

**From:** R Stewart

**Sent:** Thursday, September 28, 2023 4:47 PM

**To:** [council@london.ca](mailto:council@london.ca)

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**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Review prior to October 5 meeting to reduce Hub operating costs

I attended the 4 pm council meeting on September 25.

I have lived in Ward 7 for just over a year now.

I agree with Councillor Rahman that all of the city must participate together to shelter the 2000+ homeless people in our city and I am not opposed to homeless shelters in Ward 7.

What I am opposed to is the inefficient use of funds whether they be taxpayer funds or the hard earned donation monies that have been contributed to reduce homelessness in London.

First, a comment on the process. Yes, there have been public forums on the overall process and plans but limited input on specific locations such as 705 Fanshawe Park Rd. So for councillors to state that the taxpayers have had their chance to participate is unacceptable particularly as it relates to the specific locations where taxpayers were given six days notice and then told by the Mayor on September 25 to sit in the gallery and be quiet.

My first concern about the 705 Fanshawe location is the relative inefficiency, as I understand it. While capital expenses are different for each of the three proposed sites and must be considered when selecting a project, I am focusing on the annual operating expenses where the Atlosa site will operate a new bed for \$75,648 a year; Youth Opportunities Unlimited will operate at \$87,833 per bed annually and 705 Fanshawe proposes that they will need \$131,542 per bed per year. I'd like to know how Atlosa can operate at 42% below 705 Fanshawe and request that City Council review this before approving the 705 Fanshawe location. Given that both Atlosa and YOU operate within 15% of each other, it appears to me that the range of \$76,000 to \$88,000 is the acceptable operating target per bed for this important project.

During the meeting and in support of having no further discussion on the three locations, Councillor Sam Trosow suggested we need to think about our donors and stated that if we can't vote now after all we've been through, we're going to look foolish. I believe he is correct to keep donors in mind through this process and in particular the London family who made a large donation; however, I don't believe any donor would be impressed with an inefficient use of their hard earned donations at the 705 Fanshawe proposed location. In fact, based on the annual bed operating ratios, if you took all of the operating expenses proposed for 705 Fanshawe and gave the money to either Atlosa or YOU, they would be able to provide between 10 to 14 more beds with 10 to 14 more homeless people sleeping in warm beds this winter. I think donors and taxpayers would be more impressed with more beds than Sam's concern that we might look foolish if we don't act now.

The homeless people in London is an urgent situation and you could sense the urgency at the September 25 council meeting. However, the lack of planning on the part of Social and Health Development should not make an emergency on the backs of donors and taxpayers. Kevin Dickins and his team knew one or more years ago that it is likely to snow again in London, Ontario in November. It appears that finding three locations now at any expense is more important than finding 10 to 15 hubs with reasonable operating expenses. I don't know Mr. Dickins but I believe him to be smart enough to understand the difference in the operating expenses and to understand that 705 Fanshawe looks like an expensive outlier. He is after all smart enough to have avoided the high property taxes of London, Ontario by choosing to live in Exeter where his property taxes will not be affected by decisions on homeless hub selections

here in London - whether they be reasonable as in the case of the expenses to operate Atlosa or YOU or unreasonable as in the case of 705 Fanshawe. If this plan/timeline was started 30 days earlier than it was, the Social and Health Development could have and should have built into the plan the extra 30 days requested by Councillor Rahman for public discussion on the specific locations.

I agree with Councillor Rahman that 705 Fanshawe should have been presented as a separate suggestion mainly because of its high expenses. I also feel Council should proceed immediately with the other two locations as they appear to be operating within a comparable and reasonable expense range. Kevin Dickins and team should continue to look for all other hubs that can operate in the \$76K to \$87K range, lower would be better but anything as high as what 705 Fanshawe is proposed to operate at is 1) unacceptable to the taxpayers of London, 2) somewhat of an insult to the donors behind this project and 3) a disservice to the homeless of London where more beds should be the priority and not any beds at any cost to meet the now time-pressured department's rollout plan.

I am new to London and new in trying to understand the Hub plan and its finances. If any reader sees errors or any misunderstandings of the numbers in my email then please correct me or give me updated information.

Sincerely,

Robert Stewart  
Property Taxpayer Ward 7

PS: I could not find Kevin Dickins' email. If anyone wants to send him a copy, please do so as I have mentioned him in this email and please feel free to forward this email to any other council member if you wish.