

38 Doncaster Ave., London, Ontario
N6G2A3
February 26, 2021

Submission Re Sidewalk Exemption for Streets in Sherwood Forest

Dear CWC Members and Councillors of the City of London,

I am writing about the proposed plans for roadwork on several streets in Sherwood Forest – Friar's Way, Doncaster Place, Doncaster Ave, and Scarlett. On the plus side, these roads are in serious need of new surfacing and the filling of potholes. On the negative side is the proposal to add sidewalks and take down trees.

As a defender of initiatives to increase accessibility for those with mobility challenges, and of the need to address the challenges of our damaged environment, I appreciate the challenge when these two issues collide. Installing sidewalks at the expense of chopping down an important tree canopy in a neighbourhood where most streets are not thoroughfares negatively affects the health and environment for all of us.

An important way of meeting the challenge of creating a healthy environment for everyone is to preserve our trees. Sherwood Forest is an older neighbourhood with larger trees that take many years to reach their size. I was heartened when the city realized the need to plant more trees rather than remove them.

About two years ago, the city planted many trees along the streets of our neighbourhood, including both sides of Doncaster Ave. Many of these new trees, along with many older trees that take decades to grow, would be destroyed if sidewalks were to be installed. Where is the logic in investing in planting trees, only to chop them down? The main routes to shopping and schools in Sherwood Forest already have sidewalks. The remaining streets are not thoroughfares and people in this neighbourhood are not clamouring for more sidewalks. Many of us are very concerned about rebuilding our forests.

As an older regular walker, I feel safer walking on the roads than the sidewalks of our quiet neighbourhood, particularly in the winter. Sidewalk surfaces are uneven and are not cleared as well in the winter as the roads are. Providing sidewalks is no guarantee of accessibility.

Please do not install sidewalks in our neighbourhood in a one-size-fits-all approach to road repairs. Please do not chop down perfectly healthy trees that will take decades to replace. It would be such a huge step backwards in the drive toward improving our environment to everyone's benefit. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Sincerely,

Ingrid Connidis

Ingrid Arnet Connidis, Ph.D.
Professor Emerita & Adjunct Research Professor
Department of Sociology
University of Western Ontario