

FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL

Process, Analysis, Communication, Community Collaboration

Decision Process

- Despite presenting at least three* reports to Council over the past 2½ years, all mentioning a new forcemain – a major new infrastructure – **Staff** has never presented a report on the sole topic of a forcemain, or included an assessment of its location options or capital costs, let alone a review of its environmental and social impacts – as per policies in the Official Plan, Strategic Plan, Official Plan Review. Staff reports focused solely on budget for engineering related to the need to service new development.
 - * CSOPS.22.041 – Growth Related Budget Transfer – Wastewater Collection System – May 2022
 - * CSOPS.23.019 – Engineering Services for... Mill St Forcemain Upgrades... Budget Increases – April 2023
 - * CSOPS.23.044 – Addition of Engineering for Bay Street Reconstruction ... – August 2023
- Throughout these reports, **Staff** never specifically **asked** for Council's approval of the route of the new forcemain down Bay St E. In fact staff explicitly **told** Council, in the August 2023 report, that "The new sanitary forcemain will travel east on Bay St from Mill to Grey" ... (CSOPS.23.044).
- As such, **Council** ± "blindly" approved the route of the forcemain down Bay St E, under the guise of these Staff reports related to Budget and Engineering Services, and without any specific reference to the forcemain itself.
- Only after **residents' serious concerns** arose did Staff/Consultants prepare 4 alternate routes for the forcemain, for the PIC. These were presented to residents before they were presented to Council.
- **Consultants/Staff** repeatedly advised residents verbally at the December neighbourhood meeting, at the April '24 PIC, and in the PIC presentation deck that Council could deviate from the standards staff were relying on, e.g.: "*Final solution to be determined considering resident feedback.*". "*Deviation from Town standard would need to be approved by Council.*". "*Council must approve any deviation from the Town standard.*". (PIC presentation deck, April 18, 2024, p29, 32). The OP and the MTP contain policies that provide for these deviations.
- **A majority of Councillors** (COW) then agreed by resolution to consider/examine the 4 alternate routes, an ambitious undertaking. (July 3, 2024)
- **Council**, two weeks later then decided not to look at any other options. A resolution to examine at least one alternate route would have been a reasonable, timely and practical approach (as proposed by Bay St residents) but was not forthcoming. (July 15, 2024)
- **Council** did put forward an alternate resolution for a one-way street option. However, this is not a practical solution for various reasons, does not address the community and environmental issues, and is not supported by the residents who would use it most. **Staff**, in discussion at the Council meeting, cautioned against it.

Public Comments and Engagement

- **Staff** advised at the December 2 '23 Neighbourhood Meeting that a Community Liaison Committee could be formed.
- **Staff** then advised residents in their April 18 '24 PIC presentation that "*establishing this committee may not be necessary due to the scale of the project. Town staff can effectively communicate with all impacted residents, including on a one-on-one basis if the need arises*".
- There are now ±2000 citizens of the Town that feels this impacts them, in someway! The need has arisen!

