



2023-2024 Council Term Summary Report



Prepared March, 2025

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Land Acknowledgment

The County of Huron would like to acknowledge that the land we stand upon today is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Neutral peoples. We recognize the First Peoples' continued stewardship of the land and water, and that this territory was subject to the Dish with One Spoon wampum, under which multiple nations agreed to care for the land and resources by the Great Lakes in peace.

We would also like to acknowledge and recognize the Upper Canada Treaties signed in regards to this land, which include Treaty #29 and Treaty #45 1/2, and our roles as treaty people, committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation, gratitude, and respect with all First Nation, Métis and Inuit people.

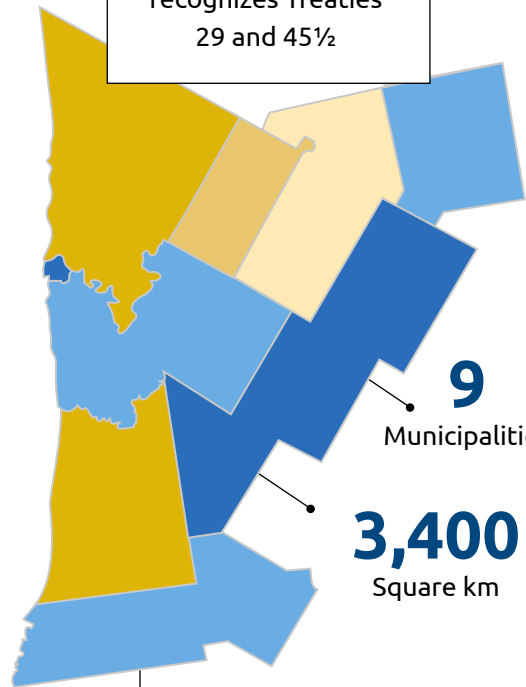
County of Huron
www.HuronCounty.ca
1 Courthouse Square
Goderich, ON
N7A 1M2



Huron County

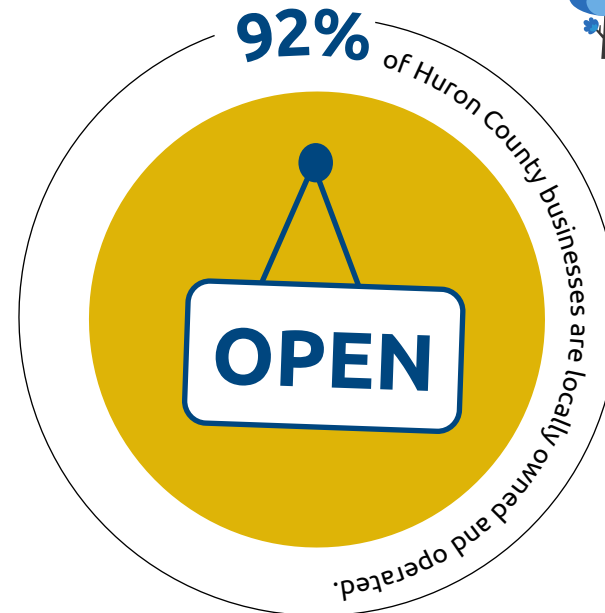
By the numbers

The County of Huron recognizes Treaties 29 and 45½

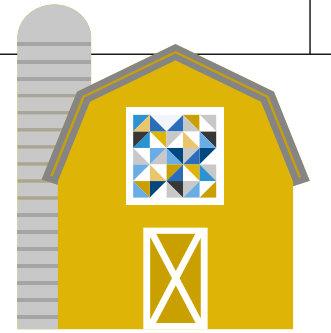


Est. 1847

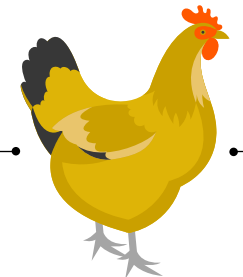
Population (2021) 61,366



25,000+ Private Households



2,500+ Farms



Huron is one of the most agriculturally productive counties in Ontario!

