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The Intentional City: Shaping London's Urban Future (Event Transcript)

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EDITED TRANSCRIPT

The Intentional City: Shaping London's Urban Future

ROUNDTABLE TO CELEBRATE THE LAUNCH OF THE
CENTRE FOR URBAN POLICY AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
NOVEMBER 23, 2018

<http://nest.uwo.ca/urbancentre>

Speakers, in order of appearance:

- **Dr. Robert Andersen**, Dean, Faculty of Social Science, Western University
 - **Dr. Martin Horak**, Associate Professor of Political Science, Western University
 - **Dr. Zack Taylor**, Assistant Professor of Political Science and Director of the Centre for Urban Policy and Local Governance, Western University
 - **Dr. Pierre Filion**, Professor, School of Planning, University of Waterloo
 - **John Fleming**, Managing Director of Planning and City Planner, City of London
 - **Dr. Neil Bradford**, Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science, Huron University College
 - **Arielle Kayabaga**, Councillor-Elect, Ward 13, City of London
 - **Michelle Baldwin**, Executive Director of Pillar Nonprofit Network and Co-Founder, Innovation Works, London
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Martin Horak: [00:00:02] Good afternoon. Welcome everybody. It's great to see everybody here. Wonderful to see a nice big turnout out and that we're very excited to be here with you all today. ... My name's Martin Horak for those of you who don't know me. I'm from the Department of Political Science and I've been involved in the development of the Centre from the outset. Along with Godwin Arku, who is over there, and whom we'll hear a bit from later on, I am one of the two associate directors of the Centre. We actually have a director as well who I'll introduce in a moment. We have an exciting panel lined up for you. But first I wanted to give our Dean Bob Anderson a chance to say a few words of welcome. Creating the Centre wouldn't have been possible without your support. So thank you for your support and thank you for being here as well.

Robert Andersen: [00:01:03] Thank you. I just have a few little things to say and many of you already know this, I'm sure. But for those who don't, Western has a long history of engagement with local government and urban development. The Local Government Program has trained generations of public servants. Graduates of our Urban Development Program work across the province in planning, real estate, and property development. Many of our faculty members are involved in research on urban areas, especially in geography, political science, sociology, and anthropology. So this is something we're proud of and that we're good at. The new Centre for Urban Policy and Local Government will take this to another level, to serve as a hub for interdisciplinary collaboration on urban issues. We will also connect academics to practice—practitioners in government, business, and the nonprofit sector. We're hoping this is going to make us even stronger and get our word out. The new Centre also plays an important role in NEST. For those of you who don't know we have a new Network on Economic and Social Trends. We have six centres that fall underneath its umbrella. The new Centre is one of them. The directors of those centres actually run the Network. The Network brings together people from the different social sciences. We're going to try to tackle collaboratively some of society's biggest issues—things like good government, economic growth, poverty, social inequality, migration and ethnic relations. We have centres that come together and we're hoping that we're going to have people working across disciplines on this. I'm very pleased to welcome the new Centre to NEST and look forward to what it accomplishes. I couldn't end without saying congratulations to Zack, Martin, and Godwin, who have done a great job. And I look forward to seeing what you produce. And I also look forward to hearing what is said today. Congratulations.

Martin Horak: [00:03:29] I'll introduce my colleague Zack Taylor. He's been a driving force behind the creation of the Centre. He's also serving as the Centre's first director. I would like to give him the chance to tell you a little bit about the purpose of the Centre and what we already have underway.

Zack Taylor: [00:03:49] Thank you Martin. Thanks for those remarks, Bob. As the director of the Centre I'm really very pleased to welcome you here today. This moment has been a long time coming. I'd like to thank Martin and Godwin and Merlin Chatwin in the back there, who put a lot of work into this over the summer. All of our faculty and graduate associates did a lot of hard work into making this Centre a reality over the last couple of years. So, as Bob said, we hope that the Centre will be a hub for urban research not only within Western, but that it will also be a bridge to practitioners in the outside world. Our roundtable today on the Intentional City exemplifies what we hope to achieve, creating opportunities for conversations about dilemmas and solutions in our increasingly urban society, not only close to home in London, but across Ontario, across Canada, and across North America. Economic growth, social inequality, immigrant settlement, housing and homelessness, environmental injustice: These and other policy dilemmas are most often found in cities, and many of the solutions for those problems will be found in cities as well. Our goal in creating the Centre is to contribute to these debates by providing evidence and connecting academics to policymakers and advocates. Before we start the roundtable I just want to talk very briefly about some of our initial projects and events. As many of

you know, London was the first city to use a ranked-choice voting system in its recent municipal election.

John Fleming: [00:05:28] And there's the City Clerk right there.

Zack Taylor: [00:05:31] She deserves a standing ovation. [applause] Other municipalities across Ontario are paying attention to what happened here with the administration of this new electoral system. Early next year the Centre will host a workshop with city staff to derive lessons from that experience and we plan to collate that into a public report. A second ongoing project is what we're calling the Canadian local government inventory. It's been at least a decade, maybe more, since anyone has done a comprehensive audit of local and regional government arrangements in Canada. We had some students, some of whom are here today, do a deep dive this summer comparing legislation and institutional structures in all 10 provinces and three territories, and in a representative selection of 22 municipalities. We're working through this material now and we hope to release a series of profile documents and datasets in the new year. And on another front, we'll soon launch a series of papers that will translate policy-relevant academic research into materials that practitioners can put to work. The first one of those will be a comparison of municipal economic development plans by geography professor and Centre Associate Director Godwin Arku and graduate students Merlin Chatwin and Evan Cleave. And finally, we're very pleased to announce that one of Canada's preeminent urban scholars, UBC's David Ley, will give our distinguished lecture on January 10th. He will present his research on the social and economic policy impacts of the influx of foreign capital into Vancouver's housing market over the past three decades. We hope to see some of you there. In short, we're very excited about the Centre, about the research it will produce, about the connections to practitioners that it will create, and about the conversations that it will start. So, without further ado, let's start a conversation. We're very pleased to have five people with us today who have a lot to say about the challenges facing midsize cities like London and the potential for such cities to strategically shape their futures. I'll now turn it over to Martin, who will introduce our speakers and moderate the discussion. Thank you.

Martin Horak: [00:07:54] Thanks, Zack. London has a reputation as a place that changes slowly, as a place where many people don't like change very much. But London is changing and it is changing in profound ways—economically, demographically, and socially. We can let these changes happen and take us where they will. Or we can start a conversation about being intentional. And this means taking stock of the challenges and the opportunities that we face as a community, as a city. It means thinking about how we'd like the city to evolve. And it means thinking about who we bring together and what structures and institutions we can build together to move in the direction that we want. These are all things that we're going to touch on in the next hour or so during our panel discussion.

[00:08:54] Our five panelists today have a wealth of insight and experience to bring to the conversation and I'm really pleased that they're all with us here today. Thank you so much for being here. I'd like to just briefly introduce each of them. ... Pierre Filion, on my far left—

though not ideologically I don't think ... [laughter]. Do you want to switch places with somebody?—Pierre is a professor at the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo. His areas of research include metropolitan-scale planning, downtown areas and suburban centres, and infrastructure. He's served on the planning and real estate advisory committee for the National Capital Commission. He's also served on the Central Ontario Zone Strategy Panel for the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs. In case you're wondering what that is, that was the panel that led to the development of the Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan, which many of you have probably heard about. He's also been a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the International Joint Commission and he's the author of many, many papers and some very important work on urban development and planning in the Canadian context.

[00:10:18] And next to him we have John Fleming. John is the Managing Director of Planning and City Planner with the City of London. ... He has a B.A. in urban development from here at Western and a Master's in planning from University of Toronto. He's worked as a planner in the private and public sectors for 26 years. In London he helped to establish a number of organizations including the London Economic Development Corporation, Main Street London, and Landmarks London. He led the Rethink London process and the development of the London Plan, which is something I think we'll talk about in the next few minutes. He played a leading role now in various transformative initiatives such as the Shift London rapid transit plan and the Dundas Place flex street, phase one of which is just being finished downtown. So welcome, John.

[00:11:16] Next to John we have Michelle Baldwin. Michelle is executive director of Pillar Non-Profit Network. She helped to co-create Innovation Works and Verge Capital here in London. She has extensive experience in non-profit management and social enterprise, social innovation, social finance, and communications and fundraising. She currently serves on the board of the Ontario Non-Profit Network and London's community economic advisory panel. Among many other roles. She's also past board member of Huron University College. Michelle holds a Master's degree in educational psychology and a B.A. in psychology.

[00:12:00] Sitting next to Michelle we have Arielle Kayabaga. Arielle is the Ward 13 city councillor-elect here in London. That's the downtown and areas near downtown ward. ... Prior to that, Arielle was a mentee to Councillor Virginia Ridley. She has a B.A. in Political Science from Carleton University and she's worked in caucus services at Parliament Hill under Justin Trudeau. She has served our community through settlement work for newcomers, activism in the black community, and work with the Climate Change Youth Coalition, among other things. She's also the mother of a nine-year-old. So welcome, and thanks for being here.

[00:12:52] And finally beside me here we have Neil Bradford. Neil is chair of the Department of Science and director of the Governance, Leadership, and Ethics Program at Huron University College right across the street from us. We only see each other about once every two or three months, which is amazing. But that's the way that things work sometimes. See—this is one reason why we need this Centre, right? He has written widely about urban social and economic development in Canada with a focus on multi-level governance and policy innovation. He was

the former director of the Cities and Communities Program at Canadian Policy Research Networks in Ottawa. And he is currently a partner with the Evergreen mid-sized cities research collaborative. They brought a great one-day event to London last spring that I was at on mid-sized cities. Actually, a number of us in the room were at that event.

[00:13:43] So welcome everybody. My aim today is that we have an informal conversation. I have a few questions. I will direct those questions sometimes to individual people, but I hope that you all feel free to jump in. We're not going to have a Q and A with the panel but instead after about 50–55 minutes we'll wrap up our conversation and we'll have 15 or 20 minutes in the room where everybody can get to know each other and talk to the panelists and having conversations in a really informal way.

[00:14:19] It's hard to know exactly where to start this conversation because there's so much to talk about. I thought maybe a good place to start the conversation is by thinking a little bit about the big-picture social, demographic, and economic trends. I thought maybe I'll start with you on this one, Pierre. How do you think the urban system is changing in our area? What does the research tell us about how the urban system is changing in Ontario? And where does London fit in with that?

Pierre Filion: [00:14:49] What it shows is that it's not easy to be in the middle. We're not in the period of time—and place—of the extreme left here, as you mentioned. But you know that was documented politically as well. When you don't have and when you stop having measures to control capitalism or the market economy, polarization starts rising. This has been the case over the last decades. And it's happening from a social point of view. David Hulchanski has documented the urban impacts of that very clearly. You know the areas that were the middle class in the City of Toronto and around as well are disappearing and it would be replaced by areas of the poor or areas that are richer. The same thing is happening at the scale of the urban system as well. The large metropolitan regions are attracting a lot of people, are attracting growth. And what is located in between, unless they're related to resource areas, are not doing very well. So within that picture, London is the ultimate. You know that that there's been a lot of conversations and debate about what is a middle-sized city. And very often you wonder when you attend panels and discussions of mid-sized cities that becomes the main object of the discussion, you know, does that qualify as a mid-sized city or not. There is a wide grey zone about that. Does Markham qualify as a mid-sized city? Does Brampton qualify as a mid-sized city? I don't know. They're obviously within the Toronto metropolitan region, and they're part of that region. But when you look at London it is clear it is a discrete metropolitan region. It is not within the immediate orbit of another metropolitan region. It has exactly the right size for the mid-sized city, four hundred and some thousand people. It is not growing very rapidly so it will remain a mid-sized city. And also, very importantly as well, is that it's playing, from the central-place theory perspective—those of you have done geography know Crystaller and all that—it is definitely playing the role of central pole within Southwestern Ontario, within this part of Ontario. It is in the middle of this region and it plays that role within that region. So that makes it

difficult for a place like London. There are a lot of opportunities but some of the problems that it's facing has to do with that polarization as well.

Martin Horak: [00:17:21] I want to open this up to other people as well. John?

John Fleming: [00:17:24] I just want to very briefly say that what Pierre just said kind of aligns with one of the theories that I have, that London is almost the Winnipeg of Ontario. We're off to the west. We're somewhat isolated—the city in a cornfield—and that presents some really interesting opportunities and also challenges. How we deal with those things, how we attract talent—I'm always talking about how do we build a city to attract talent and the investment that goes with talent—is I think really important when you're the city in the cornfield as opposed to being in the GTA or some of these other growth centres.

Martin Horak: [00:18:09] Anybody else want to come in on this? What long-term trends do you see that are going to be affecting the way that London can develop in the future?

Arielle Kayabaga: [00:18:22] I think when we talk about. ... He just said something that really stuck out to me because I guess I had a different idea to it—that London is going to be a mid-size city for a long time, that's not growing rapidly. I thought I had a different view on that. I felt like I've seen a population of people come into London. We are planning on building our city to have great transportation. It already has great tourism. We have a great health care system here in London and social programs. A lot of people know that and it's the hub where people are coming for that for those kinds of things. As we're trying to build transportation, if we ever get there (I have to add that), and have good infrastructure and a transit system that works and we can retain skilled professionals and our students and I think that it's going to continue to, as Toronto is getting big and getting expensive and pushing a lot of people into poverty, they're going to start shifting into our city. So I wonder if that's going to be a slow move or if it's going to be a fast move that's going to hit us strong. As you can see our rents have started to go high because people will have money to buy more expensive housing. It's leaving locals a little bit out of that market. So I'm wondering if it's going to grow faster or if it's going to grow as slow as he's saying.

Martin Horak: [00:19:48] That's an interesting question. I think I want to get back to that in just a few minutes, the kind of "GTA effect," because we are starting to see a little bit of that. But before we go there, I guess, another way of phrasing a similar question is—and maybe Neil, if you have any thoughts on this—is there anything that you think that is a unique strength for London despite the kind of challenging macro context that Pierre was just talking about?

