

Dear Mayor Guthrie and members of Guelph City Council,

I am writing because the proposed budget reductions to Guelph's active transportation network are alarming and will have real consequences for residents who rely on safe, affordable ways to move around the city.

My family doesn't own a car and depends on walking, biking, and transit for our daily needs. We are not outliers. Many people in Guelph are choosing or needing to live this way, whether for affordability, sustainability, mobility, or quality of life. With two young kids, our daily conversations in our home often revolve around which streets feel safe enough to take to school, work, activities, or errands. This should not be a normal calculation in a city that has committed to safer streets.

These proposed cuts also contradict the commitments Council already made when approving the Vision Zero Action Plan earlier this year. The City cannot meaningfully pursue Vision Zero while reducing the very investments that make streets safer. I want to highlight Action 58, in which the City has committed to advocate to the Ministry of Transportation to enhance winter maintenance standards for walking and cycling. It is difficult to imagine how we can advocate for improved provincial standards if we lower our own. This sends the wrong message about our priorities at a time when Guelph should be leading, not falling behind.

In the past few months, four people traveling outside of cars have been killed on our streets. They were *not* vulnerable because they walked or biked. They were vulnerable because our infrastructure failed to protect them. Reducing funding for sidewalks, cycling routes, trails, and winter maintenance makes the situation worse and puts more people at risk.

Active transportation is not recreation for many of us. It is how people get to school, work, stores, health appointments, and social connections. Cutting these investments signals that the safety and mobility of those who walk, bike, roll, or use transit matter less than the convenience of those who drive. That is not the vision of an equitable, resilient, or forward-looking city. Not the beautiful city that I know Guelph can be.

I strongly support restoring and expanding funding for safe, connected, and well-maintained active transportation infrastructure and programs. These investments support affordability, equity, public health, climate action, and the safety of everyone who moves through Guelph.

Thank you,

Jay Wall  
Ward 2