

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 13, 2013
FROM:	LARRY PALARCHIO DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL PLANNING AND POLICY
SUBJECT:	2013 BUDGET – PUBLIC INPUT

RECOMMENDATIONS

That, on the recommendation of the Director, Financial Planning and Policy, this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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2013 Budget – Public Input – Strategic Priorities & Policy Committee, January 24, 2013

BACKGROUND

This report provides a second update on public input regarding the 2013 Budget and captures feedback received from January 15 to February 11, 2013.

Budget Feedback Update

Civic Administration has been capturing feedback and comments related to the 2013 Budget through a variety of channels. E-mail inquiries and input were received through Budget@london.ca on the City’s website and social media input was collected through Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/LondonCanada> and Twitter at @CityofLdnOnt or #LdnBudget13. Financial Planning & Policy has also been collecting feedback received by phone at (519) 661-4638.

Appendix A (attached) captures all feedback received since January 15, 2013 and has been categorized on a service basis: Culture, Planning & Development, Protective Services, Social & Health Services, Transportation Services, Corporate, Operational & Council Services and Budget 2013/General.

In total 94 individual pieces of information were received during this time period. Of those responses, the three areas receiving the most discussion were as follows:

- 32% related to Budget 2013/General (37% during the previous period of December 4 to January 14);
- 31% to the Transportation program (previously 10%); and
- 20% to the Culture program (previously 39%).

Channel Utilization

In terms of channel utilization, overwhelmingly Twitter has been the most used medium throughout the budget process.

Feedback Channels	December 4 th to January 14 th	January 15 th to February 11 th
Twitter	44%	70%
E-mail	30%	29%
Facebook	20%	1%
Telephone	6%	-

'Build a Budget' Website

Building on the success of the Budget Workshops held on January 12, 2013, Civic Administration launched a 'Build a Budget' website February 4, 2013. This interactive tool allows Londoners to review and make their own decisions on the budget and see the financial implications of their decisions on property taxes. To date there have been 807 unique visits to the site.

Conclusions & Next Steps

Londoners have been and remain very engaged in the budget process and there has been significant uptake of the new engagement methods used this year. Civic Administration will continue to collect feedback until February 28, 2013. A post mortem on the budget process will be conducted with members of Council in March and will include an evaluation of engagement tools and techniques and identification of best practices for the 2014 budget process.

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared with assistance from: Meaghan Geudens and Alan Dunbar.

Prepared By:	Recommended By:
Rosanna Wilcox Business Planning Process Manager	Larry Palarchio Director – Financial Planning and Policy

c. Elaine Gamble, Director of Corporate Communications

APPENDIX A

BUDGET 2013 FEEDBACK (January 15 - February 11, 2013)

The following captures feedback received via email at Budget@london.ca, telephone at (519) 661-4638, Facebook at [facebook.com/LondonCanada](https://www.facebook.com/LondonCanada), and Twitter @CityofLdnOnt or #LdnBudget13.

Feedback has been categorized as follows: Culture, Planning & Development, Protective Services, Social & Health Services, Transportation Services, Corporate, Operational & Council Services, Budget 2013/General.

Culture

Impact of 2013 Budget Cuts to the London Public Library

Please reconsider your proposed drastic cuts to the library system as this would ultimately affect thousands – probably millions of Londoners.

As a very frequent visitor to the library, I can personally attest to the wonderful programs that are creative, diverse and available for thousands of us.

Many low income persons frequent the library each day to access the computers for job search, as well as borrow materials that they could (otherwise) not afford.

Whenever someone has a research, or business question – the first thing they do is access information at the library. Restricting access would:

- make student projects more difficult
- affect thousands of small business owners
- severely impact charities (like the one I administrate for ON)
- turn-away many children
- affect many borrowers

The library is also presently accessible by students, professors, and our brightest minds. If these cuts are imposed what will happen to people during the summer months when the University of Western Ontario and Fanshawe College severely restrict access?

There is no other business in London that offers the same or very similar programs that the London public library does. This cannot be said for other “city-funded services” that are similar in size and structure to each other. The redundancy speaks for itself.

On a personal note, I want you to know that the staff at the public library have a “very broad knowledge-base”. Not only are they able to solve problems quickly they can provide a wealth of information to us (the public) in a very short amount of time.

When you think of downtown – you think of the central library. It is the essence of downtown London. When the World Figure Skating competition arrives and visitors ask “what is there downtown” – hopefully we can direct them to visit the downtown library and say we can say with ease – “the programs are available to you because our city council reconsidered its 2013 budget cuts. **via email**

I am upset to hear that there might be budget cuts to the Library in London. The Library is a very special place for me, because High School and Elementary School have never left a wonderful place like the library. I have mild hearing loss and chronic tension headaches which makes it hard to learn at school, and hard to relate to the average person of my disabilities (most people will either make fun of me or do want to become good friends with someone who is less fortunate) Even the most teachers at my school did not care or wanted to help me. I need a peaceful and calm place to study and enjoy myself without being judged on because of my problems. I live in small home, where my parents are always depress, and have money problems; my home lifestyle felt so limiting, it felt a like void that I could never feel good about it. The library is place where it should open every day, and be open as long as possible because I need a peaceful to enjoy a vast variety of knowledge, passion, and excitement that my schools and home could no provide to my emptiness.

