

Plan the Bruce: Business Presentation to Council

January 20, 2022

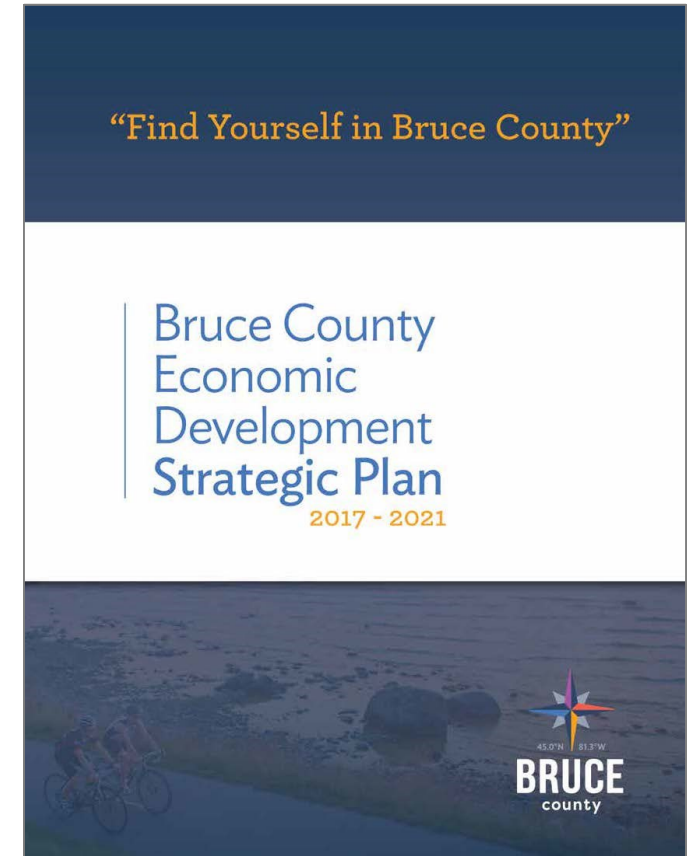
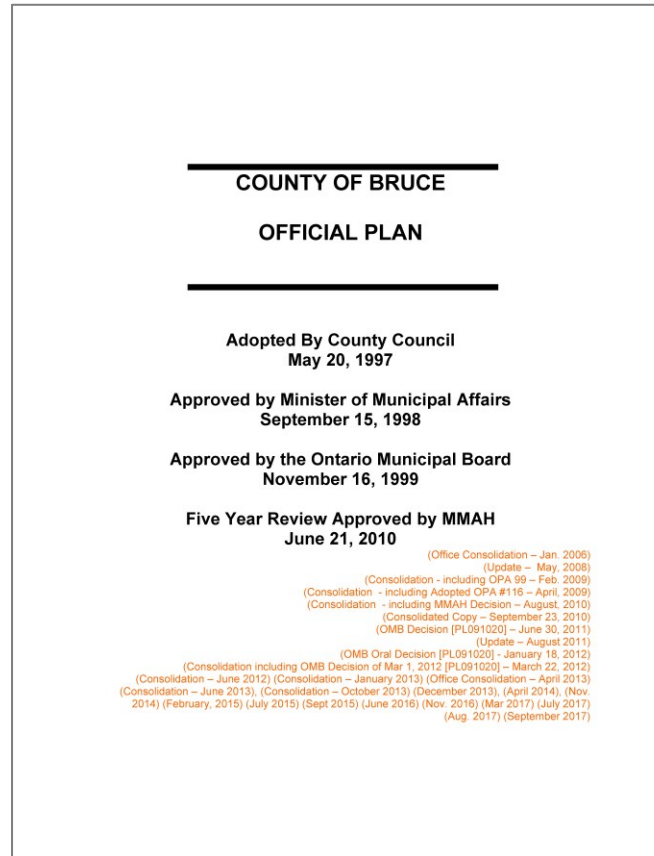
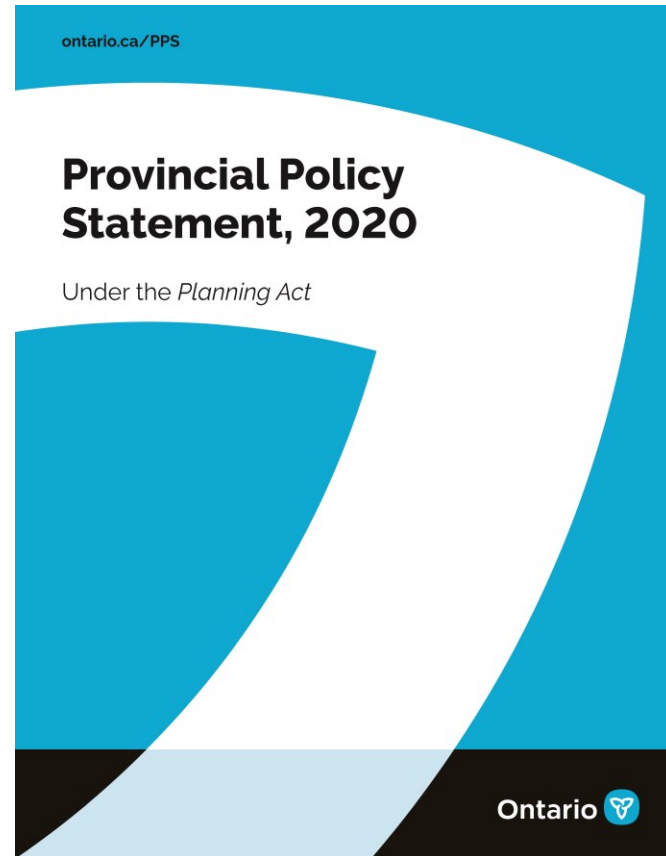


