

November 22nd, 2023

RE: Peel Street North Reconstruction Project

Dear Mayor and Council:

We understand that the Operations' Coordinator is requesting your approval to proceed with an Urban Design that does not meet or even consider some of the wishes and experiences of the long-term residents of the local community. In other words, the PIC was a complete waste of everybody's time, especially for those that provided extensive research and expertise.

Comments with regards to the Staff Report CSOPS.23.060 dated Nov. 28, 2023

Re: Intersection Improvements at Peel Street and Hwy 26 – While signalization at the intersection would be ideal, we understand that negotiations with MTO and funding would be a major issue and of course take more time to implement. However, at the present time we have a paved right turning **shoulder** which the staff have characterized it as a right hand turning lane, which makes turning off the hwy. much safer especially with the accelerating speeds coming out of Thornbury (from 60 to 80 km/hr). This right turning shoulder was paved by the Town (Reg Russwurm), at our insistence, to make it safer and to acknowledge the addition of many new residences along High Bluff Lane. Now we have added many more new residents along Timber Lane and are about to add many more residents in newly constructed semis development opposite High Bluff Lane. We are asking that when the intersection is reconstructed that the Town continues to paved the north shoulder approximately 30 metres east of the intersection so that we can maintain the safety standard that we have had for many years and we can provide for an increasing population. **Taking away an existing safety and an inexpensive feature that does not require MTO approval is not an option that should be ignored.**

Re: Streetlights – The overuse of streetlighting has been a great concern to our community as well as many communities in our Town over the years. We want to maintain our rural charm and not to be lit up like "Christmas Tree" - besides we already have lights at the street intersections which are plenty. **The fact that we can't be told where these additional light structures will be placed makes this report incomplete to us and should not be approved when significant details are lacking.**

Inground Works – The Operations Coordinator alludes to "a sanitary sewer being installed for a pending development on Peel Street. First of all, a sanitary sewer in the front of the existing residential homes on Peel Street was installed during the construction of Timber Lane at the developer's expense. Has additional funding been included for this secret new development? **Where is the accountability and transparency regarding unapproved new funds for a proposed secret development? What is this about?**

Traffic Calming – The narrow width of the road (without shoulders) at 3.5m is being used to suggest a so-called “traffic calming”. What does that actually mean? Do engineers and consultants actually think that the public will be fooled into believing that a narrow lane will slow traffic down. Just ask the OPP who will be called out frequently to monitor and enforce dangerous traffic speed! The high traffic volumes up and down Peel Street will continue and probably increase as older cottages along Cameron Street are converted to modern homes. The speeds are also expected to increase because of the downward slope of the road (from the hill north of High Bluff Lane to the waterfront) and a newly paved “runway”. As we said in our comments at the PIC, we have lived on this gravelled road for over 25 years, and we can assure you that most drivers and especially trades people who travel on Peel Street are not bothered by the existing dust-driven gravelled potted road and will continue to speed beyond the posted 50m/hr speed limit on a newly paved downhill road. **The width of the road must be reconsidered to include shoulders or bike lanes and mountable curbs that make it safer for cyclists similar to Victoria Street and the surrounding new road construction.** It is important to note that the staff report wants to discount the need for bike lanes and argues that cyclists should learn to use the road more like vehicles. This is pure nonsense and it is proven that roads without bike lanes are less safe. Why then are all the roads in Town being constructed with bike lanes?

Multi-Use Trail (MUT) Design – The MUT is now being proposed as a 2.7m wide white concrete sidewalk (2.7m vs. 1.5m). As we stated in our PIC comments, the previous Council **agreed** with the community residents to remove the urban concrete sidewalk from the design plans and replace it with a more rural MUT. The community and Council at the time, **were never told** that the 1.5m concrete sidewalk would be just replaced by a wider 2.7m concrete sidewalk and just call it an MUT. **This Council has a commitment to the community residents that a concrete sidewalk will not be constructed, otherwise what trust do we have in our elected official then and now.** Other than maybe longevity, there are no other reasons why the MUT cannot be asphalt or similar construction of the road. An asphalt road has durability and is snow cleared in the winter on a regular basis by massive trucks compared to a sidewalk which is cleared by less powerful and smaller removal equipment, A less expensive asphalt MUT would also blend in better with the rural community rather than a larger urban concrete sidewalk that does not provide any rural charm.

On a more disturbing note, we basically have a hidden driveway which could create a danger to pedestrians and speeding cyclists crossing in front of it when vehicles are backing out and possibly during snow removal. As the CAO can attest to, driveway entrances along the Georgian Trail are prohibited for safety and liability reasons. Allowing a hidden entrance across a newly created MUT next to a private property could bring/create liability issues for the Town. While the Town might argue that the driver would be at fault, the driver can counter that by arguing that Town created the liability after being advised by the resident(s) well in advance of

construction and chose to do nothing about it. In our opinion the Town would likely be held partially responsible and therefore liable for uncertain costs. So, you may want to re-think the location of the MUT – possibly the other side of the road may be more appropriate!

Tree Removal – It is apparent that the project coordinator and his consultants are still having difficulties with finalizing the Tree Removal Program. While they are trying to eliminate the removal of healthy trees and landscaping, no final determination has been made as to what they are planning to do. Like the streetlighting, without any firm plans in place we are skeptical that the final plans will clearly address the trees close to the boundary lines, as well as overhanging branches and rooting systems that, if cut, could destroy trees on our private property. If any work is required near our property line, then we would expect that a survey will be completed at the Town's expense to confirm the right-of-way, as recommended in the original Tree Preservation Report (TRP).

As I indicated to the coordinator, we will be insisting on a **"Permission to Enter Agreement"** that would allow work on or near our property boundary and also protect us against any loss or damages to our property i.e. trimming of large overhanging branches from our trees that may encroach in the Town's ROW, back filling and impact on the root systems, removal/relocation of large boulders, any matters that may result in damages and/or loss in value to our property. The Agreement will include a clause specifying the type and method of compensation should there be and removals or damages caused by the work. Should we require to submit a claim against the Town, then we will also be asking for legal expenses.

These are just some of our comments and concerns which should supplement the many others expressed by our immediate neighbours along Peel and Cameron Streets. You should also read some of our comments from the PIC with regards to the MUT, the width of the road and regards to mountable curbs vs, barrier curbs.

We understand the difficult task you have in making serious changes to such a large project that is approaching its final design stages. However, we hope and trust that Council will give some serious consideration to our comments. It's important to get a design that works for everyone and satisfies the needs of the community before the construction starts and not afterwards when there are regrets and an angry community. It is interesting that the coordinator has concluded that due to the many comments, "Council may want to direct staff to further consider the cross-section." While there may be some additional costs and delays, there can also be some savings like an asphalt MUT vs. a concrete MUT.

Yours respectfully,

Catherine Sholtz and Michael P. Seguin, Property Owners

