Engagement Summary

Vision Zero Survey

Summary of Information

City Council endorsed Vision Zero as part of the Transportation Master Plan in 2022. Beginning September 2024, the City began community engagement activities to inform Vision Zero road safety actions and communication strategies.

What we did

A survey was created which asked Guelph residents to indicate their current awareness of Vision Zero the road safety strategy, their feeling of safety by mode of travel, their attitudes toward road safety issues and demographic details.

Between September 19 to October 10, 2024, a random sample of 600 households were surveyed by telephone, representing 100 households from each of Guelph's six wards including both landline and cellular telephone numbers. The survey screened to ensure respondents were 16 years of age or older and were residents of each ward. Gender and age samples were also monitored to ensure they reflected the demographic characteristics of the community. The margin of error for the total N=600 sample is ±4 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence interval.

In addition, the survey was posted online at haveyourseay.guelph.ca/vision-zero for the same time period. Three public events were attended by City staff in September to promote to online survey. In total, 1,021 survey responses were captured representing the 600 telephone survey responses and 421 online survey responses.

What we heard

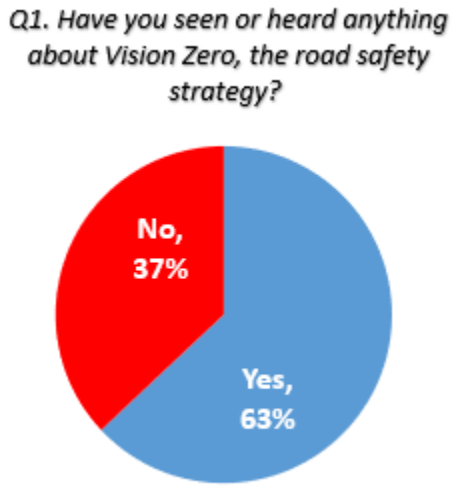
The results of the telephone survey and the online survey were reviewed and analyzed. This report focuses on the telephone survey results because they illustrate a random and statistically significant sample of Guelph's population and are summarized below. The results of the online version represent a self-selected population in Guelph and are captured below specifically noting discrepancies between the telephone and online results.

Vision Zero Awareness

All respondents were first read a short introductory statement after which they were asked if they have seen or heard anything about the road safety strategy named Vision Zero.

Slightly more than six in ten or 63 per cent said they have seen or heard something about Vision Zero. This response is opposite of the online survey results which showed that 64 per cent of respondents had not seen or heard about Vision Zero.

Figure 1: Percentage of total responses which indicated Yes or No to the question Q1, Have you seen or heard anything about Vision Zero, the road safety strategy?



Awareness was highest among those aged 25–44, and lowest for those aged 75 and above. Those who were most aware of Vision Zero lived in Ward 5, and Ward 2, while those least aware lived in Ward 6. People who identified as living with a disability were least aware as were those who identified as new Canadians.

Perception of safety by mode of travel

All respondents rated their perception of safety traveling on Guelph streets using different modes of travel. The percentage of respondents which stated that it is safe or very safe to travel by each mode of travel are as follows: vehicle (72 per cent), public transit (65 per cent), motorcycle (54 per cent), walking (50 per cent), bicycle (47 per cent) and mobility aid (35 per cent).

Perception of safety varied depending on demographic information provided:

- Those aged 25–34 were most likely to state that walking was safe, while those stated that walking was the least safe were aged 65 and above. Those who identified as living with a disability were least likely to report that walking was safe.
- A significant variation was seen when contrasting the perception of safety between younger age groups and those who live with a disability. Only 3 per cent of those aged 25–34 stated that travelling by mobility aid was unsafe, while 67 per cent of those who identified as living with a disability stated that travelling by mobility aid was unsafe.
- Most older adults aged 65 and above, those living with a disability, and new Canadians felt that traveling by bicycle was unsafe.
- Most of the people who felt traveling by motorcycle was safe were people aged 25–34 and aged 45–64.

- Ninety-two per cent of those aged 24–34 felt that traveling by vehicle was safe, while this feeling declined steadily with each age group to 30 per cent of those aged 75 and above stating that traveling by vehicle is safe.

Road safety attitudes and beliefs

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following four statements related to *speeding and driving.*

Table 1: Road safety attitudes and beliefs statements Q8 to Q11 by percentage of total responses which indicated Disagree, Neither Agree Nor Disagree, Total Agree and Unsure

	Total Disagree	**Neither Agree Nor Disagree**	**Total Agree**	**Unsure**
Q8. It is okay for people to drive a few kilometres per hour over the posted speed limit.	41%	15%	44%	0%
Q9. I can drive a little faster than the speed limit while staying in control and avoiding collisions	54%	8%	37%	1%
Q10. People who speed in Guelph usually end up getting a speeding ticket.	60%	12%	26%	2%
Q11. It would be safer for those who walk, use a mobility aid, and bike in Guelph if people drove more slowly.	15%	10%	74%	1%

While results were split on it being okay to drive a few kilometres over the speed limit. For the question of driving faster and maintaining control, 54 per cent disagreed compared to the 37 per cent that agreed with the statement. Forty-seven to 61 per cent of those aged 16–44 agreed to Q8 statement listed in Table 1, contrasting those only 21–31 per cent of those aged fifty-five agreed to the same statement.

Nearly three quarters of respondents or 74 per cent agreed that it would be safer for walkers, bikers and those using mobility aids if people drove slower, compared to only 15 per cent that disagreed. A six in ten majority are also of the opinion speeders do not get tickets.

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of agreement with the following three statements related to *collisions and driver error.*

Table 2: Road safety attitudes and beliefs statements Q12 to Q14 by percentage of total responses which indicated Disagree, Neither Agree Nor Disagree, Total Agree, and Unsure.

	Total Disagree	**Neither Agree Nor Disagree**	**Total Agree**	**Unsure**
Q12. Everyone makes mistakes so roads should be designed to account for human error	10%	17%	71%	2%
Q13. In a collision, heavier vehicles can cause greater injury to a pedestrian than lighter ones.	4%	15%	81%	0%
Q14. As vehicle speeds increase, survival rates decrease for pedestrians involved in collisions	3%	11%	86%	0%

There was a high level of agreement with all three statements. For all three statements, agreement tended to increase with age, with those aged fifty-five and over, agreeing most the statements as compared to younger respondents.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with a statement related to *equity*: *Based on their specific situations, some people in Guelph have better opportunities to use roads that are considered safe*.

Results were mixed with 37 per cent agreeing and 46 per cent disagreeing, while 16 per cent had a neutral opinion. Those who agreed most with this statement were people who identified as Inuk/Inuit, First Nations, or Metis and new Canadians, while least in agreement were people aged sixty-five and above. Telephone and online responses differed most when reviewing responses by age for this question, with 75 per cent of those aged 25–44 agreeing with this statement in the online survey, while only 40 per cent of the same age group agreeing to this same statement in the telephone survey.

Prioritizing streets

Residents were asked if the City should place priority for reducing traffic speeds on busier streets in Guelph or those that are less busy. 54 per cent of respondents favoured prioritizing reduced traffic speeds on busier streets such as Gordon Street, Speedvale Avenue, and Wellington Street, while 39 per cent favoured prioritizing less busy streets such as neighbourhood side streets, leaving 7 per cent of respondents stating they were unsure.

Safe streets

Respondents were asked in an open-ended question to describe what the term *safe streets* means to them. The theme most mentioned was having streets that are safe to walk, bike or drive on (22 per cent), while a similar theme of having streets, parks, and other open spaces safe was referenced by 9 per cent. There were 13 per cent that said it means having laws including rules of the road enforced, while 9 per cent answered police patrols. The remaining comments were mostly related to making areas safe by reducing drugs, getting offenders off the streets, and protecting the public from violence and crime.

The online survey allowed residents to contribute their responses to the question *What do safe streets mean to you*? Here are some direct quotes these responses:

- *All road users feel comfortable traveling in our city by the way they choose. Be that by car, walking, wheeling, or biking.*
- *No injuries or deaths caused by motor vehicles, no collisions, no speeding, no distracted driving, no distracted people crossing roads while looking at phone.*
- *Engineering streets to slow cars down and ensure collisions are not fatal.*
- *Enforced speed limits so that there are reasonable expectations for being on or near the streets for those living and visiting on the street.*
- *Streets where everyone follows and knows the rules.*
- *Feel comfortable to ride bicycle to stores, mall, office, parks. Sending kids to school by bicycle.*
- *Being able to safely cross an intersection, at a crosswalk, with turning traffic being aware of you.*
- *Streets are designed to enable good efficient traffic flow.*
- *Ability to cross busy streets to catch the bus at regular intervals along the grid.*
- *A strong constant police traffic patrol.*

What we are doing

A Vision Zero Action Plan is being developed which outlines actions which aims to direction road safety action and communication strategies. These survey results demonstrated several findings which direct the City's Vision Zero actions.

- There is a variation of awareness of Vision Zero depending on where someone lives in Guelph and their age. The City will create a communication and marketing strategy to promote road safety projects, programs and initiatives that support Vision Zero objectives on City of Guelph channels. The strategy will consider targeting specific areas and populations with the least awareness of Vision Zero such as older adults, new Canadians and those living with a disability.
- At least half of respondents do not feel that walking, biking, using a motorcycle or mobility aid is safe in Guelph roads. The City's Vision Zero

actions will prioritize actions that protect these users, while prioritizing an analysis of mode-specific travel patterns and safety concerns.

- Older adults and those living with a disability, feel least safe travelling in Guelph amongst all modes of travel. The City's Vision Zero actions will prioritize public engagement activities with older adults and people living with disabilities to ensure their travel patterns and safety concerns are understood and incorporated road safety policies.
- Average responses based on awareness of Vision Zero and perception of safety by modality have been chosen as Key Performance Indicators for Vision Zero actions. The results of this survey will serve as a baseline result to be contrasted every few years.
- There is a significant variation between younger populations and those with lived experience for how safe people feel while using a mobility device. The City's communication and marketing strategy to promote road safety will consider messages to younger populations that aim to describe how people living with disabilities feel while travelling in Guelph.
- About half of respondents believe that it is okay to drive a little over the speed limit, and if they do, most believe that people who speed do not get a speeding ticket. These findings suggest that many people are unaware of the risk of a slight increase in vehicle speed and believe they are unlikely to be caught. The Vision Zero actions will prioritize messaging and actions that focus on the risk of speeding and will aim to expand speeding enforcement measures within its control such as its Automatic Speed Enforcement camera program.
- Younger people are most likely to state they can drive faster than the speed limit and stay in control, while older people may have less understanding of the concept of equity. These findings will help frame and direct targeted Vision Zero messages based on age.
- One of Vision Zero Guelph's slogans is *Safe Streets Save Lives.* The findings suggest that this slogan should be continued to be used in Vision Zero messaging, as it was met with a variety of personal interpretations but also emphasizes on the built environment and transportation for all users in relation to safety, both essential components of a Vision Zero road safety strategy.
- The findings regarding which roads to prioritize for reduced speed limits suggest that people may not be aware of the risk of serious and fatal injury on Guelph's faster moving roads. These findings will be reviewed as part of City of Guelph's plan to update its Traffic Calming Policy in 2025.

Next steps

The Vision Zero Guelph Action Plan for Safe Streets document will be presented to City Council and available publicly in the first half of 2025. In 2025, City of Guelph's Vision Zero Steering Committee, with representatives from the City of Guelph, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, Guelph Police Service, and the Ministry of

Transportation, will use the survey results to inform future Vision Zero communication strategies. This Committee will continue to meet quarterly to collaborate and support each partner's road safety efforts.

In late 2025, there will be an update to the City of Guelph's Traffic Calming Policy.

Every year, the City's Vision Zero webpage will be updated with messages, updates, collision data, emerging trends, and progress toward our Key Performance Indicators. In 2028–2029, the City plans to publish an update on our Action Plan progress and will adjust our Action Plan as needed to reflect current understanding and priorities.

For more Information

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