

March 17, 2021

Dear Councillor Lehman,

CWCs Definition of Accessibility?

As you know, I represent **10 Londoners with disabilities** living in the small community of Old Hazelden where St Anthony is slated for a sidewalk. We **unanimously oppose this sidewalk**. For people using a mobility device, or anyone else with locomotion challenges, the uneven, pitched (drainage), and often icy surface of a sidewalk does not improve accessibility. Sidewalks in our already liveable neighborhood would create exclusion and segregation, not inclusion and community. This is not the intention of the AODA, and **we reject the CWCs notion that sidewalks unilaterally equal accessibility**. I have detailed our thoughts and comments in my presentation to the Civic Works Committee meeting of March 15.

Disabilities are varied. As a person living with a brain injury, I am aware of the often invisible nature of this disability which can leave people marginalized, and chronically under supported. The reality is that 50% of homeless people have brain injuries, and many others are reliant on social supports. Housing and food insecurity are commonplace. I have known many people through my Brain Injury support groups that would find the idea of installing \$500,000 worth of unwanted sidewalks in very low density neighbourhoods, with little traffic flow and nonexistent safety complaints, simply ludicrous. We should consider how we manage resources effectively to serve the needs of all Londoners.

St Anthony is already a liveable street. This sidewalk project, which is not warranted and reduces accessibility for many residents, also comes at the expense of other worthy initiatives for people with disabilities. This lose-lose situation is directly attributable to the CWCs refusal to entertain alternative perspectives. My hope is that council will acknowledge the need to keep an open mind when assessing what actually constitutes accessibility.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Skelton