

## “As we heard it” report:

### Varley Drive Proposed Sidewalk

#### Introduction

This “As we heard it report” includes the results from the consultation for the *Varley Drive Proposed Sidewalk Project* from *Beaverbrook Road to Carr Crescent north (east side)* and from *Beaverbrook Road to Milne Crescent north (west side)*. The consultation consisted of an online survey led by the City of Ottawa, a virtual public open house held by the Ward Councillor, and individual comments received from the public addressed to the Ward Councillor and the City’s project manager.

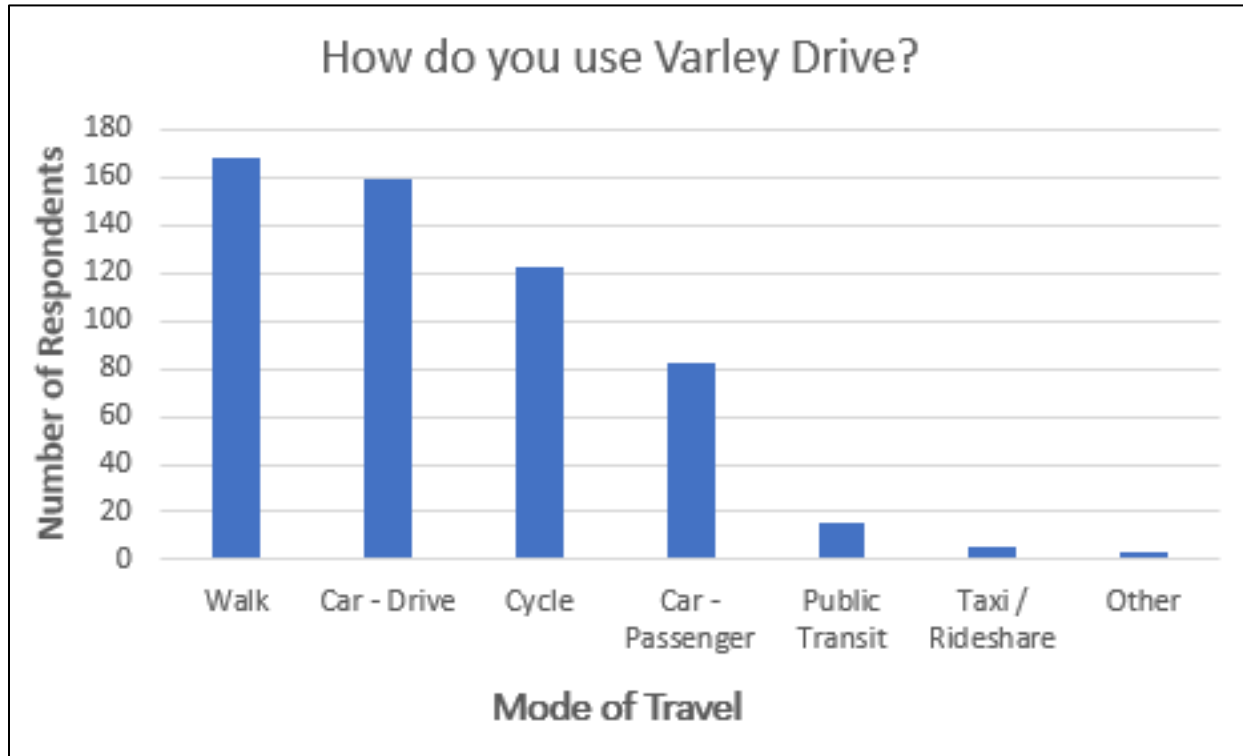
The report is broken down into the following three sections:

- A) Online public survey results
- B) Public comments during the live virtual open house
- C) Individual public comments received by email

### A) Online Public Survey Results

The online public survey was available from January 6 - 31, 2021, and was completed by 178 people. This section includes the results of the online survey.

