

Schomberg street plan starting to unfold

By Mark PavilonsEditor

A new and improved Main Street in downtown Schomberg is on the horizon. Consultants and Township staff hosted a virtual information session last week, offering some options on the new-look Main Street. Colin Berman, of design and planning firm BrookMcIlroy, said this large-scale work is a critical component of Schomberg's holistic renewal. It's an exciting project, albeit one that's technically challenging. The Schomberg Main Street Streetscaping Project includes a redesign of downtown Main Street between Dr. Kay Drive and Church Street. The design concepts aim to advance a high-quality, integrated approach to enhancing and preserving Schomberg's unique qualities. The aim is to improve the pedestrian network and connectivity to Main Street to further boost Schomberg's reputation as a vibrant, authentic, historical community and a renowned destination for day tourists, cyclists, and residents alike. This project aligns with recommendations out of the 2019 Main Street Revitalization Strategy and Action Plan and is projected to commence in 2023. The virtual information session was the first of many opportunities for public engagement. Drawing upon revitalization work done in Unionville and Kleinburg, Berman said they've narrowed down some options. Currently, the narrow street and sidewalks aren't conducive to a welcoming, pedestrian-friendly core. Currently, there are 140 on-street parking spots in the core, with many more on private and municipal parking lots nearby. The core is comprised of mix uses ??residential, retail and commercial. All of the mature trees in the core are on private property and they need to be preserved. The parameters are very tight, Berman observed and they're limited in what they can ultimately do. The overhead hydro lines are unsightly, but burying them is very expensive. Berman presented three road widening options, all with their own pros and cons. Option one includes parking on one side and a wider boulevard. This would see parking reduced to 72 spots. Option two provides an alternating parking arrangement on both sides, with smaller boulevards. This option has 40 on-street parking spaces. Option three involves two sides for parking and even smaller boulevards. Berman noted that peak parking demand in the core (busy Saturday mornings for example) require 92 spots. The reduction, he said, won't be too noticeable. In the project, a parkette is planned at Dr. Kay and Main Street, complete with benches, interpretive panels highlighting the village's rail history, and some form of public art. It's meant to act as a northern gateway to the core. There are also plans to improve the public use of space at the Community Hall, both out front and along the side. They're looking at a ?plaza??like space with seating, trees and a garden. The access and bridge to the fairgrounds will also see some sort of improvement. Berman said the materials would reflect the town's sense of history. They would include red brick pavers, historic lamp posts, bike racks, benches and planters. The consultants and Township are looking for public input on the ideas. An online survey is available through May 20, and can be found on the [Speaking King](#) webpage: <https://speaking.king.ca/schomberg-main-street-streetscaping>. The input received during the VPIC and from the survey will help guide the next steps in the design of the project. Berman said they will refine the plan and choose a preferred option.