



Committee Report

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

From: Mark Paoli
Director of Planning and Development

Date: June 17, 2021

Re: Plan the Bruce: Homes Discussion Paper

Staff Recommendation:

That the Plan the Bruce: Homes Discussion Paper be endorsed as a foundation for developing policies in the new Official Plan.

Background:

The Plan the Bruce: Homes Discussion paper is the first of eight Discussion Papers that will be completed through the Plan the Bruce project. The image below shows the steps from policy directions in interim reports, to discussion papers, and the new Official Plan.



Community Engagement:

Engagement outreach for the Plan the Bruce: Homes Discussion paper included a social media campaign, Radio ads, Newspaper advertisements, direct outreach to stakeholders and municipalities and delegations by request to 3 Local Councils. Engagement efforts yielded:

- 275 visitors to the project web site
- 124 web site survey responses
- Focus group discussions with housing service providers, developers, and real estate professionals; and
- Local municipality feedback

The feedback generally supported the interim policy directions. For some directions, the feedback noted some additional context and detail to be included while other directions can be carried forward directly. The Discussion Paper reviews the responses and sets out the analysis in more detail.

Recommended Directions:

Final recommended directions are summarized in the table below.

No.	Topic	Recommended Directions
1	Apply housing targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i) Establish and measure performance against targets, including affordability, based on the Regional Market Areas that will be established in the Plan the Bruce: Good Growth project. Targets should be further refined to the municipal scale in discussion with local Municipalities.ii) While focusing ‘good growth’ targets on growth within settlement areas, consider the role that hamlets may play in meeting continued demand for larger-lot single-detached housing.iii) Together with the ‘Agriculture’ discussion paper, consider the role that severance policies in Rural areas may play in meeting demand for housing outside settlement areas.iv) Apply form and density targets at the project scale, with a focus on net density to better account for development constraints that may be present on lands available for development and to recognize community assets that may be provided within a project.v) Strive to minimize variation in project-scale targets or criteria in different parts of the County to support consistency and certainty for developers working in multiple jurisdictions.vi) Conduct additional research into the role of additional residential units in evaluating project-level form and density targets, to encourage them as a type of unit that can support supply while recognizing that predictions at the draft approval stage may not translate into units that are constructed or consistently available.
2	Permit additional dwelling units	Incorporate the work completed around the Additional Residential Units amendment into the new Official Plan.

No.	Topic	Recommended Directions
3	Permit smaller homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Through the Official Plan, encourage local plans and by-laws to remove restrictions that require dwelling unit sizes that are larger than building code standards ii) Through the Official Plan, encourage local plans and by-laws to permit smaller lot area requirements on full municipal services to provide opportunities to reduce the cost and increase the supply of smaller homes.
4	Permit more types of homes	Through the Official Plan, direct local plans and by-laws to describe and permit a broader range of dwelling unit types; include policies emphasizing greater flexibility in planning approaches to accommodate a diversity of housing needs.
5	Increase stability and flexibility through development permitting process	Include policies and high-level criteria within the County Official Plan that enable the development of Community Planning Permit Systems.
6	Maintain supply of rental units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Include enabling and supporting policies in the County Official Plan that support municipal directions on maintaining rental housing supply and management of Short-Term Rental Accommodations; ii) Develop criteria for conversion of rental units to other tenures that can be applied by the approval authority for land division. Such criteria may rely upon access to information about measures including rental inventory and vacancy rates.
7	Use appropriate density to lower development costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Recognize single-detached, semi-detached, duplex, and Townhouse developments and associated additional residential units as being generally compatible forms of development for residential areas in settlement areas where water and sewer are available and stormwater management can be addressed; ii) Review permitted maximum densities in County and local Official Plans to reduce the need for plan amendments for compatible building forms. iii) Encourage alignment of zoning provisions for lot these forms of dwellings; iv) Informed by the “Connecting” discussion paper, encourage local Official Plans and zoning by-laws to identify core areas and corridors that can support greater intensification through increased height and/or reduced parking requirements; v) Pursue the development of intensification guidelines that focus on key principles to support compatibility of different dwelling types, to support infilling within neighbourhoods, blending and

No.	Topic	Recommended Directions
		<p>transitioning between existing and new areas, and guiding higher-density development in nodes and corridors</p>
8	Incentives that lower process and operating costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Carry forward policies and criteria in the County Official Plan related to fees and charges under the jurisdiction of the County that align with specified affordability targets. ii) Include policies that support local Municipal Community Improvement Plans that enable these tools to be used where Municipalities wish to establish them, in accordance with municipal budgeting priorities. iii) Include Community Improvement Policies in the Official Plan that facilitate Community Improvement Planning programs focused on Affordable Housing. Together with the 'Communities' discussion paper, consider expansion of the Spruce the Bruce program, which operates through Community Improvement Plans, to include grants or loans for conversion and renovation of upper-floor spaces in downtowns for additional residential units.
9	Reduce operating costs by design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Carry forward policies that encourage energy efficient subdivision and building design ii) Incorporate clear and practical guidance into intensification guidelines iii) Recognizing limitations in ability to require developments to exceed building code standards, consider pursuing Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) or Passive House standards in County-led projects.
10	Prioritize applications	<p>Include policies in the Official Plan that permit prioritization of planning applications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • housing projects that are to be owned or operated by agreement as Affordable Housing at below market rates for an extended period, • applications to revise existing draft approvals that meet policies and increase housing supply and mix. • Planning changes initiated by county or local council to broadly increase development opportunities, reduce need for future applications, or quickly address emerging land issues. <p>Prioritization eligibility criteria should be clearly stated, require applicants to outline how the project meets the criteria, and be contingent upon submission of complete applications to facilitate timely review.</p>

11	Maintain land inventory	<p>i) Establish monitoring policies in the Official Plan and key performance indicators that are focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of policy directions through local plans and by-laws • Reporting on development information that includes including lot creation and rates of development on new lots or redevelopment of existing lots, and changes in unit counts, • Tracking results of policy implementation, including unit counts for additional residential units, smaller homes, and other ‘missing middle’ types, with a focus on information that is already collected by Municipalities to support the local development approval process. <p>ii) Work with Human Services staff to integrate this information into analysis of demographics, market rents and purchase prices relative to income, and housing wait lists to maintain a broader understanding of housing needs particularly for households that are in the lower 60th percentile.</p>
12	Use surplus public lands for homes	Carry forward policies that reference County Housing First policies and include policies that encourage Municipalities to consider adoption of housing first policies that provide a range of opportunities to support development of affordable units on lands that are suitable for the purpose.
13	Require affordable housing	Initiate conversations with the province around the potential, and the mechanics, for this tool to be applied if a Municipality or Municipalities in Bruce County wish to pursue it as a mechanism for requiring affordable housing.
14	Other Tools	The Official Plan should include any policies that are required to enable Development Charges and Community Benefits Charges, with specific details to be addressed through background studies and by-laws.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

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

Interdepartmental Consultation:

The Human Services department has been involved throughout the Plan the Bruce: Homes project.

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

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

Report Author:

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Departmental Approval:

Mark Paoli
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Approved for Submission:

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