

**Paul Reale**

**RE: CSOPS.24.043**

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

**Dear Madame Chair and Councillors,**

Thank you for allowing me to revisit the topic of the 125 Peel Street South servicing project. Recently, this council demonstrated a readiness to pause and deliberate thoughtfully on a project that has been barreling forward with the force of a runaway train.

And we're here to ensure that as we advance, we do so with the wisdom, the foresight, and the unwavering commitment to the public trust.

Before your decision to pause this servicing project, we felt like change was going to happen to us, not with us, making us feel like bystanders in our own backyards. This feeling of being left out isn't just cropping up in one corner of our town. It's a fire that's spreading from Peel Street South to Peel Street North, all the way down to Bay Street East. This upheaval is uniting us, pushing us to ask hard questions about the scope of full urbanization in our neighborhoods.

This April, when I sought specifics about this servicing project—like the traffic and active transportation studies and the tree inventory— I was told by a Town staffer that these studies were incomplete and would remain undisclosed until the designs were further along (see enclosure). On May 8, 2024, however, the Mobycon Active Transportation Study was released on the Town's website and revealed that this report was completed in January 2024.

This lack of transparency drove residents to file Freedom of Information requests with the municipality and province. We feel like we're being kept in the dark, left with more questions than answers. Based on this, we are compelled to raise some of these questions once again, in hopes that we receive some answers for both the residents, and more importantly, for Council.

**Development Charges and Roads**

A seeming inconsistency that, perhaps, should be immediately addressed: the WT Infrastructure engineer mentioned upgrading Peel Street South to a Collector Road because Development Charges can be used to pay for the reconstruction of the street. Yet, this came just after the engineer acknowledged that his Paradigm Traffic Impact Study found no need for such upgrades, that Peel Street South should remain a Local Road. So

are we upgrading the road because it's financially expedient or because our studies recommend an upgrade? This contradiction is quite curious and seems to place the municipality's planning process in question, does it not? Why are we paying to complete expensive studies for the community if WT Infrastructure is disregarding their own conclusions?

The June 11th Town staff report on 125 Peel Street Servicing states that, from a design perspective, not upgrading a potential desired route to meet future demands poses a liability. This line of thinking raises two important questions: Why are the ratepayers of today paying for future development? And is the engineer legally qualified to assess liability on behalf of the Town?

The same staff report also points out that the Town's Engineering Standards do not have a specific cross-section for an urban collector road. The minimum road allowance for a minor collector or a major collector is 26m, but the road allowance for Peel Street South is only 20m. How can there be flexibility for Town staff's functional design to change Peel Street South into a Collector Road, but there isn't flexibility for any of the concessions asked for by the residents to keep Peel Street South a Local Road?

In the Town staff report on the follow-up to the 125 Peel Street South Servicing PIC (April 30, 2024), staff pointed out that through the uses established via the Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator (CIHA), it is appropriate to use Development Charges to reconstruct Peel Street South at this time because Development Charges can only apply once to a road section. Why do we need Development Charges at all to pay for the servicing and third party infrastructure on Peel Street South? In the February 2022 Town budget, \$11.5 million was allocated for servicing Peel Street South. Was this amount not enough to pay for the servicing project?

And, where exactly are these Development Charges coming from to service 125 Peel Street South? Are they based on past savings, or are we banking on future gains, or maybe a bit of both? A June 26, 2023 staff report (FAF.23.112) reads: "*The cost of servicing will be financed through a range of funding sources including, but not limited to, existing Development Charges and future Development Charges.*" This language is vague and ambiguous. Council and the resident should be provided with specific information to make informed decisions, do they/we not? What will the cost of this servicing project be to the ratepayer? Are we beginning to incur costs that well exceed the \$11.5 million initially allocated?

Moreover, the 125 Peel Street Servicing report also points out that the Development Charges Background Study labels Peel Street South as a Collector Road. But our Town's Official Plan tells a different story: Peel Street South is a Local Road. After all, Peel Street

South is only 600 metres long, hardly the length for a Collector Road. Has there been a housekeeping amendment to our Official Plan to reflect this major shift? Changing the designation of Peel Street South from a Local Road to a Collector Road should be done in a transparent and accountable process, involving public scrutiny and adherence to our Town's long-established planning practices.

This approach only serves to beg more questions: What are the consequences if we do not proceed with this upgrade? If Peel Street South remains a Local Road, are there repercussions for the Town or potential penalties? Could these Development Charges be reserved and allocated more judiciously pending a detailed future study that confirms whether such a road upgrade is truly warranted? The argument to reclassify Peel Street South as a Collector Road seems predicated solely on the financial benefits of leveraging Development Charges.

### **Multi-Unit Trail Safety**

The Town's plan to include a multi-use trail in Peel Street South's design pushes pedestrians and cyclists towards Highway 26, expecting them to reconnect with the trail on Peel Street North. I can't even think of a more dangerous situation to place our residents in. Imagine our most vulnerable—a senior with a walker, a child on a bike—trying to navigate across a highway where cars whip by at 80 km/h. Town staff and participants echo these concerns in the recently released Mobycon Active Transportation Study where they highlight these dangers: "*The MTO-controlled crossing at Highway 26 and Peel Street is a major barrier to a safe AT corridor along Peel Street. The high speeds are a major safety hazard.*" If our own Town staff acknowledge this, why push a plan that places people in danger?

In this current report on 125 Peel Street South Servicing, Town staff mention that they are confident safety can be improved at the intersection through the design, but they never provide any concrete details on how they plan on doing this. Have consultations begun with the MTO Regional District Engineer in Owen Sound or the Regional Office in London for planning?

Furthermore, while this staff report on servicing 125 Peel Street South talks of possibly adding a roundabout at Peel Street and Highway 26 to improve the safety of this crossing, the Mobycon Study made clear that there remains skepticism among Town staff and participants about whether the MTO would even approve such a plan. If Town staff doubt it's possible, why propose a roundabout at Peel as a solution for a dangerous situation this current design creates?

## **Traffic**

The WT Infrastructure engineer mentioned that the Paradigm Traffic Impact Study anticipates an increase of up to 300 vehicles/hour at peak times on Peel Street South. As a way to solve this problem of traffic on Peel Street South, the Mobycon Study suggested blocking motor traffic from accessing Peel Street South directly from Highway 26 and requiring a detour for the Campus of Care via 10th Line and Highway 26 (where Town staff and participants admit in this same report that MTO are likely to install a roundabout). However, this sensible proposal was met with skepticism from Town staff and participants as stated in the Mobycon Study. Is there information that can be brought to Council, from Town staff, to support the basis for this skepticism?

The Mobycon Study also suggested that Peel Street South be turned into a traffic calming road with a 50km/hour speed limit and then a raised ramp in front of the Campus of Care with a 30 km/hour speed limit. This is hardly the hallmark of a Collector Road. Like the Paradigm Traffic Impact Study, this suggests Peel Street South should remain a Local Road.

## **Request for Council**

Madame Chair and Council, we respectfully urge the Council to pause the current project until all servicing, traffic and trail designs are aligning with the findings of complete and thorough environmental and traffic reports. For the purposes of transparency and accountability, it is hoped that Council will continue to incorporate the voices and concerns of the many residents who have been impacted by this, including the ratepayers of the community, who are seeking to bring more information to Council, allowing them to make an informed fulsome decision regarding this matter.

Enclosure:

1. Email from Senior Infrastructure Capital Project Coordinator, TBM Operations Department (April 17, 2024)



Paul John Reale [REDACTED] &gt;

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**RE: Request for Information**

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**Mike Humphries** <mhumphries@thebluemountains.ca> Wed, Apr 17, 2024 at 11:42 AM  
To: Kyra Dunlop <kdunlop@thebluemountains.ca>, Paul John Reale [REDACTED], Corrina Giles <cgiles@thebluemountains.ca>, Town Clerk <townclerk@thebluemountains.ca>  
Cc: Pruthvi Desai <pdesai@thebluemountains.ca>, Jeffery Fletcher <jfletcher@thebluemountains.ca>, "jamie.witherspoon@wtinfrastructure.ca" <jamie.witherspoon@wtinfrastructure.ca>, Jason Petznick <jpetznick@thebluemountains.ca>

Good Morning Paul

You are correct, these studies are not on the Town's website. The design is still at a very preliminary stage. The Traffic Impact Study and Active Transportation study are well underway but not complete. We will post the studies on the website once they are completed. This will likely be in conjunction with the 2<sup>nd</sup> PIC at the 60% design stage. As indicated at the PIC the Arborists report will be advanced as the design is advanced. The tree inventory and condition assessments have been completed, we presented what we had at the PIC. The impact on the trees will be assessed in the next stage of design once Council provides direction. The Arborist's report including the tree protection plan will be posted sometime after the 60% design stage. We will include an update with the second PIC.

There is no additional information to provide at this time.

Please feel free to reach out to me anytime. I am happy to answer any questions you may have related to the servicing of [125 Peel St.](#)

Mike

**Mike Humphries C.E.T.**

Senior Infrastructure Capital Project Coordinator, Operations Department

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As part of providing accessible customer service, please let me know if you have any accommodation needs or require communication supports or alternate formats.

**From:** Kyra Dunlop <[kdunlop@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:kdunlop@thebluemountains.ca)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 17, 2024 10:52 AM  
**To:** Paul John Reale <[REDACTED]> Corrina Giles <[cgiles@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:cgiles@thebluemountains.ca)>; Town Clerk <[townclerk@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:townclerk@thebluemountains.ca)>  
**Cc:** Mike Humphries <[mhumphries@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:mhumphries@thebluemountains.ca)>; Pruthvi Desai <[pdesai@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:pdesai@thebluemountains.ca)>; Jeffery Fletcher <[jfletcher@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:jfletcher@thebluemountains.ca)>  
**Subject:** RE: Request for Information

Good morning Paul,

On behalf of Corrina I acknowledge receipt of your below correspondence and by way of copy forward same to our Operations staff for review and response. Thanks,



**Kyra Dunlop**

Deputy Clerk, BA (Hons)

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As part of providing [accessible customer service](#), please let me know if you have any accommodation needs, require communication supports or alternate formats.

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**From:** Paul John Reale <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 15, 2024 8:18 AM  
**To:** Corrina Giles <[cgiles@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:cgiles@thebluemountains.ca)>; Town Clerk <[townclerk@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:townclerk@thebluemountains.ca)>  
**Subject:** Request for Information

Hi Corrina,

Hope you enjoyed your weekend!

On the March 7th PIC for [125 Peel Street South](#) servicing, town staff referred to 3 studies during their presentation:

1. Transportation Study by Paradigm Transportation Solutions LTD.
2. Active Transportation Study by Mobycon
3. Tree Inventory by Aboud & Assoc.

At the moment, these studies are not available on the town's webpage for [125 Peel Street South](#) servicing. Could you direct me on how I could formally request and procure these studies?

Thanks in advance for any information you can provide.

Regards,

Paul

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