

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – MARCH 3, 2009

YOUTH IN ACTION – YOUTH STRATEGY 2009 & BEYOND

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services and the Director of Recreation and Culture, in consultation with the Area Recreation Managers, the Vaughan Youth Cabinet and the Youth City Councillor, recommend:

1. That this report be received for information.

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact to the operating budget. Recreation and Culture's base budget includes funding for youth programs and the initiatives within this report will be covered within those funds.

Communications Plan

A communications plan is being developed to create awareness of the *Youth in Action – Youth Strategy 2009 & Beyond* that will include, but not be limited to, staff information meetings, integrating the goals from the report with annual goals for staff, Vaughan Youth Cabinet meetings, news releases, various City publications, and the City's website.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information on the findings and recommendations to further develop programs and services for youth in the City of Vaughan.

Background - Analysis and Options

The Recreation and Culture Department delivers a variety of youth programs through community centre based youth rooms, registered programs, satellite drop ins and special events. These programs provide physical, creative and social opportunities. In addition to these, the Department has also established programmes such as Vaughan's *National Youth Week* that includes events such as the "Youth Pursuit" (an amazing race), 'speak outs' and community gatherings to provide broader venues for positive environments for youth to express their ideas and needs and to work together to achieve success. Further, the Department has partnered with the Vaughan Youth Cabinet in delivering the "Be Heard" Conference and the D.A.R.E. Awards to provide youth with opportunities to showcase their civic pride and initiative. Combined, these efforts have resulted in the Department achieving recognition as a 'youth friendly community' through 'PlayWorks – The Ontario Partnership for Active Youth'.

Anticipating an increase in the youth demographic over the next five to ten years, the Recreation and Culture Department undertook a review of its programs and services to determine how best to meet the diverse needs of today's youth and plan for tomorrow. The review included an analysis of current programmes and services for youth; consideration of the recommendations of two (2) Youth City Councillors' 'State of the Youth' reports and the Active Together Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Culture and Libraries on current trends in youth participation; and a youth needs assessment (survey) to evaluate the current level of services and to identify gaps and future needs.

Through the survey, students were asked to provide input on various issues such as the following:

- Access to public transportation
- Community centre youth memberships
- Knowledge of and participation in community centre based programs
- Where they like to spend their leisure time
- Identification of concerns for today's youth
- Use of other municipal services such as the public library

The surveys were conducted at all City of Vaughan high schools resulting in more than 1,200 being received. The findings and recommendations of the programme and document review and the survey formed the basis of the *Youth Strategy 2009 & Beyond (the Strategy)*. The Strategy outlines five (5) goals, including objectives and measurables to be implemented within defined timeframes. The five goals are:

1. to increase participation of youth in physical activities;
2. to expand the scope of the program selection for youth;
3. to provide programs and services to youth in geographically under served areas;
4. to increase the number of active youth memberships; and,
5. to increase the awareness of youth programs and opportunities.

The success of achieving the recommendations is closely connected to the development of goals and objectives at both the community centre level as well as working with the Vaughan Youth Cabinet (VyC). The strategy will be presented to all Recreation Services Supervisors, Active Living Coordinators, and the VyC. Each team will be responsible for integrating components of the recommendations within their goals and objectives for 2009. Moving forward, departmental staff will continue to receive youth friendly training. The Strategy should be reviewed, assessed and revised on an annual basis to ensure it remains reflective of current trends and responds to the changing needs of the community. The Community Development Coordinator and the Recreation Services Supervisors will be responsible for monitoring, modifying, and assessing the implementation of the goals. Upon completion of the goals, further consideration will be required to establish a strategy for youth for 2011 and beyond to ensure continued progress toward achieving service excellence.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the report will provide

- STRATEGIC GOAL:
Service Excellence – Pursue Excellence in Service Delivery; and Enhance and Ensure Community Safety, Health and Wellness

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources for 2008 will be with the Operating Budget, and for 2009, 2010 and 2011 will be part of the budget process.

Regional Implications

There are no regional implications.

Conclusion

Knowing and understanding the needs, preferences and trends of Vaughan's youth is an important stepping stone in the City of Vaughan's Recreation and Culture Department achieving the Corporate mission of *Citizen's First Through Service Excellence*. Through a service review that included research, a youth needs assessment, consideration of recommendations from the Youth City Councillors, together with the Active Together Master Plan for Parks, Recreation,

Culture and Libraries, five key goals have been identified providing guidance and direction to the provision of meaningful and inclusive activities for youth.

Attachments

1. Youth in Action – Youth Strategy 2009 & Beyond

Report Prepared By

Monika Pii, Area Recreation Manager, East, x8806
Paul Compton, Area Recreation Manager, West, x8358
Mirella Tersigni, Community Development Coordinator, x7429
Derek Ambrose, Recreation Services Supervisor, x4227

Respectfully submitted,

Marlon Kallideen
Commissioner of Community Services




Youth Friendly
Community
The City of Vaughan is a
Youth Friendly Community

Active
TOGETHER
MASTERPLAN
Parks, Recreation, Culture & Libraries

CS08369

YOUTH IN ACTION!

2009 & Beyond

YOUTH IN ACTION

Youth Strategy 2009 & Beyond

Overview

Knowing and understanding the needs, preferences and trends of Vaughan’s youth is an important stepping stone in the City of Vaughan’s Recreation and Culture Department achieving the Corporate mission of *Citizen’s First Through Service Excellence*. It also provides staff and community leaders with direction in the development of youth programs and services.

Recognizing that youth are a vulnerable group, the City has undertaken several initiatives to increase youth participation within the community and to offer youth positive lifestyle choices:

In 2005, the City implemented the Vaughan Youth Cabinet (VYC), a central body which advocates youth initiatives by facilitating communication of local youth programs and encouraging participation in youth events. Since its inception, the VYC has worked with the City to execute several highly successful youth-oriented initiatives and events, as follows.



In May 2006, BE HEARD! – a youth conference with leadership and physical activity workshops designed to develop youth skills and abilities and create awareness of community organizations with youth services – was attended by over 400 high school students.

In May 2007 and 2008 the City hosted Youth Week, a week dedicated to activities, interaction and celebration to strengthen the connection between young people and their communities.





Participation in Youth Week significantly increased in 2008, and included the first annual Vaughan Youth Pursuit, a 10-kilometer race supported by local businesses, and several charity events which raised funds to provide recreation opportunities for families in need and support special needs programming in Vaughan.

In 2007 the City of Vaughan was designated a Youth Friendly Community. This grass-roots recognition program celebrates communities that are taking steps to open their doors to youth by reinvesting in youth play through opportunities for active play, youth engagement and youth activism.



Youth continue to be one of the City's largest "untapped resources". By investing in accessible programming, outreaching to secluded neighborhoods, building services based on need and dedicating the resources of quality staff, the City of Vaughan will support youth in defining positive success and skill on their own terms. All of the leaders of tomorrow are waiting in the wings of the youth demographic. Programs and outreach that are developed, planned and delivered with participation from youth in all levels of the process instill leadership, initiative and self-sufficiency. A strong youth demographic instills pride and respect for the community.

The Recreation and Culture Department currently offers Youth programming in several tiers: community centre based youth rooms and registered programs, satellite drop in programs and special event programming. These options strive to provide both physical/active and social wellness opportunities. Youth rooms located in community centres across the City offer both lunch time and after school drop in activities. In these programs youth participate in sports and games, socialize with peers and interact with outreach groups to improve quality of life (job fairs, community involvement, fundraising etc.). Satellite programs provide drop in



activities and social time for youth who may not be able to access similar programs at a community centre. These programs function as an extension of school hours and provide opportunities in an environment youth are familiar with. Special events provide youth with the opportunity to showcase their civic pride, initiative and voice with the community as a whole. Through *Youth Week*, 'speak outs', and community gatherings, youth continue to provide input on their needs and work together to achieve success.

The City of Vaughan's Recreation and Culture Department staff, anticipating an ongoing increase in the youth demographic over the next 5–10 years, undertook a review of programs and services to determine how best to meet the diverse needs of today's youth and plan for the youth of tomorrow. A youth needs assessment was conducted to evaluate the current level of services and to identify gaps and future needs. Students were asked to comment on various issues such as: access to public transportation, community centre youth memberships, knowledge of and participation in community centre based programs, where they like to spend their leisure time, identification of concerns for today's youth, and the use of other municipal services such as the public library. Surveys were completed and collected on site. To thank them for participating, each student received a free skate pass/swim voucher. More than 1,200 surveys were completed. Consolidated information allowed for some comparison with neighboring municipalities such as whether or not there was a formal voice for youth in the municipal process, types of programs and services offered elsewhere, applicable fees, level of participation in youth week, etc. The findings and recommendations formed the basis of the five (5) goals for this youth strategy.

The delivery of youth programs and services is shared by several key players and stakeholders beyond the Recreation and Culture Department. One of the key players is the position of the Youth City Councillor. The City has been fortunate to have articulate and insightful students in this position, each of whom prepared a "State of the Youth" report (attached). Each Youth City Councillor had the opportunity to meet with municipal leaders through City Council, Boards of Education, community leaders, and Departmental staff with access to information such as the youth needs survey to augment their understanding of youth related issues. These contacts provided further insights, observations and recommendations relating to youth representation, communication needs, recreation opportunities, transportation issues, safety and law enforcement, the environment, and employment as they relate to youth. Their recommendations with respect to recreation programs and services have been captured within this strategy.

The youth strategy also includes recommendations from the Department's "Active Together" Master Plan on current trends in participation from youth. The Master Plan has identified that some of the more popular activities are walking, bicycling, swimming, running/jogging, and basketball. Further, the Master Plan notes that skateboarding is gaining momentum and that soccer is the most popular organized sport. The current trend is away from structured/organized activities and towards more self-directed, self-scheduled, unorganized, unstructured, and spontaneous activities. Success for youth involves an open dialogue loop between City staff and the youth themselves. Consulting youth on plans for upcoming youth space and equipment is a key point of the Master Plan. Youth need to have a say in their

future and they understand that engagement with City staff can improve design and support upcoming trends. City staff will continue to be trained to be “youth friendly” and open to suggestion and concerns. Success in meeting youth needs has always started with creating a welcome atmosphere at our youth programs and centres. The youth demographic need a place of their own to develop, socialize, build confidence and grow. With the stresses of school demands and negative peer pressure increasing annually, Recreation and Culture programs provide a positive outlet for youth to form the life long learnables and skills that shape their future.

Summary

The “Vaughan Youth Strategy 2009 & Beyond” is based on the findings and recommendations of four (4) documents: the Youth Needs Assessment Report, the master plan, “Active Together”, and the “State of the Youth Reports” (2) prepared by Youth City Councilors. It outlines five (5) key recommendations with measurable objectives to implement by December 31, 2009. Several of the goals and objectives extend into 2010 and 2011. They are:

1. Develop a marketing and communications plan to promote youth programs and opportunities by March of each of the three years (2009, 2010, 2011).
2. Expand the City of Vaughan’s Recreation and Culture program selection for youth by five programs and/or events by September of each of the three years (2009, 2010, 2011).
3. Increase participation in physical activities for youth annually by 3-5% by December of each of 2010 and 2011.
4. Increase the number of City of Vaughan youth memberships by 3-5% by December 2009.
5. Launch 2 new programs in communities with limited access to recreational program opportunities by June of 2010 and 2011.

The goals are over-arching in their “recreation reach” in terms of responding to the recommendations. The initial focus of the strategy is to increase youth participation through the enhanced provision of programs and services that meet their needs. Upon completion of the objectives from the five (5) recommendations, further consideration will be required to establish a strategy for youth for 2010 and beyond to ensure a continued strive towards *Citizen’s First Through Service Excellence*.

The success of achieving the recommendations is closely connected to the development of goals and objectives at both the community centre level as well as working with the Vaughan Youth Cabinet (VyC). The strategy will be presented to all Recreation Services Supervisors, Active Living Coordinators, and the VyC. Each team will be responsible to capture components of the recommendations within their goals and objectives for 2009.

The youth strategy should be reviewed, assessed and revised on an annual basis to ensure it remains reflective of current trends and responds to the changing needs of the community. The

Community Development Coordinator and the Recreation Services Supervisors will be responsible for monitoring/modifying/assessing the implementation of the goals.

The Recreation and Culture Department gratefully acknowledges the work of Mirella Tersigni, Community Development Coordinator.

Vaughan Vision

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LOOKING TO OUR FUTURE

The City of Vaughan is proud to share its strategic plan and vision to make Vaughan the city of choice.





GOALS

Goal One: Develop a marketing and communications plan to promote youth programs and opportunities by March of each of the three years (2009, 2010, 2011).

OBJECTIVES	Year 1 2009	Year 2 2010	Year 3 2011
Establish a yearly schedule of promotional displays/events with the Active Living Coordinators (ALC'S), Vaughan Youth Cabinet (VyC), and the Vaughan Public Library (VPL). [State of the Youth Report 2007] in September of each year	✓	✓	
Enhance the annual City of Vaughan Youth Week profile of activities and opportunities by collaborating and partnering with 2 youth serving agencies and 2 community groups by February 2009.	✓	✓	✓
Partner with 2 organizations to seek funding opportunities, partnerships for youth initiatives and assistance with marketing materials by March 2009.			
MEASURABLES			
Confirm location and dates for venue(s) to promote youth programs and track number of visitors.	✓	✓	✓
Obtain approval from secondary school principals for three (3) in-school announcements to be followed by two (2) in-school visits from respective centre ALC's to promote new opportunities.	✓		
Provide information and materials to 2 community organizations as well as community events to increase outreach.	✓	✓	
Addition of female youth in print materials and the presence of female youth staff to do outreach as a means to motivate and target girls' participation with youth programs and initiatives.			
Distribute youth poster to schools, Vaughan staff, Vaughan youth and community organizations.	✓	✓	
Report by March 2009 on funding opportunities to assist with support of youth programs.	✓	✓	

Goal Two: Expand Vaughan's Recreation & Culture program selection for youth by 5 programs and/or events by September of each of the three years (2009, 2010, 2011).

OBJECTIVES	Year 1 2009	Year 2 2010	Year 3 2011
City of Vaughan youth staff will advocate to current youth program participants to develop program concepts and activities for their respective areas.** This is ongoing effective January 2009.	✓	✓	
Deliver 2 programs/workshops identified as youth trends and feature workshops that reflect cultural diversity (cultural foods, dress, dance) in Fall & Winter 09/10 Recreation Guide.	✓	✓	✓
Develop two (2) new partnerships with community agencies to facilitate outreach and skill building workshops by December 2009.	✓		
MEASURABLES			
Schedule two (2) annual youth meetings to gather input.	✓	✓	
Track participation at three (3) city events that offer physical activity component (WinterLights, Youth Week) and summarize feedback from participants.	✓	✓	
Two (2) new programs implemented by Fall 2009.	✓		
Youth schedule of programs/workshops posted in City of Vaughan youth rooms, libraries, schools (minimum 3 at each location).	✓		

* Ref: 4.3.3 State of the Youth Report (2007)

**Objective will continue into 2010 -2011 to ensure activities continue to meet the growing needs/requests of each area

Goal Three: Increase participation in physical activities for youth annually by 3-5% by December of each 2010 and 2011.

OBJECTIVES	Year 1 2009	Year 2 2010	Year 3 2011
Partner with and secure agreement with Community Use of Schools Program (CUSP) to facilitate extra-curricular activities in new communities where access to programs is a barrier by December 2009.	✓		
Develop a schedule for school physical activity workshops within each community centre area by December 2010.	✓		
Highlight events and school initiatives that include active components: i.e. Youth Week, VYC-Be Heard Conference, WinterLights-WinterPLAY!, PA Days, Peace Tree with promotions to youth by October 2009.	✓		
Coordinate and develop opportunities for unstructured 2 outdoor activities i.e. trails, skateboarding, cycling, Youth mall walks.		✓	✓
Hire 1 female youth staff/mentor to assist with outreach to increase female participation in all-female programs initiatives at centres/schools.		✓	
Publicize the Physical Activity Strategy to schools, community organizations and staff by December 2010.		✓	
MEASURABLES			
Three (3) school visits by March 2009 from Active Living Coordinators from each community centre to book activity workshops.	✓		
Pilot two (2) new outdoor activities for Youth Week 2009 along with summer and winter initiatives (i.e. Winterlights, Schools in Bloom, Peace Tree).	✓		
Track number of female participants with scheduled activities, such as WinterPLAY!, mall walks (walk and shop), etc.		✓	
Develop/integrate WinterPLAY! and SummerPLAY! into youth events, City initiatives (i.e. VYC, WinterLights, Schools in Bloom, Peace Tree) by December 2009.	✓		
Cross reference youth memberships with participants in programs data base from December 2008 through to December 2010.	✓	✓	✓

Goal Four: Increase the number of City of Vaughan youth memberships by 3-5% by December 2009.*

OBJECTIVES	Year 1 2009	Year 2 2010	Year 3 2011
Provide value added features (e.g. gift packs and incentives) to existing memberships by September 2009.	✓	✓	✓
Draft criteria for membership gift pack/and school incentive packages by March 2009.			
VyC to assist in the delivery of information through website info page and with outreach regarding City of Vaughan youth programs and upcoming events by October 2009.	✓	✓	✓
MEASURABLES			
2. Secure sponsors for memberships and implement added services/opportunities.		✓	✓
2. Youth news announcements in schools created by youth rep or student council.	✓		
3. Integrate outreach and posting on website with VyC schedule of events.	✓	✓	✓
2. Review and compare increase of memberships with previous year data and gather email addresses for distribution of youth news and program info.			

* Ref: 4.3.3 State of the Youth Report (2007)

Goal Five: Launch 2 new programs in communities with limited access to recreational program opportunities by June of 2010 and 2011.

OBJECTIVES	Year 1 2009	Year 2 2010	Year 3 2011
Secure space in 2 community schools to be used as a place to provide drop-in youth programs for newer communities without access (e.g. Teston Rd, N, Weston to Keele St, Kirby, Carville) by December 2009.	✓		
Partner with 2 youth serving agencies (e.g. YMCA, Girls on the Run, Boys/Girls Club) in the program development and implementation by December 2009.	✓	✓	
Develop a business case for alternative service delivery by March 2010.		✓	✓
MEASURABLES			
Youth staff evaluate program delivery and feedback from participants.	✓	✓	✓
Recruitment and training strategy in place with 6 successful graduates.	✓		
Develop a business case for alternative service delivery.		✓	✓
Confirm youth engagement by tracking numbers of participants.	✓	✓	✓
To have one youth representative at each student council.	✓		
Report by March 2010 on funding opportunities to assist with supporting youth program.	✓	✓	

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Vaughan has seen significant growth over the past 10 years and has become one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada. With this rapid growth has come a demand for new and improved services to a changing community.

In 2003 the City of Vaughan launched the Vaughan Vision 2007 with a new mission of “Citizens First Through Service Excellence”. In October 2005 the Recreation and Culture Department underwent a departmental restructuring going from a decentralized system to a centralized community based system to adapt and meet the needs of changing communities.

The youth needs assessment was created as the first step in evaluating current youth services and identifying needs and preferences of youth in relation to recreation programming, targeting youth in communities across the City of Vaughan. The youth needs assessment will be used to develop an overall framework and plan of action in the delivery of youth services that will assist the City of Vaughan in addressing the needs and preferences of youth.

Some of the barriers that have been identified are low participation rate in physical activity (including lack of female participation), lack of variety of services available to youth, barriers to accessible programs at some of our community centres, low numbers with youth memberships, and lack of awareness regarding programs, services and opportunities available for youth citywide.

Studies show a marked drop-off in all forms of recreational activity by youth over the age of 13, which sets the stage for falling levels of physical activity throughout the rest of adult life. The drop-off with young girls starts at age 12 (Hay, J. and Donnelly, P., 1999)

This report will review community demographic information, current programs and services, trends and research related to youth and recreation, as well as data analysis of first hand information from over 1200 Vaughan high school students. This report will also provide a highlight on the impact of the arts on youth as it was identified as the surveys identified this area as a need.

Knowing and understanding the needs, preferences and trends of today’s youth will help us in achieving our mission of Citizens First Through Service Excellence and provide us with direction in the development of youth programs and services offered by the Recreation and Culture Department.

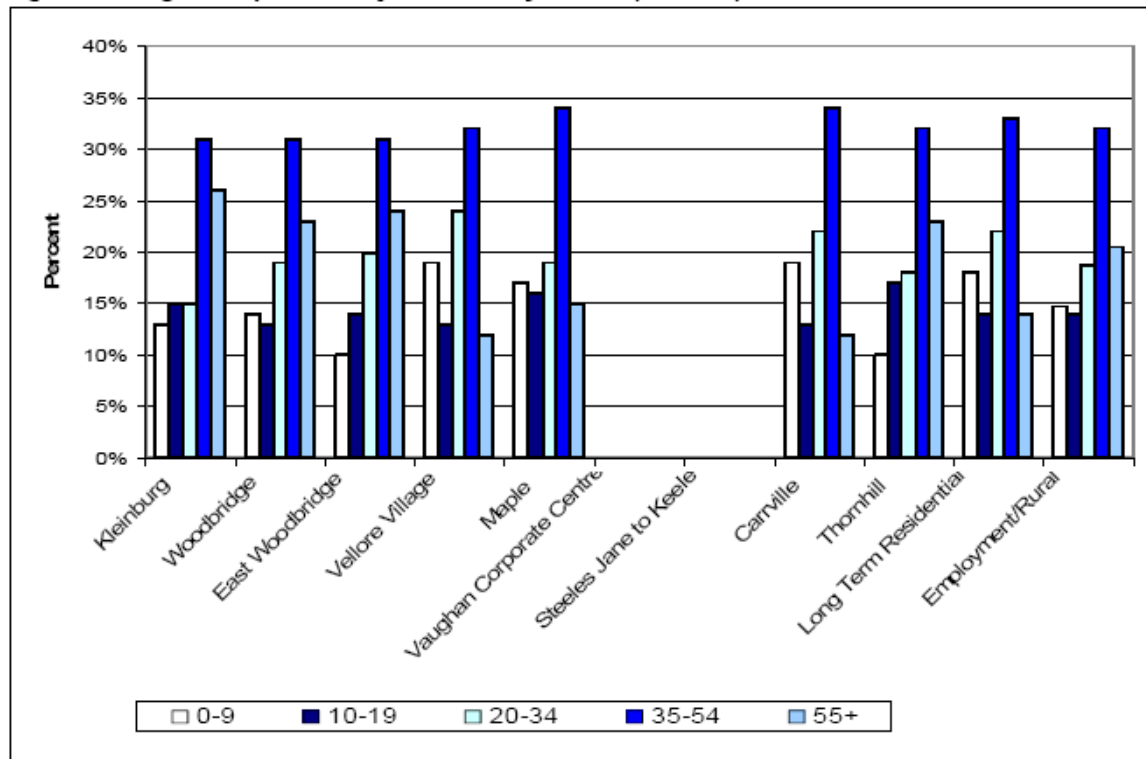
2.0 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION A PICTURE OF OUR COMMUNITIES

In the 2006 Census there were 35,265 youth between the ages of 10-19 residing in the City of Vaughan representing almost 15% of the population. With the increase in population in the last 5 years it is estimated that the population of the City of Vaughan will increase up to and over 290,000 by 2011.

Assuming youth remain to account for 15% of the entire population then it can be inferred that there will be approximately 43,000 youth in the City of Vaughan by 2011.

Statistics Canada. 2007. Vaughan, Ontario (table). 2006 Community Profiles. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007.
<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/profiles/community/Index.cfm?Lang=E>
 (accessed July 15, 2008).

Figure 3.9: Age Composition by Community – 2006 (Percent)



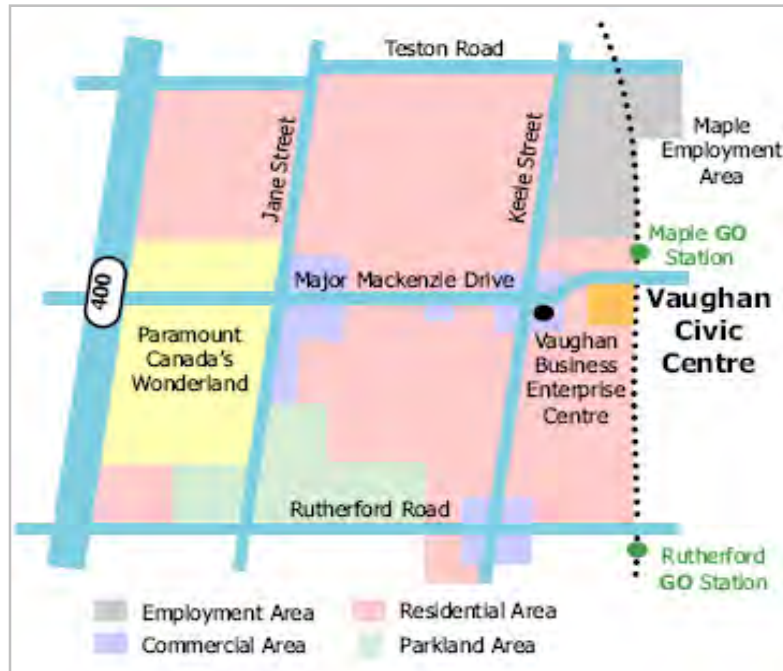
Source: Statistics Canada Census Data, 2006

City of Vaughan
 Active Together Master Plan: PLANNING CONTEXT REPORT
 Prepared by MONTEITH BROWN PLANNING CONSULTANTS (February 2008)

2.1 EAST VAUGHAN

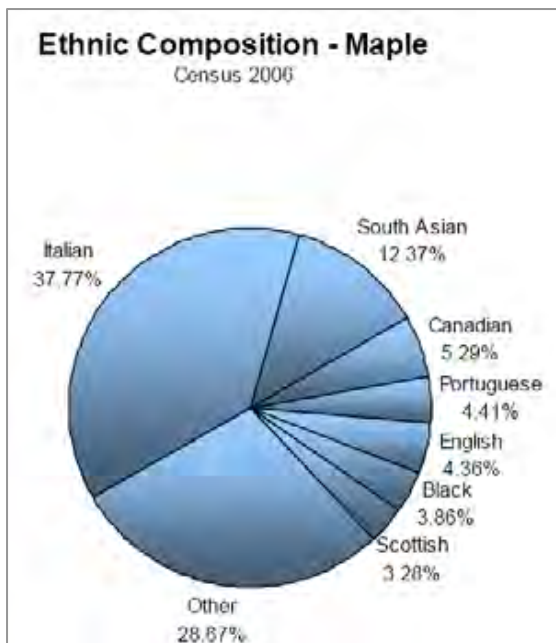
Maple

The community of Maple is bordered by Rutherford road to the South, King-Vaughan Rd to the North, Dufferin Street to the East and Highway 400 to the West. Maple has experienced rapid growth over the last 10 years with residential expansion, attracting a variety of cultures and young families to the community.



The 2006 Census established the population of Maple at 47,694 representing approximately 20% of the City of Vaughan's population.

The population has more than doubled since 1996 and forecast population growth of 4% by 2011.



- 49% population between 35- 55+years
- 35% population between 10-34 years
- 16% population between 0-9 years

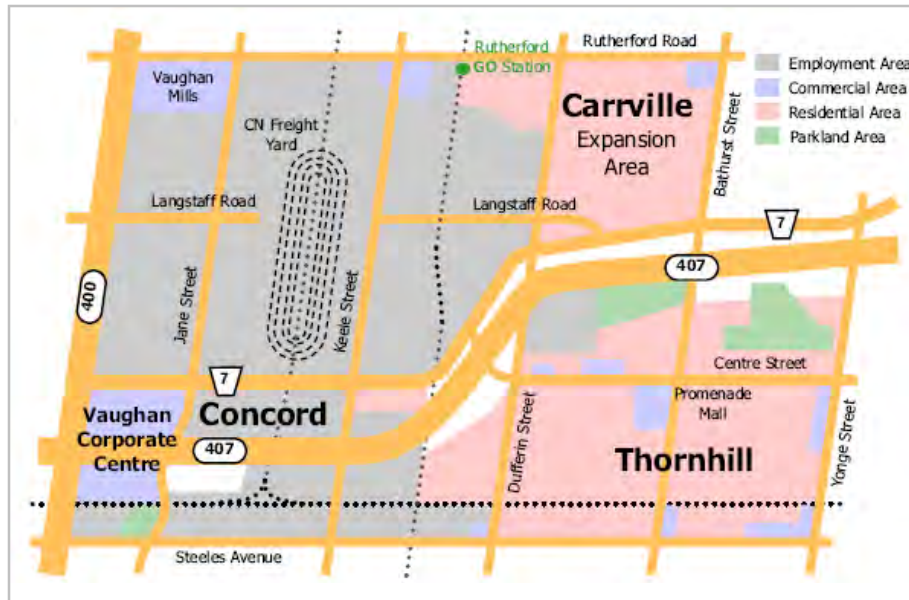
Increasingly more ethnically diverse.

- approximately 4-15% of new Canadians made Maple their home last census (York Region 2001)

2.1 EAST VAUGHAN

Thornhill - Concord - Carrville

For the purpose of this report, Concord; a large industrial and commercial area and Carrville; a new residential development between Hwy 7 and Rutherford will be included under Thornhill. Thornhill is the City's most densely populated area accounting for almost 35% of the City's inhabitants(2006 Census). Thornhill is also the most ethnically diverse area in Vaughan.



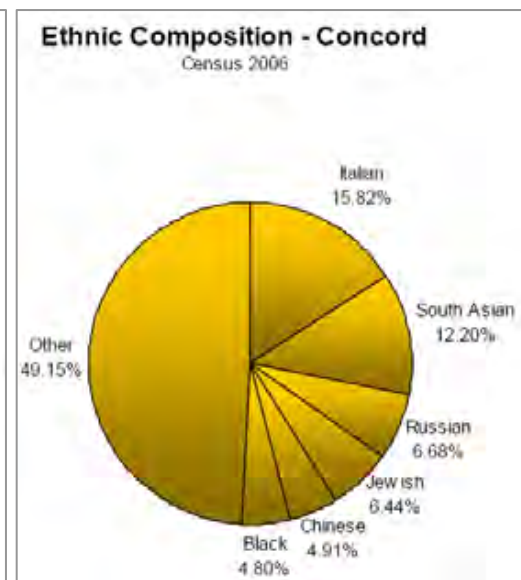
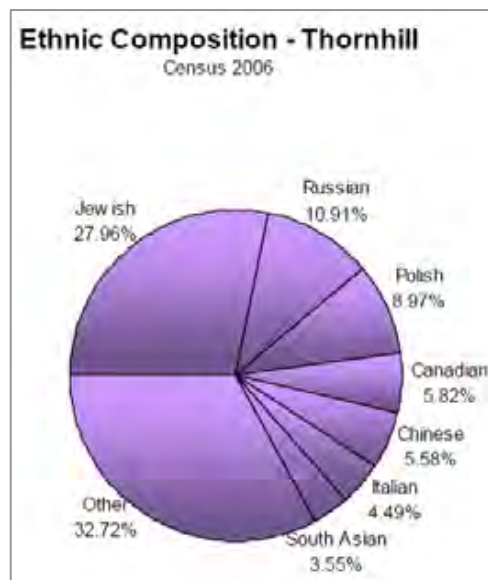
The 2006 Census (Carrville and Thornhill combined) established the population at 83,996 which accounts for approximately 35% of the City of Vaughan's population with a forecast population growth of 23% by 2011.

Youth Population in 2006 between the ages of 10-19 is approximately

- 51% population between 35- 55+years
- 34% population between 10-34 years
- 15% population between 0-9 years

Most ethnically diverse community in Vaughan

- 16-20% new immigrants made Thornhill their home last census (York Region-2001)

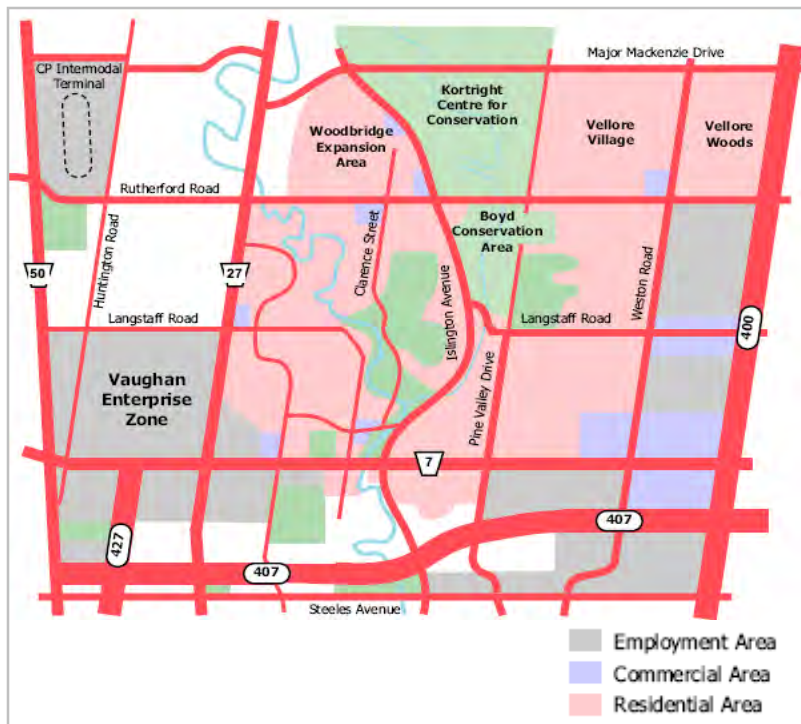


2.2 WEST VAUGHAN

Woodbridge - Woodbridge East - Vellore Village

Woodbridge is located to the west of 400 and extends from the City's southern limits to the rural areas of Kleinburg to the North.

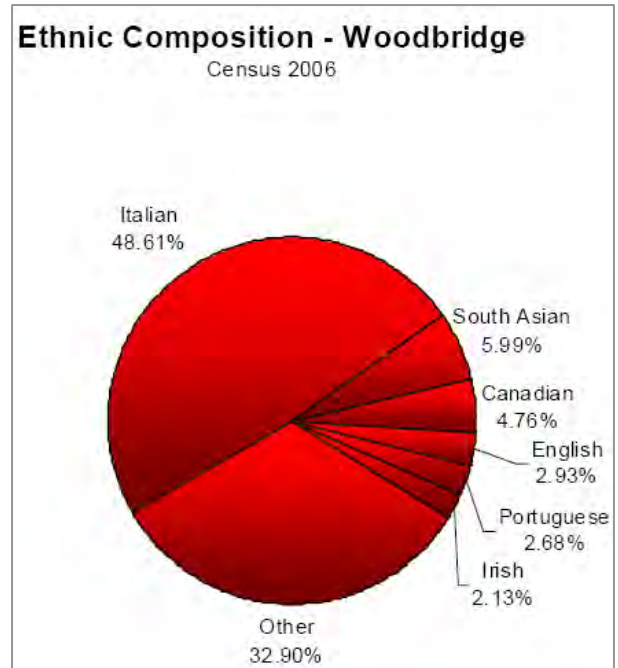
Approximately 40% of the City of Vaughan's inhabitants reside in Woodbridge (2006 Census). Woodbridge has a large Italian population but like other areas of Vaughan it is quickly becoming more culturally diverse, particularly in new residential areas.



The 2006 Census established the population at 95,109 which accounts for approximately 40% of the City of Vaughan's population with a forecast population growth of 12% by 2011.

Youth Population in 2006 between the ages of 10-19 is approximately 12,790

- 51% population between 35-55+ years
- 35% population between 10-34 years
- 14% population between 0-9 years



2.2 WEST VAUGHAN

Kleinburg and Rural Areas

The Village of Kleinburg is one of the oldest communities in Vaughan with a proud heritage. Kleinburg has a small commercial district and is bordered by rural areas. Kleinburg is also home to the Kortright Centre for Conservation and the McMichael Canadian Art Gallery.

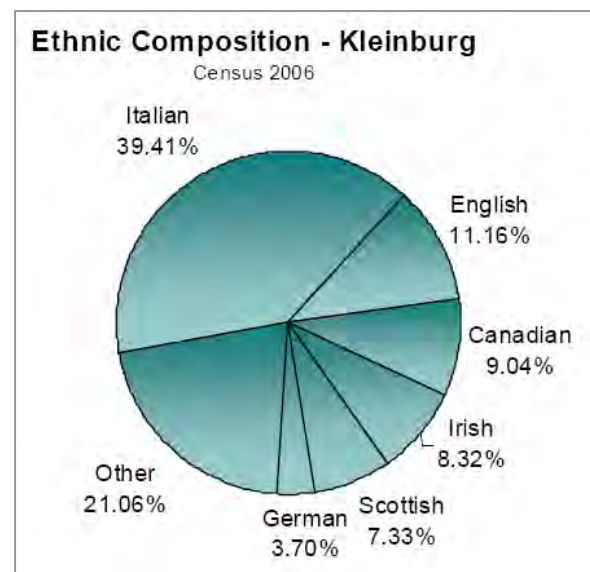


The 2006 Census established the population at 5,284 which accounts for approximately 1.4% of the City of Vaughan's population

Kleinburg is one of the oldest communities in Vaughan with a forecast population growth of 36% by 2011.

Youth Population in 2006 between the ages of 10-19 is approximately 790.

- 57% population between 35-55+ years
- 30% population between 10-34 years
- 13% population between 0-9 years



3.0 METHODOLOGY

Developing the Survey Tool

The survey questions and format were developed in collaboration with representatives from City of Vaughan Recreation and Culture Department, boards of education, social service agencies and youth, to capture information regarding some of the identified issues relating to youth in our community.

The survey tool was one page in length—quick and easy to answer, a mixture of multiple choice and brief questions that allowed students to remain anonymous.

It asked about:

- Transportation (access to recreation programs)
- How Spare time is used
- Interests
- Issues facing youth
- Use and awareness of current youth programs
- Community involvement and volunteerism

Refer to *Appendix 1: Youth Needs Survey*

Implementation

The survey was conducted over the lunch period(s) at all City of Vaughan Public and Separate High Schools.

Date of Survey	Secondary Schools Vaughan	Location
March 8	Emily Carr High School	Woodbridge
March 28	Westmount Collegiate	Thornhill
April 18	Woodbridge College	Woodbridge
April 20	St. Jean de Brebeuf CHS	Woodbridge
April 21	Father Bressani CHS	Woodbridge
April 24	Vaughan Secondary School	Thornhill
April 25	St. Joan of Arc CHS	Maple
April 27	Maple High School	Maple
April 28	St. Elizabeth CHS	Thornhill
May 9	Holy Cross CHS	Thornhill

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Distribute/collect survey on site and record student comments

Community Development Coordinators, Active Living Coordinators from the local community centre and members of the Vaughan Youth Cabinet (VyC) set up a survey booth during lunch hours at secondary schools city-wide. Surveys were completed and collected on site. Students received a free skate/swim voucher for completing the survey. The students were informed as to why the survey was being completed and were enthusiastic that they were being engaged for their thoughts and ideas, As a result, the students took the survey seriously. This also gave the VyC an excellent opportunity to engage volunteers and promote their leadership conference “Be Heard! and the “DARE” awards.

Approximately 150-200 surveys were conducted at each school, with over 1,500 surveys collected city-wide.

Refer to *Appendix 2: Youth Survey Results*

Analysis

Once surveys were completed, responses were analyzed by gender, number of respondents and percentages for each school. This allowed analysis for each school and community. In the results section of this report responses have been based on averages of responses in percentages from schools attended:

East Vaughan High Schools

Vaughan Secondary School, Westmount Collegiate Institute, Maple High School, St Elizabeth, and St. Joan of Arc

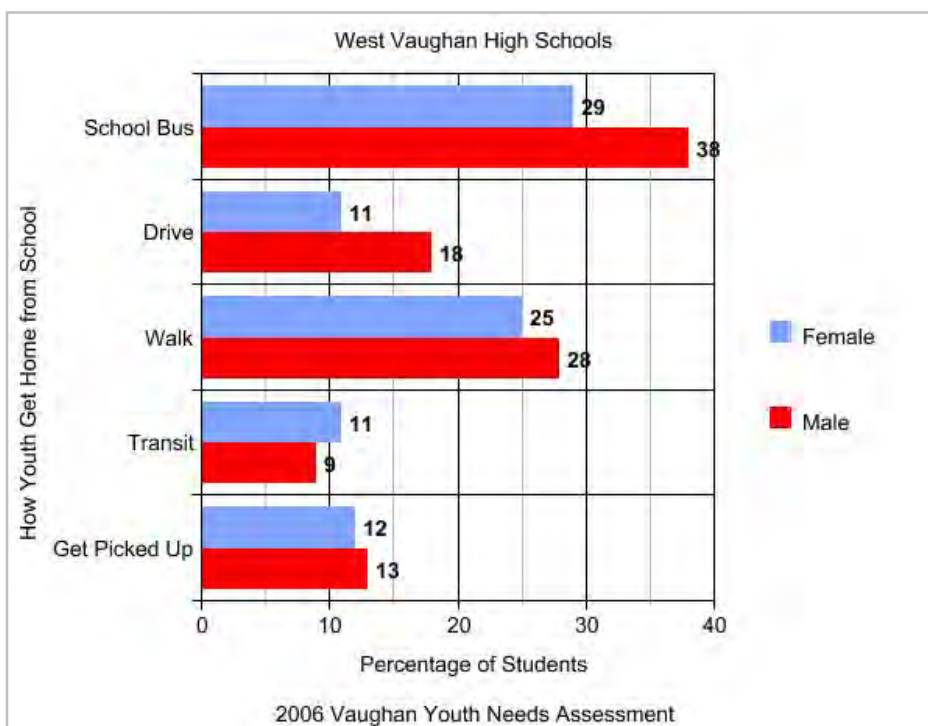
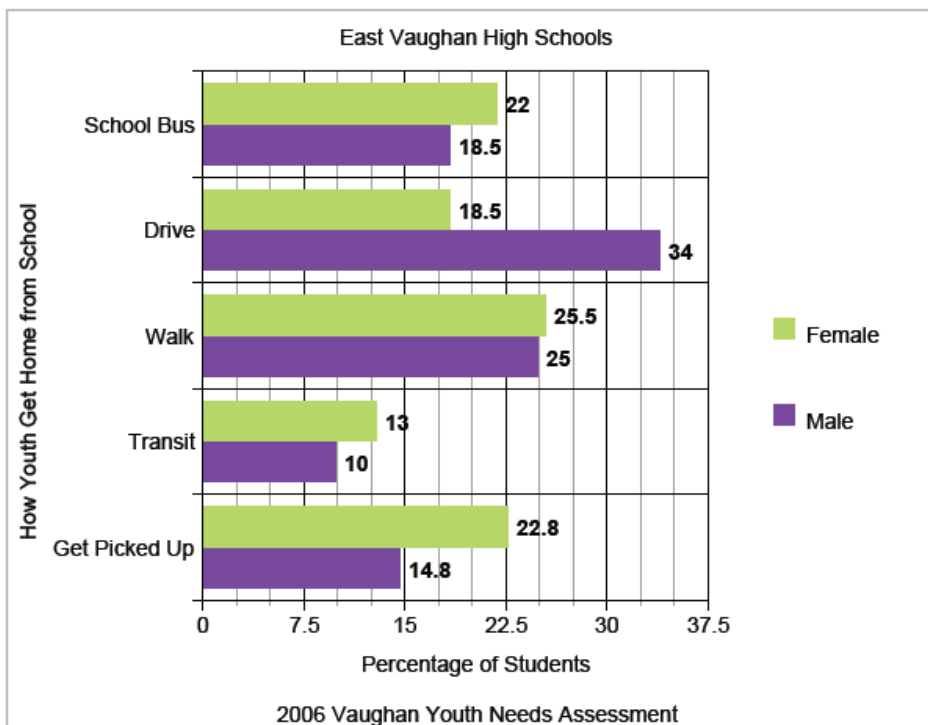
West Vaughan High Schools

Emily Carr, St. Jean de Brebeuf, Father Bressani, Holy Cross, and Woodbridge College

4.0 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The following section includes survey results and findings from secondary schools citywide listed as East Vaughan and West Vaughan. Results have been tabulated as average percentage of response from students from each area.

How do you get to/from school?



Observations

28% of students use the school bus to get to school and return home. It is the easiest and most convenient, especially for families where both parents worked and/or had no access to vehicle.

Walking to school was also popular at 26% and posed no financial detriment. Walking also includes another important component that has shown to be a trend in most of the results of the survey; the social element of walking together with friends. Male students were more likely than females to drive themselves or with friends to school.

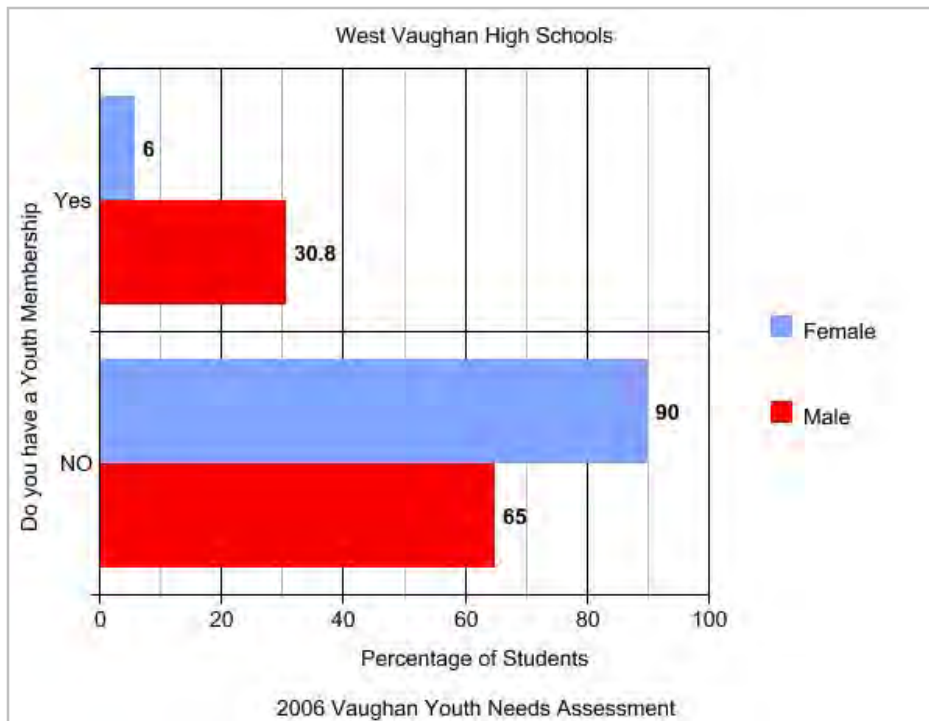
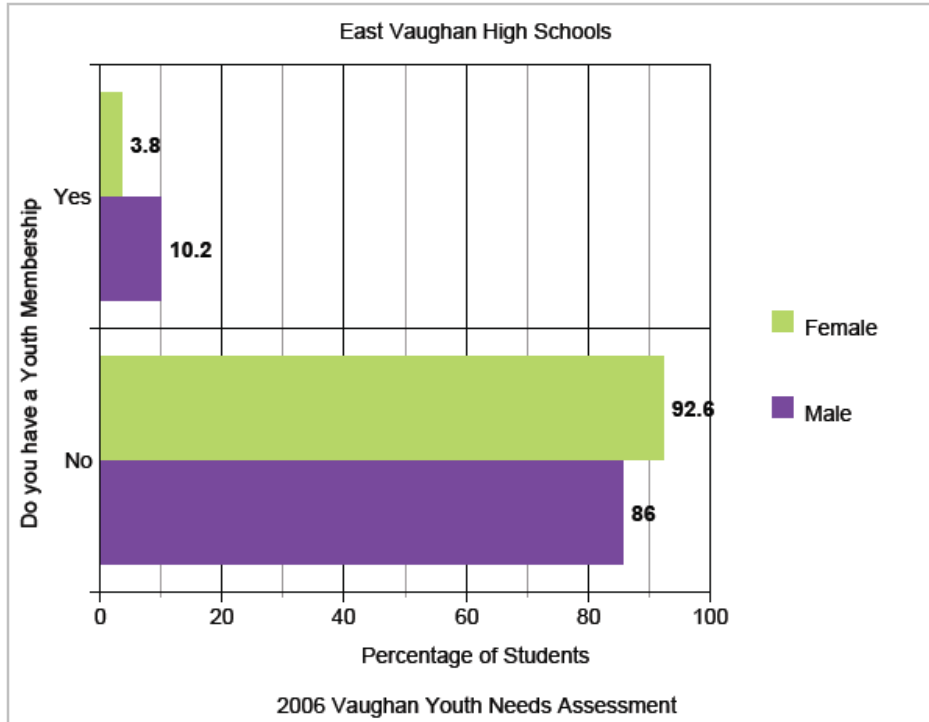
Public transit was least used among both male and female students with only 10% using the YRT or Viva transit system. Students stated that fares were too costly and that some routes were unavailable in the new sub-divisions where they lived.

Refer to *Transportation* in section 8.0

Do you have a youth membership?

Youth Memberships are sold for \$14.00 (2008 fee is \$15) and entitle youth to an annual membership to access City of Vaughan Youth Outreach programs offered at community centres.

Refer to *Appendix 3: City of Vaughan, Youth Drop-In Activities*



Observations

The information collected varied slightly from east to west with the west having slightly more youth members. This is a result of the new Vellore Village Joint Complex, which has over 50% of the city's youth members. More males had memberships than females.

What is consistent is that only a minority of youth have youth memberships. When asked why the responses echoed that they didn't know what a youth membership was or entailed and /or they were not interested in the programs offered, or didn't have \$14 to cover the fee.

With approximately 36,000 youth in Vaughan in September 2005 to July 2008 and average only 1,063 memberships, approximately 3% of the City's Youth have been successfully engaged in the Youth Outreach programming.

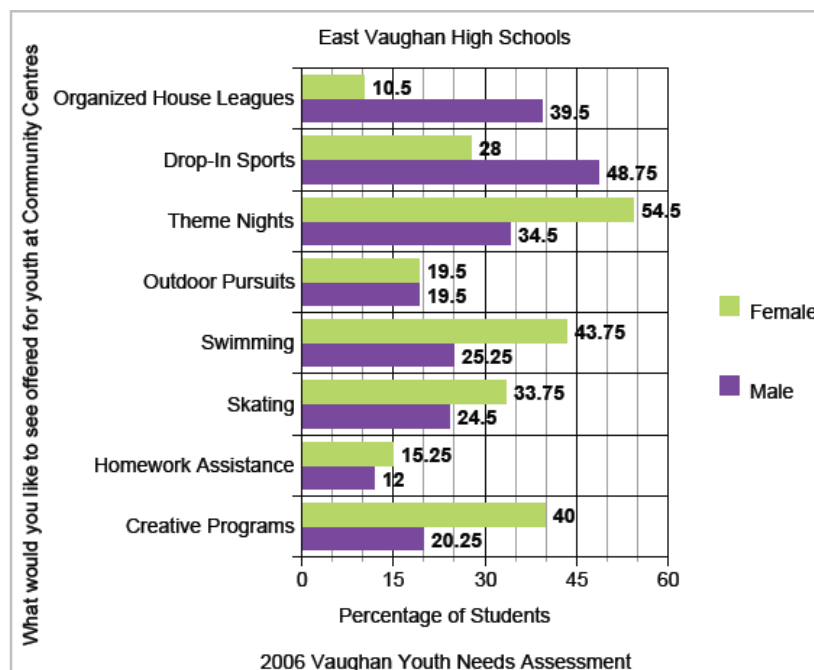
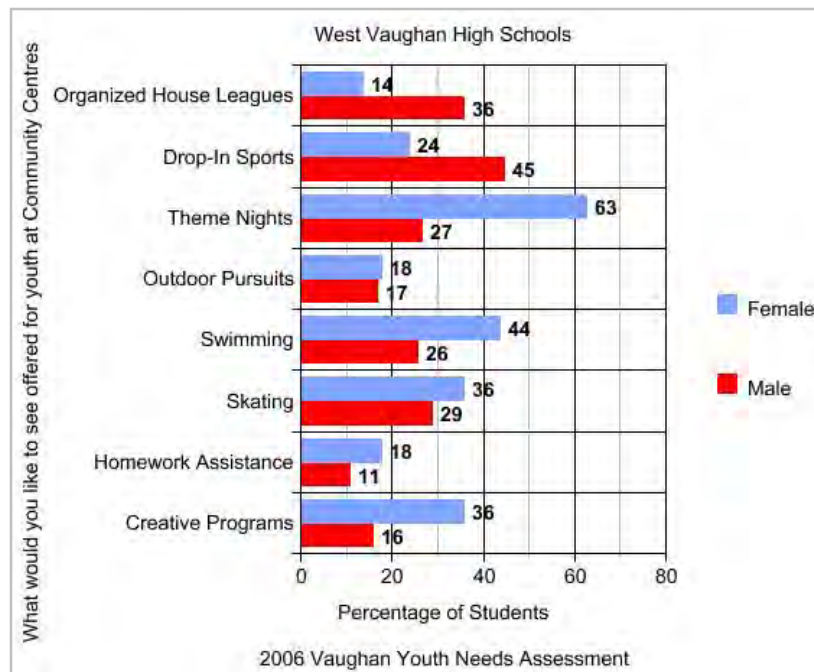
Community Centre	Youth Memberships Sept. 05 – July 06	Youth Memberships Sept. 06 – July 07	Youth Memberships Sept. 07 – July 08
WEST			
Al Palladini	75	94	103
Chancellor	134	191	139
Father Ermanno Bulfon	132	116	71
Vellore Village	647	475	285
EAST			
Maple	54	91	110
Rosemount	57	113	141
Garnet A Williams	8	7	4
Dufferin Clark	116	116	141
Total Memberships	994	1203	994
Total Revenue Generated	\$ 13,916	\$ 16,842	\$ 13,916

What would you like to see offered in your community centre?

Most of the community centres in Vaughan provide similar recreational programs throughout the year.

Refer to section 5.0 *Benchmarking of Services* and Appendix 3:: *City of Vaughan, Youth Drop-In Activities*

Youth outreach programs vary from centre to centre in both east and west areas. Current City of Vaughan recreation programs are limited in variety and are generally scheduled during the academic year. Youth were given the opportunity to select/identify a number of activities they would like to see offered at community centres.



Observations

Evident with the responses from the survey is that youth have varied interests and prefer unstructured programs. It further identified that female students showed a stronger interest in creative programs while male students tended to have interest in sports and physically challenging activities. The Ontario Profiles 2000 and the City of Vaughan's "Active Together" Master Plan both show the trend away from structured/organized activities and toward more self-directed, self-scheduled and spontaneous. Females are more interested in creative programs while males are more interested in sports and physically challenging activities.

The top five responses from females were:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| 1) Theme nights | 59% |
| 2) Swimming | 44% |
| 3) Creative programs | 38% |
| 4) Skating | 35% |
| 5) Drop-in sports | 26% |

The top five responses from males were:

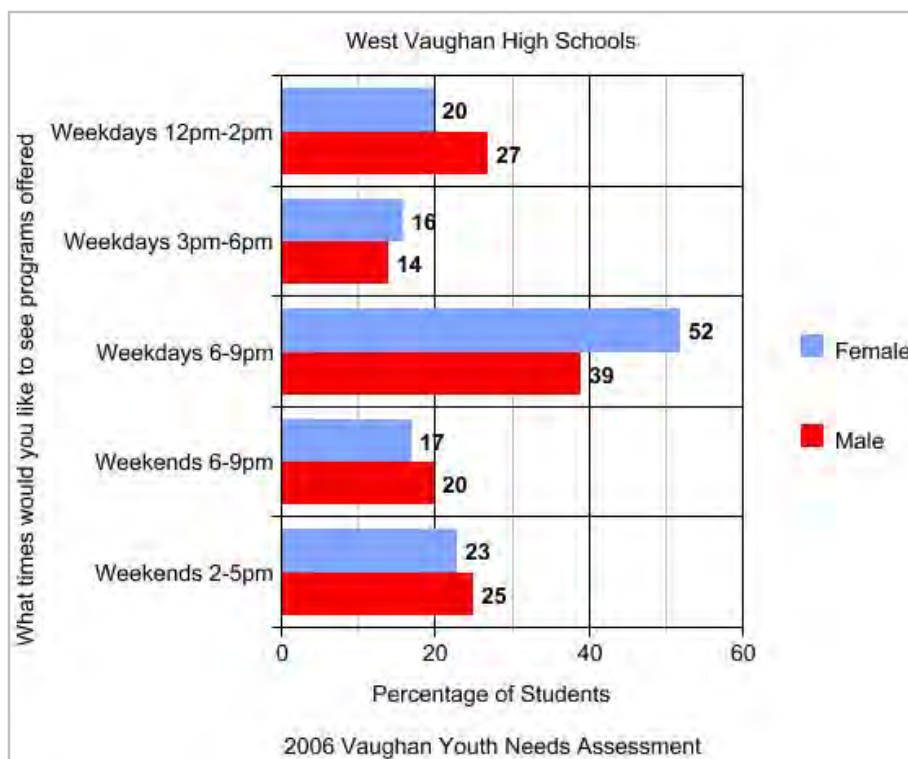
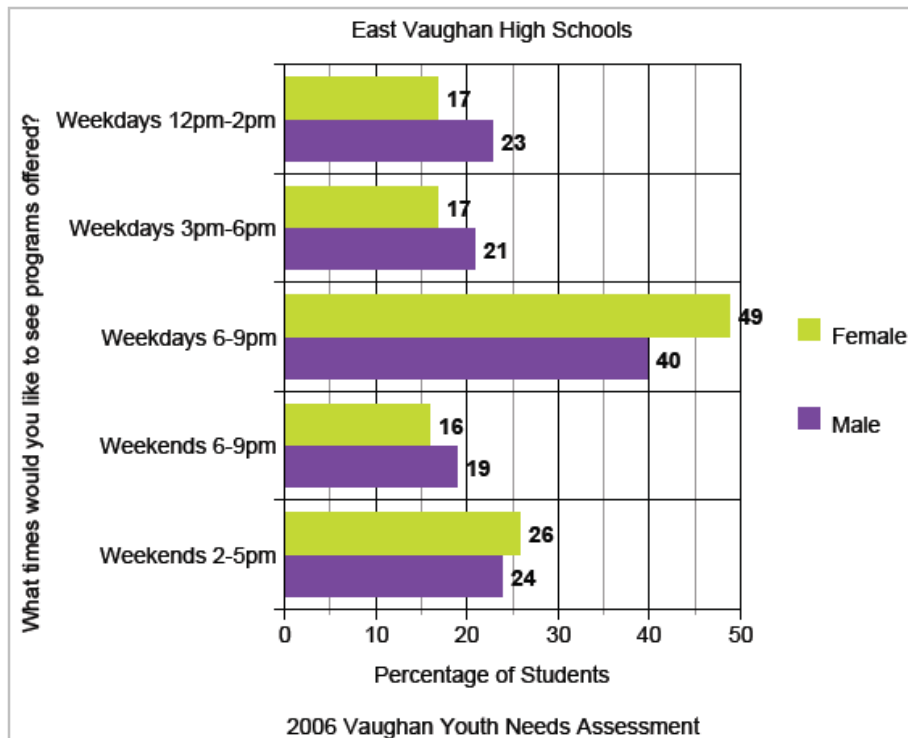
- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 1) Drop-in sports | 45% |
| 2) Organized house league | 38% |
| 3) Theme nights | 31% |
| 4) Skating | 27% |
| 5) Swimming | 26% |

The top five responses from both females and males (average of responses) were:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| 1) Theme nights | 45% |
| 2) Drop-in sports | 37% |
| 3) Swimming | 35% |
| 4) Skating | 31% |
| 5) Creative programs | 28% |

When would you like to have them offered?

Finding out what times to offer programs is just as important as what program to offer. Youth today have far less time than several years ago. The high-school curriculum has been condensed to 4 years from 5; resulting in more time spent doing homework.



Observations

The information collected on what times youth would like to see programs offered is consistent with both males and females and from east to west Vaughan.

The top 3 times youth would like programs offered are:

Weekdays 6pm-9m 45%

Weekends 2pm-5pm 25%

Weekdays 12pm-2pm 22%

Currently the majority of youth outreach programs take place on weekdays 3-6pm and weekdays 12-2pm. Little is offered during the 6-9pm weekday time frame. Often this is due to competing demands for program space. Programming for youth should take place at the times listed above to maximize participation rates.

During the school visits, listening to comments and observations from youth, youth staff and patrons, where youth would gather and socialize, malls, coffee shops, parking lots and movie theatres were noted to be most popular. Socializing and being with friends is extremely important to youth. The decisions of youth are easily influenced by their peers. A social atmosphere that caters to youth interests would attract youth to programs.

Social activities among youth in Vaughan are found to be an important constant in their lives. Hanging out with friends is the most popular activity with 83% of females and 62% of males.

