

# Baker District 2007-2021

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Source: <https://guelph.ca/business/downtown-business/bakerdistrict/>

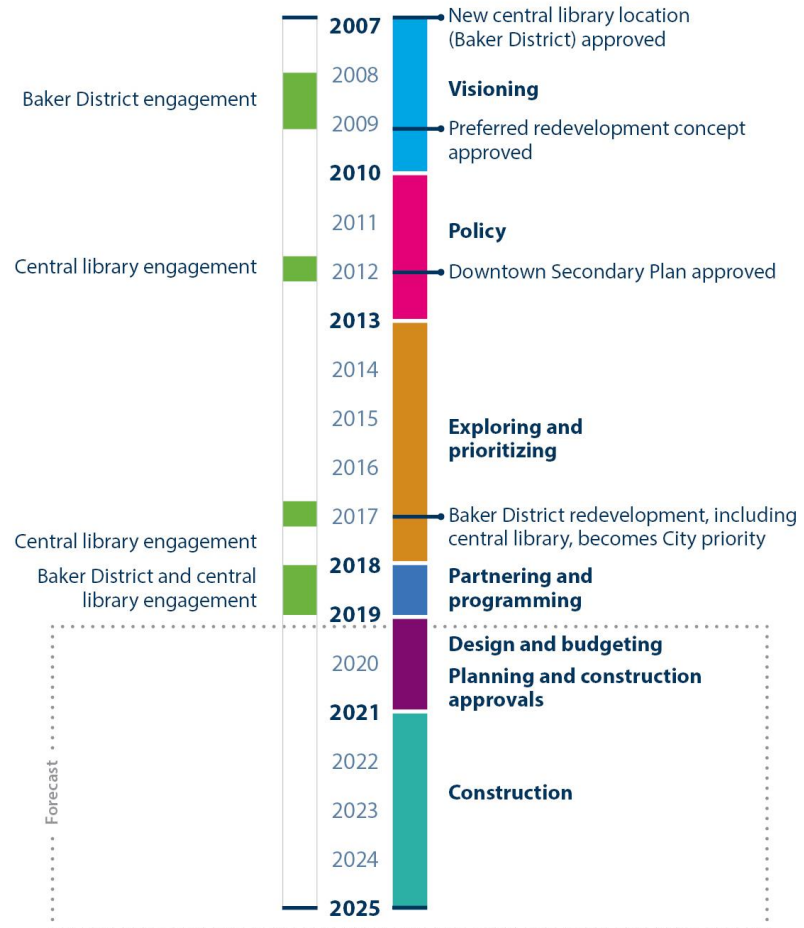
## Baker Street Development Rationale



Remember this? (Live Work Learn  
Plan Report 2013)

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# Baker District Journey



- **Visioning (2007–2010)**
- 2007 – New central library location approved
- 2008/2009 – Baker District engagement
- 2009 – Preferred redevelopment concept approved
- **Policy (2010–2013)**
- 2012 – Downtown Secondary Plan approved
- 2012 – Central library engagement
- 2012 – Library Functional Plan approved
- **Exploring and prioritizing (2013–2018)**
- 2017 – Central library engagement
- 2017 – Library Functional Plan updated/Library Business Case approved
- 2017 – Baker District redevelopment becomes City priority
- **Forecasted timeline**
- Partnering and programming (2018–2019)
  - Baker District and central library engagement
- Design and budgeting (2019–2021)
  - Planning and construction approvals
- Construction (2021–2025)

# The City's website lists 30 different reports and documents related to the project

- [Q3 2020 project update](#), October 2020
- [Public Meeting #4 engagement summary](#), September 2020
- [Urban Design Master Plan \(draft\)](#), October 5, 2020
- [Alternative concept sketches](#), October 5, 2020
- [Baker library original design](#), October 5, 2020
- [Baker library alternative concept](#), October 5, 2020
- [Q2 2020 project update](#), July 2020
- [Baker District Urban Design Master Plan, April 2020 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Baker District Urban Design Master Plan presentation \(PowerPoint\)](#)
- [Baker District Design Master Plan presentation transcript \(PDF\)](#)
- [Baker District Urban Design Master Plan presentation \(PDF\)](#)
- [Baker District Urban Design Master Plan presentation \(YouTube\)](#)
- [Q1 2020 project update](#), May 2020
- [Q4 Project Update, April 2020](#)
- [Q3 Project Update, November 2019](#)
- [Baker District Redevelopment – Update and Public Component Construction Costs](#), September 16, 2019

# It also provides a summary of all council resolutions

- [Q2 2019 Project update](#), September 2019
- [Public meeting #3 engagement summary](#), June 2019
- [Q1 2019 Project update](#), May 2019
- [Baker District archaeological, environmental and geotechnical investigations](#)
- [Public Meeting #3 storyboards](#): May 2019
- [Public meeting #3](#): May 2019
- [Public meeting #2 engagement summary](#): January 2019
- [Q4 2018 Project update](#)
- [Public meeting #1 engagement summary](#): November 2018
- [Public meeting #1](#): November 2018
- [Council resolutions – summary \(2007–2018\)](#)
- [July 2018 Baker District redevelopment – RFP Findings and recommendations](#)
- [2017 Baker District Staff Report](#)
- [2014 Baker District Staff Report](#)
- [Downtown Secondary Plan](#)
- [Downtown Community Improvement Plan](#)

Digging into the resolutions shows a pattern of commitment to a vision, commitment of funding and direction to staff. It also show a pattern of not following through.

**Council resolutions – summary (2007 to 2018)**

At its meeting of **November 19, 2007**, Guelph City Council passed the following resolutions:

THAT Council direct staff to prepare a Terms of Reference for a Request For Proposals for the redevelopment of the Baker Street which would include the integration of the new central, municipal parking structure and mixed commercial, office and residential uses and report back on the content, incentives and implementation plan, costs and the budget for this RFP.

Outcome: Not happening in the UDMP. (The plan was to add public parking to support new uses; this one removes 200 spots)

At its meeting of **February 17, 2009**, Guelph City Council passed the following resolutions:

THAT staff be authorized to negotiate the acquisition of the lands required to implement “Concept C2” as described in Report 09.02 with funding to come from debt.

Outcome: Not happening in the UDMP.

At its meeting of **November 17, 2011**, Guelph City Council passed the following resolutions:  
BE IT RESOLVED THAT staff report back on options and costs to secure the remaining Wyndham Street North properties required by the Baker Street Redevelopment for the upcoming 2012 budget deliberations.


Outcome: Not happening in the. (Staff say it is now too costly)

At its meeting of **April 30, 2012**, Guelph City Council received Report 12-49, which in part provides policy relating to the redevelopment of downtown real estate, including the Baker District, and passed the following resolution:

THAT Official Plan Amendment No. 43, initiated by the City of Guelph, to incorporate a Secondary Plan for Downtown, mapping and associated definitions into the Official Plan, be adopted in accordance with Attachment 1 – Official Plan Amendment 43.

Outcome: Not happening in the UDMP. (The DSP Calls for recreation facilities within walking district for new residential units. The original vision would achieve this, the emerging plan does not).






At its meeting of **June 18, 2014**, Guelph City Council passed the following resolutions:  
THAT based on the decision level pro forma attached to this report, Council endorses the ‘Private and Major Institutional’ mixed-use development as the preferred option for the Baker District lands.

Outcome: Not happening in the.(A condo and a Library do not achieve this)

At its meeting of **July 17, 2017**, Guelph City Council passed the following resolutions:  
THAT the Baker District redevelopment, as described in Report IDE 17-71, become the Corporation’s priority program of work to further implement the Downtown Secondary Plan

Outcome: Not happening in the UDMP emerging in 2021.(No mention of Baker’s relation to the DSP or the Downtown Parking Master Plan, or the Streetscaping Master Plan is made in the latest iteration)



Q: what does the UDMP call for?

A: a plan that does not achieve the vision of Council, that does not fulfil council directives, and that looks nothing like the project that emerged from stakeholder and citizen engagements.

## **Library**

The latest vision is for a Library hidden away, disconnected from the rest of Downtown, hidden in a back alleyway and unable to fulfill its role as a major attraction, and as a source of civic pride. It will not attract as many people, or be as robust a source of Economic Development.

## Condos

The only other building is a relatively small-scale condo development whose impact on economic development is slight compared to the original version. Residential development in Baker was deliberately situated on top of other active uses as an add-on – the icing on the cake, but not the cake itself.

**As the next slide shows,** the original multi-use plan was estimated to deliver three times the economic churn of a residential development alone.

# Baker District – Decision Level Proforma (2014 Staff Report) Selected measures

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	OPTION A: PRIVATE AND MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL (GPL, CONESTOGA, YMCA, ETC)	OPTION B: PRIVATE AND INSTITUTIONAL (GPL)	OPTION C: PRIVATE
Residential Units	350	400	460
Institutional Sq. Ft.	183,000	80,000	0
Students	1000	0	0
Commercial Sq. Ft.	0	20,000	40,000
Public Parking	775 (500 net new)	500 (225 net new)	500 (225 net new)
Private Parking	350 (ratio 1:1)	400 (ratio 1:1)	460 (ratio 1:1)
Net New Visitation (people/day)	3777	2000	687
Permanent Jobs	152	41	80

## **Public Square**

Elsewhere on the site sits an orphaned public square with no plan or budget for activation. It sits on Upper Wyndham like a missing tooth in a smile, a dead gap on the street front.