I have used the Public Library through my whole life, when I had trouble learning, reading, and

speaking at school. I went to take programs at the library to help succeed those skills. When I had trouble finding a job, the staff of the library would answer with my problems, and help me find a job. I have taken thousands of books, dvds, and cds from the library, using the library every week. I have learned so many important skills and values from these items such as cooking, food statistics, math, computer, science, english, dating, excercising. Also as well education dvds on excercising, languages skills (body language, expressions, etc), and more science and math. I also watched famous movies so I can learn to relate/talk about something social people enjoy talking about. I also find it hard to listen current music because most current songs talk about sex, violence, and guns, which disgusts me. I really like listening to really classic music that real life relating lyrics stories or something kind and peaceful.

I ask of you, please do cut the budget for the Library. The Library is important to me as it to the people of London. The Library is the future of everyone's hopes and dreams, and I believe everyone deserves Library experience. It helps everyone who cannot get jobs, who cannot learn english, who does not have parents to teach them the importants of life skills, with programs that bring significant life values to everyone we care about. **via email**

I use the library more than any other public service. It's better than sliced bread. It could use the funds to get more books on shelves for Londoners to read. Make it happen by putting more budget towards the library. **via email**

As our representatives in the City Council of London, I ask your attention for the following.

In my view, the libraries provide services that are very important for many students and school children and particularly for those citizens who cannot afford to have easy access to information both in printed form and via the internet. In the current economical climate, these services are essential to have a fair chance to move forward in the society.

I therefore ask that City Council, as my representatives, ensure that there is no reduction to the library services or opening hours.

I look forward to your response and your vote in favour of the library services. **via email**

Please forward this to the London City Council members who will be making the decisions about the 2013 city budget.

I moved to London from Northern Ontario in April 2009 when I accepted a job at Parkwood Hospital, SJHC London. As soon as I had moved into my new home, I joined the library. In the past four years I have visited the library on a weekly basis. I often walk to my local branch on the weekend incorporating some exercise into my visit. I have noticed that many people who use the neighbourhood branches walk to them -and isn't that what we want for our residents - to encourage physical exercise? Additionally I have used the website weekly as well. I also visit the downtown main branch often for the public lectures or on Sundays when the smaller branches are closed.

I believe the public library is a critical meeting place and community service for all. It is so much more than a place to borrow books - it provides a vast array of important resources for all ages and all socio-economic groups: odometers for those who are trying to get more active; book clubs for those who want to socialize; public lectures for those who love to learn; practical advice with workshops on budgeting, parenting, healthy living; lectures on art, diversity, politics, history; courses for young and old; movies to borrow, access to the internet for so many who need it and wouldn't be able to access it otherwise; tutoring for those who want it.... and so much more. Staff are always warm and welcoming -so knowledgeable.

I understand the need to make difficult budgeting decisions and that any decision to reduce services will meet with criticism. However, I cannot stress enough what an important role that the public library plays to so many in our community -and there isn't any other service like it. I believe this is evidenced by the volume of visits to the London Public Library annually and the number of resources borrowed. A neighbourhood library is irreplaceable and I strongly advocate that the London City Council look elsewhere for cost reduction strategies. Please do not reduce the library budget.... the library services. It is so important to so many. **via email**

Please reconsider your 0% budget for this year. Not only will other important services suffer in our city, so too, will our beloved Library services. The library is an important and necessary "rock" in a city. It allows those without the means to buy books, the opportunity to enjoy reading. It provides information, lectures, programs, and resources not found anywhere else. Books, videos, and computers are all easily and readily available to whoever wants to use them. It provides jobs. It offers a safe, restful, and enjoyable place to sit for a few hours surrounded by the positive influence of books and those reading them.

Look at the numbers and you'll realize that in our city, the London Public Library is well-used and is a good investment:

- 3.2 million people visited a library location
- 1.31 million people asked our staff for help finding information, materials and other resources
- 4.25 million items were borrowed
- 192,000 people attended a program, including those for newcomers, teens, job-seekers, new parents, seniors and those looking to connect with all this city has to offer
- 972,000 holds were placed on items
- 567,000 uses of our public computers were logged, many by those without access to the Internet or a computer in their home
- 4.5 million people visited our website

Please support the public library! ***via email***

I am writing out of a deep concern for how the 0% City of London 2013 Budget Target is likely to harm London Public Library.

