

SURREY *Youth:* SPEAK UP - 2017 FORUM REPORT



RECREATION SURREY
Healthy Communities. Active Together.





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SURREY YOUTH SPEAK UP FORUM

The Surrey Leadership Youth Council (SLYC) is a group of youth who help youth speak up and have their voices heard with the support of the City of Surrey. SLYC plans and implements activities to encourage civic engagement in youth.

Youth Speak Up is a day-long forum that aims to empower youth in Surrey to share their ideas and discuss civic issues. The Surrey Leadership Youth Council was excited to host the 9th annual forum on October 27, 2018 at Surrey City Hall. The forum had 140 youth participants that represented 13 different high schools. This year the workshops themes were: Light Rail Transit (LRT), Health and Wellness, and Community Connections.

THIS REPORT WAS
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I ♥ #SurreyLRT

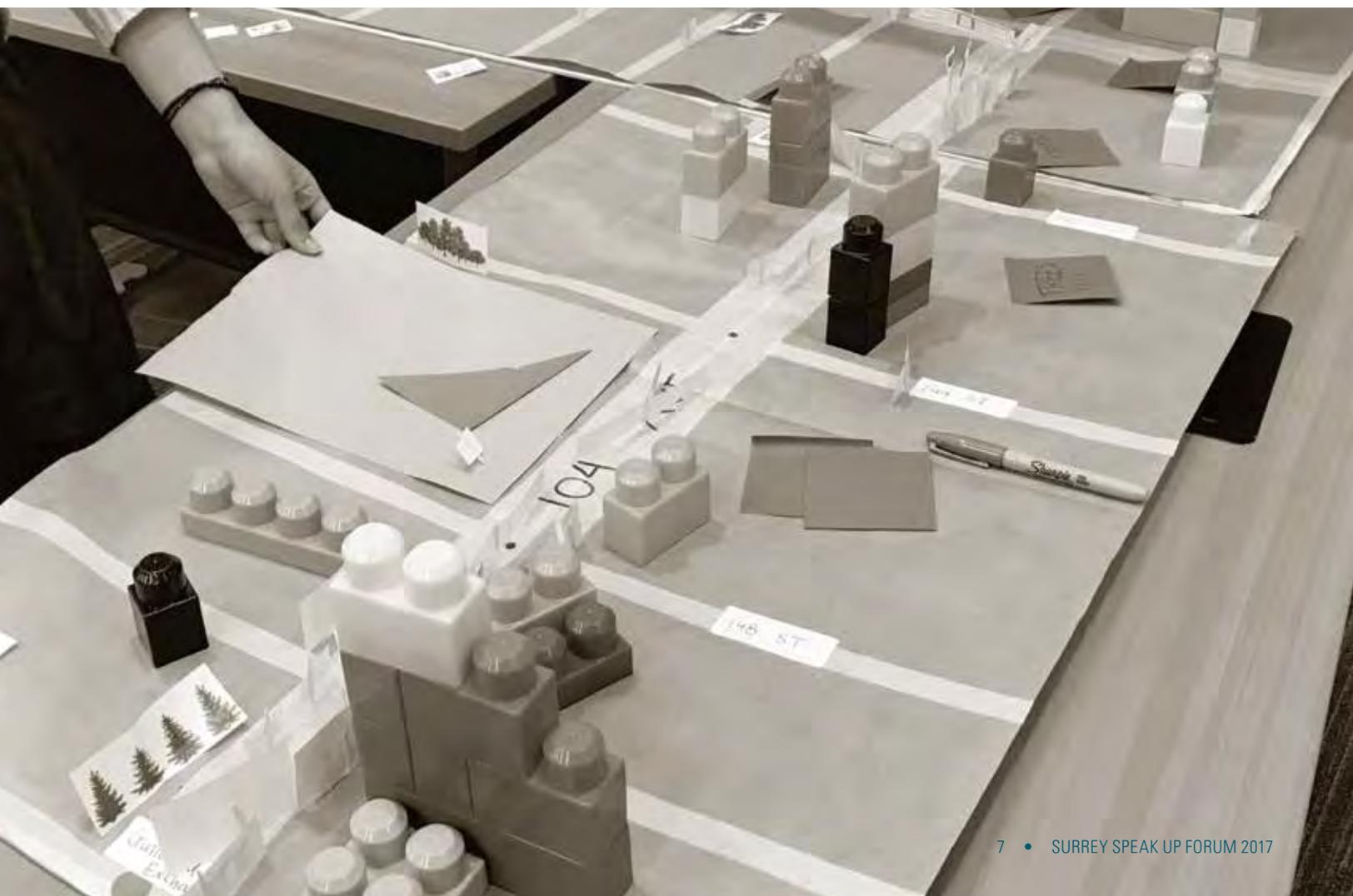


LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT

WORKSHOP PURPOSE: The Light Rail Transit (LRT) workshop focused on discussing the future of Surrey’s transportation system and the neighborhoods around the LRT. Participants were able to design LRT stations and provide feedback on the look and feel of the future LRT corridors along 104th Avenue and King George Boulevard.

INSIGHTS

KEY THEMES	PARTICIPANT SUGGESTIONS
<p>PROMOTING SAFETY</p>	<p>Skytrain stations have been described as “sketchy” and not as visible. Skytrain stations are not always deemed the safest of atmospheres. LRT stations can be much more open and welcoming for passengers. LRT should be open and transparent as to deter any unnoticed crimes that happen in non-visible areas such as the Skytrain stations.</p>
<p>CREATING AN URBAN CITY</p>	<p>We want LRT to encourage business development along the new corridor. We want to ensure that the new corridor will be attractive to youth through free Wi-Fi, more greenery, music, restaurants, lights, and crosswalks. Parking spaces at stations for people who want to park and ride should be available.</p>
<p>ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY</p>	<p>Replacing lost green space with additional green space.</p>



QUESTIONS FROM YOUTH

