



LONDON  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

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January 15, 2020

To: Mayor Ed Holder, Mr. Josh Morgan and Member of City Council

CC: Cathy Saunders, City Clerk

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

**RE: Request for Ten Minute Delegation on January 23, 2020 Public Budget Meeting**

London Community Foundation wishes to thank the City for their continued partnership and support of Back to the River. The intent of this letter is to reaffirm our commitment to this partnership as well as to share in detail why we believe Back to the River is critical to our city's culture, economy and social fabric.

The City of London, Upper Thames Conservation Authority, and London Community Foundation began this journey together five years ago. Our shared vision was of a unique opportunity for citizens and the City to undertake this exciting revitalization together – a project that has the potential to continue to transform our downtown core, strengthen our sense of belonging and civic pride, and create opportunities for economic impact and environmental stewardship.

Back to the River and its many supporters, recognize that the City has in front of it, many priorities with implications for its multi-year budget. Initiatives with a strong socio-economic benefit are inherent to a community that is robust and place-based. One that honours and respects Indigenous heritage and a vibrant culture that will attract new business and retain talented new leaders.

Affordable Housing at all levels is a high priority for the City. London Community Foundation, as you will hear more of, is fully committed to this need and is and will continue to increase our significant investment of between \$17 and \$20 million dollars.

**We are requesting delegation status for January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, during the Public Forum when the City Budget is being presented. We have prepared a *ten minute presentation to be presented* on the floor of council chambers. Fred Galloway, Chair of Back to the River and Greg Playford, Past Chair of our Board will lead this.**

As well, two individuals have requested a few brief minutes at the microphone in the Gallery:

- Mr. William Pol, Professor, Fanshawe College

- Mr. Han Vander Laan, President, Hava Holdings Limited.

I believe the following testimonials, only some we have received, will assist the members of SPPC and Council in understanding the case we plan to make on January 23<sup>rd</sup>:

*Waterfront revitalization has dramatically changed many people's perceptions of Hamilton, Ontario, - most notably those held by its own citizens.*

*Part of this work was an investment, facilitated by Hamilton Community Foundation, in a planning exercise to connect the downtown to the waterfront. In turn, it helped to expedite the shaping of an overall vision, and led to ongoing work which will result in hundreds of residential units, cultural amenities, public spaces and commercial investment. Former city manager Chris Murray says that "the investment and partnership with Hamilton Community Foundation in planning for the waterfront and adjacent north Hamilton neighbourhood development was a significant catalyst in advancing the city to this point."*

*Chris Phillips, the city's lead on waterfront redevelopment affirms, "Urban waterfronts are not only a natural asset that should be celebrated, but if planned and focussed on correctly, can truly transform a city. For decades, local officials and community leaders, have looked to Hamilton's West Harbour Waterfront and it's untapped potential, and have stayed focussed on a plan to create a destination for those who live within the area, the broader community, and those from outside looking for a unique urban experience. Anchored by significant investments in public parks and open-spaces, the West Harbour plan carefully curates spaces and places for a variety of users. From active and passive uses to on-water activities and event spaces, from cycling and transit infrastructure to new residential and commercial investments, waterfront re-development has created an opportunity to transform Hamilton's West Harbour to be a great place to live, work, and play". **Grace Diffey, Vice President, Community Relations, Hamilton Community Foundation.***

*I highly support continued investment in our Downtown economic center. The BTTR project aligns well with the objectives of the London Plan and reaffirms the importance of the heart of our City, at the Forks of the Thames. **Andrew McClenaghan, President, Digital Echidna***

*I was excited to learn about the potential of development along your waterfront. The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan has been involved with others in the development of the Detroit riverfront for nearly 20 years. It is one of the best investments we have made in terms of economic development and making Detroit a destination for people across our country and beyond. A new \$60 million park is now developing on our west riverfront with a special attention to children and young people. The following notes a little of our history.*

*For over 200 years, the waterfront along the Detroit River served as the heart of industrial development in Detroit. Critical to the growth of Detroit as a world-class business center, the proximity to the Detroit River provided opportunities for the flow of raw materials, finished products, goods and services, to other Great Lakes cities and to commercial markets around the world.*

*As an industrial riverfront, however, it was also inaccessible to the public. Other than its historic use, it had little connection to or meaning for the residents and visitors to the City.*



