

Honourable Council Members,

Let me first introduce myself and our delegation. My name is Sydney Bergeron, this is Courtney Vaughan and we are representatives of a delegation from King's University College. We are here today as both students and residents in order to express our investment and concern in London's plan to move forward. We are deeply concerned by the potential budget cuts that are being proposed, specifically those having to do with transportation. We've come today in order to voice our concern and impress upon you that it is these issues that deeply influence London's livability and in so, our upcoming decisions on whether or not we'll make London our permanent home.

We'd like to start by acknowledging our awareness that there has already been great deliberation of budget items #32, 45 and 51. While council has already spent a great deal of time weighing different considerations, we are here in the hope that council may further consider some of our concerns during the final vote on February 28th

We know from your words that the council here today believes in investing in infrastructure, in the words of the city from a 2010 city planning document;

“Investing in infrastructure makes our neighbourhoods better from a social, environmental and economic perspective.”

We agree. London is the 10th largest city in Canada and we think it's time we start building our city with growth and prosperity in mind. Throughout Canada and the United States the movement toward better, smarter and more efficient infrastructure is already taking place.

I'd like to draw your attention to some examples and the opportunity that is being presented to us;

We know that, as cited from Cycling Vision Ottawa, “Just 1 additional cyclist riding 3 times per week would recoup an infrastructure investment of \$17,500 dollars over the life of the facility. A 72% increase in ridership then, as gained by Montreal in only a 5 year period of investment, presents significant potential profit.

Portland, Oregon is a clear example of the potential return for investment. A study performed under the Portland Office of Transportation showed that since renewing investment initiatives in 2006, the bicycle industry has grown exponentially and was estimated to be worth \$90 million dollars by 2008: a 36% increase in only 2 years. While this study only accounted for economic activity including consulting, retail and manufacturing, investing in cycling initiatives also present economic opportunity in initial construction, advertising and tourism, while simultaneously raising property values and city appeal.

If we include potential savings into the equation, London could expect between a 20-1 and a 12-1 return for every dollar invested. If you're yet to be convinced, in the United States a National Study conducted by Political Economy Research Institute in 2011 found that investment in cycling infrastructure results in approximately 11.4 jobs for every 1 million dollars spent.

These are just a few examples of the real numbers from leading cities across the continent. This is what we would like to see from the city we live in. And we are not alone.

Having cycled many of Canada's major cities, I must commend London for the Thames Valley Parkway trail system, as it is a fantastic cycling experience. That being said, there are many improvements to be made. Of all of the cities in which I have cycled, none leave me feeling as unsafe as London.

As a volunteer at Western University's Purple Bikes, this is a sentiment that has been expressed to me by many Londoners and visitors to London. A study at the University of Waterloo concludes that safety concerns are the number one deterrent of cycling. This must be addressed by council by providing a safer cycling culture and infrastructure.

This can be done by increasing predictability with proper signage and bike-specific infrastructure. The UBC BICE study, based within the cities of Vancouver and Toronto, has concluded that bike specific infrastructure halves the risks to cyclists. Cycle tracks, which are physically separated bike lanes, carry about one-tenth of the risk.

As the "Forest City", London must also consider the air quality improvements that can be seen by promoting cycling. The vast majority of commutes in London are under five kilometers which is a comfortable 20 minute bike ride. Considering motor vehicles produce 80% of carbon monoxide and 30% of carbon dioxide emissions, reducing these commutes would easily improve air quality within London. Moreover, by promoting cycling, traffic congestion could be significantly reduced, thus improving the overall transportation experience of those within the London community.

Unfortunately, the sentiment of improving cycling infrastructure has been lost with the current budget. Creating a better bicycle infrastructure would not only improve the health and safety of citizens of London but it would also provide a tremendous opportunity to strengthen the London economy. This would provide a great incentive for people: be they students, families or tourists, to explore London as a future home, as well as creating a better environment for those who already call London their home. I leave you now, sincerely thanking you for your time, and hope that you can take these considerations to mind.