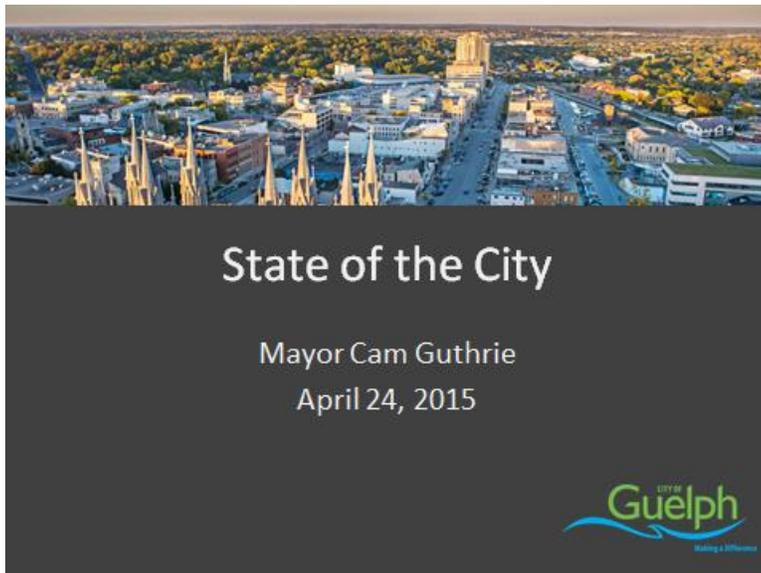


Mayor Cam Guthrie
2015 State of the City
April 24, 2015
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



Good morning.

I'd like to thank the Chamber of Commerce for hosting the annual State of the City address. This event has a long history in our city, and I'm proud to be here to deliver my first State of the City as your Mayor.

I want to thank everyone in the audience today for coming out for breakfast to talk about our city. It's great to see so many business and community leaders here. You help make this community tick and I look forward to working together with you over this term of Council.

I am now just over 100 days in office as your mayor.

Many have wanted to know what I had spent my first 100 days doing. And they all wanted to hear about what I want to accomplish over the next four years.

In response to the first question – I spent these first days creating relationships. I was meeting, talking, listening, and getting to know members of Council, staff and other stakeholders within our city. Many stakeholders are here in this room today. I also spent time getting to know fellow mayors across the

Province. This included reaching out to our closest neighbour, The County of Wellington. I am pleased to report that a solid relationship has been built with them.

Council also spent many hours in orientation sessions learning policies and processes. And, of course, we tackled the City Budget – holding six Council meetings on the budget (seven if you count the final meeting, which took place after the first 100 days); hearing from 54 delegations; and digesting more than 600 pages of Budget documents. This doesn't include the avalanche of emails and phone calls from citizens giving us their input too.

I have said before that during an election campaign, it's all about "me." Whether running for councillor, or running for mayor, you're standing on people's doorsteps asking them to "vote for me". But once elected to government, it's all about "we." I am working with 12 other elected people on behalf of our community. And I am working with professional staff who are providing their best advice and recommendations. It's only by working together as a collective "we" that we can make positive change for the city of Guelph. That's the tone I set out to accomplish within the first 100 days of this term of Council. And it is the tone I wish to maintain over this term.

The second question people were asking – what I hope Council accomplishes this term – is, to me, the more important one.

That's what I want to focus on this morning.



Shortly after being elected, I sat down with a student reporter from the University of Guelph for a "get to know your new Mayor" interview.

He asked me why University of Guelph students should consider staying in the city after graduation. What does Guelph have to offer?

I said that almost anything you could be looking for, you will find in Guelph.

It's a cliché to say that Guelph is a great place to raise a family. But it's true.

That is why my entire family is here. With roots that go back to 1919 as my great grandfather started Guthrie's Bakery downtown on Quebec St.

It's a great place at every stage of life – from childhood, to young adulthood, to retirement.

It's a great place to grow up, to go to school, to build a career, or to start a business.

It's a great place for newcomers, and for lifelong Guelphites.

And I want it to continue to be a place where my own children choose to stay in Guelph.

We have a wealth of arts and culture, music, restaurants, sports, recreation, parks and green spaces. We have a lot of amenities you wouldn't expect to find in a city our size.

In short, Guelph has the liveability thing down pat.

My vision and my challenge over the next four years is to ensure that while Guelph is liveable – it is *also* affordable.

