

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.

My Approach to These Commitments

The main concern I have heard from residents, and particularly from many residents in Ward 5, is the rising cost of living and, of course, high property taxes. While higher taxes are sometimes necessary to maintain and improve municipal services, I am very concerned that the property tax burden is not equitable. Unlike an income tax, property tax is not directly tied to a person's income or ability to pay. This can create a particular burden for homeowners who are asset-rich but income-constrained, including seniors on fixed incomes, as well as lower-income households and working families. It is sometimes suggested that homeowners who cannot afford rising property taxes can simply sell their homes. I don't believe that reflects the economic reality facing many Guelph residents. People still need somewhere to live, and selling a home in a high-cost rental market does not eliminate that housing expense—it can simply replace one rising cost with another. For seniors and others who have lived in their homes for many years, selling may also mean giving up housing security and a community in which they have established their lives.

I am philosophically supportive of the underlying goals of the initiatives outlined below. However, as a candidate for City Council, I have a responsibility to balance those goals against what the City can realistically afford and the impact that additional costs will have on residents. If we are not mindful of this, we risk creating a vicious cycle: higher taxes and fees place greater financial pressure on residents, creating more economic vulnerability and, in turn, increasing the need for additional municipal support. My approach would therefore be to look for practical, sustainable and measurable ways to achieve these objectives while protecting residents from unnecessary financial pressure. Where possible, I would also favour growing Guelph's economic and revenue base and leveraging outside sources of funding rather than relying primarily on increased property taxes.

Supporting our community and being fiscally responsible are not opposing goals. I believe responsible financial management is itself a form of social responsibility, particularly toward those residents who have the least ability to absorb additional costs.

Housing

Greening Our Communities:

Net-Zero Commitment: Work collaboratively to reach Guelph's goal of becoming a **net-zero carbon community by 2050**

I support Guelph working collaboratively toward its long-term net-zero goal. Environmental responsibility and fiscal responsibility can work together when we prioritize practical, measurable and cost-effective solutions. We should pursue emissions reductions while considering the impact of policies on residents, particularly those on fixed or lower incomes who have less ability to absorb higher costs.

Accelerated Action: Reach Guelph's target of a **63% per capita reduction** in GHG emissions by 2030 (against the 2018 baseline).

I support reducing GHG emissions and working toward Guelph's long-term environmental goals, but I cannot commit to a specific 63% reduction by 2030 without understanding the costs and measures required to achieve it.

Green Building Standards: Advocate that all new municipal and residential developments comply with high-tier Green Development Standards.

I support advocating for energy-efficient and environmentally responsible development. But I do want to balance that with making housing more affordable for lower-income households and families.

YES

NO

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Deeply Affordable & Green Housing

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 strongly support increasing the supply of affordable, accessible and deeply affordable housing. However, I cannot commit to a specific 30%-of-income model without understanding the long-term subsidy and operating costs. I would prioritize increasing housing supply, reducing unnecessary barriers to development and targeting **rental assistance** toward residents with the greatest need, while ensuring that programs remain sustainable.*

Densification: Growth that prioritizes sustainability and densification with a focus on walkable neighbourhoods near transit and services.

I support well-planned densification, particularly in areas close to transit and services. More efficient use of existing infrastructure can help control the long-term cost of providing municipal services. Growth should, however, be matched with adequate transportation, utilities, parks and other community infrastructure.

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 support energy-efficient and environmentally responsible development, but I do not support mandating the highest-tier standards for every development regardless of cost.

My main affordable housing plan is to partner with upper levels of government to get the University building student residences in a sustainable manner. My full plan is given here:

<https://gregcawsey.substack.com/p/a-smarter-affordable-housing-plan?r=e5w5a>

YES

NO

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Dignity in Basic Needs

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 believe every resident experiencing homelessness or crisis should have access to a safe place to stay and necessities. This is an area where effective municipal and community investment can make a meaningful difference. Programs should be delivered efficiently, with appropriate accountability and partnerships to ensure public resources achieve the greatest possible benefit.

Immediate Support: Maintain and expand emergency community grants to bridge service gaps for daytime drop-in spaces and food security.

I support targeted emergency assistance where it addresses genuine gaps in services such as food security and daytime supports. Funding should have clear objectives, accountability and regular review so that limited public resources are directed where they are most effective.

Public Safety: Champion safety initiatives that ensure a secure environment for every neighborhood and every community member.

Public safety is a fundamental responsibility of municipal government. Every resident should feel safe in their home and neighbourhood. I support directing municipal resources toward measures that demonstrably improve safety and provide good value to the community.

YES

NO

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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.	☒	☐
<i>I support practical, low-cost initiatives that encourage the productive use of existing residential, commercial and municipal spaces. Community gardens can contribute to food security and community resilience without requiring significant new municipal spending.</i>	☒	☐
Sustainable Infrastructure: Promote the integration of urban food production into smart growth planning to enhance local food resilience and reduce transport emissions.	☒	☐
<i>I support considering urban agriculture and local food production as part of smart-growth planning.</i>	☐	☐

Scaling Food Sovereignty & Support

	YES	NO
Expansion of The SEED: Support an increase in funding for <u>The SEED's sliding-scale grocery programs</u> , which allow residents to pay what they can afford to ensure high-quality food access for all.	☐	☒
<i>I strongly support food security and ensuring that residents can access nutritious food. However, I cannot commit to increased funding for a specific organization without knowing the funding required, measurable outcomes, accountability and whether other partnerships or approaches could achieve the same objectives more effectively. I believe we need to protect programs that help people in need while also protecting residents from unnecessary increases in taxes and fees.</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.

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I support initiatives that address food insecurity and strengthen neighbourhoods, but I cannot commit to establishing a dining hall in every ward without understanding the capital, staffing and ongoing operating costs. I would support evaluating community-led pilots and partnerships where there is demonstrated need and a sustainable funding model. Main concern is that property tax, which is not tied to income can deliver an inequitable tax burden on the economically vulnerable.

Surplus Food Recovery: Support strengthening networks between grocery stores and community service providers to redirect surplus food to those in need.

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I support strengthening connections between businesses and community organizations so usable food reaches people rather than going to waste. This is a practical way to improve food security and make better use of existing resources without placing significant additional costs on residents.

Employment

Protecting Vital Resources & Reclaiming Public Services

Water Sovereignty: Pledge to fiercely **oppose the privatization** of our local water supply and systems, ensuring they remain a protected, publicly owned resource.

YES

NO

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I support keeping Guelph's water system publicly owned. Water is essential infrastructure, and public ownership provides direct accountability to residents.

NO

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.

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I support good-quality employment, fair treatment of workers and businesses that provide stable jobs. However, I do not support making a specific wage level a condition of business approvals or development incentives. Such requirements could increase costs or discourage investment, which can ultimately affect employment opportunities and the affordability of goods and services. I would rather focus on creating an environment where businesses can grow and compete for workers.

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.

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I support using municipal procurement to strengthen Guelph's local economy wherever permitted by applicable procurement rules. Local businesses should have meaningful opportunities to compete for City work.

	YES	NO
Community Energy Initiative (CEI): Commit to the <u>Guelph Community Energy Initiative</u> as a driver for the "green-collar" economy, creating stable, well-paying jobs in renewable energy and building retrofits. I support energy efficiency, building retrofits and opportunities to grow Guelph's green economy. However, I cannot commit to a specific initiative without understanding its costs, funding model and measurable environmental and economic returns. I would support investments that demonstrate clear value rather than placing additional costs on residents without a clear benefit.	☐	☒
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. <i>Safe working environments and fair labour practices are fundamental to a healthy local economy.</i>	☒	☐

NAME:	Greg Cawsey	WARD#/ Mayor	5
Signature			