

Dear Mayor Guthrie, Council and City Staff,

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 hundreds of members and social media followers.

GCAT wishes to offer the following comments regarding the York Road/Elizabeth Street Urban Design Concepts as presented by City Staff.

- **GCAT is in support of the York/Elizabeth vision articulated in the Urban Design Concepts document.** We believe that the vision for this district of the City, with its historic mix of industrial, commercial and residential areas, provides an excellent opportunity for implementing the concept of the 'fifteen minute neighbourhood.'
- **GCAT is pleased to note the reference (in the section dealing with the Demonstration Site A Stevenson Street,) to improving active transportation connections to Downtown and Victoria and beyond, including exploring a trail connection along the GJR.**

However, because this aspect of the file is a transportation issue, and not just a land use issue, GCAT urges Council to view such a railside trail in its City-wide context. In this light, GCAT advocates for the extension of the railside TCT from the Macdonell Bridge (where it currently ends) right through to Victoria Road. This would include a section within the York/Elizabeth lands. (We wish to remind Council that extensions to the TCT are listed as a priority project in the recently approved Guelph Trails Master Plan. We have attached a .pdf file showing a map of the proposed, complete trail.)

A fully-connected trail would have many benefits, such as:

- Providing a safe, relatively inexpensive active transportation connection to Guelph Central Station, public transit and the rest of Downtown,
- Providing an active transportation connection to the future Guelph Innovation District,
- Together with a potential underpass connecting Cityview Drive, providing a viable active transportation connection to residents living North of the railway in the East of Guelph,
- Providing an extended active transportation connection beyond Downtown into the northern areas of the City including Goldie Mill, the Speed River, Riverside Park, Guelph Lake and, ultimately, to the Guelph to Goderich Trail (which would bring benefit to our local tourism economy.)
- Providing incentive to developers wishing to build in this area of Guelph. A railside trail would provide active transportation infrastructure in support of developments such as 120 Huron Street, the former Woods property (potentially as large as the Metalworks,) the former Imico site and others that may come along.
- Providing incentive for potential buyers of properties in this area of the City. For potential residents of these properties, Guelph's beautiful Downtown, with

its mix of great shops, restaurants, pubs and breweries, along with its stone and brick heritage buildings is an attractive destination in itself. Being able to access these attractions using active transportation modes instead of cars would be an important selling point. (The Transportation Master Plan highlights the trend of younger people, a demographic who might purchase properties in developments in this area of the City, being less likely to have driver's licenses or to own cars.)

- Serving as both a recreational trail and one that has significant economic benefit. This trail would be much more than just a nice-to-have amenity.
- Contributing to the Transportation Master Plan's goals of shifting to more sustainable transportation modes. We note that Council is considering the "Cities Race to Zero" motion during the same meeting as the York/Elizabeth lands issue is being addressed. GCAT argues that providing active transportation infrastructure such as the extended, well-connected TCT alongside the railway is a concrete, relatively inexpensive action in support of net zero emissions goals.
- Supporting the Transportation Master Plan's stated value of equity, since a trail would provide an alternative to car ownership for those who cannot afford one.

**For these reasons, GCAT urges Council to view a fully-connected, extended TCT, including the section through the York/Elizabeth lands, as essential transportation infrastructure.** Our vision is that the fully-implemented TCT would serve as an active transportation backbone extending from the northern extent of the City to its most Easterly point.

Accordingly, we urge Council to support Staff's recommendation regarding the section of the trail passing through the York/Elizabeth lands.

- GCAT is pleased to see that the report's York Road cross section includes a multi-use path. However, we note that the diagrams for all three Demonstration Sites show only pedestrian paths and make no specific reference to paths for cyclists. In the interest of transparency, and our excitement for the potential recreational and economic benefits of this area, including realizing the 15 minute neighbourhood concept, **GCAT recommends that Council direct Staff to modify the Urban Design Concepts document to clearly indicate active transportation infrastructure on all of the Demonstration Site diagrams and that all forms of active transportation be indicated in all future documentation.**

Yours truly,

Mike Darmon,

President, Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation

