

Report to Corporate Services Committee

To: Chair and Members, Corporate Services Committee

From: Lynne Livingstone, City Manager
Anna Lisa Barbon, CPA, CGA, Managing Director, Corporate Services and City Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer

Subject: London Community Recovery Network – Ideas for Action by Municipal Council

Date: February 8, 2021

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the City Manager and the Managing Director, Corporate Services and City Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer the following actions be taken with respect to the London Community Recovery Network:

- a) The implementation plans for the following ideas for action submitted from the London Community Recovery Network and received by Municipal Council **BE APPROVED:**
 - 1.7 - Buying Local for the Holidays
 - 1.8 - Instagram takeovers in support of local businesses
 - 3.3 - Group buying to lower the costs of PPE
 - 3.4 - Creating a government funding data bank
- b) Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to execute the implementation plans for ideas for action in support of London's community recovery from COVID-19;
- c) This report **BE RECEIVED**.

Executive Summary

1.0 Executive Summary

Over the past few months, the COVID-19 pandemic has radically altered how Londoners work, learn and participate in the community. COVID-19 has challenged the community in an unprecedented way, with long-lasting economic and social impacts likely to continue. In response, London City Council quickly established the London Community Recovery Network in partnership with leaders from London's business, industry, non-profit, academia sectors as well as communities that have experienced disproportionate impacts from COVID-19.

Network members acknowledge that collective efforts toward London's community recovery will require a long term commitment by the community. However, in the first phase of its work, Network members identified 70 ideas for action that included 37 immediate recovery ideas for the City of London to lead in the short term. Twelve (12) of these short term ideas are already underway by Civic Administration. The remaining 25 ideas have been received by Municipal Council with Civic Administration being directed to determine implementation plans for consideration by the appropriate standing committee.

On January 12, 2021, Council resolved that:

"b) The recommended short term ideas for action to support London's COVID-19 community recovery, as submitted by the London Community Recovery Network (the Network) **BE RECEIVED**;

c) Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to determine implementation plans for ideas in Table 2, excluding those included in Table 1, and return to the appropriate standing committee for approval in early 2021, noting that with the report to SPPC on September 20, 2020 (2020 Mid-Year Operating Budget Monitoring Report & COVID-19 Financial

Impacts) Council authorized \$5 million to be contributed to the Economic Development Reserve Fund to support social and economic recovery measures”

For transparency and ease of reporting, Civic Administration has developed a single report that includes ideas for action for each of the appropriate Standing Committees. This report to the Corporate Services Committee includes the following Network ideas for action for discussion and direction from the 25 ideas received for implementation by the City of London:

Idea Ref. #	Idea for Action
1.7	Buying Local for the Holidays
1.8	Instagram takeovers in support of local businesses
3.3	Group buying to lower the costs of PPE
3.4	Creating a government funding data bank

Standing committees of Council will consider reports regarding ideas for action that overlap with the mandates of each particular committee. For a full list of the 25 ideas moving forward for the consideration of Municipal Council, please refer to the [December 16, 2020 SPPC report](#).

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

The community-driven work of the London Community Recovery Network touches on numerous key areas of focus under the City of London Strategic Plan:

Strengthening our Community:

- Londoners have access to the supports they need to be successful
- Londoners have access to the services and supports that promote well-being, health, and safety in their neighbourhoods and across the city

Building a Sustainable City

- London has a strong and healthy environment
- Londoners can move around the city safely and easily in a manner that meets their needs

Growing our Economy:

- London will develop a top quality workforce
- London is a leader in Ontario for attracting new jobs and investments
- London creates a supportive environment where entrepreneurs, businesses and talent can thrive

Creating a Safe City for Women and Girls

- London has enhanced the potential for women and girls to live safe lives

Leading in Public Service

- The City of London is trusted, open, and accountable in service of our community
- Londoners experience exceptional and valued customer service

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

- London Community Recovery Network – Immediate Ideas for Action to Support London’s COVID-19 Community Recovery – December 16, 2020, SPPC
- 2020 Mid-Year Operating Budget Monitoring Report & COVID-19 Financial Impacts - September 20, 2020 - SPPC
- First Report of the London Community Recovery Network – July 14, 2020, SPPC
- COVID-19 Financial Impacts – Update – June 23, 2020, SPPC
- Second Report from the Mayor’s Economic and Social Impact and Recovery Task Forces – May 8, 2020

