

TVDSB Community Planning and Facility Collaboration Meeting

Presented by: Mayor Joe Preston

May 8, 2026



Agenda

- St. Thomas Growth and Transformation
 - Population and Employment Projections
 - Housing Needs/Market Trends and Current Initiatives
- Industrial Development
- Dalewood Water Reclamation Facility Project
- Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Refresh
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- Health Recruitment
- Implications for Local Schools and Planning

Population & Employment Growth Projections (2024–2051)

Long-Term Growth Forecast

Population:

- 2024: 46,400 → 2051: 79,500 (**+33,100 / 71% increase**)
- **The growth potential for the City considers the impact of the PowerCo site but it also generally captures the increasing growth outlook being observed for the broader commuter-shed.*

Employment:

- 2024: 22,800 → 2051: 34,300 (**+11,500 jobs**)

Key growth driver: PowerCo plant

- 3,000 direct jobs
- 5,800 total jobs in St. Thomas (including indirect/induced)
- Vianode announced in 2025: up to 1,000 jobs
- Labour force participation projected to decline from 59% to 53%, impacted by aging population.

A Shift Toward Density and Affordability

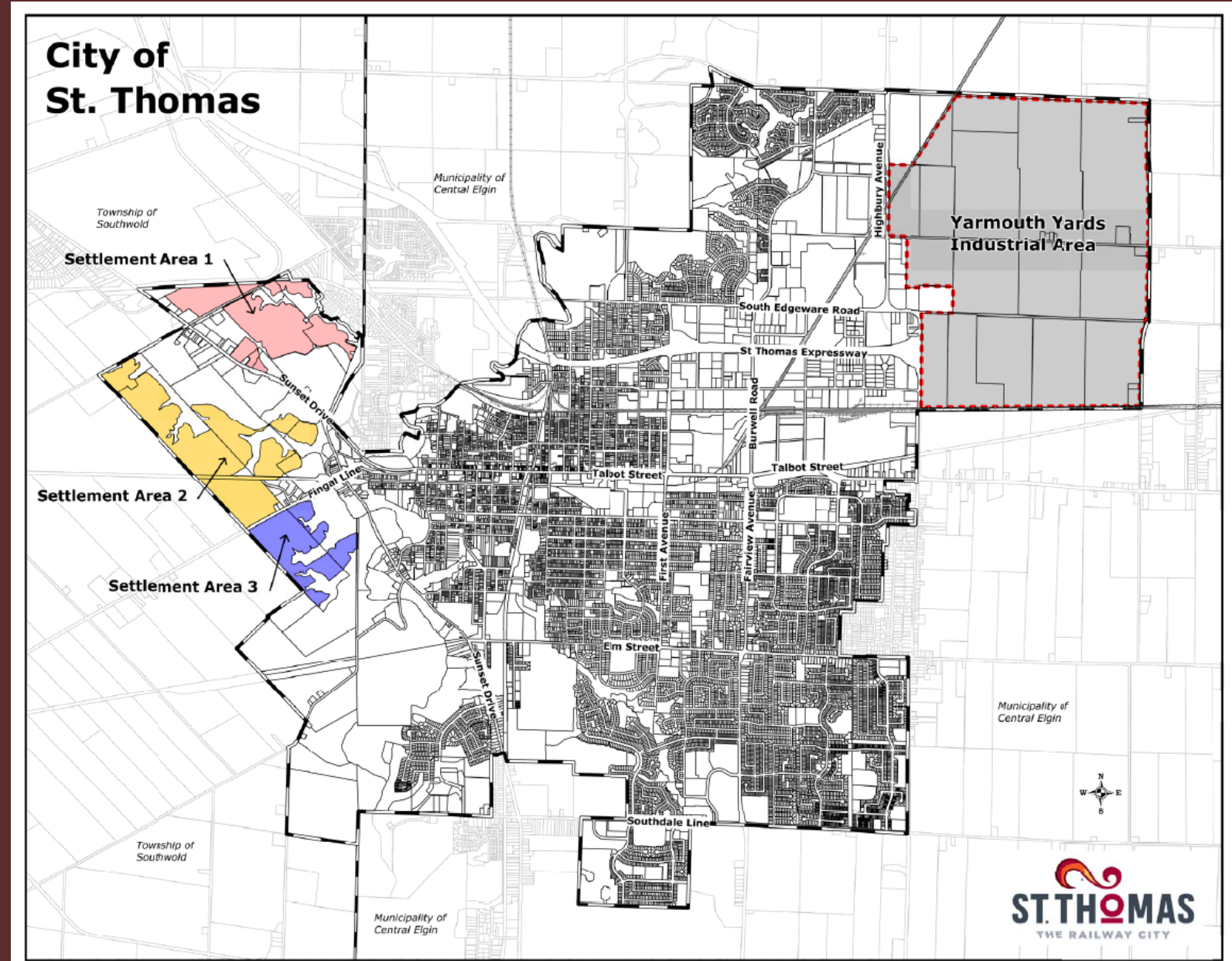
- Housing units:
 - 2024: 19,000 → 2051: 33,400 (**+14,400 units**)
 - *Over the next decade (2024 to 2034) there will be a housing need for 7,700 units; a diverse range of housing is needed.
 - Affordability needs affect school-age children and youth, as housing instability can disrupt education
- Forecasted mix of new units:
 - 55% low-density (single/semi-detached)
 - 19% medium-density (townhomes)
 - 26% high-density (apartments)
- Development Trends:
 - Rising share of multi-unit construction
 - Housing completions peaked around 2023–2031 (VW plant impact)
 - High demand for: **supportive housing, smaller units** for seniors, single people, and non-traditional families, and **workforce housing** for incoming employees
- Shifts driven by aging population and market affordability pressures.

