



youth

LADYSMITH YOUTH PLAN

SUBMITTED TO:
Town of Ladysmith
Parks, Recreation & Culture

PREPARED BY:
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Pacific Leadership Design
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2. ACRONYMS

PRC	Ladysmith Parks, Recreation, and Culture
LYP	Ladysmith Youth Plan
LSS	Ladysmith Secondary School
STZ S	Stz'uminus Secondary School
TOWN	Town of Ladysmith
MP	Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan
FJCC	Frank Jameson Community Centre
LRCA	Ladysmith Resource Centre Association
SFN	Stz'uminus First Nation
PLD	Pacific Leadership Design
YRT	Youth Research Team



3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would first like to extend our sincere appreciation to all the youth, community members, teachers, parents and representatives of a wide range of youth agencies and service clubs who contributed to the public engagement process.

3.1 CORE Team

The CORE TEAM consists of two consultants from Pacific Leadership Design (PLD) and three staff members representing the Town of Ladysmith Parks, Recreation, and Culture (PRC) department

- Clayton Postings (PRC)
Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture
- Sue Glenn (PRC)
Supervisor-Community Programs & Services
- Danielle Winter (PRC)
Early Years, Child & Youth Programmer
- Neil Smith (PLD)
- Mae Doran (PLD)

The CORE team was responsible for leading the project, providing administrative support, and enabling the roll-out of the public engagement and drafting of the Ladysmith Youth Plan.

We would like to offer our deepest appreciation for all the selfless engagement of the two key community teams:

3.2 CORE+ Team (CORE+)

The CORE+ TEAM, consists of leaders from community agencies and youth representing Ladysmith and Stz'uminus First Nation schools. This team guided the process of our public engagement strategies, provided feedback on emerging themes, and advised us on our direction

- Andrew Jager
Faith-Based Organizations Representative
- Christy Villiers
Social Planning Cowichan
- Clayton Postings
Town of Ladysmith
- Danielle Winter
Town of Ladysmith
- Grayson McDonald
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Vancouver Island University
Practicum Student
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Stz'uminus Senior Secondary School
- Liliane De Oliveira
Ladysmith Secondary School Vice-Principal

- Mae Doran
Pacific Leadership Design
- Neil Smith
Pacific Leadership Design
- Sam McMullan
Ladysmith Secondary School Student
- Shannon Wilson
Ladysmith Resource Centre Association
- Sue Glenn
Town of Ladysmith
- Teagan Harry
Stz'uminus Senior Secondary School

3.3 Youth Research Team (YRT)

The YOUTH RESEARCH TEAM (YRT) comprises youth from Ladysmith Secondary School and Stz'uminus Secondary School who took part in:

1. Two comprehensive workshops on group facilitation
2. Several community focus groups
3. Ten classroom engagement events
4. A public open house

The YRT learned from and worked alongside CORE Team facilitators with all constituent groups, actively participating in focus groups and interviews with youth, and providing facilitation of theme presentation during the community open house. We thank them for keeping our process authentic and youth-focused, and for their courage to step forward and publicly speak

- Aedan Geiger
- Amber Pridham
- Bryn Dovey
- Ethan Toole
- Grayson MacDonald
- Hanna Clare
- Isabel Smith
- Jennifer Elliott
- Nina Charley
- Ryan Bastian
- Sampson McMullan
- Seth Boisvert

4. LAYOUT OF THIS DOCUMENT

The organization of the LYP document is divided into two main blocks:

- The main block provides a rollout of the overall project:
 - a. Vision for the project
 - b. Situates the reader in the context of the youth today as well as in Ladysmith; provides an overview of each of the nine main themes which emerged from the research, and concludes with a table of strategic priorities outlining recommended action.
- The second block is a series of appendices which detail and expand upon the information in the main section.
- Links in the main block link the reader to more detail in the appendices.
- In addition, there are links to our research website where the summaries of all interviews, focus groups, surveys, and classroom sessions are documented.



5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE LADYSMITH YOUTH PLAN

5.1 The Vision of the Town

Ladysmith Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan of 2016¹ (MP), supports the National Framework for Recreation: *“Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative, and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.”* The goals within this framework are stated as:

1. *Active Living. Foster active, healthy living through recreation.*
2. *Inclusion and Access. Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation.*
3. *Connecting People. Help people connect to nature through recreation.*
4. *Supportive Environments. Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and build strong, caring communities.*
5. *Recreation Capacity. Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field.*

The Ladysmith Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan incorporates aspects of each of these national goals and priorities in the recommendations and action plan (p. 33).

5.2 Vision of the Ladysmith Youth Plan

With this vision to guide the future, Ladysmith PRC prioritized the development of a strategy for youth to engage and involve them in the community planning process for their resources and activities.

“It is time to adopt new strategies to meet the emerging needs of a new generation of youth”. In alignment with Ladysmith’s vision statement: “...a spirited community that values its small town quality of life, where we work together as stewards of our heritage, environment and economy”; coupled with a “community accord with its neighbour, the Stz’uminus First Nation”; the Ladysmith Youth Plan (LYP) embodies this inclusive esprit-de-corps.

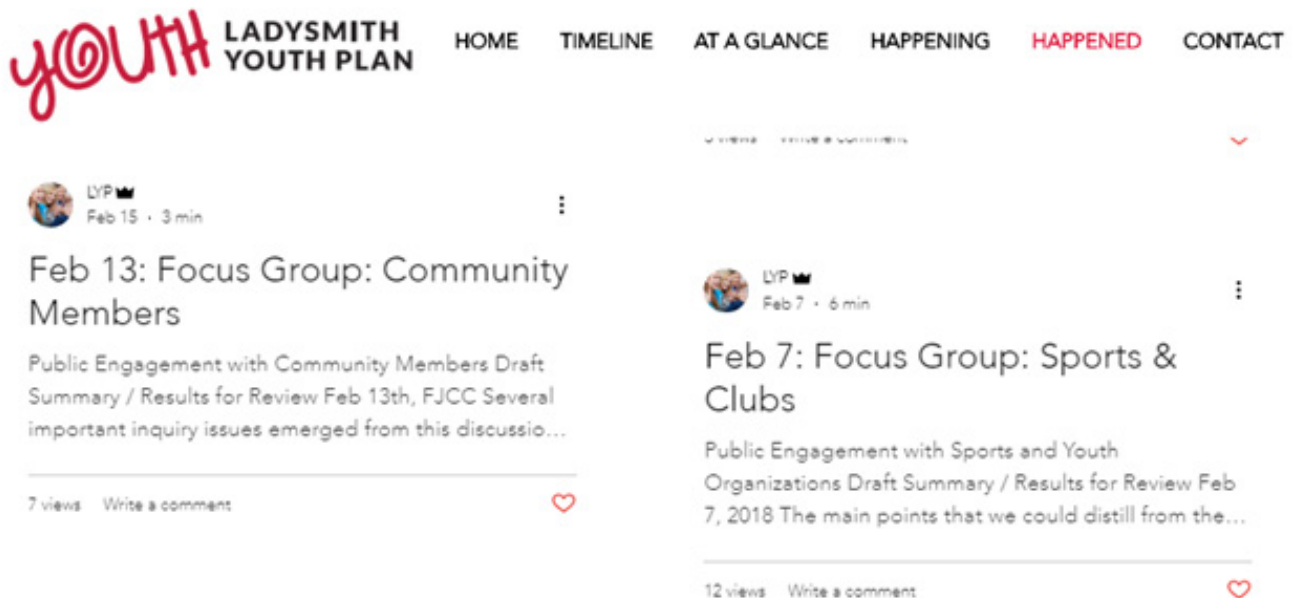
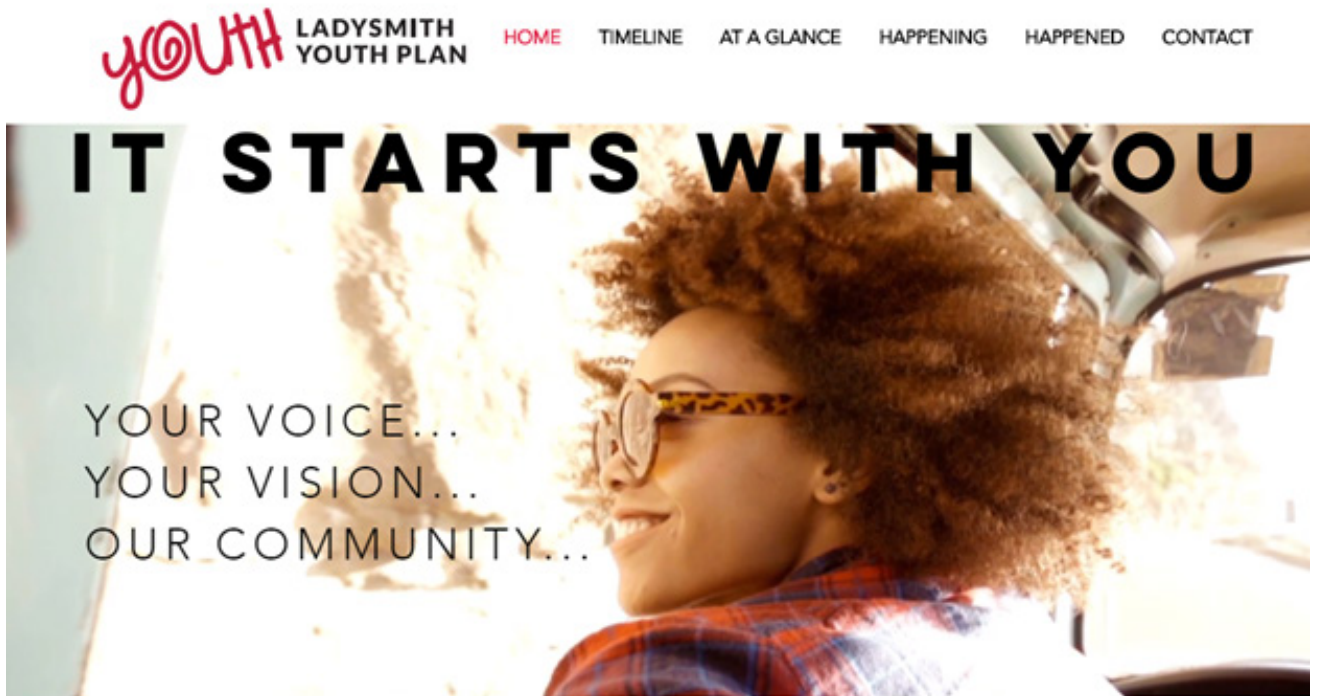
Our hope is that the Ladysmith Youth Plan will provide the community with an inspiring and realistic roadmap for the future of youth resources and services to which all participants and stakeholders are fully committed. The plan builds on the successes of the past while framing creative options for the future.

¹ Ladysmith Parks, Recreation, & Culture Master Plan. (2016). Parks, Recreation, and Culture, Town of Ladysmith: GDH Solutions.

5.3 Ladysmith Youth Plan Research Collection Website

A permanent website at <https://lyouthplan.wixsite.com/youthplandev> chronicles the project and holds all the focus groups summaries from community focus groups, from CORE+ meetings, from sessions in the LSS classrooms, as well as from the posters

from the open house on April 11. In addition, PDF versions of the Survey Monkey youth and adult surveys are in downloadable PDFs. The final version of this plan will be uploaded to this site upon completion.





6. SETTING THE CONTEXT

This section orients the reader to the LYP by setting in it into the context of the present situation for youth in general, statistical factors about the Town of Ladysmith which impact youth participation, and the situational factors impacting the results of the surveys.

6.1 Demographics

6.1.1 POPULATION

The population of the Town of Ladysmith grew 7.8% from the last Stats Canada Census in 2011, ranking it as one of the faster growing communities in BC. The population of youth in Ladysmith in 2016 grew from the 2011 levels when it experienced a considerable dip, returning to its 2006 numbers. The population of children in Ladysmith increased in this last census period from 1135 to 1255. In the same five year period the population of older adults has grown more dramatically. Nationally, we are now experiencing the effects of this unprecedented shift in population. In October 2015 Canada crossed a new threshold with Statistics Canada reporting that the number

of persons 65 years and older in Canada for the first time exceeded the numbers of young persons under 15. That is reflected in our local numbers with those aged 65 and older growing from 1805 to 2340².

6.1.2 SOCIOECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Percentage of households in Ladysmith registering under \$30,000 per annum is 17.8%. Even more challenged are persons living in lone-parent families in Ladysmith, registering a higher rate of low income at 30.1%. These two profiles have significance for the LYP, as we explore the struggles faced by many families in their efforts to pay for basic needs. Many find the recreation and cultural options out of reach³.

See Appendix A for charts

² <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-CSD-Eng.cfm?TOPIC=2&LANG=Eng&GK=CS-D&GC=5919021>

³ <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-CSD-Eng.cfm?TOPIC=6&LANG=Eng&GK=CS-D&GC=5919021>

⁴ <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-CSD-Eng.cfm?TOPIC=7&LANG=Eng&GK=CS-D&GC=5919021>

6.1.3 VISIBLE MINORITIES AND ETHNIC ORIGINS

1. **Aboriginal population.** Neighbouring community Stz'uminus First Nation registers 1319 persons. Within the Town of Ladysmith there are 665 Aboriginal persons representing 8% of the town population*. The Aboriginal population is distinctly younger than the non-Aboriginal population. The youth population is also proportionally larger in the Aboriginal population, with children aged 14 and under representing 32.3% of the total Aboriginal population, in comparison with non-Aboriginal children, aged 14 and under, that represented 13.6% of the non-Aboriginal population.
2. **Other population groups:** Aside from the Aboriginal population in Ladysmith, cultural diversity is significantly lower than most BC communities. In comparison with all of BC which registers 30.3% belonging to a visible minority group, Ladysmith registered 3.3% in the 2016 census, with the largest new immigration groups coming from the Philippines and United Kingdom⁴.

6.2 Context of Today's Youth in Our Community

For many decades we have accepted the belief that if youth participate in physical, social and cultural activities they will experience the benefits of positive mental and physical health.

6.2.1 PARTICIPATION

However, Canada-wide, the most recent ParticipAction Report Card (2015) states that only 5% of 12-17 year-olds meet the daily recommendation of physical activity. At the same time, school sports and extra-

curricular options for non-elite performers have experienced steady cutbacks in funding support and challenges for volunteer coaching. The problems standing in the way of youth participation seem universal. A recent North American survey revealed that youth ages 15-18 are now sedentary an average of 9.5 hours of their day⁵.

In the past five months, our published engagements have revealed a rich picture of youth experience in the Ladysmith region. The overview below offers some of the most interesting highlights we learned from our discussions and surveys and serves to paint the context within which the LYP has been developed.

6.2.2 REDUCED PARTICIPATION

First is the steep decline in youth engagement. In contrast to high level of participation with younger children under 10 years, our community sees a sharp reduction in participation for youth ages 11-13 years in sport and recreational pursuits. The success of programs for younger children can be attributed to the wide variety of sports and cultural activities offered to younger children that are made attractive by modest registration fees and the commitment of parents and caregivers to ensure active support and transportation. Also there is a general willingness of younger children to 'go with the flow' of parental expectations.

6.2.3 INCREASED ANXIETY

However, as children move into adolescence, many changes affect their participation. Increased stress and anxiety, have been reported by Ladysmith youth and front-line youth workers, caused by a number of influences; family problems and financial pressures,

⁵ Survey by Common Sense Media (2015)

<https://www.common sense media.org/about-us/news/press-releases/landmark-report-us-teens-use-an-average-of-nine-hours-of-media-per-day>

balancing studies with part-time work, trying to keep on top of commitments, and high expectations (from themselves and family).

6.2.4 SCREEN TIME

Increased time spent on social media platforms seems to have a huge impact on youth participation. While some youth describe a positive sense of community experienced through social media connections, others talk about intense emotional vulnerability, pressured by the need, for example, to maintain an upbeat and positive online identity that stands up to the scrutiny of peers. With the current awareness of the pitfalls of excessive screen time, many youth talked about trying to achieve a healthier balance, spending less time on screen and more time in social face-to-face connection with their peers in non-institutional settings.

6.2.5 COST PROHIBITIVE

How common is the situation where a youth age 11-18 in our community avoids participation due to financial limitations? With many families struggling to make ends meet, the average cost of fee registration and equipment for most sports, arts and cultural activities can be prohibitive. Many youth who are currently involved in dance and organized sports, for example, indicated that typically they spend a minimum of \$1500 plus per year to participate. This cost is sobering in light of the 2016 Census, which found over 17.8% of households in Ladysmith registered under \$30,000 per annum. Affordability remains a huge barrier for many.

6.2.6 TRANSPORTATION

Transporting youth to and from activities is another major challenge. With limited transit services available, and diminishing support

of adults shuttling youth to activities after the ages of 12 -13 years, there is also the element of added family costs of paying for needed transport.

6.2.7 DRONE PARENTING

In our discussions with youth, we also learned that many feel that they have been over-organized and over-protected. As one student stated, "Helicopter parenting is now drone parenting – always there." Parents continue to get caught in the protection paradox. In their need to keep their children healthy and safe, their net of protection can become too constrictive; then as children age, they may lack the resiliency, judgement or confidence to make wise decisions as young adults.

6.2.8 STAY-AT-HOME KIDS

In some cases, when youth quietly state their preference to stay home both in the after-school hours and other free times, parents and caregivers often acquiesce with the justification that:

1. there is the appearance of safety (safe at home, not on the street);
2. it is affordable, (the cost of internet); and
3. youth seem satisfied with the choice to be at home.

Not many years ago, if their children spent time roaming the streets, parents were highly motivated to ensure that they had healthier choices. Today, the same sense of urgency is no longer felt by parents.

6.2.9 INDOOR LIVING

Another result of latchkey living is Nature Deficit, a term used to describe too much indoor experience. Many local youth are responding to the excessive time spent indoors with a stated desire for more unstructured outdoor play

opportunities and access to spaces that offer risk and adventure in the outdoors.

6.2.10 DIFFICULTY STARTING A NEW ACTIVITY IN MID-ADOLESCENCE

Those youth who described themselves as fully active in sports, and have developed a solid level of proficiency in those activities, are those who seem to move through the pre-adult unaffected by the participation 'drop-off' (Contingent upon family support and finances enabling continued participation). For others, it can be a real struggle to move into new activities. During our discussions with community members, there were few examples of programs that welcomed those teens who wanted to try out a sport activity that would be new to them. Local girls softball was a notable exception, reporting huge success in a recently introduced program designed specifically to welcome newbies to softball. The program was introductory, non-competitive, and youth-friendly. In other community programs it seems difficult for youth to find friendly entry points into an activity they would like to join. Some reported that the challenges in recruiting volunteer coaches for any of the youth teams is posing a threat to the existing sports framework.

The capacity and confidence to try new sports in adolescent years is further compromised by the fact that fewer youth are developing basic physical literacy skills, possibly due to the reduction in Kindergarten to Grade 5 physical education in the new BC curriculum.

6.2.11 YOUTH VOICE

An increasing number of youth have expressed the need to be more closely connected to the decisions that affect them, including leadership, volunteering and program design.

6.3 Context of Ladysmith Youth Plan Surveys

In order to examine the feedback from youth and the community from the research conducted for the plan, there are a few influences to keep in mind.

- The youth age group results between 11-14 and 15-18 were split rather evenly over the two month course of the survey.
- Ladysmith Intermediate School and North Oyster School teachers had students ages 11 plus fill in the survey.
- Ladysmith residents dominated the results for home community in both youth and adult surveys.
- The gender mix was even in the classroom sessions but the surveys showed 25% higher female representation.

Our survey results totalled 207 from local youth and 114 from local adults (321). For detailed analysis, see Appendix B for Youth and Appendix C for Adults.

6.4 Methodology: How we gathered our information for the Ladysmith Youth Plan

6.4.1 RESEARCHING

Interviews, focus groups and surveys were our principal means of gathering information from youth, parents, and community organizations. Foundational interviews were completed with 12 key members of our youth team and members of agencies serving local youth. The CORE+ and YRT provided us with ongoing feedback on our processes and emerging themes. Our community public engagements provided us with a rich variety of perspectives. In order to access a wide cross-section of community youth, we hosted 10 one-hour focus group sessions at Ladysmith

Secondary School (grades 8-12, and Stz'uminus Secondary School, grades 11/12).

Our study was accomplished using Appreciative Inquiry (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010)⁶. This is a strengths-based model, aligning with Ladysmith's commitment to building the developmental assets of youth (Ladysmith Parks, Recreation, & Culture, 2016).

6.4.2 THE THREE QUESTIONS

Following this orientation and an introduction to the purpose of the LYP, we began each interview or focus group with these three questions:



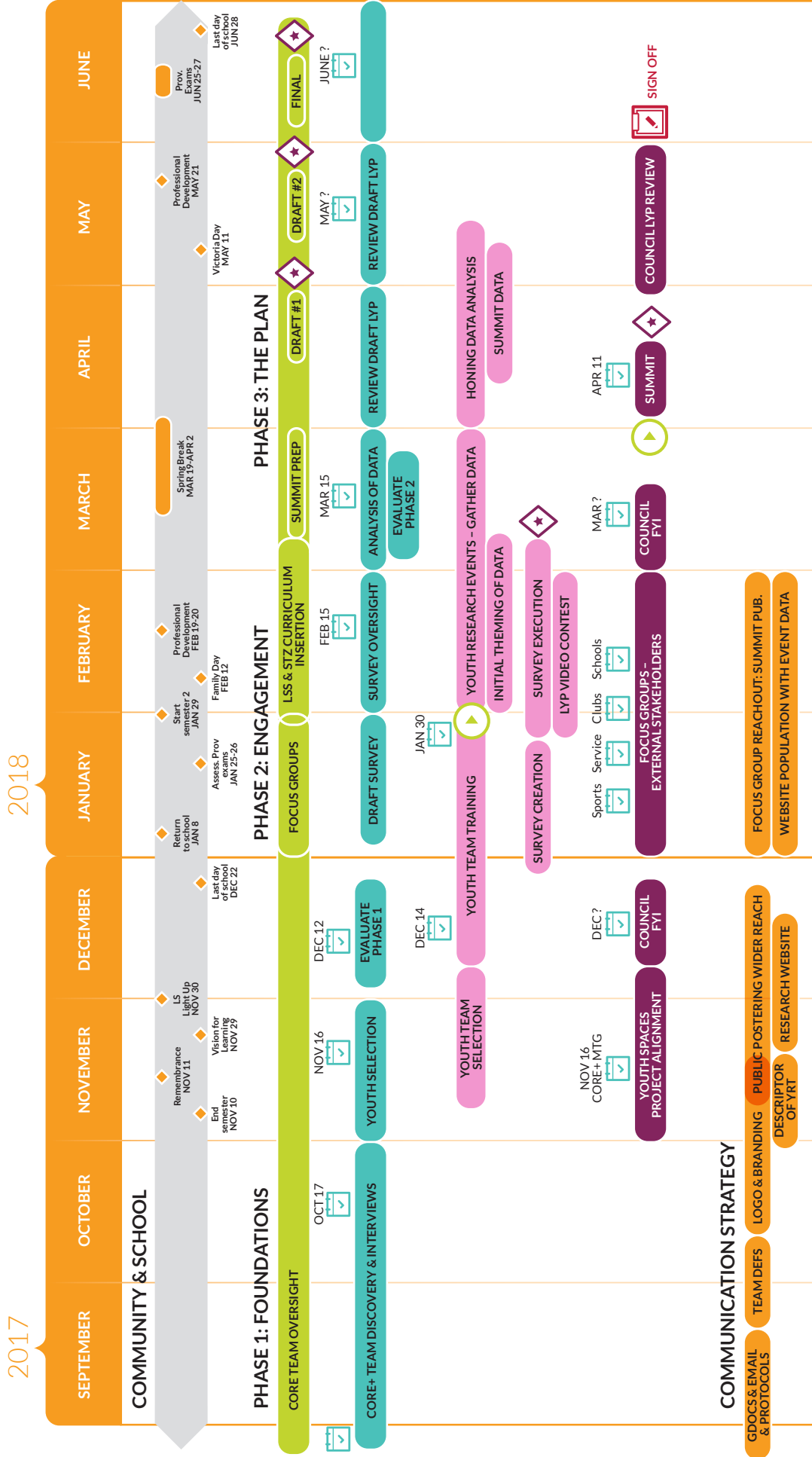
6.5 The Internal Timeline

In order for the CORE+ team to have a clear understanding of the three phases of the LYP, we created this high-level internal timeline. The top arrow in grey denotes the ongoing school and holiday events which scheme the intersections with the project phases. By showing the coinciding activities with overlaps into other sections, it helped the team to stay in the loop. As events and happenings changed, the timeline was adjusted.

⁶Whitney, D., & Trosten-Bloom, A. (2010). The power of appreciative inquiry: A practical guide to positive change. Whitney Paperback.

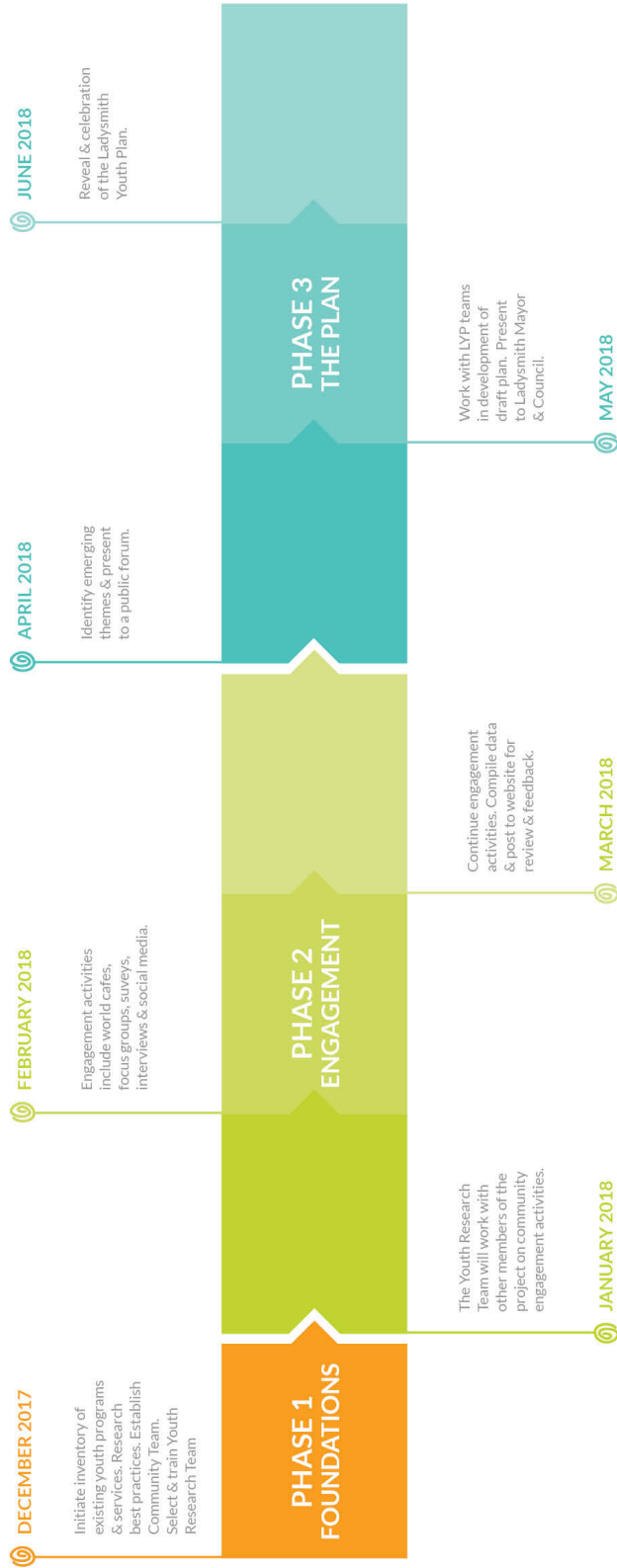
6.5.1 TIMELINE CHART

- CORE TEAM
- CORE+ TEAM
- YOUTH RESEARCH TEAM
- EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS
- Milestone
- Meeting
- Kickoff



6.5.2 THE EXTERNAL TIMELINE

LADYSMITH YOUTH PLAN TIMELINE OF PROJECT



6.6 The Three Phases

6.6.1 PHASE 1: BUILDING FOUNDATIONS & RESEARCH STRUCTURE

AUG TO DEC 2017

This phase centred on the foundational commitment of:

- Setting communication protocol and information gathering processes within meetings, by using shared Google Drive, email, and populating a public research website to document and track findings;
- Selecting, establishing, and engaging three teams in Appreciative Inquiry around youth and youth services in Ladysmith and Stz'uminus;
- Participating in foundational meetings with these three teams: CORE Team, CORE+ Team, and the Youth Research Team;
- Completing review of services, framing the current Ladysmith community context;
- Training the Youth Research Team(s) for facilitation roles;
- Summarizing information, and working with participants to confirm accuracy of directions;
- Documenting and posting to the Google Drive and website summaries from meetings; sharing the individual interviews with the CORE and CORE+ members in the form of notes;
- Gathering external information on youth outside this timeframe and review.

6.6.2 PHASE 2: ENGAGING COMMUNITY & ORGANIZING DATA

JAN TO MAR 2018

This phase centred on exploring the community's response to our three main questions through:

- Creating and testing surveys on Survey Monkey and Town of Ladysmith Place Speak for adults and for youth separately;
- Publishing, disseminating and gathering survey results;
- Holding focus groups engaging different demographics of the community with the three questions;
- Holding classroom sessions at the local secondary schools.

6.6.3 PHASE 3: FINALIZING THE LADYSMITH YOUTH PLAN

APR TO JUNE 2018

This phase began with a public forum that gathered community feedback and response to the main themes identified in the research of Phase 2. Following this last public engagement, the resulting information was then analyzed and reviewed by each of the main teams: CORE, CORE+ and the YRT. The next draft was then developed by the consultants and edited by the CORE Team and presented to Council committees. The final draft was published for final review/vetting by community stakeholders and then presented to Town of Ladysmith Mayor and Council in June 2018.



7. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

7.1.1 CORE+ INTERVIEWS

In Phase 1, key representatives of youth-involved organizations across the community as well as several youth from LSS were invited to become members of the CORE+ team to act in an advisory capacity to the project. Each of these members was then interviewed for their deepest thoughts on the **three questions**. Below is a sample list of organizations interviewed:

- Faith-Based Organizations
- Social Planning Cowichan
- Town of Ladysmith
- Ladysmith Secondary School Students
- Stz'uminus First Nation
- Vancouver Island University Practicum Students
- Ladysmith Resources Centre Association

7.1.2 YOUTH RESEARCH TEAM

12 young people stepped forward to form the Youth Research Team (YRT) seconded from LSS. Several of these youth were also representing the [PlaceMaker project](#).

7.1.3 FOCUS GROUPS

Facilitators from PRC and PLD were present to facilitate the groups. We began with a quick outline and purpose of the new Ladysmith Youth Plan, emphasizing the importance of youth sharing their voices in order to create a new direction.

We then offered a brief orientation to the idea of dialogue used in the sessions. In small facilitated groups of 4-6, perceptions related to the three questions were explored (restated): What is working well for youth in the school and community; What key issues and challenges were important to them? What things in the future do they think would enhance youth experience in the community?

NAME OF GROUP	DATE	# OF ATTENDEES	REPRESENTATIVES FROM
LSS Teacher Presentation	Jan 10	20	Staff at LSS
Service Clubs	Jan 31	16	Lions Club Kinsmen Club Rotary Interact Rotary Club LS Historical Society LS Arts Council Waterfront Gallery Probus Eagles LS Drama Society Town of Ladysmith Council
Youth Service Providers	Feb 6	12	Social Planning Cowichan Ladysmith Resources Centre Association RCMP Boys and Girls Club of Central Vancouver Island
Sports Clubs	Feb 8	6	Ladysmith Lightning Softball Mid-Isle Soccer Ladysmith Baseball Association Air Cadet League of Canada - Parallel 257
Stz'uminus First Nation Reps	Feb 13	4	SFN Employment Counsellor (CORE +) SFN SS Principal YRT Rep, Community Leader SFN Family Advocate
Community Members	Feb 13	2	Volunteers in Community
Frontline Workers	Feb 15	4	LPRC Youth Programmer VIHA Child/Youth Mental Health LRCA Child and Family Support SD68 Counsellor (LPS/LIS)
LSS PAC Presentation	Feb 20	8	Parent Advisory Committee
North Oyster PAC Presentation	Mar 7	8	Parent Advisory Committee
LIS PAC Presentation	Mar 8	8	Parent Advisory Committee
TOTAL IN DIALOGUE		88	

7.1.4 LSS CLASSROOM SESSIONS

CLASS TEACHERS	DATE	# OF ATTENDEES	2 TO 3 CLASSES OF MIXED GRADES ON EACH DATE
Teacher Sharpe	Feb 16	84	
Teacher Beuerlein	Feb 22	90	
Teacher Winter	Feb 28	32	
Teacher Leichtaler	Mar 2	15	
Teacher Taylor	Mar 2	35	
TOTAL IN DIALOGUE		256	

7.1.5 SURVEY TALLYS

Adults	114
Youth	207
TOTAL	321

For further survey statistics, see Appendix B and Appendix C.

7.1.6 OPEN HOUSE

An estimated 150+- community and youth visited the FJCC open house for the LYP, with YRT members, both PLD consultants, and numerous PRC staff facilitating the walkthrough.

In addition, community organizational leaders added valuable input (Boys and Girls Club of Central Vancouver Island, LSS Counsellors, Ladysmith Family and Friends, Island Health, and the Ladysmith Historical Society).

In the themes presented in the next section, the images are of the posters displayed at the open house with participants placing dots on a Likert Scale as to the theme's importance. This gave us valuable feedback in assessing the priorities for the LYP.

8. THE THEMES

After the analysis of the information from interviews, community and school focus groups, and public surveys, we identified nine distinct themes. These were presented to the public in an open house format in April along with all the supporting information. Our goal was to gather feedback and ideas in response to our emerging themes. The themes are presented in the section below.

For the full details, background, possibilities, and research, see Appendix E



THEME 1:
Advocating for Youth Voice



THEME 2:
Building Youth Spaces



THEME 3:
Strengthening Partnerships



THEME 4:
Creating a
Communication Hub



THEME 5:
Accessing activities:
Transportation & Funding



THEME 6:
Increasing Participation
& Variety



THEME 7:
Responding to Diversity



THEME 8:
Supporting Mental Wellness



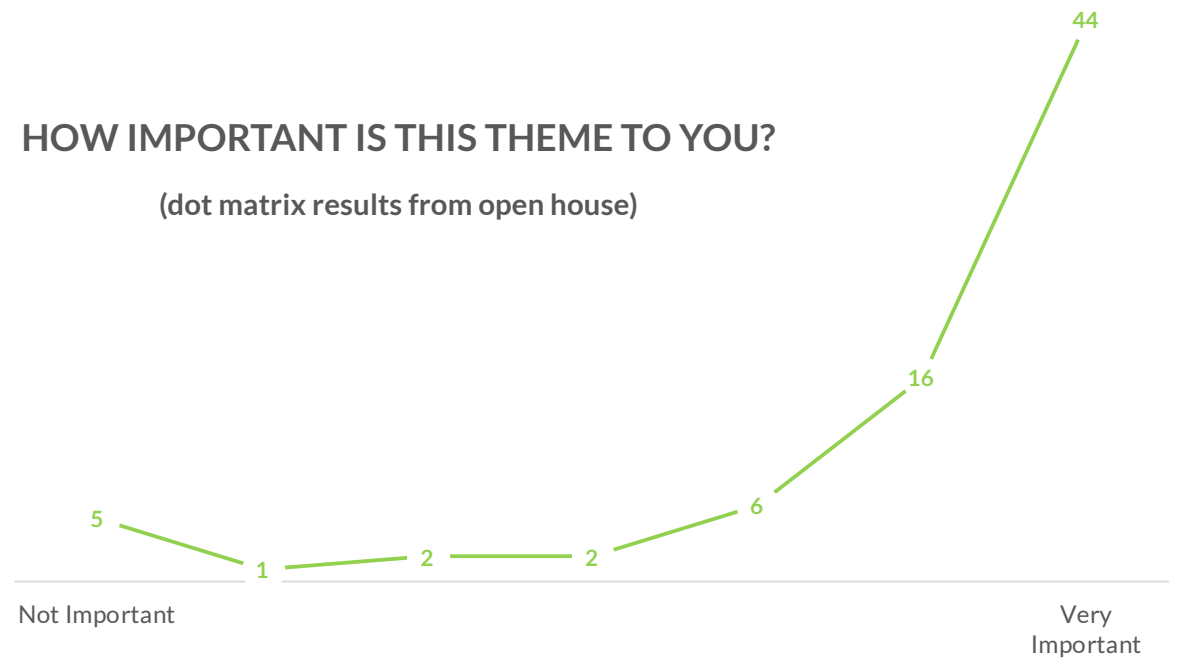
THEME 9:
Reframing Screen Time

8.1. THEME 1: ADVOCATING FOR YOUTH VOICE



HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS THEME TO YOU?

(dot matrix results from open house)



We define Youth Voice as the active way diverse groups of young people represent their ideas, opinions, and knowledge in decision-making in their school and community. This theme is at the heart of the Ladysmith Youth Plan.

8.1.1 LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Youth have demonstrated commitment by involving themselves in leadership and collaboration related to many local initiatives involving social change. Ladysmith has initiated several active projects involving youth advocacy and leadership, including the Rotary Interact program, the Ambassador program, and the aforementioned PlaceMaker Project mentored by Cowichan Social Planning and led by a group of Ladysmith youth. Youth have recommended

that we expand these kinds of options in the future.

Another example of youth voice can be found in current commitment and leadership demonstrated by the Youth Research Team during their work on the Ladysmith Youth Plan. The group of 12 dedicated and talented Grade 8 - 12 students from LSS and Stz'uminus have guided and assisted in most of our public engagements since December 2017 and have made the development of the LYP possible.

8.1.2 YOUTH GOVERNANCE

As Ladysmith remains open and willing to explore options for increased youth participation in its governance and services, we will be working toward creation of a sustainable model for youth representation on Town committees, developed with Ladysmith PRC taking the lead. A related possibility is to grant youth voting rights on key governance bodies and the creation of a local Youth Council.

When youth gain a foothold in committees and groups that have a positive influence in their school and community, the influence often fades as students age-out and move on to different places and experiences. Often there is not enough attention paid to succession of youth representation and leadership.

Youth report that there are few opportunities to (1) contribute in meaningful ways to the community and to (2) gain valuable work experience that will increase eligibility for good part-time jobs.

The Town could seek recommendations of what that framework might look like. Perhaps each Town committee could include a youth representative.

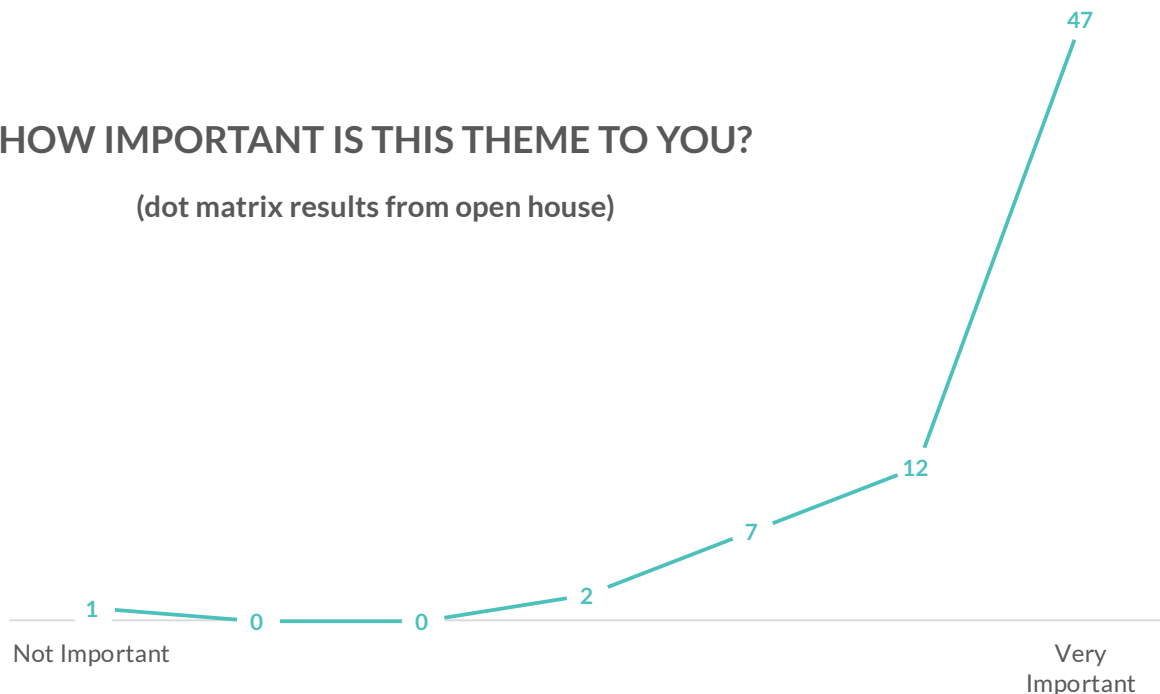
For more details and ideas and research, see this theme in Appendix E

8.2. THEME 2: BUILDING YOUTH SPACES



HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS THEME TO YOU?

(dot matrix results from open house)



8.2.1 PLACEMAKER PROJECT

In the fall of 2017, a leadership class from LSS carried the work of the [Cowichan Youth Spaces Project](#) into the Ladysmith community, with the goal of discovering the characteristics of the place local youth need to stay socially connected and engaged with friends. After three months of surveys and meetings, they presented to Mayor and Council on January 18th their findings and proposal for a new centre.

The most important result of their work was the identification of all the information generated in our public engagements:

- Youth have no indoor place that provides a healthy, non-institutional environment to meet with others.
- Youth also do not have an outdoor space where they can hang out with permission except the skateboard park. They are looking for safe, relaxed and comfortable places to spend time with each other without shame or rejection, not isolated from the community, open 7 days a week from early morning until late at night.
- As expressed by a community participant, *“The town needs a place for youth to go, a place that’s fun, exciting, connects them socially, and is safe. I think a youth centre or*

lounge specifically could be an opportunity for optimal growth and success among the youth demographic of Ladysmith that we are currently lacking. It's unfortunate to watch the youth disconnect, become very isolated and lonely, and have no social outlets or support outside of school (or home – since often that is not an option for support either)."

8.1.2 YOUTH HUB

Currently FJCC offers afternoon and evening time slots at its centre. This activity was reported to have been successful during certain periods – others not as popular – which are often seasonal. Although designed to attract multi-aged youth, youth reported they needed a place where they can freely connect with peers in a more casual setting that they can call their own. The following conditions were consistently identified as important in all of our sessions:

- Provides a fun place to relax and hang out with friends (as per PlaceMaker Project).
- Needs to be located within walking distance of LSS for pre-school, lunch and after school.
- Needs to have attending adults who build safe, caring, respectful environment, with light oversight.
- Offers food that is not expensive (can use Interac).

- Provides safe environment for all forms of diversity.
- Offers places to sit comfortably, table games, board games, a quiet area for reading.
- Provides venues for open mic and music jamming and other cultural events.
- Allows creation of a youth art wall.
- Is part of communication hub of networking information on current activities, job and volunteering opportunities.

8.1.3 OUTDOOR AND OTHER SPACES

A large number of youth would like a movie theatre. Young adults reminisced about a movie theatre in Ladysmith that was a great meeting place in their younger days.

Youth proposed other social gatherings such as bonfires at Transfer Beach. There was interest around having parameters down at the beach and responsible access to the beach.

Youth also proposed more development for: (1) Dirtbike and ATV trails and Mountain Biking (2) Bicycle skills park. Instruction in trail etiquette could be offered as part of a license to ride them. Consider using trail maintenance as another component of the license.

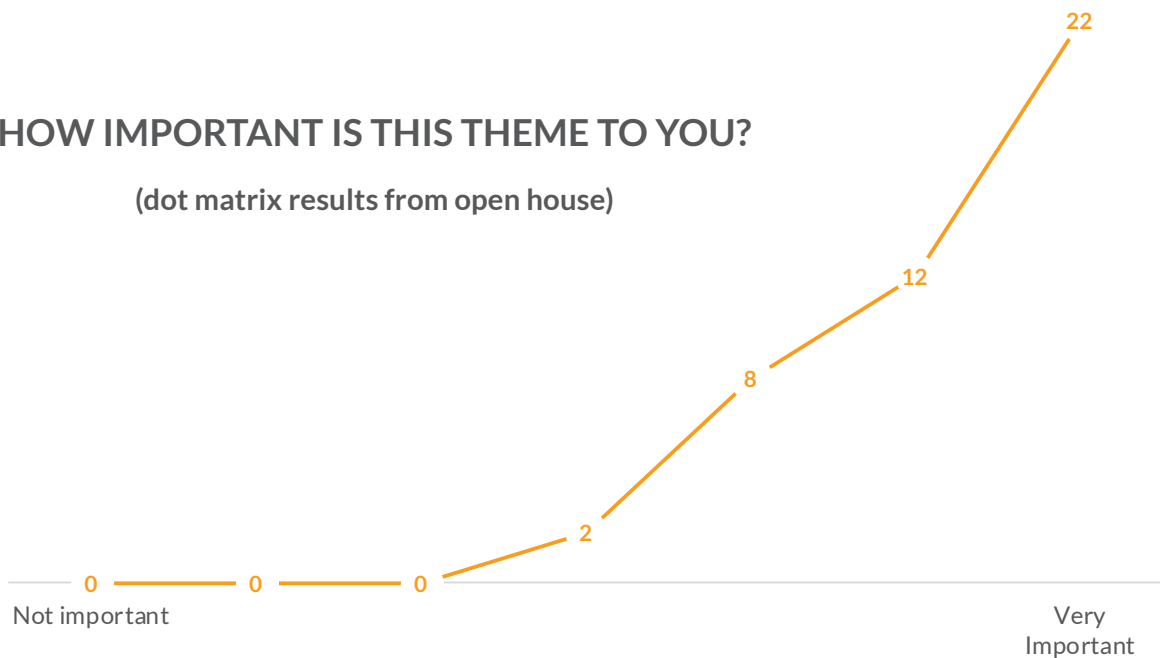
For more details and ideas and research, see this theme in Appendix E

8.3. THEME 3: STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS



HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS THEME TO YOU?

(dot matrix results from open house)



This theme presents the need for community organizations and parents to work together to share their vision and resources in a way that shows youth that they are cared about and valued.

8.3.1 COLLABORATION OF SERVICES

Service clubs and other community groups have much to offer youth but they often work in silos rather than collaborating to maximize positive impacts on youth. Nine service organizations, two churches, five sports teams, and seven youth service professionals took part in the focus group meetings for this youth plan. All of them provided enthusiastic and insightful contributions as well as offering more support

and a commitment to the LYP implementation. Notably, there was recognition that there was little shared communication about programs, resulting redundancies in youth services in some areas, and not enough support in others. Once again, there was a call for a unified strategy in connecting community agencies and organizations. Each organization, whether a school, sports agency, arts program, or health service, has been typically working in isolation.

Some of the possibilities suggested were to identify the roles and responsibilities of community agencies; clearly communicate who is responsible for what and describe their area of service; collaborate resources and planning to make the most of professional services for youth; Explore a collaborative approach by organizations and service clubs in funding sports and cultural activities, holding events, and creating volunteering opportunities, bursaries, scholarships; Use the long-established service structures to host events where youth can practise leading e.g., a communal meal; ensure representatives of organizations serving youth are included throughout the implementation of LYP to build shared commitment.

8.3.2 PARENTS TOO

“Parents need to get involved; businesses and organizations need to step up and work together to provide for the youth in our community.”

(Community participant)

The possibilities discussed in this theme centred on uniting goals, working together, and creating a sustainable framework that enables the pooling of resources in a collective community effort.

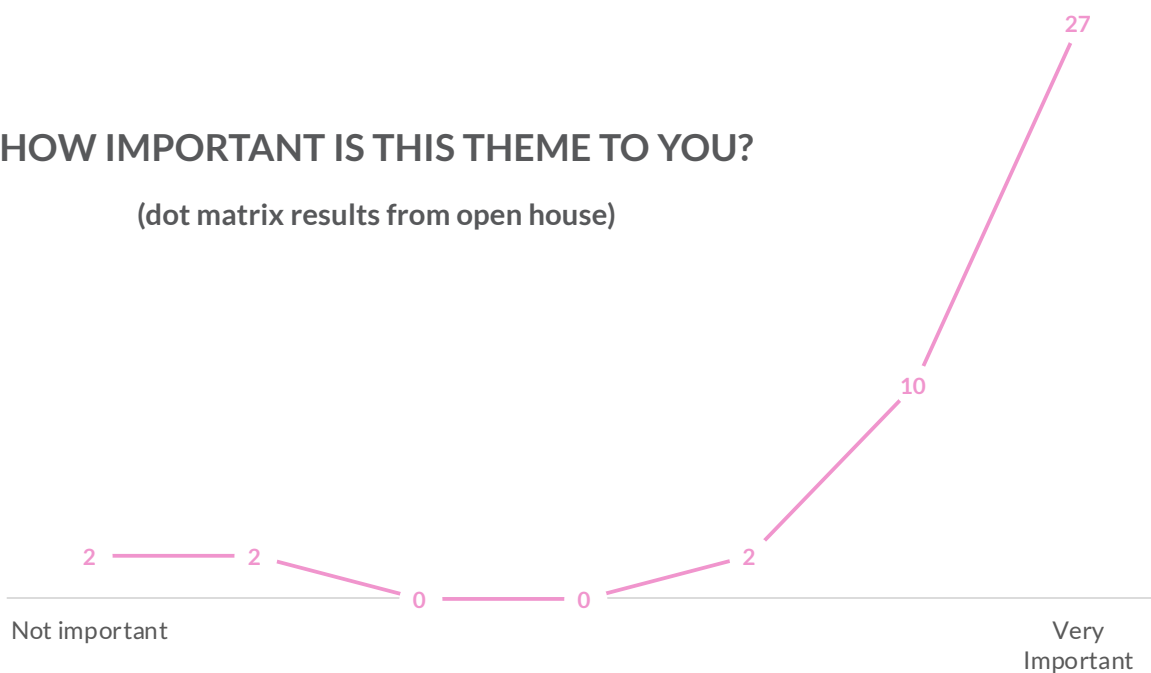
For more details and ideas and research, see this theme in Appendix E

8.4. THEME 4: CREATING A COMMUNICATION HUB



HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS THEME TO YOU?

(dot matrix results from open house)



This theme is about ensuring that both youth and adults are aware of what is offered in the town for youth. People identified the need for a central resource point, or hub in the community that is well-known by youth and families and informs them of ALL activities from sports to volunteering; and through which they can access needed funding in ways that respect their dignity and privacy.

8.4.1 COMMUNICATION HUB

Although a Ladysmith Youth page exists on Facebook, on the TOL website, and via posters of happenings distributed throughout the town, youth reported that they typically hear about opportunities and events through word-of-mouth which includes peer-to-peer messaging. As only 60% of youth in Ladysmith participate in activities, we need to make it easier to discover what is available and what is happening.

Instagram was the primary preference for communication, with eBulletins also mentioned. The LYP needs to stay current and relevant with software that is most popular with the youth of the day in order to reach them. It was suggested repeatedly by both youth and adults that the Town set up a virtual online Central Communication Hub, accessed by computer or smartphone app which constantly displays all youth-related activity including:

- volunteering opportunities
- service club opportunities

- youth services opportunities
- job opportunities
- camps of different kinds
- mental health services
- sports teams; schedules and sign-ups
- recreation activity schedules
- arts and cultural events, courses and sign-ups
- upcoming youth events like open-mic, dances, and music jamming
- public events
- opportunities for youth participation in town decision-making
- happenings at the new youth space (when launched)

For more details and ideas and research, see this theme in Appendix E

8.4.2 OPPORTUNITIES FAIR

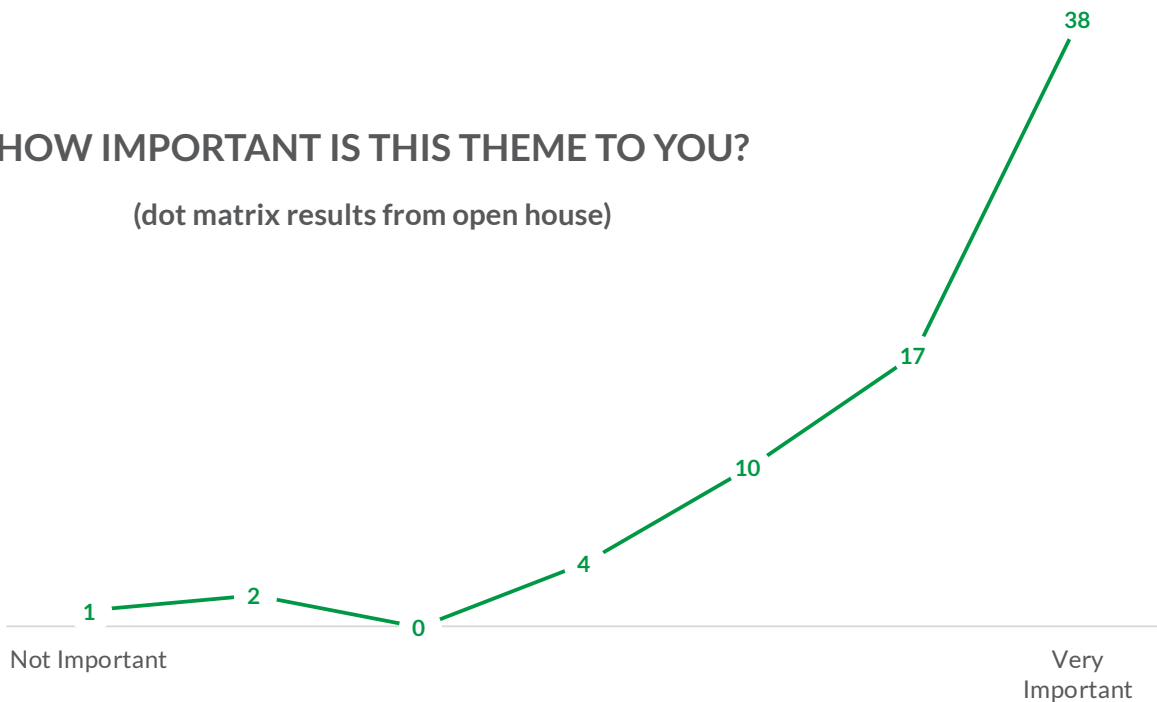
A Youth Services, Activities and Opportunities Fair would bring together all the possible service providers of the activities listed above. Such an event would promote another theme: Strengthening Partnerships. Services working together to produce these fairs could consolidate their offerings, reduce duplication, share their volunteers and common resources, and possibly reduce costs. Youth could benefit from a first-hand understanding of what each program, activity, offer and opportunity provided, and what would be involved in participating. Funding opportunities could also be applied for.

8.5. THEME 5: ACCESSING ACTIVITIES: TRANSPORTATION AND FUNDING



HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS THEME TO YOU?

(dot matrix results from open house)



Transportation and monetary capacity play a profoundly important role in making youth participation possible.

8.5.1 TRANSPORTATION

Transportation was identified as a major issue across the board in all interviews and group sessions. A large percentage of a youth's participation in activities, events, or jobs is dependent on accessibility. Ladysmith's topography with its steep slope is an impediment to walking; LSS, the sports fields, and a large percentage of residences are at the top, contrasted with the main street at the

bottom end of town, and even lower, Transfer Beach Park at sea level. After-school activities are limited by the availability of a ride home. Many students live in a perimeter community, such as Stz'uminus, Yellowpoint, Cedar, Cassidy, or Saltair and need to board the school bus home immediately following classes. Further, Coronation Mall at the south end of town, three kilometers south and downwards from LSS, houses key businesses which hire youth for part-time work, i.e., KFC, SaveOn Foods, McDonalds,

Sushi Wara, etc. But many youth reported forced isolation in Ladysmith if their parents or caregivers were unavailable to drive them. Many expressed a wish to be able to access Nanaimo activities, malls, and jobs.

Due to the absence of public transportation in and around Ladysmith and Stz'uminus, youth are dependent on parental pick-up/drop-off, or if they are older, friends with cars to access these activities. Much of the Ladysmith population works away from town, outside the hours when sports and other activities are offered.

Of the numerous suggestions from youth and adults, the most prominent one was to run a local small bus or a van on a regular schedule to enable youth to access after-school activities, sports and cultural venues, as well as work opportunities. This circuit should include outlying communities – Stz'uminus, Yellowpoint, Cassidy, Saltair, Cedar, Coronation Mall.

A related option proposed was the operation of a local small bus or van twice on the weekends to Nanaimo – SouthGate mall for fun, volunteering, and work. Community members recommended we negotiate with service groups, and Stz'uminus volunteer community groups to

share the responsibility of vehicle acquisition, drivers, and associated costs. Some working parents suggested later timings for activities.


Another suggestion is to make Ladysmith a bike friendly town with bike routes and the creation of a bike share program.

For all future program and services creation and implementation, this theme would be a consideration.

8.5.2 FUNDING

There are many families experiencing limited financial capacity, especially single parent homes, unable to participate in cultural and recreational activities. The more specialized the activity, the more costly it is e.g., Rep soccer or dance fees, equipment and travel may cost \$1500+ plus per year, plus full parental time commitment. Even though several of the service groups provide sports equipment and other financial support, youth most often reported they were unaware of possible assistance.

To respond to the needs of youth whose families are financially-challenged, most of the organized sports programs that participated in our sessions



described inclusionary policies that welcome all youth to participate. Air Cadets appears to be one of the local organizations that openly promotes the cost and relative affordability of their programs.

For more details and ideas and research, see this theme in Appendix E

Youth from financially-vulnerable families experience exclusion from activities and events. As one youth put it, “I think (activities) should just be cheaper. I barely have enough to live.” They are also more apt to be bullied; some also need a basic food program.

In order to mitigate the issue of funding, youth services representatives suggested providing a clearly communicated program of subsidies and financial support for youth and families who otherwise cannot afford services. Further, they recommended that the community ensures that youth with highest level of need are assisted in developing life skills and literacy strength so they can navigate applications and community information that could provide subsidies and scholarships.

Support funding might also be accomplished through private partnerships with local businesses that would offer free activities and workshops plus low cost-no cost sports and cultural activities.

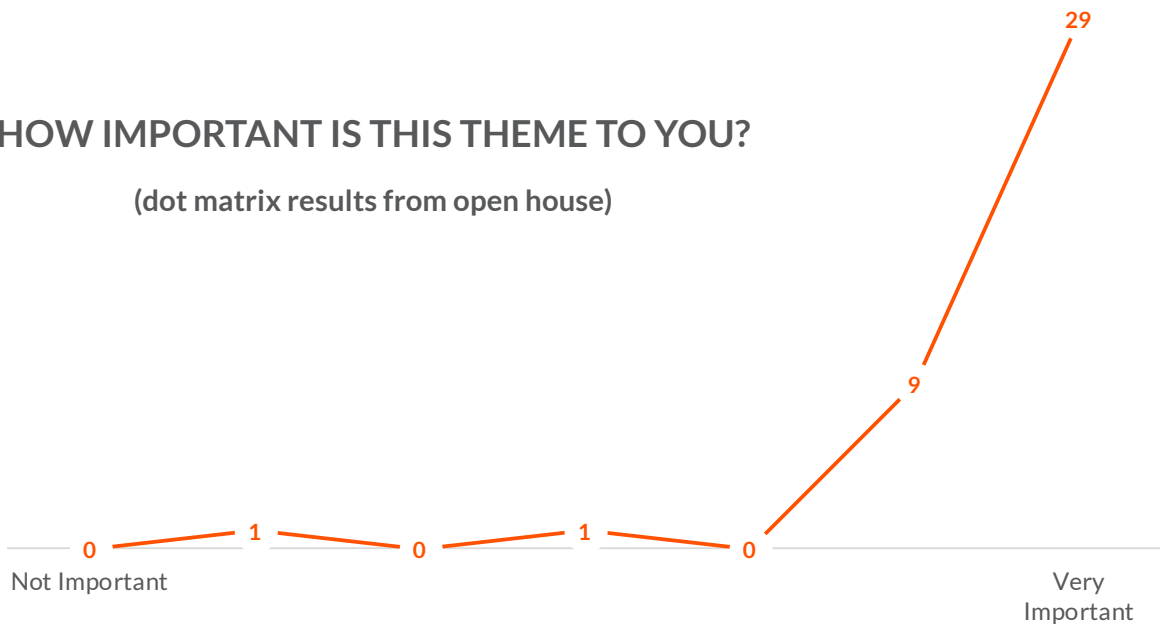
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8.6. THEME 6: INCREASING PARTICIPATION AND VARIETY



HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS THEME TO YOU?

(dot matrix results from open house)



This theme supports the premise that more involvement in a variety of recreation, cultural, and community events and activities would help youth build confidence, strengthen their sense of belonging and purpose, and increase motivation to be active.

Many creative ideas and recommendations emerged from discussion of this theme, resulting in a comprehensive list.

Please see Appendix E to explore these further

8.6.1 SPORTS

Sports activity, both organized and drop-in, was identified by respondents as a distinct strength of the Ladysmith community. Numerous youth championed the importance of their coaches as their mentors. In most classroom sessions and survey responses, youth requested more

offerings of existing sports, a greater variety of sports, more sports fields, more tournaments, and more drop-in casual sports, such as basketball or floor hockey. They also talked about the need to have access to introductory sports programs that would offer a respectful initiation into a new activity for newbies.

8.6.2 ARTS AND CULTURE

Youth described the very powerful positive impact of their experiences in improv drama, music, and dance. Local organized courses and LSS classes guided by committed and gifted mentors and teachers have fostered the successful development of these skilled activities. Youth expressed the wish for more arts-and-culturally-related activities and learning. This was especially important for those youth who were not interested in sports.

Those involved in the drama program at LSS, the bands, and those involved in organized sports advocated more support for travel that would enable them compete province-wide.

The local Rotary Club has recently allocated funding for specific projects that will support youth gathering stories from elders in the community and offer opportunities for leadership project on a summer camping venture on Vancouver Island in 2018.

8.6.3 VOLUNTEERISM

Youth reported the need for a greater variety of volunteer opportunities: More meaningful, community-involved volunteer work that might better prepare them for an adult job.

Specifically, they stated how much they valued volunteering in one-off projects or events that had a limited time-range and a final outcome, such as the Festival of Lights, or a town or trail development project.

Having fun was at the top of the list in the survey for the reason youth would participate in activities, followed closely by a wish to be with friends.

Our research suggested that working together with peers on a community project mentored by adult leaders would meet the criteria of both fun and purpose.

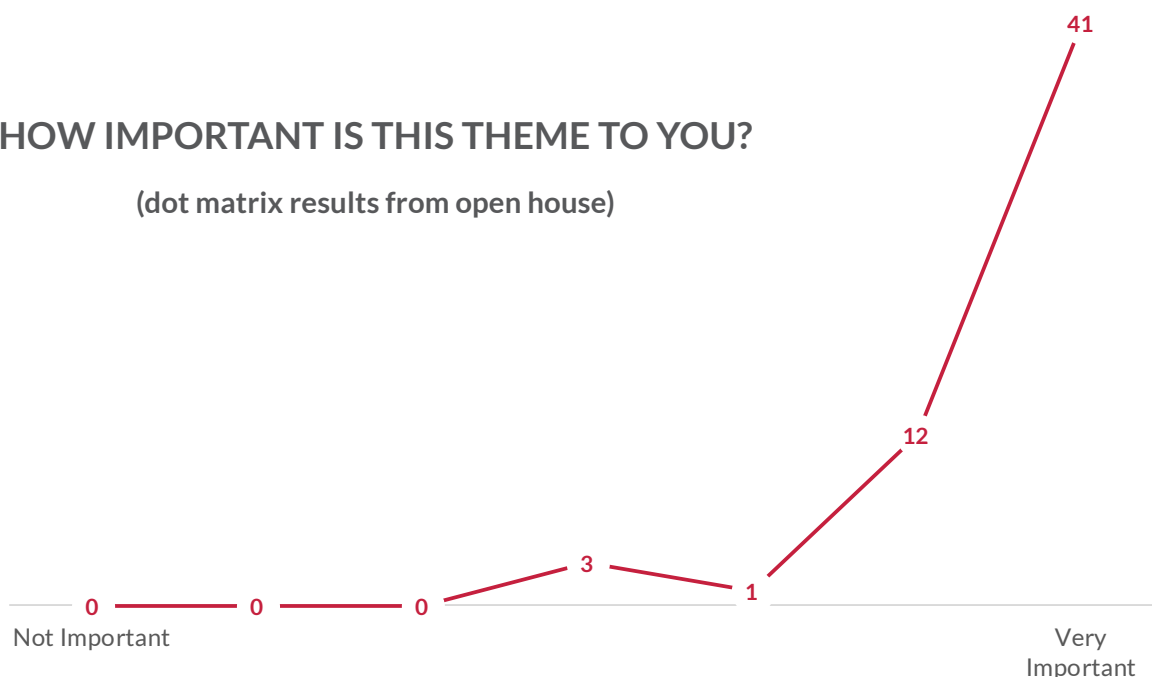
For more details, ideas and research, see this theme in Appendix E

8.7. THEME 7: RESPONDING TO DIVERSITY



HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS THEME TO YOU?

(dot matrix results from open house)



Responding to diversity means embracing the understanding, acceptance, and respect for individual and group differences within the youth population as defined by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, social groupings, physical abilities, and beliefs.

8.7.1 SHARING COMMUNITIES

Participants cited strong examples of programs that build intercultural understanding and respect in the community. Local service clubs, for example, offer International student exchanges (Rotary) that have expanded students' horizons. At LSS there have been many recent changes designed to build cultural understanding of Stz'uminus First Nation ways

and traditions, including the new Language and Land-Based Learning program in which students learn about Coast Salish culture and traditions and the Hul'q'umin'um language. At LSS there is regular acknowledgement of traditional Stz'uminus territory at school events; as well as art projects in the form of school-based cedar-carving with students working with a Stz'uminus artist.

Within the Stz'uminus First Nation (SFN), there are strong role models in sport and cultural activities that reinforce the strength of the culture, as exemplified in regularly scheduled community-based cultural sessions that successfully involve youth in weekly multigenerational activity at the community centre.

While the majority of students at LSS reported they felt that there were few signs of discrimination evident in the school environment, the experience of those who identify as ethnic minorities was clearly different. In one class of 30+ students, stories of racism and discrimination at the hand of peers and the larger community pointed to the need for increased focus on learning about other cultures and deeper understanding and respect for diversity. They pointed out that being nice to one another at a superficial level does not necessarily mean respect or acceptance of differences.

Participants in the public engagement process recommended the community place a stronger focus on diversity issues by:

(1) Building new ways of sharing culture between Stz'uminus and Ladysmith to help us move from a legacy of racism toward real cultural understanding and acceptance.

(2) Bridging the divide by bringing the two sides together to discuss new ways to learn and live together; for example, initiate Reconciliation or ReconciliAction.

Plans could be made for Aboriginal Day in mid-late June, offering special activities, cultural tours, and experiential activities such as the Walk of Nations.

8.7.2 SUPPORTING COSTS

Create more school programs that promote cultural awareness, particularly with regard to the Stz'uminus First Nation. Stz'uminus offers interesting cultural experiences that youth look forward to: special field trips, traditional dance, tribal journey, and activities like spear fishing. A course that involved both Stz'uminus Secondary students and Ladysmith Secondary students could offer these cultural experiences to youth from both communities, and could alternate between the two schools.

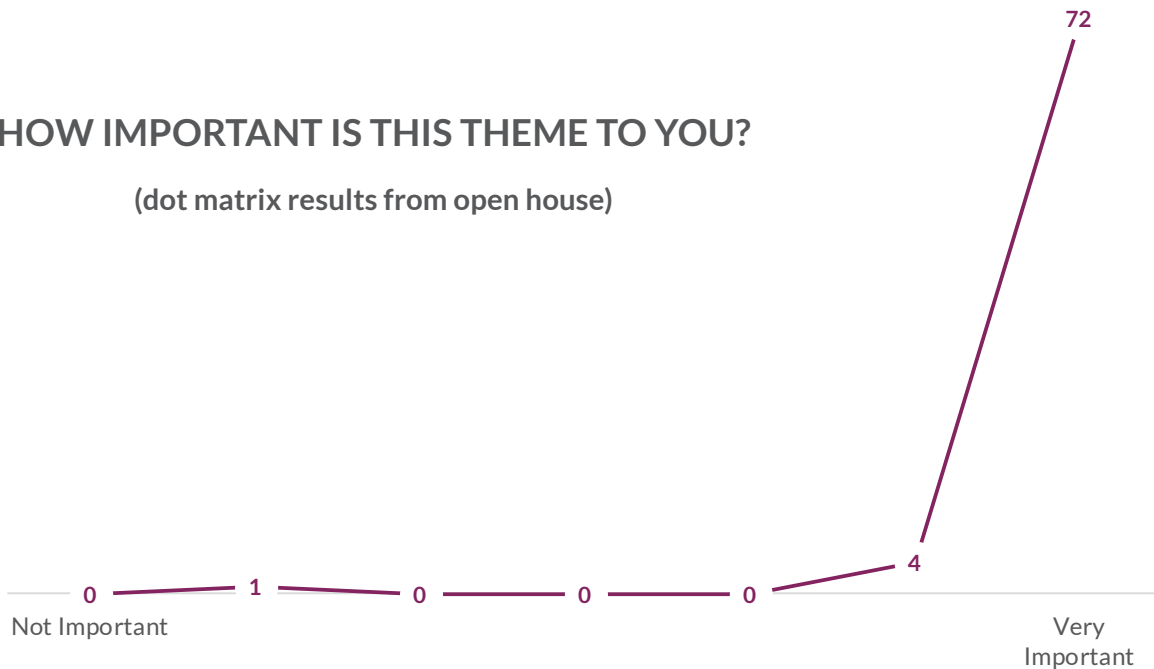
For more details and ideas and research, see this theme in Appendix E

8.8. THEME 8: SUPPORTING MENTAL WELLNESS



HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS THEME TO YOU?

(dot matrix results from open house)



Reports show that youth anxiety and depression are on the rise in our society, not just in Ladysmith. As evidenced by the density of dots placed in the Likert scale above and in the surveys, this theme is of intense interest to youth.

Youth explained the negative impact of cliques and their judgments. As a result of being judged, they begin to lack confidence in groups. This can result in exclusion, anxiety and depression. Yet the importance of peer interaction was rated very highly in the surveys.

Youth experiencing anxiety and depression often find it difficult to access the right counselling support which is timely and accessible while also fitting to their personal level of need. "In addition there is sensitivity related to personal privacy and seeing a counsellor in a small town. Some youth feel that too many people are observing and commenting on their vulnerability. Services in nearby Nanaimo are also tapped out." Youth reported waiting lists of several months.

8.8.1 UNITING SERVICES

A team of dedicated youth counselling professionals (also referred to as “Front Line Workers” in this document) contributed to the public engagement sessions by offering a graphic depiction of the challenges facing local youth. With mental health services for youth stretched to capacity, they maintain a positive and progressive attitude towards future changes that will meet the needs of Ladysmith youth. On the positive side, “Drugs and alcohol abuse in our town have decreased compared to 10 years ago.” However, new challenges have emerged.

8.8.2 INCREASE SERVICES

The main recommendation was to increase the number of mental health counsellors. Youth commented, “The availability of affordable youth counsellors would be phenomenal!” The good work initiated by the Front Line Workers to coordinate mental health support services and counsellors within the town should continue to be supported.

Other creative ideas were suggested such as tapping into the retirement community for adult mentors that could “just listen”. CORE suggested a course in Mental Health First Aid for PRC staff and beyond. One counsellor suggested instigating Outreach, often forgotten, which provides a way to meet the kids where they are for on-site support e.g., taking a drop-in program to a skate park.

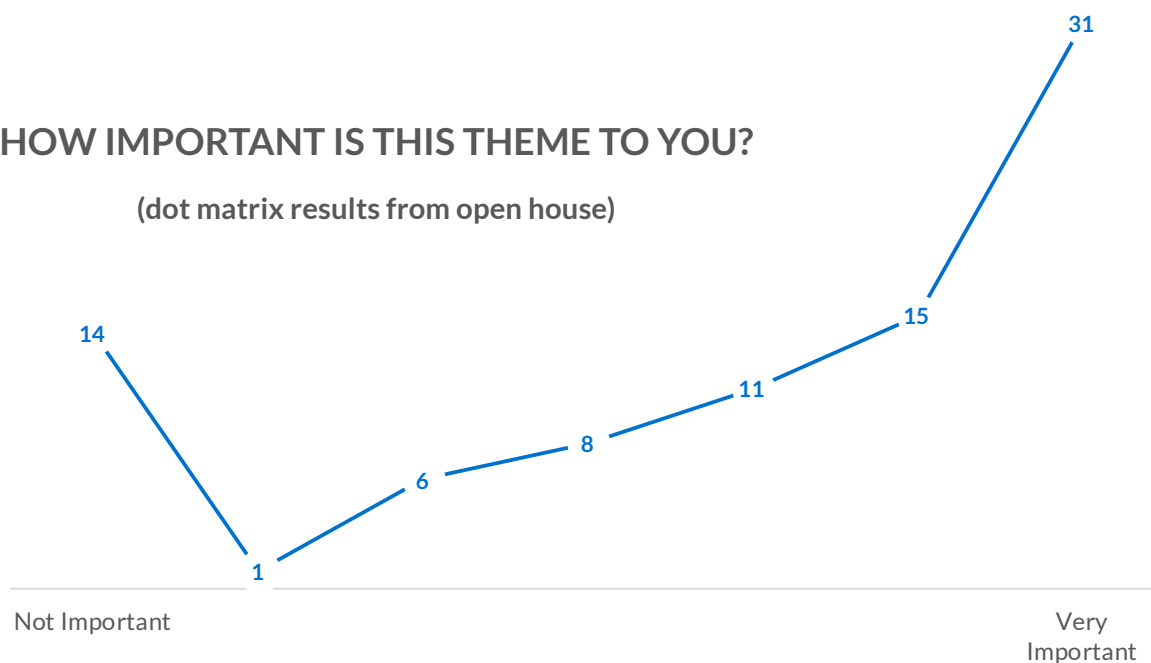
For more details and ideas and research, see this theme in Appendix D

8.9. THEME 9: REFRAMING SCREEN TIME



HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS THEME TO YOU?

(dot matrix results from open house)



This theme addresses screen time, that is, time spent with TV, computers, iPads or smartphones. Our current generation of youth has superseded previous generations in the amount of time spent engaged with digital and visual media. Only a small handful of local youth described themselves as non-users. While only extended research will reveal the long-term impact of extensive time spent on screens, we have learned some important things about how screen time has affected our youth population - in both positive and negative ways.

8.9.1 PROS AND CONS

On the positive side, involvement in healthy online communities and involvement with computer technology can build confidence and social connection that they may not otherwise access within their own community. This involvement can contribute to building a healthy

identity. As well, many youth are developing invaluable technology skills that can lead to future career opportunities. Also, youth are able to access vast array of online resources and knowledge that was unattainable ten years ago. This contributes to their learning and supports both in-school and outside-school pursuits.

