



FROM THE  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

# COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING



APRIL 22, 2025



# COUNTY COUNCIL MEETINGS

are held to handle urgent matters, final approvals from past meetings, and reports for information.

The following items were discussed at the April 22nd Council Meeting:



Protecting Our Roots: 2024 Elgin County Tree & Weed Report



Where Rural Charm Meets Digital Ease: County Launches New Tourism Website



## Protecting Our Roots: 2024 Elgin County Tree & Weed Report

Jeff Lawrence, Elgin County's Tree Commissioner and Weed Inspector, presented his 2024 year-end report to Council, highlighting key achievements in forest conservation and weed control. Jeff is responsible for administering the County's Woodlands Conservation By-law, which protects local forests by regulating tree removal methods such as cutting, burning, and bulldozing in woodlots larger than half an acre.

During his presentation, he notes that in 2024 harvest applications increased from 61 to 81, covering approximately 1,885 acres and yielding 2.24 million board feet of wood. Two clearing applications were approved under the No-Net-Loss Policy, while weed complaints remained steady at six, and no Weed Destruction Orders were issued.

### **Impact on Elgin County Taxpayers:**

The County's continued administration of the Woodlands Conservation By-law and weed control measures reflects a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable land management. These efforts help protect natural assets and support responsible forestry practices — all while being delivered within existing resources and budget.



## Where Rural Charm Meets Digital Ease: County Launches New Tourism Website

Elgin County officially launched its new tourism website, [www.elgintourism.ca](http://www.elgintourism.ca), on March 27, 2025, completing the County's website modernization project. Led by the Economic Development and Tourism team, the site was built in collaboration with Sandbox Software Solutions, County IT staff, and adHOME for design.

The website now runs on WordPress for better security and usability. It features a refreshed design with soft colors, natural imagery, and improved navigation. Users can easily browse local events, businesses, and attractions, and access digital versions of the Visitor Guide and Taste Guide directly from the homepage. With the launch complete, the focus now shifts to promoting the new site through a local marketing campaign targeting nearby regions.

### **Impact on Elgin County Taxpayers:**

Funded in part by a \$50,000 Rural Economic Development (RED) grant, the project stayed within the approved budget, while promoting local tourism and supporting businesses across Elgin County.



FROM THE  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
WHOLE  
MEETING



APRIL 22, 2025



# COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETINGS

are held directly following Council and focus on detailed discussions and reviewing reports. Decisions on the following reports won't be final until the next Council Meeting on May 13, 2025.

The following items were discussed at the April 22nd Committee of the Whole Meeting:



Value for Services: Elgin County Proposes 2025 Fee Changes



Investing in Community Roots: Grant Consideration for Wallacetown Fairgrounds



Wheels in Motion: Elgin County Council to Seek Public Input on Cycling Plan



## Value for Services: Elgin County Proposes 2025 Fee Changes

Each year, Elgin County staff review the fees and charges for County services to ensure they reflect the actual cost of delivering those services.

Key proposed changes include a small increase in the fee for document commissioning (from \$20 to \$25), and adjustments to library and museum charges. Notably, new fees are being suggested for the library's Healthy Brain Kits, a special resource developed in partnership with the Alzheimer Society. Museum programming fees have also increased, reflecting the real cost of delivering in-school and on-site tours. Planning fees were updated in late 2024 and will be being consolidated into the 2025 By-law, while tourism-related fees will be eliminated entirely.

### **Impact on Elgin County Taxpayer:**

These fee updates are based on a cost recovery model, helping cover the actual expenses of services, while minimizing the burden on taxpayers. The proposed changes ensure financial sustainability and responsible management of County services. **A final decision on this matter will be made at the May 13<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting.**



## Investing in Community Roots: Grant Consideration for Wallacetown Fairgrounds

Elgin County's new Grant and Sponsorship Policy, approved in late 2024, offers a fair framework for supporting local organizations and community initiatives. Funding is available in two streams: Sponsorships for community programs and Grants for capital projects that align with the Strategic Plan.

The Wallacetown Agricultural Society has applied for a Capital Project Grant to fund their office building project at the Wallacetown Fairgrounds. In principle, Elgin County's Committee of the Whole has awarded \$5,727.79, which will contribute to the costs of a new prefabricated office building, set to be completed before the 2025 fair. This grant represents 10% of the total project cost.

### **Impact on Elgin County Taxpayer:**

The grant would come from the County's 2025 Capital Grant Program, as approved in the 2025 Business Plan & Budget process. The Wallacetown Fair supports local tourism and economic growth, aligning with the County's strategic priorities. **A final decision will be made at the May 13th Council Meeting.**





## Wheels in Motion: Elgin County Council to Seek Public Input on Cycling Plan

Elgin County's draft Cycling Master Plan (CMP) aims to establish a regional cycling network through a "Commuter/Spine Cycling Network," linking communities with safe, long-distance routes. The plan proposes a "Priority Plan" of 180 km of cycling lanes, with 131 km as new paved shoulders along County roads, supporting tourism and active lifestyles.

After a lengthy discussion, County Council decided to engage the public before finalizing the CMP. A Public Information Centre will be held in the near future to gather feedback and ensure alignment with local priorities. If approved, the CMP will guide future investments integrated with scheduled road projects.

### **Impact on Elgin County Taxpayer:**

The Priority Plan is estimated to cost \$800,000 annually, covering capital replacement and operating expenses. Future implementations would align with existing roadwork to optimize efficiency and minimize costs. **A final decision is pending on public input and Council review.**



## NEXT COUNCIL MEETING



MAY 13, 2025



9:00 AM

## NEXT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING



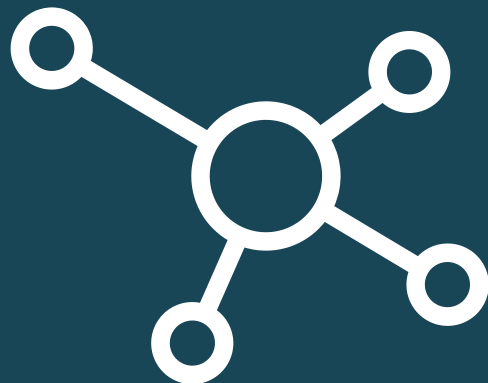
MAY 13, 2025



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