Because if you can't afford to raise your family here – if you can't afford to run your business here – the rest doesn't matter.

We can have the best parks in Ontario; we can be world leaders in X, Y and Z – but that is not going to help us if people can't afford to be here.

Some would have you believe that we face a choice: We can be a great city with high taxes; or we can be an affordable city with few services and amenities.

I reject that.

I believe Guelph can be a great city that is **also** affordable.

This morning, I'd like to give you some highlights of how – together with my colleagues on Council and the City's administration – I believe we can get there.



The best way to ensure Guelph is affordable is by attracting jobs and investment.

When I moved into the Mayor's Office, I found a gold shovel. It had been used for a ceremonial sod-turning and left in a corner. Upon arriving in the Mayor's office I immediately put it in my office next to my desk, to remind myself every day that attracting jobs and businesses is my #1 priority.

In order to attract jobs and businesses, the City needs to implement the Integrated Operational Review – the work to tackle what was originally known throughout our community and beyond as the “Guelph Factor.”

I am pleased that, within the first 100 days of this term of Council, I saw a renewed momentum for the IOR.

In February, we initiated IOR stakeholder workshops with City staff. I made a point of dropping by those workshops so that those in the room - both developers and City staff - knew that I was taking this seriously.

The developers and partners in the room told me they are finally feeling that they are being listened to, and that action is being taken.

This is a big change from what I heard and from what many experienced over the past couple of years – namely, that the process was taking far too long, with too few results to show for it.

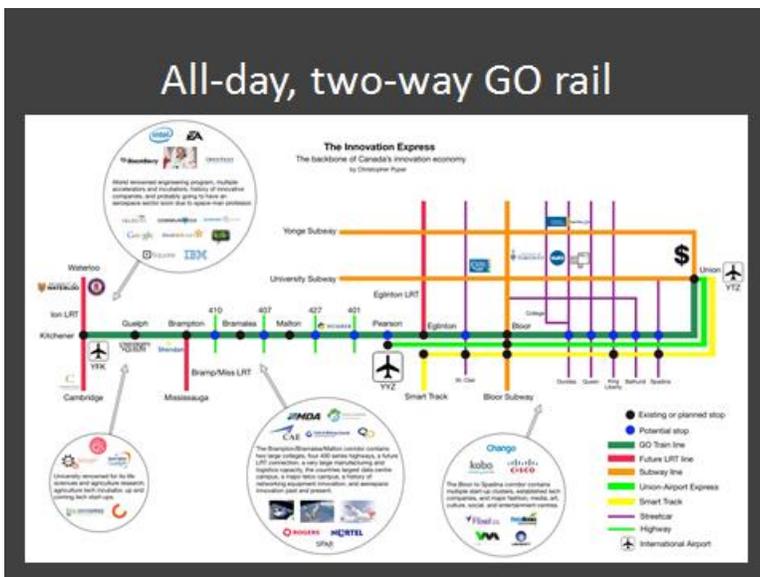
The 2015 workplan for the IOR focuses on implementation – and good progress is already being made.

The City’s development approval processes have been mapped, and we have identified opportunities for improving and streamlining processes. Performance measurement targets are also being developed.

Next steps include creating manuals to spell out roles and responsibilities and to support the streamlined development approval processes.

If you are a partner in this room today, that is involved in the IOR, I have a challenge for you. When you start to see these positive changes within city hall – tell us. Tell everyone. Write a letter to the editor, tweet it out, blog about it and call me to let me know. I know these positive changes are coming, and so do you. So let’s collectively tell our community about it.

The community will be hearing a lot more about this in the near future- so stay tuned.



Another priority to help us attract business and investment is all-day, two-way GO train service. I have always been a supporter of this coming to Guelph.

The Province of Ontario has signalled support for all-day, two-way GO rail service between Toronto and Brampton, Guelph, and Kitchener-Waterloo. And they have begun making investments in land and

infrastructure upgrades to make it happen, including the construction of a new GO layover station in Kitchener.

Along with my counterparts – the Mayors of Kitchener, Waterloo, and Brampton– I will continue to advocate for this project with the Province. I have had several meetings on this already. Just last week I had an excellent meeting with the Minister of Transportation. I told him that this isn't just about job creation, but it's about building a complete community. With the influx of residential units being created downtown and a desire by many citizens to purchase these units, having all-day, two-way GO service is a unique selling feature for them.

Together, Guelph, Waterloo Region and Toronto employ 205,000 tech workers. In North America, this is second only to Silicon Valley, which is home to 387,000 tech employees.

The big difference is that Silicon Valley is connected by two-way commuter rail service between San Francisco and San Jose. The Toronto to Waterloo Region corridor is divided by a wall of congestion on Highway 401.

There is an excellent business case to support all-day, two-way GO train service. The backbone of the business case is the opportunity for GO service to unlock the tremendous economic potential of our region. It's estimated that the service could spur the addition of 40,000 jobs in the Kitchener, Waterloo, and Guelph area alone.

Guelph is ideally positioned to attract start-ups and innovation-sector workers – because of our excellent University and College; our proximity to Toronto and Waterloo; and the lifestyle and liveability our city offers.

But you don't have to take my word for it.

I recently exchanged texts with an entrepreneur named Joe Lauge.

After building a tech startup in Toronto, Joe chose Guelph as the place to launch his new venture, a company called Fansi that builds social media networks for artists and their fans.

He wrote a blog post to explain why – as he said, “against all natural tech-startup inclinations” – he chose Guelph.

His reasons include Guelph's affordable rent, the easy commute, and even the great restaurants and micro-breweries in this city.

And I quote:



“After being in Guelph for a full year of operations, I can honestly say... Wow Guelph! WOW! I feel like I’ve discovered a secret others should know about. I’m confident in our ability to build a great and profitable global business.... 5 years ago I’d have laughed at you for suggesting it could happen in Guelph. Now, I’m thinking that just being in Guelph might play a material role in helping us do so.”

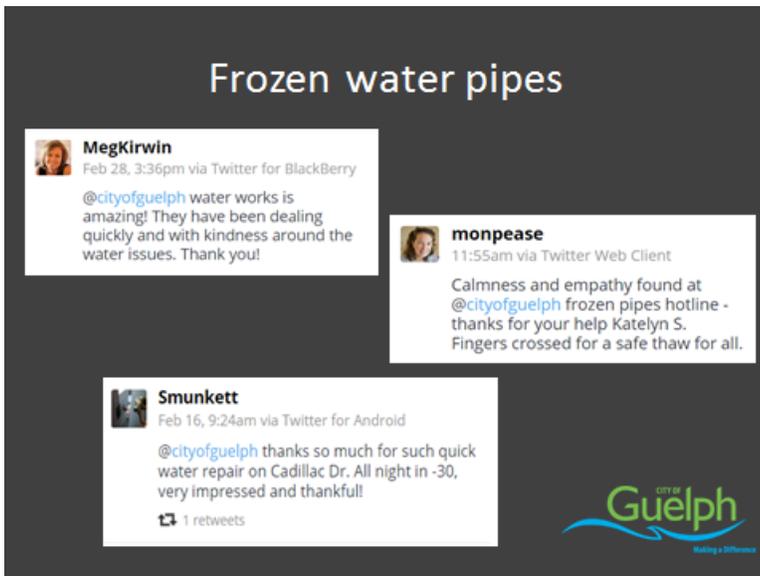
As Mayor, I want to let more people in on the secret. I want to make sure everyone knows what Guelph has to offer – and I want more entrepreneurs knocking on our door. And rest assured this city will open that door for you.

Since taking office I have had several meetings with potential investors. Retailers like Lowes, more potential condo developers in our downtown, Investors inquiring on Baker Street opportunities and east end commercial. Even exciting news like the expansion of existing businesses including Wellington Brewery or Connect Tech just to name a few.

So, attracting jobs and investment are one important part of ensuring Guelph is liveable *and* affordable.

Another important ingredient is making sure we are delivering quality municipal services, with excellent customer service.

I believe that, in order to provide the best possible value for your hard earned taxes, we need to focus on the local services that make the most difference in people’s lives. These are the things that local governments are really good at.



We had a stellar example of this in the winter, when a record number of water pipes froze – leaving a record number of households without running water.

At the peak of the issue, Guelph had 376 homes with a frozen water service.

More than 275 temporary water lines were installed throughout the issue. These lines connected people to their neighbour’s water line – but while they provided running water, it couldn’t be used for drinking or cooking.

The City also provided vouchers so people could buy bottled water, as well as free access to Laundromats and showers at City recreation facilities.

Quite frankly, this situation could have been an absolute nightmare for our city.

What is more fundamental to quality of life than having clean, running water in your home?

Talk about something that affects people – not in an abstract way, but in a real, practical, I-need-to-flush-my-toilet kind of way!

But an amazing thing happened.



People weren't angry at the City. In fact they offered more "thank yous" than I have ever seen in my time on Council.

Huge credit goes to the City's Water Services department –all of these employees truly went above and beyond.

What strikes me in the many Tweets and e-mails we received is that people not only appreciated the technical response – but also the exceptional customer service and kindness they received – from the people who answered the phone, all the way to the crews who came out to do the work.

I should note that this was an inter-departmental effort, and that Water Services received support from Communications, Emergency Services, Solid Waste, Wastewater, Service Guelph, Operations, and several other departments.

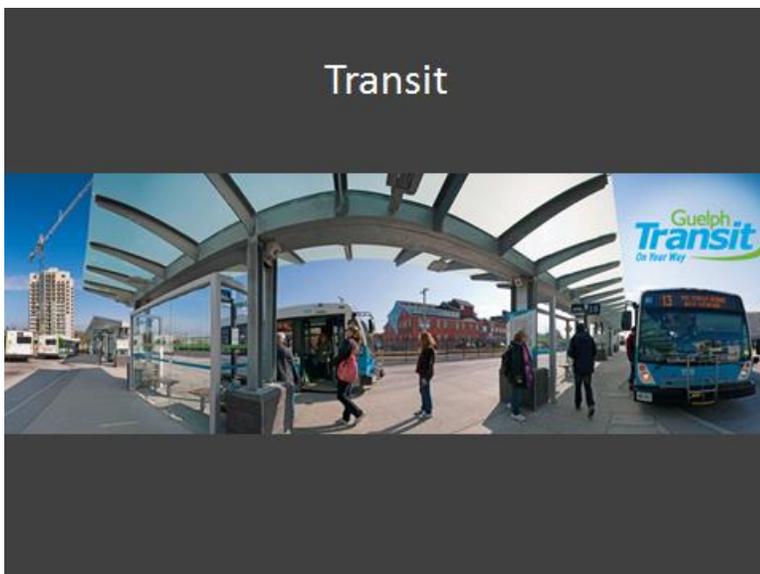
"[the crew] faced miserable conditions—extreme cold weather, wet clothes, long hours (well into the evening), and angry customers. Despite these trying circumstances, in all my interactions with them, these guys were professional, polite, considerate, empathetic—in fact, actually cheerful. Most important, they were committed; determined not to stop until they got it right no matter what that took."



Huge credit also goes out to the community. This includes the families who dealt with frozen pipes with patience, endurance, and good humour. It also includes the neighbours who stepped up to help by providing water through temporary lines and by reaching out with showers, buckets of water, and all kinds of other helpful aid.

This is an example of how our City can really shine. It's a core municipal service that people depend on. And when that service is interrupted – thanks to Mother Nature – the City and community is there to respond.

We need to celebrate this, and we need to build on it.



Speaking of core services that affect people's lives – let's talk a bit about Guelph Transit.

People rely on Transit to get them where they need to go – whether it’s school, work, or appointments. When the service isn’t working as well as it should, they notice.

It’s no secret that over the past few years, Guelph Transit has implemented a number of route and scheduling changes – and it hasn’t all been smooth sailing. Riders dealt with late buses and missed transfers. The service was not as reliable and convenient as people wanted and expected.

Thanks to a significant effort from Transit staff, Guelph Transit has made major improvements. Buses are running on time. Customer service complaints are way down.

Beyond this, I am very pleased that Guelph Transit is now embarking on a major revamping of its service – which aims to make Transit more efficient and more convenient for riders.

I know what you’re thinking. We’ve changed routes before. What’s so different this time?

For one thing, these changes are based on feedback from people who use the system – including two recent surveys that asked about travel patterns and customer service. And there has been active engagement with the front line people who know the system best – the drivers.

Secondly, we will be modifying the hub-and-spoke model, offering more transfer points where riders can change buses and travel more efficiently – because they won’t always have to go to Guelph Central Station to connect to another bus.

The proposed new routes include a north-south Mainline route along Gordon/ Norfolk/ Woolwich, from Woodlawn Road in the north to Clair Road in the south. They also include a perimeter route along major roads like Victoria, Stone, Edinburgh, and Woodlawn.

