

We thank the City for letting ACE comment with respect to the City's first multi-year budget for the term of 2016-2019. Last year our comments addressed the London Plan and waste diversion opportunities. This year our focus is London's **strategic investment cases** review for the next four years. These high level strategies embrace Strengthening our Community, Building a Sustainable City, Growing our Economy, and Leading in Public Service. Several offer opportunities to define the budget through a sustainability lens with consideration as well to the London Plan's agenda for a 'Green City'. **We ask** as well that Council build flexibility into this four year process to support ambitious provincial targets that London has already signed on to, to reduce climate impacts. ACE recognizes past near net-zero budgets have been challenging and this year involves priority setting and prudent fiscal management in a range of business case opportunities toward operating/capital budget tax levy impacts between 2.6% and 3.1%.

Thus, the decision process surrounding \$12 to \$17 million additional budget dollars will expect to incorporate balanced financing to make the best use of limited financial resources. We ask that our remarks be assessed in the review process of the following.

BIG PICTURE -

With respect to London's most recent Master Plan underway, **ACE asks** that the City endorse London Cycle Link's (LCL) 5 recommendations to generate maximum impact on cycling infrastructure for London cyclists, achievable within the four year budget term. These are:

- a) the Richmond-Adelaide multi-use pathway gap already underway,
- b) an east-west cycle track on King Street,
- c) a north-south protected route through downtown,
- d) safe, monitored, bike parking downtown and to expand
- e) Cheapside's bike lane to Clark Road (Fanshawe link to downtown).

Expenditures are estimated at \$1.5 million. LCL has shortlisted a practical and cost effective vision to increase safe mobility choices.

ACE fully supports and encourages investment in local conservation authorities' current planning to set new environmental targets to achieve measurable improvement in watershed health. Climate effects over time are expected to escalate threats to Ontario's water sources such as water quality and supply, drought and more severe weather, increased flooding and erosion, lowered river flows, disappearing wetlands and degraded biodiversity. Enhanced mitigation and adaptation planning prioritized now allows for a more flexible response to meet these challenges of the future. Another important issue is Environment Canada's proposed 40% reduction of phosphorus in the Thames River influencing agricultural and other land use practices.

ACE asks that efforts continue to profile London as an environmental champion, recognizing COP 21 outcomes have charted a fundamentally new course of action that Canada has already endorsed. Continued action on conservation, energy efficiencies and improvements, energy storage, renewables and power requirements require groundbreaking community-wide investments in sustainable infrastructure, policy and program. London should continue this direction to allow flexibility within its Community Energy Action Plan milestones and other energy efficiency strategies.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES -

BUSINESS CASE 1 - It is hoped LED upgrades can **be accommodated** in this budget by other means for our library system such as the Capital Asset Renewal and Replacement reserve fund or other means. Libraries attract thousands of citizens. Showcasing new environmental upgrades can have numerous benefits for the community overall.

BUSINESS CASE 2 - ACE supports increased waste diversion strategies to reflect the province's 50% waste diversion target first set in 2000. The City's Road Map 2.0 plan for 2016-2019 is designed to increase London's diversion rate up to 5% (by weight). The new provincial legislation underway could introduce extended producer responsibility, economic instructions, green procurement and product design strategies that London can embrace. **ACE commends** Environmental Services for revenue efficiencies in 2015 from a) the Material Recovery Facility and b) existing diversion, collection, disposal operations. Impacts of the landfill's remaining capacity of 9-11 years remain a critical consideration in terms of the higher costs of alternatively supporting a new landfill capacity. Green Bin, increased recycling and incentives still remain viable options.

BUSINESS CASE 3 - As always, **ACE supports** funding to maintain existing tree canopy. The Urban Forest Strategy and Corporate Asset Management Plan identify current maintenance levels of existing trees and newly planted trees do not meet current best practices nor sustain the long term health of street, park and woodland trees. City approved targets of 23%-28% by 2035 are not achievable with existing City funding. American Forests recommend an average 40% canopy cover to sustain the urban forest and maximize ecological, social and economic benefits. For example, Canadian cities that already utilize this guideline include Toronto, Kitchener, and Peterborough.

