

367 Grosvenor Street
London, Ontario N6A 1Z2
November 9, 2016

Chair and Members
Strategic Policy and Priorities Committee
City Council

Dear Mayor Brown and Councillors:

We are writing to urge you to accept the request by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) for additional funding to support its Strategic Plan for 2017-2037. This plan has been developed because, currently, the upper Thames watershed and its associated forest cover rate only a “D” for system health and the plan proposes an array of strategies to improve this rating. The Strategic Plan sets four targets to reach at or before 2037.

1. To improve the score of each of the 28 subwatersheds by one grade.
2. To establish and restore 1,500 hectares of natural vegetation cover, windbreaks and buffers.
3. To reduce flood and erosion risk by updating flood models and hazard mapping for all 28 subwatersheds by 2020, then integrating climate-change scenarios into the updated models and developing climate-change adaptation strategies by 2030.
4. To reach 1 million people annually with conservation messages through access to UTRCA lands and demonstration of green infrastructure by 2030.

The importance of these targets should be obvious. Climate change poses many challenges to London and the surrounding region, and the risk of flooding ranks high among these. Flood modeling must be updated to reflect new conditions, and natural vegetation cover must be restored both to reduce flood risk and to improve stream health. Human health reflects the health of our natural environments, and as the dominant species we should accept a reciprocal obligation to protect the native flora and fauna of our surroundings. Education in the challenges of a changing world and the opportunities to meet those challenges is necessary to muster public support for effective strategies.

The impact of increased funding sought by the UTRCA is minimal: 0.05 percent or 40 cents for the average taxpayer in 2017, another 54 cents in 2018, and 60 cents in 2019. The expenditure is slight compared to the importance of the goals to be achieved.

Sincerely,

Jack and Susan Blocker