

Executive Summary

The Town of Whitby is proud to be a Platinum Level Youth Friendly Community. In order to remain a 'Community of Choice,' a Youth Strategy, guiding the focus of recreation and leisure services for youth ages 12 to 18 from 2013 to 2018 has been developed.

The objectives and strategies outlined below have been developed by Staff, through feedback received from the Youth Friendly application process, extensive community engagement, consultation with the Whitby Youth Council and key community partners.

Six areas of focus have been identified and the recommended objectives and associated strategies are as follows:

1. Communication

1.1 Objective

To effectively communicate with Whitby youth by introducing new methods of communication, including the use of social media.

1.2 Strategies

1.2.1 Introduce new methods of communication to engage youth, including the development of age appropriate technology tools such as web-based newsletters, calendars and surveys and a youth-specific website.

1.2.2 Introduce the use of social media including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

1.2.3 Continue to use traditional forms of communication (newspaper ads, media releases, The Whitby Perspective, Activity Guides, posters) to reach parents, adult champions and youth who are not engaged in technology.



1.2.4 Continue to promote the Platinum Youth Friendly Community recognition throughout the broader community using new and innovative communications methods and mediums.

1.2.5 Reach out and increase awareness of the Whitby Youth Council and Town of Whitby youth programs through enhanced partnerships with the Durham District School Boards.

1.2.6 Utilize the Town's facilities to enhance the awareness of youth programs and the Youth Council, such as through a rink board campaign and other methods.

2. Youth Council Development

2.1 Objective

To ensure that the Whitby Youth Council structure and composition continues to meet the needs of youth in the community.

2.2 Strategies

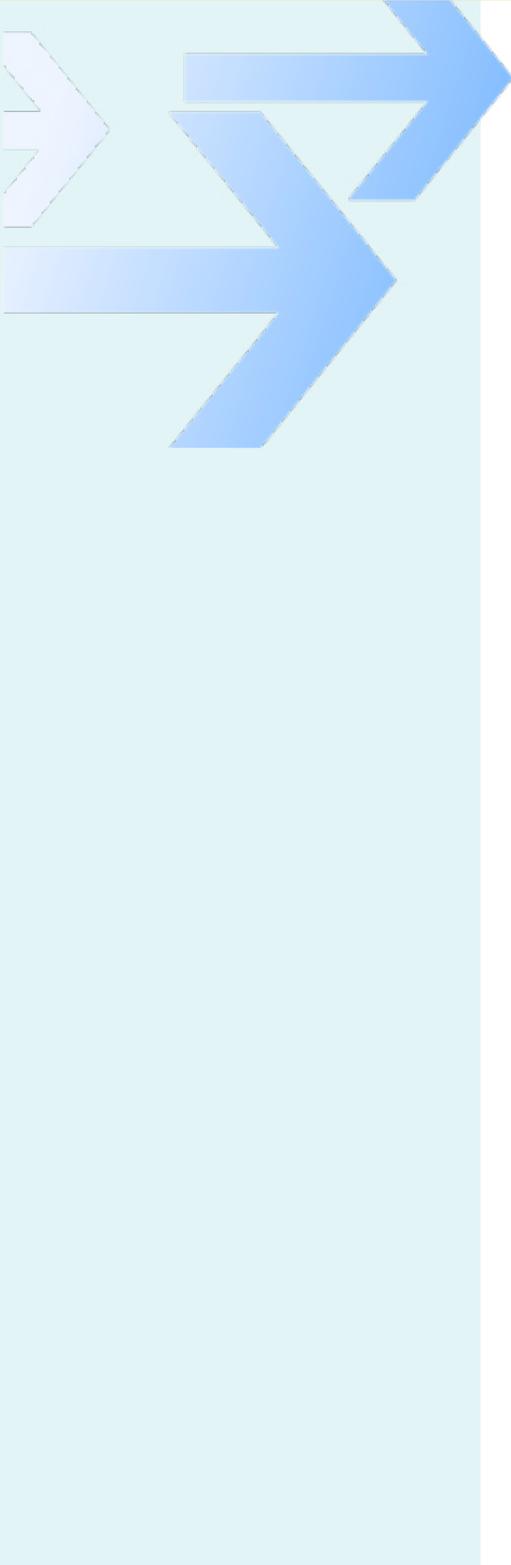
2.2.1 Review the current structure of the Whitby Youth Council, to ensure it meets and reflects the changing demographics of the Town of Whitby.

2.2.2 Introduce a Junior Whitby Youth Council comprised of Grade 7 and 8 youth.

2.2.3 Develop sub-committees within the Youth Council to accomplish specific projects.

2.2.4 Investigate the establishment of specific roles and duties within the Youth Council.





2.2.5 Continue to increase the awareness of the Whitby Youth Council through its presence at Town special events and at annual Council presentations.

3. Youth Programs and Events Enhancements

3.1 Objective

To ensure that youth programs and services offered directly by the Municipality remain accessible and engaging for and reflective of the youth of the community while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

3.2 Strategies

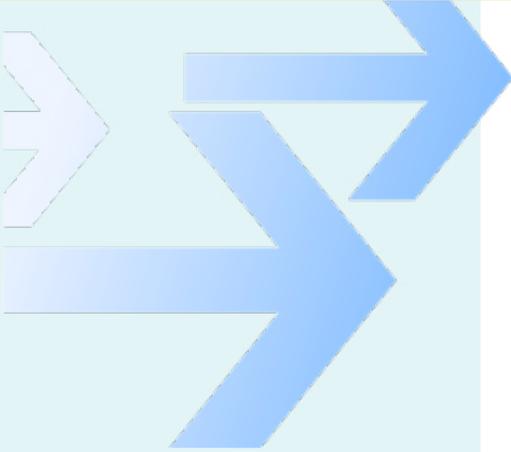
3.2.1 Create a program development plan that ensures services for a broad range of youth populations that addresses identified gaps, including but not limited to youth with special needs, ethnically and culturally diverse populations and after school opportunities.

