



July 17, 2020

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council:

The Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation is a local, non-profit advocacy group working to increase the quantity, quality and safety of active transportation options in Guelph.

GCAT supports the recommendations made in the CRSS and we urge Council to approve it.

We would like to offer the following specific comments about the plan which we hope will be helpful as the policy moves forward to implementation:

1. We wish to thank City Staff for having provided multiple opportunities for us to participate in its public engagement processes. We acknowledge and agree with the full list of road safety themes that emerged from the public engagement and which are included in the strategy.
2. GCAT is particularly pleased to see the emphasis throughout the strategy stating that roadways are shared public spaces and must meet the needs of all road users including pedestrians and cyclists.
3. Generally speaking, GCAT is in agreement regarding the twenty-four CRSS strategies that are described in the report, although we believe that some of them need strengthening.
4. The CRSS recommends a review of speed limits. GCAT has a number of comments to make about this:
 - a. Beyond a review, GCAT supports a general reduction of speed limits, achieved through a combination of education, engineering and enforcement.
 - b. Research shows that it is a high speed *differential* between cyclists and motorists that deters many potential cyclists. By reducing speed limits generally, cycling will have a greater modal share in the City's transportation system. Studies have shown that an increase in cycling actually improves road safety for all road users.
 - c. World Health Organization research shows the survival rates of pedestrians and cyclists involved in collisions with motorists at varying speeds. Collision survivability is far greater at 30 km per hour than at 40 km per hour. We speculate that this difference is amplified in North America, where the proportion

- of larger vehicles having higher bumper heights (SUVs and pickup trucks) is greater than in jurisdictions where most of the WHO research was developed.
- d. GCAT encourages a variety of traffic calming measures, such as partially blocking streets/intersections so only cyclists and pedestrians can get through (used in Vancouver, Montreal), the installation of gardens, barriers, and bump outs to force drivers to drive slowly as they navigate obstacles (also used in Vancouver, partially implemented in the Ward), raised pedestrian crossings (as in Reykjavik).
 - e. As part of a speed limit review, GCAT would support the simplification of the road network's speed limits to eliminate a patchwork of varying limits. We believe that a City-wide set speed limit policy for each of the categories of residential, collector and arterial streets in the network would be less costly to implement, would result in better compliance and, ultimately, would be safer for all road users.
5. **GCAT wholeheartedly supports the development of 'slow streets.'** Much in the same way that the City has demonstrated its agility in creating the Downtown Dining District, we would like to see a handful of rapid prototype slow streets implemented in Guelph, on an experimental basis with, we hope, permanent adoption where it makes sense.
 6. **GCAT emphasizes that streetscape design** has a critical role in the safety of active transportation users. Highway-like straight and wide roads are not conducive to pedestrian and cyclist safety. We acknowledge that infrastructure initiatives to improve streetscapes and construction of separated cycling facilities will flow out of the work that is ongoing with both the Transportation Master Plan Update and the Cycling Master Plan. As always, GCAT is eager to participate in developing projects that flow out of these plans.
 7. **GCAT supports setting advanced walk signals** to allow pedestrians to start crossing an intersection before vehicles get a green light.
 8. We note a reference to a safe pedestrian routes application. GCAT fully supports the development or acquisition of such an application, but we are concerned that the same attention was not given to cyclists in our community. We are aware, for example, of the online [Bike Ottawa Route Planner](#) application that allows cyclists to plan point to point cycling routes taking into account cyclists' tolerance for hills, traffic levels, etc. GCAT believes that having such an application available to members of our community would help to remove an important barrier to the wider adoption of cycling as a viable transportation alternative. We would also like to point out that the CRSS's reference to the *Province of Ontario Active and Safe Routes to School* initiative mentions only walking to school, when in fact the program includes wheeling and cycling as well.
 9. The CRSS proposes a distracted driving awareness campaign GCAT strongly supports, since distracted and aggressive driving are the most common causes of motorist collisions with pedestrians. An education campaign for cyclists and pedestrians to help them safely navigate the streets should be also considered.
 10. GCAT supports the recommended education program to support cycling safety. With respect to the 1-metre passing law awareness program mentioned in this section, we

know that the close passing of cyclists by motorists is a major barrier to the wider adoption of cycling. We would like to reiterate our position that since the Guelph Police Service has the 1-metre measuring device, they should deploy it, even if only for educational purposes.

11. While we recognize that enforcement is within the jurisdiction of the Guelph Police Service, not the City of Guelph, we feel that we must emphasize the importance of enforcement to the overall strategy. It is a critical success factor that enforcement aligns with ANY measure that the City undertakes to improve road safety for all users. Through Council's representatives on the Police Services Board, and City Staff's ongoing relationship with the GPS, we can only hope that the argument for enforcement will be pressed forcefully and continually.

GCAT wishes again to thank City Staff for its public engagement on this issue and we look forward to continuing the conversation about increasing the quality, quantity and safety of active transportation in Guelph.

Sincerely,

Yvette Tendick,
President, Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation