



Report No.
CMO-13-26

File No.
4-01-25

Directed to: Mayor Joe Preston and Members of City Council

Meeting Date:
March 2, 2026

Department: City Manager's Office

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Attachment
A – Public Comments and Response
B – Recommended CPP By-law

Subject: City-Initiated Community Planning Permit By-law (Elm-Wilson-Victor Area)

Recommendation:

THAT: Report CMO13-26 relating to City-Initiated Community Planning Permit By-law (Elm-Wilson-Victor Area) be received for information; and further

THAT: In accordance with section 17(5) of O. Reg. 173/16 under the Planning Act R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, a City or landowner-initiated request or application to amend the Community Planning Permit By-law (Elm-Wilson-Victor Area) is permitted before the fifth anniversary of the day the By-law is passed.

Background:

In October 2025, an Official Plan Amendment was adopted to enable the use of a Community Planning Permit (CPP) System (Report PD-45-25) and staff were directed to initiate a City-led process to consider a CPP By-law for the Elm/Wilson/Victor area (Report PD-49-25). Through Report CMO-02-26 in January 2026, a draft Proposed CPP By-law was provided, and direction was given to conduct public meetings and prepare the By-law for a decision. A Public Information Centre (PIC) was held on January 28, 2026, at the Memorial Arena with approximately 15 individuals attending, including the primary landowner/developer that provided information about their proposed development within the CPP Area. A Public Meeting at Council was held on February 9, 2026.

Public Comments:

In addition to the comments, questions and responses provided at the initiation, initial and public meetings on the Proposed CPP By-law with Council, there was 1 written submission, 1 PIC feedback form and 2 Public Meeting oral deputations (1 public, 1 landowner/developer) received as part of the public process. The comments received either provide additional information that staff have considered in preparing the By-law or can be addressed via the technical studies as part of a site-specific development application. See Appendix A for the summary of public comments and response.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff are satisfied that the Community Planning Permit By-law has regard for matters of provincial interest, is consistent with the relevant policies of the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, complies with O. Reg. 173/16, conforms to the City of St. Thomas Official Plan and is sound land use planning.

The Recommended By-law (attached as Appendix B) incorporates updates to the previous draft for the Community Benefits approach to provide more specific description and provisions along with adjusting the additional development for a better balance and usability. There were several other detailed wording updates to address comments, detailed review, provincial regulation and use of the By-law. A Council resolution is required to allow consideration of By-law amendments.

It is the opinion of staff that the City-initiated CPP By-law will allow for a new and streamlined approach to permit appropriate residential intensification of known brownfield sites in the Elm-Wilson-Victor area that will provide needed housing options and supply while being compatible with the surrounding context. It is recommended that Council approve the CPP By-law as part of this (March 2, 2026) agenda.

Strategic Priority:

Strategic Pillar: Excellence in All We Do - Priority #5: Housing for Everyone

Financial Impact:

Any of the minor costs associated with notices and process for this City-led CPP By-law are covered as part of the federal Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) grant. Completion of this initiative, and any resultant development before the end of 2027 supports the achievement of housing targets and the continuation of receiving the federal HAF grant into 2028. The By-law does include City-owned land which could have positive implications and financial benefits for its future use.

There are significant benefits to future development of an intensification area, including:

- Use of existing hard infrastructure (sanitary, water, storm, roads, transit, trails, utilities)
- Support of existing community infrastructure (recreation, schools, libraries, institutional)
- One-time development fees and charges (after reductions from expected CIP incentives)
- Significant long-term increase in annual assessment compared to the existing condition
- Additional rental supply to reduce housing pressures and new residential dwellings to support expanding employment within the area
- Environmental benefits of using land efficiently (density/growing up), energy efficiency, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved air quality, urban greening opportunities

Report Approval:

This report has been reviewed and approved by: Manager of Planning Services, Director of Planning and Building Services, Director of Financial Services/Treasurer.

All reports are reviewed and approved by the City Manager.

Appendix A – Public Comments

Comments Received	Response
Strategic Heritage Commitments and Planning Consistency re: L&PS rail corridor as a tourism and heritage asset.	A Noise and Vibration Study can be required for any specific development proposal and CPP Permit Complete Application. This would review and address the tourism and heritage rail corridor through any development measures, conditions, warning clauses, etc. and to be in an agreement registered on title.
Federal Grade Crossings Regulations – Unresolved Safety and Cost Exposure re: Victor Dr to Wilson Ave	Chester St currently crosses the rail corridor to Victor Dr and Palm St. Any future development of the Victor Dr parcel would require a Traffic Impact Study and assessment and implementation of any recommendations related to new development on the existing rail and trail crossing at the developer's expense. The assessment should follow appropriate regulations.
Use of CPP to Pre-Approve Impacts Without Site-Specific Due Diligence Re: diligence up-front for critical site-specific studies	The lands are currently designated for Residential in the City's Official Plan that permits the full range of residential uses and densities subject to criteria. As part of the initial CPP Bylaw, the potential densities permitted as part of the overall Bylaw were assessed through the City's Environmental Services review of infrastructure capacity (including existing and cumulative impacts) for surrounding and system water, wastewater, storm and road capacity. The densities considered for this site as part of Engineering Service's review of infrastructure capacity aligns with the densities in the recommended by-law. If any development application proposes to exceed this density, the recommended by-law would require further studies to justify that the infrastructure is sufficient to service this increase. A Noise and Vibration Study and Sewer Capacity and Hydraulic Analysis can be completed as part of a site-specific development application. The results and any recommendations can be implemented through the decision, site design, conditions and development agreement. This will further assess a specific development application density and the sewer and infrastructure analysis. Any improvements related to the site development would require developer costs.

