

Report to Civic Works Committee

To: Chair and Members
Civic Works Committee

From: Kelly Scherr, P.Eng., MBA, FEC
Deputy City Manager, Environment & Infrastructure

Subject: Northridge Neighbourhood Connectivity Plan
Public Participation Meeting

Date: November 14, 2023

Recommendation

That on the recommendation of the Deputy City Manager, Environment and Infrastructure the Northridge Neighbourhood Connectivity Plan, attached as Appendix A, **BE APPROVED** to inform the annual Renew London Construction Program.

Executive Summary

Neighbourhood Connectivity Plans (NCP) establish a guide for the installation of new sidewalks in legacy areas of the City with limited sidewalk connectivity. Staff have developed a community engagement strategy to guide communities in thinking holistically about pedestrian connectivity in their neighbourhood.

This report provides a summary of NCP engagement completed for the Northridge community and recommends an NCP to provide a blueprint for where to add sidewalk infrastructure when the time comes to reconstruct a given neighbourhood street.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

This recommendation supports the following 2023-2027 Strategic Plan areas of focus:

- Mobility and Transportation:
 - London's active transportation network is better connected and serves persons of all ages and abilities
 - Build, maintain, enhance, and connect more infrastructure for walking and cycling

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

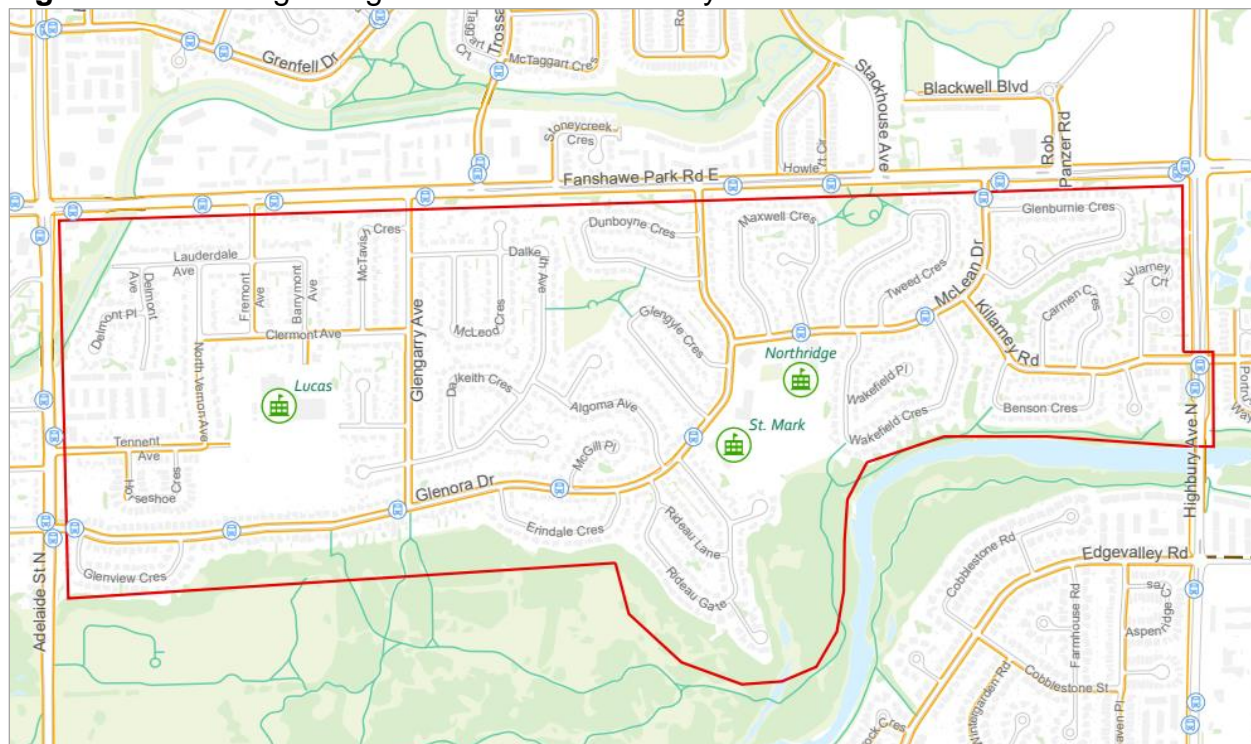
1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

