

County of Grey Presentation

BWDSB Annual Community Planning and Partnership Meeting
Tuesday, June 14, 2016

Good evening. Thank you for the invitation to attend this Community Planning and Partnership Meeting. I am Barb Fedy, Director for Social Services in Grey County. Attending along with me is Randy Scherzer, Grey County's Director of Planning.

The County Planning Department is responsible for the planning needs within the County, while Social Services includes oversight and delivery for both Ontario Works and the Children's Services programs. We are very interested in future discussions regarding childcare programs within school settings and the provision of space when determining builds or renovations to existing schools, both during and outside the Accommodation Review Process. We have some great past examples where collaboration and cooperation has resulted in some unique and successful partnerships. One such example is the Dundalk Community School child care renovation right at the school.

An example of a current partnership is regarding the programs that the county oversees and manages in Meaford. With the new school build for JK-12, it will be important for space to be considered for an Ontario Early Years program that is presently operating at St. Vincent Euphrasia. As well, we are very interested in discussions for space considerations for before and after school childcare at these same sites.

It is our hope that these same considerations would be factored into the planned amalgamation at Owen Sound Collegiate. Presently the Early Years program is offered in 2 classrooms at Bayview Public school, which is slated to close in the near future. New space will be needed and it is hoped that this program can be moved to the renovated space at OSCVI. As well, space will be needed for a 3rd party child care operator to provide a before and after school programming.

A final consideration to mention tonight is that Spruceridge School, which sits on a large property in the town of Durham, also be considered to host a new child care operation on site. Kids'n Us Child Care currently operates a child care centre at the nearby long term care residence and they offer full day programming as well as before and after school programming. We believe that the Ministry of Education is looking for these very partnerships through their recent announcement about capital funding titled "Ministry of Education Initiatives to Support Community Hubs in Schools" and we look forward to continued dialogue regarding these opportunities to link families and children to the school system at a very early age through a connection with Early Years programming and the childcare system.

Changing demographics throughout Grey County has been a continual challenge and we continue to adapt our policies and programs to meet the needs of our changing communities. Having up to date data and information is key to understanding how our communities are changing. The County recently completed a Growth Management Study update and a copy of this document has been provided to the Bluewater District School Board. This information includes growth projections that help us plan for future growth. The Growth Management Study indicates that the County will continue to grow over the next 20 years albeit at a modest pace. For example, from 2016 to 2036 the total population is forecasted to grow by approximately 11,000 people. The number of houses in Grey County within that period is expected to grow by 4,850 households and employment is forecasted to grow by over 1400 jobs.

The Growth Study identified that the growth which has been occurring has been unevenly distributed among Grey County's nine local municipalities. Therefore it is important to recognize the growth differences within each area of Grey County when making decisions on things such as school closures and consolidations. For example, the County has received a number of applications for residential development within the community of Dundalk. One application proposes to create a total of 500 residential units. It is expected that the majority of these homes will house families. Although this development may take close to 10 years to fully develop, we need to make sure that we are planning for these communities to meet the needs of not only the existing residents but our future residents as well. Development activity is also being experienced in the City of Owen Sound, the Town of Hanover, Town of Durham in West Grey, Markdale in Grey Highlands, parts of Georgian Bluffs, in the Town of Meaford and within the Town of The Blue Mountains. Essentially each municipality is experiencing growth to some degree and the County can share some further information to the School Board so that you are aware of the growth that is occurring or is expected to occur over the next few years.

The County has also started a review of the County Official Plan which we are calling 'Recolour Grey'. An Official Plan is a strategic document that sets out a 20 year vision for how Grey County is expected to grow and develop. The County is planning to attend a number of community events throughout the remainder of this year to have as many conversations with people about what their vision is for Grey County. We want to have discussions with the School Board as well to discuss what you would like to see included in the Official Plan. We will follow-up with Board staff to start the conversation.

We thank you for the opportunity to present this evening. The County wants to assist the Board in any way that we can to make sure that we all have the necessary data and information to make the right decisions for the future of our communities. We look forward to being involved in any future meetings and discussions about the future of the schools within Grey County.