

March 16, 2021

City of London Council

Re: Request to exempt Sherwood Forest sidewalks

We are writing again, this time to Council, to ask for an exemption of the planned Sherwood Forest sidewalks and the removal of mature trees in our neighbourhood (likely 40 plus large trees on Friars Way alone). This will drastically impact our neighbourhoods' character which attracted our residents to live here in the first place.

We as a community recognize we must work diligently to remove barriers to accessibility in the City. We have demonstrated to the Civic Works Committee (a committee that did not seem to listen or acknowledge our concerns and thoughts) that our streets are already accessible to a broad range of disabilities. Therefore we feel this reconstruction project should focus on other priorities of the London Plan; namely protecting our Urban Forest.

Council must remember that it is not possible to make all areas of the City accessible to all (disabled and abled) in a uniform manner. We need to prioritize based on budgets and degree of benefit.

As part of our presentation, our community offered to work with the City to develop more creative approaches to obtain their accessibility goal without impact to our mature trees that define our community. While Councillor Helmer offered sidewalks within our wider streets, we are concerned that this limited approach may stifle other creative solutions or be deemed not feasible and then the loss of trees have not been averted.

It is unfortunate this blanket policy has not been well considered with respect to implementation issues in mature subdivisions. The number of objections and delegations to speak to a sidewalk exemption is clearly evidence of this. It only makes sense for Council to exempt the sidewalk requirement as proposed and step back to develop more appropriate guidelines, design requirements and options to consider when the next slate of road works are proposed. An exemption of the proposed sidewalks along Sherwood Forest streets will not pose any long term consequences to City mobility goals given the negligible barrier posed in this community.

To summarize, the London Plan sidewalk policy needs to be revised in order to find better ways to protect and improve the safety and accessibility of residents, and protect the city's mature trees. It shouldn't be an either / or situation.

Respectfully submitted

Dave and Patty Hayman

Dave and Patty Hayman
77 Doncaster Ave