

# Special City Council Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, October 7, 2020, 6:00 p.m.

Remote meeting live streamed  
on [guelph.ca/live](http://guelph.ca/live)

Changes to the original agenda are noted with an asterisk "\*".

To contain the spread of COVID-19, City Council meetings are being held electronically and can be live streamed at [guelph.ca/live](http://guelph.ca/live).

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## Pages

### 1. Notice- Electronic Participation

#### 1.1 City Council

This meeting will be held by Electronic Participation in accordance with the City of Guelph Procedural By-law (2020)-20515.

### 2. Call to Order

### 3. Open Meeting – 6:00 p.m.

#### 3.1 O Canada

#### 3.2 Silent Reflection

#### 3.3 First Nations Acknowledgement

#### 3.4 Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

### 4. Items for Discussion

The following items have been extracted from the Committee of the Whole Consent Report and the Council Consent Agenda and will be considered separately. These items have been extracted either at the request of a member of Council or because they include a presentation and/or delegations.

**4.1 South End Community Centre Project Update - 2020-141**

1

(referred from October 5, 2020 Committee of the Whole)

**Recommendation:**

1. That the South End Community Centre as presented in Report 2020-141 dated October 5, 2020 be approved at a cost of \$80 million and reflected in the 2021 capital budget.
2. That construction begin in 2022 and any change in capital cost, resulting from final site plan, early competitive procurement processes and considerations of impacts of COVID on facility and programming design, be included in the 2022 capital budget.
3. That staff be directed to phase-in the estimated annual operating cost of \$2.4 million as part of the 2021-2024 operating budget and forecast.

**4.2 Baker District - Project Update - 2020-148**

23

(referred from October 5, 2020 Committee of the Whole)

### **Recommendation:**

1. That the recommendation to proceed with the detailed development design for the alternative option site layout for the Baker District Redevelopment Project as outlined in this report be approved.
2. That \$16.6 million for site servicing, environmental/archeological remediation and the outdoor public space for the Baker District be approved and reflected in the 2021 budget.
3. That the construction of an 88,000 square foot library in the south block as presented as the alternative option in Report 2020-148, dated October 5, 2020, be approved at a cost of \$62.0 million, and Council approve an increase of 0.39% impact to the tax levy starting in 2021 and remain in place for 20 years, in order to fund the \$19.7 million of the library capital cost that is an enhancement to the current service level beyond that allowable by the Development Charges Act, 1997, with construction to begin in 2022 subject to updated design and service delivery reconsiderations as a result of COVID-19.
4. That staff be directed to maximize the number of public parking spaces in the south block and pursue sharing agreements for parking in the north block and seek budget approval as part of the 2022 budget process.
5. That staff be directed to phase in the estimated annual tax supported operating cost of the public components of the Baker District, totaling \$3.5 million, as part of the 2021-2024 operating budget and forecast.
6. That the Guelph Public Library Board report back to Council with a detailed operating budget projection by June 2021 based upon updated design and service delivery reconsiderations resulting from COVID-19.
7. That staff proceed with revising the Urban Design Master Plan (UDMP), share a virtual presentation with the community to outline the changes and collect final comments for Council's consideration.

### **5. Special Resolution**

### **6. By-Laws**

(Councillor O'Rourke)

### **7. Adjournment**

# Staff Report



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To	<b>Committee of the Whole</b>
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Monday, October 5, 2020
Subject	<b>South End Community Centre Project Update</b>

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## Recommendation

1. That the South End Community Centre as presented in Report 2020-141 dated October 5, 2020 be approved at a cost of \$80 million and reflected in the 2021 capital budget.
  2. That construction begin in 2022 and any change in capital cost, resulting from final site plan, early competitive procurement processes and considerations of impacts of COVID on facility and programming design, be included in the 2022 capital budget.
  3. That staff be directed to phase-in the estimated annual operating cost of \$2.4 million as part of the 2021-2024 operating budget and forecast.
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## Executive Summary

### Purpose of Report

To provide an update and seek approval on construction timing and budget for the South End Community Centre project.

### Key Findings

Since early 2018, staff has been actively working through the design development phase of the South End Community Centre (SECC) project with MacLennan Jaunkalns Miller Architects (MJMA).

The design has been through a number of site plan approval stages, including a key milestone for the required parking variance in August 2019. The project is in the final stages of site plan approval with final site plan sign off expected by end of 2020.

Project elements to address environmental sustainability and mitigate climate change impacts support the Sustaining Our Future pillar of the City's Strategic Plan. To align with the City's Community Net Zero Carbon and Corporate 100% Renewable Energy (100RE) plans, MJMA was directed to ensure the design met the Canada Green Building Council's (CaGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design® (LEED) Silver Standard, and further, reduce energy and climate change impacts by designing to the CaGBC Zero Carbon Building (ZCB) Design Standard.

Upon Council approval, staff will proceed with a comprehensive tender package, including pre-qualifying the major trades and general contractors prior to its

release. Construction mobilization is intended to begin in late spring 2022 with an anticipated two year construction period and a tentative opening in fall 2024. Due to the proximity of the construction site to the South End Community Park, it is anticipated that this park and its amenities, including Larry Pearson Ball diamonds, tennis courts, splash pad and playground, will not be accessible to the public during 2022 and most likely 2023. Staff will work with user groups to relocate requests to other city facilities. In the event that safe access and appropriate parking become available, staff will endeavor to open the park earlier while work continues inside the building.

COVID-19 has required staff to pause and consider the long-term social impacts of the pandemic on our service provision. The original plan for this facility was to seek approval to begin construction in 2021 with an opening in 2023; however, in order to understand the impact of COVID on the facility and programming design which also may impact cost and revenue estimates, a pause of one year is being recommended. Over the course of 2021, staff will review the impact of COVID-19 on this design and make the appropriate changes to meet the health and safety concerns of our staff and the community in the new world of recreation programs and services.

### **Financial Implications**

The SECC is a growth-necessitated project and is justified based on previous master planning documents and facility needs assessment. For this reason, the capital cost is over 85 per cent development charge funded.

The SECC capital budget estimate for constructing the facility in 2022 is \$80 million which is approximately \$12 million higher than the last estimate included in the capital budget for the following reasons:

- Investment in building envelope construction for energy conservation, use of energy efficient equipment consistent with Net Zero Carbon initiatives, incorporation of renewable energy infrastructure for environmental sustainability and mitigating climate change impacts contributing approximately \$6.5 million
- Refinement in cost estimates based on finalized site and building detailed design elements contributing \$1.7 million
- Refinement in equipment, communication, IT and security costs contributing \$1 million
- Additional construction contract administration costs of \$800,000
- Public art inclusion of \$400,000
- General capital cost inflation from original plan \$1.6 million.

The capital cost of the SECC facility will continue to be refined through 2021 subject to final site plan impacts, early competitive procurement processes and considerations of impacts of COVID on design. Any changes in the capital budget resulting from these final steps will be included in the 2022 capital budget.

There is a tax supported capital cost of approximately \$11.2 million for this facility that is planned to be accommodated within current City capital funding strategies for growth, infrastructure renewal and 100RE. Staff are encouraged that the new Community Benefit Charge (CBC) may be a funding source for the public art component.

The changing DC and CBC legislation may also reduce the tax supported impact of this project as the mandatory 10 per cent reduction in the development charge

calculation has been removed effective with the next DC Study planned for late 2021. Transitional implications are still yet to be understood as staff await the provincial regulation. Given these uncertainties, the refined funding allocation will be included in the 2022 capital budget.

As included in previous debt forecasts, this facility is planned to be debt-financed (net of any development charges collected to date) as it is the most appropriate financing to ensure inter-generational equity for long-term facility assets. This debt has been planned for many years and is within the City's debt capacity limit. The debt will be funded by both development charges and tax supported sources as described above.

The net operating impacts for the facility are currently estimated to be \$2.4 million; this is a full-life cycle budget figure. Operating costs of growth-related capital should be financeable within assessment growth property tax revenue, having a zero per cent impact on the tax levy. For this reason, staff recommend phasing-in the operating cost of this facility over four years, ensuring annual property tax assessment growth revenues are utilized over this period.

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## Report

In 2014, a detailed south end recreation facility needs assessment and feasibility study was completed, confirming that a new multi-use recreation facility remains a priority for the City of Guelph city-wide, and for this geographic area specifically.

Approximately one-quarter of Guelph residents live in the city's south end, an area that has seen steady residential and commercial growth since the early 2000s. This trend is expected to continue as the secondary plan for the Clair-Maltby area—the last unplanned 520 hectares of Greenfield land in Guelph—moves forward. Benefits of municipal recreation and parks services are well documented. Recreational infrastructure is known to strengthen a community and improve the quality of life, and it further serves as a visitor and sport tourism destination, contributing to the local economy. This facility will improve access to recreational and municipal services in an underserved area of the city and will balance the City's recreational infrastructure providing north, south, east and west community hubs.

Since early 2018, staff has been actively working through the design development phase of the South End Community Centre (SECC) project with MacLennan Jaunkalns Miller Architects (MJMA).

The proposed 15,000 square-metre community centre will feature the following amenities:

- a twin pad fully-accessible arena and change rooms
- an aquatic complex consisting of a 25 metre eight lane lap pool and teaching pool with open and enclosed viewing areas, along with a large universal change room
- a double gymnasium with ample seating, storage and change rooms
- multi-use program and meeting space throughout the facility for programs and rental activities
- an indoor walking track that will provide a variety of passive and active program opportunities
- a warm-up area for facility participants to stretch and jog
- a centrally-located customer service area, administration and operational spaces

The design has incorporated an open space model that provides viewpoints into the activity areas. In addition, the entrance and back courtyard provides natural light and access to the nearby community park and its outdoor amenities.

Guelph recognizes that public art plays an important role in building vibrant communities and contributing to cultural identity. Artworks are located in various municipally-owned indoor and outdoor public spaces throughout the city. These works enrich the landscape, stimulate thought and serve as landmarks for gathering spaces.

The investment in public art at the South End Community Centre provides an opportunity to attract tourism and community attention, encourages city pride for residents and bolsters Guelph's reputation as a city of culture. The commissioning of public art will proceed as the project moves forward.

The facility design has been through a number of site plan approval stages, including a key milestone for the required parking variance in August 2019. The project is in the final stages of site plan approval with final site plan sign off expected by end of 2020.

The project elements of environmental sustainability and mitigating climate change impacts support the Sustaining Our Future pillar of the City's Strategic Plan. To align with the City's Community Net Zero Carbon and Corporate 100% Renewable Energy (100RE) plans, MJMA was directed to ensure the design met the Canada Green Building Council's (CaGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design® (LEED) Silver Standard, and further reduce energy and climate change impacts by designing to the CaGBC Zero Carbon Building (ZCB) Design Standard.

Energy modelling and iterative design methods were employed to ensure meaningful long-term strategies were incorporated into the facility design. Specific strategic initiatives include:

- Conserving energy by investing in the building envelope
  - Optimized window-to-wall ratios maximizing daylight opportunities while using building shading and window orientation to reduce solar heat gains and associated cooling loads
  - Thermally sound foundation, roof, walls and windows with insulation and air tightness that considerably exceeds building code requirements
- Using cleaner fuels and energy efficient equipment
  - Use only non-fossil fuel based regularly operating equipment (the only fossil fuel fired equipment in the design is the back-up generator for emergency operation)
  - Air source heat pumps used to efficiently heat and cool the building while dramatically reducing direct GHG emissions
  - Use of electric ice resurfacers instead of fossil fuel powered resurfacers
  - Recover waste heat from ice arena equipment and pool operating equipment for all aspects of building operation including space heating, water heating, dehumidification and other heating uses within the facility
- Generating renewable energy to offset energy use and energy cost
  - Solar-ready design with a photovoltaic array of at least 135 kW capacity and capable to generate over 150 MWh annually. This is enough to power 16 homes

Energy use intensity (EUI) and greenhouse gas intensity (GHGI) are performance indicators of energy and carbon emission performance. These indicators take the overall energy use and associated greenhouse gas emissions of the facility and divide it by the total building area (measured in kWh/m<sup>2</sup> and kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup> respectively). There are significant reductions in EUI and GHGI when comparing the SECC Zero Carbon Building design to the LEED Silver Standard design.

This is a Tier-1 capital project being managed by the Facilities and Energy Management department in accordance with the organization's Project Management Office processes for the management of the corporation's complex capital projects. For this reason, ongoing project updates can be found on the [City's website](#) so the public and Council can follow the progress over the next four years.

## **Milestones**

Upon Council approval of the 2022 budget, staff will proceed with a comprehensive tender package, including pre-qualifying the major trades and general contractors prior to its release. Construction mobilization is intended to begin in late spring 2022 with an anticipated two year construction period and a tentative opening in fall 2024.

Due to the proximity of the construction site to the South End Community Park, it is anticipated that this park and its amenities, including Larry Pearson Ball diamonds, tennis courts, splash pad and playground, will not be accessible to the public for 2022 and most likely 2023. Staff will work with user groups to relocate requests to other city facilities. In the event that safe access and appropriate parking become available, we will endeavor to open the park earlier while work continues inside the building.

Staff will also be working closely with the Wellington Catholic District School Board to provide reduced temporary parking spaces, safe from the construction site, while the permanent shared parking area is being created.

## **Financial Implications**

The SECC is a growth-necessitated project and is justified based on previous master planning documents and facility needs assessment.

The SECC capital budget estimate for constructing the facility in 2022 is \$80 million which is approximately \$12 million higher than the last estimate included in the capital budget for the following reasons:

- Investment in building envelope construction for energy conservation, use of energy efficient equipment consistent with Net Zero Carbon initiatives, incorporation of renewable energy infrastructure for environmental sustainability and mitigating climate change impacts contributing approximately \$6.5 million
- Refinement in cost estimates based on finalized site and building detailed design elements contributing \$1.7 million
- Refinement in equipment, communication, IT and security costs contributing \$1 million
- Additional construction contract administration costs of \$800,000
- Inclusion of public art contributing \$400,000
- General capital cost inflation from original plan contributing \$1.6 million.

The capital cost of the SECC facility will continue to be refined through 2021 subject to final site plan impacts, early competitive procurement processes and



considerations of the impacts of COVID on facility and programming design. Any changes in the capital budget resulting from these final steps will be included in the 2022 capital budget.