109,167 Acres Wheat
178,100 Acres Soybeans
109,250 Cattle & calves
727,856 Pigs

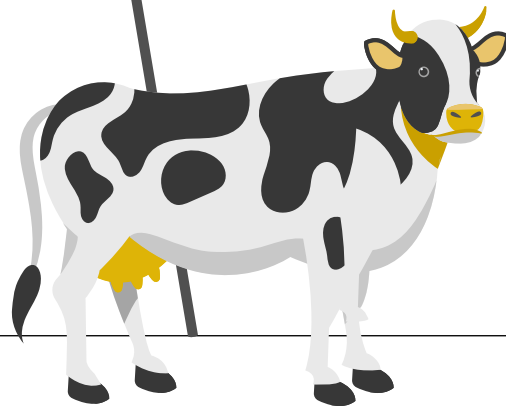
58 Diverse Communities

A living wage in Huron County is: \$23.05



15 Unique Beaches

100 km Scenic Shoreline

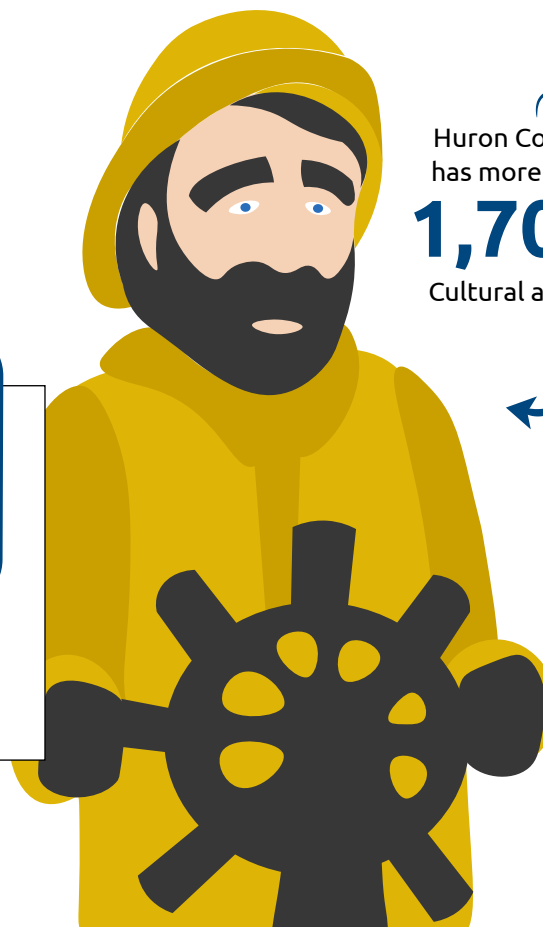


35+ Hiking Trails



1,200,000 Annual Visitors

Huron County has more than 1,700 Cultural assets



County of Huron Leadership



Glen McNeil
2021-2024 Huron County Warden



Jamie Heffer
2025-2026 Huron County Warden



Meighan Wark
Chief Administrative Officer,
County of Huron

Senior Leadership Team

Michael Blumhagen
Treasurer and Director of Corporate Services

Susan Cronin
Director of Legislative Services

Barbara Hall
Director of Social and Property Services

Jeff Horseman
Director of Emergency Services

Imran Khalid
Director of Public Works

Vicki Lass
Director of Economic Development

Beth Rumble
County Librarian and Director of Cultural Services

Dana Mellor
Interim Director of Huronview and Huronlea Homes for the Aged

Lara Vanstone
Director of Human Resources

Sandra Weber
Director of Planning & Development

2022-2026 Huron County Council

Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh

Glen McNeil, Mayor
Bill Vanstone, Deputy-Mayor

Bluewater

Paul Klopp, Mayor
John Becker, Deputy Mayor

Central Huron

Jim Ginn, Mayor
Marg Anderson, Deputy Mayor

Goderich

Trevor Bazinet, Mayor
Leah Noel, Deputy Mayor

Howick

Doug Harding, Reeve

Huron East

Bernie MacLellan, Mayor
Alvin McLellan, Deputy Mayor

Morris-Turnberry

Jamie Heffer, Mayor

North Huron

Paul Heffer, Reeve

South Huron

George Finch, Mayor
Jim Dietrich, Deputy Mayor



Huron County Council and Senior Staff 2024

2024 Huron County Budget

The County of Huron aims to ensure long-term sustainability while maintaining essential and valued services. There are many factors that affect the County's operating and capital budget, and these are closely tied to the priorities set out by Council in strategic planning sessions.

Like many municipalities, the financial sustainability of municipal services has been strained in recent years due to the rising costs associated with inflation. In response, the County has developed a Financial Sustainability Management Strategy:

- Manage Assets – Asset Management Plan
- Control Spending
- Maintain Reserves
- Increase Efficiencies
- Maintain a level and realistic levy

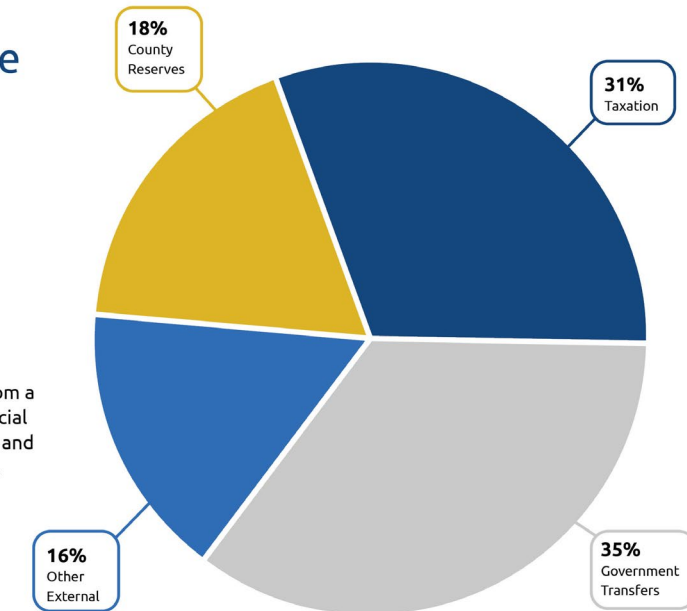
Find out more about Huron County's budgeting process:

www.HuronCounty.ca/finance

Where does the money for the Huron County budget come from?

County of Huron Budget 2024
Annual revenue: \$170,885,900

The County's revenue comes from a combination of taxation, provincial and federal grants, service fees and other external revenue sources.



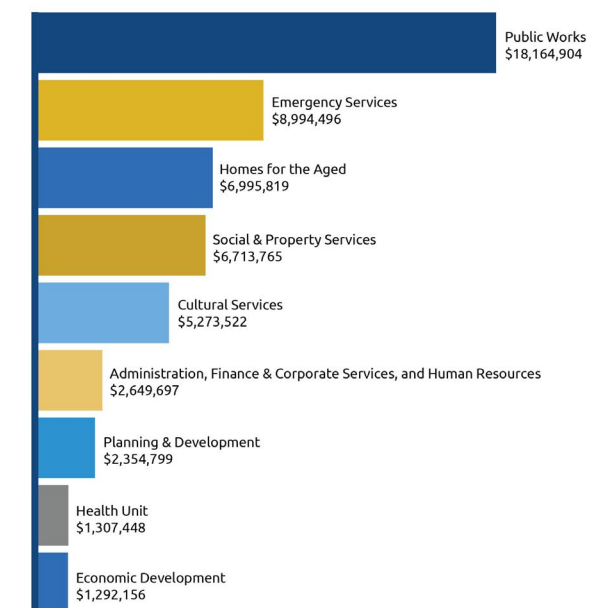
www.HuronCounty.ca/Finance



How do the taxes raised in the Huron County budget get spent?

The County of Huron uses its budget to ensure long-term sustainability while maintaining essential and valued services.

The budget for 2024 is allocated as shown.