- COVID-19 Financial Impacts and Additional Measures for Community Relief – April 28, 2020, SPPC
- Homeless Prevention COVID-19 Response and Funding Overview, Community and Protective Services Committee, April 28, 2020, Consent Item # 2.3
- Property Tax Deferral Options – April 14, 2020, CSC
- First Report from the Mayor’s Economic and Social Impact and Recovery Task Forces – April 9, 2020

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

Idea for Action #1.7 – Buying local for the holidays

Idea for Action – Community Request to the City of London

The London Community Recovery Network has recommended that the City of London work with the members of the Network to promote greater spending at home, supporting local businesses and organizations throughout these challenging times. In addition, during the holiday season, a specific call from the community would focus on challenging Londoners to purchase half of their gifts for friends, families and colleagues from local vendors.

Action Taken Since Receipt

A number of existing campaigns are already in place across London’s business community. For example, Tourism London has launched a campaign to highlight local businesses that are currently operating online (visit: <https://www.londontourism.ca/supporting-local-business>). This campaign offers an opportunity for Londoners to “get to know” local vendors and provides access to platforms where purchases can be made. Community partners have launched a wide array of initiatives such as ShopLondon.ca, which brings together the collaborative efforts of partners such as the London Chamber of Commerce, the Western Fair District, and a number of Business Improvement Areas to support local businesses (visit: <https://shoplondon.ca/>).

Next Steps to Implement Idea for Action

The City of London will work with local businesses to determine the best way of supporting initiatives focused on buying local during the holidays. The various campaigns already in place across London’s private sector community benefit from the expertise of a wide array of local organizations. To support these efforts, Civic Administration will explore the role we can play in increasing local spending and work with key community partners such as the Chamber of Commerce, economic development organizations, and Business Improvement Areas to identify opportunities to support their efforts throughout 2021.

With the holiday season passed, Civic Administration will work with local business stakeholders to prepare additional targeted efforts in advance of the 2021 Holiday season. This collaboration will build upon the efforts throughout 2020 and best position the municipality for a focused campaign alongside the community.

There will be no additional financial impact for Idea for Action #1.7 – Buying Local for the Holidays.

Idea for Action #1.8 – Instagram takeovers in support of local businesses

Idea for Action – Community Request for the City of London

Allow businesses to post approved content on the City of London’s Instagram page for one day.

Opportunity

As the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacts small and local businesses, The City of London can strengthen and develop relationships with the community by allowing businesses to do an “Instagram takeover.”

A takeover will allow the City to:

- Highlight important work being done by London businesses in our community
- Support local businesses struggling with the impacts of COVID-19 by helping them extend their reach to new audiences
- Increase the City's Instagram following and engagement by posting fresh and authentic content
- Show a commitment to inclusivity by featuring diverse businesses across London

Description

The City of London will work with local businesses to develop a schedule of takeovers of the City's Instagram account. A schedule will be developed once we have worked with the local business community to determine the extent of interest in participating.

All posts will use the hashtags #LocalLove and #LdnOnt to help brand this initiative and keep track of social media analytics. Staff will also engage with local businesses to identify any additional hashtags that may be helpful in promoting this program. The business will be required to send over a content calendar with all the posts and the desired times for publishing in advance of the 'takeover'.

After businesses have been identified, and their proposed content has been approved, the City will promote their takeover on all City of London social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.)

Communications staff will manage this program, including creating basic application process and schedule, and will work directly with local businesses and business associations to launch and promote this. Information about the program and submissions will be managed using the City's public engagement site, www.getinvolved.london.ca. This can be launched before the end of February.

Potential Financial Impacts/ Comments on Implementation

There are no financial impacts. Implementation would require a strategic approach to balance the need to engage with followers on behalf of the organization with the opportunity to promote local businesses.

Idea for Action #3.3 – Group buying to lower the costs of PPE

Idea for Action – Community Request to the City of London

This Idea for Action suggested that smaller organizations such as non-profits and small businesses face higher costs for PPE because they do not benefit from the buying power of larger organizations. Group buying strategies may lower costs for smaller organizations. This idea was included with other "ideas for action by Municipal Council" with the hope that the City could lead this group buying initiative. After further discussion, it was determined that significant cost and complex implementation prohibit the City from leading this project. However, the City Administration recommends exploring alternative approaches through community partnerships.

