

NO: R213

COUNCIL DATE: November 16, 2009

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **November 16, 2009**

FROM: **General Manager, Planning and Development** FILE: **5080-01**
General Manager, Parks, Recreation, & Culture

SUBJECT: **Update on the Development of a Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy**

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department and Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommend that Council:

- Receive this report as information; and
- Authorize staff to proceed with the next steps in the process of developing the City of Surrey *Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy* that will include:
 - (a) utilizing the information and feedback gathered to prepare a draft *Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy*;
 - (b) receiving feedback from youth and community stakeholders on the draft *Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy*; and
 - (c) presenting the final *Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy* for Council approval.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to:

- provide Council with an update on the status of the development of the *Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy* (the "Child and Youth Strategy");
- report on the results of consultations conducted with children, youth, parents, community stakeholders, City staff and City Committees; and
- obtain approval to proceed with drafting a Child and Youth Strategy for Council's consideration.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The development of the Child and Youth Strategy responds to a number of corporate plans and priorities.

Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents

"Creating a Child and Youth Friendly City" is one of the priority issues identified in the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents (the "Social Plan"). In the short-term, the Social Plan recommends that the City:

"commence a process towards developing policies that will assist in ensuring that child and youth friendliness is one of the key objectives pursued in the decisions about the continuing development and services delivered by the City. The process should:

- *Engage the community, City-based committees, and youth;*
- *Build on processes that are currently underway in defining and implementing child and youth friendly objectives; and*
- *Build awareness of existing practices that promote a child and youth friendly City".*

In the longer term, the Social Plan recommends that the City:

"amend the Official Community Plan, other plans and appropriate City by-laws to include "child and youth friendly" policies and provisions developed through the process identified in the short-term actions and as approved by Council; and develop a communication strategy to promote the enhanced child and youth policies and provisions being implemented by the City".

Official Community Plan

Surrey's Official Community Plan (the "OCP") is currently undergoing a major update and the results of Child and Youth Friendly City consultations will be considered in the update of the OCP's objectives and policies.

Crime Reduction Strategy

The Crime Reduction Strategy includes recommendations related to crime prevention through social development. The Child and Youth Strategy responds to the "early childhood development intervention" and "youth intervention" recommendations in the Crime Reduction Strategy's Prevent and Deter Strand.

Learning for Life Strategy

Strong literacy skills are linked to employment and income levels, good health, and high levels of community engagement. The Learning for Life Strategy includes recommendations for enhancing early learning and literacy development through the middle and teen years.

BACKGROUND

At the Regular Council Meeting of February 23, 2009, Council considered Corporate Report No. Ro21 and authorized staff to proceed with the development of a City of Surrey *Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy*. The goal of the Child and Youth Strategy is to ensure that the City's policies and programs promote the healthy development of Surrey's youngest residents through early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence/early adulthood.

Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy - Framework

Surrey's Child and Youth Strategy is focused on identifying priority issues and recommendations for action organized by:

- Three theme areas:
 - decision-making;
 - physical environment; and
 - civic services;
- Three developmental stages:
 - early childhood (0-5 years);
 - middle childhood (6-12 years); and
 - youth (13 years – early twenties);
- Two spheres of influence:
 - actions that are a municipal responsibility, and
 - actions that are the responsibility of other agencies or orders of government; and
- Two time frames for implementation:
 - short-term (3-5 years); and
 - and long-term.

Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy - Process

The process being used to develop the Child and Youth Strategy is intended to result in a strategy that:

- Has been developed with the "best thinking and expertise" from across all departments, other external entities and other municipalities;
- Reflects the current strengths, promising practices and assets of the City of Surrey – a "made in Surrey" brand; and
- Has been developed through children and youth engagement.

The development of the Child and Youth Strategy involves the following activities:

1. Reviewing child-friendly policies and practices in other cities and in academic literature;
2. Compiling current City of Surrey policies and programs that are consistent with a Child and Youth Friendly City;

3. Consulting with children, youth, parents, community stakeholders, Council Committees, and an interdepartmental staff committee, on priorities and recommended actions;
4. Preparing a draft Child and Youth Strategy, as outlined in the framework described above, for Council's consideration; and
5. Receiving feedback from youth and community stakeholders on the draft Child and Youth Strategy before presenting the final City of Surrey Child and Youth Strategy to Council for approval.

DISCUSSION

Staff has gathered information on existing City of Surrey policies and programs that are consistent with a child and youth friendly city, and has consulted with children, youth, parents, community stakeholders, Council Committees, and staff to elicit their feedback on:

- What makes Surrey a child and youth friendly City?;
- What are our strengths or assets?;
- What could we do to make Surrey even more child and youth friendly?; and
- What are ideas and suggestions for action?

Consultation Methodology

Engaging young people in the development of Surrey's Child and Youth Strategy has been a priority. As such, the consultations with children and youth were conducted first so that young peoples' feedback could shape the agenda of the later consultations that were held with City staff and community stakeholders.

Consultations with Children, Youth and Parents

In the spring and summer of 2009, approximately 1,050 children, youth and parents participated in the consultation process. Age-appropriate methods were used to gather feedback, as described below:

- Early Years Aged Children (0-5 years)
 - The consultations with pre-schoolers took place at City of Surrey early years events and pre-schools. The children were asked to draw their favourite place to play and, while they drew, a staff person asked questions and took notes on what they were drawing. The feedback that very young children could provide on a child friendly city was limited and, so for this age group, parents provided the majority of feedback. In total, 51 children participated by drawing their favourite place to play.
- Middle Years Aged Children (6-12 years)
 - Staff facilitated interactive workshops with middle years children at an after-school program and at summer camp programs. A game and an art activity were used to gather feedback. The workshop format proved to be an effective method for consulting with this age group. In total, 60 children participated in these workshops.