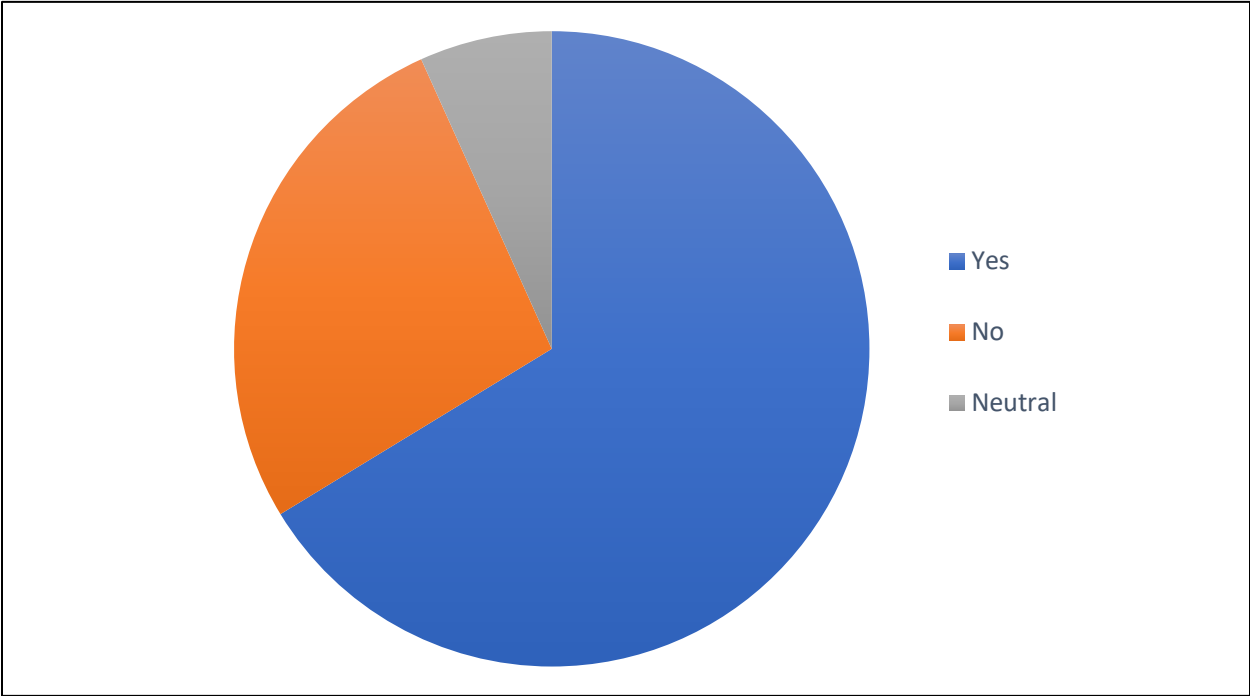
1 - What mode(s) of transportation do you use when travelling along Varley Drive? (Choose all that apply):



Response	Total # of responses
Walk	168
Car - Drive	159
Cycle	123
Car - Passenger	82
Public Transit	15
Taxi / Rideshare	5
Other	3

\* Respondents were able to select more than one mode of travel. There was a total of 555 responses from the 178 respondents as each person could provide more than one answer.

2a - Do you have any concerns with regards to pedestrian safety within the project limits?



Response	Total # of responses	Total % of responses
Yes	118	66%
No	48	27%
Neutral	12	7%

