



Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation (GCAT)
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TO: Mayor Gurthrie and City Council
SUBJECT: Wyndham Street North and St. George's Square (Item 11.1)
DATE: July 4th, 2025

Dear Mayor Guthrie and City Council,

We are writing on behalf of the Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation to express our strong support for the recommendations outlined within the report: *Wyndham Street North and St. George's Square - Preparing for and mitigating construction (DTIRP Phase 1)*. With focus on the included Recommended Concept Plan for St. George's Square.

The proposed transformation of Wyndham Street North and St. George's Square is not simply a necessary infrastructure renewal, it is a generational opportunity to reimagine how our downtown core functions and who it serves. This project delivers on our strategic plan goals, such as making our downtown a vibrant place for everyone, and does so by prioritizing the modes of travel and public spaces that foster connection, economic vitality, and long-term sustainability.

The pedestrian-focused redesign of St. George's Square is especially commendable. The Recommended Concept Plan repositions the square as an active, welcoming urban park and gathering place. By increasing shade, seating, plantings, and accessibility, and integrating a permanent public washroom, the square is set to become a hub of civic life, supporting everything from spontaneous daily use to major cultural events. Importantly, this shift toward placemaking reinforces downtown not as a place to pass through, but a place to stay, meet, participate in community, and enjoy.

The inclusion of cycling infrastructure along Wyndham Street North is critical. Improved bike access to and through the downtown will not only make cycling a safer, more viable option for everyday travel, it will also unlock the downtown for more residents and visitors. The integration of these facilities connects directly to our broader active transportation network and supports Guelph's intensification and sustainability targets. As more people move into and around our core, ensuring convenient, safe, and equitable access to downtown businesses and public services is essential.

These investments support both short-term recovery and long-term economic resilience. As Guelph continues to grow, our downtown must remain competitive, not just for cars, but as a multimodal, people-oriented destination. The vision embedded in this plan positions downtown Guelph as exactly that: a vibrant, walkable, bikeable, and welcoming city centre that reflects the needs and values of our present and future residents.

To further support a vibrant and accessible downtown throughout construction, we encourage the City to consider these additional measures:

- **Prioritize high-quality bike parking infrastructure:** Maintain access to existing racks and ensure the installation of well-anchored, visible U-style racks or secure corrals close to businesses like Old Quebec Street Shoppes. Provide temporary bike parking during construction, and ensuring year-round usability as per best practices
- **Ensure pedestrian detours are short, intuitive, and fully accessible:** Detours should replicate the directness of existing sidewalks and include smooth, curb-cut ramps. This is vital for people using mobility devices or strollers, especially where utility work or underground access disrupts current pathways. Timely signage and real-time updates will help maintain confidence and accessibility standards.
- **Leverage temporary activations to sustain vibrancy:** Keep downtown lively with pop-up public uses, such as "open-street, portable seating, community programming, and more. These activations and temporary installations will sustain energy and foot and bike traffic even during construction disruption.

We also appreciate the City's thoughtful construction mitigation strategy, particularly in maintaining access to downtown businesses, phased construction timing, and a clear commitment to communications. These details matter and will help maintain trust, business continuity, and public confidence throughout the build.

Council now has a unique opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to a thriving, accessible downtown. We urge you to support the full set of recommendations in the report and to move forward confidently with the Wyndham Street North and St. George's Square reconstruction.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



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