

SURREY *Youth:* SPEAK UP - 2018 FORUM REPORT



RECREATION SURREY
Healthy Communities. Active Together.



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SURREY YOUTH SPEAK UP FORUM

The Surrey Leadership Youth Council (SLYC), formed in 2007, is a group of 30 youth participants who are passionate about civic engagement and helping other Surrey youth amplify their voice on important community topics. SLYC members build capacity in a variety of skills including public speaking, workshop development, advertising, and report writing. SLYC meets bi-weekly at Surrey City Hall and participates in consultation processes and events throughout the year.

Youth Speak Up is a daylong forum that aims to empower youth in our city to share their ideas and discuss civic issues. SLYC was excited to host their 10th annual forum on October 26th, 2018. The forum had 120 youth participants that represented 14 different high schools. This year the workshops themes were: Youth Services, Public Safety, and Build a City.

THIS REPORT WAS WRITTEN BY THE SURREY LEADERSHIP YOUTH COUNCIL

Aisha Kausar

Angela Sheenmar

Anmol Parhar

Elizabeth Teljeur

Gurbaz Grewal

Inhye Joo

Jenny Tang

Kyumin (Louis) Kim

Likhita Konsuri

Neil Imada

Toby Baum

Veronika

Simar Vashisht

Austin

Charles Pascual

Iqra Azam

Iris Do

Ishan Sekhon

Kyle Balanay

Marcus Hazaparu

Tajdeep Singh Sandhu

Thieu (Jerry) Tran



YOUTH SERVICES

WORKSHOP PURPOSE: SLYC held a discussion with participants about the City of Surrey Youth Services and had staff representatives present at the workshop. SLYC led the participants through discussion about youth staff, youth programs, youth lounge spaces, and needs of youth in Surrey.

YOUTH STAFF	ANSWERS	
<p>What makes a good youth staff?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly • Professional • Young (20-30 years old) • Inclusive • Good leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to talk to • Good role model • Relatable to youth • Consistent • Knowledgeable about youth resources in the City and community
<p>What could staff do to make programs more engaging and fun for the youth?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve youth in decision making and invite them to be a part of the activities/space • Reach out to youth and get to know them. • Be energetic/positive • Be welcoming and offer different activities for different groups of youth • Attentive and helpful towards youth in need and aware of resources for youth 	
<p>How can youth staff better connect with the community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodate to school schedules • Go to schools and classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize surveys for school and the community • Better marketing towards the targeted audience

YOUTH PROGRAMS	ANSWERS	
<p>Wellness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nap rooms • Mental health groups and on-site counsellors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and organize activities for the LGBTQ2S+ community for LGBTQ+
<p>Career</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counsellors for volunteer and career opportunities • Resume help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University presentations and recommendations
<p>Academics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer tutor programs • Homework club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory programs
<p>Athletics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and longer drop-ins • A variety of different sports offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More playing spaces
<p>Arts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different classes for all skill levels • Music clubs • Art shows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dance studios • Drop-in classes
<p>Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooking/drawing contests with prizes • Sport tournaments once a week • Video game tournaments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movie nights • Theatre plays • Music shows

YOUTH SPACES*	ANSWERS	
Comfortability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sofas/chairs/beanbags • Mats and rugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft lighting (lamps)
Entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaming consoles • Charging outlets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated technology
Decorations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More colours (on the walls) • Designs and patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art created by youth
Functionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More table space • Educational resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulletin boards for volunteer and career opportunities for youth that the public has access to post on

*Spaces that were critiqued: Cloverdale, South Surrey, Chuck Bailey Recreation Centres

QUOTES FROM YOUTH

“Having more lighting could brighten up the mood”

“Add comfortable items like blankets, pillows, sofas, etc.,”

“Decorate the empty walls with murals, artworks and other wall decor to make it feel more comfortable”

“They should have a one-on-one tutor or career/educational support”

“Variety of books, movies and games to entertain us”

“Make sure that the emergency exits, first-aid kit and fire extinguisher are all easy to spot and is not a hazard”

“Try using the room space to accommodate more to the youths liking, it sometimes feels congested”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide affordable, diverse, and inclusive programs, clubs, and events that support youth at all recreation centres throughout Surrey. Ensure greater focus on mental health, wellness, volunteerism, and the arts. Youth have meaningful involvement and ownership over programs and spaces.

