



January 28, 2015

City of London,
300 Dufferin Ave.,
P.O. Box 5035
London, ON N6A 4L9

Re: Dundas Place - A Flexible Street

Dear Mayor Brown and Council Members:

In 2007, the London Downtown Business Association and MainStreet London asked a group of community volunteers, chaired by former City of London Controller Gord Hume, to conduct an analysis of our downtown and recommend further enhancements to the core, building on the solid foundation of work delivered by the City's Millennium Plan. The result of this work was the February 2008 Downtown Task Force Report. Three primary goals were identified by the task force. We are writing in support of one of these key goals today: ***Make Dundas Street the most exciting street in London.***

To quote the task force report, *"Many Londoners view the health and vitality of the entire downtown as represented by the few blocks on Dundas Street, especially between Wellington and Richmond. While this may be an unfair characterization, it is a reality and must be dealt with head-on."*

The traditional heart of our downtown, Dundas continues to function as our "Main Street", the centerpiece of our core neighbourhood. Cleanliness, beautification and amenities on the street are important. The task force recognized that in order to make Dundas the most exciting street in our city, we need to move beyond picking up garbage, planting flowers and putting out benches. We need to create an environment in which a variety of uses will be easier to accommodate, creating a more people-oriented place. The task force identified a need to change the physical aspects of the street to signal a much bigger change. Recommendation 29 from the task force report addresses this goal. It states: *"One very new idea the DTF discovered comes from the Netherlands. It is called "Woonerfs", or as the Americans now call it, 'naked streets'."* Locally, we describe these pedestrian-oriented corridors as **flexible streets**.

Fast forward to 2013, and we saw the same themes emerging again through the London Downtown Plan. First among the key actions recommended is again, to make Dundas the most exciting street in London. A flexible street, with pedestrian-oriented infrastructure and event programming, will support achievement of this goal.

The Downtown Task Force report was both visionary and pragmatic. Its message is echoed in the January 2015 report called *Creating Dundas Place: A Flexible Street Scoping Study*. It states: *“After years of decline and numerous studies to provide direction for renewal, there is now a strong interest in repositioning Dundas Street so that it can once again become the primary ‘meeting place’ and destination for residents and visitors in the City – a lively hub for events, activities, shopping and entertainment as well as business.”* We share this vision for Dundas Street. More restaurant patios and sidewalk cafes, more festivals and events bringing Londoners and visitors together, more pedestrian-friendly streets that set the pace for conversation and innovation.

Our downtown is our calling card to the world. When the downtown grows, the tax burden is eased for all Londoners. We are writing this letter to you today to indicate both our strong support for the flexible street and our readiness to put people first in London’s Downtown. We believe a change of this magnitude is what is needed to move forward with the continued revitalization of London’s original neighbourhood, one that belongs to all Londoners and welcomes visitors to our city. We ask that you place a high priority on continuing to invest in the flexible street initiative.

Sincerely,

Downtown London



Janette MacDonald
CEO and General Manager