



## Report to County Council

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**From:** Paul Hicks, Acting Manager of Planning

**Date:** May 14, 2024

**Subject:** PS 24-10 – Elgin County Official Plan Adoption

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### Recommendation(s):

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THAT the report titled “PS 24-10 – Elgin County Official Plan Adoption” from the Acting Manager of Planning dated May 14, 2024 be received and filed;

THAT the Council of the Corporation of the County of Elgin approves By-Law No. 24-17, being a by-law to adopt a new Official Plan for the County of Elgin; and

THAT staff be directed to prepare the statutory record in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act* to be submitted to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval.

### Introduction:

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County Staff have prepared a new official plan for Elgin County to replace the existing Official Plan (adopted in 2011). In accordance with Section 17(22) of the Planning Act, when the statutory requirements of the Act have been met, and Council is satisfied that the proposed official plan is suitable for adoption, Council may by by-law, adopt all or part of the plan and submit it to the Minister for approval.

This report is intended to provide County Council with the information required to make a decision on the adoption of the new Elgin County Official Plan.

### Background and Discussion:

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In Winter of 2021 the County embarked on a statutory review of the County Official Plan. The background review and initial public consultation for the official plan review was completed in Summer 2022. A number of expert reports were obtained to inform the new official plan. The drafting of the new Official Plan began in early September 2022, with the initial draft completed in March 2023, when the document was put on technical and public circulation until June of 2023 (i.e. circulation to the public as well as

statutory agencies and ministries, including local municipalities for comment and feedback).

Over the summer of 2023, the project was paused due to: personnel change related to staff leading the project; the release of the Draft Provincial Policy Statement 2023 (the implementation of which was later paused by the Province); and the announcement of the new VW battery plant in St. Thomas. The project was reinitiated in September 2023, when staff updated the draft Official Plan based on the comments received from the technical and public circulation of the document, and an addendum to the County's population projections and land needs assessment was undertaken in response to the battery plant announcement in the City of St. Thomas.

In January 2024 Staff brought forward a final draft official plan for County Council's consideration and endorsement, and received direction from Council to commence the statutory adoption process of the Plan, including the hosting of a statutory public open house and statutory public meeting, as well as the completion of a final technical circulation of the plan and public commenting period.

The final circulation of the plan, statutory public open house, and statutory public meeting were completed at the end of March 2024. All submissions from statutory agencies and the public were subsequently reviewed by County Staff and final proposed modifications to the plan, based on those submissions, have been incorporated into the final draft. See Appendix 'A' to this report for a summary of the submissions made, County Staff's response to the submission, and the recommended modifications made to the Official Plan. The recommended modifications to the Official Plan are incorporated in the version presented to Council with this report. This chart includes the Province's first submissions on the Official Plan (as the Ministry declined to provide comments during the first circulation of the Plan in Spring 2023).

### **Financial Implications:**

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There are no identified direct financial implications to the County with respect to the adoption of the new Official Plan.

**Alignment with Strategic Priorities:**

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<b>Serving Elgin</b>	<b>Growing Elgin</b>	<b>Investing in Elgin</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensuring alignment of current programs and services with community need.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exploring different ways of addressing community need.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engaging with our community and other stakeholders.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning for and facilitating commercial, industrial, residential, and agricultural growth.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fostering a healthy environment.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhancing quality of place.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensuring we have the necessary tools, resources, and infrastructure to deliver programs and services now and in the future.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivering mandated programs and services efficiently and effectively.

**Local Municipal Partner Impact:**

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This plan will directly impact all local municipalities in Elgin as all planning decisions made in the County, including those of local council, are required to conform to the County Official Plan.

**Communication Requirements:**

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Upon adoption of the new Official Plan, the County will be required to provide notice to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, anyone who filed a written request to be notified of the adoption, and any bodies prescribed by the Planning Act. Further, staff are required to submit the Official Plan along with statutory record to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

As has been standard practice through the development of the new Official Plan, a copy will also be posted online on the Engage Elgin platform along with the notice of adoption to provide additional notice to the public.

**Conclusion:**

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Based on the above analysis it is recommended that County Council adopt the new Elgin County Official Plan as the proposed Official Plan:

- Meets the requirements of the Planning Act;
- Is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement; and
- Constitutes good planning and is in the public interest.

All of which is Respectfully Submitted

Approved for Submission

Paul Hicks  
Acting Manager of Planning

Blaine Parkin  
Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk