A BETTER WAY

This *Community Report* is a response to a city staff report to the Civic Works Committee (CWC) for their meeting of March 15, 2021, titled *"New Sidewalks in 2021 Infrastructure Reconstruction Projects"* (designated The Report). It was submitted to the CWC for its meeting on February 9, 2021. Our Community Report is a follow up to the emails, letters and subsequent requests for delegation status.

This report has been prepared by several delegate groups on behalf of the residents from Friars Way, Doncaster Place and Abbey Rise and accompanies the petition with **310 signatures**. This petition has been signed by almost all of the residents of these three streets, along with residents on 9 neighbouring Sherwood Forest streets that have expressed their opposition to removal of these 50 year old trees on the streets mentioned in Sherwood Forest. In addition the youth in the neighbourhood wanted to express their voice in supporting our position. They started an online petition with change.org and have collected **176 signatures** to date.

We strongly believe that there is "A Better Way" to meet the many needs and desires of our community than to cut down mature trees and install sidewalks as part of the road reconstruction program.

We are aware that some may say that we are reacting as a *not in my backyard* issue; however, we think this is a bigger London issue that affects many who live on streets with mature trees that are designated as *neighbourhood streets* (which includes cul de sacs) that currently do not have sidewalks.

SUMMARY:

We are asking that Council approve a motion to exempt Friars Way, Doncaster Place and Abbey Rise and the connecting links of Doncaster Avenue from Friars Way to Doncaster Place, and Scarlett Avenue from Abbey Rise to Wychwood Park from the having sidewalks constructed on our streets when they are reconstructed because:

- of the importance and value of mature trees from both an environmental and societal perspective
- we believe that our streets are safe in the context of the Vision Zero objectives; and
- if required, there are valid alternatives to sidewalks to enhance safety and accessibility issues. Examples abound in other jurisdictions concerning "Living Streets" without sidewalks, such as a Woonerf in the Netherlands, with shared space, traffic calming and low speed limits.
- the approach employed for designing and installing sidewalks in Sherwood Forest is not supported by overarching policy or planning procedures. This proposal needs to be re-evaluated in the broader context of city policies to find solutions that apply best practices and are in line with the short and long term objectives of the city.
- Orchard Park and Sherwood Forest, as with other neighbourhoods, were planned to take full advantage of the land contours and to include safe driving conditions. The trees contribute to the character and environmental value of the neighbourhood.

Furthermore we ask that the City **use best management practices to minimize any unnecessary tree loss** during road reconstruction, as part of the City's *Climate Emergency Action Plan* that supports the City's *Climate Emergency Declaration*.

In addition, we urge the City to reconsider how residents are engaged prior to design finalization followed by construction completion with regards to residential streets. Collaboration is important. This is the challenge and the joy of living in a diverse community where we seek to accommodate everyone as best we can while striving to provide substantial benefit to the well-being of our residents.

INTRODUCTION:

As members of Council know, trees and sidewalks are a hot topic among residents who discover that they are about to be impacted by decisions that in too many cases, were decisions about which they had no previous knowledge. Perhaps Council members are surprised at the response given their awareness of documents like the 2016 London Plan and the Complete Streets Design Manual. Council members may believe that opportunity was given for public input as part of the preparation of these documents. Unfortunately many residents, like us, were not aware that the London Plan was being prepared.

Those who signed our petition agreed with the following:

> "A sidewalk will destroy many mature trees that shade & beautify our streets, trees that are integral to climate change mitigation; it is noted that some trees will need to be removed due to other factors (disease, etc.). The character and of the neighbourhood will be drastically changed.
>
> We, the undersigned agree with the City's desire to maintain strong and healthy communities through safe and accessible infrastructure.
>
> We strongly disagree that the only solution to achieve this is to build sidewalks when streets in our neighbourhood are being reconstructed. We have almost 60 years of experience that demonstrates that our neighbourhood is pedestrian and cyclist friendly, promotes walking and physical activity, is attractive, comfortable and efficient, and supports many different forms of mobility for people of all ages.
>
> As such we, the undersigned, respectfully request that the Council approve a motion to **not build sidewalks** on the above mentioned streets and **use best management practices to minimize unnecessary tree loss** during road reconstruction."

In similar situations Council has taken into account the concerns of residents and has exempted specific streets from sidewalk construction,

Our response is not a Nimby [not in my backyard] issue. This is a bigger issue that affects many people in many neighbourhoods in London who live on streets that are designated as neighbourhood streets and currently do not have sidewalks.

We base our case for exemption on the following:

A. Value of Mature Street Tree Canopy & Mitigating Climate Change

B. Safety and Accessibility

C. Design to Meet a Variety of Priorities

D. Due Process

E. Uniqueness of the Sherwood Forest Neighbourhood

A. VALUE OF MATURE STREET TREE CANOPY & MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE

SUMMARY: We request serious consideration of the important benefits and value of London's mature tree canopy in the decision to exempt the Friars Way and Sherwood Forest neighbourhood streets from the installation of sidewalks in the planned road reconstruction. Of equal importance is the Sherwood Forest mature tree canopy's role in not only keeping our "Forest City" brand, but also helping to mitigate climate change, which aligns with the City of London's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan and Climate Emergency Declaration.