My family of four are all keen users of the London Public Library system; my kids borrow books by the sackful, use the computers, and attend workshops and performances. (During the recent Christmas holidays, I managed to finish drafting my latest novel in an armchair in the Central Children's Library while my kids were effortlessly engrossed by the various activities provided; I don't know of any other space - including my own house - where that's true!) Whether they are learning about dry ice, sculpting in clay or reading, I know that everything they experience in the Public Library system will be stimulating, educational and will help them make friends.

We particularly appreciate the range of the collection at the Central Library - where we borrow materials in French and Spanish as well as English - and the fact that it is open on Sundays.

We also use our local branch a lot (Landon) and find it very handy that it stays open in the evening, most days of the week. These are some of the very aspects of the public library - hours of service and collections budget - that would be endangered by a 0% target.

It's no surprise to us that this city has the highest annual library use per capita in Ontario. The library staff strike us as consistently helpful, taking the initiative in all sorts of ways to make the libraries welcoming spaces for a very wide range of people and their very different needs. What I didn't know until recently is that London's library system also has the lowest operating cost per use in Ontario; it seems to be a model for how to do the most with the least investment.

My family is lucky enough to have lots of books at home, too, and art materials, and several computers - but we use the library because it is a more stimulating environment in all sorts of ways. Also because it teaches our kids (without them even knowing it) the crucial lesson that resources are for sharing. The library is free, a non-commercial space, and it's for everyone: it offers all residents of this city the same extraordinary educational facilities.

Culture is not an extra, it's a right. Public libraries are an anti-poverty force at the deepest level; they redistribute the wealth of culture, learning and information. When I'm telling my kids why we pay taxes, the best example that springs to mind is the library. Even in hard economic times - in fact, especially in such times, because of its power to supplement the resources available to lower-income residents - it should be spared from cuts.

I urge you in the strongest terms to reconsider the 0% Budget Target for London Public Library. **via email**

As a regular user of our library system, I am distressed by the possibility of reduction in services which will affect our family as well as many others in London. The London Public Library is such a valuable resource to our City. The system is highly-used and highly-valued by many Londoners.

The attempt to artificially restrain required budget increases is penny wise and pound foolish. To deprive Londoners of access to the Central Library on Sundays or to reduce evening hours is scandalous. I have observed over the years many students who do not have the luxury of a quiet space to work in, often come to the library as a sanctuary.

Please fund the library system at a level where it can do its job.

Comments disparaging proper funding of our library system by Councillors out of ignorance or out of lack of caring because they do not even live in our City must not play a role in damaging a true London jewel.

In closing, please support the London Public Library with increased budget funding. **via email**

Please see the following message which is of concern to me and countless other citizens who live in London and surrounding areas. I trust that the library budget will not be reduced in fact, it will be augmented to maintain the same services and amenities.

In my view, having a zero tax increase is a ridiculous idea. To use a much used axiom; "it is short term gain for long term pain" **via email**

I am a long time resident of London and an employee at the Sherwood branch of the London Public Library. I want to voice my concern regarding the potential budget cuts to our library system. This city is known as a centre of education and learning, and our libraries are a key component of that deserved reputation. What message would cutting the library budget send about London City Council's commitment to raising London's profile as a place that values literacy, education, self-improvement, and academic research?

Our library system is already on a shoestring budget, yet our devoted staff delivers the best service in the province, and more people per capita use London's libraries than any other city in Ontario. The thought that this service might be diminished to meet the short-sighted and ethically-questionable goal of another 0% tax hike sickens and dismays me and, without exception, ALL of the people with whom I have discussed this issue over the past few months.

I am proud to be a front line service provider, and at our small branch we serve hundreds of people every day. People of all means come to our library to get help with research, settlement, tech-support, and access to social services. Our patrons know that they will be helped immediately and with genuine concern by our staff, and every day we hear from the public how much they value our level of care as well as the accessibility of our public spaces at all hours of the day. London Public Library does not care about a person's social or economic status; all are welcome and their needs are addressed with equal care. The residents of this city - be they wealthy or vulnerable - will need the library's services more than ever as the city seeks new ways to draw and maintain private investment and entrepreneurs.

