



Keeping Track

City of St. Thomas Council Highlights

May 21, 2025 | Issue 13



SOUTHWESTERN PUBLIC HEALTH

In a deputation to Council, Dr. Tran, Medical Officer of Health, provided an update on the ongoing measles outbreak, reporting 664 confirmed cases since October 2024—75% affecting those under 18 and nearly 89% unimmunized.

Dr. Tran emphasized the highly contagious nature of measles and the critical role of vaccination. The City was encouraged to support public health efforts by sharing credible information and directing residents to Southwestern Public Health for reliable resources.

A LOOK INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

1. Strong Mayor Powers Update
2. Health Recruitment Partnership
3. AMO 2025 Delegation Requests
4. Canada Public Transit Fund



STRONG MAYOR POWERS UPDATE

Following a deferral at the May 12 meeting, Council has received a report outlining the expanded Strong Mayor powers that came into effect on May 1, 2025. These new authorities, granted under the Municipal Act, 2001, bring St. Thomas in line with other municipalities that meet specific council size criteria.

Among the key powers are the Mayor's ability to propose budgets, appoint or dismiss key officials, create committees, and veto certain by-laws related to provincial priorities like housing development and infrastructure. However, Mayor Preston has chosen to delegate significant hiring and dismissal powers—such as those over the city manager and select department heads—to Council. To maintain transparency, written records of mayoral decisions will be publicly available as the city adjusts to these expanded governance tools.

HEALTH RECRUITMENT

Council has approved Health Recruitment Partnership incentives of \$33,000 each for Dr. Aghogho Nathaniel Oyibo and Dr. Wallace Ordiah.

With these approvals, a total of seven grants have now been issued in 2025, bringing the overall allocation to \$157,300—exceeding the program's \$137,000 budget. The funding shortfall will be addressed through the year-end reconciliation process.

WIND PHONE

Council received a report on a community proposal to install a Wind Phone—a symbolic, disconnected phone providing a quiet space to speak to lost loved ones—in a city park.

Staff will research best practices for durable design and location. A follow-up report with recommendations and budget details will be brought to council once complete. There are no financial impacts at this time.



AMO 2025 DELEGATION REQUESTS

Council has approved proposed delegation requests for the 2025 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference, taking place August 17 to 20 in Ottawa. The report, authored by the City's Strategic Initiatives Manager and received for information, outlines planned discussions with provincial ministries on several key local priorities.

Topics include advocating for municipal leadership and funding for Family Health Organizations, reforming public health unit governance, streamlining brownfield redevelopment, and expanding childcare capacity. The City is also seeking support for seniors' services, inter-community transportation, property tax assessment reform, new cost-sharing models for policing, funding for the HART Hub, and increased Ontario Works income exemptions.



BUILT FOR ZERO CANADA

Council has endorsed a report from St. Thomas-Elgin Social Services (STESS) confirming the submission of a funding application under the federal Homelessness Reduction Innovation Fund (HRIF), a key component of Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy.

As a leading community in the national Built for Zero Canada initiative, St. Thomas-Elgin is seeking federal support for a project aimed at reducing chronic homelessness through enhanced prevention efforts and housing stability supports. If successful, the funding would allow STESS to expand its Housing Stability Services team and increase supports like move-in assistance and eviction prevention. A decision on the application is expected in early June.





CANADA PUBLIC TRANSIT FUND

Council has endorsed the Canada Public Transit Fund (CPTF) 5-year Capital Plan, supporting a strategic investment of federal funds to upgrade and expand local transit infrastructure.

Under the new federal CPTF program, the City is set to receive approximately \$2.39 million over ten years, with annual funding beginning in 2026. The approved plan prioritizes the replacement of aging gas-powered buses, transit electrification efforts, technology upgrades, and the development of a Transit Master Plan to guide future projects.

Council's decision aligns with the City's goals of sustainable growth and building equitable, accessible transit services for the community. The plan also leverages additional provincial and federal funding sources to maximize investment impact amid rising vehicle costs.

YWCA PARTNERSHIP

Council received an update on the YMCA aquatic program, which launched in April 2024 to provide affordable access to swim lessons, Aquafit classes, and public swims for St. Thomas residents. Since its inception, nearly 3,000 swim passes have been sold, and 293 residents have registered for lessons across three sessions. As of April 2025, more than \$56,000 of the original \$100,000 funding remains, with the program scheduled to continue until the full allocation is used.

ROAD CLOSURE REQUEST

Council has approved closing Prince Albert Street between Metcalf and Isabel Streets on June 14, 2025, from 4 p.m. to midnight for the annual Old Courthouse Neighbourhood Street Party. City staff will provide barricades, with volunteers managing setup and removal. The closure supports community safety and is covered by the 2025 budget.



UPCOMING FLAG RAISINGS & PROCLAMATIONS

26
MAY : **National AccessAbility Week**
🕒 10:00 AM 📍 CITY HALL

01
JUN : **National Deafblind Awareness Month**
👤 BLUE

07
JUN : **LemonAID Day**
📍 VIRTUAL

09
SEP : **International FASD Awareness Day**
🕒 9:09 AM 📍 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, June 2, 2025 at 5PM
- Monday, June 9, 2025 at 5PM
- Monday, June 16, 2025 at 5PM

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

PAST MEETINGS

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