

Dear Madame Chair and Councillors:

I am a 46-year resident of Thornbury and, as a senior myself, I am strongly in favor of and fully aware of the dire need for a senior care home. I feel it is necessary to emphasize this fact since I have come to learn if you challenge a massive development that has a good cause nested within it, it allows developers and supporters of the project to attack you as prejudiced and bent on hurting the elderly. Let me also preface this deputation to assert that it is likely we would not be here to discuss the servicing of Peel Street South if the Campus of Care had remained true to its definitive purpose and not become overly complex and ambitious, staying aligned to its original intent and purpose: 160 long-term care beds with workforce housing.

By definition, a 'Campus of Care' is a healthcare concept designed to support aging populations and healthcare systems. Several Campus of Cares across Ontario serve as a model for this concept. Closer to home, Meaford has opened their long-term care residence and has plans for retirement and seniors' apartments and townhomes in the future. Thornbury's initial attempt to establish a Campus of Care with the Southbridge development focused exclusively on the needs of seniors, long term care and workforce residences. There was never a reason to question that the 125 Peel South Campus of Care would not follow suit and absolutely no expectation that it would morph into a high density mixed used development, one of the most complex and highly populated, in Thornbury's history.

This servicing project, facilitated by the adoption of a Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator (CIHA), has seemingly bypassed the rigorous approval processes and community input typically required for developments of this scale. This approach has not only sidestepped the need for robust dialogue and consensus-building but has also left many residents questioning the integrity of the planning process. The community's concerns include the project's potential to significantly increase traffic density, alter the

area's rural nature, and impact local environmental conditions—all without sufficient public scrutiny or input. There was one public meeting when Town staff drafted an amorphous CIHA order in November 2022, and there was never again any public input requested by Town staff before the more concrete CIHA was officially adopted in Council in April 2023.

This lack of public input underscores the critical need for transparency, and some residents have taken action into their own hands by filing Freedom of Information requests, so that we can all know what transpired to get us to this point of such a massive development. These efforts aim to bring to light the underlying studies and decision-making processes that seem inadequately disclosed to those most affected by the development: the residents of Thornbury.

All this lack of community engagement becomes even more relevant since CIHAs have recently caused a lot of consternation in rural municipalities, as evidenced by the provincial government's proposed repeal of the Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator in Bill 23. A lack of adequate discussion and consensus building only serves to erode confidence in local governments.

Multi-Use Trail Safety and Tree Removal

The positioning of multi-use trails crossing driveways on Peel Street South introduces potential conflict points between trail users and motorists. Motorists may not consistently anticipate the presence of faster-moving or less visible trail users, such as cyclists or seniors on mobility scooters. The risk is compounded by the fact that trail users, particularly seniors, might have impairments that affect their reaction times and situational awareness. Despite signage, the unexpected interaction in areas traditionally used for slower, boulevard-like activities poses a heightened risk of accidents. Not to mention, the multi-use trail encourages the elderly to cross Highway 26 to reconnect to the trail on Peel Street North. Do we really want our seniors crossing a highway where the

speed limit is 70km/h? And with no traffic upgrades nonetheless at this intersection to protect the safety of our elderly residents?

The demographic profile of trail users in TBM will shift significantly due to the proximity of the Campus of Care. The typical trail user demographic will expand to include a higher proportion of elderly individuals, including those requiring mobility aids. This shift necessitates an adaptive approach to trail design to accommodate users with varying mobility capabilities and speeds.

Critical to the community is the potential environmental impact of the trail expansion, particularly concerning tree line preservation and property boundaries. Questions remain regarding how much of the local tree line will need to be removed and whether any property expropriation will be necessary to ensure adequate sightlines and trail width at driveway crossings. The absence of detailed environmental impact assessments or property surveys in the provided documents underscores the need for thorough planning to minimize ecological disruption and respect private property limits.

Additional documentation is needed in the absence of detailed, specific studies addressing the safety of trail and driveway intersections in the context of the new demographic realities. Without comprehensive traffic and environmental impact studies, proposing a multi-use trail along Peel South seems premature.

Impact on Peel Street South Residents

The Campus of Care initiatives has thus far illustrated a blatant disregard for Peel South residents and failed to protect and accommodate the needs of these property owners in any notable manner. I feel I can confidently speak for my fellow neighbors, when I say that the new development has unexpectedly thrust an extraordinary financial and emotional burden upon us that negatively impacts our quality of life.

Consider the following untenable situation which has been forced upon us:

- WT Infrastructure engineer, Jamie Witherspoon, stated that according to 2024 costs for water and wastewater servicing, the cost per unit to connect would be as high as \$123,000/unit, which puts us in the Town's unaffordability category under the Town's Affordability Policy for Water and Wastewater Servicing, and under normal circumstances, would not deem this project feasible, yet it must go on because of the Campus of Care even though it will cause undue financial stress to residents on Peel Street South and perhaps force us to sell our homes.
- Since we are deemed as a "future secondary planning" area with no Official Plan, we are severely restricted in any options we might have to encourage serious buyers and dispense of our properties. We cannot sever our properties, and we cannot sell to a commercial developer without rezoning (which would never be approved of by the Town). Finally, private sale to a residential buyer is highly unlikely due to the impending construction unless it is a sale offer far below market value. In short, our financial investment in our homes is seriously affected and our hands are literally tied.
- To further dehumanize us, the bulk of the town's documented references to the Peel Street South properties are consistently referred to as 'future secondary planning area', with a noticeable absence of reference to the word "residents". Despite our small numbers, we are still ratepayers who should be afforded the same due consideration as residents of more substantial communities.

REQUEST FOR COUNCIL:

The absence of critical information, from traffic impact studies to environmental assessments, coupled with a notable lack of public engagement, suggests a leap of blind faith rather than a step forward based on informed decision-making. Such an approach not only undermines the trust between the community and those who represent us but also sets a precarious precedent for future developments.

We deserve a process that is transparent, inclusive, and grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the potential impacts of such a significant development. We are not opposed to change or development but insist that it be done with the utmost care for those who will live with its consequences.

Therefore, I urge the council to pause the servicing of 125 Peel Street development. Let us not rush towards irreversible decisions but rather take the necessary time to gather all pertinent information, engage deeply with the community, and ensure that our collective future is built on a foundation of careful thought, thorough analysis, and genuine consensus.

Jillaine Thomson