

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Members of Guelph City Council,

I am writing as a concerned resident to express my strong opposition to the proposed budget cuts, particularly the deferral of major infrastructure projects and reductions to active transportation and bike infrastructure funding, as noted in the recent article.

While I understand the challenge of balancing the budget and moderating tax increases, these particular cuts are deeply misguided and will do more harm than good — especially to the most vulnerable members of our community.

1. Bike and active-transportation infrastructure is essential, not optional

Safe cycling routes, protected lanes, and pedestrian connections are fundamental for a healthy, accessible, and climate-conscious city.

Cutting funding to these areas makes cycling less safe, less connected, and less attractive, undermining years of progress and contradicting Guelph's commitments to sustainability, climate goals, and Vision Zero.

2. Deferring major projects only increases future costs

Deferring infrastructure projects may appear to save money now, but it often leads to greater costs later. Deferred maintenance and expansion can lead to deterioration, safety risks, and higher repair bills down the line.

In a suburban city like Guelph — where distances are greater and active transportation alternatives are already limited — these deferrals make it harder for residents to get around safely without relying on cars.

3. Vulnerable residents will bear the brunt

Those who cannot afford cars — including students, low-income residents, and seniors — depend on safe walking, biking, and transit options.

Cutting or delaying infrastructure investments disproportionately affects these groups, increasing safety risks and limiting accessibility.

This kind of budgeting effectively prioritizes the convenience of drivers over the safety and mobility of vulnerable road users.

4. Homeowners *can* afford it — and should shoulder their share

Let's be honest: homeowners in Guelph are among the most financially privileged residents in the city.

Property values have risen dramatically over the years, and many homeowners have benefited enormously from that growth.

A modest tax increase to sustain essential public infrastructure is a fair and reasonable contribution — especially when the alternative is to shift the burden onto those who rent, rely on transit, or bike to get around.

Suburban cities like Guelph are expensive to maintain precisely because of their car-dependent design. The solution is not to cut the very projects that would make our city more efficient and affordable in the long run.

5. Please prioritize the right things

Before cutting projects that improve safety, sustainability, and accessibility, please explore other options:

- Review non-essential spending and administrative overhead.
 - Phase projects strategically rather than deferring them entirely.
 - Seek alternative funding from provincial or federal programs.
 - Engage residents — you will find that many strongly support continued investment in active transportation.
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Bike and pedestrian infrastructure is not a luxury; it is a foundation of an equitable, healthy, and forward-thinking city. I urge Council to reconsider these cuts and continue investing in infrastructure that benefits everyone — not just those behind the wheel.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Frank Hoel

Dumbarton Street