

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council,

I have just learned that winter bike lane snow removal is planned to be cut from the 2026 budget.

As someone who does not drive and commutes by bicycle, I rely on safe access to the road to get to and from work every day, and this includes snow cleared bike lanes. Your cuts won't prevent me from riding but they will impact my safety and I will have no choice but to take the lane to ride safely to and from work every single day.

These 2026 budget reductions to Guelph's cycling and active transportation programs undermine our city's history of a commitment to equity, safety, and climate action, and they disproportionately harm residents who rely on affordable, sustainable ways to travel.

I am asking Council to take three specific actions in the 2026 budget: 1) restore winter bike lane snow removal to ensure year-round safe travel for cyclists, 2) reinstate dedicated funding for sustainable transportation, including new sidewalk construction (RD0404), cycling pavement marking (RD0452), and sustainable transportation programming (RD0392), and 3) add funding to Vision Zero to compensate for the loss of automated speed enforcement cameras and development charges (TF0028).

These are essential investments in safety, accessibility, and climate responsibility.

Active transportation is not a luxury. For many Guelph residents, especially low-income families, youth, seniors, newcomers, and those without access to a car; walking, cycling, and using mobility devices are essential means of getting to work, school, shops, and community spaces. Reducing funding for safe and accessible active transportation infrastructure increases barriers for those already facing financial and social inequities. It also delays our commitment to achieving a Vision Zero goal of eliminating traffic-related deaths and serious injuries.

Adding to these challenges, recent provincial legislation that prevents municipalities from using automated speed enforcement cameras has removed one of the most effective and equitable tools for traffic calming. With this avenue closed, Guelph must rely even more heavily on physical infrastructure, such as protected bike lanes, curb extensions, and safer intersections, to reduce vehicle speeds and protect vulnerable road users. *Now is not the time to divest from safer streets; it is the time to double down on investments that prevent harm before it occurs.*

These reductions also threaten progress on our Climate Action Plan. Shifting more trips to active and low-carbon modes is one of the most effective ways to reduce transportation emissions, which addresses the single largest source of greenhouse gases in our community. Slowing implementation of the Cycling Master Plan undermines our shared responsibility to meet these targets and leaves Guelph behind other cities on sustainable mobility.

I urge Council to reconsider these reductions and restore the funding for active transportation programs and infrastructure. Investments in safe, connected, and well-maintained routes are investments in equity, health, safety, and climate resilience. They benefit everyone, not just those who cycle.

Please stand up for a city and *a future* where everyone, regardless of income, age, or ability, can move safely and affordably.

Sincerely,

Richelle Forsey

Vancouver Drive, Ward 2