Purpose

- The Planning Partnership was retained to collaborate with Bruce County to prepare the **Business Discussion Paper**.
- The purpose of the Report is to provide recommendations for enabling economic development policies in the Official Plan Update.
- The report utilizes the findings from **MDB Insight's review of the County's Economic Development Strategy** and input from key stakeholders, including local and County level officials, community partners, industry organizations, workforce boards, business owners, and the public.



Planning Context



Factors that Influence Economic Development

- **Economic Resilience** - nature and structure of the economy is changing and a key issue in the County is how to respond to an evolving economic context.
- **Fiscal Realities** - employment landscape in smaller Ontario communities is undergoing a shift with the introduction of more diverse demographics and a new way to look at economic development.
- **Attracting and Retaining Workers** - resident and talent attraction strategies are a relatively recent addition to a community's toolbox for economic development; quality of life has joined the list of attributes for municipality to remain competitive.
- **Business Recruitment and Enhancement** - investment attraction and business retention and expansion are the most important foundational elements for economic development.
- **Tourist Economy** - tourism plays a large role in the County's economy, adding \$326.7 million a year to the local economy and creating 3,244 direct and indirect jobs in 2019.

Key Themes and Feedback from Consultation

- **Strengths** – agriculture, nuclear, tourism, quality of life, entrepreneurship
- **Opportunities** - diversification of the economy into new products, services, and supply chains; ensure housing affordability, development fast-tracking, and diversified housing stock
- **Biggest challenges** – lack of industrial space, labour shortage, distance to markets, lack of critical infrastructure
- **Long term vision**– focus on energy, agriculture, and tourism; economic diversification; collaboration between County and municipalities; plan for growth
- **Major economic transformations** – remote work, evolution and support of agricultural sector; energy sector; seasonal tourism
- **Services County should consider** – transportation infrastructure improvements; access to broadband internet; services for children and youth; affordable housing
- **Changes for economy to 2031** – economic independence and diversification; downtowns as destinations; sustainable growth

Recommended Directions - Key Principle

- Economic Development should be a **key principle or objective** of the Official Plan.
A flexible approach to local economic development will ensure the County is able to adapt as trends change and remain prosperous with a diversity of employment opportunities for its residents, with a focus on supporting the diversification of the commercial sector, tourism, the creative and cultural industries, the energy sector, and the rural/agricultural economy.
- The County should meet the needs of employment and business opportunities of all types, by working with local Municipalities to:
 - i. Support an appropriate mix and range of business, industrial, commercial and institutional uses to meet the long-term needs of the community; and
 - ii. Maintain a range and choice of suitable sites for all employment uses and consider the needs of existing and future businesses.
 - iii. Support a diversity of housing types and tenures to provide affordable choices for the workforce.

Recommended Directions - Economic Dev't Strategic Plan

- Official Plan should make a direct reference to the relevant Economic Development Strategy
- **Diversify Commercial Uses** - support full range of employment generating uses: office development, institutional, and restaurants, retail, and service commercial.
- **Employment Areas** – rationalize and protect inventory of employment lands.
- **Municipal Infrastructure** - Constructing, upgrading, and maintaining high quality municipal infrastructure systems and public service facilities; facilitate efficient and convenient transportation options
- **Support Creative Industries** - appropriate range of home occupations and home-based businesses, including artist studio/maker spaces and live/work units
- **Support Agricultural Economy** - support agricultural policy directions: Agricultural systems approach, opportunities for on-farm diversified uses; protect from incompatible uses.

Recommended Directions - Diverse Land Supply

- **Employment Land Employment (ELE)** - important to assess the existing supply of employment land to determine the range of employment generating opportunities; differentiate what is "effective supply" versus supply that is available but is a longer-term proposition.
- **Population-Related Employment (PRE)** - County will need to ensure that land opportunities for the expansion of the retail and service commercial sector is adequately considered.
- Include policies to allow for minor employment land area adjustments or conversions in the development of the new Official Plan. This creates flexibility for employment land conversions to be approved where certain tests or criteria have been met.
- Consider anticipating major institutional uses; Office uses should generally be permitted in downtowns and accommodated in existing or newly planned retail and service commercial nodes.
- Official Plan policy needs to be **as flexible as possible** to facilitate a new use, or expansion of existing uses.

Next Steps

- The Draft Business Discussion Paper will be circulated for stakeholder comments.
- The comments will be incorporated into a Final Discussion Paper for County Council to consider endorsing.
- Recommendations will be used as a foundation for developing detailed land use policies for growing economic health through business diversity.

