

From: Laura Bentley

Sent: Thursday, September 19, 2024 5:48 PM

To: City of London, Mayor <mayor@london.ca>; stroschow@london.ca; McAlister, Hadleigh <hmcaster@london.ca>; Lewis, Shawn <slewis@london.ca>; Cuddy, Peter <pcuddy@london.ca>; Stevenson, Susan <sstevenson@london.ca>; Pribil, Jerry <jpribil@london.ca>; Rahman, Corrine <crahman@london.ca>; Lehman, Steve <slehman@london.ca>; Hopkins, Anna <ahopkins@london.ca>; Van Meerbergen, Paul <pvanmeerbergen@london.ca>; Franke, Skylar <sfranke@london.ca>; Ferreira, David <dferreira@london.ca>; Hillier, Steve <shillier@london.ca>; Council Agenda <councilagenda@london.ca>; daryl.newcombe@ctv.ca

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Request for Meeting to Address Resident Concerns on Neighbourhood Changes and for this Letter to be Added to the Agenda for September 24th meeting

Please see the below letter and include its reading in the agenda for the September 24th meeting.

Dear Mayor Morgan and Council,

I, and many of my neighbours in the Old North area, are writing to you to express our concerns both at the proposed changes in allowing existing and viable homes on "connector streets" to be bought out and torn down and replaced towering four story townhomes, as well as the deplorable manner in which this is being pushed through for approval without proper notice to residents and opportunity for those of us effected to engage and have a voice in the decision.

We as a community demand an opportunity to speak with Mayor Morgan and Council, to be provided more information and with answers to our questions, but more importantly, for an opportunity for Mayor Morgan and Council to hear our feedback and position on the decisions that are about to effect our lives greatly. Many of the so called "connector streets" are not the busy urban transit roads as being touted by the title, but rather regular suburban streets that would be negatively impacted by the proposed changes. Four story townhouses would double the height of the typical Old North home destroying any natural light or sense of privacy. This neighbourhood of historic homes are architecturally significant regardless of heritage status, and by changing the face of the neighbourhood, you would stripping London of its pockets of character that make the city feel like home instead of just an extension of every other Canadian city. The streets where council are proposing changes need to be further assessed before any changes take place.

Why are Mayor Morgan and Council pushing through a change to overburden neighbourhoods that are still trying to catch up with infrastructure, schools that are already overburden to the point of redistributing school boarders, and most importantly, allowing for the destruction of viable homes in order to cram more units into a lot? This is not a sustainable practice at a time when we should be concerned with sustainability and maintaining perfectly adequate homes. We should be protecting all viable homes and the resources therein. If Council is concerned with creating housing, it needs to first look at all the vacant spaces and long derelict properties in the downtown core. If you are willing to approve the opportunity for private developers to tear down viable homes, why don't you first look at tearing down the 30% of vacant office spaces downtown and rebuilding as stacked townhouses? Why not look at the row of derelict and vacant houses along Adelaide St. N near York St. and implement housing there? Or tear down the enormous and problematic former McCormick's candy factory and build housing there? These are areas where people are crying out for vacant buildings to be torn down and rebuilt, and yet nothing is done. We as a city are trying to revitalize the downtown core and have poured resources into creating infrastructure there and yet shy away from creating housing in the same area. It makes no sense.

I have worked in management of low-income, non-profit housing from 2022 to this past June, and suburban high end infills are NOT the area of housing that needs to be expanded in London. We need social and SUPPORTIVE housing. Giving developers

carte blanche to destroy characteristic features of our city and overburden neighbourhoods before properly utilizing existing options is letting our downtown and the actual community in need of housing down. In fact it is truly deplorable in the midst of the various social crisis occurring at the moment in our city and across Canada as it relates to homelessness. Houses in Old North, and throughout London are taking longer and longer to sell as the year goes on. The housing crisis is less about stock of available housing than it once was, and at this point truly focuses on the affordability of what housing is available. Many in the community that I have spoken with see this as a sneaky move for council to be able to check a box of "creating housing" without doing the work to address the type of housing that is desperately needed as well as the locations that housing would best be implemented.

My expectation is that you would see far more outcry from other effected wards as well if they were fully informed as to the plans at hand. I have strong suspicions that they are also largely uninformed about the plans to enact these changes or you would hear many more voices echoing that of the Old North community.

Right now, in my experience, the public opinion of Mayor Morgan and Council's relationship with private developers is that we have no trust. There is little faith amongst your citizens that you are putting our wants and needs first as a city. It feels and looks as though you are prioritizing private developers trying to drive up the housing market over providing adequate housing for those who need it, and protecting the existing housing of your constituents.

Make no mistake. We support housing, but refusing to include the community in the decision making process that effects all of us is a mistake. Give us the opportunity to share our concerns and build a better plan that leaves the residents of London feeling heard and supported by Council instead of stomped on and ignored.

Thank you,
Laura Bentley