

Scott Frederick

I am writing to express strong support for completing the full 88000 square foot library as previously approved by council.

Libraries aren't just feel-good spaces for softies, they are solid, tangible evidence of public money returned directly to a community as public value. Increased property values, job skills development, and strengthening of social services are all examples of the public value libraries create. That means that these are ways in which libraries benefit even those who never set foot inside.

The return on investment of a public library varies from 3 – 7 times. The cost to Guelph citizens is about 29 cents/household/week. If people can't afford to pay such a small amount then we have a poverty problem, not a budget problem. We can't slash and burn our way through the budget to satisfy the least able to pay. Addressing someones inability to pay taxes needs to be done, but not at the expense of hobbling the development of the City, or of building resilience in a time of pandemic and economic uncertainty.

I understand that person visits to the main library a year number in the vicinity of 350,000. Of those visitors 75 per cent shop or carry out other business downtown providing a measurable economic benefit to our city, estimated as high as over nine million dollars annually. We need more of this, not less. We also need need the \$125 - \$175 million of private sector investment that the development partner is bringing to the table. We need the 300 units of housing on the Baker District location. And we need the \$1 million in annual property taxes once the property is built out.

There are arguments that because of the pandemic, our priorities must change. I would argue that in a pandemic, we need all hands on deck, all the thinking caps on and all the tools freely available. Libraries help with that. Book libraries, tool libraries, seed libraries and internet libraries. We will need them all. More of them, not less.

Thanks for your consideration of these points.