

Summary Report & Recommendations

Mayor's Economic Prosperity Council



2013

Mayor's Economic Prosperity Council – November 2013

SEVEN RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

Participants in the Mayor's Economic Prosperity Council developed seven key recommendations.

1. Open for Business - Green Light Strategy
2. London must establish an Enterprise Centre/Business Incubator.
3. London must be a smart and connected city.
4. London must engage INTERNATIONAL students.
5. London must turn on the lights.
6. London must promote a closer relationship between business and culture sectors
7. The MEPC should provide ideas and feedback to the City on a regular basis.

Next Steps

Background

The first Mayor's Economic and Prosperity Council (MEPC) met in 2011 under a mandate to find the ways and means of pooling business/city/community resources and experiences and find effective solutions to the economic challenges facing London. It was agreed that London needed to increase growth, encourage additional investment and ultimately create more jobs. How were we to do that? What could we do to collectively be more attractive to business and where were we to find our top prospects? London had been seen as the best place to do business. A city where investment made sense. In order to do that, business and community leaders agreed to meet and take a hard look at themselves and recommendations on what should and could happen.

The Mayor held a conviction that London must establish cooperation within every business sector and develop partnerships to bridge public and private issues. He wanted to break down silos in order to create a strong, successful community where we encouraged each other, worked together and celebrated all our achievements. He believed the MEPC was the beginning of this cooperative community venture. MEPC pillars (sector groups) were populated with members from all areas of commerce, business, and social enterprise. Eventually nine sectors/pillars were identified and each developed strategies and recommendations. A Final Report and Summary were produced and shared with participants and the public. (The document is available on the website - www.mayorfontana.ca)

In October 2013 the MEPC was reconvened to allow business and community leaders to review, together, the status of the recommendations of the first MEPC and to critique the process and identify the value achieved. Basically, what has worked – what has been implemented? What is left to be completed? Is there still value in the original suggestions/ideas as laid out in the first MEPC Report and Summary?

They were also charged with the task of determining current and emerging project priorities. Where is the low hanging fruit today? What recommendations of the first MEPC had been successfully completed? They were to determine the value of the process and how many projects/proposals were successfully completed or implemented. What remains and why?

There were a number of recommendations and ideas presented during the roundtable discussions and final formal presentations. Seven key recommendations have been put forward.

Report Card and Discussion Points

As a precursor to the MEPC 2013, a Report Card and Discussion Points document was created and circulated to the list of attendees. Details of projects that had been recommended by the inaugural MEPC were included and links made to community and businesses where applicable. The report encapsulated the efforts of the City and business over the preceding 24 months in relation to the objectives that had been initially identified.

These included:

Under the heading of TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECT there were in fact multiple projects reported ---

1. The Downtown Master Plan has been completed using information gathered from various sources including the Downtown Summit. The City is now moving forward with a coordinated effort to enhance the heart of the city, based on policy and design approved by Council.

Fanshawe College has opened its Performing Arts Facility and announced a Digital Media addition to be located in the core. The new and vastly improved walkway linking Covent Garden Market and Dundas Street is complete and includes overhead lighting.

Plans and community linkages for a Performing Arts Centre came from several presentations to the IEPC. Two separate groups have joined forces to produce a single plan and engaged several local developers. The plan now incorporates condos, hotel, retail/commercial spaces in addition to the PAC.

2. Improved Access to the City projects that have found footing and financing include two new interchanges for London on the 401 and improvements to two others. Work is set to begin this spring. Funding from the province has assisted in this critical infrastructure project.

The Mayor partnered with other SW. Ont. mayors and brought the top level VIA managers to London to discuss the negative impact reduced schedules and access to rail transportation will have on this region. SWEA has taken the lead on this now and is pushing for increased access. London's International Airport continues to have discussions with airlines regarding increased passenger and cargo transport.

The City has completed a Transportation Master Plan which includes a BRT.

3. The first MEPC said London had to be OPEN FOR BUSINESS and as a result London's Chamber of Commerce signed multiple MOU's with Chinese Business Groups. Two delegations to China included medical/education representatives.

The City of London has a new website designed to make navigating policy and procedures simpler and connecting with staff easier.

The LEDC has undergone an internal and external Economic Strategic review - report is coming forward.

Engagement of Fanshawe and Western Students in a much more significant manner.

Report Card and Discussion Points (continued)

4. London was encouraged to build on its strengths and to that end, through the IEPC process, London's Medical Innovation & Commercialization Network has taken shape. The unprecedented cooperation and partnership building by the city's research facilities, hospitals and educational institutions has resulted in an opportunity for the City of London to provide 10 million dollars to leverage 90 million for this sector.

5. International students are a priority and the Mayor held an Education Summit for International Students. Participants included ALL organizations and educators currently involved in providing services and programs for overseas students.

6. Small business was recognized as an economic driver and support for whatever this sector needs was included in the initial list of recommendations from the MEPC. Small business was to be a priority. The Business Enterprise Centre HAS NOT yet been established, nor the Small Business Advisory Committee. There was a new BIA set up in the Argyle area.

7. Understanding the value and opportunities inherent in London's most valuable natural heritage feature - The Thames River - was also included in the first MEPC report. Since the report the Thames Valley Corridor Study has been completed and the details contained herein will allow for responsible and innovative future use of the waterway.

8. London's Creative Economy was given centre stage and the City has completed the Cultural Prosperity Plan and Cultural Profile. The accurate measurement of this economic sector will allow for reasonable and fair allocations of services and funding.

London has added two HERITAGE Districts and a comprehensive review of the architectural and historic significance of the old Victoria Hospital resulted in a community approved plan for the decommissioning and dismantling of the buildings as part of the Soho revitalization.

London's Artist in Residence Program was started.
Theatre and music venues were expanded in the Old East Village.

9. Bold new partnerships were on the list and London is collaborating ---

Jinshan Science and Technology group is establishing a presence to facilitate clinical trials on medical devices. The Hydro Lands Development Proposal has brought Kilmer Brownfield Management Ltd. experience and potential investment to London.

The Commercialization Fund was not successful in the first attempt at establishment. It is being partly realized in the medical commercialization opportunity outlined earlier.

Jobs are key and advancement was made by the City funding of JOB MATCHING programs through a project founded in the IEPC.

10. Measuring - how are we doing? Establishing measurements to decipher progression was key to participants in the first MEPC.

The IEPC now requires accounting and reporting from agencies funded by the City every three months. Record building permits issued 2011 - 2013.

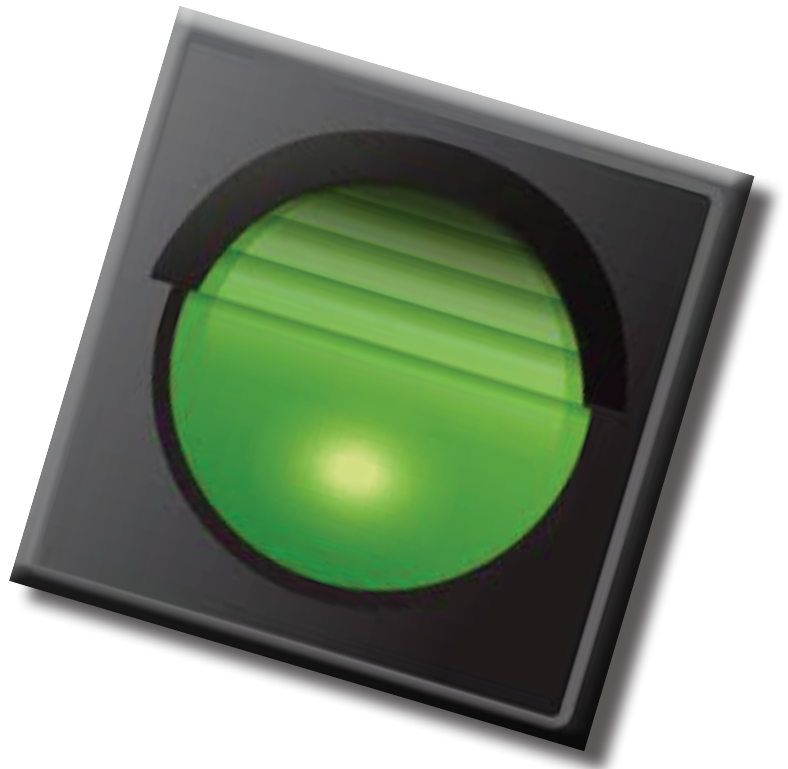
11. CELEBRATE OUR SUCCESS - in 2013 London hosted the World Figure Skating Championships and celebrated as a city. We need to continue to do so.

