



Staff Report to Council - for Information

Title: Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP) 2026-2030

From: Adam Stanley, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services

Date: April 2, 2026

Report Number: TES-2026-006

Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

Report Summary:

Over the past several months, a cross-functional team of staff has been meeting to develop a draft Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP) 2026-2030, a key initiative supporting the County's Strategic Plan and environmental stewardship objectives.

The purpose of this report is to present the draft Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP) to Council and seek feedback prior to finalizing the plan. The ESAP provides a coordinated framework to guide environmental sustainability, climate readiness, and stewardship initiatives across Bruce County over the next five years. The plan aligns environmental actions with the County's Strategic Plan and departmental business planning, with a focus on collaboration, partnerships, and measurable progress.

The draft ESAP is organized around four environmental pillars:

1. Climate Adaptation and Mitigation
2. Stewardship and Forest Conservation
3. Waste Management
4. Sustainable Transportation and Mobility

These pillars establish goals, objectives, and phased actions that will guide County initiatives between 2026 and 2030.

Background/Analysis:

Bruce County's natural environment - including its farmland, coastlines, forests, wetlands, and water systems - is central to community well-being, economic vitality, and quality of life. At the same time, climate adaptability, growth pressures, and evolving regulatory and funding environments are increasing the complexity of environmental decision-making.

The Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP) 2026-2030 provides a coordinated framework to guide environmental action across the County. Building on the foundation established in the Bruce County Strategic Plan 2023-2026, the ESAP translates corporate priorities and values into clear goals, objectives, and actions that can be implemented incrementally, measured, and adapted over time.

Development of the ESAP included research, data analysis, and engagement with residents, Indigenous partners, municipalities, Conservation Authorities, and community organizations. Nearly 800 participants contributed feedback through surveys, interviews, and discussions, helping identify key priorities and opportunities for environmental action across the County.

The ESAP supports several Strategic Plan priorities, including:

- Goal 2 - Partnerships: Enhance and grow partnerships
- Goal 4 - Responsible Growth: Promote responsible growth
- Goal 7 - Environment and Climate Change: Build capacity to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change

Environmental Sustainability Action Plan at a Glance

The ESAP is a five-year, County-wide framework designed to strengthen coordination, improve accountability, and support evidence-based environmental decision-making.

The plan aligns environmental initiatives across County programs and services while supporting collaboration with municipalities, partners, and community organizations.

The ESAP is organized around four environmental pillars. Each pillar includes a goal and supporting objectives that guide the County’s approach to environmental sustainability.

Table 1 summarizes the ESAP framework.

Table 1 - Environmental Sustainability Action Plan Framework

Pillar	Goal	Objective
Climate Adaptation and Mitigation	Goal 1 - Prepare for and reduce the impacts of a changing climate on people, infrastructure, and the environment.	1.1 Plan for climate resilience (adaptation)
		1.2 Manage emissions responsibly (mitigation)

Stewardship and Forest Conservation

Goal 2 - Promote healthy ecosystems that strengthen the environment, economy, and community well-being.

2.1 Strengthen sustainable forest management

2.2 Promote stewardship across Bruce County

Waste Management

Goal 3 - Be a leader by promoting collaboration towards a more efficient and sustainable waste management system that minimizes environmental impact.

3.1 Advance sustainable waste management through long-range planning and collaboration

3.2 Strengthen Education, Awareness, and Collaboration to Promote Responsible Waste Practices

Sustainable Transportation and Mobility

Goal 4 - Enable connected, affordable, and low-carbon transportation systems across Bruce County

4.1 Advance sustainable transportation through regional collaboration and long-term transit planning

Detailed objectives and phased actions that support implementation over the next five years are outlined in the attached draft ESAP.

Implementation Framework

Implementation of the ESAP will be coordinated by the Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) Department on behalf of the County, with responsibilities being split across the following groups:

- **T&ES** - Coordinate implementation across departments and with external partners, integrate sustainability initiatives into County operations, and track progress.
- **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)** - Review annual progress updates and proposed workplan priorities to support alignment across departments and inform budget planning.
- **Council** - Provide overall strategic direction, consider ESAP priorities through the annual budget process, and receive annual progress updates.

The ESAP follows a phased implementation approach over the 2026-2030 period.

Phase 1 - Foundation

Establish baseline data, develop key plans (e.g., climate mitigation and adaptation plans), partnerships, and initiate early pilot projects.

Phase 2 - Implementation

Scale up initiatives in manageable increments, integrate sustainability into County operations and planning, and coordinate implementation with municipal and community partners, where applicable.

Phase 3 - Evaluation and Renewal

Evaluate results, report progress, and update priorities to inform the next ESAP cycle.