- Planning and Environment Committee – June 13, 2016 – The London Plan
- Civic Works Committee – August 13, 2018 – Complete Streets Design Manual
- Civic Works Committee – September 25, 2018 – Byron South Neighbourhood Sidewalk Connectivity Plan
- Civic Works Committee – February 9, 2021 – New Sidewalks in 2021 Infrastructure Reconstruction Projects
- Civic Works Committee – March 15, 2021 – New Sidewalks in 2021 Infrastructure Reconstruction Projects – Special meeting to hear public delegations
- Civic Works Committee – November 23, 2021 – New Sidewalks in Established Neighbourhoods
- Civic Works Committee – January 10, 2023 – Neighbourhood Connectivity Plan – Engagement Strategy

1.2 Background

The Neighbourhood Connectivity Plan Engagement Strategy identified more than 20 neighbourhood “pockets” that would benefit from an NCP. The intent is to stagger these connectivity plans over several years to align with works planned for the following road reconstruction season or seasons. Northridge was selected for 2023 NCP Engagement as the 2024 Local Road Reconstruction Program includes McTavish Crescent.

Figure 1 - Northridge Neighbourhood Connectivity Plan Review Area



1.3 The Northridge Neighbourhood

The Northridge neighbourhood was constructed from approximately 1960 to 1969 and the street configurations are reflective of the design principles common in that era. The uptake in personal vehicle ownership at the time had a huge influence on the way neighbourhoods were designed. In areas like Northridge, you’ll notice far fewer sidewalks, more meandering streets with wide collector roads and lots of crescents and courts.

The only streets with existing sidewalks are the collector roads of Glenora Drive, Glengarry Avenue, McLeann Drive and Killarney Road and those streets that have already been rebuilt through an infrastructure renewal project.

Residents: More than 3,800 residents live within the boundary area identified for the Northridge NCP with people living almost entirely in single family homes and a couple small medium density developments.

Schools: Elementary schools in the area include Northridge Public School and St. Mark’s Catholic School. A.B. Lucas Secondary School is situated in the westerly part of this neighbourhood.

Businesses: There is a dense commercial area at the Adelaide Street North and Fanshawe Park Road East intersection. Within the community, Northridge Plaza supports local businesses.

Parks: Stoneybrook Park, Stoneybrook Recreation Field, Northridge Cricket Ground, Northridge Community Pool, Kilally Meadows and Fanshawe Optimists Little League Park are in the Northridge neighbourhood.

Streetlighting: Approximately half of this neighbourhood has streetlighting. Many of the collector streets with through connections include lighting while most crescents do not. As well, Glenora Drive has no streetlights from Glengarry Avenue to Fanshawe Park Road East.

Traffic: Killarney Road is the busiest street in the neighbourhood with an average of 4,500 vehicles per day (vpd). Glenora Drive is a main collector road for the neighbourhood with 3,500 vpd and the connecting streets of McLean Drive and Glengarry Avenue each carry an average 3,000 vpd and 1,500 vpd respectively. The remaining streets experience less than 1,000 vpd. The posted speed limit for all streets in the neighbourhood is 40km/hr.

Transit: Route 34 provides service through Northridge along Glenora Drive, with 45-minute frequency.

Trees: Northridge is a mature neighbourhood with single-family homes accented by a specimen tree planted more-or-less centrally in a deep front lawn. The street trees in this neighbourhood are predominantly Norway Maple and conifers, all of which are relatively shallow-rooted with visible surface roots that are particularly vulnerable to any damage. Most of these mature trees would be reaching their end-of-life phase requiring significant intervention (pruning) to address issues like overhang and crown defects. Some decline will be inevitable even without the addition of sidewalks.

To avoid impacting the health of these mature trees, sidewalks would need to be outside their Critical Root Zone.

