



## Committee Report

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

**From:** Claire Dodds  
Director of Planning and Development

**Date:** October 20, 2022

**Re:** Spruce the Bruce Reserve

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### Staff Recommendation:

That the Planning and Development Committee support the creation of a Spruce the Bruce Reserve; and

That any unspent Spruce the Bruce funds be transferred to the Spruce the Bruce Reserve on an annual basis; and

That a by-law be created to establish the Spruce the Bruce Reserve which outlines the terms and uses of the funds.

### Background:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the development of a reserve account related to funds budgeted to Spruce the Bruce. Currently each year Committee designates an amount of dollars for granting under the Spruce the Bruce Program, these dollars if not spent by the end of the year are included in general surplus funds. For the last number of years this amount has been consistent at \$125,000. In 2022, an additional \$125,000 was drawn from the Business Sustainability Fund to provide additional funding for the industry stream grants approved in early 2022.

At this time grants under this program are required to be spent by December 1<sup>st</sup> of the year that the grant was provided. The grants are offered on a first come first serve basis, with the exception of the first seed funding for industry grants that is equally split between all 8 local municipalities. In some situations, where grants have been approved, the applicant has less than a month to complete the work. At time of the report while over \$100,000 has been conditionally approved, less than 10% has been paid as projects have not been completed. In many cases the timelines do not allow the applicants to fully complete the project and the conditional funding will need to be removed. 2022 saw a high number of applicants withdrawing applications, as a result of difficulty securing contractors and supplies within the short timeline that was permitted.

Several applicants during 2022 have noted significant challenges in finding both contractors and supplies in order to undertake the work that had hoped, resulting in a number of

applications being withdrawn. It is anticipated that this will continue to be an issue and hamper the ability of these grants to provide to the value and outcomes that is intended. Development of the recommended Spruce the Bruce reserve will allow grant agreements to provide tentative approvals beyond the calendar year. In order to operationalize this, it is recommended that any unspent budget at the end of each calendar year from the Spruce the Bruce operating line be added to the reserve.

#### **Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:**

The development of the Spruce the Bruce reserve will create efficiencies in the program, ensuring that additional impact is found when administering these grant programs. As a result, there will not be an increased ask for funds in 2023.

There will be no impact on staffing, IT or legal.

#### **Interdepartmental Consultation:**

The corporate services department has been consulted in relation to the process for undertaking development of a new reserve.

#### **Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:**

Goal #5      Eliminate our own Red Tape  
                 E. Focus on the internal and the external customer/client needs first

#### **Report Author:**

Jeffrey Loney - Economic Development Manager

#### **Departmental Approval:**

Claire Dodds  
Director of Planning and Development

#### **Approved for Submission:**

Derrick Thomson  
Chief Administrative Officer