



YARMOUTH
YARDS

Industrial Development Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



ST. THOMAS
THE RAILWAY CITY

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Industrial Lands and Growth Planning

When was this development started?

- The western portion of the development has been zoned since 2000. In 2022, the area was significantly expanded through a mutual boundary adjustment with the Municipality of Central Elgin.

How much land is being used for new industrial purposes?

- The City's Yarmouth Yards Industrial Park covers 1,500 acres. It is adjacent to thousands of acres of existing industrial lands to the west and south.
- PowerCo lot: 377 acres
- Vianode lot: 280 acres
- Additional smaller lots ranging from 2 to 100 acres are also available.

What are the benefits of industrial growth?

- Approximately 5000 direct and indirect jobs will be created.
- Increased business for existing regional companies.
- Up to 4000 construction jobs over the next 10 years.
- Expanded infrastructure - including hydro, highways, local roads, sewers, and water systems - will support the community for decades.

How do cities develop land for industrial, commercial, or residential uses?

- The Planning Act and Provincial Planning Statement guide how cities can expand settlement areas.
- Settlement boundaries (urban or city limits) can only expand after comprehensive reviews and multiple supporting studies.
- The Planning Act requires each settlement area to include enough land to accommodate 20 years of growth for residential, industrial, and commercial needs.
- The Province prioritizes preserving farmland, especially prime agricultural land.
- A recent commercial and industrial land inventory showed a shortage of available land, even with the addition of the new industrial park.

Environmental and Sustainability Considerations

What steps did the City take to study and protect the environment?

- Extensive flora and fauna studies were completed in 2023 and 2024 to identify environmentally sensitive areas and determine what should be protected.

What species and habitat were found?

- Bat and woodpecker nesting areas within forested sections.
- Carolinian forest features, including beech, ash, and other hardwood species.

Were there any watercourses on the site that needed protection?

- No. Because the site is located at the upper end of two drainage areas, there are no streams, lakes, or wetlands present.

Where does the subdivision drain to?

- Drainage from the site flows partly into Kettle Creek and partly into Catfish Creek.

How is stormwater runoff managed?

- During construction, outlets are protected using silt fencing, straw bales, sediment ponds, and other control measures.
- Long-term, stormwater will be managed through very large stormwater management ponds located in the northwest and southeast quadrants of the site, which will reduce peak flows.

What are the short-term environmental impacts of construction?

- Construction can increase traffic and cause road congestion. In St. Thomas, background traffic volumes are relatively low, and studies indicate that any short-term congestion should be minimal until highway upgrades are completed.

What are the net environmental impacts of this development?

- A major strategy for reducing carbon emissions from combustion engines is the shift toward electric vehicles (EVs) and battery-powered equipment.
- While current EV technology for heavy equipment still has limitations, ongoing innovation - supported by industries such as PowerCo - is expected to make electric heavy machinery increasingly viable.
- Once operational, PowerCo will produce enough batteries to power one million EVs per year over the plant's lifetime.
- The environmental benefit of removing one million carbon-emitting vehicles from the road each year is substantial.

What environmental compensation does the City have to complete?

- The City must plant and/or restore approximately 150 acres of land to create new habitat. These areas will be permanently protected through natural heritage easements or by being designated as conservation lands.
- The City is required to install hundreds of bat and woodpecker nesting boxes.
- All compensation lands must be monitored and studied over time to contribute to the broader scientific understanding of habitat restoration.

Water Use and Environmental Protection

Can the local water system support large, high-water-use industries?

- Yes. Lake Erie provides an abundant and sustainable source of fresh water.
- The City is committed to protecting the health of the Great Lakes and managing water use responsibly.
- All water used in industrial manufacturing is:
 - Treated at a municipal water reclamation facility
 - Required to meet rigorous environmental standards
 - Returned to Lake Erie through Kettle Creek
- A detailed assimilative capacity study confirmed that the volume and quality of treated water being returned will not negatively impact the local ecosystem.

Is the shared water resource allocated equitably across the region? Who governs this?

- The Elgin Area Primary Water Supply System (EAPWSS) manages the regional water supply for:
 - London
 - St. Thomas
 - Southwold
 - Central Elgin
 - Dutton-Dunwich (partially)
 - Aylmer
 - Malahide
 - Bayham
- It is governed by a board made up of elected representatives from each member municipality. The board oversees equitable access and shared cost distribution.
- Water users pay per unit of consumption - meaning larger industrial customers pay more because they use more.

How is the large volume of water used in industrial production?

- Water use varies by industry.
- In EV battery production, water is primarily used for cooling processes.
- Many large facilities also recycle and reuse water multiple times before discharging it into the City's sanitary sewer system.

Does the water used in production enter the sewer full of chemicals?

- No. All industrial water discharged into the sewer system must meet the City's Industrial Waste/Sewer Use By-Law, which sets minimum quality standards that must be met before water can enter the municipal system.

Where does all the water ultimately end up?

- After industrial use, the water enters the City's sanitary sewer system and is sent to a municipally owned and operated treatment facility.
- A new water reclamation facility on Dalewood Road is currently under construction to treat wastewater from both municipal and industrial sources.
- The facility operates under an Environmental Compliance Approval, which includes strict effluent quality requirements.
- Once treated, the water is discharged into Kettle Creek, which eventually flows back into Lake Erie.

Dalewood Water Reclamation Facility

How was the location chosen?

- The Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) site was selected through an evaluation based on five criteria: socio-economic factors, natural environment, economic considerations, technical requirements, and cultural environment. While no location is ever “perfect,” the Water Tower Line site received the highest overall score.

How do water reclamation facilities work?

- WRFs clean wastewater through several treatment stages, including:
 - Mechanical separation using screens and grit removal systems
 - Settling tanks that use gravity to remove solids
 - Biological treatment, where naturally occurring bacteria remove nutrients, supported by added oxygen
 - Cloth media filtration
 - Ultraviolet (UV) disinfection to eliminate pathogens

When will it be complete?

- The facility is expected to be completed in Q2 of 2029.

Are local products being used?

- Yes. The project emphasizes hiring local labour and purchasing Canadian-made products.

Is there any recycling?

- Yes. Excess nutrients removed during treatment are processed into fertilizer and returned to the nutrient cycle through land application on farm fields.

What will the City do to mitigate odour?

- As a brand-new facility, the WRF will incorporate strong odour-control measures. This includes using negative air pressure in odour-producing areas and directing air through odour control units before it is released.
- In addition, tall berms and perimeter plantings are planned to help reduce odour impacts.

Where can I find more information about this project?

- A [project webpage](#) is available for more details.

Public Engagement and Stakeholder Outreach

What steps were taken during the planning and design process for the various projects?

- The City, acting as the developer, followed the full plan of subdivision process.
- In addition, Class Environmental Assessments were completed as required for several major projects, including the Highbury Avenue widening, the Dalewood Water Reclamation Facility, and Technology Trail.

How does the City engage with stakeholders?

- The City shares updates through a weekly YouTube series, From the Beehive, which features conversations with project experts, progress updates, and highlights of community involvement.
- The City also engages regularly with a variety of interest groups through direct communication, agency meetings, individual site tours, and group tours, including:
 - Provincial Ministries and Contacts:
 - Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
 - Invest Ontario
 - Ministry of Transportation
 - Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
 - Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development
 - Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
 - Ministry of the Solicitor General
 - Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Citizenship (as needed)
 - Federal Ministries and Contacts:
 - Ministry of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities of Canada
 - Member of Parliament Andrew Lawton
 - Fisheries and Oceans Canada
 - Key External agencies:
 - Hydro One Networks Inc.
 - Infrastructure Ontario
 - CN Railway
 - Fanshawe College
 - University of Western Ontario
 - Ontario Provincial Police
 - First Nations via Arch, Class EA, and D Permits (as needed)
 - Neighbouring Municipalities:
 - London

- Elgin County
- Central Elgin
- Southwold
- Malahide
- Aylmer
- Dutton Dunwich/West Elgin
- Bayham
- Local Agencies:
 - London District Heavy Construction Association
 - Kettle Creek Conservation Authority
 - Catfish Creek Conservation Authority
 - Elgin Primary Water Board
 - St. Thomas Secondary Water Board
 - Aylmer Secondary Water Board
 - Dutton Dunwich Water Board
 - St. Thomas Chamber of Commerce
 - St. Thomas Downtown Development Board
 - Existing industrial companies
 - Southwest Public Health
 - St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital
 - EMS Elgin
 - Key Service Clubs (London District Realtors, Rotary Club, Golden K, Optimist Board)
 - Professional Engineers Ontario/Municipal Engineers Association conference presentations
- City key internal groups:
 - Environmental Services Department
 - St. Thomas Fire Department
 - St. Thomas Police Service
 - St. Thomas Municipal Airport
 - City Council
 - City Leadership Team
- Local Developers:
 - Doug Tarry Homes
 - Hayhoe Homes (Performance Communities Inc.)
 - HIP Developments Inc.
 - Home Builders Association

Funding and Oversight

How is municipal infrastructure funded?

- Major infrastructure investments - such as wastewater treatment plants - are typically funded through:
 - Partnerships with Provincial and Federal governments
 - Private sector investment
 - Rates paid by system users
- Municipalities must maintain balanced budgets and often finance long-term projects through strategic use of long-term debt.
- As sewer and water systems expand, they generally generate more revenue by selling higher volumes of service. These increased volumes often help offset capital costs.

How can I get more information on the cost of these projects?

- All industrial park infrastructure projects followed the City's procurement policies and were awarded through a public tendering process.
- City Council reviewed and approved all tenders in public meetings.
- For details, visit the [Council Minutes](#) page and search for "Industrial Development."