Next Steps to Implement Idea for Action

Civic Administration recommends establishing contacts with private sector, non-for-profit sector, and public sector partners to identify group buying program options or look at leveraging existing programs to assist non-profit organizations. There are several organizations that can fulfill this role who may have the infrastructure already in place to provide group buying strategies. The City can provide contacts to non-profits for these partners and some initial high-level guidance to setup the structure to consolidate, standardize and leverage the PPE spend.

There will be no financial impact for Idea for Action #3.3.

Idea for Action #3.4 – Creating a government funding data bank

Idea for Action – Community Request to the City of London

The London Community Recovery Network has recommended that the City of London work to create a data bank of government funding/granting opportunities available to London businesses, institutions, and non-profit organizations. The community has also recognized a need for promotion of opportunities through organizations like LEDC, the Small Business Centres and employment agencies in order to provide timely and actionable information to businesses and non-profits positioning for COVID-19 recovery.

Action Taken Since Receipt of Idea

A community inventory of government initiatives, including programs and funding, has already been undertaken by the private and non-profit sectors. The LEDC, London Chamber of Commerce, TechAlliance and the Small Business Centre have collaborated to create the [London Business COVID-19 Portal](#), which can be accessed through each of the organizations' websites. This portal provides information on the latest government recommendations and restrictions for business, as well as funding programs, relief measures, local supports, and additional resources for the business community.

Pillar Nonprofit Network hosts a similar service on their [website](#) for the latest government news and relief to nonprofits, social enterprises, businesses, and individuals. This can be found on the homepage for Pillar Nonprofit Network. The existing private and non-profit portals represent a comprehensive online inventory of COVID-19 relief measures from all level of government for the private sector to access.

Next Steps to Implement Idea for Action

Significant efforts by private and non-profit community partners have already culminated in exceptional resources for Londoners. After reviewing these resources, staff is recommending that the City's efforts focus on enhancing and coordinating information through these existing channels, including support to share these resources across the community. Civic Administration will continue to work closely with the partners hosting the databanks for both the private and nonprofit sectors. Individuals will be identified from the City to ensure that the databanks contain the most recent information received through the City's relationships. Staff will work in partnership with the managing organizations to share this information in real time.

There will be no financial impact for Idea for Action #3.4.

3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

On September 20, 2020, the 2020 Mid-Year Operating Budget Monitoring Report & COVID-19 Financial Impacts report was presented to SPPC. Civic Administration reported that after applying the Safe Restart Agreement funding and prior to the recommendations in the report, the Property Tax Supported Budget projected surplus would be \$15.3 million. One recommendation was, notwithstanding the Council approved Surplus/Deficit Policy, that Civic Administration be authorized to allocate \$5 million of the surplus to the Economic Development Reserve Fund to support social and economic recovery measures.

As the implementation plans for short term ideas for action from the Network that require municipal implementation are developed, Civic Administration will track the estimated financial impacts. If the total amount exceeds the \$5 million allocation, options for addressing the shortfall will be presented. As the individual implementation plans return to the appropriate standing committee for approval, recommendations to access funding to support the plans will be included.

Conclusion

This report was prepared as part of the City of London's response to the ideas for action identified by the London Community Recovery Network focused on accelerating community recovery from COVID-19 in the short term. If directed, Civic Administration

will begin the implementation of the plans listed herein to execute on these ideas for action.

The Network's idea generation and prioritization process has drawn on the insight and expertise of a wide variety of individuals and has led to valuable discussions related to recovery within our community. The prioritized list of community recovery ideas would not have been possible without the efforts and contributions made by a large number of business and community partners, Members of the London City Council, and all Service Areas across the City of London. The City of London would also like to thank local Members of Parliament and Members of Provincial Parliament for providing valuable insights to members throughout the course of this phase of the work.

Prepared and Submitted by: **Alan Dunbar, CPA, CGA, Manager, Financial Planning & Policy**

Recommended by: **Lynne Livingstone, City Manager**
Anna Lisa Barbon, CPA, CGA, Managing Director, Corporate Services and City Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer

cc. Members of the London Community Recovery Network
City of London Senior Leadership Team
Community Recovery Working Group