

Greetings, councillors,

The proposal regarding encampments within the downtown being brought forward by Mayor Guthrie is unconscionable and immoral.

Though the revised version makes vague gestures at human rights, the goal remains clear: to sweep our unhoused neighbours out of sight so they do not disturb the "reasonable enjoyment of another person". These bylaws will further disrupt the lives of our most vulnerable neighbours, and as we get into the winter months could cost people their lives. In section 2, where an alternative site is proposed, the word "temporary" casts doubt on the genuine intent of the section, nor does it provide a timeline to ensure alternatives are ready before section 1 begins taking effect, nor does it provide information on how the city will behave if the residents do not find the alternative acceptable. Human Rights based approaches to housing are already available, and this vague bylaw proposal respects none of it <https://make-the-shift.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/A-National-Protocol-for-Homeless-Encampments-in-Canada.pdf>

Further, section 5 is a draconian overreach that could be used to criminalize all non-commercial activity downtown. Terms like "loitering", "intended use", "interfering with [...] enjoyment [...]" and "unreasonable noise" are vague, probably intentionally so. When enforcement is discretionary it is often used to target the most marginalized in our community. In addition, this section could effectively be used to prevent any form of protest, rally or public gathering using subpoints b, g, h, i, and j; which is a direct challenge to The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms section 2(b) and related provisions.

I hope I have outlined some of the very serious issues with this bylaw proposal, and urge councillors to listen to community members who will be speaking against the proposal in session and oppose the proposal.

Regards,
Russell S,
Guelph resident, ward 2