We’re all in this together

Second Report from the Mayor’s Economic and Social Impact and Recovery Task Forces
8 May 2020

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Mayor’s Economic Impact and Recovery Task Force 11
Introduction

Less than two months ago, we began meeting to understand the economic and social impacts of COVID-19 on Londoners and to identify actions that could be taken to respond to the needs of Londoners. Thank you for making time to be part of these conversations to share your experience and insights.

This second report builds on the first report to the task forces, which was shared with City Council, civic administration, our local Members of Provincial Parliament and Members of Parliament. This second report tracks progress on ideas that were included in the first report and attempts to synthesize what we have heard since then during our calls.

We would like to acknowledge the many ways that Londoners are stepping up to lead during this crisis. We hear examples on every task force call of the many ways businesses, nonprofits, charities, governments and individuals are serving our community. A couple of examples: the United Way of Elgin Middlesex and the London Community Foundation, made possible by their donors, have made an initial round of grants, totalling over $300,000 to meet some of the urgent needs in our community. And the London Food Bank has stepped up to meet the food supply needs of agencies providing food to Londoners.

At a local level, the work of City Manager Lynne Livingstone, her senior leadership team, city employees and employees of our agencies, boards and commissions who deliver essential services has been exemplary. The leaders who serve on the community control group through our Emergency Operations Centre, which convenes daily to coordinate and manage the local response demonstrate calm, clear-headed decision making at a time when we need it most.

In April, to help property taxpayers facing cash flow problems, City Council approved a two-month deferral of roughly $130 million in property tax payments, spreading remaining preauthorized payments equally over the remaining months of the year. City Council approved nine additional relief measures in early May.

Your ongoing participation in these task forces, as detailed in the progress summary and additional ideas identified below, continues to inform not only action at the local level but also our advocacy to the provincial and federal governments.

We would like to thank our local MPPs and MPs for listening in to our task force discussions. We commend the provincial and federal governments for acting quickly in their own areas of jurisdiction and for collaborating on programs like commercial rent relief. As we said in our first report, this Team Canada approach that puts solving immediate problems ahead of jurisdictional wrangling is exactly what is needed right now.

Almost two months into this pandemic, the direct financial impact on the City of London is shaping up to be very significant. The initial estimates of between $23 and $33 million by the end of August 2020, put together by Treasurer Anna Lisa Barbon and her team, are
non-recoverable losses. And these numbers are after many measures to contain costs have already been taken. Cities throughout Canada, especially those that operate transit systems, are facing financial challenges of a similar magnitude, which is why the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and its Big City Mayors’ Caucus, supported by the Large Urban Mayors’ Caucus of Ontario, has asked the federal government for an emergency operating grant to municipalities of $10 billion. All governments, including provinces, will need to play a role, but national leadership is required to ensure that all communities are able to recover strongly.

The first part of this report tracks progress on the many ideas raised during our initial discussions. The second part includes new ideas raised since the first report.

Through our continued discussions, we will be focusing on both the impact during the shutdown but also how we recover as a community and come out of this pandemic stronger and more united.

Regards,

Ed Holder
Mayor

Jesse Helmer
Deputy Mayor

Progress so far

This chart tracks progress so far on the ideas that were outlined in our first report to the task forces. Thank you to City Council, Civic Administration and the Provincial and Federal governments for acting quickly on many of these ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Idea</th>
<th>Progress so far</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Meet the immediate needs of people who have suddenly lost their income</td>
<td>Existing Ontario Works clients, as of March 1, 2020, and all ODSP applicants and recipients will have CERB income treated as partially exempt i.e. $200 flat rate exemption + 50 per cent for each additional dollar. Measures will be put in place so no recipient will lose access to health benefits for March or subsequent benefit months as a result of receiving CERB.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Additional measures from the federal government: CERB expanded to cover people who have exhausted EI; people can earn up to $1,000 per month while receiving CERB; Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB) of $1,250 per month; temporary salary top-up for low-income essential workers earning less than $2,500 per month.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Support for renters and landlords</td>
<td>Deputy Mayor wrote to Minister of Municipal Affairs and Minister of Finance regarding a temporary rent supplement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>More substantial property tax relief</td>
<td>In addition to waiving penalty and interest for taxes due March 31 for 60 days, City Council approved deferral of the final property tax due dates by 60 days with payments now due August 31st, October 30th, and December 15th; each due date results in approximately $130 million of payments deferred.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mayor wrote to Minister of Finance about the business education property tax cuts to move to a uniform rate across the province, which were temporarily frozen with the 2012 Provincial budget and would lower business education property taxes on London-area businesses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ensure our frontline workers supporting our most vulnerable have the equipment they need</td>
<td>Agencies connected to MLHU and regional planning table for PPE distribution to non-hospital community agencies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Federal Reaching Home funding increase for London covers immediate PPE costs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Maximizing the experience and talents of our residents</td>
<td>Ontario has launched a Workforce Matching Portal to connect open positions with those with medical talent. Additional opportunities may exist to expand program to include foreign-trained students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Closing the digital divide for students and families</td>
<td>Covering cost of Connected for Success Internet for LMCH tenants for three months approved unanimously by City Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>The province has funded iPads with data plan being provided to students with support of Apple and Rogers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Clearly communicate programs in plain language</td>
<td>The City of London has developed a number of simple to understand tools for residents and businesses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Public health messaging for children and youth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ensuring women and kids at risk of domestic violence have a safe place to go</td>
<td>$50 million to support violence against women shelters and sexual assault centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Aligning deferrals of rent, utilities, property taxes, mortgage payments</td>
<td>Canada-Ontario Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance: 75% reduction in rent with 50% covered by provincial and federal government, 25% covered by landlords. Three months of April, May, June.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Minimizing layoffs by organizations without an immediate year-over-year revenue decrease</td>
<td>CEWS eligibility criteria adjusted by the federal government to accommodate other measures of revenue change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Increase wage subsidy from 10% to 75%</td>
<td>The federal government increased the proposed Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy from 10% to 75%.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Coordinating the delivery of fresh, healthy food to people who are quarantined or self-isolating</td>
<td>$25,000 for this initiative supported unanimously at City Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Meeting the basic needs of our most vulnerable</td>
<td>City staff and partnering agencies are exploring options for shower access.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Providing isolation spaces for people who are experiencing homelessness</td>
<td>City staff have worked with emergency shelters to move people into 171 rooms in motels/hotels. City staff and agencies have established and staffed isolation spaces for 26 people and monitoring spaces for 30 people.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Federal government approved Reaching Home funding by $157.5 million.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Increased support for crisis mental health and phone supports</td>
<td>The Province has invested $12 million in additional funding to expand online and virtual mental health supports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Benefits delivered through Ontario Works should be as flexible as possible</td>
<td>The Province of Ontario has approved one-time funding for COVID-related items at a maximum of $100 for individuals and $200 for families. This benefit is available to eligible recipients for 3 months. The City of London Social Services staff are using provincial guidelines to effectively administer this discretionary top-up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Where possible and safe, adapting essential public works projects to new mobility patterns</td>
<td>Essential construction projects awarded by council and are proceeding. Construction-related meetings for core-area projects moving online. City staff, consulting engineers and contractors exploring opportunities to compress projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>Province has allowed major essential public works projects to proceed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Front-load grants and transfer payments as much as possible</td>
<td>Shared with local MPs and MPPs. City grant funding flows once grant agreements are signed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>A local clearinghouse matching needs for essential equipment and supplies and manufacturing capabilities</td>
<td>The London Chamber of Commerce is connecting businesses that have clean rooms with the London Region Manufacturers’ Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Eliminate 30-day waiting period for work sharing program (already actioned)</td>
<td>30-day waiting period eliminated by the federal government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Support of postal workers and Canada Post</td>
<td>Shared with local MPs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Continuation of public funding for arts, cultural events and festivals</td>
<td>Major arts funding organizations like the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council are continuing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
that have been cancelled to support organizations even when events are cancelled.

24 Accelerating Core Area Action plan
City staff are supporting activations to improve streetscapes with closed businesses, such as murals on plywood boardings over businesses. Funding for supportive housing as part of the Core Area Action Plan, $4.5 million for Indwell's building at 744 Dundas St, was supported unanimously by City Council.

25 Lowering the peak load on essential services like grocery stores

26 Security staffing
Shared with local MPPs.

27 Emergency procurement processes
City procurement policy allows for procurement flexibility during an emergency.

28 Flexibility in loading/unloading and delivery times
Supported unanimously by City Council.

Recovery Ideas

29 Focused recovery plan for entertainment, culture, tourism and hospitality sector

30 Support for recovery of the airport

31 Closing the digital divide in infrastructure

32 Shovel-ready infrastructure stimulus projects
Shared with local MPs and MPPs and part of provincial and federal advocacy efforts.

Ideas for Action

We have organized the initial ideas proposed through the task force discussions into two time periods: during the shutdown, which started in mid-March; and during the recovery. These ideas are new ones raised since the first report to the task forces. The numbering continues from that report.

During the shutdown

33. Grants rather than loans or deferrals for commercial rent (already actioned)
The provincial and federal governments should provide grants rather than loans to tenants and landlords to lower the costs of commercial rent in a way that benefits both tenants and landlords. This has already been actioned by the provincial and federal government. A lower threshold of a 50% decline in revenue should be considered, as
many essential businesses that have adapted to new ways of working are not eligible for the current program.

