Railway Lands Area Master Plan

Phase 2: Concepts

Summary Document

September 2026

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Land Use Typology, Evaluation Framework

Section 1

Land Use Types



- Residential uses incl. single detached, semi-detached, duplex, triplex and Additional Residential Units (ARUs)
- < 25 units/Ha density
- <4 storeys (11m)

Residential–Low Rise



- Residential uses incl. townhouses, multi-unit dwellings, low-rise apartments, stacked townhouses, ARUs
- 25-75 units/Ha density
- Up to 8 storeys (26m)

Residential–Medium Rise



- Residential apartments
- 75-250 units/Ha density
- 9 storeys or greater (up to 45m)

Residential-High Rise



- Range of commercial, institutional, recreation uses
- Generally, 1-2 storeys in height

Commercial



- Range of institutional, health-related, public service, recreation uses

Community Institutional



- Low-rise residential uses, multi-storey or ground floor commercial, institutional, recreation uses
- <50 units/Ha density
- < 4 storeys (11m)

Mixed Use–Low Rise



- Low and mid-rise residential uses, multi-storey or ground floor commercial, institutional, recreation uses
- 25-75 units/Ha density
- Up to 8 storeys (26m)

Mixed Use-Medium Rise



- Residential apartments, multi-storey or ground floor commercial, office, institutional, recreation
- 75-250 units/Ha density
- 9 storeys or greater (up to 45m)

Mixed Use – High Rise



- Range of park types, active and passive recreation uses, multi-use trails, recreation facilities

Park / Open Space



- Public Streets / Right-of-way
- Private Street or Access
- Active Transportation corridor or connections (cycling, pedestrian)

Mobility

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION FRAMEWORK CRITERIA

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Alignment with long-term vision, goals and policies at the municipal and provincial levels.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

The ability to create complete, well-designed communities that are feasible and compatible with the surrounding area.

HARD INFRASTRUCTURE

The ability to efficiently accommodate development with reliable and sustainable infrastructure systems.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The ability to support healthy, inclusive communities through access to essential services and facilities.

ECONOMIC

The ability to strengthen the local economy, attract investment and create jobs.

ENVIRONMENTAL / SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The ability to protect the natural environment and promote a low-carbon, climate-resilient future.



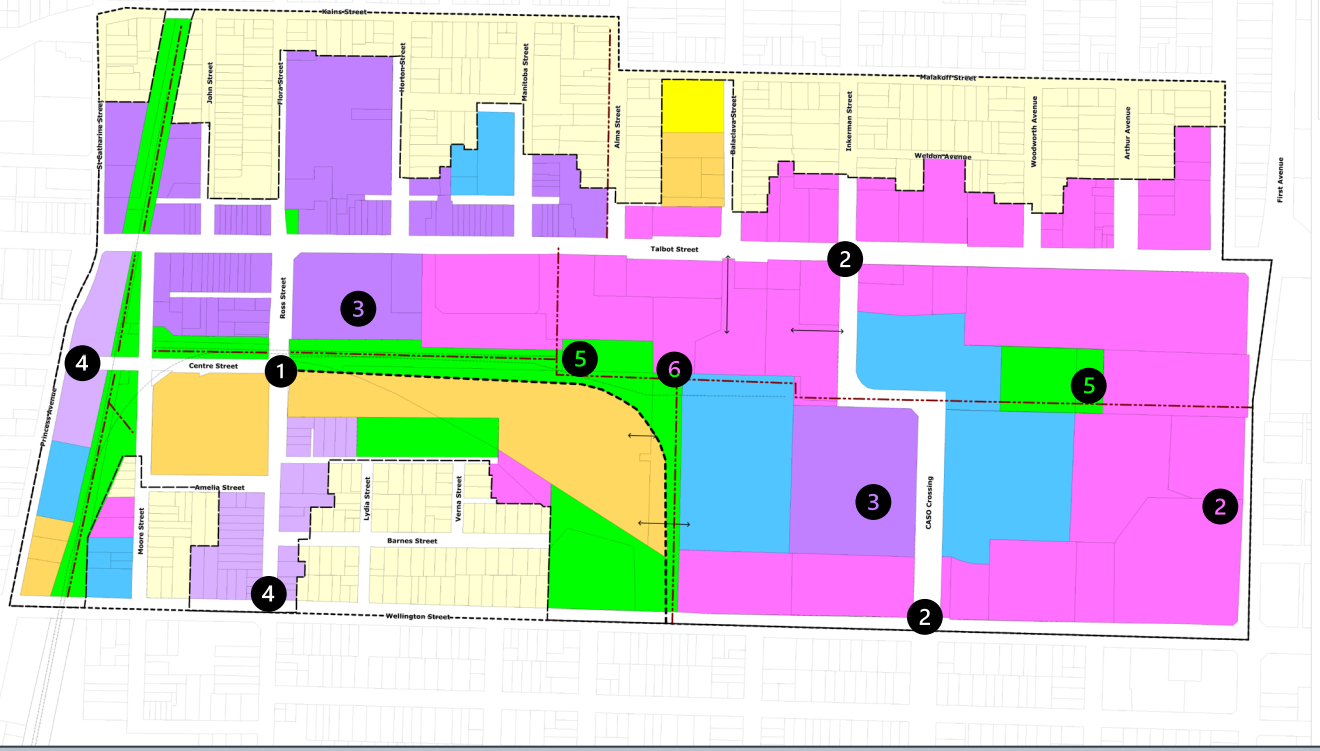
Master Plan Concepts, 3D Visualizations, Preliminary Evaluations

Section 2

Note: The concepts are preliminary and are intended to show and review different transportation, public realm and land use options. The preferred concept may incorporate elements from different concepts or other changes based on feedback received and planning principles.

