

## County Council Highlights for Oct. 18, 2023

### Warden Acknowledges Local Government Week

Warden Hilda MacDonald is encouraging residents and those interested in careers in public service to learn more about what the County of Essex does during Local Government Week (Oct. 15-21).

It is “the perfect time to shine a spotlight on the services provided by the County of Essex and local municipalities,” the warden said at the beginning of Wednesday’s council meeting.

She noted that the county employs administrative, financial, social services, health care, infrastructure, maintenance, human resources and municipal government experts, along with a wide range of support staff. They include information technology specialists, chartered accountants, engineers, paramedics, nurses, social workers and librarians.

Services Essex County provides include the building and maintenance of regional roads, responsibility for Essex-Windsor EMS, the operation of Sun Parlor long-term care home, funding for the Essex County Library and overseeing a Residential Services Homes program for low-income adults who need help with daily living and finding affordable housing.

“These services provide rewarding job opportunities and greatly enhance the quality of life in our region, MacDonald said.

### The Bridge Seeking Funding Commitment to Build More Affordable Housing

Essex County Council has directed administration to provide options in the 2024 proposed budget for contributing to an affordable housing project by Building Bridges Erie Shores (The Bridge) in Leamington.

Representatives of The Bridge presented council with their [plans to add 36 affordable housing units](#) to the not-for-profit’s location in Leamington. The organization’s goal is to create a safe and inclusive community that will have affordable, mid-level and market rent housing. A financial commitment from the county will help The Bridge access other government funding, says a [report to council](#).

The Bridge opened its Youth Resource Centre in Leamington in 2018. Its programs were expanded in 2020 to include 10 supportive housing units for those 16 to 24 years old.

## County Applying for Plaque at Historic River Canard Bridge

Essex County is asking the Ontario Heritage Trust to install plaques at the iconic bridge in River Canard.

Built in 1937, the rare bowstring bridge on County Road 8 at the Amherstburg-LaSalle border is the only remaining such structure on the county road network. Council at its Sept. 20 meeting asked administration to report back on the feasibility of erecting a plaque at the historic landmark, which is also referred to as a concrete tied arch bridge.

Bronze plaques at either end of the bridge – one in English and one in French – would cost \$6,500 plus an “in kind” donation to the Ontario Heritage Trust, says a [report to council](#). The report includes [proposed wording for the plaque](#).

## Quarry Allowed to Build Tunnel under County Road 9

Walker Aggregates Inc. will be allowed to build a tunnel for its vehicles to travel under County Road 9 and for which the company will assume all costs and liability.

Walker Aggregates has land on both sides of County Road 9 (Howard Avenue) in Amherstburg and plans to start moving its vehicles back and forth between the two properties in the near future, says a [report to council](#). To avoid a significant impact on County Road 9 traffic, the company approached the county for permission to build a tunnel. This will require the construction of a detour road that will be used by vehicles travelling on County Road 9 while the tunnel is being completed.

The company must enter into a road user and easement agreement with the county that requires it to pay the construction costs, maintenance costs, an annual fee for the use of the county’s road allowance and all insurance costs. The agreement indemnifies the county against liability and will be registered on the property title to be assumed by any future owners.

## Growth and Major Projects May Require the County to Speed Up Road Expansion

Essex County will have to consider revising its long-term road expansion plans to accommodate major new developments and accelerating population growth, says a [report to council](#).

To keep up with the traffic demands of new developments – like the electric vehicle battery plant and new regional hospital being built in South Windsor – and a growing population,

the county should consider spending more annually on road expansion or be prepared for increased traffic congestion, says the report.

Since 2004, the county has annually set aside funds for road expansion to avoid sudden increases in property taxes. Since 2020, it has set aside almost \$18 million a year. However, recent experience suggests it should be setting aside \$30 million to \$50 million a year to meet current demand, unless other sources of funding can be found, the report says.

In addition to the enhancement of County Road 42 that is currently underway, the report says, two projects that must be completed in the next three years are:

- The creation of a roundabout at County Road 46 and Rochester Townline.
- The expansion of County Road 22 from I.C. Roy Drive to Belle River.

The report says other projects that urgently need to be completed in the next five years for the new hospital and EV battery plant to operate successfully are:

- A grade separated interchange at the intersection of County Road 19 (Manning Road) and County Road 22 (E.C. Row Expressway).
- The enhancement of County Road 19 (Manning Road) at the County Road 22 (E.C. Row Expressway) intersection and extending to Jamsyl Drive.
- The widening of County Road 19 (Manning Road) to four lanes from Jamsyl Drive to County Road 42.
- The extension of Lauzon Parkway from Highway 401 to Highway 3.

## **By-law Transferring Responsibility for Waste Collection to the County Rescinded**

A by-law transferring responsibility for waste collection to the county has been rescinded by council after it failed to get the required support from local municipalities.

[Read this article on our website.](#)



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