ELGIN COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES

September 28, 2021

Elgin County Council met this 28th day of September 2021. The meeting was held in a hybrid in-person/electronic format with Councillors and staff participating as indicated below.

Council Present: Warden Tom Marks (Council Chambers)
Deputy Warden Dave Mennill (Council Chambers)
Councillor Duncan McPhail (Council Chambers)
Councillor Bob Purcell (Council Chambers)
Councillor Sally Martyn (Council Chambers)
Councillor Grant Jones (Council Chambers)
Councillor Mary French (Council Chambers)
Councillor Dominique Giguère (Council Chambers)
Councillor Ed Ketchabaw (Council Chambers)

Staff Present: Julie Gonyou, Chief Administrative Officer (Council Chambers)
Brian Lima, General Manager of Engineering, Planning & Enterprise/Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (Council Chambers)
Jim Bundschuh, Director of Financial Services (electronic)
Michele Harris, Director of Homes and Seniors Services (Council Chambers)
Amy Thomson, Director of Human Resources (Council Chambers)
Brian Masschaele, Director of Community and Cultural Services (Council Chambers)
Jeff Brock, Director of Information Technology Services (electronic)
Nancy Pasato, Manager of Planning (Council Chambers)
Nick Loeb, Senior Legal Counsel (Council Chambers)
Katherine Thompson, Manager of Administrative Services (Council Chambers)
Jenna Fentie, Legislative Services Coordinator (Council Chambers)
Carolyn Krahn, Legislative Services Coordinator (Council Chambers)
Natalie Marlowe, Library Coordinator (Council Chambers)
Susan Morrell, Library Branch Supervisor (electronic)
Dalene Vanzyl, Library Branch Supervisor (electronic)

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m. with Warden Marks in the chair.

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved by: Councillor Martyn
Seconded by: Deputy Warden Mennill

RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the meeting held on September 14, 2021 be adopted.

- Motion Carried.

3. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

None.

4. PRESENTING PETITIONS, PRESENTATIONS AND DELEGATIONS

None.

5. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Moved by: Councillor Jones
Seconded by: Councillor Ketchabaw

RESOLVED THAT we do now move into Committee of the Whole Council.

- Motion Carried.

Moved by: Deputy Warden Mennill
Seconded by: Councillor McPhail

RESOLVED THAT an additional report be considered regarding a request received from the Township of Malahide to extend Community Emergency Management Coordinator services currently offered by the County of Elgin on an interim basis.

- Motion Carried.

6. REPORTS OF COUNCIL, OUTSIDE BOARDS AND STAFF

6.1 Strategic Plan Staff Action Plan Update September 2021 – Chief Administrative Officer

The Chief Administrative Officer presented Council with an updated Action Plan originally developed by staff in February/March 2020 and most recently updated and presented to Council on May 25, 2021. The actions contained within the Plan support Elgin County Council's Strategic Plan 2020-2022.

Moved by: Councillor Purcell
Seconded by: Councillor French

RESOLVED THAT the Elgin County Council Strategic Plan – Staff Action Plan Update – September 2021 report from the Chief Administrative Officer, dated September 22, 2021 be received and filed.

- Motion Carried.

6.2 Economic Development – Chief Administrative Officer and General Manager of Engineering, Planning, & Enterprise/Deputy CAO

The Chief Administrative Officer and the General Manager of Engineering, Planning, & Enterprise/Deputy CAO presented the reimagined Economic Development and Tourism Business Plan for Council's consideration.

Moved by: Councillor Jones
Seconded by: Councillor Purcell

RESOLVED THAT Elgin County Council hereby endorse the Economic Development and Tourism Business Plan as presented; and

THAT Elgin County Council review and amend the Economic Development and Tourism Business Plan as part of its Strategic Planning discussions in January 2022; and

THAT Elgin County Council consider its investment in County-delivered Economic Development and Tourism Services as part of its 2022 Budget deliberations; and further

THAT Staff be directed to work with the St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation, the City of St. Thomas and regional municipal partners to identify opportunities for enhanced partnership and collaboration.

- Motion Carried.

6.3 **Additional Report – Request for Extension of Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) Services to the Township of Malahide – Chief Administrative Officer**

Staff received a request from the Township of Malahide to extend Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) services that the County was offering on an interim basis. The Township has asked for an extension of the services until December 2022. The Chief Administrative Officer advised that there is an established pilot program in place with the Municipality of Dutton Dunwich, Municipality of West Elgin, and the Township of Southwold. The Chief Administrative Officer recommended that Council consider supporting an extension of the CEMC service to the Township of Malahide until the end of the pilot program on October 30, 2021. Staff will bring a report to Council's October 14, 2021 meeting evaluating the pilot program and will provide recommended next steps for Council's consideration.

Moved by: Deputy Warden Mennill
Seconded by: Councillor Giguère

RESOLVED THAT the County Council supports the extension of Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) services to the Township of Malahide until October 30, 2021; and

THAT staff be directed to provide a report to Council evaluating the pilot program with the Municipality of Dutton Dunwich, Municipality of West Elgin, and the Township of Southwold with recommended next steps at their October 14, 2021 meeting.

- Motion Carried.

6.4 **Elgin County Library Policy Revision – "Code of Conduct for Elgin County Library Patrons" – Director of Community & Cultural Services**

The Director of Community & Cultural Services presented the report recommending revisions to the Elgin County Library's "Code of Conduct for Elgin County Library Patrons" as part of an on-going review of library policies.

Moved by: Councillor Martyn
Seconded by: Councillor French

RESOLVED THAT the report titled "Elgin County Library Policy Revision – Code of Conduct for Elgin County Library Patrons" dated September 28, 2021 from the Director of Community & Cultural Services be received and filed; and

THAT the "Code of Conduct for Elgin County Library Patrons" be hereby adopted.

- Motion Carried.

6.5 **A Path Forward on Library Fines – Director of Community & Cultural Services**

The Director of Community & Cultural Services, Library Coordinator, and Library Supervisors provided a presentation recommending that Council authorizes a public consultation process on a path forward for the reduction and/or elimination of Elgin County Library fines.

Moved by: Councillor Martyn
Seconded by: Councillor McPhail

RESOLVED THAT Elgin County Council hereby authorizes a public consultation process on a path forward for the reduction and/or elimination of Elgin County Library fines as outlined in the presentation "A Path Forward on Library Fines" by the Director of Community & Cultural Services at the September 28, 2021 meeting of Elgin County Council; and

THAT the results of this public consultation, along with recommendations on a path forward for the elimination and/or reduction of Elgin County Library fines, be presented to Elgin County Council as soon as feasible with the necessary amendments reflected in the draft 2022 budget; and

THAT the presentation titled “A Path Forward on Library Fines” dated September 28, 2021 from the Director of Community & Cultural Services be received and filed for information.

- Motion Carried.

6.6 **Official Plan Review Discussion Paper #3 – Elgin Natural Heritage Systems Study, Source Water Protection, and Environmental Policy Amendments – Manager of Planning**

The Manager of Planning provided an update on the Elgin County Official Plan review and presented the report that provides possible policy changes based on the draft policy documents “Elgin Natural Heritage Systems Study (2019)” and “Source Protection Plan (2017)”.

Moved by: Councillor Jones
Seconded by: Councillor Martyn

RESOLVED THAT the report titled “Official Plan Review – Discussion Paper #3 – Elgin Natural Heritage Systems Study, Source Water Protection, and Environmental Policy Amendments” dated September 22, 2021 from the Manager of Planning be received and filed.

- Motion Carried.