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*Recognizing the importance of public spaces to the culture of a city, and the unique value the Detroit Riverfront offers, in 2002 partner institutions and the City began to look at ways of making the riverfront more accessible to the City's residents. Opened in 2007, the first leg of the Detroit RiverWalk provided the public with access to the Detroit River in a downtown setting for the first time in generations. Additional components of the RiverWalk now include the first urban state park in Michigan, and links to some of Detroit's most important and iconic cultural sites, like Belle Isle and the Eastern Market. The Detroit Riverfront now hosts over 2.5 million people annually, whether attending large events or just enjoying the amenities of public access to the Detroit River. A housing development along and near the RiverWalk, the first housing development built in Detroit in decades, chose its location expressly because of access to the riverfront and its connections. A recent study confirmed that the development of the Detroit Riverfront has generated over \$1.5 billion in economic investment in the past decade, specifically because of the Riverfront development.*

*The development of the Detroit Riverfront has created a sense of optimism and opportunity for the future of Detroit. It has shown what can be done with a true partnership—philanthropy, business and the City. It has truly transformed the City of Detroit. **Mariam Noland, President, Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan.***

We sincerely value our partnership with the City of London and Upper Thames River Conservation Authority. We trust that the City believes in the vision of this project and *what London can be*. We look forward to continuing our journey together.

Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Martha Powell in black ink.

Martha Powell, President & CEO

Handwritten signature of Fred Galloway in black ink.

Fred Galloway, Chair BTTR,  
Community Mobilization Committee

Handwritten signature of Greg Playford in black ink.

Greg Playford, Past Board Chair

Attachments:

Letters of support  
Power Point Presentation



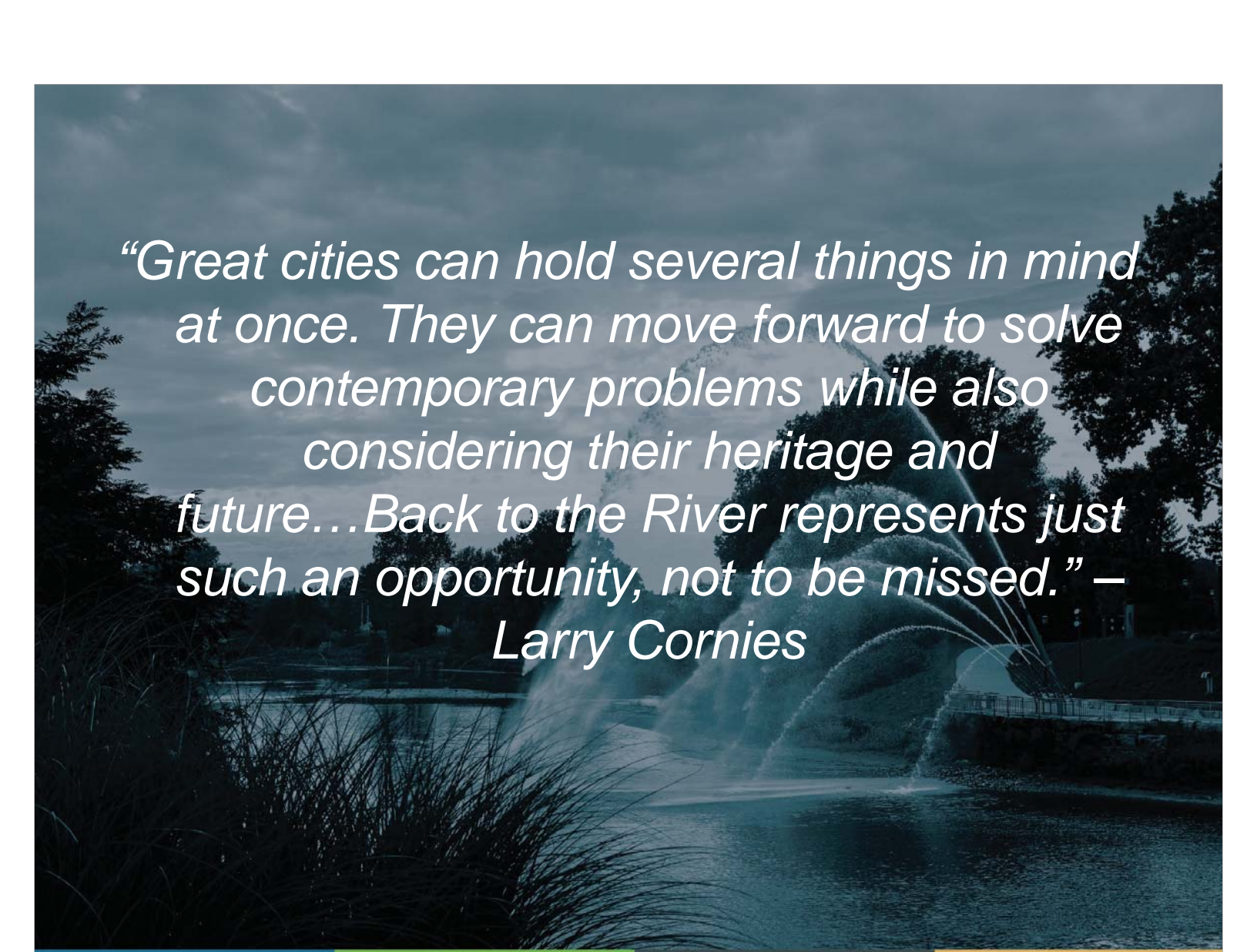
# back to the river

Re-imagining our relationship with the river



## Background

In 2015 at the invitation of the City of London, Upper Thames Conservation Authority and London Community Foundation formed a partnership to enhance community quality of life, environmental sustainability and economic development in the downtown core by revitalizing a 5km stretch of the Thames River.



*“Great cities can hold several things in mind at once. They can move forward to solve contemporary problems while also considering their heritage and future...Back to the River represents just such an opportunity, not to be missed.” – Larry Cornies*



*Why Back to the River?*

# This is a project for *all* of London

## *It's about the environment ...*

- Bring Londoners to Thames River in a new attractive way and raise appreciation for the river
- Address major shoreline erosion and instability at the Forks
- New design keeps piers out of water
- Long-term plan to enhance the health of our river
- Place-based learning opportunities for all ages



# This is a project for *all* of London

## *It's about our Indigenous Peoples ...*

- Give respect and honour the river's history and its connection to Indigenous Peoples, celebrating their history and culture
- Complements work done by Museum London and the Indigenous Legacies Project
- The Forks of the Thames was a route that linked Indigenous communities and facilitated trade in Upper Canada
- Public Art Installation (London Arts Council)



# This is a project for *all* of London

## *It's about the economy...*

- Will attract new development in the Downtown and along the river in the Core
- Create new business opportunities
- Provide a new opportunity to host major events in the Core
- Help to increase economic vitality of the Core and will add another layer of tourism attraction
- Become another gem in London's city-wide park system



# This is a project for *all* of London

## *It's about revitalizing our core...*

- A natural extension of Dundas Place
- A natural, accessible public space
- Complements other downtown investments such as Bud Gardens, the Covent Garden Market, and Museum London
- Activation of the London Plan
- Embracing what we have and building upon it
- Will provide opportunities for year-round activation and programming



# Examples of Programming

Back to the River presents an opportunity to activate our riverfront year-round in multiple ways:

- Festivals and events
- Performance art
- Pop up coffee shops & local food vendors
- Palette patio – wine/beer tastings
- Educational programming



# Examples of Programming

- Public art
- Art & craft vendors
- Access to a shopping district
- Bike share
- Kayaking & paddling access
- Indigenous cultural activities





# Investment

***Based on the business case presented to the city...***

- Council earmarked \$5M for the project in the last multi-year budget process
- Existing capital budgets have set aside an additional \$760K
- LCF has increased our donor commitment from \$2M - \$3M (by 50%)
- This leaves an additional capital budget amount of \$3.6M in this 2020-2023 budget
- Recommend by staff as a top priority investment
- No impact on average tax levy
- Additional savings have been potentially identified by City engineering staff – over \$1M
- Large contingency amount at \$2.2 M or 25%



