

Agenda Including Addeds

Strategic Opportunities Review Working Group

1st Meeting of the Strategic Opportunities Review Working Group

June 26, 2024

2:00 PM

Committee Room #5

The City of London is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek (AUh-nish-in-ah-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ah-pay-wuk) and Attawandaron (Add-a-won-da-run).

We honour and respect the history, languages and culture of the diverse Indigenous people who call this territory home. The City of London is currently home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit today.

As representatives of the people of the City of London, we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and live in this territory.

Members

Councillors E. Pelozza (Chair), S. Lewis, P. Cuddy, S. Stevenson, J. Pribil, C. Rahman, S. Lehman

The City of London is committed to making every effort to provide alternate formats and communication supports for meetings upon request. To make a request specific to this meeting, please contact 519-661-2489 ext. 2425.

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Subject: Engagement for Service Review Training for Agencies, Boards, and Commissions

Dear Members of the Strategic Opportunities Review Working Group,

I would like to respectfully request appropriate consideration be given to engaging KPMG to provide Service Review training for our various Agencies, Boards, and Commissions.

After consulting with our staff, I am pleased to confirm that this training falls within the scope of our existing contract with KPMG. This service is considered an Additional Service under the current agreement, which allows us to proceed without the need for additional procurement processes. This is a great opportunity to enhance our service review capabilities and align our strategies more effectively.

As you know, the Service Review process has resulted in tens of millions of dollars in savings identified by Civic Administration over the course of the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget. Based on these results, I believe there is merit in offering the same training to Agencies, Boards, and Commissions.

In terms of the associated costs, I recommend that the municipality cover these expenses. In consulting with finance staff, it is recommended that these costs be funded from the Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy (EEE) Reserve. By doing so, we ensure that all our agencies, boards, and commissions can participate fully without financial constraints, fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive training experience. This approach supports our commitment to maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of our municipal services.

To facilitate the most effective participation, we will organize training sessions either in-person or virtually, with multiple boards and commissions attending each session. This approach ensures broad engagement while also making efficient use of our resources and KPMG's expertise.

I invite all members of the Strategic Opportunities Review Working Group to discuss this further during your first meeting. Your insights and approval are crucial as we move forward with this initiative. Subject to the discussion at the Working Group, I would appreciate your support for the following motion:

*Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to engage with KPMG LLP for the delivery of service review training for the City's Agencies, Boards and Commissions, with the cost to be funded from the Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy (EEE) Reserve.*

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your continued dedication to improving our municipal services.

Kind regards,



Josh Morgan
Mayor



300 Dufferin Avenue
P.O. Box 5035
London, ON
N6A 4L9

London
CANADA

June 14, 2024

Dear Colleagues,

With respect to reviewing cost saving opportunities for the Multi-Year Budget, we are proposing that we suspend the London Community Grants annual Capital & Innovation Grants for the remainder of the current Multi-Year cycle. We want to note this would not impact the multi-year program stream grants at this time, only the “one off” annual grants. This represents savings of \$500,000 annually for each of the next 3 years.

We are also looking for your support to take a similar step with regard to Neighbourhood Decision Making, and suspend it for the remainder of the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget. This would represent an additional savings of \$250,000 for each of the next 3 years.

Combined, this would represent an immediate reduction of 0.1% from our budget projections.

More importantly however, we believe it is time we pause these programs to re-evaluate the value and effectiveness of spending public dollars in this manner.

While we recognize many organizations see value in what they do with grants they receive through the London Community Grants, there is a larger question of the value London as a whole receives. Should we be providing grants for “one-off” efforts? Should we be utilizing public dollars to address capital needs of private or not-for-profit entities? And if ultimately the decision is that there is good value, are these amounts right sized?

With regard to Neighbourhood Decision Making, we should be reflecting on why we are funding things like park benches, or basketball courts, or other amenities through a competition, or if we should simply be doing these sorts of park investments through our Parks & Recreation Master Plan and directly through evaluations and prioritizations of our staff. Likewise, we already have “small events grants” of up to \$500 for neighbourhood level events, yet we often see proposals for street parties etc, via Neighbourhood Decision Making, do we really need two granting streams for that?

