



Corporate Report

NO: C002

COUNCIL DATE: February 25, 2008

COUNCIL-IN-COMMITTEE

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **February 25, 2008**
FROM: **General Manager, Planning and Development** FILE: **5080-01**
General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture
SUBJECT: **Youth Engagement in Community and Social Planning in Surrey – Phase II Project**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Authorize one-time funding of \$70,000 from the Social Plan component of the 2008 budget in support of Phase II of the pilot project to Promote Youth Engagement in Community and Social Planning in Surrey.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the results of Phase I of the pilot project to Promote Youth Engagement in Community and Social Planning. This report also recommends the continuation of this initiative and seeks authorization from Council for one-time funding of \$70,000 from the Social Plan budget for Phase II of the pilot project.

BACKGROUND

In December 2006, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) awarded the City of Surrey a Community Health Promotion Fund grant for a project to engage youth in community and social planning in Surrey. The \$35,000 UBCM grant, together with \$15,000 from the City's Social Plan budget, supported an eight month pilot project.

The objective of the project was to pilot a "made in Surrey" model of youth engagement, by focusing on supporting a youth voice in the City Centre/Whalley area. The "Youth Speak Up! on Surrey City Centre" report (Appendix I), documents the perspective of

youth on creating a youth-friendly City Centre, along with an overview of the evaluation of the Phase I project's results.

Based on the success of the eight month pilot project, staff are proposing to extend the project for a second year. This will enable the City to build on the results and learning of Phase I, and continue to engage youth in the development of policies and practices for creating a youth-friendly city. Phase II will require the City to commit the necessary resources as the UBCM grant program does not fund a second year or extension of pilots. Funds are available in the Social Plan budget that could be allocated to this initiative in 2008.

DISCUSSION

Children and youth are one of the five themes or priority areas identified in the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents, adopted by Council in February 2006. The youth engagement project addresses two of the issue elements in the Plan - "Creating a Child and Youth Friendly City" and "Citizen Engagement in Social Planning" - and specifically responds to the recommendation to:

"Continue to support and enhance youth engagement processes in which youth have a meaningful and on-going role in providing input to City services and programs and policy development of interest to youth".

Providing opportunities for youth to participate is recognized as one of the most fundamental elements of a youth-friendly city. This project extension offers Surrey the opportunity to build on the successes of Phase I in testing and developing a model for engaging youth in planning and other community initiatives, demonstrating the City's commitment to its young citizens.

The following is an overview of the results of the pilot project, to date, and plans for Phase II in 2008.

Phase I - April - December 2007

Phase I of the pilot project to Engage Youth in Community and Social Planning in Surrey took place April through December 2007 and involved a collaboration between the Planning and Development Department (Social Planning) and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (Community Leisure Services). Key elements of the approach, along with related activities, are described below.

Focus on City Centre/Whalley

- The City Centre/Whalley area was chosen as the site for the pilot project because of planning and community development processes underway in the area. In addition, since the average income of City Centre households is lower than in other areas of the City, there is likely to be a disproportionate number of vulnerable youth living in the area who would benefit from a positive youth development initiative such as this.

Youth Participation Coordinator

- A young adult with expertise in youth leadership and engagement processes was hired to coordinate the pilot project. The Youth Participation (YP) Coordinator has been working under the direction of Social Planning and North Surrey Recreation Centre staff. His role is to mentor and support the Youth Council, facilitate youth consultations and workshops, and represent the City and youth interests on various City and community-based committees.

Surrey Leadership Youth Council (SLYC) and You(th) Speak Up! Forum

- SLYC was formed in July 2007. It is comprised of a diverse group of youth ranging in age from 15 to 20 years, who were primarily recruited through existing youth groups and agencies in Whalley. Since the project began, a total of 20 youth have been involved in the SLYC. The Council meets every two weeks in the North Surrey Recreation Centre.
- Skill development is a critical component of youth participation. SLYC participants have been provided with training opportunities, including a one-day ropes course and a communications workshop. As well, members participated in a weekend provincial youth leadership conference in Squamish.
- The project budget included funds for SLYC to conduct a project of their choice related to the theme of "creating a youth-friendly city". The group chose to plan and facilitate a one-day forum for Whalley youth on November 2, 2007. The You(th) Speak Up! forum engaged about 40 youth in mapping their experiences and ideas about creating a youth friendly Whalley. "The Youth Speak Up! on Surrey City Centre" report, attached as Appendix I, documents the forum results.

Consultation with Youth on City Initiatives

- *Sustainability Charter* - A workshop was conducted for youth as part of the Sustainability Charter public consultation event in June 2007.
- *City Centre Plan Update* - Two focus groups were conducted with youth to discuss and receive feedback on the City Centre Plan Update.
- *Kids Conference* - The YP Coordinator, together with the Community Schools Coordinator, developed and facilitated a workshop for children aged 6 to 12 years to elicit their ideas and perspectives on creating a child-friendly city.
- *Community Literacy Plan* - The YP Coordinator and a SLYC member are on the Surrey Public Library's Literacy Plan's steering committee. Their role is to represent youths' interests and to assist with incorporating young peoples' perspectives into the planning process.

Supporting Youth Participation in Community Initiatives

- *SFU Community Engagement for Crime Reduction* - The Community Engagement for Reduction of Crime Project was established to facilitate sharing of expertise and exchange of knowledge among individuals and organizations involved in Surrey's Crime Reduction Strategy. The YP Coordinator represents the City of Surrey on the SFU Community Engagement for Crime Reduction project steering committee. The committee is planning a forum to engage youth in a dialogue about youth services in Surrey.
- *Metro Vancouver Steering Committee on Homelessness* - The YP Coordinator and a SLYC member participated on the review team for youth project proposals for federal government homelessness funding (HRSDC's Homelessness Partnership Initiative).
- *Kla-how-eya* - The YP Coordinator facilitated a workshop for Kla-how-eya's youth leadership program to discuss how to run a successful Youth Advisory Council.
- *Umoja's Arrive, Survive, Thrive project* - The YP Coordinator worked with staff and volunteers of Umoja to assist in organizing a youth forum and follow-up report. The one day forum gave refugee African youth the opportunity to discuss their ideas as to how Surrey could better respond to the needs of Black African youth, especially related to settlement issues.

Evaluation

- An evaluation strategy was developed to measure the outcomes of the project. SLYC members have completed evaluation forms every couple of months and the results indicate that the project is having a positive impact. SLYC members are having fun, feeling respected and listened to, learning new skills, and making positive contributions. Participants at the one day Youth Speak Up! Forum rated the day highly. An overview of evaluation results is included in the "Youth Speak Up!" report.

Phase II - January – December 2008

It is proposed that the youth engagement pilot project be extended for a second year. This will provide an opportunity to build on the achievements of Phase I and continue to engage young people in a dialogue as to how to create a youth-friendly city, as well as in other social and community planning processes.

Activities

Surrey Leadership Youth Council:

- SLYC will implement a follow up project to You[th] Speak Up! (details still to be determined).

- The YP Coordinator will continue to support SLYC youth by providing formal and informal leadership skill development opportunities.
- In partnership with Parks, Recreation & Culture staff, a monthly "Whalley Youth Cafe" will be organized at Tom Binnie Youth Centre to provide youth with an opportunity to meet and talk informally about community issues.
- The YP Coordinator will continue to connect youth to opportunities for participation in other community committees and initiatives.

Youth Friendly Policy Development:

- The YP Coordinator, along with social planning staff, will work toward developing child and youth friendly policies for the City of Surrey.

Other Initiatives:

- The YP Coordinator will continue to be involved in the following initiatives:
 - Surrey Public Library's Community Literacy Plan;
 - Middle Years Initiative;
 - SFU Crime Reduction Strategy Knowledge Exchange Project; and
 - Continue to work with community agencies to build their capacity for youth engagement and contributing to the development of a youth network in Surrey.

Evaluation:

- The evaluation will be continued through Phase 2 of the project.

Budget

Expenses:

YP Coordinator (salary and benefits)	\$53,500
Meeting expenses (bus tickets, food, supplies)	3,500
Skills training for youth	3,500
Youth incentives (thank you gifts, rec passes, other incentives)	4,000
Youth led project (follow up to You[th] Speak Up! –project)	<u>5,500</u>
Total 2008 Budget	\$70,000

Amount Requested

\$70,000

CONCLUSION

The Youth Engagement in Community and Social Planning project is contributing to the implementation of the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents and is demonstrating the City's commitment to promoting the healthy development of its young people. The results of the Phase I pilot project indicate that young people are keenly interested in being involved in civic issues, and that the approach of this "made in Surrey" model for youth engagement is proving to be effective. It is recommended that

Council authorize one-time funding of \$70,000 from the Social Plan component of the 2008 budget for Phase II of the pilot project.