Partnerships and Collaborative Implementation

Bruce County recognizes the Saugeen Ojibway Nation as a rights-holder and is committed to respectful, ongoing engagement throughout ESAP implementation. Engagement will be guided by the County's Indigenous Reconciliation Framework and the Saugeen Anishnaabek Reconciliation Pathway and Action Plan.

Implementation of the ESAP will also involve collaboration with municipalities, Conservation Authorities, community organizations, and other partners to support shared environmental goals.

Next Steps

Council feedback on the draft Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP) will help confirm priorities and refine the plan prior to finalization. Following Council's review, staff will incorporate feedback into the plan and return to Council with a finalized ESAP for consideration and endorsement. Subject to Council endorsement, implementation of priority actions identified in the plan will look to align with and be incorporated into departmental work plans through the annual budget process.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

Implementation of the ESAP is intended to occur primarily within existing organizational resources. Where appropriate, staff will also pursue external funding opportunities, partnerships, and cost-sharing arrangements to support implementation.

Any future resource or budget requirements associated with Council-approved initiatives would be brought forward through the County's annual budget process.

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

Interdepartmental Consultation:

Interdepartmental consultation has occurred through the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan Cross-Functional Team and the Senior Leadership Team.

The Office of the CAO was engaged in the review of the draft ESAP.

Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:

Community and Partnerships - Enhance and grow partnerships

Growth and Innovation - Promote responsible growth

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:

Transit Demand and Feasibility Study

Long-Range Waste Management Plan

Forest Management 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:

