



City of London  
300 Dufferin Ave  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
London, Ontario  
N6A 4L9

October 25, 2023

Attention: Mayor Josh Morgan and Strategic Priorities and Planning Committee

RE: Letter of Support

On behalf of the Old East Village BIA (Business Improvement Area), we urge you to support the Staff recommendation in their report for the funding of \$1.66 million for our two core area Business Improvement Areas with Direct Business Support Funding, with the OEV BIA receiving \$500,000 and Downtown London receiving \$1.16 million).

You are fully aware of the reality on the street in OEV, but I briefly outline the key parameters below:

- Vacancy Rate is 24% with a 41% rate in areas directly adjacent to social service providers. Before the start of revitalization in 2003 the rate was 26% (Healthy commercial vacancy rate sits between 7-10% and prior to 2019 with City support, OEV BIA was able to reduce the vacancy rate on the corridor to 8% in late 2018.
- OEV has the highest concentration of social services in any London neighbourhood: within 638 metres of Dundas Street and Adelaide Street, there are currently 18 services supporting individuals experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, and addiction.
- Triple Threat: OEV has experienced 4 straight years of street closure due to level construction, increased street activity, and all COVID related business impacts.
- Multiple fires in area businesses related to street activities have threatened active and beloved OEV businesses making it difficult to maintaining their insurance policies.
- Over 4000 reports to Community Informed Response since 2019, which averages 3 times per day. These reports are often done once in the morning but if reporting all day long, this number would be 10x the reporting. Reporting could be a full-time job.

With this context in mind the proposed funding is necessary as it will provide relief to business owners who currently must choose between operating/growing their business and maintaining safety, cleaning-up and repairing vandalism related damage.

We look forward to working with City Staff to implement these initiatives with our business community and reporting back (as required).

This funding will have a substantial and positive impact on our Old East Village business owners who are all small independent operations, while also assisting with the ongoing revitalization of the area following COVID, ongoing construction and the homelessness crisis.

In close, as a member of the Whole of Community System Response we would like to thank the City Manager and Staff for initiating and creating this recommendation and advocating for a program that supports the businesses within our BIA district.

Sincerely,

Kevin Morrison  
General Manager  
Old East Village BIA

Maria Drangova  
Board Chair  
Old East Village BIA