

COUNTY OF ELGIN –

# Summary of Budget 2025



Jennifer Ford, Director of Finance/Treasurer



# Discussion touch points for Budget Summary:



Appendix A includes the 2025 proposed Business Plan & Budget that was compiled using excerpts from our Committee presentations to date which has been posted on our website for public information.

Further information was requested related to Value for Service and considerations related to impacts that consideration have made on our 2025 Business Plan review and beyond.

Appendix B outlines the proposed Budget By-Law populated with the proposed 2025 Ratios and Rates for the 2025 fiscal year.

Appendix C is the Borrowing By-Law that is annually approved by Council for the purposes of temporary borrowings throughout the year as needed.

Appendix D includes the Power Point presentation that will be presented to accompany Treasurer report at County Council on Feb 25, 2025.

Appendix E includes summarized public comments received between Feb 12 and noon on Feb 20, 2025

# Appendix A - 2025 Budget Process so far

Committee members requested Open Houses in advance of the 2025 budget.

A video and materials were compiled in preparation based on the 2024 budget materials

Open Houses were conducted Nov 26, 27, and 28, 2024 in various locations across the County.

Committee first received the budget documents related to Department incentives on Jan 28<sup>th</sup>

This presentation was required to continue at another time and was completed at Finance Committee on Feb 4<sup>th</sup>

Committee had asked for more information related to some of the initiatives presented

On Feb 11<sup>th</sup>, Staff presented more detailed information for the Committee

Committee requested further consultation on the budget from the public.

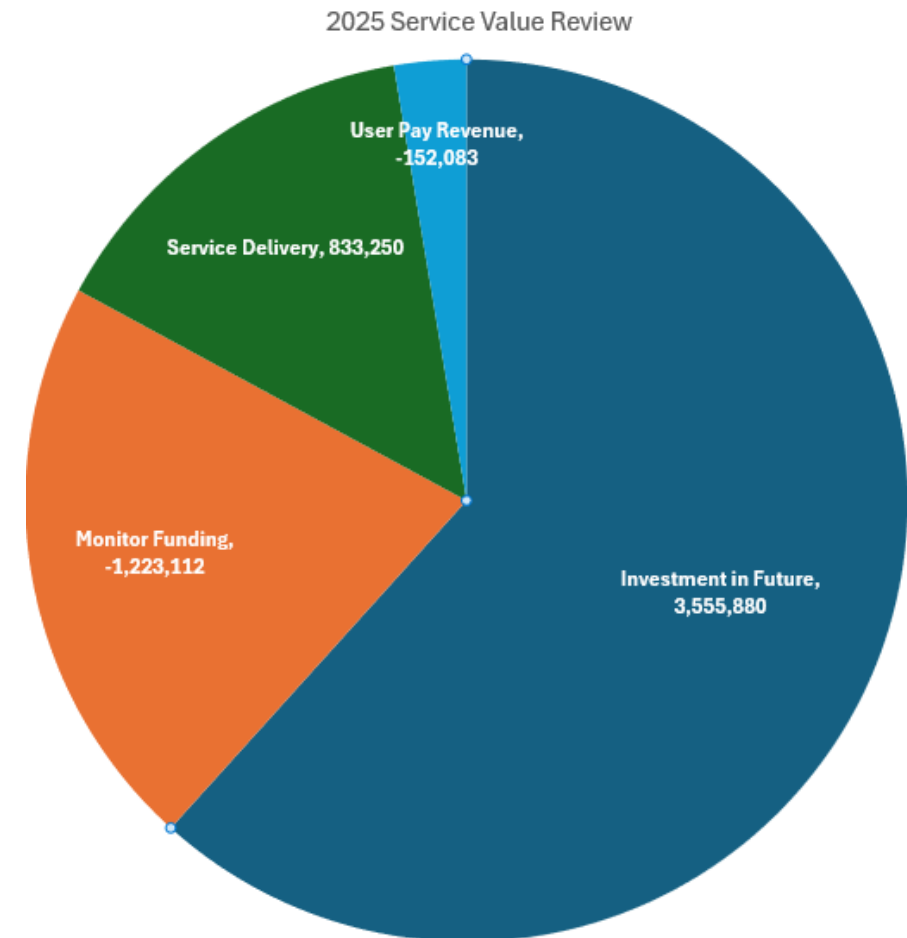
A consolidation of the information was created from excerpts of our presentations and posted online from Feb 12 to Feb 20 – Presented as Appendix A