"What kind of energy will LRT use?"

"Would this affect the shortage of trees?"

RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUOTES FROM YOUTH

"Comfortable seat with heating, phone booth in case of emergency."

"An electric board to show when the next bus is coming"

"It can represent each location by having a clear roof and the walls should be full of art from the location/diverse"

"In summer and winter time, there are heaters and air conditioning to help in cases of a long wait"

"Timer to tell you trains time, a transit planner on site, etc."

"Having Wi-Fi in buses is helpful to find out which transit line to take, closest to one's stop."

"A bench for the elderly, pregnant women and children"

"Eco friendly idea. Solar panels for power, separate smoking areas, free Wi-Fi, etc."

"Stations should represent the multiculturalism of each city-center in which the station is located"

"Color coded stations will bring a uniqueness to each station"

"Reflective safety lines that standout"

REVITALIZE 104 AVENUE / KING GEORGE BOULEVARD

The vision that participants had for 104 Avenue / King George Boulevard consisted of several common ideas. For instance,

- 64.5% of participants wanted more trees.
- 22.6% wanted more crosswalks.
- 19.4% wanted the transit to be better on time/ improve bus arrival times.
- 16.1% wanted more lights on the streets.
- Generally more density and livelier streets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Create an urban city that has a welcoming and open atmosphere. Do this by adding more sidewalk space, lighting, benches, heaters, air conditioners, Wi-Fi, travel time message boards, and art.

Focus on being environmentally friendly by adding more trees, promoting greenery at LRT stations, and using solar power.

Promote safety by creating transparent and accessible LRT stations with lots of lighting and easy crossing access to the station.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

WORKSHOP PURPOSE: This workshop had participants think about their health and wellness habits and supports in the community. They discussed the limitations around what kept them from having good health and wellness. The workshop had two subtopics: mental and physical health.