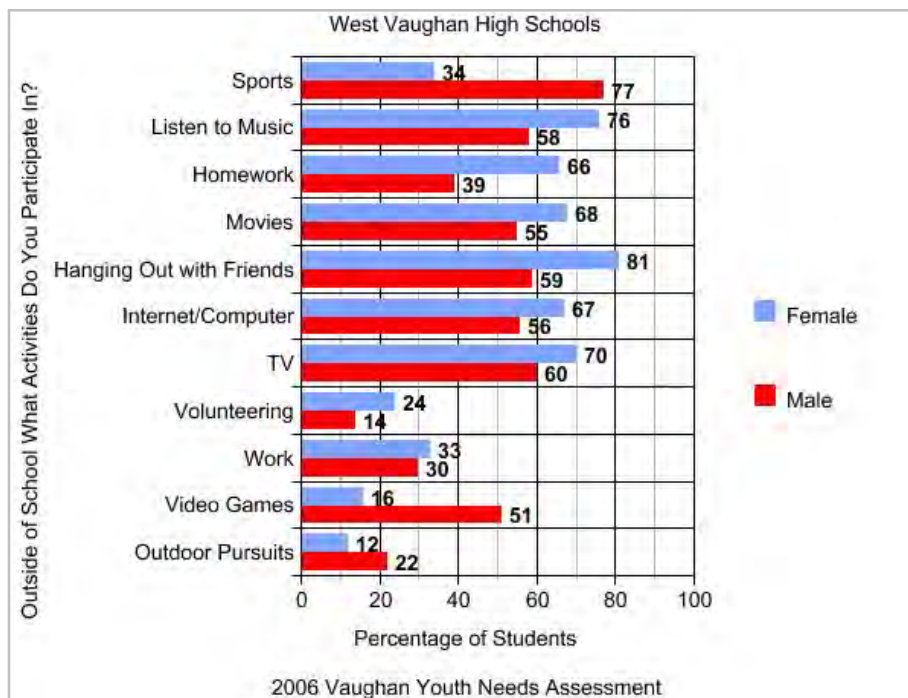
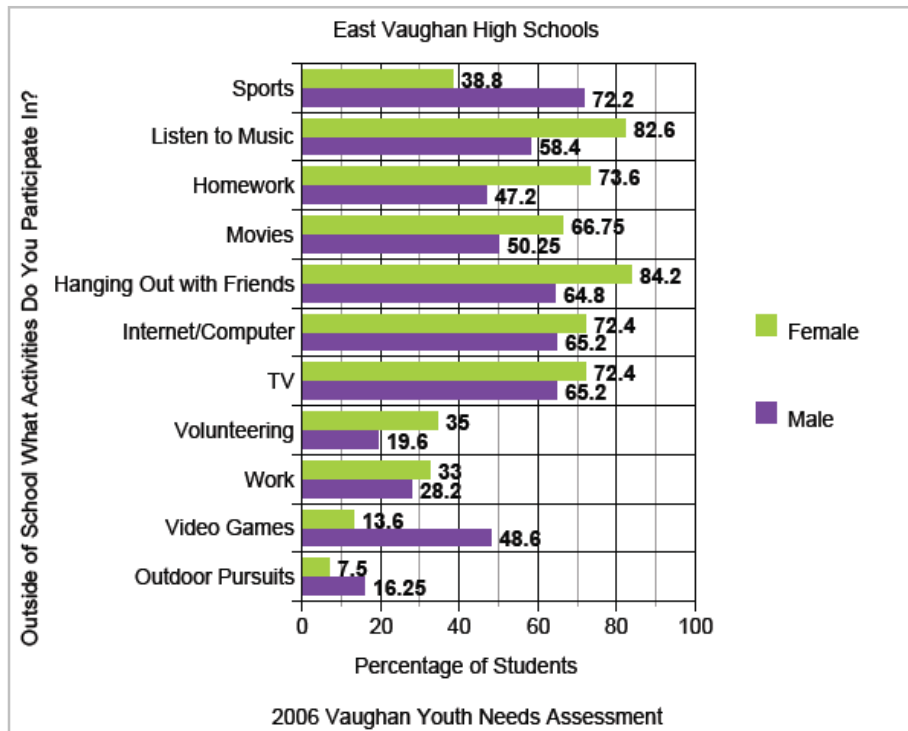
Active activities—Sports with the male students had a 73% participation, while the female participation in sports had a low percentile of 32%. Several students also engage in outdoor pursuits like mountain biking, hiking and camping.

Multi-media activities—With advances in technology, multi media activities are very popular with youth. A combined average of both males and females participate in music (69%), internet/computer (65%) and movies (60%), video games, rank as a popular activity with males with a participation rate of 50%.

Employment/education/volunteerism activities—A combined average of 31% of students surveyed report they work in their spare time. Approximately the same number of males and females reported working. 70% of females reported doing homework in their spare time while only 43% of males reported doing homework. 30% of females are involved in volunteering while only 17% of males are involved in volunteering. Nearly twice as many females than males are involved in homework and volunteering.

Outside of school, what activities do you participate in?

It is important to gain a better understanding of the activities youth participate in outside of their school environment in order to better develop programs and initiatives that meet their interests and needs.

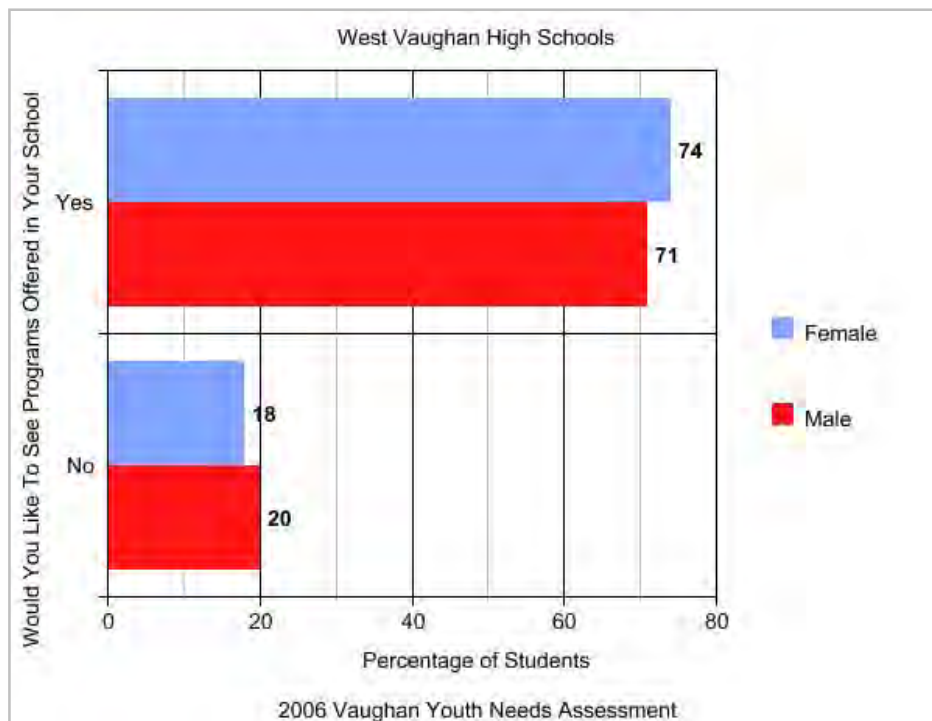
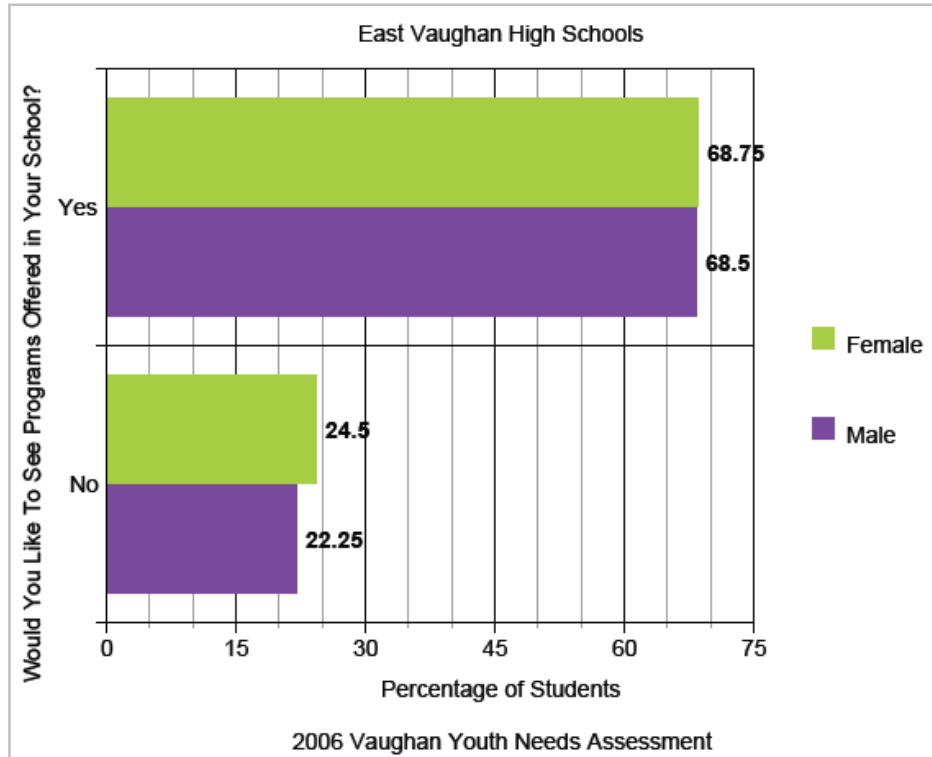


Observations

- Nearly 50% more males than females participate in sports
- Females show more interest in education and vocation training and spend more time on homework and volunteering
- Youth are spending much of their time with multi media activities such as music, internet/computer, movies and video games. Technology has taken over physical activity as a pastime

Would you like to see programs offered in your school?

Over recent years participation in youth sports has declined significantly in middle school years (Hedstrom & Gould, 2004) This decline in youth sport participation may be attributed to the fact that there are fewer options for students who are not advanced athletes (Koplan, Liverman & Kraak).



Observations

Approximately 70% of students surveyed reported that they would like to see programs offered in their schools.

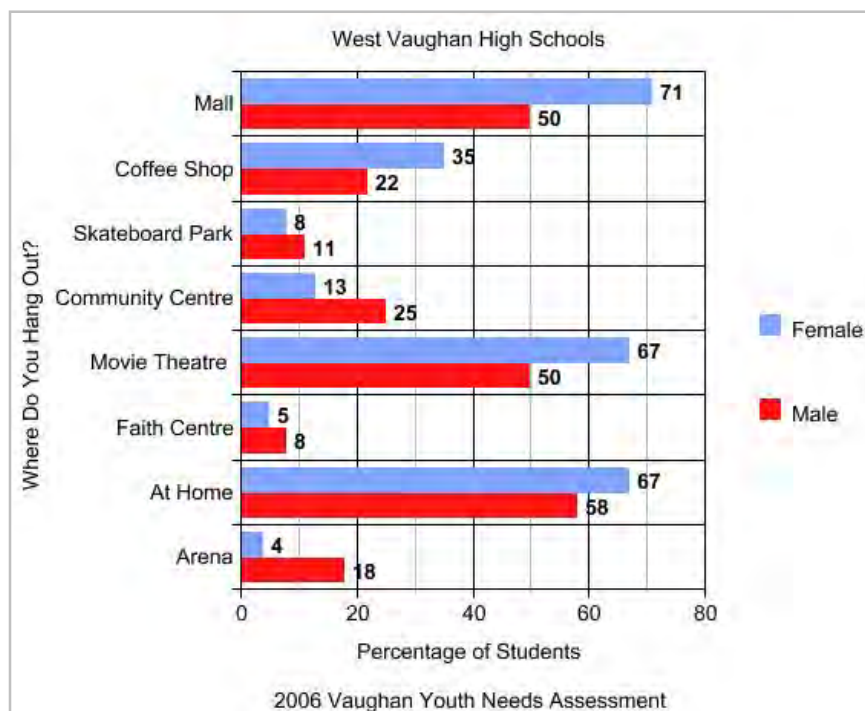
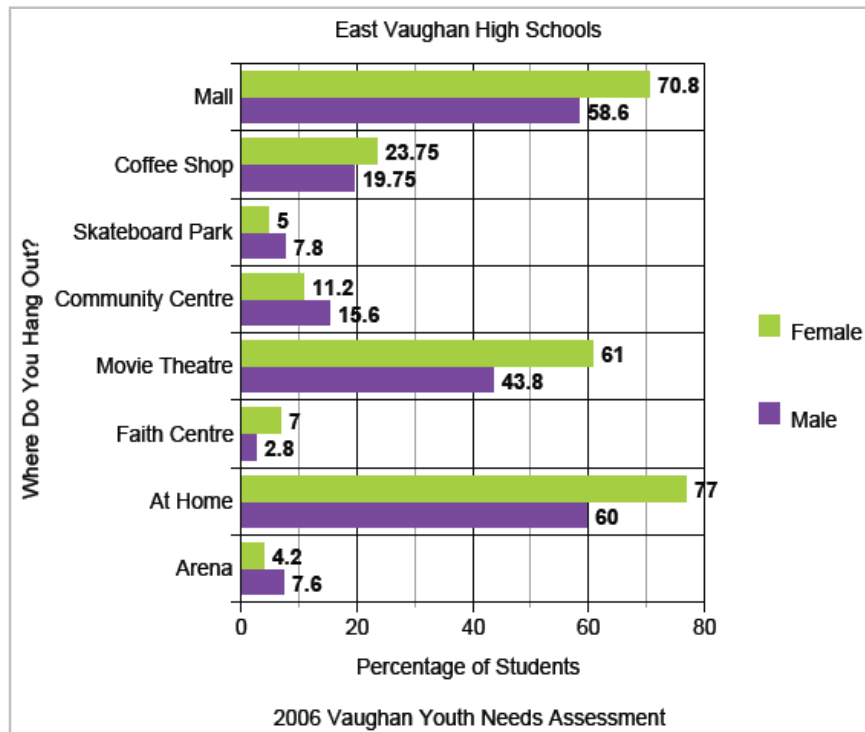
Students expressed the convenience, as they often live close to their school and if programs are offered in schools youth do not face the barrier of transportation.

The Community Use of Schools program supported by the Boards of Education and the Government of Ontario has opened the doors of the schools for community use. More schools are offering extra-curricular activities in their facilities.

Schools are continuing to look to service providers to provide programming within their schools to meet their student requests and needs.

Where do you hang out?

Getting a sense of where youth are spending their free time or “hanging out” in both East and West Vaughan will help to understand where to outreach and how to market for youth. There are 3 main spots where youth “hang out”. A reflection of these results also coincides with the results of the question “Outside of School, What Activities Do You Participate In”. Indicating that environments that provide a social outlet, technology and multi-media (music, movies and access to technology) are areas that will attract youth.



Observations

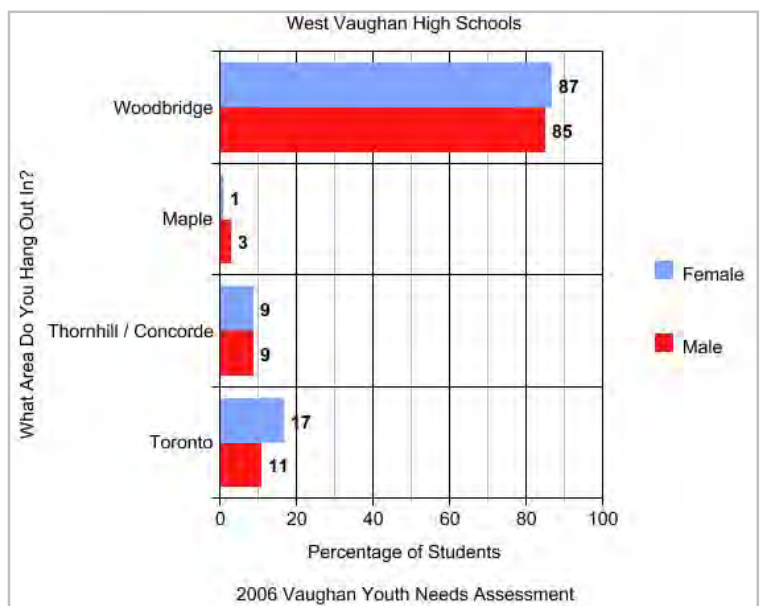
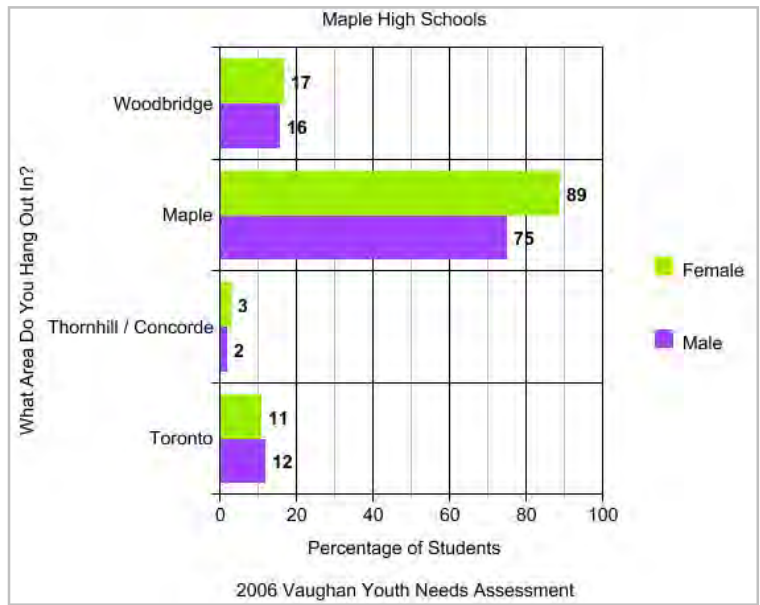
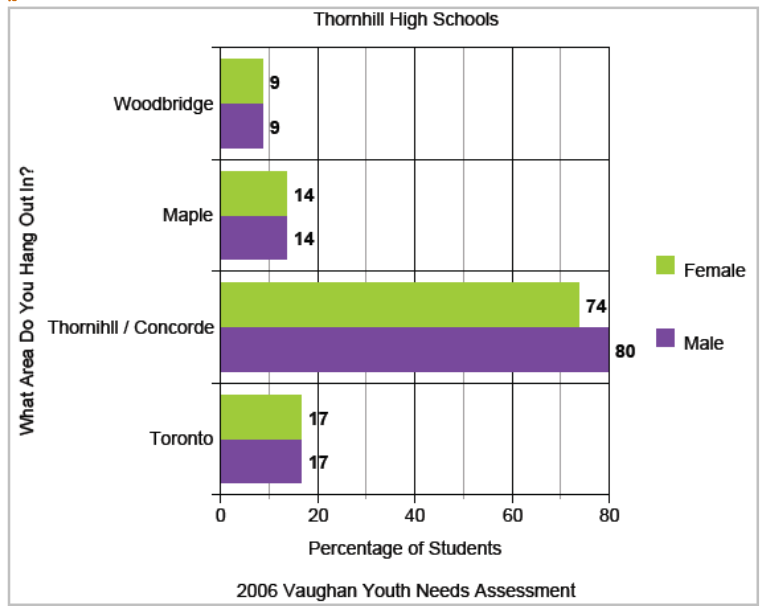
62% of youth in Vaughan spend their time hanging out at the mall, meeting and socializing with friends, with a majority of youth being female. This minimizes their participation in physical activity, and supports the importance of relationships with peers. (Major malls in Vaughan namely Vaughan Mills, Promenade Mall and Hillcrest Mall).

53% of youth spent their time at Vaughan movie theatres. Most theatres are centrally located, namely Promenade Mall in Thornhill, AMC Interchange 30 and Colossus in Woodbridge. Colossus Theatre offers a video game area, where children and youth can spend time playing before and after their movie. The loitering of youth had become a growing concern for theatre owners. In summer 2005, Colossus and AMC theatres have since implemented a cutoff time for the video games of 11pm, and have added theatre security on duty to ensure that youth are not loitering in hallways and in the gaming area after 11pm on Fridays and the weekends.

65% of Vaughan's youth spend a majority of their time at home. This may account for time spent on the internet watching TV, and playing electronic games, resulting in the overall majority of youth being sedentary.

Only 16% of youth report "Hanging Out" at their community centre. Almost twice as many youth in the West "hang out" at local community centres. Also, more males indicate that they spend their free time at community centres.

What area do you hang out in?



Observations

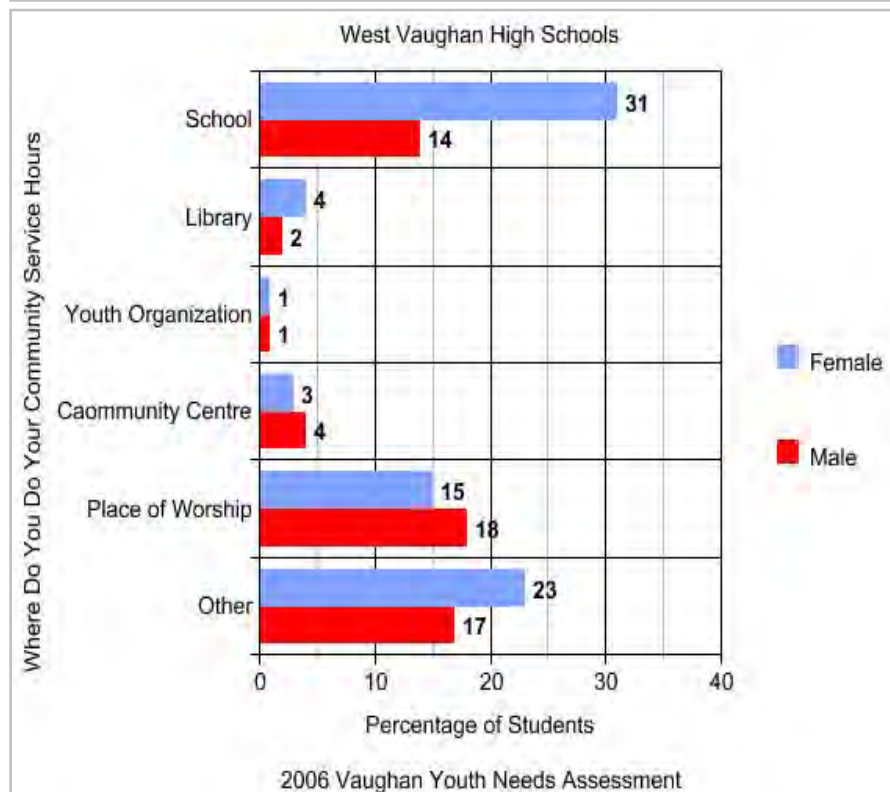
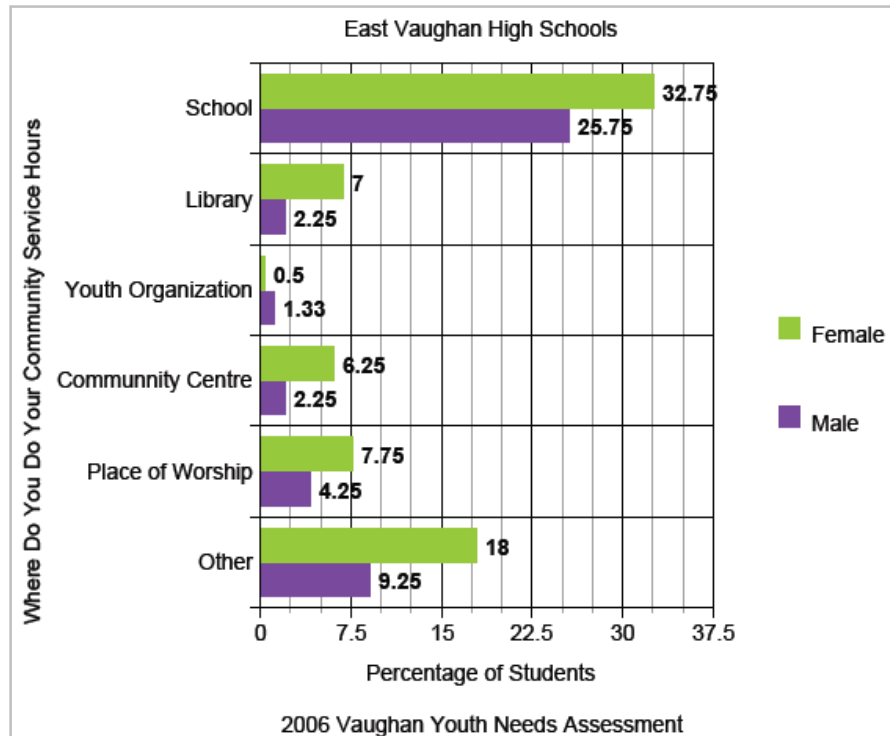
Over 80% of the youth surveyed report that they hang out in the community in which they live. This information is almost identical between males and females.

Approximately 15% of youth surveyed report that they “hang out” in Toronto.

The following results indicate that youth most often do not travel to “hang out” they look for things to do within their community and neighbourhood.

Where do you do your community service hours?

As part of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma requirements, students must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities. Community involvement activities may take place in a variety of settings, including businesses, not for profit organizations, public sector institutions and informal settings. The community service hours are designed to encourage students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility. Students decide how they will complete the community involvement requirement.



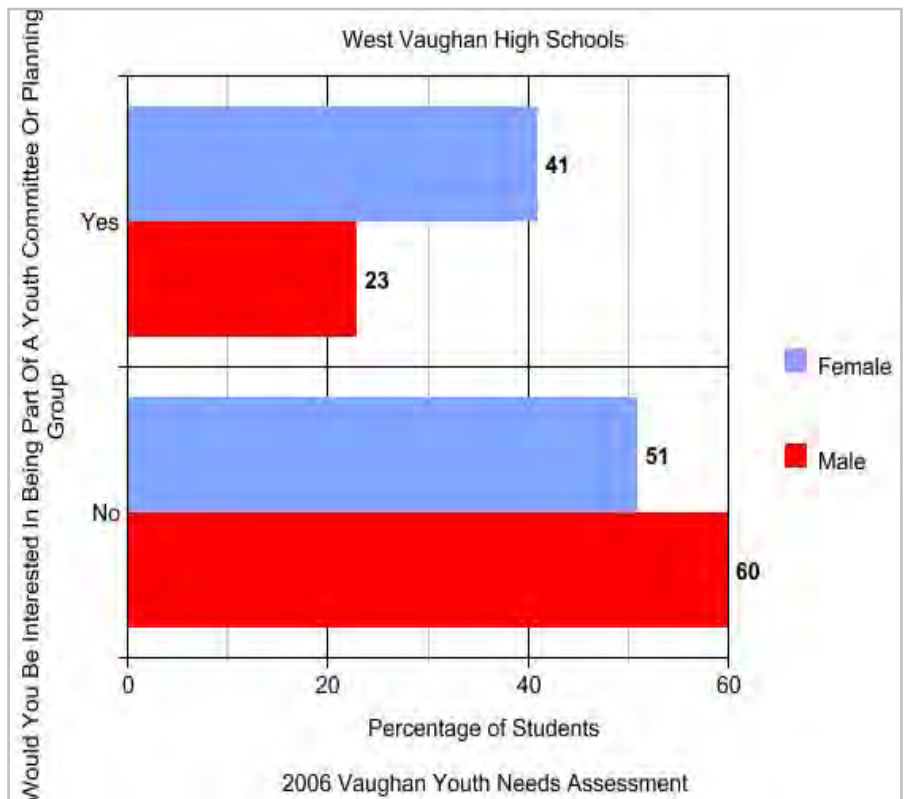
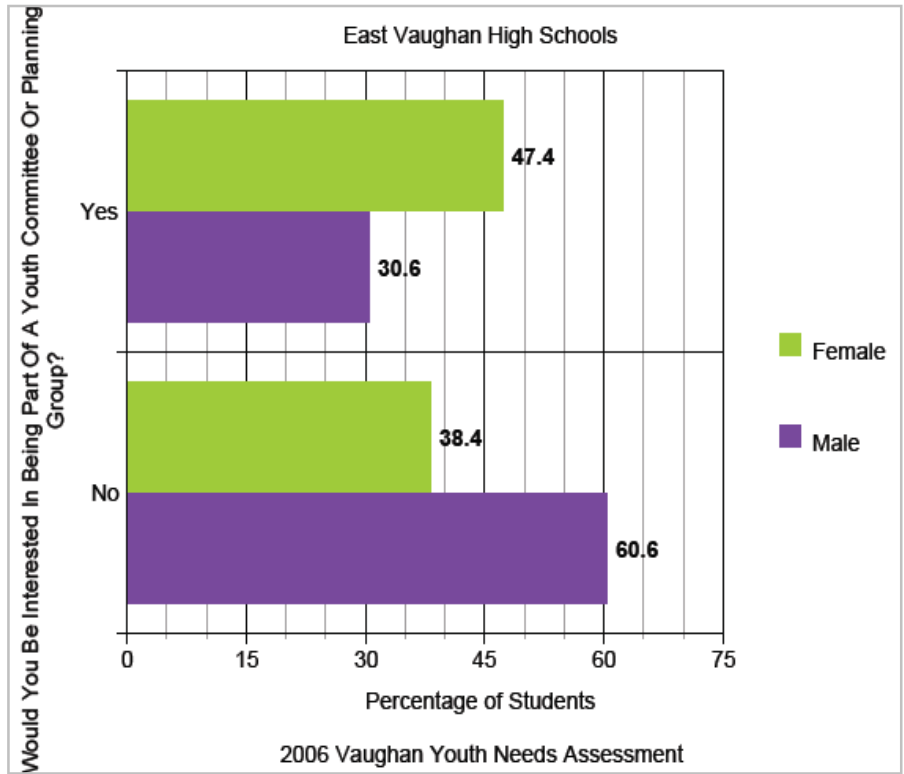
Observations

Student responses to this question were quite varied.

- 26% of students completed their hours at their school
- 17% indicated “other”—which included responses like day care, seniors, community festival, sports organization etc.
- 11% indicated that they completed their hours at a place of worship i.e. church, mosque, etc.

Students completed their community service close to home due to lack of transportation. They were also completed when convenient, for example helping with their siblings program, at lunch hour or right after school. There was a keen interest by youth to complete their hours with a youth group or at a community centre, however youth are not informed of the options they have on where to complete their hours.

Would you be interested in being part of a youth committee or planning group?



Observations

44% of females and 27% of males surveyed said they would be interested in being part of a youth committee or planning group to help be a voice and plan activities for youth. Youth showed particular interest in helping to plan activities for youth in their communities.

Currently the City of Vaughan has the Vaughan Youth Cabinet to advocate for youth, however youth are interested in getting involved at a local level. The majority of youth surveyed were not aware of the Vaughan Youth Cabinet and were more interested in planning their own activities.

