

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council:

The Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation (GCAT) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to increase the quality, quantity and safety of active transportation in the City of Guelph.

The Transportation Master Plan Update (TMPU) is of vital importance to our organization's ability to fulfill this mission. We are pleased to say that **GCAT is in support of City Staff's three recommendations, namely to approve the plan, to incorporate its costs in the City's budgeting process and to make appropriate changes to the Official Plan.**

GCAT envisions a future in which Guelph's citizens can choose to walk or bike around their city contributing positively to public health and happiness, clean air and a vibrant local economy. We envision a City-wide active transportation network that is acknowledged as essential transportation, attracting the same attention to policy, program and investment decisions as other transportation modes. The network we envision would support purposeful transportation, not just recreation, and would be inviting, enjoyable, equitable, inclusive, connected and safe for use year round by citizens of all ages and abilities.

Consequently, **GCAT is pleased to see the strong correspondence between its own vision and most aspects of the TMPU as it is presently proposed.** We wish to emphasize that the plan's provisions, if adopted by Council and fully implemented, would contribute very directly to GCAT's mission with respect to the quality and safety of active transportation in Guelph.

While we are in support of Staff's recommendations, **there are areas of the plan that we believe could be improved:**

- **GCAT agrees with Staff's strong arguments for making our transportation system less car-centric** (Report Attachment 6, Section 3.0). Council's May 2021 approval of the Sustainable and Resilient Option of the TMPU, and its endorsement of the motion to support the UN Cities Race to Net 0 campaign reflects its commitment to take climate action. Now it is important for Council to follow through by approving the TMPU.

The TMPU specifies modal share shifts of walking, from 2016's 8% to 2051's 15%, and biking, from 2016's 3% to 2051's 10%. **GCAT believes that these targets ought to be made more ambitious and that increases be considered in the plan's first update.** We consider data from 2016, now six years old, to be obsolete and not recognizing modal shifts that have already taken place. Furthermore, we believe that land use planning alone that encourages the so-called "15 minute neighbourhood" could achieve most if not all of these modest targets.

We notice that the plan's infrastructure, policy and program elements, having been developed from within an engineering paradigm, are focused very strongly on safety and, of course, GCAT is in full support of this aspect of the plan.

However **GCAT wonders if, in addition to what is already in the plan, a more humanistic approach would offer opportunities to make greater modal shifts to sustainable modes.** Ultimately, modal shifts can only be achieved by the decisions of individual citizens to change their transportation choices. GCAT believes that these personal choices are the result of the interplay of many psychological and other factors including attitudes, beliefs, intrinsic and extrinsic perceptions and misconceptions, knowledge and ignorance, and self-concept, for example.

GCAT acknowledges how difficult it is to change these elements in people's decision making, but we believe that significant efforts must be mounted to do so nonetheless. In particular, we believe that choosing active transportation represents a highly accessible way that ordinary citizens can take personal, local action on climate change and that this idea must be used to influence citizens' transportation mode choices. We believe there are important opportunities to change attitudes and behaviours of children, the beneficiaries of a 30-year plan, that are not fully expressed in the current plan.

While we acknowledge that the TMPU does indeed contain references to promotion and education, we note that, in comparison to the plan's very detailed definition of infrastructure improvements, promotion and educational issues have not been specified to the same degree. **GCAT recommends that the TMPU be amended to reflect a degree of attention to change management that is commensurate with its infrastructure planning.**

- GCAT believes that the ATN and recreational trails have vital roles to play in the overall transportation system. Importantly, **it is the connection between the two and the coordinated, year-round operation of both that must be present for the overall system to be successful.**

While we are pleased to see multiple references to connections among the pedestrian, cycling and trails networks, it is somewhat of a concern that trails, viewed as transportation pathways, come under the administration of the City's Parks Department, while the TPMU initiative comes the Engineering and Transportation Services Department, each of them reporting to a different Deputy Chief Administrative Officer.

- GCAT acknowledges the many modifications and additions to the Official Plan that are being recommended in support of active transportation. In particular, GCAT notices the recommendation to include a definition of "essential active transportation infrastructure" in the Official Plan. At present the Official Plan *describes* active transportation as "a component of achieving the City's transportation, sustainability, community energy and healthy community objectives." On the other hand, the 2013 Cycling Master Plan states unequivocally that "Cycling is an essential transportation mode for Guelph." **GCAT recommends that the Cycling Master Plan's language be included in the Official Plan during its next revision.** We have submitted our recommended additions to the Official Plan to City Staff. Recognition of active transportation and its infrastructure as "essential" in the language and definitions of

the Official Plan also confirms the City's commitment to making our transportation system more equitable since not everyone wants or can afford a car.

In summary, **GCAT is very pleased with the TMPU's attention to the quantity, quality and safety of active transportation in Guelph and we urge Council to approve it.**

Furthermore, recognizing Staff's recommendation to update the plan on a 5-year cycle, GCAT wishes to express its keen interest in continuing the positive, respectful and collaborative relationships we have with our City partners as the plan evolves.

Thank you for your service to the community.

Yours truly,

Mike Darmon,
President, Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation