



Elgin County Council Highlights



Oxford, Elgin & Perth Joint Municipal Paramedic Services

Elgin County Council received a presentation detailing the results and recommendations contained in the Oxford, Elgin & Perth Joint Municipal Paramedic Services Deployment Review. The Review identified opportunities and recommendations to improve efficiencies and coordination across the three services including:

- Need to address border zone overlapping coverage issues;
- Need to plan for Growth Pressures of 4-6% a year increase in call volume and in-service time over the next 10 years;
- Opportunity to improve Mutual Emergency Coverage during periods of Critical Unit Availability;

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- Opportunities and Interest in Service Sharing including Joint Purchasing, Shared Staffing/Human Resources, Specialty Assets and Facilities.

Moving forward, the Oxford, Elgin, and Perth Municipal Paramedic Services have committed to:

- A new collaborative business model for delivering paramedic services in post-pandemic Ontario;
- Improved value for money, cost avoidance, operational efficiencies and effective demand/growth management are potential outcomes as they continue to co-operate;
- Oxford, Elgin, and Perth are well positioned to secure improved value for money and timely delivery of paramedic services in the face of growth and an aging tsunami demographics profile;
- Potential exists to include other municipal partners moving forward.

Tree Commissioner/Weed Inspector Reports

The County Tree Commissioner/Weed Inspector presented both his Quarterly Report ending December 2021 and his 2021 Annual Report to Council on March 8, 2022. These reports contain information regarding total applications to harvest, total hectares cleared, and total weed complaints received. This information is available in the March 8, 2022 County Council Agenda Package.

The Tree Commissioner/Weed Inspector also provided education on Canada Fleabane, a weed native to Ontario and eastern North America that has naturalized in Europe, Asia, and Australia. It has several common names including horseweed and Canadian horseweed. Canada Fleabane blooms from July into September with small white flowers and it often grows to approximately 1.5 metres tall.

In recent years, populations of Canada Fleabane have become resistant to certain herbicides, including glyphosate, in areas of Ontario and Elgin County and it can become well established in dedicated no-till fields. Control of Canada Fleabane can still be achieved using alternative management techniques and/or products

Additional information on Canada Fleabane can be obtained online at the following site:

http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/ontweeds/canada_fleabane.htm

Heart Health Month Contest Winners

In an effort to promote Health and Safety at the County, monthly themes have been identified and are being promoted to County staff and Council.

February was "Heart Health Month" and in addition to the reminders communicated to staff on the importance of "Heart Health", a "Heartsmart Kids - Heart Month Valentine" contest was shared with the youth in the County staff/Council family and friends. Warden French and Julie Gonyou, CAO judged submissions and Warden French announced the winners at the March 8, 2022 Council meeting. The winners are as follows:

- Bria Godby - Grade 4
- Eden Thomson - Grade 3
- Jack Duncan - Junior Kindergarten
- Rome Duncan - Age 3
- Juliet Lyttle - Grade 3
- Lily Saxby - Junior Kindergarten



Colourful contest entries can be viewed as part of the March 8, 2022 County Council Agenda Package.

A New Framework for Library Leases

Elgin County Library leases its ten branches from Local Municipal Partners and the Port Stanley Festival Theatre. These leases all expire at the end of 2022. After 16 years, County Council now has the opportunity to review these leases, establish a sustainable framework for the future, and engage Local Municipal Partners and the Port Stanley Festival Theatre in the process. At its meeting on March 8, 2022, County Council provided direction on a path forward for lease renewals for 2023 and beyond. Council decided to standardize leases for all locations with a common base rate per square foot of \$17. A full analysis of the options presented to Council is available in the March 8, 2022 County Council Agenda Package.

Restricted Parking Zone Established on John Street (CR 73) in Aylmer

The County of Elgin received a concern from a resident in the Town of Aylmer that sight lines were obscured entering onto John Street from Walnut Street due to parked vehicles. County staff reviewed the area of concern and recommended the establishment of a restricted parking zone on John Street north of Walnut Street to improve sight lines for turning movements. In response to this recommendation, Elgin County Council adopted By-Law 22-16, an amendment to By-Law 20-05 "BEING a Consolidated By-Law for the Regulation of Traffic including Parking on County Roads". This By-Law now designates a "no parking" zone along County Road #73 (John Street), west side, from the north property limits of Walnut Street for a distance of 20 metres northerly.

Transportation Master Plan

The County of Elgin continues to develop its first comprehensive Transportation Master Plan. The County of Elgin's Transportation Master Plan (TMP) is a long-term strategy that will outline policy directions and identify transportation infrastructure plans to meet the transportation needs of the County's residents, businesses and visitors through 2065, considering all modes of travel. The TMP will be designed to look at "the big picture", identifying challenges, alternatives, steps and actions to take the County of Elgin from where we are today, to the multi-modal transportation network and landscape we envision for our future.

The TMP is a four-phase study process whereas the first phase has focused on identifying transportation needs and opportunities across Elgin so that later phases can explore and develop appropriate solutions, supporting strategies and policies to address them. This phase involved considerable public and stakeholder consultations.



The TMP's Phase 1: Needs and Opportunities report has now been completed and was presented to Council for their information. This comprehensive report provides a detailed overview of the existing multi-modal transportation system and incorporates all available County and stakeholder policies with respect to transportation planning. The report showcases the existing County road network and explores how it is currently used by different travel modes. The report also incorporates population growth trends to uncover potential capacity constraints with future commuting patterns throughout the network.

A complete copy of the report is available in the March 8, 2022 County Council Agenda Package.

Council Approves 2022 Action Plan

In 2020, County Council finalized its Elgin County Strategic Plan 2020–2022. This Strategic Plan is designed to act as a roadmap for serving, growing and investing in the community. The Plan seeks to align the County's efforts and resources in support of Council's strategic goals. As part of this strategy, Council also developed an operational plan for staff, an action plan for Council, and a performance measurement framework to monitor progress in achieving strategic goals.

Council recently met to review the outcomes of its 2021 Action Plan and discuss action items to be included in the 2022 Action Plan. These discussions lead to an updated Action Plan for 2022 which Council approved at its meeting on March 8, 2022. The 2022 Action Plan continues valuable work begun in 2021 such as aligning programs and services with community need and engaging with community stakeholders. New to the Plan in 2022 is the exploration of opportunities to facilitate and promote development of affordable housing. The complete 2022 Council Action Plan can be viewed as part of the March 8, 2022 County Council Agenda Package.

Elgin County Delivers Responsible and Forward-Thinking Budget

At their meeting on March 8, 2022, Elgin County Councillors passed a by-law approving a \$64.3M operating cost budget and a \$40.6M levy - a \$1.5M increase over 2022. The levy represents a tax increase of 1.7% on an average property and, as an example, equating to approximately \$37 on a home valued at \$350,000.

In the last year of its term, Elgin County Council remains committed to being cost efficient with every dollar available to ensure the County maintains a strong financial position into the future. The budget is a roadmap that will guide resourcing in a way that is responsible and forward-looking. The budget is linked to strategic objectives contained in the 2020–2022 Strategic Plan which prioritizes investing in Elgin in a way that is financially responsible by ensuring Elgin has the necessary tools, resources, and infrastructure to efficiently deliver programs and services now and in the future.

In 2022, the County of Elgin will continue to make significant investments in critical infrastructure through several planned transportation network (Roads and Bridges) projects. The County will also continue construction on the Terrace Lodge Redevelopment project. This project is currently on schedule and within the approved budget.

Elgin will complete the review of its Official Plan in 2022 and modernize and streamline planning documents and processes. This will cost \$121,000. Driven by recommendations in the Service Delivery Review, the County will also invest \$512,000 in significant technological enhancements across all departments to improve efficiency. These enhancements will relate to GIS, Agenda Management, Human Capital Management, Cyber Security, and Long-Term Care Homes Documentation.

The County will continue to face cost pressures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated recovery for years to come. Additionally, unusually high inflation will affect all organizations in 2022 including Elgin County, adding approximately \$90,000 in additional costs.

The County continues the important work of making necessary repairs to County-owned facilities to ensure that they are safe and accessible to members of the public for years to come. This will add \$213,000 in costs to the budget in 2022.

To offset these pressures, the County of Elgin is appreciative of \$2.5M in anticipated additional funding from the Ministry of Long-Term Care to support the retention and recruitment of staff to increase direct hours of care for residents. The County is also expected to received \$1.2M in funding for capital projects through the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund.

"Over the past several month, County Council, the Budget Committee and staff have worked tirelessly to deliver a budget that is practical and sustainable," said Warden Mary French. "Preparing a budget requires a delicate balance between funding the highest quality of services possible while ensuring the impact on taxpayers is reasonable. I am confident that we have achieved this balance, keeping increases low without sacrificing investments that must be made to maintain public assets for future use." Warden French continued, "The continuing COVID-19 pandemic and rising inflation create challenges for the County moving forward, but Council recognizes that these challenges exist for our residents as well."

Major capital projects planned for 2022 include but are not limited to:

- The County of Elgin will continue construction on the Terrace Lodge Redevelopment Project, which will take place over the course of the next two (2) years and cost \$35.6M;
- Elevators will be replaced at the Elgin County Administration Building to ensure accessibility compliance for a cost of \$3.1M;

- The Village of Richmond Reconstruction (CR #38 and CR #43) will cost \$3M;
- The County of Elgin will be replacing the deck on Philmore Bridge costing \$1.5M
- Centennial/Elm Intersection Improvements (Roundabout) will be undertaken this year and will cost \$1.4M;
- Fingal Line (CR #16) will undergo road recycling and resurfacing between the Village of Fingal and the City of St. Thomas costing \$2.5M;
- Imperial Road (CR #73) will be rehabilitated between the north limits of the Town of Aylmer and Avon Drive for a cost of \$3.6M.

For the complete March 8, 2022 County Council Agenda Package visit the [Elgin County website](#).