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Future-Proofing Guelph: Council Candidate Questionnaire

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Priority One: Build More Homes, Faster:

- 1. Will housing be your first priority for the 2026–2030 term? If so, name one current city priority you would subordinate to it when they conflict. If not, what ranks ahead of it and why?**

Housing would be one of my first priorities because the cost of a home affects people's health, employers' ability to hire, and whether young people and older residents can stay in Guelph. I would put housing-enabling infrastructure ahead of discretionary streetscape improvements when the two compete for limited capital funding. That does not mean neglecting safety, maintaining what we already own, or treating a community as an afterthought. It means being clear about the trade-off, listening to the people affected, and choosing the work that helps us deliver homes people can actually live in.

- 2. Guelph has unlocked over 22,000 potential units but issued permits for a fraction of that. What do you believe explains the gap, and which parts of your explanation are within Council's power to change?**

The 22,000-plus figure represents potential homes made possible through planning changes; it does not mean those homes are financed, serviced or ready to build. We need to find out why individual projects are stalled, whether the obstacle is financing, infrastructure, approvals or something else, and publish what we learn. Council can make its own processes more predictable and work with housing providers to resolve problems, but changing a planning rule alone will not produce a home. Council also needs to be honest about infrastructure costs and press the Province and federal government for their share, especially when responsibilities are passed to municipalities without adequate funding. I want residents to see where projects stand and what is being done to move them forward.

- 3. Would you support publishing binding end-to-end approval timelines by application class, reported quarterly against actuals? What consequences should follow when the city misses them?**

I support publishing approval timelines and reporting quarterly on how long applications actually take, but I would not commit to binding deadlines without knowing what happens when a delay is justified. If the City needs more time to resolve a serious infrastructure, cost or safety issue, Council must be able to act in Guelph's best interests without an automatic penalty or a forced approval. Applicants and residents should be told what is causing the delay, who is responsible for the next step, and when they can expect an update. Where the City can improve its own process, it should do so and report on the results. Accountability should help us move good projects forward responsibly, not pressure us into decisions that leave residents or taxpayers with the consequences.

4. Getting approved housing built depends on strong working relationships with the people who build it — both for-profit developers and non-profit housing providers. What would you do to build genuine working relationships with both, and what's one concrete step you'd take in your first year to strengthen them?

I would bring developers, non-profit housing providers, City staff and residents together early, listen to where projects get stuck, and follow up on solutions. We need people willing to build homes in Guelph, and it is reasonable for a developer to earn a return on that work. In my first year, I would ask for regular working meetings through our CAO Tara Baker on approved projects that have not moved to construction, with the barriers and next steps made public. A strong partnership also needs transparency: when someone asks the City to defer a payment or take on a cost, residents should understand why and what they will receive in return.

5. What three housing metrics should residents use to judge the next Council — and you — at the end of the term? State the values you would consider success.

First, count homes completed and ready for people to live in, by type and affordability. Second, track the share of new homes that meet a published affordability standard; I would aim for one in three, while reporting separately on rental, ownership and supportive housing so that figure cannot hide gaps. Third, publish the time from a complete application to a decision, by application type; I would want at least 90 per cent decided within the City's published standard by the end of the term. I would ask staff to test these targets against the starting data and report progress publicly each quarter. Residents should be able to judge us by homes delivered and people housed, not only by approvals announced.

Priority Two: Make Guelph More Competitive

6. Guelph is one of Ontario's most tariff-exposed communities because of its manufacturing and agri-food base. What's one specific thing you'd do as a councillor to help those employers weather this period, and how would you work with the Province and Ottawa to bring supports to bear and ensure Guelph's business voice is at the table?

I would work with Council and MP Dominique O'Rourke, who has experience in these matters through her work as the Chair of Auto Caucus, to convene Guelph's manufacturers, agri-food employers, workers and business organizations to identify the specific costs and disruptions they are facing, then bring a short list of practical requests to the Province and Ottawa. I would push for support that helps employers retain workers, adapt equipment, find new markets and keep investing here. The City should also examine its own permit and service timelines so it does not add avoidable delays when a business

needs to adapt. I would work with other municipalities and local representatives to make sure Guelph's employers are heard, and report back on what we asked for and what response we received.

