

Hello Mr. Guthrie,

I was informed by the DGBA that you will be proposing a bylaw to ban downtown encampments, and I wanted to voice my opinion that this is a dangerous precedent to set without first creating enough safe places for people to live and/or receive help. All this does is create animosity between law enforcement and our most vulnerable citizens. As a downtown business operator I am no stranger to the current climate of downtown Guelph, and I grew up in Vancouver and know full well that these tactics *do not work* to solve any problem, and in fact make the situation worse. The number of people experiencing homelessness in Guelph is of course a systemic issue, and I believe banning them from setting up the safest form of shelter that they have access to is not the answer.

You know, probably better than anyone, that solving the systemic issues are not quick fixes, but I can guarantee that it will be even more difficult and take longer if this ban goes into effect. In addition, I personally will not have trust in coming to the police if I know that this is how they would be dealing with folks experiencing homelessness. Up until now I have been quite impressed with how the GPS have handled every situation I've needed to call them for and would be very disappointed for that to change.

I am very pleased to see places like the refurbished motel on Woolwich being so quickly fixed up and funded by the city for low income living, and those are initiatives that make me proud to live and work in Guelph!

I've seen you visit our restaurant before, and I very much appreciate your support of downtown businesses!! I hope that we do not lose your support, and continue to have a strong voice in shaping the future of our beautiful downtown core.

Please say hello next time that you're in, and thank you for all that you do!

Mikaela Macht (she/her)

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