

Baker District - Project Update - 2020-148

General Correspondence – Revised Agenda

We do not need yet another iteration of not funding a new library due to OTHER PRIORITIES. That rational has become a red herring to those who do not understand the proven countless benefits to all age cohorts in any community. Thank you for listening.

Sharleen Cornelius Ward 5

This is to voice our displeasure at this proposal. We do not need a new library! It is quite obvious that the councillors in favour of this have not paid attention to the current pandemic and the costs associated with it. This discussion has been going on for years and each time the majority of the Guelph citizens have said NO! Councillors, take note and listen to the very people and their families that will have to pay for this. Why didn't we use the old post office when offered. It was going to be so reasonable to purchase and renovate? But no, these self righteous ones wanted brand new!

Enough is enough!

Wayne and Vivian Warren

This library project should be cancelled. Its not feasible in the current climate.
Jordan Vaughan-werner

I am writing to express my compete support of the Baker Street development. The city desperately needs a new downtown library. The pandemic has highlighted to me even more strongly how out of date the current downtown library is. It is tight and cramped and doesn't have the space necessary for ease of use and accessibility, even when we aren't required to maintain 6 feet of distance from others.

Accessibility is a big concern of mine, particularly for a downtown community space. I am able bodied, and I wish to stand up for those who are not. As the current library stands, it is just not accessible to people. I have used the elevator with a stroller on numerous occasions, and it is extremely difficult to navigate. My stroller is significantly smaller than most wheelchairs and I had to back in/out because there is no room to turn around in or near the elevator. I am quite certain that

some wheelchair users, especially those that require a caregiver to be with them, would not be able to access the upstairs or downstairs of the library because of the elevator size and location.

I also believe that we need to be investing in ways to develop community. The pandemic had shown many of us how important community and social connections are. A redeveloped library, community space will allow for this.

Please, build this community space, and don't listen to the ignorant naysayers who continually bring up that a new hospital is more important.

Thank you for your time,

Angela Brnjas

Hi,

I would just like to express that I do not support the proposed library plan, the only plan I could support would be a plan that does not include a tax payer levy. We are in the midst of a very uncertain time, and Guelph has many libraries that are perfectly serviceable for the current time.

Thank you,
Mary Pigozzo

I am a huuuge supporter of the library and wholeheartedly believe it should proceed.

In 2007 when first proposed....what was the population and land tax and other tax base. What is it today? I know we have poured more money into policing...and so we should. But please do not take it away from our culture and arts. Reading is affordable, enjoyable and educational. It benefits everyone equally.

Thank you
Margaret Williams

I am very much in favour of the revised plans for the library. This has been in the works for many years and should be provided. The old library is not safe anymore for health and mobility reasons. This project would bring much needed revitalization to the downtown core. I hope this is approved.

Thanks Heather Culford

I am against the building of any new library, and the additional tax burden that it would place on the tax base.

Dan Caissie

I am born and raised in Guelph. My wife retires in one year. I am currently retired as well. We are leaving Guelph for many reasons. Taxation, special levies, budget over runs on capital projects, unsafe downtown, high cases of petty crimes, abundance of drug addicts....i could go on and on. Although this may be the case in all cities of this size, it is with a heavy heart I say goodbye to Guelph and welcome leaving all the problems behind. My wallet can no longer take another hit. Let's say the proposed library is the last straw. Then after the library is built i foresee another 20 year special levy for another hospital. Guelph needs more help with infrastructure than a proposed library. I formally recommend that a library NOT be built. Thank you. J White

To whom it may concern

You probably receive a ton of emails so I will be brief.

I strongly believe that the new proposed library is way too expensive. We as tax payers already have tax Levies. During the time of the pandemic, many people are struggling. We do not need more financial burden. I think we should either scrap the project, delay it until we have more certainty regarding the financial impact of the pandemic or scale the project way down so it does not burden the citizens. Let's utilize places like the River Run more to its ability Instead of building the Taj Mahal of libraries.

Thank you for your time

Vicky

Vicky Weiler, ND

New library? NO! Third levy on tax payers? NO! ENOUGH!

Thank you

Raymond Duchesne

The city does NOT need to spend millions of tax dollars on a new library we
DON'T need!
NO LIBRARY!

Rob Statz

Dear Mayor,

I dont know if my opinion is going to make any difference to the final decision about the proposed new library. It feels like a fait accompli
However, I would like you to know that as a fairly long time resident of Guelph, whose children used the library system extensively over the years, it seemed perfectly adequate for their needs. True, it's not a pretty building or one which architects might swoon over, but it does the job. I live in a 60 year old house that also needs some attention, with a living room that has stood empty for 3 years because I cannot afford to renovate it. My pay increase this year, which, by the way has to last 3 years until the next contract negotiations, was 1%. Yes, that's right; 1% . Now in the 15 years we have lived here, we have seen our property taxes double . They have gone up \$300 every single year. Just how much more do you think hardworking taxpayers can afford? We have just gone through the most challenging economic turmoil since the great depression and the knock on effects are still to come in 2021. Is Guelph committed to bankruptcy for its citizens? We cannot afford this!! Please re- think this white elephant!

Respectfully,

Philippa Clarke R.N

Hello I will just make this short and sweet. I'm not in favour of a new library at that price and i don't know why you don't just do a 10 million update to the original building now. You could extend it take out the parking lot. I have 3 kids and I might take them there twice a year. I have a perfect little library in my area that works great. That what library should turn into in the future. With COVID people have lost their jobs and businesses. Things have changed In a big way. Our City council has got to see this.

This email is from me Nathan brousse
Alisha brousse
Sharon brousse
Amy Brydges
Dan Brydges

Betty malison dyson
Marlene malison

All tax payers who can't afford this tax hike

If the provincial and federal government think it's a bad idea maybe city council should too.

Also a idea is have a city vote. If yes wins build it but if no put it on hold or build it somewhere else for a cost that the city in on board with

Thanks
Nathan brousse

Good Afternoon,
I love Guelph. I love to read. I believe we need a community library. I understand the value of a library and its connection to our cities' prosperity. We can't afford to not build a new library. However, not at the proposed of \$62M. Please go back to the drawing board.

Thank you,
Beverly-Ann Woods

No to spending millions of our tax dollars for 10 to 20 years on a new Guelph public library that we don't want or will ever use!

I use the current Guelph libraries regularly but do NOT support a new costly downtown location.

Especially during these uncertain pandemic times!!

Jayne Ford

As a regular user of our existing libraries I am totally against the idea of a new one, not required in my mind.

Dianna Ford

Hello.

The Mayor asked we comment on our distain for council approving the 67 million dollar library going forward. WE DONT WANT IT. With this pandemic most of us are already having a difficult time paying bills. Let alone the different departments of Guelph asking for more money. We as taxpayers are not a endless supply of

revenue. Look for ways to reduce spending because we are sick of year over year increases and reductions in service.

Thank you. Tim.

Tim Caughill

It's absolutely ridiculous that the the idea of spending 62 million (that will cost 90 by the time it's completed) on a library that almost nobody wants. As a tax payer in this city the amount of taxes is already outrageous, year over year increases keep going up substantially and the spending needs to stop. The spending actually needs to be cut and the first place the cuts should be made on are on this project altogether. The councillors that voted yes to this library need to smarten up, they are playing with other people's money and don't have a clue about what the people of this city want.

Adam Walker

Hello,

I am writing to voice my opinion on the proposed library project. Even at a reduced \$62 million it it was too much money to spend right now! Libraries are low priority, especially right now with the hospital struggling and everyone feeling the strain of unemployment from COVID. No one uses libraries anymore, this is 100% a vanity project and we can't afford it. It would be better to buy everyone in town an iPad and let them access books online like everyone is already doing anyways. Libraries are a need of the past. This city is already pushing out all the young adults with insane property prices and rent. And now you want to add MORE tax to that burden? We would be better off putting the money towards housing or any number of more important and mode impactful projects. Don't waste our tax money on such a stupid project. Please do the smart and fiscally responsible thing and cancel this project. It's what's right for the people of this city.

Thank you,

Taylor Grant

Hello,

This email is to voice mine and my husband's opinion. We DO NOT support building a new library by any means!

Thank you,

Jennifer & Nick Kochan

I love the library but this is an absolutely absurd thing to spend so much money on. I'm not sure why I have to remind anyone of this but we're in a pandemic!!! We do not have any 'extra' \$ in the budget. Let's fix some city problems first. I can give you an extensive list if needed.

Thank you for your time

Katie O'Connor

To Guelph City Council,

The idea of building a new city library is an extremely bad idea.

Guelph is my home town. Born, and raised in Guelph and have been living in this community the vast majority of my life. In my 53 years living in this city. I have never seen such a disconnect between wants, needs, and the realities that our city is facing. If we take the estimated 67 million dollars cost for the library and divide it by the current reported number of people google says lives in Guelph. Which is 134,842, that equals a cost of \$496.87 for every breathing citizen of this fine city. That is additional monies that has to be contributed in taxes in one form or another. The fact is taxes are not collected equally from every person either by the city. As some people pay allot more, while others pay allot less. You have to be completely out of your minds if your spending that much on a library. There is so much more that this city needs. A 67 million dollar library is not one of them. To think of applying a surcharge tax 0.39% to pay for it is ridiculous. The cost of the service which the city already charges its citizens are already high. Service's are already poorly managed and there is much fiscal waste. Get your act together politicians of Guelph.

Come back down to earth. Focus on making what services are provided better and efficient and reduce our taxes, by reducing government, and spending. Stop trying to build these pie in the sky ideas so you can have your names inscribed on the buildings. How many people use the libraries we currently have every year. The vast majority of citizen don't use the libraries anymore. Its usually a small percentage of the cities population. Cities are already fighting to justify keeping the ones they already have open. In case you haven't heard there this thing called the internet. To think your considering spend \$500 per breathing person that lives in this city for a library is ridiculous. The Hanlon Expressway needs the proper over passes built at the main intersection of Kortwrigth, Stone Road, Paisley Rd, Willow Rd, and Speedvale Avenue. This will serve the citizens of Guelph much better than a library. You could by every one a new computer for that kind of cash. Get off the pipe, and act responsibly with the cities pocket book. Fix the cities roads and build better infrastructure as I have suggested.

Sincerely,

Jeff

I love the library, and I use it a lot. I probably borrow 5 items a week.

The new location downtown will never work for me and my wheelchair-bound son, because downtown parking is too difficult with an over-height vehicle which accomodates the wheelchair. We always use Westminster. I make great use of the request service - item from anywhere sent to Westminster.

I find it impossible to believe that this amount of money is necessary to bring our library up to standard. It's also hard to spend the money in a time of economic stress. I would rather see funds spent to enhance the branches.

Thanks,

Elizabeth Ross

Greetings. I'm a Guelphite, a bookworm, educated at UGoo, and have held a Guelph Public Library card since 1979.

I'm pleading with you to show responsibility. Cancel this new library until further notice. Only alumni of the Marie-Antoinette School of Economics could think this was justifiable.

Would I like a shiny new library for the 21st century? Sure. I'd also like three cars, and a luxury penthouse. And technically, I could probably have them - for a while. But sooner or later, bills have to be paid. I'm not foolish enough to inflict so painful a reckoning on myself.

If you have any wisdom, restraint, or concern for the people of Guelph, do not inflict this financial burden on us when we and our dear city are already under strain.

Distinguish between a 'want' and a 'need' and DO NOT commit us to this horrific expense. Guelph has deeper, more 'meta' needs for the foreseeable future. We can manage quite happily with the excellent library (and auxilliary branches) we currently have.

Thanks for taking the time to read my message.

Yours Sincerely,
Katharine Moores.

To whom it may concern,

I know that a new large library could possibly benefit the area. But for one see it as almost wasteful in the midst of a global pandemic. A time when so many have lost

their jobs or are struggling for money. To take tax payers money and invest it into something like a library seems impractical. Kids have started to go back to school and the numbers are climbing in COVID cases. So a community building that could help to spread more cases also seems like a disaster waiting to happen. So, if you were to ask what I would do with the space? Aside from scrapping the project? What about a medical building that also provides testing? Or a safe place for the less fortunate that could provide better social distancing at this time. But as far as a new giant library? Before the pandemic I would have supported. But now it feels like buying a new corvette when you're struggling to afford instant noodles. Thanks for hearing me out
Misty Strongitharm
(Proud Guelph resident for over 20 years)

Libraries are important and Guelph needs an appropriately sized Main Branch Library for the size of its population.

Some people have been misled into believing that the private sector is the great equalizer and anything that increases one's tax bill is frivolous and will ultimately impoverish a community. I beg to differ, for numerous reasons.

Libraries allow people access to information in a way that the internet does not and will not in the future. At a library, membership is free, including access to newspapers, periodicals, books, and many other information resources that you have to pay for online. While there is a prevailing myth that the internet is free, this is simply not true. An online subscription to the Globe and Mail alone is \$10.99/month.

Access to various vetted, sourced media is essential to a functioning democracy. The more sources people have access to, the better educated and informed all citizens are. An appropriately sized Main Branch would make credible sources of information available to everyone, regardless of age, income status, or educational background.

I have worked and owned a business in Downtown Guelph for many years. The past six months have been difficult for many small businesses. What better way to revitalize Guelph's downtown and create jobs than a public/private infrastructure project that showcases why Guelph is such a great city?

The project promises to develop educated trades people, musicians, teachers, scientists, doctors, novelists, while establishing an anchor tenant in downtown Guelph that will be used by the whole city. An investment in our city's future.

The idea of a new library has been debated for decades. I hope the political will is there for realizing this dream because it will benefit everybody. Our children and grandchildren will see huge benefits from this development for decades to come.

Let's do this Guelph!

Best,

Ben Minett

Hello Consellers,

My name is Monica Lueddeke. I have grown up in Guelph. I have watched this city change and grow. I have always been proud to call Guelph my home. It is amazing that we feel like a small town, but have grown to big city proportions.

The pandemic has highlighted our strengths but sadly, its weaknesses.

I would like to express my concern in spending millions for a library. My family feels strongly that this is a waste of money, when growth in this city is putting pressure on every other service that is core to sustainability.

Repurpose the funding, and revisit it once we have secured extra support for police services, to deal with the increase in theft and crime in Guelph.

Or fund social housing to deal with the extreme homelessness and lack of affordable housing for the middle class. Imagine what you could do to the 4 year waitlist for affordable housing if you spend 5 million dollars on apartments for those on disability or OW.

How about a HOSPITAL. Yes...I understand it is a province item. This past week we managed to fill the hospital to capacity and left our population scrambling to be serviced. We need a second hospital in the most desperate way. We have no medical detox for our addicted population. Mental health services are shrinking and beds are needed to treat people. Senior are living longer and medically are more complex. We have even out grown St. Josephs.

Please consider any of these issues instead of a new library.

Sincerely,

Monica Lueddeke life long Guelphite.
Nurse and wanting a better life for all in Guelph!

Hello,

As a citizen of this city for over 60 years, I am ashamed of the thought of spending \$67 million dollars for a library. And that is almost guaranteed to go up.

We are still in the grips of Covid -19 with no end in sight. Families are, and could be on the brink of financial ruin, with possibly no life line to grasp. Homes will be lost, vehicles returned, futures and dreams destroyed.

Not that I am all that enamoured with spending \$80+ million on the South End Recreation Center either but I feel that that would benefit a larger portion of the city's ever expanding growth with the GPL board itself saying that only "possibly 40%" of our citizens use the downtown location.

As I said I have seen this city grow from 33,000 - I still remember seeing the Welcome to Guelph sign - to where we currently stand. Time, progress and societal change was inevitable but the meat and potatoes of a city is it's citizens. I feel that our citizens have the integrity and perseverance to acknowledge and work through the tough times but not to be put through a heightened tax meat grinder to appease something that will make downtown look good. I'm sure you have seen the numerous articles on F/B or Guelph Today where the number of nay sayers out weigh the aye's when it comes to a centrally located library easily by a 4 -1 ratio (in my non professional opinion) Mr. Mayor I firmly believe that the citizens of this city are at the brink, and in some cases over, their tax budget. I myself am on a fixed income and have already made concessions to maintain my home but I am nearly at my limit also and leaving this city is a looming possibility.

And finally, I will take this opportunity to beseech you and your council to staunchly deny moving forward with the central library proposal.

Thank you.

Don Breen

My family are asking the city to postpone a future build of a new library downtown. We understand how lovely it would be to have a new bigger and accommodating space for public use as it seems it has seen better days and is insufficient for the needs of the public.

Councillors need to understand the hardships the rate payers are having at the moment. Many of us have lost jobs. Some families have made the decision to educate children at home because of covid. Financial issues of families and businesses must be on the minds of the councillors at this moment. This is most important. We are seeing inflation at grocery stores, more use of food banks and assistance. This should resonate with all who make the decision for the masses.

Please put on hold this large scale project for the time being and when better times come we can revisit this grand project.

Thanks

Kelli Caldwell

Good evening,

As a long term resident of Guelph I'd like to voice my opinion AGAINST the new library. I feel it is an unneeded expense.

Thank you.

Jessica Luttmann

Dear Mayor Guthrie, Councillor Downer, and Councillor Caron Piper,

I am an 11 year resident of Guelph, living south of Stone Road in Ward 5.

I strongly support the proposed New Downtown Library.

The new Library will be a center of Civic life that will promote education, community and connection.

Please take whatever decisions necessary, including a levy, in order to proceed with the construction of the proposed New Downtown Library.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Paul Benedetto

A desperately needed new main Library was accepted in a motion by Council a year ago, with a funding plan in place. The tax implication works out to be \$14.65 for the next 20 yrs.

It is to be the anchor of the Baker St. Redevelopment Project and there is absolutely no justification for debating the issue further.

Regardless, the Mayor is again raising the subject further, disregarding the existing City Council decision.

The forthcoming council decision is to concern ONLY the proposal to relocate the Library within the Baker Street Development as a stand alone building.

Library staff, Board and supporters see the proposal as an improvement, which will in fact, cost a little less than the previous plan.

Please end this debate once and for all!

Yours,
Elizabeth Macrae

Dear Mayor and Councillors

I understand that you're going to discuss and vote on a motion to reduce funding for a new main library at a cost of two thirds of the original cost, already passed by council last year.

What are you thinking? Leave the roof off? No glass in the windows? The whole point is to have MORE SPACE, WE NEED MORE SPACE THAN WE HAD IN THE 1960 S! The old building is inadequate and falling apart. We need a new and bigger building. Note the increase in population since the sixties for starters.

This notion of cost saving sounds ridiculous to me. Please explain.

Yours,

Elizabeth Macrae

As a 30 year resident of Guelph the library is a fundamental part of my life - I don't think a week goes by without my taking out a book or two. The library also plays a crucial role in the lives of my friends which also includes members of my book club; not only does the book club afford the opportunity to share our love of books but also provides an important social forum. Why the city continues to debate this makes me question its priorities - a library is central to the heart of any community and should be regarded as such.

Eydie Marion-McCrae

Dear Mayor and Councillors of Guelph.

Please do not postpone or shelve the plans for the badly needed new main library.

In my opinion it is overdue, and essential for Guelph's growing population. I have lived in Guelph for over 50 years, and use the downtown library at least once per week, often more often than that.

My children use it too, and so do my grandchildren, when they come to visit.

This is an essential amenity for a growing, modern city. It provides information, entertainment, a central socially important area, and a technological learning hub for the citizens of Guelph.

Yours,

Susan Atkinson

This is a delegation supporting the new proposal for the Baker Street redevelopment project including the already accepted funding model. Please move forward with this project!

Betty Wickett

Hello,

I am a Guelph citizen and believe we desperately need a new main library. I would also say that despite that need, now is not the time for another tax levy to pay for it. No one can afford that.

Laura Penney

What more is there not to be understood about this matter!

WE NEED OUR NEW LIBRARY!

Let's move into the future! PLEASE!

Lyn Hoppe

Dear City of Guelph,

I would like it to be known that I'm in agreement for the library to be built in a stand alone building. I hope this change in the original plan can be made without more debate & delay.

It seems to make good financial sense as well as a more straightforward plan to house the new library in it's own building.

I am eagerly anticipating our new main library.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy McCallum, a regular downtown library patron.

Please know that a main library should be a right and not a privilege. Please no more delays. Get the project done. Thanks. Ella Turnbull

We are having a homelessness pandemic.

We are having a job pandemic.

We are having a illness pandemic.

We need food... shelter... a new hospital.. ventilators.. research... more family doctors.. programming for the addicted and mentally ill... .ż

A library doesnt make the priority over the above list. Maybe thats something we can reward ourselves with down the road for accomplishments.

Kat Daly, RP

"Whatever the cost of our libraries, the price is cheap compared to that of an ignorant nation" Walter Cronkite once said. I might add that a library reflects the values of a community and the importance it places on learning and knowledge.

We all have to agree Guelph's main library is a crumbling, unsafe disgrace. We've endured years of acrimonious debate and now it is being suggested the dire need for a new library must be pitted against other sorely-needed city projects. This is patently unfair. Why is it easy for council to approve recreational and sport-related projects but the importance of reading and knowledge and the arts is always relegated to last place? Why is a new community centre in the south end more important than a 30-year outstanding need for a new library? There is the YMCA and endless sports fields and gyms that already exist in the south end ... but I digress.

Last year I visited several libraries in local towns and cities to see what other communities had done with their libraries. I suggest council members check out the libraries in Fergus, Kitchener, Hespeler and Galt. They are absolute gems and several of them have won architectural awards. Walking into them is a treat for the senses and one feels the pride that each community has taken in creating these buildings. And they didn't cost the moon. What they did do was elevate their communities by providing a community gathering place and a hub of knowledge that constantly inspires and educates and illuminates.

I hope council will do the right thing this coming week and finally decide to build a library fitting of Guelph's stature. This city has so much raw talent and ability, but without a decent library we are all lessened.

Thanks for your consideration.

Margaret Boyd

Good Morning,

Please accept this letter as support for the new library to continue as part of the Baker District.

I firmly believe the investment per family per year is a small and necessary investment in both city building, equality, and economic growth.

Regards,

Danny Williamson

Please act quickly to begin the construction of the proposed new Library.... Without further delay!!!

WE , the people of Guelph need a NEW LIBRARY >>>>ASAP!!!!

Heather M. Beecroft

It's time to move forward with this decision to build a new library — thirty years of discussions are more than enough. I trust the experts who know the importance of a 21st century library for today's and tomorrow's citizens. It is cost-effective and I wonder why Guelph city council gets itself in knots over things like a performing arts centre and a new library but not ever for another hockey arena — all are necessary in a city this size.

Judith McVittie

I've lived in Guelph since 1967 and currently live in the south end. Just a reminder that development and population growth has been the fastest ever in Guelph these past few years, thus expanding the tax base. Surely a city of this size can afford a new library and a new recreation centre. Further delays simply mean higher costs.

Judith McVittie

I support the new proposal to move the location of the new library and have it as a stand-alone building. The library staff and Board are in support of this new choice.

I am a member of Friends of the Library, and a resident and taxpayer of Guelph. The new library must go ahead as soon as possible. Our present library is woefully inadequate for the citizens of Guelph. I think the new proposal offers 2022 as start up for construction.

I am now a disabled senior, and access to the basement or second floor of our present library via stairs is not an option. We are a university city, and growing rapidly. Access to a current, and vibrant library is a must for our community.

Yours truly,

Susan Jackson

Dear Mayor Guthrie and City of Guelph Ward 3 Councillors,

A new Downtown library would be valuable component of re-urbanization plans not only for civic but for tangible economic reasons. They are natural people magnets, sometimes receiving a few thousand visitors a day. When located alongside other places people need to go, they create destinations with strong drawing power. They also bring stability. A new downtown library will be a long-term neighbor with a reliable (and in most places today, rapidly growing) clientele. Should a shop, for example, adjacent to or within the library building move out, the location can still attract another enterprise. Conversely, the mixed-use model can provide justification for the development work and the money that will go into a new main downtown library.

Thank you,
Cynthia Cheeseman & Martin Pearce

I am writing to express my support for the relocation of the new public library. There is information lacking in the media and on social media platforms that we, as taxpayers, cannot afford a 60+ million dollar library from the tax levy. I understand the concerns and wanted to check if the 60+ million dollar investment was being portrayed as true.

So let's look at the numbers.

There is funding allocated in development charges (14.1 million) along funding from the sale of the current property.

19.1 million of the project will be financed through the tax levy - 0.39% annually for 20 years. This equates to \$14.65 per household - less than the cost of one book!

In return, I get to sign out unlimited books, magazines, dvds and take advantage of the excellent programming offered in addition to the socio-economic benefits of providing the space for residents living, working and visiting our downtown.

Regards,
Kim Fairfull
Ward 6 Resident

To whom it may concern

I wanted to reach out to say that I support Guelph investing in a new library and overall development on the Baker street site.

This will not only bring needed services to the community but also help to create a stronger community and expand our community downtown overall.

This kind of investment is how we build a community and it is more than time that we do this.

One recommendation is that we build the building to a net zero standard like the evol1 building in Waterloo. The operating costs of buildings like this are far less expensive and will lower our carbon footprint as a community. The feasibility study for this building can be found here. [https://data.fcm.ca/home/programs/green-municipal-fund/funded-initiatives.htm?lang=en&project=24dd9e60-1087-e611-bf03-005056bc2614&srch=centre%20for%20sustainability%](https://data.fcm.ca/home/programs/green-municipal-fund/funded-initiatives.htm?lang=en&project=24dd9e60-1087-e611-bf03-005056bc2614&srch=centre%20for%20sustainability%20)

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Tova Davidson

To City Councillors and the Mayor,
I rarely comment on political/municipal issues, but this one has my attention. I am very much in favour of the alternative site layout for Baker District that includes a separate, stand-alone building for the downtown main library. Frankly, I believe the stand-alone alternative is a significant improvement and it even costs less! The extra \$15 a year in my taxes is a price I willingly pay.

I have been a regular patron of the main branch library since moving to Guelph in 1992. But my opinion for many years now has been that the existing building is an embarrassment as a main library for a city the size of Guelph. The reasons for its' inadequacies are well-documented and yet after endless debate, we still have not replaced it. I have seen new main libraries built in cities such as Hamilton and Halifax and am convinced they can be a tremendous benefit to a revitalized downtown core.

I will be tracking how the voting goes on this decision and it will be pivotal in how I vote in the next municipal election. Please vote in favour of this new plan and get on with it! Thanks for your attention and your service,
John McCallum

Please pass this email on to the Mayor and Council members.
Please do NOT even think about reopening the discussion on the new Main library. Discussed and done, it has already been approved and discussed to death. Why would you even bring it up again? Guelph needs this new library, end of story. Yes it will cost the taxpayers a paltry sum, but every other idea ie. South end centre costs too. I'm tired of the decades of discussion about a new library. Towns smaller than our fair city have newer, more modern and gorgeous libraries. We need to be

proud of our progress with new programs, new equipment and resources, new building etc. Many Guelph and area patrons use these services. I'm tired of you using the library as a pawn when deciding what you want to do with our tax money. Build it already.

T. Laxton

no library please. lets vote. no one wants it.
renee smith

Good evening.

As much as I love the library and use its services often. I am very against spending 62 million dollars in today's pandemic.

I simply can not afford for my taxes to go up because of the library.

Please please, press pause for a year and let us get back to normal.

Thank you so much for your time.

Dave & Amanda Burrows

Hi

If I could vote, I would vote for the city to build this library as planned on the Baker St lot. My two cents and tax dollars to make this happen.
Thanks

Louie Visentin

Good evening

This proposed library is a Gross misuse of public funds. Especially in a time when we are trying to social distance and not hold larger gatherings.

Governments at all levels are encouraging business's to not go into a building if you can work from home or use Zoom.

We don't need it and city staff should be allocating these funds in a more long term profitable and reasonable way, especially in these uncertain financial times.

During the pandemic the city has been bleeding money, and as a tax payer I think this library is the most fiscally irresponsible spending of my money. The money could be better spent on.....well almost anything other than a library of this size, which is not needed. Satellite offices are better than a monster building of this size. The world is continuing to move on the digital platform, and the city needs to keep up vs still trying to have flashy building.

The new renovated Victor David pools change-rooms are grossly inadequate and need to have room to change, especially since covid(poor forward planning) and now because of the inability to social distance in these rooms, our children are going to have to leave in the winter in wet clothings which is going to cause fūgtet issues down the road with them getting sick.

If this city continues to pigheadedly stomp forward and build this eyesore of a library just because the Library CEO thinks it a good idea, you will likely be digging an even deeper hole of poor business decisions, and lose confidence that this administration is making decision that are not in the interest of its residence at large.

Respectfully

Nick Scott-Cone

Good evening,

I am writing to advise of my opposition to the revised library proposal at the baker Street site.

While i do recognize the requirement for a facility to meet the publics current need, comitting this kind of money during the current economic state, and COVID-19 pandemic would be an irresponsible burden placed on the taxpayers of Guelph.

I think we should be looking at perhaps a smaller main branch with satellite hubs throughout the city, in smaller buildings to allow the public access within their own "ward" rather than putting all of the eggs into a large building in what is being claimed as a revitalized core. This core is a prime location that should be reserved for tax paying tenants that will generate the city income, not cost it money like a library will.

Thanks,
Scott Jennings

I am opposed to the building of this library. Timing is not right. Times are hard for

some people right now due to Covid 19. How do we know how long this is going to last or how long it's going to take for people to get back on their feet. A tax levy could be enough for these people to lose their homes. We have homeless people, the roads are a disgusting mess. Build a satellite library if a new library is a must. Please reconsider wasting \$62m or more because nothing comes in on budget, on something that is not a necessity at this time.

Valerie Collins

Hello.

I am writing to let you know that I am 100% behind the new public library as part of the Baker Street development. This library project is long overdue and must now be given priority. I have been living in Guelph since 1995 and I believe we have been talking about building a new downtown library for just as long.

I understand that an amended plan has been presented that would save us approximately cost savings of \$25 million for the whole Baker District site while maintain the same surface area. As I see it, the new site design creates many opportunities. The library will be funded by Development Charges, sale of property, reserves and a new Tax Levy of .39% for 20 years. The .39% works out to an average of \$14.65 annually per household or \$293 total over the 20 year time frame.

I use the main branch often, on my own and with my young grandchildren. The current library is in deplorable condition requiring major repairs, is inaccessible with regular elevator breakdowns and contains asbestos. It is really a significant liability for the City and the GPL.

No more talk, let's do it!

Kind regards.

Joan

Joan Agosta

Please, please, please vote for our new library. I am a library volunteer at Riverside Glen where residents' lives are much enriched by the Bookmobile. As a volunteer, I choose the books for my clients based on their tastes, then pick them up every other week from the Bookmobile and deliver them to the very happy residents (obviously these same residents are suffering the loss of books during this time of Covid).

In addition I use the library at least once a week for my private reading and for my book group selections. In the past I have taken grandchildren there, done research

there, used the computers and called on the expertise of the archivist for writing historical pieces.

The librarians are unfailingly informed, supportive and cheerful, but they are working in terribly crowded conditions with outdated equipment and a mouldering building in the case of the main branch.

Libraries are important to all segments of our community from very small children to new immigrants and the elderly.

Please support our new library.

Many thanks,
Ann Middleton

Get the library built. It is astonishing that there has been such a delay and a ballooning of cost.

It is professionally embarrassing.

--

Aaron Soch

Hello!

We would love to get this library approved and going! Let's stop the delays and accept the proposal to make this city a better place.

As two members of riverside park please count us as 2 votes !

We both work in the public sector (hospital/school) and are well aware of how public spaces keep the city alive

Thanks for your consideration,
Olivia Mann

Good evening,

As a resident of Guelph I do NOT agree with wasting an extreme amount of money (62 million dollars) on a library. This is not the time to spend money with so many struggling to find affordable housing, daycares , food, the homeless issues and drug issues etc....

I do NOT want my taxes to be raised for a library that we do NOT need.

Renovate the existing ones for much, much Cheaper and we'll be fine.

Concerned resident,

Chad and Heidi O'Reilly-Nippard

Hello,

I am a home owner and downtown resident.
I would like to pass on my desire to have this library built. NOW. The delays created by the political class in this city is costing us an outrageous amount of money.

BUILD THE LIBRARY.

Paul Barson

Hi,

Can you please pass on my desire to have this library built asap?
Appreciated.

Jen Barson

Hello,

This is a kind message to say I feel strongly that the library project should continue to move forward. The benefits for the community outweigh the potential cost to the tax payers!

Please save this much needed project!