1. **MATURE STREET CANOPY**

- Friars Way and the majority of Sherwood Forest street trees are at least 50 years old and in their prime, and provide a substantial canopy (80 m^2avg./tree)
- Majority of trees are large caliper little leaf Linden (Tilia cordata), an excellent choice by city planners – These are healthy trees, originally planted for resistance to disease, strength and longevity, with lifespan 100 years or longer in urban settings
- Will take 2 – 3 DECADES for any replacement trees to reach the current benefits of these mature trees
- Future growth of replanted trees will be constrained by installed sidewalks on one side and curb and gutters on the other side
- Without sidewalks, existing trees can remain, flourish and continue to provide multiple benefits
- Many trees identified for removal meet the **distinctive tree status** of the **City of London Tree Protection Bylaw** (>50 cm dbh) and those that don’t are just shy of this size (average of 45 cm) (Fig. 2)

Fig. 1: Photos of the canopy extending Friars Way

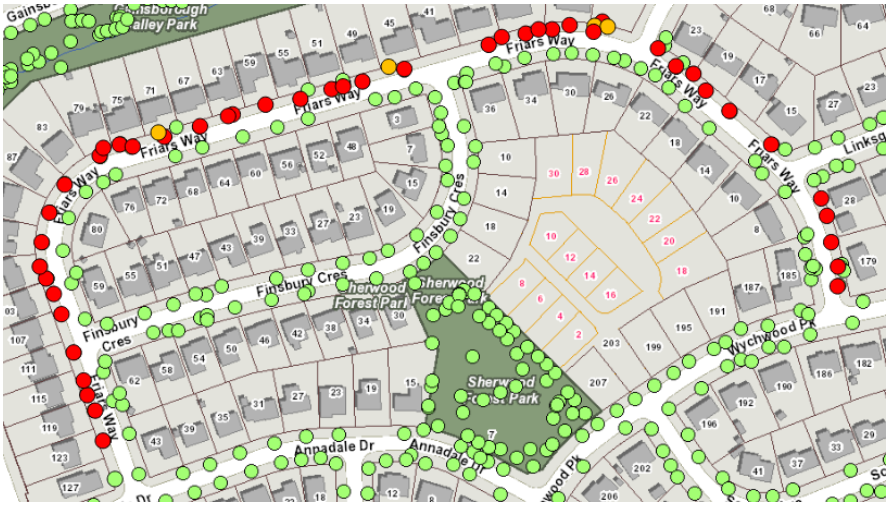

Fig. 2: Trees to be removed, identified by dark red and orange circles**.**
Source: preliminary drawings, Deris Dow, City of London; City Map, London.ca

2. HIGH VALUE OF MATURE STREET CANOPY

- **Neighbourhood Identity, Cultural Heritage and Health benefits**
    - The leaf lined, shaded local streets are a defining character of the neighbourhood and a highly valued asset to the residents
    - This heavily treed neighbourhood provides social, mental and physical health benefits, important for all Londoners - enjoyed by people of all mobility within and beyond the neighbourhood
        - Providing shade for pedestrians is an accessibility issue (Corporate Asset Management Plan, p. 282)

- **Urban Forest Strategy**
    - Keeping the trees supports the **implementation of the Official Plan**, so that London can become one of the greenest cities in Canada – The plan [mandates or recommends –which one] an increase in the city tree canopy from 21% to 34% by 2065
    - Support Urban Forest Strategy (Sec. 391, 399)
        - #3 Large, rare, culturally significant or heritage trees that are deemed healthy or structurally sound should be retained with the expectation that concessions may be required in order to support their structure and retain their health for the long term
        - # 5 Trees will only be removed for such works based on good forestry practices
    - **Sherwood Forest was showcased in the Urban Forest Strategy** document as a good example of an Urban Forest canopy; however, 0.25 ha plus tree canopy is now planned for removal on Friars Way alone based on early estimates of 30 trees to be removed for road construction.

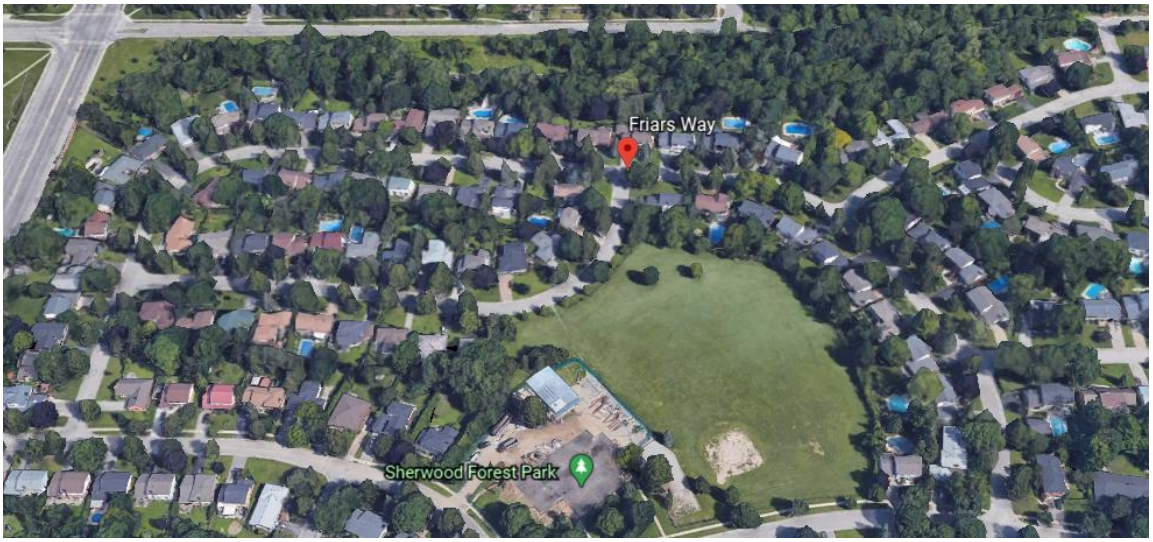

Fig. 3: Ariel view of a portion of Sherwood Forest

- **Ecological Impact**
    - Elevated benefit with close **proximity to the Medway Valley Environmentally Significant Area** (ESA). For example raptors (Coopers Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Screech Owls) often use S.F. trees as perches while hunting in and around the ESA (Fig. 3)
    - Linden trees are valuable pollinator trees (Source: www.halifaxproject.com)
    - **Policy 649, London Plan**:
        - Identifies protecting pollinator habitat

- Promotes London as a pollinator sanctuary, supporting treed environments that are conducive to pollinators in all planning and public works (road construction)

- Sidewalk installation
  - Increases stormwater run-off
  - Requires sands and salts to make them truly accessible for all mobility requirements
    - This additional contamination will reach Medway Creek, the cornerstone of this ESA

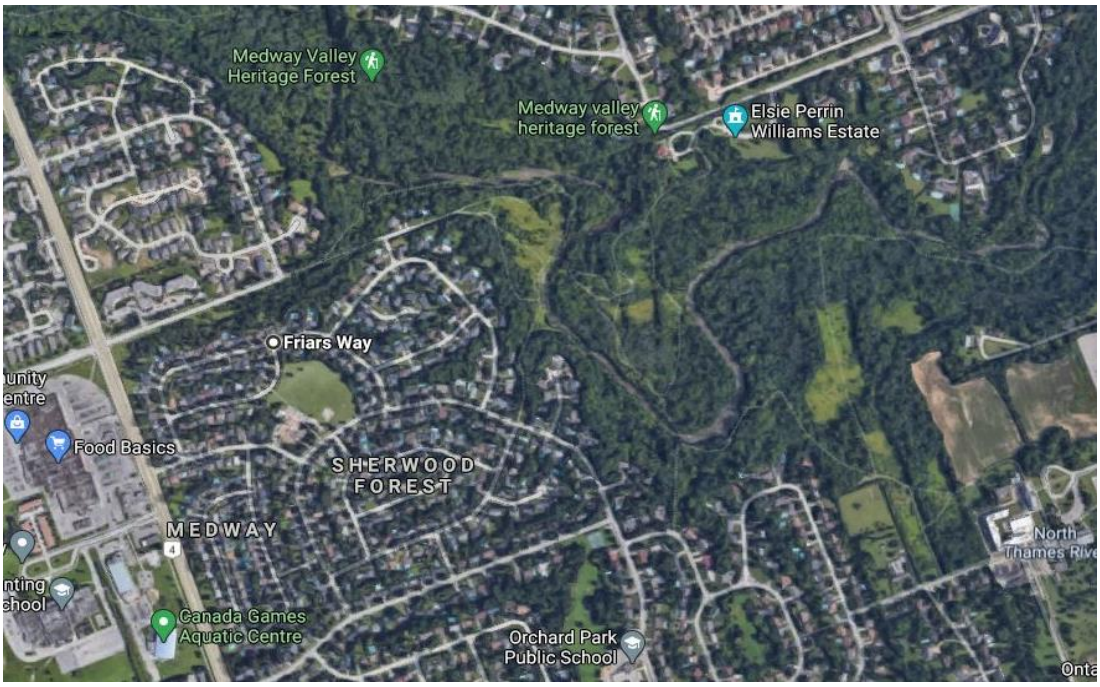

Fig. 4: Proximity of Friars Way and neighbourhood to Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA

3. CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION by protecting mature trees

- Mature trees are one of the simplest and most effective ways of counteracting climate change caused by greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide (Source: *WorldVision, Australia*)
  - Trees 50 cm in diameter have more than double the environmental benefits, Such as pollution removal from air, oxygen production by tree 'metabolism' in summer, etc., than a 25 cm diameter tree.
- Mature trees reduces private residence energy consumption, as shade provides sun shielding and energy efficiencies reducing greenhouse gas requirements
  - Mature trees help London reach its goal of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions reduction by at least 30% by 2030

- **Mature Trees support London's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan and Climate Emergency Declaration**:
  - Climate Emergency Action Plan and London Plan

- Mitigates severe weather damages, including those from flooding, high winds, freezing rain and extreme temperatures
- Mitigates the increase in tree loss from diseases like Emerald Ash borer, Dutch elm, Gypsy moth
- Integrates climate change into asset management - Trees are an Asset!
    - Increases commercial investments and property values

- **ASSET VALUE**
    - *The International Society of Arboriculture* has developed a recognized system for valuing trees- recognized by the City of London
        - 45 cm diameter tree (average size of tree for removal on Friars Way) in front of a house would be valued at **$28,000.00 per tree**
        - Represents an urban forest asset loss of nearly **1 million dollars!** Once all trees are actually evaluated for removal, including private trees, this number would be much higher.

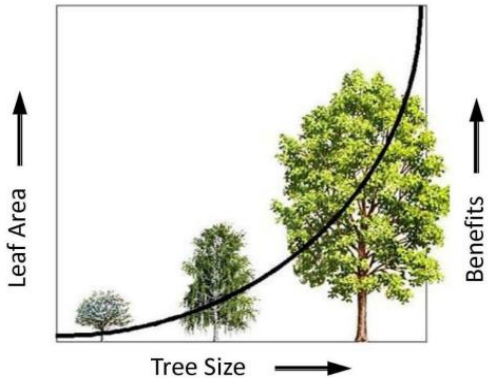

Fig. 5: Benefits as trees mature increase exponentially

4. POLICY AND BY-LAW CONFLICTS

- Removal of these mature trees conflicts with
    - Forest City brand
    - Forest City Policies 386-388 of the London Plan
    - Urban Forest Strategy and
    - Climate Change Emergency objectives
- Many distinctive trees, as defined by the Tree Protection By-law, will be removed.
- Section 400.8 of the London Plan (Urban Forest Policy section) states:
    - Medians and boulevards will be designed to *protect trees* and support their establishment and long term health, growth and development
    - Contrary to this policy, we are in receipt of a plan to **clearcut a minimum of 30 large 50 year old mature street trees on just Friars Way.**

"If current management practices (both on private and public land) continue our future urban forest will have [significantly] fewer and smaller trees. The forest will be more susceptible to catastrophic losses due to a variety of factors from which it may not be able to recover, even if we increase the level of funding at that time. There may not even be sufficient funding available to deal with environmental catastrophes when they occur. Future environmental and other benefits and services will be reduced and the overall

quality of life for future generations will be lower."(Source: City of London, Urban Strategy and Implementation Plan Meeting, June 3, 2014)

B. SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY

SUMMARY: Our neighbourhood meet the tests of London's *Vision Zero* principles. We offer alternatives that will enhance safety and accessibility without the addition of sidewalks that would enable the City to preserve and protect the mature trees that are an established asset to the City.

Today our residential community is inclusive and safe and gives everyone who uses our streets equal service and access. We are blessed with an abundance of mature trees both on city and private property that makes Sherwood Forest a very attractive place to live.

We respectfully and strongly disagree that sidewalks are the only solution to providing safe access to all the users of our neighbourhood streets, particularly in the light of the many mature trees that must be cut down to accommodate these sidewalks.

We have several decades of experience that demonstrates that our neighbourhood is pedestrian and cyclist friendly, promotes walking and being physically active, is attractive, comfortable, efficient and supports many different forms of mobility for people of all ages.

The streets Friars Way, Doncaster Place and Abbey Rise are classed as neighbourhood streets in the City's plans. They are the least in the hierarchy of the urban streets in London's street network. They are quiet, low volume traffic streets that were designed in a curving pattern that naturally slows down vehicular traffic. In addition our streets are wider than the current design standard of 7.5 m of pavement. For example, Friars Way has 8.3 m of pavement allowing greater space for an on-street shared area for pedestrians.

Furthermore, there is no advantage for drivers to "cut through" these streets, to get to external destinations. If anything traffic has *decreased* on our streets (Friars Way particularly) with the removal of Sherwood Forest Public School and the concrete median constructed on Wonderland Road to prevent southbound turns from Wonderland Rd onto Annadale Dr into our neighbourhood, and to prevent left turns from Annadale Dr onto Wonderland. There is no reason to expect that the use of our neighbourhood will change, noting also that the new development on the old Sherwood Forest Public School lands will be using Wychwood Park as its access point, and thus will not increase traffic on the streets targeted for tree removal.

We are a pedestrian-friendly neighbourhood where pedestrians, including those with physical disabilities, cyclists AND motor vehicles respectfully share the road. Furthermore, our group has heard from mobility impaired individuals in our neighbourhood and their feedback has been that, in this area, a street level surface is more user friendly and safe for their mobility than sidewalks, especially during the winter.