The species diversity in this neighbourhood is generally poor and the goal for replanting will be to include a range of species that perform well in urban conditions to provide shade, air quality and habitat benefits and enhance the pedestrian environment.

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

2.1 Northridge NCP Engagement

NCP engagement for Northridge offered a variety of options for residents to provide feedback between June 14 and July 15, 2023.

Project Website: Residents were able to visit a project website for the neighbourhood (getinvolved.london.ca/northridge) to submit comments, answer survey questions or use a community map tool to provide input. The website also contained detailed information about the rationale, process, and timelines for developing a Neighbourhood Connectivity Plan.

Virtual Webinar: The City hosted a virtual community meeting on June 15, 2023 via Zoom webinar, to outline the process for developing a Neighbourhood Connectivity Plan and how to contribute feedback followed by a questions and answer session. The recorded presentation was then posted to the NCP website.

Drop-In Community Consultation: City staff hosted two public drop-in sessions on June 14, 2023 at A.B. Lucas Secondary School and on July 12, 2023 at Ridgeview Community Church for residents who wanted to drop in and provide feedback in person.

The City's goal is to have notices for public engagement opportunities arrive in mailboxes two weeks prior to events; however, there was an issue with the printers and Canada Post that held up the mailout for the June event. It was necessary to proceed with the scheduled events for those residents that had received the notice. Recognizing there was not sufficient notice for the community, a second in-person event was added in July.

Hard copies of the online survey as well as comment sheets were provided at both events for those who preferred to submit handwritten responses. The project team designed specific questions to solicit feedback to help define each neighbourhood’s priorities around accessibility, connectivity, and pedestrian infrastructure.

Whether people were using the map or survey tools on the website or answering a paper survey in person at a pop-up consultation, the questions were the same. Residents were also welcomed to provide their own personal commentary about sidewalks and whether they should be considered within the neighbourhood.

Table 1 provides a summary of the various forms of feedback received through the community engagement for Northridge.

Table 1: Summary of Northridge Community Feedback

Total Get Involved website visits	1,300
Submitted a comment on the website	34
Filled out a survey on the website	72
Pins submitted on the map on the website	110
Approximate total number of people who attended the two in-person consultation events	175-200
Number of paper surveys received at pop-up consultation	16
Number of unique viewers who attended webinar	43
Total number of resident signatures on petitions received for 12 streets	552

Many residents provided helpful, neighbourhood-level feedback based on the specific questions asked. As well, others provided more personal commentary about why a sidewalk should not be considered for their own specific street. This type of feedback came to us via phone calls to the project team lead, as a “general comment” on the website, and in person to staff at the pop-up consultations.

Despite issues with getting information to residents for the first event, there was strong turnout at both June and July in-person opportunities, with approximately 100 attendees at each event. The events were originally designed as a drop-in format; however, in response to the large turnout, both sessions were adapted to a presentation and Q&A format.

While most feedback at the in-person event was in opposition of new sidewalks, many residents who participated online highlighted areas in need of new sidewalks. Petitions expressing opposition to sidewalks were submitted for the following streets:

- Algoma Avenue
- Maxwell Crescent and Maxwell Court
- Glengyle Crescent
- Erindale Crescent
- Wakefield Crescent and Wakefield Place
- Benson Crescent
- Dalkeith Avenue
- Dunboyne Crescent
- McTavish Crescent
- Carmen Crescent

What We Heard

The schools, parks, trails, and area businesses are top priorities for improved walkability.

Community feedback highlighted concerns around pedestrian and vehicle traffic near the high school, foot traffic towards the commercial area near Fanshawe Park Road East and Adelaide Street North, parents wanting improved connection to neighbourhood parks, and parking congestion around the elementary schools during pick-up and drop-off times.

The majority of feedback noted a lack of support for new sidewalks in the neighbourhood. In general, the top rationales provided for why sidewalks should not be considered in the area or on a given street consisted of the following:

- Residents were most concerned about potential loss of trees
- Residents felt that there was not enough foot or car traffic on the street to warrant the addition of sidewalks and expressed that walking on the road was acceptable and safe for themselves and their neighbours
- Impacts to landscaping and driveways were key concerns
- Residents indicated a preference for better neighbourhood street lighting over new sidewalks
- Some residents expressed concern about sidewalks not being adequately maintained during the winter, believing it is more hazardous to walk on a sidewalk than to walk on the road.

Staff did hear from some residents, most of whom submitted comments online, expressing support for more sidewalks being added:

- Residents raised concerns about foot traffic near A.B. Lucas Secondary School on Tennent Avenue and Barrymont Avenue
- Families noted feeling unsafe accessing neighbourhood parks such as Dalkeith Park and Fanshawe Optimist Park
- Residents also identified “Kiss-N-Drop” congestion issues near the elementary schools.

Traffic Calming: While there is much opposition to sidewalks, several streets were flagged by residents as problem areas where driving behaviours are a concern, either as a result of speeding or low visibility of pedestrians due to parked vehicles on crescents and curved roads.

Northridge has existing traffic calming measures installed on the following streets:

- Tennent Avenue between Adelaide Street North and North Vernon Avenue;
- McLean Drive between Glenora Drive and Wakefield Crescent; and
- Glenora Drive between Glenview Crescent and Glengarry Avenue.

As roads are reconstructed under the Local Roads Replacement Program or Infrastructure Renewal Program, their designs will conform to the Complete Streets Manual (2018) and incorporate Traffic Calming through environmental design. This can include reduced road widths, curb extensions and raised crosswalks and intersections.

The Traffic Calming Program is currently focused on proactively treating school zones to encourage active and safe travel to school and address recurring concerns. For locations outside of school zones, residents may submit a request to be considered for traffic calming measures following the Council-approved Traffic Calming Policy.

Figure 2: A lawn sign on Glengyle Crescent that reads: “Slow down: This is a neighbourhood not a racetrack”



2.2 Recommended Northridge NCP

A cross-functional working group was assembled to review input gathered through the NCP engagement process drawing upon expertise from Construction Administration, Transportation Planning & Design, the City’s Active Transportation Manager, and Communications. The working group considered the distinct characteristics of each neighbourhood to identify gaps in connectivity that warrant new sidewalks. The group also reviewed other infrastructure options to aid in safe, active mobility and respond to things heard from the community – such as requests for pedestrian crossings, pathway extensions or four-way stops.

NCP recommendations consider the ARAO framework to provide a plan for sidewalk connections tailored to the community’s mobility trends and patterns with regard for accessibility, equity and safety. The City is committed to the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity, as described in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The term “disability” covers a range of visible and invisible conditions for instance, disabilities include visual impairment, deafness, brain injury, intellectual disabilities, or reliance on a mobility device, to name a few.

The recommended infrastructure to improve connectivity for the Northridge neighbourhood is summarized below, listed in **Table 2** and illustrated in **Figure 3** (Appendix A).

