ST. THOMAS THE RAILWAY CITY	**Report No.** ES-50-26
	File No.
Directed to: Mayor Joe Preston and Members of City Council	**Meeting Date:** August 10, 2026
Department: Environmental Services	**Attachment** What We Heard: Engagement Summary
Authored By: Conner Hindley, Sustainable Transportation Coordinator	
Subject: **Transit Master Servicing Plan - Public Engagement Summary**	

Recommendation:

THAT: Report ES-50-26 relating to the Transit Master Servicing Plan – Public Engagement Summary be received for information, and further;

THAT: Council acknowledges the key themes and findings outlined in the "What We Heard: Engagement Summary" as representative of the feedback received during phase 1 of the public consultation process, and further;

THAT: The "What We Heard: Engagement Summary" together with the comments and direction provided by Council during consideration of Report ES-50-26 be incorporated into the preparation of preliminary service concepts and potential system changes, and further;

THAT: Staff report back to Council following the second phase of public consultation summarizing the development and components of the draft Transit Master Servicing Plan for further consideration.

Background

The City retained Dillon Consulting to undertake a Transit Master Servicing Plan. The purpose of this plan is to establish short-, medium-, and long-term goals to guide transit network planning and operations.

A comprehensive public engagement program was initiated in April 2026 and concluded in early July 2026.

Engagement Process and Groups Consulted:

The engagement program combined targeted outreach with broad public participation to capture a comprehensive range of perspectives. Public engagement began with pop-up sessions at the St. Thomas Home Show and the St. Thomas Public Library, along with bus ride-alongs and targeted outreach at the transit hub and select stops near Fanshawe College and local high schools.

Following these sessions, both in-person and virtual focus groups were conducted with a broad range of community stakeholders, including:

- Long-term care homes and retirement resident operators
- Fanshawe College staff and students
- Voyago supervisors and transit operators
- Major local employers
- City staff (Economic Development, Planning, and Social Services)
- Accessibility Advisory Committee

Additional engagement activities included:

- In-person route planning exercises with local high school students
- Three separate virtual workshops with small groups of Council members
- An online survey conducted during the first month of engagement, which received 244 responses

Key Takeaways

The engagement process generated valuable input on opportunities to enhance the City's transit system. Several key themes that consistently emerge from the "What We Heard: Engagement Summary" (**Attachment 1**) include:

- Extending conventional evening service hours beyond the current 5:45 p.m. end time,
- Improving the frequency of conventional routes 1, 2, 4 & 5 (Currently 60-minute frequencies),
- Expanding capacity within the Paratransit/On-Demand system, as users reported difficulty booking trips due to high demand; Voyago indicated that trip requests have tripled since 2020,
- Expanding service coverage to support new industrial and residential growth areas,
- Improving regional connectivity, including potential links to Port Stanley and Aylmer, as well as increased service to London,

Next Steps

With the completion of the first phase of engagement, next key milestones are:

- Community Survey #2 (Fall 2026): Dillon Consulting will present preliminary service concepts and potential system changes and gather public feedback through a second survey
- Council Presentation #2 (Q1 2027): Summarize the development and components of the draft Transit Master Servicing Plan to Council
- Council Presentation #3 (Q2 2027): Summarize the final recommendations of the Transit Master Servicing Plan

Strategic Priority:

Strategic Pillar: Excellence in All We Do - Priority #2: Thoughtful, Strategic, and Sustainable Community Growth

Report Approval:

This report has been reviewed and approved by the Manager of Roads & Transportation and Director of Environmental & Infrastructure Services/City Engineer.

All reports are reviewed and approved by the City Manager.