Master Plan Concept #1

Note: The concepts are preliminary and are intended to show and review different transportation, public realm and land use options. The preferred concept may incorporate elements from different concepts or other changes based on feedback received and planning principles.



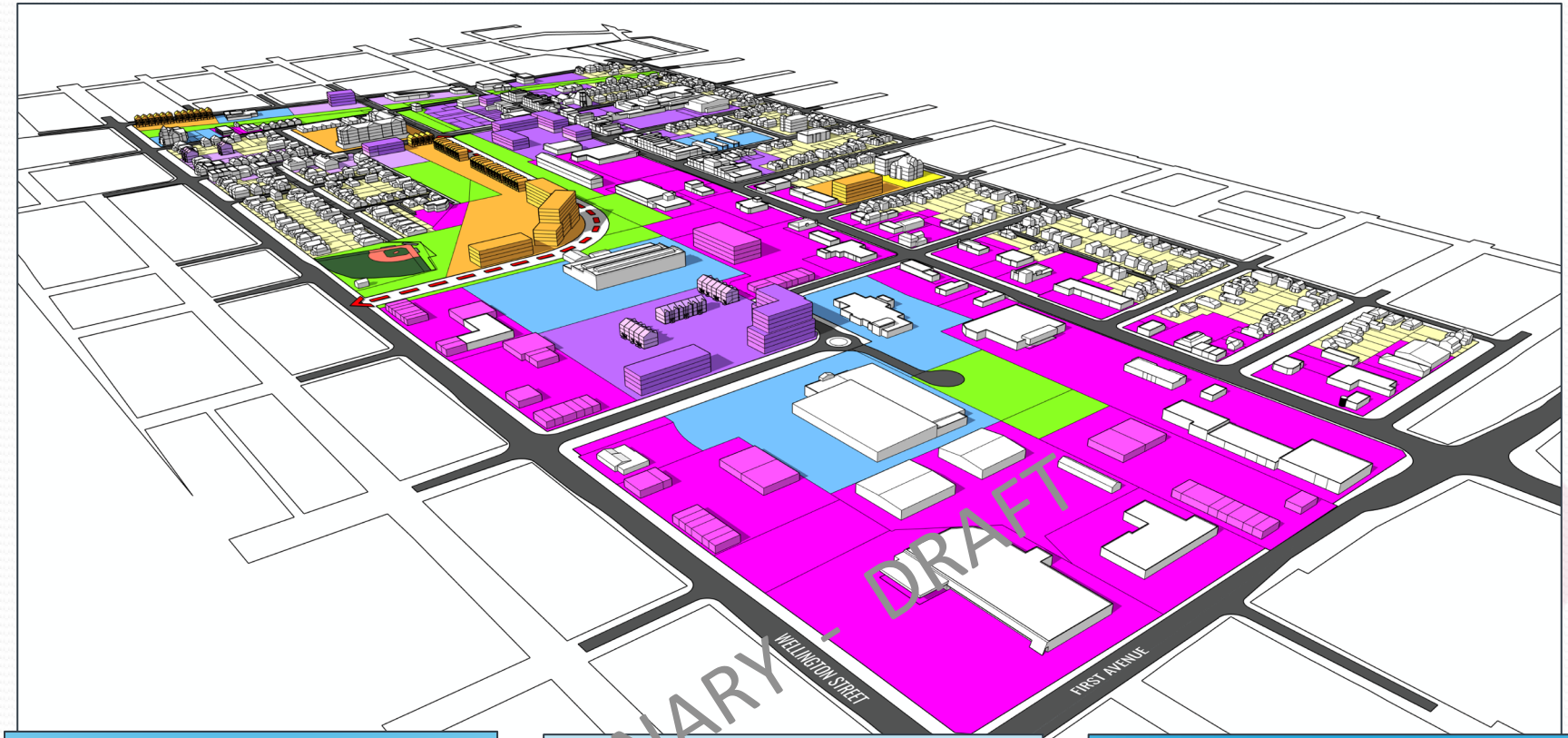
Status Quo with Moderate Intensification Scenario

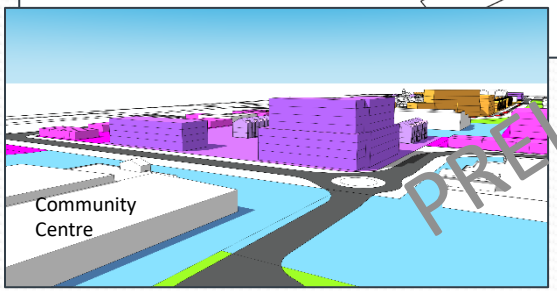
- Potential for 475 to 1325 new housing units
- Growth of 800-2300 population
- Potential for additional +25,000m2 of commercial/non-residential floor space
- Approximately 1.5 Ha of new park/ open space

Highlights:

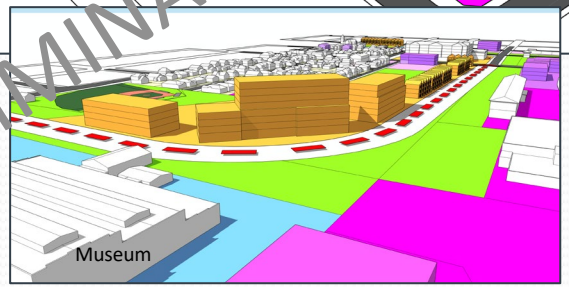
1. New Centre St road extension connecting south to Wellington St. as a public street with access to adjacent lands
2. Continue with primarily Commercial land use on Talbot (East)/First Ave/Wellington
3. Integrate new Medium Rise Residential and Medium Rise Mixed Use for vacant and some redevelopment parcels
4. Allow for Low Rise Mixed Use on portions of Ross St and Princess/Centre St with remainder of area mostly as existing land use permissions
5. New central park space, green corridor along Centre St extension, rectangular Jonas park, small addition to skate park area
6. Active transportation corridor east-west through lands (public ownership & easements) with one connection from/to Talbot St.

