

Gow's Bridge



Linking the Old University Neighbourhood to the City of Guelph since 1897

# Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association Inc.

## Letter to Guelph City Council Concerning Four-plexes - 4 December 2024

Members of the Guelph City Council,

The Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association (OUNRA) would like to respectfully offer our comments on the Bylaw currently under consideration by the City Council, which proposes allowing four-plexes by right throughout Guelph.

Several of our executive members attended the City-sponsored meeting on gentle intensification held on February 22, 2024, at Harcourt United Church. We have also had valuable conversations with our City Councillors, Cathy Downer and Leanne Caron, and we greatly appreciate their time and effort in explaining the complexities of this important bylaw.

As a Residents' Association, we are in favour of responsible intensification and acknowledge the pressing need for more housing in Guelph, including within the Old University Neighbourhood. We do not wish to be seen as opposing growth, but rather as advocates for thoughtful development that considers the character and essence of our community.

We have long experienced the presence of absentee landlords renting out homes to students. While this generally works well, thanks in part to the University of Guelph's efforts to ensure proper property maintenance and responsible student behaviour, we've observed that our proximity to the University, combined with the city's housing shortage, has led some developers to treat our neighbourhood as a business opportunity. This has resulted in high-density, purpose-built student housing within our area. While this type of development is not inherently problematic, we are concerned that the potential for four-plexes as of right could disrupt the balance of our mixed-residential community, leading to a loss of the neighbourhood's character.

Our most pressing concern, however, is parking. Based on our understanding of the proposed bylaw, there will be fewer parking spaces available than the number of tenants a four-plex could accommodate. This is already an issue in our neighbourhood, especially with student housing. With parked cars filling both sides of the street, navigating through the area can be hazardous for cyclists, and the flow of vehicular traffic becomes a challenge.

Another concern is the impact of additional dwelling units (ADUs) on green space and trees. Our neighbourhood is known for its beautiful tree canopy, which the City of Guelph is working to expand. However, with the potential reduction in green space and the absence of a tree preservation bylaw, we worry that these developments may compromise the very elements that make our neighbourhood unique.

In conclusion, we urge the City to find a balanced approach that respects and preserves the essential character of our neighbourhood. We understand that change is inevitable, but we hope that the City can encourage thoughtful design in new developments, such as well-planned four-plexes that maximize green space and preserve trees.

We ask that the City Council approach the issue of intensification with care and a nuanced understanding of the needs of individual neighbourhoods, like the Old University Area, ensuring that growth does not come at the expense of the character and environment that define our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Your truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Lawson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J" and a trailing flourish.

John Lawson  
Past-President OUNRA