



Corporation of the

City of St. Thomas

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Report No.
ES92-07

File No.
05-054-00

Directed to: Chairman David Warden, Members of the Protective Services and Transportation Committee

Date
July 16, 2007

Department: Environmental Services

Attachments
Daytech Shelter drawing
No. 3238-1

Prepared By: Dave White - Supervisor of Roads & Transportation

Subject: St. Thomas Transit Services - New and Replacement Transit Shelters
Exemption to Purchasing and Tendering Procedures By-law 53-2001

Recommendation:

THAT: Report ES92-07 be received for information; and further,

THAT: That Council authorizes an exemption under the Purchasing and Tendering Procedures By-law 53-2001 section 28 d) (Where there are a limited number of acceptable sources of supply) and section 28 e) (Where matching existing equipment forming part of a functioning system is appropriate for reasons of consistent operation, and /or efficiency); and further,

THAT: The Transit Shelter design from Daytech Limited (drawing No. 3238-1) be approved and Daytech Limited be the sole source supplier for the nine transit shelters required for 2007; and further,

THAT: The transit shelters for the four new and five replacement locations approved in report ES76-07 be purchased from Daytech Limited (Toronto Ontario) for a maximum total of \$43,934.40 (including delivery and installation on existing concrete pad and provincial sales tax at 8%), being the lowest of two quotations received.

Origin:

The 2006 Part 1 Capital submission of \$175,000.00 was approved for Transit Improvements, with the funding coming from the Provincial Gas Tax Reserve. The \$175,000.00 was broken down as follows; \$120,000 for new and replacement shelters, \$26,000 to upgrade existing shelters and bus stop signs, \$25,000 to design the downtown transit terminal and \$4,000 for fare collection equipment.

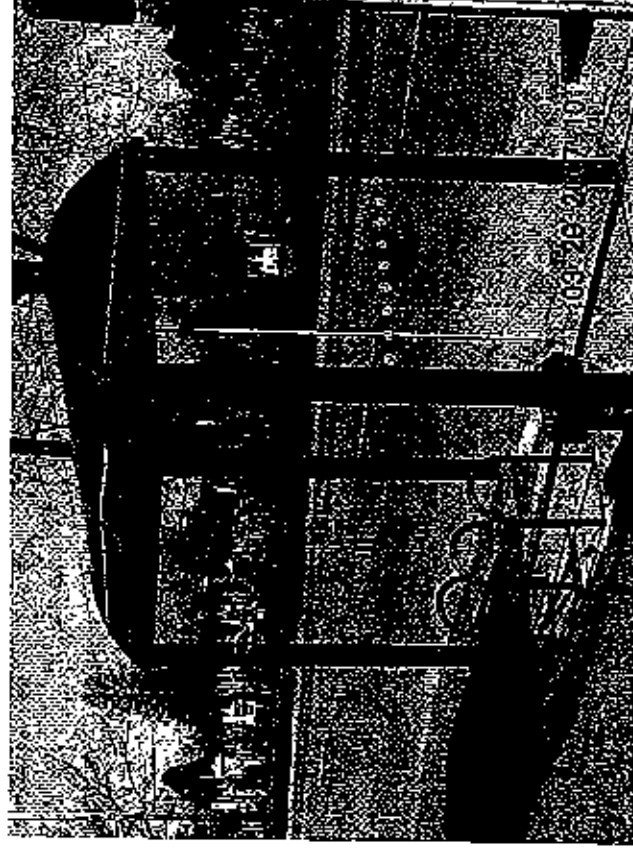
At the June 4, 2007 Council meeting, report ES76-07 recommended the locations for the new and replacement shelters and they were approved by Council.

The Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee has approved the shelter selection

Analysis:

There are (21) bus shelters currently in place on the four conventional routes and (2) at the transfer terminal at the WalMart plaza. There are three or four different shelter designs in place throughout the system. When replacement parts are required, having a variety of shelter designs can increase the cost and efficiency of the program.

The most recent installations are on the west side of Sunset Drive just north of Elm Street (photo to the right) and on the south side of Chestnut Street in front of the Seniors Centre. These were purchased from Daytech Limited and are of the same design as what is recommended within this report.



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The existing shelters are disbursed as follows; Route 1 - (5) shelters, Route 2 - (6) shelters, Route 3 - (2) shelters and Route 4 - (8) shelters.

There are a limited number of acceptable sources of supply for transit shelters. An area search was completed for Transit Shelter providers and we came up with three potential providers of the desired style as follows;

- Daytech Limited, 70 Disco Road, Toronto Ontario,
- Mountain Manufacturing & Marketing Inc., 31 Saunders Road, Barrie Ontario,
- Canadian Kiosk, 115 South Service Road West, Gimsby Ontario,

A quotation was requested for the supply and installation of the desired style of transit shelter (the design depicted on page one) with an aluminium bench and trash receptacle. We originally asked for (8) units and for comparison purposes the costs submitted from the two responses were returned as follows;

- Daytech Limited to supply and install eight transit shelters/bench/trash - \$ 4,935.00 each including P.S.T. @8%,
- Mountain Manufacturing & Marketing Inc. to supply and install eight transit shelters/bench/trash - \$ 6,424.97 each including P.S.T. @ 6%.

Canadian Kiosk could not meet our specification for the desired style.

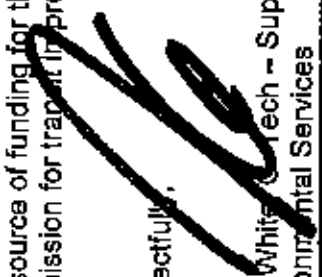
Since the quotations were received, we have changed the quantity to (9) instead of (8) transit shelter units. The recommendations within this report reflect the revised prices from Daytech Limited for (9) shelters, which is slightly lower unit price than (8) shelters.

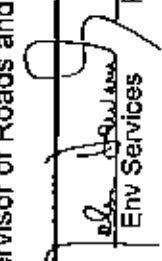
In this case, it is appropriate to match the existing equipment that forms part of a functioning transit system for reasons of consistent operation, and for efficiency. It is therefore recommended in the report that Daytech Limited receives an order for our 2007 transit shelter requirements.

Financial Considerations:

The source of funding for the transit shelter purchases is from the Council approved 2006 Part 1 Capital submission for transit improvements.

Respectfully,


Dave White, Daytech - Supervisor of Roads and Transportation
Environmental Services

Reviewed By:  Treasury Planning City Clerk HR Other





Corporation of the
City of St. Thomas

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Report No.

ES94-07

File No.

06-08-263

Directed to: Chairman David Warden, Members of the Protective Services and Transportation Committee

Date

July 16, 2007

Department: Environmental Services Department

Attachment

Prepared By: Dave White - Supervisor of Roads and Transportation

Subject: Wellington Street Reconstruction - First Avenue to Fairview Avenue
Requirement for No Parking Anytime Restriction

Recommendation:

THAT: Report No. ES94-07 be received for information; and,

THAT: The traffic by-law 45-89 Schedule II (No Parking Zones) be amended as to implement a No Parking Anytime restriction on the North and South sides of Wellington Street from First Avenue to Fairview Avenue.

Origin

The reconstruction of Wellington Street from First Avenue to Fairview Avenue is underway. The previous cross section (gravel shoulders) did not require a parking restriction. As a result, there is no existing No Parking Restriction on Wellington Street from First Avenue to Fairview Avenue (with the exception of the two major intersections).

Analysis

As a result of the urban cross section of the new road design (e.g. curb and gutter, three lane cross section) a No Parking Anytime Restriction is required for its' entire length. Parking of vehicles anywhere within this road section will block the eastbound or westbound through lanes.

Financial Considerations

There are no effects on the Roads and Transportation budget as a result of the recommendations of this report.

Alternatives

There are no alternatives suggested at this time.

Respectfully,

Dave White, C. Tech - Supervisor of Roads and Transportation
Environmental Services

Reviewed By:

Treasury

Env Services

Planning

City Clerk

HR

Other



Corporation of the
City of St. Thomas

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Report No.

ES96-07

File No.

06-08-341

Directed to:

Chairman David Warden, Members of the Protective
Services and Transportation Committee

Date

July 16, 2007

Department:

Environmental Services

Attachment

Prepared By:

Dave White - Supervisor of Roads & Transportation

Subject:

Project No. 06-08-341

The Conversion of Traffic Signal Incandescent Fixtures to LED Technology

Recommendation:

THAT: Report ES96-07 be received for information.

Origin

Council approved the 2006 Capital Project part 2 for the replacement of existing incandescent traffic signal fixtures with the most energy efficient L.E.D. (Light Emitting Diodes) components with a total budget of \$200,000.00.

Analysis

As a result of the funding approval, all incandescent signal indications have been replaced by L.E.D. indications in the City of St. Thomas.

St. Thomas Energy (the successful bidder for the installation portion of the project) recently checked meters at three intersections where the L.E.D. signal indications were installed early in the Contract. The early indication is that power consumption at the three locations had dropped between 80% and 90%. Once there are a few months of billing from each of the traffic signal meters, a further report will be provided to Council indicating actual historical savings.

During the contract we took the opportunity to change the existing flashing green ball advance phase indication to a solid arrow indication at those intersections that were not pre-existing. This was done to facilitate the future planned phase out of the flashing green ball in Ontario by January 2010. The actual work to change operation from flashing advance to solid arrow will take place over the next three weeks and will involve some controller cablenetwork. This will provide a consistent indication to all drivers two years in advance of the 2010 deadline.

The intended operation will be that where a flashing green advance indication existed previously, the flashing green will be replaced by a solid green left turn arrow followed by a solid amber clearance arrow. A green left arrow with solid green ball indicates that both the left turn and through movements facing the indication may proceed. One or two flashing green ball locations will remain because we were unable to install underground wiring to facilitate the solid green and amber arrows. These locations will be changed as soon as practical.

While converting to LED, we have also replaced signal arms and hangers that needed replacing, as well as raising vehicle signal and pedestrian heads to minimum standard heights where possible.

Financial Considerations:

There are no effects on the Roads and Transportation budget as a result of the recommendations of this report.

Respectfully,

Dave White, C. Tech - Supervisor of Roads and Transportation
Environmental Services

Reviewed By:

Treasury

Env Services

Planning

City Clerk

HR

Other



Corporation of the
City of St. Thomas

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Report No.
ES97-07
File No.
05-014-06

Directed to: Chairman David Warden and Members of the Protective Services and Transportation Committee

Department: Environmental Services Department

Prepared By: Dave White - Supervisor of Roads and Transportation

Date
July 16, 2007

Attachment

Subject: The Addition of a No Parking Zone Restriction
The North Side of Regent Street from Wilson Avenue to Devonshire Place

Recommendation:

THAT: Report No. ES97-07 be received for information; and further,

THAT: The traffic by-law 45-89 Schedule II (No Parking Zones) be amended as to implement a No Parking Anytime restriction on the north side of Regent Street from Wilson Avenue to Devonshire Place.

Origin

At the meeting of April 4, 2005 the following motions were carried by Council:

THAT: Report ES-35-05 be received as information; and,

THAT: The Ontario Fire Code and Building Code requirement for emergency vehicles along the City's local standards roadway system be applied on a site specific and as needed basis.

This report resolves a site-specific request by a local resident.

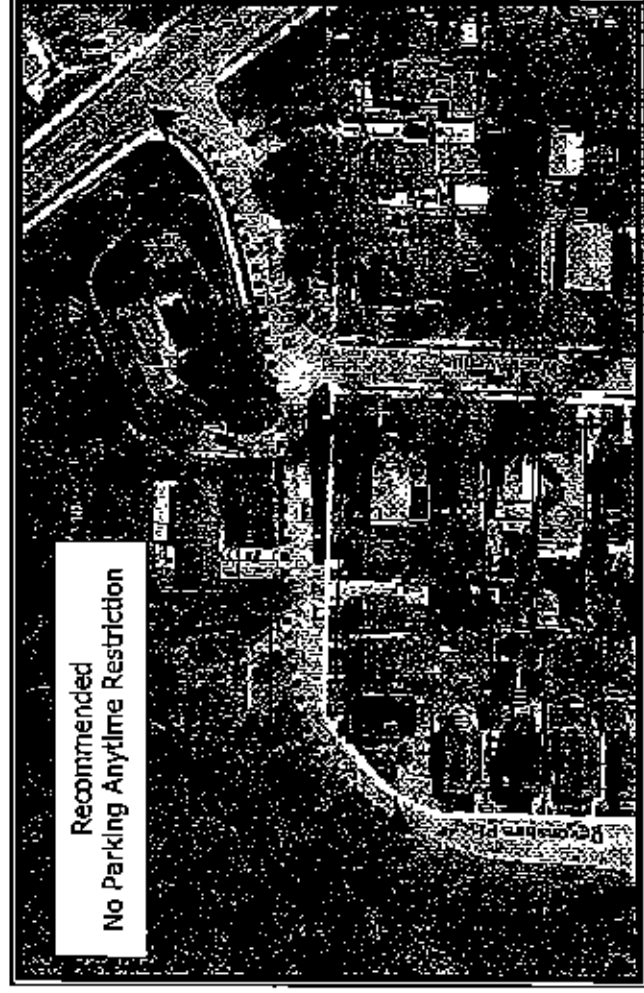
Analysis

Regent Street from Wilson Avenue to Devonshire Place was constructed to Rural Local Road standards, with a pavement width much less than 9.9m wide (actual pavement width is approximately 5m wide). The road section has been built as a two-lane road with no shoulder, curbs or gutters and has a one-way portion that runs in a southbound direction from 3 Regent Street to 8 Devonshire Place. There is no existing No Parking Zone Restriction on Regent Street.

Regent Street is classified as a Local Road in schedule B of the official plan, which carries approximately 321 vehicles per day (2004) and provides property access for Regent Street and Devonshire Place.

As a result of driver visibility and traffic safety, and to accommodate the minimum required fire route width of 5.94m, this road section should be provided with a parking restriction on at least one side. Given the fact that Emergency vehicles can use the boulevard areas and that there are homeowners that appear to need on street parking, we are not recommending a restriction on both sides of Regent Street at this time.

As a result of this analysis it is recommended that a No Parking Anytime restriction be implemented north side of Regent Street from Wilson Avenue to Devonshire Place.



Financial Considerations

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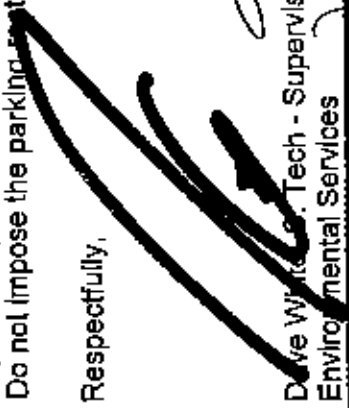
Costs associated with the installation of "no parking" signs are contained in the 2007 Operating Budget.

Alternatives

Impose the parking restrictions as indicated in this report.

Do not impose the parking restrictions.

Respectfully,



Dave Whitte, Tech - Supervisor of Roads and Transportation
Environmental Services

Reviewed By:

Treasury

Env Services

Planning

City Clerk

HR

Other



Corporation of the
City of St. Thomas

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Report No.
OW17-07

File No.

Directed to:	Chairman Lori Baldwin-Sands and Members of the Social Services Committee	Date	June 28, 2007
Department:	St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works	Attachment	One
Prepared By:	Irma Pedersen, Child Care Supervisor/Co-ordinator		
Subject:	Best Start Agreement with Forest Ave Child Care Centre Inc.,		

Recommendation:

THAT Report OW17-07 is received for information; and

THAT Council approve the entering into an agreement with Forest Ave Child Care Centre Inc., thereby establishing the obligations under which funding is being provided to the agency to support the development of 24 child care spaces within the agency's new child care centre; and

THAT a by-law be passed authorizing the Mayor and Clerk to execute and affix the Seal of the Corporation to a certain agreement between the City of St. Thomas and Forest Ave Child Care Centre Inc.,

Report:

Further to Report CR-06-09 (June 26, 2006), in December 2005, the City of St. Thomas received an unconditional grant of \$2.1 million to support the implementation of the Best Start Child Care initiative throughout the community. In June 2007 a conditional allocation of funding of \$500,000 under this initiative was allocated the Forest Ave Child Care Centre Inc. (Report OW15-07)

The funding allocation was provided to support the development of twenty four (24) child care spaces including infants spaces within the new child care centre being developed by the agency. The funding allocation was provided conditional on an approved viability plan (approved by the municipality), the acquisition of a suitable site (with appropriate zoning), sufficient (additional) funding/financing to support the full capital project as well as the execution of an agreement with the municipality establishing the obligations and requirements under which the funding is to be provided.

In May 2007, the City Treasurer and staff from the OW Department reviewed and accepted the agency's viability plan for the new project. Subsequent to that, the agency acquired a suitable site in St. Thomas, at the intersection of Sunset Road and Shaw Valley Drive, Forest Ave Child Care Centre Inc., has successfully completed and fulfilled the conditions to purchase the site, known as Block 56, Plan 11M-112, Part 2 Plan 11R8 248 in the City of St. Thomas.

A legal agreement (copy attached) outlining the roles and responsibilities of both parties as well as the conditions of funding has been developed, in consultation with the City's Solicitor. The Agreement has been reviewed by Forest Ave Child Care Centre Inc., and its solicitor and the agency has accepted the terms and conditions of the agreement and have executed the same. The agreement now needs the signature and seal of the Corporation.

As the agency has successfully met all of the conditions of the original conditional funding allocation, it is recommended, subject to questions, that Council approve the execution of the aforementioned agreement and in doing so, confirm the allocation of funds to the agency.

Respectfully submitted,

Irma Pedersen
Child Care Supervisor/Co-ordinator

Reviewed By:

Treasury

Env. Serv

Planning

City Clerk

HR

OW Housing



Corporation of the
City of St. Thomas

las

Report No.
OW18-07
File No.

Directed to:	Chairman Lori Baldwin-Sands and Members of the Social Services Committee	Date	June 28, 2007
Department:	St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works	Attachments	Two (2)
Prepared By:	Irma Pedersen, Child Care Supervisor/Co-ordinator		
Subject:	Early Learning Centre – Agreement Change		

Recommendation:

THAT Report OW18-07 is received for information; and

THAT Council approve the postponement of section 5.2(3) of the original agreement between the City of St. Thomas and the St. Thomas Psychiatric Hospital Day Care Centre – Early Learning Centre by approving the attached Acknowledgement and Direction regarding postponement of Instrument Number CT7630 in favour of the owner's new first mortgage to the Royal Bank of Canada.

Background:

On December 12, 2006 Council approved the signing of an Agreement with the St. Thomas Psychiatric Hospital Day Care Centre – Early Learning Centre to fund the centre \$500,000.00. The funding allocation was provided to support the development of twenty (20) new child care spaces for infants within the new child care centre being developed by the agency.

On February 8, 2007 the above noted Agreement was registered as Number CT8730 by the City Solicitor with the condition that the Agreement included assurances to the other Party that postponements would be signed at a later date by the City of St. Thomas in favour of the owner's new first mortgage.

Report:

The legal Agreement (copy attached) outlines the request that the Corporation of the City of St. Thomas postpone Instrument Number CT7630 (being the agreement with the property owner pertaining to the Best start Child Care Infrastructure Funding Program) in favour of the new owner's new first mortgage to Royal Bank of Canada.

Royal Bank's lawyers want the postponement of interest. They are the first on title and the City of St. Thomas is second.

This change will be part of schedule B of the Agreement between the St. Thomas Psychiatric Hospital Day Care Centre – Early Learning Centre and the City of St Thomas. It has been reviewed by the City Treasurer and the Director of Ontario Works and Social Housing and has their approval.

Respectfully submitted,


Irma Pedersen,
Child Care Supervisor/Co-ordinator

Reviewed By:  Treasury Env. Serv Planning City Clerk HR OW & SH

4.2 The Operator agrees that the project lands and premise will be developed in a manner consistent with the draft Child Care Centre "site plan" attached as Schedule "B" to this Agreement and that any substantial changes from the plans depicted in Schedule "B" will be made only after consultation with and approval of the City.

SERVICE RECORDS AND APPROVAL

5.1 In the event that the Operator ceases operation, it is agreed that the Operator will not dispose of any records or dispose of the Lands or any building (the "Building") erected or to be erected using Grant funding without the written consent of the City.

5.2 The Operator shall not change the site, structure, or use of, or sell, lease, mortgage or otherwise dispose of any part of or interest in the Lands or Building, without the prior written approval of the City save and except for any short term use of space after normal business hours to any non-profit or charitable organization.

The City hereby acknowledges and agrees that it shall provide its written approval and postpone this Agreement, if requested by the Operator, in the following circumstances:

1. The Operator entering into a site plan agreement with the City of the St. Thomas;
2. The Operator entering into a development agreement with the City of St. Thomas;
3. The Operator entering into a loan agreement to be secured among other things by a first charge over the Lands where such first charge is granted to a chartered bank, trust company, credit union, caisse populaire or insurance company properly licensed to transact business in the Province of Ontario.

5.3 The Operator agrees that the City may register notice of this Agreement on title to the Lands.

FINANCIAL RECORDS AND REPORTS

6.1 The Operator will maintain financial records and submit to the City from time to time, reports regarding the Best Start funding which shall include the status of project development, relevant financial information, and such other information as may be reasonably requested by the City.



Corporation of the
City of St. Thomas

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Report No.
OW19-07
File No.

Directed to:	Chairman Lori Baldwin-Sands and Members of the Social Services Committee	Date	June 29, 2007
Department:	St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works and Social Housing	Attachments	Two (2)
Prepared By:	Kale Demare, Program Manager		
Subject:	Best Start and Child Care Service Plan 2007-08		

Recommendation:

THAT: Report OW19-07 is received for information; and

THAT: Council approve the Best Start and Child Care Service Plan 2007/08

Background:

On November 6, 2004, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) announced the development of a comprehensive strategy for all children and youth in Ontario to have the best opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential. This strategy was about supporting children so that they could learn and grow, be successful in school, and ultimately, be successful in the workforce and society. Known as Best Start, the strategy is based on a vision of improved access to high quality early learning and care programs, which supports parents in their role and helps make the transition to school, smooth, seamless and successful.