INSIGHTS

KEY THEMES	OUTCOMES	PARTICIPANT SUGGESTIONS
RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES	Youth activities can be expensive.	Discounted rate or credit for youth who volunteer with the City.
TRANSPORTATION	Frequency of transit is not sufficient for youth in Surrey.	Free shuttle buses for youth. City recreation activities will become more accessible for youth.
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	There are minimal advertising in regards to programs in Surrey and financial assistance.	Have an app and a website which contains all the financial assistance and opportunities in Surrey. More marketing to make youth aware that there is financial assistance available.
SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL COUNSELLORS	We had found out that 95% of students were stressed on a daily basis and only 5% were not. Participants noted that there is an absence of school support for mental health.	Training young approachable adults to help youth with their mental health. Have youth speakers come to schools on a regular basis. Youth often find school counsellors don't provide enough mental health support. Having youth present might help youth be able to relate and be more open to receiving mental health support.

QUOTES FROM YOUTH

"Put a schedule of the shuttle bus idea in brochures that the City provides in recreation centers"

"Try to make vehicles electric, especially buses; to conserve carbon emissions"

"Create an online survey to see what youth activities youth want to see more of in our community"

"School counsellors are much more able and available in things educational such as changing courses, or problems with teachers. However, they are unable to accommodate those who are looking for support for anxiety or depression, simply because they are not professionals." One anonymous student claimed. "In fact, sometimes they make things worse."

"City of Surrey should have more musical workshops or mindfulness workshops for youth."

Q&A

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
Do young people experience a lot of stress?	140 participants said yes!
Why do young people experience stress?	<p>School, work, extracurricular activities, time management, bullying, expectations from others, unprepared for post-secondary, living on own, peer pressure.</p> <p>Have a course outside of school explaining how to handle stress that comes along with these.</p>
What do people do to relieve stress?	<p>Exercise, binge eating, music, sleep, any activity, which they enjoy that requires focus to take their mind off of the stress they have.</p> <p>Youth need help to relieve stress in healthy ways.</p>
Do young people have adults in their life they can get support from and talk to about their health and wellness?	<p>There was a mixed response to this question. The majority felt that there were adults in their life that they could talk to but they did not feel comfortable with them. Another major issue was that the adults in their life, such as teachers and school counsellors, were more focused on school advice and careers.</p> <p>Implement specifically trained mental health counsellors at recreation centres and schools.</p>
What resources/services exist that you know of in the community to support young people's mental health?	<p>Not many young people were aware of the resources that are available in Surrey due to lack of marketing and advertising for people dealing with stress or mental health concerns. The only resource that was named multiple times was Kids Help Phone.</p> <p>Mention resources in the leisure guide, post resources on social media accounts, and make it mandatory to have posters at school.</p>
What are some barriers that prevent you from accessing resources?	<p>Scared of judgement, not enough knowledge on resources, no resources, resources being too expensive, transportation, anxiety, resources not being accessible enough, do not feel worthy enough of getting help.</p> <p>Have free courses that assists youth in dealing with these barriers online and in person.</p>
What kind of resources would you like to see available in your community?	<p>Texting/calling for help instead of walk-ins.</p> <p>Less mental health stigma in the community.</p> <p>Free or low cost certified counsellors at recreation centres.</p> <p>Better marketing and advertising.</p> <p>Have speakers come into schools and talk about how to deal with mental health concerns.</p> <p>Have a course explaining how to deal with mental health.</p> <p>Have more awareness of the issues on the City of Surrey website and social media.</p>



RECOMMENDATIONS

As you can tell, the current recreation program for the City of Surrey can be improved. By listening to the suggestions of the youth, SLYC was able to identify the three main issues which included: financial aid and barriers, lack of variety, and the need for accessible transportation. As for mental health, there is clearly a large amount of stress that youth take on for multiple reasons. After listening to the suggestions of youth, we believe that the city can help reduce the amount of stress that youth face.

