

From: Joni Baechler [**Sent:** Monday, June 15, 2015 3:49 PM
To: Paul Hubert; Maureen Cassidy/Scott McPhee; Cassidy, Maureen
Cc: **Subject:** Back to River

TO: Planning Committee and Members of City Council
RE: June 15, 2015 Planning Committee Agenda Item #4 – Back to the River

The origin and rich history of many great cities around the world lies on the banks of rivers used as transportation corridors, effectively moving people and goods. As typical of many cities, the introduction of the automobile turned the enterprising communities away from the river and growth focused internally along the new transportation corridors. Many decades later, a multitude of the larger cities have come to understand that renewed attention to the landscape, including heritage rivers, escarpments, waterfronts, etc. that once defined a community is important. Cities such as Pittsburg, Washington, Perth, Qingdao, Boston, Toronto, and hundreds of others have come to understand that focusing back on the river or waterfront generates interest and important economic activity.

For years, we have heard councillors indicating their interest in public, private partnerships. This partnership has public, private and charitable fund commitments. The genesis of the idea came through the London Community Foundation with the generous commitment to fund a design competition for the Thames River – north, south and main branch in the core of the city. The city would have been unable to offer the “financial prize” committed to by the LCF. The City of London and Upper Thames River Conservation Authority made for natural partners given their experience, excellence and environmental analysis and study. We know from successful international design competitions that it is more important to have a “project” implemented at the close of a competition of this magnitude. The city’s participation in this aspect is a natural fit and critical component.

The recommendation before you is to support a contribution to the vision and promise of this extraordinary initiative. As you are aware, the Request for Qualifications instigated approximately 300 contacts to the LCF, with full RFQ submissions from across the world including China, New York, San Francisco, Austria, Texas, Denver, Madrid, Vancouver, Calgary etc. generating positive, international exposure and attention on our city. London has the potential for many opportunities for extraordinary development along the river with the launch of the SoHo lands. This design competition will set the stage. With your support, London will be seen as a city willing to take the steps necessary to instill excitement and financial confidence in our city.

Warm regards,

Joni