

2018-2022 COUNTY COUNCIL

Initiatives and Achievements





MESSAGE FROM WARDEN GEORGE CORNELL

It has been my absolute honour to serve as County of Simcoe Warden and represent this dedicated Council in supporting our residents and communities for the past four years. Having served as a County Councillor from 2014-2018, I knew this was an important and busy role; however, after four years as Warden, my eyes are truly opened to how vital our County services, programs and initiatives are to the lives of our residents.

Near the beginning of this term, Council struck a special Task Force to evaluate municipal services for efficiencies in service delivery and governance. These were valuable exercises, which either confirmed current models and service levels, or made recommendations for Council's consideration on opportunities to modernize and build further efficiencies and synergies on services between the County and our local municipalities.

As a Council that provided leadership during the pandemic, phase two of this Council term focused on legislative, service and funding decisions to assist the essential and critical services the County provides, specifically in Health and Emergency Services and Social and Community Services, where the needs remain extremely high.

Phase three of this term saw our Council adjust once again, with a renewed focus on economic, financial, health, and community-based recovery initiatives, while also moving forward with key infrastructure and capital projects. We made great progress on the Simcoe Village Campus Redevelopment, new housing builds and road enhancement initiatives. This Council also presided over our 100th Anniversary of the Simcoe County Forest, a regional asset that ranks among the largest municipally-owned forest networks in Canada, and the move to automated cart collection, which greatly improved service outcomes for our residents.

This Special Report documents a few of the achievements the County has reached over the past four years as Council worked diligently with residents and staff to ensure the best value for every taxpayer dollar.

We know there is more work to be done as we plan for significant growth in our communities and recover from the pandemic; however, Simcoe County has a bright future. Thank you to my fellow County Councillors, CAO Mark Aitken, County staff, residents and businesses for working together for the past four years for the greater good of our communities.

Stay safe and be kind to each other.



MESSAGE FROM CAO MARK AITKEN

It is truly a privilege to serve you, the residents and communities of the greatest region in the province of Ontario, Simcoe County.

I am reminded on a daily basis how fortunate I am to work with so many talented and hardworking people at the County, who always put others before themselves in delivering our critical services. Their boundless dedication and commitment through the very difficult challenges poised by the global pandemic has been nothing short of spectacular and inspiring. Guided by County Council's leadership and decision making, County departments continued to deliver a wide variety of much needed public services to our residents this term of Council, achieving many successes, milestones and accomplishments, all the while playing a pivotal additional role in our response to and continued recovery from COVID-19.

I've been fortunate to have a rewarding career focused in the municipal sector, and I can tell you that the past four years have brought about unprecedented challenges, change and evolution. Demand for our critical services is at its highest level ever, and the role we play as a regional government in these times and with this economy is only growing, with the needs for services and infrastructure, and social, health and community services increasing exponentially.

Our staff pride themselves on service excellence, with unwavering commitment to bettering our communities and the quality of life of our residents. This publication highlights some of the great accomplishments undertaken by County Council and staff on your behalf over the past four years.

COVID-19 has brought out both the best and the worst in people as they struggled to cope. I sincerely wish to thank County Council and Warden George Cornell for their leadership, and County staff for their resilience and professionalism in guiding and supporting Council's vision and direction in making Simcoe County Ontario's best place to live, work, invest, and play. Stay strong Simcoe County, and be careful out there.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Aitken', written in a cursive style.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

The sky's the limit for Lake Simcoe Regional Airport

In 2020, the County of Simcoe acquired an increased ownership stake in the Lake Simcoe Regional Airport (LSRA). The County gained an additional 70 per cent of shares and became the majority shareholder with a 90 per cent stake, while the City of Barrie will maintain 10 per cent of shares. Together, the two municipalities will oversee growth and expansion at the airport.

The County continues to make long-term investments towards elements of the LSRA strategic plan, which includes completing required studies, consultations and approvals to expand the runway and support the development of a business park and infrastructure on the site, among other growth and job creation initiatives.

In 2021, the County launched the LSRA Aerospace Development Fund to stimulate private sector investment and drive innovation at the airport. The fund is established on a three-year basis, providing \$100,000 per year to eligible businesses. The fund positions the LSRA as a leader in business development and acts as a catalyst for the region with a strong economic impact by encouraging new business opportunities, collaboration and partnerships, innovation, talent attraction, cluster development and high-quality jobs for residents.

Our vision for LSRA as a key driver of growth is taking flight, with the airport chosen as the location of the Volatus Aerospace Centre of Excellence, Chartright Air Group and a new hangar for Air Bravo.

County widens LSRA runway

The County worked with area partners to advance a critical runway expansion approval and funding process in 2020. Phase one of the two-phase runway project, the widening of the runway from 100 ft to 150 ft, proceeded in fall 2020 and consisted of the installation of new infrastructure to support the lighting system and drainage requirements. Phase two included installation of a high-intensity LED system in spring 2021.

As the 90 per cent shareholder in LSRA, the County has committed to phase two of the expansion project, extending the runway from 6,001 feet to 7,000 feet to permit larger sized intercontinental corporate aircrafts to operate out of LSRA.

Tourism Simcoe County service delivery to the Heart of Georgian Bay

The Economic Development Corporation of North Simcoe (EDCNS), comprised of the communities of Midland, Penetanguishene, Tay and Tiny, was formed in 2014 with four strategic objectives for economic development in North Simcoe: Agriculture, Advanced manufacturing, Health care and Tourism. The Heart of Georgian Bay (HGB) is a Destination Marketing Organization mandated by EDCNS to promote these municipalities and increase visitation to the area.

