

# YOUTH PLAN FOR RECREATION

APRIL 2020

# Youth Plan for Recreation

## Final Report

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Prepared for:

**Community Services Department  
City of Mississauga**

Prepared by:



# Acknowledgements

## Project Staff Team

**Shari Lichterman** Director, Recreation

**Jennifer Cowie Bonne**, Manager, Community & Neighbourhood Development

**Kelly Reichheld**, Manager, Sport and Community Development

**Maurice Swaby**, Manager, Business Planning

**Kristina Zietsma**, Manager, Program Delivery

**Orville Edwards**, Community Development Coordinator (Youth)

**Arlene D'Costa**, Business Advisor, Business Planning

**Julia Giovinazzo**, Business Advisor, Business Planning

**Rachel Fraser**, Business Advisor, Business Planning

## Consulting Team

Monteith Brown Planning Consultants

Tucker-Reid & Associates



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# Executive Summary

The Youth Plan for Recreation (“the Plan”) examines the 2009 Youth Plan and identifies priorities needed to move forward over the next 5 years. The scope of the Plan is focused on the Recreation Division and its Community Development Unit. The Plan is focused upon the Recreation Division’s program and service delivery practices specific to the youth market segment. The Plan’s service assessments and associated recommendations are organized into five key focus areas:

**1**

**Use of Space and New  
Programming Opportunities**

**2**

**Inclusion, Access and  
Supportive Environments**

**3**

**Youth Leadership and  
Employment Opportunities**

**4**

**Communications  
Targeted to Youth**

**5**

**Role Clarity Between the  
City and its Partners**

Recommendations arising from the Youth Plan for Recreation are as follows.

# Use of Space and New Programming Opportunities

1

In order to optimize recreation facility space, youth programming areas should come in the form of shared and/or integrated spaces within community centres rather than an area dedicated exclusively to youth. Existing centres and future redevelopments should have these spaces designed with the input of local youth.

2

Expand youth programming times to evenings and weekends to appeal to the 18-24 year age bracket and introduce more aquatics and fitness programs.

3

Explore emerging trends in recreation such as E-sports/gaming as an alternative option to traditional recreational activities.

4

Revisit the Youth Charter and role of the Youth Advisory Committees to ensure new programming ideas are explored.

# Inclusion, Access and Supportive Environments

5

Ensure that Youth Councils reflect the population that they serve by striving for representation along the lines of gender identity, cultural and visible minority groups, income levels, abilities, and sexual orientation at a minimum.

6

Ensure that community centres and spaces are safe and welcoming to the LGBTQ+ community, and that program nomenclature respects gender identity.

7

Ensure the needs of youth are incorporated into the Inclusion Strategy.

8

Expand on the sponsorship model to fund additional no cost/low cost programs.



# Youth Leadership and Employment Opportunities

9

Take a leadership role in communicating with youth serving agencies and organizations to support employment and volunteer opportunities.

10

Complete a review of the current LIT program to investigate the following: expansion into other areas of programming and other streams (i.e. admin and operations), course offering to year-round and opportunities for reducing cost barriers to take part in this program.

11

Develop a youth-focused marketing plan for employment and volunteer opportunities.



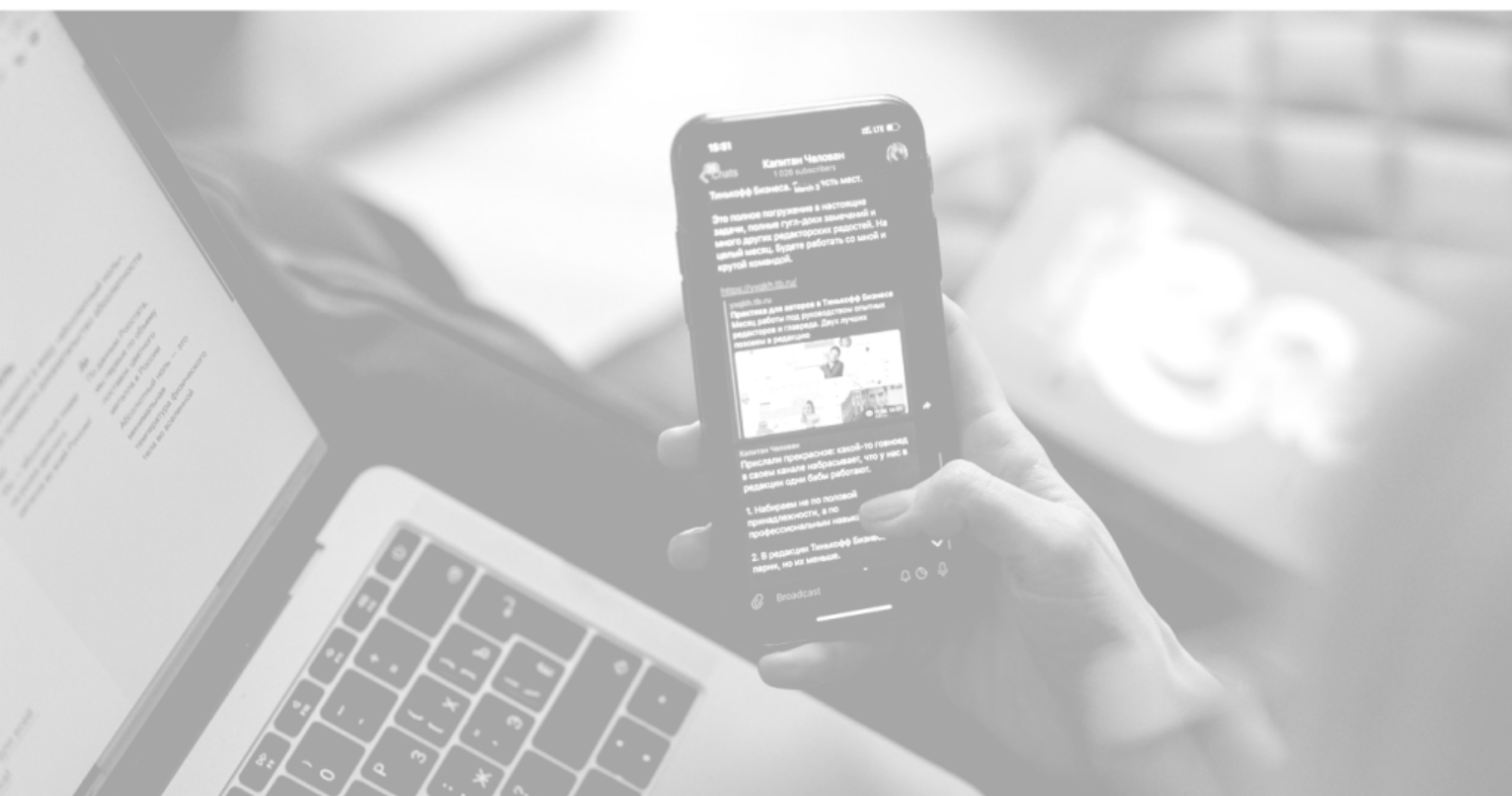
# Communications Targeted to Youth

12

Ensure that communications with youth utilize technology and digital apps currently used by youth, and that designated staff are approved to capture opportunities and activities in real time. Track engagement results of each communication mechanism.

13

Develop a Communications Plan that serves to keep youth and youth serving organizations fully informed of opportunities for youth in the City of Mississauga and to promote the positive contributions that youth make to the community through recreation.



# Role Clarity Between the City and its Partners

14

Improve communication and working relationships with external youth-serving agencies to increase organizational effectiveness and partnership opportunities.

15

Continue to work with partners to maintain Mississauga's status as a Youth Friendly Community.

16

Create School Board partnerships to co-facilitate after school programming, share program spaces, and improve communication and overall access to youth.

17

Clarify the role of the Youth Engagement Staff specifically by defining service levels, the resources needed to achieve the levels of service, developing consistent training, and formalizing connections with other youth service providers at the neighbourhood level.

18

Ensure the Recreation Division has the organizational structure to support the delivery of current and future youth programs, activities, processes and services.

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

Since 2009, the Mississauga Youth Plan! (the “Youth Plan”) has provided guidance to the City by identifying initiatives primarily focused on recreation, parks, library, and arts and cultural services. With its implementation over the past decade, the City has made progress in addressing needs and priorities that were contained in the Youth Plan. The 2019 Future Directions cycle provided an opportunity to review the Youth Plan with respect to recreation to align with current frameworks such as Future Directions, the Framework for Recreation in Canada, and others that have been developed over the past 10 years.

This Youth Plan for Recreation (the “Plan”) examines the 2009 Youth Plan and identifies priorities needed to move forward over the next 5 years. The scope of the Review is focused on the Recreation Division, its Community Development Unit and staff serving youth in the community centres. By identifying relevant issues for youth, the Review will support the Recreation Division's decision-making as how best to address the needs of Mississauga's youth through the delivery of programs and services as well as working collectively with community partners.



Within the scope of work defined in the City's Terms of Reference are:

- Assessment of Recreation's role is delivering youth programs, services, and leadership opportunities;
- Scan of relevant policies, frameworks, legislation, and best practices to highlight themes, issues and opportunities for Recreation;
- Identification of trends and methods to broaden youth customer base;
- Incorporation of principles, priorities and actions of the Framework for Recreation in Canada;
- Community engagement through an online survey, focus groups, and staff workshops;
- Identification of strategic goals, action items and funding priorities;
- Consideration of, and response to long-term youth program and service needs based upon a gap analysis; and
- Recommendations on key focus areas for Recreation.

## 1.2 Methodology

The Youth Plan for Recreation was initiated in April 2018 and is guided by a Terms of Reference that is overseen by a team of City Staff in conjunction with Monteith Brown Planning Consultants and Tucker-Reid & Associates. The planning process employed a background review of relevant national and provincial frameworks, a scan of promising practices in other jurisdictions, and consultations undertaken with Mississauga youth, staff and community stakeholders through workshops and a survey. The Plan has benefitted from selected reports that have been prepared by the City of Mississauga as well as utilization data provided through the City's Recreation Division.

The Plan is focused upon the Recreation Division's program and service delivery practices specific to the youth market segment. These are also relevant and have been recently examined through documents such as the City of Mississauga Recreation Indoor Facility Infrastructure Strategy (2017) and 2019 Future Directions for Recreation.

The Plan has been prepared in consideration of key municipal documents such as: Youth Plan (2009), Report on the Youth Plan (2015-2016), Youth Friendly Communities Application (2017), Market Assessment and Socio-Demographic Study (2018) and Mississauga's Future Directions for Recreation Master Plans (2014 & 2019). Other local, regional and provincial frameworks, and leading practices have also been analyzed for their relevance to this Plan.

## 1.3 Summary of 2009 Mississauga Youth Plan & City Achievements

### 2009 Mississauga Youth Plan

Mississauga's Youth Plan is designed to be far-reaching and respond to the full range of youth needs and interests. The plan development process included an environmental scan and thorough engagement program which was finalized in 2009. The Youth Plan established a strong vision statement as well as a set of guiding values and principles. The values of respect, opportunities, communication, youth voice, equality and shared leadership resonate throughout the document and shine through the work done by the City every day.

The Plan contains a total of 46 recommended actions, distributed across five overarching principles. The recommendations include a range of implementation opportunities; some focus on continuing with or expanding current practices, while others are larger-scale and require support and investment from both the municipality and community groups/organizations.

The original Youth Plan was developed for the entire Corporation of the City of Mississauga and was not exclusively focused on the Recreation Division. As a result, some of the recommended actions are not directly applicable within the scope of this Plan.

**“Mississauga is a youth and young adult friendly city that is respectful, inclusive and forward thinking; a city where youth are meaningfully engaged and thrive as equal members of the community.”**

~ Mississauga Youth Plan Vision

### City Achievements

Since the implementation of the 2009 Youth Plan, it is clear that there is much capacity within the community to serve youth. The City of Mississauga has committed significant efforts to fulfilling the Plan's vision and recommendations, and demonstrated a commitment to local youth by investing and supporting youth-focused programs, services and facilities. Five clear principles have been used by the City to guide the Plan's implementation and are highlighted below to provide a snapshot of the municipal achievements and investments relating to youth-specific recreational services (noting that these are not intended to constitute a complete summary of implementation progress for all of the Plan's 46 recommendations).

## 1

**Transportation**

- Implementation of the Freedom Pass along with providing bussing to transport youth to Mississauga Valley basketball on a weekly basis, in line with Recommendation 5.
- 26 high schools participated in the MiWay Ambassador Program.
- 15 dedicated high school bus routes in place in addition to regular MiWay routes.
- 14 post-secondary marketing students were employed to support MiWay outreach.

## 2

**Program Delivery**

- Municipal programming was expanded in priority neighbourhoods by offering lunch time Sauga At Play in Malton and after school Sauga At Play in South Common, supporting Recommendation 6.
- Free drop-in programs and events supported by the Youth Plan were participated in annually by 100,000 youth between the ages of 10 to 24 years old, supporting Recommendation 7.
- The At Play program has expanded to operate at all 11 community centres, five days a week thus addressing Recommendation 8.
- The addition of community centre lobby furniture and games tables created youth friendly spaces.

## 3

**Relationships**

- Over 250 relationships have been forged in response to the Youth Plan with local schools, churches and youth-serving agencies to deliver programs/services and connect Mississauga's youth; supporting Recommendations 36, 38, 42, 43 (and others, indirectly).

# 4

## Youth Engagement

- Mississauga Youth Action Committee (MYAC) has formed and hosts monthly Connects to support positive youth development. Additionally, almost 200 youth advisory meetings were held annually with 3,343 youth members of community centre and library youth teams, thereby fulfilling Recommendation 16.
- A variety of youth-focused annual and one-time events have been established in support of Recommendation 23. Examples include the Sauga Block Party, Pride Parade, and Rock the Coliseum; attracting over 5,000 youth attendees each.
- 11 part time Youth Engagement Staff were hired for each community centre/library to foster a youth friendly centre that is responsive to the needs of youth, addressing Recommendation 25.

# 5

## Social Responsibility

- The Active Assist program provided service and financial assistance to a maximum number of clients (14,500) annually, supporting Recommendation 27. In addition, a review of the Active Assist program took place and improvements have been made to increase access.
- 216 youth agencies and groups received in kind support from the city, including program and event space as well as staff assistance to hold a wide range of youth related events, meetings and programs.

# 2.0 Foundation of the Youth Plan for Recreation

## 2.1 Definition of Youth

Today's youth are unlike any generation before – they are more diverse, connected, socially engaged and educated. Many youth are reaping benefits while others face challenges such as finding jobs, social exclusion, cyberbullying, mental health challenges and addiction, and a higher risk of being obese.<sup>1</sup>

There is no single definition of youth but rather the terminology is often derived around a range of ages or a period in one's life. Some of Canada's and the world's most recognized youth-serving agencies employ varied definitions of youth. Governments, agencies and organizations tend to frame a definition of youth according to the services that they are providing to the specific segment of the youth population that they are serving.

Table 1 compares the youth age definition in municipalities surrounding or in close proximity to Mississauga. The City of Mississauga's definition of youth is consistent with other municipalities in terms of age range apart from Brampton where the age range does not extend past 17 years old.



# Examples of Youth Definitions

**Youth is the period between childhood and adult age.**

~ Oxford English Dictionary

**Youth is the time of life when one is young; especially the period of time between childhood and maturity.**

~ Merriam Webster Dictionary

**Adolescents as those people between 10 and 19 years of age.**

~ World Health Organization

**Youth is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community.**

~ UNESCO Social and Human Sciences

**Ages 15 to 34.**

~ Statistics Canada, A Portrait of Youth in Canada

**Youth are those between the ages of 12 and 25.**

~ Government of Ontario, Stepping Up

**Those aged 12 to 24, further broken down into the categories of 12-15, 16-18 and 19-24.**

~ Mississauga Youth Plan!

Table 1: Comparison of Youth Age Definitions in Area Municipalities

Municipality	Youth Age Range Definition	Average Youth Definition Age Range
Brampton	14 – 17 years	12 – 22 years
Milton	12 – 24 years	
Mississauga	10 – 24 years	
Toronto	13 – 24 years	

Youth are defined in many ways by multiple organizations that use a variety of terms and standards. A review of definitions found that youth requires a fluid definition, allowing for differentiation among age ranges, activities, or life stages.

**For the purposes of this Youth Plan for Recreation, youth are defined as persons between the age of 10 and 24 years. Overlapping and transitional age categories are applied for program delivery to recognize the level of physical and emotional development does not align with a specific age.**

For the City of Mississauga Recreation Division, the term “youth” requires a flexible definition grounded with logical sub-sets for operational and programming purposes. The result of research and analysis is a recommendation that the City of Mississauga Recreation Services continue to define “youth”



as young persons between the ages of 10 and 24 years, consistent with the 2009 Youth Plan and in line with provincial and global agencies. An age-based component of the definition will also allow the City to easily apply a basis for registration and membership pricing.

## 2.2 Alignment with National, Provincial & Local Initiatives

### The Framework for Recreation in Canada

The City of Mississauga's Terms of Reference for this Youth Plan for Recreation specifies the need to "incorporate the principles, priorities and actions of the Framework for Recreation in Canada (FRC) into the Youth Plan."

The direction from the City is to consider the respective goals of the FRC, and articulate the emerging issues as identified through the consultation phase of the Plan. The FRC is built on Canada-wide public consultation, national and international research and is grounded in experiences and data generated at the community, provincial/territorial and national level.

Recreation provides multiple pathways to well-being for individuals and communities, as well as for our built and natural environments. The FRC rejuvenates the definition of recreation and parks, articulates their economic impacts including the benefits, key goals and strategies that should be evident in each community across Canada. Recreation has the potential to address challenges and troubling social issues such as increases in sedentary living and obesity, decreased contact with nature, and inequities that limit

recreation opportunities for some population groups.

This renewed focus provides the rationale for investing in an evolved recreation strategy, and describes the need for collaboration with other initiatives in a variety of sectors. The FRC provides a new vision for recreation and suggests some common ways of thinking about the renewal of recreation, based on clear goals and underlying values.

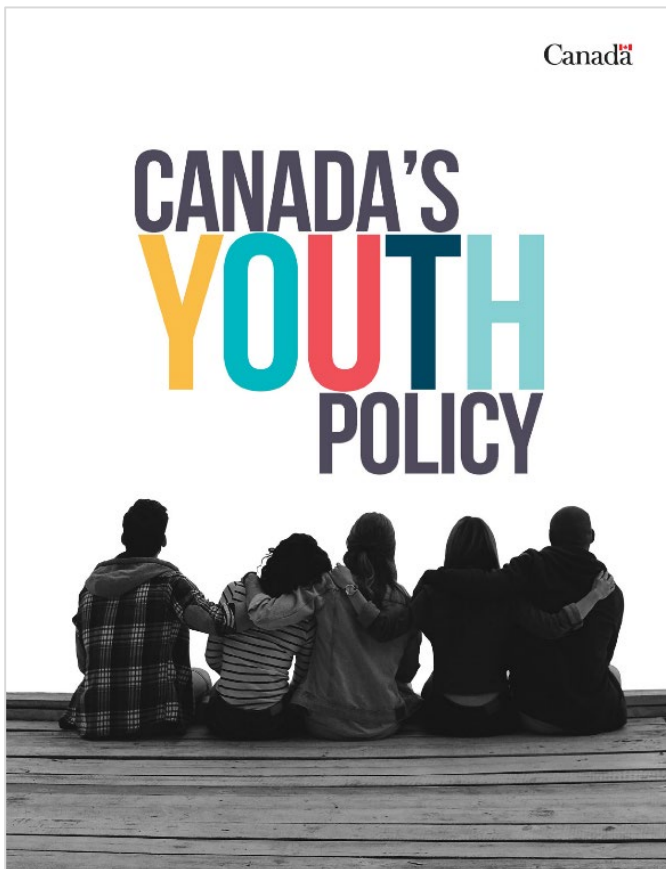
Three key messages emerged during the development of the FRC which have and will stand the test of changing demographics and environments in Canada.

- High quality, accessible recreation opportunities are integral to a well-functioning society;
- The recreation sector can be a collaborative leader in addressing major issues of the day; and
- All people and communities deserve equitable access to recreational experiences. Recreation must be accessible and welcoming to all

### Canada's Youth Policy

The federal government launched Canada's Youth Policy<sup>2</sup> in 2018 through which its "Have Your Say" initiative collected information from Canadian youth through online submissions and over 60 roundtable discussions across the country. The consultation program discussed challenges and opportunities for Canadian youth and asked for thoughts regarding physical and mental health, education and

employment, reconciliation, environment and climate change, and a variety of other topics.



Subsequent phases of research and consultation helped to form Canada's Youth Policy, and established a vision for youth to guide the actions and priorities of governments and society. The Policy is an impactful tool to ensure that youth are supported, heard, and respected. The City of Mississauga should continually evaluate Canada's Youth Policy in relation to this Plan, Future Directions and other corporate policies and practices.

### Ontario's "Stepping Up" Framework

The Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services developed a framework

titled "Stepping Up" to guide work in support of Ontario Youth. The document establishes a vision, guiding principles, and evidence-informed outcomes to help youth succeed. Twenty priority outcomes articulate the processes necessary to achieve the framework's vision. The framework is also built upon a holistic view of youth that is supported by an ecological model of development; meaning that youth themselves are the centre of the planning and all intra and inter-personal connections and experiences are influenced as such.

**"Together, we will support all young people to become healthy, safe, hopeful, engaged, educated and contributing members of their communities and our province."**

~ Stepping Up Vision

To help navigate the Stepping Up Framework, the narrative is organized across seven outcomes reflective of experiences that support youth development:

1. Health & wellness
2. Strong, supportive friends & families
3. Education, training & apprenticeships
4. Employment & entrepreneurship
5. Diversity, social inclusion & safety
6. Civic engagement & youth leadership
7. Coordinated & youth-friendly communities<sup>3</sup>

These outcomes resonate across all youth planning initiatives and have been considered



through the development of the Mississauga Youth Plan for Recreation.

### **Alignment with High Five principles of Healthy Child Development**

Parks and Recreation Ontario's HIGH FIVE<sup>4</sup> quality assurance framework was implemented in 1994 to ensure that people working with children in a recreation and sport setting were trained in child development. HIGH FIVE is grounded in research and developed by experts in child development in sport and recreation. The principles of HIGH FIVE in providing programs and services to children include:

1

#### **Caring Adult**

Children receive the benefit of a caring adult role model who ensures that safety is paramount.

2

#### **Friends**

Children get to know others in a group in a safe setting.

3

#### **Participation**

Children are empowered to have their say about the activities they participate in.

4

#### **Play**

Children are encouraged to use their imagination, can resolve their own conflicts and can be self-directed.

5

#### **Skill Mastery**

Children learn new and age appropriate skills in an encouraging environment.

The City of Mississauga Recreation Services has achieved and maintained accreditation status with HIGH FIVE since 2017. This is a significant accomplishment as Mississauga is one of the largest municipalities in Canada to receive this status. 1,800 front-line staff and 50 supervisors / managers were trained in the principles of healthy child development, while over 2,000 unique programs were assessed over a two-year period. The HIGH FIVE Framework requires assessment of four areas of organizational effectiveness including training and development, program assessments, policies and procedures and branding / promotion. The assessment resulted in improved policies, practices and processes in the delivery of service.



**The best way to play™**

Although HIGH FIVE focuses on programming for children between the ages of 6 and 12, the general principles and quality assurance measures can be applied with a modified lens for youth programs and services.

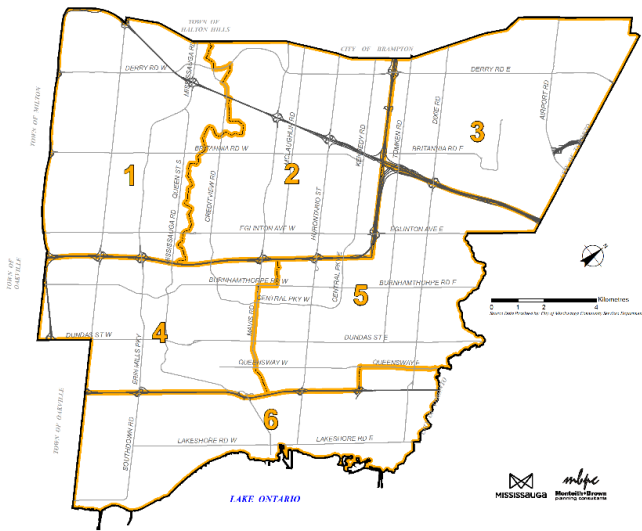
# 2.3 Mississauga’s Youth Population

According to Statistics Canada, there are 9 million youth across Canada falling between the ages of 15 and 34, representing about one-quarter of the country’s population which is lower proportion than in the 1970s when youth accounted for over one-third of the population.<sup>5</sup> Based upon the Youth Plan for Recreation’s definition of youth falling between 10 and 24 years of age, Mississauga had nearly 147,000 persons in this age group in 2016 that accounted for one-fifth of the City’s population (this is a slightly greater proportion than the 18 per cent for the country as a whole under the 10-24 age grouping).<sup>6</sup>

The most recent age structure forecast available through the City counts nearly 150,000 youth between 10 and 24 years in Mississauga (that forecast includes net Census undercoverage).<sup>7</sup> It is important to note that the population estimates referenced through these forecasts have not been updated to align with the City’s most recent set of growth projections that have been prepared as part of the ongoing Development Charges Study review. However, these remain the best source of age-specific population estimates available

at the time of writing and are thus used for the purposes of this Review.

The age structure forecasts project a significant decrease in City’s youth population, amounting to 13,000 fewer persons (-9 per cent) between the ages of 10 and 24 by the year 2031. The youth population is expected to rebound after 2031 to reach nearly 157,000 persons by the year 2041.



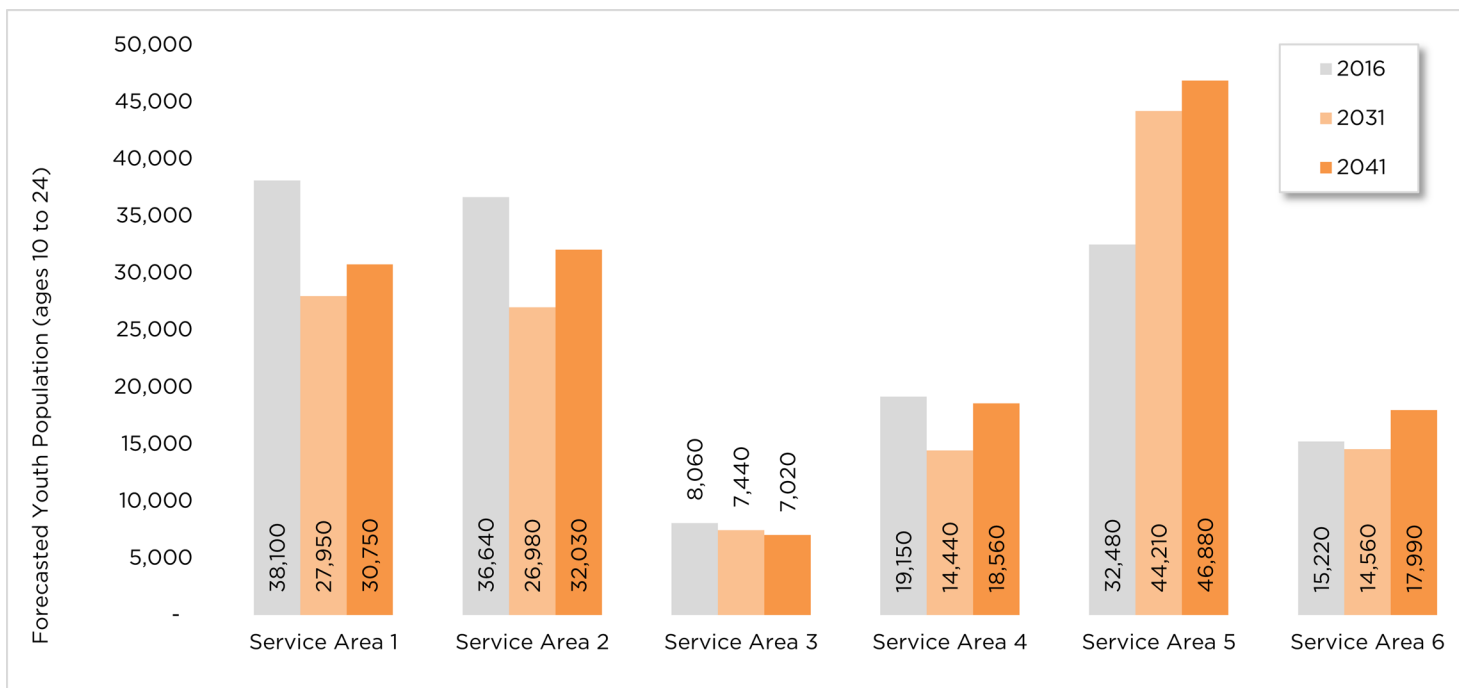
Based on the age structure forecasts, the greatest populations of youth are estimated to be residing in Service Areas 1, 2 and 5. Between the years 2016 and 2031, only

Table 2: Projected Population of Youth in Mississauga, 2016-2041

Age Group	2016	2031	2041	Δ 2016-2031	Δ 2031-2041
10-14 years	42,270	46,510	50,560	4,240 (+10)	4,050 (+9%)
15-19 years	48,840	48,110	53,040	-730 (-1%)	4,930 (+10%)
20-24 years	58,690	41,980	53,240	-16,710 (-28%)	11,260 (+27%)
Youth Total	149,800	136,600	156,840	-13,200 (-9%)	20,240 (+15%)

Source: City of Mississauga, Planning Strategies Division. Mississauga Age Structure Forecasts 2011-2041

Figure 1: Projected Population of Youth in Mississauga by Service Area, 2016-2041



Source: City of Mississauga, Planning Strategies Division. Mississauga Age Structure Forecasts 2011-2041

Service Area 5 is expected to experience an increase in its youth population. With youth populations expected to rebound City-wide after 2031, Service Areas 2 and 4 are projected to generate the most new youth residents between the years 2031 and 2041 though more moderate levels of population growth can also be expected in the other Service Areas except for Service Area 3.

looking at the age structure, the 10 to 19 age group generally has above average representation in the Meadowvale Village and Churchill Meadows (Service Areas 1 and 2) as well as centrally, in Service Area 6. Youth between the ages of 20 and 24 have greater representation throughout Service Area 2 as well as along the Burnhamthorpe Road corridor in Service Areas 4 and 5.

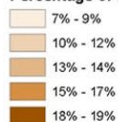
Figure 2 and Figure 3 geographically illustrate the density and percentage of Mississauga's youth population by Census Tract based upon 2016 Census data. The Lisgar and Churchill Meadows communities (Service Area 1) have substantial densities of 10- to 19-year-olds as do selected areas along the Hurontario Street, Burnhamthorpe Road and Eglinton Road corridors (Service Areas 2 and 5). When

Figure 2: Population Density of Youth by Census Tract, 2016

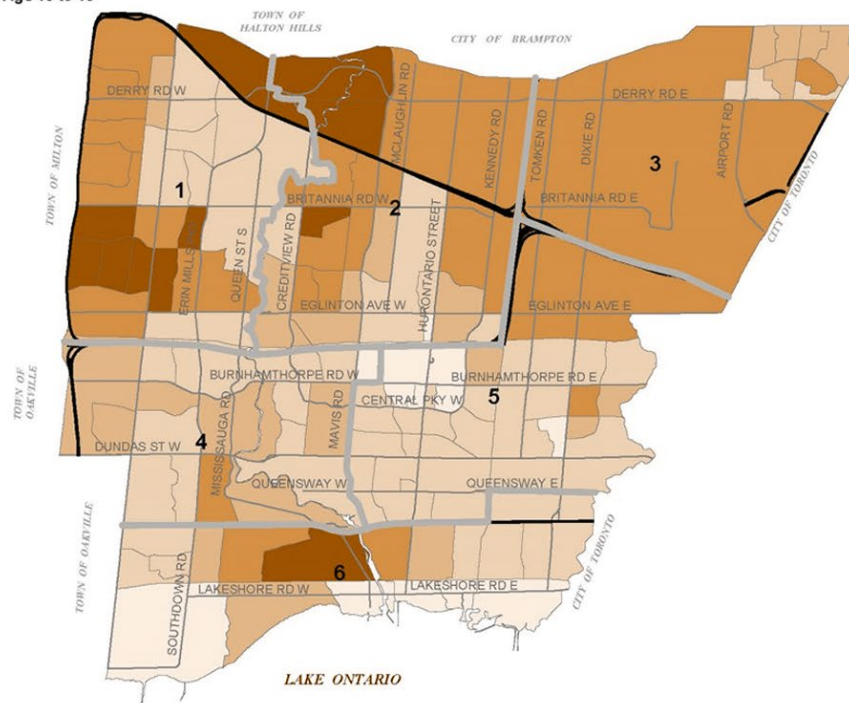


Figure 3: Youth as a Percentage of Census Tract Population, 2016

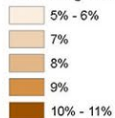
## Percentage of the Population Age 10 to 19



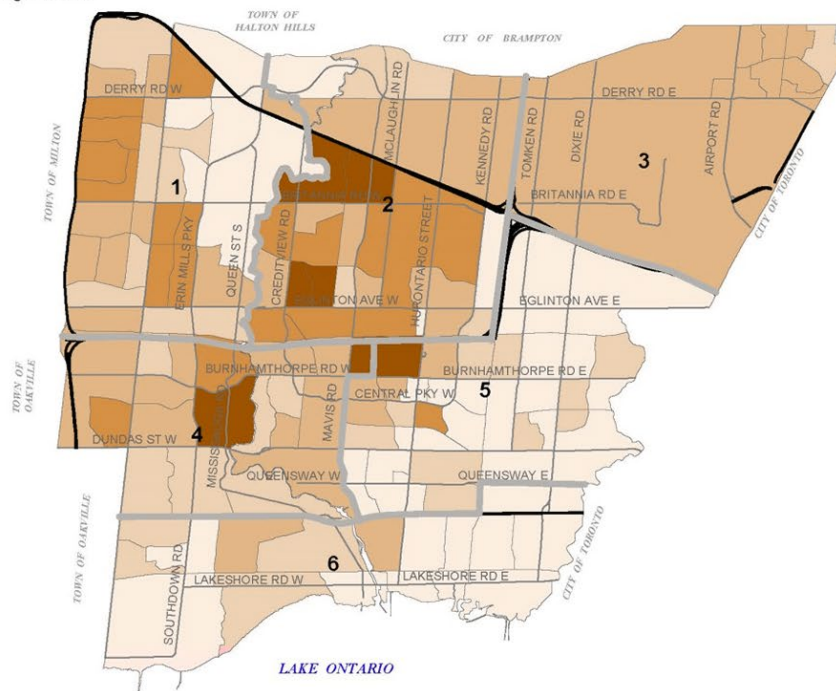
Percentage of the Population  
Age 10 to 19 in the  
City of Mississauga: 13%



## Percentage of the Population Age 20 to 24



Percentage of the Population  
Age 20 to 24 in the  
City of Mississauga: 7.5%





## 2.4 Selected Trends in Recreational Services for Youth

Effective planning for Mississauga youth requires identification, understanding, and constant monitoring of existing and emerging trends that could potentially affect needs. The following summary of major trends in participation, emerging activities, and service delivery are largely based on information collected from recent provincial and national research, and work undertaken by the Consulting Team in a variety of communities.

### Social and Economic Influences on Health and Recreation

A multitude of factors influence personal and public health, including those that are within an individual's control and those that are not. These determinants broadly describe the personal, economic, social, and environmental factors that influence overall health. The Public Health Agency of Canada has identified a collection of health determinants<sup>8</sup> including:

- Income and social status
- Education and literacy
- Childhood experiences
- Physical environments
- Healthy behaviours
- Access to health services
- Employment and working conditions
- Social supports and coping skills
- Biology and genetic endowments
- Gender
- Culture

This concept of understanding health determinants is commonly explained using

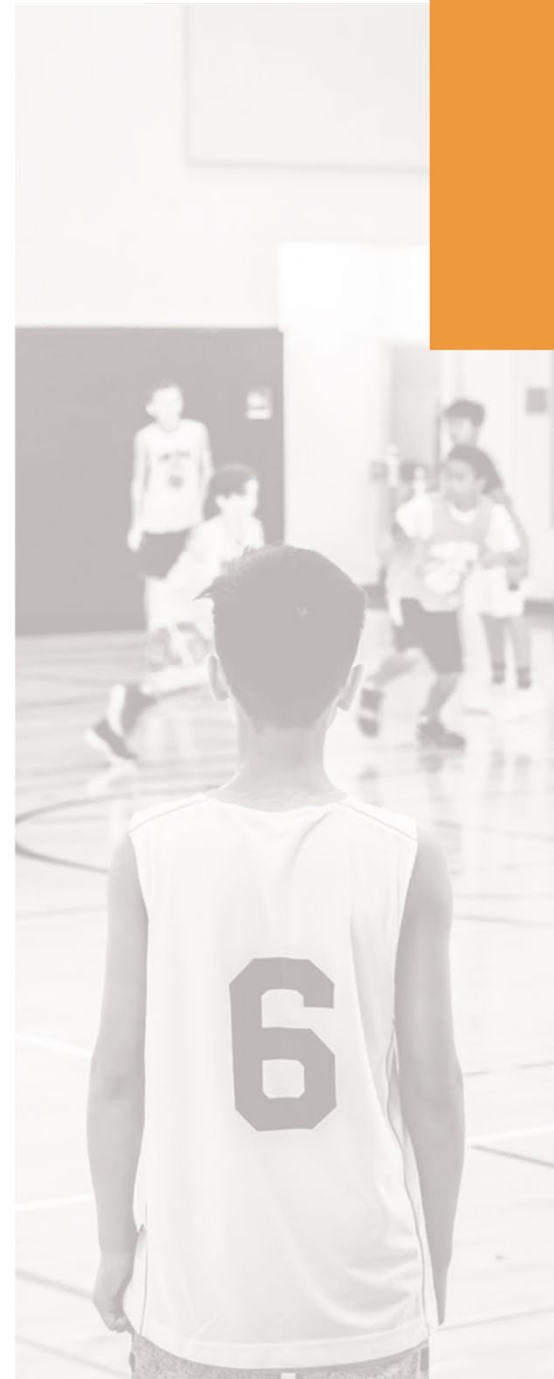
a socio-ecological model,<sup>9</sup> very similar to the Wrap-Around Model for Youth described in Section 3.2. The socio-ecological model considers five spheres of influence, all of which influence youth's ability to participate in recreation, and should be considered when planning and providing for these populations:

- 1 Intrapersonal**  
factors within an individual's control
- 2 Interpersonal**  
factors dependent on family, friends, peers, support workers, etc.
- 3 Organizational**  
considers factors such as access to and availability of health care, professional organizations, etc.
- 4 Community**  
influence of workplace, school, community organizations, media, research, etc.; and
- 5 Policy**  
global and local trends, laws and policies, professional supports and recommendations, etc.

As a result of recent societal shifts, there is a greater demand and expectation from the public for seamless services and support from municipalities, agencies, and other levels of government. This has generated a blurring of lines of responsibility, particularly in multi-use

community centre settings. The Recreation Division falls within the scope of Community Services Department, which some members of the public may perceive as social services. For the purpose of this Youth Plan for Recreation, the analysis and recommendations focus directly on Recreation, and attempts to clarify the delineation of responsibilities.

For this Plan, key recreation, social and economic trends impacting the lives of Mississauga's youth population are outlined in the tables that follow. The trends have been identified recognizing that youth's ability to participate in, be aware of, afford, and travel to recreation opportunities is influenced by their social and economic circumstance.<sup>10</sup> While these trends do not exclusively focus on recreation, they help to illustrate specific issues and considerations with respect to youth access to recreation services, programs and facilities.



## Recreation Trends Affecting Youth

### Trend

### Local Context / Potential Implications

**Youth** will continue to constitute a **key market** to which recreation services will need to be provided.

- The City is forecasted to have between 136,000 and 157,000 youth residents between 2018 and the year 2041.
- A focus on engaging youth and continuing to provide youth friendly services and programs will be important.

Increased **inactivity** and 'screen time' (e.g., television, computer, video games, etc.) have led to declining levels of physical activity and higher instances of obesity.

- Youth mentioned spending time in front of screens (TV, computer, etc.) at the youth focus groups, as did stakeholders at the service provider focus group; participants at the staff and stakeholder focus groups suggested that this was a concern.
- The City will require a concerted effort to provide interesting programs and services to "compete" with screens and sedentary activities, and make youth aware of such opportunities.
- The 2018 ParticipACTION Report Card for Children and Youth finds that most children and teens are not active enough for healthy living.

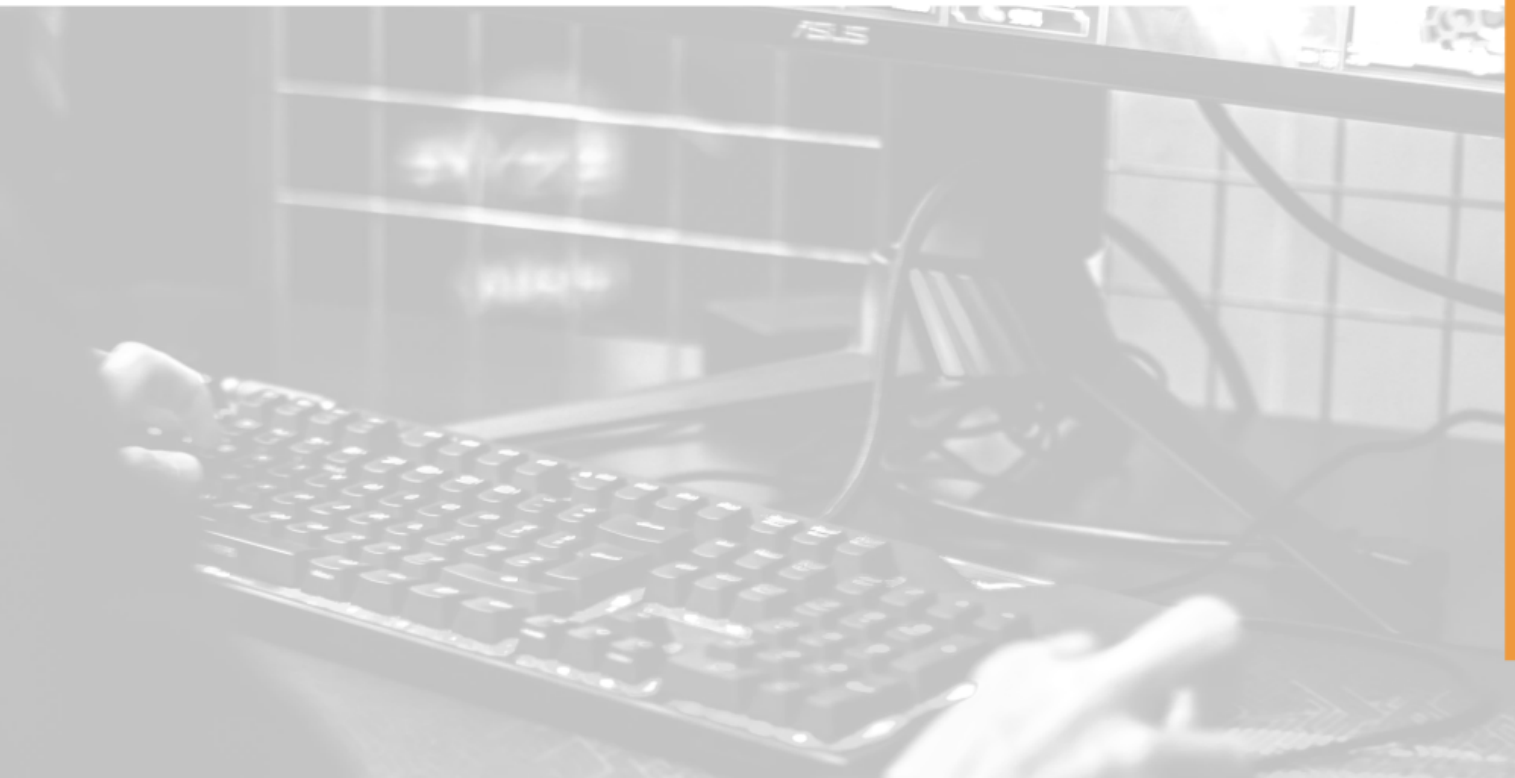




**Trend****Local Context / Potential Implications**

Youth are seeking **drop-in** and **self-scheduled** recreation opportunities.

- In the focus groups, many youths mentioned that they prefer to 'just hang out' during their free time and participate in drop-in or spontaneous activities such as basketball, rather than having to commit to a long-term program.
- Lack of free time and 'over-programming' means that some youth and their families have less time for play and unscheduled leisure, while income constraints for certain others result in being unable to afford organized activities.
- The City is cognisant of trends that promote play that encourages risk taking to enable confidence and development of fine motor skills.



**Trend****Local Context / Potential Implications**

**Diversity** is increasing across all age groups, including youth, which can impact the types of programs offered and requested.

- Consistent with best practices in youth planning processes, youth participants in this Review's consultation efforts have represented a diverse range of interests and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Newcomer youth often seek "traditional" Canadian recreational activities to integrate here, but also want to pursue the interests found where they (or their parents) previously lived.
- Members of the LGBTQ+ community are sometimes less willing to participate in recreation, with organizations such as OUTSPORT having found that homophobic environments exist within the sport community (though social acceptance is strengthening with openly gay professional athletes serving as role models and municipalities promoting "Safe Spaces" within their community centres and parks).<sup>11</sup>
- Will require an integrated service delivery approach that works with multiple City Departments, youth-serving agencies and local partners to provide an inclusive spectrum of services.
- City staff are increasingly interacting with youth that have behavioural challenges, possibly as a result of challenging socio-economic backgrounds and youth with disabilities/special needs.

**Trend****Local Context / Potential Implications**

Increased interest and expertise with **technology** may impact the types of programs offered and requested.

- Youth are becoming increasingly proficient with technology at earlier ages due to mobile devices, use of technology in schools and the home, etc. - youth and staff focus groups all touched on the need to be familiar with technology that youth are using, and optimally for the City to also use it.
- Local youth have expressed support for continued use of technology in the way that the City communicates with them and delivers programs (seeking digital interests such as e-sports, coding, STEM, etc.).



Youth Social & Economic Trends

Trend	Local Context
Each of the <b>under-represented and marginalized populations</b> described (to the right) and countless others are faced with critical issues and are often lacking essentials (i.e., food, shelter, etc.), therefore decreasing their focus on recreation and decreasing participation rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Homelessness</b> is a growing concern in Mississauga and Peel Region. According to United Way Peel more than 222,000 people are struggling to afford housing across Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga. It was estimated that in 2015 almost 4,000 children and youth in Peel used a shelter or transitional housing.<sup>12</sup></li><li>▪ <b>Newcomers and cultural groups</b> represented in focus groups identified a strong desire to participate in culturally-focused programs and activities. According to the 2016 Census, 53.4% of Mississauga’s population are immigrants and 14% of those arrived in the past 5 years. One in five immigrants in Mississauga are between the ages of 15 to 24 years old.</li><li>▪ <b>LGBTQ+</b> populations often share that they feel uncomfortable or like they don’t belong in shared public spaces such as community centres. It is important to demonstrate authentic engagement with these populations and provide inclusive programs and facilities.<sup>13</sup></li></ul>



**Trend****Local Context****Healthy Community**

**Objectives** are a key focus for government, institution, and research-based bodies. This also includes a multi-service/function **community-hub model** for services.

- Public Health Agencies and Health Researchers consistently promote the benefits of: health promotion/education, injury prevention, healthy community design, partnerships with and access to hospitals, rehabilitation programs, etc.
- An example of this functioning well in Mississauga is the partnerships that have been established with local support agencies to provide mentorship programs for youth, particularly in high needs communities.
- A growing number of physicians in the GTA and across the country are writing prescriptions for exercise and “getting active” as opposed to focusing primarily on pharmaceuticals.

**Mental Health** has been a dominant focus of recent work by researchers, agencies, organizations and government bodies committed to public health and welfare (i.e., ParticipACTION Report Card, Mental Health Commission of Canada, etc.).

- Although overall self-reported physical and mental health rates were fairly high, the percentage of Mississauga youth who rated their mental health as excellent, very good, or good has decreased 5.4% since 2009/2010.<sup>14</sup>
- The most recent (summer 2018) Healthy Kids Community Challenge (HKCC) theme and targeted messaging was to “Power Off and Play”,<sup>15</sup> encouraging children and youth to give their minds a break from screen time and promote healthy, active, outdoor recreation.
- Evidence suggests that physical activity may help lower feelings of anxiety or depression in children and youth, can bolster their resiliency when dealing with stress, and helps them recover from stressful situations faster.<sup>16</sup>

**Trend****Local Context**

Contributors suggested a need for City support for **skill development and continuing education**.

This could be presented as provision of targeted seminars, workshops, or programs focused on youth employment opportunities.

**Income Disparity** is a phenomenon polarizing communities in the GTA and throughout Canada. The inequality of affordances greatly impacts youth's ability to recreate.

- Consultations with youth found that many feel pressured to help provide for their household (e.g., care for family members, contribute income, etc.). As a result of increased responsibilities, they are seeking opportunities to gain valuable work experience through volunteering, skill development, or on-going education.
- According to Statistics Canada youth unemployment (15 – 24 years old) is 19.8%, higher than both the province and country.
- The percentage of low and very-low income individuals in Peel Region has been growing since 1970, from almost 0% to more than 50% in 2015.<sup>17</sup> There may be gaps in services, distribution, affordability, transportation, program delivery for populations depending on their ability to afford recreation.
- Youth in Mississauga living at or below the Low-Income Measure are overrepresented (21.2%) compared to youth in Ontario (18.4%) and Canada (17.0%).
- Active Assist and the range of no-cost and low-cost programs available through the City help to engage youth from low income backgrounds.

## 2.5 Summary of Consultations

A series of consultations were undertaken between June and July 2018 to inform the Youth Plan for Recreation. Consultations included:

- A survey of Mississauga youth between the ages of 10 and 24, resulting in 205 responses
- A workshop with the Mississauga Youth Action Committee and members of Community Centre Youth Advisory Committees
- A workshop with the Malton Youth Advisory Committee and frequent users of the Malton Community Centre/Paul Coffey Park
- A workshop with the City of Mississauga's Youth Engagement Coordinators
- Two agency and partner focus groups, one with youth-serving agencies operating in Mississauga and another with newcomer agencies
- Two workshops with management staff in the Recreation Division as well as program staff from various recreation units
- Two workshops with staff from various City of Mississauga departments whose responsibilities indirectly pertain to youth services

Each in-person workshop/focus group was scheduled for 60 to 90 minutes with discussion guides provided to attendees in advance to facilitate conversation around recreation services for youth. For non-staff sessions, incentives were provided in the form of food, recreation passes and MiWay fares.

The City of Mississauga undertook additional consultations with youth during the summer of 2019 when the Draft Youth Plan for Recreation was under internal review. City staff prepared and administered a second survey of youth and retained a third party consulting firm to facilitate a session with youth stakeholders.

The pages that follow summarize the key themes from each consultation initiative. See the Appendices for detailed reporting on the outcomes of each consultation initiative.

### Mississauga Youth Surveys

Surveys requesting feedback on youth needs for recreation programs and services in Mississauga were administered to youth in the summers of 2018 and 2019. They had a combined total of 1055 responses with the majority of respondents representing the 13-18 year old age bracket.

The following points are notable from the survey findings:

- The most popular activities that youth participated in during their free time were hanging out at a friend's house, watching/streaming TV shows and movies, playing organized sports, visits to the library, and volunteer work.

- Majority of respondents in each survey indicated that nothing stops them from participating in Mississauga's recreation programs and facilities, and they are able to do everything that they wanted to do. Of those that do experience barriers to participation, the most common responses were too expensive, can't get there/too far, work or school commitments, inconvenient times and lack of awareness about what is available.
- Respondents indicated that Instagram, Snapchat, emails and messaging through the schools would be the best way for the City to communicate directly with youth about services that are available.
- When asked what would make youth want to use Mississauga recreation programs and facilities more often, commonly requested options included free WiFi, drop-in/free gym times, volunteer/leadership opportunities, and youth/teen nights.
- Responses to questions on interest in volunteer and employment activities through the Recreation Division included opportunities associated with the City's sports programs, children's programs and pool programs.

### **MYAC & Youth Advisory Committees Workshop**

Much of the discussion about issues facing Mississauga youth centred on the lack of meaningful youth employment and volunteer

opportunities, difficulty travelling around the City, and the need for more resources and help with school-and life-related issues (including mental health and bullying). MYAC and the community centre advisory representatives stated that a lack of awareness was a major reason why many youth do not participate in programs and services. The youth participants recognized the positive outcomes that can be achieved when youth are engaged in positive and meaningful activities, whether related to sports, arts and culture, or simply socializing with each other in a positive way.

Employment was a high priority for many youth, either for career development/experience potential or for reasons of affordability, youth representatives identified a number of services they would like to start building their resume. Ideas included having the City provide mentorship and volunteer career education opportunities to students through ways such as formal youth job boards, job shadowing opportunities during school breaks, career pathway speakers, networking events, and mentor/resource support for youth to host their own events.

### **Malton Youth Workshop**

Malton's youth indicated high demand for additional gym time for drop-in sports such as basketball and soccer. They suggested that the City look at balancing opportunities for both males and females, as some females mentioned they are less likely to play during times/activities dominated by male participants. Malton's youth made it clear that they are looking for role models, and to



ultimately mentor others as they grow. Whether by seeing others in the community that have made positive and successful life choices or from others in Mississauga that have knowledge and experiences to share, Malton's youth emphasized the importance of developing intergenerational relationships.

The workshop drew participants from households with different social, economic and cultural backgrounds. Youth felt that community centers and parks were generally safe during the daytime though some felt that there are some staff (such as security guards) that are not what they would consider to be friendly to youth. Youth felt most comfortable with staff that they saw as "champions" or those who understand and can empathize with youth such as the City's Youth Engagement Staff. A need was identified for more support for Newcomer Youth in recreation programs, facilities, and services. Youth believe that newcomer students are interested in learning traditional "Canadian" skills and habits but are overwhelmed with choice and require additional support as they acclimate.

### **Agency Focus Groups**

Agencies would like to be well-connected with other youth-serving service providers and aware of what each other are doing but is difficult due to the complexities of issues and services. There was agreement that having at least one institution or agency be a lead (whether governmental, an educational institution, or a major non-profit) to coordinate others. The ability of youth-serving agencies and institutions to serve their clientele is largely predicated on grant funding received through government or other

agencies. The amount of funding that they have dictates the range of programs and services that they can deliver in any given year, and often funding can be variable or uncertain each year which can create challenges in terms of service continuity.

The attendees identified actions that the City could take to improve recreation and social activities for at-risk youth in Mississauga, including:

- partnering with universities to do research on youth and community centres
- partnering with the Region to find spaces/locations for services
- creating all-in-one facilities for youth and teens to access services (similar to Early ON Centres)
- training and offering recreation job opportunities to marginalized youth

### **Youth Stakeholder Engagement Session**

An engagement session with youth stakeholders was facilitated on August 20, 2019 by KeepingPACE Consulting in order to gather input relating to recreation programs and services, and to identify gaps and opportunities for the next 5 to 20 years. There were a total of 37 people in attendance representing the following categories: Government and System Partners (5), Newcomer Services (9), Youth Serving Agencies (10) and Community Organizations (12). Opportunity for input was also available through phone and email consultations for those that were unable to attend the in-person

session. Two Community Organizations utilized this method of engagement.

These organizations currently offer a good variety of programs and services for youth in the City. It was noted that sometimes they do not have the space to deliver what they offer or the space available to them is not in the proper location. Some organizations are also limited in the amount of ways they can create awareness for their services and therefore seek the City's assistance in helping to connect youth in City of Mississauga facilities and programs to other community services.

The primary recommendation arising from the session is to continue to meet with stakeholders to discuss youth programs and services provided by the City so that all are aware of services and avoid duplicating efforts. A number of quick wins and policy considerations were identified throughout the session including (but not limited to): build relationships with agencies that also have space, host a job fair with a 3rd party partner showing youth what opportunities are available and create trendable hashtags to increase Search Engine Optimization and trending of posts.

### City Staff Workshops

City staff with recreation and non-recreation responsibilities were engaged. Common topics of discussion centred upon barriers (income, transportation, and accessibility), clarifying the role of youth-serving staff (particularly with growing pressures for staff to address social challenges), ways in which the Plan could assist staff in their day-to-day and long-term

tasks, and how youth programs could be promoted more effectively.

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. 2018. A Portrait of Canadian Youth.

<sup>2</sup> Government of Canada. 2019. Canada's Youth Policy.

<sup>3</sup> Government of Ontario. 2013. Stepping Up: A Strategic Framework to Help Ontario's Youth Succeed. Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. pp. 22 to 92.

<sup>4</sup> High Five Principles of Healthy Child Development

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada. 2018. A Portrait of Canadian Youth.

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada Census of Canada. Figure is unadjusted for net undercoverage.

<sup>7</sup> City of Mississauga, Planning Strategies Division. 2016. Mississauga Age Structure Forecasts 2011-2041. Note: the Planning Strategies Division is presently reviewing these forecasts in light of ongoing conformity exercises with the Region of Peel's review of its growth forecasts/allocations.

<sup>8</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada, Social Determinants of Health and Health Inequalities. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services> accessed on October 3, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Sallis et al. 2006. An Ecological Approach to Creating Active Living Communities. Annual Review of Public Health.

<sup>10</sup> Carson et al. 2016. Systematic Review of Sedentary Behaviour and Health Indicators in School-Aged Children and Youth: An Update. Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism.

<sup>11</sup> Outsport Toronto. Making it Better Now: Ending Homophobia and Transphobia in School Athletics and Physical Education. Presentation at the Toronto District School Board FUTURES 2012 Conference, May 2012.

<sup>12</sup> United Way Greater Toronto. 2014. Homelessness Partnering Strategy. <https://www.unitedwaygt.org/homelessnessstrategy> Accessed on September 20, 2018.

<sup>13</sup> National Recreation and Park Association, LGBTQ Teens in Recreation Programs (2015). <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine> Accessed on October 4, 2018.

<sup>14</sup> Community Foundation of Mississauga. 2018. Mississauga's Vital Signs.

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. 2015. Healthy Kids Community Challenge. <http://www.health.gov.on.ca> Accessed on September 29, 2018.

<sup>16</sup> ParticipACTION. 2018. The ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth.

<sup>17</sup> United Way Greater Toronto. 2017. The Opportunity Equation in the Greater Toronto Area: An Update on Neighbourhood Income Inequality and Polarization.

# 3.0 Future Directions for Youth

## 3.1 Strategic Framework for the Review

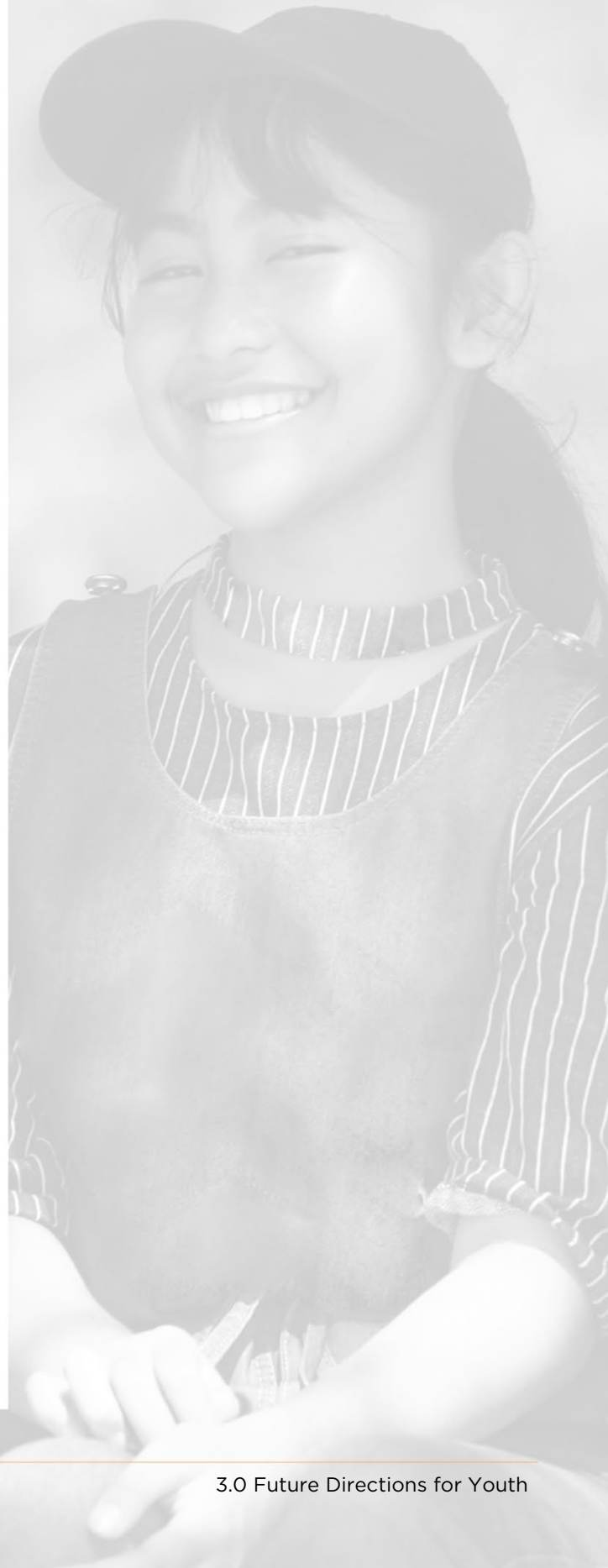
### A Vision for Youth Recreation in Mississauga

The City of Mississauga's Recreation Division Vision and Mission statements help to provide a focused and coordinated approach to ensuring recreation goals are met. The Youth Plan for Recreation is aligned with the Divisional Vision.

### **More people, connected more often, through programs and services that reflect our communities' needs**

The sentiments shared by youth, stakeholders, like-minded organizations, and staff during the development of the Plan acknowledged that:

- recreation is a life changing experience for youth;
- participation in recreation is paramount to building resilience in youth;
- there are a number of issues that currently youth face;
- there is a need to work towards building strong and resilient youth; and
- there is a whole city of supports for youth in Mississauga.



## Mission

The Recreation Division's Mission statement speaks to who it is, who it serves, for what purpose, and how the Division goes about its work. The desired objective for both the Vision and Mission statements in relation to the Youth Plan for Recreation is to inspire all youth to be strong, active, confident, and understand the full extent of their potential every day.

**“We keep Mississauga residents healthy, active and connected in partnership with the community.”**

The Mission statement supports efforts will be made to work with all youth-serving agencies to achieve specific positive outcomes for Mississauga youth. While this is not a sweeping change for the Recreation Division, it recognizes that working collaboratively can provide a greater understanding of youth participation rates, penetration of the youth population, and the possibility of sharing of resources for the betterment of youth.

## 3.2 The City of Mississauga's Practices in Delivering Youth Services

### Mississauga Youth Recreation Service Delivery Model

Understanding the needs of youth is central to the success of Mississauga's Recreation

Service Delivery Model. The development of the Youth Plan for Recreation engaged the voice of youth to a great extent, as do all ongoing efforts to develop and refine these programs and services. The analysis of participation rates in varying opportunities, satisfaction levels with youth services, and Youth Advisory Committees at community centres are all used to keep programs and services nimble and reflective of current trends.

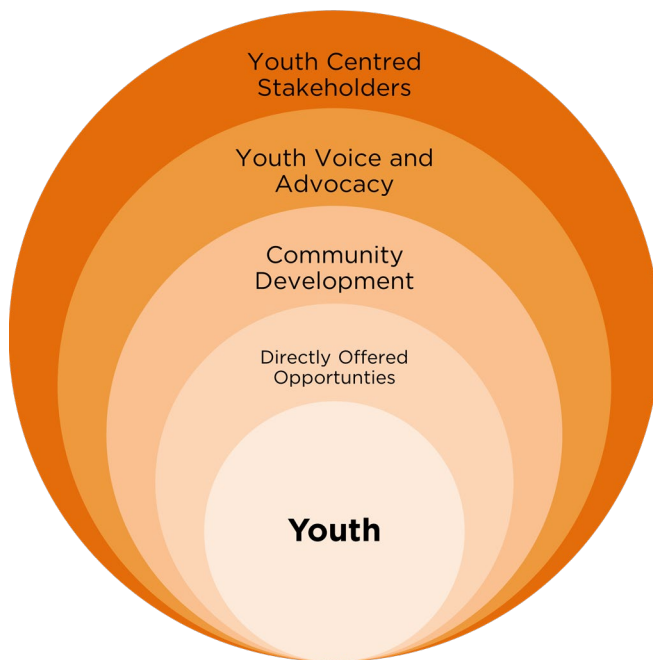
The Recreation Division employs numerous strategies and program offerings to attract and engage youth throughout the community, and within community centres. The plethora of opportunities allows youth to make choices around the types of activities and their level of participation. In most cases, quality experiences will lead to continued and increased participation. Encouraging youth to understand and engage in leadership opportunities enables greater employment levels through the varying recreation and sport service providers in Mississauga as youth age and mature into young adults. The overall goal is to maximize participation in recreation and sport to enable the benefits to the individual, family and community. Increasing participation in quality experiences is a key goal of the Review in building competent and resilient adolescents.

### Mississauga “Wraps Around” Its Youth

The current Service Delivery Model can be described as a wrap-around model, whereby the Recreation Division provides many avenues for youth to become engaged and supported in recreation/sport, and ultimately to progress to become community leaders.

Figure 4 depicts the direct supports and active opportunities available to youth through recreation services available through the Division.

