

Creation of a Youth Advisory Panel

Presented To:	Community and Emergency Services Committee
Meeting Date:	September 9, 2024
Type:	Managers' Reports
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Recommended by:	General Manager of Community Development

Report Summary

This report provides a recommendation regarding the terms of reference for the creation of a City of Greater Sudbury Youth Advisory Panel.

Resolution

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury approves the creation of, and terms of reference for a Youth Advisory Panel as outlined in the report entitled "Creation of a Youth Advisory Panel" from the General Manager of Community Development presented at the Community and Emergency Services Committee meeting of September 9, 2024.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Climate Action Plans

This report refers to the strategic goal and objective of 5.0 Creating a Healthier and More Vibrant Community identified in the City of Greater Sudbury Strategic Plan 2019 to 2027.

This report refers to operational matters and has no connection to the Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP).

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report. Operating costs and resources for the proposed advisory panel will be covered within existing budgets.

Background

At the February 20th, 2024 Community & Emergency Services Committee meeting, the following resolution was passed:

WHEREAS as City Council's strategic objective to Create a Healthier and More Vibrant Community includes ideas and opportunities that allow residents to make personal connections with the city as a whole, leading to outcomes that they are integral to, and partly responsible for, the community's success;

AND WHEREAS many Ontario and Canadian municipalities have youth advisory committees to provide a youth perspective on municipal services and projects while providing leadership experience for youth;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Greater Sudbury directs staff to present a report by Q3 2024 to the Community and Emergency Services Committee providing information on the following:

- a summary of local youth related initiatives and networks in Greater Sudbury;
- best practices from other provincial/national jurisdictions on municipal youth committees;
- a proposed terms of reference for a youth advisory panel for the City of Greater Sudbury, focusing on youth involvement with local government, civics, and leadership development.

City of Greater Sudbury Existing Youth Initiatives & Studies

Youth Drop-in Centres

Youth drop-in centres offer a variety of supervised activities for participants from preteen to 18 years of age. Centres offer a wide range of opportunities including sports, pastimes such as billiards and video games, movie nights, chat time and guest presentations on current issues. Internet access, homework assistance, peer mentoring and educational workshops are also offered. The sites connect youth with their local community, encouraging them to volunteer and make a difference in their neighborhood. Centres pride themselves on being smoke, drug and alcohol-free venues for young people to interact in a safe and nonjudgmental environment. Centres assist youth in developing positive friendships and growing up healthy. The City operates youth drop-in centres in Capreol, Claude Charbonneau Park, Dowling, Levack/Onaping, Ryan Heights, Valley East, and Walden.

Though the City's annual grant program, the City also provides financial support to the Rayside Balfour Youth Action Network. The City has also issued a Request for Proposal for youth drop-in services in the downtown Sudbury area, utilizing the funding which had historically been granted to the Sudbury Action Centre for Youth.

Parks, Open Space and Leisure Plan Review (2014)

The City of Greater Sudbury's Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan Review (2014) includes action items related to children and youth programming, including:

- Evaluate the delivery of leisure services on a regular basis, including consideration to new approaches that may improve service efficiency and cost effectiveness.
- Continue to undertake program planning in coordination with community partners and in response to local needs, with an emphasis on services that promote physical activity and social inclusion.
- Maintain and/or upgrade existing youth facilities to the degree possible, with priority placed on high-use facilities. Alternative options may need to be explored for underutilized and/or deteriorating facilities, in consultation with the affected community.

Children and Youth Recreation Programming Review

A Children & Youth Recreation Programming Review was completed in 2018 to assist with the evaluation of direct programming offered by the City as per the Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan Review and to provide a review of youth centres. This report also identified a number of opportunities to improve youth engagement and leadership development including:

- To establish a Youth Leisure Advisory committee to provide the municipality with ongoing advice on the development of leisure programs and services.
- To organize a Youth Summit every four years to engage youth in a discussion about local leisure activities, needs and trends.
- To encourage local CANs to establish Youth Community Action Networks (YouCAN) for their respective areas.
- To identify a youth leadership development model to encourage personal development, civic engagement and volunteerism within leisure programs and services.

Greater Sudbury Population Health, Safety and Well-Being (PHSWB) Plan

The Greater Sudbury Population Health, Safety and Well-Being Plan identified a number of priorities which supports a youth advisory panel:

- Play - A Panel could advise on types of programs and services offered to encourage 'play' which helps with social development and building resiliency while connecting to community.
- Families - Youth belong to families or caregivers, would provide leadership opportunity and civic engagement experience to contribute to the future lives or families from a youth lens.
- Building Resiliency - Through learning teamwork and working in a political environment where things do not always go your way. Will help build strong confident voices for youth for possible future leaders.

Local Youth Initiatives and Networks

Locally, there are a number of youth networks and organizations providing youth leadership opportunities:

Compass

Compass provides mental health, developmental and community services for children, youth, and families. Compass hosts a Youth Wellness Hub that provides high-quality integrated youth services to support the well-being of young people aged 12 to 25. The organization also has a Youth and Family Advisory Council to enhance service delivery that responds to changing needs of youth.

Future North

Future North is dedicated to improving available resources and opportunities for youth 15 to 30 years old in the Districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin. The organization offers youth engagement workshops, organizes youth-led projects, and connects youth-led communities, clubs, associations and organizations in the district.

Greater Sudbury Police Chief Youth Advisory Council

The Chief's Youth Advisory Council (CYAC) is a youth led Council bringing the voice of young people to the Chief of Police on issues that are important to youth in the City of Greater Sudbury. CYAC fosters a sense of understanding and respect between youth and members of the Police Service and is a volunteer opportunity is available for youth ages 15 to 21.

Junction Creek Youth Council

The Junction Creek Stewardship Committee provides high school students the opportunity of joining the JCSC Youth Council to gain volunteer hours, organize events, collaborate to enhance community involvement, and learn valuable life skills.

N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre

The N'Swakamok Friendship Centre offers many opportunities for youth development and engagement including youth culture camps, research projects youth policy development and a wide range of conferences and workshops.

Ontario Justice Education Network for Youth Sudbury Committee

The Ontario Justice Education Network's (OJEN) Sudbury Committee includes volunteers from the justice and education sectors who work together to organize justice education programs for students and youth.

The Sudbury Committee delivers programs that are responsive to local needs by collaborating with teachers and community partners. The committee strives to facilitate connections between youth and the legal community that promote greater understanding of the justice sector and the community it serves.

Science North's Student Advisory Council

The Student Advisory Council is a science advisory council committed to developing a teenager-friendly environment and experience at Science North, Dynamic Earth. Members are in grades 9 to 12. The program is currently paused for the 2024/2025 school year.

Sudbury Multicultural and Folks Arts Association Youth Council

For participants ages 10 to 25, the Sudbury Multicultural and Folks Arts Association Youth Council promotes national multicultural identity throughout the community by taking part in various activities that allow for opportunities share our community's cultural diversity. This organization also brings awareness to various social issues through discussions, and by taking part in various awareness programs and activities.

United Way Centraide North East Ontario Young Leaders on Board

The Young Leaders on Board program is for individuals between the ages of 20 and 39 looking to get actively involved in shaping the future of our community. Participants are matched to a local voluntary sector board as an intern and receive training and networking opportunities during the 8-month program.

YMCA Community Action Network

The YMCA Community Action Network (YCAN) is an innovative national program that engages leaders ages 15 to 30 across Canada to address a community need through service projects. The program, part of the Canada Service Corps initiative, supports youth with opportunities to identify and execute a local service project that is meaningful to them. Each service project develops a network of community contacts and provides the participants with career development skills, volunteer hours, and more all while adding value to the local community.

Young Professionals Association

The Young Professionals Association (YPA) helps young professionals start or advance their career and life in Greater Sudbury. They connect like-minded professionals to career and professional development opportunities. The YPA is for persons aged 20 to 40 who have an interest in personal and professional development and community engagement.

