



Report to Committee of the Whole

From: Brian Masschaele, Director of Community and Cultural Services

Date: July 8, 2025

Subject: Analysis of Consultation Process on the Relocation of Aylmer Library to East Elgin Community Complex

Recommendation(s):

THAT the report titled “Analysis of Consultation Process on the Relocation of Aylmer Library to East Elgin Community Complex” from the Director of Community and Cultural Services dated July 8, 2025 be received and filed; and

THAT Elgin County Council request a commitment as soon as feasible from the Board of Management of the East Elgin Community Complex to accommodate the Aylmer branch of the Elgin County Library based on County Council’s identified space needs to take effect as soon as January 1, 2028; and

That County Council engage in further discussions with the Board of Management of the East Elgin Community Complex should such a commitment be received on matters such as capital renovations and a leasing agreement to accommodate the Aylmer branch of the Elgin County Library; and

THAT copies of this report be circulated to the Councils of the Town of Aylmer and Township of Malahide.

Introduction:

At the March 11, 2025 meeting of Elgin County Council, staff were directed as follows:

“THAT Elgin County Library staff be authorized to lead a community consultation process regarding future accommodation of the Aylmer branch of the Elgin County Library at the East Elgin Community Complex before the end of May 2025 as outlined in the March 11, 2025 report titled “Community Consultation Process for Relocation of Aylmer Library Branch” from the Director of Community and Cultural Services and in response to the resolution on this matter approved by Township of Malahide Council.”

This report fulfils this staff direction by providing an analysis of the results of this consultation process.

Background and Discussion:

Elgin County Library staff led a community consultation process over the month of May 2025. [Engage Elgin](#) was utilized to facilitate this process which involved the following components:

- Weekly advertisements in the Aylmer Express and through the County's social media accounts promoting the public meeting and survey.
- A public presentation and meeting on May 6th, 2025 at the East Elgin Community Complex (EECC). 56 individuals attended this session (not including staff). This included the County Warden and some members of Aylmer and Malahide Councils. The presentation slides and ensuing recording can be viewed on the [Engage Elgin site](#).
- A public survey that was made available on-line and in hard copy at the Aylmer Library from May 6th to 28th. There was a total of 224 responses to this survey, including 49 in paper format that were then entered into Engage Elgin so the results could be analyzed in tandem with on-line submissions.
- A survey conducted by Aylmer Library staff between April 10th and May 5th that asked customers how they travelled to the library, i.e. walking versus driving.

Survey Analysis

- Of the 224 total responses, 118 (52.7%) indicated support for re-location to EECC; 106 (47.3%) indicated they were opposed to such a move.
- Aylmer residents were slightly opposed to such a move and Malahide residents were slightly in favour.
- There were noticeable variations in support based on the age of respondents, with the highest support for re-location being amongst those individuals who identified as being between the ages of 25 and 54 (62% in favour). Respondents aged 55 and over were more opposed to re-location (60% opposed). Respondents who indicated that they have children in the home indicated 56% support for re-location.
- 66% of respondents indicated that they drove to the library and 34% indicated that they walked. The in-branch survey solicited 1,553 responses and is likely a more accurate reflection on this issue. This survey revealed that 1,260 respondents (81%) drove to the branch and 293 walked (19%). One conclusion is that the vast majority of users drive to the branch.
- Frequency of use of the library generally did not influence overall results. For instance, those who indicated that they use the library at least weekly were slightly in support of re-location (54%).

The slides attached to this report provide a more detailed snapshot on the feedback received from the survey.

Financial Implications:

Not applicable.

Advancement of the Strategic Plan:

Strategy #5 – Community Well-being and Inclusivity

Goal 3: Future expansion of the Aylmer Library will increase utilization of the County's library system.

Local Municipal Partner Impact:

The consultation process indicates that there is modest support for re-locating the Aylmer Library to EECC. Staff are recommending that this option now be pursued with the EECC Board to solicit a formal commitment to accommodating the branch at the complex. Once such a commitment is confirmed, discussions between County Council and the EECC Board can then proceed regarding matters such as the level of capital renovations that will be required to accommodate the branch and the terms of a leasing agreement, with the goal of occupancy as soon as January 1st, 2028.

Communication Requirements:

It is recommended that a copy of this report be circulated to the Councils of the Town of Aylmer and Township of Malahide.

Conclusion:

The County's consultation process on re-locating the Aylmer branch of the Elgin County Library reveals that there is slight support for such a move but it is fair to conclude that opinions are divided which is in keeping with the long-standing debates and discussions on this issue. It may seem that the general sentiment is that residents are strongly opposed to such a move based on recent media coverage and attendance at a separate public meeting convened in April by the Aylmer Express. The County's consultation process reveals that is not the case. County Council can draw from the results of this consultation process that there is a solid base of support for re-location to EECC which is being expressed in much more subtle ways. Furthermore, there is a strong base of support from members of the community who represent the library's current and future users who tend to be less vocal on this issue.

There is a path forward that may involve shorter and longer-term solutions. In the shorter term (beyond the expiration of the current lease at the Old Town Hall location on December 31st, 2027), the Aylmer branch can be re-located to EECC while the Town of Aylmer fundraises, designs and builds an expansion at the downtown site. This also assures that the library has stable premises from which to operate while a construction project proceeds downtown for completion in 2030 at the very earliest. Staff recognize that such an approach will impact the level of capital renovations that the EECC Board will be willing to make to accommodate the library if it is not a longer-term commitment

and that certainly needs to be part of County Council's decision-making process on this issue. It is also within County Council's sole jurisdiction to make re-location to EECC a longer-term solution.

All of which is Respectfully Submitted

Approved for Submission

Brian Masschaele
Director of Community and
Cultural Services

Blaine Parkin
Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk