

MAYOR Guthrie , Councillors and City Staff

GCAT advocates for safer , enjoyable and well connected Active Transportation infrastructure to places of work and schools in our existing and new communities.

I have personally delegated for developments such as the Alice block because of its good land use planning that encourages Active transportation but the Fusion GID development excites me more than any other new development because it truly offers a once in a lifetime opportunity to create a vision of a new type of urban walkable City within a City that connects people and places both within the development and through the greater City Guelph due to its unique location near the center of the City

Do we simply want another cookie cutter development or do we want a truly sustainable development that offers this opportunity and will encourage other development to study it and copy it ?

Quote our Chief Planner from the City Newsroom Aug 28

“We’re really excited about this new development and what it means for our community, so we’re eager to get this right,” says Krista Walkey, General Manager of Planning & Building Services. “This decision goes beyond land use. It’s about shaping the kinds of lives possible for the people who come after us. Neighbourhoods become our homes; they’re the places we raise kids, build friendships and find joy and connection. We need to carefully consider how the Guelph Innovation District is planned to ensure it becomes a neighbourhood that supports that kind of life for decades to come.”

I believe that Fusion homes vision of a mixed use neighbourhood offers us this opportunity to build a community that we probably wish our neighborhood was like.

We love how Fusion has built Active transportation throughout their design. The linear parks along with covered and uncovered Cut throughs, and mid block street crossings , are a brilliant way to encourage AT by making the journey safer and calmer- but just as important, more enjoyable to the point where it’s a more attractive way to get to your destination rather than driving.

The linear parks offer programming opportunities for many activities and the trees provide shade but most of all it provides opportunities to quietly connect with our neighbours and the greater community.

I have had some of the best conversations with strangers that started with a” good morning “ as I passed them on our DOWNTOWN TRAIL TCT rail trail which brings us to my next point -connectivity between the GID to other neighbourhoods and our downtown which I have delegated on several times.

The beauty of a TCT GJR EXTENSION adjacent to the same city owned railway right of way is a more direct and more protected bikeways to and from the GID to Downtown and Regional and local transit hubs. It is mostly on flat trails which encourage ridership. We have met with Fusion several times on our plans which include several route options - and they want to continue meeting with us and their planners and consultants and possibly incorporate them into future submissions.

The Ward to Downtown bridge along with the proposed amazing linear Park beside the new Woods 2 development will be the gateway to what could be a continuation of what I consider a linear parkway to the GID.

Recently Barcelona, Spain, was faced with traffic congestion and air pollution. The City planners have created superblocks where walking and cycling have returned the city streets to the people instead of cars. They are very similar to the linear parks proposed by Fusion.

I am Not disputing the concerns of City Staff regarding needing a large open park space for large sports events but Distributed parks in this very large development actually make more sense for local residents especially if they are connected by programmed linear parks which provide a more pleasant mobility option like walking or cycling.

I do hope our City Official Plan update includes linear parks as parkland for ALL future developments.

My almost daily commute allows me at least 2 options to get to downtown but I will always choose the downtown trail which is lined with trees, pollinator plantings and runs adjacent to a small park versus the on-street bike lanes or even quiet city streets - because it is the most pleasant and safest route.

This development will invite residents of DT and other neighborhoods to visit and visa versa.

This is the most exciting opportunity we have to finally realize a minimum grid of connected and protected and enjoyable bikeways to and from this City within a city. This will kickstart a real mode share shift to alternative mobility options simply because it will be attractive and fun way to get to destinations and employment by walking or rolling.

Health , clean air, carbon reduction and economic development are the benefits.

Should Fusion have to solve the problem that that the City has not acquired enough parkland for large sports fields beforehand, and is now forced to change its innovative design approach to urban planning development with a combination of distributed parks

connected by linear parks that encourage a more walkable City within a City- that is also connected to our downtown by a similar trail like experience?

Do we really want this site to be dominated by large Sportsfields and huge car parking areas when we so badly need housing and employment mixed use developments that are centrally located within biking and walking distance to existing amenities?

OUR GCAT VISION MIMICS FUSIONS VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND USE. IT IS A ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD REAL LIVABLE COMMUNITIES THAT OTHER DEVELOPMENTS WILL COPY- BECAUSE OF ITS SUCCESS.

Thanks

Mike Darmon

GCAT Advocacy Co Chair