



## Report to Growth Planning Steering Committee

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**From:** Katherine Thompson, Manager of Administrative Services/Deputy Clerk

**Date:** January 28, 2025

**Subject:** Pre-Budget Consultation Feedback for the 2025 Ontario Budget

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### **Recommendation(s):**

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THAT County Council review the attached draft Pre-Budget Consultation Feedback document and provide any necessary revisions, and

THAT staff submit the Pre-Budget Consultation Feedback document to the Minister of Finance by the February 3, 2025, deadline.

### **Introduction:**

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The Ministry of Finance is currently undertaking pre-budget consultations for the 2025 Ontario Budget. As part of this process, the Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy will be hosting a breakfast and pre-budget consultation in St. Thomas on January 28, 2025. Councillors are invited to attend this event, and as a result, the County Council meeting scheduled for that day has been moved to 10:00 a.m. to accommodate those who wish to participate in the breakfast.

However, due to the timing of the consultations coinciding with the Council and Finance Committee meetings, Councillors will be unable to attend the consultation portion of the session in person. In light of this, it was recommended that staff draft a feedback document to be reviewed by the Growth Planning Steering Committee before being presented to County Council on January 28, 2025.

On January 24, 2025 the Growth Planning Steering Committee reviewed a draft Budget Consultation Feedback document and provided suggested amendments. Staff have incorporated these amendments into the attached document.

### **Background and Discussion:**

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County Council provided the following direction for the pre-budget consultation:

**Address the Increased Need for Infrastructure Funding:** Acknowledging the growing demand for infrastructure development and maintenance across the region, Council has highlighted the need for additional funding to support these projects.

**Request for Full Refund of Provincial HST Portion:** Council has requested that the provincial portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) be refunded in full, which would ease financial burdens on the municipality.

**Assessment Roll Update:** County Council has pointed out that the assessment roll has not been updated in nearly a decade. Council has expressed the need for an updated roll to reflect the current values and ensure fair and accurate assessments for municipal taxation.

The Growth Planning Steering Committee provided the following additional feedback:

### **Social-Economic Prosperity Review**

The Growth Planning Steering Committee recommended that the County of Elgin express support for AMO's call for a Social-Economic Prosperity Review and tie this to the request for additional infrastructure funding.

### **Add Additional Details to Assessment Roll Update**

The Growth Planning Steering Committee recommended that staff add some information to the request to return the assessment roll that specifically speaks to what the financial implications of the assessments remaining at 2016 dates. The Committee suggested using specific data from one of Elgin's Local Municipal Partners to demonstrate how an outdated assessment negatively impacts municipalities. The Municipality of Bayham has this data already compiled and once they have provided it to Elgin County staff, it will be added to Elgin's submission for support Elgin's argument.

Staff has utilized information from Elgin County's most recent submission to the Ministry of Finance, incorporating updated data and specific concerns from the region.

### **Next Steps:**

**Submission:** Once Council has provided additional feedback, staff will ensure that the submission is made to the Ministry of Finance by the February 3, 2025, deadline.

### **Financial Implications:**

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None.

### **Alignment with Strategic Priorities:**

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Serving Elgin	Growing Elgin	Investing in Elgin
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring alignment of current programs and services with community need.  <input type="checkbox"/> Exploring different ways of addressing community need.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engaging with our community and other stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning for and facilitating commercial, industrial, residential, and agricultural growth.  <input type="checkbox"/> Fostering a healthy environment.  <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Delivering mandated programs and services efficiently and effectively.

**Local Municipal Partner Impact:**

None.

**Communication Requirements:**

Staff will incorporate Council feedback into a final document and ensure that this feedback is submitted by the deadline of February 3, 2025.

**Conclusion:**

The pre-budget consultation process presents an important opportunity for the County to raise key issues with the provincial government ahead of the 2025 Ontario Budget. By addressing infrastructure needs, requesting a full refund on the provincial portion of the HST, and seeking an updated assessment roll, the County is advocating for necessary supports to ensure the continued growth and sustainability of local services. The feedback document attached reflects the Council’s priorities, and once finalized, it will be submitted to the Ministry by the required deadline.

All of which is Respectfully Submitted

Approved for Submission

Katherine Thompson  
 Manager of Administrative Services/  
 Deputy Clerk

Blaine Parkin  
 Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk