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Apr 1, 2025 · 98 tweets · [adamadonaldson/status/1907128219444433392](https://twitter.com/adamadonaldson/status/1907128219444433392)

Coming up at 2 pm, it's this month's Committee of the Whole meeting (no foolin'!). Here's what's on the agenda:



**Committee of the Whole Preview – What's on the Agenda for the April ...**

April showers brings Committee of the Whole. No fooling, this meeting will have some pretty big financial implications, and some pretty small ones as well when the horseshoe tackles development deb...

<https://guelphpolitico.ca/2025/03/21/committee-of-the-whole-preview-whats-on-the-age...>

Mayor Guthrie calls the meeting to order.

On closed item - Bargaining Mandate Report Update Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 241 and 973 - Guthrie says they received info and gave direction. (Cllrs Caron and Downer sat out b/c conflict.)

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest or General Nature Thereof for the open session? Nope.

Regrets from Cllr O'Rourke today as she's on leave.

Staff recognitions this month:



Guëlph

## Amusement Device Mechanic, Amusement Ride (ADM-AR) certification and licensing requirements

**Brad Kelloway**  
Program Manager,  
Parks Infrastructure and  
Construction,  
Parks



Guëlph

## Completed a Certificate as a Project Management Professional (PMP) issued through the Project Management Institute.



**Janet Gerrath**  
Project Manager,  
Information Technology

First item: Debenture Issue Authority.

Presenting are:

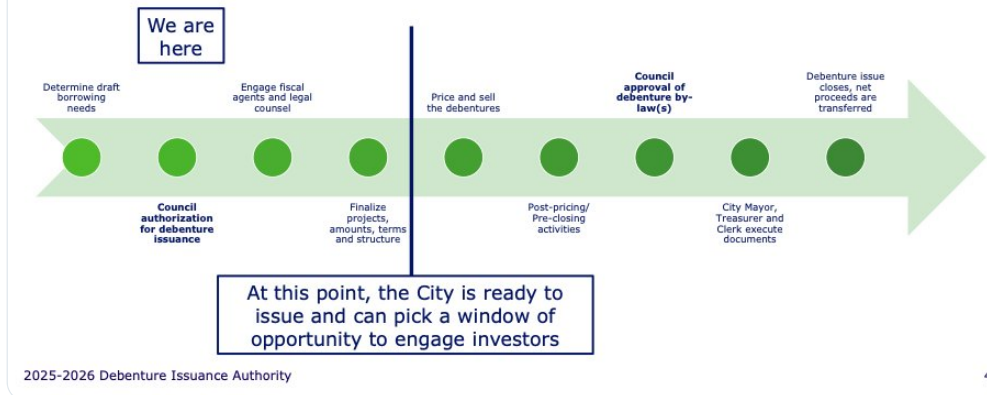
- Shanna O'Dwyer, GM Finance/City Treasurer
- Dylan Prince, Senior Corporate Analyst, Financial Strategy

The what? A debenture is a type of long-term debt instrument that is not backed by collateral. Debentures are backed only by the creditworthiness and reputation of the issuer. Both corporations and governments frequently issue debentures to raise capital or funds.”

Fun fact: The City has not issued any debt since 2021. Why now? 2 big projects: South End Community Centre and Baker District. Debt financing is cover a significant portion of the build. Staff need debenture issuance authority from council.

Timeline:

# The Debenture Issuance Timeline



Council will have to approve the debenture bylaw after it's closed, a few days before the documents are official executed. Cash flow and available investors will determine when exact the documents will be ready.

## Legislative restrictions:

- City can only issue debt of capital
- debenture can't exceed the lifetime of the project in question
- Can't exceed 25 per cent of a municipality's "own source revenue" i.e. user rates, fees and property taxes

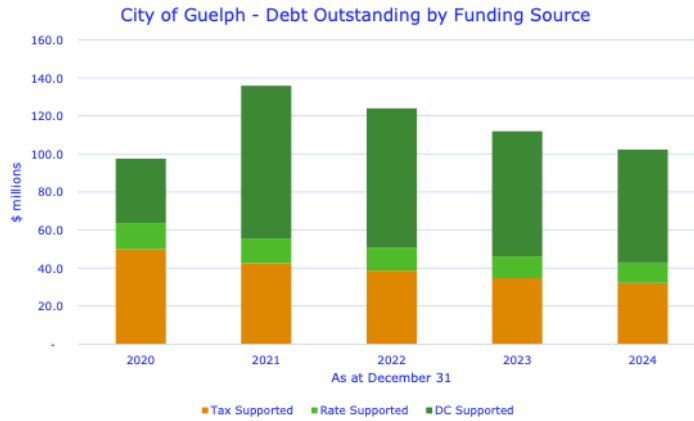
## Credit rating considerations:

- Grade given to bond issuers that indicates their credit quality
- Used by investors to assess investment risk
- The City has a AAA rating with S&P, the highest possible rating
- Allows the City to borrow at favourable rates

The City has a debt management policy to keep use of debt sustainable and maximised for these more long-term projects that pan-generational effects. Has additional guardrails to the ONgov legislation.

- Provincial limit for debt servicing costs is 25% of own source revenue – City actual is 4.1% in 2024
- Debt-to-reserve ratio of approx. 0.4 is well below the rating agency “ceiling” of 1.0
- Debt servicing costs represent only 2% of operating revenue

# Current Debt Outstanding

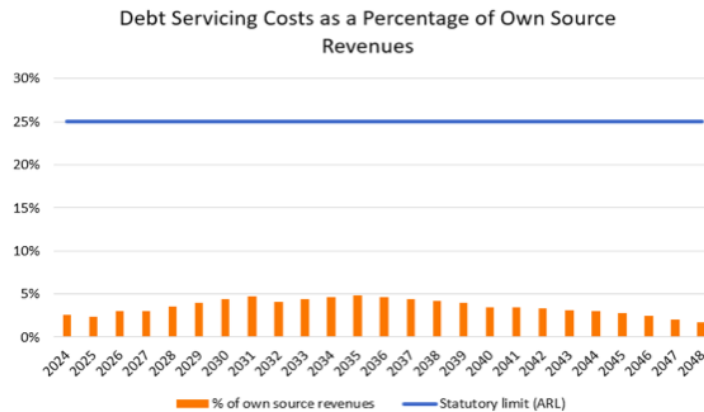


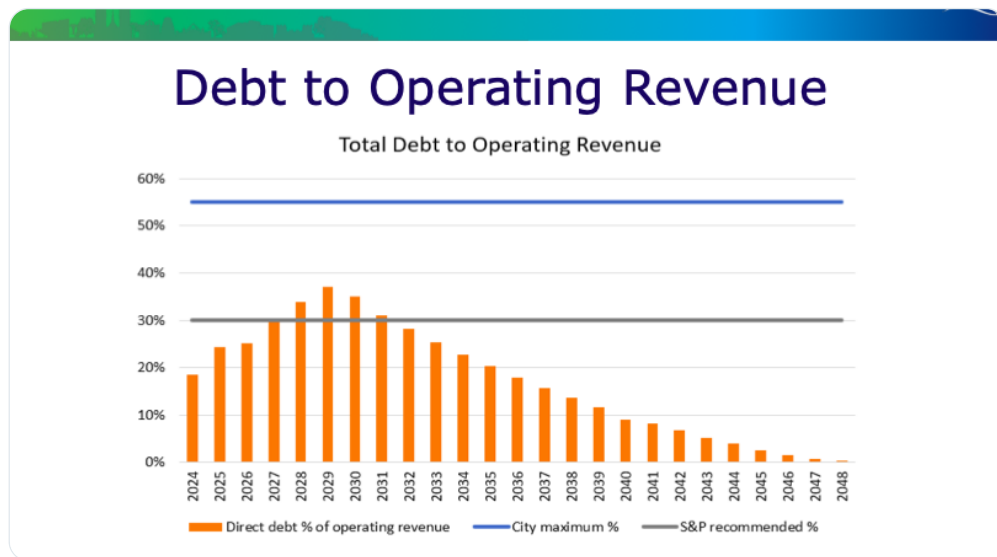
Projects we need debt financing for:

- South End Community Centre construction: 2025, \$39.4m
- Baker District Redevelopment projects: 2025 to 2027, \$53.8m
- FM Woods Station upgrade: 2027 to 2028, \$45.2m
- Guelph Transit and Fleet Services Facility: 2028, \$7.5m

Debt strategy: 1) Stat limit. 2) City max (top) and S&P recommendation (bottom):

## Debt Servicing to Own Source Revenue





2016 refinance is included in the authority request, otherwise the focus of 25/25 is Baker and SECC. Today's request is administrative since this was already accounted for in the budget.

Next steps:

- Final approval on Apr 23
- Meet with fiscal agent
- Fiscal agent engages a lawyer (WeirFoulds LLP) to provide a Legal Opinion on the planned debenture issue

Based on the market outlook and the anticipated cash requirements timing, dating, size and design of the issue will be decided on. Those issues include:

- the type of projects being financed
- the prevailing preferences of investors (i.e. term, pricing, structure, etc.)
- Market conditions – rates and rate projections, other issuers, geopolitical risks
- Council meeting dates (for approval of the debenture by-law)

Allt/Richardson move recommendation:

**Recommendation:**

1. That the capital projects identified in Table 1 of the Debenture Issue Authority report number 2025-160, dated April 1, 2025, be approved for debt financing in 2025 or 2026 in the amounts as listed.
2. That the City Treasurer be authorized to proceed with the marketing, through the City's fiscal agent, of the debenture issue(s) in the principal aggregate amount of not greater than \$118.15 million for terms not exceeding 20 years.
3. That the 2025 associated debt servicing costs be approved to be funded from the City's applicable capital reserve funds as outlined in accordance with Table 2 in the Debenture Issue Authority report number 2025-160, dated April 1, 2025.

Allt asks if the uptake on the debenture shows confidence in the City. Dave Berner from National Bank says that's right and there are a number of factors but AAA rating opens the door to a "broad stable" of investors.

Allt asks if there's any notion about impact from trade war. Berner says it starts with interest rates, and trade war as immediate impact on CDNgov credit yields but there's an "appetite" for robust debenture from Cdn municipalities.

Guthrie asks if there's an strategy about infrastructure funding in case there's opportunities from the upper levels of gov't? O'Dwyer says they're not ruling that out, but today's report is administrative and "closing a loop" from something already approved.

Guthrie says that the praise being heard for the City's fiscal maturity speaks for itself from endorsements like the one from Berner. Thanks staff for the hard work.

Next: Municipal Service and Financing Agreements Policy.

Presenting are:

-O'Dwyer

-Kevin Yaraskavitch, Senior Corporate Analyst, Financial Strategy

-Craig Binning, Hemson Consulting Limited

This is based on work council asked for in Oct '23. DCs are the primary funding source for housing-enabling infrastructure, things like roads and water pipes...

MSFAs are a way to accelerate residential infrastructure in order to make land ready to build homes faster. Essentially, the City will enter into agreements with developers to finance this type of infrastructure in the short term instead of waiting for the right moment fiscally.

How can we do this?!

The Development Charges Act (DCA)

Sec 27 –broadly permits City to enter into an agreement for the early or late payment of DCs.  
(cont'd)

-Section 38 -permits the City to allow a person to perform work related to the DC by-law and be provided a credit in accordance with an agreement. Credits are limited to the service(s) that the work was provided in.

-Section 44 –enables Front-ending Agreements.

Binning takes over. He says section 44 has broad appeal powers and is pretty prescriptive. Cities and developers both hate it, and hasn't seen it used in "a lot of years". Section 38 is more preferable and that's been used as the basis here.

Binning says that this is not dissimilar to the way the City handles parkland. In big developments, a lot of work on parks is done by the builder before the City takes over.

Potential Risks:

-The City may incur additional operating costs

-If less growth occurs in the development area, it can leave the City with services which may be under-used

-may create challenges in delivering all of the scheduled projects

-Risk of unclear terms, difficult admin

The risk was assessed and it was determined that there will be limited impacts under S&P since this is not rated debt.

Yaraskavitch takes over and notes that at the goal is accelerating housing and maintaining fiscal viability. It was set up to rely on the revenues generated as much as possible and encourages staff and developers to discuss options as soon as possible.

Initial Interest and General Provisions:

- Developer should consider whether any City infrastructure is required in advance
- Application request must be submitted to the City in accordance with the application procedure.
- Application process is designed to be progressive.

Mandatory Requirements:

- MSFAs are at the discretion of the City who's not obligated to approve any request, even if all criteria are met.

-To receive DC Credit, Developer must enter into a MSFA

(cont'd)

- Where more than one Developer is undertaking Eligible Works, the Developers must create a Developer trust and appoint a trustee.

2 ways to advance housing enabling infrastructure: -City-led: developer finances the early construction works, and the City delivers the project on the developer's schedule

-Developer-led: developer finances and delivers the works to the satisfaction of the City.

How developer gets repaid for financing project:

- DC Credits (w/ building permits)
- DC Reimbursements (paid based on share of DC collected in benefit area per Cap. Budget)
- Non-Growth Cost Reimbursement

The credit is based on the cost of the works as determined in the developer created and mutually agreed to Work Plan.

Delegated authority:

The City Treasurer may approve the agreement if all the below noted conditions are met:

- Project included in City's most recent DC Background Study
- Project included most recent Capital Budget.

(cont'd)

-Cost of the projects outlined in the approved Work Plan does not exceed the amount in the Capital Budget.

-70% or more of the anticipated DC collections are to come from the Developer(s) involved in agreement.

If these criteria not met Council approval of an MSFA is required.

Application Fee Structure

- Initial Fee: \$1,500
- Detailed Application Fee: 1% of the est cost project, up to a maximum of \$20k.
- Cost recovery for costs for external legal and consulting work, if required.
- Work plan review/construction monitoring – a fee of 6% of estimated cost.

Implementation:

Staff recommending phased approach so that they can full understand the implications and complexities.

Busuttil and Downer move applications:

**Recommendation:**

1. That the Municipal Service and Financing Agreements Policy included as Attachment-1 of report 2025-14 - Municipal Service and Financing Agreements Policy, be approved and implemented using a phased approach, and that staff report back to Council with any recommended updates prior to full implementation.
2. That the Delegated Authority By-law be updated at the earliest administratively convenient opportunity to reflect the authority provided to City staff in the Policy.
3. That the User Fees and Charges By-law be amended to add the new application and administration fees as outlined in report 2025-14 - Municipal Service and Financing Agreements Policy.

Klassen asks about expected pick-up. O'Dwyer says it will depend on the development process. DCAO Holmes says there's been good discussion, and there's some interest, but there's a lot of uncertainty in the development business.

Billings asks if they're not going to have a budget impact with exemptions and discounts. O'Dwyer says that will be continued as part of the review process. Accelerating growth does not necessarily mean accelerating the exemptions.

Billings asks if there's a exit strategy. Binning says yes there are tests built into the agreement that the developer has to pass (so to speak).

Recommendation approved unanimously.

We're going to take a 10 minute break before getting into the last two items...



Chair Downer has called the meeting to order.



Next, Private Tree Protection By-law Review and Update.