The concerns expressed in our study regarding the impact of screen time mostly centred on an average of nine⁷ hours a day on screen, the lack of personal face-to-face connection, and the anxiety around maintaining a positive social profile on Instagram. (Each response to social media postings can result in a boost or a blow to personal confidence and feelings of well-being.)

8.9.2 PARENTAL GUIDANCE

Many youth recognize their attention to social media as extreme. One youth indicated that good parental support and guidance was the main reason he was able to moderate and learn to self-regulate his use of social media and the Internet. FJCC staff working with youth reported a dramatic drop-off in youth participation in activities currently offered in the community, and surmised that one of the main causes was the overwhelming attraction to online connection.

8.9.3 POSITIVE USES

Three of the possibilities offered to address these concerns were:

- (1) Hold forums in the community to share perspectives, perhaps supported by an expert author or speaker on the subject;
- (2) Create a technology club where youth could learn more together about IT, e.g., learn a programming language, coding, build a computer; or play a shared multi-user game in a youth venue. The social interaction of learning and playing together may serve to offset some of the magnetic power of screen time through developing face-to-face relationships.
- (3) Include linking/creating activities with technology (Geocaching, Trailforks, Strava, Mapmyrun, Fitbit-type device, etc.)

For more details and ideas and research, see this theme in Appendix E

⁷ [1] Survey by Common Sense Media (2015)

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/about-us/news/press-releases/landmark-report-us-teens-use-an-average-of-nine-hours-of-media-per-day>

9. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The following table represents the heart of the LYP, that is, the themes evolved into an implementation matrix.

9.1 The Strategic Priority Table

The suggested prioritization in this table is an extracted subset of possibilities listed in the Appendix under each theme with a proposed matrix of importance, urgency, and cost. In respecting the voice of youth, all suggestions (many not included in the table) have been listed in the Appendix under Themes; and should be reassessed regularly for renewed applicability.

LEGEND					
PRIORITY		TIMING		COST	
High	Most important	Short	1 year	\$	10,000-
Medium	Important	Medium	2-3 years	\$\$	10,000 - 100,000
Low	Less important	Long	4-5+ years	\$\$\$	100,000+
Ongoing	Repeated process			N/A	Part of everyday work/ requires additional review
THEME	RESOURCE	PRIORITY	TIMING	COST	
#1 - THEME 1: ADVOCATING YOUTH VOICE					
Create a Youth Council with voting rights on key governance bodies. Set Terms of Reference up in same format, election, policy, & management framework as other Town committees responsible for monitoring youth strategy	Town Selected Youth Reps	High	Short	N/A	
Set regular reviews of new policy and placement of youth in important positions. Include youth from Gr 8-9 for continuity of youth council into future	Town Youth Council	High	Ongoing	N/A	
Involve youth in Town projects as available, for example, the PRC Master Plan, Waterfront Area Plan	Town LSS STZ S	High	Short	N/A	
Explore expanding the Rotary Interact program and the Ambassador program to a wider range of youth	Ambassador Rotary Club Town	Medium	Ongoing	N/A	

THEME	RESOURCE	PRIORITY	TIMING	COST
#2 – THEME 2: BUILDING YOUTH SPACES				
Explore/investigate a youth space which meets the criteria of the Youth Placemaking Project	Youth Council Town	High	Medium	\$\$\$
Explore expanding opportunities for events such as youth dances, movies nights	PRC Youth Council	High	Short	\$
Light up the skate park to be highly visible, safer; extending hours of use	Town	Medium	Short	\$
Work with land owners to permit more ATV, motorbike, and mountain bike trails Set up a licensing/trail maintenance agreement with youth	Town Youth Council Land Owners	Medium	Medium	\$
Promote informal and formal gatherings bringing together Ladysmith youth with Stz'uminus youth	Town LSS & STZ S Youth Council	High	Short	N/A

THEME	RESOURCE	PRIORITY	TIMING	COST
#3 – THEME 3: STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS				
Ensure representatives of organizations serving youth become strong supporters and advocates to build shared commitment (like Youth Partnership Committee) supporting LYP continuity. Decision-making process established where orgs review LYP. Establish monthly meetings similar to LEYP. Research terms of reference.	Island Health SD68 Town Non profits	High	Short	N/A
Create formal MOUs for the long term with these Youth Partnership Committee in supporting youth program	CORE+ members leading, Town	High	Long	N/A
Explore a collaborative approach by service clubs in funding sports and cultural activities, holding events, and creating volunteering opportunities (See Theme on Accessing Funding)	Service clubs Sports clubs Youth Partnership Committee	High	Short	N/A
Create more meaningful, community-supporting work experience; e.g., community-trails-parks stewardship	Town, Youth Council Non-profit Organizations	Medium	Medium	N/A
Use the long-established service structures such as Rotary Club, Lions Club, Kinsman Club to host events where youth can practise leading; e.g., a communal meal	Service clubs	Medium	Medium	N/A
#4 – THEME 4: CREATING A COMMUNICATION HUB				
Set up and maintain a central online hub with timely information on EVERYTHING that youth could participate in; activities, sports, events, projects, volunteering, job opportunities	Town	High	Short	\$
Create an awareness inventory of offerings in the community. Need for tech on software use and Instagram first choice by youth, second was school e-bulletin). Tertiary need for parents to know, using TOL website and/or Facebook.	Town SD68	Medium	Medium	\$
Hold a Youth Activities and Opportunities Fair annually which brings together all the possible service providers of the activities listed above	Chamber of Commerce, Youth Partnership Committee	Medium	Long	\$\$

THEME	RESOURCE	PRIORITY	TIMING	COST
#5A – THEME 5: ACCESSING ACTIVITIES: TRANSPORTATION				
<p>Explore viability of running a local small bus or a van on a regular schedule to enable youth to access after-school activities, sports venues, job opportunities in Ladysmith</p> <p>Negotiate with service groups, Stz'uminus volunteer community groups to share the responsibility of vehicle acquisition and associated costs</p> <p>Include outlying communities – Stz'uminus Yellowpoint, Cassidy, Saltair, Cedar</p>	Youth Partnership Committee	Medium	Long	\$\$
<p>Explore viability of running a local small bus or van on the weekends to Nanaimo for fun, volunteering, and work</p>	Youth Partnership Committee	Medium	Long	\$\$
<p>Create a bike town with bike paths possibly using e-bikes as a Bike-Share program</p>	Town	Medium	Medium	\$\$
#5B – THEME 5: ACCESSING ACTIVITIES: FUNDING				
<p>Increase number of low cost or no cost social, educational or fun activities</p>	Town Youth Council	Medium	Ongoing	\$
<p>Establish clearly defined access initiatives for youth with families with limited financial capacity</p> <p>Advertise financial support</p> <p>Continue dev of Leisure Access Program (regionally). Review of opportunities-CVRD, North Cowichan –needs to include wider ops to grow it</p>	Town	High	Short	N/A
<p>Increase scholarships and subsidies, assist with applications</p>	LSS Town Service clubs SD68	High	Medium	\$

THEME	RESOURCE	PRIORITY	TIMING	COST
#5B – THEME 5: INCREASING ACTIVITIES: FUNDING				
Provide a simple online process to make it convenient for youth and adults to apply for assistance discreetly (see Communication Hub Theme)	Town	High	Short	N/A
Consolidate funding in partnership with service organizations	Town Service clubs	Medium	Medium	N/A
#6 – THEME 6: INCREASING PARTICIPATION AND VARIETY				
Connect with non profit organizations and service clubs to review ongoing hiring, volunteering and leadership opportunities	Youth Partnership Committee	Medium	Short	N/A
Have more community arts-based courses and cultural projects e.g., community art wall, legal graffiti wall, courses in skilled craftsmanship	Historical Society Arts Council Town	Medium	Medium	\$
Involve youth in more community projects, supported by an effective mentoring network that guides them in self-directed learning project	LSS Town Youth Council Arts Council	High	Short	\$
Provide excursions to adventure (adrenaline) activities; zip-lining, rock climbing, ocean kayaking, swimming in river at Cassidy, BMX course, etc.	Town	Medium	Ongoing	\$\$
Increase drop-in sports like basketball or smaller commitment – durations shortened	Town	High	Short	\$
Seek community sports partners to establish introductory sports opportunities to the youth of LS	Town	Low	Long	\$

THEME	RESOURCE	PRIORITY	TIMING	COST
#6 – THEME 4: INCREASING PARTICIPATION AND VARIETY				
Make entrance level participation easier when joining later into a more skilled team.	Town Sport Organizations	Medium	Short	N/A
Incorporate the elements of physical literacy into all programming	All	High	Medium	\$
#7 – THEME 7: RESPONDING TO DIVERSITY				
Decide on new ways to bridge the divide between the communities, e.g., initiate “ReconciliAction”, bringing youth from two sides to discuss learning and sharing respective cultures	Stz’uminus Town other Canadian ReconciliAction project guides	High	Ongoing	N/A
Ensure that decision-making groups regarding youth future have Stz’uminus representation	Stz’uminus Youth Partnership Committee Youth Council	High	Short	N/A
Create a partnering class at LSS and Stz’uminus Secondary that moves back and forth between the two communities	LSS STZ S	High	Medium	\$
Form a team to develop a powerful and compelling VISION of healthy diversity for the Ladysmith area community that harnesses imagination and energy of youth	Youth reps and adult reps from both communities	High	Ongoing	\$
Suggest that the youth council adapt SD68 Inclusion Policy SOGI	Youth Council LSS, Youth Partnership Committee	High	Ongoing	N/A
Create a group for LGBTQ safe space or gathering place at FJCC. Identify help resources, allies and experts to guide in navigating the challenges	Youth Council	High	Short	N/A
Support efforts to educate at intermediate and secondary schools in building intercultural respect and understanding	LSS	High	Short	N/A

THEME	RESOURCE	PRIORITY	TIMING	COST
#8 – THEME 8: SUPPORTING MENTAL WELLNESS				
Train staff re: awareness of mental health issues (example: mental health 1st aid). Suicide Prevention Safe Talk	Youth Partnership Committee LRCA Volunteer team	High	Short	\$
Increase number of youth-specific mental health counsellors and counsellors. NOTE: One more full-time position being implemented at LRCA and School district has 7 more counsellors	Mental health professionals LRCA VIHA	High	Medium	\$
Seek Island Health rep to be at table for CORE+ continuity of LYP	Island Health LRCA	High	High	N/A
Ensure discreet ways for youth to access counselling (small town)	LRCA Town SD68 Island Health	Medium	Ongoing	N/A
Ensure that youth are made aware of and have access to services. Publish widely hotline crisis counselling 24/7	LRCA Town SD68	Medium	Ongoing	N/A
Increase interconnection of mental health services; schools, Island Health, and LRCA agencies - round table	LRCA Town SD68	High	Short	\$
Increase access to adult mentors who are there and trained volunteers. Consult with LRCA to add distinctive youth section. Create a volunteer recruitment coordinator	LRCA; Volunteer pool of adult mentors; organized by areas of specific skill or interest RCMP partner	Medium	Long	\$

THEME	RESOURCE	PRIORITY	TIMING	COST
#9 – THEME 9: RERAMING SCREEN TIME				
Youth council members organize an LSS forum to educate and explore issues with overuse of screen time	Youth Council LSS STZ S	High	Short	N/A
Following the LSS forum, host dialogues or open forums inviting youth, community members and parents to explore the current challenges and opportunities related to increased youth and screen time	Town LSS Outside speakers	High	Short	\$
Expand options such as computer clubs, videography clubs and special programs that involve positive use of technology in outdoor activities (e.g., Geocaching, Trailforks, Strava, Mapmyrun, Fitbit-type device, etc.)	LSS Youth Council User groups	Medium	Long	\$



9.2 Ongoing Assessment

We are recommending that progress on strategic priorities be reviewed annually, using the details of themes outlined in this Ladysmith Youth Plan as the main criteria for assessment. The results of each assessment should be documented and applicable action items carried into the next implementation steps. In the longer term, assessments can be done in annual intervals.

Volunteer youth, possibly involving those who have played an integral part in the creation of the plan, will be part of the assessment team in the first year. All other community stakeholders should also be involved in the assessment of outcomes that are related to their specific connection to the LYP. When a new policy, event, or activity is established, its efficacy should be measured annually and adjusted for the current situation with the youth of the day.

Ideally, every event or newly initiated activity or new policy implementation should be followed by a Lessons Learned session which involves two stages. The first stage is a debriefing account of what happened and a review of the activities/tasks/dialogues that took place, as well as which adult and youth leaders, and stakeholders were involved; without placing any

value or judgement. The second stage is when the progress is evaluated within the same group of people, using four questions:

- (1) What worked (which to keep and which to discard)?
- (2) What challenges were encountered?
- (3) What impacts did they have on the overall outcome?
- (4) What creative ideas emerged to improve the event or activity for next time?

The discussion takes into consideration sustainability, risk, cost, and quality impacts. Some of these assessments might result in an activity, policy, program or event being dropped, or combined with another, or advanced to a higher status based on the feedback of the community.

The documentation of this Lessons Learned process is a formative assessment method that can be used in improving the next step, the next event, the next activity, and/or the next application of policy.

