

Esteemed Council Members, Fellow Londoners,

My name is Lila Kari, and I live with my family near the Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA, at 56 Doncaster Place, London, Ontario. I am writing to respectfully request the cessation of any and all plans for the development of the Medway Valley Heritage Forest (in any way, big or small, footpath or small bridge, stairs or steps, or any other construction and human intervention).

I am university Professor of Computer Science by profession, and I just returned from a trip to the Nanyang Technical University in Singapore. I was deeply impressed by the beauty of the NTU campus and of the city, which is at the same time modern and nature-filled. Singapore is known as the "Garden City" and it is easy to see why - there are trees, abundant grass and flowers literally everywhere, and it is quite a pleasure to walk around and breathe the fresh air, amidst all the greenery. I spoke about this with the city inhabitants and it became quite apparent that this did not happen by chance, and that it was the result of careful planning and very-long-term vision. For example, on the NTU campus, I am told by my colleagues, every single tree is numbered, and they are all part of a regular maintenance plan. Nobody even touches a tree, let alone cut it down. Rather than building a new concrete-and-glass building, the NTU university is now planning a new outdoor Botanical Garden on its campus for 2019, to increase even more the amount of greenery.

In stark contrast with Singapore, other cities in neighbouring countries in Asia are jungles of steel and concrete, choking with car fumes, and almost inhabitable for human beings.

How did this happen? Because of each of those cities' planning and decisions.

For now, our beloved London is (still) known as the "Forest City". The question is, will our choices, decisions and actions of today make it become a Singapore or a Beijing in the future? Will our children and grandchildren thank us for our care and our long-term vision, or bemoan our selfishness and short-sighted goals?

It is all up to us. Our decision regarding the preservation of the pristine nature we inherited will determine which path London, our city, will take - that of becoming a marvel green paradise of the future, or a steel/concrete/smog-filled city that everyone will eventually leave.

It is that simple.

At this time of a momentous decision, which will affect our lives and the lives of our children irreversibly, for all the years to come, I now ask the London Council Members and our Fellow Londoners:

Let us do right by our forebearers, who bestowed upon us this beautiful Forest City, with its unique natural and completely undeveloped areas, now known as Environmentally Significant Areas.

Let us do right by the myriad of plants and animals that live in these ESAs, and let us leave them a home to live in and thrive in the future.

Let us do right by our children, grandchildren, and grand-grandchildren (who will be humans, not robots, and thus enjoy nature, not concrete, cement, and steel). Let us leave for them untouched undeveloped nature to enjoy, with pristine forests and creeks, with flowers, birds, insects, and animals, free of human development and construction.

Let us do the right thing, let us preserve and protect Medway Valley Heritage Forest and all other ESAs from any development*.

Lila Kari
& Family

* By development I mean any path (big or small), any bridge (big or small), any stairs, and any other type of construction.

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