

To:	Chair Keaveney and Members of the Planning and Economic Development Advisory Committee
Committee Date:	June 12, 2024
Subject / Report No:	CAOR-PEDAC-15-24
Title:	Green Development Standards Update and Green Economy Hub Pilot
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Lower Tier(s) Affected:	

Recommendation

1. That CAOR-PEDAC-15-24 be received for information as an update on the Tri-County Green Development Standards, and the Green Economy Hub pilot cohort.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide the committee with information about the Tri-County Green Development Standards project and a potential Green Economy Hub pilot cohort.

Staff have hosted information and visioning sessions and continue to solicit feedback from municipal staff and development industry on implementing a Tri-County Green Development Standard. Staff will be creating a Talent and Business attraction plan to support the industries and workforce needed to implement the Green Development Standards once completed.

Green Economy Hubs use a cohort approach to work with local businesses to set and achieve sustainability targets — bringing together, supporting, and celebrating businesses as they achieve their goals. Based on interest expressed by local businesses, the community-led working group is currently bringing together a pilot cohort to work with Green Economy Canada.

Background and Discussion

Part 1: Tri-County Green Development Standards

The Tri-County Approach

The Tri-County Green Development Standards (GDS) project is a collaborative initiative between Grey, Dufferin, and Wellington Counties to create consistent Green Development

Standards that are informed by best practices, existing building credential programs, and local input from municipalities, industry, and residents. The Tri-County GDS will establish a consistent framework across the Counties making it easier for the development industry to meet and incorporate the standards into their projects.

Green Development Standards are a set of principles that guide sustainable development and establish criteria to be incorporated into development proposals based on local priorities. These standards can be; at the building level (e.g. energy efficiency measures, sustainable building materials), at the site plan level (e.g. stormwater infiltration features, local and drought resistant plants), and/or at the neighbourhood level (e.g. sidewalks, cross walks and other active transportation infrastructure to support more active transportation).

Stakeholder Engagement

The following sessions have been held to inform and solicit input from stakeholders.

- Information sessions for municipal staff in Grey, Dufferin and Wellington (March 20-22)
- Information session for the building and development industry (April 10, 2024)

The information sessions were to share basic information about Green Development Standards and the Tri-County approach to this project.

- Public visioning sessions in Grey, Dufferin and Wellington (March 25-April 18) and an online input survey.
- Municipal staff visioning sessions in Grey, Dufferin and Wellington (May 24-31)

The visioning sessions were to understand community priorities of what should be included in the Green Development Standards.

- Industry input session (June 10th).

This session will discuss the opportunities, challenges, and feasibility of implementing the community priorities identified in the visioning. We will also discuss incentives to motivate more ambitious action.

- Municipal staff implementation workshops (June 21-28).

These sessions will discuss how to implement the community vision from a practical perspective (e.g. changes to bylaws, policies, standards) as well as how to apply the standards with an equity and affordability lens.

Once the input has been collected, staff will work with our consultants to prepare a draft of the Green Development Standards. Staff anticipate hosting additional sessions to provide feedback on the draft Green Development Standards in the fall of 2024. More information as well as updates about this project are available on the [Green Development Standards](#) webpage. The Committee can also subscribe to the public e-mail updates from this page.

Talent and Business Attraction Plan

Another part of this project includes creating a Talent and Business Attraction Plan to understand what businesses and workforce are needed to support the implementation of the Green Development Standards. This plan will identify the green development industries and

businesses that are already present in the region (Grey, Dufferin and Wellington) as well as future opportunities. Staff will survey development companies and general contractors to identify any potential gaps in knowledge, training, and the workforce. The plan will also consider how to align with current Economy Development strategies in the three Counties to support the industries and workforce needed to implement the Green Development Standards. It is critical to consider the priorities and capacity of the three Economic Development departments on implementing this strategy. Other stakeholders include local industry associations, green building experts, chambers of commerce, post-secondary institutions and other training associations. The plan will include job projections and economic impact driven by local green development.

Here is the timeline for this part of the project:

- April-June 2024 – Staff and industry input sessions. This will clarify what measures will likely be included in the Green Development Standards, which will inform what economic supports will be needed and what opportunities will be created when the GDS is implemented.
- June-July 2024 – Drafting RFP for consultation, with input from Economic Development departments.
- August 2024 – RFP is posted and open for bids
- September 2024 – RFP closes, and contract is awarded.
- October 2024 – May 2025. Talent and business attraction plan is created with assistance from consultant. Plan delivery aligns with the beginning of GDS being implemented.
- June 2025 – Start plan implementation in collaboration with Economic Development departments.

Part 2: Green Economy Hub

What is a Green Economy Hub?

Green Economy Canada works with community partners to launch and grow Green Economy Hubs — a proven model for engaging local businesses in taking climate action and building sustainability into their operations. Green Economy Hubs use a cohort approach to work with local businesses to set and achieve sustainability targets — bringing together, supporting, and celebrating businesses as they achieve their goals. While each Green Economy Hub is adapted to meet the needs of the local community, all Hubs follow the same four core approaches: community-led, business-focused, revenue generating, and target driven. The Hub is usually operated by a local environmental non-profit and provides services for a fee to the local businesses who choose to participate in the Hub. Other operating models are also possible. Businesses of any size or sector can join the Hub, but the services are geared for small and medium enterprises, who generally don't have sustainability experts on staff, and have a strong business case for sustainability. A Green Economy Hub strengthens the local green economy by providing education and creating demand for sustainable goods and services. There are currently 8 Hubs in Canada, 6 of which are in Ontario, as well as a National Hub. Grey-Bruce is the only region in Southern Ontario not currently serviced by a local Hub.

Progress to date

Discussions about creating a local Green Economy Hub have been circulating in the community since 2021. The Institute for Southern Georgian Bay hosted an event “Achieving Sustainability through a Greener Economy” in October 2023. Following that event, a working group formed to discuss the feasibility of a local Green Economy Hub. The working group includes staff representatives from Grey County, The Town of The Blue Mountains, Town of Collingwood, The Institute for Southern Georgian Bay, RTO7, Blue Mountain Resort, MacLean Engineering, Climate Action Now Network, Georgian Bay Forever, Wasaga Climate Action Team, and the Collingwood Climate Action Team. Broader engagement with the business community has not yet taken place.

The Town of The Blue Mountains hosted a [Sustainability Summit](#) for local businesses on April 25th. Green Economy Canada presented, and members of the working group facilitated a discussion to gauge interest from the business community. Due to the interest expressed at the summit, the working group is recruiting local businesses and organizations to participate in a pilot National Hub cohort. These businesses could immediately begin their sustainability journey with services delivered by Green Economy Canada, while enjoying the benefits of a local network. The Collingwood Climate Action Team is currently managing the list of businesses who have expressed interest. Businesses and organizations in Grey County interested in participating in the pilot cohort are encouraged to contact either Collingwood CAT or Green Economy Canada. If the pilot is successful, it could lay the groundwork for a local Hub with services delivered by a local organization.

Role of Grey County

The Green Economy Hub is a community led initiative. Staff will continue to participate in the working group and assist with convening and facilitating meetings with stakeholders to understand the feasibility and potential of a Green Economy Hub. Staff will continue to reach out and engage with colleagues and connections to provide information about the Green Economy Hub and get feedback about local business sustainability needs. Leaning on Economic Development, including the Business Enterprise Centre, staff will communicate information and gauge interest from businesses who see potential in joining the Hub.

Through the Green Economy Hub, Grey County can engage the business community in the priority actions identified in “Going Green in Grey,” such as Action 5: Waste Diversion, Action 7: Zero-Emission Vehicles, Action 13: Non-residential Building Energy Efficiency Retrofits, and Action 14: Renewable and Emerging Energy Technologies. The Green Economy Hub can also serve key sectors: Action 3: Sustainable Agriculture, and Action 20: Sustainable Tourism. Perhaps most importantly, by delivering education and services to the business community, Green Economy Hub supports Action 19: Climate Action Engagement.

Financial and Resource Implications

Funding for the Talent and Business attraction plan is provided by NRCan’s Codes Acceleration Fund, which is supporting the Tri-County Green Development Standards project. The Climate Change Initiatives Manager will recruit and manage the consultant, with support from colleagues

at Dufferin and Wellington Counties. Economic Development staff will be engaged to give input and provide feedback on the plan.

There is no cost to the County associated with the Green Economy Hub.

Relevant Consultation

☐ Internal (list)

☐ AODA Compliance (describe)

☒ Contribution to Climate Change Action Plan Targets

Action 5: Waste Diversion,

Action 7: Zero-Emission Vehicles,

Action 10: Compact and Mixed-Use Development

Action 11: Green Standards for New Buildings

Action 13: Non-residential Building Energy Efficiency Retrofits

Action 14: Renewable and Emerging Energy Technologies.

☐ External (list)