



February 8, 2023

London City Council

300 Dufferin Avenue

London, ON N6B 1Z2

Mr. Mayor and City Councillors, thank you for this opportunity to comment on your draft Strategic Plan. On behalf of Pillar Nonprofit Network, congratulations on the progress you've made so far.

Pillar Nonprofit is a member organization that supports more than 600 non-profits and social enterprises who are invested in positive community impact. Pillar strengthens individuals and organizations through professional development, knowledge-sharing and advocacy, and by facilitating collaboration through networking and partnership. Non-profits make up the core of our membership and, as you know, play a crucial role in London's continued recovery and growth.

First of all, thank you for giving a place of prominence to *Reconciliation, Equity and Inclusion* as your first Strategic Area of Focus and especially for your acknowledgement of the 13 municipal-focused Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action.

Secondly, we are very supportive of the presentation last week by London Chamber of Commerce CEO, Graham Henderson. Recognition of culture and the creative arts in your Strategic Plan signals that London is a place where the arts and cultural workers can thrive in order to incubate new ideas which in turn enrich our community.

I'm here before you today to make some modest suggestions on behalf of Pillar's members and the communities they serve, as well as the broader nonprofit sector.

Proposed amendment #1:

The Tim Horton's Brier, taking place right now in London, is a great opportunity to remind you of London's rich history of volunteerism. Hosting premium events like the Brier, the Junos, and the Memorial Cup wouldn't be possible without the enthusiasm of Londoners willing to share their time and talent. Indeed, Tourism London will tell you that the unparalleled reputation of London volunteers gives them a distinct advantage when bidding on these kinds of events.



We know that Londoners want to get involved, but we also know that the local infrastructure supporting volunteers was seriously weakened by the pandemic, especially for smaller nonprofits. We think the City has a role to play in supporting volunteerism in our community.

In Strategic Area of Focus #3 - **Wellbeing and Safety**, under Expected Result 1.2 - *Londoners have a strong sense of belonging and sense of place* - we propose the addition of Strategy:

- e) *Collaborate with volunteer-involved organizations to build on London's history of individual and corporate volunteerism.*

Proposed amendment #2:

We appreciate that nonprofits are included in Focus area #4 - **Economic Growth, Culture and Prosperity**, under expected Result 1.1 – *Small and growing businesses, entrepreneurs and non-profits are supported to be successful* – but we note that there are no specific measures targeted to supporting nonprofits among the draft strategies.

In an era of rapidly rising costs and shrinking resources, the demand for nonprofit services is greater than ever. Nonprofits have been ready and able partners to the municipal and business sectors in good times and in bad. Therefore, we propose four additional strategies to strengthen London's nonprofit sector so that, together, we can continue to meet the challenges facing our community:

- c) *Collaborate with nonprofits and other stakeholders to develop a local workforce strategy.*
- d) *Adjust the Community Grants Program to allocate more funding towards core operating expenses.*
- e) *Advocate to other levels of government to address the root causes that drive the demand for nonprofit services.*
- f) *Collaborate with nonprofit organizations and businesses to re-boot and boost local volunteering.*

We have often said that full economic recovery will not be possible without social recovery happening in parallel, and we applaud the City's recent work in recognizing how these issues are connected through the whole-of-community systems response to the homelessness crisis.



We offer these ideas for your consideration and look forward to future opportunities to work with the City for a better London for all.

Kindly,

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