

A photograph of a forest path that splits into two directions. The path is covered in fallen yellow and brown leaves. The trees are lush green, suggesting a late summer or early autumn setting. The lighting is soft and natural, filtering through the canopy.

Municipal decision making and trees, which path to take

Sometimes its easy to make a decision without really spending too much time on it. I think that the Municipal government should stop and think before pulling the trigger. It takes a village to raise a child, and a lifetime to grow a tree, lets make communities that do both.

Will Handler, Doncaster Place

Why are we in this position

- The AODA, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- Municipal government is trying to increase accessibility for citizens so there are no barriers to people living, or working anywhere
- People love treed neighborhoods, being around natural habitat is good for human beings, of all ages

The goal of accessibility is worthy, but that does not make cutting down mature trees to put in a sidewalk always the best decision

What facts do we have

- In the Sherwood Forest neighborhood people walk on the street, that includes the streets with sidewalks such as Wychwood.
- People drive slowly, below the current limit, towards the center of the street.
- If you are on foot, or using some aid to locomotion, you have no problem getting around as it is.
- Its is not a car culture, people are outside.
- Trees provide a lot of shade. They make people want to be outside on the street.

What will adding a sidewalk do in this particular neighborhood?

- Possibly, give a small benefit for pedestrians not having to worry about cars
- Speed up cars
- Remove a lot of trees
- Make the street more bleak, less natural
- Increase AC bills for houses previously shaded
- Cost a lot of money

Is it worth it?

Removing the trees for a sidewalk is not worth it from a cost benefit analysis. The small benefit does not outweigh the financial cost, or the arboreal cost.

What could we do instead?

- Reduce speed limits
- Traffic calming measures
- Convert streets to single lane traffic with passing places, sidewalks, but keeping all the trees.

This is not a new problem.

“To cut down the trees or not to cut down the trees that is the question.” Harmalot, play from the 15th Century