



PLAN THE BRUCE: COMMUNITIES

Interim Report

March 3, 2021





Executive Summary

Bruce County is embarking on a journey to a new County Official Plan. To make sure the Official Plan guides growth and development in a way that resonates with residents, visitors, business owners, community leaders and other stakeholders, discussion papers are being prepared exploring potential issues and best practices and supportive land use policies that may be appropriate for the County.

In preparation for the Official Plan Update, the County conducted research and a community visioning process through the Bruce GPS initiative. The feedback resulted in a Vision Statement and eight Guiding Principles to inform the Official Plan Update. Each of the guiding principles are directing the development of eight Discussion Papers. These papers will provide a base for conversations in the community about the next steps needed to bring the Guiding Principles to life in land use policies.

The Plan the Bruce: Communities document is based on **Principle #6 - To create well-being through access to complete and healthy communities.**

Healthy communities are a priority for Bruce County. As identified through the Bruce GPS initiative, and articulated by residents. A supportive, inclusive, and healthy community ensures the well-being of residents by providing all the pieces they need to thrive and meet their basic needs of food, shelter, water, income, and safety. A healthy community not only meets basic needs but provides a high quality living environment, access to public health services, a variety of experiences, support of cultural heritage, a vibrant economy, and a healthy ecosystem. An important consideration for the County of Bruce when developing policies for the Official Plan is to provide a policy framework that supports and nurtures the happiness, health, and well-being of residents.

The Planning Partnership was retained to collaborate with Bruce County to prepare this Interim Report. The final Discussion Paper for Plan the Bruce: Communities will be prepared after community engagement and further analysis.

The purpose of this Communities Interim Report is to provide recommendations for enabling healthy community development and supportive economic development policies in the Official Plan Update. This Interim Report provides:

- 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.

This Communities Interim Report focuses on the factors that influence healthy communities to support the well-being of residents. The following table summarizes the recommendations of this report for further consultation and discussion:

Topic	No.	Recommended Direction
A Healthy Community		
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.		
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.		
	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.
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.
A Beautiful and High Quality Community	
<p>A high quality and ultimately a beautiful community includes well designed buildings and <i>streetscapes</i>. A beautiful community protects natural heritage features and views 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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
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.

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.

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.

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.
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Communities Interim Report

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	i
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Purpose	1
1.2 A Healthy Community and Community Well-being.....	2
1.3 Factors that Influence Healthy Communities	3
1.4 Key Bruce County Documents and Initiatives	5
1.4.1 Current County Official Plan.....	5
1.4.2 Official Plan Best Practices Review.....	5
1.4.3 Corporate Strategic Plan	6
1.4.4 Economic Development Strategic Plan	6
1.4.5 Cultural Action Plan.....	7
1.4.6 Community Safety and Well-being Plan.....	8
1.4.7 Housing & Homelessness Plan	8
1.4.8 Summary	9
2.0 Bruce County Context	11
2.1 Community Identity.....	11
2.2 Cultural Assets and Community Facilities	11
3.0 Key Topics and Trends Affecting Bruce County	15
3.1 Public Health and Social Well-being	15
3.2 Compact and Complete Communities.....	16
3.3 Access to Services and Amenities.....	18
3.4 Economic Development	20
3.5 Best Practices	23
3.6 Summary of Key Points.....	30
4.0 Recommended Directions	33
5.0 Next Steps	39
Appendix A: Definitions	40
Appendix B: Policy Excerpts.....	43
Appendix C: References and Resources.....	51



Public Art, Walkerton

1.0 Introduction

Bruce County is embarking on a journey to a new County Official Plan.

To make sure the Official Plan guides growth and development in a way that resonates with residents, visitors, business owners, community leaders, and other stakeholders, the County undertook Bruce GPS in 2018 and 2019. Bruce GPS was a community visioning process that resulted in a Vision Statement and 8 Guiding Principles to inform the new Official Plan. The Plan the Bruce: Communities project is based on **Principle 6: To “create wellbeing through access to complete and healthy communities”**.

Building on the Guiding Principles, County Council committed to prepare and circulate Discussions Papers. These papers will provide a base for conversations in the community about the next steps needed to bring the Guiding Principles to life in land use policies.

The Planning Partnership was retained to prepare this Interim Report. The final Discussion Paper for Plan the Bruce: Communities will be prepared after community engagement and further analysis.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Communities Interim Report is to provide recommended directions for consideration in the Official Plan Update for enabling healthy community development and supportive economic development policies. This Interim Report provides:

- A definition of complete and healthy communities;
- A discussion of the factors that influence healthy communities to support the well-being of residents: Built Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change, Natural Environment and Open Space, and Economic Resilience;
- A discussion of current trends and challenges;
- An overview of the legislative/policy requirements and opportunities 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.

Applying a healthy community focus to the Official Plan Update encompasses a number of factors that work together to improve public health with the overall intent of the

County to promote *complete communities*, support social well-being, and active residents. As such, the eight Discussion Papers, including this one, are designed to act as ‘stand-alone’ documents, however, the topics addressed through each of the Discussion Papers are interconnected, and some of the recommendations may overlap.

To assist in a more comprehensive understanding of some of the key words and phrases used in this Interim Report, a glossary of terms is provided. Where a key word or phrase is used that is defined in this Interim Report, the key word or phrase is italicized.

1.2 A Healthy Community and Community Well-being

What is a Healthy Community?

Healthy communities are a priority for Bruce County. As identified through the Bruce GPS initiative, and articulated by residents, a healthy community is defined as follows:

"Healthy and sustainable communities consider and build access to services and resources and they also build opportunities for activity and provide access to healthy food while fostering a sense of belonging, trust, and inclusiveness in the community. Planning compact communities with places to walk and spaces for people to engage with one-another, we can support vibrant, inclusive downtowns and support an inclusive culture, healthy community and support social well-being."

Why is a Healthy Community that supports well-being important?

A supportive, inclusive, and healthy community ensures the well-being of residents by providing all the pieces they need to thrive and meet their basic needs of food, shelter, water, income, and safety. A healthy community not only meets basic needs but provides a high quality living environment, access to public health services, a variety of experiences, support of cultural heritage, a vibrant economy, and a healthy ecosystem. An important consideration for the County of Bruce when developing policies for the Official Plan is to provide a policy framework that supports and nurtures the happiness, health, and well-being of residents.

1.3 Factors that Influence Healthy Communities

This Communities Interim Report focuses on the factors that influence healthy communities to support the well-being of residents. The factors are organized under Built Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change, Natural Environment and Open Space, and Economic Resilience.

Built Environment

A high quality, well-designed and environmentally sustainable built environment is valued within the County and is a contributor to a high quality of life. The built environment can be defined as the human made surroundings where we live, work, learn, and play. This includes neighbourhoods, buildings, parks and open spaces, roads, and supporting infrastructure, such as water and energy systems. Importantly, the collection of downtowns and main streets found throughout the County, both large and small, act as a crucial element of the built environment, offering opportunities for social interaction and focal points for the delivery of the goods, services and recreational and cultural amenities that are so important to everyday life.

To support and nurture all the built form elements that support the County's high quality of life, the County must continue to support the creation of *complete communities* that include a diverse mix of land uses, a range and mix of housing types and tenures, job retention and creation, high quality public open spaces, amenities and services, and access to a full range of options to move around within each community and between communities (otherwise known as mobility options).

A successful and complete community also 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. To ensure that these components are achieved, the built environment must be designed to create opportunities for residents to be physically active and socially engaged.

Sustainability and Climate Change

Introducing sustainability as a lens for future development will lead to communities that are safer, more active, healthier, financially prosperous, and more resource conscious. The components of sustainable design include energy and water conservation, waste reduction, the use of clean energy, compact development patterns, and alternative transportation options which in turn reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.

The impacts of climate change are already being felt in Ontario through more frequent and severe weather events that increasingly create risks to public safety and damage to public infrastructure and private property. Examples of these risks include vector-

borne diseases such as Lyme disease and West Nile virus, water-borne illnesses, heat related illnesses, disruption to basic services and critical infrastructure (e.g., health care, utilities, water and waste-water, telecommunications, emergency services, transportation routes, power), and displacement of residents.

Provincial policy directs planning authorities to mitigate the *impacts of a changing climate* by supporting energy conservation, efficient land use and development patterns, and embracing the use of *green infrastructure* and natural areas for water infiltration.

Natural Environment and Open Space

Accommodating growth in Bruce County must proceed in a sustainable manner to support not only the health of its residents, but the health of the environment in which they live. Bruce County's *natural heritage system* defines and structures its future growth. Establishing a scientifically defensible *natural heritage system* that strikes an appropriate balance between competing goals and interests is fundamental to achieving environmental sustainability in land use planning. Bruce County's streams and rivers, shorelines, forests, and other natural heritage features must continue to be properly protected, managed, restored, and enhanced for the long-term.

In Bruce County, culture remains inextricably tied with nature. Natural heritage access was identified as a priority for Bruce County residents and visitors through the Cultural Action Plan (CAP) consultation process, which is further described under Section 1.4.5 of this report. This relationship between the natural environment and residents needs to be protected and managed for future generations and to support a healthy, sustainable community. Firstly, the preservation, management, and enhancement of the *natural heritage system* ensures the health of the environment and supports the many recreational and cultural opportunities in the County. Secondly, ensuring residents have convenient access to a connected and diverse range of open spaces, parks, and recreation facilities offers opportunities for improved public health, including both physical and mental health, and exercise.

