

**From:** James Shelley

**Sent:** Thursday, February 16, 2012 2:15 PM

**To:** Armstrong, Bill; Polhill, Bud; Fontana, Joe; White, Sandy; Bryant, Judy; Usher, Harold; Brown, Denise; Van Meerbergen, Paul; Henderson, Dale; Hubert, Paul; Brown, Matt; Branscombe, Nancy; Baechler, Joni; Orser, Stephen; Swan, Joseph

**Cc:** Saunders, Cathy

**Subject:** Budget Considerations

Greetings, Mayor, Councillors,

I am deeply thankful to your administration for your thoughtful and critical examination of the annual expenditures of our city. I admire your willingness to cut superfluous and unnecessary costs, and I appreciate your commitment to steward our tax revenue responsibly. Thank you.

That said, I am writing to briefly express some personal concerns about the presently proposed budget.

Explicit in Mayor Joe Fontana's campaign promise of 0% tax increases over four years was the stipulation that this freeze would *not include service cuts*. Is not freezing taxes *and* cutting services -- yes, even wading pools -- a rather blatant compromise on that original promise?

The original 0% tax platform also included the "promise" of 10,000 new jobs (which would presumably provide the revenue stream to maintain a freeze on taxation rates). These jobs have not yet come into existence, and thus the expanded tax base does not exist either. We cannot afford to pay for 0% -- becoming a city recognized for its cutbacks and downsizing is not likely to attract *any* jobs, especially not to the scale of 10,000. Please consider the possibility that driving towards 0% runs the risk of driving business away in the long run. The strategic optics here require careful consideration.

I do believe that you have made every conceivable effort to keep our tax rate as low as possible - - for this I am grateful, and I publicly applaud you -- but the ramifications of the currently proposed budget to meet this arbitrary target of 0% carries potential setbacks at the cost of future development that exceed the perceived "benefits" of maintaining the tax freeze.

As per the original campaign promise, raising taxes slightly (and responsibly) to meet a full service budget continues to fulfill the fiscal mandate to which you were elected into office. Please remain accountable to the original promise of only freezing taxes *on the conditions which were also set forth* and do not breach this commitment to your constituents.

I humbly request that you take these concerns into consideration when you vote on the budget this Tuesday.

Thank you for your service to our community.

Sincerely,  
James Shelley  
Ward 13

**Municipal Taxation Increase Request****FORM MTR1**

**ATTN: Mayor Joe Fontana; Councillors Bud Polhill, Joe Swan, Stephen Orser, Denise Brown, Paul Van MeerBergen, Dale Henderson, Sandy White**

As a citizen of London, Ontario, I hereby formally request that City Council abandon the present pursuit of maintaining a zero percent tax increase.

In light of our community's current economic situation, I am concerned that the service cuts that are required to freeze taxes (as currently manifested by the proposed budget) may have longterm negative consequences for our city, both socially and economically. We should maintain a municipal revenue stream that is able to adequately and effectively address the diverse and growing needs of our city.

Please make the needs of your constituents the primary focus of the budget. Responsiveness to the social and economic conditions of your constituents should be a greater priority than an ideology, rhetoric, or campaign promise about a 0% tax increase. Cutting back funding for affordable housing and disability programs does not represent a future that is in our collective best interest as a city. These needs will only tend to grow the longer they go underfunded.

Forcing a future council to spike taxes down the road is economically irresponsible. It does not provide any competitive advantage now, nor does it position us well down the road. The competitive adaptability of London depends on a growing civic infrastructure of services, not freezing them in time. The yearly compound effect of the tax freeze will result in a cumulative revenue loss worth millions of dollars: socially, structurally, and economically, the tax freeze is the perfect recipe for many future "sinkhole" scenarios.

I am concerned that drawing from reserve funds to meet budget targets will produce longterm fiscal ramifications that are not in the best interest of the city. Please do not mortgage the future to pay for the present. Weakening our future reserves in order to achieve such an arbitrary and short-term fiscal goal is a profoundly unsustainable way to govern a city.

**I formally appeal that you abandon the 0% tax agenda and increase my taxes.**

Full Name	James Shelley
Address	317 Simcoe St
Postal	N6B 1J4
Phone	519-645-9169
Email	James@jamesshelley.net
Date	Feb 12, 2012

Deliver to: City of London, 300 Dufferin Avenue, PO Box 5035, London, ON Canada N6A 4L9