Committee recommended that the budget Bylaw for the rates and ratios be presented at Council

# Review of Value for Service and Impacts on current and future Budget plan

Finance Committee members also requested further information related to the highlights of staff review with regards to value for service throughout the 2025 budget process. Considerations and reviews for the 2025 budget year also consider future positive impacts/ Considerations fit into four main categories:

User Pay Revenue (\$152,083)  
Service Delivery \$833,250  
Monitor Funding (\$1,223,112)  
Investment in Future \$3,555,880



## 2025 User Pay Revenue (\$152,083)

Impact	Initiative	Explanation of Impact	Anticipated 2025 Impact
User Pay Revenue	Commercial Rental Market Lease Analysis - Administration Building	A commercial office space market lease analysis will be conducted, along with a Space needs Study, anticipating to justify an increase in rental rates for tenants and increase revenue.	\$50,000
User Pay Revenue	White's Station property appraisal	County land asset will be appraised for potential divestment or increase in revenue as determined by County Council.	\$15,000
User Pay Revenue	Road and Bridge Ownership Rationalization	Transportation Master Plan will study jurisdictional appropriateness of assets with potential for divesting or downloading assets to reduce current and future costs. Every 5 years	\$300,000
User Pay Revenue	Shared Services Review	Review of Shared Services with LMP's to ensure equalized compensation for shared services to be completed in house is value added.	-\$25,000
User Pay Revenue	Homes	TL SemiPrivate Rates will be grandfathered to Private Rates over time - Increase to Housekeeping and Maintenance hours - Adding hours to cover additional Footprint	-\$256,233
User Pay Revenue	Planning	Increase to Planning fees	-\$235,850

## 2025 Service Delivery \$833,250

Impact	Initiative	Explanation of Impact	Anticipated 2025 Impact
Service Delivery	Senior Policy Planner	The planning and development department delayed the hiring of a senior policy planner until the on-boarding of LMPs to streamline and centralize planning services for the community. This will help to keep the department aligned with user demand.	-\$110,000
Service Delivery	Review of need to hire GIS analyst	A GIS student will be hired for 4-months in Engineering to assist in corporate demand across planning, asset management, and LMP requests, in lieu of hiring a permanent full time employee. This is solution that offers additional capacity and value as anticipated planning needs increase and more capacity is required.	\$15,500
Service Delivery	Vehicle replacement	Based on past practice the Library Van was scheduled for replacement every 5 years and then was used by Tourism. Replacement of this vehicle is being reviewed annually and it was determined based on R&M that it can be further deferred until future year 2026 or 2027. Van is a 2019 (190K) Kms.	-\$45,000
Service Delivery	US \$\$ Increase	Approximately 5% depreciation in Canadian dollar between 2024 and 2025 decreased buying power of \$103,000 of electronic resources and periodicals purchased in USD - managed within budget parameters. Ability to sustain service levels is becoming challenging while balancing consumer expectations.	\$5,150
Service Delivery	Fine Free	Library fine free phase 2 revenue reduction absorbed into the department costs. Use of Donations is helping to offset some of these pressures.	\$15,000
Service Delivery	Use of Donations to fund Programming	0% increase to library program costs through by increasing use of donations	-\$5,000
Service Delivery	Tariffs	The effects of imposed tariffs are unknown at time of draft and are not built into the current budget. Purchasing Policy requires inhouse review and refinement to assist in further mitigating these potential increases.	\$0

## 2025 Service Delivery \$833,250 (cont'd Pg 2)

Impact	Initiative	Explanation of Impact	Anticipated 2025 Impact
Service Delivery	Managing the CPI Increase	Annual CPI Increase in 2024 was 2% Oct over Oct. Increases related to this factor managed by Other Revenue or Funding increases - Potential offset equal to $\$108,000,000 \times .02 = (2,160,000) + 1,600,000$	\$560,000
Service Delivery	Inhouse Publications	Utilizing in-house resources and earned (free) media instead of paid promotions. Graphic Design is done by current Communications person. External advertising costs are not containable and are managed by each department budget.	-\$20,000
Service Delivery	Investment in Technology	Analysis was done between inhouse designed Laserfiche Permit system and a Cloud based Permit system. Migration to Cloud Permit will reduce administration of permits, improve user experience, and more effectively deliver this service to the end user.	\$8,000
Service Delivery	Development of Transportation Asset Needs and Capital Plan	Transportation and other capital assets are fully managed in-house. The development of the capital investment plan by staff in-house reduces the need for external consultants by capitalizing on existing corporate knowledge base. More sophisticated levels of analysis would be outsourced due to complexity and capacity. The last Road Needs Study completed by a consultant cost \$100,000 (2008).	-\$100,000
Service Delivery	Corporate Asset Management Plan	Corporate assets are fully managed in-house. The development of the Corporate Asset Management plan by staff reduces the need for external consultants by capitalizing on existing corporate knowledge base. More sophisticated levels of analysis would be outsourced due to complexity and capacity. Prior studies completed by a consultant cost \$100,000 (2008). This study is required to be updated every 5 years.	-\$100,000
Service Delivery	Visitor Guide	The cost of printing has increased dramatically over the past 10 years. In 2012, Tourism printed 50,000 visitor guides for \$21,095.00. In 2019, Tourism printed 25,000 guides for \$10,140. For 2025, Tourism printed 5,000 guides for \$8,572. We are printing fewer tourism materials and focusing more on digital advertising, including a new tourism website and social media. Tourism used to distribute the visitor guide across the province to the Travels Centres, Hotels, and OnRoutes. The cost to distribute the guides in 2023 was \$8,000. We have discontinued this program and moved to online communications that reach more people.	-\$8,000



## 2025 Service Delivery \$833,250 (cont'd Pg 3)

Impact	Initiative	Explanation of Impact	Anticipated 2025 Impact
Service Delivery	Wayfinding Signage Program Redirection	Review of this program identified that signs were at end of life and all required a much needed refresh and replacement. Over the course of this program Elgin had not broken even and further challenges existed related to monitoring, removal of signs due to business turnover, and annual unpaid fees. Additionally, 200 signs caused road signage clutter that competed with other required road signage. After review, it was determined that this signage program was viable upon its inception but now the audience has more reliance on readily available social media, online portal options, and GIS mapping that indicated a more modernized direction available that aligned to this service.	-\$200,000
Service Delivery	New Grants Program	Addition to Sponsorship Program now online - 1/2 of 1% on the prior year levy not eligible for offset by Revenue or Funding	\$240,000
Service Delivery	Social Services	Increase costs as per our Municipal Partnership with City of St. Thomas	\$35,600
Service Delivery	Southwest Public Health Unit	Increase of levy on the County from Southwest Public Health Unit shared service with County of Oxford, City of St. Thomas, and Ministry of Health	\$102,000
Service Delivery	Information Technology	10 year AMPlan outlines 2 cycles of Equipment exchange with lifecycle being approximately 5 years on IT equipment. Some existing equipment is now more than 10 years old due to non investment in previous years. Slower productivity and age of equipment requires more maintenance , causes more downtime, and user frustration. Increases to reliance on technology and modernization throughout the County requires investment in either hardware, software, or Cloud based applications which is not possible using outdated technology that cannot accommodate new programs. The necessary continuous management cycle of this service requires policy, prudent planning, and Servicer Provider oversight to maximize investment.	\$440,000



## 2025 Monitor Funding (\$1,223,112)

Impact	Initiative	Explanation of Impact	Anticipated 2025 Impact
Monitor Funding	Phragmites Funding Submission	Staff have applied for ongoing funding to treat Phragmites on County roads through the Ministry of Natural Resources. If successful, funding is valued at \$47,000. Not in current Budget plan as outcomes unknown.	-\$47,000
Monitor Funding	Housing Enabling Fund - Fingal Reconstruction	Staff have applied for funding through the Province's Housing Enabling Fund and if successful will be valued at up to \$3.5M for future year project in 2026. No current year budget impact	\$0
Monitor Funding	Homes	Maximize Funding opportunities for One-time operational funding to help relieve financial pressures and address key priorities	-\$627,900
Monitor Funding	Homes	Increase per diem for funding related to Case Mix Index and Direct Hours of Care.	-\$603,212
Monitor Funding	Homes	Education Lead and Coordinator Role position, value added service to support recruitment and retention initiatives, mandatory education and legislative compliance. Costs are fully supported through Provincial Funding.	\$0
Monitor Funding	Homes	Nurse Practitioner role - 1 FTE across the three Long-Term Care Homes, value added service to support resident care and services (medical and nursing). Fully funded through "Hiring More Nurse Practitioners in Long-Term Care Program" funding. Funding covers full cost of Hire	\$0
Monitor Funding	Homes	Implementation of Technology Software, Hardware and Training to improve resident care and services supported through Integrated Technology Solutions Funding and one time funding except for dietary department hardware	\$55,000

## 2025 Investment in the Future \$3,555,880

Impact	Initiative	Explanation of Impact	Anticipated 2025 Impact
Investment in Future	Terrace Lodge Debt - Reduction of Impact	Terrace Lodge Debt Decision to partially Self Finance as MoH repays us - initiative has a 25 year impact and saves the ratepayer a significant amount over the course of the 25 year plan (saves \$773,212 for 25 years on interest costs)	-\$773,212
Investment in Future	Development Charges Study	Development Charges Study will assist with an increase to revenue that support Capital projects related to Growth. If implemented there will be a 5 year phase in period delaying the effects of this program and increasing our reliance on the Growth Reserve (expected future increase in revenue \$800K per year for Growth related projects)	\$65,000
Investment in Future	Surplus set aside and Use of Reserves = prudent Reserve Management	Fail to Plan? Plan to Fail. . . .The growth of the County will require NEW investment in tangible capital assets. This future investment will require significant upfront planning and Financial resources. These costs are better paid for with Growth related revenue. Council recently heard about Bike Lanes which currently do not exist. We know that investment will not be limited to just Bike lanes, so Council has agreed to setaside current growth Growth in anticipation of the need for a reserve for this purpose. The Growth Reserve will be used to mitigate a spike in the Levy or need for debt into the future. (2026 & 2027 will see a use of capital reserve required) (2023 Growth Reserve sits at \$5M and is available for future Growth needs)	\$1,095,000
Investment in Future	Increased Efficiency with modernized technology	Lighting fixtures - florecent lights at Bobier Villa (2024) and Elgin Manor (2025) and Terrace Lodge (2026) replaced with LEDs - Replaced roof top units - Elgin Manor (kitchen makeup air unit) - Replaced Boiler - improved efficiency 25%	\$0
Investment in Future	Sparta Line Resurfacing - Union	A section of Sparta Line (CR 27) was scheduled to receive a new asphalt wearing surface and this project was deferred due to potential planned servicing by the municipality that will necessitate road excavations.	-\$230,908
Investment in Future	Window replacement and façade improvement- Administration Building	Windows to be replaced at Administration Building to eliminate drafts. External facade to be replaced to establish maximum weather resistance to further secure recent investments and extend life of asset another 40 years. There is no debt to manage these value added improvements.	\$3,400,000

# 2025 Review of Value for Service

Operating Budget	Budget 2024	Budget 2025	\$ increase	% of Revenue increase
Revenue	(20,721,703)	(21,954,278)	(1,232,575)	-5.9%
Funding	(32,863,314)	(37,078,135)	(4,214,821)	-12.8%
Levy	(48,207,509)	(49,882,187)	(1,674,678)	-3.5%
Total Revenue	(101,792,526)	(108,914,600)	(7,122,074)	

