OPSF Annual General Meeting Notes
May 21, 2026, 7.30 pm
Orchard Park Public School
Attendance: approx. 85

1. Meeting called to order by Sandy Levin
2. Presentation by Western representatives from Campus development and Open Space Strategy by Mike McLean, director of facilities planning and design, and campus architect; and Andrew Konawalchuk, Associate VP Facility Management Division
    a. Objectives of the plan are guided by the UWO strategic plan and reaffirms the commitment to a pedestrian-first core campus, to integrate current and planned capital projects, and to develop a campus mobility strategy, HOWEVER, the Brescia acquisition did push an almost entirely new plan
        i. Engaged with the neighbourhoods, the City, transit, etc.
        ii. More than 1 million sq ft of development over the next 10 years
        iii. Philip Aziz Dr will be closed for City road works at least until the summer of 2027, perhaps longer.
        iv. Pedestrian access will be improved along Western Rd.
        v. The plan is to work with the natural beauty that Western is a part of – the river, the creek, the flood plain, and the hills – and comprises nearly a third of the campus
        vi. The Open Space Plan prioritizes pedestrians, improves accessibility, emphasizes landscape, integrates West Campus, etc.
        vii. The University Drive Bridge project will continue to use the current, 100 year old bridge but limit usage to pedestrians and cyclists. The new bridge will be for cars and buses.
    b. Questions:
        i. Mike addressed the question of dead-ending Ramsay Rd in to stop any possibility of a through way from campus into the neighbourhood. He said that Western was in full support of doing so and will work with the city to make this happen.
        ii. Someone noted that Springett is only 1/3 full so why build more parking? Parking is in demand and it is acknowledged that parking will be concentrated and moved to the edges in order to keep services in the core/10 minute walk from the core. Stacking parking intensifies it without moving it further out and spreading it. This year, for example, there were 1600 student requests for parking that could not be met.

iii. What will happen to the Talbot parking lot? The musical programs and tennis courts are in high demand and the new bridge will affect it. The University will reconfigure the Talbot lot and only lose 10-15 spots.
iv. There are hurdles for cyclists to get to Western through Brescia and to cross from University Heights. You have to dismount. Possibilities include to build a cycle path around Brescia (north OR south side) to meet up with Brescia Dr.
v. Question asked as to why not build a bridge from Philip Aziz to cross the river to Huron as it would be a city project and reduce campus cut thru traffic. Answer is that the City is not thinking about this at present and the University needs to deal with the University Dr bridge which is getting to the end of its life. More importantly, the current bridge and future bridge are necessary to reach the other side of the campus where students live and services are required and transit must flow. It is vital for the University to have access across this point.
vi. Is it possible that any buildings at Brescia will be demolished? At this point the academic buildings and the residence are fully in use. Other buildings are being assessed to see if they are underused and if they can be used differently. There will be renovations this summer to Ursuline Hall to move the McIntosh Gallery into it.
vii. The intersection at Sarnia and Western will have wider sidewalks for safer waiting and will have advanced green for pedestrian crossing. More information is available at: https://getinvolved.london.ca/westernsarnia

3. Question/Answer for Councillor Sam Trosow
   a. Regarding change of zoning for "connector" streets in the neighbourhood where up to four storey buildings would be allowed on Sleightholme up to Wychwood, Wychwood up to Lawson and on Lawson. Sam suggested it was an amendment that came up rather suddenly at City Council and at the last minute. He suggested that we need to keep a close eye on who buys properties along these routes.
   b. There continues to be no support from City Council for building a bridge across Gainsborough to Windermere.
   c. Regarding the new bridge, the University will be subject to requirements for environmental studies around the river and also requirements for Indigenous consultation. Andrew Konowalchuk said that they have invited Indigenous representation to the table for the bridge project.

d. Sam suggested that the University should consider putting parking further out and using shuttle buses. He also noted that the Brescia – Kings shuttle has ended because Kings cannot afford it. He proffered this also helps with parking. Andrew noted that the shuttle was provided by Brescia, NOT Western, and Kings cannot afford it. Andrew also pointed out that over 12,000 people use the LTC buses to the Alumni and Middlesex stops. Over 7000 people live on campus. Around 7000 park. 92%+ do NOT drive to campus. The majority of drivers are faculty and staff. They do hope to encourage a mobility shift. They hope to see parking demand decrease. Further, they lose some parking with new buildings so some of this expansion is actually replacement.
e. Sam was asked to comment on the potential designation of the Church of the Transfiguration as a heritage property and asked whether he will support this. Sam is happy to support this and believes it is important to work toward preservation.
f. Question about 127 Friars Way which is now zoned as a Lodging House. It has already been operating under the Cross Cultural Learners Centre since April 2025. Sandy has a relationship with their Executive Director and is happy to take any issues to him. The house is being used as a "way station" for government sponsored refugees as they are assisted with more permanent housing.
g. A question about the new building at 299 Sarnia Rd. and the traffic increase. Western is well aware of the increase and wants to be a good neighbour. Sam has concerns about traffic with every development. Sam has concerns about whether traffic studies are adequate – they don't take into account the entire area. Some councillors are pushing for a cumulative traffic study that examines a larger context. It needs to be a more integrated study and an examination of all the implications.
h. Concerns were expressed from an attendee about pedestrian/vehicle safety as the traffic intensifies around Brescia Lane/ Kininvie and Sarnia.

4. Executive Notes:
    a. Sandy thanked the Executive for all their work.
    b. The membership cost rose from $10 to $15 this year.
    c. The City also supports this BBQ with $500 to host this event.
5. Event dismissed around 9 pm.