



INCORPORATED 1855

TOWN OF WHITBY REPORT

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

REPORT TO: Operations Committee	REPORT NO: CMS 16-12
DATE OF MEETING: 19 March 2012	FILE NO(S):
PREPARED BY: Community and Marketing Services	LOCATION: All Wards
REPORT TITLE/SUBJECT:	Youth Strategy

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That Council approve the development of a Youth Strategy to guide the priorities and work plans of the Youth Section of the Parks and Recreation Division for the next five years;
2. That development of a Youth Strategy include consultation with the Whitby Youth Council, Whitby youth and community partners and agencies who serve Whitby youth; and,
3. That staff report back with a draft Youth Strategy by the end of 2012 for Council's consideration.

2.0 **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Whitby Community Strategic Plan identifies the development of short and long term business plans as one of the strategies to pursue excellence in local government. The development of youth services and programs has been a priority for Council over the past ten years. The focus on youth services in the community has been recognized by Play Works, awarding the Town of Whitby the designation of a Platinum Level Youth Friendly Community. In order to remain a Community of Choice for youth, a new Youth Strategy is being recommended to guide the direction and future actions of the Youth Section related to youth recreation and leisure services. A budget of \$5,000 has been allocated in the 2012 capital budget to address the development of the Youth Strategy.

3.0 ORIGIN:

CMS Report 16-12 originates with the Youth Section of the Parks and Recreation Division of the Community and Marketing Services Department.

4.0 BACKGROUND:

In 2000, dmA Planning and Management Services was engaged to develop a Youth Strategy for the Town of Whitby. The primary recommendations of the study, adopted and approved by Council, were to develop a youth committee, assign resources within the Community and Marketing Services Department to develop youth programs and services, develop partnerships with community organizations to increase youth programming and put into operation youth drop-in centres. A full review of the recommendations and actions implemented can be found in Attachment 1. Over the past ten years at the direction of Council, the Youth Section of the Community and Marketing Services Department has created the Whitby Youth Council, introduced new youth programs and services, partnered with organizations and agencies to provide services to youth, and opened three drop-in youth centres/rooms (one centre/room, the Brock Street Activity Centre, was closed on December 31, 2011). The following timeline outlines these accomplishments.

Youth Development Programs and Initiatives	
2000	- Council approved dmA Youth Strategy
2002	- Development of Whitby Youth Council
2004	- Supervisor of Community Development and Special Events split into two roles, allowing the Supervisor of Community Development to focus on the Youth Section - Health Club Youth membership introduced at the Whitby Civic Recreation Complex (WCRC) for ages 16 & 17 - Whitby Youth Fair launched - Council approved Youth Section business plan
2005	- Health Club Youth membership at WCRC lowered to age 14 - Opening of the Youth Room in the McKinney Centre - Whitby Idol introduced - Recipient of a \$16,000 Safer Communities Grant from the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to implement initiatives to make Whitby a safer community for youth and all residents - Launch of Brooklin Youth Room offering a drop in centre for youth Tuesdays, Thursdays and every second Friday - Introduction of Canadian Tire Jump Start Program

2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of Cullen Central Park and McKinney Centre children and youth camps - Council approved Youth Section Business Plan - Opening of Brock Street Activity Centre Youth Room - Introduction of youth dances in partnership with Whitby Optimist Club - Introduction of Town of Whitby Access Program - Introduction of Youth Awards - Introduction of Youth Week
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whitby recognized as a Youth Friendly Community through Play Works
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of Youth Film Festival - Introduction of Grade 5 Action Pass - Introduction of Youth Leadership Conference
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Received Safer & Vital Communities Grant to offer RA Sennett After School program - Facilitated partnership between Community Connection and CAPREIT to sponsor White Oaks summer youth program - Introduction of Mayor's Youth Bursary for graduating Whitby Youth Council members
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening of Brooklin Community Centre and Library Youth Room - Introduction of Youth Cultural Event
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whitby recognized as a Platinum Level Youth Friendly Community by Play Works - Approval to close the Brock Street Activity Centre Youth Room and reallocate the funds to offer two after school programs at John Dryden and West Lynde Public Schools and free youth programs at the Centennial Building (implemented in January 2012)

Whitby Council has invested in enhancing youth facilities, activities, and programs. One of the many ways this investment has proved to be successful is the recent award of being recognized as a 'Platinum Youth Friendly Community Builder' by Play Works. Play Works is a not-for-profit organization consisting of representatives from children and youth based organizations (4-H Ontario, Arts Network for Children and Youth, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, Laidlaw Foundation, Sport Alliance of Ontario, Parks and Recreation Ontario, YMCA Ontario). Many communities strive for this achievement, but do not always measure up. This is a significant accomplishment for the municipality and is a direct result of the leadership of Council in the area of youth services. The Town will be recognized in 2012 at Queen's Park by Play Works and the Honourable Eric Hoskins, the Minister responsible for Children and Youth Services.