Economic Resilience

The nature and structure of the economy is changing and a key issue for economic resilience in the County is how to respond to an evolving economic context, and how to attract the appropriate corresponding employee profile that supports ongoing economic development - matching employees to jobs. The discussion of growth management and economic development will be provided in other Discussion Papers but is an important consideration for the development of healthy and *complete communities* and social well-being.

Provincial policy states that accommodating an appropriate range and mix of job opportunities is important for creating a healthy and livable community. Retail and service commercial uses (stores, small-scale offices, personal service businesses and restaurants) need to be identified within the County's network of Towns and Villages (identified settlement areas), with a focus on existing downtowns, and should be supported by multiple modes of transportation infrastructure (vehicular, transit, and *active transportation*).

The retail and service commercial sector will be supported by promoting *compact built form* and *intensification* (more, and higher density residential growth) in, and around the existing downtowns, encouraging the integration of those uses with other land uses (educational, cultural, recreational, and administrative) to support the achievement of *complete communities* in a logical pattern of development within the County.

It is important for Bruce County to grow its employment base in concert with residential growth - to promote a complete community, to provide jobs for residents, and to ensure a healthy and diversified tax base.

1.4 Key Bruce County Documents and Initiatives

In preparing this report, background was provided by the strong base of corporate strategies that articulate a clear vision for Bruce.

1.4.1 Current County Official Plan

The original County Official Plan was approved in 1999. In 2010, the Province approved a major update to the County Official Plan. The Current County Official Plan is an important policy document that contains a broad range of community goals, objectives, and policies that provide guidance and direction to landowners, potential investors, land developers, home builders, and the community at large. It includes policies related to numerous community-building elements, such as housing, commercial and industrial development, heritage, the environment, parks and open space, transportation, infrastructure, and urban design.

1.4.2 Official Plan Best Practices Review

The Official Plan Best Practices Review was completed to support the development of the new Official Plan by providing recommendations on innovative land use policies that will enable the eight guiding principles developed through the Bruce GPS process. The Review identified eight opportunities across all of eight Guiding Principles that the County should address through the Official Plan Update process. The eight opportunities identified include:

- The new Official Plan should link the diverse areas of Bruce County in a coordinated planning framework;
- Supporting Agriculture and Agri-Business;
- Focusing on flexible planning policies and tools that are up to date;
- Addressing Climate Change;
- Addressing Housing;
- Addressing Transportation;
- Indigenous Community Engagement; and,
- Creating an Accessible and Inspiring Document.

While creating healthy communities is not identified as a specific opportunity, some of the recommendations for addressing transportation, climate change, and housing relate to the development of healthy and *complete communities*.

1.4.3 Corporate Strategic Plan

In 2013, the County adopted a “Corporate Strategic Plan” that established a vision, values, and goals that are expected to guide the decision-making for County staff and Council to 2023. The vision is for a healthy, prosperous, and innovative community that is supported by several value statements and strategic goals to meet the needs of the residents of the County.

1.4.4 Economic Development Strategic Plan

In 2017, Bruce County developed an Economic Development Strategic Plan titled “Find Yourself in Bruce County”. Long-term goals relevant to the planning context in the Bruce County Economic Development Strategy include increasing the population and tax base by attracting visitors and entrepreneurs to the area, which fits under the County’s core value of (“Attraction”) connecting to a broad range of people who are potential prospects. In addition, the Strategy includes an economic community gap analysis that found no gap in planning and infrastructure development in the County or local municipalities.

Other objectives in this focus area included implementing directional and wayfinding signage and ensuring the community design, roads, and public spaces align with each community brand.

1.4.5 Cultural Action Plan

The purpose of a Cultural Action Plan (CAP) is to establish vision with set of strategies and actions to guide cultural planning, to enhance cultural development, and to strengthen community identity. The in progress Bruce County CAP aims to ensure that land use planning, urban design, and economic development remain consistent with local values and support sense of place. The CAP will consider how places, programs, institutions, and events contribute to social and cultural connections within a community. The document will identify the County's priority cultural resources, set forth direction to strengthen the management of those resources, and integrate those cultural resources across the County's planning and decision-making processes.¹ An identified guiding principle from the Bruce GPS process is "To identify and manage our cultural heritage resources". To support this principle the Cultural Action Plan will provide a basis for updating of the cultural and heritage policies of the County's Official Plan.

The CAP has been informed by an extensive consultation process that included a wide range of stakeholder groups at the County, municipal, institutional, and community levels. Through the consultation process cultural asset mapping was developed through stakeholder participation that identified, recorded, and classified the County's cultural resources, such as heritage designated or listed properties, points of interest, libraries, cemeteries, community and recreation centres, places of worship, parks, etc. As a result of the CAP exercise, over 1,500 cultural assets were compiled in a Bruce County Cultural Asset Inventory.

The in progress CAP has identified five strategic areas reflecting immediate priorities and key opportunities for growth in the arts, culture, and heritage sectors. Strategic directions have been developed for each with recommended actions and a timeline for the actions.

- Develop and Maintain Cultural Assets
- Build Cultural Capacities
- Improve Cultural Communication
- Implement Coordinated Cultural Planning
- Foster Engagement with Indigenous Communities

¹ Executive_Committee_Report_-_January_9_2020%20(2).pdf

1.4.6 Community Safety and Well-being Plan

The Community and Safety Well-being Plan (CSWBP), endorsed by both Bruce and Grey Counties in November 2020, was prepared as a collaboration between Bruce and Grey Counties, lower-tier municipalities, police services, police services boards, education, health, and social service agencies, and community committees. The goal of the Plan is to achieve sustainable communities where everyone is safe, has a sense of belonging, and where residents can meet their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression, ultimately leading to a reduction in crime.²

New legislative amendments under the Police Services Act (1990) came into force on January 2019 and mandate every municipal council to prepare and adopt a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (CSWBP). In response to the legislation, a CSWBP Advisory Committee was established to undertake a process of risk identification using local data and feedback from a community consultation process to identify areas for action. The five areas for priority action include: Addictions/Substance Use; Mental Health; Crime Prevention; Housing and Homelessness; and Poverty and Income.

The CSWBP is in Phase 1 of the process and through consultation and local data analysis has identified the priority areas for action for Phase 2. Phases 2 and 6 will continue through 2021 to 2025 and will include Issue Assessment (determine appropriate response and potential for an Action Table), Action Table Formation (Chair appointed to address the issue), Action Planning (measurable objectives, outcomes, and resources), Implementation (Action Table implements an Action Plan), and Evaluation and Outcomes (regular updates to Advisory Committee and final report).

1.4.7 Housing & Homelessness Plan

The Bruce County Housing & Homelessness Plan (2019-2023) is an update to the Long-Term Housing Strategy (2013-2023). The update addresses matters of Provincial interest and brings the Plan into conformity with the Province's revised policy statement that "every person in Ontario has an affordable, suitable and adequate home to provide the foundation to secure employment, raise a family, and build strong communities."³ The report explores the changing housing market, economic market, and affordable housing.

The report identifies eight housing issues along with strategies and actions for change to create a sustainable and integrated affordable housing system in Bruce County.

²<https://brucecounty.on.ca/sites/default/files/CSWBP%20Municipalities%20of%20Bruce%20and%20Grey%20-%20FINAL%20WEB.pdf>

³<https://brucecounty.on.ca/sites/default/files/Housing%20%26%20Homelessness%20Update%20WEB.pdf>

The eight issues were identified through research, analysis, and consultation with key stakeholders and community agencies, and include the following:

1. Supportive and accessible housing continue to be lacking.
2. Employment trends continue to influence the demand for affordable housing.
3. Lack of housing options.
4. Maintaining the existing stock continues to be a challenge in Bruce County.
5. High cost of utilities.
6. Location and lack of transportation are new emerging issues.
7. Affordability and availability are the two most prevalent concerns among residents.
8. New housing starts in Bruce County are not diversified.

The outcome of the Plan is to achieve appropriate, affordable, diverse, and supportive housing for the residents of Bruce County. To achieve this outcome, a number of strategies and actions were created. The strategies include:

- Increase affordable housing stock.
- Explore rural mobility model.
- A coordinated system and strong partnerships.
- Better understand the needs of youth and Indigenous groups.
- Increase housing support options.

1.4.8 Summary

The work by the County to establish a context for the new official plan provided a valuable base for this background review of Bruce community development. The foregoing document review shows that community well-being is a major priority and focus of ongoing work in Bruce County.



View to the Teeswater River, Paisley

2.0 Bruce County Context

2.1 Community Identity

Population

Bruce County's location along the Georgian Bay and Lake Huron shorelines, as well as its proximity to the Niagara Escarpment, make it a popular destination for both residents and tourists. According to Statistics Canada the current population of Bruce County is 68,423⁴ people. Growth has been slow over the past 20 years but between the 2011 and 2016 census Bruce County grew by 2,045 people showing an increase in the growth rate for the County from 0.19 to 0.62%.

Industry

The three key industries in the County are tourism, agriculture, and energy. According to the Bruce County Economic Impact of Tourism Report (2019) Bruce County attracts 2.5 million visitors each year adding to the local economy and creating jobs. Bruce Power, which produces 30% of Ontario's power and is the largest nuclear power plant in the world is also the largest employer in the County with over 4,000 employees. In addition, Bruce County has a strong agricultural sector with over half a million acres of farmland and producing 22% of Ontario's beef.⁵

Natural Resources

The County has a tremendous resource of natural features with two National Parks; four Provincial Parks and numerous parks and open spaces; the Greenock Swamp, an 8,000 hectare natural area and the largest forested wetland in Ontario; 480 kilometres of cycling and pedestrian routes; 80 kilometres of mountain bike trails; 264 kilometres of the Bruce Trail; 102 kilometres of the Saugeen River; and 854 kilometres of Great Lakes shoreline.

2.2 Cultural Assets and Community Facilities

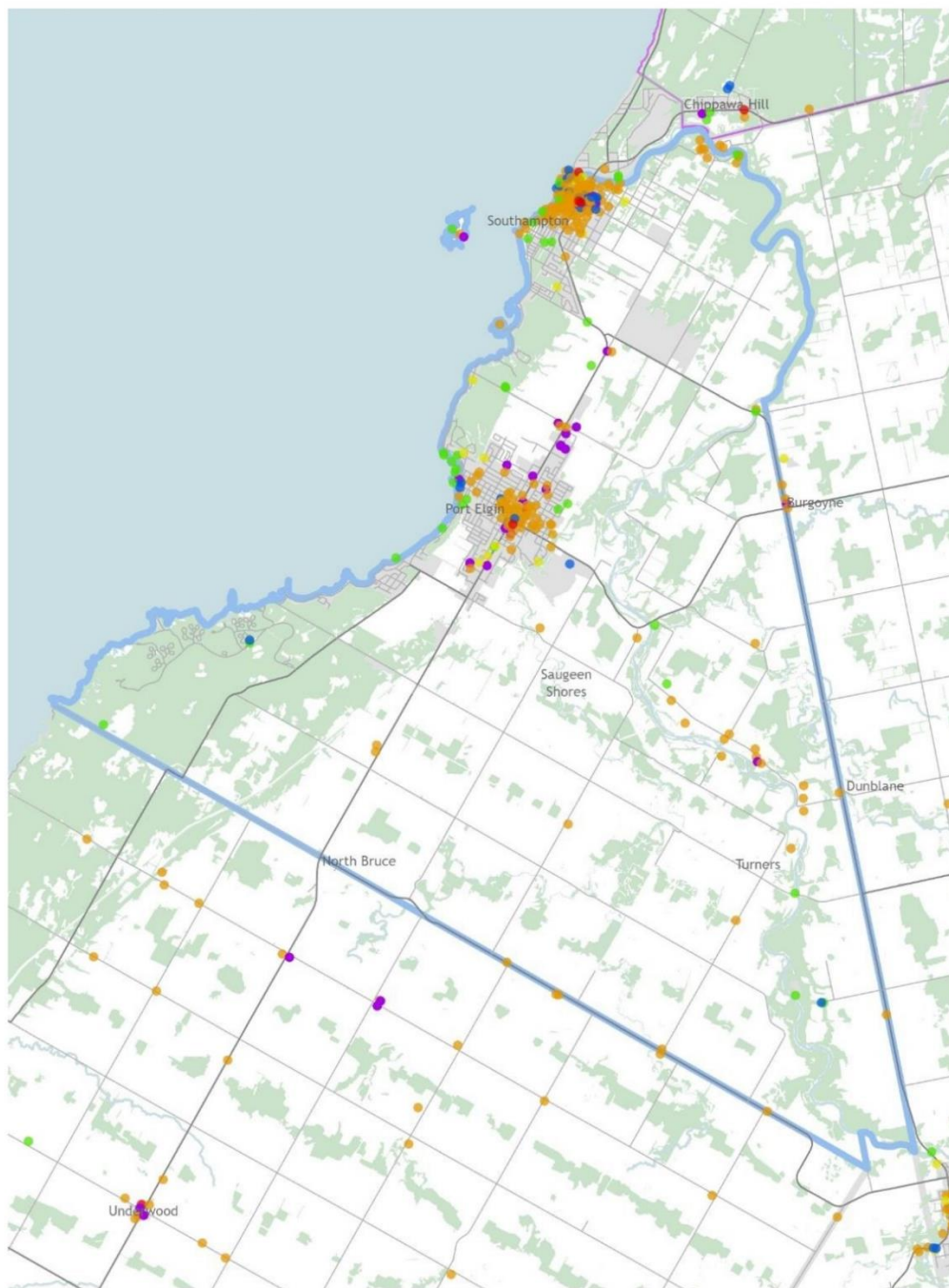
Cultural Assets

The in progress Cultural Action Plan (CAP) as described in Section 1.4.5 above has developed cultural asset mapping that locates and identifies the County's cultural resources, such as heritage designated or listed properties, points of interest, libraries, cemeteries, community and recreation centres, places of worship, parks, etc. Through the CAP process this mapping assisted in highlighting areas where specific deficiencies and needs existed.

⁴ <https://brucecounty.on.ca/business/workforce-demographics>

⁵ <https://brucecounty.on.ca/business/the-region/key-industries>

Cultural Assets Map - Saugeen Shores



CULTURAL ASSETS IN THE TOWN OF SAUGEEN SHORES

- Community Cultural Organizations
- Cultural Heritage
- Natural Heritage
- Creative Cultural Industries
- Festivals & Events
- Spaces and Facilities

Figure 1: Cultural Asset mapping from the Draft CAP Report. Source Bruce County

The example of the cultural asset mapping (Figure 1) is taken from the Draft CAP Report. The mapping was developed through a consultation process where participants were asked to locate and identify the cultural resources, facilities, and landscapes that are important to them. The results were compiled and further refined through the study process. The dots on the mapping example represent the assets in the Town of Saugeen Shores and include community cultural organizations such as the Chantry Island Lighthouse & Museum; cultural and natural heritage, such as landmarks and historic properties; festivals and events; creative cultural industries, and spaces and facilities; such as the Southampton Town Hall and the Saugeen Shores Community Complex in Port Elgin.

Public Services and Amenities Services

Bruce County is served by several public services and amenities that provide access to health care, long-term care, and education. The availability and accessibility of these services is important for maintaining a high quality of life. Some examples include:

- **Long term care homes** - two long term care homes that are operated by Bruce County, one located in Wiarton and one in Walkerton, and numerous privately-operated long-term care homes throughout the County.
- **Hospitals** - Grey Bruce Health Services operates hospitals in the Grey Bruce Region, with the largest, regional hospital located in Owen Sound and six other rural hospitals located in Lion's Head, Wiarton, Southampton, Chesley, Kincardine, and Walkerton.
- **Libraries** - There are 17 library branches located throughout Bruce County, offering information, knowledge, and entertainment resources through access to thousands of books and services such as public use computers, Wi-Fi, photocopying, and educational workshops.
- **Schools** - Bruce County is part of the Bluewater District School Board, as well as the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board. The County also has several private schools and the Kikendaasogamig Elementary School, Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation. Each community has a school or is in proximity to a school, although in rural locations bussing of students is necessary from areas outside of the identified Towns and Villages. Some students are required to travel relatively long distances, in particular those in Northern Bruce Peninsula, as well as students attending secondary schools. Fanshawe College has satellite locations in Bruce County and although Georgian College is in Grey County, it supports the residents of Bruce County.
- **Community Centres, Halls, and Complexes** - These facilities are multi-functional spaces that are often community hubs offering a range of activities from sports and recreation to social gatherings and events. The venues are newer contemporary

facilities in larger communities, such as the Kincardine Davidson Centre and The Plex (Saugeen Shores Community Complex) in Port Elgin, as well as existing halls and community centres in both large and small communities.



Southampton Arts and BIA in the former Town Hall, Southampton

3.0 Key Topics and Trends Affecting Bruce County

This section provides key topics for discussion as they relate to the health and well-being of residents.

3.1 Public Health and Social Well-being

Healthy Communities and Public Health

Public health and land use planning are intrinsically linked, bringing to the forefront several public health challenges related to the way in which we interact with our built and natural environments. Built environments that encourage physical activity can reduce the incidence of diseases such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, asthma, and respiratory disease and contribute to better overall public health. It is essential that the goal of creating livable communities that focus on public health, climate change, and the built environment be at the forefront of all policy documents. Public health considerations must become part of policy development and integrated with design and built form policies and guidelines.

Chronic Disease

According to Statistics Canada, 1 in 4 or, 25% of Canadian adults, are overweight and child obesity has tripled in the last 30 years. Obesity is one of the biggest health challenges in Canada and is the leading contributor to chronic disease such as cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada states that childhood obesity is a growing epidemic, and that children and teens must be encouraged to be more physically active, requiring at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily. According to the Grey Bruce Health Unit 33% of Grey Bruce adults and 28% of children and youth are obese.

These diseases are placing a financial strain on our health care system and according to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the treatment of diabetes alone is expected to cost approximately \$15 billion by 2022.⁶ Policies are needed to support lifestyles that are healthy and built environments that encourage daily physical activity, such as accessible and safe *active transportation* options that include walking and cycling infrastructure, access to healthy food, energy efficient buildings, and access to green space. These measures not only improve climate change mitigation but may assist with reducing the incidence of chronic diseases and contribute to better overall public health.

⁶ Public Health Agency of Canada. Link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/chronic-diseases/reports-publications/diabetes/diabetes-canada-facts-figures-a-public-health-perspective.html>

Aging Population

According to the Grey Bruce Health Unit report entitled *Older Adults in Grey Bruce*, in 2016 there were 16,075 adults in the 65 + age group living in Bruce County. Older adults made up 23.6% of Bruce County's population, higher than the provincial percentage of 16.7%.⁷

Bruce County has an ageing population and will need to contend with this within its planning framework. Challenges relating to an aging population include ensuring that health and social systems are ready for this demographic shift, establishing policies and programs that support age friendly environments, expanding housing options and the need for long term care facilities, ensuring buildings are accessible, ensuring access to safe, convenient forms of transport to health care and services, and that health and community support services are available.

Responding to this demographic shift will require adaptations across many aspects of citizens' lives, such as how people work; how people care for, communicate, and interact with each other; how the built environment supports how people live and work, how public services are provided; and how mobility supports all age groups.

3.2 Compact and Complete Communities

Varying Contexts

Compact, *complete communities* include a mix of uses in close proximity that support the ability of people of all ages to access daily needs. A complete community provides a range of housing, services and amenities, transportation options, and employment opportunities. In Bruce County, the varying context of the eight municipalities includes different forms and shapes of urban and rural communities. Each is distinct with various characteristics that define each municipality - be it shoreline, agriculture, environmental resources, regional or local service centres, large employers, or tourism. Although each municipality is unique, *complete communities* policies must be applied consistently across all municipalities with the goal to support residents and provide equitable access to daily needs.

While various planning, urban design, and sustainable policies and principles share a common intent and are applicable in a broad range of conditions, the challenge is the means by which they are applied can vary significantly with the local context. Both urban and rural areas are constantly evolving and changing in ways that are unique to

⁷ Older Adults in Grey Bruce. Link: https://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/Portals/1/Documents/Who%20We%20Are/Older%20Adults%20in%20Grey%20Bruce_Updated.pdf

their individual contexts. Also, the significant needs of both urban and rural areas drive change that ripples through economic, environmental, as well as social/cultural considerations. Policy considerations must recognize the broad range of towns and villages and rural townships that make up the County and be tailored accordingly.

Full Range of Housing Options

Bruce County is dealing with market forces that are geared towards ground-oriented housing with limited market demand for higher density residential. An increased focus on growth within the County provides the opportunity to explore a variety of residential density options to utilize land more efficiently, reduce the cost of municipal services, and provide *affordable housing* options. Infill development or *intensification* are opportunities within developed areas to provide for increased density in locations that are supported by servicing infrastructure and are close to existing services and amenities. Consideration must also be given to the protection of stable neighbourhoods and the sensitive integration of infill projects. There are often concerns that limit infill projects and create push back for *intensification* in developed areas due to real or perceived property values and issues of increased traffic.

By providing a full range of housing types and tenures, the County will aim to meet the housing needs of all current and future residents throughout their lives, irrespective of income, ability, or lifestyle. This mix and diversity make it possible for households to move within one community as housing needs and lifestyle preferences change.

The County recognizes that the population is aging and with continued attraction of seniors to the County for retirement, there is the expectation that household size will decrease, leading to the need for townhouses and apartments. This creates the opportunity to expand and encourage a variety of housing options in the County. This form of housing is also attractive for non-family households and first time home buyers.

Mobility Options

There is the opportunity to support a full spectrum of mobility options for all residents and improved connectivity within a fully integrated network. This is an essential element of planning for sustained transportation methods and healthier lifestyles. Providing enhanced mobility for people of all ages means understanding opportunities to make any type of street a “*complete street*”. *Complete streets* provide pleasing pedestrian experiences, improved safety for cyclists and enhanced opportunities for *active transportation*, all while ensuring the efficient movement of goods, transit, and passenger vehicles within a balanced right-of-way.

Air Pollution

Greenhouse gases (GHG) absorb and trap heat in the atmosphere contributing to the atmospheric greenhouse effect. To support a reduction in GHG emissions Canada has committed to meeting the 2015 Paris Agreement GHG emissions reduction target of 30% below 2005 levels by 2030 through The Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, adopted in 2016.

The Canada Energy Regulator (CER) has identified that the three big greenhouse gas emitting sectors in Ontario are transportation at 35%, heavy industry (iron, steel, and chemicals) at 24%, and buildings (residential and commercial) at 22%.⁸ Together, transportation and buildings account for over 50% of emissions which are directly related to how we design and operate within our communities.

Communities are typically designed for vehicles, and in rural areas not served by transit, vehicles are the main mode of transportation. According to Statistics Canada (2016), over 86% of residents in Bruce County commute to work by private vehicle. Climate change mitigation strategies that are focused on reducing the reliance on private vehicles and GHG emissions, promote a supportive, mixed use and compact urban structure, and have multi-modal transportation systems that support active movement - such as cycling or walking.

3.3 Access to Services and Amenities

Access to Services

The availability and access to public services and amenities (recreation, health care, long-term care, education, retail and commercial, etc.) for residents of all incomes, ages, and abilities is also important for maintaining a high quality of life and a sense of community and belonging, which is so valued in the County. The ease of access to these services and amenities is based on both their design and location. The Official Plan should direct new services and amenities to the County's downtowns and other community hubs, where they are easily accessible to a large percentage of residents by a range of transportation modes. Well located public services and amenities will further support the vitality of the community and the efficient use of infrastructure.

Not everyone can drive or has access to a vehicle. Age, disability, choice, or affordability can all keep people from owning and operating a vehicle. Ensuring everyone has a safe, convenient, accessible way to get to where they need to go is an

⁸ Provincial and Territorial Energy Profiles - Ontario. Link: <https://www.cer-rec.gc.ca/en/data-analysis/energy-markets/provincial-territorial-energy-profiles/provincial-territorial-energy-profiles-ontario.html#s3>

equity matter; everyone deserves access to health care, services, employment, education, etc. Clustering diverse land uses in neighbourhoods and communities will assist with ensuring the availability, accessibility, and convenience of destinations and facilities within walking distance. Many of the small towns and villages in Bruce County are favourable for walking and cycling and priority should be given to ensuring that walking and cycling are safe, convenient, viable modes of transportation.

Access to Parks and Open Spaces

All residents should have access to parks and open spaces, and this should be a key planning principle. Opportunities to engage with nature has physical, mental, and social health benefits and should be available through trail systems, a variety of parks and open spaces such as municipal parks, community parks, neighbourhood parks, parkettes, sports fields, community gardens, and rooftop gardens, as well as access to the natural environment.

Parks and open spaces have many benefits such as providing for a healthier urban ecosystem through improved air quality and the reduction of heat islands while also encouraging residents to be physically and socially engaged. As communities become more compact with higher density forms of housing it is critical to ensure a diversity of accessible park spaces are available for residents to provide areas for both active and passive recreation.

Access to Healthy Food

According to the Canadian Community Health Survey by Statistics Canada, 2017-2018, 1 in 8 households or 4.4 million people in Canada, were food insecure in 2018, where inadequate or insecure access to food is due to financial constraints. This number will undoubtedly increase because of the COVID-19 pandemic due to job losses or decreases in incomes. At a local scale, the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit notes that 20% of households in Grey Bruce are food insecure.

Bruce County has a strong historic, cultural, and economic identity related to agriculture and agriculture is expected to continue to play an important role in the County's rural economy and lifestyle. Access to healthy food is essential to a healthy community and continuing to promote the expansion of the agricultural industry will benefit local food production and assist with ensuring the economic viability of farming. Opportunities for a sustainable local food system should be explored and include local farmers markets, agri-tourism, Community Shared Agriculture programs (CSAs), diversity of agricultural uses (greenhouses, orchards), and community gardens.

3.4 Economic Development

Fiscal Realities

The employment landscape in smaller Ontario communities is in the midst of a shift, with the introduction of more diverse demographics. This changing context will require economic development policies to focus both on protecting key employment lands for future employment growth and adapting to the ‘new economy’, where employers and businesses may choose to locate outside of traditional employment areas and explore opportunities in more dynamic urban centres.

It is critical to protect an appropriate supply and range of commercial and employment lands to support ongoing economic development, a diversified tax base, and *complete communities* where residents have access to jobs, goods, and services. Beyond traditional employers, Bruce County should explore strategies for supporting and attracting the businesses of the ‘ever evolving (new) economy’, through the provision of business incubators, flexible/shared workspace, start-up supports, and support for home occupations.

Impacts of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is currently the focus of everyone’s attention and land use planning must respond to the lessons that have been learned from the pandemic, and how mid- and long-term planning will be ready for the next wave, a natural disaster, or some other human-made crisis. That discussion is about ensuring that communities are resilient and are ready to appropriately respond to the next crisis, whatever it may be.

