

August 20, 2024

From: Peter McDonnell
President
Cycle Stratford, Inc.
167 Franklin Dr
Stratford, Ontario
(519) 272-6867

To: Mayor Ristma,
All City Councillors
Stratford, Ontario

Subject:

Reducing risk of injury to cyclists through improved street surfaces.

Good day, Mayor Ritsma and City Councillors.

My name is Pete McDonnell, and I serve as the president of Cycle Stratford, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting safe recreational cycling and cycling advocacy. I am also a long-time resident of Stratford and have enjoyed cycling through all seasons of our city's weather for the past 25 years.

This year, Cycle Stratford has 63 members, many of whom regularly participate in our group rides and choose cycling as a preferred mode of transportation for various purposes. I write today on behalf of the entire board of directors of Cycle Stratford to express our deep concern regarding the deteriorating road conditions in Stratford.

After vehicular collisions, a significant cause of bicycle accidents with a motor vehicle is: "falls and crashes due to hazardous road conditions. Uneven pavement, potholes, and debris on the road can cause a cyclist to lose control and sustain injuries."¹

As an organization that hosts rides 2-3 times a week throughout Stratford and the surrounding areas, we are acutely aware of the road surface conditions, particularly on major arterial roads and side streets. Despite recent resurfacing efforts, such as on John Street, we have observed an alarming decline in road quality over the years. Certain streets have become so hazardous that we instruct our ride leaders to avoid them entirely for fear of accidents that could result in serious injury. Streets that are currently unsafe for cyclists due to numerous potholes, poorly repaired potholes, loose or missing pavement, and cracks include:

- Downie Street from Market Place to Player St
- Britannia St West of Churchill Circle

¹ <https://ciws.ca/blog/bicycle-accident-injuries-understanding-the-risks-prevention-and-treatment>

- Douglas St between John St and Avondale Ave
- St. David St between St. Vincent St and Erie St
- William St from Waterloo St to Delamere St
- Devon St from Romeo St to C H Meier Blvd
- Waterloo St from Ontario St to Lakeside Drive
- Lorne Ave from Erie St to Downie St

These are just a few key examples of the problem areas. As you will note, several of these streets are located on priority cycling routes as noted in the Transportation Master Plan (2023) recently adopted by City Council. The dangerous road surface conditions need to be rectified before adoption of any priority routes that utilize these (or other) dangerous road segments. It is noted that a staggering 46.5 percent of lane kilometers of roadways maintained by the City of Stratford rank in the Poor to Very Poor condition as identified in the 2022 Pavement Condition Assessment report commissioned by the City².

In the recently adopted Transportation Master Plan (2023), the 'Complete Streets' approach identifies cyclists as a priority in the transportation hierarchy, however, the poor road surface conditions conflict with recommendation of many streets as cycling routes without increased risk of injury for cyclists.

We strongly urge you, Mayor Ristma, and all City Councillors to direct the Engineering division of the City to prioritize pavement repairs or repaving operations for roads with a poor pavement quality score and all poor road surface conditions across Stratford. Cyclists should not be subjected to increased risk of personal injury due to inadequate road maintenance. It is imperative that swift improvements are made to ensure the safety of all road users.

We trust that you will give this matter the attention it deserves.

Sincerely,
Pete McDonnell
President, Cycle Stratford
(On behalf of the Board of Directors)

² Page 13,
https://www.stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/resources/INFRASTRUCTURE-SERVICES/ENGINEERING/Stratford-2022-Report-Final-20220825_AODA.pdf