A society is never improved by cutting public access to information, reducing accessibility to public spaces, or restricting cultural development. I dearly hope that our city leaders will fight to protect London's library system. **via email**

Libraries can bring people together, even during budget season: <http://t.co/HywskqyX> via: [@philipmcleod](https://twitter.com/philipmcleod) [#LdnBudget13](https://twitter.com/LdnBudget13) [#fb](https://twitter.com/philipmcleod) **via Twitter**

In 2005, staffing was 65% of library budget. In 2011 it was 75%. Money for service being squeezed out. [#LdnOnt](https://twitter.com/LdnOnt) [#LdnBudget13](https://twitter.com/LdnBudget13) **via Twitter**

Each library unique, for example Central used for offices, arts, heritage, plus London Room archives and the performance hall [#LdnBudget13](https://twitter.com/LdnBudget13) **via Twitter**

[@londonlibrary](https://twitter.com/londonlibrary) has trimmed very close already, service hours, staff hours, very difficult to find further savings [#LdnBudget13](https://twitter.com/LdnBudget13) [#LDNont](https://twitter.com/LDNont) **via Twitter**

Transit & Libraries, two things needed to make [#Ldnont](https://twitter.com/Ldnont) prosperous. Cutting them will greatly

affect the city negatively. [#LdnBudget13](#) *via Twitter*

Good news for Londoners & [@londonlibrary](#) with Council not cutting library budget [#ldnbudget13](#) *via Twitter*

Each library unique, for example Central used for offices, arts, heritage, plus London Room archives and the performance hall [#ldnbudget13](#) *via Twitter*

What London Public Library users think of our Library Service: <http://t.co/oeaCLOmz> eg. 96.3% think it's good value for tax \$\$ [#ldnbudget13](#) *via Twitter*

As a university educator, a writer on media and the Internet, and an avid reader, I urge you not to cut library budgets. *via email*

Planning & Development

Many businesses depend on "forest city" brand, urban forests pay massive dividends when we invest [#ldnbudget13](#) [#LDNont](#) *via Twitter*

Emerald ash borer plaguing this entire region, northern States, money goes to tree protection and replacement [#LDNont](#) [#ldnbudget13](#) *via Twitter*

Ashes make up about 10% of our trees (from London tree inventory), massive issue in our urban forest [#ldnbudget13](#) [#LDNont](#) *via Twitter*

No money left unspent, risk related to dead trees toppling, removal and replace the main focus [#LDNont](#) [#ldnbudget13](#) *via Twitter*

[#ldnont](#) has invested in proactively treating almost 400 big ash trees to save them. Cuts would also doom these trees [#ldnbudget13](#) *via Twitter*

Trees are the only infrastructure that *grow* in value after you put them in the ground. Huge multiple paybacks from trees. [#ldnbudget13](#) *via Twitter*

Note to self: plant more trees on our property in the spring. Citizens have a part to play too! [#ldnbudget13](#) [#LDNont](#) *via Twitter*

Protective Services

As a life long resident of London, currently in west London, I am strongly opposed to any cuts in police or fire services. *via email*

I cannot understand why the suggested cuts for each budget year are the same? I also need someone to explain to me why it is that the Police Department needs to lay off 56 officers if they do not get the same money as last year. I work in the public sector and control a budget of seven million dollars. 85 to 90% of this budget is salaries. Having had to cut back in most other areas over the last 5 – 6 budgets there is nothing left to cut without impacting collective agreements or cutting services. With the city looking for twenty eight million dollars to get to a zero increase it is impossible to do so looking at items under \$250,000. Ten thousand dollars for this and seventy thousand dollars for that, is not going to get anyone, anywhere, real fast.

We need to look at workloads within the city to determine where we can save \$\$\$ by not hiring replacement staff. Why can we not delay garbage pick-up during the frozen periods when garbage can sit for a few days longer. If we were on a same day pick up every week we could skip it for a week when staff are not available avoiding overtime costs. As far as the police go, I say give them the same amount of money and see how many are laid off. I'll bet very few because they will protect their staff. They will not reduce service to noticeable levels because that would be a reflection on them city wide, which wouldn't sit well. If they do not lay off 56 officers than they will just have lost all credibility for next year's budget.

Having said all this, I do support a reasonable increase in the budget but the money needs to be earmarked for certain items. In the public sector the envelopes for departments are frozen which does not allow money to be taken from one area to offset over expenditures in another department. Everyone spends within their means.

I think if the previous mayor was still there we would have experienced another 8% increase already on top of the 40% she increased in her first two terms. I commend Joe and this council for creating a procedure that reviews every expenditure instead of rubber stamping the

requests.

I would like to see one time increases and proof to the residents of the City of London that the taxes are reduced when the period is up. I would have no problem paying an additional amount for a one year period to fund certain items. Perhaps a cap of 2.5 – 3% and whatever the budget comes in at, the rest would be surplus each year. Special items could be one time funded from the surplus which would make the budget process more agreeable to all knowing that the lower the budget increase the more surplus for projects.

Anyways, keep up the good work and please hold staffing replacements to a minimum, including police, as we all have to do more with less these days. Continued increases of 4 – 5% percent would have cost a lot of seniors their homes down the road. **via email**

I would be happy with a zero-increase budget. Every extra dollar you take from me in tax increases is a dollar I can no longer spend on something I choose. And I'm not convinced you make better choices than I do with respect to bettering our community.