Master Plan Concept #1
Preliminary Massing Model & Potential Development





View east to CASO Crossing



View east – new road /railway lands



View west from Ross St – new road

Preliminary Evaluation Framework - Master Plan Concepts

A high-level review of potential benefits, opportunities, issues, implications or constraints for each Concept Plan in accordance with various project considerations. Not intended to be a rigid quantitative measurement (although numerical metrics may be considered).


Lowest – Does not achieve any objectives


Medium – Moderately achieves some objectives


Low – Limited achievement of some objectives

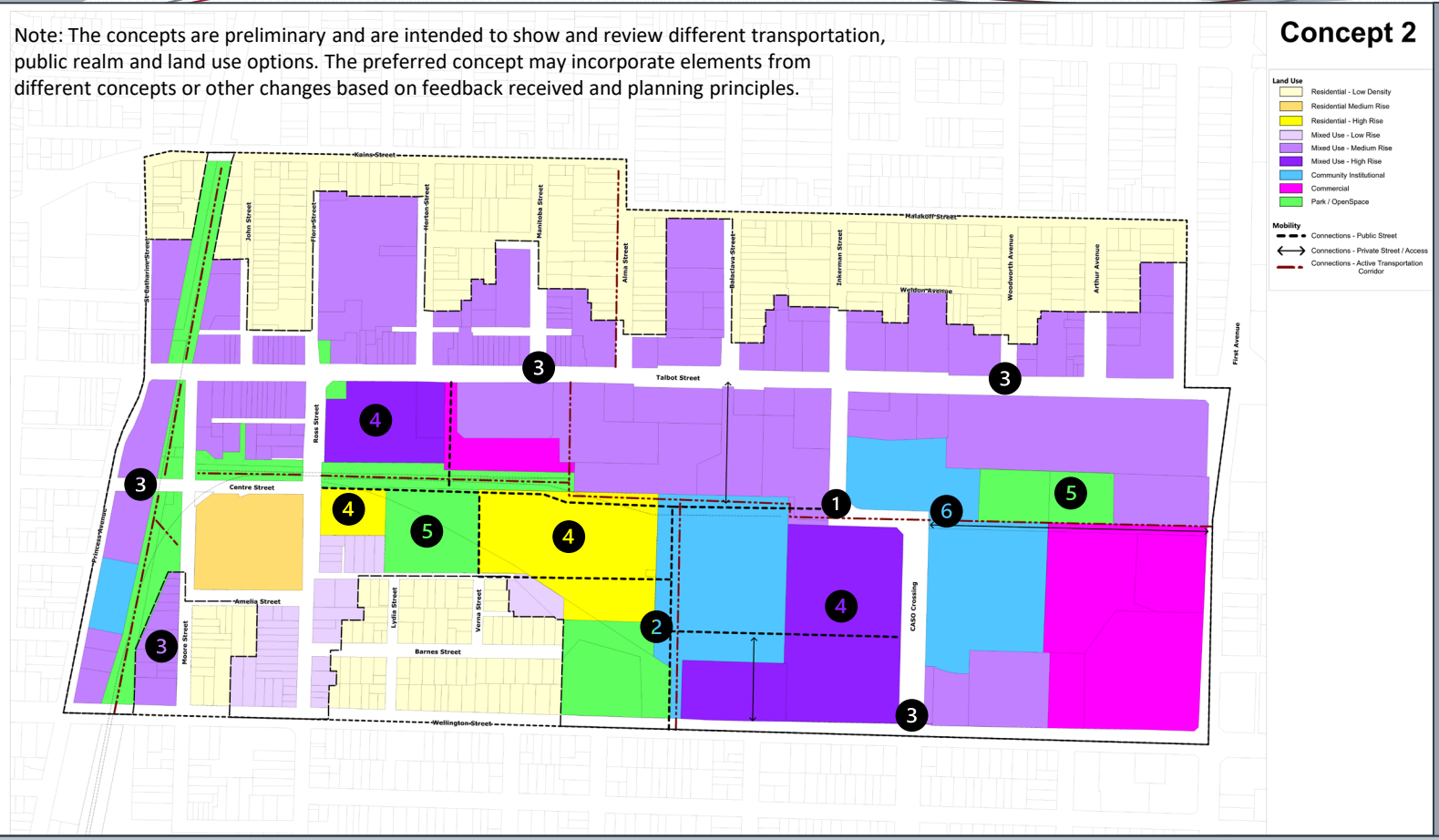

High – Large achieves many objectives


Highest – Exceeds most objectives

Criteria / Considerations	Concept #1 : Status Quo with Moderate Intensification Scenario	Evaluation
Strategic Direction - Consistency with Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 - Achievement of Official Plan (assumptions, general policies) - Support of New Growth Analysis and New OP Background Studies - Adherence to DRAFT Guiding Principles & Goals - Alignment with City's Strategic Plan (Strategic Pillar #1)	- Land uses have potential to accomodate growth of 800-2300 population - Provides the lowest amount of mixed use and has medium density residential but limited high density which does not align as well with PPS (more limited range and opportunity of housing options/types, mix uses, growth accommodation) - Lowest support of new overall city-wide growth analysis/forecasts - Low-Medium support of Guiding Principles & Goals - Lowest alignment with City's Strategic Plan - Brighter Future	
Planning & Development - Housing Potential (range of dwelling types, number of units) - Mixture of Land Uses - Land Use Compatibility - Built Form and Urban Design - Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Resources Implications	- Potential for 475 to 1325 new housing units (350 to 1150 apt, 125 to 175 towns, 0 single/semi) - Low amount of mixed uses, less opportunities for residential housing - Incorporates some land use and built form transition to low-rise areas - Maintains views of heritage resources in some capacity	
Implications for Hard Infrastructure - Wastewater Services - Water Services - Stormwater Management - Roads, Intersections and Transit - Implementation of City-wide Master Plans	- Scenario includes the least new population and development which should have the lowest implications for sanitary and water systems - Could achieve the Transportation Master Plan re: Centre St/CASO Greenway Active Transportation Corridor (although potentially not in full municipal ownership but would require easements) - Intersection upgrades at Wellington/Ross potentially required (at mid-high density scenario) - Lowest potential for new transit-supportive density and uses - Limited space for stormwater management facilities. "Regional" SWM pond preferred. Would need SWM infrastructure.	
Implications for Community Infrastructure - Parks and Open Space - Recreational Facilities - Institutional Services - Public Service Uses - Implementation of City-wide Master Plans	- Based on development estimates would yield a Parkland Dedication requirement (land or cash-in-lieu towards parks) of about 0.75 to 2.2 ha. - Approx. 1.5 ha of new park/open space land proposed in concept - Mixed Use and Community Institutional allows for recreation facilities, institutional services, public services. Limited Mixed Use sites, but commercial uses could supplement recreation facilities - Moderate opportunities to implement park and recreation master plans -Lower desirability for parks but does retain Jonas Park main area, new green space in central area east of CASO near trail/museum	
