

# Bruce GPS Report

A collaborative land use planning vision to help shape  
Bruce County for the next 20 years.



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## Background: Land Use Planning, Bruce County Official Plan & Bruce GPS

### Bruce GPS: Guiding the Next 20 Year Journey

To make sure the new Bruce County Official Plan guides growth and development in a way that resonates with Bruce County residents, visitors, business owners, community leaders, and other stakeholders, we launched Bruce GPS.

Bruce GPS was a public engagement visioning campaign led by the Bruce County Planning & Development Department. It involved extensive in-person and online engagement over many months, designed to get feedback from as many people in the community as possible.

Bruce GPS asked: “What is your vision for the future of Bruce County?” “What are your priorities for our future?” “How could Bruce County’s communities improve your experience living, working, or visiting?”

Using feedback from the community, Bruce GPS identified a common Vision Statement for the future of Bruce County and Guiding Principles for land use planning decisions. Both the Vision Statement and the Guiding Principles were presented back to the community for feedback. Now that both are validated and supported by the community, they will inform the new Official Plan.



## Why is Land Use Planning Important?

Land use planning guides how our communities grow and develop: the location of our schools, commercial areas, environmental areas, roads, and our homes; how communities are connected (e.g. placement of sidewalks, roads, bike paths).

Land use planning considers and impacts transportation, housing, the economy, the environment, culture, and more.

## What is the Bruce County Official Plan?

The Bruce County Official Plan is the guiding policy document for land use planning in Bruce County. It considers our unique, local needs and guides how we will work towards a vision for our future. Using this document, Bruce County will work on a new Official Plan that will guide the next 20 years of growth and development.



## Bruce GPS Community Engagement

Through the Bruce GPS project (August 2018 - May 2019), we reached out to the community in a wide variety of ways. We spoke to people in person at community events and festivals and through radio interviews, contributed to newspaper articles, gained followers on social media, mailed out surveys, did surveys through the internet, broadcasted events live on Facebook and led workshops with stakeholders and high school students. We reached out to over 10,000 people and over 1,800 people provided input to the project.

### Engagement

<b>Project Kickoff Event</b> 140 Participants	<b>Pop-Ups</b> 590 Participants	<b>Bruce GPS Vision Survey</b> 205 Participants	<b>Online Mapping Tool</b> 16 Participants
<b>Stakeholder Meetings</b> 48 Participants	<b>Classroom Workshops</b> 50 Participants	<b>Do It Yourself Workshops</b> 36 Participants	<b>Bruce GPS Final Steps Survey</b> Online and Paper 730 Participants

**1,815 Total Participants**

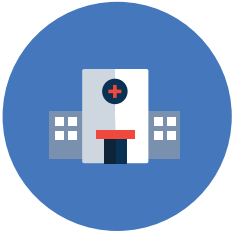
**31 Total Engagement Activities**

### Outreach

<b>Social Media</b> 543 Followers	<b>Mail Outs</b> 3,000 Delivered	<b>Postcards</b> 1400+ Handed Out	<b>Emails</b> 3,870 Sent to public and stakeholders
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## What We Heard: Priorities

More than 1,000 people told us these are their most important priorities for Bruce County to maintain and address - today and in the future:



### Access to Services and Amenities

Improve local access to health care services, medical specialists, supports/resources for seniors, and child care. Also improve access to local shopping opportunities, including gas, groceries, and specialty shops. Support local businesses and the growth of more local businesses, particularly in smaller towns.



### Activities and Events

Ensure a diversity of recreational and cultural events and activities are available for all ages (for both residents and visitors).



### Balanced Growth and Development

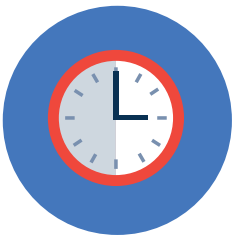
Preserve the character of small towns and natural environment while enabling economic growth and tourism. Tourism should also be sustainable and well-balanced (e.g. ensure tourism pressures do not outpace the capacity of existing infrastructure like roads, washrooms, and parking; or, ensure infrastructure is expanded to keep pace with growing demands).





