

Guelph deserves a transit plan that is built for the future

The Guelph Transit Action Plan – Route Review Recommended Plan was released with very short notice, so it will not be possible for me to address it in detail, so I will focus on our transit needs in general.

Transit is a public good. We need more of it and this is why:

Transit benefits everyone, even people who don't use it

Economic benefits:

- For every dollar invested in transit, at least three is returned in increased business sales.
- Residential is an average of 42% more valuable if located near high frequency transit service, which means cities reap greater tax revenues.

Reduced household expenses:

Each family that gets rid of a car and relies on public transit saves over \$10000 per year. This is money that could be spent in our local community, benefitting everyone.

Our future residents will prefer transit to car ownership

Millennials and their successors reject car ownership compared to earlier generations. They prefer walkable communities over sprawl, seeking to live around robust transit, shops, restaurants, libraries, parks, and a mix of housing styles such as apartments and houses.

During the first ten years of the new millennium, transit ridership increased 40% among 16-34 year olds.

We should bear in mind that it is older generations that make decisions on how to build infrastructure that following generations will have to live with. We will look like fools if we invest heavily in automobile infrastructure and fail to build transit infrastructure for the future, if that is what future generations want.

The cost of NOT building adequate transit

If transit was run like a business, we would not just analyse the cost of providing a needed service (as outlined in the report), but the opportunity cost of not providing it. Unfortunately, this has not been done this time around, but hopefully will be in future reports.

We all know that the cost of living is rising faster than incomes. This means that our lower waged fellow citizens will soon be joined by newer cohorts of people who can no longer afford to run private vehicles after paying for the rising costs of food and housing.

Some of our employers will not be able to continue to operate in Guelph without an efficient transit system to deliver their workforce to them.

Guelph needs the High Frequency Plan

We need a plan that delivers a system that is so good that people will WANT to take it, rather than have to take it because they have no option. There are things that you can do to make transit desirable, such as free WIFI, or comfy seats etc., but what really makes transit desirable, and a competitor to private car travel is FREQUENCY. Only by building a desirable system will you get the ridership that needs to be achieved if we are to meet our targets for:

- Modal split
- GHG reduction targets
- Economic benefit targets
- Future ready

If these previously agreed goals are to be more than aspirational, bold action needs to be taken.

Only the High Frequency Plan come close to delivering a system that people will want to use and relieve the pressure on our increasingly congested roads.

Vote High frequency Plan!

Thanks for your time,
Scott Frederick