

**From:** butler.chris

**Sent:** Wednesday, November 24, 2021 4:10 PM

**To:** SPPC <sppc@london.ca>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Input Submission - Added Agenda - SPPC Nov 29 Budget Meeting

Cathy / Heather – Please distribute this note as public input & “ Added Agenda “ for the upcoming November 29<sup>th</sup> – SPPC Budget meeting .

Councillor Pelosa ( Budget Chair ) / Mayor Holder / Council Members – This communication is limited to well less than the 5 minute max restriction and should be viewed as Public Input as the gallery @ City Hall is not yet open to the Public.

### Summary

I welcome the initiative & leadership of our Finance Team in mitigating / reducing our 2022 Tax Increase from the 3.8 % forecast to the recommended 2.8 % . I am both appalled and deeply concerned the forecast put forward of a 4.8 % increase in 2023 . This Council needs to take a very proactive partnership @ the City Manager and Finance Team to assure that this 4.5 % is mitigated back to a more reasonable 2.5 % well prior to handing off this responsible to a newly elected Council in late October 2022. If this takes bi- monthly meetings our a Special Committee , to plan for success , please consider this and implement this over the this December – January Budget period .

### Deeper Dive & Action Requested Please

Page 200 – Appendix C of the detailed Budget document highlights \$41.7 M in Capital Reserve Funds ( almost 10 % of all total Reserve Funds ) , as set aside for the Wonderland RD Expansion. This project was terminated in August – September 2021 by all Council Committees and any new initiative on a mix of transportation solutions on Wonderland will be and should be considered a new project @ new scope & objectives , a public meeting process with a likely outcome of 1.5 – 2.0 years to even come forward to Council . The current plan to “ wait for the next Budget Period in 2022” to review these funds is totally unacceptable. There is increasing distrust building in your taxpayers & your customers that there is anything close to a fair process currently in place @ our City Management & this Council with the repurposing of Reserve Funds. Example – the Ribbon on the Thames fund was just repurposed to Public Housing after cancellation 2 years ago and attending personally attending 3 Public Meetings. One Councillor needs to step up here and put forward a motion @ this Budget Meeting to return at minimum 50 % of the current Wonderland Rd Widening funds to taxpayers over a fair 5 year period starting in 2022 tax year. **Think of it this way** – If my Financial Planner repurposed sections of my RSP investments with the same standards this City & Council is applying – she would be charged , her license lifted and my funds returned to me.

### Budget Process & Councils Tool Bag Reco's

1. Increase the current annual target for the City of London annual contribution to “ Service Improvements ( Continuous Improvement Program )” from the \$1.2 M to at least \$2.4 ( 0.25 % annually of total OPS Budget ) . We have exceed our minimum target for 2 – 3 concurrent years, this target is far short of any annual Private Sector program ( usually 2.5 % to 5.0 % per year ) and is obsolete. The immediate impact of this would be a much broader participation level across the Operating Departments who currently seldom offer any new initiatives. I am also a LARGE SUPPORTER of steering up to 50 % of these improvements back to target & self fund the more Capital Intense improvements including technology leaps for cost reductions & future increase avoidance.
2. Immediately change the By – Law that requires our City Council to direct our City Manager on each and every Program Reduction ( often called Service Reduction )

when a OPS \$ Budget spending reduction is required to offset your continuous approval of more important or higher priority new programs . I have attended two(2) of these meetings and been sadly disappointed with the results and the inability of this Council to gain consensus on almost any item . This UNIQUE by-law seems to be shared only by the City of London and Calgary , and both these cities are testing taxpayers patience. Most major Cities In Ontario allow Council to set the tax increase target and the City Manager and their team respond @ the viable options to get there , leadership that is fully available @ our City of London Management team .

3. The by-law governing the Annual Allocation of New Assessment Growth ( \$ 11 M - \$13 M annually ) needs to be changed as follows to provide greater flexibility for Council & fairness – disclosure to tax payers

- Align the timing of this process with the Annual Budget update & public input & approval process. Currently this occurs without either a public meeting or even Council input with an annual report from the CFO marked report only. Even St. Thomas aligns this with the Public meeting process by bring forward the annual cut off date for New Assessment Value Growth . Most Ontario Councils also have a great deal more latitude to impact some of \$ allocation than you do .

- Under no circumstances should any funds be allocated from this process to an Operating Department that has not provided meaningful improvements in the “ Service Improvements Program “ for the past 2 years. Why reward past stagnant performance @ new Budget ?

- Per our London Plan we are starting to reach 38 % in-fill with rapidly increasing annual targets . There is a very strong argument building that we already have the close to full services allocated to serve this infill pretty much across the board. This opens up a huge opportunity for Council to allocate the \$ 2.5 - \$ 3.5 M annually currently applied to our tax levy to top up the never ending discretionary reserve funds allocated to developers for DC Programs like Brown Soil removal and waiving some Development Charges in approved incentive zones to be **funded perpetually** from this New Assessment Value Growth process. Growth pays for growth and our tax levy funding drops off. THIS IS NOT A RADICAL OPTION and is much fairer to tax payers .

Respectfully yours & THXS - Chris Butler – 863 Waterloo – Ward 6