I would also like your support to have Civic Administration undertake a review of the entire London Community Grants program, and the Neighbourhood Decision Making program, and report back prior to the 2028-2031 Multi-Year Budget tabling. This review should include ensuring programs are right-sized, do not duplicate or overlap, and are properly scoped to ensure good value for dollar.

Therefore, I am seeking your support for the following motion:

That Civic Administration be directed to bring forward a Business Case for the Annual Budget Update to pause:

- a) *The London Community Grants one-time Innovation and Capital Grants stream for the remainder of the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget,*
- b) *The Neighbourhood Decision Making program for the remainder of the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget,*

And that Civic Administration be further directed to undertake a comprehensive review of the London Community Grants Program, including the multi-year stream and the Neighbourhood Decision Making Program and bring forward a report prior to the end of Q2, 2027 with options for Council consideration on rightsizing and scope of these programs; including the alignment or conflict of NDM with regard to the Parks & Rec Master Plan and new Parks Reserve Fund, should Council choose to reinstate the programs for the 2028-2031 Multi-Year Budget.

Sincerely,

Shawn Lewis
Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ward 2

Steve Lehman
Councillor Ward 8

From: Nicole Karsch <nicole@londonenvironment.net>
Sent: Wednesday, June 19, 2024 2:37 PM
To: Woolsey, Heather <hwoolsey@London.ca>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Delegation Status - SORWG June 26th Meeting

Hi Heather,

I would like to request delegation status at the upcoming Strategic Opportunities Review Working Group meeting on behalf of the London Environmental Network regarding item **4.2 Community Grants - Neighbourhood Decision Making - Deputy Mayor S. Lewis and Councillor S. Lehman.**

Thank you,

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Nicole Karsch (she/her)
Director of Programs, London Environmental Network
226-932-0950 | nicole@londonenvironment.net



June 25, 2024

Members of the Strategic Opportunities Review Working Group
City Hall
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON N6B 1Z2

Re: First Meeting of the Strategic Opportunities Review Working Group, June 26, 2024
Item 4.2 Community Grants - Neighbourhood Decision Making

Dear Councillors Peloza, Lewis, Cuddy, Stevenson, Pribil, Rahman, and Lehman,

On behalf of Pillar Nonprofit Network, the nonprofit sector, and the communities we serve, I ask that you choose to *not* suspend the London Community Grants annual Capital & Innovation Grants for the remainder of the current Multi-Year cycle nor the Neighbourhood Decision Making program as proposed in item 4.2 of your agenda.

There are no more natural allies than a city and its nonprofit organizations – both dedicated to delivering public benefit responsibly, efficiently, and transparently. And when we are challenged to deliver best value to the community, our greatest opportunity is to partner for combined impact. Now is the time to champion community infrastructure, innovation, and engagement. It is time to unleash the full potential of your most impactful partnerships.

However – with nonprofits facing declining revenue, increasing costs, and rising demand for services – a decision to pause funding may mean the loss of critical partners and programs that support London residents and visitors and make this a city worth living in and visiting.

We do understand all of you are hoping to reduce the property tax impact of record budget expenditures, but reducing the City's investments in the community will cost London much more than it saves, and does not recognize current realities.

For example, it has been suggested that property taxes are meant to fund city services, not grants. But, unless the City has a reasonable hope to bring *all* services in-house – to plant every tree, arrange every art show, build and run every shelter – **grants to nonprofits are, in part, how the City delivers its services**. Governments, including London's, have long made nonprofits indispensable community liaisons, policy advisors, and program operators. A failure to invest in them weakens the whole City.

Some have labelled the Capital and Innovation Grants "one-offs" because they are single-year investments, but **investments in nonprofits are economic multipliers, attracting additional investments London wouldn't receive otherwise**. Elsewhere, I have told how a \$45,000

Capital Grant from the City made possible a \$300,000 renovation to Innovation Works, making one of London's most affordable working, meeting, and event spaces into one of London's most accessible and sustainable. Ontario nonprofits generate up to \$2.18 in GDP and \$1.76 in employment income impact for every \$1 invested. We are accountable to local communities, have high levels of transparency, and reinvest profits into our missions, ensuring taxpayer money gets optimal return on investment.

We have also heard City investments in community projects called "nice-to-haves," but a cohesive community is more than "nice-to-have." Academics, pollsters, and health care workers are sounding alarms about social isolation, burnout, and compassion fatigue. As a cause *and* effect, volunteering and giving are down, and loneliness is a risk to personal and public health. Voter turnout has also declined precipitously. With a significant reduction in almost all civic participation, now is not the time to withdraw one of few chances for citizen participation whose popularity is on the rise. We agree the Neighbourhood Decision Making program can be improved, but this could happen year-to-year, just as you recently endorsed for the 2024 program. Citizen engagement is not a nice-to-have; it's what holds us together.

Similarly, in a world of accelerating change and complexity, innovation is another need-to-have, recognized in the City's 2023-27 vision statement. The nonprofit sector is no small thing in Canada, contributing 8.4% of GDP and employing 2.6 million workers, larger than mining, transportation, or oil and gas. Would we consider innovation in any of these sectors a "nice-to-have?" Would we choose not to invest public monies in those sectors?

Recent donations to hospitals, universities, and the Fund for Change may tempt us to think the community can cover lost City funding, but charitable giving in Canada is at an historic low after twenty years of decline. London is no exception. CanadaHelps ranks **London 63rd among Canadian cities, with fewer than 3% of Londoners making charitable donations** through the platform in 2023. With organizations reporting one-time donors in line for nonprofit services, City support will be missed more than you might have considered.

Councillors, nonprofit workers and organizations are already pressed to or beyond capacity to keep Londoners afloat, and you are closer than you may realise to losing these ideal community partners. Organizations are shuttering already, and a failure to invest in critical community infrastructure and ingenious solutions and collaborations may mean the loss of more programs and services Londoners count on. A healthy nonprofit sector is indispensable to a well-run city, and this – as so many things – is something we all want.

Respectfully,



Maureen Cassidy (she/her), CEO, Pillar Nonprofit Network

mcassidy@pillarnonprofit.ca, 519-433-7876, ext 201

From: Sienna Jae Taylor
Sent: Friday, June 21, 2024 2:58:55 PM
To: Woolsey, Heather
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 5 min delegation request

Hello - I am reaching out to request a 5 minute delegation at the June 26 SORWG committee meeting regarding the City's Annual Grants.

Please let me know if you need anything from me to proceed.

Thank you so much!

Sienna Jae Taylor

Nonprofit Manager
Social Impact Consultant
MA, Candidate

From: Richard Bloomfield
Sent: Sunday, June 23, 2024 7:40:06 PM
To: Woolsey, Heather
Subject: [EXTERNAL] SORWG delegation status

Hello Heather,

I would like to request virtual delegation status at the upcoming SORWG committee meeting on Wednesday June 26th.

Thank you,

Richard

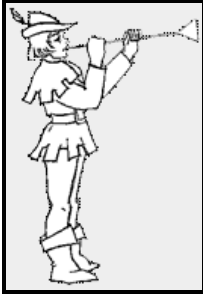
From: Brendon Samuels
Sent: Tuesday, June 25, 2024 1:05 AM
To: Woolsey, Heather
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Delegation request

Hello Heather,

I am writing to request delegation status at the upcoming SORWG committee meeting with respect to the discussion about community grants and Neighbourhood Decision Making. I hope to attend the meeting in person.

Thank you,

Brendon Samuels
Chair, Environmental Stewardship and Action Community Advisory Committee



June 21, 2024

Chair and Members
Strategic Opportunities Review Working Group
City of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON

Re: Agenda item 4.2 re Neighbourhood Decision Making (NDM)

Dear Members,

We have reviewed the June 14, 2024 letter from Deputy Mayor Lewis and Councillor Lehman. In our view the Neighbourhood Decision-Making process has largely been successful and has historically resulted in a fair distribution to worthy projects across the City. Notwithstanding that, we do respect the intent of the proposed pause. We do not oppose at least thinking about whether these types of projects could be better folded into the existing parks budget in the longer term, provided there continue to be ways for neighbourhoods to provide input and advocate for their unique needs. We look forward to contributing to that conversation.

