

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council,

My name is Andrea Bidgood, and I am writing in my capacity as Guelph's Bicycle Mayor as a follow-up to my previous correspondence in support of the proposed Updated Traffic Calming Policy, which returns to Council on April 21 as item 6.3.

Since my earlier correspondence and delegation, I have continued speaking with others, working through what is clearly a complex problem. I want to acknowledge that complexity directly because it has come up in every conversation.

There are real constraints. The cancellation of Automated Speed Enforcement, limited staffing and funding capacity within our transportation department, competing operational needs, and the reality that any change to a roadway has ripple effects across emergency services, transit, operations, and accessibility.

Those trade-offs are real. The conversations I have had reflect that. They also reinforce something important. Complexity is not a reason to delay action. It is a reason to design better, prioritize more carefully, and move forward with intention.

I want to be transparent about my personal perspective. I live with long-term joint and nerve pain and spinal instability following road traffic incidents, and I know the ongoing personal cost of treatment, recovery, and adapting to harm that does not simply disappear. Because of that, I do not see traffic calming as a minor transportation issue. I see it as prevention.

Traffic calming prevents future disability and death. It reduces the likelihood of collisions, but just as importantly, it reduces the severity of harm when collisions do happen. The public conversation often stops at whether someone survives. It too rarely accounts for what follows. Chronic pain, rehabilitation, reduced mobility, lost independence, lost income, financial strain, and years of treatment.

Even with these constraints, I continue to support this policy as a necessary and worthwhile step toward aligning Guelph's street design with its stated safety goals. The policy's own purpose, goals, and objectives are clear. Improve public safety for all road users, reduce collision frequency and severity, promote walking, cycling and transit, and reduce the need for police enforcement.

If we want safer streets, we cannot rely on perfect behaviour. We have to build safer systems. The city's own materials frame traffic calming as physical design that changes the road and prevents speeding by design, and the policy now prioritizes vertical, horizontal, and obstructive measures ahead of more limited supplemental measures.

That is why I continue to believe the order of operations matters. Infrastructure first. Education, resources, and engagement second. Enforcement last. Enforcement without safe design and adequate education risks penalizing people for conditions they did not

create, especially after years of underinvestment in those very supports from multiple levels of government.

As discussed in the last meeting, infrastructure is the measure that remains in place all day, every day. Education helps people understand changes and expectations, and enforcement has a role, but neither can substitute for a street that is designed to lower speeds and reduce harm by default. The policy itself identifies reducing the need for police enforcement as one of its objectives, and the engagement summary recommends prioritizing effective measures that reduce speeds and prevent collisions over driver convenience.

I support this policy because it moves the City toward a more proactive model. It prioritizes Community Safety Zones and sets out a five-year implementation plan to address 25 priority streets. It also adds equity data and collision history involving people who walk and bike to prioritization outside Community Safety Zones.

At the same time, this policy should be understood as a baseline. There are areas that will require continued attention and improvement over time.

First, maintain what we build. Safe design is only truly safe if it remains usable and legible year-round and long-term.

Second, continue investing in public education and engagement. While infrastructure should lead, it will take time to install and community understanding still matters. The city cannot rely indefinitely on volunteers and community groups to carry public outreach on their backs. That work needs support, coordination, some form of verification or authority on what is being taught, and funding if we want it to reach more residents consistently.

Third, continue researching the next most effective physical designs if there is no solid position on vertical measures. This includes horizontal options and visibility improvements - if done to the best standard. The updated policy already opens the door to raised crossings, curb extensions, chicanes, centreline hardening, low-impact development, custom crosswalk design, and curb radius reduction. That matters, because paint and signage alone are often not enough. Physical design that narrows space, slows turns, and improves sightlines is more reliable than asking people to simply behave better.

That includes continued attention to school-area safety, daylighting, and designs that improve visibility of children and other vulnerable road users. The engagement summary and policy both point toward reviewing surrounding conditions and selecting measures based on demonstrated risk rather than convenience.

I encourage Council to approve this policy, with or without amendments as needed, and then back it with action. Fund it, implement it, maintain it, evaluate it, and improve it. We

do not need to wait for a perfect policy to begin making streets safer. We can adopt, learn, strengthen, and keep going.

We are already paying the cost of inaction in many ways, just not in ways that show up neatly in a budget line.

Sincerely,
Andrea Bidgood
Bicycle Mayor of Guelph