



## Administrative Report

**To:** Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

**From:** Allan Botham, P.Eng., Director, Infrastructure & Planning Services

**Date:** Wednesday, February 19, 2025

**Subject:** Administration Building Renovation Phases

**Report #:** 2025-0219-IPS-R05-AB

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### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to summarize past renovations to the County Administration Building and outline the areas that still require renovation.

### Background

Beginning in 2011 the County of Essex began renovating the County Administration Building to support the long-term administration and operational needs of the Corporation.

- Council Chambers Renovation (2011)
- Mechanical, plumbing & electrical upgrades (2013);
- Exterior building upgrades to façade, loading dock and portions of parking lot (2013);
- IT Server room (2016);
- EWEMS, Infrastructure and Planning offices (2018-2019);
- IT Office and Ground floor washrooms (2020)
- General Government, and Finance offices (2023); and
- Human Resources and Community Services (2024).

### Discussion

Renovating the County Administration Building is necessary for a number of reasons. Modernizing a space built in 1976 will replace outdated systems and lead to efficiencies and lower maintenance costs. Modernizing also

allows the incorporation of technology to improve safety, security and environmental systems management.

The renovated space presents opportunities to install energy-efficient lighting, water fixtures, and insulation, aligning with our sustainability goals.

Accessibility standards are addressed in each phase of the renovation, ensuring the building complies with legislated requirements for public spaces.

Additionally, the renovation will help preserve the building's integrity and extend its useful life.

Starting in 2025, renovations will focus on the second-floor meeting rooms. This project will include architectural updates to create three fully equipped meeting spaces with furnishings and audio-visual systems. The work will also involve asbestos abatement, installation of LED lighting, and modernization of HVAC systems.

The remaining spaces left to renovate in the County of Essex Administration Building are:

- Main floor Entrance/Lobby
- Second floor Lobby
- Former Windsor Essex Student Transportation space (second floor)
- Former Federation of Agriculture space (second floor)
- Storage spaces (ground floor)
- Essex County Library space (ground floor)
- Former Essex Windsor District School Board Media Centre (ground floor)
- Essex Windsor Solid Waste Authority (main floor)
- Essex Region Conservation Authority (second floor)

Improving safety and security in municipal office buildings, such as the County Administration Building, poses a challenge while fostering openness, accessibility, and transparency. Renovations to the main and second-floor open spaces are essential to balance preserving public trust with ensuring effective governance. By employing thoughtful design and clear communication (signage and security), we can separate restricted areas from public spaces, enhance safety and accessibility, and uphold transparency.

**Financial Implications**

The costs of past renovation projects are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

<b>Renovation</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Council Chambers Renovation	2011	\$549,500
Exterior Building Upgrades to Façade, Loading dock and portions of parking lot	2013-15	\$4,676,430
Mechanical, Plumbing & Electrical	2013-15	\$1,554,350
IT Server room	2016	\$198,000
EWEMS, IPS & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Washrooms	2018/19	\$1,630,000
IT Office and Ground Floor Washroom	2020	\$984,000
General Government & Finance	2023	\$2,780,000
Human Resources & Community Services	2024	\$2,260,000
<b>Total Renovations 2011-2024</b>		<b>\$14,632,280</b>

The estimated cost for the 2025 renovations to the second-floor meeting rooms and former Community Services areas is \$2.5 million, including furnishings. Renovations to the main floor and second-floor open spaces are projected to range from \$2 million to \$2.5 million, based on current pricing.

The County's Asset Management Plan (AMP) aims to maintain the County Administrative building at an average condition rating of "good". Investing in these renovations ensures the building remains functional and up-to-date, helping avoid larger, more costly repairs in the future.

The County covers renovations to the County Administration building using the Capital Reserve. Annual contributions to replenish the reserve are based on the building's 2017 historical cost. As a result, while the reserve is being

funded, it is at risk of not keeping up with rising construction costs. According to the Reserve Management Policy, if the reserve drops below the policy thresholds, a plan will be proposed to bring it back to an acceptable level.

Recent renovations have averaged about \$236 per square foot, and with costs continuing to rise, delaying projects will only increase expenses due to inflation, rising construction prices, and potential impacts from proposed U.S. tariffs. Moving forward with a consistent, phased approach to renovations will help manage costs more effectively.

**Consultations**

Preparation of this report was done in collaboration with Financial Services.

**Strategic Plan Alignment**

<b>Working as Team Essex County</b>	<b>Growing as Leaders in Public Service Excellence</b>	<b>Building a Regional Powerhouse</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Sustainable Services through Innovation  <input type="checkbox"/> Focusing “Team Essex County” for Results  <input type="checkbox"/> Advocating for Essex County’s Fair Share	<input type="checkbox"/> Being an Employer with Impact  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A Government Working for the People  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Promoting Transparency and Awareness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providing Reliable Infrastructure for Partners  <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Dynamic and Thriving Communities Across the County  <input type="checkbox"/> Harmonizing Action for Growth  <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing Truth and Reconciliation

**Recommendation**

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-0219-IPS-R05-AB, Administration Building Renovation Phases as information.

## Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

*Allan Botham*

Allan Botham, P.Eng., Director, Infrastructure and Planning Services

Concurred With,

*Sandra Zwiers*

Sandra Zwiers, MAcc, CPA, CA, Chief Administrative Officer

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Title</b>
N/A	N/A