



# Keeping Track

City of St. Thomas Council Highlights

July 15, 2025 | Issue 17



## 2024 FINANCIAL RESULTS

Council received Report TR-14-25 outlining the City's 2024 financial results, which showed an estimated \$2.7 million deficit to be covered from reserves. The deficit was influenced by lower interest revenue, higher insurance and Health Unit costs, and tax write-offs. While some departments had surpluses, major deficits occurred in Police and Environmental Services. Revenue shortfalls in the latter half of the year contributed significantly to the larger than expected deficit, highlighting the need for careful financial planning and possible levy adjustments. The 2025 budget addressed some issues, but challenges remain, with a monitoring report to follow.

## A LOOK INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

1. Railway Lands Area Secondary Plan
2. Strategic Plan Annual Update
3. Temporary Use of Interim Excess Land
4. Tender Award



## RAILWAY LANDS AREA SECONDARY PLAN

Council has approved a collaborative planning process for the Railway Lands Area, directing staff to undertake a Secondary Plan Study as outlined in Report PD-37-2025.

The three-phase study, set to wrap by spring 2026, will guide future development of lands partially sold in 2024 to Doug Tarry Limited. The City will co-lead the process with a private team led by Bousfields Inc., funded by Doug Tarry Limited, with cost recovery options to be explored.

Council also directed staff to consider the use of a Community Planning Permit System to streamline future approvals, pending completion of the study and a separate Official Plan Amendment. Community engagement will be a key part of the process.



## STRATEGIC PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE

Council has received the 2024 Strategic Plan Action Plan Update and endorsed the Draft Annual Report for public release, highlighting the City's progress under the 2024-2027 St. Thomas Strategic Plan: Brighter Future.

The Plan, built around the pillars Excellence in All We Do and Prepared and Resilient City, guides 271 initiatives aimed at delivering high-quality services, sustainable growth, and an inclusive community. In its first year, 65% of initiatives are either completed or in progress. The endorsed report will be shared widely with residents and stakeholders to promote transparency and accountability. Staff will continue monitoring progress, with a detailed KPI report scheduled for Fall 2025. The Plan remains closely tied to budget planning, ensuring alignment between strategic goals and resource allocation.





## ON-STREET PARKING REPORT

Council received Report ES26-25 providing an update on on-street parking concerns, specifically regarding the five-hour daytime parking limit for properties without driveways that hold seasonal Overnight Parking Permits (ONPs). The report noted a steady increase in seasonal ONP demand over the past decade, although the full number of eligible properties remains unknown. Extending daytime parking beyond five hours presents challenges related to enforcement capacity and winter snow removal, which could impact roadway accessibility.

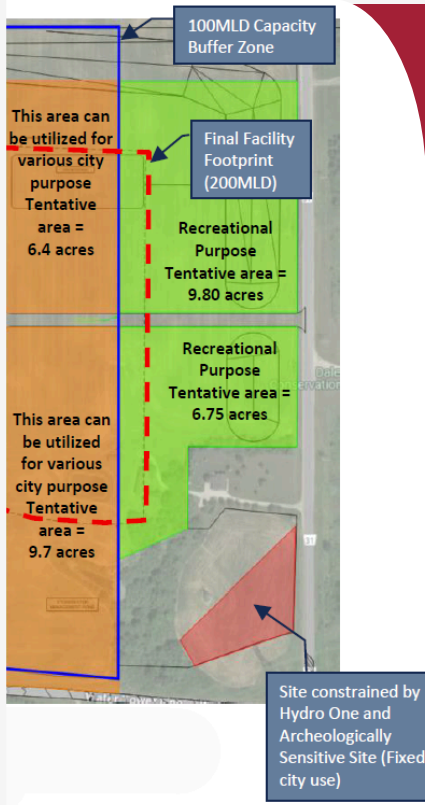
A comprehensive Parking Management Study, approved in the 2025 Capital Budget, will begin this fall to develop a city-wide strategy addressing parking supply, demand, enforcement, accessible parking, EV charging, and long-term planning. Given these complexities, staff recommend deferring changes to ONP parking limits until the study is complete to ensure a balanced, sustainable approach.

## ADULT DAY PROGRAM

Council received an update on the Adult Day Program, which serves seniors in St. Thomas and Elgin County. It is 90–95% funded by Ontario Health West, with the City contributing \$20,000–\$40,000 annually. Expansion at Valleyview is possible but would cost the City \$5,572 per additional participant, plus any capital or equipment needs. Staff are monitoring the proposed Support for Seniors and Caregivers Act, which includes \$40M for dementia care. No expansion is recommended until funding details are confirmed.

## LEASH-FREE DOG PARK

Council approved an updated agreement with Central Elgin and the Kettle Creek Conservation Authority to continue operating the Kettle Creek Leash-Free Dog Park. The revised agreement reflects legislative changes, increases insurance to \$5 million, and extends the term to 2030 with a renewal option to 2035. The City's 2024 share of \$12,927.66 is included in the current budget, resulting in no additional financial impact.



## TEMPORARY USE OF INTERIM EXCESS LAND

Council received Report ID-18-25 and approved the temporary use of approximately 32.5 acres of open land at the Dalewood Water Reclamation Facility during phased construction. The phased build-out, expected to reach full capacity by 2050 or later, creates an opportunity to utilize interim open space for city purposes. Potential uses within the buffer zone include snow dumping, vehicle parking, and material storage. Beyond the buffer zone, options include multi-sport courts, expanded trails, dog parks, outdoor fitness zones, and playgrounds. Portions of the land may also be leased for farming, with possible partnerships involving regional stakeholders. There is no immediate financial impact; however, future costs will depend on the chosen uses.

## ROAD TENDER AWARD

Council awarded Tender 2025-014 to GIP Paving Inc. for \$1,248,400 (excluding HST) to rehabilitate roads and improve accessibility at various locations including Vanier Place, Leger Avenue, and Pinafore Park. Parking on the north side of Vanier Place will be removed to add a new sidewalk, enhancing pedestrian safety. Construction is set to start in August 2025 and finish by October. The total project cost is fully covered by the 2025 budget.

## PAVILION TENDER AWARD

Council awarded Tender 2025-031 to Ro-Buck Contracting Ltd for \$299,415 (plus HST) to replace the aging Street Railway (South) Pavilion in Pinafore Park. The 50-year-old pavilion will be replaced with a larger, more accessible structure to better serve visitors near the playground and splash pad. The project will start in September 2025 and finish by November. The original \$250,000 budget from the Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF) requires an additional \$55,000 from the CCBF reserve to complete the work.





## UPCOMING FLAG RAISINGS & PROCLAMATIONS

**21**  
JUL

**Drowning Prevention Week**

🕒 TBD

📍 CITY HALL

**07**  
SEP

**World Duchenne Awareness Day**

💡 RED

**09**  
SEP

**International FASD Awareness Day**

🕒 9:09 AM

📍 CITY HALL

**30**  
SEP

**Orange Shirt Day**

🕒 TBD

📍 CITY HALL

Make your mark in the community with a proclamation, flag-raising, or by lighting up the iconic Jumbo monument! To submit your request, write a formal, signed letter addressed to the Mayor and Members of City Council, explaining your cause and desired date. Letters must be sent to the City Clerk at least one month in advance. See the [website](#) for more information.

## FUTURE MEETINGS

- Monday, August 11, 2025 at 5PM
- Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at 5PM
- Monday, September 8, 2025 at 5PM

To view the council meetings live, visit:  
[www.stthomas.ca/watch](http://www.stthomas.ca/watch)

## PAST MEETINGS

Watch archived council meetings:  
[www.stthomas.ca/archived](http://www.stthomas.ca/archived)

View past agendas and minutes:  
[www.stthomas.ca/pastcouncilmeetings](http://www.stthomas.ca/pastcouncilmeetings)

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