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Coming to you live from Breezy Breakfast this morning as the mayor tackles another Budget talk. DCAO Trevor Lee is here too. Let's thread...

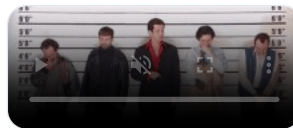


Breezy Breakfast starts at 8am in-person at [Shine Brunch and Dinner](#) on Macdonell.

Also here are

- DCAO Colleen Clack-Bush
- DCAO Jayne Holmes
- CAO Tara Baker
- Stephanie Devost, senior corporate financial analyst.

And, of course, all the Breezy peeps.



Opening thoughts: Guthrie says this is a draft, many things have come up in dialogues through town halls and folks on the street. He says that he's proud that staff have developed a fully funded capital plan. He heard the myb was "completely unaffordable" and "not sustainable"

He said that this was about setting a goal and then having a discussion about it. It's important for people to understand what council does and does not have control over, which is why the 7 local boards have been separated out.

Guthrie says that he's heard overwhelmingly so far this is a "very affordable" budget. Lee, reading off a statement, notes that this goal is to balance community needs and future planning, this is not a usual budget confirmation year.

Again, guidance for the budget:

- no more than 4% per the mayor
- balancing strategic priorities and affordability pressures
- focus on core work and community needs
- full funded capital budget
- local boards and shared services budget coming in January.

Unstable inflation have impacted costs, as have post-pandemic social challenges and a growing housing supply imbalance. This means some areas have seen delays and/or reduced investment outside the support of housing and regulatory needs.

Lee says the important thing to know about the capital budget is that there has to be enough money from various sources to cover the costs. There was never enough money to cover all capital plans, but now we're starting from a "realistic" place.

Cam says he's thankful that staff created a prioritisation framework in March, which was used as a filter to judge whether something made it in or out of the budget. The frame measured risk, whether there would impact to community, potential money from feds or ONgov...

...Also, alignment with strategic plan. Once filtered, we get the draft budget. What stayed in? South End Rec Centre, main library and downtown reconstruction. Dos pipes gotta go!

Guthrie says new downtown Guelph will be "slowed down", more pedestrian and tourist friendly, more walkable. Clair-Maltby area and Guelph Innovation District also priority areas.

Breezy moderator Rachel says there's lots of Qs on ride, but before that, asks about process of moving off \$billion-plus deferrals off the capital.

Lee says it was difficult, but he notes that this was not conceived without clarity about what the objectives were through strategic plans and other things. Guthrie adds that even w/o his SMP, the capital forecast last year was not fully funded.

Rachel says she's speaking more about the personal costs of cutting things, items like funding to the Tool Library, we're cutting things that matter to people. Guthrie notes that operating. Rachel asks if they were using same framework and Guthrie says yes.

Morgan asks about increases in parking, 15.5% versus decrease to transit capital. Clack-Bush says that's because of re-organization, parking office was moved from engineering to operations along with bylaw, so not an increase, just a shift.

Guthrie says there was a 10-year transit strategy, council stretched it to 13 and now it's being stretched further. 2 routes impacted: increased frequency to #5 and the dedicated Speedvale route.

More transit Qs: Why are transit improvements pushed out if affordability is important? Guthrie notes that he protested the pause on Sun on-demand rollout, and he's offering free rides to seniors and teens, so investments increasing, we're moving forward even if its not at speed.

Next Q: Why communications dept. increase, and why cut \$900k for the bicentennial?

Lee: This is another dept. shift, more responsibility in that dept. versus reduction in another dept.

Bicentennial. Guthrie says almost \$1 million was too much, but that's an "open and active discussion", plus there's a committee forming and their thoughts will help guide things, also, needs to be effort to look for corporate sponsorship to offset costs.

Guthrie says that he appreciates that there sometimes needs to be seed money, but he thinks they need a plan about what they want to do. He wants a celebration, we didn't want to put \$1 million in the budget today.

Breezy: He understands the financial, but someone needs to be in charge to celebrate all the Guelphiness. People have to be made aware this is coming and City has said boo.

Mike Ashkewe asks about budget items about accessibility and Indigenous relations, and honorariums for committees.

Guthrie says nothing on equity in the budget has been cut under intergovernmental relations.

On honorariums, Guthrie says that's part of the ACOC review, which is coming back to council in 2025.

Nick asks why a fully-funded budget wasn't developed first. Baker says it's about accounting systems and internal processes, noted that the forecast has never been fully-funded, but myb gave staff the capacity to make the move no longer budget planning year-to-year.

(Not sure why but "Fade Into You" is playing somewhere in the restaurant.)

Baker adds that the unfunded portions are still in the mix and the projects will be reviewed every year as things change.

How many hours went into re-working the budget? Baker says they're not re-working, they're doing the next sequence of work. Last year it was about baseline and this year was a refinement, but she doesn't think she can estimate.

Question: Wouldn't a more balanced approach be to mention all the things cut and deferred, because that's what's in people's minds?

Guthrie has the answer on his phone apparently.

Guthrie says the answers are on . He's looking for the exact place to look.



City budget

The budget is our plan to wisely manage your money and deliver the services important to you, your family and your community.

<http://guelph.ca/budget>

Question about the closed intersection at Woolwich/Speedvale and access from emergency services? Clack-Bush says they work closely with emergency depts on road closures, so there are always alternate routes planned out. No extra long delays b/c of that.

Clack-Bush also adds that bike lanes do not impede emergency response despite whatever "misleading" photos that you might have seen on social media.

Guthrie about the list of deferrals, he says it's broken by department

- life cycle replacement for some equipment deferred
- non-regulatory site investigation work
- climate adaptation plan
- digital enhancements
- modernization of guelphca

- restoration of Lyon Pool (though we could get grant)
- cultural plan
- some tourism initiatives
- development for long-term plan for Fire
- some growth enhancements in parks

Back to the 200th anniversary, Brian Holstein says he can't understand why the \$900k was left and then working to recoup. He says he's skeptical because John Galt Day was introduced and made BFD, and now it's a nothing burger.

Deferral on climate mitigation: Seems like a pretty big deal to defer this work, and part of a history of deferrals (possible reference to District Energy). Guthrie says we're still doing a lot on climate, but the best thing you can do is get more involved in active transport.

Guthrie adds that climate change is a lens when approaching any construction project, so it's about doing things that can have the most impact.

Mike Darmon of GCAT says all trail development is outside 10-year forecast, also asks about reduction on operations facility.

On the second one, Guthrie said that council made it clear that they wanted business case, and advanced scoping, and that's what they've been doing.

Holmes notes that there will be a report about that in mid-2025.

As for trails, Guthrie says it doesn't make sense to put some things in the budget today when the support or surrounding developments don't get completed for years. The capital budget now allows for easier re-allocations as circumstances changes.

Guthrie did make this clear, but I can't cut out of characters.



Not found

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Q: Do you feel this was successful, the 4%?

Guthrie: Yes

Q: Do you plan on accepting amendments?

Guthrie: We'll have to see, but he doesn't want to have to use veto.

Guthrie says his desire is to maybe add things to the budget before the draft deadline on Nov 13, but he's focused more on affordability challenges, and he thinks the community has appreciated that.

Q: Police and Social Services expected to come in over 4%?

Guthrie: Got no power, all they can do is ask, but that's his gut. He doesn't know the exact numbers, but if they stay the same, the board budgets will push total increase to 4.7% incl. the City's 2.59%

Guthrie says despite the \$4 million increase in 2024, there's likely going to be more required for social services. Same with his conversations with the police.

LIGHTENING ROUND!

Splitting off the boards?

-Guthrie stole that from Barrie, there's optics (council solely to blame) and makes electoral more informed, also sends signal to outside boards about City's efforts.

Circular economy and water?

-nothing in water cut, Tool Library is a top 3 issue in the draft budget, but there will be more funded added for that before the 13th.

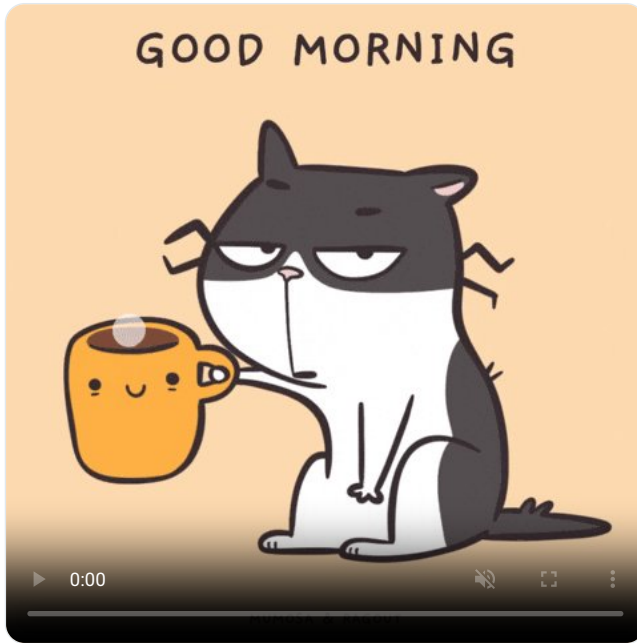
Buckthorn and invasive species?

-There are reduction in response times, and he's heard that those are front facing issues that might need more immediate addressing.

York Road?

-Last piece to Vic Road is getting done, no cuts in the budget and the project was rescoped in last year's budget. Also, council has applied for grant from ONgov since it's technically part of Highway 7.

Mayor Guthrie has left the building, and that's an end to this Breezy Breakfast!



@threadreaderapp unroll please!

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