Reasons - Benefits - Next Steps

Open for Business - Green Light Strategy

London must be OPEN for business - full stop.

MEPC participants renewed their request to establish a City “Small Business” friendly advocate based on a service model of “How do we get to YES” for small business requests. Group discussion regarding this specifically focussed on the importance of having City staff understand how time directly impacts business operations and finances. Waiting for City Hall to get back to you often results in a significant loss in business or opportunity. Margins in small business can be extremely lean and time delays due to procedural holdups or vacations can be devastating to small business.



London must establish an Enterprise Centre/Business Incubator.

In reviewing the successful implementation of recommendations from the first MEPC, the group identified the initial call to establish an Enterprise Centre as having not been completed. Discussion clearly indicated the need was still valid and the focus and intention of the EC should be to create a one-stop facility and resource centre for business which would house representatives from LEDC, Small Business Centre, Tech Alliance, Stiller Centre and other business related offices that currently operate out of City Hall. In addition, the location would provide space for federal and provincial Ministry offices.

The MEPC participants requested a more concerted effort be made by both the City and the business community to identify and establish “who” would be at the helm of organizing the next steps for the Enterprise Centre/Business Incubator. There are a number of models currently in use in other cities that could provide assistance in initial organizational structure options and set up. Incorporating educational support and programs relating to entrepreneurship may also be appropriate in this setting.

There were a number of sub-recommendations and references presented by several pillars that spoke directly to providing more active, tangible services and coordination around identified needs for current entrepreneurs (small business) and emerging entrepreneurs.

These also included:

- Investigation of Virtual Office options/Advisory Services for business and collaboration opportunities for those who work home based.
- The need to establish and develop a strong connection mentorship network – possible participants identified included (Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Business Volunteers).
- Fostering entrepreneurialism / innovation in the not-for-profit sector to increase awareness and productivity of social enterprise.
- There remains a need to recognize main street, home grown business and service providers and to take advantage of the expertise within them. Would a business to business mentorship program be appropriate in the Enterprise Centre setting and how could a partnership with Western/Fanshawe business programs be included?

London must be a smart and connected city.

The MEPC participants want ALL London neighbourhoods/business communities to be HOT SPOTS and recommended expanding WiFi into specific geographical business pockets (for example: Wortley Village, Old East Village, Byron, Lambeth etc.) would provide businesses with greater opportunities to create networks and utilize online connections to expand service and marketing. Creative cities are connected cities. The ability to source and send wherever one is and whenever one needs to, is basic to business and personal communications. A network can also provide the City with opportunities to promote services and increase community engagement.

Ensuring the connection can be used both inside and outside buildings has been shown to be a key factor in successful implementation of public internet access. Partnerships with private providers or expansion of the program initiated by London Hydro in the Downtown area should be options.

In addition to the benefit to business that can be achieved by supplying wide spread access to internet there will be a secondary benefit to residents in the area who may not be connected in their homes.

Should internet access have utility status and be supplied by the community in the same way energy and water are? A community that is truly 100% connected 24/7 for everyone would be seen as a leader in technology. The question of speed and bandwidth is also up for discussion as more businesses ask "Where's the fibre?"

London's education, hospital and research communities are well connected. What's next?



London must engage INTERNATIONAL students.

The MEPC recognized that greater numbers of international students are choosing London for their education choice. There are private and public schools, encompassing all levels of education, actively pursuing expansion of their international student enrolment.

(Numbers show Western University has 2,450 International students enrolled for 2014 and Fanshawe College welcomed 1,322 in the 2013 school year)

The Federal Government has indicated it believes there will be 450,000 International students in Canada by 2022 and is currently funding a major promotion of Canadian schools in an attempt to attract more students.

The level of education/training being offered in London is regarded as exceptional. We are building an alumni of global learners who will help introduce London to their peers.

What can we do, as a community, to help encourage those who are seeking an international experience choose London? What can we do to ensure that, once here, each student has a positive and full experience in their studies and also in learning about Canadian culture and employment and business opportunities?