At this time, however, we are mostly concerned with the abrupt timing of the proposed pause of the NDM program. It is not totally clear from the letter, but our interpretation of the proposed motion is that this would halt the 2024 submission process which is *already underway*.

Our association has already solicited ideas from our community, and our members have even voted on them at our recent Annual General Meeting. It appears the 2024 submission portal has been open since June 17. Out of respect for community members who have already taken the time to engage with the ongoing 2024 NDM process, we request that, *if* a pause is to be directed, it be set for after the conclusion of the 2024 round of submissions and approvals.

In our view this would reflect a reasonable compromise between the intent of the proposed motion, and the investment Londoners have already made under the expectation that projects would be approved for 2024.

Sincerely,

By e-mail
Members of the Executive Committee
Orchard Park/Sherwood Forest Neighborhood Association
London, ON,



Strategic Planning Opportunities Working Group (SORWG)

Re: City of London Capital and Innovation Grants and the Neighbourhood Decision Making Program

Dear Committee,

Meals on Wheels London wants to express its gratitude for the support of the City of London as a partner and funder for its programming. Our organization has operated in London for 55 years and provides meals and transportation services to vulnerable low-income seniors and people with disabilities across the City of London. As a partner who knows the value of community investment we wanted to send this letter of support for this program.

Our organization wants to advocate to keep this program because:

- a. This funding leads to new and innovative programs that service the unique needs of Londoners. Meals on Wheels London started with just 6 clients and a few thousand dollars and has grown to serve thousands within our community.
- b. The City of London is a growing City that is requiring more and more service. Investments like this ensure organizations who are providing service can seek the support of the city they serve.
- c. We recognize that the city does provide multi-year grant funding to organizations. However, this program purpose is for capital investments which will service growth and innovative ideas that meet needs of Londoners as they arise each year. The multi-year grants only allow application once per council cycle.

Our organization knows that these are difficult times for our community. We see this in the individuals we are serving. We understand the need for savings but do not feel it should come at the cost of those providing essential services to Londoners.

Thank you and welcome any questions,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chad Callander', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Chad Callander
Executive Director, Meals on Wheels London

356 Queens Ave.
London, ON
N6B 1X6

TOGETHER WE CAN DELIVER

519-660-1430
info@mowl.ca
www.mowl.ca

From: a g heartsong
Sent: Saturday, June 22, 2024 7:58:31 AM
To: Woolsey, Heather
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Neighborhood Decision Making Grants are ESSENTIAL

Hello members of the Strategic Opportunities Review Working Group,

I am a resident in Ward 1, and work in Ward 4.

I strongly object to suspending Neighborhood Decision Making Grants and the London Community Grants Program in an attempt, as I understand it, to offset the property tax spike due to the huge increase in the police budget.

Neighborhood Decision Making Grants are the most accessible and empowering ways for average citizens to have any say in how tax dollars are spent. Many of the grants result in very local neighborhood improvements with immediate, long-lasting benefits, such as the Bishop-Hellmuth neighborhood way-finding map.

Counselors Lewis and Lehman think a comprehensive review of the budget for Neighborhood Decision Making Grants is needed, but THAT ALREADY WAS DONE during the Multi-Year Mayor's Budget. Spending money on another review is wasteful and unnecessary.

Counselors should not steal money from the people's stated neighborhood needs to pay the police. I implore the Strategic Opportunities Review Working Group do not support this proposal.

Respectfully,

Ayla Heartsong

London



June 24, 2024

Dear Members of the Strategic Opportunities Review Working Group (SORWG),

I am writing in response to the proposal to suspend the London Community Grants annual Capital & Innovation Grants for the remainder of the current multi-year cycle. While the goal of identifying cost-saving opportunities is appreciated, it is important to emphasize the significant economic and social impacts these grants have on our community.

