

COUNTY OF ELGIN – Budget 2025 –

## Economic Development



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Development, Tourism & Strategic Initiatives

# 2024 Completed Initiatives

## Key Department successes include:

- Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Program: Conducted 92 interviews with local businesses, connecting them to resources and developing a County-wide action plan to support our business community.
- Collaborative Partnerships:
  - Supported “The Pitch,” a business competition (Elgin Business Resource Centre)
  - Supported the Young Entrepreneurs’ Initiative for networking and education (St. Thomas Chamber of Commerce, Elgin-St. Thomas Small Business Enterprise Centre)
  - Celebrated local business excellence through the Impact Awards (St. Thomas and District Chamber of Commerce)
  - Recognized small business achievements with Bridges to Better Business (Elgin-St. Thomas Small Business Enterprise Centre)
- Networking Events:
  - Held a Tourism Networking Event to launch the tourism season.
  - Partnered with local committees for the Cultivating Success rural networking event.
- Elgincentives Community Improvement Plan:
  - Approved 9 projects, generating \$189,000 in private investment.
  - Began program review to ensure its relevance and alignment with regional needs (completion anticipated by early 2025).
- Development and Permit Process Mapping: Initiated a project to make processes easier for businesses to navigate, expected completion by early 2025.

# 2024 Completed Initiatives

## Key Department successes include:

- Prepared a pitch package and marketing materials to attract new business to the Southwold employment lands.
- Launched the People of Elgin series to celebrate local business success stories to promote Elgin County
- 2024 Total Solar Eclipse: Generated significant visitor interest with an estimated 50,000 attendees.
- Visitor Guide: Redesigned taste guide with 20,132 online views and 6,000 print copies distributed
- Savour Elgin Program: Launched a cooking class pilot with the Horton Market to promote local food.
- Event Participation: Successfully represented Elgin County at major events to promote tourism.
- Visitor Stats: Increased visitor numbers at the Port Stanley Visitor Centre from 2023 to 2024.
- Wayfinding Signage Program: Improved visitor accessibility to attractions with redesigned signage.
- Unique Initiatives: Installed a decorated piano to enhance visitor interaction outside the Port Stanley Visitor Centre.

# 2025 Business Initiatives

**Initiative #1:** Update the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy to create a regional vision and action plan to support sustainable growth and tourism

**Strategic Priority:** Strategy 4: *Sustainable Community Growth*

**Success Measures:**

- Completion of the strategy
- Inclusion of feedback from the LMPs, local businesses, and residents
- Define a clear scope for economic development and tourism services
- Support from County Council and LMPs on the economic development and tourism priorities for the next 5 years
- Creation of action plan to guide resource allocation

# 2025 Business Initiatives

**Initiative #2:** Develop Employment Lands and Investment Attraction Study

**Strategic Priority:** Strategy 4: *Sustainable Community Growth*

**Success Measures:**

- Completion of the study
- Completion of a regional assessment, including an economic, employment, and real estate market trend analyses
- Completion of an employment land supply and investment readiness assessment
- Identification of the target industries with the best potential to grow the local economy
- Identification of opportunities to develop and update policies to support employment growth

# 2025 Business Initiatives

**Initiative #3:** Complete Elgincentives Review and Update

**Strategic Priority:** Strategy 4: *Sustainable Community Growth*

## **Success Measures**

- Completion of the review
- Inclusion of feedback from LMPs, businesses, and residents
- Benchmarking of the County's economic performance and incentive offerings against neighbouring and peer jurisdictions and identification of best practices
- Implementation of recommendations

# 2025 Business Initiatives

**Initiative #4:** Create and implement development and building permit educational campaign

**Strategic Priority:** Strategy 1: *Collaborative Engagement and Communication*

**Success Measures:**

- Completion of development and building permit process map
- Inclusion of feedback from Local Municipal Partners
- Inclusion of feedback from business community
- Development of print and online resources to help businesses navigate the development and building permit processes at the local and county level
- Launch of marketing campaign to raise awareness of the development and building permit process and available resources

# 2025 Business Initiatives

**Initiative #5:** Enhance economic development and complete tourism websites

**Strategic Priority:** Strategy 4: *Sustainable Community Growth*

**Success Measures:**

- Launch of new tourism website
- Creation of economic development content to support local businesses and business attraction efforts
- Increase in website visits and session length



# 2025 Business Initiatives

**Initiative #6:** Implementation of the Elgin County Tourism Wayfinding Strategy

**Strategic Priority:** Strategy 4: *Sustainable Community Growth*

**Success Measures:**

- Removal of the old tourism signs
- Installation of the new tourism signs
- Development and implementation of Phase 2 of the wayfinding strategy to support wayfinding to individual tourism businesses

# 2025 Business Initiatives

**Initiative #7:** Increase participation in trade show and event attendance to promote tourism in Elgin County

**Strategic Priority:** Strategy 4: *Sustainable Community Growth*

**Success Measures:**

- Number of events attended outside of Elgin County and quality of interactions
- Number of events attended and promoted within Elgin County
- Engagement with event promotion on social media

# 2025 Budget Highlights

2024 FTE: 5.3  
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## List resources needed to successfully complete your plan

- Economic Development and Tourism Strategy \$60,000
- Employment Lands Investment Attraction Strategy \$75,000
- Event Attendance \$ 2,500

# 2025 Proposed Budget

## Economic Development 2025 Proposed Budget

**\$1M**

Total Operating & Capital

**\$ 183.2K**

Budget Change

	2024 Budget	2024 Actuals*	2025 Proposed Budget	Budget Change 2024 to 2025
Revenue	(46,818)	(91,217)	(22,668)	24,150
Wages & Benefits Expense	509,798	438,537	532,987	23,189
Net Operating Capital WIP	397,750	366,140	533,583	135,833
Grand Total	860,730	713,460	1,043,902	183,172

\* as of December 19, 2024

Revenues Decreased:	\$24K no longer collecting signage fees with program redesign.
Wages & Benefits Increased:	\$23K wage placeholder increase and step changes.
Expenses Increased:	\$75K Employment Lands and Attraction Strategy project, \$60K Economic Development Strategy project.
Expenses Increased:	\$8K increase to amortization to match actual, \$2.5K increase to tradeshow with increase in attendance.
Expenses Decreased:	(\$10K) annually budgeted signage expense no longer required with signage program redesign.