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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, housing would be my first priority because affordability, economic growth, talent attraction, the retention of young people and quality of life all depend on Guelph having an adequate supply of appropriate housing. I would also make getting our Municipal Accommodation Tax and tourism vision moving quickly a very high priority because it is an area where Council can directly set the vision and create new economic activity, visitors and revenue for Guelph. I don't see these as competing priorities: a stronger economy and tax base help support the infrastructure and services needed for growth, while adequate housing is essential to attracting the workers our businesses and institutions need. At the same time, Council has to recognize that many factors affecting housing—interest rates, construction costs, immigration, provincial and federal policies and the decisions of individual builders and property owners—are outside municipal control. Within our control, I would advocate for faster and more predictable approvals, appropriate infrastructure and responsible intensification, while protecting established neighbourhood character, our water resources and the roads, traffic, parks and other services that make those neighbourhoods work. Guelph needs to grow, but we need to be disciplined about the kind of growth we pursue, where it occurs, what infrastructure it requires and what it means for the residents who already call Guelph home.

- 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?**

We have unlocked more than 22,000 potential housing units, yet only a fraction have reached the building-permit stage since 2024. That tells me we need to look carefully at what happens between

creating housing capacity and actually delivering completed homes and neighbourhoods, rather than assuming the answer is simply to approve more density. Some of the gap is outside Council's control, including interest rates, construction costs, tariffs, financing, market conditions and decisions by individual builders and property owners. Within our control are the City's approval and permitting processes, infrastructure coordination, fees, clarity of requirements and how quickly we identify and resolve applications that have stalled. I would want Council and staff to meet regularly with builders and housing providers to hear directly where projects are getting stuck, while also ensuring that approved developments move toward completion of the roads, sidewalks, parks and other infrastructure needed to make them functioning communities. My focus would be not only on getting more housing started, but on getting projects finished and delivering the complete, functional communities that residents expect.

**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 would support the City's existing service standards and reporting, but my focus would be on what happens when those standards are not being met. When an application exceeds its expected timeline, there should be a clear explanation of what is causing the delay, whether the issue is with the applicant, the City or another agency, and what the next step is. Where the same type of application is repeatedly missing its standard, I would support Council asking staff to identify the underlying problem and propose a practical solution. I would also support an escalation process for applications that have been stalled beyond the expected timeframe, without overriding legitimate planning, engineering or other professional requirements. As a councillor, I would use the existing information, along with regular conversations with builders and housing providers, to identify recurring bottlenecks and advocate for changes where the City can reasonably improve the process.

**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 work with the new Mayor and Council to establish a standing Housing Delivery Advisory Committee where Council can regularly hear directly from for-profit developers and non-profit housing providers about projects they are bringing forward to City staff. One concern I have heard from developers is that some projects can encounter significant obstacles during the staff process before Council has had an opportunity to hear the proposal and understand its merits. This committee would provide an early opportunity for Council to understand what is being proposed, hear the rationale behind it and identify potential issues, while respecting staff's professional responsibilities and Council's formal decision-making role. It would not replace the planning process or predetermine applications; rather, it would create a regular and transparent line of communication between those proposing housing and the elected officials ultimately accountable to residents. Establishing this committee, with a regular schedule of meetings, would be one of my first-year priorities.

**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.**

I would measure success by housing actually completed, the time it takes to move approved projects through the City's processes, and housing affordability and choice. For completed housing, I would want Guelph to consistently meet or exceed its provincially assigned housing targets while ensuring infrastructure keeps pace. For approvals, I would want the City to demonstrate measurable improvement against its service standards and publicly identify recurring causes of delay when standards are missed. For affordability and choice, I would look for meaningful increases in purpose-built rental, student, senior, affordable and family-oriented housing, including the University of Guelph following through on its plans for student housing so that more housing is available to other residents. I would work with the University, the Province, housing providers and the private sector to make sure student housing growth keeps pace with enrollment and reduces pressure on the broader rental market. I would also want quarterly public reporting so residents can see whether Council's policies are actually producing results.

**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?**

My first step would be to regularly hear directly from Guelph manufacturers, agri-food businesses, the Chamber and other affected employers about the specific challenges tariffs and trade disruptions are creating for them. As a councillor, I would focus on things within the City's control, including making approvals predictable, reducing unnecessary administrative delays and ensuring businesses have a clear path through City Hall. Just as importantly, we need to build positive, constructive relationships with Queen's Park and Ottawa so that Guelph is not simply calling when we need something, but is consistently at the table and receiving the attention our impacted sectors deserve. I would work with the Mayor, Council, the Chamber, our MPPs and MPs to present a coordinated Guelph case, identify available provincial and federal support and make sure our manufacturing and agri-food employers are connected to them. We should also be prepared to demonstrate that Guelph is doing its part by controlling costs, supporting economic development and making our city a competitive place to invest and create jobs.

**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 am willing to make strategic capital investments when they are necessary to support growth, address infrastructure needs or improve the City's long-term financial position, but we need much greater fiscal constraint in our operating budget. We need to distinguish between capital investments, which can appropriately be financed over the useful life of an asset, and ongoing operating costs, which create a

recurring burden that ultimately has to be supported by taxpayers. I would want Council to have a transparent discussion each year about what needs to change within the City's operations to achieve property-tax increases at or below the cost of living, and if structural operating costs cannot be brought within that target, I believe Council needs to be prepared to hold the line on new operating increases. Where the City has representation or authority within boards and agencies, I would also be willing to push back, within our legal mandate, when those organizations are not demonstrating the same fiscal discipline. At the same time, we need to look for ways to grow the assessment base and generate new revenues, including getting our Municipal Accommodation Tax plan moving so that tourism can generate additional economic activity and revenue for Guelph. My goal is to make the investments Guelph needs while ensuring that day-to-day government lives within a sustainable financial framework.