In 2021, the EDCNS analyzed the productivity and efficiencies of the HGB and the decision was made that it would be far more effective to have Tourism Simcoe County (TSC) deliver tourism services for the region, rather than the EDCNS having a separate organization. TSC is also known as Experience Simcoe County, and is a service group within Service Simcoe.

TSC continues to serve a growing role of supporting tourism operators and partners, while increasing efforts to grow tourism visits with direct operator support, visitor marketing, experience and product development, and media relations.

Tourism, Culture and Sport Enhancement Fund

In 2022, the Tourism, Culture and Sport Enhancement Fund received 106 applications requesting more than \$1.1 million in financial support. The original funding envelope was \$300,000; however, unspent funds from the 2021 fund due to COVID-19 were drawn from the tourism reserves and utilized to support additional applications. In 2022, the County of Simcoe approved 87 successful applications totalling more than \$485,000 in financial support.

Ride Simcoe County Motorcycle Experience

Ride Simcoe County launched in 2022 and spans all 16-member municipalities. The motorcycle experience, branded Ride Simcoe County, attracts riders from across the province.

Through the development phase, TSC produced a motorcycle





map in both digital and print format, two promotional videos, certified 60 businesses as motorcycle-friendly and provided each business with a County of Simcoe branded 'Motorcycle Parking Only' sign. TSC aims to see a significant increase in motorcycle tourism as a direct result of the program.

Innovation Lab – Spark Program

The Simcoe County “Spark” Mentorships & Grants Program is a collaborative partnership initiative between Tourism Simcoe County, Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) and the Tourism Innovation Lab. The program’s goal is to find, foster and support new tourism ideas, experiences and partnerships that will enhance current offerings, address gaps or challenges, motivate travel and longer stays, and increase year-round visits in the region.

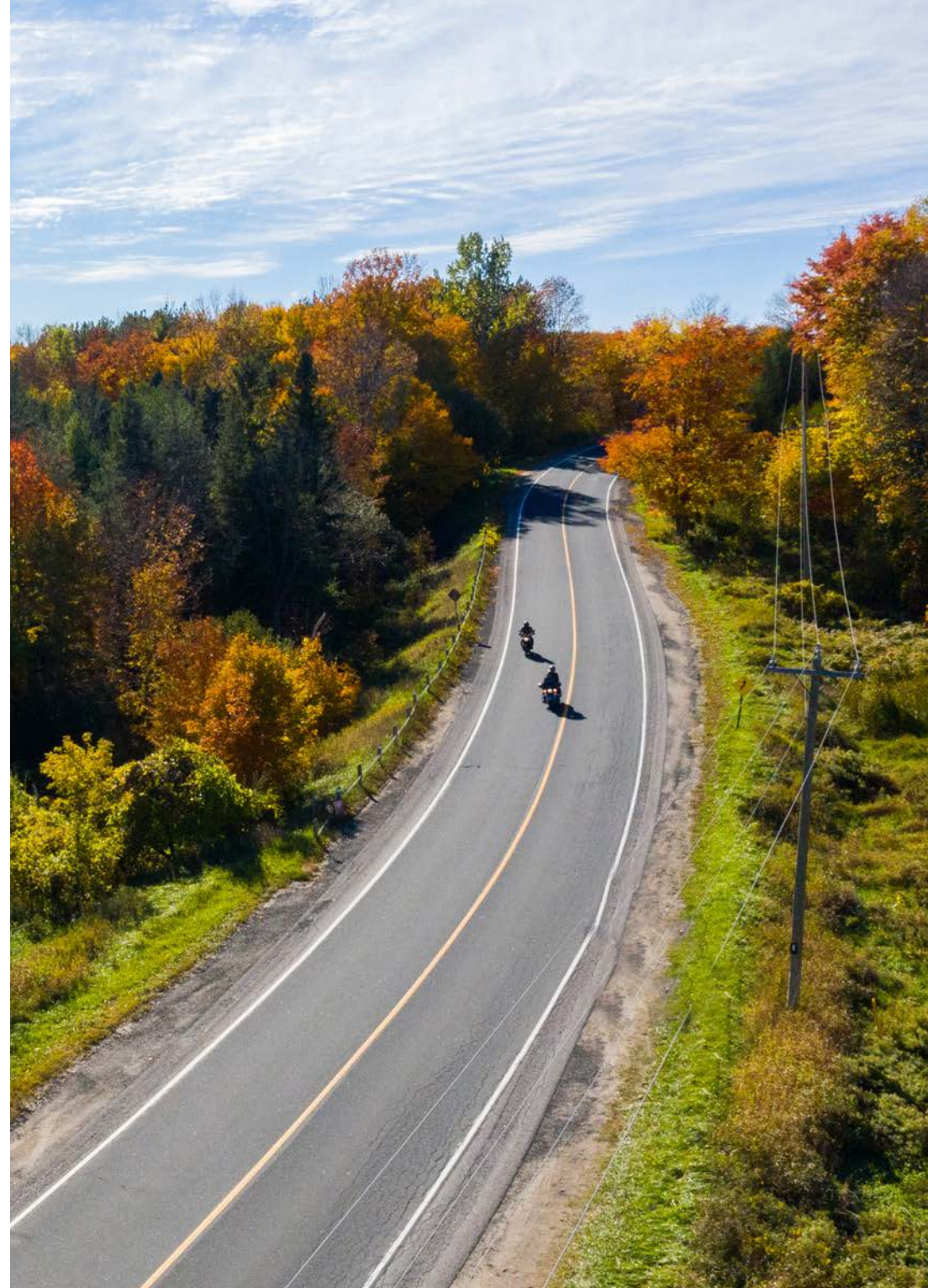
Three finalists who made winning pitches for the Simcoe County “Spark” Program were each awarded a \$3,000 seed grant and mentorship to help them get started with their new tourism ideas. Fourteen applications were received, with the top five being invited to present their new tourism ideas at virtual Pitch Sessions.

