

Report to Corporate Services Committee

To: Chair and Members
Corporate Services Committee

From: Patti McKague, Director, Strategic Communications and Government Relations

Subject: Strategic Advocacy Framework Annual Update

Date: July 25, 2022

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Director, Strategic Communications and Government Relations, and the concurrence of the City Manager, the Strategic Advocacy Framework Annual Update report BE RECEIVED for information.

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on projects that have been advanced as a result of intergovernmental advocacy in 2021-2022 through the City of London's Strategic Advocacy Framework. The Strategic Advocacy Framework, approved in May 2021, guides the City of London's advocacy in support of Strategic Plan priorities. The framework was developed to enhance the City's advocacy efforts by supporting enterprise-wide coordination and collaboration with community partners.

Overall, the approach underpinning the Strategic Advocacy Framework has driven substantial progress on the City's advocacy priorities. Status updates are provided for enterprise-wide projects advanced through the Strategic Advocacy Framework between June 2021 and June 2022, including completed advocacy projects that total more than \$120 million in federal and provincial funding.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

The City of London Strategic Advocacy Framework responds directly to Council's 2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan for the City of London objective to "Increase the effectiveness of London's strategic advocacy", which is included under the "Leading in Public Service" strategic area of focus.

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

Corporate Services Committee, May 10, 2021 meeting, Agenda Item # 2.4, City of London Strategic Advocacy Framework

<https://publondon.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=85155>

1.2 About the Strategic Advocacy Framework

The Government and External Relations office supports City of London priorities through partnerships with other levels of government and local, regional, and national stakeholders. This support includes identifying external opportunities, providing advice and information to support internal decision making, as well as the coordination of intergovernmental advocacy.

The Strategic Advocacy Framework was developed specifically to strengthen the City's intergovernmental advocacy, with commitments to greater transparency, collaboration,

and consistency. These values – along with a strategic, outcomes-focused approach to priority-setting – have delivered results. Many of London’s successes over the past year have come through partnerships with London champions that have amplified and extended London’s reach with decision makers at other levels of government.

The Strategic Advocacy Framework serves as a resource to the community. Within the framework, London’s organizations, anchor institutions, and businesses can view the advocacy priorities of the City of London. Armed with this shared understanding, the Strategic Advocacy Framework can – and has – led to collaboration and cooperation between community partners to achieve results for London.

Just as the Strategic Advocacy Framework approach has increased community partnerships in support of City-led projects, it has also guided advocacy support for community-led initiatives. Examples include the proposed Indigenous Housing Hub (led by Atlohsa Family Healing Services), and the Community Outreach and Support Team (COAST). These projects are led by community partners and have significant implications for the City’s strategic areas of focus within the Strategic Plan.

1.3 Strategic Advocacy Priorities

To firmly root advocacy planning in corporate priorities, the Strategic Advocacy Framework takes a consistent, process-based approach to implementing advocacy plans in support of Council’s Strategic Plan. The 2019-2023 Strategic Plan expected results identified in the Strategic Advocacy Framework include a range of municipal priorities, such as affordable housing, transportation, environmental sustainability, and economic development. The expected results are listed below, organized by Strategic Plan key areas of focus:

Strengthening Our Community:

- Increase affordable and quality housing options.
- Reduce the number of individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Support improved access to mental health and addictions services.
- Increase opportunities for individuals and families.
- Improve the health and well-being of Londoners.

Building a Sustainable City:

- Increase access to transportation options.
- Protect and enhance waterways, wetlands, and natural areas.

Growing Our Economy:

- Increase access employers have to the talent they require.
- Maintain foreign investment attraction, local retention, and growth and entrepreneurship support programs

In addition to the above listed key areas of focus, the Strategic Advocacy Framework supports alignment with London’s efforts to build a safe city for women and girls as well as the City’s commitment to tackle anti-racism and anti-oppression. As opportunities to support efforts in these areas arise, they are pursued in full through an enterprise-wide approach that includes strategic advocacy.