Figure 4: The “Wrap-Around” Model for Youth



### Directly Offered Programs and Services

Directly offered programs and services are developed and enhanced to offer a full range of choices to a diverse population, as shown through the City’s range of offerings in Figure 5. Consideration is given to balancing choice based on gender equity along with active, cultural and general interest opportunities. Both structured programs and drop in casual experiences are provided, allowing a continuum of learning and an ability to participate based on preferences and personal circumstances. In 2019, there were more than 101,500 youth registrations in registered City

Figure 5: Directly Offered Youth Programs and Services



programs while there were 107,800 visits by youth in City drop-in programs. Staff consider barriers to participation and develop policies to reduce barriers in order to increase participation (Active Assist is an example). Participation data is useful to guide planning for the continued support of youth and ultimately provide/enable quality experiences over time.

### The Community Development Team

The 2009 Youth Plan was a city-wide plan with leadership from a Community Development Coordinator, Youth. The Youth Plan was a catalyst for youth becoming greater priority for departments across the city, many of which now have dedicated approaches to engage and support youth and for community development in general.



Similarly many staff within the Recreation Division share responsibility when it comes to supporting youth. A number of assets have been developed, guided by the 2009 Youth Plan, that serve as a solid foundation for future service delivery including:

- After School Programming at all community centres during the school year (delivered by the Community Programs Team).
- Freedom Pass which provides free transit and fun swim for 12-14 year olds (administered by Facility Teams and promoted in partnership with MiWay).
- National Youth Week which is an annual campaign to celebrate and recognize Mississauga Youth by organizing activities and events hosted by multiple City Departments.

A key area of focus for the Recreation Community Development Team is to build skills and share tools and resources that support and empower community groups. This assists external providers to better respond to the needs and interests of Mississauga residents, including youth. This work includes five core services that benefit recreation and ensure a consistent approach across multiple business areas:

1. Community Group Registry Program
2. Community Events
3. Grants Administration
4. Community Engagement (youth, older adults, newcomers)
5. Community Partnerships

Within the context of this service delivery model, the Community Development Coordinator (Youth) supports ongoing engagement of youth and community organizations to engage more youth, more often in recreation programs and services that meet their needs.

### **Youth Voice and Advocacy**

There is a commitment from the Mayor and members of Council to respond to youth concerns and meet youth where they live and play. The City provides many avenues for youth to voice their opinion including social media such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Participation in the Mississauga Youth Council and the 11 Youth Committees at Community Centres provide youth a voice and opportunities to participate in civic decision-making with respect to recreation services amongst other issues.

### **Youth Centred Stakeholders and Partnerships**

Many other agencies, faith groups and the school boards provide youth opportunities and supports throughout Mississauga. Youth Centres such as the Merge 180 in Sheridan Mall, The Dam (two locations), Nexus Youth centre in the Central Library, Studio 89, Peel Youth Village, Creditmills and the Newcomer Centre of Peel all provide youth space and opportunities for recreation and support. The role of the City is to collaborate with these centres to explore where a shared vision and related actions might enhance the collective services available to Mississauga youth. The City also allocates recreational spaces and fields to organizations that provide sport and sport development opportunities to youth.

The service delivery model for youth recreation in Mississauga compares favourably to approaches used in other Canadian municipalities. Smaller municipalities place a greater reliance on other youth-serving agencies (Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, Girls Inc., etc.) to augment municipal recreation offerings. Mid-sized to large municipalities often employ youth workers to reach out and engage youth in developing or delivering active, cultural and general interest programs and most often support youth committees.

A few municipalities are providing hubs with multi-services for youth within one location, typically in lower income areas. This approach builds in a collective approach where all youth serving agencies work together to collaborate and share in the work to address key issues facing youth where each agency can play their part. Considering youth hubs and working collectively with other youth serving agencies will further strengthen Mississauga's service delivery model.

### **Investing in Youth**

The City of Mississauga has a high degree of commitment to youth engagement, development and positive outcomes. In 2017, the City approved \$382,000 for the provision of youth recreation and engagement, with an additional \$65,000 in sponsorships and donations. Based upon information contained in the Mississauga Youth Friendly Status Application, that dollar amount includes the provision of central staff support, funding for Youth Week and recreation youth specific programs and opportunities within community centres. This amount represents an annual investment of \$2.52 per youth resident (in 2017 dollars) over and above all other recreation costs. Excluded from the stated dollar amount is the cost of operating

community centres, arenas, pools, sport courts and parks/trails, as well as any indirect costs to promote activities, work with community partners, and registering youth. In addition to this investment, the City's Active Assist is another significant source of financial contributions to persons facing income-related barriers.

### **Maintaining Youth-Friendly Platinum Status**

The City of Mississauga's Youth Friendly Community designation at the Platinum level is a major accomplishment. The Playworks Partnership, who evaluates and awards the Youth Friendly designation, was developed to ensure that youth have supportive environments and a voice in communities. The Playworks Partnership consist of six organizations and institutions that support youth development, engagement and leadership opportunities including 4H-Ontario, Ontario Physical Health Educators Association, Parks and Recreation Ontario, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada – Central Region, and the YMCA of Ontario. This consortium completed extensive research as to what approaches will keep youth engaged and consider communities "youth friendly".

The City's Platinum status is a result of meeting all 16 Youth Friendly Community criteria at the time. Playworks has since refined its set of criteria which now include:

1. Youth have options for play
2. Youth are formally connected community-wide
3. It is easy for youth to find information about play activities in their community
4. The community recognizes and celebrates youth



5. The community formally commits funding for youth play
6. The community supports Positive Youth Development
7. Youth feel valued by their community
8. Schools and school boards support the Youth Friendly approach
9. Play is accessible to youth
10. Play is socially inclusive

Achieving Platinum status is a major achievement as only 10 per cent of Ontario municipalities have received a Youth Friendly Community designation at any one of the Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum levels since 2003. This demonstrates that the City has a commitment to youth within Mississauga and shows leadership by continuing to improve the provision of service through engaging youth to the extent that they have. Mississauga supports the provision and enabling of youth programs and services to keep this age group living, working and contributing to a vibrant community culture.

The development of the Youth Friendly Community criteria aligns with the Provincial Stepping Up Framework and other youth-specific plans such as the 2012 Ontario Youth Action Plan. Demonstrating alignment with evidenced-based initiatives such as these allows Mississauga to apply sound strategies and approaches within the community, while connecting more intentionally with youth-serving agencies and organizations. Having a common vision allows youth-centred organizations to each play their part in serving and engaging youth. The Playworks Partnership Youth Friendly application is a community application, thereby engaging youth and agencies serving youth to work better together. Alignment with these evidenced-based standards and continuing to work with other related organizations ensures

that Mississauga is employing the most current best practices in the provision of youth recreation services.

## 3.3 Key Focus Area #1: Use of Space & New Programming Opportunities

### GOAL:

Optimize spaces to engage youth in meaningful activities with positive outcomes.

### Current Approach

The City of Mississauga's community centres and parks are used for the delivery of municipal youth programs as well as those offered by certain youth-serving providers. Within community centres, multi-purpose rooms, chill zones, fitness centres, pools and common areas provide space for youth-specific programs.

### Observations from Youth Input & Research

Selected observations uncovered through research and consultations included the following:

- **Welcoming Spaces to Hang Out**  
Access to comfortable, safe and non-programmed areas are desired for youth interested in relaxing by themselves or with friends. Amenities such as free WiFi and space to hang out rated highly in surveys and in-person

discussions. Youth and City Staff participating in the engagement sessions indicated that the Chill Zones for youth require updating as well as possibly extending the Chill Zone or comfortable gathering space philosophy to the outdoors. This is an idea worth exploring to get youth connected to the outdoors and engage in physical activity more often.

- **More Drop-In & Volunteer Opportunities**

Youth responding to the 2018 and 2019 surveys indicated that they would participate more if there was more drop-in gym time. Many youth participating in the Youth Plan for Recreation process wanted more opportunities to volunteer (it is noted that many of the city's community centres have unfilled volunteer placements which could provide an opportunity to address the latter).

- **Interest in Sports**

Youth reported desires to play sports through drop-in activities as well as in the form of organized programs such as basketball, swimming and soccer.

- **Interest in the Arts**

Youth see community centres and parks for activities beyond traditional recreation and sport, and are seeking areas where they can be creative. Youth can be engaged in a greater extent if they are asked to help design or decorate spaces, or have their creative work showcased in a facility or youth

room.

- **Youth-Led Programming**

Conversations with local youth and stakeholders emphasized a youth-led approach to delivering programs, particularly to implement more things that youth say that they are looking for rather than adults delivering what they think youth need. The MYAC and Youth Advisory Committees in community centres help to address this desire.

- **Greater Exposure to other Places and Opportunities**

Some youth participants felt that they were seldom able to get away from their neighbourhoods and be exposed to new experiences. The participants felt that this would be an opportunity to expand their knowledge and horizons. There was a general desire to be exposed to different opportunities outside of their neighbourhoods, transportation was cited as a key barrier. Participants wanted to be connected to different opportunities away from the community centres and see other possibilities.

- **Inter-City Community Centre Leagues and Competitions**

Youth recognized that there are many sport leagues available for participation. While the City supports sports leagues for youth in 43 varying sports and activities,<sup>1</sup> the youth consulted felt that transportation kept them from participating on an ongoing basis. The predominant request centred on developing activities that could be

learned and practiced at the local community centre level, and then to share these experiences or compete with other youth from other community centres. Certain sports/activities such as a basketball competition, a dance competition, STEM developments are examples of activities for Mississauga youth to focus on throughout a season, and then to conclude the season with a showcase and an opportunity to meet youth in other parts of the City (and possibly boost neighbourhood pride through friendly “bragging rights”).

#### ▪ **Outdoor Opportunities**

Youth generally recognized the need to be outdoors and recognized that they are indoors most of the time. Youth responded through the Youth Survey to support the Youth Plan for Recreation that they do spend much of their leisure time at home or at friends’ homes and mostly doing sedentary activities – 62 per cent of respondents. There was recognition that youth needed to be outdoors more often. Exposure to gardening, harvesting, food preparation, forest bathing, adventurous play, outdoor Chill Zones are all options for consideration.

#### ▪ **Youth and Motivation**

57 per cent of youth survey respondents indicated that nothing stops them from participating in active pursuits. Canadian youth continue to have lower activity levels and resultant health issues. This might reflect the notion of self-motivation and what initiatives would motivate youth to be

more active and engaged.

#### ▪ **Youth Hubs**

The idea of youth hubs to provide multi-services in one location was raised for discussion. The notion was advanced that some youth need many supports and often do not get them based on support and lack of transportation. Participants spoke to the fact that there are some hubs in Mississauga that provide some services and that investigating a more strategic approach might be more beneficial to youth.

### **Youth Participation in Recreation**

Table 3 shows the following for youth participation in programs and drop-in activities from 2017 to 2019:

- Registration in directly offered programs declined by 6 per cent over the last three years;
- Free participation through ‘Sauga at Play increased by 17 per cent;
- Paid participation in drop-in and casual opportunities decreased by 12 per cent; and
- Community centre youth memberships increased by 4 per cent.

In summary, participation in all youth recreation opportunities over three years is showing declined participation in registered programs, and a decrease in drop-in opportunities for an overall decrease of 3,000 registrants/visits. With a collective decrease in

participation by approximately 21,300 registrants/visits between 2017 to 2019, the City should continue to monitor participation in registered and drop-in opportunities as well as satisfaction levels, as well as continuing to undertake detailed reviews on a centre-by-centre basis.

Assuming the current participation rate prevails over time, the City can expect additional participation from an approximately 4,400 youth in registered programs by the year 2041. The trend in participation is for no-cost and low-cost opportunities, thus there is a need to plan for additional participation while seeking sponsors to alleviate the costs associated with offering these opportunities.

opportunities to play. There are other agencies and providers of youth space to fill in certain gaps such as schools, non-profits, places of worship, and social service providers; therefore, building relationships with such providers of space and services can help fill gaps at the community and neighbourhood level.

Youth Plan for Recreation consultations held in 2019 yielded more discussion regarding stand-alone youth centres as opposed to integrated youth space. While there are selected municipal examples of strong stand-alone youth centres (such as in the Town of Newmarket and the Town of Ingersoll), stand-alone facilities tend to be more prevalent

Table 3: Youth Participation in Recreation, 2017-2019

Participation	2017	2018	2019	Δ 2017-2019
Registered Programs	104,308	103,289	101,504	- 6%
Sauga at Play (Free)	43,264	36,609	53,075	+ 17%
Drop-In/ casual (Paid)	119,311	107,856	107,818	- 12%
Community Centre Youth Memberships	6,584	6,342	7082	+ 8%

Source: City of Mississauga, 2019

## Future Space Planning

Future Directions for Recreation has historically supported a neighbourhood-based approach to meeting the space-related needs of youth. In doing so, the City relies on its own assets such as community centres, libraries, activity centres, and parks to ensure youth have strong geographic access for

among community-based providers. Stand-alone centres can impart a sense of comfort to youth knowing that it is “their space” and staff working in those environments are more likely to empathize with youth-friendly principles in their day-to-day interactions. However, it is difficult for municipalities to operate multiple stand-alone centres to attain the geographic distribution required by youth due to the staffing and financial implications, as stand-

alone facilities cannot benefit from economies of scale found through integrated/shared spaces in multi-use community centres.

As a result, Mississauga's current model of delivering youth programs and assigning specific use by youth in certain rooms at certain times is consistent with the practice of a number of Ontario municipalities. As noted by certain individuals during Youth Plan for Recreation consultations, a space ultimately needs to be "youth-friendly" and be programmed appropriately for it to be successful regardless of whether it is a dedicated or multi-purpose facility. In this regard, co-location with other complementary amenities such as gymnasiums, fitness centres, pools, comfortable lobby areas, creative studios and libraries continues to be important provided that youth programming is either dedicated or prioritized within these multi-use complexes.

The programming of indoor and outdoor spaces, whether through structured or unstructured means, is a critical part of success. Youth interests and activity preferences evolve rapidly and thus ongoing monitoring of program-related trends is needed if the City is to remain responsive to serving the needs of this age group. An ability to heed input from youth and translate it into meaningful opportunities is necessary, while empowering individuals through youth-led programming takes responsiveness to the next level. Programs should be consistent with the mandate of the Recreation Division by advancing objectives such as physical activity and literacy, sustainability, creativity, etc. in a manner that is interesting to youth.

Youth engaged in the development of Youth Plan for Recreation had many suggestions regarding programs and activities, including through the youth survey where desires were expressed for:

- more drop-in and free gym time;
- creative opportunities including visual and performing arts;
- rehearsal and practise time for music and dance; and
- greater access to pools, walking tracks, weight rooms and fitness classes.

Youth identified additional program and service considerations during the youth engagement sessions:

- Expanding the hours of availability to later in the evenings and throughout the weekends;
- Expand the program choices to include less active and more creative opportunities including art, gaming, life skills and cooking.

These program suggestions are an indication that youth are looking for varied programs apart from active and sport choices. Staff should engage youth at the community centre level to discuss the interest in these varied choices. Including both users and non-users of programs and services should give an indication of what programs and opportunities would be successful in the area surrounding the centre.

## Recommendations

### Use of Space & New Programming Opportunities

1

In order to optimize recreation facility space, youth programming areas should come in the form of shared and/or integrated spaces within community centres rather than an area dedicated exclusively to youth. Existing centres and future redevelopments should have these spaces designed with the input of local youth.

2

Expand youth programming times to evenings and weekends to appeal to the 18-24 year age bracket and introduce more aquatics and fitness programs.

3

Explore emerging trends in recreation such as E-sports/gaming as an alternative option to traditional recreational activities.

4

Revisit the Youth Charter and role of the Youth Advisory Committees to ensure new programming ideas are explored.

## 3.4 Key Focus Area #2: Inclusion, Access and Supportive Environments

### GOAL:

Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation

### Current Approach

The City of Mississauga is proud of the diverse makeup of its community. Diversity brings with it a wide range of perspectives that enrich the ability of the public service to consider various perspectives and interests as it develops a broader approach to service delivery. Specific and essential policies and practices that need to be in place in order to develop the foundation for programs and services representative of the community it serves include:

- An overall corporate and/or departmental inclusion policy;
- Affordable access to programs and services;
- Identification and building relationships with diverse groups and marginalized populations within the community;
- Opportunities for marginalized youth to participate, volunteer, gain leadership qualities and obtain employment;



- Development of opportunities with the Indigenous community;
- Welcoming and safe environments for the LGBTQ+ community; and
- Increase participation of those identifying as female on committees and in recreational pursuits.

The Recreation Division is broadly intentional in including diverse and marginalized populations. Thoughtful approaches include balancing genders on the Youth Advisory Committees at community centres, offering the Active Assist program to reduce barriers for low income families, developing and offering Therapeutic recreation programs for persons with decreased mobility, and working toward ensuring that volunteers and staff are representative of the community they serve. It is recognized that these and other approaches take time to ensure representation within the organization as well as within programs and services.

### Observations from Youth Input & Research

- **Gender Equity in Recreation and Sport**  
Comments made during youth, staff and partner engagement sessions led the Consulting Team to consider equitable engagement by gender identity. Staff indicated that many who identify as females do not engage in sports or physical activity during drop-in hours as there is a hesitancy for some girls to be active in front of males. Implementation of the Youth Plan should result in proactive approaches to

identify and support female interests since female youth participation in recreation and sport tends to decline during the teenage years.

- **Include Diverse Populations in all Youth Recreation Opportunities**

The Consulting Team witnessed a couple of homophobic comments during one youth engagement session. While this in no means represents a majority view, it invoked a sense that more work is needed in terms of education and awareness with respect to access and inclusion, in order for community centres to be completely welcoming.

- **Make Special Efforts to Include Under-Represented Populations**

There is full recognition that the City has implemented the Active Assist policy to include residents from low income backgrounds. Further, the range of no-cost and low-cost recreational opportunities has experienced a rise in participation. Therapeutic Recreation programs and supports for persons with disabilities are showing increases in participation, though there is limited involvement of individuals with a disability in universal program options and this requires review. The City has taken a thoughtful and market driven approach to positive results. Efforts thus far to include diverse populations such as newcomers and refugees have largely been successful. There will have to be continued proactive approaches to include certain populations by having deeper discussions about any potential



barriers and developing programs and initiatives to include them; specific populations include the LGBTQ+ community, Indigenous residents, as well as youth with disabilities when reviewing access to available opportunities.

- **Support for Newcomers**

Youth focus groups highlighted an increased need to support newcomer youth in recreation programs, facilities and services. Youth representatives believe that newcomer students are interested in learning traditionally Canadian sports and activities but are overwhelmed with choices and settling in a new country. Newcomers require additional support as they acclimate.

- **Support for Staff**

Staff identified a strong belief in including all marginalized populations and in the benefits that would be derived from participation not only to the participant but to the community at large. There was some confusion as to the role and responsibility of staff and the ability to reach diverse populations. Greater training in accessing representatives of diverse populations about what opportunities could be developed at both the departmental and the community centre level. Diversity training has been offered to staff and a more practical strategy in facilitating discussions and working out program opportunities would be beneficial.



### **Committees Need to Represent the Community that they Serve**

Youth Advisory Councils at the community centre level engage youth that show an interest in leadership, want to contribute ideas about programs and services, and represent youth interests. This approach provides staff with the input needed to be nimble and address current concerns. Youth are also engaged in developing and facilitating active opportunities. While the Youth Advisory Councils are active and supported by staff, a general observation indicates that the Councils are not fully representative of the neighbourhoods that they serve. While visible cultures are present and gender equity is generally addressed, there seems to be a lack of youth with disabilities, the LGBTQ+ community and Indigenous youth. Having representation among a broad diversity of abilities and backgrounds will position youth committees to develop initiatives that are truly reflective and meaningful to all Mississauga youth.

## Inclusion Data

The following Statistics Canada data regarding diversity and inclusion was summarized in a recent Toronto Star article:

- The Census counted 1.67 million Indigenous people in Canada in 2016, amounting to approximately 5 per cent of the Canadian population. This is a growth rate of 42.5 per cent over the last 10 years, which is four times the rate of the non-Indigenous population.
- About 21.9 per cent of the total population are foreign born. Statistics Canada indicates that this could reach 30 per cent by the year 2036.
- 61.8 per cent of immigrants arrived from the Middle East and Asia.
- 70 per cent of the population reported a mother tongue other than English.
- 37.5 per cent of all children under the age of 15 years are foreign.
- Five of the suburban cities around Toronto - Ajax, Mississauga, Richmond Hill, Brampton and Markham - have majorities of people who identify as visible minorities.<sup>2</sup>

## Safe Spaces Training Module - The National Youth Advocacy Coalition

The National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC) has developed an online training resource around developing safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth. This training resource is accessed online and includes six modules via

YouTube. A moderator speaks to a set of power point slides and the sessions are augmented by a workbook that staff/volunteers utilize to capture points that will be of interest to them. The various sessions support topic areas such as attitudes, language, inclusivity and representation, resources and policies.

## The Indigenous Network (Mississauga)

The Region of Peel is situated in the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit. Peel Indigenous Network was established in 2003 by a group of local Indigenous residents. A formal Circle of Directors was formed in 2007, and in the following year the organization was incorporated as a non-profit organization. In 2009, a Cultural Centre was opened to provide a social setting to foster cultural awareness, education and provide services and support to the Indigenous community.

Indigenous Sport and Wellness Ontario (ISWO) is the designated Provincial/Territorial Sporting Body for Ontario and serves 113 First Nations, in addition to Inuit and Metis people, living on and off reserve in rural and urban settings. They have collaborated with the Ontario government to strengthen Indigenous sport in Ontario through Game ON - The Ontario Governments Sport Plan's Sport Pathway. The goals of the Pathway include:

- reduce barriers for Indigenous people to participate in organized sport;
- create opportunities for Indigenous athletes to train and compete within the Indigenous community to build competition preparedness; and

- build on the existing mainstream sport and recreation system to involve and develop Indigenous participants, athletes and coaches to achieve their full potential.<sup>3</sup>

### **Indigenous Cultural Competency Training**

The Indigenous Cultural Competency program is provided by Indigenous organizations and businesses. The program provides organizations that work with Indigenous peoples and groups to obtain the skills, knowledge, and respect for the history, terminology, values and behaviours of Indigenous peoples. It is invaluable as communities begin to develop strong relationships built on respect.

### **IndigenACTION**

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is a national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada. The AFN has developed an IndigenACTION strategy which serves to develop partnerships with community level sport and recreation leaders to ensure First Nations youth can live healthy lifestyles and achieve overall well-being through recreation and sport.

### **Workforce Diversity and Inclusion**

The City of Mississauga recognizes and respects the uniqueness and the diversity of the workforce; it is committed to creating and encouraging an accessible, fair, equitable and respectful work environment by recognizing and valuing personal characteristics such as race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

The Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is a corporate wide initiative that was established in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion in hopes to achieve higher levels of employee engagement and satisfaction, enhance communication with each other and customers, attract and retain talent, increase problem-solving and innovation and strengthen core values of Trust, Quality and Excellence. In addition to addressing the workforce, the Recreation division is expanding on the Inclusion Strategy to include areas of service delivery. This work being developed will provide an Inclusion framework for how the Recreation Division will continue to support and address the needs of special populations and/or persons with disabilities. Some of these needs identified may be supported through direct programming, partnerships, one-on-one support or a combination of the three.

## Recommendations

### Inclusion, Access and Supportive Environments

5

Ensure that Youth Councils reflect the population that they serve by striving for representation along the lines of gender identity, cultural and visible minority groups, income levels, abilities, and sexual orientation at a minimum.

6

Ensure that community centres and spaces are safe and welcoming to the LGBTQ+ community, and that program nomenclature respects gender identity.

7

Ensure the needs of youth are incorporated into the Inclusion Strategy.

8

Expand on the sponsorship model to fund additional no cost/low cost programs.

## 3.5 Key Focus Area #3: Youth Leadership & Employment Opportunities

### GOAL:

Leadership programs and volunteer opportunities provide training to enable youth to be employed by the City and other employers.

## Current Approach

The City of Mississauga engages hundreds of youth in leadership programs each year to enable them to apply for positions offered in arenas, camps, programs and aquatics. This continuum from being a participant in recreation programs to taking leadership courses that lead to employment within the Recreation Division (or within the community) serves youth well. The Recreation Division hires or rehires part-time staff for each session and as required throughout the year; therefore, the youth leadership to employment continuum serves the City in providing a pool of well qualified candidates for these positions.

## Observations from Youth Input and Research

### Awareness of Opportunities

There was a limited awareness by youth of the employment opportunities available to them within the Recreation Division. It is the perception that youth who can navigate the system and have a knowledge of leadership qualifications needed are more successful in obtaining employment with the City.

### Youth Volunteer Interests

Respondents in both youth surveys expressed an interest in volunteering for specific opportunities within the Mississauga Recreation Division. The top five areas of interest included volunteering in sports programs, volunteer community service hours for school (in varied opportunities), children's programs, aquatic programs,

and training courses such as First Aid, High Five, etc.

- **Partners in Volunteerism**

Stakeholders suggested that the City strengthen its relationship with Volunteer Peel and Volunteer Mississauga BC to promote volunteer/leadership opportunities available to youth.

- **Cost Considerations**

There is a feeling amongst youth that the cost of leadership training is prohibitive (Aquatic Leadership, High Five and First Aid), and the online application process to be considered for employment is too cumbersome in obtaining a job with the City,

- **Employment Preparation Partners**

Youth-serving agencies could assist with the employment preparation process and content. The YMCA Next Steps program coordinates job shadowing and job preparation while other not-for-profit organizations could work in partnership to provide training and access for applying for positions. Job fairs held in priority neighbourhoods were suggested as a way to increase awareness of jobs and the supports available.

- **Leader In Training**

The Leader In Training (LIT) courses help develop leadership skills for youth interested in working in the field of recreation. Training is provided in the following areas: leadership and programming of children's activities,

inclusion, promoting positive behaviour, communication skills, and instructional techniques for leading arts, crafts and games. Level 1 consists of three days of in-class training followed by one week of full day (8 hrs) in-camp placement. Level 2 consists of five days of in-class training followed by two weeks of full day in-camp placement. Principles of Healthy Child Development (PHCD) is a prerequisite.

## Recommendations

### Youth Leadership & Employment Opportunities: Recommendations

9

Take a leadership role in communicating with youth serving agencies and organizations to support employment and volunteer opportunities.

10

Complete a review of the current LIT program to investigate the following: expansion into other areas of programming and other streams (i.e. admin and operations), course offering to year-round and opportunities for reducing cost barriers to take part in this program.

11

Develop a youth-focused marketing plan for employment and volunteer opportunities.

## 3.6 Key Focus Area #4: Communications Targeted to Youth

### GOAL:

To increase engagement of youth in recreation pursuits through enhanced communication efforts.

### Current Approach

The Mississauga Recreation Department expends significant effort to keep youth informed of youth-centric recreation opportunities. Ongoing efforts include the use of the City's website, social media, posters, and Youth Engagement Staff as examples. Communications are scheduled to highlight annual, sessional and seasonal opportunities. While these communications efforts are substantive, greater awareness is needed of recreation programs and services within the Mississauga youth population.

### Observations from Youth Input & Research

#### ▪ Promoting Youth Recreation

Suggestions with respect to improving communications included a promotional campaign that would get the message across that Mississauga youth opportunities are not simply about sport and physical activity but include broader youth interests including creativity and STEM. Awareness efforts would also serve to promote the wide variety of programs and services available in the community.

#### ▪ Top Five Communications Channels

The youth survey asked what communications mechanisms are best in informing youth about Mississauga recreation programs and services. In order of importance, the top five responses were Instagram, the City of Mississauga website, email, poster or message at school, and Snapchat. Following closely were receiving texts and announcements from teachers. Two of the top ten communications mechanisms included the use of school communications systems.

#### ▪ A Directory of Youth Serving Agencies and Programs

### Communications Promising Practice: Documentaries can Create Change

Youth Documentary on Homelessness - The Collingwood Youth Centre was recently constructed with funding by a private donor who chose to give back to the community. Fundraising efforts and grants are used to program, staff and operate the youth centre.

One approach applied for youth engagement and development is to seek volunteers that have specific skills and competencies to empathize with youth and introduce them to different experiences. In one initiative, a volunteer assisted youth in creating a documentary about the local homelessness issue and how the youth centre has changed lives. The documentary highlighted local issues and supports, and was used to fundraise to assist homeless youth. This is an excellent example of the power of communication, community engagement and youth empowerment.



Stakeholders spoke to the need to work together and as a quick win, create a directory of all youth-serving agencies, programs and services available to them. It was felt that this initiative could be undertaken by youth themselves to develop an online directory that could be accessed by youth and other youth-serving agencies.

- **Leverage School Board Communication Systems**

One of the key comments, which was supported through the Youth survey findings, was to strengthen the relationship with the school boards as most youth attend school. The purpose would be to enlighten the faculty and student body of all opportunities available to youth in the community, and hopefully increase engagement through their communications channels.

- **Development of a Mississauga Youth App**

Many comments during the youth engagement sessions spoke to a lack of knowing what was going on in the community. There seemed to be a lot of opportunities, but the attendees wanted to know about what interested them in particular. Decisions to participate tend to be made relatively close to the date and time of an event, and youth tend to communicate using social media and texting. It was suggested that an app depicting youth opportunities being offered by service providers (e.g. the City, stakeholder groups and associations) would be helpful. Participants felt that the app

could streamline information based on promoting what appeals to each youth resident through an online screening process.

## Recommendations

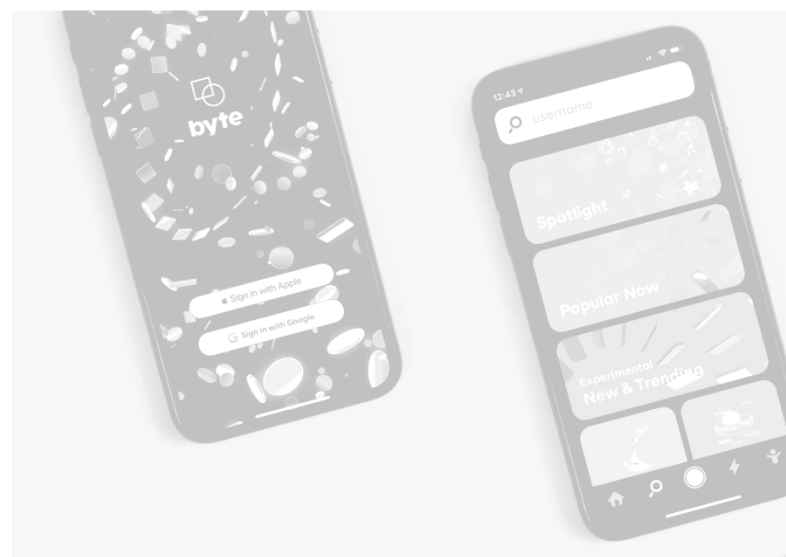
### Communications Targeted to Youth: Recommendations

# 12

Ensure that communications with youth utilize technology and digital apps currently used by youth, and that designated staff are approved to capture opportunities and activities in real time. Track engagement results of each communication mechanism.

# 13

Develop a Communications Plan that serves to keep youth and youth serving organizations fully informed of opportunities for youth in the City of Mississauga and to promote the positive contributions that youth make to the community through recreation.





## 3.7 Key Focus Area #5: Role Clarity Between the City and its Partners

### GOAL:

All youth serving departments and organizations work better together to play their part in supporting youth engagement, healthy development and lifelong choices.

### Current Approach

Many agencies specialize in serving Mississauga youth by engaging them in recreation and sport as well as providing other needed physical, mental and emotional supports. Partner agencies provide meaningful services that require specialized training, resources and infrastructure. All agencies have a common goal in building the needed resiliency in youth to adopt healthy lifelong practices and skills. Mississauga recreation staff that work closely with youth place a focus on building lifelong skills and active lifestyles through engagement in programs and services. Often a relationship of trust is built by spending time together in active pursuits. These working relationships with youth often unearth other social issues that can affect their ability to manage in a pressurized environment. The challenge becomes how City staff become aware of other available community resources and provide more seamless services to youth. Each agency has an area of expertise that may or

may not be required and thus working together consistently would provide a more seamless and informed youth centred services.

### Observations from Applicable Community/Staff Input & Research

#### Role Clarity with External Partners

- **Becoming More Strategic with Community Partners**  
Many comments from community stakeholders centred on the need to work more effectively together to better serve youth. Youth-serving groups, including the City, have specific roles to play and mandates to meet. The difficulty in serving youth is that they have many needs and a seamless delivery method would serve them more effectively. City staff have developed a table (Table 4) that would serve as a discussion point with other providers to clarify the Recreation Division's role and begin to decipher the role of all community partners. Developing strategic partnerships should be aligned with the priorities in the Youth Plan for Recreation. Table 4 provides a starting point for these suggested discussions along with a sharing and promotion of opportunities.
- **Coordination of Youth Outreach Workers in Non-Municipal Settings**  
Other youth-serving agencies have youth outreach workers active in various neighbourhoods, viewing this as a positive approach to support youth. Further, it was felt that a regularly scheduled networking opportunity

would lead to improved communications and possible sharing of information, training and resources.

- **Working Better Together**

Youth-serving agencies felt that greater communications amongst the various providers would enable improved coordination, focus on clear priorities, sharing of resources and the ability to measure the progress of the collective. Groups expressed a need to know what percent of the youth population were being reached, the importance of various approaches and the satisfaction levels of youth.

- **Space**

Many of the agencies representing lower income residents and newcomers indicated a lack of space to offer programs to youth. There was a desire to have ongoing dialogue with the City to determine if joint programming or shared space is a possibility in some centres or libraries.

### **Financial Barriers**

Youth-focused agencies indicated that cost is often a barrier to participation. It was suggested that the City provide free opportunities or workshops on how to access no-cost and low-cost programs through the Active Assist policy.



Table 4: Role Clarity for Internal and External Provider

Mississauga Recreation Division Services	Internal and External Partner Driven Services
Safe youth centred spaces for hanging out with friends and socializing;	Social services - providing social supports to youth including:
Drop-in programs arts and sports;	Granting and Sponsorship partners: funding priority work initiatives and programs for youth;
Recreation and sport programs, fitness, and related activities;	Libraries: literacy, safe spaces, engagement in related activities;
Skill based programs with a continuum;	School Boards and Post-Secondary Education: access to youth population, primary goal is to educate youth and build the whole person;
Leadership development leading to volunteerism and/or employment opportunities; and	Culture: exposure and experience in visual and performing arts;
Building awareness and support of lifelong engagement in recreational pursuits.	Health Care Providers: addressing preventative care by providing information, awareness, referrals and patient care; and
	Inclusion and Accessibility Partners: agencies and groups supporting access for marginalized populations.

### Internal Role Clarity

A common opinion offered from Youth Engagement Staff, Community Development Staff and Managers was that that the Mississauga Youth Plan for Recreation recommends that the City address role clarity in greater depth. There are many units that have a role in ensuring that youth are served well, and that the City bureaucracy should

strive to be a seamless operation. Oftentimes, youth visiting a community centre are looking for multiple services and connections, and it would be helpful if there was one easily accessible resource.

#### ▪ Youth Challenges and Training

All focus groups were very forthcoming on the issues that youth face. Examples include unemployment, cyber-bullying, bullying, drug use, isolation, mental

health issues, violence at home, dependence on cell phones and difficulty interacting, sex trafficking, anger management, family structures, cultural and language barriers, and transportation. Staff mentioned that these issues make their way into the community centres and that they feel ill-equipped to deal with many of these challenges. More comprehensive training, partnerships with social agencies and social services were seen as important supports for staff.

- **Better Equipped Youth Engagement Staff (YES)**

Staff roles have grown beyond the recreational scope of the YES position given that youth have many needs that extend beyond physical activity and leisure pursuits. To address day-to-day situations relating to mental health and social issues, staff believe additional training (e.g. conflict resolution, crisis management, de-escalation, etc.) would be highly beneficial. Having job manuals that clearly articulate overarching goals, objectives and responsibilities of YES Coordinators would allow more consistency in how the City serves youth that are using community centres. Since there can often be turnover among YES Coordinators (due to their age or stage of their career, the part-time nature of the job, etc.), relationships that have been previously built with youth can cease to exist if a staff person they trust no longer works in that facility. It was suggested that the City review the need for full-time YES positions to add the continuity and trust

in staff that is needed. YES Coordinators also believe that other community centre and City staff workers would benefit from greater training so that they are youth-friendly (or at the very least can better empathize with youth).

- **Mandate of YES Staff**

Participants suggested that the current policy that bases YES staff exclusively within the community centres should be revisited. Although there are occasions where YES staff conduct intentional school visits scheduled with the school, there is opportunity for supplementary engagement. Many successful municipalities have youth workers that are based where youth hang out (malls, parks, etc.) to inform and attract them into the centres through continued interaction and the building of trust. Staff felt that the number of engaged youth would increase using this expanded approach.

- **Youth Friendly Designation**

There is great pride overall that the City of Mississauga received Platinum Status in the Youth Friendly Community initiative. To meet the highest standards developed to serve and engage youth in meaningful programs and services is a true achievement. It is important to continue to maintain this status and share this information that supports the application with Recreation staff, youth, and other community organizations.

## Relevant Community Supports

### **The Community Group Registry Program**

The City of Mississauga has most recently (March 2018) refined the Community Group Registry Program (CGRP) which outlines the benefits to non-profit community groups lead by a volunteer board of directors in accessing City services and space. The youth resident requirement is 70 per cent for local groups and 30 per cent for regional groups. An application process ensures that the City of Mississauga can support non-profit groups on a fair and equitable basis. For groups meeting the requirements, the benefits include priority booking of space, discounted rental rates, access to affiliate insurance and promotion of programs on city road allowances through the use of mobile signs at a minimum. There are also supports for newly formed groups. This approach addresses the concern by some non-profit and charitable groups in accessing affordable spaces and services.

### **The Playworks Consortium (Youth Friendly Community Designation)**

As discussed in Section 3.2, the City should continue to maintain its Youth Friendly Community designation while leveraging the expertise of the Playworks Partnership in doing so.

### **YouthREX**

YouthREX is an organization that has set about to provide resources, education and evaluative tools to youth service providers. Supported by York University in Toronto, YouthREX supports and is aligned with Ontario's Stepping Up Strategic Framework. YouthREX have produced a series of webinars that span research, practice and experience,

and are also aligned with the key result areas of the Framework for Recreation in Canada and would be useful for all staff engaged in youth recreation. Webinars developed and delivered to date include:

- Youth Centred Approaches to Meaningful Engagement
- Six ways to Strengthen Your Work with Youth
- Working Together Against Anti-Black Racism in Ontario's Youth Sector
- Youth and Substance Use: Engaging and Supporting Through Reflective Practice
- Understanding Inter-Generational Healing – Recovery Resilience and Wellness
- Engaging the Power of Technology for Youth Work
- Gender Identity and Gender Expression Tool Kit (developed by 519 Space for Change)

## Recommendations

### Role Clarity Between the City and its Partners

- 14 Improve communication and working relationships with external youth-serving agencies to increase organizational effectiveness and partnership opportunities.
- 15 Continue to work with partners to maintain Mississauga's status as a Youth Friendly Community.
- 16 Create School Board partnerships to co-facilitate after school programming, share program spaces, and improve communication and overall access to youth.
- 17 Clarify the role of the Youth Engagement Staff specifically by defining service levels, the resources needed to achieve the levels of service, developing consistent training, and formalizing connections with other youth service providers at the neighbourhood level.
- 18 Ensure the Recreation Division has the organizational structure to support the delivery of current and future youth programs, activities, processes and services.

<sup>1</sup> City of Mississauga Youth Friendly Community Application

<sup>2</sup> Toronto Star. A majority of Torontonians now identify themselves as visible Minorities. Article dated October 26, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Information derived from Government of Ontario and the Aboriginal Sport and Wellness Council websites

# 4.0 Implementation Plan

## 4.1 Moving Forward

The Mississauga Youth Plan for Recreation is a multi-year, phased plan to guide the actions, responsibilities and budget decisions of the Recreation Division with regard to youth programs and services. To assist in implementation, this Section summarizes the Plan's recommendations while offering a sense of priority and timing, as well as a process for monitoring and updating the plan.

The City should regularly review and assess, and periodically revise the recommendations of the Youth Plan for Recreation to ensure that they remain reflective of local conditions and responsive to the changing needs of youth living in Mississauga. This will require monitoring of activity patterns, tracking user satisfaction levels, consistent dialogue with community organizations, annual reporting on implementation and short-term work plans, and undertaking a detailed five-year update to the Plan. Through these mechanisms – or as a result of other internal or external factors – adjustment of resource allocations and priorities identified in this Plan may be required.



Reviewing the Youth Plan for Recreation requires a commitment from all staff involved in the delivery of youth programs and services. The following steps may be used to conduct an annual review of the Youth Plan for Recreation:

- review of the past year (recommendations implemented, projects undertaken, success/failure of new and existing initiatives, changes in participation levels, issues arising from the public and community groups, etc.);
- identification of issues impacting the Plan (anticipated financial and operational constraints, emerging opportunities, etc.);
- cursory review of the Plan for direction regarding its recommendations; and
- include actions in the annual Divisional work plan.

## 4.2 Implementation Table

The table that follows identifies the following elements to support the Recommendations:

### **Priorities**

These are identified as high or medium priority based on community demand and resources available to the Division.

### **Timing**

Given the five year nature of the plan, recommendations have been organized into short-term (1 to 2 years) and medium-term (3 to 5 years) timelines to help staff create work plans.



## Key Focus Area & Recommendations

### Key Focus Area One:

#### Use of Space and New Programming Opportunities

#### Priority

#### Timing

1

In order to optimize recreation facility space, youth programming areas should come in the form of shared and/or integrated spaces within community centres rather than an area dedicated exclusively to youth. Existing centres and future redevelopments should have these spaces designed with the input of local youth.

High

Medium-Term

2

Expand youth programming times to evenings and weekends to appeal to the 18-24 year age bracket and introduce more aquatics and fitness programs.

High

Short-Term

3

Explore emerging trends in recreation such as E-sports/gaming as an alternative option to traditional recreational activities.

Medium

Ongoing

4

Revisit the Youth Charter and role of the Youth Advisory Committees to ensure new programming ideas are explored.

High

Short-Term

### Key Focus Area Two:

#### Inclusion, Access and Supportive Environments

5

Ensure that Youth Councils reflect the population that they serve by striving for representation along the lines of gender identity, cultural and visible minority groups, income levels, abilities, and sexual orientation at a minimum.

High

Ongoing

6

Ensure that community centres and spaces are safe and welcoming to the LGBTQ+ community, and that program nomenclature respects gender identity.

High

Ongoing

7

Ensure the needs of youth are incorporated into the Inclusion Strategy.

High

Short-Term

8

Expand on the sponsorship model to fund additional no cost/low cost programs.

Medium

Medium-Term

### Key Focus Area Three: Youth Leadership and Employment Opportunities

9

Take a leadership role in communicating with youth serving agencies and organizations to support employment and volunteer opportunities.

High

Ongoing

10

Complete a review of the current LIT program to investigate the following: expansion into other areas of programming and other streams (i.e. admin and operations), course offering to year-round and opportunities for reducing cost barriers to take part in this program.

Medium

Medium-Term

11

Develop a youth-focused marketing plan for employment and volunteer opportunities.

High

Short-Term

### Key Focus Area Four: Communications Targeted to Youth

12

Ensure that communications with youth utilize technology and digital apps currently used by youth, and that designated staff are approved to capture opportunities and activities in real time. Track engagement results of each communication mechanism.

High

Ongoing

13

Develop a Communications Plan that serves to keep youth and youth serving organizations fully informed of opportunities for youth in the City of Mississauga and to promote the positive contributions that youth make to the community through recreation.