Non-profit organizations are essential pillars of our community, fostering economic development, addressing social issues, and enhancing the quality of life for residents. The London Community Grants, particularly the Capital & Innovation Grants, have been instrumental in enabling organizations like ours to initiate projects that create lasting benefits in our city. These grants empower non-profits to leverage additional funding from other sources, multiplying the initial investment and ensuring that public dollars are used efficiently and effectively.

The proposed suspension would save \$500,000 annually over the next three years, representing a 0.1% reduction in the City of London budget projections. However, the true value of these grants far exceeds their monetary cost. Here's why:

- **Social Impact:** These grants support initiatives that address critical social issues such as poverty, healthcare, education, and homelessness. Non-profits are often at the forefront of innovation in these areas, developing and implementing solutions that government programs may not be able to address as effectively. Cutting these funds could slow down or halt progress in tackling these pressing issues.
- **Economic Stimulus:** Non-profits supported by these grants often undertake projects that stimulate local economies. These projects create jobs, attract additional funding, and drive economic activity in our city.
- **Community Well-being:** The projects funded through these grants enhance the quality of life for all residents. From improved healthcare services to educational programs and cultural initiatives, the benefits are widespread and long-lasting. These initiatives create a more inclusive, supportive, and vibrant community.
- **Leverage and Efficiency:** Every dollar granted often brings in additional funding from other sources, including private donations, other grants, and in-kind contributions. This leveraging effect means the impact of the grants is magnified, providing a higher return on investment for public dollars.
- **Innovation and Capacity Building:** Capital & Innovation Grants encourage non-profits to think creatively and develop new approaches to solving community problems. They build the capacity of these organizations to deliver services more effectively and sustainably, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and resilience.



Given these significant benefits, I urge you not only to maintain but also to consider enhancing the funding for the London Community Grants. Increasing the investment in these grants would further amplify their positive impacts, driving even greater economic and social benefits for our community.

While a review process to ensure efficiency and effectiveness is always valuable, it should not come at the cost of disrupting the ongoing and potential benefits these programs deliver. By continuing and potentially increasing support for these vital grants, we can build a stronger, more resilient community that thrives economically and socially.

Thank you for considering this perspective. Your support for London Community Grants is an investment in our community's future, contributing significantly to the overall vitality of London.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Ledgley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Kate Ledgley
Executive Director
London Children's Museum

From: Julie Stewart
Sent: Monday, June 24, 2024 10:00 PM
To: Woolsey, Heather
Subject: [EXTERNAL] SWOG meeting June 25

I am writing to express my absolute concern with this committee even considering cutting funds from the community grants and programs.

With the huge increase in taxes this year, how is this even up for discussion?

It's sad to see that support for communities is being lost especially in the current times we are in. I want my tax dollars to fund communities and community supported agencies.

The neighbourhood grants have been essential to upgrading and building community areas in places where the city council seems to forget about.

It is shameful that this is even a possibility. How about cutting some of the extravagant budget dollars handed over to the London Police.

Julie Stewart
Resident of London Ontario
Sent from Julie (she/her)

June 24, 2024

To: Members of the Strategic Opportunities Review Working Group

I urge you to defeat the motion to cut community funding as outlined in the letter to SORWG's agenda for June 26, 2024

Full disclosure: *I have applied to both the Neighbourhood Decision Making grants and to the Innovation grant program.*

Like many Londoners, I am concerned about the large increase in property taxes this year, and for the next 3 years. I too, look around and sometimes wonder why the city seems to be wasting money on certain programs, services, or activities.

I am sure we all have our own examples of what we consider waste. Councillor Lewis has commented in the past that some people say the protected bike lanes on Wavell are a waste of money. Other people love them. Everyone has their own priorities. Which is why it is so wonderful that the city has a Strategic Plan. I often find a Strategic Plan to be a great resource for identifying priorities.