Sincerely ,
Lindsay Cox

I am in full support of the building of a new main library for Guelph.
When I travel to surrounding communities like Georgetown, Fergus, Kitchener i am very impressed with their new libraries that really "set off" and promote their communities. Our current library is rather dowdy and frankly makes us, the City of Guelph, look rather inadequate with a distinct lack of pride and class in our community.

Sincerely,
Gary Luck

Hi there,

I am writing to express my support for the new Central Library Project that is being proposed and discussed right now. I believe this new Library is much needed and will be an integral part of the downtown community and the Guelph community at large.

Thank you,

Jennifer Redmond

Dear Rodrigo and James,

I am writing in support of the latest proposal to relocate the downtown Guelph Public Library to the south end of the current Baker St. Parking lot. It is blindingly apparent that a new library is required. Not only is our existing library in a deplorable state but a new library makes sound economic sense and supports the health and welfare of our citizens. These facts have been supported in numerous reports and, I believe, it is time to stop procrastinating and get on with the development before further delays and expense are incurred.

Thank you both for your continued efforts to support our City,
Elizabeth Steggle

Can you please disclose the expected annual revenue to the city once the library is built, not from library fees, but from rents and other non library service related revenue.

\$62 million is still a hefty sum.

Elizabeth Stewart

Thank you, one last bit of feedback after reading the article again. There are a I'm de if specific objectives of the city such as increased job density in the downtown core, etc. I feel like there has to be other solutions aside from a new library that will revitalize the Baker Street parking property and meet all the other objectives, an extravagant library Cannot be the only solution.

Elizabeth Stewart

To whom it may concern,

This is sent in effort to put a halt on the current plan to build the 60M+ library here in Guelph. There are so many reasons, most important we are facing extreme personal and economic financial hardship and uncertainty with COVID. This is not money we have set aside, it's going to be pushed back on our local taxpayers which is really the last thing our community needs.

I get funding for the library is separate than our Guelph hospital however that is the REAL issue on hand that must be addressed. We are facing a critical situation when we reach max occupancy having to send patients to surrounding areas. What happens if covid numbers do increase and hospitalization is required? That is an immediate risk that needs urgent attention.

This library needs to be stopped. And our real Situation needs to be evaluated. We need a hospital that can support our growing population. We need a significant increase in supports for mental healthcare.

Sometimes budgets and pre-approved plans need to be questioned when our needs change. I cannot think of a time that would necessitate this more than now.

Stop the library!

Thank you,
Jennifer Loomis

Let's get that library built. Oh please, please - I would love to see this happen in my lifetime.

No more delays!!!

Thank you

Karen Sweigard

Mayor, Councillors,

Please build our library! I recognize that we need this important city resource and urge you to continue with the 88,000 square foot minimum size plan. As our experts have told us, any smaller size will be too small by the time it is built. I am willing to pay much more than the \$15 per year tax fee, and many other citizens are as well. We hope you are able to make this happen.

Yours,

Ward 5 Resident.

Jamey Rosen

I've been watching on Facebook and have yet to see even one person say they're happy that Guelph is spending \$62 million on a new library. This is a huge waste of money when we have a homeless crisis, addiction crisis, mental health crisis and more. Spend the money on more needed things! We don't need a new library!

Thanks for listening!
Cheryl Currie

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

I would like to express my strong objection to the 62 million library project for two reasons: (1) no demand and (2) excessive cost.

Please don't take away Guelph children's college fund or daily meals for something too luxury that no one in Guelph wants.

1. Guelph residents don't need a new library

My family is one of frequent users of Guelph public library system. We visit the branches close to our home almost every week before COVID. On average, we have about 10 borrowed books sitting in our library account every day.

We are very happy with the current level of service that Guelph public library provides.

The branches we visited were never too crowded before COVID.

After the COVID reopening, the branches are basically ghost towns.

Despite being frequent users of Guelph library, in the past five years since we moved to Guelph, my family has never visited the downtown main branch even once.

Yes, you hear it right. We have never been to the main library. Why? Because we don't need to. All our library service needs could be fulfilled by the local branches close to home.

We don't understand why the city plans to invest 62 million in a new downtown library that very few people are interested in using.

All friends, acquaintances, and neighbors that we talked with don't understand it either.

Where is the demand?

2. Guelph can't afford this luxury library

I am also shocked about the \$62 million cost and 0.39% tax levy for 20 years to build this library.

Recently, North Bay, ON has proposed a 6.4 million new library to serve its 60,000 population (which was rejected by the way).

Guelph's population is about 2.25 times that of North Bay.

Using the same scale, we would expect a proposal around 14.4 million.

Why are we planning to spend 62 millions?

Our library project would be 4.5 times more luxury than the North Bay project per capita.

Calgary, AB has recently built a new library costing 245 million in 2018.

Calgary has about 1.6 million people, about 11 times of Guelph's population.

Again, using the same scale, we would expect a project around 22 million.

Why are we planning to spend 62 millions?

Our library project would be three times more luxury than the Calgary project per capita.

In addition, the 0.39% tax levy for 20 years is absurd.

Guelph's house is selling at \$679,000 on average in September 2020.

For an average house that is worth \$679,000, the new library will cost

$0.39\% * 679,000 = \$2,648$ per year for 20 years to fund this project.

That is 7.25 dollars per day! Our children could have a delicious meal for that amount.

The library project will cost an average Guelph family $\$2,648 * 20 = \$52,960$ over the 20 years (assuming zero interest). It will cost much more if you take interest into account.

Please ask any family in Guelph whether they are willing to trade children's college funds or daily meals to support this library project.

Please vote against this luxury library project that no Guelph residents want.

Don't take away our children's meals or college funds!

Sincerely,

Jessie Lu

Ward 6 Resident

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

I would like to provide additional data on why this library is too expensive for Guelph residents.

1. This library project will cost 25% of Guelph's annual tax revenue

According to the 2019 annual report, Guelph collected 251 million tax revenue in 2019.

This library project will cost 62 million dollars.

Spending 25% of the 2019 annual tax revenue on one library project seems way too expensive especially during COVID.

I understand this is a multiple year project and we don't have to budget all the cost in one year.

At this critical time, a lot of residents are struggling with financial hardship.

We need bread to feed our family and a place to live.

We DON'T need a new library building to survive during this economic uncertainty.

2. Tax Levy is already high in Guelph

In addition, based on BMA municipal study 2019 posted on Guelph city website, Guelph residents pay a \$1,696 levy per capita (p.131).

We are already in the "high" levy category in Ontario.

3. Our library cost per capita is already No.1 or No.2 in Ontario before this project

Our library service is already very expensive compared to other large cities with more than 100,000 population in Ontario even before this project.

In 2019, Guelph ranked No.2 on library net cost per capita excl. amortization (\$65 per capita vs. Ontario average \$46) and No.1 if including amortization (\$74 per capita vs. Ontario average \$53) (p.227).

We've beaten Toronto and other large cities in Ontario on library cost per capita.

I am sure this new library project will make us " a city with the most expensive library per capita" in Ontario and probably in Canada.

I agree that the library project is beautiful.

But beautiful things come with a heavy price tag.

62 million/Guelph population 140,000=\$442 per capita.

When we are starving, we can't feed on a new library building.

When we need a place to live ,we can't live in the new library (at least not long term or permanently).

If the city has too much tax surplus to spend, I think every Guelph resident will welcome a tax relief.

Thanks!

Best Regards,

Jessie Lu
Ward 6 Resident

September 29, 2020

Dear Mayor and Council,

When I finish this letter of **support** for rebuilding the new main library, it will go on top of a growing pile of studies, business plans, minutes, drawings and correspondence that I have accumulated since the library first sought to replace its aging headquarters branch more than 20 years ago.

In recent days, through social and news media, comments from the Mayor suggest that he feels this project lacks enough community support to justify the expenditure. Through these channels he has invited public feedback, presumably to help him decide whether to proceed, delay, or deep-six this project.

I'd like to state that I FIRMLY and FULLY support this project going ahead. Now. As well as the thousands of registered, regular library users (I am one), there are others in the community who clearly support this project, too. You need only look at the 450+ members of the Friends of the Library (I am one) who have literally put their money where their mouths are by raising nearly 1 million dollars through more than a dozen years of annual book sales - all proceeds to be given to the library's rebuilding program.

Unfortunately, I fear that at the upcoming October meetings, the Mayor will withdraw his past support by trying to either delay or derail the new library's construction by reopening the debate about whether the City can "afford" it. I do not want this to happen. The staff recommendation in this report, <https://guelph.ca/2020/09/city-recommends-alternative-site-layout-for-baker-district-redevelopment/>, is to proceed with the alternative location plan and stand-alone building at the south end of the Baker St. parking lot. Their recommendation should be accepted, and steps initiated to get the project underway without further delay.

The facility under threat of cancellation is the headquarters of the Guelph library system. Under its perpetually leaky roof and decaying interior it does a commendable job serving the whole community as the administrative hub of the branch system. It is also the neighbourhood branch for the residents who circle the downtown core. You are asking too much of a crowded, crumbling 55-year-old building to continue to perform efficiently in today's or tomorrow's world if you keep putting off its much-needed replacement.

At the meetings on Oct. 5th and 7th, please confirm your approval for this project and get it built.

Respectfully,

Linda Kearns, BA, MLS, Retired library employee (1977-2009)
(Ward 6 resident and taxpayer)

Good afternoon, please do not waste our tax dollars on a library that nobody will use. It will end up being a dump for all the druggies down town. We need to improve our roads!!! Please take a drive down Speedvale or Woodlawn, my drive to work should be 5 minutes tops and it takes at least 20 on a good day. I realize there is construction but seriously how many times a year do they have to rip the same spot up to fix! Or maybe even some more police officers to fix the drug problem in Guelph.

Thanks for your time

Sincerely Jamie Binkle

To all Guelph City Councillors and the Mayor

My name is Monica Pease and I live very close to the downtown branch of the Guelph Public Library. I am writing to express my support for the 'stand alone' library proposal on Baker Street. As a patron and a community member, I am very aware of the important role that our library plays in providing resources for Guelphites, including access to educational material, community and connections. I also happen to know that bringing people into the library can benefit our local downtown businesses.

The current building, as you know, is in need of major repairs and has been inaccessible to folks who require the use of an elevator. Having inconsistent accessibility is simply unacceptable and this is a significant liability for the city of Guelph and its Public Library.

I know that Guelph City council will be deliberating and voting on building a standalone library on the south end of the Baker Street district. I also know that the staff report indicates many opportunities with a new design and that the library will be funded by development charges, sale of property, reserves and a tax levy of .39% for 20 years.

I can well afford the cost per year for a tax levy of 0.39% and I feel strongly that Guelph City Council should move ahead with this proposal.

Thank you for your efforts, engagement, and consideration.
Monica Pease

Hon Mayor and Councillors: I am writing to voice my support to proceed with the proposed now library (standalone) in the Baker St redevelopment.

First, I consider it critical to every citizen of a city that there be access to a useful and beautiful public library space. While I have lived here in Guelph for more than 30 years, I visit libraries all over the country when I travel (when I could travel I should say!) and a healthy library is a boon to all citizens and a reflection of a strong community.

Second, the current library is clearly at the end of its useful life as a library: too small, without any of the modern amenities that allow a library to remain relevant and useful to its citizens. Frankly, not developing the library and claiming that it is becoming underused is a self-fulfilling prophecy - a modern library meeting the needs of the citizens will always provide benefits. This is more than a replacement of a building - it is an investment in the future of the city.

Third, I read the Deloitte report and the staff recommendation and it is clear that we should make the effort now to address the deficiencies identified: pushing this

decision down the road will not make it cheaper or easier in future. I have heard that "this year is particularly bad because of Covid"; there is never a good time and we will always have one crisis or another that makes it impossible to move forward. We must ignore the instinct to procrastinate and move this forward now. And if the financials are concerning, I'll point out that in 2018 the library project was only supposed to be \$45M; it has increased to \$67M....what will it be if we push this out 1, 2, 5 years?

So I want to clearly voice my support for proceeding with the standalone proposal on Baker St; and if there needs to be a special levy to pay for it so be it. A library is the heart of any successful city; I implore you Mr Mayor and Councillors not to let ours succumb to death by delay.

Mark Kaczmarczyk
Guelph

Mr. Mayor, and Councillors of the City of Guelph:

A thought about decisions on the Cost of a new Library
contemplated in these MOST UNUSUAL TIMES
COVID19 Times, when all else seems almost irrelevant.

It is important to remember, that
These Things Too Shall Pass not a moment too soon, I'll add.

We need to focus on the future, one where today's young people will be filling our roles of today.
With that focus, we must decide now, **what will fill their needs for some years ahead.**

To come up short on that, will mean that they will have to work around, or replace a short-sighted decision of today.

When we are concerned about spending, especially in these "shattered times", it can be hard to remember that we are part of a continuum, and must act accordingly.

Good luck on getting this Library decision right.
Best regards,
John Hart

Hello Councillors. I've spoken twice to you, urging that you support a new main branch GPL, and I have nothing more to add, other than to I am very concerned that some of you (Guthrie, Bell, MacKinnon, Gibson...) will continue to stand in the

way of this significant improvement to our downtown. The project needs to go ahead, period. I hope a unanimous vote in favour will be the outcome when the matter comes before Council, again.

Sincerely, Duncan MacKenzie

09/30/2020

Re: Baker St. District Redevelopment, Alternative Layout

Dear Mayor, councillors, and other interested parties,

[Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation](#) is a non-profit advocacy group focused on increasing the quantity, quality and safety of active transportation in Guelph. We envision a future in which Guelph's citizens can walk or bike around their city in comfort, while contributing positively to public health and happiness, clean air, and a vibrant local economy.

GCAT has reviewed the proposed alternative option in Report 2020-18, dated October 5, 2020, and accompanying slides.

GCAT is pleased to see continuing language which supports the importance of AT accessibility for the Baker St. District Redevelopment. While primarily pedestrian focused at the moment, GCAT has discussed this topic with representatives of the City and Windmill Development Group Ltd. and recognizes that we are not yet at a time where further cycling-friendly detail would be included in the plan. GCAT continues to advocate for cyclist-friendly specifics, including secure and inviting bike storage facilities, and we look forward to future updates to this regard. We subscribe to the example design idea that **a 10-year-old child, unaccompanied, should be able attend the library safely by bike or by foot.**

As such, GCAT appreciates the efforts to maintain pedestrian and cycling porosity to and through the District via the Urban Square and other measures, and we note that potential future land acquisitions would further enhance the active transportation aspects of the district. In particular, the current Bank of Montreal parking lot represents a further connection to the Quebec St. and Georges Square shopping districts.

Finally, **GCAT believes that active transportation access to the Baker Street District from all directions is a critical success factor.** Consequently, and on a broader point, we urge the City to consider reconfiguring all surrounding streets to include safe, separated infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians.

Sincerely,

Yvette Tendick, President, Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation

Hello mayor and councillors,

Please add my support to the new stand-alone library that is recommended by staff.

As a school teacher for 23 years, I have come to understand the importance of libraries in the development, inspiration and motivation of young minds to meet their potential.

I also see what a benefit it is to bring families to the downtown and how it creates vibrancy.

I remember hearing that the incredible splash pad in front of city hall was once destined to be a parking lot. Instead, it joyfully brings children and their families to the downtown core.

A new library also has an even greater ability to bring more people downtown, to make it a destination, which stimulates the development of more businesses. It represents a focal point for the community.

I frequent the current library fairly regularly. While it is functional for some of the things that I need, I don't feel inspired at all by the layout, services, or the building. Rather, I feel a little bit embarrassed that this appears to be the best that Guelph can do.

To have a beautiful, modern library as recommended by staff, \$15 a year per household in extra taxes for some civic pride seems like a real bargain.

So, let's get on with it, and build the new library.

Sincerely,
Yvette Tendick
Guelph resident

Dear Mr. Mayor,

I am tired. I am frustrated. I am **angry!**

I have lived in Guelph my whole life and over the past twenty years have watched this city council put off building a new library to serve the citizens of Guelph and lead them into the 21st century.

Our library has been in desperate need of upgrades for over two decades. The library has jumped through more than enough hoops,

(<https://www.guelphpl.ca/en/about-us/resources/Documents/The-Path-Towards-The-New-Main-Library-Final.pdf>) and that upgrade to the building and the tech and services within is desperately needed **now!** To bring this issue up for debate, **yet again**, after having been voted on and passed, **we cannot waffle on this situation any longer.**

I understand that a levy is a difficult thing to swallow, but I for one am a citizen who is happy to pay that levy, to support our library and our community.

A library is more than a storage box for holding books. It provides a place for those marginalized in society to access technology they might not otherwise be able to. It helps create community through book clubs and speaker series, it is a place of research, it is a place of gathering... much more than just simple book storage.

I know that covid-19 has created a very different world, however, I can attest to the fact that the day the library notified me that they were doing curbside pickups,

I smiled. I used the curbside pickup option many times! I continue to stop by the library on a weekly basis. While there, I see Guelph citizens using the facilities and using the technology. In a time of pandemic, a safe space in our community is more important than ever. A space that our citizens can use to research, learn, look for work... The value is immeasurable.

When you ran for mayor, you said that your mind had been changed regarding Guelph's need for an updated main branch, and you were going to support this capital project. It is disingenuous for you to continue to say "I support the new library, but not at this price tag" and have me believe you actually care about bringing a dynamic, modern facility to city. Your support is needed, even at the cost of a levy to citizens. Stand by your words, help us create a library that is worthy of the city of Guelph.

I hope that I will see the library break ground before I enter my next decade. Do what's right. Do what the citizens of Guelph are asking.

Sylvia Mollison

I am expressing my STRONG opinion that we NEED to support a new library....NOW! How many years does it take to realize our community needs this new project and will support the reasonable increase in our taxes to make this dream a reality.

Please vote 'yes' knowing that it is the right decision to replace our totally out of date facility with a stunning new exciting library that will enhance the quality of life in our Royal City.

Thanks

Joanne McAuley

In regard to upcoming meetings about the proposed new building for the main branch of the Guelph Public Library:

I ask the Council to vote in favour of a new building and to ensure that the proposal is properly funded to get this long-overdue and necessary project completed.

The priorities of the city are showing when there are dramatic cost-overruns for an expanded police station but perennially postponed budgets for a new library.

A high-growth city like Guelph, with its university and educated population, needs a central library as a community hub that reflects our dynamism and cultural strength.

The current library is a neglected embarrassment completely inadequate to the tasks that need to be undertaken by any

modern public library.

We do not think the library project should be placed into competition with the South End Community Centre (and I live in the South End). That is a false competition intended to once again put a library on the back burner. A library is a gathering place, a library is a recreational facility. Some of the overruns for the police station could have helped to support both - simultaneously reducing need for policing "services" no doubt.

Libraries are about books, yes, but also resources, education, cultural and intellectual enrichment, community engagement. It is a place to be that does not require spending, a hub sorely needed in a Guelph downtown that will see other businesses vacate due to the pandemic. A library that is open and attractive and accessible - not a dump - will bring people, and their revenue, back in.

I don't understand the kind of civic mentality that thinks a library is not a priority. That is tantamount to saying that the people of Guelph, and especially the children of Guelph, are not a priority. We have many beautiful public facilities here - but a hole where the centerpiece ought to be.

Thank you.

Rachel Adelson

We personally endorse this new arrangement and want the project to go ahead. Guelph needs a strong public library centre. It serves the public in so many beneficial ways beyond the wonders of the printed word. Sincerely, Suzanne and Earlby Wakefield

Dear Mayor and Council:

We very much want you to move ahead promptly with the new library plan. The approval for the proposed new library was passed by Council some time ago; the modified plan makes sense and is supported by the library professionals. Getting on with the plan will not only provide Guelph with a much needed updated, versatile and user-friendly library but also with a strong stimulus to the downtown and thus to the whole city. Guelph is no longer the city we moved to in the sixties and its current library is no longer up to the task of serving a modern and much larger 21st Century city.

This project has spent long enough in debate and discussion. Please get on with it before more valuable time and resources drift by.

Yours truly

Jim and Anne Shute

Greetings Mayor Guthrie and Councillors.

I'm writing to let you know I strongly support the staff recommendations on the Baker Street project including the new library.

This is an historic moment and opportunity for our community. Yes, the timing isn't great for spending. But there will never be a perfect time. It isn't going to get cheaper, nor will the need diminish. In fact it will become even more important in light of the struggles we're facing. I appreciate what a complicated and difficult decision this is, but when we look back on this in the decades to come, I know we will be glad we supported it. Much like the River Run Centre and Market Square etc.

There is strong evidence this investment will deliver economic returns, but the value to our community will go far beyond what we can quantify in dollars.

I don't even use the library. And I cringe at paying more taxes like many people. But it seems clear that delivering on this vision makes vastly more sense in the long run than abandoning it.

All the jewels in the crown of our royal city have been tough decisions and have taken courage and strong leadership to realize. Now is the time to draw on that courage and leadership to help ensure all members of our community thrive in the years ahead.

Thank you for considering my comments and for your ongoing service and dedication to our community's well-being.

Kind regards,

Jen Turnbull
Guelph

Please mark me as against this extravagant proposal.

The money could be more efficiently and effectively used by enhancing smaller satellite libraries.

A large downtown building does not make sense due to the expanded use of the internet and that the building will not be used effectively since many women don't feel safe going downtown in the evening - especially in the winter.

Kindest regards,

Keith Miles
City taxpayer since 1984

Dear Councillors,

I have lived in Guelph for 23 years and have been a regular at the Guelph Public Library for all of those 23 years. I started with my son who was born in 1998. We were regulars in the children's department and at the children's events. We took out at least 10 books a week and my son is now an avid reader. Moving along my son went to the library to research his projects and I continued to take out books to read for enjoyment or to learn something new. The public library is an important amenity to us and many families. It is time for us to build a newer larger one. I am impressed they have been able to save 23 million dollars and if you don't build it soon, it will go up another 23 million dollars. Considering it was going to cost 10 Million dollars when it was first proposed in 1997, all the delays have not been fiscally responsible decisions.

Thanks for your consideration.

Warm regards,
Irene

Irene Szabo

Hello All,

I have a badly broken arm, and I'm typing with one finger, so I will keep this short. The new library is needed. I pay a fair amount of municipal taxes (a libertarian would say I pay too much, but a democratic socialist like me would say I don't pay enough), I vote, I volunteer for candidates I support, and I know just how much Guelph needs a new library and how much libraries are essential to community well being. Please support it.

Thank you,

Dr. Ze'ev Gedalof
Ward 5, Guelph, ON

To Mayor Guthrie and Guelph City Councillors

Re: The Main Library Project

Last year, the Guelph City Council held a final vote to proceed with the long-awaited central library building project. Mayor Cam Guthrie told the audience that, though he intended to vote against it, if it was approved, he would be its biggest supporter and back it "110 per cent". We have to trust him to keep his word, and not to attempt to derail the council's commitment. The city has made a commitment to the developer, architects, partners and to citizens who have waited for over 30 years. To pull out or delay now would waste all of our investment in funds and good will and undermine Guelph's reputation as a municipality with which to do business. The Mayor and City of Guelph have made a serious commitment. It must be honoured.

Mayor Guthrie has expressed understandable concern for the taxpayers of Guelph. Canadian and American examples from recent history have shown that, in times of economic downturns, infrastructure projects stimulate the economy, creating jobs and adding value to cities. The library project will aid Guelph in its recovery from the pandemic. Studies have shown that for every dollar a community invests in library services, it gets six dollars back. Current estimates are that the annual economic benefit to Guelph would be \$9.3 million. Our downtown badly needs the revitalizing benefit of this project. The livelihoods of many downtown retailers depend on it. For the average cost to the taxpayer annually of a mere \$14.65 per household, no more than a few cups of coffee, we get an up-to-date facility for all to use and a significant boost to our economy.

The arguments against the library, refuted already so many times, still don't make sense. It's foolish to pit needed improvements against each other; Yes, the south end needs a rec centre, but the need for a new library was evident and documented when the south end was still farmers' fields. The hospital is not a rival, as it is a provincial responsibility, not civic. A library is not an elitist frill. Far from it! It is the one facility that is open to everyone in the community. For many people, computers, Internet access, media, books in all forms and educational programs are unaffordable luxuries. The library resources and all of its programs are free. Free. For \$14.65 a year in taxes. Finally, the central library has to continue to be just that – central. Accessible by any means of transport, a hub which supports all of the satellite branches.

Our current library is, simply, a disgrace. It is rundown, contains asbestos and does not meet legal accessible standards. It is well below the code for a public building. To pour more money into renovations would be a tragic waste. A draft report in 2002, a full 18 years ago, said that the main library was less than half the size it should be for a city of more than 100,000 people. Fifteen years ago, in 2005, a short-sighted city council made the biggest mistake in Guelph's history, rejecting the opportunity to buy the ideally situated former Canada Post building for a bargain price. Our current city councillors recognize that the new building is no longer a want but an urgent need. With wisdom, foresight and courage, they voted to move ahead. This decision must stand.

Sincerely,
Mary Mulholland

I am writing to all of you to express my point of view with respect to the Library project that is slated to be built on Baker street. I feel at this time, this city is not in the position to move forward with this project.

At 62-67 million, that is a lot of money at this time. We are trying to recover from a pandemic that no one had the foresight to see coming, we don't know what the future holds in store for us. Perhaps the dominos have yet to fall fully.

I was under the impression that there was 34 million already in the kitty for the library, perhaps I am wrong. If that is the case perhaps we could spend within our means. Something that seems to be lacking in this city.

It is a case of want versus need. Folks may want a 62-67 million dollar library but we may only need a 34 million dollar one.

With the city now in a pickle by being sued for work on the well over budget Police Station, South end want/need of a Community Centre. How deep do people think pockets are?

I am not opposed to a library, I am opposed to the excessive cost. Most of us must be fiscally responsible through these times and I feel the city should be as well.

Regards,

Denese Renaud

I am strongly in support of the new downtown library.

Kevin Bowman

Dear Mr. Mayor and Councillors,

I am tired. I am frustrated. I am **angry!**

I have lived in Guelph my whole life and over the past twenty years have watched this city council time and again, put off building a new library to serve the citizens of Guelph and lead them into the 21st century.

Our library has been in desperate need of upgrades for over two decades. The library has jumped through more than enough hoops, <https://www.guelphpl.ca/en/about-us/resources/Documents/The-Path-Towards-The-New-Main-Library-Final.pdf>

and that upgrade to the building and the tech and services within is desperately needed **now!** The issue has been voted on and passed, **we cannot waffle on this situation any longer.**

I understand that a levy is a difficult thing to swallow; but I for one, am a citizen who is happy to pay that levy in order to support our library and our community.

A library is more than a storage box for holding books. It provides a place for those marginalized in society to access technology they might not otherwise be able to. It helps create community through book clubs and speaker series, it is a place of research, it is a place of gathering... much more than just simple book storage.

I know that covid-19 has created a very different world, however, I can attest to the fact that the day the library notified me that they were doing curbside pickups, I smiled. I used the curbside pickup option many times! I continue to stop by the library on a weekly basis. While there, I see Guelph citizens using the facilities and using the technology. In a time of pandemic, a safe space in our community is more important than ever. A space that our citizens can use to research, learn, look for work... The value is immeasurable.

When you ran for mayor, you said that your mind had been changed regarding Guelph's need for an updated main branch, and you were going to support this capital project. It is disingenuous for you to continue to say "I support the new library, but not at this price tag" and have me believe you actually care about bringing a dynamic, modern facility to city. Your support is needed, even at the cost of a levy to citizens. Stand by your words, help us create a library that is worthy of the city of Guelph.

I hope that I will see the library break ground before I enter my next decade. Do what is right. Do what the citizens of Guelph are asking.

Thank you,
Olga Petrik

Hello,

My comments are that this is not the time to be spending this kind of money on a library during a pandemic, on top of the fact that I am completely against spending so much money on one library. Libraries have been closed during the pandemic and the world is changing and will look very different at the end of this. Even if libraries are still a great need we have many across Guelph already. I think it would be fine

to build a few more or built one bigger one but I do not feel we should be spending such an extreme cost on one library and increasing home owner taxes when many many people have lost their jobs due to covid and the cost of living in Guelph is rising so fast. We are struggling to keep float and all council seems to be concerned with is a library that would put us in dept. There has been so much public outrage over this topic and yet council things that knocking off \$10 million is good enough. I feel that council should read all of the hate comments and negative comments posted on many public platforms and see that this is not what's best for the community.

Thanks

Ashley Coles

Good evening,

My name is Kevin and I have been a lifelong resident of Guelph and passionate library user and advocate. I'm a public librarian by trade and have been working at the Kitchener Public Library for the past decade. I've been involved in various capacities in the design of several spaces within KPL, most recently the design of a growing digital media lab, Heffner Studio. I have seen, first hand, the countless benefits afforded by having a modern, properly equipped and well designed main library. After sitting in on a presentation about the main library in Guelph, I'm compelled to write and express both my support and my sincere hopes that you support the plan brought forward for a new main library as part of the Baker Street redevelopment project. The reasons for a new main library are countless. There is no need to re-iterate the strong arguments in support of this project. Please, please, please continue to fund this venture and move forward with these plans.

Thank you kindly,

--

Kevin Page

Dear mayor and councillors of Guelph,

Please pass this library proposal. It is a need, not simply a want.

I observe this daily. I have experienced Guelph Public Library as both a patron and, more recently, as an employee. I can see daily and have experienced, have witnessed my family members and neighbors experience, desperate need for a new library. This includes access and infrastructure, collection capabilities, program capabilities, and more. A library that has been desired and required for many years.

I firmly believe this will be a positive decision both socially and economically for the downtown and Guelph as a whole.

Thank you,

Erica Lear

I was born and raised in Guelph. I've been a Realtor here for 17 years. Our taxes, rents and housing prices are extremely high. I don't feel we need this expensive library nor can we afford it. Guelph has a lot to offer. I need to voice my option. I don't support this decision to go ahead and build it.

Thank you.

--

Jackie Curtis

To Mayor Guthrie and Guelph City Councillors

Re: The Main Library Project

I would like to start off by saying that I have astigmatism and do not physically read as many books as I would like to. Even with corrective glasses on, I find that the act of reading is somewhat taxing, so even though I would love to read more, I can only get through a chapter or two at a time before my eyes feel the stress. While you might initially think the opposite, this makes the library extremely important for me! The library's fantastic resources and programs are essential to help people in my situation, including audio books, large print books, CDs, DVDs, lectures, presentations and computers. In the first year that I discovered the library's audio book collection, I rated and wrote online reviews of almost every audio book I listened to. By the end of the year, I had written 98 ratings/reviews of everything from Wodehouse to Atwood.

My daughter and I love reading and stories. I read her all thirteen books from the Series of Unfortunate Events, and we are working our way through the Harry Potter series now, with me trying to pull off my best impression of Robbie Coltrane for Hagrid's lines. As I mentioned, I can only read a chapter or so at a time, so the library's audio books fill in for me when necessary. We attend library events such as magic shows, musical guests, creative activities, readings etc. regularly and, quite frankly, they are better than Disney World for her. Better content and no sunscreen in her eyes! Jokes aside, the programming is terrific and free, and the staff do the best they can with what they have, but it could be improved by an order of magnitude with a new, larger and better-designed building! Approx. \$14 a year in taxes for a vastly superior facility could not be better spent.

I am not sure I understand how anyone who has visited the downtown library could feel that a new building is anything other than completely essential. It is virtually always packed with patrons as it is, but the space is obviously much too small, the design of the building is awkward, unsightly and underperforms, and it obviously is not even close to being up to code as a public building for accessibility. It also

contains asbestos, which should be the final nail in its coffin alone. I have worked on many construction projects, and it is painfully clear that trying to prop up that old library building with band aid fixes is just throwing good money after bad. It will never have anything close to a satisfactory result.

As an infrastructure project, the new library building would not only create jobs, it would do wonders to sustain the whole downtown core of Guelph. This project is long, long overdue. The vast number of supporters have spoken. The council has spoken. We want and need to proceed with this project, as promised.

Best regards,
David Mulholland

To the Mayor and Members of Council,

I urge you to not let our new 21st century Library become a COVID-19 victim.

Now is the time to build better.

Now is the time to build stronger.

This marvellous new Library is not just about books, it's about community well-being.

Linda M Hathorn

Dear Mayor Guthrie,

I have been following the discussions and information regarding the redevelopment of the new central library in the Baker District of downtown Guelph on Twitter. As per your request for resident's thoughts and opinions on the matter, I am contacting you regarding your posting about the 62-million-dollar library that the City wants to put in.

