



University Students' Council

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Dear His Worship and Councillors,

The University Students' Council (USC) at Western is an active member of our London community. For many years, we have consistently provided the student perspective on critical decisions made by the city council. Outlined below is our response to proposed amendments for the 2021 Municipal Budget Update, as well as further areas of improvement that are important to students.

Gender-Based Analysis

In 2020, the USC recommended that the city apply a Gender-Based Analysis approach when considering policy and investment options, that both manage the impact on the budget while supporting economic recovery in London. Furthermore, the USC is very pleased to see steps taken towards this approach through the new Environmental, Socio-economic Equity Impact, and Governance (ESG) Considerations. The inclusion of ESG considerations will allow councillors and community members to adopt a critical lens in thinking equitably when evaluating budget amendments and recommendations. It also allows for greater attention to be given to the intersectionalities of our community members.

The USC would like to see these ESG Considerations expanded to further build on gender-based analysis and considerations for the safety of women and girls. In the 2019 Student Voices on Sexual Violence Survey, 71.6% of respondents from Western University disclosed experiencing sexual harrassment.¹ Although some of these experiences occur on campus, others also occur off campus at bus stops, in public areas, and at bars.² This issue is not exclusive to students, but to the community as a whole. In the previous budget update, the only Strategic Area of Focus that did not receive additional investments in the 2020-2023 budget was "Creating a Safe London for Women and Girls" and there has been no change in the current budget update.³ Although we are glad to see advancements through the ESG

¹ Student Voices on Sexual Violence. (2019). Summary Report of the Student Voices on Sexual Violence Survey. Pg 13.

<https://files.ontario.ca/tcu-summary-report-student-voices-on-sexual-violence-survey-en-2019-03.pdf>

²Anova London. (2020). Safe Cities London Scoping Report. Pg 17.

<http://www.anovafuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Safe-Cities-London-Scoping-Study.pdf>

³City of London. (2020). Tax Supported Budget. Pg 30.

<https://london.ca/sites/default/files/2020-11/2020-2023%20MYB%20Document%20Property%20Tax%20-%20AS%20OF%20OCTOBER%2028.ah%20FINAL.pdf>

Considerations, we believe that the city can go further to bridge the gaps that women and girls are subject to in the community.

Recommendation: The City of London should continue to build on the ESG Considerations to further embed a Gender-Based Analysis lense into the city's future budget processes.

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is an issue that our students are very passionate about. Furthermore, the USC is pleased to see many budget updates regarding the city's sustainability goals. Specifically, we are in support of the proposed recommendation regarding the zero-emission bus implementation strategy. Nonetheless, we believe that more can be done in regard to waste diversion.

The 60% Waste Diversion Action Plan reflects strong support for the implementation of a Green Bin composting program.⁴ Students in particular have been especially eager to see a Green Bin composting program in the City's waste diversion plans. Organic waste diversion is an effective method for reducing landfill space and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. An organic waste program also presents the potential for job creation and can offer financial benefits. Furthermore, London is one of few major municipalities in Ontario that has yet to officially implement an organic waste program as mandated by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks in the 2018 Food and Organic Waste Policy Statement.⁵

The 2020-2023 Multi-Year budget initially allocated \$17.6 million to the 60% Waste Diversion Action Plan for the 4 year period.⁶ In the 2021 Property Tax, Water, Wastewater & Treatment multi-year budget amendments, the City of London decreased 2022 funding for the 60% Waste Diversion Action Plan by \$1.45 million, reducing the allocated funds from \$6.5 million to \$5.05 million.⁷ This is in addition to the 2021 decrease from \$3.9 million to \$1.6 million.

The USC recognizes the financial constraints that the City of London is facing and is concerned that the Green Bin composting program will not be implemented within the 2020-2023 multi-year budget cycle. We are also concerned that should costs associated with such a program increase, requiring more significant investments than anticipated, the program may not be implemented in future multi-year budget cycles. The USC affirms its support for a Green Bin

⁴ City of London. (2020). 60% Waste Diversion Action Plan.
<https://getinvolved.london.ca/whywasteresource>

⁵ Government of Ontario. (2018). Ontario's Food and Organic Waste Policy Statement. Pg 10.
https://files.ontario.ca/food_and_organic_waste_policy_statement.pdf

⁶ City of London (2020). Tax Supported Budget.
<https://london.ca/sites/default/files/2020-11/2020-2023%20MYB%20Document%20Property%20Tax%20-%20AS%20OF%20OCTOBER%2028.ah%20FINAL.pdf>

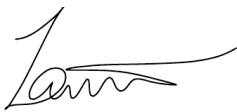
⁷ City of London. (2021). Property Tax, Water, Wastewater & Treatment Budgets. Pg 210-212
<https://london.ca/sites/default/files/2021-11/V6%202022%20Annual%20Budget%20Update%20AODA%20FINAL.pdf>

composting program and urges the City of London to begin the implementation process during this current budget cycle.

Recommendation: City council should adopt the recommended budget amendment regarding the zero-emission bus implementation strategy.

Recommendation: The City of London should return to its original 2020 funding and allocate \$6.5 million to the Green Bin Program.

With appreciation,



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President
Western University Students' Council



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