

**Comments of the London Advisory Committee  
on the Environment (ACE) regarding the 2015 City of  
London Operations and Capital draft budgets**

**January 5, 2015**

We thank the City for letting ACE comment on items of interest to members. ACE asks Council to examine the budget with a completely sustainable lens so the City can become less dependent on other levels of government funds and gain benefit from other approaches that become available. Ultimately, sustainability benchmarks for future budgets would be valued. Also, to always consider the legacy for future citizens as the responsibility of current decisions toward a sustainable community.

In terms of budget decisions, we ask that the following environmental issues be prioritized:

**CLIMATE CHANGE -**

1. **ACE fully supports and encourages** the high standard goal to have London as one of the Greenest cities in Canada by 2035, (London Plan, Our Strategy chapter, p21, Direction 4). Specifically, we would bring Council's attention to The Green City section of the London Plan in 2015 decision-making toward improvements for green job creation, the City's role in growth in a green economy, and available incentives.

2. **ACE recommends** Council continue to monitor our recommendation for a Property Assessment for Clean Energy (PACE) program – a strategy to use Local Improvement Charges to allow residents to pay for energy-saving home retrofits, with the cost added to their property taxes over time. Toronto, Guelph and Halifax programs are currently monitored by staff and their recommendation to Council is expected in 2015 for further action. It is hoped installing items such as solar panels will become more affordable to many more London residents as well as to provide work for installers.

3. **ACE asks** that the City note our proposed environmental master plan policy for further action in next year's budget. This next level includes topics such as pollination, food production and flood mitigation. It proposes to integrate London's traditional Natural Heritage System Planning with Urban Forestry, Stormwater Engineering, Parklands planning, under one umbrella. ACE has discussed this matter with the City's Planning and Environment committee, City staff, EEPAC and members of the Urban League.

4. **ACE asks** that efforts continue to profile London as an environmental champion, particularly as it relates to strong climate change policy. Stabilizing climate change is recognized by cities across Canada as an energy problem. Continued action on conservation, energy efficiencies and improvements, storage, renewables and power requirements require innovative and community-wide investments in sustainable infrastructure. The City needs to continue this direction to allow for future flexibility.

5. The City is commended for looking at self-funding through LED street light upgrade savings. It is a success story that the Covent Garden Market has encountered reduced energy use costs through lighting replacement and currently is operating without City funds (2016-2018). London has made great strides in energy savings for its recreational arenas and with its facilities energy management program.

**COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES -**

6. The City is to be commended for making a recent commitment for an updated cycling master plan in 2015 and should plan for associated costs so that the newly established Cycling Advisory Committee can be effective in its mandate.

7. **ACE asks** that Council support any and all waste diversion strategies in 2015 with consideration to the higher costs of alternatively supporting new landfill capacity estimated as necessary by 2023. The City's new Waste Road Map, The Road to Increased Resource Recovery and Zero Waste, identifies further action. London has a 44% waste diversion rate and a very successful recycling recovery facility during a time when Ontario is experiencing severe and rapidly declining landfill capacity.

The Ontario Waste Management Association tells us that although organics make up one-third of the province's waste, only 40% of Ontarians have access to a curbside green bin program. As well, three quarters of plastics that should be recycled still end up in landfill.. City staff budget notes state potential risk that W12A will reach capacity prior to receiving provincial approval to expand. As a result, a cost of \$5-10 million a year could implicate London's tax base if our landfill is closed. City staff note revenues from lower quantities of business garbage and increases in the City's operational costs show an increase in business garbage collection and disposal needs of \$580,000 for 2015. ACE would like to understand what may be causing this participation reduction.

**8.ACE notes** Edmonton has a 60% residential waste diversion rate and a long-term zero waste strategy. An estimated 60% of their waste is generated from the non-residential sector including industrial, commercial, institutional, construction and demolition waste. Edmonton sees this as an opportunity and plans to increase the rate of non-residential landfill diversion to mirror residential rates.

In 2008, The Town of Markham adopted a Zero Waste strategy. Their Civic Centre became the first Zero Waste municipal facility in Ontario in diverting 96.5% of its waste from landfill. Markham is working to make all town buildings Zero Waste facilities. Since 2006, Markham maintained an average 72% curb side diversion rate. In 2012, Markham Council approved a strategy towards a 80% diversion rate by 2014. As of June 2013, Markham achieved an 81% diversion rate, ahead of schedule. Examples of their more recent activities include: clear bags with curb side garbage collection, BIA weekly collection of recycling, cardboard and residue, 10 zero waste YRSB schools, and approximately 2,460 multi-residential units having organics collection.

**9.ACE hopes** the case of deferring subsidized transit for low income Londoners, now involving stakeholders to establish a more equitable approach to better serve the community, will include seniors and that the program will be re-activated during 2015.

**10.ACE asks** for any reprioritizing possible within the \$377.8 million for 10 (2015-2024) years of future road widenings and new initiatives. Strong cases are needed for Council to create sustainable options that give priority to pedestrians, cyclists and transit users in conjunction with vehicles without road widenings. In addition, rapid transit investment totalling \$343 million over the same 10 year period is valued by ACE members (p35).

11.It is hoped that upgrading of pavement markings at pedestrian crossings estimated at \$100,000 will not be deferred as presently recommended, because safety is a priority.

Presentation to the City public meeting January 22, 2015 by,  
City of London's Advisory Committee on the Environment