In hiring practice, hire young, friendly, professional staff who genuinely enjoy giving assistance to the youth and have been selected through relevant and detailed interviewing.

Renovate youth spaces to feel welcoming through lighting and decor. Make the space functional for a variety of indoor activities.



PUBLIC SAFETY

WORKSHOP PURPOSE: At this workshop SLYC and public safety staff informed youth participants about public safety initiatives within Surrey and offered them an open and interactive space to discuss Surrey’s current public safety endeavours.

DISCUSSION TOPICS	ANSWERS
<p>Public Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add additional streetlights in parts of the community with high violence and crime rates • Public safety volunteers are encouraged to become involved in city events, in order to be exposed to real-life scenarios that might require their involvement. • Establish a volunteer safety program, with regular community updates and check ups from safety officers that will allow future public safety volunteers to be prepared for real-life situations. • Set up safe drug consumption sites to prevent overdoses and offer increased access to support. • Increase city patrol officers in areas of need (Surrey Central area, Newton bus loop) • Strengthen the Block Watch in neighborhoods by providing fast and effective responses to public safety incidents that occur
<p>Gang Violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement at least a day within the school year where young males can become educated on the consequences of gangs, and how to surpass the peer pressure of joining one, and positive opportunities in the community. • The average rating for Surrey’s gang violence prevention effort for participants was approximately 4.1/10. This indicates that many youth were not particularly satisfied with Surrey’s current efforts towards gang violence prevention.
<p>Bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more easily accessible resources and a larger platform for youth to reach out for help. • Implement mentorship programs and support groups. • Increase & hire reliable counselors and mentors with experience in handling such issues so they can be easily approachable to students. Participants felt that school counselors were not the most equipped or have the time to provide assistance for mental health and bullying. • Host anti-bullying assemblies at high schools to reinforce the importance of inclusivity. • Decrease the wait time youth face when trying to access help on bullying & suicide prevention lines.

QUOTES FROM YOUTH

“Students need to know that they have people to back them up and then those people need to actually follow through. More resources need to be put towards recognition and support for the victim.”

“How they can do better is increase the number of counsellors in elementary [sic] because to me that’s when the most bullying takes place.”

“Gang violence directly affects students [sic] and young people’s education.”

“We don’t want this. We want help. It isn’t fun to live in this area. We can ignore the bad, but it is still there. However, we can’t do anything. Laws and the City are the only ones who can change policies and programs. None of us want this.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cultivate a better support network for youth being bullied or abused, by forming youth support groups and small programs within schools and community. These programs must be administered by trusted counsellors and adults who can provide a safe and welcoming space for youth to share their problems.

Strengthen and increase the security and Patrol officers near areas where public safety concern are most common (Whalley, Surrey Central area, Skytrain station entrances, and Newton)

Increase streetlights to increase the feeling of safety for residents walking in their neighborhoods at night.

Participants feel safe in their neighbourhoods when they are familiar with their neighbours. Strengthen the Block Watch program and other neighbourhood initiatives so citizens create a sense of community and are assured their neighbourhoods can connect with each other if public safety issues occur.

BUILD A CITY

WORKSHOP PURPOSE: SLYC created the “Build a City” workshop to discuss how public space is used - whether that is park land or the street. SLYC chose to focus the discussion on two sections:

SLYC and the City of Surrey’s parks division sought input from youth on the design for the Nicomekl Riverfront Park project. The City of Surrey parks’ project team has been collecting feedback from Surrey youth and residents at public events. This feedback will be used to develop the park management and concept plan.

Participants also discussed the public realm in our various communities and areas that participants felt would benefit from beautification and community initiatives.