- **Public concern and opposition** is spreading across the Town and along the entire Town lakefront as other cottage road communities become aware of the streetscape and community-altering impacts the same urban design plans would have for their roads, into the future. The names of these roads define the character of cottage communities – “Christie Beach, Sunset Blvd, Lake Drive, Cameron Street, Lakeshore Drive, Cottage Avenue, Bay Street, Bayview Avenue, Lakeshore Road, Lakewood Drive”. This opposition is reflected in the ‘Save Bay Street’ petition which has attracted ±2000 signatures, to date! Quite impressive when you consider that there are only 32 residences directly affected on Bay St E, Elgin to Grey.
- **Staff and Council** have not moved forward, proactively, to address the resident’s strong opposition to the lack of any broad analysis of the location of the forcemain, and the lack of transparency in the decision-making process. They have similarly not considered real alternatives to finishing the dig with a ‘full urban design’ (centering the road, widening it significantly, establishing bikes lanes, boulevards, sidewalks, barrier curbs and prohibiting parking) which would effectively transform a perfectly functional, attractive, inviting, long-established, heritage lakeshore cottage road and community into an urban community. This despite the provisions in the TMP and OP for Local Roads, and Heritage Roads, community character...
- **The Town of Saugeen Shores** was faced with these same issues, under very similar circumstances (lakefront community, fast growing, numerous treed, narrow, lakeshore cottage roads) and proactively determined that their full urban design standards should generally not apply in the case of cottage streetscapes. They have recently produced a study to this effect:
 - Town of Saugeen Shores, Cottage Streets Study, 2024**
 - Introduction.1.1
 - The Town has reconstructed several Cottage Streets over the past few years. When designing the roadworks, the Town had attempted to apply its typical engineering standards, which include the provision of storm sewers (and other underground services), curb and gutter, and sidewalks where these features do not currently exist. This approach has proven challenging in several instances ... because changing the roadway would pose adverse impacts, such as loss of mature trees and vegetation, elimination of parking. These recent projects have reinforced the need for further clarification and guidance in the reconstruction of Cottage Streets, as the Town’s general engineering standards do not always fit the local context or align with the community’s vision for the roadway. Public engagement completed for the Town’s Transportation Master Plan1 also identified the need to differentiate Cottage Streets from other Town roads given their unique character.* (underlines added)
- However, **in the TOTBM**, every comment and concern raised by our established lakeshore community at the neighbourhood meeting, at the PIC and in numerous deputations, has been disregarded by Staff, despite their own OP & SP policies which directly relate to our concerns, i.e, policies supporting: community character, community feel, the character and stability of existing and well-established residential neighbourhoods, redevelopment is compatible in terms of...street pattern, every community in the Town incorporates its own unique character that must be respected and enhanced, high quality of life, Community character is paramount.... (OP, SP, TMP, OP Review Public Survey excerpts)
- The various staff reports include a section on the Town’s **Strategic Priorities**, which address many of the above matters. However, these sections are left completely blank.
- The various staff reports do not include at all, a section on the Town’s **Official Plan**, completely ignoring the same and more policies on these matters.
- Instead, **Staff** continue to solely rely on engineering standards and active transportation plan policies which do nothing to address these policies, or to maintain the character, the stability, the feel, the existing quality of life of the long-established Bay St East community. Instead, the MTP policies completely alter all of these social, environmental and aesthetic objectives.

- **Staff** also continues to heavily rely on what they present as the **dire state of the existing infrastructure** on Bay St; insisting it is *“failing infrastructure”*, needs *“immediate replacement”*, is under threat of *“imminent risk due to sewage backups, that it’s a significant source of inflow and infiltration, there’s a potential contamination of the drinking water system, and sewage surcharge, that it “must be addressed as soon as possible, and delaying this project” could put the “Town in an increasingly liable position should these failures occur”*. As such, staff insists this project is a *“top priority”* for the Town. (excerpts from Staff Reports)
- However, these same ‘significant & imminent risks’ extend well past Grey St, to their terminus at Bayview Ave, yet **Staff and Council** have completely ignored this section of the ‘failing’ infrastructure. The ‘top priority’ is abandoned when the forcemain turns off Bay St and proceeds up Grey St.

Conclusion

- **There is concern now, after nearly three years, that this project must move forward without more delay.** However, it seems that any delays to date have been the result of not bringing this proposal forward to Council and to Bay St residents in a clear and open manner from the beginning. **Council and residents** have been working through and trying to understand the process, the “approvals”, the impacts, and to address the many issues, via a thorough and proper process. We do not wish to cause delay but we want and deserve a fair chance to participate in a process that has the potential to affect us, and other lakefront roads, so overwhelmingly.

It is abundantly clear, based on Bay Street East residents’ concerns, community concerns (±2000 signatures!), the deputations, the meetings, the continuing lack of hard costs and information, the scrambling for a proper look at the project, etc, etc, that the citizens of Thornbury do not want infrastructure and transportation design plans to urbanize Bay Street East or any of our treed, heritage, lakeshore cottage roads and communities.

Surely Council can respond to this groundswell of their community opinion and move forward to:

- **Initiate a proper review of the route options for the forcemain, and**
- **Initiate an amendment to the MTP to recognize the unique environmental, recreational and social character of the Towns’ established lakeshore roads and communities, and develop standards that protect, maintain and enhance these tremendous assets.**

Two thousand citizens of the Town are calling on you and counting on you.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Richardson