

My name is Cari Gammage and I represent no special interest group, own no property nor do I have any business that wishes to do business with the city.

I am, however, a citizen of London and have been for most of my life. I have watched the ebb and flow of this city and have many friends and acquaintances who own businesses and property here. Most of them given the impetus, would pack up their families and their businesses and move.

As a Londoner, I reject that. The potential of this city is great, and there is much love for our community. And, we as citizens must be the change managers of this city, the voice, the inspiration and the passion.

I am the little guy, the home owner, the family and the small business struggling to survive.

I have been recently to some very successful cities, some very large, some smaller than London. One of the common elements that I have observed that they have set a firm line around the city, forcing big business to do business within the city and not allowed them to create more and more sprawl to the outskirts and further decay in the core. These cities – Boston, Pittsburgh, even Stratford have clearly defined borders, for now and for the future, which allows families to prosper, small and large business to coexist, and urban revitalization to thrive.

Though in the short term, the increased tax base appears tantalizing, the long term cost of doing this business is problematic and costly. We have much to do to maintain the existing infrastructure of our borders today.

Retailers will not come, they will simply move from existing locations within London, leaving vast wastelands of retail space. Surely the ratio of population to existing retail space is at its max, and growth can easily be managed within our city boundary. In 1993 wasn't that the point of expanding our boundaries? And did we not do that to ensure sufficient land for decades to come? The city has grown, but not to the extent that warrants grinding up more farmland. I drive around the city and there is sufficient space to expand within the confines of London. It is my personal opinion is that maintaining the existing boundaries of the city will not constrain growth, rather, will ensure a successful city, vibrant and alive in all areas.

I believe that we need the intestinal fortitude to say that this city is not for sale to the highest bidder, and challenge special interest groups to work smarter and harder to make this city smart, sophisticated, competitive, inclusive healthy and innovative. Respectfully, I charge the people who run the city to do the right thing, make the hard decisions that can make London great now and for decades to come. We need to implement intelligent strategies to ensure business centric growth, neighborhoods where people want to live, not leave and small businesses that feel inspired to stay and expand, not motivated to pack up and go.

Certainly the city can find a good place to put the millions of dollars in additional infrastructure required to expand the city further. Perhaps the long awaited and much studied ring road – a real ring road. Or renovate, refurbish and where warranted, tear down and rebuild appropriately.

We should think of London as a miniskirt – small enough to keep interest but large enough to cover the subject.

Thank you.

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