High

Medium-Term

## Key Focus Area Five: Role Clarity between the City and its Partners

14	Improve communication and working relationships with external youth-serving agencies to increase organizational effectiveness and partnership opportunities.	High	Medium-Term
15	Continue to work with partners to maintain Mississauga's status as a Youth Friendly Community.	High	Short-Term
16	Create School Board partnerships to co-facilitate after school programming, share program spaces, and improve communication and overall access to youth.	High	Ongoing
17	Clarify the role of the Youth Engagement Staff specifically by defining service levels, the resources needed to achieve the levels of service, developing consistent training, and formalizing connections with other youth service providers at the neighbourhood level.	High	Short-Term
18	Ensure the Recreation Division has the organizational structure to support the delivery of current and future youth programs, activities, processes and services.	High	Short-Term

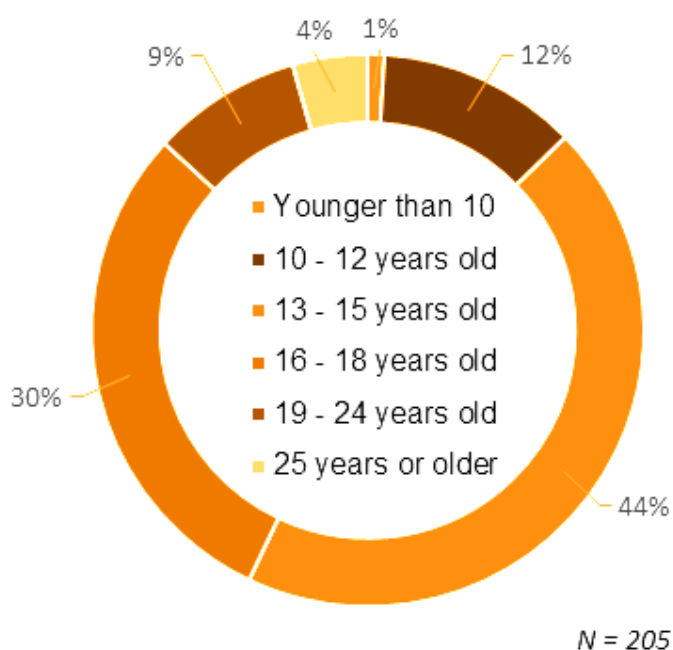
# Appendix A

## 2018 Youth Survey Results

To inform the Review, a survey was made available between June 4 and July 6, 2018 in both online and print copy formats. Designed specifically for Mississauga youth, the survey included nine questions with a targeted completion time of five minutes (average completion time was six minutes). A scoped survey was selected to reduce the likelihood of respondent drop-out from a lengthy questionnaire. The intent of the survey was to help establish an understanding of: reasons that youth participate in recreation; popular activities and programs among youth; barriers to accessing programs, facilities, and services; and to quantify participation levels.

The survey timing coincided with other consultation initiatives undertaken for the Review so that it could be promoted through discussions with key stakeholders and targeted populations. As an incentive, participants completing the entire survey were eligible for a draw to win one of three \$100 City of Mississauga recreation gift cards. Unless otherwise noted, totals for each question may not add due to rounding, skipped questions, or a “don’t know/prefer not to answer” response.

The survey received a total of 205 responses, with nearly three out of four surveys received (74 per cent) being completed by youth between the ages of 13 to 18 years of age. Ten (10) of the respondents representing 5 per cent of the total initial sample, dropped out of the survey after the first question and have not been included throughout the remaining analysis. Therefore, a sample of 195 youth survey respondents are described below.



### Participation

The most popular activities that youth participated in during their free time were: chill at a friend’s house (62 per cent), watch TV/movies/streaming (60 per cent), and play organized sports (53 per cent). Just over two-thirds of survey respondents (68 per cent) indicated that they participate in City of Mississauga youth programs and activities.

### Barriers to Participation

Interestingly, over half of respondents (57 per cent) indicated that nothing stops them from participating in Mississauga’s recreation programs and facilities. Of those who do experience barriers to participation,

the most common responses were: too expensive (20 per cent), do not know what is available (19 per cent), and can't get there/too far (16 per cent).

The majority of respondents (68 per cent) indicated that there are activities they want to do but are not able to. Basketball, soccer, and swimming were the top three activities that youth respondents would like to see offered or expanded in Mississauga.

### **Future Needs**

When asked what would make youth want to use Mississauga recreation programs and facilities more often, three preferred options were identified by most. Three out of four youth (75 per cent) would like opportunities for drop-in/free gym time, 69 per cent of respondents desired public Wi-Fi, and just over half (52 per cent) would like additional work/volunteer opportunities.

### **Sample Demographics**

One out of four survey respondents (25 per cent) lived within the L5M postal code (Churchill Meadows/Central Erin Mills/South Streetsville), one out of five (20 per cent) indicated a home residence within the L5N postal code (Lisgar/Meadowvale), and 13 per cent were located within the L5A postal code (Mississauga Valley/East Cooksville). Other City of Mississauga postal codes were represented by less than 5 per cent of survey respondents.





# 2018 Youth Survey Results

The following is a detailed summary of the results from the youth survey. Please note that the results exclude respondents who said 'Don't Know' or did not respond.

## Q1 How old are you?

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
Younger than 10	2	1%
10 - 12 years old	24	12%
13 - 15 years old	91	44%
16 - 18 years old	61	30%
19 - 24 years old	18	9%
25 years or older	9	4%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>205</b>	
<b>Skipped</b>	<b>0</b>	

## Q2 What do you like to do in your free time?

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
Chill at home or a friend's house	121	62%
Watch tv/movies/streaming	117	60%
Play organized sports (soccer, basketball, hockey)	104	53%
Play music	77	39%
Play video games	75	38%
Hang out in a park	71	36%

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
Visit a library or community centre	68	35%
Participate in unstructured activities (skateboarding, swimming, pick-up ball)	67	34%
Volunteer in the community	64	33%
Reading/writing	58	30%
Go to a restaurant or coffee shop	51	26%
Painting/drawing/designing	44	23%
Participate in arts or cultural programs and events (dance, theatre, art, choir)	34	17%
Group/club activities (books, chess, graphic novel, STEM, glee)	26	13%
Other (please specify)	9	5%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>195</b>	
<b>Skipped</b>	<b>10</b>	

### Q3 Do you participate in City of Mississauga youth programs and activities?

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
Yes	133	68%
No	46	24%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>195</b>	
<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>16</b>	
<b>Skipped</b>	<b>10</b>	

**Q4 Is there anything that stops you from using City of Mississauga parks and recreation programs and facilities?**

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
Nothing stops me from participating	112	57%
Too expensive	39	20%
Don't know what's available	37	19%
Can't get there/too far	31	16%
Not interested	14	7%
Uncomfortable vibe	10	5%
Language/cultural barriers	1	1%
Accessibility for persons with disabilities	1	1%
Other (please specify)	8	4%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>195</b>	
<b>Skipped</b>	<b>10</b>	

**Q5 Are there things you want to do that you're not able to?**

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
Yes	133	68%
No	46	24%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>195</b>	
<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>16</b>	
<b>Skipped</b>	<b>10</b>	

### Q6 What programs or activities would you like to see offered in Mississauga? (list up to 3)

#### Top 3 Activities

Basketball

Soccer

Swimming

### Q7 What would make you want to use Mississauga's recreation programs and facilities more?

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
Drop-in/free gym time	141	75%
Public Wi-Fi	129	69%
Volunteer/work opportunities	98	52%
Youth or teen nights/events	87	46%
Youth Spaces or Chill Zones	74	39%
Bright/comfortable spaces and furniture	72	38%
Friendly and welcoming staff	70	37%
Promotion of youth programs and activities through social media	57	30%
Partnerships with youth-serving organizations and agencies (disability, Aboriginal, LGBTQ+, newcomers)	27	14%
Other (please specify)	141	75%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>188</b>	
<b>Skipped</b>	<b>17</b>	

**Q8 What area of the City do you live in? (identify by your postal code)**

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
L5M (Churchill Meadows/Central Erin Mills/South Streetsville)	46	25%
L5N (Lisgar/Meadowvale)	36	20%
L5A (Mississauga Valley/East Cooksville)	24	13%
L4T (Malton)	9	5%
L5L (Erin Mills/Western Business Park)	9	5%
L5B (West Cooksville/Fairview/City Centre/East Creditview)	7	4%
L5V (East Credit)	7	4%
L5J (Clarkson/Southdown)	5	3%
L4Z (West Rathwood / East Hurontario / SE Gateway / Sandalwood)	4	2%
L4X (East Applewood / East Dixie / NE Lakeview)	3	2%
L5C (West Creditview/Mavis/Erindale)	2	1%
L5E (Central Lakeview)	2	1%
L5R (West Hurontario/SW Gateway)	2	1%
L5W (Meadowvale Village/West Gateway)	2	1%
L4W (Matheson / East Rathwood)	1	1%
L4Y (West Applewood / West Dixie / NW Lakeview)	1	1%
L5G (SW Lakeview/Mineola/East Port Credit)	1	1%
L5H (West Port Credit/Lorne Park/East Sheridan)	1	1%
L5P (YYZ - Airport)	1	1%
L4V (Wildwood)	0	0%

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
L5K (West Sheridan)	0	0%
L5S (Cardiff/NE Gateway)	0	0%
L5T (Courtney Park/East Gateway)	0	0%
Other (please specify)	2	1%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>182</b>	
<b>Don't know/Prefer not to answer</b>	<b>17</b>	
<b>Skipped</b>	<b>23</b>	

#### Q9 Is there anything else we should know about youth in Mississauga?

Detailed open-ended responses are considered throughout the Youth Plan for Recreation but verbatim comments have not been included in this summary file.



# Appendix B

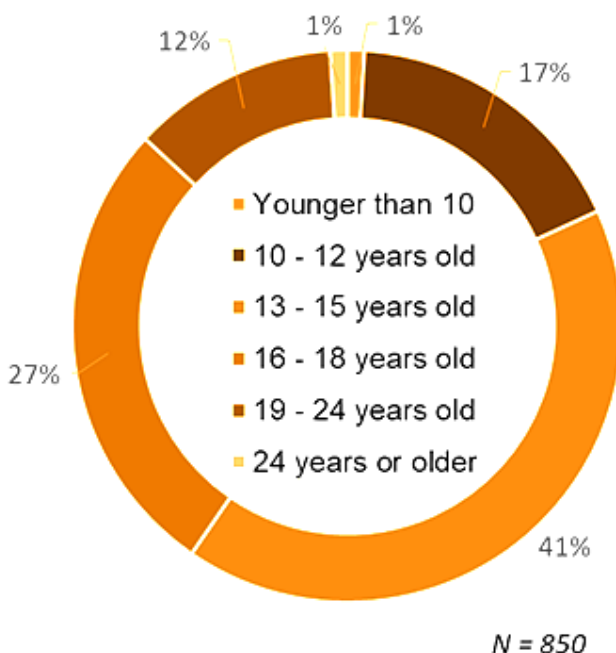
## 2019 Youth Survey Results

The City of Mississauga administered an online survey in the summer of 2019 to further test participation and preferences for recreation programs and facilities. The survey received a total of 850 responses, with more than two out of three surveys received (74 per cent) being completed by youth between the ages of 13 to 18 years of age.

### Participation

The most popular activities that youth participated in during their free time were: play on a school sports team (32 per cent), volunteer (32 per cent), visit the library (31.5 per cent), and be a part of school clubs (27 per cent). One out of five survey respondents (20 per cent) indicated that they participate in City of Mississauga At Play after-school programs, another 20 per cent participate in the City's public swimming, and 17 per cent participate in City-run drop-in programs.

Most respondents prefer to participate in activities or events after school between 3pm and 6pm during the school year, and in the afternoons during the summer holidays.



### Barriers to Participation

Two out of five respondents (40 per cent) indicated that nothing stops them from participating in Mississauga's recreation programs and facilities. Of those that do experience barriers to participation, the most common responses were: work or school commitments (32 per cent), do not know what is available (24 per cent), times are not convenient (20 per cent), and too expensive (16 per cent).

As noted above, the second-most prevalent barrier related to lack of awareness regarding available activities and services. When asked for thoughts regarding the best way for the City to tell youth about programs and services that are available, 55 per cent reported Instagram and 44 per cent would

look to the City of Mississauga website. Other popular means of communication included email (39 per cent), Snapchat (28 per cent) and posters/messages distributed through the schools (28 per cent).

## The “Ideal” Community Centre

Survey respondents valued many features in the community centre setting, the most popular being free WiFi with 81 per cent support. Also highly sought amenities included a pool (69 per cent), chill space to hang out with friends (61 per cent), a gymnasium (57 per cent) and drop-in/free gym time (51 per cent).

## Volunteering and Employment at the City

38 per cent of survey respondents were interested in obtaining their 40 hours of volunteer community service through the City’s Recreation Division. 41 per cent reported an interest in volunteering with sports programs, 38 per cent with children’s programs and 27 per cent with pool programs.

With respect to paid employment opportunities with the Recreation Division, 45 per cent would be interested in jobs related to sports programs, 40 per cent in children’s programs, and 28 per cent would like to work in pool programs.

## Sample Demographics

More than one out of every five survey respondents (22 per cent) lived within the L4T postal code (Malton), 15 per cent resided within the L5A postal code (Mississauga Valley/East Cooksville), 11 per cent were located within the L5B postal code (West Cooksville/Fairview/City Centre/East Creditview), and 9 per cent lived in the L4X postal code (East Applewood/East Dixie/NE Lakeview). Other City of Mississauga postal codes were represented by 5 per cent or less survey respondents.

The sample was equally represented by male and females at 49 per cent each, with youth identifying as transgender and non-binary making up approximately 2 per cent. Approximately 6 per cent identify as a visible minority, 4 per cent immigrated to Canada in the past five years, and 4 per cent belong to the LGBTQ+ community.

# 2019 Youth Survey Results

## Q1 How old are you?

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
Under 10 years old	10	1.18%
10-12 years old	146	17.18%
13-15 years old	345	40.59%
16-18 years old	228	26.82%
19-24 years old	100	11.77%
Over 24 years old	16	1.88%
I do not wish to answer this question	5	0.59%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>850</b>	

## Q2 What area of the city do you live in? (Identify by your postal code or neighbourhood).

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
L4T (Malton)	179	21.88%
L4V (Wildwood)	1	0.12%
L4W (Matheson/East Rathwood)	3	0.37%
L4X (East Applewood/East Dixie/NE Lakeview)	74	9.05%
L4Y (West Applewood/West Dixie/NW Lakeview)	16	1.96%
L4Z (West Rathwood/East Hurontario/SE Gateway/Sandalwood)	23	2.81%
L5A (Mississauga Valley/East Cooksville)	121	14.79%
L5B (West Cooksville/Fairview/City Centre/East Creditview)	93	11.37%

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
L5C (West Creditview/Mavis/Erindale)	28	3.42%
L5E (Central Lakeview)	25	3.06%
L5G (SW Lakeview/Mineola/East Port Credit)	5	0.61%
L5H (West Port Credit/Lorne Park/East Sheridan)	6	0.73%
L5J (Clarkson/Southdown)	16	1.96%
L5K (West Sheridan)	6	0.73%
L5L (Erin Mills/Western Business Park)	30	3.67%
L5M (Churchill Meadows/Central Erin Mills/South Streetsville)	61	7.46%
L5N (Lisgar/Meadowvale)	41	5.01%
L5P (YYZ – Airport)	0	0%
L5R (West Hurontario/SW Gateway)	10	1.22%
L5S (Cardiff/NE Gateway)	0	0%
L5T (Courtney Park/East Gateway)	3	0.37%
L5V (East Credit)	14	1.71%
L5W (Meadowvale Village/West Gateway)	8	0.98%
Don't know/prefer not to answer	24	2.93%
Other (please specify)	31	3.79%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>818</b>	

**Q3 Tell us a little bit about yourself**

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
I identify as a male	405	49.33%
I identify as a female	404	49.21%
I identify as transgender	6	0.73%
I identify as non-binary	6	0.73%
I identify as a visible minority	52	6.33%
I identify as an Indigenous person	2	0.24%
I identify as a person with a disability	10	1.22%
I identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community	32	3.90%
I immigrated to Canada within the last 5 years	36	4.39%
I am a parent/guardian of a child under 18	4	0.49%
I do not wish to answer this question	9	1.10%
I speak a first language other than English	128	15.59%
Please Specify Other language	68	8.28%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>1162</b>	

**Q4 What activities do you participate in during your free time?**

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
City of Mississauga "At Play" after-school programs	162	19.85%
City of Mississauga fitness centre	74	9.07%
City of Mississauga public skating	136	16.67%
City of Mississauga public swimming	164	20.10%
City of Mississauga drop-in programs	139	17.03%
Fitness membership at a private gym	58	7.11%
Community sports team	116	14.22%
School sports team	261	31.99%
School clubs	222	27.21%
Dance lessons	72	8.82%
Music lessons	72	8.82%
Painting/drawing/designing	119	14.58%
Visit the library	257	31.50%
Volunteer	264	32.35%
Work	125	15.32%
None	73	8.95%
Other (Please describe)	48	5.88%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>2362</b>	



**Q5 What does your ideal community centre include?**

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
Pool	557	68.77%
Walking track	227	28.03%
Weight room	355	43.83%
Fitness classes	322	39.75%
Gymnasium	465	57.41%
Chill space/space to hang around with friends	492	60.74%
Rehearsal/practice space for music/dance	206	25.43%
Space to host activities with groups/clubs that I belong to	253	31.24%
Volunteer or leadership opportunities	369	45.56%
Employment opportunities	313	38.64%
Drop-in/free gym time	416	51.36%
Drama programs	142	17.53%
Drawing/art programs	219	27.04%
Youth or teen nights/events	338	41.73%
Free WiFi	658	81.24%
Programs to learn new sports	178	21.98%
Space to play sports	275	33.95%
Other (please describe)	36	4.44%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>5821</b>	

**Q6 When do you prefer to attend activities and/or events?**

<b>During the school year:</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Before school	83	10.32%
During lunch	127	15.80%
After school between 3-6pm	538	66.92%
Monday to Thursday evenings after 6pm	257	31.97%
Friday evenings after 6pm	252	31.34%
Saturday morning	170	21.14%
Saturday afternoon	241	29.98%
Saturday evening	172	21.39%
Sunday morning	146	18.16%
Sunday afternoon	202	25.12%
Sunday evening	140	17.41%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>2328</b>	

<b>In the summer:</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Weekday mornings	252	35.54%
Weekday afternoons	428	60.37%
Weekday evenings	313	44.15%
Saturday morning	172	24.26%
Saturday afternoon	275	38.79%
Saturday evening	209	29.48%

In the summer:	Number	Percent
Sunday morning	164	23.13%
Sunday afternoon	223	31.45%
Sunday evening	181	25.53%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>2217</b>	

**Q7 Is there anything that stops you from using the City of Mississauga Recreation programs & facilities?**

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
Nothing stops me from participating	327	40.72%
Too expensive	126	15.69%
Don't know what's available	194	24.16%
Work or school	254	31.63%
Time is not convenient	162	20.17%
Can't get there/too far	81	10.09%
Not interested	81	10.09%
Uncomfortable vibe	67	8.34%
Language/cultural barriers	10	1.25%
Accessibility issues for persons with disabilities	10	1.25%
Other (please describe)	17	2.12%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>1329</b>	

**Q8 What is the best way to tell you about programs and services available at the City of Mississauga?**

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
City of Mississauga Website	349	43.73%
Email	314	39.35%
Text	172	21.55%
Facebook	65	8.15%
Twitter	109	13.66%
Instagram	435	54.51%
Snapchat	221	27.69%
Poster or messages at my school	226	28.32%
From my teachers	161	20.18%
From my parents	115	14.41%
From my settlement worker	15	1.88%
Paper flyer	147	18.42%
Other (please describe)	7	0.88%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>2336</b>	

**Q9 What types of volunteer and/or leadership opportunities at the City of Mississauga Recreation Division would you be interested in?**

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
Volunteer with pool programs	212	26.73%
Volunteer with fitness programs	169	21.31%
Volunteer with sports programs	332	41.87%
Volunteer with administration/office area	186	23.46%
Volunteer with maintenance/cleaning	84	10.59%
Volunteer with children's programs	300	37.83%
Volunteer with adult programs	94	11.85%
Volunteer with persons who have a disability	96	12.11%
40 hrs of volunteer community service required for school	304	38.34%
Volunteer for career development	164	20.68%
High school co-op placement	152	19.17%
Apprenticeship	86	10.85%
Post-secondary internship or co-op placement	106	13.37%
Training courses (such as First Aid, High Five, etc.)	189	23.83%
I am not interested in volunteer and/or leadership opportunities	69	8.70%
Other (please describe)	8	1.01%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>2551</b>	

**Q10 What types of employment opportunities at the City of Mississauga Recreation Division would you be interested in?**

Answer Choices	Number	Percent
Work in pool programs	221	28.48%
Work in fitness programs	192	24.74%
Work in sports programs	350	45.10%
Work in administration/office area	222	28.61%
Work in maintenance/cleaning	85	10.95%
Work in children's programs	314	40.46%
Work in adult programs	102	13.14%
Work with persons who have a disability	92	11.86%
I am not interested in employment opportunities	113	14.56%
Other (please describe)	22	2.84%
<b>Answered</b>	<b>1713</b>	



# Appendix C

## Youth Focus Group Summaries

Session	Date	Number
<b>Focus Group #2:</b> Youth Representatives	June 5, 2018	20
<b>Focus Group #4:</b> Malton Youth Representatives	June 6, 2018	38

### MYAC & Youth Advisory Committees Workshop

<b>Date:</b>	June 5, 2018, 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM
<b>Location:</b>	Mississauga Civic Centre (300 City Centre Drive)
<b>Attendees:</b>	20 Mississauga Youth including Mississauga Youth Action Committee (MYAC) as well as representatives from the Community Centre Youth Advisory Committees

The discussion with MYAC and advisory committee representatives began with a conversation as how to define Mississauga's youth. Workshop participants focused their definitions largely around age (generally between 14 and 24) but also based on whether an individual is a student, whether at the secondary or post-secondary level. The conversation proceeded the following topic areas:

- Issues facing Mississauga youth
- Initiatives and services that youth are seeking
- A need to publicize and promote services and events to increase awareness
- Inclusion of youth from diverse backgrounds
- Continued youth engagement and involvement in municipal planning and decision-making

## Issues Facing Mississauga Youth

Most of the discussion about issues facing Mississauga youth centred on the lack of meaningful youth employment and volunteer opportunities, difficulty travelling around the City, and the need for more resources and help with school-and life-related issues (including mental health and bullying). Other issues included: peer pressure, financial literacy, drugs in schools, low levels of physical activity, and a disconnect between motivated and underserved youth.