## Fast Facts about Total Revenue:

- 34.0% of Revenue is derived from Federal or Provincial funding sources in 2025
- 32.3% of Revenue was derived from Federal or Provincial funding sources in 2024
- 1.8% Increase Year over Year
- 20.2% of Revenue is generated through User Fees in 2025
- 20.4% of Revenue was generated through User Fees in 2024
- .2% Decrease Year over Year
- 45.8% of Revenue is generated by Property Taxation in 2025
- 47.4% of Revenue was generated by Property Taxation in 2024
- 1.6% Decrease Year over Year

## Fast Facts about Taxation

- Levy % increase is not comparable to Tax rate increase
- Total tax revenue increase is 3.5%
- Tax rate increase is 1.49%
- Changes to Assessment base or Ratio adjustments account for 2.01%.

# 2025 Review of Value for Service

## Fast Facts about 2025 Funding & Revenue for our Long-Term Care Envelope:

Council's decision to not take out the full amount of Debt related to TL Rebuild

- Maintains Ministry funding levels of this service within the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile
- Capital contribution is then consistent with regular funding envelope

LTCH - Funding alignment			
Operating & Capital Funding Sources	Homes Resident	Provincial	Municipal
Homes funding	18-20%	60-65%	17-20%
Capital Project Terrace Lodge		63%	37%

## 2025 Review of Value for Service

				% of Wage/Ben Increase
	(101,792,526)	(108,914,600)		
County Wages/Benefits	9,814,669	10,629,510	814,841	2.3%
Costs of New	-	626,000	626,000	
LTCH Wages/Benefits	25,677,859	27,336,016	1,658,157	6.5%
Total Wages/Benefits	35,492,528	38,591,526	3,098,998	

### Fast Facts about 2025 Wages & Benefits:

**35%** of Total Revenue is used to pay for Wages& Benefits

**71%** of Wages & Benefits is dedicated to the care of residents in our **Long-Term Care Homes**

# 2025 Review of Value for Service

## Fast Facts about 2025 Operations:

**41%** of Revenue is dedicated to Service Delivery

**6%** of Revenue supports operations within our Long-Term Care Homes

**4%** of Revenue is returned to LMP's for Roads Maintenance Service Delivery on County Roads

**14%** of Revenue supports Ambulance Services

**2%** of Revenue supports the Southwest Public Health Unit

**2%** of Revenue supports the Social Services

**13%** of Revenue supports other county Services

Operating Budget	Budget 2024	Budget 2025	\$\$ increase	% of increase
Ambulance Services	14,936,992	15,651,457	714,464	4.8%
Health Unit	1,852,600	1,954,915	102,315	5.5%
Social Services	2,398,834	2,434,462	35,628	1.5%
Local Road Maintenance Agreement	3,922,919	4,001,377	78,458	2.6%
County Services and Operations	12,812,699	14,360,877	1,548,178	25.3%
LTCH Program Support	5,687,726	6,219,798	532,072	17.7%
Total Operations	41,611,770	44,622,885	3,011,115	49.3%
Total Expenses	77,104,298	83,214,411	6,110,113	
Available for Capital use			(1,011,961)	



# 2025 Review of Value for Service

## Fast Facts about 2025 Capital Projects:

**24%** of Revenue is dedicated to Replacement of Tangible Capital Assets needed to deliver services to our ratepayers:

- Roads
- Bridges
- Library Books
- Long-Term Care Homes Equipment
- Computer Hardware

Available for Capital use				(1,011,961)
Capital Projects	Budget 2024	Budget 2025	\$\$ increase	% of Capital increase
Capital Projects	23,527,368	24,273,103	745,735	3.2%
Repayment of Debt	1,161,974	1,427,086	265,112	22.8%
<b>Total Capital costs</b>	<b>24,689,342</b>	<b>25,700,189</b>	<b>1,010,847</b>	
<b>Balanced Budget</b>	<b>1,114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,114)</b>	



# Appendix B – Budget By-Law



Appendix B outlines the proposed Budget By-Law populated with the proposed 2025 Ratios and Rates for the 2025 fiscal year.

