

Dear Councillors, Mayor Guthrie and city staff.

My name is Mike Darmon and I am Co Chair of Advocacy for GCAT- the Guelph Coalition for Active transportation.

I am writing today to speak about the inequity of our transportation system in Guelph, and my hope that the Vision 0 Action Plan will make our transportation system more equitable and safer for everyone, but especially our most vulnerable street users.

Recently, due to health issues, I had to change my preferred all year transportation choice from using my bicycle, to using our transit system to get to my destinations. This was an eye opener for me. I have used transit on occasion but didn't realize how hard it is, for example in winter to simply get to a bus stop- even on the number 99 main line. You can easily see that our transportation system is prioritized towards drivers and this was especially evident during the recent snow storms. Even on the frequent 99 mainline, sidewalks and our Active Transportation Network trails had not been cleared, so I had to trudge my way to the bus stop climbing over and through deep snow ruts. Just imagine if you were disabled and using a mobility device? Meanwhile, the vehicle lanes were clear. I witnessed pedestrians on Woolwich walking in the travel lane with their back to traffic.

When one reached a crosswalk area, high snow banks left by the road plow blocked the crossing area completely making it impossible to enter for anyone with a mobility device or even an able-bodied pedestrian.

Speaking of crosswalks, how many times have you pushed the crosswalk button and waited and waited for a cross signal?. In summertime, this is an annoyance however in cold, wet and snowy weather, it's a miserable experience and it encourages unsafe jaywalking, just like traffic congestion frustrates drivers and encourages unsafe driving habits. I have questioned transportation staff on this issue and have received replies that do not address the long wait times., What is needed is a policy that determines a maximum time that a pedestrian has to wait for a safe cross signal, regardless of other factors that change the wait time.

I am hoping that this Vision 0 Action will review this issue –: “Review the City of Guelph's standard operating procedures and warrant criteria for all pedestrian crossings and crossing times at signalized intersections and strategize to incorporate equity considerations” (Action 28); an Action aimed to be completed with by the development of a standard operating procedure in the next 1-2 years.

Pedestrian Master Plan (Action 24) also seems like an ideal opportunity for these issues to be addressed.

In conclusion, I am hopeful that the vision zero action plan will make our transportation system a more equitable system for all users, but especially those who do not have the means or have made a choice to not own a vehicle.

I fully agree with the staff recommendations and I urge you to adopt this plan.

Thanks

Mike Darmon