

## **Civitas Wins London, Ontario “Back to the River” Competition**

*Denver firm teams with Stantec Consulting to reconnect city with river, revive habitat*



A cohesive new open space plan with a looping pathways system has won Denver urban design and landscape architecture firm Civitas with Stantec Consulting the London, Ontario “Back to the River” design competition (image courtesy of Civitas).

Denver, Colo. – November 13, 2015 – Denver-based landscape architecture and urban design firm [Civitas](#), in collaboration with Canadian planning, design and engineering firm Stantec Consulting, has been announced winner of London, Ontario’s “Back to the River” design competition. “This is a transformational, game-changing, city-building initiative,” says London Mayor Matt Brown. “It’s about reconnecting to an asset we have at the heart of downtown. Now we can focus on execution and do this right.”

The city presented the competition as an international search for designs that would strike a balance between environmental sustainability, economic development and community/recreational space. Titled “The Ribbon of the Thames,” the winning design from the Civitas+Stantec team features renewed access for a 5-kilometer stretch of the Thames River radiating from central forks at the heart of London and stressing active four-season engagement and revitalized natural habitat.

“The Thames is such a beautiful river; however, you can’t really access it,” says Civitas landscape architect Heath Mizer. “It was clear early in the design process that we need to provide a setting at the river’s edge for people to experience the beauty of the Thames as a priority in phase one of the 20-year river corridor plan.”

In addition to Civitas and Stantec, the design team for the project includes Montgomery Sisam Architects, Blackwell Bowick Engineering, Two Twelve, Mike Baker and Tillet Lighting Design. The team will be awarded a design contract with the City of London for an inaugural project at the Forks of the Thames.

“The Forks is the historical birthplace of London, so what better place to reconnect downtown with the Thames and celebrate its heritage? A variety of spatial

experiences will accommodate large events and also provide comfortable daily encounters for the people who live and work in London,” explains Mizer. “Our design will become a civic destination where Londoners can engage with their river again.”

The Back to the River competition was narrowed to a shortlist of five teams in July, with presentations submitted before a selection panel of judges in October and the Civitas/Stantec team announced as winner on Nov. 2, 2015. Civitas is known for creating such successful completed waterfront projects as the Port of San Diego’s [North Embarcadero](#) and Calgary, Alberta’s recently opened [St. Patrick’s Island](#).

With a core purpose of creating healthier cities, Civitas is an idea-based practice of urban designers, architects and landscape architects engaged in strategic planning for urban change and project design for built works. Having celebrated its [30<sup>th</sup> anniversary](#) in 2014, the consultancy and design studio advises on a wide range of strategies for re-imagining urban life and places. For more information, visit [www.civitasinc.com](http://www.civitasinc.com).

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