Economic - Commercial and Employment Opportunities - Support of Existing Downtown and Study Area Businesses - Tourism and Event Potential - Future Assessment Growth - Municipal Financial Implications (capital infrastructure, lifecycle maintenance, development charges)	- Potential for approx. 25,000 m2 of new non-residential floor space - Highest potential for new / revised commercial opportunities (primary in traditional formats), but without signficant nearby residential to support - Potential for central park/event space - Close to status quo with some moderate new residential with some access to Talbot/business - Land assessment primary retained as is (commercial Talbot-First-Wellington) with some new infill residential assessment - Smaller amount of roads, least potential new maintenance/lifecycle costs	
Environmental / Sustainable Development - Natural Heritage Resource Implications - Active Transportation - Green Infrastructure Potential - Energy and Water Conservation/Generation, Air Quality and GHG/Carbon Emissions - Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience	- No direct natural heritage area impact - Active transportation connections (not fully) - Has green infrastructure potential along new internal road - Lowest potential for more sustainable development - Moderate potential for brownfield cleanup feasibility - Limited intensification growth would lead to increased pressure for even more urban area expansion for overall growth forecast	

Master Plan Concept #2

Note: The concepts are preliminary and are intended to show and review different transportation, public realm and land use options. The preferred concept may incorporate elements from different concepts or other changes based on feedback received and planning principles.



High Mixed Use and Connectivity Scenario

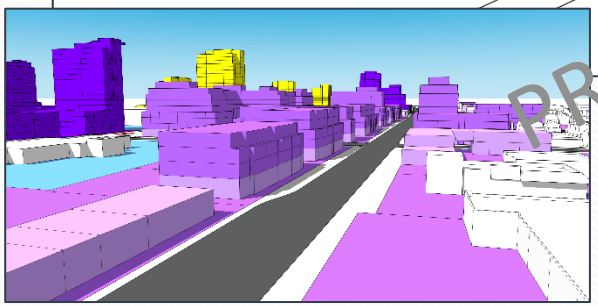
- Potential for 2300 to 3550 new housing units
- Growth of 3800-6000 population
- Potential for additional +15,000m2 of commercial/non-residential floor space
- Approximately 1.3 Ha of new park/ open space

Highlights:

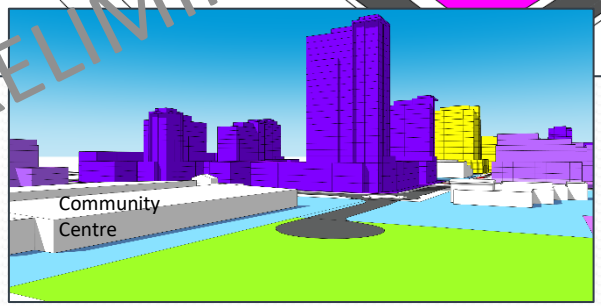
1. New Centre St road extension connecting east to CASO Crossing as a public street
2. Create new public streets in grid pattern in central portion of area connecting to existing streets and providing access to new development blocks
3. Allow for Mixed Use along all of Talbot St, more portions of Wellington St, Princess Ave, Moore St.
4. Capitalize on vacant, larger parcels with High Rise Mixed Use or Residential for new housing or range of uses and to support surrounding businesses
5. Revised Jonas Park as central park square, green space in front of CASO building, larger addition to skate park area, new public square (Ross/Talbot)
6. Active transportation corridor east-west through lands (public ownership & easements) with one connection from/to Talbot St. (+ road connection)

Master Plan Concept #2
Preliminary Massing Model & Potential Development

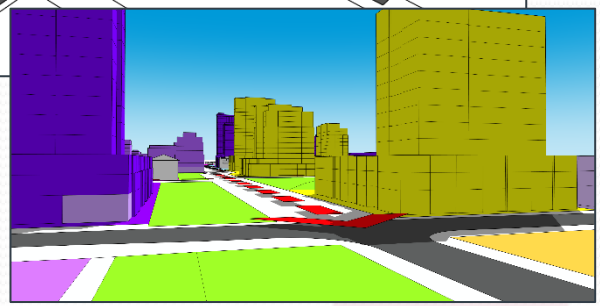




View on Talbot east to CASO Crossing



View east to CASO Crossing



View west across Ross from Centre St

Preliminary Evaluation Framework - Master Plan Concepts

A high-level review of potential benefits, opportunities, issues, implications or constraints for each Concept Plan in accordance with various project considerations. Not intended to be a rigid quantitative measurement (although numerical metrics may be considered).


Lowest – Does not achieve any objectives


Medium – Moderately achieves some objectives


Low – Limited achievement of some objectives

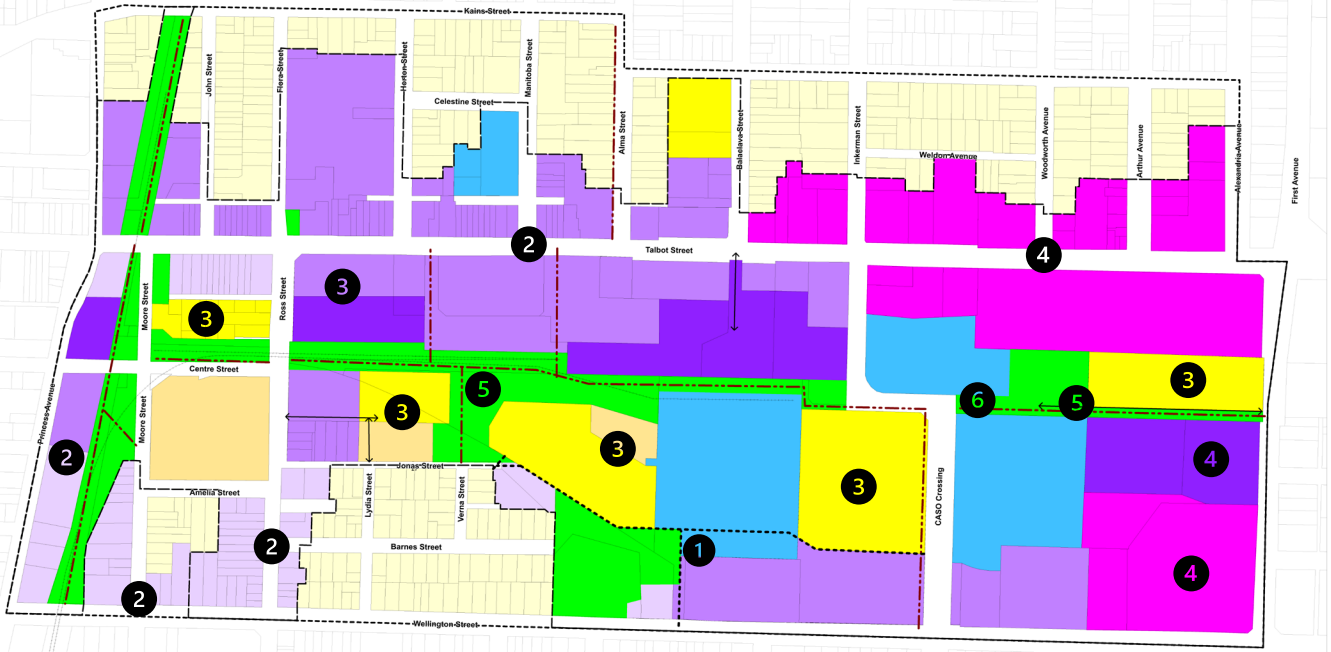

High – Large achieves many objectives


Highest – Exceeds most objectives

Criteria / Considerations	Concept #2: High Mixed-Use and Connectivity Scenario	Evaluation
Strategic Direction - Consistency with Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 - Achievement of Official Plan (assumptions, general policies) - Support of New Growth Analysis and New OP Background Studies - Adherence to DRAFT Guiding Principles & Goals - Alignment with City's Strategic Plan (Strategic Pillar #1)	- Land uses have potential to accomodate growth of 3800-6000 population - Provides the most mixed use and higher density residential which aligns well with PPS (greater range of housing options/types) - Highest support of new overall city-wide growth analysis/forecasts - Medium-High support of Guiding Principles & Goals - Medium-High alignment with City's Strategic Plan - Brighter Future	
Planning & Development - Housing Potential (range of dwelling types, number of units) - Mixture of Land Uses - Land Use Compatibility - Built Form and Urban Design - Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Resources Implications	- Potential for 2300 to 3550 new dwelling units (2100 to 3200 apt, 175 to 375 towns, 10 to 15 singles/semis) - Heavy amount of mixed use, including all of Talbot, allows for greater flexibility and range of uses/options - High potential for new housing - Land use and built form transition is generally good to low rise areas - Maintains views of heritage resources in some capacity	
Implications for Hard Infrastructure - Wastewater Services - Water Services - Stormwater Management - Roads, Intersections and Transit - Implementation of City-wide Master Plans	- Scenario has the highest population potential to manage through sanitary and water systems. Potential sanitary upgrades on portion of Wellington (Ross-museum entrance) between mid-max density scenario. - Could achieve the Transportation Master Plan re: Centre St/CASO Greenway Active Transportation Corridor (presuming trail part of public ROW) - Highest scenario for road connectivity with many new streets in grid pattern providing mobility options - Intersection upgrades at Wellington/Ross potentially required (at mid-high density scenario) - High scenario for transit potential with residential densities and mixed use - Some linear stormwater management potential opportunity - Limited space for stormwater management facilities. "Regional" SWM pond preferred. Would need SWM infrastructure.	
Implications for Community Infrastructure - Parks and Open Space - Recreational Facilities - Institutional Services - Public Service Uses - Implementation of City-wide Master Plans	- Based on the development estimates would yield a Parkland Dedication requirement (land or cash-in-lieu towards parks) of about 3.8 to 5.9 ha. - Approx. 1.3 ha of new park/open space land proposed in concept - Best alternative for active park space - Not a great scenario for amount of new park / new population potential - Mixed Use and Community Institutional allows for recreation facilities, institutional services, public services - Moderate opportunities to implement park and recreation master plans	