- 7. Guelph businesses and residents consistently raise the cost of property taxes as a concern. How would you approach property tax increases while ensuring the City can continue to deliver the services residents expect?**

I know residents and businesses feel every tax increase, and I would not promise a number before seeing the services and costs behind it. My first questions would be what we must maintain, what is working, what can be done more efficiently, and what happens if we defer a cost. Having run a small business, I know that putting off necessary maintenance can become more expensive later. I would protect essential services and make the case for any major increases in plain language, including its effect on a household or business. I would also keep pressing senior governments to pay their share rather than quietly shifting more responsibilities onto local property taxes.

- 8. What would you do to make major municipal spending decisions more transparent and ensure residents and businesses can clearly understand the value they are receiving for the taxes and fees they pay?**

For major spending decisions, I want residents to see the options Council considered, the full cost over time, the expected benefit, and who will pay. That should include the cost of borrowing, maintenance and staffing, not just the price of getting a project started. Once Council approves a project, we should report whether it stayed on budget and delivered what was promised. When it does not, we should explain why and what we are changing.

Priority Three: An Effective Strategy to Advocate for a Fair Deal

- 9. Guelph's pending development-charge reduction trades short-term relief for long-term financial risk if the offsetting funding falls short. Name one non-negotiable condition you'd require before supporting a deal like this, and one safeguard you'd put in place to protect taxpayers if it doesn't pan out.**

Before supporting development-charge relief, I would require a public financial plan showing the cost, the housing expected in return, and how supporting infrastructure will be paid for while charges are deferred. The City cannot commit money it does not have; if it must pay up front, Council needs to identify a real funding source rather than quietly passing the risk to taxpayers or delaying other essential work. My safeguard would be regular public reporting and a review point if the promised homes or outside funding do not materialize. I understand that developers need viable projects and that some relief may help get homes built, especially affordable homes. Those are reasons to examine a proposal carefully, not reasons to leave its costs or risks unexplained.

- 10. When infrastructure capacity is the reason a housing application stalls, the City's real power may lie in advocacy for provincial and federal funding rather than in saying no. What specific ask would you bring to Queen's Park or Ottawa to unlock that funding, and what would you do to build the kind of relationship that gets a yes?**

I would bring a costed request for the water and wastewater capacity needed to serve housing that is ready to move forward, including the wastewater and trunk-sewer work identified in the City's capital plans. I would show the Province and federal government which projects that investment would unlock, when homes could be built, and what each government's contribution would cover. To build a relationship that gets a yes, I would work with City staff, housing providers, employers and neighbouring municipalities to present a consistent case rather than make a one-time request. I would also report publicly on the commitments we secure and whether they arrive on time.

11. Describe, in your own words, the division of responsibility among the City, Wellington County as service system manager, and the Province on homelessness, mental health, and addictions. What is the city's job, specifically?

Wellington County is the service manager for housing and homelessness programs in Guelph and Wellington County. The Province is responsible for the health system, including the funding and coordination needed for mental health and addictions care, and it funds parts of the housing and homelessness response. The City's job is to use its land, planning powers, facilities and local relationships to help create housing and workable community responses, while addressing the public spaces and neighbourhood concerns within its responsibility. The City should work closely with the County, healthcare providers and residents, and press the Province when treatment or support capacity is missing. People need a response that joins housing with real support, not a debate over which government can pass the problem to another.

12. Would you support supportive and transitional housing, with expedited approvals for qualifying projects? Would you accept such a project in every ward, including your own?

Yes. I support supportive and transitional housing in every ward, including Ward 5, where a suitable site and the right services can be provided. I have helped bring people together to create supportive housing, and I know a building alone is not enough; residents need reliable support to make it work. I would support faster approvals for qualifying projects while being clear with neighbours about the plans, listening to practical concerns, and following through after people move in. We cannot say we support housing and then insist it must always be somewhere else.

13. Do you endorse the municipal sector's case for rebalancing provincial-municipal finances (cost uploads, predictable infrastructure funding, growth-linked revenue tools)? What should Guelph offer in return?

Yes. Property taxes cannot keep carrying costs that grow because the Province has assigned municipalities responsibilities without enough funding to meet them. I would advocate for a fairer division of costs, predictable infrastructure funding, and growth-related revenue that arrives when the work needs to be done. In return, Guelph should bring costed plans, clear housing and service targets, responsible management of its own spending, and public reporting on results. A stronger partnership means each government being honest about what it will pay for and accountable for what it delivers.