One lesson learned from the COVID-19 crisis is how to function in a world with social distancing and the limitations placed on traditional social interactions and the functionality and survival of the economy. It is believed that these current social measures may have, in fact, hastened the realization of some trends that have been on the radar for some time, including:

- The need for bricks and mortar retail space - How much per capita retail space will be needed in the future? Will it be functionally replaced by on-line shopping? What format will survive? and What will the future role of historic downtowns be should there be a less substantial retail presence?
- The need for formal office space - How will business and professional and health care offices function in the future? Will there be a need for formal office space? Will the per person space needs in an office continue to reduce, or will they increase to facilitate social distancing? Will work-from-home become predominant?

How will face to face meeting requirements be met? Will dwelling unit design change to accommodate work from home? Will high speed internet be available to facilitate work from home?

The impacts of COVID-19 have also illustrated both the positive and negative aspects of community design and its layout. This includes the availability and accessibility to services and daily needs, as well as parks and natural areas. Now more than ever, municipalities need to reconsider the design, scale, and availability of parks, the width of sidewalks, provision of cycle lanes, access to daily needs, and the impacts of an aging society and long term care.

Other land use planning topics for discussion now include:

- The scale and design of community facilities and public open spaces - How will outdoor public spaces be designed? Will there be a greater need for social gathering spaces? Will parks become more passive? Will parks become bigger or will there be a need for more, smaller scale parks?
- The scale and design of *public realm* elements - Will sidewalks become wider and be required on both sides of the street to support social distancing? How will bike lanes and trails be incorporated into community design?

In addition to those land use planning topics for discussion, one of the key questions will be about the future of the Ontario Health Care System - How will the Health Care System prepare for the next emergency, whether it be a pandemic, natural disaster, or some other human-made crisis. Will there be a plan in place to expand facilities and services when that is required? Fundamental to the discussion are the changes that are required to seniors long-term care facilities and how can these existing facilities be safeguarded to ensure the health and safety of their residents?

Today, there are no clear answers to these important topics. The world, and its social norms may never be exactly the same, but that does not mean there necessarily needs to be a paradigm shift in how our communities are designed and developed. There does, however, need to be an understanding about how to move forward, and what it all might mean. Part of that discussion is understanding the impacts of decisions that are made in the short-term, and particularly, with respect to the Bruce County Official Plan, how decisions about the future will affect the design and built form of our communities in the mid to long-terms. That is a discussion fundamentally about balance and resilience. Ensuring how to anticipate future disasters, and to avoid or minimize their impacts, balanced against the equally important issues of mitigating climate change, environmental and economic sustainability, and the quality of life of the existing and future residents of the County.



Tobermory Harbour, Tobermory

3.5 Best Practices

The following is a review of best practices related to healthy community development and public health and well-being. The documents identify the relationship between the built environment and public health and set forth strategies and land use planning recommendations to support healthy outcomes.

Healthy Community Design - Policy Statements for Official Plans, April 2014

The Simcoe Muskoka Health Unit provides specific advice to Municipalities through their document. The intent is to assist with influencing land use planning decisions and shaping how communities are developed to impart a positive impact on the physical and mental health of its residents. The report notes that built environments can impact the air residents breathe, opportunities for physical activity, access to services and amenities, and social interaction.

The report provides suggestions for healthy community development and public health and well-being under six key health issues impacted by the built environment: Environment; Injury and Safety; Physical Activity; Sun Safety; Food Access; and Social Cohesion and Well-being. Each section contains an overall health related goal and rationale, related objectives, suggested Official Plan policy statements to assist with achieving the objectives, and proposed activities for implementation of the policies.

The goals of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's Building Healthy Communities initiative are to:

- Act as a catalyst for change through programs, people, and partnerships to achieve a shared vision of a built environment that promotes and protects health; and,
- Provide strong public health leadership and expert health advice to key stakeholders to influence the design of new and existing communities to be sustainable and supportive of the achievement and maintenance of optimal health.

The report sets forth several land use planning suggestions that are important in creating healthy, complete, and sustainable communities. Planning policy examples include the following:

- A compact urban form shall be developed that incorporates mixed land uses and promotes *active transportation*, transit use and trip reduction;
- Develop patterns of land use that ensure appropriate separation of incompatible land uses and those that negatively impact pedestrian-oriented development;

- Requirements for *low impact development* techniques shall be integrated into subdivision and site plan regulations and storm water management plans;
- Incorporate vegetation and tree planting in new, existing, and future developments to increase areas for shade and assist with dissipation of heat;
- All streets shall include well maintained infrastructure (i.e., sidewalks, extra wide road shoulders for walking and cycling, and/or pedestrian trails and walkways) for all users, particularly the most vulnerable users: children, youth, the elderly and those with special needs;
- Road design and transportation planning shall be done within a *complete streets* design framework; and,
- Provide spaces for active and passive parks that enhance access to recreation and nature as an essential component for physical and mental health and well-being and shall make this a priority in land use decisions.

Healthy Built Environment Linkages Toolkit: Making the Links Between Design, Planning and Health, 2018

The British Columbia Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) prepared a toolkit to support the inclusion of public health in community planning and design. The document is based on the concept of a Healthy Built Environment and is organized under five core features which are supported by planning principles:

- **Neighbourhood Design** - facilitated by land use decisions which prioritize complete, compact, and connected communities;
- **Transportation Networks**- prioritize and support *active transportation* modalities;
- **Natural Environments** - Community planning which preserves and connects the surrounding natural environment can have significant health and well-being impacts;
- **Food Systems** - Accessibility and affordability of healthy foods can be supported through land use planning and design; and,
- **Housing** - The design, quality, and affordability of diverse housing options has a critical influence on health and well-being.

The document includes evidence-based data and research to identify areas where the benefits to public health can be implemented in planning for compact and *complete*

communities. The purpose of the document is to outline the rationale for why the built environment is important for health.

Fact sheets were prepared for each of the five core features of a healthy built environment. Some of the planning solutions include:

- Ensure that residents have access to recreation facilities to meet their physical activity needs;
- Prioritize compact street grids, street connectivity, and intersection density to provide more direct routes and reduced travel time for people who walk and cycle;
- Make trails and pathways readily accessible within residential areas, and connect them to common areas of work, play and learning;
- Use traffic calming methods such as narrower traffic lanes and residential traffic diversion to reduce traffic speeds and volume;
- Maximize the benefits of vegetation for air quality by planting species that are appropriate to the site and environment, taking into consideration the overall distribution of greenery and the local climate; and,
- Prioritize a variety of housing forms and mixed income housing developments to increase access to local, *affordable*, and diverse housing options, which helps people stay in their communities longer and improves their ability to afford other basic needs such as health care and nutritious food, while decreasing stress.

Peterborough Public Health, Health in Official Plans: A Toolkit 2018 Submission to the County of Peterborough Official Plan Review

Peterborough Public Health prepared a report that focused on using a health and well-being lens as a focal point of community design and land use planning to support the County of Peterborough's Official Plan Review. The purpose of the report was to provide recommendations under five areas of focus:

1. Healthy Community Design
2. Healthy Transportation Systems
3. Healthy Housing
4. Healthy Food Systems
5. Healthy Natural Environments

The five areas of focus were adapted from the British Columbia Provincial Health Services Authority report entitled *Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A toolkit for design, planning, health*, Version 1, 2014. The report included in this paper and

reviewed above, is the updated 2018 Version 2 toolkit. The framework is essentially the same between the two versions of the toolkit. The eleven (11) planning principles recommended are supported by health statistics and data of the County. Each principle is further supported by links to Provincial Policy, local policies and plan, precedent examples of Official Plans and policies, and tools used to implement the policies, such as guidelines, a development review tool such as the Peel Healthy Development Assessment Tool, community improvement plans, zoning by-laws, transportation and *active transportation* master plans, climate change action plans, etc.

The following are recommendations from the focus areas.

Focus Area 1 - Healthy Community Design

1. Build healthy, complete, compact, and equitable communities and settlement areas across the County.
- The report highlighted the need to recognize the correlation between the three dimensions of health -physical, social, and mental health - and the built environment. The intent is to ensure that healthy community design principles are at the core of the Official Plan and applied consistently across the County.

Focus Area 2 - Healthy Transportation Systems

2. Enable walkability for every age and ability level in all settlement areas;
3. Reduce automobile dependence by creating a well-connected and safe active transportation network; and,
4. Use a Complete Streets design approach to prioritize safety for all transportation users.
- The discussion revolved around creating environments that support and encourage walking and the health benefits of walking; creating safe and accessible *active transportation* networks, and *complete streets* that are safe for all users. The County of Peterborough, like Bruce County, has many towns and settlement areas that are favourable for walking due to their small size; trails and cycling routes; and rural roads that can be enhanced by using a *complete streets* approach, making roads safe for all users (automobiles, trucks, buses, farming equipment, cyclists, and pedestrians).

Focus Area 3 - Healthy Housing

5. Increase access to affordable, high quality housing through provision of diverse housing forms and tenure types.
- Peterborough County and City, like many areas, are experiencing a housing affordability problem. Housing affects health on an individual and community level

such as the stress of housing insecurity has both a psychological and physical effects, and the cost of housing impacting other household expenditures.

Focus Area 4 - Healthy Food Systems

6. Enhance agricultural capacity and the agri-food sector to impact the local food system;
 7. Increase access to healthy, local foods for all residents in all communities; and,
 8. Improve community scale infrastructure to support the local food system.
- Healthy eating is fundamental to good health and the report notes that healthy eating is important in reducing the risk of many chronic diseases. Food insecurity is associated with unhealthy diets and poor health (e.g., mental health, depression, anxiety, type 2 diabetes) and is often linked to households with lower incomes. Food budgets are used for other expenses resulting in the purchase of less expensive, low nutrient food, or skipping of meals.