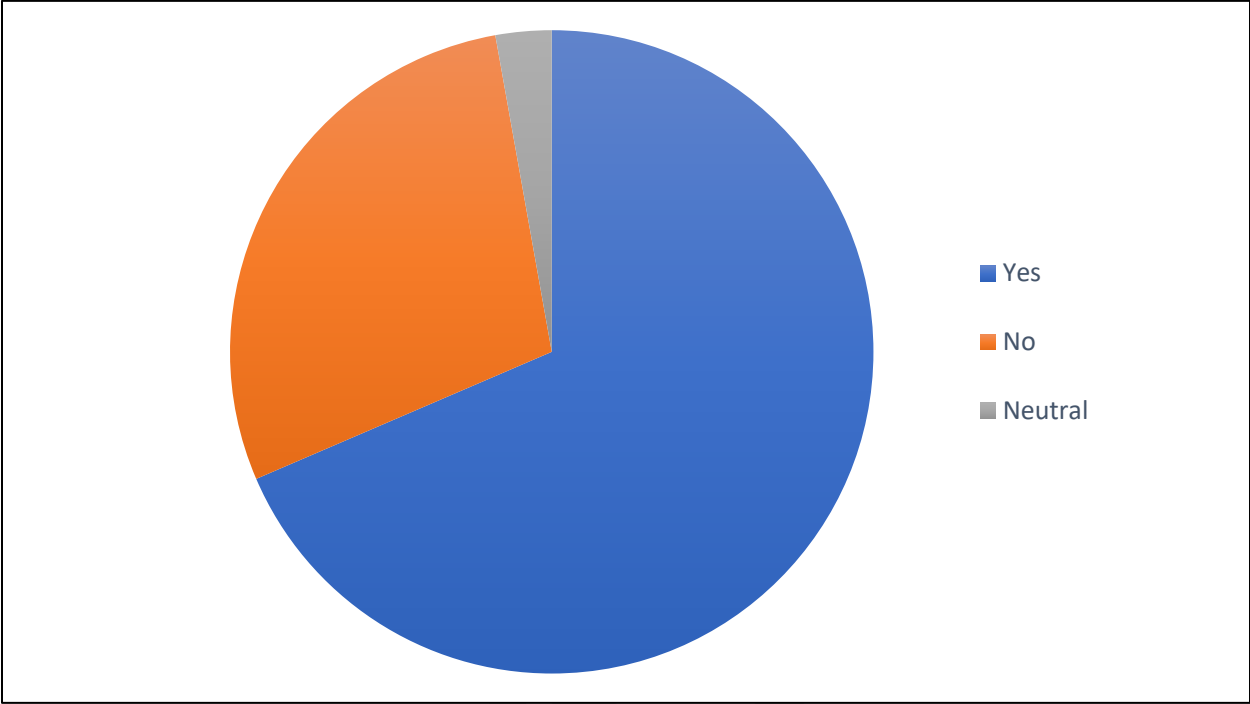
\*178 respondents

**2b - If you answered yes to question 2, what is your concern and where?**

A total of 50 responses were provided. Concerns are summarized in the table below with the number of responses that correspond to the concern.

Concern / Issue	Total # of responses
Pedestrian safety for school children, residents walking and running, strollers, seniors and those with vision and hearing impairments, mobility aids, wheelchairs. Parked cars, school buses, street lighting at night and winter conditions (snowbanks) pose safety hazards for pedestrians walking on the road.	43
No sidewalk, existing pathway system serves the need of the community. Use funding to improve pathways and lighting.	4
Impacts to trees. Loss of on-street parking.	2
Traffic speed and volume. Traffic calming measures i.e. speed bumps, narrow road, eliminate cut through traffic on Varley by closing off entries i.e. from Alfred Casson Way.	13
Top of the hill by Carr Crescent.	1
Intersection of Varley and Beaverbrook (west) is dangerous trying to access the pathway.	1

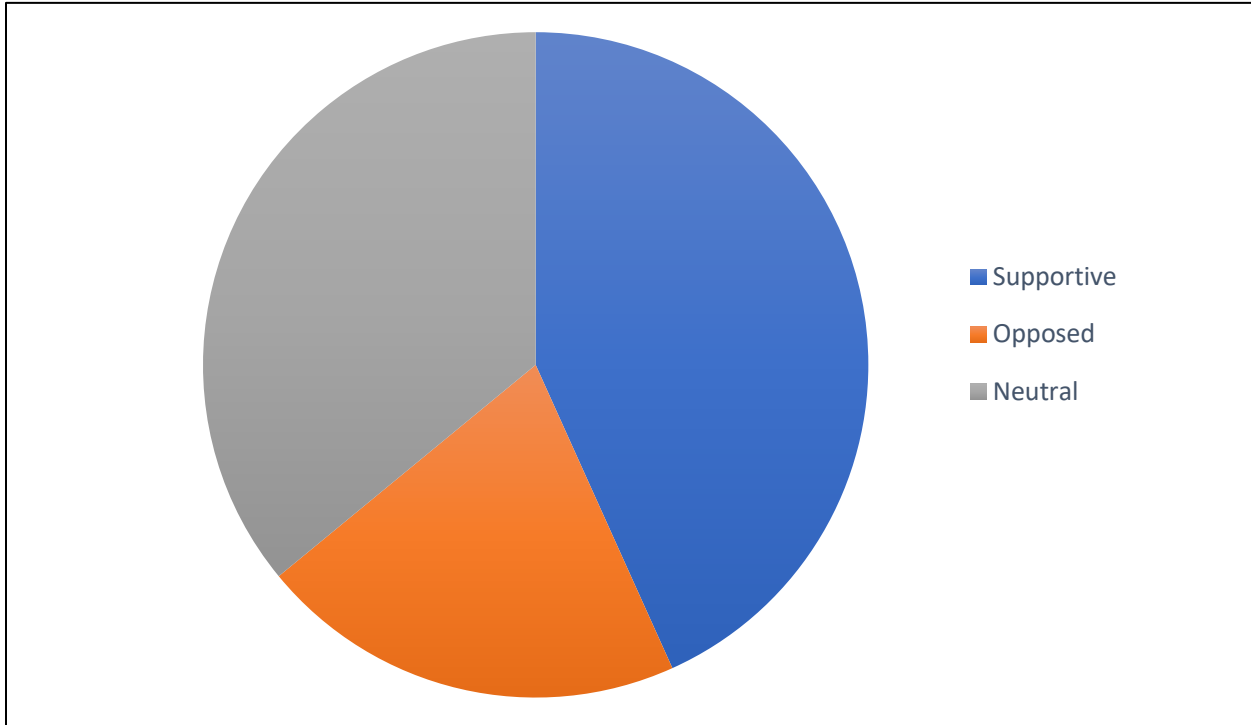
3 - Do you support the proposed sidewalk on Varley Drive?



