

Report to Council

Report Title:	Land Use Planning and Development Review Implementation		
Prepared By:	Sonya Watson, CAO, Dieter Wertz, CBO and Fiona Hamilton, Clerk		
Department:	Planning		
Date:	April 13, 2021		
Report Number:	PLN2021-01	File Number:	C11PL, F11,
Attachments:	Land Use Development Process Management Review Report		

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby approves Report Number PLN2021-01– Land Use Planning and Development Review, prepared by Sonya Watson, CAO, Dieter Wertz, CBO and Fiona Hamilton, Clerk and approves staff moving forward with the implementation recommendations described in the staff report.

Report:

Background:

At the January 12, 2021 meeting, Council adopted the Land Use Development Process Management Review Report prepared by Stantec Consulting Ltd. (the “Report”). Staff indicated a report discussing the implementation of Stantec’s recommendations would come forward in the future, as some key positions had just starting and needed time to properly evaluate the recommendations.

The Report has been attached for reference. The following is a summary of the recommendations in the Report:

- Application tracking – using a separate email address and an internal tracking process for inquiries, additional mapping resources;
- Attracting Investment – apply for an Investment Ready: Certified Site Designation from the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trades;
- Information Management – ensure links to the County site work properly, complete an annual review to be timed with the County of Bruce’s review of its website, assess the quality of information on documents circulated to the public (such as Hearing Notices, etc.).
- Municipal Organization and Training – identify key local staff to act as the main point of contact (noting that a dedicated support person may result in additional staffing), comments on timelines at the County level, stagger meetings dates with South Bruce, ensure on-going planning education for Council

members, consider process for “fast-tracking” application that support initiatives like affordable housing, etc., hosting an annual developer’s summit to obtain routine feedback from the development community;

- Website Organization – create more clear landing pages, with links to relevant forms, and available land and buildings, revisions to the “contact us” information, provide additional information on different application types and the documents that would be required, and provide more information on the Site Plan approval process.

The Report also reviewed the fees and development charges being charged by other comparator municipalities and noted that:

In general, Brockton’s current fees consistently land at the low (often the lowest) end of the range of municipalities examined...the Municipality’s ranking amongst its peers in the area of fees does indicate that current fees and charges do not likely represent any barrier to development within the community.

Analysis:

Application Tracking

Unfortunately, the use of planning email address that is shared with Bruce County planning staff poses logistical challenges, such as the control and retention of the municipal records and the security features across separate organizations. However, staff have been attending monthly development with Bruce County planning staff to ensure streamlined communication about inquiries and applications.

Staff have also started weekly development meetings with attendance by the CAO, Clerk, CBO, Director of Operations, Roads Supervisor and Municipal Executive Coordinator to manage the volume of applications and ensure Municipal interests are met and parties are responded to in as timely manner as possible with the high volumes.

Staff have also been reviewing the options available for internal tracking. The recommendation at this time is to integrate a tracking feature when reviewing the options available for e-permitted software to be used in the building department.

Attracting Investment

Staff intend to apply for this designation as part of the Phase 2 expansion of the East Ridge Business Park.

Information Management

Staff have started the process of reviewing and updating the website with additional content and flowcharts provided by Stantec. All links will be fixed and reviewed on an annual basis.

Municipal Organization and Training

At this time, staff are recommending that existing positions be redeployed and tasked with Property Standards related matters freeing up the building department for planning and development related inquiries. These shifted tasks will be evaluated throughout the following months as a preliminary step prior to making any additional staffing recommendations. However, it should be noted the volumes keep increasing and this has been consistent for over 2 years now. All staff resources involved with developments are extremely stretched

with the workloads already required. We do not foresee this ending in the near future and staff are doing their best to manage with the current staff compliment, working additional hours as necessary to meet the demands to advance developments.

At this time, all members of Council received some orientation on planning related matters. With the Procurement review and Strategic plan underway, time for meetings has been at a premium. More staff have recently received planning training and a planning refresher will be organized for the incoming Council. The Strategic Plan will see further consultation with our Development Community as a priority to establish specific actions moving forward.

At this time, there does not appear to be numerous scheduling conflicts with South Bruce, such that the recommendation is to keep the Council and Committee of Adjustment meeting dates as scheduled.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Mayor's Breakfast served as an information forum for local developers to identify potential challenges associated with developing in Brockton. A more formal forum could be organized later in the year or early next year depending on the situation related to Covid-19 and the ability to host in-person meetings.

Website Organization

Some of the detailed recommendations from Stantec involved revamping the municipal website to create a "Developer's Portal" with more comprehensive planning applications and maps of available lands/on-going developments. Stantec assisted in creating additional website content in the form of flow charts and information tables that will allow for the creation of the "Development Portal". Staff will be working to create additional mapping tools and updating the municipal website as per the recommendations. A sample of some of the documents staff have worked with Stantec to create have been attached for reference purposes and will be significant improvements to our website and to provide as an initial starting point to interested residents on the planning process they are about to embark on.

Fees and Development Charges

Over the past year, Brockton has experienced dramatic residential growth and numerous development related inquiries. While this growth is exciting, it presents a challenge in the need to maintain, develop and fund adequate infrastructure. Given the comments that Brockton is at the low (or often the lowest) end of the range, staff are recommending that a staff report come forward to Council weighing the considerations again related to development charges and/or community benefits charges to support the infrastructure needs in the community. The County is also currently embarking on a Development Charges study.

Sustainability Checklist:

What aspect of the Brockton Sustainable Strategic Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

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| • Do the recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision? | Yes |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Cultural Vibrancy? | N/A |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Prosperity? | Yes |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to Environmental Integrity? | N/A |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to the Social Equity? | Yes |

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective? Yes

The staff recommendations at this time are more operational in nature and do not involve significant expenditures, although there may be considerations for Council in the future if additional support staff are necessary or if there is an opportunity to increase revenue through additional fees or charges.

Reviewed By:




Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully Submitted by:



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer



Dieter Wetz, Building and Planning Manager/CBO



Fiona Hamilton, Clerk