Wesley Harris

Guelph Ward 5 · 2026 Municipal Election

Core Services First

Common Sense with Compassion

My approach is practical: protect the services people rely on, fix what isn't working, maintain what we own and spend carefully. Fiscal responsibility and compassion belong together. City decisions must recognize the pressure on lower- and middle-income households while protecting essential services and vulnerable residents. Core Services First does not mean core services only. It means delivering the basics well and understanding the long-term cost before adding permanent expenses.

Spending that respects household budgets

I will examine existing spending and permanent efficiencies before supporting new permanent costs. I want major proposals to show their full construction, operating, maintenance and financing costs. I will work toward keeping existing operating-cost growth closer to inflation wherever practical, without blind cuts. Taxes, utility bills and fees need to be considered together.

Rebuild our financial safety net

My first-term goal is to work toward rebuilding the main contingency reserves to at least 50% of their policy target. I would look first to genuinely available resources, operating surpluses and permanent efficiencies, rather than a special tax increase. If those measures are insufficient, residents deserve a clear explanation of the remaining choices.

Maintain what we already own

Protect reliable water and waste collection. Address high-risk wastewater problems and repair roads, sidewalks, buildings and equipment before deterioration becomes more expensive. Where practical, coordinate road, pipe, sidewalk and transit work. Plan once. Dig once.

Getting around Guelph

I will push for action on the winter-maintenance review, clearer service standards and public reporting, including accessible sidewalks and transit stops. Compare Transit Future Ready with frequency-first alternatives. Test lower-cost improvements to routes and bus spacing before automatically adding spending. Protect targeted fare assistance and neighbourhood access. More frequent service should follow demand, costs and results.

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Housing that works for working families

I will work toward more housing choices, including family-sized rentals, starter homes, suitable infill, non-profit and co-operative housing. Measure affordability against actual household incomes, improve approvals without weakening safety or environmental protections, and make growth contribute fairly to eligible infrastructure costs. Test direct municipal housing before expanding it. Further projects should depend on demonstrated lasting affordability, full long-term cost neutrality and financial sustainability.

Practical pathways out of homelessness

Work with Wellington County and community partners on prevention, stable housing and appropriate support. Compare the full cost of action with continuing to manage homelessness through emergency services. Examine a two-year modular housing pilot, subject to suitable land, feasibility, full costs, funding and budget approval. If existing allocations cannot accommodate a financially sound pilot, I will propose it for a future budget. Expansion must depend on results, with a plan for residents after the pilot.

Local businesses and workers succeeding together

Support existing businesses and jobs, protect appropriate employment land and address avoidable municipal approval delays. Connect housing, transportation and employment planning. Economic development should help businesses succeed and provide opportunities for workers to support their families.

Safe neighbourhoods and public spaces

Protect emergency response and measure what new public-safety spending achieves. Support appropriate mental-health partnerships and specialized trafficking investigations where results justify the investment, alongside survivor support and prevention. People experiencing homelessness deserve dignity and help. Violence, threats, theft and exploitation still require a response. Councillors cannot direct police investigations. Pursue provincial support for health-care responsibilities.

A community worth caring for

Protect valued parks and trails, neighbourhood library access and accessible recreation. Maintain existing community and cultural facilities and assess needs and full costs before expanding. Prepare for severe weather, maintain stormwater infrastructure and protect natural assets and tree canopy. I will advocate for a National Urban Park in Guelph.

Accessible, accountable government

I will maintain direct communication with residents and provide meaningful responses. Explain major decisions, costs, alternatives and how public input was considered. I will push for one public annual Core Services Scorecard showing what was promised, what was delivered and what it cost, using existing information wherever possible. I will be clear about what I can do, what requires Council approval and what belongs to other governments or independent bodies.

Learn more about my campaign

votewes.ca