



LONDON
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

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March 16, 2018

To: Matt Brown, Mayor of the City of London
Martin Hayward, City Manager
John Fleming, Managing Director, Planning and City Planner
Kelly Scherr, Managing Director and City Engineer
Members of City Council

From: Martha Powell, President & CEO, London Community Foundation
Greg Playford, Board Chair, London Community Foundation
Fred Galloway, Past Chair of the Board, London Community Foundation
and Chair of the Back to the River Committee

RE: Back to the River (BTTR)

London Community Foundation (LCF) wishes to formally congratulate the City of London on the outcome of the first phase of the One River Environmental Assessment and the decision to decommission the Springbank Dam. This has been a challenging process for the City, for the London community and for advancing BTTR at the Forks.

The intent of this letter is to restate LCF's commitment to community mobilization. We are very pleased with the partnership we have formalized with the City of London and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA), along with the other community leaders who have embraced this project.

We have come a long way since this gem of an idea emerged at the Foundation back in 2015, followed by positive public engagement, excitement around the river and endless possibilities. The Foundation has had several lead donor commitments to both the Forks of the Thames inaugural project and the SoHo initiative.

LCF has received a collective impact grant from the McConnell Foundation to work with the BTTR Committee on what the evolution of this working group should look like going forward. We understand that redeveloping this lovely heritage river will need to have attention and structure for years to come. LCF is currently conducting research from cities like Pittsburgh, PA, Brandon, MB, Windsor, ON and even London, England to learn of their processes, progress and corporate structures, which can help shape our local initiative as it evolves.

We are most appreciative of the City's involvement and sharing of information with the Foundation. Staff and council are to be commended. We would like to reiterate the largest issues our board is deliberating upon:

The progressive movement of the Forks of the Thames inaugural project:

- Now that the Springbank Dam decision has been made, we would like to see momentum within the concluded Environmental Assessment and the start of a detailed design for the Forks, with “shovel in the ground” action.
- LCF will continue to work with all partners to see programming activities at the Forks as a way to re-engage the community. We are pleased to be participating in two conferences/summits happening this year in London focusing on the river.
- We are supportive of the UTRCA developing educational programming for students at the Forks. Also, LCF has supported several recent grants including a large grant to Museum London to develop a First Nations curriculum for patrons and students involving the river.
- Several financial gifts have been confirmed to BTTR including two anonymous donors, potentially involving \$2M, to augment the City’s \$5M commitment to the Forks to see this project completed.
- We would like to have the City of London reaffirm the \$5M toward BTTR that is part of the capital budget forecasts.

The SoHo initiative:

- LCF has two larger gift commitments to see the SoHo inaugural project be initiated.
- As was discussed in a meeting with the City’s Chief Engineer and City Planner, we would like to request that the Environmental Assessment for SoHo be fast-tracked.
- LCF has a donor willing to allocate funds to augment what the City will input to proceed with the development of the Environmental Assessment.
- Though we understand that the existing City budget has not allocated funding for an Environmental Assessment for the SoHo stretch of the river, we would like to formally request that it be included as a budget line in the 2020-2024 Budget and Strategic Plan or earlier, if possible.
- LCF is eager and willing to meet with the developers who are beginning the redevelopment of the old hospital lands in SoHo. BTTR wants to ensure that the SoHo inaugural project is an integral feature of the overall theme of the development of this important city neighbourhood.

We hope to continue our regular meetings with City representatives to keep BTTR front and centre as part of the City’s Downtown Master Plan.



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Thank you for supporting this tremendous community partnership and these exciting projects. I would ask that this letter be formally presented and reaffirmed by council.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Powell, President & CEO
London Community Foundation

Greg Playford, Board Chair
London Community Foundation

Fred Galloway, Past Chair,
London Community Foundation and
Chair, Back to the River Committee