

Charles Cooper

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2025-06-16

To the mayor and council

Good evening, my name is Charles Cooper. I live at ██████████. in Schomberg, near the intersection of Main and Church streets.

First, I'd like to thank everyone for coming out this evening. And I'd like to thank both the staff and Councilors for their attention to this matter.

I checked my notes and it was just over 3 years ago I stood here and unfortunately, not much has changed, either to this proposal or to my opinion regarding it.

I recognize that this is a complex topic; there are a lot of things that need to be balanced out. There is a pressing and ongoing need for *affordable* housing. Intensification – building within an already serviced area, rather than extending a town boundary to un-serviced greenfield areas, is laudable. Businesses along Main Street are struggling, and higher footfall would likely help.

Let me be 100% clear. I do not object to development on this site however, I believe that the development should be in accordance with the existing OP and related zoning, and be limited to 3 storeys. The site is part of the Schomberg Village Core area, and according to the current official plan (section 5.4.3)

"That the minimum height for new buildings shall be two functional storeys and the *maximum height for new buildings is generally three storeys*"

I am disappointed in the recommendation that this six storey development go forward, as proposed. Let me explain why.

The official plan that I saw when I moved to Schomberg was from 1998. It had not significantly changed in many years. The Township undertook the long and arduous work of updating the plan. Staff and consultants worked hard (with input from Township citizenry) to update the plan and associated zoning. Dozens of public engagement sessions were conducted, many drafts were published, and thoroughly worked over by all interested parties. Mature neighborhoods were identified, design guidelines published, Village specific (including Schomberg) rules were identified and defined and codified.

Recognizing that official plans and zoning are never 100% complete, that they are living documents, at the end of this long process we ended up with what is essentially a 'contract' or 'memorandum of understanding' between the Township and the citizenry.

I believe that amending the zoning to allow this development is outside the bounds of that implied understanding.

Generally speaking, a six-storey building can hold twice as many units as a three-storey building ... Obviously that has downstream/knock on effects on all of the building parameters and its relationship to the environment in which the building sits.

The report identifies a number of 'mitigations' (strategies or actions that you need to take to reduce the negative impacts of development or human activities on the environment, community or infrastructure). These are required to allow this, a six-storey building in this location. One way or another, many of these mitigations or changes to that implied contract are related to the building height.

I will make this very clear: as far as I can see, many of these required mitigations are related to the excess building height (and related occupancy). A three-story building, as currently permitted, is the answer.

**Parking:**

There is not enough parking for the number of units in the six-story building, and there is no visitor parking.

There is a sensible trend in modern urban design, particularly applicable in cities, where parking minimums are being reduced or sometimes even eliminated. My daughter lives in Toronto, she has a drivers license but has no car, and therefore no need for a parking spot. She gets around via transit, bicycle, walking and cab. This works perfectly well within the dense urban fabric of Toronto. It is less defensible in a small rural village, that has no transit and (relatively) few employment opportunities within walking or cycling distance.

Parking is limited along Schomberg Main Street, it remains contentious. This plan will *remove spaces* from the existing parking along the street, and yet expect the street (and related Green P parking) to take up that overflow.

Let's be honest, people are not sensible about parking. People don't want to walk any further than they have to along a Main Street. Oddly enough, they will go to Upper Canada Mall, park near the old Hudson's Bay entrance, walk a kilometer through the mall, get what they want and come back. Yet people have told us in surveys along Main Street that the Green P parking space is too far away. There's a whole other urban design discussion to be had around that...

In this development, because it sits next to the Dufferin Marsh and the Schomberg River there is a high water table. They can't dig deep enough to provide all of the mandated parking under the building. Therefore the suggested mitigation is that, the Township reduce the number of required parking spaces on-site, but allow the expected overflow to utilize public utilities.

Relying on the Township to be responsible for and pay for parking (along the street and in the Green P parking on Western Avenue) to support a private developer does not make sense.

The best mitigation is to have a three-story building.

**Construction Impacts:**

This will not be a short-term construction project. Even prior to habitation, it will have a significant effect to the people and businesses and along Main Street.

### Traffic

There's only one way to get into the site and that is right on Main Street. This will incur significant disruption (heavy vehicle traffic, dust and noise) and general traffic movement along Dr. Kay Drive and Main Street in particular.

### Community Hall

The Community Hall has only recently been renovated. Construction activity is likely to negatively impact the viability of that space during the construction period. Ongoing reduction of parking along Main Street is also likely to stress the viability of the Hall.

### Businesses along Main

I'll be blunt. Businesses are already struggling on Main Street. Making access more unpleasant/difficult for a long term construction project may kill more of them.

I expect that these disruptions would last a minimum of 2 years, based on the building size, and the amount of work required to prep the site. Reducing the size of the building to the currently permitted 3 storeys would shorten the building time (although no, it would not cut it in half). Once again, 'mitigation' is a three-storey building.

### **Traffic:**

Traffic is another contentious issue in Schomberg. The number of people who have told me "I don't go to Main Street, it's too busy", or contrariwise "I don't go to Main Street, there's nothing there and no place to park", is legion.

I'll be honest. I kind of like the day-to-day negotiation of traffic along the street. People pull into gaps in the parking to let others go, and *most of the time* people are gracious by waving a hand in thanks.

We want Schomberg to be safe and walkable. Increasing the traffic is unlikely to help with this. A three storey building would significantly increase the number of units available in the village from the existing single-family dwelling, and at the same time not increase traffic as much as a six-storey building is likely to do.

### **Tree Removal and Visual Impact Study**

Almost all of the trees on the site will be removed. One large Norway maple at the extreme northwest corner of the property near the sidewalk will remain.

There is a formula for determining "a tree budget" and the current landscaping plan has a calculated "deficit of 54.6 trees". The developer isn't replanting all of the trees that were removed, instead they will pay financial compensation to the Township, in-lieu of trees as it were.

Financial compensation does not equal trees.

Also, the developer has submitted a visual impact study that stated in part that “...the building would often be screened by other buildings and vegetation due to its large setback from Main Street.”

There will be no significant vegetation between the street and the building, so I do not understand how this finding was arrived at.



Once again, if the building were smaller (the existing permitted 3 storeys rather than doubling it to a proposed height of 6 storeys) this would not be a nearly as much a problem.

### **Dufferin Marsh**

Putting on my “Charles is a community volunteer, hat” for a moment, I’m head of the Dufferin Marsh Nature Connection. We’re group of volunteers. We work with the Township to manage, maintain and strengthen the Dufferin Marsh. We put on publicly accessible activities within the Marsh that are designed to make people more comfortable with and feel free to enjoy this precious natural space within Schomberg. We hold events in the Marsh (bird feeder building for small kids, the community skate in February, moth, butterfly and frog awareness events at the appropriate times in the season). We build, install and maintain bird nest boxes, bat houses, and most recently in this past year a turtle nesting ground. That’s part of the current work we are doing with the Township and the townsfolk to ensure that the snapping turtles that use the Marsh as a breeding ground are safe, both when using the Marsh nesting ground and the roadways around the Marsh.

In my deputation 3 years ago I spoke about my concerns regarding the Dufferin Marsh and the creatures that live within it or pass through it. I highlighted my concerns about dewatering, building height, salt run-off and shadow, bird strikes on a six-storey building, amongst other issues. I really don’t think these have been addressed.

Let me give you an example of what I feel is a disingenuous example provided by the developer as to the lack of affect the six-story development will have on the Marsh. There are photos in the report that purport to give a view of what the building would look like from the Dufferin Marsh.

The kicker is, this example photograph is not taken from the within Dufferin Marsh. It's taken from Cooper Drive - as far away from the proposed six-story building as is physically possible.

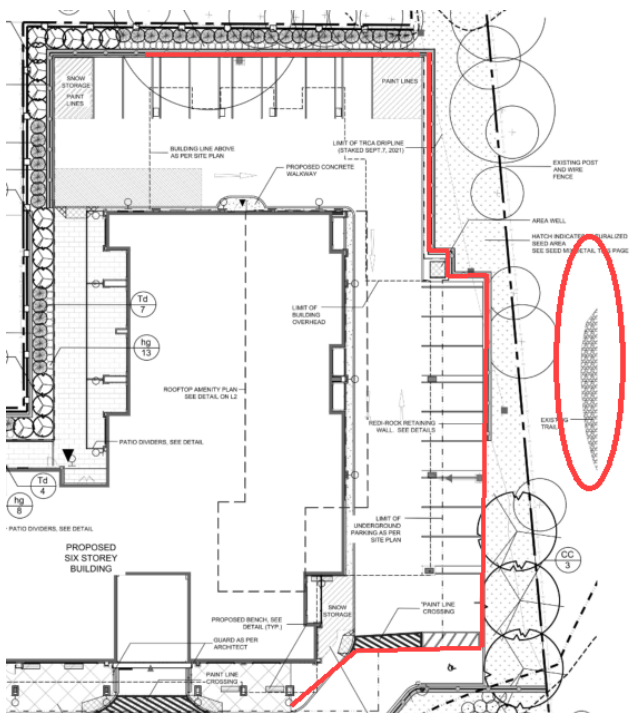
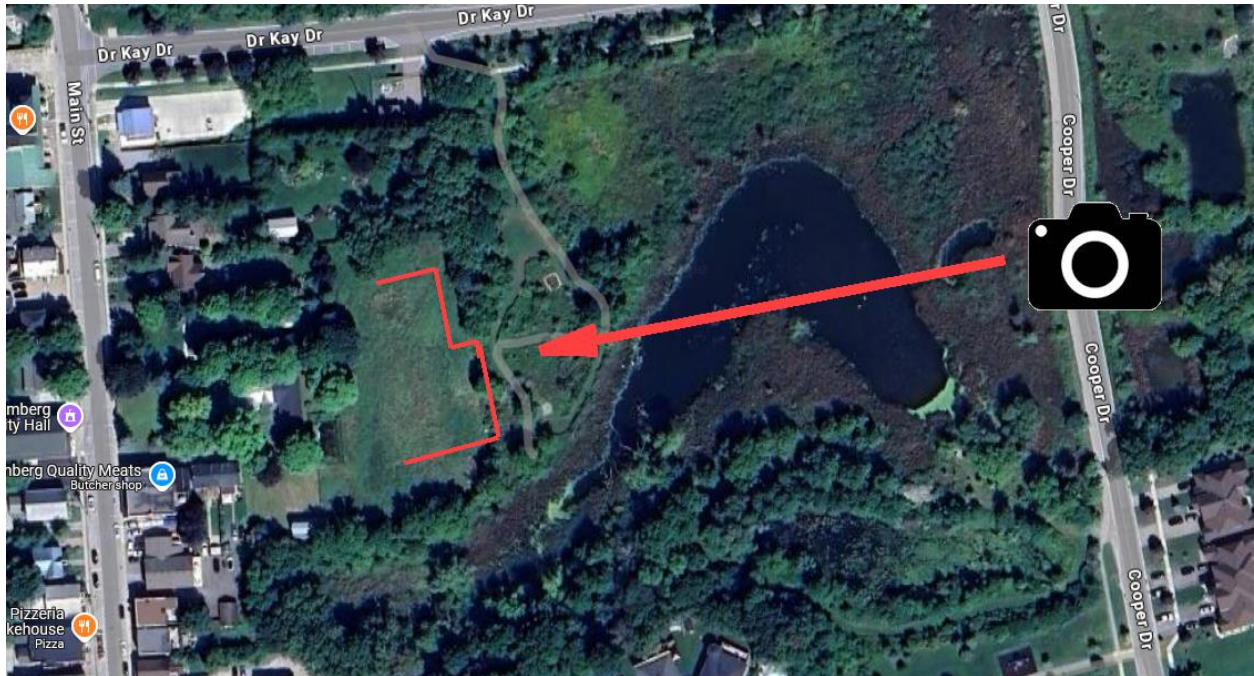
<b>Viewshed No.:</b>	5	<b>Location:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Direction of View:</b>	West	<b>Massing Outline:</b>	[REDACTED]



Figure 15: Viewshed 5 - Existing



Figure 16: Viewshed 5 - Proposed



Taken from most recent Developer Application – Landscape Plan

Note the location of the existing trail (red ellipse).

Next to active area of the Marsh.

But, once again, reducing the building height from 6 storeys to its permitted 3 storey height would significantly reduce its visual impact within the active area of the Marsh (although it would have no impact on this greatly reduced setback).

I respect the abilities of, and the hard work that members of the Planning Department have put into this effort. However, I ask that the Mayor and Council not approve this six storey development but instead defer to the current OP and zoning and restrict the development to three storeys.

# Appendix A

## Main Street Viewshed



Current Tree Cover from Street (Google Streetview)

This tree cover will not exist.

# Dufferin Marsh Viewshed

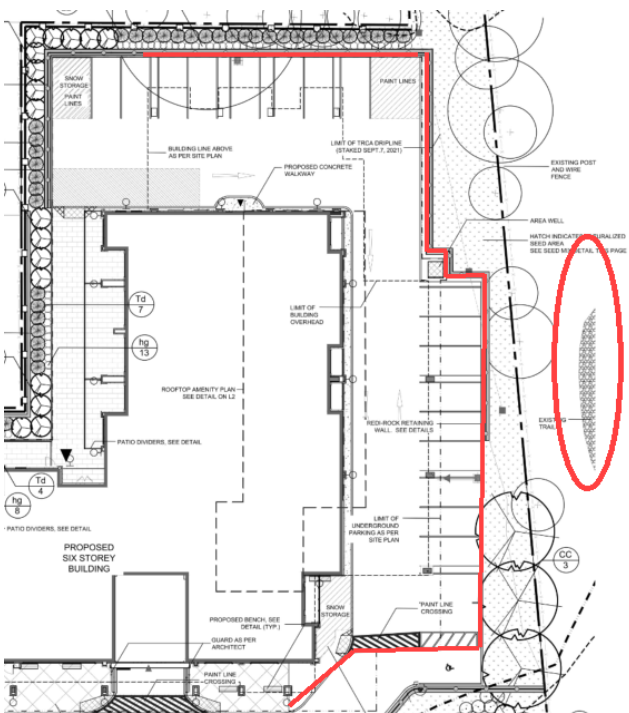
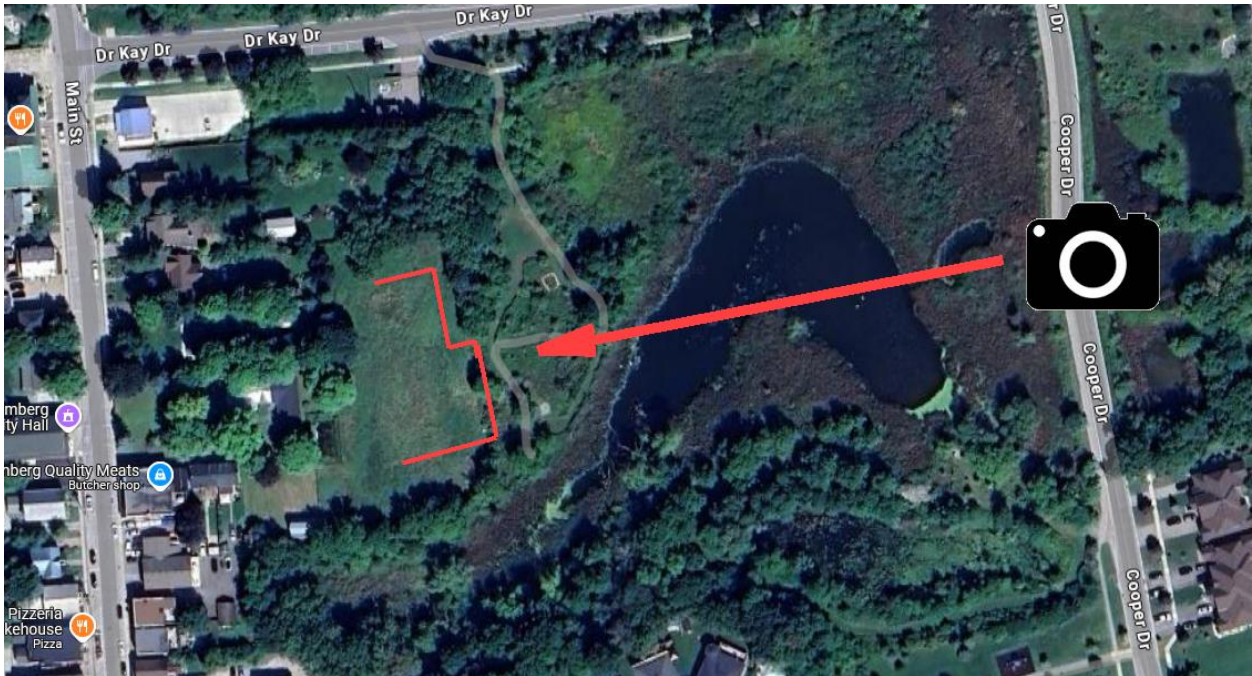
**Viewshed No.:** 5                      **Location:** [Redacted]  
**Direction of View:** West            **Massing Outline:** [Redacted]



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Next to active area of Marsh