BUSINESS CASE 4 - Londoners recognize the Thames Valley Corridor Plan (TVCP) as its most important natural, cultural, recreational and aesthetic resource, connecting communities with an equitably distributed open space system of natural areas, parks, activity areas and facilities. The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment study is still in progress for the north branch gap between Richmond and Adelaide Streets as well as secondary connections to area neighbourhoods. This has been discussed with the public. The Environmental Impact Study is underway for two preferred routes. Please **keep momentum** with this project given the strong public support for this connection.

BUSINESS CASE 6 - Transportation costs dominate 66% of the City's 10 year capital budget. Rapid Transit's anticipated \$355 million expenditure is **supported by ACE** to increase ridership and take cars off the road for regeneration and cost-effective growth.

BUSINESS CASE 7 - Infrastructure report. A forecasted \$449 million for 2016-2025 for local road widening, on the other hand, supports car dependence, wasted urban space, and is **not sustainable**. 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. Cultural and social priorities on spatial preferences for London can benefit from public input for more creative solutions. The proposed 10 year roads and bridges lifecycle renewal cost of \$238 million and \$85 million for additional transit buses are easier to justify and demonstrate benefits. **ACE asks** for innovation, substitution and efficiency over the next four years on road widenings. **ACE commends**

staff actions on new LED street lighting, durable pavement markings, pavement recycling technology and the activities of the London Middlesex Road Safety Strategy.

BUSINESS CASE 8 - ACE supports increased on-board tracking technologies for garbage trucks for route optimization, increased productivity, and controlled fuel costs.

BUSINESS CASE 10 - ACE asks that the City develop neighbourhood level feedback options, not just for planning application processes but and/or as part of Strengthening Neighbourhoods, on the municipal budget's yearly 6.8% increases in electricity/kWh 2, increased fuel and water usage costs, and the approximate annual 200,000 service hour deficit in conventional transit use. This supports the City's Strategic Plan for authentic community engagement as a priority, and making the public a partner with access to information to help make decisions with Council, as an open government

BUSINESS CASE 13 - The Strengthening Neighbourhood strategy **needs to continue** as resident-led with City support toward momentum in solving complex community issues. This moves citizens from knowledge to practice to impact learning. Empowering residents and cultivating community leadership is a strong base for celebration of the uniqueness of London neighbourhoods. City staff are to be commended for community involvement strategies built into the development of the recent London Plan process.

BUSINESS CASE 17 - enhancing existing winter maintenance programs for pedestrian and cyclist mobility safely **should emphasize** transit stops, schools and hospitals.

BUSINESS CASE 18 - ACE supports a riverfront improvement surrounding the Forks in such a way that '**ecological enhancements**' as referenced may include sustainable development strategies for stormwater management, regeneration of natural habitat, functioning ecological demonstration landscapes and a potential discovery centre that highlights floodplain protection, natural heritage systems, aquatic habitats, water cycles and so on. A centre contributes to economic prosperity as a venue for tourism as well. As a note, Burlington's riverfront received \$17.4 million from the Canada Ontario Infrastructure fund. **ACE understands** the value of integrating supporting recommendations from the TVCP, Downtown Master Plan, Parks & Recreation Strategic Master Plan and ReThink London to help leverage riverfront funds with strong consideration to outcomes.

BUSINESS CASE 20 - ACE supports small scale projects in the Downtown Plan that enhance cycling and walking, (the London Plan states Downtown, the city's premier pedestrian experience), community involvement with plantings and public art; enhanced streetscapes/lighting, placemaking, permeable pavements, while maintaining a strong focus to preserve buildings and structures of heritage or architectural significance.

BUSINESS CASE 22 - ACE supports small scale projects for Dundas Place including winter maintenance, non-vehicle use, shade/shelter, distinguished spaces, boulevard planting, living trees, habitat value, more community events, and public plaza space that links with the Forks, accessible to all. The City needs to encourage a unique mix of shops toward an 'urban' character for the downtown and tourism. **ACE asks** that the City also identify increased cultural hub or district opportunities to enhance downtown. For example, Burlington, Oakville and Hamilton have strong art districts that bring people downtown. Hamilton hosts a monthly Art Crawl (spearheaded by the arts community and buskers) that successfully engages residents and visitors to stroll along James Street.