*The Impact of Waterfront  
Revitalization*

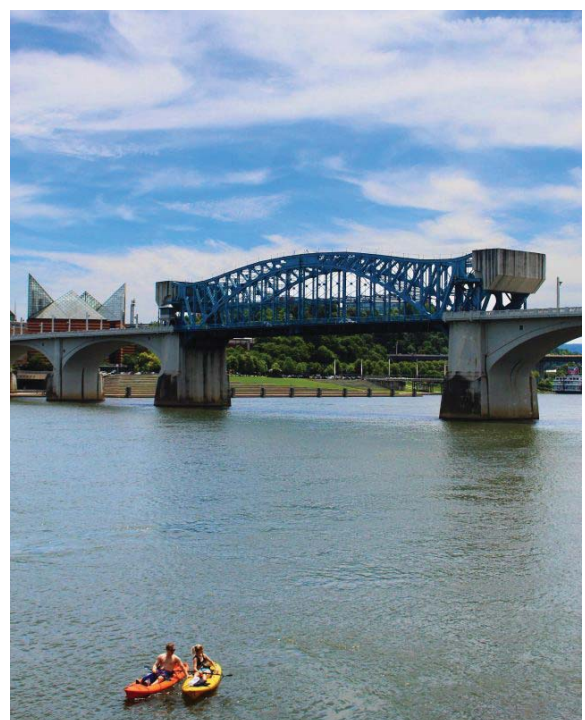
# Detroit, Michigan

- The Detroit Riverfront has generated over **\$1.5 billion** in economic investment in the past decade specifically because of the Riverfront development
- Now hosts over 2.5 million people annually – whether enjoying events or access to the public amenities
- A new \$60 million park is developing on the west Riverfront with a special attention to children and young people
- A housing development was built near the Riverwalk namely because of the access & connections it provides residents



# Chattanooga, Tennessee

- Received \$120 million in investment in riverfront development initiatives
- Landmark projects have anchored the tourism and hospitality industry, spurred signature annual events, and have become fixtures of the popular image of Chattanooga



# Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

- Over \$129 million invested since 2000
- \$4.1 billion in total riverfront and adjacent development
- Significant increase in downtown residential development



# Hamilton, Ontario

**The City of Hamilton invested over \$100 million in their waterfront redevelopment:**

*“The investment and partnership with Hamilton Community Foundation in planning for the waterfront and adjacent north Hamilton neighbourhood development was a significant catalyst in advancing the city to this point.” – Chris Murray, Former Hamilton City Manager*



# Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Invested \$82M in its Riverfront, River Landing