Housing Needs Study and Market Trends



Future Housing Market Impacts

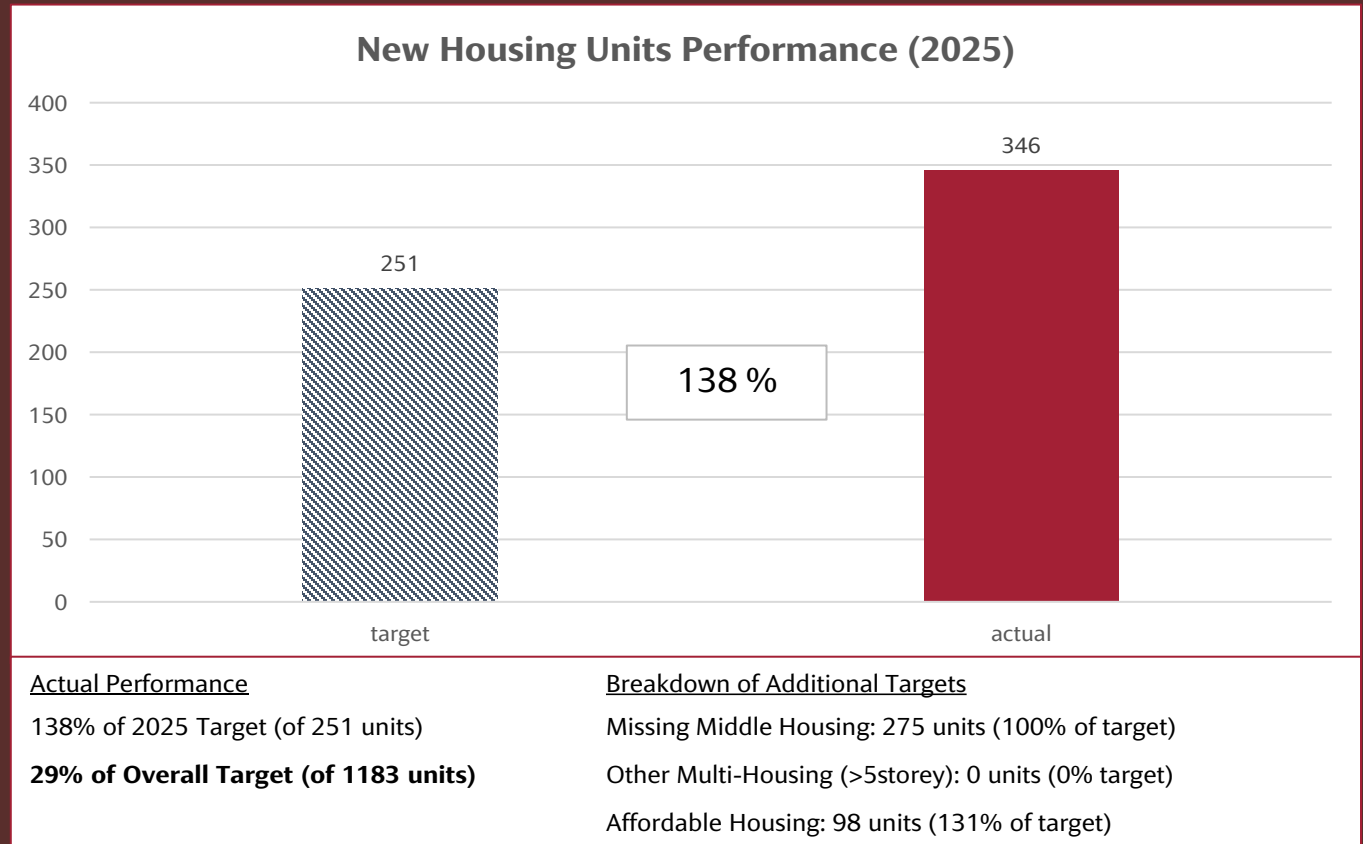
- Increased population and household growth
- Higher demand for workforce and rental housing
- More mid-density and mixed-use development pressure
- Importance of regional planning and transit-supportive growth



Ongoing Housing Initiatives

Housing Accelerator Fund...

- The City was successful in receiving **\$6.65 million** from this Federal program. By December 2027, the City is expected to add **1183 new housing units**



Ongoing Housing Initiatives

10-Year Housing & Homelessness Plan...

- **Past Plan (Taking Stock, Working Together):**
 - 272 new affordable/supportive housing units invested in
 - Over 8,000 households supported (rent supplement, etc.)
 - Housed over 65% of By-Names List referrals, including 745 people moved to housing away from homelessness
 - Feb. 2023: St. Thomas-Elgin achieves goal of Functional Zero Veteran Homelessness and continues to sustain it (second community nation-wide in Built for Zero Canada)
 - 558 units of City-owned/managed housing, 512 RGI units
- **New Plan (Housing For Everyone):**
 - Focus Areas: END Homelessness, SUSTAIN Housing, BUILD More, LEAD Collaboratively
 - Targets for new affordable and supportive housing units
 - Draft – March 2026; Submit to MMAH – May 2026

Industrial Development

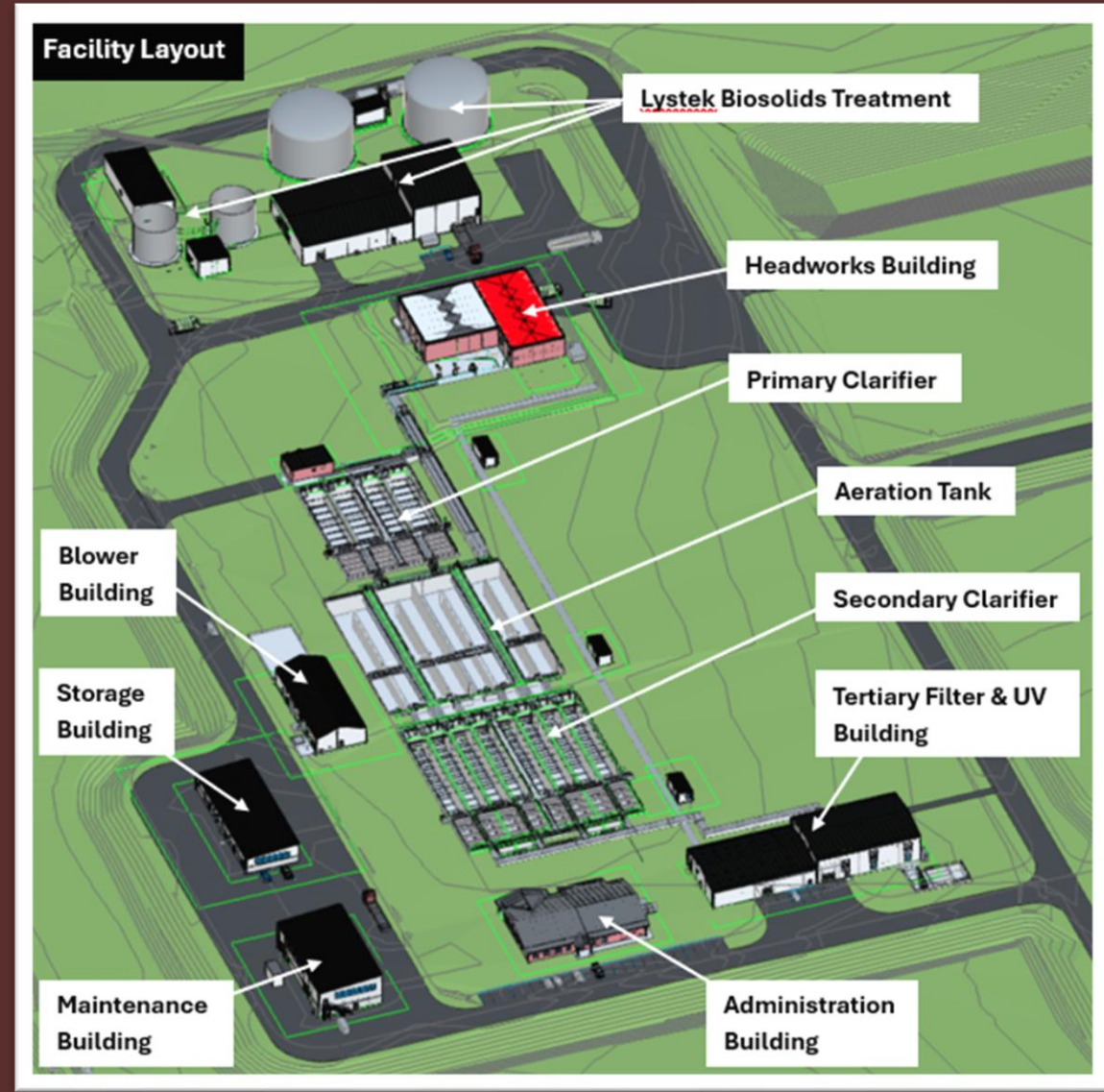
- Increased migration of working-age families to the region may lead to new enrollment growth
- Development will attract a diverse workforce, potentially increasing student diversity and support needs
- Anticipated new housing developments near employment zones will require school site planning and boundary reviews
- Opportunity for school-industry partnerships in skilled trades, STEM, and EV technology education.

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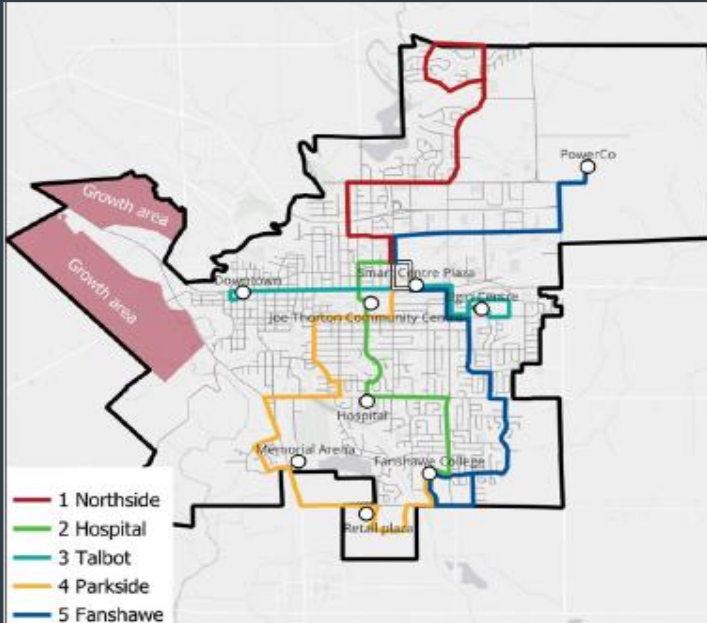


