



March 26, 2026

City of London
Planning and Environment Committee

Re: Community Improvement Plan Loan Deferrals

Dear Chair and Members of Committee,

On behalf of the London Downtown Business Association, we are writing to provide feedback regarding the upcoming report on outstanding deferred loans under the Façade Improvement Loan Program and the Upgrade to Building Code Loan Program.

Both programs are highly valued by the downtown business and property owner community and have played a critical role in supporting reinvestment, modernization, and overall improvements to the built environment. We continue to hear positive feedback from both new and existing property owners and strongly support their continuation as key components of the City's Community Improvement Plan.

As Council considers the resumption of loan repayments in September 2026, we offer the following perspectives:

1. Ongoing Economic Pressures

While progress has been made in downtown recovery, many property owners continue to face rising operating costs, construction costs, interest rates, and leasing challenges. For some, the return of monthly loan payments, particularly at higher amounts, may present challenges when combined with these pressures.

2. Consideration of Deferral Approach Based on Loan Timing

The blanket deferral has provided meaningful relief, however there is a need to balance this with long term financial sustainability. We recommend an approach based on the timing of when loans were issued. More recent loans have had less time to realize returns and may be more impacted by repayment. A phased approach would better align repayment with investment timelines.

We suggest older loans resume repayment in as indicated, while loans issued within the past 12 months begin repayment once they reach the 12 month mark. This provides targeted flexibility while maintaining program sustainability.

3. Continued and Expanded Program Value

The success of these programs should serve as a strong rationale for their continued evolution and expansion. They have proven effective in driving reinvestment, improving building conditions, and strengthening the competitiveness of downtown properties.

The success of the Fit Out Grant Program, which is directed at tenants, further demonstrates the importance of supporting both property owners and businesses. This program has helped reduce barriers to entry, accelerate occupancy, and contribute to street level vibrancy.

We strongly encourage Council to build on this success through expansion, including:

- Expanding support for B class street facing buildings to improve lease readiness and address vacancy
- Increasing the availability and scope of tenant focused programs to support business attraction, retention, and activation

4. Alignment with the Downtown Plan and Economic Development Strategy

As the City advances both the Downtown Plan and the Economic Development Strategy, we encourage Council to ensure that any changes to these programs align with the priorities and outcomes identified through these initiatives.

These frameworks will guide the next phase of investment and growth. Aligning Community Improvement Plan programs with this direction will help maximize impact, support targeted reinvestment, and reinforce shared objectives related to economic growth, vibrancy, and long term sustainability.

In summary, the London Downtown Business Association strongly supports the continuation of both programs as essential tools for downtown revitalization. We encourage a balanced approach that recognizes ongoing economic pressures, maintains financial sustainability, and builds on the proven success of these programs through thoughtful expansion aligned with the City's broader strategic direction.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input and would welcome continued dialogue as the report is brought forward to Committee and Council.

Sincerely,


Vicki Smith
Interim Executive Director
Downtown London


Kristin Nielsen
Board Chair
Downtown London