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February 19, 2019

To: Chair and Members of the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee (SPPC)

CC: Cathy Saunders, City Clerk

From: Martha Powell, President & CEO, London Community Foundation  
Greg Playford, Board Chair, London Community Foundation  
Fred Galloway, Chair, Community Mobilization Committee, London  
Community Foundation

**RE: Back to the River (BTTR)**

On behalf of Greg Playford, Board Chair of London Community Foundation (LCF) and Fred Galloway, Chair of BTTR Community Mobilization, I am writing to follow up on our letter of November 2018. We are pleased to submit this letter to the SPPC as submission for its March 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The Foundation is pleased to see that BTTR remains a priority in the city's strategic planning process and that momentum continues to build. LCF has invested for three years in this initiative and we intend to keep building on its successes to date.

We have watched with interest the wonderful development of Dundas Place and admire the new development at Museum London as it re-faces our beautiful heritage river.

I would like to highlight a few some important milestones of our journey in partnership with the City and the UTRCA.

A successful international design competition was led by LCF and primarily funded by LCF with an investment of \$500,000 that produced conceptual plans for Ribbon of The Thames.

Through extensive research in other communities we have learned that revitalizing a waterfront is not just about a "pretty river", but stimulates community revitalization and economic investment.

It creates community engagement, civic pride and brings entire community members to enjoy new amenity spaces, to interact providing greater awareness and education of the importance of the River's value and the importance of proper river stewardship.



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A revitalized river front will stimulate the economy supporting both local and out- of-city tourism.

LCF has attracted \$2 million in philanthropic gifts towards the Forks Outlook from two community leaders.

We recently received a \$3 million estate gift from well- known London philanthropist toward affordable housing, adjacent to the River in SoHo. This founder of our Foundation believed in this project, but was also keenly aware for the need of increased affordable housing, and what better match she believed than to tie her legacy to SoHo. She was also proud of LCF's investments through our Social Impact Fund in affordable housing. (LCF together with this gift has over \$8 million ready or already invested in repayable loans).

LCF has received a gift of \$750,000 toward BTTR in SoHo. Again, someone who believes in community engagement.

LCF has spoken with two developers who are interested in BTTR and how they might participate in future plans.

We have received a McConnell Foundation grant to advance BTTR as an incorporated entity for its long-term sustainability as an organization, similar to what other cities have done.

### **Forks of the Thames Inaugural Project**

We understand that the original budget for the both inaugural projects may have increased since the conceptual designs were planned. We remain committed to BTTR as we believe in the impact it can have on our community, as outlined above. This is not just about enhancing a river, but engaging all Londoners as contributors to a vibrant and thriving city.

We ask therefore, that the City retain its financial commitment to the Forks. Take the beautiful Dundas Place right down to the River at the Forks. What a destination with new amenities and gathering spaces.

### **Environmental Assessment in SoHo (EA)**

Further, we ask that the City partner with LCF in moving ahead with the EA in SoHo in the first year of the four-year plan so we can move forward with enhancement of waterfront



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development on the south side of the River opposite the old hospital lands. We have earmarked some funds to assist.

Our foundation would potentially embark on a capital campaign to support this in partnership with the City.

We will continue to make investments in affordable housing across the city but specifically in SoHo due this recent generous gift mentioned above.

While we may commit to raise significant funds toward this project, we would want the City to be a formal partner in funding this exciting initiative. To date we have received over \$1 million directly related to BTTR river redevelopment in SoHo. We truly believe that the lasting impact on revitalizing the river in SoHo and making it a “go-to destination”,

#### **In Conclusion:**

Thank you in advance for taking this request forward in your strategic and budgetary planning. We consent to have this letter included on the public agenda.

We understand that with new leadership comes change. LCF would be pleased to participate in, or lead, a Back to the River presentation to the new Council or the appropriate committee and if we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to ask.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Powell, President & CEO

Greg Playford, Board Chair

Fred Galloway, Chair BTTR,  
Community Mobilization Committee