Figure 3: Northridge Recommended Neighbourhood Connectivity Plan Map

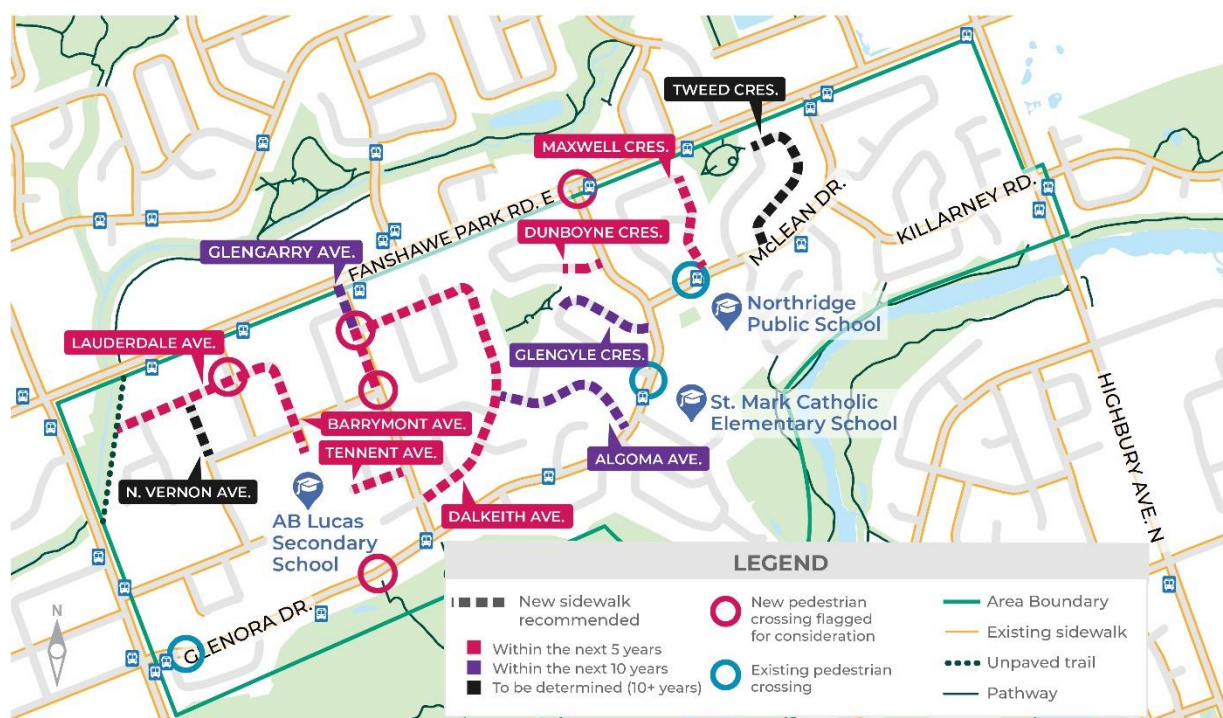


Table 2: Northridge Neighbourhood Connectivity Plan Recommendations

Street	Timing	Location	Program*
Sidewalk recommended on one side of the street:			
Lauderdale Avenue	1-5 years	West limit to Barrymont Avenue	LRRP
North Vernon Avenue	10+ years	Lauderdale Avenue to Clermont Avenue	LRRP
Tennent Avenue	1-5 years	Glengarry Avenue to A.B. Lucas Secondary School	NSP
Barrymont Avenue	1-5 years	Lauderdale Avenue to Clermont Avenue	LRRP
Dalkeith Avenue	1-5 years	Glengarry Avenue to Glengarry Avenue	LRRP
Algoma Avenue	6-10 years	Dalkeith Avenue to Glenora Drive	LRRP
Glengyle Crescent	6-10 years	Glenora Drive to Dalkeith Park access	LRRP
Dunboyne Crescent	1-5 years	Glenora Drive to Dalkeith Park access	LRRP
Maxwell Crescent	1-5 years	McLean Drive to Fanshawe Optimist Park Access	LRRP
Tweed Crescent	10+ years	McLean Drive to Fanshawe Optimist Park Access	LRRP
Sidewalk recommended on the second side of the street:			
Glengarry Avenue	6-10 years	Clermont Avenue to Fanshawe Park Road East	NSP
Barrymont Avenue	1-5 years	Clermont Avenue to A.B. Lucas Secondary School	LRRP
New pedestrian crossing for consideration:			
Glenora Drive	Monitor	New crossing at the pathway connections west of Glengarry Avenue	RSS
McLean Drive	Monitor	New crossing at Killarney Road	RSS
Fremont Avenue	Monitor	New crossing at Lauderdale Avenue	RSS
Glengarry Avenue	Monitor	New crossing at north leg of Dalkeith Avenue	RSS
New pedestrian signal for consideration:			
Fanshawe Park Road East	Monitor	New signal at Glenora Drive	RSS

* Sidewalks and pedestrian supportive infrastructure are constructed under various programs:

- IRLP – Infrastructure Lifecycle Renewal Program
- LRRP – Local Road Reconstruction Program
- NSP – New Sidewalk Program
- RSS – Road Safety Strategy
- TBD – Program/Timeline is To Be Determined

Recommended Sidewalk Exemptions:

Recognizing feedback around reducing impacts to trees, driveways and landscaping, exemptions to Mobility Policy 349 are recommended for shorter, low traffic crescents and courts with no other pedestrian connection.