Jean Lamontagne
General Manager
Planning and Development

Laurie Cavan
General Manager
Parks, Recreation & Culture

AM/kms/saw

Attachments:

Appendix I The "Youth Speak Up! on Surrey City Centre" Report

Youth Speak Up!

on Surrey City Centre



A pilot project to engage youth in community
and social planning in Surrey



December 2007

Project Team

Surrey Leadership Youth Council

Current Members

Jeff Desjarlais
Shawn Desjarlais
Clinton Forster
Paul Hillsdon
Chelsey Lewis
Josh Moreau
Michelle Meredith
Kyle Meredith
Brandon Moses
Kasia Mitchell
Robert Van Rhyn

Project Staff

Planning and Development Department

Preet Heer, Social Planner
Aileen Murphy, Senior Social Planner
David Sadler, Youth Participation Coordinator

Parks, Recreation and Culture Services

Erin Balmer, Community Services Coordinator
Stacey Rennie, CLS Manager - South Surrey
Bonnie Ste-Croix, CLS Manager - North Surrey

Community Partners

Kla-how-eya - Cecilia Henry
Surrey Public Library - Beth Barlow & Melanie Houlden
Community Schools Partnership Initiative - Shannon Rennie

The Youth Speak Up! On Surrey City Centre report was prepared by David Sadler, Youth Participation Coordinator.

This project was funded by the Union of BC Municipalities, Community Health Promotion Fund, and the City of Surrey.

Key Recommendations

Built Environment

- Youth want a walkable Whalley, with shorter blocks and places to sit and hang out. They want the area to be vibrant, safe and green.
- Youth think Whalley should be planned to be a central social and entertainment hub.

Recreation, Cultural and Library Services

- Youth identified the need for a youth lounge centrally located in Whalley, similar in spirit to Stardust Roller Rink, offering a combination of structured and unstructured activities.
- Youth want more opportunities to take part in activities that appeal to a wide range of interests.

Health and Safety

- Youth want more outreach to be done to connect with street-involved youth in Whalley.
- Young parents need inexpensive and easily accessible childcare services.
- Youth consistently commented on feeling unsafe in the City Centre area.

Youth Voice

- Youth want access to skills training and education on local issues, so young people can think critically and express their perspectives.
- Youth want more opportunities to get involved in decision making.

Transportation

- Youth think that transit service should run later at night.
- Youth see a need for better bus shelters, more bus stops, and more frequent service along high traffic routes.

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Project Information

This project was initiated by the City of Surrey to provide youth with opportunities to be involved in social and community planning. It is a collaboration between the Planning & Development Department (Social Planning) and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (Community Leisure Services).

This youth engagement pilot project has been underway since April 2007. Key elements include:

- A focus on the City Centre/Whalley area.
- A Surrey Leadership Youth Council (SLYC) has been created.
- A Youth Participation Coordinator was hired.
- A forum for Whalley youth was hosted in November 2007.
- Youth-friendly consultations have been conducted on City-led initiatives including:
 - o City Centre Land Use Plan Update
 - o Sustainability Charter
 - o Surrey and Whiterock Community Literacy Plan
 - o Child and Youth Friendly Strategy for the City of Surrey

Creating a Youth Friendly City

This project enables the City to play a leadership role in nurturing youth participation in Surrey. The project addresses priorities of the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents adopted by Surrey City Council in February 2006 - "Creating a Child and Youth Friendly City" and "Citizen Engagement in Social Planning". Specifically, the project responds to the recommendation to "enhance opportunities for youth involvement". Providing opportunities for youth to participate is recognized as one of the most fundamental elements of a youth-friendly city.

The City Centre area of Surrey was chosen as the site of the pilot for two reasons. First, a planning process is underway in the area so there was an opportunity for meaningful youth involvement. Secondly, the City Centre area of Surrey has the highest proportion of low income households in the City, so it is a community in which positive youth development activities could be of most benefit.

About the Surrey Leadership Youth Council

A key component of this youth engagement project is the Surrey Leadership Youth Council (SLYC). SLYC is a youth council comprised of young people who live in Whalley. This group shares an interest in community issues, and is committed to bringing the voices of youth to the City. SLYC meets every two weeks to plan youth engagement events and discuss community issues. An emphasis of this project has been encouraging and supporting youth who have not had opportunities to get involved in leadership. Through the course of the project, 20 youth have been involved in the committee, ranging in age from 15 to 20 years old.

The youth council was intended to bring together youth representing existing youth groups or agencies in Whalley. To date, youth from Kila-How-Eya, (Parks, Recreation and Culture's) Surrey Youth Council, Surrey Youth Alliance and non affiliated youth have joined SLYC.

SLYC members have been provided with leadership skills training. The Youth Participation Coordinator has provided members with coaching and mentorship in event planning, conducting ice-breakers, and facilitation skills. In addition, a ropes course training was organized for the group, and members of the group were supported in attending a weekend provincial youth leadership conference.



Results From Youth Speak Up!

Following is what young people had to say about how to make Whalley more youth friendly.

You[th] Speak Up! Forum

In the fall of 2007 SLYC and the Youth Participation Coordinator organized You[th] Speak Up! Youth from Whalley were invited to this day-long youth forum to discuss how to make Whalley more youth friendly.