Response	Total # of responses	Total % of responses
Yes	122	69%
No	51	29%
Neutral	5	3%

\*178 respondents

4 - To help us refine the recommended plan, please indicate your support of the following infrastructure: Tighten corner radii – Narrowing at the intersection of the side street by tightening the corner radii and shortening the crossings to reduce pedestrian crossing distances at intersections.



Response	Total # of responses	Total % of responses
Supportive	77	43%
Opposed	37	21%
Neutral	64	36%

\*178 respondents

## 5 - Do you have any additional comments?

A total of 50 individual comments were provided in the survey. Comments are summarized in the table below with the number of responses that correspond to each theme or idea.

Comment	Total # of responses
Pedestrian safety. Need a sidewalk to be continuous all along Varley Drive for pedestrian safety and to provide continuous accessibility to those with mobility issues.	20
Need to address issues of traffic speed and traffic volume. Eliminate cut through traffic on Varley by closing off entries i.e. from Alfred Casson Way. Traffic calming measures i.e speed bumps. Reduce speed limit. Designate area a Community Safety Zone.	13
Existing pathway system serves the need of the community. Use funding to improve pathways.	16
Additional school parking needed.	1
Concerned that tightening corner radii will bring vehicles closer to pedestrians.	1
Impacts to properties, trees and property values.	3
Supports tightening corner radii to improve safety to pedestrians.	1
Drainage/grade issue on corner of Varley/Pellan	1
Sidewalk needed on Carr Crescent	1

### B) Public Comments during Virtual Public Open House

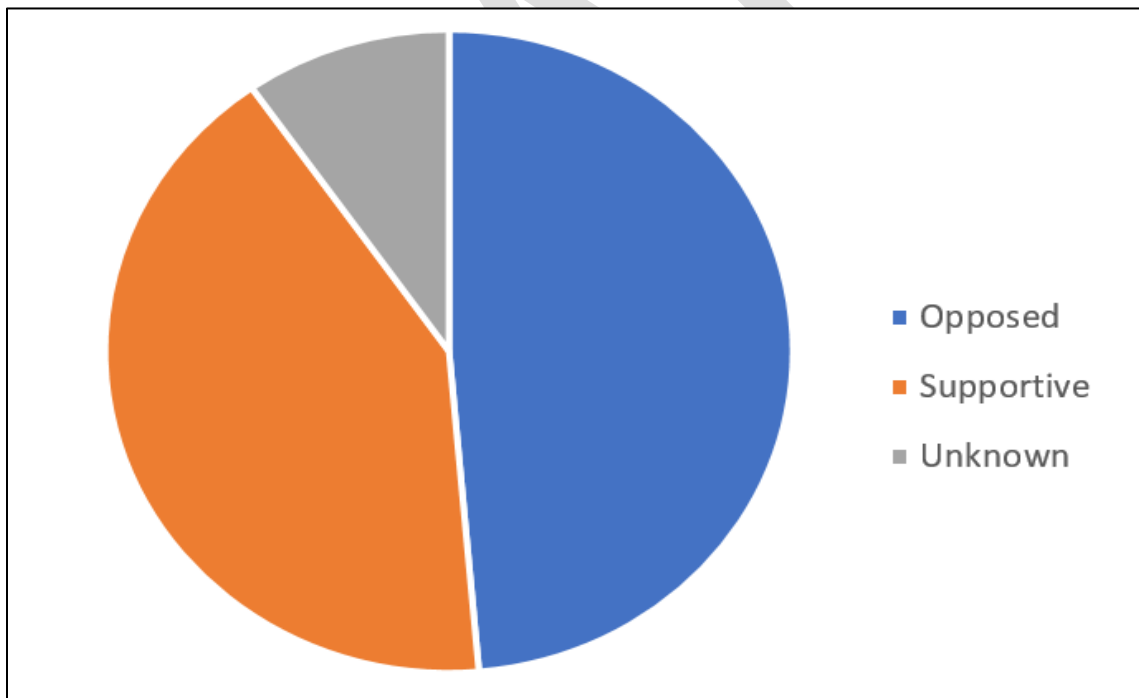
A virtual public open house for the *Varley Drive and Leacock Drive Proposed Sidewalk Project* was held by Councillor Jenna Sudds on January 19, 2021, from 7:00 pm to 8:30pm. A total of 69 people attended. The platforms used included: Zoom, Facebook and Twitter. During the virtual event individuals participated in the discussion, asking questions or providing comments. All comments were recorded by the Councillor's office and are summarized below. This number is the total number of people in attendance: 52 people on zoom (including city & consultant staff) and 17 people following on facebook. This section includes comments on both the Varley Drive and Leacock Drive proposed sidewalks.

Comment
Concerns about property impacts, driveways, retaining walls, loss of trees. Concerns about impacts to the natural environment i.e loss of natural drainage, loss of trees.
Existing pathways are not easily accessible to people with mobility issues (grade /slope /access from road) and are not accessible at all in the winter.
Safety of pedestrians walking on a sidewalk cannot be compared to walking on the road. The proposed sidewalk will complement the existing pathway system.

Speeding vehicles and traffic speed are a big issue. Consider traffic calming measures i.e. speed bump, traffic cameras, raised crosswalk. A sidewalk will not slow down traffic.
Existing pathway system is enough and there is no need for a sidewalk. Pathways connect to the schools. Use funds to improve existing pathway system.
Need to address the traffic from the parents dropping off and picking up their children at school.
Not everyone has a pathway in their backyard. Many children need to walk on the street to get to the existing pathway system.
Neighbourhood specific planning and design is certainly part of the New Official Plan, however, the details are missing as to something like sidewalk/pathway policy for Active Transportation.
How can we formally object to this proposed sidewalk project?

### C) Individual Public Comments Received by Email

A total of 72 people submitted comments by email to the ward Councillor and the City’s project manager. This number includes additional people included within a given email. 35 people stated their opposition, 30 stated their support and 7 were included as “position unknown”.



Response	Total # of responses	Total % of responses
Supportive	30	42%
Opposed	35	48%
Position Unknown	7	10%



The following table is a consolidation of the comments received including those that are “opposed to” and “in support of” the proposed sidewalk project and summarized below.

Comments
<p><b><u>Beaverbrook Community:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beaverbrook is a historically and architecturally important residential Neighborhood built by the late Bill Teron.</li><li>• Beaverbrook Community has changed a lot since it was first built.</li><li>• Beaverbrook has received awards for its design concepts over the years.</li><li>• Changes to Ontario school policy have resulted in much higher student populations of students outside the community.</li><li>• Difficult to retrofit an old community.</li><li>• How will a sidewalk disrupt the neighborhood and not traffic calming measures?</li><li>• The current neighborhood design lacks consideration for those that have accessibility requirements.</li><li>• Uniqueness of the neighborhood should not be prioritized over safety and traditional ways of moving through the neighborhood.</li><li>• Appreciate the unique look and feel of the Beaverbrook community however sometimes change is necessary to address issues.</li><li>• Increase in both younger families and seniors in the neighborhood.</li><li>• Community members have navigated the current system since it was first developed.</li><li>• Beaverbrook was designed to separate pedestrians from the roadways.</li></ul> <p><b><u>Vehicle speed:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vehicle speeds along Varley are a big concern.</li><li>• Add traffic calming measures such as speed radar cameras, speed bumps, bulb outs, street narrowing, centerline posts and raised crossings, more signage (monitor school zones).</li><li>• Including radar speed signs, regular police radar patrols, traffic speed traps cameras, and road/curb modifications.</li><li>• Narrow the road all the way down Varley to reduce traffic speeds.</li><li>• Lack of signage regarding speed.</li><li>• Enforce speed limits and create Community Safety Zones.</li><li>• Current conditions are unsafe with the speed of traffic, lack of sidewalks and necessary travel to and from school (W. E. Johnston).</li></ul> <p><b><u>Trees:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concerns regarding the removal of mature trees.</li><li>• Concerns regarding root damage.</li></ul>

