

December 16, 2019

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

RE: Sidewalks in the Town of Kingsville

The purpose of this letter is to ensure that the Town of Kingsville creates a pedestrian network throughout the community that does not create barriers or impede the participation of people with a disability with respect to sidewalks, or lack thereof.

A comprehensive network of connected sidewalks is vital in the overall creation of inclusion. Residents should not be required to walk on the roadway, regardless of it being a 'quiet street' or having lesser volumes of traffic due to a cul-de-sac, any more than a person who uses a mobility device or a person who is blind and uses a guide dog or white cane. Sidewalks act as physical safety separations between vehicles and pedestrians.

Since 2017, there have been numerous requests to Council to remove sidewalks from plans of subdivision. The fact that new or existing development, homeowners, groups or area residents do not wish to have a sidewalk traverse the public easement at their property should not delay its benefits to others or its future legacy.

It should also be noted that O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards under *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11* sets out guidelines for Exterior Paths of Travel (i.e. Sidewalks). These standards are **requirements** and are NOT optional.

Members of the Kingsville Accessibility Advisory Committee were unanimous in their concern about sidewalks being removed from development plans as regardless of ability or disability; it is more dangerous to walk on the roadway, it costs more to construct sidewalks after the fact in the future as the dynamics and desires of a neighbourhood changes. Sidewalk benefits include: user friendly for everyone (aging population, families with strollers, young children, recreational users, etc.), sidewalks are particularly beneficial for people who are blind and use guide dogs or caning to navigate. Sidewalks connect pedestrians to parks, schools, community centres, arenas, community mailboxes, residences, places of employment and commercial areas. Their absence compromises safety and encourages people to walk on lawns and private property, or on busy streets. Sidewalks are a pedestrian network throughout the community and the members support the systematic provision for sidewalks.

Council should also be aware of the accessibility goal in the Strategic Plan that says “strive to make the Town of Kingsville a more accessible community”, and its objective to “meet the accessibility needs of the community”, are not being met.

Council is requested to understand the municipal impact that the removal, deferral or deletion of sidewalk(s) cause to all pedestrians, including people with a disability. The Committee strongly notes that today’s residents may not reside there in the years to come, but the legacy of no pedestrian sidewalk will be.

Therefore, members of the Kingsville Accessibility Advisory Committee (K.A.A.C) make the following recommendation for Council’s consideration:

That K.A.A.C. advocates for sidewalk placement in all areas in the Town of Kingsville for reasons of safety, security and accessibility.

Respectfully yours,

Members of the Kingsville Accessibility Advisory Committee