



July 4, 2024

To the members of the Strategic Planning and Priorities Committee:

We were dismayed this week to learn that two Councillors have sought to have City Council cancel three years' worth of budgeted investment in community infrastructure, nonprofit innovation, and participatory budgeting for citizens.

Deputy Mayor Shawn Lewis and Ward 8 Councillor Steve Lehman will propose a motion in a working group next week to cancel funding for the City of London Capital and Innovation Grants and the Neighbourhood Decision Making program from 2025 to 2027.

The London Chamber of Commerce would like to join other members of the community in underscoring the importance of the Community Improvement Grant program and persuade you to continue supporting this vital program for London organizations.

The London Chamber is in fact a beneficiary of this program through its partnership with Nokee Kwe and Libro Credit Union to deliver the First Employ program. This initiative aims to enhance inclusive economic growth by leveraging the Indigenous workforce's strengths. The project, established in response to local businesses' struggles recruiting and retaining Indigenous talent, aims to improve hiring norms and create culturally sensitive work environments.

The City of London Capital and Innovation Grants and the Neighbourhood Decision Making are well managed, well run programs that have just undergone a staff review. While on occasion a mistake might be made or a program funded that members of council disagree with, the programs are an essential element of grassroots democracy in our community and the Chamber strongly supports their retention.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Graham Henderson".

Graham Henderson
CEO
London Chamber of Commerce