www.HuronCounty.ca/Finance



2024 Staff Demographics

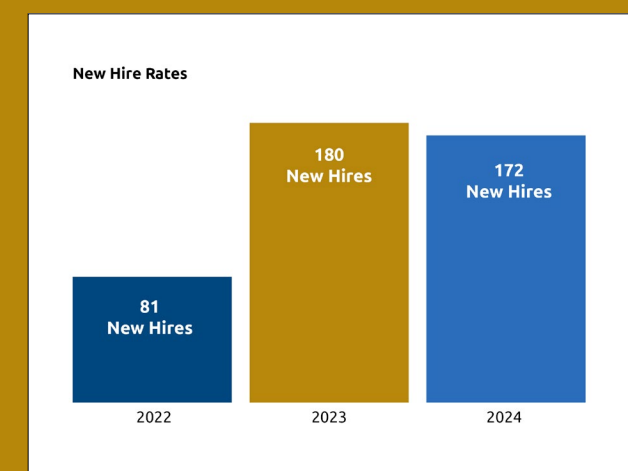
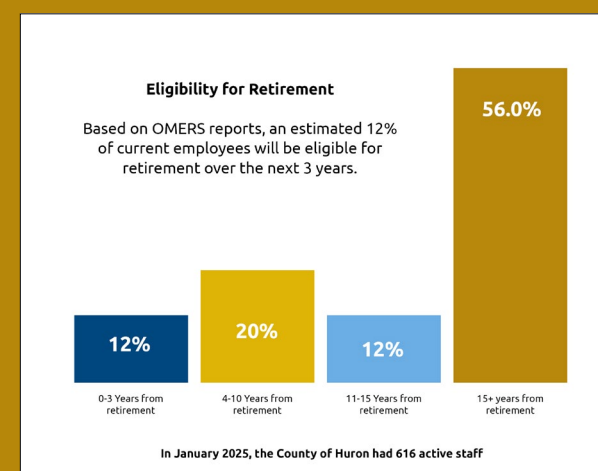
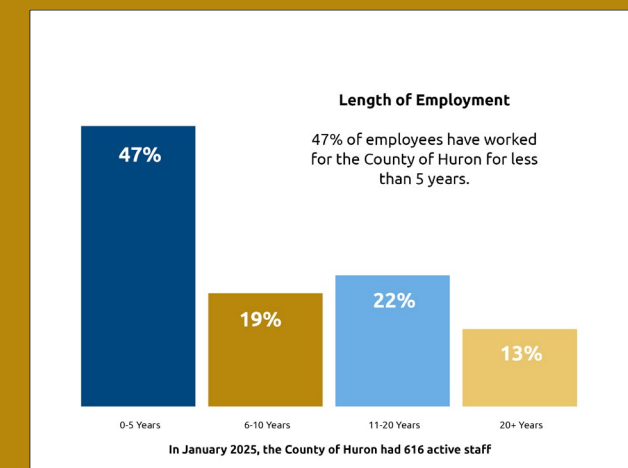
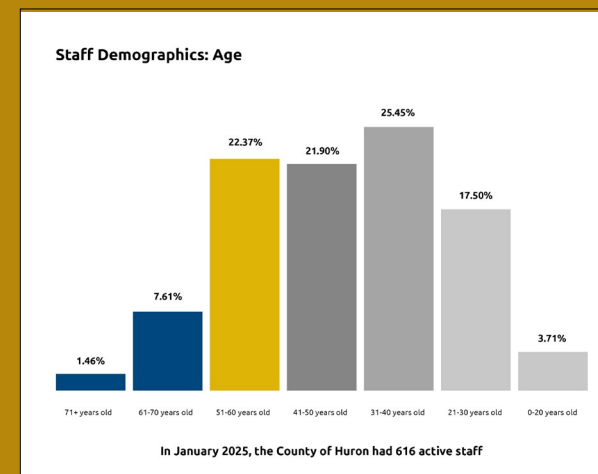
The County of Huron, with over 600 employees, is the region’s largest employer. The Human Resources department serves as the foundation of the organization, supporting the recruitment, development, and retention of a skilled workforce which are key factors in ensuring the continued delivery of high-quality services to the community.

In recent years, the organization has faced several significant challenges, including the global pandemic, the introduction of hybrid and remote work arrangements for certain positions, significant demographic shifts, legislated up-staffing requirements, and widespread staff shortages at both regional and national levels, particularly in health service roles. These factors have had a considerable impact on Human Resources and the services provided to staff, Council, and partner municipalities.

To support strategic workforce planning, the County of Huron actively tracks staff demographics, including workforce composition, age distribution, and other key employment trends. This data is used to inform decision-making on recruitment, retention, succession planning, and professional development initiatives. By analyzing demographic insights, the County can proactively address workforce challenges, adapt to evolving service needs, and ensure a resilient and sustainable workforce for the future.

Further details on current staffing trends and demographics are available in the [2025 Human Resources Staff Report](#).

Department	Active Staff (Jan 2025)
Homes for the Aged	241
Cultural Services	72
Emergency Services	100
Social & Property Services	63
Finance & Corporate Services	27
Planning & Development	16
Public Works	72
Administration and Human Resources	15
Economic Development	10
Total Staff	616



Corporation of the County of Huron

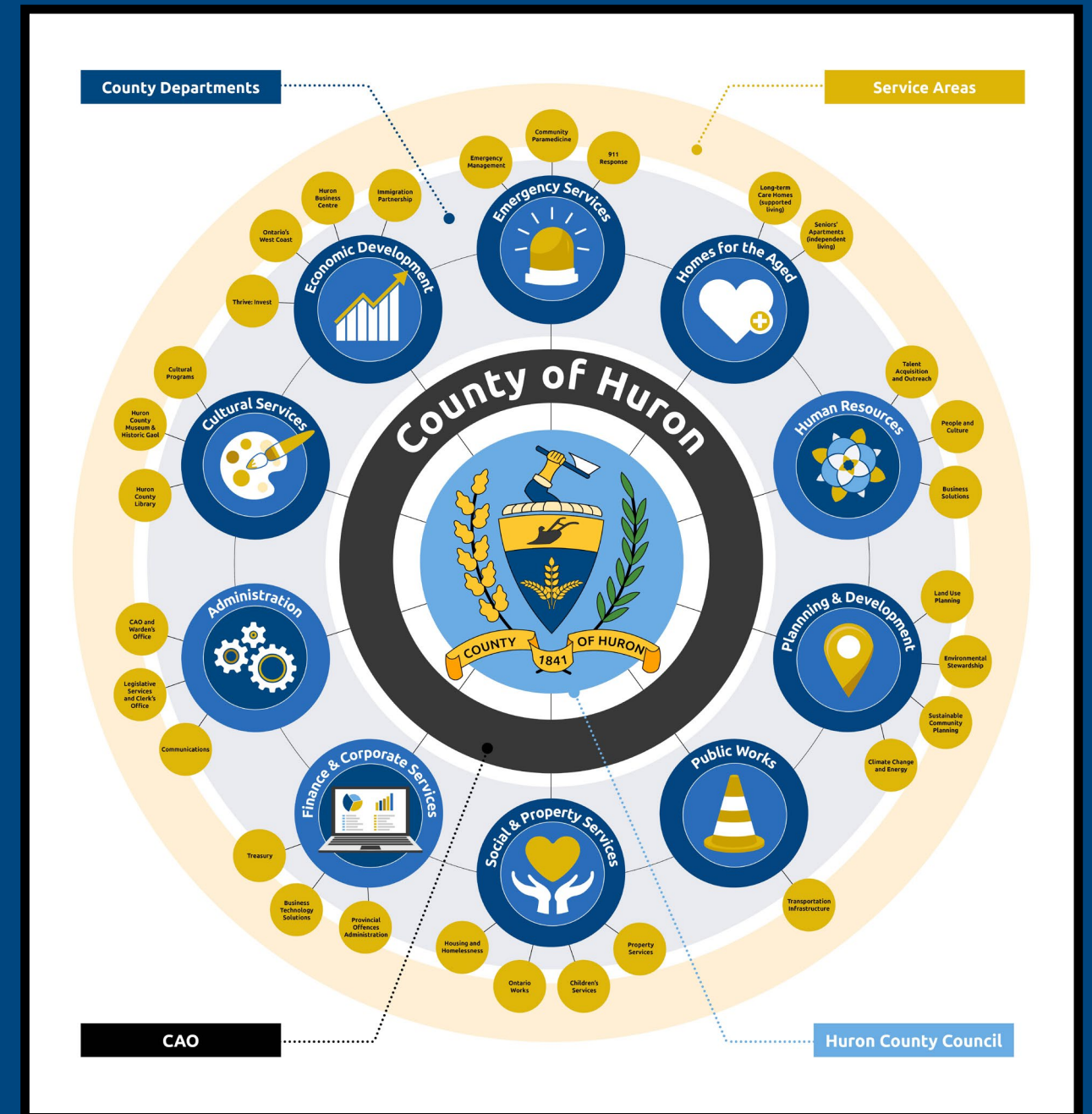
We connect and support Huron County.

The County of Huron collaborates with many partners to provide programs and services that connect and support Huron County. The work we do contributes to a community with a high quality of life where everyone can thrive.

Our Services

The County of Huron provides a wide variety of programs and services designed to meet the needs of our community.

Learn more about the services we offer: www.HuronCounty.ca



Administration, Finance & Corporate Services, and Human Resources

We support and connect staff, Council, and community.

Corporate Services includes the Administration, Finance & Corporate Services, and Human Resource departments. Service areas include:

Administration	Finance & Corporate Services	Human Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CAO and Warden's Offices ● Legislative Services and Clerk's Office ● Corporate Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finance ● Business Technology Solutions ● Provincial Offences Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talent Acquisition and Outreach ● People and Culture ● Business Solutions

2024 Project Highlights

Administration

- Value Proposition Project complete.
- Brand Policy development including corporate trademark review.
- Website development for HuronCounty.ca.
- Development of a funding campaign to encourage public contributions to affordable housing projects.
- Peak Agenda implementation.
- Hosted multiple educational webinars for staff, elected officials, and partner municipalities.
- Creation of AccessSLED program (to launch in 2025).
- Presentation of annual Huron County Accessibility Awards.
- Launch of the Huron County Council YouTube channel.

Finance & Corporate Services

- Annual budget review.
- Financing strategies (housing)
- Asset Management Plan update
- IT modernization
- Cyber threat tabletop exercise

Human Resources

- Development of a new Succession Planning Program.
- Development of a Workforce Attraction and Recruitment Strategy.
- Initiation of HRIS Phase 2.
- Ongoing Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) initiatives
- Bi-annual Management and Leadership Series events.
- Adoption of a new Training and Development Platform known as Citation Canada.

2024 Admin, Finance & Corporate Services, and Human Resources



616 County Staff



46 Media Releases
304 Media Mentions



287,125 Website visits
Most traffic'd page:
HuronCounty.ca/jobs



1,700 Facebook Followers
1,629 LinkedIn Followers



2,720 IT Help Desk Tickets Processed
17 PIAs Completed
99.95% IT System Uptime



50 Council, Committee and Board Meetings

Cultural Services

We engage and connect our community.

Cultural Services works to increase access to arts, culture, and heritage in Huron County. In doing so, we engage and connect our community while nurturing our cultural identity. We help both individuals and community to live creatively and reach their full potential.

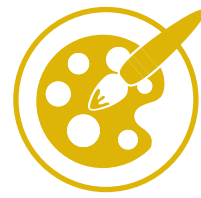
Our Service Areas



Huron County Library



Huron County Museum & Historic Gaol



Huron Cultural Office

2024 Project Highlights

Huron County Library

- Valuing Ontario Public Library Toolkit (VOLT) results: Huron County Public Library provides a Social Return on Investment of \$4.66 for every dollar invested and provides an overall benefit to the community of over \$17.5 million.
- Youth programming such as gaming and nerf after hours, youth hubs and enhanced spaces, and increased technologies including virtual reality and Cricut.
- Hold pick-up lockers installed in Bayfield and Goderich.
- Library passes added including hockey and transit passes.

Huron County Museum and Historic Gaol

- New Strategic Plan developed.
- Temporary exhibits: Stories from Storage and Beyond Ana.
- Near 100% increase in educational programs attendance.
- Additional Summer Camps added.

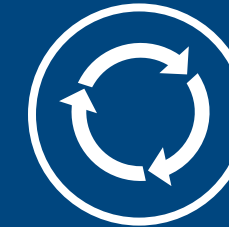
Huron Cultural Office

- New Strategic Plan developed.
- Hosting the Huron Multicultural Festival.
- New Cultural Programs initiated included Jane's Walks and Main Street Arts Festival.
- Indigenous Mural installation at Huron County Museum.

2024 Cultural Services By the Numbers



17,599 Active Library Card Holders



376,068 Circulation (Items Borrowed)



20,837 Museum & Library Program Attendance

*Attendance totals do not include cultural programs, outreach, or groups



200,994 In-branch visits



7,916 Past Perfect artifacts available on-line



232,317 Library Website page views
125,346 Museum Website page views

Economic Development

We ensure our community can thrive.

Economic Development brings people and ideas together to positively impact the economy and quality of life in Huron County. We collaborate to set the stage for our community to thrive.

Our Service Areas



Thrive: Invest



Ontario's West Coast



Huron Business Center



Immigration Partnership

2024 Project Highlights

THRIVE Invest:

- Economic Development Dashboard developed and launched.
- Adoption of Client Relationship Management (CRM) System.
- SLED and SLYP funding programs.
- Hosted first annual THRIVE Summit.

Huron Business Centre

- Managed the Summer Company, Starter Company Plus, and Foodpreneur programs.
- Business training events and workshops provided to over 135 participants and multiple business resources drafted and delivered.

Ontario's West Coast

- Management annual tourism campaigns and website for Ontario's West Coast.
- Management of the Community Events Calendar.
- Hosted events such as Maple Mania, Taste of Huron and Vine and Ale trails, and Feast on the Farm.

Immigration Partnership:

- Hosted a wide variety of engaging events designed to connect and support newcomers.
- Developed and launched newcomer guides including Building Belonging: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Rural Communities Guidebook and the 2024 Newcomer Guide.
- Participated in research with newcomers: Huron-Perth Immigrant Survey, Newcomer First Impressions Survey, and Newcomer Experiences of Housing.

2024 Economic & Development By the Numbers



22 SLED fund applications. Dispersed \$100,000.00 to 16 recipients



4,000 Holiday guides
8,000 Visitor guides
2,000 Hiking guides



102 unique clients
22 program graduates
65 jobs created
Over \$720K invested by clients



1,150 Huron Business Center calls answered
320 Consultations provided



Supported 5,100+ people through Immigration Partnership activities



Partnered with over 25 organizations to serve newcomers

Emergency Services

We're there when you need us.

Emergency Services supports public safety by preparing for, preventing, and responding to emergencies. We work to preserve and enhance the quality and longevity of life in Huron County.

Our Service Areas



Emergency Management



Community Paramedicine



911 Response

2024 Project Highlights

Emergency Management

- Hosted the annual Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) training activities.
- Developed and delivered a variety of educational resources such as the Severe Winter Weather Guide, Emergency Preparedness Kids Activities, and more.

Community Paramedicine

- Continuation of the Cool Aid Program that provides support for individuals to document medical needs for paramedics in case of emergency.
- Continuation of the Project Lifesaver Program that provides equipment for individuals who may wander and become lost.
- Continuation of the Public Access Defibrillator Program.

911 Response

- Student engagement including high school and post-secondary participation in internships, co-op placements and ride-a-longs.
- Huron County Paramedic Services partnered with OPP, Huron County CEMC, and municipal fire services in live MCI (multi-casualty incident) training scenario in the fall of 2024.
- Community Paramedicine medics responded to 5,431 calls.

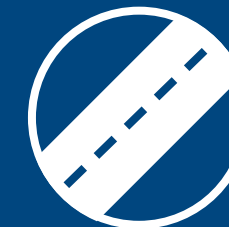
2024 Emergency Services By the Numbers



106 Huron County Paramedics



8,821 Paramedic service calls answered
5,431 Community Paramedicine calls answered



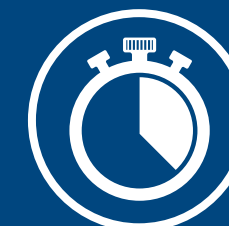
745,074 km Travelled



13 Ambulances
5 Rapid Response Units
3 Community Paramedic Units



23 Specially trained Community Care Team paramedics



8:46 Minute Average response time
1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Busiest hour of the day
Wednesday is the busiest day of the week

Homes for the Aged

We provide caring and supportive residence options for seniors.

Homes for the Aged offers a home-like atmosphere plus professional health and supportive care services so seniors in Huron County can age with dignity.

Our Service Areas



Long-term Care
(supported living)



Senior's Apartments
(independent living)

2024 Project Highlights

- Conducted a comprehensive **Staffing Level Review** to optimize workforce efficiency.
- **Enhanced Recruitment Practices** to attract and retain skilled staff while meeting the legislated requirement of providing four hours of direct care per resident. These improvements have positively impacted residents' quality of life, mobility, and ability to perform daily activities.
- Secured funding to purchase two **Wheelchair-Accessible Bikes**, promoting mobility and recreation for residents.
- Supported a wide range of meaningful resident activities, including the **Huronview Farm Stand**, where residents planted and maintained a vegetable garden that contributed to meals and fundraising efforts for the Residents' Council.
- Upgraded the **Call Bell System** at Huronlea.
- Strengthened health and safety measures, including **Enhanced Outbreak Management Practices** aligned with Infection Prevention and Control Canada (IPAC) guidelines.
- **Replaced Humidifiers** at both Huronview and Huronlea to improve air quality and resident comfort.
- Delivered **Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA)** training to staff and expanded inclusive services and programming for residents.

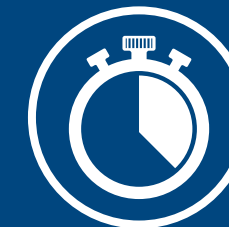
2024 Homes for the Aged By the Numbers



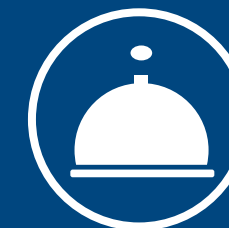
2 Facilities
184 Care beds



100 New admissions which requires 2,200 staffing hours to support



24 Hour service and care



208,680 individual healthy meals prepared and served to Homes and Apartments' residents



2,600+ programs, events and activities



241 Skilled and caring staff

Planning & Development

We're preparing for our future.

Planning & Development makes plans and takes action alongside the community to achieve a healthy, prosperous, and sustainable future for Huron County.

Our Service Areas



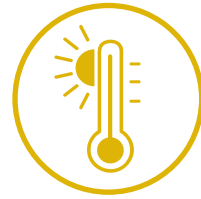
Land Use Planning



Forestry and Environmental Stewardship



Sustainable Community Planning



Climate Change and Energy

2024 Project Highlights

Land Use Planning

- Updated planning documents to increase flexibility, including housing.
- Housing presentations at MMAH Forum, OPPI Conference, and THRIVE Summit.
- Official Plan reviews, Zoning By-law update, and new Community Improvement Plans.
- Projects including Population and Housing Projections, County Aggregate Strategy Update, and Annual Building Permit and Residential Building Report.

Forestry and Environmental Stewardship

- Well attended annual Turtle Release event held.
- Good forestry practices used to harvest 16 ha of woodlot in the Rodger Tract.
- Celebrated 20 years of Huron Clean Water Projects.

Sustainable Community Planning

- Hosted Water Protection Steering Committee and Sustainable Huron Steering Committee meetings.
- Ongoing strong partnerships with multiple community organizations.

Climate Change and Energy

- Updated the County Conservation Demand Management Plan.
- Completed Climate Risk Assessment of County Bridges and Culverts.
- Completed the Rural Roadside Natural Vegetation Pilot project.
- Partnered with neighbouring communities on Electric Vehicle Charging Network.

2024 Planning & Development By the Numbers



171 Development applications reviewed



6 Plans of Subdivision approved (3 draft approved, 3 final approval)



1600+ Acres of County owned and maintained Forest Tracts (14 locations)
32 km of public trails maintained



800 People attended the annual Turtle Release event



275 Clean Water Projects coordinated



\$1,151,899 Total value of 2024 Clean Water Projects

Public Works

We maintain our community's transportation infrastructure.

Public Works takes pride in maintaining a high-quality transportation infrastructure that connects Huron County. We keep our community safely open for business.

Our Service Areas

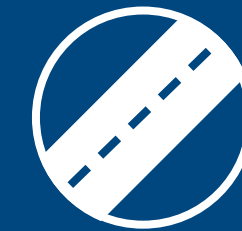


Transportation Infrastructure

2024 Project Highlights

- The **Lower Maitland Bridge** was rehabilitated including concrete deck repairs, barrier wall replacement, deck waterproofing, and new guiderails with end treatments for safety.
- **Fitch's Bridge** was rehabilitated including deck patching, girder crack injections, and expansion joint replacements. New barrier walls, handrails, and guiderails were installed.
- A pedestrian tunnel for the **G2G Rail Trail** was installed under County Road 25 to improve trail accessibility.
- **County Road 3** rehabilitation included paving of 13.3km and 18 culvert replacements.
- Phase 1 of the **Dashwood Urban Reconstruction** improved County Road 83's drainage and road base. Work included storm sewer replacement, road resurfacing, and hydro pole realignment. The County partnered with South Huron and Bluewater for coordinated infrastructure upgrades.
- Phase 2 of the **Wingham Yard Reconstruction** involves constructing a new operations building.
- **County Storm Sewer Inspection and Condition Assessment** included a comprehensive CCTV inspection of its storm sewer network to assess infrastructure condition and identify maintenance needs.

2024 Public Works By the Numbers



775 km Roads maintained



81 Bridges maintained



1,224 Non-structural culverts



210 Culvert structures



Ongoing winter road maintenance and snow removal



184 Vehicles in the fleet

Social & Property Services

We contribute to wellbeing and safety.

Social & Property Services works to improve the lives of individuals and enhance the community in Huron County. We promote equity by increasing access to life stabilizing care and services.

Our Service Areas



Housing & Homelessness



Ontario Works



Children's Services



Property Services

2024 Project Highlights

Homelessness and Housing

- Sanders Street Development.
- Gibbons Street Development.
- Launch of Bridge Housing Program in partnership with CMHA HP.
- Continuation of By-Name List and launch of Coordinated Access program with community partners.

Ontario Works

- Implementation Employment Services Transformation linking clients to Employment Ontario.
- The launch of Centralized intake automated application process for Ontario works clients

Children's Services

- Implementation of the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care program.
- Creation of an EarlyON child and family centre space at the Jacob Memorial Building.
- Professional development on the topic of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for all Huron County Early Childhood Educators.
- Early Childhood Educator recruitment section added to the division website.

Property Services

- Implemented a remote inventory system and created a capital project checklist.
- Completed an energy audit of all buildings.
- Building upgrades including an accessible vestibule, accessible parking, and new EarlyON space.

2024 Social & Property Services By the Numbers



11,550 Children visits to EarlyON programming



2,118 Children supported with fee subsidy



415 Rent-geared-to-Income units maintained



110 County properties maintained (includes County facilities and housing units)



98 exits from Ontario Works to employment



130 households supported by Housing Stability Workers

2023-2024 Council Term | Priorities and Values

In 2023, Huron County Council collaborated with senior staff and facilitator Gord McIntosh to establish a set of priorities and values to guide decision-making. Since that time, staff have worked to implement these priorities, integrating them into departmental initiatives, strategic planning, and service delivery to ensure alignment with Council’s vision for the term. Council plans to reconvene in spring 2025 to review and revise these priorities.



Council’s Priorities | 2023-2024

- Housing** | Everyone deserves access to a safe and affordable home.
- Homelessness** | We’re working to *Be Part of the Solution* to prevent and address homelessness.
- Alternate Energy Solutions** | Exploring economic readiness for environmental initiatives.
- Welcoming & Inclusive Communities** | Everyone is welcome and everyone belongs.
- Service Level Review** | Balancing service excellence with fiscal responsibility.
- Asset Management** | Ensuring resilient infrastructure now and for the future.
- Workforce Attraction** | Huron is home to employers of choice.
- Budget Process Review** | Increasing clarity for better fiscal planning.
- Economic Readiness** | Ensuring we’re ready for new and exciting opportunities.
- Health Service Access** | Advocating for health services that meet community needs.
- Youth Engagement** | Giving a voice and increasing opportunities for youth.
- Agriculture** | Celebrating and advocating for agricultural advancement and long-term sustainability.

Council’s Values
 Collaborative Approach | Environmental Stewardship | Rural Lens | Civic Leadership | Community Engagement | Inclusivity

Council Priority | Housing

The County of Huron is committed to addressing the region’s housing needs through the development of new affordable housing projects, ongoing advocacy, and collaborative efforts with various levels of government and community partners.

Bennett Street Triplexes: In 2023, the County of Huron completed two new triplexes on Bennett Street in Goderich. These triplexes were developed on an existing County housing site utilizing funds from the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative, Social Services Relief Fund, and the County of Huron.

Sanders Street Apartment: In 2024, the County of Huron completed a 20-unit apartment building located on Sanders Street in Exeter. This apartment building was constructed on an existing County housing site utilizing funds from the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative.

Gibbons Street Apartment: The County of Huron is currently in the construction phase of 40-unit apartment on Gibbons Street in Goderich. This apartment building is being constructed on a site that was sold to the County of Huron from the Town of Goderich for \$1. Funding for this project includes contributions from multiple levels of government, local businesses, and not-for-profit organizations. Funding continues to be sourced to support this project.

Housing Videos: New opportunities for housing development were promoted through a series of informative videos.

Housing Advocacy: County of Huron staff and Council continue to advocate for affordable housing within the region.

- In 2023–2024, the County of Huron participated in Western Ontario Wardens’ Caucus (WOWC) and Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) through staff and Council membership as well as holding various board and chair positions.
- Multiple communications were sent to local Members of Parliament and Provincial Parliament (MPPs) encouraging increased funding and rural considerations for affordable housing and homelessness solutions.
- Advocacy for funding specifically for the Gibbons Street Development included several presentations to local and regional not-for-profits, businesses, and philanthropists.
- Additionally, delegations were made to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing at ROMA to further emphasize the need for increased support and investment in housing initiatives.

Council Priority | Homelessness

The County of Huron is dedicated to addressing homelessness through innovative programs, coordinated community efforts, and data-driven solutions that ensure individuals in crisis receive the support they need to transition to stable housing.

By-Name List: Huron's By-Name List empowers individuals in crisis to self-identify and communicate their specific needs. This information allows staff to better understand the scope of homelessness in our community in real time.

Coordinated Access System: Leveraging data from the By-Name List, the County leads the Huron County Homelessness Coordinated Access System, ensuring local organizations collaborate effectively to address the needs of those experiencing homelessness in the community.

Bridge Housing and Stability Program: In 2024, The County of Huron launched the Bridge Housing and Stability Program in collaboration with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth Addiction and Mental Health Services (CMHA HP). This innovative year-round program replaced the previous Out of the Cold program, which operated only during the winter months. It was designed to help vulnerable individuals transition out of homelessness into temporary living spaces that provided stability and support.

- **Bridge Housing:** Utilizing a "Dispersed Model of Supportive Housing," individuals are accommodated in units located throughout the community, ensuring a safe environment where they can access rest, food, and connections to appropriate services.
- **Stability Program:** Participants are guided through the housing process by the Stability Team, a group of specially trained professionals who work directly with individuals in crisis. The team assists in connecting individuals with essential services, including safe shelter, food, clothing, and healthcare.

Homelessness Advocacy: Through participation in the WOWC, delegations were made to Ministers at ROMA on the topics of Mental Health, Addictions, and Homelessness. Presenters advocated for increased funding and rural considerations.

Council Priority | Alternate Energy Solutions

Numerous clean energy opportunities exist within the Huron County ecosystem, driven by the region's unique coastal location (wind energy), proximity to Bruce Power (supply chain development and off-peak electricity availability), availability of anaerobic digestion feedstock for Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) production, solar potential (large rooftops in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors), and energy storage in available salt caverns. However, these opportunities are influenced by factors such as community interest in being a willing host, public feedback, agricultural land preservation, and private sector engagement.

Work to date:

Economic Development Board Working Group: Established to explore opportunities in the clean energy sector.

Industry Collaboration: Membership in the Clean Energy Frontier (CEF) and the Southwestern Ontario Isotope Coalition, with staff representation on the CEF Economic Development Advisory Group.

Hydrogen Storage: Consultations with hydrogen production businesses interested in locating in the region, leveraging the natural storage capacity of salt caverns.

International Partnerships: Collaboration with the Trade Council of Denmark, including exploration of opportunities for Huron County and insights gained from a trade mission to Denmark attended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Central Huron.

Agricultural & RNG Development: Engagement with OMAFA staff on anaerobic digestion (AD) production and RNG sales.

Private Sector Engagement: Discussions with businesses making significant advancements in on-farm RNG production, with new installations in Huron County.

Defining the Municipal Role: Supporting private investment rather than competing with it, facilitating educational opportunities, bringing clean energy experts to Huron County, fostering connections for interested businesses, and actively identifying and communicating emerging opportunities in the clean energy sector.

Council Priority | Welcoming and Inclusive Communities

The County of Huron remains committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming community for all residents. This is accomplished through a variety of initiatives across multiple departments.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA): The County hired an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Specialist within the Human Resource department to advance work in these areas and support staff education.

Immigration Partnership: Collaborated with community organizations and business partners to attend and host events, coordinate volunteers, and conduct research to support a growing number of newcomers in the community.

Accessibility Initiatives: The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) provided guidance on removing barriers, completed site plan reviews, distributed the Accessibility Awards of Merit, and engaged in ongoing community education.

Community Programming: Cultural Services and Immigration Partnership hosted a wide variety of diverse events, including the *Huron Multicultural Festival*, Tastes Like Home Cookbook project, and activities such as cricket, curling, and Conversation Circles. The Huron County Library also offered LGBTQ2S+ Youth Social Connections and featured many diverse speakers and authors.

Truth and Reconciliation Efforts: The County continued its participation in the Indigenous Working Group. Cultural Services' recognized the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation through events and educational initiatives, and hosted Indigenous speakers, artists, and exhibits. Many staff also engaged in reconciliation training.

Community Events Calendar: The County of Huron maintains a community events calendar, providing a one-stop shop to discover events happening throughout the community.

County of Huron Staff Training: Many County of Huron staff members have undertaken training to better support welcoming and inclusive communities, including attending events and webinars such as Active Bystander Training and 4 Seasons of Reconciliation.

Council Priority | Service Level Review

In September 2023, Huron County Council convened for three Special Council Meetings to engage in a comprehensive corporate-wide service level review with Senior staff. During this process, County Council identified several areas requiring further investigation, which were captured using a "parking lot" system. From the discussions, the following five priority reports were identified by Council as key areas for further analysis and information:

1. Financial Analysis of Long-term Care
2. Changing Landscape of Long-term Care
3. Fleet Vehicle Replacement Cycle
4. Advocacy on Housing (Gibbons)
5. Huron Heritage Fund

Since these meetings, staff have worked to bring forward *reports* addressing these priority topics, along with several additional reports on other areas of interest. These reports provided Council with the necessary insights to guide future decisions and ensure continued service excellence across Huron County.

Council Priority | Asset Management

The Province of Ontario introduced and enacted O. Reg. 588/17: Asset Management Planning for Municipal Infrastructure under the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015 (S.O. 2015, c. 15). The impact of this regulation varies by municipality, requiring different levels of adjustments to existing asset management plans.

The 2024 *Asset Management Plan* has been updated to begin addressing the regulation's requirements. While significant progress has been made to include all assets and meet the July 1, 2024 deadline, ongoing work is needed to fulfill the July 1, 2025 requirements set by the Province. This includes:

- Current levels of service, including condition and performance levels for all assets.
- Asset information and life-cycle events and 10 year life-cycle costing.
- Impacts to infrastructure assets based on population growth and employment forecasts.
- Financing Strategies to address infrastructure deficit.

Council Priority | Workforce Attraction

The Economic Development Department undertook a variety of initiatives to address Workforce Attraction in 2023-2024:

Job Promotion: The County of Huron's Economic Development Department actively promotes employment opportunities through the recently launched job board, www.jobsinhuron.ca. In addition, three billboards highlighting local job openings were strategically placed in high-traffic areas across the region. To engage a wider audience, four *Life on the Coast* podcast episodes were released, covering topics such as youth, housing, workforce, and retirees reentering the job market. An extensive advertising campaign was also rolled out across digital, radio, video content, and social media platforms to amplify these efforts.

Publications & Resources: The Economic Development Department supports workforce attraction by developing and distributing valuable resources, including the *Employer's Hiring Guide* and *Employee Job Search Guide*, to assist both employers and job seekers.

Networking & Learning Events: The Economic Development Department facilitated four employer networking sessions focused on international talent, Gen Z hiring, and inclusive hiring practices. Additionally, tailored employment services were provided to 27 local newcomers, and support was extended to South Huron and North Huron's job fairs to connect employers with potential candidates.

Workforce Attraction Advocacy: Through participation in the Western Ontario Wardens Caucus (WOWC), delegations were made at ROMA to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development to update the Ministry on regional concerns and local efforts to address workforce challenges.

County of Huron Recruitment: As Huron County's largest employer, corporate recruitment efforts help strengthen the region by attracting professionals, spouses, and families. To build a strong workforce, the corporation focuses on partnering with post-secondary institutions, offering a wide variety of internship and student opportunities, and actively participating in local and regional job fairs.

Council Priority | Budget Process Review

In 2023, the County of Huron undertook a Budget Process Review to streamline how budgets are presented to the community and Huron County Council. The updated process continues to be utilized by staff and Council. More information on the County's budgeting process can be found on the County's [website](#).

Council Priority | Economic Readiness

To further enhance economic readiness, the County of Huron continues to prioritize initiatives that promote workforce development, job creation, and support for local businesses, ensuring a thriving, sustainable economy for all residents.

Business Support: Alongside managing the *Summer Company*, *Starter Company Plus*, and *Foodpreneur* programs, the Huron Business Centre offers personalized, one-on-one business coaching to support a diverse range of local businesses.

Business Resources: In 2024, the *Economic Development Dashboard* was launched online to support business growth and planning. Additionally, a variety of business toolkits, resources, and guides were developed, including the Business Start-Up Guide, Hiring Guide, and Employee Job Search Guide, to further assist local businesses.

Events: The Economic Development department hosts a number of events each year to support economic readiness. Examples include the Finding Fairness in Farm Transition event, held in Goderich in 2023, and the inaugural THRIVE Economic Development Summit, held in May 2024.