### **Housing and Land Affordability**

Improve and increase the affordability of land and housing, especially for seniors and low/fixed-income residents. This can include affordable rentals, housing for individuals and families with low-to-middle-incomes housing, seniors housing, housing for newcomers, affordable land for those who wish to build their own homes, and housing for temporary/service workers.



### **Jobs and Employment**

Ensure a diversity of good quality jobs year-round in the area for people with different levels of education and training, especially jobs that pay a living wage for residents, and employment opportunities to retain youth in the community after schooling.



### **Natural Environment**

Preserve Bruce County's natural features and keep them clean and as natural as possible. This includes keeping Bruce County beaches and water quality safe and clean, maintaining access to biking and hiking trails, beaches and the waterfront.

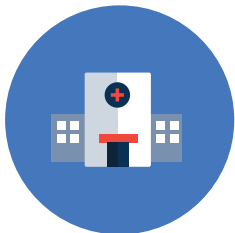
## What We Heard: Room for Improvement

More than 1,000 people identified the following ways in which Bruce County could improve their experience living in, working in, and visiting our communities:



### Expand public transportation options

Increasing access to public transportation would assist community members who do not have access to a vehicle by enabling them to travel between various areas of Bruce County, and to and from communities outside of Bruce County.



### Improve access to local health services

Improving access to specialized and family health care locally would remove the need for residents to drive long distances, or wait on long waitlist to access this care. This improvement would be especially beneficial for vulnerable populations (e.g. who need to access mental health services for adults and youth, special needs services, and senior's health care services and facilities).





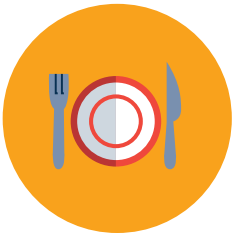
### **Improve infrastructure to keep pace with tourism demands**

Ensure infrastructure can keep up with the large amounts of tourists during tourist season (infrastructure includes public washrooms, hotels and visitor accommodation, free parking, picnic areas, docks and water access, waste disposal, roads, and visitor/directional signage). This will prevent local communities from being negatively impacted by tourism (e.g. preventing littering, trespassing, overcrowding, and traffic) and will improve tourist's experiences (e.g. they can easily find places to stay, activities to partake in, and stores to shop at).



### **Improve road safety**

Improve road safety by addressing speeding, unsafe passing, and improving winter road conditions.



### **Increase access to shops and restaurants**

Increase the availability and diversity of shopping and restaurant options in local communities across Bruce County, and during the off-season (e.g. groceries, specialty items, or gas).



### **Increase activity and education options for youth**

Provide more local, all-season activities (sports, skate-board parks, playgrounds, recreation, entertainment, etc.) for children, youth, and young adults. Additionally, provide more post-secondary education, skills training, and local jobs in the County to retain youth in Bruce County.



### **Support local businesses and workers**

Help establish more long-term, all-season employment in Bruce County, specifically jobs with a diversity of skill levels, jobs for youth and young adults, and jobs that pay well enough to support families. This will prevent residents and youth from leaving the County to find work, or having to commute large distances for employment. Additionally, consider supports and programs to help ensure local businesses have customers year-round (not only during the tourist season).



### **Manage growth and development**

Change how rapid growth is managed in communities to minimize the impact this growth has on the “look” of towns (e.g. new builds that don’t fit “quaint” local styles and a small-town atmosphere), traffic and crowding, historical structures, the natural environment (e.g. green space, nuclear waste depository, and water quality and quantity), and farmlands. Ensure existing infrastructure can accommodate current and future growth (e.g. sewage, water, waste, telecommunications, and road infrastructure).



### **Perceptions around zoning and property values**

Address property owners’ concerns regarding how zoning changes may affect development rights and property values.

## Vision Themes

More than 1,000 people told us their aspirational vision for the future of planning in Bruce County.

### Active

- There is a lot to do in all seasons for all ages for residents and to attract visitors

### Affordable

- There is a diversity of affordable housing options for residents, workers, and tourists, of all ages and income levels
- Overall cost of living is affordable in Bruce County

### Balanced

- Growth and development are managed and balance an increase in new residents with the preservation of agricultural land, nature, and historical sites
- Growth and development retain the small-town feel
- Tourism is sustainably managed in a way that respects the quality of life of residents while meeting the needs of tourists
- There is sufficient infrastructure in place to support growth



## Complete and Inclusive

- Health services, especially for seniors, and amenities such as shopping are accessible locally to all
- There are local options for good schools and post-secondary training
- Recreation and employment opportunities are available for youth
- Communities are close-knit, friendly, engaged, and welcoming to a diversity of people and ages

## Connected

- Communities are connected physically through public transportation and virtually through communication infrastructure

## Economically Diverse

- Bruce County has a diversified economy that includes agriculture, tourism, local small businesses, manufacturing, larger industries, and more

- There are plenty of well-paid year-round local jobs for multiple skill levels, income levels and ages
- Downtown centres are vibrant

## Green

- The natural beauty, scenery, and pristine environments in Bruce County are maintained or improved
- Wildlife, shorelines, forests, parks and biodiversity are protected
- Bruce County's beaches, water, land, and air remain clean