Report:

The implementation of this Best Start strategy is to span over a ten-year period and be accomplished in two phases. Phase One consists of a major expansion of child care spaces in each community and Phase Two consists of creating neighbourhood early learning and care hubs that provide integrated children's services and support for families with young children.

In conjunction with the St. Thomas-Elgin Best Start Implementation Committee, Phase One planning created three reports that were submitted to Council in January 2006. These reports included the Best Start Transition Plan, the Child Care Service Plan and the Phase One Integrated Implementation Plan, which were to be used as a blue print by the Best Start Implementation Committee to move forward with Phase One planning. In January 2006 there was a federal election, which saw a change in government as well as a change in the proposed funding formula. St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works was informed by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services that any future funding envelopes would be reduced, however, all Consolidated Municipal Service Managers were able to retain the first year funding allocations and that this funding allocation would subsequently be treated as an unconditional grant to be spent to move the Best Start vision forward.

Phase one planning is now complete. In Phase One, unconditional capital was used to support the development of two new child care facilities. The first child care facility is scheduled to open in September of 2007 and the second child care facility in April 2008. The Phase One expansions when completed will add an additional 136 child care spaces in Elgin County.

With the completion of Phase One, the focus of the Best Start Initiative has shifted to Phase Two. This phase will focus on System Integration and the creation of early learning and care hubs. The Best Start Network will consist of community providers who specialize in children's public health; children's mental health; child welfare; children's developmental services; children's treatment services; as well as cultural and recreational services. The Best Start Network will have a key role in the development and evolution of an integrated local system of services and each member will assume a shared responsibility and accountability for moving toward the community vision of System Integration.

Integration is a key process through which the service system will realize the ten-year vision of Best Start. System Integration is defined as an on-going process whereby local service providers and relevant stakeholders engage in a progressively greater degree of joint service activity along an integrated continuum to provide families with better access to services.

The following guiding principles of integration are the guidelines that will be adopted by the Best Start Network Committee in their efforts to achieve integration:

- Support and services are planned and provided in a manner that is seamless to the child and his/her family

- Parental input through parental engagement strategies is foundational to the planning, implementation and success of all aspects of Best Start.
- Supports and services represent cultural and linguistic diversity in each community.
- Best Start networks are a consortium of programs/agencies and relevant stakeholders that work together to help give young children the opportunity for healthy development and the best start in life.
- Each program/agency and relevant stakeholder has a defined role within Best Start.
- The consortium of programs/agencies and relevant stakeholders will assume shared accountability for integrating services and making sure that they work together to achieve local Best Start goals.
- The members of the Best Start networks recognize the programs/agencies and relevant stakeholders have their own governance, accountabilities, and mandates, which mutually inform and support the planning processes.
- Clearly articulated mechanisms to facilitate System Integration exist among the consortium of programs/agencies and relevant stakeholders.
- Community members work from a common language and use mutually accepted terminology.
- The consortium of programs/agencies and relevant stakeholders can clearly articulate the Best Start vision in its community and how programs/agencies contribute to the actualization of the vision.

In meeting the goals of System Integration, it is expected that community referral pathways will be developed and, through these pathways, there will be linkages between the hub and other specialized and community services.

A Hub is a physical location for the delivery of an integrated system of services. The hub will clearly be the identifiable point of access for the integrated system of services for children and their families and caregivers. Programming in the hub should be accessible and responsive to community needs. The physical structure of a hub may vary from community to community and be quite unique, however, the core services required to be offered in the hub will not vary.

The core services that will be offered in the Hub are as follows:

- Quality Child Care
- Public health services (i.e., well-baby visits, immunization)
- Healthy Babies Healthy Children program
- Screening and assessment (i.e., speech, language, hearing, vision, social /emotional and general development)
- Nutrition programs
- Parenting programs
- Preschool programs
- Preschool speech and language
- Infant hearing program

Council has before them a copy of the Best Start Plan and the Child Care Service Plan 2007/08. These plans were completed in conjunction with the Best Start Network. Once the plans are approved, the Best Start Network will meet on a regular basis to develop linkages between the hub and the specialized services offered in the hub. Phase Two of the Best Start vision is to be considered a work in progress, and will be cultivated over time with our planning partners.

Respectfully submitted,



Kate Demare
Program Manager

Reviewed By: _____ Treasury _____ Env. Serv _____ Planning _____ City Clerk _____ HR _____ OW & SH _____

**St. Thomas-Elgin
2007-08 Child Care Service Plan**

June 2007

St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Child Care Service Plan

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St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Child Care Service Plan

Progress towards Achieving the Long Term Vision for Best Start

In keeping with its designation as the child care service system manager, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works has a key role to play in promoting healthy child development and helping children arrive at school ready to achieve success. Child care also serves as an essential support for many parents, helping them to balance the demands of career and family while participating in the workforce or pursuing education or training.

This section of the Plan highlights the progress that St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works has made in achieving the community's Best Start vision and in closing the gaps in child care services to better meet the needs of St. Thomas-Elgin children and families.

1.1 2006-07 Accomplishments

The priority for Phase 1 of Best Start was to increase access to high quality licensed child care for junior and senior kindergarten aged children and to gradually expand access to licensed child care for children aged four and under. As indicated in section 1.3 of the Best Start Community Plan, sixteen new spaces were licensed in St. Thomas-Elgin by September 2006 – six infant spaces at Dutton Co-operative Child Care Inc. and ten JK/SK spaces¹ at Next to Mom in Belmont.

Table 1 provides a summary of the licensed capacity of day nurseries by location while Appendix A identifies the primary capacity of each of the centre-based child care programs in St. Thomas-Elgin. It should be noted that the licenses held by several of the programs allow them a degree of flexibility within age groupings on the condition that appropriate staffing levels are in place.

TABLE 1
Primary Licensed Capacity at Centre-Based Child Care Programs

Location	Licensed Programs	Infant Spaces	Toddler Spaces	Preschool Spaces	JK/SK Spaces	School Aged Spaces	Total Spaces
St. Thomas	11	20	55	274	0	165	514
Central Elgin	3	0	0	0	0	75	75
East Elgin	3	0	10	16	0	44	70
West Elgin	4	12	25	32	0	96	165
TOTAL	21	32	90	322	0	380	824

Source: Licensing information provided by St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works, May 2007

None of the new spaces that were licensed between April 2006 and April 2007 are in elementary schools and as such the Government of Ontario's Schools First Policy was not able to be reflected in the expansion that has occurred. Having

¹ The provincial license issued to Next to Mom has since been amended such that a 20% mixed age grouping of JK/SK children is permitted within the school-aged program.

St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Child Care Service Plan

said this, 224 or 59% of the existing school-aged spaces are located in elementary schools operated by either the Thames Valley District School Board or the London District Catholic School Board.

As evidenced in Table 2, an additional 120 spaces are in the planning phase and are expected to be licensed within the next twelve months. It should be noted that the disparity in the figures reported in Table 2 are attributed to the fact that the current licensed capacity (74) of the Forest Ave. Child Care Centre Inc. will be altered once the new location is licensed in April 2008 resulting in a net increase of 24 spaces.

TABLE 2
Projected Expansion of Licensed Centre-Based Child Care Programs

Program	Anticipated Opening	Infant Spaces	Toddlers Spaces	Preschool Spaces	JK/SK Spaces	School Aged Spaces	Total
Early Learning Centre	October 2007	20	20	56	0	0	96
Forest Ave. Child Care Centre Inc.	April 2008	10	20	48	20	0	98 [see Note]
TOTAL		30	40	104	20	0	194 [see Note]

Note: The current licensed capacity (74) of the Forest Ave. Child Care Centre Inc. will be altered once the new location is licensed in April 2008 resulting in a net increase of 24 spaces.

It should also be noted that the YWCA St. Thomas Elgin and the Ontario Early Years Centre Elgin-Middlesex-London have entered into discussions with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services with respect to the establishment of licensed child care programs in St. Thomas and Aylmer. As these discussions remain preliminary in nature, they have not been included in the projected expansion figures.

St. Thomas-Elgin families also have access to two licensed home-based child care programs – the Early Learning Centre's Elgin Home Child Care Program and Wee Watch. The Elgin Home Child Care Program has a licensed capacity of 50 homes and the number of providers under contract with the program has increased from eighteen in 2004 to twenty in 2007. With the majority of providers being located in St. Thomas, Aylmer and West Elgin, the program continues to provide parents with a choice of care options². The Wee Watch licensed home child care program has recently re-commenced operations in St. Thomas-Elgin although at this point in time, there are no providers under contract with the agency.

In addition to maintaining fee subsidy agreements with all of the above mentioned licensed child care programs, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works also maintains purchase of service agreements with two recreation providers – the

² The Elgin Home Child Care Program has also been approved by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services for extended hours and overnight care.

St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Child Care Service Plan

Family YMCA of St. Thomas Elgin and the YWCA St. Thomas Elgin – to provide further options for school-aged children.

Over the course of the past eighteen months, three new licensed child care programs have become operational and two licensed child care programs have closed. In particular three school-aged programs have recently opened – Next to Mom, Discovery Club – New Serun Public School and Discovery Club – Straffordville. During the same period, the YWCA St. Thomas Elgin Tiny Tot program ceased operations as did the school-aged program operated from Elgin Court Public School in St. Thomas. More recently, the operator of the Discovery Club – Straffordville has advised that the program will be closing in June 2007 due to lack of sufficient enrolment.

In its capacity as the child care service system manager, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works has also focused its energies on the following activities over the past eighteen months:

- Recruited and hired a Child Care Supervisor
- Implemented the provincial fee subsidy income test
- Established a child care transportation fund using National Child Benefit Supplement reinvestment funds
- Entered into a service contract with Merrymount Children's Centre for the provision of the All Kids Belong special needs resourcing program (the program was previously provided by the Elgin Association for Community Living)
- Provided funding to increase the staff complement of the All Kids Belong program (a full-time Behaviourist and a part-time Play Therapist)
- Sponsored training for early childhood educators on the Nipissing District Developmental Screen and on the Positive Parenting Triple P Program
- Provided all licensed child care programs with the initial Raising the Bar on Quality self-evaluation binder
- Confirmed the participation of three child care operators in the Raising the Bar on Quality initiative (others have since expressed an interest in participating)
- Developed an updated brochure on licensed child care information for parents and the community
- Provided \$140,058 in one-time health and safety funding to licensed child care programs
- Provided one-time viability grants to Dutton Co-operative Child Care Centre Inc. (\$40,000) and to the Early Learning Centre (\$50,000)
- Provided \$500,000 in capital funding to both the Early Learning Centre and the Forest Ave. Child Care Centre Inc.
- Provided wage improvement funding to child care staff equating to an average wage increase of approximately one percent
- Completed the first phase of the implementation of enhanced technology in all child care programs to facilitate web-based OCCMS billing and reporting

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1.2 Addressing Service Gaps, Needs and Priorities

Section 1.2 and Appendix B of the *St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* identified the following gaps, needs and priorities in the early learning and care system and provided an update on the actions that are in place to address each:

- Outreach to at-risk families (teen mothers, low socio-economic, urban and rural isolation, transportation, mental health, cultural groups, low literacy, English as a Second language, and family breakdown)
- Promote the importance of early child development
- Planning and integration of services
- Availability, affordability and accessibility of licensed child care
- Quality of early learning and care programs
- Sustain and enhance the early learning and care system

The *St. Thomas-Elgin 2005-08 Child Care Service Plan* identified three critical local needs as they relate to the local child care system – transportation, special needs issues, and parental awareness. As the service system manager, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works will continue to play a role in responding to the gaps, needs and priorities within the early learning and care system in general and within the child care system in particular. The current status of each of the previously identified child care needs is discussed below.

Transportation – Unfortunately, the child care transportation fund³ that was established in 2006 to assist subsidized families with the cost of transporting their children to licensed child care programs will be fully depleted by June 2007. A recent review of the National Child Benefit Supplement reinvestment fund has indicated that dollars will not be available in future years to re-establish the transportation fund. While some school-aged children have been able to be bussed to neighbouring child care programs, this practice has occurred on a limited basis. As a result, it has been reported that some parents are not enrolling their children in junior kindergarten as a means of overcoming transportation challenges that would result from attempting to transport children between kindergarten and child care providers. Transportation challenges are also thought to be a contributing factor to the vacancies that exist in many of the rural child care programs. Over the coming months, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works and its community partners will seek to find alternative solutions to respond to these transportation barriers.

Special needs issues – Children with special needs are typically assessed for fee subsidy in the same manner as other children. Where a formal referral has been received from a community agency such as Family and Children's Services, the requirement that parents be engaged in employment or training activities is

³ The National Child Benefit Supplement reinvestment funds were used to establish the child care transportation fund.

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walved in the best interests of the child. The engagement of All Kids Belong and the enhancement to its staff complement that has been provided through Best Start funding has resulted in more effective inclusion strategies being put in place and more timely delivery of special needs resourcing services. Further, the fact that Merrymount Children's Centre and Thames Valley Children's Centre now have satellite sites in St. Thomas-Elgin and that enhancement funding has been provided to the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program, the Preschool Speech and Language Program and the Infant Hearing Program has meant that service delivery to children with special needs has become more collaborative in nature. As mentioned in the 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan mechanisms will be identified over the coming months to further enhance partnerships amongst special needs service providers and to promote the importance of early identification, intervention and inclusion.

Parental awareness – Efforts have been made to increase parental awareness through the updating and distribution of brochures and pamphlets on licensed centre-based and home-based child care programs. Although it is difficult to ascertain the actual impact these actions have had on increasing parental awareness of the availability of programs, all of the licensed centre-based programs in St. Thomas are now operating at capacity and many in fact have waiting lists for an age-appropriate space. Vacancies remain however in the rural child care programs and in the licensed home child care programs. St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works will participate in the Task Force that will be created to oversee the development and implementation of an action plan to further increase the community's awareness of the importance and availability of early learning and care programs and to enhance communication amongst service providers.

1.3 2006 Service Levels and Expenditures

The following Tables provide an overview of the 2006 approved budget and actual expenditures for the Day Nurseries Act child care program, the ELCC program and for Best Start. Commentary specific to the reported variances follow each Table.

TABLE 3
Day Nurseries Act 2006 Approved Budget and Actual Expenditures

Component	Approved Budget	Actual Expenditures	Variance
Administration	\$ 221,003	\$ 220,030	\$ 973
Fee Subsidy	\$ 867,568	\$ 717,966	\$ 149,602
Special Needs Resourcing	\$ 297,686	\$ 293,077	\$ 4,609
Wage Subsidy	\$ 852,683	\$ 852,683	-
OW Formal Child Care	\$ 206,125	\$ 252,519	(\$46,394)
OW Informal Child Care	\$ 37,500	\$ 35,856	\$ 1,644
TOTAL	\$2,482,565	\$2,372,131	\$110,434

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In 2006, with the approval of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, unspent fee subsidy dollars were allocated to address the over-expenditure that occurred in the OW formal child care component. The surplus in the fee subsidy budget was also utilized to provide licensed child care programs with one-time funding to address legislated health and safety requirements. It is anticipated that the January 2007 introduction of the income test to replace the needs test, coupled with the expansion of licensed child care spaces that is forthcoming will largely negate any future fee subsidy under-expenditures.

TABLE 4
ELCC 2006 Approved Budget and Actual Expenditures

Component	Approved Budget	Actual Expenditures	Variance
Administration	\$ 41,800	\$ 40,219	\$ 1,581
Fee Subsidy	\$248,473	\$219,266	\$29,207
Special Needs Resourcing	\$ 75,655	\$ 75,556	\$ 99
Wage Subsidy	\$ 83,999	\$ 82,032	\$ 1,967
TOTAL	\$449,927	\$417,073	\$32,854

In 2007, attempts will be made to fully expend the ELCC budget.

TABLE 5
Best Start 2006 Approved Budget and Actual Expenditures

Component	Approved Budget	Actual Expenditures	Variance
Fee Subsidy	\$ 66,695	\$ 66,695	-
Planning	\$ 5,300	\$ 5,300	-
Wage Improvement	\$ 60,284	\$ 60,284	-
TOTAL	\$132,279	\$132,279	-

As Best Start funding is provided on a fiscal basis (April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007) the budget provided by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services also extends into the 2007 calendar year. For this reason, the remaining portion of the approved budget has been 'rolled over' into 2007 and expenditures against it will be accrued and reported on accordingly.

Section 6 of this service plan provides detailed information on the 2006 service levels achieved as they relate to the reported expenditures. It should also be noted that St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works provides \$31,440 annually in 100% municipal dollars to the Elgin Association for Community Living for the continued operation of the resource centre component of the Ontario Early Years Centre Elgin-Middlesex-London.

1.4 Wait List Management Strategies

The January 2000 designation of St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works as the child care service system manager necessitated the establishment of a process by which to address any fee subsidy waiting list that may have come into being. While the community is fortunate that the wait list strategy has not had to be implemented,

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it does remain in place should the need arise. The priorities established are as follows in descending order of placement:

- Children whose parent(s) has mandatory participation in the Learning, Earning and Parenting Program (LEAP)
- Ontario Works/Ontario Disability Support Program clients who are in need of child care in order to pursue employment or education
- Sole support parent families employed part-time or full-time
- Children with diagnosed special needs
- Two parent families where both parents are employed full-time

Until such time as the Ministry standardizes the wait list criteria, child care service system managers in the South West Region have suggested that the following priorities be considered in descending order of placement:

- Exhaust Ontario Works format and informal child care allocations
- High risk and emergency needs
- Ontario Works participants working, attending school or leaving social assistance and transitioning to employment
- Ontario Disability Support Program clients transitioning to employment

St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works will continue to participate in provincial and regional discussions to ensure that its wait list management strategy is reflective of community need and is in accordance with provincial policy directions.

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Activities and Community Engagement Process

Section 2.4 of the St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan describes the actions that have and will be taken to ensure that key stakeholders are engaged and that their respective needs and priorities are made known and acted upon.

For example, the Best Start Working Group and St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works have reinforced their earlier commitment to develop a parent engagement strategy over the coming year. Further, a number of strategies have been proposed to engage Francophone and Aboriginal stakeholders and service providers. While the low-German community has been engaged in various service planning and delivery activities, additional strategies have been put forward to further enhance this cultural community's level of awareness and participation in early learning and care programs. Strategies will also be developed over the coming year to engage other culturally and/or linguistically diverse residents in the planning and implementation process.

As mentioned previously, the majority of organizations and agencies providing services to children with special needs do participate on a number of planning, advisory and information sharing bodies and as such are actively involved in service planning and delivery activities. The membership of and the linkages that the Elgin Child Care Advisory Committee has established also serves to ensure that operators of licensed child care programs⁴ are informed of and engaged in planning and service delivery activities. In addition, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works makes use of Internet technology to communicate with licensed child care operators.

⁴ Through the participation of the OEYC Elgin-Middlesex-London, the needs of informal child care providers are also be brought forward to the Advisory Committee. All Kids Belong is also a member of the Advisory Committee to ensure that the inclusion of children with special needs remains in the forefront.

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2007-08 Strategies to Move Forward with the Community Vision for Best Start

This section of the Plan provides an overview of the strategies that will be pursued in 2007-08 in order to move closer to achieving the community's vision for Best Start. In particular, the three year forecast of local child care needs that was contained in the *St. Thomas-Elgin 2005-08 Child Care Service Plan* will be referenced and the strategies described in the *St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* will be noted.

3.1 Emerging Service Gaps, Needs and Priorities

Section 3.1 of the *St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* and section 1.2 of this Plan identified several service gaps, needs and priorities that are common to all providers of early learning and care programs. It was also noted that the future analysis and mapping of the 2006 Early Development Instrument results and the 2006 Census findings will greatly assist in identifying other emerging factors to be taken into consideration when planning and implementing services for children and their families.

The *St. Thomas-Elgin 2005-08 Child Care Service Plan* contained a three year forecast of local child care system needs. As can be seen from the list that follows, many of the forecasted needs mirror those recently identified by the Best Start Working Group and as such remain as valid today as they did eighteen months ago.

- Child care service managers need to have the authority to flow funding to where the need has been identified based on the service gap analysis.
- There will be a need for increased capacity in licensed child care spaces as the province makes the switch from needs testing to income testing.
- Types of child care use will change as the demographics of St. Thomas-Elgin change. At present there is an immediate need for infant spaces but less need for preschool space. There is a large toddler population that will eventually create a need for more preschool spaces.
- A greater need for more flexibility in child care regarding hours of service. Child care centres will be required to extend the hours of operation to accommodate shift workers in retail, industry and health care. There may be an increased need for overnight care in home-based licensed child care.
- To enhance the special needs programs through better partnerships and collaboration with mental health facilities specializing in special services to children.

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- There is a critical need to fund and support transportation to and from child care in both rural and urban areas. An additional rural transportation problem is with regard to the 'one child, one bus' policy by the Boards of Education (i.e. children who attend before and after school programs are not allowed to take a different bus to and from the child care centre).
- System changes arising out of Best Start have increased the need to improve the public's awareness of the importance of high quality child care.
- There is an ongoing need in the community for service delivery managers to provide better leadership and co-ordination for children's services including child care.
- There is an ongoing need for health and safety funding. Due to the universal nature of the new child care program there may be a reduction in the amount of surpluses in fee subsidy at the end of the year thereby reducing the availability of health and safety funding dollars. This could be a hardship for many of the smaller child care centres that rely on this funding.
- There is a growing need for community services to be sensitive to the different cultural perspectives relating to child care issues.

In addition to these previously forecast child care needs, four other needs have become prevalent in recent months – wage subsidy pressures, the demand for licensed child care in St. Thomas, the vacancies that exist in licensed child care programs in rural areas, and sustaining the licensed child care system.

Wage subsidy pressures – A comprehensive wage subsidy review was undertaken by St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works in early 2007. This review indicated that a wage subsidy pressure of \$83,000 has been in existence since 2006 and continues for 2007. With the projected creation of the 120 new spaces that were identified in Table 2 and with discussions also occurring with respect to even further expansion, this pressure will only increase. Additional funding is therefore required if early childhood educators are to be appropriately compensated, if licensed child care is to be affordable to families, and if child care programs are to balance their operating budgets.

Demand for licensed child care in St. Thomas – Licensed child care programs in St. Thomas are currently operating at capacity and in many instances, waiting lists have been established for age-appropriate spaces, particularly for infants. While the expansion that is proposed and that is in the preliminary discussion stage will respond to some of this demand, the fact remains that only a small percentage of children have access to licensed child care.

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Vacancies in rural child care programs – Transportation challenges continue to plague rural child care programs to the degree that enrolment in many of the programs falls short of licensed capacity. In the absence of the revenue necessary to meet fixed and legislated operating costs such as rent, electricity and staff to child ratios, many of these programs face a continuous struggle to remain financially viable.

Sustaining the licensed child care system – The base funding that has been provided under Best Start, has for the most part, been determined by the number of new spaces that were licensed by September 2006. While this funding appears to be adequate to sustain the sixteen spaces that were created, it does little to sustain the spaces for children zero to six that are being planned or discussed. Further, the Day Nurseries Act budget which is intended to support the remaining 814 spaces⁵ has not been increased in recent years. In other words, the ability to sustain the long overdue expansion that is occurring will soon reach the critical stage without an infusion of dollars for fee subsidy, wage subsidy and special needs resourcing.

3.2 Strategies to Address Service Gaps, Needs and Priorities

Numerous strategies were proposed in the *St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* to address the identified service gaps, needs and priorities. As the service system manager, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works will actively participate in, and in some instances will assume a leadership role, on the Task Forces and Committees that will be established to respond to them. As the various action plans are developed and implemented, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works will also develop their own internal work plans to ensure that their actions are aligned with and complementary to those developed under the auspices of the Best Start Working Group.

3.3 Challenges In Addressing Service Gaps, Needs and Priorities

Section 3.3 of the *St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* identified and described several challenges – the limited involvement of local school boards, insufficient funding, and maintaining the momentum – that exist in addressing service gaps and in moving forward with the Best Start vision. Several strategies to be undertaken in the coming year to overcome them were also identified.

In posing several of these strategies, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works has committed to actively encourage the participation of the local school board representatives on the Best Start Working Group and on its various Task Forces and Committees. Further, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works will 'champion' Best Start to ensure that the momentum gained over the past several months is maintained and the community's vision is achieved.

⁵ The ELGC child care budget is intended to support 24 licensed spaces for children under the age of six.

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3.4 Sustaining the New Child Care Spaces

St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works has sustained the new child care spaces that were operational by September 2006 through a variety of actions. Firstly, Dutton Co-operative Child Care Inc. was provided with a \$40,000 one-time viability grant to assist it through its expansion phase. In addition, fee subsidy dollars were and continue to be made available to parents who have chosen to enrol their children in the sixteen new child care spaces. Wage subsidy funding has also been provided to the two new programs to increase their affordability and to address staff compensation levels. Best Start funding was also provided to Merrymount Children's Centre to enhance its All Kids Belong program to ensure that the new child care spaces were inclusive to children with special needs.

3.5 Strategies to Address System Pressures

St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works is committed to maximize the use of the Best Start funding⁴ that has recently been confirmed for 2007-08. Other funding envelopes, such as the Day Nurseries Act budget and the ELCC budget, will be utilized to the extent possible and in accordance with Ministry policy directives, to support those components of the child care system that do not meet the Best Start funding criteria.

As mentioned previously, at the present time, wage subsidy is the greatest system pressure that exists. While not evident at this time, fee subsidy pressures are also expected to materialize as a result of the introduction of the income test and the licensed expansion that has been proposed. St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works will continue to monitor and report these pressures on a quarterly basis in the hope that the Ministry is able to cash-flow additional dollars, either on a one-time or annualized basis, to respond to these pressures.

⁴ The 2007-08 Best Start base budget of \$208,472 will be increased through the addition of approximately \$250,000 in enhanced funding. As a result of funding announcements contained in the recent federal and provincial budgets, it is anticipated that this amount will further increase in the coming years.

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Strategies for System Integration

System integration is a priority under Best Start and as such the St. Thomas-Elgin Best Start Working Group is in the process of developing plans to move the community further along the integration continuum. As the accountable body for the early learning and care system and as a key partner at the Working Group table, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works has a key role to play in this process.

This section of the Plan speaks to the activities that have occurred and that will occur in the future to promote integration amongst the Best Start Working Group partners. Several integration initiatives are also highlighted that are specific to St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works.

4.1 Integration Amongst Network Partners

Section 2.1 of the St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan describes the structure that has been adopted to ensure that local planning for early learning and care programs occurs in an integrated fashion. The upcoming establishment of several Task Forces and Committees will further ensure that existing and emerging service gaps, needs and priorities are addressed in a collaborative and integrated fashion. In so doing the St. Thomas-Elgin community will be well-positioned to move closer to achieving its Best Start vision.

By far, the most challenging issue being faced by the community in moving forward is adequate, sustainable, ongoing funding to maintain existing services and to expand programs and services into the early learning and care hubs.

4.2 Child Care Integration Initiatives

Section 4.3 of the St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan describes that strategies that will be pursued on an individual or collective basis to further develop an integrated and seamless day of early learning and care for children in child care and kindergarten. In fact, many of these strategies are equally applicable to school-aged child care programs which provide access to licensed before and after school care.

As stated in the Best Start Community Plan, the responsibility for the implementation of the many strategies that were proposed by the Best Start Working Group will be assigned to the Elgin Child Care Advisory Committee of which St Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works is a key member.

Integrating Child Care with Other Children's Services Providers

Since its designation as the service system manager, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works has made great strides in engaging in joint planning, program development and service delivery. Not only has it added a Child Care

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Supervisor to its staff complement but it has initiated, funded and provided support for professional development and training opportunities, for the introduction of quality initiatives and for the enhancement of administrative capacity through the use of technology.

Over the coming months, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works will actively participate on the soon-to-be established Committee of the Best Start Working Group that will focus its attention on the operation of existing and future early learning and care hubs. In so doing, the service system manager will be able to ensure that access to hub services is increased for all community residents, that operational considerations are addressed and that implementation challenges are overcome. Further, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works will be in a position to ensure that other Ministry-funded programs such as the Preschool Speech and Language Program, the Infant Hearing Program, the Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program and the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program are integrated, as much as possible, within the array of hub services.

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Concluding Remarks

As the designated service system manager, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works will continue to champion the community's Best Start vision with the support and input of the Best Start Working Group. At the same time, effort will also be expended to ensure that the child care needs of children six to twelve and their parents are not forgotten.

In particular, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works will continue to participate in and assume a leadership role in fulfilling the mandate of the Best Start Working Group and its various Task Forces and Committees as well as that of the Elgin Child Care Advisory Committee. As the work of these planning, advisory and information sharing bodies evolves over the coming months, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works will develop and implement its own actions plans to ensure the ongoing development of a quality, available, accessible and affordable child care system that is well integrated within the early learning and care system.

Service Levels and Expenditures Template

Data Element	2006 Actual		2007 (see Note)	
	Cost Shared 80/20 ELCC	Best Start 100%	Cost Shared 80/20 ELCC	Best Start 100%
Free Subsidy Expenditures	\$717,966	\$219,575	\$97,537	\$1,031,591
Free Subsidy # of Children Served	301	61	2	310
OW Formal Expenditures	\$252,519		\$260,000	
OW Formal # of Children Served	102		102	
OW Informal Expenditures	\$35,856		\$37,500	
OW Informal # of Children Served	35		35	
Special Needs Resourcing Expenditures	\$293,077	\$75,556	\$281,036	\$100,000
Special Needs Resourcing # of Children Served	45	-	75	10
Special Needs Resourcing # of FTE Resource Teachers	2.5	-	2.5	1.5
Resource Centres Expenditures				
Resource Centres # of Children Served				
Wage Subsidy NP Expenditures	\$798,503	\$60,733	\$794,752	\$60,728
Wage Subsidy NP # of Contracts	9	2	9	2
Wage Subsidy NP CBCC # of FTEs	79.17	6.95	82.42	12.7
Wage Subsidy Commercial Expenditures	\$54,180	\$21,299	\$58,248	\$28,788
Wage Subsidy Commercial # of Contracts	1	1	1	1
Wage Subsidy Commercial CBCC # of FTE	6	2.65	7	2.98
				4.28

Data Element	2008 Actual		2007 (see Note)	
	Cost Shared 80/20	ELCC 80/20	Cost Shared 80/20	ELCC 80/20
Wage Subsidy Pay Equity Expenditures 80%	\$61,047		\$61,047	
Wage Improvements NP Expenditures		\$52,786		\$52,786
Wage Improvements NP # of Contracts		10		10
Wage Improvements NP CBCC # of FTEs		84,766		84,766
Wage Improvements Commercial Expenditures		\$7,498		\$7,498
Wage Improvements Commercial # of Contracts		1		2
Wage Improvements Commercial CBCC # of FTEs		12,175		12,175
Wage Improvement Avg. Percentage Wage Increase		1.009%		1.009%
Planning Expenditures		\$5,300		\$26,239
Total # of new spaces created under Best Start		16		
Total # of new spaces for 0-4 years		6		
Total # of new spaces for JK/SK		10		
# of new Francophone spaces for 0 – 4 years				
# of new Francophone spaces for JK/SK				
# of new Aboriginal spaces for 0 – 4 years				
# of new Aboriginal spaces for JK/SK				
Best Start Start-up:				
Expenditures for Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces			\$7,918	

Data Element	2006 Actual			2007 (see Note)		
	Cost Shared	ELCC	Best Start	Cost Shared	ELCC	Best Start
Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces	80/20	60/20	100%	80/20	80/20	100%
# of New NP Licensed Spaces for 0 – 4 years			3			
# of New NP Licensed Spaces for JK/SK			3			
Expenditures for New NP Licensed Spaces in Existing Schools						
Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces in Existing Schools						
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in Existing Schools for 0 – 4 years						
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in Existing Schools for JK/SK						
Expenditures for New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools						
Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools						
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools for 0 – 4 years						
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools for JK/SK						
Expenditures for New NP Licensed Spaces in French Lang. Centres						
Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces in French Lang. Centres						
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools for 0 – 4 years						
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools for JK/SK						
Expenditures for New NP Licensed Spaces in French Lang. Centres						
Total # of New NP Licensed Spaces in French Lang. Centres						
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools for 0 – 4 years						
# of New NP Licensed Spaces in New Schools for JK/SK						

Data Element	2006 Actual			2007 (see Note)		
	Cost Shared	ELCC	Best Start	Cost Shared	ELCC	Best Start
Child Care Administration	\$220,029	\$40,219	\$9,000	\$221,002	\$41,792	\$12,000

NOTE: Does not include the approximately \$250,000 in enhanced Best Start funding that will be received for 2007.

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APPENDIX A Primary Licensed Capacity of Centre-Based Child Care Programs

Program	Infant Spaces	Toddler Spaces	Preschool Spaces	JK/SK Spaces	School Aged Spaces	Total Spaces
St. Thomas						
Cornetview YMCA Childcare	10	20	80			110
Early Learning Centre	10	10	56			76
Forest Ave. Child Care Centre		10	64			74
Forest Park School Age Program					30*	30
Monsignor Morison School Age Program					15*	15
Rabin's Nest Early Childhood Education Centre		15	54			71
St. Gabriel's Separate School Age Program					30*	30
St. Raphael's Before and After School Age Program					15*	15
St. Thomas Co-operative Nursery School			16			16
Wellington Street School Age Program					45*	45
YWCA - St. Mark's Discovery Program					30	30
Subtotal	20	55	274	0	165	514
Central Elgin						
Discovery Club - New Sarum Public School					15*	15
Nexl to Mom					30	30
southwald YWCA Discovery Club					30*	30
Subtotal	0	0	0	0	75	75
East Elgin						
Discovery Club - Stratfordville					24*	24
Port Burwell Community Child Care Centre		10	16			26
YWCA Discovery Club - McGregor Public School					20*	20
Subtotal	0	10	16	0	44	70
West Elgin						
Dutton Co-operative Child Care Centre	12	10	32			54
Dutton Co-operative Child Care - School Age Program					21	21
Dutton Co-operative Child Care Summer Day Camp					45	45
Tiny Tails Co-operative Nursery School of Alabourgh		15			30	45
Subtotal	12	25	32	0	96	165
TOTAL	32	90	322	0	410	824

Source: Licensing Information provided by St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works, May 2007

* denotes a program based in an elementary school

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2007-08 Best Start Community Plan**

June 2007

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Background

In January 2000 the City of St. Thomas was designated by the Province of Ontario as the child care service system manager for the City and for the County of Elgin. Since that time progress has been made, in collaboration with community stakeholders, in the development of an integrated early learning and care system.

This progress, at least in part, has been achieved thanks to the financial investments that have been made by all levels of government. For example, the \$2.1 million flowed to the City of St. Thomas in 2005-06 as an 'unconditional grant'¹ has permitted local flexibility in the allocation of Best Start operating and capital funds to increase access to high quality licensed child care for junior and senior kindergarten aged children and to gradually expand access to licensed child care for children aged four and under. Further, the 2006-07 federal-provincial allocation of \$208,472 has served to sustain the newly created Best Start spaces that were operational by September 2006. These funds are in addition to those amounts approved for the cost-shared child care budgets¹ and the 100% provincial funding provided to Elgin Association for Community Living for the operation of the Ontario Early Years Centre Elgin-Middlesex-London². The announcements made in the March 19, 2007 federal budget³ and the March 22, 2007 provincial budget⁴ serve to confirm the social and economic importance that Canadians place on investing in early learning and care.

This Community Plan builds upon the St. Thomas-Elgin Best Start Phase 1 Integrated Implementation Plan and has been prepared in accordance with the planning guidelines issued by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

To assist the reader, and as a first step in developing a common language among community stakeholders, a Glossary of Terms has been developed and can be found in Appendix A.

¹ The cost-shared child care budget consists of the regular child care program, the ELCC program and the Ontario Works formal and informal child care program.

² Ontario Early Years Centres were established on the basis of provincial electoral ridings and as such the local Ontario Early Years Centre catchment area is not aligned with Elgin County municipal boundaries.

³ The federal budget allocated an additional \$250 million to the provinces and territories to support the creation of child care spaces in 2007-08. Subject to discussions with the provinces and territories, beginning in 2008-09 this funding will flow on an ongoing basis through the Canada Social Transfer and will include a three per cent escalator starting in 2009-10.

⁴ The provincial budget announced that child care programs would be enhanced by \$25 million in 2007-08 growing to \$50 million annually starting in 2008-09. Funding announcements were also made to expand the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program, family literacy and parenting centres, children's treatment centres and children's mental health centres and to establish a College of Early Childhood Educators.

Progress Towards Achieving the Long-Term Vision for Best Start

This section of the Plan begins with a review of the Best Start vision and guiding principles developed by the St. Thomas-Elgin Best Start Working Group as put forward in the *Phase 1 Integrated Implementation Plan*. The progress that has been made in responding to identified service gaps, needs and priorities and in meeting the Phase 1 priorities of Best Start is also detailed in this section of the Plan.

1.1 Vision and Guiding Principles

The St. Thomas-Elgin Best Start Working Group has reviewed and re-confirmed its commitment to the following vision statement as contained in the January 2006 *Phase 1 Integrated Implementation Plan*:

A high quality early learning and care system that is available to all families and responsive to the needs of all children through collaborative community partnerships.

Further, the guiding principles that accompanied this vision continue to remain as relevant today as they did eighteen months ago.

Excellence – ensuring a high quality child-centred early learning and care environment provided by sufficient numbers of well qualified, trained and dedicated professional caregivers that use the most highly respected proactive principles

Universality – ensuring that everyone in Elgin County wishing to access children's services may do so without discrimination on the basis of social status, income, culture, language, geography, and other barriers to equitable access and participation subject to government funding and policies

Inclusiveness – ensuring that all children may participate in children's services and benefit from its programs; children with disabilities will get specialized supports, equipment and training within funding limits without added costs to parents and programs

Integrated – working with community partners to provide more integrated and seamless children's services, sharing child expertise and more holistic planning for children up to six years of age

Partnerships – working together with families, child care providers, school boards, community agencies, child-serving professionals and municipal and provincial government to ensure that children receive appropriate and high quality care

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Accountability – setting clear standards for service providers and providing ongoing monitoring and support to ensure effective, efficient and high quality services

Flexibility and Fairness – sensitivity to urban and rural issues and supporting a variety of approaches in providing children's services

1.2 Addressing Service Gaps, Needs and Priorities

While the Phase 1 Integrated Implementation Plan identified several service gaps, needs and priorities, the Best Start Working Group has chosen to reframe and expand upon them to more accurately depict current realities. The resultant list of gaps, needs and priorities that are evident in the St. Thomas-Elgin early learning and care system are as follows:

- Outreach to at-risk families (teen mothers, low socio-economic, urban and rural isolation, transportation, mental health, cultural groups, low literacy, English as a Second language, and family breakdown)
- Promote the importance of early child development
- Planning and integration of services
- Availability, affordability and accessibility of licensed child care
- Quality of early learning and care programs
- Sustain and enhance the early learning and care system

Appendix B contains a brief description of these gaps, needs and priorities and identifies the current status of each. The Best Start Working Group felt it important to reference not only the progress that has been made in recent months but also to articulate those actions that are continuing in nature. Through the adoption of this approach, an opportunity was provided for Working Group members to share information and to increase their awareness of programs and services available in the community.

1.3 Progress Made on Implementing Phase 1 Components

Varying degrees of progress have been made in implementing the Phase 1 Best Start components – the expansion of the licensed child care system, the enhancement of key early identification and intervention programs, and the integration of child care with schools. The comments that follow speak to the achievements that have been made over the past eighteen months

Child care expansion

Sixteen new child care spaces were licensed in St. Thomas-Elgin by September 2006 – six infant spaces at Dutton Co-operative Child Care Centre Inc. and ten JK/SK spaces^s at Next to Mom in Belmont. Table 1 provides a summary of the

^s The provincial license issued to Next to Mom has since been amended such that a 20% mixed age grouping of JK/SK children is permitted.

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licensed capacity of day nurseries by location while Appendix C identifies the primary capacity of each of the centre-based child care programs in St. Thomas-Elgin. It should be noted that the licenses held by several of the programs allow them a level of flexibility within age groupings on the condition that appropriate staffing levels are in place.

TABLE 1
Primary Licensed Capacity at Centre-Based Child Care Programs

Location	Licensed Programs	Infant Spaces	Toddler Spaces	Preschool Spaces	JK/SK Spaces	School Aged Spaces	Total Spaces
St. Thomas	11	20	55	274	0	165	514
Central Elgin	3	0	0	0	0	75	75
East Elgin	3	0	10	16	0	44	70
West Elgin	4	12	25	32	0	96	165
TOTAL	21	32	90	322	0	380	824

Source: Licensing information provided by St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works, May 2007

None of the new spaces that were licensed between April 2006 and April 2007 are in elementary schools and as such the Government of Ontario's Schools First Policy was not able to be reflected in the expansion that has occurred. Having said this, 224 or 59% of the existing school-aged spaces are located in elementary schools operated by either the Thames Valley District School Board or the London District Catholic School Board.

As evidenced in Table 2, an additional 120 new spaces are in the planning phase and are expected to be licensed within the next twelve months. It should be noted that the disparity in the figures reported in Table 2 are attributed to the fact that the current licensed capacity (74) of the Forest Ave. Child Care Centre Inc. will be altered once the new location is licensed in April 2008 resulting in a net increase of 24 spaces.

TABLE 2
Projected Expansion of Licensed Centre-Based Child Care Programs

Program	Anticipated Opening	Infant Spaces	Toddler Spaces	Preschool Spaces	JK/SK Spaces	School Aged Spaces	Total
Early Learning Centre	October 2007	20	20	56	0	0	96
Forest Ave. Child Care Centre Inc.	April 2008	10	20	48	20	0	98 (see Note)
TOTAL		30	40	104	20	0	194 (see Note)

Note: The current licensed capacity (74) of the Forest Ave. Child Care Centre will be altered once the new location is licensed in April 2008 resulting in a net increase of 24 spaces.

^a The YWCA St. Thomas Elgin and the Ontario Early Years Centre Elgin-Middlesex-London have entered into discussions with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services with respect to the establishment of licensed child care programs in St. Thomas and Aylmer. As these discussions remain preliminary in nature, they have not been included in the projected expansion figures.

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It should be noted that Best Start funding was provided to the Early Learning Centre and to Forest Ave. Child Care Centre Inc. to contribute to the capital costs associated with the establishment and/or relocation of their respective programs.

It must also be mentioned that St. Thomas-Elgin families also have access to two licensed home-based child care programs – the Early Learning Centre's Elgin Home Child Care Program and Wee Watch. The Elgin Home Child Care Program has a licensed capacity for a maximum of 50 homes. The number of providers under contract with the program has increased from eighteen in 2004 to twenty in 2007. With the majority of providers being located in St. Thomas, Alymer and West Elgin, the program continues to provide parents with a choice of care options⁷. The Wee Watch licensed home child care program has recently re-commenced operations in St. Thomas-Elgin although at this point in time, there are no providers under contract with the agency.

The many actions taken over the past eighteen months by St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works and its community partners to sustain and enhance the local child care system are detailed in the *St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Child Care Service Plan*.

Enhancement of key early identification and intervention programs

The restoration funding that has been provided to the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program, to the Preschool Speech and Language Program, and to the Infant Hearing Program by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services has meant that to varying degrees, wait lists have been able to be addressed, staff lay offs have been avoided, and that operating deficits have been reduced.

In particular, the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program received \$18,000 in enhancement funding for 2006, an amount that has been included in its 2007 base budget. The tykeTALK Preschool Speech and Language Program which serves Elgin County, Oxford County and Middlesex-London received \$100,829 in enhancement funding for 2006-07 and \$201,658 for 2007-08. This funding has enabled the program to increase its staff complement by 0.4 FTE in St. Thomas-Elgin. Lastly, the Infant Hearing Program which serves all of the South West Region (with the exception of Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent) received \$46,296 in enhancement funding for 2006-07 and \$98,592 for 2007-08 which allowed the program to increase its staff complement by 0.6 FTE and to add additional VRA testing sites including one in Elgin County.

Integrating child care with schools

As mentioned previously none of the child care expansion that has occurred thus far or that is planned for the future has occurred in elementary schools.

⁷ The Elgin Home Child Care Program has also been approved by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services for extended hours and overnight care.

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While some progress has been made over the past eighteen months on an individual basis⁸ to further integrate child care with schools, much more is planned for the future as discussed in Section 4.

1.4 Progress Made to Overcome Implementation Challenges

The *Phase 1 Integrated Implementation Plan* identified several challenges that may have arisen when attempting to achieve the community's Best Start vision.

Early learning and care hub sites – The lack of available and appropriate space in existing elementary schools has meant that school sites have not, to date, been pursued as possible future early learning and care hubs.

Low-German strategy – A concerted effort will continue to be required to engage the low-German speaking community in the Best Start vision. As relationships continue to be built and as trust continues to be earned, some progress has been made in involving young families in several early learning and care programs such as those offered by the Ontario Early Years Centre and through the Family Education and Support Project (FESPA). In addition, children from the low-German speaking community have been enrolled in the summer day camp and swimming programs that are offered in Alymer by the YWCA St. Thomas Elgin.

Transportation – Transportation continues to be a barrier for many urban and rural families. While many programs do attempt to lessen this barrier through the use of volunteer drivers and transportation subsidies, a collaborative approach will be required to further overcome this implementation challenge.

Staffing – Given the limited child care expansion that has occurred thus far, staffing shortages have not proven insurmountable. As the licensed capacity of the child care system increases in the months ahead, this challenge may materialize.

Sustainability – Long term funding commitments by senior levels of government will be required if the early learning and care system is to be sustained and enhanced. While the funding announcements contained in the recent federal and provincial budgets are viewed as a positive step, only with the passage of time will it be known if they are sufficient to fund child care fee subsidies, wage subsidies, professional development, technology and transportation costs required by the St. Thomas-Elgin early learning and care system.

⁸ For example, in some instances, individual schools and licensed child care programs have worked together to streamline scheduling and to permit school-aged children to be bussed to child care programs. Child care programs and school staff also continue to work together in school readiness activities and in the transition to school process.

Best Start Network Composition, Activities & Community Engagement

This section of the Plan provides a description of the composition and activities of the St. Thomas-Elgin Best Start Working Group. In addition, the linkages that have been established with other children's planning, advisory and information sharing bodies is discussed and the community engagement process that has been undertaken to enhance the overall service system is presented.

2.1 Network Structure and Membership

Background

With the release of the June 2005 *Implementation Planning Guidelines for Best Start Networks*, the St. Thomas-Elgin, London-Middlesex and Oxford Regional Best Start Executive Committee was established. The Executive Committee consisted of senior staff from the three Consolidated Municipal Service Managers, the four publicly funded school boards⁹, and the three Public Health Units. The Executive Committee's mandate was to ensure the development of, and recommend to the Province, Best Start Implementation Plans for each municipal jurisdiction in accordance with the planning guidelines issued by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

Three Best Start Implementation Committees, accountable to the Executive Committee, were established – one to serve St. Thomas-Elgin, one to serve London-Middlesex, and one to serve Oxford County. Responsibility for the formation and membership of each local Implementation Committee rested with the respective Consolidated Municipal Service Manager.

The Current Reality

The Executive Committee has not met since the Phase 1 *Integrated Implementation Plan* was submitted in January 2006 and as such one must assume that it considers its mandate to have been fulfilled.

As Phase 1 of Best Start was nearing completion and as Phase 2 (the integration of children's services) was commencing, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works felt that a new committee may be required. For this reason, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works sought the input of the Community Council for Children and Youth Elgin

⁹ Both English and French school boards were represented on the Executive Committee – Thames Valley District School Board, London District Catholic School Board, le Conseil Scolaire de District des écoles Catholique du Sud-Ouest and le Conseil Scolaire de District du Centre-Sud-Ouest. Given the absence of French-language schools in the Elgin County, the two French school boards did not have voting privileges with respect to St. Thomas-Elgin matters.

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(CCCYE)¹⁰ on the appropriate planning structure to be put in place to prepare this *St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan*. At the suggestion of CCCYE, a Task Force¹¹ was convened in February 2007 to further explore the matter and to make a recommendation back to CCCYE. The end result was that St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works, with the support of the Task Force and CCCYE, approached the Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Families¹² to seek its willingness to provide input into the development of the *St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan*.

Not only was the Advisory Committee agreeable to performing this function, but it also agreed to assume an ongoing planning role in the implementation of Best Start in St. Thomas-Elgin. This role made practical sense for a number of reasons. Firstly, the Advisory Committee currently serves as the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Advisory Committee, the Ontario Early Years Centre Advisory Committee, and the FESPA Advisory Committee. Secondly, the Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Children has formal linkages in place with CCCYE, with the Elgin Child Care Advisory Committee, and with the West Elgin Early Years Advisory Committee. Thirdly, it is readily acknowledged that many of the same agencies and organizations are participating in local planning, advisory and information sharing forums – it is often “just the agenda that differs”. For these reasons, any references made throughout this Plan to the St. Thomas-Elgin Best Start Working Group are intended to refer to the Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Children.

Since the planning process for this *St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* began in earnest in March 2007, interest in the community has heightened to the point where the original membership has increased and continues to grow with each successive meeting. Appendix D lists the organizations, agencies, programs and entities represented at the four meetings of the Best Start Working Group that have been held since March 2007.

In the coming months, the Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Children has indicated its intention to update its Terms of Reference to include the Best Start planning role that it has willingly assumed. As part of this exercise, the membership of the Committee will also be reviewed to ensure that all key stakeholders, such as the local school boards, will continue to be encouraged to participate in the planning process. The resultant Terms of Reference will also include the mandates and responsibilities of several Sub-Committees and Task Forces that will be struck to oversee the implementation of the many strategies proposed in future sections of this Plan to move forward with the Best Start vision.

¹⁰ The Community Council for Children and Youth exists to coordinate services for children and youth in Elgin County and to establish a positive understanding and relationship between service providers.

¹¹ Only one meeting of the Task Force was required to receive its input and suggestions.

¹² The Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Families is often more commonly referred to as the 0-6 Committee.

2.2 Linkages with the Regional French-language Best Start Network

Since local Best Start planning first commenced in June 2005, the St. Thomas-Elgin Best Start Implementation Committee and more recently the St. Thomas-Elgin Best Start Working Group have lacked representation from the Central-South-West Best Start Regional French-language Network nor have minutes from the French-language Network been provided. Given the recent appointment of a French-language Program Supervisor to serve the Ministry of Children and Youth Service's South West Region, it is anticipated that a linkage will be established between the two planning bodies and any other provincial structures that may be established in the future.

2.3 Linkages with Other Planning Bodies

The Best Start Working Group has expanded upon the work begun by the Task Force at its February 2007 meeting to identify the many local planning, advisory and information sharing bodies (and their membership) whose mandate encompasses services for children, prenatal to age six, and their families. The results of these efforts are contained in Appendix E.

In considering the information contained in Appendix E, the Best Start Working Group is of the opinion that at least for the near future, the necessary linkages have already been established between these planning, advisory and information sharing bodies. Further, given the program-specific or geography-specific mandates that these entities address, the Working Group has suggested that a more streamlined and integrated planning process would not benefit the St. Thomas-Elgin community at this time. Having said that, the Working Group remains open to considering future possibilities should they become evident.

2.4 Communication and Community Engagement

Best Start information has continued to be shared through the OEYC and its parent groups, the West Elgin Parent Committee and the parent information sharing at child care centres. The development and actioning of a parent engagement strategy therefore remains a coming year priority for the Best Start Working Group.

The Phase 1 Integrated Implementation Plan indicated that public surveys would be conducted during 2006 to determine "whether there is significant interest" to consider the development of a French-language child care program or whether Francophone children would prefer to be transported to such a program in Middlesex County. To ensure that the needs of Francophone families are understood and acted upon, a Task Force of the Best Start Working Group will be established to oversee the completion of a needs assessment. As a first step in the process, the assistance of the Ministry's newly appointed French-language Program Supervisor will be sought to engage Francophone stakeholders. In addition, contact will be made with French-language stakeholders and service providers in Middlesex-London such as the Thames Valley Chapter of Canadian

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Parents and La Ribambelle child care centre, to solicit their expertise on the design and implementation of such an assessment. Once the needs of Francophone children and their parents are made known, the appropriate community response can then be developed. Contact will also be made with both of the French-language school boards to ascertain their future plans with respect to the establishment of an elementary school in St. Thomas-Elgin.

The *Phase 1 Integrated Implementation Plan* also indicated that public surveys would be conducted during 2006 to determine "whether there is significant interest" to consider the development of an Aboriginal child care program or whether children of Aboriginal heritage would prefer to be transported to such a program in Middlesex County. The *Integrated Implementation Plan* further stated that leaders from the neighbouring Oneida Nation of the Thames and Munsee Delaware Nation would also be consulted as part of the survey process.¹³ The Best Start Working Group will establish a Task Force to oversee the development of an Aboriginal strategy. In addition to conducting the activities referenced, the Task Force will seek the expertise of Aboriginal service providers, such as the Chippewas Day Care Centre, the Oneida Day Nursery, N'Amerind Friendship Centre, and the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre, in the approach to be taken to assess the need for Aboriginal early learning and care services. Once the need is defined, the Task Force can begin work on developing the most appropriate response.

Service providers for children with special needs have been engaged in the Best Start planning and implementation process through their membership on the Implementation Committee and more recently on the Working Group. The fact that Merymount Children's Centre and the Thames Valley Children's Centre have recently established a visible presence in St. Thomas-Elgin has also served to strengthen the partnerships that have existed between those organizations and agencies which provide services to children with special needs. The Best Start Working Group will explore additional opportunities to further enhance partnerships amongst special needs service providers in the coming months.

The low-German speaking community is by far the largest culturally and/or linguistically diverse population in St. Thomas-Elgin. For this reason, both the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and the FESPA Program have been and will continue to be actively engaged in Best Start planning and implementation. The Best Start Working Group will also monitor, and participate in as appropriate, the planning that is underway for the development of a health centre to serve East Elgin residents. The Working Group does acknowledge however that the needs of those residents whose first language is other than English, French or low-German have not been addressed in the planning and implementation process.

¹³ While Best Start does have a mandate to serve off-reserve Aboriginals, the expertise and experience of those individuals living on-reserve is expected to assist greatly in the planning process and in ensuring that early learning and care programs are sensitive to and respectful of Aboriginal heritage.

Strategies to Move Forward with the Community Vision for Best Start

This section of the Plan provides an overview of the strategies that will be pursued by the Best Start Working Group in the coming year in order to move closer to achieving the community's vision for Best Start. While section 1 spoke of the progress that had been made in addressing service gaps, needs and priorities, and in overcoming implementation challenges, this section of the Plan speaks to the strategies that will be taken to further reduce the gaps, to address the needs and priorities, and to lessen the impact of implementation challenges.

3.1 Emerging Gaps, Needs and Priorities

As referenced in section 1.2 of this Plan, the Best Start Working Group chose to re-frame the previously identified service gaps, needs and priorities. In several instances these gaps, needs and priorities were intuitively known by service providers and yet were not articulated in the *Phase 1 Integrated Implementation Plan*. For this reason, a specific exercise to identify emerging gaps, needs and priorities was not undertaken.

For various reasons beyond the influence of the Best Start Working Group, the results of the Early Development Instrument (EDI)¹⁴ completed by senior kindergarten teachers in the Spring of 2006 were not available to assist in the identification of emerging gaps, needs and priorities. Once the results are compiled and mapped according to neighbourhood it is anticipated that the full report will be shared with the Working Group and with St. Thomas-Elgin planning bodies in the coming months. Further, local service planning activities will also greatly benefit from the 2006 Census information once it becomes available.

3.2 Strategies to Meet Community Needs

The strategies that will be adopted to respond to the service gaps, needs and priorities are contained in Appendix F. The Appendix also identifies some of the obstacles and challenges that may be faced in doing so.

Given their particular relevance in moving forward with the Best Start vision, the strategies directed to meeting the needs of Francophone, Aboriginal, children

¹⁴ The Early Development Instrument is a population based tool used to measure the outcomes of children's early years as they influence their readiness to learn at school. In particular, the EDI assess children's developmental skills on five readiness to learn domains – physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive development; and communication skills and general knowledge. EDI results are interpreted at the group level (e.g. neighbourhood) and are not a measure of a school's performance, but a measure of the community's ability to support early childhood development.

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with special needs and the needs of families that are culturally and/or linguistically diverse are profiled below.

Francophone – According to the 2001 Census, approximately one percent (880) of St. Thomas-Elgin residents indicated that French was the language they first learned at home and that it was still understood. In addition to establishing a Task Force to conduct an assessment of the demand and preferences for French-language early learning and care programs as described in Section 2.4 of this Plan, the Best Start Working Group suggested several actions that could be taken by individual organizations and agencies. For instance, service providers are encouraged to explore the practicality of hiring bilingual staff or dedicating dollars within their operating budgets for interpreter services. Further, where practical, selected print material pertaining to programs and services could be made available in French or programs could include elements of the French language in their curriculum, room displays, etc. The task of developing and implementing a detailed action plan that includes these and other strategies will also fall to the Task Force.

Aboriginal – According to the 2001 Census, approximately one percent (950) of St. Thomas-Elgin residents identified themselves as being of Aboriginal heritage. The Aboriginal Task Force that will be established to oversee the development of an Aboriginal strategy as described in Section 2.4 of this Plan, will also assume a leadership role in developing and implementing an action plan to ensure that 'mainstream' early learning and care programs are more culturally sensitive and to coordinate the offering of educational opportunities for front-line staff.

Children with special needs – A range of professional development opportunities will continue to be provided to front-line staff to ensure that their early learning and care programs continue to be inclusive of children with special needs. Further, the Working Group recognizes the need to enhance public awareness activities to stress the importance of early identification and treatment. Advocacy efforts are also required to ensure that those providing service to children with special needs are adequately resourced and funded to enable them to respond in a timely fashion. Service providers must also be supported in their collaborative approaches to service delivery and ways must be sought to engage primary care providers in the early learning and care system particularly as it relates to the early identification of children with special needs and families who may be 'at-risk'.

As stated in Section 2.4, the Best Start Working Group will explore future opportunities to strengthen partnerships amongst 'special needs' service providers and to promote the importance of early identification, intervention and inclusion. This will be accomplished either through the establishment of a specific Task Force or through the assignment of this task to an existing planning or advisory committee.

Other culturally and/or linguistically diverse families – As mentioned previously, the low-German speaking population is by far the largest cultural community in

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St. Thomas-Elgin. For this reason, efforts must continue to actively solicit and utilize the expertise of key stakeholders and members of the low-German community. Where possible, service providers should also consider recruiting low-German speaking staff and/or including dollars in their operating budgets for interpreter services. Given that the local low-German radio station has proven extremely popular within the community, opportunities should be sought to use this venue to inform families of the services available and to welcome their participation. Further, front-line staff must be provided with professional development opportunities to increase their understanding of the various low-German heritages that exist within St. Thomas-Elgin and to learn effective ways of adapting their programs and approaches to service to ensure that families are comfortable in their participation.

The expertise of low-German speaking stakeholders will be sought in the development and implementation of an action plan to implement these and other strategies aimed at St. Thomas-Elgin's largest cultural community.

Lastly, as a future strategy, the Best Start Working Group will seek to develop a greater appreciation of the range and size of other culturally and/or linguistically diverse cultures that exist in St. Thomas-Elgin as a precursor to assessing and responding to their need for service.

3.3 Overcoming Challenges

The Best Start Working Group also identified several challenges, as described below, which must be overcome if the community is to successfully move forward with the Best Start vision.

Limited involvement of local School Boards – Given that the primary goal of Best Start is to develop a system of services that seamlessly supports children from birth to grade one, a recent void in the planning and implementation of Best Start has been created by the limited involvement of the local School Boards. For instance, their expertise and knowledge continues to be sought to identify school locations that could readily integrate licensed child care programs and/or early learning and care hubs. Even if appropriate space is not available within elementary schools, the need to engage in joint professional development and public awareness campaigns, to design complementary curriculum, and to enhance the transition to school process remains.

For this reason, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works will actively encourage the participation of local School Board representatives on the Best Start Working Groups and on its various Task Forces.

Insufficient funding – As public awareness increases on the importance of early childhood development, the demand for early learning and care programs increases. Even with the enhancement funding that has been provided by senior levels of government to several organizations and agencies, it has proven challenging to sustain existing service levels let alone meet increasing demands

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for service. Further, while the Best Start Working Group values and recognizes the importance of collaborative service planning, it does come with a cost. Likewise, the participation of front-line staff in quality initiatives, public awareness activities and professional development sessions does take time away from their service delivery responsibilities and ultimately results in increased program costs or in reduced service levels.

As a means of lessening this challenge, the Best Start Working Group will continue to advocate for enhanced funding and individual members will continue to make effective use of their respective resources through collaboration and innovation.

Maintaining the momentum – The community momentum that had been gained in the initial Best Start planning phase became stalled in many ways as a result of the withdrawal of federal funding) and countless of the actions that were to be taken remain outstanding. In order for the momentum to be re-gained and for the many strategies and actions detailed in this *St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* to move forward, the Best Start Working Group strongly recommends that an identified leader or 'community champion' be sought. There is no doubt that a strong sense of commitment and passion is evident amongst the Working Group members, sentiments that will be put to excellent use once a champion can be identified.

As the provincially designated service system manager, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works will champion Best Start to ensure that the community's vision is achieved.

Strategies to Move Forward With System Integration

As stated at the outset of this Plan, agencies and organizations providing services to St. Thomas-Elgin children and their families have made some progress in moving towards integrated planning and service delivery to improve access and outcomes. This section of the Plan identifies the strategies that will be pursued in the coming months to further these goals. Given their importance as venues for integration, the early learning and care hubs that currently exist in St. Thomas-Elgin will be profiled and future plans will be discussed.

4.1 Strategies to Move Forward with System Integration

The Best Start Working Group used the *Continuum of System Integration* provided by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services as a starting point in its discussion of system integration. For each component of system integration – awareness, communication, cooperation and collaboration – the current situation was described, strategies to move along the continuum were developed, and the challenges that may be faced were identified.

Awareness

Current situation – A moderate to high degree of awareness exists in the community. Service providers and parents who are “well connected” tend to be more aware than those who are less connected. While the creation of the Elgin Connects website has the potential to increase awareness, there are limitations with the comprehensiveness of the information available.

Strategies – Advocate for and support the development of a community-wide publication that describes, in some level of detail, all early learning and care programs. This publication should be available in print and electronic format to ensure it is accessible to service providers and families. Secondly, explore the feasibility of establishing a St. Thomas-Elgin Best Start website to provide parents, caregivers and service providers with first-hand information on Best Start activities and to provide links to community agencies and other useful resources.

The Best Start Working Group will establish a Task Force to oversee the development and implementation of an action plan to increase the community's awareness of the importance and availability of early learning and care programs through the creation of these and other vehicles.

Challenges – For the publication and website to be meaningful and useful, dedicated resources must be made available to a ‘lead agency’ to ensure that they are regularly updated and in the case of the publication, broadly distributed.

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Communication

Current situation – A low to moderate level of communication exists between community agencies. The numerous planning, advisory and information sharing bodies that exist in St. Thomas-Elgin have served as useful vehicles for communication. Service providers tend to communicate more with those community agencies that are located within their service delivery area (e.g. West Elgin) or with those who they regularly collaborate with and/or with those who they tend to make or receive referrals from (e.g. All Kids Belong and tykeTALK).

Strategies – Better use of the planning, advisory and information sharing bodies could be made by making information updates a regular item on meeting agendas. While in some instances, service providers are contributing articles to other's newsletters (e.g. OEYC and All Kids Belong), the frequency and scope of this activity could be increased. Further, agency newsletters should be routinely circulated to front-line staff as a means of increasing their awareness of programs and services, of promoting communication amongst service providers, and of informing and linking parents to other programs and services. Communication can also be enhanced through the offering of professional development opportunities, either in collaboration with other service providers or those specific to an individual agency.

As awareness and communication frequently go hand in hand, the Task Force that will be established to enhance public awareness may also be well-positioned to take a leadership role in enhancing communication between service providers. Secondly, as the Elgin Child Care Advisory Committee has in the past included professional development (and related quality initiatives) in its mandate, it will be asked to broaden its mandate in this regard to include all early learning and care programs.

Challenges – It is often difficult to balance service delivery demands with the time required to share and receive information.

Cooperation

Current situation – Cooperative activities tend to occur between agencies for very specific reasons – the same geographical service area is shared or agencies have complementary service mandates (e.g. child health). Some degree of duplication does exist (e.g. parenting and literacy programs) but this is not always undesirable as it does contribute to parental choice.

Strategies – Through the scheduling of regular service planning meetings, the development of quarterly community calendars (such as the West Elgin Early Years News) may result. Parents would then be able to choose the program and location they wished to attend and service providers would be encouraged to schedule programs such that staff and financial resources are used efficiently and effectively.

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The Best Start Working Group will determine which of its Task Forces is best positioned to assume this role of promoting and encouraging cooperation.

Challenges - While it is recognized that community agencies have identified mandates (often dictated by their funders), a need does exist to lessen "territorial issues" if more broadly based cooperation is to more readily occur.

Collaboration

Current situation – The Thames Valley Neighbourhood Early Learning Program serves as an excellent example of the collaboration that has occurred on a system-wide basis with partners such as the OEYC, both school boards and numerous other service providers. Many examples of service integration are also apparent in the St. Thomas-Elgin community including the collaboration that occurs in the development of the West Elgin Early Years Advisory Committee newsletter distributed to 350 families and 100 agencies.