Economic - Commercial and Employment Opportunities - Support of Existing Downtown and Study Area Businesses - Tourism and Event Potential - Future Assessment Growth - Municipal Financial Implications (capital infrastructure, lifecycle maintenance, development charges)	- Potential for approx. 15,000 m^2 of new non-residential floor space - Lowest potential for new commercial development, although still adequate amount. Would have most flexible sites for wide range of commercial, institutional or residential uses (via Mixed Use) and could have highest new population potential to support existing or new commercial and employment opportunities - New residential density and mixed use could have highest support for businesses/Talbot St - New property assessment growth could be quite high compared to existing - Would be the highest sceanrio for new infrastructure (proposed new road/services) and long term maintenance	
Environmental / Sustainable Development - Natural Heritage Resource Implications - Active Transportation - Green Infrastructure Potential - Energy and Water Conservation/Generation, Air Quality and GHG/Carbon Emissions	- No natural heritage area impact - Has most active transportation connections - Has some/limited green infrastructure potential - Good potential for more sustainable development - Highest potential for brownfield cleanup feasibility - Greater intensification area growth more environmentally beneficial	

Master Plan Concept #3

Note: The concepts are preliminary and are intended to show and review different transportation, public realm and land use options. The preferred concept may incorporate elements from different concepts or other changes based on feedback received and planning principles.



Hybrid Intensification Scenario

- Potential for 2500 to 3500 new housing units
- Growth of 4200-5700 population
- Potential for additional +20,000m2 of commercial/non-residential floor space
- Approximately 2.0 Ha of new park/ open space

Highlights:

1. No Centre St road extension, instead new public street from CASO Crossing to widened Jonas St and connecting to Wellington St
2. Allow for Mixed Use along all of Talbot St mostly to Balaclava St./CASO Crossing, on Wellington St, Princess Ave, Moore St, Ross St
3. Utilize vacant, larger parcels with High Rise Residential/Mixed Use or Medium Rise Residential/Mixed Use for new housing opportunities
4. Maintain Commercial land use on Talbot East area, Wellington/First, allow Mixed Use for flexibility on portion of First Ave lands
5. New linear park system with open area/views/connections to CASO Station and Museum
6. Active transportation corridor east-west through lands as full public ownership open space system and multiple connections from/to Talbot St./Jonas

Master Plan Concept #3
Preliminary Massing Model & Potential Development

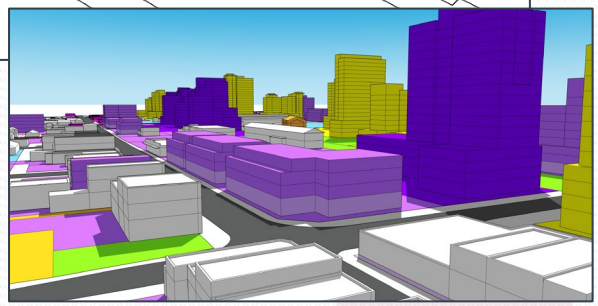




View from Wellington NW to CASO Crossing



View east to CASO Crossing



View west to Talbot/Ross

Preliminary Evaluation Framework - Master Plan Concepts

A high-level review of potential benefits, opportunities, issues, implications or constraints for each Concept Plan in accordance with various project considerations. Not intended to be a rigid quantitative measurement (although numerical metrics may be considered).


