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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 will be one of my top priorities because it directly affects affordability and the stability of families in Guelph. If priorities conflict, I would put housing ahead of optional capital projects such as decorative downtown streetscaping or non-essential facility redesigns. These projects may be nice to have, but they do not improve core services like water, roads, transit, or emergency response. My focus is on approvals, servicing capacity, and removing bottlenecks that slow down housing delivery. Residents deserve a system that is predictable, transparent, and accountable. My goal is to make sure the City's processes support getting homes built rather than creating avoidable delays.

- 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?**

Some delays come from provincial rules, but many are inside the City's own processes — things like internal coordination, contract adherence, clarity of requirements, predictable review cycles, project stage-gates, and KPIs tied to each step. Every layer connected to execution should be reassessed and monitored. There is always a system in place for these projects; if outcomes are consistently slow, either the people operating the system are not performing or the system itself is poorly designed. Both require honest evaluation. Council's role is to ask direct questions about process design, bottlenecks, and accountability, and to close gaps quickly by requiring clear timelines, measurable performance, and redesigned workflows where needed. The goal is a system that moves applications efficiently instead of creating avoidable delays.

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?

In my view, all commitments should be published on the City's website and shared with residents through digital channels. There should be clear timelines and KPIs for each application type, and when targets are missed, the City should provide a public explanation. If there is no concrete or reasonable explanation, the consequence should be an internal review of the people or processes responsible. This review should be fair, evidence-based, and focused on whether the issue is performance-related or a system design problem. Many municipalities use tools like mandatory reporting, escalation, workflow audits, and performance improvement plans to keep approvals on track. These are standard accountability measures that help ensure the system works the way residents expect.

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?

Process evaluation always identifies gaps that contribute to delays, and the best way to understand those gaps is through direct conversations with everyone involved. Speaking with developers, non-profits, and City staff helps surface concerns, pain points, and misunderstandings that slow projects down. The first step is to evaluate the process itself and acknowledge issues openly on all sides. This gives both City workers and builders confidence that their concerns are being heard and taken seriously. Clear, consistent communication is the key to narrowing gaps and building trust. When everyone understands that the goal is to benefit residents and deliver results, it becomes easier for both sides to work together toward shared targets.

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.

Residents should judge Council on three clear housing metrics: units approved, units built, and the average time it takes to move an application through the system. Success means a steady increase in approvals each year and a meaningful reduction in the gap between approvals and completed homes. It also means shorter, more predictable timelines for every application class. These metrics are simple, measurable, and directly tied to performance. If the City cannot show improvement in these areas, then the system is not working the way residents need it to. Strong results in these three metrics would show that Council is focused on execution, not just intentions.

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?**

Tariffs will always impact Guelph if we rely too heavily on a narrow set of industries, so we need to diversify and open new business opportunities globally. Supporting our manufacturing and agri-food employers means helping them access new markets and reducing the red tape that slows down their ability to compete. Ottawa and the Province should actively identify emerging sectors and streamline processes so local businesses can expand without unnecessary barriers. At the same time, attracting new companies to Guelph strengthens job security and builds confidence for residents. Hiring locally should remain a priority as new opportunities grow. A more diverse and competitive business environment helps the city weather tariff pressures and keeps our workforce strong.

- 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?**

Essential services should always improve, and the best way to manage property taxes is to first assess the City's current processes for redundancies and eliminate steps that don't add value. In the short term, reviewing workflows and removing inefficient or duplicated processes can reduce operating pressure. We also need to look at how the City can generate more revenue from existing assets, especially through emerging technologies and smarter use of infrastructure. In my work, I focus on creating revenue from assets that already exist, and municipalities can apply the same approach. This additional revenue can help fund new projects without placing another burden on taxpayers. A balanced approach that improves efficiency and grows revenue is the most responsible way to manage tax increases while still delivering the services residents expect.

- 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?**

There need to be clear KPIs for every major spending decision, showing either a return on investment, an improvement in service levels, or a measurable benefit to residents' well-being. The City should communicate these forecasted KPIs to residents before making an investment and give people a chance to understand and respond to the plan. As projects move forward, the City should report back on progress at the midway point and again at completion. This keeps residents informed about whether the City is delivering what it promised. Transparency has to exist from the beginning of the process to the end. When people can see the goals, the progress, and the results, they can clearly understand the value of the taxes and fees they pay.

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.**

I think the City needs a clear financial model that shows there is no long-term deficit, along with guaranteed provincial or federal funding before agreeing to any development-charge reduction. If that guaranteed funding does not materialize, there should be a trigger clause that automatically reinstates full development charges.

- 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?**

The best way to build a productive relationship with Queen's Park is to clearly present Guelph's strengths and show how our manufacturing and agri-food sectors contribute to Ontario's economy. These sectors rely on stable infrastructure, and more housing and development means more workers to support them. Without the necessary funding, the city risks losing existing human capital and placing higher tax pressure on residents and businesses. By showing how new development brings commercial tax revenue, supports jobs, and strengthens supply chains, we demonstrate that infrastructure investment is not a cost but an economic return. When we highlight how Guelph's growth supports GDP and reduces long-term risk for the Province, we make a stronger case for funding. Building relationships on clear economic value is the most effective way to get a yes.

- 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?**

The City is mainly responsible for zoning and land-use approvals for shelters and supportive housing. It also handles permits and site-plan approvals to ensure these projects can move forward. Coordination with police, fire, and EMS is essential so that services are prepared to support these facilities. The City's role includes advocating to the Province and Wellington County for adequate funding and resources. It must also support local partnerships that deliver homelessness and mental-health services. Most importantly, the City should remove municipal barriers so the County and service providers can operate effectively.

- 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?**

Supportive and transitional housing can provide a quick fix for people who need stability right away, and I would support expedited approvals for qualifying projects. At the same time, we need long-term solutions that address homelessness in a sustainable way and protect the well-being of residents. Many people feel stressed when homelessness or complex needs are concentrated near their homes, especially when they are already dealing with their own challenges. I believe supportive services work best when they are organized in a centralized location where outreach teams, police, fire, and EMS can respond efficiently. Centralized models make coordination easier and ensure people receive consistent support without stretching resources thin across multiple sites. My goal is to support solutions that help vulnerable people while also maintaining stability and confidence for neighbourhoods.

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?

I think the Province should share more responsibility for the financial pressures municipalities face, especially when it comes to growth-related costs. In return, the City should commit to meeting housing targets that support provincial priorities. Faster approvals are also essential, because they show the Province that Guelph is doing its part to move projects forward. Transparent reporting would help build trust and demonstrate how funds are being used. Efficient use of municipal resources is another key commitment the City can make. A balanced partnership where both sides deliver on clear expectations is the best way to support long-term financial stability.