As a young adult and lifelong resident of Guelph, I feel that the library does not suit the community needs currently. I do feel that a library is important just not on that large-scale investment that the City is proposing. While we are still dealing with the fallout of the pandemic and facing an uncertain future for all our residents, the City should put this proposal on hold for the time being. The first wave of COVID-19 resulted in a catastrophic impact on healthcare and the economy. With the second wave upon us, this will more than likely result in further job layoffs, small business closures and a definite stress on public health agencies.

I feel that instead of putting the funds toward a new library, it would be in the best interest of our citizens to allocate the money toward helping those impacted by

COVID-19, small business owners and our hospital. At this point, investing into long term commitments on a project that is not essential to the well-being of our city does not seem like a logical move. I feel now is not the time to put the strain of higher taxes on citizens.

Sincerely,

Matthew Schafer

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

City Council has already made the wise decision to proceed with the building of a new main public library for Guelph. As you know it has been demonstrated that a dollar spent on public library facilities provides many dollars in benefits and returns to that municipality.

Please do not use the excuse of saving the taxpayers' money as a reason to delay or cancel the plans for this important project. I understand that the cost to each household would amount to less than \$15/year for 20 years. Given that there should be a significant net financial benefit to the city there is no reason not to proceed.

I have also read that there is a proposal to revise the project to make the library a stand alone building. According to city staff this provides an option for a library which can be completed at a lower cost to the city.

It is also worth remembering that the City of Guelph has already committed significant money to purchase property on Wyndham St, evict commercial tenants, demolish the buildings and create a small parking lot. This was done so that the Baker St revitalization project could connect directly with Wyndham St. Admittedly the City will have generated some revenue from parking lot fees, but surely these will not have justified the expense. It seems obvious that proceeding with the library will be a way to get the overall Baker St project underway, leading to significantly increased revenue for the City, as well as many benefits to the vitality of our downtown core.

In conclusion, there is no reason to delay this important project.

Sincerely Yours
Bob Fanning

Dear Mayor and Council,

It is my understanding that City Council has already passed a motion in favour of a new main library, with a funding plan in place.

Since this has already been agreed to by council please move ahead with the building of the new library.

I understand that a suggestion has been made by staff at City Hall that it would be lower cost, and easier to complete, to change from a multi use building to a stand alone main branch library. If this will help to move this project forward, I am in favour of the proposed change.

I have been a constant user of the library for many years and would really like to be able to enjoy the new library before I die.

Sincerely Yours,
Enid Fanning

To the Mayor and the Councillors of Guelph,

After reading recent articles in Guelph Today, I am under the impression that there is a desire to delay the construction of the downtown library beyond 2022, if not cancel the project entirely. The Friends of the Library mentioned that it might be wise to send a letter of support regarding the project too, although I thought that the library had been approved and the current discussion is supposed to be whether or not to go through with the standalone library as opposed to the previous design. By the way, I saw the presentation for the standalone case yesterday evening. The proposed library and the Baker Street complex in general, look lovely. It would really improve the feel of that area of the city. However, in case there is still a chance that the project will be cancelled altogether, I thought I should send yet another letter in support of the library.

I think everyone who uses the main library is aware that we are in desperate need of a new one - the current building leaks, is extremely run down, and the elevator barely has room in it for a person with a walker and their companion, let alone a scooter, which more and more elderly people are using. If this was not the MAIN library - the main administrative centre for ALL the libraries in the area, not to mention the home of archives, I might suggest that we grit our teeth and delay the project once again. This is, however, is the administrative centre of the whole library system, not just a local library branch, and it is in a disgraceful condition.

I am tired of hearing that libraries are just a place for books, which will no longer be needed as everything is going online. People seem to forget that you require an e-book, a smart phone, a computer or some other form of expensive technology to access e-books. Not everyone can afford to buy them. Books do not require additional technology in order to read them. As well, libraries are far more than the books that they contain. They are knowledge-based community centres with the purpose of providing access to services to EVERYONE, even those on a limited budget. The main library is an important resource for those who live in the area especially those who are on a limited budget. It provides FREE programs for adults, children, and those who need ESL or FSL courses/practice. It provides FREE access to e-book readers, e-books, binoculars, 3D printers, internet, games, movies, audio books, newspapers, computers, printers, and of course books. It houses a large part of the city archives. It provides affordable meeting rooms for community programs. It provides a safe place where one can cool down in the summer and

keep warm in the winter. It provides a space where one can work away from home in relative peace. It provides much needed public washrooms in the downtown area. I know I am biased - I grew up in a very poor family and the library was my haven, a place I could explore the world through books, and take part in children's programs involving art and drama. I would have never been exposed to such things otherwise - my parents couldn't afford camps and after school programs, and my father was too proud to accept charity in the form of subsidized programs. The library was a refuge, a place where I could socialize, a place where I could find hope.

I understand that the proposed free-standing version of the library will save \$5 million (from comments in a Sept. 25 Guelph Today article regarding the new community centre). If you want to cancel the project, you should consider how much have you already paid in having the library designed, and holding open houses for public input. How much more will it cost to start the whole project once again in the future? From what I understood, everything had already been budgeted for the project and the council had already voted to go ahead with the library. I know it is a large expense, but the city is growing rapidly and we all know that it will probably be 75 years or more before we will consider building a new one. I find it interesting that the civic square for the Baker Street Project is estimated at \$20 million (number from our councillor who was providing costs of various capital projects before budget time). To me, that either says we have a very expensive square, or a very cheap library, since for a little over three times the cost of the square, we get a building, public washrooms, public space for lectures and work, a public space to cool off in the summer and warm up in the winter, not to mention the usual library services. As more condos go up downtown, there will also be more people in the area who will rely on the main library as their local branch.

I know that there was some concern when a government grant did not come through for the library project. However, the Guelph Friends of the Library did send me the following information:

"The new main library is a key anchor of the planned Baker Street development. That has not changed. When the Baker Street redevelopment proceeds, the Library will proceed. The Library was NEVER dependent upon Federal funding. City staff recommended a funding plan based on development charges, proceeds of sale of the existing library and property taxes. This was approved by Council on September 16, 2019, https://guelph.ca/wp-content/uploads/council_agenda_091619-revised.pdf

Council authorized staff to apply for Federal funding but the funding strategy put forward by City staff did not factor in funds from other levels of government. Any funding from the Federal government would have been a bonus! Over \$16 million of Development Charges is available and was factored into the strategy.

The funding plan is in place. The project will proceed with no additional tax burden on citizens beyond what has been incorporated into the Baker Street Redevelopment Project from the beginning."

Regarding the South End Community Centre - I have nothing against a new community centre, even though I will rarely if ever use it. Guelph's population is growing and I am certain that we could use more sports facilities. I am, however, spiteful enough to note that it is a duplication of services provided elsewhere in the city (a common argument against the new main library). I assume that the fact that 85% of its costs are provided by developers' fees, while the library only has 21% of its costs covered through these same fees, is due to the fact that there has been more development in the South end than in downtown. That is fine, since it means that property taxes from the city as a whole will only have to account for 15% of the overall costs. I am, however, concerned that there is already talk about increasing the total budget of the centre to \$80 million dollars as opposed to \$68 million, especially if the 85% coverage was before the \$12 million dollar increase.

In summary, I support both projects, especially the new library. I know we will have to pay for the projects through taxes, and that people will complain bitterly about these increases. They always do. If these projects added hundreds of dollars to my property taxes every year, I might complain too. From what the Friends of the Library says, however, the library will add \$14.65 to my tax bill each year for the next 20 years. This means that for less than the cost of a trade paperback per year, I will have access to a beautiful new facility and all that it contains. Since the community centre is being 85% funded by developer's fees, it should cost me far less. I know I will probably never use the community centre, but I have not forgotten that my property taxes are there to provide services for EVERYONE in ALL parts of the city, not just in my own private corner of it. On my own, I could not afford to buy the services offered by these two projects. Together as a city, we can. Both projects will benefit the citizens of Guelph and are necessary to serve our growing population. If the city and citizens of Guelph cannot afford these projects, perhaps we should be charging higher developer's fees to help finance the services and infrastructure that are required to support the thousands of people who are moving into the city due to these development projects.

Sincerely,

Christine Hassan

I am afraid that it would say a great deal about Guelph 's priorities if it can afford to sink money into recreation centre for the wealthy end of the city, and an operations hub that benefits city employees, but it can't sink money into a decent main library, which would benefit people from all income levels.

Mr. Mayor and Councillors of Guelph,

I would like to make it known that I support the current 88 000 square foot plan for the standalone central library in the Baker Street project. After 25 years of debate, a "final" decision, complete with funding details, was made last year regarding this project; however, in the last couple of months, the whole project has

been redesigned, the funding is once again under question, and a "final" decision on the plan is being made under very short notice.

The KPMG report that the city commissioned several years ago made it clear that in order for the central library to maintain BASIC service until 2036, it would require an area of at least 88 000 square feet. This means that the \$42 million and 60 000 square foot proposal will not even cover the needs of the city for the next 16 years, let alone the 50 years or more that history dictates this library will serve the city. As such, at least two generations of Guelphites will rely on this space, and wonder why we did not plan accordingly. It is like a young couple building a home where they will have to stay for the next 50 years, and not including bedrooms for the children that they plan to have in the next ten years. It makes no sense. By committing to the 88 000 square foot library, we should have enough room for at least 20 years, and experience gradual crowding of the facilities over the next 30.

As we know, the main library has three main functions: it contains the administrative offices for the entire library system, it contains the archives, and it serves as the local branch for the downtown area. As the downtown area is part of the population intensification zone, there will be a lot more people relying on the central library as their local branch. I attended the unveiling of the new plan. The initial sketches are stunningly beautiful and promise to revitalize that section of downtown. If the disgracefully rundown central library that we currently have can attract 470 000 people downtown to spend \$5.34 million in a year (2018 figures from New Central Library Q&A report), just imagine the benefits of the proposed plan! The new community spaces alone should attract people to the area. The proposed children's play area should be worth its weight in gold every winter as there are so few indoor play areas in the city.

I know there are concerns about the costs, especially in the time of Covid; however, the standalone design is \$5 million less than the previous one. There is an overall savings of \$25 million on the Baker Street project since several properties do not need to be purchased and remediated. Is it possible to divert some of these savings to fund the library itself? Even an extra few million would help decrease the levy. I know there is a concern about imposing a tax levy during the time of Covid. For most people, it would work out to less than the cost of a cup of coffee a month over 20 years. If the levy added hundreds of dollars a year to my tax bill, I would find the project questionable, but I can give up some coffee to have access to a beautiful facility and all the services it has to offer. I know the people who use other branches will not be pleased, but they have to remember two things: 1) the central library is the administrative centre for the WHOLE system, and 2) we pay taxes so that services are provided across the whole city, not just in our own area.

We must also remember: Covid will pass, hopefully within the next year. We will have to live with the library, however, for at least the next 50 years. Do we want to be remembered as the short-sighted generation that did a half-hearted job on the library, cheating the next generation out of well-needed community space and services? As well, the project itself is being delayed until 2022, so that suggests to me that there is no need to impose the levy until that time, giving people another

year to recover from the Covid crisis. As well, in the Sept. 2019 Central Library Q&A session, the Guelph Public Library Board stated that it was considering a capital fundraising campaign for the library, but could not begin until the City was committed to proceeding with the project. It is apparent that the City is still not committed to proceeding.

I know there is a concern about all the little tax increases needed to pay for our expanding city. Unfortunately, we are growing and we do need to invest in new services. Considering the state of the current central library due to 25 years of neglect, this needs to be one of the tax priorities right now. We need a new facility and it needs to be the best that we can build, as the City will be living with it for a very long time. I do not mind paying taxes if I actually get services out of them, and the 88 000 square foot library would provide a beautiful space and services for years to come.

On a related note, I do not understand why the South End Community Centre is being presented at the same time as the Baker Street Project. It creates a sense of competition between the two projects, implying that we can have only one or other. Both are, however, highly necessary civic projects. I am assuming that developer's fees cover 85% of the community centre while the library gets only about 20% from the same source because there has been more development in the South End than in downtown. I do, however, wonder why the increase of "only" \$11.2 million for the South End Community Centre does not seem to be a concern. From what I can tell from the report, this money seems to be coming out of regular property taxes and reserves. Why is this so, when the library requires a tax levy?

Sincerely,

Christine Hassan

Dear City of Guelph Council, Mayor and City Clerk:

I am in favour of the City going ahead with the building of a new Library to serve the City of Guelph.

Once again, we are in the ridiculous position of having to re-argue that the City takes action on building a new downtown library. Same building, new excuses for not going ahead.

The City has already approved the concept of a new central library, but is hesitating at providing the funds to build it. We have been here before. Much of this opposition comes from the Mayor himself. He has always opposed such a project, except on the one occasion when it became politically expedient to recognise the tidal wave of delegations to Council in favour of the project. Very few people have delegated to Council to oppose the new project.

As the Mayor and Council knows, the existing structure is falling apart, and it does not meet provincial accessibility standards. A new building would resolve those problems. The current facility fails miserably to serve the needs of a rapidly growing city. It is well documented that other cities in Canada that have chosen to build new libraries have reaped economic benefits far beyond the cost of the infrastructure. These cities have also benefited from the social and cultural benefits of their completed library projects. Council and the Mayor already recognize this.

It all comes down to cost. The opponents will argue it costs \$62 million (including potential cost over runs). The proponents of the Library, myself included, frame it differently. It will cost just over \$14.00 per household per year, and will bring much larger economic benefits, including increased revenue, to the City. Nobody has disputed this as far as I am aware. The sum amounts to the same thing; except the anti- library forces on City Council want to scare taxpaying households into thinking this is unaffordable. If people who want a new library, but balk at the cost, understand the monthly or yearly cost is actually less than a price of coffee per month, then that blows up the argument that we cannot afford it. There are others who just don't want a library because they will not use it. Fine. I don't use sports fields or rec centers, but I am willing to pay for those because I recognise their community rather than personal value. If we all paid for only the things we will use, then this would be a City with virtually no services beyond snow ploughing and sewers. The pro- Library community understands that a household cost of \$14 per year for twenty years is easily palatable, even to most households. Less than the cost of a cup of purchased coffee per month. Less than a subscription to Netflix. Less than the purchase of the paperback version of Margaret Atwood's latest novel. Imagine access to a far greater range of as many books as you can read in a year; from a new library that holds many times more books than the branch libraries combined. There isn't any potential greater value for money than this proposed library.

Other, more costly projects have gone ahead, the police station is one, and the proposed south end rec center is another. Yet, the biggest opposition is to this Library?

Guelph has been my home for five decades. It has a reputation for being a good city to live in and raise kids. But it only keeps that reputation if it compares favourably to other nearby cities in the range of services it provides. If Cambridge and other cities can do it, then why is Guelph choosing not to?

Bill McLellan

Dear Mayor and Council:

I am writing to add my voice in support of the proposed expenditure of \$63M for the building of a new main library branch.

When we think, not in terms of number of main branch visits nor number of items borrowed or viewed - both of which are compelling numbers in their own right - but instead in terms of person-hours of benefit derived from consuming the library's services (e.g., time spent reading at home, reflecting and applying), I can think of no other municipal service that can compare. You must not dismiss the importance of the main library branch to such an extremely broad swath of our citizenry.

I wonder if the situation you find yourself in is not unlike a child dreading the removal of a bandaid. Yes, there will be momentary pain to implement the necessary tax levy. But in the longer term, this small tax burden will become bearable, indeed forgotten.

Finally, I'm sure other municipalities have struggled with the costs of building their libraries. What has been their experience? Is there even a single case in Canada in which a municipality has regretted its decision to proceed?

Thank you for your service to the community.

Ted Bangay

September 30, 2020

Guelph Mayor and Councillors:

Please, no more stalling and punting the building of our library down the road! Book and information lovers need it now. The Downtown needs it now. Those with disabilities need it now. Community groups need it now. Citizens living in ever smaller spaces need it now. People without technological access need it now. We must not throw more good money after bad by just trying to keep the old building working.

So many reports and analysis confirm that libraries bring people, profit and revitalization to an area. The learning culture at the heart of every successful city needs a place to call home. Our historic resources need a better home. The branches need a modern main library to draw from. I cannot think of any things, other than a parking lot, that will be diminished by building our library. I suppose one could worry about the cost. But doing that has gotten us exactly to this place- a money sucking old building, rising costs to replace, a totally inadequate often inaccessible main library. A big infrastructure project is exactly what this time calls for. The costs have all been planned and accounted for with a manageable small commitment from property owners.

As a member of a number community groups, we often need a place to meet. One time, the place we found was in a library- the beautiful new Fergus library with meeting space for community groups. We all wondered why we had to travel so far. This is a reminder that libraries are far beyond just a place for books. They are centres for learning in all its dimensions.

Be brave, be bold, be forward thinking and commit to our new main library as outlined in the latest proposal. With the growth expected in the city it must be built with no downsizing!

Sue Rietschin

> I am writing to plead with you to approve the new library proposal for Guelph. You have been given all the facts, arguments, rationales over and over again so I will simply share my own story:

> I moved here 35+ years ago for the only reason that we loved everything about Guelph - its people, its ethics and passions, its location, its trees and gardens, its acceptance of all lifestyles - and its many volunteer opportunities.

> I loved our library from the very start- paying extra to join it while living on a farm nearby. I continue to use it every week and I read books from it every day - even, for a time, with young children living in the Arctic.

> It has grown too small over the years but still I treasure it- donating every year, money and current books. During the pandemic, with the help of our wonderful librarians, I took out dozens and dozens of children's books to read to my grandkids nightly... what a joy. Summers of children's programming were wonderful but often sold out- due to its already cramped quarters.

> I want a new library that can serve as an truly effective community hub - it's goals there for the taking if you as a council can be courageous. In my experience it is our only public building that welcomes ALL citizens (and young entrepreneurs with developmental delays!) in during the good times and the hard, the heat and the freezing cold, with open arms, kindness and respect - offering and life-long learning!

>

> Please step up and be your very best representative of our community's spirit and endurance -I will always use our library vociferously, as does my 92 year old mom, our children, their children and so on. Our library will always embrace and work in partnership with technology but never, ever be will it replaced by tech in this incredible community. Please do your part to make it stay that way for generations to come!

From the heart of
Susan Honeyman

Good day,

I would like to voice my concern and opposition with regards to the cost of this project, specifically the \$62M - \$67M price tag for the library.

As a resident of Guelph and taxpayer, I am opposed to this project.

I support the idea of building a new library, however I am certain that a more cost effective alternative can be found. I am positive that the needs of the library could

be met within a much smaller budget of \$10M such as this design (See pic), a five story office building built for \$10M.

Thanks,
Chris Thorne



Your Worship the Mayor, and Councillors,

I am writing to express my strong support for the construction of the planned new Library.

The new Library will become a focal point for downtown Guelph and indeed for the entire city.

It would foster civic pride and engagement, and it would attract visitors and investment - in addition to its obvious significance as an education hub.

Guelph lacks the sort of core public indoor gathering space that most comparable cities have, in Canada and other developed nations.

It's time - indeed, well past time! - to make that happen.

Sincerely,

David Josephy

Dear Mr Guthrie and Councillors,

I am writing today to say that we need to invest in the best possible downtown public library. This means keeping the fully funded, at \$62 million, 88,000 sq ft new main branch. \$42 million just isn't enough to build the library that the city of Guelph needs and deserves. I would be happy to pay \$1.25/month for the next 20 years (or even more really!) to ensure that we have an amazing public library. When I think of all the services that I get from the public library every single month, \$1.25 is a small price to pay.

Having a robust main branch of our public library is a critical resource for our city -- providing so much more than just reading materials. When I moved to this city 11 years ago, with a 2 year old in tow, the public library was how I met people, learned about community activities and groups, offered educational opportunities to my child and helped me integrate smoothly into life in the city. It's 11 years later and the library is still a huge part of both of our lives.

We know that investing in good public libraries makes good sense economically. As the Prime Minister said in last week's Throne Speech, now is not the time for austerity -- now is the time to invest in our future so that our future can be prosperous.

I urge you to not waste the \$5 million already spent to arrive at the current plan. -
- we need to continue with the fully funded, 88,000 sq ft, library that can provide increased services to our community. We need a great main branch library that reflects the greatness of our city. Our children and grandchildren deserve to have access to this amazing community hub and resource.

Please, for the 55,000 (almost half) of Guelphites who hold library cards, please ensure the best library possible and vote for the current plan, and against reducing the budget to \$42 million for the library.

Thank you
Amelia Meister

Pleeease vote yes on the new library proposal. For 20+ years I've watched the City go back and forth and back and forth and no action happen. We need a new library, and have since at least the 1990s.

Thank you for your time,
Gillian Maurice

All; On behalf of my family of four [Myself, Wife, & two daughters (eldest a schoolteacher), I would like this input to serve as strong support for The Stand Alone Library Proposal on Baker Street being discussed by our City Council.

My wife and I have lived in Guelph and paid property taxes since 1969 when I came to work as a UofG professor and my wife taught primary school in Guelph, both having retired in 2002. My eldest daughter, the schoolteacher, is also a property owner and my youngest is now looking for a house of her own while she handles realty for a local law office.

My entire family are frequent users of our local library for several reasons, and have been most of our lives, with no intention of changing any time soon. Like other families, we were especially heavy users of the downtown facilities when my daughters were younger, and later were school kids. The downtown library continues to be a central part of our family's life.

We consider a library to be important to all successful communities and recognize that the good ones in significantly recognized successful communities serve far more than simple sources of book loans. Unfortunately, our local downtown library is beginning not to be able to serve well the numbers of users expecting a full range of services. Simply put, Guelph now needs a new, larger, fully updated library comparable to those libraries of high-class cities of our size that continue to grow and even attract those beyond our local population. When we travel, we even stop in libraries elsewhere, being particularly impressed with libraries in Lexington, Kentucky and Topeka, Kansas as examples of full-service community libraries.

Guelph desperately needs this important project not only for education and cultural development, but also for community connections and economic stimulus for the whole area.

Thanking all for attention to this input regarding the new downtown library.

Sincerely, Dr. Jim Mottin and Betty Mottin

I am 100% in favour of the new proposal for a stand alone library at the south end of baker Street and the proposed funding for it. I have lived in Guelph since 1972 and while I may not live long enough to see this project through to conclusion, I want to see my grandchildren benefit from this very critical new infrastructure for downtown Guelph.

I feel that the need for a new library downtown has been debated long enough. It's high time that City Council act on this very reasonable proposal.

Sincerely,

Annette Twist

Your Worship the Mayor, and Councillors,

A new main library, based on the recent, south end of the Baker Street District site plan and proposed funding is absolutely vital to the City of Guelph! It needs to go ahead ASAP! The healthiest communities in Ontario embrace their public libraries as vibrant, central hubs for learning, and also these days for socializing. Countless communities have erected brilliant new libraries full of light and space that have separate areas to do book browsing, researching, and for engaging in social media. A library is like a Saturday market. It is a meeting place!

Light and space are the opposites of our badly aging, badly lit 55 year-old building with its damp basement and asbestos walls. It is a very depressing place for browsing or researching. I encourage you to go online to check out other new libraries in Ontario and see what architectural beauties they can be, how they attract people of all ages who not only borrow books, but enjoy the businesses nearby; cafes, restaurants, and shops.

Despite not have the funding that everyone expected, we cannot let go of an over 25-year-old dream. I moved here 20 years ago and was excited to hear that the locals were petitioning for a new library... IMAGINE MY SURPRISE 20 YEARS LATER TO SEE THAT IT STILL HASN'T HAPPENED!

Reading, education, learning, and children's library programs are vital parts of every society, every community. I ask that you not renege on this project, that you go full speed ahead and give the gift of a new main library that this beautiful city deserves!

Would it not be great to be known as the mayor and council who helped restore Guelph to its former glory as an exciting city with a bustling downtown? This could be your legacy, like it was Andrew Carnegie's!

Thank you very much,
Melissa Campbell

Your Worship the Mayor, and Councillors,
I moved to Guelph over 20 years ago and at that time the Tribune had articles about a new library. I thought it would be a couple of years and then I could take my kids to a nice library and give them the joy of books.

Sadly, 20 years have gone by, my children have grown. And no library. The Guelph library is so run down. They try to make it better by buying furniture and painting it but it is still the same sad skeleton of a building . It's actually a little embarrassing that our town has such little regard for its library. A new library would bring with it so many opportunities to keep the downtown alive, especially now that covid is shuttering all retail stores. Please keep this project going . Let's not wait 20 years for another generation to grow up and the downtown to become a ghost town.

Sincerely ,

Catherine Bell

I am not against a new library...just spending over \$60 million is ridiculous!

There are many local engineers/contractors/designers/builders that would and could do it for a fraction of the price.

Let's be responsible with the taxpayers money please.

Nicole Sheehy

September 30, 2020

City Councillors and Mayor:

I write to you about news that the downtown library may be closed or relocated. It is obvious to me that the downtown library, or any public library, is essential for society - for the very young and the very old (like me). Whenever I was in the downtown library it was jammed full of readers and others on computers. Sometimes it was hard to find a seat. This is evidence that libraries are popular - not just for books and reading, but for lectures and other events. People who use a downtown library are also shoppers who patronize stores, restaurants and other businesses.

One cannot overemphasize the importance of public libraries.

I hope you will ensure that the library is relocated and that it remains open long hours for public use. Downtown is a good location.

Helen Hansen

Guelph does not need a \$60 million +library!
Please stop spending money irresponsibly!

Say NO!!

Angela Anderson

We DO NOT WANT a new library that costs \$60 + million dollars!
What a waste of money!

Stop irresponsible spending!

Thank you!

Angela Kressner

I really really do not want a \$60 million library.

We live in a City who's Hospital is not nearly equipped enough to manage the needs of our growing population.

Can the \$60 million not go towards addressing that VERY IMPORTANT need???

Suzanne Muscat

I can't believe I still have to shout this from the rooftops, but LIBRARIES MATTER.

Libraries matter during a pandemic

Libraries matter during a housing shortage

Libraries matter during an opioid and overdose crisis

Libraries matter.

It shouldn't be a question of this vs that. Or us vs them. Or 'not right now'.

Yes, NOW. Our main branch is crumbling, and has been for many years. Upgrades cannot be made to this space in an effective way, and we need a new, state-of-the-art branch that can meet all kinds of needs. And do not have the audacity to tell me that 'no one uses it'. I walk by the main library every day and it is incredibly well utilized for what it is able to offer. However, the current state of the building will cause it to always fall short when it comes to capacity, accessibility, safety, and resources. The months that the library closed their doors for safety protocols were devastating to many. Folks without a stable wifi connection at home (or those under-housed entirely) were often found outside the library daily to use the wifi, just to stay connected to the world. When curbside pickup opened I saw daily lineups and packed book drop. When they reopened their doors for computer usage and loans, people rejoiced. Library users regained a small beacon of hope found in resource access and a reinstated sense of routine.

For those who feel libraries are an outdated service model, I ask you to look at [Idea Exchange](#), the public library system in Cambridge. Their branches blend traditional libraries with art galleries, community gardens and a state of the art technology hub. Their recently renovated main branch saw 780,000 visitors in 2018, and boasted over 78,000 program participants that same year. Their seed library saw over 3,000+ packets of seeds borrowed from 2017-2018. Their makerspace empowers and educates citizens of all ages in all forms of technology, from HAM radio, to engineering, to rapid prototyping. Their strong main branch serves a network of satellite branches equipped to deal with the unique needs of each neighbourhood.

That is not nothing. That matters.

I am not coming to you as a representative of the Guelph Tool Library, though I have been employed by the organization for the last three years, and I see first-hand the impact that shared spaces have on a community. I am coming to you as a

citizen, a taxpayer, and a person who understands that libraries are critical to a vibrant, well rounded city that supports those who live in it.

I understand the gravity of the current situation, but this waiting period for a library is not new, and can not be prolonged any further. We had and approved a plan. When the City felt ill-equipped to deal with the criticisms from some concerned citizens, the mayor drastically changed his tune on a project he once claimed to support. I recognize that the state of the world has changed greatly since March of this year, however, that does not negate the need for libraries. A new library needs to exist in tandem with poverty reduction, harm reduction, affordable and geared to income housing, and public health in a world experiencing a pandemic. A new library must be integrated in to the solution, and not part of the laundry list of problems that the City of Guelph wishes to place on the backburner. This is our chance to create something that serves the "new world" we are set to live in indefinitely. **Let's make this space something that matters.**

Steph Clarke

Hello,

I am writing as a concerned citizen in regards to the high price tag for the new library that is being proposed and I believe it is just too high.

First let me state that I understand the need for libraries in our community! My mother uses them quite frequently and I have also attended the programs that have been offered.

However! I feel like this is just too much to spend one 1 sole library for a number of reasons!

1) taking into consideration the pandemic which has caused many of these programs to be either cancelled, postponed, reduced sizes, or done virtually I feel like is a main reason why the price tag needs to be decreased. Many people are still without work or decreased hours and spending so much on a building/ amenities that may not be used very much in the future due to a pandemic is reckless. Because of this our society is changing and will continue to change. More people are choosing to socially distant and this trend is expected to continue for years to come!

2) Technology is changing and as a result in 20-30 years who knows where our society will be. Books are already becoming obsolete as so much information is already available online. Obviously that's not the only reason for a library but it's something that does need to be considered.

3) without receiving any of the funding from the government that we were expecting this price must be reduced! It's simply too high.

As a young home owner with 2 young boys I can't justify spending this much money on a single building that when you look at trends will most likely be obsolete by the time they reach the age of paying for it. Libraries are already located within each school, we have a University that allows access to our high school students and technology is changing at such a rapid rate that we don't know what our future holds combined with a global pandemic and millions losing their jobs- we simply can't justify a \$62 Million price tag for something that may very well be useless within a few decades.

Please reconsider the price and lower this as I don't want my 2 sons paying for this for the next 20 years or so!

Sincerely
Stephanie Kerr

Mayor and Councillors,

We are writing to ask that you expeditiously approve the plan to build the new stand-alone library on Baker Street, as recommended by city staff.

The current economic situation calls for a courageous public sector investment in our downtown, an investment that will create jobs and revitalize our downtown economy at a time when private sector investment is constrained. The proposed increased tax levy represents a negligible cost for a significant and historic public good.

The Guelph Public Library is a very important part of our downtown, a centre for education, information, community and connections. There are 55,000 current active library cardholders, disproving the theories that 'no one uses the library any more', or that we should build a smaller library than the projected 88,000 sq ft. facility.

Our existing main library is in deplorable condition, requiring major repairs, and is inaccessible to many. It would cost millions to upgrade it to meet the new Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) accessibility standards, money that will be wasted if we again delay the construction of the new library.

Last year Council voted overwhelmingly in favour of moving ahead with the new library. It is deplorable that some members now seem to want to take advantage of the current health crisis to revert to a "penny wise, pound foolish" position that would hurt not only our community's weakest members but also the downtown businesses that look to them for leadership and support. Nor is it constructive to posit a false dichotomy that pretends we can only have a new library at the cost of other important public facilities - city building is not a zero sum game.

Rather it is time to take an important and historic step forward, to create a legacy for this council in the Guelph tradition of building a strong and vibrant downtown to anchor our community's growth. We look to you to act in the best interests of Guelph.

Pauline Head and Rick Petersen

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Guelph City Councillors,

On September 29 I watched the presentation by Duncan Bates, Megan Torza (and others) concerning the reimagined Baker Street District and new Central Library.

I was very excited to see that the library is, if anything, even more attractive and functional than the one proposed earlier. It is well situated, brings attention to Chapel Lane and Baker Street, and will become a favorite destination of Guelphites of all ages and from every part of the city. It will say to the world at large "Guelph is a city that values curiosity, creativity and community engagement". And it does all this without sacrificing space, appearance, or convenience. It saves money, too, but of course you know that.

The design of the newly configured Baker Street District seems especially thoughtful and intelligent, incorporating the library, attractive living and outdoor spaces and lots of parking. I can imagine this previously dead area reinvigorated and full of activity. That just what I want for 21st century Guelph.

I hope that you are as enthusiastic as I am about this exciting development. In truth, I really can't imagine otherwise. A Smart City like Guelph deserves nothing less.

Respectfully

Nancy Ryan

I support the building and completion of the new Guelph library!

Sincerely,

Fern Cooper

Honourable Council Members,

We were privileged to participate in an online presentation explaining the revised downtown library plans last night. As a result we would like to communicate our support for this project.

We are downtown residents, and also own a condo unit, where our son and his partner reside. The vitality of the city's core is very important to us.

Our reaction to the revised plan is:

1. It is an attractive and efficient use of the property. The layout will provide pedestrian friendly use of the space, without sacrificing parking. It also respects important sightlines to the Basilica of Our Lady.
2. The library space has been sized to allow for current and future needs. In particular, the provision of appropriate archival facilities will be an important contribution to our community.
3. The residential units, which will be directly in line with the view from our Yarmouth property, look like they will be well situated. They will build upon the current downtown residential projects which are in high demand.
4. The reconfiguration of this project appears to have resulted in cost reductions which should be embraced, rather than delaying the work which may result in additional expense.

We encourage council members to support this project and the opportunity it presents for the positive transformation of Guelph's core.

Tom and Marion Reidel

Evening Scott,

Thanks for your email.

I'm not sure I recall getting answers to my questions last night.

I'm also not sure about the proposed library (which seems somewhat like some others) and wonder whether through impatience we as citizens may miss an opportunity to build a more noteworthy library. It's easy to become excited about an improved facility, but not so easy to plan for something as meaningful as our ancestors somehow managed to do, with a fraction of the resources – think of the basilica. It seems strange that a community as large as ours strives to build a library less striking than (say) a university does with a community a fraction of the size (e.g. <10%). For instance, below is a photo of a [library at my alma mater](#). Last night's presentation left me with more questions than I originally had.

Thanks again,

-Bill James

(www.chiwater.com)



Hello all,
I hope all is well. I would like this email to represent and be entered into record that as a citizen of Guelph, I do NOT support the excess spending of funds for the new Central Library.
Please add to the record for Friday's meeting.
Travis Sachs

Hi Phil and June,
As a resident of Ward 3, I am writing to you to express my enthusiastic support for the plans presented last night for the new central library and redevelopment of the Baker Street District. I think it will create an amazing community space that will dramatically speed up the ongoing revitalization of the downtown core. I hope that the city will be able to provide their full support to this project and move forward with these plans as quickly as possible.
Thanks,
Fiona Inglis

Based on what I saw last evening, I'm in favour of the new plan for the Library and the Baker District.

I would strongly encourage fiscal prudence on this, however. We have regularly exceeded budgets on these big projects (Police HQ, proposal for South End Rec, original Baker St./Library proposal, etc.).

Bruce Wilson

Please do all you can to support the plan for a new public library on Baker Street. Guelph's standing as a first class city that attracts people and business needs the support of first class institutions like the library.

kevin staunton

Please do not approve the new library. \$60 million for a library is too much on a normal day let alone during these uncertain times.

Phil Collier

Hello Cathy & Leanne,

As my reps on city council I request you vote FOR a new library being built in Guelph.

For many ,many years I have supported the annual book sale as we raised \$\$ for this cause-may it not be in vain.

WE NEED A NEW LIBRARY for Guelph!

Wendy Lindsay

Good evening,

I am writing to express my support for the revised library and the Baker Street District design. I am fortunate to live in close proximity to the downtown area, and I'm a "regular" at the GPL's downtown branch.

Having worked on Baker Street for a number of years, I'm thrilled that the City and their partners are proposing an innovative infill project that will bring more people

downtown. A parking lot is simply not the highest and best use for such an ideal location in our City. This proposal is the type of City planning we need if we want to attract more people to live and work in the existing built-up area (while meeting the province's ambitious growth targets and preventing further sprawl/greenfield development).

For the library specifically, I can't help but notice surrounding areas and the facilities/amenities provided. Our downtown/flagship branch pales in comparison. For example, Kitchener's library is a beautiful facility that offers unique programming and events and is constantly full of folks from all social and economic backgrounds. Similar to parks, libraries are equalizers. They bring people together - and I can't think of something we need more, particularly now. The City knows we have grossly outgrown the downtown branch and a larger facility that meets the needs of Guelph's diverse population is critical.

I support the new library location and standalone building. It will provide a much needed accessible community hub in an ideal location, with the ability to provide a range of programming options. I am also pleased that it can be constructed without being tied to approvals/construction of the proposed condominiums. I think this reduces a number of risks in terms of timing.

From an economic development perspective, the downtown can anticipate increased business from an influx of downtown residents and visitors. An increase in economic activity will further complement the recent changes and investments in the downtown core (e.g. new parking garage). These are all steps towards creating a thriving downtown that residents can live, work and play in.

I hope that Council will make a decision with the public's interest truly at heart, and not just the privileged, vocal taxpayers that often engage in public meetings because they have the time, energy and resources to do so. Please consider the members of our community that aren't in a position to engage through the traditional format (and even more so due to COVID), but would benefit significantly from this development moving ahead.

These are trying times from a financial perspective, and I appreciate all the time that has been put into this huge decision. But now, more than ever, we need to think beyond a Council's term and how we can create equitable spaces for future generations to enjoy.

I want to extend my gratitude to City staff for their thoughtful consideration of a revised approach and express my support for all seven recommendations put forward in their report. I would also like to thank our Ward 2 Councillors for circulating resources and encouraging engagement. I look forward to seeing this project move ahead.

Thank you,

Julie Welch

Hello,

Just want to say I heartily support the new library plans...I love the library and believe we deserve a new library that can help our community grow..

Sincerely,

Cynthia Missabie
Ward 2

Last night I watched the architects' presentation of plans for the Baker District and proposed new library. I strongly urge you to support generous funding for these projects. Clearly the improvement of the Baker St lot is past due, and clearly a new central library is needed. Guelph residents will eventually or even immediately be grateful that the projects provide new points of beauty and pride for their city. They won't miss the money. They will proudly visit and point out to friends how the projects have improved the city, and how they were designed to fit and delight.

Mayors are remembered not only for their prudence and good management. They are remembered for their legacy of built heritage.

John McLeod

Hi folks,

My name is byron murray, and I have been a resident of Guelph for 14 years now, not too long, but long enough to know what is working for me as a citizen here and what would make things a little easier for me and those in my community.

The new library downtown has been a long awaited, long hoped for project. Something I have been wishing for and waiting for for quite a while. As the city grows, and it has grown in the last 14 years, I see an increased need for a new, up to date, functional, open, shared community space which is built around the needs of all people in this diverse and expanding city. Libraries fulfill this function of public space, community centre and learning commons where folks of all stripes can come together to educate themselves and each other as to what is happening locally, nationally, and globally. Libraries provide essential services, as recently noted with the tablets being lent out for folks to make court dates, or the get togethers for older folks, or the room rentals for small groups with no place of their own.

The city has long outgrown the downtown library and a new central location would be ideal. I have read repeatedly that the cost may be prohibitive, but I believe that it is as important as any new city infrastructure and should be prioritized. If it

would help I would pay an extra 2\$ a month in taxes to help fund this project. I would pay an extra 3\$ a month in property taxes, as well. Paying a bit more for my next 30 years in this city would be well worth the resources the library would provide me, and others. Anything to be sure that this library project succeeded.

Please continue forward with the new library project downtown. Please ensure all funding is available for this project. Invest in the city now, for the gains in the future.

Thank you.

--

byron.

Mayor and Council,

I am solidly behind the revised redevelopment plan for the Baker Street precinct, anchored by a new central library.

Please have the vision and good sense to advance this critical project which will add a vital new asset to the city's cultural infrastructure, and which will stimulate a renaissance of our failing downtown core.

Sincerely,

Murray Clarke

Good evening councillors, mayor, and city staff,

I hope that this is finding you all healthy and happy!

I'm writing to you today to voice my concern around the possible abandonment of the new library project.

I won't wax poetic, as there's little that I have to say that hasn't already been eloquently and emphatically expressed by other concerned citizens and the library board. As a council, you have the opportunity to reaffirm your commitment to invest in Guelph's cultural, educational, and social potential at a time when it is absolutely crucial that you do so. For all our sake, I urge you to vote in favour of continuing with this project as planned. Without delay, without corners cut.

Thank you for your time - I'll be tuning-in on Monday.

Blue skies from Harris Street,

Braden Phelan

Dear Mr. Guthrie. I see that you have asked on Twitter for reassurance that Guelph residents are comfortable with a higher tax cost for building the new library. Yes, indeed, I am. You know we've been talking about this project for decades. You know our library use is higher than most cities. You know that the business accounting shows that the library project is a money-maker, not a drain on the city. (I wish I didn't have to make this argument. Do we expect other public services such as health and education to make a profit?) It is time to stop talking and delaying. Time to build this library, which serves the population in so many, many ways.

There will always be people who whinge about taxes (and some close to the edge who feel the pinch of increases, though these are often not the same people at all). Taxes are how we take care of each other and how we provide services that would cost so much more individually.

Please get behind this library project,
best,
Helen Hoy

I wish to add my voice to the many Guelph citizens who are strongly in support of building a new public library 88,000 sq. feet. Downtown revitalization is essential. A library built for the needs of the city now and in the immediate future is vital.

I am an active library user. I have now lived in Guelph for about 50 years. The main branch of the library has always been my library. There is no doubt that the current building is outdated, in poor physical condition, and much too small for the population it serves.

This is not the time to think small. This is not the time to start again. Guelph needs this done now not in 5 years. A smaller version of the library simply makes no sense on any level.

Build now. Build well. Give the city as a whole something to be proud of!

Judy Hodgson.
M.Sc.
Glasgow St.
Guelph

I am writing to voice my full support for the new Guelph Central library and Baker Street district plans. It is very important for us to continue to develop cultural hubs in our downtown core. This project contributes to that goal in a very meaningful way

Michael Bellingham BLA

OALA associate member
Guelph Resident

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the future of the Library development. As a Guelph tax payer I am strongly opposed to this development, especially at this time.

While library's are quickly becoming a thing of the past, my biggest concern is the enormous budget which at this point is far beyond what Guelph has to reasonably spend considering the unprecedented financial challenges facing the Guelph citizens, businesses and city as a whole. I find it inconceivable that this amount of money would be spent on a project that is questionable at best under normal circumstances.

I respectfully request that this project be canceled, at least for the next few years. Taxpayers cannot carry the burden of the future taxes that would result if this moves forward.

Bob

Bob Speers

I would like to add my support to the other Guelphites who strongly support the building of the New Library. If done properly, it has the potential to be a significant meeting place and focal point for our community that the New City Hall has, regrettably, failed to fulfill. Many progressive cities of our size have realized the benefits of investing in modern upscale Libraries that have revitalized their Downtown areas and stimulated growth. In many cases they are combined with large Town Squares that Guelph is sadly lacking.

Respectfully submitted.

Ralph Billings

I have seen the proposed plans for the new Guelph Library in the downtown area and think it is grand! So much space for all the library has to offer us --- meeting rooms, activity rooms, quiet reading spaces, natural light, archives and views -- and parking as well.

This is a building that meets so many needs of the people in our community --- an inclusive space for all ages and all people. I hope you will be able to support this proposed plan.

Sandra Wilson

Here is my humble opinion--- The library is needed, eventually, BUT, why at 62 million? Kitchener is building a new one at 107,000 sq feet for 10 million. They will have a demo kitchen for cooking classes, an outdoor garden space and quiet rooms for reading, books and DVD's etc. The 10 million is only the construction amount. Another 1.3 million will equip the building with chairs, tables, computers etc... All on one accessible floor. Why do we need such a huge structure with 4 levels? Covid has hit my family and many others really hard, and any tax increase might just push us over the edge financially. Sure, we own our house, purchased in 1976, and have seen the taxes increase since then horrifically, but there is no more disposable income with no work, so these projects should not be cancelled, just put on hold for a while and trim the design even more to a more affordable one. Also, take a look at the cost overruns for the Museum, City Hall, River Run (which is running at a deficit) and the Police station. Will this happen with this construction project? There seems to be a pattern here. It makes my head spin. Thank you for allowing me to express my opinion, even though you who are reading may not agree.

Linda Liddle

Hi there,

I'd like to express my full support for the new library in the Baker District. The long-term vision is inspiring and will help Guelph become a world class mid-sized city. It's in line with modern urban planning best practices (i.e. Jane Jacobs) and will help integrate active transportation, community and business.

The cost seems high, but split between 120-160k residents, \$15 a year is a steal for the value it provides. The library will provide space to provide services to those that need it most, families and their children. This will help with re-training and job searches, that will in turn increase prosperity and lower city spending on mental health and housing. I'd rather teach someone to fish, than give them a fish. The ROI will be immense!

The usual complaints will come.

- 1) What about parking? Answer: Bike, walk from some of the nearby parking spots, or take the bus! I would support fewer parking spots, if there are significant cost savings. In the medium-long term, an autonomous car will drop people off, possibly because they've lost their delivery driver job, and they need to re-train.
- 2) It's too expensive. A: The cost of inaction isn't nothing. The upgrades to the current library would be in the millions (see KPMG report), for a library that's not an inspiring place to work, and doesn't have what we need in the 21st century. The

Baker Street redevelopment will make Guelph the envy of the GTA and will housing prices, and development charges up, increasing revenue for the city.

3) I don't use the library. A: You don't use the current library. If you build it, they will come. After working at other university's libraries, I found McLaughlin at U of G to be a terrible, depressing space and I rarely used it.

The job displacement from AI in the next 5-20 years is extremely serious for different levels of government, and the people displaced, who are already struggling with affordability and stable employment. A state of the art library seems like a brilliant investment at this time, and a perfect fit for the vision of the Baker District.

Please, do not lose your nerve on this. This is a long-term project that is needed now, more than ever. COVID will pass in 2021, but the long-term vision for the Baker District is incredible. This will leave a true legacy in the city; something the councillors and mayor can look back on with great pride. Let's get this approved and implemented as soon as reasonably possible.

Scott McCaw

Dear Councillors and Mayor Guthrie,

As a resident of Guelph since 1985 I have participated in and supported over these past 35 years many visionary initiatives that various Councils and Mayors have also supported. These initiatives have enhanced the " Quality of Life" in our very fine City.

Some of these being:

a. Fundraising for the River Run Centre
b. Fundraising for The Guelph Youth Music Centre
c. Project Manager for the establishment of The Volunteer Centre of Guelph/Wellington .(now known as PIN).
We now have the opportunity to support another Project, the New Main Library(which has already been approved by Council).

Many of Guelph's citizens, former Councillors and Mayors have been working to have this Project finally come to fruition!

Since 1992 when it was first determined that the current Library needed an expansion or a new build, we still are waiting. It is 2020!

Hours of work on studies, designs, locations, fundraising etc.....has been going on since 2014.

So many excuses have been made to continually stall this visionary, exciting building; approvals have been made by other Councils and Mayors as well as our current Council and STILL, excuses continue to be made by some to not go ahead with the Library.

Enough, it is TIME!

Vision, strength, conviction, concern for what is needed and would enhance as well as contribute so much to the Quality of Life factor for ALL Citizens, regardless of their age, gender, race, economic status, and education.

Recommendations have been made, the design is in place, the cost per household is \$14.65 per year, IT is Time to move.

Please have the Vision and the Will to make this happen now.

Kind Regards,
Carol Ann Douglas

P.S. I and many others wish to still be around to enjoy this NEW Library!

I am writing to indicate my support for the new Guelph library as outlined in the staff report. I think it is time to move ahead with this long overdue project.

Thank you.

Julianne Pettigrew

I definitely do not want a new 60 million dollar library.

Cheers,

Clarke Snedden

Your Worship the Mayor, and Councillors,

I am writing this email in support of the plan to build a standalone Main Library, at the very least, matching the square footage of the original plan. Actually, I can't believe that Guelph residents are being called upon to defend building this valuable public institution, from those who would wish to kick it down the road once again, and in a diminished form!

We have waited too much time, at least two decades, for this project to get underway, with each delay making the project more expensive. Meanwhile, our neighbours in Cambridge and KW are investing heavily in their library infrastructure, which is providing engaging and beautiful public institutional spaces for their local population as well as attracting visitors from out of town.

As a Guelph citizen, I am in favour of accepting the levy on my property taxes as this is an important and vital investment in our city. We must not be left behind. For less than the cost of a Tim Horton's coffee a month, we can build ourselves a legacy for generations of Guelph residents to come. The current library was built over 50 years ago and will cost too much to repair in the short and long term. It has done valiant service in its time, but now we need a building that meets the needs of 21st century library users, which are complex and very different from the needs of library users in 1965.

Mayor Guthrie and Council, I urge you to seize the moment and vote in favour of at least an 88,000 sq. foot library to be built according to the new standalone plan. Your bold action will create the jewel of the downtown and re-invigorate a part of the city that was suffering long before the pandemic. When stores in the north-west end of Wyndham had to close around ten years ago because of the library that was to be built, it's been tumbleweeds there. Since that time, more and more businesses have languished and closed. The Library and the Baker Street residential / business development will be a net benefit for the entire downtown and for the city as a whole. It's time to think big and make this Library project happen now!

Thank you for the opportunity to express my views.

Sincerely,

Sidney Sproule

Ward 2 resident

Dear City Council:

I am writing to urge you to give the go-ahead to plans for the new main library in Guelph! It's so exciting to anticipate a beautiful, spacious and innovative facility for Guelph residents to use, enjoy and be proud of.

This is a golden opportunity to design and build an architecturally stunning and extremely functional resource for the Guelph community! I think of it in much the same way as our wonderful new City Hall, with the excellent splash pad/skating rink, or the artful reinvention that now houses our Civic Museum.

Please continue to work for this community's health by voting YES to plans for the Main Library!

Suzanne Duiker Kroon

Your Worship the Mayor, and Councillors,

I wholeheartedly support the construction of a new main library for Guelph. I believe that this should be started immediately.

Why wait? The cost will undoubtedly increase over time, and a new and vibrant main library would be a very important and uplifting project during a time when people are feeling depressed and directionless. It will provide much needed employment, both in its construction and afterwards. Now is the time to be investing in the future. Help us all believe that there is one!

A new main library, based on the recent, south end of the Baker Street District site plan and proposed funding is absolutely vital to the City of Guelph. Its construction has been delayed for far too long. I understand that the library is still recommended to be 88,000 sq ft but the price has been reduced to \$62 million along with an approximate cost savings of \$25 million for the whole Baker District site. The new site design creates many opportunities as identified in the report. The library will be funded by Development Charges, sale of property, reserves and a new Tax Levy of .39% for 20 years. The .39% works out to an average of \$14.65 annually per household or \$293 total over the 20 year time frame.

My husband and I would be delighted to pay an extra \$30 per year on our tax bill for such a worthwhile project.

Let's not delay this any more. Enough is enough. Let's build something that we can all be proud of.

Sincerely,

Caroline Harvey-Smith

Your Worship the Mayor, and Councillors,

I support the construction of a new main library for Guelph. I believe that this should be started immediately.

Why wait? The cost will undoubtedly increase over time. It will provide much needed employment, both in its construction and afterwards. Now is the time to be investing in the future.

Let's not delay this any more. Enough is enough. Let's build something that we can all be proud of.

Sincerely,

Douglas Haines

Both my husband and I fully support this project. It will greatly enhance the downtown area of Guelph in our opinion.

Pat Lametti

Dear Clerks - I wish to add my voice to all those who work so hard to bring the new library into reality. Thank you for adding my voice to this amazing project.

Heidi Klaming

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

I'm writing to urge careful planning of the new main branch which will be such a boost to our downtown and our community's common space. This pandemic has demonstrated how critical common space is for those of us who live without access to backyards, balconies, personal living space large enough for visitors and for everyone one of us for physically-distanced social connections.

If the majority of council vote in favour of a stand-alone library, then consider carefully how to animate the public space around the condominium developments.

We want a thriving, animated downtown core -- as has been happening with the street closures to allow for outside dining during this year's warmer months. Enthusiasm for Guelph's Five Festivals free street events are evidence of how important common space is to our cultural lives. As is the wonderful, multi-use space in front of our new City Hall.

So many of us, who first arrived in Guelph as university students, have been looking forward to a visionary central library for decades and we're excited that it is finally happening! The success of previous years' annual book sales attests to how important literacy is to this community. The cultural life of Guelph attracts good employers, and well-paying jobs.

Guide the planning of this new library wisely for the generations to come.

--

K. Vanessa Hyland

Hi Leanne,

I just wanted to send a quick message to let you know that **I support the new central library and the Baker District redevelopment**. I believe the cost is worth the economic and long term benefits for the City, and that the redevelopment of the Baker District will provide a cultural hub for the citizens of Guelph. It will also provide much needed space for those who do not have the same kinds of resources at home that we do.

Dan Gillis

I and everyone in my house DO NOT WANT a library. That is 6 of us. I own a solar company and i would want the city to use the money to invest in solar projects so Guelphs hydro bills wont get out of control. Within 15 years EVERYONES bills will have DOUBLED. this is simple math based on the past 20 years of increases. And because of the pandemic it will probably be more like 12 years. Stabalize our grid so people can afford it.

Wendy Berglund and family

Dear councillors, mayor, and city staff,

I hope this email reaches you in a good place - physically, mentally and emotionally.

I am emailing you today to contribute my thoughts on the new library, on which I understand you'll be voting on Monday. I know you're all busy, so I'll be brief!

Quite simply, we cannot afford *not* to move forward with the construction of a new library. Here are some concise reasons why I feel the project must move forward:

- The current downtown building is overrun, lacking accessibility & updated resources, and in need of costly, major repairs
- The \$1.25/month this will cost each household (over 20 years), is an extremely low ask.
- Austerity does not lead to prosperity
- A new library is *crucial* for our more vulnerable citizens
- Research has shown that for each \$1 invested in modern, community-oriented libraries, you get \$7 back into the local economy. That's huge!
- I can't think of a better time to create jobs and revitalize our downtown!
- The current library was built when Guelph's entire population was under 40,000. Now there are over 55,000 active cardholders. And Guelph is *still* growing. The library must grow with it - in size, and in updated resources.

I'd like to close with this quote: "*We all do well when we all do well*" ([Moonfruits'](#) song, *Seven Billion*).

Thank you for your time, and hopefully your vote,

Liv Cazzola

If you had 60mil to invest of your own money, would you build something that

probably won't be used in the next 5-10 years? Technology is changing the world and people who use libraries...well in ten years?

No to the Library!!!

Les Indoe

Hello.

It was very exciting to see the possibilities of a new library in downtown Guelph.

I think it should be called a Community Hub because modern-day libraries are so much more than just books. Books - Yes! But a place for people to gather, to create, to inspire. A place where people of all ages can discuss, celebrate, study.

Millennials are the fastest-growing population visiting libraries around the world.

Libraries are have also become tourist attractions.

And, while downtown, Guelphites can shop and dine!

Thank you.

Lisa Kelso

I am communicating to express my support for proceeding with the new main library project.

Sincerely,

Brooks Wickett

Good Morning,

Please circulate to council members that we wish our names to be added to those who support the proposal for relocation of the new Library to be discussed at the October 5 and 7 Council meetings. There is no need to re-open discussion about the need for a library: this has been decided and approved by council. The new proposal is only for re-location of the library, which we support.

In confidence of a positive outcome,

Sally Stelter

Gilbert Stelter

Dear Councillors,

On learning that you, Mayor Guthrie, intend to raise again the new main library budget for consideration, I am appalled. The Library Board and City staff have worked hard to design a new facility that will meet minimum needs of Guelph citizens, and Council has endorsed it; there are no "frills" or extras included that you should cut from the plan. The COVID19 pandemic is showing us that more space will be needed, not less, as this and likely future pandemic situations arise. The need to observe social distancing might be with us for many years. Therefore the space enclosed must be kept as designed. And please, Councillors and Mayor, stop attempting to impose austerity budgeting to this facility; austerity does not produce real financial savings over the long term, and never succeeds in improving the wellbeing of citizens. A new main library that meets needs adequately is essential to the city.

I support the staff recommendation of the revised plan for the Baker District development and the new main library and request that Council accept it and move ahead without delay.

Please contact me if I can clarify further.

Sincerely,

Sally Ludwig

Good morning. I know you are hearing loudly from folks who do not want to proceed with the investment in Guelph's future by building the new library. **You need to know that there is a large number of us who want this to proceed immediately** after what has been an unconscionable delay.

I will not go into all the reasons why this should proceed, why we need to invest in our growing community, how this spending is not wasteful but is affordable and necessary. I am sure you know all this, and either are ignoring the facts or playing to a base who want you to invest in hospitals (these folks obviously need to head to a library and do some research), or who understand the price of everything and the value of nothing.

My family and I will be watching what happens here, and will be voting accordingly in the next municipal election.

Thank you for your service to this city,

Ellen and John Reinhart

Jake & Julie Reinhart

Will & Beth Reinhart

Job Reinhart

> Please know that we support the values and vision of this plan, as citizens of Guelph for the past 52 years.

>

> Andrew, Gerald & Elizabeth Bloomfield

Dear Mayor, Council and Clerk,

I am writing in support of the new main branch library.

Libraries have the possibility of being an anchor for communities. When I travel the country and the world, I have attended lectures, conferences, concerts and more at libraries. Libraries provide education, literacy and internet access to those in our community who need it most.

There is a cost associated with this. This cost is outweighed by the benefits. I would encourage you to read the study titled [Understanding Economic Impact and Public Libraries](#). This shows how one can go about evaluating what to consider when building a library.

As you know, the economic multiplier of libraries can vary but is generally about [\\$5 of economic development](#) to \$1 of spend. This, in turn, can increase general revenues as businesses and houses join our growing city. When people and businesses look at where to locate a vibrant library can be a draw. So not only is this a good in and of itself through the obvious literary and cultural benefits, but it has the potential of being a revenue generator for the city. This could be a potential tool to add to your economic development team when they talk with businesses and developers.

Often these are looked at as a budget item in and of themselves. However, an activity such as this can raise general revenues as well, and that marks an important part of the business case.

Fortune favours the bold. I understand the hesitancy due to financial and political concerns. I urge you to be visionaries. What can our city look like? How will we take care of our children and elderly who use libraries to learn, grow, and increase their happiness?

You have been given an important and serious job by the citizens of the city, and I believe that it is one you all do not take lightly. I appreciate the debate that is

ongoing around this. But I urge you to ask yourself- will our city on the balance be better off with or without the library?

I believe that it will be better with the new library. I believe that we have a duty to work make our city a place that is the envy of Ontario and Canada. And I believe that when you look at the facts you will join me in this vision.

Should you have any questions or concerns, I am happy to discuss further.

Thank you very much for your time in this matter, and thank you very much for your service to me and the citizens of Guelph.

Sincerely,

-David Estill

Ward 1

Guelph

To Mayor and Councillors:

I would like to express my support for the proposed changes in the Baker St. redevelopment project to allow for a new freestanding

library to be constructed on the south end of the site. It seems that this change would involve overcoming fewer constraints in the planning and building of the new library and would also be less expensive for the library component of the project.

I have waited many years along with many people I know and worked at many book sales to finally see the chance of this new

library actually coming to pass. The time is now to provide an exciting new city facility for the growing and creatively developing City

of Guelph. I have paid property taxes for thirty years to help an aged library limp along and I am quite sure that this is surely one of the projects that have taken the longest time to see the light of day. I sincerely hope that the Councillors and the Mayor will agree with this.

Yours sincerely,

Wilma Honey.

Dear Mayor Guthrie and all Councillors,

I share a beautiful art studio space that overlooks St. George's Square on Wyndham Street with two other artists. Over the past seven years we have seen a numerous businesses come and go in the downtown core, and currently our building is up for sale. The owners have seen only two interested buyers come in to take a look at the building in the past six months. I can only surmise that buyers must be reluctant to imagine their business in the downtown core due to what appears to be a lack of foot traffic and interest in the area. Bravo to the opening of a pedestrian area on Macdonell Street for restaurants to welcome the community in the summer continues to attract customers and as a result, good business. I applaud the City and Council for extending the timeline of the pedestrian area into the fall.

As I write this, I am looking out the window of my downtown art studio as light descends across St. George's Square. The street looks depressed and ailing with so many "for rent", "business closing" and "for sale" signs in my view.

My point is, with respect to the GPL project: it is time that we respect the desire of citizens in the Guelph community to build the library. After more than two decades of discussion, we know that the library and the entire Baker Street development, will bring people downtown to live, work and play. The return on investment, through retail spending and the generation of property tax revenue, will be exactly what the downtown core needs.

In addition to this, the library we envision will have community meeting spaces; full accessibility for all; updated technology; green spaces; and places to celebrate art: all this built under the One Planet Living sustainability framework. Our current main library is unsafe, to say the least.

I implore councillors to vote YES to the library project so that shovels can hit the ground as soon as possible. Let's build that library to serve the community!

Commit to being the council that committed to the library plan that will add vigour to the revitalization plans for our downtown core. Let's go!

Sincerely,

Rosanne Morris

To:

Mayor C. Guthrie

City Clerks

Guelph is one of the top-ranked cities in Canada. However, if this growing and well-respected community cannot manage to support the building of a new state of the art Library, the reputation of the city will fade.

Guelph is a very progressive city with a populace which supports a fine hockey team as well as the visual and performing arts, but the library is over 50 years old, bursting at the seams – the seams that are not needing repair. The present library, now over 50 years old, was built to serve a community of less than 50,000 not a city of over 135,000.

That the City Council is renegeing – again – on the financial commitment previously agreed upon is deplorable. Guelph citizens are frustrated by constant delays and procrastination by Guelph City Council on the issue of a new library for Guelph.

In the past 10 years hundreds of citizens of the Guelph area have raised more than \$750,000 towards the construction through the Friends of the Guelph Public Library annual book sale. Their effort and dedication should be rewarded.

The Guelph City Council should vote overwhelmingly to proceed with the construction of the new Guelph Public Library.

Sincerely,

Gail and Gordon Lange

Dear Mr Guthrie,

I watched the Zoom presentation describing plans for the new Guelph Library on Tuesday evening and was delighted to learn that this project is finally ready to launch. The delivery was excellent and all the participants conveyed a strong sense of optimism about the proposed facility.

We have waited a long time for this badly needed library complex and the news is especially welcome during the dark days of the COVID pandemic.

I urge you and all members of City Council to lend your support to the project. It will bring new life to the Downtown core.

Sincerely,
Jean McKenzie

Good morning Mayor and Clerks,

I am writing to support the go ahead of the new Guelph Central Library and Baker District Plan in our beautiful town.

On behalf of The Funky Mamas I would like to make sure you know that our historical relationship with the library systems all over Canada has made it clear that Guelph is in need up an update to this much needed community space.

Over the years, we have had the honour of being hosted at many libraries to entertain children of all ages. We have been blown away many times by the glorious library spaces all over this amazing country.

Come on Guelph let's follow suit!

Tannis Maynard-Langedijk

AKA Mama T

Dear Sir / Madam

I would like to add my comments for the council meeting on Tuesday 6th October with regards to the main library especially.

I am in FULL support of the new proposal and would like to see a library built that can provide the services that are required by the community and to have a central hub for the City of Guelph.

Although there appear to be many people on social media voicing against the cost, there are just as many who are not vocal on social media who support it.

This building is well overdue and the current building is not fit for the job.

Regards

Brigid Porter

Dear City Clerks Department

I am writing an email to you to suggest the new central library move forward. The library contains many historical materials that require unique housing and care. In addition, the library has acted as an unofficial archives for the city for some time. It is very unusual for the city the size of Guelph not to have an archival program. The new central library would help address this shortcoming. Guelph City Council has a duty of care in the relation to the records it creates.

Sincerely,

Darcy R. Hiltz BA Hons MLIS, PLCGS

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Council,

I am sending this email to express my support for the current plan for the much needed new central library as revealed this week.

The new plan will give Guelph residents a library of which they can be proud. A library which will promote civic pride and community development.

It will also send a very strong signal that families are welcome back to Guelph's core.


Ken

Ken Hanson

I am writing in full support of the creation of a new library in the Baker Street Development. I consider the main branch of the library to be an integral aspect of our community. It is the hub that welcomes a diverse range of people, strengthening the heart of the city which is the downtown core. I constantly hear rationales for changes in our city, my home, that I struggle with. This is one area of growth and change that I believe is **truly** for the greater good of everyone!

With deep respect and trust

Jan

 Nurturing our First Mother

Jan Sherman

I find it inconceivable that the Guelph City Council is still debating the worth of carrying forward construction of an intricately planned public library in downtown Guelph. Yes, the cost of a new library is expensive (the major argument against it) but how much more time and money need Council waste debating, studying, analyzing this needed building?

