



Municipality of West Elgin

Agenda

Committee of the Whole

Date: January 8, 2026, 4:05 p.m.
Location: Council Chambers
160 Main Street
West Lorne

Committee of the Whole Meetings are held in-person at 160 Main Street, West Lorne, and the post-meeting recording available at www.westelgin.net, when available (pending no technical difficulties).

Zoom Link for Virtual Participation:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83789269097?pwd=HmLqGxkkXVyLJZFxKcCcvpkzlyoTg8.1>

Pages

1. Call to Order

2. Adoption of Agenda

Recommendation:

That West Elgin Committee of the Whole hereby adopts the agenda for January 8, 2026, as presented.

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

4. Staff Reports

4.1 Infrastructure & Development

4.1.1 Sidewalk and Crosswalk Study

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Recommendation:

That West Elgin Committee of the Whole hereby receives the report from Dave Charron, Manager of Infrastructure and Development, and

That West Elgin Committee of the Whole hereby receives this report and recommends Council approve proceeding to contract RV Anderson as consultants to assess crosswalks needs in the residential areas of West Lorne and Rodney at its January 22nd Council meeting. The cost of \$17,400 plus applicable taxes will be applied to the 2026 budget.

4.1.2 Water Connections Bylaw

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Recommendation:

That West Elgin Committee of the Whole hereby receives the report from Dave Charron, Manager of Infrastructure and Development, AND

That West Elgin Committee of the Whole hereby recommends that the West Elgin Council at its January 22nd, 2026, regular meeting repeal By-law 2024-75 and replace it with an update version with the changes noted below as supported by the attached document.

4.1.3 Verbal Discussion Re: Landfill Concerns

4.2 Community Services & Clerks

4.2.1 Backyard Urban Hen, End of Pilot Program

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Recommendation:

That West Elgin Committee of the Whole hereby receives the report from Terri Towstiuć, Manager of Community Services/Clerk; And

That Council direct staff to proceed with option one (1), approval of a permanent fee based Backyard Urban Hen licensing program, to be approved at the Regular Meeting of Council, January 22, 2026.

4.3 Chief Administrative Officer

4.3.1 Verbal Discussion Re: ROMA Delegations

Ministry of Health and Ministry of Rural Affairs

5. Closed Session

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of West Elgin hereby proceeds into Closed Session at _____ pm, to discuss matters pursuant to the Municipal Act, Section 239 2(k), being a position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the municipality or local board (Port Glasgow Trailer Park Seasonal Contracts).

6. Report from Closed Session

Clerk to provide Report from Closed Session.

7. Adjournment

Recommendation:

That West Elgin Committee of the Whole hereby adjourn at _____ to meet again at 4:00pm, on Thursday, January 22, 2026 or at the call of the Chair.



Staff Report

Report To: Committee of the Whole
From: Dave Charron, Manager of Infrastructure & Development
Date: 2026-01-08
Subject: Sidewalk Crosswalk Needs Study

Recommendation:

That West Elgin Committee of the Whole hereby receives the report from Dave Charron, Manager of Infrastructure and Development, and

That West Elgin Committee of the Whole hereby receives this report and recommends Council approve proceeding to contract RV Anderson as consultants to assess crosswalks needs in the residential areas of West Lorne and Rodney at its January 22nd Council meeting. The cost of \$17,400 plus applicable taxes will be applied to the 2026 budget.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee of the Whole with information regarding how administration would recommend and assessment of crosswalk needs in the residential areas of West Lorne and Rodney be conducted, and to review consultant quotations to evaluate the need for pedestrian crosswalks at selected locations within the community and to provide recommendations consistent with provincial guidelines.

Background:

Residents have expressed interest in improved pedestrian crossing facilities at various locations throughout the Municipality. As a small rural community, traffic volumes, pedestrian activity, and roadway characteristics vary significantly by location.

The installation of pedestrian crosswalks must be supported by technical analysis to ensure:

- Pedestrian safety is enhanced
- Traffic operations are not negatively impacted
- Infrastructure complies with provincial standards and best practices
- Ontario guidelines require specific data collection and professional judgment before pedestrian crossing facilities can be warranted.

Administration is recommending this work be contracted to engineering consultants to ensure the proper analysis is completed. The timeline for this work will be for traffic and pedestrian counts to occur in late spring with a final report, complete with recommendations, to be produced in the summer.

Proposed Study Scope

The consultant would be responsible for completing the following tasks:

- Review of existing roadway conditions and posted speeds
- Collection of vehicles and pedestrian traffic counts
- Confirm pedestrian desire lines or pedestrian crossing locations through a comprehensive site visit to validate active transportation connectivity, interaction between modes, and adjacent land use context.
- Assessment of collision history (if available)
- Evaluation of sightlines, roadway geometry, and surrounding land use

Application of Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) guidance, including:

- OTM Book 15 – Pedestrian Crossing Facilities
- Other applicable OTM standards as required

Identification of appropriate crossing treatments, such as:

- Pedestrian crossover (PXO)
- Marked crosswalks
- No crossing warranted (where applicable)

Outcome of the Study

The final report will provide:

- Clear recommendations on whether pedestrian crossings are warranted
- Identification of suitable crossing types for each reviewed location
- Concept-level guidance to support future implementation and budgeting
- Documentation to support Council decisions and public transparency

Financial Implications:

As per the West Elgin procurement policy, three quotations were obtained from reputable engineering firms. RV Anderson produced the lowest quote to perform scope of work as described. The total cost of the Pedestrian Crosswalk Needs Study is \$17,400, plus applicable taxes.

Funding for this study will be provided from: 2026 Capital Budget

There are no immediate capital construction costs associated with this report. Any future implementation of recommended pedestrian crossing facilities would be subject to further Council approval and budget considerations.

Policies/Legislation:

[Ontario Ministry of Transportation Ontario -Traffic Manual Book 15 Pedestrian Crossing Treatments](#)

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Infrastructure Improvement	Recreation	Economic Development	Community Engagement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To improve West Elgin's infrastructure to support long-term growth.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To provide recreation and leisure activities to attract and retain residents.	<input type="checkbox"/> To ensure a strong economy that supports growth and maintains a lower cost of living.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To enhance communication with residents.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dave Charron,
Manager of Infrastructure and Development

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Sidewalk Crosswalk Needs Study - 2026-01-Infrastructure Development.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jan 2, 2026

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Robin Greenall



Staff Report

Report To: Committee of the Whole
From: Dave Charron, Manager of Infrastructure & Development
Date: 2026-01-08
Subject: Updating By-law 2024-75 Water Connections

Recommendation:

That West Elgin Committee of the Whole hereby receives the report from Dave Charron, Manager of Infrastructure and Development, AND

That West Elgin Committee of the Whole hereby recommends that the West Elgin Council at its January 22nd, 2026, regular meeting repeal By-law 2024-75 and replace it with an update version with the changes noted below as supported by the attached document.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to recommend updates to the municipality's Water Connection Charges By-law 2024-75 to simplify water service connection fees and reduce excessive costs to property owners while maintaining cost recovery for the municipality.

Background:

The current Water Connection Charges By-law was enacted in December of 2024 and establishes fees for properties connecting to the municipal water system.

In that by-law the cost of water can be excessive due to the cost of the capital charge for the watermain along with the connection charge of the watermain.

By updating the by-law to have only one connection charge per type of lot for the service, the only variable number will be the material, labour and machine time to complete the construction of the service.

Issue

The current fee structure includes multiple fixed charges that do not accurately reflect the actual cost of constructing individual water service connections. In particular:

- Capital costs for watermain infrastructure and service connections are both charged to the applicant.
- Property owners may perceive the fees as unfair or inconsistent.

Proposed By-law Amendment

It is proposed that the Water Connection Charges By-law as attached in this report be updated to include:

- Removal of separate capital charges related to the watermain for individual service connections.
- Clarify actual construction costs to be charged based on:
 - Materials used
 - Labour required
 - Equipment and machine time necessary to complete the work
- When request come from residents to upsize their water connection that the appropriate fee can be assessed to the site.

This approach ensures transparency, fairness, and a direct relationship between costs incurred and fees charged.

By-law revisions are currently being reviewed by the County of Elgin Legal Services.

Financial Implications:

The proposed amendment is not expected to negatively impact municipal finances. The municipality will continue to recover the full cost of installing water service connections, while eliminating redundant or excessive charges. Administrative efficiency may also improve through a simplified fee structure.

Benefits

- Fair and predictable costs for property owners
- Improved transparency in fee calculations
- Alignment of charges with actual construction costs
- Support for development and system connection

Policies/Legislation:

By law 2024-75

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Infrastructure Improvement	Recreation	Economic Development	Community Engagement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To improve West Elgin's infrastructure to support long-term growth.	<input type="checkbox"/> To provide recreation and leisure activities to attract and retain residents.	<input type="checkbox"/> To ensure a strong economy that supports growth and maintains a lower cost of living.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To enhance communication with residents.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dave Charron
Manager, Infrastructure and Development

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Updating By-law 2024-75 Water Connections - 2026-02-Infrastructure Development.docx
Attachments:	- By-law 2026-TBD- WE Water Connections By-law (003).docx
Final Approval Date:	Jan 2, 2026

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Robin Greenall



THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF WEST ELGIN

BY-LAW NO. 2026-??

A By-Law to Impose A Water Connection Charge Upon Owners of Land Who Derive or Will or May Derive a Benefit From Connecting to The Water Distribution System Water Works.

WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of West Elgin is accumulating and maintaining a reserve for future capital requirements for the Municipality's water distribution system;

AND WHEREAS the Council would like to provide an alternative payment method for such water rates;

AND WHEREAS the Council has determined that it is desirable for such properties to contribute to the reserve for future capital requirements for the Municipality's water distribution system upon connection to such system, pursuant to sections 11 and 391 of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, as amended;

AND WHEREAS the Council has determined that it is desirable for new development arising from severances and plans of subdivision to contribute to the reserve for future capital requirements for the Municipality's water distribution system, pursuant to subsection 90(3) and subsection 391(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, as amended;

NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF WEST ELGIN ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

Definitions

1. In this By-law:

- a) "connection charge" means the fee charged by the Municipality of West Elgin to the owner of land requesting a connection to the water distribution system;
- b) "Council" means the Council of the Municipality of West Elgin;
- c) "lot" means a parcel of land held or owned under separate ownership from the ownership of the fee or equity of redemption in abutting land and shall be described in a registered deed or other document legally capable of conveying

land;

- d) "serviced areas" means any property within the Municipality of West Elgin which abuts an in-service water line;
- e) "settlement area" means the Settlement Areas defined in the Municipality of West Elgin Official Plan,
- f) "settlement area connection" means a water connection to a property within a settlement area;
- g) "subdivision development connection" means a water connection to a property being created through a Plan of Subdivision;
- h) "Treasurer" means the Treasurer for the Municipality of West Elgin, including any Deputy or authorized alternates;
- i) "water rate" means a charge for the capital cost of the water works or any part or parts thereof;
- j) "water system" means the Municipality of West Elgin water distribution system, including all pipes, pumps, meters, chambers and all associated installations and equipment, providing water to the serviced areas.

Water Connections – General

- 2. Water connection charges are allocated for future capital improvements of the water works systems.
- 3. No lots or properties located outside of the serviced areas will be permitted to connect to the distribution system.
 - a) Notwithstanding Section 2, Council may, upon written application, consider expanding the serviced area to permit lots to connect to the distribution system. Upon receipt of a request, Council will determine the process to consider and evaluate the request. Subject to Council's approval, all costs associated with the extension of, installation of and connection to the water distribution system would be the responsibility of the property owner(s).
- 4. Except as otherwise provided in this By-law, all land uses are to be charged on the same basis and at the same rates.
- 5. Water connection charges will be based on the size of the service requested, type of development proposed and geographic area of the property to be connected.

6. For Multi-residential and Multi-use properties, connection fees shall be based on the number of connections and/or connection size and not based on a per lot or per property basis. Water connection charges and timing of payment will be included in the development agreement.
7. Connections to the water distribution system shall be completed and/or supervised by personnel or authorized agents of the Municipality of West Elgin.
8. Water connection charges for existing properties and those created through the consent process, include all costs associated with installation of a service to the property line, including labour, materials, and contracted services. All installation and costs on private property are responsibility of the property owner.
9. Subdivision development owners are responsible for installation of all water distribution services within the plan of subdivision and/or development area, including any upgrades required to the water distribution system as set out in the subdivision agreement.
10. All water connections are subject to review and approval by the Municipality of West Elgin. Connections that cannot be supported by the existing water distribution system infrastructure may be subject to additional charges and/or postponement to make upgrades to the system.
11. All water connection charges, less costs to install the service, shall be segregated annually in a reserve account and shall be used only for future capital improvements of the water works system.
12. Unless otherwise specified, payment of water connection charges must be made upon application for a water connection. In all cases, full payment must be made prior to being connected to the water distribution system.
13. The Treasurer shall be authorized to implement and carry out all financial administrative actions required to implement the provisions of this by-law.
14. The Manager of Infrastructure and Development shall be authorized to implement and carry out all infrastructure administrative actions required to implement the provisions of this by-law

Water Connections – Existing Lots

15. For existing lots within a Settlement Area that are not connected and have not already paid a water connection charge according to municipal records, the connection charge shall be as set out in Schedule “A” – Existing Settlement Area with Water Service.

16. For all other existing lots that are not connected and have not already paid a water connection charge according to municipal records shall be subject to the water connection rates as set out in Schedule “A” – Existing Rural Area with Water Service.

Water Connections – New Development

17. All lots created after the passage of this by-law, and its predecessors, by consent, and not prohibited by zoning regulation or otherwise from being developed with construction, shall be subject to the water connection charges as set out in Schedule “A” - Existing Settlement Area with Water Service or Existing Rural Area with Water Service, as applicable. The water connection charge shall be added as a condition of as a condition of severance and the owner will be liable for payment of the water rates.
18. All lots created after the passage of this by-law, and its predecessors, by registered plan of subdivision, and not prohibited by zoning regulation or otherwise from being developed with construction, shall be subject to the water charges as set out in Schedule “A” – New Subdivision Development. The water connection charges shall be set out in the subdivision agreement and payable prior to registration of the plan of subdivision.

Payment of Water Rates

19. The water rates shall become due and payable in full upon application to the municipality for a connection to water distribution system, with the exception of lots created by consent or plan of subdivision.
20. For lots created subsequent to passage of this by-law as stipulated in paragraph 15, the water rates shall become due and payable in full as a condition of severance.
21. For lots created subsequent to passage of this by-law as stipulated in paragraph 16, the water rates shall become due and payable in full as set out in the subdivision agreement.

Alternative Payment Option – Paragraphs 15, 16 and 17 Only

22. For Connection Charges levied under paragraphs 15, 16 and 17, a property owner may apply to the Municipality of West Elgin, prior to the water rates becoming due and payable, to have the water connection fee debentured. The process, terms and conditions for such a debenture are set out in Schedule "B" to this by-law.

Lien and Charge on Land

23. The water rates shall be a lien and charge upon the land, and if the rate or any part thereof remains unpaid after the due date, the amount unpaid may be collected by

distress or entered on the collectors' roll and collected in the same manner as municipal taxes, in accordance with section 398 of the Municipal Act, 2001.

Failure to Remit Payment

24. Failure to remit payment in full upon application to the municipality for connection to the said water works shall prohibit actual connection to the said works.

By-Law Indexing

25. The connection charges set out in Schedule "A" to this by-law shall be adjusted annually on January 1, commencing on January 1, 2027, without amendment to this by-law, in accordance with the most recent twelve month change in the Statistics Canada Non-Residential Building Construction Price Index for Toronto.

Schedules to the By-Law

26. The following Schedules to this by-law form an integral part of this by-law:

- a) Schedule "A" – Water Connection Rates
- b) Schedule "B" – Water Connection Debenture Process

General

27. Where the provision of any other By-Law, resolution or action of Council are inconsistent with provision of this By-Law, the provisions of this By-Law shall prevail.

- a) All capital costs outlined in any prior by-law are hereby repealed. Only the connection costs associated with this by-law shall be charged.
- b) For existing lots that, pursuant to a prior by-law, have paid capital costs related to a waterline extension but have not connected to the system, the amount of capital costs previously paid shall be credited toward the connection charges set out in Schedule "A".
- c) Lots that currently receive water service and request an upsizing of that service shall be charged the difference in upgrade cost, in addition to all applicable material, labour, and equipment (machine) costs.

28. If any clause, provision, or requirement in or under this by-law should be determined to be invalid or unenforceable in whole or in part, such invalidity or unenforceability shall attach only to such clause, provision or requirement, and all other clauses, provision or requirements hereof shall continue in full force and effect.

29. This By-law may be cited as the “Municipality of West Elgin Water Connection By-law”.

30. That this By-law shall come into full force and effect upon final passing.

Read a first, second, and third time and finally passed this 22nd day of January 2026.

Richard Leatham, Mayor

Terri Towstiuc, Clerk

Schedule "A" to By-law #2024-

Water Connection Rates

Connection Size	Per Lot or Unit Connection Fee		
	New Subdivision Development	Existing Settlement Area with Water Service	Existing Rural Area with Water Service
1"	\$5,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$15,000.00
1.5"	\$6,651.00	\$13,301.00	\$19,952.00
2"	\$7,500.00	\$14,999.00	\$22,499.00
4"	\$8,349.00	\$16,699.00	\$25,048.00
6"	\$9,713.00	\$19,426.00	\$29,138.00

Additional costs for the service not included above are:

1. Materials – Including but not limited to pipes, saddles, steel sleeves, curb stops, water meters, etc.
2. Labour – The costs associated with both municipal and subcontracted employees.
3. Machine Time – The time each piece of municipal equipment is used to complete work, multiplied by the municipal rate.

Schedule "B" to By-law #2024-
Water Connection Debenture Process

1. PROCESS

- a. The property owner shall submit, in writing, a letter to the Treasurer of the Municipality of West Elgin, requesting the water charge be debentured. Such letter shall include the property owner's names and a description of the property including the 911 address.
- b. Staff shall calculate the annual repayment amount and provide notice to the property owner of such amount to be collected annually.
- c. Staff shall set up the debenture on the applicable property tax roll for collection purposes.

2. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- a. A debenture shall be 10 years in length.
- b. The interest rate applied shall be the current 10-year Infrastructure Ontario Amortizing rate plus 2%. The debenture amount shall be a minimum of \$5,000.00, up to the maximum of the total connection fee.
- c. The annual repayment amount shall be added to the tax roll and invoiced on the final tax bill each year, commencing with the year in which the debenture is approved, and shall be collected in the same manner as taxes.
 - i. If the final tax bill has already been issued for the year in which the debenture is approved, the first annual payment shall be added to the final tax bill for the following year.
- d. The annual repayment amount shall be collected in 10 equal installments of principal plus interest.

3. EARLY REPAYMENT

- a. A property owner who has been authorized for a debenture of the water connection charge shall have the option of repaying the debenture prior to the 10th annual installment.
- b. A property owner shall submit, in writing, a letter to the Treasurer of the Municipality of West Elgin offering to redeem the debenture and requesting the amount required to retire such debenture.

- c. The Treasurer shall determine the remaining principal on the debenture and the interest accrued on the principal from the 1st of September immediately prior to the submission date of the request at the rate applicable to such debenture.
- d. The Treasurer shall communicate, in writing, the amount required to redeem the debenture to the property owner.

Upon receipt of the amount, the Treasurer shall remove the debenture from the applicable property tax account and no further amounts shall be collected with regards to the debenture.

DRAFT



Staff Report

Report To: Committee of the Whole
From: Terri Towstiuc, Manager of Community Services/Clerk
Date: 2026-01-08
Subject: Backyard Urban Hen, Pilot Project Update

Recommendation:

That West Elgin Committee of the Whole hereby receives the report from Terri Towstiuc, Manager of Community Services/Clerk; And

That Council direct staff to proceed with option one (1), approval of a permanent fee based Backyard Urban Hen licensing program, to be approved at the Regular Meeting of Council, January 22, 2026.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the 2025 Backyard Urban Hen Pilot project and to outline staff recommendation as to how the program could be implemented in the future.

Background:

The Municipality of West Elgin created By-law No. 2024-84, brought into effect on January 1st, 2025, for a one year duration. The purpose of this by-law was to discover through a pilot program the amount of interest in non-commercial hens being allowed on properties zoned as Residential First Density (R1), Rural Residential (RR), and Hamlet Residential (HR). There was an initial maximum number of permits limited to 100 for the entire Municipality of West Elgin, with a forecasted pilot timeframe of one calendar year.

During 2025, By-law Enforcement Officer A. Keeler, tracked workload, process, requirements, concerns and recommendations for potential updates to the by-law. The interest in this program was minimal, with one (1) complete permit (being in full compliance of the by-law) being issued and one (1) conditional permit.

The workload for the program varied, with most of the workload being directed towards the administrative process, including issuing the permit, review and verification of the application and confirming zoning and mapping. The chart below identifies the two (2) applications received in 2025, and the process and challenges, from start to finish.

When Council is determining the potential for permanent implementation of the Backyard Urban Hen program, it is important to consider the following items:

1. West Elgin By-law is a part time, ten (10) hour per week contracted position, which struggles to keep-up with the current workload.
2. As indicated in the initial conversations, many West Elgin residents (residential properties) already have backyard hens, and have not come forth to initiate a proper application. By-law will only investigate and inspect these properties, if a complaint has been received.
3. Currently by-law is contracted at \$70 per hour, through Tenant security. The cost of the initial permit is \$150 with an annual renewal of \$100. This presents a financial loss to the municipality, considering the time spent with very little recuperation.

	Application One (1) Complete	Application Two (2) Conditional
Initial Application Process	The initial review and completion of the application paperwork took approximately two (2) hours, which included answering any questions from the applicant and providing assistance.	This application took approximately one (1) hour, due to having previous experience with the application process.
Administrative Processing	The completion of application took the officer six (6) hours, however the officer anticipates in the future it will be reduced to three (3) hours, as they become more familiar with the program. This included reviewing the full application for completeness, and confirming compliance with by-laws, zoning and mapping.	The administrative process for the conditional permit took three (3) hours, due to the officer being more familiar with the process.
Inspection	The inspection process was less time consuming, with an estimate of twenty (20) minutes per property.	The conditional permit took much longer in the inspection stage, due to the failure of the initial inspection. The initial inspection took ten (10) minutes, as none of the material had been installed. The secondary inspection took thirty (30) minutes, and a conditional permit was granted. A subsequent inspection is still required, which the officer has yet to attend to due to capacity. In hindsight, the officer has indicated that a conditional permit should not have been granted, as this has created more workload on their end.

Completion of Application	The completion of this application took approximately two (2) hours, including the creation of the permit, and follow-up conversations and clarification required.	This application has not been completed. Final inspection is pending and a payment has not been received.
Total Time Required	Approximately ten (10) hours	Estimated seven (7) hours , as the final inspection and completion of the application has done been fulfilled.

Additionally, the following chart provides Council with three (3) options regarding Backyard Urban Hens; (1) Implementation of a permanent program with a licensing fee increase, (2) removal of the program, and (3) allowing backyard hens with parameters in place for by-law compliance without the requirement for licensing.

Option	Pros	Cons
<p><u>Option 1:</u> Implementation of a Permanent Backyard Urban Hen program, with a licensing fee increase.</p> <p>Increased fee to \$300 for the initial fee, and \$100 for annual inspections.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish parameters for raising hens in urban settings • Provides enforcement staff with compliance guidelines and address complaints. • Permits urban hens for food security (eggs), educational opportunity, waste reduction (food scraps), mental health benefits, pest/insect control. • Increased fees to assist in offsetting the cost of by-law enforcement, primarily in the initial stages. • A licensing program places much of the onus on the residents, as they are required to sign off indicating they have read the health & safety documents from OMAFRA and the Ministry of Health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of the current by-law is challenging to gauge. The pilot program received little response, and urban hens were present prior to the implementation. • Growing urban population could lead to increased number of urban hens, which could be problematic. • Increased by-law enforcement hours, which are already strained, for the initial application as well as annual inspections. • Increased cost to the licensing fee could deter potential applicants • Permitted use could have increased animal welfare concerns, public nuisance (noise, odor), increased number of predators, public health risks (Salmonella, avian influenza).

<p><u>Option 2:</u> Not proceed with a permanent program or by-law.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By-law hours are directed at other matters and complaints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without a by-law in place, by-law enforcement will have little to no authority to handle complaints regarding backyard chickens. • Removal of the program could potentially increase complaints, with any properties currently raising urban hens. • Without a by-law animal Welfare concern, such as public nuisance (noise, odor), increased number of predators, public health risks (Salmonella, avian influenza) cannot be effectively addressed.
<p><u>Option 3:</u> Allow Backyard Urban Hens, with implementation of a permanent bylaw <u>without</u> licensing requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The By-law establishes parameters for raising backyard hens in the urban settings and provide staff with enforcement and compliance guidelines. • Removal of the licensing cost may encourage more compliance and applications, resulting in a more successful program. • Permits urban hens for food security (eggs), educational opportunity, waste reduction (food scraps), mental health benefits, pest/insect control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The removal of the licensing system eliminates the database as to how many and where chicken coops are being erected in the urban areas. • Increased by-law enforcement hours to address compliance; by-law would only respond to complaint received. • Permitted us could have animal welfare concerns, public nuisance (noise, odor), increased number of predators, public health risks (Salmonella, avian influenza).

Summary and Recommendation:

With the options noted in the report, and the analysis of the process, ***staff are recommending implementing a permanent bylaw to establish parameters for raising backyard hens in the urban areas, with an initial fee of \$300 and an annual inspection fee of \$100.***

Establishing rules surrounding housing backyard chickens is important for public health measures, animal welfare and public nuisance concerns. By-law parameters will also allow enforcement staff to ensure compliance with coop standards (sizing, distance, number of hens, prohibition of roosters, etc.) and enforce set fines for non-compliance.

Option one (1) would allow for this, with an increased fee to \$300 for the initial application and \$100 for the annual inspection. An increase to the initial fee would assist in offsetting the cost for by-law enforcement, and with time and expertise, the time required from the by-law officer should be significantly reduced from the ten (10) hours with the initial application. A comparable program would be West Elgin's [Kennel Licensing Program](#), which requires an annual inspection and \$200 fee for those housing more than three (3) dogs, and/or planning to breed and/or board dogs.

Option three (3) would also provide for a permanent program with enforcement and compliance parameters in place through a municipal by-law, without the burden of an associated cost, potentially encouraging more (compliant) applicants. However, like many municipal services, this program should be funded primarily through those who are using it.

Financial Implications:

Currently by-law is contracted at \$70 per hour (10 hours @ \$70 = \$700), through Tenant security. The cost of the initial permit is \$150 with an annual renewal of \$100. This presents a financial loss to the municipality, considering the time spent with very little recuperation.

Policies/Legislation:

By-law 2024-84

Additional Resources

[Public Health Ontario: Reducing Health Risks Associated with Backyard Chickens](#)

[Ministry of Health: Backyard Poultry Fact Sheet](#)

[CDC: Healthy Pets – Backyard Poultry](#)

[West Elgin Council Meeting, March 14, 2024 – Originating Motion](#)

[West Elgin Council Meeting, April 25, 2024 – Clerks Report \(2024-21\), Backyard Hen First Report](#)

[West Elgin Council Meeting, July 18, 2024 - Clerks Report \(2024-30\) Re: Survey Results](#)

[West Elgin Council Meeting, December 19, 2024 - Clerks Report \(2024-47\), Pilot Project](#)

[West Elgin By-law 2024-84 – Backyard Urban Hen Regulations](#)

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Infrastructure Improvement	Recreation	Economic Development	Community Engagement
<input type="checkbox"/> To improve West Elgin's infrastructure to support long-term growth.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To provide recreation and leisure activities to attract and retain residents.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To ensure a strong economy that supports growth and maintains a lower cost of living.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To enhance communication with residents.

Respectfully submitted by,

Terri Towstiuc, Dipl. M.A.
Manager of Community Services/Clerk

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Backyard Urban Hen Update - 2025-25-Community ServicesClerks.docx
Attachments:	- By-law 2024-84 - Final Backyard hens.docx
Final Approval Date:	Jan 2, 2026

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Robin Greenall



MUNICIPALITY OF
West Elgin

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF WEST ELGIN

BY- LAW NO. 2024-84

Being a By-law to regulate and licence the keeping of Backyard Hens within Residential First Density (R1), Hamlet Residential (HR) Rural Residential (RR) Zones in the Municipality of West Elgin

WHEREAS Section 5(3) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2002, c.25, as amended, provides that powers of every Council are to be exercised by by-law unless specifically authorized to do otherwise;

AND WHEREAS Section 8(3) of the Municipal Act, 2001 provides municipalities with the broad authority to govern affairs as it considers appropriate and to enhance the municipality's ability to respond to municipal issues;

AND WHEREAS Sections 11(1) and (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, provides that a lower-tier municipality may provide any services or thing that the Municipality considers necessary or desirable for the public in respect to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the municipality and the health, safety and well-being of persons;

AND WHEREAS Section 11(3) of the Municipal Act, 2001, provides that a lower-tier municipality may pass by-laws respecting matters within the following spheres of jurisdiction: animals;

AND WHEREAS, for the purpose of the "Pilot project", the yearly licences shall be capped at 100 for the entire Municipality;

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of West Elgin deems it expedient, necessary and in the public interest to regulate the keeping of backyard Hens in accordance with the Municipality's Zoning By-law, as amended, for the purpose of public health and safety.

NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF WEST ELGIN ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

Definitions

"Annual Licence Cap" or "cap" shall refer to the maximum limit of Backyard Hens Licences being issued annually.

"Backyard Hens" means the accessory keeping of hens for the purpose of companionship as a pet or providing eggs for personal consumption by occupants of a dwelling on the same lot, and does not include accessory livestock, or agricultural uses otherwise defined by the Municipality of West Elgin's Zoning By-law.

“Clerk” means the Clerk of the Corporation of the Municipality of West Elgin or their designate.

“Coop” means a fully enclosed weatherproof and ventilated building where hens are kept and which the interior of includes nest boxes for egg laying, perches for the hens to sleep on, and food and water containers.

“Council” means the Council of the Corporation of the Municipality of West Elgin.

“Dwelling” means one or more rooms in a building, designed as, or intended as, or capable of being used or occupied as a single independent housekeeping unit and containing living, sleeping, sanitary and food preparation facilities or facilities for the installation of kitchen equipment and has an independent entrance. For the purpose of this By-law, a dwelling unit does not include any commercial accommodation or a recreational trailer.

“Hen” means a domesticated female chicken that is at least four months old.

“Licence” means a licence issued under this By-law.

“Municipality” means the Corporation of the Municipality of West Elgin.

“Officer” means a Police Officer or an Animal Control Officer, a By-law Enforcement / Municipal Law Enforcement Officer for the Municipality of West Elgin, or anyone working under his/her authority.

“Outdoor Run” means an area enclosed by wire screen intended for permitting a hen or hens to be outdoors.

“Property” means a parcel of land and any buildings or other structures on the land.

“Property Owner” means the registered owner(s) of a property within the Municipality of West Elgin.

“Slaughtering” means the killing of livestock for purposes that include the use of meat for food, which includes backyard hens for the purpose of this by-law.

“Waitlist” means the list of applications received after the cap of 20 issued licences has been reached.

“Zoning By-law” means a by-law passed under Section 34 of the Planning Act that regulates the use of land in the Municipality of West Elgin.

1. Administration

1.1 The Corporation of the Municipality of West Elgin is responsible for the administration and enforcement of this by-law.

1.2 The provisions of this By-law shall apply to the keeping of Backyard Hens in accordance with the Zoning By-law within the boundaries of the Municipality of West Elgin.

- 1.3 The Owner and/or applicant understands and agrees that upon notice, the Municipality may revoke the licence/permission to keep hens at anytime, and the keeping of hens after this date is an offence under the by-law as set out in Schedule “A”.

2. Application for Backyard Hen Licence

- 2.1 No person shall keep Backyard Hens pursuant to this By-law, unless that person has submitted an application and receives a licence from the Municipality of West Elgin.
- 2.2 The applicant/owner of the Backyard Hens must reside on the property where the Backyard Hens are kept.
- 2.3 An application for such licence must be signed by the applicant and/or landowner and shall include, but is not limited to, the following mandatory fields:
- 1) Applicant information including name, address (mailing and physical), postal code, and telephone number and email address (if available);
 - 2) Property Owner’s information including name, address (mailing and physical), postal code, and telephone number and email address (if available);
 - 3) Site sketch/plan illustrating the location and size of the coop and manure storage area on the property, complying with the coop regulations set out in the By-law;
 - 4) Checklist of specific regulations contained in the By-law confirmed by the applicant; and,
 - 5) A declaration that the applicant:
 - a) Reviewed OMAFRA Webpage titled “Raise Healthy Small Flock Poultry”;
 - b) Reviewed the OMAFRA Webpage titled “Rodent Control in Livestock and Poultry Facilities”;
 - c) Reviewed the Ministry of Health Factsheet titled “Reducing Health Risks Associated with Backyard Chickens”;
 - d) Will provide suitable housing and shelter for the backyard Hens in their care and will maintain such housing in a clean and wholesome state, having regard for Biosecurity Recommendations for Small Flock Chicken Owners (OMAFRA);
 - e) Will provide the Backyard Hens with appropriate food, water, space and environmental conditions conducive to good health and the opportunity to socialize and engage in fundamental behaviours such as scratching, roosting and dust bathing; and,
 - f) Will abide by the regulations contained within the Backyard Hens Licensing By-law.

- 2.4 It is understood that different ministries and organizations may update their resource kits and factsheets from time to time. Staff have the authorization to make updates to the education package applicants and current permit holders are to review as outlined above in section 2.3, based on new information provided and/or recommended by OMAFRA and the Ministry of Health.
- 2.5 Tenants must obtain written permission from the property owner to keep Backyard Hens on the owner's property, of which the original or a notarized copy must be provided to the Municipality. Property owner's may remove their permission at any point in time for any and no reason, immediately rendering the permit voided. New applications must be submitted to apply for reinstatement.
- 2.6 Every application for a Backyard Hens licence shall be submitted to the Municipality on the form provided (application form).
- A licence will be issued for every approved application upon receipt of payment submitted in accordance with the annual licence fee as outlined in the current User Fees By-law (as amended from time to time). Approved licences that are not paid within 30 days of their approval will not be held or guaranteed issuance based on licence availability.
- Prior to any Backyard Hens being permitted, property requires a property inspection and confirmation of compliance by a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer or other authorized employee or agent of the Municipality.
- 2.7 Through the authority of this by-law the Municipality has set a yearly cap on the number of Backyard Hen licences so as not to exceed 20 approved licences per year.
- 2.8 Applications received after the cap of approved licences is reached will be added to a waitlist, whereby applicants will be notified in sequence of their submission upon licence availability.

Application

- 2.9 An application shall be submitted by all new applicants for any property proposing to receive a licence, providing all the required documentation as outlined in section 2.3 of this By-law.

General

- 3.0 Every application for a licence will be reviewed to determine whether it meets the requirements of this By-law. Part of this review will include circulation to applicable departments.
- 3.1 Applications received after the annual cap has been reached, will be held on a waitlist in the sequence they were received. Upon licence availability waitlisted applicants will be contacted in the order their application was received. These applicants will have 30 days to respond to the Municipality advising if they will proceed with their application.

- 3.2 Waitlisted applicants who do not inform the Municipality of their intention to proceed, will forfeit their position on the waitlist and the subsequent applicant will be contacted.
- 3.3 When waitlisted applicants are offered an available licence, they will be required to affirm that the information on their application has not changed. If the information has changed, they will be provided an opportunity to resubmit an application within a 30-days for immediate consideration.
- 3.4 Reviewing departments as part of their review, may require an inspection of the property, other than a room or place used as a dwelling.
- 3.5 If at any time the Municipality determines, as a result of evidence that is provided, that the operation of a coop does not conform to the requirements of this By-law, it may suspend or revoke the licence.
- 3.6 In the event of any changes to the conditions to which the licence approval was based on, the applicant shall notify the Municipality immediately of the changes and may be required to submit additional information, including but not limited to a new site sketch/plan of the coop location.
- 3.7 For current permit holders, applications can be submitted to transfer their current permit to a different property. All applications for transfer must be submitted to the municipality meeting all current requirements of the by-law. Failure to meet all requirements will result in the current permit being disallowed at the new property.
- 3.8 Current permits may be transferred from previous to new owners on the condition that the property is still in compliance with the by-law. Tenants may transfer permits to new tenants with written acknowledgement of the property owners and compliance with the by-law.

4.0 Property Regulations

- 4.1 A person is not eligible for a Backyard Hen licence of such licence unless:

- 1) The property is zoned Residential First Density (R1), Rural Residential (RR), and Hamlet Residential (HR) and is in conformity with the Municipality's Zoning By-law.
- 2) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this by-law or the Municipality's Zoning By-law to the contrary the property shall have a minimum lot area of 1,000 m² (10,760 ft²).
- 3) The property conforms to all applicable law, including but not limited to, the Health Protection and Promotion Act, laws regarding animal cruelty, and the Fire Protection and Prevention Act.
- 4) The property complies with all other municipal By-Laws and there are no outstanding orders or unpaid fines.

5.0 Backyard Hens Regulations

- 5.1 A maximum of six (6) Backyard Hens shall be allowed on each permitted property.
- 5.2 All Backyard Hens shall be at least four (4) months old.
- 5.3 The keeping of roosters is strictly prohibited.
- 5.4 All deceased Backyard Hens shall be disposed of promptly in a sanitary manner.
- 5.5 The slaughtering of Backyard Hens on the property is prohibited.
- 5.6 The selling of eggs, manure, meat or other products derived from backyard Hens is prohibited.

6.0 Backyard Hen Coop Regulations

- 6.1 Within any Residential First Density (R1) or Rural Residential (RR) Zone, as defined by the Municipality's Zoning By-Law, no coop (including manure storage area) or outdoor run, shall be located within:
 - 1) Conservation Authority Regulated Area, unless a permit is granted by the Conservation Authority, as defined in the Zoning By-Law mapping;
 - 2) 7.5 m of a drainage swale, open private drain, open municipal drain, catch basin or similar open access point to a drain or water course;
 - 3) A front yard or exterior side yard;
 - 4) 2 m of any dwelling;
 - 5) 3 m of any lot line;
 - 6) 1.5 m of any structure;
 - 7) 3 m from and downgradient of any well location to avoid potential water source contamination;
 - 8) 3 m of any private sewage system (including tile bed); and,
 - 9) 15 m of any lot line on which a school is located.
- 6.2 A maximum of one (1) coop and one (1) outdoor run shall be permitted per property.

A coop shall be provided that has:

 - 1) A maximum ground floor area of 9.0 m²
 - 2) At least 0.37 m² of floor area for each hen;

- 3) A maximum height of 2.5 m (8.0 feet approximately).
- 6.3 The coop and manure storage area, exclusive of the outdoor enclosure, shall not cumulatively exceed an area of 10 m².
- 6.4 The coop shall be a fully enclosed weatherproof structure or enclosure with ventilation and a heat source, built to prevent any rodent(s) from harbouring underneath or within its walls and to prevent entrance by any other animal. The interior shall include:
- 1) At least one nest box per hen for egg laying;
 - 2) At least one perch giving 0.3 m of space per hen;
 - 3) At least one food and water container;
 - 4) The floor must be constructed of a material that is resistant to moisture, mould, retain heat in the cold weather and exclude rodents and predators;
 - 5) The floors must be lined with shavings, straw or other appropriate materials to absorb manure and facilitate cleaning;
 - 6) Hen boxes and a perch must be provided to accommodate all hens;
 - 7) Dust bath area must be provided (helps control mites);
- 6.5 The coop shall have a heat source that is a Canadian Standards Association (CSA) rated product and meets the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) standards upon installation. It is the owner's responsibility to follow the manufacturer's instructions for the heat source to ensure proper use.
- 6.6 The coop must be kept in a clean and sanitary condition at all times, free of vermin, obnoxious smells and substances and in good repair.
- 6.7 The coop and outdoor run shall be secured against the entry of predators.
- 6.8 Backyard Hens must be provided with food and clean water at all times, shelter, light, and ventilation to assist in keeping the hens in good health. Food and water shall be kept in solid, rodent proof and weatherproof containers. Uneaten feed shall be removed in a timely manner.
- 6.9 All manure shall be stored in a fully enclosed container. Manure stored on a single property shall be limited to a maximum of three (3) cubic feet. Manure shall not be disposed of as or with domestic household waste. All manure shall be removed daily from the hen coop and outdoor runs. Manure shall be used for composting, fertilizing or disposed of appropriately off-site. Licensed properties abutting an agricultural property shall not dispose of manure on the abutting property without the express written consent of the property owner.
- 6.10 All Backyard Hens must be kept securely in a coop or outdoor run at all times. Backyard Hens are not permitted to run at large.

6.11 The coop must be locked from sunset to sunrise.

7.0 Right of Entry

7.1 Every person who holds a Backyard Hen licence shall allow, at any reasonable time, a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer or other authorized employee or agent of the Municipality to inspect the property, other than any room or place used as a dwelling, to determine whether all requirements of this By-law are being complied with.

7.2 No person shall obstruct or hinder or attempt to obstruct or hinder a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer or other authorized employee or agent of the Municipality in the exercise of a power or the performance of a duty under this By-law.

8.0 Offence and Penalty Provisions

8.1 Every person who contravenes any of the provisions of this by-law shall be guilty of an offence and upon conviction is liable to a fine pursuant to the *Provincial Offences Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 33*, as amended.

8.2 If this By-law is contravened and a conviction entered, the court in which the conviction was entered or any Court of competent jurisdiction may, in addition to any other remedy and to any penalty that is imposed, make an order prohibiting the continuation or repetition of the offence by the person convicted.

9.0 Severability

9.1 It is hereby declared that notwithstanding any section, subsections, clause, paragraph or provision of the By-law or parts thereof, may be declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, unenforceable, illegal or beyond the powers of Council to enact, such section or section or parts thereof shall be deemed to be severable and shall not affect the validity or enforceability of any other provisions of the By-law as a whole or part thereof and all other sections of the By-law shall be deemed to be separate and independent therefrom and enacted as such.

9.2 Whenever any reference is made in this By-law to a statute of the Legislature of the Province of Ontario, such reference shall be deemed to include all subsequent amendments to such statute and all successor legislation to such statute.

10.0 Force and Effect

This by-law shall take force and effect January 1, 2025, with an expiration date of December 31, 2025.

Read a first, second, and third time and finally passed this 19th day of December, 2024.

Richard Leatham, Mayor

Terri Towstiuc, Clerk

To regulate and licence the keeping of Backyard Hens within the Municipality of West Elgin

Schedule "A"

Part I Provincial Offences Act

Item	Short Form Wording	Provisions Creating or Defining Offence	Set Fine
1.	Fail to obtain licence	s. 2.1	\$205.00
2.	Possess more than six (6) Hens	s. 5.1	\$205.00
3.	Possess a rooster	s. 5.3	\$205.00
4.	Fail to dispose of deceased Hen promptly and in sanitary manner	s.5.4	\$250.00
5.	Permit slaughtering of Hens on property	s. 5.5	\$305.00
6.	Permit the sale of products derived from Hens	s. 5.6	\$205.00
7.	Fail to comply with coop location setbacks within settlement areas	s. 6.1	\$205.00
8.	Permit more than one (1) coop or outdoor run on property	s. 6.2	\$205.00
9.	Fail to comply with permitted size of coop and manure storage area	s. 6.3	\$205.00
10.	Fail to comply with coop maintenance standards	s.6.4	\$205.00
11.	Fail to maintain sanitary conditions	s. 6.6	\$305.00
12.	Fail to keep coop and/or outdoor run secure	s. 6.7	\$205.00

Item	Short Form Wording	Provisions Creating or Defining Offence	Set Fine
13.	Fail to provide clean food and water	s.6.8	\$205.00
14.	Fail to keep food properly stored	s.6.8	\$205.00
15.	Fail to keep manure in proper fully enclosed container	s. 6.9	\$205.00
16.	Permit storage of manure over three (3) cubic feet	s. 6.9	\$205.00
17.	Failure to dispose manure separate of domestic household waste	s. 6.9	\$205.00
18.	Permit Hens to run at large	s.6.10	\$205.00
19.	Fail to lock coop from sunset to sunrise	s. 6.11	\$205.00
20.	Hinder or obstruct the Township, its employees, officers or agents	s. 7.2	\$400.00

Note: The general penalty provision for the offences listed above is Section 8.1 of By-law 2024-84, a certified copy of which has been filed.