

From: Dave & Marcia Crockett
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 8:15 PM
To: Rowe, Linda; City of London, Mayor
Cc: dean Sheppard; Ryan Julie; Schurmans Mitch
Subject: London Budget 2015- need for investment in Urban Forest Management Strategy-note to council

Dear Mayor Matt Brown

Congratulations again on your successful run for Mayor of London. We are looking forward to new innovations and directions with a new and vibrant council.

I have been following the budget recently and understand you and council are under a lot of cumulative pressures from past council decisions to hold inflation to zero for several years.

That said, there are significant investment decisions to be made to make London what we need it to be in order to balance the economic, social, health and environmental well being of our community.

I am writing to express my concern about the apparent lack of investment in the draft 2015 budget for the approved Urban Forest Management Strategy (UFMS). This is of concern since our "Forest City" is no longer at the levels of tree canopy of other neighbouring communities who do not feature the logo and byline.

I know you are aware and have participated in the Million Tree Challenge. It was an audacious goal launched in mid 2011 to plant one million trees in ten years or 100,000 trees per year. In the 3 full years of execution to 2014, many partners and hundreds of volunteers have worked hard to plant 210,000 trees of the three year 300,000 tree target- about 70%. The city has been a key partner in the planning and has contributed under 10% to the number. Although This is commendable, we are leveraging 10 times that amount with the community through our many partners and community volunteers.

We are very appreciative of city staff time and expertise to help advance a key theme of the London Plan and a focus on Green infrastructure in the city's future by way of the Urban Forest Management Strategy (UFMS). That is why we were also excited to see the Council response and approval of the UFMS in 2014. The rationale and benefits of the green infrastructure were well documented in recent reports to Council over the past three years.

When I looked at the 2015 budget material it appears that the business case for the UFMS is referenced under deferred with no additional budget proposed for 2015. I am very concerned that London will wait another year or worse to add to London's tree cover and thereby the lost opportunity to improve and gain the benefits that tree canopy adds to our community health, environmental infrastructure, climate change adaptation, and welcoming look of the city.

As I understand the original UFMS proposal, the 2015 tree budget would need to be increased by \$2.48 per property to achieve the first year goal of the UFMS. I and many others believe this is a **minimal and necessary investment in green infrastructure renewal** that the public and council should and would support.

A small tree valued at \$20 yields incremental health and environmental benefits over its first 40 years of growth and then sustains this benefit for its lifecycle of another 40 to 60 years. A year delayed adds to the cost to catch up and cumulative loss of benefit.

My last concern relates to the potential loss of support by many volunteers who have spearheaded this tree planting initiative and look to the city to play a bigger role in its success. The lost leverage of these donors and volunteers would mean even more city cost in the future to lose this support and energy to sustain a ten year initiative.

I urge you to open the budget question about the tree planting plan in the UFMS and invest and enable the city can to advance More tree planting in 2015. The budget is a powerful signal of Council intention to execute the UFMS.

Since we launched the Million Tree Challenge, my wife and I and many others have made significant personal contributions in the last 4 years to advance this important work in London. Other grants and corporate gifts have been made by many others. It shows Londoners will leverage city investments. We wish to continue to help the initiative but I think it is reasonable to know that the city also wishes to invest in its approved UFMS plan for the benefit the community.

The leverage factor and the lifecycle benefits make this a wise city investment decision and the cost per taxpayer is low for a hundred year cumulative environmental benefit and to live our byline as the Forest City.. I know there are many requests and needs. However, the risk of delaying this investment is significant and real.

The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago, the next best time is today.

I hope we can count on you to flag this issue and make a statement before the current budget deliberations close so we might know the current council direction and investment in green infrastructure . Once city support is shown , we will continue to further engage the London citizen and partner collaboration to add to the success of this grass roots initiative for London.

Regards and best wishes,

David Crockett