



Committee Report

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

From: Mark Paoli
Director of Planning and Development

Date: August 12, 2021

Re: Plan the Bruce: Communities Discussion Paper

Staff Recommendation:

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

Background:

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



Community Engagement:

Engagement outreach for the Plan the Bruce project included a social media campaign, radio ads and newspaper advertisements. The Communities project additionally conducted random telephone interviews, circulated an online survey and direct outreach to stakeholders.

Engagement efforts yielded:

- 917 visitors to the project web site
- 124 web site survey responses
- 485 random telephone interviews completed
- Presentation to and feedback received from the “Food Security Action Group”

Recommended Directions:

Final recommended directions are summarized in the table below.

No.	Topic	Recommended Directions
1	Design an active transportation system that is accessible within and between communities and includes a mix of transportation options including walking, cycling, or using a wheelchair, and is connected to amenities like shopping, parks, restaurants, and cultural / community facilities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">I. Informed by the “Bruce County Master Transportation Plan”, provide for a balanced transportation system that promotes <i>active transportation</i> facilities to encourage walking and cycling and other non-motorized forms of transportation. The County should require that all development contribute to the creation of walkable and connected communities with multiple destinations within walking distance of all residents and visitors.II. 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.III. Include policies to support sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-use paths connecting to the street network and to community amenities to ensure that corridors between key destinations are fully accessible and support <i>active transportation</i> year-round.IV. Planning for <i>public service facilities</i> should consider the ease of access by <i>active transportation</i>, the creation of mixed use neighborhood nodes, proximity to concentrations of residents, equitable access, and the contribution new facilities will make to the success and vitality of the County. Potential elements that may be considered for a strengthened policy framework may include upgrading and maintaining municipal services, <i>active transportation</i> facilities, public utilities, and social and recreational facilities so that they meet or exceed minimum standards and are inclusive and accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

		V. Although each municipality is unique, the County Official Plan must direct that <i>complete communities'</i> policies be applied consistently across all municipalities with the goal to support residents and provide equitable access to daily needs.
2	Anticipate changing needs due to an aging population.	<p>I. Considering changing demographics, it is important to ensure that there are sufficient housing options appropriate for and geared to seniors. The Official Plan policies should consider directing retirement and long-term care facilities closer to the downtowns of the urban areas to be close to services and amenities, and incorporate multi-storey, higher density buildings to achieve sufficient yields on small sites.</p> <p>II. Providing for universally accessible housing options will play an important role in enabling the widest spectrum of residents, regardless of age or ability, to live within the community. Special needs housing, including supportive housing and accessible affordable housing, should also be prioritized, to accommodate residents of varying or developing needs. Special needs housing should be located in proximity to a range of services and amenities to ensure access to daily needs.</p>
3	Supporting opportunities for sustainable local food systems such as local farmers markets, agri-tourism, Community Shared Agriculture programs, and urban agriculture.	<p>I. Through the Official Plan, support opportunities for a sustainable local food system that may include local farmers markets, agri-tourism, Community Shared Agriculture programs (CSAs), food cooperatives, diversity of agricultural uses (greenhouses, orchards), and community gardens. Encourage community gardens in proximity to multi-residential housing and special needs housing, either on public or private land.</p> <p>II. Consider adding a healthy food system as an objective in the Official Plan.</p> <p>III. Support urban agriculture as 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.</p> <p>IV. Through the Official Plan, development plans and building designs should provide opportunities for local food growing and production through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Community gardens; -Edible landscapes; -Small scale food processing; -Food-related home occupations/industries; -Small and medium scaled food retailers; and, -Local market space (i.e., a farmer's market).

4	Strengthen the role of Public Health in collaborating with municipalities to promote a healthy community.	<p>I. Approach the Public Health Unit about the potential to collaborate on development of: supporting criteria for when public health is circulated on planning documents; and, a policy in the Official Plan that would encourage developers use the Grey Bruce Healthy Development Checklist as part of the development application process.</p> <p>II. Through the Official Plan, ensure that the healthy community vision and supportive planning policy frameworks are fully articulated in local Official Plans and local Zoning By-laws, including an approach for measuring success.</p>
5	Support accessibility for persons with disabilities in all land-use planning and development decisions.	<p>I. Through the Official Plan, introduce policies that implement Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)</p> <p>II. Providing for universally accessible housing options will play an important role in enabling the widest spectrum of residents, regardless of age or ability, to live within the community. Housing for people with special needs, including supportive housing and accessible affordable housing, should also be prioritized, to accommodate residents of varying or developing needs. This housing should be close to the services and amenities that meet daily needs.</p>
6	Promote building and site designs that assist in the reduction of crime.	<p>I. Introduce policies that specifically encourage the design and development of safe neighbourhoods, site design, and buildings that assists in the reduction of the incidence of crime through policies and principles associated with <i>Crime Prevention through Environmental Design</i> (CPTED).</p> <p>II. Through the Official Plan, 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.</p>
7	Offering a mix of housing types and options for all life stages.	<p>I. Informed by the “Homes” Discussion Paper 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.</p> <p>II. Encourage local municipalities to develop policies that provide incentives to develop affordable housing in their downtown areas. The County should consider establishing a new County Community Improvement Plan (CIP) for housing to address the supply of affordable housing and to encourage housing development in the downtowns.</p>

		<p>III. Ensure that the County policies direct local Official Plans and Zoning By-laws to facilitate the desired mix of uses and forms of development. The County and its local municipalities must focus on facilitation, rather than a highly restrictive/regulatory approach. This means more flexibility in policies and procedures so long as the collective healthy community development vision is achieved.</p>
8	Create public spaces designed to promote social interaction inclusive of community members from all life stages and backgrounds.	<p>I. Through the Official Plan, it will be important to ensure that the policy framework supports an appropriate parks and open space network, which considers the current needs of residents in addition to future needs as the County continues to grow and evolve. This may include consideration of more urban park typologies.</p> <p>II. Consider policies for new development that ensures residents are generally within 400 to 800 metres of a component of the parks and open space system and/or a publicly accessible component of the natural heritage system.</p> <p>IV. Public space/event space should be prioritized in the downtowns, as well as near schools, senior's centres, workplaces, and higher density residential developments.</p>
9	Highlight and develop local landmarks and entry points in an effort to improve navigation and site recognition throughout the community.	<p>I. 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.</p> <p>II. 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.</p> <p>III. Support the integration of arts, cultural, and recreational facilities with local business, health and social services, schools, parks, and civic buildings.</p>
10	Develop beautiful streets and streetscapes to enhance the character of the community.	<p>I. Consider an Official Plan policy that supports County-wide urban design guidelines to provide direction and greater clarity for upcoming development in areas that are favourable for new development or intensification. Urban design guidelines will protect and reinforce the County's built characteristics and shape the public and private realms, including streets, public spaces, and</p>

		<p>buildings to achieve the vision of the Official Plan. The guidelines are to be read in conjunction with and complement the objectives and policies of the Official Plan.</p> <p>II. Through the Official Plan, strengthen the policy framework for the public realm and streetscapes.</p>
11	Ensure parks, open spaces, waterfronts, and natural features are beautiful, accessible, and connected.	<p>I. All parks and open spaces shall be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Accessible and visible from the street network. Public parks shall include substantial street frontage; -Developed with native, water efficient, drought resistant planting; -Developed with areas for shade; -Hard surface materials shall be permeable; and, -Visual and physical means of access shall be provided to all recreational areas, open space, parks, and other similar public uses. Adequate parking shall be established and access points to parking areas shall be designed so that they minimize the danger of vehicular/pedestrian conflict. <p>II. Policies should be provided to ensure that parks and open spaces, including the existing 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.</p> <p>III. Connectivity should occur beyond the scale of roads and must consider how pedestrians connect to parks, the waterfront, and visit natural systems, and do so safely and in a comfortable manner. Policies for new development must play a role in ensuring a high degree of connectivity by enhancing circulation systems and creating clear routes. A connected system must also be legible. A legible environment should be easy to navigate, safe, and create opportunities for public interaction.</p>
12	Require diverse and high-quality architecture through the use of themes, building materials, colour, and architectural details.	<p>I. Require high quality architecture that transcends a theme or a specific period in time. 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.</p> <p>II. Through the Official Plan, new policies could support architectural control guidelines for new development,</p>