Presenting are:

- Timea Filer, Urban Forestry Field Technologist
- Gene Matthews, General Manager, Parks
- Margot Ursic, Principal Planning Ecologist and Facilitator, Grounded Solutions

Filer notes that the City has recommitted to 40% canopy over and this is one of the tools. This update has been in the works since fall 2022.

Findings?

- 2/3 of canopy is on private property
- this could secure another 10%
- hasn't been updated since '86
- community wanted expanded scope and regulation of mature trees
- many people didn't know about the bylaw, and many who didn't, couldn't understand it

Ursic says staff require more resources to implement the current bylaw, and they will need more for the update.

Key change: Regulation applies to mature trees – trees at least 50 centimetres in diameter – on ALL private property. This is in addition to current scope of the By-law which regulates trees at least 10 centimetres in diameter on properties greater than 0.2 hectares (0.5 acres).

On that community engagement: Participants were supportive of additional investment, but many added that "additional costs to Guelph residents should be limited or avoided."

Other changes include improved clarity, new and changed exemptions, and new and revised permit fees to maximise cost recovery:

Description	Current rate (not in User Fees By-law)	Base rate to be added to User Fees By-law
Tree injury or removal permit (per application)	\$122 (no tree limit)	\$150 (1 to 3 trees)
Tree injury or removal permit: 4 or more trees (per tree, no tree limit per application)	n/a	Base rate for 1-3 trees plus \$50 (total permit fee maximum of \$500)
Tree permit appeal (per appeal)	n/a	\$300
Tree compensation: cash in lieu per tree removed	\$500	n/a
Tree compensation: security deposit per replacement tree required	\$650 (average)	\$350 (or based on landscape costs where applicable)
Tree compensation: cash in lieu per replacement tree required	n/a	\$350
Private Tree By-law compliance inspection fee (per contravention)	n/a	\$500

The proposed update will require an increase to the annual operating budget expenditures by \$222,000 to provide the resources to implement the updated by-law, while will be funded by an estimated \$104,000 in additional user fee revenue and \$118,000 tax support.

One delegate on this and it's Morgan Dandie. She says she's pleased that the update will protect an old oak tree at her previous residence and she looks forward to seeing it passed.

Goller/Guthrie table the recommendations:

**Recommendation:**

1. That Council endorse the proposed updates to the Private Tree Protection By-law ("Private Tree By-law" or "By-law"), as attached to report 2025-25, and repeal the existing Private Tree Protection By-law 2010-19058.
2. That staff be directed to place the proposed updated Private Tree By-law on the April 23, 2025 agenda for final adoption after which the By-law will come into effect.
3. That a by-law be enacted to amend the applicable User Fees By-law 2025-21052 to include the permit fees set out in report 2025-25 when the Private Tree By-law takes effect.

Goller asks about comms strategy about changes. Filer says they've developed a communications tactic plan and will use the "while box of tools." Some of those will be immediate, but there will be months of follow-up and outreach to developers, tree care bizes and others.

Goller asks about exemptions. Dead or dying trees and hazardous trees still exempted, and there are some other exemptions that are carried through per staff discretion.

Busuttill asks about heat islands, have we ever had a bylaw to encourage tree planting on lots where there are none. Filer says no, that's not addressed through this bylaw, but it is being address through other strategy.

Goller/Caron move amendment to protect trees 30 cam in on any private lot, and 10cm in diameter on private lot bigger than 0.2 ha. Goller says it would protect more trees and increase property value.

**Private Tree Protection By-law Update,  
2025-25**

Councillor Goller



1. That staff be directed to amend the definition of a Regulated Tree in the Private Tree Protection By-law to mean a tree of at least 10 cm in DBH located on any Private Lot larger than 0.2 hectares and a tree of at least 30 cm in DBH located on any Private Lot.

