

30 June 2020

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

Dear Minister Clark,

**RE:** Proposals to Support Municipal Recovery

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the City of Guelph has remained focused on providing essential services to the public in ways that are safe, accessible and affordable. As the crisis stabilizes and we transition to the 'new normal,' it is imperative that we continue to work together to identify solutions that make sense for the people of Guelph.

The City of Guelph continues to call on the province of Ontario to immediately provide municipal governments with robust stimulus supports to enable our economic recovery as we emerge from the pandemic. Financial relief from the federal and provincial governments will be necessary to keep cities afloat as our costs balloon and our revenues decline sharply in light of COVID-19. Supporting cities is crucial in making sure our local communities and economies are able to recover quickly from the COVID recession.

The City has also identified other provincial actions for immediate consideration that would support municipal governments as we transition to our new normal in upcoming weeks.

**Continue Enabling Electronic Participation in Council Meetings**

The *Municipal Emergencies Act*, 2020, has proven that electronic participation can make municipal government safer and more accessible to the public without compromising the integrity of local democracy and council business. Once the Declaration of Emergency expires, the province should continue to allow local councils and committees to convene electronically to protect against a second wave of infections.

**Solution:** Amend Section 238 (3.1) and (3.3) of the *Municipal Act* to allow electronic participation to count towards quorum and to allow electronic participation in closed door meetings outside of provincially declared emergencies as deemed necessary by local councils through their procedural bylaws.

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### **Extend the Validity of Marriage Licenses Issued by the City of Guelph**

The City of Guelph recommends that the province temporarily waive the 90-day period of validity on outstanding marriage licenses issued by the City that expired during the Declaration of Emergency. This would spare the City from having to fund and process refunds for affected residents, including fees already remitted to the province.

Solution: That Ontario pass a time-limited regulation extending the validity of marriage licenses that expired during COVID-19.

Thank you for considering these policy proposals from the City of Guelph. In the coming weeks, the City will continue to identify solutions that will make municipal governments simpler, faster and better as we transition to the new normal. I look forward to sharing these ideas with you.

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 stylized flourish at the end.

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

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CC the Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Government and Consumer Services; Jamie McGarvey, AMO President; Trevor Lee, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Corporate Services, City of Guelph; and Jodie Sales, General Manager, Strategy, Innovation and Intergovernmental Services, City of Guelph.