

56 Doncaster Place
London, Ontario N6G 2A5
February 19, 2021

Civic Works Committee
City of London Ontario
By Email to: cwc@london.ca

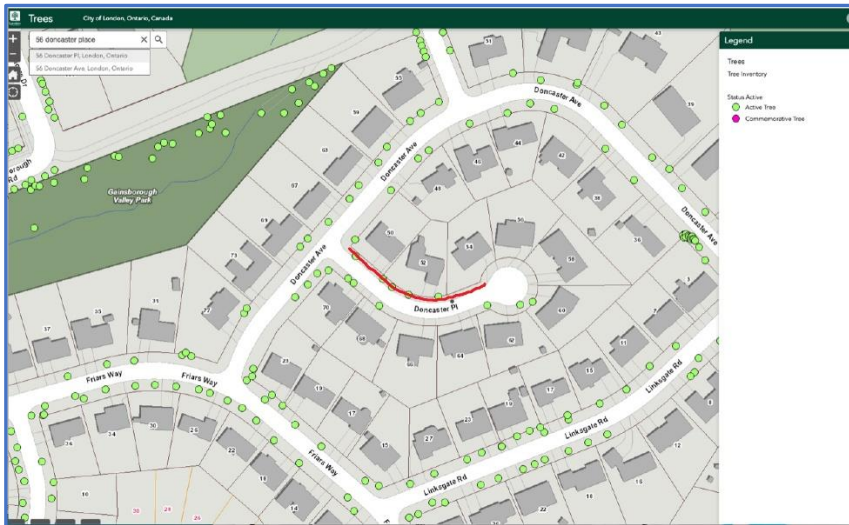
Dear Members of the *City of London Civic Works Committee*,

We, as a family of four residing on Doncaster Place, are writing in opposition to the installation of a sidewalk on Doncaster Place. We are especially in opposition to the proposed removal of trees to accommodate this sidewalk or any un-necessary tree removal for any projects whatsoever.

Below we first outline why a sidewalk on Doncaster Place is not justified, and indeed is a waste of taxpayer money. We then provide justification for the preservation of mature trees on Doncaster Place and neighbourhood. Based on these arguments, we conclude with our view that this sidewalk project with its requisite tree removal must not go forward.

(A) Reasons why a sidewalk on Doncaster Place is neither justified, nor useful:

- 1) Doncaster Place is a 11-house cul-de-sac with absolutely no traffic outside of its residents and their visitors. The amount of traffic is almost certainly only a small fraction of that of Runnymede Crescent, a street in the same neighbourhood for which we understand an exemption has been warranted. We estimate the vehicular traffic to be less than 10 minutes per day in total.
- 2) The proposed sidewalk would provide at best *marginally improved access to only 3 houses* of the 11 houses on the street, and the residents in all three of those houses oppose the sidewalk project. This proposed project could actually be argued as *decreasing* the quality of access to those houses, by virtue of no longer having the solar protection provided by the mature trees' shade. For most houses it would now require two street crossings.



Doncaster Place sidewalk would destroy half of the city trees while providing no benefit.

Pedestrian and wheel chair traffic would require as much time on the road as not having a sidewalk due to street crossings required for use.

- 3) The use of the proposed sidewalk would require crossing the road twice for the majority of the houses on the street. Because the street is so short compared to its width, these street crossings would make up to 50% of the distance.
- 4) The removal of the trees would negatively impact the residents of all 11 of the houses. From the notice we received one week ago, on February 11, 2021, it appears that the only reason for tree removal is for sidewalks. Tree removal is not necessary for the other aspects of the proposed project.
- 5) The expenditures incurred by sidewalk construction are wasteful, and do not meet any present need, outside that of the construction contractors and tree-removal contractors involved.

(B) Reasons why preservation of mature trees is crucial and should be prioritized

(on Doncaster Place and on the adjacent Friar's Way, see map)

1) *Who bears the financial, inclusivity, health, and ecosystem costs of tree removal?*

- Mature trees are irreplaceable in the short and medium term. A 50-year tree cannot be replaced with a sapling, and ***transplanting a mature tree can cost upwards of \$500,000 per 50-inch caliper tree.***
(<https://www.parksandrecbusiness.com/articles/2015/01/30/moving-large-trees>)
- A mature tree cannot be replaced with a single young tree, but rather would require planting of "2,000 saplings, each with a tree top volume of 1 cubic metre in order to compensate fully for ***the loss of the tree. The cost of this would amount to roughly \$150,000.***"
(from <https://citygreen.com/blog/how-much-is-one-mature-tree-worth/>)
- Mature tree removal has consistently been found to decrease property values. One study shows property tax impact of 15 million USD from street trees in Portland, Oregon (see attached pdf document, page 23, right, and its reference [78]). It is understandable that we homeowners object to actions that will decrease our property values.
- Removal of trees from one neighbourhood not only affects that neighbourhood's homeowner property values and therefore property taxes, it unfairly shifts the municipal tax burden to other neighbourhoods.
- The effect of mature trees on air quality is well documented, and their removal would negatively impact air quality measures, including the particulate matter level, ***disproportionately affecting those with respiratory disabilities and the elderly.***

- Trees have a significant effect on physical health and on people’s physical activity levels: A study showed that residents of eight European cities were found to be three times more likely to be physically active, and about 40% less likely to be overweight and obese, if they lived in green areas (see attached document, page 33 left, and its reference [159]).
- The presence of mature trees has been found to enhance mental health (for a popular article see <https://treecanada.ca/blog/trees-our-natural-ally-for-living-longer-healthier-and-happier-lives/>). With London’s mental health support strained to its maximum (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/london/london-ontario-mental-health-1.5436476>), taking action that is correlated to worsen mental health is ill advised.
- Trees have measurable beneficial effects on social activities: One study showed that residents in a US public housing estate with good access to green common areas were found to have more social activities and visitors, know more of their neighbours, and report that their neighbours offer more help to each other, than people living near barren areas (see attached document, page 36, left, and its reference [178]).
- Aside from the human health impact of air quality, mature trees perform important ecological functions. Not only do they provide habitats for native fauna, they serve as major contributors to carbon capture.

For example, Chicago’s 157 million trees remove an estimated 677,000 tons of carbon from the atmosphere each year, worth around US\$14.0 million per annum, while storing about 16.9 million tonnes of carbon valued at US\$349 million (see attached document, page 28, left, and its reference [116]). Will the city of London be purchasing carbon offset credits to compensate for the removed mature trees, and if so, what will be the cost to the taxpayer?

2) ***Incompatibility with London as a “Forest City”***

Removal of mature trees, in spite of significant public opposition, is directly at odds with the goals of London’s “Million Tree Challenge” initiative (<https://www.reforestlondon.ca/million-tree-challenge>), and it would have a negative impact to the reputation and public image of London as the “Forest City”,

3) ***Incompatibility with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals***

Cutting mature trees is in direct opposition to the *United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals* (Goals 13 and 15), in which the City of London is involved (<http://unitedwayem.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/London-Ontario-SDG-Indicators-report-LPRC-2020.pdf>)

Based on the above arguments, we conclude with our view that the Doncaster Place sidewalk project should not go forward, and that removal of mature trees on Doncaster Places and environs (Friar's Way) should not proceed. We hereby request an exemption from sidewalks for Doncaster Place. If an exemption is not granted immediately, then we request a traffic survey be conducted to justify the sidewalk project. In any case, we request that no trees be removed or endangered.

Finally, we wish to express our disappointment in the governance processes surrounding this project. Information relating to this project has not been shared in a timely manner with the London citizens directly affected, despite multiple direct requests for that information. Moreover, it is not sufficient to simply inform the stakeholders of a *fait accompli* — we expect to be consulted and for our opinions to matter in the future of our neighbourhood, if not for our city.

We are hopeful that we may have a dialog, albeit belated, that will result in a satisfactory outcome.

Respectfully Submitted,

Handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of the names 'Lila kari' and 'SMW' written in a cursive style.

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