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Good afternoon,
My name is Wes Kinghorn and I am the President of the Urban League of London.

Thank you for your time – I don't usually work from notes but I have a fair bit of ground to cover, so I will stick to my script for time.

I speak today for the Board of the Urban League of London. My comments relate to the broad mandate of the League and have been assembled in consultation with Board members.

First off the League has reviewed and is supportive of the positions of a number of our member organisations.

We support Women & Politics in its call for funds to be attached to the Community Diversity and Inclusion Plan. We know that it can be frustrating to have a request for a budget item without figures, but this raises an important issue. It seems a bit unfair for citizens to be asked 'what will this cost', and asking may discourage Londoners from speaking up. Citizens cannot calculate what it would cost to implement such plans. This plan is initiated as part of Council's own 2015 Strategic Plan – therefore it seems logical that staff should be given a mandate to consider costs.

We also support ReForest London in its call to increase funding for the Urban Forest Management Strategy. The need for this tree spending is URGENT as the Emerald Ash Borer, tree age and development have reduced our tree canopy. This spending is aimed at getting London back to 2008 canopy levels, and the expense grows with each year. The current commitment is just a small portion of what is really needed to reach the Council target of 34%; its a start but should be increased. We must remember that trees are a key part of strong healthy neighbourhoods.

Second, the League supports efforts in this budget to improve citizen engagement in civic matters.

Bus Cases #10 & #13 ...'Establishing Public Engagement' & the 'Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy' have the clearest connection to the League, as both deal with community engagement and strengthening of the community voice. The League requests that as part of the implementation process staff directly engage neighbourhood reps in developing rich, effective outreach strategies, rather than the somewhat arbitrary social media metrics – which are a good start but are not enough. The League has close ties with community leaders, who in turn have close ties to their communities and can work with the City to develop richer engagement strategies. We are here to help.

Perhaps the time has come for a bolder move on engagement – a full time engagement officer. We encourage the City of London to move away from one-off engagement efforts and towards an overall engagement strategy with dedicated staff and resources to ensure that future efforts have the maximum reach and impact.

Engagement too is important in Bus Case #6 ...The 'Rapid Transit Implementation Strategy'. The League is supportive of improved Rapid Transit and the catalytic effect on sustainable and connected city building and economic development - the kind of city many of us imagine London becoming. Driving density to nodes and corridors will help us manage density conflicts within existing neighbourhoods. There is a risk though, that London's neighbourhood networks (based on traditional buses) are not getting the support they need in early planning. Certainly less media and presentation time has been dedicated to this part of the model. We feel that a budget needs to be established as part of this process for direct neighbourhood engagement and consultation on the matter of the 'broader network'.

Third the League would like to note the importance of deep citizen engagement and 'openness to change course' in the coming years as we re-examine this budget annually.

For example, **Bus Case #2 ...'Increased Resource Recovery and Zero Waste' and #24 'Green Bin Program'**. We realise that much is evolving here. Perhaps elements of this can be flagged and tabled until new legislation emerges – then re-evaluated with a more substantial commitment and higher waste diversion targets. From the League perspective, this re-evaluation should be coupled with significant neighbourhood engagement. Different neighbourhoods face different challenges. While composting is possible in areas with larger lots, older and core subdivisions often have lots unsuitable to compost a year's worth of organic waste. If there is resistance to a city-wide green-bin project, could we consider beginning where the need is greatest by consulting and engaging directly with neighbourhoods as part of this process?

Finally, we would like to voice our support for Bus Case #14 'Ontario Works– Low Income Supports'; #15 the 'Mental Health and Addictions Strategy' and #21 "Urban Regeneration". Simply stated, given these cases have a minimal impact on the Tax Levy and potentially significant positive impact on the lives of our most vulnerable neighbours, these cases should be supported. The Urban Regeneration strategy offers the opportunity to begin the process of renewing existing social housing stock, while substantially adding to our affordable housing. The provision of housing can have an immediate impact on the lives of people, but the redevelopment and enhancement of our social housing sites can also have positive impacts on the communities where they are located.

Thank you for your time.