

Staff Report

Presented By: Candace Hamm, Development Services Officer
Meeting Date: February 9, 2026
Subject: University of Guelph Planning Practice Municipal Project
Attachment(s): None

Recommendation

That Council receive the University of Guelph Planning Practice Municipal Project report for information.

Report Summary

The Town's proposal entitled 'Settlement Area Expansion: Town of Saugeen Shores Community Needs Assessment' has been selected by students from the University of Guelph as a topic for a group project for the winter 2026 semester.

Background/Analysis

In the fall of 2025, staff from the Town's Planning and Development Division received a request from the University of Guelph to submit proposals for student projects for the winter 2026 semester. The purpose of the project is to give students enrolled in the Planning Practice course real-world experience outside of the classroom, working with a municipality.

The Rural Planning & Development program at the University of Guelph is a masters-level program, and the only accredited post-secondary program in Ontario with a focus on rural and remote communities.

Staff submitted four proposals for consideration by the students, and 'Settlement Area Expansion: Town of Saugeen Shores Community Needs Assessment' was selected as a topic for a student group project. The details of the proposal submitted by the Town are outlined below.

Proposal Details

Proposal Description: Identify and analyze the Town of Saugeen Shores' community strengths, weaknesses, needs, and resources. This assessment will include demographic trends, housing affordability, and access to services such as education and healthcare. Once

the gaps between the current conditions and desired outcomes are identified, provide recommendations for how to incorporate these findings into future development applications. The goal is to ensure that any proposed settlement area expansions align with the long-term vision for sustainable growth and meet the evolving needs of residents, businesses, and community stakeholders.

Additional details: As part of the Bruce County Official Plan Update, several Landowner Requests for expansion to the settlement area boundaries for Port Elgin and Southampton have been submitted to the County for consideration. As these requests are considered and advanced, there will be an opportunity for the Town to work with the developer(s) and make recommendations on how to meet the needs of our rapidly growing community. The work done for this project will be considered and used to facilitate these discussions. Following project completion, students will have the opportunity to follow the development process independently and observe whether the suggested recommendations are implemented.

Next Steps

Town Staff have met with the student group to review the proposal, provide additional context, and to identify data sources to support their research. Staff look forward to seeing the recommendations from the group which they are aiming to present to Council later this spring.

Linkages

- Strategic Plan Alignment: Pillar 3: Building Valued Relationships
- Business Plan Alignment: Development Services Business as Usual

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding

No costs or revenue is associated with this report.

Prepared By: Candace Hamm, Development Services Officer

Reviewed By: Dwayne Evans, Director, Development Services

Approved By: Kara Van Myall, Chief Administrative Officer