

From: Tyler Smith

Sent: Monday, November 8, 2021 7:17 PM

To: Council Agenda <councilagenda@london.ca>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Designate Blackfriars Bridge for Active Transportation Only

Dear Mayor Holder and City Councillors,

I invite every single member of council to visit the Blackfriars Bridge in person. If you do, you will see that it has become a quiet oasis in the center of a bustling downtown core. You almost forget you are in the centre of a city with nearly half a million people. Nobody goes to the Oxford Bridge or the Queens Bridge to relax, but they can relax at the Blackfriars Bridge. It is peaceful, serene, and allows residents and tourists to enjoy the natural wildlife of the Thames River. It serves as a gateway to the past which allows people to imagine a time when the bridge was built. Before Blackfriars was a part of London. Before cars or electricity. Back when people used horse and buggy to cross it. And generations of men and women crossed it every day to build up the city of London to turn it into the great city it is today. Adding cars to the bridge makes all of these benefits harder to realize, and some of them are made impossible.

Adding cars to the bridge does not improve the bridge or the natural area or its wildlife. It does not generate wealth. It does not support small local businesses – it encourages people to drive past those businesses. It does not encourage tourism. It does not reduce greenhouse gas emissions or help mitigate the effects of climate change. It does not encourage people to experience nature and appreciate their local history. The quiet residential neighborhoods that surround the bridge do not benefit by adding cars to the bridge.

Adding cars makes to the Blackfriars Bridge takes a beautiful and treasured spot in the heart of downtown and makes it worse. Adding cars would mean increased wear and tear on an already expensive heritage bridge, which would shorten its lifespan. In short order, the city again would be confronted with the decision on whether to bear the cost of saving and restoring a heritage bridge or decommissioning it, and removing it permanently from future generations. The only people who benefit from adding cars are a handful of people - if it may, in fact, actually shorten their commute times. The possible added convenience to the few, does not outweigh the loss to the many that adding cars to bridge would bring. The noise, risk and stress of having drivers cut through two parks, and a pedestrian/cycling pathway diminishes it for every Londoner and every visitor to our city and for this reason should be prevented.

There is no compelling reason for cars to use the Blackfriars Bridge to get downtown when Oxford, Riverside, Stanley, and Horton all exist and function perfectly fine.

I urge you to designate the Blackfriars Bridge for active transportation only and keep cars off.

Please add this letter to the public agenda.

Thank you.

T.W. Munro