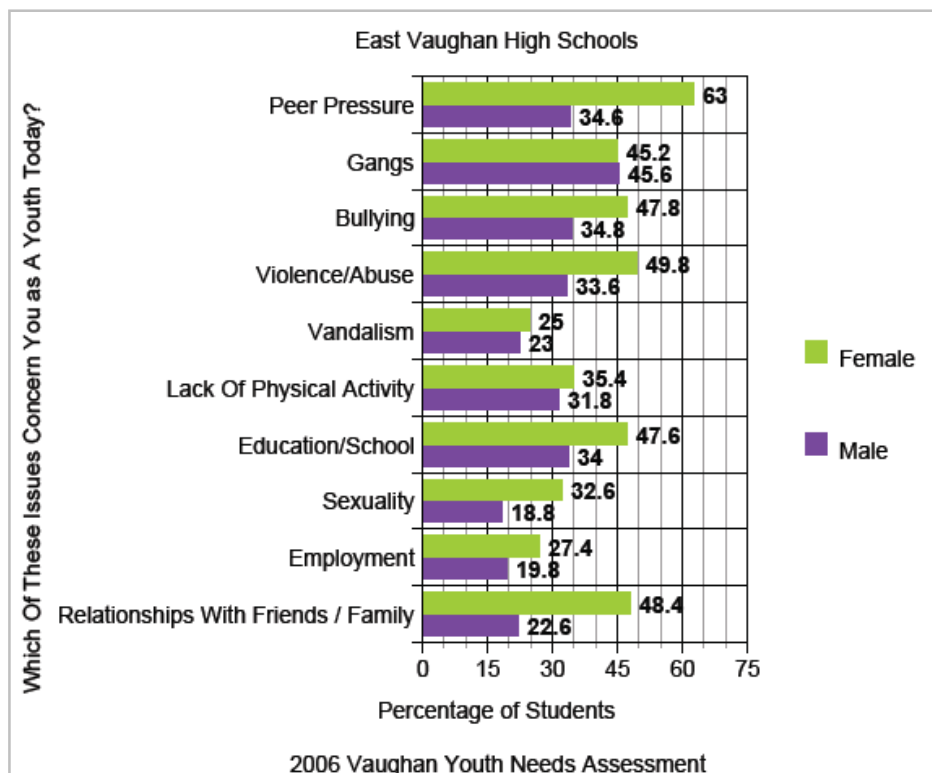
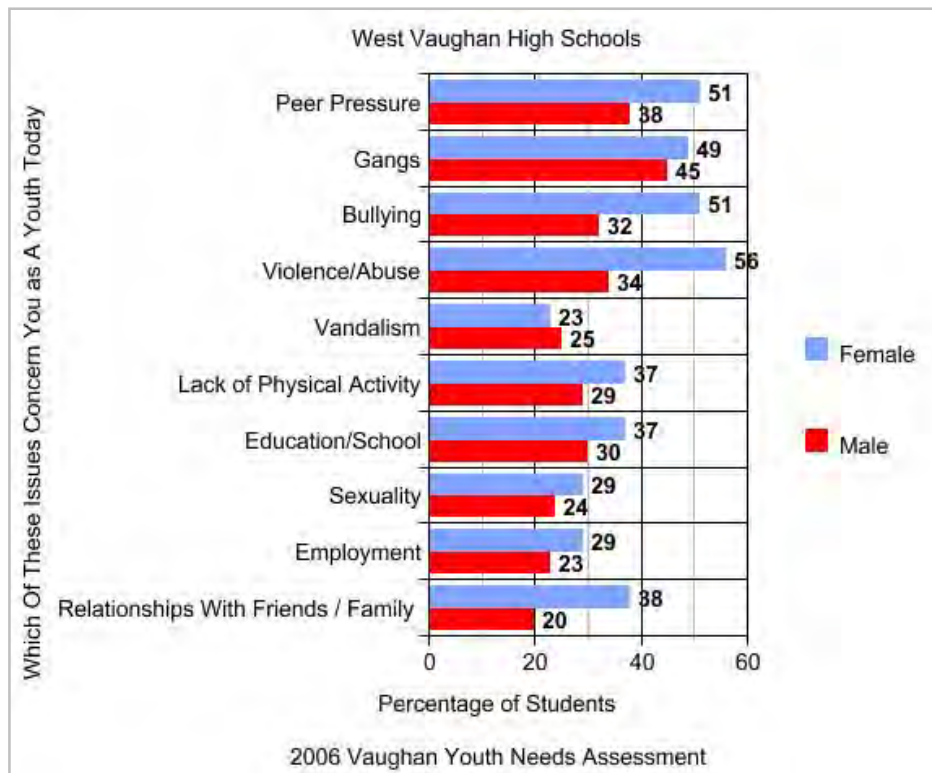
Current research shows that for successful youth programs youth need to be engaged.

For information on youth engagement, refer to *Appendix 4: Youth Gathering Places - 5 Key Ingredients* and *Appendix 5: Process of Youth Engagement* prepared by the Centre of Excellence in Youth Engagement.

The Vaughan Youth Cabinet has done excellent work for youth on a City Wide basis although they have often had limited resources. By having localized youth groups in community centres youth leadership and programs will be enhanced. If those groups were under the umbrella of the Vaughan Youth Cabinet the Cabinet would strengthen its membership and mandate and be more responsive to localized community needs.

What issues concern you as a youth today?

Understanding what issues youth are facing is extremely important. The issues youth face occur throughout the community; on the streets, in our parks, in our malls, at our schools and at our community facilities.



Observations

47% of youth indicated that peer pressure was a major issue of concern. Youth are pressured to fit in with peers. As indicated previously the social cohesion with peers is extremely important. Although drugs and alcohol were not provided as an option for youth on survey, peer pressure and substance use are directly related.

Over 40% of youth also reported that gangs, bullying, and violence were issues of concern.

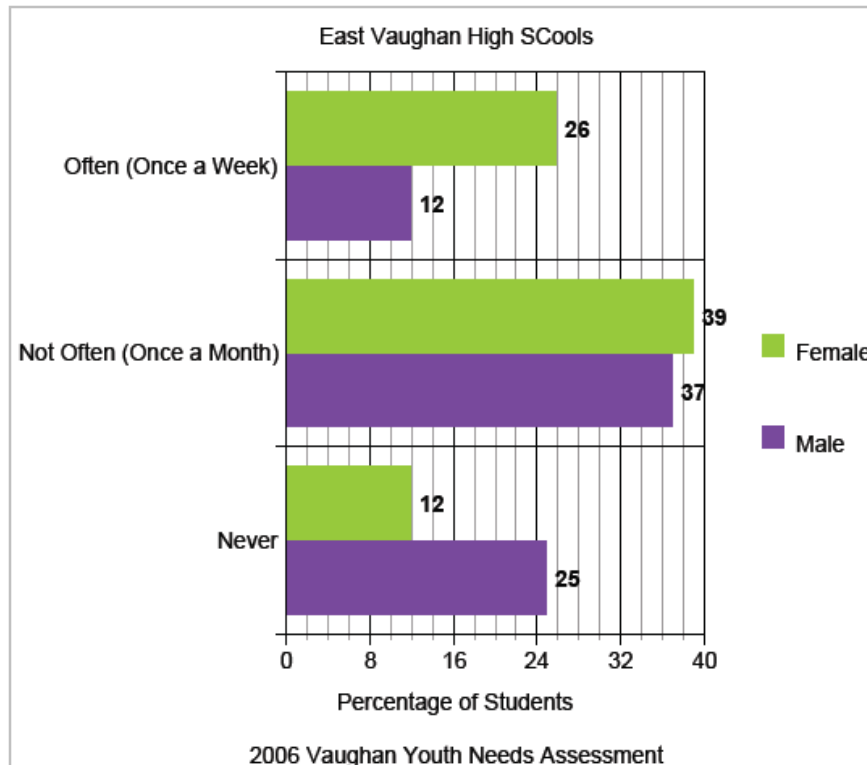
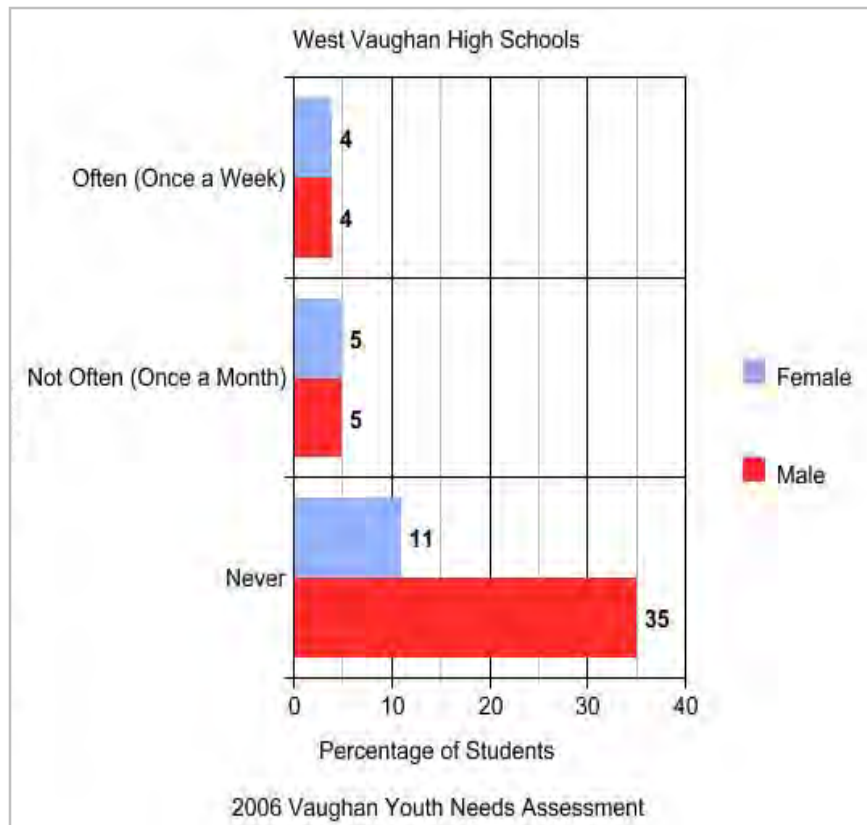
Approximately 35% of youth indicated that a lack of physical activity is an issue for youth, demonstrating their awareness that they are not as active as they should be.

The complexity of issues facing youth are interdisciplinary, therefore, our community problem solving approach should be as well.

Refer to *Partnerships* in section 6.0

How often do you use your local library?

Libraries play an important role in the community and provide many important services for youth such as access to computers, resources for homework and employment, books for passing the time, and opportunities for learning.



Observations

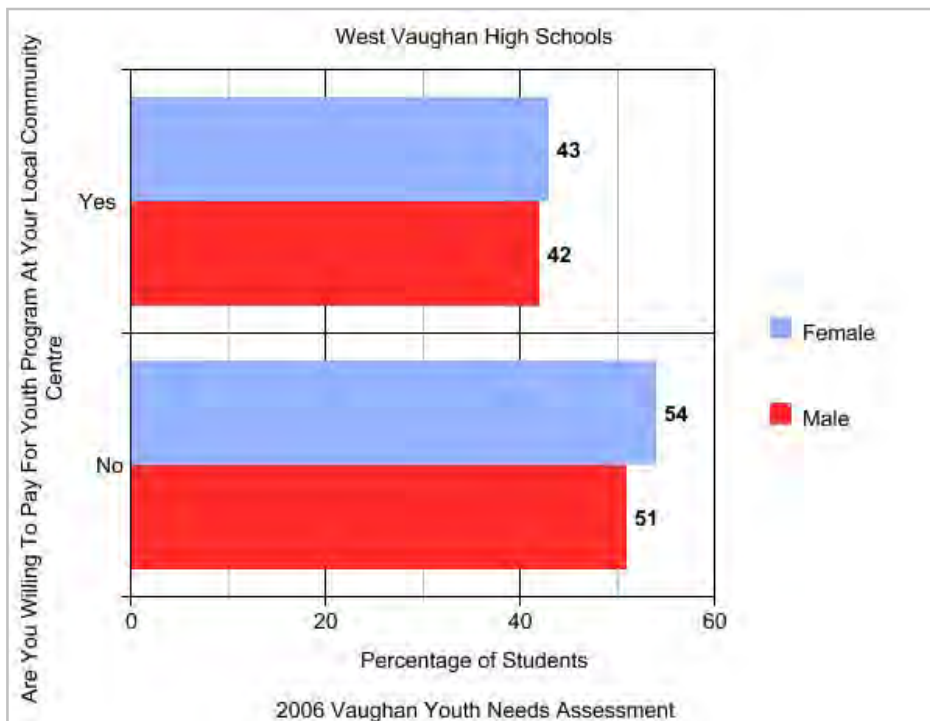
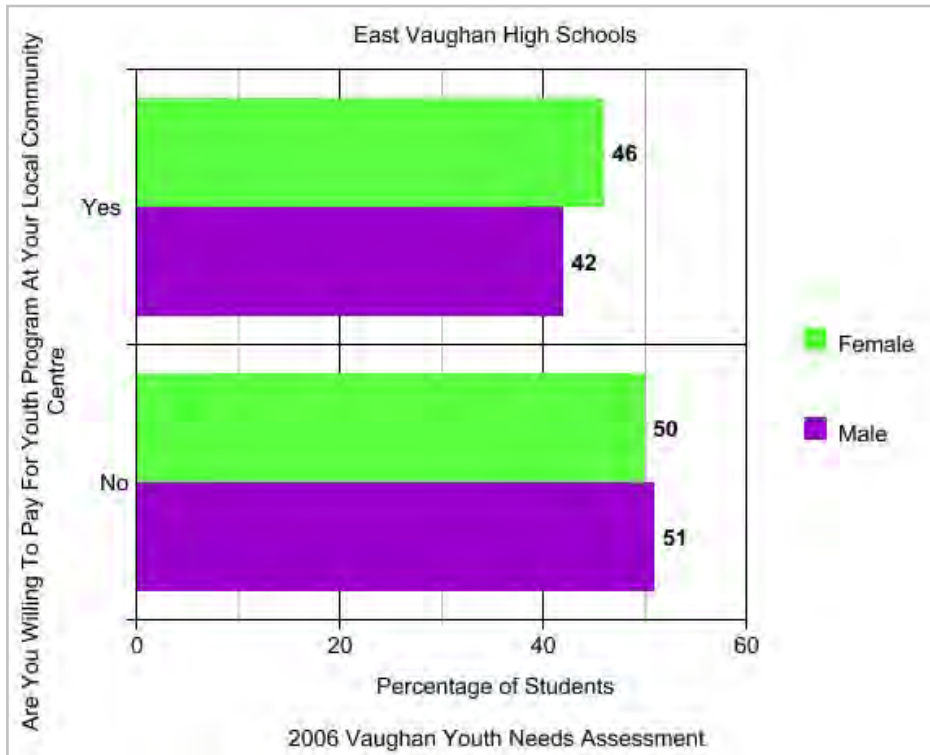
The results of this question indicate that youth are not accessing their libraries on a regular basis. Although more youth in the East access services at their local libraries only 9% of students in the West access their library once a month.

Students surveyed said that having the internet at home eliminated the need to go to the library. This indicates that there's an opportunity to reach out to youth by providing engaging programs.

Are you willing to pay for youth programs at your local community centre?

User fees often present a barrier for youth to attend recreational programs. 5% of the Vaughan youth population aged 13-18 are living below the low income cut-off (2001 Census). This question asks specifically if youth are “willing” to pay for programs, not “are you able pay for programs?”

Appendix 6: Children 0-18 Years Living in Low Income Families in York Region



Observations

Less than 45% of youth indicate they are willing to pay for programs that offer them something they want. They did not feel they should have to pay for programs. Youth want programs, feel they are important, but don't want to pay for them. Youth also indicated that it really depended upon the type of program and were willing to pay for some programs.

The SPC (Student Price Card) offered to youth 13-26 years of age (across Canada), completed their survey on youth spending in Ontario for 2005. The results indicate that the majority of youth spend their money on clothing, movies and music. If programs were offered that provided a social outlet for youth they would be more willing to pay for them.

Refer to *Appendix 9: Student Price Card*

5.0 BENCHMARKING OF SERVICES

City of Vaughan Youth Programming*

A series of benchmarks was conducted among neighbouring municipalities to identify the types of youth services offered. The specifications of these services, which include a youth advisory committee, youth outreach staffing, facility allocation, program fees, and employment assistance, were then reviewed to determine a comparative standard for the provision of recreational programs and services for youth in Vaughan.

*Fall, Winter & Spring, Refer to *Appendix 3: City of Vaughan, Youth Drop-In Activities* for complete listing.

Youth Outreach programs and Youth Rooms are available in the City of Vaughan at the following locations:

East Vaughan

Dufferin Clark Community Centre
Maple Community Centre
Rosemount Community Centre

West Vaughan

Vellore Village Community Centre
Chancellor Community Centre
Father Ermanno Community Centre

Findings with our Youth Needs Survey reveal that youth in Vaughan were unaware of the youth room availability, hours of operation, programming and membership benefits. As a result, only 3% of the City's youth have youth memberships, and/or participate in youth outreach programs.

5.1 YOUTH SERVICES OFFERED IN SURROUNDING MUNICIPALITIES

	VAUGHAN	Markham	Toronto	Richmond Hill	Newmarket	Aurora
Youth Policy	No	No	Youth Mandate	No	No	Yes
Youth Cabinet	-Vaughan Youth Cabinet (VyC) -Youth City Councillor	Working on cabinet, have Mayor Task Force on Youth	Yes TYC + Youth Councils in Each of the Communities that have Youth Workers	Youth Action Committee	No -Have Youth Action Cte and advisory group -Youth Support Task Force municipal initiative Comprised of reps from school boards, police, region, pathways, youth services, recreation, meeting monthly to develop initiatives	Yes
Youth Outreach Staff and #	Active Living Coordinators and part-time youth staff	1 Community Resource Staff and 12hour Youth Supervisor	31 Permanent Youth Outreach Workers	Youth Coordinator	1 Contract 35 hours a week PT Youth Outreach	1 FT Youth and Community
Youth Facility	No Use various locations (community centres, schools) for programs	15,000 sq ft Concrete Skatepark	Not in Recreation Neighbourhood Services – Yes All community centres offer youth programs	Skatepark	1 Dedicated facility Newmarket Youth Recreation Centre and Kinsmen 23000 sq ft Sk8Park 10000 sq ft	No Use various facilities for programs
Youth Services Offered	Registered and drop- in programs, special interest, cultural, life skills; Community resource contacts, referrals; educational and resource workshops; volunteer and coop placements	Drop In variety of sports, arts and leadership Also outdoor pursuits	Recreation, Arts, Cultural, Social Skills, and Leadership, Inner City Out tripping Centre		Registered and drop- in programs, special interest, cultural, life skills; Community resource contacts for housing assistance, referrals; educational and resource workshops; volunteer and coop placements	Recreational, Educational, and Cultural
Dedicated space for youth in CC	Yes 6 youth rooms citywide located in community centres	Yes Drop-In programs at each centre dedicated space in Angus Glen CC	Yes in Several CC. Programs offered in a variety of settings in other CC		Dedicated Centre	No

Continued...

	VAUGHAN	Markham	Toronto	Richmond Hill	Newmarket	Aurora
Employment Assistance	Leadership training	No	Yes		Yes	No
Fee Range	-Youth Membership: \$14 -Registered programs vary in price	Free – 100\$ (for CPU Courses) Avg \$45 for 8 week program	Mainly Free – Specialized programs range from \$25 - \$175 Determined by Fee Committee	20\$ Youth Activity Card for Drop-In Registered programs avg	Membership Fee: Resident \$12 year Non-Res. \$27yr Drop-in \$1 for non members -Registered Programs range from \$30-\$75 for instructional members have discounted tickets -Camps \$105 -\$230 Subsidy available	Free - \$3.00/per drop-in Registered programs vary in price
Use of Schools in provision of programs	Yes Summer camps, Leadership training	Yes After school / Summer camps/ Drop-In	Yes – Both TDSB and TDCB		Summer Outreach 2 gyms one night a week -Shared use facilities (4) -Sports Fields	Yes
Leadership Programs	Yes -Learning-to-Lead -Aquatics & Coaching Certifications	Aquatics, Events, Leadership Conference	Yes Aquatics, Volunteer, Inner City Out-tripping, Specialized programs, Youth Awards		Apprenticeship program for Sk8boarding instruction assistants (13-16yrs) -Youth Action Committee Sept-June -Volunteer Programs -Aquatics Leadership Programs	LIT, CIT, Home Alone, Babysitting Training
Celebrates Youth Week	Yes Variety of activities and special events	Yes First week of May; many Events	Yes	Yes First week of May	Yes -Essential Services vs. Youth Ball Hockey And BBQ -Young Workers Safety Challenge -Stress Busters Event -Jam Session -Sk8Board Competition -All Free	Yes

Continued...

	VAUGHAN	Markham	Toronto	Richmond Hill	Newmarket	Aurora
<i>Works in Partnership with other agencies in delivery of programs</i>	Yes -Several CSOs and community agencies	Yes	Yes Toronto Police Toronto Public Health United Way Toronto Argos, United Way CSOs and many others		CMHA For Rent (weekly 3-hr sessions of open discussion, activities Health Services YR-Resources & Health York University (Nursing Student Placements) York Police Blue Talk Program & special events Canadian Tire an YR Subsidies Youth agency quarterly meetings	Yes Many CSO and agencies
<i>Transportation Support to programs</i>	No	For Youth Week	Not Needed		Not currently	No
<i>Times programs offered</i>	Youth Drop-in Varied hours – 11am-8pm -Registered programs at various times	7 days a week; not much offered on Weekend Evenings	Mon-Fri 3pm-11pm -During the Day from 11-3pm -Weekends 9am – 12am depending on season.		Centre: Mon –Thurs, 4-9pm; Fri 4-10pm Sat 9am-10pm; Sun 2-6pm -Summer Mon-Fri 9-4 camps; 4-10 centre; -Drop In and Registered programs various	Weekday 4:00pm – 11:00pm (Summer) 9pm school year Weekend 10:00am – 11pm

5.2 ARTS IN VAUGHAN

In the City of Vaughan, a gap exists between arts education and community arts programming for youth. At some schools, art classes are available only on a limited basis. Where this occurs, students and parents seek arts-related education opportunities from community centres, local galleries, theatres and community businesses.

Trends in the Arts

Urban trends such as, digital media arts, graffiti illustration, skateboarding, skateboard art, hip hop, dance, DJ techniques, printed clothing, and t-shirt/sport shoe design, are steadily on the rise in York Region. In particular, municipalities such as Newmarket, Markham and Aurora have been offering programs that meet these trends and demands for years. Some include youth drop-in and registered programs such as DJ workshops, Hip-Hop Dance, Sk8 & Create, Build a T-Shirt and many more.

Through the youth needs survey, students who were aware of the programs offered in recreational centres commented on the lack of variety available and that programs listed were 'boring'. In particular, programs were not reflective of the evolution in youth culture and current interests.

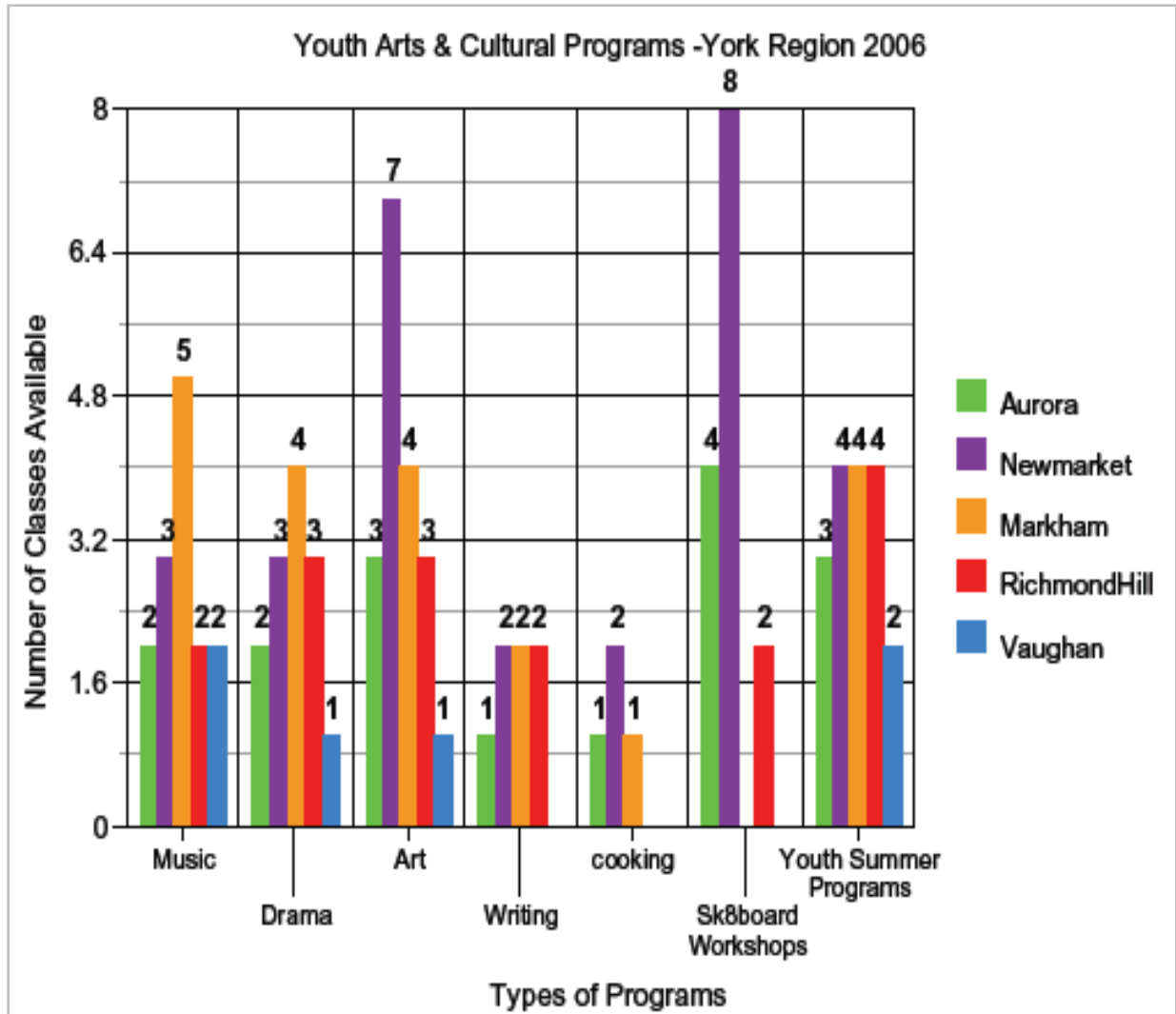
To get a pulse on the interest levels of high school students in arts programs, a limited number of activities were organized for Youth Week celebrations for May 2006 at the Maple Community Centre. Activities such as drama, graffiti and swimming were geared to meet some of the survey responses identified during the visits to Maple High School and St. Joan of Arc Catholic High School. Flyers with a schedule of activities were distributed in each school. Approximately 40 students participated in the after school and early evening activities, with 25 students participating in the graffiti activity that took place outdoors.

Recent arts related initiatives such as *Picture Your Vaughan*, *In Unity Youth Performance*, and *Heritage Poster Contest* as well as annual initiatives requesting school participation have succeeded in engaging youth in using their creativity and talents to participate in projects that provided a platform to encourage and embrace their talents. The community had an opportunity to experience their work, as works of art displayed outdoors and performances on stage in the local theatre.

Events of this nature provide a means of support to our youth, and are an opportunity to inform them of the programs and drop-in activities available to them within their local community centres.

Refer to *Appendix 7: Strategies for a Creative City*

Youth Arts Programs Offered in Surrounding Municipalities 2006-07



6.0 TRENDS AND CURRENT RESEARCH

Issues and Trends Affecting Youth

In the report “Children and Youth at Risk” (Report by Stats Canada and Human Resources Development), several recent trends were identified that have had a significant impact on youth development.

The Changing Family—Neighbourhood networks have eroded and divorce has become common. With one or more parents in the workforce and working additional hours and otherwise out of the home, adolescents are spending less time in the company of caring adults. More of their time is spent with peers or in front of the television set and computer screens

The Shifting Nature of Work—With economic restructuring, the shift to a knowledge-based economy and the globalization of the marketplace, many high school students find themselves relegated to low-status, dead-end jobs.

Media—Television, videos and music, along with computers, increasingly pervade the life of adolescents. Television profoundly influences adolescent fears and expectations about the future, their values and their relationships with others. There is a significant drop in physical activity patterns as children reach adolescence. Canadian youth spend 20-26 hours a week watching TV. Unrealistic images of “the beautiful” people portrayed in mass marketing campaigns also affect self image and self esteem. The increase in violence throughout the media i.e. movies, video, games and popular music is feeding an increase in violent youth crimes.

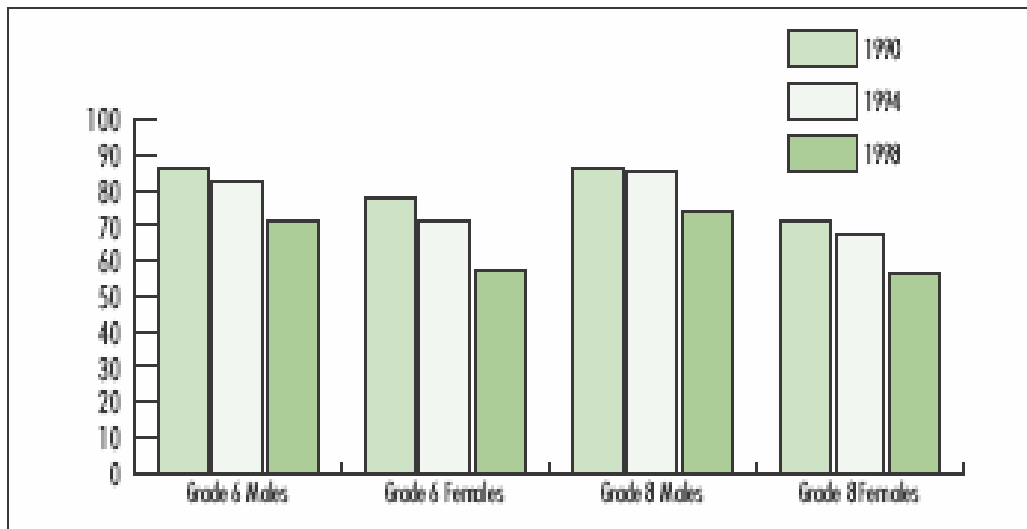
Population Diversity—Canada has become a multi-cultural nation with an increasing population representing a variety of religious, ethnic and national backgrounds. Learning to live peacefully, while respecting diversity, will be a major task for youth in the 21st century. The City of Vaughan is quickly becoming one of the most diverse communities in Canada.

In addition to the trends identified by Parks and Recreation Ontario, the following trends are also occurring locally:

Decrease in Physical Activity and Increase of Obesity—Today’s youth are becoming increasingly inactive, 63% of 5-17 year olds are not active enough for optimal growth and development (Physical Activity Monitor, CFLRI 1999). The rate of participation by females is much lower than that of males. Youth are exposed to a “Fast Food Culture”. Parents are not home nor have the time to cook meals. Processed foods are consumed more often and “quick fix” dinners are high in fats. In the past 15 years the prevalence of obesity has tripled in Canadian children aged 7-13 (Tremblay and Williams 2000).

