

To The Mayor and Members of Council:

Mayor Matt Brown
Councillor Michael van Holst
Councillor Bill Armstrong
Councillor Mo Mohamed Salih
Councillor Jesse Helmer
Councillor Maureen Cassidy
Councillor Phil Squire
Councillor Josh Morgan
Councillor Paul Hubert
Councillor Anna Hopkins
Councillor Virginia Ridley
Councillor Stephen Turner
Councillor Harold L. Usher
Councillor Tanya Park
Councillor Jared Zaifman

Subject: April 24, 2018 Council Meeting

Agenda Item 6.2; Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA (South) Conservation Master Plan

We are writing to you on behalf of the Sunningdale community. This includes the Sunningdale West Residents Association, Sunningdale North Residents Association, and the MVHF Adopt an ESA Sunningdale West RA. Our community is located on the parcel of land bordered by Wonderland Rd, Sunningdale Rd, Richmond St, and Fanshawe Park Rd. which borders the North regions of the Medway Valley ESA area.

We respectfully ask that you approve the latest version of the Conservation Master Plan (CMP) - March 2018 with one alteration. Please consider moving the 2nd pedestrian bridge location from site D to site E.

This request represents a significant compromise from our community's original position. As you are likely aware, our community is located in "The North" section of the MVHF ESA. We are very proud of our award winning ESA and how our community uses this area in a responsible manner. As members of the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) for the Medway VHF ESA (south) Conservation Master Plan Phase 2 we advocated for a similar trail systems to be installed in the south section of the MVHF. During last Monday's PEC meeting on this matter it became clear that there are many different views on this area and how it should be protected. We believe the following rational supports our view on this item:

Protection of the Environmental Sensitive items of the ESA

May people have raised concerns with installing pedestrian bridges and hardening of trails in the ESA? It is important to note that doing nothing to improve the trails system has a larger negative impact. Without trail improvements users in the South continue to enter areas with sensitive species and expand the informal trail network. We respectfully ask you to look at the data from the north section of the MVHF where trail upgrades have been made several years ago. What you will find is that no new informal trails have been created and users are staying on the trail system away from sensitive areas. It is also important to note that there is a strong sense of stewardship in our community and we work with City Staff to remove invasive species, plant trees and many other items to protect the area. We invite you to visit this area for yourself, you will find that is well cared for and does not look like "A Park".

Accessibility is a right for all

Our community fundamentally believes that all efforts should be made to provide access to for all community members to the MVHF. The CMP includes accessibility upgrades to some trails and 2 pedestrian bridges over the Medway Creek. Care has been taken, that trails for the most part, are over the existing sewer lines or hydro infrastructure alignments and are in areas of lower ecological sensitivity. One new trail is proposed to connect the North Valley ESA Trail to The Archeology Museum at Attawandaron Park. The upgraded trails, new trail and bridges were planned in consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and will be compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The recommended trail system will provide better access and education opportunities for all Londoners. The CMP specifies the closure of all un-managed trails.

Compliance with City of London Guidelines

The CMP fully complies with the Council approved (2016) Guidelines for Management Zones and Trails in an ESA. It details the plans and priorities to protect and monitor the significant ecological features and functions in the ESA. The Plan is consistent with Council's other related policies including, The London Plan, Council's Strategic Plan, City of London Accessibility Plan, London Strengthening Neighbourhoods

Strategy and the Age Friendly London Strategic Plan. We are very proud that the MVHF ESA has been federally and provincially recognized as an example of best practices for the protection of ecological integrity, biodiversity and species at risk in an urban natural environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the LAC process and to provide input into the Medway Valley Trail. 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 Council Agenda Package.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Sheculski, Sunningdale West Residents Association, LAC Member
Renee Agathos, Sunningdale North Residents Association, LAC Member
Keith Zerebecki, MVHF ESA Adopt an ESA, LAC Member
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