

Dear Guelph City Council,

I am a Guelph resident in Ward 6 and I am writing to ask you to vote in favour of Councillor Erin Caton's and Councillor Phil Allt's motions on Wednesday's (December 11<sup>th</sup>) council meeting.

I support Councillor Allt's motion (agenda item 4.1) regarding supervised consumption sites (SCS). It is especially important now to pass this motion as a means of pressuring the provincial government to rescind Bill 223. As the auditor general's report highlighted, Bill 223 that was pushed through by the provincial government has an abstinence-based treatment model that fails to "meet the challenging and changing nature of the opioid crisis in Ontario". As well, the provincial government passed this bill without proper planning, research and public consultations – especially damning is the lack of consultation with Indigenous Peoples, who are one of the most represented demographics to access SCS and face drug poisoning deaths. It is also important to note that healthcare professionals, and other experts in the treatment of substance use have repeatedly stated that an abstinence-based treatment model is not effective and will lead to more preventable deaths. Adding to this, the closure of SCS will mean more instances of public substance use and the improper disposal of needles. It will also mean there will be less access to clean needles, which will lead to a rise in the occurrence of blood-borne diseases, such as HIV and hepatitis. As well, the closure of SCS will further strain the medical system and result in even more crowded hospitals and longer wait times for ambulance and ER responses – this will also lead to more deaths. The closure of SCS and the city's bylaw encourages the criminalisation of substance use and pushes people away from lifesaving supports and services. This will have devastating impacts in our community. For these reasons I implore you to vote in favour of this motion.

I support Councillor Caton's motion (agenda item 4.2) because it safeguards the basic human rights of all Guelph residents. As a reminder, in 2023, an Ontario Superior Court justice ruled that a bylaw to evict residents in an encampment in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo violated Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms – the right to life, liberty and security. One must question why the provincial government, and several Ontario mayors are so intent on weaponising the notwithstanding clause to circumvent this ruling in order to violate fundamental human rights. Could this zeal and work hours not be put to better use in working with unhoused community members and support services to find actual solutions that are compassionate and dignified? Using the notwithstanding clause to evict encampments will not address systemic issues, such as the lack of affordable and accessible housing, and will only push people further into the margins of our community, causing them further harm. Voting in favour of this motion will show that our city council prioritises the protection of the human rights of all Guelph residents.

Thank you for your time,

Christine Dulal