

From: [Petersburg Drinking Water System Users Group](#)
To: [Council](#); [Clerks](#)
Subject: January 27, 2025 Council Meeting
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Good day council members and thank you in advance for your attention to my concerns.

To prepare for the January 27, 2025 council meeting I recently downloaded and reviewed the meeting agenda published on the Town website. Attached to that agenda, at page 40, is a document titled "Infrastructure Services Staff Report" (IS-2025-02). A review of that document has brought some concerns to mind when referenced against the discussions I witnessed at the January 6, 2025 committee of the whole meeting regarding the Petersburg Drinking Water System (PDWS).

My intent had been to register as a delegation and present this content to council on the 27th but I feel the material and points of view may better serve to clarify some issues that may be discussed that evening.

Concern 1: see page 41 section titled "Design Options and Detailed Design".

It was unclear from the January 6, 2025 committee of the whole meeting that these were the final two options to be submitted for design, especially when referencing what turned out to be, in my opinion, a costly yet factually useless MTE report as a starting point.

Option 1 as described on page 41 suggests that the majority, if not all, of the watermain (w/m) replacement work will be completed within the non road easement at the front or side of each property. It could be assumed this would involve trenching and/or boring techniques to place the w/m infrastructure. Hopefully, this would be the most cost-effective manner of achieving the Town goal of w/m infrastructure replacement while financially benefiting the PDWS users' group that are being forced to pay for this endeavour.

Option 2, however, states that "This option includes all components of Option 1, with the addition of renewing the Township's local roads..." This statement in turn lends itself to a question of interpretation. If the Town were to proceed with Option 2 in addition to Option 1 will the w/m work the users are paying for still be conducted in the non road easement area separate from the roadwork which should then be funded as would any other Town road reconstruction project not directly involving the PDWS users' group OR does the documentation suggest that all work in Option 2, including the w/m rebuild described in Option 1, will be conducted within the boundaries of the road bed itself? It is understood that such an option would increase the costs to the water system users as some road work costs, such as digging deeper, differing materials required, etc. would then be directed to the PDWS users group.

My concern with the interpretation of this option is reiterated on page 47 under Financial Considerations in the second last paragraph which reads:

“Watermain replacement costs will depend on the selected design option (watermain-only or semi-urbanization) and be refined during detailed design.”

It becomes a question, under Option 2, whether the PDWS users will be on the hook for some road work costs that would otherwise be invoiced under the Town’s road reconstruction budget.

I have yet to meet any one PDWS user that wants to pay for this w/m work so I ask that council, with staff ensure that moving forward the implemented option ensures a mere 62 users are paying the absolute minimum and only paying for what we must for w/m work and nothing else.

Concern 2: see page 42 design option 2 - Preliminary Design (30%):

“Preliminary Design (30%): This phase involves the creation of preliminary design drawing which would be made available for viewing by those affected through online or in-person format.”

As a user of the PDWS I strongly believe this should read **online AND in-person format**.

This would lend itself to transparency and access for those footing the bill.

Concern 3: see page 42 design option 3 - Detailed Design:

Detailed Design: This phase consists of three stages:

60% Design: Preparation of detailed drawings and specifications, along with a cost estimate. **A Public Information Centre (PIC) will be held** to engage the public at this stage of the design.

90% Design: Finalizing detailed...

Once again, I reiterate previous correspondence and interactions indicating that the October 10, 2024, meeting format with only information boards scattered around the room and no option to discuss the system as a whole and as a group is inappropriate and unacceptable. This is NOT a typical Township engineering project with only 62 residences paying the freight. Although most of us may not be engineers and may not comment on design specific details we can talk to practical user issues, situations, and concerns that only users of the current system would know since we live here. We must be treated as investors/project partners and kept in the loop with lots of face-to-face communication.

I know for a fact that the PDWS users will only tolerate these **public information sessions** if they consist of a proper sit down, Q & A style format such that all users in attendance and the Town are on the same page at meeting end. The display boards would of course be part of this format and could be viewed before and after the sit-down session(s).

NOTE: If I am understanding the staff report correctly, page 46 under Public Engagement contains much the same information as just discussed but it should be noted that page 46 suggests the PIC to be held at 50% design completion while page 42 suggests 60%. There may be a small mismatch in timing in one of those statements.

Concern 4: see page 42 near the bottom for Cost Estimate Comparison vs in-house.

Assuming the Town has the in-house expertise, which it appears we do, the lower cost option of design, tendering, contract administration, and inspection services is the obvious choice and in line with reducing costs to a very small group of users that must accommodate this tremendous financial burden. This option may have the added benefit of implementing missed, incorrect, or altered last minute design options in a timelier and cost-effective manner.

Concern 5: see page 47 under Financial Considerations last sentence.

I understand that the Town has little or no influence on Region costing but the last sentence in this section may be interpreted as suggesting that the PDWS users may be looking at yet another \$300,000 in costs coming from the Region in or around 2027. If this were in fact a possibility, I must re-state the groups previously expressed concerns that the Town is rushing this and in the end the Regions EA could **in fact** cost the water system users more in the future by assuming everything will mesh without concerns.

Even the Regions medical officer of health has suggested, at page 56, that “Given the history of compliance with then Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standards, I have no objection to this system continuing to supply water for domestic purposes...” If the Region and Town simply maintain those standards, I feel confident the history of 100% compliance can easily be maintained until proper w/m consulting, design and implementation takes place in the proper order.

Concern 6: see page 42 Option 2 near the top of the page.

“The roads will be upgraded from a rural cross section with roadside ditches to a semi-urban cross-section, which could incorporate concrete curbs, catch basins, storm sewers, boulevard works and/or ditching graded to drain effectively. Additionally, this option will involve full-width, full-depth asphalt replacement on the local roads complementing the water distribution system replacement and house service upgrades.”

Many of our water system users take great pride in the yards and spend considerable time keeping them as top end as possible. There are strong concerns that the semi-urban profile mentioned could dramatically impose upon these residents’ properties, affecting them at a personal level. This would be even more prevalent for properties that lie below the elevation of the road itself. I want to task the Town engineers to take these matters seriously from day one and endeavour to mitigate any negative effects such a cross-section profile may have on those properties and residents.

Thanks for your time and attention.

Doug Jordan
Petersburg