### **Pathways:**

- Pathway system is sufficient and provides access to schools and neighborhood pods for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The pathways provide access to amenities in the neighborhood.
- Encourage and educate pedestrians to use the pathway system.
- The pathway system does not connect to all houses.
- Many families need to use the roadway to access the pathways.
- Missing pathway signage.
- Not all properties back onto a pathway nor are they properly winter maintained.
- Children walking to school use the corridor regularly.
- Pathway network is safest for children and best way for adults to exercise.
- Pathways need draining repairs.
- Install a link to the pathway under the iron bridge. This should follow the current informal path that has been created between the driveway of 20 Varley and the iron bridge.
- Resurface, increasing the lighting and install missing signage.

### **Properties:**

- Disturbance to property owners.
- Berms will be affected. Property value.
- Shortening the driveway space will create issues for residents to park their vehicles causing people to have to park on the street.
- Concerns related to landscaping (stones, pavers, greenspace, tying the sidewalk into lawns etc).
- Construction is in the City's right-of-way.

### **Costs:**

- Waste of taxpayers' money.
- Tax burden at this time.
- Winter maintenance costs.
- Money should be spent on existing pedestrian infrastructure by widening the Pathways.
- Unnecessary expenditure during the financial hardship of COVID 19 and money should be directed to high priority projects.
- The project design to accommodate trees and shorter driveways is costly.

### **Traffic Volumes:**

- Close off Alfred Casson Way to prevent cut through traffic.
- Increase in traffic degrades pedestrian safety.
- Elementary children at higher risk.
- Traffic and pedestrian traffic have significantly increased since the 1980s.
- Traffic reduction and control is key.
- Volume of traffic has increased since moving to the community 30 years ago.
- Varley acts as a shortcut to and from March Road – consider closing Casson Way.

- Mostly of which are teenagers, adults and seniors.

#### Schools:

- Issues in front of the schools during drop off and pick up hours (U-turns, illegal parking, illegal stopping).

#### Proposed Sidewalks:

- Sidewalks will encourage pedestrians to walk next to the busy roadway creating further safety concerns.
- Build the sidewalk completely into the roadway.
- Feel unsafe as a pedestrian walking on the roadway with no sidewalk.
- Sidewalks are welcomed and cannot come soon enough.
- Sidewalks are a great idea for both Varley and Leacock.
- New sidewalks would be a major asset.
- Unwanted and unnecessary.
- Environmentally unfriendly.
- Greenspace will be replaced with concrete.
- Sidewalks would also mean that children would be required to cross intersections creating additional safety concerns.
- Sidewalks will assist children walking to school, residents walking for exercise, residents running for exercise, residents retrieving their mail, residents walking their dog/pet.
- Sidewalks will create a safe passage for seniors or others with vision or hearing impairments or other disabilities requiring mobility aids.
- The sidewalk would be great for children walking to school, seniors and people wanting to walk for exercise within the community.
- Safe passage when there are both automobiles and bicycles on the road.
- Safe plowed passage in the winter when snowbanks and parked cars would otherwise prohibit passage.
- Availability of safe outdoor opportunities for activity and exercise is important and even more apparent with the recent COVID 19 pandemic.
- Sidewalk will have a negative impact on the environment and a negative impact on children's safety.
- Road narrowing will create issues for cyclists.
- Raised sidewalks do not provide safety measures for pedestrians.
- Sidewalks on the school side of the roadway.
- It is hard to understand how a city element that makes life safer, healthier and facilitates social interaction (by allowing folks to walk outdoors in a comfortable manner) does not make their houses more valuable and attractive.
- Priority should be safety of children and other pedestrians. Winter snowbanks create more of a pedestrian concern.
- Sidewalks will encourage vehicular traffic to speed up.
- Drainage issues with new sidewalk.

**Safety:**

- When we visit with our children, we have to be very careful, as the road undulations - though scenic- reduce visibility for cars coming towards pedestrians.
- Safety trumps NIMBYism.
- Safer travel for children to walk to school and a better solution than the back pathway system.
- Both the pathways and walking on the road put children at higher risk.
- People walk on the road sometimes where there are sidewalks in the wintertime.
- Personal safety, especially in the evening and mornings.

DRAFT