Neil Bradford: [00:20:19] Yes. I think that given the framing that you set there, Pierre, very accurately, that there is a kind of intellectual analytical challenge here of developing an alternative model to growth and innovation that plays off the Richard Florida "creative city," high-tech, niche-sector strategy, and that really doesn't fit in some ways with the challenges that the mid-sized cities face. And I think there we've got to look more internally and we have to look at more

collaborative forms of intersectoral work. We have to look at a wider range of potential growth areas that combine advanced manufacturing with some niche high technology, agribusiness, that there's a range of economic strategies that we need to really think about. And they involve the kind of creative work that Michelle's been doing around social enterprise and social finance. A different entry point into globalization is one of the big challenges for the mid-sized cities and to really push back in some ways on the imposition of that Richard Florida / creative cities / global city model of what we aspire to and what our asset base can credibly lead us to build and deliver. I think London's actually been very innovative in exploring these alternatives over the past decade or so, in part enabled by a council that's created an interesting framework around community inclusion and diversity, the London Plan, the Medical Research Cluster, and that's intersected with some really creative work at the level of civil society and the business community. We see many examples of pragmatic collaborative efforts around immigrant settlement, the kinds of big challenges that Zack spoke about, that I think if we stand back they aggregate up to an alternative model to the creative city.

Martin Horak: [00:22:05] Let me just pursue that for a minute what is that. Is there a hallmark to that model? Is it about, metaphorically, not putting your eggs in one basket and about connecting across different ways of developing? Because I kind of hear you talking about that.

Neil Bradford: [00:22:19] I'd like others to come in. I call it "inclusive innovation," which is kind of a jargony mouthful, and Michelle is completely positioned to speak about this.

Martin Horak: [00:22:26] OK, Michelle, let's hear from you on inclusive innovation.

Michelle Baldwin: [00:22:30] Well I think you kind of hit on it. You know, many cities that have grown really quickly have this disparate group of people who have not had a lot. And so how do we make sure we're growing a city that's thinking about an economy for all? Obviously I bring the lens, just throwing it into the room, around social enterprise and I think it's one of the tools that can be used; there's lots of other ones. It's one of, how do you have different kinds of industries and opportunities. It's an entry point for what I think we need as a city, which is to be thinking about what the impacts are that we're having as individuals in our organizations, in our businesses, and how do we reflect on that from that perspective. Everything from the equity inclusion lens to the environmental impacts. My big dream is that non-profit, business, and government are thinking about that holistically, through that cross-sector collaboration and that when you think about innovation, it's not innovation for growth and scaling; it's about making sure you're creating an economy for all.

Martin Horak: [00:23:37] Right. This isn't on my list of questions, but it makes me think, are we, in a city like London, best placed to think about the future of London in terms of growth, or do we get too worried about growth, slow growth, not enough growth. Is a model of development that's appropriate to London one that is more about diversity and inclusion than about rapid growth? Because as Pierre was saying the rapid growth is not happening here.

Arielle Kayabaga: [00:24:13] It is a very good question. I think that we do have a lot of issues in London right now that we must work together to solve and, as we think about growing the number of people who are in London and we're not able to solve those issues first then, again, it's going to fall to those cities that were growing too fast and then left some people out. I think ... what Michelle was saying, how we have to look at inclusive innovation and just making sure that we're looking at every aspect of the community that we have right now before we grow and go into the numbers of how many people are in London and focus on really providing good services in our city and making sure that everybody—and I saw that one of the questions was, who gets to decide how our city grows, right? I think the community has to collectively come together and make that decision and make sure that we're reaching out to the people that we're not able to reach right now. I mean, there are more than 300,000 people in our city right now. Are we able to reach each and every one of them? Are we able to respond to the problems that we have in our community right now? If we can solve that, if we can nail that to the ground then we can start thinking about growth. The numbers will grow as our city gets better, as we have great programs, and people feel included, and people feel like this is a city that they can call their own, right?

John Fleming: [00:25:57] I want to pick up on where Arielle just left off and that's the quality of the city. That's my "city in a cornfield" again. But I actually brought this whole story because I thought it would be useful: In 1991 United Airlines was looking for a site to locate a new \$500 million maintenance facility. Imagine that, talking about 7,000 to 7,500 new jobs. In 1991 the salaries were averaging around \$45,000. So there were four cities—it sounds a lot like Amazon, right?—Oklahoma City; Louisville, Kentucky; Denver, Colorado; and Indianapolis, Indiana. So, Oklahoma City's proposal was to construct the facility. They were actually going to build it for them, no cost to United, financed with a one-cent sales tax, supported by bonds. And then through the negotiations, the site selector said to the folks at Oklahoma City, "you guys have the best package by far, your incentives are awesome. We're coming there." Mayor Norick, who was the mayor at the time of Oklahoma City, he was so certain they would win the bid that he called a press conference on the day of the announcement and had the press assembled in his office. [To Arielle:] So you might not want to ever do this. [laughter] Imagine his surprise and embarrassment when it was announced that the facility would go to Indianapolis. So the mayor followed up with United to find out what happened. What the hell happened? He was told that before the final selection, United flew their management team who would head up the new facility to do all the bidding cities. They went to all four of them, and they told the president that they would not take their families to Oklahoma City. And Mayor Norick was told that Oklahoma City did not have the quality of life expected by their employees. And so, after that, Oklahoma developed a program with the Chamber of Commerce there called MAPS (metropolitan area projects) and they spent five billion dollars—sorry, they had five billion dollars of impact—but spent millions, millions of dollars on things like a ballpark, a downtown park, Civic Centre Music Hall, Cox Convention Centre, Energy Arena. It's culture, arts, entertainment—quality of life stuff. So, when you think about exactly what's been said over here, the quality of the city that you build, these are not just fluff projects, these are not just spending money for fun. These are things that really can attract talent, attract investment, and create jobs. When you create jobs in municipality, that helps everybody across all demographics. So I think

we forget that. We think about economic development often in terms of chasing smokestacks, getting out there and doing some of those traditional things, giving incentives, incentives, incentives, and those sorts of things. But we often forget about what we have to do to attract people.

Martin Horak: [00:29:05] All right. Neil, you've written about this in the past. There are different ways to do economic development.

Neil Bradford: [00:29:11] I want to not leave the impression that we trade off diversity, inclusion, and growth. There are ways in the mid-sized cities that we can we can bring this together. London recently has been a really interesting example. On the diversity side we have a very dynamic Local Immigration Partnership Council, partnered with Western, the Pathways to Prosperity Project, which has done some really neat programming around settlement and integration on the diversity front that links directly into economic development. We have an employer community that's come together in a very innovative way to program—Michelle you'd be aware of Ability First—which is a Canadian first, actually, the way in which the employer community in London has come together to create space and opportunity for people facing various kinds of challenges in employment. All of that leads to more a more dynamic, creative, diverse workforce, and in turn around inclusion, if you look at the local economic development corporation, go on their website now; they really have a portfolio of sectors they're targeting. And yes, they're doing digital media as Richard Florida would like, but you know they're also doing advanced manufacturing, they're doing agrifood in a very creative way that speaks to the cluster in old East Village and the organic food movement. They're doing social enterprise now in a way they didn't 10 years ago, they are linking up with the employer sector council and workforce development board on labour market training that links to these four target sectors. All of this is a broader way of trying to link inclusion, diversity, and growth in a coherent model and strategy. And as I say, the last council deserves credit for embracing this wider framework around diversity and inclusion in cluster building. So I don't want to go into detail on this but there are alternatives to the Richard Florida global-city funky café strategy that applies really to San Francisco and Toronto. It is a tougher road here in London, but we don't have to go that route. And we're not.

