

Dear Mayor and councillors,

I am writing to show my support for continued transit investments in the upcoming budget.

I attended the Chamber of Commerce breakfast municipal budget meeting on November 8, 2023.

It was a very informative meeting that helped raise awareness of the difficult decisions that have to be made when deciding what budget line items to cut, due to high upcoming tax increases. The cost of housing and general cost of living were highlighted, to remind the audience that many people are struggling in our community.

At the very end of the meeting, CAO Stewart indirectly suggested Transit may be one of those line items that could take a hit if it comes to looking for cuts. And that general "service enhancements" are very low priority for 2024/2025.

I was a bit surprised by this comment. If people are struggling to pay for housing, shouldn't we at least make it less of a struggle to afford good quality transportation?

The only way that we can truly help those struggling is by advancing transit improvements and speeding the timeline for them, not slow them down. We need to make taking a bus more convenient so that giving up one of the family cars, for example, does not cause undue hardship. People, especially now, need economical transportation choices.

Good quality transit boosts our economy and improves the quality of life for our residents. Public transportation offers economic growth opportunities, reduces traffic congestion, promotes healthier lifestyles, and contributes to a cleaner environment, aligning with our climate goals and the concerns of our younger generation. **But the transit needs to be good quality in order for people to use it. We're not quite there yet.**

Here is a cost-effective way to enhance transit (and active Transportation) in the city of Guelph. Dedicate the Gas Tax grants (now called Canada Community-Building Fund) that Guelph receives from the Federal and Provincial governments to critical transit and active travel infrastructure projects. In 2023 Guelph received \$3,182,566 from the Provincial Government and \$8,723,200 from the Federal Government under this program. The Gas Tax monies can be used to extend service hours, buy transit vehicles, add high frequency routes, improve accessibility, or upgrade infrastructure.

Thank you for your time,

Yvette Tendick