



# Making a difference in Guelph



# Introduction

The City of Guelph is pleased to present its platform for the 2022 provincial election.

The next four years will be defining for Guelph and the well-being of our community as we strive to be future-ready. There are real and pressing challenges facing our city as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, transition to net zero, and build an equitable city free of discrimination and racism.

We're eager to work with Ontario over the mandate of the next provincial government to make a difference for everyone who calls Guelph home. We want our city to be the best place to live, work, raise a family, run a business, and get an education in Ontario.

For the City of Guelph, that means working together with the Province to realize our strategic plan vision of being an inclusive, connected and prosperous city where we look after each other and our environment.



It also means helping to realize the ambitions and hopes of our community as identified in Guelph's Community Plan—to be a place where we are home, we protect our environment, we create value, we feel well, we play and explore, we move around freely, and we are community.

A United Vision:  
**GUELPH'S  
COMMUNITY PLAN**



To do this we must advance the post-pandemic recovery of our business community and other hard-hit sectors while embracing our identity as a circular economy innovation hub and a testbed for creative problem-solving.

A strong municipal-provincial partnership is essential to build the innovative and inclusive community of tomorrow that our residents and businesses expect.

In addition to calling on the next provincial government to maintain supports aimed at business recovery and helping our most vulnerable community members, Guelph's platform focuses on five priorities that, through collaboration with the Government of Ontario over the next four years, will help us make a difference in Guelph. These priorities include:

1. **Renewing the municipal/provincial infrastructure funding framework**
2. **Delivering on interregional transportation**
3. **Ensuring housing affordability/attainability**
4. **Improving access to mental health and addiction supports; and**
5. **Addressing brownfield remediation**

By working together to advance these priorities, Guelph and the Province can create the conditions necessary for our residents, small businesses and local industry to thrive.

The City of Guelph looks forward to working alongside the next provincial government, and with our Member of Provincial Parliament at Queen's Park, to make a real difference in our community and for our future.

# City of Guelph: Community Profile



The City of Guelph is a fast-growing community of nearly 145,000 residents located in the heart of southwestern Ontario's Innovation Corridor in Between the Lakes Treaty #3 Territory, a treaty signed between the British Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation in 1792. The land Guelph is built on is steeped in rich and diverse Indigenous history with many Indigenous, Inuit and Métis people continuing to call it home today.

An innovative, green and creative city, we are home to the University of Guelph, a strong small business community, renowned local arts and culture festivals, and major employers in the advanced manufacturing, agri-innovation, life sciences, cleantech, information and communications technology and tourism sectors. Guelph is also a top destination in the Americas for foreign direct investment and circular economy innovation. As a premier, mid-sized city, Guelph is the perfect place to test innovative solutions to big-city problems.

Projected to grow to 208,000 residents and 116,000 jobs by 2051, the City of Guelph is committed to using renewable energy to power all of our City facilities by 2050, and to supporting our community's goal to be carbon neutral by this same timeframe. We're also committed to creating a community of prosperous inclusivity free of racism and discrimination in all its forms.



# Priority 1: Renew the municipal/provincial infrastructure funding framework



The City of Guelph joins the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and Ontario's Big City Mayors' (OBCM) in calling on the Province of Ontario to renew the municipal/provincial infrastructure funding framework.

Cities across Ontario are increasingly struggling to keep up with the costs of building and maintaining the public infrastructure our residents and businesses rely on. Be it building new green facilities, replacing old roads and sidewalks, or planting trees to meet our environmental goals, the City of Guelph is facing mounting challenges to deliver on our capital plan without overburdening the property tax base. This is especially true when it comes to building for the transition to 100 per cent renewable energy and a carbon-neutral Guelph. As an example, due to inflation, supply chain issues and the impacts of the pandemic and conflict abroad, recent bids for shovel-ready capital projects have come in as much as 50 per cent over budget. Given the economic environment and well-known supply chain issues, this price escalation is expected to impact other critical city-building projects in the time ahead.

Per our 10-year capital plan, which does not yet account for inflation and other factors contributing to this recent cost escalation, the City expects to invest over \$964M

in infrastructure over the four-year mandate of the next provincial government. Despite these significant investments, there is an annual \$3.9M gap in our budget for City Building Projects and an average annual gap of \$29.9M for infrastructure renewal. As of 2020, the City faces an infrastructure backlog of \$289M.

Given these challenges, what we need is a renewed infrastructure funding framework with the Province that reflects the cost pressures municipalities like Guelph are facing. This framework should also recognize the economic stimulus and job-creating potential of investing in critical municipal infrastructure. In light of changes to the provincial gas tax, it is also important that overall transfer payments from the province to municipalities for infrastructure are increased or at least maintained.

**Guelph calls on the next provincial government to create a new, predictable, and administratively simple municipal/provincial infrastructure funding framework to address existing funding gaps in the City's capital plan, increase the City's green infrastructure and alleviate pressure on our local property tax base.**

# Spotlight on green capital projects

## South End Community Centre

- This multi-use community and recreation centre will bring much anticipated municipal recreation services to Guelph's fast-growing South End.
- It is designed to contribute to Guelph's corporate 100% renewable energy and community carbon neutral objectives, resulting in 62% energy savings and 85% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- Though initially costed at \$80M, and slated to be financed predominantly by development charges, the City has since learned through the tendering process that the lowest bid to construct this facility has come in at 50 per cent over budget – evidencing the impact inflation and supply chain issues are having on municipal infrastructure projects province-wide.
- This highlights the need for a provincial review of the municipal/provincial infrastructure funding framework.

## Baker Street Library

- The City of Guelph's Baker Street redevelopment project, delivered in partnership with Windmill Developments, will see the construction of a new mix-used residential and commercial district in Guelph's downtown core that will be anchored by a new central library.
- This \$62M library will bring vibrancy to downtown Guelph while providing residents with a new, modern and accessible facility sized to serve Guelph's quickly growing population.
- Designated a One Planet Living Community project, the new central library will be built to contribute to Guelph's corporate 100 per cent renewable energy and community carbon neutral objectives.

## Operations Campus

- The City of Guelph is a leader in electrifying its public transit fleet.
- Key in this transition is the construction of a new Operations Campus, featuring new transit and fleet maintenance facilities necessary for the green electrification of Guelph Transit.
- Partially funded by provincial and federal grants, the Operations Campus will be critical in helping the City achieve its climate change goals.

## Active Transportation Network

- Once complete, Guelph's Active Transportation Network will provide over 221 km of protected bike lanes, on-street bike lanes, off-road trails and multi-use paths.
- This network will be built for people of all ages and abilities and will connect Guelph from north to south and east to west during all seasons of the year.
- Investing in active transportation infrastructure increases the safety of those who use the network to commute or for recreational purposes while contributing to community GHG emission reduction efforts towards a carbon-neutral Guelph.
- Over the four-year mandate of the next provincial government, Guelph intends to invest around \$6.2M to expand our active transportation network – even more can be achieved with provincial support.

## One Canopy Strategy

- The City of Guelph has an ambitious target of achieving a 40 per cent tree canopy cover across the community.
- This initiative is about preserving our existing urban forest while planting additional native species of trees and plants to green our community and invest in our natural environment. We expect to plant \$3M worth of trees and native species plants over the mandate of the next provincial government.
- It will lead to a healthier local natural heritage system, improved air quality and a reduction in GHG emissions through carbon sequestration, amongst many other benefits.
- Investing in the ongoing implementation of the City's One Canopy Strategy is an important way the Province can empower local climate action – we expect to plant \$3M worth of trees over the mandate of the next provincial government.





## Priority 2: Deliver on interregional transportation



The actions of the next provincial government will be critical in determining whether we will meet the goal of two-way all-day GO Train service along the Kitchener line by 2025. This next provincial government is also charged with delivering on longstanding commitments to expand Highways 6 and 7.

Enhancing our interregional connectivity improves the movement of people, goods and services between Guelph and surrounding communities and will be essential to the prosperous and inclusive growth of our city. For too long, our residents, businesses and visitors have had to rely on inefficient and expensive transportation options to travel between different communities along the Innovation Corridor and across southwestern Ontario. Implementing two-way all-day GO Train service and expanding our highways to enable improved transit and commuter service will be central to creating the interconnected and future-ready Guelph of tomorrow.

Ensuring committed funds to complete the new Highway 7 (Kitchener-Guelph) and the planned interchanges along the Hanlon Expressway (Highway 6) are essential for ensuring efficient and competitive goods movement through and to the region, supporting jobs, local businesses and the regional economy.

**Guelph calls on the next provincial government to deliver on interregional transportation initiatives that will help connect Guelph to neighbouring communities, including Two-Way All-Day GO Train service on the Kitchener line by 2025 and ongoing infrastructure investments on Highways 6 and 7.**



## Priority 3: Ensure housing affordability/attainability in Guelph



The City of Guelph is deeply concerned by the skyrocketing cost of rent and homeownership in our community and across Ontario. We are committed to working with the Province, the federal government, and local private and non-profit sector housing developers to address this crisis locally.

