natural heritage features and viewsapes and includes an accessible and well-designed system of public parks and open spaces that celebrate the community and provide opportunities for enjoyment by the entire population.		
A high-quality community includes destinations, landmarks, and gateways that distinguish it within its context and establish a sense of place. Crucial to a high-quality community is the attention to the interplay among built form, the <i>public realm</i> , and the natural environment. A high-quality community should engender a sense of pride as a place to live and a sense of stewardship in its long-term care and maintenance.		
13		Develop a high-quality community that encourages and supports active living, social engagement, civic pride, and the creation of a sense of place and well-being. Celebrate views over the water and public access to the water's edge. Opportunities for public access points will ensure the protection of the existing natural features and recognize any hazards along the water's edge.
14		Include landmarks and gateways that clearly identify where you are, and when you have entered. Landmarks must be recognizable and visible from a distance. Gateways help recognize entry points into the community. Landmarks and gateways can include buildings, structural elements, and/or landscape features.

15	Build beautiful streets and <i>streetscapes</i> . Streets need to accommodate all modes of transportation and be designed to be pedestrian friendly and safe. Building facades play a crucial role in defining the street edge, animating the street, and creating the image and character of the community. Together the streets and the adjacent building facades create a <i>streetscape</i> .
16	Ensure that parks and open spaces, as well as Bruce County's natural features, are beautiful, accessible, and linked. Parks and open spaces need to be visible and accessible from, and integrated with, the street system, and include a full array of opportunities for outdoor festivals, recreation, and play, as well as quiet contemplation. High quality landscape architecture will ensure that these outdoor spaces include public art and appropriate grading, paving, and planting materials that celebrate the landscape context.
17	Require high quality architecture that transcends a theme or a specific period in time is fundamental to a beautiful community. Buildings should be compatible with one another, but there must be a diversity of scale and a diversity of style as it may be defined through building materials, colour, and architectural details.

Topic	No.	Recommended Direction
A Viable Community		
A viable community has a strong economy that is market responsive, efficient, and cost effective.		
18		Continue to attract long-term economic development opportunities by protecting for and establishing opportunities for businesses and commercial activities.
19		Continue the County's leadership role in attracting new economic drivers by adapting to trend changes, while still providing a full range of population-related employment options.
20		Together with Plan the Bruce: Connecting, ensure that new development supports a full range of economical, safe, and accessible mobility options, including transit, when it becomes available.
21		Ensure that development is sustainable and financially viable over its life cycle.

Topic	No.	Recommended Direction
A Sustainable Community		
Sustainability is commonly referred to as activities that meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The County may consider developing an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan to create a long term plan that provides direction for the community to achieve environmental, cultural, social, and economic sustainability goals. A sustainable community is environmentally and socially healthy and resilient. It meets the challenges of climate change, and other environmental issues through integrated solutions rather than through fragmented, incremental approaches that meet one objective at the expense of the others. A sustainable community manages its human, natural, and financial resources equitably and takes a long-term view - one that is focused on both present and future generations. Sustainability success relies upon having specific and measurable targets for indicators related to energy, water, carbon, and waste.		

22	Together with Plan the Bruce: Natural Legacy, protect and enhance local and regional ecosystems and biological diversity.
23	Promote the responsible use of resources to ensure long-term sustainability, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce demands for energy, water, and waste systems.
24	Demonstrate leadership in sustainable forms of green building design and technology, including the incorporation of renewable and alternative energy sources.
25	Incorporate low impact design and other site design strategies to mitigate environmental impacts and to create a more comfortable urban and rural environment.
26	Protect the urban forest and the tree canopy and identify objectives for how it can be enhanced and expanded. Trees provide ecological services that benefit human and environmental health, such as reducing the heat island effect, sequestering greenhouse gases, providing shade in the summer, separating pedestrians from vehicular traffic, and contributing to more appealing sidewalks and streets.
27	Support opportunities for best management practices for stormwater to protect against flooding and erosion while improving water quality by reducing the frequency of discharge, runoff volume, and peak flows for most storms. Consider <i>low impact development (LID)</i> techniques that focus on runoff prevention, treat storm water as close to the source as possible, and use natural systems as the integrating framework.

Topic	No.	Recommended Direction
A Resilient Community		
A resilient community can effectively respond to emergencies because it has a plan in place, responsibilities assigned and facilities available. Natural or human made disasters are considered and the necessities of life are provided, particularly for those who are most at risk.		
28		Explore opportunities in the Official Plan to support Emergency Preparedness Planning with respect to development, infrastructure, and systems to ensure access basic needs are designed in a way that mitigates the impacts of climate change and related extreme weather events, such as flooding, heat waves, severe winter storms, and supply chain disruption.

The next step is to advance the interim report for public consultation to seek input on if, where, and how these topics and recommended directions should be implemented in Bruce County.

The Final discussion paper will incorporate the results from public engagement on these topics with additional research and analysis to round out the final recommendations. It will also include supporting policies for the implementation of the planning tools ultimately recommended to County Council in support of Communities in Bruce County.

Communication and Engagement:

Communication and engagement approaches will recognize public health considerations to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, while seeking to maximize awareness and involvement. Communication tactics planned for the next phase of the Plan the Bruce: Communities project are:

- Information and tools on the project website at www.planthebruce.ca
- Social media posts to generate traffic to the project website
- Meetings with community stakeholders and delegations to Local Councils, in accordance with public health measures
- 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:

N/A

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

Plan the Bruce was identified as a major initiative and Council priority in the 2021 Planning and Development Business Plan.

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Departmental Approval:

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