



January 4, 2016

London City Council, Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee, Police Services Board
300 Dufferin Ave.
London, ON N6A 4L9

RE: January 21, 2016, Public Participation Meeting for the City of London's Multi-year Budget

I am writing on behalf of Market Tower and its tenants, in support of a request by Chief Pare, London Police Services, for increased funding between 2016 and 2019... specifically in our area of interest, **the Downtown Community Foot Patrol Unit**. LPS has a 4-year plan to add 2 officers per year, **to build up this unit from a complement of 12 officers to 20**. We feel this is **critical** to the expansion and improvement of our downtown.

**Downtown's population is growing at a rate almost five times faster than London as a whole, suggesting city hall's \$100-million investment in the core is paying off. Continuing that trend is crucial to downtown's "long-term viability," said City Analyst, John Paul Sousa in 2012. "Reversing that [1990s] demise requires more people living downtown," he said, which is what makes the new statistics so encouraging. "A vibrant downtown (needs) a number of different people down there for a number of different reasons at a number of times of day," Hopkins said. "You don't want 'nine-to-five downtown's busy' and then at five o'clock everyone gets in the car and leaves." This trend, he noted, will feed on itself and likely only increase downtown's population in future years. "The more people you get down there, the more people you will get down there. It's a snowball effect. This is a very, very good thing."*

- *From 2006-11, downtown's population grew at an annual rate of 4.5%; London overall grew at just 0.9%.*
- *In that five-year period, the core's population grew by a total of 23%.*
- *The number of occupied dwellings skyrocketed 62% to 3,461 from 2006 to 2011, suggesting many of those homes are occupied by single people living alone — such as students, young professionals and seniors.*

Many of us remember how clean and safe our downtown felt during the 2013 World Figure Skating Championships. Our clientele commented on this, and many people still do. Londoners deserve this feeling of safety downtown **all** the time – not just to impress visitors for a special event!

The Foot Patrol Unit was initially created as a separate entity within the London Police Service in 1993. At that time, officers were responsible for providing a consistent and visible presence in the downtown area. The Unit's complement of 12 full-time members and a Supervisor work from an office adjacent to Covent Garden Market and engage in problem-oriented initiatives to address prevalent concerns in the community. Officers who fulfill foot patrol duties are familiar with chronic offenders and troublesome areas, and they address quality of life issues like panhandling, intoxicated persons, loiterers and other nuisance type offences.

As a result of increased demand, Foot Patrol now polices the Downtown, Hamilton Road, SoHo, Argyle and Old East business districts as well as a growing network of parks and bike paths. Thinking toward the future, they will also be policing the riverfront.

They use the intelligence they collect to address problems and educate other LPS units. While also involved in the enforcement of Federal and Provincial legislation and bylaws, these officers engage in proactive initiatives, **integrating with the community** to identify and resolve specific problem areas and address them at their root.

MARKET TOWER

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Foot Patrol officers also respond to assaults, disturbances, and other offences which had previously put a significant drain on police resources at a critical time of night. They work closely with the Community Oriented Response (COR) Unit, whose mandate is to increase the interaction between the public and the police in an effort to form partnerships to improve community life in general.

London has not seen an increase in the number of police officers **since 2012**. Nevertheless, our city's population rises significantly each and every year – and *some of that population is not so nice!* We live and work and eat and enjoy entertainment downtown, and we know: present staffing and competing priorities **do not allow** for a consistent and effective police response in Foot Patrol's expanding area of responsibility. **This is a big concern for businesses downtown!**

Many times, Foot Patrol officers are not close enough to attend when we have a problem, and business owners and operators have to call 911. Those officers do not have the knowledge of downtown London that Foot Patrol officers do. There are only 12 on Foot Patrol, and sometimes they have to appear in court.

A 2014 Audit by pWc found that of Tier 1 Ontario Municipalities with populations greater than 100,000, London Police Services has **156 officers per 100,000 population compared to the average of 166**. We sorely need to increase the number of officers with special skills and knowledge, at least downtown. We are doing **our part** to make downtown better – we ask the City to do **its part**.

Sufficient staffing will enhance Foot Patrol's ability to develop and promote community-based initiatives, allow them to deter and prevent crime through a **consistent visible presence**, and enable us to have a service level commensurate with development in the core, **in accordance with the City's Strategic Plan**.

There are changing needs in our growing community. The current band-aid solution of calling 911 (which takes away from LPS front line operations) is not sustainable. We see an increase of people downtown who are suffering from mental illness and drug addiction. There are trends that affect us such as human trafficking rings, street gang activity, organized crime, property damage, etc.

In the words of Chief Pare:

"Community safety is the responsibility of all of us. Together, we need to draw on multiple strategies, not only to prevent crime, but also to address social issues such as mental health, addictions, and homelessness, that continue to strain policing and social service resources. We need to develop long-term, community-based solutions that build safe and healthy communities.

There has never been a time in our history where collaboration, community partnerships, and integrated policing initiatives are so necessary in order for us to resolve community issues and problems. This is especially necessary in economic times that require us to re-examine priorities, with the express purpose of continuing to ensure that we are a safe and secure community."

It was publicized recently that the City of London has a **projected \$4.7 million budget surplus**. When Council meets to fine-tune their plans for this money, we ask that Downtown Foot Patrol be at the top of the list for funding. It just makes sense.

In reviewing the multi-year budget, please support the increase of Foot Patrol officers to allow for a complement of 20 as soon as possible – at least – within four years. We believe this is critical to the safety and security of our businesses and the public, downtown.

Thank you in advance for taking our concerns seriously.

Sincerely,



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*SOURCE: London Free Press, "More Downtown Residents Attributed to Investments," Patrick Maloney, 10/10/12