Mississauga Youth Plan
Environmental Scan

May 2008

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

In October 2007, the City of Mississauga hired through a public Bids process a consultant, The Students Commission of Canada to conduct a public consultation process to develop a Mississauga Youth Plan. Engaging young people in the development of the Youth Plan was to be a cornerstone of the process of creating the plan. The Students Commission is a charitable youth organization and lead of The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, affiliated with academics and institutions across Canada. It committed to hiring Mississauga youth to be involved from the outset as members of the consultant's team.

This Environmental Scan is the first of a series of reports; it reviews and summarizes key background information to guide the development of the plan and its presentation to City Council. It highlights trends, issues and opportunities identified from around the world and from local Mississauga sources.

The research included:

- a better practices review from cities around the world

- interviews with key informants: City Councillors, City staff and staff from community organizations

- a review of documents, statistics and other material pertinent to youth in Mississauga.

The second report, the Youth Engagement Report, will detail the youth engagement process and present the results from youth consulted across all wards in Mississauga; the third report will set out a Framework for a Youth Plan, and the fourth report will detail an Action and Implementation Plan. During the last phase, the impact of specific recommendations will be looked at in relationship to current city policies, programs and staffing requirements, implementations in other municipalities, and methods of measuring and evaluating success moving forward.

Why engage youth?

The Mississauga Youth Plan will address the needs of almost 22% or Mississauga's population who are between the ages of 10 and 24. (2006 Census). Evidence shows that being involved and engaged in community activities and extracurricular activities is associated with many positive benefits for young people. Engagement is also associated with reduced negative behaviours, improving the community for all generations. Effective practice shows that involving young people in designing, planning, marketing and implementing opportunities for their peer group and themselves results in more relevant, successful, and well-attended programming.

> " *For example, we were having a lot of problems of kids riding their bikes in*
> *forested areas and they were killing the forest. We went in and met with them*
> *and explained to them that they are killing the forest….. We fenced it off, but we*

said we'd find them a new place. We ordered pizza and sat down and talked to them. We did a search and ended up with Meadowvale North Sports Park. We brought in the dirt and they built the jumps. They dedicated the park to a young man who had been killed. The kids built it, they maintain it, they do lessons. They have great ownership ...." (Interview 13)

In a Play Works youth engagement project (Do It Yourself), 21 groups across Ontario received $1,500 for short-term projects for youth to design their own projects which increased the participation of youth from 481 youth (who were originally involved in applicant programs) to 6,043 youth. Participation increased overall by 18,000.

This environmental scan and previous consultations confirm that the City itself, together with other community groups throughout Mississauga, offer a great many programs and services. Yet, many young people are either unaware of them or unable/unwilling to access them. Moreover, there is a substantial drop-off in the numbers of youth using programs and public spaces at age 16 (an 87% drop in Recreation and Parks youth registrations, see Appendix 2). These facts alone suggest that engaging youth, not just in the development of the Youth Plan, but also in its ongoing implementation would be a wise strategic investment.

Summary Areas of Focus

Four thematic areas of focus emerged from the scan: transportation, accessibility of programs (place and cost), lack of awareness of existing opportunities, and increasing the diversity of youth participation in continuous planning and participation.

Transportation

A comparison to other jurisdictions in Ontario revealed that public transit costs for students are higher in Mississauga than in 5 other jurisdictions (i.e., London, Toronto, Hamilton, Oakville, and Ottawa).

Key informants, as well as various reports and previous consultations, identified transportation as a major concern and dealing with youth transportation needs through a variety of strategies was identified as an effective practice.

Accessibility

Pricing for programs run by the City of Mississauga's Recreation and Parks is set by a corporate policy on pricing. The subsidy offered for low-income families is depleted early every year. Effective practices in other jurisdictions show that free services, at least in low-income neighbourhoods significantly increase child, youth and family participation rates.

Many youth face barriers to participation in physical activity and recreation in the current system. The barriers identified include: program costs; transportation; lack of awareness about programs and subsidy policies; inflexible and uninviting program structures and schedules; class and racial discrimination; lack of family/parent support

or disapproval; time constraints and changes in lifestyle in immigrant youth; and age and gender.

Background information and key informant interviews suggest that some communities in Mississauga will need more support/resources than others. Emphasis should be placed on accessibility and on meeting the needs of diverse communities in appropriate ways.

For instance, emerging themes related to Recreations and Parks services for youth in Mississauga include: the need for more basketball nets; a need for increased recreational facilities and activities in areas such as Churchill Meadows/Lisgar; public interest in increased level of services directed to youth, including an increase in teen centres; and an interest and precedence for Mississauga's Recreation and Parks Division to providing services using a number of alternative delivery approaches and through partnerships.

Specific to library programming for youth, Mississauga library staff members have reviewed best practices and trends for library services geared to youth. They examined best practices in seven areas of library services to teens: administration, collections, programs, services, electronic resources, facilities and staff. They detail numerous recommendations in these areas, but central to all of this is the involvement of youth in all areas of library service to improve accessibility and use of programs and facilities..

Lack of Awareness

Several previous and current consultations have indicated that many youth are simply unaware of the current opportunities that exist and perhaps need some different kind of communication to become aware and access them. The Peel Youth Violence Network has identified increasing community awareness as one of its priority action areas. In 2006, at the Mississauga Youth Summit's "Things to Do" workshop (MYAC, 2006) youth had identified that there was not enough to do and during the workshop Recreation and Parks staff showed youth participants what programs are in place. Youth provided feedback on available programs and identified the lack of outreach to inform youth of programming.

Diversity and Breadth

The background review demonstrates that in order to address youth needs, a Youth Plan needs to be holistic and not focus primarily on sports and athletic opportunities. This was stressed by key informants and by many of the effective practices that reach out to a broader range of participants, accommodating a variety of needs and interests within diverse communities.

Social activism and arts and cultural activities provide other venues for youth engagement, increasing the breadth of opportunities within municipal programming. "Youth" is not a homogenous group; alternative structures may need to be established to engage different youth, and special efforts need to be made to engage youth that are typically disengaged.

Evidence is suggesting that not only does activity matter in terms of outcomes, but what also matters is whether it fits the community's needs and interests, who is supporting it and how youth are engaged.

Structures and Roles for Youth

Many municipal governments in Canada and elsewhere are in the process of developing or implementing plans to improve youth engagement and services for youth in their cities. Most commonly, they include: 1) a governance structure for youth to advise the municipal government; 2) opportunities for youth consultation on various municipal policy issues; and 3) events, activities and programs for youth.

At the systemic level, there are many existing frameworks developed to create child and youth friendly communities. Internationally, the Child Friendly Cities Initiative is a framework by UNICEF to make cities liveable places for all. A more local framework, Play Works is a movement committed to promoting investment in play in Ontario. It suggests several criteria that make a community youth friendly, as for example, including facilities dedicated to youth play and adults championing the need for youth play.

There are many approaches that facilitate reducing barriers and increasing accessibility. These include: linking programs to an overall community strategy; engaging youth in identifying needs and planning programs; creating partnerships; reducing or subsidizing user fees; and ensuring that transportation is accessible and affordable. Key informants also put an emphasis on diversity of programming and increasing the number of less structured programs and spaces for youth.

In summary, youth can be engaged through programs in many different ways: as participants, consumers, planners, deliverers or in governance roles offered by a wide range of stakeholders: the City, private clubs, community organizations, regional authorities and the private sector.

Existing strengths and weaknesses of the City

As part of the environmental scan, interviews were conducted with Mississauga's City Councillors, staff from community organizations, agencies, and educational institutions. In addition, one small focus group was conducted with Recreation and Parks programming staff, and two individual interviews were conducted with city staff (from Recreation and Parks and Library Services). The main strengths identified by key informants include the City's facilities and range of programs: city government and staff; the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee; sports opportunities; schools; and partnerships. The main weaknesses identified by key informants include: getting around in Mississauga; lack of unstructured, less supervised social spaces; underutilized space in schools; accessibility issues; lack of leadership and decision making opportunities for youth; and lack of good facilities in some areas.

The main ways in which youth are currently involved in Mississauga as identified by key informants are: sports and sport organizations; school involvement; and in decision making and planning, mostly through the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee.

Several themes emerged when respondents were asked how the costs of the Youth Plan could be covered, including: corporate partnerships/sponsors; all layers of government; existing resources; and partnerships in order to ensure access for lower-income families.

Overall: themes, trends and opportunities

The three components of the environmental scan point to some initial themes, trends and opportunities to keep at the forefront in both the consultative and planning phases of the Mississauga Youth Action Plan. The scan has identified the following effective practices that are mentioned repeatedly in numerous documents, literature and examples of practices in various jurisdictions.

Breadth, Diversity and Responsiveness

- Provide a variety of meaningful roles and options for youth to be engaged in a breadth of activities. Programs and opportunities should be flexible and change over time to be responsive to different/changing interests and diverse youth.

- Focus on inclusion and diversity with proactive outreach to disengaged youth and their families in an acceptable and respectful way.

- Focus on gender and diversity and different needs and experiences of young women and men and ethnic minority communities.

- Hire diverse and representative support staff: staff that youth can relate to (i.e. from representative cultural, linguistic, experiential backgrounds).

Accessibility

- Provide accessible opportunities for children, youth and their families to be engaged (e.g. accessible locations, financially accessible costs, programs tailored to communities).

- Provide access to affordable transportation.

- Focus on youth's rights to public spaces and provide informally structured social spaces for youth to safely hang out. (It is more accurate to identify the effective practices as informally structured spaces).

Building and Leveraging Capacity of Youth

- Focus on positive strengths of youth while also meeting specific needs of "youth at risk" (positive youth development and asset -based approach).

- Hire and promote youth in decision making, planning consultation roles, and supporting them to build and continuously engage a constituency base of their peers.

- Provide opportunities for youth to build skills (training and support) and move into different (appropriate) roles as they grow.

- Engage youth in planning/development of programs (e.g. recreation), services/spaces (e.g. transportation, parks) and delivery of programs for youth to foster youth "ownership" of programs.

- Support youth-initiated and/or grassroots, community-based programs.

- Build capacity of supportive adults to engage youth(e.g. training as an important component) and foster adult-youth partnerships and shared decision making).

Systemic Practices

- Approach programs with a broader vision for youth recreation (e.g. drop-in activities or engagement in social activism/justice activities) and link programs to overall community strategies.

- Build strong strategic partnerships with community organizations, services and institutions.

- Provide adequate systemic support (policies, budget, dedicated staff, youth positions).

- Integrate various municipal departments and regional/provincial services for youth.

- Provide ongoing reflective evaluation that is focused on the quality of the interactions and engagement and not on numbers for continual adjustment to changing needs.

Building on current strengths

The scan also points to some current strengths to build upon and themes that might be considered in the remaining phases of the Youth Action Plan.

- The City of Mississauga has multiple strengths that the Youth Plan could build upon, including: good facilities, dedicated staff, an Access and Equity Committee, existing partnerships with schools and community organizations, and a forward-thinking, proactive approach with the development of a youth plan.

- The background review and key informant interviews highlight the importance of partnerships. The City could develop further its partnerships with schools, community organizations, the private sector and social services.

- The background review demonstrates that in order to address youth needs, a Youth Plan needs to be holistic and not focus primarily on sports and athletic opportunities. It needs to accommodate a variety of needs and interests within diverse communities.

- Background information and key informant interview results shows that some communities in Mississauga will need more support/resources than others. Emphasis should be placed on accessibility and on meeting the needs of diverse communities in appropriate ways.

- The Mississauga Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee is also a strength. The plan could build on the existing structure of the committee to ensure that its members have the capacity and support to learn how to be more representative of a broader range of Mississauga youth and play a key role in providing input into the city's day-to-day planning.

The key informant interviews and effective practices within the literature support the growing trend of engaging young people in youth strategies from the beginning of the process, including planning, implementing, ongoing pulse-taking and evaluating throughout the life cycle of a plan.

Purpose and Scope of the Environmental Scan

The City of Mississauga has commissioned The Students Commission of Canada as the administrative lead of the Centre for Excellence for Youth Engagement (CEYE) to work with youth and the city to develop a plan that will make Mississauga a more youth-friendly community. Youth engagement, participation and ownership are cornerstones of the project. The primary focus and philosophy of the youth action plan will be directed at ages 12 to 24, with specific focus on three age categories of 12-15, 16-18 and 19-24. This environmental scan report is the first of four project reports that will be followed by a youth engagement and consultation report, a youth framework report and a youth action plan report.

The purpose of the environmental scan was to identify themes, trends, issues and opportunities for consideration in subsequent phases of the project. The background research for the scan included three components:

1. A better practices review of models for youth engagement, facilities, programming and leadership in North American and international cities

2. Interviews with key informants, including city councillors, staff from community organizations, and city staff

3. A review of documents, statistics and other material pertinent to youth in Mississauga

The environmental scan report is intended to be a planning tool that will facilitate the development and implementation of the next stages of consultation and framework development by identifying themes, trends and opportunities that need to be further explored.

These next stages will consult widely with young people and then develop with youth and City staff a framework for the plan, based on what the public consultation process reveals and the environmental scan of effective practices, trends, gaps and opportunities. Once the basic framework and recommendations are in place, the development of the implementation plan will consider how the following relate to the proposed plan: current City polices regarding youth, current staff serving youth in the City, comparisons to other municipalities on key factors such as cost, pricing, dollars invested, diversity of programs. The implementation plan will also examine current and proposed methods of communicating with, and engaging youth, and measures for tracking and evaluating success of the implementation of the plan.

Mississauga: Demographic Picture

Mississauga is Canada's 6th largest city with a population of more than 700,000. Mississauga has a diverse population, with almost 42% of the population having a mother tongue other than French or English. Results of the 2006 census show that Mississauga has been seeing rapid growth with a 9.1% increase from 2001 to 2006;

however, the proportions of young people in the city were similar in both census time periods.

Statistics from the 2006 census data contains breakdowns for age categories with Mississauga having a higher proportion of individuals in the 10-14, 15-19 and 20-24 age categories than both Canada and Ontario. The data shows that in 2006:

- 21.6% (145,005) of Mississauga's population was between the ages of 10 and 24;

- 7.4% (49,625) of Mississauga's population was between the ages of 10 to 14;

- 7.3% (49,090) was between the ages of 15 to 19; and,

- 6.9% (46,290) was between the ages 20 to 24.

Community profiles are not available for 2006, but 2001 census data of Mississauga's 23 residential districts shows that the fastest growing areas in Mississauga are the City Centre, Churchill Meadows and Hurontario[1] (the area bounded by Highway 403 on the south and east, Mavis Rd on the west, and Matheson Blvd. East on the north). With the exception of the City Centre, the three youth age groups (10-14, 15-19, and 20-24) were significantly represented in all city districts. Erin Mills, East Credit and Hurontario had the highest proportions of youth in the city. (See Appendix 1.)

Youth Involvement in Mississauga

The following section provides an overview of activities, structures and other initiatives within the City of Mississauga related to current youth involvement in the city.

Recreation and Parks

The City's Recreation and Parks division runs a multitude of programs directed to youth, ages 12 to 18. These include general aquatics programs, aquatics leadership, arts, dance, drama and music programs, fitness programs, general interest programs, skating, and a variety of sport programs. These programs and activities are advertised in Recreation and Parks Guides and specific information for youth is promoted through a one-page general description flyer and the city web pages.

In 2006, there were 20,867 registrations for programs by youth ages 12 to 18. There was a significant drop in registrations from those 12 to 15 (n=18,514) to those 16 to 18 (n=2,353). (See Appendix 2 for more detail). In 2007, there were 19,859 registrations; 17,324 for those aged 12 to 15 and 2,535 for those aged 16 to 18.

Drop-in programs are also offered through the city and these include basketball, dances for teens and pre-teens, Friday night drop-ins, after-school and games drop-ins. In 2006 there were 36,157 visits recorded in drop-in programs across city community centres for youth ages 12 to 15 and 441 recorded for youth aged 16 to 18.

---

[1] Source: City of Mississauga Planning District Documents

More than 1,750 youth fitness memberships were also sold in the same year, ranging from day passes to yearly memberships.

Mississauga has many facilities available for different programs and activities including 11 major community centres and 11 minor community centres[2], arenas (25), ball diamonds (97 unlit and 40 lit), cricket pitches (3), football fields (2), lacrosse boxes (1), soccer fields (186 unlit and 17 lit), multi-use trails (210 km), indoor soccer facilities (1), outdoor tracks (1), BMX dirt jump facilities (4), gymnasiums (10), indoor swimming pools (11), multi-purpose/basketball pads (50), outdoor rinks (3), outdoor swimming pools (7), playgrounds (256), multi-use ramp parks (7), spray pads (14), public tennis courts (70), and community club tennis courts (68).

Several documents identify numerous key themes related to Recreations and Parks services for youth in Mississauga:

- The *2004 Future Directions for Recreation and Parks* identified the need for more basketball nets saying that trend research indicates that basketball is a growing sport and one of the most favoured activities for youth and children. The flexibility and low cost of basketball increases its appeal amongst all cultures and ethnic communities.

