

Media Release

March 24, 2021
For Immediate Release

~~WE ARE READY WE CAN'T WAIT ...~~

WE GOT IT!

WINDSOR, ON. _ A long-awaited project to transform hospital care in Windsor-Essex is finally moving to the next stage!

The Ford government today stepped up to deliver where the previous government stopped short by committing \$9.8 million in funding in its 2021 Ontario budget to cover “Stage 2” planning costs for the development of a new state-of-the-art acute care hospital to serve Windsor and Essex County.

“Premier Ford told us last August that he would ‘go in there ... like an 800-pound gorilla’ to fight ‘tooth and nail’ for a new hospital for our community. The Premier kept his promise – and in doing so has made an unprecedented health care infrastructure commitment to this community that will benefit generations to come,” said WRH President and CEO David Musyj.

The budget states that the Province is investing “\$9.8 million to support the ongoing planning of a new regional hospital in Windsor-Essex which will bring together acute care services in one location,” further adding that the project will “consolidate acute care services, while retaining the existing Ouellette site for urgent care and ambulatory services.” (<https://budget.ontario.ca/2021/pdf/2021-ontario-budget-en.pdf>).

Stage 2 of the five-stage capital planning process includes the development of a Functional Program, which is a very detailed description of how the new system will operate. It includes a look at staffing, space and equipment requirements and focuses on workflow for patients, staff and materials.

Community engagement has been an integral part of the project from the start. Last year, the Steering Committee overseeing plans for the new Windsor-Essex Hospitals System released a plan to incorporate public input into the next stage of planning. The [Stage 2 Community Engagement Strategy](#) identifies Engagement Principles and a framework outlining levels of community participation.

“We are thankful to the many local political leaders and community advocates who didn’t lose hope and continued to press our government for action,” said Musyj, noting that last August during his tour of Windsor-Essex, the Premier noted that he had consistently heard from community leaders the importance of the project.

“This was a team effort and our entire community should be proud and know that the government heard loud and clear the need for a new hospital system for our region.”

Although the previous government announced in spring 2017 its support and intention to move the project to Stage 2, it never followed through with a funding commitment. Local supporters continued to press the new government for its support, particularly in the last 12 months as the pandemic highlighted the deficiencies of current hospital facilities. A lack of private rooms to prevent infection spread, poor ventilation that risks transmission, and an ability to segregate areas of the facility were all challenges faced by WRH since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The hard work is just beginning,” Musyj said, noting that Stage 2 will take 24 months to complete. “We look forward to getting going on our stage 2 development and moving ever closer to the first shovel digging into the ground at our new hospital site on Highway 42 in the near future. What COVID-19 has taught us ... every day is valuable and time is of the essence.”

For a chronology of the project to date, go to <https://www.wrh.on.ca/Chronology>

For information about the five-stage capital planning process, go to https://www.wrh.on.ca/uploads/Common/windsorhospitals/5_Stage_Process.pdf

For more information about the overall project, visit www.windsorhospitals.ca.

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