- Staff set up a station at the Move for Health Day 2009. At this station, elementary school students were invited to post a note about what makes Surrey good for children, and what could be improved. Over 400 children participated.
- Youth (13 years and above)
 - Staff visited six high schools across the City and an Aboriginal community agency. Two methods were used to receive feedback from youth in schools. During lunch-hour, interactive display boards were set up and students were invited to give their feedback by responding to multiple-choice questions with stickers and writing comments on post-it notes. After-school workshops were also hosted to provide an opportunity for more in-depth discussion. Over 200 youth participated in the interactive survey boards, and approximately 100 participated in the workshops.
- Parents
 - A parent survey was developed that included both multiple choice and open-ended questions. Surveys were distributed by email, and administered in person at children's events and at community agencies. Approximately 250 parents completed all or part of the survey.

The results of the consultations with children, youth and parents were compiled into a report that was used as the basis for the subsequent consultations with City staff and community stakeholders (the "*Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy: Results of Consultations with Children, Youth and Parents*" is attached as Appendix I to this report).

Surrey's approach in engaging children and youth in the development of the Child and Youth Strategy was showcased at the "Cities Fit for Children" provincial conference held in Langley on October 22 and 23, 2009. Surrey's Child and Youth Engagement Coordinator participated on a panel and facilitated a workshop in which he shared the tools and methods used in this unique consultation process.

City of Surrey Staff

Consultations with City staff focused on gathering information on current policies and programs that promote a child and youth friendly city; and feedback on additional actions that the City could take.

- Staff from Long Range Planning and Policy Development, Community & Leisure Services, Arts, and Heritage Services, Parks Planning Research & Design, Engineering Transportation Section, Drainage and Environment Section, and Risk Management took part in an interdepartmental workshop in October 2009.
- One-on-one interviews were conducted with staff members who were not able to attend the interdepartmental workshop, or who were identified as having specific information to contribute.

Community Stakeholders

A half-day meeting with community stakeholders took place in October 2009. Participants included representatives of community agencies that provide services to children and youth in Surrey, the United Way of the Lower Mainland, the Surrey School District, and Fraser Health. Two academic experts in child and youth friendly cities were also invited to participate.

Council Committees

Staff gave a presentation on the development of the Child and Youth Strategy to the Social Planning Advisory Committee and the Parks and Community Services Committee and received their input on what makes Surrey child and youth friendly.

Consultation Results - Key Themes and Elements

The feedback from children, youth, parents, City staff and community stakeholders has been organized into three themes and 16 elements that are proposed to form the basis of the Child and Youth Strategy. This information is briefly summarized below to provide an overview of the priorities that emerged through the consultation process.

For each element, an example of a current City policy or program is noted, along with ideas for future action.

- **Theme: Participation of Young People in Decision Making and Community Life**

Both middle years children and youth expressed a clear desire to participate in community life. Middle years children are particularly interested in "hands on" volunteer opportunities, while youth identified wanting to have a voice in civic issues.

1. ***Opportunities for child and youth engagement in decision making and planning***

- An example of what the City is already doing includes supporting a number of youth committees, such as Surrey Leadership Youth Council which is involving Whalley youth in community and social planning, and Surrey Youth Council which involves youth in parks and recreation planning. Another example is the recent creation of a new Community Development Services staff position that is specifically responsible for facilitating child and youth engagement in civic issues.
- Feedback suggests that the City continue to build its capacity to engage young people and to expand the number and range of opportunities for children and youth to participate.

2. ***Opportunities for young people to contribute to the community.***

- An example of what the City is already doing includes providing volunteer opportunities through our Engineering Department and Parks Division for young people to participate in environmental projects and also through Community & Leisure Services' Community Development Section and the Arts Services to volunteer at City-run events and festivals.

- Feedback suggests that the City continue to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities for children and youth and, specifically, to develop strategies to engage previously "un-tapped" populations of young people.
- **Theme: A physical environment that nurtures and promotes the healthy development of young people**

When asked what makes Surrey child and youth friendly, overwhelmingly, people of all ages said that the parks and natural areas are Surrey's greatest asset. In terms of creating a child and youth friendly physical environment in Surrey, the consultation feedback is consistent with what experts in other cities consider the critical components of a child and youth friendly city.

3. *Public spaces that are safe, clean and promote social connectedness*

- An example of what the City is already doing is the recent establishment of a City Beautification Coordinator position. Another example is Holland Park, which was redesigned so that it can facilitate the celebration of City-wide festivals and events.
- Feedback suggests that the City design public spaces (roads, parks, squares and walking routes) at the City Centre, town centre and neighbourhood levels, that are clean, attractive and welcoming places for people of all ages and that encourage positive activity and feelings of safety.

4. *Neighbourhoods that are designed to promote a sense of community*

- Already, the majority of families in Surrey have a school and a park within walking distance of home.
- Feedback suggests that having places to go and gather within walking distance of home contributes to creating socially cohesive, child and youth friendly neighbourhoods. Land use, parks and school facility planning policies and processes that support walkable, socially cohesive neighbourhoods should be a priority.

5. *Affordable housing that is suitable for families*

- Examples of what the City is already doing includes planning residential areas such as East Clayton that provide a diversity of more affordable housing choices for families with children, such as townhouse and small lot developments. The contribution of land for the YWCA supportive housing project is another example of an action that Surrey has taken to provide affordable housing for low-income single-parent families.
- Feedback suggests that Surrey's policies and planning processes should ensure that Surrey continues to work toward achieving a supply of affordable family housing that provides sufficient space for children to grow and play, and is situated in family-friendly neighbourhoods.

6. *Access to nature*

- The City of Surrey has a wide variety of natural spaces, along with trail and greenway systems.
- Feedback identified enhancing opportunities for young people to experience nature as a priority to be pursued.

7. *Public play spaces*

- The City has a large number of public parks and investments in play infrastructure such as playgrounds and bike parks.
- Feedback suggests that the City consider expanding the opportunities for creative and enriching play opportunities in parks, facilities and in other public areas. Many children identified water parks and features as their favourite place to play.

8. *Safe and convenient walking and cycling*

- An example of what the City is already doing includes the Engineering Department's development of Walking and Cycling Plans. The Engineering Department is also undertaking the Safe and Active Schools Initiative that includes a review of road and pedestrian safety for all elementary and secondary schools with a goal of encouraging walking and cycling to school.
- Feedback suggests that the City promote walking by planning areas to be walkable. The provision of bike lanes separated from traffic lanes on streets and secure places to store bikes were suggested as ways to promote cycling. It was also suggested that the City undertake specific education and training initiatives that encourage walking and cycling to school.

9. *Safe and efficient public transit*

- Improving transit services in Surrey is already a corporate priority.
- Feedback suggests that the City promote transit use through increased safety and cleanliness of waiting areas, and continuing to advocate for frequency of busses, and increased rapid transit services that travel east-west through Surrey.

- **Theme: Accessible programs and services that respond to the developmental stages of early childhood, middle childhood and youth**

The Social Plan identified enhancing recreational and library services for children and youth as a priority, and the associated Social Plan budget has resulted in a number of new services and programs, especially for vulnerable children and youth. Feedback from the consultations identifies some gaps or areas for improvement in child and youth programming and services.

10. ***Early years children's programs and services (0-5 years)***

- Parent feedback was very positive about the quality and variety of programs being offered for early years children in Surrey. The libraries, recreation centres, schools, and community agencies provide a range of early childhood programs that are delivered by trained instructors.
- Feedback suggests that additional outreach is needed to encourage those parents who don't bring their children to participate in early years programming. The lack of quality childcare for working parents, while not a City responsibility, was identified as a significant issue.

11. ***Middle years children's programs and services (6-12 years)***

- Examples of what the City is already doing in terms of programming for middle years children includes High Five training for recreation staff, Quest program evaluation of middle years' programs, and the annual Kidz Conference.
- Middle years children's feedback focused on wanting programs that provide them with an opportunity to be with friends and make new ones. Other feedback suggested that there is a need for more quality after-school programming specifically for this age group.

12. ***Youth programs and services (13+ years)***

- The City has youth facilities and offers programs for youth in every town centre. In addition, the City organizes special youth events such as the annual Youth Fest at the Guildford Recreation Centre.
- Youth feedback identified a need for more safe and accessible places to gather. They also suggested that the City offer a greater variety of leisure programs such as arts activities and non-competitive sports. Other feedback included the need to provide programs that build youth skills and for more staff training so they can work effectively with this age group.

13. ***Disseminating information on programs and services that the City offers for children and youth***

- The internet and Leisure Guide are the primary ways that the City provides the public with information on programs and services.
- Feedback suggested that the City improve its web-based information so that it is easier to access information on available services and programs for children, youth and families all in one place. Other feedback suggested the need for more outreach to those who do not participate in recreational, library or other community services.

14. *Affordable recreation opportunities*

- The City's Leisure Access Pass and free youth membership provides children and youth from low-income families with access to recreational opportunities.
- Feedback suggested that the City continue to provide inexpensive recreation opportunities and events, and an expansion of the Leisure Access Pass program.

15. *Children and youth services that are provided at the neighbourhood level.*

- The Community-Schools Partnership is using school facilities as neighbourhood hubs that provide recreational and other programs and services for children and youth. This initiative is a joint School District and City project.
- Feedback suggests expanding the Community-Schools Partnership model such that all school facilities become neighbourhood hubs and so make services and programs more accessible for young people, as well as supporting neighbourhood cohesion.

16. *Partnering with Community Agencies*

- Make Children First is an example of a community collaboration that the City actively participates in. It is concerned with early childhood issues and services.
- Community stakeholders identified the importance of communication and collaboration between the City and community agencies when planning for children and youth in Surrey. While inter-sectoral collaboration on early childhood issues is strong, this is not the case for middle years and youth.

Next Steps

The next steps in the process of developing Surrey's Child and Youth Strategy will be to:

- Utilize the information gathered through the review of policies and programs from City Departments, academic research and other cities, as well as the feedback from staff and community stakeholders, and in consultation with staff from various City Departments, to prepare a draft Child and Youth Strategy for Council's consideration;
- Receive feedback from youth and community stakeholders on the draft Child and Youth Strategy; and
- Present the final City of Surrey Child and Youth Strategy for Council's approval.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The Child and Youth Strategy will further the Sustainability Charter's vision to "promote a society where all residents feel a sense of belonging". More specifically, it will implement "Action SC5: Plan for the Social Well Being of Surrey Residents".

CONCLUSION

A Child and Youth Strategy will serve to confirm and formalize Surrey's commitment to being a community in which all young people have opportunities to develop, participate and thrive. It will contribute to making Surrey a vibrant, caring and sustainable city.

The Child and Youth Strategy responds to a recommendation in the Social Plan. Its development is underway and progress to date includes:

- A review of other cities' approaches to creating a child and youth friendly city;
- Compilation of current City of Surrey policies and programs that are consistent with a child and youth friendly city; and
- Consultation with children, youth, parents, community stakeholders, City staff and City Committees.

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council

- Authorize staff to proceed with the next steps in the process of developing the City of Surrey *Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy* that will include:
 - utilizing the information and feedback gathered to prepare a draft *Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy*;
 - receiving feedback from youth and community stakeholders on the draft *Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy*; and
 - presenting the final *Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy* for Council approval.

Original signed by
Jean Lamontagne
General Manager,
Planning and Development

Original signed by
Laurie Cavan
General Manager,
Parks, Recreation & Culture

AM:saw

Attachment:

Appendix I - Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy: Results of Consultations with Children, Youth and Parents

Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy



Results of Consultations with Children, Youth and Families

Report Summary

The Plan for the Social Well Being of Surrey Residents identifies “Creating a Child and Youth Friendly City” as a priority. In early 2009, the City began the process of developing a Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy. A key element of developing this strategy is consulting with children, youth and parents.