- Public input to the *2004 Future Directions for Recreation and Parks* noted demand for community centre space in the Churchill Meadows/Lisgar area of the city. The forecast for the growth of this community indicated a need for more recreational activities.

- The public opinion survey administered as part of the *2004 Future Directions for Recreation and Parks* indicated an interest in increased level of service directed to youth, including an increase in teen centres (59% of respondents), basketball courts (43%) , youth outdoor soccer, (36%), youth indoor soccer (34%), skateboarding (34%), youth baseball (32%), and extreme sports like BMX biking (28%).

- Mississauga's Recreation and Parks Division has a history of providing services using a number of alternative delivery approaches. Partnerships have been identified as one of the key strategies to achieve the Division's vision and mission.

Library Services for Youth

The Mississauga Library System offers a variety of services and programs for youth aged 12 to 24 throughout its 18 locations. In 2006, Library Services held 41 programs directed at teens. These programs were attended by more than 470 teens between the ages of 12 to 18. Some of the youth-relevant services are designed for all ages and are part of the library's general mandate to meeting the educational, information, recreational and cultural needs of Mississauga's residents. Others are geared specifically to youth. Specific youth programs include:

---

[2] A minor centre is space used on a limited basis or is a stand-alone building such as a small hall.

- Teen Book clubs at some locations

- March Break and summer programs at some locations

- Author visits

- School library visits

- Outreach to schools

- Presentations or displays at schools

- School open house, school trips, music and book clubs (for those libraries that are linked to schools).

- Volunteer programs for teens, including Reading Buddies where teens are paired up with younger children

- Teen summer reading clubs at some locations

Pricing, Access and Subsidies

Pricing for programs run by the City of Mississauga's Recreation and Parks are set by a corporate policy on pricing. The policy states that "the fee charged for participation in a recreation program is based on an evaluation of the benefits the program or service provides for the community." There are is a set of detailed criteria used to evaluate the pricing of recreation services and programs. The policy says that the greater the community benefit, the greater the justification for the use of public money to cover the costs of the programs or services.

At the current time, there is a fee for most programs provided for youth in Mississauga, including drop-in programs, but the pricing does vary depending on the program. A review of pricing charts shows that fees for drop-in programs start at $1 for a sport or youth "room" drop-in and range up to $6 for shinny hockey. Registered programs have higher costs.

The city has identified some concern over pricing and access to programs and has several initiatives in place to deal with these concerns.

- Results of the public meeting process for *the 2004 Future Directions for Recreation and Parks* highlight a concern about the financial accessibility to programs by many of Mississauga's residents.

- The city has recently initiated an Access and Equity Committee to assess and introduce an access policy for Recreation and Parks.

- To date, the Jerry Love Fund administered by Mississauga Recreation and Parks has helped subsidize the cost of recreational fees for children and youth who cannot afford the cost of a program. The fund began in the mid 1980's and has provided recreation experiences to hundreds of children in Mississauga (9,429 cited in 2006 general report). Referral for the subsidy is made by a social service agency. The fund is available for children and youth 15 years and younger for one program or one session of camp per calendar year up to a

maximum subsidy of $140. Money for the fund is raised through fundraising activities that include donations from clubs and other bodies.

- Wal-Mart at Play Mississauga Program is a corporately sponsored program that provides free after-school sports activities in a supervised environment in local community centres and schools. The initiative provides programs in two age groups: 10 to 12 and youth 13 to 15. In 2007, 17,790 children and youth participated in the program.

- While not a city initiative, the Canadian Tire Jump Start program also provides subsidies for some of Mississauga's youth. This Canada-wide program helps kids in financial need participate in organized sports and recreational activities such as hockey, dance, soccer and swimming. Jump Start delivers support to the Boys and Girls Club, as well as the YMCA.

Community Programs in Mississauga

In addition to city-run programs, community agencies, sports clubs and other organizations that serve both Mississauga and Peel Region provide services and activities for youth. The range of programs through these organizations is substantial and diverse as evidenced by a survey distributed by the city in the summer of 2007 to 500 community groups in Mississauga. Of those 500 groups or organization, 19% (n=95) responded. The results showed that:

- The respondents represented a diverse range of sectors, including cultural groups, sports organizations, clubs/leadership organizations (e.g. Scouts), community and social services, neighbourhood services, churches and others.

- Together these 95 organizations had over 50,000 youth members.

- 64% (n=61) said they provide recreation and sports programs.

- 38% (n=36) provided educational programs.

- 29.5% (n=28) provided social service programs.

- 19% (n=18) provided arts programs.

- 5 % (n=5) provided leadership initiatives.

- 3% (n=3) provided environmental programs.

- Attendance in their combined programs was over 40,000 for ages 12-15, over 30,000 for ages 16-18 and over 15,000 for ages 19-24.

Several community organizations provide activities and programs geared specifically for youth in Mississauga. A few are highlighted here.

- The Dam Youth Drop-In, located at the back of Meadowvale Town Centre is for youth aged 13 to 19, with drop-in and various programs running from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. from Monday to Thursday and 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Fridays, and afternoon programs on alternating Saturdays. The drop-in program provides a place for young people to hang out or get help if they need it. They support youth who are

looking for alternative education, and provide youth with skills necessary to be independent. The Dam fosters relationships between youth and potential employers, to help obtain and keep a job. Youth outreach workers staff the Centre and volunteers are committed to helping youth make smart choices for their lives.

- The Square One Youth Centre (SOYC) is located inside Square One Mall and is open to all youth, with the average age being 23. SOYC provides Internet access for students who need to do research or write resumes and cover letters. The Centre provides a variety of programs geared towards youth who are looking for jobs or in need of peer counselling. There is a Youth Council that meets every other week to discuss current issues facing youth and respond to those issues with activities, workshops, events, and leadership opportunities. There are also a number of discussions such as "Girl Talk" and workshops such as "Babysitter Training", "Leadership Training" and "Sexual Health". SOYC also has a Homework Club for students in grade 7-12, where they can receive tutoring.

- The YMCA has a variety of programs for youth, both its own buildings and in others. The YMCA's Peel Youth Village is both a housing development with short-term, mid-term, and long-term housing in 48 rooms and a neighbourhood centre in the Acorn Community. It offers a variety of services to both its residents and other community members, including access to social services, employment and life-skills counselling and free community outreach programs. The Employment Resource Centre offers support with cover letters, resumes and provides workshops. The YMCA also offers the Youth Leadership Corps (YLC) program for youth, ranging in age from 11 to 19. YLC discussions talk about issues that youth face on a continuous basis. Members can participate, free-of-charge in fitness and recreation, volleyball days, inter basketball league, table tennis competitions. Other activities include a homework club run by volunteers and student placements and dominoes club.

- The Boys and Girls Club (BGCC) is funded by the United Way and works to provide at-risk youth with new opportunities and help them overcome barriers, create supportive relationships, and develop skills and confidence for life. The Club facilitates social and recreational activities for youth in a group setting, designed to enhance the growth and development of children. The BGCC is a place for youth to go after school, especially between 3:30 and 6pm. The programs vary, but main concerns are emotional and physical health, safety and security, success at learning, social engagement and responsibility.

- The Missing Drop Project is a youth-led initiative that aims to promote community involvement among local Mississauga youth. They hope to encourage more young people to make the most of their mandatory 40 hours of service and to match students with opportunities that are meaningful, worthwhile and fun. Their tasks have included building a web database of all the volunteer opportunities in the city, launched in late August 2007, and developing interactive presentations for high school students to motivate them to make a positive difference in the community.[www.missingdrop.org]

- Community programs continue to grow and respond to the needs of the community. For example, the Peer Adult Learning Centre has recently initiated a

Youth Host Program. The goal of the program is "to help newcomer youth overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of successful and fulfilling integration by connecting them to appropriate social networks and build their confidence to independently engage in the community." The program focuses on group matches of newcomer youth with youth that are Canadian born or have been in Canada for more than five years.

Peel Youth Violence Prevention Network

The Peel Youth Violence Network was formed in December 2005. It is a partnership of 44 agencies and community agencies serving youth in the Peel region. The Steering Committee investigated the issue of youth violence and determined that a collaborative approach was essential. The efforts of the Peel Youth Violence Prevention Network, in which the City plays a key role, are significant because the City operates within a two-tier government system, where certain services, social services in particular, are the jurisdiction of the regional government, not the City. The Committee established that:

- Youth violence is an issue in Peel.

- Existing programs reach only a small proportion of Peel's youth.

- Large service gaps and challenges exist for organizations that are trying to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population.

- A collaborative community approach is necessary to reduce violence among youth.

The Committee set three primary goals based on their findings:

- Research the issue of youth violence prevention in Peel with police, schools, youths, faith groups and community groups.

- Develop an inventory of existing programs from agencies and organizations directly or indirectly involved with youth violence prevention programs in Peel.

- Host a forum targeted to community agencies and organizations directly or indirectly involved in youth violence prevention in Peel.

The Peel Youth Violence Prevention Forum, held in June 2006 in Brampton, was attended by 147 participants representing Peel youth, local agencies and organizations, faith groups, police, and school boards. Each participant was either directly or indirectly involved with youth violence prevention programs in Peel. This Forum provided the opportunity to share background information and multidisciplinary perspectives on youth violence in Peel. The information and perspectives revealed at the forum became the foundation of a violence prevention community-based strategy specific to Peel. The following actions were identified and prioritized and have since been assigned to separate working groups:

- Foster a sense of neighbourhood in communities.

- Create more community drop-in centres for youth.

- Develop a better approach to zero tolerance policy in schools.

- Help parents develop better parenting skills.

- Enhance the connection between families and schools.

- Develop a Student Employment Network.

- Create co-op programs to provide youth with mentoring.

The Network hired a full-time co-ordinator in 2006 and in 2007 created the Peel Youth Charter. This document forms the foundation for safe and supportive environments and to date more than 1000 signed charters have been hung across the region. In October 2007, Mississauga Council pledged to display the charter in all its recreation centres, libraries and other public spaces.

In its Community Report for May 2008, the Network outlines its vision for the next three years. This vision includes four priorities: increasing community awareness; advocacy with all levels of government; engaging youth and families by developing new programs and keeping schools open after hours; and strengthening networks of support.

Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee

Founded by Mayor Hazel McCallion in 1982, the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee (MYAC) has evolved into a dynamic and dedicated group of young Mississauga residents between the ages of 14 to 24.

- The MYAC's mission is to strive "to be a dynamic, outgoing volunteer organization, which spearheads a host of beneficial community projects; actively encourages youth involvement and creates unique, constructive recommendations, all the while aspiring to foster a positive image for the City of Mississauga and its young citizens".

- The Advisory Committee and its activities are supported by various private sponsors.

- MYAC members volunteer at numerous city-run activities and organize events such as Youth Week.

- MYAC monthly general meetings are a forum to meet new people, learn about and discuss issues affecting young people, and receive opportunities to make a difference in the community. Average attendance is about 40 youth.

- In 2002, MYAC started holding monthly debates on issues concerning youth and revived the Ambassador's Program, where students act as liaisons between MYAC and their school. This Youth Task Force is a sub-committee of MYAC with a mandate to raise awareness of issues important to youth and to advocate for change in a positive direction. The Task Force consists of 16 members, representing high schools from all over Mississauga, who are selected from a

handful of applicants by the Chairperson and Director of Government Affairs. At the beginning of every term, MYAC general members vote on what issue the Task Force should deal with. Topics dealt with by the Task Force have included HIV/AIDS and violence.

- Mississauga Youth Week is organized by MYAC and was founded in 2000. Through events, ceremonies and celebrations, Youth Week strives to create an atmosphere of celebration and promise for the future. Youth Week includes events organized by other community organizations that are oriented toward young people and held throughout Mississauga. Events in 2007 included: the Mississauga Youth Achievement Awards; a scavenger hunt to encourage public transit use; a youth public speaking competition; an essay contest; a park clean-up; soccer event, and a youth art showcase.

Public Transportation for Youth in Mississauga

Effective February 2008, the single ride bus fare for Mississauga's children in Grades 1 to 8 and students in Grades 9 to 12 is $2.75. This rate is the same as for adults. Children and students do get a reduction for buying tickets in bulk or a weekly or monthly pass as outlined below.

- 5 or 10 tickets work out to $1.60 per trip for children and $2.15 for students as compared to $2.30 for adults.

- Weekly passes for students are $22.50 and $24.00 for adults, with no weekly pass for children.

- Monthly passes are $93 for students and $99 for adults, with no monthly pass for children.

- Seniors can purchase a monthly pass for $39 and a yearly pass for $390.00.

- Mississauga Transit and The University of Toronto, Mississauga campus, have initiated the Universal Buss Pass. Full-time undergraduate or graduate students pay $89 for unlimited travel for the Fall and Winter terms (September 1 to April 30). Participation in this program is mandatory for all eligible students.

A comparison to other jurisdictions in Ontario revealed that public transit costs for students are higher in Mississauga than in five other jurisdictions (i.e., London, Toronto, Hamilton, Oakville, and Ottawa).

Conversation 21

Conversation 21 is a public engagement campaign to gather the thoughts and ideas of Mississauga residents to build a strategic plan for the future of Mississauga. Mississauga's citizens have been involved by submitting puzzle pieces that ask "what is the future of Mississauga?" Other consultation processes have included a two-day event, featuring a conversation about priorities and goals. Transit, the environment,

arts and culture were among some of the themes identified. The puzzle pieces results were categorized into eight themes:

1. Getting around in Mississauga
2. Going green
3. Creating wealth in the community
4. Embracing social diversity
5. Positively influencing our quality of life
6. Investing in creativity and knowledge
7. Vibrant downtown
8. Realizing our potential in the Golden Horseshoe

Youth were engaged though the two-day event as well as the puzzle piece initiative. Youth were represented at the forum and presentations were made at numerous primary and secondary schools. Puzzle pieces were distributed and 2,545 puzzle pieces were completed by youth in the schools. This represents about a third of the total number of puzzle pieces collected (over 6700). Over 23% of the total number of puzzle pieces collected talked about transportation.

The Need for a Youth Plan

The need for a Youth Plan for the City of Mississauga has been identified and documented over the past few years in several initiatives and reports:

- The 2004 *Future Directions for Recreation and Parks* recommended that the city, in partnership with the Library System, Neighbourhood Watch, Youth Outreach programs and school boards develop a Youth Strategy to identify recreation and social support needs of Mississauga teens and how these needs can be addressed through city programs, facilities and services. Other recommendations relevant to a Youth Plan included a recommendation to increase the number of skateboard parks and BMX facilities and the development of a thoughtful, fair, equitable and sensitive financial assistance policy that would subsidize individuals and groups who may not otherwise be able to access programs or facilities due to an inability to pay.

- The 2006 Mississauga Youth Summit's "Things to Do" workshop (MYAC, 2006) identified various issues with Recreation and Parks programming for youth. The aim of this workshop was to create an open dialogue between Mississauga's Recreation and Parks Division and youth. Youth had identified that there was not enough to do and during the workshop Recreation and Parks staff showed youth participants what programs are in place. Youth provided feedback on available programs and identified the lack of outreach to inform youth of programming as an issue as well as some problems with arts programs (e.g., costly, wide age-spans, not tailored specifically to youth). Youth also identified some barriers to participation: transportation, cost of programs, locations, and lack of drop-in centres. For library services, youth suggested extending the hours, providing more computer access, providing more activities geared to youth, and having a more relaxed atmosphere in some areas of the library.

- Through various meetings and documents the city also identified: 1) that there are pockets of poverty within each city ward; 2) there is a concern with increased youth violence; 3) the Jerry Love fund that provides subsidized recreation is depleted early each year; 4) there is evidence that outreach to multicultural groups is needed; and 5) that there is a willingness in the private sector to contribute resources toward youth programs and outreach programs.

The process for the development of a Youth Plan was initiated in 2007. The Youth Plan Team consists of city staff, the Students Commission of Canada (as project consultants), and a Youth Advisory Team. Involving youth from the onset, one of the initial activities of the youth plan process was to hold a branding contest for the logo and tag line. Youth were asked to submit their designs. The top three designs and tag lines were posted on the youth sections of the city's website. Youth were then asked to vote on their favourite and several favourite designs were blended together to create the logo. In the next phase, as the consultant was hired to conduct the youth engagement strategy for the development of the plan, youth from Mississauga were recruited immediately to be part of the process. The full description of this process will follow in the Youth Engagement Report.

Why Youth Engagement? Rationale, theory, evidence

Defining Youth Engagement

As mentioned earlier, youth engagement is a cornerstone of the development of a Youth Plan for Mississauga, based both on the rights of children and youth to be consulted on decisions that affect them (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Canada is a signatory, and upon a body of literature on effective practice that suggests plans and programs for stakeholders work better when stakeholders are consulted.

There is no single generally agreed upon definition of the term "engagement". Increasingly, the definition developed by the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement (CEYE) is being used and referenced throughout Canada. As defined by CEYE, youth engagement is:

> *"the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity that has a focus outside him or herself. Full engagement consists of a behavioural component (such as spending time doing the activity), an affective component (for example, deriving pleasure from participating), and a cognitive component (for example, knowing about the activity)"* (Pancer, Rose-Krasnor, & Loiselle, 2002, p. 49).

