

What We Heard So Far:

Round 1 Engagement Summary

ST. THOMAS
THE RAILWAY CITY

DILLON
CONSULTING

Engagement Venues

Notifications, Information and Invitations	Community-Wide Engagement	Focused Engagement			
Project Website	Library	Senior Care Workers	Fanshawe College	Planning	Social Services
	Home Show	PowerCo	Supervisors and Drivers	Economic Development	Accessibility Advisory Committee
	Round #1 Online Survey	High School Students	Major Employers	Connecting Agencies	Council

Focused Engagement



Senior Care Workers Focus Group



Senior Care Workers Focus Group – April 9, 2026

Intent: Identify key areas for improvement within the current transportation system from the perspective of current senior transit users

Key Take-aways for the Master Plan

- While Parallel Transit is affordable ($1.65 for seniors, $2.25 for adults, $2.75 through cash fare), its reliability is inconsistent, and it's often already booked.
- A critical need is to extend evening hours and flexible booking to accommodate last-minute medical appointments.
- Perspective that the Parallel vehicle leaves before the passenger is picked up
- Importance of door-to-door service for many seniors.
- Bus stops (such as the Walmart location) are situated too far away, lack adequate shelter, and feel unsafe for seniors carrying bags.
- Standard payment methods are challenging for cognitively impaired individuals. Users request simplified options, such as invoicing long-term care facilities directly or implementing a dedicated senior bus pass

Other Discussion Topics

- Private hospital transport is very expensive (up to $300 one-way).
- Discussion around the relationship of using VON and Parallel Transit

Fanshawe College Focus Group

Fanshawe College Focus Group – April 9, 2026

Intent: Identify key areas for improvement within the current transportation system from the perspective of post-secondary students and staff

Key Take-aways for the Master Plan

- Classes regularly run from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm and can run as late as midnight. Conventional service currently unable to meet the demand for student trips at some of these times.
- The On Demand system seems to not adhere to the scheduled pick-up time, leaving students waiting 30-45 minutes after classes end.
- Students would benefit from a transit pass integrated into their tuition.
- Potential challenge implementing a universal pass due to where students live.

Other Discussion Topics

- Many students do not own cars and heavily rely on Uber or transit.
- Consider the potential to relocating the Fanshawe stop to be more visible or closer (potentially on the campus).
- Key requested destinations include Talbot Street, Downtown, Port Stanley, industrial sites, daycares, long-term care homes, and the Elgin Centre.
- There are frustrations regarding route changes due to construction, poor lighting at night, a need for bike racks on the buses and more bus shelters.

PowerCo Focus Group

PowerCo Focus Group - April 9, 2026

Intent: Identify key areas for improvement within the current transportation system from the perspective of current employers

Key Take-aways for the Master Plan

- For their upcoming workforce of 2,000 to 4,000 staff, a transit connection to London is highly important.
- Would like to see more frequent buses, ideally every 10-15 minutes or half an hour, coinciding with the beginning and end of shifts.
- Emphasizes the need for nighttime transit service.

Other Discussion Topics

- Discussion on use of Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers for vehicles to compliment the transit service.

Voyago Supervisors & Drivers Focus Group

Supervisors and Drivers Focus Group – April 10, 2026

Intent: Identify key areas for improvement within the current transportation system from the operational perspective

Key Take-aways for the Master Plan

- The Talbot route is the busiest, and the Fanshawe area sees heavy congestion during peak hours (7:00 am to 9:00 am and 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm)
- Conventional service ends at 5:45 pm, leaving only one driver to manage all night operations for both Parallel Transit and On Demand service.
- On Demand service calls have tripled, jumping from 8 calls per driver in 2020 to 20–25 calls currently.
- Commingling On Demand passengers with Parallel Transit passengers is causing operational issues.

Other Discussion Topics

- Passengers often confuse the Railway City Transit buses with other buses, thinking their bus has left them behind, indicating a need for clearer identifiers on vehicles.
- A more diversified fleet, utilizing smaller vans or sprinters, would be more cost-efficient for On Demand routes.
- There is a need for more dispatchers.

