

Friday, March 10, 2023

Sent via email to minister.mah@ontario.ca

The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
17th Floor
777 Bay St.
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

RE: City of Guelph Municipal Housing Pledge

Dear Minister Clark,

The City of Guelph (the City) recognizes the Provincial governments desire to take bold and transformative action to get 1.5 million homes built over the next 10 years. Through the More Homes Built Faster: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan 2022-23, the City will continue to be a partner in achieving this goal alongside other municipalities, the development industry, not-for-profits and the federal and provincial governments.

Guelph is committed to facilitating the provision of new housing units. This commitment is evident through the City's Strategic Plan and the Community Plan.

The recommendations in the staff report were amended as follows:

1. That the City of Guelph Housing Pledge to facilitate the construction of 18,000 units by 2031, attached as Attachment 1, as amended, be approved; and
2. Notwithstanding current actions, or new actions undertaken by the municipality to support this pledge, that Council recognize that meeting the housing target is subject to Provincial action, as identified by Attachment 1, to support and implement the Pledge.
3. That the City of Guelph call on the Province of Ontario to freeze changes in population targets and time horizons for 5 years to allow realignment of Master Planning to meet the needs of city residents, and to cease changes to the Planning Act to allow municipalities time to focus on approvals and issuing permits rather than reacting to changes in legislation.
4. That the Province be called upon to action and fund the third-party audit program as soon as possible in order validate and provide provincial funding to address the City of Guelph's growth revenue shortfalls created by recent legislation changes.
5. That the federal government collaborate on these issues directly with municipalities and with the provincial government
6. That the Mayor be authorized to submit the final Municipal Housing Pledge to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and those copied on March 1, 2023

Please find attached our housing pledge which outlines our commitment to work with your government and other identified partners to get more homes built faster. The pledge includes actions that Guelph will undertake and identifies recommendations for Provincial support. While Guelph remains committed to doing our part to meet the Provincially set housing targets, we recognize that this will require continued Provincial support and action as we have outlined in Attachment 1 City of Guelph Housing Pledge: By Guelph, For Guelph.

Should you have any questions, I encourage you to reach out to our Chief Planner at the City of Guelph at krista.walkey@guelph.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cam Guthrie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cam Guthrie, Mayor
City of Guelph

E mayor@guelph.ca
guelph.ca

Attachment 1 City of Guelph Housing Pledge: By Guelph, For Guelph

Cc: The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada; The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario; The Honourable Lloyd Longfield, M.P. Guelph; The Honourable Mike Schreiner, M.P.P. Guelph; The Honourable Ted Arnott, Speaker, M.P.P. Wellington-Halton Hills; The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure, and Communities; The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change; The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion; The Honourable Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation; The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health; The Honourable David Piccini, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; The Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Long-term Care; The Honourable Michael A. Tibollo, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions; The Honourable Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure; The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions; The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance; The Honourable Michael Kerzner, Solicitor General; The Honourable Jill Dunlop, Minister of Colleges and Universities; Mayor Drew Dilkens, Chair, Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team; Spencer Reid, President, Guelph and District Home Builders' Association; Ontario Big City Mayor's Caucus; Colin Best, President, Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

Attachment 1

City of Guelph Housing Pledge: By Guelph, For Guelph

Guelph's pledge

The City of Guelph is committed to facilitating the provision of new housing units. This commitment is evident through the City's Strategic Plan objective under Building our Future to help increase the availability of housing that meets community needs and the "We are home" key theme in Guelph's Community Plan. We agree that housing is a human right, and that housing should be affordable and attainable for all. The City also agrees that municipalities must work together in a collaborative effort with federal and provincial governments and other key partners including homebuilders and social services organizations in our community to create smart programs and policies that enable more people to obtain housing.

The following is the City of Guelph's pledge to facilitate the construction of 18,000 new homes by 2031:

Municipal policy and regulation initiatives to be led by the City

1. Official Plan: Municipal Comprehensive Review
 - The Minister's approval of the updated policies and land use schedules to meet population and employment forecasts to the year 2051, supporting the potential development of 29,205 housing units is essential to achieving the targets including the designation of strategic growth areas and increased heights and densities in the city.
2. Approval and implementation of secondary plans:
 - Guidelines in place to support the implementation of the Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan which has the potential for 3,290 housing units.
 - Minister's exemption of appeals to the Clair Maltby Secondary Plan which is Council approved to allow 16,300 people and 1,250 jobs, and 7,150 units.
 - Minister's approval of the Downtown Secondary Plan Official Plan Amendments (OPA), through OPA 80, with recent revisions to support the achievement of a density target of 150 persons and jobs by 2031, 175 residents and jobs to 2041 and 200 residents and jobs by 2051.
 - Initiation of the boundary adjustment secondary plan or equivalent process for the Dolime lands boundary adjustment to provide for housing for an anticipated 5,000-7,500 people.
3. Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw Review
 - The City to finalize a new zoning bylaw that pre-zones properties, increases heights and densities in accordance with the Official Plan, removes exclusionary zoning and promotes intensification.

4. Additional dwelling units

- Permissive regulations are in place that promote intensification within neighbourhoods allowing for this form of housing which currently represents 20 per cent of annual new housing unit creation since the permissions were provided for in 2020.

5. Streamline the development approvals review process

- Applying LEAN principles to the development review process to improve efficiency and processing timelines.
- Implementing technological improvements (e.g., digital development plan review and markup tool and upgrades to permitting system).
- Enhancing the pre-consultation and pre-submission process to provide clarity and certainty to applicants.
- Prioritizing and streamlining application process for supportive and affordable housing projects including those that have Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation or federal funding support.
- Remove redundancy on departmental comments and overlap between Zoning Bylaw Amendment and Site Plan applications.
- Focus planning application comments to specific policy requirements.

6. Infrastructure and servicing

- Increase human resources to deliver capital projects consistent with the City's Capital Program Resourcing Strategy and committing new and existing human resources to deliver capital infrastructure projects that provide essential services like water and wastewater needed for new housing and to keep existing services in a state of good repair, that maximizes the quantum of housing units that can be provided in a given area of the city.
- Review and update the City's 10-year capital forecast to incorporate recently completed master plans and determine any adjustments in capital project prioritization to support the acceleration of housing.
- Invest in the renewal of infrastructure in the downtown to support realization of the Downtown Secondary Plan.
- Rehabilitate land through brownfield renewal projects to support land supply for housing.
- Seek to improve utility locate turnaround timelines consistent with the goals of Bill 93 so that projects break ground faster.
- Communicate with third-party utility providers, such as telecommunications and hydro, so they are aware of Guelph's growth needs and can adjust their plans.
- Communicate with construction industry partners to ensure they are informed of the City's plan so they are able to plan how to support achievement of the housing goals.
- Continue to invest and build infrastructure to support all modes of transportation, consistent with the goals of the City's Transportation Master Plan with the assistance of federal and provincial partners.

- Complete a downtown parking master plan strategy that considers the planned growth in downtown Guelph and links to Guelph's Major Transit Station Area.

7. Financing

- Complete growth-related revenue bylaw reviews including a comprehensive Development Charge Study, Parkland Dedication fee review, water, wastewater and stormwater utility revenue model review and development application fee review in order to maximize City revenues to fund as much of the cost of infrastructure required for growth as possible, understanding that full cost recovery is not possible in all cases.
- Establish a process for front-ending agreements with developers for the prepayment of Development Charges or front-ending project funding for roads, water, and wastewater services to minimize debt requirements for the City and share in the financial risk of servicing these sites for anticipated development.
- Advocate for upfront funding from upper levels of government to finance the infrastructure required to service greenfield and intensification developments in order to share the financial risk of servicing sites for anticipated development and to reduce the capital cost of growth on both the property tax-payers and new home buyers of Guelph.
- Advocate for ongoing funding to support the associated growth required for transit.
- Review and update Community Improvement Plans to incentivize certain types of development consistent with the goals of the City's Strategic Plan.
- Perform an update to the City's debt forecast to understand growth financing capacity from a whole-city perspective.

8. Monitoring measures

- Continue to produce an annual monitoring report measuring number and type of units created and fulfill the data reporting requirements of the Minister with available data.
- Continue to post the monthly building permit report and share with the housing industry.
- Analysis of housing needs and opportunities through the Affordable Housing Strategy Update (scheduled for 2023-2024).

Guelph's requests of the Province to support this pledge

9. That the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing approve our Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) that is currently paused by the Minister and increase our population target from 203,000 to 208,000 as requested though the MCR work in OPA 80.
10. That the Minister exempt appeals of secondary plans and comprehensive zoning bylaws that account for increased population, densities, heights and end exclusionary zoning.

11. That the Province work with municipalities to open the discussion on a new long-term, permanent municipal funding strategy to fund critical growth-related infrastructure projects and until a new agreement is in place, ensure municipalities are made whole, dollar-for-dollar to eliminate the unintended consequences of revenue Development Charges reductions associated with Bill 23.
12. That the Province recognizes the risk to municipalities of servicing land for development without any guarantee of the timing or extent of that development and the associated collection Development Charges or property tax assessment growth and works with municipalities to provide upfront funding for infrastructure to mitigate this risk.
13. That provincial ministries, municipalities, developers, homebuilders and other community partners be held jointly accountable and the Province identifies annual targets for each group, along with agreed upon accountability measures and metrics put in place based on each partner's role in the homebuilding process.
14. That the Province look at review and permit issuance delays within their ministries (e.g., Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks) and mandate maximum response times, and the responsibility of developers and homebuilders to further coordinate the building of homes in a timely manner once development approvals are in place.
15. That the Province commits to building supporting institutions including schools, hospitals, daycares and long-term care facilities to support the provincially anticipated surge in population.
16. That the Province supports the associated funding of health care workers, paramedics, public health and social services to address the proposed increase in population.
17. That the Province addresses the shortage of parkland a municipality receives though development application changes under the planning act in order to ensure Guelph meets its provincial approved policies in the Official Plan for parkland in Guelph.
18. That the Province amend the Planning Act to re-instate bonusing provisions (former Section 37 – increased density, etc., provision bylaw), whereby permitting increased height or density in return for the provision of facilities or services.
19. That the province increases education and training spaces in the Guelph area to provide the highly-skilled talent that is needed for development and growth. Relevant programming includes professional services, engineering, skilled-trades and apprenticeships.
20. That the province provide additional investments for housing in municipalities with post-secondary institutions.

21. That the Province addresses supply chain shortages and gaps as well as interest rates and inflation that will impact the housing market and market decisions by homebuilders.
22. That the Province provides transportation network improvements to service growth by fast tracking two-way all day GO transit service, improvements to Highway 6 and construction of the new Highway 7 linking Waterloo Region to Guelph/Wellington and invests in interregional and local transit.
23. That the Province funds and expedites approval for necessary infrastructure including water supply, waste treatment plants.
24. That the Province approve the backlog of Municipal Class Environmental Assessments (EA) and reduce the administrative burden of EA's while still achieving the environmental protection goals of the Environmental Assessment Act.
25. That the Province waive the requirement for new municipally and privately initiated EA's that will provide housing infrastructure.
26. That the Province provide clear and consistent guidance with respect to Indigenous engagement and fund capacity requirements for Indigenous engagement in the EA process.
27. That the Province increases funding for affordable, accessible and supportive housing projects to address the critical shortage in Guelph which would include funding for new units as well as ongoing support services.
28. That the City of Guelph requests the Province of Ontario to prioritize investment in brownfield remediation in Guelph and across Ontario to fund the remediation and clean-up of municipally managed contaminated sites so we can unlock these lands for housing, economic development and other community needs.
29. That the City of Guelph requests the Province of Ontario donate provincially-owned surplus lands in the City of Guelph to be used for subsidized, co-op or non-profit housing.

Signed by,

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Cam Guthrie, Mayor
City of Guelph

E mayor@guelph.ca
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