Engagement then refers both to the activities that young people can be involved in, ranging from sports, music, arts, service, volunteering, recreation, learning, and to the process that makes the activity meaningful (efficacy, fun, skill-building, opportunity to contribute, type of structure). It is a broader definition which includes the quality of the experience, as well as structures which focus on youth participation activities and

youth decision-making such as youth councils, youth boards, youth participation activities.

Regardless of the specific wording, there are some common elements to most definitions of youth engagement:

- participation must be meaningful to the involved young person;
- youth have opportunities to take responsibility and leadership; and
- youth work in partnership with caring adults who value, respect, and share power with them.

Further, it should be noted that "engagement is a process, not a particular program—and most importantly, it is reciprocal, dynamic, and interactive" (McCart & Clark, 2005, p. 3). Also, current research indicates that breadth of engagement, that is, engagement in a wide-range of activities, is important for youth development and positive outcomes (Rose-Krasnor et al., 2006; Busseri et al., 2006).

The implications are that a city strategy promoting the healthy development of its youngest citizens will invest in providing a broad range of positive activities to foster their growth and positive behaviours, address the barriers that prevent participation and ensure that there is a process in place to sustain youth engagement in ongoing implementation of the strategy.

Youth engagement is associated with positive health outcomes for youth, the people with whom they interact, and the communities and systems in which they live. Engaging youth contributes to the health and well-being of youth and communities, encouraging communities more responsive to young people's needs. Meaningful engagement can help young people take more positive risks and make healthier decisions to promote healthier outcomes. For example, decreased marijuana and hard drug use, decreased use of alcohol, lower rates of school failure and drop-out, and lower rates of depression are associated with young people being involved in positive extra-curricular activities (Mahoney et al., 2005).

A Framework for Youth Engagement

The CEYE has developed a Youth Engagement Framework for thinking about youth engagement, including how engagement is initiated, how [it] is sustained and supported, the qualities that make it effective, and its outcomes. The framework can be used at three levels of analysis: individual, social, and systems to encompass young people themselves, their families and friends, and the local community and the city.

Figure 1: CEYE Youth Engagement Framework[3].

---
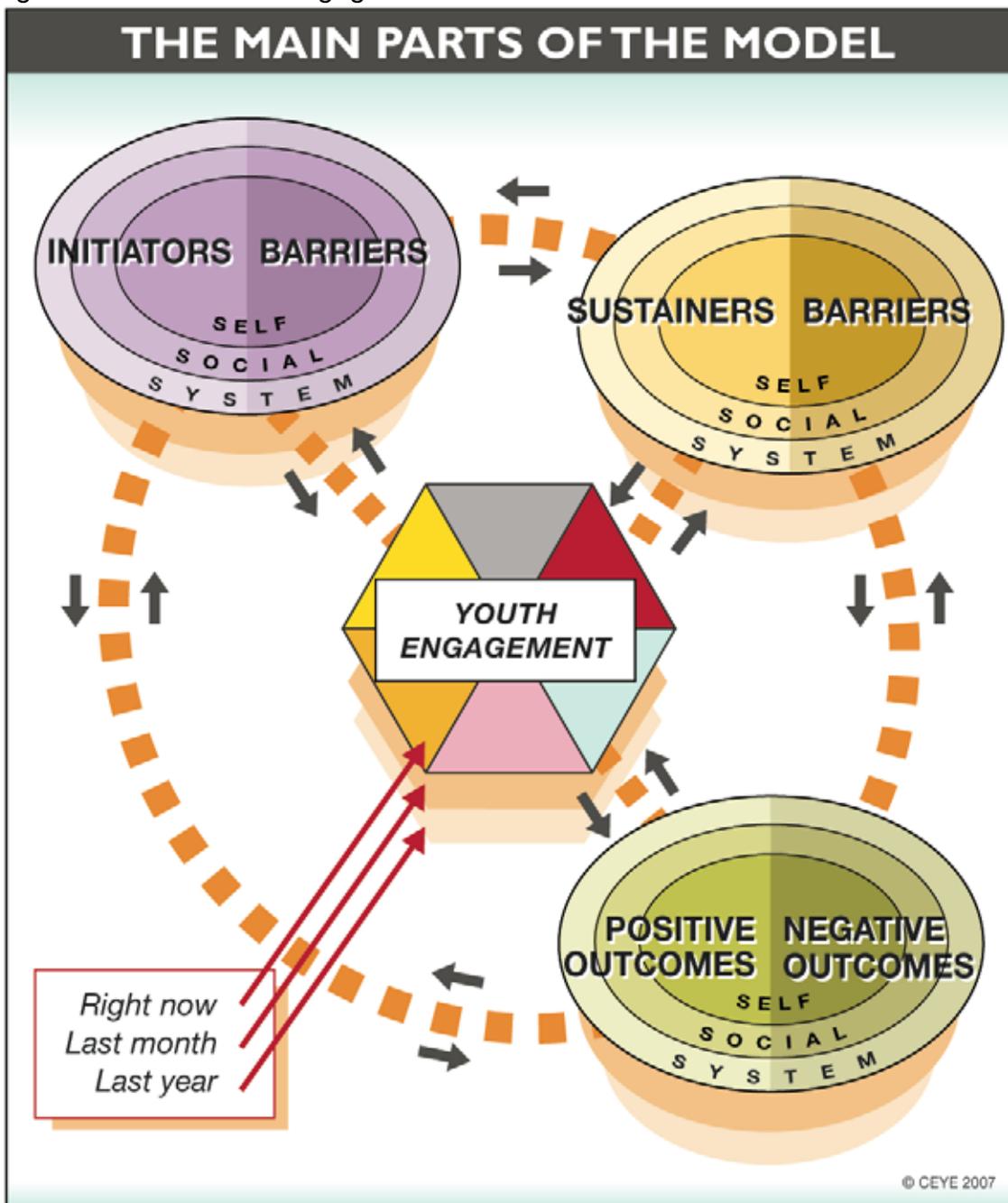
[3] The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement framework was originally developed by Dr. Mark Pancer (Wilfrid Laurier University), and modified by Dr. Linda Rose-Krasnor and Michael Busseri (Brock University), and Stoney McCart, Director of the Centre and the Students Commission, with the core partners of the Centre.

The next sections provide the evidence from academic research for the positive outcomes associated with positive outcomes for young people, their peer groups, friends, families, organizations, City programs and the broader community.

At the individual, social and systemic levels, there are many positive outcomes from youth engagement.

Individual Level Outcomes

Engagement can provide opportunities for young people that are associated with many positive outcomes including:

- **Personal growth and identity development:** by presenting young people with opportunities to try out different roles, responsibilities, and activities; learn about their personal limits, gain self-knowledge, engage in self-reflection, and gain self-awareness and respect for themselves and others (Dworkin et al., 2003; Finn & Checkoway, 1998; Pancer et al., 2002)

- **Skill, knowledge, and capacity building:** in areas such as research, evaluation, public speaking, problem solving, critical thinking, reading and writing, decision making, moral reasoning, and community organizing (Finn and Checkoway, 1998; Cargo, Grams, Ottoson, Ward, & Green, 2003; Checkoway, 1998; Conrad & Hedin, 1982; Matysik, 2000; Roker, Player, & Coleman, 1998).

Engagement has been linked to many positive health benefits[4] such as:

- **A reduction of risk and problem behaviours:** such as a lower overall involvement in delinquent activities and lower involvement in serious delinquent activities (Agnew & Peterson, 1989; also see Anderson-Butcher et al., 2003; Eccles & Barber, 1999).

- **Reduced drug and alcohol use:** studies have shown reduced drug and alcohol use (Jenkins, 1996; Komro et al. 1996). However, it should be noted that participation in team sports is sometimes linked to increased alcohol consumption (see Eccles and Barber, 1999; Eccles et al., 2003; Komro et al.1996). It is likely that the cultural norms and media images related to team sports surrounding some substance use, such as alcohol, influence youth behaviour, but to date no studies have provided evidence about why this is.

- **Positive academic outcomes:** such as increased school enjoyment and higher grade point average (e.g., Anderson-Butcher et al., 2003; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Eccles et al., 2003).

---

[4] For a comprehensive literature review visit the CEYE website at www.engagementcentre.ca.

Social Level Outcomes

Engagement can provide young people with positive outcomes at the social level. The following outcomes have been associated with positive youth engagement:

- **Broadened social networks and strengthened relationships within those networks:** this results from meeting and developing strong relationships with youth from outside their original peer network (Dworkin et al., 2003).

- **Strengthened relationships within their social networks:** Engaged youth have reported developing intimacy with and feelings of loyalty toward their new friends and have reported increased feelings of empathy for and understanding of these diverse individuals. Engaged youth have also been found to be more attached to their friends, families, and schools than uninvolved youth (Dworkin et al., 2003; McGee et al., 2006).

- **Networking with adults and expansion of their social capital:** Youth learn about their communities and how they operate, experience support from leaders and community members, and gain access to resources such as information (Dworkin et al., 2003; Jarrett, et al., 2005).

An important part of youth engagement is awareness of who is getting opportunities to be engaged, and who is disengaged. A diversity of youth can lead to more opportunities for learning, new contributions and new perspectives.

The term "youth at risk" is used to describe young people who are likely to experience non-adaptive outcomes or display problems. Although some researchers have identified problems with using this terminology, currently, the literature does not provide a more respectful and/or appropriate term to replace "youth at risk". For the purposes of this scan, the term "youth at risk" will be used to describe young people who are exposed to risk factors. For youth that are considered "at risk", engagement is as beneficial to them as youth not experiencing risk, if not more beneficial. Youth engagement can provide a variety of positive outcomes for minority and at risk youth including:

- **Personal growth and identity development**: by helping youth learn about themselves, develop ethnic identities, learn about their cultural heritage, realize their own potential, feel good about themselves and their futures, feel empowered, and feel more satisfied with their lives (Bloomberg, Ganey, & Alba, 2003; Green, 2000; Jones, Bibbins, & Henderson, 1993; Maton, 1990; McMahon, Singh, Garner, & Benhorin, 2004).

- **Skill, knowledge, and capacity building:** in areas such as goal-setting, social and leadership skills, decision making, and job/career skills such as research/evaluation skills and interviewing skills (Bloomberg et al., 2003; Dutton, 2001; Harper & Carver, 1999; Jones et al., 1993).

- **A reduction of risk and problem behaviours:** In one study, young people who participated in extracurricular activities were less likely to be arrested on

criminal charges as young adults than similar, uninvolved peers. These findings held true mostly for the youth who were at the highest risk of engaging in antisocial behaviours (Mahoney, 2000; also see Pedersen & Seidman, 2005; Yin, Katims, & Zapata, 1999).

- **Reduced drug and alcohol use:** The research in this area is mixed. One study found that involvement in high school sports was linked to decreased substance abuse in Black males and increased substance use in White males (Eitle, Turner, McNulty Eitle, 2003). Another study found that minority middle school students who participated in empowerment lunch and after school clubs reported decreased use of both alcohol and marijuana after one year in the program, but also a slight increase in the use of cigarettes and other drugs (Nelson & Arthur, 2003). Thus, programs that may reduce the likelihood that young people use certain substances may not necessarily have the same effect on all substances. Further, young people from certain backgrounds may be more likely to experience protective effects as a result of involvement than others.

- **Positive academic outcomes:** such as decreased school dropout, especially for those at the highest risk of attrition, feeling more positively about their school environment, performing better in school and becoming involved in enriching academic activities, having higher educational aspirations, spending more time doing homework, and applying to more universities (Mahoney, 2000; Marsh and Kleitman, 2003; Pedersen & Seidman, 2005; Posner & Vandell, 1994; Yin et al., 1999). It should be noted that participation in neighbourhood groups has been linked to decreased academic achievement in poor urban youth; however this finding may be indicative that young people who struggle with school might be more likely to seek out connections to adults and peers in neighbourhood-based groups (Pedersen & Seidman, 2005).

Systems Level Outcomes

Although there is less research at this level, there is evidence to demonstrate benefits of youth engagement for programs, organizations and communities.

- **Benefits for youth-serving staff:** Zeldin and colleagues found that working in partnership with young people was often an extremely beneficial experience for youth-serving professionals. For instance, many adults began to feel more positively about young people in general. They also became more confident in their abilities to work with and relate to young people and better able to understand young people's needs and concerns.

- **Improved Programming and Organizational Culture:** Zeldin's work also indicated that as a result of effective youth engagement, many adults were able to develop and refine their organization's youth programming so that it was more effective and more responsive to young people's needs. The organizations also benefited from working directly with young people because youth engagement philosophy often became a part of the organizational culture, which led to changes in how things were done at all levels of operation.

- **Application of new knowledge:** Zeldin and colleagues (Zeldin, Larson, Camino & O'Connor, 2005) point out that organizations must have the kinds of cultures, norms, and structures that make it possible for adult staff to develop meaningful and beneficial partnerships with young people if they want their youth engagement efforts to be successful. Indeed it can be quite challenging for adult staff to adapt to working with young people, especially when it comes to finding the right power balance in their relationships with their young partners. Thus, Zeldin and colleagues assert that organizations must help guide adults in creating healthy partnerships with young people. They also insist that in order to help staff to adjust their new roles and relationships with young people it is important for organizations to make sure that staff have enough time, space, and opportunities to come together to share information, reflect, and try out new ideas/apply new knowledge (Zeldin, Larson, Camino & O'Connor, 2005).

- **Income a system barrier to participation:** There is some work that suggests connections between "systems" and the impact on whether or not youth will become and stay engaged, and what needs to happen at systems levels to engage youth. Work by Dan Offord and others indicates that low-income children and youth participate in extra-curricular and community-based recreational activities at much lower rates than others.

Effective Practice Review

Many municipal governments in Canada and elsewhere are in the process of developing or implementing plans to improve youth engagement and services for youth in their cities. Most commonly, they include:

1. A governance structure for youth to advise the municipal government

2. Opportunities for youth consultation on various municipal policy issues

3. Events, activities and programs for youth

The Youth Engagement Spectrum (see Figure 2) is a model that outlines levels of youth engagement, demonstrating how different opportunities and situations can fit and potentially move to higher levels of engagement. At the highest degree of engagement, youth and adults share decisions. Municipal engagement initiatives fall within this spectrum, ideally moving towards higher youth involvement and ownership in shared partnership with adult decision-makers. The levels are a useful way of being conscious of where on the spectrum a program or initiative intends to operate. For different purposes, the various degrees of engagement are appropriate in order to achieve certain outcomes. Effective practices communicate clearly to children and youth what the level of engagement is intended to be.

Figure 2: Youth Engagement Spectrum

Adapted from Roger A. Hart and Sherry Arnstein (1969)
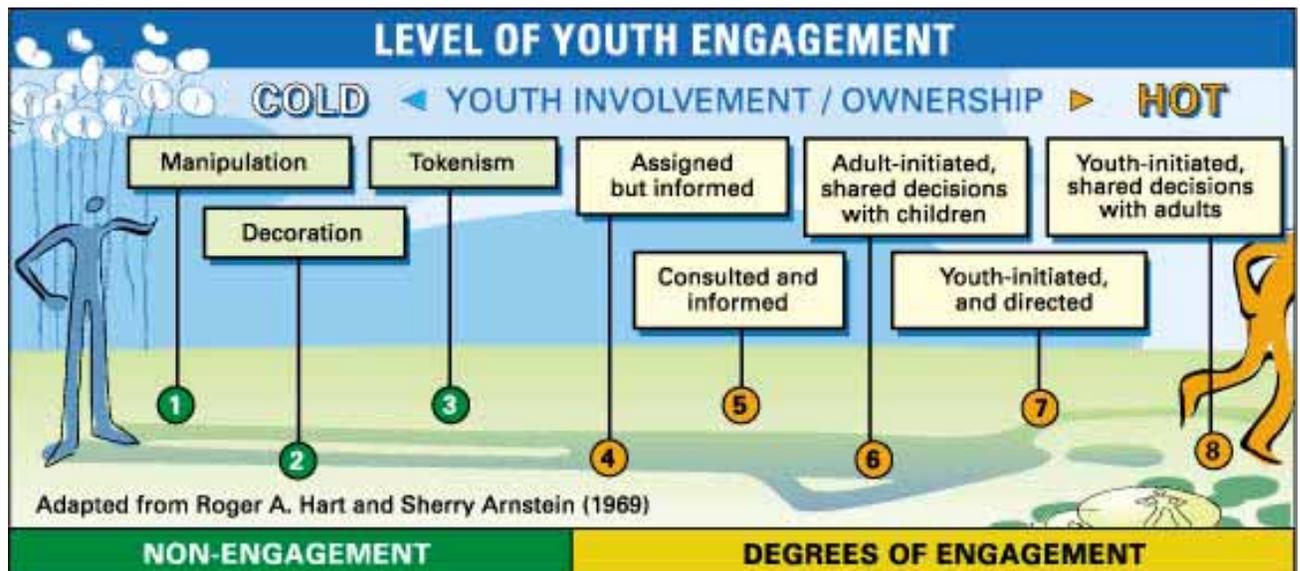
The following sections of this report summarize the scan of relevant documents and materials related to youth engagement at a municipal level. The sections include an overview of the three themes identified above, as well as an overview of

frameworks to create child and youth friendly communities, and finally a discussion of key barriers and issues related to accessibility to youth engagement

Some examples are used to illustrated effective practices in these three areas. Further examples of practices can be found in Appendix 3.