Major Employers

Major Employers – May 13, 2026

Intent: To understand the evolving transit needs of major employers.

Key Take-aways for the Master Plan

- Current transit schedule and frequency does not align with shift times. Routes are long and indirect.
- Transit schedule does not align with employees commuting from London or Toronto. Those without access to a personal vehicle rely on biking or carpooling and are often late to work.
- Having smaller vehicles or routes that connect to different points in the city would be helpful.
- Employers support having an employer transit pass program.

Other Discussion Topics

- Lack of reliable transit it makes it difficult for those without cars to access these jobs.
- There is a stigma against transit among employees.
- There are no sidewalks at all in the industrial area, Employees have to walk on the road to get to work. A bike path, safe crossing location, and bike racks would be beneficial.

Connecting Agencies

Technical Stakeholder Working Group – May 20, 2026

Intent: Review transit master plan objectives and operational challenges for future service network expansion.

Key Take-aways for the Master Plan

- Need for improved industrial area coverage, digital payment options, and weekend service.
- Key issues raised include the lack of service to the industrial area and Lynhurst, during the evening, and general lack of bus shelters.

Other Discussion Topics

- Middlesex County Connect Route 3 will undergo changes in mid-August, including potential timing adjustments, a new stop at Fanshawe College, the removal of the Amazon Southwold stop, and an extension to Victoria Hospital. Coordination with Fanshawe College will be required.
- London Transit to move terminal from White Oaks Mall to a new facility at Wellington and Exeter.
- The city is anticipating the construction of a third high school in the southern part of the city, which will require new service coverage as the area currently lacks fixed route access.
- Policy around allowing foldable scooters on transit to assist with first/last mile transit is being explored.
- To address specialized transit capacity challenges, different vehicle sizes, such as smaller accessible vehicles, and refining reservation windows are being considered. Flexible transit options for shift workers are also being considered.

Planning and Economic Development

Planning – June 3, 2026

Economic Development – May 13, 2026

Intent: To understand the residential and economic development of the City and how that will influence transit design

Key Take-aways for the Master Plan

- New industrial developments necessitate transit service for thousands of employees. PowerCo will require service by 2028.
- Interest in further expanding on-demand transit.
- Service should support intensification along corridors identified in Commercial Market Study
- There is a recognized need for reliable and effective bus service downtown. Downtown businesses primarily need transit for local customers who do not have their own car.
- Interest in connections to London and Port Stanley

Other Discussion Topics

- Hospital lands in the south end anticipated to greatly expand, which may drive further growth needs.
- Most people are currently driving, which complicates master planning efforts.
- Importance of connecting to parks and open spaces.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Accessibility Advisory Committee – April 23, 2026

Intent: Discuss key transit accessibility concerns and priorities.

Key Take-aways for the Master Plan

- Parallel service wait times have gotten worse, increasing from 5 minutes to 15 minutes. Trips have increased in length.
- Passengers have problems with booking trips ahead, could not reliably booking trips for appointments.
- Many passengers choose not to use transit service for leisure trips due to unreliability. Some passengers are unsure when they need to pre-book rides for on-demand and when they can use fixed-route service.
- The height of the first step onto the bus makes it difficult for passengers who have mobility issues or require mobility devices, having a ramp would be beneficial.
- Having rails or overhead straps to hold onto would be helpful.
- Current shelters do not provide protection from wind and rain and there is not enough room for multiple mobility devices and other passengers. Some shelters do not have accessible entrances.
- Passengers want more accessible ways to pay their fare, with online payment and more ticket retailers around the city.

Other Discussion Topics

- The service needs to be easier for seniors to use.

Social Services

Social Services – June 2, 2026

Intent: Identify critical transit accessibility gaps for vulnerable populations and discuss potential infrastructure and affordability solutions.

Key Take-aways for the Master Plan

- Social services congregate in the St. Thomas core, requiring county-wide transit connectivity. The west portion of Talbot Street is a critical corridor for social services and community support programs, including Grace Café.
- Specialized needs often necessitate travel to London due to limited local capacity.
- High transit costs and non-traditional work schedules hinder low-income residents, particularly those on Ontario Works receiving less than $800 per month for all living expenses. Digital-only booking systems present accessibility challenges for populations lacking reliable data or technology.
- Recreational and youth programming require aligned transit schedules. Enhanced safety lighting at bus stops remains a priority for women and late-night commuters.

