

## **MOTION PASSED AT JULY 10, 2024 ESACAC MEETING:**

- 1. That the Environmental Stewardship and Action Community Advisory Committee recommends that the City does not pause funding to community grants and the Neighbourhood Decision Making program;***
- 2. That Civic Administration be requested to include this report as an attachment to the Civic Works Committee meeting agenda on July 16, 2024 so it may be referred to the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee.***

The Environmental Stewardship and Action Community Advisory Committee (ESACAC) [mandate](#) includes climate change mitigation, the development and monitoring of London's Urban Forest Strategy and Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) and to act as a resource for other related policies and strategies. ESACAC recognizes that many Londoners engaging in environmental stewardship and climate action activities related to our mandate depend on access to funding provided through the City's existing grant streams and the Neighbourhood Decision Making (NDM) program. For example, many recipients of funding through grants and NDM support tree planting and projects related to climate change adaptation in neighborhoods.

In May 2024, ESACAC engaged with staff overseeing NDM to inquire about linkages with CEAP implementation. Our committee was satisfied with ongoing improvements to the program, which staff explained provide enhanced value-for-money, fairness and equity. In 2024, the City of London Innovation and Capital grant stream received 53 applications with more than \$4.1 million requested and \$396,000 to be allocated (9.7% of total requested); the Grassroots grant stream received 32 applications with \$1.1 million requested and \$100,000 to be allocated (9.1% of total requested). These funding sources are demonstrably in high demand and existing allocations are already falling far below needs expressed by the community.

**ESACAC is concerned by the decision of the Strategic Opportunities Review Working Group (SORWG) to suspend funding to the City of London community grants and NDM program, believing that this will negatively impact community-led efforts towards making London into a greener, more resilient city, supporting CEAP implementation and helping the City to implement its 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.**

**ESACAC prepared 5 questions about this decision and engagement with the working group that we request be forwarded to the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee (SPPC) for consideration:**

1. What exactly would replace the existing grant streams and Neighbourhood Decision Making program?
2. Where does the 0.1% budget savings estimate come from, and does this estimate account for costs associated with shifting delivery of neighborhood improvements into the Parks and Recreation Master Plan?
3. How has suspending funding for grants and NDM been studied in terms of impacts to the capacity of relevant divisions to deliver services, impacts to workload of individual members of Council, as well as impacts to community partners who work with the City?
4. What is the process for the SORWG to receive suggestions of potential cost saving opportunities from outside its core membership, such as from the City's advisory committees? ESACAC members are prepared to propose cost saving measures that the working group could explore, but we are unsure how to share feedback.
5. What is the City of London's policy with respect to receiving delegations at working groups, such as the SORWG or Governance Working Group?