

June 8, 2023

Planning and Environment Committee
City of London
300 Dufferin Ave
London, ON N6A 4L9



To the Members of the Planning and Environment Committee,

I am writing this letter as the Chair of Mainstreet London, an organization dedicated to promoting a vibrant mix of history, commerce, residents, visitors, and unique experiences in the core of our City.

I wish to express our organization's strong support for the recommendations outlined in the report submitted by the Deputy City Manager, Scott Mathers, on the 5-Year Review of Community Improvement Plans and Financial Incentive Programs, particularly the recommendations under Section D – those related to the enhancement to, and creation of, financial incentives.

Mainstreet London was created in 2001 as a collaboration between the City of London and the London Downtown Business Association. Since 2012, the organization has been solely funded by the LDBA members and has continued to operate with limited resources to promote the Downtown as an economic driver of the City and key investment destination.

In recent years, the focus of re-development efforts has expanded, rightfully so, to the greater Core Area comprising three distinct areas: Downtown, Midtown, and Old East Village.

Mainstreet London is well structured to continue the successful work of last year's Core Area Vacancy Pilot Program with a targeted recruitment campaign to the Core Area with the CIP incentives and leveraging other financial incentives available last year through the My Main Street program and the Small Business Centre, as key tactics of any marketing campaign to both new and existing businesses and property owners. This campaign would be further enhanced with tactics recommended and currently being considered from the Core Area Vacancy Report. All programs and services will foster economic development activities that will promote investment and support projects that reflect our shared vision for our local neighbourhoods.

We have many talented organizations in our City (LEDC, Small Business Center, Downtown London BIA, and Old East Village BIA, Chamber of Commerce, Covent Garden Market, Tourism London, Film London, London Music Office) – which in partnership with a properly staffed and resourced Mainstreet London can foster the environment for investment for all Londoners. We will act as a catalyst, connector, and collaborative partner, working with a broad network of organizations and community stakeholders to encourage main street commerce.

A vibrant economic area will need to strike the symbiotic balance of residential needs and commercial amenities, both in regards to the day-time economy (retail, quick serve, lunch service) and the night-time economy (fine dining, culture, entertainment, arts, pubs and bars). As such we strongly caution against directing CIP funds towards any sole sector, neighbourhood, and/or planning district and instead recommend applying proportionately based on estimated impact on tax base growth.

We sincerely appreciate your attention to these recommendations, and we pledge our continued cooperation with the committee in meeting the multifaceted needs of our city.

Respectfully,

Andrew McClenaghan, Chair, Mainstreet London