Current Projects: *Dalewood Water Reclamation Facility (DWRF)*

- Modern, multi-stage wastewater treatment process , with expected completion Q2 2029
- Built with high-capacity pumping stations, capable of handling large and consistent industrial flows
- Designed with redundancy and resiliency
- Supports long-term regional growth & environmental protection
- Tasks to be completed in the immediate future include archaeological, geotechnical, and hydrological site work.



Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Refresh 2025



What We Heard (Key Themes):

- Need for enhanced and accessible transit options
- Strong demand for safe, connected walking & cycling networks
- Support for modern approaches (parking policy, demand management, new tech)
- Preference for strategic road investments (less widening, more efficiency)

A Community-Informed Plan for a Growing City

- Extensive public engagement guided the TMP under the Municipal Class EA process:
 - 190+ survey responses on travel habits and priorities
 - Two public open houses + online engagement

Youth Voice Integrated into Planning

- 72 students engaged through *Students Build Cities* (in partnership with Thames Valley District School Board)
- Workshops, surveys, and idea sessions shaped future mobility vision

Regional & Industry Collaboration

- Coordination with Elgin County & neighbouring municipalities
- Input from development industry on building complete, livable communities

TMP Refresh: Strategic Direction

Planning for Growth Over the Next 30 Years

- Advanced modelling used to forecast traffic and infrastructure needs across multiple growth scenarios

Critical Shift Identified:

- Increase transit use from **1%** → **6%** to reduce costly road widening
- Major policy and investment pivot from previous TMP

Infrastructure & Network Priorities:

- Targeted road improvements (not expansion-heavy)
- New connections to support growth areas (e.g., NW areas, Major Line extension)
- Intersection upgrades across the network

Active & Sustainable Transportation:

- +29 km of new active transportation routes (10-year target)
- +44 km long-term secondary network
- Regional connections with neighbouring municipalities

Transit Transformation:

- Interim improvements (expanded routes, hours, frequency)
- Currently in process: **Transit Master Plan** to modernize the system



The City's recently approved Parks & Recreation Master Plan identifies a growing need for expanded recreation infrastructure to support population growth and evolving community needs

Some notable priorities include:

- Additional multi-use/turf facilities
- Expanded gymnasium space
- Increased opportunities for youth sports, recreation, and year-round programming

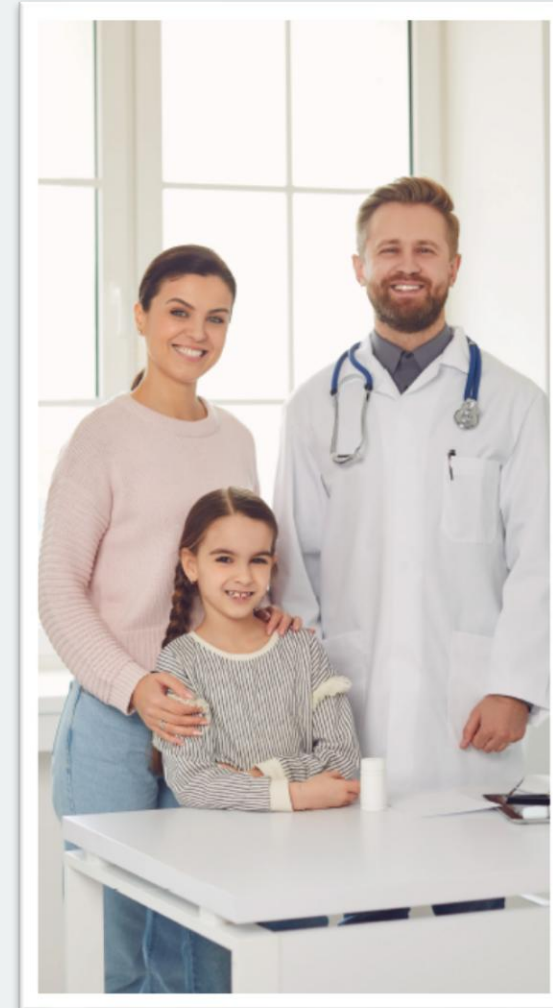
Schools play an important role as community hubs and shared gathering spaces. The City welcomes opportunities to collaborate with Thames Valley District School Board on:

