



# Staff Report to Council - for Direction

**Title:** International Plowing Match - Request for Support

**From:** Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development

**Date:** February 15, 2024

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## Staff Recommendation:

That Bruce County support the efforts of the Bruce County Plowmen's Association to host the 2026 International Plowing Match in Bruce County; and

That Council support providing start-up funds of up to \$100,000, conditions of which would be brought back at a future meeting.

## Report Summary:

Representatives proposed hosting the 2026 International Plowing Match in Bruce County, with requests including support for hosting, discussions on potential start-up funds, in-kind sponsorship commitment and exploring participation through a county showcase. The report recommends Council support hosting the International Plowing Match in Bruce County in 2026 and seeks approval in principle for start-up funds.

## Background:

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, representatives of the International Plowing Match and the Bruce County Plowmen's Association presented the opportunity to host the International Plowing Match in Bruce County in 2026.

The previous International Plowing show held in Bruce County ran from September 16-20, 2008, in Teeswater. Approximately 84,000 people attended this event including dignitaries from all levels of government and international partners. Bruce County staff and Council were heavily involved in developing the event in 2008, with a municipal cross functional group and internal cross-functional group, dedicated staff resources and budget of \$125,000.

As part of this request there were four asks made of the County:

1) A motion in support of hosting the 2026 International Plowing Match in Bruce County

This report recommends providing the Bruce County Plowmen's Association with a motion of support. This support will allow the Association to start development of the committee needed to plan this event.

2) Commitment to discussions about a start-up fund/loan

The staff recommendation seeks approval in principle for start-up funds to a maximum of \$100,000 be made available to the committee for the development of this event. The terms, details and outlay of that funding will be developed in conjunction with the committee and brought to council for consideration of approval at a future meeting. This approval in principle provides direction to staff to start having those conversations.

A business plan, outlining the budget and operational logistics and other details will be required from the committee in order for staff to review and define the next recommendation to council. It is anticipated that Bruce County staff will have awareness and involvement in this process as way to support the event.

3) Commitment to in-kind sponsorship of infrastructure/operational needs such as garbage disposal, recycling services, disposal of black and grey water

Staff have not had sufficient time to investigate the extent of the in-kind support that has been requested for this project, however, are committed to reviewing the business plan noted above to determine this.

Many of the in-kind items requested above are outside the scope of current County operations, and as such consultation with service providers will be key to ensuring these services are available.

4) If desired, participation through a County showcase.

While it is recommended that Bruce explore the opportunity to host a County showcase, details have not been developed at this time. The showcase provides the opportunity to highlight the unique benefits of our economic and cultural assets in the County. It is anticipated that when more details are developed, any requests will form a subsequent request to council with the applicable details.

In addition to these requests, staff have identified potential opportunities to advance County strategic priorities and business through this process. The International Plowing Match represents an opportunity to learn and unite various aspects of our agricultural sector and events of cultural significance. This event can be used to strengthen relationships and ultimately ensure that the County continues to support Agriculture as one of the main economic drivers of our regions.

As a large-scale event the International Plowing match gives Bruce County the opportunity to further refine and develop processes to plan for and manage the County's contribution to these types of events. These processes will be built on the best practices of similar municipalities and aim to contribute to the future of this event for rural Ontario.

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

While this report commits in principle to start-up funds of up to \$100,000, there is no immediate financial commitment until such time that the details of the agreement are confirmed based on the business plan developed by the Committee.

Existing staffing resources are available to support the work outlined under section 2). Consideration for staffing capacity and costs required to resource the requests outlined in sections 3) and 4) of this report's background will require further review through the process undertaken regarding section 2).

There are no specific legal or IT considerations related to this report.

**Interdepartmental Consultation:**

Staff in the Office of the CAO and Corporate Services were consulted on the development of this report.

**Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:**

Community and Partnerships - Enhance and grow partnerships

**Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:**

This event supports goals in the Cultural Action Plan and the Economic Development Strategic Plan

**Report Author:**

Jeff Loney, Economic Development Manager

**Departmental Approval:**

Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development

**Approved for Submission:**

Christine MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer