

2021 City of Guelph Budget – Public Delegations

General Correspondence – Revised Agenda

To even consider a 3.52% tax increase is a crime! Inflation is .5%!
How can anyone justify this increase!!

Rob Statz

Mayor and City Councillors of Guelph,

Re. "Guelph could see red-light cameras as soon as next year" (GMT, November 12, 2020)

I trust Guelph City Council will recognize as its staff has not the scientific research on red-light traffic cameras which demonstrates they *"do not reduce traffic accidents or improve public safety"*.

The most current research from the School of Management at Case Western Reserve University concluded from analysis of thousands of collisions over a 12-year span that the installation of the cameras led to fewer head-on collisions, but far more rear-end and angle collisions. "There is no reason to believe that there is reduction in overall accidents thanks to red-light cameras - - It's likely the cameras *actually led to more accidents overall*. - - Our analysis does not support the case that the cameras improve public safety".

This accords with my own daily observation as a cyclist across the city of Guelph. Motor vehicles almost never run through red-lights, but are often dangerously speeding and turning right at stop signs and crossings in much greater danger to cyclists and pedestrians.

But it is big business for out-of-town vendors of red-light cameras across American and now Canadian cities. More than 400 communities in the United States—including 36 of the largest 50 cities—have installed the devices, usually placed at busy intersections. Yet once the facts are known, communities refuse or remove the cameras (including Cleveland, where Case Western Reserve University is located).

That City staff are now "seeking 112,400 [of Guelph taxpayers money] to go to implementing the program of \$700,000 total over a seven year contract" is shocking waste in this time where all programs are under financial stress or facing defunding from the Covid crisis.

Sincerely,

John McMurtry FRSC

Hello,

This is a brief email to voice our support of a micro transit option for 2021 for Hanlon Bus. Park in place of the bus line originally planned for this area.

Current options for non-drivers are unsafe esp. considering the amount of construction on that road.

Thanks,

Laura Lando PT, DPT

Clinic Owner & Director

Registered Physiotherapist

www.defysportsperformance.com

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of Ontario One Call, a local business located in the Hanlon Business Park on Cooper Drive. The fall of 2020 was supposed to mark the beginning of bus service to our area. We were looking forward to the expansion as a way to boost our recruitment efforts as many of our staff are frequent users of public transit.

Currently employees using transit are required to walk more than 1.5 kms on a busy road with no sidewalks (or often uncleared sidewalks), navigating merges onto the overpass on Laird Rd. It is unsafe to say the least.

We understand that COVID has had an enormous impact on municipal budgets as it has had a significant impact on the way we operate as well. In truth the majority of our staff are now working from home and we are committed to maintaining the work from home option until March 2021. That being said, we still have transit users coming into our office and we are about to begin our recruitment for 2021 in January, adding a dozen new employees, all of whom will work from our office, many of whom will likely be transit riders.

I have seen the micro-transit report. Our current transit riders generally feel that the option is a good one, however, they are concerned that there will be hidden costs transferred to the user. If there are no additional costs for the rider than we support this initiative.

Providing micro-transit, specifically to business and industrial locations promotes employment. The more Guelph residents we can employ the better for everyone. Guelph has traditionally had a very low unemployment rate, in order to maintain that it is important to provide support so that things like a lack of transit are not preventing our businesses from growing and residents from thriving.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Morgan Malinski

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council:

The Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation (GCAT) is a not for profit organization that seeks to increase the quantity, quality and safety of active transportation in Guelph. For eight years we have acted as the collective advocacy voice for our members and social media followers now numbering in the many hundreds.

We wish to make some comments about the 2021 Budget Recommendation from Staff that will be decided upon at the November 25th meeting of Council.

- In the multi-year capital project list there are several
- allocations (PK0002, PK0075, PK0079, PK0087, PK0091, PK0121, PN0002, PN0011, PO0028, PO0033, RB0010, RD0385, RD0387, for example) that support improved and expanded active transportation. GCAT is in full support of these as we believe these investments will
- pay off to our City and its citizens through an invigorated local economy, energy savings, positive local climate action, reduced noise pollution, lowering costs of road construction, reduced automotive traffic, physical and mental health, wellbeing and social
- benefits and many more.

- GCAT is particularly pleased with the City's having
- joined its provincial and federal government partners to build out 13km of protected cycling infrastructure on three routes within Guelph (RD0357.) We are concerned that it often takes money to spend money and we would like to be assured that the staff resources
- necessary to complete these projects will be funded as well.

- With respect to the Emma Earl bridge project (RD0330),
- GCAT reminds Council of its approval of this project at the Committee of the Whole meeting on September 8, 2020. Please recall that this bridge represents a much less costly alternative to having to provide active transportation infrastructure along Speedvale
- Avenue when it is reconstructed.

- GCAT notes the allocation for the Speedvale underpass
- interim solution approved by Council in 2018 (PK0099.) Although we are pleased that the south side trail is being addressed on an interim basis, we wish to remind Council that it is only an interim solution and that further design work is necessary.
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- GCAT notes that there are several road reconstruction
- projects in the capital budget proposal. We would like to remind Council and Staff that, under Section 5.4 (3) iii of the Official plan, the City has committed to "ensure that bikeways and pedestrian walkways are integrated into and designed as part of new
- road and other infrastructure projects in the City. Special consideration will be given to matters such as bike lanes, physically separated bikeways and provisions for a comfortable pedestrian environment which may include shade trees, street furniture, bicycle
- racks, lighting, signed and safe street crossings and other traffic controls."

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Unfortunately, we have seen isolated cases in the past, particularly when reconstruction projects have been required for repair or replacement of buried infrastructure, where this clause of the Official Plan has been overlooked. We understand how easy it is for project engineers to omit the active transportation layer when their focus is elsewhere.

We would like your assurance that the capital budget proposals and project estimates for all road reconstruction projects have accounted for the cost of active transportation infrastructure and amenities as is specified in the Official Plan.

- GCAT is appreciative of the greater level of detail
- and multiple-year allocations provided this year in the Budget proposal. However, in the case of some capital projects, we feel more detail should be available to the public and organizations like ours. For example, when a project refers to build-outs according
- to existing master plans, we are unable to see any information about which elements of the plan are to be built, when and at what cost. Whether it is part of the budgeting process or otherwise, as an organization that speaks for many hundreds of interested
- citizens, GCAT would like to be part of the conversation that establishes these priorities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the budget recommendations, and for your service to the community.

Yours truly,

Mike Darmon
Vice President,
Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation

Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council:

The past 10 months have brought unprecedented challenges and impacts on City of Guelph expenditures and revenues.

The challenge before you is to implement a budget which responds to the current reality, as well as the economic hardships that many people have been experiencing.

This challenge is exacerbated by two realities:

- 1) The property tax regime is not a "progressive" program, ie: it's not based on people's income and ability to pay. It's based on the value of their property.
- 2) The pandemic has polarized the gulf between "haves" and "have nots". Economists describe this as a "K-shaped recovery". Many households in our community are awash in extra cash that they would normally be spending on travel, clothing and dining out. At the other end of the spectrum, people in minimum-wage jobs have been disproportionately impacted.

As of this morning, the ZOLO real estate website documents that housing prices in Guelph have risen 15% year-to-date.

<https://www.zolo.ca/guelph-real-estate/trends>

What this means is that someone who bought a \$400,000 condo a year ago is now \$60,000 wealthier.

If you were living in an "average" house in Guelph worth \$575,000 a year ago, you are just under \$90,000 wealthier and your house is now worth \$661,000.

This needs to be the context within which you consider the 3.63% property tax increase which is put before you.

In actual dollar terms, if a household has an annual tax bill of \$5,000, a 3.63% increase would translate to \$182.00 for the year, or \$15 per month.

I acknowledge that even this small amount could be onerous for households on a fixed income or others experiencing financial stress. How could City Hall expand our Tax Increase Deferral Program to soften the impact of a 3.63% increase on targeted households?

<https://guelph.ca/city-hall/budget-and-finance/property-taxes/bill-payments/deferral-program-and-rebates/#:~:text=The%20tax%20deferral%20amount%20is,property%20or%20change%20in%20eligibility.>

I do not support cutting City services such as affordable housing or transit. Reliable, regular transit is critical infrastructure for low-income people to get to and from their jobs and connect with others in their community. It would be unethical to minimize property tax increases for wealthy property owners at the expense of downloading the impacts onto low-income members of our community.

If Council is concerned about looming future impacts on tax rates, the sacred cow that needs to be put on the table is growth. Ms. Baker has previously told us that the cost of growth over the next 10 years is projected to be \$122 million. That is the shortfall of growth costs not covered by Development Charges and it's sucked out of citizens' pockets both through taxes and water and wastewater fees - \$12.2 million per year!

Council needs to get serious about getting a grip on the pace of growth we can afford and the type of growth that gets approved. Fifteen years ago, Watson & Associates Economists made a presentation to Guelph City Council which demonstrated that most low-density housing does not cover the cost of services delivered through property taxes remitted. In contrast, most medium and high-density housing results in a net benefit to City tax coffers: taxes remitted exceed the cost of providing services to compact development.

Given this information, Clair-Maltby is sheer financial folly. Guelph citizens will pay the price while developers will pocket the profits.

If you are serious about getting a grip on rising property taxes, this is where you need to focus restraint, not on key services like libraries and recreation centres.

Sincerely,

Susan Watson

City Councilors of Guelph

We wish to communicate our support for the micro transit proposal for the Hanlon Creek Business Park. We were very happy to learn of the approval of some transit in the 2019 budget, and while we realize that COVID-19 has necessitated certain projects to be put on hold, we would like to strongly encourage council to consider this proposal as a means to facilitate employees and patrons of businesses in the Hanlon Creek corridor to have reliable access. We feel it would be a good way to test the waters for micro transit in Guelph and provide valuable feedback and data on how micro transit can help a city support local residents and local businesses in under serviced transit areas.

During cold winter months employees and patrons having to walk fairly long distances in the dark and/or poor weather to reach places of employment and business which often preclude them from doing so. We feel it would be of good value for the city to support this area of town which continues to see considerable expansion and growth.

We hope to hear that council is able to find some room to begin navigating this possibility in a timely and friendly manner.

Regards,

Heather Burke



Heather Burke

Office Manager

Dear Friends,\$ LongTCare or parking? Public Health /Full Transit-BOTH, 20%salary reduction

Dear Friends,

Regarding Budget prioritizing:

Consider the importance of investment and values of \$ Long Term Care or parking, further supporting Public Health and Full Transit ,in 1919 we had better transit,

New Zealand politicians voluntarily took a 20 % salary cut. Gritty empathetic and insightful leadership.(some people could do this)

Regards,

Diane Hurst