## Safe

- Bruce County roads and communities are safe

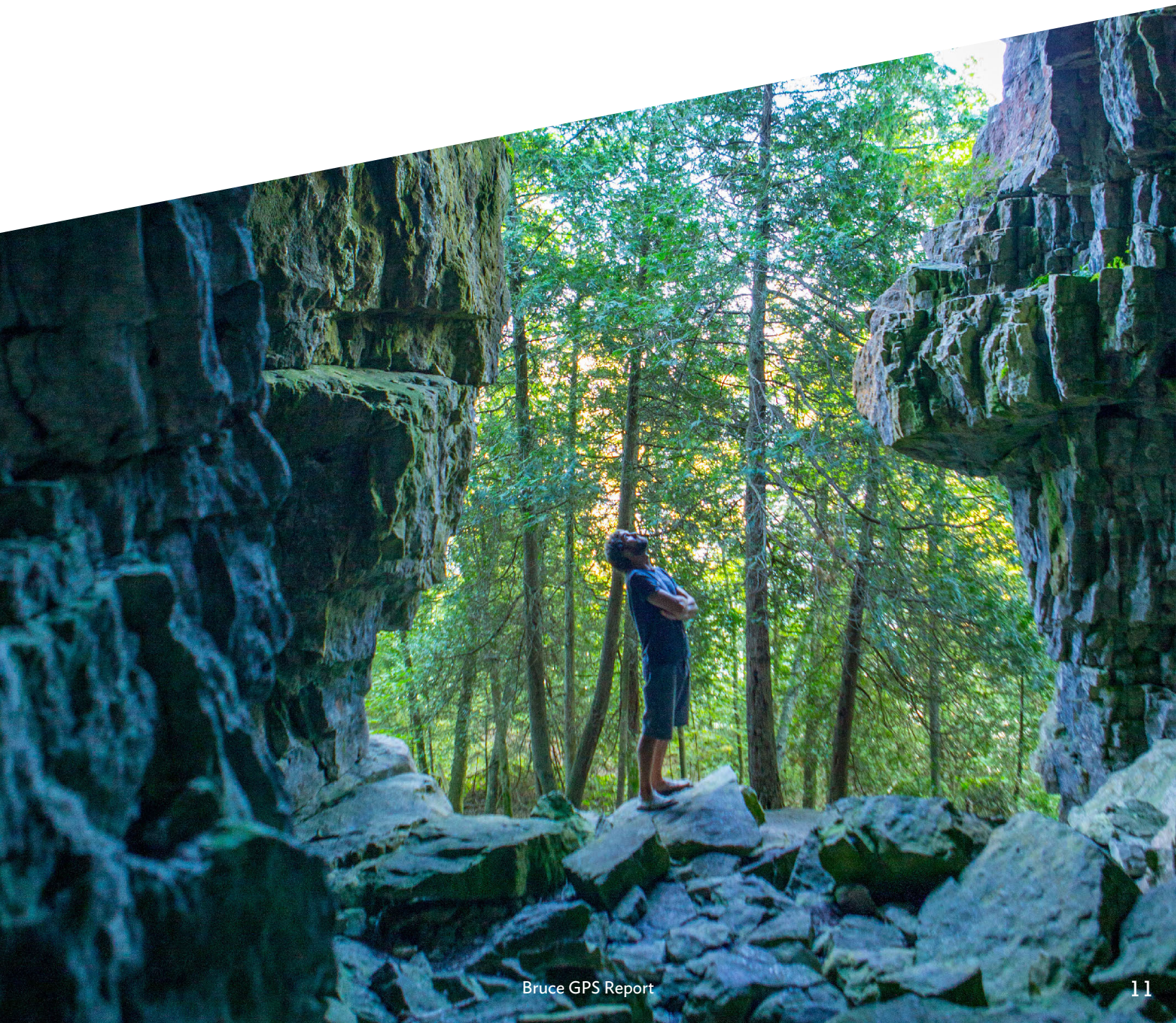
## Small-Town feel

- Communities are connected physically through public transportation and virtually through communication infrastructure

## Vision Statement

Capturing the elements of the vision themes we've heard, the following vision statement is meant to guide future land use planning decisions in Bruce County over the next 20 years:

*“We are the explorers: navigating Bruce County towards a healthy, diverse, and thriving future.”*



## Guiding Principles

Using the feedback from the community (with over 1,800 responses), the following set of Guiding Principles has been developed by the Planning and Development Department. Responses included over 700 people that completed a survey that validated these Guiding Principles. These principles are not in order of importance but rather collectively help shape the overall direction of land use planning across the County in future planning decisions. Moving forward, Bruce County will balance the guiding principles when we make land use planning recommendations and decisions.

- 1** To put growth in the right locations with the right services.
- 2** To increase the supply and mix of homes.
- 3** To support our key economies, including supporting a thriving agriculture community.
- 4** To create opportunities for a diversity of businesses, jobs, and employers.
- 5** To improve our ability to move people, goods, and information between communities.
- 6** To create wellbeing through access to complete and healthy communities.
- 7** To identify and manage our cultural heritage resources.
- 8** To manage natural resources wisely for future generations.



## **Guiding Principle #1: *To put growth in the right locations with the right services.***

### **We heard from the community that:**

- It is important to manage growth and development to preserve the character, look, and feel of small towns, and beauty of the natural environment, while still allowing for growth and development that will enable people to make a decent living within the County;
- We need to ensure growth is managed to minimize impact on the “look” of towns, traffic and crowding, historical structures, the natural environment, and farmland; and
- The vision for the future should include enough infrastructure to support growth.

### **Discussion:**

When growth happens in a community, it usually means that we are seeing an increase of people, jobs, businesses, buildings, roads, and traffic. Growth can also mean supporting community amenities like arenas and schools or improving infrastructure.

Where growth happens - and how it happens - needs to be carefully planned. Planning helps to put the growth in the right place, with the right services, to provide the most benefit to the community - at the lowest cost. That’s why planning concentrates most of the houses and jobs within our towns and hamlets, paying attention to the fit within the community. Planning also supports the right kind of growth in the countryside too by thinking about compatibility and preservation of our natural assets.

## Guiding Principle #2: *To increase the supply and mix of homes.*

### **We heard from the community that:**

- The affordability of housing is a challenge;
- It is important to improve and increase the affordability of land and housing, especially for seniors and low-income residents; and
- The vision for the future should include a diversity of affordable housing options that include both owning and renting, for all ages and income levels.

### **Discussion:**

Housing diversity is necessary to build a healthy community where everyone access to a home. Creating housing diversity means providing a mix of single-family homes, multi-residential homes, apartments, and townhouses in a variety of settings. It also means encouraging housing that is compact, near amenities and affordable. In Bruce County, we define affordable housing as housing that costs less than 30 % of household income.

We can have a positive effect on housing diversity through our planning decisions. Planning guides the long-range supply of residential land, the type and density of residential buildings, and the mix of housing in a community. Good community design considers placing housing it in locations where individuals can access jobs more easily, thinking about putting homes in locations with proper infrastructure and building communities that have the amenities that support health and wellbeing.



## **Guiding Principle #3: *To support our key economies, including supporting a thriving agriculture community.***

### **We heard from the community that:**

- Agriculture plays an important role in Bruce County's economy and rural identity;
- Protecting farmland and promoting farm business opportunities is a challenge for the future; and
- Bruce County is envisioned as a place where future generations of farmers will prosper.

### **Discussion:**

Bruce County's economic development goals include promoting our three key economic sectors (tourism, energy, and agriculture), supporting existing businesses that want to grow, and attracting entrepreneurs who want to create new opportunities.

Planning for growth in these key sectors is critical to the future success of Bruce County. Supporting farmers and farm businesses while protecting our agricultural lands is a key planning consideration. Our natural assets are finite, non-renewable resources and our agricultural lands are the foundation for food, fibre, the local food economy, agri-food exports, and economic prosperity. Making sure our key industries are thriving is crucial to achieving our vision.





## **Guiding Principle #4: *To create opportunities for a diversity of businesses, jobs, and employers.***

### **We heard from the community that:**

- It is important to establish more long-term, all-season employment in Bruce County, specifically jobs with a diversity of skill levels, jobs for youth and young adults, and jobs that pay well enough to support families.
- Residents and youth having to leave the County to find work, or having to commute large distances for employment, is a challenge.
- The vision for the future has a diversified economy that includes agriculture, tourism, local small businesses, manufacturing, larger industries, and plenty of well-paid year-round local jobs for multiple skill levels, income levels and ages.

### **Discussion:**

A community that has a wide range of businesses and jobs is a strong community. It is resilient to changes and can adapt. It is a place where everyone can contribute and attracts residents, workers and entrepreneurs to move here.

Planning has a positive and proactive role to play in this. We can identify for the long term a variety of sites for industries and businesses. Planning can give businesses spaces to grow, connect them to the services they need, and provide locations close to their customers or main suppliers. Planning for this growth in a thoughtful manner, that integrates with our communities and considers the necessary infrastructure to support all opportunities is a priority.

## **Guiding Principle #5: *To improve our ability to move people, goods, and information between communities.***

### **We heard from the community that:**

- Increased public transportation services would assist community members who do not have access to a vehicle to travel between Bruce County communities and beyond;
- There is a challenge in meeting a range of needs including farming, alternatives to cars such as bikes and horse and buggy, and tourism; and
- Visions for the future include connected communities.

### **Discussion:**

To be a successful County, we need to be able to move people (workers, visitors, family members) goods (food, tractor parts, lumber), and information (data, websites, media) between our communities and beyond. Connecting communities has traditionally been the job of our highways and streets, with the focus on cars and trucks. Over time, we have seen larger farm machinery, more demand for walking and cycling, growth in the use of horse and buggy, and increased tourism traffic. More changes are coming, including cars that will do the driving for us; looking to the future and planning for these connections can make a difference.

Planning can forecast the biggest areas of growth so we can see where improvements will be needed and where there may be opportunities for public transportation. Planning can also help build connections between neighbourhoods, schools and jobs, to make walking and biking easier. Connecting communities is also about connecting people. Planning can make sure the ability to provide good internet connections is built into new subdivisions at the start.



