

<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS CIVIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING ON APRIL 17, 2018</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>KELLY SCHERR, P.ENG., MBA, FEC MANAGING DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES &amp; CITY ENGINEER</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>UPDATE ON THE THAMES RIVER CLEAR WATER REVIVAL INITIATIVE AND ASSOCIATED WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
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That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Environmental & Engineering Services and City Engineer, the following information report concerning the Thames River Clear Water Revival Initiative and associated water management plan **BE RECEIVED** for information.

<b>PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER</b>
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- Report to the September 26, 2017 meeting of Civic Works Committee, Domestic Action Plan (DAP): London – Proposal Update (Agenda Item # 14)
- Report to the April 24, 2017 meeting of the Civic Works Committee, Environmental Programs Update: Thames River Clear Water Revival (Agenda Item # 10),
- Report to the November 29, 2016 meeting of the Civic Works Committee, Lake Erie Bi-National Phosphorus Reduction Target and Comments on Reducing Phosphorous to Minimize Algal Blooms in Lake Erie (EBR registry #012-8760) (Agenda Item # 20),
- Report to the April 20, 2015 meeting of the Civic Works Committee, Environmental Programs Update: Thames River Clear Water Revival (Agenda item # 12),
- Report to the April 8, 2013 meeting of the Civic Works Committee Environmental Programs Update: Thames River Clear Water Revival, Agenda Item # 2),
- Report to the May 14, 2012 meeting of the Civic Works Committee, Environmental Programs Update: Thames River Clear Water Revival (Agenda Item # 9), AND
- Report to the July 18, 2011 meeting of the Built & Natural Environment Committee, Update: Thames River Clear Water Revival (Agenda Item # 33).

<b>2015-19 STRATEGIC PLAN</b>
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The following report supports the Strategic Plan through the strategic focus areas of *Building a Sustainable City* and *Strengthening our Community* directly and indirectly as follows:

- Strengthening our Community – healthy, safe & accessible City of London;
- Growing our Economy – Strategic, collaborative partnerships;
- Building a Sustainable City – Strong & healthy environment.

## BACKGROUND

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide Committee and Council with a status report and update on the Thames River Clear Water Revival Initiative and related Water Management Plan.

### **Context**

The Thames River Clear Water Revival Initiative is a project specifically listed in Council's Strategic Plan reflecting the importance of the Thames River to the City of London. It appears both under *Building a Sustainable City* and *Strengthening our Community*. This multi-year, multi-stage project involves a steering committee comprised of all levels of government, two Conservation Authorities, several First Nations and City of London staff who together represent the entire river watershed interests.

The initiative began originally in 2009 by staff at the City of London, to address questions regarding the health of the Thames River. That conversation broadened into a more holistic, watershed-wide approach when other interests, communities and organizations contributed their support and ideas. The initiative continued to evolve to address emerging issues such as the Canada-Ontario Lake Erie Action Plan (formerly referred to as the Domestic Action Plans) for phosphorus reduction in Lake Erie and related concerns over algae blooms.

## DISCUSSION

### **Clear Water Revival Initiative:**

This overall initiative is described as a watershed strategy for the Thames River. The various components of the strategy are illustrated on the attached graphic showing concentric circles or scales of work radiating from the centre. The centre circle is the watershed strategy which has been titled the "Thames River Clear Water Revival". This strategy forms the overall objective to improve the health of the Thames River (see **Figure 1**).

The various components of the strategy as envisioned today are the necessary steps needed to reach the objective. They are shown as project "boxes" positioned on the various concentric circles to represent the scale of work. Several of these projects have been completed in London (e.g. Urban Forest Analysis, Thames Valley Corridor Study) however they have not been done for other watershed communities and municipal jurisdictions.

