

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM THE OPSF RATPAYERS TO MAYORAL CANDIDATES

The following three questions were sent by e-mail twice to all mayoral candidates. The text of the e-mail and the questions are reproduced below. The candidate's response (or lack of a response) appears after each candidate's name and contact information from the City's web site.

Dear Candidate for Mayor, please answer the 3 questions below by October 2, 2018 to this e-mail address. The questions and your answers will be posted to our web site after October 2nd and e-mailed to our community e mail list of roughly 450 individuals. Thank you in advance and good luck in your campaign.

*Sandy Levin
President*

1. The Mayor is only one vote. You need 7 other votes to agree with you. Other than BRT, what one issue is your priority for getting 7 other members of Council to agree with you and why?

2. Last Council overruled the Minister of Municipal Affairs who said London could restrict secondary dwelling units from the Near Campus Area. Will you support a motion to reconsider Council's decision?

3. The Medway Valley Heritage Forest Environmentally Significant Area is a part of our community. What have you done that would give us an idea of how you would deal with issues affecting the Medway and other environmentally significant areas in London?

Paul Cheng

PO Box 50013, London ON, N6A 6H8

226-667-6481

Office@paulchengformayor.ca

Facebook: [@PaulChengforMayor](https://www.facebook.com/PaulChengforMayor)

Twitter: [@PaulChengLdn](https://twitter.com/PaulChengLdn)

This is the response from Mr. Cheng's office:

I have forwarded your email onto Paul. If you would to speak directly to Paul, please feel free to contact our office. I would be happy to set up an appointment.

Our office is located at 313 Horton Street East. Phone 226-667-6481

Ed Holder

PO Box 22021 Wilton London, ON N6A 6H8

info@holderformayor.ca

A1: I will recommend that Council adopt a significantly enhanced capital budget for the development of new affordable housing. This commitment would enhance our credibility with both the private sector and senior levels of government, which should encourage them to join us in investing in a critical need in our community. With my extensive experience in business and government, I feel confident that I can convince all parties to make a significant new investment in affordable housing in London that would be a key element in addressing many of our community's social problems.

A2: Yes. I would support such a motion. Any decision of Council can be changed after one year with a majority vote by the Council of the day i.e. 8-7. Most Council decisions that are reconsidered are done so when new information, or circumstances develop that could affect the results of a decision. I believe the landscape with respect to the provision of student housing is changing in London, with evidence of new, high quality student housing being added to our supply in both built and planned forms.

A3: Each ESA is unique in their fragility and resilience. They are also unique in their abilities to provide opportunities for interpretation and education including the study of the interdependence of natural phenomenon and systems. Some ESAs lend themselves better to enhanced public access than others. In some cases, the provision of structured pedestrian access can contribute to the preservation of flora and fauna that might otherwise be jeopardized by unlimited, unstructured and unfocussed access.

In 2015, as Minister of State (Science and Technology) and MP for London West I was pleased to work with City Council, and Friends of the Coves in securing a \$45,000 grant from the Government of Canada as part of a larger project approved by City Council to provide a scenic trail, a new pond look out and a canoe launch for the Coves EA. In this case, all parties agreed that proposed access improvements would have the equally important effect of protecting endangered species from unstructured access.

Paul Paolatto

999 Collip Circle, PO Box 25, London ON, N6G 0J3

226-782-3260

paul@paolattoformayor.com

Facebook: [@PaulPaolatto](https://www.facebook.com/@PaulPaolatto)

Twitter: [@PPaolatto](https://twitter.com/PPaolatto)

- 1) As Mayor of London, I will be seeking majority support of Council (excluding my own vote) to marginally expand the Urban Growth Boundary in select areas where services already exist, to secure the Development Charges and Assessment revenue associated with the 1500-2000 shovel-ready lots along the boundary.

