

## TOURISM

LONDON  
C A N A D A*Discover our Spirit!*267 Dundas Street,  
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January 18, 2012

**Mayor Joe Fontana and Members of City Council:**

In light of the Council Minutes from January 10, 2012 that are before you to adopt, Tourism London's Board of Directors has asked me to express the Board's gratitude for the Municipal Council's overall support of the 2013 World Figure Skating Championships, including the City of London's financial commitment to the event. The Municipal Council's support and partnership is key to ensuring that necessary enhancements are in place to showcase London at its best to not only London's citizens but to an unprecedented international visitor and media presence – the likes of which London has never benefitted from before. The Municipal Council, like other partners involved in the preparations, are to be commended for the foresight and commitment to capitalizing on this rare opportunity for the long term benefit of our community.

It is with the latter in mind that the Board feels compelled to express its concern with the recent decision to decline a contract proposal for the Sound and Light Show project approved by Council. While we understand that the Municipal Council is faced with many difficult funding decisions in today's economic climate, our feedback from your recent decision has not reflected well on the City of London. We are therefore respectfully requesting that the Municipal Council re-evaluate its decision regarding the contract award and continue to move forward in a consistent and organized way in order to honour the Municipal Council's commitment to the Sound and Light Show and maintain the City of London's reputation as a reliable business partner.

While the Sound and Light Show may not be an "asphalt and mortar" project, its intrinsic value should not be discounted. It will create meaningful "buzz" bringing positive attention to this community and with it future opportunities for bolstering the City of London's spirit and economic well-being. This is not a frivolous expenditure without purpose.

Please reflect on the benefits of an estimated \$25M in anticipated economic spinoff; the \$4.5M that the federal and provincial governments are expected to contribute and the \$12M operating budget that Skate Canada and the International Skating Union have shouldered without risk to the City. Beyond the legacy spending, London's financial input is disproportionate to the overall risks and contributions being made on our behalf by others.

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Skate Canada has commented that if the Municipal Council were not to proceed with the Sound and Light Show, that decision could have a serious impact on whether London will be recommended for future international events. Tourism London, as your municipal partner, feels compelled to ensure that the Municipal Council realizes that if the Sound and Light Show were not to proceed, as originally supported by Council, existing and future partnerships would be compromised and London's credibility as a "can do" City would be severely undermined. This would, in turn, result in making the City and Tourism London's job to attract future national and international events a much harder sell, and would undercut what the City and Tourism London have done to date in building a solid and stellar reputation as a sport tourism destination. Please show that we are prepared to "go the extra mile" to illustrate our willingness to act and function on a world class level.

Tourism London is sensitive to and respects the concerns of Council Members who oppose this expenditure as excessive in light of our local economic challenges. We therefore reiterate our commitment to making every effort to alleviate some of the financial burden on the taxpayer by seeking third party sponsorship.

Therefore, on behalf of the Board of Directors of Tourism London please reconsider your decision to decline the contract award for the Sound and Light Show and move ahead with this project.

Respectfully yours,



Brad Rice  
President  
London Tourism Inc.

c.c. Tourism London Board of Directors