






**Adam A. Donaldson** @adamadonaldson

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Coming up at 6:30 pm, it's the first of 4 town halls hosted by Mayor Cam Guthrie. Stand by for updates!

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Do you have questions about the 2025 budget? Join Mayor Cam Guthrie at tonight's town hall meeting.




2025  
Budget

**Attention Wards 5 and 6**

Attend Town Hall on  
**November 4** to learn  
about the 2025 budget

November 4 | Salvation Army Citadel | 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
1320 Gordon St

2:01 PM · Nov 4, 2024 

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Mayor Guthrie begins. For the record, there about as many people here as there are city staff.



Guthrie says that this is a new process with the budget, which are now consider "mayor's budget". Council has the ability to amend it, and after that the mayor has option to veto, and then council can override the veto if there's 9/13 votes to do it.

Guthrie says he doesn't want to get to a veto.

Guthrie thanks staff for the all hard work to get to the under 4% goal, which is divided into 2 parts. That means the budget of the 7 local board and shared services ie; the police, library, public health, etc.

Guthrie notes that this is a draft, not a finished budget. He says he's doing it this way because he wants to hear from residents in order to make any adjustments. He also says he may not know an answer to someone's question tonight, fyi. But he will get an answer.

Acting treasurer Shanna O'Dwyer will present some of the highlights. She notes that this is the first confirmation year for a 4-year multiyear budget and reflects the priorities of council, staff and residents.

She notes that this budget update represents a significant shift from what was approved in 2025. A lot of the next bit of information was covered last week in the budget presentation meeting of council: <https://pub-guelph.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=53478>

Of primary focus in this budget: affordability, and then accommodating growth more housing. That second one means focusing on roads, pipes and similar infrastructure. Unstable inflation has had impact and post-pandemic social challenges are another pressure.

Areas of the strategic plan have been paused or delayed as consequence, and other areas outside of immediate need or long-term risk have been paused or delayed too.

Also this year, there's now a fully funded capital budget and forecast, funding has been identified for all planned projects from all the various funding sources including DCs, grants,

debt financing and more.

Back to the mayor. He says they prioritised infrastructure, especially higher risk and supporting new housing. Still, this will impact the corporate asset management plan as other stuff takes lower priority.

Investment in fleet improvements will continue, meaning EVs for fleet and transit. There's also a pilot for free transit for high school students weekday evenings and weekends, plus seniors one day out of the week on Thurs.

Guthrie says that these pilots help support the move to affordability, because it will help out those users and it will also help develop taking transit as a habit for young people.

The inaction the median family for the changes in 2025 will go from \$28.40 per month and \$10.27 per month. It will also mean about \$50-\$60 in savings per month for small office buildings and small commercial buildings.

Guthrie says it's good and healthy to review services and costs and re-evaluate, you know, just like you do around the kitchen table.

Guthrie says that in order to meet the goal of getting the overall increase under 4 per cent, the City had to get under 2.63%. The current levy increase is 2.59.

Guthrie says that we "cannot mess with our water." He asked a lot of questions about that, especially after the surging in stormwater systems in Toronto and Burlington this summer.

Next steps:

Nov 13 - Guthrie has to sign off on the draft

Nov 19 - Public delegation night

Nov 27 - Amendments

Question: What was the City portion of tax levy impact in 2024? Staff are having to get that, but Guthrie says total impact was 8.52%.

Question: Why 4%? Guthrie says he felt was achievable if they looked at things in a different way and he wanted to give staff a lot of time to see if they can get there. He heard that 2024 increase was already tough to absorb so going bigger was "100% unacceptable".

Guthrie adds that there's still a climate of high inflation and high construction costs, and that the day of 2-3% increases are "definitely over."

Also, the City's portion last year was 3.17%.

Question about using Strong Mayor powers, why not work it out with council? Guthrie says that he didn't think council would agree to 4% though he agrees with the man's point that there's democratic questions about using the powers. He's trying to rebuild trust with colleagues.

Having said that, he has no regrets.

Question about transit plan delays, what impact? Guthrie says it was 10 year plan, now 13. He worked with staff to keep Sunday on-demand service. There were 2 new routes, including the Speedvale "spine" route, but due to bridge work that was delayed.

This is the chart with the tax difference:

City tax impact	2025 adopted	2025 update
Average monthly impact to the median single family detached residential homeowner	7.16%	2.59%
Approximate monthly impact to:		
Small office building		
A single tenant or owner-occupied office building under 7,500 sq. ft.	\$28.40	\$10.27
Small retail commercial building		
A one storey retail property under 10,000 sq. ft.	\$94.59	\$34.22
Standard industrial property		
Industrial property not identified by type or use	\$77.49	\$28.03
	\$312.37	\$112.99

Guthrie says that the changes push back the plan an extra 1-3 years. The other route delayed is the increased frequency for route #5.

Question: Why did Guthrie think council would disagree with him? He agrees that he should have talked to councillors in advance of doing it, but he says trust has to be rebuilt and he's been doing that. He's heard from all but one about budget changes.

Is a review of city staff done in terms reducing costs, and is there talk of a wage freeze? "Making staff lean and mean". Guthrie says that's always reviewed through gapping and doesn't automatically default to rehire. He adds most employees are unionised and have to respect that

Guthrie says that there's also a lot of attraction and retention issues in the municipal sector, hard to find good talent so they need to be able to compete with private sector. (This is an issue with all cities, he adds.)

Question about the extra \$18 million for streetscaping downtown approved in Sept. Guthrie says things are always fluid in the capital forecast, new funding opportunities arise, but there's never been cap. plan fully funded and gotta do work in 26/27.