The Tax rate increase for this year is 1.49%. The tax rates have been adjusted up by this % in the rates section of the By-Law to reflect the correctly adjusted percentages by property tax class.

A new Ratio for Aggregate Extraction was introduced this year and has been added to the list at the prescribed rate by the Minister of Finance. Properties have been moved from the Industrial Class and it is expected that they will not be subjected to Education taxes.



## Appendix B – Budget By-Law



Prior Year By-Laws have included provision for grants to the Municipalities of West Elgin and Dutton/Dunwich to exempt these municipalities from paying tax on a portion of municipally owned property containing landfills. This began in 2016 when MPAC moved these properties from their previously exempt status to a new class for the purpose of Landfills in Elgin County. Staff have made provision in the 2025 budget to continue this practice.

The 2025 departmental budgets for Operating and Capital have been added to the By-Law in summary to reflect the use of funds for the proposed budget.

# Appendix C – Borrowing By-Law

Appendix C is the Borrowing By-Law that is annually approved by Council for the purposes of temporary borrowings throughout the year as needed:

- Enables blanket Short-Term only borrowings from our lending facility
- Section 407 c.25 of the Municipal Act allows for borrowings by certain parameters throughout the year
- Ensures our ability to maintain trusted working relationships with our employees, vendors and partners and delivery critical services to our community such as Long-term care and Ambulance Services .
- Can be leaned on in times of emergency such as during Covid 19 pandemic

Council approval of the Budget By-Law and the Borrowing By-Law are two pieces of documentation that our banking partner requires to maintain our credit facility (promissory notes) in good standing.



# Appendix F:

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

### 2025 Business Plan & Budget

**Jennifer Ford**, *Director of Finance/Treasurer & ITS*

February 25, 2025



# Agenda

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Background

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Proposed Business Plan  
& Budget Document

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Engage Elgin

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Survey

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Survey Results

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Questions & Comments



# Background

## **COUNCIL DIRECTION**

At its meeting on February 11, 2025, Council directed staff to engage the community in the budget process and to seek feedback regarding the 2025 Proposed Business Plan & Budget.

## **WHY IS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE BUDGET PROCESS IMPORTANT?**

Participatory budgeting allows the community to engage in discussions regarding the County's financial and budgetary processes. It provides a platform for public feedback on municipal finance matters, such as the allocation of public resources, prioritization of services, and oversight of public spending.

# 2025 Proposed Budget & Business Plan



[EngageElgin.ca/2025BusinessPlanBudget](https://EngageElgin.ca/2025BusinessPlanBudget)



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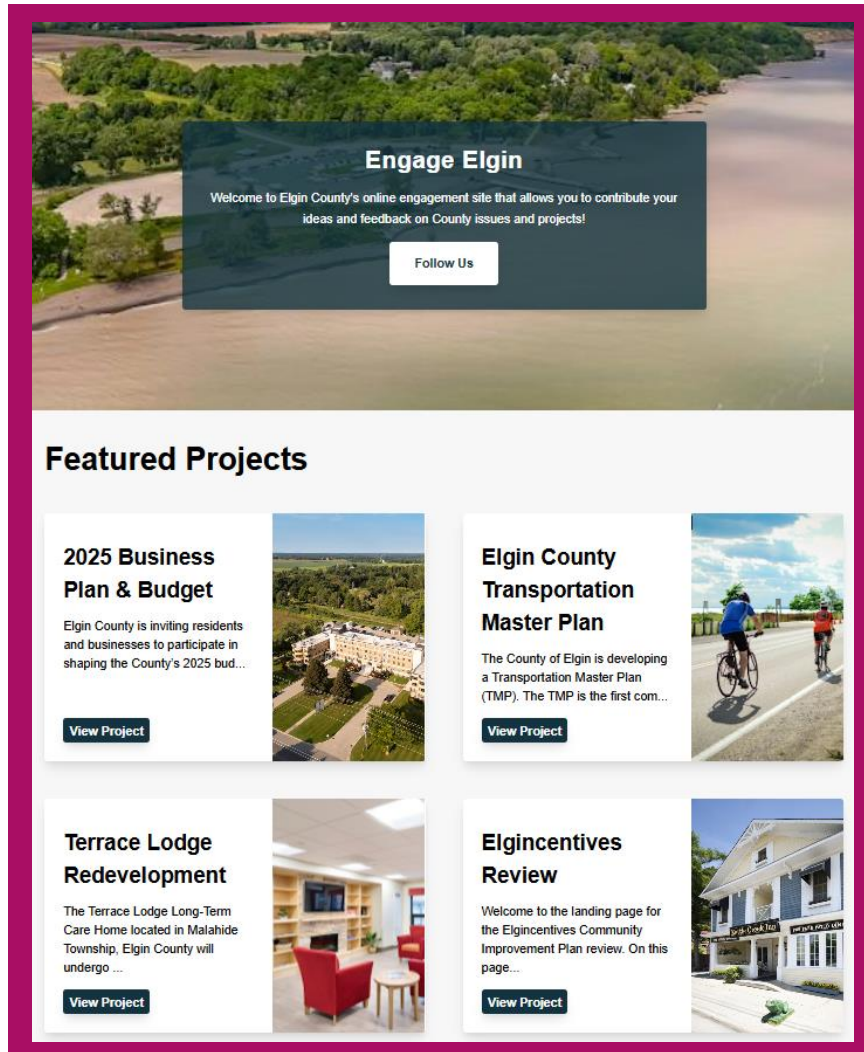
2025 BUSINESS PLAN & BUDGET 2



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8	Your County Service Areas		

The *2025 Proposed Business Plan and Budget* document was updated this year to enhance public understanding of the County's budgeting process and how the 2025 county levy and tax rate are established.

## Online Engagement Website



### WEBPAGE :

[EngageElgin.ca/2025BusinessPlanBudget](https://EngageElgin.ca/2025BusinessPlanBudget)

This webpage contains essential information, including key dates, the timeline for the budget process, and important documents such as the proposed budget. It assists the community in navigating the budget approval process and outlines what is being proposed for 2025.

### WEBPAGE RESULTS:

**FEBRUARY 12, 2025 - FEBRUARY 20, 2025**



256

Total Webpage Visits









25

Downloads of the 2025 Proposed Business Plan & Budget Document

# Promotional Materials

## Poster



	25 Posters placed throughout the County Administration Building
	7 Posters placed within the LMP's Administration Buildings
	3 Posters placed within the County's Long-Term Care Homes
	10 Posters placed within the County's Library Branches
	1 Poster placed within the Elgin County Heritage Centre
	1 Poster placed within the County's Provincial Offences Building



# Promotional Materials

## External Communications



Press Release sent to 12 local media contacts (Feb 13), MyFM shared it on Feb 14



Press Release added to the County's website in the news section (Feb 13)



Shared by LMP's Facebook Pages (Feb 14)



Shared with LMP's Economic Development Committees (Feb 14)



Shared by Establish Media on Facebook (Feb 14)



Included in the St. Thomas & District Chamber of Commerce's Green Mail E-Newsletter (Feb 18)



Included in the Aylmer & Area Chamber Of Commerce's E-Newsletter (Feb 18)



Included in the County's Economic Development & Tourism Member E-Newsletter (Feb 18) - 198 people opened the e-newsletter, 21 link clicks

# Promotional Materials

## Elgin Facebook & LinkedIn Pages



10 posts on the County Facebook Page (Total Views\*: 14,283, Total Reach\*: 7,602, Total Link Clicks: 36)



Posts on the County's LinkedIn Page (Total Impressions\*: 366, Total Clicks: 65)



Shared by the Elgin County Heritage Centre Facebook Page (Feb 13)



Shared by the Elgin County Library Facebook Page (Feb 13)



Shared by the Elgin County Archives Facebook Page (Feb 13)

\* Total Views: The number of times your content was played or displayed.

