

Guelph Old City Residents' Association (GOCRA)  
Guelph, Ontario,

October 1, 2020.

To Mayor Cam Guthrie and City Councillors,



I am writing on behalf of the membership of the Guelph Old City Residents' Association. We represent more than 140 members in the area within two kilometers of the Basilica. We formed in 2016 to be a voice of awareness and advocacy for that area.

I am writing on behalf of GOCRA to support the revisions to the Baker District Urban Design Master Plan and to strongly support the revised plan for the new Main Branch as a stand-alone building of 88, 0000 square feet. We have surveyed both our members and the neighbourhood and found that the majority of residents support this plan, with no opposition stated.

The reasons for our support are as follows:

Guelph is a growing city whose population will continue to grow quickly in the next few years. The present Main Branch was built for a city of 65,000 whose needs are quite different than the needs of citizens now and in the future. The present library is not AODA compliant. The new library of 88,000 sq. ft. will have enough room to allow for AODA compliance.

The new library plan will provide the following:

- Space for adult programming and community meetings of various sizes
- Space for Young Adult materials and programming, space that is not now available in the downtown area
- Space for parents and children in the enlarged Children's area, both for activities and programs and for an enhanced materials collection.
- A unique and beautiful building that will attract tourists and business investment. Cities with beautiful new libraries have experienced up to 70% more visitors.
- Attractive new streetscapes that will revitalize many areas of the downtown like Baker Street, Chapel Lane and Quebec Street.
- Space for the City Archives. In a time of increased interest in archival research, this space is much needed to allow family, home and city research in a comfortable setting.

The revised Baker District Urban Design Master will provide the following:

- More much-needed public space, much-needed because of the present deficit in parkland and green space in the downtown.
- More view corridors to the unique and valued Basilica landscape, a landscape which draws thousands of visitors to the city
- New opportunities for pedestrians to walk safely in the downtown.
- Opportunities for urban agriculture and more affordable housing

Recent experiences in the pandemic have shown us the need for more accessible public space and for planning that will attract new economic investment in our downtown. The resulting increase in taxes and commerce for the City will benefit all of us.

We in the Old City Residents' Association urge you to support the revisions to the Baker District Urban Design Plan and to support its revised location and design for the new Guelph Public Library Main Branch.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Ratcliffe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Susan Ratcliffe,  
President,  
Old City Residents' Association  
On behalf of its members and neighbours