- The event was held November 2nd, at Camp Alexandra in Crescent Beach.
- Approximately 40 youth from Whalley attended, representing students from Kwantlen Park, Queen Elizabeth, L.A. Matheson and alternate school programs, as well as youth not in school.
- Activities during the day included a combination of large group interactive discussions and small group community mapping activities.
- Adult representatives from Planning and Development, Parks, Recreation & Culture, Surrey Public Library, Kwantlen University College, and SFU were in attendance.

At the You[th] Speak Up! forum youth participants chose to join a discussion group that would explore one of five different themes:

- Built Environment
- Recreation, Cultural & Library Services
- Health and Safety
- Youth Voice
- Transportation

Through a mapping activity each group drew and wrote on a large map of Whalley. In the context of their topic they used symbols and notes to identify what works well for youth, what doesn't, and ideas to make improvements. The notes in this report are from that activity.

Information in boxes like this is from another You[th] Speak Up! activity. In the large group a statement was read out to youth, and participants had to arrange themselves on a room wide continuum from agree to disagree. Youth then explained why they agreed or disagreed with the statement. This activity was useful in exploring the range of perspectives that youth had on issues.

Other Youth Engagement Events

The majority of information in this report is feedback from youth participants at You[th] Speak Up! Additional feedback from other youth engagement events has been included:

Sustainability Charter Youth Workshop

- The Youth Participation Coordinator facilitated a workshop for youth as part of the Sustainability Charter event held at SFU Surrey in June 2007. This workshop focused on City-wide sustainability issues, but also received a fair amount of feedback on how to make Whalley a livable and sustainable community for youth.

City Centre Plan Update Focus Groups

- The Youth Participation Coordinator conducted two focus groups with youth to discuss and receive feedback on the City Centre Plan Update. The first focus group was held with SLYC members at a meeting, and the second focus group was held during a drop-in night at Tom Binnie Youth Centre in Whalley.

Youth Speak Up! Cafe

- Held monthly at Tom Binnie and hosted by SLYC and Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services, the cafe is an opportunity for youth to hang out and have a casual conversation about the community. It provides SLYC with an ongoing opportunity to engage their peers in dialogue, and ask follow up questions on current issues.

Built Environment

Youth described the Surrey City Centre area as being the centre of many things. It is the place where they meet up with people, hang out, shop, access services –it’s close to everything they need. Youth had a vision of how they wanted their community to look and feel. It included: being vibrant, walkable, green, safe and well designed.



Vibrant Social and Entertainment Hub

Youth want City Centre to be a social and entertainment hub –one location for entertainment, shopping, and social gathering.

- Put in a movie theatre so Whalley youth have easy access to movies, instead of having to travel to other parts of town.
- There should be comfortable places to sit outside. They should be covered so you can stay dry.
- Encourage more entertainment options in the area.
- Design Surrey Central to have stores, public spaces, commercial office space and residential built around it.
- Community art in public places will discourage graffiti. Get youth to do tastefully done graffiti in public spaces.

Walkable

Youth travel mostly on foot in the neighbourhood, and had some ideas on how to make that a good experience.

- Create a walkable City Centre through:
 - Shorter blocks.
 - More small shops.
 - More plants, greenery, and places to relax.
 - Wider sidewalks, more walking routes.
- Trails, open space and nature are good things.
- There is need for an off-leash dog park in Whalley.
- There are too many strip malls with large parking lots –they’re ugly places for pedestrians and shoppers.

Green Space

Youth like nature in their communities.

- More well-lit green-ways for pedestrians and bikes.
 - Run one through City Centre to Bear Creek Park and Green Timbers Park.
- There should be lots of greenery around.
- Put trees along paths.

Safe and Well Designed

Youth want the city designed so it is safe and easy for people to get around.

- There are too many car accidents.
- Whalley needs more lights and crosswalks to get across busy streets (eg. King George).
- The bridges are too narrow, which make the sidewalks and bike routes too narrow as well.
- Put something useful in empty lots. We need stuff to do.
- In all of Surrey have better lighting on streets and in parks.

Recreational, Cultural and Library Services

Youth had lots to say about finding things to do in Whalley. The theme that emerged most often in conversations was the importance of a variety of easy-to-access recreational opportunities being central and close to transit. Youth said that they and their peers get in trouble when there is nothing to do, which is why opportunities that appeal to a range of youths' interests is important.



Access to Recreation in Whalley

Youth wanting quick, easy and safe access to recreational and cultural opportunities in Whalley was a theme that emerged.

- Whalley needs a movie theatre that's easy to get to
 - o Transit provides good access to the mall and rink, but poor access to movies.
- Youth get into a lot of trouble in Whalley because there is nothing to do.
- There needs to be more recreational opportunities for youth aged between 16 and early 20's.
- City Centre needs a facility that provides recreational and cultural activities for Aboriginal youth.
 - o "We have Kila-how-eya, but that's more for families"

"Bring Back Stardust!"

The Stardust roller rink repeatedly came up as a place that was important to Whalley. Youth were asked what made Stardust such a fun place to hang out at, and what the City could learn from it as to why it was so popular.

- The roller skating was fun. It was really unstructured, and you could do what you wanted.
- It was open late, sometimes all night.
- It was very, very cheap.
- All types of youth went there.
- It was really easy to get to.
- It had youth dances and bands played there.
- It was a family place as well.

Recreation Centre

When organizing You[th] Speak Up! SLYC discovered that there was no venue in Whalley that would accommodate the event (size, accessibility, youth friendliness). Ideas regarding recreation centers included:

- Have multi-use community facilities that are accessible via transit.
- There is a pool at the Recreation Centre, but there are too many seniors and kids and it's not open late enough. It's also not very fun for youth.
- A Recreation Centre with all its facilities (pool, rink, gym) centrally located at Surrey Central is good.
- Create a graffiti wall at Surrey Centre bus loop, outside the Recreation Centre.

Library

Youth felt that the library could improve service to youth by:

- Offering free and easy to log on Internet access that doesn't require a library card or a guest card.
- Having comfortable places to sit and read: floor seating (cushions), couches and chairs.
- Make it an appealing space, large, relaxing.
- Have a coffee shop.
- Good lighting, with lots of natural light.
- Better signage in sections to assist with browsing.
- Stickers on paperback books in Young Adult section, to identify Science Fiction, etc.
- The libraries need more places to do work. Study areas would be good - tables and computers and electrical outlets for laptops.
- Multi-purpose meeting rooms, to be used for things like meditation groups, book clubs, and other clubs (comic book drawing, sketching etc).

Sports

Most youth identified school when talking about how youth have access to sports. There are many opportunities to participate in sports through school, but a variety of barriers are preventing youth from taking part.

- Youth felt that participation in sport affects youth's future desire to be involved in sports and levels of physical activity.
- Not all youth can play sports in schools for a variety of reasons: They do not make it onto teams, there are no coaches or no money for teams.
- Sports are very competitive at school. It is hard to be a casual athlete.
- Even non-competitive sports opportunities are still dominated by star athletes, stopping less athletically inclined youth from participating.

Community Activities

Youth liked community wide events and activities.

- Organize community events in Holland Park.
- Hold more free events for youth.
- The lantern festival is fun.
- Improve playgrounds by making them safer and more clean.
- Promote small scale community events, more community events in parks and local places.

When given the statement, "I find it easy to find something to do in the community"

Youth responded that:

Agree

- There is lots you can do.
- Yes, but not much of it is culturally enriching stuff.
- The more friends you have, the more you can do.
- I hang out a lot.

Disagree

- It depends on imagination.
- There is not much to do at all.
- There is nothing in the mall that is fun.
- Youth are scared to get involved with the community.
- Youth don't want to hang out in dirty places.
- Police harass you if you go places to hang out.

Neutral

- You can always make your own fun –positive or negative.
- People are afraid to go out.

Youth Recreation Centre

It is important to youth to have a space that they can call their own, where they do not worry about being hassled. A low barrier space with a combination of sports, arts, programmed activities, and informal hang out space would meet the needs of most youth.

- Tom Binnie Youth Recreation Centre
 - o Positive:
 - There are video games, sports, pool tables, ping-pong, concession, and it's a minimal cost to youth.
 - o Improvements:
 - Inside Tom Binnie is safe, but getting to and from it is not -"at night you have to walk in groups of 6 to and from Tom Binnie".
 - It's in an area of drug users, dealers and scary people so you are not safe walking around the area, especially at night.
 - It is too secluded, and there is no transportation directly to it.
- The Ideal youth centre
 - o A youth hang out spot that is easily accessible and safe.
 - o Have it stay open late so youth have something to do –an after hours drop in.
 - o Make it a relaxing space with couches.
 - o Include access to drug and alcohol counselors, or other social services for youth.
 - o Have cool things like a jam space for music.
 - o Make it like Tom Binnie but closer to transit.
 - o Programs based on drop-in work for youth.
- Youth feel its important to have their own space
 - o Don't want to be hassled, youth need privacy sometimes.
 - o Don't want to have to share stuff all the time.

Health and Safety

Youth want the same things in a community as anyone else would –a healthy environment where they can get access to supports when needed. Youth also said they were fed up with the bad stereotype that Surrey gets. When discussing health and safety, the major themes that emerged were: prejudice and racism, social services, outreach services, police and schools.



Prejudice and Racism

Many youth reported being judged in the community by the way they looked. When it comes to racism, youth want more public awareness, intercultural connections and empathy.

