



Strategic Plan

2024-2027

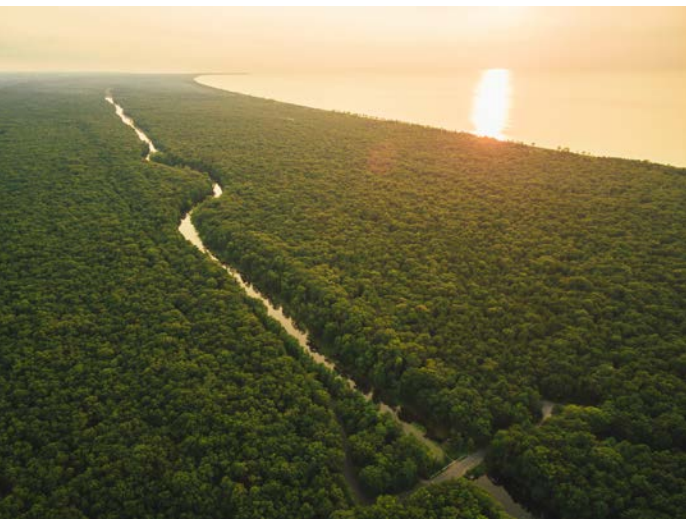
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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The County of Lambton acknowledges that this land on which we reside is part of the ancestral land of the Chippewa, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples, referred to collectively as the Anishinaabeg. It is through the connection of the Anishinaabeg with the spirit of the land, water, and air that we recognize their unique cultures, traditions, and values. Together as treaty people, we have a shared responsibility to act with respect for the environment that sustains all life, protecting the future for those generations to come.





The County

History

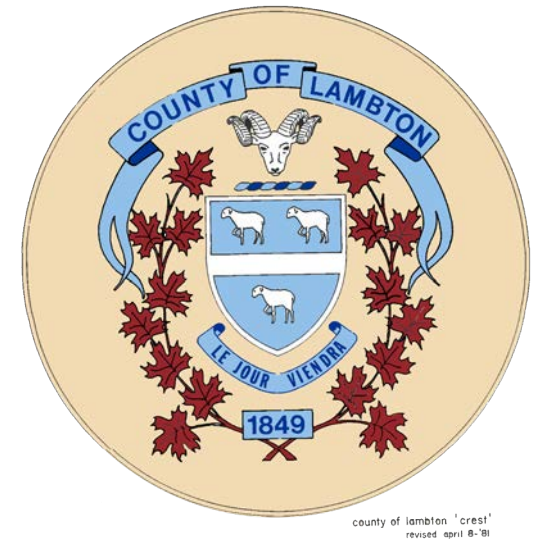
Through its habitation, settlement, and development, the history of Lambton County stretches back thousands of years. Dating back to the late 1700s, Lambton County was once part of the “District of Hesse”, later known as the “Western District”, that included a large tract of British territories west of Long Point on Lake Erie that essentially included all of western Ontario. The District had appointed administrators who were responsible for property assessments and taxation to fund local improvements.

District boundaries changed several times as the population grew, and territorial divisions were renamed over time. Treaties were signed between the Crown and the Indigenous peoples who inhabited these lands, including the Chippewa, Odawa, and Potawatomi, referred to collectively as the Anishinaabeg. Lambton County was part of the Huron Tract, which was negotiated under Treaty #29 in 1827, and includes lands associated with Sombra Township, negotiated under Treaty #7 in 1796, and the Long Woods Tract, negotiated under Treaty #21 in 1819.

The treaties the Crown signed with Indigenous peoples since the 18th century permitted the evolution of Lambton as it is known today, providing land in the Western District for settlement and industrial development.

With the passage of the Municipal Corporations Act (also known as the Baldwin Act) in 1849, the districts were abolished and replaced with a two-tier system of municipal government that saw counties as the senior local level. It was a result of this legislation that Lambton was incorporated as The Corporation of the County of Lambton (“Lambton County”), which is why the County’s Coat of Arms incorporates the 1849 year in its design. Lambton was initially unified with two other neighbouring counties for municipal purposes, until 1852 when it constituted a standalone “Provisional County”. The earliest record of Lambton County’s municipal transactions is quoted from a minute book recording the “meeting of the Provisional Council of the County of Lambton, held at Port Sarnia, on the 15th day of April, 1852”. At the time, Thomas Fisher of the Township of Moore served as the County’s first Warden.

