



# Council Highlights

**Tuesday,  
September 10, 2024**

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## **Elgin County Libraries Show Strong Performance in Technology, Staffing, and Collections**

Council received an in-depth analysis from the Director of Community and Cultural Services on the performance of Elgin County Library branches, based on the Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario (ARUPLO) Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems. This benchmarking report compared key areas such as facility size, hours of operation, staffing, collections, seating, and technology across the County's ten library branches.

The report found that the libraries performed well in several categories. Nine out of ten branches met or exceeded the guidelines for collections, technology, and staffing. Notably, the system excelled in providing technology access, with all branches surpassing the ARUPLO guidelines in this area.

However, facility size remains a challenge, with only three branches meeting the recommended space requirements. The report identified growth in population and insufficient space for community programs as ongoing concerns. The Director noted that improvements to facility size are largely dependent on local municipal partners, as they own the buildings housing the branches.

Council received the report for information, which will support future planning and advocacy efforts for the library system.

## Elgin County Endorses Proposed Relocation of Rodney Library

Elgin County Council has endorsed a recommendation to support the Municipality of West Elgin's efforts to find a new location for the Rodney Library. While the project is still in the early stages, the endorsement aligns with the County's Library Branch Construction Policy and follows a request from West Elgin to move the library as part of a broader renovation project for the Old Town Hall, which has been supported by the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

Council has approved a letter of support to West Elgin and will collaborate with the municipality on key details such as square footage, leasing arrangements, and preparations for the new facility. While the move may result in increased leasing costs for the County, options for financial collaboration are being explored, including an interest-free loan from the County to assist with the project.

This decision reflects the ongoing collaboration between the County and local municipal partners to improve and expand library facilities in line with community needs and library planning guidelines.

## Council Expresses Support for Potential West Lorne Library Expansion

Elgin County Council has expressed support in principle for the expansion of the West Lorne Library within the West Lorne Community Complex. The expansion would add up to 1,000 square feet of space to the current library, addressing critical needs such as dedicated program areas, a community meeting room, and quiet study spaces.

The additional space, made available by a vacant office suite adjacent to the current library, would bring the total library size to approximately 2,763 square feet, meeting guidelines set by the library's planning framework. The Municipality of West Elgin will be responsible for preparing the space for library use and integrating it with the existing facility.

Council's support is subject to further details being outlined in a formal "Letter of Intent" from the Municipality of West Elgin, which will include specific square footage, timelines, and lease considerations.



## **Council Supports Planet Youth Model for Youth Substance Use Prevention**

Elgin County Council expressed support for Southwestern Public Health's adoption of the Planet Youth model, a community-driven approach developed in Iceland to reduce youth substance use. The model focuses on creating environments that discourage substance use and foster protective factors through community involvement and data-driven strategies. This initiative aligns with the County's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, aiming to enhance youth well-being and safety across the region.

## **Council Approves New Tourism Wayfinding Strategy to Enhance Visitor Experience**

Elgin County Council has approved a new Tourism Wayfinding Strategy designed to improve visitor navigation and promote key attractions across the County. The strategy will replace aging signage with a more visually cohesive system, guiding visitors to popular destinations like historic downtowns and beach communities. This strategy will enhance the overall visitor experience while supporting tourism growth throughout Elgin County.



**Approximation of the design for the new County gateway signage**

## **New Provincial Planning Statement Paves Way for Growth in Elgin County**

Elgin County Council reviewed the new 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS), which provides a streamlined policy framework to support land use planning and housing development across Ontario. The PPS replaces previous provincial planning documents and introduces significant changes, such as removing the need for population and employment growth targets and allowing more flexible settlement area expansions. The new PPS will come into effect on October 20, 2024, and all local planning decisions will need to align with its guidelines.

## **County Introduces Centralized Planning Model and Plans to Gather Feedback from Local Municipal Partners**

Elgin County Council reviewed a proposal to centralize planning services across the County to enhance efficiency and address growth pressures stemming from major developments like the Volkswagen EV battery plant. The proposed model would gradually transition planning responsibilities from individual municipalities to a centralized County service in a phased approach.

Council supported the model in principle and will move forward with gathering input from local municipal partners. The Director of Planning and Development will present the model to local municipal councils to ensure their needs and concerns are fully addressed before implementation.

## **Elgin County to Raise Flag for Welcoming Week in Celebration of Diversity**

Elgin County Council approved a flag raising request from the St. Thomas-Elgin Local Immigration Partnership (STELIP) to mark Welcoming Week 2024. The flag will be raised on September 24, 2024, at the Elgin County Heritage Centre to celebrate the ongoing efforts to create an inclusive and welcoming community for newcomers. The event will reaffirm the County's commitment to supporting diversity and combating racism, xenophobia, and anti-immigrant sentiment.

For the complete **September 10, 2024 Agenda Package**, please visit the following link:  
[County Council Agenda Package](#)