

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council;

We wanted to thank you for the opportunity to give feedback on the new Parks and Recreation Master Plan. We also appreciate that Eric Poole, Project Manager of Recreation Services, Culture and Recreation met informally with our Executive Director and later answered questions from older adults at a facility pop-up at the Evergreen.

In black are the City's four draft recommendations concerning older adults.
Blue are the GWSA proposed recommendations for your consideration.

92. Continue work outlined in the Older Adult Strategy and implement seniors-driven initiatives to maintain Guelph's designation as an Age Friendly Community

Comments from Guelph Wellington Seniors Association.

The Older Adult Strategy produced in November 2012 was an ambitious exercise which included many recommendations (65).

It was approved for implementation without any dedicated or sustainable funding.

Strategy didn't include timelines for review of key performance indicators against which to measure impact and success.

The pandemic greatly impacted older adults in Guelph, and we believe it is critical to gain an updated understanding of emerging local needs.

Proposed GWSA Recommendation

Sunset the Older Adult Strategy (which is proposed to end in 2024).

Work with the GWSA to initiate and complete a needs assessment of older adults 55+ in the City of Guelph. The research data and information collected through the needs assessment to be shared to help us collectively develop an action plan for the City of Guelph to become an Age Friendly Community. Results will include timelines for review of key performance indicators against which to measure impact and success.

93. Improve geographic distribution of older adult programs to ensure programs are offered throughout the whole city.

Comments from Guelph Wellington Seniors Association.

Online-only approach created gaps in access to information. Many residents lack access to technology and internet and/or digital literacy creates a digital divide.

Rising costs and affordability are barriers to participation. Many older adults are on a limited or fixed incomes. It continues to be important to consider the role City Recreation plays in supporting/accommodating the varying needs of equity deserving individuals and communities. Those new to Guelph frequently tell us that finding and accessing information about recreation programming can be difficult. Many older adults who would benefit from City recreation programs are unaware of subsidy programs.

[Proposed GWSA Recommendation \(impacts recommendation #61 regarding a recreation promotion strategy\)](#)

Begin providing some printed Community Guides again. A printed community guide will ensure that residents lacking access to consistent technology and internet are not left behind.

Better promotion of FAIR (Fee Assistance in Recreation) Program to help older adults on a limited income stay active.

94. Investigate designating the South End Community Centre as a Seniors Active Living Centre.

Comments from Guelph Wellington Seniors Association.

Since the South End Community Centre is not expected to open until 2026 it would appear premature to apply for funding for another Seniors Active Living Centre. Instead, it would make more sense to focus on the two existing approved facilities (the City currently receives maintenance and operating funding for the West End and Evergreen Centres from the Province).

[Proposed GWSA Recommendation](#)

Work with the staff at the GWSA to explore opportunities to acquire grants that benefit all residents in Guelph. (Ontario Trillium Capital Grant for Acoustic Tiles – Evergreen Auditorium)

When crafting the new Community Benefit Agreement expand non-exclusive use to the West End Community Centre as well as the Evergreen Centre.

95. Update the City's Older Adult Strategy – reframing as an Age Friendly Strategy to better align with current industry language and terminology – to understand and support the evolving needs of older adults and ensure the City remains a great place to live and age well.

Comments from Guelph Wellington Seniors Association.

We understand that municipalities in Ontario are struggling with Bill 23 which has reduced revenues from development charges, parkland dedication fees and community benefit charges which are important revenue sources to support growth related infrastructure.

As a Community Benefit partner, our new proposed funding model will help ease the burden on older adults while at the same time provide much needed services that would otherwise be unavailable due to financial limitations. This would allow us to continue to explore and evaluate emerging trends especially those targeting older adults to address identified demographic gaps in service.

[Proposed GWSA Recommendation](#)

Support a recently proposed GWSA Community Benefit funding model. This 5-year renewal would be a strategic investment by the City which would allow the

GWSA and our partners to continue to provide diverse programs, activities, and services.

The Age Friendly action plan could guide the language in future Community Benefit Agreements with actionable deliverables as well as a blueprint to guide the City in future budgets and planning.

Linda

Linda Jeffrey, Executive Director (on behalf of the GWSA Board)

Guelph Wellington Seniors Association

683 Woolwich Street

Guelph, Ontario N1H 3Y8

www.gwsa-guelph.ca

416-903-9682