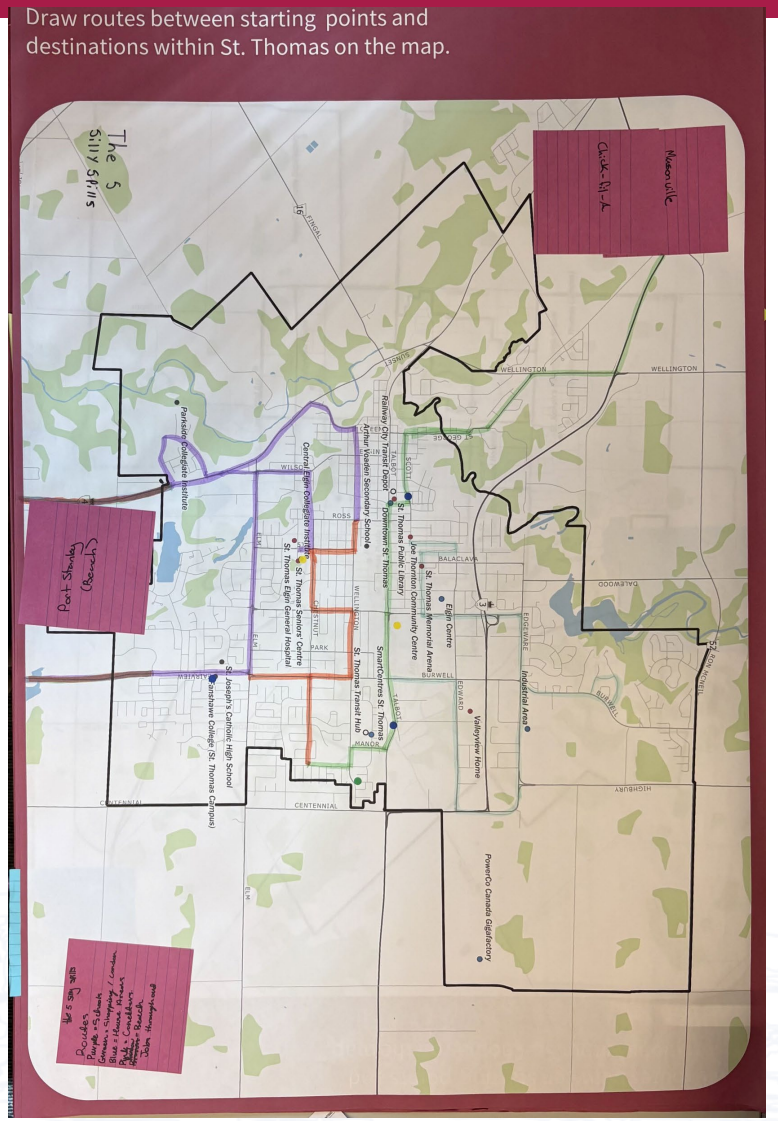
High School Students

High School Students – April 10, 2026

Intent: Identify key areas for improvement within the current transportation system from the perspective of a high school students by allowing the students to create their own transit networks

Key Take-aways for the Master Plan

- Interest in regional destinations (primarily London and Port Stanley; as well as Aylmer, Springfield, Talbotville and Dorchester)
- Focus on establishing direct connections or dedicated loops between local high schools and Fanshawe College
- Routes were also drawn to connect residential areas and schools to major commercial hubs such as the Walmart, Elgin Centre and Downtown



Council Workshops

Council – July 8 to 13, 2026

Intent: Identify priorities for councilors and what they have heard from residents. Councillors were invited to attend one of three small-group workshops.

