



Staff Report to Council - for Information

Title: International Plowing Match and Rural Expo 2026 - Update

From: Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development

Date: May 15, 2025

Report Number: CDO-2025-010

Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

Report Summary:

Bruce County is preparing for its role as the regional host community for the 2026 International Plowing Match and Rural Expo, with planning efforts underway to support both event logistics and the creation of a Bruce County Showcase. Two governance structures are being established, including a Bruce County Cross-Functional Staff Team and a Municipal Executive Committee with representation from both the Municipality of Brockton and Bruce County. Both are being established to ensure efficient and effective coordination, internal alignment, and timely response to event-related requests.

Background/Analysis:

Bruce County is proud to serve as the regional host community for the 2026 International Plowing Match and Rural Expo (IPM), scheduled to take place from September 22 to 26, 2026, at Lang Farms, located west of Walkerton on the same site that hosted the 1993 IPM. This will mark the fourth time Bruce County has hosted this prestigious event, with previous events held in 1976, 1993, and 2008.

The IPM is organized by the Ontario Plowmen's Association (OPA) in partnership with a local committee of volunteers, and is recognized as North America's largest agricultural celebration, drawing more than 80,000 attendees annually. The event celebrates agriculture, rural life, and innovation while offering significant cultural and economic benefits to host communities.

Bruce County Council endorsed and supported the local Plowmen's Association's successful bid to host the event. In addition, Council approved a loan of up to \$100,000 to the local organizing committee to assist with early-stage planning and preparation. To date, \$50,000 of that loan has been disbursed. County staff also hold a non-voting advisory seat on the local IPM committee to provide regular updates and ensure efficient coordination between the committee and municipal staff.

As the regional host community, Bruce County has two responsibilities:

1. Responding to requests within our scope of control that event organizers need (i.e. Emergency Management), and;
2. Hosting a Bruce County Showcase. The Showcase will be in Tent City during the event and will serve as a dedicated space to promote Bruce County's communities, economy, and lifestyle to attendees.

As the event draws nearer, it is anticipated there may be an increasing volume of requests and planning needs directed toward both Bruce County, in its regional role, and the Municipality of Brockton, as the local host municipality. To manage requests effectively and support streamlined decision-making, two governance structures are being developed:

1. Bruce County Cross-Functional Staff Team:

This internal working group will consist of relevant County staff from departments likely to be asked to support the IPM. The team's responsibilities will include:

- Reviewing and responding to requests from the local IPM committee.
- Coordinating internally across departments to support IPM planning.
- Leading the development and execution of Bruce County's Showcase Exhibit at the IPM.

2. Municipal Executive Committee:

This strategic planning group will include project leads from both Bruce County and the Municipality of Brockton, along with an elected official from each jurisdiction. This committee will meet regularly with designated representatives of the IPM Executive Committee to facilitate and action requests. Once a detailed draft Terms of Reference for the Municipal Executive Committee has been developed, in consultation with Brockton staff, it will come forward to Council for consideration and to appoint the Bruce County Council representative to the committee.

A flow chart outlining the proposed structure for information-sharing and decision-making between the IPM local committee and municipal staff is attached for reference.

Once the Cross-Functional Staff Team is formally established, it will prepare a detailed proposal and budget for the Bruce County Showcase for Council's consideration.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There are no immediate financial, legal, or IT implications arising from the approval of this report.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

The Office of the CAO and the Municipality of Brockton have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:

Community and Partnerships - Build a strong and inclusive community

Growth and Innovation - Promote responsible growth

Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:

N/A

Report Author:

Jeffrey Loney, Economic Development Manager

Departmental Approval:

Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development

Approved for Submission:

Christine MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Communications Flow for Municipal Requests related to the IPM