**COMING SOON: I'm still working on the election post-mortem report. Stay tuned.**

# Thorold's Growing Waistline-Not Ugulini's

## Municipal Bloat and XXXXXXship

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**SHORT READ: 1,128 body words | under 5 minutes – reading times may vary from person to person**
**Word count and reading time cover body text only; exclude titles, headings, charts, illustration text, captions, satire and opinion notices, references and source check, and sign-off. Illustration-viewing time is additional.**

Tomorrow I will announce my new pronouns and potential city pronouns. Today, we need to examine a city that may require a longer measuring tape.

## Bigger deserves a better question

Our "Night Mayor," Terry Ugulini, as many so affectionately refer to him, has certainly left us thinking about growth—and what qualifies as an accomplishment.

Before anyone takes a victory lap over population growth in Thorold, taxpayers who have spoken to me want the complete report card. Have roads, water and sewer capacity, emergency services and other public services kept pace? What has growth cost existing residents? What obligations remain?

Statistics Canada's 2021 Census recorded 23,816 Thorold residents, compared with 18,801 in 2016: an increase of 5,015, or 26.7%. Those figures cover 2016–2021; they are not a FULL measure of growth throughout Ugulini's eight years as mayor. [1] By the traffic in Thorold it seems the growth between 2021 and October 2026, it may even have exceeded the 26.7% mentioned earlier. A population count tells us how many people live here. It does not tell us whether the planning was good.

**Ugulini told me a couple of times how Thorold's population growth was one of the fasted growing in Canada like it was a good thing.**

A growth award looks lovely on the wall. From the tax-payers view, it cannot increase sewer capacity, rain water capacity or even stop a toilet backing up.

Throughout this article, leadership will appear as XXXXXXship. The missing letters are awaiting servicing of answers from Ugulini. Apparently, even my vocabulary has an infrastructure backlog, not unlike, Ugulini's explain is also back logged.

## My imaginary diagnosis – see page 3 for the satirical illustration. Please don't let the illustration 'weigh in' on you as a Thorold taxpayer:

Voters called growth that outpaces a city's ability to serve it - Municipal Bloat. "City obesity" was my first diagnosis, but my imaginary medical department suggested a second opinion—and a larger examination gown.

On page 3, in my satirical illustration, the patient is the municipality. New residents are our neighbours. The question is whether those approving expansion have properly planned and funded what everyone needs, now and into the future.

A building permit is no prescription for a healthy city. You cannot hand someone a subdivision brochure and say, "Take two townhouses and call me in the morning." The concern taxpayers brought me is whether growth fits the infrastructure.

City Hall can keep letting out the waistband. Eventually, somebody must explain who is paying for the trousers—and any damage when the seams give way. Both tangible and intangible costs.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony is the only procedure where the politician gets the photograph and the taxpayer gets the stitches.

## Retirement should include retiring for Ugulini

Will Ugulini leave the political stage or keep advising the UN-FAB FOUR from the sidelines? I nearly said "from the wings," but Clarence has not announced that Ugulini has earned his, as Jimmy Handley did in my earlier satire illustration. To borrow the spirit of Ricky Ricardo, Ugulini still has some 'splainin' to do. Future influence is a question, not inside information about private conversations.

Some have made this observation about Ugulini: if he wants distance from their future decisions, distance should mean something. You cannot expect credit for the circus commenced under his Mayoral terms when it benefits him and then seek recognition for disassociating himself from the foursome, as the fellow who merely happened to walk past the tent when it benefits him another way when it was ALL under his XXXXXXship.

In my imaginary L'Oréal department, the verdict is: "For a public appointment? He's just not worth it." My political judgment and that of other taxpayers—not the company's. Readers can make their own assessment. Why reward a record with a political appointment before giving it the scrutiny it deserves?

Any appointment should rest on qualifications, the public record and a transparent process. It should not arrive as a retirement gift. I have no evidence of a trade for personal gain. Taxpayers are demanding accessible records that let them assess both terms themselves. **It seems taxpayers still want the receipts, not a self-written report card by Ugulini.**

## A good neighbour and a political report card

Once Ugulini leaves office, let him retire in peace. No doorstep interrogations. No farewell heckling. A neighbourly hello will do; private opinions do not require a megaphone after he retires as Mayor. Many taxpayers are already aware that Ugulini views -what the taxpayers view as Ugulini's failures-, Ugulini views as his personal achievements as Mayor. So yes beauty and transparency is in the eyes of the beholder. And he see's things much differently than many of the taxpayers.

It's hard to think Ugulini doesn't know voters think of him this way. Let him live out his life in that denial. Because Denial isn't a river in Africa, to Thorold taxpayers I've been told it's now a waterway running through the Thorold locks. This opinion I mention in this sub section of the article was said to me by many Thorold taxpayers. Many told me, they would be very upset if Ugulini receives a highly spiffed, well paid political appointment without explaining his record to the taxpayer's satisfaction.

As my neighbour though, I do endorse him wholeheartedly as a neighbor, that is. On that score, I won the lottery. I mean that sincerely, without satire. If he moved, I would miss him—and his fantastic gardening skills.

As mayor, my assessment is very different. Many still want a clear accounting of his tenure: the commitments made, costs carried forward and obligations residents will inherit. He can be a wonderful neighbour to me while I and many others strongly disagree with his decisions and XXXXXXship at City Hall. His biggest criticism told to me is that he allowed Thorold to get into a deal letting the partners terms to be that much of the terms had to be held as a non-transparent deal. I'd like to see him try that one at home and see if he could get away with that one. When this is brought up to him, he gets upset. He's done it with me and many others, so I'm told by other taxpayers.

Those public decisions and their consequences deserve examination. The full price tag should not disappear behind another congratulatory photograph.

## A prescription from the imaginary circus

PERHAPS a cartoon of the UN-FAB FOUR with an air-dart gun firing suction-cup darts labelled "OZEMPIC—CITY VACCINE" being the imaginary prescription would: "Shrink the voters until the infrastructure looks big enough!"?? Unfortunately, the tax bill remains its original size—and keeps growing. This vaccine exists only in my cartoon department. Ozempic is not a vaccine. **Maybe the Ozempic dart should be air gunned to the city finances? That would be a real clinical study said many!**

## P S  A final award announcement

The UN-FAB FOUR under the XXXXXXship of Ugulini have won my imaginary Championship Hide-and-Seek Award. Their secret? They seem to hide in plain sight too. You can find them at the council table. Try finding an answer.

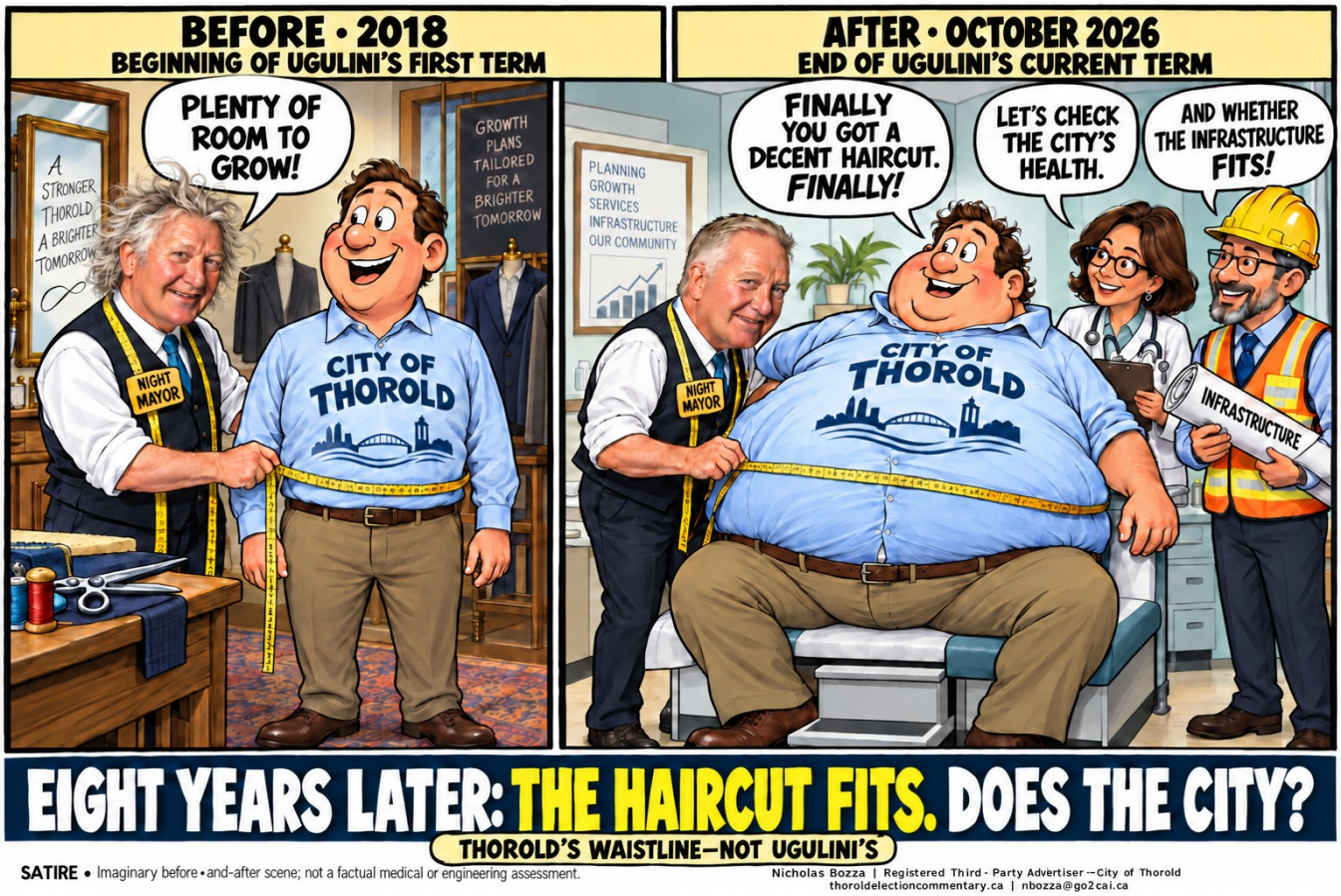
## Satire and opinion notice

Municipal planning is the patient; people's bodies and new neighbours are not the target. The clinic, diagnoses, award, brand verdict and dart prescription are invented. Future influence is questioned, not proven. No medical or engineering findings or endorsements are claimed. Ozempic is not a vaccine. My imaginary clinic has no licence—and apparently no spell-check for XXXXXXship.

## References and source check

[1] Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population, Census Profile: Thorold, City, Ontario (2016 and 2021 population; 26.7% change). Source locator: https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm
Editorial status: source page and figures require a live check before publication; online retrieval was unavailable during this revision. The requested "sixth-fastest-growing" mayoral quote remains unverified and has not been used as a factual attribution.

## Eight years later  A municipal checkup




Satire: an imaginary municipal checkup, not a medical or engineering finding. The before-and-after scene and haircut are invented.

Likeness based on the supplied mayoral profile screenshot. The illustration compares 2018 and 2026; the haircut was performed on the artwork.