



Friday, May 21st, 2021

Re: Transportation Master Plan– Our Preferred Future: Selecting the Preferred Alternative

Transportation is more than moving people, services, and goods on Guelphs roads, rails, buses, sidewalks, and trains. It is an essential infrastructure that shapes our urban form, is a primary determinant of our city's environmental, financial, and social sustainability, and impacts our economic well-being.

How efficiently and quickly we move through our city, the distances we must travel, the transportation choices we have, and how readily we can move between different transportation modes profoundly affects our relationship with our city, the environment, and each other. As one of the Places to Grow in the Province of Ontario's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area, our city's transportation system contributes to the economic vitality and competitive advantage of Guelph and the surrounding area.

The Transportation Master Plan is a crucial component to helping shape Guelph into a "Future Ready" 21st-century city that can meet the needs of our diverse and growing urban and regional population. Increasing environmental concerns, acknowledging the ongoing investment needed to maintain our transportation infrastructure, and the rapid growth of our city demand a shift in transportation priority setting. The need to shift from single-passenger vehicles to more public transit use means building outward to a compact urban form. From an auto-oriented view of transportation to a more holistic view of an interconnected, multimodal transportation system where Guelphites can walk, bike, bus, and train efficiently and conveniently to their desired location.

The recommendation from City Staff for Alternative 3 - Sustainability and Resiliency Focus, combines the Sustainability focus of Alternative 2 while also acknowledging that the City needs to anticipate how changes in technologies, mobility services, and personal travel choices will impact the road network. It protects additional arterial road corridors for future widening to accommodate these unknowns.

Both Alternative 2 and 3 fully implement the Pedestrian, Cycling Spine, and Quality Transit Networks.

In a traditional sense, Alternative 2 – Sustainability offers a more conventional route to gaining an increase in modal share. It prioritizes sustainable modes of travel like walking, cycling, and transit over cars and does not add new street capacity for them.

Alternative 3 - Sustainability and Resiliency Focus keeps all the features of Alternative 2 to continue supporting a mode shift to sustainable modes of travel and maintaining vehicle levels of service through mode shift. It results in slightly less congestion in the future but will be more costly because it includes approximately 68 km of potential road widenings. However, it allows for flexibility and capacity (resiliency) to adapt and respond to emerging technologies, services, and behavioral trends in the future.

Stakeholder engagement preferred this option (Alternative 3), and community (public) survey data indicates it was slightly less preferred than Alternative 2 but was still viewed favourably.



The Transit Action Alliance of Guelph supports either Alternative 2 or 3 - with minor concerns for the latter.

The message Guelphites have sent to Council via the consultation is loud and clear: City roads designed for cars above all else are unsafe and unhealthy, not only to people but also communities.

Creating a better balance between how much room we dedicate to cars, buses, pedestrians, and cyclists is crucial for fulfilling our goal of making Guelph genuinely accessible for all.

Placing higher priority on sustainable options (biking, walking, transit) is highly encouraged. Creating a Multimodal Transportation Plan provides a viable, attractive transportation alternative for citizens, including walking, cycling, and transit is critical in building a healthy, sustainable community. While each model can work individually, they must and can work together to create a balanced, integrated network.

Close to a decade ago, the City reorganized and separated Guelph Transit from the Operations and Transportation Departments. This situation caused silos to form and struggle to implement key parts of the Transportation Master Plan and the Transit Master Plan.

While there is now some coordination between departments but for the long term, this will not be efficient or nor economical for our city. More and more cities have realized how important it is to have Transit alongside Transportation Services, Economic Development, Planning, and Tourism. The recent discussions over citywide parking minimums showed the huge disconnect between transit and planning.

The Transit Action Alliance of Guelph strongly recommends that Guelph Transit, Engineering, and Transportation Services and Economic Development and Tourism no longer be in separate silos and be reintegrated together under one DCAO head to bring a more efficient service to our city.

Public Transit is a strategic asset that can be leveraged more to direct development, grow the economy, improve public health, and future-proof the transportation network.

Rideshare programs, hailing apps, and autonomous vehicles stand ready to transform urban transportation into an interconnected network that brings together different modes of transportation into an efficient and compelling whole.

Underpinning it all will be public transit. The Quality Transit Network has the bones to become a strong network of frequent, affordable, and accessible transit which are attractive to people looking to reduce car use. We look forward to the Transit Master Plan discussions in 2022 where we can further expand on this topic.

Whichever preferred solution Council confirms tonight, we look forward to the development of the implementation plan for the TMP and providing additional input during the stakeholder and community engagement later this year.

Thank you.

Steven Petric

Chair

Transit Action Alliance of Guelph

taaguelph@guelph.ca

www.taaguelph.com



Appendix 1:

Balanced Modes or Prioritization of Modes

We do have some concerns over some conflicting language used with both Alternative 2 and 3.

The website states that *“The preferred solution for transportation in Guelph prioritizes equitable access for all transportation modes”* and in the presentation states that it *“Provides best ‘balance’ between needs of drivers and supporting sustainable transportation.”*

After careful research, and looking at the examples given in the report, we have determined that the best way to balance the modes is to prioritize them. The Vancouver, BC, and Burlington, On. examples did just that. Walking first, then biking, then transit, then goods movement, then the single occupancy vehicle or car share. In Vancouver, they did not ban the car and do not talk about “car-lite” or any of those kinds of things. They just prioritize them last. And in doing so, they make all ways of getting around better and successful. Just look at their modal share compared to 1991 when the TMP started the “prioritization.”

If you design and build a multimodal city, it works better for everybody, including drivers.

“Reconsider this word “balance.” Let’s say, for argument’s sake, your end goal is balance. Picture a 100-yard dash where you’ve given the car a 90-yard head start. That’s kind of where you are. Even if your goal is an outcome of balance, by definition you have to prioritize the other modes even to just catch up — let alone be where you should be in urban places.” - Brent Toderian



Brent Toderian  @BrentToderian

Replying to @BrentToderian

I haven't seen a North American city with a stated goal of mobility “balance” that has designs/budgets that would actually achieve balance.



3

124

158





This should not be seen as a war on the car. Making cities delightful for walking, biking & transit makes cities work better for everyone – including car drivers. Buses move more people per hour than a single person in a car. Taking this type of approach is strongly recommended for both Alternatives 2 and 3.

Multimodal needs a plan to be integrated.

We also encourage Council to watch our recorded webinar on “[Multimodal Integrated Transportation](https://taaguelph.com/2021/03/25/video-learn-about-transit-webinar-multimodal-transportation-integration/)” with Transportation Planner Dennis Fletcher for some additional insight on how we can better integrate modes.

<https://taaguelph.com/2021/03/25/video-learn-about-transit-webinar-multimodal-transportation-integration/>

Quick Thoughts

What we like:

- Re-allocating space to all modes and creating Complete Streets.
- Active transportation infrastructure improvements such as protected bike lanes.
- A frequent quality transit network that would give people the freedom to take transit on a whim and not fret over schedules. This will be a game-changer for ridership.
- Putting in a Vision Zero program that takes a systematic, evidence-based approach to eliminating traffic deaths and injuries.

Other Suggestion Points:

- Altering the convenience of driving requires a fundamental re-think of transportation planning, which has typically viewed getting from A to B as quickly as possible as its chief aim.
- Over the past decade, our municipalities and provincial government have poured hundreds of millions into the widening of our roads and highways, in the (mistaken) belief that greater road capacity means less congestion. It does not – after a brief initial speedup, it just induces more people to drive.
- What if we stopped widening our roads and allowed congestion at key points to moderate car use? Further still, what if we adjusted traffic signal timing to favour pedestrians and transit, or re-purposed turning lanes to make room for bike lanes, optimizing for the kinds of transportation choices we actually wanted to encourage?
- None of these suggestions prohibit anyone from being able to hop in their cars and drive where they want. But by changing the incentives, more people will be able to rationally choose different options for getting around.

Areas of Concern:

- The whole process did put the cart before the horse (or is it the car before the house?) Transportation plans are being made in the midst of an update with the Official Plan. Changes in the Official Plan could impact travel patterns used to establish the transportation plan. As Brent Toderian says, “[the best transportation plan is a great land use plan.](#)”
- A lot of handwringing seems to be taking place over transfers between buses (and soon, GO trains). High frequency transit networks reduce the ‘pain’ of transfers, but it can be hard to get to higher frequencies if transit networks are designed to minimize transfers.
- There seems to be a lot of faith put into ‘flexible’ transit with adaptive routes or smaller vehicles. This may be useful in poorly designed, sparse areas, but planners should be careful not to expect this to scale well into denser, urban areas.



- There needs to be a co-ordinated plan to integrate cycling infrastructure alongside transit.
- Making sure we are doing the best to implement Vision Zero and not watering down recommendations.

Land Use Planning

Great cities have great transportation systems. Transit needs good land use planning. Transit thrives in areas with a tight mix of homes, shops, offices, schools and parks. Whether urban or suburban, complete communities complement transit and active transportation. Guelph's Official Plan directs development into specific growth areas. Today, most of these growth areas don't have high frequency transit: our network would connect many suburban and urban growth areas. The plan also directs growth into the urban core, where our network provides excellent service. A permanent, high frequency network will improve access and quality of transit to residents all over the City, helping Guelph thrive. Dense employment hubs like downtowns, main streets, universities and hospitals are strong transit markets. To support transit ridership, Guelph should direct most new office space to Downtown Guelph, and major transit corridors for a transit-oriented future.

The policies and actions of the TMP should reflect the shift in how people want to live and travel today, building on recent work and existing initiatives to rethink and transform our mobility network. The movement of people, rather than vehicles, should be at the heart of this plan.

In an ideal scenario, we would choose our destination based on the nature and quality of the personal experience at that destination.

Quality Transit Network

As Guelph grows so will its transit needs. A high frequency network (15 minutes or better) is just the beginning: more buses; commuter rail; new high frequency lines; bus rapid transit lines; or even light rail and streetcars are exciting options. Our network's transit lanes are the foundation for transit corridors connecting the entire city and region. Whatever modes we chose, the biggest commitments will be building more infrastructure to keep transit out of traffic and providing more residents with frequent service.

Further Reading (Links)

[Essential Elements of Good Transit](#)

[A guide to a more frequent, affordable, and accessible transit system for Guelph](#)

[How to make public transport an attractive option in your city](#)

[Why change can be hard for Transit in Guelph](#)

[Is Your Bus Late or Full? Find Out Why And Some Solutions To Fix It](#)