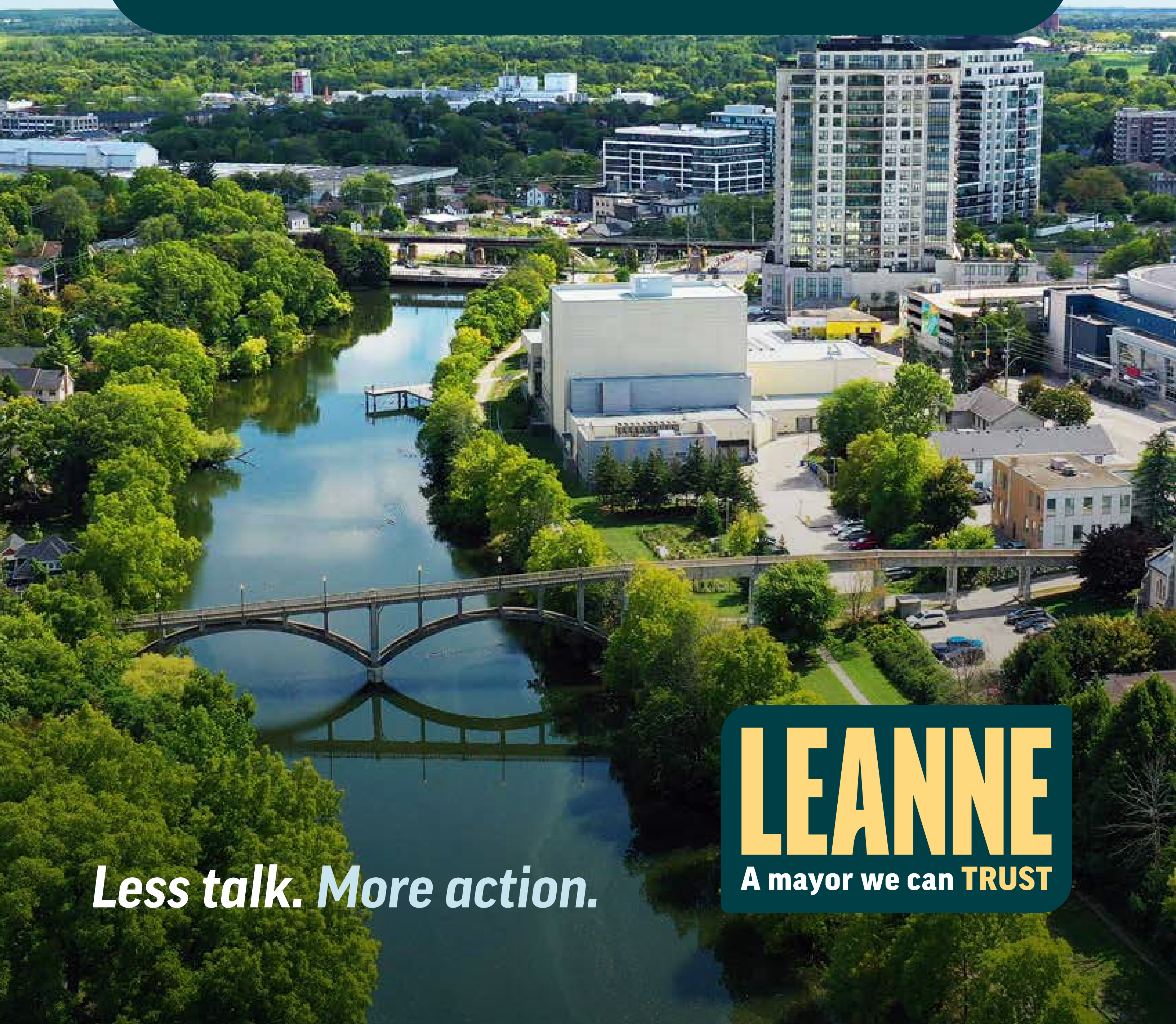
THE GUELPH AFFORDABILITY PLAN



Delivering on affordability is the first of three pillars in Leanne Caron's campaign.

The Guelph Affordability Plan (GAP) is focused on tackling costs from all directions: reducing pressure on property taxes by strengthening City finances, while investing in services and programs that help lower the everyday cost of living.

Leanne won't make an arbitrary tax-cut promise she knows will be impossible to deliver. Instead, she'll focus on what she can deliver: disciplined financial management, efficiencies without sacrificing services, strategic investments that save residents and the City money over time, and new sources of revenue that reduce our reliance on property taxes.

By making better choices today, we can keep taxes more sustainable, protect the services people rely on, and make life more affordable.

Leanne's GAP is responsible, realistic, and responsive. It is built on three financial pillars that seasoned financial professionals know are key to delivering results: efficiency, strategic investment, and new revenue.

THE GAP

A solid and tested economic model, focused on three things, backed by specific actions.

