



February 22, 2012

City Clerk's Office,
Room 308, 300 Dufferin Avenue,
P.O. Box 5035, London, ON N6A 4L9

TO: Chair and Members of the Planning & Environment Committee

**RE: Amendments to the Official Plan & Zoning By-Law Z-1 for the City of London
Methadone Clinics and Pharmacies
Planning and Environment Committee, February 27, 2012**

The Urban League of London would like to commend Council and Staff for investing the energy and the funds required to address this important land use planning issue in a way that respects the needs of clients of methadone treatment programs as well as the interests of local neighbourhoods.

In no way should our support of the zoning and OP amendments before you today be seen as disrespectful to the very real and clearly-demonstrated treatment needs of clients of methadone clinics and pharmacies. We believe, as do you, that consumers of social services should be able to access these services in the places where they live and work. No-one benefits from the concentration of social services in a few downtown neighbourhoods, forcing clients to travel downtown from neighbourhoods across the city to access the services they need.

We note that the Methadone Clinic and Pharmacy Licensing By-Law is not before us at this time, and trust that the by-law will come forward shortly. While the OP and zoning changes are critical to reducing potential land use conflicts between the operators of these for-profit businesses and the neighbourhoods in which they are located, the regulations attached to the licensing by-law will provide the operational guidelines to ensure that clients of new methadone treatment facilities are able to access professional services in ways that are respectful to their treatment needs while also recognizing the legitimate concerns of the neighbourhoods in which clinics and pharmacies are located. For example, while the zoning amendments will require that new methadone clinics have a waiting area of not less than 15% of their total gross floor area, the draft licensing regulations address the longstanding practice of using sidewalks and other public spaces as "auxiliary waiting rooms".

The League supports the Minimum Distance Separation requirements from schools, libraries, pools, arenas and the Western Fair District, though we wonder why municipal parks were not included in this list.

The Urban League of London urges the members of this committee to move forward with this file. Let's get the OP and zoning amendments enacted as quickly as possible. We look forward to seeing the Licensing By-Law come forward in a timely fashion.

Respectfully,

Greg Thompson.
President of the League.