Increase accessibility to health and wellness services by reducing financial and transportation barriers.

Increase awareness and knowledge of services and resources through an app and on social media.

Host mental health courses at recreation centres.

Have a mental health counsellor available at recreation centres.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

WORKSHOP PURPOSE: This workshop explored new ways of creating an interactive and connected community. The focus was on bridging the gap within our community and creating more opportunities for community collaboration.

As a result of the information gathered from our workshop, we found five key community gathering places among youth in Surrey: Schools, Shopping Malls, Recreation Centres, Parks and City Wide Events.

PLACE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	PARTICIPANT SUGGESTIONS
SCHOOLS	<p>Able to see friends daily and socialize.</p> <p>Opportunity to join extracurricular activities such as sports and clubs.</p> <p>Taking a work experience course and being informed from career centres is a great way for youth to find and explore new opportunities outside of the school environment.</p>	<p>Bullying</p> <p>Comparisons of grades</p> <p>Drug use and crime</p> <p>Stereotyping</p> <p>Feelings of isolation from other social circles.</p>	<p>Encourage involvement in school clubs and in the community.</p> <p>Invite presenters to talk with students about the negative effects of drug use and crime related activities.</p>
SHOPPING MALLS	<p>A place to spend time with your family and friends</p> <p>Helps community connect by hosting seasonal and community activities.</p>	<p>Economic barriers.</p> <p>False expectations of what people should look like.</p>	<p>Encourage local clothing swap events at thrift stores, recreation centres and shopping malls.</p> <p>Host youth events and services in the malls.</p>
RECREATION CENTRES	<p>Hosts engaging special events such as Surrey Youth Fest.</p> <p>A place from home that serves as a stress relieving location.</p> <p>Effective advertisement of recreation centre events.</p>	<p>Transportation to recreation centres may sometimes feel unsafe.</p> <p>Can be a costly to transit if using often.</p>	<p>Maintaining advertisements will keep continual interest.</p> <p>Encouraging LRT to provide a cheaper, local and easily accessible alternative.</p>
PARKS	<p>Open for everyone where money is not an issue.</p> <p>An excellent family bonding and leisure time location.</p>	<p>Parks do not feel safe at night, but is a space for youth to hang out late.</p> <p>Residences living nearby may feel threatened by crime.</p>	<p>Invest in updating the quality of parks and growing the greenery surrounding each park.</p> <p>Introducing a community watch program for neighborhoods and increasing street surveillance with cameras.</p>
CITY WIDE EVENTS	<p>Community engagement events are affordable and connect the community.</p>	<p>Events tend to target a particular group of people.</p> <p>Some may feel excluded as it does not pertain to a certain demographic.</p>	<p>Diversify the target audience for events ranging from youth to seniors, academics to athletes.</p>



QUOTES FROM YOUTH

"There needs to be more ways to connect individuals together, without the use of social media. Social media can sometimes be very disconnecting."

"Environments where negativity may be converted into creativity. Toronto's Graffiti Alley. A place where youth can voice their concerns while also funneling out their negativity. This way, instead of being divided through negativity, we can become more connected."

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of our collected information, SLYC feels youth in Surrey need engaging and inclusive activities that tears down the divide between the stereotypes within our society.

As a City we need to invest in obtaining more methods in which youth can become more connected, without the feeling of exclusion. In addition, it was important for youth to have safer public facilities such as transit and parks in order to enhance a positive atmosphere within the City.

Invite presenters into schools to talk about the negative effects of substance use and crime, as well as positive opportunities in the community.

Promote City youth events and opportunities on the schools' apps.

Host more community events in highly used spaces and have organizations such as the City of Surrey, shopping malls and schools work together.

Light rail transit must provide cheap, local, safe and easily accessible transit throughout the City of Surrey.

Diversify events and programs for youth to include a variety of interests.





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