The plan for this facility started in the early 2000s. It first appeared in the 2003 Development Charge Background Study, at which time it was determined to be fully required for the City's growing population and therefore 100 per cent funded by development charges. As a result of the LEED certified design, the inclusion of public art, the most recent DC Study, and the legislated calculation of the development charges, there is a tax supported capital cost of approximately \$11.2 million. The tax funded cost is able to be accommodated within current City capital funding strategies for growth, infrastructure renewal and 100RE. Staff are encouraged that the new Community Benefit Charge (CBC) may be a funding source for the public art component.

The changing DC and CBC legislation may also reduce the tax supported impact of this project as the mandatory 10 per cent reduction in the development charge calculation has been removed effective with the next DC Study planned for late 2021. Transitional implications are still yet to be understood as staff await the provincial regulation. Given these uncertainties, the refined funding sources will be included in the 2022 capital budget.

As included in previous debt forecasts, this facility is planned to be debt-financed (net of any development charges collected to date) as it is the most appropriate financing to ensure inter-generational equity for long-term facility assets. The cost of debt has never been as low as in the current market environment and Finance staff are developing a strategy to ensure the current low interest rates are able to be accessed for this future build.

The net operating impacts for the facility are currently estimated to be \$2.4 million; this is a full-life cycle budget figure which includes impacts for facility operations and management, programming costs and revenues, and facility and equipment maintenance and renewal including the longer-term capital replacement.

The gross expense budget is \$4.3 million with estimated revenues of \$1.9 million. This user fee recovery rate is consistent with other recreational facilities in the City. A delay of one year as proposed by staff will increase the confidence in these estimates as they are highly influenced by the social impacts of COVID. Both of these figures may be impacted by the work undertaken in 2021 to better understand the requirements and use of a post-COVID community facility.

Operating costs of growth-related capital should be financeable within assessment growth property tax revenue, having a zero per cent impact on the tax levy. For this reason, staff are recommending phasing-in the operating cost of this facility over four years, ensuring annual property tax assessment growth revenues are utilized over this period.

## **Consultations**

A number of community stakeholders, including the Wellington Catholic District School Board, major facility users, Guelph Wellington Seniors Association, University of Guelph, Union Gas and City staff, have been engaged and provided valuable feedback on this project.

## **Strategic Plan Alignment**

The SECC is a key facility identified in the Building our Future pillar of the Strategic Plan. The design of the facility incorporates elements of environmental sustainability and mitigating climate change impacts support the Sustaining Our Future pillar of the City's Strategic Plan. To align with the City's Community Net Zero Carbon and Corporate 100% Renewable Energy (100RE) plans, the design meets the Canada Green Building Council's (CaGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design® (LEED) Silver Standard, and further reduces energy and climate change impacts by designing to the CaGBC Zero Carbon Building (ZCB) Design Standard.

## **Attachments**

Attachment-1 2020 South End Community Centre Presentation

## **Departmental Approval**

Tara Baker, City Treasurer / General Manager, Finance

Heather Flaherty, General Manager, Parks and Recreation

## **Report Author**

Antti Vilkkö, P.Eng., MBA

General Manager, Facilities and Energy Management

Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services

519-822-1260 extension 2490

antti.vilkko@guelph.ca

## **This report was approved and recommended by:**

Kealy Dedman, P.Eng., MPA

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services

519-822-1260 extension 2248

kealy.dedman@guelph.ca

# South End Community Centre



# Guelph. Future ready.

## Strategic Plan alignment

### Building our future

- Responds to Guelph's growing social and economic needs
- Offers a safe place where everyone belongs
- Enhances community well-being through service and program delivery



### Sustaining our future

- Designed for environmental sustainability
- Mitigates climate change impacts
- Supports the community net zero carbon target
- Contributes to the Corporate 100% Renewable Energy (100RE) target



# South End Community Centre

## Background

- **2003**—First included in the Development Charge (DC) Background Study
- **2014**—A detailed recreation facility needs assessment and feasibility study
- **2018**—Detailed design work
- **End of 2020**—Final stages of site plan approval and sign off

# Facility overview





## Facility amenities

165,000 square feet or three times the size of an NFL football field

### **Community space features:**

- Accessible twin pad arena, change rooms, seating and storage
- Aquatic complex—25-metre, eight-lane lap pool, teaching pool, open and enclosed viewing areas, and large universal change room
- Double gymnasium—seating, storage and change rooms
- Five multi-use program and meeting spaces
- Indoor walking track above gymnasium
- Warmup area for facility participants to stretch and jog
- Centrally-located customer service area

# Carbon-neutral initiatives



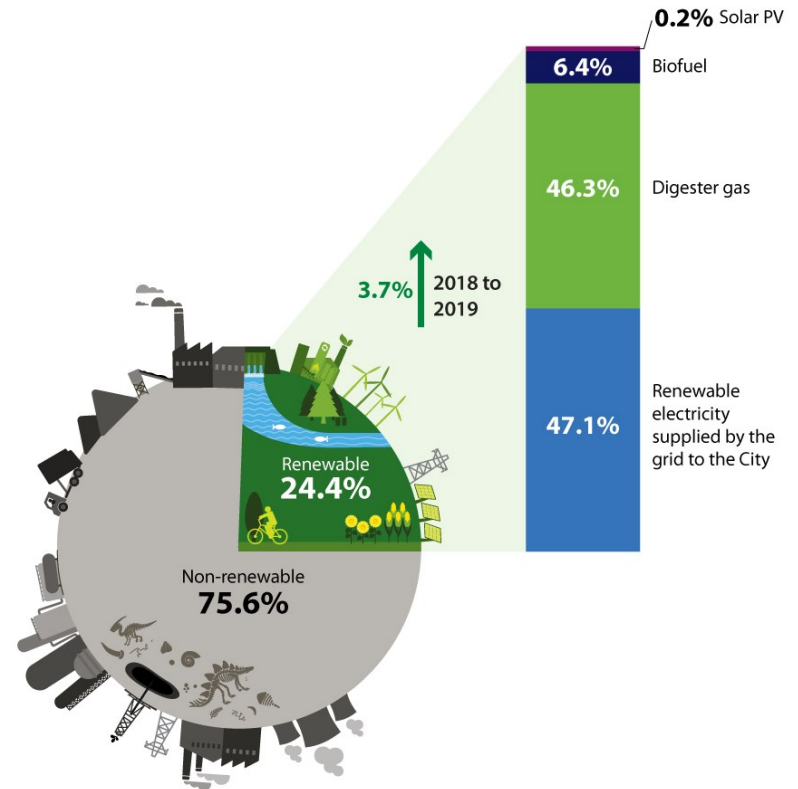
## Aligns to City's

### Sustaining our Future pillar:

- Designing for environmentally sustainability
- Mitigating climate change impacts
- Zero Carbon building design in support of the community Net Zero Carbon target
- Conservation first approach and contributing to the Corporate 100% Renewable Energy (100RE) target

### Design standards:

- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Standard
- Canada Green Building Council's (CaGBC) Zero Carbon Building (ZCB) Design Standard





# Carbon neutral initiatives



## Conserve energy by investing in the building envelope

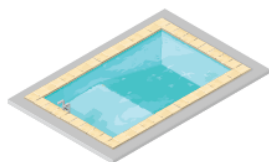
- Optimized window-wall ratio
- Increased insulation
- Heightened air tightness

## Use cleaner fuels and energy-efficient equipment

- Air source heat pump
- Heat recovery (HVAC, pool drain water, ice rink refrigeration)
- Electric ice resurfacers

## Generate renewable energy to offset energy use and cost

- Solar PV panels

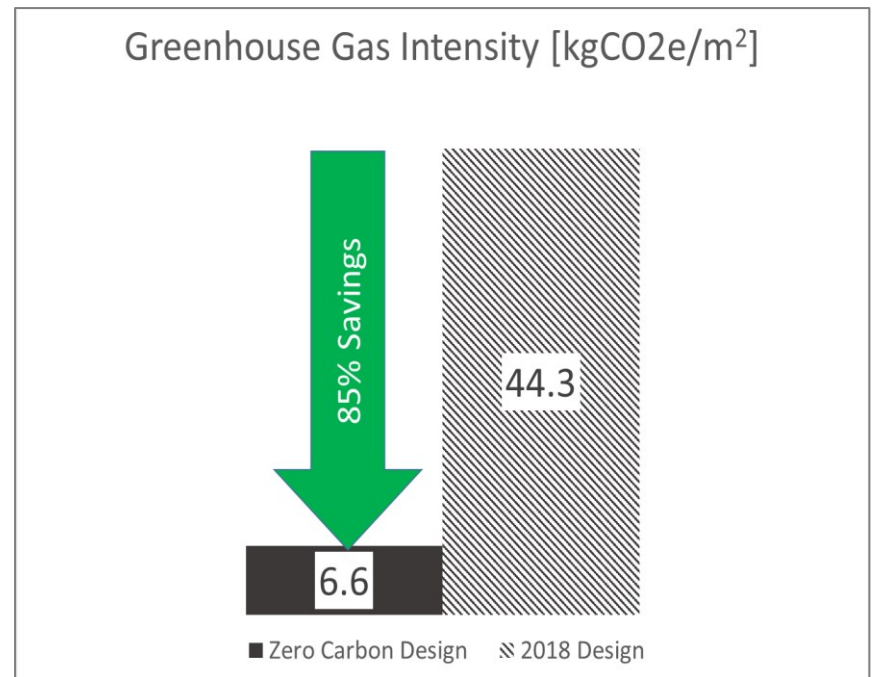
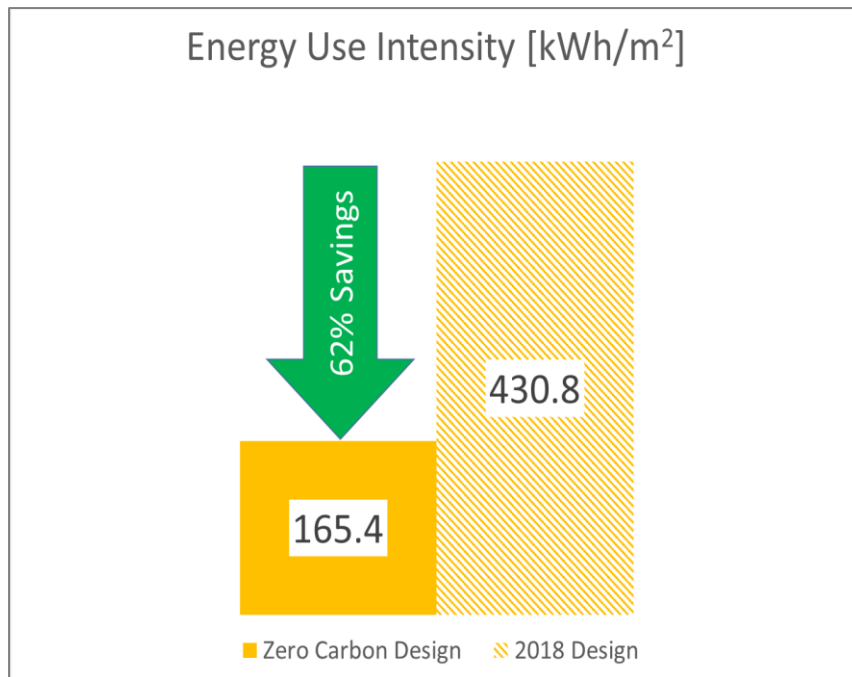




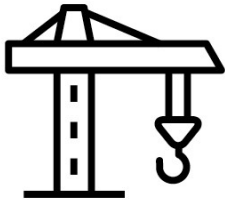
## Carbon neutral initiatives

### Reduce energy and greenhouse gas with zero carbon design

- 62% savings in energy
- 85% savings in greenhouse gas emissions



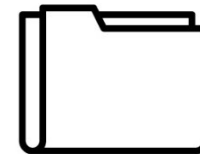
## Budget change from 2019 forecast



**\$1.7 million**  
Final site and  
building detailed  
design



**\$1 million**  
Equipment,  
communication, IT  
and security



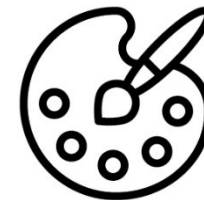
**\$800,000**  
Additional  
construction contract  
administration costs



**\$6.5 million**  
Investment in energy  
conservation



**\$1.6 million**  
Capital cost inflation



**\$400,000**  
Public art

## How the City would fund the new community centre

### **Capital**

- Development charges (DCs)—85%
- \$11.2M—tax funded
- Potential of additional DC coverages
- Current low interest rates could save \$3-6M

### **Operating**

- Net tax impact of \$2.4M
- Phased in over 2021 to 2024

## Next steps

- **If approved**, staff to review COVID-19 impact
- **Spring/Summer 2021**—All major trades/general contractors pre-qualified
- **Fall 2021**—tender package and bid release
- **Winter 2022**—Bid awarded
- **Spring 2022**—Construction begins
- **Fall 2024**—Tentative opening

## Construction impacts

- The entire site will be needed for construction.
- South End Community Park close to the public for 2022/2023
- Relocate booking requests
- Bishop MacDonnell school parking lot reduced; supply temporary solution



# South End Community Centre

## Recommendations

1. That the South End Community Centre as presented in Report 2020-141 dated October 5, 2020 be approved at a cost of \$80 million and reflected in the 2021 capital budget.
2. That construction begin in 2022 and any change in capital cost, resulting from final site plan, early competitive procurement processes and considerations of impacts of COVID on facility and programming design, be included in the 2022 capital budget.
3. That staff be directed to phase-in the estimated annual operating cost of \$2.4 million as part of the 2021-2024 operating budget and forecast

**Rendering presentation to follow on October 5, 2020**



**Thank you**

# Staff Report



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To	<b>Committee of the Whole</b>
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Monday, October 5, 2020
Subject	<b>Baker District – Project Update</b>

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## Recommendation

1. That the recommendation to proceed with the detailed development design for the alternative option site layout for the Baker District Redevelopment Project as outlined in this report be approved.
  2. That \$16.6 million for site servicing, environmental/archeological remediation and the outdoor public space for the Baker District be approved and reflected in the 2021 budget.
  3. That the construction of an 88,000 square foot library in the south block as presented as the alternative option in Report 2020-148, dated October 5, 2020, be approved at a cost of \$62.0 million, and Council approve an increase of 0.39% impact to the tax levy starting in 2021 and remain in place for 20 years, in order to fund the \$19.7 million of the library capital cost that is an enhancement to the current service level beyond that allowable by the Development Charges Act, 1997, with construction to begin in 2022 subject to updated design and service delivery reconsiderations as a result of COVID-19.
  4. That staff be directed to maximize the number of public parking spaces in the south block and pursue sharing agreements for parking in the north block and seek budget approval as part of the 2022 budget process.
  5. That staff be directed to phase in the estimated annual tax supported operating cost of the public components of the Baker District, totaling \$3.5 million, as part of the 2021-2024 operating budget and forecast.
  6. That the Guelph Public Library Board report back to Council with a detailed operating budget projection by June 2021 based upon updated design and service delivery reconsiderations resulting from COVID-19.
  7. That staff proceed with revising the Urban Design Master Plan (UDMP), share a virtual presentation with the community to outline the changes and collect final comments for Council's consideration.
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# **Executive Summary**

## **Purpose of Report**

To provide an update on the Baker District Redevelopment project, which includes a new central library, urban square, parking, residential, institutional and commercial space and summarize the rationale for recommendations within the report for Council decision. The Baker District is nearing the end of the pre-development phase and Council decision is required to establish certainty on the desired direction for the City and Windmill Development Group Ltd. to progress into the development phases of the project.

## **Key Findings**

As the Baker District Redevelopment project advanced in greater detail over the past year, several challenges and risks became apparent that negatively impact the project's viability. To date, there has been a lack of interest by an institutional partner for the space allocated for a post-secondary institution in the South Block. As well, the complexity of the required legal agreements and business terms under the original site layout is a risk for the City as detailed in this report.

There are also financial concerns about the overall cost of the project. Specifically, the purchase of any land not currently owned by the City is more expensive than originally anticipated and does not increase the overall land value from an appraisal perspective, based on the specific development proposed for the property. Further to the additional land cost, the City would be responsible for the eviction of tenants, demolition of the existing buildings and completion of environmental remediation activities. Thus, it will cost the City significantly more to purchase the outstanding properties than can be expected to be recouped during the land sale of the entire parcel. Under section 106 of the Municipal Act, 2001, assisting directly or indirectly any commercial enterprise through the granting of bonuses for that purpose is forbidden. If the price that the City receives is not fair market value for the land it is selling and/or equivalent to what the City paid, there are bonusing concerns that arise and will create significant legal, financial and reputational risk for this project.

An alternative layout for the site was explored in an attempt to address the risks and challenges, and to find a path forward for development of the Baker District. The new alternative increases the value of the current land holdings, simplifies agreements between the City and Windmill and gives the City an independent asset. As well, the alternative site layout excludes the properties intended to still be acquired along Wyndham Street, which will mitigate significant capital expense. The stand-alone library in itself has several additional benefits aside from the financial impacts.

With the alternative site layout, the library moves from the north block building with a condominium on top to its own stand-alone building in the south block, located in the area that was originally earmarked for the institutional partner. Privately-owned residential towers would be located on the north and mid blocks, with commercial on the lower levels and flexibility to have institutional space in the

north block. This allows for the “highest and best use” of the land related to height restrictions, as only the full south block is directly in the view corridor and is limited in height of three to four floors. The “highest and best use” then drives the best economic outcomes for the development related to density, and property taxation revenue.

The site will still have two levels of underground parking under the entire footprint. The stand-alone library in the south block also allows the public parking component of the site to be placed directly under the library, creating effective use of space with minimal cost sharing and access agreements.

The outdoor urban space concept will still exist with the two outdoor “court” areas, and there is a potential opportunity for a green roof on the library with public access. The alternative option no longer provides the library with direct frontage onto Wyndham Street; however, connectivity is maintained through park space and pedestrian access to Wyndham Street.

Activation of the north part of Wyndham continues to be a major focus of the alternative option with large open public space, combined with retail and institutional ground floor frontage, all inviting active transportation through the whole Baker District.

A number of public engagement sessions have been held to solicit community and stakeholder feedback on the Baker District Redevelopment project. Specifically, the Urban Design Master Plan (UDMP) has been one of the main focal points of the public engagement process. Three key topic areas that emerged were parking, affordability and accessibility, and active transportation. While these themes are well reflected in the alternative site layout, additional feedback will be collected through the engagement process for updating the UDMP, pending approval of the alternative site layout.

### **Financial Implications**

A pivot to the alternative option from the original plan will result in overall cost avoidance of between \$17.6 and \$32.6 million, with the most probable estimate netting about \$25 million. Cost avoidance includes savings related to land acquisition and demolition, library construction, public parking construction, environmental remediation, as well as additional costs related to redesigning the library. This, combined with additional annual revenue from taxation and lower overall operating costs for the library and parking, make the alternative option significantly more financially viable.

As these cost pressures were identified through progressing pre-development activities, the concern about property tax levy increases and additional debt capacity in order to fund this \$17.6 to \$32.6 million was heightened. Over 20 years, an increase in this range equates to a 0.33% to 0.64% tax levy increase. The City also has no available debt capacity to absorb these pressures. This cost is in addition to the estimated \$3.5 million of net new operating costs for the public components, and \$19.7 million of currently unfunded library capital cost required

for the square footage deemed to be a service enhancement above that allowable under the Development Charges Act, 1997.

Land value has played a significant role in the determination of these costs and has resulted in the opinion that executing Council's current direction for Baker District has the potential to contravene the bonusing prohibition contained in section 106 of the Municipal Act, 2001. Land valuation is impacted by the site design and the view corridor, and the fair market value of the land on a site design basis was significantly lower than the escalating costs for the parcels that have not yet been acquired.

With all this in mind, staff believe the original design concept for the Baker District is not financially or legally feasible. The alternative site layout option can allow the Baker District to proceed, protecting the investment of resources for planning this development and helping to mitigate the financial concerns, while still achieving the overall development goals for the City.

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## **Report**

The Baker District Redevelopment project is a mixed use development, which includes a new central library, urban square, parking, and residential, institutional and commercial space. A number of public engagement sessions have been held to solicit community and stakeholder feedback on the development project. Specifically, the Urban Design Master Plan (UDMP) has been one of the main focal points of the public engagement process. The integration of the library and development of the schematic design has been completed. Parking is proposed to be arranged such that there are separately-owned portions of the underground parking space to simplify the long-term operation of the parking for the City and the residential units. Business terms to define the short-term and long-term roles and responsibilities for the City and Windmill Development Group Ltd. (Windmill) continue to be developed. Financial aspects of the development project are summarized in this report. Through the process of refining the project, there were logistical, design, economic, contractual and financial challenges discovered relating to the original development concept. As such, an alternative site layout has been considered in an effort to mitigate these constraints while still maintaining the overall development objectives.

This report describes the results of the public engagement sessions and predevelopment work for the original site layout, describes the challenges encountered and proposes a viable alternative to develop the Baker District in alignment with the Downtown Secondary Plan and the Official Plan.

## **Public Engagement**

Since November 2018, the City, the Guelph Public Library, Windmill and its consultant team have met with the public four times (three in person, one online following the outbreak of COVID-19). Each event was designed to reach the maximum number of people; afternoon and evening sessions were held for each in-person event, while the online engagement platform remained active for a month.

Importantly, the first three events also included an online survey so that members of the public who were unable to attend in person could still provide feedback. A summary of the feedback received at each event can be found in the following [Baker Engagement Summary Report](#).

The engagement events were designed to track with the progress of the project. The first event, held November 29, 2018, introduced the project to the public. Designed as an open house, the event provided members of the public, 270 attendees in total, with an opportunity to learn about the Baker District redevelopment journey—how we got here and where we are going—and how they can get involved, stay informed and have their say as the multi-year project progresses. Attendees were able to speak directly with staff and the developer and were invited to provide feedback about the project.

The second engagement event (two identical workshops), held on January 15, 2019, was designed to gather input from the public to inform the sustainability vision and goals for the project. The workshops were focused on site-wide sustainability, including the new central library, residential, commercial, and institutional uses, public parking, and the urban square.

The third in-person event, held on May 29, 2019, was designed to validate the design as it had evolved between January and May. One hundred and sixty-three members of the public attended the event. The open houses focused on the north block of the redevelopment, including preliminary design work on the new central library and the urban square. Participants were also shown preliminary sustainability strategies, which emerged from the feedback received during the January 2019 event. Attendees were asked to indicate whether or not the library, square, and sustainable strategies met their expectations.

The fourth and final engagement event, launched on June 11, 2020, was held online following the outbreak of COVID19. Open to the public for a period of four weeks, the electronic engagement provided detailed information about the final Urban Design Master Plan (UDMP), including a pre-recorded presentation delivered by members of the project team. Members of the public were able to provide feedback and questions by way of the [haveyoursay.guelph](#) engagement platform.

The feedback that was received from each event helped to shape the design of the library including the programming options and services that are to be offered, and the overall urban design of the Baker District including the outdoor urban square experience, active transportation throughout the site and the sustainability strategies.

## **Urban Design Master Plan**

The purpose of the Baker District Urban Design Master Plan (UDMP) is to set objectives and describe the proposed solutions pertaining to the urban design of the Baker District Redevelopment, in order for the urban design elements to be evaluated. The City of Guelph, through documents such as the Urban Design Action Plan and the City's Official Plan, has emphasized the importance of urban design

excellence. Excellence requires conscious and coordinated efforts on the part of the public and private sectors, and the UDMP sets out, in part, how the elements of the public and private realm will work together to create a coherent and functional redevelopment. The document is used to show design intent of the spaces and has varying levels of detail as the designs continuously evolve.

The UDMP for the Baker District Redevelopment has been one of the main focal points of the public engagement. The four engagement sessions each gathered feedback, which helped shape the UDMP along with the City of Guelph's Official Plan, Downtown Guelph Secondary Plan, Urban Design Manual and Downtown Streetscape Manual and Built Form Standards.

The UDMP for the original concept was completed following the online public engagement held in June 2020. Three topic areas that emerged were parking, affordability and accessibility, and active transportation. See the following link for the [Draft Baker District UDMP](#).

## **Original Design**

### **a) Library Design**

Located at the north end of the Baker District Redevelopment site, the new four storey Central Library leverages a number of assets and opportunities unique to this location. The library benefits from an urban square as a connection between Wyndham Street North and the library itself, affording an opportunity to define a new gateway to the northern part of downtown Guelph. Large, highly visible curvilinear forms reach out to meet Wyndham Street and the square to collectively define a new civic precinct and create an entry to the library itself.

The proposed development includes an 11-storey residential condominium tower above the library, which necessitates significant structural transfer beams to accommodate the required library and parking functions below the tower. Shared facilities agreements will be required to manage the interrelationships between the two ownerships. Refer to the Library concept design in the link below.

[Baker District library original design](#), October 5, 2020

### **b) Parking**

Parking is a key element in the Baker District Redevelopment. The plan identifies two levels of underground parking under the entire footprint of the site, with entrances on Baker Street and Chapel Lane. The underground parking is to be a combination of publicly-owned parking and privately-owned parking for the residential towers.

Although the number of parking spaces will need to be finalized pending site plan comments from the City Planning and Engineering departments, the original concept for the Baker District site is anticipated to have approximately 548 spaces.

Delineation of the parking areas would occur by level, with one level dedicated to public, City-owned parking and the other level to be owned by the private

developer. The City-owned level would be approximately 280 stalls and the privately-owned level would be approximately 278 stalls.

This arrangement of having separately-owned portions of the parking lot help to simplify the long-term operation and maintenance of the parking for the City and the residential units. The residential tower owners/operators would have to retain control over the residential permits and the changeover of permits. City staff would operate the City-owned portion of the garage including the issuing of permits and enforcement.

### **c) Business Terms**

Business terms and the associated legal agreements discussed to date are based on the concept of selling the entire parcel of land to Windmill. Under this arrangement, Windmill would construct all of the different components of the site. The City would buy back the finished library, urban square and portion of the underground parking once completed.

This arrangement requires multiple legal agreements due to the complexity of the north block building being a library on the first four floors and a condominium on the top 11 floors.

The list of agreements includes:

1. Agreement of Purchase and Sale (APS) of Land – to sell the entire parcel to Windmill. This is for Windmill to own the entire site for construction. The timing of this is also affected by the acquisition of remaining properties.
2. Agreement of Purchase and Sale (APS) of Land – for the City to purchase its components of the project upon completion. With the original design, this agreement is complex and includes a freehold strata agreement for the north block building with the library and through the whole site for one level of parking.
3. Master Development Agreement – to be in effect upon completion of the Pre-Development Management Agreement (PDMA).
4. Parking Agreement and Ownership of Parking – parking ownership to be split between the City and private development with shared access and egress.
5. Shared Facilities Agreement – north block building contains the library and condominium and requires a detailed shared facilities agreement for access, security, utilities and operational costs, easements, etc.
6. Construction Agreement – details for the construction of the public facilities including change order processes, construction guidelines, etc.

### **Challenges and Risks**

Several challenges and risks have become apparent as the project has advanced that negatively impact the project viability. Of greatest concerns are financial in nature and are detailed in the Financial Implications section of this report. However,



there are other challenges and risks with the project that have been discovered over the last year through the process that has been undertaken.

There has been a lack of interest by an institutional partner for the space allocated for a post-secondary institution. After extensive efforts, Windmill and the City have exhausted all options to find a post-secondary partner for the institutional building in the south block. There have been discussions with multiple universities and colleges throughout Ontario. Before the pandemic, there was little to no interest from these institutions without heavy subsidization for the cost of the land and building. This lack of interest has been compounded with the challenges facing educational institutions due to the COVID-19 pandemic as academic institutions move to offer the majority of their course offerings online.

Under section 106 of the Municipal Act, 2001, bonusing any commercial enterprise is forbidden. If the price that the City receives is not fair market value for the land it is selling and/or equivalent to what the City paid, there are bonusing concerns that arise and will create significant legal, financial and reputational risk for this project.

The complexity of the required legal agreements and business terms is a risk for the City. Challenges under the original arrangement include the following elements:

- A shared facilities agreement is complex considering library access, security protocols, shared utilities and spaces, long-term operation and maintenance agreements and establishment of easements
- Long-term implications of a freehold strata agreement for the north block building with the library limit future flexibility
- Construction timing of the library is tied to the construction of the north block residential tower, which requires units to be sold prior to being constructed
- Shared access agreements and strata agreements would also be required for the public parking.

All of this not only has legal and financial implications now; however, for the extended life of these building, the City would be bound by these agreements, minimizing flexibility and involving significant costs.

### **Alternative Option**

In an effort to address many of the challenges and risks outlined above, staff, in conjunction with Windmill, explored an alternative option for the site layout. In addition to the financial advantages of this option, there are also several additional benefits for the long-term viability of this development for the Guelph Public Library and the citizens of Guelph.

### **Alternative Site Layout**

The proposed alternative site layout excludes the properties yet to be acquired along Wyndham Street, which would mitigate significant capital expense and eliminate the section 106 bonusing concern. In the alternative layout, the library moves from the north block building with a condominium on top, to its own building

in the south block. The site would now feature a stand-alone library to be owned by the City and located in the area that was originally identified for the institutional partner. Privately-owned residential towers would be located on the north and mid blocks. The building on the north block would have a residential tower and commercial on the lower levels, with flexibility to have institutional space. The mid-block building would be a residential tower with some commercial/retail on the main street level. This allows for a higher and better use of the land related to height restrictions as only the south block is directly in the view corridor and is limited in height to three to four floors.

The site will still have two levels of underground parking under the entire footprint. The number of spaces will decrease based on the smaller footprint of the land assembly. Alternative solutions can be pursued to facilitate adequate stalls for both public and private parking. The stand-alone library in the south block also allows the public parking component of the site to be placed directly under the library creating effective use of space with minimal cost sharing and access agreements.

The outdoor urban space concept will still exist with the two outdoor “court” areas, and there is a potential opportunity for a green roof on the library with public access. The design team will work closely with the Planning Department to ensure it still achieves and possibly surpasses the goals of the Downtown Secondary Plan.

The east-west roadway, referred to as “Library Lane” would be removed. However, a laneway from Wyndham Street to connect to the site for pedestrians, cyclists and emergency vehicles is being considered. Staff recognize that the alternative option no longer facilitates the Library with frontage onto Wyndham Street. Although the frontage was relatively small with the original concept, the alternative concept is intended to still have connectivity through park space and pedestrian access to Wyndham Street. The new development including the urban space is expected to act as a catalyst to reactivate the north end of Wyndham Street.

The final design would be determined upon approval to proceed and would incorporate additional feedback through engagement processes for updating the UDMP.

The new layout will increase the value of the land, simplify agreements between the City and Windmill and give the City an independent asset. The stand-alone library in itself has several additional benefits aside from the financial impacts. For reference, see the link for [Alternative concept sketches](#).

### **a) Library Design Description,**

The proposed new location of the library at the southern end of the Baker District Redevelopment affords the library a unique and strong autonomous identity within the overall development. It provides an independent asset for the City which gives levels of flexibility for the life of the building that would not be possible when in a shared building with a residential condominium.

From an ownership standpoint, the fee simple title—not linked to a residential tower--offers a high degree of flexibility with respect to operations, special

configurations and future use potential. The free-standing three to four floor building configuration within a more rectangular footprint allows for more efficient space uses, providing more effective programming opportunities.

One concern is that this will remove the “main street” address of the library by not having it on Wyndham Street. By moving the library to the south end of the Baker District Redevelopment, the proposed design for a new Central Library presents an opportunity to animate the intersection of Quebec Street and Baker Street. The presence of a new facility of this scale will mean a significant amount of foot traffic to portions of the downtown that have previously not been considered as civic assets. Chapel Lane would adopt the character of a complete street, with a much heavier emphasis on pedestrian movement while functioning as an extension of the public realm. A strong pedestrian realm can link the new Wyndham Square through a landscaped mews to a new Library Square, which could be animated by library users as well as active retail frontage on the southern side of the South Block residential tower. The south-east corner of the proposed library would afford an opportunity for exposure to St. George’s Square from the upper floor levels while also using a linear grade level corridor to animate Chapel Lane. A fourth floor, accessible roof terrace oriented towards St. George’s Square could provide excellent opportunities for outdoor library programming while also affording scenic views across downtown Guelph.

Additionally, a stand-alone structure allows for flexibility during construction and phasing of the project. With the previous concept design, the construction of the library was tied to the condominium tower. As a simpler structure, the time to complete construction would be shorter and less costly than it would be with an 11-storey condominium atop the structure.

A design of the space would have to be completed upon approval of this alternative option. A preliminary investigation conducted by Windmill shows that there are potential financial savings in this stand-alone design concept. Given that there is no longer a condominium above, the alternative option does not have the same requirements for structural supports and slabs for the library and two floors of parking. There is also no shared spaces such as stairwells, elevator shafts, and loading docks, which could allow for the overall area of the library to be reduced to still fit the same program requirements. These changes to simplify the design will save \$5.1 million, reducing the overall cost from the previously estimated \$67.1 million to \$62.0 million for an 88,000 square foot (sq. ft.) facility.

Removal of the shared spaces also helps with security and reduces operating costs for the library over the long term. Additionally, the simplified design and rectangular floor plan may also allow for additional efficiencies related to current programming requirements and overall square footage required. Refer to the following link to the [conceptual illustrations of the proposed alternative library](#).

The funding of \$62 million for the new Central Library of 88,000 sq. ft. is driven by the size of the facility summarized as follows:

	Square feet	Cost	Funding source
Replacement of current library	40,000	\$28.2 million	Tax infrastructure renewal reserve fund, proceeds from sale of current facility
Growth of library for population to 2041	20,000	\$14.1 million	Development Charges, Tax growth reserve fund
Service enhancement beyond that being experienced by current population	28,000	\$19.7 million	Tax city building reserve fund

The average cost per square foot for this facility is approximately \$705.00, and includes appropriate contingencies and administration as well as furniture and equipment. It does not include library collection expansion.

The current library is 29,000 square feet and it was determined, in an earlier study, that 40,000 square feet would be required to replace that footprint including the accessibility standards in place today.

The portion of the facility that is deemed to be a service enhancement based upon the size and cost of the facility beyond that allowable to be funded from development charges as per the Development Charge Act, 1997 is \$19.7 million and is currently unfunded. A one-time increase to the property tax levy of 0.39%, or \$1 million annually, would be required over a 20-year period to fund this cost.

The increase in operating cost estimated for this facility, including the incremental infrastructure renewal requirement for the expanded size, is \$3.5 million; however, with the alternative design in a stand-alone facility, it is expected to be lower. The Guelph Public Library Board will need to prepare an updated cost projection and report back to Council, preferably in advance of the 2022 budget process.

[Baker District library alternative concept](#), October 5, 2020

**b) Parking**

This alternative layout would still feature two levels of underground parking under the entire site. The quantity of stalls would be decreased due to the decreased overall land footprint of the site. From preliminary review, it is estimated that there would be approximately 430 spaces for the entire site. A more detailed review upon approval is required to maximize the number of spaces.

With this alternative site layout concept, the City would own the two levels of underground parking that are under the library footprint in the south end. This would be approximately 170 parking stalls. The lot would be separated so the developer would own the two levels of underground parking under the two residential towers, which would be approximately 260 stalls. These numbers are

preliminary and would be finalized upon approval of the alternative option. The budget proposes the capital cost of public parking be reduced from \$21 million to \$13 million for the 170 underground spots. The number of stalls required for the residential towers would be determined through a parking study and appropriate planning processes.

The rationale for having the parking lot split by ownership is consistent with the original design—to optimize the operation of the parking lot between the two very different entities.

Staff are recommending that options for shared-parking be investigated for some of the privately-owned stalls to maximize and optimize the use of the underground parking space, while also considering the overall downtown public parking requirements that may be changed post-COVID-19.

The funding of the public parking will be maintained within the new enterprise funding model for Parking Services. This means that the capital or on-going operating cost is not funded by property taxes, but by the fees and rates charged to the users who use the parking stalls. Development charges were also a planned funding source for this parking structure.

Delaying the finalization of the parking arrangements until the site design is complete benefits the City as well because there are on-going changes with the legislation, and Parking Services will no longer be an eligible service under the Development Charge Act, 1997. This means that, in approximately two years' time, the City can no longer collect this revenue. A new alternative revenue source called the Community Benefit Charge can replace this lost revenue stream; however, the regulations were released just on September 18, 2020 and staff have not yet determined the full impact.

### **c) Business Terms**

By simplifying the overall site and having the library as a City-owned, stand-alone building at the south end of Baker District the legal agreements that were required with the original design will, in turn, be simplified. With this scenario, the purchase of the library would not require a complex strata agreement. The north block portion of the district could be severed and sold to Windmill. There would be no need for shared services agreements, and it makes the operational costs much simpler and easier to control.

The list of agreements proposed may include:

1. Agreement of Purchase and Sale (APS) of Land – simpler with this option because the City currently owns all the land. North block portion could be severed.
2. Agreement of Purchase and Sale (APS) of Land – the City buy back, significantly simpler with this alternative layout and may not be required.
3. Master Development Agreement
4. Parking Agreement and Ownership of Parking

## 5. Construction Agreement

The simplification of the agreements has short-term benefits, but there are also long-term gains, particularly for the library. As a stand-alone, independent asset, there would be flexibility to make any changes that might be required in the future without the complication of doing this work in agreement with a condominium.

The simplification makes both the City and Windmill respective owners of their own timelines and construction schedules and reduces complications with coordination.

### **d) Summary**

The alternative layout for the Baker District Redevelopment provides benefit for the City of Guelph, the Guelph Public Library, Windmill Development Group Ltd. And, most importantly, the citizens of Guelph. The Baker District will boost the quality of life downtown and provide economic revitalization to more than just the downtown core. This layout will achieve the overall development goals while being more financially viable. In addition, it will provide less complex agreements for the long term and will provide improved flexibility for the future.

### **Financial Implications**

The original and alternative site design approaches in terms of financial impacts is summarized as follows:

	Original design (in millions)	Alternative design (in millions)
Total estimated net land cost for the City including development planning and design, remediation and site servicing	\$16.2 to \$26.2	\$5.2 to \$10.2
88,000 square foot Central Library	\$67.1	\$62.0
Public Parking	\$21.0	\$13.0
Additional costs related to the redesign of the Alternative Option	\$0	\$1.5
Urban square and public space	\$2.6	\$2.6
Total estimated City capital cost of Baker District	\$106.9 to \$116.9	\$84.3 to \$89.3

The alternative option can achieve most of the existing goals of the Baker District with a potential cost avoidance of between \$17.6 million and \$32.6 million with the probable estimate of \$25 million in cost avoidance, which includes savings related to land purchases, library construction, public parking construction, environmental remediation, as well as additional costs related to redesigning the library. This,

combined with additional annual revenue from taxation and lower overall operating costs for the library and parking, make the alternative option significantly more financially viable.

As these cost pressures were identified through progressing pre-development activities, the concern for property tax levy increases and additional debt capacity in order to fund this \$17.6 to \$32.6 million was heightened. Over 20 years, an increase in this range equates to a 0.33% to 0.64% tax levy increase. The City also has no available debt capacity to absorb these pressures. This cost is in addition to the estimated \$3.5 million of net new operating costs for the public components, and \$19.7 million of currently unfunded library capital cost required for the square footage deemed to be a service enhancement above that allowable under the Development Charges Act, 1997.

The capital cost of the alternative design is fundable within the City's current base capital funding for infrastructure renewal, contaminated sites and growth except for library service enhancement component \$19.7 million. Staff are recommending a 0.39% levy increase in the 2021 budget for this reason. The operating cost of the public components will need to be refined based on the alternative design and other factors including the impact COVID-19 will have on service and program delivery. Staff are requesting the Guelph Public Library Board to have these estimates to Council in advance of the 2022 budget, when the phase-in of the budget is planned to begin.

### **Land Acquisition and Valuation**

Land value has played a significant role in the determination of these costs and has resulted in the opinion that executing Council's original direction for Baker District would contravene section 106 of the Municipal Act, 2001. Land valuation is impacted by the site design and the view corridor, and the fair market value of the land on a site design basis was significantly lower than the escalating costs for the parcels that have not yet been acquired.

The purchase of any land not currently owned by the City does not increase the overall Baker District land value as identified in a recent land appraisal completed based on the specific development proposed for the property. Further, staff are now certain that the cost of these parcels of land will not be achieved at the current budget and the City would be responsible for the eviction of tenants, demolition of the existing buildings and completion of environmental remediation activities of which costing was not previously known.

Thus, it will cost the City significantly more to purchase the outstanding properties than expected and, based upon the appraisal, the City will not be able to recoup this value during the land sale of the entire parcel. The addition of these lands to the existing property proposal also does not increase the value of the overall development.

This creates a challenge, given that the land sale required for the private development, which has the potential to contravene the Municipal Act, 2001, which prohibits "obvious undue advantages" to the developer.

Without an alternative solution, this Baker District project is at risk of not continuing. For this reason, staff have developed the alternative site plan option being proposed with financial benefits including:

- significantly reduce costs to the City for the land acquisition by eliminating the need for the Wyndham Street properties
- increase the overall land value by simplifying the development for the land sale to Windmill as a simplified design is less expensive to develop
- reduce the costs of the library by making it a simplified, stand-alone structure that no longer requires substantial structural supports and areas for shared services
- reduce the cost for underground parking due to a simplified, stand-alone parking structure under the library, which would result in a reduction in parking spaces
- Simplify and reduce ongoing operating costs as there will not have to be extensive shared service agreements for common elements related to a mixed library, residential, retail, public and private parking space

There were several items in the original site design that contributed to lower appraised land value, including the complexity of the site, and the combination of a library and condominium in the north block. These factors contributed to a lower value than if the residential and library buildings were separate. In the alternative option, staff recommend moving the library into its own stand-alone building, which will help increase the overall land value.

Another item was the area that was allocated in the south block for the post-secondary institutional building. Land values for institutional development are significantly less valuable than for residential or retail space.

The building on the north block will now have the opportunity for more residential and commercial spaces where the library was originally located, thus increasing the overall taxable assessed value of the development. This annual property taxation increase is estimated at \$100,000, which, over a 50-year period, equates to an additional \$5 million in taxation revenue.

In order to ensure the site is ready for construction, the City is responsible for site servicing, archeological and environmental remediation totaling \$14 million, as well as the construction of the urban public spaces of \$2.6 million for a total of \$16.6 million. Staff are recommending this budget for approval in order to allow the Baker District site to move forward.

## **Consultations**

Windmill Development Group Ltd.

Baker District Steering Committee

Guelph Public Library Board



Legal, Realty and Court Services

Business Development and Enterprise Services

### **Strategic Plan Alignment**

The Baker District Redevelopment Project aligns with the following Strategic Plan priorities:

#### **Powering Our Future**

This project leverages partnerships and is fostering downtown business innovation to support a thriving downtown Guelph. It is a collaborative partnership, which will help grow the downtown residential, business and institutional areas. The development is contributing to a sustainable, creative and smart local economy.

#### **Building Our Future**

The redevelopment of an existing parking lot into a multipurpose mix of residential, public and commercial space is a strategic investment in the downtown area. It is a response to Guelph's growing and changing social, economic and environmental needs. It will have a mix of housing types to address the growing concerns in the city and will be working with community partners to establish a safe neighborhood.

### **Departmental Approval**

John Regan, General Manager, Business Development and Enterprise

Tara Baker, General Manager, Finance / City Treasurer

Christopher C. Cooper, General Manager, Legal, Realty Court Services / City Solicitor

### **Report Author**

Stephanie Guy, Project Manager, Special Projects, Business Development and Enterprise

James Krauter, Deputy Treasurer/Manager Taxation and Revenue

### **This report was approved by:**

Antti Vilkkö, P.Eng., MBA

General Manager, Facilities and Energy Management

Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services

519-822-1260 extension 2490

antti.vilkkö@guelph.ca

### **This report was recommended by:**

Scott Stewart

Chief Administrative Officer

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

519-822-1260 extension 2221

scott.stewart@guelph.ca

Kealy Dedman, P.Eng., MPA  
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer  
Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services  
519-822-1260 extension 2248  
kealy.dedman@guelph.ca

Colleen Clack  
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer  
Public Services  
519-822-1260 extension 2588  
colleen.clack@guelph.ca

Trevor Lee  
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer  
Corporate Services  
519-822-1260 extension 2281  
trevor.lee@guelph.ca



## Committee of the Whole Baker District Redevelopment Project Update October 5, 2020





## Agenda

1. September 2019 Recap
2. Project Elements Update
3. Alternative Option
4. Recommendations
5. Conclusion



# September 16, 2019 Recap

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Summary of motions from council report IDE-2019-100 - Baker District Redevelopment – Update and Public Component Construction Costs:

- That the following public components be approved (estimated costs):
  - a) Site remediation, site servicing, and archaeological works - \$15 million.
  - b) Urban Square and streetscape - \$2.6 million.
  - c) Public parking - \$21 million
    - Direction for staff to report back on a strategy to address the financial impact through an updated Parking Master Plan Financial Model.
  - d) Public Library - maximum of \$67.1 million
    - inclusive of a capital funding strategy that requires an estimated 0.86% increase to the property tax levy.
- That staff with the Guelph Public Library and other partners to apply for funding from the Investment in Canada Infrastructure Program – Community, Culture and Recreation Stream (ICIP:CCRS)



# Project Elements Update

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- Public Engagement to date
- Urban Design Master Plan (UDMP)
- Library Schematic Design – Original Layout
- Parking
- Business Terms



# What We Discovered

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- A shared facilities agreement is complex considering Library access, security protocols, shared utilities and spaces, long term operation and maintenance agreements and establishment of easements
- Long-term implications of a freehold strata agreement of the north block building with the library, limit future flexibility
- Construction timing of the library is tied to the construction of the north block residential tower that requires units to be sold prior to being constructed
- Shared access agreements and strata agreements would also be required for the public parking.



# What We Discovered

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- Acquisition of additional property is significantly higher than anticipated and does not increase the overall property value of the Baker District.
- Potential bonusing issues with the land sale
- An institutional partner has not been secured for the south block building to date
- Overall project financial viability is a concern for the project moving forward





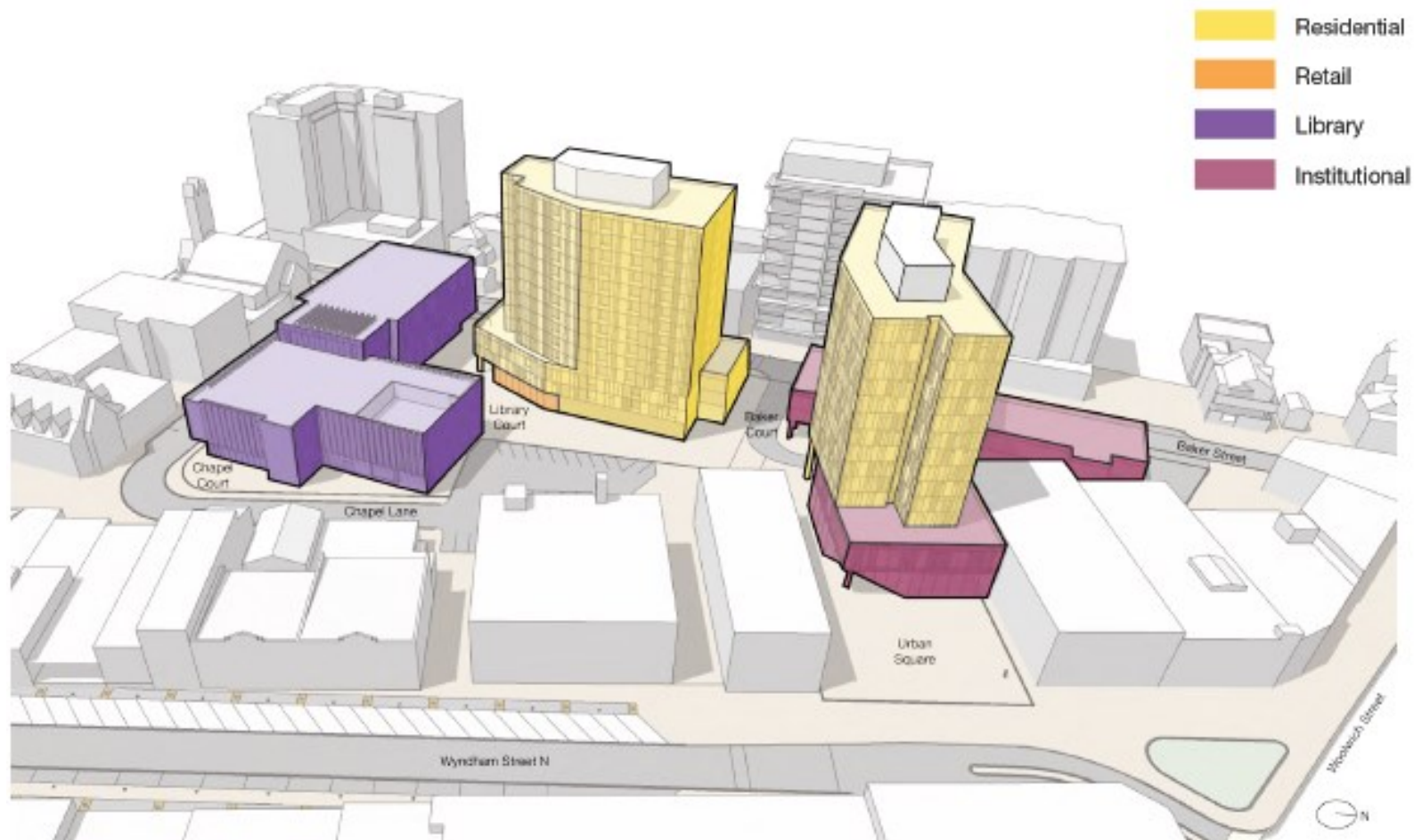
# Alternative Option

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- Move the library to the south block (where the institutional space was previously allocated)
- Move the institutional space to north block building to allow for more time to acquire tenant
- North building has flexibility for additional residential or retail space if no institutional tenant is found
- Library is an independent standalone building
- Two levels of underground parking remain

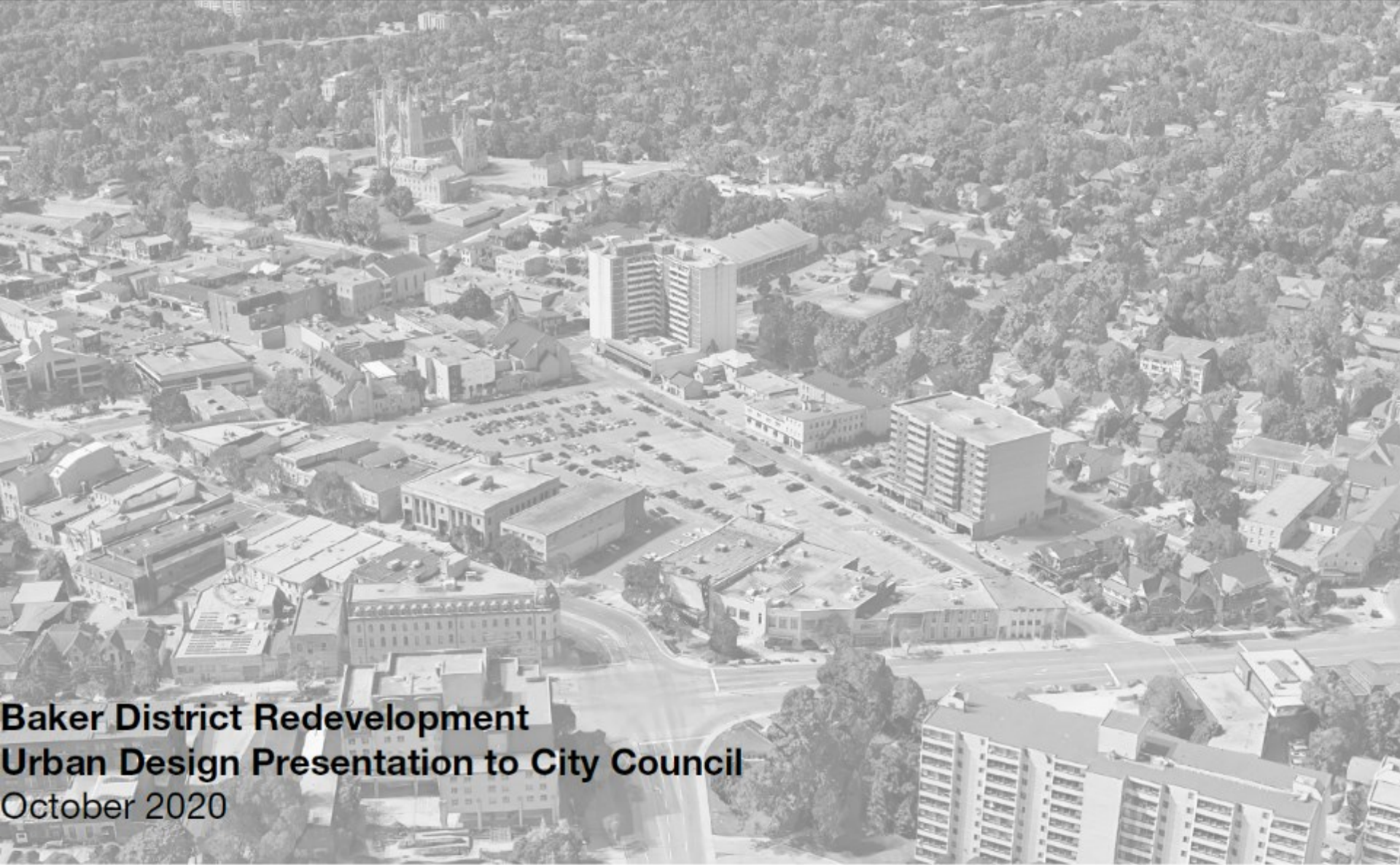


# Alternative Option





# Windmill



**Baker District Redevelopment  
Urban Design Presentation to City Council  
October 2020**



## Project Boundary

- Alternative project boundary reduces frontage on Wyndham Street North by half, triggering the following design responses:
  - Library Lane no longer feasible nor practical without removing Urban Square from Wyndham frontage
  - Library frontage on Wyndham no longer feasible or practical without removing Urban Square from Wyndham frontage
- Rethink of Baker District Redevelopment in light of alternative boundary led to the following changes:
  - The Library and the Institutional uses exchange locations so that the Library can be stand-alone facility with programming, financial and construction advantages
  - The institutional use is moved to within the northern podium where it can be more easily accommodated beneath the residential tower than the large open spans of the Library.
  - Wyndham Street frontage maintained as an Urban Square, with potential retail or institutional uses animating the space
  - Pedestrian porosity through the block maintained by a series of mews and open space connections



- Current UDMP Boundary  
Area: ±11,950sm  
(128,620sf)
- Alternative UDMP Boundary  
Area: ±10,700sm  
(115,160sf)

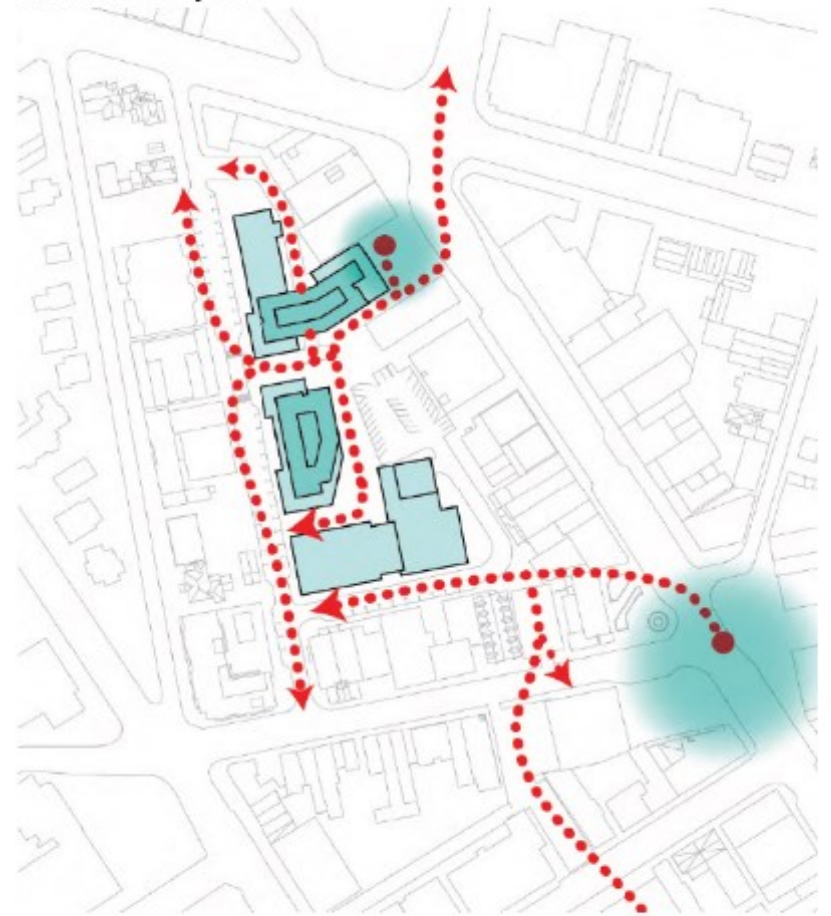
## Pedestrian Circulation and Porosity:

Pedestrian and cycling circulation priorities maintained + enhanced in the alternative layout

Original Layout



Alternative Layout



## Open Space Network:

Increased outdoor placemaking opportunities within alternative layout including Wyndham Square, Baker Court, Library Square and Chapel Court

Original Layout



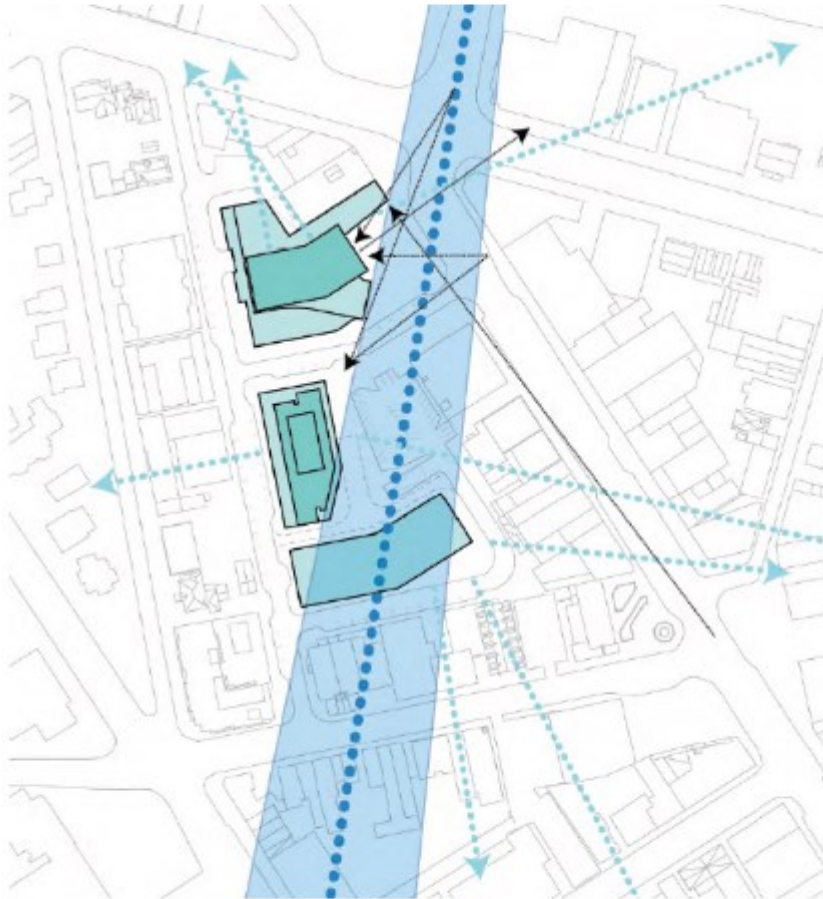
Alternative Layout



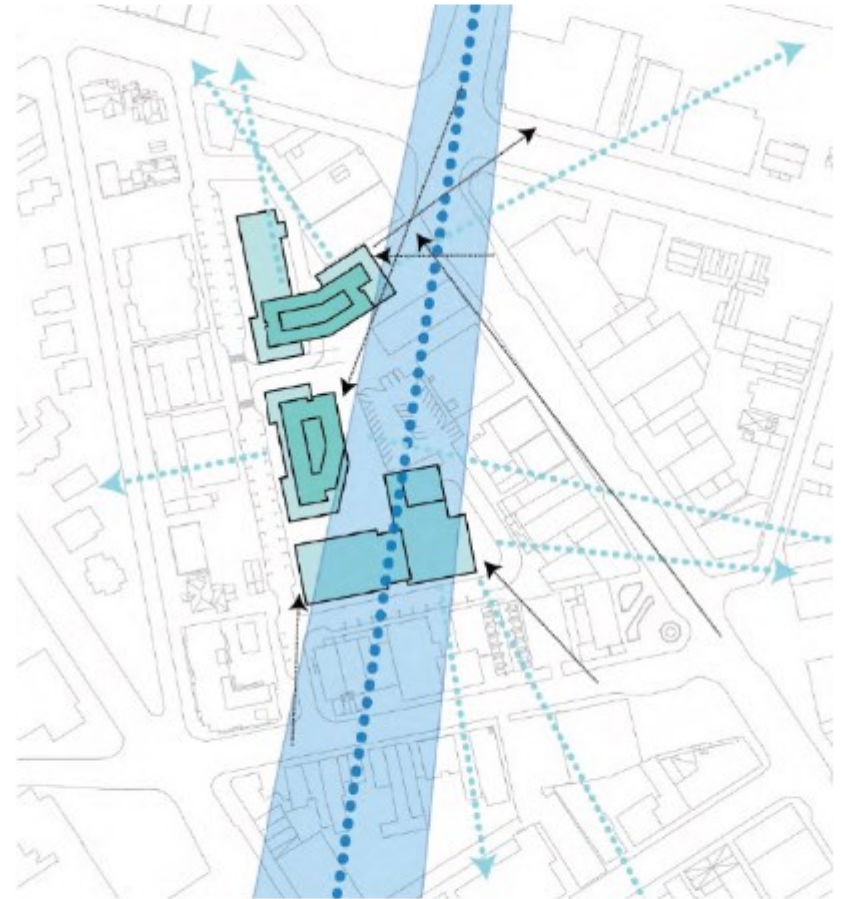
## Key Views and Vistas:

View corridor to Basilica of Our Lady maintained while Library provided direct Baker Street frontage, indirect St. George's Square frontage in the alternative layout

Original Layout



Alternative Layout





## Site Plan: Original Layout

- As per the submitted Urban Design Master Plan, the original layout anticipates three distinct buildings as part of the redevelopment, with two major open spaces (Urban Square and Baker Court), and one new publicly-accessible street (Library Lane) dividing the property into north and south blocks.
- The Landscape design anticipates a common language of pavers, seating and retaining walls, planting, lighting and street furnishings across the property.



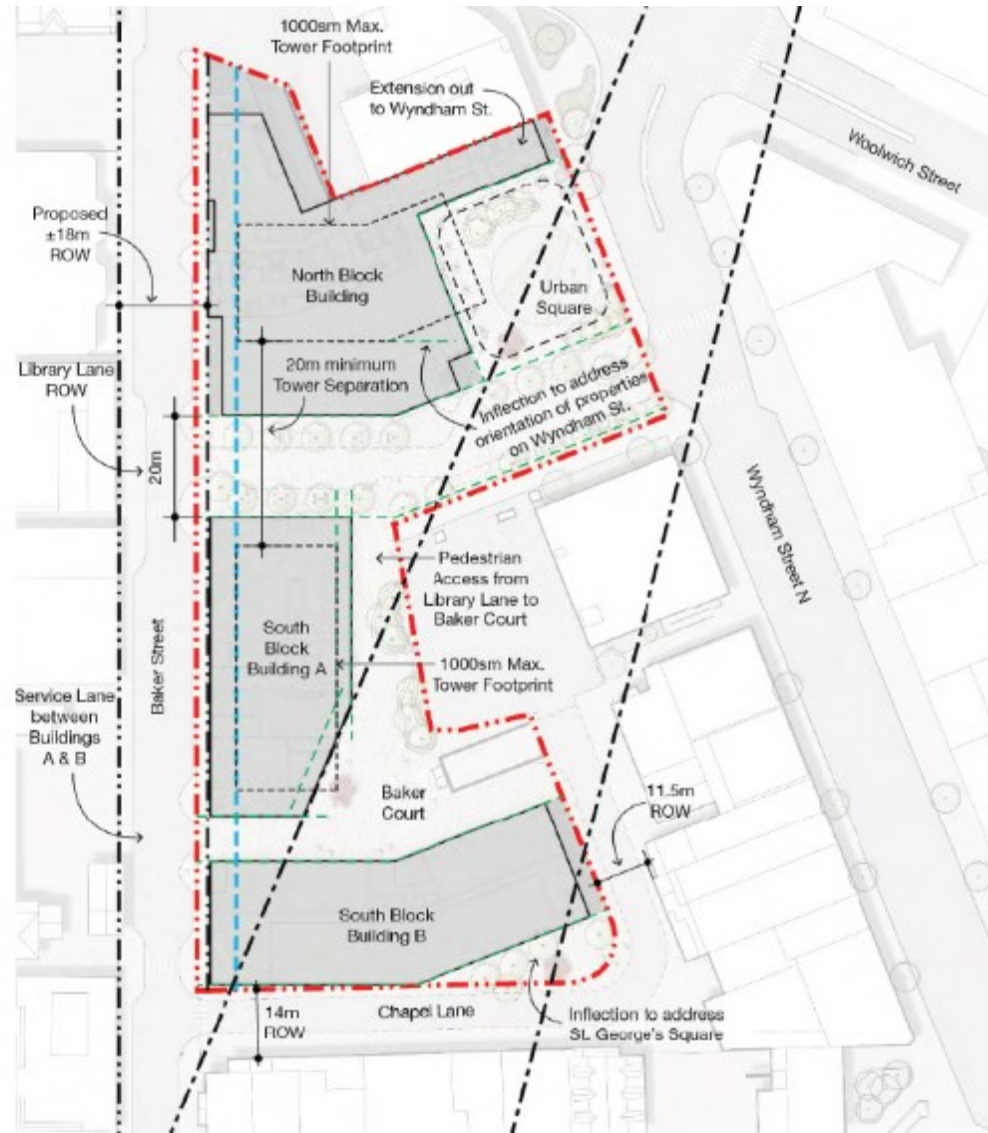
## Site Plan: Alternative Layout

- The alternative layout maintains many important elements of the original design, although reorganized to suit the new distribution of uses on the block.
- The site design features as a series of open spaces connected by pedestrian mews, allowing movement from north to south and Baker Street to Wyndham Street North, through a variety of routes
- A common ground-plane paving material is continued throughout the block in keeping with its “precinct” identity
- Seating elements and planting areas are distributed across the site supporting pedestrian comfort
- Screen walls (open/closed) are angled to break down the ownership boundary between the Baker District and the County property
- The north podium is planned to accommodate an institutional user; however, the footprint is flexible enough to accommodate residential uses in the event an institutional user does not materialize.
- The residential lobbies face one-another with a recessed collonade providing weather-protection



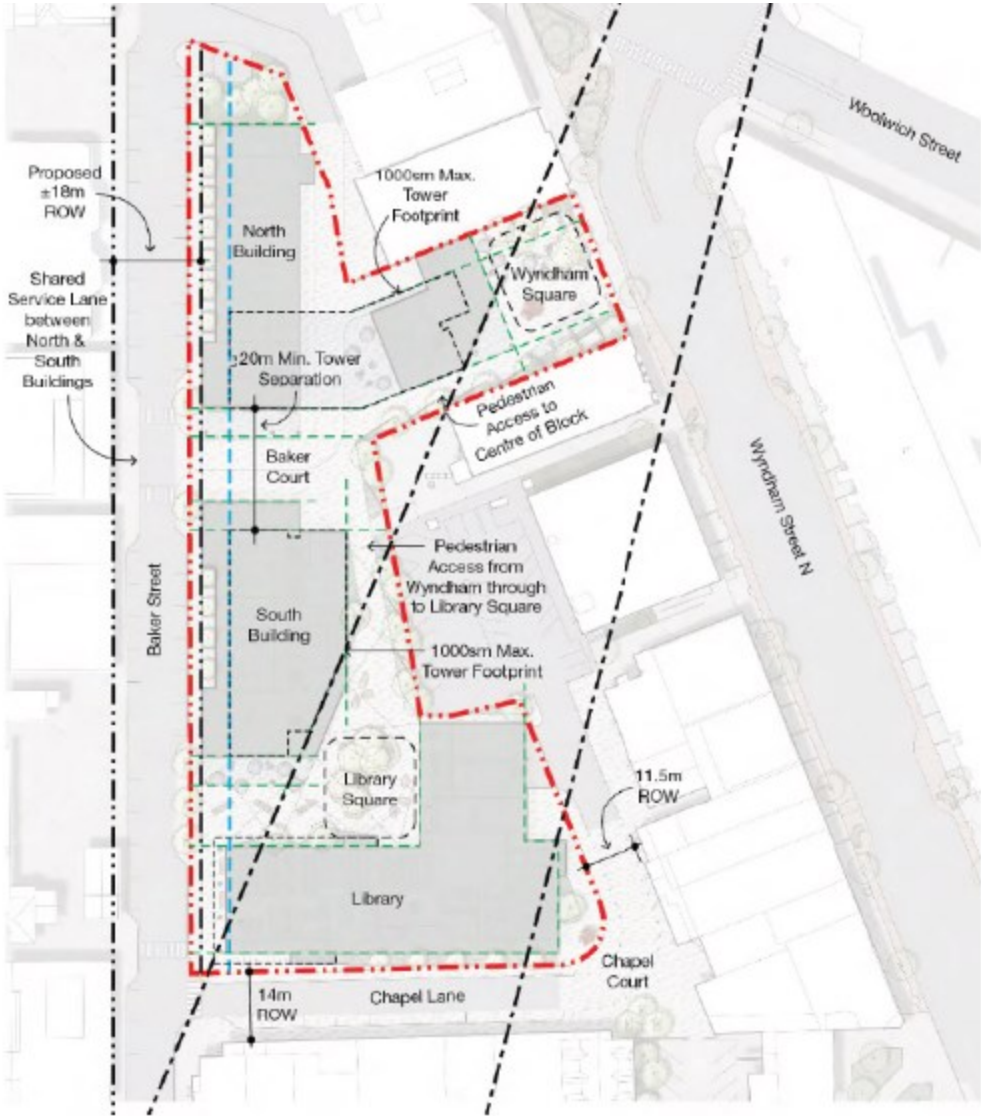
## Built Form Configuration: Original Layout

- The original layout includes two 15-storey buildings separated by Library Lane, each developed in a podium/tower form, with the north 4-storey podium accommodating the Library, and the south 1-storey podium accommodating retail uses.
- A stand-alone 3-storey institutional building at the southern end of the site flanks and frames Chapel Lane.



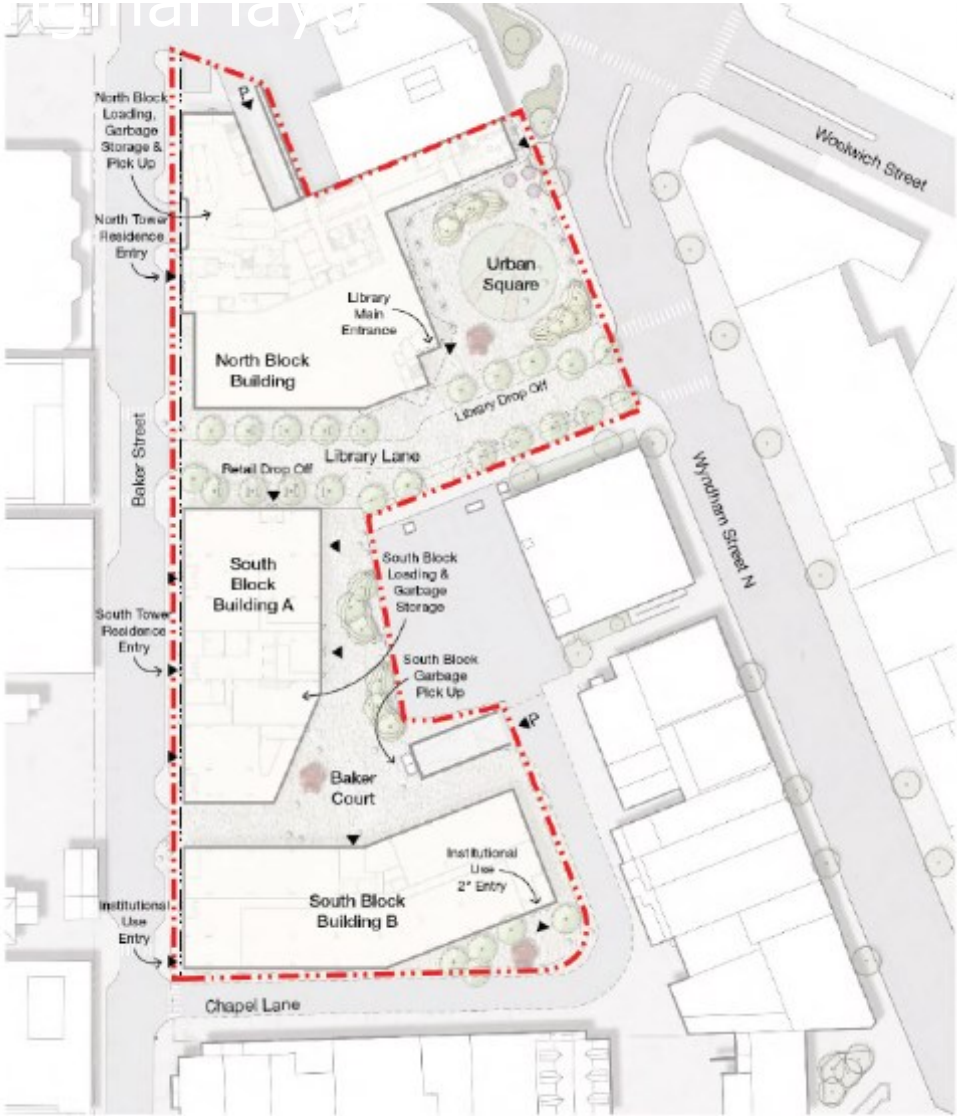
# Built Form Configuration: Alternative Layout

- The alternative layout again includes two 15-storey buildings in a podium/tower format, with both buildings now including more substantial 3-4 storey podiums accommodating institutional, retail and residential uses.
- The Library is accommodated within a stand-alone building at the southern end of the site, flanking and framing Chapel Lane.



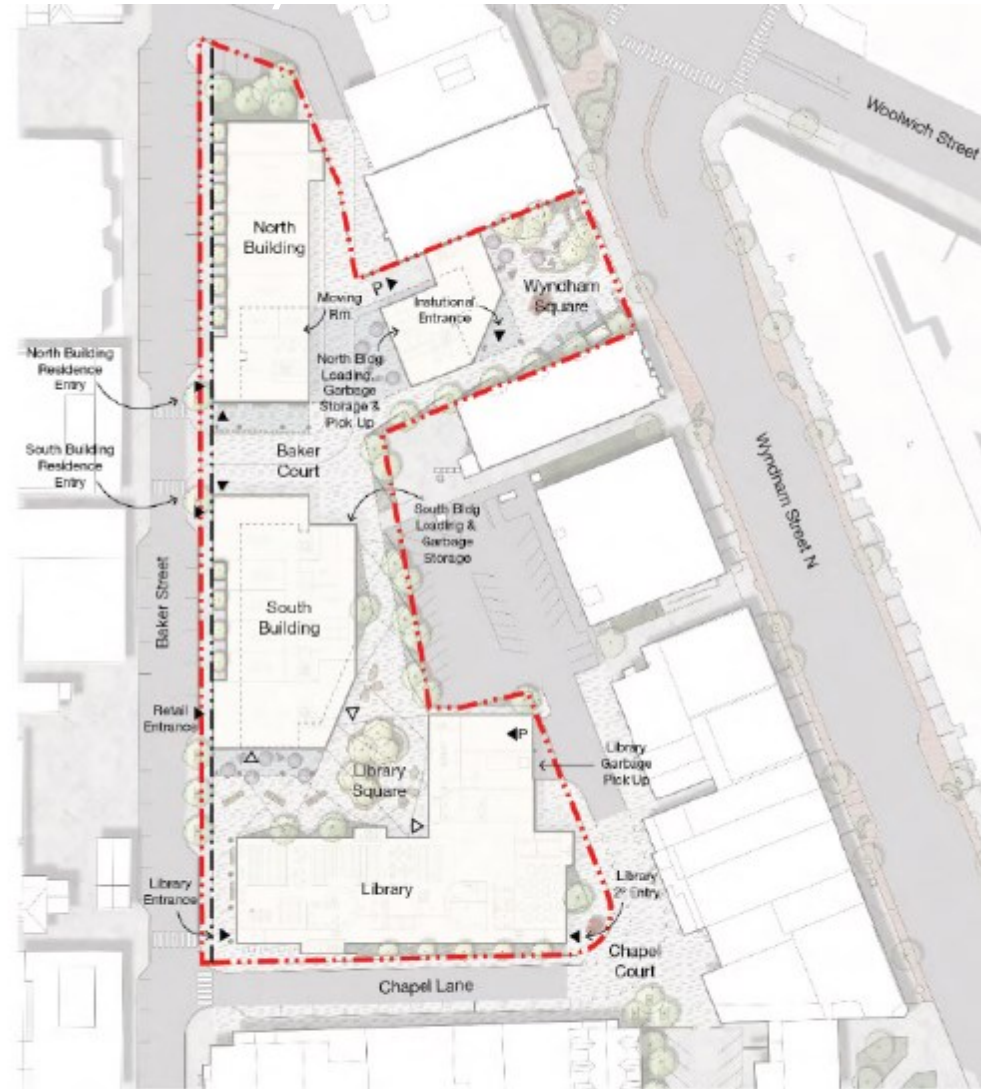
# Parking + Servicing: Original Layout

- Parking is currently organized predominantly within two underground parking levels access from both the north and south ends of the property. Two ramps provided access to all levels of parking - one behind the northern portion of the north block, and the second accessed from Chapel Lane.
- Some at-grade parking is provided along Library Lane and Baker Street, presumed to be converted to two-way traffic and improved as per the “flexible street” typology within the Downtown Streetscape Manual.
- Loading is provided to the north block via an internal loading area accessed from Baker Street, and for the southern block through a shared garbage and loading area contained within Building A and accessed via Baker Street through Baker Court.



## Parking + Servicing: Alternative Layout

- Parking access for the alternative layout is organized in a similar way to the previous design - two levels of underground parking accessed by two ramps located at opposite ends of the property.
- A dedicated Public parking area under the library and library court is proposed
- On-street parking is continued to be presumed along Baker Street.
- Instead of Library Lane, an internal parking and servicing roadway (designed as a curbless woonerf or shared street) encircles the northern block providing access to the northern parking ramp, garbage and servicing rooms for both residential buildings, as well as providing continued access to the adjacent rear properties on Wyndham Street.
- Loading for the Library is presumed to occur from Chapel Lane.



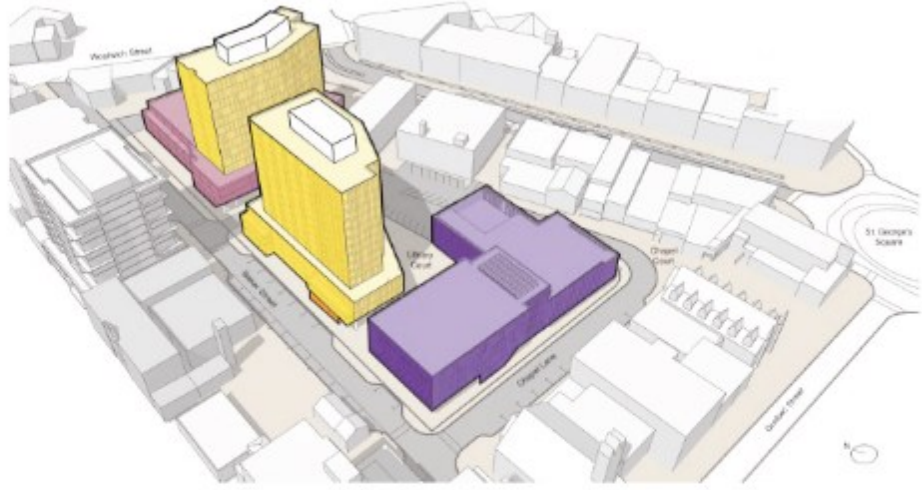
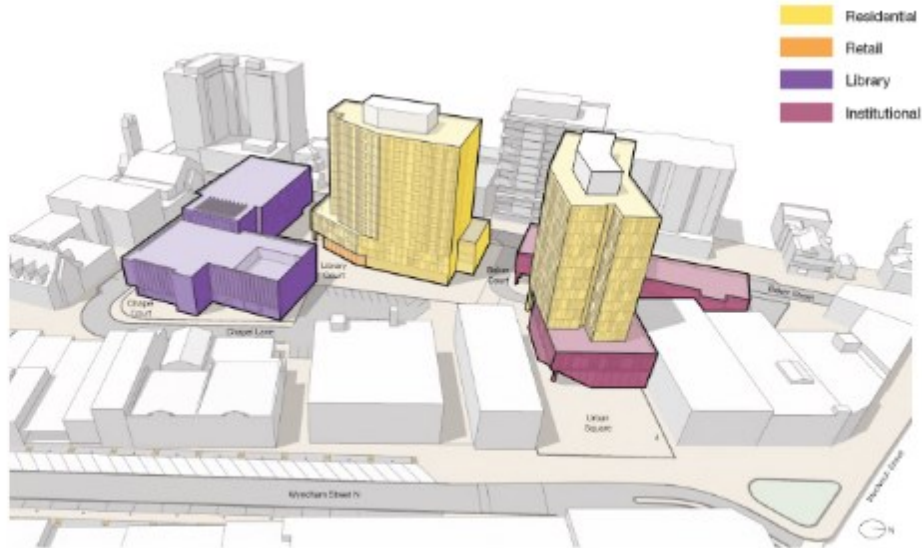
# Mix of Uses: Original Layout

- The original layout includes three buildings on the property with a mixture of uses, including a stand-alone institutional building at the southern-most end of the site.
- The Library is contained within the podium of the north block.
- Modest amounts of retail is provided within the base of Building A on the south block, flanking a central residential lobby.



## Mix of Uses: Alternative Layout

- The alternative layout simplifies the distribution of uses across the property, and takes advantage of the street frontages provided to position the most active and animating uses along those frontages.
- The North Building's podium and tower form is split in half at the lower levels by a service lane, allowing the portion of podium facing Wyndham Street North to have its own identity and more public/institutional use. The portion of podium facing Baker Street extends the institutional program from the Wyndam podium through to Baker Street or alternatively could be residential uses. A prominent residential lobby is positioned at the podium's southern end - facing the residential lobby of the south building.
- The South Building is primarily residential with retail at grade only on its southern edge, facing the Library. Ground floor uses are otherwise residential and setback from Baker Street, with a prominent residential lobby at the north end.
- The Library commands the southern end of the property in a stand-alone building, with entrances anticipated facing Baker Street, Chapel Lane, and Library Square.





## Perspective View: Wyndham Square



### Design Notes:

- A terraced garden and seating edges frame the space and GF retail / institutional use, stepping down to the street
- Informal small amphitheater potential
- Public art potential
- Walkway pergola with seating edge available to accommodate market stalls, stage cover
- Spatially open and inviting - a first stop along a series of news connections to residential lobbies and Library
- Building responds at grade, inviting pedestrian passage and frames view through the block

## Perspective View: Library Square looking North



### Design Notes:

- Includes a stone island with two ledges and high clustering trees so as to provide a gathering / outdoor classroom space
- Additional limestone boulder erratics are proposed to be provided for climbing, speakers
- Overhead catenary lighting potential between buildings - creates a more welcoming and intimate space
- Retail use at southern edge of residential podium animates Library Square with patio / sheltered seating

## Perspective View: Baker Street looking North



### Design Notes:

- Baker Street upgraded to vibrant, pedestrian-friendly curbside flexible street
- Expanded public realm including street tree planting interspersed with parking and drop-off spaces
- Library given prominent address visible from Quebec Street
- Retail and residential frontages further north along Baker Street animate the street

## Perspective View: Baker Street looking North-East



### Design Notes:

- Entry point to Library Square from Baker Street flanked by Library entrance to the south (right) and retail uses to the north (left)
- High-degree of transparency lends to welcoming entrance to Library Court

## Perspective View: Chapel Court looking North



### Design Notes:

- Chapel Court acknowledges informal pedestrian connections to St. George's Square
- Secondary entrance to Library supports activation of Chapel Lane - paving, planting and roadway design prioritize pedestrian safety
- Servicing access to Wyndham Street properties maintained
- Library parking access at end of Chapel Lane



# Alternative Option

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- Improves overall financial viability of the project
- Significant savings from not acquiring additional properties
- Overall land value to increase as project simplifies
- Increased tax revenue over time approx \$5M over 50 years
- Allows for additional time to secure an institutional partner
- Simplifies legal agreements between City and Windmill
- Still achieves the original development objectives



# Alternative Option

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- Standalone library building has advantages:
  - Stronger identity with an independent asset, provides future flexibility
  - Simplified legal agreements
  - Lower construction costs, no shared services/spaces which simplifies security needs
  - Better control of operating costs/procedures
- No roadway puts focus on more active transportation and pedestrians
- Longer term potential to create alternative connections Wyndham St., St. Georges Square or Quebec St.



# Financial Implications

Baker District Project - City Costs	Original Design (in millions)	Alternative Option (in millions)
<b>Total estimated net land cost for the project for the City</b>	<b>\$16.2 to \$26.2</b>	<b>\$5.2 to \$10.2</b>
Library Construction Costs, Alternative option allows for a more cost effective stand alone rectangular design of approx. 88,000 sq ft.	\$67.1	\$62.0
Public Parking - Alternative layout with approx. 170 spaces and additional shared parking options	\$21.0	\$13.0
Additional costs related to the redesign of the Alternative Option	\$0.0	\$1.5
Urban square and public space	\$2.6	\$2.6
<b>Total estimated City capital cost of the project</b>	<b>\$106.9 to \$116.9</b>	<b>\$84.3 to \$89.3</b>

- The alternative option can achieve most of the existing goals of the Baker District with a potential cost avoidance of between \$17.6 million and \$32.6 million with the probable estimate of \$25 million in cost avoidance. This combined with additional annual revenue from taxation and lower overall operating costs for the library and parking make the alternative option financially viable.





# Capital Costs – Central Library

For 88,000 sqft main library	Alternative Option (in millions)	Funding Source
Replacement 40k sqft	\$28.2	Tax Infrastructure
Growth 20k sqft		
- 90% Development Charges	\$12.7	Development Charges
- 10% Reduction - Tax Growth	\$1.4	Tax Growth
Service Increase 28k sqft	<u>\$19.7</u>	Tax City building
Total Building 88k sqft	\$62.0	

- Includes all soft costs and FF&E
- Current library is 29k sqft, will require additional 11k sqft to meet basic accessibility standards for a total replacement of 40k sq ft and 20k sqft additional for growth requirements
- City Building funding of \$19.7M will require an additional \$1M annually from taxation through the budget for 20 years
- Calculated at \$705 per sqft



# Recommendations

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1. That the recommendation to proceed with the detailed development design for the alternative option site layout for the Baker District Redevelopment Project as outlined in this report be approved.
2. That \$16.6 million for site servicing, environmental & archeological remediation and the outdoor public space for the Baker District be approved and reflected in the 2021 budget.



## Recommendations

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3. That the construction of an 88,000 square foot library in the south block as presented as the alternative option in Report 2020-148, dated October 5, 2020, be approved at a cost of \$62.0 million, and Council approve an increase of 0.39% impact to the tax levy starting in 2021 and remain in place for 20 years, in order to fund the \$19.7 million of the library capital cost that is an enhancement to the current service level beyond that allowable by the Development Charges Act, with construction to begin in 2022 subject to updated design and service delivery reconsiderations as a result of COVID-19.



# Recommendations

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4. That staff be directed to maximize the number of public parking spaces in the south block and pursue sharing agreements for parking in the north block and seek budget approval as part of the 2022 budget process.
5. That staff be directed to phase-in the estimated annual tax supported operating cost of the public components of the Baker District, totaling \$3.5 million, as part of the 2021-2024 operating budget and forecast.
6. That the Guelph Public Library Board report back to Council with a detailed operating budget projection by June 2021 based upon updated design and service delivery reconsiderations resulting from COVID-19.



# Recommendations

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7. That staff proceed with revising the Urban Design Master Plan (UDMP), share a virtual presentation with the community to outline the changes and collect final comments for Council's consideration.



# Conclusion



## **Baker District - Project Update - 2020-148**

### **General Correspondence**

\*\*\*

During this tough economic times which will have fall out for many years, it is NOT in the best interest of public spending to build a new library. I'm sure a less expensive option can be found. I trust my municipal council and mayor will act prudently and support the decision to cancel a new building plan for a public library.

Thank you,  
Rhonda McMahan

\*\*\*

Hello,

I reside in ward 1 and very thankful for Dan Gibson and Bob Bell for voting no to the library in 2019.

I would like to express I do not support the library and would like to see the project cancelled.

Thank you

Sandra Swietochowska Murray and Owen Murray

\*\*\*

Hi,

I am a tax payer living in Kortright Hills and I am AGAINST the \$67 million dollar library. Not only is the price absurd, but we have a ton of libraries and the two I visit are empty always. Even pre covid they were empty. Let's use what we already have.

Rebecca Adam

\*\*\*

To Whom this May Concern,

In regards to the most fiscally irresponsible project I have ever seen, I cannot express loudly enough that this project needs to be 100% axed.

I am a taxpayer, and absolutely disgusted that this kind of spending was ever approved by anyone on this Council, nevermind now in the recession and pandemic

mess we are in. Why would the federal or provincial government give any money towards this? Absolute waste of infrastructure and money!!! Shame on you!

I work in Community Health Care and the lack of affordable /supportive housing is appalling. How about you actually look after your constituents and put some money to that? Or fix the roads that are a disaster? Or something as simple as grey bin pickup WEEKLY ? I could go on.

Thank God I am in Ward one with a common sense Councillor. The nonsense about the fenced Dog parks and now this, you are quite the group. Seems pretty cliquely and crooked to me. I also hear someone in this group has a vested interest in this project occurring.

You should look at the petition and watch the emails come in, the City of Guelph is speaking. No 20 year tax levy for us, thanks.

Stephany Reeves

\*\*\*

To whom it may concern,

When we moved to Guelph seven years ago, the sky high taxes were our only hesitation but we decided to work our asses off in order to make ends meet. Now, after seven years living here, we are very close to needing to move away somewhere where the taxes are reasonable. Our taxes have shot up from \$6,000 to \$8,000 in seven years, for many different reasons including an MPAC re-assessment but mostly because of YOUR irresponsible spending. Absolutely unacceptable and disrespectful of our hard earned money!!! And they will inevitably keep increasing without even considering this ridiculous over-priced library! Sure, libraries are somewhat necessary in this day and age for a very small fraction of people but our libraries are already functioning as is. Seven of them! We have taken the time to check them out to see for ourselves what the problem is and why we desperately need this new library. It makes no sense because they seem to be functioning just fine...and they are mainly empty. For the majority, I cannot imagine why anyone would need to even step foot in a library. Our library is now the Internet, which the vast majority have access to and it is basically FREE information. I cannot even remember the last time that myself, my family, or any other friend or family that I know has needed to step into a library. You better believe that this ridiculously over-priced, unnecessary library will go way over budget because 100% of the time these projects ALWAYS do. You would be naive to hope otherwise. And the taxpayer is the one that pays for it every time.

Let me tell you, if we weren't following the politics of the city of Guelph before, we are certainly following very closely now and we are very much aware of the out-of-touch, irresponsible counselors that voted for the library and all of the other over-the-top spending at the city as well. The Covid pandemic should have caused a complete 180 but the irresponsible ones continue to push to spend our tax dollars and we will not let this go unnoticed.



Good luck at election time! Time to turf the old and get some responsible representatives voted in.

Dean and Ramune Beattie

\*\*\*

For starters, I would love to know what pros and cons were evaluated by my Ward 4 Councillors in the initial decision for you both to vote in favor of a \$67M budget for a new city library. Also, how much community engagement did you do **within our Ward 4 for you both to vote in favor** of this project and its expensive price tag? Other area municipalities have upgraded their libraries with a much less budget (e.g., City of Kitchener's \$40M library improvement project).

I am not arguing against the idea of upgrading our city library system, but I suspect that the city could have evaluated other options that would improve on what we have, and consider the economics of the project higher up on the evaluation criteria list, keeping in mind that tax payers are already getting stretched as it is.

And now with the current economic impacts due to COVID-19, increased pressure on city budgets and the taxpayer will be felt for years to come. With this in mind, the library project and its \$67M budget should be at least postponed indefinitely, until the city finances are better understood in the next 1-2 years. In addition, you should be considering alternative approaches for library upgrades, which can find a happy medium between better library infrastructure and the cost burden on the tax payers. \$67M is not what I would call a community "need", but rather a budget that way beyond "need" and into the "nice to have" category. Money can be better allocated to ensure that all "must-have/need" projects are considered when using \$67M. One example - the city still needs a new South end rec centre, and I don't even live in that Ward yet I see and realize the need for one.

You should take a look at the amount and content of the recent social media postings on this matter. My view on this is well supported by many taxpayers of our city.

Regards,  
Jason Rice  
Ward 4 Resident

\*\*\*

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

Please respect the plight of tax payers for years to come and revise the proposed library project. The scale is massive. Libraries are important and indeed the current library is old, but the scope of the proposed library is far beyond our financial limits.

We would be ignorant to not assume cost overruns will occur, this will be bigger than \$67 million. This is a lofty expectation to put on the shoulders of the tax payer in today's economic environment. Do not jeopardize our credit rating for a project larger than what we need. All levels of government will struggle with reduced revenues related to coronavirus, the money is drying up. Now is clearly not the time to proceed with this project. Use this time for planners to revise the size of this project.

Thank you, Judy MacEachern

\*\*\*

To Whom this May Concern,

I am writing to express my serious concern with the proposed \$67 million dollar library new build that was passed by Council.

As a Guelph citizen, homeowner and Guelph-based business employee, I spend the vast majority of my time in Guelph, supporting local businesses and services, and paying my property taxes. Our family is proud to be doing their part to be good upstanding citizens. We are excited to begin our family, in the City of Guelph.

Growing up in Milton, Ontario, my family would often visit the (now old) Milton Public Library, which was the lone library at that time. It was small and cozy, jammed packed with books, magazines, movies and other resources such as programs, experienced associates to assist with research and quiet areas for reading. My family would spend the day participating in reading and children programs, renting VHS movies and CDs, and as I got older, participating in resume building courses and utilizing the space for school work since we didn't have a family computer for a few years. I have many wonderful memories from our years in Milton. I share this to note that I am not blind to how vital libraries and their many services are to a community.

All our social services, like our libraries require adequate funding to provide their services and a safe space for all who need it - children programs, senior citizen support services, addictions and homelessness services, etc. What we need to remember is that those who contribute to paying for these services are already at their breaking point, and have been pushed even further due to COVID-19.

COVID-19 has thrown us all for a loop, to put it bluntly. Jobs and wages have been cut or lost all together. Businesses have closed or are operating at the bare minimum resulting in severe layoffs. Everyday expenses have increased with zero assistance from service providers, and most importantly, our property taxes and rent/mortgages are still to be paid, in full.

People are at risk of losing their homes and businesses, and this risk will be with us all for some time. Not to mention how already financially stressed our citizens are with the current cost of housing (both rentals and home ownership) with such limited supply, and how high property taxes are already.

Hard decisions have been made by Council during this pandemic; services cut or minimized, projects placed on the back burner, and moving quickly to implement new programs or initiatives to support our local businesses and services to get them through the pandemic. Your leadership does not go unnoticed. What seems to go unnoticed is how this decision is going to affect every single tax payer in Guelph.

Living in Guelph is a luxury. We have local businesses and services that welcome you like family, beautiful architecture and a rich history that we are proud of, organizations that support each other, and we believe we have a local government that cares about its People.

This is not the time for us to change. I urge you to review your decision in a new light, and take into account what we have all gone through and will continue to go through. Remember that what makes Guelph so great are the citizens of this city, who are from all walks of life. This is not the time to take on more debt. If we continue to increase property taxes in the City of Guelph and stay on this trajectory of making living in Guelph unobtainable and impossible, we are going to lose what Guelph is all about; its People.

Cancel this new build, or postpone for the time being. Focus on ensuring your citizens, local business owners and social services are managing. Let's get our City back on financial track.

Because frankly, we can't afford it.

Thank you for your consideration,

Chelsea Woolley

\*\*\*

To city clerks and council

To Mayor Guthrie (there are changes from original email)

I am writing about the library controversy. I moved to Guelph in 2004, from Timmins Ontario. In Timmins we had a severely unfit library and the city built a new one. However, in that case it was much less expensive even if adjusted for inflation. I donated \$100 to the construction effort. In Guelph, there seems to be an effort to build a monumental building. I have been told that you don't support the construction at this time. I agree that this is not the time to spend our way into massive debt. Does anyone really know when the COVID crisis will end? When the world health and safety situation is clear and the economy is on track, possibly with a city surplus, it would be advisable to build a modest working library. In my opinion, you are on the right side of the debate.

Thank you,

Peter Landriault

\*\*\*

Please reconsider this massive expense in light of Covid-19's impact on the global and local financial environment, the lack of matched government funding, and the absolutely immense and long term financial impact on the city of Guelph and it's taxpayers.

Smaller deployment of focused projects would be better use of library budget such as improved IT department, additional emergency shelter for our large homeless population, or a smaller renovation with an eye towards a future use of the facility when we have the ability to upgrade appropriately. Guelph's citizens can't afford this, and neither can our coffers.

A vote in favour of this build at this time is one out of touch with its already financially strapped taxpayers.

Sincerely, Colleen Sorensen