Focus Area 5 - Healthy Natural Systems

9. Ensure greater quantity and quality of green and open spaces including environmentally sensitive areas;
 10. Ensure green and open spaces are comfortable for human use which includes improving air quality and mitigating against heat; and,
 11. Ensure that green and open spaces are accessible for all ages and abilities.
- Access to parks, open spaces, and nature has physical, social, and mental health benefits. The report outlines the evidence that exposure to the natural environment can alleviate stress, increase physical activity, and improve social interaction and mental health. Opportunities for residents to engage with nature should be in every land use area, supported by trails, linear parks, sidewalks, creating connections between parks and green spaces.

Live Grey Background Report and County of Grey Official Plan, 2019

Grey County's new Official Plan was approved by the province in 2019, and as part of the Official Plan Review process, the County produced numerous background reports including Live Grey, which informed the development of the County's new Official Plan healthy communities' policies.

The Live Grey Background Report provides background information and policy recommendations on healthy communities, community inclusion, housing, and culture. The Live Grey Background Report was developed in response to County resident's comments on the importance of developing healthy communities within Grey County.

The Official Plan policy recommendations relating to healthy communities include:

- Provide criteria for when public health is circulated on planning documents;
- Specify policy direction to create healthy environments for settlement areas and rural areas;
- Provide policies that support *active transportation*, recreational opportunities, healthy food, attractive public spaces;
- Encourage sustainability of services and land use; and,
- Support attractive built form.

The County has incorporated these policy recommendations into the overarching Vision and Principles of the Official Plan, which set the foundation and policy direction of the Official Plan, as well as within Section 4 - Live Grey of the Official Plan. The intent of these policies is to promote *active transportation*, age-friendly communities, and healthy food systems, mitigate climate change, and direct development away from sensitive land uses and natural hazards.

Grey Bruce Health Unit, Healthy Development Checklist

Developed by the Grey Bruce Health Unit, this checklist was created to provide information to developers and lower-tier municipalities about features that can be implemented to create healthier communities. These features touch on neighbourhood design, housing, natural environments/food systems and transportation networks. The Grey County Official Plan indicates that developers are asked to consider this checklist as part of the development application process.

Hastings and Prince Edward Counties - Building Complete and Sustainable Communities: Healthy Policies for Official Plans, 2012

Building Complete and Sustainable Communities: Healthy Policies for Official Plans was prepared by the Hastings and Prince Edward Counties Health Unit to support their mandate of working with municipalities to create healthy communities. The report notes that where a person lives and how that community is designed, plays a large role in the health of that individual.

The report comprises five sections; sustainable and accessible transportation; access to active recreation; preserving and protecting the local food system; access and exposure to tobacco and alcohol products; and social interaction and sense of community. Within each section, there are identified objectives and specific policy recommendations that can be implemented in local official plans to achieve each identified objective.

The goal of Building Complete and Sustainable Communities: Healthy Policies for Official Plans is to provide local municipalities with specific Official Plan policies and implementation strategies that they can use to support the development of healthy and *complete communities*.

Wellington County: Planning Review Through a Public Health Lens, 2015

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) commissioned this report to review and evaluate local and county Official Plans through a public health lens, and to provide considerations for these Official Plans and related policies that can be implemented to encourage the development of healthy communities. The review adapted the framework outlined in the aforementioned Healthy Built Environment Linkages: A Toolkit for Design, Planning and Health, produced by British Columbia's Provincial Health Services Authority. The recommendations provided vary by each municipality to address their local needs, and are divided into the following categories:

- Neighbourhood Design;
- Transportation Network;
- Natural environments;
- Food systems; and,
- Housing.

A few of the suggested Official Plan policy considerations included:

- Link safe neighbourhood design with natural heritage of the area in ways that foster social interaction and increase neighbourhood connectivity (including walking and cycling).
- Introduce policies that specifically encourage the design and development of safe neighbourhoods, possibly through employing policies and principles associated with *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design* (CPTED).
- Encourage local municipalities to develop policies to support appropriate infrastructure to promote safe walking and cycling. Incorporating principles associated with accessibility (inclusive, universal design) and age-friendly community planning.
- Develop policies that encourage the exploration or development of alternate public transportation service delivery options in the County.
- Encourage or require new County road infrastructure projects to incorporate bikeability and walkability, such as paved shoulder.

- Consider adding a healthy food system as an objective in the Official Plan.
- Encourage local municipalities to promote and encourage local food production (i.e., community gardens, rooftop gardens, farmers markets).
- Encourage local urban municipalities develop policies that provide incentives to develop *affordable housing* in their downtown areas.

An important point raised in the report is strengthening the role of public health units in collaborating with municipalities to share knowledge and build capacity to promote the development of healthy communities.

3.6 Summary of Key Points

The review of the various precedent examples has provided a series of recommendations that, although they vary by area, are all focused on the development of healthy, *complete communities* and the provision of Official Plan policies to support that direction. Some of the key findings from the best practices review that are applicable in the context of Bruce County and would assist in informing the Official Plan update include:

Neighbourhood Design

- Provide spaces for active and passive parks that enhance access to recreation and nature as an essential component for physical and mental health and well-being and shall make this a priority in land use decisions.
- Requirements for *low impact development* techniques to be integrated into subdivision and site plan regulations and storm water management plans;
- Incorporate vegetation and tree planting in new, existing, and future developments to increase areas for shade and assist with dissipation of heat;
- Prioritize compact street grids, street connectivity, and intersection density to provide more direct routes and reduced travel time for people who walk and cycle;
- Link safe neighbourhood design with natural heritage of the area in ways that foster social interaction and increase neighbourhood connectivity (including walking and cycling); and,
- Introduce policies that specifically encourage the design and development of safe neighbourhoods, possibly through employing policies and principles associated with *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design* (CPTED).

Transportation

- Road design and transportation planning shall be done within a *complete streets* design framework;
- Ensuring street networks and off-road paths are multi-modal to provide choice to pedestrians and cyclists;
- Encourage or require new County road infrastructure projects to incorporate bikeability and walkability, such as paved shoulder;
- Provision of sidewalks are provided on both sides of the street in low density areas; and,
- All streets shall include well maintained infrastructure (i.e., sidewalks, extra wide road shoulders for walking and cycling, and/or pedestrian trails and walkways) for all users, particularly the most vulnerable users: children, youth, the elderly and those with special needs.

Healthy Food

- Accessibility and affordability of healthy foods can be supported through land use planning and design;
- Consider adding a healthy food system as an objective in the Official Plan; and,
- Encourage local municipalities to promote and encourage local food production (i.e., community gardens, rooftop gardens, farmers markets), processing, and year-round culinary tourism.

Natural Environments

- Maximize the benefits of vegetation for air quality by planting species that are appropriate to the site and environment, taking into consideration the overall distribution of greenery and the local climate.

Housing

- Prioritize a variety of housing forms and mixed income housing developments to increase access to local, *affordable*, and diverse housing options, which helps people stay in their communities longer and improves their ability to afford other basic needs such as health care and nutritious food, while decreasing stress; and,
- Encourage local urban municipalities develop policies that provide incentives to develop *affordable housing* in their downtown areas.



Walking Trail, Bruce County. Source Bruce County

4.0 Recommended Directions

The following section provides objectives and recommendations for healthy community development policies.

Provincial planning frameworks provide some direction for healthy communities. However, it is not one single action or policy topic that will define or lead to the achievement of a healthy community, but rather an approach to implementation that considers all the policy sections of the Official Plan comprehensively.

There are several policy tools which can have important impacts on healthy communities. The Bruce County Official Plan will need to address elements such as safe streets, walkability, access to healthy food, access to parks and the natural environment, and a mix of uses to ensure that healthy community objectives are met. In particular, the County's unique landscape and eco-friendly, clean environment support healthy lifestyles and are key elements of the County's reputation and image, providing an opportunity to capture this positive attribute in future growth and development.

As discussed previously in this report, applying a healthy community focus to the Official Plan Update encompasses several factors that work together to improve public health with the overall intent to promote *complete communities*, support social well-being, active residents, and a viable and beautiful place to live, work, learn, and play.

Public health and land use planning are intrinsically linked. The following recommendations support healthy community planning and the land use planning decisions required to ensure that public health considerations become part of policy development.

The recommendations under this section are organized under:

- A Healthy Community
- A Complete Community;
- A Viable Community
- A Beautiful and High Quality Community;
- A Sustainable Community; and,
- A Resilient Community.

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.
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.

A Beautiful and High Quality Community

A high quality and ultimately a beautiful community includes well designed buildings and *streetscapes*. 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 *public realm*, 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.
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.
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.
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.

5.0 Next Steps

This Interim Report is intended to provide a foundation for policy directions for healthy communities and well-being. Now that the stage is set, the County will lay out a road map for the community engagement process on the Recommended Directions. This process will culminate in a final Communities Discussion Paper to be integrated into the County's new Official Plan.



Wetland trail loop. Source Bruce County

Appendix A: Definitions

Active transportation: means human-powered travel, including but not limited to, walking, cycling, inline skating, and travel with the use of mobility aids, including motorized wheelchairs and other power-assisted devices moving at a comparable speed.

