

3 July, 2020

The Honourable Steve Clark  
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
College Park 17th Flr, 777 Bay St  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

The Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria  
Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction  
Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade  
7th Flr, 56 Wellesley St W  
Toronto, ON M5S 2S3

Dear Minister Clark and Minister Sarkaria,

**RE: Proposals to Make Municipal Governments Simpler, Faster and Better**

Consistently modernizing the way we do business is critical in making sure municipal governments like the City of Guelph continue to grow, adapt and evolve. Focusing on solutions that eliminate red tape and make municipal governments more cost efficient is particularly imperative as we enter the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you know, municipal governments have been hard hit by the COVID crisis. Locally, the City of Guelph has taken on new expenses to protect the health of our residents and businesses. We have also seen a significant decline in revenues. While economic stimulus supports from the provincial and federal governments will be important to help cities like Guelph on the road to recovery, it is also important that we consider changes that will help local governments operate more cost-efficiently. Below you will find legislative and regulatory proposals for your consideration that aim to do just that.

**Advance Central Digitalization of the Assessment Roll**

Under *the Assessment Act*, the Assessment Roll as returned must be made available by the City of Guelph for public inspection during normal office hours. The current options for doing this are outdated, rely on high contact surfaces and do not allow for proper physical distancing during the COVID pandemic. This provides an opportunity to modernize how members of the public access the Assessment Roll moving forward.

The City of Guelph recommends that full access to the Roll as returned be made available online through AboutMyProperty.ca or a similar online portal so that assessment information can be accessed without attending City Hall in person. This must be done in a way that ensures data mining cannot occur. A digital online portal for the Assessment Roll would also produce savings for the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation by reducing printing and mailing costs.

Solution: Modernize Subsections 39 (1) and (2) of the *Assessment Act*, 1990, to allow for the electronic delivery of the Assessment Roll, for the public, through

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[guelph.ca](http://guelph.ca)

the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation's 'Aboutmyproperty.ca' service or a comparable online portal.

### **Digitize the Freedom of Information Request (FOI) Process**

Regulations under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, 1990, require modernization to allow municipal governments to digitize the FOI request process. Digitizing FOI requests would improve services for the general public while allowing municipal governments to operate more efficiently and effectively. In particular, the fee structure outlined in O.Reg 823 requires updating to facilitate online transactions, digital disclosures and the collection of fees for these online services.

Solution: Update O.Reg 823 under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, 1990, by allowing online payment transaction fees and the collection of fees for the digital disclosure of requested records.

### **Extend Bylaw Powers Granted during COVID-19**

The City of Guelph supports the provincial government's decision to empower bylaw enforcement officers during the COVID-19 crisis. Enabling bylaw officers to request identification and to issue charges for minor provincial offences eliminated key barriers to effective bylaw enforcement. These powers should remain in place beyond the COVID-19 Declaration of Emergency.

Solution: Amend Part XIV of the *Municipal Act*, 1990, by adding a section granting municipal bylaw officers the power to request identification, where appropriate.

### **Continue Digitizing Reporting Requirements**

The City of Guelph welcomes the provincial government's ongoing efforts to reduce and streamline municipal reporting requirements. Outstanding examples of reporting requirements that could be streamlined through digitization include driver logs and training records.

Solution: Introduce necessary legislative and regulatory changes under the *Highway Traffic Act*, 1990, to allow for the digitalization of driver logs and training records.

The City of Guelph welcomes your consideration of these legislative and regulatory proposals. If implemented they will help municipal governments run more efficiently, allowing us to better serve our communities as we all adapt to the 'new normal' under COVID-19.

If you have any questions or comments, I encourage you to contact Leslie Muñoz, Manager, Policy and Intergovernmental Relations for the City of Guelph, at [leslie.munoz@guelph.ca](mailto:leslie.munoz@guelph.ca).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott Stewart', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Scott Stewart**, Chief Administrative Officer  
City of Guelph

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**C:** The Honourable Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance;  
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Government and Consumer Services;  
The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General of Ontario;  
Mayor Jamie McGarvey, AMO President;  
Trevor Lee, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Corporate Services, City of Guelph;  
Colleen Clack, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Public Services, City of Guelph;  
Kealy Dedman, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise, City of Guelph; and  
Jodie Sales, General Manager, Strategy, Innovation and Intergovernmental Services, City of Guelph.