A panel of judges from the tourism leaders, partner representatives and an entrepreneur from outside the region selected the three winning applicants. Three winners were named and TSC will work with all applicants to help foster the development of their ideas.

Simcoe County Museum introduces The Red Pine House

In September 2019, Warden George Cornell was joined by fellow County Councillors, staff and area forestry partners to unveil Simcoe County Museum’s latest attraction – The Red Pine House: Forestry Education Centre.

The building aligns with the County’s #greenandgrowing forestry program and pays tribute to the region’s deep-rooted forestry history. Interpretive panels depict the chronological history of the forests of Simcoe County, beginning with the Indigenous use of the land, European settlement and the exploitation of the forests in the 1800s and early 1900s, and the subsequent conservation efforts led by the County and area partners.





Red Pine House: Forestry Education Centre grand opening ceremony at the Simcoe County Museum.

County of Simcoe launches Work in Simcoe County job site

The County of Simcoe launched a new interactive job portal in June 2020. The Work in Simcoe County site is a “one-stop shop” with local resources, career exploration tools and thousands of local job opportunities.

The Work in Simcoe County portal uses an automated fetching tool to aggregate job listings from more than 20 popular job boards and career sites. The new user-friendly online tool also features the ability to map job opportunities across Simcoe County, and provides important information on accessing Employment Ontario offices and childcare

facilities.

The website has had more than 534,000 views since its inception. Building on the success of the job site and to help connect area employers with prospective job seekers, the County and area partners hosted three virtual job fair events with 1,245 job seekers and 259 employers across a variety of sectors.

The events were hosted on an innovative, user-friendly platform where job seekers and employers could connect through one-on-one text chat, audio and video.



Archiving our history

The Simcoe County Archives served 555 in-person researchers and 491 other visitors (tours, records drop-off/retrieval, etc.), and answered 2,437 telephone, email, or mail inquiries during the Council term.

The Simcoe County Archives collected 108 metres of records, including:

- 76 metres of private collections from people, organizations, and businesses
- 32 metres of transfers from seven County departments and 13 lower-tier municipalities

The Simcoe County Archives building also underwent energy efficiency upgrades. Parts of the roof were replaced, solar power generation equipment was installed, and the exterior walls were insulated and clad in metal.

Simcoe County Archives, Midhurst.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Newcomer Recognition Awards

Each year, the County of Simcoe and the Simcoe County Local Immigration Partnership host the Newcomer Recognition Awards to recognize and celebrate the contribution of immigrants living in Simcoe County and the organizations and businesses supporting enhanced opportunities for a growing and changing demographic. These community leaders strengthen community awareness about, and advocate for, newcomer equity and the celebration of cultural diversity in Simcoe County and enrich the immigrant experience in the region.

This initiative is supported annually through corporate sponsorships. In 2021, Silver sponsors included the Barrie Public Library, Georgian College and Innovative Automation. Bronze sponsorships were provided by Amical Little Lake, Bradford Greenhouses, Lakehead University, Pavliks.com, Roadmap2Canada, Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board, Township of Clearview, Town of Innisfil, Town of Penetanguishene and the Township of Springwater.

Operation Ukrainian Safe Haven

Since the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, millions of Ukrainians have been forced to flee their country. In response, the Canadian Government announced the launch of the Canadian-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET), a special temporary residence visa program for Ukrainians seeking safety in Canada. The government is also prioritizing family sponsorship applications for Ukrainian relatives of Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

The website <https://immigration.simcoe.ca/operation-ukrainian-safe-haven> provides information and resources to support Ukrainians arriving in Canada. The page is updated on a regular basis as new information becomes available.

Settlement Services help newcomers settle and adapt to life in our communities. These services include information, referrals to other community services, language training, and assistance finding employment that matches newcomers' skills and education. Additional supports may be available to ensure that programming is accessible, such as transportation, child-care and interpretation/translation services.

Lucy's Place

The County of Simcoe partnered with Redwood Park Communities, the David Busby Centre, and the City of Barrie to create Lucy's Place, an 18-unit supportive housing complex for those experiencing chronic homelessness. An old motel and adjacent house were purchased by the County of Simcoe, with funding support



● Lucy's Place grand opening ceremony, Barrie.