In the spring of 2009, a total of 1,050 children, youth and parents provided feedback on creating a Child and Youth Friendly City. This document summarizes their perspectives. Key themes are highlighted below.

Community

Young people and parents identified a Child and Youth Friendly City as:

- **Connected:** It fosters social connections between people.
- **Safe:** It is a community that is safe, and also feels safe. Knowing people in their neighbourhood and having more people in public places were identified as factors that contribute to safety.
- **Clean:** Public areas are clean and inviting, which encourages positive activity.
- **Welcoming and Engaging:** Young people are recognized as being a part of the community and have opportunities to contribute.

Physical Environment

Key themes that emerged pertaining to a Physical Environment include:

Urban Planning and Neighbourhood Design

A Child and Youth Friendly City is environmentally sustainable, and designed at a walkable scale.

- **Environmental Sustainability:** Young people felt that preserving green space and trees, and the sustainable development of the City is important.
- **Community Scale and Layout:** Young people and parents value a community where the distance between amenities encourages walking.
- **Affordable Housing:** Parents commented that the availability of affordable family-oriented housing in Surrey is important to them.

Parks and Natural Spaces

Surrey’s parks and natural areas are highly valued and were identified as one of the most important features that makes Surrey Child and Youth Friendly.

- **Parks:** Young people like playing and meeting friends in parks, and enjoyed water features. They identified that some parks could be cleaner and safer.
- **Trails:** Parents and young people said that trails promoted access to nature and thought that natural areas could be linked by greenways. They reported sometimes feeling unsafe on trails.

- **Access to Nature:** Young people said natural areas promote play and recreation. They like having access to natural areas and feel that it encourages health and wellness.

Transportation

Youth people and parents provided their perspectives on non-automobile oriented forms of transportation.

- **Walking:** Young people said that compact communities encourage walking. Feeling unsafe reduces their freedom of movement, and they identified crossing roads as a concern.
- **Cycling:** Young people said that bike routes separated from traffic and more secure bike storage would encourage cycling.
- **Public Transit:** Major concerns young people and parents identified included safety at waiting areas, the infrequency of busses, and lack of transit that connects the eastern and western parts of Surrey.

Community Services

Key themes that emerged pertaining to a Community Services include:

Leisure and Library Services

Providing a wide variety of accessible leisure programming and other opportunities for children and youth was identified as important.

- **Early Childhood Programs:** Parents value the programs offered, their close proximity and low cost. They enjoy programs that include both the parent and child.
- **Middle Years Programs:** Middle years aged children wanted a wide variety of activities, and opportunities to make friends.
- **Youth Programs:** Youth wanted more safe places to hang-out in an informal atmosphere, and a wider variety of activities. Affordability was identified by some youth as a barrier to participation.
- **Advertising:** Young people and parents wanted to be more informed about programs and events available to them. They suggested making better use of the internet.

Community Events

Young people and parents commented that both large and small community events build a sense of community and provide an opportunity to celebrate Surrey's multiculturalism.

Services Provided by Other Agencies

Young people and parents gave some feedback related to services provided by other agencies including the need for affordable quality childcare, after school programs, service provision through schools, and more social services for young people.

Introduction

The Plan for the Social Well Being of Surrey Residents, adopted by Council in 2006, identifies “Creating a Child and Youth Friendly City” as a priority. In February 2009 Council approved a Terms of Reference to develop a Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy which stated that:

The goal of Strategy will be to ensure that the City’s policies and programs promote the healthy development of Surrey’s youngest residents through early childhood (0- 5 years), middle childhood (6 to 12 years) and adolescence/early adulthood (13 years to early twenties). It will identify priorities and recommendations for action in three areas, as follows:

- *Decision-making processes;*
- *Urban environment, including land use, and transportation planning; and*
- *Civic services.*

A key element of this initiative was a community consultation process involving Surrey’s children, youth and parents. These consultations were important to ensure that the Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy reflects their ideas and perspectives.

The purpose of this document is to review the key themes and common ideas that emerged from the consultations.



Method

In total, approximately 1050 children, youth and parents participated in the consultation process in March to July 2009. A number of methods were used to gather feedback from different age groups, and are described below.

Early Years Children (aged 0-5)

Consulting with children aged 0 to 5 presented an interesting challenge. For this consultation process children were asked to draw and describe their favourite place to play. A staff person asked the child and parent questions while the child drew their picture. 40 children drew pictures illustrating where they like to play.

Parents

Most of the feedback regarding early years children was gathered through consultation with parents. A parent survey was developed and distributed to family service agencies and administered in-person at family oriented events in Surrey. Questions included: "What makes Surrey a good place for your children?" and "What could make Surrey a better place for your children?" There were also questions that provided parents with the opportunity to comment on specific aspects of the City including: parks, services and transportation. This survey was available in English and Panjabi. Over 250 parents completed the full survey or part of the survey.

Middle Years Children (aged 6-12)

The perspectives of middle years children was gathered from two sources:

- At a large multi-elementary school event, over 400 middle years children answered the questions: "What do you like about your community?" and "What would make your community better?"
- Staff also designed and facilitated a workshop for middle years children that used an interactive game and art activity. These workshops took place in an elementary school in North Surrey and City of Surrey summer camp program. A total of 60 children took part in these workshops.

Youth (aged 13-adulthood)

Information was gathered from youth through two methods.

- An interactive survey display board was developed. This portable display had multiple choice questions on topics such as engagement, the built environment and community services. Youth used stickers to vote on what was most important to them. The boards also included an open ended portion where young people could comment on what they like about their community and what they think needs to be improved. This display board was used at six high-schools during lunch and at three City-wide youth events. Over 200 youth gave feedback through these boards.
- Afterschool workshops to follow up on the interactive display boards were organized at five high-schools and one additional community agency. An “interview matrix” activity was used to engage the students in actively seeking feedback from each other and then reporting this back to the City staff person. Approximately 100 youth across the City took part in these workshops.

