



# REPORT TO THE **COMMUNITY**

2020



**London**  
CANADA

# INTRODUCTION



In April 2019, London City Council approved their 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. This plan includes a vision for London as, “A leader in commerce, culture, and innovation - our region’s connection to the World.” Council has committed to focus on Strengthening our Community, Building a Sustainable City, Growing our Economy, Creating a Safe London for Women and Girls, and Leading in Public Service. The specific outcomes, expected results and strategies that Council and Civic Administration will deliver on together are outlined in the Strategic Plan.

The City of London is committed to reporting on progress towards implementing the Strategic Plan on an annual basis. This Report to the Community highlights a number of accomplishments over the past year.



## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

On behalf of London City Council, I am proud to present our 2020 Report to the Community.

Last year, following a period of extensive and robust public consultation, Council approved a thorough and thoughtful strategic plan meant to guide our work for the duration of our four year term. We have committed to Strengthening our Community, Building a Sustainable City, Growing our Economy, Creating a Safe London for Women and Girls, and Leading in Public Service.

While the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted and altered almost every aspect of our lives, it has not shaken the City of London's commitment to our strategic plan. In fact, it has served as an invaluable resource and guide to ensure our focus remains fixed on areas that matter the most, especially at a time of great change and uncertainty.

Since the pandemic's onset, we have provided numerous supports for individuals, families, and businesses. The deferral of 2020 property tax installments along with a rent deferral program for tenants of City-owned properties received unanimous support from Council, while our Back to Business action team and intake portal assisted numerous businesses, ensuring a rapid and responsible re-opening as they emerged from provincially-mandated lockdowns. As a result of these, and other actions – including the launch of the London Community Recovery Network – our local economy has recovered at a much faster rate than almost any other community in southern Ontario.

The City of London also acted, very early in the pandemic, to protect and support our most vulnerable. Among other examples, more than 150 people have been supported in temporary transitional housing using hotels, close to 300 vulnerable Londoners are being supported monthly with their rent at an average of \$550 per month, and we've had no community spread of COVID through vulnerable populations.

In addition to COVID-19, the City of London recognizes there are other curves that must also be flattened – namely racism and oppression, unsafe spaces for women and girls, and climate change. We fully appreciate that our work in these areas is far from finished, but it's also important to acknowledge progress as advances are made, and there is much of that to document and celebrate as part of this report.

This is a year each of us will never forget. At times, it has been challenging, confusing, and frustrating. It has also been rewarding, encouraging, and inspiring. Through it all, and in spite of the pandemic, City Council and City of London staff have continued to work – with great determination and enthusiasm – on our key strategic priorities, and it is in that same spirit we present to you our 2020 Report to the Community.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Ed Holder'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Ed Holder  
*Mayor, City of London*



# STRENGTHENING our Community

**Londoners have access to the supports they need to be successful**

**Londoners are engaged and have a sense of belonging in their neighbourhoods and community**

**Londoners have access to the services and supports that promote well-being, health, and safety in their neighbourhoods and across the city**

**London's neighbourhoods have a strong character and sense of place**

## LONDONERS HAVE ACCESS TO THE SUPPORTS THEY NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL

- Over 100 isolated older adults were connected to community supports and services through the distribution of resource packages, and over 40 older adults received one-on-one social support and companionship through the “Leisure Buddies” program.
- 72 supportive housing units were created at 744 Dundas Street, in partnership with community partners.
- Through both the Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan and the Affordable Housing Loan Program in the Multi-Year Budget; the City has been able to financially assist in the development and retention of affordable housing units.
- Shelter diversion rates have improved significantly (20-30% increase) since the City implemented a shelter diversion program in January, 2020.

- Child and Youth Network partners supported Western University Students' Council to create and deliver 1,000 basic needs kits to local community centres.
- The London Public Library hosted a Truth and Reconciliation Speaker Series, aimed at strengthening relationships, deepening understanding and prompting action towards reconciliation and resolution of critical Indigenous and Canadian issues.
- Built for Zero Canada recognized London as the first community in Canada to achieve a Veteran Quality By-Name List, a real-time list of all veterans experiencing homelessness in the community. The City of London Homeless Prevention and Housing team has continued to respond to the specific housing needs of veterans on the By-Name list and has reduced the number of veterans experiencing homelessness by over 75%.
- Nshwaasnangong, London's first Indigenous-led Child Care and Family Centre, is under construction and is scheduled to open in 2021.

## LONDONERS ARE ENGAGED AND HAVE A SENSE OF BELONGING IN THEIR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITY

- Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (CDIS) volunteers worked in partnership with Rogers TV to create a 7 part series on diversity and inclusion in London.
- The City participated in and supported the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Place Matters Conference, where over 200 registrants met virtually to explore creating a strong sense of place for all Londoners.
- The City, Western University, University Students' Council and Fanshawe College collaborated to develop communications about unsanctioned street gatherings and COVID-19 community-focused communications.

## LONDONERS HAVE ACCESS TO THE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS THAT PROMOTE WELL-BEING, HEALTH, AND SAFETY IN THEIR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ACROSS THE CITY

- The Dundas Place Fieldhouse was completed to support Dundas Place activities.
- New summer programming opportunities were added in Huron Heights, East London, and West London neighbourhoods. New, modified fall programming added in Lambeth and West London neighbourhoods.
- In partnership with the London Arts Council, the City added 10 new traffic signal box art wraps in the core area.
- The Hamilton Road BIA continued to expand the tree trunk tour in partnership with local businesses with the additional of virtual tours in 2020.
- London Police Service was awarded a Civil Remedies Grant of \$98,000 to provide funding for a Human Trafficking Education and Awareness Campaign in 2020/2021.
- The London Fire Department held "Coffee with a Firefighter" events to provide members of the community with an opportunity to speak with members of London Fire.

## LONDON'S NEIGHBOURHOODS HAVE A STRONG CHARACTER AND SENSE OF PLACE

- The development application review uses a toolbox of regulations, City Official Plan policy and guidelines to ensure that development fits within and enhances its surrounding community, and to achieve an exciting, exceptional, and connected place to live.
- As a result of the Closed School Strategy, the Lorne Ave School redevelopment is underway including the construction of a new public park and selection of a developer for new housing. Two additional surplus schools are in the planning process and will include new parkland as well.
- The resident-led Community Gardens Advisory Committee provided guidance on how to improve London's Community Garden Program to maximize its positive social, health, and community impacts. In 2020, all 470 garden plots were allocated and 41% of these plots were subsidized, supporting 191 Londoners to grow their own plants and fresh, healthy foods.





# BUILDING a Sustainable City

**London's infrastructure is built, maintained, and operated to meet the long-term needs of our community**

**London's growth and development is well planned and sustainable over the long term**

**London has a strong and healthy environment**

**Londoners can move around the city safely and easily in a manner that meets their needs**

## **LONDON'S INFRASTRUCTURE IS BUILT, MAINTAINED, AND OPERATED TO MEET THE LONG-TERM NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY**

- Municipal Council approved the 2020-2023 Multi-Year Capital Budget on March 2, 2020, a total additional investment of \$10.5 million to reduce the City's infrastructure gap.
- Three pieces of public art are being restored (Bell Carillon, Pro Patria, Charley Fox) and a new piece of public art was installed at the Bostwick Community Centre, YMCA and Library.
- London Middlesex Community Housing completed its Asset Management Plan, which meets the new Asset Management regulation (O. Reg 588/17) requirements.
- Six high-rise multi-residential buildings were retrofitted through the Social Housing Apartment Improvement Program (SHAIP). Retrofits included: lighting and air make up unit upgrades; and, the installation of cladding and solar walls.

## **LONDON'S GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IS WELL PLANNED AND SUSTAINABLE OVER THE LONG TERM**

- Phase 1 of the Meadowlily Conservation Master Plan was completed.
- The City continues to work with partners on the implementation of core area revitalization strategies including providing incentives for infill and intensification in urban neighbourhoods.
- Resulting from the Core Area Action Plan, the City created a grant program to eliminate fees for sidewalk patios to support the core area business community.
- The City created a Construction Dollars program to encourage people to shop and dine in the Core while much needed infrastructure improvements happen.
- The development of an Ambassador Program has begun and it is anticipated the first Core Area Ambassadors will hit the streets in spring 2021 to support businesses, residents and visitors.
- The Request for Qualifications for a developer for Phase 2 of the redevelopment of the Old Victoria Hospital Lands closed on October 30.

## **LONDON HAS A STRONG AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT**

- Species at Risk screening report was completed for the Byron Valley Trail, with endorsement from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority.
- The City of London received a Letter of Commendation from the National Invasive Species Centre for its efforts in Kilally Meadows Environmentally Significant Area.
- 57 basement flooding grant applications were approved.

- Thanks to enhanced treatment and storage capability at the Greenway Wastewater Treatment Plant, 113 million litres of raw sewage was treated instead of being directly bypassed to the Thames River in spring 2020. Since then, a further 6.4 million litres has been treated rather than bypassed to the River.
- The Climate Emergency Screening Tool which will be used on all major corporate projects and programs is nearing completion and staff training is underway.
- Climate change actions as part of the City's Corporate Energy Management Conservation Demand Management include moving to electric ice resurfacers, additional green fleet vehicles, and the installation of a 10 kW solar panel at the New East Lions Community Centre.

## **LONDONERS CAN MOVE AROUND THE CITY SAFELY AND EASILY IN A MANNER THAT MEETS THEIR NEEDS**

- As part of the Rapid Transit Corridors, design of the Downtown Loop is progressing and Municipal Council awarded the design elements for the East London Link and the Wellington Gateway.
- New lighting installed at East Lions Park, North London Athletic Fields and While Oaks Park.
- As part of the Vision Zero London Road Safety, 2020 safety measures included the first phase of 40 km/h area speed limits, 30 km/h speed limit on Dundas Place, new pedestrian crossovers, new pedestrian signals, accessibility upgrades and rail crossing measures.
- The City broke ground on three cycling projects that will improve connections through and into the core area. The Dundas Cycle Track, Colborne Cycle Track Extension, and Dundas-Thames Valley Parkway (TVP) Connection represent 2.6 kilometers of new cycling infrastructure, and an \$8-million municipal investment in the City's active transportation network in 2020/2021.



# GROWING our Economy

**London will develop a  
top quality workforce**

**London is a leader in  
Ontario for attracting  
new jobs and  
investments**

**London creates a  
supportive environment  
where entrepreneurs,  
businesses, and talent  
can thrive**

## LONDON WILL DEVELOP A TOP QUALITY WORKFORCE

- The SkillsAdvance Ontario project Skills2Succeed was launched in October 2020, with 15 participants in the first cohort.
- 85.4% of Ontario Works participants have an active outcome plan.
- The London Community Recovery Network is working with community partners to advance many ongoing initiatives and create new initiatives to assist Londoners impacted by the pandemic.
- Museum London launched a virtual internship for student teachers who develop curriculum-based museum programming during the pandemic.

## LONDON IS A LEADER IN ONTARIO FOR ATTRACTING NEW JOBS AND INVESTMENTS

- The website [www.LondonJobsNow.com](http://www.LondonJobsNow.com) was created to provide Londoners with an interactive job board to help raise visibility for job opportunities.
- Industrial land sales remained strong in 2020 with even higher numbers expected for 2021.
- Western Fair District hosted the first virtual agri-food week and continues to work with industry partners to create additional opportunities.
- CityStudio, a collaboration between the City of London, Brescia University, Fanshawe College, Huron University College, King's University College, Western University and Pillar Nonprofit Network, launched 24 new projects for the Fall 2020 semester.

## LONDON CREATES A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT WHERE ENTREPRENEURS, BUSINESSES, AND TALENT CAN THRIVE

- The City has established a quarterly all-BIA meeting to help in sharing information and providing support to BIAs. BIAs have been collaborating on the Digital Mainstreet grant program.
- Nine loans were issued in 2020 as part of the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Incentive Programs, for a total of approximately \$1,050,000.
- 2020 featured nine Industry Professionals that were mentored through the Music Amplifier Program. The Folk Music Alliance featured one showcase opportunity for London artists in January 2020.
- A review was completed to simplify and combine the archaeological holding provisions in the Zoning By-law in order to provide greater clarity to the development community and staff.