Infrastructure Capacity: Wastewater, Electrical, and Phasing Risk Re: Pollution Prevention and Control Plan (PPCP), Dalewood Water Reclamation Facility, combined sewer outflows, electrical distribution planning	The City of St. Thomas is required to follow the Sewage Treatment Capacity Commitment Policy as approved by Council. Sewer routes will be determined at time of detail design. Electrical capacity is determined by supplier.
Employment Land Conversion and Loss of Protective Buffers Re: comprehensive impact analysis of historic conversions of employment areas along rail corridor to residential intensification as indicated on Official Plan Schedule K	These lands are all designated Residential in the City's Official Plan and Railway Tourism. There are no employment land conversions proposed as part of the CPP Bylaw process. Most of the lands are currently zoned R7 (future residential). The rail corridor provides a tourism function and is not used for industrial employment lands purposes within this area. The Residential Official Plan land use designation and proposed CPP Bylaw permitted uses are compatible with the Railway Tourism lands. Any compatibility issues between future residential development and the Railway Tourism lands can be further addressed through the site design, supporting technical study and any conditions. There is no Schedule K in the St. Thomas Official Plan (there is one in the Elgin County OP).
Request for Deferral and Disclosure Re: until public materials for Grade Crossing Assessment, Noise/Vibration Compatibility Study, Hydraulic & Sewer Capacity Analysis, Economic Impact Assessment, confirmation of Sch K employment land conversions	Ensuring overall infrastructure capacity in relation to the proposed CPP Bylaw development and density provisions is important. As identified above, the base level analysis for the overall CPP Bylaw is through the department and agency review and comment. The City's Environmental Services has reviewed the potential development and densities in the context of the infrastructure system and advise that further detailed analysis needs to take place through the site-specific applications, technical study and detailed engineering design phase. The City's Official Plan and the CPP Bylaw allow for and require technical studies and compatibility for site specific development applications within the CPP Area. Specific development applications will have detail on the number of units and design which would be accompanied by analysis (including modelling) and implementation of any improvements – at developer's cost.

	An Economic Impact Assessment on L&PS tourism viability is not something that is part of the development bylaw/approval process nor identified in the Official Plan as information that may be required with a complete application. The allowances for higher density within the residential area should provide added tourism opportunities. A Community Benefit provision is added to the CPP Bylaw regarding connection and promotion to the opportunity. The CPP Bylaw area does not involve an employment land conversion. In lieu of the above, the comments are helpful and can primarily be addressed through the development permit applications under the CPP Bylaw.
Dog Park – Increase in residential, need safe space (along trail suggested)	This will be reviewed with parks and recreation staff and with future development of the lands as to the potential for an area.
Review of Sewage	The City's Environmental Services has reviewed the existing and planned wastewater system as it relates to the proposed CPP Bylaw. Any development applications will need to provide a detailed Servicing Report for the site and would be responsible for any upgrades required (if any) to facilitate the development.
Potential Building Heights Re: Elm/Wilson Ave development site	The maximum building height under the base Class 1 provisions would be 15 storeys for an Apartment use. Additional height may be considered through Class 2/3 Permits in exchange for community benefits and subject to justification of achieving criteria. The building would have to be setback a minimum of 7.5m from the Wilson Ave lot line and any portion of a building that is within 15m of the Wilson Ave lot line that is above 6 storeys would have to be stepped back by another 3m. There would also be a Shadow Analysis as part of a development application that would be reviewed to limit and minimize any shadow to surrounding lands. The landowner/developer also indicated their intended plan to orient more of the taller building heights away from Wilson Ave and towards to trail and Elm St. site.
Community Benefits – Requirements and calculations	The Community Benefits, including the provisions to be provided and the corresponding added development amounts have been refined. An updated

	approach is provided within the final CPP Bylaw. The intent is to provide a balanced approach to the proportional valuations of what is a usable and justifiable community benefit amount and the corresponding additional height and density that is to be exchanged. Affordable housing is one of the top priorities through municipal (and federal, provincial) objectives. As part of a submission, any application would indicate how the benefits proposed to be provided are proportional in quantity or monetary value to the number of dwelling units added.
Structured Parking Regulations	An update from the original draft by-law has been provided and included within the final CPP By-law. An additional clause was added regarding no obstructions within a parking space, and that a landscape buffer be provided between a public street and a parking structure (same as for a parking lot).