Terms Used to Define Age Groups

In this report the following terms are used:

- “Early years children” refers to children aged 0-5
- “Middle years children” refers to children aged 6-12
- “Youth” refers to youth aged 13 to adulthood
- “Young people” refers to all age groups, including early years children, middle years children and youth.
- “Children” refers to children aged 0-12

According to the 2006 Canadian Census there are over 107,700 young people (27% of total population) between the ages of 0-19 living in Surrey.

Contents

Page	Section	Content
2	i	Report Summary
4	ii	Introduction
5	iii	Method
7		Consultation Results
8	1	Community
8	1.1	A Connected Community
9	1.2	A Safe Community
11	1.3	A Clean Community
12	1.4	A Welcoming and Engaging Community
14	2	Physical Environment
14	2.1	Urban Planning and Neighbourhood Design
16	2.2	Parks and Natural Spaces
18	2.3	Transportation
21	3	Community Services
21	3.1	Leisure and Library Services
25	3.2	Recreation Facilities
26	3.3	Community Events
27	3.4	Services Provided by Other Agencies

Community

This section explores how children, youth and parents described the attributes of a Child and Youth Friendly City.

- 1.1 A Connected Community
- 1.2 A Safe Community
- 1.3 A Clean Community
- 1.4 A Welcoming and Engaging Community

1.1 A Connected Community

Social Connections

Young people often cited the importance of social connections to a Child and Youth Friendly City. The most frequent comments that youth made included:

- Being connected to people gives youth a sense of belonging to community and a feeling of security.
- Public places are safer when there are more people present.

For middle years children “people” was the most frequently occurring response to what makes a Child and Youth Friendly City. Common things middle years aged children said included:

- They like how their community has friendly people.
- They like seeing young people around outside that they can play with.
- They feel that people in Surrey are helpful and take care of each other.
- They like how people in their neighbourhood work together.

“What I like about my community is that everyone is friendly and they don’t like gang violence”

-11 year old boy

“What I like about my community is that everyone works together and helps each other out”

-10 year old girl

Neighbourhood Connections

Having a connection to their neighbourhood was very important to youth. Youth frequently said that:

- They feel more secure when the neighbourhood knows each other and community members look out for one another.
- In connected communities people get to know each other by being outside.
- Neighbourhoods in which houses are secluded and people don't interact with each other are more likely to have illegal activities occurring in them.
- Good neighbourhoods are where youth are able to meet and play with friends.
- Some neighbourhoods feel unfriendly.

"I like that our community is safe. I like the community. It lets children play and do lots of activities at our parks"

-12 year old female

"I love it here in Surrey because there is no war, there are lots of trees and the government gives us free healthcare."

-8 year old boy

1.2 A Safe Community

Children, youth and parents said a community that is Child and Youth Friendly is safe. While some young people felt that their community was safe, many others did not.

Comments from children, youth and parents included:

- Wanting a community that is safe.
- Wanting a community that "feels" safe.
- Increasing police or security presence in high crime areas or problematic areas such as bus exchanges.
- Making frequently used parks and play areas safer.

Those young people who indicated that they felt safe in their neighbourhoods noted the following reasons:

- Knowing people.
- Having a lot of people around.
- Having parents around.
- The community being happy.
- The neighbourhood being clean.

The most frequent comments that youth made about safety included:

- Fears of gang violence.
- The need to clean up public places and make them look friendlier and more inviting.
- Bringing positive activity into problem areas.

Of the many young people who cited crime as an issue of importance, several cited the importance of:

- Reducing the prevalence of drugs.
- Reducing gang activity.
- Better safety at night.

They also noted that:

- Some people in the community scare young people, and being scared cuts down on their freedom of movement and independence.

Parents frequently made comments about:

- The importance of more effective laws to deal with criminals.

"More money to make the community a better place and safer place for everyone to live with more things to do"
-12 year old boy

"I think that if there was less crime and there were more places to hang out and visit the crime levels would drop immensely and more people would be interested in spending time outside and less time being scared of being outside"
-Youth

Youth Survey Result	
I'd feel safer in public places if:	
There was good visibility (e.g. lighting, no hiding spots)	43%
There were more people around	24%
More police or security	20%
Other (more people around scary places at night, I feel safe, bus stops are too dirty)	11%
<i>See page 4 for information about the youth surveying process.</i>	

Street People

Young people are keenly aware of challenges that people in their community face. Middle years children and youth noted that they see many homeless people, drug addicts and people with mental health issues on the streets of Surrey. They made a number of comments regarding vulnerable populations in Surrey:

- Encountering these people makes them feel unsafe.
- Youth would like to see support for vulnerable people to get off the street.
- Middle years children offered a very straightforward solution: provide more homes for the homeless.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism was identified by children, youth and parents as something that makes Surrey a good place for young people. Parents said that Surrey's diversity offers an opportunity for children to grow up embracing multiculturalism. Comments included:

- Surrey is a multicultural community.
- The multicultural events offered by Surrey bring people from different cultures together.
- Work still needs to be done on education and acceptance.

"Multiculturalism brings richness to our community and lives, in food, entertainment, social, and celebration"
-Parent

"More education offered for both children and adults on racial tolerance and acceptance of different cultures"
-Parent

Youth Survey Result	
I'd like places in my community to be:	
Cleaner and more beautiful	42%
Safer	30%
More welcoming to youth	27%
Other (People happier, more fun for teens, environmentally friendly)	1%
<i>See page 4 for information about the youth surveying process.</i>	

1.3 A Clean Community

While many young people said that they liked Surrey because it is clean, others said that they wished their neighbourhood was cleaner.

Children, youth and parents:

- Made a link between cleanliness and security. There is a perception that areas that are clean are also safer.
- Believe that cleaning up parks and playgrounds, walking areas, key transit hubs and gathering areas should be a priority.