It is clear that such a completely accessible building would enliven downtown Guelph. It would be a beautiful landmark for tourists and out of town visitors. As has endlessly been pointed out, studies by the Ontario Public Libraries (Oct 30,

2019) have shown that every dollar invested in libraries generates over \$6.00 in local and frontline economic impact.

A much needed new library makes sense on a purely financial level. Yet, public libraries widen their value to include the social capital they generate. This social capital, at such a time in our history, is a sorely needed commodity and will become even more critical post- pandemic.

Please support this vision of a greatly enhanced beautiful Guelph. Our city could really use something with an entrepreneurial bravado - a new public library is something that would make so many of us proud.

Sheila O'Reilly

Hello,

I attended the presentation about the Baker District development on Tuesday evening, Sept 29, 2020, hosted by Scott Butler and others. I am excited to see the plans for what they presented as the Alternative Vision (with the library as an iconic separate building within the Baker District) come to fruition as soon as possible. As a downtown Guelph resident, I wholeheartedly support moving forward with this plan.

Thanks for your service to Guelph.

--

Matt Brodie

To: Mayor and Councillors for the City of Guelph

Re: New Library Recommendations

Guelph City council will be deliberating and voting on building a standalone library on the south end of the Baker Street district this coming Monday October 5th at 2 pm. with a follow up approval on October 7th.

I wish to voice my strong support for the approval of an 88,000 square foot library as described in the 11.3 recommendations. The tax levy of .39% for 20 years is a small price to pay for such a critical community investment.

The approval for a new library MUST go through. This is the time to invest in the future. My daughter who has a mild disability, works at the library and hopes to continue. This new library is her future.

Thank you and regards,
Karen Kowalchuk

Guelph

Guelph does not need this project. With the current state of the world, a library should not be a priority. Keep books in current library and allow access on line for people.

Concerned citizen

Matt Shany

Dear Mayor, City of Guelph staff and City Councillors

I feel it is extremely important to move forward with the new location of the new City of Downtown Library at it's new location.

The current library is in deplorable condition requiring major repairs, is inaccessible with regular elevator breakdowns and contains asbestos. It is really a significant liability for the City and the GPL.

The Main Library doesn't just have a central administrative function, it is also the branch library for the neighbourhoods surrounding the Downtown. It is a very important part of our Downtown and centre for education, information, community and connection. The economic spin offs are significant. After all the studies that have been done it is extremely important to point out that the new main library is a branch for the neighbourhoods downtown. The next closest branch is the far edges of the east end.

Sincerely

Maria Pezzano

I am writing to you as one of many voices in favour of the new design for the Guelph Main Library. Having visited the libraries of cities of comparable size, the design size of 88,000 square feet will be needed to meet Guelph's projected population of 145,000 in the next 4 years (according to the World Population Review).

Having worked as an elementary K-8 teacher-librarian in the Upper Grand district school board for close to 20 years, I know how essential a forward-thinking public

library is to ensure equal access to information and materials for ALL students, regardless of their economic situation.

As you may already know, school libraries staffed with trained teacher-librarians have not been sufficiently funded by the Provincial government since the passing of Bill 160 in 1997. That bill limited the amount of money the local school boards had to work with to fund their school libraries. As a result, the quality of a school library collection varies from school to school, with the strength of school fundraising an essential variable. This means that schools with more economically stable communities can afford better collections than those without. This means an inequality that must be re-balanced.

Now, more than ever, we need to provide equal opportunities for ALL students to access both print and online resources. The public library is the ONLY way this can be done.

I was excited to see the design for the children's and young adult sections especially, as I have been part of the team working on the Friends of the Guelph Public Library Giant Used Book Sale for the past 11 years. There is over \$800,000 that we have raised waiting to be used to supplement the public library collections. My experience in the children's and young adult section there showed me how vibrant the reading community in Guelph is, families coming from all over Guelph, and in droves - at the end of the weekend we are usually left with less than 10% of the 18,000 books in our section for sale. I know they will be coming in droves to our new central library.

Please consider this very important aspect of this Council decision. I believe it is part of our legacy to make sure no child is left behind.

One final point: the cost of this legacy IS affordable at an average of less than \$15 a year per household.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Val Morse

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Councillors,

I watched last night's presentation of the plans for Guelph's new central library, heartily approve of it and encourage Council's endorsement and acceptance of the new proposal.

I might add that when a new library was first proposed in 1995 the cost was estimated to be \$10.6 million. I am appalled to see the new estimate 25 years later is \$62 million. Let us not waste any more time ! We can have a beautiful new,

very necessary central library, if council has the will to approval the motion and act now.

I am one of those fortunate people who grew up in city where a librarian directed me to age appropriate books and instilled within me a life long love of reading. I want all children in Guelph today, and in the future, to have that same opportunity, and yes, it is true "Libraries do Matter".

Respectfully,

Joan Todd

October 1, 2020

Mr. Mayor and Councillors,

When I became Council's representative on the Guelph Library Board in 1998, I learned that the need for a new larger main library had already been shared with Council, Staff, and citizens.

During the ensuing 22 years, other needs have emerged including a new city hall, a new downtown arena, a new museum, a theatre, a community health centre, a parking garage - just in the downtown core. Some of those projects came during times of financial stress. Others were temporarily postponed and built later at a higher cost.....BUT THEY ARE ALL HERE NOW, serving the citizens of Guelph and adding value to the City's list of amenities.

A library is not just a collection of books. A main library includes other vital services: it preserves and houses the City's archives; it is the branch for downtown residents as density in the city core increases; it supports the branch libraries; and it serves as a stimulus for a vibrant downtown.

The Covid-19 pandemic forced many public buildings to close or limit their use. The main library was among them UNTIL IT WENT VIRTUAL. It was able to adapt and serve Guelph citizens throughout the city with many of its services, while pools, playing fields, ice rinks, and theatre seats remained empty. And especially in good times, the library remains one of the most used public buildings in the city, catering to all ages, and providing essential services to all socio-economic classes.

Council members don't need another expensive study to verify the library's need or requirements. Citizens should not be burdened with the wasted cost of patching up an inadequate, unsafe building. It's long overdue for Council to approve a new main library and get it built.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Shapka

Councillors and Mayor,

I am a frequent user of our current library. I almost always have a book or two out and enjoy borrowing other items such as DVDs. The benefits I get from the well curated collection are both educational and entertainment and am grateful that we have this facility for all to use.

I occasionally visit public libraries in other cities and the one in London is particularly impressive. It was built in a former Hudson's Bay store in downtown London in 2002 and so is a fully modern and well lit facility. It has the space to fully display the collection as well as to provide desks and seating for patrons to use. It is a pleasant place to be.

In contrast, our main branch is much too small and is in poor repair. Often books and DVDs are left on carts because there is no shelf space for them. The staff are wonderful but every time I enter the building I am reminded how much we need a new one that can provide the service that this city needs.

I urge you to support this project. It is not an indulgence or luxury. When built it will provide a service as important as any other that Guelph provides.

--

Tim Allman

Hi Bob,

Hope that you're doing well despite our current circumstances. I'm writing to you in regards to the new Guelph Public Library.

I've been writing to you since 2015, asking for you to support the new Guelph Public Library. I think that the new design of the library is functional, beautiful and more affordable than previous options. It will elevate the south corner of the baker street district and drive foot traffic to all of downtown.

I'm asking you to support this project and vote in favour of the new central library.
Kind Regards,

Carly Klassen

Hi Cam,

Hope that you're doing well despite our current circumstances. I'm writing to you in regards to the new Guelph Public Library.

I've been writing to you since 2015, asking for you to support the new Guelph Public Library. I think that the new design of the library is functional, beautiful and more affordable than previous options. It will elevate the south corner of the baker street district and drive foot traffic to all of downtown.

I'm asking you to support this project and vote in favour of the new central library.
Kind Regards,

Carly Klassen

Hello all,

I am a member and taxpayer in Ward 5 and I am in complete support for the proposed development on the Baker Street lot, which includes the development of a beautiful new library. This library will be an anchor in the downtown and will revitalize the downtown for years to come. As a mother of two young children, the library is central to the community of young families in this city. Most of our family friends we have met through our time spent at the library and it's programs, and improving the library will only help to foster the health of our community.

Please choose to build this development and invest in the future of Guelph for our children.

Respectfully,

Katherine Roger

Hello all!

Please read and understand this. I am a LOW income resident of Guelph. I also own my home, and seem to manage okay. I have no extra money in my accounts, but my future is bright as an entrepreneur.

The Baker Street Development Debate:

I Pay \$3918 in city of Guelph taxes in 2020. In 2019, \$3732 in property taxes were collected. My property was built in 2015, semi-detached, 1500Sq ft, approximately 3000Sq ft property. MCAP says my house is worth \$342,000(2016). My taxes increase each year.

My personal financial methods aside, I'm stingy with money outlays. There must be a good reason to spend money. That is the lay up to the following conversation:

According to the my recent Ward News email on the cost per tax payor: "To the average homeowner in Guelph this works out to be a total of \$293 paid over 20 years, or about \$1.25 per month."

Now for my decision...I'm *****IN*****. **Not with a full heart though.**

My rationale; the new lower cost Baker Street design is lovely and it is lower cost. It will add a nice street scape to the Downtown, and provide more amenities to the public at large. Even though I do not use the current public library, I hold a library card for my kids. The options for other uses of the Library compared to the current model is where I would personally see value. For example there will be public use spaces, that I plan to use in the future. Especially as a budding entrepreneur. It has a good balance of replacing the existing parking, providing pedestrian friendly walking space, and gathering areas. It brings new housing to the Downtown. Provides a good use of the land.

Here is where I want to see the project improved upon:

There **MUST** be other funding sought. I understand the funding source we originally sought fell through. It must continue as a priority. We have a lot of funding projects on the horizon. Further fundraising opportunities should continue. There **MUST** be an evaluation of all the Capital Projects to date. To be leveraging tax payors for 20 years is **NOT** good policy. Especially with so many things in need of development. At some point you are pushing out your tax base in lower income brackets, or those not willing to continuously pay increased taxes. And a good city has a variety to its constituents. We all deserve to live in this great City of Guelph, without a constant pull on our wallets.

Let me be clear, I **DO NOT WANT MY TAXES TO BREACH \$4,000** a year. I believe this amount of money is a lot for what I own. **BUT** I do also see the value in the investment. Maybe it is a time to review the taxes in general. I **DO** believe my taxes are too high. But again that may be because I have a pragmatic view of money. And we all have different relationships with money.

This decision has not come easily and I still hope and pray money will come to reduce the cost on tax payors. If other money comes available the 20 year **TAX** levy must be reviewed.

For the time being I believe we should start the project based on the alternative plan.

A long time resident of Guelph (14 years) and grew up here as a child part time. I've seen the city change since I was 5 years old living on York Rd. I like the improvements, but also don't understand why it costs so much. Bad decisions? Bad investments? Cost of doing business? I leave that to the people I elect.

Thank you for listening,
Corinne Steel Gillespie

Don't do it. It would be an expensive tribute to a dying medium.
Lots of other programs that need assistance first.

Josh Slavin

Mayor & City Councillors -

This letter is to show my support for building the new library with the proposed changes recently recommended. For two decades we have waited for this to happen while the price has increased; the time to act is now.

The list of reasons for action have been repeated over & over with everyone agreeing but with no follow through. Councillors & delegates have spent enough time in discussion.

As a member of the library I have the privilege to obtain books regularly as well as attend meetings where the subject matter interests me. While there I see many people take advantage of using the computers, the washrooms, a cosy chair for a nap, getting caught up with news in newspapers & items in magazines, . Our library is an oasis for many. We must cherish this service provided for all the citizens by caring for the building. When the time comes to replace it then we should act after fully exploring where it should be built, where the funding should come from & who should build it. THESE STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN.

The mayor & councillors have been elected to act on the taxpayers behalf. As a taxpayer I expect you to hear my voice & act now.

--

Betty Lou Clark

Your Worship and Members of Council:

I'm writing today to declare my strong support for the establishment of the new Central Guelph Public Library in the Baker District re-development.

Our downtown is failing. You know this to be true. Currently, the core of our city,

particularly the north end, is not a destination that I, or any of my friends and colleagues, feel is attractive.

The vision of the Baker District re-development with an impressive public amenity, residential options and public outdoor space will do much to address the problem. **The new library, as the anchor for that development, is key to its success — and to the success of our downtown.**

The library will be a safe and central public space. It will support continuing education. As a technology provider, it will help improve Guelph's workforce. It will enhance personal productivity and cultural engagement for new citizens. As a public meeting place, both formal and informal, it will improve the sense of community that we so need there.

The new library is a good use of our tax dollars and I am asking that Council approve the plan at the upcoming meeting.

Sincerely,

Joan Eaglesham

The city of Guelph needs another hospital before a new library, so I do not support the cost of the library at this time.

Marlene Congi

My name is Christine McEwan and I have been a happy resident in Guelph since 1967.

We need a new main library. It seems that one has been promised most of the time I have lived here, and there have always been reasons why we cannot afford it in the "current climate". Enough already with the cost debates, which will always and forever be there. The need today is greater than ever.

The library has been a lifeline for me during this pandemic, and I have happily borrowed hundreds of books, getting lost in other worlds while this one makes me just a little crazy. But the library is so much more than just books for so many people, most especially for those who do not have the advantages that I have in my life.

In providing access to books in many forms, to computers and internet access, to seminars & panels, to entertainment and distraction, to boundless information

locally and worldwide, it is a place of refuge, of learning, of education, of community building, of belonging.

It is more than the books of your childhood, but a place to be seen, heard, taught, informed, helped, entertained, eased, challenged, awakened, directed, and given a sense of belonging. This new main library will be a jewel in the crown of our fair Royal City.

We Guelphites are a privileged and proud community of people who are known for our support of all that is and can be good in the world. Let's make this true for everyone in our city, for all of the tomorrows ahead of us. Support the new library and all it brings in keeping Guelph on the forefront of sense and sensibility, of compassion and care, of education and erudition, of hope and wonder.

Do the city proud, Councillors.

Thank you for your service, and thank you for taking the time to weigh present day costs with future opportunities.

Wishing you health, and safety,

Christine McEwan

Councillor Goller,

I'm a Ward 2 resident and I would like to take the opportunity to share my thoughts on this issue.

I am a library user and the main branch is my closest. I have seen the state of the current building as have you, I'm sure. You know that the status quo is not a preferred option of anyone except those who have no use for libraries in general. The current main branch should be an embarrassment to us all when seen by visitors to Guelph. It needs to be replaced.

As for the current project proposal and the decision you're being asked to make, I understand your hesitation. It's a lot of money, for sure, but what are the costs of not moving forward with it? Not just the direct costs of extended maintenance and repairs on the current outdated building, but the indirect impacts of not attracting development partners for the rest of the Baker Street project. Not only that project but how do you think developers and potential employers in general feel about investing in a city that doesn't invest in itself? If I was looking to open or move a business to this area I would choose a location with a smart population that values education, technological literacy, and culture. To be honest Guelph will not be seen favorably by potential employers if we take the attitude that libraries are a waste of time and money.

It's too bad previous councils didn't build this project when it would have cost far less. And it's too bad these councils didn't even plan for this by allocating funds in anticipation. That was their failure. But do you want your council to do the same? Kick it down the road for some future council to deal with? Don't make the same mistake they did. Show the region and potential employers that Guelph is a smart, progress-oriented, high tech city that believes in itself and the growth of its citizens, and not some rural bedroom community where people have to commute to the real cultural centres. The best modern cities use libraries as their showpieces and the cultural engines of their community.

As for the money...yes it's a large number in total but over time it's manageable. Most people in opposition to this project aren't doing a full accounting of the financial benefits that come with this cost. I trust that you understand those very real benefits and see that this isn't some frivolous purchase but an investment.

One last thing...I grew up in Hamilton and was still in public school when that city built their downtown main library and we made extensive use of it. School trips were regularly planned to learn about the facilities and services and I continued to use it long after. I have many happy memories there and it sparked a curiosity and desire for learning that shaped my career in engineering and technology. I've lived in Guelph 20 years and my own children have now missed out on having a modern accessible library. Our main branch isn't a destination to explore like the one I enjoyed. A whole generation has missed out on the benefits of having a modern learning and culture center. Let's not deny the next generation.

Please think of the future, not just whatever temporary present situation we find ourselves in.

Thank You for taking the time to read my thoughts.

Steve Mercer

Good Afternoon,

I am reaching out to you because I am gravely concerned with the ongoing exhausting delays in bringing our city's library facilities up to date. The main library is in tatters, needing major repairs and is often inaccessible due to regular elevator failures.

Furthermore, I am deeply concerned to learn that there is now a last minute suggestion that we move away from the Council supported 88,000 square foot design to a smaller 60,000 square foot model with no evidence based business case.

Public libraries offer more than just books. Libraries are a lifeline for those who need access to technology they cannot afford in their own homes. They are

community centres where all can access programs and services that support lifelong learning. We need a facility that meets our needs and supports our Library Staff enabling them to provide these services.

I implore City Council to approve the 88,000 square foot version rather than an inferior penny pinching short sighted model. The people of Guelph have waited long enough. The time has come for us to have a state of the art facility.

Kindest regards,

Liz Boyle

Hello,

Like many Guelph taxpayers, I would like to voice my opposition to the construction of a new downtown library.

The use of tax payer dollars in this manner is wasteful, unnecessary and shows that both city council and administration are tone deaf to the wishes of the majority of the Guelph tax paying population.

A project of this magnitude should be put to a public referendum so that we can vote it down.

Taxes increases have outstripped inflation by double over the last decade and it is time the council stopped treating taxpayers like their personal ATMs.

There are far more pressing needs in the city that are not being addressed.

Regards,

Ryan Townson.

"I didn't support it the first time it came to council, at \$67 million and I don't support it now, especially with the fact there are no federal and provincial funds coming to support that project. I don't support putting that extra burden on the citizens of Guelph through a tax levy." Gibson

I really don't think it could be said any better than above, too much money we don't have and no money coming in to support the project. Don't make us pay for this over the next 20 years. Plus putting us at the top or our debt ceiling is so financially irresponsible.

I may not totally disagree that the current downtown library is needing an update but it is the amount being spent is my bottom line issue. You don't spend money when it puts a strain and could potentially affect the city's credit.

Jacqueline Merkley

Dear Mayor and Councillors of Guelph,

As a downtown resident, I ask that you please take the opportunity to develop the downtown core in a beautiful, vibrant and meaningful way. Please make the library a priority. People of all ages and walks of life use libraries.. They provide services to families, to retirees, to the poor and affluent alike. And their role continues to morph as our needs as a society change. Downtown Guelph needs a library that can grow with it.

Please invest in the future and give Guelph a library that will serve for years to come.

Sincerely,

Lillian Links

To whom it may concern..

Good afternoon,

As a resident of Guelph for the last 11 years, seeing how fast our city is growing, I understand the need to grow businesses and opportunities as well. Firstly, as a mom of two young kids, let me start off by saying a huge thank you to the city of Guelph for our beautiful updated playgrounds. We went to all of them and we are enjoying them! So thank you!

Now let's talk about the library...

we are in the second wave of COVID pandemic, businesses have had to shut down, numerous people have lost their jobs, others like myself have experienced tremendous financial struggles and yet you think that it's fair to tell people, "we hear you but, we don't care, we want your money and there's nothing you can say or do about it"... Where's the love and respect for your Guelphites? This is not ok... Renovations will cost less, would make a HUGE improvement and here's a thought.. How about hiring a GUELPH company to do the job!? Support locals is something that the city is preaching about, yet the city isn't holding up to their own words... The city is in no shape to be spending this astronomical amount and even worst, telling people who don't want this new library that even though they won't be using it, they still have to pay for it. Just me two cents!

Thank you for taking the time to read my concern. I hope you take what I said seriously and respectfully.

Sincerely,

Carol Savoie

Guelph East End Resident

Hello,

I am writing to express my concerns over the proposed \$62 million dollar library. This is an absolutely preposterous idea. Raising taxes on the hard-working residents of Guelph in the middle of a pandemic is absolutely unacceptable. Make upgrades to the existing facility. But the idea of spending \$62 million to appease a small portion of citizens and special interest groups is ridiculous. We have a huge overdose crisis in the city, a homelessness crisis, all in the backdrop of a pandemic. You claim to work towards "smart development and affordable communities". Council, I can assure you that voting in favor of a \$62 million dollar library is neither smart development nor affordable. The young generation of Guelphites will be the ones to pay for this. It is unacceptable. I trust knowing that you will vote against this ridiculous proposal.

Thanks,

Parker Varnai

I just wanted to send in my comments to voice my thoughts about the library. I am a regular user of the library and in my work I support people who use the many services available there. However, I am NOT in favour of the library development at this price. Guelph can not afford \$62M and the tax levies associated with it.

Sincerely,

Leah Scott

Ward 2

Good afternoon

I appreciate you taking the time to add my NO preference to the pile regarding building a new library at this time. I feel it is fiscally irresponsible. I think finding a currently empty building that can hold people, books, computers, shelves, tables and chairs would be eminently suitable and far less expensive. We seem to have lots of empty buildings around.

Thank you again, and stay well.

Cindy

Hannant-Steffler

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

I am writing to voice my support for the new library plan which will come before Council on Oct. 5. As a taxpayer and GLP donor I want to see this plan come to fruition. I encourage Council to fully endorse this plan.

Please vote to support this innovative and fundamentally important project which lays the foundation and creates the opportunity for a significant and inclusive public institution and cultural legacy for all the citizens of Guelph.

Sincerely,

Sue Smith

To Mayor Guthrie and Councillors:

I am emailing to urge you to support the revised plans for development of the Baker District and most importantly, a new Guelph Public Library as approved by Guelph City Council in February 2018 at a size of 88000 sq ft.

I'm sure you don't need me to restate the importance of public libraries, but I will repeat just a few of them. Public libraries:

- provide a place for people of all ages and backgrounds to gather
- support the well-being of people and entire communities
- provide equitable access to information whether in print or digitally, at no direct cost to the user
- have been shown in numerous studies to be a good return on investment

As you know, Guelph's population has been growing faster than any other city in Ontario. To build a new library at less than the recommended 88000 sq ft will result in a building that will not meet the needs of our growing community.

Finally, imagine how a new library in the Baker District will contribute to a revitalized and vibrant downtown. Just like Market Square has animated Carden Street, a new GPL will animate the Baker District.

I expect Councillors to focus on the future and approve investments in projects that will contribute to the quality of life for all Guelphites. The case has been made

repeatedly for a new main library and it is time to deliver a new library that will serve us for years to come.

Janet Kaufman

Academic Librarian (Retired), University of Guelph

Hello Rodrigo,

Thank you for your regular updates. They are very helpful and appreciated.

I have lived in Guelph for about 20 years now, and for all this time the library has been debated and delayed over and over again. It is time!

I see that the library and another rec centre are both on the agenda for October 5 and 7. We already have two state of the art rec centres, and only 1 very aged library. Although I support both of these projects, if it were to come down to a choice, I would strongly urge you to vote for the library. A new, central library along with the public spaces included in the latest plan would help rejuvenate a decaying downtown. The many empty stores would become more desirable, and the central location would be accessible to all. The residential component would also bring more people downtown, contributing to more business for the stores and more safety, as well as the income from rental/sale of units. I would also support the funding spread over 20 years.

I also support the sale of the Parkview Motel for supportive housing, and encourage city council to support this in any way possible.

I encourage council to accept and pass the latest plan for the Baker Street development, and if possible the rec centre as well.

I thank all members of council and staff for their commitment and effort in making Guelph the most desirable place to live.

Sincerely,

Norman Feldman

Dear Councilors:

This is my first letter to Council, I hope this in itself underlines how strongly I feel about the subject of my correspondence.

My family and I have enjoyed living in Guelph since 1990, returning "home" after many years spent in Toronto

I still remember the culture shock of walking in to the Main Library all those years ago and thinking: I'm not in the big city anymore; this is quite dated small city Library - I'm sure it's due for an update or replacement soon.

Here we are thirty years later and the Main Library has not changed! Sure, it's been prettied up a bit inside but, that's about it.

What staff have accomplished in that restrictive building is simply amazing!

In a structure that was built before computers, they have adapted to provide great access to technology and introduced us to the very latest with the Tech Bar. In a space with limited meeting rooms, they have managed to host generations of children for lively programs and, in more recent years, greatly expand adult programming. Not so great if you have accessibility issues and the elevator is out of service or, you can't climb the stairs within the Program Room itself. The Main Library has long since reached capacity for the books and other materials it houses, to say nothing about the Archives, tucked away in the basement, while it has the potential to offer so much more.

These points have all been made long ago, the Library has produced study after study, business cases etc. as requested by various Councils and the end result has, until now, always been the same. "This is not a good time."

Now, we have the potential to go ahead with the Baker District Development which includes a new central Library as an anchor institution. This allows the City to accomplish several goals at once: bring people downtown by intensifying housing, increase the tax base, revitalize a dead zone in the downtown core and, at the heart of it all, build a library which has the people drawing capacity to bring energy & life back into the area.

2020 has been a horrible year. The COVID pandemic has had many profound impacts on people, businesses, organizations and governments. The economy has been weakened and we're not sure what will come next.

With that in mind, it appears that the stakeholders in this project have come together to find a way for the development to move forward in a simpler and more cost effective way. How often do you hear that the price of something is going down?!

Windmill, the developer of record, sees the Library as a critical component of the District and seems enthusiastic about building it.

Regardless of what comes next in 2020, the economy will need to be energized. Infrastructure work and the jobs it brings is a tried and true method of helping to stimulate growth. As the Baker District development moves forward and other levels of government are also looking to invest in growing the economy, there is still a potential for them to contribute funding, particularly if they see that the City

of Guelph has made the commitment to the Library, is shovel ready or, even already moving along with construction.

Please show your commitment to improving the quality of life of Guelph citizens by fully supporting this project, including the new Central Library as proposed, NOW.

It will bring short term jobs and long term revitalization, growth and a thriving downtown anchored by a lively, welcoming community hub – the Guelph Public Library!

Many thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nancy Clarke

Hi Mike and Christine,

I have lived in Ward 4 for over 30 years and only go downtown sporadically; however, I feel that Guelph needs a new downtown central library that will accommodate the city's future growth. I attended the online meeting Sept 28th and was really impressed with the new plans and the thoughtfulness toward the community afforded the project by all involved. I think fronting the library on Baker Street will ultimately drive revitalization of the street and the area in general. I think relocating the library to the south end of the site and making it a standalone building will give the city a wonderful rooftop space and will encourage folks in the suburbs to visit.

We have been tossing this around for almost as long as I have lived in Guelph and it is not going to get any cheaper.

Building a smaller version will ultimately hamper the vision and will become a self fulfilling prophecy by those who are against the project.

To my mind, the River Run Centre is an example of a project that was underfunded pared down and as such never lived up to its potential.

Please support the required square footage for the library and its relocation in the Baker Street development.

thank you.

Jeff Overton

Dear Mayor Guthrie and City Councillors,

I will try to keep this brief as I'm sure you have received thousands of emails in a similar vein to mine.

I support the new downtown library. I have supported it since I moved to Guelph in 2001. Then as now I have seen the need for a larger, more accessible, modern building and I love the idea of it as a stand-alone part of the Baker Street Development.

A library is so much more than a place to borrow books. Our Central Library is a community service freely available to all and as important to the revitalization of the downtown core as our restaurants, businesses, services, residences and indeed the beautiful new building in which you all work.

When I moved here 19 years ago and was working full time, I could easily afford the \$14.65 the proposed library is going to cost each household per year. Now retired and on a fixed income, I am still more than willing to pay \$1.25 a month for the next twenty years if I live that long. I sure hope the library gets built before then though!

I could outline all the reasons a new central downtown library is essential but you already know and agree with them because you have already voted to go ahead with it. I want you to also vote to go ahead with the new design in the new location recommended by your staff.

Sincerely,

Barb Anderson

Dear city councillors and mayor Guthrie,

I am writing to you in order to express my support for the construction of the new Baker Street district library.

I feel the need to speak up on this issue because our current downtown library branch is not suited to the current needs of the over 55,000 Guelphites who are active cardholders, and it is entirely inadequate for serving the quickly rising population of our city. We are all aware of the statistics proving the importance of our local library system, which checked out over 2 million items in 2019, greets over 1500 visitors per day, and provided nearly 90,000 instances of computer access [in 2018](#). We understand that people aged 16-29 most frequently access physical and electronic resources at the library (see page 5 of the [Economic, Social, and Cultural Assessment report](#) for GPL in 2017) and that failing to provide adequate space and resources for this demographic will deprive the next generation of Guelph residents—particularly those in marginalized communities—opportunities to develop intellectually, socially, and emotionally.

However, rather than merely relay statistics and facts about the importance of our downtown library, I wanted to share a personal story to consider when voting on this library plan.

While I was finishing high school, I was a page in the children's department of the downtown library, which involved glamorous tasks ranging from shelving endless piles of books to helping frantic families find the bathroom to cleaning gunk off *Thomas and Friends* DVDs. I loved it. I adored seeing parents sitting with their kids, getting lost together in the magic of a Robert Munsch or Eric Carle book, and I was giddy about leaving each shift with an armful of CDs, novels, and comics, but the greatest joy came from knowing that I was working in an extraordinary space.

I'd frequented the children's department at the downtown branch since I was a child, but I didn't realize until I was 18 that it was completely unique. In this crusty, dilapidated room—made beautiful by its dedicated staff, in spite of its decades of wear and tear—everyone was welcome. There was this charming boy, maybe 11 or 12, who would come barreling up the stairs after school. He knew every staff member by name, loved making jokes, and often made friends with whoever happened to be around that day. I don't know how things were at home or at school—I gleaned from a few comments that they were not ideal—but I knew that the library was his favourite place in the world. I could tell from his smile.

In this space, I also saw first generation Canadian families bonding, grateful to have access to books in their native languages. I witnessed one mother, obviously at the end of her rope, holding her head in her hands while her little girl flipped through a chapter book—this was a place where she could drag herself and her daughter out of the December snow, break down, and figure out the rest of her evening, week, or month without judgement or cost. In our programming room, I laughed with a crowd of families as a local magician pulled an endless line of scarves out of his hat—in this room, everyone felt joy and connection, and a respite from the challenges outside.

Our public libraries are our most important community resource. They are a space in which any community member is welcomed, without cost, and is given dignity, support, and opportunity. Our most vulnerable populations—those who are unhoused, struggling with their mental health, or facing other social challenges—are counting on this space. The next generation of our city is counting on this space.

Will you support it?

Sincerely,

Sam Boer

Councillors and Mayor, City of Guelph

I am writing this e-mail in support of the creation of a new main library in the Baker Street site.

My grandson is five years old and loves to learn all kinds of facts about fish. The books we get from the library have brought him weeks of pleasure. Without access to books his joy for learning will die.

I am a senior living downtown and visit the main library on a weekly basis. The Covid 19 closure was a real blow. It reinforces how important it is to have books of fiction for a quiet time of escape. Most people do not have the money to order from Indigo or Amazon on a weekly basis.

Guelph needs a new library. Guelph deserves the best library possible. I support the creation of the best library, not a watered down version. Please, for the citizens of Guelph, support the \$62 million dollar budget.

Wendy MacDonald

Mitchell Street

Guelph

Dear Guelph City Council,

A year ago, you passed a motion to go ahead with a new main public library with a funding plan in place. You passed the motion, therefore that should be the end of the matter. The current library is in dreadful condition, it is way too small, it is not fully accessible for the handicapped, and I have just learned the building contains asbestos. The staff elevator breaks down a lot. Clearly, a new building is needed.

For 30 years, lobbying for the new library has taken place. It is time. Delaying the project will not bring the costs down. No, the current situation is not ideal, conditions being what they are with COVID and I understand that, but I doubt there will ever be a perfect time. The proposal to relocate the library in the Baker Street Development as a stand alone building is a sound one, it does bring the costs down a little.

You passed the motion to go ahead with the library. It would be hypocritical not to proceed. It is time.

Sincerely,

Joan Friendship-Gray

Ward 1 Resident and library user

The Honorable Mayor Cam Guthrie,
Guelph City Councilors,
City of Guelph Clerks Office,
Good afternoon,

I would like to formally support the revised "Proposed New Guelph Central Library and Baker District" plans and vision. Presented September 29, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., by architects Duncan Bates of Diamond Schmitt and Megan Torza of DTAH, and Moderators Scott Butler, and Steven Kraft.

The plans and vision demonstrate a vibrancy to uplift the area and encourages a positive pedestrian flow as well as providing a necessary supporting pillar for the downtown. With the growth of our city and expected population, the 'current' library has overreached its capacity to provide and accommodate for today's standards and needs.

