London’s Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy

Project Summaries: the Nordex Commentaries

compiled by Nordex Research™

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Introduction

As participants in London’s Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy know, the City of London’s Environmental Programs Division (part of the Planning, Environmental and Engineering Services Department) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Green Municipal Fund co-sponsored a series of biweekly/weekly questions on the environment, conservation, energy, related economics, as well as on neighbourhoods, garbage & recycling, and transportation, since October 14, 2011. By May 22, 2012, project administrators had received more than 2600 responses to 30 questions and well more than 500,000 words of commentary.

The summaries below, prepared by Nordex Research™, seek to offer readers a précis of the response sets aligned with the 30 questions posed by the Roundtable. The Nordex summaries do not necessarily represent the views of City staff (or City council) as all final reports related to this project have not yet been reviewed by City staff. City staff will report back to participants in the near future.
**Question # 1 – Environmental Protection**

Q1. The environment has been a constant public policy agenda issue over the last 25 years. Indeed, some of us can remember environmentalism becoming a big top of mind issue back in the early 1970s. And yet for most of that time the importance of the environment has rarely reached beyond middle-ranked status on the public agenda. We say action must be taken on environmental preservation and protection, but often we really mean it is somebody else’s problem; something for “governments” to address.

For you, what can we really do to protect the environment, to avoid unnecessary air and water pollution, to contain carbon emissions and so forth? What is desirable and what is practical? What big and small things should we pursue in this city? If it is individual action, what is the motivation? If it is social action, how do we finance it? What do you think?

**General Themes Relevant to Q 1 (received on Oct. 28, 2011)**

Nordex notes the high quality of responses to Q 1, in general. We take from these responses that challenging questions generally produce thoughtful answers – an important note to researchers and policy-makers.

In the aggregate, we observe an interesting pattern. About two-thirds of respondents favoured additional government regulation, additional punishments for bad environmental behaviour, outright banning of apparently offensive consumer products, plastic bags, and unacceptable transportation behaviour. This resort to regulation and state action is not new.

In contrast, about one-third of respondents were more interested in positive incentives; actions that would otherwise encourage people to take corrective action on the environment. These incentives include the usual references to government subsidies and also references to municipal “couponing,” discounts on energy saving equipment and recycling, reductions on property taxes in response to energy savings, Green Festivals to highlight environmental
products and protection, grants in aid of the environment from private foundations and corporations, and environmental awards for good behaviour and service.

Most respondents did not broach the financing issues or the effects of environmental costs for taxpayers and the economy.

**Question 2 – Energy Savings**

Q 2. Now that we’re into the fall season, what are you doing to prepare your home for winter, to save on energy costs? What has been the most successful thing you’ve done over the last few years, or even well into the past, that helped you reduce your hydro bill? Have government subsidy programs for winterizing your home worked, or do they not provide much incentive? What innovative things have you done or considered to save on energy costs?

**General Themes Relevant to Q 2 (received on Oct. 28, 2011)**

The federal tax credit for home renovations turns out to be quite popular for energy savings, according to Roundtable participants, although several complained about the comparatively high price for energy audits in advance of purchasing energy saving products and equipment. Some respondents also complained about the bureaucratic nature of the program, when it would have been easier simply to purchase the products or equipment directly, armed with a discount coupon.

Several respondents were concerned that they had undertaken a fair bit of work and expense to purchase and install energy saving products, and yet they saw no relief on their hydro bills. Indeed, as it turns out, their conservation efforts probably had nothing to do with rising hydro bills. London Hydro won a substantial increase in fees from the Ontario Energy Board last year. Most of the rising hydro bill locally is attributable to the installation of smart meters, rising
salaries and personnel costs, and lately attributable to provincial subsidies granted in aid of wind and solar power development. And yet, the problem of no or little consumer compensation for “natural conservation” remains. Rarely are consumers rewarded at energy board hearings for natural conservation, even while utilities are rewarded. Randy Aiken, an official intervenor at the Ontario Energy Board, offered the following to Nordex in correspondence.

Natural conservation is the term usually given to the reduction in energy use that happens when older equipment is at the end of its life and is replaced with new more energy efficient equipment. An example would be replacing a 20 year old refrigerator with a new one, or replacing a gas furnace that has died with a new one that is more efficient. This reduction in energy usage takes place with or without DSM [demand-side management re: natural gas utilities] and CDM [conservation demand management re: electric utilities] programs.

In terms of the compensation for utilities, [the issue concerns] LRAM (lost revenue adjustment mechanism). The LRAM mechanism is generally reserved for reductions in energy usage that are directly attributable to DSM and CDM activities, which are in addition to natural conservation.

Natural conservation is generally built into the forecast consumption of utilities and that is part of their forecast risk (i.e. there is already a trend to lower usage as a result of natural conservation). The LRAM protection is reserved for the DSM and CDM programs which are supposed to accelerate the reduction in usage beyond the natural trend.

**Question #3 – Environmental Incentives?**

Q 3. Based on your collective responses from the last set of submissions we are picking up, among other things, two broad sets of desirable actions on the environment.

i. Many respondents are suggesting we should more heavily regulate environmental pollution, consumer products waste, including the use of plastics and packaging, as well controlling the use of cars and even transit. There are references to "banning" activities that apparently cause air & water pollution as well as eliminating waste that affects our environment.
ii. An almost equal number of respondents want to tackle these environmental problems by offering incentives for good behaviour. These folks want to incent good behaviour with subsidies, relaxed regulations, and lower taxation. Most of these incentives are directed to businesses and corporations, but also to homes and residences.

We have been hearing about environmental regulation and how we’re supposed to do it for decades. Right now, we want to learn more from you about the whole variety of incentives that could be used to encourage good environmental behaviour. What do you suggest?

**General Themes Relevant to Q 3 (received on Nov. 14, 2011)**

In contrast to Questions 1 & 2, responses to Question 3 declined somewhat in terms of quality. There was apparently some confusion related to our call for a discussion of “incentives ... to encourage good environmental behaviour.” Unfortunately, the confusion was in part the result of the point i and point ii structuring of the introduction of the question (see above) – an outcome of last minute re-drafting – our fault. Points i and ii as descriptors became confused as questions themselves. Too many participants too impatiently did not read down to the end of the question to obtain the primary interrogative. Instead they were distracted by trying to answer both sides of a question on environmental behaviour that for them included a regulatory side and an incentive side. Most gave favour to regulatory aspects, including banning behaviour, state coercion and penalties. This result, of course, defeated the purpose of the question, which was to focus on incentive issues exclusively.

However, not all participants were confused by the structure of Q 3. Many of our participants, mainly self declared environmentalists, were simply intent on conveying their demands for more state regulation, banning behaviours and coercion, notwithstanding our inquiry about incenting good behaviour. In a kind of “jury nullification” these participants decided to answer a question of their own making. Occasionally, this predisposition drifted into a
call for outright totalitarian methods – a somewhat jarring outcome given that this was an exercise in democratic participation.

For participants who focused on the question of incentives, we received many interesting ideas: 8 in support of less government and more private sector initiatives; 10 in support of more government programs and regulations in support of incentives; 7 in support of education initiatives that would aid incentivising; one was quite articulate on how better analysis would assist, and one pointed to the issue of conservation without any real pay-off or incentive, which presumably should be corrected.

**Question 4 - Carpooling**

Q 4. Some say London has a traffic congestion problem. The City is putting a fair bit of effort into researching and analyzing commuter behaviour in London, with a special emphasis on carpooling. Whether you own or drive a car or not, please offer us your views on the pros and cons of carpooling, and whether you've tried it, or carpool currently.

**General Themes Relevant to Q 4 (received on Nov. 14, 2011)**

Overall, participants seemed sceptical about the City’s involvement in carpooling. The dominant environmental constituency in this pool of participants adopted the idea that everybody would be better off riding buses and bikes, walking, and shunning automobiles.

**Question 5 – Clean Tech & Electric Charging Stations**

Q 5. Technology and the environment are intimately linked. We are dependent on technology for modern living and yet our technologies often contribute to pollution and waste. Currently, there is an emphasis on “clean tech” inside governments, whether it is in support of underground sequestering of carbon emissions (i.e., carbon capture and storage as being proposed in Western Canada), clean coal technology, electric cars or other technological advances for automobile engines, boat motors, or lawn mower emissions.
What do you think about clean tech as the appropriate future for improving the environment?

Electric cars and electric hybrids are currently being introduced to consumer markets, and are being encouraged with incentives from the provincial government.