Governance and Policy

At the systemic level, there are many existing frameworks developed to create child and youth friendly communities. Internationally, the Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFC) is an initiative of UNICEF to make cities liveable places for all.

A Child Friendly City is actively engaged in fulfilling the right of every young citizen to:[5]

- Influence decisions about their city

- Express their opinion on the city they want

- Participate in family, community and social life

- Receive basic services such as health care and education

- Drink safe water and have access to proper sanitation

- Be protected from exploitation, violence and abuse

- Walk safely in the streets on their own

- Meet friends and play

- Have green spaces for plants and animals

- Live in an unpolluted environment

- Participate in cultural and social events

- Be an equal citizen of their city with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability.

> In Canada, the City of Edmonton has used this framework to develop their municipal youth strategy, Child Friendly Edmonton, and cities in many countries around the world have adopted the framework.

The child-friendly city is a concept that cross-cuts all sectors and is a framework to assist cities to become more child friendly in all aspects of their environment,

---

[5] These criteria are available on the Child Friendly Cities website: http://www.childfriendlycities.org/home.html

governance, and services. Through this framework, cities recognize the relationships between sectors as they affect children and youth.

> The Society for Children and Youth of British Columbia has developed a Child and Youth Friendly Communities project that is focused on housing and the child's right to play. However, in order to address the child's right to play, the environment that surrounds children and youth must be addressed. Lack of transportation and heavy traffic; for example, have been shown to limit the range and diversity of children's play (Centre for Sustainable Transportation, 2004).

Play Works, a movement committed to promoting investment in play in Ontario, suggests several criteria that make a community youth friendly:[6]

- Facilities are dedicated to youth play
- Adults champion the need for youth play
- Schools support the youth friendly approach
- The community commits funding for youth play
- Youth activism and advocacy for play is nurtured
- Youth can get to the play programs that are offered
- Youth have options for play
- The community supports public youth events
- Youth feel comfortable in their own community
- Youth are formally connected to the community
- The community celebrates and recognizes its youth
- The community supports positive youth development
- Play is accessible to youth with disabilities
- The community has models of effective community partnerships
- The community supports youth volunteerism and leadership development
- It is easy for youth to find information about play activities in the community

The frameworks and elements of inclusive child and youth friendly communities are implemented in cities in many different ways based on the needs identified by children, youth and their families. The roles of children and youth in cities vary: participants in programs, consumers of services and products, planners, program

---

[6] The Play Works criteria is available online at http://www3.playworkspartnership.ca

deliverers, youth representatives, advisors, decision makers and ultimately change agents (Laidlaw Foundation, 1999).

The research on youth friendly cities also includes recommendations for common and public spaces. The Australian Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (1999) has developed guidelines for how to re-design cities to be youth friendly. The guidelines recommend numerous re-designs for cities that address some of these barriers, including:

- Maximize public transportation and design for access and circulation
- Design public spaces to accommodate a wider range of users
- Make safer places
- Design formal and informal spaces for public entertainment and as meeting points with a focus for activity and outlets for expression
- Provide for spaces in the public realm in addition to those provided privately
- Ensure spaces for activities such as skateboarding are separate from main paths of movement, but in locations that are visible[7]

Governance Structure

In general youth governance structures involve youth members that are responsible for providing advice to the municipal government on issues related to youth. Their success is linked to common effective practices:

- Youth engagement and its supporting structures (e.g. funds for permanent staff) are embedded in municipal policy
- Youth have been consulted in the development of municipal policy and implementation
- Young people are hired to provide their expertise (stipends)
- Full-time permanent staff are dedicated to provide formal and informal support for youth within governance and planning groups
- Youth are recruited continuously
- City councillors advocate for and work directly with youth
- Strong partnerships exist with community organizations and services
- Municipal structures are responsive to youth input and consultation
- Adults are continuously educated about youth engagement
- Evaluation is continuous, as is feedback to youth.

---

[7] For a full list of recommendations, see www.planning.nsw.gov.au/programservices/pdf/udas_yo.pdf

The Youth Commission of Gatineau, Quebec represents 14,000 youth from five amalgamated cities. There are 20 seats for youth representatives which form a majority in relation to adult representatives. At the systems level, the Gatineau Youth Commission has many sustaining factors to support youth engagement, including a yearly budget, three appointed city councillors and full-time staff (from the department of Recreation Services, Sports and Community). In addition, other councillors and representatives from community, organizations and specialists are brought in as needed. In interviews with Gatineau youth and city councillors, both indicated that close mentoring between councillors and youth were what made the Commission work.

The City of Vancouver's Civic Youth Strategy was passed by the council in 1995 and embeds their commitment to youth in municipal policy. The city created a full-time position, the Child and Youth Social Planner, that is dedicated to coordinating and planning in collaboration with other levels of government, the youth community, service providers and internal city departments. In addition, the Youth Outreach Team is a team of young people hired as city staff, specializing in youth involvement. The Youth Outreach Team has its own separate budget, office space and access to different city resources.

Youth Consultation

Consultation is another way that municipal governments engage youth. Effective practices include:

- Building capacity for youth (e.g. facilitation training)
- Hiring youth facilitators to design, plan and implement consultation with their peers
- Actively reaching out to youth at-risk
- Partnering with community
- Responding with actions based on youth consultations
- Seeking out input from a broader constituency of youth so that politicians and decision makers are more likely and able to respond.

The City of Vancouver's Youth Outreach Team (YOT) is a team of youth hired as city staff who specialize in youth involvement. They bridge the gap between the city and the youth of Vancouver by functioning as guides for youth to access the municipal system and create opportunities for youth to be engaged in decision making processes. The YOT trains and hires youth as facilitators to conduct consultations with youth about issues identified by various departments.

Youth Involvement in Decision Making and Planning

The literature highlights that youth engagement in decision making and planning can contribute to a higher level of engagement, leading to more benefits for youth, programs, and communities. There are some key strategies to successfully engage youth in governance and decision making that are also ultimately foundational to working with youth in any role. Some of these include (Laidlaw, 1999):

- Recognizing the diversity of youth: that youth is not a homogenous group, alternative structures may need to be established to engage different youth, and special efforts need to be made to engage youth that are typically disengaged
- Capacity building: youth need to have developmental opportunities to develop skills for effective engagement
- Responsiveness to youth time horizons and tangible results
- Avoiding tokenism
- Clarifying expectations and limitations
- Providing effective orientation and learning opportunities for both adults and youth
- Ongoing staff support
- Tailoring the time, place and format for youth
- Recognizing the contribution of youth

As a way to make Munich, Germany more child and youth friendly, a Child-Action-Suitcase and Child-Plan-and-Build-Mobile-Unit has been developed. These are tools to facilitate participation of children in planning processes. They include instruments for participatory planning such as: tools and materials to build scale models, materials for drawing and painting, camera and sound recorder, tables and chairs, exhibition set and documentation. They can be borrowed by anyone who is planning to design/build facilities for children, community organizations, schools, housing, etc. (Child Friendly Cities, 2004c).

Youth Events, Activities and Programs

Many municipalities support youth events, such as Youth Weeks, Youth Awards, and other similar activities to recognize youth in the city. These may also include youth conferences and events whose purpose is youth capacity building (e.g. leadership training) and networking.

Youth can also be engaged through programs in many different ways: as participants, consumers, planners, deliverers or in governance roles. In addition to recreation programs through private clubs and community organizations, municipalities offer recreation and physical activity programs through their parks and recreation departments as well as through library services. There are examples of innovative programs targeting youth (arts, recreation, sports, cultural, etc) all over the country and the world, however, interestingly it's not the activity that seems to matter in terms of outcomes, but rather whether it fits the community's needs and interests, who is supporting it and how youth are engaged.

Recreation and Physical Activity

The benefits of youth participation in recreation and physical activity are well documented. Physical activity and participation in recreation has been shown to improve or enhance self-esteem, academic and cognitive performance, peer and family relationships, social and emotional development, health, and community connectedness (OCASI, 2005; CCSD, 2001). A study by the Australian Institute of Criminology found that sports and physical activity can reduce crime by providing accessible, appropriate activities in a supportive social context (Cameron and MacDougall, 2000).

Parks and Recreation Ontario (1999) has identified elements of success in planning recreation services or youth. **Essential elements** include

- Respect - valuing the views of youth and the differences among youth and treating one another with dignity.

- Empowerment - involving youth in a meaningful way by sharing decision making and management of activities.

- Giving Voice – providing opportunities for youth to question, be listened to, be heard and be understood.

- Diversity - recognizing, valuing and responding to the diversity in cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, and interests of youth.

- Leadership - ensuring that leaders have a positive attitude and are "in touch" with youth issues and providing training and support for leaders to inspire and motivate others.

- Mentoring – opportunities for youth to learning positive social skills, cooperation and how to organize activities from effective adult leaders.

- Youth-Centered - working with youth to plan programs suited to their unique style.

- Accessibility - making recreation resources easily accessible to youth in their local areas. Safety, public transportation, and the time of the program need to be considered. Go to where the youth are (e.g. a traveling youth centre that goes to local malls).

- Affordability - making programs available to all youth regardless of financial ability by keeping them low cost or no cost. By developing community partnerships, you can often keep expenses down.

- Using Community Resources - expanding the reach and effectiveness of programs to attract the most marginal and under-served youth. Use cooperative efforts and pool resources to involve the whole community: families, schools and community partners.

- Safety - providing positive, non-threatening environments for youth.

Play Works sponsors a "Do It Yourself" project, which provides minimal financial support ($1500) to young people to develop a self-initiated, short-term play project (such as recreation, leadership, sports, travel, arts, performances, civic engagement, and volunteerism). The success of the short-term projects is a telling demonstration of efficiency, innovation and youth engagement in design, planning, delivery and decision making. Twenty-one groups across Ontario received funds and resulted in an increase in the number of youth engaged. The Do It Yourself funding increased the participation of youth from 481 youth (who were originally involved in applicant programs) to 6,043 youth. Similarly, the number of hours youth were involved in productive play activities increased by 18,000 (Play Works, 2007). These results speak to the potential of supporting youth to be engaged in the development and delivery of programs for themselves and their peers.

Parks and Recreation Ontario (1999) also suggest ten **effective structures and components** of programs.

- Youth-led services

- Unstructured programs – Many youth prefer non-traditional, non-competitive activities with fewer rules and regulations.[8]

- Fun, social opportunities

- Place to hang out/drop-in centre

- Trained youth leaders – As well as being trained in youth issues, it is important that youth leaders come from the community they are serving and have a positive attitude toward youth.

- Low cost/no cost

- Easy access and well promoted – Make it easy for youth to get to the program. Avoid locations requiring complicated transit or long distances and make sure they know about the program

- A safe, non-threatening environment – Steps should be taken to ensure youth feel safe coming to your location (e.g. lighted pathways and entrance) and comfortable in the surroundings

- A mixture of youth – Services should attract males and females from diverse backgrounds, including under-served youth

---

[8] There is research that indicates that no structure produces poor outcomes (Mahony's study of Swedish drop-in centres) and that the better practice is informal, casual structure appropriately supported with skilled staff

- Regular evaluation (both informal feedback and more organized surveys and focus groups)

The concept of accessibility (easy access) reoccurs in the effective practices and key informant interviews. The trend is to push the notion of accessibility beyond legislative requirements for physical disabilities to be as inclusive as possible, recognizing specific barriers that relate to age.

Programs through Libraries

Specific to library programming for youth, Mississauga library staff members have reviewed best practices and trends for library services geared to youth. They examined best practices in seven areas of library services to teens: administration, collections, programs, services, electronic resources, facilities and staff (DaSilva, 2006). They detail numerous recommendations in these areas, but central to all of this is the involvement of youth in all areas of library service.

- At the forefront, a commitment to youth needs to be an integral part of the library's mission, goals, objectives and strategic planning.

- Youth should be involved in planning and decision making throughout the library.

- Young adults should be employed by the library to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate programs and services.

- Youth should be involved in the collection development process and should explore and develop more formal participation processes for youth such as a teen advisory group.

The report highlights the top ten trends that are currently shaping the direction of library services to young adults:

1. use of internet at library

2. format expansions e.g., teen boys are drawn to graphic novels, DVDs and video games

3. information literacy – teaching teens how to access, evaluate and use information

4. new young adult spaces – ensuring distinct space for teens

5. evaluation – libraries are focusing more on the quality of the teen's experiences and not just the quantity

6. programming – renewed emphasis on teen programming

7. outreach in the community – outreach programs increasingly used as a means to influence those teens who don't frequently visit libraries

8. teens as volunteers

9. youth development – focus on the positive in teens and thereby build on their strengths

10. young adults as library programmers

Social Activism

Social activism provides another venue for youth engagement, increasing the breadth of opportunities within municipal programming. Opportunities for youth engagement need to take into account the diversity and unique needs of youth. Traditionally, recreation, leisure and sports organizations have been concerned with youth development and there has not been as much focus on youth engagement and development through social activism.

An evaluation of the Youth Leadership for Development Initiative (YLDI) demonstrated the many positive outcomes from youth engagement in social activism (Lewis-Charp et al, 2003). Twelve organizations were selected to participate in the three-year initiative. Under the auspices of the Innovative Centre for Community and Youth Development, the organizations were offered technical assistance and opportunities to participate in learning opportunities. The organizations had a focus on addressing community and social issues and were established or run by young adults. The evaluation showed that social activism involvement can make a positive contribution to young people's development and is an effective approach for reaching youth who are often not reached by conventional youth development programs, such as older youth and those who struggle with negative public perceptions of their abilities, limited employment options and support, premature adult responsibilities and other issues. Social activism organizations can provide youth a way to focus on their own cultures and backgrounds and give some youth a forum to reflect on and address the challenges faced by their families and their communities.

The Arts

Art and cultural activities are important ways of engaging youth and extracurricular arts programs are particularly effective in reaching disengaged youth and youth at-risk of various negative health outcomes because attendance is relatively high and sustained among these populations (Wright et al. 2004). Students from lower socioeconomic communities with high arts participation perform higher academically than other students with high arts participation (Catterall et al. 1999). Art activities range from visual and graphic arts, to theatre, music, dance, film and various other innovative methods for creative expression. Arts activities are important outreach tools that can be used to explore various topics with youth, using arts as media for their exploration into issues that are important to them (e.g. social justice issues).

The Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre is youth-driven and is aimed at engaging marginalized and culturally diverse youth in the community. The Centre provides free access to media technology for youth to work together and explore issues and develop resources to address social inequities in their community. (www.catchdaflava.com)

Accessibility

Research has shown that many youth face barriers to participation in the current system of physical activity and recreation (OCASI, 2205: Frisby et al, 2005; and CPRA, 1994). These barriers include:

- Program costs, including registration and equipment

- Transportation, including limitations of getting to the activity and distant program locations

- Lack of awareness about programs and subsidy policies

- Inflexible and uninviting program structures and schedules

- Class and racial discrimination

- Issues related to physical accessibility, and capacity for program inclusiveness, for children and youth with disabilities

- Lack of family/parent support or disapproval

- Time constraints and changes in lifestyle in immigrant youth

- Age and gender (girls and older youth less likely to participate than boys and children or younger youth)

- Limited knowledge of the culture of Canadian sport, recreation and other types of community involvement puts recent immigrants at higher risk of non-participation (OCASI, 2005)

- Increased work obligations: Adult immigrants, regardless of social class, experience less family time more often than non-immigrants (Juniu, 2000). Adult immigrants with low-income level may work two or more low-paid jobs and have less leisure and family time (e.g. could not drop off their child at a recreational program)

- Immigrant youth may have more responsibilities (e.g. staying home alone, caring for siblings and finding paid employment) (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003)

- Parents' language skills are not strong enough to mingle with other parents, coaches, etc (Stodolska, 2004)

- Immigrant youth language skills (Anisef and Kilbride, 1999). (Require program staff who linguistically reflect demographics of population served)

Approaches to Increasing Accessibility

There are many approaches that facilitate reducing barriers, increasing accessibility and fostering inclusion for youth participation in programs. This goes beyond ensuring that public facilities meet the standards of physical accessibility outlined in appropriate legislation.

Linked to an Overall Community Strategy

The literature suggests that recreation, sport and other programs should be linked to an overall community strategy. In Australia, sport and recreation is used as an important strategy to support immigrant and refugee youth to "settle well". However, it is also recognized that their sports programming is only one element and other barriers to participation must be addressed (e.g. education, employment, housing, health services, family and community support, positive relationships with the police, fair and responsive justice system, celebration of diversity, and reduction of social exclusion) (Olliff, 2007).

Engaging Youth as Stakeholders

Engaging youth in identifying needs and planning programs is especially effective to design programs for youth who are typically disengaged or face many barriers to participation.

> In Melbourne, Australia, young Muslim women who were typically disengaged from sports programming, were consulted to identify their needs and design a program that would fit for them. The young women identified their need for an after-school sport program, as well as appropriate times, locations, and cultural requirements (e.g. female instructors only). The program was supported by a partnership of stakeholders including the schools, the community sports stadium, and the Women's Sport Club. The schools promoted the program and parents were supportive because it was supported by the school, was in a familiar environment, took place right after school, and all the coaches were women (Keogh, 2002).

Creating Partnerships

Creating partnerships is key to increasing accessibility. The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) has launched the "*Everybody Gets to Play*" initiative and hopes to assist recreation practitioners and volunteers to provide accessible recreation programs for children and youth living in low income families. They provide recommendations for communities and municipalities to increase accessibility in their areas and emphasize partnerships, including the following recommendations.

- Partner with others, including those living in poverty and community organizations.

- Identify and establish partnerships with other agencies in your community (eg. community schools, RCMP/municipal police, health authority).

- Work with school boards to access community – use of school facilities for conveniently located and accessible programs.

- Work with principals and teachers to link low-income youth to recreation (i.e., share information, encourage participation and provide positive alternatives for kids in need).

- Work with multi-sectoral partners to: create community awareness about the importance of recreation for everybody and to create awareness about barriers faced by low-income families and establish pilot activities to test and evaluate strategies and create programs with long-term sustainability.

Another approach to accessibility involves building partnerships within the community and using alternative facilities for programming, such as the use of schools as community space. Schools and community centres are generally easy to access.

There are other innovative opportunities, some based on outreach in rural or remote communities that increase accessibility to facilities and programming. One option is to bring programming to facilities where youth are present already (e.g. schools, community centres), another option is to bring the facilities to youth.

In a partnership of the United Way of Greater Toronto, the Toronto District School Board, the Toronto Catholic School Board and the Ontario Ministry of Education, the Focus on Youth Program is designed to keep Toronto's youth engaged and productive during the summer holidays. In key neighbourhoods across the city, schools are opened during the summer to host recreational, learning, leadership programming and employment opportunities provided by community agencies.

Reduce or Subsidize User Fees

Cost is a huge barrier to participation and CPRA recommends that organizations and/or municipalities research, develop and test low-cost programs. They also recommend providing youth from low-income families with sport and recreation skills such as swimming and skating in conjunction with leadership training and certifications (e.g. NCCP, Refereeing, Bronze Medallion) at no charge. Toronto Parks and Recreation is currently doing this with skating and aquatics.

The majority of recreation programs in Ontario implement user fees. Many studies (Foot and Hennigar, 1992; Clutterbuck and Howarth, 2002) suggest that user fees

reduce the demand for the activity. In Toronto, with the harmonization of fees following municipal amalgamation, there was a 33% drop of users within a year after fees for recreation services were imposed. When free programs were introduced in Scarborough, participation rates increased by 45% (Clutterbuck and Howarth, 2002).

The main concern for the public is that user fees have adverse distributional effects (low-income families cannot afford services). Play Works recommends eliminating user fees. Ontario had the highest proportion of municipalities that charged user fees for youth programs. A significant proportion of low-income adolescents in Ontario almost never participate in supervised sports, arts, and community programming. In fact, 279,750 adolescents in Ontario were excluded from playing sports for no other reason than because they were poor (Totten, 2005).

Providing subsidies to users can be done by developing a basic service at a low price or at no charge (often used for basic programs, such as swimming programs for children). Or, to avoid stigmatization and bureaucracy, programs can be accessed using a 'smart card' system. All users would obtain access to services using the card, but low-income users would have an initial credit on their cards (Bird and Tsiopoulos, 1997). Those living in poverty are granted free access, while membership dues collected from more affluent members pay for their access.

The Welcome Policy of the City of Toronto subsidizes users as well as some facilities. Individuals who cannot afford to pay for recreational services can receive free services, but only one percent of those who are eligible have taken advantage of this policy. However, facilities in areas where 40% or more of people are below the low-income cut-off provide free services, and in these centres, participation rates have increased by 80%, presumably due to less stigma (Clutterbuck and Howarth, 2002).

Transportation

As one of the most significant barriers to youth participation, transportation needs to be easily accessible and affordable. Therefore, in order to succeed in effective youth engagement, municipalities need to address transportation barriers for youth by ensuring the location of programs and youth meetings are accessible and that youth have free or affordable transportation.

Oakville, Ontario launched the Student Freedom Pass in March 2007. The purpose of the student pass was to enhance and further promote transit use to students. The initiative is revenue neutral, enhancing the use of existing transit services with no additional costs such as the need for new buses. The Student Freedom pass is available for $10.00 per month, with unlimited use for elementary and high school students during weekday evenings after 5 p.m. and all day Saturday, Sunday and statutory holidays.

The Flipside Mobile Skateboard Park and Youth Centre of Caledon, ON, is an innovative example of meeting recreational needs of various neighbourhoods and communities. Rather than have youth go to the program, the program goes to them, making Flipside accessible to youth that would not have been able to participate due to lack of transportation. Flipside serves the dual purpose of providing a safe place to skateboard, bike or skate, as well as a mobile drop-in centre. Flipside attracts on average 10-20 young people each evening in the summer and throughout the year on weekends. Participants range from as young as 7 to 18, although the majority are between 10 and 15 years old.

Key Informant Interviews: Summary Of Key Points And Themes

Methodology

The interview guide was developed by the Consulting Team (Youth Team Members and Project Consultants) in collaboration with city staff (please see Appendix 4). In brief, questions were asked about the city's strengths and weaknesses with regard to opportunities, activities and resources available to youth, how youth are currently involved, gaps in programming for youth, priorities for the youth plan, how costs for the youth plan could be covered, as well as what tools/training may be needed for municipal staff once a plan is implemented.

City staff identified key informants to be interviewed and included the 11 city councillors, city staff, and staff from several community organizations, agencies, and educational institutions. As well, one person with youth recreation experience in the province was also identified as a key informant.

In total, the following interviews were conducted:

- Seven individual interviews were conducted with city councillors; one interview was conducted jointly with two city councillors. (Two city councillors were unavailable to be interviewed.)
- Six individual interviews were conducted with staff from community organizations, agencies, and educational institutions. These agencies and organizations included: The United Way, YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, and the president of the student union, University of Toronto at Mississauga.
- One small focus group was conducted with Recreation and Parks programming staff, and two individual interviews were conducted with city staff (from Recreation and Parks and Library Services).

It should be noted that the interview guide was quite long and often not all questions could be covered in the time period allocated.

Key Points/Themes

Strengths of the City

The main strengths identified by key informants are described below. (Please see Appendix 5 for supporting quotations from the interviews conducted.)

1. **Facilities and Range of Programs:**
   - Identified in 9 interviews (Interviews 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16).[9]
   - Community centres: the facilities and range of programs.

---

[9] Please note that not all questions were asked of every respondent, as mentioned in the Methodology section above.

- Libraries: many locations (18), convenient hours (12-hour days), and they provide employment and volunteer opportunities for young people.
- Outdoor parks and playgrounds: many locations, one respondent reported that they are located within 800 metres of every home.

2. **City Government and Staff:**

- Identified in 4 interviews (Interviews 1, 4, 6, 16).
- City politicians, including the Mayor.
- City is debt-free, well-organized, and there is an emphasis on law and order.
- City staff were described as dedicated and forward-thinking.
- Healthy Cities Stewardship Centre, a coalition of all leaders in Mississauga.
- Peel Youth Violence Prevention Committee.
- Conversation 21 – a symposium that addressed the future of Mississauga.

3. **Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee:**

- Identified in 3 interviews (Interviews 1, 6, 15).

4. **Sport Opportunities:**

- Identified in 3 interviews (Interviews 1, 6, 8).
- For those who can afford it, there are many sport opportunities for youth in the city.

5. **Schools:**

- Identified in 3 interviews (Interviews 1, 10, 14).
- Respondents felt that there was youth engagement occurring in the schools.
- Two respondents identified Stephen Lewis Secondary School in particular, which has a focus on social justice, The building itself houses Applewood School, which supports students with developmental disabilities.

6. **Partnerships:**

- Identified in 3 interviews (Interviews 2, 3, 7).
- Partnership between the city and University of Toronto Mississauga Campus.
- Partnership between the city and the YMCA.
- Partnership between Recreation and Parks and some schools, and between Recreation and Parks and the Boys and Girls Club.

7. **Rate Payer's Associations:**

- Identified in 2 interviews with Councillors (Interviews 9, 14).

- These councillors identified that they had active Rate Payer's Associations in their wards, which they considered to be strengths of the city.

Other strengths mentioned by single individuals included:

- City is committed to ensuring programs and services are accessible to vulnerable families (Interview 1)
- Leadership development programs through various community centres (Interview 1);
- Festivals and events (Interview 8);
- Community spirit (Interview 9);
- Huge potential for Mississauga to be a leader (Interview 2);
- The UTM(University of Toronto Mississauga) youth bus pass (Interview 2); and
- Dam Youth Drop-In (Interview 13)

Weaknesses of the City

The main weaknesses identified by key informants are described below. [Please see Appendix 5 for supporting quotations from the interviews conducted.]

1. **Getting Around in Mississauga:**
   - Identified in 5 interviews.
   - City was not set-up to be walkable.
   - Over-reliance upon the car for transportation.
   - Transit system inadequate – some areas have no or very few bus routes, buses often run infrequently, cost is prohibitive for youth.

2. **Lack of Unstructured, Less Supervised Social Spaces:**
   - Identified in 5 interviews (6 individuals in total) (Interviews 2, 11, 12, 13, 14).
   - Respondents remarked that at a certain age youth just want a place to "hang out" and not necessarily be in structured activities; there were few places to do this in the city.

3. **Underutilized Space in Schools:**
   - Identified in 4 interviews (5 individuals in total) (Interviews 8, 9, 11, 13).
   - Related to the lack of unstructured spaces, respondents reported that there was not a good working partnership with the schools, to open them up to have social, unstructured spaces for youth.

4. **Accessibility Issues:**
   - Identified in 4 interviews (Interviews 1, 4, 6, 7).

- Access to programs is sometimes limited because there are no programs located in certain neighbourhoods and the cost of transportation is prohibitive.
- Some community residents simply cannot afford the cost of programs for youth.
- There are some high-needs, low-income communities that have not been well served.

5. **Lack of Leadership and Decision Making Opportunities for Youth:**

- Identified in 4 interviews (Interviews 1, 3, 4, 6).
- Opportunities to be engaged, express themselves and become leaders through the arts are missing.
- Few opportunities to have youth involved in decision making about what programs and services are offered.
- Lack of civic engagement.
- Few opportunities for facilitative leadership development

6. **Some Areas Lack Good Facilities:**

- Identified in 3 interviews (Interviews 8, 9, 14).
- One ward does not have a community centre.
- Access to pools is limited in some areas.
- Insufficient number of skateparks and BMX trails.

Other weaknesses that were reported by single individuals included:

- City staff could be more reflective of the communities in which they work (Interview 4);
- Lack of safety/perception of the lack of safety at community centres (Interview 7);
- Inadequate space for the Dam Youth Drop-In (Interview 13);
- Lack of media focus on Mississauga (Interview 15); and,
- City government has not made social justice issues a focus (Interview 6).

How Youth are Currently Involved

The main ways in which youth are currently involved in Mississauga identified by key informants are described below. [Please see Appendix 2 for supporting quotations from the interviews conducted.)[10]

1. **Sports and Sport Organizations:**

- Identified in 6 interviews (Interviews 3, 6, 7, 10, 13, 14).
- Mississauga youth that can afford it are involved in sports, and with sport organizations.

---

[10] It should be noted that not all respondents were asked the question about current youth involvement in Mississauga.

- Wal-Mart At-Play, an after school drop-in program at some Mississauga community centres.
- Involvement in community centre sport programs.

2. **School Involvement:**
   - Identified in 3 interviews (Interviews 1, 13, 14).
   - Sports, clubs or Student Councils.

3. **Decision Making and Planning:**
   - Identified in 4 interviews (Interviews 1, 9, 12, 13).
   - Youth involvement in decision making and planning appears to be limited, currently, to involvement on the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee (MYAC) as well as some occasional opportunities when youth have been consulted with respect to public spaces designed for youth.
   - When skate parks and BMX trails have been proposed, youth have also been involved in planning those facilities.

4. **Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee:**
   - Identified in 3 interviews (Interviews 1, 12, 13).
   - Youth on the MYAC may not be representative of most youth in Mississauga.

One Councillor also reported that youth were involved in the Dam Youth Drop-in. In the past, the drop-in was located in a mall and had adequate space; the program grew and became quite popular. However, with management turnover in the mall, the program was forced to relocate and the current space is inadequate for the demand (Interview 13).

Gaps in Programming or Opportunities for Youth

No common themes emerged from the interviews about current gaps in youth programming and opportunities. This, in part, was because not all respondents were asked the question about gaps in programs and opportunities.

Two respondents thought that there was a gap in terms of employment opportunities or employment mentoring for youth (Interview 8, 17).

All other responses were reported by single individuals and included:
- Insufficient number of skate parks (Interview 10);
- Opportunities for younger youth because they cannot go to places on their own (Interview 2);
- Opportunities or programming for older youth (Interview 12);
- Lower income youth (Interview 2);
- Gay youth (Interview 6);
- There is very little to do outside of sports opportunities (Interview 6); and

- Some high needs communities have no access to programming because there is no community centre within walking distance (Interview 4).

Examples from Other Jurisdictions

Due to lack of time in the interviews conducted, not all respondents were asked the question about any examples they had seen in other jurisdictions, with respect to youth programming and opportunities, that they felt could work well in Mississauga. Therefore, there were only several responses and no common themes emerged. Examples provided by respondents included:

- United Way of Windsor: their Board Development program for older youth helps train young adults in governance (Interview 1).
- United Way of Winnipeg: the Youth Investment Committee includes youth who help decide how grants are spent (Interview 1).
- YMCAs: some YMCAs have created a "Youth Zone" in their facilities, which are fun, unstructured spaces where youth can hang out (Interview 3).
- City of Burlington: worked with youth in renovating a house into a youth-friendly community centre (Interview 10).
- City of Toronto: the city hall skating rink stays open throughout the winter, and they have more events and festivals (Interview 14).
- Cities of Calgary and Halifax: lots of opportunities for youth to be engaged and have opportunities to develop their leadership skills (Interview 16).
- City of Hamilton and Halton Region: have done some joint work with youth (Interview 4).
- City of Melbourne, Australia: the city has done a good job of making the city very walkable with trails and paths (Interview 12).

Creating Multi-Generational Spaces

As with several other questions, not all respondents were asked the question about how multi-generational spaces could be created due to lack of time. Only a few of the respondents answered this question; therefore, no common themes emerged.

- Develop the waterfront for all ages, have cafes, walking paths, and spaces where youth can display their art (Interview 1).
- Add community centres onto schools or libraries (Interview 4).
- Street parties or more neighbourhood-based events (Interview 13).
- More events and celebrations (Interview 14).
- Create more engaging outdoor spaces, places that are safe and high quality (well taken care of, good amenities, well lit) (Interview 16). This respondent gave the Frank McKechnie Community Centre as an example. [Please see Appendix 2 for the supporting quotation.]

Youth Plan Priorities and Components

All respondents were asked what they thought was important to include in a Youth Plan for the City of Mississauga; that is, what the priorities should be. Several themes emerged and are described below. [Please see Appendix 2 for supporting quotations from the interviews conducted.]

1. **Include a Range of Activities, Programs and Opportunities:**

   - Identified in 11 interviews (Interviews 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 16).
   - Activities, programs and opportunities should go beyond sports or athletics.
   - Examples given included a focus on arts/culture, volunteerism, civic engagement, leadership development, and employment opportunities.

2. **Ensure Youth are Included in Development and Implementation of Youth Plan:**

   - Identified in 7 interviews (Interviews 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9).
   - Important that youth have a meaningful voice.
   - Important the youth help decide the gaps, priorities and components.

3. **Access to Service, Programs and Opportunities:**

   - Identified in 6 interviews (Interviews 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10).
   - Youth activities need to be local or easy to get to.
   - Some community centres are simply inaccessible or too far away for some neighbourhoods.
   - Ward 10 had no community centre.
   - Services need to be affordable.
   - Services need to address diversity and include marginalized youth.
   - Staff reflect the face of the communities.
   - Activities offered need to be a good fit with the surrounding community.
   - Youth need to be aware of the activities and opportunities; ensure communication with the youth and in a youth-friendly format.

4. **Include Social, Less Structured Spaces and Activities for Youth:**

   - Identified in 5 interviews (Interviews 2, 10, 11, 12, 13).
   - Youth need places to hang out or fun things to do that are less structured.
   - Recommend identifying existing spaces that could be used for such purposes – e.g., schools.

5. **Develop Partnerships and New Ways of Working Together:**

   - Identified in 7 interviews; partnerships with schools/school boards; and identified in 6 of those interviews (Interviews, 4, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15).
   - This will be important in accessing space for youth, and in addressing all needs – the city cannot do it alone.

6. **Engage Council in Development and Implementation of the Youth Plan:**
   - Identified in 1 interview with 2 individuals (Interview 10).

Finally, other recommendations for the youth plan were provided by single individuals and included:

- Ensure the approach is asset-based (Interview 1);
- Break down the plan into age groups/developmental stages (Interview 3);
- Ensure the family is involved (Interview 3);
- Invest money in areas of the city that need it (e.g., Malton, Acorn Place) (Interview 6);
- Address issues of safety and perception of safety (Interview 7);
- Provide more services or education opportunities for young mothers (Interview 10); and,
- Work to improve the perception of young people by adults and seniors (Interview 10).

Measuring or Evaluating Success of the Youth Plan

As with other questions, how the success of the Youth Plan could be evaluated was not asked of all respondents. A few respondents thought that success could be evaluated by looking at crime and incarceration rates (Interviews 1, 4, 7). Some respondents thought that it was important to create clear measurable objectives,. Other suggestions were for youth to develop benchmarks and/or for the youth to provide input and feedback through the use of evaluation forms (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 5, 15). Some respondents also thought it was important to look at participation rates in different youth events and activities (Interviews 2, 3, 5, 7). Other possible indicators included "mental health indicators" or the number of youth staying in school or going on to post-secondary schooling or trades (Interview 1).

Important Players in Youth Plan

Some of the different people and organizations that were mentioned by respondents with respect to important players in the youth plan included:

- The municipality – particularly Recreation and Parks staff (Interviews 1, 3, 4, 10, 15,17);
- Schools (Interviews 4, 8, 10, 15, 17);
- YMCA (Interviews 1, 3, 17);
- Youth and parents (Interview 2, 3);
- Sports organizations (Interviews 1, 4);
- Non-profit agencies and organizations (Interview 1, 4);
- Churches (Interview 4, 16);

- Arts/culture organizations (Interview 1);
- Boys & Girls Clubs (Interview 1);
- Police (Interview 17);
- Square One Youth Centre (Interview 17); and
- Shopping malls (Interview 16).

Tools/Training Needed for Youth Plan

Not all respondents were asked what tools or training were necessary for municipal or NGO employees for the Youth Plan. Nonetheless, some themes emerged and are described below. [Please see Appendix 2 for supporting quotations.]

1. **Training Unnecessary:**
   - Identified by councilors in 4 interviews (Interviews 10, 11, 12, 14).
   - These councilors did not believe that training for municipal or NGO employees was necessary.

2. **Youth Engagement Training:**
   - Identified in 4 interviews (Interviews 1, 3, 15, 16).
   - City staff might benefit from some training in how to work with youth so that they are meaningfully engaged, and that there is proper balance between providing support and guidance and giving the youth some latitude.

3. **Partnership Building:**
   - Identified in 3 interviews (Interviews 2, 6, 16).
   - Municipal staff may need tools and training in building partnerships with community organizations.

4. **Youth Leadership and Governance:**
   - Identified in 2 interviews (Interviews 1, 16).
   - City or other staff may need to be trained in how to develop youth leadership and governance skills.

Finally, one respondent thought that it might be important to train staff in "non-violent crisis intervention" (Interview 1).

Covering Costs of the Youth Plan

Several themes emerged when respondents were asked how the costs of the Youth Plan could be covered:

1. **Corporate Partnerships/Sponsors:**
   - Identified in 8 interviews (Interviews 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 17).
   - City has many corporations and they could be approached to fund certain events or activities.

2. **All Layers of Government:**

- Identified in 3 interviews (Interviews 1, 2, 8).
- Municipal, Provincial and Federal governments should contribute to the Youth Plan.

3. **Use Existing Resources:**

- Identified in 4 interviews (Interviews 2, 4, 5, 10).
- Use city's surplus.
- Re-allocate funds from other areas.
- Increase user-fees in other areas to cover costs of Youth Plan.

4. **Partnerships:**

- Identified in 3 interviews (Interviews 5, 7, 12).
- Share costs by building partnerships with other community organizations, agencies or service clubs.

5. **Ensure Access for Lower-Income Families:**

- Identified in 3 interviews (Interviews 5, 6, 7).
- It is important that all youth be provided with opportunities, regardless of financial situation, and that they not be singled out or embarrassed by their inability to pay user fees.

6. **Youth Foundation and Swipe Card:**

- One key informant (Interview 16) suggested the development of a Youth Foundation that seemed to encompass all of the recommendations given above.
- Corporate donations, donations from service clubs, and money from the government would be put into one large fund.
- The Healthy Cities Stewardship Centre could then guide how money is spent from that fund.
- Three key informants (Interviews 7, 15, 16) suggested the use of a swipe card for users of all recreational and library services. Those in need would be subsidized – as Key Informant 16 suggested, youth could possibly be subsidized through the Youth Foundation.
- Since all residents would have a card, those with subsidies would not be identified or singled out and possibly embarrassed.

Finally, one key informant suggested receiving grants from private foundations (Interview 1).

Summary of Key Themes, Trends and Opportunities

The three components of the environmental scan point to some initial themes, trends and opportunities to keep at the forefront in both the consultative and planning phases of the Mississauga Youth Action Plan.

The environmental scan points clearly to key themes and trends related to effective practices in engaging youth at municipal levels and in working towards a youth friendly city. The scan has identified the following **effective practices** that are mentioned repeatedly in numerous documents, literature and examples of practices in various jurisdictions.

Breadth, Diversity and Responsiveness

- Provide a variety of meaningful roles and options for youth to be engaged in a breadth of activities. Programs and opportunities should be flexible and change over time to be responsive to different/changing interests and diverse youth.

- Focus on inclusion and diversity with proactive outreach to disengaged youth and their families in an acceptable and respectful way.

- Focus on gender and diversity and different needs and experiences of young women and men and ethnic minority communities.

- Hire diverse and representative support staff: staff that youth can relate to (i.e. from representative cultural, linguistic, experiential backgrounds).

Accessibility

- Provide accessible opportunities for children, youth and their families to be engaged (e.g. accessible locations, financially accessible costs, programs tailored to communities).

- Provide access to affordable transportation.

- Focus on youth's rights to public spaces and provide informally structured social spaces for youth to safely hang out. (It is more accurate to identify the effective practices as informally structured spaces).

Building and Leveraging Capacity of Youth

- Focus on positive strengths of youth while also meeting specific needs of "youth at risk" (positive youth development and asset -based approach).

- Hire and promote youth in decision making, planning consultation roles, and supporting them to build and continuously engage a constituency base of their peers.

- Provide opportunities for youth to build skills (training and support) and move into different (appropriate) roles as they grow.

- Engage youth in planning/development of programs (e.g. recreation), services/spaces (e.g. transportation, parks) and delivery of programs for youth to foster youth "ownership" of programs.

- Support youth-initiated and/or grassroots, community-based programs.

- Build capacity of supportive adults to engage youth(e.g. training as an important component) and foster adult-youth partnerships and shared decision making).

Systemic Practices

- Approach programs with a broader vision for youth recreation (e.g. drop-in activities or engagement in social activism/justice activities) and link programs to overall community strategies.

- Build strong strategic partnerships with community organizations, services and institutions.

- Provide adequate systemic support (policies, budget, dedicated staff, youth positions).

- Integrate various municipal departments and regional/provincial services for youth.

- Provide ongoing reflective evaluation that is focused on the quality of the interactions and engagement and not on numbers for continual adjustment to changing needs.

Building on current strengths

In addition to effective practices, the scan also points to some current strengths of Mississauga to build upon, as well as themes that might be considered in the remaining developmental phases of the Youth Action Plan.

- The City of Mississauga has multiple strengths that the Youth Plan could build upon. These include: good facilities, dedicated staff, an Access and Equity Committee, existing partnerships with schools and community organizations, and a forward-thinking, proactive approach with the development of a youth plan.

- The background review and key informant interviews highlight the importance of partnerships. The city needs to develop further its partnerships with schools, community organizations, the private sector and social services. Mississauga community centres that are running lunch and after-school drop-ins in co-operation with the adjacent school are good examples to build upon. The partnerships that could be developed would help on a number of levels: helping with costs, with ensuring accessibility (again with costs but as well with location), addressing many different youth

needs, and connecting with youth programs with overall community strategies.

- The background review demonstrates that in order to address youth needs, a Youth Plan needs to be holistic and not focus primarily on sports and athletic opportunities. It needs to accommodate a variety of needs and interests from diverse communities. The library is developing interesting new programming which could be a strength to build on. The Youth Plan needs to give youth opportunities for leadership development and decision making. Finally, it also needs to look at issues of transportation and spaces for youth. Better knowledge of what the community is offering and can offer, and how all opportunities are integrated into a common strategy is part of the challenge and the opportunity.

- Background information and key informant interview results shows that some communities in Mississauga will need more support/resources than others. Emphasis should be placed on accessibility and on meeting the needs of diverse communities in appropriate ways. This approach resonates with current literature on youth and municipal engagement and can be an opportunity to engage typically disengaged youth through programs related to social justice issues.

- The Mississauga Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee is also a strength of the city. Mississauga has shown itself to be a leader by setting up this Committee long before many other communities. The plan could build on the existing structure of the committee to ensure that its members have the capacity and support to learn how to be more representative of a broader range of Mississauga youth and play a key role in providing input into the city's day-to-day planning. This should be an important element of the youth consultation process.

- The key informant interviews and effective practices within the literature support the dominant trend in developing youth action plans of engaging youth within the process from the beginning, including planning, implementing, ongoing pulse taking and evaluating throughout the development of the Youth Plan. During this process, opportunities will emerge to build capacity of youth and staff to work in sustainable partnership.

- Transportation, accessibility of programs (place and cost for all youth, as well as physical accessibility for youth with disabilities), lack of awareness of existing opportunities for all youth, and increasing the diversity of youth participation in continuous planning and participation are emerging as areas of focus during the next steps in the development of the Mississauga Youth Plan.

Bibliography

2006/2007 Bylaws: San Francisco Youth Commission, www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/youth_commission/Documents_and_Public ations/2006-2007bylaws.doc. Retrieved on March 26, 2007

Agnew, R., & Petersen, D. M. 1989. Leisure and delinquency. *Social Problems, 36,* 332-350.

Anderson-Butcher, D., Newsome, W.S., Ferrari, T.M. 2003. Participation in boys and girls clubs and relationships to youth outcomes. *Journal of Community Psychology, 31*, 39-55.

Anisef, Paul and Kenise M. Kilbride. 1999. The Needs of Newcomer Youth and Emerging "Best Practices" to Meet Those Needs - Final Report. Submitted to the Settlement Directorate, Ontario Region, Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement.

Bird, Richard, M. and Thomas Tsiopoulos. 1997. AUser Charges for Public Services: Potentials and Problems." *Canadian Tax Journal* 45(1): 25-86.

Bloomberg, L., Ganey, A., Alba, V., Quintero, G., & Alcantara, L.A. 2003. Chicano-Latino youth leadership institute: An asset-based program for youth. *American Journal of Health Behaviour, 27,* S45-S54.

Browne, Gina. 2002. Making the Case for Youth Recreation. Ideas That Matter, 2(3): 3-8.

Burrow, M. H. 2003. Evaluation of the Youth Inclusion Programme: End of phase one report. London: Youth Justice Board. http://www.yjb.gov.uk/Publications/Resources/Downloads/YIP-Evaluation03.pdf. Accessed on December 11, 2007.

Cameron & MacDougall, 2000. Crime Prevention Through Sport and Physical Activity. Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice series, Sept. 2000. Canberra, Australia.

Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) (2001). *Recreation and Children Living in Poverty: Barriers, Benefits, and Success Stories.* Prepared for the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association

Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (2005). Everybody Gets to Play. Information on initiative retrieved from www.cpra.ca

Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (1994). *Impact and Benefits of Physical Activity and Recreation on Canadian Youth at Risk.* Ottawa: CPRA.

Cargo, M., Grams, G.D., Ottoson, J.M., Ward, P., & Green, L.W. (2003). Empowerment as fostering positive youth development and citizenship. *American Journal of Health Behaviour, 27*, S66-S79.

Catterall, J.S., Champleau, R., & Iwanaga, John. (1999). Involvement in the arts and human development: General involvement and intensive involvement in music and theater arts. In E.B. Fiske (Ed.), Champions of change: The impacts of the arts on learning (pp. 1-18). Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership.

Checkoway, B., Allison, T., & Montoya, C. (2005). Youth participation in public policy at the municipal level. Children and Youth Services Review, 27, 1149-1162.

Checkoway, B. 1998. Involving Young People in Neighborhood Development. Children and Youth Services Review, 20(9/10), 765-795.

Child Friendly Cities, 2003. Project Review: Christchurch City Council Initiatives. 2003. http://www.childfriendlycities.org/pdf/christchurch_fulldocument.pdf Accessed October 25, 2007.

Child Friendly Cities, 2004a.). Project Review: Essen – City for Children, Germany. http://www.childfriendlycities.org/pdf/essen_fulldocument.pdf Accessed Oct. 25, 2007.

Child Friendly Cities. 2004b. Project review: Growing up in Tilburg, Netherlands. 2004

http://www.childfriendlycities.org/pdf/tilburg_fulldocument.pdf. Accessed October 25, 2007.

Child Friendly Cities, 2004c. Project review: Munich, City for Children, Germany. http://www.childfriendlycities.org/pdf/munich_fulldocument.pdf. Accessed October, 25, 2007.

City of Mississauga (2004). 2004 Future Directions for Recreation and Parks. Mississauga: Parks and Recreation Department

Clutterbuck, Peter and Rob Howarth. 2002. Toronto's Quiet Crisis: The case for Social and Community Infrastructure Investment. Research Paper 198, Toronto: Centre for Urban and Community Studies.

Conrad, D., & Hedin, D. 1982. *The impact of experiential education on adolescent development.* Child and Youth Services, 4, 57-76.

DaSilva, Mary (2006). Library Services for Young Adults: Best Practices and Trends. Mississauga Library internal report.

Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (1999). Urban Design with young people in mind. Australia: Urban Design Advisory Services. http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/programservices/pdf/udas_yo.pdf

Dutton, S.E. 2001. Urban youth development – Broadway style: Using theatre and group work for vehicles for positive youth development. *Social Work with Groups,* 23, 39-58.

Dworkin, J.B., Larson, R., & Hansen, D. 2003. Adolescents' accounts of growth experiences in youth activities. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 32*, 17-26.

Eccles, J.S. & Barber, B.L. 1999. Student council, volunteering, basketball, or marching band: What kind of engagement matters? *Journal of Adolescent Research, 14*, 10-43.

Eccles, J. S., Barber, B. L., Stone, M., & Hunt, J. 2003. Extracurricular activities and adolescent development. *Journal of Social Issues, 59*, 865-889.

Eccles, J. & Gootman, J.A. (Eds.) (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development.* Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council & Institute of Medicine. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Eitle, D., Turner, R.J., McNulty Eitle, T. 2003. The deterrence hypothesis reexamined: Sports participation and substance use among young adults. Journal of Drug Issues, X, 193-222.

Finn, J. & Checkoway, B. 1998. Young people as competent community builders: A challenge to social work. *Social Work, 43*, 335-345.

Foot, D.K. and Hennigar, T.W. 1992. Recreation and the Economic Cycle in Ontario. Journal of Applied Recreation Research, 17(1): 37-62.

Frisby, W., Tirone, S. Harvey, J. (2005). *Bridging the Recreation Divide: Listening to Parents from Low Income Families Across Canada*. Ottawa: CPRA.

Ginwright, S., & James, T. (2002). From assets to agents of change: Social justice, organizing, and youth development, In Kirshner, B., O'Donoghue, J. L. & McLaughlin, M. (Eds.) Youth participation: Improving institutions and communities. New directions f or Youth Development: Theory, Practice, Research. Jossey-Bass: 27-46.

Hanvey, Louise. 2001. "Access to Recreation Programs in Canada." *Perception*. Canadian Council on Social Development. 24(4), Spring

Harper, G.W. & Carver, L.J. 1999. "Out-of-the-Mainstream" Youth as Partners in Collaborative Research: Exploring the Benefits and Challenges. *Health Education and Behavior*, 26(2), 250-265.

Jarrett, R.L., Sullivan, P.J., & Watkins, N.D. 2005. Developing social capital through participation in organized youth programs: Qualitative insights from three programs. *Journal of Community Psychology, 33,* 41-55.

Jenkins, J.E. 1996. The influence of peer affiliation and student activities on adolescent drug involvement. *Adolescence,* 31, 297-307.

Jones, D.J., Bibbins, V.E., & Henderson, R.D. 1993. Reaffirming young African American males: Mentoring and community involvement by fraternities and other groups. *The Urban League Review*, 16(2), 9-19.

