

July 10, 2024

To: Mayor and Councilors, Town of The Blue Mountains

From: Lynne Richardson, [REDACTED]

Re: Bay Street East Forcemain Installation and Infrastructure Reconstruction Project

I am Lynne Richardson and I live in a home at [REDACTED], that has been in the Richardson family since 1964.

First of all, I want to sincerely thank the Committee of Council who on July 2:

... voted 6-0 in favour of a motion that directed staff to provide another Staff Report with the following information:

- 1. A complete review of the four options offered for the forcemain alignment presented in the Public Information Centre and the options proposed by the members of the community at the July 2, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting in response to CSOPS.24.031, including costs for each of these options.*
- 2. Further information on the costs, savings, and cross-section of the one-way street, two-way street and centering options, plus consideration of an additional option of status quo amenities (no sidewalks, no multi-use trail and no curb).*

By now, I believe you are all well aware that:

- On **August 15, 2023**, when you approved the staff report for the budget and engineering consultants for this proposal, staff did not present forcemain route options and alternatives to you. In fact, Staff simply told you that *“The new sanitary forcemain from the Mill Street SPS to the TWWTP will travel east on Bay Street from Mill Street to Grey Street, then south along Grey Street to the TWWTP.”*
- Staff then proceeded to undertake studies and design work on Bay Street East. Bay St residents then became aware of this work via flagging tapes and such, and began inquiries.
- Town staff and consultants then decided to hold a PIC, on **December 2, 2023** to inform Bay St residents of the forcemain decision and route.
- At this point staff prepared 4 alternative locations for the forcemain, showing Bay St E as the preferred option.
- However, the four alternatives to Bay St were not, and had not, been options before Council. Council had already perhaps somewhat surreptitiously ‘approved’ the forcemain route months earlier, in the absence of the four options and under the guise of a staff report that was essentially a Project Budget item.

You have also been presented with the many concerns of Bay Street East residents, regarding:

- 1. The removal of virtually the entire existing tree canopy along the Bay Street East, between Elgin and Grey Streets** – This would not only destroy the visual aesthetic of the road, but also eradicate the many ecological and environmental benefits mature tree canopies provide. My property alone could lose approximately 78 trees and 39 shrubs. That’s just one property! (see attached survey).
- 2. The ± doubling the of the width of the paved road** – which would lead to increased car speed and traffic volume. Reduced speed limits are ineffective in controlling speed, an unfortunate fact. This and the removal of trees would transform this inviting, cool, shaded street into a hot and uninviting street, for all “active transportation” users.
- 3. Realigning the road to the centre line of the ROW** – which would unnecessarily further expand the cleared portion of the right of way, simply to meet “engineering standards”. Why not take full advantage of the already cleared/paved portion of the ROW, to minimize disturbance as much as possible!
- 4. The proposed bike lanes** – which would not prevent biking groups from riding as they usually do, three and four abreast in sociable recreational
- 5. The proposed grassed boulevard** – which no resident, or cottager wants to be responsible for maintaining in their short leisure times.

6. **The proposed sidewalks** – which would funnel groups of families and friends into a virtual single file and restrict them from walking in broader, interactive social groups, as is possible on the cottage road.
7. **That existing driveways would be cut back to ± half and even ¾'s of their current length** – limiting the number of family and friends' vehicles that can be parked at their hosts cottages/homes.
8. **The proposed stormwater management that would include a high barrier-curb** – that would prohibit roadside company and guest parking. Adding further insult to injury 'No Parking' signs are proposed all along the street. This also prevents parking for construction, delivery, repair, maintenance, and other such vehicles on the roadside! The shortened driveways would not accommodate these vehicles. Parking for the Towns' extremely popular summertime **Music in the Park** would be severely limited. **These various types of parking are necessities of life, and to not take this into consideration is quite simply unbelievable!**
9. **Not upgrading the sewer and waterlines past Grey St, down to their terminus at Bayview Ave** – these lines are a continuation of the same bay St systems but are not included in the proposed upgrades. Cost effectiveness and operational effectiveness would, I think, suggest that the entire length of this aging, potentially contaminating, system be replaced at the same time!

To show another perspective I'd also like to quote a few comments made and a letter written by friends, to you, 2 weeks ago, about the impact this proposal would have on them, as frequent guests/vacationers at my home:

"As long-time visitors to our friend's cottage/home on Bay Street East (██████) we were alarmed to learn about the plan the Town engineers have proposed for our favorite cottage road. The attractiveness of a weekend or week at the cottage comes not only from the gorgeous lake and escarpment vistas, but also from walks down this quiet, tree-lined cottage road. The narrow road keeps traffic slow, respectful and friendly. The mature trees provide us with shade from the hot summer sun, and breaths of fresh, oxygenated air. Coming from the city this is such a rejuvenating change from a walk down a stark city sidewalk, with heat radiating from the wide paved roads, and breathing exhaust fumes from busy traffic as we go. It would be utterly disheartening to leave the city and find this same city-scape on Bay Street! It defeats the purpose of coming to visit and vacation on Bay Street, or perhaps even to Thornbury.

As friends of Bay Street and its residents, and from a long-time visitor/tourists' perspective, please reconsider the route of the forcemain and the consequent transformation of one of Thornbury's attractive streets into an urban desert!"

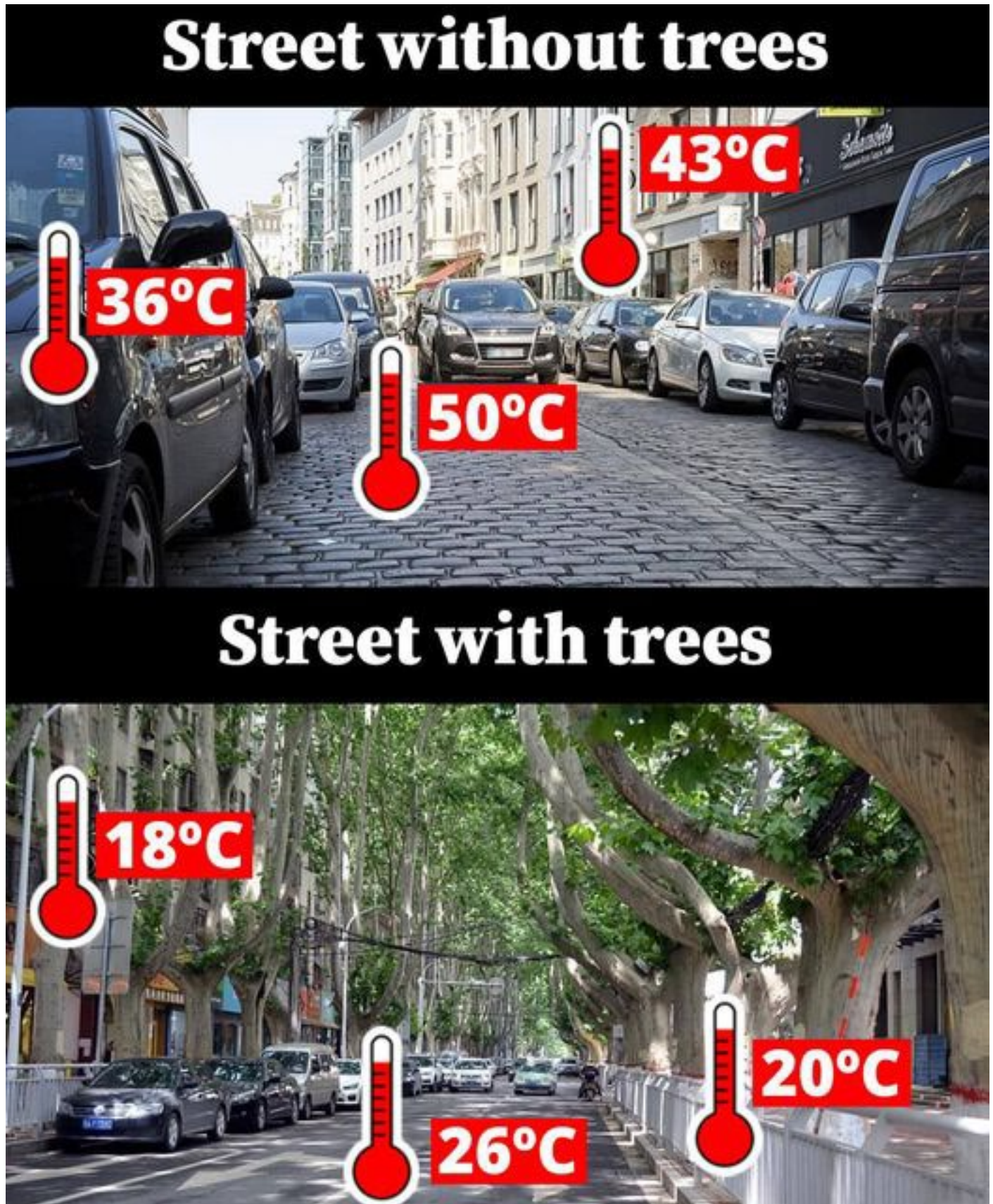
I'm also including pictures they attached to their submission, to illustrate their points about the aesthetic and ecological benefits Bay Street provides in its current form, VS the proposed finished streetscape.



VS



This picture illustrates their concerns regarding the effect the proposed tree removal and widened pavement will have on heating up our climate, noting that each one of these seemingly *small* projects *cumulatively* has a *big* impact. This should be a high priority consideration in this time of climate change:



The Town of The Blue Mountains has a tremendous asset in its miles of lakefront, which attracts cottagers, residents, and vacationers. Narrow tree covered cottage roads are part and parcel with the cottage/vacation experience. These traditional lakeside cottage community areas are one of the key elements that contribute so greatly to our Towns' character and charm. We feel this lakeside character should be preserved just as much as say - the downtown core's cultural and architectural heritage, or other areas unique to the Town's famous identity. Doing so will maintain the current well-known appeal of the various parts that make up the whole of the Town of The Blue Mountains.

The Consultants' report is based on documents the Town has adopted to guide infrastructure renewal and active transportation facilities across the municipality. These documents are focused on providing highly urbanized standards, which are most really most applicable to new developments and intensively used areas. Trying to superimpose them on historical and traditional cottage areas with their historical, pre-existing limitations to accommodate these standards does not make sense, especially when considering what is lost. There should be room in any policy for considering such circumstances and adapting accordingly. There should never be a policy that allows one unique community in town to be effectively ruined in order to accommodate another new community in Town. *"Community character is paramount. It defines who we are, where we are and what we want to become"*. (Community Survey)

Bay Street residents do understand the gravity of and necessity for the forcemain project. We greatly appreciate the Councillors sober second thought and resolution on this, and are willing to and hoping to work with the Town to find a solution that serves us both.

Thank You!

Lynne Richardson

Lot Survey