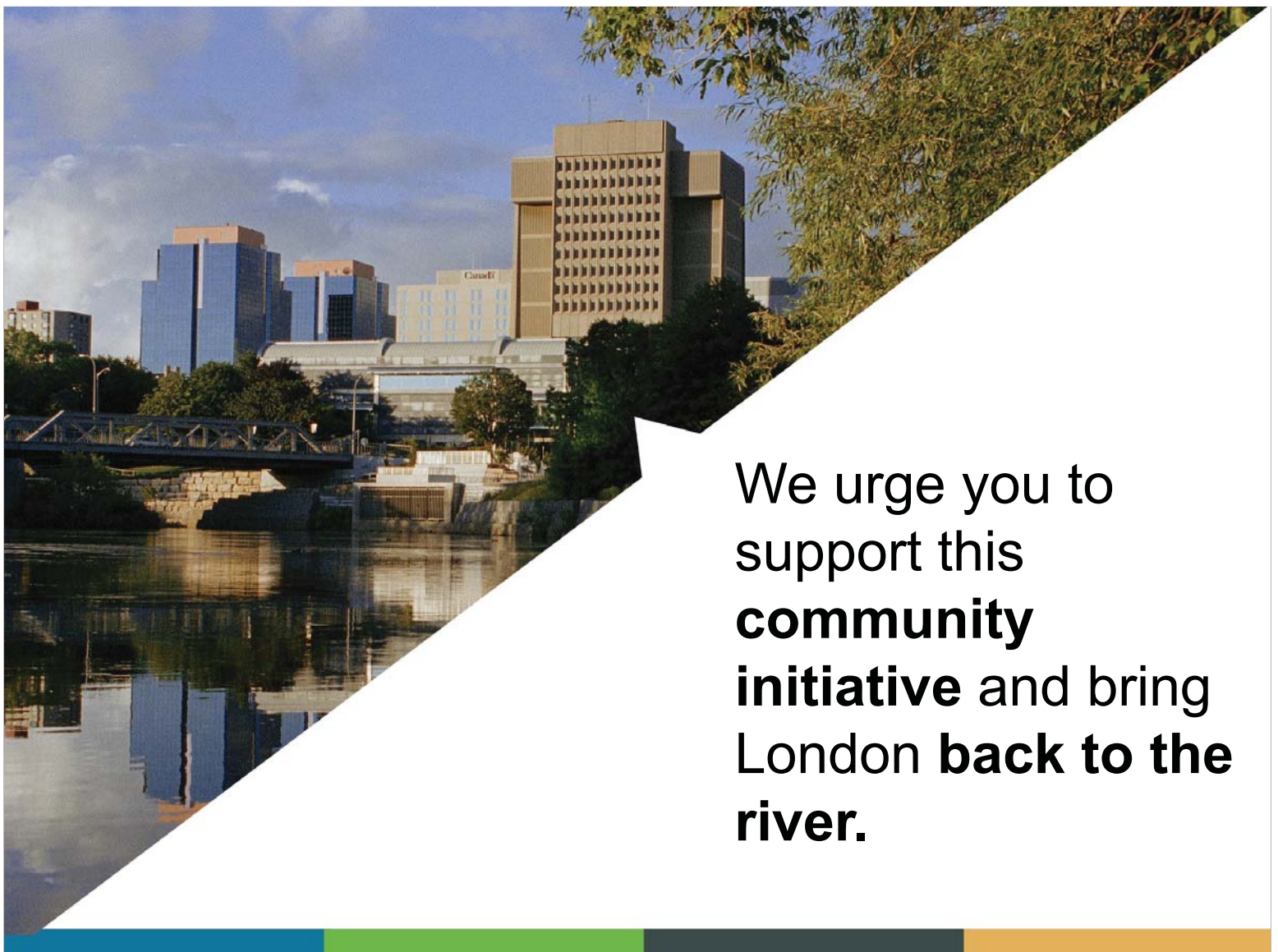
# Burlington, Ontario

Invested \$50M in Waterfront Redevelopment



# Affordable Housing

- Not an either/or proposition
- Affordable housing is a priority for LCF and we have invested over \$5 million in loans in the last 6 years, and enabled the creation of 350 units
- Just announced a dedicated affordable housing fund to address this need: \$17M - \$20M
- We believe the environmental, economic and social benefits of Back to the River will complement the critical goal of developing more affordable housing in the core and elsewhere in London



We urge you to support this **community initiative** and bring London **back to the river.**

December 17, 2019

Mayor Edwin Holder  
City Hall  
214-300 Dufferin Ave  
London, ON N6A 4L9

CC: London City Council  
Cathy Saunders, City Clerk

RE: Back to the River – Forks at the Thames

Dear Mayor Holder,

I am writing to urge you to proceed with the Forks of the River improvements.

As you may know a few years ago I helped the City and the London Community Foundation organize the very successful competition to prepare a landscape design for the Forks of the Thames. It was a project I felt would characterize and support the remarkable improvements and sense of confidence the city is exhibiting.

As a consulting urban planner, I have had the pleasure over the past decades to have worked on numerous projects in your city – for the City, for Western, and for private interests. There is little doubt in my mind that the difficult times the city has been through economically are coming to an end and that there is a new sense of confidence and consequential investment taking place.

No more so than in the downtown and in the immediate vicinity of the Thames, with the completion of the Dundas Place improvements, the Museum redevelopment, the expansion of new tech activity, and the several new residential projects built or being planned for the core. I'm also aware of the recent purchase by York Developments of the old Courthouse lands. It is within this context, to link together planned investments and to extend the confident sense of place characterized by Dundas Place, that the Back to the River – Forks of the Thames project is so significant.

I have been lucky enough in my career to have worked in cities all over the world and to have gained first-hand experience of the way in which major public space improvement projects can galvanize new investment – both directly by establishing a compelling sense of place, but as importantly indirectly, by exhibiting the care and confidence of those in charge of the city. Most recently I have been working in Cardiff and Manchester in the UK, both cities of roughly

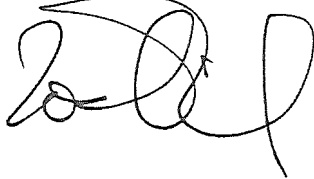
London's size and both of whom had been going through a wrenching transition from the old economy to the new. Both cities have invested heavily in the natural and heritage features of their riverfronts to create opportunities for new investment and to send a message to the world that the city they love is confidently returning.

The rivers for those cities were their reason for being, the place at which the history of their city started. Just so London, where the Forks of the Thames have always been a place of trade, and transportation for indigenous peoples, for the Province's first Governor, John Simcoe, and for merchants, agriculturalists and industrialists up to the present day.

