

Re: Agenda Items 2.1 & 3.1 — GID Block Plan Endorsement and Frost Building Designation

September 4, 2025

To Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council,



My name is Andrea Bidgood, and I'm honored to serve as Guelph's first Bicycle Mayor, proudly connected through the international BYCS network.

As a Bicycle Mayor, my mandate is simple: help make cycling a safe, accessible, and desirable option for more people, by building systems that center care over convenience and people over parking.

What's before you tonight on the **Guelph Innovation District Block Plan (Item 2.1, 2025-419)** and the **Frost Building designation (Item 3.1, 2025-416)** may look like a set of technical decisions. But I see choices that will define how children play, how families move, and whether this new community will live up to our climate and equity commitments.

## 1. -Item 2.1: GID Block Plan

Staff recommend refusing the current Block Plan and requiring six critical modifications:

- A 6.7-hectare community park,
- At least 16.48 ha of employment mixed-use land,
- The school in Residential,
- The Frost Building out of parkland,
- A single-loaded river road, and
- Proper stormwater facilities

I urge you to endorse these changes. But I also urge you to go further: build the community park without paving it over for 300 vehicle stalls.

### Why it matters:

I like to humanize decisions so I will share this one personal story given that this park will be beside the new proposed school. When I transferred to one of the poorest elementary schools in Ottawa in the third grade, I remember running to the play structure on my first day, only to be

yelled at that it was “for kindergarteners only.” The nicer lower yard, with a bit of grass and flagstones, was also off-limits to anyone in grade 3 and above. That day I learned that my entire recess was going to take place in a cracked parking lot that was part of the closed adult high school. During the two years of asphalt before they dug it up to be replaced with grass, some of the only “games” I remember playing was digging into potholes with my classmates and making them bigger.

That’s why I can’t read “parking for 300 vehicles” in the community park facility-fit plan without picturing that same bleak asphalt yard

A park should be for soccer fields, cricket pitches, playgrounds, and shade trees, not for kids to grow up with massive views of asphalt - brand new or broken down.

Guelph already knows how to do parks well without this kind of overbuilt car storage:

**Exhibition Park, Royal City Park, Hanlon Creek Park:** spaces where people arrive by foot, by bike, and by bus, and where play and gathering take precedence. The GID deserves the same.

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## 2. - Human Infrastructure, Not Asphalt

Staff’s traffic analysis forecasts 1,538 trips in the AM peak and 1,817 in the PM, with intersections like Victoria/York and College/Main exceeding capacity by 2036–2046

The choice is clear: either we hard-wire car dependency, or we design for the 42% non-auto mode share in the Transportation Master Plan.

That means:

- Protected bikeways along Victoria, Stone, and the single-loaded river road,
- River-crossing AT links missing from the Block Plan,
- Transit-ready streets from day one,
- Parks and schools accessible without a car.

These are the investments that align with Guelph’s climate plan, Vision Zero, and equity commitments.

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## 3. - Item 3.1: Frost Building Designation

Staff confirm the Frost Building meets 5 of 9 criteria for cultural heritage value I support designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. But please keep it out of parkland. A heritage

building in a park block means costly maintenance for Parks and less functional green space for families. Designate it, sure. But locate it in Residential, where it can be preserved without displacing play space.

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## **This is all bigger than infrastructure. It's about how we value people.**

As Bicycle Mayor, I carry stories of children who need safe parks, people who can't afford a car, families trying to stretch budgets by living car-light, disabled residents adapting routes that weren't built for them, and newcomers finding freedom in walking or cycling. These aren't edge cases. They are your constituents.

When we protect their safety and dignity, we plan for everyone.

Let's proudly be a city known for protecting life, not just moving traffic. Let's build a Guelph where a community park means play, not parking; where cycling isn't a gamble, walking isn't a risk, and choosing sustainable travel is the easy, obvious, supported choice.

Thank you.

In motion and solidarity,

**Andrea Bidgood**

[Bicycle Mayor of Guelph \(BYCS\)](#) | [REDACTED] | @BicycleMayorGuelph

The role of Bicycle Mayor was inaugurated in 2016 by BYCS, an Amsterdam-based social enterprise, to break silos between government and civil society when promoting cycling for transportation and amplify the voices of community leaders in this effort. As interest in the position grew, a network was born in order to encourage collaboration, transnational solidarity, and to share common challenges & solutions on a global scale. As part of the network, Bicycle Mayors receive resources and training as well as opportunities to learn from and collaborate with other Bicycle Mayors. The network itself combines the voices, experiences, and efforts of the Bicycle Mayors to advocate for progress in cycling at a global level including calls-to-action to international organizations. BYCS works internationally with civil society, governments, nonprofits and businesses to initiate and scale breakthrough ideas around cycling. In particular, the organization focuses on strengthening the "human infrastructure" of cycling cities by supporting community initiatives, developing a culture of active transportation and inspiring new citizens to take up the bicycle for daily trips.

For more information, visit [www.bycs.org](http://www.bycs.org)