Affordable Housing: In the case of ownership housing, the least expensive of:

1. housing for which the purchase price results in annual accommodation costs which do not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or
2. housing for which the purchase price is at least 10 percent below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the regional market area;

In the case of rental housing, the least expensive of:

1. a unit for which the rent does not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or
2. a unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent

Compact built form: A land use pattern that encourages the efficient use of land, walkable neighbourhoods, mixed land uses (residential, retail, workplace, and institutional) all within one neighbourhood, proximity to transit and reduced need for infrastructure. *Compact built form* can include detached and semi-detached houses on small lots as well as townhouses and walk-up apartments, multi-storey commercial developments, and apartments or offices above retail. Walkable neighbourhoods can be characterized by roads laid out in a well-connected network, destinations that are easily accessible by transit and *active transportation*, sidewalks with minimal interruptions for vehicle access, and a pedestrian-friendly environment along roads to encourage *active transportation*.

Compatible Development: Means development or redevelopment which may not necessarily be the same as or similar to the existing development in the vicinity, but shall enhance the character of the community, while not creating any undue, adverse impacts on adjacent properties.

Complete Communities: places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within cities, towns, and settlement areas that offer and support opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access most of the necessities for daily living, including a mix of jobs, local stores, and services, a full range of housing, transportation options and *public service facilities*. *Complete communities* are age-friendly and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts.

Complete Street: A *complete street* is a transportation facility that is planned, designed, operated, and maintained to provide safe mobility for all users, including cyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists, appropriate to the function and context of the facility.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED): is a crime prevention approach based on a theory that the built environment influences the behaviour of people. The proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime, thereby improving the quality of life.

Green infrastructure: means natural and human-made elements that provide ecological and hydrological functions and processes. *Green infrastructure* can include components such as natural heritage features and systems, parklands, storm water management systems, street trees, urban forests, natural channels, permeable surfaces, and green roofs.

Impacts of a changing climate: means the present and future consequences from changes in weather patterns at local and regional levels including extreme weather events and increased climate variability.

Intensification: means the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through: a) redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites; b) the development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas; c) infill development; and d) the expansion or conversion of existing buildings.

Low Impact Development (LID): is a *green infrastructure* approach to stormwater management that uses simple cost-effective landscaped features and other techniques to filter, store, infiltrate and use rainfall where it falls.

Natural heritage system: means a system made up of natural heritage features and areas, and linkages intended to provide connectivity (at the regional or site level) and support natural processes which are necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species, and ecosystems. These systems can include natural heritage features and areas, federal and provincial parks and conservation reserves, other natural heritage features, lands that have been restored or have the potential to be restored to a natural state, areas that support hydrologic functions, and working landscapes that enable ecological functions to continue. The Province has a recommended approach for identifying *natural heritage systems*, but municipal approaches that achieve or exceed the same objective may also be used.

Public realm: means the publicly owned places and spaces that belong to and are accessible by everyone. These can include municipal streets, lanes, squares, plazas, sidewalks, trails, parks, open spaces, waterfronts, public transit systems, conservation areas, and civic buildings and institutions.

Public right-of-way: also known as municipal road allowance, refers to a piece of City or County-owned land. It includes the roadways, sidewalks and a section of land used for utility services (e.g., electrical equipment, water mains, gas lines and telecommunication cables). On a residential street, this usually means that the section of the front lawn closer to the roadway is publicly owned. However, the section of the lawn closer to the house is owned by the homeowner.

Public service facilities: means land, buildings, and structures for the provision of programs and services provided or subsidized by a government or other body, such as social assistance, recreation, police and fire protection, health and educational programs, long-term care services, and cultural services.

Streetscape: means the natural and built fabric of the street, and the design quality of the street and its visual effect. The concept recognizes that a street is a public place where people are able to engage in various activities. *Streetscapes* and their visual experience largely influence public places where people interact, and it ultimately helps define a community's aesthetic quality, economic activity, health, and sustainability.

Appendix B: Policy Excerpts

Provincial Policy Statement, 2020

Policy Reference: Section 1.1 (Managing and Directing Land Use to Achieve Efficient and Resilient Development and Land Use Patterns); Section 1.5 (Public Spaces, Recreation, Parks, Trails and Open Space); Section 1.6 (Infrastructure and Public Service Facilities); Section 1.7 (Long-term Economic Prosperity); Section 1.8 (Energy Conservation, Air Quality and Climate Change)

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS provides for appropriate development while protecting resources of provincial interest, public health and safety, and the quality of the natural and built environment. The PPS supports improved land use planning and management, which contributes to a more effective and efficient land use planning system.

The PPS is issued under the authority of Section 3 of the Planning Act and according to the Act, all land use planning decisions shall be consistent with the PPS. The PPS came into effect on May 1, 2020. The recent changes to the PPS were in response to changes to the Planning Act through *More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019* and *A Place to Grow, 2019*. Some of the key changes included increasing the mix and supply of housing through affordable and market-based residential; increasing minimum requirements for housing land supply to 15 years, further supporting a changing climate and *green infrastructure*, enhancing land use compatibility policies for sensitive land uses, and providing flexibility for the consideration of residential development on rural lands.

An overarching theme of the PPS is the promotion of sustainable, *complete communities* and the careful coordination and management of land uses to accommodate appropriate development to meet the full range of current and future needs of the community, while achieving cost effective development patterns. Stronger emphasis must also be given to preparing for the *impacts of a changing climate* through maximizing energy conservation, effective management of storm water, and the use of *green infrastructure*.

The PPS advises that healthy and livable communities are sustained in part by promoting development and land use patterns that conserve biodiversity and by preparing for the regional and local *impacts of a changing climate* (Policy 1.1.1). Land use patterns within settlement areas is to be based on a mix of land uses which minimize negative impacts to air quality and climate change and promote energy efficiency, as well as a mix of land uses that help prepare for the *impacts of a changing climate* (Policy 1.1.3.2).

The PPS advises that healthy and active communities should be promoted by planning public spaces, streets, and recreation settings to be accessible, equitably distributed, to foster social interaction and to promote travel by *active transportation* (1.51).

The PPS requires that “Infrastructure and *public service facilities* should be strategically located to support the effective and efficient delivery of emergency management services” and that “*public service facilities* should be co-located in community hubs, where appropriate, to promote cost-effectiveness and facilitate service integration, access to transit and *active transportation*” (Section 1.6.4 and 1.6.5).

Planning authorities should promote *green infrastructure* to complement infrastructure (Policy 1.6.1) and planning for storm water management shall minimize erosion and changes in water balance and prepare for the *impacts of a changing climate* (Policy 1.6.6.7).

Long-term economic prosperity should be supported by promoting opportunities for economic development, providing range of housing options, optimizing the availability of *public service facilities*, enhancing the vitality and viability of downtowns and main streets, providing opportunities for sustainable tourism, supporting local food, minimizing negative impacts from a changing climate, and considering the ecological benefits provided by nature (Policy 1.7.1).

Planning authorities shall support energy conservation and efficiency, improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and support climate change adaptation through land use and development patterns. (Policy 1.8.1).

Overall, the PPS provides a comprehensive set of policy directions that will be appropriately considered through the County's Official Plan Update process. These policy directions focus on several issues that are specifically related to this Communities Interim Report. In addition to the overarching theme of the PPS - the promotion of sustainable, *complete communities* - the following are also important considerations for the Official Plan Update to recognize:

- Promote healthy, active, and livable communities;
- Protect the *natural heritage system* and conserve biodiversity;
- Consider the *impacts of a changing climate*;
- Promote cost-effectiveness and facilitate service integration;
- Promote *green infrastructure*;

- Enhance economic prosperity;
- Enhance the vitality and viability of downtowns and main streets; and,
- Support sustainable tourism.

Current Bruce County Official Plan

Policy Reference: Section 1.1 (Purpose); Section 3.2 (Vision); Section 3.3 (Principle of Sustainable Development); Section 3.4 (County Goals and Objectives); Section 4.3 (The Environment); Section 4.4 (Population and Housing); Section 4.5 (Economic Development); Section 4.6 (Transportation); Section 4.9 (Community Facilities); Section 4.11 (Energy Conservation and Development); Section 5.2 (Urban Areas); 5.6 (Rural Areas)

Bruce County's Current Official Plan was first adopted by County Council in 1997, approved by the Ontario Municipal Board in 1999, and last reviewed in 2010. As an upper-tier municipality, the County's Current Official Plan provides the overarching planning policy framework for the entire County. The eight lower-tier municipalities within the County all have their own local Official Plans that must conform with the County's Official Plan.

The Current County Official Plan is an important policy document that contains a broad range of community goals, objectives, and policies that provide guidance and direction to landowners, potential investors, land developers, home builders, and the community at large. It includes policies related to numerous community-building elements, such as housing, commercial and industrial development, heritage, the environment, parks and open space, transportation, infrastructure, and urban design.

Policies Relating to Healthy Communities

One of the Current Official Plan's intents is to "encourage [the] necessary social, cultural and educational facilities and services." Further, the vision for the Current Official Plan is one which "protects the quality of life of Bruce County while ensuring the growth of sustainable communities based upon diverse economic opportunities, which respect the natural environment." The Current Official Plan also indicates that "the principle of sustainable development will be used in the resolution of land use issues" signifying the County's commitment to sustainable communities.

