

**To Office of the Mayor, Office of the CAO  
C/O Mayor Cam Guthrie, Council and,  
CAO Scott Stewart  
City Hall, 1 Carden Street, Guelph**

**June 12, 2023**

Guelph has a housing crisis.

Solving this crisis requires our community - our leadership, industry, and citizens - to do things that have not been done before. We must produce more homes at an unprecedented level. This is a call to action to City Hall.

We know that we cannot do these extraordinary things with a “business-as-usual” mindset. In fact, we must be bold in our vision, recruit everyone to the cause and put a dedicated team in place with the ability to move solutions forward.

The housing crisis in Guelph is complex; it spans across the housing continuum; from emergency shelter for homeless individuals, to affordable options for low-income individuals, to the whole range of market housing types. All of these units need to be resourced and built at rates we have not seen in Guelph for generations. This isn't unique to Guelph. It won't be easy to fix.

We commend staff and council for their efforts on the issue to-date, and we acknowledge the context (economically and politically) that makes moving forward feel more challenging than ever. We also thank the many community partners who continue to relentlessly manage this situation, and we recognize the individuals and businesses that continue to make significant financial and in-kind contributions to many pertinent initiatives in our community.

However, we believe two critical elements for success remain outstanding:

1. Creating a plan with “ownership” of the problem at City Hall, and
2. The responsibility for action.

Ownership of the problem, beyond acknowledging the situation, means having developed a plan that is linked directly to the complex problem. Responsibility for action means having someone in place with the authority and resources to act and be accountable for their role in the results.

To-date we have not seen evidence that these critical elements are being put in place.

To that end, a growing community collaboration from across the housing, social, and healthcare continuum is calling for action. As committed community partners we have outlined what a plan would look like, along with what we believe are common sense priorities for action.

We ask that the elected leaders and official decision makers of our community act now. We do not need to wait for further or more consultation. #bettercantwait.

### What's the plan? Where's the action?

Better cannot wait – and we believe that action now is critical for the well-being of our community. We will support any action that moves this City forward in building more housing across the continuum.

## HOUSING CONTINUUM

Guelph-Wellington



Above all, a successful plan requires the leadership necessary to harness the skill, energy, and commitment of our community. We need a point-person in City Hall with the authority to act. They must have the responsibility for a plan of action and be held accountable for progress. We would note that owning this problem (and its solutions) does not mean paying for it alone. It would include engaging other levels of government as well as public and private sector partners.

Moving forward we would request the following:

1. Appoint a housing commissioner to collaboratively build out the plan, be accountable for achieving results, and publicly communicate the progress on the outcomes.
2. Ensure that emergency housing infrastructure is in place and ready for at-risk individuals by the fall of this year.
3. Work with community partners such as the University of Guelph and Habitat for Humanity to support the acceleration of new and affordable housing projects.
4. Work with the homebuilding/developer community to change the focus of approvals from “who’s to blame” to “what’s the next step” in order to accelerate the pipeline of projects and getting more of them queued up to be ready to go.

We eagerly await your response and are committed to whatever we can do to help make a difference in Guelph’s housing crisis.

Yours Truly,  
*(in alphabetical order by last name):*

Jason Ashdown, Co-Founder & CSO, Skyline Group of Companies; Chair, Federation of Rental  
Housing Providers of Ontario

Dave Bullock, VP Innovation, RWDI

Adam Carapella, VP Operations, Tricar Developments

Ryan Deska, Director, Community Engagement & Development, Habitat for Humanity

Brandy Douglas, President HR Consulting; Chair, Guelph Chamber of Commerce

Helen Fishburn, CEO, Canadian Mental Health Association, Waterloo Wellington

Michael Keegan, President, MK&A; Advocacy Advisor, Guelph Chamber of Commerce

Kristin Kerr, CEO, Stonehenge Therapeutic Community

Melissa Kwiatkowski, CEO, Guelph Community Health Centre

Mellissa McDonald, AVP Government Relations & Community Engagement, University of  
Guelph

Michele McTaggart, President, Bensol Consulting; Past Chair, Guelph Chamber of Commerce

Doug Minett, The Bookshelf

Ian Panabaker, VP Development, Wood Development

Emmi Perkins, Director of Transformation, on behalf of GW Ontario Health Team

Ryan Scott, Senior VP Development & Finance, Fusion Homes

Shakiba Shayani, President & CEO, Guelph Chamber of Commerce

Mark Walton, CEO, Guelph General Hospital