

Dear CWC members,

The slated removal of 36 trees in Ward 6 on Friars Way and neighbouring streets has been well documented in the media of late, and I would like to take this opportunity to share my concerns with this proposal. While I am not a resident of this ward, I have similar experience with the drastic loss of many healthy, mature trees in my own neighbourhood as a result of road construction, and when I learned of another neighbourhood facing a similar fate, I immediately reached out to Ward 6 Councillor for advice on how I could have my comments shared more broadly with the CWC in attempt to have a greater impact on the eventual decision.

Many of the residents of the aforementioned neighbourhood have already voiced their own concerns regarding the drastic tree removal being proposed to make way for a sidewalk. I would like to take this opportunity to echo those concerns and to also voice my opposition to ongoing projects, like the one in question, happening throughout the city in conjunction with The London Plan. I don't personally take issue with the installation of sidewalks, but for this to occur only after dozens of mature trees across the city must first be "sacrificed", this strikes me as pure madness! No one is against making streets safer and more accessible for all, but if the London Plan is so short-sighted as to call for the deliberate removal of so many of London's magnificent trees (which provide untold benefits to the community) just in the name of adding a few additional kilometers of sidewalk, then perhaps it's time for an update to the plan. Is it not possible, for example, to find a compromise whereby sidewalks are installed around the existing trees so that they can still be preserved (some examples are pictured below)? Similarly, perhaps the roads in question could be made more narrow by a few feet to accommodate a sidewalk.

It just strikes me as so backwards that the London Plan would promote "safety" at all costs, without simultaneously advocating for solutions that call for more imagination and advanced problem solving skills. Like many other residents whom members of City Council have likely already heard from at different times in regards to different projects, the feedback is always the same: residents want to keep their trees! I don't understand why this is such a difficult circle to square, or why it always has to come down to a "fight" with the City about what shouldn't even be an issue at all. Why does a swell of local opposition need to always bubble to the surface before our local representatives in government begin to take pause on the rationale driving some of these ill-advised decisions? It should be a given that all healthy trees will be preserved -- no matter what -- and that if a sidewalk still needs to be installed, then alternative solutions will be brought to bear.

I truly do not want to see any more residents having to endure the painful loss of their streets' canopy as has already happened in my neighbourhood (on Regal Dr) a couple of years ago, now. And to even speak of "replacing" these trees with youth trees is downright ludicrous if we're being honest, and seems to miss the point entirely. Surely there must be a way forward that can address the safety needs of residents while still preserving one of our city's greatest assets.

Thank you in advance for accepting my comments for consideration at the March 2 meeting. I hope these along with other comments from local stakeholders will help inform the committee's decision.

Sincerely,

Teresa Daniele

Ward 3 Resident

