

## Deputation to the Council of The Town of Blue Mountains on CSOPS.24.018

Dear Members of the Council,

My name is Melissa Herod. I come before you not just as a concerned citizen, but as a representative of many voices within our community who hold deep affection and concern for the safety and environmental integrity of The Town of the Blue Mountains. The recommendations outlined in document proposing servicing for 125 Peel Street South, particularly regarding the proposed multi-use trail on Peel Street South and the drastic reduction of our cherished tree canopy, strike at the heart of what we value most about our town — its natural beauty and the safety of its residents.

### 1. Multi-use Trail Concerns:

The proposal for a multi-use trail alongside Peel Street South raises several serious safety and design issues that must be addressed:

**Safety and Traffic Concerns:** The design envisions up to 300 cars daily using Peel Street South, an area proposed for simultaneous heavy pedestrian and cyclist usage. This design increases the risk of vehicular accidents involving pedestrians or cyclists, particularly near the Campus of Care entrance and residential driveways. Such an arrangement, where trail users must navigate across driveways and a busy street, poses a unique hazard that is not encountered elsewhere in our community. The multi-use trail is proposed to link Peel st south to Peel St N. In order to make this connection, trail users are left with the decision to unsafely cross highway 26 or turn around and walk back south on the trail. Section 8.3.2 of the Master Transportation plan states that “A successful active transportation system requires two key elements – connectivity, and safety”. The proposed multi-use trail disregards both of these key elements and leaves serious questions as to why the town is choosing to go against its own plan.

**Impact on Local Residents:** The trail’s proposed placement in front of residential properties disrupts the peaceful enjoyment of homes, creating a direct conflict between vehicular, pedestrian, and residential space. This proximity is unusual and was not convincingly justified during the consultation phases. The lack of alternative placements for the trail, or even a discussion on possible relocations, highlights a significant oversight in planning and resident engagement.

**Suggested Alternative Design:** To mitigate these concerns, we request consideration to designate Grey Rd 113/10th line as a core active transportation route as opposed to a general active transportation route. There are no buildings, trees or homes that would be impacted by a multi-use trail along this road. Additionally, the intersection at Grey Rd

113/10th line and highway 26 has been identified on the Master Transportation plan as an area of concern due to the high number of speed related accidents, including the death of Thornbury resident Leslie Bettie who was struck on his bike by a motorcycle while trying to cross highway 26 on May 2, 2022. Putting a traffic light at this intersection would allow those using the multi-use trail the opportunity to safely cross highway 26. This recommendation is in line with the Master Transportation plan mandate of connectivity and safety for active transportation, it will also address the intersection safety improvements recommended within the towns own plan.

**Clear Cutting of Mature Trees:**

The plan's impact on the local tree population is equally concerning:

**Extent of Tree Removal:** The proposal includes the clear-cutting of well over 100 trees, with only a small percentage identified as being in poor or dead condition. This substantial reduction in tree cover not only impacts the aesthetic and environmental quality of the area but also diminishes the habitat for local wildlife and the overall canopy coverage in the town.

**Accuracy of Planning Documents:** There are notable discrepancies in the GIS/Topographical surveys presented, specifically regarding the delineation of property lines and rights of way. These inaccuracies necessitate an independent review to ensure that all planning is conducted within legal bounds and with accurate data. For example the current town property line does not include the ditch on the east side of Peel St. Last year, the town did work on those ditches with a backhoe. That leaves the question, if the town does not own those ditches, why were they doing the work?

**Compliance with Environmental and Forestry Legislation:** The removal process must be compliant with The Forestry Act. Independent assessments by qualified arborists and surveyors would ensure that decisions are made with a comprehensive understanding of the environmental impacts and based on accurate, unbiased information.

In light of these detailed concerns, I strongly urge the Council to reconsider the recommendations in the Town staff's proposal. We should seek a development approach that safeguards both the safety of our residents and the environmental integrity of our community. Additional studies and alternative designs should be explored to find a balanced solution that aligns with the values and needs of The Town of the Blue Mountains.

Thank you for your attention to these pressing issues.

