

Dear Mayor Guthrie and City Councillors,

I am deeply concerned that the 2026 City Budget further impacts and discourages Active Transportation, which is in contradiction to the budget focus on affordability and more central, denser residential developments. We cannot encourage more affordable car free or car less developments -often with no minimum car parking requirements close to our downtown -without providing the means to cycle safely to and from these developments, to other practical needs destinations. Developers will be discouraged to build more affordable housing with less parking when we are reversing our plans to build more protected bike infrastructure and not provide winter snow clearing on bike lanes. Potential purchasers or renters will not be encouraged to buy these units if they cannot get to destination safely and enjoyably -and when they can only cycle part of the year without proper bike lane maintenance.

The 2025 Budget cut all new trail projects past the 10 year budget cycle, and the proposed deferrals or cuts to Active Transportation (AT) in the 2026 budget sends the wrong message to our community and developers. New trail Active Transportation Network (ATN) project cuts will not enable safe ATN connections to near future developments like the WOODS 2 Development With 700 units or the FUSION GID development with 12,000 new residents. Although we have made some progress with AT projects including the about to be opened Emma to Earl bridge and the newly installed separated bike paths on College Avenue, we need to follow the example of our neighbours in Kitchener who have had the vision and support to complete their Downtown Cycling Grid which has encouraged the investment in many new residential projects. Including the LRT, over \$3 BILLION of investment has occurred along this corridor since the project was announced.

QUOTE from link attached.

"The City of Kitchener's continued push for bike lanes and cycling options, particularly when it comes to its Downtown Cycling Grid project, have now garnered some national attention, receiving the **2025 Active Transportation Achievement Award**.

The award comes from the Transportation Association of Canada, which is given to cities and municipalities that have made considerable efforts in advancing local transportation infrastructure in a progressive manner.

For Kitchener, the award is mainly being given thanks to its latest Downtown Cycling Grid project, completed through the City of Kitchener's Cycling and Trails Master Plan.

"The award underscores council's ongoing commitment to building a safer, more connected city through active transportation and road safety initiatives," said **the city in a statement**

The city said the project has already seen upwards of **160,000 users in 2025 alone**, thanks in part to the input from 5,700 residents across the city.

“This multi-year initiative added approximately 10 km of new and upgraded infrastructure, creating a safe, accessible network for cyclists of all ages and abilities,” the city said.”

Please use the link below to see the full Award presentation slides.

In Conclusion ,I hope you can see how continued support for Active Transportation is an investment in enabling more affordable and sustainable residential development in our City ,and offers more economic development opportunities for our downtown.

Thanks

Mike Darmon

GCAT ADVOCACY CO CHAIR

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<https://kitchener.citynews.ca/2025/11/11/kitcheners-downtown-cycling-grid-wins-national-infrastructure-award/>