

Public Space Use Bylaw Proposal Encampments within the Downtown Bylaw Proposal

Letter from the Guelph Environmental Justice Committee

The Guelph Environmental Justice Project is a community-led initiative. This project seeks to systematically realign Guelph's municipal priorities to address environmental justice issues.

Environmental justice is an important social movement linking environmental and social problems by addressing the systemic issues & biases that cause poor and marginalized communities to experience higher levels of harm from climate change.

The Guelph Environmental Justice Steering Committee, composed of key community leaders from across Guelph, is outraged at the proposed new Public Space Use Bylaw that aims to restrict, and prohibit encampments under the guise of public safety. This new proposed bylaw threatens the means of survival for many underhoused community members living in the downtown core and throughout the City of Guelph.

Displacing underhoused community members, and creating overly restrictive rules on their very existence is outrageous and is a human rights violation. The Public Space Use Bylaw is an explicit attack on Guelphites living in poverty. It is also deeply concerning that the City of Guelph has opted to rush and restrict public engagement and consultation around a bylaw that will harm so many people. Real dignified housing solutions are needed, not bylaws that further marginalize and harm our community members living in encampments.

We are calling on Guelph city councilors to reject this proposed bylaw and instead work to better understand the immediate needs of the underhoused community members in Guelph and to offer immediate support and dignified solutions.

Guelph Environmental Justice Collective

Link to review:

<https://www.guelphtoday.com/local-news/unhoused-community-feels-proposed-new-bylaw-setting-us-up-for-failure-8133634>