



Keeping Track

City of St. Thomas Council Highlights

March 10, 2026 | Issue 36



PROPOSED ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT - 115 EDWARD STREET

Council received Report PD-13-2026. An application has been submitted in regards to a Zoning By-law Amendment. The request is to expand the range of permitted uses in the Secondary Commercial Zone to permit the playing of bingo and accessory uses at 115 Edward Street (former Peavey Mart). The reason for the application is to relocate Jackpot Time Charitable Gaming Centre from their current location of 140 Edward Street. Renovations will take place in the existing building to accommodate the gaming operations which include updated signage and a potential parking lot expansion in the future. A site plan approval may be required if any physical changes are proposed. Due to the area being located in the Ministry of Transportation permit control area, a permit will be required from the MTO prior to the building permit to allow this change in use. The area is zoned Secondary Commercial (C5) which does not include a bingo hall in the definition of permitted uses. Playing of bingo is a specific use and a Zoning By-law amendment is required. E-gaming is permitted under the definition so no amendment will be required for this use. A public meeting will take place on April 13th, 2026.

A LOOK INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

1. Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment - 115 Edward Street
2. Community and Aquatic Centre Feasibility Study Final Report
3. Brighter Future Monthly Update Pillar #5: Housing for Everyone
4. 2026 Parks and Recreation Master Plan - Final Report



BRIGHTER FUTURE MONTHLY UPDATE PILLAR #5: HOUSING FOR EVERYONE

Council received Report CM0-18-26 regarding the Brighter Future Monthly Update. In March, Pillar #5 Housing for Everyone was selected as the dedicated focus and departments provided Council with updates on progress for this priority.

During meetings, Council members have been encouraged to share their ideas, feedback, suggestions and ask questions that will spark further discussions related to each Pillar that is being highlighted. Social Services, Planning and Building, City Manager's Office and Police Services contributed to the following accomplishments in 2025:

- Expanding the City's partnership with Indwell through investment in and support of Balaclava project, which will deliver 78 new units of supportive affordable housing to the community
- Supporting the Highview Hideaway project in partnership with Eastwood Housing, resulting in 48 net new affordable housing units;
- Utilizing the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to secure affordable units within new residential developments, including the Highland Apartments;
- Achieving measurable reductions in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness as identified through the By-Name List;
- Delivering coordinated street outreach services in partnership between St. Thomas-Elgin Social Services (STESS) and the St. Thomas Police Service (STPS) to support safer pathways for vulnerable residents and reduce the risks associated with unsheltered living;
- Ensuring access to low-barrier emergency shelter spaces and beds for individuals experiencing homelessness; and
- Increasing the number of locally administered rent supplements and housing allowances to address affordability challenges and support housing stability.
- Completing all of the 21 milestones required in 2025 for the Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan, including a Housing Needs Assessment & Action Plan; CIP Amendment and added housing incentives; ~2~ amendments to planning documents to allow 4 units; ARU Guidebook; process for City-owned land review and disposal, land acquisition policy, development incentive review and brochure, establishing a Community Planning Permit System within Official Plan policies and beginning a By-law for a key housing redevelopment area; creating an Affordable Housing Grant Program; and more.
- 346 new housing units in 2025, including 275 missing middle and 98 affordable.

With more priorities and milestones on the horizon, the most important focus areas include:

- Close monitoring of the By-Names List and continuing efforts to reduce numbers;
- Working with Eastwood Housing and the YWCA on strategic tenancy selection for their newest units (Highview Hideaway and Tiny Hope);
- Planning for the next supportive affordable housing project with a focus on priority populations including seniors;
- Updating our 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan;
- Undertaking the disposition process for City-owned land parcels to be made available for housing (Third Ave, Chestnut St); and,
- Launching the Affordable Housing Partnership Grant Program, review and selection.





2026 PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN - FINAL REPORT



Council received Report PR-06-26 with a recommendation to adopt the 2026 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This Master Plan will be the guiding policy framework for parks, recreation, and open space planning within the City of St. Thomas. Council approved a refresh of the 2020 Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2024. Monteith Brown Planning Consultants were selected to update the Plan with the undertaking of a Community and Aquatic Centre Feasibility Study. The purpose of the Master Plan is to establish measurable service level standards, identify capital investment priorities, align parkland planning with growth and intensification, integrate recreation planning with asset management principles and reflect community-driven priorities through structured engagement. This Master Plan was developed through a four-phase process that included research, engagement, analysis and implementation planning. During Phase 1, the community engagement was received through surveys, open houses, input from community groups and workshops. Phase 4 engagement included 100 attendees at an open house and 40 responses via comment sheets and emails. Having community and staff participation ensures the Plan reflects both operational realities and community aspirations.

