

## **Parks and Recreation Master Plan Submission**

**Date:** October 19, 2023  
**To:** Guelph City Council  
**From:** Guelph Sports Council  
**Re:** Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Board of the Guelph Sports Council appreciates the opportunity to partner with the City of Guelph to provide the necessary expertise required for sport and recreation facilities, programs, resources, and events for the City of Guelph.

Noting that we also reviewed the Needs Assessment prior to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, it showed that some of the data appeared to be out of date and not relevant to the City of Guelph. Sport organizations in Guelph are here to provide the necessary sport specific data required as well as the necessary insight into recreational and competitive programming that includes but is not limited to tournament/championship hosting, and of course the programming, from youth to seniors, provided by various sport associations. As well as, changing needs associated with facilitating our programs for members of our community. Our concern is that the sport organizations in the City of Guelph were not consulted to provide current and accurate information for the Needs Assessment prior to building the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

### **Other considerations:**

- The Guelph Sports Council is supportive of this plan and would like to assist the City of Guelph with gathering data from the various user groups, as well as Provincial, National, Multi-Sport Organizations and Government agencies.
- While comparing us to other municipalities is good, we encourage the City of Guelph to reach out to the Provincial, National and Multi-Sport Organizations to see what is recommended by each sport for a city of our size to encourage growth as well as proper program implementation. It is also important to take into consideration the changing demographics and how that impacts the current recreational programming in the City of Guelph.
- We are encouraged that the City of Guelph is open to looking at private sector funding for projects, and we strongly consider that you look at exploring a multi-purpose project like RIM Park in Waterloo to help service community needs.

- As the Parks and Recreation landscape evolves in the City of Guelph, the Guelph Sports Council encourages the City of Guelph to investigate the economic benefits of hosting tournaments and/or multi-sport events/games. With adequate infrastructure in place, that not only includes host venue(s) but hotels, and event spaces, the City of Guelph could become a sport destination that would have a positive economic impact. Hosting tournaments generates significant revenue for minor sport associations in the City of Guelph. This allows associations to keep user costs low and attract users from all socio-economical backgrounds to our sports. The current infrastructure in the City of Guelph does not permit associations to host many tournaments a year which puts a financial burden on our community. For instance, the Guelph Minor Hockey PowerPlay tournament attracts close to 75 out of town teams into the City of Guelph and generates close to a \$1 million in revenue to the City of Guelph. Many associations would like to host similar tournaments but can not, due to the existing infrastructure.
- There is an opportunity to improve the user experience at current facilities by accessing the resources that are currently in place that are being underutilized. i.e., snack bars/pro shops at the rinks/fields/clubhouses. This is another area that could be benchmarked to other municipalities; many municipalities have facilities that offer full food and beverage services. We encourage the City of Guelph to create a plan to refurbish and upgrade the already existing facilities as many of them fail to meet the needs of the current user groups.
- We are very pleased that the City of Guelph has a planned timeline, but feel the projections should be 1-3 years, 4-8 years, 9-14 years, and 15+ years out. We are lacking infrastructure right now, and we believe some of the 'long term' items should be 'longer term' to accommodate for the projected population growth and there are varying age ranges for facility refurbishment and/or replacement (i.e., sports dome in 5-10 years, Centennial/Exhibition rinks - retrofit in the rebuild/repurpose).
- We encourage looking at current municipalities who have the City of Guelph's projected growth (i.e., Kitchener, Oakville, Richmond Hill, Burlington) to compare how many facilities they have now and find out from their user groups to see if their facilities are meeting their needs. We believe the effects of the projected population growth should be reflected by comparing cities of similar size of our 2030-2050 projected population.
- We encourage the City of Guelph to engage with the 55+ community, creating/improving partnerships with community groups i.e., Guelph and Wellington Seniors Association (GWSA).

We continue to look forward to engaging with Council and Staff for the benefit of our community, on behalf of current and future residents.

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