

Friday, February 11, 2022

**Sent via email to [submissions@ontario.ca](mailto:submissions@ontario.ca) and [Minister.fin@ontario.ca](mailto:Minister.fin@ontario.ca)**

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy  
Minister of Finance  
Government of Ontario  
Frost Bldg S 7th Flr, 7 Queen's Park Cres  
Toronto, ON M7A 1Y7

**RE: City of Guelph 2022/23 Ontario Provincial Pre-Budget Consultation Submission**

Dear Minister Bethlenfalvy,

The City of Guelph welcomes the opportunity to provide comments as part of the pre-budget consultation process in advance of the 2022/2023 Ontario budget.

The City applauds the province's leadership over the last year. Together, we've made great strides towards fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and the secondary impacts it has had across our local community. Recent setbacks related to the emergence of the Omicron variant reinvigorate our desire to continue working collaboratively with you and your cabinet colleagues to enhance our resilience locally and to create prosperity for Guelph. Given the impacts of the pandemic on mental health and general wellbeing, it is also important that we continue discussions on supporting the recovery of our most vulnerable. We must also tackle supply chain issues and labour shortages linked to the pandemic that have had a considerable impact on housing prices, food costs and other increasingly expensive necessities of life.

Below you will find specific recommendations for the upcoming budget from the City of Guelph that focus on ensuring our municipality is future ready, and on increasing the resiliency of our local community.

**Powering our Future**

The challenges the latest lockdown has created for our local businesses are of deep concern to the City. Our small businesses and other hard-hit sectors of our economy need targeted support. Ontario has risen to the occasion in past waves of the pandemic by providing grants, rebates, and other supports to ensure business and industry survival. We encourage the province to continue these measures, and to continue the search for innovative investments to stimulate recovery.

Moving forward, the province should also invest in the business models and economic approaches of the future. The City's [Our Food Future](#) and [Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad](#) initiatives have demonstrated the value of the circular economy in reducing waste, addressing food precarity, promoting environmentalism and enhancing economic development. This area of work

continues to expand beyond the agri-food sector, creating new and innovative business opportunities ripe for provincial investment.

Our recommendations:

- ✓ Continue to provide comprehensive business supports in partnership with the federal government to stabilize our local economy, including support for small businesses, the non-profit, culture, tourism, hospitality and arts sectors, and the business support organizations that provide them with advisory services
- ✓ Invest in Guelph's circular economy to reduce waste in our landfills and to address food precarity, enhancing our city's position as Ontario's circular economy innovation hub

### **Sustaining our Future**

The City of Guelph has an ambitious corporate target of relying 100% on renewable energy by 2050. Our community also aspires to be carbon neutral by this same time frame. Local innovation and action is key in driving this change but municipalities cannot do it alone: provincial investments can accelerate the transition to a green and sustainable future. The province should also focus on brownfield remediation. Investing in the remediation of contaminated sites can unlock land for growth, economic development and housing across the housing spectrum.

Our recommendations:

- ✓ Invest in green municipal innovation towards a carbon neutral future by 2050, including the green, energy efficient components of new municipal community buildings and retrofits
- ✓ To advance Ontario's Environment Plan, create incentives for residents and local businesses to adopt green, energy efficient technologies
- ✓ Create a dedicated funding opportunity for the remediation of contaminated sites to unlock these properties for housing development

### **Navigating our Future**

The City of Guelph recognizes the importance of having a strong local public transit system as well as the economic development benefits associated to enhanced interregional connectivity.

Our recommendations:

- ✓ Continue emergency funding supports for hard-hit transit systems like Guelph Transit until ridership recovers
- ✓ Increase interregional transportation by expanding Metrolinx bus routes connecting Guelph to neighbouring cities, with a focus on increasing express routes to Waterloo Region and Toronto to address service gaps, including those created by the closure of Greyhound

- ✓ Continue investments to improve highways 6 and 7 to enhance interregional connectivity and increase the movement of people and goods
- ✓ Continue to invest towards Connecting the Corridor to ensure All-Day Two-Way GO Train Service along the Kitchener Line is a reality by 2025

### **Working Together for our Future**

COVID-19 continues to create significant fiscal challenges for the City of Guelph that are exacerbated by lockdowns, capacity limits, and other public health measures essential in helping us fight the pandemic. Given these fiscal impacts, we urge the provincial government to work with the federal government to create a successor agreement to Safe Restart to help municipalities maintain a balanced budget without service reductions. It is also critical that the province continue ongoing investments to the Social Services Relief Fund given the impacts the pandemic has had on vulnerable community members and the increased demand we're seeing in our community for emergency and supportive housing, and other essential services.

The pandemic has also led to an increase in mental health challenges in our community. That is why we urge the province to invest \$1.5M to pilot a 24/7 Integrated Mobile Police and Crisis Team (IMPACT) program in Guelph. Currently the service stops running from midnight to 8 am, creating a service gap. We estimate that a \$1.5M investment would save the Guelph General Hospital \$3.6M by diverting individuals in crisis from the emergency room and connecting them to the mental health supports they need. Investing in IMPACT will also reduce intrusive police apprehensions and enable our officers to better respond to community needs.

Our recommendations:

- ✓ Pilot a 24/7 Mobile Crisis Intervention Team in Guelph by investing \$1.5M towards the joint Guelph Police Service and Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo-Wellington IMPACT program while also investing additional provincial dollars to increase the general capacity of the local mental health continuum of care in Guelph
- ✓ Negotiate a successor agreement to Safe Restart with the federal government to protect municipal services and property taxpayers in 2022 until revenues fully recover from the COVID-19 pandemic
- ✓ Continue to support our most vulnerable through ongoing investments to the Social Services Relief Fund

### **Building our Future**

Investing in critical municipal infrastructures will be an important tool in the provincial government's toolkit as we look to recover from the economic impact of COVID-19. Not only will these investments address the infrastructure backlog and help build the Guelph of tomorrow: funding for infrastructure will also create good jobs across the employment spectrum when Ontarians need them the most.

The City welcomes recent provincial investments in the new Streamlining Development Approvals Fund aimed at helping municipalities address barriers to get more housing supply on the market. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with both the province and the federal government to get more affordable housing online. The province's \$1.75M investment in Guelph will be critical in helping us improve our local development approval process.

On long-term care, the City calls on the provincial government to invest in new beds in our community, while also continuing ongoing programs aimed at addressing staffing shortages in long term care homes. Notably, we also welcome the recent provincial announcement to increase the number of beds in the Elliott Community, the City's arms-length municipal long term care facility.

Our recommendations:

- ✓ Invest in critical municipal infrastructure to stimulate local economic recovery, including funding for libraries, community centres, operational municipal buildings, and inclusive public spaces
- ✓ Continue to work collaboratively with municipalities, the federal government, and the development community to rapidly increase housing supply and to reduce barriers to getting shovels in the ground
- ✓ Continue to expand the number of long-term care beds in our community
- ✓ Enhance and continue provincial programs and investments aimed at increasing the long-term care workforce with a focus on helping municipal homes address labour attraction and retention challenges

Thank you for the opportunity to share our recommendations for the upcoming provincial budget. Should you have any questions, I encourage you to reach out to Leslie Muñoz, Manager, Policy and Intergovernmental Relations for the City of Guelph at [leslie.munoz@guelph.ca](mailto:leslie.munoz@guelph.ca).

Sincerely,



**Cam Guthrie, Mayor**  
**City of Guelph**

E [mayor@guelph.ca](mailto:mayor@guelph.ca)  
guelph.ca

C Scott Stewart, CAO, City of Guelph; Mike Schreiner, MPP for Guelph; the Honourable Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure; the Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Honourable David Piccini, Minister of

the Environment, Conservation and Parks; the Honourable Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions; and the Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Long-Term Care.