

**December 15, 2025**

Mayor and Members of Council  
Town of The Blue Mountains  
Thornbury, Ontario

**Re: Bay Street East Redevelopment Budget Increase — Request for Immediate Pause and Reassessment**

Dear Mayor and Councilors,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My family has owned a cottage on Bay Street East for 30 years. We take great pride in being residents of this town, and particularly this street. Bay Street East is a defining part of Thornbury. A corridor of beauty, history, and community. Allowing it to be torn apart under an outdated, oversimplified rationale would be a mistake this town would feel for decades. We are asking Council to pause this project and reassess its alignment, its cost, and its process before irreversible damage is done.

A major growth-enabling force main designed to accommodate development decades into the future is being routed through one of Thornbury's most historic, environmentally significant waterfront streets. That is a serious planning choice, and it should have been presented honestly from day one. Residents were initially told the Bay Street alignment was chosen because it was efficient and cost-effective. How is it council was able to determine this was the best option when no others were ever explored. Even if there was some evidence supporting Bay St E as the best possible route for the force main, can it still be justified? Perhaps with the costs ballooning by an additional \$19M it is no longer in the best of interest of the tax payers and residents of this town. Perhaps one of the 4 other options that were RETROACTIVELY presented and NEVER PROPERLY INVESTIGATED may be less expensive, less invasive to the community and less destructive to the environment.

When Council debated whether to examine alternative alignments at the July 15, 2024 meeting, the Deputy Mayor's argument against exploring options was that it would take too much *time* and cost more *money*. Ironically, and predictably, the chosen option has now ballooned by **\$19 million**.

This is precisely *why* responsible municipalities explore alternatives:

- To prevent cost overruns
- To ensure the final design is the best possible choice
- To reduce risk
- To protect taxpayers

Of course exploring options costs money. But every credible planning authority acknowledges that the cost of due diligence is an investment. One that prevents outcomes that are more expensive, more disruptive, and less beneficial for the residents who live with the consequences. Skipping proper evaluation is not fiscal responsibility. It is the opposite. And the Town has now proven that by choosing a route on the basis of cost then watching that cost explode.

Paraphrasing the words of a City Councilor that were in response to the Deputy Mayor's comments: "Just because we didn't have the information before, we need it now for Council to make a good decision. We want to know the costs to allow us to be good representatives for the residents of Bay Street. To be fair to everyone and to be **fiscally responsible.**"

This statement captures exactly what residents have been saying all along: you cannot make a responsible decision without understanding the alternatives. Yet that is exactly what happened. I'm someone who has in the past blindly believed in governance. Believed that those who dedicate themselves to working on behalf of the people, have the best interest of those people at heart. That while some decisions may not be liked by everyone, they are in the best interest of the whole. The same can't be said about the Bay St project and the decisions that have led us up to this point.

This project will remove **hundreds** of mature trees and effectively eliminate an entire canopy that has defined Bay Street for generations. The environmental, visual, and community impacts are enormous. Once these trees are gone, they are gone for a lifetime. Thornbury's identity is tied to its landscape. This project reshapes that identity without meaningful consent from the people most affected.

In regard to the tendering process, it's my understanding that "This project did not follow a fully open, competitive tendering process. Instead, the Town limited competition through pre-qualification and invited bidding. While this approach may be administratively convenient and presented as a way to ensure only the best bidders apply, what it really does is reduce transparency, restrict market competition, limit exposure to innovative ideas, and increase costs. Council now has the chance to step back, correct the process, and choose a path that respects residents, protects the landscape, and reflects true fiscal responsibility.

We request that Council:

1. **Pause all further tree removals, tenders, and construction activities** on the Bay Street East corridor.
2. **Reopen the analysis of alternative alignments**, using updated cost data and independent review.
3. **Commit to genuine public consultation**, proactively not retroactively
4. **Acknowledge that the original cost justification is no longer valid**, and that moving forward without reassessment is fiscally irresponsible.

Respectfully,

Daniel Gütter  
Bay Street East property owner since 1994