

Paul Reale

[REDACTED]

Town of the Blue Mountains
32 Mill Street, P.O. Box 310
Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0
April 24th, 2024

RE: CSOPS.24.018

Deputation Request, April 30th Committee of the Whole

Dear Madame Chair and Councillors,

In considering the proposed changes under CSOPS.24.018 for the 125 Peel Street South servicing, we stand at a critical juncture that challenges the very principles of thoughtful, inclusive town planning. This proposal, by its nature, starkly contrasts with established good planning practices—a cornerstone of sustainable community development. As residents of the Town of the Blue Mountains, and, more specifically, those of us living in Thornbury West, we must question whether the actions proposed are set in the interests of the residents or a precursor to hasty, haphazard planning scenarios.

Lack of Secondary Planning in Thornbury West

Under the Town of the Blue Mountains Official Plan, Thornbury West is designated a Future Secondary Plan Area and currently has no Secondary Plan to guide its development, nor is such a plan underway or even being discussed. With the future development of the Community Campus of Care well in the works in this Future Secondary Plan Area, the character of Thornbury West is at an inflection point and going to dramatically change as it begins to experience pressure for land use conversion and intensification. All of this is being done without a Secondary Plan, the substratum of a holistic process that guides development in a Future Secondary Plan Area.

The sheer size and scope of the Community Campus of Care alone (multiple 5 storey buildings and commercial spaces on 18 acres of land) necessitates the mandate for a Secondary Plan in Thornbury West. Without a Secondary Plan to guide this massive development, we exclude critical stakeholders from the planning process—namely the Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks and, equally as important, the residents of Thornbury West, along with all others residing in the Town of the

Blue Mountains. Their inclusion is essential for a holistic assessment and integration of the community's needs and insights.

As we stand on the threshold of a development that will shape the future of our community, we urge a reevaluation of the process to ensure it is as comprehensive and transparent as it ought to be. In short, we need a Secondary Plan in Thornbury West.

Future Secondary Planning Area

According to the Town of the Blue Mountains Official Plan, the area of Thornbury West is zoned as Future Secondary Plan Area. This area has limited permitted uses (B3.13.3) that do not mandate a Secondary Plan. With the proposal to service and fully urbanize Peel Street South, however, the area of Thornbury West is now experiencing pressure for land use conversion or intensification (E.3.1), all of which should necessitate a Secondary Plan.

The Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator (CIHA) that expedites and streamlines the process for developing the Community Campus of Care at 125 Peel Street South is localized to that specific property. Based on my reading of the recommendation report concerning the servicing of 125 Peel Street South, there appears to be an interpretation that while a Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator (CIHA) does not permit a municipality to initiate the provision of water and wastewater services, third-party utilities, and transportation networks in a Future Secondary Plan Area without an accompanying Secondary Plan, it is possible for a municipality to engage in these activities in an area subject to a CIHA order. The other properties on Peel Street South on both the east and west side, however, also fall into the Future Secondary Plan Area of Thornbury West (see attached Official Plan Schedule 'A-2') and are, therefore, not subject to a CIHA order.

Outside of 125 Peel Street South, which is subject to a CIHA order, are properties on Peel Street South also subject to a CIHA order and on what basis?

The intent of a Secondary Plan is to develop a detailed development concept for infrastructure and land use for the entire area of Thornbury West. Under the Town's Official Plan, any Secondary Plan must invite all of the property owners in the Future Secondary Plan area to the consultation process. It must also include all other stakeholders and all other applicable agencies.

As part of the development process, a Secondary Plan also requires longitudinal studies, including traffic impact, stormwater management, servicing and other technical studies. Moreover, these studies need to be completed for the entire Future Secondary Plan Area of Thornbury West, not only the Community Campus of Care. A Secondary Plan guides development for an entire area, not a subsection of it.

