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London City Council
London City Hall
300 Dufferin Street
London, ON N6B 1Z2

Re: Conservation Master Plan - Medway Valley Heritage Forest, ESA South

Dear Council Members,

We are writing today to express our concern and to voice our opposition to the CMP as it relates to the draft Conservation Master Plan Phase 2 and specifically, the Medway Valley Heritage Forest, ESA South. We were outraged to learn that the city's planning department had been working on this plan for years yet we were only apprised of it in late March of this year, although not surprised as this pattern of disregard for transparency and real community input is evident in many major decisions - in 2009 council attempted to move the same agenda with zero consultation and the proposal was rejected then as it should be in 2018.

As a neighbourhood, we organized quickly to become familiar with the plans proposed and to educate ourselves on what they would mean to this beloved valley. How disappointing to discover the poor and at times, almost complete lack of consultation with so many of the key stakeholders (the neighbourhoods and groups/associations, as well as our First Nations, most affected by the CMP - MVHF, ESA South). In addition it became clear, at the April 16th Environment Committee meeting, that the city and its' consultant have not yet completed all the appropriate studies to ensure the proposed plans will not harm the ESA, yet some committee members were of the opinion that consultation and scientific study could be completed after passing the plan, as is!! In fact, it would appear that the city's own planning department and its' consultant felt it was their right to mislead and misrepresent certain facts regarding EPAC's endorsement (in truth lack of endorsement) and AODA requirements as they would relate to this situation.

Perhaps some historical context is appropriate for you all at this point. Some of our neighbours in Medway Heights have lived here for over 50 years. In fact, some of those families' adult children have moved back to the neighbourhood to raise their own families. Over these generations, they have faced the challenges of planning departments and past councils trying to change and develop the Medway Valley, and in each case

fought to preserve this lovely valley as the wild and beautiful wonder it is. It would appear that almost every 10 years these types of plans or proposals are presented causing neighbourhoods like ours to go to bat for the valley over and over (I refer council to 1989, 1996 and 2009). It's now 2018 and here we are again.

Our household, which shares in the majority opinion of the Medway Heights, Orchard Park and Sherwood Forest neighbourhoods, is in opposition to any changes to the MVHF for the following reasons:

1. The CMP is not an environmentally sound or safe plan as it relates to the MVHF - lack of completed studies, lack of direct and thorough community consultation;
2. It is a FOREST, an ESA and NOT A PARK - the plan is bad for this sensitive environment (more paths and greater infrastructure of existing paths and bridges create more human use and add enormous pressure to the bio-environmental landscape, creek and tributary flow, aquaculture and species at risk or concern.);
3. The legislation regarding accessibility is only in play if existing paths are redeveloped or if new are added, including the proposed bridges. If left as is, there is no requirement to enact AODA legislation. Accessible paths currently exist in the loop path at Elsie Perrin and on the opposite side in the Sherwood Forest and Orchard Park side of the valley...therefore leave the valley as is;
4. Building any footbridge can open the door to future vehicular traffic across the valley - something we have fought before and would fight again;
5. There is a real risk regarding safety for the neighbourhoods abutting the valley under the current plan, (risk of increased crime, traffic, other threats to the communities' safety);
6. The enormous amount of tax dollars required to execute this plan are obscene in light of the more pressing socio-economic issues London is currently facing.

On Tuesday, April 24, 2018 you, as council, will be charged with making a decision that we hope is the right one. For the Medway Valley Heritage Forest, that is: No bridges, No new paths, No redevelopment of existing paths....in other words, leave the valley as it is. Reject the CMP.

Sincerely,

John Besterd and Maria Hauschel