Funding Programs: The *Supporting Local Economic Development (SLED)* Program funds projects that address the strategic priorities outlined in Huron County Economic Development's 2022–2025 plan. The *Supporting Local Youth Program (SLYP)* offers grants of up to \$1,000 for youth-led initiatives and activities that provide opportunities for Huron County youth between the ages of 14 and 19.

Destination Marketing: The Economic Development department promotes the region as a premier destination—not only for visitors but also as a great place to live and work. This is achieved through the website www.OntariosWestCoast.ca, as well as a variety of publications, marketing initiatives, and events.

New Website: A new *corporate website* was developed by the Communications and Business Technology Solutions teams to transparently communicate the services provided by the County of Huron while also showcasing the vibrant and dynamic community of Huron County.

G2G Rail Trail Tunnel: The G2G Rail Trail Tunnel supports tourism and outdoor recreation by attracting visitors to local businesses and enhancing regional connectivity. By improving safety and accessibility, the tunnel encourages greater use of the trail, benefiting both residents and tourists. Strengthening connections between communities along the trail, this project contributes to economic growth and sustainable development in the region.

Digital Permitting Project: Huron County Public Works expanded its online digital permitting system to improve efficiency and accessibility for applicants. Two new permits—Municipal Consent and Work in the Right-of-Way were added, bringing the total number of online permits to four (Single Trip and Annual permits were already offered digitally). This project has streamlined the approval process for various public and private sector projects. By digitizing permitting, the County enhances service delivery, reduces administrative costs, and supports economic readiness by making it easier to obtain necessary approvals.

Planning: The Planning and Development Department supports economic readiness by ensuring planning policies are up to date and meet the needs of our communities, with a priority on housing. A Housing Friendly Review was completed to increase flexibility for housing developments of all types. In partnership with Economic Development, a series of housing videos was also produced.

Council Priority | Health Service Access

The County of Huron is dedicated to improving access to essential health services and advocating for better healthcare support across the region.

Community Paramedicine Program: The County of Huron's *Community Paramedicine* program helps improve public health and safety through education, injury prevention, and in-home healthcare services. The team provides regular wellness checks and assessments for residents, responding to healthcare referrals and offering community-based emergency care such as point-of-care testing, wound care, and homebound blood draws. By delivering care at home, the Community Paramedicine team helps reduce 911 calls, Emergency Department visits, and hospital admissions, ultimately improving the quality of life in Huron County.

ORH Review of Huron County Paramedic Services: Operational Research in Health Limited (ORH) worked with EMS staff to collect detailed workload and resourcing data from June 2019 to June 2024 to analyze trends in key metrics. Data collected for the report indicated that the demand for EMS services is growing, and will continue to grow, in Huron County. Recommendations from the *report* included relocating some paramedic bases and adding additional shifts to other locations to better meet current and future demands.

Health Service Access Advocacy: The County of Huron continues to advocate for improved health service access at other levels of government through participation in the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus (WOWC), the Rural Ontario Association of Municipalities (ROMA), and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). In 2024, the County of Huron made a Multi-Ministers Delegation at ROMA. Presenters Bernie MacLellan and Glen McNeil advocated for continued public health funding and special consideration for rural communities on behalf of Huron Perth Public Health. Further delegations are planned for upcoming ROMA and AMO conferences.

Workforce Attraction Long-term Care: The County of Huron is actively enhancing recruitment and retention efforts to meet legislated care requirements in its long-term care homes. In collaboration with Human Resources, Homes for the Aged staff have refined their hiring strategies to attract and retain qualified professionals. By implementing targeted recruitment initiatives and fostering a supportive work environment, the County is ensuring consistent, high-quality care for residents while addressing the growing demand for skilled healthcare workers.

Council Priority | Youth Engagement

The County of Huron is committed to fostering opportunities for youth through dedicated spaces, programs, and employment initiatives across various service areas.

Youth Spaces at the Library: The Huron County Library provides welcoming and inclusive spaces for youth, offering resources, study areas, and specialized programming to support learning and social engagement.

Youth Programming in Cultural Services & Economic Development: Programs such as the *TD Summer Reading Program*, *Summer Company*, and interactive Museum programming provide youth with educational and entrepreneurial opportunities.

School Visits to the Huron County Museum & Historic Gaol: The Huron County Museum and Historic Gaol hosts *school groups* for immersive learning experiences, connecting students with local history through exhibits, tours, and hands-on activities. The Museum has noted an incredible increase in student attendance (Grades K-HS) in recent years, almost 100% more youth participated in school program in 2024 than in 2023.

Internships & Co-op Placements: The County offers high school and post-secondary students internships and co-op placements in various departments, providing valuable work experience and skill development opportunities.

Summer Employment Opportunities: A range of summer positions are available across County departments, helping students gain practical experience while contributing to the community.

Funding Support: The County has secured funding from organizations such as McCall MacBain and Compass Minerals to enhance youth programming and employment initiatives.

Warden's Visits: In 2023 and 2024, Warden Glen McNeil visited local high schools to offer presentations about the role of local government to grade 10 civics students.

Council Priority | Agriculture

As Ontario's most agriculturally productive region, Huron County plays a vital role in the province's food production and economy. The County of Huron is committed to supporting farmers to ensure that Huron County's \$12.2 billion in agricultural assets remain viable for future generations while promoting responsible land stewardship and economic resilience.

Farm Succession Planning: The County of Huron recognizes the importance of farm succession planning and has launched several initiatives to support local farmers. In 2023, the Finding Fairness in Farm Transition event brought together 180 attendees to learn from expert Elaine Froese. The Life on the Coast podcast dedicated four episodes to the topic, and an education campaign provided online resources and social media outreach to raise awareness.

Farmland Protection Advocacy: The County was pleased to see the revised Provincial Planning Statement continued strong farmland preservation policy. County Council, in alignment with farm sector groups, advocated for the removal of the proposed residential lot creation policy in prime agricultural areas which was achieved. Further, the County's proactive work in permitting Additional Residential Units in agricultural areas was supported by new Provincial direction, highlighting the progressive and best practices of Huron's agricultural planning.

Huron Clean Water Project: The *Huron Clean Water Project* supports agricultural land by funding initiatives that improve water quality and soil health. Eligible projects include erosion control, tree planting, livestock access restrictions, and manure storage decommissioning, all aimed at reducing contamination and protecting groundwater. These efforts help prevent the runoff of harmful substances into watercourses, which benefits the agricultural community by preserving water resources for farms and ensuring the sustainability of farmland. The total value of past Huron Clean Water Projects completed is more than \$16.3 million.

Huronview Demo Farm: The County of Huron supports the *Huronview Demo Farm* by providing land for its operations. The farm serves as an innovative hub for agricultural research and demonstrations, showcasing sustainable farming practices, new technologies, and environmental stewardship. It provides valuable educational opportunities for local farmers and agricultural professionals to learn about best practices and improve productivity. For more information, visit Huronview Demo Farm.



HURON
C O U N T Y

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