The Current Official Plan includes several County Goals and Objectives that relate to healthy communities, such as ensuring that land and resources are utilized efficiently and effectively, and ensuring the provision of educational, social, recreational, health and cultural facilities and services to meet the needs of residents.

The general policies relating to the environment in the Current Official Plan state that “the natural resources of the County shall be protected and managed in order to maintain and preserve a healthy living environment for existing and future generations.” Further, “County Council recognizes that natural areas or features within Bruce County provide a wide range of benefits to the residents of the County. Those areas shall be protected from the negative effects of development.”

An objective of the Current Official Plan is to “provide for *intensification* in existing urban areas that enhances the positive characteristics of those areas” and to ensure that new development and growth occurs in a managed and efficient manner that will minimize the adverse impacts on the social and natural environments and agriculture and heritage features.

The County’s housing policies include “opportunities to increase the supply of housing through *intensification* and redevelopment in appropriate locations, taking into account municipal services, existing facilities such as parks and schools, all modes of transportation, including walking and cycling, compatibility with adjacent land, environmental considerations, health and safety, and the demonstrated demand for the proposed type of dwellings.” Further, the County supports the creation of *affordable housing* by indicating that 30% of new residential development and *intensification* shall be *affordable*. The 30% *affordable housing* target is relatively typical across southern and southwestern Ontario.

The County through its transportation objectives and policies encourages the development of recreational transportation routes and trails and encourages the development of a comprehensive trail system through the County.

When considering development or redevelopment, the County encourages measures that lead to the conservation of energy resources. These measures may include:

- Maintaining a reasonably compact urban form;
- Establishing efficient pedestrian and vehicular transportation networks;
- Providing neighbourhood services and facilities in proximity to residential development to reduce vehicular travel;
- Avoiding development which results in extensive loss of sunlight to adjacent land uses;
- Encouraging the energy-efficient design of buildings;
- Encourage the use of energy efficient appliances, heating and cooling systems, low water bathroom facilities, and other innovative technologies;

- Allowing for the placing of buildings on lots to encourage passive solar energy gain;
- Incorporating district heating, solar energy, and similar designs into residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial development; and,
- Incentives for the use of energy efficient technology.

Policies Relating to Economic Development

The Current Official Plan includes several policies relating to economic development and supporting Bruce County's key industries. Section 3.4.1.5 details the County's economic goals:

- Provide opportunities for the continued development of a diverse, sustainable, and viable economic base within the County, which is compatible with the natural environment;
- Strengthen the industrial and commercial base of the County;
- Recognize the interest in and importance of economic growth of the County;
- Recognize, promote, and strengthen tourism as a viable, vital component of the County economy;
- Recognize, promote, and strengthen the agricultural community as a viable and vital component of the County's economy; and,
- Promote energy generation as a viable form of economic development including, but not limited to, nuclear, renewable alternative and green energy supply.

Section 4.5 Economic Development of the Current Official Plan details the County's economic development objectives and general policies. The County's economic development objectives include identifying and supporting industries such as tourism, agriculture, the energy sector, home industries, and other local businesses that are important to the County's economy, and ensuring that the County's natural resources are identified, protected, and promoted to create and support recreation and tourism opportunities.

The general policies for Economic Development include facilitating the expansion and diversification of the economic base, through sustainable economic development while recognizing the importance of existing industries and business.

The Current County Official Plan promotes the development of a four-season tourism industry and recognizes that the Rural Recreational Area is one of the principal areas for tourism and recreation. As such, the County supports the upgrading and expansion of existing commercial/tourism related facilities and allows commercial uses that service tourists and local residents to be permitted in this designation.

Policies for Community Structure

From a community structure perspective, the Current Official Plan establishes Primary and Secondary Urban Communities. The Current Official Plan's intention is for Primary Urban Communities to accommodate the largest concentration and range of residential, tourism, economic, social services, and facilities, serving as regional service centres.

Secondary Urban Communities are intended to accommodate a more limited range of economic and tourism activities, services, and facilities. The Current County Official Plan requires that Local Official Plans be prepared for both Primary and Secondary Urban Communities, and that they contain more detailed land use policies on economic development, as well as general policies and permitted uses on a variety of land uses including retail and service commercial uses.

For the most part, the structure of Primary and Secondary Urban Communities incorporates urban residential neighbourhoods that are supported by a downtown or main street. The Primary Urban Communities act as service centres for the broader community, providing goods, services, and job opportunities County-wide. Secondary Urban Communities serve a smaller community, and generally incorporate smaller scale and fewer goods, services, and job opportunities.

Official Plan Best Practices Review

Transportation Opportunity

The following recommendations for addressing transportation that relate to healthy communities include:

- The County should consider *active transportation* corridors as a means of linking communities and settlement areas together while providing alternatives to private vehicle use. Promoting *active transportation* is a crucial component in achieving healthy communities, as it can promote physical activity, reduce contributions to climate change, and improve community livability;
- Put in place some of the land use building blocks required for the County to work toward creating a transit system - one day. Implementing a public transit system can allow those who do not have access to a vehicle the opportunity to get around their community and the County; and,

- Historic downtowns, commercial centres, specific hamlets which already have or will have adequate servicing, and other key locations in the County should be given *intensification* targets and other supportive policies. Increasing densities within these key locations can allow more people to live in proximity to their jobs, amenities, and services, reducing the need for personal vehicle use and supporting investment in a transit system.

Climate Change Opportunity

The following recommendations for addressing climate change that relate to healthy communities include:

- Establish the County as a leader in climate policy, while keeping it tailored to its unique communities;
- Implement County-wide policies that mitigate climate change, including measurable goals and related policies, such as:
 - An energy and greenhouse gas emission inventory;
 - Greenhouse gas reduction target;
 - Develop a plan or strategy that outlines the actions that the municipality and its stakeholders have prioritized for implementation;
 - Indicators on progress made towards actions and/or emissions reductions;
 - A monitoring and reporting framework in place for the Plan and the timeframe associated with progress reporting; and,
 - A time frame and process for evaluation and updating of the Plan.

Housing Opportunity

The recommendations for addressing housing that relate to healthy communities include adopting a County-wide vision for settlement areas and the application of targets that will increase the supply and affordability of housing.

Growth Management Opportunity

As noted in the Land Use Service Delivery Review, the County in collaboration with local municipalities can identify the type and amount of growth that is appropriate for each settlement area, including appropriate *intensification* and density targets which would

reflect population allocation, developability, future transit provision and existing conditions.

Promoting *intensification* and densification can result in a more efficient land use pattern, more opportunities for *active transportation*, support the viability of the retail and service commercial functions within historic downtowns and main streets, and can allow people to live closer to where they work or to services.

Appendix C: References and Resources

Bruce County Economic Impact of Tourism Report (2019)

<https://brucecounty.on.ca/sites/default/files/file-upload/business/economic-impact-of-tourism-for-2019.pdf> (accessed Feb. 11, 2021)

Heart and Stroke Foundation

<https://www.heartandstroke.ca/healthy-living/healthy-kids/heart-healthy-activity> (accessed Nov. 4, 2020)

Public Health Agency of Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/chronic-diseases/reports-publications/diabetes/diabetes-canada-facts-figures-a-public-health-perspective.html>

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https://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/Portals/1/Documents/Who%20We%20Are/Older%20Adults%20in%20Grey%20Bruce_Updated.pdf

World Health Organization (WHO)

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health> (accessed Nov. 4, 2020)

Canada Energy Regulator (CER)

<https://www.cer-rec.gc.ca/en/data-analysis/energy-markets/provincial-territorial-energy-profiles/provincial-territorial-energy-profiles-ontario.html> (accessed Jan. 5, 2021)

Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2017-18

Peel Region, Healthy Development Assessment, 2016

<https://www.peelregion.ca/planning/officialplan/pdfs/HDA-User-Guide.pdf>

Healthy Community Design: Policy Statements for Official Plans, 2014

<https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/BuiltEnvironment/Healthydesign.aspx>

Connected Communities: Healthier Together, February 2019

2017 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/cmoh_19/cmoh_19.pdf

Healthy Built Environment Linkages Toolkit: Making the links between design, planning and health, 2018

http://www.bccdc.ca/pop-public-health/Documents/HBE_linkages_toolkit_2018.pdf

Peterborough Public Health, Health in Official Plans: A Toolkit

<https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/PPH-County-OP-submission-DESIGNED-180425-FINAL.pdf>

Live Grey Background Report and County of Grey Official Plan, 2019

<https://www.grey.ca/programs-initiatives/recolour-grey>

Grey Bruce Health Unit Healthy Development Checklist

<https://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/Portals/0/Topics/HealthyCommunities/BuiltEnvironmentbooklet.pdf>

Hastings and Prince Edward Counties - Building Complete and Sustainable Communities: Healthy Policies for Official Plans, 2012

https://hpepublichealth.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2019/08/Healthy_Policies_for_Official_Plans_Final_web_1.pdf

Wellington County: Planning Review Through a Public Health Lens, 2015

<https://www.wdgppublichealth.ca/reports/wellington-county-planning-review-through-public-health-lens>