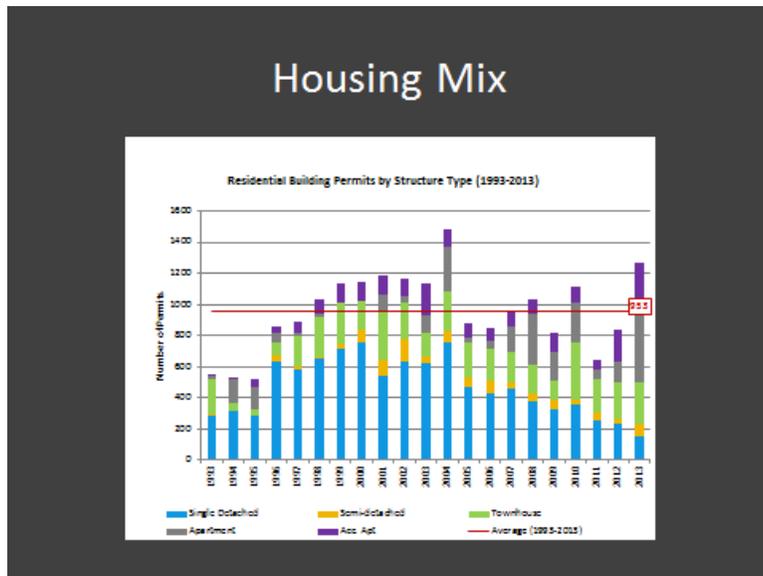
Take the example of someone who lives in the Northeast part of the city and needs to get to work at one of the factories on the Northwest side. Right now, that person has to take a bus downtown to Guelph Central Station, transfer to another bus, and then ride all the way back up to Woodlawn.

In other words, they have to go pretty far out of their way.

Under the proposed routes, that person would be able to ride a bus along Woodlawn – from their home in the East to their workplace in the West.

The General Manager of Guelph Transit has said his goal is to make the changes within the existing budget. But if that's not possible, it will be an item of discussion in the 2016 Budget process.

At one time, Guelph was a pretty small city and the hub and spoke Transit model worked just fine. Not anymore. I am hopeful that, with these changes, Guelph Transit will win back some old customers and gain some new ones. The more people we have on board, the more cost-effective the service will be.



Whenever people in Guelph talk about affordability, the subject of housing always seems to come up.

With good reason. Housing costs continue to rise in our city, even for starter homes.

There is no doubt that the housing mix in Guelph has changed over the past couple of decades. The trend since 1993 is that there are fewer single-family homes, and more townhomes and apartments being built.

There are several factors that have contributed to this change.

The City annexed land in 1993, bringing a large stock of new greenfield land on stream, which in turn created a spike in development of single-family homes.

The change in housing mix is also partly market-driven, as baby boomers and young professionals choose to live in condos that don't require them to mow the lawn or shovel the driveway. Townhomes provide an affordable option for people buying their first home.

Some of the change can be attributed to policy changes, such as the Places to Grow legislation that mandates the City direct growth to its core built-up areas. The Province has launched a 10-year review of Places to Grow, and the City of Guelph will be providing comment as part of that process. As Mayor, I will also provide feedback as a member of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Large Urban Mayor’s Caucus group. I will ensure Guelph’s voice and Guelph’s experience is heard. In my personal opinion, I believe a goal of many young families is to eventually own a detached home, with a backyard to throw the ball around with their kids. If there is a way to accommodate more of this type of housing within our growth plans, I think we should.

Over the next few years, Guelph will also be doing background studies and community engagement to support its next 5-year Official Plan review. This will include looking at growth in the City beyond 2031.



I can’t talk about affordability and liveability without talking about efficiency in the City’s operations.

The City has taken a number of steps to make the administration more streamlined and effective.

In November, the City was reorganized into 3 service areas instead of 5.

In February, a further realignment reduced the number of departments and the number of senior-level decision-makers.

The changes are meant to make the organization more effective and responsive to the people and businesses of Guelph.

An important ally in the drive for more efficient municipal government is the City’s Internal Auditor.



The Internal Auditor brings a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

Our Auditor recently presented her 2014 Annual Report to Council’s Audit Committee.

Her team completed 9 internal audits in 2014 – including value-for-money audits; follow up audits; and system validation and assessments. An impressive achievement. What’s even more impressive is that City management agreed with 98% of the recommendations put forth in the audits.

In addition, the Internal Audit team conducted 7 risk management assessments and 5 business process reviews in 2014.