Apart from anything else we do on the transportation front in London, specifically, what do you think about the City becoming involved in planning for electricity “charging stations” in support of electric cars at i) condominium and apartment complex parking lots in London and ii) city-owned facilities such as community centres, arenas, etc.?

*General Themes Relevant to Q 5 (received on Nov. 25, 2011)*

We posed two queries inside this question: one about the future of “clean tech[ology]” and another about City planning for electricity charging stations in support of electric cars.

We received 75 responses on the clean tech query. Most re-stated the implied hypothesis of the question that clean tech is positive. Our example of “clean coal technology” agitated several participants. Ideologues on both sides were clearly feeling out of sorts.

On the second part of the question concerning municipal planning for electric car charging stations, opinions were split. Supporters liked the progressive aspects of the idea; critics were quite concerned about the use of dirty energy e.g. fossil fuels in the production of electricity for charging stations. A large number assumed the question focused on immediate implementation instead of “planning,” and thus they objected to the idea of charging stations because the private sector should invest in such things. They thought the City should not come to taxpayers to pay for charging stations, among other reasons, because electric cars are likely to benefit too few people.
Appendix: Ideological Division

As noted above, participants in Question 5 revealed a notable ideological orientation in their answers. Often they actually answered questions we did not pose by offering views on governing roles the City of London should adopt, and advancing a more salient place for free markets in formulating to public policy goals. This appendix provides more detail on ideological expressions channelled through our Roundtable questions.

On clean tech and electric charging stations, participants offered the following array of ideological responses. Responses are categorized by Nordex along four dimensions of a continuum for roles in support of the state and free markets: 1) pro-free market, 2) the “night-watchman state,” 3) state business development, and 4) regulatory/dedicated statism. “Free marketism” is defined as the advocacy of relatively unregulated commercial markets to be used as instrumentalities for public policy goals. The “night-watchman state” is an old political science term used to connote minimal state intervention: the provision of basic or essential services, but no more. “State business development” is a more recent neo-socialist term for the state’s promotion of business enterprise either through state incentives, subsidies, or targeted reductions of taxation – in Canada principally advocated by neo-Keynesians in the 1980s. And, “regulatory statism” or “dedicated statism” means advocacy in favour exclusive state management of public policy initiatives; the private sector is unnecessary or unwanted.

The results for Q 5 were as follows:

- Free marketism 18 entries 3:2 ratio in favour of anti-statism and relatively free commercial markets
- Night-watchman state 23
- State business development 18
- Regulatory/dedicated statism 8
Question 6 – Garbage User Fees

Q 6. Garbage collection and paying for it seems to be cropping up more and more at City Hall. Currently, this basic service is a charge against property taxes. Recently, there has been a move to carve out a separate charge for garbage services, somewhat similar to water and sewer taxes, which are said to be user fees. We received an observation in our first Roundtable response set contending that contrary to official opinion, user fees (e.g. bag tags) act as a disincentive to using what are otherwise basic and essential services such as garbage collection.

Where do you stand on this matter of garbage collection financing?* Should garbage collection be financed as a basic service under the property tax, or be financed as a special service (e.g. utility service) with a special surtax or user fee? Are there any alternatives? Does this financing question in the end matter to you or should it matter to the public, since the property tax and alternative special charges and users fees for garbage essentially come out of the same taxpayer pockets?

*Please note that existing property tax financing of garbage collection runs on an 8-day cycle for most of the year although there are periods where between 11 and 13 days occur between pickups. The user fee option will likely bring in more revenue, but will likely cover more and better services, such as a 7-day cycle for pick-ups, and green bin collections for compostable materials.

General Themes Relevant to Q 6 (received on Nov. 25, 2011)

Participants answering this question displayed considerable clarity and conciseness in their responses.

This question effectively became a mini-referendum on user fees in general and garbage collection user fees in particular. By a 5:2 negative ratio, participants opposed garbage user fees (48 negative:18 positive).

The rationales for opposition or support were well articulated. Those who opposed user fees for garbage collection did so because they regarded such fees as an extra charge for which there would likely be no corresponding reduction in property taxes, and so they claimed they
would face net property tax increases. In addition, a large number said they anticipated illegal dumping as a consequence of relying on user fees for garbage collection.

Those in support of user fees mentioned the encouragement of good environmental behaviour with respect to reduced waste and possible recycling benefits. They also liked the pay-as-you-go system. User fee enthusiasts also tended to associate stricter bag limits with a user fee system. Thus, two out of five participants favoured more state intervention in order to achieve what was presumed to be better environmental husbandry.

**Question 7- District Energy Systems/Co-Generation**

Q7. District energy systems, particularly those with co-generation of heat and electrical power, are an efficient means of using fossil fuels. London has Canada’s oldest district energy system which expanded its co-generation capacity in 2008. It currently serves many major buildings downtown, including City Hall, the Convention Centre, and the TD-Canada Trust buildings. A smaller district energy system (without co-generation) also serves the University of Western Ontario campus. As far as you are concerned, what can the City and/or local utilities do to encourage the expansion of district energy and co-generation?

**General Themes Relevant to Q 7 (received on Dec. 12, 2011)**

Given the technical nature of this question, fully one-third (N=30) of participants stated that they could not answer due to self-declared knowledge deficits. The good news is two-thirds attempted substantive responses, and in some cases provided quite excellent answers on district energy and co-generation. Indeed, even the “don’t know” folks made some useful suggestions on “public education,” the most frequent refrain being: if district energy and co-generation is so beneficial, why isn’t the city educating the public on the subject? Much more information could distributed, they said.
As noted above, we counted 30 explicit “don’t knows” on the idea of expanding district energy and co-generation projects by the City of London. Six participants favoured the idea outright; 4 were clearly opposed; 6 thought more planning was needed; 4 were ambivalent, and 6 thought the more public education was needed on the subject. Overall, even expressive participants were quite tentative about local state support for district energy or co-generation projects.

**Question 8 – Redeveloping Neighbourhood Malls**

Q 8. If there is an underperforming or empty commercial property (e.g., plaza or mall) in your neighbourhood, do you support or oppose the idea of converting this property to higher-density, mixed use (housing & commercial) development?

**General Themes Relevant to Q 8 (received on Dec. 12, 2011)**

More than 70% of those expressing their preferences on this question favoured the idea of converting “under-performing or empty commercial property” into “higher density, mixed use development.” Just under 30% were ambivalent or negative on the idea. So, by a 5:2 ratio (66:26), this planning option succeeded. And yet 30% opposition and ambivalence is not insignificant.

**Question 9 – Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals**

Q 9. What goals should the City of London set for the reduction of local greenhouse gas emissions, if the City should do so? Should we harmonize reduction goals with the federal and provincial governments? Should we have more aggressive goals or less aggressive goals? If the Kyoto Protocol is no longer the standard for the Government of Canada, how should we be guided?
General Themes Relevant to Q 9 (received on Dec. 22, 2011)

In general, those supporting City of London goal-setting for greenhouse gas emissions reductions, while passionate in some cases, were more than a little vague on the substance of their preferences. Views such as: “the City should provide leadership,” or GHG goals should be whatever “city decides they should be” tended to dominate. Proponents were also inclined to recite complementary programmatic GHG emissions reductions of their own prescription. Probably the most concrete of these programmatic goals concerned the capture of methane from London area garbage dumps. Otherwise, more bus & cycling and a “zero carbon footprint” seemed to be favourite choices.

Thirty-one participants indicated they would encourage more aggressive City of London goals on the reduction of GHG emissions; 26 participants preferred less aggressive goals, and 11 participants could not express themselves or were vague and/or ambivalent on the subject. Thus, by a split 6:5 negative ratio, participants as a whole were tentative about aggressive GHG emission reductions goals and associated state intervention. As a reminder, split opinion means no action should be taken given insufficient public support for the option.

Question 10 – Global Warming Mitigation Financing

Q 10. What specific actions should the City pursue on global warming mitigation? Should we pursue only those actions with guaranteed financial pay-back/return on investment? Should we pursue actions that will at least break even financially? Or, should we pursue actions that have a cost premium to reduce London’s greenhouse gas emissions?
General Themes Relevant to Q 10 (received on Dec. 22, 2011)

Overall, we observed the following levels of participant support for different categories of financing posed in the foregoing question:

- 18 participants favoured net spending – “a cost premium” -- on GHG emissions reductions;
- 11 favoured a pay-back or a return on investment scenario, and
- 14 favoured some break-even discipline by the City.
- 9 individuals said we should “stop talking” about the issue, mainly because, for them, GHG reductions were not relevant, not a priority or too expensive for local public policy consideration.