It looks like it will function more as an added amenity for the Condo building – one paid for with public money – rather than a true, active, desirable public square.

## **The Site**

The footprint for development is much reduced because staff did not follow through on Council directives to purchase needed properties; staff also did not work in concert with the County to make their parking lot part of the development.

## **Parking Reduction**

The plan would also leave the site with 200 fewer parking spaces than are currently available.

That is infrastructure that supports commercial and cultural activities, tourism, and workplace development.

The parking spots have been essentially given over to the condos; public spaces traded for private use.

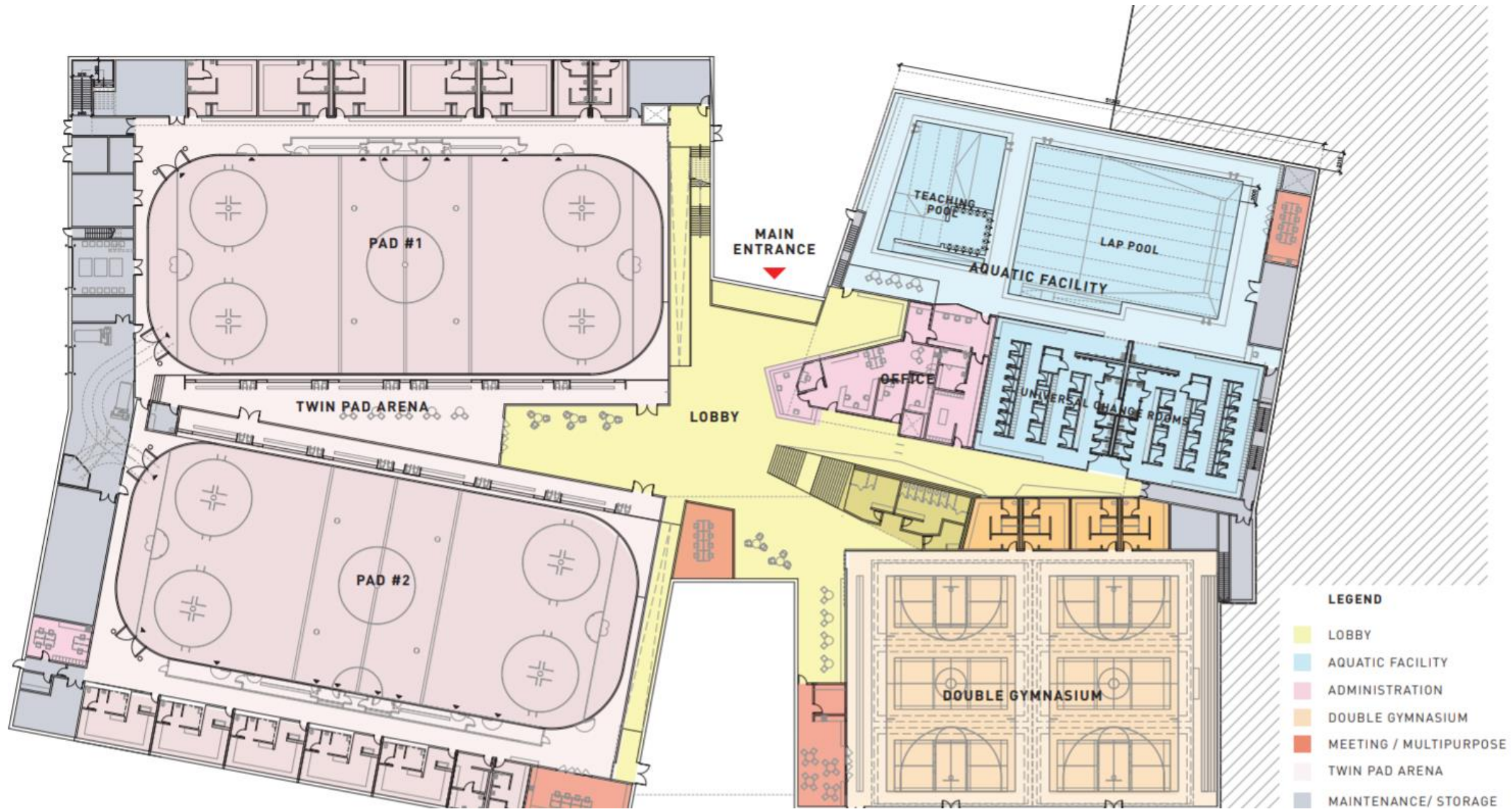


**Let's ask a question.**

# **What would happen to the Vision for the South End Community Centre if we applied the “Baker Treatment” to it?**

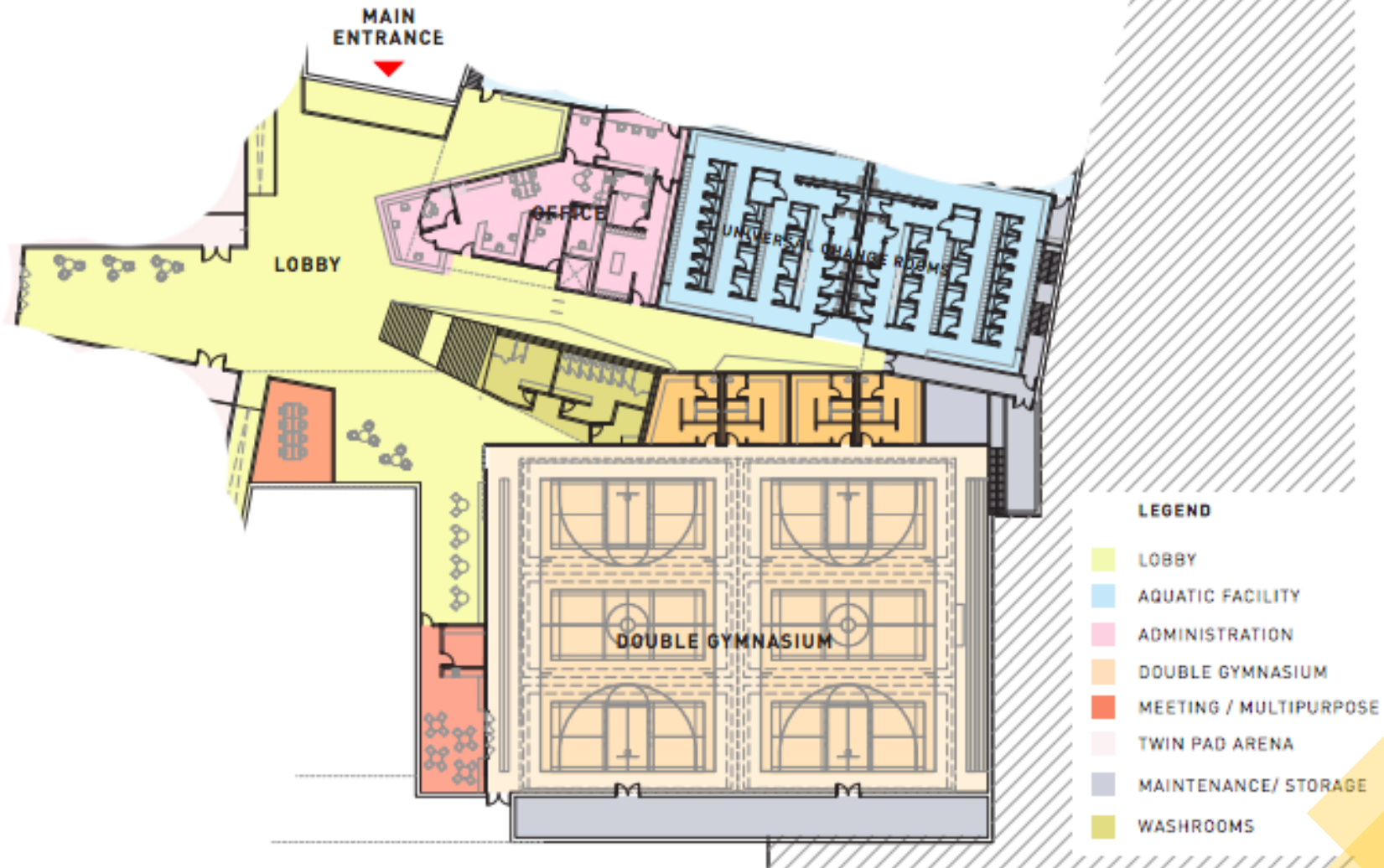
This:

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



Would look more like this:

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~~ 4 lane lap pool and teaching pool with open and enclosed viewing areas, along with a ~~large~~ modest 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






# From the current vision many questions remain unanswered:

## **1. What is the Economic Development value of building a condo on Baker in particular?**

Would the same impact be achieved elsewhere? The modelled presented is based solely on residential spending of new units, which is a given in any version of the development.

## **2. What is the economic impact of 200 lost parking spots that currently support the commercial fabric of Downtown – as well as public amenities such as the Sleeman Centre and the River Run Centre?**

How can we allow the reduction of some 200 public parking from the existing inventory, with no update to the Parking Master Plan to understand how this radical change will effect existing uses -- as well as the success of the new development. Local employment, as well events and facilities that rely on the existing parking inventory, as well as daily visitor impacts have not been addressed.



### **3. How can it be built with no additional access points?**

The project as presented is relying on a 15m wide roadway to service the developments. So where are the traffic studies to indicate how the level of projected activity will be accommodated? There is no indication of how intersections at Quebec or Woolwich and beyond will be affected. In addition, there is no Servicing study to understand the infrastructure renewal implications to support the level of development, on site and beyond the site.

### **4. Are the squares really public – or will they function as private amenities for the condos?**

These public 'mews' spaces planned as interior to blocks and disconnected from active streets, with no CPTED review (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) to understand the public safety and management implications of these spaces.



## **In Conclusion**

The DGBA supports the building of a new Main Library.

The DGBA cannot endorse the proposed Urban Design Master Plan based on the lack of supporting detailed study.

At this stage, with Council being asked to support undertaking detailed design and planning for construction, there needs to be far more information provided beyond the aspirational document presented. This is what Council routinely asks of all other developments, especially of this scale.

DGBA is asking Council to require that the standard suite of development technical studies be developed and shared publicly ahead of any approval decision on the master plan.



# Discussion/Questions

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## Matrix for Baker Project as of June 2021

Version one: current UDMP Dated May 31<sup>st</sup> 2021

Affect for	Measure	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
<b>City</b>					
	Impact on Tax Base	New Residential	Loss of parking revenue		
	Impact on Budget	Lowest possible investment	Lowest possible ROI		
	Assessment Values	New Residential	Threat to commercial viability		
	Library	Improved Facility; attracting more users	Location; lack of parking to support		
	River Run and Sleeman		Lack of parking to support		Impact on attendance
	Parks and Recreation facilities		No improvement in plan	No decline in plan	
	Return on investment	Better Library	Low input = low output		Value for tax money spent
<b>Private Commercial</b>	Parking infrastructure		Loss of customer parking		
	Approximately 600 New Residents	Expected Spending in Commercial; support for City Facilities	Lack of sufficient parking for residents, visitors, and staff		
	Construction Disruption		Removal of parking, sidewalks, road closures		Timeline, length of disruption,
	Post-COVID recovery	Consumer confidence/ spending	Unable to satisfy demand due to parking removal and		

			construction impacts		
<b>City of Guelph residents</b>	Transportation to Downtown		Insufficient parking infrastructure		Incentive to use active transportation and transit
	Commercial diversity		Lack of parking stresses particular businesses		Impact of parking removal
<b>Visitors from outside Guelph</b>	Transportation to Downtown		Insufficient parking infrastructure		

**Version 2: build library, loose some parking, do nothing else (compared to version 1)**

Affect for	Measure	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
<b>City</b>					
	Impact on Tax Base	parking revenue mostly maintained	No new condos; loss of some parking revenue		
	Impact on Budget	Less upfront costs; money can be used for land assembly			
	Assessment Values	Maintain commercial strength	No new condos		
	Library	Improved Facility; attracting more users	Location; loss of some parking		
	River Run and Sleeman	Less decline in parking support	loss of some parking		

	Parks and Recreation facilities		No improvement in plan	No decline in plan	
	Return on investment	Better Library; less threat to viability of RR and Sleeman			Value for tax money spent
<b>Private Commercial</b>	Parking infrastructure	Retaining parking			Competition for public spaces by increase library use
	No new condos	Opportunity to build mix use in the future that will support existing commercial	No new expected spending in Commercial; support for City Facilities		
	Construction Disruption		Removal of less parking than v1		Timeline, length of disruption
	Post-COVID recovery	Consumer confidence/ spending	Better able to satisfy demand; still some impacts due to parking removal and construction		
<b>City of Guelph residents</b>	Transportation to Downtown	Parking at close to current levels	Increase competition for parking infrastructure		
	Commercial diversity	Maintain viability levels			Impact of new uses on parking
<b>Visitors from outside Guelph</b>	Transportation to Downtown	No loss in parking infrastructure			Is the parking sufficient?