



Keeping Track

City of St. Thomas Council Highlights

May 5, 2026 | Issue 41



MUNICIPAL TREE PRESERVATION BY-LAW 130-2017 UPDATES

Council has authorized the proposed amendments to the Municipal Tree Preservation framework. Staff have outlined the key updates: Removal of Minimum Diameter Threshold, Clarification of Trees Abutting Private Property, Replacement of Non-native or Functionally Invasive Municipal Trees, Application to Plant Trees on Municipal Property, Clarification of Fees, Charges and Valuation, Service Charges for Contraventions and Clarification of Tree Measurement Terminology.



A LOOK INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

1. Municipal Tree Preservation By-law 130-2017 Updates
2. 2026 Provincial Gas Tax
3. Alteration of User Group - Water Tower Mountain Bike Network
4. Downtown Development Board 2026 Budget and Levy
5. Introduction of Chronolog for Community Engagement and Environmental Monitoring



GREEN LANE LANDFILL

Council received an update on the status of the Green Lane landfill following concerns it may reach capacity by 2035. Located in the Township of Southwold, the 71-hectare site serves as the primary waste facility for the City of Toronto and several municipalities within Elgin County, including St. Thomas. While earlier projections suggested a 2035 closure, the City of Toronto is reviewing its Long-Term Waste Strategy, with completion expected in 2028. Options under consideration include landfill expansion, alternative disposal contracts, and energy-from-waste solutions. Importantly, existing agreements and provincial approvals ensure St. Thomas maintains priority access to landfill capacity while future plans are finalized.



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT BOARD 2026 BUDGET AND LEVY



Council received and reviewed the 2026 Downtown Development Board (DDB) levy and associated tax rates, as required under the Municipal Act. The DDB operates as a Business Improvement Area (BIA), with its annual budget subject to Council approval. For 2026, the Board has proposed a budget of \$285,250—an increase of \$5,250, or 1.88%—funded through the BIA levy on properties within the designated downtown area. Staff have recommended approval, noting no concerns with the submission. However, the report highlights longer-term considerations, including a potential review of BIA boundaries, levy exemptions for vacant properties, and the current \$1,100 maximum contribution cap, which no longer reflects today's property values and could create inequities among taxpayers. Staff have asked for this budget to be submitted separately in coming years to provide an opportunity for the Board to attend Council, present its budget and participate in broader budget deliberations related to the BIA.



ALTERATION OF USER GROUP - WATER TOWER MOUNTAIN BIKE NETWORK

Council received Report PR-14-26. The Water Tower Mountain Bike Network will now be the primary steward for the trail network due to recent strategic restructuring of local cycling groups. The Water Tower Mountain Bike Network will be responsible for trail clearing and sustainability, insurance purposes and safety which includes implementation of trail signage, emergency protocol and communicating potential risks to Parks and Forestry staff. The WTMBC will assume all rights, responsibilities and liabilities from the Railway City Cycling Club. The Railway City Cycling Club will continue to focus on street cycling and requested the separation.

2026 PROVINCIAL GAS TAX

Council received the report TR-12-26 to state that the City will receive \$418,003 through Ontario's Gas Tax program for the 2025-2026 year, supporting local public transit services. The Provincial program, which distributes nearly \$380 million to 107 municipalities, provides stable, predictable funding based on ridership and population. Funds must be used for eligible transit needs, including operating costs, service improvements, infrastructure, and accessibility upgrades. In the City of St. Thomas, \$271,000 will offset operating expenses, which will reduce pressure on taxpayers and riders, while \$147,003 will be placed in a reserve fund to support future transit vehicle purchases and long-term service sustainability.





INTRODUCTION OF CHRONOLOG FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

The City is launching Chronolog, an innovative citizen science initiative that invites residents to help document environmental change through time-lapse photography. Installations will be located at Lake Margaret (Jim Waite Park) and Waterworks Park, positioned along popular multi-use pathways to encourage participation. Residents can take photos using a mounted bracket and upload them to a shared platform, creating a visual record over time. The program supports education, environmental monitoring, tourism, and community engagement. With minimal costs covered by the Parks budget, Chronolog offers a cost-effective way to track landscape changes while advancing the City's environmental stewardship goals.



PROPOSED ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT - 115 EDWARD STREET - FOLLOW UP REPORT



An application to amend zoning at 115 Edward Street to permit bingo use and relocate Jackpot Time Charitable Gaming Centre was received by Council. Staff supports the proposal and is consistent with policies, conforms to the City's Official Plan and is sound land use planning. A public meeting was held on April 13th with no submissions, questions or comments made by the public or Council. The amendment is recommended for approval on May 11, 2026 at the next Council meeting.



WINTER MAINTENANCE LEVEL OF SERVICE POLICY

Council received the Winter Maintenance Level of Service Policy. The update will enhance safety, accessibility, and consistency across municipal transportation infrastructure. Aligned with provincial standards, the policy outlines snow and ice control for roads, sidewalks, and bike routes, while expanding coverage to transit stops, downtown parking lots, and public lanes. Key updates include new service standards for transit stops and integrating the Active Transportation Network into sidewalk-level maintenance requirements. While most changes reflect current practices, this addition may require extra resources, costing an estimated \$5,000 to \$15,000 annually.



UPCOMING FLAG RAISINGS & PROCLAMATIONS

11
MAY

Victims and Survivors
of Crime Week
🕒 10:00AM 📍 CITY HALL

1
JUNE

National AccessAbility
Week and Red Shirt Day
🕒 10:00AM 📍 CITY HALL

2
JUNE

National Deafblind
Awareness Month
🕒 11:00AM 📍 CITY HALL



📍 CITY HALL

JUMBO MONUMENT LIGHTING

May 4-8
GBS/CIDP
Awareness

💡 Blue

May 10
Lupus
Awareness
Day

💡 Purple

May 11-16
Victims and
Survivors of
Crime Week

💡 Teal



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, May 11, 2026 at 5 p.m.
- Tuesday, May 19, 2026 at 5 p.m.
- Monday, June 1, 2026 at 5 p.m.

To view the council meetings live, visit:
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