5.0 DISCUSSION/OPTIONS:

Long term strategies are important to the municipality as they provide focus, help to prioritize financial resources, and provide direction to move from plan to action in order to achieve Council's goals and vision. In order to continue to look at the needs of

youth and be proactive in addressing these needs, a revised Youth Strategy that guides the direction and future actions of the Youth Section of the Parks and Recreation Division related to youth recreation and leisure services is recommended. As the demographics of the community and youth trends change, it is imperative that the youth services offered by the municipality anticipate and respond to these changes. A Youth Strategy would provide this proactive approach to ensure Whitby remains a Platinum Youth Friendly Community. The proposed Youth Strategy would provide the following:

- background on how the Town of Whitby currently serves youth; how the Town partners with various government and non-profit community organizations to serve youth, along with a description of some of the core activities that provide unique and enriching experiences for youth in Whitby;
- a summary of the key trends impacting Whitby's youth today and into the future;
- feedback from youth through an engagement process to complete an assessment between service needs and expectations;
- recommendations for a Whitby Youth Strategy that establishes goals, desired outcomes and actions for Whitby's delivery of youth leisure and recreation services for 2013 to 2017.

The Youth Section of the Parks and Recreation Division continually evaluates services on an operational basis as exemplified by the recommendation and approval of Council to close the Brock Street Activity Centre in 2011 and to introduce after school programs in three areas within Whitby in its place in 2012. This service provision change was approved to provide the most effective use of the resources to meet the needs of youth in our community.

A new Youth Strategy would allow for a full review of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of youth services in the community. The goals, desired outcomes and actions that are to be identified in a Youth Strategy would focus on municipal recreation and leisure services. The outcome of the strategy may recommend incremental services, discontinuation or modification of current leisure and recreation services.

The Town of Whitby and the Whitby Youth Council established a Youth Advisory Committee in the spring of 2010 to work on the Youth Friendly Community application. This working committee of over 40 representatives from community organizations conducted a youth survey and provided input for the development of the Town of Whitby's Youth Friendly Community application. This information and input from the Youth Advisory Committee provides an excellent foundation from which to develop a Youth Strategy, however it is felt that further community engagement and more youth input is required. This could include workshops with the Whitby Youth Council, focus groups conducted in high schools, online surveys, Town Hall meeting, and stakeholder focus groups. Some of these sessions could be facilitated by Town of Whitby Staff and some could be facilitated by a consultant.

6.0 PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS/PLAN:

In order to fully assess the needs of youth in the community for the next five years, extensive consultation with youth, community leaders and partners would be required. Subject to Council approval to proceed, a number of facilitated discussions, feedback sessions and strategic meetings would be held.

7.0 CONSIDERATIONS:

A. PUBLIC

The development of a Youth Strategy would benefit all members of the public as the community, and specifically youth, would be provided the opportunity to contribute towards the development of the plan.

B. FINANCIAL

A budget of \$5,000 has been allocated in the 2012 capital budget to assist with the development of the plan. Staff are not recommending the hiring of a consultant to lead this study, but rather the utilization of a facilitator to provide support for community workshops. Staff feel this strategy can be developed internally as a strong foundation has already been developed through the work completed for the Youth Friendly Community application. If approved, the capital funds would be used to engage a facilitator to lead workshops, increase opportunities for community input and complete targeted market research, as required.

C. IMPACT ON & INPUT FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS/SOURCES

Staff from the Community and Marketing Services Department would work closely with community partners for the development of the plan including the Durham District School Boards and Durham Regional Police Service.

D. CORPORATE AND/OR DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The following Community Strategic Plan objectives would be addressed through the development of a Youth Strategy:

1. Develop a safe and healthy community
 - 1.1 Promote healthy lifestyles and wellness for all ages and abilities
2. Preserve and advance Whitby's heritage, culture and natural environment
 - 2.3 Encourage and promote community-based special events and activities

- 2.5 Celebrate and promote the unique events and accomplishments of our citizens
- 4. Pursue excellence in local government
 - 4.3 Develop short and long term business and financial plans including performance measurements
 - 4.6 Encourage and promote community volunteerism
 - 4.7 Develop partnerships with public and private sector organizations for innovative service delivery arrangements

While the Culture, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan does not have any Strategic Directions specifically directed to youth, it does comment on the importance and strength of the youth programs as referenced below:

Capital and Organization Resources - Section 2.1.3

- Importance of the ongoing support to the Whitby Youth Council and the provision of staff resources to work with youth to develop a marketing plan to assist local youth to develop and manage the Youth Council initiatives

Consultants Highlights Section 2.2

- Additional programs and services for youth are strongly supported by the majority of consultation participants
- Suggestion for more flexible or drop-in type facilities such as basketball courts, sand volleyball and outdoor rinks

Service Strategies: Program Direction 4.1.1

- The Town should maintain a proactive approach to working with youth

Strategic Direction SD-O-006

- Develop methods and products that ensure the perspective and initiatives of the Community and Marketing Services Department are effectively communicated to the Town's stakeholder's groups, residents, businesses, and service delivery partners

SD-O-006 AS c

- Investigate, through discussions with stakeholders, participants in existing programs, members of advisory groups and the public at large and review marketing trends, new opportunities to market the Department's services and messages to target audiences. These opportunities could include enhanced on-line opportunities, such as "blogs" and "zines" popular with youth and young adults, and direct communication to members and participants through instructional staff, volunteers, and stakeholder meetings.