Billings asks if the budget request will be more with this change. Matthews says yes, and it will increases costs to the community overall, which was an issue raised in the engagement.

Allt thanks Goller for the motion and consider this value for money as a long-term project with big community benefit. He says there will be disgruntlement and challenges with this, but the City has a responsibility to build for the future.

Downer notes that there are a lot older lots where the trees are coming down as the owner redevelops and bulldozers end up sitting on exposed roots. If we can't protect the trees we have, then there needs to be change.

Amendment passes 8-3 (Guthrie, Chew and Billings against)

Amended recommendations pass 8-3 (Guthrie, Chew and Billings against).

Next, Results of the Feasibility Study for Potential Future Arts and Culture Uses of the Drill Hall.

Dana Evans, GM of Culture and Recreation, begins by thanking everyone for the community engagement. Last year, council asked staff to look at using the Drill Hall for an arts and culture hub, noting the gap in the need for creation space, especially equity seeking groups.

Evans says it could be realised as an arts space, but the City doesn't have the capacity for that. DCAO Clack-Bush says that there was fulsome engagement, and they would love to see more A&C space, but feasible  $\neq$  viable. It needs investment from all 3 levels of gov't.

CCB: Based on previous market sounding, public funds are need to make this viable, and they already delayed a lot of projects in the name of affordability. Also, they only have enough cash approved to maintain and upkeep Drill Hall till this vote.

On to delegations. Michelle Peek from Art Not Shame who says that they will be a potential operating partner and have a funder that might be willing to team up for the redevelopment of the Hall. She says this is an exciting and viable opportunity but they need more time.

Peek is asking council to not approve the sale of the Drill Hall today so that they can take that time. They're interested in a P3 to make it happen, and making the space open to equity seeking groups, and they have the experience bringing all these things together.

Allt raises a point of order: He appreciates the pitch, but wonders if this would have to be addressed through an RFP. Downer says that's true but they're only asking council not to sell the Hall right now.

Guthrie says he doesn't want to sell the building, but why are council just hearing about this \*now\*? Peek says they can't answer, and they're surprised too, but finding that funder takes time.

Next is Norma Mendoza, who's the co-chair of Art Not Shame's Board. She also asks council to reject motions to sell the Drill Hall and feels that there's a real chance to make the Drill Hall something unique and take a deep dive into what it can do beyond viability.

This is the recommendation in the agenda:

**Recommendation:**

1. That the Drill Hall Feasibility Study be received.
2. That the building at 72 Farquhar Street, known as the Drill Hall, be declared a surplus asset; and that there be no further financial investment into the building other than general maintenance and security.
3. That staff be directed to advance disposition of the building at 72 Farquhar Street in accordance with the City process and protocol.
4. That staff continue to work with the culture community to identify and address needs and gaps in cultural spaces across all artistic disciplines.

We're having a discussion about process because there are amendments coming that are contradictory to some provisions. Committee puts receipt of the study on the floor.

Guthrie asks about process going forward with the building if they don't sell. CCB says they would need to pass motion to maintain building beyond end of the month, if there's still potential for the building that's great, but they also need to tackle idea that City will invest.

Sending out a call for proposals would be after that, and council will have to give staff that direction too. So three steps:

- 1) Keep maintenance
- 2) Decide on investment
- 3) Announce RFP

The report is received.

Klassen now put some motions on the floor to address the next steps:

- 1) Retain building
- 2) ID sources of capital funding
- 3) Upon confirmation of funds, develop open process.

