



Dr. Sam Mossaed

Founder and CEO

Doctors Choice Rehabilitation

To whom it may concern,

In the fall of 2021, my family and I moved to the beautiful city of Guelph. Prior to the move my wife and I had spent a great deal of time researching communities in Ontario that would be suitable for us to live and raise our son. We looked at factors such as affordability, safety, and quality of life as indicators in our decision-making process. We were also looking at accessibility to parks, forests and an overall environmental sensitivity of the community. I was raised in Mississauga and later moved to Milton. In both cases I witnessed a rapid transformation of cities with plenty of natural space, low crime rate, low congestion and a community feel to that of fast-growing densely populated, crime-ridden, traffic congested larger urban centres. During this urbanization process I witnessed firsthand how over-ambitious development of communities had a negative impact on not only the quality of life of the residents but the environment as well.

We narrowed our search to a handful of communities including the city of Guelph where there was a focus on balanced growth and a high regard for the environment. During our research my wife and I were exploring the city's website and were impressed by the city's focus on maintaining environmental integrity. Some of the core values of the city as highlighted by its website were as follows:

- Water sources are protected, and our water systems are managed in harmony with the environment.
- Our food system is sustainable.
- Our natural heritage—including the urban forest and biodiversity—is nurtured, not damaged.
- Our rivers, parks and green spaces are preserved, and the tree canopy is abundant.
- Development occurs in harmony with the natural environment

I had always heard great things about the city of Guelph. I had many friends who had attended University of Guelph and lived in residence and later I had many patients who had grown up or were living in the city of Guelph. It seemed there was always a common sense of pride associated with living in Guelph and an abundant of praise towards the city and its friendly

residents. In the summer of 2021, we started looking more seriously and found a beautiful residence located at the south end of Guelph.

Not long after we had moved one of our neighbors paid us a visit and after welcoming us to the neighborhood, expressed some of the recent challenges the neighborhood was facing. We found out the very issues we were trying to get away from were in fact afflicting our new community as well. The city was moving towards building more higher density homes at the expense of destroying the homes of some of the residents along with its vast area of green space. This green space was the natural habitat of many animals and plants some endangered. My neighbor was clearly distraught and later I met other members of the community who were equally upset about this decision. I was pleasantly surprised at how the members of this community were passionately involved in influencing the decision-making processes at the municipal level. Their involvement was a source of inspiration for me, and at this point, I genuinely wanted to become more involved in understanding this matter better. As a result, I found myself reading the community news, reviewing the provincial mandates influencing city's decision-making process, and researching urbanization trends not only at the province level but nationally as well. I found some interesting and disturbing facts:

From an environmental perspective, apart from the obvious negative effects of cutting down the trees and taking away the natural habitat of some of the animals, green spaces have been shown to reduce what is called urban heat islands – bubbles of high temperature around cities. Heat islands can help cause human health problems such as respiratory failure or heat stroke, a problem worsened in heat waves such as that experienced last summer over much of Western Canada. Governments have been starting to recognize the issue and were making it tougher to cut down trees for the sake of development.

From a financial perspective, I discovered that the city of Guelph has acknowledged that it would be taking on a large debt to develop the supporting infrastructure for the redevelopment. In order to recover this debt the city would require to raise municipal taxes.

Public relation wise this redevelopment plan has been a disaster as well. Neighborhoods were to be destroyed and established communities torn down to make space for the new development. Many residents who had been living in the community for many years even decades have to relocate, and they are not happy. Houses they had invested time and resource to make into family homes are to going to be in effect taken away from them.

I cannot stop wondering why does a city that prides itself, according to its website, on preserving its green space, natural heritage, rivers and parks and water quality is aggressively moving towards destroying an already established community that has the perfect residential/environmental balance. This action completely disregards the statement 'development occurs in harmony with the natural environment'.

Furthermore, not long ago, the neighboring community of Puslinch township being concerned about the negative impact on its water source had launched an appeal, challenging the decision of Guelph council in its drive to redevelop the south part of the city. Apparently, the City of

Guelph "has shown no commitment to implement meaningful long-term monitoring to protect water quality" for Puslinch residents. "The city relies on clean groundwater as do all the residents in the township, however, the terrain of the Clair-Maltby Secondary Plan area, the proposed density, the lack of overflow storm water outlets to streams (particularly in the Mill Creek subwatershed) will result in the contamination of groundwater". It seems the neighboring communities have maintained their sense of responsibility to the environment and to the wellbeing of their own residents.

I do understand of the housing shortage, and the provincial government asking or mandating regional governments to create more affordable housing zones to accommodate this shortage. I am far from being a city planner but simply from an observer's perspective there seems to be many industrial and even commercial buildings closer to the city centre which are completely vacant. These building are located on major roadways within the core of the city which already have access to public transportation routes. The infrastructure already exists which would make redeveloping less expensive thereby saving the city and taxpayers money. Would it not make sense that these buildings be the natural starting point where rebuilding and rezoning starts? Also is there such a shortage of land that the city cannot afford to have a balanced mix of not only low and medium density homes in the area but also be able to preserve the already existing estate homes in this specific neighborhood?

In summary, the city is in effect cutting its trees, destroying the natural habitat of many animals and plants, upsetting the residents of an established community and its neighboring township. Not to mention the eventual raising of municipal taxes and imposing a bigger financial burden on the residents of the city.

All of the above factors inspired me to write this letter. My wife and I both love the city and our neighborhood. However, we are also very concerned that the values that have shaped this city are now becoming compromised. The same values stated in the website. From my perspective the current priorities driving the city's decision-making process are not as stated in its website. Rapid, aggressive urban development is becoming more of a priority at the expense of non-preservation of rivers, parks and green space, to the detriment of the overall wellbeing of the existing and future residents. I hope that the city counsellors consider whether the vote they are giving truly reflects the real values of this beautiful city. Once the bulldozers arrive and the shovels hit the ground there will be no turning back.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sam Mossaed', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Sam Mossaed, BSc. DC

Founder and CEO, Doctors Choice Rehabilitation