

**To: Community and Social Services Committee**

**From: H.R. Whiteley**

**June 11 2014**

**RE: CSS-2014.16 SOUTH END COMMUNITY CENTRE NEEDS  
ASSESSMENT AND FEASIBILITY STUDY**

**I congratulate staff on the comprehensive report presented to CSS to-day on recreational facility planning for Guelph.**

**Required Procedural Steps**

**There are important procedural steps that must be taken to allow proper consideration of this report.**

**In the 1970's the City of Guelph, together with all municipalities in Ontario, adopted sectoral master plans as an essential framework for setting levels of service and project priorities in each sector. Guelph last adopted a Master Plan for Recreation and Parks in 1999.**

**Before report CSS-2014.16 is considered by City Council the 2009 Recreation and Parks Master Plan must be brought to City Council for adoption as a guide for planning in the City. It then has standing in the planning process and can be used to justify recommendations made in CSS-2014.16.**

**As an immediate next step, following adoption of the 2009 Master Plan, Council should direct staff to prepare the required five year update to the 2009 Master Plan to have the update received by City Council and approved before the final decision on planning steps for the South End Community Centre.**

**The wisdom of following proper master plan protocol can be seen in the example set by the City of Cambridge. In April 2014 The City of Cambridge approved the planning process for two new multi-use recreational facilities. In making this decision Council had the advantage of the guidance of the City of Cambridge Community Services Master Plan Review Prepared by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants December 2013 and adopted by Cambridge City Council.**

**The Master Plan Review for Cambridge confirmed that priority should be given to the new multi-use facilities among the possible**

**alternative priorities considered in the comprehensive scope of a Master Plan Review.**

**The Master Plan Review also established that in Cambridge, while residents were supportive of these new facilities, a large majority (80 %) opposed any increase in taxes to pay for the construction. Cambridge is in the fortunate position of having identified Development Charges as a possible source for \$30 million of the \$50 million estimated cost of the two multi-use facilities.**

### **Additional Aspects To Be Considered Before Final Approval**

**The proposed one-site multi-use facility at the extreme southern limit of residential development in Guelph does not correspond to the goal of making Guelph a neighbourhood-centred walkable City.**

**The facility is remote from even the nearest areas of housing, making walking unattractive and would require a multi hour (round trip) bus journey from most areas of the City which would greatly deter access by public transport for a majority of Guelph residents.**

**Alternate smaller sites identified in the report are located in close proximity to some reasonably dense residential areas. Consideration should be given to possible distribution of some of the facility elements to walkable sites within housing areas.**

**The future population trends in Guelph should be considered in more detail before the timing of any construction is established. The report identifies that justification for the twin ice pads, for example, would not occur until late in the planning period. This conclusion is made without consideration of the age-distribution trends in Guelph population.**

**The age group 5 to 19, of great importance for facility demand, has remained constant in Guelph at 20,000 since 2001. School-Board enrollments have declined slightly over the last few years and projections for school-age population for the next five years are for a slight recovery from the recent drop followed by a constant population.**

**These population projections should be taken into account in the final assessment of the timing of new facilities. It may be that priority should be given to renovation/reconstruction of aging facilities before new facilities are added.**