In addition to creating more housing inventory and tempering house price escalation, these funds are desperately needed to:

(i) upgrade our downtown infrastructure to accommodate greater intensification, (ii) upgrade our waste-water treatment capabilities to finally end the practice of dumping raw sewage in our river during storm surges. I also favour the material upgrade of our sewage treatment facilities so that we finally end the practice of dumping raw sewage into our river during storm surges, and (iii) expand our police presence in core neighbourhoods that are now enduring a rash of thefts and property crimes.

(2) Recognizing from my tenure on the Police Services Board, that high concentration of students in a specific residential area could result in a potentially consequential outcome to someone's health or property, I am prepared to support restrictions on the proliferation of Secondary Dwellings near campuses, with the stipulation that those residences already licensed as such are grandfathered.

(3) Having resided for 18 years within walking distance of Medway, I have a great deal of respect for the area and what it represents to our community. Therefore, I am very interested in preserving it. If we wish to deploy walking trails through the area, I would support doing so in a manner that limits damage to the area while still permitting accessibility.

Mr. Paolatto also added two other issues to his response. As including this would appear to be unfair to other candidates, it is not included here. If you wish the additional information, please let me know.

Tanya Park

619-A Dundas Street, London ON, N5W 2Z1

519-914-0167

Info@tanyapark.london

Twitter: [@tanneramma](https://twitter.com/tanneramma)

1. My top priority for the next term of council is to address the social and affordable housing crisis in our community. It is important we continue the work begun by this council to seek funding from both the provincial and federal governments so we can not only maintain our existing stock of public social housing, but to build new social and affordable housing.

2. During this term of council we did a lot of work on the Near Campus Neighbourhood Strategy and removed some areas where residents did not feel their communities identified with a lot of the same challenges as neighbourhoods closer to campus. If a ward councillor felt it was important to re-evaluate this situation, I would be open to the discussion.

3. When we dealt with the Medway Valley Conservation Plan earlier this year, I worked hard to eliminate the bridges from the plan. I'm a strong proponent for protecting our ESA's, especially when there are such sensitive species as are present in the Medway. My approach to all ESA's in our city is to ensure that they are adequately protected from encroachments, heavy foot traffic, and invasive species.

Vahide Bahramporian

435 Ridout Street North, London ON, N6A 2P6

bahramporianv.for.mayor@gmail.com

Facebook: [@vbahramp](https://www.facebook.com/vbahramp)

A1. Unfortunately at this time each and every issue at the City Hall is a priority. However, not every priority has to be done first. Timing is everything. Different plans have to be timed differently in order for them to have realistic chances of success. We need to see how different plans and issues relate and connect to each other first, before jumping too far ahead of ourselves. Cautious and solid steps are far better than fast and unstudied moves. Without a clear motive and a clear direction, speeding can be disastrous. The main thing that connects all of these difficult issues for us is the state of our economy which is directly connected to employment, which in return connects all other important issues: Development, traffic issue, public transit, affordable housing, job creation, and so on. All of these are connected to the social state of every Londoner as citizen. We need to create jobs and employment so that people can afford to live comfortably enough so that fewer people will be needing subsidized or affordable housing. For that we need to develop the city. But we can not ask for more money from the people since the great majority are suffering economically. Hence, we would be better off finding other ways to fund our plans and projects. Encouraging outside investors to come and invest here and helping London investors and businesses to thrive instead of just surviving could be a good place to start.

Easing and speeding the licencing, zoning, and permits can be a great idea. Doing this will save time and major economic costs both in short and long term. Sky Train at zero cost to the people and the city, as well as London Transit Free for Londoners can be two great ideas that are going to reduce traffic jam to a great extent and help solving many issues such as commute to and from businesses and city development. A public TV that is going to be featuring all future debates and elections in London, should also be seriously considered so that EVERYONE and not just a few with the access to cable and internet can see the and be informed of everything that is happening so that concerns can be raised on time and issues can be addressed prior to actions. In every election, the more people are informed, the more they can get involved and make a right choice when deciding for whom they should be voting. Choosing while being well informed will undoubtedly increase the chances of having a better and more capable Candidates for the job at the City Hall and this is what we can benefit from at the end.