If you want to cut services, start with the big ones -- police and fire.

Hold them to zero increase. I do not believe we'll all be murdered in our beds if the police are forced -- probably for the first time ever -- to seriously deal with their expenses. The same goes for the fire department.

They all spend lots of money on things we don't really need.

I believe your deliberations would be much more productive if you spent more time considering what services we should be providing to our citizens and less time debating minor tweaks to existing services. **via email**

I respectfully request you send a strong message to the Police about REDUCING their budget. I have contacted you in the past regarding this issue and I may I remind you the police budget has increased by ~35% since 2007..

Thank-you for your serious attention to the budget for 2013.. **via email**

After all semantics the avg increase to maintain fire services in London is approximately **\$1/month** to the avg household!! [#LdnBudget13](#) **via Twitter**

I just recently was told of the changes to the Landlord Licensing for the city of London. Being a landlord I was not impressed that there is going to be an 820% increase in new rental licenses. This clearly is not fair.

Landlords didn't want the licensing and now all the law abiding landlords like myself will pay all the fees for the ones that don't and the guys with huge profits with buildings over six units pay nothing. Not exactly fair. I am sure this will easily pass because landlords are a small voting pool that I am sure no one will miss.

The city sucked good landlords into the program by having low fees and I am sure council knew in advance that the fee increase would be massive, but now what are we going to do about it? If we don't pay the city will take action against us. I am not one to complain, but this is the largest fee increase in the budget is it not? If new business licenses went up 820% I am sure this would be on the nation news, but of course no one will really care except for a small minority while we continue to pay for this massively expensive and useless program.

I bet that any councillor that voted for this is not a landlord. **via email**

#LdnOnt Police Reporting Centre open 18h/day, 7d/week, staffed by highly paid police officers. Could be run by private partner. [#LdnBudget13](#) **via Twitter**

Social & Health

"How many of the most vulnerable people in the city are you going to sacrifice on your altar?" - <http://t.co/D3yX19SA> [#ldnbudget13](#) **via Twitter**

Trying to write impactful political statement condemning [#LdnBudget13](#) cuts to affordable housing. Aaron Sorkin - give us a hand, would you? **via Twitter**

Transportation

Hi, just wanted to touch base about the tax situation. As a London Ontario resident spending a ton of money on an education, I rely heavily on busses to get to both work and school. Cutting

back on the LTC is NOT a solution to anything, in fact it makes it harder for people to get around town. If busses ran 24/7 (even just main routes like 17, 2, 20, 10, 14 and 13) people could have a lot more job opportunities. I support RAISING taxes to make London a better place, a 0% budget is like asking everyone to move somewhere else. The council, who are made up of well to do adults with cars and money, and a mayor who doesn't even live IN LONDON, have no idea how hard it is to get around when you are bus dependant. Please, think of the people who struggle to get to work before you make any rash decisions. **via email**

"A developed country is not a place where the poor have cars. It's where the rich use public transportation." (Petro Gustavo, Mayor of Bogota, Colombia)

I would like to express my sincere hope that the 2013 Budget will not mean cuts to the public services that enhance the quality of life of many Londoners. Although I am worried about a number of services that are being asked to accommodate a 0% increase in City of London funding, in this letter I am writing about transportation services offered by the LTC.

I take the bus to work, to volunteering, to medical and dental appointments, to go shopping. I take it absolutely everywhere I go. And I know that many other Londoners rely on the LTC the same way I do.

In my opinion, a well-funded and efficient public transportation system is the hallmark of a thriving city.

Please do what is necessary to preserve the essential services the LTC offers. Please consider my experience and the experiences of many other Londoners who rely on public transportation in their day-to-day lives. **via email**

The current inadequate budget for audible pedestrian signals is now on the committee chopping block. [#ldnbudget13](#) [#ldnont](#) **via Twitter**

If you want to cut things like bike lanes in [#ldnont](#) you lack any foresight and should not have the privilege to vote on the [#LdnBudget13](#) **via Twitter**

Delaying bike lanes doesn't save money now, it just delays it until it will cost more later [#ldnont](#) [#ldnbudget13](#) **via Twitter**

Cut bike lanes. Put them on sidewalks at the expense of pedestrian safety. Kudos to everybody who wasted time on TMP process. [#ldnbudget13](#) **via Twitter**

Hard to understand how we can talk about economic development, student retention etc. while letting services like LTC collapse [#ldnbudget13](#) **via Twitter**

LTC ridership growing now 4x faster than service delivery. Falling further behind every time asked to cut [#ldnbudget13](#) [#LDNont](#) **via Twitter**

We don't own a car, depend on [#LTC](#) for our transit. We invest in it, but concerned our city isn't interested in doing it too [#ldnbudget13](#) **via Twitter**