DCAO Holmes says the money is over a number of years, and reinforces this is a one-and-done project. The questioner is asking what's being given up and Guthrie says it could just be that something is being shifted. Holmes says they prioritised all projects against the framework

Fun fact: The assessments have been frozen by ONgov since 2016, and that's why the media assessment is \$423k if every you feel that benchmark is out of whack.

Baker says look at the budget website under the capital tab , there's a lot of info about what was deferred and they tried to organise it by program.

Cllrs Dominique O'Rourke and Ken Yee Chew are going to take over and talk about Ward 6 biz: South End Community Centre, Orin Reid Park upgrades (splash pad, washrooms and picnic area)...

...and Gordon St improvements from Landsdown to Lowes. Not in the budget, but still pretty important is Clair-Maltby 2ndary plan, and staff are doing master environmental plan right now for servicing the area. Important because it's one of the last strategic growth areas in G.

Question: How are they widening Gordon when condos there are right up near the road? O'Rourke says bike lanes will be moved off road to a separated cycle track, so that will buy some space. Federal funds coming for that work.

O'Rourke says that there's also other moves in the Transportation Master Plan, getting people to make the modal shift from cars to buses and bike lanes. Improving transit and improving bike safety might make those modes more appealing for some trips.

Question: Why so much low density in the Clair-Maltby area? O'Rourke says much of it is high and medium density and 45% will be natural heritage, so density is pretty high for the area.

Back to Guthrie, and there's a question about his support for notwithstanding clause and the human rights concerns of the unhoused? Guthrie notes that council directed staff to engage with Tiny Home Coalition in effort to look for land. Also, still talking to County...

...nothing came back from City's call for proposed sites, but there was a lot of alignment with the GTHC, and they said they weren't ready to implement (which he's not saying to blame them)...

...There's a governance role in what the City does and what Wellington does. City could have land, but authority and operating costs from the County and there is some realistic and honest debate about whether that's the right tool...

...Guthrie says it's his view it is the right tool. He adds that there's 76 extra shelter beds coming, plus new supportive housing coming. People may be able to be helped with that added capacity, but some feel there's still a gap in this transition that tiny homes could meet.

He also adds that the federal gov't announced extra \$250 million coming for homelessness in April, and several mayors reached out to get more info in June. We're looking to double with province, but ONgov opted out. Are they working with feds now? Maybe, still don't know.

Next, why is so much money going to police when people are freezing to death? Guthrie says 90% of budget is people, and a growing city needs...

"A tank?" she says.

Guthrie says you can't like it, but they did pick it up for a cool \$20k.

Another question about the notwithstanding clause, why not ask for more funding?

I will say there seems to be some confusion about whether or not Guthrie has the power to use the clause.

Guthrie says that it's a provincial power.

The members of Downtown Friends are getting rowdy now saying that he was fighting for it all weekend.

Now there's kind of a fight between the people here to talk about the budget and the Downtown Friends. Guthrie says he's going to move on.

Question from a volunteer from the Tool Library, their budget was cut thru the CBA and wonders about all the small fish? Guthrie says the Tool Library is a priority for him and other councillors and there's good conversation what impacts these have.

Guthrie says this wasn't an exercise to save money, but it was about knowing where the priorities are. He can't think of another example though.

Royal City Mission, someone says.

Guthrie notes that this was one-time funding never in the budget to begin with.

Guthrie also points out that the City contributed \$450 to the Basic Needs Table, which, I should point out, has never been formally announced and we have no idea who's on it.

Another question about the Tool Library. It has a real impact for people who don't have a house with a garage or a shed, and as city looks to increase density, the Tool Library might become even more important. They improved infrastructure at Guelph Food Bank.

Without that funding, the Tool Library won't be around.

Guthrie calls on Kate Nixon. She notes that there's not enough shelter beds for everyone according to the ByName List and notes that Welcome Streets are impacted too. We have money to go into hefty legal battles, but no money for impactful programming.

Guthrie says Welcoming Streets is on his radar too, and there were a lot of issues with regards to data and metrics and we will be meeting with the head of CHC to discuss it. Also, some businesses feel that WS didn't have the impact they wanted.

Nixon asks if the DGBA directs the budget, b/c the metric is the people benefiting from the programs. Guthrie says he wants to hear this feedback, the DGBA does not direct the budget, but they have an equal voice. That's why he's looking to get those metrics.

Guthrie says that Brampton is taking a similar program out of their budget but he didn't get into why.

Nixon says she's deeply concerned about people being pushed to the margins.

Guthrie notes that 35% of the budget is out of the City's control and that not everyone on the list is in a tent, they're couch surfing.

"They're still unhoused, Cam," Nixon says.

Guthrie notes that there's an additional \$4 million in the social services budget this year, and we're probably \$1.2 million over budget. He says it's probably that police and social services increases are both coming in over 4% next year.

Next question: It's jaw-dropping what's been cut, and this woman was hoping to hear how it will impact people beyond the smaller tax increase. Also, what's the cost of deferring?

Guthrie asks if everyone in the room can agree that 10% is maybe too high. (There seems to be.) On the budget website it lists all the deferrals, but the questioner points out that she would like to see what the cost is more delay. Guthrie says 7-8% budget increases is unfair too

Guthrie says that's why we're having nights like this, to talk about needs. It's not 0 and it's not 10 so maybe we can meeting in the middle somewhere. Also, it's important to focus on what's doable, hence fully-funded 10-year capital plan.

It appears that we're wrapping up. Guthrie reminds everyone that there's a Facebook Live town hall tomorrow night at 6:30 pm.



That's a wrap!



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