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

2.1 Progress Tracking in the Strategic Advocacy Framework

Strategic advocacy helps to deliver on the nine identified expected results through support for projects developed through enterprise-wide efforts from Civic Administration. In most cases, preparing for advocacy begins early in the project lifecycle, well before a specific request is to be delivered to other governments. Advocacy can be fluid, where

projects move between active advocacy and internal development as external/environmental factors change.

Advocacy projects in this report are organized into three broad categories: “Complete”; “Active”; and “In Development”. These categories are defined below.

Complete: The advocacy objective of a project has been successfully achieved.

Active: A project has an identified advocacy objective and advocacy planning and/or outreach is underway.

In Development: Civic Administration is developing or refining the project terms and identifying advocacy objective.

2.2 Project Identification in the Strategic Advocacy Framework

The City’s intergovernmental relationships are essential to providing high quality services and supports to Londoners. Transfer payments from other governments make up about one-quarter of the City’s annual budget.

Transfer payments between orders of government can be divided into two categories: administrative investments to support ongoing programs, and project-specific investments. The first category includes transfer payments from provincial and federal governments to the City to administer annual programs on behalf of another order of government. Examples include Ontario Works and homeless prevention programs. While intergovernmental partnerships are essential to both, the Strategic Advocacy Framework focuses on the second category of transfer payments. For these projects, advocacy is required to secure discrete investments to support new or existing services or infrastructure to Londoners. The Government and External Relations office provides support to Service Areas for ongoing programming. Reporting on these initiatives remains with the Service Area responsible.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic required enterprise-wide efforts to secure investments from other orders of government to protect vital local services. Over the last two years, collaborative advocacy approaches have been implemented to secure numerous rounds of Safe Restart Agreements, which has resulted in London’s success in maintaining services such as homeless prevention, housing, parks and recreation as well as many others. Since 2020, London has been active in both direct advocacy to other orders of government as well as in municipal sector advocacy to secure federal and provincial operating supports and temporary top-up funding as required.

Civic Administration works through an enterprise-wide approach to identify targeted advocacy projects to achieve the objectives outlined in numerous municipal plans and strategies. The Government and External Relations office works directly with Service Areas to support identifying and scoping investments, changes in policy and regulation, and other needs from other orders of government. Once advocacy needs are identified, projects are developed, and advocacy plans are created. Projects are in the process of being developed to support several significant plans and strategies, including the Core Area Action Plan, the 3,000 Affordable Housing Unit Plan, the Climate Emergency Action Plan, and the London Community Recovery Network, to name a few. Civic Administration collaborates not only on developing advocacy plans, but also on responding to shifts in the advocacy environment. Projects must often evolve and adapt to changes in priorities from other orders of government. The Strategic Advocacy Framework helps ensure London can remain nimble through the fluid nature of intergovernmental advocacy.

2.3 Strategic Advocacy Framework Annual Update 2021/22

The following charts provide project summaries and status updates on projects supported by Government and External Relations through the Strategic Advocacy Framework between June 2021 and June 2022. Note that status updates in this report refer only to the intergovernmental advocacy component of projects. Details regarding project design or implementation should be referred to the Service Area responsible.

Expected Outcome: Increase affordable and quality housing options	
PROJECT	ADVOCACY STATUS
122 Baseline Road 61-unit affordable housing project with an accelerated build using modular components.	COMPLETE Secured \$7.5 million through Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) and \$5.4 million through Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF).
Thompson Road 44-unit affordable housing project with an accelerated build using modular components.	COMPLETE Secured \$10.7 million through the expanded Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI).
Social Housing Regeneration Supporting repairs and upgrades of existing London Middlesex Community Housing stock.	COMPLETE Secured \$40 million through the federal Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Co-Investment Fund.
CMHC Co-Investment Fund 65-unit affordable housing apartment complex through PAM Gardens Non-Profit Housing.	COMPLETE Secured \$11.6 million through the federal Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Co-Investment Fund.
Sylvan Street 42-unit affordable housing project with an accelerated build using modular components.	ACTIVE Round 3 of the Rapid Housing Initiative was announced in federal Budget 2022. Intergovernmental advocacy is underway to identify and secure funding when program details are made available.
Education Act Policy re: Surplus Lands Provincial policy change to unlock provincial lands for affordable housing development	IN DEVELOPMENT No opportunity window has been identified; project advocacy plan is under reassessment.

Expected Outcome: Reduce the number of individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless	
PROJECT	ADVOCACY STATUS
Extending the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) Program Pandemic-linked funding to support additional demands on social safety net programs.	COMPLETE Secured a total of \$14.5 million through Phases 3 to 5 of the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF).
Additional Federal Supports for Homeless Prevention Federal supports to support homeless prevention services during the pandemic.	COMPLETE Secured additional one-time funding through Reaching Home program of \$4.2 million.
Indigenous Housing Hub A central component of the Giwetashkad Indigenous Homelessness Plan, which includes resting spaces and supportive housing components.	ACTIVE Advocacy objective has been identified. Federal Budget 2022 included new potential new funding envelopes and advocacy planning and outreach is underway.
Reaching Home - Indigenous Community Designation Request for London to be made eligible for federal funding allocated to select cities to support culturally appropriate services for Indigenous residents.	IN DEVELOPMENT No opportunity window has been identified; project advocacy plan under reassessment.

Expected Outcome: Increase opportunities for individuals and families	
PROJECT	ADVOCACY STATUS
Nshwaasnangong Family Centre Indigenous-led family and child care centre	COMPLETE Secured \$5.84 million in Provincial funding; centre opened September 2021
National Child Care Framework Working with municipal sector partners to encourage a Canada-Ontario agreement on child care.	COMPLETE Canada-Ontario agreement announced March 28, 2022.

Expected Outcome: Support improved access to mental health and addictions services.	
PROJECT	ADVOCACY STATUS
Supervised Consumption Site Request to Provincial government to support a permanent site on York St.	COMPLETE Capital funding request approved by Province in March 2022.
Community Stabilization Spaces Low-barrier support services for those in immediate mental health and addictions-related crises.	ACTIVE Advocacy objective has been identified. Advocacy planning and outreach underway with support from community partners.
Community Outreach and Support Team (COAST) Community partnership lead by London Police Service providing mental health/addictions crisis calls.	ACTIVE Advocacy objective has been identified. The City is currently supporting community-led advocacy planning and outreach.

Expected Outcome: Improve the health and well-being of Londoners.	
PROJECT	ADVOCACY STATUS
Southeast Community Centre Multipurpose community centre, arena, and library, providing services to Southeast London.	ACTIVE The federal Green and Inclusive Community Buildings program has been identified as a potential funding source. Advocacy planning and outreach is underway.

Expected Outcome: Increase access to transportation options.	
PROJECT	ADVOCACY STATUS
Expanded one-time investments in the Canada Community Building Fund Advocating for expanded investments under the Canada Community Building Fund to support transit and transportation expansion in London.	COMPLETE Federal Budget 2021 committed a one-time doubling of the Canada Community Building Fund, adding an additional \$23 million to support municipal infrastructure priorities.
Public Transit Infrastructure Stream Intake 3 Funding application for City of London transit/transit-supportive projects.	ACTIVE Outreach is in progress in support of the application submitted for projects approved by Council in January 2022.
Regional Transportation Conceptual Framework City-led proposal identifying opportunities for the provincial government to improve regional transit in Southwest Ontario.	ACTIVE Advocacy objective has been identified. The framework has been submitted to the Government of Ontario; advocacy planning and outreach underway.
Net-Zero Transit Fund Application Council commitment to apply to the federal Net-Zero Transit Fund application.	IN DEVELOPMENT Civic Administration is developing the project in partnership with the London Transit Commission and advocacy planning has commenced.
Public Transit Electrification	IN DEVELOPMENT

Exploring opportunities to transition London's transit fleet to electric/zero-emission vehicles.	Civic Administration is developing the project in partnership with the London Transit Commission and advocacy planning has commenced.
Expected Outcome: Protect and enhance waterways, wetlands, and natural areas.	
PROJECT	ADVOCACY STATUS
Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF) Funding application for City of London climate adaptation and mitigation projects.	ACTIVE Outreach is in progress in support of the City's application to the federal funding program.

Expected Outcome: Increase access employers have to the talent they require.	
PROJECT	ADVOCACY STATUS
Implementing a new Municipal Nominee Program Engaging the federal government on the design and implementation of a municipal nominee program to increase local opportunities to attract newcomers.	ACTIVE Advocacy objective has been identified. Government and External Relations is working with London's Newcomer Strategy members to execute the advocacy plan.
Employment for International Students Advocating for an expansion of pathways for international students and other temporary residents to obtain permanent residency.	ACTIVE Advocacy objective has been identified. Government and External Relations office is working with London's Newcomer Strategy members to execute the advocacy plan.
London Profile in Immigration Marketing Encouraging greater profile for the London Economic Region within all-of-government efforts to attract newcomers to Canada.	ACTIVE Advocacy objective has been identified. Government and External Relations office is working with London's Newcomer Strategy members to execute the advocacy plan.

Expected Outcome: Maintain foreign investment attraction, local retention, and growth and entrepreneurship support programs	
PROJECT	ADVOCACY STATUS
Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF) Funding application for City of London community projects.	COMPLETE Secured \$1.1 million in federal funding to support two community projects.
Tourism Relief Fund Funding application for City of London projects supporting local tourism initiatives.	COMPLETE Outreach is in progress in support of the City's application.

2.3 The Year Ahead - Next Steps for the Strategic Advocacy Framework

The Strategic Advocacy Framework was designed to be a “living” plan that can be refined and updated on an ongoing basis. In the first year of the framework, the Government and External Relations office has prioritized developing the inventory of advocacy projects, operationalizing the framework, and securing community partnerships to enhance advocacy around London's advocacy priorities.

For 2022/23, the Government and External Relations office will be devoting additional focus to developing outcomes-focused metrics to better evaluate the impact of advocacy efforts. Advocacy progress is difficult to measure granularly, as quantitative tracking (e.g., “number of meetings”, “number of public references”, etc.) provides only some insight into whether initiatives are progressing toward a desired outcome.

The Government and External Relations office will continue to work with all Service Areas to identify projects and approaches that build London's reputation as a creative and responsive partner in priority areas. London's reputation as a leading municipality on issues such as affordable housing and homeless prevention, anti-racism and anti-

oppression, and climate action have had a cascading effect in attracting further interest and support from other levels of government. Identifying targeted, measurable opportunities to enhance London's reputation in other areas is expected to drive similar success. In the year ahead, for example, strategic advocacy will be instrumental in driving a strong and inclusive recovery and renewal for a post-COVID London.

Finally, the Strategic Advocacy Framework priorities will be reviewed and updated in step with the next Council Strategic Plan. Updating intergovernmental advocacy priorities in parallel with the development of the next Strategic Plan will provide new opportunities to further strengthen the framework as a tool for delivering on London's priorities.

Conclusion

Strong partnerships across governments remain essential to achieving the City of London priorities, and the Strategic Advocacy Framework has proven to be a valuable tool in strengthening the City's intergovernmental relationships.

With the Strategic Advocacy Framework as a guide, the Government and External Relations office will continue to drive outcomes for London through enterprise-wide coordination and community collaboration in support of the City of London's Strategic Plan.

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