

London, Ontario

# Building. Growing. Leading.

Unlocking the full potential of mid-sized cities



Pre-Budget Submission to the  
Government of Canada

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## London is a leader.

London stands out by combining access to large export markets, a skilled workforce, and first-class facilities, with greater affordability and a strong sense of community. Mid-sized cities like London have the potential to raise the quality of life for entire regions through exceptional social and economic productivity.

London is the economic, social, and cultural centre of Southwest Ontario, a region of mid-sized cities. We recognize that our success as a city is inextricably linked to the success of our region. In the same way, the success of our whole region depends on the success of our cities.

London leads with innovative social programs, a transformative transit plan, and an outward-looking approach. By building a stronger city, we are building a stronger region, province, and country.



London's work is driven by the four priorities laid out in our Strategic Plan:

- **Strengthening our Communities**
- **Building a Sustainable City**
- **Growing our Economy**
- **Leading in Public Service**

These pillars drive our work as a city and as a leader in Southwest Ontario. These are the key planks shaping the vision of London as "A leader in commerce, culture, and innovation — our region's connection to the world."

London is planning for the future of our city and our region, and we have the opportunity now to help ensure that future through investments in three key areas:

- **Connecting our neighbourhoods with Rapid Transit**
- **Investing in core infrastructure priorities that will improve lives for generations**
- **Ensuring safe, affordable housing and ending chronic homelessness**

By combining the right investments at the right time, our governments can work together to ensure London can continue to serve and grow as a leader in commerce, culture, and innovation.



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## Rapid Transit

Shift – London’s Rapid Transit Initiative – will provide the foundation of our transit and transportation system. Shift will create jobs, grow our economy, support vibrant neighbourhoods, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Rapid transit is a natural evolution of the transit system in London. The London Transit Commission provides more than 23 million trips per year, but is unable to keep up with present demand. Shift will support London’s transit needs now and in the future. Over the next 20 years, London will continue to grow by an estimated 77,000 new residents and 43,000 more jobs. That kind of growth can’t be supported by our current transit infrastructure.

Since the Shift Rapid Transit process officially began in 2015, London hasn’t stopped talking about Rapid Transit. We have engaged with over 15,000 Londoners on this city-building priority. We have received dozens of letters of support from prominent community organizations. Our project is well regarded and London’s commitment to public consultation has delivered a strong commitment by Council to move forward with Shift.

Rapid Transit will unlock London’s full potential. It will connect our world-class education and healthcare institutions with our award-winning neighbourhoods and employers.

Our full Bus Rapid Transit system will provide reliable, affordable transportation enabling all Londoners to access fundamental needs like employment, housing, and social supports. It will also provide enhanced accessibility, and a fully accessible transit system means no one is left out as a result of limited access to suitable transportation.

The City of London has committed \$130 million toward Shift and is seeking the remaining \$370 million through federal and provincial government partners (for a total future project value of \$500 million).

With the updated business case and municipal funding allocated, now is the time for action.

**London is seeking a \$370 million commitment from the provincial and federal governments. We are ready.**



## Facts:

- Bus Rapid Transit will reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions by about 233,000 tonnes over 30 years.
- Bus Rapid Transit will reduce road expansion projects by around \$290 million over 20 years.
- Bus Rapid Transit will add quality jobs and generate about 4,400 person-years of employment in construction.
- Bus Rapid Transit will create \$724 million in transportation, environmental and economic benefits over the project lifespan.



# Homeless Prevention



The City of London continues to lead the way on innovative community partnerships working to end homelessness. Leveraging the existing strengths of our community organizations is a key element of London's plan to solve homelessness through a collaborative, principled Housing First/Housing Stability approach.

## Local initiatives include:

- **Street Level Women at Risk**, a collaborative of 24 diverse organizations providing rapid response, housing with intensive in-home support and a health, wellbeing, and community belonging component for street-involved sex workers.
- **London CAREs**, providing outreach and a housing stability program including a dedicated response to local veterans experiencing chronic and persistent homelessness based on a highly collaborative community-based approach.
- **The Court Order to Reside Pilot Project**, As a result of the evaluation the 20 year practice of providing emergency shelter to individuals placed on a Judicial Interim Release Order has ended. Instead, a broader Justice to Home response prevents individuals from being ordered into homelessness aimed at improving health outcomes and decreasing recidivism.

London has a supportive partner in the federal government. Increases to the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) and support for enumeration events have helped improve capacity and provided concrete data to strengthen London's homeless prevention efforts.

As the Homelessness Partnering Strategy is reviewed, London encourages the federal government to commit to increasing the total funding allocated to the HPS. Mid-sized cities like London needs sufficient resources to turn the tide for vulnerable Canadians.

Increasing the overall capacity of the HPS will ensure that all communities in need receive support to meaningfully address and solve homelessness and avoid taking funds away from cities who rely on existing funding.

**London encourages the federal government to increase the total funding allocated to the Homeless Partnering Strategy.**



## Social and Affordable Housing

Canada's housing crisis is a national problem weighing heavily on cities. In London, nearly 3,200 households are currently on the waitlist for social and affordable housing, and countless more are living in housing that is not safe, suitable, or secure.

Compounding the issue, London has seen housing prices increase at unprecedented rates, with detached home prices increasing by over 20% in 2017 alone. Demand for housing outweighs supply at all income levels, which has the most profound impact on low-income Londoners. Vacancy rates for one bedroom units in the city are as low as 1%.

As the city at the centre of the Southwestern Ontario region, London must provide supports well beyond just those required by the residents living within the city limits. Demand for social and affordable housing has never been higher, and London's existing housing is in jeopardy.