The youth representatives spent a considerable amount of time explaining how such barriers affect them and others that they know. The youth participants recognized the positive outcomes that can be achieved when youth are engaged in positive and meaningful activities, whether related to sports, arts and culture, or simply socializing with each other in a positive way. They noted that income is a barrier to many youth and results in them either not being able to afford to participate in positive activities or not having the time to pursue them because their time is spent looking for employment (higher priority than doing “fun” things) or working at their jobs. Simply put, youth mentioned that barriers, whether physical or societal, make it a challenge to participate in recreation activities.

## New Youth-Related Initiatives

Building upon the discussion that employment was a high priority for many youth, either for career development/experience potential or for reasons of affordability, youth representatives identified a number of services they would like to start building their resume. Ideas included having the City provide mentorship and volunteer career education opportunities to students through ways such as formal youth job boards, job shadowing opportunities during school breaks, career pathway speakers, networking events, and mentor/resource support for youth to host their own events. There was some interest in creating Innovation Hubs in Mississauga libraries (similar to Toronto and Brampton).

Youth suggested Teen Nights, low-cost competitive and recreational sports leagues and charity runs be held. Basketball, football, dodgeball, and soccer were popular while attendees suggested that the City should host different types of events to appeal to a variety of youth interests.

## Promoting Services and Events

MYAC and the community centre advisory representatives stated that a lack of awareness was a major reason why many youth do not participate in programs and services. They indicated that there are many service providers offering countless programs yet either service providers do not communicate using the same tools as youth or it is confusing to navigate through all that is available in terms of what a program or service entails, who provides the service and who is eligible to participate, when it is offered, etc. especially when trying to navigate between multiple providers.

To encourage greater participation among youth, a centralized source for information was desired which could be advertised to increase awareness. Attendees said that word-of-mouth is the most effective way to promote events, but the City should also publicize events online and through partnerships with student organizations and schools. Snapchat and Instagram are the best platforms for the City to advertise recreation and youth events. They suggested that every community centre should have a separate social media account, with a centralized website for all event postings. A few attendees suggested that the City should also offer an e-newsletter for youth and parents. Other advertising venues include religious institutions, schools, and the MYAC volunteer fair.

### Including Diverse Populations

Low-income or newcomer youth may not trust (or are scared of) government representatives, and such individuals may be reluctant to attend City recreation programs as a result. In these cases, connections between trusted community leaders and community centres may help bridge that gap. Attendees also suggested creating advertisements in different languages (especially Urdu and Punjabi) and reaching out the Muslim Student Association to attract youth from different cultures or communities.

### Involving Youth in Planning & Decision-Making

The attendees expressed interest in having more meetings like this one, so youth can speak to problems in their communities. They also suggested that youth should be involved in all aspects of the planning process for the Youth Plan.

## Malton Youth Workshop

<b>Date:</b>	June 6, 2018, 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM
<b>Location:</b>	Malton Community Centre (3540 Morning Star Drive)
<b>Attendees:</b>	38 Mississauga Youth including the Malton Youth Advisory Committee and frequent users of the Malton Community Centre/Paul Coffey Park

As with the discussion with MYAC and advisory committee representatives, the youth workshop in Malton began with a conversation as how to define Mississauga's youth. Workshop participants again focused their definitions largely around age, again highlighting that youth extends beyond the teenage years. The conversation proceeded to focus upon a number of topic areas as follows:

- A desire for more drop-in and youth-focused programming

- Seeking out intergenerational opportunities and relationships
- Supports for newcomers
- Wanting to feel safe and welcome in City parks and facilities

### **Drop-in and Youth-focused Programming**

Malton's youth indicated high demand for additional gym time for drop-in sports such as basketball and soccer. They suggested that the City look at balancing opportunities for both males and females, as some females mentioned they are less likely to play during times/activities dominated by male participants. Youth also suggested that the City could work to include more youth-specific general interest and lifestyle programs such as photography, cooking, and media arts.

Malton is an isolated area of Mississauga that creates challenges for youth living there to travel to other areas of the City and the rest of the GTA (particularly those living in households without regular access to a vehicle). Focus group participants suggested that they would be interested in getting out of their community to experience other events and learn new skills in other communities. While this had happened on a couple occasions, they would like to increase the number and type of opportunities.

Building on the theme of seeing other parts of the City, Malton youth were also interested in friendly competitions, whether through intercity leagues or occasional events. For example, competitions for sport, dance, and STEM topics were all cited and youth suggested competitions could be organized within and between community centres. They saw this as a way to encourage youth to participate in activities, hone their skills, and establish positive relationships with other youth across Mississauga.

### **Intergenerational Opportunities**

Malton's youth made it clear that they are looking for role models, and to ultimately mentor others as they grow. Whether by seeing others in the community that have made positive and successful life choices or from others in Mississauga that have knowledge and experiences to share, Malton's youth emphasized the importance of developing intergenerational relationships.

Youth are looking for opportunities to collaborate with one another and learn from their elders. Many participants indicated an interest in attending workshops to learn skills to assist them with education, use of tools, carpentry, cooking and employment. They identified additional interest in a mentorship program with older adults in the City whereby youth can share technology skills and in return older adults can share their culture and skills.

## **Support for Newcomers**

A need was identified for more support for Newcomer Youth in recreation programs, facilities, and services. Youth believe that newcomer students are interested in learning traditional “Canadian” skills and habits but are overwhelmed with choice and require additional support as they acclimate.

## **Feeling Safe and Welcome**

It was apparent that the Malton youth workshop drew participants from households with different social, economic and cultural backgrounds. A topic of discussion centred on whether youth feel comfortable coming into the City’s community centres and parks, and participating in programs. Youth felt that daytime use of these spaces was generally safe though some felt that there are some staff (such as security guards) that are not what they would consider to be friendly to youth. Youth felt most comfortable with staff that they saw as “champions” or those who understand and can empathize with youth such as the City’s Youth Engagement Staff. There were also some conversations about how parks and the facilities within them could be designed to minimize vandalism and destruction of property that would then go unfixed for a long period of time (such as basketball hoops), and providing lighting for facilities in the park beyond just the sports fields (e.g. for sport courts and skateboard areas).

# Appendix D

## Agency & Partner Focus Groups

Session	Date	Number	Agencies
<b>Focus Group #1:</b> Youth Serving Agencies	June 5, 2018	6	Erin Mills Youth Centre YMCA Greater Toronto University of Mississauga Toronto Region of Peel Transitional Shelter Region of Peel Housing and Homelessness Strategy Peel Youth Village
<b>Focus Group #3:</b> Newcomer Agencies	June 6, 2018	4	Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre Indus Community Services Newcomer Centre of Peel Peel Newcomer Strategy

## Agency & Partner Focus Groups

### Youth Serving Agencies & Institutions

<b>Date:</b>	June 5, 2018, 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM
<b>Location:</b>	Mississauga Valley Community Centre (1275 Mississauga Valley Boulevard)
<b>Attendees:</b>	Representatives from Erin Mills Youth Centre, YMCA Greater Toronto, University of Toronto Mississauga, Region of Peel Transitional Shelter, Region of Peel Housing & Homelessness Strategy, and Peel Youth Village

Each participant described how their respective organization defines a “child”, “youth”, and “young adult” to open the discussion. Some organizations must align with legislation or governing standards such as in the case of child care providers while others had multiple definitions depending upon the program or service that was being offered (e.g. a definition for recreation service would be different than for an employment service or a social service). A couple of providers also talked about delivering their programs and services based upon the grade level of a youth either as a

specific grade or more broadly categorized based on being in middle school, high school or a post-secondary institution.

The agencies recognize that in an ideal situation, they would be well-connected with other youth-serving service providers and aware of what each other are doing. Clearly, this is difficult due to the complexities of issues and services specific to youth though there was agreement that having at least one institutional or agency (whether governmental, an educational institution, or a major non-profit) lead to coordinate others could further mutual understandings between agencies. In such an instance, the coordinating agency or agencies must have sufficient resources to lead the undertaking.

The ability of youth-serving agencies and institutions to serve their clientele is largely predicated on grant funding received through government or other agencies. The amount of funding that they have dictates the range of programs and services that they can deliver in any given year, and often funding can be variable or uncertain each year which can create challenges in terms of service continuity.

The workshop attendees also identified a number of other barriers that some of their clientele experience when trying to access recreation and social activities in Mississauga. Examples of barriers included program cost, ability to travel to the programs, lack of awareness of what is available, attitudes of staff that deliver services (prejudice and bias), and stigma against LGBTQ+ communities from certain cultural communities. The attendees identified actions that the City could take to improve recreation and social activities for at-risk youth in Mississauga, including:

- partnering with universities to do research on youth and community centres
- partnering with the Region to find spaces/locations for services
- creating all-in-one facilities for youth and teens to access services (similar to Early ON Centres)
- training and offering recreation job opportunities to marginalized youth

Attendees noted that services that are not specifically for at-risk youth should still have facilitators trained to recognize challenges of at-risk youth (e.g. homelessness services in libraries). They underscored the need to talk to at-risk youth, not just facilitators or other professionals. They discussed a need for “made-in Mississauga” solutions, instead of trying to take solutions from other jurisdictions and apply them without considering the local context.



# Newcomer Agencies Workshop

<b>Date:</b>	June 6, 2018, 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM
<b>Location:</b>	Mississauga Valley Community Centre (1275 Mississauga Valley Boulevard)
<b>Attendees:</b>	5 Representatives from the Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre, Indus Community Services, Newcomer Centre of Peel, and Region of Peel Newcomer Strategy

Agencies attending the workshops represented diverse cultural groups, each stating that their members form strong “familial” bonds based upon culture and shared interest. In many cultural groups, newcomers find solace and a feeling of belonging through their interaction with people with similar backgrounds. While not necessarily providing physical activity as a source of recreation, the newcomer services and agencies identified the value of social activity. All participants stated their members feel at home when in their programs and find the health benefits and social encouragement allows them to thrive. They believe that having newcomers to Canada participate in their respective programs reduces the chances of people feeling socially isolated, including newcomer youth. Many newcomer service agencies identified that their customers are highly interested in recreation and the benefits it provides but find it difficult to attain because of cost. Attendees suggested that perhaps the City could offer workshops or targeted programs at little-to-no cost to help alleviate the financial barrier associated with participation.

Representatives from newcomer agencies in Mississauga identified a lack of space or program capacity as a dominant issue in their organizations. Many of their programs and services are limited by their ability to find adequate space in which to operate, partially because of the types and locations of spaces that they need. For example, agencies are ideally looking for facilities that are accessible for persons with disabilities as well as located along major transit routes and ideally within neighbourhoods as newcomers may not have their own vehicle or are still learning to navigate the City. Some were of the opinion that Mississauga community centres are optimal locations for their services but it can be difficult to gain access to multi-purpose rooms due to allocation policies regarding rental and booking (regarding the number of people that are using the room and historic allocations, as cited examples).

It is noted that this workshop explored topics related to both the Youth Plan for Recreation and the concurrent Older Adult Plan for Recreation.

# Appendix E

## Staff Workshop Summaries

Session	Date	Number	Agencies
<b>Workshop #1:</b> Youth Engagement Coordinators	June 5, 2018	8	YES Staff from various City of Mississauga Community Centres
<b>Workshop #2:</b> Non-Recreation Staff I	June 5, 2018	7	Environmental Outreach, Transportation, Planning, Culture, Human Resources, Security
<b>Workshop #3:</b> Managers	June 6, 2018	9	City of Mississauga Line of Business Managers, Community Development Coordinators, and FMT Representatives, representing: fitness, aquatics, older adults, youth, facilities, volunteers, sport development, and community programs
<b>Workshop #4:</b> Program Staff	June 6, 2018	10	City of Mississauga Fitness, Inclusion, Aquatics, Community Development, Customer Service, and Community Programs
<b>Workshop #5:</b> Non-Recreation Staff II	June 12, 2018	9	Active Transportation, Libraries, Transportation (MiWay), Parks Operation, Park Development, Sport Development, Special Projects (Culture)

# Youth Engagement Coordinators

<b>Date:</b>	June 5, 2018, 12:30 PM – 2 PM
<b>Location:</b>	Mississauga Valley Community Centre (1275 Mississauga Valley Boulevard)
<b>Attendees:</b>	8 Youth Engagement Staff (YES) Coordinators

A workshop with the City’s Youth Engagement Coordinator Staff (YES staff) provided valuable insights from people working on the front-lines with Mississauga youth. It became apparent that YES staff are not simply facilitators of recreation because youth are facing many critical challenges including unemployment, peer pressure, isolation, finances and socio-economic status, cyberbullying, social media pressures, dependence on cell phones (and difficulties interacting in in-person groups), sex trading, family structure and single-parent homes, cultural and language challenges (including for newcomer parents), and transportation difficulties.

The discussion centred upon the following themes:

- Role clarity and support for YES Staff
- Youth advancement opportunities
- Space and service delivery opportunities

## Role Clarity and Support for YES Staff

The workshop began with a conversation on how the 2009 Mississauga Youth Plan has assisted them in their work and what the Review can do to further it. YES Coordinators hope that the Review will provide greater clarity for their role and articulate the City’s expectations for the responsibilities of YES staff. Staff roles have grown beyond the recreational scope of the YES position given that youth have many needs that extend beyond physical activity and leisure pursuits. To address day-to-day situations relating to mental health and social issues, staff believe additional training (e.g. conflict resolution, crisis management, de-escalation, etc.) would be highly beneficial as would greater support from other City staff working in operations, customer service, etc.

YES Coordinators recommended that job manuals be created to clearly articulate overarching goals, objectives and responsibilities of YES Coordinators, and would allow more consistency in how the City serves youth that are using community centres. It was noted that different approaches were employed by YES staff depending upon the community centre in which they work, and although sometimes this differentiation is necessary given the facilities serve youth with different social or

economic circumstances, there should be a baseline set of responsibilities and a defined common role.

Furthermore, there is substantial turnover among YES Coordinators (due to their age or stage of their career, the part-time nature of the job, etc.) which can result in inconsistent approaches being applied when serving youth. More importantly, the staff turnover often results in relationships that have been previously built with youth ceasing to exist if staff that youth trust no longer work in the community centre. To address the latter, workshop participants suggested that the City would benefit from having full-time YES positions to encourage staff to remain in those positions and add the continuity and trust that many youth seek. YES Coordinators also believe that other community centre and City staff workers would benefit from greater training so that they are youth-friendly (or at the very least can better empathize with youth).

Participants suggested that the current policy that exclusively places YES staff at community centres needs to be revisited. Many successful municipalities have youth workers that are based where youth hang out (malls, parks etc.) and draw them into the centres through continued interaction and the building of trust. It is felt that the number of engaged youth would increase using this expanded approach.

#### Youth Advancement Opportunities

The YES Coordinators noted that barriers to employment are constraining many youth that are actively looking for career development and advancement opportunities. They suggested that the City expand leadership, volunteering, and job opportunities at community centres to be more accessible and accommodating, particularly for at-risk or marginalized youth. For example, many youth cannot afford the cost of training courses for required certifications (e.g. HighFIVE, aquatics) while others may not qualify for volunteer or employment if they have a past criminal record.

Building on that idea, YES staff suggested that the City could consider how other services could be delivered alongside recreation services (e.g. homelessness prevention). Attendees also recommended that the Youth Plan include a monitoring and evaluation component, similar to the YouthREX model.

#### Space and Service Delivery Opportunities

Youth need spaces to hang out, but there was a consensus that the “Chill Zones” are not effective in their current form. The spaces need to be more welcoming and youth need to have things to do (e.g. vocational activities, karaoke machines, arcade rooms). Attendees strongly recommended that Community Centres should be promoted through Snapchat and Instagram in order to reach youth.

In regard to programming and policies, YES Coordinators suggested: creating more non-competitive or therapeutic programs; partnering with existing community agencies to avoid program duplication; celebrating cultural events throughout the year; improving LGBTQ+ inclusion;

and adjusting rules and regulations to make it easier to work with marginalized youth (e.g., “zero-tolerance” policies). Staff should continue to engage and respond to youth feedback and incorporate it into programming.

## Non-Recreation Staff Sessions (2)

<b>Date:</b>	June 5, 2018, 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM and June 12, 2018, 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM
<b>Location:</b>	Mississauga Valley Community Centre (1275 Mississauga Valley Boulevard)
<b>Attendees:</b>	16 representatives from various City of Mississauga departments including Sport Development, Park Development, Parks Operations, Environmental Outreach, Transportation Planning, MiwWay, Culture, Human Resources, Security, and Special Projects (Culture)

Recognizing that there are City Departments and Divisions beyond Recreation whose services affect youth, two workshops were held with non-Recreation staff. Given the wide range of responsibilities and services provided through these departments and divisions, discussion topics were diverse. It is noted that these workshops also explored topics related to the concurrent Older Adult Plan Review, however, only youth-specific themes are presented as follows.

Each Department views youth differently and do not necessarily have a formal definition for the age group. Some indicated that their informal definitions align with a 16 to 30 years age range used when they submit grant applications for external funding. The Culture and Transportation staff mentioned that their respective Divisions have considered the previous Youth Plan to inform certain works undertaken, noting that the greatest ability for them to implement recommendations is when they are clearly identified for a specific Departmental Division or Unit. Otherwise there can be confusion or ambiguity in terms of who will lead an action and support it using within their respective budget or funding sources. Other Departments do not actively refer to the document but were generally aware of the Youth Plan’s overarching principles and intent.

Staff suggested assigning a designated departmental contact for the Youth Plan so everyone knows who is responsible for implementation (perhaps suggesting they are unaware of the current Youth Coordinator’s role in this regard). To strengthen the coordinated approach and avoid duplicating efforts between multiple Lines of Business, managers should explore initiatives surrounding community outreach, coordinated program schedules, and joint promotion of activities and events. Various departments should also support intergenerational opportunities where youth and older adults work together even when responsibilities span more than one Department or Division. One cited example was to view parks as an extension of libraries (meet at the library and then walk to a park) or trip planning for MiWay on library computers with youth volunteers. Another successful program that could be built off of is one that presently exists between the Parks & Forestry Division

and local high schools whereby parks staff provide the school with wood while the shop classes construct rink boards and art classes paint murals on the boards. At the end, parks staff pick up and install the finished project resulting in an excellent partnership where all parties benefit from experience and cost savings.

Staff continued on the topic of an intergenerational approach to programming. This would involve offering opportunities to interact with others as frequently and seamlessly as possible. In doing so, older adult participants could avoid social isolation and allow youth to learn from their peers and elders. An example that is in place in Mississauga is through the Library system where residents of any age can sign up for computer assistance and youth provide tutorials to gain their mandatory volunteer hours.

City staff identified the lack of affordable housing as a challenge facing youth in Mississauga, largely in the context that youth may have to live at home for longer periods of time or young adults may not be able to live in Mississauga if their jobs do not provide sufficient means. Transportation choices are also limited for this age group due to affordability and the time it would take to travel across the city using transit or active transportation, and most areas of the city are not designed to be walkable. Therefore, accessing recreation services or events can be a challenge for youth without a vehicle. The upcoming Transportation Master Plan will focus on providing transportation options (cycling, walking, and transit) for people aged eight to 80+, rather than focusing specifically on “youth” transportation needs. MiWay offers a targeted program for youth by way of free summer transit passes for students. The Transportation Department is working with the planning department to support walkable neighbourhoods and suggested encouraging participation/ minimizing barriers through promotion of cycling routes, Active and Safe Routes to School, and bicycle safety blitzes.

Attendees discussed a general tendency to be reactive, rather than proactive, in addressing youth issues. An example cited included the fact that the City is challenged to fill certain positions and job recruitment efforts are not resolving the issue. If barriers to employment could be reduced for youth (e.g. professional fees, certification costs, etc.), perhaps more job vacancies – emergency services and lifeguarding were mentioned in particular – could be filled across the Corporation. They spoke about the need to empower people to contribute to the community in positive ways (e.g. improving parks, painting murals, cultural inclusion) and highlighted the need for youth engagement during most planning processes.

Security staff mentioned that they often receive calls regarding youth in parks and community centres that are not always representative of true security threats. Security is working with City staff to reduce the number of security calls made in regard to youth in public spaces by educating staff what constitutes a threat or potential ways that disruptions (such as loud noise) may be resolved without Security’s interference. Security staff are also in the process of revising their own policies and tools to see if they can solve teen-related security issues in more creative ways, instead of banning youth from City facilities.

# Managers Workshop

**Date:** June 6, 2018, 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

**Location:** Mississauga Valley Community Centre (1275 Mississauga Valley Boulevard)

**Attendees:** 9 City of Mississauga Line of Business Managers, Community Development Coordinators and FMT Representatives (represented: fitness, aquatics, older adults, youth, facilities, volunteers, sport development, and community programs)

A workshop was held with Recreation Division Managers of the various line of business. Given the range of responsibilities and services provided through these units, discussions topics were diverse. It is noted that this workshop also explored topics related to the concurrent Older Adult Plan Review, however, only youth-specific themes are presented as follows.

Line of Business Managers discussed how the Youth Coordinator position seems to be a corporate level position since being Youth Friendly extends beyond the Recreation Division, but there is little authority for that staff person to influence holistic decision-making that is needed to guide the City's overarching youth objectives. Managers commonly identified a lack of role clarity as their positions and departments respond to the evolution of "recreation" and the youth market, including a "grey area" where recreation services seem to be blending with social services. Attendees reflected that social services such as emergency relief and support programs are becoming commonplace in their facilities and wondered if there might be opportunities to partner with other organizations and agencies to supplement those services. In this way, the City should determine what the appropriate "pathway" is to providing such services to youth. Recreation Staff through its YES workers should be able to find the balance between what they can provide recreationally versus referral services for social needs whereby they can direct youth to the appropriate agency. This would take the pressure off the City for social service requests and establish paths for youth and the City's agency partners.

Workshop attendees also discussed the value of information and resource sharing in their Line of Business roles. The City offers a vast amount of programming and services as do many other private and not-for-profit organizations in Mississauga. It was stated that managers would feel better equipped to support their customers if they had more information on other programs, resources, services and facilities available throughout the City. With such information in hand, they could be a resource for youth and disseminate information beyond recreation which would be beneficial since youth are often the link between agencies and their parents.

