

From: yuyuezhang
Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 1:25 AM
To: Council Agenda <councilagenda@london.ca>
Cc: Rahman, Corrine <crahman@london.ca>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter to Council pertaining hub at 705 Fanshawe Park Road West

Dear Council,

My name is Yuyue Zhang, resident of Foxhollow neighbourhood in Northwest London. I am writing to voice my concerns on the hub location at 705 Fanshawe Park Road West.

Many of the residents in this community were shocked to learn about the hub location last Wednesday (September 20, 2023) from news, like me. As of this evening, as I checked around with neighbours along my street, many of them were still unaware of this. They shared the confusion that they have never been informed in any way from the City on this matter, and wondered why the decision making process on this matter cannot be made transparent to the public, and why the lack of public engagement and communications prior to the announcement.

To be clear, our community members are actively engaged in many public affairs, and are caring for those who are in need - heartwarming actions, fundraising initiatives, etc. Mayor Morgan is from this ward and he should know this very well. So, please don't label any of the opposition to the hub at 705 Fanshawe Park Road West. We oppose not because of not-in-my-back-yard, not because we don't care for the unhoused, not because we fear. We oppose the plan just because the whole decision making process lacks transparency, ignores public engagement, violates the principle of justice and democracy.

All of us have the right to dignity and safety in our communities. It is unjust that our community was not consulted or asked for feedback on this location. Is this the type of city we are, where decisions are made without democracy, without a fair and balanced look at both points of views?

Dear Council, please do reconsider this plan for the hub location at 705 Fanshawe Park Road West. The plan is not aligned to City's own location criteria. Implementing the plan will cause more issues with heavy cost, and disappoint your constituents on Council's accountability and ability in decision making for public good.

And below are the concerns that need to be addressed:

1. Could Council clarify on the location selection criteria? This location is not "directly adjacent to licensed childcares or city parks", however, it is just two doors down from a treatment facility for vulnerable autistic children (TVCC), and right beside Mastermind Toys, where workshops for children and families are hosted regularly. It is not in the interior of residential community, but it just backs into the residential neighbourhood, by wood fence. This doesn't assure the safety.
2. Other than the hub location selection criteria City has made, what kind of risk assessments have been made regarding the 705 Fanshawe Park Road West? If any, who made the assessments by what methods?
3. Have the City and Council been aware of the emergency medical services nearby if the hub is established? All other four locations are current agencies that already provide such assistance, hospitals and institutions that have the capacities to provide such services, why Fanshawe location is the only one that doesn't possess any of these capacities? Are any locations in the North End of the city being considered, for example, somewhere close to University Hospital?
- 4.. Could the Council explain on the cost per bed as it does not meet the terms of the previous stipulations?
5. Could Council explain why the number of beds is contrary to what was stipulated in the previous report?
- 6.. Has the Council been aware that the current residents at the Lighthouse Inn would be displaced from their housing? Is this going to create more housing issues?
7. What is the safety assurance for the community if the hub is established here? The advice of a safety guard and we learn how to call 911 when we see concerns are not going to work because this is not a sustainable way. Thinking about disruption and safety concerns shut down a makeshift center in the Oakridge area in a matter of two months. We are not short of such examples.

8. It has been stated that clients served at the hub will be transitioned to affordable/assisted housing creating a "flow" of clients that will go on to be successful in the community. Where are these supports as it seems the city is currently out of resources with extreme waitlists for housing?

If the goal is to help the most people, this isn't the solution.

If the goal is to do something, as opposed to doing nothing, this is plain desperation without good sense.

If the goal is just to get 20 people off the street this winter, this is unjustified, as this winter will come and go before this hub is opened. Furthermore the 10 CMHA cold weather beds that are attached to this plan – there need to be 10 extra beds allocated to the cold weather plan if this is the issue stopping community members from having their voices heard.

We need a strong location that everyone can get behind. Please, dear Council, rethink this plan and find a more suitable option, for your accountability and ability in decision making for public good.

We thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Fox Hollow Resident, Yuyue Zhang

Please add my letter to the public added agenda, with my permission, for the council's October 5th meeting

Dear Council,

My name is Yuyue Zhang, a resident in the Fox Hollow neighbourhood. With respect, I am writing my second letter to the Council to voice my questions and concerns regarding the hub on 705 Fanshawe Park Road West.

After my first letter (sent on Friday September 29, attached) to the Council and the Mayor, I was advised to listen to Mayor Morgan and Councillor Lewis' s informative talk on the Craig Needles podcast. While I listened to the talk, I am not sure if it was as informative as it claimed, it was definitely selective on information and biased on opinions. And it again raised more questions and concerns, not to the hub itself, but also to the accountability and ability of the Council in decision making.