- ***Potential co-build recreation projects***
- ***Shared-use gymnasiums and sports facilities***
- ***Maximizing access to community amenities through partnership opportunities***

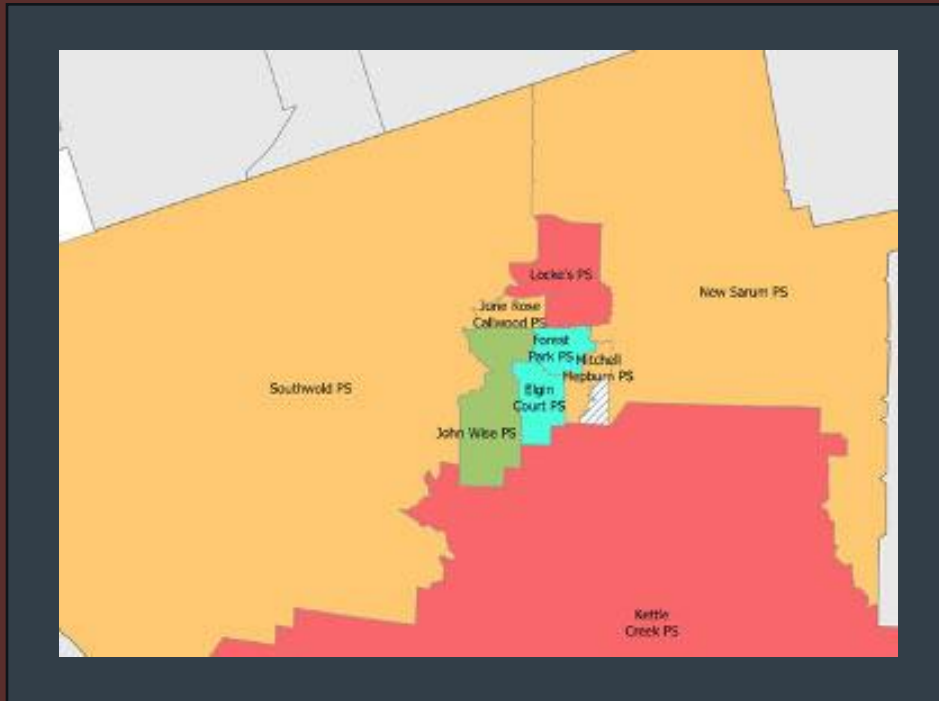
Parks and Rec Master Plan

Elgin St. Thomas Health Recruitment Partnership **2025 Success**

- **11 New Physicians** (*including 1 unfunded*) recruited to serve the community
- **2 Nurse Practitioners** added to expand primary care access
- Strong collaboration with community partners and health organizations
- Improving local access to family medicine and reducing wait times



Implications for Local Schools and Planning



Aligning Education with Community Growth

- Expected growth in young families and working-age residents = **increased school enrollment**
- Aging population may reduce enrollment in some areas while increasing need for lifelong learning or child-care supports
- Housing affordability and mobility could create pressure on schools in lower-income/high-growth neighborhoods
- Proactive collaboration with the City ensures schools remain accessible, adaptable, and adequately resourced

Questions?

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Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Annual Community Planning and Facility Collaboration Opportunities Meeting.

The City of St. Thomas is committed to all future collaboration opportunities that will ensure equitable education and success for our residents and families.