

<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING ON NOVEMBER 27, 2017</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>ANNA LISA BARBON MANAGING DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SERVICES AND CITY TREASURER, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>2018 ANNUAL BUDGET UPDATE – PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT</b>

**RECOMMENDATION**

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Corporate Services and City Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer, the following report regarding public engagement for the 2018 Multi-Year Budget Update **BE RECEIVED** for information.

**PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER**

Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee, meeting on June 12, 2017, agenda item 1, 2018 Budget Schedule  
<http://sire.london.ca/mtgviewer.aspx?meetid=1542&doctype=AGENDA>

**2015-2019 STRATEGIC PLAN**

The 2018 Annual Budget Update public engagement strategy advances the following areas of focus and objectives of Council's 2015-2019 Strategic Plan:

- Leading in Public Service
  1. Open, accountable and responsive government
    - A) Make community engagement a priority. Make the public a partner who has access to our information and helps make decisions with Council.
    - B) Improve the City of London website so people can find what they want, when they want it and how they want it.
  4. Collaborative, engaged leadership
    - B) Maximize openness and transparency in Council decision making.

**BACKGROUND**

In the lead up to London's first Multi-Year Budget (2016-2019), extensive public engagement occurred to identify the financial priorities of Londoners and to promote participation in civic government. Public feedback received was communicated to Council, unedited by Staff, to assist with budget deliberations.

In the annual update years of the multi-year budget (2017-2019), the public engagement strategy involves educating Londoner's on the multi-year budget process, reminding them of the average annual tax levy increase approved for the 2016-2019 Multi-Year Budget period, and demonstrating how the annual amendments could impact the tax levy.

The public engagement and education strategy undertaken during the annual budget updates of the multi-year budget period will also help provide a foundation of knowledge and information for the upcoming 2020-2023 multi-year budget.

The 2018 Annual Budget Update engagement process did not include a formal process for input on new budget requests or budget amendments. Londoners were able to utilize informal channels like phone, email, social media, and conversations with staff at the budget sessions to ask questions and/or provide voluntary input on the budget process or amendments.

The public engagement strategy for the 2018 Annual Budget Update included the following channels:

1. Website ([london.ca/budget](http://london.ca/budget));
2. Budget Sessions (hosted on November 7 & 9, 2017);
3. Public Participation Meeting (PPM) (held on November 22, 2017); and
4. Social Media (Twitter/Facebook), Email ([budget@london.ca](mailto:budget@london.ca)), and Phone Calls (519-661-4638)

## **Budget Feedback**

### 1. Website

Civic Administration utilized the City of London website to educate the public on the 2018 Annual Budget Update. A dedicated webpage was created to provide general information on the 2018 Update, budget amendment cases, and Water and Wastewater & Treatment budgets.

(<http://www.london.ca/city-hall/budget-business/budget/Pages/2017-Multi-Year-Budget-Update.aspx>)

The webpage summarizes the recommendations found in the 2018 Annual Budget Update so that visitors are able to quickly understand the amendments that have been presented to Council for approval. If members of the public wish to explore the details of the budget update, links to budget document, amendment forms and Water and Wastewater & Treatment budgets can be found under related content.

Additionally, users were able to explore other webpages for information, such as the 2016-2019 Council Approved Multi-Year Budget, Budget Basics, the Property Tax Calculator and Finance Flicks. The 2018 Annual Budget Update page was featured on the City of London website's main page throughout the budget process. Also, new this year on the [london.ca/budget](http://london.ca/budget) website is an additional finance flick on the Multi-Year Budget process. Since the new finance flick was launched on November 6, the video has been viewed 67 times on the City's YouTube channel and 2,397 times through a Facebook advertisement.

Contact information for the Finance team (email and phone) is listed on the webpage so that any questions or comments can be answered by staff.