Of great concern is the high cost of shelter in Guelph. It's generating significant pressures on housing services in our community administered by the County of Wellington with detrimental impacts on vulnerable community members experiencing homelessness and those waiting for community, supportive or subsidized housing. Given the connection between this rise in housing instability and COVID-19, we encourage the next provincial government to maintain pandemic supports like the Social Services Relief Fund while also recommitting to ending chronic homelessness by 2025.

Guelph calls on the next provincial government to work collaboratively with municipal governments to increase the supply of affordable and attainable housing across the housing continuum in local communities like Guelph while respecting local decision-making and facilitating the digitization of development approvals. We also call on the next government to continue the Social Services Relief Fund to provide ongoing supports to vulnerable community members most affected by the pandemic and to recommit to the goal of ending chronic homelessness in Ontario by 2025.



Guelph has received \$1.75M under the provincial government's Streamline Development Approval Fund to improve our planning processes and increase supply.



There were at least 270 individuals experiencing homelessness in Guelph/Wellington at the last point in time count on October 20, 2021.



At last count, there were 2,838 households in Guelph/Wellington on the social housing waitlist.



1 in 7 Guelph residents experience food insecurity.



## Priority 4: Improve access to mental health and addiction supports



The City of Guelph encourages the Province to improve access to mental health and addiction supports across Ontario. In our community, one of the biggest difference-makers to help those experiencing acute crisis would be to expand Guelph's Integrated Mobile Police and Crisis Team (IMPACT) to 24/7 coverage. IMPACT pairs highly trained mental health clinicians with police officers during calls for service involving a mental health and /or addictions crisis, including on the University of Guelph's campus. Currently, this joint Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington and Guelph Police Service program only runs between 8 a.m. and midnight, meaning that up to 60 per cent of mental health-related 911 calls are received outside of IMPACT hours. This creates challenges for vulnerable community members in need of immediate mental health and addiction support and risk intervention.

Investing in IMPACT is not only the right thing to do to save lives and improve timely community-based care for those experiencing crisis - a \$2M provincial investment to expand the service will also generate up to \$3.6M in savings for the Guelph General Hospital while increasing emergency room capacity for the community.

Further to investing in an IMPACT expansion pilot, the City also encourages the Province to make strategic investments to reduce gaps in Guelph's broader mental health and addictions continuum of care. Filling these outstanding gaps would allow for improvements to supportive housing services, community-based addictions supports, access to psychiatry, intensive services, and inpatient treatment beds for people of all ages, amongst other necessary services. Additional funding from the province would also reinforce the position that mental health is health.

**Guelph calls on the next provincial government to invest in Guelph's mobile crisis response team by funding 24/7 IMPACT coverage across the city on a pilot basis for \$2M per year. Guelph also calls on Ontario to make strategic targeted investments to address the \$29.6M annual funding gap across our community's broader mental health and addiction continuum of care.**



## Priority 5: Address brownfield remediation



Cleaning up sites contaminated because of historic use is a promising way to unlock land in Guelph for new commercial and residential development, including affordable housing in areas primed for densification. Brownfield remediation involves removing and addressing contaminants in the soil and groundwater from past industrial activity or even former landfills so that the land can be used again without concerns to human or environmental health.

A number of these properties have come under municipal ownership following their industrial use. The City is therefore liable for the cost of cleaning up these sites – a liability valued at \$24M. Each year the City works to manage risks associated with these properties in line with provincial requirements. The goal of our Contaminated Sites Strategy is to bring these lands back into productive use and bring the liability down to only \$5M in the next 10 to 25 years. Given the high cost of managing and cleaning up brownfields, including for sites that defaulted into municipal ownership, and the potential of these properties if returned to usable status, the City encourages the next provincial government to prioritize investment in brownfield remediation in Guelph and across Ontario.

**Guelph calls on the next provincial government to fund the remediation of municipally managed contaminated sites in our community to unlock these lands for affordable housing, commercial opportunities and other community needs.**

### Spotlight on brownfield remediation: **200 Beverley Street**

- Formerly a foundry site, 200 Beverley Street came into municipal ownership in 1997 following non-payment of taxes and failure to fulfill necessary remediation work.
- Today, this 5-hectare (13-acre) property located in St. Patrick's Ward just east of downtown Guelph is undergoing environmental studies so that cleanup and redevelopment can proceed.
- While past environmental work has been conducted at the site to manage risk, there is a great deal of interest in fully remediating this prime location to unlock land for residential and/or commercial development.
- Provincial investment in remediation can help unlock this brownfield for future use.



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