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Staff are seeking Council's approval to develop a new Youth Strategy. This proactive approach would ensure that as the demographics and needs of Whitby youth change, that the municipality adapt and adopt recreation and leisure service initiatives as appropriate.

9.0 ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No.1: Youth Recreation Needs Analysis

For further information contact:
Sarah Klein, Manager of Recreation, Ext.2217

Peter LeBel, Commissioner of Community and Marketing Services, Ext. 4319

Robert Petrie, Chief Administrative Officer, Ext. 2211

Youth Recreation Needs Analysis – dmA Planning 2000

Recommendation	Actions to Date
<p>1. The Parks and Recreation Department should initiate the development of a youth services “committee”, comprised of the Town’s youth and of the key providers of youth services in the Town, including those providing health, security, employment guidance, education and social and recreation services to youth. The role of this group will be able to communicate to co-ordinate initiatives, and to develop supportive and comprehensive services to youth. The role relative to the services of the Parks and Recreation Department should be advisory.</p>	<p>A Youth Council comprised of youth and adult advisors was created in 2002. The Youth Council has been instrumental in the development of youth services for the municipality and currently has over 40 members who meet on a monthly basis. A Council representative sits on the Youth Council.</p>
<p>2. The Parks and Recreation Department should investigate opportunities within the Department to assign staff resources in the development and co-ordination of youth services. This may be a new position, redeployment, or restructuring of an existing position.</p>	<p>At the time of this report, the Supervisor of Community Development and Special Events was overseeing youth. In 2004, this position was split into two roles: Supervisor of Special Events and Supervisor of Community Development. The Supervisor of Community Development oversees youth and children’s programs and Community Connection. In 2008, a full time Youth Programmer was hired to assist in the development of youth programs and services.</p>
<p>3. That the Parks and Recreation, Community School, and respective school staff involved in the community school programs review the services and approach (supervision, scheduling, type of activities, marketing, etc.) to youth aged 13 to 18 to consider opportunities to attract youth through adjustments to the design of programs, staffing, and communication and advertising.</p>	<p>Community Connection completed a review of their programming and modified the location and items of programming to meet the community needs. In addition a youth membership was introduced at the WCRC health club in 2004 and the age of the membership was lowered to 14 in 2005.</p>
<p>4. That the Town confirm, with the sport groups dealing with youth and currently using the Iroquois Park Sports Centre, their potential and desire to use a youth fitness facility, including frequency, seasons, acceptance of fees, requirements for supervision of equipment by trained staff, etc.</p>	<p>Introduction of a Youth membership at the WCRC and expansion of abilities centre is currently underway adjacent to IPSC. Expansion youth rooms: - McKinney & BCC youth rooms opened in 2005 and BAC in 2006 (closed in 2011) to address socialization needs of youth.</p>
<p>5. That the Town draft performance measures for the operation of the Youth Fitness Centre including the general scheduling and distribution of structured and unstructured use, supervision guidelines, staffing to participant ratio, acceptable fees and charges, options and relationship with other facility components; i.e. ice and pool, etc.</p>	

<p>6. That the Town initiates discussions with those in the private sector who have expressed an interest in a partnership to assess this option.</p>	
<p>7. That the Town proceeds to develop the space, informally designated as Fitness space in the Iroquois Park Sports Centre as a youth fitness centre.</p>	
<p>8. That consideration be given to opportunities to provide other youth serving ancillary services within the Iroquois Park Sports Centre, such as an on-site physiotherapist and those services which promote socializing.</p>	
<p>9. That opportunity to create additional facilities in Brooklin, either at Brooklin Memorial Park or another location, needs to be investigated with the intention of providing approximately 2,000 to 4,000 square feet of community space with a focus on youth drop-in. Further, this space should be designed to incorporate the considerations noted in the “ideal youth space” including a lounge area, computers with internet access, snack bar, instructional fitness programs designed for teens, etc.</p>	<p>Opening of BCCL in 2010 that includes a youth room dedicated to and designed for youth. This facility also includes a library, gymnasium, arts and crafts room and computer commons available to youth.</p>
<p>10. This study did not investigate the broad recreation needs of the Brooklin area and the need for youth space <u>relative to other recreation needs and age groups</u> in this community should be considered prior to moving on the preceding recommendation.</p>	<p>BCCL also provides space for children, adults and seniors.</p>
<p>11. That Parks and Recreation staff meet with staff responsible for transportation to ascertain the opportunity and costs to provide a shuttle bus on specific days/times from the Brooklin area to Iroquois Park Sports Centre.</p>	<p>With the addition of programs in BCCL, this is no longer as necessary, however Durham Region Transit has expanded to service Brooklin.</p>