The next step must be to engage individuals on a personal and career basis.

Recommendations included:

- Establishing a formal mentorship program with local business and organizations as the first step to making a permanent connection with the student. Could this be incorporated into the mentorship program suggested for the Enterprise Centre?
- Establish an International Student Hub – We need a reputation as a preferred destination.
- Leverage existing international populations and associations.
- Promote greater access to London events to International Students through clubs, associations, and educational institutions. We should regard them as future ambassadors for London. How we treat them now will ultimately have a direct effect on how our city is portrayed globally.



London must turn on the lights.

It sounds simple. London needs illuminating so we flick the switch - Downtown – Uptown – Neighbourhoods.

If London is truly open for business then people have to see where they're going.

Londoners and visitors shouldn't be kept in the dark.

The MEPC recommendation highlighted the displays that were very evident during the International World Skating Championships as an example of how the creative use of lighting can be utilitarian but also magical. Keeping the lights on in the downtown and along other business corridors for extended evening hours and showcasing special event/programs coloured lighting (LED) on various buildings and street corners will deliver the message to both residents and visitors that London is, indeed, bright.

Studies in by the U. S Justice Department have shown that increased street lighting is welcomed by the public and can create an increased feeling of community confidence.

Tourism London may be a natural community/business lead on this project.



London must promote a closer relationship between business and culture sectors.

Building on London's Cultural Prosperity Plan and cultural mapping, traditional business and networks, must work collaboratively with the arts and cultural sector to showcase the talent and opportunities that exist across the city.

To assist with attracting businesses to London, the London Arts Council and London Heritage Council will work with London Economic Development Corporation to draw on resources and talent from London's arts, heritage and multicultural organizations. Other arts and culture organizations can be encouraged to develop expanded relationships and tailor programs to assist in this area.

The community should be encouraged to participate and build on current discussions that are underway between the identified organizations that focus on providing assistance with:

- o Companion tours when companies are evaluating locations in London
- o Customized site visits to offer deeper understanding of London's cultural assets
- o Information for foreign delegates unable to come to London but who need are seeking a better knowledge of London's arts, heritage and culture.

The City of London's Culture Office works closely with the London Arts Council and London Heritage Council as well as a number of independent culture partners.

Offering a close up look at the outstanding balance and distribution of talent and creativity that exists and flourishes within London is an integral part of opening investment doors for the city. There is great prosperity in London's culture and heritage. It is valued and must be supported.



The MEPC should provide ideas and feedback to the City on a regular basis.

At the conclusion of the MEPC event the Co-Chairs, Marilyn Sinclair (TechAlliance) and John Winston (Tourism London) shared their observations. They committed to continuing the public engagement process within the MEPC and offered themselves as initial representatives of the group in acting as a resource to the Investment & Economic Prosperity Committee.

Additional recommendations included:

- The MEPC should meet on a regular schedule and provide critical assessment of identified projects and connection to business/community partnerships.
- Create an Advisory Committee from the MEPC to work with the City's Economic Prosperity Committee. Co-chairs to provide this leadership.
- Identify three actions and timeline for movement. There should always be three projects in progress. Upon successful completion a project can be removed from the active and ongoing list and replaced by the next in line.
- Establish a schedule for MEPC meetings – twice a year with Summary Reports to be completed within 90 days of the session.
- Evaluate the current format for the MEPC - Outline recommended changes to the format. Identify the best method to attract participants.
- What should the reporting component of the MEPC look like? Who is responsible? Is there support within the City for administration/organization?
- Reiterate the benefit of public and private entities working together – of how partnership can create innovation for London?



Next Steps

1. Establish an Economic Action Advisory Committee (EAAC) to provide counsel to the city's Investment in Economic Prosperity Committee (IEPC) with regard to the various Summit recommendations. Co-Chairs to provide leadership.
2. Draft a Terms of Reference for the Economic Action Advisory Committee
3. The EAAC to review the value proposition of each of the recommended action items to determine their feasibility for implementation.
4. The MEPC Pillar Chairs to meet twice a year to provide critical assessment of the identified projects and provide a status report to the MEPC participants within 90 days following each session.
5. Evaluate the existing MEPC format to improve the effectiveness of the consultative process and seek administrative support from the city to fulfill the requirements of the above noted.

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