Of all the age groups, middle years children (aged 6-12) had the most to say regarding the importance of having a cleaner community.

Middle years children expressed a desire for:

- Parks, playgrounds and other areas to play that are clear of garbage.
- Less littering by people.
- Garbage being picked up (in the streets) more often.
- Better cleaning up after dogs in public places.
- Community members having a personal responsibility for clean communities and individuals doing their part.

"We as the ones living in the community should help clean up garbage like once a week or something"
-12 year old girl

1.4 A Welcoming and Engaging Community

Engagement

Both middle years children and youth noted the importance of being engaged in their community.

Comments from youth included:

- Government needs to ask youth what they think, and follow up.
- Youth have opinions and want to express them.
- Young people need more opportunities to get involved meaningfully in their community.
- Youth should be more aware of their community.

Middle years children said that:

- It is important for people to be aware of what's happening in the city around them.
- They feel safer in their community when they are treated with respect.

Youth Survey Result	
I want to be involved in my community by:	
Being asked what I think	33%
Working with other youth on projects that interest us	33%
Volunteering	20%
Not interested in community involvement	14%
<i>See page 4 for information about the youth surveying process.</i>	

"I would like you to be more accepting of us, people with disabilities and to ask us what we think! We have voices too. We have the right of speech as well. I would feel a lot safer if I was treated with a lot more respect and kindness."
—Youth

"When kids are expected to be a part of their community, they take part. When expected to goof off, they will."

—Youth

Giving Back

Middle years children in particular made many comments that demonstrated their belief in personal responsibility and giving-back to their community. They spoke about the need for people to be more involved, and expressed an interest in volunteering themselves. The most popular volunteer activity was to help clean the environment.

[On how to make the community a better place] "Getting everyone's opinions about the laws that the government is making"

-13 year old girl



Youth engaging other youth in dialogue on issues important to them.

Physical Environment

This section explores how children, youth and parents described the built and natural aspects of a Child and Youth Friendly City.

- 2.1 Urban Planning and Neighbourhood Design
- 2.2 Parks and Natural Spaces
- 2.3 Transportation

2.1 Urban Planning and Neighbourhood Design

Environmental Sustainability

Children and youth across the City made many comments about their desire for Surrey to be a sustainable and “green” City.

Middle years children and youth noted the following issues as important to them:

- Cutting down less trees.
- Preserving green space.
- Using less resources such as electricity and water.
- More recycling.
- Encouraging walking and cycling instead of driving.
- Encouraging less pollution.
- Containing urban sprawl.

Community Scale and Layout

The scale of a community –the distance to schools, stores, services and recreation –was frequently cited as an important contributor to a Child and Youth Friendly community. The ability to walk to places was consistently referenced by children, youth and parents as a measure of a good community.

Young people regularly made comments about walkable neighbourhoods. The most frequent comments include:

- Neighbourhoods where young people can walk to places were favoured.
- Neighbourhoods where there are people out walking brings the community together and makes them feel safer.
- Getting people out and walking in their community should be a priority.

- The current cul de sac design creates less traffic in neighbourhoods, but a grid is easier to get around in.
- Some neighbourhoods are very “cookie cutter”, and could use more uniqueness.

Parents also spoke favourably about communities where places like recreation centres and parks were close. They liked being able to take short drives or walk to places. Parents with children can have difficulty getting around the City.

“I like that our schools and facilities are nearby so it makes it easier to travel. I like that there are so many parks and the people are very friendly.”

-13 year old female

Affordable Housing

Many parents indicated that the supply of affordable housing in Surrey makes it a good place for families:

- Many parents said that they live in Surrey because they can find affordable housing with enough space for their family.
- Some parents felt that their children would have limited space to play if they lived in places like town homes or apartment complexes.
- Parents want there to be a good supply of affordable family-friendly housing.

Shopping

- A number of young people said that they want better places to shop in Surrey. Many said they travel outside of Surrey for shopping and entertainment.



Children find places to play all over the City.

2.2 Park and Natural Spaces

Parks

People of all ages had a lot to say about the parks in Surrey. Parents and young people spoke very highly about the parks and open spaces that are available in Surrey, and parks were reported as a key element that makes Surrey a Child and Youth Friendly City.

As part of the consultations with very young children (aged 0-5 years) they were asked to draw their favourite place to play. Almost exclusively children drew parks or natural spaces. Early years children included the following in their drawings:

- Water features
- Playgrounds
- Specific drawings of Bear Creek Park
- Trees and natural features
- Riding bikes

Middle years children also made many comments about parks:

- They like playing in parks.
- Water features and pools were common elements of parks they liked.
- Parks are a good place to interact with other people.
- They like playgrounds.

Middle years children had a number of ideas to improve parks. Common ideas included:

- Making parks cleaner.
- Creating more parks and other places to play.
- More people in parks so you can make more friends.

Youth also had a number of positive things to say about parks in Surrey. Frequent comments included:

- Surrey has many great parks.
- Youth rely on the outdoor areas in Surrey as locations to hang out with friends.
- Good parks bring younger kids out into the community. Without parks kids wouldn't be outside in the community.
- Parks that are too out of the way, so with few people, are the most likely to be unsafe.

Youth had a number of suggestions:

- Make parks cleaner.
- Make more parks available for safe use.
- More gardens.

Parents of young children said:

- They appreciated parks that had areas purpose-built for families in them.
- Bear Creek park was often mentioned as a favourite family-friendly park.
- Water features rated high with parents and children alike.
- They like City staff running activities in parks.
- It is good when parks are close and accessible to residential areas.

Parents had a number of suggestions to make parks more family friendly:

- Parks with more facilities for families, including:
 - Covered areas for mothers and children.
 - More picnic facilities.
 - Playgrounds that are secure and have a barrier protecting children.
 - Washrooms in close proximity to play areas.
- Improve neighbourhood walking access to parks, so that parents don't feel the need to drive.
- More water features and shallow pools.
- Organizing parks into play areas by age and use, so that younger children are safe from being knocked over by older kids.
- An improved online resource with information about parks including – amenities, age suitability, planned events and trails.