The following is a note that was sent to members of Council:

> "*Our experience on our street and in the neighbourhood reinforces the original plan of safety and accessibility for all residents. Over the years, our 4 children have had multiple sports injuries, and felt safe walking on our street in boot casts or using crutches. Personally, I have had two hip replacements, and have spent months of rehabilitation, feeling completely safe walking our streets on crutches. My 87 year old father also had hip surgery, and rehabilitated in our home for 3 weeks, also feeling safe walking with crutches on our street. Our 80 year old neighbour is seen out for daily walks in all seasons using her walker.*"

In our research we have discovered that the City has adopted the following Vision Zero Principles:

- No loss of life is acceptable
- Traffic fatalities and serious injuries are preventable
- We all make mistakes
- We are all physically vulnerable when involved in motor vehicle collisions
- Eliminating fatalities and serious injuries is a shared responsibility between road users and those who design and maintain our roadways." (quote from the "Review of the Forthcoming City of London Complete Streets Design Manual")

We have searched for studies and incident reports to document the risks to pedestrians and less mobile pedestrians in urban neighbourhoods like our own. We found no data for London, or for similarly sized cities, which would suggest that such incidents are relatively rare. Our experience and the lack of any evidence to the contrary demonstrates that our streets meet the 'Vision Zero' criteria of no loss of life and that our streets provide "a pedestrian friendly environment" as per the Complete Streets Manual, p 22.

That paragraph goes on to state that "*The City will use an evidence-based decision-making framework to assess, guide and improve traffic safety*." We respectfully suggest that the evidence is clear that our neighbourhood streets are already safe, yet we see opportunities to enhance safety by the implementation of soft measures such as noted in the next section and at the same time save a very valuable City resource, the mature trees that line our streets.

We chose not to extend our investigations regarding accessibility for bicycles. The Report does not mention cycling infrastructure objectives, which are prominent throughout the Plan, even though Sherwood Forest is a prime target for cycling or shared-use infrastructure:

- we are within easy commute to key economic nodes
- we have quick access to the BRT
- there are existing links to bike paths on Wonderland Road and Brescia College, and
- we are an active cycle community

Furthermore, narrowing the road to 7.5 m as proposed increases the risk for cyclists.

C. DESIGN TO MEET A VARIETY OF PRIORITIES

SUMMARY: We call for implementing the Best Management Practices in the proposed road reconstruction projects to balance the variety of the city's priorities. Given the present plans and the recent experience on some of the other city streets we are concerned that the current approach to mitigation of environmental impact may be inadequate. Several possible measures to reduce the number of affected trees without compromising safety are suggested.

The following are quotes from the *London Complete Streets Design Manual*, August 2018. The italized words emphasize the fact that our streets meet the following criteria without sidewalks.

Pg 23 - Section **1.4 The Vision for Complete Streets in London**, point 2 "... that will *meet the needs of a wide range of users* as defined by the place, type*, feature high-quality pedestrian environments …."*

From **Section 1.5 Design Principles for Complete Streets**, section entitled

Pg 25 - **"Embed Sustainability**

Streets should be *designed to minimize environmental impacts* and maximize the lifespan of physical infrastructure. The design of streets *should promote low emission and energy efficient travel modes such as walking, cycling, transit and carpooling*. Wherever feasible, *streets should promote ecosystem diversity through trees, planters and vegetation*, include low impact development features *to facilitate groundwater recharge, maximize solar reflectivity to reduce the urban heat island effect, and make use of low impact construction techniques and materials*. This principle also suggests that complete streets planning and design should be economically sustainable. Decisions should be cost-effective and not place undue short- or long-term financial burden on the City for street construction, operations, and maintenance. (Reflects policies 52, 62, 65, and 216 in The London Plan)"

Pg 25 - And the section entitled **"Emphasize Vitality"** — "*Streets that attract pedestrians enhance urban vitality.* Whether out for a relaxing stroll …."

Pg 51 - Section **2.5 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

"In the context of complete streets, *green infrastructure refers to street elements that support the ecological and hydrological systems in the city.* Green infrastructure can improve storm-water management, air quality, biodiversity, and help mitigate the urban heat island effect*. Green infrastructure features enhance the aesthetic and comfort of the streetscape, improving physical and mental health outcomes for residents, making walking and cycling more attractive,* and reducing perceived wait times for transit riders. Green infrastructure features such as street trees and planted curb extensions in a permanent motor vehicle parking lane can also have a traffic calming effect. *Beyond supporting more livable, complete street design, green infrastructure plays an important role in the City's overall sustainability goals.* "

In the context of neighbourhood streets, we can see how the *"London Complete Streets Design Manual"* applies to new development as the opportunity is there from the beginning to design

streets that include all the elements of a ‘complete street’ such that pedestrians and environmental elements are in harmony. We do not see any reference in this Manual for exceptions to be made in the case of existing streets that do not have sidewalks and that have healthy mature trees and have a proven record of Vision Zero.