Looking at the Strategic Plan:

Yes, we value financial stewardship. But we also value Inclusivity and Respect; Compassion; Teamwork and Collaboration; Commitment and Drive and Learning.

According to Cambridge Dictionary: *someone's stewardship of something is the way in which they control or take care of something.*

To me, this definition seems to emphasize that the City's values should be inherent in the financial decisions made.

I have heard members of Council in the past reference the good work of the Smart Prosperity Institute. In their March 24, 2023 writing titled: "[Industrial Policymakers need to put Communities First](#)", author John McNally points out

"governments rarely spend enough time engaging with community members to understand the problems they are experiencing." "...creating a sense that governments do not care about the challenges faced by their constituents."

It is my understanding that this was why these Community and Neighbourhood Decision Making (NDM) grants were established in the first place. The City's website indicates that:

"Neighbourhood Decision Making allows residents to be involved in making their neighbourhood a better place to live, while connecting with their neighbours and engaging in their municipal government."

From the letter circulated with this meeting's agenda, I understand that "More importantly" [than the cost savings], "it is time we pause these programs to re-evaluate the value and effectiveness of spending public dollars in this manner."

This makes me think that this is really a motion about the legitimacy of these programs, not about cost savings opportunities, which to me would be outside the purview of this working group.

The letter singles out proposals for street parties and park benches. I will point out that Covid highlighted the fact that stronger neighbourhoods provide more resiliency in difficult times and getting more people out (and sitting in) nature, has a positive benefit to their mental health, saving health care dollars and lost productivity.

The Councillors' letter makes me think that if park benches are truly needed, we should perhaps not eliminate this budget, but move the budget to Parks and Recreation (*which some would argue is already underfunded*). It is my understanding that when the NDM grants were established, a portion of the budget for community enhancements were allocated to this project – so if the NDM grants are discontinued, *should the budget not revert back to these staff-directed budgets?*

Frivolous Projects

This letter suggests that there are frivolous projects proposed in the NDM grants. This is the beauty of the NDM program. Residents are accountable to how the money is spent. In searching past projects from 2017-2023, I could not find examples of any street parties approved in NDM grant program, unless you count the one Woodfield porch concert series. There were instead, by my count, 21 enhancements to playgrounds, often at elementary schools and 41 projects that were enhancements to green spaces. Schools no longer fund playgrounds, I believe it is up to the Home and School Associations to raise funds for play equipment, which can be difficult for some communities.

Outdated Framework

The NDM grants HAVE ALREADY been reviewed and revised this year. Why use more staff time to do it again? That does not seem to me to be efficient use of staff resources. *If you want to make some changes to the NDM grants, perhaps it might be useful to look at the 9 projects awarded for outdoor neighbourhood ice rinks. As we have already experienced, climate change will be bringing warmer and more unstable winters – making outdoor rinks a waste of city funds and staff resources. But I digress.*

Community Grants shouldn't benefit for-profit organizations.

The letter seems to indicate a concern for providing capital funds for private and not-for-profit organizations. Again, let's go back to that Strategic Plan. Some of the Areas of

Focus include Accessibility, Inclusion, Culture, Wellbeing and Safety, and Climate Action. I did not recognize any “for profit” organizations that received funding. Many of the services that Londoners rely on are delivered by not-for-profits. From my experience serving on the board of a children’s camp, I understand that when new regulations like Accessibility Standards come into force, it can add a financial burden to organizations. Organizations like the Boys and Girls club, Reforest London, the John Howard Society, the Arts Project each contribute to our community in meaningful ways. The City has many programs that support businesses, like through the Business Improvement Associations, that have larger budgets-are we suspending those programs too? Not-for-profits also create jobs and generate GDP.

Innovation Grants support Council’s anti-racism and oppression work

A quote from the Multi-Year budget:

“Municipal council has affirmed its commitment to eliminating systemic racism and oppression in our community. As individuals who serve the public, facing this troubling reality is both daunting and uncomfortable-and, for many, deeply personal. While this work demands urgency, the actions needed to deconstruct systems of racism and oppression will require sustained commitment and courageous action to drive transformative change.