The Forks of the Thames vision contained in the 'Back to the River' transformation continued these themes to make it very much a place for everyone in the wider city and region. A place for events, for recreation, for picnics and parties and for the celebrations for which the city is renown. It is my understanding that the London Community Foundation has committed \$3M toward the project. It is rare in my experience to see this level of philanthropic investment in such public space projects – and the opportunity should be expeditiously grasped.

The Forks of the Thames project started when the City invited LCF to the table and they have for 5 years worked, funded and committed energy and resources to see it be successful. I sincerely hope this lovely and important project can continue to success.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Berridge', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Joe Berridge  
Partner  
URBAN STRATEGIES INC.

# Hava

## HOLDINGS LIMITED

2617 Old Victoria Rd., London, Ontario, Canada N6M 1B8 1 (519) 455-1333

January 9th, 2020

Dear Members of London City Council,

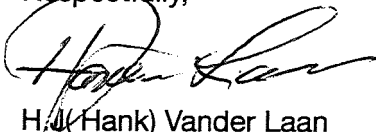
When one thinks about successful innovation we can point to many examples in our own backyard and yet miss the point that all of these were born out of a vision and taking risks. Risks that only a few would undertake in its early stages yet looking back turned out to be the kind of risks that truly built what would be considered highly successful enterprises as well as cities today. In our own city we see that for example in the Budweiser Gardens, the Convention Center as well as numerous other public and private enterprises. Without vision or risk taking we see only mediocrity or failed initiatives.

So today you have before you one of those visions that we call the Back to the River project initiated with considerable resources provided by the London Community Foundation in partnership with the City. London Community Foundation is an organization funded and supported by hundreds of Londoners for the purpose of enhancing our city as a place of excellence, compassion engaging the city where all citizens know they can thrive and build a future. In this project we corporately see a great effort to build and enhance a vision of creating great public spaces to compliment and integrate with that which already has been invested by the city as well as the private sector. To me it reflects confidence by this council that ongoing investments downtown will attract not only more money and people but also environmental enhancements that truly commits us to build an ever more attractive downtown. A place for the thousands of people already here but also for the thousands coming as we see development after development rising from the ground downtown. So we need creative and active spaces for all those to enjoy every day year in year out. This project already has attracted \$3.0 million in private sector commitments from visionary donors and now needs to be supported fully by this council

It has been said that this takes away funding for more urgent projects but I believe nothing is further from the truth. Take for example affordable housing so sorely needed in our community, yet those proposing and help fund this very project are deeply involved to exactly provide that kind of initiative and funding as well. LC Foundation has already committed millions of dollars to that initiative and has attracted others to do the same. The recently opened facilities called Woodfield Gate at 356 Dundas St as well as the upcoming 744 Dundas St project for affordable and supportive housing is a prime example that these efforts are all complimentary, not mutually exclusive and in fact creates functional public spaces for all. This to me is just one example of the broad well thought through vision this foundation has pursued and executed on.

Finally we at Hava Holdings pride ourselves being part of a community that has a big inclusive vision for the future that will help in attracting new investments and companies creating new jobs and growing economic well being. All we ask is for this council to not only affirm this vision but keep enhancing it well into the future.

Respectfully,



H. J. (Hank) Vander Laan

President



09 JAN 2020



January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Dear Members of the London City Council,

Trojan Technologies is one of London's largest private employers, selected as the London Business ICON winner in 2020 by London Chamber of Commerce. I am writing to express our support for the Back to the River project and to share some insights as to why we believe this is not only good for the city but also a positive step to support local employers.

For our business, headquartered globally in London, the importance of London as an employment hub is critical and at times we face the challenge of drawing talent to the region. Our financial growth over time, with annual sales now exceeding \$400M CAD, has been supported by increases in employee numbers to almost 900x staff globally as a world leader in Water Treatment – as part of this, Talent attraction is one of the key challenges that we as a business face today and as a key employer in the region, our growth appetite will require us to further grow our associate population in the region with this headquartered around our London facility. We additionally have facilities in Guelph, California, New York State, and Norway.

Innovation as a business and seeing the same from a city standpoint is encouraging – investment here is paramount as a leading indicator to success. At Trojan Technologies, we pride ourselves to be part of an inclusive community with a vision for the future. Continuing to attract talented employees to the region and to our team as well as a safe and friendly environment for customers/partners visiting from around the world is important in this vein. Our desire to see the London City Council continue to enhance their vision of the future and deliver on these promises well into the future bode well for our continued collaboration and combined growth.