3.2.2 Develop evaluation tools that will ensure constant review of all services, events and programs in order to provide high quality opportunities for youth participation.

3.2.3 Continue to pursue government and private sector grant opportunities to support program and services development in the youth area.

3.2.4 Complete a full audit of current youth events and make recommendations for future youth events based on feedback and best practices from other municipalities.

3.2.5 Pursue development of enhanced and new 'neighbourhood' based programs to address the youth needs and recreation opportunities throughout the community.



3.2.6. Continue to promote the Canadian Tire Jumpstart and Town Access Program to allow youth from low-income families to participate in sport and leisure programs.

3.2.7 Promote youth volunteer development through Town special events and camps.

4. Positive Youth Development and Training

4.1 Objective

To ensure that the Town of Whitby remains a champion for a Youth Friendly Community, and that the municipality creates an environment that values and encourages youth participation and engagement.

4.2 Strategies

4.2.1 Ensure that management policies, general practices and training reflect Positive Youth Development.

4.2.2 Work with community partners to define the role of the Department as a conduit for youth volunteerism, including event volunteers, forty hours of volunteer work and long term volunteer development opportunities.

4.2.3 Commit to informing and including community partners and other adult Youth Friendly Champions about the importance of Positive Youth Development and the opportunity to work together, recognize and engage more adults.

5. Community Development

5.1 Objective

To review current services and programs and create new opportunities for Whitby youth through partnerships with community service providers and organizations.

5.2 Strategies

5.2.1 Formalize a youth partnership network, inclusive of current and potential partners, to formally connect youth service providers in order to utilize resources to identify and address gaps in youth recreation services and engagement.

5.2.2 Consider reinforcing relationships with non-traditional partners to address broader gaps in youth services and community building, including, but not limited to, the Business Sector and Social Service providers. These programs may include after school initiatives and investigation of a Whitby based Youth Community Health Centre.

6. Facilities

6.1 Objective

Plan for indoor and outdoor facilities that will address the recreation and leisure service community needs now and in the future while ensuring youth have input into the long term planning of facilities.

6.2 Strategies

6.2.1 Continue to monitor demographics, resident patterns and youth needs for the development of facilities and programs across the Town.



6.2.2. Consider the establishment of a youth room in South Whitby.

6.2.3 Consider the prioritization for the development of future facilities identified through youth feedback including but not limited to aquatic facilities, leash free dog parks, skate parks and a performing arts centre within the municipal capital budget/plan.

6.2.4 Investigate and develop relationships with community providers that may address identified facility requests from the youth survey.

6.2.5 Develop practices that reinforce involvement of youth in the planning stages of capital projects, service changes and/ or on Advisory Committees.

Appendix F outlines measurable accomplishments for each of the six objectives along with an expected implementation date.

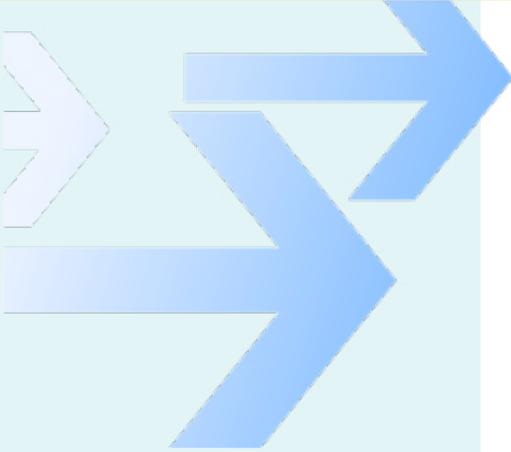
The areas of focus for the short, mid and long term time frame are as follows:

Short-term Priorities (2013/2014)

- 1) Implement Social Media platforms to reach Whitby Youth.
- 2) Develop a Junior Whitby Youth Council to include representatives from Grades 7–8.
- 3) Complete a full review of current programs and events in order to make recommendations for partnerships, and modifications.

Mid-term Priorities (2015/2016)

- 1) Development and delivery of Positive Youth Development Staff Training workshops.
- 2) Implementation of new or modified programs and services through community partnerships.
- 3) Pursue the development of a Youth Friendly Business Recognition Program.



Long-term Priorities 2017/2018

- 1) Facility planning to address community youth needs.
- 2) Establishment of sustainable programming for after school initiatives.
- 3) Investigation of a Whitby based Youth Community Health Centre.

Budget Implications

The proposed draft Recreation and Leisure Services Youth Strategy identifies a number of implementation strategies and measurable accomplishments. These can be achieved through a reallocation of staffing hours within the Youth Sections' budget in order to result in no increase on the operating budget related to human resources. Further budget implications related to implementation of specific youth strategies will be identified through future reports for consideration by Council and during the annual operating and capital budget review process.

Summary

The Town of Whitby is a Platinum Youth Friendly Community and is committed to ensuring that youth are engaged and involved in their community. Youth have played an active role in providing feedback and information relating to their needs and wants that have been taken into consideration throughout this document. Development and adoption of this Youth Strategy reinforces this commitment and ensures that youth and the staff working with them have direction and focus moving forward.

The adoption and implementation of the draft 2013 to 2018 Recreation and Leisure Services Youth Strategy will ensure that Whitby continues to consider the needs of youth and be a model community for youth and their families to live, work and play.