Thus, about two-thirds of all participant entries (N=52) were essentially opposed to taking any action on debt financing of global warming mitigation. Eighteen participants were encouraged by the “cost premium” option (in effect they favoured state initiated “exhaustive expenditures” – as a public finance economist would use the term.) The remainder: 14 participants favoured the break-even option or better; 11 participants favoured the pay-back or a return-on-investment option, and 9 participants simply didn’t want local government involved in GHG emission reductions at all. And so, by a 2:1 margin participants were essentially conveying the idea of limited government action.

Question 11 – The Provincial MicroFit Program

Q 11. Not just for farmers, but for urban registrants as well, the microFit Program has been wildly popular, but also marked by volatility, financial burdens on the costs of start-ups, declining subsidies, and other challenges. Is this the price of establishing renewable energy in Ontario and London; is there a better way to
finance small-scale solar development in the province and locally? What program design choices would you make?

*General Themes Relevant to Q 11 (received on Jan. 13, 2012)*

About one-third did a moderately good to excellent job of directly answering Q 11. The rest floundered and were inclined to answer questions of their own making. The question the latter group typically posed for themselves was: “Is the microFit program a good or bad program and thus should government be involved in it?”

Those who offered more than ambivalent commentary (N=29) and who implicitly answered the more general question: “Is the microFit program good or bad, and thus should government be involved in it?”; they tended to oppose the program. Indeed, by a 2:1 negative margin (19:10), those who could offer decipherable answers on the implied question were non-supporters -- less than one-half of our participants.

*Question 12 – Conserving Energy on Transportation Choices*

Q 12. In order to reduce the impact that personal transportation has on energy use and the environment, there are a number strategies that can be used. We can boost public transit services and make them better; we can build active transportation infrastructure (bike lanes and pathways); we can encourage telework/e-commerce, carpooling/ride-sharing, bio-fuel development, the use of electric cars and hybrids, and more walking friendly neighbourhoods with corner stores and groceries in the suburbs. Which approach or set of options seems appropriate to you, and which would you use?

*General Themes Relevant to Q 12 (received on Jan. 13, 2012)*

Most respondents provided clear and cogent answers on the matter of personal transportation options contributing to the environment and conservation.

In terms of priority preferences, we observed the following results.
• 36 mentions on transit, typically favouring improved transit options;
• 28 mentions on bicycling, including improvements to bike paths & trails, and references to safety issues;
• 20 mentions in favour of more walking-friendly neighbourhoods in the suburbs including affordable corners stores and/or grocery outlets, and negative references to big box, retail centres;
• 12 mentions on electric cars, usually in favour, including charging stations, parking lots for electric cars, and the city’s positive role in such things;
• 11 mentions in support of safe walking in the city and closer walking distances to amenities*;
• 9 mentions in favour of teleworking;
• 5 mentions in favour of carpooling;
• 2 mentions in favour of better traffic flows, including a better traffic light system;
• 2 mentions in favour of a better taxi system, including a private taxi system to replace the LTC, a shared taxi system running set routes comparable to South American “collectivos;” and
• 1 mention of biofuel development as a priority.

*If one combines the mentions of “walking friendly neighbourhoods, and “walking” the total is 31 and thus this combined category is second-ranked on the list.

Question 13 – Economics of Conservation

Q 13. Anthony Scott, a Canadian economist at UBC, introduced us to a brand new field in the 1950s, “the economics of natural resource conservation.” Scott held that “all conservation is merely a particular form of investment,” that natural resources such as forests, mines, oil/natural gas fields, or even rivers, prairies, and meadows ought be regarded under the same investment conditions as factories or
other physical capital that provide products and services. He argued that natural resources had the best chance of being developed properly, conserved, or depleted without degradation, if *private owners* were allowed to make unimpeded decisions about future net revenues and present investment costs. As long as expected, calculable, future net revenues exceeded the current, all-in costs of investment, then development of the resource proceed to best advantage of society as a whole -- including decisions on timing of development. If current costs exceeded net, future (discounted) net revenues the resource would be conserved; development would be delayed until economic conditions improved. A central idea here is: private property ownership ensures proper sustainability of natural resources.

Scott’s theory is consistent with another development phenomenon, the “tragedy of the commons,” where non-owners who have unimpeded access to common property use that property until it is depleted, without regard to conservation and sustainability.

What do you think of these ideas? Can you give examples of both conditions in play here in the city of London, or, perhaps the opposite occurring?

*General Themes Relevant to Q 13 (received on Jan. 27, 2012)*

Most participants did not answer the foregoing question directly. Indeed, participants in general were not at all comfortable with mainstream economic ideas. There was little evident comprehension of the basic concepts we presented, including the basic ideas of conservation through investment and potential protections offered by private property interests. Perhaps contingent with this lack of understanding, the central premises of the question set were rejected by a 2:1 margin; for many the rejection typically turned on objections to key words as opposed to the underlying concepts. Most responses became an over-reaction to presumed symbols of corporate domination, and thus platforms for anti-corporate, anti-profit screeds. (The timing of this question coincided with the lock-out at EM Diesel, owned by Caterpillar in the U.S.

In terms of extant patterns for this question, we noted the following:

- 20 participants effectively said “no” to the ideas expressed in the question set i.e. “all conservation is merely a particular form of investment,” “private property ownership
ensures proper sustainability of natural resources,” and “non-owners who have unimpeded access to common property use that property until it is depleted without regard to conservation and sustainability.”

- 10 participants effectively said “yes”;
- 6 participants offered ambiguous answers and
- 12 participants could not offer a clear answer.

Thus, somewhat more than one-third of participants were flummoxed by the question set or could not make a decision, and about 40% rejected the ideational premises being put; half that number (20%) said they agreed with the ideas being expressed -- although not always in the clearest terms.

**Question 14 – Corporate Social Responsibility, Triple Bottom-Line, Internalizing the Social Costs of Production**

Q 14. Many folks like the idea of “corporate social responsibility.” While the concept implies different meanings to different people – even the experts -- the basic idea is corporations have an equivalent obligation to look after employees, pay attention to standards of social justice, and the health and welfare of communities, as they do to reward shareholders. Some have used the term, “triple bottom line” to evoke the same idea: corporation’s bottom line should be a calculation not just about profitability and shareholder value, but also its responsibility to society as a whole, as well as a responsibility for environmental protection.

Liberatarians take a similar approach. They reject the idea that the costs of manufacturing production can or should be socialized i.e. communities or governments should pick up the tab for pollution or resource depletion as a result of manufacturing production -- or agricultural production for that matter. Businesses do not have the right to pollute; all businesses, including manufacturers must internalize the costs of production, or stop doing business.

Do these ideas ring true to you, or are these ideas just pie-in-the-sky nonsense, or something in-between? What do you think?
General Themes Relevant to Q 14 (received on Jan. 27, 2012)

The count on those in support, against or confused about corporate social responsibility and libertarian discipline on the problem of (manufacturing) externalities is offered below.

- 16 indicate a positive response to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and/or libertarian externalities discipline;
- 7 are opposed to CSR either because they don’t like it or they say it doesn’t work;
- 8 are ambivalent on CSR etc. or argue both sides of the issue; and
- 11 cannot offer a clear opinion.

Thus, by more than a 2:1 ratio, participants who were not ambivalent or confused, favoured corporate social responsibility and/or libertarian discipline on externalities. And, up to 45% (N=19) of participants could not offer clear opinions. Moreover, several submissions were characterized by incoherence, anti-corporate diatribes, and an unnerving totalitarian impulse in support of state coercion and correctives.

Question 15 – Costs of Environmental Programs

Q15. While environmental protection is always important, environmental policies and programs can be expensive and such expenses to the public purse can lead to political instability. The provincial *Green Energy Act* in support of highly subsidized wind and solar energy is one important example; the push by the Ontario Ministry of Energy to install “smart meters” – notwithstanding the hoped for energy savings – is another example. We also have an emerging “green industry” and “green jobs” in this region that are tentatively supported by government subsidies that may have an uncertain and risky future. Locally, the full roll-out of the proposed Green Bin program for municipal composting will not be cheap. In addition to being expensive, several of these programs have attracted considerable political opposition: the ruling Liberals in the last provincial election lost most of their seats in the rural Ontario with much of this loss blamed on its wind energy policy and the *Green Energy Act*. In mid January 2012, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, representing 38,000 farmers, called for a moratorium on wind power development. Due to program costs, the Green
Bin program locally was scaled back from a city-wide roll-out to a 750 household pilot project due to City Council opposition.

On the other side of this debate, folks are saying and even some Roundtable participants have said: “it’s all worth the price,” or “what is the cost of not taking action?”

Where do you stand on the costs of environmental programs? Are such programs well worth it for a sustainable economy, or do they go too far in terms of the tax burden and political divisions?

**General Themes Relevant to Q 15 (received on Feb. 10, 2012)**

About 39 participants or about two-thirds did a moderately good to excellent job of directly answering the question. The rest floundered (N=20) and were inclined to vacillate in their answers, or simply did not provide a straightforward answer.

For those who could offer a reasonably direct answer, they were split in the negative on their responses (21 neg:18 pos). By a close margin, they said the “costs of environmental programs are not worth it.” A further 11 participants were ambivalent on environmental costs, and 9 did not offer a direct response.

**Question 16 – Economic Impact Assessments**

Q16. For decades, most big and small public construction projects in London have required official, provincially mandated, “environmental impact assessments” -- among other things -- in order to be given final City approval to proceed. Environmental assessments and resulting adjustments offer the City and the public some certainty that significant environmental degradation will not occur as a result of this construction. In a similar drive for good analysis, in the last few years there has been a big push, particularly in the U.S., for comprehensive “economic impact assessments” on public construction projects. Economic impact assessments measure for economic viability on a cost-benefit basis, including all direct, indirect and “implied” costs and benefits. The idea is to ensure that such projects are fiscally sound going into the future, where municipalities have to borrow money and incur debt. They often include calculations of the “net present value” of projects by “discounting” future costs of capital and considering opportunity costs for choosing one project over another. Economic impact
assessments answer the question: is this project that seems so appealing right now currently affordable in terms of borrowing and debt going into the future?

For you, how important or unimportant is it for the City to conduct official “economic impact assessments” on all new publicly-financed construction projects? The City would do so based on a rationale similar to that justifying environmental impact assessments: the public needs additional certainty that today’s significant investments contribute to strong and responsible future financial conditions.

General Themes Relevant to Q 16 (received on Feb. 10, 2012)

By a 3:1 ratio, for those who were clear on the subject, they favoured the use of “economic impact assessments” (27:9). A 3:1 ratio represents a solidly positive outcome. However, one-third of participants indicated that they were ambivalent (N=10) or unable to offer a clear answer (N=9) on economic impact assessments.

On the positive side i.e. for those who favoured economic impact assessments, most either understood them as “good financial planning” tools (N=10) or as useful ways to enforce “fiscal discipline,” and thus “rein in the tax burden” (N=6). Another group (N=8) said it had assumed such economic analyses were already common practice inside municipal governments. That sanguine prospect, of course, is not so. The remainder were vague on their reasoning.

While we might be gratified by the 3:1 ratio on the matter of demanding fiscal and financial discipline inside municipal governments, another look at the numbers reveals the aggregate outcome is not so rosy. In effect, only half of our participants actual favoured economic impact assessments outright (N=27), and the other half was either negative on them, as mentioned; they were ambivalent, or could not arrive at a resolution on their value (N=28). A few participants (3 of the 9 negatives) regarded economic impact assessments as obstacles to pursuing environmental programs. Their view in effect was “don’t do economic impact
assessments because they will curtail environment programs and spending.” Or, in the alternative, economic impact assessments will reveal the actual scope of environmental spending, which ought not to be reviewed given its inherent merit. For these folks, there was a clear trade-off between financial discipline and environmental enhancements and advances. A couple of the other negatives rested on the idea that economic impact assessments could not possibly contemplate all relevant factors for the consideration of future financial costs of public projects – a kind of “counsel of perfection’ where “no one can accurately predict the future.”

**Question 17 – The Conservation Dilemma**

Q17. Over last 90 years, the City has promoted two kinds of water conservation plans: 1) *forced conservation* like metered water (since 1920), storm drainage and sanitary sewer charges (since 1993), and alternate day water restrictions (since 1988) during the summer, and 2) *natural conservation*, when residents are encouraged to purchase low flow shower heads, low flush toilets, tankless water heaters, rain barrels, etc. In the future, the City may also consider a third conservation alternative: providing rebates and subsidies to promote water conservation devices such as those listed under *natural conservation* or modified rates for certain water users (e.g., low income).

*Conservation* has been even more successful than City officials originally contemplated, particularly since the mandatory “environmental charge” was introduced in 1993 – later becoming the storm and sanitary charge [i.e. the water and sewer surcharge]. Since 2001, average annual household water use has dropped by 27% in response to the rising rates. Engineering officials at the City are now concerned about low total revenues coming from the sewer and water rates charges.

How should the City of London deal with water conservation? Is water conservation worth it since ratepayer conservation has not led to reduced consumer water bills, in general. Indeed, annual increases to water and sewer rates between 7% and 9% have been typical in the last few years. What do we do about the dilemma of rising water and sewer rates in the face of sustained consumer conservation?

**General Themes Relevant to Q 17 (received on Feb. 24, 2012)**

Participants found it difficult to come to grips with the “dilemma of conservation” i.e. that significant “water conservation” by Londoners as a whole occurred without any offsetting
reductions in individual rate charges by the City. For many, their unrewarded acts of water conservation came as a surprise; they assumed individual conservation behaviour would lead to lower water and sewer rates. For those who could express a clear reply on the conservation dilemma (N=28), by a 3:1 ratio they were unhappy. For a handful (N=6), this apparent contradiction was of no consequence. That water conservation was achieved at the price of rising rates for the whole was regarded as a success not a failure. Individual compensatory incentives were unimportant to these folks.

The remainder (N=26) struggled with the question: N=22 were unable to offer a coherent response or an on-topic response, and N= 4 were really quite ambivalent or confused by the conservation dilemma. Thus, half of our respondents provided clear answers on the question and half did not.

**Question 18 – One Day Environmental Events**

Q18. Each year there are a number of one-day environmental events. Earth Hour, for example, is a stand-alone event and focuses on a single hour in early spring. In the case of Earth Day, three weeks later, the City promotes a series of community events as part of London Clean & Green. Which of the following one-day environmental events do you look forward to, if you do? What do you like or dislike about them? Is the environment properly promoted at these events, or should the City ignore these events? Are Londoners properly motivated to do something about the environment by recognizing and promoting these one day events, or do you think most people overlook these dates?

- March 15, Bottled Water Free Day
- March 22, World Water Day
- March 31, Earth Hour
- May (any one day), IMatterMarch
- June 5, World Environment Day
- June 6, Clean Air Day (Canada)
- August 14, Blackout Day (Ontario)
- September 12, International Plastic Bag Free Day
- September 22, World Car Free Day
- First Wednesday in October, International Walk to School Day.
General Themes Relevant to Q 18 (received on Feb. 24, 2012)

At least half of our respondents to this question were quite negative or offended by the promotion of one-day environmental events. By a 2:1 ratio (27:15) participants indicated that environmental days were ineffective, a waste of time, generally unrecognized and/or not a valid public expense. Most participants who were positive on these one-day events understood them to be helpful to the cause of environmentalism, even exciting and interesting events, and quite worthwhile.

About 20% of participants could not make up their minds (N=11). Ten participants referenced pluses and minuses and thus were ambivalent.

Several participants offered detailed assessments of each event; indeed, individuals who were clearly positive or negative often offered a couple of hundred words of commentary.

Question 19 – 8 & 7 Day Garbage Cycles

Q19. London’s current 8-day garbage and recycling collection cycle has been in place since 1996. City administrators have been directed to re-examine collection cycles in 2012 and to report back to council with any eye to proposing changes to service levels and costs.

Many Londoners have expressed concerns about the inconvenience of extra-day (8-day) cycle and related health and safety concerns of rotting garbage and infestation in the hot summer months. Others have said such inconvenience is the price they’re prepared to pay for a less expensive service and presumably a lower tax burden.

The cost structure of the current 8-day collection cycle has “saved” Londoners just over $1 million per year since 1996. The additional cost of providing a 7-day (weekly) cycle would be between $12 and $16 per household per year or between $1.3 and 1.8 million per year.

Which cycle of garbage collection do you favour: the less expensive and less convenient 8-day cycle – with up to 11-day cycles accounting for statutory holidays in the summer -- or do you favour the more convenient and more expensive 7-day cycle (weekly service) that has the advantage of removing
extended pick-up periods in the summer? If you favour a change to the 7-day cycle, but don’t like the increased costs and tax burden, what garbage, composting or recycling services would you defer, contain or eliminate, for example, collecting garbage every two weeks in colder months (October to March) and weekly in the warm months (April to September), or possibly reducing blue box pick-up to a two week (14-day) cycle? Or, something else?

**General Themes Relevant to Q 19 (received on Mar. 9, 2012)**

By close to a 3:2 ratio (N=107), participants favoured the status quo on London’s garbage collection schedules. The 8-day cycle was favoured by 49.5% (N=53) with extensions for statutory holidays. The 7-day cycle was favoured by 34.5% of participants (N=37); 5.6% (N=6) were ambivalent, and 10.4% (N=11) did not offer a relevant response.

For most of those who opted for the status quo and the 8-day cycle, just over half (N=28) cited tax reasons, i.e. to keep taxes down.

For those who favoured the 7-day cycle, the following cost factors were offered as offsets for the more expensive service:

- 2-week pick-up in cold months 12
- prepared to pay more for collections 11
- 2-week pick-up for blue boxes 7
- lower bag limit 1
- no answer 6

**Question 20 – Blue Box Administration**

Q2. In August 2011, the number of eligible recycling items that could be placed in the Blue Box (Blue Carts for residents living in multi-residential buildings) was expanded to include all plastic bottle, jugs and tubs; plastic clamshell containers; empty aerosol cans; cardboard cans; and milk cartons. The list of eligible items for the City’s recycling program now exceeds 20 different items.

However, many of these eligible recycling items are currently being placed in garbage bags and containers by mistake. In fact, more than 15% by weight of the
average garbage bag could be diverted to the blue box. To increase blue box recycling, other communities have introduced recycling promotions and information campaigns for residents. There are also mandatory recycling bylaws, user fees for garbage pickup with no additional charge for recycling, as well as disincentives like reduced garbage container limits to penalize over-reliance on garbage collection versus recycling.

Are you aware of the recent changes to the blue box eligibility list? Are you confused by what goes in the blue box and what doesn’t? What initiatives should the City of London pursue to increase the quantity of eligible recycling items going into blue boxes? Should we pursue only educational and promotional activities? Or, should we pursue a heavier-handed approach such as mandatory recycling coupled with enforcement? In the alternative, should we reward positive behaviour and create positive incentives for greater blue box use? What incentives could we use? Overall, what’s the best way to resolve “the 15% problem” i.e. making sure all eligible items are placed in blue boxes?

General Themes Relevant to Q 20 (received on Mar. 9, 2012)

We asked a lot of questions about blue boxes in this compound query, and participants did a reasonably good job of answering them.

Out of 78 submissions, 35 participants reported they were aware of the recent changes to eligible items available to be “blue-boxed;” six reported they were unaware.

And yet, 22 participants said they were “confused” about what was eligible for the blue box and what was not. Fourteen reported they were not confused.

Twenty-five participants reported initiatives to enhance blue box use.

And, 37 participants indicated that “education and promotion” was the way to go on facilitating blue box functionality.
Somewhat consistent with the foregoing, 18 participants said there were opposed to a “heavier-handed approach such as mandatory recycling;” 11 participants said they favoured such an approach.

Nine participants expressed explicit positives on incentives for blue box use; two participants made it clear that incentives were unnecessary.

Finally, thirteen participants addressed the “15% problem,” with varying degrees of effectiveness.

Overall, participants seemed reasonably aware of recent changes to the blue box eligibility list; a surprising number still seemed confused, and thus many suggested continuing education and promotion. A heavy-hand approach, making blue box use mandatory, was not a favourite option, and participants were quite tepid about using incentives. Answers on the 15% problem tended to be a little vague.

**Question 21 – Walking/Biking to School?**

Q 21. We all remember walking or cycling to and from school as children. Today, fewer children walk or bike to school as many are either driven to school by their parents or they take a school bus. Quite obviously, children need proper exercise to be active and healthy; they need to learn discipline and self-reliance to ensure they can get out of the door and arrive at school on time. On the other side, there is the personal security issue of arriving at school safe and sound, especially when both parents are working. And, apart from the healthy lifestyle and safety issues, there is the matter of extra gas consumed and idling that occurs on short trips going to and from school.

What do you think about these healthy lifestyle, safety, and environmental issues on walking and biking to school? Do they matter to you? What can and should parents do, if they are able to do anything? What should the school, its principal and the school board do to assist, assuming they are prepared take any action? Is there any role here for City Council or should Council stay out of it?
General Themes Relevant to Q 21 (received on Mar. 23, 2012)

Roundtable participants as a group demonstrated concerns for the healthy lifestyle option and safety issues. They liked the idea of encouraging children to walk & bike to school, that parents would accompany their child(ren) to school, and they liked the idea of using of vehicles, cars and buses as safe carriers for transporting children to school.

Worries about gas consumption going to and from school, and cars idling near school property were modest concerns. As relevant to participants, were speeding vehicles coming in and out of the school area and thus threatening inattentive children.

Participants were also cognizant that healthy lifestyle and safety roles could be better taken up by schools. But, they were split and slightly negative on the idea that the City of London had a role in providing for these options.

Up to 8 participants were ambivalent on what to do about children walking and biking to school, and 8 participants could not really articulate a point of view.

For participants’ answers on all these options, see below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthy lifestyle</td>
<td>42 mentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>40 mentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>8 mentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A role for schools</td>
<td>13 mentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A role for the City</td>
<td>13 mentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No role for the City</td>
<td>15 mentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalence</td>
<td>8 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing much to say</td>
<td>8 participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Question 22 - Littering**

Q22. Probably because of our early spring this year, the unsightliness of litter seems to be everywhere. It is especially visible around bus stops, major roadways, and even in neighbourhoods and parks. Plastic bags, paper cups and wraps, small and large, are quite literally in the air. Litter, of course, is a very visible example of the “tragedy of the commons”. If it’s public property; just toss it, somebody else will pick it up -- or not. Instead of shoving that pop can or plastic bottle in your purse, bag or jacket and putting it in the blue box when you get home, somebody will pick it up -- or not. Littering is a nasty habit for people acting out social disaffection, self-centred behaviour, or simply not caring. Managing litter in London consumes financial and human resources that would be better directed to more productive activities.

Does litter bother you, or are you resigned to it? What can we do, if anything? Run education campaigns, call out by-law enforcement, post photos online, seek cooperative action from community groups, businesses and business associations, or nothing at all? What’s the answer?

**General Themes Relevant to Q 22 (received on Mar. 23, 2012)**

Occasionally, Roundtable participants insert a common sense option not raised in our questions. The unposed question offered to us in this case was: “what is the best method to control litter?” The answer was “collection bins.” This option led all others as a control feature for litter. Indeed, participants regularly complained there were not enough collection bins around London. Bus stops would often be mentioned, but also parks – although not walking and biking trails – and in the downtown area – which has been regularly cited in every Roundtable on garbage issues for poor refuse collection.

Two other leading litter control options were favoured: cooperative community efforts and education campaigns, particularly for children in schools. A couple of sharp voices blamed “corporations” for over-packaging and therefore most of the litter problem, and many more moderate voices specifically cited Tim Horton’s for not producing recyclable cups -- which they
noticed were strewn all over the city. One participant humorously noted that one rarely sees a Starbucks cup littering the landscape, and wondered, why?

Many participants cited Londoners’ “laziness” on the litter problem and their own “disgust” at the “nasty habit” of littering.

See the answer categories below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collection bins</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperative action</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education campaigns</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bylaw enforcement</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online photos</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing much to say</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 23 – Transportation Master Planning: Preferred Options**

Q23. Londoners have many options for getting around our city: cars, trucks/SUVs, buses, cycling, and walking. Some options are under-utilized such as carpooling, taking the bus, cycling, and perhaps walking to local shops.

Currently, the Transportation Master Plan (a plan for London’s transportation network over the next “20 years”) is being updated. There is a major emphasis on transit in this update – the last revision was published in 2004. In fact, this transportation plan is almost like an Official Plan amendment as it is pressing for something that assumes a considerable increase and intensification of the population in the downtown core and suburban areas, which will then accommodate a new Bus Rapid Transit system -- having a projected capital cost of between $350 and $450 million over a 20 year period.

The problem is London’s population is expanding outwards; indeed urban nodes are more quickly developing outside the city’s boundaries to the west, north and east, and even into St. Thomas to the south. Moreover, efforts to increase transit use and curtail auto use have failed consistently since this strategy was invoked in the 1994 transportation master plan. The specific policy set in 1994 of reducing “single occupancy vehicle” use by 15% has never been met. In fact car use remains at about 80% of Londoners’ trips around the city, and transit use remains
at about 11% of trips made. Londoners have been quite resistant to planners’ plans and projections.

Which of the following transportation options needs to be better developed over the next number of years to make it easier for you and your family to get around? Do we need more 4/6-lane roads, a better coordinated traffic light system, an expressway (ring road) around the city, improvements to the current bus service (e.g., hours of operation, frequency), a new BRT (bus rapid transit) system, alternatively a new light rail system like Kitchener-Waterloo, or should we promote and protect cyclists and e-bikers with more and better bike lanes and cycling pathways? Finally, should we promote better infrastructure for walking to commercial and institutional sites in or near our neighbourhoods (e.g. more sidewalks in the suburbs), or do other things? Tell us your selection and priority list.

**General Themes Relevant to Q 23 (received on Apr. 6, 2012)**

We offered a lengthy series of options to choose from on our multiple-part question on personal transportation preferences. We asked participants to prepare a “priority list” from the 9 options identified in our question. Participants did so and in addition offered positive and negative descriptions to praise or oppose to the various options. Here’s their list in order of the priority of preferences, also including ratio ratings on the positive and negative dimensions of each option.

1) a better coordinated traffic light system¹

positive = 32², negative = 0

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¹ The order of priority laid out above is determined by a combination of the strength of the positive:negative ratio and the quantity of the positive and negative results. So, for example, a better coordinated traffic light system is ranked “first” because this option attracted more than 30 positives and absolutely no negatives. While other options had higher positives, none had zero negatives, which gave this option a theoretical ratio of 32:0. Further, the bike lanes option is ranked “third” because it attracted a high 4:1 ratio, better than 4-6 lane roads at 3:1, but with more negatives than an expressway at 11:2. Walking infrastructure is ranked “fifth” and behind “4-6 lane roads” because it has significantly fewer positives than all the foregoing options, even though it attracted a high 8:1 ratio. Any option with a ratio of 3:1 or higher can be regarded as a popular option. A 2:1 ratio denotes a passable grade, and a 1:1 ratio, effectively a split result, means the option is non-viable. In our calculation of ratios we subtract the negatives from the positives or *vice versa* and calculate the numerical, comparative proportions or the ratio.

² The foregoing enumeration represents “mentions” by participants, and so single participants can and did offer more than one transportation preference, positive or negative.
2) an expressway (ring road) around the city
   positive = 38, negative = 7, ratio 11:2

3) more and better bike lanes and cycling pathways
   positive = 43, negative = 11, ratio 4:1

4) more 4/6-lane roads
   positive = 38, negative = 12, ratio 3:1

5) better infrastructure for walking to commercial and institutional sites in or near our
   neighbourhoods (e.g. more sidewalks in the suburbs)
   positive = 24, negative = 3, ratio 8:1

6) a new BRT (bus rapid transit) system
   positive = 21, negative = 6, ratio 7:2

7) a new light rail system like Kitchener-Waterloo
   positive = 24, negative = 8, ratio 3:1

8) promote and protect cyclists and e-bikers
   positive = 12, negative = 11, ratio 1:1

9) improvements to the current bus service (e.g., hours of operation, frequency, etc.)
   positive = 33, negative = 34, ratio 1:1

Roundtable participants placed traffic signals/traffic flow, an expressway, and expanded
roadway options in three of the top four priority rankings, in contrast to the stated agenda of the
recently-released Transportation Master Plan, which favours transit and a new BRT. For
Roundtable participants, a new BRT ranks 6th on their list, and “improved transit” is dead last.
Question 24 – Walking/Cycling Infrastructure

Q24. London’s walking and cycling pathways are an enviable part of the city; indeed, they have brought to life the banks of the Thames River since the 1970s. In 2011, the City won a bronze medal (Bicycle Friendly City) for our efforts over the years. Expansion of walking and cycling opportunities has become a primary objective of London’s Parks & Recreation Master Plan and the 2030 Transportation Master Plan (nearing completion); the result of “passive recreation” activities in demand by baby boomers and seniors.

The network of pathways and trails is growing in London. You can even secure a map of these pathways and trails from the City of London or go on-line to view the map.

However there are some gaps in the infrastructure, most notably the absence of links across Medway Creek in the Northwest, and along the Thames River in the northeast. East London is also underserviced.

In spite of the gaps, we have much to be pleased about in relation to our pathways. Walking and cycling on and across the streets of London is another matter. Our research indicates people in general are quite nervous about walking and cycling as our car culture has generated a class of vehicle operator who too often is careless and disrespectful of pedestrians and cyclists. And while some streets have new bike lanes, other streets like Western Road near the University of Western Ontario and most of Oxford Street are without bike lanes and have very limited space for cyclists beside the vehicles.

Tell us your views on London’s walking and cycling infrastructure. Are you satisfied, dissatisfied, or does it matter to you? What are the next steps in fixing or expanding this infrastructure? What advice would you give a novice cyclist, younger or older, before cycling in London?

General Themes Relevant to Q 24 (received on Apr. 6, 2012)

We broke down participant responses into satisfaction and dissatisfaction categories for this question. The enumerated categories below represent single respondents and not “responses” or “mentions,” a method of counting we’ve used previously.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied, but with qualifications/negatives</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dissatisfied 44 40.7
N/A 8 7.4
Ambiguous/Ambivalent 4 3.7
Walking, satisfied 2 1.9
Walking, dissatisfied 2 1.9
Cycling, dissatisfied 1 0.9

Biking is “dangerous” on London streets 40 37.0

From the foregoing data, our most generous observation suggests there is split opinion on London’s walking and cycling infrastructure. Up to 49 persons were “satisfied” to some extent, - even if many offered this assessment with significant qualifications or heavy negatives -- while 47 were dissatisfied without attending amelioration. If one takes into account the qualifiers and negatives attached to the “satisfied, but ...” category, the City’s walking/cycling infrastructure falls into net negative territory in terms of satisfaction. Moreover, 40 participants were prepared to say that biking on the streets of the London is “dangerous” and thus there were significant safety concerns. Almost all of the “dangerous” streets criticism was levelled at careless and uncaring automobile drivers. Many times respondents cited London as one of the worst communities for careless drivers -- compared to other cities in which they lived, worked or visited.

It is also notable that many self-declared auto drivers participating in the Roundtable were agitated by the conduct of cyclists on the streets of London. The big complaint was cyclists blowing through red lights and stop signs.
Q 25. Access to high quality drinking water is a precious resource in Canada and our city. We cannot afford to overlook our dependence on it and to sustain eternal vigilance ensuring its protection. In London, we are favoured with access through water pipelines to Lake Huron and Lake Erie, back-up groundwater wells to ensure a secure supply, and treatment plants to ensure our safety.

And yet, activities that cause water pollution are everywhere. From the salt we put on our roads, to combined sewer overflows and sewage treatment bypasses that end up in the Thames River during major rain storms, to the nearly unchecked chemical run-off coming from both farm fields and even our residential lawns. All this effluent flows into our streams, into the Thames River, and then into the Great Lakes from which we drink.

Periodically, we alert to the problem of water pollution such the Walkerton tragedy in 2000, and it draws our attention for a limited time. However, on the everyday business of ensuring the quality of water resources, the majority of us appear to pay limited to no attention. According to City officials, a survey of Londoners in 2011 illustrated that many Londoners were not specifically aware of the source(s) of their tap water.

The Provincial Government is slowly putting into place “source water protection plans.” “Regional source water protection committees” under the Clean Water Act, 2006 are finishing their 5 year task to prepare plans, but definitive plans are not yet in place. The Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act, 2002 still has not been declared into force and its regulations have yet to be approved.

Do you think we value our drinkable water supplies sufficiently, or do we take drinkable water too much for granted? Do you think it important that the City of London increase awareness about the connection of citizens’s household practices and effluent going into the Thames River (e.g., driveway runoff and yard management)? In the face of government’s long time frame and modest action on “source water protection,” what do you think we should do locally on our own as individuals? What can ordinary citizens do to improve water quality and source water protection?

*General Themes Relevant to Q 25 (received on Apr. 20, 2012)*

Almost 40% of respondents on the “source water protection” question thought the City of London and the provincial government should either leave well enough alone, take no action, or else respondents chose not to offer a direct answer. Another almost 40% defaulted to the generic “we need to educate the public” option, with a variety of specific and non-specific suggestions.
The remainder, about one-fifth of these participants, offered best practices suggestions, which were helpful on the avoidance of wasting water resources.

Specific Response Categories for Q 25

N=

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education option</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nil option (do nothing/do no harm)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A no useful answer/no direct answer</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalent/Ambiguous</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best practices (e.g. waste practices)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation dilemma</td>
<td>8+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Dilemma</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conservation Dilemma

While we assigned a value of “8” respondents exclusively referencing the “conservation dilemma” -- the idea that residents engaging in water conservation are not rewarded with tax or water/sewer rate savings -- the actual number of mentions throughout the transcript was 16, by 16 different participants. And so the conservation dilemma became a significant “undercurrent” in this water protection discussion. Indeed, several participants were really quite put out by local news reports – at the time the question was posed -- that the City wished to collect a minimum water charge from those who had engaged in water conservation and who had saved the most and used the least -- a charge that considerably exceeded current rates for those people.

Question 26 – Financing Reduced Producer (Consumer) Packaging

Q 26. The Provincial government is considering legislation to control excessive and wasteful consumer packaging. The official name for the policy is “extended producer responsibility” (EPR). EPR means that the producers, and most likely
consumers, will be responsible for the full costs of packaging associated with products. These costs would include the environmental costs of production of the product and packaging, as well as the costs of reuse, recycling, and/or disposal at the end of the product’s life cycle. In brief, EPR will mean a shift to “consumers” paying more for waste diversion through direct, up-front, product prices, as opposed to “taxpayers” paying higher taxes to municipalities for waste diversion.

On the background of EPR, in 2011 the Provincial government initiated an expanded role for items that were deemed household special waste – a program also referred to as “Eco Fees.” This provincial program was designed to be phased in over 5 years. However, the program was placed on hold in summer of 2011 due to a consumer backlash against rising retail prices and lack of clarity of program objectives.

For Londoners, halting the program meant that only 45% of household special waste program costs could be captured by the City instead of 100%. In dollar value, if the EPR program is not resurrected, London taxpayers may lose out on $2-4 million per year that could be re-couped through proposed “recycling” Eco Fees.

Do you support idea of having a provincial “extended producer (consumer) responsibility” policy? Under the policy consumers will pay more. The alternative is to continue to have local taxpayers fund a large percentage of recycling program costs for household packaging waste and other recyclable materials. The central question is who should pay: consumers or the taxpayers?

*General Themes Relevant to Q 26 (received Apr. 20, 2012)*

On the Extended Producer (Consumer) Responsibility (EPR) question, about one-fifth of participants offered “troubled” responses, in many cases essentially attempting to re-write the EPR question in order to avoid the “consumer versus taxpayer” burden issue. The favourite avoidance technique was to claim that consumers and taxpayers are the same people. We have chosen not to debate participants on this distinction, since we are mainly interested in determining whether the burden for costs should lie finally on consumers or taxpayers. Having noted this, we do acknowledge that the response back from a few participants, placing a check on our defence of a clear consumer-taxpayer dichotomy, was sensible: the burden to consumers and more importantly to taxpayers would not likely be lifted or positively affected in one direction or
another, notwithstanding the choice. The idea that savings could or would be achieved on the
market side or government side in terms of lower consumer prices or lower taxes was thus
directly and perhaps properly challenged by many of these respondents.

Another group of naysayers (about one-fifth of participants) was even more cynical; they
held that government should do nothing on this file. They rejected the EPR policy outright; no
action should be taken by government(s).

Next, we had a group of participants (about 10%) who also rejected the EPR question and
insisted that “producers” should voluntarily pay for any EPR changes/costs, or producers should
be forced to pay for packaging improvements. In effect, they wanted a substitute tax to be
assessed by the Provincial Government in aid of EPR, or were happily prepared to ignore the
basics of the wholesale and retail marketplaces i.e. that all producer costs are passed on to
consumers.

The good news is: we observed a large minority of participants on the EPR question
(48%, N=47) who were prepared to answer the questions directly: 81% (N=38) of this group said
consumers should pay the costs of EPR and 19% (N=9) said taxpayers should pay.

On both questions, however, we received very considerable resistance to the issues
posed. Large proportions of the Roundtable wished to go their own way.

Specific Response Categories for Q 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumers should pay</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxpayers should pay</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producers should pay</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 27- Mobilizing Environmental Volunteers

Q 27. In London, environmental volunteers are very active. Motivation to volunteer time stems from many personal interests including giving back to community, social interaction, personal/family development, learning about the environment, attachment to a particular place, a specific community issue, etc.

The contribution in volunteer hours can be very high or just a few. It can either be a very positive and meaningful experience, or frustrating and without value. It can either lead to very positive community recognition, or to a very real issue of volunteer burnout.

To grow the number of volunteers and groups working on environmental initiatives across London would be desirable, but what happens if that adds to burnout by spreading existing volunteers too thin? Without a doubt, community contributions towards environmental projects and initiatives in London have increased significantly over the last 10 years.

Funding is often a challenge. Some groups are better at obtaining funds than others but may not always be the best at obtaining results. Some groups are able to make a small financial contribution multiply several times over in the community. Funds from the City of London, whether grants or through collaborative projects, have generally been stagnant or declining. Funds available from the City in the next couple of years will likely decline based on the current economic conditions in London.

Given the financial reality, how do we avoid (environmental) volunteer burnout in London? How do we grow the number of volunteers? Or in lean times is it better to merge groups and not try to grow? Are other community groups capable of expanding their mandates into the environment? Do we need to better acknowledge community achievements and, if so, who should do it? What additional items can City staff bring to the table? Is there a stronger role for the business community to play as part of corporate social responsibility?
General Themes Relevant to Q 27

Participants primarily reported on to two broad ideas in this discussion of community volunteering: how to grow volunteerism and how to organize it.

While the Roundtable did not actually ask about organizational issues, nonetheless this area of concern became the leading response category. And so we have another example of participants offering answers to a question we didn’t pose, i.e. “How should we organize volunteers in the city?” This phenomenon of providing answers to unsolicited questions cannot be regarded as a negative; indeed, it positively reflects on participants who are thinking through their responses with perhaps more prescience than we framed the questions.

The following categories are aligned with the several queries posed in the last paragraph of Q 27. They represent the themes raised in Q 27 by participants. Below we specify the number of mentions within each category as expressed by all 69 respondents -- including the additional “organizational process” dimension we cited above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burn-out</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandate and organization</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievements</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff role/government role</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business role</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguous response</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A no direct answer</td>
<td>8 respondents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the above table, we note that discussion of mandates and organizational process issues tended to dominate participant concerns. This was followed by considerable interest in “growing” volunteerism and growing the number of volunteer organizations in the city. On the issue of growth, a recurrent suggestion raised by participants was the targeting of high school students for volunteer projects. Acknowledging the “achievements” of volunteers was raised notably by those wishing for a healthy volunteer environment, as was the involvement of businesses and corporations. Curiously, the issue of volunteer “burnout” was a lesser concern and so was any significant role by City staff or the local government.

**Question 28 – Improving Air Quality**

Q28. In the past, it was thought that automobiles were our primary source of local air pollution. However, cars built since 2004, and newer trucks and buses, have dramatically lower tailpipe emissions than older vehicles, London has seen air pollution levels drop significantly (65%-75% lower since the 1990s) for such noxious substances as nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, and carbon monoxide. Also, over the last three years, ambient air concentrations of ozone and fine particulate matter here in London have stayed below provincial limits, whereas we always used to exceed them in summers past.

We still experience occasional summertime smog alerts, but these are primarily due to ground-level ozone created by upwind sources of air pollution in the US, such as coal fired power plants – even though many have been retrofitted with pollution control scrubbers.

Based on information from Environment Canada, “small” sources like old lawn mowers, wood-burning stoves and open-air fire pits are potentially bigger contributors to local air pollution than cars and local industry, and we can still be modestly concerned about air pollution coming from older, diesel-powered construction equipment.

Having noted the foregoing, what remains to be done on the air quality front in London? Should our priorities shift toward tackling smaller and more dispersed local sources of air pollution? Or is now the time to focus our attention on other aspects of environmental and health protection and investment?
General Themes Relevant to Q 28

Question 28 above probed mainly for the big and small measures that could be pursued to address air pollution, noting that significant improvements locally have already been experienced in London’s air quality.

