

Dear Councillors:

With respect to the proposed bylaw, I would like to submit my comments.

As a resident of downtown Guelph, and one who supports our local business and establishments, I am very concerned about the current state of our City. Each day I walk by the downtown square and see the growing piles of "items" not only around the tents themselves, but on the benches and the water fountain. I recognize these may be valuable items to the owners, however, it is still an eyesore. In addition, I have seen people washing their hair, and bathing in this fountain.

We can no longer share the space and it should be available for ALL of us. In the past, I would have purchased a coffee from Capistrano and sat and enjoyed it at the fountain. This is no longer possible. In other places, such as the skateboard park, encampments have been set up under the pavilion, again precluding these areas from use by everyone. I am a very liberal person, but the language, arguments and other actions, such as people sleeping/passed out, or worse, on the benches or the ground is intolerable.

Regarding the various tents along the rivers in downtown, we've witnessed people chopping branches, making many paths and otherwise defacing public property. I don't have proof, but it is likely they use the rivers for their washing and other personal matters.

Given the increasing number of homeless as you state in the Ward 2 update, not putting some restrictions NOW will mean that the issues will grow in a corresponding manner. Trying to encourage businesses to locate or stay downtown or people to live downtown will be virtually impossible and for the many of us who have purchased houses or condos to take advantage of the location, we will be reconsidering our choice.

A long-term housing solution is, as you state, a long way off and for this winter, and maybe next year too, without a bylaw in place, our prime city land will no longer be available to many of us. Remember the "us" are the people paying the bills for our city and we deserve equal consideration.

While not entirely, much of the problem is rooted in substance abuse and mental illness or a combination thereof, and unless the supply of drugs around the world changes (unlikely), then the problem will just get bigger and bigger. That is certainly not in your court or mine to solve, but thinking this homeless situation will go away anytime soon is a fallacy. So in the meantime, it is TIME to do something to manage it in a way that allows everyone to enjoy our city.

Thankyou for your consideration.

*Donna Guittard,* [REDACTED]