



Staff Report to Council - for Information

Title: Environmental Sustainability Action Plan - Project Update (Spring 2025)

From: Adam Stanley, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services

Date: May 15, 2025

Report Number: TES-2025-011

Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

Report Summary:

This report provides an update on the development of Bruce County's Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP), a key Strategic Plan goal to strengthen organizational capacity in climate action and sustainability. Since last reported in February 2025, the project has advanced through its initial planning phases, including the launch of a Cross-functional Team and completion of foundational documents. The ESAP will guide coordinated environmental action across County services, with stakeholder engagement beginning in late May and plan completion targeted for December 2025.

Background/Analysis:

The Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP) is a key initiative under Bruce County's Strategic Plan. The ESAP creates an opportunity to align environmental efforts with the County's eight local municipalities and other partners, recognizing that environmental challenges extend across jurisdictions.

This work aligns with Ontario's *Planning Act* and *Provincial Policy Statement (2020)*, which require municipalities to consider climate change in land use and infrastructure planning. It also reflects the *Municipal Act, 2001* which empowers municipalities to deliver services that protect environmental well-being and is informed by Ontario's "Climate Change Impact Assessment", which outlines regional climate risks and emphasizes the importance of local adaptation. More broadly, the ESAP reflects national and international commitments to climate action and sustainable development, recognizing the important leadership role of local governments.

The ESAP will serve as a practical framework to guide environmental decision-making across Bruce County's operations, infrastructure, and services. It will address key focus areas such as climate mitigation and adaptation, energy conservation, waste reduction, forest conservation, and sustainable transportation. The plan will be shaped through meaningful

engagement with Indigenous rightsholders, local municipalities, community stakeholders, and the public.

The ESAP will provide Bruce County with a coordinated, evidence-based framework for advancing environmental priorities. By establishing clear goals and timelines, the plan will support better-informed decisions related to infrastructure, service delivery, and internal operations.

Through this initiative the County is identifying opportunities to reduce resource consumption, improve operational efficiency, and manage environmental risks proactively. Over time, this work will contribute to long-term cost savings, more resilient infrastructure, and improved public services. The ESAP also strengthens Bruce County's eligibility for government funding, as many programs increasingly require applicants to demonstrate strategic planning for climate change and sustainability.

Internally, the plan supports collaboration, builds staff capacity, and aligns departmental efforts under a shared environmental vision. Regionally, it reinforces Bruce County's ability to coordinate with local municipalities and Indigenous rightsholders, advancing shared goals and strengthening partnerships. The ESAP also demonstrates a commitment to transparency and public accountability, enhancing the County's reputation as a forward-thinking and responsible level of government.

LAUNCH OF THE CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAM

To guide the development of the ESAP, a Cross-Functional Team was launched and held its first meeting on April 7, 2025. This marked an important milestone in establishing the collaborative foundation needed to move this work forward.

Since its launch, the Cross-Functional Team has completed the work to finalize the project charter, complete the environmental scan and engagement strategy.

ESAP WORKPLAN OVERVIEW

The ESAP is being developed over several phases throughout 2025, progressing from internal planning and engagement to drafting the action plan, with the final plan to be brought to Council for consideration by year-end.

Key Project Phases	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4
Project Initiation - Review County and Departmental priorities to establish framework and project charter				
Project and Cross Functional Team Launch				
Engagement with First Nations Rightsholders, Municipal Partners and other stakeholders				
Undertake a needs assessment, environmental scan & SWOT analysis				
Identify short-term and long-term goals and recommendations				
Present Draft ESAP to County Council for Input				
Council Review and Endorsement				

Next Steps

With foundational planning complete, the project will now move into the engagement phase. A Council survey will be distributed to gather input from elected officials on priorities and areas of focus. An all-staff survey will also be conducted. Broader stakeholder and public engagement will begin, including outreach to municipal partners, Indigenous rightsholders, and community organizations. These engagement activities will inform the County's needs assessment, SWOT analysis, and emerging themes and opportunities as the ESAP continues to take shape through the summer. An ESAP progress update will be brought to Council in September.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

Development of the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan will be undertaken using existing staff resources; no additional budget is required at this stage. Budget considerations for implementation will be incorporated into future budget planning cycles.

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

Interdepartmental Consultation:

Interdepartmental consultations with the Senior Management Team have occurred.

Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:

Community and Partnerships - Enhance and grow partnerships

Environment and Climate Change - Build capacity to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change

Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:

Transportation and Environmental Services 2025 Departmental Business Plan

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Departmental Approval:

Adam Stanley, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services

Approved for Submission:

Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development

Attachments:

N/A