

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please submit this as correspondence for the upcoming encampments by-law council meeting.

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed new bylaw regarding encampments in our city. As a resident of downtown Guelph and someone whose family works in the area, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges and pressures that our downtown has been facing.

The increasing number of encampments has significantly impacted our community. We have observed the overwhelming presence of these encampments, and it has raised serious concerns about safety and the general well-being of our once beautiful downtown. My family and I are often apprehensive about our safety when we visit downtown, which has become a growing concern for us as well as many of our neighbours.

The proposed bylaw offers a practical solution to this issue. By regulating when and where encampments are allowed, and by providing clear guidelines for their management, this bylaw addresses these challenges in a fair and compassionate way. We need to do something to ensure that public spaces remain accessible and pleasant for all residents. The alternative to implementing this bylaw is to do nothing. Time and again, we have seen that inaction does not lead to positive outcomes. Simply allowing the status quo to persist only exacerbates the problems and kicks the can down the road.

In walking to work, I've had to assist and provide CPR to someone who overdosed. I've seen drugs casually discarded on the sidewalks in the public square. I've seen people defecate on the sidewalk and piss onto BMO. Just this morning I watched a homeless woman bathe in fountain and walk around completely naked. All of this is happening in our downtown square where families are supposed to gather?

It's time to take a proactive step towards creating a safer and more organized downtown environment while continuing to offer support and dignity to those in need.

Those living in encampments have options, they can live in the shelters that our social services provide. Should they choose not to, they should not be allowed to camp out in public spaces.

I urge you to support this bylaw and help move it forward. Use your strong mayor powers should you need to. It represents a necessary and constructive approach to managing encampments in our city, and it is an opportunity to make meaningful improvements to our downtown area while addressing the needs of our most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this important issue. I look forward to seeing positive changes in our downtown area and am hopeful that this bylaw will contribute to a more balanced and respectful approach to managing encampments.

Sincerely,

Aaron and Dominic

Oxford Street