Toronto City Planning

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Getting involved in City Planning

Final Report

TORONTO

Acknowledgments

PLANNING A GREAT CITY
TOGETHER

(((growing))) conversations
making engagement work

Toronto City Planning Youth Engagement Strategy

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Toronto Planning Division identified the development of a *Youth Engagement Strategy* as a key component of *Growing Conversations*, an effort to improve the relationship between the Planning Division, residents and stakeholders.

The City Planning Division, a Consultant Team and a Youth Research Team engaged in a 6-month study to learn about the issues that matter to youth, what the barriers to youth engagement are, and to recommend ways for City Planning to improve youth engagement in its conversations with residents.

The study revealed that the topics youth care most about are transit/transportation, social equity/affordable housing, employment and jobs for youth, safety, the public realm and play. The most significant barriers to youth engagement are a lack of trust in government, a lack of awareness of engagement activities, lack of youth representation in positions of influence, and intimidation. In order to improve youth engagement in City Planning, the Division needs to focus on the different stages of life that make up the youth demographic, consider different geographies and income levels, explore partnerships, focus on short- and long-term ideas, and make engagement more interesting. The Youth Engagement Team found that improvements to youth engagement overall would require a focus by City Planning on schools and education, promotion and engagement, an "Under-30" ambassador program, and the creation of youth hubs.

The research recommends nine Guiding Principles, four Focus Areas, and twenty Actions to improve youth engagement in city planning conversations. It also identifies an implementation framework and targets to demonstrate how City Planning can implement the recommendations in the short, medium and long-term across the various engagement processes it leads.

WHY A YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY?

How do we make Toronto the most engaged city in North America? That's the question at the core of the City of Toronto City Planning Division's *Growing Conversations*, an effort to improve the relationship between the Planning Division, residents and stakeholders through better community engagement.

One of the key efforts within *Growing Conversations* is the *Youth Engagement Strategy*. Youth aged 18–30 are an important segment of Toronto's population. In some parts of the city, they are the fastest-growing demographic group, and they are often drivers of economic and employment growth. Yet the voices of youth are often missing in Toronto's planning processes, where homeowners over the age of 55 typically dominate the conversation.

The *Youth Engagement Strategy* aims to bring more youth voices into city planning conversations by:

- understanding how and when to engage youth on city planning issues; and,
- creating a framework that will mobilize a generation to take ownership of and become active on planning issues.

BACKGROUND

Growing Conversations

The City Planning Division launched *Growing Conversations* in January 2014 with the goal of making Toronto the most engaged city in North America on urban planning issues. *Growing Conversations* has five main objectives:

1. Better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the current community planning process in Toronto

2. Explore new engagement models and tools

3. Explore opportunities and best practices related to implementing Community Planning Advisory Groups in each Ward

4. Explore opportunities to broaden participation by engaging new audiences

5. Identify other potential opportunities to improve engagement in the current community planning process

As part of objective four, the Division identified a series of new audiences that it would like to engage more effectively in the planning process, including youth aged 18–30. The Youth Engagement Strategy aims to address this important objective.

What is City Planning?

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines planning as:

Programs pursued as a means of improving the urban environment and achieving certain social and economic objectives.

The City of Toronto uses an array of planning tools to do its work, of which the most important is the Official Plan, a forward-looking document that acts as the blueprint for the city and sets out policies to guide how the city should grow and change. The Official Plan envisions "an attractive and safe city that evokes pride, passion and a sense of belonging—a city where people of all ages and abilities can enjoy a good quality of life." A city with:

- vibrant neighbourhoods that are part of complete communities;

- affordable housing choices that meet the needs of everyone throughout their life;
- attractive, tree-lined streets with shops and housing that are made for walking;
- a comprehensive and high quality affordable transit system that lets people move around the City quickly and conveniently;
- a strong and competitive economy with a vital downtown that creates and sustains well-paid, stable, safe and fulfilling employment opportunities for all Torontonians;
- clean air, land and water;
- green spaces of all sizes and public squares that bring people together;
- a wealth of recreational opportunities that promote health and wellness;
- a spectacular waterfront that is healthy, diverse, public and beautiful;
- cultural facilities that celebrate the best of city living; and
- beautiful architecture and excellent urban design that astonish and inspire.

The Official Plan focuses on ten topics, each supported by a series of policies. They are:

- Facilitating Movement
- Supporting arts, culture, and learning
- Allocating Land Use
- Protecting the Environment
- Managing Growth and Change
- Shaping Development
- Defining Social Equity and Social Policy
- Designing the Public Realm
- Promoting a Strong Economy
- Supporting play

The Official Plan can be found online at:
www.toronto.ca/planning/official_plan/

When does City Planning engage?

Every year, City Planning engages as many as 20,000 residents through public meetings alone, and many thousands more are engaged online. Currently, the City Planning Division engages residents and stakeholders when:

1. **It receives a development application.** When a property owner wants to redevelop a piece of land, they must usually submit a development application to the City. The review of development applications is a big part of what City Planning does. The process often involves a public meeting before staff prepares a planning report. The public is also always welcome to make comments at the Community Council meeting where the report is tabled.

2. **A neighbourhood-based planning process is initiated.** In high growth areas, or in areas that require special attention (like the waterfront or Heritage Conservation Districts), City Planning creates area-based plans. These might be Secondary Plans, Avenue Studies, or Urban Design studies.

3. **A citywide planning process or special study is initiated.** Some planning processes are of citywide importance, like reviews of Official Plan policies, the Tall Buildings Guidelines or the *Growing Conversations* initiative.

4. **It wants to talk about city building.** Sometimes City Planning wants to have conversations with residents and stakeholders about big ideas that set citywide priorities, like the Chief Planner Roundtable. Sometimes, City Planning just wants to create an opportunity to check-in and ask some questions, like it does through its Planners in Public Spaces (PiPs) program.

The majority of the City Planning's public engagement efforts revolve around development applications, though it also engages people through neighbourhood and city-wide processes, too.

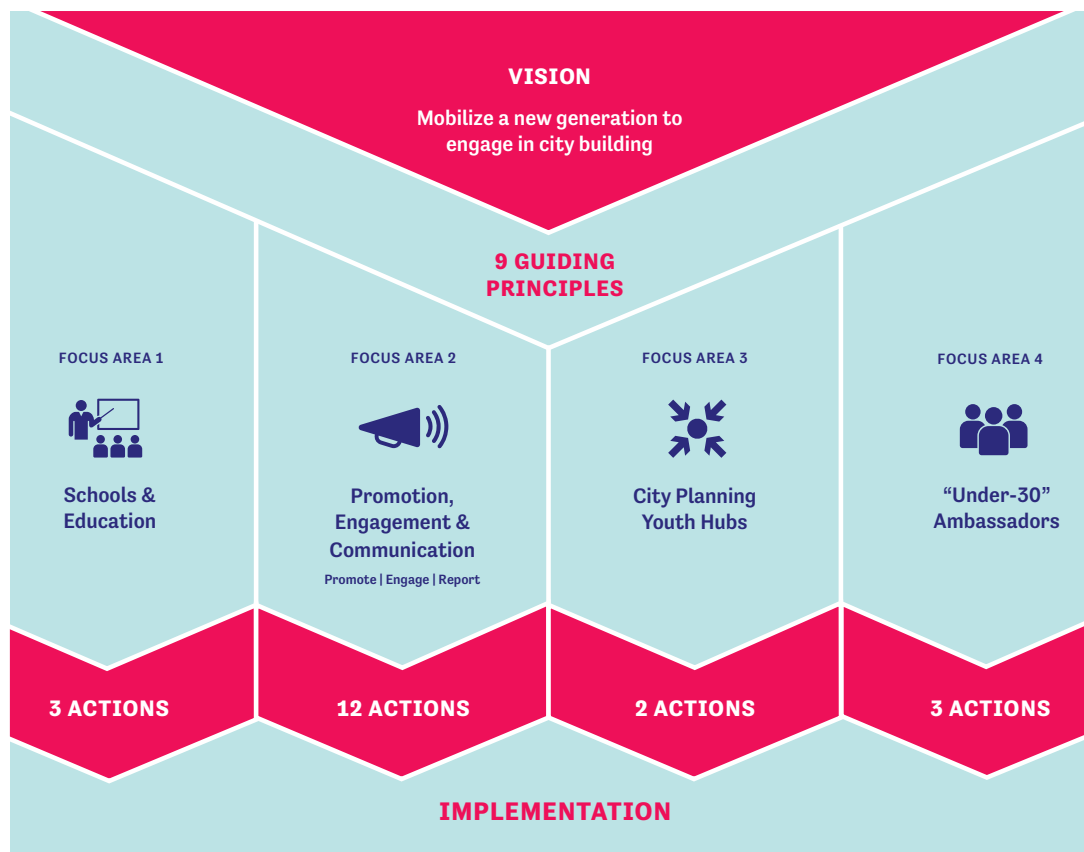# DEVELOPING THE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Process

A Consultant Team composed of Swerhun Facilitation, Maximum City, and Urban Strategies Inc. led the study process in close collaboration with the City Planning Division. Central to the success of the study was the Youth Research Team (YRT), a talented, diverse group of ten passionate city builders aged 18–29, hired by the Consultant Team to research youth engagement issues with a broader youth audience across Toronto. The Youth Research Team played a key role in the study process. The team connected with other youth to understand **what issues matter** most to them, **when** and **how to involve youth** in city building conversations and **how to build** youth **understanding** and **engagement** in city building. Specifically, their job was to:

- Engage and seek feedback from other youth about youth engagement in city planning;

- Strive to achieve the participation of youth with a diversity of perspectives, experiences and interests;

- Organize and/or host meetings or other consultations with between 30 and 50 other youth;

- Encourage participants to be constructive and solution-oriented, providing advice on how to address challenges;

- Document and summarize the results of conversations, including areas where there is common ground between perspectives and areas where opinions differ (including optionally summarizing the findings using artistic methods, such as visual art, video, creative writing, music, or other creative works that communicate youth perspectives on city planning);

- Share the findings of the research with the City and its Consultant Team; and,

- Work closely with the City and its Consultant Team throughout the process to turn their findings into a concrete Strategy.

The Study Process took place over six months, and included three workshops that brought City Planning, the Consultant Team, and the Youth Research Team together to discuss the emerging research outcomes and strategies to improve youth engagement in city planning. Early in the process, the Youth Research Team promoted, facilitated and documented engagement activities with over 400 of their peers across more than 15 Toronto neighbourhoods in an intensive five-week research period. In their consultations with peers, the Youth Research Team used a variety of methods, including surveys, pop-up town halls, and facilitated workshops. Their work resulted in over 150 pages of documentation.

Strategy Framework

The Strategy's policy framework begins with a vision to mobilize a new generation to engage in city building. This is followed by a series of 9 Guiding Principles, which are intended to guide all of City Planning's engagement efforts with youth. The four Focus Areas are the big moves of the Plan, and each is supported by a series of Actions, which are the specific projects recommended for implementing the objectives of the Focus Area. Finally, an Implementation Plan charts a course for advancing the Plan's recommendations.

VISION

Mobilize a new generation to engage in city building

9 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FOCUS AREA 1	FOCUS AREA 2	FOCUS AREA 3	FOCUS AREA 4
Schools & Education	Promotion, Engagement & Communication Promote | Engage | Report	City Planning Youth Hubs	"Under-30" Ambassadors
3 ACTIONS	12 ACTIONS	2 ACTIONS	3 ACTIONS

IMPLEMENTATION

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

The Youth Research Team's work focused on three different areas: topics that youth care about, barriers to youth engagement in city planning discussions, and suggestions to improve youth engagement.

Issues youth care about

What are the issues that matter most to youth and how do they relate to the issues that City Planning normally consults on, like transit, urban design, and development review? **As part of their work, the Youth Research Team identified a number of city planning- and city building-related topics that youth care about**:

- **Transit and transportation**. The youth consulted identified transit and transportation as being their top interests. For them, being able to get around conveniently, safely and cheaply is very important. Specifically, youth identified issues like the cost of transit, the need for better and more frequent service, the need for a diversity of transportation options, and cycling infrastructure as well as walkability as priorities.
- **Social equity/equality**. Social equity and equality was a clear concern of the youth consulted, because, they argued, youth tend to be impacted negatively by them. Specific issues of importance include marginalization, injustice, systemic racism, the growing income gap, gender issues and poverty. In particular, the contrast between the wealth of new development in some parts of the city and the lack of community services and infrastructure in others is seen to be a reflection of social inequality.
- **Affordable housing**. Many youth in Toronto are concerned about housing affordability, both in terms of renting and buying. Specifically, youth are concerned about the lack of an adequate supply of rental housing, the increasing cost of housing, long waitlists for access to subsidized housing and tenant rights.
- **Youth violence, safety and law enforcement**. Many youth in Toronto are at risk of violence and so safety and law enforcement are

important to this demographic. Specifically, community-police relations, the existence of stop-and-search programs and safety at night (especially for women) are important issues.

- **Employment and jobs.** One of the greatest concerns for youth in Toronto today is their ability to find and keep meaningful employment that pays a living wage. In addition, youth are concerned about the high rates of youth unemployment, job security and finding meaningful (i.e. career-building) work.

- **Supporting play.** For some youth, sports and play are important because of the opportunities they provide to be both physical and social. Youth are concerned by what they see as a general lack of recreation, sports and play spaces and the difficulty some face in accessing parks and natural areas, which may be located far from home.

- **Intensity and character of development**. Youth are interested in development insofar as it affects their own communities, or ones they care about. They are particularly interested in the change (both good and bad) that new development brings with it.

- **Supporting arts**. Supporting the arts is very important to some youth, since the arts contribute to making the city feel vibrant, creative and fun. Youth identified issues like funding for arts and arts festivals (like Luminato) as being important to them.

- **Urban design and public realm**. Since many youth spend a lot of time in public spaces, urban design and public realm ranks highly as being important to them. Many seem to feel that new, high quality public spaces tend to locate downtown or in other wealthy parts of the city, leading to a lack of such spaces elsewhere.

- **Sense of community and neighbourhoods**. Having a sense of belonging or a connection to community is important to many youth, since they feel most connected to the neighbourhoods in which they live or go to school.

- **The environment.** Many youth feel passionate about the environment, since they see themselves as the eventual inheritors of the consequences of good or bad environmental decisions. Specific issues of importance include a lack of green space in the city, ensuring environmental sustainability and creating sustainable green spaces.

Barriers to youth engagement

In order to assess why youth aren't more engaged in planning processes, the Youth Research Team asked their peers what barriers prevented them

from becoming engaged in planning discussions. **According to their research, the top barriers to engagement by youth in the planning process are**:

- **Trust.** Youth need to feel more confident that their participation in the planning process is meaningful and actually affects outcomes.

- **Transparency.** Youth need clarity as to what happens with the feedback they share, so that they can be confident their participation is meaningful.

- **Intimidation.** Youth need to feel their voices are just as valued as those of other participants in order to overcome the feeling of being unqualified to speak to or critique professionals.

- **Youth representation.** Youth need to see themselves represented at the front of the room in engagement processes to give them confidence their concerns will be understood and to help overcome intimidation.

- **Promotion and communication.** A lot of youth indicated they had not heard of many opportunities to engage in the planning process.

- **Relevance of planning.** Many youth indicated they aren't familiar enough with what city planning is, how it applies to their lives, or why it should matter to them.

- **Branding of engagement activities.** The advertising and branding of public engagement needs to appeal to youth specifically in order to be effective. This will help make engagement "cool".

- **How to engage.** Youth want to understand what actions they can take to make a difference or what the best way to participate is.

- **Scheduling and timing conflicts.** A lot of in-person engagement activities occur at times when youth (especially students) are unable to attend.

- **Far or hard-to-access locations for meetings.** "These meetings are not just a walk away, they're a bus ride away," was a common sentiment among youth surveyed.

- **Importance of Planning.** Youth indicated that they struggled to understand the relevance of city planning relative to other priorities, like school, work and socializing.

The barriers that youth face are similar to the barriers that others have noted in separate *Growing Conversations* discussions. However, intimidation is a barrier experienced more exclusively by youth, which often seems to be the result of youth feeling unqualified to critique or participate in discussions in "adult" dominated arenas.

STRATEGY

The Youth Engagement Strategy is central to City Planning's goal of making Toronto the most engaged city in North America on planning issues. It envisions a future Toronto where **a whole new generation of youth is mobilized to engage in city building**.

The Strategy for realizing this vision includes nine Guiding Principles, four Focus Areas and 20 Actions.

They reflect the advice of both the Youth Research Team and the over 400 youth consulted through the process.

Guiding Principles

The nine Guiding Principles should inform all youth engagement undertaken by City Planning:

- **Focus on stages of life, not ages.** There are many different stages of life within the youth demographic (high school student, young adult, university/college student, young professional), and each needs a different approach to become engaged in city planning discussions.

- **Engage youth early.** People often develop their core interests, beliefs and habits in their high school years (or, in some cases, even earlier). Sparking a person's interest in planning at this point in their life makes it much likelier they will become active participants in the planning process later in life.

- **Overcome intimidation**. Getting youth to participate means creating an environment where they feel safe, supported and comfortable enough to engage.

- **Put youth in positions of influence.** Youth engagement works best when it's youth-led. When youth see other people their age in positions of influence, it gives them greater confidence that their interests and perspectives will be respected and reflected within City Planning.

- **Consider different geographies and income levels**. Toronto is geographically, culturally and socio-economically diverse. Different approaches will work for different areas and communities, so it's important to consider what works for different audiences.

- **Work towards both short-term and long-term systemic change.** For youth engagement to be most impactful, it needs to include both quick actions and actions that focus on longer-term, systemic change.

- **Go to where youth are**. Meeting youth in the physical and virtual spaces they inhabit can bring them into city planning conversations in a way that is convenient for them.

- **Foster partnerships and build youth capacity**. There are already many youth-focused organizations doing good work with and for youth in Toronto. Leveraging these organizations' networks will help youth develop an interest in city planning and build their capacity.

- **Make it fun**! Youth are more likely to participate in a process that's fun, creative or social. Typical planning processes can feel dry or boring—if you want youth to participate, you have to shake things up a bit.

Focus Areas and Actions

The four Focus Areas reflect the priorities identified by the Youth Research Team through its research and in workshops with the City and Consultant Team. Each Focus Area contains specific Actions to implement the recommendation.

The examples included within these actions should not limit City Planning from exploring other ideas or platforms to improve youth engagement in city planning. Over the course of three workshops with the study team (as well as in each of the Youth Research Team's research projects) participants shared many ideas that City Planning could use. We have referenced some of these ideas in these recommendations, and there are many more appended in each of the Youth Research Team's final reports.

Focus Area One: Schools and Education

Connecting with youth when they're at school can help them develop an awareness of—and an interest in—planning when they're otherwise still forming political interests and habits. For newcomers, children often serve as interpreters of civic life for their parents, broadening the impact of connecting with them in schools.

Formal education occurs beyond the classroom as well, including through skill-development programs, workshops, and summer camps. Since these programs help build youth capacity in areas they're already interested in, they're a good way for City Planning to connect youth's existing interests to planning and to provide youth with transferable, marketable skills.

The Actions in this Focus Area aim to connect City Planning to youth in these two different educational settings.

ACTION 1: **Develop a "Planners in Classrooms" (PiCs) educational outreach program to increase awareness of planning issues and concepts among youth.**

A Planners in Classrooms ("PiCs") program would bring city planning out of City Hall and into Toronto's schools, with the short-term objective of teaching a younger generation about city planning and the long-term objective of mobilizing them to take ownership of and engage in city planning throughout their lives. A team of planners in the City Planning Division with an interest in and facility for education and youth engagement could lead the program, delivering existing curricula in high schools and elementary schools (such as those developed by Number 9, Maximum City, TDSB EcoSchools, Jane's Walk or the OPPI). Since these curricula already exist, City Planning would need only to train some of its planners to deliver them.

Through the program, these planners would deliver an engaging, hands-on curriculum steeped in real-world problem-solving tasks and authentic planning challenges in Toronto. The program could take place over 1–3 classroom visits at each school.

A long-term objective of the program could be the eventual development of an on-site City Hall School component for school groups visiting City Hall. This would require a physical space in City Hall and would use the same team of trained City planner-educators as facilitators of the program. Schools could pay a fee to participate, as in some other Canadian cities with well-established City Hall schools. For example, Calgary's City Hall School is now in its fifteenth year and charges about $1,000 for a week of customized programming for elementary and high school students, and offers free teacher-training workshops.

ACTION 2: Develop a recognition or accreditation system for schools participating in PiCs.

A PiCs recognition or accreditation system would give the PiCs program credibility and desirability among Toronto's schools. Other education programs, such as TDSB and Ontario EcoSchools, have successfully developed a recognition system that awards points and levels of certification (e.g. Bronze, Silver, Gold) for participation and achievement in environmental categories such as Energy Conservation and Waste Minimization. EcoLeader students and staff within schools keep track of points and require only occasional external auditing. Similarly, the PiCs point system could award points and levels of certification in categories such as a Mobility Score for increasing active school transportation or hosting bike workshops; a Neighborhood Stewardship Score for adopting a local park or participating in/hosting a public meeting; or a Curriculum Score for adopting lessons about urban planning in certain classes or having students participate in a design charrette.

ACTION 3: Partner with skill-development organizations to build youth capacity while engaging on planning issues.

There are a number of organizations in Toronto that host workshops or programs that relate to city planning (such as neighbourhood walking tours organized by Jane's Walk, hackathons organized by the Canadian Open Data Institute, or photo editing software workshops organized by Microskills). City Planning should partner with these organizations to deliver their programs through a city planning lens, providing participants with real-world skills they can add to their resume or apply in their work, while also functioning as a "hook" into city planning.

These workshops or programs should also function as engagement opportunities, giving City Planning valuable insights about a planning issue or project. For example, City Planning could partner with an organization to teach participants the basics of photo editing, with the goal of helping them to create a series of photo montages re-imagining a public space in the city.

Focus Area Two: Promotion, Engagement and Communication

New approaches to promotion, engagement and communication are needed to make planning more exciting for youth, as well as to better explain the connection between participant feedback and its influence on decision-making.

Most engagement processes include three steps: promotion of a project or engagement activity (like a town hall or a survey), engagement with the public (in a meeting or at a pop-up, for example), and a report-back on the feedback received (in a consultant or a staff report). The Actions proposed in this Focus Area are organized according to these three steps.

PROMOTE

ACTION 4: Promote and campaign using social media channels.

Most youth today use social and digital media channels to interact with one another and to get their news. To better reach youth, City Planning should campaign more actively through these channels. Promotion and campaigning on social media should not replicate standard corporate communications: the messaging and approach needs to be appropriate for the medium. It should be both informal and fun.

One example is an AMA (Ask Me Anything), where people ask high-profile personalities questions about their work, and receive answers in real-time. City Planning could host an AMA with the Chief Planner or another high-profile planner.

ACTION 5: Develop a City Planning Division YouTube Series/podcast.

Over the last several years, City Planning has made a tremendous effort to be better storytellers, clearly explaining planning concepts and issues through brochures and short, informational videos with the goal of helping people to understand why planning is relevant to their lives. City Planning should continue this effort with a particular emphasis on reaching youth. One way to accomplish this is through a City Planning YouTube series or podcast. This storytelling platform could periodically include a Q & A, where audience members could write in and share questions to be answered in an upcoming episode.

ACTION 6: Promote engagement in new physical spaces like coffee shops, TTC shelters and libraries.

City Planning should make better use of the physical spaces in which youth spend time, like coffee shops, TTC shelters, university campuses and libraries. Any promotion in youth spaces needs to have a tone that is accessible, understandable and eye-catching for youth. This type of promotion doesn't need to be limited to posters or flyers; it could also be achieved through the use of physical objects or interventions in public spaces that catch people's attention, such as temporary public art installations or street chalk infographics.

ACTION 7: Partner with local media to better promote engagement activities.

Many local media include weekly listings of Toronto events, like concerts, gallery openings and movie releases. City Planning should partner with these media organizations—including both digital and physical publications, like Urban Toronto, Torontoist, blogTO, Spacing or NOW Magazine—to include weekly highlights of City Planning engagement activities.

ENGAGE

ACTION 8: Provide remote access to meetings.

Enabling remote participation in planning processes will help to attract youth audiences who are tech savvy but reluctant to attend a meeting in person. There are a variety of platforms City Planning could use to enable remote participation (web conferencing, telephone town halls, live streaming, live-tweeting, live-blogging). After each event, the recorded stream should be hosted online for people to watch on their own time and could also be accompanied by a feedback tool to further increase participation rates.

ACTION 9: Involve artists in engagement processes.

Some youth prefer to participate or communicate using art or other less literal media. City Planning should involve artists to incorporate arts-based practice into engagement processes, using techniques like Photo Voice, community mapping or digital storytelling. This Action could be combined with Action 3 by involving an artist in helping participants develop specific arts-based skills that feed into a planning process. For example, a photographer could work with participants to teach them how to compose, shoot and edit photos of places in their neighbourhood that feed into a planning process. At the end of a process, City Planning could showcase the art produced at a final event.

ACTION 10: Go beyond traditional engagement methods to reach youth audiences. Make it creative and social.

Youth are attracted to activities that are creative and social. Walking tours, pop-up events and parties (in parks or on subways) are all examples of creative meeting types that could attract youth audiences. City Planning should require that all engagement processes involve at least one such event.

ACTION 11: Host meetings or engagement activities in the places youth already are.

Rather than expect youth to come to places that are convenient for City Planning, City Planning should go to the places that are convenient for youth, just as it does with existing PiPS initiatives. These places could include community cultural events, farmer's markets, outdoor concerts, street festivals and college and university campuses.

ACTION 12: Require Stakeholder Advisory Groups or Committees convened by City Planning to include youth representation.

Many City Planning engagement processes convene Stakeholder Advisory Groups to get advice and input from representatives of external agencies or organizations. On future projects, City Planning should require that Stakeholder Advisory Groups include at least one youth representative.

ACTION 13: Create an "Office Hours" Program in local libraries and community centres to make Community Planners more accessible.

The City Planning Division should create an "Office Hours" program to bring City Planners out of City Hall and into communities. During high-profile projects (either city-wide or neighbourhood-specific), a City Planner could staff a space in a library to promote the project and seek people's input, like a kind of Pop Up event. Over time, City Planning could begin to have a semi-permanent presence in libraries.

ACTION 14: Expand and extend Planners in Public Spaces (PiPS).

PiPS has been successful in raising the City Planning Division's profile with youth. Expanding the PiPS program would mean hosting more frequent pop-up consultation activities and connecting them more explicitly to decision-making and planning processes. At the outset of a project, City Planning or its consultants should identify locations or events that would be suitable for a PiPS booth.

REPORT

ACTION 15A: Use engaging media such as videos, infographics or interactive e-books to communicate the outcomes of planning processes with youth.

Outcomes of most planning processes are communicated via written reports, but other media (including videos, infographics, graphic novels, interactive e-books, etc.) can be more engaging for youth. City Planning should use these media more consistently in its projects, potentially by requiring consultant teams to include graphic design, video production, storytelling or other specialized media skills.

ACTION 15B: Report more consistently on how participants' feedback has influenced outcomes.

While City Planning often releases reports outlining engagement outcomes in the context of strategic planning exercises, this should be done more consistently across all processes. In addition, future planning reports—both consultant reports and staff reports that go to Council—should clearly explain how participant feedback influenced final recommendations.

Focus Area Three: Youth Hubs

Many youth prefer to connect with and learn from each other in places—both physical and digital—that are run specifically for them. These hubs are places where youth can connect with their peers, develop new interests and become engaged in local issues in their communities. The City of Toronto's Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA) and Parks, Forestry, and Recreation (PFR) Divisions, as well as the Toronto Public Library have been working together to develop both physical and digital Youth Hubs, and City Planning should collaborate with these divisions and agencies to support their work and connect youth hubs to City Planning engagement processes.

Action 16: Collaborate with other divisions to support Youth Hubs and Youth Lounges.

The Toronto Public Library is developing Youth Hubs throughout the city, and PFR is developing Youth Lounges in community centres. In these spaces—which have consistent, dedicated staff—youth can connect to each other, to City programs and services and to youth mentors. City Planning should collaborate with these other divisions and agencies to help connect youth to planning processes that affect them.

Action 17: Collaborate with other divisions to support the ongoing redevelopment of www.toronto.ca/youth/.

SDFA is implementing a recommendation from the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy to make toronto.ca/youth a more interdivisional website, which youth could use to access services across a range of municipal divisions. City Planning should work with SDFA to ensure it has a presence on toronto.ca/youth, connecting youth to resources that will teach them about planning and to encourage them to get involved in planning projects.

Focus Area Four: "Under-30" Ambassadors

Representation is an important issue for youth: they are much more likely to participate in a process if they see other youth in positions of influence (such as at the front of the room or leading a process) since it is an indication that their perspective is valued and will be heard. Since representation can only be authentically reflected by people 30 and under, City Planning needs to work with youth ambassadors in that demographic. These ambassadors should have formal roles within, or relationships to, the City Planning Division; roles that are paid either financially or in credit. These 30-and-Unders (or "30+U") could act as advisors to City Planning, ensuring that youth are being adequately engaged throughout a process. They could also play a more active on-the-ground role, working with staff and consultants to actively engage youth. The Actions in the 30+U Focus Area reflect these three roles.

ACTION 18: Ensure equal youth representation for each Planning District on the new Toronto Planning Review Panel.

The Toronto Planning Review Panel is a new engagement initiative intended to capture the diverse voices of Toronto's residents. 28 Panelists are appointed to two-year terms, and are selected through a Civic Lottery process. To ensure that youth voices are adequately represented on the panel, there should be two youth representatives for every District, for a total of 8 youth panelists. While this is slightly more than is justified by the size of the youth population in Toronto, it will ensure an equitable distribution of representation across the Districts.

ACTION 19: Create a "30+U" Youth Engagement Specialist internship(s).

The "30+U" Engagement Specialist internship(s) would be a for-credit internship within City Planning that allows students to earn credit while working with City Planning to implement these Actions or other youth engagement activities. Potential tasks could include developing a citywide Youth Roster to identify youth groups that should be included as part of Stakeholder Advisory Groups (Action 12); developing a list of media in which to advertise engagement opportunities (Action 7); and developing agendas and connecting with Youth Advisory Board members (Action 20).

ACTION 20: **Require a "30+U" Ambassador on future consultant teams.**

Future City Planning Requests for Proposals (RFPs) with an engagement component should specify a requirement for a 30+U Ambassador on consultant teams to help design, execute and document engagement activities. This will allow 30+U Ambassadors to be paid through consultant budgets. These paid Ambassadors could be individuals proposed by Consultant Teams, "30+U" Engagement Specialist(s), or they could be drawn from a citywide Youth Roster established by City Planning.

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Broadly, there are two ways the City Planning Division can implement this report's recommendations:

- **By adding new requirements to City Planning RFPs or City Planning-led studies:** City Planning can add new requirements to Requests for Proposals that require consultant teams to implement one or some of the Actions. On projects where City Planning leads the engagement process (i.e. projects that do not involve consultants), one or some Actions could be required to be addressed through internal work programs.

- **By initiating new programs and processes within the City Planning Division:** New initiatives and processes within City Planning can create an institutional shift in how City Planning approaches engagement. Once these new programs and processes become embedded as common practice, some could be required in future RFPs or City Planning-led studies.

The table below organizes the actions beneath these two implementation tools and sets targets and timeframes for each.

Action	Short (2 years)	Medium (2 5 years)	Long (5+ years)
Adding new requirements to RFPs or City-Planning led studies			
3: Partner with skill development organizations	10% of studies	25% of studies	50% of studies
4: Promote & campaign using social media	10% of studies	25% of studies	50% of studies
6: Promote in new physical spaces	25% of studies	50% of studies	75% of studies

8: Enable remote access to meetings	25% of meetings	50% of meetings	75% of meetings
9: Involve artists in engagement processes	10% of studies	25% of studies	50% of studies
10: Go beyond traditional engagement methods	25% of studies	50% of studies	100% of studies
11: Host meetings in youth spaces	25% of studies	50% of studies	100% of studies
12: Require youth on SAGs	50% of studies	100% of studies	100% of studies
14: Expand and extend PiPS	10% of studies	25% of studies	50% of studies
15A/B: Use new media to report after processes	10% of studies	25% of studies	50% of studies
20: Require a 30+U Ambassador on future consultant teams	30% of studies	75% of studies	100% of studies
Initiating new programs within the City Planning Division			
1: Create a Planners in Classrooms program	4 high schools; 1 elementary	8 high schools; 4 elementary	10 high schools; 10 elementary
2: Develop recognition system for PiCs	Draft criteria	Finalize criteria	Implemented
5: Develop a City Planning YouTube/podcast series	Create terms of reference	1 pilot episode	4 episodes/year
7: Partner with media to promote events	Develop list of media	Listings in 3 publications	Listings in all publications
13: Develop Office Hours program in libraries	4 libraries (1 in each borough)	8 libraries	16 libraries

15A/B: Document feedback and its influence in staff reports	10% of planning reports	50% of planning reports	100% of planning reports
16: Collaborate on Youth Hubs/ Lounges	Program in 0% of Hubs/Lounges	Program in 10% of Hubs/Lounges	Program in 50% of Hubs/Lounges
17: Collaborate on toronto.ca/youth	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
19: Create a 30+U internship position	Create Terms of Reference	2 30+U interns / year	2 30+U interns / year

As described in the Background section of this report, City Planning engages Torontonians in four different contexts. It engages when:

1. **It receives a specific development application.**
2. **A neighbourhood-based planning process is initiated.**
3. **A citywide planning process or special study is initiated.**
4. **It wants to talk about city building.**

The table below identifies which engagement processes the Actions should apply to. Since the research revealed that youth tend to care most about transit/transportation, social equity/affordable housing, employment & jobs for youth, safety and public realm and play, the City Planning Division should take extra care when initiating engagement processes about these topics to engage youth.

ACTIONS	Development Applications	Neighbourhood Planning Processes	City Wide Planning Processes	City Wide Conversations
1: Create a Planners in Classrooms program				X
2: Develop recognition system for PiCs				X
3: Partner with skill development organizations		X	X	
4: Promote & campaign using social media	X	X	X	X

5: Develop a City Planning YouTube/podcast series		X	X	X
6: Promote in new physical spaces	X	X	X	X
7: Partner with local media to promote events	X	X	X	X
8: Enable remote access to meetings	X	X	X	X
9: Involve artists in engagement processes		X	X	X
10: Go beyond traditional engagement methods		X	X	X
11: Host meetings in youth spaces		X	X	X
12: Require youth representation on SAGs	X	X	X	X
13: Create an Office Hours program in libraries	X	X	X	X
14: Expand and extend PiPS		X	X	X
15A: Use new media to report after processes		X	X	
15B: Report on feedback and its influence in reports	X	X	X	
16: Collaborate to support Youth Hubs / Lounges		X		X
17: Collaborate on toronto.ca/youth			X	X
18: Ensure equal youth representation on the TPRP		X	X	
19: Create a 30+U internship position	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
20: Require a 30+U Ambassador on future consultant teams		X	X	X

Appendices

Recruitment

Call for Applications
Applicant Screening Criteria
Youth Research Team Terms of Reference

Call for Applicants: City of Toronto Youth Research Team
It's your turn to mobilize a generation!

Are You…

… between the ages of 18-30?
… passionate about Toronto and city building?
… self-directed and / or entrepreneurial?
… a good communicator, researcher, and writer?
… comfortable working with others?

As part of its goal to become the most engaged city in North America, the City of Toronto is developing a Youth Engagement Strategy to learn how to better involve 18-30 year-olds in city building. The City wants to better understand **how** and **when** to involve them, **what issues matter** to them, and how to **build their understanding** and **engagement** in city building.

We're recruiting a team of youth researchers from across the city to investigate these issues. The selected team will be a talented, diverse group that is passionate about city building and has the skills to research these issues with a broader youth audience across Toronto. We will train and support the team, whose work will run from October to January 2015.

