



Phase two engagement summary

Engagement purpose

Our phase two engagement activities validated what we heard in our first round of listening for both the [Parks and Recreation Master Plan](#) (PRMP) and the [Guelph Trail Master Plan](#) (GTMP).

Engagement for the GTMP was merged with the PRMP to make it easier to provide feedback on trails, parks and recreation together. The original GTMP work plan did not include a second phase of engagement but was added as we aligned the GTMP with the PRMP. This summary is a reflection of the two master plans and the engagement we led together.

We focused on understanding key themes better to establish community priorities. Using the feedback from the 2017 GTMP survey and 2019 PRMP survey, we asked new questions that dug a little deeper and touched on some of the themes that were top of mind for residents.

Guelph Trail Master Plan engagement

The goals, deliverables and objectives of the GTMP remain the same: plan, design, fund, build and maintain the trails of tomorrow. By aligning this work with the PRMP, we are well positioned to discuss the entire city open space system and to understand the financial impacts of both plans.

What we did

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

- Online community survey made available at guelph.ca (November 26-December 16, 2019);
- Intercept surveying at various city locations (November 26-December 16, 2019);
- Online community mapping exercise to understand opportunities and constraints in our trail system (November 26-December 16, 2019);
- Brainstorming engagement with over 300 children in grades 2-5 during the City's Local Government Week visits (October 15-25, 2019);
- Sport user group survey continued (December 20, 2019-January 28, 2020);
- Sport user group meeting (January 14, 2020);
- Presentation and discussion with the Accessibility Advisory Committee;





Master Plans

- Advertising and correspondence sent to a number of key stakeholder groups (November/December 2019);
- Internal stakeholder workshops (nine workshops from November 2019-February 2020);

In the first phase of engagement for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan update we heard from 677 individuals. In the first phase of engagement for the Guelph Trails Master Plan update in 2017 we heard from 570 individuals. During this phase we heard from 1,051 individuals or groups.

Wherever possible, we reviewed and incorporated community engagement data from other related City of Guelph projects such as the [2019 Strategic Plan](#) and [2019 Citizen Satisfaction Survey](#).

What we heard

The online survey asked questions about communicating with the community, recreation facilities, recreation programming, parks, park amenities and trails. There was also a map to record what was working well and what wasn't working well in our trail system. The people who responded to the survey were mostly adults ages 31 to 55 (62.4 per cent) or adults over 55 (24.7 per cent).

Key findings for recreation

- 86 per cent of people find it easy to find information about City programs, services and facilities. People prefer to use online sources to get information like the City's website, the Guelph Community Guide online and/or the City's Facebook or Twitter. 35 per cent of people prefer a print form of the Guelph Community Guide and 21 per cent of people prefer learning about programs in-person at recreation centres.
- 45 per cent of survey participant's prefer a drop-in (pay-as-you-go) style of programming and 16.9 percent prefer drop-in (membership) based programming to fit a more flexible lifestyle or to make participating in recreation programs more affordable.
- About 67 per cent of people believe that the price they pay for recreation is a good value for their money. 75 per cent of people either agree or strongly agree that registered aquatic programs are a good value and 61 per cent believe that ice programs, fitness programs and general interest programs are good value. Less than 1 per cent of people don't believe that Guelph's programs and services provide good value for money.
- 59 per cent of people believe that free satellite-based programming like Activation Stations are important for the City to offer and 64.7 per cent of people believe the City should develop more of these programs for all ages. Only 22.5 per cent of people would be interested in paying a small fee for this service.





Master Plans

Key findings for parks and trails

- 88.2 per cent of people feel that they live close enough to a park and 72.9 per cent of people use the park that is closest to them most often. For 27.1 per cent of people that don't use the park closest to them the popular reasons include: they prefer destination parks, prefer larger parks, go to parks with specific amenities/features, prefer a specific type (natural or sports fields) and prefer parks with more shade.
- The top three priorities for the future of our park and open spaces are: 1) connecting parks with trails, sidewalk or greenways, 2) obtain more land for parks in the form of small pocket parks in existing areas, 3) add more trails in existing parks and natural areas.
- 92.4 per cent of people believe naturalization in parks and open spaces is important. Many people believe we should be improving our existing natural areas (NHS) and including unmown areas or more tree canopy in our parks.
- Similar to the results in phase one, almost half of people believe that adding or improving trails is the best way to provide recreation in our community to adults, youth and seniors. The other top popular amenities include: dog parks, all season rink with boards and a ninja obstacle course/outdoor fitness equipment.
- The top three tools identified for creating improved trail experiences are: wayfinding signs, dog waste bags at trail entrances, and water fountains in key locations. 39.7 per cent of people identify that the City should invest in trails for experiencing nature—narrow natural surface trails.

Ideas to make parks, recreation and trails better

- Focus our efforts on creating a healthy community that serves all ages, backgrounds, income levels and abilities
- Invest in City infrastructure to encourage daily exercise, such as on-road cycling, trails, safer streets and higher quality public spaces that are senior and kid-friendly
- Make recreation affordable to for all to provide better access to all income levels
- Install more low-cost/free park amenities for informal play like disc golf, cross country ski trails, bocce ball, pick-up sports or other similar features
- Make facilities multi-purpose and provide half-ice rinks/ice dividers to increase ice time
- Build the South End Community Centre
- Encourage all-season use including winter and provide relevant amenities year-round
- Provide more washrooms and water fountains in key locations and parks
- Plant more trees in parks to provide shade for users and contribute to other environmental benefits

In addition to the online survey, people were asked to provide feedback on the city's trail system—what was working and what wasn't working. We received 84 comments that





Master Plans

ranged from small improvements like better winter maintenance is needed to very large infrastructure upgrades suggesting bridges or underpasses in key locations.

How we're using your feedback

Community feedback is one factor in creating a guiding plan for recreation and parks in the future. As we prepare the master plan we will also consider:

- Alignment with other plans and strategies (e.g. Community Plan, Strategic Plan)
- Overall community benefit
- Environmental sustainability
- Future trends and population changes
- Technical considerations and operating impacts
- Financial sustainability

Next steps

In the next phase, we will review the plan framework. We will also review potential recommendations of the plan and prioritize which ones are the most important to tackle first.

The next round of engagement is planned for late 2020 and early 2021. Sign up to receive updates and participate at haveyoursay.guelph.ca.

The project is proceeding with some schedule adjustments as staff balance ongoing work with responding to community needs resulting from COVID-19. An updated schedule will be posted on the City's web page shortly.

