

Dear CWC Chair and Committee Members,

I asked that the issue of underground utilities on Hamilton Road come back to council because I believe we have an important decision to make about marketing our city which goes beyond the scope of mere road reconstruction.

A previous council spent 5 million dollars to put the utilities underground on Wellington Road (between the river and the rail tracks) as a means of improving a gateway that was considered the “front door” to downtown. However, visitors entering London from the 401 East are directed, by Google Maps and other GPS devices, along Hamilton Road. This initial experience of urban London to potential new residents and business owners should entice them to relocate to our city but, at present, it does more to remind them that London has been leading the province in unemployment and poverty. Strategic investment by our council could change this.

London Hydro will pay to install underground utilities at the intersection of Hamilton Road and Egerton due to the complexity of the corner. We, therefore, have the opportunity to continue this westward to Chesley Ave through the heart of the main street place type section of Hamilton Road. Here, six tree-trunk-tour carvings, along with the Crouch Library and Hamilton Road Senior’s Centre, could be acting as the visual focus for the area. Right now, it is an oppressive abundance of utility wires that draw the attention, as seen in the two attached photos (one with a 12 foot carved Sasquatch).

Since section 907-5 of the London Plan states that we will, “Enhance the character of Main Streets with the public works we undertake”, I respectfully request that your committee consider taking the steps required to beautify this important gateway by locating the utilities underground.

Michael van Holst
Councillor, Ward 1