**Results of the Feasibility Study for Potential Future Arts and Culture Uses of the Drill Hall , 2025-56**  
Councillor Klassen Motion



1. That the City retain 72 Farquhar St. (the Drill Hall) as a city-owned asset and continue to be responsible to fund and maintain the current state of the structural elements and primary systems, estimated at approximately \$125 000 annually.
2. That staff be directed to identify potential sources of capital funding for the development of a mixed use space including an arts and cultural centre in the former Drill Hall, as well as to identify operating budget implications as part of the MYB, and to respectfully request that the Mayor consider allocating funds to move the project forward in the 2026 budget.
3. That upon confirmation of available capital funds, city staff be directed to develop an open process to evaluate and identify a community partner(s) to transform the Drill Hall into a mixed use space including an arts and cultural centre, and also respect and incorporate the Council designated heritage attributes of the building per Bylaw (2018)-20332, reporting back to Council on the results of that RFP before awarding to any proponent.

Klassen says that the City's put a lot of money into the building already, and have heard repeatedly that they will need to put in more. They owe to the community the explore all the possibilities. Caron seconds.

Goller asks if the second motion directs staff to put \$2.5 million into the Hall for further development. Klassen says there's no dollar amount attached and the report puts the whole cost on the City. This motion opens it up beyond the City in terms of finding funds.

CCB adds that if the motion passes, they would need to take it away and look at other sources. They'd also talk with the Mayor since it's his budget. In terms of community engagement, the feasibility study is complete and there will no more till the RFP.

Caron asks to amend #2 saying that council supports mayoral direction to investigate funds, as it was already done this morning. Guthrie seconds and it's approved.

**Results of the Feasibility Study for Potential Future Arts and Culture Uses of the Drill Hall , 2025-56**  
Councillor Caron Amendment



2. That staff be directed to identify potential sources of capital funding for the development of a mixed use space including an arts and cultural centre in the former Drill Hall, as well as to identify operating budget implications as part of the MYB, **and that Council supports the Mayoral direction to investigate allocating funds to move the project forward in the 2026 budget.**

Caron says that adaptive re-use of heritage buildings has been a proven winner, and there's been a need for something like this identified for over 20 years. There's also an opportunity here for reconciliation work, a feasibility study and a community culture plan.

Allt says that there are a lot of reasons to support this, from the bicentennial to economic development.

Caton asks if staff will take Indigenous content into consideration with RFP. CCB says if this gets beyond budget, they will use equity lens, including Indigenous.


Guthrie says the crux is that \$5 million was spent on the building in the last few years and he can't go there in terms of not doing anything with it. But that means choices. Something's got to give and they already deferred \$1 billion in capital.

Downer says she's been thinking about other missed opportunities, like using the old post office on upper Wyndham for the library, and doesn't want to see this join the list.

Recommendations approved.

Guthrie says there are opportunities here for residential if they get permission from the ONgov. He emphasises they'll keep the structure, doesn't know if it's doable, but should ask the question. Busuttil seconds.

**Results of the Feasibility Study for Potential Future Arts and Culture Uses of the Drill Hall , 2025-56**  
Mayor Guthrie Amendment



4. That the Chief Administrative Officer be directed to advocate to the provincial government for the necessary permissions to allow residential development at 72 Farquhar Street.

5. If necessary permissions are not obtained, or if no potential development proposals are received by September 30, 2025, that no further staff time to advocate for these permissions is required.

Caron asks if this should be clarified to mention Metrolinx. CAO Baker says they take "province" to mean "Metrolinx" here. Caron says there's some merit but wonders about feasibility.

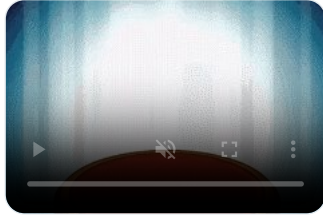
Caton asks why no residential is allowed there. Holmes says there are setbacks from Metrolinx mandated in the name of potential derailments. Caton asks about impact on noise complaints. Holmes says there are mitigation needs, but this is an existing building so concerns different

Caton asks about process. Holmes says it would require and OPA so it would follow the typical planning process, including the full public process.

Recommendation approved unanimously.

Downer says that she appreciates the staff work because there's been a lot of back and forth over the last week.

Nothing further, so this meeting is over!



@threadreaderapp unroll please!

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