

To the Mayor and Members of Council

Subject: Bay Street East Reconstruction

My name is John Edwards, and I reside at [REDACTED] in Thornbury. My wife Tina and I have owned the property since 1998.

We participated in the April 18th virtual public meeting, where the various routes for the new force main sewer line were reviewed. The Town is recommending, mostly based on cost, that this force main sewer be run along Bay Street from Bayview Park right over to Grey Street North, then heading south up to the existing sewage treatment plant. A large out-fall pipe will then run back down Grey Street out into Georgian Bay. Running a new forcemain pipe up Bay street will increase the need to widen the road by approximately 10 feet, that is, 10ft more than if the street only contained normal utilities and regular sewers. (This is according to the engineer working on the project.)

We feel that the result will be devastating for the character of Bay Street! The resulting roadway will require most of the mature trees on the north side, (beach side,) of the street to be removed. This includes majestic, towering pines that are, without exaggeration, wonderful.

In addition to the many trees that will be required to be removed because of the (greatly) widened roadway, there is another important factor that will greatly affect the character of the street. Along the stretch of Bay Street from Elgin Street to Grey Street there are a dozen houses on the north side of the street that are very close to the current roadway, and if the current street is widened significantly, they will have their front driveways shortened by almost half. My house is one of those affected.

What the Town has not considered is that significant widening will limit parking options for residents with multiple vehicles and visiting families. We have 3 adult children, (and eight grandchildren,) who visit regularly in summer and winter, and the result is at least 5 cars being parked in our front driveway. Our neighbors on each side have almost identical situations.

If the street is widened as proposed, we will certainly continue to have our families visit, and the only option will be to pave most of the front yards of our homes, leaving no green space whatsoever! This includes cutting down even more mature, healthy trees to make room for parked cars!

This will affect many of the houses on this segment of Bay Street, and the result will be car after car, parked nose-in off the street. On weekends, the street will resemble a giant parking lot! The current look of Bay Street East will be altered forever!

In addition, the project engineers have conceded that the much wider street will likely promote cars to drive much faster, and traffic control measures will likely have to be added to slow autos down.

We think that the Town should revisit the planning process and look at going with what they presented as Option #3 in their presentation. This option proposes that the forcemain be run from the pumping station along beside the tennis courts, then up McAuley Street to Huron Street, then along the Georgian Bike trail to Grey Street, then south up to the Sewage treatment plant.

In fact, the force main could be routed in a “beeline” crossing through Cedar Grove Park, and then run along the bike trail up to Grey Street. Note that this is the SHORTEST route for the force main pipe, and the project engineers have conceded that this will consume the least energy! (That is, energy used for pumping waste when the pipe is put into use.)

While we understand the direct cost benefit of running everything down Bay Steet, we believe the environmental and aesthetic costs far outweigh them.

In our opinion, the current Town plan is more like “cutting a corner” rather than “Doing the Right Thing.” The force main can definitely be put down the bike trail, and then a few years later the infrastructure on Bay Street can be replaced without destroying the character of the current street. It will cost more, but it will likely not be wildly more expensive than what is being proposed. Regardless of the actual cost difference, how can anyone put a price on cutting down beautiful mature trees or turning one of the nicest streets in Thornbury into an eyesore!

The Town also felt that following the Bike trail route would require summertime cycling traffic to be re-routed around the construction. This is a minor issue, in that cyclists could be routed down to Bay Street and then pick up the trail again via McAuley Street. In fact, today, many local cyclists take this route because Bay Street East is a much more pleasant ride than the Georgian Trail where it runs beside the Astec manufacturing plant.

Also, the presentation mentioned that trees along the bike trail would be affected, but these are mostly young trees, and nothing like the mature trees along Bay Steet.

In the Town presentation, there were both “Pros” and “Cons” for both the Bike Trail route and the Bay Street routes, but we on Bay Street strongly believe that the intangible benefits of utilizing the trail route far out-weight the cost difference between the two alternatives. Note that it is not just those of us who live on Bay Street that feel like this. Others that live in the Town have voiced their support in preserving the character of our beautiful street.

The unique charm of Bay Street East, a "cottage-like road" unlike others in Thornbury, attracts both residents and visitors for walks and bike rides. Widening the road with significant tree removal would destroy this irreplaceable character. Unfortunately, if the Bay Street sewer pipe route is taken the result will be an ugly, wide strip of asphalt with little or no character. It will be impossible to restore it.

We feel strongly that Council should revisit the forcemain options presented on April 18th and elect to pursue the Bike trail option, or a variation of it, to avoid ruining Bay Street East.

Thank you for considering our opinion.

Best Regards,

John and Tina Edwards