With respect,

Deborah Morrissette

Good Afternoon,

I hope you and your team are keeping well. I am writing you as a student advocate for the Baker District One Planet Action Plan. I would like to attest that a great deal of the student demographic in our ward is extremely excited about the new library. From a sustainability perspective, an equitable space perspective, and a long-term perspective, we are really rooting for the new library to come to fruition.

As students, we are always looking for study spaces and hubs for community building. My colleagues, peers, friends and I have read the report and concluded that the Baker District One Planet Action Plan maps out a future 'Guelph' that we want to live in beyond University- a city that prioritizes an equitable community, and gives that community a space and place in the heart of downtown to thrive.

Thank you for all the great work you are doing. I sincerely hope that council votes to approve the library plans next week. Please let me know if you need help advocating for the library from a student perspective.

Kindest Regards,

Sarah-Anne Thompson

Hello June and Phil

I am writing to express support for getting on with the building of a new Guelph Central Library.

I am a relatively new resident of Guelph (Ward 3), but have lived in the area for more than 30 years, and have followed with considerable interest the multiple iterations of plans to replace the current Central Branch of the Guelph Public Library. Surely, it is time to get the project finally approved, and underway.

As I understand it, the estimated cost of construction of a suitable replacement for the current Central Library building has increased almost exponentially, over the years of obtuse and inconclusive argument. Although not everyone may appreciate the consequences of dithering, it actually has effectively been a continuing vote for a shocking cost increase, as 'doing nothing' is actually a 'tabled' negative decision, with substantial financial penalty.

I have personally observed, after years of similar wrangling, the very positive impact of construction of the beautiful new, modern Halifax Public Library, in a central location in that city's downtown. It has become a source of civic pride, and no doubt, has reinforced the enthusiasm of Guelph Library advocates, who will be aware of the municipal-rejuvenating effects of such projects there and elsewhere.

I would add that I am already impressed by the Guelph library service level managed through the Guelph Central. It is enjoyed in particular by my son and his new family. The Children's section is already a favourite of my wee grandson, whom I hope will be encouraged to become a lifelong reader, as well as choosing to become a recipient of safe access to the myriad of developments in communication as he grows. The current facilities have simply outgrown the future dynamics from the status quo, in technology and population.

Please consider the well-founded concerns of all advocates for proceeding with this project; it certainly has my support.

Respectfully, Nancy MacDonald

Hello,

I wanted to express my firm support for the new main Library, without delay!

It saddens me that our mayor does not see nor understand the value that a Library brings to a community. Unlike any other major project, the library has a direct and indirect value to our city and community.

Donna Sartori

To our Councillors and Mayor,

I have been reading with dismay the debate that is still going on about building our new library. With every delay the cost goes up; needless man hours are wasted rehashing the same questions over and over again. This project is sorely needed in our community. It will serve all age groups and provide a needed educational resource for the members of our community. We have the River Run Centre, The Sleeman Centre and a multitude of bars to bring people downtown at night.

Perhaps a vibrant, functional library will encourage people to visit downtown Guelph during the day and actually help to encourage entrepreneurs to open shops once more.

CLAUDIA ETCHES

Hello,

I want to voice my concern that some members of council have no enthusiasm for the new main library.

This crucial piece of the Baker Street development will bring economic, cultural and social benefits to the entire city, as numerous studies show.

Property tax increases are manageable for a prosperous city like Guelph. Our city has been without an up-to-date main library for way too long. Myopic decisions have been made in the past.

A city which boasts a good university and a smart, progressive population is failing to serve its residents in this key area.

We need leadership with vision and courage. NOW.

Thank you.

Margaret Ahlers

Good Morning,

I rarely comment on the dealings of council and municipal decisions as I myself work at a municipality and understand the complexities of any decision. However, as a taxpaying resident of Guelph (ward 4) I have serious concerns about the proposed downtown library. While I do not doubt the importance of a library for any and all demographics of the community I feel that the proposed price tag is unreasonable at any point but particularly during this difficult time where many people face unemployment concerns and uncertain futures as we are in the early stages of a second wave.

Both my husband and myself have steady employment with likely above than average hourly wages, we do not spend our money frivolously, however, the cost of our taxes continues to rise each year that at some point we will likely not be able to afford to live in a community we have created our modest home in. I understand the market for housing in Guelph is very competitive and there will always be someone who can step in, buy our house and afford our taxes, however, you risk losing the people that built this community to what it is today as when we bought our homes, their values were lower and the tax rate was affordable.

I was heavily involved in the same funding application you applied for in the municipality I work with. Unfortunately, we were not successful in our application. With this disappointing news our staff and council have had to make the difficult decision not to proceed with the much needed project in our community as we simply cannot afford to burden our residents with that cost.

Perhaps there is a more cost effective alternative that can be created that both provide for the need in the community without having to severely impact residents to pay their tax bills? They say in difficult times often the most innovative prevail, as a City Guelph has always been innovative, please consider rising to the challenge to find a way for this project to progress but not on the backs of the tax payers.

Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,

Melissa Biffis

Dear city councillors and mayor Guthrie,

I am writing to you in order to express my support for the construction of the new Baker Street district library.

Borrowing some words from my friend, Sam Boer who more than adequately sums up my feelings on the new library.

"Our current downtown library branch is not suited to the current needs of the over 55,000 Guelphites who are active cardholders, and it is entirely inadequate for serving the quickly rising population of our city. We are all aware of the statistics proving the importance of our local library system, which checked out over 2 million

items in 2019, greets over 1500 visitors per day, and provided nearly 90,000 instances of computer access in 2018. We understand that people aged 16-29 most frequently access physical and electronic resources at the library (see page 5 of the Economic, Social, and Cultural Assessment report for GPL in 2017) and that failing to provide adequate space and resources for this demographic will deprive the next generation of Guelph residents—particularly those in marginalized communities—opportunities to develop intellectually, socially, and emotionally.

Our public libraries are our most important community resource. They are a space in which any community member is welcomed, without cost, and is given dignity, support, and opportunity. Our most vulnerable populations—those who are unhoused, struggling with their mental health, or facing other social challenges—are counting on this space. The next generation of our city is counting on this space."

Please recognize the importance of this valuable resource in our community. It needs to happen and it needs to be prioritized!

Sincerely,

Monika Hauck

Hi Dominique,

I see you are still undecided on the issue of the new Library. I would like to provide my thoughts on why I think you should vote for the Library to be built.

On the economic side of things, as you know the main library is in a pretty embarrassing state. It requires major repairs, and is inaccessible with regular elevator breakdowns. It will cost millions to upgrade to meet our new accessibility standards, which is money wasted if we delay the new library now. It is time, and this project has been put off far too long. Further, we KNOW austerity never leads to prosperity. Investing in our city does.

More importantly than the additional \$14/taxpayer/year, libraries support our most vulnerable. Now more than ever, people need a safe place to go to learn, study, apply for jobs, and feel seen. My husband, now an engineer, grew up in poverty and would not have made it through highschool without the access to the technology available at the library. Without a home computer, the public library was his only option to complete required work. He is just one example of someone who benefits from libraries, and he is one of the lucky ones. Others need the service even more than he did. Children, mothers, students, teenagers, unemployed folks, houseless folks, can all benefit from this new space. I believe that a functional central library is a core component of a healthy city.

I implore you to think about how underprivileged Guelphites need this resource when you place your vote.

Thank you,

Katie McLean

Dear Mayor Guthrie, Council, and Staff.

As someone who was born and raised in Guelph, and has many memories of going to "The Library" as we only had one then. I can say that I wholeheartedly support the need for a new functioning main branch of the library. Libraries support education, awareness, literacy, and engagement in our community.

However, I DO NOT SUPPORT spending \$62 Million Dollars to build a new library. I didn't during the last vote, and I don't even more so now that there are no other forms of government funding available for this project. We can build a great library for a lot less!

Michael Bennett

Hello Councillors Allt and Hofland and Mayor Guthrie,

I want to add my support for the update to the Baker Street Project -- particularly the third recommendation to proceed with the new central library project. I also support adding additional public outdoor space as part of the project.

Libraries provide key services to our community and are important social spaces. Investing in our library system is key for our growing city. I urge you all to support this measure in the upcoming city council meetings.

Thank you,

Virginia Andersen

Hey there,

Just wanted to reach out to voice my support for the proposed new main branch of the library.

It seems to me that the loudest voices who chime in on this issue are all using the same anti-intellectual, privileged and ignorant rhetoric - usually something about how libraries are 'obsolete', or how 'we already have libraries!', or that they're just

for 'homeless drug addicts', or that the cost to the individual tax payer would be prohibitive, or 'how can we build a library during a pandemic?!'

I believe these arguments are either misinformed or (as is often the case on the social media) made in bad faith to deliberately misinform others.

I have been a card-carrying member of GPL since I was a small child and I continue to make use of its services to this day. When my daughter was a toddler, we would visit the library multiple times a week for various programs - on some weeks, we would visit every single day. I use the library for researching both my personal interests and also for professional pursuits. I know that my wife does the same. My sister, my parents - we all use the library, because we understand that it's an invaluable resource.

Having said that, visiting the main branch of the library is largely akin to stepping through a time warp. Barring the 3D printer and the VR station, I could easily convince myself that it's still the 1980's in most corners of the building. It has scarcely changed or evolved since my earliest memories of visiting the library as a kid.

I believe that Guelph is one of the greatest cities in the country. It deserves a modern library and I don't believe it can wait any longer. I've visited the modern main library branches in other cities of similar population and wealth to Guelph, so I'm aware of how far behind our city is in this regard.

This new library is necessary. For the sake of the next generation of kids to be brought up in this city, please make it happen this time.

Tim Clarke

I am writing this to say I do not want the new library project delayed.

As a Guelph Tax payer, There has been too much of our money invested to delay this project further.

This project needs to go ahead because it will not get less expensive and the old library is a in need of maintenance that has been put on delay in anticipation of the new library. Please save the tax payers money by proceeding immediately.

I use the services of the library and do want the new library so a wide variety of services can be provided efficiently. It will a focal point of the downtown.

Jane Cotter

To Mayor Cam Guthrie

The 1960s-era Guelph Public Library was reported to be inadequate to meet demand in 1995, and it is now 25 years later. Guelph is a growing city and is very attractive to people wanting to relocate from Toronto and its environs. Housing prices have never been higher.

The library is a valuable asset for all Guelph residents, but especially for those who may be less wealthy than others – seniors who may be on fixed budgets and immigrants and marginalized individuals who may have poorer-paying jobs or no jobs. These individuals come to the library to use computers, to seek help with resumes and to apply for jobs.

Funding for the library was approved and is in the budget, and it was never dependent on a grant from higher levels of government, thought that would have been helpful. Building the new library is key to revitalization of the downtown core of Guelph. Your leadership is needed to approve this project now. Please be leaders.

Lynn Allen

Mr. Mayor,

We have been waiting for a new main public library for decades.

In 2019 you promised to build one in the Baker St district.

Please make sure this proceeds during this current year. Guelphites are tired of waiting and expect you to keep your promises.

Regards,

Brian Ostrow MD, FRCSC

Adjunct Assistant Professor

University of Toronto

Hello Rodrigo,

Thank you for your regular updates. They are very helpful and appreciated.

I have lived in Guelph for about 20 years now, and for all this time the library has been debated and delayed over and over again. It is time!

I see that the library and another rec centre are both on the agenda for October 5 and 7. We already have two state of the art rec centres, and only 1 very aged library. Although I support both of these projects, if it were to come down to a

choice, I would strongly urge you to vote for the library. A new, central library along with the public spaces included in the latest plan would help rejuvenate a decaying downtown. The many empty stores would become more desirable, and the central location would be accessible to all. The residential component would also bring more people downtown, contributing to more business for the stores and more safety, as well as the income from rental/sale of units. I would also support the funding spread over 20 years.

I also support the sale of the Parkview Motel for supportive housing, and encourage city council to support this in any way possible.

I encourage council to accept and pass the latest plan for the Baker Street development, and if possible the rec centre as well.

I thank all members of council and staff for their commitment and effort in making Guelph the most desirable place to live.

Sincerely,

Molly Swan

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Councillors –

Guelph Arts Council has championed the arts in Guelph since 1975. Over the years we have helped build the cultural heart of the city by supporting the development of new cultural organizations and programs. We are a voice for the arts, creating awareness of the role the arts play in creating a vibrant community where people want to live, work and play and in supporting all residents' wellbeing and sense of belonging. The Guelph Public Library is an essential part of this community's cultural life and the wellbeing of its residents, including its most vulnerable. I am pleased to submit this letter of support for City of Guelph staff's recommendation to Council that construction of an 88,000 sq ft library proceed.

A library is a community hub and resource that connects people with resources for learning and inspiration. Creators need a wide range of resources to succeed in their work and having an up-to-date and accessible central hub will enable and encourage them to live and work in our city. It also supports learning and intellectual discovery for people of all ages and walks of life - children and families, youth, job-seekers, newcomers, seniors – through its staff, resources, and programs. It's a cultural and community space that helps foster a sense of community belonging.

A new library is an opportunity for residents – including children and youth – to experience greater success in their academic, professional and personal lives; for vulnerable residents to access information and services they need; for the creative

community and the public to collaborate in new ways; for new and innovative library programming to develop; and for community connections and partnerships to flourish.

The current downtown library is in very poor condition, requiring major repairs. Its regular elevator breakdowns, lack of main floor washrooms, and insufficient space make it inaccessible. It's time to build a new library that will appropriately serve a growing community, revitalize the downtown economy, and be a symbol of the innovative, progressive and visionary community that is Guelph. On October 5, we urge you to vote in favor of staff's recommendation to build a new library.

Patti Broughton, Executive Director

on behalf of Guelph Arts Council

As a tax payer and downtown resident of the city of Guelph I whole heartedly support building a standalone library on the south end of Baker St. and urge council to vote in favour of the project.

The project will energise the downtown and bookend what could be a resurgent business area.

Councils have dithered on this decision for years. There is always a reason to delay moving forward. Well, its time to Build back better. Its time to make it happen and allow the free market to follow the public initiative and revitalise downtown Guelph,

john fisher

Hello,

I am a resident of the Exhibition Park neighbourhood and I am not sure how much this is worth but I wanted to send a note to express my support for the new library. I am not originally from Guelph, my husband grew up here, but I can say that the special thing about Guelph that keeps so many here and so many new arriving, is the tradition of long term thinking. There will never be a right time to spend \$62M on anything, but forward-thinking projects with long-term social impact are never a poor decision.

Thank you for your time,

Janessa Siren

To Our Royal City Councillors and Mayor

This email is to let you know that I am very much in favour of the new library downtown... I am a senior now and still use the library services all the time .. I brought up 5 kids in this city and we frequented the library all the time both for events and to visit, play and read.. taking books home and reading to them were all special events..

My children are grown up and now I take my grandchildren on a regular basis ... Instilling books, knowledge from reading is the backbone of our education...

Also for my Grandkids and I we plan special outing to the library..

I also belong to a book club with 12 other women .. a reason to read, discuss and socially that I look forward to monthly .. we get our books mostly from the library..

We are a University City and the library goes hand in hand with that..education..!!!

If you google libraries of the world you will be amazed at some of the brilliant designs that cities have spent fortunes on because they are cornerstones of their cities .. how can we be so backward as not to see how important a new up to date library is to our city ...

It is valuable and important to our young people as well..

I live in the southend and have no problem going downtown but parking is important...

I hope you will make the right decision...

Jayne Patrick

Council better start listening to the people in Guelph!!!!!! Stop spending money!! Everyone is taxed to death!!!! Whoever in the planning division decided a \$60 million library was necessary needs to be fired immediately!

A library is fine, if you can't build one for a million dollars. Then absolutely don't build one, ever!!!!

Attrium's are not to be part of libraries!!!! Ever!!!!

How about, books! Wifi access? Books!!!! Computer stations? Maybe one community room? And that's it.

No grandiose buildings, no dreams, no legacy projects, just a Library!!!! Plain and simple!

Listen to the taxpayers! Or you will not be on council!

Habs Rule!!!

Barry MacLennan

Dear Mayor Guthrie, Counsellors Caron and Downer,

It's been exciting to learn about the proposed plans for the new Guelph Public Library this week. The plans make good sense and it's critical that the City moves forward now with this long-delayed project. It will provide tremendous benefits to all sectors within our community.

Please give it your continuing support.

Janet Wood

Mayor Guthrie and Council--

We've talked about this too long, now it is time for action and unanimous support! We have a new location that will save the city funds. Now is not the time to back-pedal, try to reduce the size or budget for a fully operational library, or question the value of a prominent, fully functioning Main Library. Let's move ahead with a plan that looks to the future and will make us proud to have such a public facility that will be used by many citizens of Guelph, will serve those with less access to electronic media and who want to improve their abilities to function more effectively in our community.

Think of cities that have prominent libraries that are widely used and contribute not only to public use, community enrichment and programming but even economic returns--Vancouver, Calgary, Halifax--we can be there also! Invest in Guelph's future!

John D. Ambrose



Hello Rodrigo, James, and Mr. Mayor,

I attended the virtual meeting this week to present the new Baker Street District design. I'm unable to attend as a delegate the upcoming Council meetings regarding this item so I include my thoughts and hopes below.

I appreciate the thought that went into the new design and think it is a great idea. Eliminating the purchase of 2 properties with existing structures on Wyndham St, plus not requiring the demolition of structure and soil remediation reduced the expense of the overall project costs by \$25 million. The switch of the library location to the south orientation of the district and the commercial and possible institutional base to the most northerly residential tower was thinking outside the box, in my books :-). I realize that the cost of building the library is not reduced as much as the overall project. I strongly urge Council to find a way to allow the new design of the library to proceed as offered. I realize it will involve a tax increase but the return on the dollar in terms of multiple generations is to use a well worn word - priceless. Access to free knowledge to enhance both scholastic and general life, access to technology and internet for Guelphites at any stage of life and the opportunity for our most vulnerable to have a quiet space to either restore their day or plan a new future is remarkable. In addition, the wealth of interactive programs the library board and staff offer plus the increased public rooms for

booking by community members or groups, both during and after library hours, will ensure this new place looks well worn in no time. The library, the retail / institutional base plus the pedestrian focused public space will bring more people and potential retail activity to the north Wyndham and Baker Streets.

Thank you for your time. I do appreciate your efforts to make decisions for the good of us now and for our future generations of well rounded community citizens.

Beth Campeau, Ward 2 resident

As a resident of Ward 4, I am writing to request that you support the alternative site layout for the Baker District redevelopment project in the upcoming City Council meeting (and beyond). The city needs to move forward with this project. The revised design for a stand-alone library meets the community's key requirements enabling it to become a cultural, community, genealogy/heritage and educational centre as well as a key component in the revitalization of Guelph's downtown core.

As a regular patron of the Guelph library, I have personally seen the problems faced by the current facility including those caused by a lack of capital investment in the library infrastructure over many years. In addition to infrastructure issues, programming, events and community use have been severely hampered by lack of space. Those who are attracted to the library for research or business purposes often do not have an area to sit, review material, access computers, connect to the internet or meet in small groups. Archival and genealogy-related collections have been restricted due to lack of space hindering the library's ability to become a major resource for researching genealogy and local history. Young people struggle to find a place without distraction to meet with tutors, obtain homework help or to research and complete assignments. These are just a few examples as the list goes on and on...

I have participated in public forums and a focus group session related to this project and am pleased to see that the vast majority of concerns raised in these sessions have been addressed in the alternative site layout.

Guelph desperately needs a new library and I am counting on you to support this project.

Jan Salsberg

I do not support spending to build a new library!

Steve Van Dam

Good evening,

I am writing to voice my support in the City's plan for a new public library.

As a parent in this city I see so much value to having access to a public library. My family takes advantage of not only having access to the books and movies but also as a place of community and learning. My 10 year old loves having access to the VR station and has spent time learning about 3D printing. The library not only has staff that are willing to chat and educate but we often find ourselves in conversation with others, young and old, who are enjoying their time in the library. We have attended workshops included some led by Indigenous circles which is important to our family because of our connection to the Ojibway people.

Having a public library also support our local, small business by driving traffic to our downtown core. There is so much value to continuing with the plan and again, I am voicing my support.

Thanking you for your time,

Kate MacKenzie

Please add our letter to be presented with all those **FAVOURING** forward movement on the Library Project.

The reasons for doing it have been voiced and listed for years now. They are all valid as far as we are concerned. Especially in light of the budget demands from this Covid problem. It is a project exactly on time and fit for the current conditions we are living in.

The Library and for that matter the whole project is about community building at a time when such action will be even more vital than in more normal times. All of the downtown core will benefit, regardless of what business is located there. We feel this project is also key to other initiatives that are either due or long overdue in the core. The employment this will provide is important for our economic recovery as well.

The negative voices on this issue sound like they are just echoes of past cultural and downtown development opportunities for improvement that have been delayed or abandoned. Let's learn from this kind of attitude in past years and move beyond it.

Our taxes keep increasing every year for things that are far less beneficial for the whole of our community—so let's get past that whining voice.

PLEASE SUPPORT THIS PROJECT and KNOW IT WILL BE PROVEN THE BEST DECISION FOR AND FROM THE FUTURE!

Thanks for your time, consideration and effort on this and the many hard decisions required in your duties!

Mary & Greg Elliott

Dear Mayor Guthrie and City of Guelph Councillors,

I am writing in regard to upcoming meetings and discussions about the alternative site for the new Guelph central library, which suggests moving the library from the north tower residential/commercial complex, to a freestanding building on the south end of the site. I believe this is a good plan, and want you to know that I (and many other Guelph citizens) support this change wholeheartedly. We want to move ahead with this new library!

I moved to Guelph with a young family about 35 years ago. We raised our family here, and our adult children have now chosen to live in Guelph and raise families here. We value so much about the city – but it is sadly missing when it comes to our central library. The current downtown library has been inadequate and outdated – and there has been discussion about the need to replace it – for at least as long as we've lived here. It is well documented that vibrant cities invest in great libraries ... and that they provide many different and much needed services to citizens, but also add great value to a community. I believe the need for a new central library has already been debated enough, and the decision to go ahead has been made ... now is the time to endorse this plan, and commit to a freestanding central library as the anchor at the south end of this important Baker Street development project. We will not only be investing in our library, but in our downtown revitalization. As a taxpayer and citizen, I support this plan and ask you to do the same.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kathryn MacLean

Good Evening,

We are writing to express our concerns regarding the \$62,000,000 library price tag.

It is difficult to keep afloat for families, especially with the uncertainty of job security. People are losing their jobs and taxes continue to rise. Our property taxes

are high enough with the additional levies that have been tagged onto our taxes in recent years. This \$62M library would add yet a 3rd levy to our taxes. Those who say it's only \$15 a year, that's based on a house that is valued at \$300K. Most Guelph homes are well over that value. There's no doubt in our my minds, it will most definitely end up costing taxpayers much more in the end.

The outpouring comments on social media are a clear sign that residents feel this price tag is outrageous. Please consider families who are only trying to get ahead/stay afloat to put food on the table while paying these high tax bills each month.

Please reconsider the price tag. We can build this library for less, there has to be a way. Thanks for listening

Sincerely,

Jan and Aaron Douma

Dear City Councillors and Mayor Guthrie,

I am writing to you in order to express my support for the construction of the new Baker Street District library.

Our current downtown branch is inadequate to the needs of the over 55,000 Guelphites who are active cardholders as well as the quickly rising population of our city. The library system plays a vital role in our community, having checked out over 2 million items in 2019, greeting 1500+ visitors per day, and providing nearly 90,000 instances of computer access in 2018. We understand that people aged 16-29 most frequently access physical and electronic resources at the library (see page 5 of the Economic, Social, and Cultural Assessment report for GPL in 2017) and that failing to provide adequate space and resources for this demographic will deprive the next generation of Guelph residents—particularly those in marginalized communities—opportunities to develop intellectually, socially, and emotionally.

Our public libraries are our most important community resource. They are a space in which any community member is welcomed, without cost, and is given dignity, support, and opportunity. Our most vulnerable populations—those who are unhoused, struggling with their mental health, or facing other social challenges—are counting on this space. The next generation of our city is counting on this space. The time is now, not 5-10 years from now, to commit to building this new community resource! Please do the right thing and support the decision to move forward with the current Guelph Central Library and Baker District plans.

Sincerely,

Alex Ricci

Please don't be short sighted, rather plan for the future of Guelph. Building a new library is long overdue. Do a better job at helping others understand the impact a library has on the community particularly our most vulnerable citizens. Help our community understand that a full service central library does not just house books that many believe will become obsolete in the near future. Show them the value of the programs and resources libraries offer to help our children, our seniors, our immigrants, our students and our underprivileged...those citizens who don't have the means to have internet or purchase books and magazines, those who don't have support to help them learn, research and discover. Libraries build communities up. Those of us who are privileged, who can afford to own our homes, may not need the resources offered by a library but we, above all, have a responsibility to our fellow citizens to help them and to take care of them. A library can help with this.

Please don't allow the mayor's personal opinion influence your decision. He always looks for the popular vote which isn't always the best for the community.

Thank you.

Rosanna Gemin

Greetings Honourable Mayor and Council Members,

As a library user and downtown Guelph resident I am compelled to speak about the proposed library project.

I feel strongly about the vibrancy and future of Downtown Guelph. I feel strongly about a library that will be at the centre of our vibrant city core. We are creating the desired density to ensure a strong city centre. Now let's take the important step in ensuring the culture and community a library provides.

A scaled down version of the library in my opinion is wrong on so many levels. We should be building for the future. We should be building something to be proud of. We want to draw people from all areas of Guelph and beyond. A scaled down version will not do this. It will be just another library that serves a local area.

I had the privilege of touring the Halifax library a year ago. It left me breathless. A multi-use building with open space, a community theatre, a living roof and a roof top cafe were some of the features that were unforgettable.

Let's go for gold. Let's build something we can be proud of that will serve future generations and immediately add to the vibrancy and culture of Downtown Guelph. Let's build the 88,000 square foot library that studies and reports supported.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelly Johnson

Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council,

As a young citizen of Guelph I would like to voice my support to moving forward with the new library. Safe creative spaces such as libraries are essential for our communities and their growth.

Thank you

Madeleine Digby

Dear Mayor Guthrie,

I attended the Zoom presentation on Tuesday night of the new site proposal for the Main Library in the Baker Street Project.

I think this is a much improved arrangement for both the site and the Library, and I give it my enthusiastic support.

Yours sincerely,

Carole Stewart

Hi,

In your decisions regarding the New Main Library, I'd like to mention the value that GPL offers for the community. A place to study, stay warm, do research, find entertainment, teach our children literacy skills, or create a resume when you have no other means to.

A New Main Library should not be viewed with a negative connotation, and like an expense - but rather an investment in our city. The better library that Guelph has, the better GPL is able to give back to the community in many ways, from community building, programs for all ages, and a resource for the lower economical class.

Please, invest in our community. Invest in our Library.

Esthria

October 1, 2020

Dear Mayor Guthrie and members of Council,

I'm writing this letter to ask you to vote next week in support of the building of the new downtown library. I have lived in Ward 1 in Guelph for over 20 years and, for all of those years, the current main library has been too small, dilapidated, inaccessible and ridden with asbestos. To repair the main library which, even when repaired would be far too small to meet the needs of a city of 135,000 people, would be a waste of money and reflect poor fiscal management.

In July of 2018, you voted almost unanimously (with the exception of Councillor Bell) to approve the building of an 88,000 sq. ft. library. I'm asking you to vote next week to move forward on this project. I have heard various arguments lately that the size of the library should be reduced and that the budget for the project should be cut. Please do not do that. All the issues surrounding a new main library have been studied repeatedly. Over the years, while the library has been repeatedly delayed and new studies have been requested by council, the need for a new library has continued to grow at the same time as the cost has continuously risen. What would have cost \$10 million 25 years ago will now cost \$62 million and that increase in cost rests squarely on the shoulders of council members who have voted to delay the project. Please do the fiscally responsible thing and approve the new library as recommended by independent consultants and approved by city staff.

I have also heard that the Mayor and some councillors are objecting to the tax levy to help pay for the new library. I do not in the least wish to sound cavalier about the spending of taxpayers' money especially during a pandemic; however, a .39% increase or an average of \$14.65 annually per household, is not excessive. The new main library will provide significant economic benefits to the city and will be an important part of the Downtown.

Some members of council do not see libraries as an essential service in a city. They don't use the library, they don't believe that libraries are relevant in today's digital world (even though libraries provide much needed digital services to many people who otherwise wouldn't have access to the technologies), and they regard libraries as a frill or luxury which a city should only indulge in when it finds itself somehow with an excess of funds. Those councillors are entitled to their opinions. However, you were elected to represent the views of your constituents and many of Guelph's citizens do not share your opinion of the relevance and value of libraries. The Guelph Public Library has 83,599 card holders and 55,446 are considered "active." The Guelph Vital Signs report from 2018 notes that Guelph has double the average Ontario library circulation. Guelph's population is increasing rapidly and the need for a new central Library is only going to increase dramatically as well, as will the costs if you delay this much needed project again.

Guelph needed a new library decades ago. Please do not waste more taxpayer money on more delays, more studies, and more repairs to the existing main library which is literally falling down. My daughter is 12 years old. She has no choice but to use an outdated and rundown library with inadequate space and limited resources. She will never know as a child what a library can truly be: a meeting place full of space and light, information, education, activities and fun. The tax levy is reasonable: for \$14.65 per household annually, you can ensure that her children will enjoy a wonderful new library that she could not.

Please do not waver. Be fiscally responsible and forward thinking. Vote to approve the library project next week.

Sincerely,

Donna M. Kelly

I strongly support the suggested new plan for the library to be a standalone building on the south end of the Baker Street district. That location will be more convenient for pedestrians to access. It would be a fine library to be proud of. The current library is totally inadequate and actually unsafe and inaccessible. Patrons and staff deserve better.

Many reasons have been given for a new library and the many functions of a central library has been explained in numerous meetings. This includes a place to preserve the archives of the city which have been neglected as long as I have lived here since 1973. It is time to bring this forward without further delay. As elected officials, it is your responsibility to ensure that Guelph shows it is a mature city with adequate services. That does not mean just roads and garbage collection. Guelph would be a very poor city without culture and recreation. A library enriches all of us; rich and poor, old and young, immigrants and citizens.

The library is an essential service in this community and should not be delayed again. You built a new City Hall, a new Police building, a new Recreation Centre. Now it is time for a new library.

I do understand the concern for the financial aspect and implications but this project should be approved and proceed. The proposed financing over a period of time by means of a special levy is acceptable to us. My husband and I are retired but are willing to pay our share.

During the Depression many projects were completed because it was a means of providing jobs and in turn giving people a way to support their families. It helped the economy. One such project was the Royal Botanical Gardens. It is still a cultural gem. A lot of planning and expense has gone into the library project. A lot of community effort and support has gone into it by many community members as evidenced by the annual book sales as well as the funds raised.

The Downtown needs to be brought back to something to visit and be proud of. Let the library be a start. You cannot afford to delay any longer.

Show that you have vision .

Sincerely,

Margaret and Albert Abbink

Dear Mayor Cam Guthrie, Councillor James Gordon, and Councillor Rodrigo Goller.

As our city's population grows and our downtown residential density increases, the longstanding need for a new main library becomes ever more apparent.

I am therefore very excited about the plan the Guelph Public Library shared online Tuesday night presented by architects Duncan Bates of Diamond Schmitt and Megan Torza of DTAH.

Shared was an updated, pragmatic, and cost saving proposal for the Baker District that would give the City of Guelph the central Library we need.

More than that, the design offered glimpses of a stunning building that would be functional, community minded, and would provide a beautiful space that this city deserves.

Libraries are important to cities. This project is important to our city.

I hope you will support this project as I do.

Sincerely,

David Wood

Ward 2 Resident

Please don't build a new library downtown, we cannot afford this during a pandemic.

Thank you, Cynthia Dool

I am completely against building this new library. I am very concerned about the cost to the City and its taxpayers. Even before COVID-19, spending over \$60 million on a new downtown library was fiscally irresponsible. Now there is even more evidence that this project must not go ahead.

Recently, when word came that the City would be receiving a grand total of ZERO dollars from the provincial and federal governments to help fund the new library, it should have been this project's death knell. Now that this is known, surely the criteria for approving this project have changed. Post COVID-19, the possibility of future provincial and federal infrastructure funding to recharge the economy is very real. At the very least, this new library needs to be put on hold until funding is ensured.

