DOWNTOWN LONDON

August 20, 2015

Chair and Members of Planning Committee
City of London
300 Dufferin Ave
London, ON N6A 4L9

Re: 505 Talbot Residential Proposal

Downtown London is the organization that focuses on recruitment and retention of investment and businesses in downtown London, Ontario. We are both the London Downtown Business Association (LDBA) and MainStreet London, a downtown revitalization organization, and our expanded boundary encompasses over 1,160 properties and businesses whose taxable assessment is well over $1 Billion. We work together with the City of London and other stakeholders in the community to improve London's downtown for the benefit of all Londoners and visitors to our city. Downtown London is a great place to call home, and we actively encourage development of additional residential units in the heart of our city.

Multi-unit residential buildings benefit the downtown, and the City of London, on a number of levels. First and foremost, they address a growing demand for residences in the heart of our city. The addition of a large number of new residents to the downtown benefits our district by bringing new potential customers to the core, new tax dollars to the City, and a more active streetscape for the neighbourhood. We know that growing the residential population is critical to regenerating the downtown, and that attracting more residents supports both culture and retail in the district. In fact, we believe that growing the residential base is critical to supporting the businesses that generate significant tax dollars for the City.

We are writing today in support of the proposed residential development at 505 Talbot Street. The Tricar Group has a proven history of successful residential development, and they have been very collaborative in working with the downtown community to achieve a design that reflects a very thoughtful consideration of their development's fit within its immediate neighbourhood.

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We note that the church on the adjacent property on Talbot Street has embraced this project, hosting the public consultation session and acknowledging Tricar's willingness to work with them to provide an appropriate set-back that protects views of the heritage designated church's stained glass windows. The proposal to create a heritage garden next to the church will add an attractive landscaped space that enhances both properties and provides an appropriate transition from the church to the residential property. From a pedestrian perspective this is a very desirable addition to the streetscape.

From our point of view as the downtown board of management, the project makes good sense for the downtown community. We are well aware that London's downtown is home to an important heritage conservation district (HCD), and we are very sensitive to the efforts to restore and maintain heritage properties in our area. We deal with heritage conservation every day. We understand that the requested demolition applies to existing buildings on this site that, although listed, are situated outside of the HCD boundary, and they cannot reasonably be incorporated into the new development. We recognize the need for balance between the goal to preserve and retain these buildings, and the demand for new urban dwellers that will provide much-needed activation and generate economic activity throughout the district for the benefit of the downtown and all of London.

We believe that the proposed development at 505 Talbot Street fits with the vision for the downtown as expressed in the City's downtown plan document, Our Move Forward. This development addresses the goal to achieve greater intensification in the downtown to give us the density that we know is necessary to sustain our community.

We welcome the opportunity to work with Tricar to ensure that this development meets the needs of our stakeholders, and we ask the City to support the demolition request and the Planning permission that will enable the project to go forward.

Sincerely,

Janette MacDonald
CEO and General Manager