Key Goals for the Master Plan

- To be efficient and provide frequent and reliable transportation alternatives to employment, recreation, education, appointments and other opportunities in the City; especially for those without vehicles
- To see what changes peer agencies are making to improve their services and to invest more into improving our service while increasing cost recovery
- To reliably serve shift workers at shift change times and students in the morning and afternoon
- To have more capacity for paratransit trips and have short walking distances between stops and key destinations for seniors
- To explore regional transit partnership options including trips to London, Port Stanley and Aylmer that are appropriately cost-shared with those municipalities
- To improve and integrate active transportation connections with transit including pedestrian connections and bike racks. Increase number of bus shelters across the network.

Pop-ups



Home Show and Library Pop Ups



Library Drop In Session – April 9, 2026



Home Show Booth – April 10 to 11, 2026

Strengths

- Some passengers highlighted that the service is "always on time" and they generally feel safe while riding the bus.
- There was positive feedback regarding the bus drivers, the current bus schedules, and an appreciation for the "small buses."
- Users specifically mentioned liking Routes 3 and 4, the convenience of the Walmart bus stop, and the importance of maintaining the affordable Parallel Transit system.

Opportunities for Expansions

- There is a demand for regional transit. The most frequently requested connections were to London (specifically Victoria Hospital / LHSC, VIA train station, Masonville), Port Stanley, and Aylmer.
- Residents want service expanded to Orchard Park, Lynhurst and the new subdivisions, Wellington & Ross, and the Elgin-St. Thomas Health Hub.
- There is a need for transit servicing the industrial areas and the battery plant, specifically aligned with employee shift changes.
- Requests were made to route inner-city buses further west along Talbot (near the Jumbo the Elephant statue).

Home Show and Library Pop Ups

Opportunities for General Improvements

- Request to extend transit service later into the evening (at least until 10:00 pm) and adding more weekend service.
- General requests were made for more frequent buses. One notable frustration is that taking the bus is currently "slower than walking" in certain areas.
- Interest in relocating the current hospital bus stop. Additionally, buses stopping at the Transit Hub are reportedly blocking the road.
- Passengers want better walkways and bike paths leading up to bus stops, as well as the addition of bike racks on buses and protected bike parking.
- There are requests to better clean up the bus shelters.



Home Show and Library Pop Ups

Opportunities for General Improvements

- Request to install printed schedules at all bus stops
- Request to show real-time location of On Demand buses in app
- There is a desire to implement a transit "smart card." Additionally, users suggested selling bus tickets at accessible third-party retailers like Shoppers Drug Mart.
- Some passengers noted that the current buses do not have enough space and need to be more comfortable.
- Alternative Ideas: Suggestions included adding an open-air tram on Talbot Street and accommodating small, non-licensed electric vehicles.



Online Survey



Online Survey

Round #1 Online Survey

Opportunities for Improvement

- **Extended Service Hours:** Request to extend transit service earlier in the morning, later into the evening (at least until 10:00 pm) and adding more weekend service.
- **Reliable Schedules:** General need for buses to run according to schedule, passengers mentioned that buses are departing from stops very early making it difficult to rely on the schedule.
- **Increased Frequency:** Have fixed-route buses run every 30 minutes.
- **High School Connections:** Include a direct bus connection from local high schools (e.g. Parkside and Central) to the Ignite Youth Centre to improve access for students, especially those affected by the closure of Arthur Voaden Secondary School in the next school year.
- **School Trippers:** Have a dedicated school bus route or bus that serves students in the morning and afternoon (e.g. Route 4).

LOCAL MOTION
RAILWAY CITY TRANSIT

Online Survey

Round #1 Online Survey

Opportunities for Improvement

- **Accessible Route Design**: A desire to have short walking distances between stops and key destinations for seniors.
- **Flexible Payment Options:** A desire to implement a transit "smart card" and a longer transfer window.
- **Regional Transit Access:** There is demand for regional transit. The most frequently requested connections were to London (specifically Victoria Hospital, LHSC, White Oaks Mall and Masonville) and Port Stanley as well as Aylmer.
- **Extensions:** Residents want service expanded to Orchard Park, Lynhurst and the new subdivisions, Wellington & Ross, and the Elgin-St. Thomas Health Hub.
- **Employment Connections:** Have a dedicated bus route that serves shift workers at shift change times.

LOCAL MOTION
RAILWAY CITY TRANSIT