

From: Lisa Fisher - Ferguson | Hangar9 <lisaf@hangar9.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, May 4, 2021 2:13 PM
To: Maton, Catherine <cmaton@london.ca>
Cc: Kate Langdon
Subject: [EXTERNAL] London's Downtown and Parking

My name is Kate Langdon, and I am a friend of Lisa Ferguson and devoted customer of Hangar 9. I understand that you are on London's downtown business association. As someone who has family in London and recently moved back permanently here, I would like to share with you some of my thoughts on parking and London's downtown.

I have experience living in a wide variety of cities here in North America and abroad – I have lived in Ottawa, Washington DC, and Basel, Switzerland – and I hope you find my perspective useful.

Having good options to park are a critical aspect to revitalizing London's downtown. While I appreciate the importance of rapid transit to reducing our impact on the environment, we would still need to have sufficient parking to support local businesses. Just as the reasons for coming downtown vary, people need to have a sufficient range of options in terms of transportation.

I frequent London's downtown because I believe deeply in supporting small local businesses and Canadian products – so much so that I always did my clothes shopping in London even when I lived in the US and in Europe.

I also believe a strong and vibrant downtown core is key for a safe city. I witnessed the revitalization of Washington DC over the last 30 years firsthand. When I arrived in the early 90s, Washington was the "murder capital" in the US. Part of that arose out of a hollowing out of the city's core. The return of the sports/events arena to the downtown was pivotal to its revitalization. It brought lots of restaurants and shops back to the city and made downtown a destination for a wide variety of people from all income levels. The availability of public transport was important but at the same time, the city planners also made sure to have sufficient and safe parking.

London also brought back its sports/events arena to downtown and the focus on revitalizing the downtown is something I very much support. By providing options for transport, including sufficient parking, it allows for diversity and inclusion, which helps spur creativity and vibrance. Again, I have firsthand experience. For people with disabilities -- like my older sister -- having parking is the only way they can experience London's downtown. Public transport is simply not an option for my sister given her mobility issues. Without parking I would not be able to bring her to some of our favorite shops and provide support to London's small businesses.

I also believe strongly that parking versus public transportation is not an "either/or" issue. In Basel, Switzerland, they had a fantastic tram system, but it also still had good parking opportunities and for good reasons. Have you ever had to take a large purchase (e.g., a wicker chair, enough meat and veg and beverages for a holiday meal, bedding plants and soil for your garden) on a tram? Again, I have firsthand experience not having access to a car while I lived there. I can assure you using a tram for those types of purchases is very tough. The bottom line is that if you want people to come downtown to buy things or partake in services, you need to give them options on how they can come.

I hope these thoughts are useful to you in your support of London's downtown businesses. If I could do anything further to help, please do not hesitate to ask.

Best regards,

Kate Langdon
94 Green Hedge Lane
London, ON N6H 5A6