		<p>which could address elements such as building design, design for priority/high visibility locations, and architectural standards.</p> <p>III. Establish a clear policy framework for the design issues related to infill and redevelopment in order to ensure compatible development adjacent to existing neighbourhoods.</p> <p>IV. Together with the 'Culture' discussion paper, develop supportive policies for adaptive reuse of older buildings.</p>
13	Protect and support current businesses and commercial activities while attracting long-term economic development opportunities.	<p>I. Continue to attract long-term economic development opportunities by protecting for and establishing opportunities for businesses and commercial activities.</p> <p>II. Ensure Official Plan policies support Community Improvement Plans (CIP's). The preparation of a Community Improvement Plan must be consistent with applicable provincial, upper-tier, and local policy. Section 28 of the Planning Act requires that municipalities must have provisions within the Official Plan relating to community improvement, in order to designate a Community Improvement Project Area by By-law and prepare and adopt a Community Improvement Plan.</p> <p>III. 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.</p>
14	Maintain the County's leadership role in adapting to economic change, maintaining employment options, and attracting new businesses/investments to the area.	<p>I. Ensure County Official Plan policies and regulations are updated to facilitate innovative investment opportunities like temporary uses and pop-up activities, outdoor restaurant facilities, festivals, artisan studios, maker spaces, small-scale breweries and distilleries, farm experiences, monetized sustainable tourism experiences, and other desired mixes of uses and forms of development.</p> <p>II. Commercial/mixed use areas must be able to continue to support the needs of all residents and provide opportunities for community-based employment. The policy framework should clearly define appropriate uses for various commercial/mixed use areas and ensure there are strong links between residents and the commercial areas.</p> <p>III. Official Plan policies should encourage more intensive retail development or direct growth to underutilized</p>

		<p>commercial parcels with space for additional infill development. The opportunity for more mixed-use development (retail and service commercial at-grade, with residential above) has the potential to achieve live work objectives in key locations throughout the County.</p> <p>IV. The County should place a stronger emphasis on intensification, alternative modes of transportation, urban design, a high-quality public realm and linkages to adjacent lands in the planning of commercial, mixed use and employment lands, where appropriate.</p>
15	Ensure a wide range of mobility/transportation options that are economical, safe, and accessible.	<p>I. Consider a complete streets approach to meet the needs of road users of all ages and abilities. This would include the development of a complete streets policy and supporting design guidelines for new streets such as design, construction, operations, and maintenance activities and products on the public road network. The policy would also apply to the refurbishment and reconstruction of all existing Arterial, Collector, and Local Roads to accommodate the needs and safety of all road users.</p> <p>II. Informed by the “Connecting” Discussion Paper, support an active transportation system that is highly integrated and connected within the community, the adjacent communities, the County, and to transportation systems that serve the broader region.</p> <p>III. Informed by the “Connecting” Discussion Paper, ensure that new development supports a full range of economical, safe, and accessible mobility options, including transit, when it becomes available.</p> <p>IV. In considering the impacts of a changing climate the County should consider prioritizing a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system and mobility strategy involving reduction in auto use and the promotion of transit/shuttles, rideshare, and active transportation.</p>
16	Ensure that development is economically sustainable and financially viable.	<p>I. Through the Official Plan, develop policies to optimize the use of existing infrastructure investments and to promote the coordinated, efficient, and cost-effective delivery of service infrastructure and community infrastructure, including fast and affordable broadband connectivity.</p> <p>II. The Official Plan should acknowledge and plan for the impacts of a changing climate on the County’s servicing and transportation infrastructure.</p> <p>III. Informed by the “Good Growth” Discussion Paper, support higher density-built forms and higher intensity land uses as a way of reducing land consumption and</p>