I would also like to draw your attention to the attached letter from our Founder, Hank Vander Laan, outlining his support in addition to ours.

We count on the City of London to continue to develop this City and region.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Bell".

Stephen Bell - President  
Trojan Technologies

December 18, 2019,

The WindsorEssex Community Foundation (WECF) has a rich history within the Windsor-Essex community. For over 37 years, the WECF has been building a better Windsor-Essex community. We believe that better, healthier communities are those that have access to parks, have on-going events and activities to attract residents to our downtown core. The WECF has been a partner in developing various projects on the Windsor Waterfront with grants to the Peace Fountain for \$150,000, the Peace Beacon for \$350,000, Bert Weeks Memorial Garden, and most recently, streetcar 351.

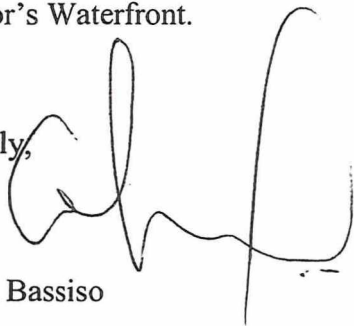
These projects will contribute to improving the economy of the downtown core, and Windsor Essex by attracting tourists, both local and out of town. This creates jobs by reviving local businesses in the area and help partners maintain jobs or create new ones.

Neighbour city, LaSalle, Ontario is working towards developing their waterfront and have recently requested funding of \$48.5 million from government partners. Their goal is to create a waterfront destination park.

The foundation believes in the revitalizing of the downtown core, and believes that developing attractions across the waterfront is key in achieving a busy and vibrant downtown. We work with partners to inspire philanthropy across Windsor-Essex to benefit the region today and forever.

We are proud of the work we continue to do in the revitalizing of the Downtown core and Windsor's Waterfront.

Sincerely,



Ghasan Bassiso

Program Coordinator

**“Inspiring philanthropy,  
to benefit OUR community  
today and forever.”**

Mayor Edwin Holder  
City Hall  
214-300 Dufferin Ave  
London, ON N6A 4L9

CC: London City Council  
Cathy Saunders, City Clerk

Dear Mayor Holder,

**RE: Back to the River – Forks at the Thames**

Great cities and great leaders make bold investments.

In doing so, they contribute to the future social and economic prosperity, culture and livability of their communities.

Here in London's downtown, we see evidence of the impact of bold investments all around us - Budweiser Gardens, Covent Garden Market, the Central Library and, today, the reimaged Centre at the Forks and the impressive and exciting destination that is Dundas Place.

Most recently, we've seen successful and highly respected private developers betting on large scale investments in this same area.

Because it's a desirable destination to live in and to visit.

Because they have a vision for the future that includes a vibrant downtown and riverfront.

Because this is straight out of the playbook of modern, progressive, competitive cities.

It was in this same way and with this same spirit, that London Community Foundation, along with a group of generous, forward thinking donors, and in partnership with the former City Council, conceived of the Back to the River - Forks of the Thames project.

Investments like this are projects for all Londoners - inclusive places for families from all over the city to gather, an opportunity to appreciate the largely untapped beauty of our river, and a chance to build affordable housing, at a time when it's desperately needed in our community, in a place where people want to live.

Of course, what makes a great city is also practical things - it's reliable snow plowing, sanitation, road maintenance, and social services that protect our community's most vulnerable citizens.

That's not in dispute.

sagecomm

But to drive the attraction and retention of talent, ensure investments by existing and future leaders, enhance culture and tourism, and continue to build the kind of dynamic, livable city that ensures strong and sustainable assessment growth, we need to follow the playbook of successful modern cities.

**To ensure attractiveness and livability for this generation and so many to come, we cannot take half measures.**

As citizens, parents, and business owners, we are proud of and grateful for the commitment that our previous Council and London Community Foundation, along with a diversity of private donors, made to this incredibly important investment in London's future.

We hope you'll demonstrate that same vision and commitment by maintaining the approved investment in the Forks of the Thames project, including the proposed Ribbon of the Thames.

Thank you for your kind consideration and for your municipal leadership. We are always grateful to anyone who puts their hand up to serve our London community.

