



Staff Report to Council - for Information

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

From: Adam Stanley, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services

Date: November 20, 2025

Report Number: TES-2025-022

Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

Report Summary:

Bruce County has completed two key milestones in developing its first Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP): an Environmental Scan documenting current initiatives and opportunities, and Community/Stakeholder Engagement with nearly 800 responses. Engagement results showed strong support for County leadership on environmental sustainability, with concerns centered on water, waste, biodiversity, and climate change. Participants demonstrated readiness to act, emphasizing equity, collaboration, education, accountability, and indicated a willingness to partner with the County on environmental priorities.

The next step is to draft priorities and actions under each theme, with a draft ESAP being brought forward to Council in January 2026 for consideration.

Background/Analysis:

Bruce County is developing its first Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (ESAP) to provide a coordinated framework for environmental initiatives across operations, infrastructure, and services. The ESAP is a key initiative under the County's Strategic Plan, advancing Goal 7: Build capacity to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

An update on the ESAP was provided to Council in May 2025, highlighting the launch of the Cross-Functional Team, completion of the project charter, and initiation of the project. Since that time, two major milestones have been achieved: the completion of the Environmental Scan and the completion of broad Community and Stakeholder Engagement. Together, these efforts establish the foundation for the ESAP.

Progress to Date

Environmental Scan

The Environmental Scan provided a clear picture of what Bruce County is already doing to advance environmental sustainability. It documented a wide range of initiatives across departments, from forestry and waste diversion to energy audits and transportation initiatives. The review identified areas of strength, including strong staff commitment and innovative approaches, while also pointing to opportunities to build on this momentum through better data tracking, clearer accountability, and stronger coordination across departments. These findings demonstrate that Bruce County has a solid foundation and is well-positioned to scale up its efforts under a unified framework.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

The engagement process generated 799 survey responses, reflecting broad community interest and commitment to sustainability. This included 574 responses from the public and 225 from stakeholders such as municipal representatives, conservation authorities, and First Nations. Respondents highlighted strong support for County leadership in the area of environmental sustainability, while also noting important concerns related to water quality, waste management, biodiversity loss, and climate change. Feedback also showed a clear readiness to act, with a significant majority of participants indicating they were willing to change personal habits. Guiding insights emphasized the importance of equity, collaboration, education, and accountability. Overall, the engagement confirmed both a strong mandate for action and a shared willingness to partner with the County in advancing environmental priorities.

Taken together, these two efforts confirm that Bruce County is well-positioned to advance its first Environmental Sustainability Action Plan. The Environmental Scan demonstrates that strong initiatives and staff commitment already exist across the organization, while the Engagement results confirm a willingness from the community to partner and act on environmental initiatives. Together, they provide both the internal foundation, and the external support needed to move confidently into the next phase of drafting the ESAP. Executive Summaries for both efforts are attached to this report as supporting documents.

Building Momentum for the ESAP

The completion of the Environmental Scan and Community and Stakeholder Engagement marks a major milestone in the development of Bruce County's first Environmental Sustainability Action Plan. Together, they provide a comprehensive base that reflects both internal capacity and community priorities, ensuring the ESAP will be practical, and responsive to local needs.

Next Steps

With the Environmental Scan and engagement complete, the ESAP will now move into the drafting phase. Work will focus on developing priorities and actions under these themes, establishing measurable short-, medium-, and long-term goals, and integrating cross-cutting considerations such as equity, accountability, and collaboration. A draft ESAP will be presented to Council in January 2026, with final approval anticipated following Council's review and feedback. The ESAP will strengthen collaboration with municipalities, Indigenous partners, and community organizations, ensuring shared priorities guide implementation.

Key Project Phases	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4	2026 Q1
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					

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:

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

Community and Partnerships - Enhance and grow partnerships

Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:

Transportation and Environmental Services 2025 Departmental Business Plan

Report Author:

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Departmental Approval:

Adam Stanley, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services

Approved for Submission:

Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development

Attachments:

ESAP Environmental Scan - Executive Summary - Nov 2025.pdf

ESAP Engagement - Executive Summary - Nov 2025.pdf