

Dear Members of the Civic Works Committee for the City of London,

I am writing in support of the request that the Council approve a motion to **not** build sidewalks on Friars Way, Doncaster Avenue, Doncaster Place, and Abbey Rise and use best management practices to minimize any unnecessary tree loss during road reconstruction.

I grew up at 23 Friars Way (at the corner of Friars Way and Doncaster Ave), I continued living there during my University education at Western, and I have visited the neighbourhood many times a year since then. An avid dog walker and runner, I have never felt unsafe in the neighbourhood due to the lack of sidewalks, and I have greatly appreciated the shade afforded to the streets and the houses by the abundance of mature growth trees. I would strongly urge Council to consider the long-term health of the neighbourhood that is supported not by cutting down trees, but rather by preserving what is there and maintaining as many trees as possible in their mature state. I know from first-hand experience how long it has taken for those trees to reach any height and shade potential, and I also know how many birds and other creatures depend on the trees year-round for shelter and nourishment.

As a resident of Toronto who does not own a car, I also have first-hand experience navigating busy streets as a pedestrian and cyclist. I fully support where sidewalks are necessary to protect residents from busy traffic. However, none of these London streets—Friars Way, Doncaster Avenue, Doncaster Place, and Abbey Rise—is a busy thoroughfare, and the urban nature of this neighbourhood is not likely to change, given the absence of a public school and any commercial business in its midst.

If Council firmly believes that safety is an issue due to traffic flow in the area, speed bumps might be a possible alternative to which the money currently earmarked for sidewalks could be directed. What is crucial, in my mind, is that the benefits of mature trees and unimpeded green space be carefully weighed against the permanent destruction of pockets of the “Forest City” that help protect the city’s lungs—and heart.

Sincerely,

Alison Kenzie