

April 7, 2018

To the Chair and Members of the Planning and Environment Committee:

Councillor S. Turner (Chair)
Councillor A. Hopkins (Vice Chair)
Councillor J. Helmer
Councillor M. Cassidy
Councillor T. Park
CC: Councillor J. Morgan

**Subject: Public Meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee of Council
Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA (South) Conservation Master Plan – April 16th**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Sunningdale West Residents Association, a community which borders the North West regions of the Medway Valley ESA area. The Sunningdale West Residents Association was formed in the fall of 2012. Our group has been very active in helping to shape the trail system between Sunningdale Rd and Fanshawe Park Road. In fact, in the spring of 2013 our group made strong arguments for the paved trail system and water crossing bridge that are currently in place.

I would like to thank the past and current City Council for their commitments to complete this project over the past several years. We have patiently waited during the past five years as construction progressed and acquisition of the land behind Valley Run Blvd advanced. We are very excited that 2018 will likely mark the year that the project reaches completion.

Over the past few years we have remained active in supporting the MVHF trail system. We are participating in the City's Adopt an ESA program and have adopted the portion of the trail starting at the Sunningdale Rd entrance. This trail system has seen a significant increase in use since the water crossing bridge was installed a few years ago. During this time we have been very happy to see that there is less garbage present when we conduct our annual spring clean-up. Another great benefit of the formal paved trail system has been the adherence of users to stay on the trail and not creating new informal trails.

We were encouraged in the spring of 2017 when Linda McDougall of the City's Environmental and Parks Planning Services group approached us about joining the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) for the Medway VHF ESA (south) Conservation Master Plan Phase 2. Our group has always envisioned a trail system that followed the original 2005 plan from the City that provided a paved trail system that ran from Sunningdale Road all the way to Western University. Unfortunately it was clear from the start of the LAC process that there were very different views on how the trail system should be upgraded.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the LAC process and to provide input into the Medway Valley Trail. Our group would like to recommend that the Planning and Environment Committee reject the latest version of the Conservation Master Plan (CMP) March 2018. We would ask that the PEC provide clear guidance to the City's Environmental and Parks Planning Services group to install a Type 3 trail system from Fanshawe Park Road to Western University.

We believe the needs of our community are best served by a fully connected, and accessible type 3 trail system. This is based on three key points:

1) A connected and accessible paved path system meets the various mobility needs of our community now and in the future

- This is not just a request from our group but is in fact the law
 - The AODA requires The City to make new trail systems accessible in areas where this will not cause harm to the environment
 - We believe this area meets this criteria given the sewer and utility infrastructure that is installed in the location we would like the path system

2) Well managed trail systems can provide better protection of the environment

-Literature supports that areas with well managed trail systems have less impact to the environment

-People stay on the trail instead of using and creating more informal trails

-More utilization of the trails create more stewards for the care of the area

-We have the data that supports this from the trail system in the North

3) The City has spent considerable amounts of money to develop a multi-use system surrounding the trail in question

-The City has recently approved a pedestrian crossing over Richmond St (Just north of Sunningdale)

-The plans for Upper Richmond Village and future Sunningdale Golf course properties include a multi-use path system leading up to the paved system in the North

-These three systems will funnel people from a large catchment area from a paved multi-use system on to an inadequate system if paved paths are not provided south of Fanshawe in the Medway Valley

While recognizing that this pathway system is located in the environmentally significant area it is important to note that it is installed over a sewer trunk line in an urbanized area. This provides a unique opportunity to provide access into this natural area for members of our community that may not normally be able to access such areas.

Please include this letter within the Planning and Environment Meeting Agenda Package.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Sheculski

Vice-President, Sunningdale West Residents Association

c/o 2025 Wallingford Avenue