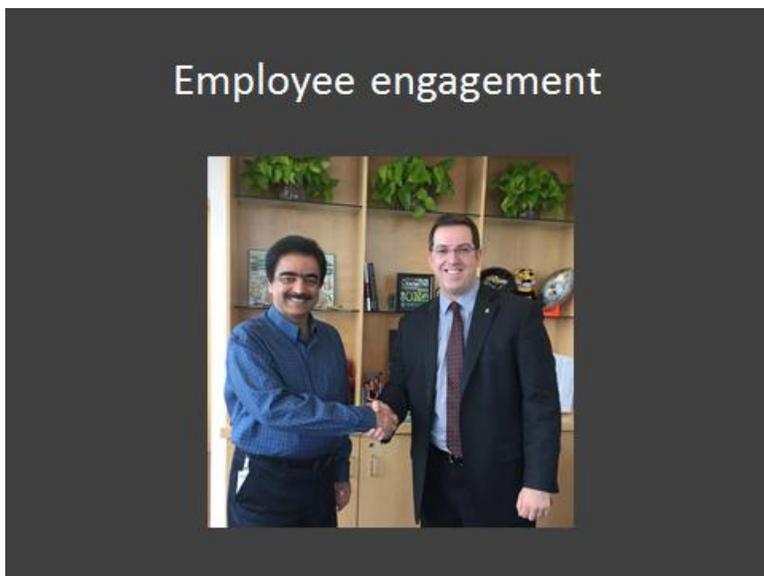
Audits are an important way to identify cost savings and optimize resources. The cumulative total of all audits and reviews since the function was established in 2012 is a potential \$3.7 million.

The Internal Auditor has just begun an operational/ value-for-money audit of residential waste collection. It will look at process, cost, alternative service delivery models, and comparisons to other municipalities. I look forward to her report, because it will give a clear picture of what it takes to collect your bins from the end of your driveway each week. This kind of data is vital to Council’s decision-making process and our accountability back to the very people in this community who pay for it.

To quote from the Internal Auditor’s Annual Report:

“The [Internal Audit] department continues to focus on efficiency and effectiveness of the business of the Corporation. Value to Guelph residents means exceptional service delivered at a sustainable price. The audit function continues to be a catalyst for improved business processes, efficient use of resources, increased focus on internal controls and greater transparency and accountability.”

To put it another way – it’s helping the City of Guelph be affordable *and* liveable.



Of course, the job of building an efficient, effective, and responsive municipal organization doesn’t rest solely on the shoulders of the CAO and Executive Team (with a little help from the Auditor.)

The City has more than a thousand other allies in that effort – they’re called municipal employees.

These are the front-line staff who know City services and programs inside and out. The people who drive the buses every day. The ones who come out in minus 30 weather when your water line is frozen.

The City is tapping into this well of knowledge and ideas in a number of ways.

Last year, employees identified a number of front-line efficiencies and improvements.

One of the proposals, from an employee in the Engineering Department, helped the City earn an Employer of Excellence Award from Conestoga College. His idea was to offer paid placements for internationally trained professionals – providing them with Canadian work experience, while benefiting the City through their knowledge and skills.

That employee, Mohsin Talpur, is here this morning – Mohsin, can you stand up to be recognized?

Other proposals from employees included new methods for collecting court-imposed fines, and improvements to sidewalk snow clearing equipment. In total, 19 ideas were implemented.

I believe employees should be empowered to keep bringing their ideas and innovations forward.

That's why I'm pleased that the City has launched a series of roundtables, where different City employees will work together to find new, on-the-ground solutions to help improve how the City delivers services.

The roundtables will break down silos and improve processes. They will provide a way for employees to keep bringing their good ideas forward.

That employee who managed to put a smile on someone's face when their water line was frozen and they couldn't flush their toilet? Maybe he can suggest ways to improve customer service in all areas of the City. Maybe he can help all employees deal with difficult situations.