The Managers discussed the fact that many youth are in recreation programs, not because of interest but rather out of necessity because they have nowhere else to go. This exacerbates gaps in programming, particularly for youth over 12 years of age when they are no longer eligible for camps



and thus “aged out of programs.” They discussed that perhaps this is where recreation needs to look at how to address these gaps or if recreation still has a place for older youth who may be looking at different service needs (e.g. employment, volunteering, arts and culture, etc.).

Managers also identified a need for more streamlining through process, policies, and information. For example, many customers find it difficult to distinguish the City’s ability to provide entry-level “learn-to” programming versus elite training facilities. Discussion focused on the need to improve communication and information sharing to streamline business services. If both staff and customers have a greater understanding of what is available and how it functions, they will be better able to provide for one another.

## Program Staff Workshop

**Date:** June 6, 2018, 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM

**Location:** Mississauga Valley Community Centre (1275 Mississauga Valley Boulevard)

**Attendees:** 10 City of Mississauga Program Staff (representing fitness, inclusion, aquatics, community development, customer service, and community programs)

A workshop was held with Recreation Division staff from various lines of business and program/service units. Given the range of responsibilities and services provided through these units, discussions topics were diverse. It is noted that this workshop also explored topics related to the concurrent Older Adult Plan Review, however, only youth-specific themes are presented as follows.

Workshop attendees were hopeful that the Review could help Lines of Business establish timelines, priorities and determine appropriate allocation of resources. Additionally, the Youth Plan for Recreation should be aligned with the Older Adult Plan Review as well as Future Directions as a whole, but they should be structured such that the City of Mississauga’s overarching goals may be achieved. Additionally, program staff would like for the Review to help identify the role of Recreation in service provision. Echoing a common theme from other workshops, program staff questioned where the true responsibility of City of Mississauga Recreation Division lies (as it relates to the balance between recreation and social services).

Program staff noted some strategic planning opportunities that focus on maximizing access to, and participation in City of Mississauga Recreation programs and services. Ideas included coordinating schedules so that youth are not competing for space within community centres, aligning program start and end times with public transportation schedules, and offering a wide variety of program options to target a wide range of interests and abilities.

Strategies oriented to staff training, transition, and retention were identified as opportunities to improve programs though it was acknowledged that this may be difficult to implement given the part-time or seasonal nature of many recreation employees. For example, youth participants often develop a level of trust and comfort with certain staff (who become their “champions”) and often lose that comfort when that person leaves. Where possible, the City should consider succession planning and help support staff as they transition to various roles and programs.

One of the commonly discussed opportunities to employ a more holistic approach is to review the membership passes offered by the City of Mississauga. Program staff indicated that residents frequently ask why the passes are not able to be used City-wide and have difficulty understanding the various membership types. In order to better serve the residents of Mississauga, program staff suggested that youth memberships should be applicable across the City, and that programs and services should be distributed to reflect the needs of the various demographic groups within Mississauga.

To offer a holistic approach to programs and services, all involved Lines of Business should coordinate offerings and encourage participation by all residents. Some of the methods suggested to help encourage participation include reaching out to faith-based organizations where residents gather; offering culturally-diverse programming; and providing information in a variety of formats and languages.

# Appendix F

## Youth Stakeholder Engagement Session Summary

The purpose of the session was to gather input from external stakeholders relating specifically to recreation programs and services. The intent was to gather information to identify gaps and opportunities to formulate direction for the next 5 to 20 years under the Recreation Division's Youth Plan.

The key issues as identified in the Engagement Plan were:

- Role Clarity Between the City and its Partners in Delivering Programs and Services to Youth
- Use of Space/Dedicated Space
- Inclusion and Access/Affordability/Safe and Supportive Physical and Social Environments
- Youth Leadership and Employment Opportunities in Recreation
- Communication to Youth/Awareness of Programs Services and Opportunities

### Process:

Table recorders were assigned a set of questions that related to one of the key issues and spent 15 minutes at each table talking to the representatives from the agencies and organizations in attendance. All notes were taken and summarized in their entirety and are included here as Appendix A for reference and record.

### Follow - up:

Review of the notes taken was completed with a summary under each key issue. This summary includes 4 main areas:

**Key messages** are a summary of important repeat messages from the table notes. These messages could have appeared in notes for other tables as none of the issue areas stand alone.

**Quick wins** are things that the City could consider that would require minimal resources and have immediate impacts on service delivery for youth

**Policy considerations** are those things that should be considered from a program service management perspective and is more about how the City provides their services or creates their own barriers with policies.

**Youth Friendly Community Criteria** connections have been identified as it is important for the City to continue to be recognized as a Youth Friendly Community. The 2018 Criteria are attached as Appendix B.

### **Next Step Recommendation:**

The number one recommendation is to continue to meet with Stakeholders to discuss Youth programs and services provided by the City so that they are aware of services and the City avoids duplicating. The feedback was that the meeting was valued and they want to see the results of their input built into the Youth Plan. Working with others is a key requirement of Youth Friendly Communities.

## **Role Clarity Between the City and its Partners in Delivering Programs and Services to Youth**

There was a lot of information given related to who is best suited to deliver which services, challenges faced and duplications, gaps in services and recommendations for working together. As a Key Issue area this is one that regular conversations with organizations can create a more fluid look at what is going on in the City. This was touched on in all table discussions as it is a huge focus area.

**Key messages** from all question areas related to role clarity:

The lack of media sources in Mississauga causes confusion in itself for who does what. The City could play a role in being a reliable source within youth “channels” and networks.

The want and desire to co-facilitate and work together to combine resources is evident throughout many of the table discussions. The City needs to look at more partnerships, sharing resources and keeping lines of communication open with youth service providers.

There is a lack across the board of “youth-led” programs and services. The City and the other stakeholders need to consider not offering what they think is needed and start letting youth be truly engaged in program development from concept to implementation.

Recreation is often considered physical activity and sport. The City needs to think about connecting with and expanding opportunities in the artistic community to engage those youth who have that as an interest or skill set.

There is constant conversation about new comers, LGBTQ+2, culturally different, social economic and non-engaged youth and outreach/services to and for them. Conversations around providing programs where they are, considering their varying barriers and working with their agency providers is a key direction for the City to consider.

**Quick wins** that the City could consider for instant impact:

Consider things that can be done to get the word out there about youth services provided by the City and by the other stakeholders. A couple of suggestions include:

Create a city directory of youth services available – could be a page on a website created by youth as part of their 40 hours community service

Connect with Joe G who attended the meeting and is the instructional Leader at the Peel District School Board. He can work with the City to get access to staff meetings and share available services and links to teachers for them to share with the youth

Reach out to Volunteer Peel and Volunteer MBC to promote Leadership/Volunteer opportunities throughout more of the community.

**Policy considerations** that are impacting this key issue area:

Branding of services available. Recreation is not just physical activity sport and exercise. Is there messaging that can be created to promote other opportunities available.

Costs/Accessibility – Costs are a barrier for service .

- Can consideration be given to share spaces/services or offer a discount for services that compliment City run services.
- Can the City consider in kind support for use of space as part of community grants?
- Can the city consider family discounts for multiple children - cost is not just about low income as per LICO

School Board relationship for use of space. Is there a way to “stream-line” relationship so planning for use of space can be done together and avoid the “queue”, while opening direct connections with access to schools/students for the City?

**Youth Friendly Community Criteria** that are directly impacted by this key issue area include:

Criteria #1 – Youth have options for Play

Criteria #2 – Youth are formally connected community -wide.

Criteria #3 – It is easy for youth to find information about play activities in their community

Criteria #5 – The community formally commits funding for youth play

Criteria #7 – Youth feel valued by their community

Criteria #8 – Schools and School Boards support the Youth Friendly Approach

Criteria #9 – Play is accessible to youth

Criteria #10 – Play is socially inclusive

## Use of Space/Dedicated Space

**Key messages** from all question areas related to space:

There was much discussion about multi-purpose vs dedicated space and the concept of what makes space youth friendly. If a space can be dedicated it is way easier to make youth friendly.

There was also discussion about timing of programs for youth and although 3-6 pm is a key time for after school opportunities many older youth in the City commute to school, depend on transit systems, have responsibilities, jobs and school activities so are looking for safe places later in the evening activities, especially on weekends and during school breaks.

Barrier of cost for community agencies using spaces was a consistent message.

Attention needs to be drawn to ensuring that space/equipment is appropriate for the age grouping that is utilizing. Full size outdoor court are needed, as is space for traditional games like fooseball and board games.

Ensuring that spaces are welcoming with art work, lots of colour and appropriate signage is a key factor for youth. Wifi and access to food is a requirement.

There are not enough outdoor washrooms and/or gender neutral identified ones.

**Quick wins** that the City could consider for instant impact:

Offer more outside activities. Youth like the idea of being outside after being IN school all day.

Build relationships with the agencies that also have space – churches, DAM, DBN etc.

Let the youth help “decorate” a space with an art competition or juried art show with the winner being hung in a space.

**Policy considerations** that are impacting this key issue area:

Gender Neutral washrooms are a must for all youth to feel welcome and safe.

Costs/Accessibility – Costs are a barrier for service.

Can consideration be given to share spaces/services or offer a discount for services that compliment City run services.

Can the City consider in kind support for use of space as part of community grants?

**Youth Friendly Community Criteria** that are directly impacted by this key issue area include:

Criteria #1 – Youth have options for Play

Criteria #5 – The community formally commits funding for youth play

Criteria #7 – Youth feel valued by the community

Criteria #8 – Schools and School Boards support the Youth Friendly Approach

Criteria #9 – Play is accessible to youth

Criteria #10 – Play is socially inclusive

## Inclusion and Access/Affordability/Safe and Supportive Physical and Social Environments

**Key messages** from all question areas related to access:

Many of the messages have already been reflected in the other table discussions with discussion about dedicated space for youth, cost as a barrier and gender-neutral washrooms.

Discussion about inclusion vs specialized programs and the ideal being a balance of both for parent/youth choice. Specialized for specific cohorts to give an experience is also an ideal – newcomers, females, black males

Staff set the tone – regardless of what the space is the leader is the one who makes it youth friendly.

Youth need a stronger voice in the planning, implementation and delivery of programs and services.

**Quick wins** that the City could consider for instant impact:

Name Tags with more reference and depth ie: My name is Lisa Pronoun They/Them I speak English, Arabic



Alter the Sterile feel of Community Centres by adding art and making brighter more homey.

Share participation numbers if collected with service agencies so they know who are coming and what is available. If not collecting the data find a way to even if just random start to create a basic understanding of who is coming.

**Policy considerations** that are impacting this key issue area:

What is the City definition of Youth Friendly Space and who is the target audience to attract to that space?

Active Assist review to ensure that the working poor can access services without cost barrier.

Partner relationships – what can the City share with others, what determines a real relationship with other service providers

Staff training requirements related to creating safe spaces, leadership skills required by staff to be welcoming and enforcement of keeping spaces safe.

**Youth Friendly Community Criteria** that are directly impacted by this key issue area include:

Criteria #1 – Youth have options for Play

Criteria #3 – It is easy for youth to find information about play activities in their community

Criteria #7 – Youth feel valued by their community

Criteria #9 – Play is accessible to youth

Criteria #10 – Play is socially inclusive

# Youth Leadership and Employment Opportunities in Recreation

**Key messages** from all question areas related to leadership and employment:

It is obvious that there is limited awareness from attendees related to the opportunities available for youth in the recreation division.

There is an impression in the community that the City does not have good hiring practices – on line is too long, its about who ya know, it's tough to get the jobs.... and the jobs are only seasonal anyways.

The cost to complete required training is not reachable by many of the youth (High Five, First Aid etc)

3rd party partnerships may be able to assist with recruiting and provide candidates with readiness training.

Communication channels don't exist and need to be created t have youth serving agencies working together.

**Quick wins** that the City could consider for instant impact:

Host a job fair with a 3rd party partner showing youth what opportunities are available. Create postings that encourage specific skills, locations and details. Avoid being too broad.

Connect with Lori Carrera at YMCA/Next Steps who can help with Job Shadow and Job Prep Programming

**Policy considerations** that are impacting this key issue area:

Consider required training, recommended training and working with partner agencies to consider cost savings and alternative training for transferable skills.

Ensure that notation around equal opportunity employer is clearly communicated.

**Youth Friendly Community Criteria** that are directly impacted by this key issue area include:

Criteria #2 – Youth are formally connected community-wide.

Criteria #7 – Youth feel valued by their community

Criteria #8 – Schools and School Boards support the Youth Friendly Approach

# Communication to Youth/Awareness of Programs Services and Opportunities

**Key messages** from all question areas related to communication:

Social Media is a key factor for communicating with youth. It is important that these channels project youth style messaging and have a tone that hollers youth so they will seek it out and review it. Don't just limit to facebook and twitter – think Instagram too. Website is not easy to use.

Do not eliminate traditional methods of spreading messages – not all household have access to computers and wifi - think about school communications, flyers, transit messages etc. and make them have a brand or certain style so youth know what to look for

Working with settlement or specific population organizations as conduits for sharing of information to youth cohorts will help spread the word.

Create an Advisory Group or Youth Committee that can help with sharing information, act as a catalyst for engagement and ensure that youth are hearing about what is going on.

**Quick wins** that the City could consider for instant impact:

Host an orientation to City services available with a settlement or specific population agency that explains available services, how to register and all things the recreation division offers.

Do a promotion on available wifi spots in Community Centres and other City facilities to attract youth to them and see what is happening there.

Create trendable hashtags and tags that youth will not hesitate to use to increase Search Engine Optimization and trending of posts.

Recruit a “mentor” or spokesperson that could be considered a “celebrity” to youth and have them share messages about the value of recreation and the services available.

**Policy considerations** that are impacting this key issue area:

Social Media Policies – who can post, how often what barriers are within own policies

Partnership agreements – who can you work with , how can you work with them, what info can you share?

**Youth Friendly Community Criteria** that are directly impacted by this key issue area include:

Criteria #1 – Youth have options for Play

Criteria #2 – Youth are formally connected community -wide.

Criteria #3 – It is easy for youth to find information about play activities in their community

Criteria #7 – Youth feel valued by their community

Criteria #8 – Schools and School Boards support the Youth Friendly Approach

## Recreation Programs and Services Additional Issues

These tables were a great chance for allowing participants to voice any other recommendations or issues they felt the City should hear. The list of new program ideas generated is full of depth and should be reviewed by program staff teams for new initiative considerations.

**Key messages** from notes taken at the tables:

There are definitely organizations that want to and need to have a larger presence and consideration. These include and are not limited to LGBTQ+2, new comers, youth with disabilities.

There was a lot of discussion around improving drop in – from facility and programming perspectives – especially for older youth at times that work better for them.

Working with the youth serving agencies was continuously reinforced during these discussions. Everything from helping to recruit participants to delivering more specialized programs can be done if everyone is sharing their resources. Communication and a platform for sharing needs to be considered.

Youth have to have a chance to speak, implement and be actively engaged in the programs for them. From sharing their own ideas to creating roles for youth Ambassadors there are many ways to engage youth in the process and ensure they are participating.

Discussion about actual role of YEC ( Youth Engagement Coordinators) How much outreach can they actually do if not outside of CC – most attending didn't know the role existed.

**Quick wins** that the City could consider for instant impact:

Share these responses directly with programming staff teams and consider adding some new concepts – less “active” like knitting, art, life skills, cooking etc.

Review timing of programs and transit schedule. Is it easy for youth to access programs without cutting it too short or having to leave before it’s over?

Consider the potential partners in attendance and relationships that can be developed to make youth program delivery more diversified.

**Policy considerations** that are impacting this key issue area:

Roles and Responsibilities of YEC position. Could they be doing more to work together with others and reaching out in their communities?

Red Tape barriers including but not limited to: permits and special insurance for potential partners, cost for other agencies to provide cool programs like filming with Art Council and City wanted \$2k per day

**Youth Friendly Community Criteria** that are directly impacted by this key issue area include:

All 10 of the Criteria!

# Appendices

## What are the Youth Friendly Community Criteria?

### Youth Friendly Community Criteria

A community that meets a minimum of 7 of the following 10 criteria will be recognized as Youth Friendly.

A community must meet Criteria 2 to be recognized as a Gold or Platinum Youth Friendly Community.

Each criteria links to at least one of the themes and outcomes of **Stepping Up**, the Ontario governments' strategic framework to help Ontario's youth succeed.

A community meets this criteria through services, programs and support provided by local government (parks and recreation departments), health, police services, education, clubs, youth agencies, non-profit and charitable organizations, service clubs, local businesses, the faith community, and any other groups operating that offer 'play' (as defined in Criteria 1).

### Criteria 1: Youth have options for play

**Play is any activity that has elements of choice, leads to satisfaction and encourages progressive learning.**

A Youth Friendly Community offers a variety of play opportunities for youth ages 13 to 19. Play Works defines 'play' as recreation, sports, arts/culture, drama/dance/music, volunteerism, and leadership development.

### Criteria 2: Youth are formally connected community-wide

**Note: This criteria must be met to achieve Gold or Platinum Youth Friendly Community recognition.**

**Connecting youth to the community creates opportunities for the youth voice to be heard in a continuous, formal and public way.**

The community encourages engagement and activism by youth ages 13 to 19 and supports them in speaking out about their need for play.

Youth are connected to the community through a formal youth advisory committee or action group that is attached to and recognized by local government.

The youth voice is heard through such vehicles as presentations or through officially recorded reports to the local governing body.

There is clear evidence that youth have a way to advocate for play and that changes are made because the youth voice is heard.

Youth also participate on community agency boards/committees and other civic engagement structures, and may host and/or participate in youth forums and summits.

### **Criteria 3: It is easy for youth to find information about play activities in the community**

**Information is publicized through a variety of media and communication outlets, making it easy for youth ages 13 to 19, to find out about play activities.**

A variety of media and communication tools are used to reach youth, including social media portals (Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, text, IM), websites as well as more traditional routes of print sources, radio, TV, posters, brochures and leisure guides.

There is tangible evidence youth are using these outlets to access information (e.g. evidence through web analytics, liking, retweeting, sharing, etc.).

### **Criteria 4: The community recognizes and celebrates youth**

**A Youth Friendly Community recognizes and celebrates youth ages 13 to 19 in a variety of ways.**

Youth are recognized for their accomplishments through vehicles such as: local media coverage (print, radio, television, web-based); dinners and awards ceremonies; agency websites; and scholarship and bursary programs that recognize their contribution to the community.

Organizations and businesses value their youth and are keen on celebrating their successes.

There is evidence youth are aware of these opportunities, are taking advantage of them, and are often involved in various aspects of the events (e.g. planning, delivery, evaluation).

### **Criteria 5: The community formally commits funding for youth play**



**A Youth Friendly Community has a variety of funding sources that support play for youth ages 13-19.**

The local government/governing body has some formal and committed funding line designated for youth play.

Funds may cover costs for program staff, programs and services, facilities, special events and/or youth advisory councils.

Youth play is also funded by community agencies, faith communities, local businesses, other independent service providers, not for profit agencies and service clubs.

Where one-time grant funding supports youth play, plans are in place to sustain needed programs and services.

**Criteria 6: The community supports Positive Youth Development**

**Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a formal process that engages youth along with their families, communities and governments in empowering young people to reach their full potential. PYD approaches build skills, assets and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems.**

Staff and volunteers are trained in PYD approaches, such as the 40 Developmental Assets, 7 Developmental Needs and 6 C's (competence, confidence, character, connection, caring, and contribution), and the use of these approaches are reflected in programs and marketing tools.

Service providers have clearly defined policies, procedures and practices that promote PYD.

**Criteria 7: Youth feel valued by their community**

**A Youth Friendly Community listens to and acts on the needs expressed by youth ages 13 to 19.**

Youth know they are valued by their community.

They provide testimonials confirming there are play opportunities that meet their needs in both formalized ways (registered programs) and informal ones (access to parks, community space, etc.).

Community organizations and businesses have adopted youth friendly approaches in their interactions with young people and, as a result, youth from a variety of walks in the community see it as youth friendly.

Youth confidently affirm they feel respected within the community.

Youth themselves can identify who the adult champions of youth play are in their community.

## **Criteria 8: Schools and school boards support the Youth Friendly approach**

**In a Youth Friendly Community, schools and school boards actively support and promote play for youth ages 13 to 19 outside of regular school hours, both inside and outside of the school facility.**

The Community Use of Schools favours youth groups through dedicated youth programming hours and discounted rates.

School Boards have reciprocal agreements with other service providers to share their physical resources and maximize the use of space during non-school hours.

Schools and their staff support youth by sitting on community committees.

School announcements/bulletins connect are presented in a youth friendly manner.

Flexible bus programs are offered to support before/after school activities.

## **Criteria 9: Play is accessible to youth**

**A Youth Friendly Community supports play that is physically, geographically and financially accessible to youth ages 13 to 19 and works on reducing barriers to participation.**

Facilities used for play are physically accessible for those with physical and/or developmental disabilities.

Facilities are intentionally accessible during the times that youth are able to participate (after school, evenings, weekends).

Play is geographically accessible, available where youth regularly convene or where youth can access public transportation, lighted bike/walking trails, taxis and/or car pools.

Youth play is financially accessible, with programs available free and/or at low cost and/or where community groups fund, offset or provide program subsidies (e.g. Canadian Tire Jump Start).

## **Criteria 10: Play is socially inclusive**

**Play is socially inclusive and considerate of and sensitive to the needs of all youth ages 13 to 19.**

Inclusion has clear and intentional policies, procedures and practices that align with provincial and federal human rights protections.

These protections acknowledge youth intersectionality, prevent discrimination and promote inclusion and engagement of youth who experience: racialization; lower socio-economic status; homophobia, biphobia or transphobia; gender-based discrimination; mental health issues; diverse

physical and developmental needs, and other forms of exclusion or harassment based on their diverse lived experience.

Staff/volunteers are regularly trained in social inclusion approaches.

Staff are aware of agency policies and procedures that promote social inclusion.

Groups reach out to all manner of unengaged youth to create opportunities for inclusion.