EFFICIENCY

Create smarter ways to work, improve services, and get more value from every tax dollar.

INVESTMENT

Invest strategically today in programs and infrastructure that save residents and the City money over time.

REVENUE

Increase revenue to reduce the pressure on property taxes.

1. EFFICIENCY

We've been doing it for years. Continuous improvement is already part of the culture at City Hall. Now it's time to take it to the next level. Efficiency doesn't have to mean cuts to service. In fact, the best solutions improve service with the same resources, find smarter ways to work, and get more value from every tax dollar.

ACTION	IMPACT
1. Speed up value-for-money audits, service reviews, and best-practice scans. See savings sooner. Update the schedule and bring forward ideas with the highest potential cost savings.	Potential savings of $100,000 to $1 million over four years.
2. Engage our staff in the solutions. They are the experts, and they want to help. Implement an internal "suggestion box" with an incentive and recognition program.	Unlimited potential.
3. Explore a universal quality management system that is used consistently throughout the organization.	Potential savings of $100,000 to $200,000.
4. Implement shared purchasing, staff, and technology systems with school boards, County of Wellington, and other public agencies, including operational functions such as fleet maintenance, IT, and HR admin.	Potential savings $100,000 to $500,000, depending on the service (hard costs vs. labour savings).
5. Expand digital service delivery, including responsible and appropriate use of AI tools for administrative tasks, such as scheduling, invoicing, and online customer inquiries.	Potential savings of $200,000 to $300,000
6. Optimize fleet management and maintenance through right-sizing and vehicle sharing, and local maintenance of specialty vehicles.	$100,000 to $150,000 annual savings and creation of local jobs.
7. Using the annual Municipal Benchmarking Network study, identify significant variances for Guelph among Ontario comparators and report publicly on rationale or recommendations for service adjustments. Continuous improvement and accountability.	Potential $100,000 to $5000,000 depending on findings.
8. Establish a joint City–board efficiency task force to assist with achieving a mandate to find 1–2% in annual administrative savings across all six outside boards without cutting frontline service.	1% = $1.36 million 2% = $2.72 million
9. Establish a staff-per-capita-based approach to hiring growth relative to population growth, consistent with comparator municipalities. Hiring outside the benchmark would require additional rigour and validation during the budget process.	Potential savings between $400,000 to $1 million.
10. Scan service reviews and audits from other municipalities and translate efficiencies locally.	Savings from external consultants, research, and optimized performance.

2. STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

You've heard the phrase "you have to spend money to make money." We plan to spend money to save money. When an investment in technology, equipment, or infrastructure can deliver measurable long-term savings, we should make it. When delaying a necessary investment will only increase costs or risks down the road, we should stop deferring it to the next year. And when we can invest your tax dollars in programs and services that save you money on everyday costs, your bottom line benefits too.

ACTION	IMPACT
1. Expand transit to new and existing employment areas to facilitate business growth, create new jobs, and service residents who are using taxis or a second car.	Service employment lands, reduce, traffic impact, and cost per trip.
2. Invest in additional water conservation programs and policies that eliminate or delay the need for major capital expansion of water supply and treatment facilities.	$10+ million over the next 10 years, and lower water bills.
3. Expand Guelph Greener Homes program for low-income households and rental properties. Rental properties must include a condition that 75% of energy savings be passed on to tenants where tenants pay utilities outside of their monthly rent.	Tenant savings of $250–$500 per month in utility bills.
4. Bring in an urban economist to assess the biggest bang for investments in infrastructure, economic development, and city building projects.	Unlimited potential.
5. Move forward with high-impact infrastructure renewal projects with a clear return over ten years compared to deferral. Clear the $5.7 million backlog in recently deferred capital projects.	Cost avoidance of rising costs and service delays.
6. Expand urban forestry targets and green infrastructure to reduce stormwater costs and soil erosion, and improve cooling, groundwater recharge, and infrastructure protection.	$3.20 savings or cost avoidance for every dollar spent + environmental benefits (priceless).
7. Build out active transportation and transit infrastructure that reduces long-term road-widening and parking-structure capital needs.	Reduce maintenance and expansion of roads over time.
8. Invest in employee retention and internal skills training to reduce costly reliance on external consultants and contractors for recurring specialized work (engineering, IT, planning).	Reduce cost of recruitment, hiring, and onboarding new staff.
9. Expand renewable energy generation and distribution at municipal facilities through rooftop solar, battery storage and co-operative energy partnerships.	Reduce energy costs and improve resilience during power shortages.
10. Increase preventative road maintenance (crack sealing, preservation treatments) to extend asset lifecycle and risk of failure.	Extends pavement life and delays expensive reconstruction.
11. Increase community benefit agreements and community grants for charities and non-profits that deliver programs and services that lower the cost of basic needs for youth, seniors, and low-income families (food security, recreation, literacy, poverty reduction, etc.).	Savings will be measured at the community and household level. Range of return between $2.50 to $7 for every $1 invested in poverty reduction and food security programs.

