



Council Highlights are intended to provide a summary of Council proceedings only. The information contained within the Highlights is based on approved material from within the associated agenda packages, linked at the bottom. These reports were part of the agendas from the **Council Meeting on October 10, 2023** and the **Committee of the Whole Meeting on September 26, 2023**. For more information on any item covered in the Highlights, each article is hyperlinked to the appropriate report, which can be accessed by clicking on the title. Images are also linked to relevant resources.

A recording of these sessions is also available for public viewing on the [County's YouTube channel](#).

- Service Simcoe



Click on the image above to learn more about the Newcomer Recognition Awards.

2023 Newcomer Recognition Awards

In 2012, the Simcoe County LIP published a Community Settlement Strategy, providing recommendations to enhance the development of welcoming communities in Simcoe County. The strategy is based around four themes of Readiness, Opportunity, Celebrate and Inspire.

Since 2016, the Newcomer Recognition Awards have been funded entirely through community sponsorship. This year, the eleventh annual Newcomer Recognition Awards will be held at The Heights Ski and Country Club (1106 Horseshoe Valley Road West) on Thursday, October 26, 2023.

Simcoe County Hospice Alliance Funding Request

On May 24, 2022, the Simcoe County Hospice Alliance submitted a request to the Warden asking County Council to consider continuing its capital funding support for local hospices in the amount of \$500,000 per year for an additional five-year period from 2021 – 2025. This request was reviewed and approved by Council on June 28, 2022.

On September 14, 2023, the Alliance submitted a letter requesting its funding allocation for 2022 (funds are provided based on completed projects and initiatives and provided to the organizations the following calendar year once proof of work can be confirmed).

On October 10, 2023, Council approved the 2022 Simcoe County Hospice Alliance capital funding allocation, including approximately \$135,000 for Hospice Georgian Triangle in Collingwood, \$118,000 for Matthews House Hospice in Alliston, \$140,000 for Hospice Simcoe in Barrie, and \$96,000 for Mariposa House Hospice in Orillia.



Age-Friendly Housing Grant Update

The Age-Friendly Seniors Housing Grant program is recommended within the Simcoe County 2018–2023 Positive Aging Strategy. In 2018, County Council approved \$500,000 in annual funding towards implementing this program. This annual program supports the development of age-friendly housing by including accessible, adaptable, and inclusive designs and/or incorporating a range of support services that would allow older adults to continue to live independently in their homes and participate in their communities for as long as possible.

On September 26, 2023, Council received a report on the Age-friendly Housing Grant's performance. In 2023, there were 110 applicants. The County of Simcoe was able to support 83 various projects; 50 bathroom modifications, 16 stair lifts, 16 ramps, handrails or entrance ways, and one dementia modification. Over the past five years, the program has approved 346 housing renovations and seen an average of 31.5% growth in the number of approved applications year over year.

County Forest Land Acquisition - Current Practice & Policy Update

The County of Simcoe owns and operates Ontario's largest municipally owned forest network, spanning more than 35,000 acres. Growing Simcoe County Forest remains a priority due to its many benefits. Using the Ecological Land Classification system, the Annual Ecosystem value for the Simcoe County Forest is approximately \$75 million.

The key acquisition principles for the continued strategic expansion of the County Forest are that additional properties enhance the environmental, social, and economic benefits. Priority is given to acquire available lands which:

- Enlarge or consolidate existing forest tracts;
- Provide opportunities for forest restoration / management;
- Contribute to natural heritage protection;
- Increase or protect woodland cover in underrepresented areas of the County

Working within the context of these principles, the County Forester has been delegated authority to investigate potential additions to the Forest and negotiate an offer of purchase which is subject to approval by County Council. This has resulted in a total of 1,969 ha (4,865 acres) added to the County Forest over the previous two decades (since 2004 and including additions to date in 2023).

On October 10, 2023, Council approved the updated County Forest Growth, Investment & Protection Policy, which includes an amendment to help increase County Forest within underrepresented areas of the County.



Bursary Program

2023 County of Simcoe Bursary Program Status

The County's 2023 Bursary Program was open to Simcoe County-based full- and part-time students enrolled in an undergraduate program at a post-secondary institution in Canada. Eligible candidates must have graduated or be eligible for graduation in the year of application with an Ontario Secondary School diploma in Simcoe County. This typically includes students who graduated from high schools in Simcoe County but also includes diplomas received through an accredited institution including some home-schooling programs.

The County's 16 member municipalities participated resulting in 21 \$3,000 bursaries for 2023 (16 from the member municipalities and a further 5 fully funded by the County).

In 2023, the County received a record number of submissions. A total of 485 applications were received of which 261 were eligible for an award - a marked increase from past years. Members of the Bursary Committee independently reviewed all anonymized applications prior to their meeting on September 19, 2023, then met in closed session to determine a recommended list of recipients. On October 10, 2023, Council confirmed the list of recipients, and successful applicants will be notified shortly.

[Council Meeting Agenda - October 10, 2023](#)

[Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda - September 26, 2023](#)

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