



Report to County Council

From: Brian Masschaele, Director of Community and Cultural Services

Date: April 14, 2026

Subject: CCS 26-03 West Lorne Library Expansion Update

Recommendation(s):

THAT the report titled “CCS 26-03 West Lorne Library Expansion Update” from the Director of Community and Cultural Services dated April 14, 2026 be received and filed

Introduction:

The Municipality of West Elgin recently approved a tender to proceed with renovations to expand the West Lorne Library. This report provides County Council with an overview of the project, associated timelines and matters for future consideration.

Background and Discussion:

At the September 10, 2024 meeting, County Council approved the following recommendations:

“THAT Elgin County Council affirms support in principle for an expansion to the West Lorne Library in the West Lorne Community Complex of up to one thousand square feet and in the space adjacent to the Library’s current location, subject to the terms and conditions of the County of Elgin’s *Library Branch Construction Policy*; and,

THAT staff be directed to work with the Municipality of West Elgin to supply further information to County Council as part of a “Letter of Intent” from the Municipality of West Elgin as outlined in the County’s *Library Branch Construction Policy* for formal adoption at a later date.”

West Elgin Council approved a tender to proceed with these renovations at their March 12, 2026 meeting. The following is an overview of the project:

- Renovations will be proceeding at the West Lorne Community Complex where the West Lorne branch of the Elgin County Library is located. The branch currently comprises 1,793 square feet of assignable library space. This project

will result in an expansion of approximately 1,000 square feet, resulting in approximately 2,800 square feet of assignable library space. A plan of the area to be renovated is attached to this report.

- Renovations include demolition of a partition wall, flooring replacement and general building upgrades. Renovations may take up to six months, with occupancy anticipated to be no later than the end of October 2026.
- Renovations are also proceeding to create accessible washroom facilities and upgrades to West Elgin's Council Chamber also located in the building. However, these projects are not encompassed in the assignable lease space for the library.

The full scope of this project means that there will not be any space available to facilitate temporary library service on site. Therefore, the branch will need to close at its current location for a period of up to six months in 2026. Staff are currently exploring alternate service options which may involve a temporary increase to service at the Rodney Library and/or a temporary location in West Lorne.

Financial Implications:

Funds have been approved in Elgin County Library's 2026 budget allocation to encompass costs associated with this project as follows:

- An increase of approximately \$18,500 annually for leasing costs upon project completion. Discussions are underway with the Municipality of West Elgin regarding the suspension of lease payments while the branch is closed to the public and in light of costs being experienced by the County such as storage of equipment and collections. An update on this matter will form part of a future report to County Council.
- An increase of 8 hours per week towards staffing in anticipation of increased hours of operation once the project is completed. Full implementation is expected in the 3rd quarter of 2026. Recommendations on revised hours of operation will be the subject of a future report to County Council.
- Up to \$85,000 in capital funds for temporary storage, shelving, furniture, technology and collections throughout the space. Expenditures will begin in the 2nd quarter of 2026.

Advancement of the Strategic Plan:

Strategy #1 – Collaborative Engagement and Communication

Goal 1: Strengthen Relationships with Local Municipal Partners. This project strengthens the partnership between the County of Elgin and Municipality of West Elgin.

Strategy #5 – Community Well-being and Inclusivity

Tactic 5.3: Increased access to all health and wellness services, through increased utilization of our library system. This project will increase library service to County residents.

Local Municipal Partner Impact:

West Elgin Council's commitment to proceed with these renovations through a tender award satisfies the major criterion in the County's "Library Branch Construction Policy" to be eligible for an interest-free loan of up to \$100,000 of project costs repayable over a ten-year period. West Elgin's construction costs associated with library renovations will be approximately \$200,000 plus architectural fees. It is anticipated that the Municipality of West Elgin will be making a formal request for such a loan to County Council. This matter, along with the need for a revised lease to encompass the expanded premises, will be the subject of future reports to County Council.

Communication Requirements:

The County's communications team and library staff will be providing the public with regular updates on the project's progress and impacts to library service on a continual basis and through all available channels. Regular communications with the Municipality of West Elgin will also form part of this plan.

Conclusion:

This is an exciting project that will result in expanded space and enhancement of library services at the West Lorne branch. The increase in space is justified according to the library's planning guidelines and relative to recent growth in the catchment area being served by the branch. This project marks the first increase in library service in West Elgin since the West Lorne branch was re-constructed after a fire that occurred in 2006.

County Council can also expect further reports related to this project on matters such as required lease revisions, the possibility of an interest-free loan to West Elgin to support associated costs, revised hours of operation and general project updates. Staff will also be engaging in a user survey to assess the types of services, collections and hours residents would like to see once the new space opens to the public.

All of which is Respectfully Submitted

Approved for Submission

Brian Masschaele
Director of Community and
Cultural Services

Blaine Parkin
Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk