

Good day.

With regard to the proposed Public Space Use Bylaw, I have a few questions and comments.

Can there be some clarification given on the scope and meaning of "Sensitive Public Space"? It seems to me that all parks and outdoor public spaces are intended for use by children. Would this not prevent erection of temporary shelters and/or clusters of structures in these areas? As an example, I would think and hope that the entire park area around a playground is intended for use by children, and that the entire park should therefore be considered Sensitive thereby prohibiting temporary sheltering. As another, a Reservable soccer field would certainly qualify as a space intended for use by children, also preventing legal erection of shelters. The idea that someone can set up camp on a reservable field until it is reserved is absurd. How would a team go about using their practice time on a field occupied by tents, while Bylaw Enforcement is called to come and request the residents decommission their shelters?

Who is responsible for labeling or designating public spaces? Schedule A of the draft is blank and I am concerned about allowing encampments of any size in public parks.

How will the term "obstruct the safe use and enjoyment of" be applied? My 15 year old daughter wanted to walk with me from our home to Woolwich Fine Yarns last week. She asked me though, if we could take the long way around to avoid the encampment. If a similar gathering of tents is allowed anywhere else, I feel very sure that she would avoid it too. Is a situation like this enough to qualify as obstructing the safe use and enjoyment of a public space? This leaves out the very real safety issues around needles and other drug paraphernalia.

It is possible that this new bylaw can help with Guelph's encampment situation, but also possible that it is seen as a relaxation of previous bylaws which outright prohibited residing in public parks and open spaces.

Enforcement concerns me greatly even if the language and meaning are clarified. Right now in Downtown Guelph laws and bylaws are being broken all day every day and there seems to be no enforcement of consequence at all. I watched a Bylaw enforcement officer pull his vehicle over to ticket a parked car on Quebec Street yesterday, right across the road from the square littered with garbage, with tarps strung up on city light fixtures, stolen bikes lying around, propane tanks sitting outside tents, not to mention the disgusting bodily fluids littering the sidewalks. It was a bizarre thing to witness. How would a new bylaw change anything if there is a chronic unwillingness to apply existing rules?

Safe enjoyment of Guelph's public spaces needs to be made available to our community. I hope it can be done in a way that protects ALL of our spaces, and doesn't just move the hazards from one place to another. I am hopeful for change.

Sincerely,

Samantha Cantin