

Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council,

I am here today, speaking not only on behalf of myself, but on behalf of the hundreds of youth between the ages of 2 months and 18 years old that I have worked with over the past half a decade in this city. The decision that lays before you this evening is not simply a matter of logistical planning but one of generational well being. Tonight, you will decide what kind of city these kids will grow up in. Tonight you will be leading by example in demonstrating whether or not the adults with access to power in their world will make decisions based on what's right, or what is easy.

I fully acknowledge that for you, this decision is not straightforward and is fraught with political nuance. However, I would like for us to centralize our commonly held priorities. That being, preserving our heritage, prioritizing the mental and physical health of citizens, maintaining publically accessible greenspaces, and honouring the voice and the values of this community. These are not meaningless platitudes but precious pieces of our collective well-being as citizens. Pieces that you, our elected representatives, are entrusted to protect.

These community values are strongly reflected in our award winning GID secondary plan, which is jeopardized by a Part 4 Heritage Designation for the OR lands alone. Preserving the integrity of the GID, means preserving our autonomy in the decision making about the kind of development that we allow in our city. I cannot fathom a reason for us to willingly forfeit our only opportunity to ensure that whatever is built on the OR lands is in alignment with the brilliant vision of the GID. A part 4 heritage designation alone gives all the power to a future unknown developer, whom I can almost guarantee will not live in Guelph, and will not care about what we want. And what do we want? I'm glad you asked. Plain and simple, we want you to adhere to the Guelph Heritage Committee's recommendation to designate the OR Lands with both a Part 4 and a Part 5 Heritage Designation. We know the lands will be sold. We know the lands will be built on. What we don't know is whether or not we will continue to have a say in what the development of those lands will look like. That is up to you.

Designating the OR lands with a Part 5 heritage designation requires the re-opening and reprioritizing of the previously established Heritage District Plan for Ward West. A plan, I might add, that was not endorsed by a single member of the public or the Guelph Heritage Committee. Ward West, which is actually where I live, is not at risk of being sold. It does not contain a precious ecosystem. And it not currently being used by thousands of people on a weekly basis for the promotion of health and much needed outdoor recreation. Ward West, is NOT our priority [pause]. By the time this meeting is over, I need, at minimum, nine of you to champion the voice of the people and re-prioritize the OR over Ward West. I need you to bravely look the stack of paperwork we asking you to complete, and say this is what the people want and I am here to serve the people.

I spent the last three weeks canvassing up and down the entranceway of that land, chatting with every single person who passed me by about what we are at risk of losing. I talked to folks who have been coming there every day for the past five years. I talked to people who used to work at the gate house. To people who have childhood memories of watching the inmates build clythe creek. I talked to people

who drove from out of town just to visit the lands. I talked to folks visiting for the very first time, who simply saw a line of cars parked along the side of York Road and stopped to see what all the fuss was about. And all of us here, taking time out of our day in the middle of a pandemic to delegate, is a testament to what all that fuss is truly about.

I want to believe in the democratic process. I want to believe in our political system. I want to believe that my voice matters. With hope and optimism, I offer you my support in deciding to take the longer road. I support you in re-prioritizing the will of the community. I support you in using my tax contributions to properly and securely preserve our heritage landscapes for future generations. And I support you in being role models to the children I work with by demonstrating here tonight, that integrity is more important than convenience; and that when they grow up and choose to take a stand for something they believe in, that their voices will be heard by the adults with the power to listen.

Brooke Fry