

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Phase One Engagement Summary

What we did:

Phase one community engagement for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan update included the following activities:

- Online community survey made available at guelph.ca (June 12-July 4, 2019);
- Intercept polling at various city locations (June 19, 2019);
- A public open house – drop in format (June 20, 2019 – afternoon and evening);
- Sport user group survey (June–August 2019);
- Advertising and correspondence sent to a number of key stakeholder groups such as the Youth Council, Immigrant Services, Guelph Neighborhood Support Coalition, local Parks and Recreation advocates, external partner agencies as well as neighbouring municipalities (May–2019);
- Individual stakeholder meetings with Youth Council, Youth Providers Committee, Local Immigration Partnership, Upper Grand District School Board, and Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition;
- Internal stakeholder workshops with key municipal departments such as Parks Planning, Parks Operations and Forestry, Recreation Services, Policy Planning, Asset Management, Accessibility, Culture, Tourism, Community Investment and the City management team (June 2019);

In total, we received feedback from 677 individuals.

Wherever possible, we have reviewed and incorporated community engagement data from related City of Guelph projects such as the [2019 Strategic Plan](#), the [2018 Community Plan](#), the [2017 Citizen Satisfaction Survey](#), [Natural Heritage Action Plan](#), [Urban Forest Management Plan \(UFMP\)](#), [Parks and Recreation Master Plan](#) phase one data and the [Guelph and Wellington County Vital Signs](#) data.

What we heard:

For the Parks and Recreation Master Plan update, we wanted to know strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes as well as suggestions and opportunities for improvement.

Both staff and community data revealed overwhelmingly how much we value our green spaces including parkland and our trails system. Overall there is satisfaction with our recreation and parks programs which serve participants of all ages. We have skilled and dedicated teams of parks and recreation staff.

We heard common top of mind themes including:

- Accessibility (specifically people with mobility issues and autism)
- Access in terms of transit
- Basketball courts
- Disc golf, tennis and pickleball
- Games in parks (ping pong, chess, horse shoe pits, bocce, etc.)
- Investment in aging parks

- Off leash dog parks
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Outdoor rinks and improvements
- Parkland inventory and achieving future parkland targets
- Model for recreation programming (drop-in vs scheduled classes, parent and child classes, etc.,)
- Naturalization in parks, access to naturalized areas and additional shade in parks
- Trails and cycling infrastructure
- South End Community Centre
- Splash pads
- Washrooms and water fountains in parks
- Where to find relevant information, mapping, and city advertising of programs/assets

Survey Results

The survey focused on questions specific to the convenience of parks and recreation services, the overall satisfaction with parks and recreation services for different age groups, and how often parks and/or recreation services are used by the survey respondent. A total of 468 survey responses were received; however, not all 468 respondents answered every survey question. Survey data showed that respondents were aged from 12 to 71+, with the majority of respondents (52.3%) being between the ages of 31 to 55 years old.

- 62% of respondents believe that City supported, community led programs are very important, with 184 respondents participating in one or more.
- 83% of respondents stated that they used parks and outdoor recreation for leisurely walking or exercise, with the next highest use of parks being to meet with friends (47.2%), to use the playground facilities (46.5%), to cycle (45.7%), and to walk their dog (44.2%).
- 32.7% of respondents use indoor recreation facilities once or twice a week, with 23.6% of respondents using these facilities seasonally.
- 59% of respondents use outdoor recreation facilities either daily or once/twice a week, with the remaining respondents only using the facilities monthly, seasonally, or for special events.
- Regarding indoor recreation facilities, 26% of respondents stated that they do not use these facilities, with the remaining respondents stating that they use Victoria Road Recreation Centre and West End Community Centre most frequently.
- Of the indoor recreation activities provided by the city, respondents stated that they use aquatics (70%), camps (18%), children/youth programs (18%), and adult programs (17%) most frequently. 35% of respondents also stated that they use these facilities as part of other, non-City run programs like basketball.
- Program scheduling (37%), lack of interest in services offered (22.5%) and high program fees (22.5%) are some of the most common barriers that prevent respondents from using the City's indoor recreation facilities.
- Of all the City provided outdoor sports field and/or courts, respondents stated that they used off-leash dog areas (42%), outdoor rinks (42%), soccer fields (25%), tennis courts (25%), and softball/baseball diamonds (20%) the most.

Aligning the Guelph Trails Master Plan with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

We have decided to merge the Parks and Recreation Master Plan engagement process with the [Guelph Trails Master Plan update](#) (GTMP) which is currently underway. This makes it easier for you to provide feedback on trails, parks and recreation – together!

By aligning the two processes, we are well-positioned to understand the financial impacts of both plans.

Next steps

The next round of engagement is happening in late November 2019. Sign up to receive updates and participate at haveyoursay.guelph.ca.

In the next phase we are using the feedback gathered in the first phase of engagement to ask new questions that dig a little deeper. We want to understand the themes better and to validate what we heard.

In spring 2020, we will be reviewing potential recommendations of the plan and prioritize which ones are the most important to tackle first.