Strategies – Regularly scheduled planning meetings can serve as a vehicle to strengthen existing relationships and build trust amongst service providers. All concerned must remain cognizant of the community's Best Start vision and the fact that the intended outcome of system integration is improved outcomes for young children and their families.

The Best Start Working Group and its Task Forces will ensure that a regular meeting schedule is developed and adhered to. In the short term, as this *St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Best Start Community Plan* moves to the implementation phase, monthly meetings are apt to prove necessary if the momentum that has been gained is to continue.

Challenges – Relationships are "give and take" and as such service providers must be willing (and able) to identify how they can contribute to the collaborative and what benefits can be achieved. To ensure that planning moves forward and the current momentum is maintained, a balance must be found between the time necessary to plan and the time devoted to the delivery of early learning and care programs.

4.2 Hubs as a Venue for System Integration

Background

The Ministry envisions early learning and care hubs as focal points where families could access:

- core early learning and care services (e.g. licensed child care, parenting programs, preschool programs, public health programs);
- some specialized services (e.g. preschool speech and language program);

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- linkages to other specialized services (e.g. children's treatment centres); and
- linkages to other services in the community (e.g. recreation).

Each Best Start Network was to first look to elementary schools in keeping with the provincial Schools First Policy. Where such locations proved impractical, Networks were encouraged to consider other sites that were near schools or that were known to families such as child care centres or Ontario Early Years Centres. The constellation of services could vary from community to community and from hub to hub depending upon the needs of the community and where services were currently being provided.

The Phase 1 Integrated Implementation Plan proposed that at least one early learning and care hub be established in each of the following areas – St. Thomas, East Elgin and West Elgin. The Integrated Implementation Plan went on to identify possible hub and hublet¹⁵ sites, some of them in elementary schools and others in existing multi-service sites in the community. The original Best Start Implementation Committee also stated their belief that a critical component of any hub site was the presence of an OEYC program.

Existing Early Learning and Care Hub

Based on the Ministry's definition of an early learning and care hub, it appears that one fully operational hub exists within St. Thomas-Elgin – the West Elgin Community Parent Child Resource Centre. This site, as detailed in Appendix G, is currently home to one or more licensed child care programs; has on-site access to other early learning and care programs (e.g. OEYC programs) and several specialized services; and provides linkages to other specialized services and community programs.

Future Early Learning and Care Hubs

In all likelihood, three additional hubs (which are listed in Appendix H) are expected to become operational over the course of the next twelve months:

- YWCA St. Thomas Elgin – Through its site on Mary Street in St. Thomas, the YWCA provides residents of the downtown core with on-site and linked access to a variety of early learning and care programs. Many other services are also available that support older children, youth and adults. The YWCA has entered into discussions with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to operate a licensed child care program for junior and senior kindergarten aged children after recently closing its on-site nursery school program. At such time as licensed child care returns to the site, the YWCA will meet the Ministry's definition of an early learning and care hub.

¹⁵ Hublets were defined as those sites that had limited services and fewer resources on-site.

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- OEYC St. Thomas site – The OEYC is currently meeting with Ministry representatives to obtain a license to operate a child care program at its site at 7 Morrison Drive, St. Thomas. As the OEYC currently has on-site access to a variety of specialized services and linkages to other specialized services and community programs, once licensed child care is available, it will meet the Ministry definition of a full service hub.
- OEYC Alymer site – The OEYC is currently meeting with Ministry representatives to obtain a license to operate a child care program at its site at 424 Talbot Street West, Alymer. As the OEYC currently has on-site access to a variety of specialized services and linkages to other specialized services and community programs, once licensed child care is available, it will meet the Ministry definition of a full service hub thus providing East Elgin with an early learning and care hub.

The identification of these possible future hub sites in no way limits other organizations or agencies from also becoming early learning and care hubs in the months to come. As a means of building upon community strengths and resources and of making best use of evidence-based research, the need and practicality of establishing additional hubs will be explored.

For instance, one or more of the licensed child care programs in St. Thomas-Elgin may further evolve to meet the Ministry definition of an early learning and care hub. In addition, several elementary schools operated by the Thames Valley District School Board and the London District Catholic School Board currently serve as OEYC outreach sites or are host to licensed school-aged child care programs¹⁶. The fact that new elementary schools are being considered for the Winfield neighbourhood of St. Thomas (2008), for the St. Thomas core (2009) and that in the past consideration was given to opening a French-language school in the community, future opportunities may become available to implement the Schools First Policy.

Ensuring Access to Hub Services

The programs and services available at or linked to existing or future early learning and care hubs will attempt to respond to the needs of Francophone and Aboriginal children and families and to children with special needs and their families. The approaches that will be taken to do so are described below.

Until such time as the Francophone and Aboriginal Task Forces complete their respective mandates to determine the need for services and the best ways to meet these needs, the message will be clearly conveyed that all children and families are welcome and encouraged to reap the benefits of the available hub and community based programs and services.

¹⁶ Nine of the fourteen school-aged child care programs which currently exist are located in elementary schools.

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A wide variety of programs serving children with special needs are currently available at the existing hub and at the sites identified as possible future hubs. As the availability and scope of these programs is increased and as the hubs become more widely known in the community, accessibility will increase. Given the fact that the existing and possible future sites are also able to offer extended hours of services, families will be able to access selected programs and services at a time and location in St. Thomas, West Elgin or East Elgin that are convenient to them.

Operational Considerations

The Best Start Working Group has identified several future discussions that should occur to ensure that early learning and care hubs become the venue for service integration. A Committee will be established to consider the following topics and other topics that will undoubtedly emerge over time. At minimum, this Committee would consist of the lead agencies for each of the hub sites and ideally those organizations and agencies providing services at the hubs.

- Exploring ways to coordinate the activities between hubs particularly with respect to the scheduling of parent workshops and the on-site presence of other service providers
- Ascertaining whether a core (or minimum) set of services that would be accessible at each hub should be defined
- Finding ways to retain each site's individual identity and flexibility to respond to the needs of its clientele
- Developing a strategy to market the hubs
- Exploring the implications of developing common logos and/or signage while still publicly recognizing the contributions of individual service providers
- Identifying other agencies and organizations to provide programs and services in the hubs or to link with the hubs
- Exploring the issues and options available to extend hours of operation to ensure accessibility for working parents
- Identifying the mechanisms (e.g. Memorandum of Understanding, communication and service protocols) required to facilitate collaborative service delivery between programs and services located in the hubs

As these topics are discussed over the coming months and as others come to the attention of those concerned, it will be important that the potential implementation challenges identified in the next section of the Plan (and others that are apt to emerge) be taken into consideration.

Implementation Challenges

The Best Start Working Group identified several challenges to be overcome if the range of available programs and services are to be enhanced and if access is to be streamlined.

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Appropriate space – Several specialized services, such as speech and language screening and infant hearing testing, require that appropriate clinical space be available. Where possible, existing space will have to be adapted or future space will have to be designed accordingly if certain specialized services are to become readily accessible through the hubs.

Capacity of existing resources – While organizations and agencies have indicated their willingness and desire to make their services available at hub sites, the size of their current staff complement and operating budget restrictions may limit their ability to do so. In the absence of enhanced funding, creative means will have to be sought to address this challenge.

Funding considerations – While some degree of service integration has already occurred at the existing and possible future hub sites, if the Best Start vision is to be realized then additional funding will be required to ensure the availability of appropriate space, to increase the capacity of service providers, to engage in public awareness campaigns and to ensure services are coordinated within and between hubs.

4.3 Integrated Planning and Service Delivery

Integration of Child Care With Schools

As referenced earlier, even prior to the implementation of the provincial Schools First Policy, several steps have been taken in St. Thomas-Elgin to integrate child care with schools. In most instances these actions have been initiated by individual service providers such as the OEYC or a child care operator.

The Best Start Working Group developed numerous strategies that could be pursued on an individual or collective basis to further develop an integrated and seamless day of early learning and care for children in child care and kindergarten.

- Expand the Thames Valley Neighbourhood Early Learning Program beyond the ten schools where it is currently offered
- Provide networking opportunities between kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators
- Continue to invite school staff to attend child care programs to observe children with special needs
- Collaborate with school staff to explore ways of ensuring that children with special needs are ensured a seamless transition to school (e.g. it has been reported that some children experience delays in receiving school-based speech therapy)
- Provide increased opportunities for joint professional development
- Resolve the bussing issues that exist in some parts of St. Thomas-Elgin
- Engage Parent Associations in advocating for school-based early learning and care programs

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- Utilize school newsletters to promote the importance and availability of early learning and care programs
- Continue to ensure that educators are aware of and make use of resource libraries
- Continue to engage individual schools in discussions on the scheduling of JK and SK classes as it pertains to accessing licensed child care
- Increase the level of communication between kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators

Given its current mandate, it appears to make intuitive sense that responsibility for the implementation of these strategies be designated to the Elgin Child Care Advisory Committee.

Preschool Speech and Language, Infant Hearing, and Blind-Low Vision Early Identification Programs

The availability of enhanced provincial funding for the Preschool Speech and Language Program and the Infant Hearing Program provides an opportunity to integrate planning, strengthen partnerships, and enhance coordination amongst community resources. These same benefits will also be achieved through the introduction of the Blind-Low Vision Early Identification Program announced in the March 2007 provincial budget.

Preschool Speech and Language Program

The Middlesex-London Health Unit has received enhanced Ministry funding for the LykeTALK Preschool Speech and Language Program to reduce waitlists, to improve training in the areas of language and literacy through integrated planning with other program areas, and to expand service to children with complex needs who do not attend senior kindergarten.

The strategies and services that LykeTALK, through its local provider agency, the Thames Valley Children's Centre, will put in place to achieve these objectives and to support the St. Thomas-Elgin Best Start vision are described in detail in Appendix I. The Appendix also discusses the challenges that may be faced in doing so.

Infant Hearing Program

The Infant Hearing Program, administered by the Middlesex-London Health Unit also received enhanced funding to extend all services to children with identified permanent hearing impairment to grade 1 entry. The services the program will put in place to achieve this objective and to support the St. Thomas-Elgin Best Start vision are described in Appendix J. The Appendix also discusses the challenges that may be faced in doing so.

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Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services has designated administrative responsibility for the new Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program – a service program that provides supports for children, birth to grade one entry who are blind or have low vision – to the Middlesex-London Health Unit. Now that an implementation plan has been completed it is anticipated that the program will be fully operational by September 2007¹⁷. As such, the linkages with the Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program will continue to grow with time.

Integration Amongst the Best Network Partners

Section 2 of this Plan addressed the actions that have been taken and that are proposed to further integrate the planning process as a means of moving forward with system integration. The fact that the Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Families now serves as the community advisory committee for the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program, the OEYC and FESPA and is willing to expand its mandate to serve as the Best Start Network speaks to the achievements that have been made. Numerous community agencies and organizations are members of the Advisory Committee including St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works, the OEYC, the Preschool Speech and Language Program, the Infant Hearing Program, Healthy Babies Healthy Children, and the Infant Development Program.

As referenced earlier, the *lykeTALK* program and the Infant Hearing Program have highlighted several opportunities to engage in collaborative service delivery and have identified possible challenges in doing so, as described in Appendix I and J respectively.

The Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program and other maternal and child health programs are currently accessible at several locations in St. Thomas-Elgin and numerous partnerships have already been established with other early learning and care providers. Perhaps the largest challenge faced by the Elgin-St. Thomas Health Unit is their limited capacity to expand the number of programs offered in light of their current staff complement. The withdrawal of provincial child development and injury prevention funding in December 2006 also resulted in the elimination of several early learning and care programs. Despite these factors, the Health Unit remains committed to the Best Start vision and will continue to explore opportunities to engage in collaborative service delivery and to make some of its services available at hub sites while at the same time ensuring that its mandated service delivery targets are met.

As discussed in greater detail in the *St. Thomas-Elgin 2007-08 Child Care Service Plan*, the child care service has historically engaged in collaborative service delivery of programs and services for children with special needs. Local child

¹⁷ The Canadian National Institute for the Blind has been named the local service manager.

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care operators have also worked together to provide professional development opportunities for early childhood educators and to increase the quality of care through the use of environmental rating scales, the recent introduction of the Raising the Bar on Quality initiative and the adoption of a private home child care quality assurance program. While the expansion of licensed child care has slowed down in recent years, several expansion projects are in the planning or discussion stage many of which may serve as future hub sites. The availability of sufficient resources to sustain this expansion will be the primary challenge faced by the child care system. In particular, dollars for fee subsidy, wage subsidy and special needs resourcing will have to be secured if the more than 120 spaces that are planned can be adequately supported.

Since its inception, the OEYC Elgin-Middlesex-London has made it a priority to engage in collaborative service delivery with a variety of partners as discussed in its 2007-08 Service Plan. The OEYC has utilized creative means of engaging parents, particularly in the rural parts of the County through the use of a mobile van visiting and setting up summer programs in neighbourhood parks. In the coming months, the OEYC intends to study the feasibility of having other service providers 'riding along' to increase access to specialized services. The OEYC has also indicated its intention to explore the possibility of including licensed child care in its portfolio to complement the support it currently provides to informal caregivers.

It should also be noted that the following multi-service sites, all of which provide programs and services to children and their families, are also operational within St. Thomas-Elgin and are recognized as importance service centres within their respective communities.

- Mennonite Central Committee – From its main site and satellite sites in Aylmer, the Mennonite Central Committee and the FESPA program provide a number of early learning and care programs (and other services) to children and their families. While many of these programs and services are targeted to newcomers to Canada, they are accessible to all community residents. In the absence of a licensed child care program, child minding services are provided to those parents attending programs or workshops.
- Merrymount Children's Centre – Through its recently opened satellite site in the St. Thomas core, Merrymount provides several programs and services (e.g. All Kids Belong, respite child minding) primarily directed to children with special needs and their parents.
- Thames Valley Children's Centre – The Preschool Speech and Language Program, physiotherapy and occupational therapy services are provided by staff of Thames Valley Children's Centre at the agency's recently opened satellite site in St. Thomas.

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- **West Elgin Community Health Centre** – Numerous primary health care services and community support programs are provided to residents of West Lorne and surrounding area by the West Elgin Community Health Centre. Programs such as Grow With Baby, Crazy Kitchens, breast feeding clinics, prenatal courses, Let's Connect workshops, and Parent Chats are offered by the Centre's registered nurse, registered dietician, family support worker, early childhood educator and others.

Concluding Remarks

The November 2006 release of the Ministry's *Service Integration Addendum* and associated *Best Start Planning Guidelines* have provided the impetus for the St. Thomas-Elgin community to build on the foundation that has been laid and move forward with fulfilling its Best Start vision. Now that broad strategies have been identified to do so, St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works with the input and expertise of the Best Start Working Group, will direct its energies to creating action plans to implement these strategies. For continued progress to be made, it will be imperative that the priorities listed below are addressed concurrently rather than consecutively. It will also be important if the community is to move forward along the integration continuum that every available opportunity is sought to increase awareness, communication, cooperation and collaboration through the sharing of knowledge, best practices and evidence-based research.

In particular, the following actions that have been referenced throughout this Plan will be taken over the course of the coming year to ensure that access and outcomes are improved for St. Thomas-Elgin children and their families.

- Gain the participation of the local School Boards in the Best Start planning and implementation process
- Assign responsibility for the development and actioning of a parent engagement strategy
- Create a Task Force to oversee the completion of a Francophone needs assessment
- Develop of a Task Force to oversee the development of an Aboriginal strategy and action plan
- Identify the mechanisms necessary to further enhance partnerships amongst special needs service providers and to promote the importance of early identification, intervention and inclusion
- Seek the input of low-German speaking stakeholders in the development and implementation of an action plan to implement engagement strategies aimed at St. Thomas-Elgin's largest cultural and linguistic community
- Begin discussions on the ways to identify and respond to the needs of other culturally and/or linguistically diverse residents
- Establish a Task Force to oversee the development and implementation of an action plan to increase the community's awareness of the importance and availability of early learning and care programs and to enhance communication amongst service providers
- Expand the mandate of the Elgin Child Care Advisory Committee to include broad-based professional development, early learning and care quality initiatives and the integration of child care with schools
- Assign responsibility for creating and implementing an action plan to promote and encourage cooperation amongst service providers
- Establish a Committee to be responsible for integrating services within and between existing and future hub sites

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Appendix A Glossary of Terms

Accessibility – The availability of services to all people to the extent that one is able to secure needed services with physical, language, cultural, economic and any other barriers minimized or eliminated. Accessible services are also located nearby and are open during evenings and weekends.

Affordability – The degree to which the price of early learning and care programs is a realistic family expense.

Availability – The degree to which age-appropriate services exist and are able to meet the demand for service without placing families on a long waiting list.

Capacity – The human and financial resources, technology, skills, knowledge and understanding required to permit organizations and agencies to do their work and fulfill what is expected of them by stakeholders. The term 'capacity' is also used to denote the total number of children that may be in care at any one time according to the license issued by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

Caregiver – An individual who provides care and protection for children in or outside the home. Caregivers may include parents, relatives, child care workers and early childhood educators.

Child Care Centre – A facility, licensed by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, which provides regularly scheduled care for a group of children one month of age through twelve years of age for periods of less than twenty-four hours.

Child Minding – The provision of on-site informal child care services while a parent, guardian or caregiver is participating in a parent education workshop, course or seminar.

Collaboration – The act of working in partnership, agreement and accord to reach an outcome. Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals.

Co-location – One or more service providers sharing the same physical space.

Community – An area having common geography and/or neighbourhood where people have shared interests. It is a natural catchment area for services that acknowledge linkages, consumer patterns of travel and communication.

Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) – Municipalities and District Social Services Administration Boards to which the Province of Ontario has devolved responsibility for the management and delivery of Ontario Works, child care and social housing. Some CMSMs are also responsible for land ambulance and public health.

Continuum of Services – An unbroken, seamless provision of services.

Coordination – The adjustment of relations between organizations or parts of organizations to harmonize goals and plans.

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Day Nurseries Act – Legislation enacted by the Province of Ontario that governs the funding and licensing of nursery schools, child care centres and private home child care agencies.

Early Identification and Intervention – A range of programs and services designed to enhance the development of young children with special needs or who are at risk of developmental delay. Such programs and services can improve outcomes and reduce the need for future services.

Early Learning and Care – A range of programs and services for children and their parents and caregivers that foster healthy child development. Examples of such programs include parenting support, parent education, and preschool speech and language.

Fee Subsidy – Financial assistance that is provided towards the cost of licensed child care. Parents who are “persons in need” (as defined by the Day Nurseries Act) and parents of children with special needs may be eligible to receive a fee subsidy.

Inclusion – The practice of supporting the participation of children with disabilities or with special needs to assist them in reaching their full potential.

Income Test – Effective January 1, 2007 eligibility for a child care fee subsidy is determined through an income test which is based on a family’s net income. Prior to this date, eligibility was determined using a needs test which took into account income, assets and allowable expenditures.

Informal Care – The provision of child care through an unlicensed or unregulated private arrangement between a family and the caregiver. Informal care may be provided in the parent’s home or in the caregiver’s home. These arrangements are not licensed and are not regulated by the Day Nurseries Act. The only requirement is that the caregiver may not care for more than five children, plus their own, at a time.

Licensed Care – Also referred to as formal or regulated care, this care may be provided in child care centres or in supervised private homes in accordance with the licensing standards of the Day Nurseries Act.

Nursery School – Group programs, licensed by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, designed for children aged three to five. Normally they operate for three to four hours per day and from two to five days per week.

Parental Involvement – Building strong effective relationships and partnerships with parents to help solicit advice and ideas on the planning and delivery of children’s services.

Parents and Caregivers – Birth, adoptive, foster, associate family parents, legal guardians or extended family members who provide care for a child.

Private Home Child Care – Licensed care typically provided in the home of a provider. Individual caregivers, operating as independent contractor, provide child care for up to five children under 12 years of age in addition to their own children. Providers are supervised by a licensed home child care agency. The agency is responsible for placing children, monitoring the caregiver, providing resources and support, and ensuring that the caregiver and setting meet the regulations outlined in the Day Nurseries Act.

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Quality Child Care – The provision of a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that provides opportunities for growth, interaction and development. It is responsive to the needs and uniqueness of each child and to the values and needs of parents.

Respite Care – Trained parents or professionals who take care of a child for a brief period of time to give families of children with special needs some relief. This type of care can be provided in the child's home or in another location.

Schools First Policy – A Government of Ontario policy that states that schools will be the first choice for the expansion of child care spaces and the development of hubs.

Service Provider – An individual or agency providing direct service to children and/or their parents or caregivers. The term should be viewed as all encompassing and taking into account a variety of disciplines, educational backgrounds and approaches to service.

Service System – A group of service providers so combined as to form a whole and to operate in unison to meet the needs of children and their parents and caregivers. It offers a comprehensive range of services and supports which ideally are organized in a coordinated, integrated and interactive network to meet the multiple and changing needs of those it serves.

Special Needs – A child or family who faces barriers to normal development and functioning in one or more functional areas – physical, social, emotional, intellectual, behavioural or in terms of communicating – or who is 'at risk' or likely to be 'at risk' without some form of intervention.

Special Needs Resourcing – Services and supports provided by Resource Teachers and Resource Teacher Assistants to encourage the integration and inclusion of children with special needs.

Stakeholder – A person who is affected by an issue or problem or who stands to either gain or lose through the resolution of the issue. Stakeholders therefore include children and their families, service providers, caregivers, educators and the community at large.

System Integration – An ongoing process whereby local service providers and relevant stakeholders engage in progressively greater degrees of joint service activity along an integrated continuum to provide families with better access to services. An integrated system also builds on existing community capacity and makes efficient use of public resources.

Wage Subsidy – Enhances the salaries and benefits of staff who are employed in regulated child care centres, private home child care agencies, resource centres, and agencies that provide supports to children with special needs. They also increase payments made to home child care providers.

APPENDIX B

Description and Current Status of Service Gaps, Needs and Priorities

Outreach to At-Risk Families

Gap/Need/Priority	Description	Current Status
Teen mothers (over 16 years of age and under 16 years of age)	- often difficult to engage in programs and services - may be transient - may not be eligible for OW or child care subsidy given their age and living arrangements	- programs for teen moms offered by OEYC, HBHC, Merrymount, Elgin Respite Clinic (program funding ceases in June 2007)
Low socio-economic	- often not aware of available programs and services - may not be able to afford the costs of participation - may be uncomfortable interacting with families from other socio-economic levels - loss of pride in asking for subsidies	- move to income testing from needs testing will increase access to the licensed child care system
Urban and rural isolation	- often lack the support of extended family - with only one vehicle in the family, mothers and children are isolated and have no way to access programs and services - limited awareness of programs and services	- Let's Grow newsletter serves as an effective tool to increase public awareness of healthy growth and development - Preschool Speech and Language Program and Infant Hearing Program operate from several sites throughout Elgin County
Transportation	- some parents are not enrolling their children in JK because of the scheduling difficulties that result (a variety of schedules exist in urban and rural schools and across the School Boards)	- NCBS (reinvestment) funds used to fund transportation for OW recipients accessing licensed child care (the availability of this funding will be gradually reduced over the years and will not be available at all past 2011) - transportation provided to Healthy Babies Healthy Children parenting programs - transportation provided by CAS on occasion - transportation provided by volunteers in West Elgin (primarily for seniors and the disabled but may be used by others on occasion) - volunteer drivers provide transportation to medical and Ontario Works appointments for those women and children participating in the FESPA program - Four Counties Transportation

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Gap/Need/Priority	Description	Current Status/Progress
Mental health	- families often experience stress in not knowing how or if their 'basic needs' will be met - Isolation may lead to depression and depression may lead to isolation - when parents are unable to parent, children often assume the role of parent which may lead to truancy, etc. - parents may not understand or be aware of what they are feeling, or may not acknowledge their symptoms - a negative stigma is often associated with mental health problems - parents are often concerned about 'losing' their children - parents may not have the ability to work and as a result get caught in the OW cycle (in and out of work)	Network provides transportation for a small fee - Mernymount staff have been trained in Kids Have Stress Too - Telehealth has improved access to services - more respite care available through Child and Family Counselling Centre and Mernymount - increase in staff complement at West Elgin Community Health Centre - discussions underway with Christian Horizons to establish housing in Alymer - Elgin Mental Health Network has assumed a service coordination role - enhanced funding provided to Child and Family Counselling Centre - increase in staff complement at Mernymount and at Canadian Mental Health Association in Alymer - some professional development being offered to service providers
Cultural groups	- low-German speaking residents are the largest cultural group although it must be recognized that they too come from diverse cultures (e.g. Central and South America, Amish) - other languages spoken by residents include Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese and Punjabi - lack of awareness of programs	- Increase in the number of low-German speaking families accessing OETC programs - connections made with families through various school readiness programs - Family and Children's Services has a dedicated staff member working with low-German families - Elgin-St. Thomas Health Unit has a Parent Resource Worker and a Public Health Nurse who speak low-German
Low literacy	- print material must use simple language - children impacted when parents have low literacy levels - negative impact on self-esteem - economic impacts include challenges in securing and maintaining employment leading to limited finances	- school readiness program devotes a full day to literacy - Healthy Babies Healthy Children and the Ontario Early Years Centre have collaborated in offering the Lullabies to Literacy Program - Early Literacy Specialist has established connections with the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program and with

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Gap/Need/Priority	Description	Current Status
	- and poor nutrition - often are least aware of available programs and services - difficult to access services given the reliance on written applications and forms	- various parenting programs - Early Literacy Specialist provides professional development to early childhood educators - Increased collaboration between TykeTALK and Early Literacy Specialist - Community Relations segments on local television network - alternative schools and high school equivalency program available in West Elgin and St. Thomas
English as a Second Language	- often not literate in their first language - print material not useful - children impacted when parents have low literacy levels - negative impact on self-esteem - economic impacts include challenges in securing and maintaining employment leading to limited finances and poor nutrition - often are least aware of available programs and services - difficult to access services given the reliance on written applications and forms	- programs currently offered by FESPA, Boards of Education, YWCA - some programs offered during the day time for mothers - child care available on-site at programs offered by FESPA and YWCA
Family breakdown	- socio-economic impacts - family violence may be involved - custody and access issues	- programs currently being offered by Marymount, FCS, West Elgin Community Health Centre, Child and Family Counselling Centre, OEYC and Early Learning Centre - some programs offered by the OEYC occur during the evening and on weekends - supervised access program available in St. Thomas

Promote the Importance of Early Child Development

Gap/Need/Priority	Description	Current Status
Increase community awareness of the importance of early child development	not all community residents are aware of the importance of early child development	allied health care professionals are very engaged

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Planning and Integration of Services

Gap/Need/Priority	Description	Current Status
System integration is a Best Start priority	- need to coordinate the planning and delivery of services required for all children	- hubs in existence at the West Elgin Parent Child Resource Centre, the MCC East Elgin, OEYC and outreach sites, and at Merriymount – All Kids Belong Thames Valley Neighbourhood Early Learning Program operates in ten schools in St. Thomas-Elgin providing sessions on healthy living, literacy, numeracy and visits to local schools (collaboration between OEYC, both school boards and other service providers) - Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Families has agreed to take on a planning role and to serve as the Best Start Network

Availability, Affordability and Accessibility of Licensed Child Care

Gap/Need/Priority	Description	Current Status
Children experiencing delays in accessing licensed child care	- children of all abilities must be able to access licensed child care in a timely fashion	- new provider of special needs resourcing in spring 2006 (All Kids Belong) - the availability of special needs resourcing services continues to contribute to the ability of licensed child care programs to be inclusive of all children
Fee subsidy program too restrictive	- needs testing approach to fee subsidy often excluded families who would prefer licensed child care	- January 2007 introduction of income testing to assess eligibility for fee subsidies
Availability and accessibility of licensed child care	- licensed child care options must be available throughout Elgin County and must be financially accessible (affordable) to families	- fee subsidy agreements in place with two recreation providers - fee subsidy agreements in place with all licensed child care programs - fee subsidy agreements considered on a case-by-case basis with neighbouring CMSMs in response to parent need and individual circumstances - development and distribution of home child care brochures and flyers

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Quality of the Early Learning and Care Programs

Gap/Need/Priority	Description	Current Status
Recruitment, retention and recognition of ECE professionals	- staff turnover negatively impacts upon the quality of care	- wage improvement funding of \$60,284 provided to 99 FTE staff (average of \$608 per FTE) and one Home Visitor
Professional development	- research has shown that skilled, trained professionals contribute to the quality of services	- licensed child care programs surveyed of their training needs - four licensed child care programs have participated in the Raising the Bar on Quality Initiative - several licensed child care centres and community agencies have been trained in and initiated the Triple P parenting model - child care centres and licensed private home child care providers able to access resources through the OEYC lending library

Sustain and Enhance the Early Learning and Care System

Gap/Need/Priority	Description	Current Status
Sustain the existing licensed child care system	- those licensed child care programs that currently exist must be adequately supported to ensure that licensed spaces are not lost as a result of operating deficits	- \$123,154 provided in 2006 to address health and safety concerns in all licensed child care programs - technology and training provided to all licensed child care programs to simplify and streamline OCCMS reporting requirements
Enhance the existing early learning and care system	- parents and caregivers must be supported in their roles and children must be provided with opportunities to ensure that they are ready to learn and achieve success regardless of their background, culture, place of residence or ability	- six infant spaces created in Dutton and ten before/after school spaces in Belmont - expansion of the home child care program into West Elgin - viability grant and capital funding provided to Early Learning Centre - viability grant provided to Dutton
Sustain and enhance early identification and intervention programs	- early identification and intervention is essential if children are to reach their full potential	- \$18,000 in restoration funding provided in 2006 to HBHC program (used primarily to prevent staff lay-offs) that will now form part of the base budget - PSL services experienced an increase of 0.4 FTE speech and language pathologists in 2006 as a result of restoration funding

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APPENDIX C Primary Licensed Capacity of Centre-Based Child Care Programs

Program	Infant Spaces	Toddler Spaces	Preschool Spaces	JK/SK Spaces	School Aged Spaces	Total Spaces
St. Thomas						
Cornetwew YMCA Childcare	10	20	80			110
Early Learning Centre	10	10	58			78
Forest Ave. Child Care Centre		10	64			74
Forest Park School Age Program					30*	30
Monsignor Morrison School Age Program					15*	15
Robin's Nest Early Childhood Education Centre		15	56			71
St. Gabriel's Separate School Age Program					30*	30
St. Raphael's Before and After School Age Program					15*	15
St. Thomas Co-operative Nursery School			14			14
Wellington Street School Age Program					45*	45
YWCA - St. Mark's Discovery Program					30	30
Central Elgin						
Discovery Club - New Sarum Public School					15*	15
Next to Mom					30	30
Southwold YWCA Discovery Club					30*	30
Subtotal	20	55	274	0	165	514
East Elgin						
Discovery Club - Stratfordville					24*	24
Port Burwell Community Child Care Centre		10	14			26
YWCA Discovery Club - McGregor Public School					20*	20
Subtotal	0	10	14	0	44	70
West Elgin						
Dutton Co-operative Child Care Centre	12	10	32			54
Dutton Co-operative Child Care - School Age Program					21	21
Dutton Co-operative Child Care Summer Day Camp					45	45
Tiny Tots Co-operative Nursery School of Aldborough		15			30	45
Subtotal	12	25	32	0	96	165
TOTAL	32	90	322	0	380	824

Source: Licensing information provided by St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works, May 2007

* denotes a program based in an elementary school

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APPENDIX D Organizations, Agencies, Programs and Entities Attending the Best Start Working Group

Child and Family Counselling Centre
 Community Services Coordination Network
 Dutton Co-operative Child Care Centre Inc.
 Early Learning Centre / Elgin Home Child Care
 Early Literacy Committee
 Elgin Child Care Advisory Committee
 Elgin-St. Thomas Health Unit
 Family and Children's Services
 Family Education and Support Program
 Forest Ave. Child Care Centre
 Mennonite Central Committee
 Merymount Children's Centre / All Kids Belong
 Ministry of Children and Youth Services
 Ontario Early Years Centre Elgin-Middlesex-London
 St. Thomas-Elgin Ontario Works
 Thames Valley Children's Centre
 tykeTALK Preschool Speech and Language Program / Infant Hearing Program
 West Elgin Community Health Centre
 West Elgin Community Parent Child Resource Centre
 West Elgin Early Years Advisory Committee
 YWCA of St. Thomas Elgin

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APPENDIX F Strategies to Respond to Service Gaps, Needs and Priorities

Outreach to At-Risk Families

Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
Teen mothers (over 16 years of age and under 16 years of age)	- holistic approach required - begin engagement at the pre-natal stage	- Takes time to build a trusting relationship
Low socio-economic	- Increase access to programs and services for the working poor	- programs must be available to address 'basic needs' before other needs can be addressed
Urban and rural isolation	- explore the feasibility of 'mobile' programs and services (similar to T.H.E. Bus operating in Huron County) - provide opportunities for social interaction (e.g. shopping, visits, phone calls) - use physicians and health care providers to disseminate information	
Transportation	- negotiate costs with transportation service providers (e.g. taxi companies) - encourage child care programs to be located in schools (Schools First policy)	- the scheduling of JK/SK children and of the staff required to address enrollment is challenging for child care centres
Mental health	- offer professional development opportunities to service providers to assist them in knowing how to support families with mental health challenges - offer professional development opportunities for front-line staff to gain an understanding of mental health issues and of the strategies to address the issues - develop a support group for children whose parents have mental health issues - collaborate with others to design and implement a public awareness campaign focusing on mental health	- access to mental health programs is often confusing for service providers and the general public given differing program mandates and funding sources
Cultural groups	- utilize the expertise of other stakeholders including members of cultural groups - make information available in multiple languages - hire staff who speak a second language - include dollars for translators	- cost and availability of translators

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Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
	- In operating budgets - utilize low-German radio station in Aymer - place public service announcements on TV in a variety of languages - work with private sector sponsors - educate youth on cultural diversity (be proactive) - provide professional development opportunities for front-line staff on cultural diversity - explore Aboriginal issues and strategies (experts indicate that similar approaches to service delivery are effective for both Aboriginal and low-German speaking families) - explore French-language issues	
Low literacy	- use a variety of vehicles to get the message out - explore the feasibility of some degree of common forms amongst service providers	
English as a Second Language		- lack of space to expand programs - different funding sources limits the ability of service providers to be flexible in their approach
Family breakdown	- increase access to special needs resourcing - increase the availability of targeted programs for children - provide professional development for front-line staff on the issues arising from family breakdown	- limited availability of licensed child care options for children experiencing family breakdown - changing role of child care centres (e.g. scheduling challenges associated with joint custody, vacation policies)

Planning and Integration of Services

Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
To identify the location of future early learning and care hubs	- selection of future hub sites - establish better linkages between existing planning, advisory and information sharing bodies - explore the options available to have a formal reporting relationship to City Council - funding required to support integrated planning (e.g.	

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Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
	dedicated staff resources to provide leadership and coordination) - update Terms of Reference for the Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Families to reflect broadened mandate - expand the membership of the Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Families to include FCS, School Boards and parents - continue to enhance the capacity of the CMSSM in its role as the child care service system manager	

Availability, Affordability and Accessibility of Licensed Child Care

Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
Children experiencing delays in accessing licensed child care	- expand the availability of licensed child care options	- majority of licensed child care providers are operating at capacity
Fee subsidy program too restrictive		- increased demand for service may result in waiting lists
Availability and accessibility of licensed child care	- continue to recruit home child care providers particularly in Elgin County	

Quality of the Early Learning and Care Programs

Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
Recruitment, retention and recognition of ECE professionals	- continue to advocate for increased wage subsidy dollars (current pressure of \$83,000) - create agreements for all programs eligible for wage subsidies - adopt a team approach to service delivery within and between agencies	- competing funding pressures
Professional development	- continue to make available professional development and training opportunities - expand participation in the Raising the Bar on Quality Initiative - share with the community those who have completed the Triple P training program as a means of making effective use of community knowledge	- costs associated with professional development (e.g. fees, supply staff)

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Sustain and Enhance the Early Learning and Care System

Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
Sustain the existing licensed child care system	- continue to provide health and safety funding	- the demand for fee subsidy may not result in surplus funds being available for health and safety
Enhance the existing early learning and care system	- expansion of Thames Valley Neighbourhood Early Learning Program - opening of the new Early Learning Centre in September 2007 (20 Infants, 20 toddlers and 56 preschool) - support the YWCA in its desire to expand the school-age program in New Sarum and Stratfordville	- Insufficient program and office space to accommodate expansion
Sustain and enhance early identification and intervention programs	- provide professional development opportunities for caregivers and service providers - Increase the availability of Resource Consultants and Program Assistants - create an inventory of services for children with special needs to determine whether the supply meets the demand - integrate the new Blind-Low Vision program in the community - continued collaboration amongst 'special needs' service providers	- waiting lists for specialized services - early identification has resulted in increased demand for services

Promote the Importance of Early Child Development

Gap/Need/Priority	Future Strategies	Challenges
	- embark on a public awareness and education campaign - recruit a physician champion - engage parents through participation on the Network and through surveys - promote the 18 month well-baby screen	

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APPENDIX H

Existing St. Thomas-Elgin Early Learning and Care Hub

Operator/Lead Agency: **West Elgin Community Parent Child Resource Centre**
 Name & Address: 217 Funnival Road, Rodney
 Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday 6:00-6:30, Wednesday until 8:00, Saturday 9:00-noon
 Opening Date: 2002

Location of Hub		Type of Hub	
Non-school (y/n)	School (y/n)	Francophone Specific (y/n)	Aboriginal Specific (y/n)
Yes	No	No	No

Programmatic linkages have been developed and maintained with the neighbouring family of schools through the following actions:

- JK Readiness Program is offered annually (three mornings) at St. Mary Catholic School, Dunwich-Dutton Public School and Aldborough Public School
- Representatives from the London District Catholic School Board and the Thames Valley District School Board sit on the West Elgin Early Years Advisory Committee
- A resource lending library (for teachers) is provided at each local school
- Daily communication occurs with each school
- The school bus picks up and drops children off at the before and after school program
- Case conferencing with respect to the transition to school

Hub Services

Services provided in the Hub
Tiny Tots Co-operative Nursery School (30 school-aged spaces)
Tiny Tots Co-Operative Nursery School (10 toddler and 16 preschool spaces)
Ontario Early Years Centre – West Elgin Satellite
Toy and resource lending library
Mobile toy and resource lending library
tykeTALK preschool speech and language program
Merrymount – All Kids Belong (special needs resourcing program)
Parent relief program
Growing with Baby (West Elgin Community Health Centre well-baby clinic)
Early literacy programs
Special needs parent support group
Car seat clinics and child safety programs
Thames Valley Children's Centre (physiotherapy and occupational therapy)
West Elgin Community Health Centre services
Parent education workshops

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Services linked with the Hub
JK school readiness program
Municipality of West Elgin summer day camp programs
Elgin Home Child Care
Family and Children's Services of St. Thomas and Elgin
Parents and Tots Matler (hosted by West Elgin Community Health Centre)
Elgin Association for Community Living
Child and Parent Research Institute (CPRI)
Elgin-St. Thomas Health Unit
Violence Against Women Services Elgin County
Child and Family Counselling Centre
Elgin County Library
Wrap Around Elgin
Infant Hearing Program
Community Services Coordination Network
Blind-Low Vision Early Intervention Program

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APPENDIX H
Possible Future Early Learning and Care Hubs

Year	Hub Operator	Address	School y/n	Francophone- specific	Aboriginal- specific
2007/08	YWCA St. Thomas Elgin	16 Mary Street West St. Thomas	No	No	No
2007/08	Ontario Early Years Centre Elgin-Middlesex- London	7 Morrison Drive St. Thomas	No	No	No
2007/08	Ontario Early Years Centre Elgin-Middlesex- London	424 Talbot Street West Aylmer	No	No	No

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APPENDIX I Draft 2007-08 tykeTALK Service Plan



In 2007/2008, PSL received enhanced funding in order to reduce waitlists, improve training in the areas of language and literacy through integrated planning with other program areas, and expand service to children with complex needs who do not attend senior kindergarten. Please describe how the strategies and services PSL will put in to place to achieve this objective will support the Best Start network's vision and overall plan.

tykeTALK is committed to working with our community partners towards the Best Start vision of moving forward along the continuum of integration. Below are examples of some key strategies we are employing to support integration of services.

In 2007/2008 we added 1.9 FTE SLPs (Middlesex-London: 1.0; Elgin: .4; Oxford: .5) to the region. This increase in FTEs will assist us in being able to continue to provide services in childcare centres and OEYC's/hubs. Presently in Middlesex-London we provide intervention at approximately 70 childcare centres and all of the OEYC main sites. In Elgin, intervention is provided at 6 childcare centres in St. Thomas and at the OEYC sites in St. Thomas, Alymer and Rodney. In Oxford, intervention is provided at 3 community sites which are either co-located or close to OEYC's. Drop-in at OEYC sites occur several times per year. This year we are funding a pilot project with the Thames Valley District School Board in 3 schools (1 in each region) that have childcare centres located in the schools. As part of this project the school board SLPs who are already in these schools are providing the services to childcare centres.

We remain committed to striving towards keeping our waitlist for assessment at an average of 4 weeks from date of referral and our waitlist to access first intervention at an average of 4 months from date of referral. We participate in family service planning for children with complex needs and work together with our school boards, resource consultants and CTCs to ensure that these children can continue to receive appropriate speech and language intervention if they are not attending senior kindergarten.

This year we are funding a conference on Language and Literacy for the PSL SLPs and support staff and we are co-sponsoring a 1/2 day workshop with the Association for Early Childhood Educators of Ontario (AECEO). In addition we are working with municipalities and Fanshawe College to secure funding for Learning Language and Learning It training for childcare providers.

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What opportunities exist to integrate or further integrate the tykeTALK planning process with the community planning occurring at the Best Start network table in order to move forward with the development of a locally integrated system of services.

The tykeTALK Steering Committee is committed to working together with the Best Start Networks and to align our strategic objectives with those developed by the networks to the greatest extent possible. The tykeTALK program manager and a director/or manager from each of the service provider agencies currently sits at each Network table. In addition the tykeTALK manager sits on other key community communities for children services from birth to 6 years.

Are there opportunities for tykeTALK to engage in collaborative service delivery within community hubs that are currently operational, or which may be operational? How are or will linkages to the hubs be developed or sustained?

As hubs in each region are identified, tykeTALK is committed to pursuing opportunities for services that could be delivered there that are related to the needs of the child, the family and the community. For example, offering programs at these sites including parent and caregiver support and education as well as more direct intervention can be considered. The types of services offered at each hub will depend on the needs identified by that hub and the physical environment

Presently tykeTALK maintains excellent linkages with the OEYCs. All of our print resources are available there. Our Health Promoter offers sessions for parents or participates in sessions that are already in place in order to demonstrate facilitation of speech, language and literacy skills in everyday activities. Our SLPs and support personnel currently provide either direct intervention or drop ins at each of the OEYCs.

Are there opportunities to develop mechanisms that will facilitate collaborative service delivery between tykeTALK and other Best Start partners?

Our continued participation on Best Start networks combined with our regular system meetings and annual strategic planning process will facilitate identifying opportunities for collaborative service delivery. Community partners will continue to be part of our Steering Committee and Services and Liaison meetings. Collaboration is most likely to happen when relationships are built and nurtured. We will continue to support our SLPs to deliver services at community sites and within childcare classrooms and community programs when appropriate and to attend team/family service plan meetings. There are opportunities to formalize processes for children with complex needs so that the SLPs are planning more collaboratively with OT and PT. We are in the process of instituting the use of Childcare Service Plans for children who receive services in childcare centres that outline the roles and responsibilities of all team members including the family. Considering more formalized agreements with childcare

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centres where some programs can be delivered jointly with childcare staff will be considered as well. When needed, we are open to using memorandums of understanding and more formalized written agreements.

Are there implementation challenges and/or barriers faced by tykeTALK in moving forward with the community's vision for an integrated system of services? Describe these challenges and a description of strategies to overcome these obstacles.

The following barriers/challenges and suggested solutions were identified:

- 1) The need to sit at 3 different network planning tables
In order for the tykeTALK Manager to maintain a systems perspective it is important that she be involved at all the planning tables. However also having a director/manager from the local agency attend will help support his work. There have already been talks in all 3 regions re consolidating several existing groups into Best Start tables and this will reduce the number of local community meetings that are required.
- 2) Balancing the time required to integrate service with the need for direct service delivery
While tykeTALK is committed to re-aligning resources to the greatest extent possible, this remains a challenge. Guidelines need to be set for front line SLPs to balance client related activities with more administrative and planning activities. We continue to promote community based service delivery but that has to be balanced with ensuring that we are using our limited resources in the most efficient, effective and equitable way.
- 3) Accessibility
This is a particular challenge for vulnerable families who still are not consistently accessing OEYC programs. The problem is not unique to tykeTALK and we will work with each region to be part of whatever solutions are developed.
- 4) Appropriate Space to Deliver Services
Not all of the existing OEYCs or childcare centres have appropriate space for programming. While some of the work can and should be done in the classroom setting, there remains a need for a quiet, private room where one on one instruction can happen. When new centres are being built, the need for this type of space is being considered. For existing sites without appropriate space, we have attempted to locate a community based site nearby.
- 5) Need for Continuing Education
We continue to provide professional development activities and mentoring for front line staff to assist them on moving towards more collaborative models.

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APPENDIX J Draft 2007-08 Infant Hearing Program Service Plan



In 2007/2008, the Infant hearing Program received enhanced funding to extend all services to children with identified permanent hearing impairment to grade 1 entry. Please describe how the services IHP will put in to place to achieve this objective will support the Best Start network's vision and overall plan.

The IHP is committed to working with our community partners towards the Best Start vision of moving forward along the continuum of integration.

Currently we partner with public health units to ensure that families are aware of the IHP. We have displays at prenatal health fairs and give out literature at prenatal classes and in the Lets Grow newsletter. Public Health Nurses, as part of HBHC ask follow up questions about the hearing screening at the 48 hour phone call and follow up visit. Major birthing hospitals in London have a video running in the hospital on the hearing screening.

Follow up hearing screenings in the community are currently provided at approximately 45 sites throughout the regions; several in OEYC's in Middlesex-London and Lambton that have appropriate space.

In 2007/2008 we added funding for an additional .6 of audiology time for high risk follow up and audiology services for identified children until they are eligible to attend Grade 1. We added another site for high risk follow up VRA testing in the southern part of our region (Elgin County) in addition to the site already established in the north London. Once identified children reach 2 years of age, we will be contracting with local community audiologists throughout the region to provide follow-up services. We are training 2 additional SLPs to provide auditory verbal therapy - one in London and one in Owen Sound. Communication development services are offered throughout the region at family's homes. PSL community sites and in at least 2 OEYC's (Sarnia, Aylmer).

What opportunities exist to integrate or further integrate the IHP planning process with the community planning occurring at the Best Start network table in order to move forward with the development of a locally integrated system of services.

The IHP is committed to working together with the Best Start Networks and to align our strategic objectives with those developed by the networks to the

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greatest extent possible. The IHP manager currently sits at each Network table in addition to participating on other key community communities for children services from birth to 6 years.

Are there opportunities for fykeTALK to engage in collaborative service delivery within community hubs that are currently operational, or which may be operational? How are or will linkages to the hubs be developed or sustained?

As hubs in each region are identified, the IHP is committed to pursuing opportunities for services that could be delivered there that are related to the needs of the child, the family and the community. We already hold some follow up community hearing screenings and communication development at OEYC's that have appropriate space. We will look at relocating screening clinics as new hubs are created.

Opportunities exist to support identified children who attend OEYC programs and childcare centres. We will work with our partners to identify training needs to support integration and the development of language and literacy.

Are there opportunities to develop mechanisms that will facilitate collaborative service delivery between the IHP and other Best Start partners?

Our continued participation on Best Start networks combined with our regular system meetings will facilitate identifying opportunities for collaborative service delivery. Community partners will continue to be part of our system meetings.

We recently have expanded the role of our Family Support Worker. She will initiate family/team meetings when multiple service providers are involved with a child. A service coordinator will be chosen and a method for ongoing communication and identifying opportunities for collaboration when working with a child will be identified.

Are there implementation challenges and/or barriers faced by the IHP in moving forward with the community's vision for an integrated system of services? Describe these challenges and a description of strategies to overcome these obstacles.

The following barriers/challenges and suggested solutions were identified:

1) The need to sit at or provide input to multiple network planning tables in order for the IHP Manager to maintain a systems perspective it is important that she be involved at some level at all the planning tables. Local PSL managers can assist in sharing information and representing the IHP.

2) Accessibility

This is a particular challenge for vulnerable families that is not unique to the IHP and we will work with each region to be part of whatever solutions are developed.

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3) Appropriate Space to Deliver Services
Not all of the existing OEYC's or childcare centres have appropriate space for testing and intervention. While some of the work can and should be done in the classroom setting, there remains a need for a quiet, private room where one on one instruction can happen. When new centres are being built, the need for this type of space is being considered.

4) Resources
Except for the Best Start demonstration communities the availability of fiscal funds will limit our ability to integrate programs. We continue to work closely with the provincial school for the deaf's home visiting program who can provide support to childcare settings.

APPENDIX E **Overview of St. Thomas-Elgin Planning, Advisory and Information Sharing Bodies**

Terms of Reference Component	Community Council for Children and Youth Elgin (Community Council)	Best Start Implementation Committee	Early Literacy Committee	Wrap Around Elgin	West Elgin Early Years Advisory Committee (WEEYAC)	Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Families (0-6)	Elgin Child Care Advisory Committee (ECCAC)	Preschool Speech and Language Steering Committee	Infant Hearing Program Steering Committee	Elgin Supervised Access Advisory Committee
Target Group	- children and youth in St. Thomas - Elgin	- children 0-6 and their families	- children 0-6 and their families		- children 0-6 and their families	- children 0-6 and their families	- licensed child care operators	- children 0-6 and their families in Elgin, London, Middlesex and Oxford	- children 0-6 and their families in South Western Ontario (excluding Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent)	- children and their families
Purpose	- to coordinate services for children and youth in Elgin County - to establish positive understanding and relationship between service providers		- to plan early literacy activities	- to plan and coordinate service delivery for selected children - to provide advice to CSCN - to identify needed services for their clients - to promote their services - fundraising	- to plan and coordinate services for children 0-6 in West Elgin - sponsor community events - fundraising - production of a Newsletter	- serves as the mandated HBHC Advisory Committee, OEYC Advisory Committee and the FESPA Advisory Committee - information sharing - possible future planning role	- information sharing - problem solving - professional development	- to oversee the program - to provide advice to the lead agency (Middlesex-London Health Unit)	- to oversee the program - to provide advice to the lead agency (Middlesex-London Health Unit)	- to provide advice to Merrymount as the program coordinator
Linkages	- membership linkages to WEEYAC and 0-6			- information sharing and formal presentations to the Community Council	- one or two members sit on 0-6 Committee - two members sit on ECCAC	- two members sit on the Community Council - information sharing between 0-6 and the Community	- one member sits on 0-6 Committee	- lead agency sits on 0-6 Committee, the Community Council and Best Start Implementation	- lead agency sits on 0-6 Committee, the Community Council and Best Start Implementation	- lead agency sits on 0-6 Committee, the Community Council and Best Start Implementation

Terms of Reference Component	Community Council for Children and Youth Elgin (Community Council)	Best Start Implementation Committee	Early Literacy Committee	Wrap Around Elgin	West Elgin Early Years Advisory Committee (WEYAC)	Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Families (0-6)	Elgin Child Care Advisory Committee (ECCAC)	Preschool Speech and Language Steering Committee	Infant Hearing Program Steering Committee	Elgin Supervised Access Advisory Committee
Accountability		- accountable to Ministry of Children and Youth Services - actions guided by EMO Best Start Steering Committee		- mandated and funded by CSCN		Council		Committee		
Meeting Frequency	- monthly between September and June	- regularly				- four times a year	- every other month	Five times per year	- twice a year	- two or three times a year

Sources:

Draft Terms of Reference for the Community Council for Children and Youth Elgin (November 2006)

Terms of Reference for the St. Thomas-Elgin Best Start Implementation Committee (August 2005 Best Start Steering Committee)

Terms of Reference for the Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Families (November 2005)

Membership

Agency	Community Council for Children and Youth Elgin (CCCYE)	Best Start Implementation Committee	Early Literacy Committee	Wrap Around Elgin	West Elgin Early Years Advisory Committee (WEEYAC)	Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Families (0-6)	Elgin Child Care Advisory Committee (ECCAC)	Preschool Speech and Language Steering Committee (see note 1)	Infant Hearing Program Steering Committee (see note 2)	Elgin Supervised Access Committee
Elgin St. Thomas Health Unit	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes
Child & Family Counselling Centre	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes				Yes
St. Thomas Public Library		Yes	Yes							
Elgin County Library		Yes	Yes		Yes					
West Elgin Community Health Centre	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes				
Ontario Early Years Centre (Central)	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes			
Ontario Early Years Centre (West Elgin)					Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Family & Children's Services	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes				
Community Care Access Centre	Yes	Yes		Yes						
MCC Aylmer Resource Centre/FESPA	Yes	Yes				Yes				
YMCA of St. Thomas-Elgin	Yes									
Tyke Talk/Infant Hearing Program	Yes	Yes				Yes		Yes	Yes	
Elgin Association for Community Living	Yes	Yes		Yes						
Child Care Provider(s)		Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes			
Wrap Around Elgin		Yes								
Paediatrician		Yes				Yes				
Ministry of Children and Youth Services		Yes								
Thames Valley District School Board	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes	
London District Catholic School Board		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes		
Ontario Works	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes			

Agency	Community Council for Children and Youth Elgin (CCCYE)	Best Start Implementation Committee	Early Literacy Committee	Wrap Around Elgin	West Elgin Early Years Advisory Committee (WEEYAC)	Elgin Advisory Committee for Young Families (0-4)	Elgin Child Care Advisory Committee (ECCAC)	Preschool Speech and Language Steering Committee (see note 1)	Infant Hearing Program Steering Committee (see note 2)	Elgin Supervised Access Committee
St. Thomas United Way	Yes									
Community Services Coordination Network	Yes			Yes		Yes				
Violence Against Women Services of Elgin County	Yes					Yes				Yes
Learning Disabilities Association	Yes									
YWCA	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes			Yes
Merrymount / All Kids Belong	Yes			Yes		Yes	Yes			Yes
Parent				Yes	Yes					
Community Representative	Yes			Yes				Yes	Yes	
Home Visiting Program for Infants (CPRI)		Yes				Yes		Yes		
Probation	Yes									
Second Stage Housing	Yes					Yes				Yes
Salvation Army	Yes									
Big Brothers Big Sisters	Yes									
Elgin Employment Services	Yes									
Rehaboth	Yes					Yes				
Ministry of Education		Yes								
St. Thomas City Police										Yes
Lawyer										Yes
Thames Valley Children's Centre								Yes		
Elgin Audiology Consultants									Yes	

Note 1: As the Preschool Speech and Language Program and thus its Advisory Committee serves St. Thomas-Elgin, London-Middlesex and Oxford, numerous agencies outside of St. Thomas-Elgin are also represented on the Advisory Committee.

Note 2: As the Infant Hearing Program and thus its Advisory Committee serves south western Ontario (excluding Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent), numerous agencies outside of St. Thomas-Elgin are also represented on the Advisory Committee.

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Housing Finance Branch
777 Bay Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5
Tel: 416 595-9437
Fax: 416 595-6588

**Ministère des
Affaires municipales
et du Logement**

Direction du financement du logement
777, rue Bay, 2^e étage
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5
Tél. : 416 595-9437
Téléfax : 416 595-6588



June 22, 2007

Ms. Elizabeth Sebestyen
Housing Administrator
City of St. Thomas
423 Talbot Street
St. Thomas, ON N5P 1C1

City of St. Thomas
Receiving

JUN 28 2007

City Clerk's Dept.

Re: Social Housing July 1, 2007 Quarterly Payment

The Province processes quarterly payments for social housing at the beginning of January, April, July and October, and deposits these payments directly into Service Manager's bank accounts.

Where applicable, payments are processed for: "Federal Funding" as required under Section 134 of the *Social Housing Reform Act* (SHRA); "Strong Community Rent Supplement" program funding; and, or, "Apportioned Share of Social Housing Costs in Territories or Deemed to be Territories without Municipal Organization" as required under Section 130 (4) of the SHRA.

Our financial processing system will consolidate the separate payments into one Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) deposit in your Service Manager bank account on the first business day of the month.

The breakdown of the EFT deposit, by initiative, is as follows:

Program Title	Payment this Quarter	Calendar Year to Date (including this Quarter's payment)
Federal Funding	\$253,943.00	\$761,829.00
Strong Community Rent Supplement	\$50,933.59	\$152,800.77
Apportioned Share of Social Housing Costs	n/a	n/a
Total	\$304,876.59	\$914,629.77

Funding is to be used by the Service Manager as per applicable legislation or agreement.

In the event an adjustment to your payment is required, you will receive a letter of explanation under separate cover.

Page 2
 Ms. Elizabeth Sebestyen
 June 22, 2007

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the following sleiff for assistance:

- Federal Funding: David Yitagessu, 416.585.7322 or David.Yitagessu@ontario.ca
- Strong Community Rent Supplement Program, Howard Douglas, 416.585.6945 or Howard.Douglas@ontario.ca
- Apportioned Share of Social Housing Costs In Territories or Deemed to be Territories without Municipal Organization, Darlene Kelley, 416.585.6054 or Darlene.Kelley@ontario.ca

Sincerely,

Rosalind Lerman

Rosalind Lerman
 Director
 Housing Finance Branch

c: Ms. Sandra Datars Bere
 Mr. Wendall Graves
 Mr. Tony Brutto

REFERRED TO	
S. DATARS BERE	
E. SEBESTYEN	
W. DAY	
FOR	
DIRECTION	☐
RECOMMENDATION	☐
INFORMATION	☒
FROM	MARIA KONEFAL

City of St. Thomas
Hess, Dept

JUN 14 2007

City of St. Thomas
Municipal Clerk
P.O. Box 520 City Hall
St. Thomas, Ontario
N5P 3A7
(519) 631 2130

June 13th, 2007

City Clerk's Dept

Attention: Wendell Graves

RE: **REQUEST FOR LETTER STATING NO OBJECTION TO BELLA JACK'S
MEXICAN CANTINA TEMPORARY PATIO**

BELLA JACK'S PATIO (LIC# 805641)
437 Talbot Street, St. Thomas
(519) 637 6247

DURING: IRON HORSE FESTIVAL

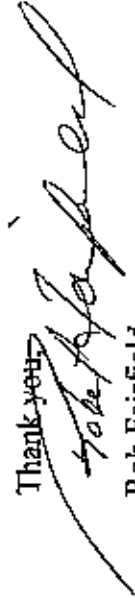
Bella Jack's has applied for a Temporary Extension of its Liquor License during the Iron Horse Festival to accommodate a 20-ft by 20-ft outdoor patio during the closing of Talbot Street. The Chairman of the Iron Horse Festival has accepted our proposal. We propose to operate the outside patio directly in front of our establishment during the following hours.

Thursday	August 23 rd 2007	11:30am – 11:00pm
Friday	August 24 th 2007	11:30am – 11:00pm
Saturday	August 25 th 2007	11:30am – 11:00pm
Sunday	August 26 th 2007	11:30am – 5:00pm

In order to obtain this license we require a letter from the Municipal Clerk stating that there is "No Objection" to the extension of the proposed extended licensed area. Your cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions or concerns or require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Thank you,



Rob Fairfield
Bella Jack's Mexican Cantina
(519) 637 6247

209

June 18/2007

City of St Thomas
Municipal Clerk
P.O. Box 520 City Hall
St Thomas, Ontario
N5P 3A7

City of St Thomas
Received

JUN 19 2007

City Clerk's Dept

Attention: Wendell Drauer

Re: Request for letter stating no objection to
Manny Arms Restaurant Ltd.,
1640285 Ontario Inc. Temporary
patio (Licence # 23142)
373 Talbot St., St Thomas, Ont
N5P 1B7
Phone: 519-631-3491

The Manny Arms Restaurant has applied for a Temporary Extension of its Liquor Licence during the Chron Horse Festival to accommodate a 20-ft. by 23 ft. outdoor patio during the closing of Talbot Street. The Chairman of the Chron Horse Festival has accepted our proposal. We propose to operate the outdoor patio directly in front of our establishment during the following hours:

Thursday	August 23/07	11:30 AM To 12:00 AM
Friday	August 24/07	11:30 AM To 12:00 AM
Saturday	August 25/07	11:30 AM To 12:00 AM
Sunday	August 26/07	11:30 AM To 12:00 AM

Cont'd page # 2

To: Municipal Clerk, City of St. Thomas

In order to obtain this license we require a letter from the Municipal Clerk stating that there is "No OBJECTION" to the extension of your proposed extended licensed area. We enjoyed participating in the Shon Horse Festival previously and your co-operation would be greatly appreciated.

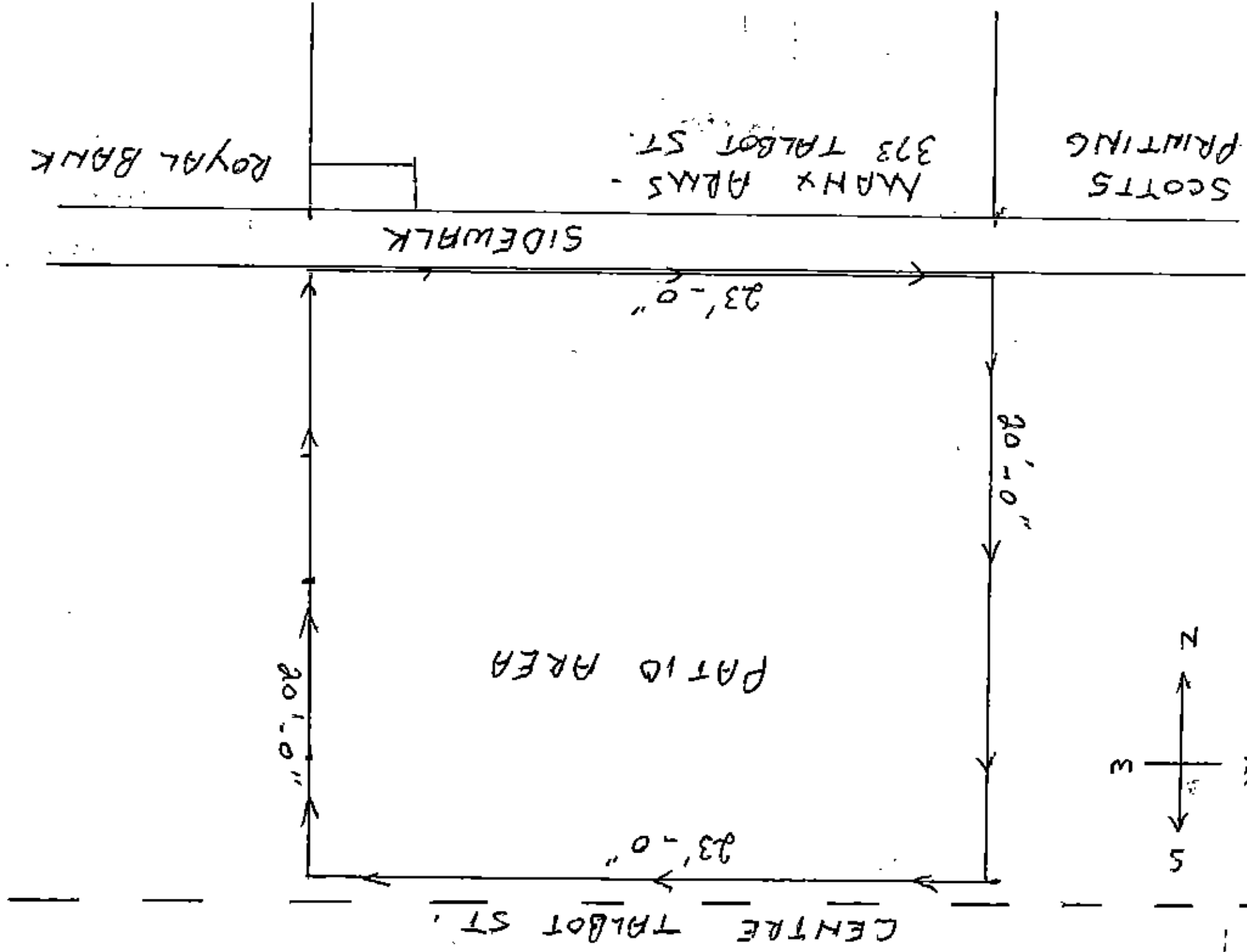
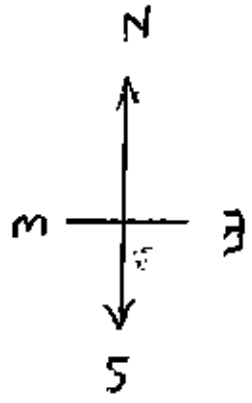
Yours truly,



George Wilson
THE MANY ARMS RESTAURANT LTD.
16402 85 ONTARIO INC.

C.C.

REFERRED TO	
SPECIAL EVENTS	
COMMITTEE	<u>WILSON</u>
J. DEWANCKER	
FOR	
DIRECTION	☐
REPORT OR COMMENT	☐
INFORMATION	☒
FROM	<u>MARIA KONGER</u>



d/d

St Thomas

June 15, 2007

City of St Thomas
545 Talbot St.,
St Thomas, Ont.
N5P 3V7

Dear Mr. Barwick

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and gamer your financial support. My name is Tucker Vendrig and I have recently been chosen from over 800 applicants across Canada to be a member of Global Vision / Junior Team Canada. I will join 29 teammates on an economic mission to Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore this summer.