During the time period of October 27 to November 16, the [london.ca/budget](http://london.ca/budget) webpage had 364 unique visitors and 535 page views:

<b>Webpage</b>	<b>Visits</b>	<b>Page Views</b>
• 2016-2019 Council Approved Multi-Year Budget & Highlights	81	114
• Property Tax Calculator	572	487
• 2018 Annual Budget Update	86	119
• Budget Basics	52	72
• Finance Flicks	36	47
• Past Budgets	11	14
• New Page: Annual Budget Update – Key Dates	41	53

## 2. Budget Sessions (hosted on November 7 & 9, 2017)

This year Civic Administration hosted two separate budget sessions at different locations (November 7, 2017 at the Byron Library and November 9, 2017 at the East London Library).

The budget sessions invited Londoners to come and learn about the Multi-Year Budget process and the 2018 Annual Budget Update. The budget sessions were structured as an informal “drop-in” where Londoners could learn more about the Multi-Year Budget and changes proposed for the 2018 Update. Members of the community could view eight poster boards that told the story of the multi-year budget process, the approved average annual tax levy, and the amendments found in the 2018 Annual Budget Update.

The budget sessions presented a unique setting where community members were able to converse and engage directly with Finance staff, members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) and Council.

The budget sessions were advertised through the following methods:

- Social Media and Facebook ads
- London.ca/budget
- Homepage image on london.ca
- Communications package to Councillors including budget brochures, posters and suggested social media messaging
- Advertised in Our London, Londoner, London Free Press, SCENE Magazine and Latino! Magazine
- PowerPoint in City Hall lobby (on the TV monitor in the lobby)
- Posters distributed throughout City facilities and libraries
- Media release following budget tabling

Attendance at the Budget Sessions was limited. In total, seven (7) members of the community attended the two sessions and provided feedback. Topics raised by attendees are provided in **Appendix A**.

## 3. Public Participation Meeting (PPM)

The Public Participation Meeting (PPM) provided Londoners an opportunity to address the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee (SPPC) in Council Chambers. Written submissions for the PPM can be seen on the City website under the meeting agenda for SPPC on November 22.

The PPM was advertised through the same methods as the Budget Sessions listed above.

## 4. Social Media, Email, and Phone Calls

Staff utilized the City’s Twitter and Facebook accounts to educate Londoners on the 2018 Annual Budget Update. Information was provided regarding where to access budget resources and budget education tools (e.g., “Finance Flicks” and the “Property Tax Calculator”). Additionally, social media was used to advertise the 2018 Annual Budget Update webpage, the Budget Sessions and the Public Participation Meeting.

Social media messages were posted to the City social media channels several times a week over the duration of the 2018 Annual Budget Update process. The City of London Twitter account has 45,651 followers and the Facebook page has 25,819 likes.

The City’s budget email received six emails throughout the 2018 Annual Budget Update from October 30 to November 16, 2017.

Feedback received from the City’s budget email and social media is provided in **Appendix B**.

## **Analysis**

For the 2018 Annual Budget Update, staff examined new ways to reduce barriers to public engagement for Londoners. The following are some examples of how public engagement efforts were improved for the 2018 Annual Budget Update:

- A new finance flick for the Multi-Year Budget Process;
- Two separate dates and locations for the budget sessions (one east and one west);
- More Advertising on key budget dates in the Londoner, Our London, London Free Press, Latino!, SCENE, and a PowerPoint in the lobby;
- Created a “key dates” page on our budget website so that Londoner’s can easily view the budget timetable ([london.ca/budget](http://london.ca/budget));
- Created new educational material (a new budget amendment summary package that was given to Councillors, the media and posted on our website);
- Proactively reached out to the Urban League for a discussion on the 2018 Annual Budget Update (although appreciative of our outreach, it was not possible to organize an event with the Urban League due to scheduling); and,
- Chamber of Commerce – the City Treasurer made a presentation to the Chamber of Commerce on November 2, 2017.

## **Summary**

Public engagement continues to play an important role in the budget process in London. In the lead up to a new Multi-Year Budget, a more extensive, in-depth engagement strategy is deployed by Civic Administration. In the year of an annual update, the public engagement strategy aims to educate the public and encourage more involvement in the budget process. For the 2018 Annual Budget Update, the public engagement vehicles focused on educating Londoners on the Multi-Year Budget process and the 2018 Budget Amendments.

## **Acknowledgements**

This report was prepared with the assistance of the 2018 Annual Budget Update public engagement team from Financial Planning & Policy (Louie Bruni and Anita Hodgins) and Communications (Tara Thomas and Meagan Geudens).

<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED BY:</b>
<b>ALAN DUNBAR, MANAGER FINANCIAL PLANNING &amp; POLICY</b>	<b>ANNA LISA BARBON, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SERVICES AND CITY TREASURER, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER</b>

## APPENDIX A

### BUDGET INFORMATION OPEN HOUSE FEEDBACK

- Additional details were requested with respect to budget amendment case 12 and which specific projects were affected by the timing changes.
- What mitigation options are available to address the impacts of budget amendment cases 7 and 8?
- With respect to budget amendment case 11, does this include any new affordable housing or strictly rehabilitation of existing public housing?
- Discussed the relationship between the BRT initiative and budget amendment cases 14, 15, and 19.
- Is the funding for budget amendment case 14 actually required when it is budgeted in the amendment?
- One participant questioned where BRT was reflected in the 2018 budget update. Explained that it has already been approved in the budget.
- Questioned whether plans had been finalized for Farquharson, Glen Cairn and Silverwoods arenas (budget amendment case 17)?
- Explained that a \$5.5 million budget increase represents approximately a 1% tax levy increase.
- Clarification was sought regarding where the \$10 million London Hydro special one-time dividend is recorded.
- Feedback on the Multi Year Budget was generally positive.
- One participant asked for an overview of the MYB process.
- Questioned what the process will be for the next MYB, i.e. will it be a full “reset”?
- The format of the 2018 Budget Update is very useful and easy to follow. (x2)
- Is there any new funding included in the budget for affordable housing?
- Is “bonusing” ever used for affordable housing?
- One participant asked how to provide input at the Public Participation Meeting?
- How will the 3.0% increase in the Water Budget be allocated to the various variable and fixed portions of my water bill?
- For budget amendment case 4, why is the Economic Development Reserve Fund being recommended as the Source of Financing to mitigate the budget pressure? How many employees will be hired to support this initiative?
- For budget amendment case 7, does the budget impact include only employees making minimum wage (or below the new \$14 and/or \$15 rates), or does it also include the resulting impact from other employees making close to \$14 or \$15 that will request a raise?
- Is there anything that you can tell me about budget amendment case 8? Will there ever be anything released regarding the details of this business case?
- Why are you emphasizing the average increase over 2016-2019 when the actual increase on my tax bill will be 3.3% in 2018 and 2019? The years 2016 and 2017 are behind us and should not be factored into the four year average.
- So the tax levy increase in 2018, without budget amendment cases 7 and 8, is actually 0.6% (from 2.7% in Table 2 (excluding budget amendment cases 7 and 8) on page 12 to 3.3% in Table 3 (including budget amendment cases 7 and 8) on page 13).
- Why do you use the value of an average assessed home in 2015 (\$221,000)? What is the average assessed value of a home in 2017 and what is the impact from the tax levy increase on that home?
- What is the tax levy increase including the value of assessment growth? Why do you “sprinkle” all of the assessment growth funding around all the departments at the City?
- If the assessed value of my home increases, how much more tax do I have to pay?