Trails

Both parents and young people enjoy the trails and greenways that are available to walk on, however, some cited safety concerns as reasons they may not use them. Comments included:

- Better lit trails would make them safer.
- They would like to see greenspace linked by trails.

Access to Nature

Surrey's natural areas were frequently cited as one reason why Surrey is Child and Youth Friendly. Surrey's natural elements and the opportunities they offer are highly valued.

Youth said that:

- Having access to nature is important.
- They enjoy being able to access forests and treed areas.
- Access to nature encourages a healthy lifestyle.
- They enjoy walking on pathways and trails in natural areas.

"The best part is still having trees all around us in the City! It makes a huge difference compared to just paving over or developing forests with houses and highrises".

–youth

Middle years children also noted that access to natural areas makes Surrey a good place for young people. Middle years children made the following comments about natural spaces:

- Trees and greenery are good.
- Exploring the forest and natural areas is a favourite activity.
- They like to play games in natural areas that they can't play in other places.
- Creeks and other bodies of water are of particular interest.
- They get to see animals and bugs in the woods.

"Surrey has lots of trees and places to play and explore"

–12 year old girl

2.3 Transportation

Walking

Children, youth and parents all spoke about walking in their community. Some frequent observations included:

- Sidewalks make walking safer and easier.
- They prefer walking in places where they are not exposed to exhaust.

Common suggestions from children, youth and parents included:

- Build more sidewalks.
- They feel safer walking in areas that are clean from garbage.
- Better street lighting would make them feel safer and able to walk later at night.
- Gardens or other greenery would make walking nicer.
- Less traffic would make walking more appealing and safer.

Middle years children said:

- Walking to school can be fun, as they can play along the way.
- They want someone to walk with.

Walking and Traffic

Feeling unsafe due to traffic was a recurring message from children and youth. Comments in regards to the difficulty of crossing busy roads were common.

- King George Highway was identified by young people and parents as dangerous and difficult to cross.
- Youth said that they are forced to jaywalk because there are not a lot of crosswalks and on major roads long distances between crossing points.
- Young people noted that getting to school during the morning rush is the most dangerous time. They commented that drivers are in a rush and not aware of students. Many students reported near misses and collisions.

"Walking around and being on the streets needs to become a priority for more people"
-youth

Youth Survey Result	
I would be more likely to walk or cycle if:	
Places were closer together	42%
Sidewalks and roads were designed better	28%
I felt less threatened by people	15%
Other (afraid bike will get stolen, don't have anyone to walk with, I would if I had a bike")	15%
<i>See page 4 for information about the youth surveying process.</i>	

Cycling

Distance, danger from traffic and fear of stolen bikes are reasons why young people don't cycle. Young people made the following positive comments about cycling:

- They like cycling because it's fun and gets them places faster than walking, and they are less tired when they arrive.
- Children like to cycle in parks.

Young people made the following additional comments about cycling:

- They only cycle on the sidewalk.
- They feel that cars don't care about them.
- Many young people's parents won't let them cycle places because of safety concerns.

Parents and young people made a number of suggestions to increase cycling:

- More bike lanes and routes physically separated from traffic.
- Barriers between cyclists and traffic.
- Provide more secure places to lock up bikes in areas with good visibility.
- A number of references were made to providing bicycle training. Young people felt that if they were trained it would make them safer.

Public Transit

Young people and parents made similar comments about public transit in Surrey.

Regular comments related to:

- Improving the safety of waiting areas, especially at transit exchanges. This was a key concern for parents.
- More frequent busses
- Improved rapid transit that extends to the east and south of Surrey.

Several parents also noted that:

- Busses have limited space for strollers.

Youth Survey Result	
I would be more likely to take transit if:	
Buses were more frequent	43%
I felt safer on transit	21%
Transit stops were closer to places	20%
Waiting areas were better	16%
<i>See page 4 for information about the youth surveying process.</i>	

Driving in Surrey

Few comments were gathered with respect to driving in Surrey, however, parents noted the following:

- More drop-off short term parking areas at recreation centres would be helpful.
- Parents with car seats need wider parking spots.
- Many cars travel too fast in residential neighbourhoods.

In addition, youth said that:

- Driving is good because it keeps them away from scary people.

Community Services

This section explores children, youth and parents' perspectives on services in the City of Surrey, and how they contribute to a Child and Youth Friendly Community.

- 3.1 Leisure and Library Services
- 3.2 Recreation Facilities
- 3.3 Community Events
- 3.4 Services Provided by Other Agencies

3.1 Leisure and Library Services

Children's Programs and Services

Parents of pre-schoolers spoke very positively about the programs and activities available to their children. They noted the importance of:

- The wide variety of programs for early years children that are offered through recreation centres and the Surrey Public Library
- Programs for parents and their early years children to play together such as those offered through family places or Strong Start programs.
- Close proximity of programs to where they live.
- Excellent instructors at recreation centres and the Surrey Public Library.
- Many early years children's programs offered through the City of Surrey were either very reasonable in price or free.

Parents made a number of key suggestions, including:

- More family programs that include both parents and children.
- Less expensive activities and courses.
- Incentives or reduced cost opportunities to "try out" new programs or activities.

Middle years children said they wanted a wide variety of activities and more opportunities to make friends.

Public Library

Children, youth, and parents made the following comments about the Surrey Public Library and services available through the Library:

- Parents routinely mentioned the Library as an important place for their children.
- Story times are popular.
- Children frequently said that they like the books, contests and reading clubs.
- Middle years children said they would like to do more in the library like create their own books or other creative things.