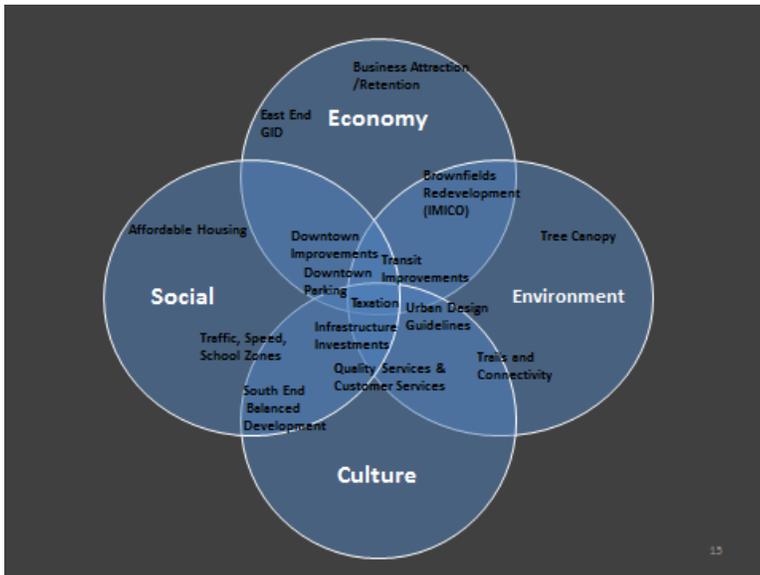
Employees are a great resource in building a liveable and affordable city – and I'm glad the City is tapping into that resource.



Making Guelph an affordable place to live, raise a family, and start a business is not going to be achieved in one Budget night – nor will it be achieved in 100 days. It's not going to be achieved by waving a magic wand.

There are many competing priorities – infrastructure needs; program and service expectations; the demands of growth.

Council is in the process of developing our shared agenda for the term. This will be an important foundation for the next four years. It will guide departmental work plans and performance measures for the organization.



We met on Monday to discuss the shared agenda. We have a good list of common items (which were put forward by 4 or more members of Council); shared items (which were put forward by 2 to 3 members of Council) and unique items that were identified by just one member of Council.

There aren't too many surprises on the list. It includes things like downtown parking, traffic, taxation, infrastructure, business attraction, and the south end rec centre.

For most of the items on the list, work is already underway. For example, staff are working on a parking master plan that will come forward this summer.

On Monday night, Council approved the list in principle and decided to send the items to the appropriate standing committees for further discussion.

As a Council we understand that the City cannot be all things to all people. We are going to have to prioritize. We are going to have to throw out the old, false choice of being liveable OR affordable – and come up with ways to be liveable AND affordable.

Fortunately, there are 13 people around the Council horseshoe who are dedicated to this city and to serving the people and businesses of Guelph. That came through loud and clear during our shared agenda discussion.



This morning, I've talked about affordability in the context of the average taxpayer and homeowner, who may find that taxes and other costs are going up faster than their wages are.

But I am mindful that there are also people in Guelph living in poverty – people for whom affordability is a major, daily challenge. People who might have to choose between paying the rent and putting food on the table.

This morning, I want to issue a second challenge to all the business leaders in the room to commit to doing something about poverty in our community.

I recently met with a group called Circles Guelph Wellington. They have a very innovative series of programs that are tackling the complex issue of poverty in our community.

Bridges out of Poverty educates people from the middle or upper classes about what it means to live in poverty, and helps people to see poverty in a different light. *Getting Ahead* is a program that helps people of low income learn about their own strengths and the resources available to them. *Circles* brings people from both programs together, creating relationships across economic boundaries and helping people move from poverty to sustainability.

You can find out more about Circles at www.circlesgw.ca. I want to thank Circles GW and all their volunteers for the excellent work they do.

And I want to take this opportunity to thank the many organizations and volunteers in Guelph who do tremendous work on a wide variety of issues in our community. You play an important part in making Guelph the great city that it is.

One of the things I've been asked a lot in my first few months in office is, What it is like being Mayor?

My answer is that being Mayor has exposed me to so many wonderful people, and important challenges and great opportunities that lie ahead for our city. Every day, I get to think about and work towards making Guelph even better.

It's a privilege to do this job. I appreciate the trust the people of Guelph have placed in me.

In my short time in office so far I have met and spoken with so many people about our city:

from the Premier of Ontario



Officials from the United States Consulate



to local businesses and entrepreneurs



volunteers and students (who continually ask me for "Selfies").



Every one of them has remarked on how impressed they are with Guelph and all that our city has to offer.

I am looking forward to continuing to work together over the next four years. There are a lot of important issues ahead and a lot of stakeholders to be involved along the way. With my Council colleagues, with the City's staff, and with people just like you – "WE" will help make Guelph all that it can be.



Thank you.