

Dear CWC and London City Council:

My wife and I have lived in Sherwood Forest for 30 years. It's a wonderful neighbourhood and full of people who moved here because Sherwood Forest is a representative of the Forest City with all its beautiful, mature trees. We taught our daughters to ride their bicycles here. Now we're teaching our grandchildren to do the same. Even though I attached bright orange flags to their bikes, the neighbourhood has always been a safe place for kids riding on the quiet streets. It is as rare now as it was then to see speeding cars or careless drivers, indeed quite the opposite where drivers are constantly on the lookout for children on bicycles. My wife and I go on almost daily walks through the neighbourhood and the lack of sidewalks has never jeopardized our safety, both in the past and today. We see absolutely no need to add sidewalks to the streets which don't currently have one, at least at this point in time. I have seen residents with canes and walkers making their way on the roads with no indication that they felt at risk.

While we are strong supporters of accessibility and safety for all, we simply see no practical case to be made for the installation of sidewalks that will require very high up front capital costs, ongoing maintenance costs and, perhaps worst of all, removal of mature trees. While we respect all city policies, let's not blindly adhere to them without acknowledging the risk of unintended consequences. Clearly, there is an environmentally negative impact in removing beautiful, mature trees aside from the shade they provide. Clearly, installing sidewalks in areas where no past or current obvious safety or accessibility issues are present changes the look and feel of a neighbourhood aside from adding annual costs. Clearly, a mature tree canopy provides well documented ongoing emotional, social and health benefits. Indeed, our tree canopy has dropped from 25% to 21% in a short period of time which completely contradicts our Forest City moniker allowing many cities like Kitchener and Ottawa to surpass us.

Let's take some time to evaluate the reasons why an overwhelming majority of the affected areas believe that applying the city wide policy is not a good idea. Lets take time to re-evaluate our city policies including the London Plan along with other relevant and overlapping policies such as the Urban Forest Strategy and Climate Emergency Action Plan. Then, lets take our decisions based on thoughtful, nuanced, integrated, and creative approaches that are so vital in our new world.

Respectfully,

E and J Hoffman