Youth Survey Result	
I would have more to do in my free time if:	
Things were cheaper	69%
Stuff was easier to get to	21%
Other (I have a lot to do already, better traffic flow)	6%
Things were advertised better	4%
<i>See page 4 for information about the youth surveying process.</i>	

Youth Programs and Services

When asked to identify what makes Surrey's leisure opportunities child and youth friendly youth said:

- There are many opportunities to play sports and take part in physical activity.
- They access many opportunities through the City's recreation centres.
- There are free events.

When asked how youth programs and services could be improved, youth made the following comments:

- The cost of activities is a major barrier to finding things to do in their free time.
- Sports equipment is expensive, and unaffordable to some.
- Commitment to a block of time is a barrier, so increased opportunities for drop-in recreation are favourable.
- If the distance to recreation programs and services is too far it presents obstacles. Youth said that it is better if they are able to access opportunities in their own neighbourhood.
- As they get older, youth need to be more talented at sports to continue taking part. There should be recreation options available for less skilled individuals.

Arts opportunities

Both middle years children and youth expressed a desire to have more opportunities to participate in arts and culture activities. They said:

- There aren't many opportunities to take part in arts and culture activities.
- Youth want more opportunities to express themselves creatively.
- It would be helpful if there was more and better advertising of what does exist.
- There could be more opportunities to showcase local talent.

Variety

Youth indicated a need for a better variety of recreation opportunities. Many ideas for recreation programs emerged through the consultations, for example:

- Hanging-out
- Clubs
- Music
- Cooking
- Non-typical sports
- Science activities
- Fine arts and other creative activities
- Aboriginal programming

Advertising Events, Programs and Services

Youth said that they often don't hear about events offered by the City. Comments made by youth included:

- Advertising in recreation centres doesn't get out to a wide youth audience.
- The internet and word of mouth are the best ways to communicate information to youth.
- Create a "one stop" internet resource for youth in Surrey.

Parents also noted that they weren't aware of some opportunities for their children offered by the City. They suggested creating a website that is a resource specifically for families.

Youth Survey Result	
I want more opportunities to do:	
Places to just hang out	33%
Arts, music and creative activities	31%
Sports and active stuff	29%
Other ("I wish we had a coffee place")	7%
<i>See page 4 for information about the youth surveying process.</i>	

Hanging out

One of the most frequent comments from youth was that they need places to hang out. Youth said that hanging out is important because it provides an opportunity to meet new people and interact face to face.

Common ideas from youth regarding opportunities to hang out included:

- Parks and the beach are popular places to hang out.
- Youth can find places outside to hang out in the summer, but options are limited for the rest of the year.
- Many youth feel that if they are not a younger kid or skater they have nowhere to go to.
- Age appropriateness –some youth said they won't go to youth centres because there are only young kids there and the activities are inappropriate for them.

Common suggestions youth made regarding hanging out included:

- Youth need more safe and clean places to hang out.
- A spot with a variety of activities would draw in people and expose them to new things.
- Youth want somewhere to “chill” without too many strict rules where they are free to be themselves and don't have to worry about being hassled.
- Youth centres being open longer hours, during evenings and weekends.
- Encourage “by-youth for-youth” approaches

Middle years children also made a number of comments about wanting places to hang out safely. Children indicated that they want their hangout spots to:

- Be safe
- Provide healthy activities
- Provide opportunities to meet new friends
- Offer fun things to do

Youth Survey Result	
I'd like more public places to hang out:	
Parks	42%
Public squares or plaza	29%
Inside	23%
Other (music, skate or game shops)	6%
<i>See page 4 for information about the youth surveying process.</i>	

3.2 Recreation Facilities

Recreation Facilities

Children and youth had positive comments about Surrey's recreation facilities. Facilities that they said they like included:

- Recreation centres.
- Pools.
- Skateparks.
- Sports fields.

Young people said they would like to see more:

- Recreation centres.
- Larger recreation centres with more activities in them.
- Turf fields.
- Public gardens.
- Pools and swimming.
- Ice rinks.

Regular comments from parents regarding recreation centres included:

- They like the opportunities provided through recreation centres.
- They would like more pools throughout the City.
- Recreation facilities that are both centrally located and close to home are important to parents.
- Many town centres need larger recreation centres that offer a better variety in activities.



Waterparks are very popular.

3.3 Community Events

Community events were identified as an important part of community life. Children, youth and parents all spoke of the contribution that celebrations make to a community.

Many youth spoke positively about the community celebrations in Surrey. Frequent comments youth made about community events were:

- Youth enjoy large city-wide events, but also like smaller scale community-based events which bring together a neighbourhood.
- Events get more people out at night.
- Everyone enjoys free food at events.

Middle years children also indicated that they enjoy taking part in community events.

Likewise, parents spoke positively about community events in Surrey noting that:

- Community events are great and bring life to the community.
- The City offers a wide variety of great child-friendly events.
- Events with a multi-cultural dimension are good.



3.4 Services Provided by Other Agencies

While the consultations focused on asking children, youth and parents about services provided by the City (recreational, cultural and library services) there was some feedback related to services provided by other agencies.

School

Young people at a number of schools spoke about overcrowding at their schools. They noted that there is a lack of space, and students often spend a lot of time in portables, which they do not like.

Community Schools

A number of parents and youth spoke about providing recreation and other services through schools. Comments included:

- Schools could open their doors when they are not in session to offer recreation opportunities.
- Services could be organized through schools
- Parents could be connected more with schools through these opportunities.

Childcare

Some parents had positive comments about child care, saying:

- They are able to find child care in their area.

Many parents had strong concerns about child care in Surrey. Common themes that emerged from the consultations included:

- The need to increase the availability of affordable and quality child-care.
- The need for more after school programs.
- Often the hours of child-care do not meet the needs of working parents. In particular, they end too early in the afternoon.

Youth Services

Youth made a number of comments regarding health and social services, including.

- It is hard finding a job. Many youth need help with developing employable skills and job searching.
- Surrey needs more advocates helping youth on the streets.
- Youth need more activities to keep them out of trouble.