

Dear Planning and Environment Committee,

As a citizen of London, I spend much time walking the pathways of our city, and although I appreciate being able to enjoy many areas to commune with Nature, I do find it disheartening to learn that more concrete bridge areas and paved pathways are proposed to be built in London north along Medway Creek. I understand as well that the installation of these bridges will not only cause much damage to the natural surroundings during construction, but will also further endanger an already threatened plant, the False Rue Anemone.

According to the natural Heritage Master Plan it has been stated that we will protect locations deemed to be environmentally sensitive. It would therefore seem clear to me that the region in which these plants are located would qualify under the ESA category. Perhaps councilors and city staff are not aware that there are only 5 relatively small locations in Ontario in which this fragile plant exists and London is one of them. We should be proud to be part of 'owning' this status and the opportunity to protect this sensitive, flowering plant.

The proposed area for the bridges is in a small location of forested land with not much room to, a) bring in large heavy equipment, and b) to make pathways which are conducive to a forested setting, without doing much damage. The natural areas from this location running towards the Gainsborough area are heavily forested and the pathways are narrow and a lot of trees, plants, flowers and bushes would be destroyed building a 'connecting system'. Also as far as accessibility is concerned, there are entrance locations where no wheelchair would be able to gain access, for example from Glenridge Cres.

One of my own main concerns is the use of bicycles along the pathways. I have walked in many areas, especially forested places where aggressive cyclists go speeding along without concern for the walkers, let alone the environment. Not only do I often not feel safe, the bikes really do damage the plant life. Generally speaking, many cyclists do not follow the rules on the designated signs. The signage is not always specific and clear. My suggestion would be, if there is a pathway not suited for bicycles, then large signs could simply read: NO BIKES! People whizzing through on bikes will not see, and/or ignore, the instructions with tiny logos with circles and X's on the current signage with a long list of information on them. These natural locations are made for people to observe and enjoy them, and I feel that most cyclists are actually there to speed through for the thrill of racing. Personally, I think they are not much interested in nature, and even further, if the intention is speed and thrills, I feel they have no business being there.

In conclusion, to quote the city's Master Plan, I feel this proposed project does not "protect or enhance the ecological integrity of the ESA". Therefore, it would appear to me that if a municipality deems itself to designate areas as 'sensitive' in the Master Plan, then they should carry out these intentions. Otherwise why bother making these statements? Perhaps it's time to put your money where your mouth is, as the expression goes. Speaking of money, as a tax payer, I do not think we should be spending our budget will nilly on such of projects. (Do we even have the budget?) We have homelessness, hunger and lack of affordable housing issues which could use much financial attention.

Thank you for your time and attention to this issue, Margo Does 161 Bruce St. London ON