**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?**

Major spending decisions should clearly show the total cost, the source of funding, the expected benefit, the risks and what alternatives were considered. I would also want Council to clearly distinguish between the full cost of delivering a service and the incremental cost or savings that would result from changing it. A program may have significant staff and overhead costs allocated to it, but eliminating that program does not necessarily mean those salaries or other costs disappear; conversely, a new initiative may be able to use existing staff and facilities and therefore have a relatively small incremental cost. Council should understand both numbers before deciding whether a program should be expanded, reduced or changed. For major expenditures, I would support plain-language reporting that shows the cost per user or unit of service where practical, appropriate corporate overhead, expected outcomes and whether the project or program delivered what was promised. The better Council understands the true costs, benefits and trade-offs of its decisions, the easier it is to explain those decisions honestly and clearly to residents and businesses and demonstrate the value they are receiving for their taxes and fees.

**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.**

My non-negotiable condition would be that the City have a clearly documented and enforceable funding agreement for the infrastructure that the development-charge reduction is intended to support, with the City's financial exposure understood before Council approves the deal. I would not support reducing a reliable growth-related revenue source based simply on an assumption that future funding will arrive. The safeguard would be quarterly public reporting on development-charge collections, external funding received, infrastructure commitments and the resulting impact on the City's reserves, debt and tax-supported budget. If funding falls short, Council should have a predefined trigger for reviewing the

program and adjusting future commitments rather than allowing the shortfall to quietly become a property-tax obligation. Growth should pay its appropriate share of growth-related costs, while government funding should be used to reduce the burden where it is genuinely available. The City's own financial reporting shows why this matters: slower development has already reduced projected development-charge revenues and affected the timing of capital projects.

**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?**

My specific ask would be a multi-year, cost-shared infrastructure commitment for the water, wastewater, roads and other growth-enabling infrastructure required to bring identified housing projects from approval to construction. Guelph has planned for growth from roughly 155,000 people today to 175,600 by 2031, but some of the infrastructure needed to support that growth still has to be built, so I would bring senior governments a specific list of projects, the housing they would enable, the City's contribution and the economic benefits. I would work with the Mayor, Council, City staff, the Chamber, housing providers, developers and our provincial and federal representatives to present one coordinated Guelph case rather than having different organizations making separate requests. I believe we need to make that case both privately and publicly: build strong relationships with decision-makers while also making sure their governments' voters understand why an investment in Guelph matters to them. My student-housing plan is an example of this approach making the case not only to senior governments and the University, but publicly to the people who ultimately hold those governments accountable. Building the kind of relationship that gets a yes means being prepared, consistent and willing to demonstrate that Guelph is doing its part financially and delivering the results promised with senior-government funding; if infrastructure capacity is holding up housing, our response should be to identify what is needed, find the funding and get the infrastructure built—not simply use the lack of capacity as a reason to say no.

**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?**

I have struggled with this issue because, from a Guelph taxpayer's perspective, we are contributing a significant amount of money, but much of the administration and delivery of these services sits with Wellington County, while the Province controls much of the health, mental-health and addictions system and provides funding to the County as well. I believe the City's role should be to make sure we are doing what is within our mandate—planning for appropriate housing, providing municipal infrastructure and services, supporting community agencies where appropriate, maintaining safe public spaces and advocating strongly to the County and Province when the system is not meeting local needs. We also need to use our representation on County governance to ask much tougher questions about what we are spending, what outcomes we are getting and what is actually working. I would like to explore whether there are ways, within our legal authority, to give Guelph greater oversight and influence over

the services and funding for which our taxpayers are contributing, so that we can have more impact and accountability for those dollars. I don't think residents should have to navigate a maze of different government responsibilities to understand who is accountable when someone is homeless or struggling with mental health or addiction. We need the different levels of government to work together, clearly define who is responsible for each part of the response, and focus on getting people from crisis toward stable housing and better outcomes.

**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, and I would support expedited approvals for qualifying projects where that can reduce unnecessary administrative delay without removing legitimate planning, safety or building requirements. These projects are an important part of the housing continuum and can help people move from homelessness or crisis toward greater stability. I recently met with the executive leadership at Stepping Stone and came away convinced that, where appropriate, we should look to embed housing and support services throughout the community rather than concentrating too many services in one area, including downtown. I would accept an appropriate supportive or transitional housing project in Ward 5, just as I would expect every ward to participate in addressing a city-wide need. At the same time, every project needs an appropriate location, a clear operating plan, adequate supports and meaningful engagement with the surrounding community. Supporting these projects means supporting people while also making sure projects are properly planned, sustainably operated and integrated into the neighbourhoods where they are located.

**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, very much so. The current system is not sustainable. Property taxes are not directly tied to a person's income or ability to pay, and it is increasingly difficult to expect them to carry a growing list of services and responsibilities that extend well beyond traditional municipal responsibilities. I support the principle that municipalities need a sustainable financial relationship with the Province when we are being asked to deliver services and infrastructure that exceed the resources available through the existing property-tax base. Guelph should advocate for predictable infrastructure funding and appropriate growth-linked revenue tools, while recognizing that taxpayers also expect municipalities to demonstrate financial discipline and control their own costs. In return, Guelph should offer clear accountability through measurable housing and infrastructure outcomes, transparent reporting on how senior-government funding is used, and evidence that the City is improving efficiency and living within a sustainable operating framework. We should also be prepared to make a reasonable municipal contribution where appropriate rather than expecting senior governments to fund everything; a stronger fiscal relationship should ultimately be about matching responsibility with the revenue needed to deliver it, not simply transferring costs from one level of government to another.