\* Total Reach: This metric counts reach from the organic or paid distribution of your post, including if it was boosted.

\* Total Impressions: Views when the post is at least 50% on screen, or when it is clicked, whichever comes first.



# Survey

A one (1) question survey was published on Elgin's Engage Elgin: 2025 Proposed Business Plan & Budget webpage. We asked:

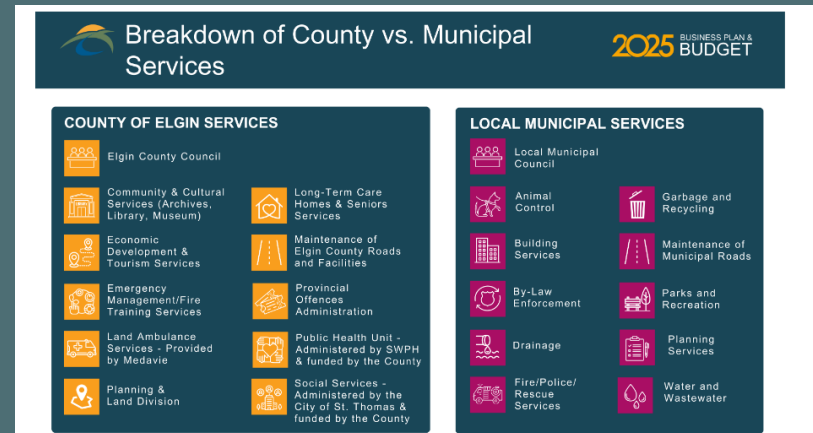
1 Please provide your feedback on Elgin County's 2025 Proposed Business Plan & Budget (250 Words Max).

## We Want YOUR Feedback on the Elgin County 2025 Proposed Business Plan & Budget!

Elgin County Council is inviting residents and businesses to participate in shaping the County's 2025 budget by providing feedback on the *2025 Proposed Business Plan & Budget*. Public input is crucial in determining service levels, programs, and infrastructure investments, which will ultimately affect the County's Levy and tax rates.

The public consultation period will run from February 13 to February 20, 2025. This is a valuable opportunity for residents and businesses to have their voices heard and help shape Elgin's financial priorities.

The image below provides a break of County Services vs. Local Municipal Services. **We are looking for feedback on County Services only! Please note that while the City of St. Thomas is geographically located within Elgin County, St. Thomas is a separate city from Elgin.** If you have feedback on your Local Municipal Services, please contact your Local Municipality.



# Survey Results



**24** Online Surveys Completed  
by 15 Individuals\*

A full list of comments received are provided as an  
attachement to the Council report

\* The 24 online surveys are as of 3pm on February 20, 2025 (if any additional comments are received they'll be presented at County Council on February 25, 2025)



# Recommendations



THAT the 2025 budget as summarized in the “2025 Proposed Business Plan & Budget” in Appendix A be approved with a tax rate increase of 1.49%, and

THAT Council directs that a By-Law, generally in the form of Appendix “B”, be added to March 11, 2025 agenda to adopt the 2025 budget, and,

THAT this resolution constitutes notice for the purpose of By-Law 24-15 that Council intends to consider a by-law to adopt the 2025 budget at its March 11, 2025 meeting, and,

THAT the Borrowing By-Law (25-08) as outlined in Appendix C be approved as presented, and,

THAT the Treasurer, CAO, and Warden be authorized to carry out Option #2 related to Debt financing for Terrace Lodge in the amount of \$6M for 10 Years, and,

THAT the County of Elgin will undertake an analysis of shared services with their Local Municipal Partners in 2025 and report back, and;

THAT, in response to the letter from the Municipality of Central Elgin, staff be directed to reach out to Hospice (Elgin) to advise them of the process for the County’s newly established Grants program and ask that they fill out an application for consideration under this program.

# Questions & Comments

