



Elgin County Official Plan

SEPTEMBER 2010

Elgin County's First Official Plan

Elgin County Council has embarked on a program that will develop the County's first ever Official Plan, a policy document that sets out long-term goals and objectives for how a community wishes to grow and develop. This long range document will set a planning horizon for 20 years and will address matters of County importance while acknowledging local planning authority and the need to provide a balanced approach to planning in Elgin County.

Once the County Official Plan is approved, which is expected in 2012, Elgin County will become the approval authority for local Official Plans, Subdivision and Condominium Plans. This responsibility will be delegated to the County from the Province of Ontario. Having such approval powers at the County level will expedite the approval process and bring decision-making closer to our local municipal partners.

Steve Evans was hired in January as Planning Manager to oversee and coordinate the development of the Elgin County Official Plan. Steve is dividing his time between Elgin County and Middlesex County where he retains his position as the Director of Planning and Economic Development.

Meridian Planning Consultants was retained to assist the County in preparing the new Official Plan. Meridian has been responsible for preparing numerous Official Plans for upper and lower tier municipalities throughout Ontario.

Meridian's project team also consists of GLPi, C4SE and North-South Environmental.

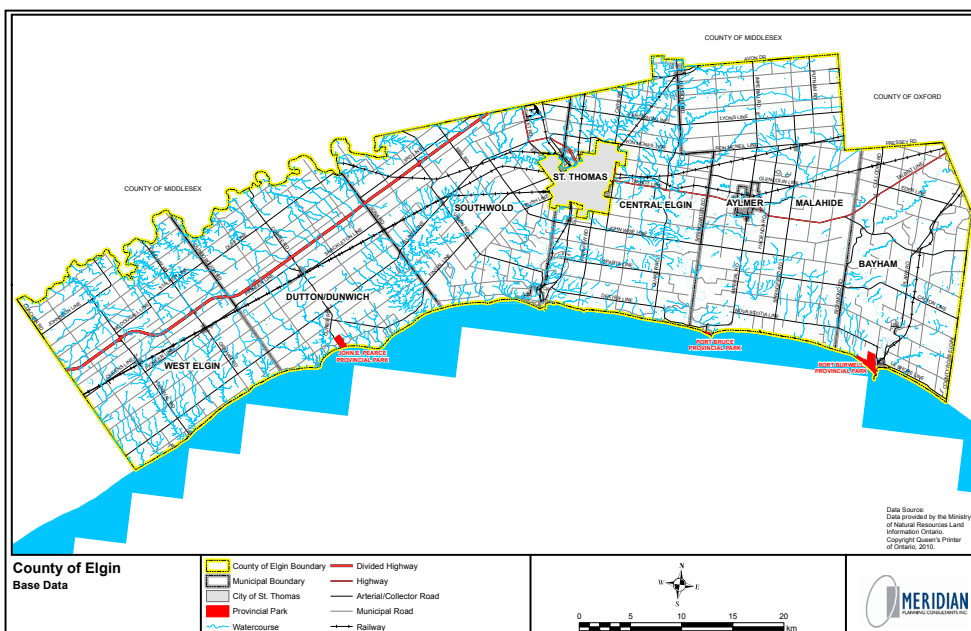


County of Elgin

Elgin County consists of seven local municipalities:

- Aylmer
- Bayham
- Central Elgin
- Dutton/Dunwich
- Malahide
- Southwold
- West Elgin

The City of St. Thomas is located in Elgin County but is a separated City. However, the County has committed to ongoing discussions and exchange of ideas with the City throughout the Official Plan process.



Official Plan Work Plan Stages

There are three main stages to the Official Plan Work Plan. The County and consulting team have already commenced or completed several of the Stage 1 components, including reviewing background information, Provincial policy, County data and studies, and the Official Plans for the various lower tier municipalities in the County.

Stage 1: Research and Issues Report

- Detailed literature review
- Meetings with Steering and Technical Committees
- Meetings with Focus Group
- Meetings with local Councils
- Preparation and presentation of Research Papers
- Public Open Houses

Stage 2: Policy Formulation

- Additional data collection analysis
- Preparation of draft Official Plan
- Meetings with Steering and Technical Committees
- Meetings with Focus Group
- Public Open Houses

Stage 3: Policy Refinement and Consideration by Council

- Preparation of 2nd and 3rd drafts of the Official Plan
- Meetings with local Councils
- Meetings with Steering and Technical Committees
- Meetings with Focus Group
- Public Meeting
- Preparation of Recommendations Report
- Preparation of final Official Plan

Public Consultation

The preparation of an Official Plan is a significant undertaking with profound implications for the County's future. A significant part of this review will involve identifying a vision, establishing goals and objectives and considering growth and policy options with the help of the public through an extensive consultation process. The consultation process will involve a series of meetings, including several open houses and public meetings held throughout the County.

The intent of the County's consultation process is to:

- "Get the word out" by providing detailed, yet easy to understand information to the community.
- To obtain feedback from the general public and a number of representative groups that have been requested to take an active role in the process.
- To present, identify and discuss the range of issues and themes to be considered in developing the new Official Plan.

To achieve these goals the County is committed to providing information through public notification, the County's website and through newsletters like this one.

Getting Involved:

The County is looking to you to provide information, opinions and ideas to assist us in preparing the Official Plan. There will be several public sessions conducted throughout the process and notification of these sessions will be advertised and dates will be posted and regularly updated on the County's website - www.elgin-county.on.ca. Of course, you can always contact us for further information:

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