Draft Environmental Sustainability Action Plan 2026-2030.pdf

Draft ESAP 2026-2030 Presentation.pptx

BRUCE COUNTY

Environmental Sustainability Action Plan 2026-2030



Introduction

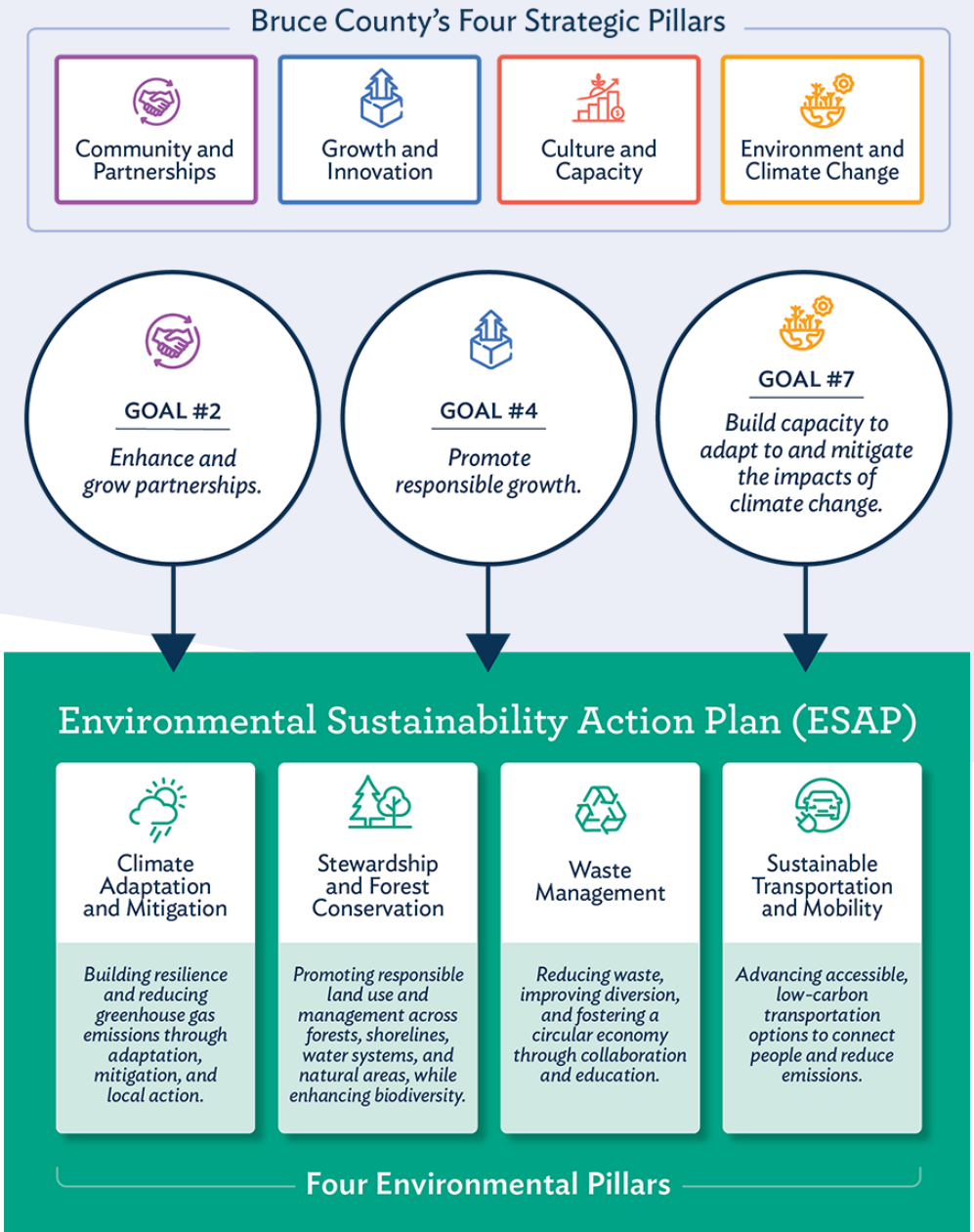


Connecting Strategy to Action

Aligning with the Strategic Plan

The ESAP supports key Strategic Plan goals:

- Goal 2 - Enhance and grow partnerships.
- Goal 4 - Promote responsible growth.
- Goal 7 - Build capacity to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.





Our Vision and Guiding Principles

Vision
A resilient and sustainable Bruce County where environmental protection and responsible growth strengthen communities.

- Guiding Principles**
- Collaboration and Co-stewardship* ←
 - Evidence-based decision* ←
 - Accountability and Transparency* ←
 - Equity and Accessibility* ←
 - Education, Engagement and partnerships* ←
 - Adaptability and Responsiveness* ←



How We Developed This Plan

A Collaborative Process...





Climate Adaptation and Mitigation

Build resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through adaptation, mitigation, and local action.

GOAL:

Prepare for and reduce the impacts of a changing climate on people, infrastructure, and the environment.



Stewardship and Forest Conservation

Promote responsible land use and management across forests, shorelines, water systems, and natural areas, while enhancing biodiversity.

GOAL:

Promote healthy ecosystems that strengthen the environment, economy, and community well-being.



Waste Management

Reduce waste, improve diversion, and foster a circular economy through collaboration and education.

GOAL:

Be a leader by promoting collaboration towards a more efficient and sustainable waste management system that minimizes environmental impact.



Sustainable Transportation and Mobility

Expand accessible, low-carbon transportation options to connect people and reduce emissions.

GOAL:

Enable connected, affordable, and low-carbon transportation systems across Bruce County.

Climate Adaptation and Mitigation

Build resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through adaptation, mitigation, and local action.

Goal 1 Prepare for and reduce the impacts of a changing climate on people, infrastructure, and the environment.



Stewardship and Forest Conservation

Promote responsible land use and management across forests, shorelines, water systems, and natural areas, while enhancing biodiversity.

Goal 2 Promote healthy ecosystems that strengthen the environment, economy, and community well-being.



Waste Management

Reduce waste, improve diversion, and foster a circular economy through collaboration and education.



Goal 3

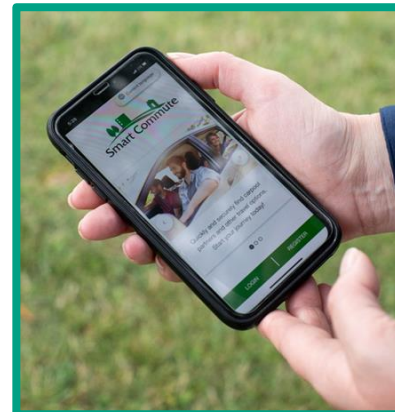
Be a leader by promoting collaboration towards a more efficient and sustainable waste management system that minimizes environmental impact.



Sustainable Transportation and Mobility

Expand accessible, low-carbon transportation options to connect people and reduce emissions.