## APPENDIX B

### SOCIAL MEDIA AND EMAIL FEEDBACK (received October 30 to November 16, 2017)

Emails sent to <a href="mailto:budget@london.ca">budget@london.ca</a>
<p>Where in the multi-year budget documents can I find the revenue received from the Western Fair Lease and also revenue from the “host city” agreement with OLG for slot machines at Western Fair?</p>
<p>On reviewing the Budget 2018-19 update yesterday I'm absolutely gob smacked/ shocked that the LEDC would approve the release from our/ your development reserve fund of \$175 K over 2018-19 to support the operational costs of Dundas Place (6.0 FTE City of LDN - employees by 2019). The optics of this are off side , completely paternal and a bit like a private corporations board running out of growth options so they buy back their own shares ( best sell signal I have on growth). Could you please comment / provide feedback on how this recommended funding fits your development mandate / metrics and supports me as a taxpayer?</p>
<p>Could you please clear up the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does Dundas Place fit the template to qualify for a draw on the Economic Development Reserve Fund?</li><li>• Which London City MGR is responsible and accountable to approve an allocation from this reserve fund?</li><li>• Why would the City of London recommend using this reserve fund to cover the on-going Operational Expenses for Dundas Place when these should be upfront expensed to the tax base if supported by Council just like your salary? ( yes I know the reserve fund is tax based but it's topped up @ a time lag from taxpayers )</li></ul>
<p>Unfortunately I am not going to be able to attend the budget update session on Thursday as that when our club has its regular meeting. The Summerside Community Club is the community association for Summerside in south east London. I am hoping you will be able to answer a couple of questions for me.</p> <p>It is my understanding that money is currently being put aside in the budget for a future community centre in our area. What is the current status of this funding, with regards to how many years has this been happening and how many more years does it have to go and how much are we talking about?</p> <p>Are there any other in the budget for our areas that we should be aware of?</p>
<p>I would like to know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The reasoning behind the tax increase being imposed knowing full well the builders costs formula is not a standard used by many municipalities?</li><li>• Name three other cities that use this inflation rate as a guide for city tax increases?</li><li>• Over the four-year budget time line the total increased revenues will be 2.8% x 4 or 11.3%. Why has the city treasurer Barbon not brought in a tax increase matching that established in 2016 knowing full well the tax rate established in 2016 was almost 100% higher than the Canadian Cost of Inflation Index Rate?</li><li>• Added to this the 3% increase in water tax per year for a total percentage of 12%. When reporting possible tax rates for the next four years, why is this not included in reporting the massive increase in total property and water tax revenues as an example of transparency with we the taxpayers?</li><li>• In the past four years there have been millions of dollars given to the city by London Hydro, The Slots only to mention a couple of examples and yet our city cannot operate within a reasonable budget which has a profound burden on seniors and low income families?</li><li>• Why is Bill 148 being used as an excuse to keep raising city taxes well in excess of the COL index without staying within a reasonable budget by demanding efficiencies within the total city budget by all departments?</li><li>• With both the federal Liberal government and the Provincial Liberal government in debt that will cost the next 4 generations billions in repayments to get back to a balanced budget, why can't the city and water department be more frugal in their funding demands?</li><li>• How much did the city pay down the city debt and increase the contingency funds of the corporation in the last four years?</li><li>• Why is the city still allowing deferred tax payments at the cost to ordinary hard working tax payers?</li></ul>

WE CAN NO LONGER BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE, ORGANIZATIONS, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, WELL ESTABLISHED BUSINESSES AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.

I was looking for was the detail for case #12, PD225318 (ESAs) and PD276518 (Woodland Parks). Would like to know which got moved from what year to what year. If I can provide more clarity, let me know and I can call you Weds or Thursday afternoon.

### Facebook Comments

Yes London. Be informed. Change isn't just on the way, It's here! 😊

Everyone can afford to pay attention!

CITY POST: We are hosting two budget sessions on Tuesday, November 7 at Byron Library from 6-8 p.m. and Thursday, November 9 at East London Library from 6-8 p.m.

Register now for an opportunity to explore the Multi-Year Budget in an environment where you can learn about the process and ask staff questions. <http://bit.ly/2iiTELb>

Can't make it? There are other ways you can stay in touch with City staff. Learn more at [london.ca/budget](http://london.ca/budget)

COMMENT: How about addressing the homeless problem?? I am presently there. We have nothing. We are marginalized, under-represented and cast aside. We are just an industry to provide work and suffer abuse. We can't say nothing or get kicked out of the shelters. Just because we speak our minds. It's cold. We take disrespect that any other human would scream about. Who speaks up for us?? No-one.

REPLY: If you were a refugee you would be given money a HOUSE or apartment free schooling free everything

REPLY: You are correct, Ray. The homeless are cast aside. The problems are always skirted and pushed from one level of government to another. Province says it's city problem, city says it's a provincial problem. Feds just won't deal with it. Homeless people need to be better cared for. It's almost only donations and churches that provide funding for these shelters. And yes, you get cast out if you don't conform. It's something that definitely needs more attention.

COMMENT: If you want your voice to be heard, consider participating in the meetings that the city is hosting, instead of expressing comments on a Facebook post. Improper, immature, ineffective.

REPLY: your in ottawa , mind your own business

REPLY: And "your" just as smart as the rest of them.

REPLY: Complains on Facebook about people complaining on Facebook.....

REPLY: That's what it's here for...

COMMENT: The City doesn't care what people have to say. Smoke and mirrors and they do as they want. People are dying in our streets and all they care about is a BILLION dollar rapid transit system. They should be celebrating minimum wage increase but instead blame the working poor for City mismanagement.

COMMENT: Please keep funding the library. One of the greatest assets we have if only we used it to full advantage. Perhaps if part of the funding would be an insert with property taxes explaining the full programs that are available. Absolutely the most understood and under used utilities available to all Londoners!

COMMENT: This is just an "information" session and nothing else. Don't bother to wake me up. I'll be the old \_\_\_ at the East London one, snoring way back in the corner. I call it expressionism, at it's lowest form.

COMMENT: I have attended this type of Session in the past, and have found city staff to be knowledgeable and forthright. Don't confuse these people with the politicians, who only want to say what is politically expedient.

COMMENT: What always concerns me as a taxpayer in this city is when the politicians state the next years tax increase, it does not take into account that our assessment is indexed as well. For example: they are projecting a 3% increase next year and property taxes assessment in the Oakridge will go up 2.5%. That represents a 5.5+% increase in our property taxes, not 3% as our politicians want us to believe. Please have our actual city tax increase stated as to how it affects

the property owners not the same value assessment, this is very misleading!

COMMENT: and why would people go when if they speak there mind they get thrown out, or the more honesty the council hears they don't like it and have you thrown out

COMMENT: London is a joke thanks to useless bureaucrats.. overpriced housing overpriced rent speedbumps traffic cams.. can you waste anymore money that isn't yours??!

COMMENT: please take the fluoride out of the city water now ; it causes disease and adding it is assault

COMMENT: There shouldn't be any homeless \_\_\_\_\_ say the economy is booming

COMMENT: Just raise taxes for the property owners. 20% hike should be ok.

REPLY: Assuming you rent? Who owns your rental? A property owner. Enjoy the rent hike!

REPLY: we need to get rapid transit and drug sites and welfare payments. Raise the taxes now.

REPLY: The \$130M of London's portion of RT, been set aside years ago. Council had placed the \$59.9M Adelaide underpasses, as part of the RT project.

COMMENT: Curious, how much are we short to cover the minimum wage increase?

REPLY: Londoners will find out when they get their next tax bill.

REPLY: \$1.5M for 2018, \$2M for 2019. You can find the details, here.

<http://www.london.ca/.../2017-Multi-Year-Budget-Update.aspx>

COMMENT: ... want to talk budget stuff? Lol

REPLY: This sounds like a fruitful and fun opportunity

COMMENT: I had made changes to the budget before, and I am a common Londoner. It is all about the attitude.

COMMENT: So right.

YES ... BE informed!