The NCP does not recommend sidewalks for crescents with connections to Thames Valley trail system as there are several alternate access points and the trail system itself is not fully accessible.

A total of 12 crescents and 12 courts have been recommended for exemption from Mobility Policy 349 and would be reconstructed with no sidewalk when the time comes for infrastructure renewal. Sidewalks will be reconstructed on streets where they currently exist.

Recommended Sidewalks:

Most of the Northridge area is not structured in a way that supports a pedestrian grid pattern, so the working group focused on pedestrian destinations, desire lines, and community feedback. Alignment with London Plan policies and principles was also considered, as was applied to previous NCP communities in order to maintain a consistent approach in identifying locations where sidewalks can provide the most benefit.

Identifying strategic sidewalk connections in the NCP protects for future opportunities to complete gaps in sidewalk connection. Still, streets where a sidewalk is recommended will not see the installation happen until it is time to reconstruct the street and, in some cases, that can be many years in the future. For priority sidewalk connections, sidewalks could be advanced sooner under the New Sidewalk Program. Table 2 includes anticipated timing and program for each of the streets where a future sidewalk is recommended. These are the earliest possible timing of works as road reconstruction projects are subject to budget and program capacity

Dalkeith Avenue and Algoma Avenue:

Dalkeith Avenue and Algoma Avenue are important connector routes in the community. Dalkeith Avenue is 900m long with more than 135 properties when counting homes on the two crescents and court. These pedestrians and drivers all use Algoma Avenue if they want to reach the elementary schools, community pool, commercial plaza or church. Residents indicated that it can be challenging to navigate Algoma Avenue on foot due to poor driver behaviours, bends and cars parked on the road. Parents noted feeling unsafe walking along this street with their children.

Figures 4:

Left – Dalkeith Avenue looking east towards Maxwell Crescent
Right – Algoma Avenue looking southeast towards Glenora Drive



Glengyle Crescent, Dunboyne Crescent, Maxwell Crescent, Tweed Crescent:

Many residents in the community enjoy visiting Dalkeith and Fanshawe Optimist neighbourhood parks but commented that all park entry points are located on crescents with no sidewalks and, in most cases, park access is located at a bend in the road. Pedestrians must either share the road with vehicles or drive and park, creating additional traffic and hazards on these residential streets. Families with young children expressed a desire for sidewalk connections to these parks.

Fanshawe Optimist Park also provides access to Fanshawe Park Road East and transit stops.

Residents also raised concerns about these crescents being used for overflow parking when the school or church lots are full, resulting in increased traffic as drivers look for on-street parking. These crescents are also well used as school “park and walk” areas during school pick up and drop off.

The recommended NCP shows the shortest path to provide a sidewalk connection to the park entrances. However, street level engagement prior to construction on any of these crescents will review options with residents to find a solution that minimizes impacts to the streetscape.

Figures 5:

Left – Glengyle Crescent pathway access to Dalkeith Park

Right – Dalkeith Neighbourhood Park



Tennent Avenue and Barrymont Avenue:

Both Tennent Avenue and Barrymont Avenue are access points to A.B. Lucas Secondary School.

Tennent Avenue funnels foot, school bus and vehicle traffic down a narrow road with no sidewalk infrastructure. Community feedback noted Tennent Avenue as a priority for new sidewalks, even from those who generally felt that sidewalks are not needed for this neighbourhood.

Barrymont Avenue leads into the norther entrance of the high school. Residents noted that students follow Barrymont Avenue to the school rather than use the sidewalks on Fremont Avenue and Clermont Avenue. People living on Barrymont Avenue raised concern for high volume of student pedestrians given observed vehicles speeds and the sharp corner at the north end of the street. While there is a sidewalk on one side of Barrymont Avenue south of Clermont Avenue, a second sidewalk on the west side may be warranted for this busy access point.

Figures 6:

Left - Tennent Avenue looking west towards A.B. Lucas Secondary School

Right – Barrymont Avenue looking north towards Lauderdale Avenue



Lauderdale Avenue and North Vernon Avenue:

Community feedback noted lots of foot traffic on Lauderdale Avenue and North Vernon Avenue, mainly from high school students travelling to school as well as the commercial area at Fanshawe Park Road East and Adelaide Street North via the Stoney Creek foot trail.

