



**Town of the Blue Mountains**  
**Peel Street Reconstruction**  
**Between Highway 26 and Georgian Bay**  
**Public Consultation Centre #1 – Thursday July 11, 2019**

Please complete and hand in this sheet so that your comments can be considered for this project. If you cannot complete your comments today, please take this home and email, fax, or email your comments by Friday August 9, 2019.

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Comments regarding this project:

MTE option 5, reprofiles the hilltop and extends the paved surface to the waterfront. It also includes underground stormwater drainage which reduces re-grading onto private property, and preserves the forest. That's all OK.

What should be re-considered, is the inclusion of sidewalks, boulevards, and lighting, in the established community which extends from Timber Lane, to Georgian Bay.

### Between Cameron Street and Georgian Bay

Sidewalks may be neither required nor appropriate north of Cameron for the following reasons.

- 1) They will seldom be walked on. There is simply too little vehicular traffic, moving at too slow a velocity, over too short a distance to deliver any frequency of encounter or perception of risk.
- 2) By mid-summer, the flow rate of the Little Beaver River usually drops to the point where it's easy to cross on foot, with or without a bicycle. Anyone crossing the river will continue to walk right down the centre of Bay Street and up the roadway to Cameron, as they always have, because it is perfectly safe to do so.

- 3) It is unlikely there will be any significant change in the volume of vehicular traffic north of Cameron as residential development continues. About 90% of today's traffic is occasioned by the residences on Bay Street and the operations of the TBM water treatment plant. There may be a few more sightseers driving to the north end of Peel Street, but most of those transits are at very slow speeds and many of those are in the evening or on weekends, when water treatment plant operations and related vehicle movements are at a minimum.
- 4) Sidewalks should have only the modest of grades. A sidewalk between Cameron and Bay streets would be quite steep. Ice accumulation from freezing rain is more of an issue in this area close to Georgian Bay than in other parts of Thornbury. This sidewalk, especially when covered with a fine dusting of snow, could deliver serious injuries to unsuspecting pedestrians. Regular sanding and/or salting cannot be expected to adequately reduce this risk. In short, this stretch of sidewalk would be a perpetual liability, and in all probability, deliver a negative contribution to personal safety.

The construction of this sidewalk would require grading back onto private property and would require tall trees on the west side of Peel street to be cut down.

- 5) The sidewalk along Bay Street may be viewed as part of the Town's Official Plan (with or without a pedestrian bridge over the river), but it may not be required to serve the plan's objectives. An 8.5m roadway with mountable curbs provides lots of room for the safe passage of pedestrians. This is especially true in this stretch of roadway, as it serves only two private driveways and the entrance to the water treatment plant. Even during business hours it seldom carries a traffic volume of more than 2 vehicles per hour, and vehicles in this area travel at speeds of less than 15 km/h. As mentioned above, there is no perception of risk and no reason to walk in any direction but the direction that serves the objective of travel.

The pavement width along Bay Street has been increased in the plan, from that proposed for Peel Street, from 8.5m to 10m. The additional width does not appear to be required. Seldom are there more than 2 vehicles onsite, both of which park on the plant's driveway, and heavy truck deliveries, of which there are few, have no problem backing into the loading area over the existing roadway. Staying with the 8.5m standard roadway would increase green space and improve the plant's appearance.

Two light standards are proposed for the section of Peel Street closest to the Bay. There are almost no pedestrians or cyclists in this area at night and those that are, are here to view the sky. We can repeat our neighbour's comments on the lights. They are unwelcome, unnecessary and inconsiderate. They may also increase risk as discussed below.

## Between Timber Lane and Cameron Street

A risk the overall project may not reduce is northbound vehicles failing to make the turn at the 45° intersection of Peel and Cameron streets. Minor accidents have been occurring there for years and increased speeds, enabled by improved sightlines and roadway redesign, may exacerbate the situation. Lighting, north of the intersection, if visible from south of the intersection and perceived to indicate the principal roadway continues north, may exacerbate the situation further.

Vehicular traffic is light in this section of Peel street, partially because many Cameron Street residences find it faster to drive to Thornbury via 10<sup>th</sup> Line and Highway 26, than to navigate Cameron Street with its many turns and posted 10 km/h and 15 km/h speed warnings. Within the section of Cameron Street that uses Peel Street, only a few properties remain to be built on. As Cameron Street serves only limited local traffic, and as Bay and this section of Peel Street are fully developed, vehicular traffic many years from now, is unlikely to be more than 10% above today's volumes.

We are accustomed to meeting our neighbours, as we walk along Bay and Peel Streets, and stopping to talk with them, sometimes at length, without a care in the world that a car might come along. Visibility is excellent and it can be half an hour between vehicles. It strains credulity that a 10% increase in today's traffic volumes could be used to justify the environmental cost of the boulevard and sidewalk that the current proposal portends.

## General Comments

This project was undertaken because of serious deficiencies in the current road that became impossible to ignore with the development of Timber Lane. It is important to note, the total number of lots on Timber Lane is only about one-half of the number of lots already fully developed to the north. Since the water treatment plant accounts for about 60% of the traffic on Bay Street, the maximum future increase in total traffic between High Bluff Lane and Timber Lane is probably about 30%. Even if it was 50%, the necessity for a sidewalk between High Bluff Lane and Timber Lane would be arguable.

A sidewalk between the Georgian Trail and High Bluff Lane, may be required because of the Trail's proximity to the Highway 26 intersection, but its design should be based on projected usage. It will not be used by persons walking downtown because it is shorter, faster, and safer to cross Peel Street at High Bluff Lane. Once across the road, the gravel lot connects to the trail, 44m closer to Thornbury than the proposed sidewalk at the trail.

If this sidewalk is constructed, it will be for persons wishing to access the trail westbound. It should be designed like the trail, with a granular A base and a crushed limestone topcoat. That would encourage its use, and be appreciated by all joggers, for both their knees and their shared interest in the environment. Concrete construction has an awful carbon footprint.

If safety considerations indicate a sidewalk is advisable at the hilltop, the jogging path could be continued as a gravel shoulder, outside the paved shoulder and curb, to Timber Lane. This would permit the boulevard to be omitted which would reduce the width of 'proposed works', reduce expropriation, reduce construction and subsequent maintenance costs, and provide a nicer transition to the rural standards of the existing community.

North of Timber Lane there is no need for a sidewalk. It is safe to transition to walking on a paved shoulder because all opposing traffic has come from a virtual full stop less than 150m ahead.

We describe the stop as 'virtual' because there is so little traffic southbound from Bay Street, that Cameron street residents occasionally forget to look to their left as they roll through the Peel Street intersection. As any employee of the water treatment plant can verify, we never approach that intersection without being prepared to stop.

The attendees at the PIC were invited to submit a hybrid solution (i.e. a plan of their own). Here is our shot at option 4.5. We think it's a solution that would be acceptable to all. It uses speed control to render sidewalks and boulevards unnecessary.

- 1) Post a reduced speed limit of 40 km/h approaching the hilltop from High Bluff Lane.
- 2) Use vehicular lane markings to further control speed. They could be narrowed at High Bluff Lane, and narrowed further at Timber Lane. This may yield even better results than the 40 km/h signage. It is human behaviour to drive at a speed that matches one's perception of risk and a narrowing roadway does that beautifully. It's subliminal of course, but speed is seldom adjusted consciously.
- 3) The current plan (option 5) has an 8.5m asphalt surface (4.25m per lane) surrounded by 500mm traditional curbs. If traditional curbs are changed to mountable curbs (which can be walked on without twisting one's ankle), defining the width of each lane to be 3.0m (the standard Rural Cross Section width), with solid white lane markings, would deliver a 1.75m paved shoulder on both sides of the street, measured from the outside of each traffic lane to the outside of each curb. This is especially desirable in an area where low traffic volumes make crossing the street to walk on a sidewalk, more trouble than it's worth.
- 4) Except for the above lane markings, this is the current roadway design of Timber Lane, (8.5m roadway, 500mm mountable curbs, and no sidewalks.) Simply run the Timber Lane profile all the way to the waterfront and forget the sidewalks and boulevard.
- 5) At Timber Lane, if vehicular lane markings further reduced each lane to 2.75m, the paved shoulder portion of the roadway would increase to 2m, wider than the 1.5m proposed sidewalk, and more suitable for persons walking in groups, who would not stick to the sidewalk in any event.

Peel Street between Timber Lane and Cameron Street runs through a pine and cedar forest corridor that has a traffic calming effect. MTE has positioned the roadway within the corridor, but in conjunction with the above changes, the roadway should be re-positioned to ensure no trees are cut anywhere from Timber Lane to Georgian Bay. There is no justification for centring the road in the ROW, at the cost of the loss of even a single tree.

The forest corridor, may not look all that impressive to a visitor, but it is the gateway to the community and a very important part of it.

Within the area bounded by Georgian Bay, the Little Beaver River, High Bluff Lane, 10<sup>th</sup> Line, and Lake Drive, there do not appear to be any streets that will ever require a sidewalk for safety. We would appreciate the investment being re-directed to planting additional trees, and building a small pedestrian bridge over the Little Beaver River.

The PICs have not served to provide the community with plans that enable intelligent debate over the trade-offs between safety and the environment. Another PIC is essential if the community is to unite behind the best possible solution, and accept the level of ruralism that must be lost.

Town council should not be put in the position of having to adjudicate between the professionals they depend on and the society they are sworn to serve.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Collection Notice:**

All comments and information received from individuals, stakeholder groups, and agencies regarding these projects and meetings are being collected to assist the Town of the Blue Mountains in making a decision. Under the "Municipal Act", personal information (such as name, address, telephone number, and property location) which may be included in a submission becomes part of the public record. Questions regarding the collection should be forwarded to the staff member noted above.