Traffic Impact in Thornbury West

In the proposal to service 125 Peel Street, Town staff recommend the intersection of Grey Road 113/10th Line and Highway 26 be avoided as a possible route to direct traffic to the Community Campus of Care. In the initial FAF.21.040 report of purchasing 125 Peel Street South, however, Town staff asserted that this specific property offered the potential of providing for an enhanced intersection at Grey Road 113/10th Line and Highway 26, which as the Town's Transportation Master Plan points out, is a dangerous intersection in need of upgrades and one that will carry increasing north-south traffic once the Community Campus of Care is completed.

What has changed in our information about the intersection at Grey Road 113/10th Line and Highway 26 since the FAF.21.040 report?

Suddenly, Town staff are recommending that all traffic for the Community of Campus of Care be directed down Peel Street South with a recommendation to consider a future roundabout to slow traffic and allow for pedestrians and cyclists to cross Highway 26 to access Peel Street North. This recommendation is based on a Transportation Operations and Impact Study presented at the March 7th PIC for 125 Peel Street South servicing that will not be made available to the public until a later date.

Encouraging increased traffic down Peel Street South, increased traffic of pedestrians and cyclists on Peel Street and a pedestrian crossing at Peel Street and Highway 26 is a very dangerous and unsafe standard for the Town to propose. Moreover, if a roundabout is subsequently needed at Peel Street and Highway 26, as mentioned in the Town staff's proposed design for servicing 125 Peel Street South, we will create a new unsafe intersection without resolving the existing issues at the intersection of Grey Road 113/10th Line and Highway 26.

Will this type of haphazard planning result in two roundabouts roughly 800 metres apart?

In the Town of Blue Mountains Official Plan, moreover, the intersection of Grey Road 113/10th Line and Highway 26 has been identified as a Community Gateway and a proposed route for a potential Thornbury bypass where the traffic will flow down Grey Road 113 and Alfred Street. In the Town's Transportation Master Plan, it suggests this intersection should be used for a Thornbury-Clarksburg bypass. On the other hand, the traffic study being used to recommend driving traffic down Peel Street South only looks at the immediate area around the Community Campus of Care and does not take into account the increase in traffic that will be experienced in all of Thornbury West, particularly, Peel Street South, Alice Street, Alfred Street and Grey Road 113.

Why is the Town not working with the Ministry of Transportation to conduct studies that recognize preferred approaches to accommodate future highway capacity for the entire area around Thornbury West?

Conclusion

In conclusion, the necessity for a Secondary Plan in Thornbury West is clear. It provides the essential framework for managing development in a way that respects both our community's needs and our commitment to safe transportation policies for residents and commuters alike. As we move forward, it is crucial to ask: Will the town commit to maintaining a robust level of public engagement for this project? Or will our voices be once again silenced as they have been with the Community Campus of Care development?

The residents of Thornbury West deserve a transparent process that considers their input and integrates it into the planning process. We must ensure that the development and urbanization of Peel Street South and the broader area does not bypass the voices of those whom it will most affect. A truly successful Secondary Plan is one that emerges from the collective insights and approvals of its community, not one that is imposed.

Therefore, I urge the council to commit to a comprehensive Secondary Plan for Thornbury West and encourage genuine public engagement, ensuring that all decisions are made with the fullest participation of those they impact.

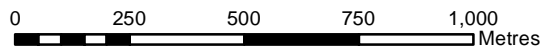
Sincerely yours,

Paul Reale

The Blue Mountains Official Plan Schedule 'A-2' Thornbury and Clarksburg

Designations

- ★ Former Landfill
- ▭ Bruce St./Marsh St. Corridor
- ▭ Niagara Escarpment Plan Boundary
- ▭ Agricultural
- ▭ Commercial Corridor
- ▭ Community Living Area
- ▭ Downtown Area
- ▭ Future Secondary Plan Area
- ▭ Harbour Area
- ▭ Hazard
- ▭ Institutional Area
- ▭ Major Open Space
- ▭ Residential Recreational Area
- ▭ Rural
- ▭ Urban Employment Area



Note: This Schedule forms part of the Official Plan and must be read and interpreted in conjunction with the text. The information depicted on this Schedule has been compiled from various sources. While every effort has been made to accurately depict the information, data/mapping errors may exist.

Download PDF: www.thebluemountains.ca

June 2016

