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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?**

Yes, improving housing accessibility & affordability – in all of its forms – is my top priority for a '26-30 term. We need to recuperate ~\$8 million/year currently provided to Enbridge Gas in the form of a municipal service, and infrastructure usage subsidy. With this money, my housing priorities would be as follows:

- Invest in deeply affordable and supportive housing for unhoused people
- Unlock housing potential within existing infrastructure
- Incentivize densification within priority transit corridor and employment lands neighbourhoods
- Subsidize high-priority housing projects (high efficiency/density, cooperative, affordable, deeply-affordable and supportive housing)

- 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?**

This gap is caused by high labour, interest and building materials along with low market value of real estate. I believe that Council's best option to increase construction would come from subsidizing the high priority and deeply affordable housing I described above.

- 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 binding approval timelines, as long as the City staff are equipped with the resources and personnel power to achieve this. The ongoing round of City lay-offs is a good example of how the

current council is failing to maintain its capacity with respect to city projects and critical goals. Without a detailed examination of what capacity remains at the city after the ongoing lay-offs, I cannot comment on whether the city (or its departments) should be penalized for missing deadlines.

Also, as an ecologist, who has interfaced with hundreds of planning projects all over Canada, I do not believe that insisting on rushed timeframes is the answer for improving housing supply, quality or affordability. Instead, I believe that the city must focus on subsidizing the highest priority affordable housing (described above) using the income streams I described above.

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?

Thorough, robust relationship building is my main tactic for all project work throughout my career. I would provide a (city catered) round-table for approved and trusted for-profit and non-profit developers within the city to file and categorize the primary concerns and barriers that they face in moving forward with building projects in the city of Guelph.

Using this information, I would propose a policy based on these findings to city council with the goal of reducing barriers. However, the residents of our city remain my top priority and I strongly believe that careful planning is always required.

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.

- 1) How many people are unhoused and how has this changed?
- 2) What is the affordability rating of rental units in our city?
- 3) How many deeply affordable, supportive, cooperative and other affordable housing projects have been approved and/or built.

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?

This is a novel challenge, and it will take a combination of new innovations, new investments in our city and ongoing collaboration with Ottawa and the Province. We need a Guelph delegation to Ottawa to promote our industrial and agri-sector value as well as the ongoing costs and future risks of tariffs to our City.

I am not an expert in this field, and will be very open – as with all fields of expertise – to collaboration with local stakeholders and investors to ensure our industries are not left unsupported and exposed without mitigation.

- 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?**

Property taxes should not burden people who are struggling to make ends meet, or afford basic necessities. I propose a percentage property tax relief to individuals with demonstrated, confirmable need, including those on disability, OW or other social services. In conjunction with this relief, I propose a top 5% property wealth tax increase for our city's most affluent. This would generate additional tax revenue from residential properties valued approximately \$1.8M or higher (equivalent to the top 5% of property values in Guelph).

Furthermore, property taxes – and the services they provide - are good value for the wallet and well-being of Guelph residents: I believe the city needs to be better at marketing this fact.

- 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?**

As described above, I believe we need better marketing surrounding the great value for wallet and well-being provided by city services. This could include digital (ideally) possibly print marketing to describe where property tax money goes and the goals that it achieves.

I also believe that more fee-based revenue should be gathered from major natural resource users in our community, and that known subsidies to monopolies should be removed.

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 do not support a development-charge reduction provided to for-profit developers. Real estate and housing developers should provide sufficient community benefit to warrant their expansion in our city. This should include, parks/open space, infrastructure, development fees for city services and use, transit and active transportation infrastructure etc.

I do not support exposing our residents to long-term risks of developments, which have not properly paid for their use and occupancy within our extremely safe, vibrant and productive city.

- 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 agree that ultimately advocacy for provincial and federal funding will be required. Ultimately, as I described above, I bring charisma, energy and commitment to robust relationships. With this skill set (which has been extremely effective for my career thus-far), I would seek, advocate and do all within my

power to insist on Provincial and Federal collaboration. While grant writing, alternate revenue streams, novel income and investment for the city are all important components: I think that building real, meaningful and robust relationships is the key to unlocking some of this potential.

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?

Specifically, the city's jobs are to ensure 1) seamless funding for emergency relief (e.g. Royal City Mission for example) for people requiring food and warm space – a gross oversight by the current council; 2) to advocate to receive for the newly announced federal funding for community food hub developments; 3) use novel revenue streams (as described above: property wealth tax, ending all Enbridge subsidies) to increase development of deeply affordable and supportive housing, and promote a community hub (asked for by food & housing security grassroots organizations) 4) financially support homelessness diversion organizations and programs .

The province and feds, will also need to be involved in large capital investment projects. Wellington County provides social services. However, as described above the city also has social services and housing development obligations and responsibilities.

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?

Absolutely yes. And yes, in Ward 5 (my own) as well as any others. Mixed neighbourhoods serve to greatly reduce the impacts of concentrating vulnerable people in one area. Barriers to accessing supportive housing should be reduced, opportunities to enter this system should be supported and increased.

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: the province and feds are able to seek to loans in order to develop revenue streams, major capital projects, critical repairs and upgrades. And indeed, most of business growth in the private sectors depends on such loans. Cities are not able to seek this kind of investment tool: as such the province should be obliged to provide this type of funding to our city for many projects which can show reasonable (or better) projected returns. While I understand that individual nuances would arise in any such negotiation, I do not believe that Guelph should have any automatic obligations with respect to making investment proposals to the province.

Furthermore, the negotiation feels flawed at the outset in that the province can insist on draconian mandates that we can't enforce the speeds – or develop active transportation corridors – on our roads.