Juniu, Susana. *The impact of immigration: Leisure experience in the lives of South American immigrants*. Journal of Leisure Research. Third Quarter, 2000.

Keogh, Virginia. 2002. Multicultural Sport: Sustaining a level playing field. Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI).

Komro, K.A., Perry, C.L., Murray, D.M. Veblen-Mortenson, S., Williams, C.L. & Anstine, P.S. 1996. Peer-planned social activities for preventing alcohol use among young adolescents. *Journal of School Health*, 66, 328-334.

Laidlaw Foundation. 1999. Youth As Decision-Makers: Strategies for youth engagement in governance and decision-making in recreation. Toronto, ON: Laidlaw Foundation.

Lewis-Charp, H. Cao Yu, S. Soukamneuth and J. Lacoe. 2003. Extending the Reach of Youth Development Through Civic Activism: Outcomes of the Youth Leadership. Takoma Park, MD : Social Policy Research Associates.

Mahoney, J. L., Larson, R. W., Eccles, J. S., & Lord, H. (2005). Organized activities as developmental contexts for children and adolescents. In J. L. Mahoney (Ed.), R. W. Larson (Ed.), & J. S. Eccles (Ed.). *Organized activities*

as contexts for development: Extracurricular activities, after-school and community programs. (pp. 3 - 22). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Mahoney, J.L. 2000. School extracurricular activity participation as a moderator in the development of antisocial patterns. *Child Development, 71*, 502-516.

Marsh, H.W. & Kleitman, S. 2003. School athletic participation: Mostly gain with little pain. *Journal of Sports & Exercise Physiology,*25, 205-228.

Matysik, G. 2000. Involving adolescents in participatory research. *Community Youth Development Journal, 1*, 15-19.

McCall, Douglas S. 1998. Selected Case Studies of Youth Involvement in Public Decision-Making. Centre on Community and School Health, Canadian Association for School Health for the Childhood and Youth Division, Health Canada.

McCart, S. & Clark, S. 2005. Guidelines for youth engagement for Canadian practitioners and professionals in the tobacco control field. A report prepared for Health Canada, Office of Programs and Mass Media.

McGee, R., Williams, S., Howden-Chapman, P., Martin, J., & Kawachi, I. 2006. Participation in clubs and groups from childhood to adolescence and its effects on attachment and self-esteem. *Journal of Adolescence, 29,* 1-17.

MYAC (2006). Youth Today: Challenges and Opportunities- The Mayor's Yotuh Advisory Committee Youth Summit Report 2006. Mississauga: MYAC

National Movement of Working Children, India. 2003. The Alternate Report. Submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.35/India_NMWC_ngo_report.pdf. Retrieved on March 23, 2007.

Nelson, A. & Arthur, B. 2003. Storytelling for Empowerment: Decreasing at-risk youth's alcohol and marijuana use. *The Journal of Primary Prevention, 24,* 169-180.

OCASI. 2005. OCASI Research on Inclusive Recreation Model for Immigrant and Refugee Youth: Provisional Model. For the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation. Toronto: Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants.

Olliff, Louise. 2007. Playing for the future: The role of sport and recreation in supporting refugee young people to 'settle well' in Australia. Published by the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues: Australia.

Omidvar, Ratna and Ted Richmond. 2003. *Immigrant Settlement and Social Inclusion.* Laidlaw Foundation.

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) (2005). *Inclusive Recreation Model for Immigrant and Refugee Youth Update.* Retrieved from www.ocasi.org/downloads/OCASI_YOUTH_PROJECT_Activity_Report_May_2005.doc

Pancer, M., Rose-Krasnor, L., & Loiselle, L. 2002. Youth conferences as a context for engagement, In B. Kirshner, J.L. O'Donoghue, & M. McLaughlin (Eds.) Youth participation: Improving institutions and communities. New directions for youth development: Theory practice research (pp. 47-64). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO). 1999. Together With Youth: Planning Recreation Services for Youth at Risk. Toronto: PRO.

Pedersen, S. & Seidman, E. 2005. Contexts and correlates of out-of-school activity participation among low-income urban adolescents. In J.L. Mahoney, R.W. Wilson, J.S. Eccles (Eds.) *Organized Activities as Contexts of Development: Extracurricular Activities, After-school and Community Programs* (pp. 85-109). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Play Works. 2007. Investing in our Future: The Youth of Ontario. Do it Yourself Project Report. Toronto, ON: Play Works.

Posner, J.K. & Vandell, D.L. 1994. Low-income children's after-school care: Are there beneficial effects of after-school programs? *Child Development*, 65, 440-456.

Resnick, G. & Burt, M.R. 1996. Youth at risk: Definitions and implications for service delivery. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 66,* 172-188.

Roker, D., Player, K., & Coleman, J. 1998. Challenging the image: The involvement of young people with disabilities in volunteering and campaigning. *Disability & Society, 13*, 725-741.

Slack, Enid. 2002. Municipal Funding for Recreation. Ideas That Matter.2(3): 15-23.

Spano, S. 2003. *Research facts and findings: Best practices. ACT for Youth Upstate* Centre of Excellence. Available online at http://www.actforyouth.net/documents/may_factsheet_web.pdf.

Stodolska, Monika. 2004. The Role of Recreational Sport in the Adaptation of First Generation Immigrants in the United States. Journal of Leisure Research. Third Quarter.

Subgroup on Procedural Issues for the TCPS. 2005. *Refinements to the proportionate approach to research ethics review in the Tri-council policy statement: Ethical conduct for research involving humans (TCPS).* Available online at: http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/pdf/print%20package%20final%20-%20ENGLISH%20Final.pdf.

The Centre for Sustainable Transportation. 2004. Child-Friendly Transport Planning. Available online: http://cst.uwinnipeg.ca/documents/Child_friendly.pdf. Accessed Dec. 6, 2007.

Tidwell, R. & Garrett, S.C. 1994. Youth at risk: In search of a definition. *Journal of Counselling and Development, 72,* 444-446.

Totten, M. 2005. The Cost of Excluding Ontario's Youth From Play: A Call to Action! Toronto, ON: Play Works Partnership.

Wright, Robin., John, Lindsay, Offord, David, & Rowe, William. (2004). National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project. Symposium held in Montréal, Québec.

Yin, Z., Katims, D.S., & Zapata, J.T. 1999. Participation in leisure activities and involvement in delinquency by Mexican American adolescents. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioural Sciences, 21,* 170-185.

Zeldin, S., McDaniel, A., Topitzes, D. & Calvert, M. 2000*. Youth in decision-making: A study of the impacts on adults and organizations.* Chevy Chase, MD: National 4-H Council.

Appendix 1: Residential District Age Groups

Mississauga Residential Districts Youth Age Groups

District	Ward	% 10-14	% 15-19	% 20-24	District as % of City 10-14	District as % of City 15-19	District as % of City 20-24	% of total of City
Port Credit	1	4.9%	4.2%	5.6%	1.1%	1.0%	1.4%	1.7%
Lakeview	1	5.9%	5.4%	5.9%	2.9%	2.7%	3.1%	3.6%
Mineola	1	6.8%	6.7%	5.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.3%	1.6%
Clarkson-Lorne Park	2	7.7%	7.6%	5.9%	6.8%	6.8%	5.6%	6.4%
Applewood	3	6.4%	6.2%	6.4%	5.5%	5.4%	6.0%	6.3%
Rathwood	3/4	6.9%	8.3%	8.0%	4.7%	5.8%	6.0%	5.1%
City Centre	4	3.8%	3.4%	5.9%	.6%	.5%	1.0%	1.1%
Mississauga Valley	4	6.4%	6.7%	7.1%	3.8%	4.1%	4.6%	4.4%
Hurontario	4/5	7.8%	7.5%	7.3%	8.8%	8.7%	9.1%	8.4%
Malton	5	7.2%	6.8%	7.6%	6.7%	6.5%	7.8%	6.9%
Streetsville	6	7.0%	6.8%	6.2%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	1.9%
Creditview	6/4	7.7%	9.3%	8.8%	2.0%	2.5%	2.5%	1.9%
East Credit	6/11	8.4%	7.8%	6.7%	9.8%	9.2%	8.5%	8.5%
Erindale	6/7	7.1%	7.3%	7.6%	3.7%	3.9%	4.3%	3.8%
Fairview	7	7.2%	7.8%	7.2%	2.2%	2.4%	2.4%	2.2%
Cooksville	7	5.9%	6.1%	6.8%	5.7%	6.0%	7.1%	7.1%
Sheridan	8	7.7%	7.9%	6.4%	2.9%	3.0%	2.6%	2.8%
Erin Mills	8	8.6%	9.3%	7.7%	9.2%	10.3%	9.1%	7.9%
Central Erin Mills	8/9/11	8.4%	8.0%	6.3%	5.5%	5.4%	4.5%	4.8%
Meadowvale	9/11	8.4%	7.5%	6.6%	7.8%	7.2%	6.7%	6.8%
Lisgar	10	8.5%	6.7%	4.6%	4.7%	3.7%	2.8%	4.0%
Churchill Meadows	10/8	6.6%	5.2%	5.6%	0.8%	0.6%	0.7%	.9%
Meadowvale Village	11	6.4%	4.0%	4.2%	1.7%	1.1%	1.2%	2.0%
Mississauga		7.3%	7.2%	6.8%				100%

Appendix 2: Recreation and Parks Registrations

2006 Mississauga Recreation and Parks Youth Registrations

Activity	Ages 12-15 Registrations	Unique Participants	Ages 16-18 Registrations	Unique Participants	Total
General Aquatics	7468		204		7672
Aquatics Leadership	1486		1191		2677
Arts	212		30		242
Dance, Drama and Music	670		158		828
Fitness	242		148		390
General Interest	640		23		663
Skating	1173		79		1252
Sports and Athletics	3950		476		4426
Camps – Full days	1851		35		1886
Camps – half days	822		9		831
Total	18, 514	13,724	2353	1927	20,867

2006 Community Centre and Youth Registrations

Community Centre	12 to 15 Registrations	16 to 18 Registrations	Total Youth Registrations
Burnhamthorpe	404	38	442
Cawthra	396	30	426
Clarkson	336	27	363
Erin Meadows	2998	267	3265
Frank McKechnie	1981	241	2222
Huron Park CC	1271	171	1442
Malton	232	10	242
Meadowvale	1594	169	1763
Mississauga Valley	1371	2665	4036
River Grove	2248	209	2457
South Common	1329	173	1502

Appendix 3: Examples of Effective Practices

Examples of Effective Practices

Integration and collaboration among municipal departments and services for youth in the City of Ottawa

The City of Ottawa created a new department in 2001 called "The People Services Department" that amalgamated many services under one administrative structure (e.g. libraries, social services, child care, recreation, culture programming, social housing, and community development). Although initially difficult, the integration forced collaboration and shared values and vision, shifting to more holistic preventative programming and services.

San Francisco's City-Chartered Youth Commission

The San Francisco Youth Commission advises the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors on issues related to youth and children. The Youth Commission is secure as its development was based on a city vote and is therefore a city-chartered commission. The Charter ensures that there are funds for permanent professional staff to support youth commissioners. The Youth Commission has very clear bylaws that state the purpose and duties of the Commission. Their overall goal is to "collect all information relevant to advising the Board of Supervisors and Mayor on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs and budgets concerning the children and youth of San Francisco." In addition, the duties associated with that role are clearly laid out to ensure that their activities will contribute to the overall goal (2006/2007 Bylaws: San Francisco Youth Commission):

- Identify concerns and needs of children and youth by examining existing programs and make recommendations for improvements
- Identify unmet needs of children and youth through personal contact, public forums etc.
- Gain support from partners and create recommendations to coordinate them
- Advise funding decisions for youth programs
- Submit recommendations about issues related to children and youth, including opportunities for youth participation in governance
- Respond to requests on matters referred to the Commission
- Report to the Board of Supervisors annually

While the San Francisco Youth Commission is only one of many youth bodies that participate in public policy at the municipal level, they have identified key elements for success (Checkoway et al., 2005):

- Youth leaders are instrumental to youth participation
- Adult allies' support, advocacy, and resources
- Formal and informal support from staff
- Resources for permanent professional staff and staff training
- Mutually beneficial relationships between advocates and commissioners
- Charter that permanently embeds youth participation and its supporting structures (e.g. funds for permanent professional staff)

- Youth friendly community context

In addition, effective practices identified by staff include:

- Educate adults continuously about engaging youth
- Identify roles and purpose (e.g. bylaw)
- Connect Commissioners to the 'power players' (e.g. each youth Commissioner is directly connected to the Supervisor who appointed them)
- Bring input from a broader constituency of youth so that politicians and decision makers are more likely to respond
- Support staff to get information, connections, and resources that the youth need
- Balance youth development with political engagement
- Provide stipends for youth

Child and Youth Friendly Calgary provides a variety of meaningful roles and options for youth to be engaged, appealing to different interests and diverse youth.

Child and Youth Friendly Calgary (CYFC) provides various opportunities for youth to be engaged in their city. They run ten programs and events:

1. Business Accreditation Program: Local businesses are reviewed by a panel of "kid critics" to ensure each is an appropriate and safe place for children, youth and families.
2. Calgary Urban Vibe: An online community for-youth-by-youth that connects youth to each other, to resources, and provides a way to express themselves online.
3. Calgary Youth Foundation: The youth members of the foundation coordinate two granting cycles each year and make all granting decisions, selecting the best youth initiated projects and youth serving agencies to receive the grants.
4. Mayor's Youth Council: The Council is a partnership between CYFC and the City of Calgary. The Mayor's Youth Council advises the city on issues important to youth and provides their perspective to a variety of organizations seeking youth input.
5. Teen Critic: Two high school students are selected every year to conduct one review per month throughout the city. Teen Critic segments are aired between 3:00 and 6:00 PM once a month from September to June on CBC Radio 1010.
6. Youth Distinction Awards: City-wide award program that celebrates youth for who they are and how they are choosing to live their lives.
7. Youth for the Future: An annual gathering that addresses barriers between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth that are grade 10 and 11 students in Calgary and the surrounding area.
8. Youth Volunteer Corps: Volunteer projects for youth.
9. Youth Volunteer Corps in Schools: Volunteer projects with fellow students to meet the needs of schools and surrounding community.
10. Youth Week: Communities, families, agencies and businesses host events, projects and offer free services during a week-long celebration of youth.

These programs and events engage youth in different roles, types of activities and fulfill different purposes that fit different youth interests. Even within a single program, there are diverse roles. For example, the Mayor's Youth Council is divided into three committees, each of which consists of 8-10 members and two co-chairs. These include:

- Upshot Committee: The role of the Upshot committee is to conduct research around the chosen theme and present it to the council.

- City Speak Committee: The role of this committee is to be the liaison between the Mayor's Youth Council and The City of Calgary, and to provide a voice for Calgary's youth.
- Forum Committee: The role of the Forum committee is to conduct a forum based on the selected theme. The event occurs in late May and is open to both members of the MYC and other youth from the community.

Youth that are interested in the formal structures and roles of councils and boards tend to be engaged in the Mayor's Youth Council and the Calgary Youth Foundation. However, this seems to appeal to a select few. In contrast, the Youth Volunteer Corps attracts a more diverse group of youth. The Corps is the biggest program of CYFC and engages youth from all walks of life, including youth doing community service hours through the Youth Justice Society, as well Young Offenders participating in the Youth Volunteer Corps Club that takes place within the Youth Detention Centre. In addition, the synergy between programs is strong; youth that start in one program can move to others and participate in different ways, building new skills and recruiting and mentoring new youth. Through their various programs, CYFC engages approximately 2500-3000 youth in different ways.

YOUTHLINK hires diverse and representative staff that youth can relate to.

Hiring diverse experiential staff is an effective way to increase psychological safety and model inclusion and belonging. This is especially true for youth that are at-risk and have difficulty building trusting relationships with adults and/or people in positions of authority.

YOUTHLINK is a peer education program in Toronto that employs youth that have experience with homelessness and are street-involved as peer educators. They provide street outreach services for hundreds of youth that are currently street-involved, work in the drop-in centre, participate in community education activities and serve as consultants on issues impacting street-involved youth. Professional staff supports the peer educators to develop life skills and become economically independent. The Peer Educator allow YOUTHLINK to reach more youth effectively, build trust relationships based on the credibility of the peer educators and their experience of street life and survival, and identify routes to reach out to very isolated youth. The success of this strategy is based upon the strong supervision and support by the professional staff.

Focus on gender, diversity and different needs and experiences of young women and men and ethnic minority communities in Melbourne, Australia.

Engaging youth as stakeholders in identifying needs and planning programs is especially effective to design programs for youth who are typically disengaged or face many barriers to participation. For example, in Melbourne, Australia, young Muslim women who were typically disengaged from sports programming, were consulted to identify their needs and design a program that would fit for them. The young women identified their need for an after-school sport program, as well as appropriate times, locations, and cultural requirements (e.g. female instructors only). The program was supported by a partnership of stakeholders including the schools, the community sports stadium, and the Women's Sport Club. The schools promoted the program and parents were supportive because it was supported by the school, was in a familiar environment, took place right after school, and all the coaches were women (Keogh, 2002).

Appendix 4: Key Informant Question Guide

City Of Mississauga Youth Development Plan
Key Informant Question Guide

1. What do you think are the City of Mississauga's current strengths in how it engages and involves youth?

2. What are the City of Mississauga's current weaknesses in how it engages and involves youth?

3. Who are the important players in providing opportunities for young people in the City of Mississauga? For young people in your Ward?

   - Are they working together as well as they could?
   - Do you have ideas for improvement?

4. What do you think needs to be addressed in a Youth Plan for Mississauga?

   - what do you think the priorities should be? for what reasons?
   - what would success look like?

5. What do you think works well in initially getting youth involved?

   - what gets them first in the door?
   - what do the adults involved do to encourage youth to become involved?
   - what mechanisms are in place in help youth get involved?
   - what type of youth is getting involved through the efforts being made (e.g., age, ethnicity, geographic region, already engaged youth, etc.)? who is being missed?
   - any barriers to getting youth involved?

6. Once youth are involved, what sustains their involvement - that is, what keeps them coming back?

   - what do the adults involved do to encourage youth to stay involved?
   - what mechanisms are in place in help youth stay involved?
   - what type of youth is staying involved through the efforts being made (e.g., age, ethnicity, geographic region, already engaged youth, etc.)? who is being missed?
   - any barriers to getting youth stay involved?

7. How are youth involved? What are the types of things that youth are involved in?

    - physical activity/recreation? leadership training? opportunities for volunteerism?
    - what opportunities are there for youth to be meaningfully involved?
    - how are they involved in planning and decision making?
    - is it fun? interesting? challenging?
    - is there a good mix of activities?
    - is there a good balance between youth autonomy and adult-provided structure and guidance?
    - are there opportunities that youth can continually strive toward or move from one opportunity to another?
    - how could they be involved in future decision making, not just at the top?

8. What are the gaps in programming and opportunities available for youth in Mississauga/in your ward? What isn't available to youth that should be?

    - do these gaps affect all youth or only certain groups of youth (e.g., by age 12-15, 16-18, 19-24, ethnicity, "risk", geographic regions)?
    - what resources would be necessary to fill or address these gaps?
    - how are things different or the same for youth in Mississauga and other municipalities?
    - are there ideas from other jurisdictions that you would like to see in the City of Mississauga?
    - are there gaps or changes to public spaces and urban planning that could be addressed to create more multi-generational interaction and involvement?

9. Do you have ideas about the costs or services and programming?

    - cost sharing
    - affordability
    - accessibility
    - emphasis
    - ongoing decision making

10. What is your knowledge/responses based on? Direct experience, feedback from parents/youth/children, from the media, visits to other municipalities, research?

11. What tools or training do you need, or do you think municipal employees (ngo employees) need to support Mississauga's efforts to involve more youth?

12. We're interested in the role adults play in supporting and encouraging youth. Is there anything about your background, that has lead you to the work/position that you do now?

    - was there anything about how you grew up that lead to the work you do now with youth? (if applicable)
    - educational background? life experiences?
    - past work experiences?
    - past involvement with youth and youth engagement activities
    - involvement so far in the development of the Youth Plan?

13. Do you support an emphasis on youth engagement initiatives? Or (as appropriate) do you work with youth or in youth engagement initiatives? **If yes,**

    - what motivates you to do this work?
    - what do you like about it?
    - is there anything about your personality or who you are that you think lends itself to this type of work? (e.g. being open, honest, flexible, etc.?)

    If not, where do you think the emphasis should be, or how should resources be allocated?

14. What can you do within your job mandate with regards to youth and youth involvement?

15. How would you like to stay involved in the development of the Youth Plan for Mississauga?

    - emphasis
    - ongoing decision making

Appendix 5: Quotations from Key Informants on Themes

Quotations from the Key Informant Interviews

Strengths of the City:

Facilities and Range of Programs:

"City facilities. A lot of community centres. Also outdoor parks." (Interview 7)

"Variety. The wide range of program opportunities .…" (Interview 7)

"Pretty good network of community centres and parks. Playground within 800 metres of every house. Trails.…" (Interview 16)

"Libraries. 18 branches, conveniently located. [They] have good hours. Welcoming... excellent technology .… [A] very aggressive program toward volunteer recruitment.…" (Interview 15)

City Government and Staff:

"[City staff] are very committed to finding ways to make the city's programs and services more accessible to vulnerable kids and youth which is certainly admirable and very important." (Interview 1)

"Dedicated youth staff …[and] they recognized what they need to do and that's a strength too.… Mississauga recognizes problem [and] need to put resources in. The foresight to do that is really great .… Forward thinking." (Interview 4)

"Well organized…city is well-managed…Whether you like the mayor or not, she gives visibility. She is a major factor on the social civic landscape. So that is good. [And] by and large the politicians are decent." (Interview 6)

"I think our councillors, the elected officials, are connected with the community.… I think Mississauga is a genuinely caring community.… Another aspect, the Mayor, through her leadership, helped to establish the Healthy Cities Stewardship Centre. It's an organization that meets several times a year [and is] comprised of all the leaders of Mississauga. It's meant to bring forward subjects, issues, or proposals to be green lighted with all the parties involved.… A powerful group. This groups … identified … need for youth strategy.… I think Mississauga is not afraid to take risks." (Interview 16)

Weaknesses of the City:

Getting Around in Mississauga:

"I think ... the very nature of Mississauga being a suburbia ... depending on the car. Certain areas are difficult to access ... not within walking distance." (Interview 16)

"Access to their good facilities for some neighbourhoods is difficult. Transportation has improved but still not great and cost involved for that." (Interview 4)

"Transportation is an issue because people don't want buses. They don't want them on their streets. Very car oriented area .... There's no bus going up Mississauga Road. For a young person who can't be driven by a parent, have a fair distance to get to a bus. And inefficiency of bus system." (Interview 9)

"My ward probably has the most transit users in any place in the city. In the morning it's all closed-door service. By the time you get to the east side, buses are full. Sometimes you have to wait for several buses to go by until there is room for someone to get on. We definitely need more transit – no question about that." (Interview 10)

Lack of Unstructured, Less Supervised Spaces:

"A lot of kids don't want to be involved in sports, so what you need is a place to listen to music, talk to each other....We have nothing informal." (Interview 11)

"You want to join sports, no problem, but informal unstructured activity it's hard, because we're a bureaucratic institution and we want to institutionalize everything." (Interview 11)

"... structured programs do not meet the needs. What we hear is that they want to do pick-up basketball. They don't want to join for a whole session." (Interview 13)

Accessibility Issues:

"I think ... vulnerable youth ... because there is a fee-for-service there are kids and youth from families that can't afford to go. So that's prohibitive and that's a concern. Secondly, there are communities that have great coverage ... other communities... there are no community centres [and] there aren't those opportunities for youth." (Interview 1)

"A lot of opportunities are not cheap. Affordability [is a weakness]."
(Interview 7)

"I think part of the challenge is that in Peel ... they've dispersed social housing in smaller pockets ... which is great in some ways. [But] it makes it harder to serve. So rather than an entire community where you can invest resources, it's a larger problem – 37 micro communities." (Interview 4)

Lack of Leadership and Decision Making Opportunities for Youth:

"What are opportunities to be engaged, express themselves and become leaders through arts, dance, music, and writing." (Interview 1)

"Maybe the involvement in leadership of youth... Involving the youth in deciding what they want." (Interview 3)

How Youth are Currently Involved:

Decision Making and Planning:

" For example, we were having a lot of problems of kids riding their bikes in forested areas and they were killing the forest. We went in and met with them and explained to them that they are killing the forest..... We fenced it off, but we said we'd find them a new place. We ordered pizza and sat down and talked to them. We did a search and ended up with Meadowvale North Sports Park. We brought in the dirt and they built the jumps. They dedicated the park to a young man who had been killed. The kids built it, they maintain it, they do lessons. They have great ownership ...." (Interview 13)

"At one point the kids were ruining the wood lot. Gathering mounds of dirt. We worked with the young people to put in a skateboard park." (Interview 9)

Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee:

"We have youth involved in activities in the Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee. That attracts the youth who are usually the top of the class. The kids that want to go on to be managers and lawyers and politicians and urban planners.... Very small proportion.... They don't really represent the average kids in Mississauga." (Interview 13)

Creating Multi-Generational Spaces:

Frank McKechnie Community Centre:

"... You're in one activity but you can see other activities.... In the back part of that centre there is a park where people can sit or lie down. You can watch basketball, splash pad, tennis court, swing sets." (Interview 16)

Youth Plan Priorities and Components:

Include a Range of Activities, Programs and Opportunities:

"We have a generation used to watching games on tv. That doesn't challenge their intellectual capacity. I think we need to engage youth in a higher order way. And I don't know what it looks like. They should be building things, stretching themselves to do thing beyond school and play and give them opportunities to gain skill sets and leadership sets.…" (Interview 16)

"Often youth development tends to focus on Parks and Recreation and sports. Sports are great but not all kids are athletic and are there opportunities to build leadership around fixing things? Maybe it would encourage kids to go into the trades. Arts ... opportunities to be engaged, express themselves, and become leaders through arts, dance, music, writing." (Interview 1)

"Need opportunities to make them feel good about themselves – one of the best ways to do that is through volunteerism. Very important." (Interview 8)

"Certification opportunities so that maybe some of those youth at risk could take their leadership and apply it through courses that can provide them with opportunities later on. Doing job fairs ... places where you get trained and learn." (Interview 5)

"… look at working with corporations... how corporations could help sponsor youth and make them more aware of the work they do and work with the schools to get them more focused and more involved in the co-op program." (Interview 17)

Ensure Youth are Included in Development and Implementation of Youth Plan:

"Youth given leadership and sense of ownership. Can't be top down.… It's the youth coming together to say what affects us, what's important to us, what do we want to accomplish and what can we do to achieve that." (Interview 2)

"Youth have a legitimate voice. Not just the achieving youth but the voices that you hear in terms of needs and priorities are from the true representation of youth, reflective of diverse culture, economics, languages, interests, athletics, etc. All voices have a legitimate place at the table.…" (Interview 5)

Access to Service, Programs and Opportunities:

"First of all, the City of Mississauga has to take into consideration the issue of cultural diversity and its population. So when it's planning youth services it can't …just be hockey in skating rinks. Think cricket, soccer.… Second, upper class and middle class can take care of themselves, the city has to be inclusive of families on the margins.… Make special efforts to include and accommodate marginalized youth. Third, transportation. Unless you have a car, you're not going there… I don't know what they got in terms of special passes for youth or reduction of fees." (Interview 6)

"Could be more reflective of their communities in terms of staffing. Hasn't started to bubble up - and at times it really really shows. How can we possibly understand what is happening with a black youth if not a single black person there?"

"Key is affordability access within the neighbourhood, and meet certain standards – quality, safety, attractive, continuous.… Getting a philosophical base that is agreed to by all stakeholders in the community … that youth need access, both from physical and income, to serve their needs readily.…" (Interview 16)

"Cost. Accessible. Not just at the Recreation Centres, because not everyone can get there, they have to move out from that comfort zone.… We need to reflect faces in the community." (Interview 4)

"Key is communication. Sometimes services are available but youth don't know about it. Why can't we have all information in one area where youth can access it. Website, office, an avenue that is easily accessible and easily used. How to best communicate … is very important. It's very tricky. Communication changes as technology changes. Now Facebook, but in the future could be something else." (Interview 2)

Include Social, Less Structured Spaces and Activities for Youth:

"They need a place to go where they can be comfortable, do things, have fun and yet feel safe and it needs to be located in a reasonable place from their home." (Interview 10)

"Vacant space or recreational or social space. And I think our tendency as council is to leave this stuff to the school board. I think that's got to be broken down. The schools are not cooperating, they aren't giving [youth] vacant space – gyms, cafeterias.… They don't make space available for young people. So we should start looking at our space.…" (Interview 11)

"Open doors at schools, community centres, any community facility. Open doors. Maybe we need to have hoops outside fire halls. Just get out of the way for the trucks. And maybe the youth would better understand the fire department, or the police stations…. different facilities. Open up the public facilities to not only the youth. Maybe in the summer, put out the chess sets. Simple little things." (Interview 12)

"Hanging out is what they want to do. They don't want structured stuff…. Sometimes we can over-program and try to fit everyone into a little slot…. Drop-ins are the best idea ever …. From my perspective and what I've heard from kids, I'd like to see more of that type of thing…. Hopefully we're not just going to be looking to the city to provide for this but also to other partners like … the schools as well. Why can't the kids come back after school and play?" (Interview 13)

"We could work with Boards of Education to try to get something worked out collaboratively with … them so they could offer programs in the schools that wouldn't cost the youth…. Get the high schools involved in that … and even the middle schools involved. Work with superintendents and director and get something going in the schools…." (Interview 14)

Develop Partnerships and New Ways of Working Together:

"It's the longer-term relationship building that help keep youth out of trouble. This is where partnership with non-profit community really becomes key in making that happen. Not municipality's role in doing that – but other organizations' role…. Relationships with Boards of Education and the municipality. Not sure it exists right now. Resources put in to developing those relationships. It takes a really mature organization to recognize that they cannot do everything, that they need help and they need to be able to resource that help. Agencies have different ways of solving problems." (Interview 4)

"The challenge for the city is to try to make sure that all the existing agencies are in better communication and better coordinated…. I hope the city, the plan, will identify the key players and identify no just what they're doing and how well they're doing but ways in which there is synergy and opportunities to work together." (Interview 15)

Tools/Training Needed for Youth Plan:

Youth Engagement Training:

 "…front line workers, perhaps municipal workers, need to understand needs of youth and how youth communicate. How to meaningfully work with different age groups. That is key too. An 18-year-old is a lot different from a 16-year-old and a 12-year-old. Not a homogeneous group." (Interview 16)

"Do we have the staff that understand the youth and can relate. That's huge …. The staff need to understand it first. Staff are key. Educating, training them in how to deal with youth." (Interview 3)

Partnership Building:

 "… let the money go to our youth serving agencies. Make them stronger partners with the city.… I would work more closely with our youth serving agencies, create more opportunities.… I call it creative infrastructure for involvement and personal growth. Working closely with the schools because that is where the youth are .…" (Interview 6)

"… how to reach out to community organizations. Building a stronger bond with the city. We look forward to doing that. More collaborative events with the city … organizations, etc. That way, we can learn from each other.…" (Interview 2)

Youth Leadership and Governance:

 "Developing our competence around resident leadership. How do we involve youth as resident leader – how do we do that effectively? How do we effectively engage youth into … governance structures that have been typically adult driven. How do we effectively engage youth in Board of Directors, and in other work we do, effectively, so that they have opportunity to contribute and we still attain our goals and objectives?" (Interview 1)

Covering Costs of the Youth Plan:

Corporate Partnerships/Sponsors:

 "Corporate involvements are also key and important.… The City of Mississauga has [many] corporations. We have various companies and corporations that would love to claim being a part of youth engagement and empowerment." (Interview 2)

"If you're running a youth event for National Youth Week then you look to sponsors who youth are good customers for. Maybe have the youth write the letters to the sponsors to get those dollars to come in." (Interview 5)

"It becomes a partnership. Wal-Mart does programs. Particularly drug companies.… By federal law, they have to put money into social activities within the communities, so they are good to approach once you've got a plan in mind." (Interview #11)

Use Existing Resources

"I think youth are the most inexpensive out of all the programs that we deliver because they want minimal supervision, minimal direction. They want more friend opportunities, so that itself is low cost for us. So if a municipality is already subsidizing a youth drop-in program, for example, then why not go the extra mile and subsidize the whole thing. Increase the user fees in other things that are more high- end and develop a youth front door opportunity.… It's essential … to [not] let fees be a barrier for youth.… Certain clubs will help build opportunities for youth such as skate parks." (Interview 5)

All Layers of Government:

"When it comes to funding, I don't think one level should be responsible.… There should be some coordination. We all have an investment in our youth. It doesn't matter if you're federal, provincial, municipal, or regional. Something that needs to be looked at a macro level." (Interview 8)

Partnerships:

"We do have partnership opportunities with Play-Start and Jump-Start through Canadian Tire. Service groups partnerships .… More partnership opportunities."   (Interview 7)

Youth Foundation and Swipe Card:

"A youth foundation where you have a consortium of available resources from business sector, gifting authorities, service clubs, and municipality. Put in one large fund and then [a] 'My Mississauga' [swipe] card is that vehicle to get there. Specific capital projects or project-based initiatives. The youth foundation would link with Healthy Cities [Stewardship Centre] and then work with federal, provincial, and municipal governments, but it would be a clearinghouse.… You outline a work plan. One organization alone can't do it all. Health Cities Stewardship Centre – that is the key .… Foundation would release the funds and the Healthy Cities Stewardship Centre would guide how it's spent.… Instead of a collection of well meaning initiatives funded by

various people, why not move it up a level, have a grand plan, bit of an art."
(Interview 16)