

We are Guelph

Stronger Together

Labour, students, and community promoting a Guelph vision for and by community members.

We are Guelph community members united in our commitment to transparent, community-driven leadership that serves every resident.

Our guiding philosophy is investment in a future that meets Guelph's needs. We are dedicated to housing affordability, public safety, greening our communities, good jobs, reliable transportation and smart growth.

As a candidate for the City of Guelph, I recognize that the decisions made in the 2026-2030 term will shape our community for generations. I hereby pledge my commitment to the following pillars of leadership.

Candidate's note: I've answered every item, and added a short comment where a checkbox alone couldn't carry an honest answer. The comments are part of my answers. If my responses are published, I ask that the comments be published with them. Jon Christensen, Ward 5

Housing

Greening Our Communities:

	YES	NO
Net-Zero Commitment: Work collaboratively to reach Guelph's goal of becoming a net-zero carbon community by 2050	☒	☐
Accelerated Action: Reach Guelph's target of a 63% per capita reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 (against the 2018 baseline). <i>I support the goal. But the baseline year was 2018, eight years ago, and the city's own scorecard shows emissions have stabilized since then, not dropped. We were at 921,949 tonnes in 2018 and 917,927 in 2023. The 2030 target needs us at about 416,000. I'd challenge anyone checking yes on this box to show me the plan that gets there. Until it exists, I'll put the effort into the actions that cut the most emissions per dollar.</i> Source: Guelph's Race To Zero Community GHG Emissions, 2024 Environmental Sustainability Report (guelph.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024_ESR_COG.pdf)	☐	☒

	YES	NO
Green Building Standards: Advocate that all new municipal and residential developments comply with high-tier Green Development Standards. <i>Yes for city-owned buildings, where council actually has the authority. For private homes, the province took that power away from municipalities in 2025, so the advocacy belongs at Queen's Park and I'll make it there.</i> Source: Bill 17, Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025 (ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-44/session-1/bill-17)	☒	☐

Deeply Affordable & Green Housing

	YES	NO
Accessible Affordability: Prioritize mixed housing options where rent is capped at 30% of household income, with an emphasis on subsidized and deeply affordable accessible units. <i>I want more subsidized housing built, and I'll support the city's tools to get it, including fee waivers, city land and faster approvals. But I won't commit to rent caps before there's an overall plan that shows who builds, who pays, and who covers the gap between capped rent and real costs. Plan first, then rules.</i>	☐	☒
Densification: Growth that prioritizes sustainability and densification with a focus on walkable neighbourhoods near transit and services.	☒	☐
Green Standards: Mandate that all new developments meet Green Development Framework (GDF) standards to ensure long-term energy efficiency and lower utility costs for residents. <i>I like where this is going, and I'll support high standards on city-owned buildings today. But the framework isn't finished, the province passed a law in 2025 barring cities from mandating standards above the Building Code, and developers are suing Toronto over exactly this right now. Checking yes here signs Guelph up for an expensive lawsuit of its own, when patience will tell us for free whether cities even hold the power. Let Toronto's case land first.</i> Source: Bill 17, Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025 (ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-44/session-1/bill-17)	☐	☒

Dignity in Basic Needs

	YES	NO
24/7 Safe Shelter: Ensure reliable, around-the-clock access to safe shelter and three nutritious meals a day for every resident in need. <i>Nobody in Guelph should sleep outside or go hungry. We need more social housing and shelter capacity, and I'll support every serious effort to build it. But shelters and social housing are funded through the County and the province, so this only works if every level of government shows up. I'll be loud about making sure they do.</i> Source: the County of Wellington is the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager for housing and homelessness for both the County and the City of Guelph (wellington.ca/programmes-services/housing-services-supports/about-wellington-guelph-housing-services)	☒	☐
Immediate Support: Maintain and expand emergency community grants to bridge service gaps for daytime drop-in spaces and food security. <i>Maintain, yes. The daytime drop-in and the winter emergency grants worked. Expansion gets decided in each budget on the evidence, like everything else.</i>	☒	☐
Public Safety: Champion safety initiatives that ensure a secure environment for every neighborhood and every community member.	☒	☐

FOOD

Urban Agriculture & Sustainable Food Systems

	YES	NO
Community Garden Incentives: Promote and create incentives for apartment, commercial, and municipal buildings to utilize rooftops and planter boxes for community food gardens.	☒	☐
Sustainable Infrastructure: Promote the integration of urban food production into smart growth planning to enhance local food resilience and reduce transport emissions.	☒	☐

Scaling Food Sovereignty & Support

	YES	NO
Expansion of The SEED: Support an increase in funding for The SEED's sliding-scale grocery programs, which allow residents to pay what they can afford to ensure high-quality food access for all. <i>The SEED's sliding-scale model is smart and it works. City funding decisions belong in the open grant program, where 76 organizations compete fairly, and I'd welcome their application there.</i>	☒	☐
Neighbourhood Dining Halls: Support the expansion of the Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition (GNSC) to establish neighborhood dining halls in every ward, providing meals at cost through a community house model.	☒	☐
Surplus Food Recovery: Support strengthening networks between grocery stores and community service providers to redirect surplus food to those in need.	☒	☐

Employment

Protecting Vital Resources & Reclaiming Public Services

	YES	NO
Water Sovereignty: Pledge to fiercely oppose the privatization of our local water supply and systems, ensuring they remain a protected, publicly owned resource.	☒	☐
Opposing Privatization: Resist the contracting out of essential municipal work, ensuring services remain accountable to residents rather than profit margins.	☒	☐

	YES	NO
Municipalizing Waste: Work to keep city composting operations under direct municipal jurisdiction and to have city works operate them; establish clear, mandatory bylaws for composting and waste sorting to ensure 100% community participation. <i>I want the composting facility to stay in public hands, and I take that seriously. But the operating contracts expire in 2028 and council decides next year with real numbers in front of it. I won't pre-decide that before the business case exists. And while I support better waste sorting, I'm not sending bylaw officers to fine residents over their green bins.</i> Source: GuelphToday, June 16, 2026, "City weighing its options for organic waste processing" (guelphtoday.com/local-news/city-weighing-its-options-for-organic-waste-processing-12421752)	☐	☒

Economic Stability & Quality Employment

	YES	NO
Secure Jobs: Promote a Guelph's "Living Wage" city by prioritizing secure, high-quality municipal employment and supporting local businesses that provide stable jobs, and tying new business approval and city-issued development incentives to a commitment to pay all employees a Guelph living wage. <i>Yes to the living wage goal, and to costing out certification for the city's own workforce, which is the part council actually controls. One correction though. Cities legally can't tie business approvals to wages. That power sits with the province. Where the city hands out its own incentive dollars, wage commitments are a fair conversation.</i> Source: wages are regulated provincially under the Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ontario.ca/laws/statute/00e41)	☒	☐
Local Resilience: Support a "Guelph-First" procurement policy that aligns with the provincial Buy Ontario Procurement Directive, ensuring municipal bids for goods and services prioritize local, provincial, and Canadian suppliers.	☒	☐

Sustainable Jobs & Energy Future

	YES	NO
Community Energy Initiative (CEI): Commit to the Guelph Community Energy Initiative as a driver for the "green-collar" economy, creating stable, well-paying jobs in renewable energy and building retrofits.	☒	☐

	YES	NO
Protecting Worker Rights: Uphold and protect the rights of all workers, supporting fair labour practices and safe working environments as core components of Guelph’s economic identity.	☒	☐

Transportation

Reliable & Equitable Transportation

	YES	NO
Modernizing Transit: Support a free, accessible, and safe transit system with optimized routing to reduce traffic congestion and carbon emissions. <i>I'm a strong supporter of transit, and the targeted free programs for kids, teens, seniors and low-income riders make transit affordable for the people who need it most. I'd keep them. But fully free fares would cost on the order of \$10 million a year in lost fares, based on today's ridership and fares, which is roughly a 3 percent tax increase on its own. The city's own review also found the free pilots didn't grow overall ridership. I'd rather put those dollars into more frequent, more reliable service.</i> Sources: GuelphToday, Sept 26, 2025, "Free Guelph Transit programs fail to increase overall ridership" (guelphtoday.com/local-news/free-guelph-transit-programs-fail-to-increase-overall-ridership-11265428); Guelph Transit fares effective January 1, 2026 (guelph.ca/living/getting-around/bus/fares-and-passes)	☐	☒
Equitable Growth: Work to ensure that service expansion—from snow clearing to transit frequency—is distributed fairly across all neighbourhoods, meeting the unique needs of every ward.	☒	☐
Advocate for reliable bike and walking lanes/trails that are maintained year-round. <i>The best cities on the planet have great, well-maintained bike lanes. But last winter's \$650,000 debate turned into pro-bike versus anti-bike with no usage numbers on the table. Every city program needs a stated goal and a tracked return, and the return doesn't have to be dollars. It can be riders, trips, or roads people can finally get to. Count it, publish it, and let the results drive the investment.</i>	☒	☐

Taxation and accountability

	YES	NO
Lobby to increase Federal & Provincial financial support to municipalities, instead of increasing property taxes and fees to cover shortfalls and downloading of service provisions	☒	☐
Ensure value, quality, and transparency in tax spending through an open review process that engages all community members in defining Guelph's priorities and needs.	☒	☐
Direct city staff to create a vote dashboard that records councilors' votes. <i>I wanted this to exist so much I already built one. This year I published a searchable tool for council voting records. Staff can have everything I built as a head start.</i>	☒	☐

NAME:	Jon Christensen	WARD#/ Mayor	Ward 5
Signature			