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Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. I urge the Planning and Environment Committee recommend City Council to allow Secondary Dwelling Units (SDU) as a right in Near Campus Neighbourhoods (NCN). SDUs are extremely beneficial economically, socially and environmentally. SDU provide benefits to our planet, our province, our city, our communities, our neighbourhoods, and our families.

The provincial legislation, Bill 140 “Strong Communities Through Affordable Housing, of 2011, has forced City of London to modify existing City Plans to comply with the Act to improve affordable housing stock. The legislation is progressive, enlightened and demonstrates such forward thinking that I think it warrants highlighting three of its greatest merits.

1. SDU support the changing demographics by providing more housing options for extended families or elderly parents, or for live-in caregivers. For the first time in history, there are more seniors in Canada than children. By 2024, the aging population of Canadians will account for more than 20% of the population.¹ Health care spending per person increases with age as seen in 2013 statistics. At age 80 and older, it costs \$20,917.80 per person, per year.² About 85% of Canadians over 55 years old want to remain in their present home for as long as possible, even if there are changes in their health.³ If governments, at all levels, support seniors to age in place, the costs of care are reduced. SDU provide informal support for extended family members or a place for a live-in caregiver.

2. SDU provide homeowners with the opportunity to earn additional income to help meet the costs of home ownership. The cost of housing is increasing. I am sure many of us have noticed the bump in London houses prices this year. It is becoming harder and harder for first time buyers to get into the housing market. Supplementation of income from a SDU, helps young buyers afford home ownership and helps retired individuals pay for living expenses and health care costs.

3. SDU maximize densities to create income integrated communities, which support and enhance public transit, local businesses and local labour markets while making more efficient use of infrastructure. Maximizing density with invisible SDU, decreases tax burdens on cities. As urban sprawl is constrained, cities will spend less money to expand and maintain roads, build libraries/fire/EMS stations/community centres/public parks and provide policing and transit. Smart planning decisions control urban sprawl and keeps municipal taxes from exploding.

I am approaching this issue a little differently than most other presenters tonight. I would like to offer a broad holistic view of impacts of SDU rather than just the microcosmic municipal examination that has been well represented here this evening. Local decisions have global impacts. With increased population density of SDU, more efficient public transit emerges encouraging higher ridership, resulting in less CO2 emissions and greenhouse gases, better air quality, and healthier environments. Increased density slows the need for urban sprawl thereby reducing future infrastructure costs and protecting Ontario’s rich agricultural farmland allowing farmers the ability to grow food to feed our cities. Councillor Cassidy remarked during the Heritage discussion of barns on Sunningdale near Adelaide how much the neighbourhood has changed. Fanshawe Park Road used to be farm fields and after a decade or two is now completely urban. It is our civic responsibility to demand city planners to make decisions that preserve our planet for the wellbeing of children and grandchildren. Decisions protecting our

¹ Statistics Canada: Canada’s population estimates: Age and sex, July 1, 2015.

² Hermus G. Stonebridge C, Edenhoffer K. Future care for Canadian Seniors: a status quo forecast. Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada; 2015

³ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2008). Impacts of the Aging of the Canadian Population on Housing and Communities, Research Highlight, Socio-Economic Series

planet begin right here in city planning public participation discussions like this. Making SDU a right in all areas of the city protects our planet.

The City of London should allow SDU as a right in the entire city because it invisibly maximizes densities supporting public transit, local businesses and local labour markets. SDU in the NCN would provide essential affordable housing not just for Fanshawe and Western students but also for young employees of large employers located within the geographic boundary of NCN like Western University, London Health Sciences Centre, St. Joseph Hospital, Fanshawe College, General Dynamics, 3M and the budding computer tech firms proliferating here. Increasing density encourages new employers to start businesses here and allows workers to live near their jobs. This promotes age diversity in older established neighbourhoods like the NCN. Young families with the help of income support of SDU's, will be able to afford homes close to where they work and their children will keep schools open in these neighbourhoods. Schools are important meeting places for the community. Healthy communities are defined by a diversity of age, culture, income, and will benefit from competitive affordable housing. Locating people closer to their jobs encourages bicycling or taking transit to work thereby supporting a greener city.

At the community level it is advantageous to have secondary units. New social trends are constantly emerging affecting this issue. Young adults in their 20's and even 30's are choosing to live with their parents longer and launching later than ever before. It is a choice out of necessity. More millennials have contract jobs offering less stability and little or no benefits. This cohort is choosing live at home longer to save money for a down payment on their first home. SDU can give parents and adult children a more harmonious quality of life. I don't know about you, but once the kids are in there 20's and 30's, I don't want them right under my feet all the time. SDU offer independent living for the young adult with the benefit of some support. Sadly not all adult children are able to launch independently. One in nine children has special needs.⁴ The NCN contains an estimated 12000 residential units.⁵ A conservative estimate of maybe 5 to 8% of children with special needs may not launch and are considered "forever children" requiring some level of care throughout life. SDU provide families with housing alternatives for adult children with special needs. We have a moral and ethical duty to support families facing the extra burden of caring for adult children with developmental challenges or mental illness. Even though this represents a small number of families, maybe 100 families or so within the NCN, they deserve consideration. They may have specifically chosen to live in the NCN to access to hospitals and research facilities. Is it right to deny their need for an SDU because of their geographical location within the NCN? Their small numbers make them politically insignificant and while it is tempting to summarily and expediently dismiss their needs in planning discussions, I think it is morally and ethically wrong to make life harder for these families. The City should allow SDU as a right so if these families need to hire a caregiver, they may be allowed a little respite. Some of these parents are still providing care in their 60's, 70's and 80's because there is no alternative housing for them, just long waiting lists that never move. Will the city provide a group homes for the mentally ill or the developmentally challenged? No it is too expensive. An earlier presenter, Sandy Levin, made the point that removing the right of SDU in NCN is not "a ban." He suggested people can apply for a variance. Unfortunately these families have neither the energy nor the resources to apply for a variance. It would be a grave hardship. I feel an obligation to speak to this issue because I was once the parent of a child with profound developmental challenges and am familiar with the demands. They exist in the NCN and our city but rarely have a voice. In the future, caring for

⁴ <http://openpolicyontario.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/every-ninth-child-reportfinal.pdf>

⁵ Lief Maitland, City of London

adult dependent children and elderly parents will continue to grow as community resources are stretched more thinly. Now, more than ever, a family residence with a SDU is not just an advantageous benefit but becoming a NEED during multi-stages of the family life cycle. I ask that you allow SDU as right because it is an innovative solution to changing housing needs of families. It is good for the community and reduces dependence on government services.

Students provide many economic benefits in the NCN. Because we benefit, we should also feel an obligation to ensure safe affordable housing. The nationally televised Fleming Drive Riot was a catalyst to force the City of London to collaborate to with the University, College, Police and Student University Leadership to develop measures to deal with rowdy street parties and other obnoxious and unsavoury student behaviour. Through awesome collaboration and creative thinking, many new measures have been implemented. Western/Fanshawe Housing Departments have built over a 1000 new units to concentrate the student population on campus. The City Council has done its part approving zoning to build large apartment style housing designed specifically for students close to campus. The City has hired more bylaw officers to deal with absentee landlords and problem rentals. London Police have employed strategies to deter large street parties by clearly communicating hefty \$10,000 fines for landlords of homes rented by students having unruly street parties. The high cost of education has made students more responsible. Calming measures have started to improve the behaviour in student dense parts of the NCN. Give these strategies time to bear fruit. Discouraging SDU will not get rid of student behaviour problems. Any five bedroom home rented to students can still house a group "ready to party." Removing SDU as a right in the NCN will not eliminate partying; it will just encourage more hazardous illegal units. Without licensing, building codes and fire safety inspections are ignored. Heaven forbid, I hope we never have to deal with a tragedy of Western students dying in a fire because their home did not provide proper egress or working smoke alarms. This would be a worse black mark on our city than the St. Patrick's Day Fleming Drive Riots. Sadly, it will not ONLY be the landlord who bears responsibility. We will ALL be culpable. It is public knowledge that the City has approximately 2500 to 3000 illegal dwelling units in the city, many located in the NCN. A City staff gave out that estimate at a public participation meeting discussing SDU in St. Peter's School Auditorium on an evening in the spring 2015. The City of London should employ the least restrictive zoning possible to encourage compliance and decrease the development of illegal units. SDU will increasing housing supply and create more competition. As more legal SDU are created, competition will force shoddy landlords with low quality units out of business.

Lastly SDU rights affect me personally. For 28 years, I lived in a 5 level side split home with 33 stairs from the basement laundry to the master bedroom. Health issues forced me to retire early and seek the safety of a one floor home. I now live in Orchard Park. The area is an attractive place to retire with nice trees, close access to healthcare, and excellent public transit. It is my hope to age in place. Since I retired early, I would like to create a SDU in the basement to supplement my retirement income. Right now, the basement is unused and pretty ugly anyway. My dream is to save the income generated from rent to pay for a live-in caregiver in a SDU when needed. Please do not punish me with restrictive zoning regulations for trying to plan well. Finally, I urge you to zone SDU as a right in NCN. There are too many advantages to ignore. Hard decisions are sometimes the "right decisions." Please consider what is best for our planet, our province, our municipality, our community, our neighbourhoods, our families and for individuals like me with foresight and dreams who love living in the City of London. It is my hope that you do not shatter my dream. Thank you.

Supplementary

In the future, the city may also feel an obligation to employ measures to massage landlords of non-compliant units to legal status. According to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, cities like Saskatoon and Burnaby have employed programs and measures to legalize non-compliant secondary suites by waiving fines and offering assistance with a complimentary suite feasibility inspection. This free service is a coordinated inspection carried out by building, electrical, plumbing and gas inspectors.⁶ It is best way forward to meet our moral obligation to supply safe housing not just for students in the NCN but for all tenants living in the City of London.

⁶ https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/afhoce/afhostcat/afhoid/pore/pesesu/pesesu_001.cfm