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Future-Proofing Guelph: Council Candidate Questionnaire

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Ward: 2

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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?**

Yes. We need “affordable” (provincial definition) and especially affordable (30% of gross household income) housing as well as social, supportive and transitional options.

There is currently a modest “buyers housing market” in Guelph indicating that increased market housing will not solve our current housing crisis.

Climate readiness & action rank a close second to housing & food security. I am advocating for initiatives to increase revenue etc. Also, instead of subordinating other priorities, I will advocate for any necessary cuts to be distributed relatively equally across the remaining budget items.

- 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?**

Housing starts have stagnated province wide due to factors outside of the city’s control such as higher building costs/ unaffordability and lower consumer confidence. The City of Guelph has responded by securing Housing Accelerator Funding (so far), encouraging low-impact intensification that doesn’t require new infrastructure, contributing city-owned land etc.

- 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?**

Yes. I am not convinced “binding” consequences are needed for continual improvement in timeliness and predictability of approvals, but I am open to fee rebates or other suggestions. Having clear targets will be incentive to resolve bottlenecks as they occur.

- 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 will have face-to-face meetings with city staff, developers and housing experts to identify pathways to progress. Successful strategies used outside of Guelph will also be considered (e.g., modular housing).

- 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.**

Growth Management Monitoring Reports clearly show which targets were achieved. For example, the intensification target of *46% residential development in built up areas* was met in 2025. I think it is fair to consider adjusting the *150 residents and jobs per year by 2031* target for Downtown Guelph given the Cooperators move and how changes to federal student visa policies impact the downtown Conestoga Campus timeline. Targets for each term of council should set rather than for 10-30 years in future; examples include goals for intensification corridors and mixed-use nodes.

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?**

Recent tariff exposure strengthens the case for bringing future-forward green jobs to Guelph. I have requested and booked appointments with our MP and MPP, respectively, to discuss how we can collaborate in retrofitting and/or attracting green manufacturing, agri-food and other industries. For effective collaboration, it is important to respect what is in our representatives’ control and identify common priorities. The next step will be to bring the initiative to existing and potential employers.

- 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?**

There is no silver bullet that will balance the tight city budget, but we can limit property tax levies by examining how each component contributes to our priorities and goals.

We must advocate to upper levels of government for a better deal for cities and to local boards and shared services to help.

Municipalities have legislated tools such as increasing revenue (grants, investment income) and modifying tax ratios. I support property tax breaks for small businesses and non-profits, and for low/fixed income seniors and people on inadequate disability allowances.

To get different results we should also try innovative approaches. For example, key performance indicators of whether or not we are on track to meet our strategic goals should guide council budget decisions.

Voters and candidates have proposed many other promising ideas on how to stretch our tax dollars; in collaboration with staff, I look forward to helping to incorporate them into budgeting.

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?

The City of Guelph received a *Distinguished Budget Presentation Award* for policy, financial planning, operations guidance and communications (www.guelph.ca/city-government/budget-and-finance/city-budget/). However, not all residents and businesses agree. During my first budget review as a councillor, my experience as a post-secondary educator will help bridge this divide.

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.

When this decision was handed down, I asked sitting city councillors what would happen if we didn't agree to the terms. I hope I would have had the foresight to suggest a "within city control" condition so we would not be at risk of losing the 2027 funds now.

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?

Like my answer to Q6, I will seek win-win scenarios; the specific ask often reveals itself through discussions. Preexisting relationships/ networking will improve the likelihood of success. I look forward to strengthening relationships and building wider networks (e.g., at www.amo.on.ca conferences).

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 landing page of my website describes the division of responsibility between the city and county (www.bowman4ward2.ca). *The City of Guelph is responsible for the culture, emergency, health & social, infrastructure and land & resources service areas listed [in this [AMO](#) graphic]. The [County of Wellington](#) shares the responsibility for services such as ambulances, childcare and social services including shelters & social housing.*

The province is responsible for healthcare including mental health and addictions.

The city's official role is to participate as an interest holder on county boards and provide funding; they also advocate for changes at the provincial level.

The lines among these jurisdictions become blurred because there is a visible homelessness crisis in Canada and constituents want solutions, not finger pointing. It is also important to acknowledge that initial homelessness is increasingly unrelated to mental health and addictions.

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?

100% to both. Toronto is known internationally for successful multicultural integration rather than assimilation throughout the city, and that includes socioeconomic disparities.

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?

100%. I believe the role of a city councillor is to understand the priorities of you constituents and advocate for them, but *A Better Deal for Municipalities* is the only non-negotiable in my platform. Cities are being asked to provide more services with fewer resources and constituents are paying the difference in property tax levies. It is past time for upper levels of government to share our financial resources more equitably. I advocate for more "no strings" autonomy for municipalities – they are best positioned to solve their unique issues.