



Staff Report to Council - for Direction

Title: Bruce County Official Plan Amendment - Implementation

From: Jack Van Dorp, Director of Planning and Development

Date: February 15, 2024

Staff Recommendation:

That the County Official Plan Amendment - C-2023-008 Implementation Amendment be adopted; and,

The appropriate By-Law be forwarded to County Council for adoption.

Report Summary:

The County Official Plan serves to set overall direction for the County, and to function as the detailed land use plan in areas that are not covered by a local Official Plan, such as Hamlets, Rural, and Agricultural areas outside of settlement areas.

The purpose of the Implementation Amendment is to make some valuable changes to the Bruce County Official Plan. The proposed changes affect all of Section 6 (Implementation) and all of Section 7 (Interpretation) of the Plan. Amendments are also proposed to selected portions of Section 4 (General Policies) related to policies for Servicing and the Niagara Escarpment Plan. Overall, the amendment will make these policies clearer and more effective.

On December 7, 2023 a public meeting was held to consider an amendment to the Bruce County Official Plan, known as the Implementation Amendment. One comment, from Bev Nicholson, a local planning consultant was received in writing and read into the record. Additional comments received after the public meeting are attached.

Alignment with Guiding Principles:

This amendment will add or revise policies within the Bruce County Official Plan. The policies affected enable planning tools for implementing the goals and objectives of the County Official Plan and Local Official Plans. Of note are policies that facilitate the development of housing, discussed further below. The amendment is aligned with the Guiding Principles and the Vision of a healthy, diverse, and thriving future.

Summary of Key Changes:

Although some new policies have been added, the overall length of the implementation section remains similar, achieved by shortening existing policies.

Volume of text is reduced to make policies easier to read and understand.

Quotations of the Planning Act and other provincial direction are replaced with references to the act/ provincial direction to avoid conformity issues when the province changes or establishes new policies.

The updates also clearly enable local Official Plans to rely upon the County OP as the applicable policy. This would reduce the requirement to amend both the County Plan and local Official Plan(s) to address policy changes. Municipalities may however choose to provide more detailed policy in their own plans.

New “Did You Know” information boxes are proposed to be added to offer information. These information boxes are provided not for policy direction, but rather for information purposes. Information boxes do not form part of the plan and can be updated without an amendment to the Plan.

Existing County Official Plan policies, proposed new policies, and summary of changes are provided in the attached appendix. Changes that have arisen from the agency and public consultation are noted.

Policies to Facilitate Housing

The Implementation Amendment enables a number of planning tools under the Planning Act. In many cases these tools help facilitate the development of housing.

In particular, a new section has been added for Community Planning Permit Systems. This may assist with addressing housing need through a more streamlined approval process. Saugeen Shores is currently preparing for a possible Community Planning Permit System to facilitate gentle density in settlement areas for the purpose of creating a broader range of housing options.

A new section has been added for Inclusionary Zoning. If permitted by the province, inclusionary zoning could be used to require affordable housing to be constructed for certain residential development projects.

Community Improvement policies have been updated within the proposed amendment to allow, when authorized by the provincial government, County Council to identify a community improvement project area for affordable housing.

In the proposed amendment consent policies no longer include a requirement to follow the frontage and density pattern of the surrounding area. This could facilitate smaller lots for infilling.

Matters Arising from Agency and Public Consultation:

A request for comments was circulated to agencies and municipal staff. Information meetings were held with municipal Chief Administrative Officers, Clerks, Chief Building Officials and other Development staff.

All comments that were received in response to the request for comments, including comments received at and following the public meeting are attached to this report.

The attached Comment and Response Matrix provides a summary of the comments received and the changes that have been made in response to comments. Changes that have been made since the public meeting on December 7th are highlighted in this matrix.

The effect of the amendment is shown in the attached copy of the Bruce County Official Plan with the proposed added and deleted text shown as tracked changes.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

Potential Appeal to Local Planning Appeal Tribunal

Report Author:

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Departmental Approval:

Jack Van Dorp
Director of Planning and Development

Approved for Submission:

Christine MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer