

**General Correspondence – Revised Agenda:
March 29th Council – 2021-2023 Seasonal Patio Program**

I am writing to express my support for the downtown pedestrian area. We enjoyed the lovely atmosphere last summer and it felt very progressive. We hope you will reconsider your decision.. Let's make downtown something every southern Ontario struggling downtown looks to for inspiration

Thank you
Deborha DalBo

I hope this finds you well. I have emailed before regarding the dining district and how it was a great experience last year. I felt as though it helped with the mental challenges that this pandemic has brought forth as well as helped with our local businesses.

When I think of Guelph, I am overwhelmed with how supportive this city is and community driven. Although the dining district only was one block of downtown, I believe it supported and contributed to more than just those core businesses in the blocked area.

I think this should be a yearly experience as our neighbour cities (Fergus, Elora, etc) have done.and hope you decide for this.

Thank you for your time,
Shauna Patmore

Good afternoon
I am writing to express my support of the pedestrian friendly (closed street) downtown dining district.
Please reconsider your decision to keep the streets open to traffic.
Thankyou
Karis Chester

I am sending this email to add my support to this initiative. My wife and I enjoyed walking and dining downtown several times last year and strongly believe that it should be reinstated. Thank you for your consideration.

Nick Pranger

My family and I are long-term residents of Guelph. We love Guelph's downtown. A vibrant, healthy downtown is vital to the health of a city. Guelph has some wonderful downtown restaurants, hair salons and retail businesses. We all know they have really struggled throughout Covid. Sadly, we are not "all in this together" because they are bearing a disproportionate share of the lockdown burden. Last year's dining district was really amazing for these businesses, as well as people who have always supported downtown businesses and new patrons alike. It helps bring us all together as Guelphites. Please please please approve

the Guelph dining district this year. It means the world to our downtown restaurants and also the retail businesses that benefit from having more people downtown. Anyone who wants to drive downtown is not significantly inconvenienced and the benefits far outweigh any minor inconvenience to anyone who has to park their car a block away.

Thank you!
Regards, Hilary Coates

I know you are having a council meeting coming up and I just want to say that the dining district downtown has brought a lot of community, economic prosperity to small businesses and a resemblance of "normal life" for those that have been struggling since the pandemic in March 2020. Assuming appropriate safety standards are met and enforced it is simply a no-brainer to have extended patio seating for summer/fall 2021 again this year.

I strongly believe that the Dining District has made Guelph a better city and elevated our city's energy which we all need now more than ever. Listen to the voice of your citizens!

Thanks,
Phil Greenway

Please consider keeping this area open throughout the summer! It's been such a long winter and Guelph residents need a place to go and somewhat socialize safely. Not to mention the state of the downtown Guelph economy.

Guelph Dining District via Change.org <change@e.change.org>
Subject: Consider Sending an Email to clerks@guelph.ca

Guelph Dining District shared an update on *Save Downtown Guelph's Car-Free Pedestrian Zone* Check it out and leave a comment:

PETITION UPDATE

Consider Sending an Email to clerks@guelph.ca

Hi all,

We've just passed 6,280 signatures on our petition! Thank you so much for your support! Guelph City Councillors will be voting on Monday March 29th to ratify a decision to pull back the downtown pedestrian zone experienced in 2020; restricting patios to parking stalls and opening the street to vehicular traffic.

We hope these signatures and comments will be enough to persuade council to...

[Read full update](#)

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You signed Guelph Dining District's petition, "Save Downtown Guelph's Car-Free

Thank you for your consideration.
Michelle Irvine

I'm writing to you today in support of the downtown pedestrian zone.

It is rare that a city has the opportunity to create a pedestrian zone in their downtown core. Guelph currently has that option, and it would be a mistake to pass on a piece of infrastructure that creates and sustains community, local business development, culture, and more.

A pedestrian zone downtown core is an investment in the future of Guelph. The benefits of allowing traffic are minimal. The benefits of embracing business and community, and creating a space for these things to thrive, massively outweighs the minor convenience of making the downtown core a traffic through-fare.

I am a born and raised Guelphite who has seen massive change since my youth here. Guelph has embraced numerous projects which have helped create community, culture, and business, all for the better. This is yet another opportunity to better Guelph, and I urge you to take it.

Regards
Cameron Main

Huge mistake if you don't expand on what was done last year!! Close the downtown streets for the duration of the dining district. It's what the majority wants!! Other cities are following our lead from last year...listen to what the residents in your ward want for once!!!

Stephanie McCrone

Mayor Guthrie and Councillors MacKinnon and O'Rourke

My wife and I are residents in Ward 6. I wanted to write to express my support for your reconsideration of the Downtown Dining District. I gather you will be voting on this matter at an upcoming meeting.

My wife and I retired a couple of years ago. We decided to move back to Guelph, where we had lived for a number of years over 20 years ago. Both of our kids were born here and we have many fond memories of walking around the downtown to visit the (then) many bookstores, cafes, toy stores etc. We even took our toddlers to Storm games during the Bertuzzi, O'Neill era! The love of hockey and the love of the City was instilled into our kids at a very young age.

Last Spring, when we moved back to Guelph, we went back downtown and were saddened to see so many stores closed, both temporarily due to Covid, and permanently, for a variety of reasons that I am sure are varied and diverse. However, upon implementation of the Guelph's Downtown Dining District pilot

program, it appeared to breathe a little life into at least some of the downtown. My wife and I visited the area several times, as did our friends. My son, now 23, even got a part-time job for the summer and fall in one of those restaurants that benefited from the closure of Wyndham and Macdonnell Streets.

We talked a lot about how portions of the downtown could even potentially go 'car free' - for example along the length of Wyndham, which could give a legitimate reason for businesses to reopen and reinvest in the downtown retail environment. We reflected on our visits to other cities where pedestrian zones have been created successfully, often WITH transit, for the betterment of all. I reflected further on this today while observing traffic movement along Wyndham. The vast majority of personal vehicles were not stopping downtown or frequenting the businesses that were open. Instead, the great majority were using Wyndham as a means to go from A - B (e.g. from Eramosa to Wellington) and doing so at a fairly rapid pace as well!

My point here is that I think Guelph has a fantastic opportunity to do something truly special. Our surrounding street network is circuitous and convenient and can easily manage the vehicular traffic coming to and through the downtown. We have many surface and deck parking lots that are a few steps to downtown businesses. City busses, maintenance vehicles and delivery vehicles CAN coexist with pedestrians, diners cyclists and diners in a 'car free' zone along the length of Wyndham.

I would encourage you to use the success of the dining district pilot to go even bigger this year, but different. Encourage staff to think 'out of the box' on this one. Pilot programs can be expanded upon and tried and massaged. Let's breathe a little more life into the downtown rather than putting shackles on businesses.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

John Spencer

I am writing to voice my support for the City of Guelph to reconsider their position with regard to the downtown Dining District.

Frankly, downtown Guelph has suffered tremendous loss of business in the downtown core due to Covid restrictions as can be seen as you walk around. Boarded up windows, empty storefronts & a loss of vibrancy.

This vibrancy & renewed energy was seen & was evident, however, last year when you made the bold choice of pursuing & supporting the downtown restaurants with this initiative. As a result, many neighbouring communities have elected to follow suit while sadly, Guelph who originally lead the way, is now retreating.

All businesses in our city require assistance at this time. I urge you to reconsider & help our downtown be not only sustainable but to thrive in spite of our circumstances.

Thank you for your consideration.

Julie McCann

Councillors and City Staff

There is no denying the huge success of our car free pedestrianized Dining District and expanded patio space areas last year. This initiative-but especially the Dining District- brought more people downtown on a regular basis than I have ever witnessed .But more important it created a vibe with a more enjoyable and safe space in our downtown core for walking, biking, dining and shopping. One of my favourite photos of the Dining District is one of kids riding their scooters, while their parents enjoyed a meal one warm late September evening. Another is of a group of cyclists who biked all the way from Mississauga and stopped to recharge at a restaurant .The tourism and economic development potential is huge with GO transit options within eyesight.

The customer and public support for the dining district is overwhelmingly in support of its return and there can be no denying the first goal of any downtown is first, to actually get people to visit and explore downtown. I heard many stories of visits from people in Guelph and beyond who had never been downtown before.

It is ironic that Covid19 gave us the opportunity to test something many of us dreamed of happening now and not in the distant future

So why is there resistance to continue this success - at least on weekends ?Why are we so afraid of restricting one small area of our downtown to pedestrians only ?Can we not have just one space to safely enjoy a meal or drink and perhaps enjoy some musical entertainment, without the danger , noise ,fumes and distraction of vehicles?

Our downtown has all the elements needed for success of a pedestrian only area. We have close -by ample parking garages and surface parking, and roads around the perimeter of the core as well as local streets for access to businesses. If you are using the downtown to get through the downtown you are most likely not stopping and not shopping.

A recent Opinion article in the Mercury compares us to Kalamazoo, a 1958 example of a failed pedestrian only area. However the writer fails to inform us of the reasons for its failure. Besides the fact it was 1958 when the car was king - there was a huge movement into the suburbs and consequently downtowns were failing. However a quick Google search reveals the real reason: the original plan included ring roads and lots of peripheral parking but in the end only the pedestrian area was built!

We have all the elements needed for success in our downtown area. Times have changed and there is now a huge movement around the world for more people friendly areas. We need to embrace this change.

We can also easily turn most of the rest of our downtown core into a much safer and enjoyable destination for all users by lowering speed limits drastically, and this along with elements of the Secondary Plan including reducing Wyndham and Macdonell to two narrower lanes from four, will quiet our streets by design.

The proposed 3 year Temporary Patio Program is still a pilot project and as time goes on we can easily work to solve any issues that arise and adapt. The people have spoken overwhelmingly in support of continuation of the dining district and more pedestrianization of our downtown and is key to the long term goals of our Community Plan and our pathway to net carbon zero by 2050.

The customer is always right?

Mike Darmon

GCAT (Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation) and a Director of OEG (Our Energy Guelph

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Brandon Rennie, I'm the owner of GIN MILL Guelph, and I would like to be included as a delegate for the Monday council meeting regarding the crucial need for quick movement on the issue of patios downtown.

I am urging council to consider moving up the date for at least non-roadway, previously approved temporary patio space. The restaurant industry has been devastated by this pandemic and we need any help we can get in order to get our employees back to work and keep the downtown viable and vibrant.

My business is surrounded by vacant storefronts and we may count ourselves among them before long without council's push to expedite the process of allowing our diners to enjoy our fare on our patio.

We were allotted a ten seat patio last summer and, although it paled in comparison to the space designated for the 'Dining District', it was enough to keep us in business, if barely. A May 1st rollout of the temporary patio program is a misstep as we've already seen numerous days where we would have been able to maximize our sales by putting out our tables. Instead we're forced to watch our eager guests pass by our establishment and instead dine elsewhere. This is a plea to allow non-roadway, previously approved patio space to be put out immediately. I cannot stress the urgency of this motion enough. We've sacrificed so much in the interest of keeping this community safe, all that we ask is the ability to get back to work safely and soon.

Thank you,
Brandon Rennie

Good morning! I wanted to add my name to the list to ensure that we have the dining district open. I felt that last year was a huge success and that there are many things that can be improved upon. The atmosphere was also wonderful! The businesses need our support and this is an easy way to provide it. It should be in my opinion, not just re-enacted but expanded to include more businesses. Thank you for your time!

Regards,
Morgan James Adams
