



Dear City Council,

### **RE: Multi-Year Budget 2024-2027**

Housing affordability and homelessness are the biggest challenges facing many people within the City of London. We thank you for your commitment, advocacy and investment in housing solutions to date, including your support for the Whole of Community Response. We were pleased to hear Mayor Morgan state “housing as a fundamental human right” in the State of the City address in 2023. Municipal and private investments into the not-for-profit sector is pivotal to working towards the common goal of solving this crisis together.

As our representatives of the City of London, we ask you to consider the systemic ramifications of what increasing the Police Budget would have on the most marginalized people in London without a balanced community approach. Growing research continues to show that investments in policing do not correlate to safer cities, economic prosperity for job growth and investments in community support do. This requires a perspective shift to start seeing the work of community agencies as the essential work that it is. London Police play an important role and we need Police to continue to work alongside us in partnership; however, if we respond with reactive solutions rather than proactive ones, we will be in the same position at the next budget cycle with worsening conditions as marginalized people continue to struggle and survive in deteriorating conditions.

City Council approved the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan which identifies the Strategic Areas of Focus including the following: Reconciliation, equity, Housing and homelessness, and Wellbeing and safety. 30% of the people living on the streets of London self-identify as Indigenous due to long standing impacts of colonization. There will be consequential impacts without a stronger commitment to a community approach that includes increased opportunities for diversion like programs that support individuals to maintain housing with wrap around supports. Without proper attention to prevention measures and systemic change, emergency services become overburdened due to a weakening social safety net and this will not change with the proposed budget. Diverting some of the available funds from policing to housing needs and Indigenous-led programming would create a long-term impact for key areas of the strategic plan.

We recommend the following:

1. 17.6 million dedicated to a new Training Facility for Emergency Services be diverted to Housing Stability Services to increase rent supplements and expand operating capacity within programs to house individuals experiencing homelessness, while partnering with the Housing Accelerator Fund on new housing opportunities to focus on solving preventable deaths. These dollars could also support the amendments P-15, P-16, P-17 and P-18 to help individuals maintain long-term housing stability.
2. 6.6 million for capital and operating costs of body-worn and car cameras, tasers, a drone and a light armoured vehicle be diverted to Indigenous-led programming to increase culturally appropriate supports that will enhance the Giwetashkad Homelessness Prevention Plan.



3. Given the escalation of domestic violence concerns, reallocate police dollars to build an investigative Intimate Partner Violence Unit to align with the Safety of Women and Girls Framework.

In lieu of a thriving community sector, Police Services were never intended to be the responders to the many competing crises they've become today. We call on City Council to make the commitment with us to prioritize housing as a human right by actioning housing as a top priority in the 2024-2027 multi-year budget and aligning with the values of the Strategic Plan. This is opportunity to take the lead alongside ready and willing programs to work towards a thriving community for everyone.

  
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Jaclyn Seeler

Co-Chair of the London Homeless Coalition