34. Pooling resources or collaborating to allow smaller organizations access to EAP services like counselling

Considering the dramatic increase in the number of people who are working remotely and isolated at home, it would be helpful to have Employee Assistance Program services available to employees of smaller organizations that currently do not have access to such benefits, similar to how nonprofits in Ontario have worked together to provide pension benefits.

35. Insurance companies should reduce premiums to reflect changes in economic activity and mobility

The provincial government should encourage insurance companies to lower premiums for customers whose operations have been impacted by the pandemic and whose activities have changed significantly.

36. Consider distributing funds though existing organizations like Regional Innovation Centres

The provincial and federal governments should consider building on the established relationships between regional innovation centres and their client companies to flow funding to startups and scaleups that may not qualify for existing support programs.

37. Deliver food on a regular basis to agencies that provide food to people

As demand for food, both prepared meals in takeaway boxes and groceries, increases, organizations that have significant food supplies should deliver directly to agencies in need of food, including neighbourhood resource centres. The London Food Bank has stepped up to fill this need in the community.

38. Maximize number of people receiving support through discretionary benefits

City staff should make sure eligible recipients are aware of and are maximizing their discretionary benefits.

39. Supporting physical distancing by people who are living unsheltered

People who are experiencing homelessness and are living unsheltered face many barriers in practicing physical distancing. Efforts to create spaces for people in motel
rooms have been excellent, but for people who remain on the street, all city services and agencies should be communicating physical distancing measures in effective ways.

40. Communicate government programs via widely available print publications that are delivered
   The pandemic has revealed the extent of the digital divide in London. Governments at all levels should communicate key information in print publications that are delivered to people’s homes.

41. Continuing transit service to make sure people can continue to move around the city for essential trips
   Maintaining transit service is critical for essential workers at hospitals, grocery stores and other essential workplaces and for many people who do not have access to a car. Reductions in existing transit service have already put cost pressures on individuals and organizations. Maintaining a basic minimum transit service throughout the city is very important for essential workers and people who have the fewest mobility options.

42. Significant increases in funding for mental health for children and youth
   The isolation arising from physical distancing measures is worsening people’s mental health. The pre-existing issues facing children and youth in accessing mental health care, especially psychotherapy, are being made worse. The provincial government should significantly increase funding to make it possible to hire more people who are trained to provide psychotherapy to children and youth. The [CMHO’s pre-budget submission for 2020](https://www.cmho.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Pre-Budget-Submission-2020.pdf) provides a good roadmap.

43. Clarify how psychotherapists can provide emergency counselling
   Regulatory colleges should clarify virtual practice standards for psychotherapists and how they can safely provide in-person counselling during a public health emergency.

44. Broaden distribution of comfort stations to include Hamilton Road
   The 26 comfort stations located throughout the core are very helpful. A comfort station close to Safe Space would help to meet the needs of people in that part of the city.

45. Providing blankets to agencies working with people experiencing homelessness
   The cool weather is increasing demand for blankets but many agencies are in short supply. Connecting with a supply of blankets from Goodwill Industries would help to meet this need for people who are living unsheltered.
46. **Expand the number of monthly rent supplements**

   To help make more rental units affordable, the city could expand its existing rent supplement program. The Ontario-Canada Housing Benefit may also meet this need.

47. **Creating more space to provide shelter**

   The initial work by city staff and emergency shelter providers to create spaces in motels to support isolation and physical distancing is excellent. But there are still many people living unsheltered. The city and agency partners should look to create additional spaces with staffing to support the people staying there.

48. **Connecting faith communities to support service agencies**

   Many faith communities are looking for opportunities to serve the community, but in-person volunteering has been disrupted by the pandemic. There is an opportunity to match faith communities with community organizations that have identified needs for volunteers. Faith communities are organizing a London interfaith service in May.

49. **Providing opportunities for public participation in committee meetings**

   For committees like the planning and environment committee, which often includes public participation meetings, it is important that Londoners are able to participate, ask questions and provide their feedback on land-use planning issues, even if these committee meetings are held virtually rather than in person.

50. **Supporting the specific needs of international students**

   Hundreds of international students at Western, Huron, Brescia, King’s and Fanshawe College have completed their academic terms but face unexpected and difficult circumstances. Many are not eligible for pandemic-related emergency benefits. The federal government’s decision to allow international students to work more hours than usually allowed is a good step forward, but all levels of government should work together and with our postsecondary institutions to ensure that the basic needs of international students are met.

**During the recovery**

51. **Rapid shift to office employees working remotely should be considered in long-term planning**

   Many large employers of office workers have moved upwards of 90% of their employees to work from home. Although this level of working at home is not seen as sustainable, or even desirable from a productivity standpoint, the rapid change has shown how it can be
done and the future for many office workers will likely include more hours worked at home than was the case at the beginning of 2020. Heading into the recovery, long-term plans should consider what a future with more hours worked at home would mean for office space needs and peak congestion of the transportation network.