Martin Horak: [00:31:10] I hear you saying that we can, and that we have, an opportunity, maybe an imperative, in London to bridge the divide among different ways of doing economic development and building the city, right? The traditional smokestack chasing, creative capital, and then there's the social inclusion piece, so we've got three different pieces. And I also hear you saying it's not a zero-sum game but I do wonder whether, at least politically, if there aren't tensions there sometimes, and sometimes there's real challenges. I mean, I think about—and I'm moving here a little bit to planning—a few years ago, John helped to run the Rethink London process, produced the London Plan, which in terms of the way the city grows physically is very innovative. It's more about growing in and up, not out. We know from an academic and from a long-term perspective that there are big advantages to growing that way. But there's a lot of resistance. There's a lot of pieces of the system that resist a push in that direction. Not all

developers have been very excited about the plan because there's new restrictions, there's new costs. They've felt like their voices haven't perhaps been heard as much as at least they used to be heard and that could be a problem for implementation. Also we've seen people who like density in theory but don't necessarily like density in practice. Where I'm going with this, and I would like to hear from John, but anybody else who wants to come in on this, on the challenges of when the rubber hits the road in terms of long-term ambitions and plans that really depart from the way we've been. How do you bridge that? How do you make that transition?

John Fleming: [00:33:02] Well, I'd say that ... I think that you're right Martin that there's been a lot of pushback. But I also think that there's been huge advancement on the London Plan already and it's actually startling when you start to look at how much things have moved forward. At the last council, it was in the newspaper the other day, the last council approved something like 2,000 units. That's growing inward and upward and although some of those were maybe not exactly aligned with the plan, they're pretty close, even the ones that are off of the bull's eye. But a lot of those units were in the bull's eye; they're at centre ice for where we're looking for infill and intensification. So growing in and upward does all these great things like help to regenerate urban neighborhoods and reduce the need to use a car to get around, energy conservation, air quality improvements, supporting transit whether it's rapid or not. But you're right. I mean there's a lot of resistance because some people, some developers, some landholders, own land in locations that have nothing to do with where we're trying to promote that growth. What we've been trying to do is use things like rapid transit to create incentives for growth and development in that inward and upward configuration, laying out the planning permissions, being very flexible with those permissions. You can go up, you can mix your uses in those areas where strategically that kind of density would be most beneficial. So you could characterize that stuff as kind of carrots and we've stayed away from, for the most part, a really regulatory, heavy approach that would try and say you can't grow it at all or you've got to grow this way. So there's a little bit of a push and pull and I think that staying away from the heavy regulatory approach is one of those bridges that you're talking about. To try to help make it happen without getting stuck in our trenches and not making any progress.

Pierre Filion: [00:35:04] Things are harder in terms of intensification in mid-sized cities. When you look at Toronto the two major factors in intensification are the cost of housing and congestion. When you're in a place like London. The cost of housing is not that high, compared to Toronto, and there's no congestion. Well there is; it's all relative. [laughter] But let's put this into perspective, you know, there is relatively little congestion so it is possible to go to different destinations by car fairly easily. So the impetus for recentralization and intensification is less here. And as a result you see that the market for intensified development in places like Toronto is much larger than it is in a place like Waterloo Region and even more so than in a place like London. In a place like Toronto you've got young adults, people who can't afford to live in lower-density types of developments, and some retirement. In places like here, in places like where I'm from, it's largely retirement. Retirement is a much bigger proportion of people. Not that there's anything wrong with that. ... It makes for smaller market.

Martin Horak: [00:36:19] Well I think that it does bring us back a little bit to what Arielle mentioned a few minutes ago about the relationship between London and the Greater Toronto Area. The last couple or three years we've begun to see some real estate market effects here and some development effects from spillover from Toronto. Prices have gone up. There's been interest from developers more from the GTA. Is this the start of a bigger trend? Is London close enough to become part of that kind of orbit of the GTA the way that Kitchener Waterloo arguably has, and if so, what does that mean for our thinking about the possibilities and the challenges for London's future?

Michelle Baldwin: [00:37:10] Oh wow. That's a big one. I think one of our unique value propositions when I hear about why people come is because we have that distance. One of our new board members, if you haven't met him, Melvin Wright. He actually looked at a map and he intentionally chose London because he was from Toronto earlier on and he wanted to be close enough but at the same time in a distinct community. So while I want to see high-speed rail and I think we want that connection, I think it's about the unique value that we have as a community. And so for me you know it's having both being connected but also having that kind of stuff, that kind of independence. ... And there's challenges with that. I get it. But there's something about that place-making and local piece that happens in our neighborhoods with all that non-profit/government/business coming together that puts us in a unique position. I guess just to weave it all together it's like who are we as human beings in our city, and what's that sense of belonging? And what is London's story that we can all say we're a part of, because I feel like everybody's trying to make unique stories. And I think it's all these stories is what makes up London.

Martin Horak: [00:38:30] I mean isn't that interesting. ... I moved to London 15 years ago. I have to tell you quite honestly that I'm not sure that I've quite figured out what London's story is yet. It seems to be complex and it's really not a place that's defined by one thing. And yet what I hear you saying is that being distinct is perhaps part of what is attractive to us as a community, that we're far enough away from the GTA that we're not in that orbit. The question is, if we keep attracting people by being distinct, is that going to change? And how is that going to change? Neil?

Neil Bradford: [00:39:14] Very quickly, I would say that with respect to the GTA we do have, as Michelle says, the advantage of a quality-of-life appeal. Also, in the new knowledge economy, technology really does enable virtual working relationships. So you can be a young person working in London on digital content or something and be connected into a technology cluster in Waterloo that's doing a different piece of the knowledge economy, and into Toronto, right? So there are potential opportunities here where geography doesn't matter as much, high-speed rail or not. The other point I would make, though, about the Toronto and GTA relationship, if you think about what was presented in the Community Foundation's Vital Signs report over the past two months, David Hulchanski might well want to come and look at London as a mid-sized city experiencing this kind of polarization around poverty, the precarious workforce, issues of substance abuse and addiction. These are real "big-city" social issues. One of the big challenges I

think collectively for all of us in this room right now is that those challenges of course reach beyond the scope of the municipal government. We have a provincial government now that's not particularly interested in an urban social agenda. We're really kind of looking for external partners to leverage some of these entrenched social problems. I have some ideas about what might be available. It's mostly federal around infrastructure programming and so forth, but we as a community have to be prepared and ready with a variety of tools to leverage those dollars that will increasingly come more from the federal than the provincial government. It's a larger discussion but, look, I'm just saying Professor Hulchanski would do well to reach out beyond Vancouver and Montreal and do some mid-sized city polarization spatial and social studies.

Martin Horak: [00:41:07] Interesting. I want to get back to that but I know John had something to say.

John Fleming: [00:41:11] By the way, I always love these discussions because as a panellist you always learn way more than you're actually sending out there. That's happening today. I think that one of the reasons, Martin, maybe that you can't really read London's story is because the bottom fell out of London's story. London's story was all about being a regional centre. If you wanted to do business in this region you had to do in London. ... Finance, insurance, real estate. Old money, you know, we had a long-established pool of money. And then all of sudden, kaboom. Everything changed and a lot of that was probably relating to communications technologies changing and the ability to be able to still do business in this back-office, smaller sort of way in London while having headquarters elsewhere. I'm sure there are lots of different reasons, but all of sudden London found itself having to reinvent how it was going to succeed. I think we've been writing that story over the last 20 to 30 years. Really the bottom fell out probably in around the 80s. I used to do the growth forecast when I started at the City of London in '91. And I remember so distinctly that we looked at the provincial lines. We looked at all the trends and we were always above the growth forecasts for the province and then that changed in around the mid- to late-80s and it's never recovered. We've always had a lower growth rate than the rest of the province. But how do we succeed? I think the conversation over here around the grassroots approach, building up, are important. We're really well positioned, I think, from an agriculture perspective. We forget that sometimes. That cornfield analogy is useful, it's positive, it's something that can really benefit us economically and we've been talking about urban agriculture as one way to even get it in, you know, that whole notion of agriculture into our community and community economic development. So, I think the point again is just rewriting the way that we succeed is something that we're still working our way through here.

Pierre Filion: [00:43:18] I think there are two dimensions that need to be balanced here. One dimension is the growth dimension and the relationship to the GTHA. Put the fast train and within a few years you're like Waterloo Region. Your house prices are going to go up. All of a sudden you're going to get that growth. You're going to feel the effect of the Toronto region and you're going to become within the orbit of the Toronto region. Is about 100 kilometers between us and a fast train would make it so that friction of distance would more or less disappear. But there is another dimension as well—that cities have a culture and have different levels of self-

awareness. It's very difficult to quantify, it's very difficult to measure, but I know for instance in my region that Guelph has much more of that than Waterloo Region does. When I go to Guelph, you know, I know there are a lot of hippies in Guelph. [laughter] There's that way of thinking that is there and that this part of the identity of Guelph. Waterloo Region maybe has too many identities. London has an identity. John, you were talking about the similarity with Winnipeg. Winnipeg is one city that has major personality, certainly. I mean it has a ballet, it has theatre, it has a lot of culture. For people of my generation the Guess Who came from there. You know I think it really is an entity. (Neil Young as well, but there are other places that claim him.) But it's the same thing with London, although I can't name names as easily.

Martin Horak: [00:45:08] That's an interesting question, though. Does London have an identity? Does it have a culture? You know, what people often say is, well, London is conservative, it's averse to change. I think maybe that's connected partly to the legacy, still, of what you were just talking about, John, right? That London was an old-money place, a self-sufficient regional centre, and that's begun to change. Naturally there's some resistance to that change. So what do we do with that, right, when we think about going forward? How do we create a different sense of collective identity in London rather than being Southwestern Ontario's old regional centre or whatever it might be. What do we build on that binds us together? Michelle?

Michelle Baldwin: [00:46:02] So maybe I'm taking this in a different direction, but I just read this amazing book. Kelsey Ramsden, Canada's number one entrepreneur, wrote a book recently called *Success Hangover*. She talks about how are you always adding new ingredients to your life. She just gives the simple ... like, drive a different way to work, or walk a different way to work. We're creatures of habit. So I think our story is changing, but we're holding on to something else, and change is really hard. So if you look at, I'll put into the room, the whole transit discussion. It became so polarized. I even found myself, I admit, going down, like, not understanding the other perspective and getting entrenched in my own thinking and really having to push myself so that if you're going to create change you have to look at why people are holding on to that perspective and try to find that common place to have that conversation. Because when you get so polarized I think for me the strength of London is that if we can recognize there is a new story that's told We keep going back to the conservative because that's what knew. But I'm in my bubble of InnovationWorks and if you hang out there enough or if you are at the Pillar Community Innovation Awards ... the stuff going on in this community is magical. And if we can really just hold on to that and then be open to a bigger conversation, and try to understand other people's perspectives even when they're really difficult, because you just feel so "I know that this is the right thing", I think that's how we're going to make change.

Arielle Kayabaga: [00:47:38] From a millennial perspective, I find it interesting when I hear what other people think of London. We had some visitors this week who were touring London and they kept asking "What is it about London? What's the culture of London? What is London's identity?" And I thought, you know what? London is what you make it to be. If you want it to be conservative it's going to be conservative. If you don't want it to be conservative, it's not going to be. Like Michelle just said, if you hang out at an innovation spot, you're not going to

see any of the challenges that London still has to pull through. It's about creating. I think London has room for everyone to create a city that is for them. If you want it to be, you know, like an urban agriculture city for you, you're going to build that, you're going to have a community that's going to support you to do that. ... For me, I campaigned in the core and I felt like London has a strong heritage culture. Heritage is also changing in a way that it can fit into the modern way of life. But I also felt like London can be what I want to be. There are a lot of things that I don't know that are happening in London because I'm in this sector and in this field. I don't know. For me it's not that conservative anymore. It's shifting and it's changing and there's room for that to keep changing and the less we speak on it, the less we reflect on it, the more it's going to go away.

Neil Bradford: [00:49:12] I'm going to jump off of "not as conservative anymore" and try to link it back to inclusive innovation. I would suggest that London, again, as a mid-sized city, is really on the leading edge of some major institutions in cities across Canada. Our medical officer of health is absolutely extraordinary, the way he's brought the social determinants model to the whole question of disease and addiction and so forth. Libro Credit Union is an absolute powerhouse of social investment—\$7.7 billion of capital that is targeted to social good and financial outcomes. Your Pillar Non-Profit Network has essentially reinvented the voluntary sector in this city. It's a model that is appreciated North America-wide, I can tell you, Michelle. I would put a fourth institution here. The challenge is still out there, and that's the post-secondary education sector. Fanshawe College has done more than Western, and Western has to up its game, and I include my own institution, Huron University College, in this. We have to engage with the wider community in the city. I want to tell a bit of an anecdote here and this tells you about moving away from conservatism. I came to London in the late 1990s and one of the first things I was confronted with was a mayor boycotting the Pride Parade and in fact violating the Ontario Human Rights Code to make this statement. It was just all very bizarre to me, coming from Ottawa. That was 1999–2000. Here we are in 2018: the Prom Queen high school project at the Grand Theatre. When the school board pulled the funding, a civic entrepreneur by the name of David Billson actually did a crowd-sourcing funding call. They met the target to fund the play in the first 24 hours and they raised \$60,000 out of a crowd-sourced initiative here to ensure that this play, which is expressing the diversity of our millennial generation, would be able to be launched at the Grand Theatre. So, I think back to boycotting Pride, violating human rights legislation to that Prom Queen experience—these are stories of London that really capture the kind of shifts that we're speaking about here at the level of culture. And it's those institutional leaders that we have that we don't talk enough about.

Arielle Kayabaga: [00:51:31] We may not completely be there but we're going to get there because we're pushing for it, right?

Martin Horak: [00:51:38] I mean, I know I was asking questions, not commenting, but I can't resist. From my perspective one of the reasons why the transit debate—the rapid transit debate—became so polarized, and there's a number of reasons, is that there is an element of London's identity and self-image that came into that debate. It became to some extent a debate about what

kind of city we are. And I also saw, just anecdotally talking to people, that there was a big generational divide there as well. So maybe London's finding a new identity is tied to a generational transition. I am just putting it out there. We can pick up on that or not as well.