In 2024, The Corporation of the County Lambton commemorates its 175th anniversary and celebrates its role as a unified federation of local municipalities that work together with a spirit of collaboration, innovation, and ambition.



Geography

Lambton County is located in Southwestern Ontario, nestled along Lake Huron and the St. Clair River, next to the state of Michigan. It is comprised of approximately 3,000 square kilometres that feature many natural attributes including beautiful blue waters, sandy beaches, fertile farmlands, and rare and unusual wildlife and habitats. Its Carolinian life zone is home to many unique plants and animals found nowhere else in Canada. Southern flying squirrel, blandings turtle, the towering tulip tree, rare wild lupine, and the endangered dense blazing star are all residents in Lambton's celebrated wild environments.

Demographics

Lambton County is home to a diverse and welcoming population of approximately 128,000 residents.

Along with its strong roots in the agriculture, chemical, and oil and gas industries, Lambton County counts bio-chemicals, education, fabricating, health services, manufacturing, research, and tourism amongst its economic sectors.





Municipal Federation

Lambton County is an upper-tier government and home to the following 11 local municipalities, each with its own unique history and identity:

- Municipality of Brooke-Alvinston
- Township of Dawn-Euphemia
- Township of Enniskillen
- Municipality of Lambton Shores
- Village of Oil Springs
- Town of Petrolia
- Town of Plympton-Wyoming
- Village of Point Edward
- City of Sarnia
- St. Clair Township
- Township of Warwick



Governance

The County is governed by a council of 17 elected municipal representatives, representing each of its 11 local municipalities.

The County seat is located within the Town of Plympton-Wyoming, which is the location of the County Administration Building and Council Chambers.

Services and Operations

Lambton County is one of the area's largest employers. It employs over 1,300 employees within the following divisions:

- Office of the CAO
- Corporate Services
- Cultural Services
- Infrastructure & Development Services
- Finance, Facilities and Court Services
- Long-Term Care
- Public Health Services
- Social Services



The County's diverse and talented workforce delivers hundreds of services and programs to our residents, allowing our community to flourish.

Services and operations include:



Long-Term Care

through three long-term care homes and related community services including Adult Day Programs and Lambton County Connects.



Public Health Services

including program, service, and policy development, involving health promotion, health protection, and clinical & family services.



Emergency Medical Services

through nine ambulance bases and a Community Paramedic program.



Social Services

including employment and income support, community housing, homelessness prevention, and children's services.



One Art Gallery

with Category 'A' designation from the Department of Canadian Heritage.



Three Museums

including a National Historic Site (the Oil Museum of Canada).



Library Services

through 25 library locations.



Public Works

including maintaining 646 road kilometres, 190 bridges and culverts, and landfills.



Planning Services



Building Services



Provincial Offences Court



Strategic Plan

The County has operated under several successive strategic plans over the years. This Strategic Plan confirms and builds upon those prior plans and the County's established mission, vision, values, and priorities.

This Strategic Plan serves to set current priorities, confirm the principles that guide our actions and decision-making, and guides the County in its continued evolution.

This Strategic Plan sets out the County's:

- 1. Guiding Principles**
- 2. Vision**
- 3. Mission**
- 4. Areas of Effort**



Guiding Principles

The following core principles guide the County's actions, decision-making, and operations:

- Effective governance demonstrated through financial sustainability, openness, and transparency;
- Collaboration and partnerships;
- Inclusiveness;
- Environmental stewardship; and
- Recognition of, and respect for, the uniqueness and distinctiveness of its local municipalities, First Nations, and stakeholders.

Vision

The County is a caring, growing, and innovative community, committed to creating a better future for all.

Caring: A community of people working together, volunteering, and supporting one another. Lambton County is a place where people practice an authentic concern for the well-being of their neighbours and their environment, both now and for the future.

Growing: Striving for economic expansion and the diversification of Lambton's economic base while modelling environmental sustainability. A community that fosters the creation of employment opportunities for people from all walks of life while cultivating prospects relevant to youth and new residents.

Innovative: Creatively working together and piloting new ideas to meet current and future needs, aspirations, and values of Lambton County residents.



Mission Statement

Working with municipal and community partners and stakeholders, the County provides efficient, responsive, and sustainable services and programs to enhance the quality of life of its citizens. In doing so, the County is committed to sustainability, economic growth, and environmental stewardship.

Outcomes

Economic Growth: Using and developing skills and assets to achieve positive economic growth that can provide the employment and economic activity necessary to allow the community to thrive.

Environmental Stewardship: Practicing sound environmental principles that are transferable from one generation to the next, and that promote and protect local waterways, shorelines, marshes, agricultural lands, and other components of the natural environment.

Enhanced Quality of Life: Building a community where residents are safe and healthy; feel a sense of belonging, pride, and purpose; and care for one another.

Although the above sets out the guiding principles that will govern the County's general actions, decision-making, and operations, the following areas of effort set out the County's specific areas of focus over the next four years.



Areas of Effort

The County of Lambton is committed to the following areas of effort:



Economic Development and Prosperity



Service and Communications



Community Development, Health, and Wellness



Progressive Organizational Culture



Partnerships



Corporate Sustainability



1. Economic Development and Prosperity

The County will focus on economic growth and prosperity. Working with organizations such as the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, Tourism Sarnia-Lambton, and the Western Sarnia-Lambton Research Park, the County will contribute to economic growth and prosperity by:

- Advocating for, and promoting, economic diversification;
- Supporting enhanced advocacy to attract increased senior government supports and private sector investment;
- Leading community branding while executing an evolving, multi-faceted marketing plan that strengthens awareness of the benefits of the Lambton County area;
- Highlighting the natural, cultural, and recreational assets of Lambton County; and
- Adopting policies and practices to increase the County's population to support economic growth and evolving workforce demands.





2. Services and Communications

The County is focused on the provision of responsive services and programs, independently and through partnerships, and is committed to progressive and effective communications in promoting the same, by:

- Anticipating and aligning service delivery to emerging needs and expectations (including changing demographics);
- Engaging and informing residents, stakeholders, and municipal partners of the County's services, programs, opportunities, and challenges; and
- Advocating Lambton County's perspective on provincial and federal programs and legislative amendments.





3. Community Development, Health, and Wellness

The County's divisions follow various Council-approved strategic planning documents that provide direction in respect to Community Development, Health and Wellness. The County is committed to capitalizing on opportunities that enrich the quality of life and future prospects of the community, by:

Community Development

- Strengthening the County's advocacy and lobbying efforts with other levels of government to raise the profile of the County and its needs to secure improved senior government supports, funding, grants, and other resources to meet emerging infrastructure and service needs;
- Consulting with the community and stakeholders on ways to increase housing options and affordability, and innovative programs and initiatives that focus on poverty reduction and promote social belonging;
- Supporting the development of a variety of affordable housing to meet demand;
- Implementing the approved actions of the *Cultural Services Division Strategic Plan* to advance cultural development in Lambton County for economic, social, educational, and community benefit; and
- Advocating for the continuous improvement of internet/broadband infrastructure.

Community Health and Wellness

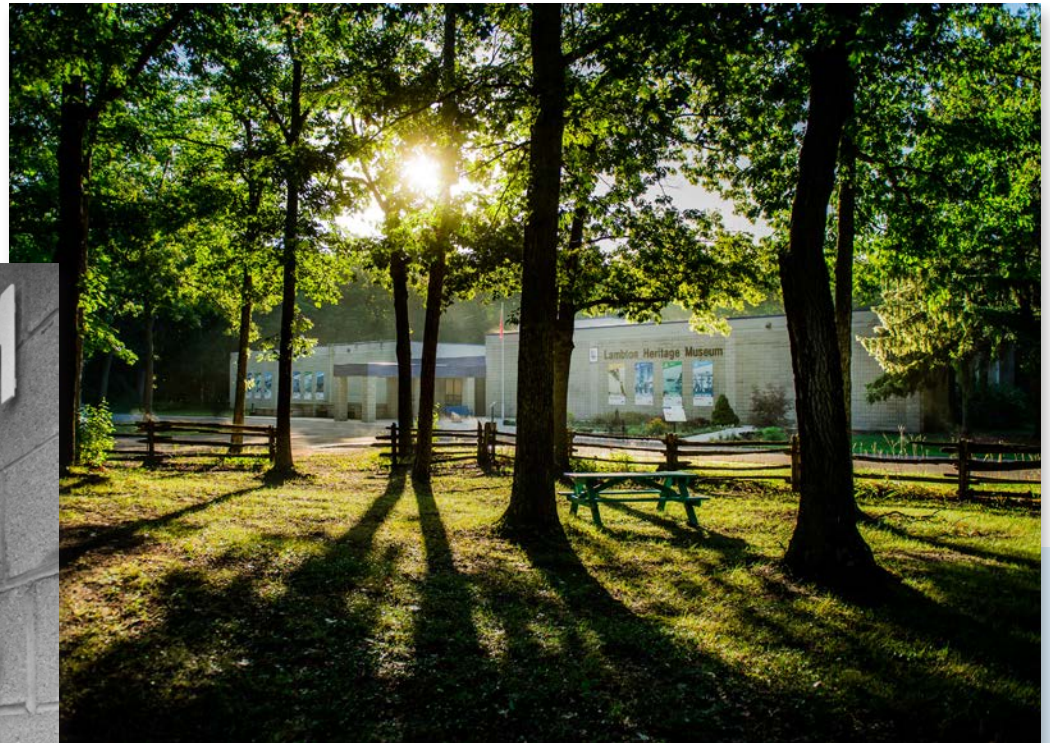
- Implementing, monitoring and updating community health and wellness-related plans and priorities, including, but not limited to, the *Housing and Homelessness Plan*, *Community Safety & Well-Being Plan*, the Long-Term Care division's mission, vision, and values, *Age Friendly Community Planning* framework, Lambton Public Health's strategic priorities, *Lambton Drug & Alcohol Strategy*, *Lambton EMS Master Plan*, and *Child Care and Early Years 5-Year Service System Plan*; and
- Advocating for, and supporting access to, mental health and addiction services.



4. Progressive Organizational Culture

The County is committed to maintaining a progressive organizational culture that supports the County's Vision, Mission, and Areas of Effort, by:

- Recruiting and retaining the best available talent based on fair, inclusive hiring practices;
- Investing in technology to modernize delivery of services and operations;
- Encouraging staff participation and input through effective communication and listening;
- Providing professional development opportunities that support staff and Council roles and responsibilities, encourage individual growth, and build leadership capacity;
- Valuing excellence and recognizing the contributions of staff, Councillors, and volunteers; and
- Taking a proactive approach towards succession planning, talent development, and knowledge transfer.





5. Partnerships

The County is committed to developing strong relationships with community partners, municipalities, and First Nations by:

- Cultivating sustainable relationships that include strategies to improve communication and understanding, and provide mutual assistance on projects;
- Collaborating with strategic partners to leverage available resources and service opportunities;
- Hosting regular engagement opportunities to facilitate information sharing with partners; and
- Exploring public-private partnerships aimed at benefitting the community.





6. Corporate Sustainability

The County is committed to ensuring long-term environmental and financial sustainability in all its operations, by:

- Continuing to implement strong financial plans, policies, and practices that bolster and safeguard municipal services and infrastructure;
- Committing to a sound *Asset Management Plan* to maintain and fund critical infrastructure;
- Developing and implementing a long-term financial plan that includes reserves and reserve funds, debt and tax rate strategy, and revenue growth and diversification;
- Increasing external sources of revenue in an effort to mitigate reliance on property taxes;
- Adopting and promoting environmentally sustainable practices in the face of climate change; and
- Undertaking environmental initiatives that protect and enhance woodlots and the County's natural heritage features, and target waste reduction, energy conservation, lower fuel consumption, and the use of sustainable technologies and processes.