Lowest – Does not achieve any objectives


Medium – Moderately achieves some objectives


Low – Limited achievement of some objectives


High – Large achieves many objectives


Highest – Exceeds most objectives

Criteria / Considerations	Concept #3: Hybrid Intensification Scenario	Evaluation
Strategic Direction - Consistency with Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 - Achievement of Official Plan (assumptions, general policies) - Support of New Growth Analysis and New OP Background Studies - Adherence to DRAFT Guiding Principles & Goals - Alignment with City's Strategic Plan (Strategic Pillar #1)	- Land uses have potential to accomodate growth of 4200-5700 population - Provides mixed use and higher density residential which aligns well with PPS (greater range of housing options/types) - Medium support of new overall city-wide growth analysis/forecasts - Medium-High support of Guiding Principles & Goals - Medium-High alignment with City's Strategic Plan - Brighter Future	
Planning & Development - Housing Potential (range of dwelling types, number of units) - Mixture of Land Uses - Land Use Compatibility - Built Form and Urban Design - Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Resources Implications	- Potential for ~2500 to 3500 estimated new housing units (2400 to 3250 apt, 125 to 225 towns, 10-20 single/semi) - Moderate to high mixed use potential and new housing opportunities - General land use compatibility, some transition from existing low rise res areas to new medium or high density land use - Maintains views of heritage resources in some capacity	
Implications for Hard Infrastructure - Wastewater Services - Water Services - Stormwater Management - Roads, Intersections and Transit - Implementation of City-wide Master Plans	- Scenario has moderate population growth potential to manage through existing sanitary and water systems. Potential sanitary upgrades on portion of Wellington (Ross-museum entrance) between mid-max density scenario. -Fully achieves the Transportation Master Plan re: Centre St/CASO Greenway Active Transportation Corridor (if in full municipal ownership) - Intersection upgrades at Wellington/Ross potentially required (at mid-high density scenario) - Has connections to Talbot and elsewhere for transit stop access, could establish transit on Wellington St - Scenario provides medium-moderate amount of density and land uses to support transit ridership - Linear green space could be considered for linear SWM opportunity - Limited space for stormwater management facilities. "Regional" SWM pond preferred. Would need SWM infrastructure.	
Implications for Community Infrastructure - Parks and Open Space - Recreational Facilities - Institutional Services - Public Service Uses - Implementation of City-wide Master Plans	- Based on development estimates would yield a Parkland Dedication requirement (land or cash-in-lieu towards parks) of 4.3 to 5.8 ha. - Approx. 2ha of new park/open space land proposed in concept - Better scenario for the linear east-west/Centre St open space corridor and trail - Mixed Use and Community Institutional allows for recreation facilities, institutional services, public services - Moderate opportunities to implement park and recreation master plans	
Economic - Commercial and Employment Opportunities - Support of Existing Downtown and Study Area Businesses - Tourism and Event Potential - Future Assessment Growth - Municipal Financial Implications (capital infrastructure, lifecycle maintenance, development charges)	- Potential for approx. 20,000 m^2 of new non-residential floor space - Moderate amount of new commercial opportunites balanced between traditional formats (single use type) and mixed use flexible sites or buildings - High residential densities providing more potential support for surrounding businesses/Talbot - Best scenario for increased land assessment and fairly low new infrastructure (road) requirements and annual maintenance/lifecycle costs	
Environmental / Sustainable Development - Natural Heritage Resource Implications - Active Transportation - Green Infrastructure Potential - Energy and Water Conservation/Generation, Air Quality and GHG/Carbon Emissions - Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience	- No natural heritage area impact - Has active transportation connections (not fully) - Has good green infrastructure potential (including linear green space) - Good potential for more sustainable development - Highest potential for brownfield cleanup feasibility - Moderate intensification area growth more environmentally beneficial	

Preliminary Evaluation Framework - Master Plan Concepts

A high-level review of potential benefits, opportunities, issues, implications or constraints for each Concept Plan in accordance with various project considerations. Not intended to be a rigid quantitative measurement (although numerical metrics may be considered).

SUMMARY


Lowest – Does not achieve any objectives


Low – Limited achievement of some objectives


Medium – Moderately achieves some objectives


High – Large achieves many objectives


Highest – Exceeds most objectives

Criteria / Considerations	Concept #1 Status Quo with Moderate Intensification Scenari	Concept #2: High Mixed-Use and Connectivity Scenario	Concept #3: Hybrid Intensification Scenario
Strategic Direction - Consistency with Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 - Achievement of Official Plan (assumptions, general policies) - Support of New Growth Analysis and New OP Background Studies - Adherence to DRAFT Guiding Principles & Goals - Alignment with City's Strategic Plan (Strategic Pillar #1)			
Planning & Development - Housing Potential (range of dwelling types, number of units) - Mixture of Land Uses - Land Use Compatibility - Built Form and Urban Design - Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Resources Implications			
Implications for Hard Infrastructure - Wastewater Services - Water Services - Stormwater Management - Roads, Intersections and Transit - Implementation of City-wide Master Plans			
Implications for Community Infrastructure - Parks and Open Space - Recreational Facilities - Institutional Services - Public Service Uses - Implementation of City-wide Master Plans			
Economic - Commercial and Employment Opportunities - Support of Existing Downtown and Study Area Businesses - Tourism and Event Potential - Future Assessment Growth - Municipal Financial Implications (capital infrastructure, lifecycle maintenance, development charges)			
Environmental / Sustainable Development - Natural Heritage Resource Implications - Active Transportation - Green Infrastructure Potential - Energy and Water Conservation/Generation, Air Quality and GHG/Carbon Emissions - Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience			

Phase 2 Public Engagement Summary

Section 3

Master Plan Concept Feedback

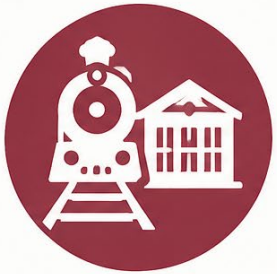
- **Overall, the public feedback received reflects a strong desire to see the Railway Lands become a meaningful community destination while preserving St. Thomas's heritage and character.**
  - Some expressed support for new housing, mixed-use development, parks and improved connections in some areas, but there are concerns about the scale and location of higher-density development, traffic and infrastructure capacity, and the treatment of the railway and Elgin County Railway Museum.



Phase 2 Public Feedback Summary - Themes



Parks, Green Space & Community Gathering



Railway Heritage & Museum



Community Facilities & Recreation



Housing & Residential Development



Building Height, Massing & Character



Transportation, Connectivity & Infrastructure



Downtown & Mixed-Use Development



Heritage, Character & Quality

Parks, Green Space & Community Gathering

- There was **strong interest in significant public open space**, particularly a central park and connected green space.
  - Several respondents preferred keeping the central portion of the lands largely open and orient density to the edges.
  - A connected east-west park/trail system was viewed positively.
  - Respondents highlighted the importance of pedestrian and cycling connections through the site and to downtown.
  - Some residents specifically stated that preserving green space should be the primary focus of the redevelopment.
- There was also interest in a **major community gathering space/event area**, potentially capable of hosting festivals and other activities.

Railway Heritage & Museum

- A **significant theme** was the desire to preserve and strengthen the City's railway heritage.
  - Respondents want the **Elgin County Railway Museum (ECRM)** to remain an important focal point of the area.
  - Several comments emphasized maintaining **active rail access and a connection to the existing rail corridor**, including the ability for trains to access the museum.
  - Some respondents expressed concern that the museum and railway infrastructure appeared insufficiently integrated into the concepts.
  - Suggestions included extending the rail line, creating a tourist rail experience, and supporting the museum as a destination and community asset.
- **Key concern:** Some respondents felt the concepts did not adequately demonstrate how the museum and active railway operations would be accommodated.

Community Facilities & Recreation

- Many respondents identified a perceived need for **new community and recreational facilities**.
- Suggestions included:
  - Community centre/community hub
  - Aquatic centre
  - Additional ice facilities
  - Indoor recreation and entertainment
  - Event/festival space
  - Childcare
  - Facilities and activities for youth and families
- Several comments framed the Railway Lands as a **once-in-a-generation opportunity to establish a major community destination** in the heart of the city.

Housing & Residential Development

- There was **support for additional housing and intensification**, but considerable concern about the **scale of development**.
- Positive comments included:
  - Support for infill and bringing more people downtown
  - Support for centralized residential intensification rather than continued outward expansion
  - Interest in a greater variety of housing options, particularly **3+ bedroom units for families**
  - Support for some mixed-use residential/commercial development
  - Interest in housing that appeals to young adults and contributes to a more active downtown
- At the same time, there was repeated concerns with any **high-rise/tower development**, particularly adjacent to existing low-density neighbourhoods and around a central park space.
- A recurring preference was for **low- to mid-rise development, appropriate setbacks, and higher densities concentrated around the edges/perimeter of the site**.

Scale, Built Form & Neighbourhood Character

- The **height and massing of buildings was one of the clearest areas of issue.**
  - Respondents expressed concerns that:
  - Tall towers could negatively affect the existing neighbourhood character.
  - Higher densities could create an overly urban environment inconsistent with St. Thomas's smaller-community identity.
  - Towers could visually and physically isolate a central park space.
  - Development adjacent to existing detached homes should transition carefully.
- There was greater acceptance of **mid-rise buildings**, particularly where setbacks, high-quality materials and appropriate transitions are provided.

Transportation, Connectivity & Infrastructure

- Traffic and transportation capacity were another recurring concern.
- Respondents questioned whether the existing road network could accommodate significant population growth and expressed concern about:
  - Traffic congestion
  - Increased vehicle trips
  - Limited road infrastructure
  - Connections between the Railway Lands and surrounding streets
  - Pedestrian and cycling connections
- At the same time, several respondents supported **better connections to Talbot Street and downtown**, including:
  - Additional pedestrian connections
  - Active transportation routes
  - A connected park/trail system
  - Improvements to Talbot Street
  - Potential Centre Street extension

Downtown & Mixed-Use Development

- There was interest in using the Railway Lands to **strengthen and extend the downtown core**.
- Suggestions included:
  - Mixed-use commercial/residential development
  - Retail and cafés
  - Restaurants and entertainment
  - Extending the downtown experience toward the Railway Lands
  - Filling vacant/demolished gaps along Talbot Street
  - Adding residential units above street-level commercial uses
  - Creating a destination attractive to young adults
- Some respondents specifically supported **modern architecture that incorporates heritage elements**, rather than attempting to replicate historic buildings.

Heritage, Character & Quality

- Beyond the railway itself, respondents emphasized the importance of **maintaining St. Thomas's heritage and community character while accommodating growth**.
- There was interest in:
  - High-quality building materials
  - Appropriate architectural design
  - Heritage-compatible development
  - Retaining important views and streetscapes
  - Integrating new development with existing neighbourhoods

Other Ideas

- A number of additional ideas were raised, including:
  - Artist studios
  - Larger retail opportunities
  - More entertainment options
  - Better transit service
  - Additional childcare
  - Affordable rental and ownership housing
  - New employment opportunities
  - A new central grounds/event space
  - Talbot/Ross = prime spot for an apartment building with public amenities on the ground floor that can also be utilized by the tenants.
  - Independent coffee shops/ bakery/ space for food trucks/ places to sit. Make the area a stopping place for visitors to the arena and locals out walking.
  - High school site - preserve the facade and build housing. Perhaps a low rise apartment building.
  - Larger plots in the community allotment gardens either here or in other public spaces

Overall Themes

Theme	Overall Feedback
Parks & Public Space	Strong interest in a significant central park and connected public realm
Railway Heritage	Strong desire to preserve the railway story, museum and functional rail connection
Community Facilities	Desire for a community hub, recreation, event and family-oriented facilities
Housing & Intensification	General interest in more housing and downtown intensification, particularly mixed-use and family housing
Building Height & Character	Concern about high-rise towers; stronger support for low/mid-rise development and transitions
Connectivity & Infrastructure	Need for better links to Talbot/downtown, active transportation and consideration of traffic capacity

Summary

- Some residents see the Railway Lands as a significant opportunity to add housing, public space, community amenities and activity to the heart of St. Thomas.
- At the same time, feedback identified concerns regarding building height and density, traffic and infrastructure capacity, neighbourhood character, and the need to protect and meaningfully integrate the City's railway heritage and museum.
- A recurring preference from commenters was for a connected central park/public realm, mixed-use and mid-rise development, improved connections to downtown, and a strong role for the Railway Lands as a community destination.

Railway Lands Area Master Plan

Phase 2: Concepts

Summary Document

September 2026