Furthermore, the City’s *Urban Forest Strategy*[1], 2019-2023 Strategic Plan[2], and the London plan[3] all state the importance of preserving, maintaining and growing tree coverage throughout London. Our understanding is that this is not a secondary priority but one of the key directions for moving forward.

Hence, we anticipate that the City will use the most appropriate Best Management Practices to balance the variety of the city's priorities. In particular, we are respectfully asking the Council to take into account the unique characteristics of our neighborhood, the strong consensus of its residents, and the relevant data to consider alternative traffic control and engineering solutions to better accommodate the interests of everyone.

We are compelled to call for implementing best management practices because of our concern that the current plans, approaches, and communication of rationales for decisions could be inadequate. For example, we were informed that some trees may be lost due to road construction even in case sidewalks are not installed. Indeed, we had a chance to observe that this happened last year on Runnymede Crescent. However, our communication with the construction administration did not clarify which trees would be affected, and we were not convinced that appropriate measures would be taken to minimize the negative environmental impact. There are also examples of road reconstructions on some streets of the city (some with installation of new sidewalks, some with reconstruction of existing sidewalks) that lead to irreversible environmental damage (for example, Tecumseh Avenue in 2017; Regal Drive in 2019).

Positive examples also occur when the construction administration worked together with the involved parties to come up with reasonable solutions and mitigations in established neighborhoods to balance all the priorities (for example, Oakridge area road construction in 2017-2018). In our own neighborhood we had a successful example of design and construction of Sherwood Forest Park in 2019-2020.

To make sure that the proposed road reconstructions become examples of success we are asking to consider the following possible measures to reduce the number of affected trees without compromising safety of the people as appropriate to each street.

Soft measures

- Allow parking only on one side of the road
- Consider making some streets one–way for traffic
- Dedicate a portion of the street width to pedestrian/wheelchair traffic along with proper signage and markings on the street that would enhance the safety of those with mobility / disability issues.

These are the sort of measures which are used in other jurisdictions, in the “Living Street” model. In fact some of the above measures were successfully used in establishing bicycle lanes in parts of London in recent years, and this could be adapted for pedestrians and those with mobility needs.

Hard measures

- To protect the roots of mature trees that are close to the curb and susceptible to root damage from the curbs by hand instead of using a curb machine
- If there is an opportunity - widen the road but not at the detriment of harming the mature trees. The current pavement width on Friars Way is 8.3 m. The wider road is safer for pedestrians, cyclists and those with mobility issues, than the 7.5 m design width of a neighourhood street. (In both cases add another 0.6 m for gutters)[4]

It would be greatly appreciated if Council members would consider implementing some of the above measures (or measures that City staff may be aware of) to accommodate better the interests of everyone involved. We also would be very grateful if the rationale for the final decisions were communicated to our community.

---

[1] City of London Urban Forest Strategy – Implementation Plan (2014), p.14.

[2] Strategic Plan for the city of London, 2019-2023, p.16.

[3] The London Plan (2019), section *Forest City*, p.89-93.

[4] London Complete Street Design Manual (2018), p.96.

D. DUE PROCESS

SUMMARY: the approach employed for designing and installing sidewalks in Sherwood Forest is not supported by overarching policy or planning procedures. This proposal needs to be re-evaluated in the broader context of city policies to find solutions that apply best practices and are in line with the short and long term objectives of the city.

This is an unpopular project. Council and Committee are being pressed from all sides. Thus, we recommend that the February 9, 2021 report to CWC entitled “*New Sidewalks in 2021 Infrastructure Reconstruction Projects” (The Report)* be examined carefully for its rationale and demonstration of alignment with city priorities, vision, goals and objectives.

When reviewed against the policies referenced in The Report the proposed project does not align well with key city policies, and does not provide sufficient rationale in policy to support the proposal.

A review of the city policies cited in The Report indicates that those policies don't obligate the city to install sidewalks, and in some cases policy directs against the default installation of sidewalks.

The Report is also inappropriately silent on areas of policy that conflict with the default sidewalk policy. The failure in analysis to examine the conflicts between other policies and the default sidewalk policy leaves the project open to unexpected and unaccounted-for costs. It also contradicts efforts to ensure that city policies are integrated and support each other in purpose.

One example is shown in the following table: *Expectations from the Strategic Plan* are shown on the left and recommended *Strategy Options to achieve the Expectation* are shown on the right. Items in plain text were addressed in The Report and those in bold were not addressed. This is not a comprehensive review, just an example.

It appears that The Report picks items selectively from the Strategic Plan goal. It addresses an Expectation from the Plan - 'support for future development'. It then addresses the best Strategy Option to attain the Expectation - 'balance development and funding'. The Report advances the argument that this supports building sidewalks during road work, for cost efficiency.

Strategic Plan - Building A Sustainable City

Expectation (Addressed/**Not Addressed**)	Strategy Option (Addressed/**Not Addressed**)
Build infrastructure to support future development **and protect the environment.**	Continue annual reviews of growth infrastructure plans to balance development needs with available funding. **Work with multi-sectors to finalize the Climate Change/Severe Weather Adaptation Strategy for London's built infrastructure.** *
Improve London's resiliency to respond to potential future challenges.	**Advance sustainability and resiliency strategies.** **Prioritize investment in assets to implement the Asset Management Plan**

* * Note climate change adaptation or mitigation strategies will undoubtedly place a high value on the canopy for sever wind dissipation, shading, moderation of ground temperature, water absorption and retention, and most of all for their exceptional carbon sequestration. #### unsubstantiated, refuted

The Report, however, fails to fully address the 'development- Expectation' from the Strategic Plan, which includes "*and protect the environment*." Nor does it address others of the Strategy Options like 'apply severe weather adaptation strategies' that would apply to the Expectation, if The Report had presented it in its completeness.

Lacking review altogether is the Expectation that the project will ‘improve resiliency to future challenges, and the obviously related Strategy Option of ‘practice sustainability and resiliency strategies’.

Also lacking review: *‘implement Asset Management Plan’, Strategy Option* would illuminate policy that emphasizes forest infrastructure as a key feature of climate resiliency, and identifies an asset gap that needs to be addressed through retention of canopy .

Insufficient attention to, or inaccurate representation of city policy like this example can be found throughout The Report.

The following is another example. The Report identifies Strategic Plan goals *of ‘Creating Safe Places for Girls and Women’*, implying that the project will address the vulnerability and disadvantages of Women and Girls, via enhanced pedestrian safety in Sherwood Forest. The claim is not supported with a reference and no evidence was found in police records of gender specific road safety issues.

The proposed project and its rationale precede pending city policies which will put more weight and value on tree canopy protection, in line with the climate emergency crisis. If necessary, the proposed projects should be delayed and reconsidered in context of pending policies that are high priority and relevant.

The street level outcome of this direct application of the high level policy (sidewalks) is insensitive design. That is, design that fails to capture the unique opportunities, and fails to limit unnecessary costs.

The approach employed, of applying high level policy and theoretical benefits, for designing and installing sidewalks in Sherwood Forest is not supported by policy or planning procedures. Rather, testimonials and site specific consultation indicate an accurate project environment where:

- the projected increase in walking is undocumented and not credible,
- that there are no transit nodes involved,
- that street trees are not appropriately valued, and
- streets, in practice, are universally accessible already.

This proposal needs to be re-evaluated in the broader context of city policies to find solutions that apply best practices and are in line with the short and long term objective of the city.

E. UNIQUENESS OF THE SHERWOOD FOREST NEIGHBOURHOOD

SUMMARY: The design and development of Orchard Park and Sherwood Forest was intentional and sensitive to the land. The roads were planned to take full advantage of the rolling land and to ensure safe driving conditions throughout the community and the trees contribute to the character of the neighbourhood.

The design and development of Orchard Park and Sherwood Forest began in the mid-1950s after the purchase of farm land in north-west London by Bill Davies. Bill Davies had successfully earlier developed University Heights and looked to expand into the farmland owned by George Gunn, Gilbert Sleight and Harold Sleight. Sherwood Forest had previously been the Dr. Russell Schram farm.

Gordon Culham, the planner responsible for Western, Brescia and St. Peters, designed the layout of the neighbourhood. In *The Story of Bill Davies*, he describes trees as being central to the original design of the sub-division. “All street layouts were prestaked, so roads could be adjusted to retain as many trees as possible, as well as natural contours” [p108, The Bill Davies Story – London Room].

The design was intentional and sensitive to the land. The marketing brochures of the time note that “[t]he roads are planned to take full advantage of the rolling land and to ensure safe driving conditions throughout the community …. Practically all the beautiful trees have been retained in Sherwood Forest … to be sure that each home will have the best setting possible in keeping with the typography and natural surroundings” [Compare Sherwood Forest and Orchard Park Marketing Brochure].

In addition to the trees retained during the planning and development process, more trees were planted as new families purchased in the sub-division. “As the subdivision developed, a lot of deciduous, evergreen and flowering crab trees were planted. Each family was given a tree when they moved in … to create the same colourful atmosphere that the farms had before development. Trees were brought in by the truckload from Fonthill and Port Burwell Nurseries, and heeled in on a lot on Metamora so they could be protected until they were distributed. Trees were planted at every lot line by the Orchard Park Development Company” [p112, The Bill Davies Story – London Room]. There was great care by the developers and the first residents to maintain and foster a neighbourhood that was connected to its treed history.

Beyond the local lore, trees are an important feature of street design. Currently, street design as a practice, is marked by a tension between street (traffic) efficiencies and street quality made of the intersections between sociability, walkability and “delight” from green spaces (p2-3, Grammenos, “Residential Street Pattern Design”). The trees contribute to the character of the neighbourhood. In Grammenos’ terms, green spaces as parks, boulevards and treed streets, provide “delight” as a “well-designed green space provides visual relief and opportunity for relaxation, becomes a place for casual contacts, and forms a haven for kid's play. Green space also has environmental benefits: it cools the air, recycles carbon dioxide, and retains rainwater” [p3, Residential Street Pattern Design].

