

September 25, 2014

Mayor Joni Baechler

City of London

300 Dufferin Ave

London, Ontario

N6B 1Z2

Dear Mayor Baechler:

I am writing with respect to the proposal for the lands at 1300 Fanshawe Park Road East in London. My partners and I in the London Airport Auto Mall are strongly opposed to the Official Plan Amendment and Re-zoning request. We attended at the Planning Committee meeting last Tuesday and voiced our concerns. We were pleased the Committee voted to recommend refusal of the application. I understand that this will now come before council and ask that you support the recommendation of the Planning Committee and refuse the Application.

The members of the Committee rightfully inquired of the planning staff whether this could be the start of an unintended auto mall in the north end of the city and whether approval would be setting a precedent. This is also our concern considering our significant investment in the London Airport Auto Mall. To their credit, the staff offered no assurances in that respect.

You will recall that my partners and I, through The Shrew Sports Corp., proposed the development of a new auto mall concept in the same area as this Application. As part of that effort, we met with John Fleming and then Mayor Joe Fontana. We also had many telephone discussions with many people on council. Based on those meetings and discussions, the Planning and Mayor's staff strongly urged us to look to east London to develop this concept if we were to garner the City's support. We were told that the city did not contemplate Auto Retail areas in the north end for fifteen years and they could not see recommending an Official Plan amendment until then.

The City has three areas where staff saw auto retailing:

- Wharncliffe Road South,
- Oxford & Wonderland, and
- Dundas Street East.

My partners and I valued this advice and we relied on those discussions when deciding on a final site. We worked with the city as a partner. The London Airport Auto Mall is now off to a very strong start with more than \$60-million dollars being invested in the community as a result of this project. While the Auto Mall is off to a good start, creating a new Auto retail location in the north risks fractionalizing our investment in the east end of London. London is

not large enough to support 4 locations of the various automotive brands. Hopefully someday it will be large enough.

Our concern is with the idea that the city would discourage our proposal and then less than three years later recommend approval the application at 1300 Fanshawe Park Road. The Zoning hasn't changed and using a "Special Policy" provision to change zoning and create an exception does not make sense. The way consumers buy cars has not changed either. Consumers use the internet to search information about vehicles, but consumers want to test drive 3 or 4 vehicles before they make their final decision. To do that conveniently requires multiple dealers in one location or close proximity to each other. That is why an Auto Retail cluster has been such a successful retail platform.

Mr. Fleming and staff argue that a 4 acre parcel versus a 35 acre auto mall is comparing apples and oranges. Not so. The moment you approve one auto dealership use in the north end others will come. In fact, there are dealer principals looking for land in the north area right now. If you allow the use of this special provision and change this zoning for one dealer, more will try and as a council how can you ethically not do it for the others that request it. All may have to go to OMB hearings but in the end an Auto Mile is created without any real planning. That is what we referred to as opening Pandora's Box and the start of something big on Fanshawe, the inadvertent Auto Mile.

We believe that there are a number of locations along Fanshawe Park Road East that would be desirable to locate several Automotive Dealerships, thus creating the "Auto MILE" that the City of London wants to avoid.

The attached map (See Attachment) highlights these locations. We realize that there would be zoning change requirements to these parcels of property, but if precedent is set by allowing this current request to proceed, it would open the door for these parcels of property to go through a similar process to be deemed acceptable for Automotive Dealerships.

In addition to these parcels of property, the precedent set by the City of London in using a portion of the current "Community Commercial Zone (CCZ)" for the existing requested dealership would seem to open the door for additional prospective Automotive Dealerships to make application to rezone more of the existing "CCZ", resulting in even more desirable land for Automotive Dealerships.

We have invested heavily in the brand new Airport Auto mall location. However, if the precedent was set and the opportunity became available in the North part of London for Automotive Dealerships, we and other Automotive Dealerships would be very quick to look to locate our future Automotive Dealerships in this north area of the city. The city should "Plan" for where it wants to direct this type of use and not turn a blind eye to its residents and partners.

I trust that this council will do the right thing and support the Planning and Environment Committee's recommendation to deny the application for rezoning.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Semkowski