Somewhat surprisingly, the leading plurality of participants (N=27) wanted to focus work on small sources of air pollution; open pit fires were a favourite target – an issue apparently causing some modest friction among neighbours – as well as the smoky effects of back-yard barbecues, incinerators and the like. Another group (N=17) were more concerned about what one might describe as “big issues” in support of more general environmental protection, not necessarily related to air quality. And so, just over 50% of participants focused on big and small issues of air pollution mitigation.

About 25% of participants settled on the idea that there was little more to do on the air quality front or at least whatever there was to do was beyond the jurisdiction of the local government. Selecting this “nil” option meant that again we had participants offering us an answer to a question we did not pose. We did not ask participants if “no action should be taken,” but we probably we should have done so. Up to 25% gave us the answer anyway.

About one-fifth of participants could provide no direct answer to the question (N=15) and a couple seemed confused about what might be pursued (N=2).

The table below again reflects the tentative but focused intent of Roundtable participants on air pollution. For those most interested in this policy field -- just over 50% -- the dominant view was to hold with small successes and incremental change (27:17). And about 25% indicated government should in effect take no further action and/or government action should be regarded as ultra vires of municipal jurisdiction. The remainder were befuddled by the questions.
N=
Small steps  27
Big steps      17
No steps (nil) 20
Ambiguous steps 2
No direct answer 15

**Question 29 – London’s Parks and Green Spaces**

Q 29. London’s large parks, neighbourhood parks and green spaces are a source of pride for the city. The jewels in the crown are Victoria Park, Springbank Park and the Forks of the Thames. East London, southwest & northwest London have been very well served with such outdoor spaces compared to other parts of the city. London also has several designated environmentally significant areas that have special rules to protect the heritage features.

But, we face some challenges with maintaining our inheritance: for the most of the summer Victoria Park has been effectively commercialized. Almost every weekend the park is filled with festivals, hawkers, commercial activities, where apparently everyone is cashing in on expected tourism and business development. In recent years, costs have increased for using the City parks. Some increases may be puzzling. For example, permit fees for family picnics during the summer in Springbank Park have increased, a bureaucratic step well beyond what many imagine for informal recreational activity by London families – justified or not. Over the years, the City has increased the amount of hard surfaces in many of our parks and green spaces.

To balance some of the littering and overflowing garbage cans in parks, the use of recycling bins has been increased but not to the level being requested. Victoria Park is now home to a community-driven program called the Greening of the Festivals (high-visibility recycling and composting stations, grease collection, etc.), which has been well received by the public but often only lukewarm by event operators and vendors due to increased costs.

So what should we be doing as a community about the use of our parks and green spaces? How much development and commercialization is good or bad; how much insurance and asphalt do we need or not need? Who should pay for the increased services and environmental protection required in parks and green spaces? What should be our plan?
General Themes Relevant to Q 29

Consistent with the shift to mainstream thinking in the Roundtable after mid March 2012, we observed a solid majority of Roundtable participants supporting “pro-development” plans for London’s parks (N=38). On numerous occasions, participants echoed the theme that “parks are for people.” Parks should be actively used by London residents; they are nodes of community participation; they are gathering places for people, and so the emphasis was on promoting a “social ecology” of parks as opposed to “natural” ecological protection. These folks, in particular, revelled in the idea that Victoria Park can and should be used for festivals in the summertime. And if this kind of activity meant charging vendors more money, or forcing them to do a better job cleaning up after the events, then so be it.

A tiny handful (N=3), anti-development advocates, said our parks should be turned back to their natural condition -- whatever that might mean. A larger group more moderately suggested “less development” of the parks (N=8). About the same number (N=7) objected to the kind of development and commercialization that has gone in our major parks: they don’t like the weekend after weekend redundancy of events in Victoria Park during the summer; for example, they don’t like the same vendors at every event, and the irrelevance of the vendors to the theme of the event itself. And, they don’t like how cars have taken over Springbank Park including the volume of pavement in Springbank.

Up to 11 participants seemed confused by the questions or could offer no direct response. See the table below.
N=

Pro-development  38
Anti/Non-development  3
Bad development  7
Less development  8
Ambiguous responses  4
No direct response  7

Appendix: Autonomous Response

It became evident in this set of responses that participants were again taking control of the question(s) they wanted to answer. In effect, they simplified our set of questions by addressing the good, the bad and the ugly of current development of parks in London. In the end, productive responses came down to pro-development versus anti-development positions. The pro-development folks won the straw poll.

Question 30 – Energy Conservation Strategy

Q 30. We are considering a couple of different approaches to complete an energy conservation strategy with Londoners; a strategy the makes sense for our city, a truly practical and “doable” strategy, basically a made-in-London energy strategy.

Our first concern is the composition of such an approach, its very definition, what roles and responsibilities should the various people and organizations have, and indeed whether we should have an energy conservation strategy at all.

We believe that any type of plan, whether “grand” or something more “modest,” must contain practical items that many Londoners are prepared to embrace; one that has the appropriate balance of individual and community-led actions coupled with local business and government leadership and inspiration. It needs a sense of urgency, but it should not be offensive or inappropriate to the majority of Londoners either. Most important, we’d like to figure out what Londoners are thinking and what they are willing to do on the energy conservation scene at home and on the road.
Here are some possible elements of a strategy:

Reducing car use; good idea, saves on gasoline, and we have already explored the benefits and challenges of walking, biking, and taking transit. But cars for some time now have also seen improving fuel economy numbers; is it enough; should we continue to switch to smaller, fuel efficient autos? How do Londoners respond to rising prices at the pumps – drive less, replace inefficient vehicles, or “suck it up” and cut costs elsewhere?

Reducing home energy consumption; another good idea; saves on electricity and natural gas consumption, particularly in an environment of rising energy prices of electricity. But, most people only put in new furnaces or buy new appliances when they have to (the appliance or furnace breaks down), or are engaged in major renovations, or when buying a new home. Is this a useful area for energy conservation in the home?

Less use of all mechanized equipment using fossil fuels or electricity including lawn mowers, clothes dryers, leaf blowers, snow blowers and so forth.

Are these useful things to do or is our whole effort wasted because some conservation efforts are often not rewarded with reduced taxation and utility rates? Or, should we look beyond the issues of taxation and utility rates and pay significant attention to the cost to the environment and society if no action is taken? Or, will rising energy prices, a global issue, ultimately dampen demand for energy with savings experienced here in London? How far should we go in order to conserve energy resources? How can people be motivated to conserve? How should people be held accountable for their roles and responsibilities, even if that is possible or desirable?

General Themes Relevant to Q 30

Participants in response to this question did not necessarily express themselves in strategic terms, except perhaps for those making arguments not to engage in an energy conservation strategy. For the most part, participants who offered positive concepts opted for “shopping lists” of energy “to do” items. In addition, others suggested reliance on “buses ‘n bikes;” one made a stirring case for an “anti-car culture;” another promoted “city leadership;” another promoted electric charging stations for electric cars; one suggested raising prices to impoverish people who would then be inclined to conserve, and another said paying the “true
costs” of everything would be best. There was also inclination to resort to conventional solutions, for example, “educating the public” and the use of use incentives or even disincentives. A tiny handful, each, suggested greater reliance on “free markets” and as an opposite alternative, “de-mechanization” – which appears to be the new buzz word for the self-declared cognoscenti.

On the other side, the critics of an energy conservation strategy, about the same number as proponents, suggested, sometimes strongly, that the City should leave well enough alone; theirs was the “nil strategy;” do nothing, do no harm. In parallel fashion, there was a notable contingent of folks still not coping with the “conservation dilemma.” Some heaped scorn on the idea that they would be asked to engage in energy conservation when governments continued to raise rates on water services and electricity. Indeed, the conservation dilemma has become a continuing theme since we raised it in Roundtable Question 17 on February 14th and it was underscored shortly thereafter in news reports about the City staff promoting the idea of a minimum charge on high water conservers and low users.

Overall, participants were effectively split in their preferences for and against a new City energy conservation strategy: 40 mentions in support and 41 mentions in opposition.

The remaining respondents (N=11) appeared confused by the question(s) on an energy conservation strategy or did not offer a direct response.

See our table below for results in each category.

<p>| Nil option/no government involvement | 26 mentions |
| Conservation dilemma                | 15 mentions |
| A shopping list of suggestions      | 13 mentions (respondents) |
| More public education               | 5 mentions  |
| Greater reliance on incentives      | 4 mentions  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>De-mechanization</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater reliance on free markets</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other stratagems</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ambiguous responses</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>No direct responses</td>
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