



City of Guelph - Downtown Parking Workshop

Tuesday July 14, 2015

President & CEO Speech

Good evening Mayor Guthrie, City Councillors, members of city staff and members of the public. My name is Kithio Mwanzia and I am the President & CEO of the Guelph Chamber of Commerce. We are pleased to be here today to offer the business voice and to play an active role as a dynamic solutions provider so as to build a stronger more robust economy and community here in Guelph. Guelph's downtown continues to lead the way in punching above its weight. Like many downtowns in Canada our downtown occupies less than 1% of the city wide land area yet attracts an average of 20% of the city wide construction value. The downtown is accommodating a growing population base and has a steep upward growth trajectory. So to that end we have been following discussion on necessary city infrastructure to support this type of growth.

As a bit of background the Guelph Chamber of Commerce is a member driven organization with over 900 members representing more than 30,000 employees. We have a diverse membership, ranging in size, industry, period of operation and location across Guelph. We have received the National Accreditation with Distinction and are proud to be the champion of the business community here in Guelph.

Tonight's presentation on parking has been informed by the Chamber's research and study of local city plans, specifically:

- *Prosperity 2020 and the Downtown Secondary Plan*

As well as research and study of work produced by the Canadian Urban Institute, the International Downtown Association and the Canadian Parking Association.

In addition to this intensive background research we have engaged in consultation with our members from a variety of sectors located both inside and outside the downtown.

As we proceed forward it is important to note that City staff have continued to be forthcoming and timely with information related to the downtown as the Chamber has developed its commentary and would like to recognize the Downtown Advisory Committee and their hard work on a plethora of downtown issues. Each of these elements demonstrates an on-going commitment to support meaningful stakeholder engagement.

The downtown is an important economic engine for the community, with one of the highest job densities of comparable downtown jurisdictions, at approximately 6000 jobs per 100 hectares. However despite this growth there has been no net new parking inventory added to the downtown since 1983. As the downtown trajectory continues its upward trend the need becomes even greater to support existing and future businesses and activities that will serve to benefit the entire community and its economic output. Sound planning in this regard plays an important role in building a competitive environment that retains and attracts businesses. Already there are powerful signals that the city is open for investment, with a detailed downtown secondary plan. In order to support this, short term actions, as well as a long term parking strategy are key.

By 2031 the downtown is set to have 8000 residents and at least 8000 jobs – a net increase of 30%. It is therefore important to ensure that moving forward there is a parking strategy to address the short and long-term stability, growth and prosperity of the downtown core as a key pressure point as well as lever of prosperity and economic competitiveness.

As the fifth fastest growing jurisdiction in Canada addressing this challenge with both short term actions with a focus on longer-term strategies is critically important. The

capacity for downtown to accommodate growth through vital infrastructure like parking will enable private sector investment.

The key issues, as you may know are as follows:

- On-street parking is currently beyond capacity and is being used for both short-term and long term parking.
- Off-street supply is beyond capacity during the day time – further evidenced by a lengthy waiting list for daytime permits.

As a means to further unlock the economic capacity of Guelph through further enabling growth in the downtown, the Chamber recommends the following:

1. Immediately Implement the Wilson Street Parking Pilot – this short term action will better inform long term strategy by providing actionable data on cost effective technology in parkade construction and operations.
2. In the short-to-medium term – leverage the city's 'Open Data' and the innovative capacity of Guelph's technology based businesses by issuing an *Expression of Interest* (EOI) for the development of additional medium term technology based parking solutions.
3. In the Long Term - Establish a clear plan for the building of new parking structures that include the consideration of public-private partnerships as part of a long-term strategy.

Availability and access to parking continues to play an important role in business decision making. Through the recommendations that we have made, we seek to meaningfully contribute to the conversation to what is an important part of the ecosystem of doing business in Guelph.

Parking is a key component of growth enabling infrastructure. Solutions to and infrastructure for parking is therefore a central pillar of economic competitiveness and economic development.

Thank you again for providing the Chamber with the opportunity to speak this evening, and I look forward to your questions.