The current inadequate budget for audible pedestrian signals is now on the committee chopping block. [#ldnbudget13](#) [#ldnont](#) **via Twitter**

Remember: [#LTC](#) service already poor, far over rider capacity, many others don't take transit because of poor service [#ldnbudget13](#) [#LDNont](#) **via Twitter**

Transit & Libraries, two things needed to make [#ldnont](#) prosperous. Cutting them will greatly affect the city negatively. [#LdnBudget13](#) **via Twitter**

[#LTC](#) cuts will further devastate those who rely on it to keep work. If unemploy is 8% now, what'll it be when can't get to work [#LdnBudget13](#) **via Twitter**

London Transit additional revenue option: Vending Machines on Buses. [#LTC](#) [#LdnOnt](#) [#LdnBudget13](#) **via Twitter**

[#LTC](#) has to balance safety, budget and environmental impact, important to update fleet, more gas economy, less emissions [#ldnbudget13](#) **via Twitter**

Cutting the bus fund saves the average [#ldnont](#) homeowner \$2.52 a year. Adequate transit could save each of them \$10K a year. [#ldnbudget13](#) **via Twitter**

Re: last RT. massive cuts to vital service. We want to get away from car dependence, this would

take us years backward #LTC #ldnbudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
We don't own a car, depend on #LTC for our transit. We invest in it, but concerned our city isn't interested in doing it too #ldnbudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
Remember: #LTC service already poor, far over rider capacity, many others don't take transit because of poor service #ldnbudget13 #LDNont <i>via Twitter</i>
#TTC is way better than #LTC #ldnbudget13 #ldnont <i>via Twitter</i>
LTC ridership growing now 4x faster than service delivery. Falling further behind every time asked to cut #ldnbudget13 #LDNont <i>via Twitter</i>
#LTC cuts will further devastate those who rely on it to keep work. If unemploy is 8% now, what'll it be when can't get to work #LdnBudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
#LTC income alone is not an acc. measure of it's contribution to city coffers! Think of businesses they serve! #taxpayerstoo #LdnBudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
What about campuses? #uwo and Fanshawe give bus passes to students. Obviously there is a reason for that. #LdnBudget13 . #ldndont <i>via Twitter</i>
omg - I can just see cuts to the routes servicing out past Fanshawe to airport area... <i>via Twitter</i>
#LdnBudget13 Glad to hear Councillors are supporting LTC. <i>via Twitter</i>
Thank you for not axing our #LTC . Now let's see if we can continue to develop it into a successful model. #ldnont #LdnBudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
London Transit By The Numbers 2003-2011 -- Inflation: +16.5%, #LTC Op Costs: +42.7%, LTC Compensation Costs: +52.3%. #LdnOnt #LdnBudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
London Transit additional revenue option: Vending Machines on Buses. #LTC #LdnOnt #LdnBudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
Budget 2013/General
Mayor Joe has got to stop making everything about him and that's exactly what he is doing by trying to stick with this 0% tax freeze! It's more about him and his promises rather than what's good for the city! Most people don't really care if he meets his 0% target! He's more concerned with this then we are. I'm sure the majority of my fellow Londoners would agree to pay a few extra dollars on our property tax bill if it means no cut in essential services...esp police and fire...as well as low cost housing for those in need. Let's help those who need it rather then spend recklessly on things we don't want or need. I understand library cut backs and a little less street cleaning in the summer and the thoughtless hacking of so many city trees just to justify a job. Also...we don't need a levy/tax/fund to put in a beach in downtown London! That's just not London...and he as mayor, should know that's not our style. Who needs another place for homeless to hang out, bathe, leave their drug paraphernalia! Let's focus on what really matters. Thanks for your time and allowing me to weigh in on this...even though it might not make one bit of difference... <i>via email</i>
Hearing a lot of comments about "throwing taxpayer \$ at X". Why not: paying what is needed for a service. #ldnbudget13 #LDNont <i>via Twitter</i>
As a tax payer I am hoping you and the council will listen to Londoners as to service cuts vs a tax hike. We would rather see a tax hike than to have such drastic service cuts. If not now, then 2014 will be a worse mess. I hope your Fontana "8" councillors smarten up and listen to the people who voted them in, including you!! <i>via email</i>
In watching CTV London news tonight, I don't understand why the council are not listening to the people of London in regards to the tax hike. My husband and I would rather see a small tax hike as mentioned on TV, approx. \$50.00

If not now, then in 2014, we will be in a worse mess.

By having a zero tax hike, there are so many services that will feel the brunt of the cuts. As a tax payer, I would hope that Fontana's 8 listen to Londoners for a change. **via email**

So no one is telling you, Joe, to stop trying? Or maybe you are just not listening?

Please stop trying to get to a zero % tax increase.

I remember hearing you say that you could get to zero without a cut in services. I don't remember you saying "essential services".

