

**Jillaine Thomson**

**RE: CSOPS.24.043**

**Deputation Request, June 11<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Whole**

**Dear Madame Chair and Councillors:**

As a 26-year resident of Peel St South, I am highly in favor of the development of much needed long-term care and living residences for seniors. I never anticipated that the 125 Peel Street servicing project would morph into such a large residential and commercial project that would deeply affect the residents of Peel Street South by ripping up our street for a full urbanization plan.

As more information comes to light, there are many aspects of this proposed development that do not add up and appear to go unanswered. And this seemed to be the case in the latest staff report on 125 Peel Street South servicing where Town staff did not answer any of the questions raised in my deputation because they stated that my deputation is related to the development, transparency, CIHA order, secondary plan, and other planning issues. My deputation, however, also touched on servicing, multi-unit trail safety and trees and the environment. My concerns being dismissed in a sweeping fashion made me feel like an inconvenient local even though I've lived in Thornbury for over 40 years. For the sake of being heard, I'll repeat the more pressing ones.

**Servicing and Environment:**

The report for 125 Peel Street South servicing speaks of repairing a deficient watermain on Peel Street South. Yet, here's a fact: no such watermain exists. My family and I rely on well water. Now, for the first time ever, we face the prospect of our street being dug up. As expressed in O. Reg. 322/12, there is no requirement for us to hook up, but, if we are forced to hook up, who will pay for the decommission of our septic and well? There would also be more costs to burden us. Taking on water and wastewater would require running pipelines over 60m to the back of our house. The engineering design and construction for this hook up would incur exorbitant costs estimated over \$25,000.

And that's not all. According to 2024 costs for water and wastewater servicing, the WT Infrastructure stated the cost per unit to connect would be as high as \$123,000, which puts us in the Town's unaffordability category under the Town's Affordability Policy for Water and Wastewater Service Extensions. Under normal circumstances, the Town 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. How will Council solve this conundrum?

This staff report also omits a critical component—the lack of an approval process under the provincial Environmental Assessment Act, a cornerstone of our Town’s Official Plan for integrating municipal services into secondary settlements. Indeed, the second paragraph of the Official Plan in section D1.2 says, in part, the following: *“When expansion of the existing municipal water and/or sewage facilities become necessary, such expansion shall be subject to the approval process under the Environmental Assessment Act. The Environmental Assessment approvals may include the phased expansion of municipal facilities, with additional design servicing capacity for future expansion phases, as well as other associated municipal infrastructure works, as further provided under this Plan.”* Without these assessments, how can we, as residents, protect our drinking water, as it exists today?

And from the staff report on the purchase of 125 Peel Street South, February 21, 2021 (E-4-FAF-21-040), it was noted that: *“The farmed portion of the property (Parcel 1) has historically been used as an active farm, most recently for cash crops (soybean, corn, etc.). Previous to this, the property was an active apple orchard similar to the Town’s Tomahawk Recreation Complex property and may have pesticide residuals in its soil that may require removal prior to it being developed. The Tomahawk Recreation Complex property contained residual levels of arsenic in the soil, however, the levels found did not require removal or any type of remediation.”* We have yet to see the Environmental Site Assessments, Phases 1 and 2, that have been conducted by Cambium in July 2023 and December 2023, respectively. The Phase 1 report identified 10 areas of potential environmental concern. The Phase 2 report investigated soil, sediment and groundwater quality. On May 11, 2024, I requested these documents in an email to the CAO but have yet to receive a response (see enclosure). We need to know these results so that we can protect our well from potential contamination.

### **Multi-Use Trail and Safety:**

The positioning of multi-use trails crossing driveways on Peel Street South introduces potential conflict points between pedestrians and cyclists. 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 on a bidirectional multi-use trail in areas traditionally used for slower, boulevard-like activities poses a heightened risk of accidents. In Collingwood recently, a servicing project for Sixth Street ran into the same concerns for bidirectional multi-use trails, and the final design

moved to unidirectional trails because it was deemed a lot safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

The demographic profile of trail users on Peel Street South 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. Have Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and municipal accessibility standards been considered? In their report, Town staff suggest that it's not unreasonable for those with mobility concerns to walk from the Campus of Care to the waterfront with a mobile resident or push in a mobility device to make a 1km trek, which represents a 30-40 minute round trip. I would suspect that elderly people in the long-term care facility would not venture that far and should have more accessibility standards taken into account on the multi-use trail.

### **Trees and Environment:**

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 staff report states that less than 40 trees will need to be removed for their full urbanization plan, but, on page 12 of their report, Town staff point out that many trees will have to be removed. I encourage everyone to walk along my property line where you'll find that a minimum of 100 trees will need to be removed in the ROW. What is the real impact to trees required for construction? We still don't know. And what about the trees that will remain but will suffer from the area being dewatered because it is dug up? Those trees will surely die down the road in 10 years or so.

The staff report stated that there are no plans to pursue property acquisition at this time. But the map attached to their report shows markings (the green triangles at entrance points) for tree removal on private property. Does that mean there are possibilities for expropriation? If so, can Town staff inform us of potential plans to expropriate: Would it be property to improve sightlines? The Town staff report points out that there are existing driveways that currently do not have proper sight lines and will have to be addressed with the design. Does this mean that if I don't agree to any compensation for trees on my private property that the town will expropriate my property to ensure proper sight lines?

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.

### **Request for Council**

Our concerns have been many, and we appreciate the work Councilor June Porter did to bring our issues to Town staff. We ask that Council help us adopt a minimalistic view to Peel Street South, which should remain a local road and continue to look like a local road until future studies warrant upgrades. We have no idea what this area will become, and we shouldn't be saddled with predictions based on a dream on paper, which is what the Campus of Care is at this point.

Enclosure:

1. Email to CAO on May 11, 2024

## Information Request: Campus of Care

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**From:** Jillaine Thomson [REDACTED]

**To:** [severitt@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:severitt@thebluemountains.ca)  
[severitt@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:severitt@thebluemountains.ca)

**Sent:** Saturday, May 11 at 5:04 a.m.

Dear Shawn Everitt:

I am writing to inquire about accessing environmental assessment reports and test results (Phase 1 and 2) related to 125 Peel Street South Campus of Care. These documents are of crucial interest, since I am a neighboring property and I am very concerned about potential health risks. I would appreciate guidance on how to obtain these reports.

Thank you for your time and assistance in this matter.

Jillaine Thomson