NICOMEKL RIVERFRONT PARK SUMMARY

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS	
<p>Why do you visit parks?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places to play and be physically active, that appeal to all ages and abilities • Trails and Gardens • Integration of nature and artwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability for pet owners to bring their pets • Gathering areas such as benches and picnic tables • Park rangers maintaining parks • A place to hang out with friends where we can be loud or find quiet
<p>What park features would you like to see?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artwork that shows Canadian and local history, including that of local Indigenous peoples and those of other cultures who call Surrey home • Up to date amenities (such as washrooms, garbage cans, and water refill stations) • Play spaces (such as treehouses) integrated within nature • Areas to rest and enjoy the park with family and friends such as benches, picnic tables, and gazebos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated nature watching areas and classes • Different ways to explore the park (walking trails, boardwalks, bike trails) • Accessibility and safety (flat for wheelchairs, enough lighting in gathering areas) • Enough parking and connected to bus routes • Partner with the City of Surrey volunteer programs in order to help clean and maintain the park • Lighting should be adequate, but should not disturb the wildlife

RECOMMENDATIONS

Guildford is a great gathering place. Many people including families, friends and tourists like to hangout or shop in this area. Enhancing the area aesthetically and hosting public events would create a welcoming environment for people to gather.

The city should plan more public events in all town centres. After listening to the youth, it was clear that the youth felt that Whalley/ City Centre was the town centre that had the most events and was the center of action. Having events in different town centres would better market towards those town centres and create a sense of neighbourhood and community.

The city should incorporate historical art pieces in the public realm. The youth were very fond of different art pieces around Surrey, especially if it had something to do with the history of the city.

Incorporate a variety of historical artwork that showcases Indigenous culture and the diverse community that makes up Surrey.

Partner with schools to create volunteer groups that will help maintain the parks and have park rangers regularly assess park conditions.

Incorporate areas designated for dogs (dog off-leash parks).



BEAUTIFICATION AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES SUMMARY

SURREY COMMUNITIES	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	PARTICIPANT RECOMMENDATIONS
Cloverdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation centre makes the area more welcoming • City of Surrey staff and public are welcoming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of community events • Accessibility to washrooms • Lack of activities, most residents go to activities in Guildford • It's a residential space rather than a place for community gatherings • Use of land is not efficient (many vacant areas that are not being used) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add more playgrounds and parks to attract families • Indoor areas that can be used yearlong by residents • More volunteer opportunities • Ask local organizations, bands, and artists to hold events
South Surrey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple gathering spots (shops, parks, beach) • Recreational activities • Art gallery • Warm and friendly City of Surrey staff • Calm and quiet area • Multiple places for food options that accommodate all diets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of washrooms is not up to expected standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Indigenous services and presence of Indigenous culture in public spaces
Whalley/ City Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well known area because of all the events held here • The city hall and library allow the area to be the centre of action • Multiple areas to accommodate groups such as the library, Holland park, civic plaza, Bear Creek Park • Staff at Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre are very welcoming • Open and in the middle of action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting in parks is not adequate • Residents feel uncomfortable walking around at night due to the high homeless population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More homeless shelters • Better lighting at parks • Better maintenance of washrooms • More security, specifically after hours/dark • Buses should be more frequent to avoid long wait times
Guildford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mall makes a great place for gatherings and allows the town centre to be an attraction • The recreation centre makes the place more welcoming and allows it to be a good place for a gathering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling of being unsafe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More security, especially after hours/dark
Newton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a lot of dining options • The area is environmentally friendly • The parks allow the area to be a nice place for gatherings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parks in this area need to be better maintained • Residents do not always feel safe walking around at night 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More security, especially after hours/dark • More seating for public gatherings • Newton is really large and would benefit from increased services and places to gather



Contact Information:

AMIE JOHNSON
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES, CITY OF SURREY
13450 104 AVENUE
SURREY, BC V3T 1V8
604-591-4709 | youth@surrey.ca