Who wants to live in a city where only essential services are available?

Yes, London IS better than that.

From one of many citizens who have never spoken up before, and who hopes to be heard. **via email**

I would like to offer the following suggestions on the budget and the spending. As a taxpayer I do not want you to go on doing 'business as usual' with the spend spend spend programs which should not be part of the city budget process. My suggestions are ones that I think the city should get out of and/or phase out. These are only a few and not in any priority.

- 1] Sell or turn over Story Book Gardens to East Park or any worthwhile tender.
- 2] City Transit – sell to highest bidder. Get out of this union plagued mess.
- 3] Stop – Stop this obsession with wasting money on down town London. The wasted millions are a disgrace and it only gets worse.
- 4] Do a cost/benefit analysis of every department with the view of possible sub-contract for savings.
- 5] Especially – do one on the outside workers.
- 6] Should garbage pickup be tendered?
- 7] Review the pay rates/benefits for the police and fire department even though these are viewed as untouchable.
- 8] Take a firm stand on dealing with the unions in place of the usual policy of – 'give in' just to have labour peace regardless of the costs.
- 9] Replace welfare with workfare for able bodied people.

There are many more – but I offer these suggestions for inclusion in the budget process and for further study.

You will be receiving a significant increase in taxes from new construction –there is no need to be increasing taxes. Like most governments – you have a spending problem. You need to learn a few words of wisdom from Nancy Reagan on the spending demands – “Just say no” **via email**

Our social needs have never been greater because of high unemployment and an all but disappearing manufacturing sector. Provincial and Federal governments are cutting their deficits on the backs of municipal governments. Therefore we need to consider increasing spending on social programs, not cut them. Too many of the proposed Business Cases by council and its administration are going to hurt social needs. Examples are case # 4; 20; 46; 47; 49; and 51. We need to maintain or increase our assistance as a city to those less fortunate.

The other area I do not understand is why just last week the council voted to spend money promoting the city when the world is here skating in March. Clearly promoting our city makes no sense when this council has listed Business cases like #13;15;16;17;22;23;24;25;26;27; and 32. When your actions as a council destroy or let infrastructure deteriorate you certainly cannot expect others to see your city as a place to move to.

This council has been so focused on zero tax increases that it no longer sees the social needs of its citizens. All government levels above the municipal one are cutting social spending. We cannot do this at the municipal level. In fact we should be increasing spending to offset the cuts above. When you are elected by the public to run our city we expect that you will act in an appropriate way to each other and that you will have in your thoughts those that are less fortunate and in need of a helping hand through municipal assistance. A council should look to

the future and improve our situation – not be focused on the last election and some promise that may be totally inappropriate today.

I would ask as a citizen of London that you take a step back and think about consequences of decisions that you make. Do not think of yesterday; today or tomorrow but instead think of the future of London and what kind of community you want to live in. Are your actions worth a tank of gas? **via email**

Thank you for hosting the 'Build a Budget Workshop'. I did attend and thought it quite useful. I did post some thoughts during the day however upon reflecting I would like to pass along some further thoughts/opinions.

Overall, my general budget feeling is that we do indeed need to say 'no' to things rather than saying 'yes' to absolutely everything however I think sticking to an absolute 0% increase may NOT be wise. I think there are initiatives that can be started that will improve the city and potentially decrease the need for tax increases in the future and these should not be passed up. I don't have a problem with a 1-3% increase if after significant due diligence that is what is considered appropriate.

With respect to a couple of particular issues;

1. Police and Fire Services: Although it is beneficial to keep a good relationship with the Police and Fire Services, I believe that amounts (salaries and benefits) previously agreed to are unsustainable regardless of any economic cycle. I think that both Police and Fire Service should NOT get any increase over last year. If this means going to some arbitration then I think that should be the path. If municipalities are consistent in doing this then the message will be taken seriously and unsustainable salaries and benefits will no longer be awarded. If this is not done then the Police and Fire Services will grow and grow as a percentage of the City budget and there will be no room to do other things.

2. On a high level I quite like the 'Kilmer Brownfield Equity Fund' proposal as part of the Prosperity Plan. Subject to a reasonable relocation cost of London Hydro then I think this could be a great deal. It by itself will increase the tax base (ongoing revenue) but also kick start a revitalization along the Thames River near the city's core. This could trigger a number of related projects nearby. This in-fill growth seems key to a sustainable city budget - existing infrastructure already in place and avoids additional costs associated with urban sprawl. Additionally, creating a relationship with Kilmer may seed further Brownfield development at other sites in London. This is a prime example of an item that should NOT be deferred just to get to a 0% tax increase. Again, subject to reasonable relocation costs this should go forward soon then later.