Physical Activity

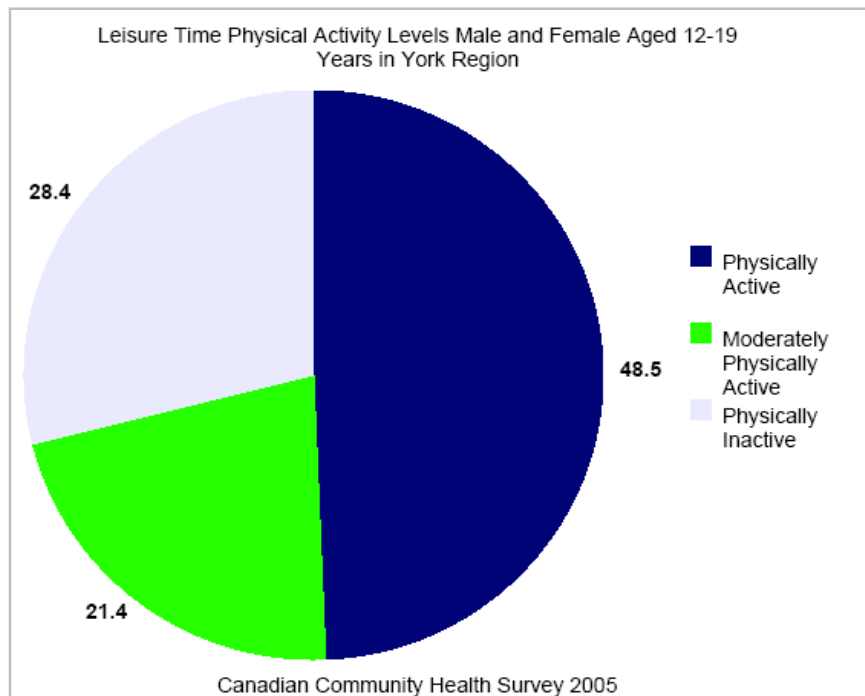
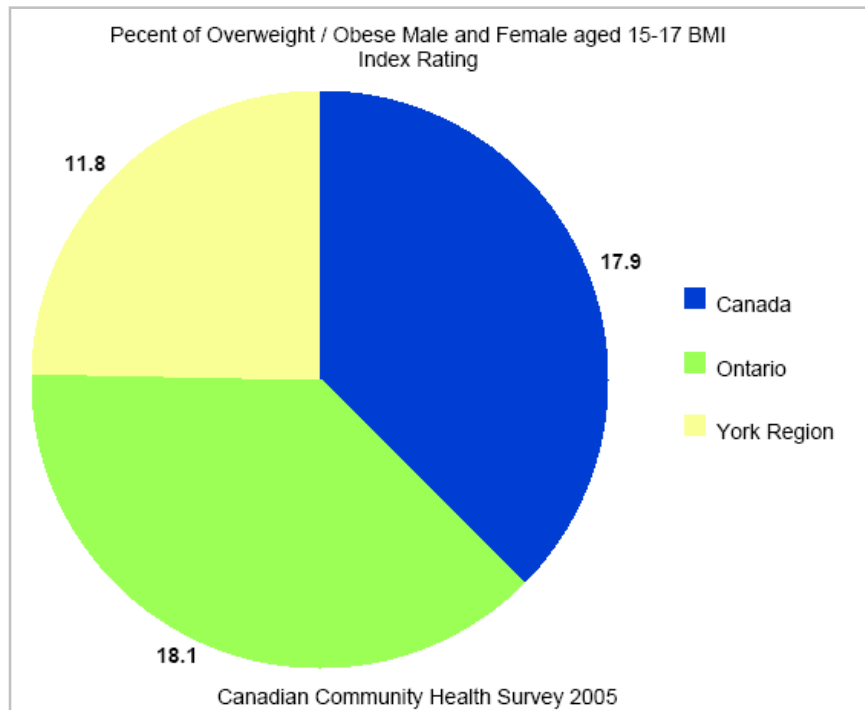
Trends in Grades 6 and 8 Children Who Exercised Two or More Times Per Week Outside School Hours, by Sex, Canada 1990 –1998



Source: King et al. "Trends in the Health of Canadian Youth and Ottawa: 1990-1998" Health Canada

Percent of Obese Males / Females

Physical Activity Levels



The percentage of overweight youth in York region is significantly lower in York Region (11.8%) compared to the National (17.9%) and provincial (18.1%) averages, however approximately 30% of youth aged 12-19 years in York Region are physically inactive.

User Fees—Recreation programs user fees continue to rise an average of 3-6% per annum, the numbers of families living below the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut Off (LICO) Level is also on the rise.

Youth as Decision Makers—Across Canada, municipalities have made efforts to involve and include dialogue with youth to ensure their needs are met. Initiatives to engage youth as advisors, organizers and volunteers take several forms. Some municipalities have opted for a youth cabinet that makes recommendations to the Mayor and councils and lead their own projects. Others have instituted advisory committees to the Mayor to provide feedback on issues of importance to youth in the community. A few have opted for a broad youth strategy focused on youth research, liaising between government and youth, soliciting youth advice, organizing youth events and more. The City of Vaughan has recently implemented the Civic Youth Strategy including the Vaughan Youth Cabinet and a City Youth Councillor position (2005).

Drugs and Alcohol Use—In Ontario in 1997, 25% of youth 15-19 reported using cannabis; 25% reported smoking; and 64% reported drinking alcohol (Ontario Health Survey conducted by Statistics Canada). The rate of cocaine use and ecstasy are on the rise. Although Crystal Meth has not been reported in York region, it has devastated other communities in Canada and it is a matter of time before it appears on our streets. Alcohol use continues to be an issue with adolescents.

Sexuality—Sexual orientation issues present a challenge for youth. Teens that are gay, lesbian or bisexual are vulnerable to ridicule, alienation and isolation. It is estimated that one third of all teen suicides are committed by those who are gay, lesbian or bisexual (ONSAD 1994).

Violent Crime—The rate of violent crime has been rising steadily since 1986 (National Crime Prevention Centre).

Gang Activity—With changing demographics many youth are turning to gangs to provide a sense of belonging. 46% of youth reported that gangs are a concern (tied with peer pressure as biggest concern).

Participation of Girls—With Attendance and participation figures within all Vaughan community centres indicated similar results regarding the lack of female participation in scheduled drop-in programs and registered programs. Our survey found that 35% of female students expressed they were interested in participating in drop-in activities, but felt intimidated by the number of males in attendance. Over 40% of female students also indicated that they enjoyed leisure and creative activities and wanted not only the opportunities to join in physical activities, but a way to express themselves and relieve stress from their everyday school activities and study.

Results from our survey question “Where do you hang out?” indicated that going to the mall or spending time at the movie theatres were preferred locations for socializing, but also presented financial challenges that they wished to avoid. Staying at home using online communication with friends was preferable. When asked about physical recreation activities, most girls showed little interest. A barrier that was identified was the lack of motivation that was connected to the recreation program advertising they felt did not best represent them. Most of what they recall seeing (if any) from the recreation centres always related back to sports and activities that did not elicit any interest. Suggestions were made regarding “only girls” programs, or “only-girls sports” and many students exhibited a positive reaction indicating that they would readily participate if that was an available program.

Female outreach staff would facilitate and assist to ease this barrier with female participants. Developing a positive dialogue with students, with outreach staff presenting themselves in local schools as contacts and facilitators for female recreation programs would bring forward a positive awareness for programs set out to target ‘all girls’ participation.

Youth Volunteers—In 2007, there were 67 volunteers in general programs, 22 in camps, and 30 volunteers that were assisting with integration and special needs with the City of Vaughan.

Youth have been actively volunteering in their schools and within their community in areas such as places of worship, daycares, and local libraries. High school students are required to complete 40 hours of volunteering prior to graduating from Grade 12. This opportunity offers a wealth of possibilities for assistance with events, recreational programs and camps along with the potential of training possibilities for volunteers to become paid staff.

Most comments from our students were that they wanted to volunteer, but wished that there were more options to choose from. As discovered in the survey, many youth were unaware that the City of Vaughan offered volunteer opportunities in many departments, especially with Recreation and Culture. Students were even more interested in the possibility of volunteer hours leading to gaining experience for their career goals or employment opportunities. Many opportunities exist for volunteers in the community and city-wide events. Youth volunteers have been an integral component to The Vaughan Youth Cabinet.

Two major events, the “Be-Heard! Youth Conference” and the “DARE Recognition Awards” successfully enlisted the help of over 20 youth volunteers to assist in all aspects of preparation, organizing and promotion across the City of Vaughan.

Guidance counsellors are an internal source for information on volunteer opportunities for all students. Most guidance offices have numerous informative booklets, brochures, flyers and posters for all students. It presents an opportunity to exchange information and promote awareness regarding youth opportunities within the local community centres, including events and programs.

Partnerships—Recreation Departments are being urged to offer more youth programming at later hours as well as offer holistic programs that not only focus on sports and arts and culture, but also on social services and youth development. Because the problems and issues facing youth are interdisciplinary, so must be the problem solving approach. The community must be involved and work together with leadership and input from youth.

Since 2000, the proportions of municipalities who state they work in conjunction with workplaces, health settings, or local not for profit organizations to promote physical activity and deliver recreation services has increased.

The 2004 Survey of Canadian Municipalities, conducted by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, indicated that municipalities with a population over 100,000 report working with following groups to promote physical activity and deliver programs:

- 93% with schools
- 58% with workplaces
- 64% with health settings
- 64% with local not for profits organizations such as YMCA's

Working with other groups in service delivery for youth is also recognized as a “best practice” by Playworks, a provincially recognized group of organizations concerned about the future of youth in Ontario.

7.0 BENEFITS OF RECREATION, CULTURE & PARKS

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association has outlined 8 Benefits:

1. Recreation is Essential to Personal Health

- Recreation improves health and reduces risk of coronary disease, stroke, osteoporosis, diabetes, back problems and certain types of cancer
- Recreation and arts/culture contribute to mental health
- Recreation is a proven therapeutic tool—helping to restore physical, mental & social capabilities

2. Recreation is Key to Balanced Human Development

- Recreation is essential to the development of children and youth
- Motor skills, social skills, creativity and many other life skills are learned through participation in Recreation and Arts/Culture programs.

3. Recreation is Essential to Quality of Life

- Recreation and arts/culture builds self-esteem and positive self-image, as well as enhancing life satisfaction levels
- Recreation, sports and arts/culture nurtures growth, acquisition of life skills and independent living for those with a disability

4. Recreation Reduces Self-Destructive and Ant-Social Behavior

- Recreation, sports and arts/culture reduce self destructive behavior and negative activity in youth an antidote to smoking, substance use, suicide and depression
- Recreation and arts/culture can reduce crime
- Recreation and arts/culture can reduce racism – engaging participation and understanding diverse cultures

5. Recreation Builds Strong Families and Healthy Communities

- Recreation, sports and arts/culture produce leaders who serve their communities in many ways
- Recreation, sports and arts/culture build social skills and stimulate participation in community life, especially with new Canadian citizens
- Art/Culture helps people understand their neighbours, their history and their environment
- Recreation and arts/culture build pride in a community

6. Recreation Reduces Health Care, Social Service and Police/Justice Costs

- Recreation support families reducing social service costs
- Recreation reduces crime reducing police criminal justice costs
- Recreation improves health and well being reducing health care costs

7. Recreation and Parks are Significant Generators in the Community

- Recreation and Arts/Culture attract businesses and people to the community
- Recreation, Sports and Arts/Culture are the attractions that draw tourism – the third largest and one of the fastest growing industries in the world today.
- Recreation, Fitness, Sports, Arts and Culture generate revenues and create many jobs

8. Parks, Open Space and Natural Areas are Essential to Ecological Survival

- Green space protects habitat, biodiversity, ecological integrity and improves air quality
- Outdoor Recreation is one of the best approaches to environmental education
- Green Spaces attract new business and relocation to a community

8.0 BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

The following is a summary of findings from school surveys, discussions and observations conducted for this report as well as findings from the *State of Youth Report 2006* and 2007 from Vaughan Youth City Councillors.

Awareness

When we started talking to youth about Recreation and Culture programs their first response was “I didn’t know about that”. Many parents are also unaware of programs offered for their children and youth. This is likely why only 3% of the youth in the City of Vaughan are engaged in programs.

Currently, our main marketing is done through the Recreation and Culture Guide which has now been condensed to include only two publications Fall/Winter and Spring/Summer sessions. The other marketing tool is the internet, through the City of Vaughan website. Neither the Guide or website contains elements that are marketed specifically to youth. A section highlighting youth programs, initiatives and events would draw better attention from youth about opportunities available to them.

Lack of a Variety of Programs

A common complaint from students that were surveyed was the lack of variety of programs that were reflective of current trends. Many considered community centres as a facility that offered only sport programs, swimming, Youth drop-in, and programs for children.

User Fees Value to Memberships

As discussed in the trend section of this report user fees for Recreation and Arts/Culture programs continue to rise (City of Vaughan Department of Recreation and Culture User Fees 2000-2005), as does the number of families living below the low income cut off level (2001 Census). The 2001 census period indicated that there were 1,440 children aged 7-12yrs and 1,175 youth aged 13-18 years old living below the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut Off Level .

Refer to *Appendix 6: Children 0-18 Years Living in Low Income Families in York Region*

In the Vaughan youth needs assessment, when asked why they do not have a youth membership many youth cited cost as the reason. This barrier was also echoed by students involved in focus groups with Youth Councillor Mark Frisoli. In his report *State of the Youth Report 2006*, he outlined that membership costs and were not motivated to obtain a membership due to the lack of variety of programs offered/scheduled all prevented them from getting involved in recreation activities.

Transportation-Accessibility to Centres Programs

(a) Public transportation is the main method of transportation for youth in the City of Vaughan. Vaughan is served by three transit lines: VIVA, York Region Transit (YRT), and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC). With the rapid growth and development in the City of Vaughan the City's transit infrastructure is struggling to meet the needs. Through focus groups conducted at Vaughan High Schools students identified two concerns with the transit systems (State of the Youth Report 2006).

Fare—Students expressed concern over the fares for transit as well as having to pay an additional fare when travelling south of Steeles Avenue, as there is currently an agreement between York Region Transit and the TTC. Another concern is that student fares do not apply to post secondary students.

Frequency—Another concern with transit is the frequency of routes. Routes are cut back in the evenings and on weekends when youth use transit most. Many youth are forced to take public transit to and from school and are limited to what they can do after school as they must plan their schedules around the transit schedules. In new communities there is a lack of routes and service, and it is not uncommon to see youth waiting at transit stops on the side of major roads. c) Active Transportation – Another common method of transportation for youth is active transportation i.e. walking, rollerblading, biking, or skateboarding. Most Community Centres are located on major roads that are not conducive to active transportation and there are no paved trail networks that link to community centres, leaving bike racks in front of community centres empty.

(b) Driving – For those who are fortunate enough to be able to afford a vehicle, gas and insurance driving is the transportation method of choice as it is the most convenient and is not inconvenienced by barriers listed above.

The transportation barriers faced by youth could be the main reason as to why youth “hang out” in their local community and are often loitering in parks, malls, storefronts and the local Tim Horton's as the things they want to do are often too difficult for them to reach.

Discrimination

Many youth feel discriminated against because of their culture, age, style of dress, or sexual orientation. Girls and young women often object to the bias towards male sports and activities. Similar findings have been identified by Vaughan Youth Councillor report: State of Youth by Mark Frisoli, with youth speaking on cultural separation that exists in most schools that contributes to lack of participation.

Financial

Many youth will not participate in recreation if they cannot afford the proper clothing and equipment needed to participate, 5% of Youth in Vaughan are living below the low-income cut-off level (2001 Census).

Lack of Skills

A lack of skills, whether social, creative or physical will discourage youth from participating. For example; if a grade nine enters a drop-in basketball program that is being played by grade 12 students on the basketball team, they are likely to turn around and leave

Organizational Constraints

Some organizational constraints include loitering policies in substantiated community centres. Youth coming in to centres are often kicked out.

- Public perception i.e. A group of youth with baggy clothes and piercings are often viewed as a "Gang"
- Limited hours of operation.
- Liability policies that restrict non-traditional programs – i.e. Skateboarding, Adventure Activities
- Pressure on recreation programs to generate revenue.
- Staff that do not know how to engage and relate to youth

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

SHORT-TERM

The following recommendations have been identified as short-term and medium term supported by the research, survey results and the evaluation of current level of services established in this report and include the findings in the Youth City Councillor Reports from 2006 and 2007. It is recommended that an implementation strategy of high to moderate goals be carried out from 2009 to 2011 and to be articulated as goals and objectives, for community centres citywide as well as a review of budget implications for 2009 to 2011. The goals maintain the existing service base and provide strategies to increase outreach and services to youth in the community and identify the gaps and needs of youth in the City of Vaughan.

In addition, it is also recommended along side with the implementation strategy that a marketing and communications plan be implemented as a means to increase communication and dialogue with youth and provide information regarding youth opportunities and services utilizing a variety of media and progressive applications. It is recommended that an instrument be developed to evaluate the success of youth programs. The instrument should track numbers of both male and female youth as well as the numbers of ethnic minorities in youth programs to ensure the needs of the community are being met. Both qualitative and quantitative information should be gathered to measure progress and success. This report and survey have indicated some excellent baseline data and should be re-conducted in 2010 and 2011.

9.1 Develop Implement a Marketing and Communications Plan

It is recommended that a marketing and communications plan is implemented to promote youth programs and opportunities.

Creative and effective social marketing prompts have proven to be effective in motivating youth to participate and become more active in two ways; by reminding youth that there is an opportunity at hand to become more active, and by informing them of the health benefit from the activity being promoted to them. Materials such as periodical newsletters, flyers, special passes etc., create a flow of ongoing information that continually prompts to remind youth of opportunities available in their community. As well, information that is uniformly distributed begins a dialogue amongst youth in which they could collectively organize their participation. Distribution within the schools that would directly inform students would be the first step in successful communication of information.

When we began talking to youth about Recreation and Culture programs their first response was "I didn't know about that". Many parents are also unaware of programs offered for their

children and youth. This is likely why only 3% of the youth in the City of Vaughan are engaged in programs.

Currently, our main marketing is done through the Recreation and Culture Recreation Guide which is Fall/Winter and Spring/Summer sessions with limited number of flyer distribution regarding any special offers for children and youth.

The other marketing and information tool is the internet, through the City of Vaughan website. Neither the Guide or website contains elements that are marketed specifically to youth. A section listing youth programs, and drop-in schedules is available but not easily visible. Graphics that are targeted for youth and better placement of youth section (as it is now, youth listing of programs is in the last section prior to advertisement section) would draw better attention from youth about opportunities available to them.

Refer to Appendix 8: Examples of Youth Events/Marketing

- a. Youth Newsletter/ Website /News section in school newsletters would definitely engage youth with immediate access to information and become interactive with providing online feedback. A bi-monthly Youth newsletter distributed in all secondary schools would effectively prompt student interest in recreational activities, updates with Youth rooms and events. It would include quick updates and announcements regarding all of Vaughan's community centres including website information, changes, events and volunteer information. Active Living Coordinators and frontline staff would contribute all updated and current information regarding all centres. Youth Rooms would be another location that would advertise and support the website and newsletter. Partnerships with local libraries and school boards would strengthen the outreach of a youth newsletter and website initiative in Vaughan.
- b. Vaughan Youth Week is an optimal opportunity to include multicultural activities and demonstrate support for the diverse makeup within our growing communities. During the week numerous events and displays are held throughout the city to celebrate the achievements and contributions that youth make to our community. Youth Week-Event marketing should include a full week of print materials such as posters (community centres, schools, malls, community service organizations), Vaughan Youth week t-shirts to be worn by all admin. Staff at Centres, ALCs and youth staff during entire week, Youth week challenges for giveaways in youth rooms, and events, In School youth week workshops to encourage participation at local centres and inform students of health benefits and opportunities.

- c. Recreation Guide: Enhancing the Youth Section would garnish more attention and highlight youth opportunities available to residents, parents and youth. With distribution of over 85,000 citywide, increasing the attention to the youth section would have a significant impact in locating youth information and in informing those unaware of youth rooms, programs, events and volunteer opportunities available in their local community centres.
- d. Mall Demonstrations/information stations presents the opportunity to target outreach in the area indicated by results in the survey "Where do you hang out?" Shopping malls were evidently most popular, as it included shopping, exposure to the latest trends, and unlimited time to 'hang out' in the food court areas and seating areas located throughout most malls. Vaughan Mills(central-west) and Promenade Shopping Mall (East Vaughan) are the larger shopping centres in Vaughan that would be ideal for setting up a Youth lead information Booth. It should have youth present to promote information such as information on youth rooms, programs, youth events, memberships, volunteer and Job opportunities. The booth should be setup 2-3 times a year. (Fall, Early spring, Early summer)Demonstrations could also be coordinated to include a variety instructors from programs offered in the centres to attract people to the booth, as well as interact with instructor/youth to obtain more information. This also provides the opportunity for businesses that target youth to showcase their support by offering coupons or discounts to youth who participate in the demos, or pick up information.
- e. Youth Bulletin Board (placed on exterior of community centres and featured posters inside centre and within youth rooms) would also create a successful vehicle to inform youth and families for those who would not always want to walk into the centres to ask or pick up information on programs and services. Creating flyers and posters for recreational programs for posting INSIDE the community centres does not leave any room for connecting with the community outside of the centre. Inclusive participation-It is recommended that all print materials, outreach and distribution of information regarding youth opportunities, programs and memberships be promoted as inclusive opportunities for all.

9.2 Expand the Scope of Program Menu and Selection for Youth

It is recommended that Recreation and Culture department expands the scope of program menu and selection for youth.

As a means to expand program menu and provide a larger selection for youth, a variety of arts programs that reflect popular urban trends and techniques should be offered in our centres and as after-school programs at school locations. It was evident that responses from students surveyed repeatedly requested to have opportunities that were related to what was current. We could draw from artists, musicians, dancers and community organizations in our community as well as students in York University who have the skills necessary to lead creative programs. It is recommended to offer a variety of art programs/initiatives that reflect the responses indicated in the survey in each center to engage.

Music and Hip Hop continues to be increasingly popular with young people, it is recommended that a music mixer and turntables be brought in to youth rooms. This is also a small capital expense and will bring many youth out to the programs. Youth will be able to express themselves through music and they can “Spin” music at their own events. There are old youth members from Dufferin Clark Community Centre who have made careers in DJ’ing and youth from Maple who have produced hip-hop albums.

Programs and events embracing cultural diversity provides opportunities for recognizing and valuing differences in the cultural makeup of youth in our community and especially in our schools.

During his term as Vaughan Youth City Councillor in 2006 Mark Frisoli presented the “State of Youth Report”. With the open discussions and conversations he experienced with students in high schools across Vaughan, he notes the segregation of cultures present in the schools. Many pointed out that this was clearly visible when entering their cafeterias during lunchtime, where students were divided by their culture. Many confrontations and fights that broke out in schools were racially motivated. Suggestions made to promote integration were to get a better understanding of other cultures, through education and exposure to various cultural traditions through events and city wide festivals.

Times for Programs—Approximately 50% of youth surveyed indicate they would like programs offered from 6-9pm on weekdays. This is when the bulk of youth outreach and registered programs should take place. Weekdays 12-2pm and 3-6pm, and weekends 2-5pm and 6-9pm were all approximately 25%. Youth Drop-In and Outreach programs should be offered during these times. It is especially important to ensure programs are offered Friday and Saturday evenings as these are the times youth are looking for social opportunities. As mentioned previously in order for these to be successful, the programs need to be carefully planned with youth. Youth Outreach programs have not currently been offered in the summer months so there has been nothing offered for ages 12 and older.

Youth do not gain employment until 15-16 years old so ages 12-15 are left with nothing to do but “hang out” in parks and malls. This is also the time that the rate of youth offences rise. Not only are youth looking for things to do in the summer, their parents are looking for them to do something. It is not uncommon to hear “Why are there no summer programs for kids over 12” coming from a concerned parent echoing across the customer service desk at a community centre. Summer programs for the 12-15 age group would generate revenue that Summer Camps and programs have not yet targeted.

Leadership Programs—We currently offer Aquatics Leadership Courses, CIT training, Volunteer Opportunities and the NCCP. These are all excellent programs which enhance skill development of youth. Outdoor Recreation and challenge activities have been known to enhance leadership, social skills and self-esteem. In the summer months there should be some Outdoor Recreation opportunities available to youth. In particular youth who would not normally be able to have this type of experience through residential summer camp

Registered Programs—A variety of registered programs should be offered in line with the changing interests of youth. Sport and physical activity programs should be put in place to target girls specifically. Programs should be a balance by choices from the arts, culture, leadership, personal interest and sport and physical activity.

The following diagram indicates considerations to be taken when planning services for youth



9.3 Increase participation in youth physical activities, with an emphasis on female participation

By getting youth involved they are taking ownership and also learning leadership. In order for this to be successful we need locally engaged staff that are in touch with local youth and can design programs that respond to their particular demands. Another way to do this is to have Ad hoc Youth Committees at each Community Centre. This group of youth could help in program development, promotion, as well problem solving any issues particular to youth. This could be done under the umbrella of the Vaughan Youth Cabinet which will also help them in strengthening their mandate. Youth want to be involved: 36% of all youth surveyed indicated that they are interested in being part of a planning committee.

As indicated in the survey, when asked what programs youth would like offered at the community centre, responses varied and so should the schedule of activities. It was evident that through the survey that males tend to be more interested in sports and house Leagues and less interested in the creative programs. Females wanted to see programs like theme nights and creative programs and physical activities like swimming and skating likely due to the fact that they are not competitive. This should also be taken into consideration. It is recommended to have more female front line staff available and scheduled for all girls participation programming.

Community-wide initiatives involve many community sectors in a highly visible and multi-dimensional approach to increasing the awareness and benefits of physical activity. Also, communication of activities and events through mass media increases and broadens the awareness for participation as well as social support. It is recommended that physical activity components should be included with initiatives and events involving school board(s) both with the elementary and secondary levels.

Working with Other Groups—Youth outreach programs should be holistic in nature and offer a variety of services to address concerns facing youth. In the survey, youth indicated peer pressure, gangs, bullying, violence, personal appearance/weight, sexuality and employment as concerns. In the development of the outreach program youth serving agencies can be brought in to talk about these issues. For example: Youth Speak – Coffee House where youth serving agencies can facilitate relevant discussions. Another example is planning a game of floor hockey vs. the Police. While it is a fun activity, youth also gain a positive perception of police and vice versa.

Youth serving agencies must work together to meet the needs of youth and avoid competing with each other and duplicating their services. A coordinated effort is essential.

Youth engagement– The City of Vaughan has an excellent opportunity with dedicated space and outreach programs for youth. As indicated in the survey, youth prefer loosely structured activities such as hanging out with friends, listening to music, chatting via the Internet and

playing sports etc. Youth rooms are the perfect opportunity to engage youth as they provide a welcoming environment to these types of activities. We need to engage youth and get them involved in planning activities for themselves with staff as facilitators not organizers (please see appendix 3 Youth Gathering Places 5 Key Ingredients for Success and appendix 4 Process of youth engagement). For example instead of having youth room every day and evening, staff should be working with youth to develop a monthly schedule with a variety of activities.

9.4 Increase the number of active youth memberships

It is recommended that Youth Outreach programs remain affordable to youth. The \$14.00 (2007/2008) rate for youth memberships is reasonable. As outlined in the City of Vaughan Recreation and Culture User Fee and Pricing Policy Youth Outreach, Public Swimming, and Skating are listed as basic services and are subsidized. It is also recommended that youth memberships include added value features.

Public Swimming and Skating—These programs can be easily adapted to engage youth. For example; “Splash Bash” – This public swim could be done with some lights and a DJ with a few games. “Cool as Ice” – Public skate done to the sound of a DJ. Themed swims and skates with prizes should be considered.

It is recommended that these programs are covered with youth membership as an added value. 44% of females and 26% of males indicated they wanted to see swimming programs offered while approximately 30% of youth indicated they want to see skating. These programs are already being offered, they just need to be marketed and geared to engage youth.

Age—The age for youth needs to be clearly defined. Currently youth outreach is for ages 10-18 years. 10 year olds (Grade 5) and 18 year olds (grade 12) should not be in the same programs. They have completely different needs and are at completely different developmental stages and skill levels. Perhaps the youth room can be open for certain times to accommodate 10-12 year olds. It is recommended that youth outreach programs be for ages 12-18 years. Programming should be offered in the evenings Friday and Saturdays. Youth programming should provide a social outlet for youth and be catered to their interests. For example youth will not be interested in a sports program on a Friday or Saturday evening. They would be more interested in a themed swim, a movie night, a punk concert, or another special event. These types of programs should also be offered during holiday season and school breaks when youth are not in school and are looking for things to do. All programs must be welcoming and accessible to all youth regardless of sex, colour, culture, physical and abilities, or sexual orientation.

9.5 Increase youth participation in communities with limited access to program opportunities

Use of Schools—In new communities where access to programs is a barrier community schools should be used as a place to run drop-in youth programming. The school boards in Vaughan have been very supportive in providing use of space in partnership for no expense. As indicated in the survey approximately 70% of youth would like to see programs offered in their schools. The City of Vaughan should work with other youth serving agencies such as the YMCA, Girls on the Run, and Boys and Girls Clubs in developing programs in schools.

With school-based physical education being shortened to an alarming degree, an alternative to providing opportunities would be participation in community and city organized initiatives, (Youth Week, March Madness, Youth Drop-ins, Summer Active) and to have programs available in schools (after school programs). Developing opportunities that would be easily accessible in schools would increase participation and awareness as well as eliminate accessibility and transportation barriers. Each initiative would provide additional opportunities to inform youth of existing and upcoming programs being offered as well as an opportunity to recruit youth volunteers

It has been noted in the Progress of Canada's Children Report, that emphasis on cultural and recreation programs is most effective when they are community based and located in the communities where the youth reside. Also, when children and youth participate in cultural and sport programs they have better psychological health, improved family interactions and perform better academically. They relate better with their peers, and have a better awareness of their community. Such programs have made a substantive impact on non-productive and personally destructive and anti-social behaviour by youth

City Wide Active Events: In partnership with the school boards promoting physical activity, we would succeed in highlighting challenging events and activities as an excellent opportunity for the community to develop a greater understanding and acceptance of our youth.

The most effective ways to support youth and people in the community becoming more physically active are:

- Community-Wide initiatives (both community and schools)
- Social marketing prompts and periodical distribution/passes
- Recreation and Culture Active Newsletter and Website dedicated to Youth

Initiatives such as The York Region Character Community promotes that people recognize the importance of good character. This initiative is an integral part of every school curriculum and is supported by both school boards across the region, using the 11 attributes chosen by the community that strives to reflect the different sectors and diversity of our community. Annually, mid October is Character Community Week and is celebrated in York Region as a time for the community and schools to participate in activities highlighting the 11 attributes.

Endorsement of this initiative would also link our recreational centres with an important initiative already in place in elementary and secondary schools that would extend our inclusion supporting the importance of cultural respect and the celebration of diversity within our growing community.

MEDIUM-TERM

Upon completion of the recommended priority goals, further consideration will be required to continue to establish a strategy for youth for 2010 and 2011 to ensure the City of Vaughan continues to strive toward Citizen's First Through Service Excellence. The following recommendations are to be considered as future goals that would further enhance youth services and programming identified in the Youth needs survey.

Human Resources

Staff play a key role in the success of youth programming. Youth staff need to be able to relate to youth and be able to engage them in activities not simply supervise them. By doing this staff will be able to build positive relationships with youth and effectively engage them in programs. They will also be able to act as mentor for youth and provide guidance and support on a number of issues.

Youth outreach and staff should take a more active role in engaging youth and be involved in outreach i.e. promotion of programs at schools and places where youth hang out as indicated in this report. In planning, it will be important to ensure that adequate funding and resources are allocated for youth programs, and that a wide array of youth programs are offered. By having youth outreach staff involved in planning programs with youth they will take ownership in the program and it will improve the quality of the program offered. With the current structure of the Recreation and Culture Department we have the opportunity to know the community well and program accordingly.

It is also recommended that female staff are hired as youth outreach workers to outreach and engage female youth in programs.

Job descriptions should be reviewed and changes made to reflect responsibilities of youth staff as currently they are classified as program leaders who only supervise programs. Youth staff should be trained on how to effectively work with youth. Training should include how to engage youth, building relationships with youth, issues affecting youth i.e. gangs, violence, drugs, sexuality etc, and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention. It is also recommended that staff attend the annual conference for Youth Recreation staff "Ontario Provincial Consortium on Youth in Recreation" held in March by Parks and Recreation Ontario.

The City of Vaughan Recreation and Culture Department employs many skilled staff with specialized skills and certifications. We can draw on our internal expertise and skill bank when looking at training opportunities, as much training can be done internally.

Youth Volunteers and Training

It would be useful to have information on volunteer opportunities available to students prearranged with the school guidance counsellors early in the school year. With local community centres providing volunteer opportunities, the flow of information back to school and students could be facilitated by the youth volunteer, and in this capacity they would indirectly assist in restoring interest about the centre. Partnerships with the Community Information and Volunteer Centre of York Region lists the Vaughan Public Libraries as placement for volunteers. It is recommended to have the Recreation and Culture Department listed as supporting community volunteers.

The City of Vaughan is the second largest employer of youth after Canada's Wonderland and yet it is difficult for many youth to obtain employment with the City. Most of our part-time jobs pay \$10-\$16 an hour. Many of the jobs require youth to have specialized certification in order to be hired. For example; youth wanting to become a councilor in training must complete the learning to lead program, which costs \$145. Youth wanting to get involved in aquatics must complete aquatic leadership programs, which are very costly. This creates a financial barrier for those who cannot afford these certifications and are looking to gain employment. It is recommended to find suitable funding to offset the fees for these certifications, so that we can ensure that all youth have opportunity at obtaining these positions.

Funding for Youth Programs

It is recommended that a database of grants available to support youth programs be assembled. Grants should be sought to address new programs and capital items required to enhance youth programs.

It is recommended that through youth rooms and outreach programs that staff are able to work with youth in fundraising and seeking sponsorship to run their events and their programs. From a community development standpoint this approach builds capacity and ownership in youth and communities can see the positive accomplishments and contributions of youth. Youth Info Centre in Vaughan.

The City of Vaughan lacks many services available to youth. Most social services agencies (i.e. counseling, housing assistance, mental health, employment assistance and addiction services) who are funded to serve York Region are located outside of Vaughan in Newmarket, Markham, Aurora or Richmond Hill. Through this survey it was evident that youth in the City of Vaughan are facing many issues in today's changing society. Youth centres are a "one stop shop" for youth with Recreation, Social Services, Education, Employment, Health services all under one roof. To provide these services agencies work in partnership in service provision. Youth centres have been extremely successful in other municipalities Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Toronto all have youth centres. It is recommended that a youth centre be pursued in the City of Vaughan. An ideal location would be in a storefront or around the Vaughan Mills Mall as it is a central location and youth are always at the mall. The youth centre could also be the office of the Vaughan Youth Cabinet.

Appendix 1: Youth Needs Survey

YOUTH NEEDS SURVEY

The City of Vaughan Community Centres offer a YOUTH MEMBERSHIP FOR \$13/year. This allows you to participate in various activities at ANY of the Community Centres in Vaughan.

We need YOUR input so that we can ensure we are meeting your needs in our community. The information from this survey will help us create the programs and activities that reflect your requests and answers.

THANK YOU!

<p>1. Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female</p> <p>3. How do you get home from school?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> School bus <input type="checkbox"/> Bike <input type="checkbox"/> Walk <input type="checkbox"/> Drive <input type="checkbox"/> Transit <input type="checkbox"/> Get pick-up</p> <p>5. What would you like to see offered for youth at your local community centre?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Organized house league <input type="checkbox"/> Drop-in sports <input type="checkbox"/> Theme nights (music, movies) <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Pursuits <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming <input type="checkbox"/> Skating <input type="checkbox"/> Homework assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Creative programs (art, writing)</p> <p>7. Outside of school, what activities do you participate in?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sport <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to music <input type="checkbox"/> Homework <input type="checkbox"/> Movies <input type="checkbox"/> Hanging out with friends <input type="checkbox"/> Internet/computer <input type="checkbox"/> TV <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Video Games <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Pursuits (i.e. Adventure Challenges) <input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>	<p>2. Your Age?_____</p> <p>4. Do you have a Youth Membership?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no Why not?:</p> <hr/> <p>6. What times would you like them to be offered?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Weekends - <input type="checkbox"/> 2-5pm <input type="checkbox"/> 6-9pm <input type="checkbox"/> Weekdays - <input type="checkbox"/> 12-2pm <input type="checkbox"/> 3-6pm <input type="checkbox"/> Weeknights - <input type="checkbox"/> 6-9pm</p> <hr/> <p>8. Would you like to see programs offered in your school?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no What?:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>9. Where do you hang out?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mall <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee shop <input type="checkbox"/> Skateboard park <input type="checkbox"/> Community centre <input type="checkbox"/> Movie Theatre <input type="checkbox"/> Faith Centre <input type="checkbox"/> At home <input type="checkbox"/> Arena <input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p>	<p>10. In what area of Vaughan?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Woodbridge <input type="checkbox"/> Thornhill <input type="checkbox"/> Maple <input type="checkbox"/> Toronto If NOT Vaughan, why not?:</p>
<p>11. Where do you do your community services hours?</p>	<p>12. Would you be interested in being part of a youth committee of a planning group?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p>
<p>13. Which of these issues concern you as a youth today?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> peer pressure <input type="checkbox"/> gangs <input type="checkbox"/> lack of physical activity <input type="checkbox"/> violence/abuse <input type="checkbox"/> vandalism <input type="checkbox"/> bullying <input type="checkbox"/> education/school <input type="checkbox"/> sexuality <input type="checkbox"/> employment <input type="checkbox"/> relationship w/friends or family Other:</p>	<p>14. How often do you use your local library? For What?</p> <hr/> <hr/>
	<p>15. Are you willing to pay for youth programs?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no</p>

YOUTH NEEDS SURVEY - VAUGHAN SECONDARY SCHOOL

Survey taken April 24 2006

	50	63%
Females		
Total	80	

	30	38%
Males		

Females		
Males		

2. Age

		%
	14	2 4%
	15	18 36%
	16	14 28%
	17	8 16%
	18	7 14%

		%
	0	0%
	4	13%
	10	33%
	8	27%
	7	23%

9. Where do you hang out?

		%
Mall	40	80%
Coffee Shop	10	20%
Skateboard park	2	4%
Community Centre	9	18%
Movie Theatre	27	54%
Faith Centre	2	4%
At Home	41	82%
Arena	0	0%

3. How do you get home after school?

		%
School Bus	14	28%
Drive	4	8%
Walk	20	40%
Transit	4	8%
Bike	0	0%
Get Pick-up	15	30%

		%
	3	10%
	16	53%
	4	13%
	1	3%
	5	17%
	4	13%

Other

		%
Park, On my Street, School	2	4%
Friends House	6	12%
Outside	0	0%

4. Do you have a Youth Membership?

		%
Yes	1	2%
No	46	92%

		%
	5	17%
	23	77%

10. In what area of Vaughan?

		%
Woodbridge	4	8%
Thornhill	40	80%
Maple	5	10%
Toronto	5	10%

Why Not

		%
It Cost Money too expensive	2	4%
Not sure, Not interested in programs, Not interested, No Money	2	4%
Didn't know what it is	12	24%
No Programs I like	1	2%
Didn't know how to get one, don't feel like it, Don't care, Don't use it	1	2%
Don't have time	4	8%
What is it	1	2%
Too lazy, Didn't get one	1	2%

		%
	1	3%
	3	10%
	7	23%
	0	0%
	0	0%
	0	0%
	0	0%

11. Where do you do your community service hours?

		%
Food bank, Tutoring, Babysitting, Gymnastic Club, theatre, Figure Skating Club	1	2%
School	11	22%
Library	4	8%
Shelter, Reena Foundation, Hockey Tournaments	0	0%
Camp	2	4%
Hospital	3	6%
Hockey Team	0	0%
Community Centre	4	8%
Church	2	4%
Daycare	0	0%
Harmony Movement	0	0%
Hospice Vaughan	0	0%

5. What would you like to see offered for youth at your local community center?

		%
Organized house league	6	12%
Drop in sports	12	24%
Theme nights (music, movies)	26	52%
Outdoor pursuits	6	12%
Swimming	24	48%
Skating	22	44%
Homework Assistance	8	16%
Creative programs (art, writing)	21	42%

		%
	16	53%
	17	57%
	12	40%
	6	20%
	8	27%
	11	37%
	7	23%
	7	23%

12. Would you be interested in being a part of a youth committee of a planning group?

		%
Yes	23	46%
No	23	46%
Maybe	0	0%

6. What times would you like them to be offered?

		%
Weekdays 12 - 2pm	9	18%
Weekdays 3 - 6pm	11	22%
Weeknights 6pm - 9pm	22	44%
Weekends 6pm - 9pm	7	14%
Weekends 2pm - 5pm	12	24%

		%
	5	17%
	9	30%
	14	47%
	5	17%
	7	23%

13. Which of these issues concern you as a youth today?

		%
Peer pressure	38	76%
Gangs	28	56%
Bullying	32	64%
Violence/abuse	26	52%
Vandalism	13	26%
Lack of physical Activity	19	38%
Education/school	28	56%
Sexuality	15	30%
Employment	12	24%
Relationship w/friends or family	21	42%

7. Outside of school, what activities do you participate in?

		%
Sports	22	44%
Listen to music	43	86%
Homework	40	80%
Movies	39	78%
Hanging out with friends	43	86%
Internet/computer	43	86%
TV	41	82%
Volunteering	19	38%
Work	15	30%
Video Games	11	22%
Outdoor pursuits	5	10%

		%
	23	77%
	21	70%
	20	67%
	16	53%
	21	70%
	24	80%
	21	70%
	7	23%
	11	37%
	12	40%
	4	13%

Other

		%
Poverty around the world	1	2%

Other

		%
Musicals, Piano classes, Baking, Baby-sit, Shopping	1	2%
Dance	2	4%
Writing Music, Biking	0	0%
Singing	0	0%
Skateboarding	0	0%

		%
	0	0%
	2	7%
	1	3%
	1	3%
	1	3%

8. Would you like to see programs offered in your school?

		%
Yes	29	58%
No	16	32%

		%
	24	80%
	4	13%

14. How often do you use your local library? For What?

		%
Not often	8	16%
Once a month	8	16%
School Work	16	32%
Often	13	26%
Projects	4	8%
Never	4	8%
Always - Reading	3	6%
Computer, internet	1	2%
Once a Week	5	10%
Study	1	2%
1 to 2 times a month, homework, 1 every 2 months, 2 a week for reading, All the time Study once a year, often for work, take out books, once a week for movies	1	2%

Like What

		%
Gym Programs, Creative Arts, Movies, Skating, Art, Swimming	1	2%
Music Productions, Vocal Programs	0	0%
Music	0	0%
Home Ed	0	0%
Volleyball	0	0%
Dance	2	4%
Boxing	0	0%
Youth rooms, ball hockey, Tennis, Kick box	0	0%
Hockey	0	0%
Baseball	0	0%
Sports	1	2%
Football	0	0%
Soccer	0	0%
Swimming	0	0%
Bowling	0	0%

		%
	0	0%
	1	3%
	0	0%
	0	0%
	0	0%
	1	3%
	0	0%
	0	0%
	0	0%
	1	3%
	5	17%
	1	3%
	0	0%
	1	3%
	0	0%

15. Are you willing to pay for youth programs at your local community centre?

		%
Yes	25	50%
No	22	44%
Maybe	1	2%

YOUTH NEEDS SURVEY - WESTMOUNT C.I. & EMILY CARR

Survey taken March 28/06

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
Females	62	49%	47	43%
Total	126			

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
Males	64	51%	63	57%
Total	110			

2. Age

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
14	8	13%	12	26%
15	9	15%	14	30%
16	25	40%	10	21%
17	13	21%	8	17%
18	7	11%	2	4%

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
16	25%	21	33%	
13	20%	19	30%	
19	30%	20	32%	
8	13%	3	5%	
8	13%	0	0%	

3. How do you get home after school?

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
School Bus	2	3%	15	32%
Drive	12	19%	4	9%
Walk	24	39%	11	23%
Transit	12	19%	12	26%
Bike	0	0%	0	0%
Get Pick-up	15	24%	10	21%

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
1	2%	16	25%	
9	14%	12	19%	
39	61%	20	32%	
7	11%	10	16%	
0	0%	0	0%	
13	20%	8	13%	

4. Do you currently hold a Youth Membership at the Community Centres?

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
Yes	6	10%	1	2%
No	53	85%	46	98%

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
8	13%	20	32%	
59	92%	42	67%	

If so, which centre to you visit the most?

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
APCC	0	0%	21	45%
VVCC	0	0%	5	11%
CCC	0	0%	1	2%
FEBC	0	0%	0	0%
MCC	0	0%	0	0%
GAWCC	11	18%	0	0%
DCC	11	18%	0	0%
RCC	4	6%	0	0%
NONE	31	50%	23	49%

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
0	0%	32	51%	
0	0%	12	19%	
0	0%	1	2%	
0	0%	2	3%	
0	0%	0	0%	
17	27%	0	0%	
3	5%	0	0%	
10	16%	0	0%	
36	56%	17	27%	

5. What types of programs, activities or events would you like to see offered for youth at the Community Centre?

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
Organized House League	7	11%	10	21%
Drop in Sports	15	24%	11	23%
Employment Workshops	14	23%	6	13%
Theme Nights (ie:Movie Night)	20	32%	25	53%
Outdoor Pursuits(ie:Adventure Challenges)	19	31%	10	21%
Skating	29	47%	25	53%
Swimming	38	61%	20	43%
Homework Assistant/Tutoring	10	16%	13	28%
Certification Opportunities (ie: First Aid)	16	26%	6	13%
Instructional (ie: Dance)	24	39%	not on survey	
Other:				
Gym, Sports, Dodgeball, Karate, Guitar, Singing, Paintball, Dramatic Arts, Yoga, Art, Badminton, Fitness	1	2%	1	2%
Dance	0	0%	2	4%
Aerobics	0	0%	2	4%
Baking	2	3%	0	0%
Basketball	0	0%	0	0%
Starwars Conventions, Snowboarding Trips, Hockey, Ball Hockey, Soccer, Football	0	0%	0	0%
Drama, La Crosse, Skateboarding, Hockey, Volleyball, Boxing, Marital Arts	0	0%	0	0%

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
14	22%	22	35%	
25	39%	21	33%	
5	8%	8	13%	
11	17%	14	22%	
8	13%	4	6%	
21	33%	25	40%	
26	41%	19	30%	
4	6%	7	11%	
7	11%	4	6%	
2	3%	not on survey		
	0%			
0	0%	0	0%	
0	0%	0	0%	
0	0%	0	0%	
0	0%	4	6%	
0	0%	1	2%	
1	2%			

6. What times would you like to see programs/activities being offered?

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
Weekdays 12 - 2pm	3	5%	2	4%
Weekdays 3 - 6pm	15	24%	21	45%
Weeknights 6pm - 9pm	36	58%	21	45%
Weekends 6pm - 9pm	10	16%	10	21%
Weekends 2pm - 5pm	17	27%	16	34%
Other: Summer	0	0%	0	0%

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
6	9%	8	13%	
21	33%	19	30%	
21	33%	19	30%	
16	25%	10	16%	
7	11%	20	32%	
1	2%	0	0%	

7. Would you be willing to pay to participate in programs for youth at the Community Centre?

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
Yes	47	76%	25	53%
No	10	16%	18	38%
Depends	1	2%	0	0%
Maybe	1	2%	0	0%

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
56	88%	37	59%	
8	13%	26	41%	
0	0%	0	0%	
0	0%	1	2%	

8. Outside of school, which activities do you participate in?

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
Sports	21	34%	15	32%
Volunteering	32	52%	17	36%
Family Activities	24	39%	16	34%
Work	20	32%	10	21%
Working out	30	48%	14	30%
Homework	49	79%	36	77%
Internet/Computer	49	79%	28	60%
Hanging out with friends	56	90%	36	77%
Watching T.V	49	79%	32	68%
Playing Video Games	4	6%	4	9%
Listening to Music	51	82%	33	70%
Other:				
Reading, Sewing, Drawing, Writing Songs, Shopping, Babysitting, Karate, Drama	1	2%	1	2%
Yoga, Dance, Piano	2	3%	2	4%
Acting	0	0%	0	0%
Guitar	0	0%	0	0%

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
	45	70%	44	70%
	18	28%	12	19%
	13	20%	11	17%
	17	27%	13	21%
	27	42%	20	32%
	31	48%	23	37%
	38	59%	26	41%
	43	67%	32	51%
	36	56%	36	57%
	26	41%	29	46%
	39	61%	30	48%
		0%		0%
	0	0%	0	0%
		0%	0	0%
	1	2%	0	0%
	1	2%	0	0%

9. Where do you hang out?

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
Shopping Mall	47	34%	31	66%
Restaurants	34	55%	13	28%
Movie Theatre	43	69%	31	66%
Faith Centre	2	3%	1	2%
Community Centre	3	5%	3	6%
At Home	46	74%	29	62%
At Friend's House	52	84%	29	62%
Skateboard Park	2	3%	3	6%
Ice Rink/Arena	2	3%	3	6%
Other:			0	0%
Downtown	2	3%	0	0%
Gym	2	3%	0	0%
Tim Horton's, Curling Rinks, Soccer Field, Park, Streets	1	2%	1	2%
Bars	0	0%	2	4%
Instrument Stores	0	0%	0	0%
Outside	0	0%	0	0%

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
	28	44%	32	51%
	16	25%	7	11%
	29	45%	30	48%
	1	2%	4	6%
	5	8%	17	27%
	30	47%	29	46%
	43	67%	31	49%
	6	9%	10	16%
	7	11%	16	25%
		0%		0%
		0%	0	0%
	1	2%	0	0%
	0	0%	1	2%
		0%	0	0%
	1	2%	0	0%
	1	2%	0	0%

10. What area do you hang out in?

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
Woodbridge	4	6%	38	81%
Thornhill	53	85%	1	2%
Maple	5	8%	3	6%
Toronto	19	31%	22	47%

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
	5	8%	54	86%
	62	97%	4	6%
	4	6%	7	11%
	12	19%	18	29%

If not in Thornhill, why not?

		%		%
Boring	4	6%	5	11%
Klienbergl	0	0%	0	0%
It's Soft	1	2%		0%
Dance Studio/Friends	1	2%	2	4%
More People	1	2%	0	0%
Richmond Hill/Friends	1	2%	0	0%
Not easy to get around, not enough within walking distance	0	0%	1	2%

		%		%
	0	0%	2	3%
	0	0%	2	3%
	0	0%	0	0%
	0	0%	0	0%
	0	0%	0	0%
	0	0%	0	0%
	0	0%	0	0%

11. Which of the following issues do you feel concern youth today?

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
Peer Pressure	37	60%	23	49%
Relationship with friends	30	48%	18	38%
Employment	15	24%	7	15%
Education/School	30	48%	18	38%
Gangs	20	32%	22	47%
Bullying	21	34%	19	40%
Lack of physical activity	23	37%	16	34%
Sexuality	23	37%	14	30%
Abuse/Violence	27	44%	23	49%
Other:				
Self Image	1	2%	0	0%
Appearance	1	2%	0	0%
Lack of intelligence/view of world acute	1	2%	0	0%
Terrorism, Guns & Knives	0	0%	0	0%
Drugs	0	0%	1	2%

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
	25	39%	22	35%
	15	23%	4	6%
	8	13%	10	16%
	20	31%	11	17%
	22	34%	28	44%
	16	25%	17	27%
	12	19%	11	17%
	10	16%	12	19%
	10	16%	12	19%
		0%		0%
	0	0%	0	0%
	0	0%	0	0%
	0	0%	0	0%
	1	2%	1	2%
	1	2%	2	3%

12. Would you be interested in sitting on a Youth Committee or planning Group?

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
Yes	37	60%	17	36%
No	19	31%	26	55%

	Wesmount C.I.	%	Emily Carr	%
	25	39%	17	27%
	34	53%	41	65%

YOUTH NEEDS SURVEY - WOODBRIDGE COLLEGE

Survey taken April 18 2006

Females	90	68%
Total	132	

Males	42	32%
Total		

Females

Males

2. Age

		%
14	6	7%
15	28	31%
16	27	30%
17	16	18%
18	8	9%

	%
4	10%
12	29%
11	26%
6	14%
7	17%

9. Where do you hang out?

		%
Mall	65	72%
Coffee Shop	26	29%
Skateboard park	4	4%
Community Centre	9	10%
Movie Theatre	58	64%
Faith Centre	8	9%
At Home	63	70%
Arena	3	3%

	%
19	45%
5	12%
2	5%
9	21%
17	40%
4	10%
28	67%
6	14%

3. How do you get home after school?

		%
School Bus	61	68%
Drive	6	7%
Walk	12	13%
Transit	10	11%
Bike	0	0%
Get Pick-up	9	10%

	%
25	60%
3	7%
6	14%
4	10%
0	0%
5	12%

Other

		%
Park, On my Street, School, Church, Internet	4	4%
Café	5	6%
Friends House	0	0%
Outside	0	0%

	%
1	2%
2	5%
1	2%

4. Do you have a Youth Membership?

		%
Yes	3	3%
No	82	91%

	%
12	29%
28	67%

Why Not

		%
It Cost Money & not enough activities	1	1%
Not sure, Not interested in programs, Not interested, No Money	1	1%
Didn't know what it is	10	11%
Never thought of it	2	2%
Didn't know how to get one, don't feel like it, Don't care, Don't use it	1	1%
Don't have time	1	1%
Didn't know what it is	15	17%
Too lazy, Didn't get one	1	1%

	%
1	2%
0	0%
10	24%
0	0%
0	0%
2	5%
0	0%
1	2%

10. In what area of Vaughan?

		%
Woodbridge	84	93%
Thornhill	1	1%
Maple	6	7%
Toronto	10	11%

	%
40	95%
0	0%
1	2%
4	10%

11. Where do you do your community service hours?

		%
Sports Village, Hockey Arena, Vet, Amica Retirement Residence, Gym, Seniors, Library, Tutoring, Hospital	1	1%
School	35	39%
Library	4	4%
Youth Association, Camp, Food bank, Music Academy, Thrift Store, Woodbridge Fair, Hospital, Walk in Clinic, Vaughan Camps	1	1%
Humber College, Ice Sports	7	8%
Old Age Home	0	0%
Toronto marathon	0	0%
Hockey Team	0	0%
Community Centre	3	3%
Church	9	10%
Daycare	5	6%
Harmony Movement	0	0%
Hospice Vaughan	0	0%

	%
1	2%
2	5%
1	2%
1	2%
2	5%
0	0%
0	0%
2	5%
7	17%
0	0%
0	0%
0	0%

5. What would you like to see offered for youth at your local community center?

		%
Organized house league	11	12%
Drop in sports	20	22%
Theme nights (music, movies)	51	57%
Outdoor pursuits	17	19%
Swimming	52	58%
Skating	33	37%
Homework Assistance	21	23%
Creative programs (art, writing)	42	47%

	%
16	38%
22	52%
14	33%
13	31%
12	29%
14	33%
8	19%
10	24%

12. Would you be interested in being a part of a youth committee of a planning group?

		%
Yes	31	34%
No	51	57%
Maybe	1	1%

	%
9	21%
31	74%
0	0%

6. What times would you like them to be offered?

		%
Weekdays 12 - 2pm	18	20%
Weekdays 3 - 6pm	7	8%
Weeknights 6pm - 9pm	54	60%
Weekends 6pm - 9pm	14	16%
Weekends 2pm - 5pm	19	21%

	%
14	33%
6	14%
15	36%
12	29%
12	29%

7. Outside of school, what activities do you participate in?

		%
Sports	26	29%
Listen to music	73	81%
Homework	60	67%
Movies	65	72%
Hanging out with friends	67	74%
Internet/computer	61	68%
TV	69	77%
Volunteering	20	22%
Work	27	30%
Video Games	17	19%
Outdoor pursuits	7	8%

	%
28	67%
23	55%
18	43%
26	62%
22	52%
28	67%
29	69%
8	19%
18	43%
24	57%
9	21%

Other

		%
Karate, Piano, Singing, Swimming Sleeping, Walking, Volleyball, Photography, Electric Guitar, Drawing, Church, Cricket,	1	1%
Dance	4	4%
Skateboarding, Paintball	0	0%

	%
1	2%
0	0%
1	2%

8. Would you like to see programs offered in your school?

		%
Yes	67	74%
No	19	21%

	%
29	69%
9	21%

Like What

		%
Art, Ballet, Fun Stuff, Sports, Band Shows, Tennis, Dance Club	0	0%
Movie night, Hair styling, break dancing	1	1%
Music	1	1%
Home Ed	0	0%
Art	5	6%
Dances	6	7%
Skating	2	2%
Youth rooms, ball hockey, Tennis, Kick box	0	0%
Hockey	0	0%
Baseball	0	0%
Sports	5	6%
Football	0	0%
Volleyball	0	0%
Swimming	6	7%
Cricket	0	0%

	%
0	0%
0	0%
0	0%
0	0%
0	0%
1	2%
0	0%
0	0%
0	0%
3	7%
0	0%
1	2%
0	0%
1	2%

15. Are you willing to pay for youth programs at your local community centre?

		%
Yes	40	44%
No	46	51%

	%
13	31%
26	62%

Appendix 3: City of Vaughan, Youth Drop-In Activities

Youth / DROP-IN ACTIVITIES 161

DROP-IN ACTIVITIES: September 2, 2008 - March 13, 2009

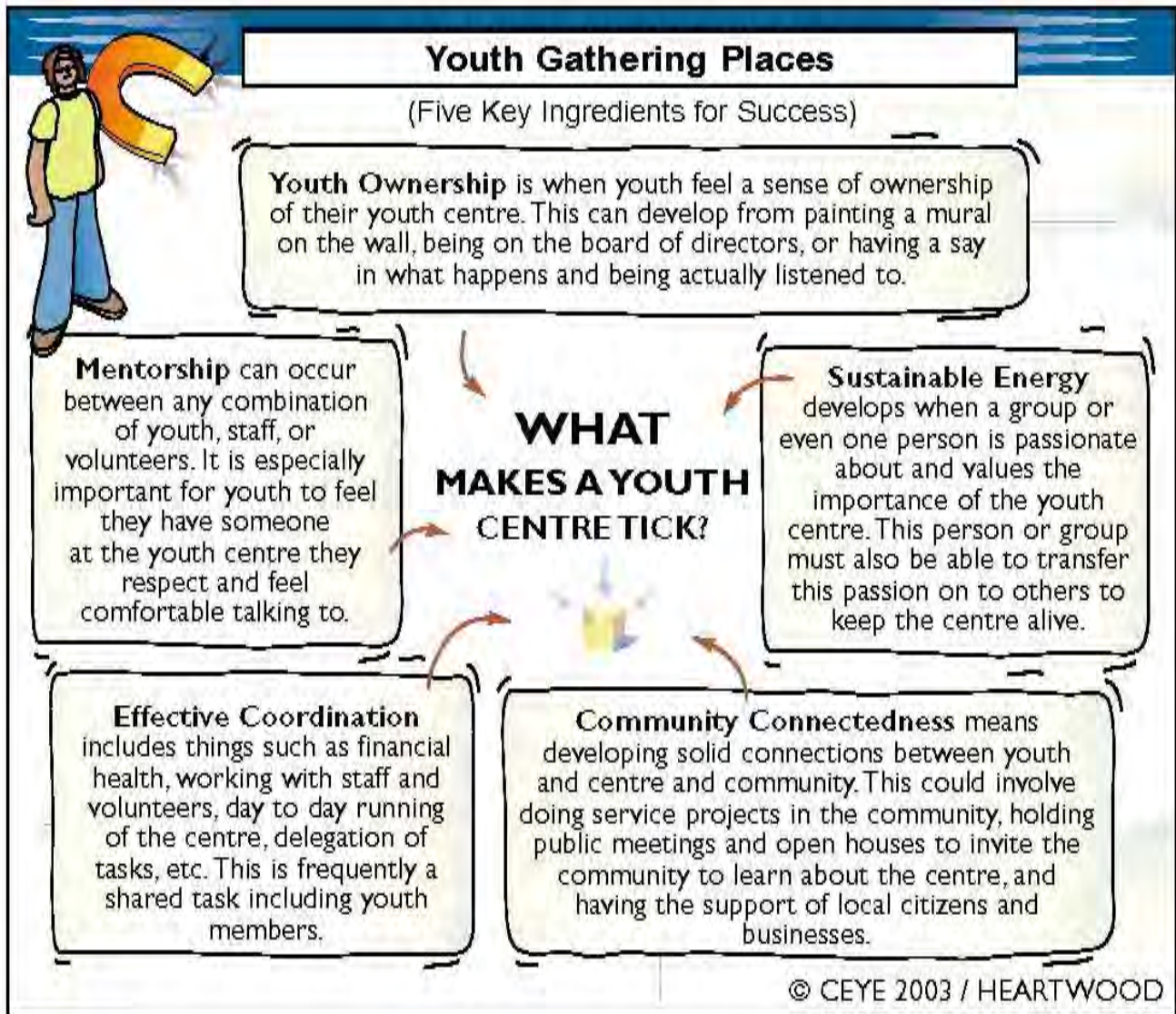
Program	Age	Activity	Days	Time
AL PALLADINI COMMUNITY CENTRE: 9201 Islington Ave., Woodbridge - Tel: 905-832-8564				
NEW Friday Night Dance Series	18 years+	Dance Class Trial	Friday (Oct 3 - Nov 28 only)	7:30-9:00pm (Fee: \$10 pay-as-you-go)
Lunch Program	10 - 17 years	Sports/Drop-In	Monday - Thursday	11:00-11:45am
Sports	10 - 17 years	Open Gym	Monday - Thursday	2:30-5:00pm
CHANCELLOR COMMUNITY CENTRE: 350 Ansley Grove Rd., Woodbridge - Tel: 905-832-8620				
Basketball	10 - 17 years	Gym	Mon - Wed, Fri Thursday	3:30-6:00pm 3:30-5:00pm
Sports	10 - 17 years	Gym	Saturday	1:00-3:00pm
Youth Room	10 - 17 years	Drop-In	Monday - Friday	4:00-6:30pm
DUFFERIN CLARK COMMUNITY CENTRE: 1441 Clark Ave. W., Concord - Tel: 905-832-8554				
Youth Room	10 - 17 years	Drop-In	Monday - Friday	3:00-8:00pm
Youth Sports	10 - 17 years	Lunch Program	Monday - Friday	11:30am-2:00pm
		Open Gym	Monday - Friday	3:00-6:00pm
FATHER ERMANNIO BULFON COMMUNITY CENTRE: 8141 Martin Grove Rd., Woodbridge - Tel: 905-879-8732				
Youth Room	10 - 17 years	Drop-In	Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri	5:00-7:00pm
Youth Sports	10 - 17 years	Basketball	Monday - Friday	4:00-6:00pm
GARNET A. WILLIAMS COMMUNITY CENTRE: 501 Clark Ave. West, Thornhill - Tel: 905-832-8552				
Basketball	14 - 17 years	Gym	Friday	7:30-9:30pm
MAPLE COMMUNITY CENTRE: 10190 Keele St., Maple - Tel: 905-832-2377				
Basketball	10 - 17 years	Gym	Monday - Friday	4:00-6:00pm
Youth Room	10 - 17 years	Drop-In	Monday - Friday	11:00am-1:00pm; 4:00-7:00pm
ROSEMOUNT COMMUNITY CENTRE: 1000 New Westminster Dr., Thornhill - Tel: 905-709-4597				
Lunch Program	10 - 17 years	Youth Room	Monday - Friday	11:30am-2:00pm
Youth Room	10 - 17 years	Drop-In	Monday - Friday	3:30-6:00pm
Youth Sports	10 - 17 years	Open Gym	Monday - Friday	3:30-6:00pm
VELLORE VILLAGE COMMUNITY CENTRE: 1 Villa Royale Ave., Woodbridge - Tel: 905-832-8544				
Basketball	10 - 17 years	Gym	Mon, Wed	4:00-6:00pm
Lunch Program	10 - 17 years	Youth Room	Mon, Wed, Fri	11:00am-1:00pm
Youth Room	10 - 17 years	Drop-In	Mon, Wed	6:00-8:00pm
		Family / Youth*	Sunday	11:30am-1:00pm
Youth Sports	10 - 17 years	Gym	Tue & Thu	5:00-7:00pm
		Gym	Saturday	2:00-4:00pm
		Gym	Sunday	1:00-3:00pm
WOODBIDGE POOL & MEMORIAL ARENA: 5020 Highway 7, Woodbridge - Tel: 905-832-8576				
Drop-In Water Polo*	12 years+	Pool	Wednesday	7:30 - 8:30pm

*Please Note: Recreational Swimming fees apply. Youth membership not applicable.

SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

YOUTH DROP-IN ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS ARE \$15 EACH, AND CAN BE PURCHASED AT ANY CITY OF VAUGHAN COMMUNITY CENTRE.

Appendix 4: Youth Gathering Places - Five Key Ingredients for Success



Appendix 5: Process of Youth Engagement

PROCESS OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

(a model)



Centre of Excellence
for Youth Engagement

Initiating Factors How and why youth first became engaged / involved

Want to:

- personal interest / passion / enjoyment
- professional / personal development / benefit
- boredom
- inspired / encouraged by another person (e.g. family member, peers, role-model, youth friendly advocate) or event
- seeking social networks
- youth friendly environment (e.g. food being offered, good people already involved)
- not satisfied with current state of affairs
- have a voice / make a difference

Need to:

- sense of obligation
- sense of guilt
- sense of responsibility
- values / beliefs
- prove something
- norm / natural progression

Have to:

- family initiated – parent / guardian signed you up
- school initiated mandatory community involvement
- post-secondary application requirement

GET INVOLVED



MOTIVATION + OPPORTUNITIES

Made aware of opportunity through advertisements (e.g., posters, TV, radio)

Participation in / with other activities or organizations leads to more opportunities

Influenced by another person – peers, family, teachers, youth-friendly advocate, etc.

Sustaining Factors What keeps youth engaged / involved

Individual Factors

- enjoyment / personal interest / passion
- personal rewards / benefits
- sense of responsibility / commitment / obligation
- need for acceptance / raise
- values / beliefs
- supportive peers / family
- working towards a goal
- social aspects
- need to

Organizational Factors

- provides opportunities
- youth friendly environment
- supportive environment
- role models
- recognition of accomplishments

Community and Societal Factors

- make significant, sustainable changes in the community
- problems in society and community
- nothing else to do in one's community

Barriers

What prevents youth from becoming and / or staying engaged / involved

PERSONAL BARRIERS

- time
- indifference
- disillusionment
- lack of confidence
- personal limitations
- limited capacity
- unrealistic goals
- life circumstances
- individual personalities
- negative experiences

SCHOOL / FAMILY / ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS

- parent disapprove / don't provide support (financial)
- organizational environment is not youth friendly
- organizational structure
- activities are not youth friendly
- group dynamics
- limited opportunities
- discrimination
- school structure
- limited resources

COMMUNITY / SOCIETAL BARRIERS

- lack of guidance / support from adults
- lack of opportunities and knowledge of opportunities
- lack of respect for youth
- limited community resources
- ageism
- attitudes
- media

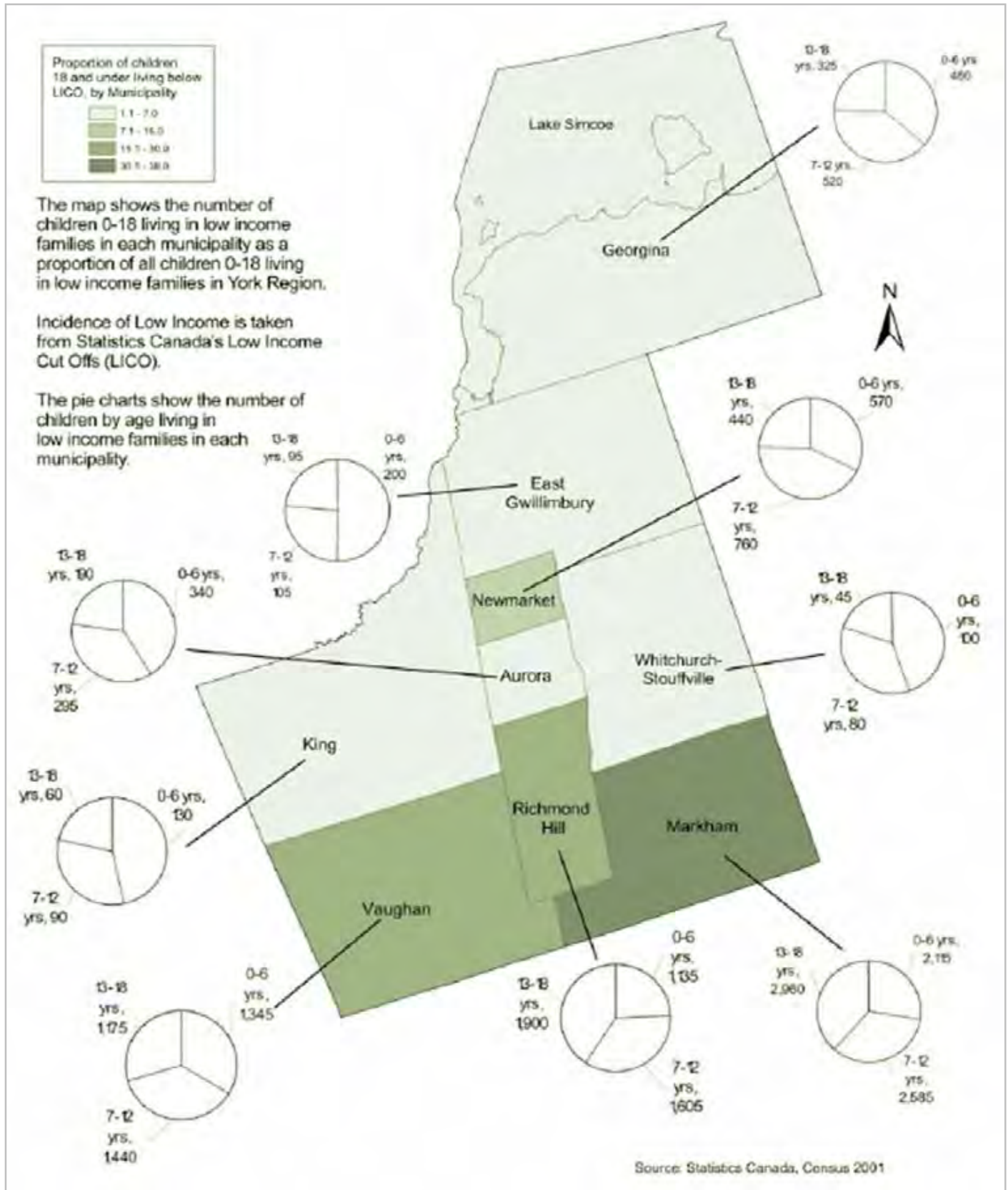
GLOBAL / STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

- poverty
- consumerism



The Centres of Excellence are a Health Canada funded program. The opinions expressed in this model do not necessarily reflect those of Health Canada.

Appendix 6: Children 0-18 Years Living in Low Income Families in York Region



Creativity seen as economic key

Strategy aimed at luring the best and brightest
Report urges creative thinking to involve youth

VANESSA LU
AND KERRY GILLESPIE
STAFF REPORTERS

If Toronto invests time, money and energy to turn itself into a creative city, the economic and social benefits could be huge, especially for at-risk youth in need of good-paying jobs.

That's the message from Karen Carter of Education Connections, a non-profit organization that focuses on arts education for youth across Toronto.

Carter was pointing to tangible results that could come from the implementation of a new report, *Imagine a Toronto — Strategies for a Creative City*, released yesterday, that urges better strategic planning and funding to make the creative economy stronger.

Commissioned by Premier Dalton McGuinty and Mayor David Miller, the report specifically calls for a co-ordinating entity or umbrella group to nurture a creative city.

"Film means more than being in front of a camera. Music means more than being the artist singing in the studio,"

said Carter. "There is a huge range of opportunities that are economically viable and interesting and creative."

But too often kids are not exposed to different options when it comes to career counselling or they don't do well in a traditional classroom setting.

"You need government money to provide the structure and you need the private sector to provide the apprenticeships and opportunities — to think outside the box for training," Carter said.

A perfect example is a web-design program in Regent Park, where youth have the skills but not the credentials like a design degree, so they are being shut out of jobs.

"Give them an opportunity, an apprenticeship," Carter said of private sector firms. "A lot are not expecting to get that dream job right away. They're willing to start in the mailroom."

This type of training would lay the groundwork to build a strong creative economy, where creativity is key to developing wealth. But first, cities must craft the right conditions.

How a creative economy builds new value

What is a creative economy?

It's an economy where economic activity depends on creativity or innovation to generate wealth. Specifically, it's that additional input of a creative or innovative spark that produces value, and in the global marketplace, that's becoming more and more important.

"In the world of creativity, it's not something you can magically construct. I think what you have to do is create the place, to create the setting where those kinds of things can happen," said John Honderich, special adviser to the Premier on the future of the GTA and Creative Cities, and an author of the report.

With the world becoming a global economy, the best and the brightest can choose to live anywhere — and the report's authors want to make sure Toronto is the destination of choice.

"This project... is a blueprint for transforming Canadian cities into creative hubs. It is done by cutting creativ-

ity loose from the box thinking that has relegated it to the arts," said Toronto's poet laureate Pier Giorgio di Cicco at a news conference yesterday.

In fact, the authors, led by University of Toronto professor Meric Gertler, argue a creative job can span many fields from advertising, publishing, film and television to science, biotechnology and even automotive design.

And Toronto is ideally positioned with its diverse and educated talent pool, cultural mix, liveable neighbourhoods and high quality of life.

"There is time, but we have to move quickly," he said, noting other cities have the exact same plan.

Appendix 8: Examples of Youth Events/Marketing

WIDE ANGLE YOUTH MEDIA PRESENTS...

The 2nd Annual WHO ARE YOU? YOUTH MEDIA FESTIVAL

MARCH 31, 2007 AT CENTERSTAGE
700 North Calvert Street, Baltimore, MD 21202
DOORS OPEN AT 1PM
SHOW BEGINS AT 2PM
Emceed by Anthony McCarthy and the Youth Festival Committee

FREE ADMISSION - RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
Call CENTERSTAGE for tickets: 410.332.0033

EXHIBITION DATES
MARCH 20 - APRIL 8, 2007
Gallery hours 4-6 pm, no tickets required.

GALLERY TALKS
FREE TO THE PUBLIC.
Please call 410.338.0947 for reservations

DISCUSSION WITH MARK ALICE DURANT:
Artist and Writer, Professor Visual Arts Department UMBC
MARCH 22, 2007 6-7pm

DIALOGUE WITH LAMARR SHIELDS
FEATURING BALTIMORE URBAN DEBATE LEAGUE:
Co-founder and President Urban Leadership Institute, Radio Host 92Q
APRIL 5, 2007 5-6pm

Everyone has a story to tell.

SPONSORED BY: **G.1440** www.g1440.com

ADDITIONAL FUNDING PROVIDED BY: Willora G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, Maryland State Arts Council, And Many Generous Individuals

MEDIA SPONSOR: **Comcast**

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HOSTED BY: **CENTERSTAGE**

Wide Angle Youth Media
2524 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
410.338.0947
www.wideanglemedia.org

Dancekool's famous street dance showcases & battles

DANCEKOOOL

vol. 16

20.8.2006
HAVANA CLUB
3:00PM OPEN
ALL AGES EVENT

2 ON 2 BBOY BATTLE
2 ON 2 HIP HOP BATTLE
[Prize: \$400 cash for each comp + the right to enter the Grand Final]

STUDENT SHOWCASE
[Classes from Wabana's St. Jazz, Mac's Hip Hop, Trapski's Locking & Popping, Unique Crew, and Bala DZ -deutschtanz]

DANCE GROUP SHOWS
[Dancekool Crew (DK instructors), Psalm (Groova Sydney 2006 Winner), S-Blow, Teriyaki Paradise, Sakura, Jai3, Rhapsody, Miestas and more]

HAVANA CLUB DE LUXE
163 OXFORD BY DARLINGHURST

DOOR OPEN 3:00PM -
COMP REGISTRATION 2:00PM -
GENERAL ENTRY: \$15
ADVANCED TICKET: \$12
COMP ENTRY: \$5 / PERSON
I.D. REQUIRED FOR PURCHASING ALCOHOL, LIMITED CAPACITY

GIVEAWAYS INCLUDE:
CLOTHING, DAVE CHAPPEL'S BLOCK PARTY DVD, RIZE DVD, LATEST BBOYS DVD, UK FREE LESSON CARD, AND MORE

WWW.DANCEKOOOL.COM

SPLASH SKATE SURF & BEACH SKATE COMPETITION

FRIDAY OF NOVEMBER

BEGINNERS AMATEURS IN-LINERS ADVANCED ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS

CALL: 51.6633
BD
DH

Red Bull

BOOST presents

LAST GIRL STANDING

FEMALE SKATEBOARD JAM

-sat 22 april 2006
practice 11:00 a.m. / contest 1:00 p.m.

-at boost skatepark
district stuttgart - bad cannstatt
frachtstr. 25

by car: direction to Daimler-Stadion - follow Mercedesstr.
turn left before shell petrol station -
turn right at „toom“ building center into Güterstr. -
follow street for 500 m into a brick road and here we go!

-after party at mata hari
22 april 2006 from 10 p.m.
mata hari, geißstr. 3, 70173 stuttgart-city

prize 1-3:
free participation at all european skateboard championships 2006 + stuff

AT BOOST SKATEPARK STUTTGART / BAD CANNSTATT

FORVERT hallo21

element etnies EASTPARK

Maxxis

hall eleven AVEAL

Appendix 9: Student Price Card

SPC CARD Brand Relevancy Ontario

- Analyzing 2536 responses. Male/Female 13-26 yrs
- Presentation generated on November 15, 2005

Q.1 On a monthly basis, where do you spend most of your money? (Choose as many as apply)

Choice	Count	Percent of Sample
Clothes	1951	76.9%
Fast Food	1321	52.1%
Movie (Theatre)	1114	43.9%
Dining Out	995	39.2%
Cell Phone	920	36.3%
Shoes	851	33.6%
Cosmetics	832	32.8%
Books and magazines	652	25.7%
Movies (Rentals)	627	24.7%
School Supplies	622	24.5%
Other	608	24.0%
CDs	604	23.8%
Transportation (local)	561	22.1%
Tuition	470	18.5%
DVDs	428	16.9%
Electronics	408	16.1%
Night Clubs	395	15.6%
Gasoline	359	14.2%
Sporting goods	326	12.9%
Video Games	322	12.7%
Rent and Utilities	267	10.5%
Concerts	201	7.9%
Music Downloads	168	6.6%
Insurance	132	5.2%
Travel	110	4.3%
Auto Repair	48	1.9%

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STATE OF THE YOUTH REPORT 2006

Written By: Mark Anthony Frisoli
Vaughan Youth City Councillor
City of Vaughan
June 2006

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Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank the City of Vaughan and the Vaughan Youth Cabinet for making the idea of a Youth City Councillor a reality. Through the creation of the Youth City Councillor position, the voices of Vaughan's young people have been heard and through this report their ideas, voices and opinions have come to life.

The scope of this report includes the voices of high-school students from all parts of the city, from all grades, from both school boards and from all of Vaughan's different cultures.

The vast scope of this report has been made possible through the following Vaughan high schools: Maple High, Vaughan Secondary, Emily Carr, Woodbridge College and Father Bressani CHS. Had it not been for the various teachers and principals who allowed me to speak with their students, this report would not have the diversity or number of student voices which made it possible.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank the over 500 high school students who all contributed to this report. After speaking to a class at Maple High the teacher was surprised that her class was so engaged and so openly offered their opinions when such a case was a rarity amongst that class. It is sometimes difficult to engage a high-school class in a discussion and get students to speak their minds. It was through their willingness and cooperation that they have all contributed to this report and dared to Be Heard!

Preamble

When the Vaughan Youth City Councillor position was created by the Vaughan Youth Cabinet and City of Vaughan, it had a clear mandate to represent the youth of Vaughan and get the voices of Vaughan's young people heard. It was in the first State of the Youth address that a clear mandate was given to reach out to local high-schools and this report is the result.

This report includes the voices of classrooms from half of Vaughan's high schools and over 500 students. This report gave students the opportunity to have their say and make their voices heard. This report was their way to not simply learn about politics but play a role in politics.

Despite the amount of students and diversity, there were common themes and opinions amongst students. Those themes are represented in the various sections of this report: *The Changing face of Vaughan, Law Enforcement, Recreation, Public Transit, Community Safety and Post-Secondary.*

This report aims to present the various opinions, ideas and perceptions of youth. Not only are the results of the student opinions given but suggestions and ideas are also given as a way to act on those opinions and better the lives of Vaughan's youth.

Methodology

The information for this report, unlike others, is not based on the results of a survey; this report is the result of having open discussions and conversations with numerous classrooms. Youth were given the opportunity to discuss issues important to them and sometimes questions had to be asked which would spark discussion if youth felt the issue to be important.

No formal votes or tabulation were given to the various perceptions and opinions in this report. It is based on general consensus of the class and of the trends common amongst the various classrooms.

Just as this report was conducted, the aim of this report is not to list numbers and statistics but to give an in-depth view of the state of Vaughan's youth.

The Changing Face of Vaughan

As one of Canada's fastest growing municipalities and with over 240,000 people Vaughan is one of the most diverse and multicultural cities in the GTA. A recent report released by York Region indicates that by 2013 100% of the Region's economic growth will derive from new immigrants. As Vaughan grows and attracts more and more people from across the globe the city will become more diverse and multicultural.

Youth are seeing this growing trend and the changing nature of our city by often times using the words diverse and evolving to describe Vaughan. However, along with this growing trend youth identified another growing trend; the segregation of cultures in their schools.

Every classroom had a general consensus that segregation exists in their school and in their community. Many students would point out the situation during lunch time; stating that it is clearly visible when entering the cafeteria, where the groups of students are divided by their culture.

Despite this almost constant trend, most students would argue that it is a peaceful divide and would agree with the statement "segregation exists but racism doesn't". Virtually all students pointed out that segregation is due to comfort. They would candidly say that at the heart of the segregation was the comfort of being amongst members of their own culture and the numerous things that they share in common.

Although the idea of a peaceful divide seemed to be common there were instances pointed out where it was not always peaceful. A teacher at Vaughan Secondary pointed out cases where he and other teachers have had to break up racially divided confrontations between groups of students, one being as large as 40 students. One class at Maple High pointed out cases of actual fights and students from across Vaughan would point to numerous racial slurs made, sometimes escalating into confrontations or fights. Students at Father Bressani CHS felt that a case in October of 2005 where a student lost his life on Chancellor St. due to a confrontation between two groups was racially motivated.

Students would naturally point to segregation and rare was the student who denied its existence in their school or in their community. Although most believe it is a peaceful co-existence numerous cases were identified which were either confrontations or fights due to culturally divided groups and few denied the existence of racial slurs or racial "jokes" made between students of varying backgrounds.

As Vaughan grows more diverse and multicultural, a state of segregation amongst our youth threatens the peaceful integration of Vaughan residents. Students should be able to feel comfortable not only amongst students of the same background but of students from across the globe. Students would identify that segregation exists but a common suggestion to promoting integration was also clear.

A common suggestion to promoting integration was knowledge. Students felt that with a knowledge and understanding of other cultures it would help them feel comfortable amongst students of different cultures. Students at Maple High pointed to a grade 11 English project where students research other cultures and get to sample different foods from various cultures. Other students would point to Black history month and the need to also learn about other cultures.

Students were positive to the idea of a multiculturalism day and a city wide International Youth Festival. A festival in which students can learn about different cultures, try different foods and meet new people. Students felt that promotion in school and learning were key to the success of an event of that nature. Just as students agreed that comfort was the cause of segregation should comfort be the key to integration.

Law Enforcement

It is the job of York Regional Police to keep our streets safe. Everyday presents a new challenge and everyday poses a new risk. They are the ones who risk their lives to help make our community a safe, healthy and vibrant place to live, work and play.

Police officers are meant to give their citizens a sense of safety and security. However, the majority of students did not always feel the same way. Students would often times feel they were being unfairly targeted and did not understand why police officers would seem to suspect them of engaging in some form of crime. It was this sense of targeting that lead students to misinterpret and misunderstand the job of a police officer. What was most disheartening was the apparent lack of trust in police officers.

Some students realized that police officers exist to ensure the safety of each and every citizen, unfortunately not all had that same understanding. Students clearly felt uncomfortable around police officers despite not committing any crime.

Students have to feel comfortable around police officers and it is clear that they need a better understanding of how and what police officers do. Students have to be shown that police officers exist not to target them but to help them and to ensure their safety. Police officers should speak to high school students about their role and ensure that they are comfortable around police officers by also being involved in the community with youth to show they are not just police officers but everyday citizens. Students should understand that a police officer asking him/her a question is not an indictment but a way of ensuring that they are safe and that criminals remain off our streets.

Recreation

As a city grows so to do the needs of its residents. Communities not only offer a place to live but a quality of living. When it came to the issue of recreation there was a clear opinion amongst all of the students; Vaughan needs more for its youth.

On Friday and Saturday nights a common trend amongst youth is to go to Toronto. Some other common destinations were all-ages nights at clubs and the movies. There were also youth who cited local parks as a way to gather with friends but complained of the local police presence in the parks. As many youth would explain, they are not in local parks by choice but simply that there is no where else to go.

Vaughan's youth rooms in community centers are a way for students to gather and spend some free time. Although a tremendous resource, many students were unaware such a resource existed. Those who knew of them and/or used them thought them to be a good start. However, it is the time of operations (particularly the early closing times) which forces them to find other forms of recreation at night.

One student at Maple High expressed concern with the low numbers of youth outside after school, especially when compared to Toronto's youth. Others felt that the cost of organized sports was too high and prevented them from getting active in them.

Students feel that there is not enough for them to do in this city. Whether it is the lack of services or the times they are offered, students are forced to either go to Toronto or gather in our parks and on our streets. Students must be active and the cost of organized sports should not be a barrier. Students should have ways to have fun and spend their free time productively.

Public Transit

Due to the age and cost of owning a car, most youth (even those with a driver's license) take public transit. For students, it is their primary method of transportation from getting anywhere to school, work, the mall or downtown Toronto. Virtually all of the students have taken VIVA, York Region Transit (YRT) and Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) buses. Although all are public transit systems which operate in Vaughan, youth had different opinions of each.

VIVA is heralded as a new and innovated transit system, one that is people friendly and gets people taking the bus. Youth clearly felt the same way. Virtually no youth had a negative opinion of VIVA. They enjoyed the look and comfort of the buses and how all stops are announced. The only opinion they had for VIVA operators was how easy it was to not pay for bus rides due to VIVA's fare system. A few youth went as far as to think that the VIVA buses were free. Most youth were surprised to learn how security has been increased and how high the fines are for getting caught without a ticket. Although most youth recognized that it is easy not to pay the fare for VIVA they also recognized that there is a cost for such a service.

Due to the large number of youth who travel to Toronto, a common criticism was the double fare for traveling past Steeles Ave. Some students understood why the double fare was in place while others did not but virtually all did not enjoy being charged twice for traveling past Steeles Ave. Their overall impression of the TTC however was one which was positive. They appreciated the student fare and speed of the TTC.

Most students expressed concern with YRT's cash fare and how unlike the TTC, YRT's cash fare is the same for everyone. Although YRT tickets and passes are cheaper for students either students were unaware, didn't know where they were sold or it was uneconomical to buy a book of tickets or a pass. Their other major concern was the frequency between buses and felt that TTC was faster than YRT. Youth did not understand why service is decreased so much on weekends when that is the main times that they have to go out.

Grade 12 students would often express a concern that the student passes on YRT are only for high school students and are not extended to university students. They felt that the student pass should be extended for university/college students as public transit is a way for them to save money and travel within their means.

Overall, the responses and concerns were common; fare prices and service frequency. It was clear that students do not take public transit by choice and are all eager to be car owners.

Youth should be taking public transit by choice and not because it is something that they are forced to do. Youth should understand the benefits of taking public transit but it should also be a system that is affordable and convenient. A key component to promoting public transit should also be the access to information. Youth did not know where to

purchase student tickets or where to find schedule information. YRT should consider having a student fare much like TTC and more work should be done to eliminate the double fare and make it cheaper to travel between Vaughan and Toronto.

Post-secondary

University/college degrees are a requirement for many jobs and they are often extolled as ways to enhance students learning, increase their chances of success and better their lives over the long term. Despite the upfront cost the average says that over the long term the tuition fees pay for itself many times over.

Most students seemed to understand the benefits of a post-secondary degree as the majority were planning on attending either university or college. The only concern amongst students planning on attending university was the cost. At Emily Carr one Grade 12 student stated that a lot of students have the grades but can't afford it. She stated a case where another student was working from grade 9 in order to save enough money to attend university. The cost was a theme which echoed in many students, especially in Grade 12 classrooms.

Another common concern was how university is promoted. Many grade 11 and 12 classrooms expressed concern on how college and skilled trades are perceived to be inferior to university. They felt that the perception was university graduates make more then any other level of post-secondary education when that is often not the case. Youth felt that skilled trades were not being promoted enough and that they are often times pressured into choosing university as the post-secondary destination of choice.

With university or college degrees quickly becoming requirements for many jobs tuition costs should not provide a barrier for students. More government grants/scholarships should be available for students and student loans should be flexible and students should not be burdened with a mountain of debt immediately after achieving their degree. For those who do not wish to attend university or college they should not be pressured into getting a degree they don't believe in. College and particularly skilled trades need to be understood as equal and not inferior to university degrees.

Community Safety

As was confirmed in the latest report of the Vaughan Safe City Committee, community safety is the number one priority amongst residents. The public opinion is that Vaughan is a safe city, especially when compared to our neighbor in the south, Toronto. However, with increasing gang and youth violence in numerous parts of the GTA, could that trend be seen in Vaughan and do our youth feel safe?

Mirroring the results of the Safe City Committee survey, youth do feel safe in their schools and in their community, especially when compared to Toronto. When asked on the question of the threat of gangs, youth do not feel threatened by gangs and do not feel their safety is at risk. However, one youth said that there are "wannabe gangs" of students but that they do not pose any real threat. The definition and activities of a "wannabe gang" were not made clear.

Youth clearly feel safe in Vaughan and are not threatened by gangs. The only recommended course of action would be to monitor and identify the "wannabe gangs" to ensure they do not escalate.

Included in this section is another threat to youth, one which is all too common and all too known, drugs. The fight against drugs is an ongoing campaign, one which is fighting against an increasing trend and as this report confirms a "norm" amongst youth. Drugs have ruined lives and sometimes whole communities. It often starts when a person is young and carries on for the rest of their life. The likelihood of someone abusing drugs drops dramatically after high school and post-secondary, if someone can get past that point.

Youth were all in agreement that accessibility to illicit drugs is easy. Their perception was that a majority of students had at one time or another tried illicit drugs but that few of those youth became ongoing users of illicit drugs. However, the most disturbing trend came when youth would then say that illegal drugs/drug activity don't pose a problem to them. Much like the case of segregation of cultures in their school, drug use/activity had seemed to become accepted and seemed far from a taboo subject.

The students confirmation that illicit drugs are easy to obtain that a majority of youth have at least tried it are disturbing but what may be worse is students acceptance of the subject as a fact of student life. Some causes for drug use suggested by students was that drugs act as an escape from reality and that students tend to take drugs when they are bored. They also acknowledged the peer pressure to try illicit drugs and as one student said "it is hard not to do something when every one of your friends is doing it."

It is clear more must be done to crack down on the flow of illegal drugs and more must be done on the part of the student. Students should understand that drugs are not a normal fact of life but most importantly that the fight against drugs is one which all students share. As students confirmed through peer pressure, when more and more people do something it's hard for someone not to.

Conclusion

The voices and perceptions of youth are clear. There was little difference between youth from Maple or Woodbridge, public or separate schools. This report has set out to identify the state of Vaughan's youth and it has identified 7 common areas of concern. Over all the state of Vaughan's youth is good but there is plenty of work that needs to be done.

When students distrust police officers, there is work that needs to be done. When segregation of cultures thrives in local schools in the age of multiculturalism, there is work that needs to be done. When drugs are so commonplace that youth feel it has no effect on them, there is work that needs to be done. Vaughan, as one student put it is evolving and as this city evolves youth must remain a top priority so that Vaughan can continue to be the city above.

Council approved roles and responsibilities of the Vaughan Youth City Councillor	VYCC Tasks and Responsibilities as prepared by Nick Pasquino to the Deputy City Clerk, Co-op Teacher with copies to Regional Councillor M. Ferri, Vittoria LaNave, Chair of VYC and Mirrella Tersigni of the Department of Recreation and Culture on March 13, 2006	VYCC project outline/accomplishments and status report
To provide a meaningful voice on issue and matters that affect Youth		
To act as a conduit for the flow of information and ideas between Vaughan City Council and youth.		
To be between 16 and 25 years of age		
Length of term		
Non-recording member of City of Vaughan Council		
Term may be terminated at any time for violations of the established guidelines.		
Will not count for quorum at Council meetings, but is expected to inform the Clerk's Department if s/he unable to attend.		
Receive an honorarium of \$500 in recognition of their service to the community together with a letter of service from the Mayor.		
Demonstrate they are able to complete their duties without compromising their academic standing.		
Attend Committee of the Whole and public Council meetings.	Job shadowing: To shadow each Vaughan politician, if afforded the opportunity, during their time as monthly meeting Chair.	
Maintain consistent attendance and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.	Regular meetings: Attend meetings: Council, Committee of the Whole, VYC, Mayor's Task Force of Community Safety and Security, Community Relations Committee, School Board Liaison Committee, mentor meetings	
Keep themselves informed of current affairs that may affect youth positively.		
Represent youth on matters affecting youth in areas such as civic involvement, transportation, employment, housing, recreation, environment, arts, culture and education.		
	Round table discussions: VYC - Executive - round table discussions	

STATE OF THE YOUTH REPORT 2007

Written By: Steven Xu
Vaughan Youth City Councillor
City of Vaughan
June 2007

STATE OF THE YOUTH REPORT, JUNE 2007

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *State of the Youth Report* is a summative review of the most pertinent issues affecting the youth generation in the City of Vaughan. The issues presented in this report are reflective of the opinions of the youth regarding items that fall under municipal jurisdiction.

The purpose of this report is to iterate, where appropriate and applicable, opinions, analysis, and anecdotal evidence from the youth perspective as they pertain to 8 municipal issues.

The information presented in this report has been collected through a variety of means: secondary school visits, personal experience, research, and peer consultation.

2 METHODOLOGY

The information presented in the *State of the Youth Report* is derived from several major sources.

2.1 SECONDARY SCHOOL VISITS

The office of the Vaughan Youth City Councillor has existed since February 2006.

The first Youth City Councillor, Mark Anthony Frisoli (February-June 2006) conducted visits to five Vaughan secondary schools: Vaughan SS, Maple HS, Emily Carr SS, Woodbridge College, and Father Bressani CHS.

The second Youth City Councillor, Steven Xu (February-June 2007) revisited Vaughan SS and Maple HS, met with the students of Westmount CI, Stephen Lewis SS, St. Elizabeth CHS, St. Jean de Brebeuf CHS, and established productive correspondence with Thornhill SS.

2.1.1 LECTURES

In nearly all of the above mentioned schools, the Vaughan Youth City Councillor has lectured and conducted question-and-answer periods with classes or student groups (e.g., student council). Youth City Councillor Steven Xu (February-June 2007) delivered lectures ranging from 40 minutes to 75 minutes in length covering a variety of themes: civic engagement, civic responsibility, current municipal projects and developments, recreational/cultural/employment/volunteer/activism opportunities, the structure of municipal government, the municipal decision-making process, and the position of the Youth City Councillor itself. The lectures have culminated in question-and-answer sessions with much overall success.

2.1.2 LUNCH-PERIOD CANVASSING

In many schools, it was determined that, supplementary to the lectures, a convenient and appropriate manner to reach out to the general student population at the secondary schools visited would be to canvass the students during lunch periods. The canvassing time per school ranged from 80 minutes to 150 minutes.

During the canvassing periods, qualitative data was gathered and steered the Youth City Councillor towards seeking quantitative support. A voluntary Secondary Needs Assessment Survey was distributed among and collected from students during the periods, and information gathered included the following items:

- Whether students would be willing to purchase an annual youth membership (\$13.50);
- Whether and when students would like to see new programming within the schools;
- Whether students were familiar with existing programming; and

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- Whether students had any other suggestions to supplement the delivery of services.

2.2 PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

The fact that the Youth City Councillor is a secondary school student provides the position a unique insight into the interactions among youth and between youth and society.

The Youth City Councillor interacts with secondary school peers on a daily basis and can represent a diverse array of youth perspectives. In addition, the Youth City Councillor will often take advantage of the same municipal services and will often use them in the same manner as the general youth population. By participating in services such as public transit, recreational facilities, libraries, cultural facilities, and schools, the Youth City Councillor can provide an otherwise silent perspective.

2.3 RESEARCH

The Youth City Councillor is able to conduct regular correspondence with respective youth representative bodies in nearby municipalities such as the Town of Richmond Hill, and the Town of Markham.

On top of demand analysis conducted to the students, the correspondence allows for comparative analysis between the City of Vaughan and other municipalities.

In addition, the current extent of services offered by the City of Vaughan can be adjudged on an immobile standard through the youth lens.

2.4 PEER CONSULTATION

The Youth City Councillor communicates actively with student officials in the secondary school system. Productive and fruitful conversations have taken place between with student council bodies, student council presidents, student trustees, and other student leaders.

2.4.1 STUDENT COUNCIL MEETINGS

At most of the schools, the Youth City Councillor arranged to make a presentation to the student council. At the meetings, ideas contained within Steven Xu's *Youth Feedback Initiative* were discussed, and action plan guidelines were formed. In addition, student council members were asked for feedback from their students' perspective regarding municipal services.

2.4.2 STUDENT PRESIDENT/TRUSTEE CONSULTATION

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In preparation for this report, the Youth City Councillor has conducted detailed discussions with certain individuals:

- Kristine Soufian, Student Trustee, York Catholic District School Board
- Kimberly Hart, Student Trustee, York Region District School Board
- Novel Rahman, President, Student Council, Vaughan Secondary School
- Sarina Isenberg, President, Board of Student Senators, Thornhill Secondary School
- Amanda Cupido, Prime Minister, Student Council, St. Elizabeth Catholic High School

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3 NOTE TO THE READER

The intent of this report is to examine several key issues in the City of Vaughan from a point-of-view that often gets dismissed, the youth perspective. In order to do so with the greatest level of efficiency, this report is organized in a common structure.

Eight integral issues have been identified and the main section of the *State of the Youth Report* treats the issues distinctly.

Each issue is broken down into three categories:

1. Background information and support;
2. Analysis and opinions; and
3. Action plan.

The action plan predominantly treats the actions of the Youth City Councillor. However, certain recommendations are made affecting the City staff and council. These recommendations may be received for information purposes, and at council's discretion, certain items may be referred for further investigation and shortlisted for change.

The Youth City Councillor and the Vaughan Youth Cabinet both hold copious amounts of data and information well beyond the scope of what can be presented in this report. The above bodies may be sought should further information or elaboration be required.

4 THE ISSUES

The issues, presented in no particular order, are selected amongst the ideas that incited the most feedback from the youth in Vaughan. The eight issues presented in this report represent the eight primary ways in which the youth interact (or do not interact, as the case may be) with the municipal infrastructure.

4.1 YOUTH REPRESENTATION

Youth representation symbolizes the new symbiotic interaction between the governing bodies and the youth generation. Increasingly frequently, youth are stepping up in their communities and in their schools to represent their peers. Consequently, the idea of youth representation extends beyond the symbolic realm into a very consequential realistic realm. Having youth step up not only improves the quality of life for young people now but also builds upon the existing infrastructure to prepare for a more prosperous future.

Note that 4.1 Youth Representation and 4.2 Communication are very similar, but differ in that 4.1 focuses on the relationship between the City and key student leaders while 4.2 focuses on the relationship between the City and the general youth population.

4.1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Fear of the figures survey of youth opinions conducted earlier this year advised that no significant changes regarding the main operation of our community centres. There has been a historically low level of turnout for youth organizations like the current Vaughan Youth Cabinet.

The current Vaughan Youth Cabinet is in the beginnings of its second term in existence. In its first year last year, the Vaughan Youth Cabinet ran a leadership conference, hosted an awards night, arranged a large youth and technology focus group, and conducted a needs assessment procedure for the youth in Vaughan. Students in several schools across Vaughan reported their familiarity with the Vaughan Youth Cabinet experience and their desire for the Vaughan Youth Cabinet to reassert themselves in the schools. There was nearly universal consensus among peer consultants that, had the Vaughan Youth Cabinet approached them and their peers earlier on in the year and with greater strength, they would have taken full advantage of the opportunity.

Despite the low level of enthusiasm exhibited by the youth at the community and municipal levels, most secondary schools report a vibrant student leadership movement. Novel Rahman, the student council president at Vaughan SS, points to a number of regional conferences such as the Fusion conference, the CAYRE conference, the York Region Police Guns and Gang Violence conference, and the OSSSA conference, all of which were well-attended by Vaughan students.

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York Region District School Board student trustee Kimberly Hart makes the particular observation that student leadership is not divided among the entire student body according to each individual's passion. Instead, in each school, leadership is focused within a very limited niche of motivated students. She suggests that the best approach to assemble a similar core group would be to appeal to those leadership niches within each school or before they form.

One of the highlights of the *Youth Feedback Initiative*, crafted by Steven Xu, is the project of establishing an intramural liaison. The goal of this plan is for each secondary school to have one student representative who will act as a key liaison between the students and the City, reporting to the Vaughan Youth City Councillor and the Vaughan Youth Cabinet.

4.1.2 ANALYSIS AND OPINIONS

The contrast between the relatively low level of interest in community events and the high level of interest in some school events emphasizes a key point about the youth demographic. Youth are more than prepared to dedicate endless time and energy into community events, but only if two preliminary conditions are first fulfilled:

1. They must be aware of the opportunity; and
2. The opportunity must be intrinsically appealing.

Both conditions may be satisfied through an educational process. Communication may be made to school officials to make the students aware of opportunities at the Vaughan Youth Cabinet or application cycles of the Youth City Councillor. Similarly, a strategic approach to iterate to students the important ways in which municipal government affects their everyday lives may attract more individuals to municipal service.

Student Trustee Kimberly Hart's observation suggests that the best way to identify and attract a core group of student leaders for the purposes of a Vaughan Youth Cabinet would be to appeal through guidance councillors and administrators in schools across the City to ask to be referred to such students. The best times to do this would be at the conclusion of one school year (May-June) or at the beginning of another (September).

The intramural liaison is a crucial step in increasing the communication efforts between the City and the students. Relating particularly to the concept of Youth Representation, the intramural liaison acts as a representative in itself, and the position can be a portal for encouraging other student leaders to get involved on the community level.

Most student councils congregate two to three weeks before the beginning of school. That period of time represents an ideal opportunity for individuals from the City of Vaughan to establish contact and to plan for the subsequent year.

4.1.3 ACTION PLAN

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Whereas, across all schools and consultants, there was a uniting belief that the outlets for youth representation should step up and play a more visible role in students' lives today;

Therefore, the *State of the Youth Report*, June 2007 recommends as follows:

1. That the Youth City Councillor place as a key priority the introduction and maintenance of an effective city-to-student communication system;
2. That the Youth City Councillor and members of the Vaughan Youth Cabinet collaborate to formulate a publicity effort that will hit the students at the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year; and
3. That the former Youth City Councillor, Steven Xu, work with newly-elected student council bodies to the greatest possible extent over the course of the summer to plan correspondence and establish contacts for the upcoming school year.

4.2 COMMUNICATION

The effectiveness of democratic rule is based on the line of communication between the policy-makers and the polity. Unique in democracy is the fact that the polity plays an active role in informing the policy-makers and thus the policies. Consequently, the effectiveness of the city is directly correlated to the effectiveness of the communication with the population. This communication section covers strictly the ability for the Youth City Councillor to engage the appropriate parties in effective communication and to establish an effective collaborative infrastructure between the City and the students.

4.2.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2006, the City of Vaughan took the initiative to introduce the Vaughan Youth City Councillor, a position unique in Canada. The youth of Vaughan gained the foundations for a political voice. The first steps have been taken.

It is the ultimate goal of the office of the Vaughan Youth City Councillor to establish an increasingly effective line of communication between the youth generation and the City of Vaughan. Such a system works towards a cycle of participation. The youth, aware of their voice in the political system, will actively engage in it, speaking up and voting when they come of age. In addition, the politicians, aware of the concerns and needs of the youth generation, will cater to those needs and thus improve society.

Since the Youth City Councillor is not only a unique position but also a new one, there are very little existing social infrastructure and network connections supporting the role. The first two Youth City Councillors have started the project of defining and revising the Youth City Councillor's communication strategy, and work on it will continue throughout the existence of the position.

The crux of the Youth City Councillor position is the length of each term. In a five-month-long term, little can be accomplished if too much attention must be paid to

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establishing the communication infrastructure. The term of Steven Xu is a case in point. Of the five months, the first month was dedicated to orientation, media addresses, interviews, and brainstorming. The second and third months were dedicated to formulating ideas into action plans and carrying the action plans through the approvals process. The latter part of the third month and the early part of the fourth month were dedicated to making contact with the 11 secondary schools in Vaughan to make arrangements to speak to student council, the students, or the administrations. The Youth City Councillor has no access to support staff to process administrative work during the visits, so once the visits began, arranging other visits consumed most of the in-office times, and there was no time left to conduct any meaningful follow-up. By that time, it was so late in the school year that change would have to wait until the beginning of the next school year in September to take action.

Most schools that serve Vaughan residents have student media outlets. Vaughan Secondary School has its own student radio station, RAV FM; many schools like Stephen Lewis SS and Maple HS are in the process of creating a student newsletter. St. Elizabeth CHS has its school newspaper, the *St. Elizabeth Times*, which recently won the second place award in the Toronto Star High School Newspaper Awards for Best Volunteer Newspaper. Thornhill Secondary School too has a school newspaper, the *Eye of the Tiger*, which recently won the first place award in the same category.

A notable aspect of the *Youth Feedback Initiative*, crafted by Steven Xu, is the establishment of a regular update sent to the intramural liaisons in Vaughan secondary schools. The update would be compiled by the Youth City Councillor, and its contents may include the following:

- Highlights of pertinent existing programs;
- Prominent advertisements of new programs;
- Postings of municipally-sponsored student employment opportunities;
- Links to prominent youth-run and youth-targeted events; and
- An unbiased point-form summary of the political events in the area.

The contents of the regular updates would be concise and informative and could be shared via the announcements or as a visual bulletin. The regular updates would be a demographic-specific, youth version of the current City Page.

4.2.2 ANALYSIS AND OPINIONS

Due to the structure of the school system, a Youth City Councillor's term cannot be extended beyond five months under the current terms of reference. Since the time is limited, it is imperative that the productive and progressive time be maximized and that redundant tasks be resolved beforehand and minimized.

Therefore, it is the top priority to establish working mechanisms atop those that already exist so that the Youth City Councillor can allocate the maximum amount of time to the implementation of the plans.

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Communication for the Youth City Councillor exists on two entirely distinct levels. First is the communication with City officials. Second is the communication with school officials and the students. Steps need to be taken to make for easier, faster, and more effective exchanges.

The most important communication to the City conducted by the Youth City Councillor is the formulation, review, and approval of the Youth City Councillor's action plans.

There are a number of routine activities conducted by every Youth City Councillor, namely the conduction of secondary school visits and acquisition of quantitative and qualitative data from the students. If every Youth City Councillor were to reformulate the action plan, time will have been inefficiently utilized. In order to expedite the process, it may be advisable to create one action plan governing the visits and have it apply to each successive Youth City Councillor.

Although the idea would require each successive Youth City Councillor to take on a different and rapidly evolving role, it is the only path to achieve significant progress considering the current challenges regarding term length and continuity.

The second level of communication, that involving the students and the schools, is significantly more difficult to achieve considering the number of individuals involved and the relatively short periods for which students serve on student council.

However, similar to the philosophy applied to City correspondence, in order to move forward, correspondence tasks that would otherwise need to be performed term after term should be addressed together at once.

The Youth City Councillor must seek the guidance of officials at all ends with the goal of setting a schedule of regular visits without the need to undertake a tedious logistical process before each one.

Ideally, the Youth City Councillor would be able to convey information through an annual presentation to the student body. Under the advice of numerous student councils as well as the peer consultants, the advice would be supplemented by regular updates delivered from the City of Vaughan to a student liaison within each school.

The presence of youth media outlets in secondary schools across the City of Vaughan represents an avenue to communicate with students at the grassroots level. The City of Vaughan may look into sponsorship or advertisement deals with the media outlets in the 2007-2008 school year. As well as promoting and supporting student excellence, such a deal could allow for information to be conveyed directly to the students.

4.2.3 ACTION PLAN

Whereas the establishment of a more expedient system of communication with both the City, the students, and the Youth City Councillor is imperative to maximize the amount of work that can be accomplished within a five-month term;

Therefore, the *State of the Youth Report*, June 2007 recommends as follows:

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1. That the City look into the formulation and approval of a common Youth City Councillor communications plan including but not limited to class lectures, secondary school visits, student liaisons, and student council meetings, authorizing such actions throughout all Youth City Councillor terms;
2. That the City formally defer the issue of the Youth City Councillor and respective publicity efforts to the City School Board Liaison Committee for direction in arranging the secondary school visits; and
3. That the City explore opportunities for sponsorship or advertisement agreements with student media outlets.

4.3 RECREATION AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

The City of Vaughan Department of Recreation and Culture facilitates a vast array of both public and privately delivered services. Its breadth spans many interest groups and many diverse demographics. In order to improve the expansive system in place, the current programming facilitated by the Department of Recreation and Culture can be continuously developed to better suit the needs of the youth generation.

4.3.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The City of Vaughan currently publishes a bi-annual Recreation Guide including an extensive amount of information regarding recreation opportunities. The activities open to youth include the youth room, youth drop-in sports, youth registered programs, park and community facilities, recreational and instructional swimming and skating, and league sports through private organizations.

Currently, youth can purchase an annual youth membership valid for one school year for \$13.50. The youth membership enables students to drop into designated youth rooms during preset times erected at four community centres across Vaughan. The youth rooms contain entertainment devices including but not limited to billiards, table tennis, various parlour games, and television sets. In addition, the youth membership provides access to drop-in basketball three of the community centres across Vaughan.

There is a much greater breadth of drop-in sports programs open to adults 18 years of age or older, with a variety of sports including volleyball, table tennis, and floor hockey. Youth are unable to access these programs de jure.

When asked whether they were aware of the activities offered at the local community centre, an overwhelming majority of students responded with a "somewhat" or "no."

Novel Rahman (Vaughan SS) indicates that community centres appear to be too sport-centric to many students. He reports to have received complaints regarding the absence of cultural programs, study sessions, or peer tutoring at the community centres. The perspective is echoed among students in all areas of Vaughan. There was a substantial interest in movie nights and music nights in the community centres.

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Survey data was collected from several schools requesting students to indicate the kinds of activities they preferred and when they preferred them. The survey data will be compiled in the near future.

The availability of community facilities such as gyms and meeting rooms is very limited in all community centres, so there is little room to slot in a new youth-oriented activity.

It is very common, especially during warm months, to see pick-up sports in the parks on evenings and weekend afternoons. Activities vary by location and range from basketball to baseball to soccer. The sporting activities are concentrated in the well-lit parks.

Certainly community facilities have been commended by students for their symbiosis with other aspects of student life. Particularly, Vellore Village Community Centre is not only located adjacent to St. Jean de Brebeuf CHS, but also contains a skate park. Kristine Soufian (YCDSB) comments that the Vellore model is an excellent one to which to adhere, as the proximity of community facilities allows and encourages students to associate and to enjoy the community after school hours.

4.3.2 ANALYSIS AND OPINIONS

All of the peer consultants express the idea that youth cannot be appeal to through indirect media. The number of youth who would retain the guide and refer to it on a regular basis is very limited. The peer consultants believe that the most effective way to reach to the youth generation about recreation opportunities is through direct contact, either by visiting the youth personally or by appealing to those with whom the youth do engage directly. In particular, Kristine Soufian (YCDSB) points to a particular case in which City officials visited St. Joan of Arc CHS personally to publicize the local youth activities. The subsequent week, attendance at the community centre dramatically increased. Community recreational programs are ones whose participants are consistent week-to-week. Accordingly, just one visit can encourage a student to stick with a particular program.

A number of youth have pointed out that the youth membership is not offered on a calendar year basis (365 days from the date of purchase) but rather at a flat rate for the school year, and that the regulation has deterred students from purchasing the membership part way through the year.

Many students, including Amanda Cupido (St. Elizabeth CHS) have recommended that, in order to increase awareness of recreational programs, flyers could be distributed to the main office or posted in the school or on an appropriate bulletin board with the permission of the school administration. Currently, many schools have bus schedules available for pickup in the main office. It may be appropriate to add copies a quick reference sheet for a neighbouring community centre for students to store.

Since drop-in sports are available only for basketball and only at three community centres, youth who are interested in sports are neglected. Since there are few openings to introduce new drop-in programming slots, age restrictions should be reconsidered

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on the existing programs. In addition, any new drop-in allocations should run experimentally as a 14+ or 12+ age range.

One course of action that has been considered in the past and should be reconsidered at this point is the concept of extended hours at community centres. Due to a relative freedom of schedule, youth are able, and sometimes prefer, to participate in community centre activities later at night. Extending the open hours for the community centres may allow for more youth to participate in activities without impeding existing programming.

The introduction of music nights or movie nights is difficult to enact due to space restrictions and uncertainty in demand. Although there is an obvious, widespread interest in such programs, it would be exceedingly burdening for such an event to be coordinated by City staff. In order to accommodate the demand, an advisable course of action may be to make available community centre facilities to school clubs or student councils seeking to organize events, and to publicize the availability.

4.3.3 ACTION PLAN

Whereas recreation and cultural development is an important aspect in community living by encouraging civic engagement, physical activity, and socialization;

Therefore, the *State of the Youth Report*, June 2007 recommends as follows:

1. That the Youth City Councillor work with the Department of Recreation and Culture to incorporate recreational opportunities into communiqués sent to schools and student liaisons;
2. That the Youth City Councillor work with the Department of Recreation and Culture to find potential time openings to slot drop-in sports and cultural events;
3. That the City explore the possibility of having the Department of Recreation and Culture and City Council jointly reassess the possibility of leaving community centres open later to provide youth with times for drop-in sports and cultural events; and
4. That the Department of Recreation and Culture investigate the issue of the logistical limitations of the annual youth memberships.

4.4 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Ontario Secondary School curriculum mandates that all students complete forty hours of community involvement as a prerequisite for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. This portion of the report examines how students achieve their hours, how many students go beyond the curriculum requirements, and what steps the City may take to benefit both the students and the community.

4.4.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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Currently, in both the YCDSB and the YRDSB, students must complete forty hours of community service on their own time during their secondary school careers. There are several common locations at which students seek to fulfill their volunteer hour requirements:

- Hospitals
- Retirement homes
- Food banks
- School activities (several schools do not acknowledge student involvement in school activities for volunteer hours)

Peer consultants such as Sarina Isenberg, president of the Board of Student Senators at Thornhill Secondary School, place between 50-75% of students as ones who shun volunteer opportunities as soon as they have fulfilled the Ministry of Education requirement. The remaining 25-50% represents those who typically go well above and beyond the required number of hours.

When asked whether students serve their hours at public community events, all of the peer consultants responded in the negative. Many student council presidents conceded that the school and its students are completely ignorant of community events such as the 2007 Woodbridge Quasquicentennial, the annual Maplefest, or the annual Thornhill Village Parade celebrations. The consultants attributed the lack of awareness to a lack of permeation of City events into the school culture.

4.4.2 ANALYSIS AND OPINIONS

Amanda Cupido, the student council prime minister at St. Elizabeth CHS, notes that students have been the most receptive to events which may offer many hours at once. She points out as an example large volunteer commitments across two days – one day preparation, one day event – which grant in the vicinity of 20 hours over two days would be very well received by students. She comments that the publicity regarding these volunteer opportunities merely needs to be in place.

4.4.3 ACTION PLAN

Therefore, the *State of the Youth Report*, June 2007 recommends as follows:

1. That City Council receive this section for information purposes.

4.5 PUBLIC TRANSIT

Due to a drastic reduction in the levels of school bus service to secondary school students in 2007-2008, an impending legislation that seeks to reduce the number of secondary school drivers in 2007, and the perpetual increases to service area, frequency, and speed offered by the York Region Transit/VIVA system, the next few years may see a drastic increase in the number of students taking public transportation around Vaughan.

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4.5.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The York Region Transit/VIVA system consists of an extensive network stretching across commuter and residential roads in the City of Vaughan and the rest of York Region. Investing more money per capita and per rider than nearly all other comparable systems, the YRT/VIVA network offers a level of service to places whose ridership densities may have similar levels in other municipalities.

Students who do commute on YRT/VIVA typically do so out of necessity. The proportion of students who take the bus regularly ranges dramatically from practically zero in some schools to 25% in others.

Although students during the Youth City Councillor lectures expressed a very enthusiastic interest in YRT/VIVA developments, students generally have very few qualms about the service.

Ironically, despite many students reliance on the system, all of the peer consultants agreed that rapid transit is generally a non-issue. Students who take rapid transit are typically satisfied with the service. Students who do not take rapid transit are indifferent about the service.

It is a credit to the YRT/VIVA system that there were no dire problems voiced by the students; nevertheless, there were several perpetual issues raised.

Chief among them was service frequency. Schools in the Thornhill area (St. Elizabeth CHS, Thornhill SS, Vaughan SS, and Westmount CI) existed along the VIVA bus routes or high-traffic streets, and students were thus very satisfied with service levels. However, students in Woodbridge and Maple complained about the infrequency of bus service.

Another issue was that of education. Many students did not access or were unaware of the services offered by the YRT/VIVA system. Bus schedules or bulk ticket purchasing were not familiar with the students.

In addition, few secondary school students considered the double fare incurred by crossing Steeles Avenue a major issues; however, it should be noted that very few students commute in that fashion on a regular basis and that the issue is likely more serious among university students and adults.

4.5.2 ANALYSIS AND OPINIONS

The local municipality does not have jurisdiction over public transit; therefore, any analysis is reserved for the regional municipal level of government.

4.5.3 ACTION PLAN

Therefore, the *State of the Youth Report*, June 2007 recommends as follows:

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1. That City Council receive this section for information purposes.

4.6 SAFETY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

It is the job of York Regional Police to keep our streets safe. Every day presents a new challenge and everyday poses a new risk. They are the ones who risk their lives to help make our community a safe, healthy and vibrant place to live, work, and play.

4.6.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Several schools have made the move to adjust class schedules from a five-period day to a four-period day, halving the time allotted for lunch in most cases. Schools reported wide success in the trial year, seeing reductions in lunchtime delinquency and disciplinary actions. In Thornhill Secondary School, during the 2006-2007 school year, the number of incidents regarding disciplinary action was reduced to two from the previous year whose figure was significantly higher.

Students feel very safe in the City of Vaughan. In recent years, the York Region Police has established a law enforcement officer liaison program, assigning one law enforcement officer to every three schools to interact with the students. In addition, the Empowering Student Partnerships program has been implemented or is in the implementation phase in secondary schools across Vaughan. The reported reception varies from school to school, but the overall relationship is neutral to positive.

4.6.2 ANALYSIS AND OPINIONS

The local municipality does not have jurisdiction over law enforcement; therefore, any analysis is reserved for the regional municipal level of government.

4.6.3 ACTION PLAN

Therefore, the *State of the Youth Report*, June 2007 recommends as follows:

1. That City Council receive this section for information purposes.

4.7 ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE

The preservation of the natural environment exists as a responsibility shared amongst governments, citizens, and organizations. This section of the report examines specifically how well the students are fulfilling their role and what the City of Vaughan can do to support their efforts.

4.7.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the past 5 years, as the Greening Vaughan initiative has advanced its waste diversion goals to the broader population, individual schools have moved in a greener direction.

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Many schools report having at least one environmentally-oriented student club, and the vast majority of schools report some variety of a student clean-up initiative. St. Elizabeth CHS had a program where many homeroom classes would each take several minutes off on one day during the year to collect and dispose of refuse in the woodlot adjacent to the school. Vaughan SS saw roughly 300 of its students participate in the 20-Minute Makeover program hosted by the City of Vaughan.

The success and extent of waste diversion in classrooms varies drastically from school to school. Most schools report having both a garbage receptacle and a blue box in each classroom. All schools with blue box programs report that there are initiatives where students bring their rooms' recyclable waste to an on-site central location on a weekly basis for collection. Some schools have a large quantity of recyclable waste thrown in the garbage receptacles. Other schools report that improperly disposed garbage is nearly unheard of. Novel Rahman (Vaughan SS) reports that students' recycling efforts are exemplary due in large part to the initiative of individual teachers. Amanda Cupido (St. Elizabeth CHS) reports that, three years ago, the school introduced a green box program for paper-based recyclables - plastic and metal recyclables would still go into the blue bin. She reports that the initiative has been an overwhelming success.

Conversely, some other schools have limited recycling efforts in place. Particularly, Kristine Soufian (YCDSB) brings up an example of her own school, St. Joan of Arc CHS, as one which is in the early stages of the environmental initiative adoption. The school currently has very few recycling receptacles, and the few that exist are only infrequently used. However, the school is making concerned steps in the green direction, and the City should offer its support in the positive endeavour.

Every peer consultant has expressed dissatisfaction with the waste disposal and diversion efforts in the cafeteria. In most schools, the cafeteria has only one blue box, frequently placed in an awkward location. The inaccessibility deters students from utilizing the blue box.

4.7.2 ANALYSIS AND OPINIONS

Since many schools are just starting their respective environmental organizations and initiatives, it is the appropriate time to explore the possibility of a relationship between respective officials at the City of Vaughan. They Vaughan Youth City Councillor may be able to serve as an avenue connecting interested student environmental leaders to the City.

Recycling and composting are habits, and many habits start in the schools. Therefore, it is advisable that the City of Vaughan encourage students to dispose of their waste properly and to do everything possible to facilitate the habit.

The three main reasons for which students throw recyclable items in the garbage are negligence, apathy, and confusion. Each of these issues can be combated within the schools both to reduce the amount of garbage collected and to encourage environmental responsibility among students.

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Negligent or apathetic students simply cannot be bothered to take the extra steps to dispose of waste properly. The problem can be combated partially by communicating and emphasizing to teachers and the administration the importance in recycling. In addition, it may be advisable to provide more blue boxes to increase their accessibility. An increase in the number of recycling receptacles is especially important in the cafeterias, where it has been reported that such receptacles are frequently hard to find. Much waste is produced in the cafeteria, so waste diversion efforts should be concentrated in such locations.

Occasionally, students are plainly confused by their waste disposal options. Boxes and bins come in many shapes, and colours can be misleading (green boxes used for paper waste; green bins used for organic waste). It may be advisable to encourage or to provide prominent labels that can be affixed to or in the vicinity of the disposal receptacles.

4.7.3 ACTION PLAN

Whereas the facilitation of environmentally friendly activities in the youth generation produces a population of conscious and responsible world citizens;

Therefore, the *State of the Youth Report*, June 2007 recommends as follows:

1. That the City formally defer this information regarding the environmental initiatives in schools to the Greening Vaughan Advisory Committee for information purposes;
2. That the City explore the possibility of having staff conduct an assessment of the current waste diversion strategies employed in schools with a focus on deficiencies in collection resources or literature;
3. That subsequent Youth City Councillors liaise with the student liaisons and school officials to establish contact with the City;

4.8 YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Many students in Vaughan choose to seek their own sources of income by taking part-time or seasonal employment. This portion of the *State of the Youth Report* examines the patterns present in youth employment.

4.8.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In general, very few Grade 9 students have or seek part-time employment. However, in Grades 10, 11, and 12, the proportion is dramatically higher. Sarina Isenberg (Thornhill SS) and Novel Rahman (Vaughan SS) estimate that roughly half of senior students have either seasonal or part-time employment. The most common areas of employment are chain stores in malls and plazas as well as fast-food restaurants.

A notable exception to the student employment pattern is St. Elizabeth CHS. Student council president Amanda Cupido estimates that in Grades 10 and higher, 80-90% of

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students have some sort of employment. The aberration can be attributed largely to the presence of a mall neighbouring the school. She also comments that many students from St. Elizabeth CHS are employed by the City of Vaughan as seasonal camp supervisors or aquatic leaders.

4.8.2 ANALYSIS AND OPINIONS

There is a worrying lack of youth getting involved with meaningful employment opportunities. Although common youth employment roles such as a sales representatives, cashiers, food and stock preparers, and maintenance work do grant youth work experience and an increased level of financial independence, they fail to develop any significant personal or professional skills.

4.8.3 ACTION PLAN

Therefore, the *State of the Youth Report*, June 2007 recommends as follows:

1. That City Council receive this section for information purposes.

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5 CONCLUSION

The City of Vaughan is a municipality that boasts a tremendous level of service for the youth generation. With a safe, vibrant, and diverse youth population, the City's future is surely in good hands. This report could not delve deeply into multitude and depth of services the City already has to its credit – such a report could not fit in even 100 pages. As societies in the world undergo a revolution en masse from a time of youth dependency to a time of youth activism and engagement, the City of Vaughan is taking the steps necessary to be at the forefront.

The state of the youth is excellent, and through some of the considerations made in this report, Vaughan can continue to be the ideal place for young people to live, to work, to study, and to play.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Xu, Vaughan Youth City Councillor

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