6.7 **Antenna Lease Agreement – Whites Station – QuaeNet Canada Inc./Elgin (County) – County Solicitor and General Manager of Engineering, Planning, & Enterprise/Deputy CAO**

The General Manager of Engineering, Planning, & Enterprise/Deputy CAO presented the report informing Council as to a proposed draft Antenna Lease Agreement between Elgin County and QuaeNet Canada Inc., as successor to Turris Communications Ltd., and relating to existing installations attaching to a rooftop tower at the Whites Station facility and to seek Council approval and authorization for execution of the draft agreement on behalf of Elgin.

Moved by: Councillor Jones
Seconded by: Councillor French

RESOLVED THAT the report titled “Antenna Lease Agreement – Whites Station – QuaeNet Canada Inc./Elgin (County)” dated September 17, 2021 from the County Solicitor and the General Manager of Engineering, Planning, & Enterprise/Deputy CAO be received and filed; and

THAT County Council approve the draft Antenna Lease Agreement between QuaeNet Canada Inc. and the Corporation of the County of Elgin in relation to wireless antenna installations at Whites Station, Central Elgin; and

THAT County Council further authorize execution of said draft Antenna Lease Agreement as described in Recommendation 2 above by the Warden and Chief Administrative Officer on behalf of Elgin County.

- Motion Carried.

6.8 **Central Elgin Antennas Licence Agreement, County Administration Building – Senior Counsel**

The Senior Counsel presented the report seeking approval and authorization for the execution of a proposed Antennas Licence Agreement between Elgin County

and The Corporation of the Municipality of Central Elgin with regard to antennas affixed to the roof of the Elgin County Administration Building.

Moved by: Councillor Ketchabaw
Seconded by: Councillor McPhail

RESOLVED THAT the report titled “Central Elgin Antennas Licence Agreement, County Administration Building” dated September 7, 2021 from the Senior Counsel be received and filed; and

THAT County Council approve and authorize the Warden and Chief Administrative Officer to execute a proposed Antennas Licence Agreement as between Elgin County and The Corporation of the Municipality of Central Elgin.

- Motion Carried.

6.8 **Meals on Wheels Agreement Elgin/VON – Director of Homes and Seniors Services**

The Director of Homes and Seniors Services presented the report seeking Council’s approval to execute the Meals on Wheels Supply Agreement between Elgin County and Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada – Ontario Branch (VON).

Moved by: Councillor Martyn
Seconded by: Councillor Giguère

RESOLVED THAT the report titled “Meals on Wheels Agreement Elgin/VON” dated September 21, 2021 from the Director of Homes and Seniors Services be received and filed; and

THAT Council authorize the Warden and Chief Administrative Officer to execute the agreement between Elgin and Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) for the time period of October 1, 2021 to September 20, 2023.

- Motion Carried.

6.9 **Homes - Infection Control Policy 2.10 – Immunization – Staff COVID-19 – Director of Homes and Seniors Services**

Moved by: Councillor Jones
Seconded by: Councillor Ketchabaw

RESOLVED THAT the report titled “Homes – Infection Control Policy 2.10 – Immunization – Staff COVID-19” from the Director of Homes and Seniors Services be deferred and reconsidered following Closed Session.

- Motion Carried.

7. COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 **Items for Consideration**

7.1.1 Allison Adams, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk, Township of Malahide with a resolution requesting a review of the Imperial Road and John Wise Line intersection.

Moved by: Deputy Warden Mennill
Seconded by: Councillor Jones

RESOLVED THAT staff be directed to review the intersection of Imperial Road and John Wise Line in the Township of Malahide to determine what safety enhancements could be implemented; and

THAT this intersection be reviewed during the completion of the County of Elgin Transportation Masterplan; and

THAT staff report back to Council with the results of their review.

- Motion Carried.

7.2 **Items for Information (Consent Agenda)**

7.2.1 Jeff Yurek, MPP, Elgin-Middlesex-London with a letter regarding drowning prevention in St. Thomas-Elgin.

7.2.2 SWIFT Monthly Project Update.

7.2.3 Diana Wilson, Deputy Clerk, Township of Malahide with a resolution requesting copies of County policies regarding facilitating internet projects.

