



January 2026

January was a strong (and cold!) start to the new year in Central Elgin.

One of the most significant milestones this month was the adoption of the 2026 Municipal Budget. Developed with careful consideration, the budget strikes a balance between investments and responsible financial management, while maintaining a strong focus on customer service and the delivery of reliable core municipal services. The 2026 capital program includes 37 projects that deliver key investments in infrastructure, public safety, and community services supporting growth and quality of life across Central Elgin. You can see the final budget on our website.

Also of note in January we launched a new swim pass program in partnership with the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario, offering Central Elgin residents reduced rates for swimming. Swim passes start at \$3.50.

Recently, Minister Flack announced that Central Elgin will receive \$9.3 million in provincial funding through the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program's Health and Safety Water Stream. This funding will support flood mitigation projects in Port Stanley and represents an important investment which recognizes the challenges faced by a waterfront community. In addition, Central Elgin residents will benefit by the Port Burwell Water System Rehabilitation Project which will also receive provincial funding. This critical infrastructure initiative, shared by the Municipality of Bayham, the Township of Malahide, and the Municipality of Central Elgin, supports over 3,000 residents across the three municipalities. We appreciate Minister Flack's continued support of Central Elgin and Elgin County.

Last week I was elected Chair of the Elgin OPP Detachment Board. I am pleased to have the opportunity to serve in this role and to continue working collaboratively with the Board and our policing partners to support community safety across our region.

Looking ahead in February, residents will have opportunities to share their feedback as we develop a Community Services Master Plan. This plan will take a comprehensive look at community recreation, including parks and open spaces, trails, community centres and arenas, as well as our beaches, harbour, and waterfront. Watch for an online survey launching later this week, along with in-person open house events planned for early March.

Also in February we will be launching the second round of community engagement on the former Psychiatric Hospital lands. This phase will focus on the Final Policy Directions and Land Use Plan, building on the feedback we heard from residents during the first round of consultation. We're planning an Open House on February 24, and more details will be shared soon.

I will once again be participating in the Lunch with the Mayors event hosted by the St. Thomas & District Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday, February 11. I look forward to discussing the opportunities and challenges our region faces with mayors Preston and Jones.

Lastly, my next Office Hours will be held on February 24 from 1–3 p.m. If you would like to book a meeting, please call 519-631-4860 ext. 7286 or email deleitch@centralelgin.org. January set a positive tone for the year ahead, and I look forward to continuing this work alongside Council, staff, and residents as we move through 2026 together.

— Andrew



Jamie Kovacs, Executive Director, Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council
Doug Chapman, Supervisor, Utilization, Enbridge Gas
Andrew Sloan, Mayor, Municipality of Central Elgin