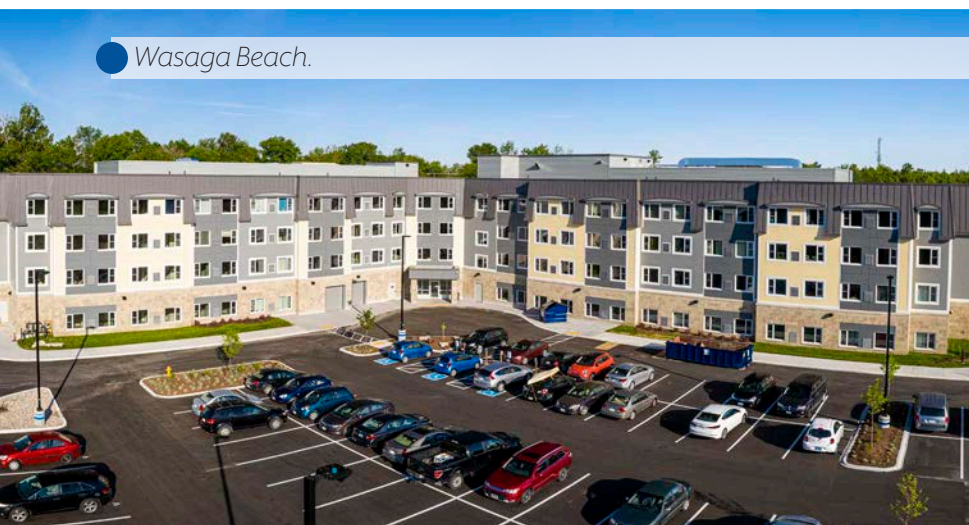




Mixed-use affordable housing building, Collingwood.



Victoria Harbour.



Wasaga Beach.

from the Ontario Government in 2017 in order to create a home for Lucy's Place. The City of Barrie contributed \$152,115 to the project as a redevelopment grant from its 2018 Community Improvement Plan funds. In 2018, the County entered into a 25-year ground lease agreement with Redwood Park Communities. Redwood Park Communities oversaw the conversion, and the David Busby Centre is providing case management and 24/7 supports to the residents. The grand opening was held in October 2019.

Affordable Rental Housing - Completed

Collingwood mixed-use affordable housing building

Opened in 2019, the \$40-million Collingwood mixed-use affordable housing build created 147 new units located in the Town of Collingwood, within walking distance of public parks, transit, schools, shopping and amenities. The Town of Collingwood provided relief from building, planning and legal fees.

Two unique mixed-use buildings opened in spring 2019, replacing 30 townhouses that were rapidly aging and in need of serious upgrades. This site offers affordable housing for singles, families, and seniors, along with onsite services such as an EarlyON Child and Family Centre. This site is also home to a community hub for social and community services, such as Ontario Works, Children's Services, the Simcoe County District School Board (adult learning programs), Empower Simcoe, and drop-in/satellite office space for various community agencies and partners including Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Disability Support Program and various health services.

Tay Township (Victoria Harbour)

A \$12.8-million investment by County Council and its funding partners, this three-storey affordable rental building was officially opened in fall 2020 on land donated by the Township of Tay, with several covered costs included. The 41 one-bedroom units offer barrier-free homes for seniors and persons with disabilities. In picturesque Victoria Harbour, residents are known to enjoy the local trails and serene setting of Tay Township.

Wasaga Beach

Recognizing the need for affordable housing for families and seniors in Wasaga Beach, County Council and its funding partners invested \$27 million in creating 99 new affordable homes in the community, with the building opening to residents in 2020. This includes one-, two-, and three-bedroom units in the building developed on land donated by the Town of Wasaga Beach, where they have waived property taxes for 20 years and have covered the costs of planning and engineering reviews, zoning amendments, and more.



Rendering of new County-Orillia Campus.

Affordable Rental Housing - Upcoming

County-Orillia Campus

Located on the former site of Orillia District Collegiate Vocational Institute (ODCVI), this \$79-million investment will create approximately 130 new affordable housing units for families and seniors in a 216,000 square foot combined hub that includes residences, commercial and community space. These plans are based on local needs in consultation with the City of Orillia and guide local actions to address homelessness and housing in line with provincial and local priorities.

Well-designed housing provides safety, health and affordability. It further represents an investment in our community and sense of place. Affordable housing created through the proposed development will increase the opportunity for low-to-moderate income households, as well as some specific vulnerable individuals, to access housing with dignity.

Bradford West Gwillimbury

County of Simcoe County Council has approved a new 50-unit affordable housing project mixed family and seniors building in Bradford West Gwillimbury. This new low-rise building will create additional affordable housing in the area, allowing more people to have stable homes where they can continue to contribute to their community.

This comes on land generously donated by the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury, and will create an attractive streetscape with good connectivity to transit and adjacent walking trails. The building will be within walking distance of the town's future civic plaza, downtown commercial amenities, elementary schools, ample green space parks, and the GO Station.

Barrie

The County of Simcoe purchased 1.9 acres centrally located in Barrie for the purpose of building affordable housing with easy pedestrian access to commercial amenities and transit.

Currently, County staff is in the pre-development approvals process, with the goal of creating up to 150 units of affordable housing. If pre-development approvals are granted, a full design will be available as early as 2023, with construction starting in 2024. County Councillors also approved a plan to temporarily expand emergency homelessness shelter capacity in the City of Barrie and area through the procurement of a temporary homeless shelter facility on this property.

In January 2022, Council approved the purchase of 77 Tiffin Street for the purpose of converting it into 14 units of housing with supports for people who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness. Conversion work has begun. A request for proposals will be issued to select an organization to provide support services and property management at the project, which is expected to open in late 2022 or early 2023.

Secondary Suites Program

In June 2021, Council approved increases to the municipally-funded secondary suites and rent supplement programs, bringing the annual investments in those programs to \$650,000 and \$800,000 respectively. The program assists homeowners with costs of creating secondary or garden suites that must be rented at affordable rates. The rent supplement program helps low-income households with monthly payments towards their rent.





● Kirtland's Warbler.

ENGINEERING, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

County invests in Habitat Restoration

The County of Simcoe continues to invest in its forests, conducting its largest tree planting effort in decades in April 2019. The County's Forestry Department contributed to Simcoe County's green and growing forests by planting more than 150,000 seedlings within the Museum Tract in Midhurst. The replanting operation was part a multi-partner, three-year Forest and Habitat Restoration Project, restoring a formerly degraded site into a rare habitat type.