Moved by: Deputy Warden Mennill
Seconded by: Councillor Giguère

RESOLVED THAT Correspondence Items #7.2.1 – 7.2.3 be received and filed.

- Motion Carried.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 **Statements/Inquiries by Members**

Councillor French announced her intention to run for the position of Warden for 2022.

8.2 **Notice of Motion**

None.

8.3 **Matters of Urgency**

None.

9. CLOSED MEETING ITEMS

Moved by: Councillor Martyn
Seconded by: Councillor Ketchabaw

RESOLVED THAT we do now proceed into closed meeting session in accordance with the Municipal Act to discuss the following matters under Municipal Act Section 239 (2):

In-Camera Item #1

(b) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees; (d) labour relations or employee negotiations – Labour Relations

- Motion Carried.

Council recessed at 9:51 a.m. and reconvened at 10:00 a.m.

10. MOTION TO RISE AND REPORT

Moved by: Councillor Giguère
Seconded by: Deputy Warden Mennill

RESOLVED THAT we do now rise and report.

- Motion Carried.

In-Camera Item #1 – Labour Relations

Moved by: Councillor Ketchabaw
Seconded by: Councillor McPhail

RESOLVED THAT the report from the Director of Homes and Seniors Services be received.

- Motion Carried.

11. REPORTS OF COUNCIL, OUTSIDE BOARDS AND STAFF (continued)

11.1 Infection Control Policy 2.10 – Immunization – Staff COVID-19 – Director of Homes and Seniors Services

The Director of Homes and Seniors Services presented the report seeking direction from County Council regarding the adoption of the Homes Draft Infection Control Policy 2.10 “Immunization – Staff COVID-19” policy changes. The Homes – Infection Control Policy 2.10 – Immunization – Staff COVID-19 policy updates align with the September 2, 2021 ministry directive option(s) and increasing trends in for-profit, not-for-profit and municipal Long-Term Care Homes across the province of Ontario.

Moved by: Councillor Martyn
Seconded by: Deputy Warden Mennill

RESOLVED THAT the report titled “Homes – Infection Control Policy 2.10 – Immunization – Staff COVID-19” dated September 21, 2021 be received and filed; and

THAT Council approves the Homes Draft Infection Control Policy 2.10 “Immunization – Staff COVID-19” policy changes.

- Motion Carried.

12. MOTION TO ADOPT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Moved by: Councillor Jones
Seconded by: Councillor French

RESOLVED THAT we do now adopt recommendations of the Committee Of The Whole.

- Motion Carried.

13. CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

13.1 By-Law 21-36 – Confirming all Actions and Proceedings

BEING a By-law to Confirm Proceedings of the Municipal Council of the Corporation of the County of Elgin at the September 28, 2021 Meeting.

Moved by: Councillor Purcell
Seconded by: Councillor Ketchabaw

RESOLVED THAT By-Law No. 21-36 be now read a first, second and third time and finally passed.

- Motion Carried.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Councillor Jones
Seconded by: Councillor French

RESOLVED THAT we do now adjourn at 11:07 a.m. to meet again on October 12, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

\- Motion Carried.

Julie Gonyou, Chief Administrative Officer.	Tom Marks, Warden.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

BUSINESS PLAN

Elgin County

September 2021

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT Elgin County Council hereby endorse the Economic Development and Tourism Business Plan as presented; and

THAT Elgin County Council review and amend the Economic Development and Tourism Business Plan as part of its Strategic Planning discussions in January 2022; and

THAT Elgin County Council consider its investment in County-delivered Economic Development and Tourism Services as part of its 2022 Budget deliberations; and further

THAT Staff be directed to work with the St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation, the City of St. Thomas and regional municipal partners to identify opportunities for enhanced partnership and collaboration.

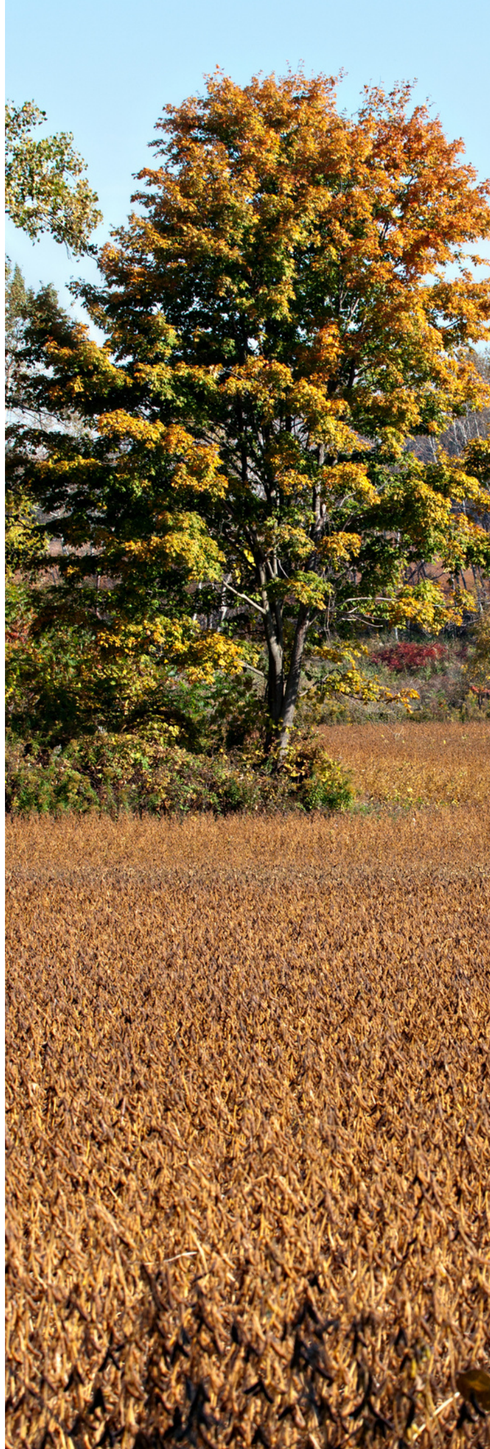
INTRODUCTION

The role of the Economic Development and Tourism Department is to facilitate and implement regional economic development and tourism strategies for the promotion of Elgin as a place to live, work, and play. This is accomplished by developing and implementing programs and policies that support, increase and strengthen the business community of Elgin County. This can be achieved by engaging and working with our local municipal partners, neighbouring municipalities, businesses and business organizations, community organizations, provincial and federal government partners, investors and associations.

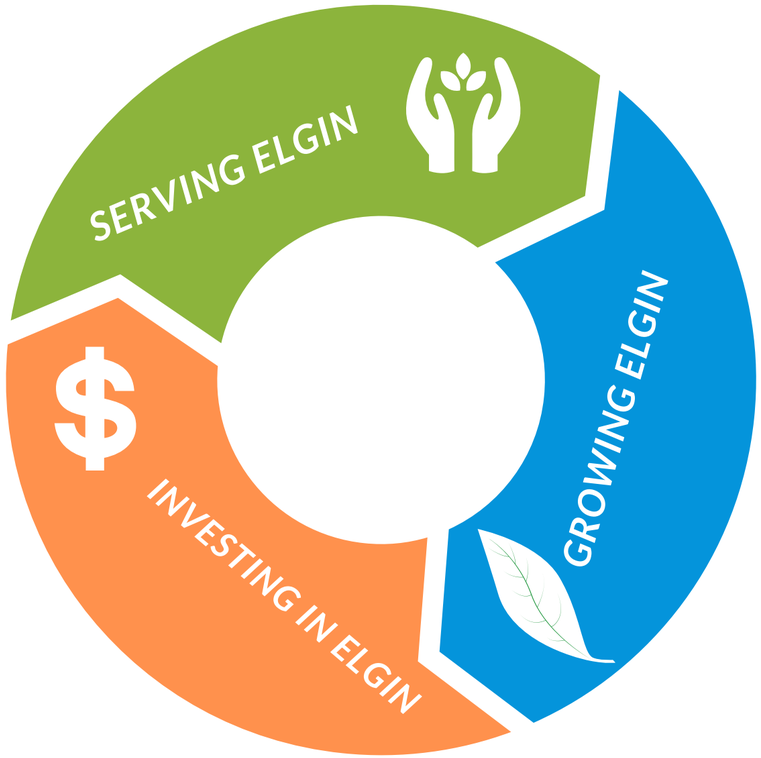
Economic Development and Tourism activities include initiatives aimed at retaining existing businesses and creating a business environment that will enable local businesses to expand and prosper. These activities include business expansion and attraction, workforce attraction, tourism development, and foreign direct investment.

Strategic partnerships along with regional collaboration are key to the success of Elgin's economy.

Tourism initiatives will continue to promote Elgin County as a destination, promoting and strengthening the local economy, communities and events. Through new strategic marketing initiatives, Tourism will continue to elevate the profile of the offerings in the region with the goal to increase visitor overnight stays. Strategic marketing of our region's tourism amenities to visitors and residents helps to create jobs and stimulate supply-chain spending and enable our business owners to prosper.



KEY LINKAGES WITH STRATEGIC PLAN



Economic Development is a key focus of Council's Strategic Plan 2020-2022. The programs and services supporting the business community are directly aligned with Growing Elgin: To be the place where people want to live work and play.

This goal and the subsequent actions are directly tied to the delivery of economic development or have overlap with economic development priorities and programs.

VISION

TO SUPPORT AND FOSTER AN ENVIRONMENT OF PROSPERITY AND OPPORTUNITY FOR THE COUNTY OF ELGIN, ITS RESIDENTS, AND BUSINESSES.

MISSION AND MANDATE

TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR LOCAL AND NEIGHBOURING MUNICIPAL PARTNERS AS WELL AS BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, AND OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT TO ADVANCE REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTERESTS AND TO SEEK STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE COUNTY OF ELGIN.

GOALS

The Economic Development and Tourism Department is underpinned by four high level goals, intended to anchor and qualify all strategic initiatives or ensuing actions on the part of the County and its local municipal partners. These goals also support the overall vision and encourage prosperity and opportunity for the county and its residents.

4 GOALS

1. **BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION**
2. **WORKFORCE ATTRACTION**
3. **TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**
4. **FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT**

GOAL #1
BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this goal is to enhance opportunities for the expansion of local business and the retention of business investment and entrepreneurs in the County.

ACTIONS

- Sector Specific BRE (agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, small business
- London & Area Works
- Business Directory
- Elgincentives
- Small Business Enterprise Centre (Partnership with City of St. Thomas)
- Ambassador Program
- Conference Series
- Made in Elgin Campaign (proposed)

GOAL #2
WORKFORCE ATTRACTION

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this goal is to strengthen the access and quality of the labour force in Elgin to address the needs of the business.

ACTIONS

- Partnership with Workforce Planning Board
- Utilize existing job board https://workforcedevelopment.ca/jobs/ and metrics from site to begin supporting employers
- WOWC: Western Ontario Workforce Strategy
- Made in Elgin Campaign - extend beyond BRE to talent/workforce attraction (proposed)
- Elgin Alumni Attraction - reach out to those that went away to school and bring them back home to Elgin (proposed)

GOAL #3
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this goal is to ensure that the County is effectively promoting the assets, talents and opportunities of Elgin County and enhancing the profile of the County to a target audience of visitor and business interests.

ACTIONS

- Savour Elgin
- Tourism Membership
- Leveraging tourism successes into other sectors (agriculture, manufacturing, small business)
- Campaigns
- Social Media
- Tradeshows
- Shop Local
- Cycling, hiking trails, recreation

GOAL #4
FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this goal is to enchance opportunities for the attraction of new business investment and entrepreneurs to the County. Improving the level of investment readiness capacity of the County and local municipal partners will enable the region to attract and manage investment opportunities.

ACTIONS

- Ontario Food Cluster
- Southern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA)
- Vacant Land Inventory
- Film and Tv Attraction

(partnership with City of St. Thomas)

KEY CUSTOMERS

- County Council, Local Neighbouring Municipal Partners, staff and elected officials;
- County Businesses;
- Business Investors
- Business Associations, Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) and Chamber of Commerce
- Sector Associations (Federation of Agriculture etc.)
- Regional Economic Development Organizations (SCOR, WOWC)
- Provincial Ministries
- Federal Departments

CORE SERVICES

- Promote and respond to business and investment inquiries
- Promote Elgin as a region to invest, live, work, and play
- Develop and implement Business Retention and Expansion Program
- Implement Workforce Development Projects
- Economic Development Support for Local Municipal Partners, Business Associations, industry and community organizations
- Serve as a resource and partner for BIAs and Chambers
- Lead and facilitate economic development and tourism research projects to support business and community development
- Support key economic sectors; Agriculture, Manufacturing and Small Business
- Execute regional marketing strategies
- Pursue funding opportunities
- Maintain an online presence including web and social media
- Engage a diverse group of key stakeholders to ensure strategies are designed with community input
- Gather and analyze statistical data about the County need to monitor socioeconomic trends
- Establish relationships with other levels of government, business community, education institutions and regional organization to develop and further collaborative economic initiatives and goals

PROPOSED STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

The Economic Development and Tourism Department with an appropriate staff compliment will be able to provide exceptional service by participating as a key partner in regional initiatives, serving as a resource to Elgin's local municipal partners and ensuring responsive action to inquiries and challenges facing business.

THE PROPOSED STAFFING REQUIREMENTS ARE:

- Manager of Economic Development
- Economic Development Officer
- Tourism Officer
- Engineering, Planning, and Enterprise Administrative Assistant (expanded existing position)

A STRONG STAFF TEAM WILL ENSURE DELIVERY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM PROGRAMS FOR THE COUNTY OF ELGIN.

2022 WORK PLAN

The first days of the work plan will be critical in getting the Economic Development department operational. Re-establishing networks with key stakeholders will be the primary focus of the first ninety days.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Council
- Staff
- City of St. Thomas
- BIAs
- Chamber of Commerce
- Top Employers (manufacturing, agriculture, small business)
- Local Municipal Partners
- Ministry Partners (MEDCJT, OMAFRA)

In the first year, the key focus will be on developing a strategic approach for the department aligning programs and services with Council's strategic plan.

DELIVERABLES FOR YEAR ONE

- Develop a new Strategic Plan for Economic Development (2022-2025)
- Introduce programming with a focus on Foreign Direct Investment, Land Inventory and business supports
- Develop an industry led advisory team/committee
- Develop a strong Foreign Direct Investment Strategy

2021 ACHEIVEMENTS

COUNTY WIDE BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Presently, Economic Development and Tourism staff have updated the county-wide business directory capturing new businesses, closures, and pivots due to COVID-19. This directory also includes a GIS element for pinpoint mapping locations and an improved website experience.

VACANT LAND INVENTORY

Staff, with the assistance of the Engineering and Planning service departments is in the process of developing a new comprehensive vacant land inventory also using GIS technology to map actual business locations. This product, once finished, will help eliminate delays in correspondence and searches for incoming inquiries.

FILM PROMOTION

The Economic Development department has introduced a new filming process for incoming productions. This streamlined procedure will include a new website highlighting our film history and promoting potential filming sites in the area. The process will also incorporate a new online application form, new documentation including Code of Conduct, Release and Indemnity Agreement, and Letters of Notification. Staff, with the support of local municipalities, the County Solicitor, production companies, and other film-friendly municipalities gained extensive knowledge and insight into the industry and how to better serve it and our communities. This process will also include the promotion of Elgin County as a welcoming and adaptive film location. By adding images to digital libraries used by location managers and production companies, we will be accessible to industry professionals, allowing for more interest, visibility, and potential filming.

2021 ACHEIVEMENTS CONTINUED

ELGINCENTIVES

Elgincentives is an award-winning program that started in 2015. Over time, the program has been very rewarding to the community, the municipalities, and Elgin County. Currently, the department has undertaken a comprehensive detailed review of the program and has identified improvements to the application process, identified administrative efficiencies, and updated features of the program to improve the applicant experience. The department has identified ways to improve the application process including the creation of a new online application form, reducing the steps within the application, limiting the overall documentation required during the application process, and adding improved verbiage for a better understanding and direction for applicants. Reducing overall intake dates from four (4) to two (2) in a year will reduce the overall resources required and the large commitment from Committee members and Municipal CAOs. With Council direction, we will continue to find ways to improve and update the Elgincentives program for 2022 and onward.

Elgincentives

2021 ACHEIVEMENTS CONTINUED

TOURISM

Elgin County Tourism currently works on a number of promotional and product development campaigns including: The Official Visitor's Guide, Tourism Signage Program, Savour Elgin, Elgin Arts Trail, Elgin Lakeshore, Cycle Elgin, Fall for Elgin, Shop Elgin, Maple Syrup Trail, and more. We are in the process of reviewing the Elgin Arts Trail program and looking for different avenues of promoting Arts in Elgin. Tourism services collaborates with a number of other community partners including but not limited to: Railway City Tourism, Elgin Heritage Centre, Southwestern Public Health, Buy Local Buy Fresh, and Ontario Southwest Tourism.

Throughout the year, community events and tradeshows are attended by staff to promote Elgin County as a great place to visit, work, play, and start a business. During the summer months, Tourism Assistants staff our two visitor centres in Port Stanley and Port Burwell, attend events, and assist in special projects as required.

The department endeavours to increase communications with businesses in all municipalities through in-person visits, e-blasts, and phone conversations. Shoulder season promotion is also a top priority with increased awareness of Fall and Winter activities happening throughout Elgin County, building on and creating new campaigns such as Fall for Elgin, and Winter in Elgin.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Proposed operating expenses will be similiar to pre-pandemic investment (approx. $1M). Detailed financial information will be presented to Council as part of its 2022 Budget deliberations.

LOCAL MUNICIPAL PARTNER IMPACT

Elgin County's Economic Development and Tourism Department will have a renewed dedication to supporting our local municipal partners through economic development committees, business retention and expansion efforts, workforce attraction initiatives, tourism development programming, and investment inquiries.

COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

Elgin County's Economic Development staff will continue to disseminate business supports, workforce development initiatives and opportunities to the business community through email correspondence, and promote them accordingly through its various social media platforms. When appropriate, this information is also disseminated through Elgin's Corporate social media platforms and shared with Local Municipal Partners to promote.

CONCLUSION

Since the creation of the Economic Development and Tourism Department in 2006, the County of Elgin has overseen the development of an Economic Development Strategy and three subsequent updates. The department was actively engaged in promoting economic development and tourism opportunties in the County for many years.

With a renewed focus on goal setting and strategic planning, Elgin's Economic Development and Tourism Department can once again be a leader in supporting and fostering opportunity for the County of Elgin, its residents, and businesses.

ElginCounty