

July 07, 2016

**RE: The Thames Valley Parkway North Branch Gap Municipal Class Environmental Assessment**

To the Community and Protective Services Committee:

The mission of the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) is to promote and protect the health of our community. Ensuring environmental supports are in place for Londoners to live healthy, active and safe lifestyles is an important means of reducing chronic diseases, injuries and supports overall physical, mental and social well-being.

The 42 kilometer long Thames Valley Parkway (TVP) is the City's primary multi-use pathway system and is linked to over 150 kilometres of additional pathways that connect all corners of London. It is free to use and accessible to Londoners of all ages and abilities. The TVP is a resource for physical activity both recreationally and as an affordable means of active commuting. Active modes of travel, particularly for commuting purposes, have additional benefits including decreased traffic congestion and improved air quality.

The TVP has several gaps that have been identified as key priorities to be addressed. The section of the TVP between Richmond and Adelaide streets is one of the identified existing gaps. Several municipal plans, including the City of London Strategic Plan, The London Plan, Transportation Master Plan, the current Bicycle Master Plan and the London ON Bikes Cycling Master Plan draft as well as the London Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy, all support increased provision of convenient and connected mobility options for Londoners.

For cyclists, in particular, connecting the TVP along the North Branch of the Thames River provides important safety benefits since it will eliminate the need to interact with traffic on Richmond Street (at Ross Park) where there is currently a break in the TVP and subsequently navigate through several residential streets before rejoining the TVP at Adelaide and Huron streets.

The MLHU supports the current City of London staff recommendation to connect the TVP along the north branch of the Thames River between Richmond and Adelaide streets. This is an important link to make in the overall plan to complete the TVP that will serve both the recreational and the commuting needs of Londoners.

Sincerely,



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