



Ms. Elizabeth Pelosa, Chair
Civic Works Committee
City of London
300 Dufferin Ave
London, ON N6B 1Z2

1 March 2021

Dear Ms Pelosa:

I am writing on behalf of United Way Elgin Middlesex and as a Co-lead of the Community Benefits Action Table with Inclusive Economy London and Region. I want to commend the City of London on moving forward a plan for Community Employment Benefits as part of upcoming infrastructure projects, I also want to highlight the growing local interest and support for this work. Outcomes achieved through community benefits agreements support strategic goals shared by the Council and United Way including reducing poverty, increasing access to affordable housing and increasing access to job opportunities for equity seeking populations.

Inclusive Economy London and Region is a network of organizations and community members who are organizing to activate community economic development practices that will address poverty reduction, social exclusion, and sustainability. We believe this work is an important part of our community's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and have made several submissions to the London Community Recovery Network including one on developing a Community Benefits Framework with the City of London and other local anchor Institutions. The London Community Recovery Network has positioned economic recovery side by side with social recovery and tools like Community Employment Benefits are a powerful means for our city to achieve both social and economic outcomes.

Inclusive Economy London formed in 2019, developed an Action Plan in 2020 - and in 2021 is implementing that plan. While there are over 30 organizations engaged with the network in various ways, the leadership team is made up of representatives from Pillar Non Profit Network, Goodwill, United Way Elgin Middlesex, the Sisters of St. Joseph, and the London Poverty Research Centre at King's.

Our most recent activity regarding community benefits started in January 2021 when we began to host a four conversation series with key stakeholders about community benefits agreements. The conversations have included representation from the employment sector, organized labour, the construction industry, advocates and other local organizations. The goal of these meetings is to develop a common local understanding of community benefit opportunities in the city and a stronger voice in our community to inform and support community benefits work moving forward.

This group represents a great cross section of stakeholders and reflects the types of actors who are part of Community Benefit Networks in other cities. We believe that this group has much to offer the future of community benefits in London including the Community Employment Benefits proposal being considered by the Civic Works committee.

What we have learned speaking with groups across the province and country, is that community benefits require external stakeholders to make them effective. That is to say that there should be a community group convened specifically to help inform and build capacity to implement community benefits agreements in the city and provide information about needs and opportunities as well as ongoing insight about evaluation and metrics of success.

United Way Elgin Middlesex
unitedwayem.ca

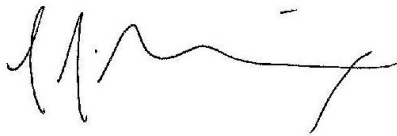
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The report being considered by the Civics Work committee on March 2, 2021 highlights that city staff has consulted with several groups in developing this strategy. United Way Elgin Middlesex and our Inclusive Economy London partners are thankful to have been part of that consultation and to have provided input in developing the CEB process and appendix that is part of this agenda item. We also acknowledge that consideration has been given to existing employment pathways and networks within London including the Job Developers Network.

Thank you to city staff and council members who have supported London's efforts to embed Community Employment Benefits in upcoming large infrastructure projects such as Rapid Transit. We are encouraged to see that there is a willingness to consider additional aspects of community benefits such as a city-wide Community Employment Benefits framework and social procurement. We look forward to continuing our work together, seeking additional projects where CEB could and should be incorporated. We encourage you to consider Inclusive Economy London and its members, including United Way Elgin Middlesex, as willing partners along with the growing base of organizations interested in this work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Middleton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sara Middleton
Director, Community Impact

cc: Kelly Ziegner, President & CEO, United Way Elgin Middlesex