

~~Madam~~ ^{Mr} Chair, members of this Committee, thank you for agreeing to hear from our delegation. We are here once more to request that the Council plough the walkways in White Oaks Park in wintertime.

Despite the inconclusiveness of last year's pilot study, the ploughing that was done made a huge difference to our community and I know that Councillor Usher received letters and emails of thanks from many residents.

It is important to remember that the walkways in this park are not mere leisure trails but a major thoroughfare for our community. It has been referred to as the 401 of White Oaks.

The White Oaks District Plan adopted in 1973 prescribes an "effective pedestrian circulation system" so that residents can "gain access to commercial, school and park areas". The objectives of the District Plan describe providing the citizens with an area "to which they can relate" with "continuous pedestrian walkways" to provide good access to services. In wintertime, White Oaks residents still have to get to school, to the library and job centre, the South London Community Centre with its essential services, the Urgent Care Centre and White Oaks Mall. In wintertime, this is near impossible without a car unless you're very fit and very determined.

I would like this Committee to bear in mind that support of neighbourhood initiatives is important to London City Council as stated in the Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan Update of

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June 2009. By investing in neighbourhoods, the city can reduce costs such as crime, and improve positive outcomes. Ploughing White Oaks Park would keep our residents walking; encouraging people to walk in their community is an easy and cost-effective way to improve the health of London's inhabitants and neighbourhoods.

According to the "London's Bike and Walk Map" the paths in White Oaks Park are part of the "Thames Valley Pathway" and therefore essential to the City's commitment to reducing greenhouse gases and improving local fitness ALL YEAR ROUND.

Last winter, concern was expressed in Council about "pitting neighbourhood against neighbourhood", and I appreciate that this could be perceived as a problem. Many neighbourhoods have parks, but White Oaks Park quite clearly bisects the residential and service areas.

Another problem raised in Council following last winter's pilot project was *timing* and *drifting*. I spoke to Mr Stafford in the Parks and Recreation department about this and between us we reached the understanding that residents benefited as long as the paths were cleared *sometime* following a snowfall. This discussion removed the perceived priority conflicts between sidewalks and the walkways. Furthermore, drifting was not a problem either – on a five or six-foot wide path, a foot lost through drifting is negligible.

I'd like to thank the staff in the Parks and Recreation department for their patience and their willingness to listen and discuss the issues with me.

White Oaks Public School is primarily a walking school, and parking is difficult because the school shares the parking lots with the pool and a daycare centre. Walking is the easiest and healthiest option, as well as being better for the environment.

Furthermore, our school's initiatives in setting up Walk on Wednesdays and the Walking School Bus would be supported by ploughing the walkways in the park. These plans can only have positive effects as more children walking to school reduces congestion and provides a visual reminder to keep driving speeds down. More children walking builds on community spirit as they provide "eyes on the street", and students benefit from their morning exercise. Ploughing the park's walkways would encourage winter walking to school and thus improve the health of our children and community

The Parks and Rec Strategic Master Plan shows the City's commitment in placing greater emphasis on strong neighbourhoods, healthy lifestyles and sustainable environments. Ploughing the walkways in White Oaks Park would ensure that local programmes remain accessible for all our residents. The Master Plan refers to "neighbourhood hubs" as "anchors of community life" to foster greater

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interaction within neighbourhoods. This is exactly what we are trying to achieve in White Oaks by encouraging residents to walk.

I respectfully ask the Councillors to seriously consider repeating ~~the~~ ^{last year's} pilot study.

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Alan Carthew

From:
To:
Sent: August 24, 2009 3:12 PM
Subject: parks (plowing)

To: City council members,

I am writing this letter in regards to the plowing of the White Oaks park pathways. I am a stay-at-home mother of two children and I also run a home childcare that requires me, and several of the older children in my care who attend White Oaks public School and St. Anthony's French Immersion School to go back and forth twice a day, after doing this for quite a few years I was extremely happy when the pathways were plowed. My job as a Mother, Childcare giver, and community member was very difficult when the paths were not plowed, I would have to make a timely decision, do i go around with all my kids, some in a double stroller, on the sidewalk and make the trek a 25 minute trip (in minus -25 weather), or do I go through the field and pull the double stroller backwards some times thigh-high snow. In my opinion, which is only one of many, there was such a huge relief last winter when the paths were plowed, and would make life so much easier for so many different people myself included, the school, which has little parking for the amount of parents who drop-off and pick-up, the public pool, which has had many problems with parking due to the school, and to the students and families which can only benefit not only with parking issues but to make a healthy start and finish to a full day. In the end I do believe that plowing the paths was and is a great choice and I would like to say Thank-you on behalf of my self and all of the many people out there who use our beautiful parks Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter, Thank-you again.

*Sincerly, Laura Link
86 Renny Crescent*

Attention all humans. We are your photos. Free us.

24/08/2009

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