Although the loop and cul-de-sac street design, typical of the post-war era, is considered to be inefficient and indirect for the purpose of walkability to amenities, it is known to increase *sociability*. According to Fanis Grammenos, senior researcher with CMHC: “to enhance sociability, particularly with regard to children's safety and play, most traffic experts recommend discontinuous street patterns of the kind found in conventional loop and cul-de-sac suburbs. Such street patterns consistently show a lower rate of accidents and a higher level of perceived security.” [p3, Residential Street Pattern Design].

The design of Sherwood Forest, with the wide, curvilinear roads and the heavy investment in trees from its inception has created a strong sense of community amongst its residents. The petition has

collected the voices of over 300 residents in our neighbourhood who are opposed to the removal of the trees. These were the same voices that participated in the Sherwood Forest School Redevelopment. Keeping the character of the neighbourhood was a central goal in the redevelopment project. Many families whose children grew up attending Sherwood Forest Public School wanted to see something positive come from the loss of the school.

The city engaged the neighbourhood in a series of open meetings to gather the thoughts of the residents who were invested in the project and wanted to see the character of the neighbourhood retained. The sale of the land to The Hampton Group offered a happy ending for all involved. There is a desirable in-fill development now with a mix of condominiums and family homes along with a new green space for Sherwood Forest. Highly successful, this project is considered a model redevelopment for the city. As the London Free Press reported, in *"New development on former site of Sherwood Forest elementary school could be the wave of the future as more schools close*" [published February 4, 2018] that '"This development in particular shows this Council's commitment to the community. They turned a negative into a positive "Michael Tomazincic, a city planner, said of the school closing, "There's been a lot of collaboration between the city and community. It is high-quality urban design.""

If the city were to consider the same approach to its roadworks project, not just in Sherwood Forest, but across the city, there would be many more happy residents. When design is intentional and sensitive to the area, in the way that Bill Davies and his partners were to the development of Orchard Park and Sherwood Forest, it allows a community to flourish. "Strengthening the Community" is a goal from the London Strategic Plan 2019-2023. It behooves the City to listen to its residents, and hear their experiences living in these neighbourhoods to work towards a design approach that retains the residential character while further supporting safety and walkability. As Coun. Phil Squire commented in the London Free Press article, the redevelopment "is a precedent, the city is the facilitator for good development that matches the community. This is good for everybody."

CONCLUSION

We are asking that Council approve a motion to exempt Friars Way, Doncaster Place and Abbey Rise and the connecting links of Doncaster Avenue from Friars Way to Doncaster Place, and Scarlett Avenue from Abbey Rise to Wychwood Park from the having sidewalks constructed on our streets when they are reconstructed because:

- of the high regard for the value of mature trees from an environmental and societal perspective, both for our neighbourhood and for the City as a whole
- there are valid alternatives to cutting down trees, to enhance safety and accessibility for pedestrians, those with disabilities, and cyclists that, at the same time, also respect other important needs in our community
- there is a better way to promote and respect the character of our neighbourhoods
- the approach employed for designing and installing sidewalks in Sherwood Forest is not supported by overarching policy or planning procedures. This proposal needs to be re-evaluated in the broader context of city policies to find solutions that apply best practices and are in line with the short and long term objectives of the city.

- the design and development of Orchard Park and Sherwood Forest was intentional and sensitive to the land. The roads were planned to take full advantage of the rolling land and to ensure safe driving conditions throughout the community and the trees contribute to the character of the neighbourhood.

It will take a willingness on the part of the City to work cooperatively with the residents in each neighbourhood and to be creative both in engagement, design and reconstruction of our streets. If the City still intends to reconstruct our streets this year we are willing to engage. However, if more time is needed, than so be it, so that we get this right. It would be a pity if irreversible changes were made due to hasty decisions.

Going forward, we believe that the City needs to establish a better process to engage residents who may be impacted as we have been. The London Plan, and the London Complete Streets Manual do not recognize the place of legitimate exemptions to the sidewalk policy, how that would be determined, and how best to engage the neighbourhoods that are affected by these decisions. This is a larger matter than we can address in this report. We expect that The London Plan will be coming up for review and this may be an opportunity to engage a wider cross section of stakeholders, like ourselves, to address this matter.

In addition we would encourage the City to extend its timeline to engage the communities that will be impacted by construction to the year before the project is to proceed.

We need to work together. This is the challenge and the joy of living in a diverse community where we seek to accommodate everyone as best we can while striving to provide substantial benefit to the well-being of our residents and be a benefit to all of our London community.

Those who have contributed to the development of this report:

Peter Canham, Peter Corbin, Lillianne Dang, Therese Hutchinson, Lila Kari, Patti MacLennan, Julia Morrow, David O'Gorman, Greg Pavlov, Steve Nazarian, Gary Renlund, Ron Standish