

YOUTH

services plan

A strategic vision for youth services



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HALIFAX

A special thank you...

Parks & Recreation would like to thank the following Youth Team members:

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VISION statement

The Municipality's Youth Services provides an open & diverse environment that is accessible to all youth. We support mental & physical wellbeing while promoting unity, friendship & most importantly happiness.

– We make a difference!



MISSION statement

We enrich the quality of life for all and strengthen communities by providing fun, accessible, friendly, and inclusive youth services.

CORE values

Core values are the foundation for all of the municipality's youth services. They are the rules of engagement to make the mission and vision come true.

The youth services core values are:

- Support
- Happiness
- Inclusivity
- Friendship
- Opportunities for all



OUR definition of youth

Youth Services in the municipality encompasses ages 13-24.

For the purposes of this report we grouped the ages of 13-15, 16-18 & 19-24.

We recognise the diversity within these age ranges that requires specific and intentional services.

Engagement Methods

Engaged youth through:

- Online survey
- Workshops
- One on one conversations

1400 youth consulted to help create this Youth Services Plan.

Key Issues from Surveys & Workshops

- **Services should be inclusive for all youth**
Youth feel that our services need to be inclusive to all youth, specifically with regard to gender, sexual orientation, economic background, culture & abilities.
- **Mental & Physical Health pose barriers to access**
Youth feel mental and physical health can limit the services youth are able to access. Anxiety and shyness were the top reasons why youth did not attend youth services.
- **Limited Marketing and Promotion to youth**
Youth identified lack of knowledge as one of the primary reasons for not accessing services.



Key Issues from Surveys & Workshops

- **Low to no cost services**
 - Cost is a barrier for youth to access services.
- **Transportation & Accessibility**
 - Youth feel the services they want to participate in are not offered in their community and it takes too long to get to these services if they are not offered locally.
- **Drop In & Equipment Loan Programs**
 - Youth want access to equipment and flexible program opportunities.
- **Youth Friendly Spaces**
 - Youth don't feel included, accepted or welcomed in some facilities.



STRATEGIC VISION

Our services positively impact the mental health and physical well being of youth

RANK

1

GOAL 1.1:

To remove barriers of access around mental & physical health

OUTCOME

Improved quality of life

- Mental Health is a very important issue for youth
- Research supports positive outcomes to youth's mental health when they participate in physical activity, recreation and leadership programs.

STRATEGIC VISION

RANK

2

All youth are able to access our services

GOAL 2.1:

To provide low to no cost services

GOAL 2.2: To create youth services that are inclusive for all youth

GOAL 2.3: To provide and implement various drop-in programs

GOAL 2.4: To ensure there is adequate accessibility of programs through location and transportation

GOAL 2.5: To expand equipment loan programs

OUTCOME

Increased access to youth services

- Low cost, inclusive services
- All youth can access services regardless of their academic, cultural or financial background

STRATEGIC VISION

RANK

3

The municipality offers friendly and welcoming environments for youth

GOAL 3.1:

To design physical spaces that are open and welcoming for youth

GOAL 3.2:

To employ friendly staff that are trained in youth engagement

GOAL 3.3:

To change the culture on how staff view youth

OUTCOME

Increased traffic by youth through municipal facilities

- Physical spaces need to be friendly and welcoming to youth
- Steps need to be taken to educate staff on youth and youth engagement

STRATEGIC VISION

RANK

4

Services are diverse and geared towards youth interests

GOAL 4.1:

To gear multi-sport “try it” programs towards older youth to give them an opportunity to participate

GOAL 4.2:

To diversify our selection of “non-standard” art programs

GOAL 4.3:

To make program times specific for needs of different age groups

GOAL 4.4:

To offer age-specific youth programs

GOAL 4.5:

To review policies & best practices for service delivery of youth programs

OUTCOME

Improved social connectedness, sense of belonging and community pride

- Offer “try it programs” lets youth experience new sports and activities
- More opportunities to take “non-standard” art classes
- Drop in programs offer more than just a single activity

STRATEGIC VISION

RANK

5

All youth are aware of the services offered by the municipality

GOAL 5.1:

To target youth with marketing and promotion that is on trend and will catch their attention

GOAL 5.2:

To promote and clarify the importance of leadership programs

OUTCOME

Increased participation in youth services

- Marketing and promotion needs to stay ahead of the trends
- Market youth services directly to youth in addition to parents and guardians
- Youth webpage and social media tools is the best way to spread program and service information

Next Steps

1. Continue to provide Youth Engagement Reports to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee twice a year (fall and spring). The next Youth Engagement Report will provide an update on Parks & Recreation's new Youth organization.
2. Ongoing engagement of youth on the priority areas and identification of at-risk youth/communities. This will be necessary to ensure current youth programming is adequate and appropriate to meet the needs of youth.
3. Implement the Youth Services Plan and report updates to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee in the next Youth Engagement Report