Respectfully submitted,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is 'L Sage' and the second is 'Jeff Sage'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeff & Lindsay Sage  
Co-Founders and Senior Strategists  
sagecomm

13 January 2020

Mayor Edwin Holder  
City of London  
300 Dufferin Ave  
London, Ontario N6A 4L9

**Re: Back to the River – Forks at the Thames**

Dear Mayor Holder,

It is my pleasure to write this letter of support for the London Community Foundation and their Back to the River initiative. We were very excited by the possibilities of the project when it was first announced and have grown more excited over the years as London continues to recognize the central role the Forks of the Thames plays in the life of our community.

Museum London has recognized the importance of the river through our recent Centre at the Forks project which opens up the Museum to the Forks both visually and programmatically. This along with the recent purchase of the Old Courthouse lands and the proposed development of the Labatt's buildings to our north illustrate how both the public and private sector see the great potential of this area.

Back to the River would be the project to tie all of these initiatives together and provide both the residents of downtown, as well as all Londoners a place for everyone to enjoy the recreational and cultural opportunities that the Forks has to offer. The project ties in nicely with both the London Plan and the Dundas Place initiative given that they are all designed to bring business and residents to the core to create a new sense of place for downtown London.

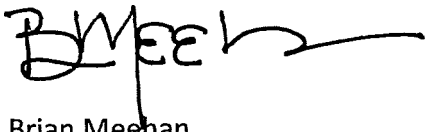
Equally important, Back to the River recognizes that Indigenous Peoples throughout history have accessed the Thames River at the Forks as gateway for trade and transportation. Formal recognition of this fact at the Forks is an important part of our community's reconciliation efforts.

In the past few decades communities around the world have once again begun to focus on the core of their communities with great success. Most have recognized what an asset their downtowns and their rivers are for socio-economic growth, for attracting new business and residential development, and for repurposing of existing building and lands.

The London Community Foundation's belief that this is an essential project for London is illustrated by their commitment of \$3 million dollars toward this City-led project, something that is *unusual for any Community Foundation to do, but something they are to be commended for.*

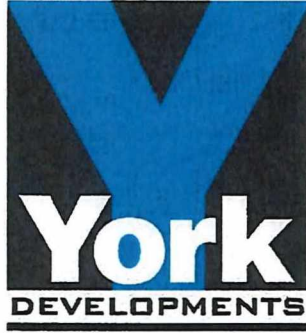
For all the reasons laid out here, we wholeheartedly support the Back to the River project and encourage you to do so as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B Meehan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Meehan  
Executive Director

cc: London City Council  
Cathy Saunders, City Clerk



**201-303 RICHMOND STREET  
LONDON, ON, N6B 2H8  
519 433 7587**

January 15, 2020

We are writing to express our strong support for the partnership between the City of London, London Community Foundation, and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority for the Back to the River Project.

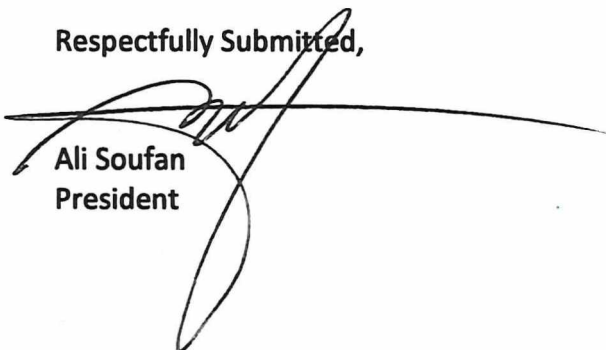
The Back to the River project will help boost London's reputation as a vibrant city for people to work, live, and play. Water is a natural draw for cities and London benefits from having a heritage river flowing through its core.

The river complements the revitalization of Dundas Place and the link to the Forks the city has approved. These investments, along with investments made by many developers and various institutions, will positively impact the economic and socio growth of London's core.

We recently purchased 50 King Street and 399 Ridout, two strategic parcels of land that front onto the Thames River. We recognize the importance the Thames River has in our community and we plan to explore various options to maximize its benefit. While we are early in the planning phase, our vision is to create a vibrant and lively destination that will draw people from London and elsewhere to the area.

We are investing heavily to boost activity in the core and we encourage City Council to help maintain the momentum that has already started in downtown London.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ali Soufan', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, extending above and below the line.

Ali Soufan  
President