



SPARKS! NEIGHBOURHOOD MATCHING FUND **GUIDELINES**

I. WHAT IS THE 'SPARKS! NEIGHBOURHOOD MATCHING FUND'?

The heart and essence of London is our neighbourhoods. London's neighbourhoods are about people and places and how they work in partnership to make great places to live, work and play. The **'SPARKS! Neighbourhood Matching Fund'** is a Neighbourhood Matching Fund that helps to improve, build and strengthen London neighbourhoods and improve the quality of life for everyone.

- To "SPARKS!" improved safety in our neighbourhoods ...
- To "SPARKS!" the addition of art and beauty to our neighbourhood streets ...
- To "SPARKS!" the creation of places for neighbours to congregate ...
- To "SPARKS!" the development of gardens in corners of our neighbourhoods ...

In the fall of 2008, over 100 residents expressed interest in being part of a resident task force to make and keep London and its community of neighbourhoods a wonderful place to live. The resident task force developed a vision (see page 2) and identified 13 core elements of a strong neighbourhood. This work resulted in a comprehensive city-wide strengthening neighbourhoods' strategy and five year implementation plan endorsed by City Council. The London Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy and Implementation Plan is a road map that contains the collective ideas of the resident task force for creating the best city they can imagine. This document is a vehicle for collective action!

An important strategy that was born out of these discussions was the *'SPARKS! Neighbourhood Matching Fund'* that supports the creation and implementation of neighbourhood-driven initiatives that build neighbourhood capacity, connections and livability. Ultimately, *'SPARKS!'* funded projects can transform the culture, pulse and even the physical appearance of many neighbourhoods and build a stronger sense of community by engaging people from diverse walks of life. With the support of the City of London, the *'SPARKS! Neighbourhood Matching Fund'* allows neighbourhood groups to initiate, manage and implement projects that truly make a difference, and the possibilities are endless! Neighbourhood groups may use the *'SPARKS! Neighbourhood Matching Fund'* to plant gardens; restore environmental resources; create murals, banners and sculpture; pilot a community program; host a neighbourhood fair; document a neighbourhood's history; or enhance a park or playground, to name just a few ideas. Each project reflects the unique needs and aspirations of the distinctive neighbourhood and people who live there. The outcome: stronger neighbourhoods and a stronger London.

II. HOW DOES THE 'SPARKS! NEIGHBOURHOOD MATCHING FUND' WORK?

1. A neighbourhood group develops a concept for a project within their neighbourhood that fits within the criteria for the 'SPARKS! Neighbourhood Matching Fund'.
2. The group submits an application, including a budget and workplan to the City of London.
3. A cross-functional review committee evaluates and approves or declines the project.
4. If the project is approved, the City of London supplies funds up to **\$5,000.00** to match the equivalent contribution the neighbourhood makes through a combination of other funds raised; donated services; donated materials and supplies; and volunteer labour. For example, if a neighbourhood group contributes \$2,500, the City of London matches this contribution with \$2,500.00 for an approved project. Money and resources from other City of London sources, funds and services, cannot be counted as part of the group's match.

III. WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS WILL BE FUNDED?

London's Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy embraces the following **vision** for London:

Our London is a City of Neighbourhoods.

Our London neighbourhoods will be empowered, sustainable, safe and active communities.

We will care for and celebrate each other while encouraging diversity and inclusiveness.

Our neighbourhoods will be environmentally and socially responsible and will have available green space, vibrant local economies and accessible amenities of daily life.

Accordingly, the projects to be funded through 'SPARKS!' must be aligned with the *Strengthening Neighbourhoods* vision for London and its 42 neighbourhoods. Approved projects must demonstrate benefits across some or all of the following project criteria.

- Involve and empower members of the neighbourhood
- Create visible outcomes that are sustainable
- Improve neighbourhood safety, participation and mobility
- Beautify the neighbourhood
- Improve community connections and understanding between neighbours
- Encourage diversity and inclusion
- Enhance or expand green space
- Improve neighbourhood accessibility

Additionally, the project submission must:

- Clearly outline the community matching effort

- Be originated, planned and put into action by the neighbours and community members who will be affected by the project
- Demonstrate broad-based and diverse neighbourhood participation in the project process
- Validate that there is strong community support of the project
- Demonstrate that neighbourhood residents will develop new skills and abilities as a result of the project
- Occur within the city limits and be on public land that is accessible¹

Potential '*SPARKS!*' project concepts will be designed to:

- Advance arts and culture in the community
- Inspire community connections
- Motivate and celebrate multicultural connections/awareness
- Focus on the history of the area
- Promote and encourage beautification and cleanliness
- Build community capacity
- Expand economic capacity
- Increase recreation programming
- Improve parks, playgrounds or green areas
- Enhance connectivity, walkability or playability within the neighbourhood
- Create gathering spaces
- Improve neighbourhood navigation (i.e. lighting, signage)
- Promote naturalization

Funds cannot be used to:

- Replicate an existing public or private program or an initiative that is already in the planning stages or that will be implemented in the future by another public / private group
- Maintain ongoing programs or services
- Fully fund staff positions
- Pay for a project on private property
- Substitute funding lost from other sources of money
- Reimburse an organization's operating expenses not directly linked to the awarded project
- Purchase land or buildings
- Reimburse out-of-London travel expenses or any accommodation expenses
- Pay for expenses or financial commitments undertaken prior to the organization being under contract with the City of London
- Fund any alcohol , tobacco or gambling expenses

¹ Some exceptions may be considered for land that is not public, but is accessible to the public at all times.

IV.WHO CAN APPLY TO THE 'SPARKS! NEIGHBOURHOOD MATCHING FUND'?

A neighbourhood-based, registered not-for-profit group is eligible to submit an application for funding.

Unofficial neighbourhood-based groups, community-based organizations, ad-hoc groups and business groups may apply in partnership with a registered not-for-profit organization as their sponsor. In this situation, the sponsoring organization will be deemed the **Applicant**, while a representative from the informal group is listed as the **Project Lead**. School-based parent committees must make an application in association with a community group based outside of the school.

Registered not-for-profit groups which are not based in the neighbourhood must actively engage neighbourhood residents. These groups will be disregarded if acting alone.

Applicants must demonstrate that they are open and inclusive and that the group is composed of a significant number of committed people who live and / or work in the neighbourhood.

A successful applicant² or Project Lead can only have one 'SPARKS!' project operating at any one time.

Insurance Requirement

It is necessary for groups to maintain third party liability insurance in the amount of \$2 million, and if a grant is awarded to the group, they must submit a copy of the insurance certificate to the City of London. If the group does not possess insurance, then the required insurance must be purchased to cover the duration of the project. In this situation, the cost of insurance can be identified as a project expense in the budget.

Ineligible Applicants

- Individual businesses, government agencies, political groups, district councils, universities, hospitals or newspapers.
- Organizations outside the City of London limits.
- Applicants who have failed to carry out approved 'SPARKS!' funded projects funded in either of the two preceding years.

² If the applicant is a sponsoring organization, it can be the sponsor to more than one project at any one time as the sponsoring organization is not the Project Lead in this case.

V. HOW DO WE APPLY FOR FUNDING FROM THE 'SPARKS! NEIGHBOURHOOD MATCHING FUND'?

It's easy to apply! Applicants must complete the '*SPARKS! Neighbourhood Matching Fund*' **Application** (see Appendix A.) The form is broken into key sections.

1. **WHO** - Applicant Data

- a. Name of neighbourhood-based, registered not-for-profit group. If the applicant is an ad-hoc group, being sponsored by a not-for-profit group, the ad-hoc group must also be documented as the **Project Lead** and the not-for-profit as the sponsoring **Applicant** (see Section III).
- b. Contact information
- c. Business Registration information

2. **WHAT** - Project Description and Information

- a. Project goal and expected outcomes if the project is approved and completed.
- b. Project origin – what is the origin of the project idea?
- c. Project location / catchment area
- d. Neighbourhood support for project
- e. Neighbourhood engagement, involvement and participation
- f. Fit with SPARKS! vision and selection criteria (see Section II).
- g. Skills and abilities that will be developed as a result of the project
- h. Sustainable legacy from the project

3. **HOW MUCH** - Budget Worksheet (see Appendix B)

- a. Precise amount of funding that is being sought by the applicant
- b. Summary of budget for how funds will be used
- c. Summary of neighbourhood match contributions

4. **HOW** - Workplan (see Appendix C)

- a. Specific steps and accountabilities with associated timelines
- b. Resources required for each action step

5. **WHEN** – When can we apply for funding?

Applications must be submitted to the City of London by Tuesday January 31, 2012. Applications will be evaluated, decisions made and the applicant notified of the decision not later than March 31, 2012. Funds must be expended and the project completed within the following 12-month period of time.

6. **Agreement**

By submitting this application, the Applicant acknowledges and agrees that in the event of being awarded City funds pursuant to the '*SPARKS! Neighbourhood Matching Fund*' Program, the applicant will comply with the requirements set out in the '*SPARKS! Neighbourhood Matching Fund*' Guidelines accompanying the application form.

7. **Neighbourhood Support**

As this project will impact people beyond those in the applicant group, their support must be demonstrated at the application stage. Accordingly, applicants must submit a minimum of **three letters**

of support for the proposed project. Letters can be from local community or neighbourhood groups, businesses, or residents living in the neighbourhood that will be impacted by the project.

Letters of Support from City of London staff or City Councilors **will not** be accepted.

VI. HOW ARE MATCHED CONTRIBUTIONS VALUED FOR THE APPLICANT?

There are four types of contributions that applicants can present to match the '*SPARKS! Neighbourhood Matching Fund*' contribution. They include cash, volunteer labour, donated professional services and donated materials and supplies. Applicants are encouraged to use the potential SPARKS! volunteer labour fund contribution to leverage other contributions. The specific rules governing each type are as follows:

Volunteer Labour

Individuals can contribute time to a project in many ways, including: serving on project committees; implementing action steps from the workplan; attending community meetings; leading the group, etc. Volunteer labour is valued at \$20.00 per hour. Volunteer time spent on planning, fundraising, design and organizing will be tallied commencing on the application approval date.

Donated Professional Services

Donated professional services must be relevant to the project and proportionate to its needs. Examples include a web designer, graphic designer, photographer, landscape architect, printer, etc. Donors must document the hourly value of their professional services on their letterhead. Services are valued at their customary rates, up to a maximum of \$75.00 per hour. An individual or business that will be compensated for any project-related work cannot also pledge their time as a volunteer nor donate other goods or services to the project.

Donated Materials and Supplies

All donated materials and supplies (food, paper, flowers, wood, paint, tools, etc.) are valued at their retail prices. Borrowed equipment can also be considered as part of the match, valued at the standard rental fee. Donors of the materials and supplies must provide documentation on their letterhead of the value of the match.

Cash Donations

Cash donations can be secured from fundraising events, individuals, foundations, businesses and the community.

VII. HOW WILL APPLICATIONS BE EVALUATED AND DECISIONS MADE REGARDING WHAT APPLICATIONS WILL RECEIVE GRANTS?

Each application will be evaluated based on a number of key criteria, including the following.

- Feasibility of project
- Clearly articulated outcomes that are expected from the project. Outcomes should align to the London Strengthening Neighbourhoods Vision (see Section II). Does the project:
 - Involve and empower members of the neighbourhood?
 - Create visible outcomes that are sustainable?
 - Improve neighbourhood safety, participation and mobility?
 - Beautify the neighbourhood?
 - Encourage diversity and inclusion?
 - Enhance or expand green space?
 - Improve neighbourhood accessibility?
- Tangible benefits to the neighbourhood
- Organized and thoughtful budget that clearly outlines the neighbourhood match. The neighbourhood contribution should be appropriate to the funding request and reflect the neighbourhood's capacity to contribute.
- Comprehensive workplan that is ready for implementation
- Neighbourhood letters of support for the project

Step One – Feasibility Review

A **City of London Feasibility Committee** will review all applications against a set of feasibility criteria, related to City of London by-laws, policies and legislative or contractual guidelines and procedures. The task force will be comprised of employees from the following departments:

- Planning
- Parks & Recreation
- Green Initiatives
- Special Events
- Culture Office
- Community Development
- Finance
- Other relevant Subject Matter Experts, as deemed necessary for the feasibility review process

Step Two – Evaluation of Applications

All applications that are deemed 'feasible' will proceed to the evaluation stage. Using the Evaluation Tool, project applications will be evaluated by a diverse **Review Committee**, comprised of seven individuals, with representation from:

- City of London (two individuals)

- London Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy Resident Task Force (two individuals)
- London Residents-At-Large (two individuals)
- Representative from a Community Funding Agency (one individual)

The Terms of Reference for the Review Committee are included in Appendix D. To view the Evaluation Tool, please go to Appendix E.

VIII. WHAT ARE THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

All '*SPARKS! Neighbourhood Matching Fund*' recipients must submit a final report describing the project outcomes and successes and verifying the project expenses and resources. A Financial Statement of expenditures and copies of receipts must be submitted within 90 days of project completion.

Successful applicants should submit stories and photos of their activities to be shared as part of the '*SPARKS!*' celebrations.