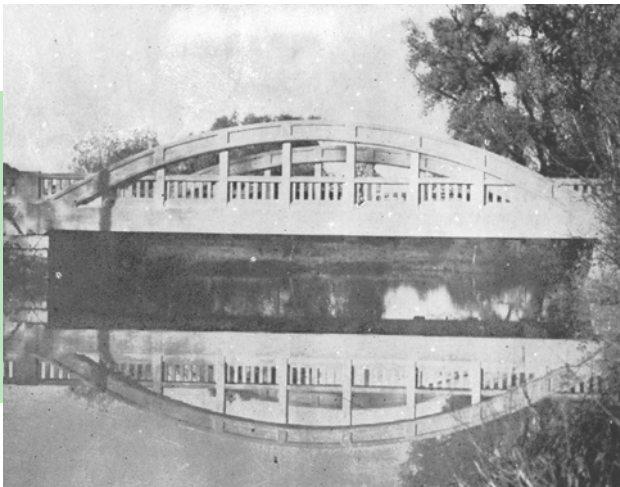


Photo Credits

Page 1 - County Administration Building, 2023 (Source: County of Lambton)

Page 2 - (Top to bottom) County Building, 1904 (Source: Lambton County Archives); Council Chambers (Source: County of Lambton)

Page 3 - (Left to right) Pinery Provincial Park (Source: Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation); Canatara Park (Source: Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation); Pinery Provincial Park (Source: Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation)

Page 4 - North Lambton Lodge (Source: County of Lambton Long-Term Care Division)

Page 5 - County of Lambton Crest (Source: County of Lambton)

Page 6 - (Top to bottom) Aerial photographs of Corunna, Farmland, and NOVA Chemicals Corunna Plant (Source: Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership)

Page 7 - (Top to bottom) County Administration Building Grand Opening, 1981 (Source: County of Lambton); Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology Rural Broadband Announcement, 2019 (Source: County of Lambton)

Page 8 - (Bottom left) Students at Northern Collegiate receiving an anti-polio vaccine, 1956 (Source: Lambton County Archives); (Bottom centre) Clearwater Arena COVID-19 Immunization Clinic, 2021 (Source: Lambton Public Health); (Top right) Bonnie Doon Creek Bridge Rehabilitation, 2023 (Source: County of Lambton); (Bottom right) Roadwork in the City of Sarnia, 1960 (Source: Lambton County Archives)

Page 10 - Lambton Shared Service Centre, 2023 (Source: County of Lambton)

Page 11 - (Top to bottom) Oil history, near Kelly Road and Gumbed Line (Source: Lambton County Archives); Oil Museum of Canada (Source: Oil Museum of Canada); Oil Museum of Canada (Source: Oil Museum of Canada)

Page 12 - (Top to bottom) Miniature therapy horse visiting with people living at North Lambton Lodge, 2023 (Source: County of Lambton Long-Term Care Division); Party at North Lambton Rest Home (Source: Lambton County Archives)

Page 14 - Lambton Public Health (Source: County of Lambton)

Page 16 - (Left to right) Agriculture, Threshing, 1940s (Source: Lambton County Archives); Harvesting (Source: Sue Smith)

Page 17 - (Top to bottom) Lambton County Court House, 1857 (Source: Lambton County Archives); Court Room, Lambton Shared Services Centre, 2023 (Source: County of Lambton)

Page 19 - (Left to right) Willems of Willems Bros Construction looks at the facility sign on the Lambton Heritage Museum, 1970s/80s (Source: Lambton Heritage Museum); Lambton Heritage Museum, 2019 (Source: Lambton Heritage Museum)

Page 20 - (Left to right) Bluewater Bridge Construction, 1938 (Source: Lambton County Archives); Bluewater Bridge aerial photograph (Source: Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership)

Page 21 - (Left to right) Sarnia Ambulance Services, 1963 (Source: Lambton County Archives); Forest Emergency Medical Services Base, 2017 (Source: County of Lambton)

Page 22 - (Top left to right) Brigden Fair, 1950s/60s (Source: Lambton County Archives); Brigden Fair, 2016 (Source: Tourism Sarnia-Lambton) (Middle left to right) Schoolhouse and students in Dawn Township (Source: Lambton County Archives); Dawn School (Source: Bill Baker) (Bottom left to right) Bear Creek Bridge, 1940s (Source: Lambton Heritage Museum); Bear Creek Bridge, 2020 (Source: County of Lambton)

Page 24 - Tundra swans in the Thedford Bog (Source: Tourism Sarnia-Lambton)



Acknowledgements

This version of the County's Strategic Plan was updated during the 2023-2026 term of Lambton County Council. Council and senior staff undertake a comprehensive review of the Strategic Plan once per term of Council.

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