What is Global Vision / Junior Team Canada?

Global Vision is the national organization which operates the Junior Team Canada program, providing youth with the skills, experience and knowledge to be today's leaders. This year, 30 of Canada's youth have been selected to represent their regions as Youth Ambassadors on an International Mission to Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore in August 2007.

What's the Mission all about?

During the Mission, Junior Team Canada will focus on trade and development opportunities. The team will be meeting with industry, government, community and youth leaders to identify business opportunities for Canadian companies. The role of each ambassador is to represent their community, company partners and country. After the mission, Junior Team Canada ambassadors will return back to Canada to share their new found knowledge and expertise with their peers and the community at large.

Who am I?

I am a lifelong resident of St Thomas - Elgin County. I currently attend Parkside Collegiate and am looking forward to a career in the business community after post-secondary education. I work part-time for Real Canadian Superstore and have spent the last four summers priming tobacco. I am an enthusiastic member of the Parkside rowing team. I am hard-working, easy-going and eager to represent my community.

Where is the money going?

The Junior Team Canada Mission costs over \$9,000 per person. Each team member is required to raise \$4500 from their community before August 1, 2007. The mission consists of a 4 day national youth caucus in Ottawa where I will receive cultural training, attend receptions with foreign ambassadors and promote St Thomas - Elgin County as well as 16 days abroad where I will meet with business, industry and government leaders.

What are the benefits of supporting Junior Team Canada?

- ✓ Gain valuable market intelligence overseas
- ✓ Receive global exposure and key contacts for local companies
- ✓ Have access to Canada's top young talented entrepreneurs
- ✓ Provide a youth from your area with valuable work and community based experiences
- ✓ Learn first hand about Canada's involvement in International Development
- ✓ Promote Elgin County / St Thomas overseas

Enclosed you will find a brochure that provides a little more information on me and some of the industries I am looking to target, a standard partnership package and my business card. Your feedback is welcome.

I appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to your support!

Sincerely,

Tucker Vendrig

Tucker Vendrig
5 Lynhurst Ave.,
St Thomas, Ontario
519-633-1778



RECEIVED

JUN 18 2007

Enclosed you will find a brochure that provides a little more information on me and some of the industries I am looking to target, a standard partnership package and my business card. Your feedback is welcome.	
FOR	
DIRECTION	☐
REFLECTION COMMENT	☒
INFORMATION	☐
FROM MARIA KONEFAL	

MARK G. McDONALD
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

(Mrs.) SANDRA J. HEFFREN
MANAGER OF
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES



450 SUNSET DRIVE
ST. THOMAS, ONTARIO
N5R 5V1
PHONE 519-631-1460
FAX 519-633-7661
www.elgin-county.on.ca

June 27, 2007

City of St. Thomas
Received

Inc. 1852

JUL 03 2007

Mr. Ken McCormack
The Ontario Plowmen's Association
188 Nicklin Road
GUELPH, Ontario
N1H 7L5

City Clerk's Dept

Dear Mr. McCormack:

The Council of the Corporation of the County of Elgin, at its meeting held on June 26, 2007, adopted the following recommendation:

1. That County Council support the Elgin County Ploughmen's Association's bid submission for the 2010 International Plowing Match and Rural Exposition to be held in Elgin County as described in the June 12th, 2007, County Council report titled "2010 International Plowing Match and Rural Exposition" as submitted by the Manager of Economic Development; and
2. That \$67,000.00 be allocated from the 2008 budget to be added to the current reserve of \$33,000.00 to provide the International Plowing Match Local Organizing Committee with a repayable line of credit totalling \$100,000.00; and
3. That the County of Elgin agrees to contribute to the development of a County or Regional Exhibit at an upset-limit, excluding staff time, of \$250,000.00 from a reserve account to be identified by the Director of Finance as described in the June 12th, 2007, County Council titled "2010 International Plowing Match and Rural Exposition" as submitted by the Manager of Economic Development; and
4. That staffing levels of the Economic Development office be increased by hiring an Economic Development or Special Projects Intern on a contractual basis at an upset-limit of \$65,000.00 from a reserve account to be identified by the Director of Finance as described in June 12th, 2007, County Council report titled "2010 International Plowing Match and Rural Exposition" as submitted by the Manager of Economic Development; and
5. That the operating budget of the Economic Development office be raised as activity increases to accommodate the 2010 International Plowing Match and Rural Exposition as described in June 12th, 2007, titled "2010 International Plowing Match and Rural Exposition" as submitted by the Manager of Economic Development; and
6. That cost recovery options for the County or Regional Exhibit and Economic Development activities be explored by the Manager of Economic Development and the County Exhibit Committee by forming partnerships with the lower tier municipalities, the City of St. Thomas, and other stakeholders.

- Carried Unanimously.
(signed) Warden Lynn Acre

County Council is pleased to help sponsor this exciting event and looks forward to the OPA's final announcement on site selection.

If you have any questions concerning the resolution, please contact Alan Smith, Manager of Economic Development at (519) 631-1460 ext. 133.

Yours truly,


Mark G. McDonald,
Chief Administrative Officer.

214

Ottawa

Confederation Building, Room 142

Ottawa, Ontario

K1A 0A6

Tel: (613) 990-7769

Fax: (613) 996-0194

www.joeprastonmp.ca



HOUSE OF COMMONS

RECEIVED

JUN 28 2007

Constituency

24 First Avenue, Unit 2

St. Thomas, Ontario

NSR 4M5

Tel: (519) 637-2255

Fax: (519) 637-3358

Toll Free: 1-866-404-0406

Arndt
Joe Preston, MP
Elgin-Middlesex-London

Dale Arndt

St. Thomas Municipal Airport

44989 Talbot Line

St. Thomas, ON

N5P 3S7

Monday, June 25, 2007

Dear Dale,

It was a pleasure to be able to watch Canada's finest pilots demonstrate their skills in St. Thomas this past weekend.

I had the pleasure to be able to meet many of the pilots, show participants and organizers during my visit. The one comment that I heard over and over again was how it was so nice to work with "Dale," how easy he was to get along with and how well organized the event was.

I am sure that you acquired some of your customer service skills from working at Wendy's!

I want to congratulate you on an incredible weekend for the airport and the City of St. Thomas.

Congratulations!

Joe Preston
Joe Preston MP
Elgin - Middlesex - London
cc. Mayor Barwick

Minister of Municipal Affairs
and Housing

777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto ON M5G 2E5
Tel. (416) 595-7000
Fax (416) 595-6470
www.mah.gov.on.ca

Ministre des Affaires municipales
et du Logement

777, rue Bay, 17^e étage
Toronto ON M5G 2E5
Tél. (416) 595-7000
Télééc. (416) 595-6470
www.mah.gov.on.ca



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JUN 28 2007

Adm. in Mayor's Office

June 20, 2007

To the Head of Council:

Attached for your reference is a copy of the newly released *Municipal Performance Measurement Program Handbook*.

This coming October marks the seventh anniversary of the launch of the Municipal Performance Measurement Program (MPMP) by the Ontario government. The program involves all municipalities in collecting and publicly reporting on performance measurement results in several major areas of service delivery.

Public accountability is critically important for responsible government. You can take pride in knowing that Ontario's municipalities are among the leaders in North America for providing clear and timely performance measurement information to their ratepayers. You have embraced and improved MPMP as a tool for documenting the valuable services delivered to the public. I congratulate you on your work.

Since the program's launch, staff at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing have been working closely with municipal partners and experts to refine both the key elements of the program and the specific performance measures. We have now reached the point where the core components of the program reflect the good efforts of municipal staff to produce reliable data and enlightening comparisons. In addition to improving municipal accountability to ratepayers, the program is aiding in the identification of best practices in municipal service delivery.

A new section of the handbook outlines the capabilities of the Municipal Information & Data Analysis System (MIDAS). The legitimate demand to provide greater access to municipal financial and performance data, along with a desire to conduct better analysis using MPMP data, was recognized by both the ministry and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. MIDAS is an exciting project to address this need and is sponsored by the "Strengthening our Partnerships" Program funded by the Ministry of Finance. For further information about MIDAS, please contact Ms. Nancy Plumridge, Director of Administration and Business Development at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. Ms. Plumridge can be contacted by e-mail at nplumridge@amo.on.ca or by telephone at 416-971-9856, extension 324.

Head of Council

In addition to MIDAS, the updated edition of the handbook includes all of the twelve core service areas now covered by the MPMP. As well, a new section describes the benefit of linking performance measures and budgeting.

I trust you will find the new handbook informative and useful.

Sincerely,


John Gerretsen
Minister
Attachment

ONTARIOPOWER GENERATION

RECEIVED
JUN 2 8 2007

Bruce Boland
Senior Vice President Corporate Affairs

700 University Avenue Toronto, ON M5G 1X6

Tel: 416-592-4480 Fax: 416-592-6600
bruce.boland@opg.com

June 20, 2007

Mr. Cliff Barwick
Mayor, City of St. Thomas
Box 520, City Hall, 545 Talbot St.
St. Thomas ON N5P 3V7

Bruce Boland
1115 in Mayor's office

Dear Mr. Barwick:

Ontario Power Generation's Waterways Safety Awareness Program

I am writing to let you know about the efforts Ontario Power Generation Inc. (OPG) has underway, both in your constituency and across the province, to make people aware of the safety precautions that must be taken near hydroelectric facilities. OPG's objective is to help provide for the safety of people who use waterways and lands near hydroelectric dams and stations. That is why we are asking people to stay clear of our facilities.

OPG's outreach program raises awareness of the dangers near hydroelectric stations. The program includes advertising; distribution of public education materials including brochures, DVDs, and children's materials; and presentations to target audiences.

You may see or hear any of the following over the next few months:

- Large billboards in hydroelectric communities that warn people about the dangers near dams.
- Advertising both in newspapers and radio, with more frequent ads in communities where we have hydroelectric stations.
- DVDs available free of charge – a seven-minute video describing the dangers of recreation near hydroelectric facilities.
- Brochures for adults warning of the dangers of coming too close to hydroelectric facilities.
- Children's activity books – 300,000 copies of our interactive water safety/Niagara tunnel booklet are being distributed throughout the province.
- Over 600,000 copies of a "Four Season Water Safety" poster were distributed, including insertion in the May issue of Ontario Out of Doors and the summer issue of Cottage Life, and in select hydroelectric site community newspapers in early June. Although OPG is sponsoring this poster it will be endorsed and distributed by:
 - Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
 - Ontario Out of Doors
 - Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs
 - Ontario Waterpower Association
 - Ontario Marina Operators Association
 - Ontario Provincial Police
 - Yamaha Motors
- Ads in specialty magazines to reach anglers, snowmobilers, ATV users, and visitors to the area around our stations.
- Displays at community events, presentations to school and community groups, distribution of educational materials.
- Distribution of brochures at conferences and shows, including Fishing, Sporting, and ATV shows.

Enclosed are copies of the brochure, poster, DVD, and children's activity books. If you would like additional copies, please let us know. Should you have any questions or suggestions about our Stay Clear, Stay Safe program, please contact us toll free at 1-877-592-4480.

Sincerely,

Bruce Boland

Bruce Boland

Enclosure

217

**Ministry of Children
and Youth Services**
Minister's Office

56 Wellesley Street West
14th Floor
Toronto ON M5S 2S3
Tel.: (416) 212-7432
Fax: (416) 212-7431

**Ministère des Services
à l'enfance et à la jeunesse**
Bureau de la ministre

58, rue Wellesley Ouest
14^e étage
Toronto (Ontario) M5S 2S3
Tél. : 416 212-7432
Télééc. : 416 212-7431

RECEIVED

JUL 03 2007



JUN 28 2007

His Worship Cliff Barwick
Mayor

The Corporation of the City of St. Thomas
545 Talbot Street, PO Box 520
St. Thomas, Ontario N5P 3V7

Dear Mayor Barwick:

I recently wrote to you with news that, as a result of our 2007 Ontario budget, new Best Start child care enhanced funding was being provided as a first step towards helping to address pressures in the delivery of child care services in your community.

As the 2007 federal budget included an additional \$97.5 million to further support child care in Ontario, I am happy to provide further details on additional funding to support the province's system of early learning and child care.

As indicated in the 2006 and 2007 budgets, the province is committed to both enhancing and sustaining the significant progress that we have achieved. That is why my ministry continues to provide funding to help sustain the almost 15,000 new licensed child care spaces created under our Best Start plan as of September 2006.

Many municipalities have indicated that they have created additional child care spaces that are attributable to Best Start funding. My ministry has worked closely with municipalities across Ontario to understand how these spaces are meeting the needs of children and families in local communities. In May 2007, your municipality did not identify any additional Best Start spaces as being licensed and operational as of March 31, 2007.

However, in order to enhance quality in the provision of care and recognizing the important contributions they make to the lives of Ontario's children, my ministry is also allocating funds in 2007-08 and onward in order to improve the wages of eligible child care practitioners in your municipality. A total of \$184,900 in Best Start wage improvement funds will be made available shortly.

When combined with ongoing investments, these new commitments will result in a total 2007-08 Best Start child care allocation of \$644,100, some of which has been made available already to address immediate pressures.

The province is committed to moving forward with Best Start in a manner that provides municipalities with the greatest degree of flexibility. This is why we will continue to ease municipal cost-sharing obligations on Best Start funding in order to provide municipalities with the flexibility required to provide the greatest benefit to children and families.

I would like to thank you for your continued partnership and shared dedication to the Best Start vision. I look forward to our further collaboration as we continue to improve Ontario's system of early learning and child care.

Sincerely,

Mary Anne Chambers
Minister

*Copy to Sandra
Armand Agache*



uniongas

A Spectra Energy Company

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RECEIVED

JUN 19 2007

June 18, 2007

Carved

Your Worship Cliff Barwick
City of St. Thomas
Box 520, 545 Talbot Street
St. Thomas, ON N5P 3V7

Dear Your Worship Barwick,

As we approach the summer season and together seek out ways to meet our energy needs, improve our air quality and find ways to meet our Climate Change objectives, we wanted to remind you of the many solutions natural gas provides.

Natural gas supply is abundant, affordable, cleaner burning, and safe. With an extensive and existing infrastructure network that provides energy for over 3 million Ontario homes and businesses, farms and factories province-wide, natural gas is a resource we can all depend upon.

In the home, natural gas can heat space and water, cook our meals and dry our clothes, while saving consumers money and reducing our electricity needs. Commercial needs for cooling and dehumidification can readily be met by using natural gas applications. Natural gas can be used to make electricity and heat to help power the wheels of industry.

As communities across Ontario – both rural and urban – grow, natural gas serves as a vital ingredient for local economic development.

Much cleaner than coal, and less than half the heating cost of other fuels, there are many applications that make this versatile fuel a natural part of Ontario's environmental and energy future.

Should you or your staff have any questions or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 1-888-325-5587 ext. 109. You can be assured of our co-operation and enthusiasm.

Sincerely,

Wes Armstrong

Wes Armstrong, P.Eng.
Manager Operations
London/Sarnia

Stewardship
ONTARIO




June 29, 2007

Mayor and Members of Council
ST. THOMAS, CITY OF
545 Talbot Street
PO Box 520
St. Thomas, ON N5P 3V7

RE: Industry's Stewardship of Municipal Blue Box Recycling Program

Dear Mayor and Members of Council:

The companies that are "Blue Box" stewards fulfill their stewardship responsibilities through the activities of their organization, Stewardship Ontario. It works in partnership with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and directly with municipalities to find ways to improve the effectiveness and cost efficiency of our popular Blue Box recycling program.

One such activity provides opportunities for municipalities to undertake pilot and demonstration projects to test new ideas, operational systems and technology to determine if they can enhance the operational efficiency of the Blue Box system. Called the Effectiveness and Efficiency Fund, it is described in more detail below. By working together in these areas of common interest, municipal and industry Blue Box partners can both benefit.

In fulfilling one aspect of industry's stewardship responsibility, Stewardship Ontario and Waste Diversion Ontario (WDO) are pleased to enclose the first quarterly payment for the 2007 program year as industry's share of the net costs of the residential Blue Box recycling program.

The payment is provided under the auspices of the Blue Box Program Plan (BBPP) which provides funding directly from the companies who do business in Ontario and produce packaging and printed materials that are managed through the municipal waste management system. Under the *Waste Diversion Act, 2002*, these companies report the amount of packaging and printed paper they put into the Ontario residential marketplace and pay fees to Stewardship Ontario based on the type and amount of material. Stewardship Ontario is the industry funding organization that distributes the funds from industry to municipalities.

This is the first of four cash payments totaling \$12.1 million that Stewardship Ontario will distribute to Ontario municipalities for the 2007 program year. This payment brings the total cash amount of industry's share of Blue Box programs in Ontario to nearly \$142 million over three years. For the 2007 program year, Stewardship Ontario will distribute a total of \$48.4 million in cash payments to Ontario municipalities.

In addition to these cash payments, a further \$3.4 million will be made available through the fourth year of the Effectiveness and Efficiency (E&E) Fund (for a total of \$19.8 million at end of year). Each year, 10% of the stewards' financial obligation to municipalities is placed in the E&E Fund to provide competitive grants to municipalities to explore new methods of increasing the effectiveness and minimizing the cost of municipal recycling programs. So far, a total of 78 municipal projects valued at \$14.5 million in support have been approved. For information about

the B&E Fund and how to apply, please visit the Stewardship Ontario website, www.stewardshipontario.ca. Questions concerning the Fund can be directed to Guy Perry at info@stewardshipontario.ca.

The provincial total net system cost is approved by the WDO, which calculates the amount each municipality receives based on information your municipality provides through the annual waste management "Datacall." Funding for the 2007 year is based on a different methodology compared to previous years. It is based on a percentage of each program's reported net system cost as well as the cost-effectiveness of a program relative to other municipal programs in its municipal group. Additional information about how funding for residential Blue Box programs is allocated is available at the Municipal Funding page of the WDO website at www.wdo.ca (shown under the "Diversion Programs" then "Blue Box Waste" tabs¹⁶⁹).

We are pleased to report that the second quarter payment for the 2007 Blue Box Program year will be forwarded to your municipality on September 30, 2007.

Sincerely



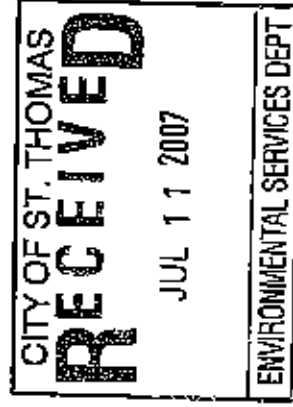
Dennis Darby
Chair
Stewardship Ontario



Gemma Zecchini
Chair
Waste Diversion Ontario

¹⁶⁹ The direct link to detail about the funding allocation process for 2007 is <http://webservices.siriusweblabs.com/dotconnector/files/domain4116/2007%20Funding%20text%20Jan%2026%2007%20updates.doc>

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Elgin Area

Primary Water Supply System

Municipality of Bayham
 Municipality of Malahide
 Town of Aylmer
 Municipality of Central Elgin
 City of St. Thomas
 Municipality of Southwold

**Re: Financial Strategic Plan Workshop
Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System**

Attention: Mayor, Council and Administration

At its meeting of June 7, 2006, the Board of Management for the Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System received a report on the water system's Financial Strategic Plan. At that time, the Board deferred the report pending a workshop with the member municipalities to review the content of the Plan, background materials, and the recommendations of the June 7th report.

As per the Board's request, a workshop has been scheduled for Wednesday August 8, 2007 starting at 12:00 NOON at the Best Western Lamplighter Inn to review the recommended Financial Strategic Plan and the background materials. A light lunch will be available.

A Compact Disc containing the Board report, Financial Strategic Plan materials and draft workshop agenda will be mailed to your municipality by Friday July 13, 2007.

Please RSVP and confirm the names of the persons attending on behalf of your municipality by 4:30pm on Thursday August 2, 2007 by facsimile at 519.474.0451, by telephone at 519.661.2500 ext.2714, or by e-mail at watersupply@london.ca. Please include an e-mail address for each of the participants to ensure updates can be forwarded in a timely manner.

Should you have any questions or comments, please contact the undersigned at your earliest convenience.

Best regards,

Alamy

Andrew J. Henry, P.Eng.
Manager of Regional Water Supply
Lake Huron & Elgin Area Water Supply Sys

c.c. P. Steblin, P. McNally



Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System
Office 519.661.2500 ext. 2714
Fax 519.474.0451
ahenry@london.ca
<http://watersupply.london.ca/>

c/o The City of London
Regional Water Supply Division
29 Kilworth Park Drive
RR#5 Komoka, Ontario
N0L 1R0

ISO14001:2004

NOL 1RO



Corporation of the
City of St. Thomas

2007

Report No.

CC-32-07

File No.

Directed to:

Mayor C. Barwick and Members of Council

Date

July 3rd, 2007

Department:

City Clerk

Attachment

Prepared By:

Cindy Bezaire, Administrative Clerk

Subject:

Semi-Annual Attendance for the 127th Council and Committee of the Whole for the Period of January 1st, 2007 to June 30th, 2007

Recommendation:

THAT: Report CC-32-07 regarding the Semi-Annual Attendance for Council and Committee of the Whole for the period of January 1st, 2007 to June 30th, 2007, be received and filed for information.

Origin:

Semi-annual reports on attendance at City Council meetings are provided for information.

Analysis:

Semi-annual attendance for Council and Committee of the Whole regarding the number of meetings held and the number of meetings attended by Council members.

Mayor C. Barwick
Council

Mtgs
Held

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Mtgs
Att

30

Alderman B. Aarts
Council

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Alderman L. Baldwin-Sands
Council

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Alderman G. Campbell
Council

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Alderman H. Chapman
Council

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Alderman T. Johnston
Council

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Alderman T. Shackelton

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Council

Alderman D. Warden
Council

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Respectfully,

Cindy Bezaire
Administrative Clerk

Reviewed By:

Treasury

Env. Services

Planning

City Clerk

H.R.

Other