

Please note that I have also attached my last delegation concerning the design of the square for the public record.

Councillors and Mayor, You may have received this from me last week. I was hoping to be able to delegate in person but I will probably be away.

I had trusted that city staff, who have been in conversation with the DGBA for the last two years would have listened to their concerns about the design. It seems like this has not happened and therefore I am adding my voice.

The two biggest issues for me are the public washroom right on the place which is meant to celebrate the city and bring people together, and the children's playground. I believe strongly that the public washroom should be where the bars and transit hub are. Daily users of the square could easily use our new public library. It might even bring in some new library goers!

I also think that the space allocated to a playground looks like it was an afterthought. I know that there will be a lot of programming for kids at the new library so I look forward to that. Also the splash pad has been a great addition for fun for kids downtown, but I don't believe that a little playground on the square will be used. As I mentioned in my original delegation, it is independent businesses (often maligned) who bring people together in downtowns. There should be as much space as possible give to outdoor cafes and other businesses.

The design principle less is more, is important and would better suit the small space that we have on the square.

I would like to be proud of our new square, but I am sorry, at this point I am not. I know that city staff intimated that if anything was changed, it would take the whole project longer. I can't see that removing the playground would set things back that much. So much is being invested that I think it is important to get the details right. Barb Minett

I do still believe that we could have a public art constellation much like the begging bear or the griffin at the University of Guelph. This may be an additional cost which could be raised by people who are committed to a vibrant downtown.

Good afternoon councillors, mayor and staff. I cocreated the bookshelf in 1973.

While searching online for the most updated square design I tripped on a 2014 draft design for the square. It starts with a section called guiding principles and the very first principle is listed as “Support local business and daily activities.” I am not sure if this is still a guiding principle as some design details do not reflect this.

I have worked downtown for over 50 years and have overheard many, many conversations about how people use the downtown. They say things like meet you at Capistrano, or meet you at Mijidaa, or meet you at the Red Brick or meet you at Buon Gustos. In other words, businesses spawn activity and community. That is why I hope that you understand how important we are to keeping downtown culture alive and that you understand that our feedback is genuine and comes from experience.

My first problem with this design is that it takes space away from any cafe or sidewalk space that might be used by our small businesses. I don't believe that a children's play area is as crucial as helping café and restaurant culture. I think that the splash pad at city hall is great. Kids like it there! But all of you probably have experienced the fact that kids don't always like the plastic play spaces engineered for them and it makes the Square look very haphazard.

Another issue that I find problematic is the fact the outdoor self cleaning washroom would be more appropriate closer to where the majority of bars are and where the transit hub and train station are located. I have been told that there may be 10 to 15 washrooms in the new library which people in and around the square area could easily access.

My last concern is that this design is quite generic. There is no wow factor, nothing that brings joy and engagement. There is nothing here that citizens and tourists would want to have their picture taken in front of. Two very successful examples of this kind of, call it public art or installation, ARE in Guelph. One is the begging bear at the Art Gallery of Guelph and the other is the gryffon stature at the south end of the university. People love these. They dress them, they take pictures in front of them. They remember them.

To me, moving the fountain is a big waste of money. Leave it where it is. Use that money and instal a public installation which will make people also say “meet you at the ??? canoe, the train, the chimney swift...whatever it happens to turn out being. After all, Guelph is a city of artists who either singly or collaboratively could create something that makes its citizens proud.

Please.