

Mayor Ed Holder
City of London
314-300 Dufferin Ave.
London, Ontario N6B 1Z2

Councilor Steve Lehman
Ward 8
City of London
314-300 Dufferin Ave.
London, Ontario N6B 1Z2

JAN 19 2021

February 15, 2021

Dear Sirs:

PROPOSED SIDE-WALK ALONG THE SOUTH SIDE OF PART OF ST. ANTHONY ROAD

We have recently become aware of the intent of the City during this coming summer to reconstruct St. Anthony Road in the Old Hazeldon subdivision to the south of Riverside Drive from Hyde Park Road to Hampton Crescent in order to repair the road (ref: <https://london.ca/living-london/roads-sidewalks-transportation/road-construction> , visited February 14, 2021).

We understand that as part of the reconstruction, there is the intent to install a sidewalk along the city easement on the south side of the road between Hyde Park Road and Hampton Crescent as part of the New Sidewalks Program.

We are concerned that (a) to the best of our knowledge there appears to have been no environmental assessment done with respect to tree removal and damage to adjacent shrubbery, and shared with all residents in this subdivision, (b) that the sidewalk will start and terminate without contiguous connection to any other existing sidewalk, (c) that the additional cost will add an unnecessary burden to our already very high city taxes.

One of the important attractions living in this sub-division, is the presence of mature trees that offer shade during times of heat, as well as being a refuge for birds and other wildlife. Following wholesale removal of such trees, we observe from experience elsewhere that it will take many years to recover this habitat, assuming the city re-plant saplings adjacent to the new sidewalk in line with the current mandate to maintain and perhaps enhance tree cover.

Locating the proposed sidewalk on the south side will result in the surfaces remaining in an icy state in winter for longer than would be the case if it was on the opposite side of the road, and further away from the shade of the houses and remaining trees.

We walk daily through this quiet sub-division and also into the newer Hazeldon North subdivision, where sidewalks exist. In winter, we find that even with the use of the small snowplow units used by city road maintenance crews, the removal of snow is imperfectly done and in consequence surfaces often become very icy after a day or so. This outcome makes it safer to walk along the roadway where road traffic combined with city snow clearance has rendered the surface less slippery. At other times, we have found that adjacent tree roots frequently displace the concrete sidewalk slabs upwards. We observe that the city road maintenance efforts to regain a horizontal surface by shaving back the uplifted concrete edges is often ineffective, so that trip hazards remain or reappear as the combination of root growth and frost heave continues. We therefore conclude that new sidewalks as they are presently constructed and likely to be maintained, are not of benefit to our sub-division.

Notwithstanding our objections to sidewalks as constructed and maintained, we do not understand why there is a need to install this isolated sidewalk when there is a far greater need for one to be located down Hyde Park Road south of Riverside Drive, a far busier road.

If there is money to be spent on pedestrian aids, we propose diverting some of the funding allocated for the new sidewalk to provide a controlled road crossing where the frequently used and city-maintained passage leading from Hazeldon North meets Riverside Drive, and where pedestrians need to cross to access the west end of St. Anthony Road. This crossing is close to a sharp bend to the right in Riverside Drive, when viewed facing east. In consequence, fast-moving vehicles only become visible to pedestrians when they are less than 5 seconds away from them (many cars and trucks travel at speeds in excess of the current 50 km/hr limit). On more than one occasion, we have observed vehicle shunt collisions to avoid pedestrians attempting to dodge rapidly appearing traffic when crossing. At present, there is no pedestrian-controlled crossing between the traffic signals at the Riverside/Hyde Park and Riverside/Sanatorium junctions, a distance of more than 1 km, which is an excessively long detour for pedestrians to manage routinely, especially in inclement weather. Importantly, having that crossing would be safer for children accessing both John Dearness public school and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic school, both located within a short walkable distance.

We therefore request that you, together with the other councilors, revisit the current policy regarding sidewalk installation as it appears both inflexible to resident desires and seems also to be an unwanted extravagance, given the current severe drain on budgets as the result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic fallout.

Yours sincerely



Jolyon and Sylvia Mitchell
1154 St. Anthony Road