- Ideas to help with racism problems:
 - Public awareness about what racism looks like.
 - Create more opportunities for people to meaningfully connect with people from different backgrounds.
 - Hold cultural awareness days in high schools.
 - Build a centre dedicated to multiculturalism.
 - Promote inter-cultural education, exchanging ideas back and forth.
- School staff may be generalizing and punishing youth stereotypically.
- Homophobia is a problem in schools.
 - Youth need a gay/straight alliance or counseling and more awareness about homophobia.
- Youth have experienced many rude bus drivers who treat young moms and non-English speakers disrespectfully.
- Provide Aboriginal Youth with opportunities to learn about and connect to their culture.
- Provide positive representations of Aboriginal culture in schools and the community.

Social Services

Youth identified a need for more youth centred services in Surrey, especially daycare, shelters and treatment facilities. Youth also want access to services to be available at recreation centres, so youth can get in touch with services easily and without stigma.

- More daycares that are free, or really cheap.
 - Daycares designed for low income teens.
 - Locate the daycare along the Skytrain route so it's easy to stop there on the way to and from work.
- Youth Services.
 - More social programs in City facilities, so youth can hang out, have fun, and get help at the same time.
 - More youth shelters and safe houses.
 - Safe houses should be available to younger youth. The minimum age is 16, but youth younger than 16 still get pushed onto the street.
 - More spaces in treatment programs for teens who are trying to stop using drugs
- Adult Services.
 - Find shelter and treatment for people on drugs to go to, instead of leaving them to sit and walk around on the street asking for money.
 - More homeless shelters with food, showers and clothes.
 - More to help people stop taking drugs.

Outreach Services

Youth also thought that more outreach could be done with vulnerable populations of youth and adults, especially in key areas of Whalley where negative activities happen in the open. Some youth said they feel that outreach workers can do more good for youth than the police can.

- Have street outreach workers doing needle exchanges.
- More presence of outreach workers in Surrey Central and the parks in the area.
 - More people to help, inform, and prevent people at Surrey Central from getting involved in drugs.
- People are using hard drugs and drinking in open spaces, completely visible, and nothing is being done.

Police

Youth had mixed feelings about police in Whalley. Their personal experiences with the police determined whether they wanted an increased police presence or not. Comments that offered ideas to improve relationships between youth and police reflected the mistrust and poor communication that has made positive relationships in the past hard.

- Put more patrollers around Skytrain stations.
- Police are involved with harassing teens that aren't causing trouble.
 - Youth feel outcasts and loners are seen as "aliens" by police.
- Some police officers don't have respect for youth, they think they are better than others.
- For police who work directly in the community there should be training where they learn how to interact with youth, because the approach they use with adults won't work with youth.



A participant at You[th] Speak Up! looking after a baby (and future Surrey youth)

Schools

School is where the majority of youth spend a large amount of their time. This is a good opportunity for youth to make positive connections to their peers and community.

- Teachers are being more supportive in a positive way.
- Have more supervision during breaks, and before and after school.
- Give kids who don't usually play sports a fair chance to get involved.
- Offer Aboriginal classes taught by an Aboriginal teacher.
 - Invite Elders to talk about their history.
 - Getting Elders more involved in school will help Aboriginal students connect.
- Advertise supports for youth being bullied.
- There needs to be sexual education at schools that is comprehensive.
 - Abstinence based education isn't realistic today.
 - Youth today need "straight up" information about health issues.

When given the statement: "Whalley is as bad as people make it seem."

Youth responded that:

Disagree

- Anywhere is as bad as you make it.
- There is hidden potential in the community.
- People need to look underneath the surface.
- People coming through only notice certain things. It's a superficial analysis.
- Other places have just as many problems, but they are more hidden.

Agree

- In my own experience, it is as bad.
- I've witnessed bad stuff happening.

Neutral

- It's a Surrey joke thing.
- We aren't all sluts or drug addicts, but we have that stereotype.

Youth Voice

Youth want to be involved in decision-making in their community. Having youth involved in decision-making creates positive outcomes for everyone –skill and personal development for the youth, more effective programs and services that better reflect what youth need, and youth perspective in community planning decisions that will benefit the community as a whole. In discussions related to youth voice four themes emerged: things SLYC could do, skill training, new youth participation structures and youth voice in substance use issues.



Things SLYC could do

Youth participants had some ideas of other activities SLYC could be doing to reach more youth.

- Go into schools and do workshops.
- Organize more forums to consult with youth.
- Work with younger kids and create more opportunities to occupy them with constructive stuff.

New Youth Participation Structures

Participants identified specific programs and situations that could be a conduit for youth voice in the City.

- Creating more youth councils at recreational centres and other places.
- Making teens have a place where they feel safe and they can talk.
- Create partnerships for youth and the City to share responsibility for recreation centre services, parks, roads, community gardens etc.
- Organize opportunities for teens to break down barriers and get comfortable talking with adults.
- Supply more resources to support meetings of youth.