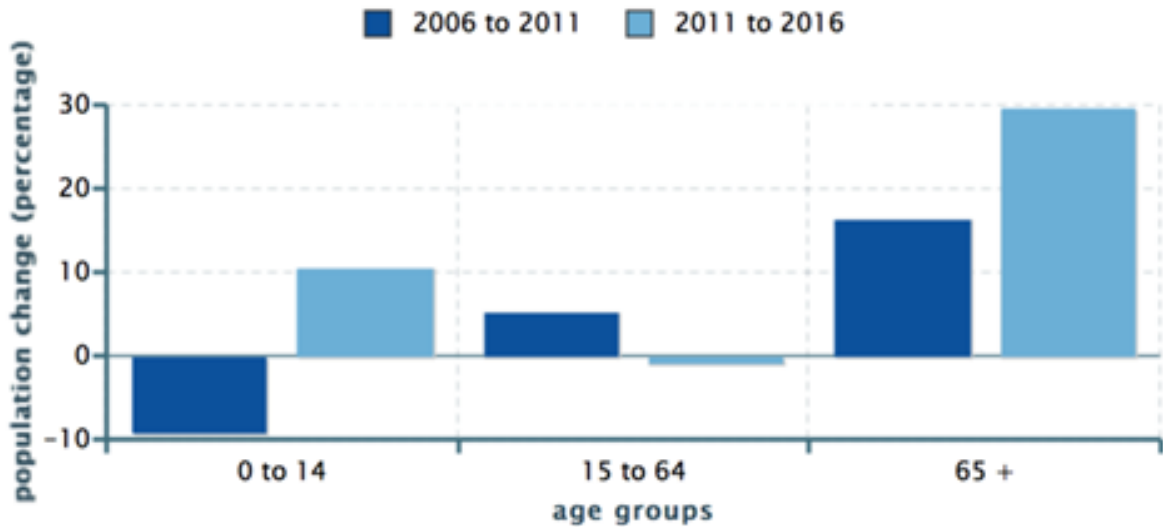
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: STATISTICS

1.1 Ladysmith Demographics

Figure 1.2 description

Population change by broad age groups, Ladysmith, 2006 to 2016

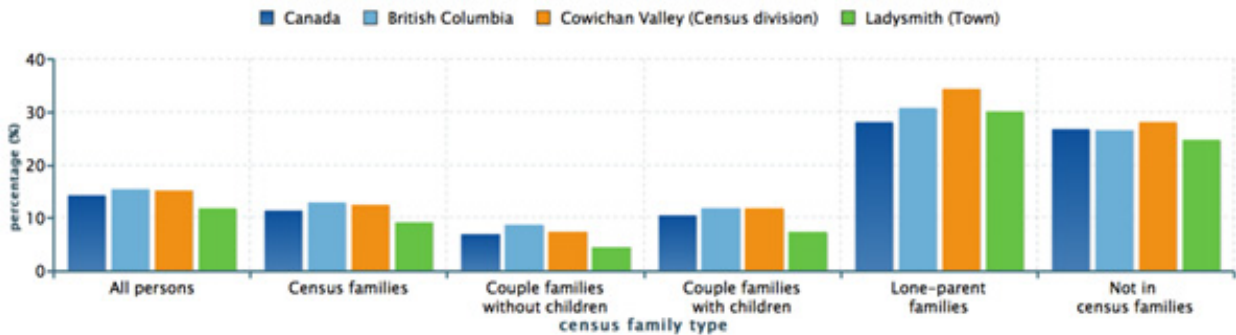


1.2 Lower Income Categories

Low-income rate

Figure 1.5 description

Percentage of persons in low income by census family type, Ladysmith and higher level geographies, 2015



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APPENDIX B: YOUTH SURVEY

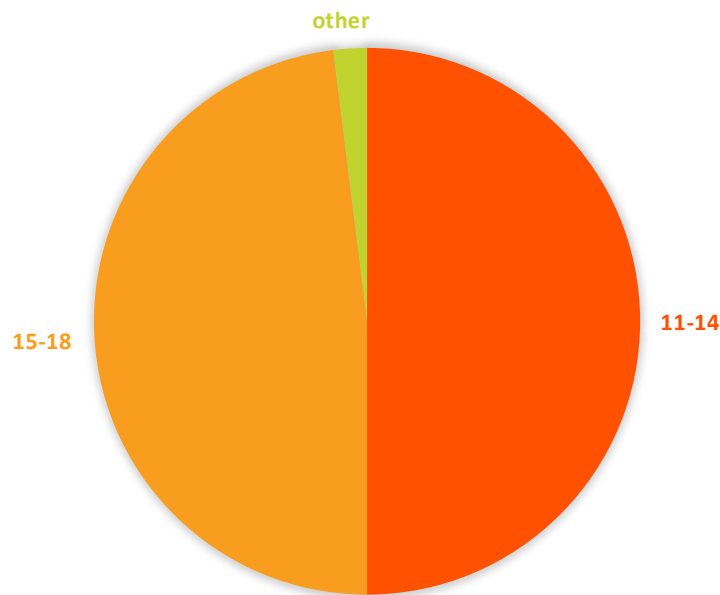
Appendix B offers interpretations taken from the youth surveys about trends and priorities. The [full survey](#) can be reviewed as a PDF on the website.

Caveat: These results have been received from the input of 207 youth.

2.1 Demographics

The age group results between 11-14 and 15-18 were split rather evenly over the two month course of the survey.

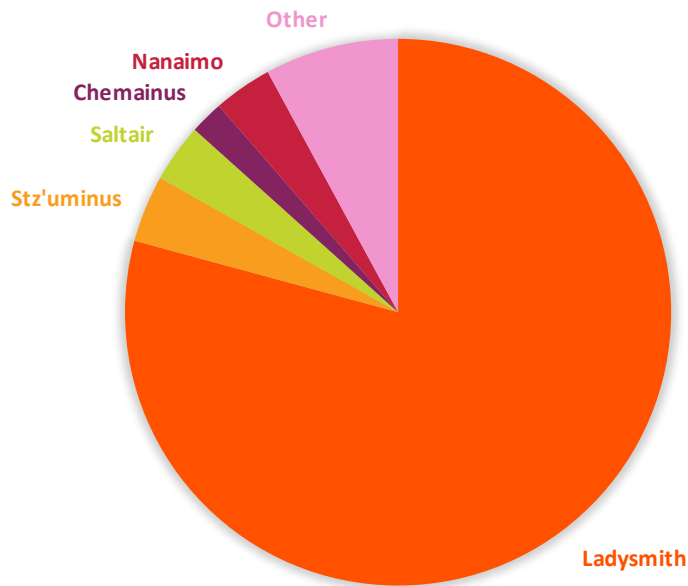
WHAT AGE GROUP DO YOU BELONG IN?



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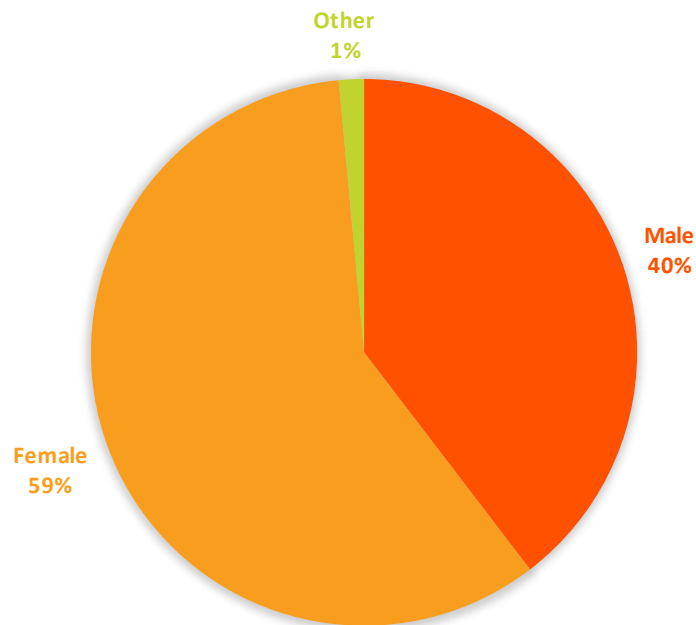
In assessing the feedback, it is important to note that the Stz'uminus community was minimally represented.

WHAT IS YOUR HOME COMMUNITY?



In addition, there was a clear majority of girls responding to the survey.

WHICH DO YOU IDENTIFY AS?



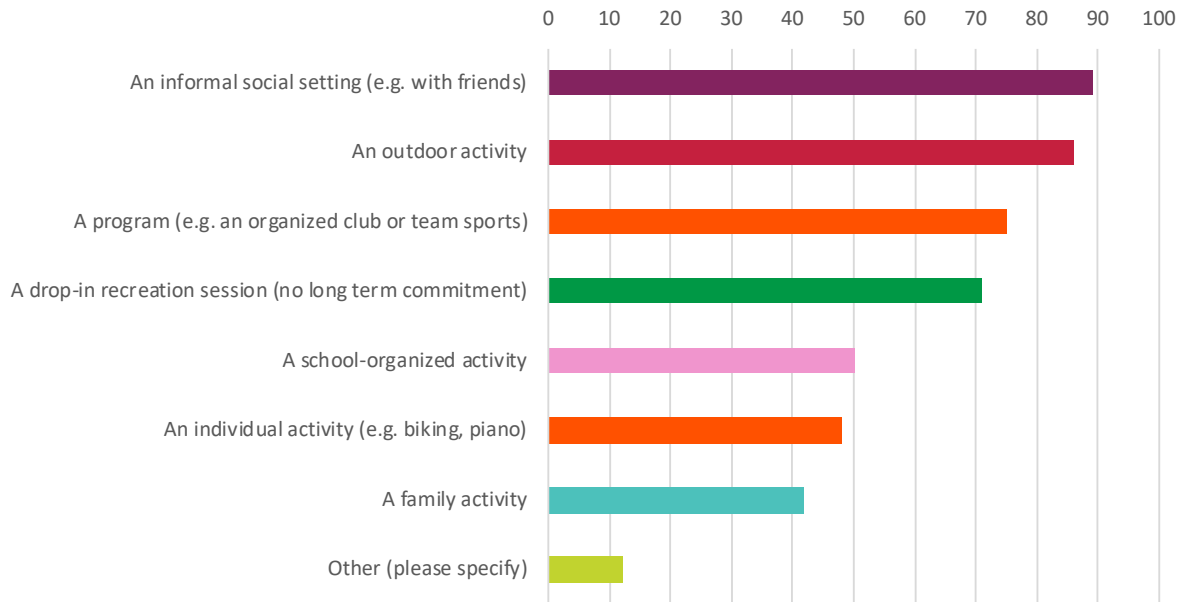
APPENDICES

2.2 Participation

There were three questions which brought to the fore an underlying condition favouring participation, that is, the presence of friends. This is illustrated in the following results.

- (1) The first question indicates the preference for an informal setting with friends.

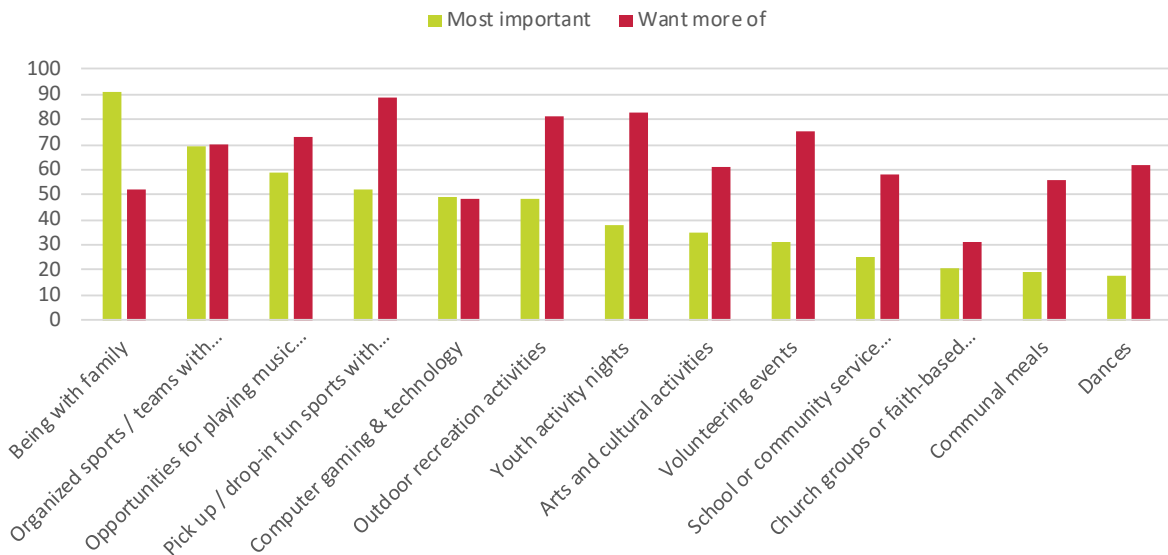
WHAT ARE YOUR PREFERENCES FOR TYPES OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES?



APPENDICES

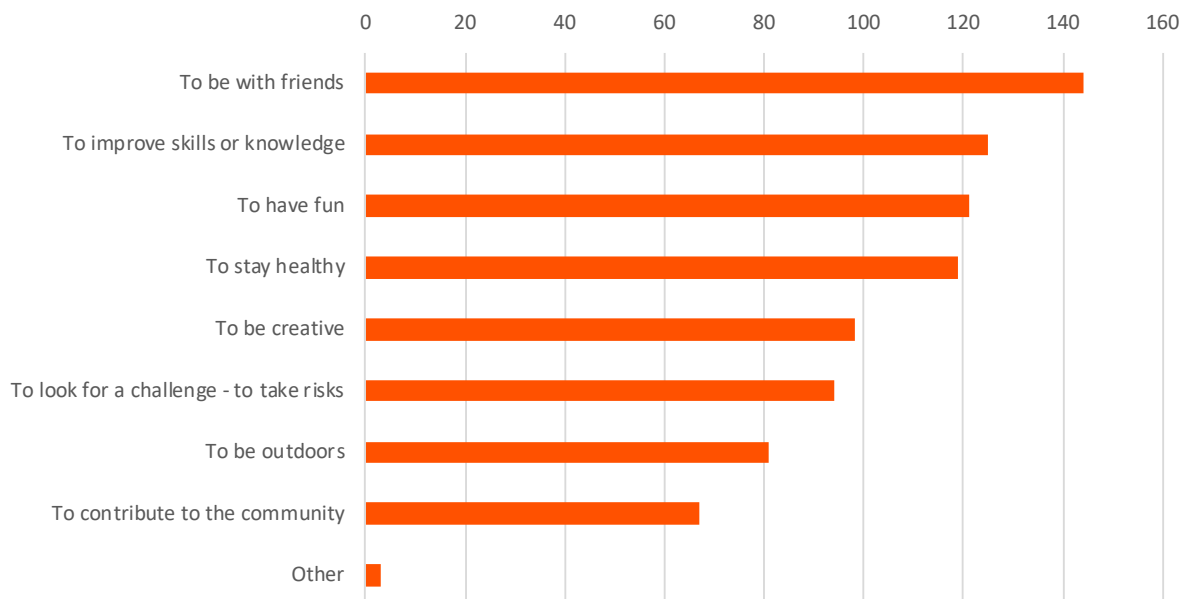
(2) The second one, where youth specified which activities they wanted more of, shows drop-in sports with friends at the top, and youth activity nights as second. This suggests that doing fun things in a social setting is a top priority.

CHECK THE ACTIVITIES THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU, AND THOSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE MORE OF



(3) In the third question, youth chose to be with friends as the top priority, and to have fun as the third.

WHEN YOU PARTICIPATE, WHAT SHOULD BE THE MAIN GOALS?

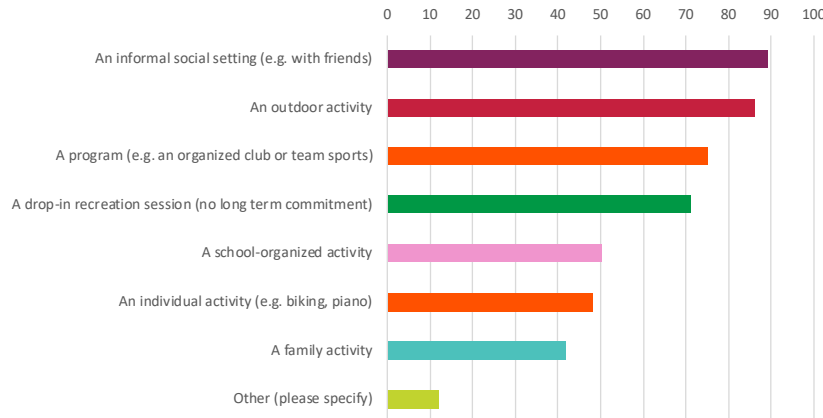


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2.3 Activities

In the above question addressing the main goals motivating youth to participate, it was a multiple choice question....each youth could provide numerous responses. It is noteworthy that 80% of the aims were in the 50% to 76% range. This suggests that youth have strong and wide-ranging motivations for engaging in activities.