## Guiding Principle #6: *Create wellbeing through access to complete and healthy communities.*

### **We heard from the community that:**

- It is important to have a variety of recreational, arts, cultural, community, and other events and activities, available for all ages, in all seasons;
- Access to health care, child care, and services for people with special needs is a challenge; and
- The vision for the future is more than people making a living, it's also having a great life in vibrant, active communities with local access to important services.

### **Discussion:**

Healthy and sustainable communities consider and build access to services and resources like education and technology. They also build opportunities for activity and provide access to healthy food while fostering a sense of belonging, trust, and inclusiveness in the community. By planning compact communities, with places to walk and spaces for people to engage with one-another, we can support vibrant, inclusive downtowns with street markets, festivals, art shows, and other events. All these considerations support an inclusive culture, a healthy community, and support social well-being.

With long range planning and an eye to community development, we can foresee opportunities and prepare for future challenges. Then, when demand rises to support or create the need for buildings or facilities, most of the planning work is already done. Getting ready for the future as a community means we can make the best possible partnerships with developers, community groups, and social agencies.





## **Guiding Principle #7: *To identify and manage our cultural heritage resources.***

### **We heard from the community that:**

- It is important to protect the County’s cultural heritage resources, including historic buildings, and scenic streetscapes and views; and
- Our cultural heritage resources contribute to preserving our identity; support tourism, which spreads wealth within the local economy; and ensure people’s sense of belonging in our economic future.

### **Discussion:**

Bruce County is rich in cultural heritage resources. Past activities of First Nations, Metis, the Great Lakes maritime history, pioneers, and people who founded our towns, villages and early industry all contribute to our cultural heritage. In preserving our cultural heritage resources, we preserve our identity, support tourism, and maintain a strong sense of community. For these resources to sustain our community for the long term, they first need to be identified and, where possible, effectively managed.

Planning can focus efforts on preservation, creating distance between the resource and new development, managing the resource in a way that keeps its value or makes it even more valuable, and thoughtfully integrating new development into the landscape. Efforts can also be made for the thoughtful consideration of materials, like brick/stone, timbers, or design elements, which can be preserved or reused to thoughtfully integrate development into our existing community fabric.



## **Guiding Principle #8: *To manage natural resources wisely for future generations.***

### **We heard from the community that:**

- It is important to protect the County’s natural resources, including farmland, water quality, natural areas, and scenic views; and
- Bruce County’s rich natural resources contribute to our quality of life, economy, and health in the future.

### **Discussion:**

Bruce County is rich in natural resources that are part of our landscape: good soil, sand and gravel, groundwater, clean beaches, forests. For these resources to sustain our community in the long term, they need to be managed. This starts with identifying where the most important resources are. Then, we can wisely utilize them and / or enhance and protect them.

Options for planning to support this can include, depending on the resource, preservation, creating distance between the resource and new development, and managing resources in a way that keeps its value or makes it even more valuable. We need to put the plans in place now to ensure that the combined effects of change preserve our natural assets and positively impact our future.

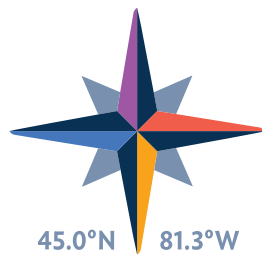
## The Next Steps Forward

We are inspired by the many conversations we had with people throughout the community from August 2018 to May 2019. The Guiding Principles and Vision Statement will both be used to inform the Official Plan Review.

Planning staff are building a tool to use the Guiding Principles in the review of development applications. Planning staff are also working on report changes to make it clear to Council and the public how planning recommendations were shaped by the County's Vision and Guiding Principles.

Also building on the Guiding Principles, planning staff will prepare and circulate a series of discussion papers. These discussion papers will provide a base for conversations in the community about the next steps needed to bring the Guiding Principles to life in land use policies. Each guiding principle will be explored by providing planning context, comparing best practices and identifying issues that will require thoughtful navigation. This process is intended to lead us to policy directions to be included in the County Official Plan Review.





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# **BRUCE** county

*Be an explorer.*