Skill Development, Education and Training

Participants wanted youth to have the skills to advocate for themselves and others. Literacy, communication skills, and other skills training were all things that youth identified as being important to encouraging youth voice in Surrey.

- Knowledge about how things like petitions and protest letters work.
- Communication skills for youth.
- More opportunities for youth to be educated on current issues.
- Youth need to talk to the people around them.
- Youth should be aware of the importance of education and literacy, and what it means for them.
- Youth should have access to resources if they want to go back to school.
- Make youth participation programs an opportunity for teens with troubled lives to have an alternative, to make better choices.

Youth Voice and Action on Substance Abuse

Youth thought that young people could have a direct impact on social issues and their peers.

- Involve youth in developing drug education programs –youth know what realistic information will be listened to by youth.
- Encourage more peer based education about drug use.

The evaluation form from You[th] Speak Up! asked what can youth and adults do to increase youth voice in the City:

What youth can do:

- "Be more involved in the community"
- "I think youth can do a lot as long as we work together"
- "Stay away from drugs and be smarter so our kids will have a good role model"
- "Speak up and make sure we are heard, so the ones with power know what to do"

What adults can do:

- "Trust youth with more respect"
- "I think adults have most of the power, and if they listen to youth we can make Whalley better"
- "Encourage youth to get involved"
- "Adults can stop treating youth like children, we are young adults"
- "Offer opportunities to listen and let youth have input"
- "More resources for youth"



Participants during the "temperature activity" discuss their views of Whalley.

When asked if they agree with the statement, "There should be more activities like this forum."

Youth responded that:

Agree

- Just because we're kids doesn't mean we can't talk about big issues.
- You always hear about bad 14 year olds. If more forums like this happened, maybe we would get rid of stereotypes.
- People will be able to find help if it is offered.
- Helping others helps yourself, "I'm not in jail" – proof it works.

Neutral

- I Agree, but some people are stuck in their ways, its not for everyone.
- Some people won't be willing to get help even if it is offered.

Disagree

- None.

Transportation

Youth are interested in transportation issues, especially transit, biking and pedestrian modes of transportation. Finding ways to get around Surrey is a major part of youth's lives, and as a result youth have an in-depth knowledge of the transit system. Youth discussed transit design, security on transit, biking improvements, walking, and opportunities to showcase arts and culture.



Public Transit Design

Youth want a safe and clean transportation system that provides quick access to the places that youth go to.

- The frequency of Skytrain is good.
- The way it is designed now, public transit makes you walk too far, and it's indirect.
- Build Skytrain stations with a good lay out and good signage.
- Add a bus line from Scott Road to Surrey Central along 132nd street.
- There are too many cars in Surrey. Reduce the amount of them.
- Bus stops and bus shelters:
 - o Need better shelters for rainy days.
 - o Seats would be good.
 - o Have well lit stops for safety.
 - o Increase the frequency of bus stops along routes.
 - o More bus shelters in Guilford and Fleetwood and along Scott Road.

Opportunities to showcase arts and culture

Youth saw public transportation as a good opportunity to showcase community artists and inform people about upcoming events.

- Put community art on buses, sky trains, and bus stops.
- Sky train stations are glum looking. Make them nicer places.
- Advertise community events on the Skytrain and at Surrey Central bus loop.

Safety and security on transit

Youth reported that they don't always feel safe while using the transit system. The biggest safety concern about transit was having to take the bus later at night.

- Buses should run more often later at night.
 - o Every 30 minutes rather than every hour.
 - o Nighttime buses should run to at least midnight.
 - o Youth get stuck walking home at night.
- Buses are late or early far too often. If there's a dangerous situation, or if it's really late, and a bus that runs every hour or half hour shows up at the wrong time it can end up being unsafe for the youth.
- Hire more transit police to create a sense of security
 - o But transit cops having guns makes people uncomfortable.
- There are lots of perverts or people with attitude on transit.
- The two major transit hubs that youth from Whalley access are not safe enough.
 - o There is too much drug use, violence at Surrey Central.
 - o The Newton exchange is also a bad area.
- Improve lighting on bus shelters for safety.

Biking

In a group of 10 students at You[th] Speak Up! discussing transportation 4 biked regularly. Here are some ideas that would encourage more youth to use a bike.

- The bike paths are not clear underneath the Skytrain. Make them nicer and safer
- Create a proper bike network with lots of greenways and separated bike lanes
 - Make smart routes around major hills
- Encourage more bike parking
 - Provide bike lockers like at Skytrain
 - Bike lockers at schools are good
- Bike safety in traffic is a big issue for those who want to bike
 - Separate bike paths from traffic

Walking

Not surprisingly, walking is the major way youth get around Whalley.

- Surrey needs bigger sidewalks
- Youth want more protection from traffic
- Build sidewalks on all streets and increase the amount of streetlights
 - Bridgeview in particular has hardly any sidewalks.



Evaluation

Youth Engagement Pilot Project Phase I -What Have We Learned so Far?

Best Practices

From this model of youth participation, so far we have learned...

1. Youth of all ages will respond to opportunities for engagement if it is clear that their involvement is meaningful and they will be respected. Youth are interested in social and community planning issues.
2. A balance needs to be found between youth driven and adult supported, depending on the experience level of youth and the project task.
3. To have the best success, youth need training opportunities to develop skills, or ideally the opportunity to participate in youth events (conferences, workshops), in order to learn, practice new skills, and most importantly, be inspired by their peers.
4. Time needs to be taken to set goals (however informally) and identify and celebrate small successes.
5. Discussions with young people should be fun and take place through a variety of means to accommodate different communication and learning styles.
6. Consultation is not enough. Youth engagement is most successful if youth have a chance to undertake a "hands-on" project of their own.

You[th] Speak Up! Forum Evaluation Results

Youth participants were overwhelmingly positive about participating in You[th] Speak Up! Youth had a lot of fun and felt listened to at the You[th] Speak Up forum held November 2, 2007. They were most positive about the amount of respect that they felt they were treated with during the day.

At Today's workshop did you...

	A lot	Some	No
Feel respected by others?	85%	13%	3%
Have a chance to meet youth you may not usually talk to or meet?	79%	21%	0%
Have Fun?	74%	26%	0%
Feel like you contributed something to the day?	72%	25%	3%
Feel that your voice was heard?	64%	31%	3%
Think of new ways to make a difference in the community?	58%	42%	0%
Feel like you contributed something to the day?	57%	40%	3%
Learn something new about Surrey?	56%	42%	3%

A few youth comments from the forum:

- I thought I would be shy and quiet and not have fun, but I had a lot of fun and think my voice was heard.
- It was amazing getting to talk to others about Surrey.
- I liked meeting other people so I can hear what they think.
- I liked that everyone worked together and had a common goal.

Surrey Leadership Youth Council Evaluations

SLYC members have been involved in an ongoing evaluation process. On a scale of 1 to 4, the table below lists the average score (from evaluations completed at 3 times over the past 6 months) youth members had to questions about their experience of participating in SLYC.

So far with SLYC, are you...

Having Fun?	3.8
Feeling respected by others (listened to?)	3.7
Working in cooperation with others?	3.7
Feeling that adults are listening to you?	3.7
Getting the opportunity to do fun activities?	3.6
Feeling that what you're doing will have an impact in the community?	3.5
Having a positive influence on others?	3.3
Helped someone out? (another SLYC member)	3.2
Learning new skills or abilities?	3.0
Meeting youth you wouldn't usually?	3.0

*Average scores on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being "no" and 4 being "a lot".

In general we are finding that the ratings increase at each evaluation cycle, indicating that youth are learning, and feeling more competent as the project progresses.

A few comments from SLYC evaluation forms...

- [I like best] "The fact we have the city listening"
- "I feel that this program has a lot of potential and we can really build on that"
- "I truly do believe this group will have an impact"
- "I like that in SLYC everyone's opinion matters"
- "I'd like more skills to help benefit me and others"
- "Theres nothing I dislike besides sometimes we talk a little too much, but that's whats gotta happen for now."
- "What I like best is that there will hopefully be something for Surrey youth to do besides the negative"
- "It's fun and we just chillin 'n talk, no pressure"

Accomplishments

Other Accomplishments and Activities of the Project

- SLYC will be presenting the project results to Mayor and Council, and City staff.
- A SLYC member participated on the review team for youth project proposals for federal government homelessness funding (HRSDC's Homelessness Partnership Initiative) through Metro Vancouver's Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness.
- From feedback obtained through SLYC regarding youth wanting events like those that happened at Stardust Roller Rink, the North Surrey Rec Centre is organizing Roller Skate and "Band Wars" nights.
- The Youth Participation Coordinator worked with the Surrey School District's Community Schools Coordinator in Whalley to develop a workshop to engage elementary school aged youth in discussions about their community. This workshop was piloted at Kids Conference, a city wide conference for kids aged 6-12.
- The City partnered on Umoja's *Arrive, Survive, Thrive* project that engaged African refugee youth in discussions about their experiences settling in Surrey.
- The Youth Participation Coordinator is a member of the steering committee for Simon Fraser University's Community Engagement for Crime Reduction Project.
- A SLYC member is involved in the Surrey Public Library's Community Literacy Plan Initiative.



A young participant at Kids Conference.



A SLYC member at the end of the forum inviting youth participants to join the council.



SLYC members getting prepared for a crazy activity at a provincial youth leadership conference.