

Renata E. Mares – Personal Statement

Who I Am

As a long-time Guelph resident (since 1996), a public health leader (public health nurse since 2008), and an advocate for inclusive, forward-thinking communities, I am honoured to seek your support as a candidate for City Councillor in Ward 6. My vision is deeply aligned with the City of Guelph's 2024–2027 Strategic Plan, and I am committed to building an inclusive, connected, and prosperous city where we look after each other and our environment.

A Proven Record of Leadership and Service

My professional journey spans continents and communities, from leading public health initiatives in Northern Canada (Ontario, Nunavut, Yukon) and internationally (Australia, South Africa, Uganda and Europe) to serving as a founder and innovation coach here in Guelph. I have built and led diverse teams, managed multi-million-dollar public health programs, and delivered education at leading Canadian institutions. My work as a public health nurse, educator, and systems consultant has always been rooted in service, integrity, and a commitment to equity. These values first instilled by my parents and as an active citizen of Guelph.

I learned English at Willow Road public school, when my family immigrated to the city in 1996 (refugees from Romania and immigrants from Hungary). I graduated from John F. Ross high school and received my very first pay cheque from the City of Guelph, working as a lifeguard, camp councillor and swimming instructor. Once graduated from Western University, I returned to Guelph and worked as a public health nurse and an H1N1 emergency responder. These initial experiences in Guelph (and Europe) shaped my leadership journey internationally and across Canada.

Championing Guelph's Strategic Vision

The City's Strategic Plan calls for responsible, responsive public service and sets out ambitious goals across four themes: Foundations, City Building, Environment, and People & Economy. My experience and passion position me to advance these priorities:

- **Foundations:** I have led organizations through strategic planning, accountability, and innovation. As a board member for the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin, I understand the importance of sound governance, fiscal responsibility, and advocating for our city at every level.
- **City Building:** My background in systems design and community health equips me to address housing, transportation, and public spaces. I have managed complex logistics for large-scale public health programs and understand the importance of accessible, vibrant neighbourhoods. Co-operative housing initiative and grocery stores in Iqaluit and across Nunavut exposed me to solutions using diverse economic models to addressing complex and dynamic problems to modern times. Working across silos is key when building a well-being municipality and economy.
- **Environment:** As a nurse and member of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, I am committed to climate action and sustainability. I will empower our community to create a greener, healthier Guelph, supporting local initiatives that protect our natural spaces and promote active transportation. I will work with community members, my colleagues on Council and city staff to create a greener and healthier Guelph.
- **People & Economy:** My work with local and international partners (example: co-founder of women's microfinance groups in Uganda 2009-2019) has focused on building resilient, inclusive communities. I will champion economic growth, support small businesses, and ensure downtown Guelph is a welcoming

place for all. My teaching and mentorship roles reflect my dedication to lifelong learning and community well-being.

A Voice for Inclusion and Innovation

Guelph's strength lies in its diversity. As a multilingual professional (English, Hungarian, Romanian) and a founder of initiatives supporting marginalized groups (ex: women's microfinance groups in Uganda, carpentry program for waste management at the Correctional facility in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut), I bring a 'g-local' perspective and a deep commitment to inclusion. I have mentored future leaders through programs with the World Health Organization, McMaster University, Conestoga College, and All Tech is Human, and I am passionate about bridging the digital divide, ensuring everyone in Ward 6 can access opportunities in our evolving economy.

Delivering Results for Ward 6

Ward 6 is a dynamic, growing part of Guelph, facing unique challenges and opportunities. I will:

- Advocate for improved housing options and affordable living.
- Support safe, efficient transportation and active mobility.
- Promote community health, wellness, and access to services.
- Foster partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and residents to strengthen our neighbourhoods.

Accountability and Engagement

Transparency and collaboration are at the heart of my approach. I will maintain open lines of communication, host regular town halls, and ensure your voice shapes the decisions that affect our ward. My track record (delivering on complex projects, mentoring emerging leaders, and building consensus) demonstrates my readiness to serve with integrity and accountability.

A Future-Ready Guelph

The City's recent progress (completing or advancing 77% of its strategic initiatives) shows what we can achieve together. As your councillor, I will build on this momentum, ensuring Ward 6 is at the forefront of innovation, inclusion, and sustainable growth.

I am ready to listen, to lead, and to work with you for a thriving Ward 6 and a stronger Guelph. Together, let's realize our city's vision for an inclusive, connected, and prosperous future.

Submitting with gratitude,

Renata E. Mares, MIPH, BSN, BAKin, RN, WHO IM

Candidate for City Councillor, Ward 6
Guelph, Ontario

Let's build an adaptive future of Guelph, together.