3. Structure tax to fit with London's long term plan. I have attended a couple of ReThink London events. Thank you for creating this public participation forum. If the goal is to grow smart, increase density in certain areas and avoid the full costs of urban sprawl then we need the tax to work in tandem with other policies to create that incentive. Things such as tax zone (encourage development where you want it or add costs to new outlying areas to help represent the true costs of those developments) could make sense. Additionally, a land value tax could also make a difference. If balanced correctly, most existing residential areas would see no net increase in tax however a lower rate on the building may encourage more improvements (more intensive uses in existing areas) and encourage those sitting on vacant land or parking lots to build.

Again thank you for creating a well run workshop over the weekend. **via email**

While I appreciate Council attempting to restrain our tax bills, could we please define a 0% increase as one that keeps pace with inflation? I am driving on city streets filled with potholes, sinkholes, and ill-repair. I feel like the city is going rapidly downhill in the attempt to save a few tax dollars - and that's not smart.

3 years at 0 will mean a HUGE increase in a couple of years, and most of my social circle agrees this is foolish at best. **via email**

The current budget approach doesn't seem conducive to making multi-year decisions that reflect the city we want to be long term [#ldnbudget13](#) **via Twitter**

I hope everybody realizes these 'budget cuts' are actually just deferrals to a future [#ldnont](#) city

council? #ldnbudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
Theme for #ldnbudget13 is "what we do today will affect our tomorrow" #ldnont needs extended stability not a political roller coaster <i>via Twitter</i>
Multi-year targets allow for long term prudent fiscal and strategic planning. #ldnbudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
Funny thing about assessment growth is that it requires an extension of services...like transit. You don't get to pocket the \$ #ldnbudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
To me, that sounds like increasing debt, staff saying this will bite us all the harder later #LDNont #ldnbudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
I respect that none of the folks advocating for causes during #ldnbudget13 have turned this into Budget Battle Royale. You're good people. <i>via Twitter</i>
The current budget approach doesn't seem conducive to making multi-year decisions that reflect the city we want to be long term #ldnbudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
Following #LdnBudget13 . Sad to see so much of #ldnont on chopping block. City as a whole makes it great, not certain pieces. <i>via Twitter</i>
I wish #ldnont could be more decisive. We can't pay for everything. #ldnbudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
Can city manage its debt load and liabilities? They were over 100% of taxes in 2011 Taxes \$482 M.vs.Debt \$400 & Retiree \$118M #LdnBudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
Multi-year targets allow for long term prudent fiscal and strategic planning. #ldnbudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
On the bright side of all this, there are some amazing lessons for everyone about #ldnont services in the budget discussions #ldnbudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
If #ldnont council really wants to help fight rising taxes they need to look at cost saving initiatives. Not just cut funding. #ldnbudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
Cutting funding is short sighted. London Housing & Dearness & busses will not magically self repair next year. #ldnbudget13 #ldnont <i>via Twitter</i>
What can city do long term to lower expenses? Urban growth boundary, economical & longer lasting replacement products #ldnont #ldnbudget13 <i>via Twitter</i>
Set me straight #ldnont . is the only reason #ldnbudget13 is chasing 0% so hard to fulfill election campaign promises? Any other reasons? <i>via Twitter</i>
While donations help the City of London. Property Taxes should pay for needed services. If it means an increase so be it. We are a community and should pay as a community. As individuals it is our responsibility to pay as a community for the best bang for our buck concerning services.If we can give a little more as individuals so be it,but this cannot be a new policy concerning the sustainability of COMMUNITY SERVICES. <i>via Facebook</i>
I am writing to you regarding some of the proposals for the upcoming city of London budget and the current attempt to keep the tax rate increase at zero percent. I am concerned that if city councillors continue with their goal that three of the main tools which will be used will be to dip into city reserves, issue debt to fund the short fall or to sell city assets. I feel that the use of either dipping into city reserves or issuing city debt will only push the burden for funding current city needs onto future generations and would be irresponsible of this council. If the council cannot find sufficient savings via cost cutting measures then council should do what is best for the long term financial health of the city and raise property taxes so that you are not pushing the burden of paying for current city programs and services onto both future councils and future generations. An average tax increase of \$60 - \$120 a year should be manageable for most households. Also, reasonable annual increases will likely be more manageable over the long term then 4 years of no property tax increases and then a \$500 or \$600 increase in the first year of a new council which will have to play catch up on city maintenance and to replenish reserves. I will ask of you if city council cannot balance the budget without dipping into reserves and

issuing debt that you vote against the budget, and if necessary then vote to raise taxes on all property owners in London to balance the budget. **via email**

The only move left is forward, that means compromise is a must. [#ldnbudget13](#) [#ldnont](#) [#1love](#)
via Twitter

Whether or not Council reaches the 0% goal, we owe them a big thanks for their effort. The culture shift is important. [#LdnOnt](#) [#LdnBudget13](#) **via Twitter**