3. INCREASE REVENUE

Efficiency and investment will only get us so far. Generating new revenue will get us across the affordability finish line. Municipalities are limited in their ability to generate revenue from taxation, so we need to get creative and tap into sources of revenue that have long been ignored.

ACTION	IMPACT
1. Work closely with Town and Gown Ontario and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) to update the payment in lieu of taxes amount (also referred to as “heads and beds” levy”) to adjust for cost of living increases since 1987.	Increase of $2.8 million in 2027, with adjusted annual increases in future years.
2. In collaboration with AMO, advocate for an amendment to the Municipal Act to permit zoning regulations to differentiate “estate residential” for properties over ½ acre. Adjust mill rate to account for additional cost to service large property frontages.	Potential revenue of $360,000 annually.
3. Implement tiered Non-Resident surcharges for users of subsidized municipal services, such as recreation centres, libraries, and waste drop-off.	Potential revenue of $25,000–$50,000 annually.
4. Improve development charge recovery by updating background stuides more frequently as capital costs increase.	Higher immediate compensation for growth-related expenses.
5. Implement a comprehensive municipal services user fee review every two years to ensure cost recovery where appropriate, and reduce unanticipated spikes for residents, businesses, and other users.	Stable non-tax revenue.
6. Monetize city-owned land being used by for-profit energy and utility providers. Continue advocacy and encourage other municipalities to support the “No More Free Ride for Fossil Fuel” bill to amend the *Municipal Act* to charge private utilities for use of public land.	Potential revenue of $8.6 million annually. Use savings to accelerate transition to renewables to save homeowner utility bills.
7. Expand sponsorship and naming rights, and co-operative use of space, for recreation facilities, events, and public amenities. The new South End Community Centre and the Operations Centre offer new opportunities .	$100,000 to $1 million potential new revenue.
8. Establish a municipal green investment fund that leverages private capital for energy and climate projects with bonds or shared savings dividends.	Reduced capital financing costs and energy savings for residents.
9. Grow the commercial and industrial tax base by accelerating employment land development and business attraction. Work directly with Chamber and Business Accelerator to target high-quality, high-value employers with incentives.	Tax assessment and job growth potential $3 to 5 million on existing service lands.
10. Maximize grant funding through a dedicated grant office responsible for identifying and securing external funding opportunities. Apply for every eligible grant stream tied to housing enablement, transit, and climate resilience— areas already flagged as budget priorities.	Higher external revenues for strategic projects.

Leanne can **DELIVER**

Since COVID in 2020, the cost of almost everything has skyrocketed. Many of those pressures are beyond the City's control, from provincial policy to global economic forces and U.S. tariffs. But that doesn't mean City Hall is powerless. Serious leadership means focusing on the choices we can make here in Guelph, and acting on them.

Leanne has a plan. Not a "pass the buck" plan, but a real plan with actions that translate into short- and long-term tax relief, stability, and investments in services that reduce costs for residents.

Leanne has the experience. She's Chair of Corporate Services, understands how City Hall works, and knows where the financial pressures are. She has a business background at the U of G, where she is responsible for generating $55+ million in revenue annually, and has exceeded targets every year of her career. She has run her own successful small business, and is a graduate of Lang School of Business with a Masters in Leadership.

Leanne has the compassion. She knows that service cuts affect low-income families the most and end up costing more in the long run. Leanne won't defer today's challenges onto the next generation, and she won't leave anyone behind.

Leanne has the leadership. She doesn't give directives using Strong Mayor powers and direct staff to do the heavy lifting. She brings people into the room to innovate and problem-solve. She listens to the community, seeks out best practices, and looks for data to inform decisions.

Deliver with **ACCOUNTABILITY**

A plan is only as good as the results it delivers. As part of her commitment to an open and collaborative City hall, Leanne will make affordability a measurable, City-wide priority, report publicly on our progress every year, and reinvest verified savings into finding even better ways to serve residents.

Leanne commits to:

1. Engage residents, business, industry, and service providers early in an annual budget process, so community priorities help shape the budget before key decisions are made. When Leanne tables the budget, it will truly be "The People's Budget".

2. Establish an Innovation and Efficiency Reserve where a portion of verified annual savings is reinvested into future efficiency and strategic investment projects.

3. Make affordability a City-wide priority by integrating affordability metrics into departmental business plans and senior leadership performance objectives.

4. Publish an annual **Affordability Report Card**, including reporting on progress and savings for actions identified in this Affordability Plan, including but not limited to:
    - Operating cost per resident
    - Cost savings achieved
    - New revenue generated
    - Infrastructure renewal progress
    - Energy savings

"I will protect Guelph's AAA credit rating"

Learn more about the Leanne Caron Campaign at LeanneCaron.ca

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LEANNE

A mayor we can TRUST