		maximizing the efficiency and cost effectiveness of municipal service infrastructure.
17	Promote responsible use of resources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, demands for energy, water, and waste systems.	<p>I. 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.</p> <p>II. Energy and water conservation, waste reduction, and improved air quality are important components of sustainable design. Consider policies which enhance the sustainable design of new development and buildings, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Promoting energy conservation by reducing demand for energy from the grid and encouraging renewable energy production. Renewable energy sources that could be employed include the use of solar thermal and photovoltaic equipment, geo-exchange, and/or wind power. Proposed alternative energy source(s) could be used in combination with energy from the grid; -Minimizing air quality and climate change impacts through <i>complete communities</i>, <i>active transportation</i>, reduced parking strategy, separation of sensitive land uses, etc.; -Encouraging building(s) that are LEED® Certified or recognized or accredited by a third-party certification program i.e., Energy Star, BREAM, etc.; -Promoting innovative residential and public building designs that contribute to energy reduction and natural resource conservation, green roofs, synergies between buildings and site management practices; and -Utilizing passive solar orientation in the layout of new development to maximize solar energy gain opportunities. <p>III. One of the consequences of a changing climate is the development of heat islands. This term refers to urban areas with higher temperatures, typically caused by heat-absorbing buildings, roads, and other hard surfaces, such as surface parking lots. Responding to the heat island effect requires strategies related to both the built and natural environment and may include promoting green (living) or light-coloured roofs, establishing a tree canopy target, using light colour paving materials and supporting green building standards.</p>

18	Encouraging low impact and green building design through their integration with existing natural ecosystems, minimization of pollution, and the use of renewable and alternative energy sources.	<p>I. 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 low impact development (LID) techniques that focus on runoff prevention, treat storm water as close to the source as possible, and use natural systems as the integrating framework.</p> <p>II. Demonstrate leadership in sustainable forms of green building design and technology, including the incorporation of renewable and alternative energy sources. Support renewable energy sources that present the opportunity for a distributed generation model - meaning the energy is produced, stored, and used near where it will be consumed. Renewable energy and energy sources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Photovoltaics; - Wind; - Biomass; - Geothermal; - Solar thermal; - Combined heat and power; - District energy; and, - Low impact hydro-electric.
19	Protect and expand the urban forest and tree canopy for human and environmental health.	<p>I. Informed by the “Natural Legacy” Discussion paper, protect, and enhance local and regional ecosystems and biological diversity.</p> <p>II. 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.</p> <p>III. Through the Official Plan, the urban forest policies should be reviewed, considering updates related to a tree canopy target, minimum tree cover requirements, naturalization programs, and species selection to support climate change adaptation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Consider expanded vegetation and tree planting in existing and new developments to increase the tree canopy; - Provide robust species selection to anticipate climate change conditions and operational constraints; - Provide, when possible and in concert with appropriate safety measures, street trees on both sides of the road in the public right-of-way; and,

		-Encourage a diversity of tree species in parks and along each road, native to the County, non-invasive, drought and salt tolerant, and low maintenance.
20	Support Emergency Preparedness Planning that mitigates the impacts of climate change and related extreme weather events.	I. 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.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

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

Interdepartmental Consultation:

The Human Services and Transportation and Environmental Services departments were consulted. Additionally, Human Services staff provided community contacts for further engagement.

It should be noted that the Transportation and Environmental Services has advanced initiatives that are in line with some of the recommended directions. Specifically, related to Recommended Direction 10, the County has adopted a total street design approach. The next step is to further develop the design standards. Related to Recommended Direction 17, the Waste Management Service review identified the need for policies to reduce waste and specifically Construction waste. This will be addressed as well when the County's Waste Management Master Plan is updated in 2022.

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

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

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Departmental Approval:

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