

# Golden Age Society's Board Position on Amalgamation

August 15, 2024

## Summary

The Golden Age Society Board of Directors has reviewed all the available information on the Proposed Amalgamation Implementation Plan of the Yukon Council on Aging (YCOA), the ElderActive Recreation Association (ERA), and the Golden Age Society (GAS). The board is not saying "no to amalgamation", but rather, it is saying that more information and time are required before saying "yes to amalgamation."

The board feels that there are unanswered questions on the Proposed Amalgamation Implementation Plan. There are planning, financial, staffing, and governance questions that are not fully addressed in the plan that we feel need more clarification. Examples of specific questions, as well as concerns and information gaps are given in the attached appendix.

In order to allow the time to address these amalgamation questions, we suggest that the following motion be presented to the members of all three organizations at the Special General Meetings (SGMs) on October 10<sup>th</sup>:

Would you like us to continue to pursue the amalgamation of YCOA, ERA and GAS? Yes or No.

An affirmative response to this question would give us the mandate and time needed to address these unanswered questions. Answering these questions would give the members of all three organizations the information and confidence needed to make a rational decision on amalgamation. Shared communication with the members of all three organizations is essential to this process.

## Acknowledgements

We appreciate the leadership and careful thought of the Amalgamation Feasibility Committee (AFC), which has brought the discussion on possible amalgamation to this point. This includes the leadership shown by the AFC representatives of the YCOA, GAS and ERA and their respective board members. We also appreciate the funding provided by Health and Social Services under the direction of ADM Sharon Specht and the work done by the consultants from YZED Projects (Wendy Morrison); NomadMind (Ryan van der Marel); and Casson Ltd. (Linda Casson).

Prepared by:  
Board of Directors  
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## Appendix 1. Overview of Questions, Concerns and Information Gaps

The following are examples of Golden Age Society board amalgamation questions, concerns and information gaps that we hope to address. These are mainly related to planning (including governance and staffing), financial considerations, and communication with members.

### Planning

- The transition process to a new amalgamated board needs to be better defined. We need to plan the transition process and communications to anticipate and respond to questions and possible negative reactions. We also need to define any funding requirements for the transition as funding timing could be critical. The plan would need to outline what work needs to be done to implement the amalgamation plan, how it would be done, and who would do it. Currently, it is not clear who will do the remaining undefined tasks. For example, will some amalgamation work require funding to hire a contractor?
- Staffing plans need to be completed, including alignment of human resources policies, assignment of staff duties and supervision to ensure all administrative and financial tasks are completed. Staff location and office space allocation, software review, selection and upgrading, systems integration, membership list consolidation, etc. all need to be dealt with.
- We need to consider how to stage the amalgamation to ease the transition to the new organization and cope with the possible lack of enough office space in one location. That is, we need to address the desire/need for all the staff to be located in one office to share the workload better and achieve operating economies.
- The policy development process and the policies to follow are not clearly defined. A timeline for developing and approving bylaws and policies for the combined organization will need to be prepared.
- Would the legacy organizations continue to exist once assets have been transferred to NHY? (NHY refers to the proposed name for the new organization, Northern Horizons Yukon).
- The proposed name, Northern Horizons Yukon, has received criticism for not referencing seniors clearly enough. It's not readily apparent from the name that it is a seniors' organization.

### Financial

- Some have argued that amalgamation would result in cost savings, while others have pointed out that there would be some additional costs. A more detailed financial plan and combined budget, including expected start-up costs and any required funding, needs to be prepared and vetted. Finding any funding for planning and startup will need to be addressed in a timely way.
- Revenue and expense estimates need to be refined, justified with an appropriate rationale, and approved.
- A plan to transition assets to the proposed new organization needs to be completed. This includes discussing how to treat the legacy organizations' accumulated financial reserves.
- More information on the implications of obligations under Golden Age's condominium ownership arrangement is needed.

- A process to develop a membership fee structure is missing. At this point, it appears that most members would prefer one low annual membership fee. A plan to deal with the potential associated revenue loss is needed. How will the transition strategy be reflected in the new membership fee structure?

### Communication with Members

- An effective communication process is needed to reach members and help them become invested in the proposed amalgamation. That should include an effective method for getting and incorporating feedback from seniors.
- The members' desire to continue existing programs should be recognized and supported.
- We need to address the fears expressed that each group may lose something after amalgamation that was not anticipated before amalgamation happened.
- The desire expressed to keep the existing Golden Age facilities safe for seniors should be acknowledged.
- As a goal, we need to include activities that appeal to all groups of seniors, not just those currently attending.