52. Consider waiving or deferring approved increases in building permit fees and development charges for 2021

Developers and buildings of residential, commercial and institutional buildings are facing significant financial challenges because of the shutdown of many parts of the economy. They have requested consideration of deferring planned increases in planning and development fees and development charges, and/or flexibility on the timing of paying these fees and charges.

53. Sharing best practices for minimizing risks in different kinds of workplaces

Returning to work with additional public health precautions will be different for different kinds of organizations. Rapidly and clearly sharing best practices and evidence-informed guidelines will be essential in supporting recovery.

54. Increased funding for mental health phone and virtual supports during recovery period

The mental health impacts of isolation are likely to continue well into the recovery period. Funding to support increased levels of supports should also continue throughout the recovery period.
# Appendix A: List of Task Force Members

## Mayor’s Economic Impact and Recovery Task Force

The membership of the task force is evolving. If you are interested in being part of the task force, or have ideas for consideration, please email [mayor@london.ca](mailto:mayor@london.ca).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company/Entity</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3M Canada</td>
<td>London Economic Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argyle BIA</td>
<td>London Health Sciences Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avison Young</td>
<td>London Homebuilders’ Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better Business Bureau</td>
<td>London International Airport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bluestone Properties</td>
<td>London Regional Manufacturers Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada Life</td>
<td>Media Sonar</td>
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<td>Diamond Aircraft</td>
<td>Nestle Canada</td>
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<td>Digital Echidna</td>
<td>Old East Village BIA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital Extremes</td>
<td>Old Oak Properties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downtown London</td>
<td>Pathways</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drewlo Properties</td>
<td>Paystone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ealing Pharmacy</td>
<td>Pillar Nonprofit Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce</td>
<td>RBC</td>
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<td>Development and Planning Board</td>
<td>RBC Place London</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fanshawe College</td>
<td>Sifton Properties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farhi Developments</td>
<td>Small Business Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gateway Casinos</td>
<td>St. Joseph’s Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDLS-Canada</td>
<td>Start.ca</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goodlife Fitness</td>
<td>Sterling Marking Products Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamilton Road BIA</td>
<td>Sun Life Financial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hyde Park BIA</td>
<td>Sunfest</td>
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<tr>
<td>InfoTech Research Group</td>
<td>TD Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>Libro Credit Union</td>
<td>TechAlliance</td>
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<td>Liuna 1059</td>
<td>Tourism London</td>
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<tr>
<td>London District Construction Association</td>
<td>Tricar Developments</td>
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<tr>
<td>London and District Heavy Construction Association</td>
<td>Trillium Manufacturing Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>London Arts Council</td>
<td>Western Fair District</td>
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<tr>
<td>London Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Western University</td>
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<tr>
<td>London Development Institute</td>
<td>York Developments</td>
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We want to recognize all of the City Councillors as well as Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks Jeff Yurek (Elgin—Middlesex—London), MPPs Teresa Armstrong (London—Fanshawe), Terence Kernaghan (London North Centre) and Peggy Sattler (London West), and MPs Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre), Parliamentary Secretary Kate Young (London West), Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London) and Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe), who have listened in to task force discussions.
Mayor’s Social Impact and Recovery Task Force

The membership of the task force is evolving. If you are interested in being part of the task force, or have ideas for consideration, please email mayor@london.ca.

519 Pursuit
Across Languages
Anova
Ark Aid Street Mission
Atlohsa Family Healing Services
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Boys and Girls Club
Centre of Hope
Centre for Research on Health Equity and Social Inclusion
Children’s Aid Society of London and Middlesex
CMHA Middlesex
Cross Cultural Learner Centre
Crouch Neighbourhood Resource Centre
CSC Providence
CSC Viamonde
Culinary Foundation
Fanshawe College
Glen Cairn Community Resource Centre
Goodwill Industries
Health Services for South West
Life*Spin
London Abused Women’s Centre
London Cares
London Community Foundation
London District Catholic School Board
London Food Bank
London Homeless Coalition
London Intercommunity Health Centre
London Middlesex Community Housing
London Public Library
London Youth Advisory Council
LUSO Community Services
Meals on Wheels
Middlesex County
Middlesex London Health Unit
Neighbourhood Legal Services
Ontario Student Nutrition Program
Pathways
Pillar Nonprofit Network
Safe Space London
Sisters of St. Joseph
South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre
Thames Valley District School Board
United Sikhs
United Way
Youth for Christ
Youth Opportunities Unlimited

We want to recognize all of the City Councillors as well as Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks Jeff Yurek (Elgin—Middlesex—London), MPPs Teresa Armstrong (London—Fanshawe), Terence Kernaghan (London North Centre) and Peggy Sattler (London West), and MPs Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London), Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe), Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre) and Parliamentary Secretary Kate Young (London West), who have listened in to task force discussions.