This portion of Northridge exhibits more of a grid pattern than the balance of the neighbourhood, providing an opportunity to establish a more traditional pedestrian grid along Lauderdale Avenue and North Vernon Avenue.

Lauderdale Avenue offers good connection to the Barrymont Avenue route into A.B. Lucas Secondary School at its east end and the heavily used foot trail along Stoney Creek at its west end. There are currently no plans to formalize the trail at this time due to physical constraints. Instead, Fanshawe Park Road East was upgraded with a multi-use pathway to help connect the Stoney Creek Trail System.

Figures 7:

Left – Lauderdale Avenue looking east towards Glengarry Avenue

Right – Stoney Creek foot trail



Glengarry Avenue:

The Northridge NCP recommends completing the sidewalk connection on the west side of Glengarry Avenue north of Clermont Avenue. Many people noted Glengarry Avenue as a street they enjoy walking along in response to the survey. As a collector street into the neighbourhood, this street should have sidewalks on both sides for its full length. This gap in the sidewalk network forces pedestrians to cross the street at Clermont Avenue and one resident pointed out the current location of the mailbox on the west side.

Figure 8: Glengarry Avenue looking south



Pedestrian Crossing Recommendations:

Several residents noted a desire for a pedestrian crossing facility for Glenora Drive west of Glengarry Avenue where there are path connections north to A.B. Lucas and south to the Thames Valley Trail System. There is also an opportunity to improve pedestrian crossing movements where Killarney Road meets McLean Drive.

Subject to approval of the NCP recommendations, new crossings may be warranted at Lauderdale Avenue and Fremont Avenue, as well as at Glengarry Avenue and the north leg of Dalkeith Avenue. Staff will monitor the need for a pedestrian crossing to improve connectivity.

Other Traffic Control Recommendations:

Residents shared that are very happy with the addition of a pedestrian crossing signal at Fremont Avenue and Fanshawe Park Road and would like similar installations at Glenora Drive or McLean Drive. The only other signalized crossing point along Fanshawe Park Road is at Trossacks Avenue. This feedback has been shared with the Transportation Division for further consideration as part of their signal program.

2.3 Street Level Engagement

The NCP recommendations provided in this report are based on feedback gathered through the first stage of neighbourhood-level consultation. For those streets where a sidewalk has been recommended, residents who live on the street will have another opportunity to provide feedback on options to help refine the sidewalk design prior to construction. A second stage of street-level engagement will consider factors such as trees and vegetation, existing driveways, on-street parking, emergency vehicle access, winter road maintenance and streetlighting to develop a design that mitigates some of the impacts of adding a new sidewalk.

Figure 9: Example Curb-face Sidewalk Installation – Before and After



A curb-face sidewalk as shown in **Figure 9** is design mitigation that may be appropriate for streets in Northridge. While not suitable in all cases, building the sidewalk into the paved road width with no grass boulevard can sometimes help mitigate impacts to trees, driveways and landscaping. The trade-off of this design option is the loss of on-street parking on one side of the road to support winter maintenance and emergency services access. This design approach would likely be appropriate for most sidewalk installations in the Northridge neighbourhood in an effort to reduce impacts to the streetscape.

Conclusion

The recommended Neighbourhood Connectivity Plan for Northridge was informed by feedback collected through community engagement, available technical information, input from local agencies and partners and London Plan policy. Subject to Council approval, the Northridge NCP will establish the streets where new sidewalk infrastructure will be built when the time comes for infrastructure renewal.

The Northridge NCP recommends 11 strategic sidewalk connections to improve pedestrian connectivity and 24 sidewalk exemptions from Mobility Policy 349.

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Recommended by: **Kelly Scherr, P. Eng., MBA, FEC**
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Attachments: Appendix A: Northridge Recommended Neighbourhood Connectivity Plan Map

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Appendix A: Map of Connectivity Measures Recommended for Northridge

