

Position Title: Senior Planner

Department: Planning

Reports To: Director of Planning and Development

Purpose

To supply a full range of professional planning services related to supporting the County's planning and development goals and strategies, while providing leadership within the planning department.

Responsibilities

Specific Responsibilities Related to Planning

- Prepares and presents reports to Committee of the Whole regarding plans of subdivision, condominium, County or Local Official Plan Amendments, Niagara Escarpment Plan Amendments, planning policy matters, or provincial planning initiatives.
- Prepares and presents reports to Task Forces and Committees of Council, such as the Agricultural Advisory Committee or the Affordable Housing Taskforce.
- Provides technical support and comments to local municipalities on applications including; consents, minor variances, zoning by-laws or amendments, and site plans, with respect to County Official Plan conformity and provincial policy, as required under Municipal Plan Review.
- Provides an advanced level of planning knowledge to assess development applications or new policy submissions submitted to the County for approval with an emphasis on major, complex applications and projects.
- Coordinates comments from internal departments under the County's internal 'One Window' Planning process.
- Provides advice and comments to the Niagara Escarpment Commission on development permit applications and Niagara Escarpment Plan Amendments.
- Provides on-going planning advisory service to local municipal Councils, local planners, planning consultants, and the public regarding interpretation of County Official Plan policy, provincial policy, and regulations.
- Reviews and provides advice on confidential pre-submission development inquiries from the public or the development industry.

- Reviews studies and reports prepared by others in support of development applications (ie. Environmental Impact Studies, Planning Justification Reports, etc.).
- Represents the County and/or gives planning evidence at various judicial/quasi-judicial tribunals.
- Liaises with County solicitor regarding emerging planning matters, or development applications that have been appealed to tribunals.
- Attends off-site meetings and conducts site inspections.
- Attends and make planning presentations respecting development and land use matters to local Councils, Committees, public meetings/open houses, and the public.
- Represents the County by sitting on special interest and advisory committees.
- Researches and provides reports on planning policy matters.
- Assists with the formulation of policies that can be practically implemented within the Grey County context.
- Coordinates the activities of consultants working on studies or technical reports for the County, including preparing study outlines, arranging for requests for proposals or quotations with County Purchasing staff, assisting with consultant selection, acting as a contact for the County, and oversees the completion of project deliverables.
- Supports planning policy exercises, such as County Official Plan reviews, and special studies e.g. growth management strategy or age-friendly community strategy.
- Engages the public on planning matters, both related to development applications, but also furthering public knowledge and understanding of planning.

Leadership and Backup to the Director

- Assists the Director in the development of departmental work plans, priorities, and strategic decisions for the department.
- Backs up the Director and acts for the Director during absences.

Human Resource Management

- Provides leadership to staff to advise, support and motivate staff in achieving County objectives and participates as an effective team member.
- Supervises and assigns tasks to identified department staff.
- Provides direct supervision to identified department staff including the completion of employee evaluations and implementation of the personnel policies.
- Provides leadership, guidance, and encouragement to staff throughout the organization who are engaged in planning and development activities.

- Maintains a work environment that promotes participation, teamwork, and positive employee relations.
- Participates in the recruitment, selection, and orientation of new staff, along with the Director, other departments, and Human Resources staff.
- Ensures recruitment process, training, and employee support, including performance evaluations, coaching and discipline are provided.
- Responsible, as a manager, for occupational health and safety.

Other Duties

- Supports other departmental functions as needed including data collection/analysis, civic addressing, agriculture, trails, forestry, and geographic information systems (GIS).
- Provides assistance on an as needed basis with policy and strategic initiatives, by providing back-up to the Senior Policy Planner.
- Performs other related duties as assigned by the Director of Planning and Development.
- Maintains skills at a high level through courses, seminars, and selected reading, as per the Ontario Professional Planners Institute's Continuous Professional Learning requirements.
- Acts as a mentor to guide junior planning staff through the Professional Standards Board process to attain the Registered Professional Planner designation.
- Ensures compliance with provincial and county legislation and policies (i.e. occupational health and safety, accessibility and Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act).

Working Conditions

Usual hours of work are thirty-five (35) per week, Monday to Friday. Overtime/flexibility in working hours is required to deal with the demands of the position, such as evening meetings that are convened for the public and committees' convenience, plus normal operational and statutory deadlines, and peak periods.

There is risk to the prospects of emotionally loaded, hostile situations that arise from planning and development recommendation and policies, as well as forestry and trail policies/permitted uses, which must be confronted tactfully and professionally.

Occasional site visits to planning sites are required; must have a personal automobile available for travel.

Contacts

Internal Working Relationships

Discusses plans, priorities and receives general policy direction from the Director and other senior staff outside the Planning department. Works with staff in other County Departments (Transportation Services, Clerks, Housing, Economic Development, Tourism and Culture, Information Technology, Community Services, Finance, Human Resources, etc.). Prepares and presents reports to Committee of the Whole and taskforces or other committees.

External Working Relationships

Staff of Provincial Ministries, including Conservation Authorities and the Niagara Escarpment Commission, staff of local municipalities, neighbouring counties/municipalities, Quasi-Judicial Boards, solicitors, consultants, developers, contractors, special interest or user groups, and the general public.

Knowledge and Skill

- Degree in Urban and Regional Planning or related field (ie. Geography, Environmental Resource Studies, etc.), with a minimum of 5 years progressive planning experience, preferably with at least 2 years municipal planning experience.
- Full membership in the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) and Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI), with the Registered Professional Planner (RPP) designation.
- Advanced knowledge of and ability to apply expertise in community, rural, environmental, and recreational planning principles, and concepts.
- Advanced knowledge of planning and related legislation, including associated regulations and processes.
- Demonstrated presentation, project management and administrative skills with ability to develop recommendations for a wide range of planning initiatives.
- General knowledge of public policy, practices and current issues affecting local government with a broad understanding of two-tier municipal governments.
- Ability to respect confidentiality, and to communicate effectively and courteously with all levels of staff, external government agencies/authorities, elected officials, media, the development community, special interest or user groups and the general public.
- Excellent organizational, analytical, investigative, report writing, communication, presentation, and public speaking skills.

- Effective consultation, conflict resolution and negotiating skills when dealing with the public, the development community, consultants, other County/Municipal departments, and public and private agencies.
- Analytical mindset with the ability to provide timely solutions and proactive problem solving.
- Experience with working in a multi-departmental environment where work is often collaborative and integrated.
- Experience in budgeting and managing sectional budgets.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office products, particularly Word, Excel, Outlook, and PowerPoint.
- Knowledge of planning application tracking software.
- Working knowledge of Geographic Information Systems software or web applications.
- Working knowledge of agriculture, forestry principles, trail management, and asset management is an asset.
- Working knowledge of data analysis tools and datasets is an asset.
- Experience in working with contractors on construction or maintenance projects is an asset.
- Knowledge of the *Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and/or accessibility principles is an asset.

Impact of Error

Judgement errors could cause potential harm to the public image through failure to exercise diplomacy when dealing with the public or government officials. Errors in judgement, miscommunication and breach of confidentiality would result in unfavourable relations between staff, council, the development industry, and the public and a loss of trust in the County's planning approval system. A misinterpretation of County policies or provincial guidelines could directly impact public safety or the natural environment.

Technical errors could lead to higher legal and administration costs, including litigation and tribunal costs. Errors in the planning process for subdivisions, condominiums, and local official plans and official plan amendments may place the County in a position of liability of significant proportions both from a financial and environmental perspective.

Staff management errors could reduce departmental and program effectiveness, increase costs or liability, decrease employee involvement or morale, lead to negative public relations, and inconvenience the public or the development community.