

# County of Essex Policy and Procedures Manual

## Public Petitions Policy

<b>Policy Number:</b>	2026-001
<b>Policy Type:</b>	Corporate Policy
<b>Approval Authority:</b>	Essex County Council
<b>Office of Responsibility:</b>	Legislative and Legal Services
<b>Issuance Date:</b>	2026-03-04 (DRAFT for review/adoption)
<b>Revised on Date:</b>	2026-03-04
<b>Scheduled Review Date:</b>	2030-03-04
<b>Replaces Policy:</b>	New

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Corporation of the County of Essex (the "**County**"), strives to be a regional champion and trusted partner in delivering services for the success of the County, its constituent local municipalities, and its residents. Through meaningful partnerships, strong advocacy, and informed decision-making the County aims to deliver fair and valuable regional programs and services.

### 2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This Public Petitions Policy (the "**Policy**") pertains to all petitions presented to the County of Essex.

### 3.0 Definitions

- 3.1 To provide context for this policy, a list commonly used terms is provided below and shall be used in the interpretation of this Policy.

**"County"** means the Corporation of the County of Essex, and may refer to both the County as a municipal corporation, the County as a political unit, and the County as a defined geographical area.

**"Petition"** means a formal written request made to Council for a particular action to be taken or to advocate for an opinion on a matter.

**"Petition Organizer"** means the individual person who has initiated a Petition, or, in the case of a Petition initiated by a group of individuals and/or organizations, the person who has been identified as the main contact for the Petition.

## 4.0 Purpose

4.1 The purpose of this Policy is to establish the method by which members of the public may present petitions to the County, but with the following being acknowledged:

- 4.1.1 Petitions are a way for residents to communicate their opinions to members of County Council and bring attention to matters of public interest or concern which are within the jurisdiction of the County.
- 4.1.2 Matters that are administrative or operational in nature should be first raised with relevant Department(s) of the County for Administration to address prior to a Petition being brought before Council.
- 4.1.3 Residents of the County and individuals who own businesses and/or property within the County may bring forward and sign Petitions.
- 4.1.4 All Petitions are subject to the specific requirements outlined in Section 5 of this Policy below, and which requirements are intended to help ensure that only authentic and valid Petitions are advanced.
- 4.1.5 This Policy shall not limit any statutory petition process that may be outlined in applicable provincial and/or federal legislation.

## 5.0 Policy

5.1 **Matters Within the Jurisdiction of the County of Essex**

- 5.1.1 Only Petitions that pertain to matters within the jurisdiction of the County will be presented.

5.1.2 Any Petition presented to the County, shall be done so in accordance with the applicable provisions of the County's Procedure By-law.

5.1.3 Any Petition presented to the County shall be addressed to the Warden and Council, but delivered to the Clerk.

**5.2 Form and Format of Petition**

5.2.1 Any Petition to be presented to Council shall be legibly written or printed, shall not contain defamatory, obscene, or improper content or language, shall be signed by at least one (1) person, and shall be filed with the Clerk, in accordance with applicable policies and procedures of the County.

5.2.2 Any Petition filed with the Clerk in accordance with Section 5.2.1 of this Policy above shall include contact information for the Petition Organizer, including the legal name of the Petition Organizer, along with their, address, telephone number, and email address.

5.2.3 The Clerk will not accept any Petition that contains any obscene or improper language, with only Petitions that are, in the opinion of the Clerk, appropriate, respectful, and temperate in language, being accepted.

5.2.4 If a Petition is being presented by a group of individuals and/or organizations, they must identify a key contact as the Petition Organizer, and provide that person's full legal name, mailing address, telephone number, and email address to the Clerk when submitting the Petition. Individuals who wish speak before Council, shall be subject to the County's Delegation Policy and all other applicable policies and procedures of the County.

5.2.5 Petitions shall include a legible written, printed, or typed statement of the position being advocated for through the Petition, and shall contain legible printed or typed names accompanied by original signatures and addresses for each and every signatory of the Petition.

**5.3 Inclusion on Agenda (Petitions Relating to an Agenda Item)**

- 5.3.1 Petitions relating to an item on an agenda for an upcoming meeting of County Council will be included as part of the agenda package for the meeting where the related item is being considered by County Council.
- 5.3.2 The deadline to submit a Petition in relation to an item on an agenda is 10:00 AM on the Friday before the meeting.
- 5.3.3 Although Petitions received shall be included on the earliest possible agenda for consideration by Council, should a matter be related to items of business planned for a subsequent meeting of Council scheduled within a reasonable amount of time, then the Petition may be held until that meeting at the Clerk's discretion.
- 5.3.4 If the matter raised by a Petition is deemed to be of an urgent nature, the Clerk may, in consultation with the Warden, schedule a Special Meeting for the purpose of considering the Petition.

**5.4 Inclusion on an Agenda (Petitions Introducing New Business)**

- 5.4.1 Any Petition introducing new business and not related to an item on a current or upcoming County Council agenda will be published under Correspondence in the agenda for a subsequent meeting of County Council, if the matter addressed in the Petition is within the jurisdiction of the County.
- 5.4.2 Notwithstanding Section 5.4.1 above, any Petition to be published under Correspondence in an agenda of a meeting of County Council, must contain a minimum of 1 (one) signature.
- 5.4.3 A member of County Council may request the Petition to be removed from the Correspondence section of the agenda and placed under New Business for consideration at a subsequent meeting of Council, to provide Administration an opportunity to review the matter raised by the Petition and report back to Council.

- 5.4.4 A Petition related to the same topic as a Petition that has already been published through an agenda of County Council within the term of Council, shall not be included again within the same term.
- 5.4.5 A Petition submitted via an external petition website (e.g. change.org) will not be accepted as a formal Petition but may be published as an item of correspondence on a Council agenda if the Petition satisfies the requirements of Section 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 above, and such external petition website verifies and attests as to the identity and civic address of the individuals who endorse said petition.

## 5.5 Validation and Authentication and Disclosure

- 5.5.1 The Petition must clearly disclose on each page of the Petition that the Petition is a public document and that personal information, names, signatures and comments contained in the Petition will be included on a public Council Meeting Agenda and shall form part of the County's public record.
- 5.5.2 Personal information contained on the Petition and by those signing in support of the Petition will be used by the County for the purpose of informing County Council as to the views of the Petition Organizer and those who have signed in support of the Petition, as a matter of public interest or concern as specified in the Petition. Any personal information contained in the Petition or correspondence provided by the Petition Organizer may be made public through the course of a meeting and corresponding agendas and minutes and/or distributed otherwise for members of Council and Administration to review.
- 5.5.3 Personal information, as defined by Section 2 of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* ("**MFIPPA**"), is collected under the authority of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, and will be maintained for the purpose of creating a record that is available to the general public in accordance with the provisions of MFIPPA.
- 5.5.4 Any Petition received by the Clerk that does not meet the requirements indicated in this Policy will be returned to the Petition Organizer, and only once the requirements of

## Public Petitions Policy

Number: 2026-001

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submitting a Petition are complied with will the Petition be processed by the Clerk in accordance with Section 5.3 or 5.4 of this Policy.

### 5.6 Submitting a Petition

- 5.6.1 To submit a Petition to Council it shall be provided to the Clerk who can be contacted at 519-776-6441 x 1353 [clerks@countyofessex.ca](mailto:clerks@countyofessex.ca) . A sample cover sheet is included as **Appendix A** to assist Petition Organizers in submitting a Petition.

## 6.0 Responsibility

- 6.1 The CAO is responsible for ensuring adherence to the Policy.
- 6.2 The Clerk is responsible for the administration of Petitions submitted in accordance with this Policy and that comply with the County's Procedure By-law and other relevant policies and procedures that may be in place from time to time.

## 7.0 Related Documents/Legislation

- County of Essex [Procedure By-law](#)

## 8.0 Summary of Amendments

Date	Amendments
2025-09-20	Reviewed and approved by SLT, with a recommendation that the Policy be presented to County Council for formal approval.

## Appendices

- Appendix A – Public Petition Cover Sheet (Sample)
- Appendix B – Public Petition (Sample)

## **Appendix A - Public Petition Cover Sheet**

**Date:**

**Petition subject matter:**

(Briefly state the subject matter of your petition and the request for action within the authority of the Corporation of the County of Essex. If your petition is related to an upcoming agenda item, please indicate meeting date and report title. The Clerk may request a further written description of the matter in greater detail at the time of the submission.)

**Total number of signatures:**

**Petition Organizer:**

**First and Last Name:**

**Mailing Address:**

**Email:**

**Telephone Number:**

**NOTE:**

**Petitions** containing original signatures should be sent by mail to:

The Corporation of the County of Essex – Warden and Members of Council  
Attention: County Clerk's Office  
Essex County Civic Centre, 360 Fairview Ave. W., Suite 201, N8M 1Y6

Alternately, Petitions may be delivered by hand in person to the address above, during regular business hours. For further information or inquiries, please contact the Clerk by email at [clerks@countyofessex.ca](mailto:clerks@countyofessex.ca). It is the responsibility of the Petition Organizer to confirm that the Clerk has received the Petition.

**Appendix B - Public Petition**

**Petition Statement: We, the undersigned, petition the Warden and Members of Essex County Council as follows:**

**(Briefly state the subject matter of your petition and the request for action within the authority of the Corporation of the County of Essex.)**

<b>First and Last Name</b>	<b>Civic Address Within the County of Essex (Primary Residence or Owned Property)</b>	<b>Original Signature</b>

**Collection of personal information:**

Personal information is being collected and will be used for the purpose of informing the Council for the Corporation of the County of Essex as to your views on a matter of public interest or concern as specified in this Petition. Your information may be made public through the course of a meeting and corresponding agendas and minutes and/or distributed as part of Correspondence items. Personal information, as defined by Section 2 of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* ("**MFIPPA**"), is collected under the authority of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, and will be maintained for the purpose of creating a record that is available to the general public in accordance with the provisions of MFIPPA. If you have questions about the collection, use or disclosure of this personal information please call 519-776-6441 extension 1353 or email [privacyofficer@countyofessex.ca](mailto:privacyofficer@countyofessex.ca) .

**Page \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_**