The 2026 Parks and Recreation Master Plan has been established to align with the projected growth over the next 25 years. Recommendations such as the following: a minimum parkland provision target of 1.8 hectares per 1000 residents, securing approximately 55.6 hectares of additional parkland to support the growth, reinforces the importance of universal accessibility, safety and equitable geographic distribution of park amenities, while addressing the need of a Downtown Parks and Public Realm Master Plan that guide coordinated improvements in the City's core.

Trails - completion of the east-west railway corridor trail connection, enhanced links to growth areas, and collaboration with partners to build a comprehensive and connected trail network.

In the Plan, strategic expansion and enhancement of outdoor recreation infrastructure is addressed.

Recommendations include: new and improved sports fields, lighting upgrades, expanded public tennis and pickleball courts, increase number of basketball and volleyball areas, a new splash pad in Orchard Park to improve service coverage and continued lifecycle-based playground replacement.

Equitable service delivery and long-term sustainability were emphasized with focus on updating facility allocation policies, regularly reviewing user fees, developing an Inclusive Program Design Framework to support participation for people of all abilities and strengthening affordable recreation programming for all ages.

There are 72 prioritized recommendations which include facilities, parkland planning, service delivery, partnerships and policy updates. These recommendations will be addressed over a 10 year period and any capital projects will be brought forward through separate reports that would include detailed design analysis, financial feasibility assessment, funding strategy development, site evaluation (where applicable) and Council approval.



COMMUNITY AND AQUATIC CENTRE FEASIBILITY STUDY FINAL REPORT



Council received report PR-07-26. The Community and Aquatic Centre Feasibility Study was undertaken concurrently with the 2026 Parks and Recreation Master Plan to ensure alignment with long-term policy direction. The Study examined current and projected population growth, regional market conditions, public and stakeholder input, facility design trends and service delivery models, site considerations, capital and operating cost implications, and potential implementation pathways. The report is completed and has been presented to Council.

The growth within the City of St. Thomas is anticipated to grow to approximately 79,500 residents by 2051. This growth will include all age cohorts with Seniors (65+) increasing by 119% and highlighting the need for accessible, multi-generational recreation infrastructure.

Nearly 3000 survey respondents and approximately 50 community organizations were part of the feasibility study and master plan engagement program. There were four key findings that stood out in the results. The findings included 79% of survey respondents indicated that development of an indoor aquatic centre should be a high priority, 80% supported consideration of partnership approaches to facility delivery, broad support was expressed for multi-use, multi-generational recreation facilities and respondents emphasized the importance of affordability, accessibility, and thoughtful long-term planning. The Feasibility Study identified two primary facility types: a Community and Aquatic Centre and an Indoor Turf Sports Dome. At this time, the Study findings have been presented to Council.



UPCOMING FLAG RAISINGS & PROCLAMATIONS



18
MAR

World Down Syndrome Day



Blue and Yellow

Make your mark in the community with a proclamation, flag-raising, or by lighting up the iconic Jumbo monument! The Proclamation, Flag-Raising, and Jumbo Lighting Request Form can be found on the City's website or is available at the City Clerk's office in City Hall. Requests should be submitted as far in advance as possible to ensure they can be placed on a Council agenda. Request forms can be submitted in electronic or hard copy format.



FUTURE MEETINGS

- Monday, March 16, 2026 at 5 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 5 p.m.
- Monday, April 13, 2026 at 5 p.m.

To view the council meetings live, visit:
www.stthomas.ca/watch

PAST MEETINGS

Watch archived council meetings:

www.stthomas.ca/archived

View past agendas and minutes:

www.stthomas.ca/pastcouncilmeetings

STAY CONNECTED



www.stthomas.ca



info@stthomas.ca



519.631.1680 'O'



545 Talbot Street, St.
Thomas



@cityofstthomasontario



@cityofstthomas



@cityofstthomas



@cityofstthomasontario

