

Dear Members of City Council,

For years, Guelph has spoken proudly of its commitment to being a forward-thinking, **green** city—one that expands and protects parkland, preserves biodiversity, and honours the heritage and cultural assets woven into our natural spaces. Yet as a lifelong Guelph resident, I struggle to see these values reflected in the current direction for the Yorklands.

The Yorklands represent one of Guelph's last remaining biodiverse, interconnected ecosystems. Families walk these trails; residents find moments of peace, and wildlife depends on the corridors that thrive here. This land holds deep **historical and cultural significance**, from its buildings to its bridges. It is a place where community, nature, and heritage meet.

Despite this, the current Conservation Plan continues to leave the door open for future development—contradicting both existing zoning and the Secondary Plan, which do **not** support residential intensification on this site. Even the inclusion of building heights in certain areas underlines a vision that is inconsistent with true conservation. **Development is not conservation**, and any clause that allows for future development undermines the very principles the city claims to uphold.

Guelph is already struggling with urban sprawl. There are numerous underused or previously developed lands within the city—spaces far better suited for housing and infrastructure needs. Meanwhile, our mandate to expand parkland remains unmet. Fully protecting the Yorklands, without exceptions or future development clauses, would be a meaningful step toward closing that gap and strengthening Guelph's position as a leader in innovative urban parks—much like Rouge Park in Scarborough.

The Yorklands are more than just land. They are a living, breathing ecosystem, a refuge for mental wellbeing, and a testament to our city's history. To lose any part of it to development would be a loss for generations.

I urge Council to demonstrate true environmental leadership:

Remove all clauses permitting future development and grant the Yorklands full, permanent protection.

Our community deserves a conservation plan that actually conserves.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to Guelph's future.

Sincerely,

Michelle Martin Donaldson

Ward 6 resident