

University of Guelph Submission

Re: City of Guelph Transportation Master Plan

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

Over the past year, the City of Guelph has engaged in critical discussions and consulted with community stakeholders to ensure the development of a strategic, thoughtful and well-informed Transportation Master Plan (Plan). Certainly, the University of Guelph has benefited from such engagement and remains supportive of the Plan's goals and objectives and understands their necessity. However, we must reiterate¹ our concern regarding Gordon St. More specifically, U of G continues to be concerned by the proposed widening – for any purpose – of the corridor between Stone Rd. and College Ave.

In a recent meeting with City staff about the Cycling Network Study, it was confirmed that this corridor will be part of the Pedestrian Priority Network in addition to the Cycling Spine Network and a Quality Transit Network. While we appreciate this addition, we remain concerned about campus safety and the ability to minimize campus disruption in the face of these seemingly competing priority networks.

While we understand that the Plan is a high-level policy lever intended to facilitate future planning, there is a lot of uncertainty and ambiguity about impacts to U of G's campus. Without an understanding of the project scope, its implications and how affiliated studies and consultations factor into the TMP, it has been difficult for the University to assess and meaningfully contribute to the Plan.

The safety of our campus community, as well as the integrity of our University research and operations, infrastructure and campus landscape are of utmost importance. Though we are appreciative of the opportunity to engage in the consultation process, the University must continue to oppose the recommendation to widen Gordon St. between Stone Rd. and College Ave., and thus the Plan in its current state.

As the Plan moves through various stages of approval and consultation, the University looks forward to working closely with the City to achieve a shared vision.

Sincerely,



Daniel Atlin
Vice-President (External)

CC: Mellissa McDonald, Director, Government Relations and Community Engagement

¹ See appendix A for U of G's Jan. 31, 2021 submission to Council

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VICE-PRESIDENT (EXTERNAL)**

University of Guelph Submission

Re: City of Guelph Transportation Master Plan

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

As a stakeholder in the Guelph community the University of Guelph appreciates the exhaustive community consultation undertaken by City of Guelph staff with respect to the Transportation Master Plan (Plan). Indeed, this Plan is critical to supporting the growth, safety, and sustainability of the City moving forward. Generally, U of G is supportive of the objectives of the Plan, however, we must share our significant concerns regarding the recommendation to include the Gordon St. corridor between Stone Road and College Avenue as a prospective road widening opportunity.

Throughout the consultation, the City has indicated that significant physical alteration (widening) of Gordon St. north of College Avenue is not possible. Without that possibility, it is unclear what the intended outcomes of undertaking the substantive and disruptive project of widening Gordon St. between Stone Road and College Avenue would be. To date, intended outcomes and research that demonstrate a significant positive impact on Gordon St. traffic flows have not been shared. In the absence of any major benefits or substantive strategy to eradicate the Gordon St. bottleneck completely, the University has serious concerns about the proposed widening of Gordon St through our pedestrian dense campus. Instead, we suggest further exploration of the less constrained Victoria and Edinburgh roads to facilitate a better, faster connection to central Guelph. While we understand that the Plan is a high-level policy lever intended to facilitate future planning, we urge the City to carefully explore these issues prior to further considerations for the property in question.

Beyond the analysis of the project, U of G has serious concerns about possible impacts on campus safety, our research enterprise, and prospective cultural heritage designation.

The potential safety risk to our campus community is of paramount concern. A central objective of the City's Plan is prioritizing the safety of travellers, including pedestrians, but road widening is known to negatively affect pedestrian safety. Our Guelph campus is home to more than 25,000 faculty, staff, and students and Gordon St. cuts directly through our campus and sees a high volume of pedestrian crossings. Potentially increasing traffic along Gordon St. – and consequently throughout campus – will undoubtedly threaten the safety of our campus community.

As a comprehensive and research-intensive institution, it is critical that the University voice our concern about the possible impact on our research enterprise. The University's research enterprise is scattered throughout campus, with many labs and facilities located near to the Gordon St. corridor. In some cases, things such as chemicals, lab equipment and other technology can be particularly sensitive to vibration – a significant by-product of high-volume, heavy vehicle traffic. As such, there could be significant detrimental effects to research conducted in neighboring facilities.

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Further, U of G was identified as a possible cultural heritage landscape in the City's Cultural Heritage Action Plan (CHAP). It is important to better understand how altering the corridor that connects the Brooklyn and College Hill Heritage District will affect this potential designation.

While we appreciate road widening serves a purpose, it is equally important to consider the associated risks.

Once again, we are grateful to the City for the opportunity to engage with this project. We truly value this work and recognize the important role the Transportation Master Plan will have in shaping the future of the City of Guelph. As the Plan moves toward approval and preliminary stages of implementation, the University looks forward to working closely with the City to achieve our shared goals.

Sincerely,



Daniel Atlin
Vice President External
University of Guelph

Cc: Mellissa McDonald, Director, Government Relations and Community Engagement