

Dear Mr. Macpherson,

My Family and I are very concerned about this final MVHF ESA report. We are very much against the opening of access points into our neighborhood and the intensification and urbanization of the Medway Valley Heritage Forest. Although the study mentions what a gem it is in the middle of our city, an ecological paradise with rare plants and animal species, it also speaks about asphalt paths, intensification, and many bridges over the river. This is the placing of a parking lot in the middle of paradise. The only reason for the existence of this valley is that it has been left natural and that humans have had limited access. If access points and paths are widened, paved or spread with compact granular chips or mulch, and bridges are installed over the river, the floodgates will be open for your Disney-like version of a forest. Anyone walking through in the future will be disappointed as the heritage forest we have today will be a thing of the past.

The natural forest will be destroyed by:

- the increased traffic of people that will bring more disturbance to the environment and who might leave behind their trash (see photo of Sunningdale path attached)
- the possibility of people bringing bicycles into the forest and disturbing the plants and wildlife
- the 7 to 12 feet wide paved pathways or hardened surfaces winding back and forth down to the valley to achieve the desired slope for wheelchairs
- the steel and concrete bridges that will need to be constructed
- the machinery to build the bridges and paths that will have a permanent detrimental effect on the fragile ecosystem
- the increase in off-lease dogs that will roam around everywhere, disturbing or killing small animals (picture of dogs off leash at Sunningdale path attached) and trampling rare plants
- Signs won't keep people from consuming alcohol in the park at all hours, won't keep dogs on leashes, won't keep people from leaving their trash behind, won't keep people and pets on the paths, etc. Marijuana smoking in the valley will be a major fire liability. The City will not enforce any of these rules and should be held accountable for all of the violations that the increase traffic will create.

The proposal to open the second entry point into the neighborhood between 74 and 84 Green Acres Dr. will increase the traffic into our dead end neighborhood immensely and unnecessarily. Changing the access point between 1607 and 1597 Gloucester Road to a level 2 will potentially create a parking nightmare for the narrow curb-less streets. Since these streets don't have any curbs, they are not salted in the winter and are slow to get plowed making for an already challenging drive in and out of the neighborhood. Adding parked cars along these narrow streets would create an even greater risk to safety and liability.

If there must be a level 2 or 3 entry point into the valley it can easily be accommodated at the west end of Windermere Road or on the south side of the Elsie Perrin-Williams Estate which are already owned by the city, one with an already paved parking lot and both located **only half a block away** from the existing access point. To create all these access points through an existing closed end subdivision so close together does not make any sense when access already exists in the form of the bridle path which runs behind Green Acres Drive and connects Ambleside Drive to the valley and then to the end of Windermere Road. The continuous connection of the path from Sunningdale to Western University is not necessary. If the city is adamant about connecting these paths they will achieve this once the bridges are done (if the city accepts the destruction of the forest as necessary). Opening these paths is unnecessary and detrimental to the environment and destroys neighborhoods like this one.

My family and I have lived on Gloucester Road since 1991. When we first moved into the neighborhood we used to have about 500 trillium plants in our backyard. I recall the year we purchased the house, there were so many toads in our backyard, we used to see turtles in the valley that were larger than 18" in diameter, and lots of large fish in the river. These are things

of the past now, we have not seen any large turtles in the last 15 years. Back then the houses were occupied mainly by the original owners who built them in the 50's and 60's and there were a lot fewer fences. The neighborhood was very quiet as the kids had all grown up and moved out. As the homes changed ownership, many families moved in with small children. A lot of fences went up when the farmland north of our neighborhood was developed into a subdivision causing a major disruption to the natural pattern of growth and habitation for plants and animals. Today it is hard to find any trilliums in our back yards but we do have a lot of groundhogs who love to eat trilliums. The fenced-in backyards have protected the groundhogs from their natural predators so they are thriving. The neighborhood backyards are less natural than they were back in 1991 with far less diversification of animals and wildlife. Some of these changes were inevitable but the protection of the Medway Valley Heritage Forest is not inevitable--it is a choice that is made by the committees and councilors that will ultimately hear these arguments. Once this study is accepted there is always the risk that a future council will vote to make changes to access. The only way to fix this problem permanently is to eliminate the two access points inside the neighborhood altogether and leave the access to the valley from the bridle path and from the end of Windermere Road. If we don't, then one day the Medway Valley Heritage Forest might be known simply as the Medway Valley Forest or worse Medway Valley.

Over the last 50 years or so we have lost many truly heritage worthy sites. Today we are trying to save any heritage properties we can after having lost so many to development. Intensifying this unique heritage forest will destroy it too, and 50 years from now our grandchildren will wonder what we were thinking when we willfully and unnecessarily put paved paths through it all, built concrete bridges over the river, and allowed for its devastation. The only legacy left behind will be the destruction of this last truly unique heritage forest.

I, along with my wife and children, strongly object to the opening of the second access point between 74 and 84 Green Acres Drive and to making the access point between 1597 and 1607 Gloucester Road anything more than the dirt path it is presently. I consent to having my name published on the agenda.

Sal, and Silvana Pacifico

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