John Fleming: [00:52:34] I didn't realize there was a debate on rapid transit. [laughter] I think the change is hard. Change is hard as Michelle pointed out, and I think there is a little bit of a track record. This is maybe a little controversial to say but it's Friday. London has a track record of doing something like getting to the precipice about to take a big leap into a new kind of stratosphere. And this comes with reinventing yourself. And then London says no, that water looks cold, or whatever. I felt a little bit of that. There are some projects that embody that, like our performing arts centre, Centennial Hall. My understanding is it was supposed to be a different design and pretty amazing and then at the last minute it got pulled back. I just wonder if it's that change that you were talking about, Martin, that it's something that happens a couple of steps forward, and then one back; a couple steps forward, one back—which can be very frustrating in a position like mine, but when you look at the longer term, getting to where you're going, you get there. Another piece of it is you could do big massive change or you can do it incrementally, like some of the stuff that Neil's been pointing out and Michelle is doing. That's creating change and actually quite rapidly but at a smaller scale which is easier for people to swallow.

Martin Horak: [00:54:19] One thing that we haven't talked really about yet is that we can have a conversation about the longer-term future of London here. But I think politically sometimes that conversation at the city level can be difficult to sustain. ... I think a lot of folks on our last council have been much more focused than previous councils on thinking about it and acting in terms of London's longer-term future. But the incentives are often there, not just politically but in the community, to really focus on what's important now, on the short term, on crisis management. And so my question is, outside of this room, how do we sustain a vigorous public conversation about where London is going long term and who leads that kind of conversation? Who needs to come together in order to make that happen?

Neil Bradford: [00:55:23] Really quick answer. This won't surprise Zack when I mention this. I'm a big fan of the Toronto Civic Action Alliance which is a non-governmental, multi-sectoral group that actually has a kind of institutional structure. It looks to long term issues across the GTA. It brings together multiple sectors and they link them to discrete project work on big issues—around the environment and homelessness, and so forth, and transit. They work at arm's-length from the municipal government. They draw down federal resources. Our Urban League may be a potential similar vehicle were it to scale up and try to think about a more formal Civic Alliance for the mid-sized city. Pillar maybe a vehicle for that.

Michelle Baldwin: [00:56:10] Or together.

Martin Horak: [00:56:11] It sounds like the key is beyond government, not just government.

Neil Bradford: [00:56:13] It's beyond government, and it's a very dynamic but permanent mechanism for the kind of longer-term-horizon analysis you're speaking about that is linked to action.

Michelle Baldwin: [00:56:27] So we've been talking about how to get beyond the kumbaya of collaboration. It's really, really difficult and, I think, similar to the work everybody's hopefully focusing on around equity and inclusion. You have to give something up. So if I use the London Plan as an example, that was a huge community consultation. The community showed up in a huge way. You have this plan but it's hard to sustain things through political systems that are shifting and evolving. And so how do we carry a thread of something as amazing as the London Plan, and there's a million other examples, even with that changing political system? And I think it's about everybody giving up some power and not thinking that this has to be their next big thing. "What are we doing together?" rather than "what am I doing and where's the spotlight for me?" And I think that's the shift we're going to need in order for us to see those big projects happen and carry through. Because having to put everything in incremental change is fine, but as Kate Graham often says London needs to believe that it deserves big things. When you're traveling you see cities that believe that they deserve it. And I think that's where we're getting to. Let's carry those threads—the big things—through to bold moments.

John Fleming: [00:57:50] I just want to jump on that because I believe that as well, that sometimes we suffer from a lack of self-confidence as a community; that we can do that. So when you look at the rapid transit situation in Waterloo they did it and they paid for it themselves. ... They were doing it and raising taxes to it. And before they even had provincial approval they got going. It's just a bit of a contrast there. And we're not the only ones. Hamilton, for example, they're getting a billion dollars or \$1.3 billion and they've had a lot of conversation around whether they're going to go forward. I think that's a really important point—that it all comes down to people. There's systems, there's governments, all those things, but it's the people that are either in those systems or in the community that actually make a difference. One example I'll give is cycling. Cycling it has been something that's been important for London for a long time and we've not been able to really gain traction forever. We did a cycling master plan, I think it was about 15 years ago, it came out of Planning, and not much happened after it. But then somebody by the name of Ben Cowie started just hammering, getting community together, push, push, push. Response and action. And so I think that when you look at a lot of the people that are pushing, whether it's a councillor that is pushing a specific thing or a member of the community, somebody like Michelle, that's able to move mountains. That's what really changes things. Sometimes people don't look at themselves as champions. I think the more that we can give people that feeling that they can do this, and they can make a difference, the more champions we'll get, and the more we'll move forward.

Martin Horak: [00:59:50] Pierre, having listened to the conversation for a while now and since you are in Kitchener-Waterloo and have a lot of context there, do you think that there are lessons or insights or ways that Kitchener-Waterloo has charted a strategic course forward that London can learn from? Or is it just a very different context?

Pierre Filion: [01:00:17] I must confess that I wasn't aware of the rapid transit debate in London. [laughter] I'll start reading the *Free Press*! Actually that's a really important point I know London a bit because I worked here in 1972 for six months. ... It was really interesting in '72 because downtown London was really alive. You went to downtown London on a Saturday afternoon and the sidewalks were full of people. People came from all over the region because there were four major department stores in downtown London then. And it was really the central place, a gravity place, you know, for the whole surrounding area. Another point as well—about that time John Sewell had written an article about transit in London. And he said that transit was much higher in London than in other cities the same size across Canada because it had such a centralized structure. That was lost, completely. We could go into details about that, but that's not my job. Let's go back to KW and how we got transit—rapid transit or light-rail transit. It was a coalition. It was a coalition of interests that came together. There were the environmentalists who were fighting for it and they were a strong constituency. There were the rural councillors. The decision was at the level of the Region. So there were rural councillors on the regional council who didn't want to have urban sprawl within their area and they thought that by having light rail it would create intensification at the centre. There were the creative-class types. And the creative class type says, well, you know we need something to attract those creative people and they don't drive, so we need to provide them with light rail transit. And last point, a very important one, is the economic development constituency. That was very—you know, I have given a number of tours of Waterloo Region over the last few years of people coming from outside the province. And I always have in the tour a planner from the Region, or someone from the Transportation Department of the Region to talk about the LRT. Never—and I hope there is no one from Waterloo Region here—never did they mention improvement of the public transit system when they were talking about the LRT. All they were talking about was, we've got all those billion dollars of redevelopment that is taking place within the axis. When they do the tour they come with the map with all of the developments that are going to happen. That was the major argument. So it was when all those people were brought together that the decision was made to go ahead with light-rail transit.

Martin Horak: [01:03:28] Very interesting. Just a couple more questions and then I think — Godwin just told me maybe we should take a couple of questions from the audience, so I think we'll bring people in. But before I do, just maybe two more things here. One is I want to get back to the issue of entrenched poverty in London, which is tied to what Pierre started us out with when he was talking about the bigger economic context. There are deep structural reasons why in London we only have a 60% labour force participation rate, which is one of the lowest in Canada for an urban centre. We have 25% of kids living in poverty. These are deep structural issues. And as Neil was saying, a lot of the levers of control are not local. I would love to hear folks' wisdom on what are the biggest points of leverage locally for beginning to deal with those issues, understanding that we can never deal with them entirely at a local level. Where can community leaders, where can governing mechanisms come in most effectively at the local level to support those who need that support?

John Fleming: [01:05:02] I'll just start by talking about housing. You know I learned a lot of this from my colleagues. Essentially when you're looking at poverty, the number one issue is having a place to live. A place for you to feel safe, feel secure, and you're able to have mental health and calm in your life. And so I think that's a good place to start. I don't know if this is answering your question, but I think that there's a lot that a municipality can do. I think that to Neil's point, part of London's struggle has led to us being nimble and innovative in the way that we approach things. We haven't historically got the same sort of dollars from senior levels of government as places like Ottawa, for example, or Toronto. When I look at the Ontario Growth Plan, we're not on it. That means we're not in an area that's planned to grow at that provincial lens. And then I hear about all the money that goes into those growth poles. Fair enough, but the point is that we've been pretty inventive. The Housing Development Corporation, the way that we've administered affordable housing dollars—now we're looking at a whole new range of other tools that might be able to come together in a more comprehensive strategy to increase the amount of affordable housing development that's occurring in the community. But there's lots of examples, lots of people that know this subject area better than I. But I do think that's one area and that's a good area to start.

Michelle Baldwin: [01:06:42] So I've been talked to two things. One is I know the great work that's been done with the conversations around precarious work. I can use the example of the sector I come from. The Ontario Non-Profit Network has a research project around decent work for the non-profit sector and decent work for women. And there are huge gaps and inequities that happen. I know it's happening broader than that, but just bringing in that perspective, that this is something we need to look at. People look at the non-profit sector, and people who work there, ... they ... basically work for nothing. How do we shift that conversation and then, going back to this cross-sector collaboration, how do we come up with new tools to solve things like poverty and housing? Just linking it to that social finance. If you were watching, the federal government just announced \$755 million for a social finance fund and \$50 million for investment readiness. So you have a social enterprise. ... What does it mean? You can start something that is getting at the root of the issues and building business models that create change and address inequities at the same time as creating a profit and then you blend that. We looked at London. There's \$40 billion investable assets around social finance. If we can unlock a little bit of that—we've been investing through Verge Breakthrough Fund in affordable housing, in community hubs, in social enterprises, and I think this is a place-based model that could go across the country as one example of what you can do. Those are two things that come to mind when I think about this. But I'm always rooting it in people. Why are you starting a social enterprise? It's people or environment. The planet and people.

Martin Horak: [01:08:32] And it speaks to what John was saying about how you need to do the big stuff—that you need to do it bottom up.

Michelle Baldwin: [01:08:37] And how do we access this federal money? It requires the coordination—the example you gave of everybody coming together to access this big money that's available to cities. We just have to show a united front.

Martin Horak: [01:08:51] Final quick question before I open it up. If you think 20 years from now, what's one thing that you hope will have changed in London? And what's one thing that you maybe will not have changed? Arielle, do you want to start with that?

Arielle Kayabaga: [01:09:14] Something that would have changed. ... I hope that we get to a place where, as a community, we can remove that divide between "us" and "them" and we work collectively together regardless of class. Regardless of what community you're from, I think that it's something that we still deal with a lot in London when we're trying to address poverty, trying to address housing, the stigmas around housing, decisions around social issues that we have in our city. I'll give you an example of something that I heard a lot when I was campaigning. "Is it true that some of the people that are on the street right now are not from London?" It would annoy me, because ... does it really matter if they're not from London? They're coming in from another city because there are Londoners who go to other cities and we're all Canadians. Why do we have to always put a divide between us and them? I would love to see that change. I want to see people love their community enough to see everyone as their community and not the divide between us and them.

Martin Horak: [01:10:33] Anybody else want to come in with some words on this? John?

John Fleming: [01:10:39] Sure. What I would love to see is a really vibrant downtown, one that sends the image of the vibrancy of the community overall, one that is for everyone, that is not exclusionary in any way, and at the same time really expresses that this is a vibrant city. This is a prosperous city and it has opportunities for everybody. Lots of third spaces for people to hang out in. Lots of ways to feel embraced by community. Lots of ways to feel like you actually are tied to and connected to your community; gathering places and events. And also there's this feeling that this is the city that you really want to live in. The downtown contributing to that; but there's much more, of course. In terms of things that I hope never changes? Our heritage. ... I think that heritage is an incredible part of that identity that we've been talking about. Whether we grow or not grow, it's so important that we keep those pieces that express who we are as a community and that we do a good job of, while we have to grow, we need to grow in ways that are sensitive to that recollection of who we are and where we come from.

Martin Horak: [01:12:16] Neil?

Neil Bradford: [01:12:16] I think being an academic I would really like to see this community, this Centre, actually, give meaning and imagination to the mid-sized city as a distinct model and strategy that would speak of the kinds of things Michelle and John and Arielle are referencing here, and put it up against Richard Florida's ideas in a kind of spirit of dialogue and exchange. We can then use it as a policy model to guide investments in the city and how we build the city, and also to reinforce the distinctive sense of identity, and what the mid-sized city means—its integrity and its shape and its dynamic. And I think that that there's important intellectual work to

be done to support the people that are on the front lines actually doing things to build that, and we can do some of the intellectual work that supports your efforts on the ground.

Michelle Baldwin: [01:13:09] Yeah I've changed my mind about eight times, but I think the one thing that I would say that we haven't really dug into is the racism and inequity that's happening in our community and, going back to that earlier point, what's the power that we're willing to let go of. So, 20 years from now if we can see a shift on that, I think we do not want that as part of London's story. It's there in the background and sometimes really out there. I think it's upon all of us to recognize that and to know that we have those moments, all of us. How do you create a community where you can gently call each other and nudge each other when you're in that place? Because we're all doing that at different points. You can't have full understanding of all the inequities in our community. Just having that recognition, and then what I would want to build on, given that we're here today, about campus-community collaboration. I think this is a huge opportunity and it's one of our assets as a community. We have good things happening, like this event today. I think there's way more opportunity. So I'll do a little shoutout. Evelyn, who's in the crowd there, we're in a mentorship relationship through the women and Civic Leadership course through Kings and Brescia and I know you were connected to that as well, Arielle. There's a million examples at Western and all over. But if we can elevate that and put young people in as "intrapreneurs," if you will, into the systems that we have, like the City of London—we're exploring City Studio Vancouver model and how do you bring that to London. I think that is how we're going to attract and retain young people, through campus-community cooperation.

Pierre Filion: [01:14:54] I'd like to follow in the direction that John has opened. Downtowns are one of my areas of study. I like downtowns and spend a lot of time in them. So if I came back 20 years from now, I'd like to have downtown with a light rail system running through. ... And also to build downtown in the image of London. I don't think downtowns will attract the big chain stores, and the big chain stores are in big trouble anyways. But downtowns with activities that are representative of London. I mean, small shops, cafes with different themes, a lot of culture. A mix of social classes as well. A lot of that happening. But most importantly, a lot of people.

Martin Horak: [01:15:47] Thank you. So we'll take a couple of quick questions. ... I'm going to take about four or five minutes worth of questions and then we do have the room for another few minutes after that if people want to have a chance to visit.

Audience: [01:16:09] One of my questions, and it's been brought up a number of times at the end here, sort of the "us and them," as well as community-Western cooperation. It's my first semester at Western, I'm a master's student. And the thing that's really surprised me about London is this animosity between the university body and the city. So we see this a lot, especially around Fake Homecoming but not only that. I also felt it a lot around the election. I tried to get into a mayoral debate but it was full. I was actually told by one of the people from the City that students' votes don't matter because we don't pay taxes we're only here for a little bit of time. So that sort of thing. So I guess my question is how do you see this relationship between the city and the school working effectively? Where do you think that it could build?