Youth Research Team members will:

- Engage and seek feedback from other youth about city building over a period of four to five weeks;

- Achieve the participation of youth with a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and interests;

- Organize and host meetings with between 30 and 50 youth;

- Document and summarize the results of conversations (including optionally using creative methods, such as a poetry, visual art, video, music, or other creative works);

- Share the findings of the research with the City and its Consultant Team; and,

- Work with the City and its Consultant Team to develop a workplan, complete reporting templates, and fulfill these responsibilities in a timely and cost-efficient manner.

Please send a cover letter (maximum 500 words) and resume including references to director@maximumcity.ca and imalczewski@swerhun.com by October 6, 2014. Your cover letter should tell us about you, your interest in engagement, and why you think involving youth in city building matters. Youth Research Team members will be given a stipend of $1,500. A shortlist of applicants will be selected for a phone interview.

TORONTO

Candidate Name:

	Name	Quality of Reference	
1		High	Superior
2		High	Superior

Evaluation: Skills

	Low	Medium	High	Superior
Record in City Building, Civic Engagement, and Research				
Written Skills				
Verbal / Communication Skills				
Passion for City Building				
Overall				

Evaluation: Diversity

Geographic Distribution (Home or Work)			
Scarborough	North York	Etobicoke	Downtown

Experience Working With Diverse Cultural Groups		
Lots of experience	Some experience	Little experience

Experience Working With Diverse Socio-Economic Groups		
Lots of experience	Some experience	Little experience

Experience Working With LGBT Groups		
Lots of experience	Some experience	Little experience

Family Structure	
Has Kids	Does Not Have Kids

Age (Range between 18 - 30)		
Younger	Middle	Older

Overall		
Many Candidates Like This	Some Candidates Like This	Few Candidates Like This

Overall Evaluation

Based on Skills and Diversity Criteria		
Must Have on Team	Good To Have on Team	Nice To Have on Team

Youth Engagement Strategy

Terms of Reference
for Youth Research Term

Overview

What's this about?

How do we make Toronto the most engaged city in North America? That's the question at the core of *Growing Conversations*, an effort to improve the relationship between the City of Toronto Planning Division, residents, and stakeholders through better community engagement.

One of the key efforts within *Growing Conversations* is the *Youth Engagement Strategy*. Youth aged 18 - 30 are an important segment of Toronto's population. In some parts of our city, they are the fastest-growing demographic group, and they are drivers of economic and employment growth. Yet the voices of youth are often scarcely heard in planning processes.

The *Youth Engagement Strategy* seeks to understand how the City of Toronto Planning Division can better involve youth in city building conversations and mobilize them into becoming active on planning issues.

Youth Research Team

A key element of the *Youth Engagement Strategy* is the Youth Research Team. The Youth Research Team's job will be to connect with other youth to understand **what issues matter** the most to them, **when** and **how to involve youth** in city building conversations, and **how to build** youth **understanding** and **engagement** in city building.

The Youth Research Team includes youth aged 18 - 30 from across the city to investigate these issues. The team is a talented, diverse group that is passionate about city building and has the skills to effectively research youth engagement issues with a broader youth audience across Toronto. Members of the Youth Research Team will: participate in two workshops with City Planning and its Consulting Team, identify groups and individuals to consult with, participate in and host small meetings with other youth, consolidate and summarize the results of these meetings, and complete reporting templates and check-in regularly with the City and its Consultant Team.

Who's involved?

The City of Toronto's Planning Division and a Consultant Team are leading the *Youth Engagement Strategy*. The people behind the project have experience working with youth, designing and

facilitating conversations, and working on a wide variety of city building projects in Toronto. The Consultant Team includes Swerhun Facilitation, Maximum City, and Urban Strategies Inc., and its role is to design, manage, and report on the Strategy.

Purpose of these Terms or Reference

This document outlines the approach that will guide the Youth Research Team's work. It is meant to guide members of the team by explaining the context of their work, outlining proposed research questions, and providing templates to track their work.

Key components of this document include: Chief Planners' Statement (page 2); Proposed Questions to Guide the Youth Research Team (page 3); Role of the Youth Research Team (page 3); Key Steps for the Youth Research Team (page 4); Conceptual Research Work Plan (page 6); and Reporting Templates (pages 7and on).

Chief Planner's Statement

Our city is transforming before our eyes! After a decade of rapid growth, Toronto has become North America's fourth largest city. Every year, thousands of new residents come to call Toronto home; their arrival is a symbol of belief in the opportunity this great city provides.

Much of this population growth is driven by youth under the age of 30. They are young Torontonians who are moving out of their homes for the first time to attend a college or university, find their first job, or live with friends; young immigrants looking for a brighter future for themselves and their families; or people from across the country who have chosen Toronto as their home. Youth are the future of our city, and we want to ensure that it grows and changes in ways that reflect their values and unique needs.

That's why we've launched the Youth Engagement Strategy as part of Growing Conversations. We want to ensure that the voices of Toronto's youth are heard in our planning processes! We know that we will have to do some things differently in order to make that happen. We're looking to you, our Youth Research Team to provide us with insights and ideas on how best to reach Toronto's youth. But most of all, we're looking for you to help us to mobilize a whole new generation of young city builders. We need you to help us articulate why planning matters to youth, and why it's important that your peers should get involved.

This is an exciting opportunity and a very important task, for you as well as for the City of Toronto Planning Division. I look forward to learning from you as much as you will learn from us. Be creative, be innovators, be visionaries, and be the ones that think outside the box.

Good luck!

Jennifer Keesmaat
Chief Planner & Executive Director

Questions to Guide Youth Research Team

The City Planning Division is interested in exploring the following questions:

1. What are your interests in life (generally)? What inspires you to get out of bed every day?
2. What kind of issues in the city do you care about? These issues could be the same as the ones City Planning is talking about or they could be completely different.
3. Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?
4. What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action? (Online tools, innovative meeting formats, etc.)?
5. Are there any specific times or contexts you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?
6. Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?

Role of the Youth Research Team

The members of the Youth Research Team should have experience working with and in youth-led organizations and be passionate about city building and engagement. They should also be geographically, demographically, socio-economically, and culturally diverse.

Their role is to:

-   Engage and seek feedback from other youth about city planning over a period of five weeks;
-   Ensure that participants understand the purpose of the *Youth Engagement Strategy;*
-   Strive to achieve the participation of youth with a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and interests;
-   Participate in two workshops with the City and its Consultant Team;
-   Organize and / or host meetings or other consultations with between 30 and 50 other youth. At least 75% of these youth must be between the ages of 18 and 30; 25% can be between the ages of 14 and 17.
-   Encourage participants to be constructive and solution-oriented, providing advice on how to address challenges;
-   Document and summarize the results of conversations, including areas where there is common ground between perspectives and areas where opinions differ (including optionally summarizing the findings using artistic methods, such as visual art, video, creative writing, music, or other creative works that communicate youth perspectives on city planning);
-   Share the findings of the research with the City and its Consultant Team; and
-   Work closely with the City and its Consultant Team throughout the process to develop a workplan, complete reporting templates, and fulfill these responsibilities in a timely and cost-efficient manner.

Please note that, as facilitators, Youth Research Team members' role is to guide a discussion and collect feedback. Team members should not attempt to lead or influence the conversation with their own opinions or allow the opinions or views of any one individual or organization involved in the conversation to dominate the process.

Key Steps for Youth Research Team Members

These steps should guide the work of the Youth Research Team. They are meant to be a road map and should be refined if and when necessary to best meet the needs of team members and the *Youth Engagement Strategy* process.

1. Develop a work plan

Using the template provided in this document (see page 7), Youth Research Team members will prepare a work plan that will explain and guide their work during the 5-week research period. The work plan should include:

- A timeline between start and end of the research process that identifies key dates and deliverables
- How the team member will investigate the research (e.g. hosting meetings, conducting pop-up events, designing surveys, etc.)
- How the team member will document the research findings (e.g. writing a summary or, optionally, presenting a piece of creative work)

2. Make a list of who to reach out to

Draft a long list of individuals and organizations to connect with. The idea is to connect with as large, diverse, and balanced a group of youth as possible in the time available. Members of the youth team will be expected to have some sense of possible organizations and individuals to reach out to, which could include:

- Neighbourhood youth leaders
- Youth outreach workers
- Colleges and universities (including those interested in city building and civic engagement and those who might not be interested in these areas)
- Faith-based organizations
- Youth employment centres
- Housing providers, shelter service providers
- Local providers and funders of youth programming (such as the Boys & Girls Club, Emerging Leaders Network, etc.)
- Any other individuals and/or organizations that are engaged in youth or city building issues in Toronto.

The process is open to anyone between the ages of 18 - 30 who wants to provide advice to the City about how to better mobilize youth to care about and engage in city building issues.

3. Identify networks and existing meetings

Identify any already-scheduled meetings or events that involve individuals and organizations identified in Step 2 and occur during the timeline you created. Contact these networks and request

permission to participate at the meeting(s) or events. If no meetings are already scheduled, contact individuals and/or organizations individually or in small groups and host a meeting.

Youth Research Team members should aim to involve between 30 - 50 youth, including some that _do_ participate in city building conversations and some that _don't_ (i.e. those who are less likely to be reached through current engagement processes). The City and its Consultant Team, with input from the Youth Research Team, will develop a Discussion Guide to help structure the Youth Research Team's work.

4. Participate in and / or host small meetings or consultations

Before meeting(s) or consultations, Youth Research Team members should:

- Share a copy of the Discussion Guide (which will be prepared by the City and its Consultant Team) with participants and let them know that it will be the basis of the discussion. Youth Research Team members should not expect or require participants to complete the Discussion Guide in-advance of the meeting; the purpose of sharing it early is to give participants time to consider their answers.

At the meeting(s) or consultations, Youth Research Team members should:

- Introduce the _Youth Engagement Strategy,_ including an explanation of why it's important and how the overall process will work;
- Review the Discussion Questions and share copies of the Discussion Guide to those who do not already have them (the Consultant Team will print and distribute copies of the Discussion Guide with YRT members);
- Seek feedback to the questions; and
- Identify the deadline for further feedback.

Each member of the Youth Research Team will be responsible for keeping notes capturing the feedback received during these discussions, as well as the names of organizations that participated (if applicable) and email addresses of participants (for sharing Draft and Final Summaries). **These notes will reflect key messages raised by participants, but will NOT track "who-said-what."**

5. Consolidate feedback received and share it with participants in a draft summary

Based on the rough notes taken in both one-on-one and small meetings, Youth Research Team members will write a summary of the feedback received to each question in the Discussion Guide. The summary for each question should be a minimum of 0.5 to 1 page long, and should identify **where there is common ground among perspectives** and **where perspectives differ**. Where there are differences, explain them and the reasons behind them. These summaries should also identify any **key messages** from the meetings / consultations. Email the draft summary to all those who participated in the conversations and provided their email address. Ask them to identify anything major that's missing or off base.

6. Report back to the City and its Consultant Team

Each member of the Youth Research Team will share a summary report with the City and its Consultant Team. Team members can do this by one of two methods: preparing a final meeting summary that identifies key messages and summarizes detailed feedback **or** by preparing a piece of creative work that communicates or reflects the findings of the research. Creative works could include visual art, video, music, creative writing, or other creative works. If reporting with a creative work, team members must a) confirm the method with the Consultant Team **before** beginning the work and b) submit a short (3 - 4 page) document along with the work that identifies the key messages from the research and explains how the creative work reflects or incorporates that research.

In preparation for the second workshop with the City and its Consultant Team, which will focus on brainstorming ways to educate and engage youth in city building, Youth Research Team Members should spend some thinking about **how** the city could better engage youth on different topics (in light of the feedback received through meetings and conversations).

Conceptual Research Work Plan

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
October 26	27	28	29	30	31	**November** 1
	Steps 1 & 2: Confirm work plan, make a Contact List, identify networks and existing meetings					
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Step 3: Participate in / host meetings / consultations; take rough notes					
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Step 3 (Continued): Participate in / host meetings / consultations; take rough notes					
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Step 4: Summarize feedback in a draft summary; share draft summary with participants					
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	Step 5: Finalize summary / creative work; share with City and its Consultant Team					

Templates

Facilitator Contract & Work Plan Template (2 Pages)

Responsibilities:

_____, Youth Research Team member for the City of Toronto's *Youth Research Strategy*, will:

1. Complete the responsibilities outlined in this document as per the deadlines, deliverables, and budget outlined below.
2. Be accountable to Ian Malczewski of Swerhun Facilitation.
3. Invoice Ian Malczewski for **50%** of fees on November 28, **25%** on December 26, and **25%** on January 30.

Budget (all amounts are inclusive of applicable taxes):

$1,500 Total payment to facilitator for completing all responsibilities as outlined in the TOR.

Deadlines and Deliverables:

Date	Deliverable
October 23	Participate in first Youth Workshop
(Insert Date)	Confirm workplan (refined as necessary)
(Insert Date)	Develop initial list of who to contact (to be updated regularly)
(Insert Date)	Develop list of existing network meetings or other scheduled meetings (including dates & times)
(Insert Date)	Identify venue(s) for meeting(s) / consultations (if applicable)
(Insert Date)	Hold meeting(s) / consultations
(Insert Date)	Draft and share a summary of feedback
(Insert Date)	Finalize summary of feedback (and / or optional creative work)
(Insert Date)	Participate in second Youth Workshop
(Insert Date)	Participate in final meeting with City and its Consultant Team

Proposed methods to conduct the research (e.g. hosting meetings, conducting pop-up events, designing surveys, etc.):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Proposed method to document and summarize research findings (if doing a creative project):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signatures:

_____
Youth Research Team Member (PRINT AND SIGN NAME)   Date

_____
Ian Malczewski   Date

Raw Meeting Notes Template

1. What are your interests in life (generally)? What inspires you to get out of bed every day?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What kind of issues in the city do you care about? These issues could be the same as the ones City Planning is talking about or they could be completely different.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action? (Online tools, innovative meeting formats)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Are there any specific times you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Final Report Template

Overview Section

½ page - 1 page. *Opening paragraph that identifies the number of participants, names of organizations represented through your process (if applicable), methods used, and times and dates of meetings / conversations.*

Key Messages Section

½ page. *3 - 5 bullet points explaining the strongest and / or most consistent messages participants shared with you.*
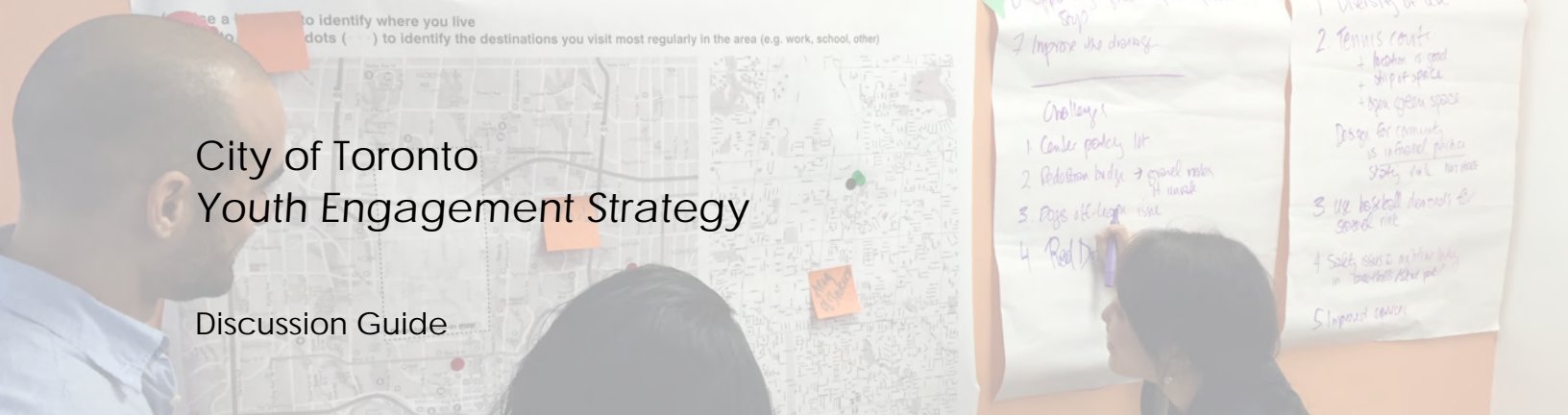
Detailed Feedback Section

3 - 4 pages. *Minimum half-page summary of feedback participants gave to each question. Bullet points are ok. If doing a creative work, this section can be* **2 - 3 pages** *and should focus on explaining how the creative work connects to the feedback participants shared.*

Participant List Section

1-2 Pages. *Include names of individuals (with their permission) and names of organizations engaged through your process.*

Research Materials & Reports

Youth Research Discussion Guide
Interim Report
Youth Research Team Reports
Supplemental Research Report

City of Toronto
Youth Engagement Strategy

Discussion Guide

What's This All About?

City planning is incredibly important. It affects everything from how long your commute is to how clean the air is to where you go to play to how safe your neighbourhoods are. It's the City of Toronto Planning Division's job to develop and implement strategies that address these issues, and a big part of that job involves engaging the public. Public engagement is one of the main tools planners use to make sure the city's diverse perspectives and priorities are reflected in their work, and through public engagement people can have a real and meaningful influence on planning and on Toronto's future.

But the Planning Division isn't reaching all the audiences it should be. In particular, youth are under-represented in planning conversations, even though they're a big part of the city's future. This means that people whose futures are strongly impacted by planning are not influencing it as much as they should.
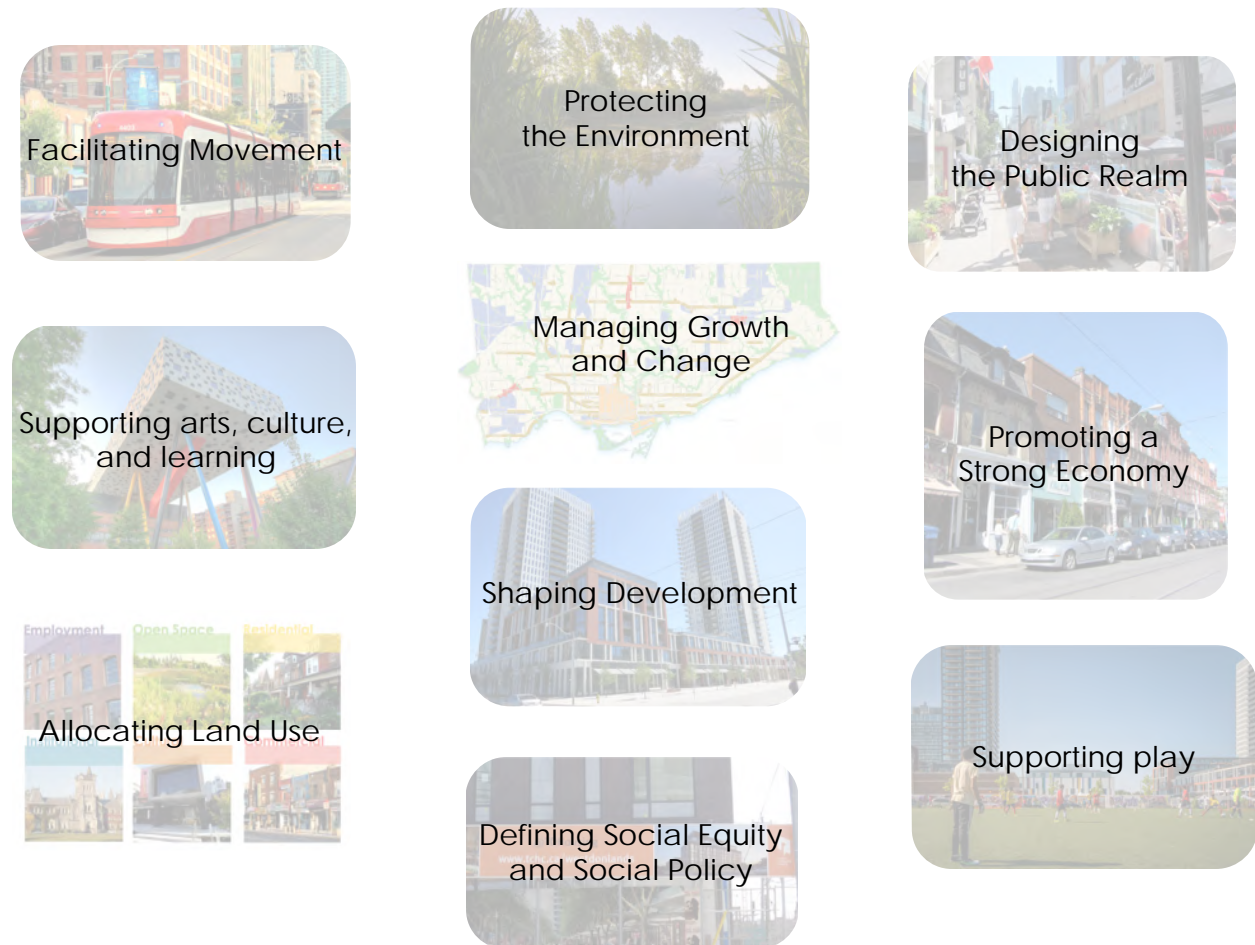
To address this problem, the Planning Division has launched a *Youth Engagement Strategy*. The point of this strategy is to help the Planning Division figure out how to better involve youth in city planning conversations and to mobilize them into becoming active on planning issues.

This Discussion Guide explains what city planning is and how and when planners engage people. Throughout this Discussion Guide, you can provide feedback and advice to the Planning Division about how to better engage youth in planning conversations.

Question #1: What are your interests in life (generally)? What inspires you to get out of bed every day?

What is Planning?

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines city planning as "programs pursued as a means of improving the urban environment and achieving certain social and economic objectives." The City of Toronto uses a few tools to do city planning, the most important of which is the Official Plan. The Official Plan is a forward-looking document that acts as the blueprint for the city and sets out policies to guide how the city should change. It talks about ten topics:

Facilitating Movement

Protecting the Environment

Designing the Public Realm

Supporting arts, culture, and learning

Managing Growth and Change

Promoting a Strong Economy

Allocating Land Use

Shaping Development

Supporting play

Defining Social Equity and Social Policy

Question #2: These are the issues that City Planning is talking about. What kind of issues in the city do you care about? They could be the same issues that City Planning is talking about or they could be completely different.

How Do Planners Plan?

Planners plan by developing policy, reviewing development applications, and engaging communities. They work to get people to engage through three strategies:
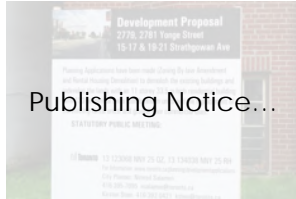
Publishing Notice…

… by putting ads in newspapers, putting signs in front of properties, and advertising in social media.

Hosting A Conversation…

… by organizing public meetings, design charrettes, and using different online tools.

Considering and Incorporating Feedback…

… by balancing feedback with other priorities (like policy directions or technical and financial limits).

Question #3: Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies above helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?

Question #4: What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action? (Online tools, innovative meeting formats, etc.)?

When Do Planners Engage People?

Planners engage people at four different times:

Neighbourhood-Based Planning
In high growth areas, or in areas that require special attention (like the waterfront), the Planning Division creates area-based plans. These include studies like Secondary Plans or Urban Design studies.

Development Application Review
When a property owner wants to redevelop a piece of land, they must typically submit a development application to the City. The City then hosts a public meeting to get feedback on the development application.

A City-Wide Planning Process or Special Study
Some planning processes are of city-wide importance, like the 5-year review of our Official Plan or Tall Buildings Guidelines.

Conversations about City Building
Sometimes planners need to have conversations about big ideas that set city wide priorities. Sometimes, planners just want to create an opportunity to check-in and ask questions, like with Planners in Public Spaces (PiPs).

Question #5: These are the times the City asks people to engage on different issues. Are there other times you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?

Question #6: Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?

Toronto City Planning Division
Youth Engagement Strategy
Interim Report

Overview

How do we make Toronto the most engaged city in North America on city planning issues? That's the question at the heart of *Growing Conversations*, an effort to improve the relationship between the City of Toronto Planning Division, residents, and stakeholders through better community engagement.

One of the key efforts within *Growing Conversations* is the *Youth Engagement Strategy*. Youth are an important segment of Toronto's population. In some parts of the city, they are the fastest-growing demographic group, and they are drivers of economic and employment growth. Yet the voices of youth are often scarcely heard in planning processes.

The *Youth Engagement Strategy* seeks to understand how the City of Toronto Planning Division can better involve youth in city building conversations and mobilize them into becoming active on planning and city building issues.

The Planning Division retained a Consulting Team composed of Swerhun Facilitation, Maximum City, and Urban Strategies Inc. to report on how the City Planning Division could achieve these goals. The Consulting Team in turn hired ten youth researchers to help develop this report by researching youth engagement issues with their peers.

This Interim Report summarizes key findings from the first stage of work in developing the City of Toronto's *Youth Engagement Strategy*. There are three sections to this report: an overview of the Youth Research Team's work and research process, demographics, and a summary of the findings from Youth Workshop #1, the Youth Research Team's Research, and a Supplemental Literature Review and Research.

The Youth Research Team's Work and Research Process

The Youth Research Team's job was to:

- Explore what issues matter most to youth, when and how to involve youth in city building conversations, and how to build youth understanding and engagement in city building.
- Achieve the participation of youth with a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and interests in the development of the Strategy.
- Engage and seek feedback from 30 - 50 youth per team member about city building over a period of five weeks.
- Share the findings of the research with the City and its Consultant Team.

Youth Engagement Strategy

City of Toronto Planning Division

Youth Research Team Final Report
Research and Report by Anna Procopio

1.   Overview

Over the course of the past month I developed and ran three focus groups with twenty-three youth between the ages of 14 – 30 in different parts of the City of Toronto. In addition to these focus groups, I carried out one-on-one in-depth interviews with an additional eight people between the ages of 18 – 30. My research is part of *Growing Conversations,* a City of Toronto initiative aimed at improving the City's community engagement process. I am one of ten youth researchers trying to better understand how to effectively include young people in the City's urban planning process as part of the Youth Engagement Strategy component of *Growing Conversations*.

Age of Participants	No. of Participants
14 – 17 years old	7
18 – 24 years old	15
25 – 30 years old	9

Figure 1: Age and numbers of participants

Focus Group 1: Tuesday, November 18th 2014, 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM – Maria A. Shchuka (a Toronto Public Library branch) with members of the Youth Advisory Groups from both Maria A. Shchuka and Oakwood Public Library.

Focus Group 2: Thursday, November 20th 2014, 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM – Sherbourne Health Centre with members of SOY's (Supporting Our Youth) H.E.A.T. Program

Focus Group 3: Friday, November 21st 2014, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM – Scadding Court Community Centre with youth who participate in various programs at the community centre, many of whom self-identify as living in Alexandra Park.

8 Interviews: one-on-one, 30 minute, in-depth interviews during the month of November in various places (e.g. coffee shop; public library).

The most surprising message echoed by many of the research participants is their strong **preference for in-person engagement** over participating via online platforms.
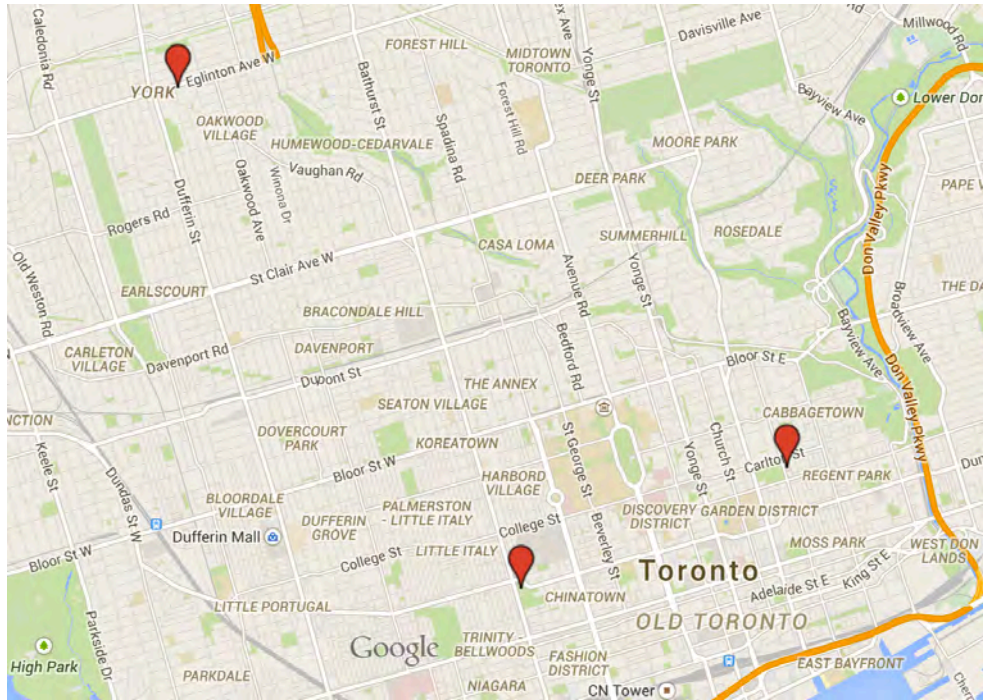

Figure 2: Map of Focus Group Locations – Source: Google

2. Key Messages

These key messages identify the most consistent or common messages research participants offered. They're meant to be read along with the more detailed summary of feedback below.

In-Person Engagement. The majority of research participants strongly prefer in-person engagement methods to online ones. If online tools are used they should be innovative, interesting and allow for a two-way exchange of information. These tools should be used in addition to in-person engagement, not instead of.

Creative Outreach. Many research participants were unaware of how many public meetings and consultations happen all the time in the City of Toronto. Efforts should be made to creatively advertise community engagement processes through social media, as well with eye-catching signage in highly-trafficked public spaces such as on the TTC. Youth animators could also be hired by the City to get the word out.

Continuous Dialogue. Youth are tired of one-time engagement/consultation processes in which they never hear back from the researcher. Youth should be involved throughout the planning process and followed-up with.

Emphasis on Equity. Equity and social justice are key strands that run through the feedback for all of the research questions. Youth have a keen understanding and interest in issues of marginalization and injustice. Planning should aim at giving voice to marginalized communities and should pay close attention to issues of equity.

3.   Detailed Feedback

This feedback is organized by research question.

What are your interests in life (generally)? What inspires you to get out of bed every day?

Focus group participants and interviewees had a wide range of interests and identified varying sources of inspiration:

– **Learning.** Being out in the world meeting people, having conversations, making connections, and being physically present in the presence of others is an amazing and motivating feeling. Being part of a community, especially one that engages in learning together, is a major source of inspiration.

– **Having a Positive Impact.** Contributing to some sort of major societal transformation away from individualism and towards a greater, more caring collectivity. Focusing on overcoming and creating a society that isn't centered on individualism, conservatism, and injustice. The welfare state has been decimated; homelessness is on the rise; shelters are being closed; the physical environment is inaccessible to many people; therefore, ensuring that everyone, in one way or another, is able to live a stable and fulfilling life is a source of motivation.

– **Love and Empathy.** Expressing love, showing love, receiving love. Continually working on creating the capacity to show others empathy and understanding.

– **Innovation.** Working towards a more creative, efficient, and interesting world. Building knowledge and applying this knowledge to creative and challenging problems.

– Fighting Injustice. Marginalized communities repeatedly get the short end of the stick. Trying to end the injustices perpetrated against these communities in the hope of greater equity and inclusion is a top priority.

– Environmental Sustainability. Protecting the environment and doing things sustainably in a way that everyone feels engaged and where everyone can contribute to the common project of environmental sustainability. People (individuals) have to make this change, or at least lead the movement towards greater sustainability because governments have been lagging on this front. Furthermore, government is supposed to represent the people and so public policies should emerge because people demanded them.

– The Economy. Capitalism. Poor people are getting poorer, while the rich are getting richer. Toronto is multicultural but only certain voices are being heard; there are clear cycles of poverty and cycles of privilege that reproduce the worst inequities of our economy.

What kind of issues in the city do you care about? These issues could be the same as the ones City Planning is talking about or they could be completely different.

This section is organized by issue including feedback given about each; however, there was an overall feeling amongst focus group participants and interviewees that the issues planning cares about are not independent of each other and should not exist in silos as stand alone issues. Here are the most important issues as identified by research participants:

– Facilitating Movement. *"I shouldn't have to wait twenty minutes for a bus."* Toronto is a wealthy city with a lot of development happening, yet there's little investment in public transportation. There are serious problems with transit right now and this will only worsen as Toronto's population continues to grow. There also needs to be investment in active transportation, such as bike infrastructure and pedestrian oriented streets. There is a desire for transportation options in and out of the City – Autoshare isn't an option for people without their G licenses and this is very limiting for individuals who want to explore other parts of the province while living in Toronto.

– Defining Social Equity and Social Policy. There are serious issues when it comes

to equity in Toronto. These include a lack of affordable rental housing, a long social housing waiting list, systemic racism, homelessness, over-crowded and expensive public transit, and high rates of unemployment. To compound these issues, the City decided to host the Pan-Am games when it should be using that money to address these issues. We shouldn't be hosting major events when we can't take care of the people who live here.

– Supporting Arts, Culture and Learning. *"Toronto is such a culturally diverse, creative city – this should be displayed in the physical and social fabric of the city."* Art isn't just a perk; it's essential to city life and ought to be fostered by planners. It seems as though there's many new people in the city but not enough entertainment venues for everyone to go to. Furthermore, there should be more alternative educational institutions for young people and adults to go to in order to learn life skills, professional development, and other skills not taught in schools.

– Protecting the Environment. *"The City is not green enough."* As Toronto continues to grow, there must be more green spaces built in the City. The City can't just *say* this is a priority, or build green spaces in certain areas and not others – there absolutely must be more green spaces, no excuses. There also needs to be investment in alternative energy sources and less of a reliance on fossil fuels. There should also be more urban forestry.

– Supporting Play. *"I love basketball but there aren't not enough places to play in my neighbourhood."* The City should be building recreational places not just for young children, but for teens and adults as well. Supporting play is essential for young people who want to partake in recreation but need the space to do so.

– Promoting a Strong Economy. *"Poor people are getting poorer, while the rich are getting richer."* A strong economy is not one that merely ensures the generation of wealth; a strong economy ensures a just distribution of wealth. A booming, wealthy place like Toronto should be able to support its least fortunate residents. Furthermore, the high rates of youth unemployment, and the bleak employment situation overall, is a huge problem.

– Designing the Public Realm. *"It seems like some areas of the City get a lot more attention than others."* Beauty is very important. Public places that are beautiful and entice people to linger and spend time in the them are crucial to the vibrancy of a city – good urban design should extend to all neighbourhoods though, not just ones where people spend a lot of money.

– Shaping Development. *"There are an abundance of ugly, overpriced condos being built."* There's so much new construction in Toronto right now, yet there's little investment in new infrastructure to accommodate this growth. There are so many expensive new condos, but where is the affordable housing? Toronto is not harnessing enough money from developers.

– Other Issues:

    - Lack of education surrounding tenant rights and landlord duties. People need to know their rights as renters and renters need more rights overall in this city. Some landlords break the rules and discriminate against potential tenants if they come from marginalized groups. We need more education surrounding tenant rights; landlords also need education about what they can and cannot do!

    - The Police. We need to do away with stop and search programs and targeted carding programs. There needs to be more police accountability.

    - Accessibility. It is imperative that the physical environment, public spaces, entertainment venues, and recreational facilities be accessible to people with disabilities. This should be mandatory in a wealthy and diverse city like Toronto.

    - Innovation. Toronto drags its feet when it comes to innovation and technology that could increase everyone's quality of life. Toronto's lack of fare standardization is an example of this. There is too much bureaucracy, red tape, and politics; so many other awesome cities show that it's possible to do amazing things, yet Toronto spends time debating backwards ideas like building a casino.

    - Ensuring the city is hospitable to newcomers. More needs to be done to make Toronto a welcoming and inclusive place for immigrants, migrant workers, and refugees.

    - City Council's interaction with planning. City councilors should be educated about the role of urban planners and why they are important. Often times it seems as though councilors make decisions that aren't based in research or fact. Planners should be included in the legislative process.

Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?

Some focus group participants and interviewees responded 'yes' to this question and others responded 'no':

Yes:

– Demonstrations. The hope is that these demonstrations will spur change. They are a way of pushing an issue into the public eye and inspiring discussion about important issues. Demonstrations also serve as outlets for frustrated young people.

– Voting. Many interviewees and focus group participants mentioned voting as one way of taking action on important issues.

