

April 19, 2018

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

Dear Members of Council,

Re: Conservation Master Plan – Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA South

My husband and I own a home at 28 Green Acres Drive where we have lived for almost 20 years with our 3 children. I was in attendance at the Planning and Environment Committee meeting on the evening of Monday, April 16th 2018. The room was at capacity with many others filling the overflow area. It was undeniably clear that the vast majority of those in attendance were strongly opposed to this plan. I find it difficult to believe that this plan, as it now stands, is being considered at all based on the profound and irreversible effects it will have on the Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA South.

Firstly, I would like to echo a concern that many of my neighbours voiced at the April 16th meeting and in their letters to council, and that is the “apparent” oversight of notification or consultation with the Medway Heights neighbourhood. With the access points 11 and 12 leading directly into our neighbourhood, Mr. Macpherson’s explanation of the parameters of notification being those residing within a 200m radius from the ESA is simply unacceptable.

Secondly, I would like to voice my concerns regarding the significance of ESAs within our city. As you are most certainly aware, these ESAs are home to a large variety of wildlife, aquatic life and vegetation. A number of them are identified as “special concern” “regionally rare” or “species at risk” (page 3-4 of the Conservation Master Plan Phase 2). The council in attendance heard from various experts in the field, all of whom opposed this plan. Construction or alteration of any kind, such as that which is being proposed for the two bridges would most certainly displace and disturb species in the vicinity, and to suggest otherwise would be negligent. Further disturbance would be posed by the increased use of the area via the proposed pathways. It is my understanding that ESAs are to be protected, not developed. In my opinion, ESAs are not meant to provide yet another park like setting within the city nor are they to connect neighbourhoods for those seeking a longer hiking route. This city has ample parks and trails that are accessible to all and well-designed and I believe that human interference need not touch every corner of our environment.

This process has been truly eye opening for me. From the outset, it appeared that the wishes of one neighbourhood have been addressed while those of another are being ignored. The vague answers from Dillon Consultants and other staff, the lack of transparency for all constituents, appropriate and thorough research which includes the alteration of river flow and its effects on aquatic species, as well as lack of consultation with Indigenous organizations reinforce the need to reconsider this plan. A few Council members stated that they wanted the plan to move forward and deferrals from year to year needed to end. I would argue that the fundamental reason for these deferrals is because this is not a sound plan and it is one that does not sit well with many.

I would encourage all members of council not in attendance at Monday's meeting to access the video recording which is available on the city's website prior to Tuesday's Council meeting. I hope that after viewing it, you will come to the same conclusion as I have and vote not to approve the CMP.

Thank you very much for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Anna Dzongowski

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