

Attention: City of London Council

Re: Parking Incentive Pilot Project

March 26, 20024

Members of our district rely heavily on municipal parking in Lots 1 & 2 since there are no privately owned parking lots within the OEV BIA District. Demand for parking in our area is directly tied to economic activity, building vacancy rates, employment numbers, and other indicators of success.

We are completely supportive of Councillor Susan Stevenson's motion below for the implementation of a reduced parking incentive as a pilot project until the end of Q3 2024 for Municipal Parking Lots 1 & 2 within our OEV BIA district.:

That Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to implement a reduced parking incentive as a pilot project until the end of Q3 2024 for Municipal Lots 1 & 2 utilizing the existing HONK mobile application; recognizing that Municipal Lots 1 & 2 have a lower hourly and daily revenue intake in relation to other parking lots managed by the City.

A past report from City staff states that the free parking program "has been very successful, providing discounted parking to people visiting the core area."

At the end of 2023, this Council approved the allocation of \$500,000 to assist our BIA in providing direct support to our business members. We have initiated the following programs that have already proven successful:

- 1) Our Special Event Grant Funding provides financial assistance to business owners hosting events on their premises. This funding provides assistance up to \$500 however, the average application request is a modest \$350. Beyond financial assistance, we also provide promotional and marketing support. Many events are selling out within days of being announced and drawing crowds regularly to OEV's commercial corridor.
- 2) Our Safety & Security Grant provides funding to assist contributing BIA members in implementing, upgrading, or replacing security measures including security gates, cameras, enhanced locks, etc. We offer financial incentives to cover 50% of costs, up to a maximum of \$5,000.

- 3) Our Sign Grant addresses the numerous properties in OEV who currently have substandard signage. This grant provides financial assistance and support with obtaining city permits, as well as the design, manufacturing, and installation of proper and professional signage at an affordable price. The program offers financial assistance to cover up to 50% of costs, up to a maximum of \$1,500.

- 4) Our “Clean Crew” initiative is our newest program and was launched just yesterday. We have contracted a local company to walk our BIA district from Adelaide Street to Rectory Street on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. They will clean up debris, drug paraphernalia, human and animal excrement and other items left on the private properties of our business and core area residents. Outside of these timelines, issues and concerns are forwarded to our office. All matters are resolved within one business day. The city has been diligent in keeping public property clean. This is an excellent example of working together for the betterment of our community.

As we move forward in supporting our district, we are continually frustrated with the unique havoc we experience in Old East Village. Our businesses constantly struggle with homelessness issues, open drug dealing and use, mental health outbursts, property damage, and mess.

These problems were not created overnight and certainly will not be resolved quickly; however, it would be beneficial for the City of London to work with us in a more collaborative manner to address these ongoing issues.

As a BIA, we are prepared to continue investing in OEV. All we ask is that the City invest equally in our efforts and cease generating an abundance of obstacles.

Embracing this reduced parking incentive will avoid further detriment to the businesses within our district and contribute to the goals of the Council’s 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. The following excerpt describes the strategic plan and how it aligns with the same goals set forth by the OEV BIA:

“The 2023-2027 Strategic Plan identifies Council’s priorities and implementing strategies to inform the associated 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget. The following outcomes of the Economic Growth, Culture and Prosperity as well as the Mobility and Transportation strategies include: London’s Core Area is a vibrant neighbourhood and attractive destination; and Londoners of all identities, abilities

and means can move throughout the City safely and efficiently. It also specifically addresses the following strategies:

- Economic Growth, Culture, and Prosperity strategy 4.1 a) ‘Decrease commercial vacancy through new programs and initiatives.’
- Economic Growth, Culture, and Prosperity strategy 4.3 e) ‘Explore and implement strategies to support the retention of existing businesses’”

These strategies directly align with the goals and initiatives being created and offered by the OEV BIA for our members to create a safer, more welcoming, and vibrant community.

Council itself recognized the relationship between economic growth and ease of visitor parking in their decision to extend the initiative into the 1st quarter of 2024. The ability to visit and browse OEV’s commercial district for up to 2 hours free is incredibly beneficial for businesses, property owners, and community members. A correlation between accessible parking and improved attendance is visible at the Western Fair District Market every weekend when hundreds of visitors make their free parking lots very busy on Saturdays and Sundays.

In close, we are doing our part to revitalize Old East Village.

Please allow us the opportunity to work in closer collaboration with the City to achieve our mutually beneficial goals.

I thank you for your attention, interest, and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Kevin Morrison

General Manager - Old East Village BIA