A2. Again: Further studies need to be done by different parties and committees, however: Immediate attention is needed to increase affordable housing at the present time. Therefore, if this a good solution to create affordable housing and since they would be Near Campus, they will help reduce traffic jams, then it might be a good idea to not restrict it. However, We need to see what are the economic impacts of it for the city and its citizens. More importantly concerned citizens and home owners near the campus shall be notified to raise concern and give their opinion on the matter before any decision is made. This goes for everything else as well.

A3. I have constantly questioned the disappearance of our green lands, specially when we have so many locations in the city that need to be reconstructed, rebuilt, and redeveloped. Rezoning the Old East for example can give the people the chance to rebuild their homes bigger and taller, with more rooms that can help eliminate homelessness, affordable housing and also create revenue and income. All of this can also help eliminate poverty and everything else it carries such as crime and drugs. These home owners can also chose to sell to developers so that they can build high-rises, commercial buildings, recreation centers, and so on. All of this development will bring jobs and income -- security and stability. We should better protect our farmlands and green lands so that we can benefit from our geographical location in the Green Belt and take advantage of it in becoming the food production center in the area. Everything is interconnected and by doing things right the first time everyone can benefit. No single decision shall ever be made without considering and predicting it effects for at least the next one or two decades.

Better roads, smarter development, green land protection, better controlled and processed zoning changes can benefit everyone.

I am and have always been pro-environment activist and defended nature's, as well as animal's right. But humans' and citizen's rights should be just as important, if not more. I am against cutting trees, polluting the environment, destroying heritage sites, redoing roads over and over, and everything else that wastes resources.

Ali Hamadi

1151 Lancaster Street, London ON

519-878-4187

aliamadi456@gmail.com

Did not reply

Dan Lenart

1 - 39 Tecumseh Avenue East, London ON, N6C 1R5

519-679-1794

dan.lenart.66@gmail.com

Facebook: [@dan.lenart.for.mayor](#)

1. Negotiating with developers to set aside a higher proportion of their projects for the lower end of the market needs to be a priority, because of the crisis of our current vacancy rate, and our growing homeless population. Jesse Helmer has already raised this issue in the media, and more need to join him in this battle. As it is, the poor are sleeping in store fronts downtown. We need to do better.

2. In the past the idea of "Granny Flats" were shot down, and battles with sub-standard housing practices - the so-called "Slum Lords" have not gone well with City Hall. City Hall has done better regulating unlicensed boarding homes, and inspecting rooming houses for proper codes, but stories can still be seen in the media of horrific abuses of decent housing provisions in our city. However, proposing a "Housing Standards Bi-law" has been met with indifference, or rejected outright, because in the past, landlords (slumlords), banded together and hired top notch lawyers, like Allan Patton and the like, and the court battles have always gone the way of the landlords. But this battle is worth fighting, and yes I would keep passing motions to fight for better options, and higher standards, and more units on the lower end. The situation, as it is, is clearly not working. The emergency shelter system is unendurable even for short stays.

3. Developers need permits before sending in the Bulldozers. This is where City Hall comes in. Residents are crucial in this process, especially when a sign, "Re-Zoning Application" and the like is posted. If no one from the affected neighborhood shows up, City Hall usually assumes that no one from that neighborhood cares, and that's when developers get free reign, or sensitive environmental areas are not taken care of in the best possible way. Community engagement is the most important way to keep a city vibrant.

Nina McCutcheon

519-670-0978

takeittothestreetscanada111@gmail.com

Facebook: [@NinaMcCutcheonforMayor2018](#)

Twitter: [@nina_tittsc](#)

Ms. McCutcheon sent a 12 minute video. As this did not meet the request and would be unfair to those who did meet the request, it is not included here. If you wish to get a link to her video, please contact me.