Mayor Morgan and Councilor Lewis, you educated us to separate the Fanshawe hub from other general homeless hubs, as Fanshawe hub is for more acute women who are experiencing housing issues due to their mental health situation. No problem. I get it. But when we asked for more open dialogues, you responded with a rush timeframe (nine-month timeframe) stating this would delay the opening of the hubs for the homeless in winter. I don't understand this rush for the timeframe - Fanshawe hub won't open until May 2024 in your plan, anyway you cannot cover the winter. Also, as you educated us, Fanshawe hub is not the same as other general homeless hubs. Then, why cannot this location be discussed separately from other hubs in your agenda? You want to create a "flow" of these unhoused, where do you plan to flow these more acute women from 705 Fanshawe Park Road West to? Do you really have the full capacity to keep the full cycle running as a flow, rather than just covering one mistake with another?

When we raised concerns over safety, we were given the answer that a security guard will be in place, and this place will be monitored and kept tracking by the staff. How many of you have been to the Parkwood Institute in the other end of the City? Do you know what kind of safety measures are in place over there? It is for sure more than just a security guard and staff monitoring there, multiple gates to swipe in and out, as you can see directly entering into the building, let alone other response mechanisms. Mayor Morgan and Councillor Lewis, if a security guard and regular staff monitoring are all you can say to assure the sense of safety to the community, I am sorry that none of us would take it, because we all know this just cannot enable the work. 705 Fanshawe Park Road doesn't have the capacity to run such a hub, and your plan for such a hub just cannot serve its purpose stated. To be clear, with your current plan for such a hub, it is not going to work at 705 Fanshawe Park Road West, nor to any other neighbourhoods in London - residential neighbourhoods just don't have the capacity to run such hubs this way regardless of the funds you are going to invest in. You will have to find other more suitable plans to spend the funds responsibly.

Mayor Morgan and Councillor Lewis, according to your talks, I understand that you are also taking this project as an experiment. No problem. Social progress needs such experiments. But, such trials of errors cannot just go by people's wills, it needs to consider many factors, including but not limited to the larger social impacts, cost-benefit effectiveness, as the basics. I don't see much of such considerations in your plan or in any of your talks to the public, your plan on this hub location to the public is just throwing money into the river, instead.

Mayor Morgan and Councillor Lewis, you promised that the funds for the hubs are not from property taxes. Thank you for your hard work in gaining external resources for London! However, just because the funds are not from the property taxes doesn't mean you can violate the democratic principles involved in the decision making process. Just because the funds are not from the property taxes, we the residents here cannot have our voices and concerns be heard? Just because the funds are not from the property taxes, any opposition to this hub location shall be labeled as NIMBYs? Just because the funds are not from the property taxes, residents in Fox Hollow community who are not in favour of this hub location shall be portrayed as the million dollars house owners who just turn their back to those who are in need?

In other meetings and talks, Mayor Morgan also commented on some oppositions "misinformed and feared", and out of "misconception". Mr. Mayor, I am one of the opponents to this hub location, and I can correct you that I am not scared of the hub itself, and I am always open to be educated, by good points out of logical thinking though. When we talk about the safety concerns and the location suitability, we are talking about the toy store that regularly provides workshops to children and families, right next to 705 Fanshawe Park Road West; we are talking about a treatment facility for vulnerable autistic children (TVCC) just two doors down; we are talking about Vista Woods park in the neighbourhood in 10 minutes walking distance from 705 Fanshawe Park Road West; and we are talking about the easy access to the adjacent trails that connect multiple schools. Mr. Mayor and the rest of the Council, I can assure you that I am not misinformed, or feared, I just feel I am misrepresented, and most of the opponents from our community feel the same way. And I speak with no entitlement or privilege here. I came to Canada ten years ago, renting a basement, no extra dime for new clothes other than from thrift stores, and paying for a Tim Hortons coffee was a luxury to me by then. As a woman, I do understand these struggles myself. And I appreciate the kindness and support I received here in London along my way from an immigrant to the Canadian Citizen. My husband and I work hard to earn a decent living here and live in a community that we are proud to call it home. Many of the residents in this neighbourhood come from a similar background, and would stand on the point to share the love and care to others whenever needed. I just don't understand why all of a sudden we are labeled unfairly and being publicly shamed just for having different voices over a proposal on Council's agenda. Can we not have our concerns and voices be heard? What are you fearing for, my dear Council?

Mr. Mayor and the rest of the Council, please stop labeling the opponents unfairly. All we want is an open dialogue on the issues and concerns raised over the hub location at 705 Fanshawe Park Road West. All we want is to be educated with good knowledge out of logical thinking. All we want is to urge the City Council to hold its accountability and ability in decision making so as to make London a better place to live for everyone!

Dear City Council, please reconsider your view for the hub at 705 Fanshawe Park Road West, and separate this hub from other hubs from your agenda for further public consultation and discussions.

Please add my letter to the public added agenda, with my permission, for the council's October 5th meeting

Sincerely,

Yuyue Zhang
Ward 7 resident