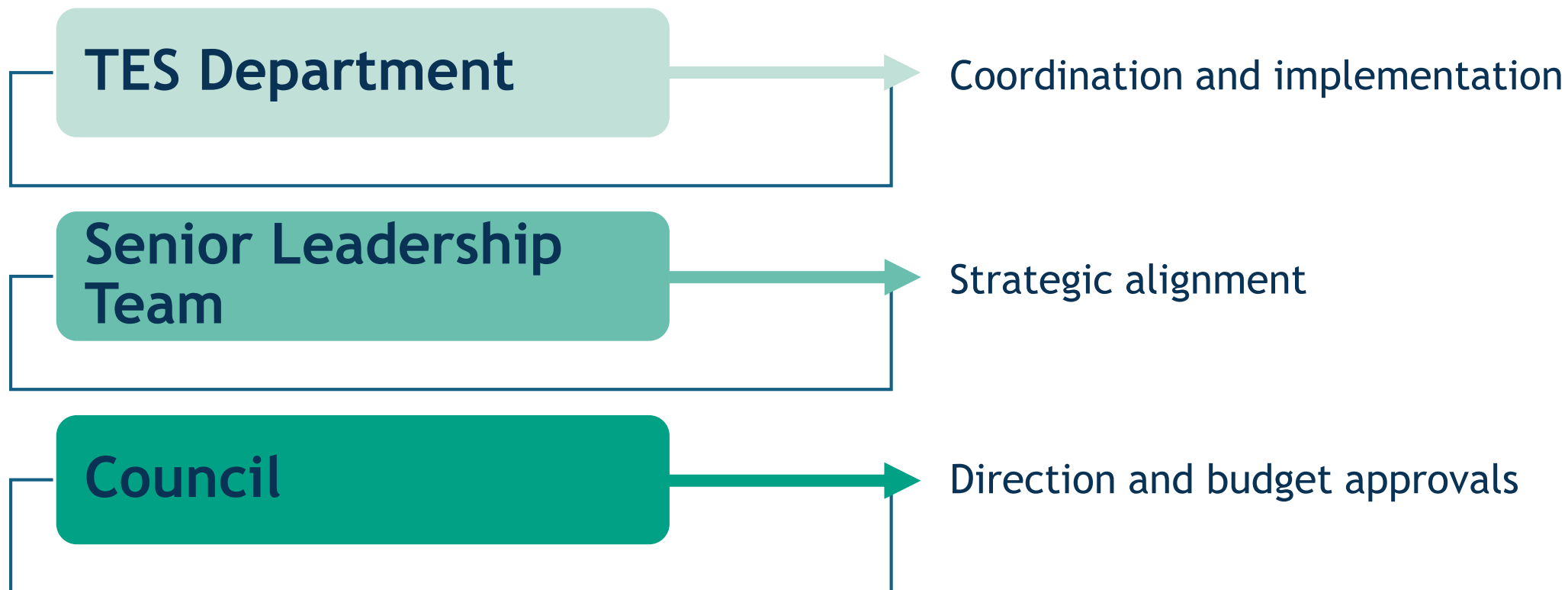
Goal 4 Enable connected, affordable, and low-carbon transportation systems across Bruce County.





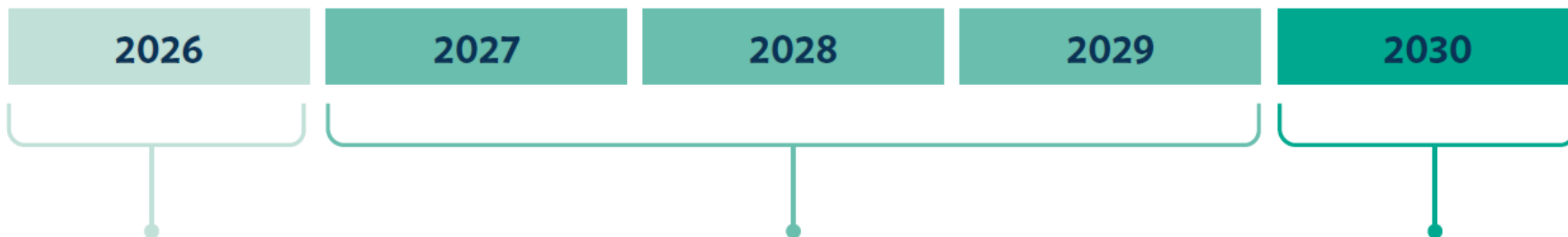
Implementation Framework

Key Roles:





Implementation Framework



Phase 1 Foundation

- Establish data baselines
- Develop key plans & partnerships
- Launch pilot projects

A strong foundation for coordinated implementation.

Phase 2 Implementation

- Scale up programs & initiatives
- Integrate sustainability into operations
- Expand partnerships & collaboration

Demonstrated progress and measurable results.

Phase 3 Evaluation and Renewal

- Measure outcomes
- Report progress
- Refresh priorities for the next ESAP cycle

Updated direction for the 2031-36 plan.



Resources and Capacity

Implementation will:

- Use existing staff resources where possible
- Pursue external funding opportunities
- Strengthen partnerships and cost-sharing
- Be integrated into annual budget and Departmental workplans



Conclusion

The ESAP establishes a framework for:

- Coordinated environmental action
- Stronger partnerships
- Evidence-based decision making
- Long-term sustainability