David Millie

9005 - 420 Central Avenue, London ON

mayor@millietime.ca

Facebook: [@Mayoral.Millie](https://www.facebook.com/Mayoral.Millie)

Twitter: [@MayoralMillie](https://twitter.com/MayoralMillie)

Did not respond

Jordan Minter

301-413 Richmond Street, London ON

226-224-4958

jordanmylesminter@hotmail.com

Facebook: [@jordan.minter](https://www.facebook.com/jordan.minter)

Twitter: [@mintertained](https://twitter.com/mintertained)

Did not reply

Mohamed Moussa

88 York Street, Suite 1, London ON, N6A 1A7

mdmomo66@gmail.com

The one issue that Council needs to address is affordable housing. I'm not referring to social housing, which is another matter that is in dire need of repair and upkeep. Council needs to do a better job at ensuring more affordable housing units exist and not through mandated inclusionary zoning policies. We need to stop wasting tax money on needless items like ranked-balloting and overspending on making bridges more aesthetically-pleasing while only paying lip-

service to other important matters such as affordable housing. Only through investment with the private sector through our Housing Development Corporation can we bring more of these units online throughout the entire city where they're needed. It's a win-win situation where, with some investment on the City's part, the private sector can develop underutilised (properly zoned) lands that may not have otherwise been developed while guaranteeing affordable housing units exist for at least a 20 year span and bringing in building permit fees as well as municipal property taxes in perpetuity.

2. Last Council overruled the Minister of Municipal Affairs who said London could restrict secondary dwelling units from the Near Campus Area. Will you support a motion to reconsider Council's decision?

In short, yes it needs to be reconsidered. Having attended all the Committee meetings on this matter, I truly believe that Council got this one wrong even going against the advice of staff who recommended that the near campus restrictions continue. In fairness and not to paint the entire Council with the same brush, I'd like to note that there were four councillors who voted to not lift the previously-existing limitations.

3. The Medway Valley Heritage Forest Environmentally Significant Area is a part of our community. What have you done that would give us an idea of how you would deal with issues affecting the Medway and other environmentally significant areas in London?

As an ESA, the MVHF is in need of protection. Whether an ESA, an ANSI, or just a plain old forested area, there are numerous areas in London that require protection. How we do that not only affects the impacts on other areas within the boundaries of London but also affects the areas and corridors upstream and downstream from us. Although I appreciate a nature hike as much as others do, these areas are not meant to be our playgrounds. Respect for our indigenous communities, wildlife, plant species, and mother nature in general is paramount.

As a concerned and engaged resident of London, I have attended Committee meetings on this matter and made my personal opinions known. From pointing out the carve-outs and exceptions contained within the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA) to having read and reviewed the Conservation Master Plan (CMP), I have been involved in my own little way. The CMP is ambitious, as it should be, and accessibility for those with disabilities is not only important but legislated, but the framers of the AODA gave municipalities access to the exceptions where accessibility is superceded if its effect is such that it interferes with the natural environment. We must keep these areas as unadulterated as possible.

Carlos Murray

PO Box 44044 Carling PO, London ON N6A 5S5

226-503-5757

karlus.km@gmail.com

1.) Under my government it will require much more than 7 others agreeing. It will require 2/3 of the public. I am proposing that government be changed to one where the public votes on the issues, and the council's job would be then to implement what the public chose.

He also included a campaign brochure. As this was not requested of candidates, it is not included here. Please contact me if you are interested in receiving it.

Sean M. O'Connell

apoliticalhand@hotmail.com

Facebook: [@apoliticalhand](https://www.facebook.com/apoliticalhand)

Twitter: [@Wodanis](https://twitter.com/Wodanis)

Did not reply

Jonas White

33 Hunter Woods Cres, London ON

226-700-8315

jr-white@live.com

1. I would try and get council to approve the LRT.
 2. Yes I would. I do not agree with that decision.
 3. I support all forms of environmentally sensitive areas. I hike regularly all over Ontario including the Medway area.
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