When you look at the list of projects funded by Innovation Grants, you can see evidence of this commitment from Council through funding for Muslim, Indigenous, Black, and newcomer communities. If this work “demands urgency”, then pausing these grants for three years undermines this sense of urgency and importance.

Why are these the first cuts?

It saddens me to think that the first reaction to cutting expenses is targeted at the only programs that Londoners have where they can engage with program funding. We have recently come out of a municipal election where only 25% of Londoners bothered to vote. Suppressing engagement efforts with the public will not improve this average.

When I look at the functions of the SORWG, I see the mandate to review programs and services, explore revenue generation, and develop an annual workplan for both city programs and services and the City’s boards and commissions. Why are we jumping straight to “pausing” – which in effect is canceling of programs BEFORE the reviews are complete?

- Where is the “thorough consideration of all qualitative and quantitative impacts in the review process” that is required in the stated functions?
- Where is the “clear performance metrics and evaluation criteria”?
- Or the “structured framework for decision-making”?

How is this decision to cut community funding justified without any of this pre-work? 'We all know' that once you cancel a program, it is much harder to get it re-instated.

I urge you to defeat this motion and instead start the process for developing criteria and framework and metrics so that a non-emotional decision can be made on this and other cost saving measures.

Respectfully,

Mary Ann Hodge

Climate Action London

You have my permission to add this letter to the public record.

APPENDIX A – CAPITAL PROJECTS

In 2023, there were 2 capital projects:

- \$61K to create a classroom for the Humana Community Services organization – who focus on addressing child and youth mental health concerns and providing supported community living options for children, youth and adults with specialized needs.
- \$38K to a church to facilitate programs serving low income and newcomer residents

The 2022 capital projects were:

- \$24K -John Howard Society, soundproofing for confidentiality
- \$132K – ReForest London, renovations to buildings at Westminster Ponds
- \$24.5K -Reimagine Institute, renovations for community event space and home of the Thing Library
- \$35K – Urban Roots, processing facility, hydro and water upgrades
- \$40K -YMCA (Central), new gym floor

The 2021 capital projects were:

- \$35K- Boys and Girl's Club, new gym floor
- \$80K – Southwest Aboriginal Health Access Centre, security system for Child Care and Family Centre

The 2020 capital projects were:

- \$90K Aeolian Hall Musical Arts, to purchase building to host El Sistema program
- \$75K Big Brothers/Big Sisters, renovations
- \$40K Forest City Velodrome, accessible washrooms, training space
- \$25K John Howard, roof and parking lot repairs
- \$22K N'Amerind Friendship Centre, roof repairs
- \$90K ReForest London, building renovations, including washrooms
- \$36K The Arts Project, washroom renovations
- \$52K Youth Centre for Change, washroom renovations

APPENDIX B – Innovation Grants

2023 Innovation Funding

- \$8K Canadian hearing Services, First Aid and CPR training using ASL
- \$15K Gan-Gani Nursery School, Art Program for seniors and pre-schoolers
- \$28K London Children’s Museum, STEAM activities for low-income families
- \$15K London Community Chaplaincy, Youth leadership and mentoring program
- \$22K, London Environmental Network, Carbon Sequestration Feasibility study
- \$44K, Nokee Kwe, Chamber of Commerce collaboration on hiring practices
- \$81K Muslim Resource Centre, Healing program for women/girls responding to Islamophobia
- \$60K Muslim Wellness Network, Mentorship program for youth
- \$67K Now for Tomorrow, Music and dance program for South Sudanese youth
- \$30K Participation House, Community participation for Young Adults
- \$28K WeBridge, Adult day program for Black seniors

2022 Innovation Funding

- \$75K Across Languages, App to connect interpreters to medical professionals
- \$47K Alzheimer Society, Dementia training to community volunteers
- \$68K Centre Communautaire Regional, assist newcomers to integrate into London community
- \$50K Anova, Trauma and violence-informed training for landlords to increase safe and quality housing for women

2021 Innovation Funding

- \$87K Aeolian Hall Musical Arts, Black London Network Outreach Program
- \$43K Nigerian Association, Mental health and addiction services
- \$35K Pillar Nonprofit Network, Equity & Inclusion Reflection and Framework toolkits
- \$32K ReForest London, Seed Hub and Community Tree Nursery
- \$35K Thames Region Ecological Association, Thing Library
- \$33 Congress of Black Women, Future Smart Youth Program
- \$85K London Cross-Cultural Learner Centre, Youth Peer Support Project
- \$31K WeBridge, Black Seniors and Youth Educational Workshops

2020 Innovation Funding

- \$66K Across Languages, Remote Interpretation Change Agent Project

From: Heenal Rajani

Sent: Tuesday, June 25, 2024 9:11 AM

To: Woolsey, Heather

Cc: McAlister, Hadleigh <hmcaster@london.ca>; Lewis, Shawn <slewis@london.ca>; Cuddy, Peter <pcuddy@london.ca>; Stevenson, Susan <sstevenson@london.ca>; Pribil, Jerry <jpribil@london.ca>; Trosow, Sam <strosow@london.ca>; Rahman, Corrine <crahman@london.ca>; Lehman, Steve <slehman@london.ca>; Hopkins, Anna <ahopkins@london.ca>; Van Meerbergen, Paul <pvanmeerbergen@london.ca>; Franke, Skylar <sfranke@london.ca>; Pelozo, Elizabeth <epeloz@london.ca>; Ferreira, David <dferreira@london.ca>; Hillier, Steve <shillier@london.ca>; City of London, Mayor <mayor@london.ca>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter to the SORWG committee re Proposed Changes to the NDM & London Community Grants programs

Dear Ms. Woolsey, Mayor, and Councillors

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the proposed suspension of the London Community Grants and the Neighbourhood Decision Making (NDM) grants. As a community member and representative of Reimagine Co and of the Institute for Community Sustainability, I strongly oppose this proposal and urge the committee to reject it.

While I will not be available to attend the meeting tomorrow to speak in person, I humbly invite you to hear my further thoughts on the matter

here: <https://www.facebook.com/heenalr/videos/954764383003292>

Reimagine Co exists today because of the NDM. The \$8,000 grant we received kickstarted our work and enabled us to turn our vision into reality. Many many London groups can share similar stories. Furthermore, the capital grant we received enabled us to renovate our community event space, which has been a tremendous benefit not only for us but for dozens of other organizations in our community. Suspending these grants would be a significant setback for many local nonprofits that rely on them for essential projects and services.

These grants encourage community involvement and foster a sense of ownership and pride among residents. Reducing or eliminating these opportunities would discourage civic engagement at a time when it is needed most. The NDM grants, in particular, have empowered residents to directly participate in improving their neighborhoods, creating a stronger, more connected community.

The funds provided by these grants often help nonprofits leverage additional funding from other sources. In the post-COVID era, with donations dwindling, these grants are more critical than ever. They serve as a catalyst for further investment and support, amplifying the impact of each dollar spent by the city.

The argument against funding park benches, basketball courts, and other amenities through NDM overlooks their importance as community assets and the importance of local democracy as a public good in its own right. These amenities promote social interaction, physical activity, and overall well-being. Investing in such infrastructure is essential for maintaining a high quality of life in our city.

While I support a review of the grants process to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, pausing the program is not the solution. Instead, the review should consider expanding these grants to better meet the growing needs of our community. We should be looking at increasing the funding tenfold, not reducing or scrapping it.

The London Community Grants and NDM programs are vital to the fabric of our community. They support essential services, enhance public spaces, and foster a sense of community and participation. I urge the committee to reject the proposal to suspend these grants and instead focus on enhancing and expanding them to better serve our community.

Thank you for considering my letter. I trust that the committee will recognize the importance of these grants and the positive impact they have on our city.

Yours sincerely,

Heenal Rajani

ANNUAL WORK PLAN

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES REVIEW WORKING GROUP

as of June 26, 2024

File No.	Subject	Request Date	Requested/Expected Reply Date	Person Responsible	Status
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
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