– Volunteering. Volunteering at various organizations such as Greenpeace, No One Is Illegal, homeless shelters, Live Green Toronto, Scadding Court Community Centre, Toronto Public Library's Youth Advisory Group, and Toronto Youth Council.

– Letter Writing. *"When I was in grade 6, my class wrote a letter to City Council expressing our concern about fluoride in the water and we got invited to sit in on a discussion in city hall which made us feel liked we were listened to."*

– Extra-Curricular Activities. Participating in clubs at school such as the Social Justice Club.

– Public Meetings and Consultations. Some participants have been to City meetings and consultations when the focus of the meeting or consultation seemed especially important or relevant.

No:

– Lack of Awareness. Many focus group participants and interviewees had never been to a public meeting or consultation before – some research participants also claim to have never been made aware about the occurrence of public meetings

or consultations.

– Lack of Engagement. *"When I lived In Vancouver I did go to some public meetings about important decisions affecting the City, such as the Olympics because it was an issue I carried deeply about and there was a lot of discussion about it at the time. I've never really had the same urge to get involved in Toronto."*

– Lack of Knowledge. Some participants expressed a strong desire to take action on issues affecting their lives (for example, the lack of recreation and community space in the Oakwood Village neighbourhood) but don't know where or how to get started with taking action.

– Feeling Discouraged. Many focus group participants and interviewees have tried to take action on various issues in the past but feel much of this has been futile and met with opposition/pessimism. This causes them to feel hesitant about continuing to get involved and invest their time in trying to spur change.

– Cynicism. Some participants said that they had been consulted quite a lot by the City, but that very little of what they say is actually incorporated into City plans. Some participants think that planners have their own agenda and don't actually care about the community's input. Planners want to change the mind of the community, rather than allow planning's mind to be changed by the community. Consultation is often tokenistic rather than genuine.

– The Media. Sensationalized news and other types of media can distract the public and lead them away from important issues worth talking about and acting on.

What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action? (Online tools, innovative meeting formats, etc.)

Tools:

– Innovative Meeting Formats. Meeting formats that try to reduce power imbalances between facilitators and participants would increase young people's participation. Furthermore, not everyone enjoys participating in the same way – there should be opportunities for people to partake in discussions while others

prefer to writer their thoughts down or express themselves in other ways.

– Creative Information Sharing. Most participants were surprised to hear that there's at least one public meeting or consultation held almost every day of the year in the City of Toronto. These meetings need to be advertised in creative and engaging ways in order to get youth to come out. Boring, monochrome flyers and signs do not work. Meetings should be advertised in a variety of ways, including: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, signs on the TTC, and by people getting the word out 'IRL' (In Real Life).

– Youth Leadership. *"I think for change to take place there first needs to be a leader to initiate action. Someone who is passionate and has the capacity to get things going."*

– Effective Online Tools. *"CBC had a great tool called Voter's Compass* during the provincial election; *you could input information about yourself and then it would suggest who to vote for based on your stance on different issues – it was quick and easy to use. This type of online engagement works well and could be an awesome tool for getting young people involved in planning."* There is a need for innovative and engaging online tools to be used in addition to, or in concert with, in-person engagement methods. However, said tools need to be interactive and youth should get gain something from them (i.e. two way information exchange), rather than youth sharing their input without receiving any in return.

Barriers:

– Perceived Irrelevance. *"Often times meetings that I do hear about seem boring and irrelevant to my life – maybe if it was explained how my participation in a specific instance would actually affect me personally, I might be more inclined to get involved."*

– Over-Emphasis on Online Tools. The majority of research participants said they greatly prefer participating in-person rather than online. Many participants felt that online surveys and similar online engagement tools are merely tokenistic and have no real impact. Furthermore, it's easy to get distracted on the internet and therefore challenging to focus in on a single issue. In-person engagement and participation is preferred because of the perception of it having a greater impact, and because of the potential for two-way learning and idea exchange.

– No Follow-Up. When young people are engaged in a decision-making process,

it shouldn't be a one-time thing. Young people need to know that their input was at least considered. Receiving tangible feedback and having an opportunity to engage in continuous dialogue would go a long way. No more "hit-and-run" consultation.

– Inconvenience. Inconvenient meeting times and locations were identified as concerns for a number of participants. Public meetings and consultations that aim at including young people need to be accessible. One of the ways this can be achieved is by *"going to the youth rather than having us come to you."*

Are there any specific times you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?

– All Big Decisions. Whenever big decisions affecting the City are being made, youth should be actively included. For example, when the casino was being debated, or when there were votes about bike lanes on Bloor St. Often times, youth aren't aware decisions are being made that affect them until after it's too late to get involved.

– Continuously. Youth should be involved in city building throughout the entire conversation, not just once.

– Community Initiated Conversations. Communities should be able to get together and initiate a development review meeting or engagement process. It is problematic that currently public consultations are only organized when a big stakeholder introduces a plan or when the City decides to consult. The public is viewed as a hurdle to get around rather than active and valued participants in the process. The public should be able to initiate community engagement processes.

– During and After Implementation. Youth should also be engaged and consulted with during the monitoring and evaluation of a planning programs. This will allow youth to offer feedback on a plan or program's progress and give them a voice when it comes to changes or amendments that might need to be made.

– When the Plan is Changed. If a community consents/agrees to a plan that is a described in a public meeting or consultation, and then that plan changes, there needs to be another public meeting or consultation. Consent =/= blanket consent.

Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?

– Empowerment. Empower youth and build their capacity so youth can participate effectively and robustly.

– Accessibility. This means physical accessibility, but it also means accessible meeting formats, accessible language, convenient locations and times, compensation for bus fare, and refreshments and food.

– Online Presence. The Planning Division should have an engaging website that is easy to navigate, accessible, and aesthetically pleasing. Government websites are often not user-friendly – changing this would be a great first step to better involving youth in planning.

– Planning Pop-Ups. Have planners schedule regular hours in community spaces such as libraries and community centres, so youth can ask questions and voice their concerns on a regular basis, while also learning about the planning process, will be important to a Youth Engagement Strategy.

– Continuous Contact. Enable youth to have long-term contact with planning professionals once youth are involved in a planning process.

– Take Youth Seriously. Don't treat youth as an 'add on' to the consultation process – make them an essential component and earnestly try to incorporate their ideas, or at least explain why it wasn't possible to in a particular instance.

4.   Participant List

I informed all participants that names and email addresses would be kept strictly confidential. In part, this was due to the fact that the first focus group was with YAG at the Toronto Public Library; there are stringent rules surrounding research with YAG members, since many are below the age of consent and all are volunteers. I was required to provide a consent form that all YAG members had to sign before participating in the research; youth under the age of 16 had to have the form signed by a parent or guardian. The YAG coordinator suggested it would be easier to recruit YAG members if I guaranteed anonymity/confidentiality on the consent form.

Following the first focus group, I decided to keep all research participants' identifying information confidential, in part for consistency purposes and in part to protect participants whom I consider to be part of a vulnerable population as youth, and some of whom are from marginalized communities and neighbourhoods.

Organizations and Neighbourhoods Engaged

Maria A. Shchuka Public Library, Youth Advisory Group (YAG)
Oakwood Public Library, Youth Advisory Group (YAG)
Oakwood Village, neighbourhood
Sherbourne Health Centre, Supporting Our Youth (SOY) H.E.A.T Group
Scadding Court Community Centre
Alexandra Park, neighbourhood

City of Toronto Youth Engagement Strategy

Summary of Research Activities

Prepared by Corey Horowitz

Overview

A total of 42 participants were engaged in research activities. This includes a group of 10 people involved in face-to-face discussion at the Youth Employment Services (YES) downtown location. This meeting took place on November 11, 2014 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. I followed up the next day to receive any further information not provided during the session. Along with the clients, a youth staff member also participated.

In addition, I created an online survey using SurveyMonkey, which received 32 complete responses. The survey was sent to friends, colleagues and extended networks of individuals not known to me personally. It utilized short and long answer questions. Surveys were sent out and collected between November 3 and November 14, 2014.

Varied representation was achieved in terms of age, location, occupation/interests and level of knowledge/engagement. A total of eight responses came from persons in school for/working in the field of urban planning.

The tables below display the demographic information gathered for age and residential location:

Age ranges of participants in years					Average age
	18-21	22-24	25-27	28-30	
Number of participants	6	9	16	11	25.8

Area of residence in Toronto								
	Bloor W/ Annex/ Little Italy	Parkdale/ High Park	Downtown west (other)	Downtown East	Uptown/ North York	Scarborough /Beaches	Etobicoke	East York/ Danforth
Number of participants	8	8	7	5	4	3	2	3

[Information not provided: 2]

Challenges with research:

Within the survey component, there was a minor issue with some participants skipping questions, providing vague/limited answers or repetitive answers. While part of this is likely the nature of the survey method, I think it also reflects the lack of background or context in issues of City Planning and engagement processes for some individuals. While background information on these subjects was provided, it's unlikely that every participant took the time to internalize it. I think there was also some potential overlap between questions (parts of 3 and 4) that elicited some repetitive or missing responses.

<u>**Key Messages**</u>

There is great interest among youth in issues of personal impact as well as broader implication for the city
• City needs to spark initial involvement, make process transparent, show how youth are directly affected and can have real impact

There is a frequent lack of awareness, interest and understanding of public engagement processes and methods
• Little appeal to youth sensibilities; not seen as current or relevant

The TTC (and transportation in general) are not cutting it
• Constant delays, slow, unreliable, overcrowded

It's time to get serious about cycling
• We need aggressive infrastructure investment—more bike lanes and safe, comfortable conditions

Lack of affordable, quality housing options is a big concern for youth
• Including diminishing likelihood of ownership and disproportionately high rents in the city

<u>**Detailed Feedback**</u>

1. What are your interests in life (generally)? What inspires you to get out of bed every day?

Hobbies
• Music, concerts, cultural events, video games, reading, fitness, cycling, yoga, food, cooking, fashion, painting, drawing, film, theatre, nature/outdoors, travel, art/design, photography, urban exploration, urbanism, architecture
• Sports (hockey, basketball, surfing, tennis, running, volleyball, golf, swimming, skiing)

Other interests
• Advocacy groups/events, informative lectures, learning, social (getting to know people, helping with problems), giving back to community, political causes, heritage preservation

Professional/academic
• Nutrition, culinary arts, creative technology, urban planning, social services, early childhood education, youth empowerment, community building, sustainability, architecture, advertising, marketing, video production, finance, social enterprise, psychology, humanities, literature/publishing, journalism

2. What kind of issues in the city do you care about? These issues could be the same as the ones City Planning is talking about or they could be completely different.
• **TTC service**
• Need for a youth/student voice for feedback and priorities
• Volume of users relative to resources

- **Bike infrastructure and safety**
- A more standardized system (consistency, predictability, regulations), including e-bikes
- Mutual respect and awareness with drivers

- **Affordable housing**
- Quality of aging apartment stock (public and private)
- Gentrification

- **Intensity and character of development**
- Prolific condo development, exasperates already inadequate infrastructure and services
- More thoughtful architecture and urban form
- More attention to long-term vision and considerations

- **Maintenance of parks/public space**
- Protection and increase of greenspace, trees and natural areas
- Clean up and enhance community/school recreation spaces

- **Traffic and congestion**
- Poor road conditions, constant construction

- **Environmental preservation/sustainability**
- Pollution and air quality
- Recycling and waste management

- **Social and economic justice**
- Social services
- Homelessness (including increased shelter space)

Other important issues:
- Neighbourhood business composition
- Support for small and independent businesses and entrepreneurs
- Affordable workspaces/studios
- Funding for arts/culture
- Infrastructure investment
- Improving the waterfront
- Streetscape design and placemaking (mixed-use, pedestrian friendly)
- Pedestrian and street safety
- Police presence
- Security of females walking at night
- Active and alternative transportation modes
- NIMBYism and opposition to change
- Youth employment challenges
- Seniors issues
- Immigrant access to services

The following quote from a participant helps to sum up the documented frustration with Toronto's transportation system and infrastructure, along with associated issues of congestion, safety, growth and development patterns:

"None of the forms of transportation are good enough: roads are a mess and far too congested, public transportation cannot handle the volume of users, and bike lanes are almost non-existent. Yet condominiums continue to be built along the most congested routes! Furthermore, there is a real dispute between drivers and bikers, too, because we are forced to share the same infrastructure and act according to the same rules, which makes no sense at all considering the different speed at which we travel, weight we carry, space we occupy, and the severe difference in potential harm caused."

3. Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how?

A total of eight participants expressed that they have participated directly in City engagement activities or other action on related issues. Activities included the following:

• Community meetings
• Open houses
• Development application review
• Protests and advocacy initiatives
• Volunteer work
• Various surveys

Topics included:

• Condominium developments
• Safe injection sites
• Homelessness
• Toronto Community Housing refurbishment
• Cycling (support/protests for bike lanes, CycleTO advocacy)
• Public transit (Metrolinx's The Big Move plan)

If not, why not?

• Ignorance about opportunities for where and how to take action
• Capacity to have an impact is unclear or dubious
• Most options to take action seem impotent to cause real change
• Lack of defined processes to act and influence outcomes directly (as opposed to "direct democracy" or referendum)
• Issues don't have enough personal importance to compel action
• There is an urban/suburban divide that prevents meaningful consensus action on large issues

Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?

• Twitter is somewhat helpful for notifications on public meetings/consultations
• Family/friends have attended Toronto Community Housing (TCH) consultations for Regent Park and Alexandra Park redevelopments

• 'Feeling Congested' campaign was interesting and generated interest
• 'Ideaspace' is a good tool

On the other hand:

• Community meetings and development application review do not seem relevant to young people
• Meeting notices rarely even register, if seen at all
• Notices about TCH revitalizations not compelling or very encouraging (seemed like they were just being told what was going to happen, not invited take action in process)
• City materials appear mundane and lack appealing design
• The outreach is not exciting
• Less outreach/events in inner suburbs; downtown-centric

• *"Notice of Development Proposals are typically walls of legalese text that seem to be actively dissuading anyone from getting involved. Gimme a picture, a couple facts, a place to go for more information, and where I can go to have my voice heard. Nothing more."*

4. What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about?

• Lack of awareness or knowledge of specific engagement processes, public meetings
• General ignorance about how public engagement process looks and works
• Not knowing the who/what/when/where/how (e.g. to oppose a condo development)
• Lack of interest in methods and/or subjects of City engagement
• Activities don't seem easy to participate in or appealing for youth
• Issues don't seem to impact my everyday life
• "What does this have to do with me"
• Visibility of advertisements is infrequent
• Language used by City can come across as obscure, full of jargon, confusing and boring
• Advertising and 'branding' of public engagement is not accessible or attractive to youth
• Timing of meetings and activities is not ideal (after work/school, dinner time)
• Lack of time between work/school and social life
• Language barriers exist in some communities
• Feeling that no one really listens; and if they do it won't change anything
• People don't care unless they see how change can occur
• Disconnect between owners and renters with regard to community meetings and development proposals
• Issues aren't presented as directly relevant to youth

What would help you take action (Online tools, innovative meeting formats, etc.)?

• A permanent youth-dedicated group or division of City to engage, help identify and address relevant issues and methods
• Community youth champions to mobilize on issues and act as liaisons to the City
• Regularly scheduled community meetings (same day each month) to discuss current issues
• Provide background info and allow time for community to form opinions prior to public sessions
• Make language on advertisements simple and transparent (needs to be sexy and quickly understood)
• Use one key issue to spark youth involvement, and build from there

• Use spaces where youth hang out...can then transition to more formal engagement
• Advertisements and meetings in libraries, TTC stations/stops, coffee shops and apartment buildings
• Pop-up events in local parks and public spaces (Use food, music and make it fun)
• Park crawls
• More City presence at community and cultural events
• A facebook page geared towards youth...spread awareness of specific issues
⠀⠀⠀⠀• Opportunity to connect with peers online and build agency
• Involvement through employment centres and job search/career-building skills
 • Provide youth-specific forum for youth to express opinions (eg. on TTC service)...It's interesting to hear the perspectives of your peers
• Remote/electronic access to City meetings
• More use of video to inform about projects, issues and forums for action
⠀⠀⠀⠀• Live Youtube channels
• Drop-in times with local councillors

5. Are there any specific times or contexts you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?
• Generating awareness, promoting clear options for involvement
• Advertising and creating a single platform for discussion and information
• Youth committees and organizing social gatherings
• Youth employment strategies
• Job creation and entrepreneurship
• Social, economic and environmental justice
⠀⠀⠀⠀• Youth are often open-minded, understanding, enlightened and innovative; they should
⠀⠀⠀⠀be more involved in big ideas about positive change
• 'Green' decisions
• Environmental education
• Development of public greenspace—advertisement and how to support projects
• Cycling programs
• Bike lanes
• Active transportation
• Public transit
• City infrastructure
• The economy
• Future development
• Traffic and congestion
• Affordable housing
• Poverty reduction
• Arts and culture
• Music (now that it has its own Development Officer)

6. Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?

• *"Present the issues directly to youth, with facts/figures/discussion about how they affect our generation. This generation is driving less, delaying getting driver's licenses, delaying buying homes and renting more, delaying family formation (children). I'd be more interested in talking about those things, because they affect us directly."*

• Enhance branding of City advertisement and activity to get on the youth level
      • Promotion similar to social events—grab attention and make it cool
• Hire youth to design social media/promotional campaigns
• A lot of youth post about issues on Facebook and Twitter…The City should look to take advantage of this to utilize power of social networks (Youth will engage their friends naturally)
      • [For many, the survey was a first in terms of involvement with City initiatives, and it only reached them through their social network]
• Communities would benefit from City having a more local, neighbourhood-based presence rather than one big bureaucratic entity
• Start education and engagement about municipal issues early i.e. in schools
• Engage at university/college level in issues relevant to students' future
• It's time to start doing instead of just talking—youth can have a role here
• Make planning popular; market to wider community of interest and expertise beyond the profession
• Ensure that results of meetings/workshops are shared with participants

Next Steps

Following the distribution of this summary to research participants, any additional feedback provided will be incorporated. The report will then be finalized and submitted to the City of Toronto Planning division. Our research team will work with the City to identify the most effective strategies around youth engagement, based on your information and suggestions. The Youth Engagement Strategy is part of the City of Toronto's *Growing Conversations* initiative to improve the City's relationship with its residents, and generate outcomes that better relflect their vision and values.

Appendix

List of Participants

Note: Several participants preferred to remain anonymous, or gave only a first name.

Kyrsten Howat
Neil Loewen
Sandra Pavlovic
Victoria Lee
James Cameron
Michael Difede
Mark Tugwood
Julie Martaus
Pamela Wannamaker
Athena Gossifidou
David Selak
Daniel Bitonti
Tate Kelly
Ashley Carmichael
Chris Andrew
Michael Cranston
Abby Ainsworth
Ryan May
Charlotte Ficek
Meghan Walker
Alex Kaju
Jordan Gildersleeve
Adam Sweanor
Polina Bam
Marshall Eidinger
Paige Sisley
Aslam Shaikh
Laura Di Nardo
Kit L.
Stephanie
Emma
Alexandra
Katie
Laura
Lindsay
Anna
Adam
Gilda

YRT Final Report Template

    1. <u>Overview Section</u>

I embarked on this research with the intention of using multiple methods to collect data. These methods include an online survey through survey monkey, one on one interviews and focus groups.

The **online survey** was the method that had the most responses with a total of **31 participants**. The online survey included a question that would allow participants to indicate if they wanted to be contacted to discuss in detail their responses or things they could not convey through the online survey. Out of the 31 participants7 indicated they would be ok with being contacted for a follow up. I contacted all 7 to further discuss their responses. The survey was available from November 11th 2014 – November 26th 2014. I included my contact information and encouraged participants (with a note before beginning the survey) to contact me if they needed any clarification on any of the questions while filling out the survey.

One on one interviews took place with **4 individuals**, outside of the individuals contacted through the survey. The 2 individuals who were engaged through the online survey indicated their interest based on knowledge of my participation in this project, these two individuals then referred one individual each. These conversations took place in person on November 14th, 17th, 22 and 23rd. The 7 individuals from the online survey who indicated they would be interested in follow up conversations were contacted by phone (where the phone number was available) and through email to arrange phone interviews. In total **11 individuals** were engaged one on one, on the phone and in person.

I arranged 2 focus groups however I was only able to attend 1. The weather lead to 1 of the 2 focus groups being cancelled as I was dropping in to an existing program and the program was cancelled for the day. The focus group was conducted with a youth group at Access Alliance on November 18th. There were **a total of 8 participants**, one of whom was the facilitator of the group. The age range was 16-29 with the facilitator being the oldest.

        -In total **43 participants** participated.
        -The tables below breakdown some demographic information from survey monkey.
        -The bullets are all participants

    0f those who answered demographic questions:

- 3 out of the 31 online survey participants did not answer demographic questions
- 26/40 were between the ages of 21-29
- 10 /40 were between the ages of 18-20
- 2/40 were 17 or younger
- 2/40 was 30 or over (I confirmed this person was 30 prior to allowing them to participate)
- 13/40 had High school degree or equivalent
- 5/40 had less than high school
- 7/40 had some college but no degree

- 1/40 had an associate degree
- 8/40 had a bachelor degree
- 6/40 had a graduate degree

Online survey Reponses

Answer Choices	Responses	
— 17 or younger	**3.57%**	1
— 18-20	**28.57%**	8
— 21-29	**64.29%**	18
— 30-39	**3.57%**	1
— 40-49	**0.00%**	0
— 50-59	**0.00%**	0
— 60 or older	**0.00%**	0
Total		28

| Answer Choices	Responses	
— Less than high school degree	**3.57%**	1
— High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)	**39.29%**	11
— Some college but no degree	**17.86%**	5
— Associate degree	**3.57%**	1
— Bachelor degree	**21.43%**	6
— Graduate degree	**14.29%**	4
Total		28

2. <u>Key Messages Section</u>
   - ➢ one of the most consistent messages is the need for TTC/public transportation reform
   - ➢ participants feel that their voices are not being heard by city officials in a way that matters
   - ➢ many participants indicate that they are unaware of city planning meetings
   - ➢ youth should always be involved in city planning
   - ➢ youth should be engaged where they are (i.e at school, online tools, youth targeted events)
3. <u>Detailed Feedback Section</u>

   Under each question asked, use bullet points to provide a consolidated summary of feedback participants gave. If you have verbatim quotes, please put them in when a participant said or wrote something that struck you as important or memorable. What resonated with you? What made you pause and think? This is longest section and is essentially a raw data dump for you to share your research findings. Again, avoid analyzing or interpreting the data too much here, even though the temptation will be strong to do so.

   1. What inspires you to get out of bed every day? What are your interests in life (generally)? **"the possibility of success" "can't change the world from under the covers"**
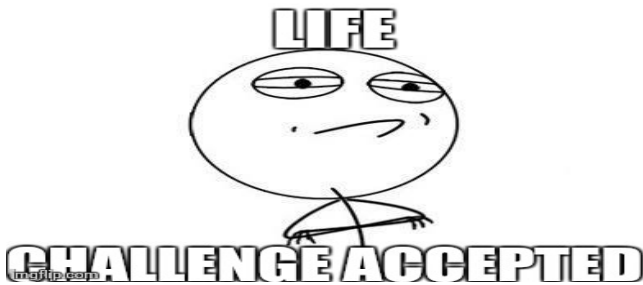
   - ➢ Being successful was one of the main reasons indicated by participants that they get out of bed.
   - ➢ Obligations such as work and school
   - ➢ Family and feeling a sense of obligation to family/parents/children
   - ➢ Making money, making a living
   - ➢ Happiness, exercise, fashion, volunteering, learning/education, music and sports were among the top interests, God, Faith
   2. What kind of issues in the city do you care about? These issues could be the same as the ones City Planning is talking about (public transit, facilitating movement, the environment, etc) or they could be completely different. "

- ➢ Public transportation: lack of reliability, fares being constantly increased, service being unpredictable and irregular
- ➢ At risk youth
- ➢ Youth violence
- ➢ The city being un-pedestrian friendly "walk-ablity"
- ➢ Social determinants of health particularly race and how they affect health care outcomes
- ➢ Immigration issues (deportation, refugee access to health care)
- ➢ Safety for women " a community safety strategy needs to be put into place to help women protect themselves" (focus on aboriginal women)
- ➢ Employment
- ➢ Tuition increase
- ➢ Lack of recreation services/spaces for youth
- ➢ Mental health issues (barriers to mental health services, stigma around mental health)

3. Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?

"no I haven't taken action for some reason. City strategies haven't been helpful for me, because the dates of these town hall meetings are kept so discreet, however this could be my fault for not searching as much"

- ➢ Half of participants have "taken action" on issues
- ➢ Attending workshops about efficient planning around the city
- ➢ Rallies/protests/ signing petitions

➢ Founding organizations to address issues (such as Healin' Scars in Scarbrough- focus on providing a home for teens in the east end and engaging youth through the arts)
➢ Not taking actions because putting in effort and not seeing any change is discouraging
➢ Not knowing who to go to and "how to create case that illicit change"
➢ Unaware meetings were open to the public
➢ Participating in advocacy groups and volunteering
➢ Lack of time
➢ Emailing concerns to TTC

4. What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action?

"It often feels like no matter what the action is, there is no result. The system that is in place and the people that are running it are too powerful. They will eventually make small concessions after a certain amount of public outcry, but I have never seen significant change happen"

➢ The city is not interested in what youth have to say
➢ Time and limited resources
➢ Not feeling apart of the system
➢ Personal doubts, fears and failure
➢ Power relations between students and stakeholders "we have no voice as much as they say we do"
➢ Being lazy
➢ School
➢ Lack of information
➢ "Town hall meetings can be intimidating especially for youth who feel their opinion isn't valued or respected"
➢ Online tools would help
➢ Bringing information to youth where they are/making information more readily available

5. Are there any specific times you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?

- ➢ During the summer
- ➢ Should be flexible
- ➢ When it effects the area where they live of effects youth directly (education related issues)
- ➢ Weekends and evenings
- ➢ Election times
- ➢ All the time **"youth should be part and parcel of stakeholder position whose views and input is ranked important"**
- ➢ "Youth should be involved every step of the way"

6. Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?

- ➢ The city should listen and take seriously the input of youth
- ➢ Getting schools involvement
- ➢ Youth need the information, skills to preserve their futures
- ➢ Create programs that bring out leadership qualities in youth
- ➢ Offer incentives

4. Next Steps Section

    My next steps will include sending out the report via email to participants that I am able to contact. A survey monkey conveying the major themes would be useful to gauge whether or not the report reflects respondents answers.

5. Participant List (Appendix)
    - Access Alliance
      Emen B
      Samantha C
      Assani M
      Miles M
      Bulqissa M
      Agan L
      Sumaia A
    - Nadeisha Pinnock
    - Jennifer Amankwa
    - [Email addresses removed for participant's privacy]

6. Other Materials (Appendix)

Question 1: What inspires you to get out of bed every day?

School The thought of laziness Outside noise
-class -working out -the activities I have ahead of me -friends
work money coffee self-motivation progression
School Money A house Car Bills
Work
- new day, chance for a fresh start - goals I have for the week, month, etc - building for my future - my family - God
My family
Nothing Hunger Have to pee Thirsty God knows what
Helping the children I work with Making money to survive and afford luxuries Helping my family Just being motivated overall (Can't change the world from under the covers) Having the strength to get up everyday (it's a blessing)
1)God 2)family 3)my purpose
My mom
my hopes and dreams becoming my reality
My family My friends My faith Academic Career Making an impact
Success
Perseverance Faith Change Authenticity
God's purpose Making myself and immediate family proud Food Furthering my career Seeing what the day will bring (curiousity)
My family , friends , future goals and my passion to succeed
School Friends Parents Dreams Life
Succeeding in life, happiness, FOOD, family and friends
Family; my passion to fulfill my destiny in assisting other
routine another chance to start again another chance to fix mistakes life
God - Family - Friends - Money - Myself
To get as much educated I can to be a better person for my son

work boyfriend food
being successful trying to make a difference doing well in school making my parents proud generally because i kinda have to
I am not quite sure - pretty mundane things like food, sunshine, the possibility of petting a dog. I mostly get out of bed because I have to for work.

Question 2: What are your interests in life (generally)?

music the way people think writing
- travel - global politics - religion
Anything which exemplifies my view of success
I'm interested in fashion and styling.
Making connections with people, inspiring other, making a difference, becoming the best person i can be
working out becoming successful
Volunteering in anything regarding young children and women empowering
- Music - Sports - Learning
reading books business movies fiction art emtions
I love to help others ans be the conduit in which others pursue their vision
Sports, Life its self, friends/family and cooking/eating food
Entertainment
Faith , God , education , career and my community
Faith, social issues, cultures, education.
Family/Friends Music/Art Charity Education Health
Building a brand
Baking Arts Music Ministry
Fashion people ministry
Sports
Interested in helping individuals across the world
Traveling Baking Dancing Helping others Learning about the Lord Reading Writing Watching movies
Sports
Hair Psychology History
entrepreneurship the arts travel
Fitness Music Reading Running Dancing Yoga Plays/theatre Socializing
Right now nothing schools to much
Be successful and being in a happy state of mind
Politics Equality Finance/Capital Markets Globalization/Global Issues
-Movies -Running and exercise -cooking and baking -family and friends
Sports Food

Question 3

public transit
marginalization as it impacts race, religion and how it plays out in geography - lack of access to basic facilities to many people in the area
Public transportation and its proficiency
-Immigration issues: making sure that Toronto is actually a practicing sanctuary city. This includes keeping immigration out of essential services like schools, hospitals etc. and not cooperating with CBSA to racially profile and deport immigrants. In addition to protecting immigrants from CBSA, the city should proactively work to support immigrants in precarious situations (e.g. temporary work/study permits, refugee claimants, people in the sponsorship process, people without status). -Building healthy public transit - particularly infrastructure for environmentally friendly forms of transit such as cycling. -Making the city more environmentally friendly in general: increasing community awareness and engagement with environmental issues, expanding city recycling and composting systems, enforcing stricter environmental standards for buildings (e.g. Leeds standard), etc. -Enriching the idea of what a community means and what it can do together - working to connect people, break isolation, change individualistic attitudes, encourage co-operation between neighbours, etc. -Addressing our city's pathetic scarcity of affordable housing - Helping to support Toronto residents experiencing homelessness, mental health issues, and addictions. Taking a

harm reduction approach to drug use (e.g. safe injection sites like insite in Vancouver) -Increasing safety of the shelter system, particularly for the most vulnerable such as trans women and other gender minorities, women experiencing trauma and domestic violence, Aboriginal women, and newcomers to Canada. -The issue of missing Aboriginal women in Canada - this is all across the country but a significant number of Aboriginal women go missing in Toronto as well. A community safety strategy needs to be put in place to help women protect themselves, and begin to address the myriad forms of discrimination and exclusion that Aboriginal women face. Probably a million more issues but I will stop there.
teens at risk. public transit, government housing, tuition fees, lack of recreation places for youth.
Youth violence, high school dropout rates
Heating in bus stops Bus shelters Global Warming
The city is not pedestrian friendly at all!
Public transit
that fact that the city is changing and I feel Toronto is getting a make over, malls are getting expensive stores, condos are being built everywhere especially downtown
Inadequate and aging infrastructure and limited efforts to address the immediate infrastructual crisis
Public transit, wages, finding a job in your field
Public transit
Traffic congestion , public transit and safety
I care about a lot but to highlight a few: - public transit, walk-ability, and bike lanes - health care access, systems and waiting times - social determinants of health (income, race, class, gender, etc) and how these affect health outcomes - refugee and immigrant health, the cut in refugee health care - people reintegrating into society (whether they were previously incarcerated or other means)
Public transit (costs, delays, construction, rerouting) Post secondary (fee hikes) Construction work in the mornings
faster public transport
Public transit and accessibility of other resources for transporting around the city. Educational resources that are not so expensive.
student tuition youth and violence
public transit
Public transit and how to combat gun violence
People with mental health conditions being stigmatized in the community Unhealthy living conditions in subsidized housing Unhealthy eating Limited access to physical activity opportunities for marginalized youth Limited mentoring programs in the community
public transit
Public transit Education (lack of useful education)
at risk youth not getting the nuture and chances other kids are getting
Public transit Biking safety(Bike paths/ accessible bike lock stations) Parking The Environment (parks, green space) Traffic
Public transit it's to high for post secondary students
Public transit ...its increase in bus fare
Public Transit Overpopulation Anxiety and Issues related to overpopulation
-public transit -facilities and resources locations -garbage, recycle and green bin pickup
Cost of living in the city is too high. Especially for students

Question 4: Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?

I have taken action on issues I care about. Developing a strategy to fix the problem. I haven't heard of any city strategies.
have engaged in rallies and protests on issues that I care about, as well as signing petitions
I've helped co-found a non profit organization in Scarborough (Healin' Scars) that focused on providing a home for teens in scarborough and other parts of the GTA that were into the arts and making them achieve their full potential. These teens belonged to low income families, or were foster teens, and had no support from anyone to help them become successful in the arts. We gave them a chance, set them up with industry members to guide them, put on talent shows in the city and so on.
No I haven't taken action for some reason. City strategies havent been helpful for me, because the dates of these townhall meetings are kept so discreet, however this could be my fault for not searching as much
I have taken action on how to secure my self because its getting harder to live toronto, everything is increasing

accept min wage
Yes i have been to workshops and been part of conversations about effecient planning around the city
No, because no time and also a lot of people try to get thing fixed and fight about stuff and nothing happens
No and because I didn't know how to and believed my concern would not be taken seriously
Youth violence and youth employment. Participated in committees to address these issues
I would say I have but I feel like I can always do more. I decided to continue my education to strategically become apart of the policy decision making tables and stakeholders' tables. I also volunteer and use my time to attend events, workshops or any other action-oriented activities to help further address these issues. However, I feel like I could always be doing more. Not really, I usually feel like these spaces are not as welcoming to young people.
No, I don't know who to go to and how to create a case that illicits change. No, I didn't know theses meetings were open to the public, plus personal scheduling doesn't always permit.
I have been to meetings and town halls at my educational facility
yes i created a event catered to young females living in low income areas. the event was geared towards motivating and redefining themselves.
Yes, by writing letters to the mayor
Yes, speaking on gun violence and it's effects on youth in my local high school
Yes. Advocating on a daily basis for children and their families. I would like to do more if possible and sadly when time permits.
No, I don't have time. And never been to meetings etc.
No, I don't know how
Unfortunately I have not, simply because I have not taken the time to find out where I can help if possible.
No I don't have time and no one to voice my opinions to
No. Because our plea to the city is usually not taken into consideration.
Yes, I continously email my concerns to the TTC customer service department. Besides that, I don't have any action because it produces no real results.

Question 5: What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action?

online tools will really help. i'm on the most of the day anyways so it will definitely help
- red tape - transparency and honesty in the system.
A platform to voice my opinion
It often feels like no matter what the action is, there is no result. The system that is in place and the people that are running it are too powerful. They will eventually make small concessions after a certain amount of public outcry, but I have never seen significant change happen. I think that one thing that is needed is a meaningful significant space for Toronto residents (including, but not limited to youth) to engage in city planning. This could look like community committees that actually engage with the issues and work alongside government to shape policy. I think that to have occasional townhall meeting like we have now is not effective - it is tokenistic. It is not enough for voices from the community to be heard - government needs to be accountable for responding to us and making our voices count in decision-making as well.
The biggest barrier in helping me to take action in issues I care about is ofcourse lack of money. for example, the organization i was part of, we always had issues getting funds to have rehearsal spaces, talent shows, provide a meal for the teens and so on.
Too busy
I'm busy
Although I do care about these issues, I may have a fear of not presenting my issue correctly with resolutions, which just stops me from presenting my ideas. Online tools and innovative meeting formats could definitely be helpful.
I think accessibilty. People dont have access to all the infortmation about the city, and even if they do, sometimes the information is opaque and overtly academic
No barriers, just don't want to stress myself over something when nothing is going to happen
Online surveys like this that are actually looked at
Time and limited resources
I think my agency is often limited to spaces, contexts and power. In class, I feel like I can take action on these issues however I also feel like a very small fish a big pond of sharks. Barriers include: not feeling apart of the system, not seeing many people like myself apart of the system or in positions of power, my own doubts and fears. It would help to have more events geared towards the public (besides townhall meetings) that are neighbourhood-friendly and forums for youth. Using social media is a huge avenue for innovative meeting formats or anything for that matter.
A community of people have already helped to implement change

Fear of failure
Power relations between students and stakeholders. We have no voice as much as they say that we do.
tools
Innovative meeting formats
Time and money
Meeting times, events not properly promoted to the public. (I usually find out about these particular events at the last minute)
unawareness, laziness, location
I don't think it'll help
knowing when and where to help, I am not informed as Id like to be
Online tools
No one to voice my opinions to
What would help me is if we had a municipal government that understood the financial planning necessary to create better infrastructure related to transportation. We need federal funding -- no more taxpayers dollars should be given to help fund the revenue necessary to build more subways or street cars.
Information needs to be more readily available on how to address these issues and problems, who to contact and where to go with these issues. Townhalls can be very intimidating especially to youth who often feel like their opinion isn't valued or respected.
School is prevebting me

Question 6: Are there any specific times you think the City should involve youth in city building
conversations?

youth i think, should be invoved in every step of the way
- transit - public services - education related issues
All the time
Probably the summer would be a good time because school is out for a large number of youth. However whatever times are given it is important to be flexible, given the very diverse studying/working situations and schedules that youth have.
I think youth should be involved in all aspects of building conversations when it comes to this city, specially since we are the future
When it effects them and the neighbourhood they live in.
Week ends, evenings
no
At all times
I think the city should involve youth in some city building conversation, it will ultimately affect them the most
At all times. Youths should be part and parcel of stakeholder position whose views and input is ranked important
All the time, because the youth will become the adults soon and they would want to have a say in thing as well
When they are building or creating new things like bus routes parks recreational centres because that's the environment children often are
Yes , when it involves thier neighbourhood
Definitely during election campaigns, but generally all throughout the year.
School fees and Employment issues.
Yes
During the process of creating city plans youth should be involved because we use facilities and resources and maximize the resources that are provided for us
when they discuss student affairs/ education
In everything, I think we should get youth involved in everything thing we do. We are the future
I think the city should involve youth all the time.
After school. Its hard to say as many rely on the transportation of their parents who may work at odd times
summer
Yes , education
In terms on building things that will aid them directly then YES.
Yes. Of course with any issue that involves youth esp
Yes because we are the future
During the summer and weekend are specific times that engaging youth will be blissfull
This should be an ongoing conversation.

No but I think youth should be involved
When the city is planning on building or changing something

Question 7: Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?

No, I think its a good start to get youth involved in the issue as the city planning will have most impact on their future.
Meetings, social media
Maybe if the City of Toronto went in to schools (highschool and post secondary) or made online questionnaires available to the youth to express any issues they may have
Start the conversation young. From when individuals are in elementary school to their adolescence.
Just make more of an effort to hear the voice of the youth
Ask youth from various communities to offer Thier input. You can contact local schools for more participation.
Include youth in decision-making, have representatives join the stakeholder tables, create events that are fun and interesting for youth, in these events - make language accessible and simplify things for everyone to understand, have more people representative of the population & allow youth to hear from them and their paths.
Teaching them ways in which they can preserve their environment for the future
Create programs that bring out the leadership qualities in the youth because at the end of the day, the mantle will be passed to them
Having seats for the youth while planning these initiatives and creating an open dialogue where youth feel empowered to voice their opinions.
Bring more awareness to the issue so that the youth are not just left not in the know.
Provide more safe forums to talk about these things. A lot of time people shy away from talking in crowds. Maybe providing letter to the editor workshops/blogging workshops and other skill building programs may be helpful
inform them
Get in the schools in an interesting and captivating way that engages the youth.
- go to where they are- schools. Community ctrs. Involve the tdsb to assist in accessing and communicating with the youth
You need to relieve bus lines that school children take during specific times of the day, the bus schedule shouldn't just run on a frequest service basis. If school gets off at 3:30 then there should be buses coming non-stop for that spefic time period
Have more information available for the youth and provide this information to schools so that they know that being involved is even an option. Also have the Planning Division inform the youth that their opinion is important and needed.
Offer incentives or be more vocal towards youths

City of Toronto:

Youth Engagement Strategy

A research report conducted by:

Hiba Hussain

Table of Contents

1. Overview

In order to engage youth in the most accessible and successful way, I chose to engage youth that attended the University of Toronto-Scarborough campus (UTSC). The other two organizations I also engaged with are Geography and City Studies Student Association at UTSC, and Environment Canada. Of the 49 participants I interviewed, 41 were full-time students at an undergraduate school (one of my participants attended UOIT and another at George Brown). Of the 49 participants, 32 lived in neighbourhoods within the region of Scarborough.

The primary method/process that I used in order to engage with the youth was a combination of a survey and a discussion. The discussion processes essentially began when I asked my participants to take 15 minutes to look over the youth engagement strategy discussion guide and fill out a survey individually. After they had a chance to look over the questions and start to brainstorm the answers, I gathered them together and explained the *Youth Engagement Strategy,* why the City of Toronto was conducting this research and the role that I played as the facilitator. After giving them context about the research, I began the conversation about youth engagement using the six questions provided to me. While the participants began to voice their opinions and ideas, I took detailed notes making sure to note the constructive ideas and opinions of the group as a whole. While I was fortunate enough to conduct six large group discussions consisting of three or more people, I also had the opportunity to engage participants in a one-on-one conversation. While I found the large discussion group to be diverse in opinions and engagement ideas, I was surprised to find that the individual conversations became very personal and helped me to comprehend much better about what barriers youth face in order to engage in city planning conversations.

The second method that I used to engage participants was through email. I had spoken to many students about the research that I was conducting and many were eager to participate. Unfortunately, since we could never come up with a time that would allow us to meet in person, I emailed them the discussion guide and the survey and then they returned their answers to me. If I wanted to engage in further analysis of the answers or to clarify their thoughts, I emailed them back. This way, the participants and I were still able to have useful conversations in spite of it occurring through email over a span of several days.

One of the biggest surprises throughout this process was the level of passion and curiosity that the participants bought to the discussion. Many were inspired to voice their opinions after learning about the *Youth Engagement Strategy* and were glad to see that the city is taking initiatives to engage voices that are unheard in city planning conversations. All of the participants were very vocal about the growth that they have seen in Toronto simultaneously indentifying the key areas in Toronto that require more attention. This lead to one of my challenges which was, as the conversations became more intense, the participants became overzealous into the topic so much so that they detracted from the question. With this challenge,

I struggled with finding the balance of letting the discussion occur fluidly while also making sure that the participants answered all the questions thoroughly.

Date and Time of meeting/conversations*:*

Date	Time	Name of Participant
November 7th, 2014	12:00 pm -1:30 pm	Michelle Bilokrely, Katie Burke, Alice Chen
November 9th, 2014	10:00 pm -11:00 pm	Geevi Ramakrishnan, Barrah Faysal, Muna Rahman, Naveeda Hussain
November 10th, 2014	12:00 pm- 1:45 pm	Holly Morin
November 11th, 2014	12:00pm -3:00 pm (Conducted one group discussion and individual one during this time)	Abbas N. Ali, Rupinder Bagha, Timothy Yip, Nancy Haider, Masooma Ali, Janine Jivani, Yasna Kharadi, Rebecca Roach, Karen Jiang, Mahrukh Elmaliki
November 14th, 2014	7:00 pm- 8:45 pm	Sarah Lacasse, Mackenzie Dawson, Jonathan Rodriguez
November 16th, 2014	5:00 pm- 6:30 pm	Natasha Ramatour
November 18th, 2014	7:00 pm- 8:00 pm	Abshayan Vimalanathan, Kamer Ali, Soha Kaleem, Asad Qazi, Saad Khan
November 20th, 2014	7:30 pm- 8:15 pm	Saba Janin
November 21st, 2014	7:00 pm- 10:00 pm (conducted three individual interviews during this time)	Miranda Ramnarayan, Abid Hasimi, Samirdhi Kundra
November 22nd, 2014	1:00 pm -3:00 pm; 7:00 pm- 8:45 pm	Kevin Jin, Jamie ****, Husnain Mansoor Tahmina Emam Nazar

November 23rd, 2014	1:00 pm- 3:00 pm; 5:30 pm-7:00 pm	Safa Ingar, Anas Ingar, Aiman Hussain, Mubashir Hussain, Munzir Hussain, Kelsey Filipwicz
November 17th-24th, 2014	Used email to converse with the participants	Pirouz Salari, Ferozan Asiri, Adrian Agrippa, Jonathan Caithesan, Ehsan Ekbatani, Kevin Tarkowski, Meas Danok

Demographic Information:

Gender

Male	19
Female	30

Age

Age 18	1
Age 19	3
Age 20	26
Age 21	9
Age 23	4
Age 25	2
Age 27	1
Age 28	1
Age 30	2

Ethnicity

South Asian	22
Asian	4
African	2
South American	5
North American	4
European	2
Middle Eastern	6
Mixed	4

Region of Residency

Scarborough	32
Downtown Toronto	3
North York	4
Other	10

2. Key Messages

1. Youth are intimated to voice their opinions when conversing with City Planners and homeowners such that:

- they find it difficult to voice their opinions when they feel they have no agency

2. Youth are uninformed about what the issues are and how to get involved

- they would like to have seminars or workshops to better inform their opinions

3. Engage the youth in places like university campuses where they already feel like they have a voice and will be more inclined to voice their opinions

- it also makes the meetings more accessible to youth that would not be able to go to Downtown Toronto

4. Educating the public is extremely important in order to gain an insightful and constructive opinion.

- Start engaging citizens at an younger age
- One of the main suggestions was to make local politics a mandatory class in high school

5. Enjoy more community based conversations

- youth thoroughly enjoy the personal conversations because then they feel like someone from the city is actually listening to their ideas
- allows them to learn from the conversation while allowing them to contribute their opinion

3. Detailed Feedback

Question 1: What are your interests in life (generally)?:

- Social justice and social activism
  • Motivated to gain equality and equity for minorities living in Toronto especially focusing on reducing the barriers that newcomers face such access to health, employment, etc...
  • Challenge and change systematic barriers for people of discrimination such as the LGBQ community
  • Helping other people whether it be with large social issues such as equal access to social services or small acts of kindness like handing out sandwiches to the homeless, what matters overall is being a good human being
-Communication
  • Social conversations with other people gives you the opportunity to meet new and interesting people
  • An opportunity to learn from other people's ideas and experiences
  • Conversations give you the chance to be inspired by another human and their outlook on life
  • Samirdhi Kundra stated
    "After having an eight hour inspiring conversation with a man on a flight to Norway, I later discovered that he was the boyfriend of one of my friends. What a small world we live in"
-Hobbies
  • Arts and craft; any creative activities such as making things from scratch like garments or gardening
  • Reading
  • Traveling
  • Enjoying working out/ staying healthy
  • Politics and learning about how policies created at different government levels affects Canadians
  • Live music performances
  • Passion for writing creative narratives and short stories
  • Food
-Enjoy majoring in the programs like History, English, Healthcare, Geography etc... at the undergraduate level
  • enjoy all different methods of learning like theoretical and practical
-Enjoyment of life determined by happiness, success, love, friends and family.
-Enjoying that natural environment and participating in outdoor activities such as hiking and camping

What inspires you to get out of bed every day?

-Fighting for the rights of women in Toronto and using feminist ideology to achieve success
>*"I'm very involved in women's issues in particular, so I get my motivation to get out of bed to go into my job at the Women's Centre and do my best there and to continue making it a safe space for all self-identifying women"*
>
>   -Meas Danok

-To achieve certain dreams
  • of becoming a lawyer or a doctor
  • To achieve goals laid out for themselves
 -Career
  • getting a good education in order to have a successful professional career
-Responsibilities
-Obligations
-Ambition
-Family pressure; family expectations
-Personal development
  • learning new skills for future employment
  • living a stress free lifestyle
  • satisfaction of completing a task to the expectations of the superiors resulting in appreciation for task
  • the ability to present yourself in a valuable way
  • to be a productive person
  • financially stable

Question 2: What kind of issues in the city do you care about? These issues could be the same as the ones City Planning is talking about or they could be completely different.

-Not having resources for marginalized communities
  • If there are, need to advertise what the resources are and how to gain access to them
-Lack of opportunities and resources for at risk youth
  • youth development programs
  • encourage them (youth under 18) to build skills and leadership qualities
  • present these youth with more inspiring role models
  • creating more positive influence in their life
-Politicians that lack interest/care in youth
  • They need to give youth the time and resources required to earn their respect
  • The public environment in certain communities can be unsafe in terms of crime; local government needs to acknowledge the obstacles faced within these communities
  • city does not focus enough on youth relevant issues such as gangs
-How does our public space affects our ability to have social interactions
  • space and the way that it is built controls interaction and can be detrimental for a positive experience
-Social issues and equity
  • gender and race

- Queer inclusion
- creating more safe spaces within the city
- bringing to light systematic violence brought on by discrimination

-Women's rights
- it is active in many women's lives. They experiences it, see it and hear it.
- We need to get educated about this topic and have more open city-wide conversations
- Women's safety when walking outside the house and around Toronto

-Homelessness
- not being efficient with resources at local government in order to create effective and lasting change for these people

-Public transit
- It is expensive to use public transportation for the average undergraduate student
- Services have improved but need to see more consistent results; at certain times it can became extremely inconsistent
- living in Scarborough, residents feel a lack of options and an inefficient political system that is not making decisions to better the situation
- more transit options within the suburbs
- according to Miranda Ramnarayan
  "the amount of time that it takes to get there (referring to Downtown Toronto) drastically reduces my economic productivity"
- need more safety options on the TTC
- increase accessibility throughout different parts of the GTA

-Unemployment
- lack of opportunities in certain employment sectors in Toronto
- increasing income gap with the workforce in Toronto

-Budget spending
- Where is the money going? More transparency at the municipal level especially in regards to where taxpayers money is being spent
- wants to see the changes occurring in Toronto in a yearly report published by the City Council

-Automobile transportation
- it is the main method of movement
- lots of volume on the streets
- traffic on the 401 can become extremely stressful and will only get worse with increase in population
- many agree with Karen Stinz advocacy to start taking tolls on residents who use the highway but do not actually live in Toronto
- road construction leading to heavy traffic congestion; this gets aggravating for many participants because they were not properly informed about road closures.
- limits available choices because people do not want to spend time on congested highways and roads

-Population growth has created many issues within the city and the planning department is not adequately preparing for the future
-The cost of living in Toronto is rising and making it inaccessible for people to live here

- many youth find this a scary outlook for the future because they someday hope to be homeowners
- Inequality in housing; prices of homes are on the rise in Downtown Toronto that people are forced to live in areas that they do not want to
- not enough efforts and resources put into the suburbs
- gentrification in Downtown Toronto creating inequality

-Lack of aesthetic appeal in the GTA
- downtown is given funding and resources to make it look attractive but there is a lack of maintenance in other parts of the GTA

-Lack of green space in the GTA
- build more infrastructure

-Enforcement of recycling
- increase awareness to recycle

-Resource conservation
- waste management

-Loss of community centre's in Scarborough
- community centre's are a vital part of the community because it gives youth the chance to participate in programs
- no place where the community can come together to voice their opinion
- lack of information about this part of the city
- no community development
- All major festivals and activities are located in Downtown Toronto reducing youth ability to participate in them
- isolated from resources in Downtown Toronto

-Failing infrastructure like public schools

Question 3: Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?

Has taken action:

-Worked with the Liberal government create a policy that would be presented in front of the ministers

-City youth council
- Got access to the issues and learned on how to create a plan
- Sense of agency or autonomy when participated in the City Council
- Spreading awareness using community organizations and social media

-Running youth workshops
- Educating youth (18 and under) and their parents
- Bringing people together with similar experiences
- certain communities lack youth opportunities; contribute to their skills by encouraging youth to go further in their education

-Neighborhood-based planning
- Thorncliff neighborhood office

        -provides co-op internships

        -volunteer opportunities

- Kathleen Wynne works with this organization

        -active member and advocated for this organization

-Grade 6 essay to the mayor about climate change

- scared if the drastic changes in the environment
- what are they doing to protect the citizens?
- chose to do an essay because that was the only way she knew how to approach the issue

-Planting trees in high school

-Voting

-My32 petition (cutting down transit time)

- this was during the provincial elections
- found out about the petition through print ads, face book, website, Toronto star, radio ad
- participated because it was easy; all you had to do was sign your name and it was also anonymous

-community clean up

-Dialed 311

- on the phone from more than 45 minutes and received no acknowledgement from the city regarding the issue

Has not taken action:

-Inaccessible in terms of:

- What do I do?
- What action would I take?
- How to approach the issue?
- No voice
- Logistical work (red tape; frustrating)

-No access to resources required to participate

-City does not focus on regional issues

- youth only get involved when there are drastic issues that affect them

-Intimated

- feels like she/he has no voice because others people voices are more important
- terms are too technical in order for the average youth to understand

Strategies help take action:

- Likes that the city does environmental assessment because it incorporates public opinion

- good way to voice opinions

-community conversations allows the people engaged in the conversation to know exactly what the problem is and it is much clearer

- has used this strategy to get more informed about development occurring

Strategies has not helped take action:

-None of the strategies have helped some participations take action because they have never heard of them before or seen them around the city
   • need more awareness of the strategies city uses to engage people
- lack of knowledge, confidence and support
   • time/date
   • the process of attending a meeting is too time consuming
   • do not know what the issues being debated/discussed are about
-youth feel that their opinions are not heard when business owners and city planners are involved
-they feel that it is not their responsibility to participate
   • the city does not encourage youth to take part
   • no place to voice your opinion
   • need to create more youth opportunities and more awareness to those opportunities
-one-to-one basis-personal conversations
   • this gives participants more of a personal experience

Question 4: What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action? (Online tools, innovative meeting formats, etc.)

Barriers:

-Lack of support for the local community
-systematic barriers
   • Who is in charge?
   • Whose making the decisions?
   • More diversity within the planning division and at city hall
-We are finding white males at the top making all the decisions
   • Feels like their opinions matter less
   • Intimated; opinion might not be heard or matter
   • Vocabulary or way of speaking might not be the same
-It is very hard to learn the city planning (professional) language
-Youth do not feel respected in the building process
-Lack of Education
   • lack of communication from the City
   • do a better job of spreading awareness
   • the Youth feel that they are not informed enough about an issue in order to be a productive voice in the conversation
   • if she did not study it, than she would have no idea about the planning process
-Language barrier
   • Not all people can understand and rely information in English
-Do not see change happening which discourages people from participating; feel like it would be a waste of time
   • need to see that their opinions will result in change

Help you take action:

-Youth conferences
- use this format as a way to educate them on how to make changes
-Less formal meetings
- meetings should be more interactive
-Incorporating local political and city planning into the TDSB curriculum
-Bring people with different experiences
- They bring an environment that is diverse and rich
- more likely to participate if they see someone they can relate too
-Working in a group
- as a team to collaborate
-Parents are interested
- Holding programs that allow parents to come and learn
- Working collaboratively with older adults
-Social media
- use it as a way to spread awareness
-Local programs and workshops
- working with local organizations and communities
- Providing funding and resources
- Many communities already have youth programs but they lack funding
-Use city resources to inform people
- campaigns, TTC
-Go to youth oriented places like University campuses
- many youth stated they would definitely attend a city planning meeting and voice their opinion if it was held on campus
-Event nights
- community, recreational centre; these centre's are close to the issue and is a place which is accessible to everyone
-Informal meeting with councilors
- people like to talk to someone that they can relate to
- it leaves the impression that the conversation was genuine and helpful
-More employment/research/volunteer opportunities
- less competitive
- Online forum that is created and asks specific questions targeted for youth
- can send my concerns in and get an instant reply that would help express the process.

Question 5: Are there any specific times you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?

-The youth should be involved in every layer of the building process
-Should have an understand of what is going on in the communities
- Our taxes later will be going to these projects
-More youth encouragement and involvement during the municipal elections
-Getting youth feedback than proceeding with the project
-Get them involved in the beginning of the process
- gives them a good understanding of what the issue is

- • during the beginning of the conversation because they have the right to know all the information and voice their opinion before major decision are made

-In the building conversation, make the community involvement as important

-Make the time/date more convenient

-Suggestion: live stream the meetings so youth can participate even if they physically cannot be there

-All throughout the process

- • making an conscious effort to keep youth informed because plans can change over time

-Need a valid reason for the building proposal and need to have community approval before any action occurs further

-If the buildings directly impact youth, such as building a new university campus, or athletic facility then youth definitely need to be engaged at all the different planning stages

Question 6: Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?

-Online discussions

-Support at the high school level

- • curriculum needs to be revised
- • promotes more civic engagement
- • get them politically involved at a younger age; create the interest

-Showing all results of the opinion and conversations

-Make it tangible

-Make them feel like their voices really matter

- • impact should be shown

-How to approach the people makes a difference

- • everyone has different barriers

-Focus on the conversations

- • follow up
- • individual conversations
- • more open and pubic conversations

-Events targeted towards youth

-Hire youth in positions of power

- • creates a feeling that they have a personal stake in the development process

-Presence in university campuses

-Workshops or presentations

- • visuals
- • workshops on how to get youth involved or to educate the youth

-Gain the confidence of the youth

-Using different methods (not just poster or mail)

- • *"Make it more accessible, so post more on social media, make online surveys and offer a monetary gain for attending a planning conversation or at least transportation cost to encourage them to come out."* -Meas Danok

-Incentives to get involved

4. Next Steps

After talking to 49 participates about youth engagement, there is one clear conclusion that can be drawn. The youth have strong opinions about the future of Toronto and various planning issues, which are not being communicated to the policy makers. Conducting this research with the intention to understand the barriers that the youth face towards voicing their opinions, I am using this section of the report to state clearly what the next steps the planning division needs to take. First, as youth find lack of knowledge as the main barrier to their understanding of city issues, the city needs to start hosting city-wide workshops and conferences. These sessions will give youth the opportunity to learn about the resources that are available to them, when and where can they voice their opinion and how their opinion will affect policy change. The second step consists of the city working to hold meetings and conversations in areas that the youth find to be a positive place. These positive spaces will include areas that are welcoming to all different genders, ethnicities, class, etc.. and they should be located in youth oriented environments such as University Campuses. The last step that the city can take in order to better engage youth is to provide them with results of their conversations and explain how their opinions are going to affect future building decisions. Understanding that their conversations/opinions makes a difference in future decisions will help empower youth to speak up about other issues affecting them, in turn, creating a long lasting pattern of engagement.

5.Participant List

Name:
1. Adrian Agrippa
2. Abbas N. Ali
3. Masooma Ali
4. Kamer Ali
5. Ferozan Asiri
6. Rupinder Bagha
7. Michelle Bilokrely
8. Katie Burke
9. Jonathan Caithesan
10. Alice Chen
11. Meas Danok
12. Mackenzie Dawson
13..Ehsan Ekbatani
14. Mahrukh Elmaliki
15. Tahmina Emam-Nazar
16. Barah Faysal
17. Kelsey Filipwicz
18. Nancy Haider
19. Abid Hashimi
20. Aiman Hussain
21. Naveeda Hussain
22. Mubashir Hussain
23. Munzir Hussain
24. Anas Ingar
25. Safa Ingar
26. Saba Janin
27. Karen Jiang

28. Kevin Jin
29. Janine Jivani
30. Soha Kaleem
31. Saad Khan
32. Yasna Kharadi
33. Samirdhi Kundra
34. Sarah Lacasse
35. Aqsa Malik
36. Husnain Mansoor
37.. Holly Morin
38. Asad Qazi
39. Muna Rahman
40. Geevi Ramakrishnan
41. Natasha Ramatour
42. Miranda Ramnarayan
43. Rebecca Roach
44. Jonathan Rodriguez
45. Pirouz Salari`
46.Kevin Tarkowski
47.Abshayan Vimalanathan
48. Timothy Yip
49. Jamie *****

Organizations engaged:

1. University of Toronto-Scarborough Campus

2. Geography and City Studies Student Association

3. Environment Canada

6. Other Materials: Examples of Raw Data

Youth Research Team Survey: Hiba Hussain Notes

Participants: Saba Janin

1. What are your interests in life (generally)? What inspires you to get out of bed every day?
- to be a productive person
-has goals for herself
-Getting involved within the community and to give back
-Job: community outreach at UTSC
-advocates for policy change
   • Health Policy
-interested in gaining equality and equity for minorities
   • Especially focusing on reducing the barriers
-Ambitious, need to succeed, has long term goals, and wants a good education

2. What kind of issues in the city do you care about? These issues could be the same as the ones City Planning is talking about or they could be completely different.
-works with an organization: CASSA (the sieves provides language appropriate services to immigrants)
-Cares about not having resources for marginalized communities
   • If there are, need to advertise what the resources are and how to gain access to them
-Transit
   • It is expensive to use public transportation
   • But on the other hand, is extremely happy with extra bus lines that TTC has provided like the 198 express

3. Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?
-Worked with the liberal government create a policy that would be presented in front of the ministers
-always gets involved with the liberal party
-is an active member of the UTSC liberal party
-City youth council
   • Got access to the issues and learned on how to create a plan
   • Sense of agency or autonomy when she participated in the City Council
-None of the strategies have helped her because she has never heard of them before or seen them around the city
-why: lack of knowledge, confidence and support

4. What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action? (Online tools, innovative meeting formats, etc.)?
-lack of support of local community

-when people get involved, its hard to keep their attention
-systematic barriers
  • Who is in charge?
  • Whose making the decisions?
  • More diversity within the planning division and at city hall
-we are finding white, males at the top making all the decisions
  • Feels like their opinions matter more
  • Intimated; opinion might not be heard or matter
  • Vocabulary or way of speaking might not be the same
-Its very hard to know the city planning (professional) language/ words
-youth conferences
  • Use this format as a way to educate them on how to make changes
-less formal meetings
  • Intimates people again
  • Meetings should be more interactive
-incorporating it into the TDSB curriculum

5. Are there any specific times you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?
-the youth should be involved in every layer of the building process
-we should understand what is going on in the communities
  • Our taxes later will be going to these projects
-more youth encouragement and involvement during the municipal elections

6. Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?
-support at the high school level
  • Curriculum need to be revised

Youth Research Team Survey: Hiba Hussain Notes

Participants: Abid Hashimi

1. What are your interests in life (generally)? What inspires you to get out of bed every day?
-enjoy life
-achieve his dreams of becoming a lawyer
-inspired to get out of bed to achieve his goals
-enjoying working out/staying healthy
 -enjoys politics
-inspires you to get out of bed
  • Responsibilities
  • Ambition
  • Meeting new people
  • Learning something new

2. What kind of issues in the city do you care about? These issues could be the same as the ones City Planning is talking about or they could be completely different.
-is a youth worker and a facilitator
-lack of opportunities and resources
  • Youth development
  • Programs
  • Encourage them (youth; under 18) to build skills and leadership qualities
  • Not enough role models
-No positive influence
-politicians that lack interest/ care in youth
  • They need to earn the respect of youth
-no enough youth as active members of society
-not providing opportunities
-transit
  • It has improved but need to see more results
-public environment
  • Many unsafe communities in terms of crime
-city doesn't focus enough on youth relevant issues such as gangs
-unemployment
  • Competition
  • Lack of opportunities

3. Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?
-prevent kids from smoking
  • Ban tobacco
  • Spreading awareness using community organizations and social media
-runs workshops
  • Educating youth and parents
  • Bringing people together with similar experiences
  • Activists
-certain communities lack youth opportunities
  • Contribute to their skills by encouraging youth to go further in their educations
-Neighborhood-based planning
  • Thorncliff neighborhood office
    -provides co-op internships
    -volunteer opportunities
  • Kathleen Wynne works with this organization
    -active member and advocated for his organization
-Doesn't like to see youth drop-out of high school
  • Put youth in a difficult situation because they can't use opportunities and skills to further their life

-wanted to help community and his friends
- Felt like it was his obligation as a resident

-making change and helping people

4. What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action? (Online tools, innovative meeting formats, etc.)?
-youth do not feel respected
-people bring different experiences
- They bring an environment that is diverse and rich
- Racial ethnicity can sometimes became a barrier

-working in a group
- As a team to collaborate

-education
- Communication (lack of it)
- Spread awareness
- not informed

-language barrier
- People cannot understand

-parents are interested
- Holding programs that allow parents to come and learn
- Working collaboratively

-social media
- Learned/spread awareness

-local programs and workshops
-working with local organizations and communities
- Providing funding and resources
- Many communities already have youth programs but they lack funding

5. Are there any specific times you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?
-letting them know from the beginning
-getting there feedback than proceeding with the project

6. Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?
-promotes more civic engagement
-get them politically involved
-high school (civic teaching about local communities)

Youth Research Team Survey: Hiba Hussain Notes

Participants: Miranda Ramnarayan

1. What are your interests in life (generally)? What inspires you to get out of bed every day?
-successful/happiness
-not stressed or have a nagging feeling
-concerts
-hang out with friends
-satisfaction of completing a task
-getting appreciation and seeing results
-paying for school
-geography
-ambition
  • money
  • expectations by family

2. What kind of issues in the city do you care about? These issues could be the same as the ones City Planning is talking about or they could be completely different.
-budget spending
  • city council
  • where does the money go?
  • pays taxes and lives in the city of Toronto; has the right to know
  • corruption (more transparency)
  • see more changes occurring but wants to see it in a report (documented)
-social equity
  • queer inclusion
  • personal stories
  • minority rights?
    -safe spaces
    -the city is doing a good job!
-university costs
  • 700 dollar increase every year
  • where is the money going?
-transportation
  • costs
  • informed citizen (transparency)
  • it is the main method of movement
  • fixing the road (she sees this as an action being done by the city)
-lots of volume on the streets
-population is already issues and the city is not planning
-cost of living in Toronto is rising and making it inaccessible for people to live here
-resource conservation
  • waste management

3. Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?
-Grade 6 essay to the mayor about climate change
- scared if the drastic changes in the environment
- what are they doing to protect her?
- chose to do an essay because that was the only way she knew how to approach the issue
-environmental assessment
- want to do it
- no opportunity
- good because it includes communities
- good way to voice opinions
-no, was not aware of the initiatives
-do not know about the issues
-time/date
-would love to go to a meeting
-she is comfortable with voicing her opinion

4. What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action? (Online tools, innovative meeting formats, etc.)?
-lack of time
-lack of energy
-motivation
- hard work; see results, do not feel that it will result in change
- gratification
-bring light to these concerns
-resources
- lack of money
- lack of people/networking
-you would want the people to be older
- age is knowledge
-direct and indirect approach
-community approach
- they are the ones living in the area
-results/ gratification
-online forums
- to get the opinion of people who cannot
-spread the word maybe poster like on the TTC
-event nights
- community, recreational centre (close to the issue)
-informal meeting with councilors (people are easily intimated)
- people like to talk to people that they can relate to
-more minorities/ diversity

5. Are there any specific times you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?
-the first and second stage of the building conversation
-the youth need to understand what's happening at all stage because they will be affected by it in the future
- just inform them

6. Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?
-give them the sense that they have the right to an opinion
- more open and pubic conversations
-events targeted towards youth

Youth Research Team Survey: Hiba Hussain Notes

Participants: Sarah Lacasse, Mackenzie Dawson, and Jonathan Rodriguez

1. What are your interests in life (generally)? What inspires you to get out of bed every day?
-having job; money
-healthcare; the practical the experience; rewarding
-creative activities; making things; grown up creative
-school; like learning and enjoying that environment; natural progression
-live music performances

2. What kind of issues in the city do you care about? These issues could be the same as the ones City Planning is talking about or they could be completely different.
-transit
- living in Scarborough (mayoral candidates; lack their of transit choices)
- downtown core
-aesthetic appeal
- downtown has a attraction
- lack of maintenance
- garbage
- agglomeration
-throw events and festivals all located in downtown Toronto
-lack of economic opportunities
- people aren't willing to come to Scarborough
-lack of green space
-traffic
- on the 401
- talking to tolls
- we are part of the Scarborough but do not gain any of the resources
-community centre's

- lack thereof community centre's in the Scarborough
- lack of information about this part of the city
- no community development
- really far and inaccessible
- isolated

3. Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?
-planting trees: pollutions (through school)
-no, everything is located in downtown Toronto and is inaccessible for the entire day by TTC
-school and work responsibilities
- inconvenient physically (takes a back)
-first hand experience of development processes
- people opinions aren't heard when regarding business owners and city planners are not involved
-no idea what these strategies; never seen them occur
-city councilor at utsc

4. What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action? (Online tools, innovative meeting formats, etc.)?
- taking meeting university or to youth oriented sites
-online tools
-lack of information
-no place to go for public posting
-regional issues aren't garner attention when you do it online
-the guarantee that your voice will be heard
-impression that is will be genuine and helpful
-targeted youth more directly
-educating the youth (starting younger) teach local politics
-lack of information/educations
-civic programs more experiential
-engage in community in a lifelong way

5. Are there any specific times you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?
-before the decision are made sound
-needs to happen after the proposal and after it has been approved and right before the shovel goes down
-make the community more important
-make the time/date more convenient
-live stream the meetings
-flyers
-more city involvement in the public meetings
-asking the community what their needs are rather than asking them if the proposal is okay with them

6. Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?
-hire youth
-feeling like a personal stake
-youth in powerful situations like council
-use other options than meetings and face-to-face conversations
-presence in university and schools (get more involved)
-experience to get a job
-25-30 have a huge stake
-getting the youth get the research

<u>**Youth Research Team Survey: Hiba Hussain Notes**</u>

<u>**Participants: Meas Danok**</u>

1. What are your interests in life (generally)? What inspires you to get out of bed every day?
I'm very interested in social justice and social activism. I'm very involved in women's issues in particular, so I get my motivation to get out of bed to go into my job at the Women's Centre and do my best there and to continue making it a safe space for all self-identifying women. I also get out of bed to become a better person, I want to get out of bed and go do good in the world. Whether that be discussing in a political conversation with a friend or a stranger, or helping someone learn about an issue they didn't know about before. Engaging with people in conversation is inspirational for me, I believe that even if someone is not listening the message you are giving will remain with them. So always remember to give a positive message.
-Is an extremely ambitious person; pursuing her degree in political science while hoping to get accepted into law school
-Not only an active member with the Women's Centre but does other extracurricular activities like RA work for a professor and executive on MUN
-wakes up every day hoping to inspire conversations within people that changes their outlook on life
-wants to make people more conscious of their behavior and ideas so that we can be a little less of an ignorant society

2. What kind of issues in the city do you care about? These issues could be the same as the ones City Planning is talking about or they could be completely different.
Female safety is an issue I care about deeply and one I also have to deal with every single day. Females always plan out a map in their heads of the safest route to the place they are walking to, and planning a route that is well lit. I believe city planning should focus on creating better lit areas and less ally-ways. They should also have emergency polls that if a women feels unsafe she can press the button and an emergency dispatcher can be released to her location.
-including more women in higher levels of the city planning department

- see growth with the chief planner being a woman; but we as a city need to continue to empower women to be active members of the city and making sure that we see more diversity

-transit

- worked in downtown Toronto and the commute in the mornings can be ridiculous
- because of transit, can cause her to be late for work (the timing of buses and trains are not correct)

3. Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?

All the action I've taken is in regard with safety of women on campus at my university. I want to focus on areas such as the parking lot where women feel uncomfortable in at night. I've spoken with Campus police to regularly check their emergency polls and make sure they work and are operating perfectly. I have also joined a campaign on campus to highlight the area on campus where women feel unsafe in. In regards to strategies that the city uses, I suppose the one that has helped me take action is simply having a conversation. This allows the people engaged in the conversation to know exactly what the problem is and it is much clearer.
-didn't really know about these strategies until she saw the discussion guide
-the city need to use more interactive methods to get the information out; the methods that they are using right now aren't reaching the maximum amount of people
-really like the conversation strategy that the city is using because she feels that this is the way to get the most honest opinion from the youth

4. What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action? (Online tools, innovative meeting formats, etc.)?

Time is the biggest constraint I have that's preventing me from taking more action. Being a student I'm usually very crunched with time and usually conversations with city planners and co are very long and due to my busy schedule I cannot afford to spend hours talking about a topic that's not related to my studies, if there was an online forum that's created and asks specific questions or if I can send my concerns in and get an instant reply that would help express the process.
-would get more involved if the conversations where happening on the school campus
-not only online forums, but more use of social media
-make more convenient, fast and accessible way of letting the youth voice their opinion
-it is hard because most youth do not have the time to travel somewhere to attend a meeting
-focusing on the issues that really affect them (regional issues) is the best because most youth aren't informed about issues in other parts of the city

5. Are there any specific times you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?

I think if it is a project such as creating safer city building for females, engaging youth would be best since we tend to be the one working the longer hours. If the buildings directly impact youth, such as building a new university campus, or athletic facility then youth definitely need to be engaged
-during the beginning of the conversation because they have the right to know all the information and voice their opinion before major decision are made

6. Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?

Make it more accessible, so post more on social media, make online surveys and offer a monetary gain for attending a planning conversation or at least transportation cost to encourage them to come out.

-incentives

-getting the youth more informed about issues through local conversations

City of Toronto Youth Engagement Strategy Survey: Final Report

From: Jacob Zorzella

1. <u>Overview</u>

I had a great time participating in the YES Surveys, as it gave me an opportunity to connect with many old friends, family, and community members that I have not had the chance to be in contact with over the last couple of years. I was able to complete a total of 50 surveys.

In preparing for how I would complete the surveys, I sat down with three of my best friends, completed the survey with them, and then asked them to suggest how I should go about getting the rest of them done. After having a long conversation, we came to the conclusion that it was best to complete surveys one-on-one to get complete answers. We also concluded that this survey may be a bit of a bore for youth to do; they may have prior commitments or even just would not want to complete the survey because they feel it doesn't benefit them. I felt these were both fair conclusions that could easily be treated.

What I decided to do was schedule time in a small room at my old workplace, Lawrence Heights Community Centre, and conduct most of the interviews there. To attract people who may see the survey as boring, I would offer an honorarium of $10, but only after they would decline my initial offer. This method allowed me to reach those that would say "what do I get out of it?", and not spend money on every participant that completed surveys. A total of 23 people completed surveys and received a $10 honorarium.

I had gotten into a bit of trouble the week of by not being able to get people into the Community Centre, after the first week of surveys. I decided to take a walk around the Lawrence Heights Community, and I ran into many former friends and where able to do many of the surveys with them.

As for demographic numbers, here is the data that I collected:
- All 50 lived in the M6A area code.
- 29 participants (58%) identified Somali as the language spoken at home; Only 1 participant identified French. All other participants identified English (40%).
- 14 Females (28%) and 36 Males (72%) Participated.
- 3 participants (6%) under the age of 18.
- 46 participants (92%) identified themselves as a visible minority.
- 49 participants (98%) identified that they used 1 or more social media outlet regularly (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).
- No single participant knew how much their household made combine.

City of Toronto Youth Engagement Strategy Survey: Final Report

From: Jacob Zorzella

2. <u>Key Messages Section</u>

- **Social Media is a Must!** Many participants in the survey said that they have no knowledge of where they can find information on city matters that they cared about, especially when it came to transit. 28 participants (56%) brought up social media as a means of raising awareness of city issues.

- **Waste of Time.** This specific line appeared in 31 or the surveys completed (62%). Many participants felt that planning issues can't be effected by participating; that they "wouldn't be listen to because (they) aren't experts". Some went as far as they feel it is a waste of time to even talk to planners about issues.

- **Transportation is Important to Youth.** A total of 40 participants (80%) identified Transportation as the city issue they cared about (80%). All spoke of personal negative experiences they have had while using the public transit system and need of improvement.

3. <u>Detailed Feedback Section</u>

1) **What are your interests in life (generally)? What inspires you to get out of bed every day?**
   - 21 participants said Sports (42% - Basketball, Soccer, Baseball, Football among answers)
   - 16 participants said Arts/Dance (32% - Music, Crafts Dance among answers)
   - 10 participants said School (20%)
   - 27 participants said Work/Money (54%)

2) **What kind of issues in the city do you care about? (These issues could be the same as the ones City Planning is talking about or they could be completely different.)**
   - 40 participants said Facilitating Movement (80%) – 29 participants' spoke of personal negative experiences that they have had on public transit system and the need to improve. One participant said: "I hate rush hour. I constantly have to wait three or four train to even manage to squeeze my way on to one. Every other time of the day I can handle, but rush hour has to get fixed." 4 of the 40 said traffic on road is a concern for them as well. The other 7 did not give detail.

   - 31 participants said Shaping Development (62%) – All 31 participants live in the Lawrence Heights neighborhood and identified the Revitalization project as an issue that they cared about. Predetermining that this would happen, I had prepared a follow up question. I asked these same participants "Do you care about Shaping Development outside of Lawrence Heights?", only 3 said they did (6%).

   - 14 participants said Supporting Play (28%) – Only one participant elaborated, saying "sports could be so much better not just in Toronto, but in the whole country".

3) **Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?**

   • 32 participants said they did not take action about an issue they cared about (64%) – There were 2 popular reason. One was participants felt it did not make a difference whether they participated or not; that they "wouldn't be listened to because (they) aren't experts" (14 of 32). The second popular reason was that they had no idea where to go or how to engage in the issues they cared about (13 of 32). The remaining 5 participants said they did not feel comfortable taking action about the issues they care about. One participant said he was not a "model citizen" and "shouldn't be attending those things anyways".

   • 18 participants said that they did take action (36%) – All 18 talked about participating in community update meeting and unite design meeting held by Toronto Community Housing as per the Lawrence Heights Revitalization. As a follow up question, I asked "Was there any instance that you have been involved other than the revitalization project?" all 18 said they had not.

4) **What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action? (Online tools, innovative meeting formats, etc.)?**

   • I did not ask the first part of this question. After the first could of surveys, I felt it overlapped with question 2.

   • 28 participants said that they felt they could be more informed by the use of Twitter, Facebook or Instagram. As a follow up question, I asked "How would you do outreach on social media? Where would you start?" Only one person answered this question, but it was a very interesting answer. The idea he had was to make local media outlets promote/retweet events and/or meetings that are happening throughout the city. He said "many people follow accounts like CP24, and actually read the tweets"

   • 20 Participants said they did not know what would help them take action.

   • 2 participants said nothing would help them take action.

5) **Are there any specific times you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?**

   • Only one participant answered this question and said that youth should be involved in all city building conversations because "the city is being built for us to live on with."

6) **Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?**

- One participant said "stop making everything for old, rich and white people".

- One Participant said "keep trying, it will work one day"

- One participant said "put more into sports"

- No other participant commented.

  ∗ NOTE: In all sections, some participants had more than one answer.

4. <u>Next Steps Section</u>

This information will be a part of the City of Toronto Youth Engagement Strategy and will be shared with the City Planning Division and there Consultants. This is a draft that participants will have a chance to correct. It will then be finalized and given it to the City. The City will then try to identify specific strategies around Youth Engagement in Toronto Planning.

Youth Engagement Strategy Research Final Report

Express Yo'self!

Prepared by Mojan Jianfar & Jo Flatt

Prepared for: City of Toronto's Planning Division via Swerhun Consulting, Urban Strategies and Maximum City

Submitted November 30, 2014

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Section 1: Overview

As part of The City of Toronto's Planning Division's Growing Conversations initiative, the City hired facilitators from Urban Strategies, Swehurn Consulting and Maximum City to support the development of a better youth engagement strategy for the city. The group developed a Youth Engagement Research Team comprised of individuals aged 16-30 from across the city. Jo Flatt and Mojan Jianfar are two of those members who collaborated together to conduct research and produce this report.

We had two core assumptions in how we designed our research work:
1. Youth need a variety of opportunities and access points in order to participate.
2. Communications and design of each engagement activity must be fun, creative and generate value for those participating.

The theme and communications title of our research work was **Express Yo'self!** We chose this approach in order to communicate in a way that was engaging, fun and simple, to intrigue and attract youth to participate.

In order to collect the data, we used 4 different methods to gather insights and ideas from youth. The methods were as follows:
1. Online survey
2. In-person facilitated workshops (2 unique workshops)
3. Pop-up City Hall
4. Creative submissions (received online)

We advertized all of the events via the York & Ryerson Planning Departments, University of Toronto's School of Public Policy and Governance, planning based listservs, the Centre for Social Innovation listserv, The Civic Salon email list, our personal Facebook and Twitter accounts, and blogTO. Based on our modes of advertisement and communication, we primarily reached out to educated early-career professionals with undergraduate or masters degrees who are reasonably aware or engaged with issues that are happening in the city. A copy of the invitation that was shared across platforms can be found in **Appendix A.**

The online survey asked 8 questions to explore the issues youth care about; their level of engagement with the City of Toronto; the types of barriers they face in engagement; and the ways that they would ideally like to be engaged by the City. The full question set can be found in **Appendix B**. The survey was completed by 70 individuals from across Toronto. Eighty-four percent of those who completed the survey are aged 18-30, and 16% are 31 and older. We did not have any participants below the age of 18. Seventy-three percent of respondents live in Toronto and East York, 9% live in Etobicoke and North York respectively, and 3% live in Scarborough.

Two in-person workshops were run on Tuesday, November 11th and Sunday, November 16th. Each workshop was 2 hours in length. The November 11th workshop drew 30 participants and the November 16th workshop had 6 participants. While we had 25 registered participants for the November 16th workshop, we believe that the unexpected weather conditions significantly impacted attendance. This outcome might also illustrate that weekends are not the ideal time to be engaging with youth on these types of topics.

On Saturday, November 15th we ran an event titled Pop-Up City Hall on the main floor and coffee lounge of The Centre for Social Innovation, Annex Location (720 Bathurst Street). The Pop-Up event ran from 1pm-5pm. Participants were invited to sit down at our booth and either answer from a list of questions or simply describe what they felt the City of Toronto Planning Division needed to do in order to engage them better. Eight individuals participated in the Pop-Up event. Each individual that came to our booth discussed and shared their experiences for approximately 15 minutes.

Core to our approach was offering youth a variety of ways to express themselves. As part of this commitment, we offered creative submissions as a way for youth who may not want to partake in surveys, workshops or Pop Up City Halls to share their ideas and thoughts with us. We received one submission, which can be found in **Appendix C.**

Section 2: Key Messages from Participants

Participants shared a wide range of ideas. The following are a few of the key messages that came out over the course of our research work.

Transportation and transit is one of the most important issues for youth. Seventy-nine percent of survey respondents said that they cared about this issue.

Youth enjoy engaging on the issues they care about when their actions are supported within an environment that creates a **sense of community**, and where they have opportunities to meet and connect with like-minded and inspiring people.

Youth often **do not feel that they have a voice** and opinion that is valued by the City of Toronto. Some believe that the City does not care or adequately seek out the perspectives of this demographic. This is made further problematic because many youth do not see themselves as being represented by the City, which diminishes their sense of trust and appreciation for City-led events and activities.

Youth are **unsure of how their contributions can have an impact**. They can be skeptical of the processes that are undertaken by the City and require explicit and transparent information sharing and feedback loops to illustrate how their insights and ideas are being used. It is crucial that their efforts are properly rewarded and integrated to avoid feelings of tokenism.

Engagement strategies undertaken by the City need to **compliment the values, behaviors, lifestyles, perspectives and comforts of youth**. They need to be held at times and in locations that are viewed as proximate and safe, and use techniques that are transparent, build trust and are valuable. They must address issues that youth care about and be engaging, educational and enjoyable. They need multiple and diverse points of entry and engagement opportunities.

Section 3: Detailed Summary of Feedback

During our research we asked participants key questions through multiple platforms (online survey, workshop, pop up). The following section is a compilation of all the data we collected, categorized by question, and organized based on response type.

Question 1: What does engagement mean to you?

During our Express Yo'self workshops we asked participants what "engagement" meant to them. Many of the participants said that engagement consists of participating in discussions and processes that create connections and a sense of ownership among community members. Equally valued, was the idea that engagement requires a space for dialogue where participants can feel a sense of trust, mutual exchange, respect, and genuine influence over political processes. Participants expressed that having a personal connection to issues fostered better engagement. A sense of connection partnered with the proper facilitation methods and space to support engagement are critical for encouraging individuals to want to partake in these types of activities.

Question 2: What type of city issues do you care most about?

The City of Toronto's Planning Division concerns itself with issues categorized under 10 areas: Transportation and Transit, Arts and Culture, Environment, Economic Development, Social Equity and Justice, Land Use and Zoning, Housing, Recreation Sports and Leisure, Public Space, and Parks. We asked our participants which type of city issues they cared about the most.

Transportation and Transit was the most important issue to the youth that participated in the survey, 79% of youth said that they cared about this issue. Social Equity and Justice followed at 64%, with the Environment and Public Space each respectively receiving 40% of votes.
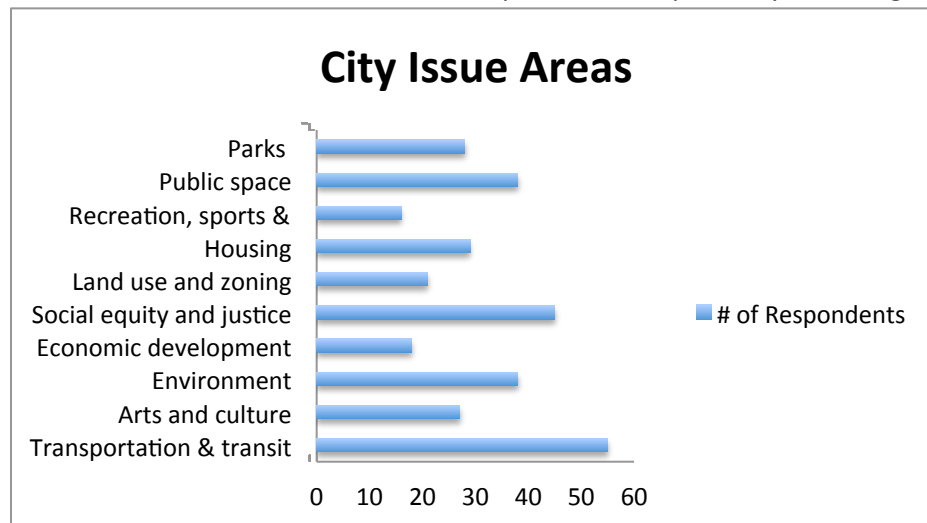
Question 3: How have you engaged with the City of Toronto on the issues you care about?

Examining the survey responses to the question, "Have you ever engaged in some way on these issues with the City of Toronto?" many respondents illustrated that they are engaged on the issues

that they care about. However, while many are engaged, they are not specifically working with the City on these issues and were far more likely to be working with community organizations, advocacy groups, in protests or as part of deputations than in collaboration with the City. The activities in which they primarily engage on are the following:

The bracketed numbers represent the number of times that the idea was expressed by participants in the survey.

- Toronto Youth Council (1)
- Toronto Youth Food Policy Council (1)
- Toronto Youth Cabinet (1)
- Online surveys (2)
- In-person public consultations and public meetings (3)
- Volunteering with nonprofit organizations (3)
- Joining local advocacy groups like Stop the Cuts and CycleTO (5)
- Running or contributing to councilor campaigns (3)
- Voting (10)
- Deputations (2)
- Attending protests (5)
- Signing petitions (1)
- Letters to local councilors (2)
- Tweeting with councilor (1)

Question 4: Why do you participate?

During our workshops, we asked participants why they take action on the issues that they care about and what they like best about participating. Our aim was to understand what motivates youth to participate, what they enjoy most, and the perceived benefits of participation. The following thematic areas were the most commonly held reasons for youth in our research sample to engage in the issues they care about.

A sense of responsibility and guilt. Some participants expressed that they participate because of anger, guilt, accountability and a sense of responsibility to act. One participant stated, *"I don't want to feel like a bystander. [I have] a sense of feeling responsible without being ignorant. You complain, but then you don't act - there comes a breaking point when you decide you need to actually do something."* Another participant expressed that they participate out of anger or concern about the future, because that they don't want to *"complain without taking action."* One participant stated that they participate because they feel a sense of *"duty to have [my] voice heard"* as part of a racialised and under-represented community.

Genuine concern for the issue. Some participants participate because they feel personally impacted by issues or because they care and are interested in the issues that the City is addressing.

A desire to have influence. A few participants mentioned that taking action and doing something allows them to feel influential in their communities and social circles. They believe that they can set a precedent and make a difference by being engaged and participating in events and actions. As one

participant stated, they participate because of *"the chance to address topics that feel unaddressed by dominant structures but should be."*

To build connection and community. Some participants expressed that they participate in order to feel a sense of belonging, connection and engagement in the world they live in. They feel that the opportunity to create and connect with others around issues that they care about is a significant motivator. Participating allows youth to meet like minded people, make friends, network, and to hear from others' opinions. Participation was also seen by some as a platform to resist complacency, build a collective movement, and to feel inspired and ignited by their community. One participant stated that solidarity was an important reason why he participants, *"I don't go to protests because people are going to listen, but because it builds community, and that is important."*

Social and peer pressure. Several participants stated that peer pressure and obligation from friends was their motivating factor for participation. Personal invitations, organized events led by friends and peers they respect, and word of mouth were highly influential for youth to engage and participate.

Self interest, professional development and networking. Participants stated that the reason they participate is due to self-interest, whether it is to build their own networks, look for a job and/or increase their own brand. When an activity best aligned with their personal goals, they were more likely to participate.

To learn more and be informed. Some participants stated that the reason they participate is because of curiosity, to learn more about the topic, and be better informed. Engagement also offers an opportunity for youth to learn how others are addressing the issues that they care about.

Ease of access, design and organization. Location, timing and frequency were important influencers in why youth participate. Engagement activities that are easy to get to, require little effort, are well facilitated, provide snacks, and are infrequent enough to remain captivating/interesting are some characteristics that youth look for.

Question 5: What do you like best about participating?

When we asked participants what they liked *best* about participating, their responses centered strongly around building a sense of connection, community, and personal development. Participants liked that participation provided them with the opportunity to meet new people and decision makers, build solidarity and collective agreement, and to learn "*how different people are connected and [..] taking different strategies and approaches to address the same issue.*" One participant stated that participating allowed them to "*[gain] a sense of ownership over something - when you do something, you feel like you are part of the system and did it in a community, so [you] don't feel like [you] are isolated [in your opinions/ideas/actions].*" Another participant stated that they "*like it best when [they] see a result! Something tangible for [their] work.*" Participants also expressed that participating gave them a sense of validation and motivation; it improved their quality of life; provided them with an outlet to express their opinions; and re-ignited a sense of action in them.

Question 6: What do you think are the biggest barriers preventing youth from engaging with the City of Toronto?

The survey, workshops and Pop-Up City Hall provided participants with opportunities to describe the barriers that are preventing youth from being more engaged on the issues they care about and with the City of Toronto.

Improper timing, place & location of meetings

Youth described the importance of hosting engagement activities that are conveniently located in places that they feel comfortable going to. Meetings at City Hall are not necessarily compelling for all youth, as one survey respondent indicated, *"City Hall is just a distant place where decisions get made."* It is also crucial that engagement events are able to support capacity demands of participants, as one participant mentioned, *"I tried to attend a community information meeting about the Walmart moving in on Bathurst by Kensington, but it was over capacity!"*

Many youth described the challenge of spending time engaging on issues when their work and life schedules are busy and demanding. Not all youth are eager to volunteer their time for city related issues. As indicated in one survey response, *"We work too much. We don't have time to engage or learn. We're all trying to stay afloat. Student debt prevents you from "buying into" the future we want to create. We have crippling debt, we work 3 jobs, we are worried that being political could cost us a job or friends."*

Perception of disinterest in youth

Many of the youth that we surveyed feel that the City of Toronto does very little to gear programs and initiatives to their needs and wants, and that even City Councilors are not thinking about youth or the issues that relate to them. There was a general sense that the City has done little to demonstrate that youth are an important demographic and that they value their opinion. Other youth felt that political leaders and staff at the City don't actually care about their ideas, and that they are being engaged merely to reach "quota" that has to be met. Some stated that youth are perceived as "non-voters" and therefore not valued by politicians.

Lack of awareness and education about how the City of Toronto works

One of the most strongly conveyed barriers was that today's youth are unclear on the process of how the City works and how they can participate. This lack of transparency, knowledge sharing and understanding has fostered a deeper sense of apathy, indifference and intimidation among youth. As stated by a participant, *"I haven't felt equipped to engage at the city level - not knowing who to talk to, how to present an issue, or whether it would go anywhere."* Based on responses, this is not only true of municipal government, as participants expressed that they felt a general lack of clarity around how government operates at provincial and federal levels as well.

Their lack of knowledge around specific issues make youth feel that they can't contribute or participate. Participants expressed that this gap in education disempowers them from feeling like their opinions are valuable and worth contributing. They have a *"fear that they don't know enough about the topic to voice their opinions,"* which prevents youth from participating. Several

participants also expressed the sentiment that they do not trust materials that come from the City and that they look to civil society/grassroots education to learn about important issues.

Mismatched communications, engagement tools and lack of opportunities to engage
Participants felt that the strategies underway to engage youth are not well matched to their demographic. Some felt that the tools being used are outdated and inconsistent with the lifestyles and practices of youth (ex. not technology focused, landline polls - youth have cell phones). There was also a sentiment that the language being used by the City and politicians is not always presented in a way that resonates with them. They further stressed that the opportunities to engage are not being communicated well or in an engaging way. One respondent criticized City staff for not being properly trained to engage with the public and that there exists a gap in available resources and information. As stated by one participant, *"Where do I go to speak with anyone from the City of Toronto? It's City Hall or Metro Hall - but there should be hundreds of more spaces that represent the City [..] that are closer to where I live and where I could walk in and talk to people."*

Others suggested that there is a lack of visibility of the opportunities to engage on important decisions related to housing, transit, development, zoning, and that even for someone with an academic and professional background in political issues it can be difficult to navigate and contribute because the *"the policy process is very inaccessible".* Youth are often unsure of how to start being engaged if they never have before. It can be intimidating and they are often *"unsure of where to begin and assume that getting involved will be a big commitment."* One participant described the challenge of participating in processes that seem to be best suited for *"angry and aggressive voices"*, and saw this as a deterrent to participation.

Belief that their actions will not make a difference
Participants expressed a strong belief that their inputs won't effect any change and that *"council will not respond"* to their ideas, actions and requests. Survey responses reiterated a sentiment that youth feel that their, *"voice isn't heard and that [their] opinions don't matter"* at the City level. Some felt that there is a lack of evidence that participating actually results in any change, and described a sense of general distrust in the political system. *"While the City is clearly important, I don't know who to talk to about what and would be apprehensive that my ideas would be met with token hearing."* Many participants stated that they think that young people are unsure what actions they can take to effect the decision making process underway in Toronto.

Many youth expressed a desire to understand the impact of their contributions and how they fit into a process. They want to feel that they are part of a process that will effect change, but are not currently able to see their contributions as influencing anything. Many stated that the City has not created the proper feedback loops, clarified expected outcomes, or shared the timelines to understand the level of youth impact. They also criticized current City of Toronto practices for lacking that sense of transparency on how public input influences decisions and the impact of their contributions. For the most part, youth remain unaware and unconvinced that there are channels by which their ideas and opinions can create measurable impact on policy and city outcomes. As survey responses illustrate, many youth feel *"powerless to progress any positive*

change due to bureaucracy/social economic status/educational standing not working in their favour."

Lack of youth representation in City leadership
Participants surveyed described the lack of youth leadership at the City as problematic for creating a sense of trust and value among youth. They want to see themselves being represented in the City. Not being represented creates a *"sense of disenfranchisement as youth - we don't see young people in places of power generally, and often those in power are 'out of touch' with what youth would want or need. There is no sense that our voices matter."* For youth to engage, they want to be led by a champion that is "relatable". For some, the City feels *"institutional, wonky, a little lame, boring, and not fun, spirited or inclusive."*

Missing culture of civic engagement
Participants suggested that civic engagement is not embedded into everyday life, and that many youth, *"simply have never been engaged before."* As a result, civic engagement is not considered 'cool' and there remains a sense that *"decisions are meant for adults"*. Youth expressed that they didn't grow up learning and caring about important city issues, and that means they don't have the knowledge or the habits to take action. Some participants suggested that there is a *"lack of expectation from society that we should engage as citizens."* Change can also take a long time, youth are used to *"an age of instant gratification"*, which makes it challenging to commit and see long-term change-making processes through.

Question 7: What do you need/want to participate?

We asked our participants what they needed or wanted in order to participate and be more engaged in planning based issues with the City of Toronto.

Youth reiterated the importance of understanding how their engagement contributions will feed into a larger process. They felt that they needed to receive updates and feedback letting them know how their ideas and thoughts are being used and applied, in the form of what several described as *"meaningful feedback loops"* and *"impact maps"* to understand how a project/process works and is developing.

Participants felt frustrated when their engagement activities happened in contexts of drama or poor leadership. They only wanted to engage in environments that were positive, supportive and well managed as not to feel that their decisions to participate were a waste of time. They also wanted to be assured that they were in an environment that supported transparency and trust, and that there were no secret hidden agendas. Feeling a sense of satisfaction and acknowledgement for their contributions was also expressed as important elements of a positive engagement experience.

Participants suggested that to be engaged, they require a variety of channels and methods to participate. Offering a range of methods and practices will expand reach and encourage more youth to participate. The events must also be promoted using communication methods that compliment the range of behaviors and habits of youth.

Engagement activities must be easy to access and enjoyable to partake in. The event/meeting has to be accessible, convenient and held in places where youth feel comfortable and welcomed, at times that work with their schedules. One suggestion was to cover the cost of TTC or organize a bus to incentivize and ease the burden of transportation. The style of events and facilitation methods should be enjoyable and entertaining. Some suggested the importance of using third-party facilitators and not someone from the City to run the events in order to create a good dynamic among participants. Having drinks, food and snacks were also considered useful strategies to attract and retain youth participation.

Youth are primarily interested in engaging if the topic and issue are aligned with their interests. They are less likely to engage if they are not already interested in the topic. They want to feel that their participation is going to benefit them in some capacity and connects with the issues they care about.

Question 8: Would you like to be engaged and how?

Based off the responses from our survey participants, we learned that 96% of respondents are interested in being engaged by the City of Toronto on the issues that they care about.

Sixty-three percent of survey respondents stated that they would like to be engaged in citizen advisory groups/panels, 60% were interested in participating in focus groups, and 57% were interested in surveys and questionnaires. The full results of that question can be found in the chart below.
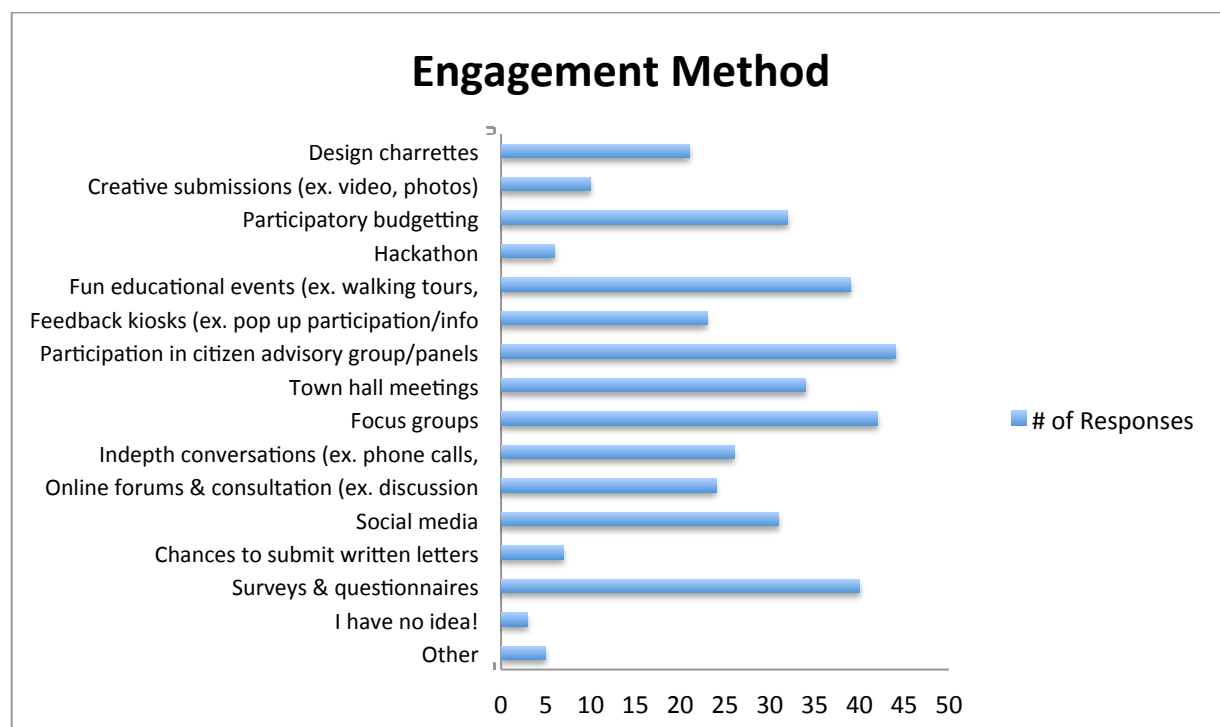
Question 9: What ideas do you have?

A key objective of our research process was to work with participants to brainstorm, ideate and conceptualize different, new and creative ways that the City of Toronto's Planning Division can better engage youth on planning issues. Many ideas were generated and the following is a list of the main recommendations that were shared by participants.
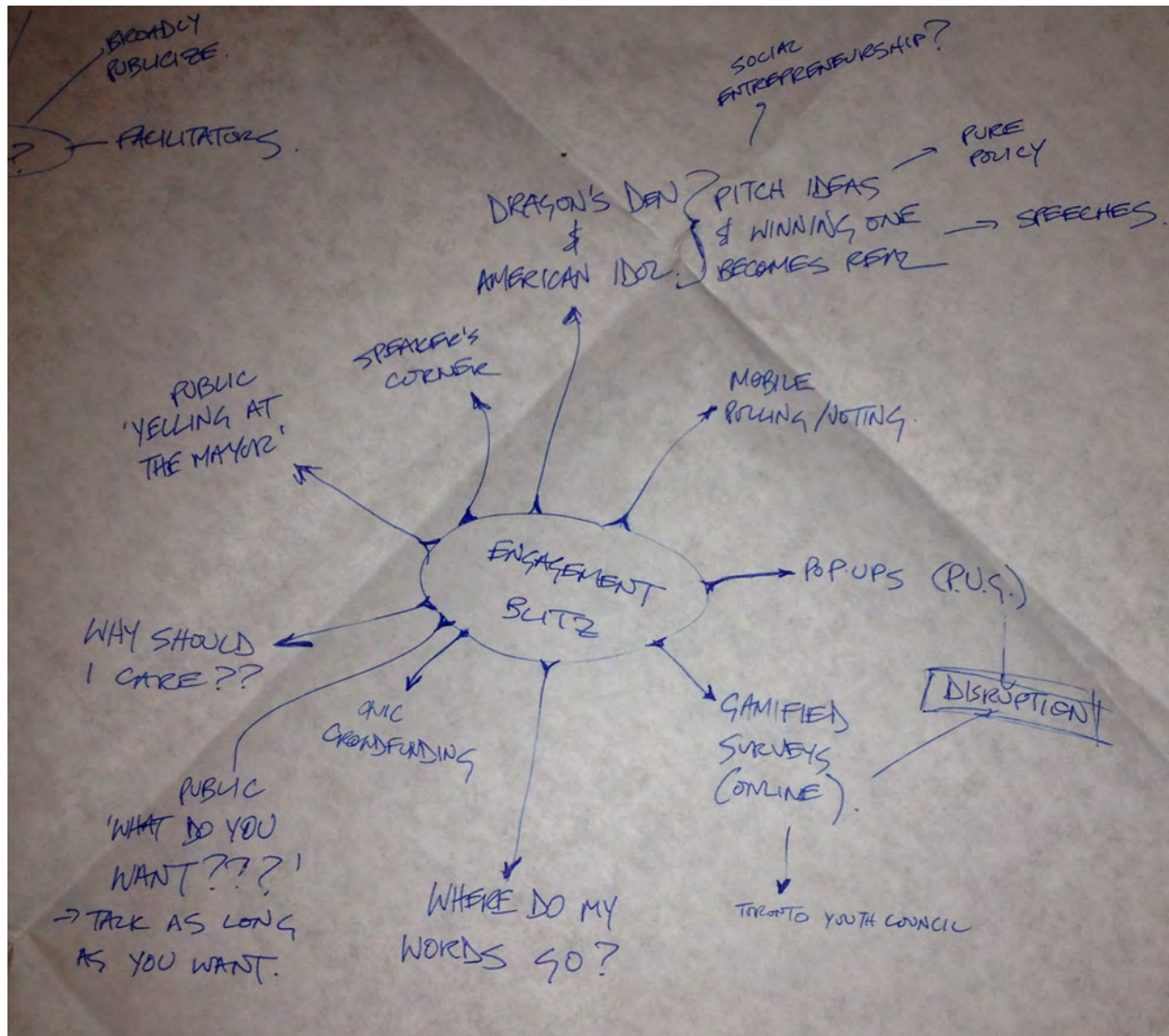
Use social media and 'non-traditional' communications tools and strategies: Many ideas incorporated elements of social media and the use of social media tools, platforms and communication streams to better connect with and engage youth. Some of the ideas suggested were to:

- Create a smart communications team within the municipal government that is coordinated across the GTA and beyond.
- Use social media and 'non-traditional communication' platforms such as: Facebook pages, text messaging (sending newsbites via text), podcasts (to be emailed or via apps for users), through Twitter and the use of tumblr to share city news.
    - Better leveraging Twitter accounts (such as @TorontoComms, @TOPublicHealth) which should be used more as engagement tools instead of information dissemination tools.
    - Facebook pages may be useful for youth as a means to Like/Follow organizations/institutions/individuals that align with their specific interests and values. This will allow youth to curate information in their newsfeed or explore issues and topics that may motivate them or spark their interest/curiosity/passion.
- Create social-media type advertisements, which would require the audience to complete a simple task or challenge, such as user-generated YouTube challenges used to promote the ASL Ice Bucket Challenge. This platform was able to create a huge buzz, and was simple but fun. It resulted in people taking the time to research the cause and what they can do to support it or get involved. It made it feel easy to engaged and learn.
- Create quick informative TV commercials/infomercials or through snapchat videos.
- Use infographics and pictures as a means to better disseminate information.
- Provide a centralized presence (such as a website) that lists ongoing engagement opportunities, with both a presence on Twitter and through emailing options.
- Host an online destination that acts as a portal for distilled information on what and how the city is currently working towards. Alternatively this could exist on a local place-based scale (example at the neighbourhood scale) regarding what's going on, what issues the community is facing, etc.
- Distribute an online newsletter/monthly digest as a means to tell participants about current issues and opportunities and how to get involved.
    - A similar suggestion was to create an online event calendar for youth.
- Implement clear messaging for items directed at youth.
- Better manage, update and easily access the City of Toronto website.
- Use of online forums for open discussion such as a 'City Reddit' - a platform that youth are very skilled at and comfortable with using.
- Host TEDTalk like events focused on youth, collaboration and co-creation where youth can get involved and talk constructively about issues.
- Offer a 'dating' / 'match making' service among city departments and youth, in order to allow youth to better learn where their interests lie and create 'matches' among their interests to learn more about how to participate.
- Design app platforms that promote participation, such as the democracyOS app, open source software made specifically to enable voter engagement (see democracyOS.org, or a ted talk by the make here - http://www.ted.com/talks/pia_mancini_how_to_upgrade_democracy_for_the_internet_era).

- Provide online voting platforms.

Provide food or nominal compensation to incentivize participation.
- Offer small amounts of compensation, TTC tokens, meals, snacks or drinks as an incentive to get youth involved.
- Consider working with corporate partners who would invest money and sponsor engagement events.

Create a space/hub that is just for youth.
- A one-stop shop place that is focused on supporting, engaging, educating and convening youth in the city.

