

Respected members of the Civic Works Committee
and all those interested in this matter,

I write in support of sidewalks across this city whenever and wherever possible.

By now, you've heard objections to new sidewalks on the grounds of loss to private property, loss of mature trees, and loss of control over one's street.

I'm not here to offer a point-counterpoint—the London Plan has already stated the case clearly in favour of more sidewalks after consulting with experts and citizens alike—I'm writing to ask residents living along affected streets to think about sidewalks in the same manner as they do the trees which they so (rightly) cherish...

Just as the best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago, the best time to make our neighbourhoods as accessible as possible is when they are first created. Unfortunately, that didn't happen here.

What you are faced with now is the opportunity to look toward the next twenty years and how you can work together to give future residents of your neighbourhood safer, more accessible means of transportation, recreation, and livelihood.

It's patronizing to suggest replanting new trees will bring you the same shade and beauty as the mature trees enjoyed now; but there will come a day when new residents will look back and have you to thank for the now-taller trees they and their children can enjoy from the sidewalks you paved the way for.

I'm also writing to ask Committee Members and Council to respect the largest civic public consultation in Canadian history and trust that today's hard decisions are building a better city for tomorrow's citizens. And, with respect, I'd ask that you implore our planners and engineers to explore alternative solutions to these particular situations (such as sidewalks that weave around the trees currently slated for removal) and double-down on the frequency (and quality) of our current sidewalk maintenance over the winter months. We're a city known for testing new things, I believe it's in our DNA to find creative ways to address the concerns of these specific plans.

Thank you to everyone here—whether resident or public servant—your love for where you live is obvious and with that in common we can surely find a path forward.

James Kingsley
Resident, Old South
Member, Good City Co.
Editor, The Localist