In 2018, growth of the County Forest continued with the acquisition of a 105-acre parcel as an addition to the Simcoe County Forest 'Packard Tract' in the Township of Essa. An assessment of the property identified opportunities to substantially enhance planned forest restoration to include habitat creation for the endangered Kirtland's Warbler.

The restoration and habitat creation project began in fall of 2019 and, in June 2022, during its spring migration, the globally rare Kirtland's Warbler was sighted in the Simcoe County Forest as the County celebrated the 100th anniversary of the largest municipally owned forest network in Ontario.



● The new LINX Transit Route 5 connected the Towns of New Tecumseth and Bradford West Gwillimbury.

Simcoe County LINX Transit Service connects more communities

In 2019, the County launched two new LINX Transit Service routes and assumed the operations of an existing connecting link between Collingwood and Wasaga Beach, creating LINX Routes 2, 3 and 4.

The County introduced LINX Transit Route 5, connecting the towns of New Tecumseth and Bradford West Gwillimbury in August 2020, and in August 2021, County's LINX Transit Route 6, connecting Midland and Orillia with stops between, hit the road.

These additional five routes provide enhanced access to health, recreation, education, service and employment opportunities across Simcoe County, including traditionally under-served areas in the north.

County drives first roundabout project

Continuing to improve and maintain our regional transportation infrastructure and assets has been a long-term focus of the County, and is both noted and appreciated by residents and visitors. The County constructed a major roundabout at County Road 93 at Vindin Street and Golf Link Road between Penetanguishene and Midland in 2021. Roundabouts are commonplace across Europe and are becoming more common in Ontario as they represent an effective long-term solution for intersection improvements - increasing safety and capacity at lower overall maintenance costs.

The County has invested in multiple roundabout projects and will continue to include these in our transportation infrastructure designs where there is merit.

New automated cart collection rolls out

The County rolled out a new automated cart system for curbside waste collection on November 1, 2021. The new system provides an easy and safe solution for residents to manage their waste each week and returns collection reliability to curbside collection.

While the frequency of bi-weekly garbage and recycling collection and weekly organics introduced in 2020 stayed the same, the County moved to a new four-day collection schedule to improve predictability when missed collections occur.

More than 450,000 carts were delivered to 150,000 serviced units as part of a months-long roll-out, involving an extensive public relations campaign including the creation of the new carts.simcoe.ca website.

This major change in our waste collection system was initially met with some apprehension; however, public feedback has been overwhelmingly positive since implementation.



Increasing diversion

The County has continued its outstanding residential waste diversion rates, and in late 2021, provincial data from 2020 showed the County placed second out of 98 municipalities, with a 64% diversion rate. This is the County's highest diversion rate since recordings began in 2006. In addition to improved curbside diversion rates, the County has also seen great success at its waste drop-off facilities, where 18 innovative programs for different materials, including asphalt shingles, have diverted more than 66 per cent of drop-off materials from landfill.

Planning for the next generation of growth

The County is expected to grow significantly over the next 30 years, with more than 194,000 new residents and more than 80,000 new job opportunities anticipated by 2051.

Charting where that growth should go, managing the changes that accompany it, all while balancing with stewardship of agricultural and natural resources in a comprehensive way is at the core of the

County's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR). The MCR process is underway and has involved numerous meetings with municipal partners, organizations and stakeholders to gather valuable input into things that need to be considered in the MCR.

The statutory open house and public meeting in June 2022 represented a major milestone in the project, and Council approval of the first phase came in August 2022. Looking ahead, continued collaboration with local municipal partners will be imperative to ensure future growth can be accommodated in a way that is efficient with land and infrastructure as well as financially sustainable for future generations.

Connecting our communities with more trails

In addition to purchasing and planning for future active transportation links on the Collingwood-Barrie Railway corridor, the County also continued to invest in its popular Trails Connecting Communities Program (TCCP). This 50/50 cost sharing program provides up to \$30,000 per project to partners, to expand, create, and/or enhance the extensive network of trails across Simcoe County. Since 2009, the County has provided approximately \$2.7 million in funding to assist in the completion of 119 trail and active transportation projects across all 16 member municipalities including investing \$350,000 in 2022 alone.

100 years of the Simcoe County Forest

2022 marked the 100th Anniversary of our County Forest. The County was the first jurisdiction in Ontario to enter into the 'Agreement Forest' program in 1922 and has invested in tree planting, management practices and property acquisitions to become Ontario's largest municipally-owned forest, now spanning more than 33,000 acres across more than 150 properties.

The County also received the prestigious national honour of being recognized as the Forest Capital of Canada for 2022 by the Canadian Institute of Forestry (CIF). The County is the first ever two-time winner of this award, which acknowledges leadership in forestry.





Collingwood Station.

HEALTH & EMERGENCY SERVICES

New Paramedic Stations

County Council has approved a number of new paramedic stations throughout the County, including in Collingwood, Elmvale, Orillia, Springwater, Barrie, and Bradford West Gwillimbury. Some of these stations are part of the “hub and post” model, where there is a larger base (“hub”) in one location that feeds a number of smaller stations (“posts”) in key areas of increased paramedic activity. This allows the County to create smaller stations in highly condensed areas, reducing paramedic response times, and allowing for greater coverage across the region.

These facilities demonstrate County Council’s approach to investing in infrastructure and resources that improve 9-1-1 response times and make communities safer. Many include modern features such as: pneumatic air-controlled doors improving speed efficiency; Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) sensor system for enhanced security; green initiatives such as controlled lighting systems as well as high-efficiency heating and cooling; and on-site generators to allow the station to continue operations in the event of a power failure.

Barrie Simcoe Emergency Services Campus

The Barrie Simcoe Emergency Services Campus opened in 2020, after approximately two years of construction. It is a partnership between the City of Barrie and the County of Simcoe to co-locate Paramedic, Fire, and Police Services in an effort to obtain increased capital and operational efficiencies. Features include some shared education and training facilities, personnel spaces and other amenities. This model saves approximately \$15 million annually in operations and maintenance costs when compared to standalone facilities.

As part of the paramedic services strategic facility plan, this hub and post model ensures operational and resource efficiencies as well as reduced response times. Paramedics report to the “hub” at the beginning of their shift, where they receive report, have their vehicles and equipment checked, supplies restocked, and then travel to the “post” where they complete their shift, using a smaller footprint in an area of high demand. This centralized hub also acts as an excellent venue for ongoing paramedic educational needs.



Community Paramedicine

Over the past four years, the County has continued to expand its innovative Community Paramedicine program and offers the service to more communities and residents in need. Community Paramedicine programs provide opportunities for Paramedics to apply their training and skills in the community outside of their traditional 9-1-1 emergency response role, where Paramedics work in collaboration with other health care professionals and community agencies to connect patients with needed health and community services. Providing care in the home was vital during the pandemic.

Paramedic Services teams up with Volatus Aerospace to explore the use of drones

With the arrival of Volatus Aerospace in Simcoe County (Canada's largest tech-enabled drone solution provider), Paramedic Services staff discussed opportunities to develop drone technology for local use. These discussions led to the establishment of a working and program development relationship. The aim of the current effort is to develop and demonstrate the use of drone-delivered life-saving resources such as defibrillators, epi-pens, or naloxone to identified areas based on a 9-1-1 call in order to save a life.

Simcoe Village Campus Groundbreaking

Warden George Cornell joined with members of County Council, leadership at the County of Simcoe as well as Simcoe Village and Manor residents, and stakeholders, to officially break ground on the new Simcoe Village Campus. The Campus will be built adjacent to the current Simcoe Village and Manor. On this historic day, attendees were given a first look at what Simcoe Village Campus will be and the vision for its future in Beeton, Ontario.

The new Simcoe Village Campus will have 160 long-term care beds (an increase of 34 from the current Simcoe Manor) and more than 180 seniors housing units (representing an increase of approximately 150 new units from the current Simcoe Village). The new Campus will include offerings such as health and medical services, retail, pharmacy, dining, salon, physiotherapy, and exercise and recreational options.



Warden George Cornell with the Volatus drone.



Simcoe Village groundbreaking ceremony held in Beeton.





Fierté Simcoe Pride flag-raising ceremony, 2022.

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES

Fierté Simcoe Pride

The County of Simcoe proudly supports Fierté Simcoe Pride and its purpose to create a safe and inclusive Simcoe County that supports gender and sexual diversity through services, activities, and events. Each year, the Warden proclaims Fierté Simcoe Pride and raises the Rainbow, Transgender Pride and Progress Pride flags with leadership and supporters from the organization.

Fierté Simcoe Pride is filled with numerous events every summer and activities that focus on education, awareness, community development, creative expression, and fun for the whole family.

To learn more about Fierté Simcoe Pride, residents can visit www.fiertesimcoepride.com or follow them on social media at www.facebook.com/FierteSimcoePride.

Every Child Matters

Joining in solidarity with Indigenous communities and municipalities across Ontario, the County of Simcoe raises the Every Child Matters flag at the County Administration Office in honour of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30. Staff are encouraged to wear orange on Orange Shirt Day (and throughout September) to recognize and honour Residential School Survivors and their families, and in remembrance of those who tragically lost their lives.

Orange Shirt Day is an opportunity for those across Canada to have conversations on the aspects of Residential Schools and engage in meaningful discussions about their effects and tragic legacy that they left behind. It is also an opportunity for to educate ourselves and reflect on what actions we can personally take towards reconciliation.

RBC Race for the Kids

With as many as one in five children and youth in Ontario struggling as they experience some form of mental health concern, the County of Simcoe is honoured to raise the RBC Race for the Kids flag at the County administration office in October of each year. The global race came to Simcoe Muskoka for the first time on October 16 and 17, 2021 to benefit the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) Child and Youth Mental Health Services program.

Through funding to the Simcoe County Hospital Alliance, the County of Simcoe has been pleased to support the Simcoe Muskoka Regional Child and Youth Mental Health program at RVH and continues to support children and youth in our community.



Cheque presentation at Southlake Regional Health Centre, 2019.

Supporting local hospice centres

During this term, County County fulfilled its previous three-year commitment of \$1.5 million to area hospice centres, and reaffirmed a new, five-year \$2.5 million funding program to support new beds and vital hospice programs in Simcoe County.

Investing in our hospitals

Throughout the current term of Council (2018-2022), County Council has delivered more than \$10 million in funding to local hospitals through the Simcoe County Hospital Alliance. This is part of the County's ongoing commitment to deliver \$3 million annually in support of area hospitals.



Regional Health Care Funding, 2019.



Cheque presentation at Georgian College, 2019.

Investing in our future leaders

Lakehead University

To improve access to post-secondary institutions across Simcoe County, Council chose to contribute \$10 million to Lakehead University's Orillia Campus over a 10-year period starting in 2009. The final installment was delivered in 2020, supporting innovative programming that ensures Simcoe County has job-ready candidates to help grow our 16,000 area businesses. The \$10 million commitment allowed Lakehead University to open Simcoe Hall in 2010, improving access to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programming with the addition of four degree-diploma programs through the Lakehead-Georgian Partnership, expanding the teacher education programming to include Intermediate/Secondary level training, and opening the doors to improved access to continuing education and professional training opportunities.

Georgian College

In 2018, County Council pledged a \$5 million commitment to Georgian College's Power of Education campaign in support of the Peter B. Moore Advanced Technology Centre.

The Peter B. Moore Advanced Technology Centre prepares students to be job-ready on day one, and includes research and collaboration spaces with emerging technology. Many students in the programs choose to stay local and contribute to the regional economy while giving back to their community.

Since 2008, the County of Simcoe has invested more than \$9 million into Georgian, which includes a previous \$2 million commitment to the John Di Poce South Georgian Bay Campus, and \$2 million to the Sadlon Centre for Health, Wellness and Sciences.





CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

Council maintains responsible budgets to meet growing demands

The 2022 County of Simcoe budget is a total of \$638M operating and capital expenditures. The total revenue is \$595M with a taxation levy amount of \$192M.

This prudent financial plan focuses on the resources necessary to maintain or improve the existing crucial County services and contains expense impacts of approximately \$7.4M directly related to COVID-19. The final component of the budget addresses areas of growth and initiatives directed by Council to enhance service levels, increase efficiencies, and plan for the future.

This term of County Council continued its prudent financial management of taxpayers dollars. In 2021, to support residents through the pandemic, County Council held a 0% increase to the County's portion of municipal taxes.

S&P Global Ratings reaffirmed the County of Simcoe's AA credit rating

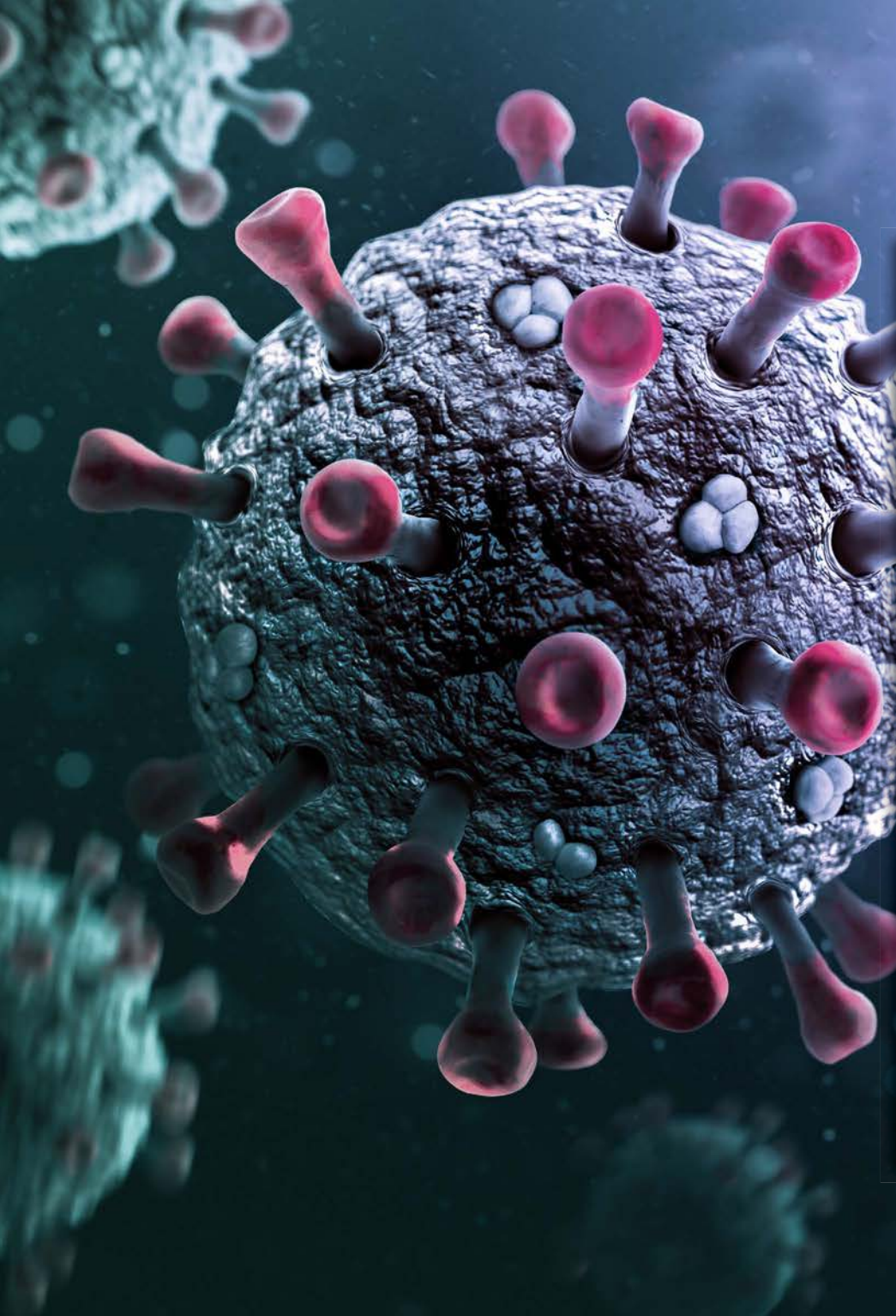
In 2021, for the eighth consecutive year, S&P Global Ratings affirmed an AA rating along with a stable outlook for the County of Simcoe based on its responsible financial management and supportive institutional framework.

S&P Global Ratings also notes the County's stable economy will support the local recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. They indicated that the County of Simcoe's financial management will continue to fund its capital plans largely internally with minimal reliance on debt, even as it implements significant infrastructure, housing and long-term care developments in coming years.

The stable outlook reflects S&P's expectations that the County's strong budgetary performance and very strong liquidity will keep reliance on debt minimal. S&P stated that prudent financial management practices underpin the sustainability of Simcoe's budgetary performances and debt burden, and modest after-capital deficits will minimize the need for new debt issuance.

Electric vehicle in Simcoe County fully charged for environmental success

Since purchasing its first fully electric vehicles (EV's), the County of Simcoe has seen both environmental and fiscal success. With an approximate average cost of \$35 in annual maintenance to date per vehicle, and roughly \$15 per week in electrical charges / operational costs to drive, these vehicles are the most economical and sustainable vehicles in the County's fleet, and with capital costs decreasing, we will likely be increasing utilization of these vehicles in the future where they appear sustainable and feasible.



COVID-19

Thank you to all residents and businesses for your efforts during this pandemic. The impact of COVID-19 posed challenges to all of us and the County sends our condolences to all residents who lost a loved one due to COVID-19. Together, we are recovering, and we will be even stronger.

Throughout the pandemic, governments and communities around the world were tasked with determining what constitutes an “essential service” that must continue to operate, despite the challenges faced by public health concerns. At the County of Simcoe, we knew that our critical and essential services must carry on. Our tremendous front-line workers, office staff and administrative departments all stepped up to meet the needs of our residents, communities and partners.

Ask an Expert Series

The County of Simcoe and area partners put together an Ask an Expert series to assist businesses and organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic. This series features experts on topics such as Health and Safety, Human Resources, Accounting, Marketing, Business Planning, Legal, and Mental Health.

To-date, 28 online/remote sessions have been held on a variety of subjects from Corporate Inclusivity to Cybersecurity, helping more than 1,800 participants through the difficulties post- COVID-19.



Licensed Emergency Child Care during the COVID-19 pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many schools and child-care agencies were forced to close out of an abundance of caution to ensure that community spread was reduced. While this happened, still many parents were asked to continue reporting to their workplace due to the nature of their work, whether it be for health care, community safety, or other essential services.

The County of Simcoe spent considerable time during these lockdown periods ensuring, through at least 26 locations, the children of essential workers had safe, secure places to be taken care of while their parents were taking care of others.



Ontario Works continues to provide service throughout pandemic

Since public health measures came into force across the Province in early 2020, Ontario Works (OW) has been ensuring they were able to deliver the same high-quality services while respecting requirements to maintain physical distancing, wearing proper PPE, and frequent hand washing. Due to this, OW has found ways to modernize and enhance operations, while still increasing accessibility.

Some of the measures taken include the following, many of which will remain permanent in the post-pandemic world:

- **Revised Service Delivery** – the County of Simcoe maintained regular hours of operations across all offices, with a considerable reduction in on-site staff presence through increased use of technology.
- **Digital Delivery Enhancements** – Introduced the ability to accept payments by means of electronic file transfer – email transfer. This became the preferred payment method due to its simplicity and convenience from the payee’s perspective, eliminating the need to attend a local office to make a payment.
- **Reloadable Payment Card (RPC)** – The County of Simcoe rolled out the RPC in spring 2021, in an effort to eliminate client cheques for those unable to open and/or maintain a bank account for direct bank deposit. These cards can be remotely reloaded monthly.

Emergency Motel Shelter Program

The temporary emergency motel shelter model program began in March 2020 and was a direct response to the needs of homeless individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic as shelters reduced their capacity or closed due to health and safety requirements. The temporary program was fully funded by both the provincial and federal governments with funding streams ending in line with the province’s Re-Opening of Ontario Act. The federal and provincial governments both stepped up during the pandemic to support vulnerable residents, and we value their tremendous contributions.

Collaborative planning to transition from the temporary emergency motel shelter model started in March 2022. We are grateful that all area shelters have been given health and safety approval from Public Health to operate their impactful programs at their regular locations.

Services and programs adapt to pandemic

The County’s wide range of service areas, many considered essential during an emergency situation, continued to meet the evolving needs of our residents. From solid waste management to roads and plowing, from transit to customer service, from tourism to human resources, from communications/marketing to finance, from legal to planning, and from legislative services to forestry, the County stepped up to support our essential service areas and continued to serve our communities and residents when they needed it the most.

Long-Term Care and Seniors Services

Due to the very nature of Long-Term Care and Seniors Services, our residents, families and staff were hard hit through the restrictions and protocols required through the pandemic – thank you for your understanding and cooperation. Our dedicated staff continued and enhanced their significant efforts, working so very hard throughout the pandemic. Provincial legislation has required increased staffing, protocols such as the usage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), vaccinations, frequent testing, enhanced cleaning, and more. In addition to this, the Province and the County were required to enhance many public visitation requirements to reduce the incidence of putting this vulnerable population at increased risk. County Council and Senior leadership pass on all of our support and appreciation to our LTCSS staff, families and residents.

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Mayor
Tiny



Floyd Pinto
Mayor
Adjala-Tosorontio



Bob Meadows
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Adjala-Tosorontio



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