Please do the fiscally responsible thing and cancel this project. Expecting taxpayers to bear the brunt of the cost is wrong.

Ruth Sproule

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Ward Councillors,

As a long time resident of the City of Guelph and taxpayer I wish to express my support for the staff recommendation that the City proceed with an 88,000 square foot library, funded in part by a tax levy to cover part of the capital cost.

As I wrote with regard to meetings about the business case for the new main library in 2018, as a resident of Guelph since 1991 I have tired of cycles of regular Council discussion of need for a new main branch followed by kicking the proverbial can down the road. It has been clear for many years that the current building no longer serves the needs of a city that had grown in population by 41,000 from when I arrived through the census of 2016 and is mandated by the A Place to Grow plan to expand to 203,000 by 2051. I was present at the Special City Council Meeting of 13 February 2018 – my birthday – when Council agreed to support the recommendations of the KPMG Guelph Public Library business case and allocation of capital budget to move forward on preliminary design and construction. It felt then that this Council finally had understood that developing social infrastructure like the new library was in the best long term interest for our community.

I understand that recently some on Council have broached the idea of scaling down the new library square footage from the 88,000 square feet recommended in the business case on the basis that a very small tax levy of 0.39% could be avoided. I would like to reiterate what I wrote to my ward Councillors Goller and Gordon, and Mayor Guthrie, in July of 2019: The Carnegie Library building stood for sixty years before being replaced by the current Main Branch Library, and the current library is close to sixty years old. The proposed new main branch library is an investment that will serve generations. Ignoring the business case recommendations and scaling back the size of the new library to reduce short term building costs would exemplify penny-wise pound-foolish thinking.

I hope and trust that Council will make a wise decision on October 7 and support proceeding with an 88,000 square foot library.

Yours very truly,
Stephen Kilburn

Mister Mayor - I am the one who called you a mensch" one evening at City Council for the way you have pivoted on your support for the new Main Library.

Eileen Hammill told you not to worry, that being a mensch is a good thing!

I am asking you to maintain your menschness by continuing to support the building of this new jewel in our city. Imagine - just imagine - how it would be to walk down Quebec Street and turn the corner and enter this new delight.

Guelph has been talking about a new library since our arrival in Guelph in 1974.

46 years.

It is time.

Carol Herrmann

Dear mayor and councillors:

Gee whiz, guys (and women), I feel like I've been rewriting the same letter once a year for the past 15 years.

But since the same issue keeps popping up like a midway whack-a-mole, I feel compelled to make my appeal once again: Build the library. Build it smart. Build it to last. Build it NOW!

As elected members of council, please do not second guess a location that has been scrupulously vetted a thousand times.

Do not huff and puff about the marginal tax impact and how this isn't the right time, because we all know there will never be a "right" time to invest millions in a long-term legacy project, and that if we had waited for this fabled perfect time, we wouldn't have a new city hall, world class River Run Centre or half the amenities that draw people to our community (and over which few, if any, have expressed regret.)

Do not water the project down in size so it becomes obsolete the minute it opens -- that would **really** will be a waste of taxpayer dollars.

Do not waste money maintaining the current crumbling wreck of a library that is fast becoming a health and safety hazard.

Do not hobble a project you -- and your predecessors -- have laboured over, and agonized about, for decades.

There comes a time when you have to step up, recognize that -- to the best of your ability -- the concerns have been addressed, options studied, decisions made and, with due respect, get off your butts and get it done.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is that time.

For a rapidly expanding city like Guelph, a new downtown library isn't a luxury.

It's not a superfluous "frill" to benefit an elitist book-reading minority.

It's a foundational cornerstone of a community that strives to be better, smarter, more enlightened.

It's a gift for the generations to follow: your kids and grandkids.

Stop making excuses, see the big picture, show some leadership and vote for the future -- our future.

To quote a famous movie, "if you build it, they will come."

Thank you.

Joel Rubinoff

Guelph

I'm writing you to share my support for the revised plan for the downtown Guelph library.

I understand that the pandemic has caused serious financial problems, and I realize that you might reasonably choose to postpone or kill this project because it is expensive. That would be disappointing, but I defer to your knowledge of the City's financial situation.

However, some people have presented this to me as a binary choice between the South End Community Center or the downtown library. I will be moving to the south end (Gordon Square) in a couple of years, when construction is completed. Having the Community Center nearby was one of the reasons my wife and I chose to buy a unit at Gordon Square. Despite that, if the choice is binary, I support building the library. A vibrant downtown is enormously important for the long-term health of a city. We have a terrific downtown and the library will make it much better.

Cordially, and with Respect

Cem Kaner, J.D., Ph.D.

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council,

I'm writing this letter to express my continued support for the new Guelph Public Library. As an engaged citizen, property owner and professional placemaker, I can see how the current site plans presented this past week will achieve several goals for a future forward city, which I believe Guelph to be.

Over the past 25+ years, I've watched Guelph grow to become a dynamic and interesting city. Others are noticing too, with many new residents choosing Guelph over other cities. We were recently named one of the top 5 real estate markets in Canada in 2020. As both property values and our population continue to grow and remain strong, we should lead forward with courage, taking responsibility and care to add amenities for our citizens. A strong library system is a BASIC AMENITY for any city. Our current library has been past its due date for at least 20 years. While staff do their best to animate, the aging library - which should be our leading civic space - can not meet demand. Guelph has quite simply outgrown this library of 50+ years.

I'm in favour of moving ahead with the existing plan, with the Library at the proposed 62 M and the well-researched size of 88,000 SF for four main reasons:

1. The Baker District including the current parking lot, ill-maintained back alleys and street scapes, is an underperforming asset on many fronts, including spatial uses, tax base, revenue opportunities and housing. Unlocking this space and completing the full development - with the Library as the leading civic asset - with dense residential and new commercial space will dramatically change the downtown and have positive long-term financial benefits for the entire city.
2. Guelph strives to be recognized on the Innovation Corridor. In a knowledge-based economy, a vibrant, well-used library is one of the key foundations with which to provide opportunity to create a knowledgeable and engaged community. Guelph is also primarily an entrepreneurial city. A strong library and community-based programming will further serve growth by supporting entrepreneurs young and old, including social innovators as Guelph leads the way on several fronts.
3. Public places matter. A Library that is large enough to welcome people in a universally accessible way is key to creating a city that is inclusive and welcoming to all. With our community plan winning national awards, the Library could serve a transformational role as a hub that fosters a strong sense of belonging. There are nearly no places that welcome everyone in the city, free of charge, and a right-sized, inspiring and active library can offer

places for us all. The Library can show in a very tangible way that Guelph cares about its people. This is placemaking.

4. A vital library and the residential/commercial component will bring thousands more people onto the sidewalks each day. This new plan offers exciting public realm changes. With the library facing onto Baker Street and along Chapel Lane, the site plan presents many opportunities for open outdoor space, as well as new pedestrian areas and a new streetscape along the back of businesses on Wyndham Street. The public realm space and conduits to adjacent businesses, organizations and streets will begin to revitalize areas that have been struggling to hold on, not just due to the pandemic, but to the energy that goes to other areas of our downtown due to years of inaction on this file.

The additional tax levy amounts to 0.39% works out at an average of \$14.65 every year per household. Over the 20 year time frame this would be just over \$300 for the average home owning household. If there was a method, I'd send my \$300 in today. Pausing now, or backing up on the plan, will, I believe, cost taxpayers more in the future. If not now, when? If not you, who? Moving this project ahead requires leadership and vision for the city we are building for the future. I do hope that you are the leadership team that can finally create the path forward for both the library and the Baker District project.

Julia Grady

engaged citizen, proud Guelphite and Co-Founder of 10C Shared Space

Super pleased with the leadership shown in this and previous mandate.

The library has been contentious for years, a cheap shot favourite of those councillors (YouTube stars of yore, and others of their ilk) who, lacking vision of their own, rely for their political existence on strife, opposition, and dog whistles of anti-urbanism, with every one of the implications that entails.

For Guelph to be a the city it can and should be -- to fulfil its best identity -- we need to get with the program and move on from this provincial spat. All the other municipalities have done do. And we have in this city the highest library membership population on the continent. We also have highly problematic legacy development restrictions downtown. The library is the keystone that will engender responsible, positive downtown growth, stemming the inevitable results that will occur and are occurring when it doesn't make sense to put real investment in downtown properties.

Which version of the future will we represent?

Don't worry, there will still be the height restrictions to argue about, long into the future ;)

Cheers

Trish Fontyn

On behalf of my husband and our family, I am writing to present our full support of the new library. Guelph is a city that understands the value of community, inclusivity and forward thinking. Our beautiful downtown is at a significant juncture to continue to thrive. The downtown needs the city's commitment to continue the great work that has been started on other sections of the core. The library at the centre of the Baker St. District would provide a hub for living, working, learning, connecting and playing for all residents of our city. It will also provide a strong and supportive environment for other businesses in the downtown to thrive and a stimulus for other developers and landlords to continue to invest in the heart of our city.

We are excited to see the new library come to life and to enjoy it with our children, family & friends.

With thanks

Inam Carere

And on behalf of Chester Carere Sr, Sharon Carere-Hasson and Chester Carere Jr.

Hello

In light of the COVID situation, the building of the new library should be postponed

Regards

Fern DeAngelis

I would like to provide my support for the new library at the south end of the downtown Baker Street development and that it be maintained at the original recommended size of 88,000ft. The projected costs of less than \$15 per Guelph household per year for 20 years seems cheap considering the City obtains a much needed cornerstone facility in the core of the city where revitalization is most needed.

The downtown area needs help. It should be a place where people want to live. It needs more first class facilities. It should be the cultural hub of the city where residents from across the city can come to learn, be entertained, dine out, watch the Santa Claus Parade and generally enjoy an outing. Downtown revitalization is slowly taking place. We already have several first class facilities such as The Sleeman Center, River Run Center, Guelph Civic Museum, Guelph City Hall and the new Police Station. We can't afford to take our foot off the gas and miss opportunities to upgrade our outdated facilities. Guelph is a University town that has benefited greatly from people coming to learn, with many deciding to stay. Guelph residents are well educated and progressive in their nature. We want to continue to learn. Having a strong Library system is fundamental to continuing education. A strong Main Library is a much needed resource, a Center of Excellence for learning. It is not a liability, it's an asset from which the residents can gain valuable information and knowledge that will in itself lead to a self-sustaining reinvestment into the community at large.

Guelph established Ontario's 1st Public Library in 1883. In 1905 the iconic Carnegie Library was built. In 1964 this beautiful structure was torn down and replaced by the current Library. Now almost 60 years, we're again needing a much needed library refreshment.

The current Central Library is merely a depository of books, newspapers, periodicals, dvd's, music, etc... In progressive communities, modern day public libraries have evolved into Learning Center's where young and old can be introduced to the constantly evolving world of information and knowledge exchange, merging cultures and new technologies. Since the existing Main Library was built we've landed on the moon, experienced the information age, the evolution of the Internet, social media, and technology. Continued change is inevitable and we need to keep up. What's on horizon, real Artificial Intelligence? – now I'm just scaring myself.

Again, don't down size the Library plans. We paid good money to an independent agency to come up with the currently proposed 88,000 ft². A business case was developed and approved by council. Don't take a step backwards by under-sizing a much used and needed facility. Don't undermine the great work folks have already invested. Downsizing will only shorten the life of the Library and increase the life cycle costs of the library system. In the future Downtown open areas will only be available at a premium. We now have a unique opportunity to build a right sized Library in synergy with the Baker Street development. Opportunities like this will become rarer. Again, \$15 per Guelph household per year for 20 years seems like a great deal for what we will get.

If I have a Wood Workshop full of tools but no open space to actually work on a project, then what was the purpose of the investment? By analogy, the new Central Library needs to be a state-of-the-art, Informational, Knowledge, Learning Facility

with plenty of space to adapt for the future and to provide the much needed hands on environment the current facility so sorely lacks.

--

Regards

Peter Links

Dear Council and Mayor Guthrie ~

It's a pleasure to write this email, encouraging you to ensure that our community has a library that attracts attention and is there to support all generations in their quest to learn and to find reflections of themselves in our culture.

My husband and I moved to this area almost 20 years ago because we recognised the community's emphasis on the environment, culture and learning. We know of many others who have followed us here for these very reasons. It's been our pleasure to also invest in the community, following your lead.

We are supportive of the people and the projects that make this library happen, no matter how difficult the times. It is truly an indication of foresight.

respectfully,

Joy

Joy S. Roberts, Ph.D.

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to voice my support for the new central library in the Baker District redevelopment. My family and I are regular users of both our local branch library and the central branch. I support building the new central library for the following reasons:

1. Focal Point for the Community- My daughter and I can access books and many library services from our local branch, but the central branch offers us the opportunity to meet other people and families from all over Guelph. I think this increases community cohesion, celebrates diversity and inclusion, and has certainly been a factor in making us feel welcome in our beautiful city.

2. A Draw for Downtown- The new downtown library and the redevelopment around it will elevate central Guelph. The library will provide pleasant surroundings for people to meet, attend programs and use the library facilities. All of these things will be free of charge. Beautiful public spaces that can be used year-round without

purchase are not common, and should be celebrated. People who visit to use the library may stay to enjoy all else that central Guelph has to offer, bringing customers to all of the downtown core.

3. **Guelph Pride-** When I think of Guelph, I think of a city that prizes knowledge, is open and inclusive, and gives its residents beautiful natural and built environments. With the new library, Guelph has an opportunity to emphasise these values, and project them both to its citizens and to the wider world. The current central library provides some great programming and resources that my family make regular use of, but I think it would be an unreasonable stretch to call it inspiring. We have the opportunity to change that, and use the library to signify the kind of forward thinking city we wish to be.

I understand that there is a certain amount of sticker shock when the price is written down, but research shows that libraries are investments in communities. The replacement of the library is long overdue, and the current site is not fit for purpose. It is a false economy to keep patching the current building, and the project will continue to get more expensive until the city finally decides to pull the trigger. Guelph has the chance to show that it values what libraries stand for, and at the same time build a facility that will be the envy of Ontario, and the pride of its citizens.

Thank you,

Nick James

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

I am writing to you today to express my strong personal support for continuing the Baker Street District redevelopment, including the current alternative layout for the future library.

I first moved to Guelph as a student in 1996, and have primarily called this city home since then. My wife and I have settled here and both our careers are based at the University. I tell you this because when I first came to Guelph the current library already felt antiquated, and that was 24 years ago!

Libraries are important fixtures in any community, particularly a growing city such as Guelph. They are necessary infrastructure, not nice-to-have luxuries. As you are aware, Council has overwhelmingly approved the base business case for a new library, and ***this base need is not going away.***

An important aspect of the business case is the map on page 52, which shows the extensive user coverage of the Main Branch across Guelph. I'm sure you have received correspondence expressing the sentiment, 'Well usarship is low at my local branch, so we don't need a new main branch.' That argument is fallacy, and should

have no bearing on your decision. It is clear that the **Main Branch of the Guelph Library system serves many socio-economic communities across the entire City.**

In terms of the new 'alternative layout', I could not be happier. **The new layout is a better design, for less cost.** It is clear that the primary library uses and programming can be accommodated in the standalone library, which is beautiful and inviting. There is still excellent porosity to Wyndham and other streets, and the new face of the standalone library will add vitality to Baker Street. There is opportunity for plenty of parking, both car and bike, and this district will serve as a destination for decades to come. "Come to Guelph, park your car, now go explore." The new layout is a **fiscally responsible solution to various economic and legal design issues.** Further, as Mr. Butler has pointed out, the overall project savings to be realised with this new layout are comparable to the grant funding opportunity that was not successful.

All that said, I am not ignorant of current COVID realities. However, this project is still in the design phase, and if there is a sudden economic turn for the worse, there will be future opportunities to pause before shovels hit the soil. **It is premature to pause now due to COVID.**

Any significant delay for this project will just increase the cost down the road. The City of Guelph can't possibly retain the current Main Branch much longer and also declare that it is a modern, forward-looking city. If this council delays this project, you will not save residents tax dollars; in the long-run you will cost us more.

Sincerely,

Adam Bonnycastle

Raglan St.

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

Please build the library.

I am a new resident to the City of Guelph. I moved here in January 2020 when both my husband and I got jobs. We have since ensconced ourselves in the city's culture, and particularly the downtown core. We love the vibrancy of the downtown--the market, the restaurants, and, perhaps most importantly, the library.

Libraries are a hub to any city's center. They are essential institutions that bring a sense of community, provide a safe space where people can collect important (and often essential) resources, and build a culture of well-being within a city. If we want Guelph to grow and thrive--particularly during these trying times--it would be in our best interest to have a central downtown library. I have lived in Toronto, where the

downtown library is a central hub that provides a sustainable space, with access to key skills training and networking opportunities to bring residents into the workforce and drive the economy. The library ensures that a city's residents are informed, engaged and empowered to contribute to a free and just democratic society.

The current downtown library is in dire need of repairs and renovations for accessibility. We need only to look to Halifax, Calgary, and Toronto to see the positive impacts when a city invests in its future with a downtown library. It will create new jobs and bring further economic growth to our downtown core, which it will badly need in the next few years.

I implore you to vote yes to building a standalone library on the south end of the Baker Street district this coming Monday.

Sincerely,

Keriann McGoogan

I attended the public information webinar held Tuesday, September 29/20 regarding the plans presented for the new Central Library and the Baker District. Our family whole-heartedly supports the plans, the ideas and the beautiful designs that were presented. It's been a long time in coming and Guelph and our residents deserve a beautiful and functional building and space to house the new central library and a true area where our community can come together in the downtown core any day of the week.

We believe libraries are a place where intelligence and critical thinking are supported and education is fostered. We look forward to hanging out in the library with a good book or meeting with colleagues to discuss ideas in our next strategy session or watch a film being shown for public benefit, etc....so many uses!

Thank you for listening,

Annie & Alex & Ethan

Annie Wiese, OCR-CR, RRPr

To: Mayor, Cam Guthrie at mayor@guelph.ca

CC: City Clerks Office at clerks@guelph.ca,

Scott Butler GPL Chair

October 2, 2020

Dear Mayor Cam Guthrie, Councillors and City Clerks,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support of the new library project and the redevelopment of Baker St. I recently saw the beautiful drawings and designs for the newly proposed building and I have to say that the time really is now, to agree together on this essential and vibrant asset that really hits the nail on the head!

I am a born and raised Guelphite, but left town for my Film & TV career for 18 years. I moved back 8 years ago to raise my children here and be close with my family. During that time I fell in love with this city again. It was the parks, the community, cultural events, over the years the revitalizing downtown, and my time spent at the libraries, specifically the Main Branch. So I feel compelled to first share my own positive experiences with libraries, and how they have played an important part of my life, and how the future library has me waiting in anticipation.

Along with many new moms, years ago I started frequenting the libraries around town for programming as well as looking for a place to socialize or reading during nap time. Now that my kids are a little older, I still regularly bring them to the library after school for playtime, reading, and selecting a new set of books to bring home for the next three weeks. This is always a highlight for them. I just wish the space was more kid-friendly, had more computers, and more learning opportunities within a stimulating area.

My positive experience of having a place in the community to fulfill my love of books and reading also came with some frustrations, especially in the downtown main library building. I can remember the elevator was out of use as I had my stroller in tow; too many kids in the small area to unleash my little ones there at times; and spending lots of time in a building that lacked inspiration and innovation.

My late mother, Wendy Young was an amazing Children's librarian with a passion for books and literacy. Along with my dad, Paul Young, my parents actively worked for years with Friends of the Guelph Public Library to raise money and awareness for this cause. I feel the new dynamic and stunning designs will be the perfect inspirational hub that they were hoping for, where our community can find that peaceful reading nook, along with so much more.

I implore you to join so many constituents in Guelph who are ready and anticipating a landmark library. A spacious environment where there will be increased access to information and be a cultural gathering place for our community. Where more programming, events, arts, education, coffee talks, and nap times can happen in a destination we all want to spend time at and a place that we can all be proud of.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Erin Faith Young

Dear Mayor Guthrie and members of council,

In a September 2019 post on his blog, the mayor characterized supporters of the new library--to be constructed without the help of additional funding from Canada or Ontario--as being Clark Griswolds, the Chevy Chase character in "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation." That is, basically fools. Optimistic, dreamy, perhaps lovable; but still fools. Unsaid, but there for us to acknowledge, is the difference between a Christmas movie and the real world. Clark is saved by the happy-ending comic conventions of Hollywood. Also unsaid, but really the point in the mayor's analogy, is that Griswold's real-world counterparts in Guelph are unlikely to find any salvation, or comedy--and more likely to drag the city down into ruin with their dreamy, eyes-bigger-than-their-tummies view of the city's future.

The goal of a public library for downtown Guelph, sufficient to last for decades, sufficient to accommodate the needs of an expanding population, is not comic foolery, and is not the road to ruin. A library capable of meeting those expanding needs, and of fulfilling its crucial function in the education of a growing democratic citizenry, is not the desire of foolish tax-and-spend liberals. Such a library is essential to Guelph's future, assuming that future is to be more than Pottersville--to jab with another Christmas movie.

So, what is this burden that the mayor and other members of council do not want to impose on Guelph's property tax-paying citizens? According to The Mercury, this levy is 0.86% of a household's annual property tax bill. In our family's case, that amounts to somewhere between 10 and 14 dollars with every three-month cheque we send the city. Really, 14 dollars in three months. That is not even one six pack of decent beer. Three jars of peanut butter without salt or sugar. A pack of cigarettes, almost. Not quite three fancy coffees. And what would that 14 dollars in three months get a household? A window to the world, reliable information about most any topic you care to choose, free movies of all sorts, and space to share and enjoy with many other citizens.

I believe that most anyone in Guelph who would be taxed with this sort of levy would see the benefit. Go to any city with a well-functioning central library and you will see the broad range of people who live and work and dream and get curious about a book they need to get their hands on. Go to Kitchener. Go to downtown Buffalo, NY. Libraries are not for the rich, for elites, for liberals. They are the heart of the necessary, shared, public space that all members of a democratic community can enjoy. It seems shameful to me that for fifteen years Guelph's Mr. Potters have tried to resist building this new library, employing a nonsense argument in order to ensure their political legacy as fiscal conservatives.

I urge you to vote, finally, in consensus, and in favour of the project.

Thank you,
Matthew Glass
Ward 2

Say yes!

I've seen people argue that Guelph hardly needs a new library because look at the average per capita expenditures: this city is already above them.

Yes, it is: just barely above!

So is Guelph satisfied to be a city just slightly above average?

I didn't think so when I moved here.

This city has the potential to be far better than that.

The new library can lead Guelph into an exciting future.

The time is now. I urge you to support the building of the new Downtown Library.

Ken McGoogan

Mayor Guthrie and Councillors of Guelph:

It is 2020 and it has been almost 20 years since the present main library branch was declared unfit. The building is woefully inadequate, the parking lot too small, the washroom facilities insufficient, the meeting spaces too small and too few, there are known health hazards and why are we once again revisiting this time-worn issue and wasting precious time and tax dollars in doing so?

I delegated previously on the need for going ahead with a new library and I attach a copy of that delegation here.

Council has already approved a building of 88,000 square feet at a cost of 62 million dollars based on a strong and approved KMPG business case and an estimated population of over 200,00 by 2051. A forward thinking and visionary partner has been found in Windmill developments. The tax increase of an estimated \$14.95 per household over 20 years is miniscule and as a tax payer and a senior living on a fixed income I see this as an opportunity to contribute to a much needed resource in continuing to make Guelph a great city.

The new library will revitalize the downtown and upper Wyndham Street, and generate more tax dollars for the city's coffers. Are you forgetting this? We also desperately need public meeting and green space in the city core as so many cities around the world are creating. This can bring people safely out of the isolation so many of us are feeling.

I do appreciate that we have councillors and a mayor who are fiscally prudent but I wish for them to be equally visionary. Scarcity thinking is fear based and this is not a time for fear.

The library should be the heart of downtown and the north star of the community, offering as the Cambridge library does, a vast supply of rich digital resources to help people creatively address our changing times. It could offer educational resources such as how to effectively homeschool your children or how to help them most efficiently benefit from online learning, how to reduce your home's energy costs, etc. and other timely subjects. The library should meet the needs of the whole community and be a unifying force within it.

Mayor Guthrie, you saw the gallery filled with library supporters the last time I delegated. It is undeniable that a large percentage of our citizens see this library as meeting an urgent need in our city. We have taken years going over and over these proposals. This can be a memorable part of your legacy. To delay again would be a dangerously backward decision.

From Cynthia Bragg, ward 3

A NEW MAIN LIBRARY FOR GUELPH

Did you know that the first libraries in Ontario were founded by organizations called Mechanics Institutes? The first ME in Ontario was set up in 1851 to provide a library, educational classes and weekly lectures for the middle and working classes to provide a chance of a broader life for tradesmen and labourers.

Libraries in the 19th century, though initially housed in rented rooms, as well as housing books, held public lectures in such diverse topics as astronomy, geology, and shorthand. They had quiet reading rooms, amusement rooms and even classes in things like mechanical drawing, all functions still relevant today.

Since then libraries have continually had to change in keeping with changes in morals, occupations and as populations became more diverse. Today, in this digital age, libraries are reinventing themselves again and are becoming more relevant than ever. Now serving as community hubs, they are being housed worldwide in aesthetically beautiful buildings that often let in lots of light and have appealing views. In Sweden a library is called the living room of the city. The Halifax library has an outdoor portion with a deck and WiFi filling the need for green space.

Like in the 19th century there is still a need for classes but now days in writing code, mastering new technology or learning new languages.

There is a need for community meeting spaces. Of the 6 libraries used in KPMGs comparative study, 1 has an auditorium and all the others have large multi-use rooms with seating for 90 -200 people. With Guelph's growing population a library auditorium would surely be widely used and help to continue to attract well known public speakers and lectures here.

Modern libraries are often the first places new immigrants and residents go so having multilingual resources is a must. Libraries now need many digital resources to help with job applications, career searches, health information and grant applications. Libraries now help promote digital as well as conventional literacy and spaces are needed for collaborative learning and projects, for children's games, activities and storytelling.

Our present main library is woefully inadequate, doesn't meet accessibility standards, has inadequate work space for staff, no room for new book acquisitions, needs mechanical and electrical work to even meet building code, has no meeting rooms, a pathetically small and slow elevator and inadequate parking.

Guelph is way behind neighbouring communities like Kitchener, Cambridge, Milton and Burlington in providing a modern multi-use library. Cambridge has completely revitalized its downtown by abandoning the concept of a library/ gallery for an Idea Exchange with a downloadable library to access e-books, video, music and audio books and has activities in various locations within the downtown and databases with information on thousands of subjects. They have repurposed their old post office as a main branch, an opportunity Guelph sadly missed.

The beautiful glassed-in Waterdown library is part of a larger multi-use complex housing a recreation centre and community services, a similar shared-use concept Guelph could consider to reduce costs. It even has a lounge with a fireplace, an area designed for kids and teens and space for classes to be held.

I maintain that since we will be investing a lot of money in this long overdue project, we should allow sufficient space allocation for population expansion beyond 2036. The province is pushing for 191,000 by 2041 and Guelph is bound to keep growing. 88,000 square feet for a population of 185,000 is only a basic level of accommodation and not adequate to meet population numbers that will keep growing beyond 2036.

Our present main branch has been deemed inadequate since 2001. It is long past time to commit to improving our community, bringing new people and new business to our downtown as a new library will inevitably do, anchoring the two ends of downtown and capitalizing on an expanded GDP that this report promises a new library will yield. To stay a great forward thinking city, Guelph needs a great library so let's commit tonight.

Cynthia Bragg

Good morning Councillors,

I wanted to express my support for the new Central Library, the new location, and the levy. It would bring revitalization to a declining downtown core, be a support and safe place for our most vulnerable, and finally allow the Library to live into its role as a community hub and a space for Guelphites to connect. The current building is well past its prime; it prevents the Library from serving its community in the best way possible. I hope you can recognize that the Library is more than books; it is an extremely important democratic public space.

Thank you for your hard work in determining if this is the right project for our community. I acknowledge the complexity of the issue, and I know that the current socioeconomic climate makes it challenging. I believe that carrying on with the promised new Central Library is the right decision.

All the best,

Emily Tyschenko

Dear Counsellors and Mayor Guthrie,

(cc clerks@guelph.ca)

I urge you to support the new Guelph Central Library coming before you at Council on Monday. I support the \$62M cost, reduced already through updated design, and I support the tax levy required to move this project forward.

As you well know, there has been a longstanding need for a new central library to replace the current inaccessible and outdated main library. Previous councils have punted this over and over. The city continues to grow, the downtown residential density also continues to grow and this building, along with the remainder of the Baker District development, will provide residents from across the city a fully functional, accessible, modern and stunning piece of architecture worthy of a progressive city like Guelph.

Libraries and the support for them are a core function of municipalities; they are key to an educated and informed citizenry; they are a social good that produces significant ROI - both in actual dollars as well as civic-mindedness. This project cannot be ignored any longer.

This new library will stand for generations and significantly revitalize the Baker St. space, much like the City Hall and Carden St. revitalization.

Again, I urge you to support the library project at its current cost and vote in favour of the tax levy necessary to move this forward. The project cannot languish any longer.

Sincerely,

Patricia Tersigni

Resident, Guelph, Ward 2

Dear Council and Mayor Guthrie -

I am thrilled with the proposal to move the new Central Library to the south end of the Baker District lot and fully support proceeding to the next step of getting this whole project going.

Having the library as a standalone facility simplifies so much: it no longer has to accommodate the structural and special privacy requirements of a 12-story condominium tower. The proposed design for the new Central Library, which is in its very early stages, contains everything that was identified by librarians and the community as being necessary for a library that will serve our growing community for many years.

The new configuration of Baker District improves the walkability and accessibility of the area and increases the opportunities for private investment along a revitalized Baker Street. The new proposal seems to offer so much.

Although we are not a lot closer to final costs for either the Baker District redevelopment or the new Central Library, both city staff and the Windmill partnership indicate that costs are going in the right direction - down. There is much work yet to be done to get to reliable cost estimates. To stop the project now, or to delay it, on insufficient information would be a travesty. It would waste all the money and effort that has been put into this project to date. We need to continue moving forward with this project.

Kind regards,

Vivian Webb

Dear Mayor Guthrie and City Councillors,

I urge you to give your clear support for the proposed 88,000 square foot library and vote to proceed. This is a well-planned proposal that will be a huge benefit to many citizens and will be an important anchor for downtown renewal.

The time is now. Let's not miss this opportunity. Please move this forward and get this done!

Ian Digby

Good morning, Councillor Gibson

I write to you as a resident in your Ward, and as an urban design professional in Guelph.

I have reviewed the plans for the new library and the Baker District, and also attended the Plan2041 talk in February. Community focal points, contextual mid-rise density and mixed-use urbanism in Guelph is crucial to ensuring the continued walkability, resilience, and success of downtowns like the wonderful one Guelph already has. Libraries serve as strong hubs for citizens of all walks of life and bring communities together, both inside the facility and outside along the animated streetscape.

I support the continued work to realize this new city downtown placemaking.

Best Regards,

Todd Smith

Good Morning Mr. Goller,

I just wanted to take a moment to let you know that I support a new main library project. It is my impression that Guelph would benefit from investment in projects that benefit the enrichment of cultural and intellectual life of the city and help foster a sense of community amongst diverse socio-economic backgrounds. A library is a great equalizer of resources and helps those who struggle to keep up with the rising costs of modern life stay connected.

It can also help revitalize the downtown core by offering itself as a community hub for programs and events or a meeting place for our community.

Guelph, in my opinion, is at risk of becoming a stale, uninspired bedroom community. Full of sprawling suburbs filled with people who only come here to sleep.

It's time to commit to a vision of a future Guelph, perhaps one that we may not get to fully enjoy but one that our future neighbors will.

Thank you.

--

Amy Lychwa

To the Mayor and City Council

I am writing to ask each of you to support the revised plan for the Baker St. Development. I strongly believe that this development with residential, commercial and library plans will help our city be well positioned for the future!

I have reviewed the position of each councillor as reported in Guelph Today and I am concerned that some councillors appear unwilling to accept the overwhelming research showing that modern cities reap significant benefit from modern, correctly sized libraries. Guelph needs councillors to be responsive evidence - especially evidence for which our city has paid significant money to have access. We've already invested a lot of time and money to identify what our city needs. Now is the time to act on this evidence!

In addition, hasn't Council already voted to go forward with a library? Why is the debate open again?

Yes, a modern library will cost money - however, the cost to the city to not provide all citizens access to adequate library services is also costly. Having a modern library will result in making Downtown a more attractive to new residents - resulting in revitalisation of Downtown businesses, employment opportunities and vibrancy while reducing pressure to develop greenfields that will feed us in the future! As a downtown resident, the whole Baker St. Development is so exciting to see.

So much evidence has been presented to Council to show that libraries are vital to a vital modern urban environment! It is time for every councillor to accept the evidence and approve the new main branch once and for all! Having it at Baker St. or in a slightly different location is a vortex argument.

One concern I have about the proposed redevelopment is about parkland. Please do not lose sight of the need to increase parkland downtown along with welcoming more residents downtown. Public spaces do not equal parkland where residents can benefit from some contact with nature.

Please, just build the library downtown along with the proposed residential, commercial and public spaces. Please keep Guelph in line with other cities in Ontario, and Canada who have realized that an investment in a modern, appropriately sized library, along with a intensified residential and commercial downtown, and public spaces, is necessary to a vibrant, economically thriving, healthy community!

Sincerely,

C Killen

Dear mayor and members of city council,

As a father of two children (age 6 & 10) living in the junction area and walking distance to the library, I am glad to hear that the construction of a new 88,000 sqft main library can finally get approved by city council. My family and I fully support and look forward to the construction of the new library and we hope that city council and the mayor see the importance of this project going ahead the same way.

I understand that with COVID-19 on our doorstep and the associated loss in revenue for the City might make you feel that every decision on spending of taxpayers money by city council has to be considered carefully and well thought out and perhaps large spending projects suddenly appear to be scary in light of the current pandemic. If so, I would you like you to take a moment and think of the implications that your decision on the library construction will have for the future of Guelph.

I am firmly convinced that a new main library in Guelph is overdue based on my own experiences and those of friends and their families and in light of the growth of the City of Guelph. For us, the library is the most visited part of downtown Guelph, it is a magnet my children love to go to and enjoy to visit and I think this is true for many Guelphites . A new library will allow to accommodate all Guelph residents to enjoy its books, various medias, programming, events etc. for decades to come and it will serve well an expected, growing population in Guelph.

In contrast, we all hope and anticipate that the COVID-19 pandemic will be manageable within the coming year or two. Even though COVID-19 is on everyone's mind in the short term the decision to support the construction of a new library is for the long term and thus I urge you not to let a short term event cloud your vision for Guelph's downtown future.

Again, I do understand that the current financial stress on the City is hard and difficult to manage but I want to say that you are not alone when voting in favour of the library! You are backed by citizens who understand the far reaching consequences of a new library and, although I can only speak for myself, I am more than happy to cover my share of the bargain with my tax dollars to support your decision in favour of a new library and a revitalization of the Downtown core.

Sincerely,

Thomas Eckert

A happy and proud resident of Guelph

(cc: City Clerks Office and Scott Butler, Library BoD Chair)

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

I am writing to you today to express my strong support for continuing the Baker Street District redevelopment, including the current alternative layout for the future library.

The proposal reflects the needs of our growing city with higher density housing built with an eye to the environment, close to transit hubs and services. The new design, with standalone library, offers excellent porosity to Wyndham and other streets, and the new face of the standalone library will add vitality to Baker Street. There is opportunity for plenty of parking, both car and bike, and this district will serve as a destination for decades to come. "Come to Guelph, park your car, now go explore."

Good libraries are part of good cities. There is often talk of Guelph being a progressive and innovative city as it continues to be a growing community. The state of the current main branch library seems to oppose this sentiment. It is woefully inadequate to meet the demands of our community. Libraries are key components in any community. They are not an extra or a luxury, but instead a piece of necessary infrastructure that serves and benefits many. Council has overwhelmingly approved the base business case for a new library. ***The base business case is still relevant, and will remain so.***

You have likely received correspondence from residents sharing that they don't think their local branch has much usership, therefore the need for a new main branch is unwarranted. That argument is inconsistent with need-based design and does not address the current realities (and potential) of a new main library. Arguments of that nature should have no bearing on your decision. The map on page 52 shows the extensive user coverage of the Main Branch. In many cases, those users are un(der)served elsewhere in the City. ***The Main Branch of the Guelph Public Library system serves many socio-economic communities across the entire City.***

The primary library uses and programming can be accommodated in the proposed standalone library. The design is beautiful and inviting. The new layout is a ***fiscally responsible solution to various economic and legal design issues***. Further, as Library board chair Mr. Butler has pointed out, the overall project savings to be realised with this new layout are comparable to the grant funding opportunity that was not successful. ***The new layout is a better design, for less cost.***

I am not ignorant of current COVID realities. However, this project is still in the design phase, and if there is a sudden economic turn for the worse, there will be future opportunities to pause before shovels hit the soil. ***It is premature to pause now due to COVID.***

Any significant delay for this project will simply increase costs down the road. The need for this project is not shrinking, it is growing. The City of Guelph can't possibly retain the current Main Branch much longer and also declare that it is a modern, forward-looking city. If this council delays this project, you will not save residents tax dollars; in the long-run you will cost us more.

Sincerely,

Shannon Thibodeau

Raglan St.

Good morning,

I would like to direct this email to Council during the Committee of the Whole meeting on October 6, 2020 in support of the Guelph Public Library.

Libraries are a foundation of our society. They are the last remaining public institution that is accessible to all members of the public regardless of income, race, gender, sexuality, or accessibility needs. Libraries are often a safe haven for those who have nowhere else to go. They act as a warming center in the winter and a cooling center in the summer. They provide a refuge from the difficulties one may have in other aspects of life.

Libraries are crucial to support our most vulnerable populations. They provide free internet access and printing resources for those who may not otherwise have access to it. Accessible materials and public programs are offered at a great benefit to those who do not have access to other, more costly options. The library's online eResources provide education and job training opportunities that individuals may otherwise not be able to benefit from.

The Guelph Public Library system is one of the oldest library institutions in Canada, established in 1850. This is a library system that should be celebrated! Our current Main Library resides in an old, inaccessible building that is far too small to adequately support the growing population of Guelph. It was too old and too small when the new library was first proposed over 20 years ago. Today, the building is showing its age even more with many structural problems and proven accessibility issues. With a constantly breaking elevator and no public washrooms on the main floor, this building is ready for a Human Rights complaint. There are no longer any feasible modifications that can be made on the current building that would justify their cost. A new Main Library is necessary to be able to serve the entire community equally and without safety concerns.

City Council has already approved the development of the new Main Library. The need for a new building has been proven time and time again. Upon complaints regarding the cost of the building, this new proposal has been presented at 10%

less than originally proposed. This is something that has not been given enough recognition. Those who use the library already saw the value in the initial dollar figure and the decrease in cost is nothing but a benefit to everyone. To ask for the cost to be decreased again would take away from the functionality of the new library and may affect how long this new building would be able to serve the community. We need to spend a significant amount of money now to ensure that this building is able to serve the community for years to come, not make shortcuts that will cost more in modifications in just a few short years.

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries states that there is an average return rate of \$5.39 for every \$1 of taxpayer support. There is no other public institution that has a comparable return on investment to a public library. The value of a public library shows the value that the city places on its community. This value is easily seen in the cost analysis of libraries but also in various social-economic factors. Libraries provide a sense of community, support small business ventures, and assist in bridging the gap between generations. During this pandemic, the need for libraries has been shown more than ever! Those struggling with their income during this time still have unlimited access to the wealth of resources available at their public library.

A vote against the library is a vote against the elderly, the disabled, and those living in poverty. It is a vote against struggling families, those living on the streets, and those trying to improve their lives. A good library system is a building block for a good community and we need to acknowledge that how we treat our library is equal to how we treat our citizens.

We need to ask ourselves why we are so reserved to build a new library and invest in a building that will serve the entirety of the community for years to come. We need to question why a tax levy of 0.39% is being modeled to the public as a drastic increase while higher levies to provide support to other capital ventures are rarely mentioned. We need to question why we are re-visiting an issue that was already voted on and approved with a higher price tag. A decline in cost by 10% for building a community resource that will provide every member of the Guelph community for years to come should be celebrated, not berated on social media. We need to stand behind the decision to support our most vulnerable communities. We need to vote yes to this new proposal for a new Main Library.

Sincerely,

Kristen Bowman

As a resident of Guelph's Ward 1 for the last five years, I am writing to register my support for the proposed new library and the Baker District revitalization project. On Tuesday evening I attended the Zoom forum outlining the plans for this project, and was very impressed. We deliberately chose Guelph as our new home when

moving back to Ontario after a decade in New Brunswick, and have come to love the city. The changes being proposed are ambitious, but I think they draw upon and expand the considerable strengths and assets of this fine city. I urge Council to consider with open minds what this could mean for the future of our home.

Thank you,

Krystyna Higgins

October 5, 2020

Dear Mr. Mayor and Guelph City Councillors:

The items up for discussion today are the location of the new Main Library and how to pay for it. The developer is quite excited to have a stand-alone Main Library in the Baker District. I believe a stand-alone library has many advantages, not the least of which being its lower construction costs and its more effective response to COVID-19 distancing requirements.

In any case, it is likely that you have received many letters solely regarding the building of a new Main Library.

The focus of this letter is on the numbers and some questions for Council to consider.

In February of 2018, Guelph City Councillors approved the building of an 88,000 square foot Main Library in the Baker District. The Library board recommended that this Library be at least 88,000 square feet: anything less wouldn't accommodate Guelph's projected population growth, nor would it meet AODA requirements.

In October of 2020, a different layout of the Baker District Development is being proposed. In this layout, the library is a stand-alone building and will cost \$62 million, \$5 million less than the original cost of \$67 million.

To help pay for this stand-alone Library, a 0.39% levy paid over 20 years is recommended. A rough estimate of the cost of this levy for the average property owner in Guelph is \$293 paid out over 20 years. This is not an exorbitant price to pay for a structure that will bring in an estimated ROI of \$3 for every \$1 spent.

In addition, the Baker District Development itself will bring in approximately \$1 million per year in property taxes and at least \$125 million of investment. It does not seem financially prudent to put this kind of money in jeopardy.

Furthermore, if the City of Guelph continues to waffle on the status of the Library in

the Baker District Development, it sends a clear message to developers: at best, our City is difficult to work with; at worst, our City is not to be trusted.

Finally, tens of thousands of dollars have been spent on the many reports and studies related to building a new Main Library. If the new Main Library isn't built, that money will have been wasted.

Can Council provide any evidence that the Library board will accept a smaller Main Library?

Has Council considered the possibility that a decrease in the square footage of the Library might actually lead to an increase in the cost per square foot?

If Council vetoes the building of a new Main Library, how many more years will Guelphites have to wait for one?

Does Council have support from the developer for a smaller library?

Has Council considered the possibility that the developer might get cold feet and pull out of this development?

A Main Library has a different role than branch libraries. In order for the GPL to operate with maximum efficiency, a Main Library is necessary. Thus, a Main Library is a valuable asset for all citizens of Guelph, not just those who live in the downtown area.

I end this letter with a quote from Oscar Wilde's "Lady Windemere's Fan":

"Cecil Graham: What is a cynic?

Lord Darlington: A man who knows the price of everything, and the value of nothing.

Cecil Graham: And a sentimentalist, my dear Darlington, is a man who sees an absurd value in everything and doesn't know the market price of any single thing."

I include the entire quote because I do not want to mislead Guelphites by cherry picking facts that support my opinion. The value of a Main Library is not an absurd one. Generations to come will receive the benefits of a Main Library in the Baker District, and that value is not something we can put a price tag on.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Regards,

Tanja Gevaert

Dear City of Guelph Councillors,

I'm writing to express my support for a new Central Library in the location proposed. The potential for revitalization is critical in the declining downtown core, and such a library can fulfill its role as a community hub and cultural space for Guelph residents to explore. We have all seen that the current library building is unfortunately not serving its population to its potential. In particular, the archive of City materials should be a critical issue for you to consider.

Thank you for your work to create a new Central Library that will enhance the lives of Guelph's citizens and visitors.

Sincerely,

Deb Quaile

We hope that the Mayor and Council employ all their courage and wisdom in making the difficult but final decision to move forward with the construction of a new main library which will proudly serve so many Guelph residents of all ages.

Michel and Debi Hunter

Dear Mayor Guthrie and City Councillors,

I'm writing in support of the library proposal going to vote tonight, and to urge all Councillors to vote in favour of it. The need for a new downtown library has been indisputable for 15 years. The location and necessary size have been studied in detail. The costs have been figured out. It will never feel like the right time to pay millions of dollars for a legacy project like a new flagship library, but in hindsight it will always have been the right time several years ago. The longer we put this off, the more it's going to cost, and the more taxpayer dollars will be at stake. Building a smaller library than what the professionals have determined to be necessary would be an even bigger waste of taxpayer money - it would be insufficient the second it was built. Let's not pretend we're going to learn anything more or find any savings by kicking this can even further down the road... realistically, the opposite will be true.

Myself, I have no concern with the tax levy of 0.39%. I would be thrilled to pay it - this is exactly the kind of thing I WANT my tax money to be spent on.

I urge you to be bold and prudent and build this library now. It's the one our community needs now and for generations to come. We can't wait any longer. And I look forward to visiting it!

Thank you,

Laura Schreiner

Ward 2, Guelph

Hello

Calculations evaluating where best to spend public money are difficult at the best of times, even more so during the pandemic. That said I think the revised plan for Baker street and a new library would be infrastructure dollars well spent.

Russell Dunk

Hello Leanne and Cathy,

I hope you're both doing well during these most unusual times. I just wanted to send a quick note as a way to show my continued support for a new main branch for our city's library system.

A few years ago in 2018, I was the final delegate to speak in support of the library at the lengthy council meeting that lasted late into the night. My thoughts and feelings are unchanged since then, despite the challenging times we face now: Guelph needs a new library that reflects and addresses the needs of this community. In fact, I believe we need it now more than ever.

As a veteran journalist for publications such as *The Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, CBC and others, and award-winning children's author (including the book, *Why We Live Where We Live*, which won the Norma Fleck Award in 2015, the most prestigious for children's non-fiction in the country, and one I've long considered my love letter to Guelph) I've been fortunate to visit and speak at libraries across Canada. I've seen what a well-designed building and strong library culture does for the community and streetscape. I've seen children and parents snuggling on sofas reading together. Teens and young adults studying at large, well-lit tables, taking breaks to socialize. Adults of all socioeconomic backgrounds perusing shelves and taking advantage of all the services a library offers to help people live better lives.

As I mentioned that night in 2018, a well designed library is a community hub and a great equalizer. It's one of the few indoor spaces in a city where everyone is welcome. It is a gift to ourselves.

I'll admit, after the meeting I started to dream up new ways to use the space once it was built. When we do have our new library, it is my intention to build a children's writing festival, in which children across Ontario are invited to come to Guelph and learn the craft of writing from well-known children's and YA authors. Many authors have already said they're interested in participating. But...we need a space in Guelph to pull it off. Of course, a well-designed library is the obvious choice.

I'm sure once the library is built, others will come up with inspired ways to use the space and contribute to our community too.

A final thought: Walking around downtown last weekend and seeing the growing number of shuttered stores due to COVID made me incredibly sad. Once the pandemic is over and the masks finally come off, Guelph will need to work very hard to rebuild our downtown so our city centre, our heart, remains strong. A few replacement storefronts won't be enough. I can get a new pair of sunglasses or a haircut anywhere in the city. But if we build a welcoming and beautiful main library, people will walk, ride and drive downtown. And people will likely pop into the neighbouring stores along the way too. I know I will.

In the aftermath of COVID, we will need a library — a long-lasting, effective downtown anchor — more than ever.

I know some people are worried about the money needed to build a library. I do completely understand. We are all feeling rattled right now. But we have to remember that the pandemic will not last forever. And we have to remember the money each Guelph resident pays does not sink into a black hole, only to disappear. On the contrary: In the end, we will have a physical manifestation of our commitment to accessible learning, creativity, education and community building. All traits that convinced me to move back to Guelph 17 years ago.

For your records, I am attaching the first draft of an article I originally wrote for *The Globe and Mail* not long after the council meeting in 2018. Sadly, it is one of the very few articles I've ever written to be killed after acceptance. My editor liked it, but the entire section it was written for was reorganized, and I fear it was lost in the shuffle. Despite that, it was a "good news" piece that I send not as a rebuke, but as I way to remind us all what happened in 2018 and why a new library still matters.

Warmest wishes,

Kira

The Globe and Mail

Date: March 12, 2018

Word count: 1515

Subject: Happy Guelph Mayor

By: Kira Vermond

Head: "I Have No Problem Saying I've Changed My Mind"

Deck: Guelph's mayor, Cam Guthrie, used to think public libraries were a waste of time and money – until he didn't

Even before he opened his mouth that night, there were people sitting in the peanut gallery of Guelph's council chambers who thought they knew precisely what Cam Guthrie, the mayor, was going to say about libraries.

After all, all you had to do was Google his name and "library" and it was pretty clear what he'd considered them over the years: a waste of money.

But at the Feb. 13 special council meeting that dragged for over five hours, Mr. Guthrie and the 10 other council members in attendance patiently listened to presentations from KPMG and the library board. Then 28 delegates took the microphone: kids, entrepreneurs, teachers and seniors.

All were making their case for a new, updated main library building that would replace the current one – a grey slab of a structure built in the mid-1960s, complete with leaky washrooms, cramped meeting spaces and tall, inaccessible shelves.

A bright, new, 88,000 square foot (8,175 square metre) library, they said, would become part of a larger downtown redevelopment project that would turn a nearby current parking lot wasteland into a much-needed community hub.

After 23 years of frustrating irresolution, it was time.

At the end of the 30-plus presentations, a bleary-eyed Mr. Guthrie, shuffled a few papers at his space on the council's horseshoe-shaped desk and took a breath as the audience squirmed and coughed.

"I don't have a library story," Mr. Guthrie began, referring to the many accounts told that night. "I'm being very open and honest with you. I didn't go to the library a lot." A few people in the audience laughed, but he shut them down. "I don't mean to be funny. I never used the library, I just didn't."

As the mayor spoke about his time getting to know the library staff and the state of the current building, the room grew quiet. And then he said the words, some never thought they'd hear: "I've changed my mind."

His pronouncement comes at a time when, particularly south of the border, politicians draw their ideological line in the sand and stick to their side, even if that division means creating logjams and stalemates. Think President Trump's recent

(some would say inevitable) NRA capitulation after yet another school shooting. In that context, Mr. Guthrie's private and public turn around on libraries, can be seen as a breath of fresh air. A humanization of politics.

Sure, it's just about a library. But in today's political climate, it's not.

Sitting in his boardroom overlooking Guelph's City Hall's skating rink a few weeks after the council meeting, Mr. Guthrie is the first to admit he didn't actually know what he was going to say that night until he launched in.

"I just kind of talk off the cuff," he says. "And it's probably gotten me into trouble sometimes, but I do like to just speak from the heart, speak from the gut and just tell people how I feel."

Not that his 180-degree swerve on the topic came out of the blue. Insiders knew that Mr. Guthrie's view of libraries had slowly been changing since his 2014 election win in Guelph, Canada's third fastest growing city, about 1.5 hours west of Toronto. In fact, he says there were plenty of behind-the-scenes meetings and talks intended to get more councilors on side.

Steve Kraft, Guelph Public Library CEO who has been with the library for over 30 years, says there had been a more urgent shift in public tone about building a new main library in recent years.

"But I think the biggest change came from the mayor himself, you know. And congratulations to him," says Mr. Kraft, sitting in his overflowing, first-floor office in the current building. "I was so surprised by him saying that he didn't use libraries as a kid – and that now he really values them."

When asked how it felt to be in the room when Mr. Guthrie offered his final words, "Let's build a library. I'll call the vote," he responded, "It was like relief and joy at the same time."

For good reason. While still a councilor, Mr. Guthrie once voted to reduce public library budgets and staff, and even for nixing Bookmobiles, which rumbled around the city visiting seniors' homes, daycare centres and underserved areas of town.

Mr. Guthrie, who spent 16 years as an insurance broker before being elected to council, says the seed of change sprouted after taking a tour of the current library building when he first became mayor. From a risk management perspective, it was an "uh-oh" moment that eventually became an "ah-ha" one. The building, was constructed when Guelph was merely half its size now – a population of over 130,000. By 2041, it's expected to jump to 191,000. How could the dated, already overcrowded building accommodate the growth?

“That was the first little shift,” he says of meeting the library’s board and making the rounds with them. “Credit must be given to them. They were very welcoming and very kind to a mayor walking in the door that they knew wasn’t very supportive of them. If they had taken a contrary, defensive and uncooperative position, I doubt we’d be here today. Honestly, I would have probably dug in my heels a bit.”

He also quickly realized he’d have to work with the other 12 councilors, some of whom were longtime proponents of building a new library as part of reinvigorating the downtown area. Other people in the community mattered too.

“You’re better off working with people for four years than fighting for four years and getting nothing done,” he explains.

Ultimately though, it wasn’t until Mr. Guthrie started considering what the library of today is, a community hub open to all, did he finally make the shift for real. And while some might argue that cell phones, ebooks and Google will eventually make libraries obsolete, more recent research is painting a different picture: paper and pixels will likely live side by side. Even smart phone-happy kids prefer to have the choice.

It’s this realization, based on the research, that makes Mr. Guthrie say he’s actually happy the city waited so long to approve a new main, downtown library, despite the frustrations along the way. Society is finally at a moment where the future of the library seems far clearer.

“The future of the library is not books. It’s community space. It’s a place to celebrate arts and culture. And it’s a place to connect, to help with newcomers to our city, to facilitate people who are looking for jobs and archives. It’s not just books,” he says. “If this city had looked to build this, even 10 years ago, I think we would have done it wrong.”

Not that the way ahead is going to be a simple one. While the Feb. 13 meeting resulted in a near unanimous vote to approve the recommendation that \$1,900,000 of the capital budget be allocated to preliminary design concepts and construction costs for the library component of the larger development project, it’s a long road ahead. The words, “five years” floated around that night, but at this point, no one can say with any certainty exactly how long it will be before the new doors open. The final cost is to be determined too.

Mr. Kraft says there will likely be other hold-ups and aggravations coming – typical and not-so-typical things that pop up with any construction project. For starters, there’s a little issue about an old burial ground where they want to build. Although

most of the remains were moved to the city's largest cemetery years ago, there may be a few surprises on the horizon.

"Every time they dig or do something in there, a sinkhole opens up and they find bones," he says. "Fair enough. OK, they obviously missed some people, but they'll need to be carefully removed."

Even with the probable headaches to come, Mr. Guthrie knows the library has come to represent a full-circle moment for him personally. He remembers, back before the thought of running for a council seat even crossed his mind, he'd watch politicians on TV and find himself yelling at the set.

"It just always seemed so scripted, so fake, spinned, no honesty. And I always used to say to my wife, 'Why can't they just say, 'sorry' when they make a mistake?' Or why can't they just say, 'I got new information and I've changed my mind?'" he says now.

The mayor, who calls himself, "a pro-development, pro-business, pro-revenue type of leader," has come to realize a library, which anchors a growing city's downtown, can offer all of those things too. Knowing that, has made the pivot easier, even if he knows it can be politically risky.

"Yes, I've got these principles. Yes, I've got these values that I believe in. But that doesn't mean I'm closed-minded," he says. "It's about going home, looking in the mirror at the end of the night and knowing that you made the right decision."

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council,

I recently moved here to start my position at the University of Guelph and was excited to join a vibrant growing city that cared about moving into the future. The proposed library project promotes everything this city needs to do just that. A library is more than books, it is a destination hub that enables future growth. When Calgary recently built their library it made national news — let's make a Guelph library that will make headlines, let's make the library we need now and in the future, let's make the library we deserve. Please say yes to this new library.

Best Regards,

Travis

Travis Steffens

Hello Mayor Gurthrie and Guelph Council members,

I wanted to write to you all to express my full support of a New Central Library for Guelph - the proposed location in the Baker Street redevelopment, and the levy.

As Guelph Public Library's Development Officer, I see first-hand each and every day how much the library means to our community. And, in light of the global COVID-19 pandemic, our system means even more than ever, which is why this project must be seen as an essential investment in our community.

As life gets more difficult for people, our library is vital in ensuring Guelphites remain connected, supported, and entertained during these unprecedented times - offering in some cases the only available community access to computers and the internet, lifelong learning tools, and a safe space. As a result of the hardships faced by COVID-19, a vibrant library for Guelph will be more important than ever. Please don't neglect this project and continue to push it aside when our community is in growing need of extended public library services, and libraries will only become more valued and necessary into the future. Studies after studies have shown the immense value of public libraries to their communities in recessions, as they are key drivers in the social, economic, and educational vibrancy of their communities. An updated new Central Library will be a key driver in Guelph's success moving forward, and something we can all be proud of.

As library staff, I am also painfully aware of the current main library building, and the restrictions it creates. In addition to the blatant safety and accessibility issues, we could be doing so much more for our community with a more appropriate and functional space. I encourage you to see what other libraries are able to offer their communities, and ask, why shouldn't Guelphites enjoy those options - tech hubs, quiet spaces, community rooms, and beyond?

For those who say that Guelph doesn't need a new main library, I implore them to learn what would be possible with adequate space to serve our community. I implore them to visit our current building and see its run-down state, which is inaccessible, and completely out-of-date to function properly.

Your decision on October 5th will make an impact in Guelph for generations to come - please make the visionary choice that will allow everyone in our city to explore, connect, and thrive. Otherwise, what message does this send?

Thank you for your time,

Kirsten Bester

Folks, I know you are concerned about tax increases associated with this project but 30 years is too long to let this project drag on and on. We desperately need this new library... for the kids, for the vulnerable, for our community. So much work has gone in so far to create a beautiful design, with even more work going in to try and get the budget down.

The existing downtown library building is a huge liability for the City with serious costly issues like asbestos and upcoming fines for not meeting provincial accessibility requirements. Have you compared those costs?

I urge you to approve this new downtown library development NOW! It's only going to get more expensive the longer we wait.

Thank you

Marnie

Marnie Benson

Mayor Guthrie and members of Council:

This coming Monday and Wednesday you will collectively find yourselves at a fork in the road on what has been a 5-year journey initiated by you.

On November 25th, 2015, Council unanimously voted to launch a Downtown Implementation Strategy with a particular focus on the Baker St. property. Many members of the current Council were part of that decision.

What was the motivation? It actually had very little to do with the library.

Places to Grow legislation designates downtown Guelph as an Urban Growth Centre. We are required to achieve a minimum density of 150 jobs/residents per hectare by 2031, approximately 8,500 people. We have an award-winning Downtown Secondary Plan to get us there. Residential, institutional, commercial and public realm development has long been envisioned for the Baker District.

Launching this 5-year process was also driven by the private sector. Staff were receiving unsolicited interest from developers wanting to know the plans for highly valuable city-owned downtown properties.

As part of the Downtown Implementation Strategy, I believe you spent \$100,000 to hire Collins-Barrow to survey the private sector and evaluate the potential of 5 city-owned sites for development.

The Baker St. property was the hands-down winner in terms of private-sector interest.

As a result, in July of 2017, you directed staff to initiate an RFP process for the development of the Baker St. parking lot which would include the library. In media coverage, the Mayor stated:

<https://www.guelphtoday.com/local-news/city-makes-it-clear-it-wants-new-library-to-be-part-of-baker-street-plans-673174>

"This is a money maker for the city of Guelph," urged the Mayor, adding that while the site may be downtown, the whole city benefits from the uses and taxes that will follow redevelopment of what he called an "underperforming asset."

Flowing out of that decision, you asked the library to furnish a business case, which they did, at a cost of \$100,000. That business case, for a 88,000 square foot library was approved in an 11-1 vote on January 24, 2018.

In July of 2018, you voted to issue an RFP with the 88,000 square foot library figure included.

When Windmill Developments was chosen as the business partner, Mayor Guthrie stated the following:

<https://www.guelphtoday.com/local-news/city-chooses-green-developer-for-massive-baker-district-project-987290>

"This is one of the proudest moments of my time on council and as the mayor," Mayor Cam Guthrie said, saying that this isn't about the library, Baker Street or the downtown core, it's about the impact it will have on the entire city.

We landed a top national developer with green credentials which will help us meet our Climate Change obligations of being carbon neutral by 2050. We have one of the pre-eminent architectural firms in the country working on our project.

Mayor Guthrie recently highlighted Hamilton's commitment to their dining district:

<https://www.guelphmercury.com/news-story/10205706-guelph-s-downtown-dining-district-expanded-restaurant-patios-extended-to-end-of-november/>

"Their staff know that certainty brings investment and an opportunity for these people in their downtown core."

We need that certainty to support investment in our downtown core. Windmill Developments is bringing \$125 - \$175 million in investment to the table for this project. When the District is fully built-out, it will generate \$1 million annually in property taxes.

I think it's a sad state of affairs that we find ourselves in a situation where the Mayor is inciting polarization of the community around the library, rather than leading forward on the city building project of a lifetime.

If the library is downsized or paused, the dominoes will start to fall and the whole project could unravel. Don't let that happen.

Sincerely,

Susan Watson

From Rob Ramage

I have lived in many places from Montreal to Vancouver and I've had the privilege to travel widely around the world. Without a home town bias, I see my new home in Guelph from the perspective of opportunity and Guelph is blessed with so many ingredients to continue it's path as a leading city. Underused land right at the core of a city provides an enviable chance to create a bonding and community space that is at the centre of modern urban development. I urge the approval of the plan and the library to create a cornerstone of civic space, a type of space that is central to the vibrancy of cities around the world that take leading positions in livability and social connection and cohesiveness. The library is not a holder of books, it is a statement of growth, connection, education and learning space for all in the community. A central piece of a thriving and modern city.

Good morning Mayor and Councillors,

I fully support for the new Central Library location. The downtown core would highly benefit from this development. The current library building is antiquated and needs a new beginning and would serve it's community better. The Library is more than books and a gathering. It represents a learning centre which must be brought into the 21st century.

I hope that you can visualize that this new building not for today but for our future. We will kook back and realize that this library was a great investment to our community. Do not make any compromises as this new Central Library project is the right decision.

Regards

Walter Tyschenko

Good morning,

I wanted to write to show my support for the city proceeding with the Baker Street redevelopment and New Main Library project.

Certainly, we're in economically uncertain times right now. COVID-19 has destabilized our sense of normal, and I understand the concerns that many of you have about increased taxes at such a time as this. However, consider that it is the very citizens struggling right now who stand to benefit most from investment in our libraries. If COVID-19 and economic uncertainty is what's giving you pause and

your primary reason for not wanting to proceed with this project, then I'd invite you to consider why the library of all projects should be subject to such scrutiny. If COVID-19 is the reason for pause, then all city projects and spending should be paused.

I don't have children, and yet I'm happy for my taxes to fund public education. I don't use rec centres, and yet I'm happy for my taxes to support public recreation. I'm happy for my taxes to support both of these things because even though they don't personally benefit me as an individual, they benefit the collective good of our city. Libraries are at the heart and foundation of any healthy, vibrant community and ours is insufficient and falling apart.

Our neighbouring cities are surpassing us. Cambridge, Kitchener, and Hamilton have all invested in the rejuvenation of their libraries, and their cities are more vibrant and moving forward because of it. I urge you to do the same in Guelph.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Laura Baker.

I'm writing to add my support to build the new library downtown. Unlike transportation decisions, there has actually been a rigorous assessment by the GPL, staff and KPMG consultants.

\$13 million of the \$62 million cost is for parking. A comprehensive TDM program at the new library and throughout downtown would negate the need for at least \$10 million of this cost bringing the overall price down to \$52 million.

A further \$35 million could have been applied to the library had council not approved Speedvale widening, Emma-Earl Bridge, Niska Road/Bridge, Wilson Parkade, Stone Road widening – to name a few terrible transportation decisions.

A big picture point of view of the full context is needed!

Sincerely,
Martin Collier

Mr. Mayor,

I would like to add my support for the construction of the new main library to begin in the Baker Street parking lot as soon as possible. I am a long term resident of

Guelph and feel that using the old parking lot site for a fantastic community library is the best use of this space.

Best regards,

Mary McNally

Dear Council,

I SUPPORT THE ORIGINAL PLAN FOR THE BAKER STREET LOCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF OUR DOWNTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY.

All the best,

John Farley

Ward 1