



Committee Report

To: Councillor Steve Hammell, Chair and
Members of the Planning and Development Committee

From: Mark Paoli
Director of Planning and Development

Date: June 16, 2022

Re: Bruce County Official Plan Review Schedule

Staff Recommendation:

That staff be directed to advance a revised work plan for 2-stage Adoption of the new County Official Plan as outlined in Option 3.

Background:

This report is to update Council on the Official Plan Review project, risks, and alternatives for consideration.

Project Update

WSP Canada Inc. is working with staff to prepare the new Official Plan, in a project that has 4 phases. We are nearing the end of Phase 2 - preparation of Draft Official Plan. We have also been working with Watson and Associates to update the land supply numbers to account for the higher rate of development that has occurred since the project commenced.

The project phases are illustrated below.



Risks and Alternatives:

Option 1: Maintain Current Project Work Plan and Schedule:

The current schedule is based on the original work plan and timeline, to complete a comprehensive new Official Plan for Adoption by the current Council.

Benefits

- Aligns the project timing with the efforts of this Council to develop a new Official Plan
- Completion of the Official Plan enables staff to proceed to other project work, including a strategic plan for the division.

Risks

- Ongoing high application volume, and some staffing vacancies, have limited staff and consulting team capacity to fully engage in the Official Plan review work, despite having secured increased consultant support.
- Local Municipalities are also continuing to encounter high rates of development.
- Consideration of boundary expansion(s) to support local area growth may not be fully rationalized within the time period available in the current schedule.
- The province has recently legislated an ability to pause its review period without Municipalities being able to appeal.

Maintaining the project schedule could result in:

- critique of the level of engagement provided for the plan.
- implementation challenges related to potential for loose ends.
- risk of the Province having concerns and taking longer to make a decision on the approval of the plan.

Option 2: Maintain Current Project Work Plan and Extend Schedule Into Spring 2023

This option would see the team continue to work to prepare the plan, with additional time provided for public and stakeholder engagement and consultation and consideration of engagement outcomes.

Benefits:

- The current work plan supports a comprehensive framing of the issues and opportunities with the plan, and opportunity for engagement on a single “package” - a new Official Plan.
- Extending the project schedule provides an opportunity to carefully and thoroughly consider matters raised by public, stakeholders, and thorough staff analysis as the plan comes together.
- May be opportunity to align the County project with local efforts to rationalize and prioritize locations for boundary expansions and/or employment land conversions.

Risks

- Extending the project schedule increases the total time required for staff resources and impacts the ability to advance other business plan priorities
- Time or resources may be required to bring new Council members up-to a level of understanding of the project so that they can make a decision or may require further discussion or changes.

Option 3: Revise Work Plan and Schedule to Support 2 Stages of Adoption

This option would see staff prepare a standalone amendment to the Official Plan to update growth management policies and establish the growth management framework to 2046. This would be “Stage 1” and would be prepared for Adoption within 2022. Staff would continue to prepare and engage on the balance of the new Official Plan, which would be targeted for spring Adoption, and which would incorporate the Stage 1 amendment.

Benefits

- Additional project time, with an initial focus on ensuring there is broad support for the updated growth management framework. This includes a further round of consultation with County and local municipal staff and Councils, as well as other stakeholders and partners, including Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.
- More specifically, a 2-stage approach enables focused effort on resolving priority concerns for Growth Management that relate to localized growth and Provincial Policy directions related to regional market areas.
- Provides opportunity for the Brockton Minister’s Zoning Order process to unfold, or for comparable outcomes to be advanced through the OP review process.
- Enables local municipalities to begin preliminary study on Local Official Plan updates related to growth management, for example to inform boundary expansions, growth allocations, or infrastructure and asset management plans.
- Additional time to build support through engagement on items like the Natural Heritage System and Agricultural mapping and implementing policies, which might receive considerable attention and dialogue from local municipal partners and the public. The NHS and Agricultural mapping and implementing policies would be further refined and consulted on during Stage 2.

Risks

- Municipal elections, and any potential change in elected leadership that could impact project priorities, milestones, or confirmed policy directions already achieved under the current Council as they relate to any work completed post-election cycle.
- A Range of variables and caveats regarding finalizing the GMS before municipal elections. While this risk holds true for both a 1-Phase approach that concludes this fall, and a 2-Phase approach that would have an adopted GMS framework this fall, it can be better mitigated through an approach that ultimately realizes an adopted comprehensive OP in Spring 2023.

In the view of our consultants and based on their experience, there is a considerable amount of study and consultation that needs to occur for the growth management framework to be adopted this fall; should there be delays in getting buy-in, this would likely push adoption to 2023.

Summary:

There is significant benefit to an extended project timeline given the current status of the work being undertaken. Principally, this includes more opportunity for closer and more fulsome review and collaboration between consultants and County staff, followed by the same for meaningful engagement and consultation with Local staff and Councils, stakeholders and the public on draft OP policies and mapping. A 2-Phase approach that concludes in Spring 2023 would likely result in a more collaborative, defensible and transparent process and product.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

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

Interdepartmental Consultation:

None

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

Development of the new County Official Plan is a major initiative in the Planning and Development Department 2022 business plan.

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Departmental Approval:

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Approved for Submission:

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