Identify opportunities and programs to increase youth leadership and representation in the City.
- Create youth advisory groups within each ward that are focused on the budgetary process (participatory budgeting). Give youth the opportunity to allocate funds within their neighbourhoods and communities. This could be complemented with in-depth training on city issues so they can be informed.
- Run mock council meetings (for example Model City Hall taking inspiration from Model UN type gatherings) to teach youth how the City operates, empower them with a renewed sense of understanding, and promote future interest in initiatives led by the City. Online and in-person opportunities should both be considered.
- Have Youth Ambassadors to be the face of engagement for the City, who are able to rally people to get engaged in cool and playful manners.
- Invest in grassroots organizations and individuals (community leaders/influencers) who can bridge the gap between youth and the City. Identify the influencers that youth identify and see as trustworthy, and give them accessible and useful platforms to support them at the neighbourhood level.
- Support the creation of a youth lobby group.
- Undertake a youth check-in every 6 months to gauge their perspectives and insights on things taking place throughout the city.
- Have a youth representative on council.

Use playful, creative, fun, unconventional and educational methods (such as events, activities or tools) in order to create a unique set of engagement options for youth.
- Consider strategies that reward and incentivize frequent participation.
    - A "Youth Passport" - which gets stamped for participating in different engagement related activities.
    - "Rewards" for participation in different engagement opportunities (like in Citizenville).
- Ensure that fun events also maintain usefulness and genuine engagement.
- Run youth only meetings/information sessions.
- Host a party. A Civic Engagement Party - to educate, engage and connect the city's youth.

- The parties can have different themes, like reimagining spaces, and solicit people's ideas and share them by generating real time word clouds with the ideas and thoughts of people in attendance.
- People come to the party with ideas that they have for the city and the party offers a chance for them to find collaborators or co-conspirers.
- Host the parties at cool venues, and at multiple locations across the city.
- Party as a source for brainstorming and generating good ideas and creating a sense of ownership over certain pockets and places in the city.
- Use the Dragon's Den/American Idol model to hold a citizens pitch contest for policy ideas or city building changes.
    - This can be to a panel of policy leaders or have the public vote on which ideas win.
    - Get commitment from government that the winning ideas will be implemented/experimented.
- Run a "Yell at the Mayor" Event - where people share their ideas with the Mayor in a rapid fire, dramatized and humorous way.
- Create a "Speaker's Corner" type space where youth can come and share their ideas for how to make the city better and the videos can be shared on a YouTube channel or website. **(This was mentioned several times!)**
    - Opportunity to rank and vote on their favorite ideas.
- Capture people's attention when they are bored, such as when they are on the TTC. For example, there is an opportunity to require people to do a survey before they can access wifi. Offer learning activities presented through fun, gaming platforms - even force subway riders who use the app to connect in real time.
- Pop-Up engagement options to ensure that a wide range of people are engaged, not just those who seek out opportunities to participate.
    - Can locate them in popular places (ex. TTC) and areas that are connected to the issue requiring youth input.
    - Engage youth and volunteers to be the educators and facilitators of the pop-up events.
- Hire or collaborate with celebrities and famous people that influence youth.
- Apply social practice art and use multiple modes to express ideas and allow communities to be heard regardless of education level, primary language and accessibility requirements.
- Run online voting opportunities just for youth.
- Host a Q&A with council members and City staff in informal social settings and geared towards youth.

Create platforms that allow should allow youth to connect with each other and learn about issues, focusing on follow-through and action.
- Convene youth in ways that support networking building and fostering connection between participants.
- Focus events on follow-through and tangible outcomes.
- Run workshops so youth have the opportunity to dive deeply into the issues that they want to learn about the City.

- The process should be exposed to youth. For example an event like Doors Open Toronto but for City Hall where the public can access and see the processes that run inside the City of Toronto and how certain issues are being addressed.
- Host public events, panel discussions, forums, focus groups, and citizen advisory panels.
- Consider ways to diversify Town Hall attendance and turnout.
    - For example, lottery invite to a town hall in order to minimize the selection bias that takes place with usual town halls where the more activist demographic is more likely to attend and diversify the audience.
- Create opportunities for youth to both learn about issues and take action on them.
    - Connect education opportunities with community-based initiatives that have opportunities for involvement.
- Run walking tours and foster engagement with new neighbourhoods.
- Foster meaningful dialogue between participants and experts. Make those with expertise more approachable.

Distribute a survey to gather a baseline of interest from youth and learn how they want to engage.
- Send a survey to all residents in the city in order to understand their level of interest on issues and the type of relationships that they would like to have with the City.
- Use this information to develop a strategy for engagement that creates a sense of belonging that resonates with residents and offers multiple pathways for engagement.

Focus on education and urban literacy to build engagement from a younger age. Our participants mentioned the value of urban literacy and ongoing education of planning based issues as a way to keep them informed and ultimately feeling more motivated to participate.
- Develop graphic novels that teach youth about how the City works.
- Develop partnerships with school boards so that the City engages youth in *their* environment and build engagement strategies into school curricula at an early age, forming a culture of engagement, helping children and youth have a better understanding of how to get involved. Curricula should be hands-on (field trips, community leaders/mentors/motivators speaking in schools, student gardens, etc.), where students would actually have the opportunity to get involved on issues.
    - Incorporate more direct links between schools and the City/urban planning issues taking place in the City, with opportunities for direct engagement.
    - Through education, support youth to better understand that their work/actions can make a difference and how to vocalize and speak with one another to bring about change.
    - Develop co-op programs and link curriculum back to current issues, in order to create a catered 'civics classroom package'.
- Create a pen-pal system across schools to encourage students to give each other tours of their neighbourhoods or communities within the City of Toronto.
- Provide opportunities for group learning, with a time and place dedicated to learning, discussion and contribution.

- Set up a pop-up table or quick presentation during University Orientation Week (first week of school in September) to connect the City to the like-minded faculties in universities, and subsequently to youth.
- Demonstrate successful initiatives that influence youth are important parts of their lives
    - ex. being involved in the secondary planning process of a city (City of Waterloo engaged youth in this process), Imagined Spaces Photography Exhibit, ideas incubator (DiverCity Fellows)

Section 4: Next Steps

Following this report, our next steps are to share our report with all of our participants and inform them about our process in compiling the data. All 10 youth researchers will be reconvening and presenting their findings to each other. What will result will be a final compilation of everyone's research, which will be presented back to the City of Toronto's Planning Division. We will also share this final report with our participants. Below is a draft email to be sent to our participants regarding this current report.

Hello Fabulous Express Yo'self Participants!

We are pleased to update you on what is happening with your integral insights. Firstly, thank you. We could not have done any of this work with you! We, and the 8 other Youth Research Team members, have submitted our reports to the consulting team (Swerhun Consulting, Maximum City and Urban Strategies). They are the intermediary between us and the City of Toronto Planning Division. The Youth Research Team and consultants, will be working to take all the feedback that has been gathered and craft a final report that reflects your amazing insights and perspectives. On December 9th, we will be coming together to see exactly what that final report will look like. All of this information will then be given to the City of Toronto's Planning Division for them to use in generating their final engagement strategies to be released in 2015.

For your reference, we have attached the report that we provided to the consulting team. Please feel free to have a gander. And if you see anything that looks inaccurate, then let us know! We've taken a lot of care to represent you properly.

We will keep you all abreast as things unfold and share the final (compiled) report with you in the January 2015, when it is ready. Once again, thank you and have a wonderful week.

Best,
MoJo (Mojan Jianfar & Jo Flatt)

Appendix

Appendix A: Email shared with public

Title: The City of Toronto wants to hear from you!

No joke. They really do.

The City of Toronto Planning Department has pulled together a team of 10 youth to conduct a whole bunch of research on how to engage Toronto's youth [ages 16-30] in the decisions and planning activities that are being made by our local government.

Over the next 3 weeks, the Mojan Jianfar and Jo Flat will be running a series of discussions, surveys and pop up events as a way to gather your thoughts and insights. All this information will be collected and shared back to the City.

Interested in taking part? Sure you are. We have 4 different ways that you can get in on the process.

Here is the Facebook page!

1. **Express Yo'self Workshops**. Let's get together and talk it out. We will bring together a bunch of awesome folks (just like you!) to ideate, brainstorm and make some youth engagement magic. During these workshops we will come up with strategies and insights to share with the City's Planning Department on how they can connect with youth today.

Workshop #1: **Tuesday, November 11th from 7pm-9 pm** @ CSI Annex - 720 Bathurst Street, Garage (ground floor) - REGISTER HERE

Workshop #2: **Sunday, November 16th from 5-7pm** @ CSI Annex - 720 Bathurst Street, Room #2 (second floor) - REGISTER HERE

2. **A simple survey.** This will take about 3 minutes of your time. Our quick little survey is a way to get a baseline sense of what you care about and how you might want to contribute to the work taking place at the City's Planning Department.

Click here to fill it out. And if you have a few extra moments, share it with your friends - we want as many responses as possible!

3. **Pop Up City Hall.** Think Speakers Corner meets information booth meets walk-in clinic. Take a step into our 'office', have a seat, rant, discuss, and share with us what you think the City needs to do to engage you better.

The 'City's doctors' will be in on **Saturday, November 15th** on the ground floor of CSI Annex (720 Bathurst) in the Coffee Pub cafe between 1pm and 5pm waiting to hear from you. So come on down, grab a coffee and tell us what you think.

4. **Creative Submissions.** Maybe none of this sh*t excites you. Maybe you want to express yourself in a totally different way. We think that is awesome. We want to hear it, see it, feel it from your perspective...and share it back to the City. So, express yourself!

Email us at **youthengageto@gmail.com** with your wild and wacky wisdom. (oh, and please keep it clean - we're working for the City). Deadline to submit is November 20th.

Most importantly - share this around! Send this email to all of your friends (and even enemies). We want to get all the gems of great ideas, because this a chance for us to influence the way that the City of Toronto does it's planning work. And we think that is pretty awesome.

If you have ANY other questions, thoughts, or concerns then just email us at youthengageto@gmail.com. We welcome your brain waves.

Yours in youth engagement,

MoJo (Mojan & Jo)

Extra special thank you to the Centre for Social Innovation for the space sharing!

Disclaimer: Where possible, all participants will be kept anonymous. Creative submissions may be shared with the rest of the Youth Engagement Strategy team, with the City of Toronto planning department and Chief Planners office and potentially in other formats online. Please indicate if you'd like to have your name shared with your creative submissions. All creative content will be properly credited.

Appendix B: Survey Questions

1. How old are you? *
   ○ 31+
   ○ 25-30
   ○ 18-24
   ○ Less than 18 years old

2. What part of Toronto do you live in?
   ○ Toronto & East York (Wards 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32)
   ○ Scarborough (Wards 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44)
   ○ Etobicoke York (Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 17)
   ○ North York (Wards 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 23, 24, 25, 26, 33, 34)
   ○ Other:

3. What types of city issues do you care most about? *
Choose your top 3
   ○ Transportation and transit
   ○ Arts and culture
   ○ Environment
   ○ Economic development
   ○ Social equity and justice
   ○ Land use and zoning
   ○ Housing
   ○ Recreation, sports & leisure
   ○ Public space
   ○ Parks

4. Have you ever engaged in some way on these issues with the City of Toronto?
If yes, tell us how. If no, tell us why not.

5. Would you like staff at the City of Toronto to engage you in the decisions that they make about the issues you care about? *
   ○ Yes, please!
   ○ Yes - but it depends on what they want from me
   ○ No.
   ○ Other:

6. How would you like to be engaged? *
Choose your favourite 5
   ○ Surveys & questionnaires
   ○ Chances to submit written letters

- Social media
- Online forums & consultation (ex. discussion groups, wikis)
- In-depth conversations (ex. phone calls, interviews)
- Focus groups
- Town hall meetings
- Participation in a citizen advisory group/panels
- Feedback kiosks (ex. pop up participation/info booth)
- Fun educational events (ex. walking tours, dance parties)
- Hackathon
- Participatory budgeting
- Creative submissions (ex. video, photos)
- Design charrettes
- I have no idea!
- Other:

7. What do you think are the biggest barriers preventing youth from engaging with the City of Toronto?

8. Tell us more. What is your ideal way to learn about the things that are happening in the City of Toronto and participate in the outcomes?

Describe any ideas that you have. You can be as wild and wacky as you want!

9. If you want to be included in future work - whether by the City or by us, please give us your name and email.

Appendix C: Creative Submission

The following is a creative submission we received from two participants.

Plan TOgether

A meaningful online engagement platform & strategy to better envision the City of Toronto.

How do we make Toronto the most engaged city in North America?

DESIGN CHARETTE

&

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

🐦 **@PlanTOgether**

TWEETS	FOLLOWING	FOLLOWERS	FAVORITES	LISTS
10.5K	437	51.2K	161	8

#DesignTOgether
#OwnYourCity
#EnvisionTOgether
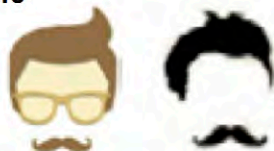
Work collaboratively to avoid silos.
Early feedback & answers to critical questions.
Ideal environment: gain trust and explore design alternatives to reach consensus.

Contribute ANYWHERE.

Inclusive, creative, informative, accessible.
Engagement and awareness via social media.

**Hamburg University
Hamburg, GERMANY
Plasti City
Bradford City Centre, UK**

BENCHMARKING

Click for more on the Urbanists behind Plan TOgether:

PROCESS:

1. City Planning receives application or City-led initiative. (Ex: Nathan Phillips Square Revitalization).
2. City Planning follows protocol as per provincial policy, legislation, and Official Plan.
3. @CityPlanTO builds social media awareness for the @PlanTOgether platform.
4. City Planning gathers feedback from public meeting(s) and Plan TOgether platform.
5. Plan TOgether platform collects online submissions pre & post public meetings.

Photos: www.toronto.ca

Plan TOgether

Sample

What does engagement mean to you?

#participation   #collaboration   #outreach   #CityPlanning   #communication

Property: 123 Abbey Road

Submission #201

Drag and drop icons to let us know what you want to see in this space.

🐦 @PlanTOgether

Tweets

@GreenCommuter
North access excellent location for pedestrians & vehicles. #accessible #Site34 #PlanTOgether

@ParksBuff @TorontoComms Great to see adequate green space in this new development. #designTOgether

@TorontoBorn @PlanTOgether Missed the public meeting so I'm contributing online now, love the new platform! #OwnYourCity

Tweet to @PlanTOgether

Tell us what you think:

1. Based on your experience, what are the characteristics and qualities of the neighbourhood that make it a unique place? _____
2. What positive and negative effects could the proposed development have on the neighbourhood and adjacent properties? _____
3. Are there any amenities that you feel are currently missing from the surrounding area? _____

Other Comments: _____

Submit

Youth Engagement Strategy: Research Summary
Researcher: Siva Vijenthira

Overview

The data in this report comes from interviews with 30 youth aged 18 to 29, primarily residing in Scarborough, and primarily racialized. Interviews were conducted via 15- to 45-minute phone calls or in-person conversations, and took place over lunch or in the evenings in November 2014. Participants sometimes worked or volunteered with, but did not represent, the following organizations: Boys & Girls Club of East Scarborough, East Scarborough Storefront, Planned Parenthood Toronto, and University of Toronto.

Household income	Number of participants
Under $5,000	1
$5,000 - $19,999	3
$20,000 - $39,999	6
$40,000 - $59,999	1
$60,000 - $79,999	2
$80,000 - $99,999	2
$100,000 - $119,999	5
$120,000 - $139,999	2
$140,000 and over	2
No Answer	6

Researcher's note: Several other organizations were contacted, but it was difficult to convince individuals to set up phone or in-person interviews with me unless they had a personal connection with me. In the end, the majority of participants were friends, friends of friends, family friends, or people with whom I'd worked on past projects.

Key Messages

- The issues that interested participants most were those that affected them on a daily basis. The top official issue that mattered to them was "Facilitating Movement"; they consistently pointed to the need for more affordable and expansive transit options.

- Participants overwhelmingly believed that their input would not be heard and did not matter in the decision-making process; they either did not trust the City to respect their perspective, or did not think that their non-expert perspective was worth submitting.
- Participants emphasized the need to either make public meetings more accessible for everyone, including youth, through scheduling/location/leadership/marketing, or to bring these meetings to existing local youth or cultural organizations.

Detailed Feedback

1. What are your interests in life (generally)? What inspires you to get out of bed every day?

- Working towards personal goals, which included:
    - Finishing school. ("I wouldn't get out of bed if I didn't have to go to school.")
    - Finding or maintaining meaningful long-term employment, especially in a field that involves doing good for others.
    - Saving money in order to move to a different neighbourhood. ("I don't want to put it this way, but I can't wait to get out of Scarborough.")
- Social issues in the city: improving housing, providing accessible healthcare (across a spectrum from sexual health to dental care), designing better neighbourhoods.
- Toronto's arts and culture scene. ("There's always something going on!")
- Seeing friends, enjoying entertainment like films or television, or spending time on personal creative projects or hobbies.
- "I don't know. I don't think about this stuff that often, I have school."

2. What kind of issues in the city do you care about? These issues could be the same as the ones City Planning is talking about or they could be completely different.

The following were issues that at least two people brought up as important, in order of popularity:
- Facilitating movement: overwhelmingly the most popular issue
    - Need for more affordable, more expansive transit options, including better bus service, overnight and Sunday morning subway service, and more LRTs.
    - Sense of disconnect from home neighbourhood because of inability to travel within it. ("It's faster for me to go straight downtown than to somewhere else in Scarborough.")
    - Need for solutions to crowded roadways. ("I drive and I feel like it's getting worse and worse every year.")
    - Need for a "diversity of transit options", including pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.
- Defining social equity and social policy
    - "This kind of connects with everything else."
    - "This is the most important issue for me but it's inside every other issue."

- Promoting a strong economy
    - Need for meaningful employment ("not just tax breaks for companies") with a "living wage" and long-term career possibilities, rather than ongoing contracts.
    - Frustration that hard-earned education feels undervalued in the job market.
    - The importance of "anti-oppression and equity" strategies in order to ensure that these resources reach everyone in the community.
- Allocating land use
    - Need for better access to grocery stores, libraries, and community health services that are closer to home.
    - Possibilities of creating affordable housing options in vacated buildings or abandoned lots.
    - Need for more streetlife and entertainment options for youth. ("It feels like there's nothing in Scarborough for people our age.")
- Designing the public realm
    - Need for a more beautiful, more inviting streetscape.
- Supporting arts, culture, and learning
    - "Does [this category] include university? That's what matters to me most."
    - "I love festivals like LuminaTO. It's why I like living in this city."

3. Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?

- Many participants had never taken action on an issue, for many conflicting yet complementary reasons:
    - Sense that their input won't be heard, or that politicians/businesses/other players have more power in decision-making than members of the public: "It feels like all the decisions were already made and they're just having this meeting because they have to have a meeting."
    - Sense that it isn't their responsibility: "I vote. And then I expect my representative to take care of things. That's why I vote."
    - Sense that lack of existing knowledge precludes involvement, or makes involvement unnecessary: "I don't feel like I'm an expert on this stuff." "I probably shouldn't say this, but it seems like the kind of thing older people know more about." "It's not like we don't go because we're apathetic… we read the news. But if I don't know much about a particular issue, it's not the end of the world if I don't go. Whatever I'd say is not crucial."
    - Scheduling and location: "These meetings are not just a walk away, they're a bus ride away. If I'm getting home from a long day at 7 or 8pm, why would I take another bus to go to a planning meeting?"
    - Sense of disconnect from the area: participants either hadn't grown up in the neighbourhood (their parents had moved in order to buy a house, after saving up for years), or they didn't plan to stay there in the future, so they didn't feel the impetus to engage on local issues.

- Lack of interest/urgency: "I wouldn't go unless I was really, really passionate about the issue, or someone told me I really needed to go. I'm not going to go for the sake of going." "I've never gotten involved in anything. It's not my thing."
- Lack of knowledge of meetings: "I don't read newspapers, so I don't see newspaper ads... I do see development notices in front of buildings but I don't really stop and look at those." " I've seen notices for the Metrolinx consultations. I don't think I've seen notices about anything else."
- Other pressures: "Currently, completing school is my priority." "When I'm at school, I'm not paying attention to anything else." "I work, I don't have the time."
- Of those who had taken action, most had done so through non-municipal organizations like the Boys & Girls Club, a club at school, or an activist non-profit. The City's strategies had not helped them to take action; a leader or peer at the organization had brought them on. The most locally-engaged participants said that they were too busy with their existing projects to participate in City consultations; they were "getting things done on the ground" on their own, without the City.
- Some participants had gotten involved in an issue because of a request or "call-to-action" from a friend, a blog, or an activist group. ("I understand that the City can't really do a call-to-action because they have to be neutral… but that would be the only reason I'd go to something I didn't already feel really strongly about.")

4. What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action? (Online tools, innovative meeting formats, etc.)?

Barriers:
- Lack of existing knowledge about municipal issues, which also means a lack of interest/passion about municipal issues.
- Lack of belief that individuals, especially youth, are really welcome to give their input.
- Lack of trust in the City to respect individual/youth opinions when making decisions.
- "Honestly? Poverty." — *i.e.*, lack of time and energy to participate.
- Lack of options for involvement.
- Lack of knowledge about opportunities for involvement.
- Being in a "bubble" at school.

Things that would help:
- Make clear that all input is important and will be taken into consideration.
- Make clear that educational material will be provided at meetings.
- More public education through the media about local issues that are coming up for public consultation, similar to how federal issues are often discussed heavily in the media; use online media, especially local blogs, as well as mainstream news outlets, and social media, to make the consultations seem urgent and newsworthy.
- Approach existing local organizations, including cultural groups and youth groups, to seek input at existing meetings, rather than setting up separate meetings and expecting attendance.

- Hold meetings on Saturday mornings instead of weekday nights, to reach youth who have long workdays or multiple jobs, and students who have unpredictable schedules.
- Hold smaller meetings in each neighbourhood, instead of larger meetings in central locations that take time to get to.
- Set up a "City planning department" club/organization at each university, get students on a mailing list, and have regular drop-in sessions to talk about what the City is working on. Similar to activist organizations at universities.
- Incorporate planning discussions into university classes for students across different fields, to reach them directly.
- Provide childcare and tokens at meetings.
- Online surveys offer a lower point of entry for people who don't feel that they know enough or have enough passion to participate in person.

5. Are there any specific times you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?

- The majority of participants said no, the four listed times sounded fine.
- More consultations asking what needs to be done, instead of discussing proposals already made. ("Where do I go, who do I talk to, if I want a grocery store in my neighbourhood?" "I feel like my neighbourhood isn't made for me, or people our age. If there was a consultation about that, maybe I'd go.")
- More consultations about planning questions at the "middle point" between development notices for single buildings and larger consultations like the waterfront or Eglinton Connects — *i.e.*, more consultations at the street/neighbourhood level rather than at the level of either individual buildings or very large swaths of the city.
- More public evaluations to see whether improvements can be made after infrastructure has already been installed.
- More Planners-in-Public-Spaces events. ("I don't think I've ever seen one of those. That sounds cool.")

6. Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?

- The majority of participants said no. ("We're just a tough group. There's no easy solution.")
- Approach cultural groups or youth groups to ask how best to approach the youth in their particular community. Every group is different.
- To show youth that their ideas really matter, create more Youth Councils and make them easier to join. One participant had had a bad experience trying to get involved with a Youth Council that felt exclusionary because its social dynamic was insular.
- Recruit youth leaders from the community and make them organizers and leaders in planning meetings. ("They'll bring their friends and it'll go from there.")
- Provide resources for youth who are already doing grassroots planning work, *i.e.,* provide funding or guidance on seeking funding.

- Create opportunity for ongoing relationship with youth in their later 20s — "we fall through the cracks" between university-age engagement strategies and older adult engagement strategies. ("I'm not sure what [that strategy] would look like... but it's important." "Something social? Something fun?")
- Engage youth in high school, especially since they are often the interpreters/points of contact for their newcomer parents, and that could help bring underrepresented older newcomers into the planning discussion as well.
- Use social media more effectively.

Next Steps

This summary will now be finalized and then shared with the City, after which the research team will work with the City to identify specific strategies around youth engagement.

Appendix: Participant List

Boys & Girls Club of East Scarborough
East Scarborough Storefront
Planned Parenthood Toronto
University of Toronto Scarborough Campus

Abarna Kathirgamanathan
Andrew
Angela Salamanca
Ajeev Bhatia
Ayesha
CN
Farooq Ahmed
Hiba
HH
Jessica Su
Laura Salamanca
Lisa Marie Nagapen
Kate
Krisna
Marina
Nisha
Rajivan
SK
Sharmini
Talia Bronstein
Tanya
Theo
Thupten Dorjee
Unisha Shrestha
VK
YS

City Building Youth Research Team Final Report

Research Findings

Suhal Ahmed

11/28/2014

<u>Overview</u>

Throughout November, Suhal Ahmed conducted a study on 18-30 year olds in order to determine how to better engage this demographic in the city building process. The study was completed through group meetings, phone interviews and online surveys completed through SurveyMonkey. The interview process followed the discussion guide provided with a few adjustments that will be discussed in the detailed feedback section. The survey distilled the interview into simple questions designed to enhance the information found in the interviews. Thirty-one youth completed the interviews, and twenty-five completed the survey. Most participants completed the interview and did the survey as a follow up. A few participants were only able to do the survey or interview.

There were four group meetings for the study
- November 5th in a post tournament meet-up with players in the Toronto Bengali Sports Organization (TBSO) volleyball tournament, there were 6 attendees.
- November 8th after a Lead2Peace volunteer meeting (Youth leadership program), there were 7 attendees.
- November 11th with people contacted through UofT Meal Exchange (University Club about Food Security), there were 5 attendees.
- November 19th with contacts through Lead2Peace, there were 7 attendees.
- Six youth leaders who were interested but not able to complete an in person interview did phone interviews on November 16th.

The participants in the study were from many different neighborhoods. Most of the participants recruited through Lead2Peace were from Regent Park and Moss Park. Participants from TBSO were from the Victoria Park/Danforth and Scarborough areas. Meal Exchange UofT participants were a diverse group and no specific neighborhoods were targeted.

Throughout the study there were many challenges. Coordinating a meeting time was a big issue in the early stages, this was solved through piggybacking on other meet-ups and phone interviews. There was some difficulty letting all voices be heard as some people would dominate the conversation not giving others a chance to speak. This was partially solved by specifically asking people for their opinion. Originally surveys were mass emailed but the response rate was low. When the survey was redesigned to target specific people the response rate was higher. Participants felt uncomfortable answering too many demographic questions in the survey so the number of demographic questions was reduced to three. 66% of participants were male, with most being 21-24 years old. The average family income ranged greatly and included all but one of the income brackets. The demographic data tables can be found in the Appendix (pg 8).

<u>Key Messages</u>

Four key messages stood out from the research:

1. **Limited Time**. Many youth felt that their time is limited and that attending most of these meetings is a waste of their time since it would not affect anything. Youth want concrete feedback on what attending the meeting will affect and why what they say matters.
2. **Short Term benefits and feedback.** Youth want to know the short term benefits of attending the meeting. They are uncertain about where they will be in the future, so they are less likely to care about projects that take years to complete. To keep their interest, short term milestones should be a focus when discussing topics with youth, with constant updates on the progress of these changes (preferably through the internet)
3. **Focus on issues of interest**. Youth are particular about what issues they are interested in discussing. Even if it is an important topic, youth may not feel they have something worthwhile to say on the topic. In city building conversations there should be a time to discuss how these changes will affect topics of interest for youth like jobs, public transportation, social policy and equity, and supporting play.
4. **Advertising directed at Youth.** 77% of Participants were unaware these meetings existed and blame it on the lack of targeted advertising. There needs to be better advertisement for city building meetings in areas frequented by youth and these advertisements should mention the topics that directly impact the youth.

<u>Detailed Summary of Feedback</u>

1. What are your interests in life (generally)? What inspires you to get out of bed every day?

- When asked about interests participants mainly focused on what they do for entertainment
    - Sports (mainly basketball, volleyball and soccer), Video games, and hanging out with friends were all common answers
- Some people talked about more general interests, most common of which were politics, environmentalism, science and technology
- Others talked about their goals such as helping others or making money to support family

Things that inspired participants to get out of bed varied greatly
- Most focused on their short term practical goals such as making money for food/ rent "to survive until the next day".
- Long term goals included becoming more healthy and getting closer to their dream job
- Abstract answers include "to feel alive" and "accomplish something more than yesterday"
- Since most people focused on what they do as part of their job I asked them what makes them get up on the weekends and holidays
    - This got responses such as having fun and enjoying life

- o Explore and try new things and keep their mind active
- One comment that stood out was "I want my actions to matter to the world around me. I make a difference in my company, but I also want to make a positive difference in my community". This comment was met with enthusiasm from the group.

2. What kind of issues in the city do you care about? These issues could be the same as the ones City Planning is talking about or they could be completely different.

- Transportation was the most discussed topic for this question and one of the most highly rated in terms of importance in the quiz (Appendix pg 10, figure 1)
  - o The TTC was seen as unreliable and slow
  - o A big concern was the need for more bike lanes and safer roads
  - o One discussion centered around the importance of having our streets designed to be accessible by the elderly and disabled. A nursing student at the University of Toronto said "If we designed our transportation, roads and sidewalks for the elderly, then it would be accessible to everyone"
- Promoting a strong economy was important especially supporting job creation
- Play and supporting arts were also seen as important, the youth wanted to keep their brain and body active
- Protecting the environment was rated very important in the survey, yet few mentioned it during the discussion. Participants said they didn't think of it as something the city did.
- The lowest rated in terms of importance in the quiz was shaping development.
- Topics that were mentioned that were not in the planning list were Healthcare and Education

3. Have you ever taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how? If not, why not? Have any of the strategies the City uses to encourage people to participate helped you take action on an issue? Why or why not?

- Participants felt this question was vague and weren't sure what constituted an issue (did personal issues count?), I told them to focus on social or political issues
- Survey results show that only 50% of participants said they had taken action on a social or political issue that they cared about
- When probed for why they didn't take action, time and feelings of powerlessness were common answers

Issues participants took action on include
- One time actions such as voting, signing petitions, attending protests, environmental cleanups or running for a cure (Cancer)
- Major projects such as starting an after school martial arts program, teaching about food security through gardening, organizing boycotts and starting a service learning program

- Volunteering in soup kitchens, hospitals and with mental health patients were also popular responses
- The strategies used by planning division such as publishing notice, hosting conversations and incorporating feedback were all seen as important by youth but only a small minority have implemented them previously. According to the survey this was around 40% (Appendix, figure 2).

4. What are the barriers preventing you from taking action on the issues you care about? What would help you take action? (Online tools, innovative meeting formats, etc.)?

- By far the largest barrier was time, this was reiterated in nearly every meeting. Participants wanted to know if it was worthwhile before using their precious social and work time. Even when it was seen as interesting participants felt overwhelmed with school or work.
- Another major barrier was that youth were simply unaware of the engagement opportunities and how they could make a difference. This was seen in the survey where 77% said they simply were unaware of the city planning meetings (Appendix, figure 3).
- Participants felt that their actions would not lead to a positive change so they didn't want to put in the effort. Even though they cared, not enough other people did for it to matter
- Taking action costs money that participants could not afford. Getting funders can be incredibly difficult.
- It is difficult coordinating between volunteers and stakeholders. Without everyone being on the same page things fall apart quickly
- Convenience was important as youth didn't want to go out of their way to attend a city planning meeting.
- Some things that would make taking action easier were
  o Being able to view meetings online through Skype or another streaming service
  o Hosting meetings at universities
  o Online methods to connect with stakeholders (decrease time it takes to communicate with different parties)

5. Are there any specific times you think the City should involve youth in city building conversations?

- Participants felt that youth should be involved in all steps of the process including neighborhood based planning, development application review, city wide planning processes and conversations about the city. Yet the youth felt that they would not attend unless it was about a plan/development that affected an issue they were concerned about like public transportation or the environment.

- Young single business men and women, make up an ever growing part of the city demographic. Many new condos are being made directly targeted to 18-30 demographic. It is becoming more important than ever for youth to have a say in city building
- Those that did not attend should be able to access notes about what happened during these meetings or watch it online later. This will help make keeping up with city building conversations easier.
- It is easier to get youth involved in meetings about transportation, retail areas, park redevelopment, and changes that affect their university because they can easily see how these topics affect them

6. Do you have any other advice about how the Planning Division could better involve youth?

- In city building conversations with youth there should be a focus on how the project will affect the youth in the short term as many youth may not expect to be in the area or city in the long term.
- Mohsin, an industrial engineer argued "Often these projects happen over many years in which the student expects to be in a completely different stage of life. If you only talk about long term results then only the older people with more stable lives will show. Students need to see the short term milestones of city building projects and have constant updates so they know how it is going to impact them city directly."
- In order to deal with issues of convenience and save youth time, there should be meetings near universities campuses and schools.
- These meetings need to be better advertised in areas frequented by youth such as gyms, recreation areas and universities. It may be good to connect with university clubs to promote the city building meetings
- There needs to be email reminders of meetings
- A small stipend or free food would also encourage more attendees.
- Uses of Twitter, Facebook and other online forums to keep people up to date. These can be used to keep the discussion going outside of the meetings
- Streaming the meetings live so people can watch from home if they cannot attend, but are interested in the information
- Meetings should be interactive and engaging with visuals and demonstrations when possible. Such as drawing out what their ideal park should look like
- Incorporate city building into the school curriculum, build an interest from a young age
- Have opportunities to network or make connections with important people and other attendees
- Allow participants to be involved in the issue beyond just talking in meetings. There needs to be a way to constantly give feedback on a project

Next Steps Section

The report has been send out to participants and feedback was received. The paper was adjusted to better align with participant's views. The report will now be used in conjunction with other researcher's findings to help adjust the city planning division's youth engagement strategy. With the feedback received, Suhal Ahmed will help identify specific strategies to engage youth in the city building process. Participants who requested it will be updated with the results of the process through email.

Participant List (Appendix)

City Building Survey Contact List	
Name	**Contacted Through**
Alex Frias	Lead2Peace
Alexa Qu	UofT Meal Exchange
Amer Choudhury	Lead2Peace
Amir Mohammed	Lead2Peace
Bilal Sarwar	UofT
Bipu Bashar	Toronto Bengali Sports Organization
Caroline Fouad	UofT
Chloe Kovacheff	UofT Meal Exchange
Jo Anne	UofT Meal Exchange
John Huynh	Lead2Peace
Mahi Choudhury	Lead2Peace
Mamon Uddin	Toronto Bengali Sports Organization
Matty Sri	UofT Meal Exchange
Michel Ciomber	Lead2Peace
Mohsin Khan	Lead2Peace
Montaha Zaman	Toronto Bengali Sports Organization
Navreet Dhanju	UofT
Onik Khan	UofT Student Council
Oussama Ekchanti	Lead2Peace
Paul Huynh	Lead2Peace
Ratul Islam	Lead2Peace
Sumi Akhter	Toronto Bengali Sports Organization
Tahseen Israque	Toronto Bengali Sports Organization
Tanbir Haque	Lead2Peace
Tazim Israque	Lead2Peace
Vinthuja Rasa	Toronto Bengali Sports Organization
Yusra Ali	Youth mentor
Anonymous	
Anonymous	
Anonymous	
Anonymous	
Anonymous	
Anonymous	
Anonymous	
Anonymous	
Anonymous	
Anonymous	

The participant list including their names, and which group they were contacted through. Not all participants gave their last name and some preferred to do the study anonymously.

Other Materials (Appendix)

Survey Results:

Participant Age	
Age	Responses
18	1
19	0
20	0
21	1
22	5
23	11
24	4
25	0
26	0
27	0
28	1
29	1
30	0

Gender	
Male	17
Female	8

Annual Household Income	
Income	Responses
Under $5,000	2
$5,000 - $19,999	2
$20,000 - $39,999	5
$40,000 - $59,999	5
$60,000 - $79,999	2
$80,000 - $99,999	1
$100,000 - $119,999	0
$120,000 - $139,999	1
$140,000 and over	0
Prefer not to answer	6
Total	24

Tables showing the participants age, gender and annual household income.

Q5

These are ten key topics in city building.
Please rate how important you feel these
issues are to you.

Answered: 25   Skipped: 0

Facilitating Movement...
Protecting the Environment
Designing the Public Realm...
Supporting arts, cultur...
Managing Growth and...
Promoting a Strong Econo...
Shaping Development...
Supporting play (size,...
Defining Social Equit...
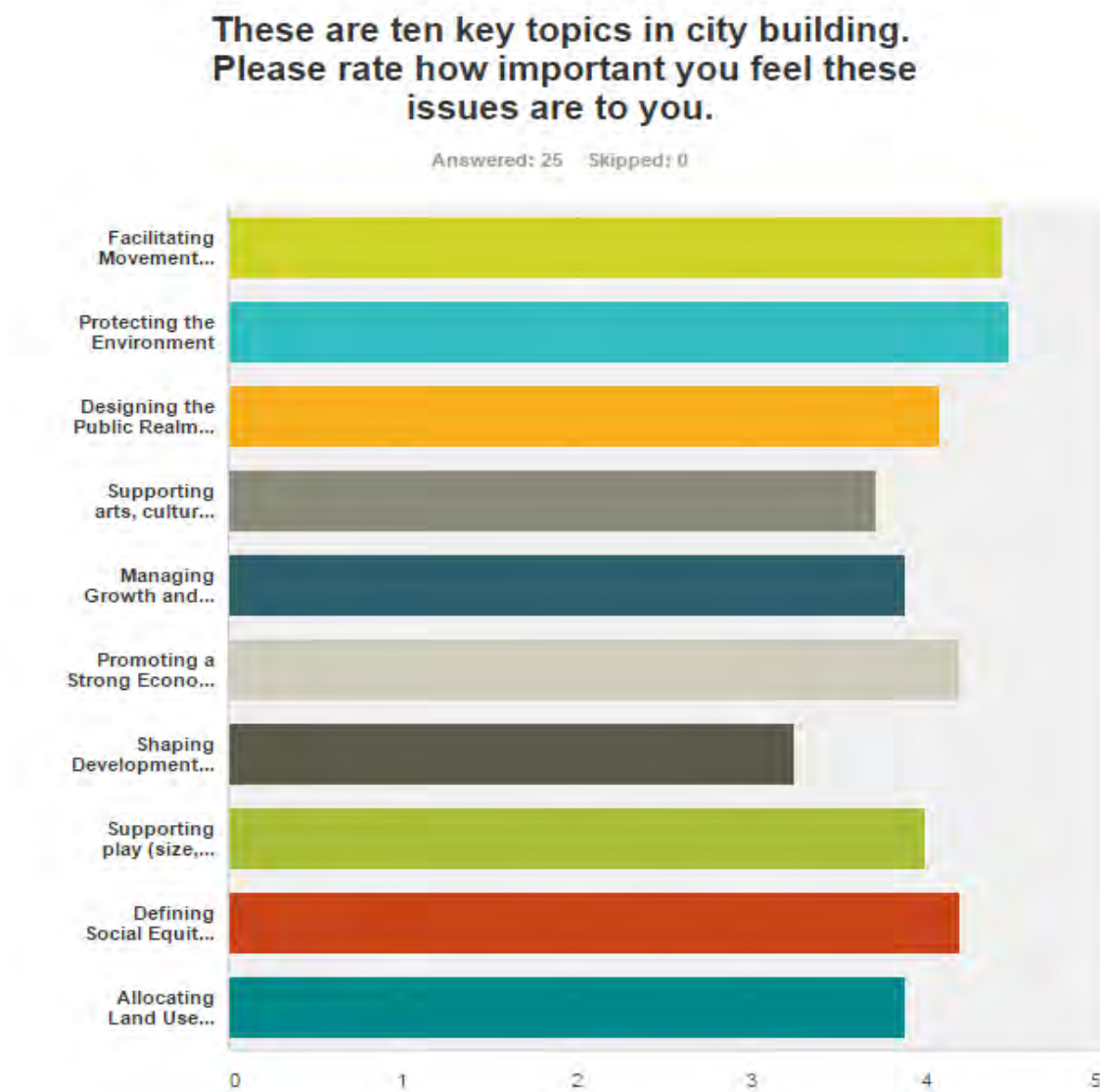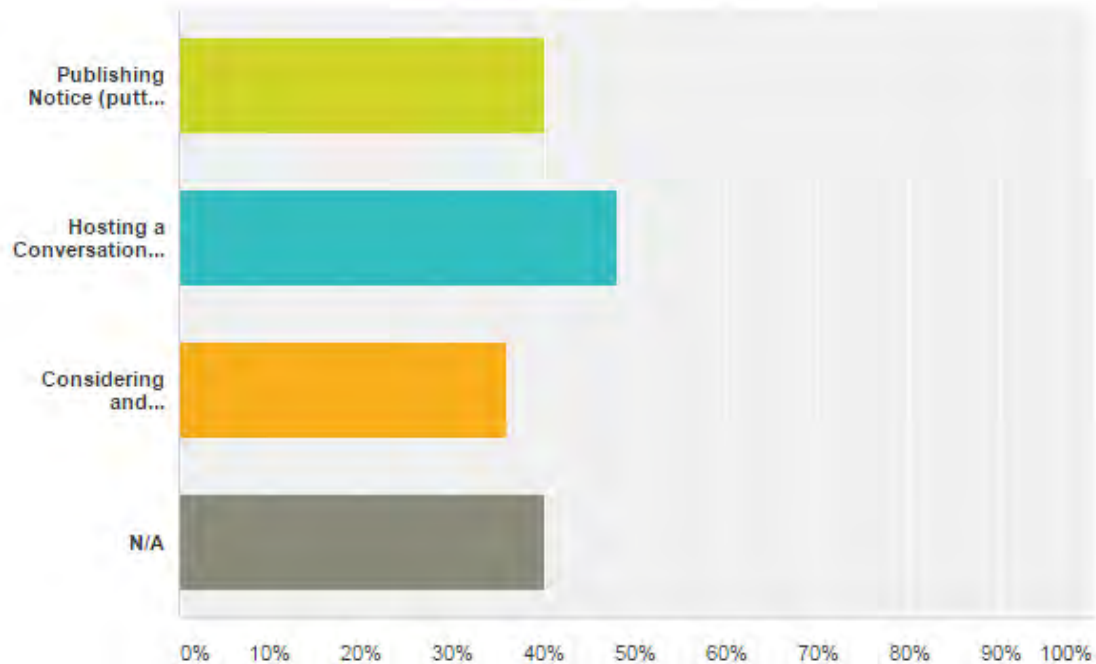Allocating Land Use...

0   1   2   3   4   5

Figure 1: Bar graph showing participants rating of how important each topic in city planning is. This was done on a scale from 1-5, with 5 being incredibly important and 1 being not important at all.

Have you used any of the following strategies to take action? Check all that apply

Answered: 25   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Publishing Notice (putting ads in newspapers, putting signs in front of properties, and advertising in social media.)	40.00%	10
Hosting a Conversation (organizing public meetings, design charrettes, and using different online tools.)	48.00%	12
Considering and Incorporating Feedback (balancing feedback with other priorities, like policy directions or technical and financial limits).	36.00%	9
N/A	40.00%	10

Total Respondents: 25

Figure 2: Bar graph and table showing how many participants employed city building strategies to take action.

Q4

If not, why have you not attended? (check all that apply)

Answered: 22   Skipped: 3

Answer Choices	Responses	
Did not know about any meetings	77.27%	17
Didn't have the time	45.45%	10
You feel the meeting will not influence city plans	50.00%	11
Your voice will not be heard	31.82%	7
Not interested	31.82%	7
I have attended	4.55%	1
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 22		

Figure 3: Bar graph and table showing the results of why participants have not attended city planning meetings.

City Building Youth Engagement Survey

City Building

City planning is incredibly important. It affects everything from how long your commute is to how clean the air is to where you go to play to how safe your neighbourhoods are. It's the City of Toronto Planning Division's job to develop and implement strategies that address these issues, and a big part of that job involves engaging the public.

However youth are under-represented in planning conversations, even though they're a big part of the city's future. This means that people whose futures are strongly impacted by planning are not influencing it as much as they should.

The aim of this survey is to help figure out how to better involve youth in city planning conversations and to mobilize them into becoming active on planning issues.

1. Have you ever taken action on a social or political issue you care about?

Yes

No

If Yes, explain how?

2. Have you used any of the following strategies to take action? Check all that apply

Publishing Notice (putting ads in newspapers, putting signs in front of properties, and advertising in social media.)

Hosting a Conversation (organizing public meetings, design charrettes, and using different online tools.)

Considering and Incorporating Feedback (balancing feedback with other priorities, like policy directions or technical and financial limits).

N/A

3. Have you ever attended a city planning meeting?

Yes

No

4. If not, why have you not attended? (check all that apply)

Did not know about any meetings

Didn't have the time

You feel the meeting will not influence city plans

Your voice will not be heard

Not interested

I have attended

Other (please specify)

5. These are ten key topics in city building. Please rate how important you feel these issues are to you.

	1 (Not important)	2	3	4	5 (Incredibly important)
Facilitating Movement (Public Transportation)					
Protecting the Environment					
Designing the Public Realm (Size of trees, sidewalks, cycling lanes)					
Supporting arts, culture, and learning					
Managing Growth and Change (Infastructure, reduce sprawl)					
Promoting a Strong Economy (diverse and stable jobs)					
Shaping Development (building height, design rules)					
Supporting play (size, type and number of park spaces)					

Defining Social
Equity and Social
Policy

Allocating Land Use
(residential,
commerical areas)

6. What would make it more likely for you to attend city planning meetings?

Emails about meetings   Meetings on university campus

Innovative meeting formats   Free Food

Smaller groups   Networking opportunities

Meetings closer to home   Fun, interactive meetings

Other (please specify)

[   ]

Next

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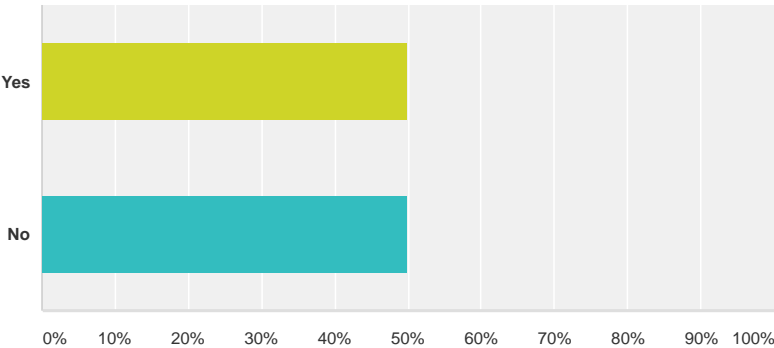
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Q1

Have you ever taken action on a social or political issue you care about?

Answered: 24   Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	**50.00%**	12
No	**50.00%**	12
Total		24

25 responses

20 days (November 10, 2014 - now)

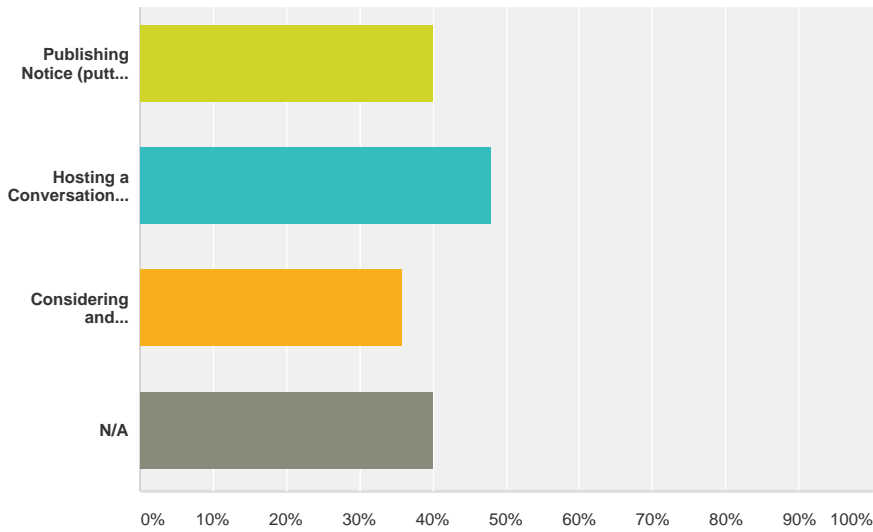**2** views

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Q2

Have you used any of the following strategies to take action? Check all that apply

Answered: 25   Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
Publishing Notice (putting ads in newspapers, putting signs in front of properties, and advertising in social media.)	40.00%	10
Hosting a Conversation (organizing public meetings, design charrettes, and using different online tools.)	48.00%	12
Considering and Incorporating Feedback (balancing feedback with other priorities, like policy directions or technical and financial limits).	36.00%	9
N/A	40.00%	10
Total Respondents: 25		

Q3

Have you ever attended a city planning meeting?

Answered: 25   Skipped: 0
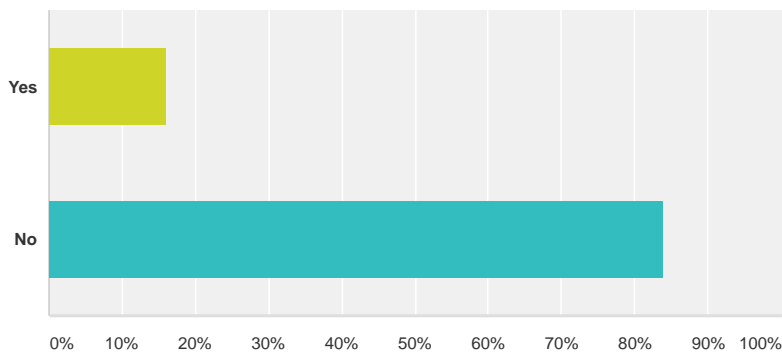
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	16.00%	4
No	84.00%	21
Total		25

Q4

If not, why have you not attended? (check all that apply)

Answered: 22   Skipped: 3

Answer Choices	Responses	
Did not know about any meetings	77.27%	17
Didn't have the time	45.45%	10
You feel the meeting will not influence city plans	50.00%	11
Your voice will not be heard	31.82%	7
Not interested	31.82%	7
I have attended	4.55%	1
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 22		

Q5

These are ten key topics in city building. Please rate how important you feel these issues are to you.

Answered: 25   Skipped: 0
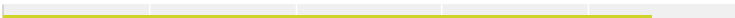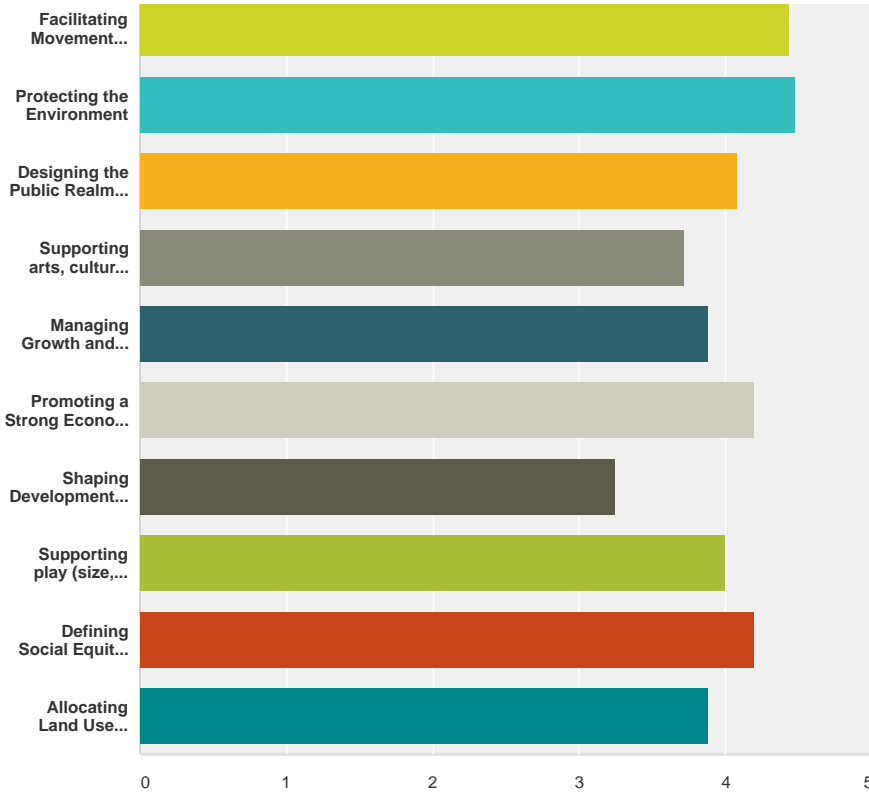
|	1 (Not important)	2	3	4	5 (Incredibly important)	Total	Average Rating
Facilitating Movement (Public Transportation)	0.00% 0	4.00% 1	12.00% 3	20.00% 5	64.00% 16	25	4.44
Protecting the Environment	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.00% 1	44.00% 11	52.00% 13	25	4.48
Designing the Public Realm (Size of trees, sidewalks, cycling lanes)	0.00% 0	4.00% 1	28.00% 7	24.00% 6	44.00% 11	25	4.08
Supporting arts, culture, and learning	4.00% 1	16.00% 4	16.00% 4	32.00% 8	32.00% 8	25	3.72
Managing Growth and Change (Infastructure, reduce sprawl)	0.00% 0	12.00% 3	20.00% 5	36.00% 9	32.00% 8	25	3.88
Promoting a Strong Economy (diverse and stable jobs)	0.00% 0	8.00% 2	16.00% 4	24.00% 6	52.00% 13	25	4.20
Shaping Development (building height, design rules)	0.00% 0	20.83% 5	45.83% 11	20.83% 5	12.50% 3	24	3.25
Supporting play (size, type and number of park spaces)	0.00% 0	4.00% 1	24.00% 6	40.00% 10	32.00% 8	25	4.00
Defining Social Equity and Social Policy	0.00% 0	8.00% 2	12.00% 3	32.00% 8	48.00% 12	25	4.20
Allocating	4.00%	4.00%	24.00%	36.00%	32.00%		

| Allocating Land Use (residential, commerical areas) | 1 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 25 | 3.88 |

Q6

What would make it more likely for you to attend city planning meetings?

Answered: 25   Skipped: 0
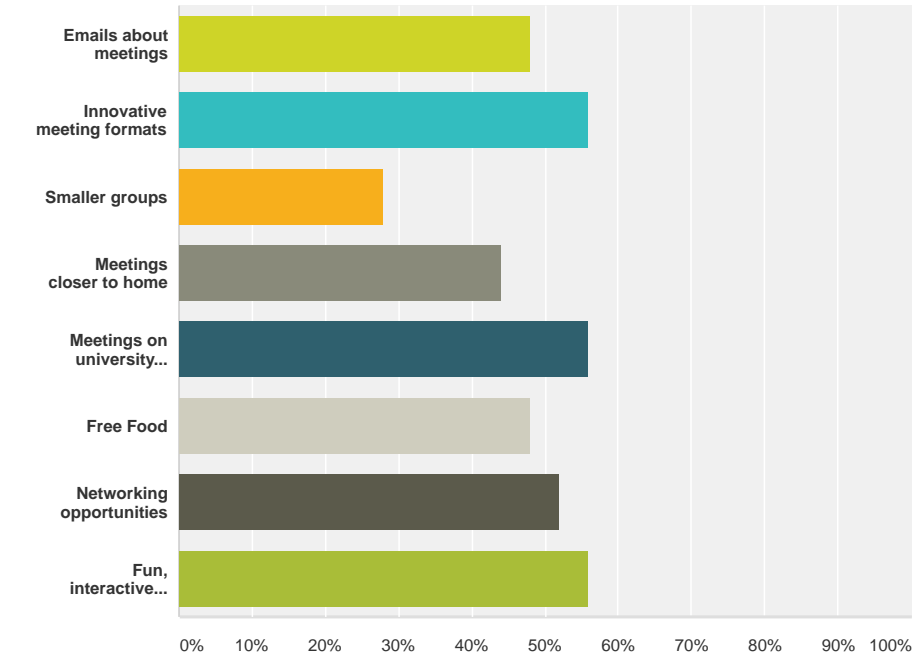
Answer Choices	Responses	
Emails about meetings	48.00%	12
Innovative meeting formats	56.00%	14
Smaller groups	28.00%	7
Meetings closer to home	44.00%	11
Meetings on university campus	56.00%	14
Free Food	48.00%	12
Networking opportunities	52.00%	13
Fun, interactive meetings	56.00%	14
Total Respondents: 25		

Q7

What is your gender?

Answered: 25   Skipped: 0
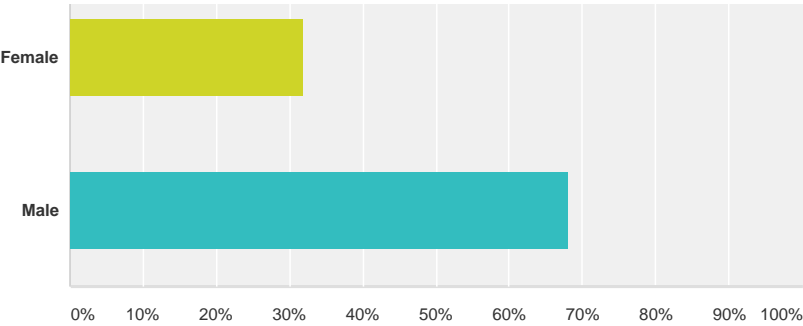
Answer Choices	Responses	
Female	**32.00%**	8
Male	**68.00%**	17
Total		25

Q8

What is your age?

Answered: 24   Skipped: 1
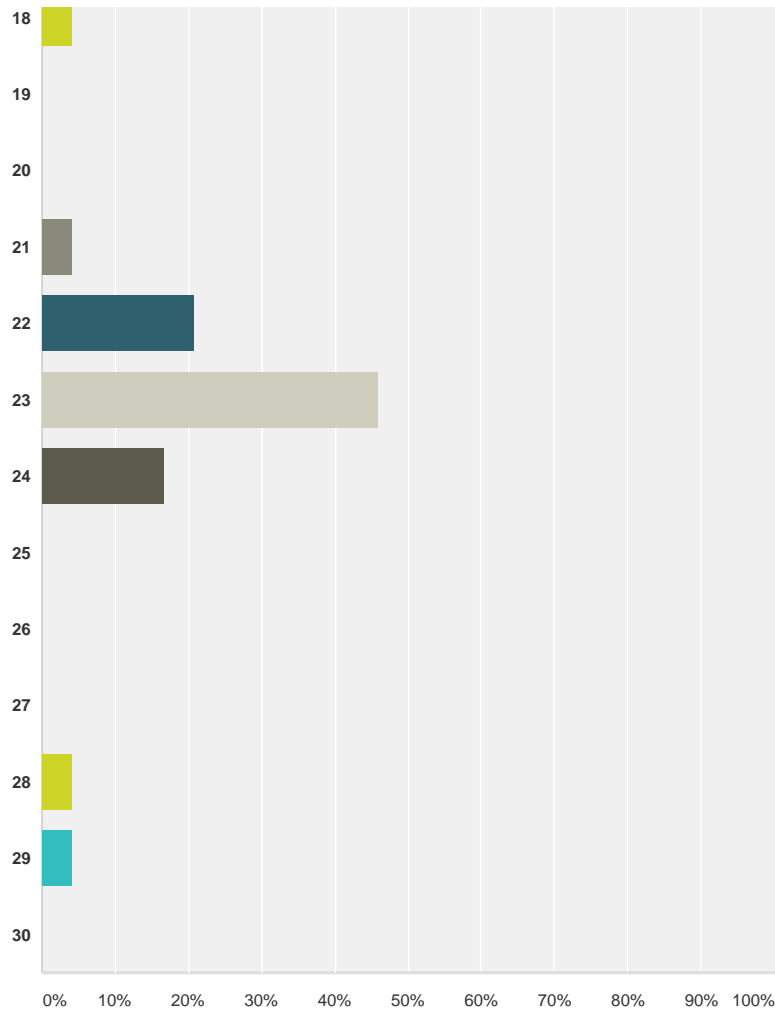
Answer Choices	Responses	
18	4.17%	1
19	0.00%	0
20	0.00%	0
21	4.17%	1
22	20.83%	5
23	45.83%	11
24	16.67%	4
25	0.00%	0
26	0.00%	0
27	0.00%	0
28	4.17%	1
29	4.17%	1
30	0.00%	0
Total		24

Q9

What is your annual household income

What is your annual household income before taxes?

Answered: 24   Skipped: 1
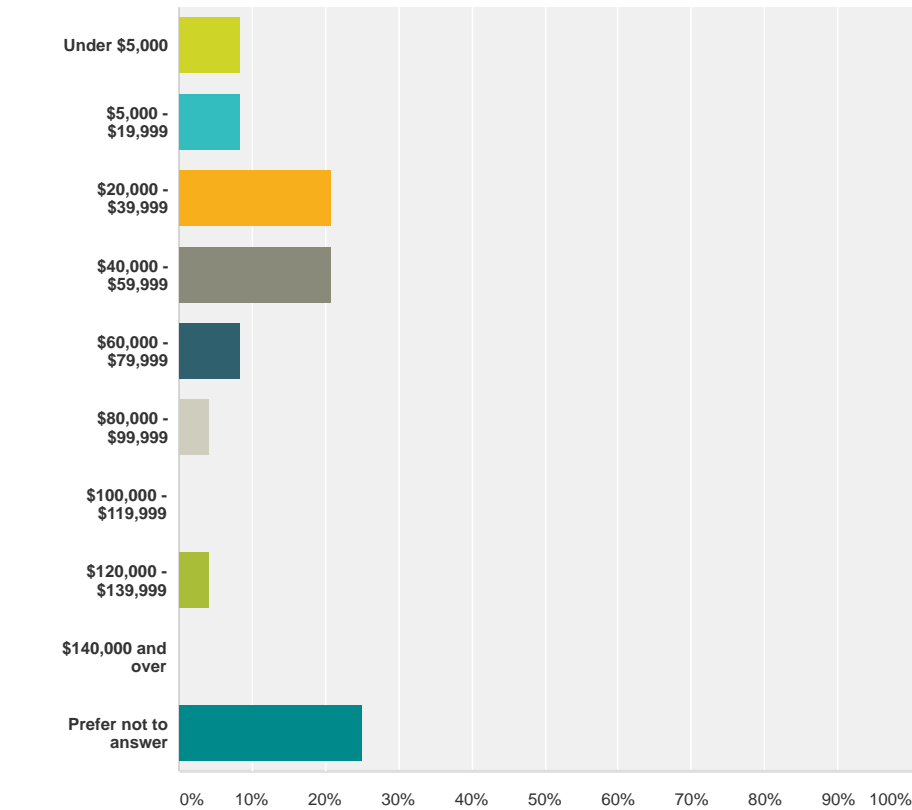
Answer Choices	Responses	
Under $5,000	**8.33%**	2
$5,000 - $19,999	**8.33%**	2
$20,000 - $39,999	**20.83%**	5
$40,000 - $59,999	**20.83%**	5
$60,000 - $79,999	**8.33%**	2
$80,000 - $99,999	**4.17%**	1
$100,000 - $119,999	**0.00%**	0
$120,000 - $139,999	**4.17%**	1
$140,000 and over	**0.00%**	0
Prefer not to answer	**25.00%**	6
Total		24

Q10

If you want to be contacted with the results, please provide your email below:

Answered: 4   Skipped: 21

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Youth Engagement Final Report
City of Toronto Planning Division

Overview

Included in my research are individuals from many facets of Toronto. I primarily engaged youth from the 18-30 year old range (63%) and a chunk of 16-17 year olds (%). The bulk of my engagements were via a survey, with 40 people completing the questions, and I held verbal conversations with an additional 7 people to gain greater insight. The majority of the individuals I spoke to were from North York and Etobicoke. However, my survey was completed by a whole slew of individuals, capturing almost every residential area in the city. I didn't calculate many demographic information as most of my responds chose to be anonymous.

Garnering the right demographic to actually complete my survey proved to be fairly difficult and not having one group of likeminded individuals make up my data. The conversations I had were engaging but forming the right questions to get people to open up was a

Key Messages

These key messages identify the most consistent or common messages the Youth Research Team shared. They're meant to be read along with the more detailed summary of feedback below.

Ensure people feel as if they're making meaningful contributions. Many individuals felt that even though they cared about the city's decisions and wanted to contribute, they didn't want to waste their time because the city doesn't seem like it takes it into account.

Not a lack of motivation but rather a lack of information. When city planners sit down and try to better engage our generation they think of how to motivate youth to participate in the discourse. Many feel that they need to focus on how they can better market their meetings because the motivation is already present.

Utilizing spaces that establish comfort. Various people mentioned that if the Planning division holds meetings where students already congregate they'll be more inclined to participate when they have "home court advantage" so to speak. This will also solve accessibility and convenience issues.

Transparency above all. More often than not, we are not given a detailed summary of what happened and how our feedback developed. Issues such as social housing, transit, and law enforcement have begun to become engaged in secrecy and this increases the feeling of disengagement.

Detailed Summary of Feedback

In the summary below, I've organized the Youth Research Team member's feedback under subheadings of every issue that people brought up or I asked about.

Issues People Care About

I asked youth what issues they care about.

Transit.
   -Youth should be included in the conversation because they make up a huge chunk of transit users that have no other alternative. Seldom are decisions made with consulting one of the largest demographics that will be effected by the changes. 80% of individuals felt that transit was one of the issues they care about.
   -A couple individuals focused on cycling as their main method of transportation and mentioned again, that the city often makes decisions catering to the working class.
   -"Bike lanes, buses, subway lines, potential LRTS are never for us"

Social Equity and Equality.
    -Social Equity and Equality came up tons of times in conversations I had with individuals and it often seemed like a topic many people were passionate about
   -62% of respondents listed Social Equity and Equality as an issue they care about and many expressed their confusion at how little it is mentioned
   -"Transit is literally the topic of every debate and they never even mention what they're going to do to stop our growing income gap and help people continue to live in Toronto. This conversation needs to be had"
   -Affordable housing needs to be more transparent and we should be part of the process
   -Escalating tension between civilians and police officers and the importance of youth being engaged in the law enforcement process to potentially save lives
   -There is a gap between the older generation and themselves in terms of acceptance of equality and acting upon the lack of it in the city
   -"Removing the veil of secrecy between the general public and law enforcement would be essential to having a more harmonious Toronto"

Promoting a Strong Economy.
   -The economy was another topic that came up quite frequently and many surveyors (50%) responded that it was an issue they cared about.
   -The government makes decisions with even thinking about talking to who they're making the decisions for and the ability to affect us with poorly thought out policies
   -No attempt at fostering a generation that is financially aware and able to understand the workings of our capitalist system

Protecting the Environment.
   -The environment has been an ongoing debate issue for years and stigma is
   growing around the issue. People often dismiss any claims about protecting
   the environment as "green party" and fail to see the repercussions of
   disregarding the subject.
   -Feel as if the older generation isn't taking this issue too seriously and aren't
   consulting the younger generation on the topic, leading to a lack of action.
   -"city puts absolutely no visible effort in engaging students who are passionate
   about the topic and want to voice their opinions"
Facilitating Play
   -Adults often forget the importance of allowing and creating space for
   children to engage meaningfully and stay away from dangerous alternatives
   - Many youth continue to stay physically active throughout their 20s and need
   for the city to build structure and pursue creating accessible spaces
   -35% of respondents said this was something they cared about
Supporting the Arts
   -Everyone didn't care about Supporting the Arts but the minority who did (29%) were
   extremely passionate and involved
   -City often discourages the pursuit of arts and contracts its artistic needs outwards
   instead of focusing on young individuals
   -Art is something everyone can benefit from and the city treats it as the last option.
   Once all the funds are allocated for a project then planners begin to talk about art.
   Allocating Land
   -Less than 10% of people surveyed actually included the allocation of land as
   something they care about.
   -"Topics of many public consultations which are, more often than not, focused
   on how the city will allocate its scare resource and regulate condominiums.
   These are often mundane and boring, whilst also not providing me with a
   meaningful outlet."

Barriers to youth engagement

Impact.
   -35% of individuals listed feeling as if there opinion has no impact as the
   number one barrier to their engagement
   -"When I bring ideas to the table, I'm not critiqued but rather supported by the
   planning staff however I never get any feedback or next steps. Makes me feel
   as if they're simply holding meetings because they must."
   -Nothing moving down the chain-our input is received by the City but we're
   never told what they led to or what decision was made.
Timing.
   -Timing is simply the most important thing when planning events and the one
   thing you can never be certain will work out.
   -Attending City consultations has never been a matter of interest for me but
   rather a matter of timing. The meetings are often at times where I am working
   and cannot carve hours out.
   -Only one person mentioned meetings "relevancy" as the reason they don't
   attend
Awareness
   -It's impossible to attend a meeting you don't know is happening and this

should be a focal point of the city's efforts in getting more youth involved in the process.
-Should publicize meetings using Twitter, Facebook, and other forms of social media for maximum awareness.
-"I miss out on opportunities to utilize my voice because I'm not cognizant of what's going on and it seems the City isn't putting to great an effort into reversing that"
Accessibility
-The meetings need to be had in places that are convenient not for the planner, but rather for the individuals they are trying to reach out to.
-It seems as though planners could care less at times how many people engage in the discussion and voice their input

How can the City of Toronto ensure youth partaking in planning? Suggestions to Improve

Hold meetings where youth congregate.
-To hold meetings in already established youth spaces will greatly increase the participation of youth and bring more idea's to the table.
-64% of students agreed with this sentiment and felt that meetings will be most effective when held at schools, universities, and other youth-centric areas.
Make meetings more accessible/known
-If the meeting coordinators were more welcome in compromising with the attendees, the amount of youth engaged would go up
-56% of individuals said that making the meetings more widespread and available would ensure the engagement of youth
-Piggybacking and using other events as forums to engage the audience would also be effective and help youth provide input
Utilize other forums of discourse.
-Face to face conversations are great but the fact of the matter is everyone is busy these days and it's just not realistic all the time. The city's policies need to reflect how times have changed and the power to connect in other ways we now possess.
-Online forms where people can provide input would prove to be very helpful and are easy to analyze. Suggestion box's, booths, and email are all alternative ways people who can't make it to meetings can engage
Use more inviting language.
-Currently city planners often erect huge bulletin boards on empty lots and utilize a small font to declare all the meetings that will happen. This often includes tons of complex terms that the layman wouldn't understand
-Confusion often leads to people to be disinterested and it's a domino effect that ends up having no one engaged

Have you taken action on an issue you care about? If yes, how?

Haven't taken action
-70% of individuals haven't taken any action on the issues they cared about within the city
-There isn't always the optimal opportunity to engage and when the opportunity did arise many felt as if there time could be better spent on something else
Have taken action.
-30% of individuals have actually taken action on issues that they care about, however

47 percent of people didn't do this through city consultations compared to the 31% that did
-Not a lack of motivation but rather a lack of information
-Many people began to care less about city issues when they weren't given the chance to speak on the topics and provide meaningful feedback

Next Steps

Using this information, the City of Toronto Planning division along with the Youth Research team will analyze the information as a whole to greater understand how engagement can be increased.

The information from the participants will be used to back up our understanding of youth engagement and help us make a recommendation to the city that is thoughtful and supported.

December 4, 2014| Toronto Youth Engagement Strategy: Mobilizing Action
Researcher: Victoria Ho

Executive Summary
This research reviews best practices in successful civic engagement programs, particularly with regards to young people. It includes a review of other municipal programs and reports compiled by NGOs detailing strengths and weaknesses of their own work. It also identifies strategies the City of Toronto could use in its own Youth Engagement Strategy. This research was guided by three questions:

i) What are the components of successful education and engagement programs that lead people to take action and influence change?
ii) What lessons do other education and engagement programs offer the City of Toronto's Planning Division as it develops a Youth Engagement Strategy?
iii) How have other decision-makers approached and implemented youth engagement strategies?

Some of the key findings of this research are:

- **Meaningful youth engagement does not look only to entice young people into the adult-dominated realm of policy**. It should also disrupt current policymaking processes so that adults have the opportunity to reflect on their roles as mentors and effective listeners, to reassess the role of youth as partners (not only as stakeholders), and to consider intergenerational spaces for mutual learning.
- **Officials must cultivate a civic culture that moves beyond communicating <u>to </u>youth, and towards having a dialogue <u>with</u> youth** where outcomes are clearly linked to the process. A renewed civic culture must acknowledge youth as relevant and intelligent participants in public decision-making processes.
- **Engagement should help youth make clear links to multiple areas of their lives**. Youth need to know how their interests can be pertinent for civic participation, but they also need to improve their everyday lives and for their own academic and professional success. How this looks in reality may differ based on stages of life (i.e. looking to make friends, shape identity, improve career prospects). Making every day links is particularly important for busy folks that feel limited by time to participate. Engagement might involve single projects or issue points (i.e. an election); however, a Youth Engagement Strategy is a long-term strategy to create a civic environment that engages youth and their interests by focusing on applying their knowledge in varied settings.
- **A YES should leverage the social worlds, skills, aspirations, neighbourhood attributes, and everyday places of youth** to facilitate a variety of activities that link public policy to everyday life. Policy that focuses on applications in multiple social worlds might take the form of training in transferable skills for personal and professional development, or public consultations that take place in the spaces where youth already live their lives. These spaces include school, work, faith institutions, play, and interest-specific social worlds in extra-curricular activities or popular culture.

In summary, this research highlights that citizen-centred engagement is a process of shifting culture in youth-adult partnerships. This process must focus on civic culture change and provide opportunities in inter-generational and varied settings for young people to formulate and promote their own decisions as relevant, intelligent bearers of knowledge in their own lives. And the process must connect to the multiple social worlds of a young person's life at home, school, work, and play.

What are the components of successful education and engagement programs that lead people to take action and influence change?

1. Combining worlds of personal interests with civic action: Linking multiple social worlds (school, home, peer culture/ community, popular culture) helps people make connections between their existing interests and the relevance of political engagement. This combined world might spring from popular culture (fan fiction, video games, sports, film) or specialized talents (creative writing, visual art, video-making) as a place to test creative ideas and cultivate civic skills. Because fandom often creates social belonging, it can be a space to grow participatory culture for civic action. The skills used to express fan cultures are linked to collective identity formation, such as appropriation and remixing of content, social networking, self-publication, and creating communication infrastructures to reach fellow fan communities far and wide. Combining a social world with civic goals also engages existing peer supports and leverages shared values in favour of civic-minded identity formation. Some specific examples of this strategy include:

- Using art and digital content production skills in campaigns on city issues: see examples from YOUmedia Washington Library Hub and Center for Urban Pedagogy art/design
- City of Toronto and Lego strategic partnership (Planners in Public Spaces events)
- Connecting to fan communities:
  - Harry Potter Alliance: US-based charity to turn "fans into heroes…by making activism accessible through the power of story". Harry Potter Alliance leverages values from popular culture to advance civic actions like voting, book drives, and fundraising for social causes. Draws in fans by reinterpreting the storyline and values of Harry Potter to use in the real world
  - #MyHungerGames: US-based campaign to open up personal narratives of 'daily hunger games realities' to launch dialogue on economic inequality and demand legislators to raise the minimum wage
    - retweeted by politicians
- "Gamify" learning and/or participation by using game design elements (points or incentive structure[i]) in civic contexts, and by finding the game in learning.
  - Geography: Carmen Sandiego, SimCity
  - Park management: RollerCoaster Tycoon
  - Building/Design: Minecraft
  - Participants in a Pokemon-style adventure game 'engage in battle' to decide on key issues, developing skills to construct an argument.[ii]
  - See excellent gamication infographic: http://www.knewton.com/gamification-education/

2. Peer support: Peer support is a social marketing technique to help build motivation, use existing behaviours while cultivating new ones, and obtain commitment. Projects with collective goals allow actors to collaborate, or even to compete, in order to motivate sustained participation in a project**.** On-going feedback from peers can also be more inviting than check-ins from conventional sources of authority. Peer support is not necessarily age-specific; rather, it

can be based on shared interests. Fostering interest-based interactions helps citizens of all ages to advance their own knowledge and even encourage cultural recognition of young people's expertise or achievements. Specific examples of peer support include:

- o The TidyStreet project: In Brighton, UK, participants published data about their electricity usage using open-source software and street art. This approach, in which participants were publicly accountable to their actions, is part of wider studies that demonstrate how some behaviour change is encouraged through regular (more than monthly) feedback[iii].
- o Commuter Challenge: Canada-wide campaign in workplaces to encourage active transport and reduced carbon footprint in annual week-long competition between Canadian cities and within workplaces
  - ▪ Adopted by government departments, with support from City Coordinators and workplace Champions
  - ▪ Participants' results are registered and publicly available online, group-based results encourages peer accountability and increased participation

3. Cross-generational dialogue for long-term culture change: Interests are not necessarily age-specific (cycling, web design) and experience is not necessarily tied to qualifications on a CV (what would make the bus ride more pleasant?). Recognizing the validity of voices across the age spectrum, cross-generational interactions in areas of common interest can make it normal for citizens of all ages to mobilize their skills and knowledge. To support this approach, youth need a welcoming environment, shared language and cultural references, and authentic ways of contributing their knowledge in varied settings.

Working with adults also helps youth to refine thinking skills and practical skills, and translate formal instruction to varied settings relevant to their own lives. Working with young people helps adults to ensure programming is relevant, and helps to dissolve assumptions about what programs work for young people. The Mississauga Youth Plan identifies that some young people are hesitant to label "youth issues" (i.e. substance abuse, which crosses ages), while they are also interested to discuss issues that are not necessarily age-specific (i.e. the environment). Cross-generational exposure and support can also help youth to construct their sense of self. Specific examples include:

- o The Mississauga Youth Plan, which encourages reciprocal mentorship programming across age groups (youth to youth and intergenerational) and recommends structured and unstructured intergenerational programming in public parks during the day and evening[iv]
- o For more detailed analysis, see *A Fragile ecosystem: The role of arts & culture in Philadelphia's Mantua, Powelton Village and West Powelton neighbourhoods (2014)*, *Connected learning: an agenda for research and design* (2013), and *Citizens at the Centre: A New Approach to Civic Engagement* (2006)

4. Start young, recognize different stages of life, and teach by doing: Develop civic skills by using hands-on teaching/learning before high school. This helps to cultivate a problem-solving culture at a critical time when young people (ages 10-18) are forming interests and social identities. Early engagement helps make it commonplace for young people to identify and be respected as relevant, intelligent, and active citizens. Hierarchical power dynamics can make some demographics feel inferior or that they have irrelevant knowledge. Replacing these

dynamics with those that ensure participants feel valued is a key step to motivating people to contribute a participatory process. Some examples include:

- o Halton Region Health Department, which identifies notes three major groupings of youth[v]:

Involvement in Social Issues/Programs: Reasons to Get Involved

10 to 13 Years	14 to 17 Years	18 to 24 Years

• **For Fun**
• **Help Others**
• **Learn New Things**
  • Curious about the issue
• **Meet New People**
  • Make friends
  • Get friends involved
• **Build Social Skills**
• **Improve Community**
	• **Create Opportunities**
	  • Opens doors
	  • Diversify yourself
	• **Builds Confidence**
	  • Makes you feel good
	• **Help Others**
	• **Try New Things**
	• **Meet New People**
		• **Create Opportunities**
		  • Build your resume
		  • Build knowledge of the issue
		  • Build yourself as a person
		  • Gives you experience in the field
		• **Personal Fulfillment**
		  • Gives you a sense of accomplishment
		• **Help Others**
		• **Meet New People**

The key motivators to get involved with social issues and programs are different for each age cohort, naturally, since each is in a unique and specific life-stage. For the youngest group, the possibility of having fun was by far the most lucrative offering of getting involved with social issues; they often saw this area as another activity in their schedule, just like soccer practice or piano lessons. For teens, creating opportunities, bettering oneself and building confidence were key motivator, along with helping others. Finally, for the oldest age group, whose priorities have shifted to school and career, creating opportunities and gaining experience were especially valued.

5. Participatory project planning, monitoring and evaluation: Participants take ownership of a project, a commitment to an action, or of their own skills-building progress by being involved in the project design, monitoring, and evaluation. As part of an action-oriented process, they also become leaders by being responsible for checking on the progress of their peers (for example, in a behaviour-shaping campaign to use less energy). Involving youth in designing programs that impact them makes the program more relevant and well-attended.

This cultural and political process has three major outcomes: i) it creates a partnership model to leverage local capacities and restructure relationships between municipalities and communities; ii) it provides space for people to define and solve problems themselves; and iii) it internalizes civic actions in participants' daily lives. Communication amongst citizens is as important as communication between citizens and municipal leaders[vi].

- o **Mississauga, ON**: Youth research found that word-of-mouth is how young people receive their information, suggesting that engagement throughout the development and implementation of a policy or plan is important[vii]
- o **NY, USA**: *NY Cares* is a volunteer organization that engages volunteers in leadership roles and articulates a communications strategy that focuses not just on hard data outputs such as number of hours worked, but on qualitative

impact and outcomes such as increased knowledge on a subject, improved attitudes, or the types of tasks completed[viii].

6. Provide access to learning resources and teaching opportunities: Providing citizens with the training, physical resources, and direction to build skills they can apply to multiple areas of their lives helps to bridge links between social worlds and civic action. Providing access to resources also helps to remove a potential barrier to participation/ engagement. Training is another opportunity for peer and intergenerational mentorship. Moreover, once the student becomes confident in their (transferable) skills, they can transition to become an educator and inspire another generation.

- **Scarborough, ON**: The Community Design Initiative is an ongoing participatory architectural process for the East Scarborough Storefront community centre, initiated in November 2010 by ERA Architects and Sustainable.TO. It uses a design curriculum with 50 youth over 16 months to provide training in design and building. Participants have access to industry professionals and seminars, providing career development opportunities and transferable skills for both civic action and jobs[ixx].
- **Washington, USA**: YOUMedia Washington Library Hub runs skills-building workshops in filmmaking. A Digital Planners competition then asked young people to create a film that outlined their dream city, allowing youth to apply their skills in a civic function. This case study supported youth engagement by asking young people to use their skills for self-expression and to take initiative.
- **Philadelphia, USA:** Creating networks to help people work better together
    - *OpenDataPhilly* is "connecting people with data": Municipal open data strategy (est. 2012) to develop maps, apps and services that take the city's data and add value to users throughout Philadelphia (i.e. planning/zoning; parks/recreation; public safety, evacuation routes; electoral districts). Open data meant to create opportunities for innovation around service delivery within city government, and enable government, businesses, and citizens alike to develop new solutions to complex problems.
    - *Open Access Philadelphia* is a rotating group of civic members invited by the mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics to develop public-private solutions using tech innovation, particularly when applying to federal or corporate grants. Invited participants include "hackers and community activists"[xi]
    - "A better Philadelphia through technology," is the mandate of *Technical.ly Philly*, a local news and events network focused on building community through technology, particularly by celebrating innovation in the city with Philly Tech Week
    - City-sponsored '*Call for Ideas*' grants focus on training and retaining talent in Philadelphia, in order to 'support the culture' of the Philly tech scene.
        - 10-week internship program of $2,500 per student participant to connect 10 students with local tech-based companies.
        - Developer Bootcamp grant of $24,000 to teach a five-week web development workshop to a class of 30 graduating high school

students, ending with a job fair of tech firms to link students with small businesses

7. Co-working spaces and hubs bring together innovative social mixes in a cost-effective way, termed 'civic fusion' in Philadelphia's government and technology sectors. Regularly asking members of the public for their expertise (i.e. developing technology) during scheduled congregations demonstrates a partnership approach by government that seeks to include citizens as active and skilled participants. This approach is particularly used to bring together members from government, the private sector, and civil society to foster mutual learning and respect. Moreover, using a hub model of service delivery facilitates access to training and leadership, existing networks, and physical resources. It can also build community by welcoming knowledge-bearers and seekers from different cultures and age groups, thus breaking down social barriers and isolation.

- o **Philadephia, PN:** Mayor's *Office of Urban Mechanics* hosted conversations in a shared working space to remove barriers between public and private sphere to collaborate on technological interventions in planning (co-designing apps to gather open-source data for OpenDataPhilly strategy)[xii]. Also:
  - o University City Science Center: as the largest urban research park in the US, this business incubation lab and office space support start-ups with a social goal.
  - o "Better work starts with better coworkers," is the mantra of Indy Hall, a shared working space and community for designers, developers, writers, artists, entrepreneurs, scientists, educators, game developers and more. Premise is that constantly meeting new people by working together builds relationships and a better life.
- o **Toronto, ON:** East Scarborough Storefront (training youth in design/building, physical space for community-based organizations)[xiii]

8. Use technology in concert with face-to-face interactions: Online platforms (social media, website) are essential to help interested parties connect to data, a cause, and to like-minded folks. Citizens can be involved in developing the technology itself (ie. apps that use open source data) to facilitate city-building processes, participate remotely in public meetings, or use online platforms to share ideas.

Technology can also be used to "gamify" learning with rewards and incentives structures (points and badges) or find the game in learning. It can also digitize and share personal experiences of public spaces through mapping. Still, improved coordination is needed to join municipal officials, community organizers, and funders to help address the problem of piecemeal digital conversations. Currently, it is common for engagement efforts to be operated by a single institution (i.e. local government, school system). Moreover, though technology-facilitated discussions can be helpful, they should not serve to replace in-person contact.

- o **US and UK:** *PDPal*[xiv] and *Hello Lamppost*[xv] are public mapping projects to encourage anyone to record personal memories, knowledge, or experiences of public space.[xvi]
- o **Brighton, UK:** Tidy Street electricity usage project designed open-source software to allow each household to compare their energy usage with the Brighton average, national average, and that of other countries.

- **MA, USA:** Harry Potter Alliance's fan activism facilitates media skills development by encouraging participants to remix and curate fiction content, self-publish, and express opinions on digital forums and social media as part of a wider education and action model based on peer culture that is collaborative and adaptive.[xvii]
- See *Connected Learning* (2013)[xviii] for examples of New Media uses to connect youth to skills building for academic success and professional development

9. Physical presence as intervention: A symbol or material representation of a project/process is a physical intervention to help remind current participants of projects while spurring curiosity of potential participants. Public art is another innovative way to draw interest, shape neighbourhood identity, showcase community skills, and/or reflect on ideas expressed non-verbally.

- **Kitchener, ON**: Blue bin as iconic curbside recycling system[xixxx]
- **Brooklyn, NY**: Centre for Urban Pedagogy uses design and visual art to provide simple visual explanations to planning issues so that individuals can better participate in shaping them[xxi]. Examples include:
    - Illustrated guide to "How can I improve my park?"
    - Hands-on toolkits with colourful blocks to explain zoning
    - *Urban Investigation* posters asking, "Who decides where homeless shelters go?
- **New Brunswick**: Posters as reminders of commitment (litterless lunch in schools)[xxii]
- **Brighton, UK**: Street painting and doorhangers with reinforcement symbols (happy /sad face) to demonstrate progress regarding energy use

10. Use existing facilities, infrastructure and social networks or communication channels: Interact with people where they live, work, and congregate in their daily lives: schools, neighbourhood and faith institutions, and workplaces. This makes it easier for citizens to participate in formal engagement projects and to explore community identities and assets. Moreover, for citizen-led processes, people need a place to convene. Creating a navigable network of community spaces that is easy to access by community members is critical for those looking to become more involved. Related, bureaucracy can be a major administrative barrier to citizens looking to self-organize and carry out an activity with neighbourhood schools, for example. Universities can be helpful partners in this process by taking care of the logistics and organizing, and helping citizens to focus on the content of their activity. Faith-based organizations, schools, businesses, and neighbourhood associations can facilitate trust-building and act as a connecting channel between citizens and municipalities. Using existing communication channels could also reduce research fatigue by those looking for information in multiple places.

- **USA**: The Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships is a federal initiative to partner agencies with local organizations to meet specific community needs.
    - Allentown, Pennsylvania: AMEN (Allentown Mentoring and Enrichment Network) involves teachers, parents, and community leaders as mentors to students to equip them to graduate high school and become a 'well-rounded' citizen.

- Activities include Midnight Basketball, academic tutoring, personal mentorship, clinics, and field trips. In order to be eligible to play basketball on Friday nights till midnight, participants must first complete a workshop[xxiii].
- PICO (Pacific Institute for Community Organization), Gamaliel Foundation, the Industrial Areas Foundation, and DART (Direct Action and Research Training Centre) all facilitate large public meetings to bring people together "based on faith and values, not just issues or anger" in order to translate their faith into action[xxiv]

  o For analysis and case studies see *A Fragile ecosystem: The role of arts & culture in Philadelphia's Mantua, Powelton Village and West Powelton neighbourhoods (2014)* and *Connected learning: an agenda for research and design* (2013) and *The National League of Cities* at http://www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/institute-for-youth-education-and-families/youth-civic-engagement

What lessons do other education and engagement programs offer the City of Toronto's Planning Division as it develops a Youth Engagement Strategy?

Participation in public policy must connect to multiple areas in young people's lives: their personal interests and career aspirations, their social networks and communities. Civic engagement can only be meaningful and sustained if youth are supported to develop transferable skills they can apply in multiple settings, and with a community of supportive adult allies. To be effective partners to youth, city staff cannot only look outward at engagement strategies, but should look inward at how they listen to young people.

A YES should therefore should be less about singular projects, events, or short-term timelines, but about creating Youth-Adult Partnerships that engage the interests and needs of young people for more sustained change in civic culture.

The *National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education and Families* provides a useful "Authentic Youth Civic Engagement" (AYCE) framework that aligns with the education and engagement programs analyzed in the literature review. Halton Region has also conducted research to better understand youth needs and the role of Youth-Adult Partnerships. Adapted from the AYCE framework and the Halton Region Youth Strategy, the following factors are critical to a successful engagement strategy[xxv]:

i) **A setting that is welcoming to young people**, with a clear civic climate that acknowledges youth as relevant and intelligent participants in public decision-making processes. Using Youth-Adult Partnerships, adult allies (inside and outside of local government) provide ongoing support and expertise. Youth want and expect support from adults. This includes coaching, dialogue, and connections to institutional resources and community leaders;
ii) **A structure that encourages ownership** of decision-making by youth, in which the process integrates needs of local government with interests of young people. Youth need to be included in essential roles of decision-making authority, where adults share power with youth and youth take initiative to participate;
iii) **A strategy that makes available a wide range of activities** to provide meaningful opportunities inside and outside of public policy. The policies that set out this strategy should clarify vision, roles, and expectations. This is important since even well-meaning adults can co-opt a youth-oriented agenda, staff turnover can weaken established relationships or institutional memory, and youth can burn out.[xxvi]

What does this mean for the City of Toronto?

Framed by the components derived from this research, the City of Toronto could incorporate the following actions in the YES:

- **Link skills to civic projects**
  o Build from the Toronto Reference Library's digital innovation hub and workshops by creating opportunities to apply skills in a city-building context (Photoshop, Digital Film-making, Creative Writing, Website building, Planning literacy poster campaign)
  o Provide access to digital production tools to launch civic action from existing interest in production, performance, and play (See Centre for Urban Pedagogy projects that use art/design for public awareness campaigns)[xxvii]
  o Fund high school co-op placements with municipalities, local businesses, and community agencies

- **Collaborate with community networks to mobilize urban planning curriculum/projects**
  o Ontario EcoSchool model
    ▪ Ontario EcoSchools is an environmental education and certification program for grades K-12 to develop ecological literacy.
    ▪ Success indicators used to implement board-wide waste minimization and energy conservation standards
    ▪ Program provides curriculum resources to school Champions that lead the program
  o Study Circles[xxviii]: Collaborate with TDSB and social service partners to create study/tutor groups on social issues and academic skills-building
  o Work with universities and colleges to encourage research and/or project-oriented partnerships with community groups
    ▪ Berkeley, USA: Drexel University collaborated with community arts groups to address bureaucracy of school systems so that community groups can focus on content of programming, rather than on administrative burdens
  o Support programming with existing faith-based and community organizations to integrate needs of local government with interests of youth and families, leverage existing networks before channeling funding into new infrastructure and communications vehicles

- **Decentralize the geography of planning**
  o With a 'Community Centre on Wheels', let planning go to youth in a mobile 'fair' format. The Planner is IN.[xxix]

- **Teach, Learn, and Unlearn**
  o Train municipal staff in how to work/partner with young people
  o Train municipal staff to be prepared to receive input that they did not anticipate
  o Train young people in planning policies and language
  o Incorporate follow-up as a critical part of the YES to dissolving feelings of tokenistic engagement

- Engage young people in different ways: as participants, planners, service deliverers, evaluators, governors (youth council)[xxx]
    - Peer ambassador: youth to youth marketing approach to assess youth needs and promote city programs, services, and facilities available for youth

How have other decision-makers approached and implemented youth engagement strategies?

Municipalities, agencies, and entrepreneurs have employed a variety of strategies to develop skills and civic capacities, foster relationships, or provide an avenue to channel existing energy into action. These strategies include the following:

Governance:
- Established Youth Council or Advisory Board
- Dedicated municipal office for youth and/or public engagement
- Built capacity of adults to work with young people using "train the trainers" programs
- Engaged young people as Peer Ambassadors to connect with other youth and disseminate or collect information

Technology:
- Provided open-sourced data on city statistics to open up problem-solving possibilities on municipal issues
- Collaborated with non-governmental actors to create engaging online platforms and apps
- Created webpage to publicly track behaviour changes/progress
- Digitally mapped community stories:
    o Funded intergenerational knowledge-sharing in Queens, NY: *Our Town, Our 'Hood* is a community project that links teen leadership to an active senior centre to create a digital map of the community's historical transformation. Project goal is to teach media literacy and share stories about a shared space.
- Established online forums to share questions and concerns

Programming:
- Set up collaborative drop-in programs with community service providers, faith institutions, and schools
- Fostered training/skills-building in urban design, website-building, visual arts
- Created opportunities to apply skills in city-run competitions (Digital Planner video: What is your dream city?)
- Developed high school co-op program to link youth to local business or tech start-ups Built technology for participatory storytelling, participatory mapping projects
- Animated neighbourhoods with art and street parties to highlight local skills, organizations, and resources
- Reinterpreted popular culture to inspire fans with civic action

For case studies, see: National League of Cities. (2013). *Bright spots in community engagement: Case studies of U.S. communities creating greater civic participation from the bottom-up.*

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The 10 members of the Youth Research Team conducted their research over a period of 5 weeks in October and November of 2014. The YRT was successful in engaging 431 people between the ages of 14-37, with most falling into the original target demographic of 18-30 year-olds.

Participants in the Youth Research Team's research came from over 15 neighbourhoods across the city. The Youth Research used a variety of methods to engage participants, including online and in-person surveys, one-on-one in person and telephone interviews, workshops, and a pop-up city hall. The research was compiled and submitted to the Consultant Team in over 150 pages of documentation reports, including 2 creative submissions. All Youth Research Team reports are included as an Appendix to this report.

Demographics

Toronto's youth are a diverse and growing demographic. They live, work and play in various neighbourhoods throughout the city, are well educated, and many identify as visible minorities. The Youth Research Team (YRT) and many of the group's participants also fit this demographic profile.

YOUTH RESEARCH TEAM PARTICIPANTS

The Youth Research Team's participants were a diverse group of individuals from across the city. Among the 102 youth whose age was recorded, 20 year-olds were most represented. The second most represented group was 23 year olds. Five participants were between 16-19 years old, 67 were between 20-24 years old, and 30 participants were between 25-29 years old.

From a total of 124 youth participants whose gender was recorded, 72 identified as male and 52 identified as female. Two researchers also recorded the ethnic background of their participants, and among the 99 individuals who reported their ethnicity, 89 identified as visible minorities.

Within two research groups with a total of 92 participants, 54 youth had at least a high school diploma.

YOUTH IN TORONTO

The data on the youth cohort within the City of Toronto is more detailed than that collected by the Youth Research Team. As such, it is impossible to directly and thoroughly compare demographic statistics between our cohort and the city as a whole. However, similar characteristics between these two groups still exist, and some demographic statistics explain the important city building issues that were expressed by the YRT's participants.

In 2011, 541,745 individuals in the city of Toronto were between the ages of 15 and 29, and made up 21% of the city's population. This population grew by 7.4% from 2006 to 2011, more than the 4.5% population increase in the city as a whole. Specifically, those between the ages of 25-29 made up the largest proportion of the cohort (211,910; 39%),

followed by individuals between the ages of 20-24 (181,460; 33%). Between all age groups, there tended to be an equal number of male and female youth.

Participants in the Youth Engagement Strategy were younger than those in the city as a whole. While those between the ages of 20-24 years were most dominant among YRT participants, youth between 25-29 years old make up the largest youth cohort in the city. In terms of gender, the participants engaged through the YES were mostly male, while the distribution of males and females among youth in Toronto is more equal.

In terms of visible minority status of those between the ages of 16 and 29 years old, 54% of youth identified as a visible minority (277,355) while fewer residents in the city as a whole, 49.1%, identified as such (1,264,390). In 2011, the largest visible minority group among youth was of South Asian descent (13.1%). This was followed by people of Chinese descent (13.1%). This high number of visible minorities was also present among YRT participants. In two research groups in particular, 99% of the 99 participants were visible minorities, a proportion that is higher than within the city as a whole.

In terms of education, 83.1% of Toronto's population had a certificate, diploma or degree, with the majority having obtained a high school certificate or degree (34.4%). This trend in educational attainment was also recorded among YRT participants. In the research, 59% of youth had at least a high school diploma.

COMPARING DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

There are several similarities in the demographic profiles of the YRT, their research participants, and youth within the City of Toronto. In general, youth participants in the Youth Engagement Strategy were younger than those in the city. However, trends in terms of visible minority status and education were similar, with a high proportion of youth with a high school diploma and identifying as a visible minority recorded among both YRT participants and in the city as a whole.

Draft Key Findings

The first stage of work for the Youth Engagement Strategy included a number of different activities:

- Youth Workshop #1 (October 23, 2014)
- Youth Research Team Research (October 23 - November 28, 2014)
- Supplemental Literature Review and Research (October 23 - November 28, 2014)

The findings from the research fall into three categories: <u>topics that youth care about</u>, <u>barriers to youth engagement in planning</u>, and <u>suggestions to improve youth engagement in planning</u>. Each of these are indicated as Draft, to be confirmed and refined with the Youth Research Team through the rest of the project.

Draft Topics that Youth Care About

Transit and transportation. For most participants, transit and transportation was one of the most important topics in the city. They mentioned things like the cost of transit, the need for better and more frequent service, overnight and early Sunday morning service, a need for a diversity of transportation options, having cycling infrastructure and walkability.

Employment and jobs for youth was also very important to many participants. They mentioned topics like having a "living wage" rather than contracts, having meaningful (i.e. career-building work), and were concerned about high rates of youth unemployment.

Social equity / equality. Many participants identified issues of social equity and equality as important, including: marginalization, injustice, systemic racism, the growing income gap, gender issues, the disconnect between wealth of development (condos) and inadequate/crumbling services and infrastructure, and poverty.

Affordable housing was important to many participants, such as a lack of adequate supply of rental housing, the increasing cost of housing, social housing waitlists, and tenant rights.

The environment. Participants felt that the environment was an important topic, noting specifically issues such as a lack of green space in the city, environmental sustainability, and creating sustainable green spaces.

Supporting play. Parks, natural areas, public facilities maintenance, lack of recreation spaces, sports, and play spaces were all important issues to participants.

Supporting arts, such as importance of arts to the city's vibrancy, funding for arts, and arts festivals (like LuminaTO).

Sense of community / neighbourhoods was important to many participants, who noted the importance of belonging to a community. Many participants were and issues at the neighbourhood scale.

Access to amenities, such as grocery stores, libraries, community services, and public spaces.

Youth violence, safety, and law enforcement were important to some participants, who identified specific concerns with community-police relations, stop and search programs, at-risk youth, and safety at night (especially for women).

Intensity / character of development was important to some participants, such as development within their own neighbourhoods and concerns with over-priced condos.

Urban design and public realm were also important, specifically: beauty in the public realm and the importance of having high-quality urban design in all parts of the city. Other issues. Participants identified some other issues they cared about, including healthcare, innovation, accessibility, smart cities, education (tuition), immigration, mental health, and homelessness.

Draft Barriers to Youth Engagement in Planning

Poor promotion. Many youth are simply unaware of engagement opportunities. Visibility / accessibility of advertisements is inadequate.

Unappealing. Advertising and branding of public engagement is not appealing. Engagement is not seen as cool, and there isn't a culture of civic engagement among youth.

Location. "These meetings are not just a walk away, they're a bus ride away." Many participants didn't want to go out of their way to attend a planning meeting.

Scheduling / timing. A lot of the meetings occur at times / dates when youth (especially students) are unable to attend (like when they're at work or dinner).

Lack of trust / faith in the system. Feeling that the City is having a meeting because it has to, not because it actually wants input. There is a sense that no one cares about youth because they don't vote. The ability to have a real impact is unclear or dubious, and there is a lack of trust in materials that come from the City.

Inaccessibility / unsure of how to engage. Youth are unsure of what actions they can take to make a difference or what the best way to participate is. Don't understand how engagement processes work or what a successful engagement process looks like.

Lack of representation. Mistrust among youth because they don't see themselves represented in politics or at the "front of the room."

Intimidation by homeowners and professionals. Some feel like youth voices are not as valuable to the conversation and that youth aren't qualified to speak to or critique professionals. There is often a power imbalance in meeting formats.

Lack of relevance. Youth don't know what city planning is or how it applies to their lives.

Lack of priority. City planning just isn't as important as school, social life, making money, or building a career.

Other. Some participants are not "model citizens" and feel like it's not their responsibility / job to engage in these matters. Others also face language barriers.

Draft Suggestions to Improve Youth Engagement in City Planning

1: Start Young and Focus on Stages, Not Ages

Some participants felt it was important to engage people younger than the Youth Engagement Strategy's proposed minimum ago of 18 years old. Many participants also resisted the label of "youth," especially given the broad age-range encompassed by the strategy

Examples of specific suggestions to start young include:

- Tailor strategies to different stages-of-life (e.g. high school students, university students, young professionals).
- Incorporate youth as young as 14 into the Youth Engagement Strategy.

2: Make Engagement Easy, Understandable, Convenient, and Fun for Youth

Many participants felt youth would be likelier to engage if it was easier, more convenient, and fun to do. They also wanted to understand how engagement processes work and how they can actually lead to influencing an outcome.

Examples of specific suggestions to make engagement easy include:

- Provide a small stipend or free food to encourage more attendees.
- Provide childcare at meetings.
- Provide tokens to help people get to meetings.
- Hold meetings on Saturday mornings instead of weekday nights.
- Create remote/electronic access to City sessions (like livestreaming).
- Use accessible, meaningful language (and avoid jargon).
- Host a Doors Open-like event for City Hall, where the public can access and see the processes that run inside the City.
- Explain what a successful engagement process looks like.
- Provide background info before engagement meetings to give people time to form opinions prior to public sessions.
- Focus on concrete, short-term milestones in planning processes and provide updates; make the impact of their engagement clear.
- Create a permanent youth-dedicated group or section of City Planning to engage youth, help identify and address issues.

3: Make Promotion of Engagement Opportunities Broader, More Appealing, and Ongoing

For many participants, a lack of awareness of engagement opportunities prevented them from participating. They suggested a number of ways that the promotion of engagement opportunities could be broader and more effective.

Examples of specific suggestions to broaden promotion include:

- Put ads for meetings near places where youth hang out (like recreation areas, universities, TTC stops, libraries, schools, coffee shops, newspapers, door to door, letters).
- Make ads more attention-grabbing: for example, an ad could say "Installing a new stop light" or "Should this condo be here?"
- Promote engagement opportunities through social and digital media (like YouTube videos, Twitter, Facebook, online forums, TV commercials, infomercials, Snapchat videos, and campaigns (like the ALS ice bucket challenge).
- Use physical representations of a project or process to connect with existing and potential new participants (e.g. Blue Bins are a physical reminder to others about recycling).
- Partner with media outlets that youth already follow to promote events.
- Keep people up-to-date between meetings (by using Twitter, Facebook, and online forums).
- Create opportunities for ongoing relationship with youth in their later 20s.
- Develop a centralized website and / or calendar that lists ongoing engagement opportunities.
- Send monthly newsletters to let people know about meetings.
- Hire celebrities to promote events.
- Provide explanations beforehand so people know what they're taking about.

4: Incorporate City Planning into Education (Schools, Skills, and Professional Development)

Since a large segment of the youth cohort spends the majority of their time in school, incorporating city planning into education curriculums and developing a greater overall presence for City Planning on campuses across the city would provide better opportunities to engage youth. It would also provide youth with ways to engage while building new skills and professional connections.

Examples of specific suggestions to incorporate planning into education include:

- Build education about planning into school curriculums at an early age.

- Incorporate planning discussions into university classes for students across different fields.
- Set up a "City Planning Division" club / organization at each university, get students on a mailing list, and have regular drop-in sessions.
- Host more meetings in or near university campuses.
- Create opportunities to learn new skills through engagement (such as Photoshop, 3D printing, etc.).
- Create a dating / match-making service between youth and City staff to provide youth with professional development and deeper understanding of how City Planning works.

5: Use Different Engagement Methods

Different methods can solicit different kinds of feedback and broaden engagement. These methods could include new methods that haven't been used before or simply bring a different kind of energy to existing methods.

Examples of specific suggestions to use different methods include:

- Make space for creative methods (photography, stories, etc.) to honour the different voices that youth use.
- Use different activities to engage youth, such as focus groups, surveys / questionnaires, walking tours, Reddit, participatory budgeting, online voting, meetings in parks, pop-up events, meeting call-ins, suggestion boxes in community centres, and parties (that include music).
- Create a one-stop shop / hub just for youth.
- Create a "Speaker's Corner" for youth to share their views.
- The City should go to more existing events, like community cultural events.
- Host smaller meetings in more neighbourhoods, instead of larger meetings in central locations.
- Host monthly or regularly scheduled meetings to discuss issues (e.g. at the ward level).
- Design apps and / or platforms that help people engage (such as Democracy OS).
- Require people to do a City Planning survey to access free WiFi on TTC.
- Incentivize and "gamify" participation with a passport, offer "rewards" for participation in different activities.
- Use a Dragon's Den / American Idol model to discuss ideas.

6: Increase Youth Confidence in Participating

For many, intimidation in adult-dominated spaces can be silencing. Increasing youth confidence to participate in spaces that are ordinarily dominated by adults could lead to more engagement in city planning conversations.

Examples of specific suggestions to increase youth confidence include:

- Make youth comfortable participating in intergenerational conversations.
- Make sure there's diverse representation at meetings (culturally, age-wise, etc.) so that youth can see other youth running or presenting at meetings.
- Put youth in positions of authority.
- Create a safe space for youth to have conversations about issues they care about (such as TTC issues).
- Create a group of youth champions/representatives to mobilize on community issues in a given area.
- Hire Youth Ambassadors to be the face of engagement for City Planning.
- Create a welcoming environment for youth by using cultural references that are relevant to them.
- Engage youth in co-working spaces - these areas are safe spaces where they already have strong networks.
- Involve youth in the design of projects (including monitoring and evaluating its goals).

7: Make Planning Relevant to Youth

Many youth do not understand how or why planning is relevant to their lives. Youth will be more likely to participate if they understand its impact on their day-to-day lives.

Examples of specific suggestions include:

- Market how planning issues affect youth in everyday life and how they can make a difference.
- Focus on the short-term impacts of planning projects.
- Use graphic novels that teach youth about how the city works.
- Emphasize in notices that ALL input is relevant.
- Connect personal interests with civic action: for example, leverage youth's interests (video games, sports, film, etc.) or skills (creative writing, video-making) to test creative ideas and cultivate civic skills.
- Make consultations more neighbourhood-based versus project-based.
- Share resources that come from civil society and grassroots organizations.
- Leverage existing channels and networks within and between youth.
- Encourage issue-based peer support (since peer support isn't necessarily age-specific).
- Use events organized specifically for youth.

Next Steps

The City, Consultant Team, and Youth Research Team discussed these Draft Findings at a Youth Research Team Workshop on December 9, 2014. The purpose of the workshop was to review the draft topics, barriers, and suggestions to improve youth engagement in city planning, and to identify priorities within each. The feedback participants shared in the second Youth Research Team workshop will inform the development of some Draft Recommendations, which the City and the Consultant Team will present to the Youth Research Team early in 2015.