National and Provincial Best Practices

In preparation of this report, staff researched other municipal youth action and advisory committees from other jurisdictions in the province and across Canada. The following communities have established committees that focus on youth involvement with local government:

- City of Barrie Youth Council
- City of Brantford Youth Council
- City of Burlington Youth Student Council
- City of Edmonton Youth Council
- City of Kitchener Youth Action Council
- City of Lethbridge Youth Advisory Council
- City of New Westminster Youth Advisory Committee
- City of Niagara Falls Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee
- Halifax Regional Municipality Youth Advisory Committee
- Municipality of Port Hope Youth Action Committee
- Ottawa Youth Engagement Committee
- Region of Waterloo Youth Advisory Council
- Town of Shelburne Youth Advisory Committee

Common elements of the terms of reference for youth committees include:

- Providing youth input on municipal programs, services, and initiatives
- Educate youth on City governance, procedures and policy making
- Providing networking opportunities for youth
- Hosting events and initiatives to celebrate local youth
- Youth members were typically high school age

Additionally, the **Federation of Canadian Municipalities** provides the Youth Council Toolkit, which is a comprehensive guide on starting and supporting a youth council in communities. This resource provides the following checklist for municipalities considering a youth advisory committee to ensure they have all the resources necessary for success:

- A commitment to seeing youth as co-designers of your community's future
- A commitment to ensure credibility of thought and expression
- A commitment to a safe, flexible, welcoming, and encouraging environment
- A commitment to sustainable recruitment and succession planning
- A willingness to reach out for additional support and learning opportunities
- A willingness to research and discover best practices

Parks and Recreation Ontario also provides strategies on how to develop an effective youth advisory action council, with recommendations on recruitment, engagement strategies and how to properly resource this type of group.

Proposed Terms of Reference for a City of Greater Sudbury Youth Advisory Panel

Based on the common themes of other successful youth advisory committees, and best practices from other jurisdictions, the following Terms of Reference are recommended for a City of Greater Sudbury Youth Advisory Panel.

Mandate

To provide a youth perspective on municipal initiatives and provide recommendations to Council about issues that affect youth living within the City of Greater Sudbury.

Primary Objectives

To provide input and insight on the City of Greater Sudbury projects and initiatives.

Advise on social, recreational, and lifestyle issues concerning the City's youth population.

To amplify youth voices in the municipal decision making processes and increase youth engagement opportunities.

To provide opportunities for leadership development and to learn about municipal decision making processes.

Plan and coordinate events and activities to engage and celebrate youth in Greater Sudbury (e.g. National Youth Week).

Membership

The panel will be composed of youth residing within the City of Greater Sudbury who demonstrate a strong commitment to the terms of reference. Youth will have demonstrated leadership through volunteerism, school and community involvement and have interest in civics and municipal processes. The panel will be comprised of:

- Up to twelve (12) youth representatives, ages 13 to 18 (one (1) youth representative per Ward)
- Two (2) members of Council

Staff Support

The panel's activities will be coordinated and supported by staff from the Leisure Services Division's Community Initiatives and Partnerships Section.

Time Commitment

Panel meetings will be held monthly except for summer months. Additional meetings may be scheduled as required.

Term

To coincide with the term of Council.

Summary and Next Steps

The creation of a Youth Advisory Panel is supported by previous guiding documents and would provide Council an opportunity to receive feedback from youth on the City's programs and initiatives, while encouraging youth participation in municipal governance.

The application process for the Youth Advisory Panel membership will commence following the adoption of the Terms of Reference by-law. Information about the application process will be shared with the community as well as through numerous stakeholder groups, including local school boards.

The Nomination Committee meeting will take place following the application process, with the advisory panel holding its first meeting shortly thereafter.

Resources Cited

City of Greater Sudbury Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan (2014)

<https://www.greatersudbury.ca/city-hall/reports-studies-policies-and-plans/report-pdfs/parks-open-space-and-leisure-master-plan-review-2014/>

City of Greater Sudbury Children and Youth Recreation Programming Review, Community Services Committee (July 9, 2018)

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?documentid=5140>

Youth Council Toolkit: How to Create and Support a Youth Council in your Community, Federation of Canadian Municipalities

<https://fcm.ca/en/resources/youth-council-toolkit>

How to Develop an Effective Youth Advisory/Action Council, Youth Engagement Project, Parks and Recreation Ontario

<https://youtu.be/HvheE9dj1HQ>