

Good evening, Ms. Cassidy. I hope you and your family are keeping safe and healthy.

As you may recall, I was in contact with you several times during the Grenfell Drive road construction project, most notably to raise my concerns over the removal of so many of the trees that lined both sides of our street. I am writing to you today to raise similar concerns, this time as they relate to the proposed removal of trees along Imperial Road.

I walk along Imperial Road (and Balcarres Drive) almost every day as part of my usual route around the neighbourhood, and for the last couple of weeks have been trying to make sense of the large yellow ribbons that have been tied to several of the large trees that align this beautiful street. It was not until recently that one homeowner put up a "save our trees" sign that we became aware of the City's intent. Earlier today, we took time to review the construction plan on the City's website and were quite upset at the number of trees that will be removed (essentially all of the trees along the west side of the street).

I appreciate that the City has a new requirement that streets under reconstruction that do not have sidewalks should have that omission addressed. However, I believe it is also important to take into consideration the impact that such an addition may have on the ambience of the streets involved, and also the importance of that addition to the street itself. There are less than 20 homes, combined, on both sides of this lovely street and the trees targeted for removal are large and mature. As was the case with Grenfell Drive, it is the trees that give the street its ambience, and when they are removed, there is something more than just a tree that is lost. Speaking from our recent experience, Grenfell Drive is no longer the same (and I don't just mean in appearance); it has lost its character. I would hate to think that same thing will happen on Imperial Road, especially given it need not happen. To be quite frank, there is no need for a sidewalk on that short street, other than because it is a City requirement. The vehicular traffic is very limited and sporadic at best, and most of it involves homeowners from the street or Balcarres. We walk that street almost everyday, and if we do encounter traffic, it is slow-moving and never a threat to pedestrians, regardless of the season or the weather. And this past summer, after Grenfell lost most of its trees, it was actually a relief to make the turn on to Imperial Road, to be able to spend a few short minutes under the shade of those old trees, after being baked by the sun on a Grenfell that was now treeless or covered only by small, recently planted young trees.

I understand that the City is trying to make certain that there are appropriate safety measures in place in all residential areas, and sidewalks certainly improve those measures. But I also believe it is important to consider all factors involved, rather than simply applying a policy, regardless of the differences between the residential areas involved. In the case of Imperial Road, in my opinion, the amount of traffic and the threat that traffic represents to the neighbourhood, and in particular, to pedestrians in that neighbourhood, does not equate to the physical and emotional damage that will be done to the character of that neighbourhood, and to its residents, if the trees are removed.

I would encourage you to discuss this project with the City's Engineering department, with a request that the road construction project (which, I agree, is badly needed) continue as planned, but that the addition of a sidewalk on the west side of Imperial Road, and the associated removal of trees, be abandoned.

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