Arielle Kayabaga: [01:17:08] Before we respond to that, I just want to let you know that's not true. Students pay lots of taxes and it would be a shame if we lost that money that goes back into our city.

John Fleming: [01:17:27] I think that it's a shame that there's been so much negativity attached to rapid transit because that is an opportunity to actually integrate students into the broader community. Depending on the student, there can be a limited capacity to get around this city because of the way that transportation works here. I always feel bad when I see people all huddled around a transit stop and then the bus going right by because it's full. ... My point is, though, that it is a great tool to integrate students into the community, to deghettoize, for the benefit of students as well as surrounding communities, student housing. So wouldn't it be great to be able to live in the Old East Village and be able to get to campus in 12 minutes and not worry about—15 minutes, whatever it is—but reliable, direct, and not stuck in traffic. It's just one example. We have worked very closely with Western on some of the near-campus neighborhoods stuff. And it's been the administration but also the student body, and they've been phenomenal. I haven't been involved in a while but there's really good progress that way. I spoke at a session about five years ago and I remember the students talking about feeling like they're in a bit of a bubble. Boy it'd be nice if we could find ways to integrate students into the community more fully. The last thing I'll say is, Michelle's working on some really cool stuff and will work alongside her on the whole notion of trying to integrate students into an immersive learning environment and working on solving city issues too.

Michelle Baldwin: [01:19:30] I mentioned City Studio London, just as an example. It's a program where the students are partnered into the community. They partner up with the City, the municipality, and they get to work on projects on everything around city-building: urban planning, cultural planning, get out the vote for youth. And so I think when you can get people into community ... I appreciate you putting the honesty in the room though because I think that that's part of how we get there. It's recognizing that that is a narrative that has an undertone and if we just pretend like it's not happening, I sometimes wonder, if you look at 100% of the story, is that maybe a part of it and it just gets the play because it's been part of the story for a while. I think it's true. And then I think there's so many other opportunities that exist in that moment. So how do we push? The last thing I'll say is, how do we have forgiveness when we do screw up? Because sometimes we do mess up relationships between institutions. How do we move past that and recognize if people are going to come on the bus later, let's forget about the past and not hold onto it and go forward.

Arielle Kayabaga: [01:20:47] Personally, as someone who had the full advantage of students on my campaign, I am really saddened to hear that. Kate Graham, who is sitting at the back there, had a course where students who are not from London were able to engage with the election. And I'm telling you they got a lot of votes for me because they were students and they were out in the community speaking to other students. It was really great to see how engaged they got. They were super awesome. I had really great students. I am really sad that's the narrative that

you've got to experience, but I guess I am in my own bubble. Maybe because I was a student, that's how I actually got connected to city hall. It was through a mentorship program from Western to the City of London. And it was great.

Neil Bradford: [01:21:34] OK, just really quick. Three points from the university out to the community perspective. One is we underestimate Western—the convening power of the university as a neutral third space on issues like opioids or transit or affordable housing, that we could we could have a convening role. Secondly, we need to work on integrated learning and bridging partnerships for our undergraduates or graduates into the local economy. And then thirdly more on local research partnerships. I mentioned the medical innovation one which is a really strong example, but social enterprise—there's a lot of stuff that can be done through the Ivey School and so forth. Some may be happening but we could do more of that across disciplines to try to embed those partnerships to reinvent the inclusive and innovative London economy. Convening, integrating work and learning, and research partnerships.

Martin Horak: [01:22:27] I saw a hand back there so I'm going to take one more question and then we'll wrap things up.

Audience: [01:22:39] Going off that, I was wondering if the reluctance to adopt new models is not so much reluctance for London to change, but a fear of adopting models from other places when there are unaddressed struggles and needs locally.

Michelle Baldwin: [01:23:22] I'll let me try this one. I like where you're taking this and I think where we need to go next is to understand that there might be some underserved areas. How do we take the plan as it exists today with some tweaks? We're hearing today that we have this beginning place and that this plan has to be iterative. How do we take some of what we're hearing of some of the other parts of London where people are feeling, like, I'm not representative in this, and then move that forward. So I think that's the new story. It's how do we not just say, the whole thing's not going to work, but adapt it at this point and find that common ground?

John Fleming: [01:24:05] And I think that my comments would be very similar. Sometimes we put ourselves into false choices that we don't have to. Are we going to do potholes or are we going to do the flex street? Are we going to do to deal with poverty or are we going to do the Take Back the River project? It doesn't have to be necessarily one or the other. There's ways that we can stage things. There's ways that we can budget things. I think we need to be balanced. For example, when we look at the rapid transit plan there are ... all kinds of improvements that are intended to be made with that investment. And remember, again, we're getting a third of it paid by the federal government, a third by the province, a third by development charges, ... Most of it's paid by those sources as opposed to taxes. And it's a great way to improve our local transit system in the meantime. So it was this great window, this opportunity. We'll see where we are right now and where we're going to go with it. But I'm with Michelle. I'm hopeful that there are

some sort of tweaks that can get us back on track and hopefully we can do those things that you're talking, about improving our existing system. I'm not sure it's either/or—it's both.

Arielle Kayabaga: [01:25:41] And I think that the idea of having the bus rapid transit—it's honestly to respond to a lot of the needs that the community has. It's to respond to those who are underserved. Maybe it's the way we have those conversations. I know a lot of people had a very negative BRT conversation. I like to say that I didn't as much. People who were against it just didn't speak to me. [laughter] The ones who were for it, we had really great conversations. People were just not informed enough and some of the questions that I would get. It was like, well, that's the wrong information, actually. Because we're not hiking up your taxes. We're using our money that we're already investing and it's going to serve your community. So "why do I take the bus? Is it going to come my my way?" It's like, how do we get everyone involved without having to make this ... I think maybe the bus rapid transit sounded too fancy, but it's really not. It's to serve the communities, to make sure that people who need the bus everyday are actually getting those services, right? There are lots of people can't afford cars, who can't afford other means of transportation and they're relying on the bus and we got to make it better so that our community as a whole is collectively served. So it's the way we have those conversations that I think needs to shift. It doesn't always have to be negative.

John Fleming: [01:26:58] And it's funny, when you took a look around the transit, one of things it does is it provides affordability, or it can. It's one thing to build affordable housing out somewhere where somebody needs to get a car and drive. It's about affordable living. How do you set a context so that affordable housing also offers an affordable way of mobility, essentially, that goes along with it?

Martin Horak: [01:27:20] Neil, quick final point.

Neil Bradford: [01:27:22] Look, I'm generally a fan of incremental approaches to innovation but I think on this one, on transit—it's easy for me to sit on the sidelines—but LRT might have been the way to go. And I think that reaching higher builds the kind of coalitions that Pierre talked about there and can move the debate forward and mobilize broader support, aspirational support, for a project in a way that the BRT wasn't. But it is easy for me to say that sitting here without the responsibility to carry the larger project. I do think that might have been one big innovation that might have built a coalition.

Martin Horak: [01:27:55] Well, I hope that we as academics are not going to be sitting too much on the sidelines. That's part of what we're trying to do in this conversation here. We could we could keep taking questions all day, but we will not. Thank you very much to everybody.