



300 Dufferin Avenue
P.O. Box 5035
London, ON
N6A 4L9

London
CANADA

June 14, 2024

Dear Colleagues,

With respect to reviewing cost saving opportunities for the Multi-Year Budget, we are proposing that we suspend the London Community Grants annual Capital & Innovation Grants for the remainder of the current Multi-Year cycle. We want to note this would not impact the multi-year program stream grants at this time, only the “one off” annual grants. This represents savings of \$500,000 annually for each of the next 3 years.

We are also looking for your support to take a similar step with regard to Neighbourhood Decision Making, and suspend it for the remainder of the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget. This would represent an additional savings of \$250,000 for each of the next 3 years.

Combined, this would represent an immediate reduction of 0.1% from our budget projections.

More importantly however, we believe it is time we pause these programs to re-evaluate the value and effectiveness of spending public dollars in this manner.

While we recognize many organizations see value in what they do with grants they receive through the London Community Grants, there is a larger question of the value London as a whole receives. Should we be providing grants for “one-off” efforts? Should we be utilizing public dollars to address capital needs of private or not-for-profit entities? And if ultimately the decision is that there is good value, are these amounts right sized?

With regard to Neighbourhood Decision Making, we should be reflecting on why we are funding things like park benches, or basketball courts, or other amenities through a competition, or if we should simply be doing these sorts of park investments through our Parks & Recreation Master Plan and directly through evaluations and prioritizations of our staff. Likewise, we already have “small events grants” of up to \$500 for neighbourhood level events, yet we often see proposals for street parties etc, via Neighbourhood Decision Making, do we really need two granting streams for that?

I would also like your support to have Civic Administration undertake a review of the entire London Community Grants program, and the Neighbourhood Decision Making program, and report back prior to the 2028-2031 Multi-Year Budget tabling. This review should include ensuring programs are right-sized, do not duplicate or overlap, and are properly scoped to ensure good value for dollar.

Therefore, I am seeking your support for the following motion:

That Civic Administration be directed to bring forward a Business Case for the Annual Budget Update to pause:

- a) *The London Community Grants one-time Innovation and Capital Grants stream for the remainder of the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget,*
- b) *The Neighbourhood Decision Making program for the remainder of the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget,*

And that Civic Administration be further directed to undertake a comprehensive review of the London Community Grants Program, including the multi-year stream and the Neighbourhood Decision Making Program and bring forward a report prior to the end of Q2, 2027 with options for Council consideration on rightsizing and scope of these programs; including the alignment or conflict of NDM with regard to the Parks & Rec Master Plan and new Parks Reserve Fund, should Council choose to reinstate the programs for the 2028-2031 Multi-Year Budget.

Sincerely,

Shawn Lewis
Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ward 2

Steve Lehman
Councillor Ward 8