

An aerial night photograph of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, showing a mix of urban development including modern high-rise buildings, residential areas, and a river. A large blue rectangular overlay is positioned in the upper left quadrant, containing white text. The sky is a mix of orange and blue, suggesting dusk or dawn.

Increase connectivity and growth across our region

City of Guelph meeting with
Ministry of Transportation

AMO 2023

We call on the Ministry of Transportation to help increase connectivity and facilitate growth across our region by ensuring the Hanlon Expressway improvements move ahead, and ask for investment in active transportation.

The benefit



3,300–5,000 potential additional housing units



Improved pedestrian and cyclist connectivity across the Hanlon Expressway



Increased access to grocery stores and schools



Reduced traffic congestion and emissions

Why we're here

We recently learned of the potential deferral of the planned grade separated intersections on the Hanlon Expressway in Guelph, as well as the new Highway 7 connection between Guelph and Kitchener.

Planned improvements to the Hanlon Expressway are critical to accommodate growth in Guelph.

The existing Hanlon Expressway intersections are a barrier for pedestrian and cyclist connectivity and contribute to congestion on the expressway. Without the proposed interchanges, the road infrastructure is unable to fully support the housing developments planned along this corridor.

We also continue to advocate for dedicated active transportation funding. As our city grows and we work towards our shared goal of Net Zero 2050, we would welcome provincial support towards active transportation infrastructure.

The details

The November 2022 Auditor General's report identified the deferral of all highway improvement projects in Guelph. Our transportation planning team has been working closely with MTO staff on relationship building, and the coordination of studies and projects. These deferrals were not mentioned during our regular update meetings with project staff or senior management. We have two residential developments between Paisley Road and College Avenue, planned for 5,750–8,250 residential units, plus a large industrial complex at the southern boundary of the city recently approved through the Minister's amendment to Guelph's Official Plan.

All of these developments will directly border the Hanlon Expressway.

We are particularly concerned about the impact of these deferrals on the planned large-scale residential development on the former Dolime quarry lands, approved through an MZO. Preliminary traffic studies indicate that the builders can only develop one third of this property in the absence of the Hanlon intersection improvements. This represents a reduction of 3,300–5,000 potential units and is a significant setback to our efforts to meet the accelerated provincial housing targets.

We've also started early works on accommodating the Highway 6-7 interchange. This has been a complex and delicate undertaking, and the unexpected cancellation of the project may have significant reputational impacts on the City's relationship with important stakeholders.

In addition to improving highway infrastructure, we will also need to accommodate new growth with active transportation options. An estimated 53 per cent of trips in Guelph can be completed by foot or by bicycle – however this requires increasing the quality, coverage, and connectivity of our active transportation network. As municipalities face rising construction costs and reduced revenue streams, dedicated provincial support is essential to build new active transportation infrastructure.



Photo credit: Ryan Hodnett





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