



April 9, 2018

**Via Email**

The Corporation of the City of London  
Planning & Environment Committee  
300 Dufferin Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
London, Ontario N6A 4L9

**Attention: Councillor Steven Turner (Chair)**

Dear Councillor Turner

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

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I have reviewed the Conservation Master Plan (CMP) Phase II for the Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA (South) prepared by Dillon Consulting, dated March 2018. I feel that there is a real opportunity being missed here. I would appreciate it if you and your Committee would consider the following as you contemplate the approval of this CMP.

The City of London has built millions of dollars worth of recreation trail infrastructure in natural hazard / heritage areas to the benefit all users, including those with accessibility challenges. This infrastructure includes thousands of metres of multi-use trail (paved) and bridges across the City including the Medway Valley (between Fanshawe Park Road and Sunningdale Road). In addition, it is our understanding that the Richmond Street Pedestrian Pathway Connection Environment Impact Study has been completed and as a result the City will proceed to construct a \$1.9M pedestrian overpass, consistent with the Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) which recommended implementing a major east-west recreational pathway corridor along the northern boundary of the City with a crossing of Richmond Street. This pedestrian overpass will connect directly into the Medway Valley Trail System, proposed within the CMP, south of Sunningdale Road.

City-wide, it has been proven that multi-use trail infrastructure, can be implemented and exist within natural heritage / hazard areas, including ESA's, in a manner that respects the natural features within which they reside and minimizes impacts to the benefit of all Londoners. The City's Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2009) provides direction on programs, services, recreation facilities, park infrastructure and community investment into the future. The following service level recommendations are relevant to this study:

- Determine gaps and needed improvements in services and facilities;
- Ensure programs, facilities and parks are designed with accessibility in mind including adherence to the requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act;
- Continue to expand and improve access to the City's pathway system because it provides low-cost, accessible, multi-generational recreation for all neighborhoods; and
- Maintain a commitment to accessibility, safety and security within its entire parks and pathway system.



To not extend the existing multi-use trail system (paved) south of Fanshawe Park Road, to the University, and then provide an opportunity to link into the Thames Valley Trail System would be an incredibly huge opportunity missed. To proceed with unpaved trails south of Fanshawe is not consistent with the level of recreational trail infrastructure being installed or already installed within other segments of the Medway ESA and other sections of this broader trail system that direct recreationally minded users to this area.

Why build million dollar crossings to facilitate pedestrian connections to an ADA standard if these trails ultimately connect to trails that are not designed to accommodate all users?

Why ask developers to provide multi-use trails connections from their adjacent developments if we are only to going abandon some users along the way, by not continuing a multi-use trail?

When the City improves / constructs pathways south of Fanshawe they should do so once to the long-term benefit of all Londoners and the environment within which they exist. London is a highly urbanized municipality. If we don't pave these trails the first time, then we will only need to revisit this issue again and again in the future as user demands and maintenance requirements force the issue. Let's do this once, the right way, for the benefit of all and to lessen impacts on the environment from having to go into these areas again and again to maintain other trail types only to ultimately pave them in the future. It has been proven that multi-use trails can co-exist within natural heritage features in the City, the Medway Valley should be no different.

I understand and appreciate that there are many various opinions and perspectives on trails in natural heritage areas. As such, I would never support the City in taking a "pave all, everywhere, every time" approach to trail development. There are thousands of hectares of Open Space (Natural Hazard / Heritage) lands within the City where there are no trails (let alone paved ones) and where trails should likely be never contemplated. In this line of thinking, there should also be some acceptance that paved multi-use trails are desired and necessary in some locations as there can not be a "pave nothing anywhere anytime" attitude towards this matter. The Medway Valley is different. It is a long linear system which already has significant infrastructure (sewers, pathways, bridges, SWM ponds) located within in it. This has all been implemented in a sensitive way that balances the interests of all and has enabled the natural heritage / hazard features to not only function but flourish. The linear nature of the Medway Valley and its connection to UWO and the Thames River Valley make it the ideal location to connect these areas to the north.

Respectfully, I can't help but feel that if London does not have the fortitude to make these multi-use connections at this time, they will regret this missed opportunity and will simply look for a way to re-open these discussions again in the years to come. It is our hope that your Committee will support accessibility that a continuous multi-use trail will provide for all users and abilities.

Yours truly,  
Corlon Properties Inc.

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David R. Schmidt, MCIP, RPP  
Development Manager