



June 3, 2015

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

**Re: Back to the River**

Dear Mayor Brown and Council Members:

Downtown London has been following the story of the Back to the River competition with much interest. Great cities utilize the riverfront areas in their core communities to create opportunities for locals and visitors to enjoy outdoor public spaces in urban settings, and to generate economic and business development activity. It's an important contributor to our image and reputation.

We have always believed that the Forks of the Thames area is an important amenity space adjacent to our downtown district. Much of the recent downtown residential development is located close to this area, which serves as the backyard space for downtown apartment dwellers and connects us to the path system for both recreation and cycling to work for our downtown workers. We talk to businesses that want to locate close to the river so their staff have access to outdoor recreation space.

The City of London has recognized the importance of this area in the past through its investment in the popular splash pad and children's playground at the Forks, but also recognizes that the work at our riverfront isn't done yet. Through public consultation, the redevelopment of the Forks of the Thames has been identified as priority #2 in Our Move Forward, The Downtown Plan. From experience, we know that if we take on a revitalization project, we should do it extremely well. A design competition should bring the best, world-class ideas, and logically we need to set up the competition so that the best and the brightest will actually submit proposals.

We ask that you allocate appropriate resources to Back to the River to ensure that we attract top caliber submissions to the design competition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Janette MacDonald", is written over a light blue circular scribble.

Janette MacDonald,  
CEO and General Manager