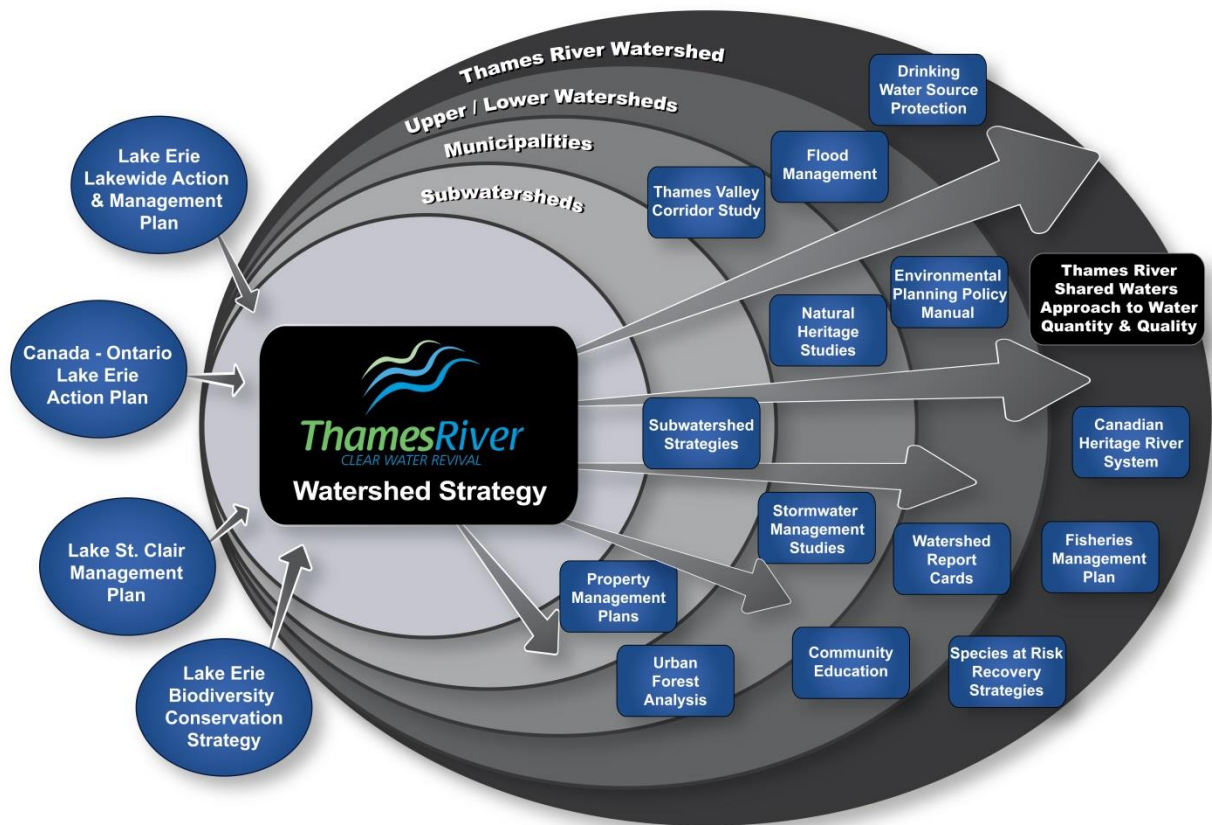


Figure 1: Thames River Clear Water Revival Watershed Strategy

### “A Shared Waters Approach – Water Management Plan”:

One component of the overall strategy is a Water Management Plan, this being the steering committee’s first project. It has currently been completed in draft form with a final version nearing completion awaiting stakeholder comments. It will update the previous and only river basin study done for the entire Thames River Watershed completed in 1975. The 1975 document was prepared by two Ministries of the Province of Ontario and is in dire need of an update, given that it was written at a time when the construction of water resource dams was still being recommended.

The Water Management Plan focuses on water quality and quantity in the Thames River and has been titled a “*Shared Waters Approach*”. This title reflects the influence of the First Nations participants and communities who have shared their traditional knowledge and perspectives. The main themes have continued to guide the plan from the start of the process, however the specific topics have evolved given the recent concern over excessive phosphorus entering Lake Erie and creating harmful algae blooms. The Thames River has been identified by both the Provincial and Federal Governments as a contributor to this problem and London’s action in response to this concern have been detailed and presented in earlier Civic Works Committee reports.

One of the encouraging developments that has taken place through this project is the engagement of First Nations communities. This engagement has been facilitated through a separate First Nations Engagement Working Committee that includes participation by many of the downstream neighbouring First Nations communities. Working Committee meetings have provided the opportunity for a number of City projects to be vetted as information presentations.

The Water Management Plan will be completed later this year and a report detailing the plan will come to this Civic Works Committee and Council for endorsement. Implementation and outreach will be the next steps over the following two years. Several of the expected recommendations from the “plan” include efforts already being implemented in London (e.g. low impact development, sewer separation, wastewater treatment plant upgrades, enhanced tree planting).

**Financial and in-kind Contribution:**

The project is co-funded by Environment Canada and Climate Change, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and the City of London with in-kind support from several other agencies. Our modest contribution has been \$25,000 per year for the past four years plus in-kind support. We have included a similar amount in the existing budget request for the next four year budget cycle. The multi-agency financial contributions assists in securing a project manager to lead the project. Tara Tchir has served as project manager for the past four years and is employed by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority.

City staff have been actively involved in the Clear Water Revival initiative since its inception and the Division Manager, Wastewater and Drainage Engineering currently co-chairs the steering committee.

<b>CONCLUSION</b>
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The Steering Committee continues to see the strategy and related projects as worthwhile initiatives. The overall strategy will continue to set the groundwork for more collaborative efforts with our neighboring river communities, our First Nation communities and our Provincial and Federal Governments to protect and improve the water quality of the Thames River.

**Acknowledgements:**

This report was prepared by Patrick Donnelly and Tom Copeland with input from Chris Harrington and Tara Tchir of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority.

<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>
<b>PATRICK DONNELLY, M.Sc. RPP WATERSHED PROGRAM MANAGER, ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS</b>	<b>TOM COPELAND, P. ENG. DIVISION MANAGER, WASTEWATER &amp; DRAINAGE ENGINEERING</b>
<b>REVIEWED &amp; CONCURRED BY:</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED BY:</b>
<b>SCOTT MATHERS, MPA, P. ENG. DIRECTOR, WATER AND WASTEWATER</b>	<b>KELLY SCHERR, P.ENG., MBA, FEC MANAGING DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL &amp; ENGINEERING SERVICES &amp; CITY ENGINEER</b>

March 8, 2018/pd

cc: Chris Harrington, UTRCA  
Tara Tchir, UTRCA