# CREATING a Safe London for Women and Girls

London has enhanced the potential for women and girls to live safe lives

## LONDON HAS ENHANCED THE POTENTIAL FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS TO LIVE SAFE LIVES

- The City and the London Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse are collaborating to advance the work of the Creating a Safe London for Women and Girls priority, including the establishment of a Three-Pillared Framework.
- The City has been working with the London Abused Women's Centre to revise the training programs for "I Step Forward", which addresses intimate partner violence, sexual violence including sex trafficking and non-state torture, and "It Starts with Me", which has been updated to include information on intimate partner violence, sexual violence (including sex trafficking and non-state torture) and sexual harassment.

- The updated “It Starts with Me” training has been incorporated into the City’s Corporate Orientation program as of May 2020.
- Respectful Workplace tools and resources were launched and Phase 1 of training was delivered to all employees.
- Municipal Council approved three additional housing support programs which complement existing housing first programs and focus on community priorities, which includes women and children fleeing violence. The program works to rapidly house individuals experiencing homelessness in accordance with the City’s coordinated access system.
- In an effort to continue to support local Violence Against Women (VAW) agencies, Housing Services received Ministry approval to increase the Average Market Rent used by housing subsidy programs which will provide additional financial support to those supported by VAW agencies.
- The London Community Grants Program Multi-Year funding stream allocated \$147,000 to four local non-profit organizations supporting women and girls; two organizations are new recipients of City of London funding.





# LEADING in Public Service

**The City of London  
is trusted, open, and  
accountable in service of  
our community**

**Londoners experience  
exceptional and valued  
customer service**

**The City of London is a  
leader in public service  
as an employer, a steward  
of public funds, and an  
innovator of service**

## **THE CITY OF LONDON IS TRUSTED, OPEN, AND ACCOUNTABLE IN SERVICE OF OUR COMMUNITY**

- Successfully launched the new London.ca website on October 7, 2020. The new website connects users to City services and information more effectively and better meets the needs of customers, residents and the community.
- The City has implemented a number of new innovation engagement techniques through the City Planning Outreach and Education Strategy. These include walking tours, virtual reality, community showcases and the holding of office hours at local libraries.
- The Multi-Year Budget engagement strategy included: eight “pop up” events; two community open houses; attendance at Councillor ward meetings and community events; use of social media and radio advertising to promote awareness of information and engagement opportunities.

## LONDONERS EXPERIENCE EXCEPTIONAL AND VALUED CUSTOMER SERVICE

- 88% of Ontario Works clients access intake within five minutes.
- More than 420 employees have received formal Lean training. Standard work, visual management and team huddles continue to be implemented giving employees the tools to improve service delivery. 196 service improvements were made across the corporation.
- Introduced a modernized and customer-centric recreation and activity management system for all recreation business.
- Following a successful pilot project, Municipal Council approved the addition of free menstrual products in all washrooms at City facilities starting in January 2021.

## THE CITY OF LONDON IS A LEADER IN PUBLIC SERVICE AS AN EMPLOYER, A STEWARD OF PUBLIC FUNDS, AND AN INNOVATOR OF SERVICE

- The City of London retained its Aaa credit rating for the 44th consecutive year.
- Target balances for the Capital Asset Renewal and Replacement category of reserve funds were developed and endorsed by Municipal Council in 2020. This represents the second category of reserves and reserve funds with formal target balances, following the completion of the reserve portfolio in 2018.
- Homeless Prevention and Information Technology Services launched the Chronic Homelessness Intelligence System (CHAI). The first of its kind, CHAI is an Artificial Intelligence (AI) system that analyzes data to predict who may be at risk of chronic homelessness.





# COVID-19

**Health and Safety**  
**Financial Management**  
**Supports for Individuals  
and Families**  
**Supports for Businesses**

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

- In early January, the City began monitoring the COVID-19 virus spread and activated a logistics team to support City services and community agencies to acquire personal protective equipment (PPE). This team continues to support the procurement and distribution of PPE in the community.
- The City of London activated the Community Control Group (CCG) in March and declared a local state of emergency on March 20, 2020. The CCG continues to meet regularly to ensure critical municipal services are operational and support the health sector in the management of COVID-19 in our community.
- In response to COVID-19 the Middlesex-London Health Unit launched a comprehensive incident management response which includes contact tracing, outbreak management, working with countless organizations to ensure appropriate health measures and protocols are in place, public education and monitoring and responding to case experience in the community.

- The City has provided vital services and responded quickly to changes to Provincial orders and local health guidelines, restarting programs and services where it is safe and possible to do so.
- The City has maintained an ongoing commitment to the health and safety of its residents and employees. In all operations, health and safety precautions have been incorporated, including health screening upon entry of City facilities, physical distancing, frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing, and frequent sanitization of high touch surfaces.
- A field hospital was created at the Western Fair District Agriplex.
- The Dearness Home has responded to the COVID-19 Pandemic by increasing staff training on proper Infection, Prevention and Control measures including use of Personal Protective Equipment.
- The new protocol manual and staff training for modified summer and fall recreation staff included COVID-19 health and safety measures and a greater emphasis on mental health.
- The temporary Mandatory Face Coverings By-law came into effect on July 21. Municipal By-Law Enforcement Officers have taken a proactive education enforcement approach to the by-law, visiting large and small businesses across the city to provide education to business operators and the public.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- The City of London's received \$40.5 million in emergency assistance through the federal-provincial Safe Restart Agreement to support municipalities including transit to address COVID-19 financial impacts and service interruptions.
- The City of London received \$9.7 million through the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) to support Covid-related housing initiatives for vulnerable people and create opportunities for longer-term housing.

## SUPPORTS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

- City Council unanimously approved the deferral of 2020 property tax installments and a rent deferral program for tenants of City-owned properties.
- The Rogers Connected for Success program was expanded to London Middlesex Community Housing tenants, providing support to explore expanding the program to additional low income households to support online access key resources.
- A focused application review team was established to prioritize zoning and site plan approvals for affordable housing.
- The City introduced free, modified neighbourhood-based programming for all ages October-December at eight community centres suitable to safely accommodate COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions, with locations opening in two waves.

- More than 150 people were supported in temporary transitional housing using hotels as a response to physical distancing requirements in Emergency Shelters since March. These included the establishment and operation of Isolation Spaces, Monitoring Spaces, and designated hotels for those medically compromised or at risk of contracting COVID-19.
- The City of London implemented the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) leading up to COVID-19 and have since administered the entire program. Combined efforts have resulted in close to 300 vulnerable Londoners being supported monthly with their rent at an average of \$550 per month.
- The City of London partnered with community agencies to provide meals to vulnerable populations during this pandemic. This included 14,744 meals and 1,050 London Good Food Boxes delivered across London.
- The City of London in partnership with the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario established a temporary shower facility during COVID-19 to ensure individuals that were sleeping rough or unsheltered had access to a hot shower and personal hygiene kits.
- The City ran a “Rec at Home” Facebook campaign from April to May, 2020 to encourage people of all ages to take part in physical activity while isolating at home.
- The ‘Seniors Centres Without Walls’ free programming was launched in April to connect isolated seniors and engage them in social interactions, mindfulness and guest presenters. This program operates five days a week with an average of 18 participants per day.
- The Dearness Home implemented measures to ensure residents could connect safely with their families during this time which included online and window visits.
- The City of London operated a modified summer camp program in 2020 in 11 locations across the city. Over 800 children registered and camps were at 97% capacity.

## SUPPORTS FOR BUSINESSES

- Municipal Council approved the extension of payment terms to 60 days for City of London invoices issued to customers in the months of May, June and July, as well as flexibility in loading, unloading and delivery times.
- The City established a Back to Business (B2B) action team and intake portal to support London businesses. B2B is a temporary initiative designed to provide rapid and flexible responses to business’ requests associated with reopening.
- Patio fees were waived city-wide in 2020 and many patios were permitted to expand further. The City is experimenting with the extension of patio season in the colder months.
- The City established an online building permit application process for all building types allowing for concurrent plan review and improved processing times.
- Digital drawing reviews and digital signatures were implemented to support business continuity and improved turnaround timelines.
- Virtual job fairs, webinars and online channels were launched in 2020 to help facilitate effective labour matching.
- The London Community Recovery Network has brought together over 150 leaders from business, non-profit, and institutional sectors to identify ideas that can power a faster, stronger, deeper and more inclusive recovery for London.