The majority of the city's housing stock was built around the same time in the 1950's and 1960's, and many building systems are coming to the end of their lifecycle. Although buildings are in fair condition today, in five years' time there is a forecast \$225M deficit for maintenance, repairs, and replacement of City-owned affordable and social housing properties alone.

To begin addressing the affordable and social housing maintenance deficit, mid-sized cities like London need predictable, flexible funding that allows for long-term planning and meaningful progress on capital renewal.

**The City of London is seeking a 10 year, \$20 million investment from the federal government, over and above existing funding.**





## Core Infrastructure

There is no greater influence on the way Canadians interact with their communities than public infrastructure. The way we travel, the water we drink, and the spaces where we connect have a profound impact on every aspect of our lives.

Smart investments in public infrastructure drive economic growth, improve social inclusion and enhance quality of life. Across Canada, local governments own almost 60% of all public infrastructure, and municipalities experience the community impacts and benefits first-hand.

The federal government is taking the right approach by investing in public infrastructure, and the City of London wants to ensure these investments lead to meaningful results. We're ready for the next phase of the federal government's plan, with projects that will impact Canadians for generations to come.

### Public Transit Infrastructure Fund

The City of London is excited for the transformative public transit improvements that will be made possible by the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund. This funding will enable the city to undertake significant improvements that will support the implementation of Shift Rapid Transit and permanently change the way Londoners get around, like the Adelaide Street grade separation.

The Adelaide Street rail crossing is a significant source of congestion in London. Over 25,000 vehicles per day cross the Canadian Pacific Rail (CPR) tracks on Adelaide. Adelaide is a major north-south road corridor through the city. Immediately adjacent to the street is a busy rail yard, which is an important strategic part of CPR's rail network, marking the midpoint between Toronto and the US border crossing. As a result of shunting and the high volume of trains using the rail yard, the Adelaide Street rail crossing suffers an average of 126 minutes of delays every single day.

Addressing the Adelaide Street grade separation would support London's economic, social, and environmental wellbeing. Reliable transportation down one of London's busiest corridors would make more efficient use of infrastructure, reduce traffic congestion and GHG emissions, support a multi-modal transportation network including Rapid Transit, and enable greater population density.

## Green Infrastructure Fund

London is known as The Forest City, and protecting our environment through greater sustainability is one of the City's top concerns. The Green Infrastructure Fund will unlock opportunities for London to secure a healthy, thriving community for future generations. From green energy production, to mitigating the effects of climate change, London is building a more sustainable and resilient city.

One element of London's plan has particularly wide-reaching, regional implications: Our Domestic Action Plan (DAP) for reducing phosphorus in the Thames River.

The Canada-Ontario Action Plan for Lake Erie has set important targets, including a 40% reduction in spring loads of total phosphorus and soluble reactive phosphorus for priority tributaries by 2025, in hopes of improving the health of Lake Erie. London is committed to doing our part to ensuring healthy waterways and preventing toxic algae blooms in the Great Lakes.

Algae blooms that result from phosphorus in agricultural runoff and treated wastewater effluent have a devastating impact on the water supply of millions of people in Ontario and the United States. In 2014, 500,000 people in Toledo, Ohio were without water as a result of an algae bloom in the lake, and without a serious, coordinated effort, the problems will only get worse.

As a result of the enormous scale and widespread impacts of the phosphorus issue, federal and provincial governments must work together with London and the region to fund solutions as a provincial initiative under the Green Infrastructure Fund.



## Community, Culture and Recreation Fund

London is a fast-growing market for recreational and cultural activities. Our city is establishing itself as a destination for major events from sports (2013 World Figure Skating Championships), music (2017 Canadian Country Music Awards), and beyond. London is submitting a bid to host the 2019 Juno Awards, which will continue to build our reputation as a major cultural destination.

The Community, Culture and Recreation Fund represents an exciting opportunity, and London is ready to invest in local culture and inclusive communities through important projects like the Thames Valley Parkway North Branch connection.

The Thames Valley Parkway (TVP), the City's primary recreational pathway system, is 42km long and runs along all three branches of the Thames River. The TVP is envisioned as "London's most important natural, cultural, recreational and aesthetic resource", and is a central component of London's growing active transportation network.

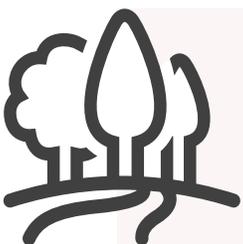
The Community, Culture and Recreation Fund will help address one of the few remaining gaps in the TVP, promoting vibrant, and connected neighbourhoods, while enhancing convenient and connected mobility choices.

The current gap in the TVP between Richmond and Adelaide Street spans only 850 linear meters but results in Londoners having to navigate over 2.5km of municipal streets. While this significant gap impacts users from the entire City, its greatest impact is felt by the 50,000 residents living in North-East London who have currently have limited means of accessing the TVP in a safe and functional way.

Ensuring all of London's communities are connected, accessible, and attractive is just one way that London is building a more vibrant city. We look forward to bringing this and other projects to life through our partnerships with the federal and provincial governments and the Community, Culture and Recreation Fund.

## Moving Forward

The potential projects London has identified are all important to the vitality, sustainability, and economic future of our city, and there is not a moment to waste. London encourages our federal and provincial partners to move quickly to establish agreements and program guidelines that will allow work to begin in the 2018 construction season, ensuring the benefits of these important investments are available as soon as possible.



**The City of London encourages the federal government to complete the necessary program design to allow cities to begin work on critical infrastructure priorities in the 2018 construction season.**



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