# ANTI-RACISM and Anti-Oppression

## Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression

### ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-OPPRESSION

- Municipal Council reaffirmed its commitment to eliminating systemic racism and oppression in the community by unanimously approving the creation of the Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression unit. This unit will include a Director, Black Liaison Officer, Indigenous Relations Officer, Accessibility Specialist, and Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Specialist.
- The mandate of the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee (SPPC) was amended to include anti-racism, diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression as a strategic initiative.
- Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy community volunteers elected to create a new 6th Priority to address anti-Black racism; the development of this new priority will be complete in 2021.



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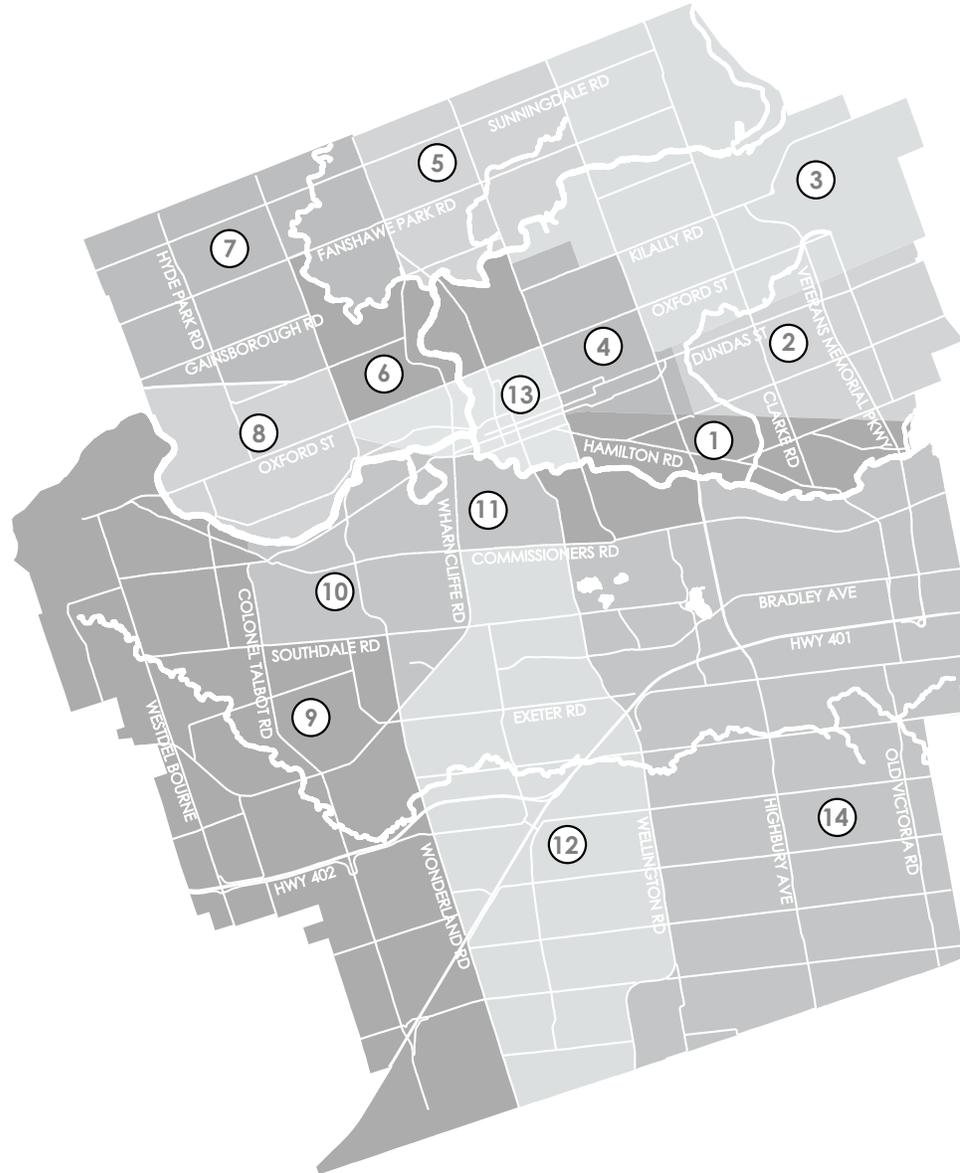
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# CITY OF LONDON

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