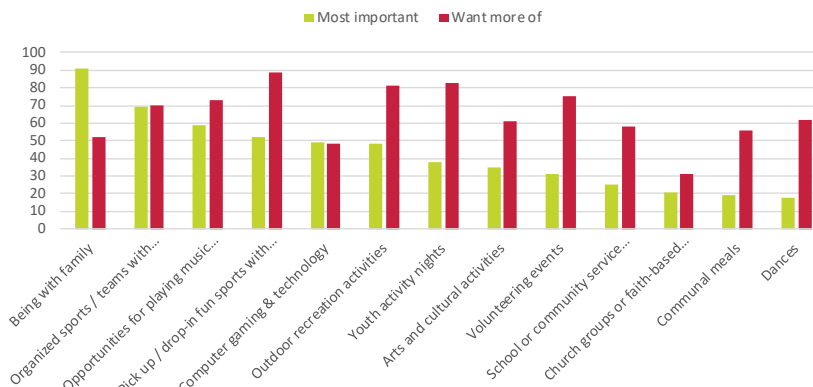
WHAT ARE YOUR PREFERENCES FOR TYPES OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES?



In the following question, overall there was an obvious wish for more activities across the board. The greatest importance was given to having more dances and more communal meals, followed closely by more arts and culture, and more outdoor activities.

Outdoor activities also scored highly in the Types of Community Activities youth liked to be doing. Interestingly, most youth reported giving great importance to being with family. Kudos to the strength in Ladysmith families! (although doing actual community activities with them...not as much! (22%).

CHECK THE ACTIVITIES THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU, AND THOSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE MORE OF



The two preferred activities were informal settings with friends and outdoor activities; organized programs (non-school) followed closely. This suggests that more outdoor activities would be welcomed whether informally or as a program and inversely, programmed activities are good if your friends are there. Further to this prerogative is a question further down in the survey querying what affected youth's decisions to participate. Once again, whether friends were present was an important determining factor to participation (69%).

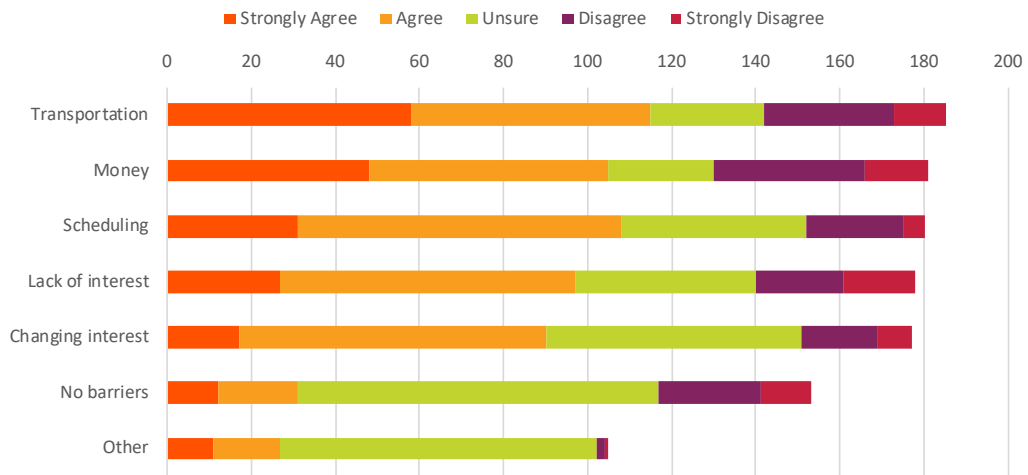
APPENDICES

2.4 Barriers

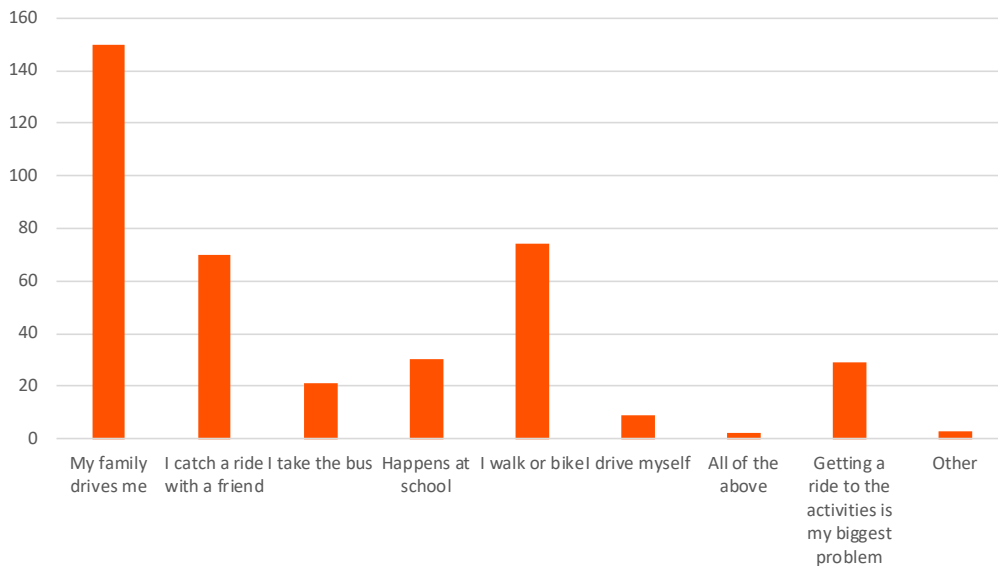
2.4.1 TRANSPORTATION

In this question, transportation as a barrier does not appear of any greater importance than other barriers, which is a clear discrepancy from all the interviewing and class focus groups reporting the opposite. However, there is another question further down in the survey asking how youth usually get to activities. This corroborates the access issue of parents as taxis. An increase in activities would signal a need for more parental taxiing as well as more of their money needed. Further, it may partially explain why 40% of youth do not take part in activities, if transportation via a parent or caregiver was unavailable.

WHAT CHOICES MAKE IT DIFFICULT OR CHALLENGING FOR YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES?



HOW DO YOU USUALLY GET TO ACTIVITIES?



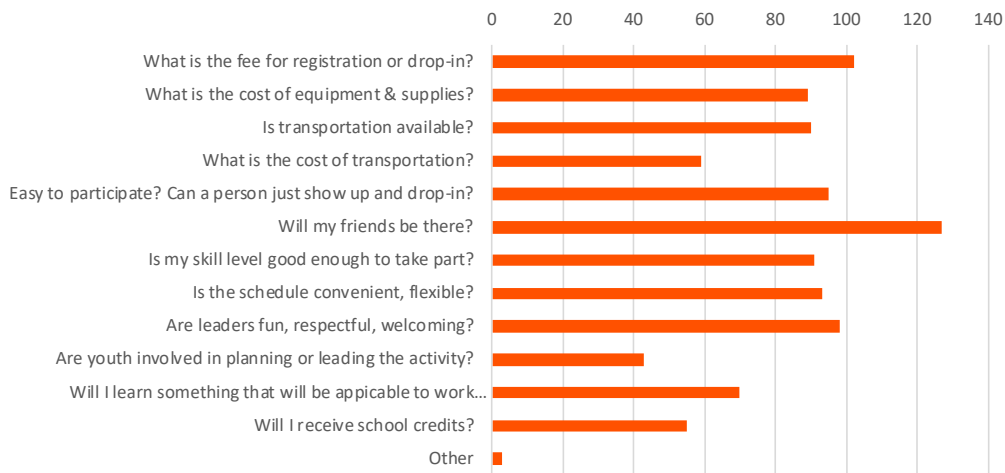
APPENDICES

2.4.2 FUNDING

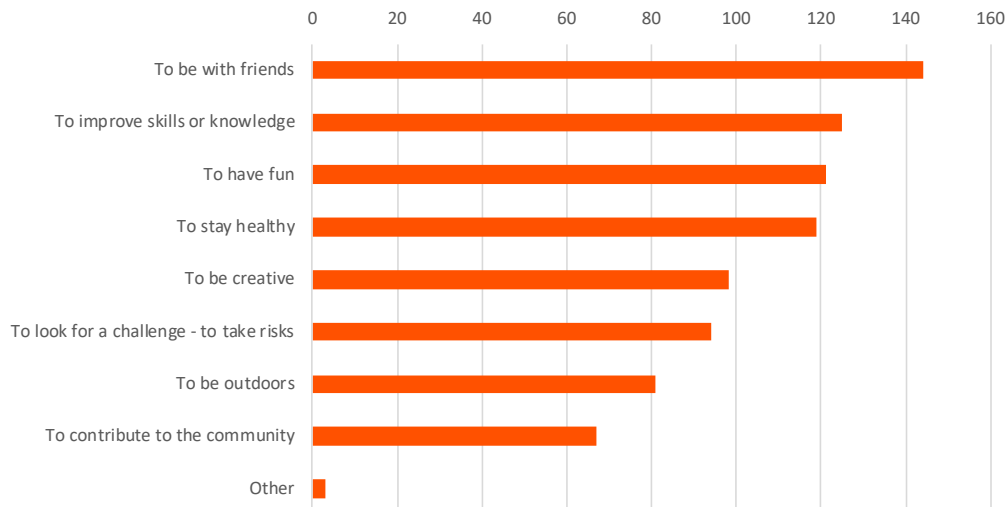
Furthermore, money also did not appear as a major barrier in this survey question. Once again this was clearly a discrepancy from all the interviewing and class focus groups reporting the opposite. A subtly related factor arose from the youth feedback which revealed how many could not participate in activities due to needing to work part-time to cover their monetary needs. Further down in the survey, another question queried what issues were foremost in making decisions about participating. Number one, number two, and number four were monetary considerations, and number three was transportation.

Money and transportation are ubiquitous elements that affect the participation rate for youth.

WHAT QUESTIONS SEEM TO BE MOST IMPORTANT WHEN YOU ARE DECIDING ABOUT YOUTH RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES?



WHEN YOU PARTICIPATE, WHAT SHOULD BE THE MAIN GOALS?

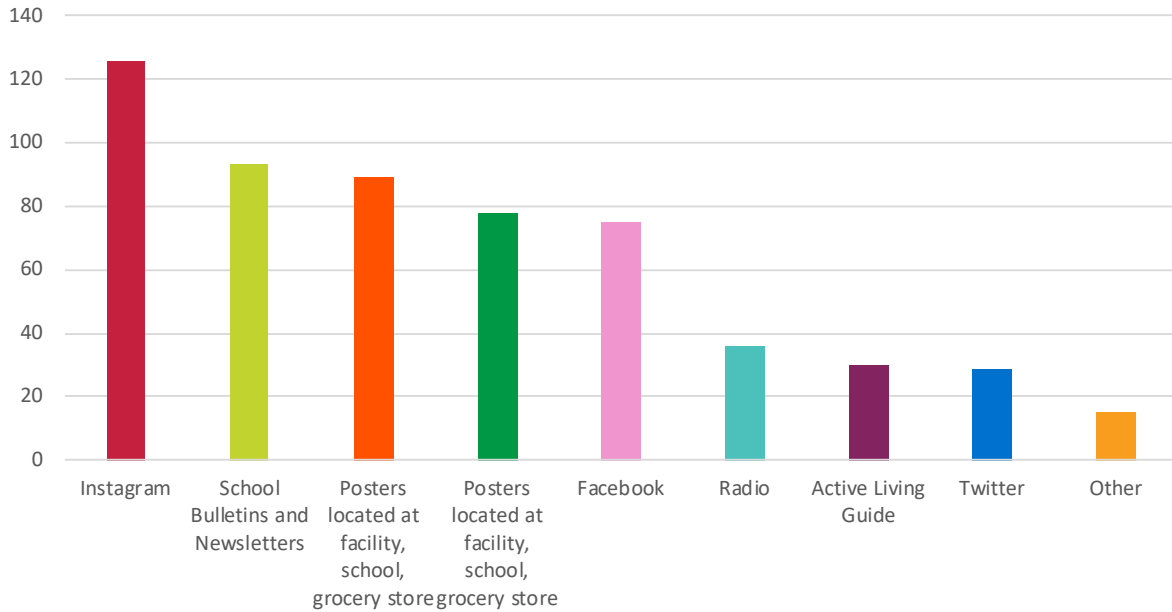


APPENDICES

2.5 Communication

Instagram and School eBulletins appeared to be the best ways to inform youth about activities, while Facebook took fifth place.

WHAT ARE THE BEST WAYS TO INFORM YOUTH OF THE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS?



APPENDICES

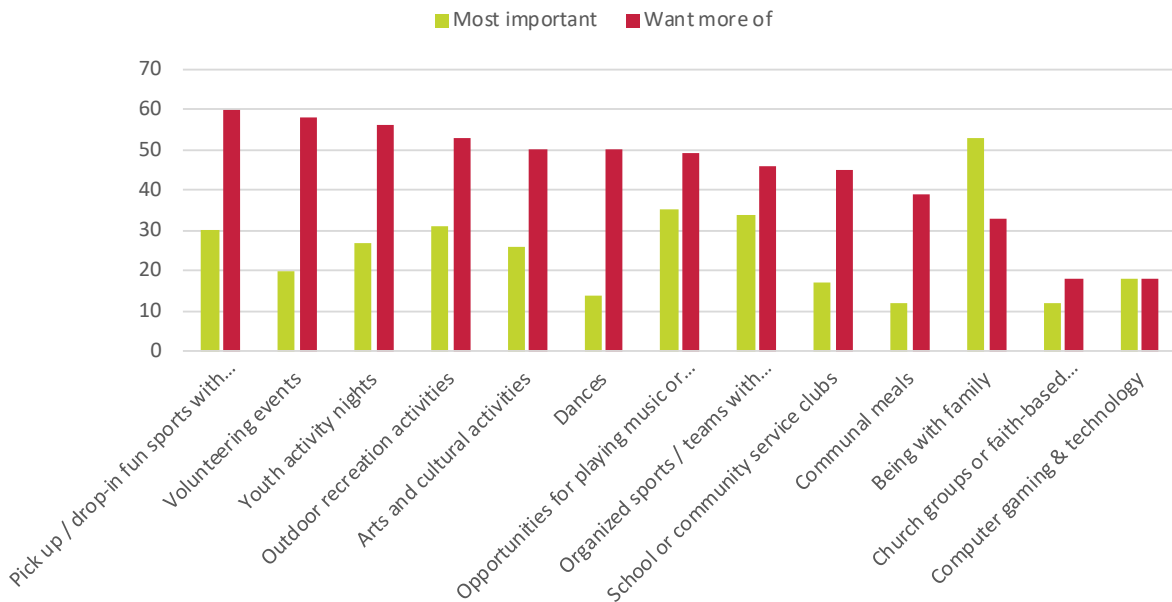
2.6 Gender Specificity

In selecting the female respondents who were the majority (110), there were actually few differences with the second highest majority, male respondents (75). This will be helpful in simplifying the priorities. A subtle difference in the gender breakdown of the survey was that there were a larger majority of males in the 11-14 age range responding than in the higher age range. Only those selections that showed a discrepancy from the other genders will be mentioned here.

2.6.1 ACTIVITIES

As seen below, approximately 86% (58) girls wanted more event volunteering opportunities, as opposed to 65% of the 20 boys who responded to this question. 46 chose school and or community service club involvement with a wish for more. Of the 77 female respondents for the question, 70 scored being with family as very important, 45% wanted more; of the 38 male respondents, 31 rated being with family as most important, and 37% wanted more.

RATING ON FEMALE RESPONDENT CHART FOR QUESTION 7



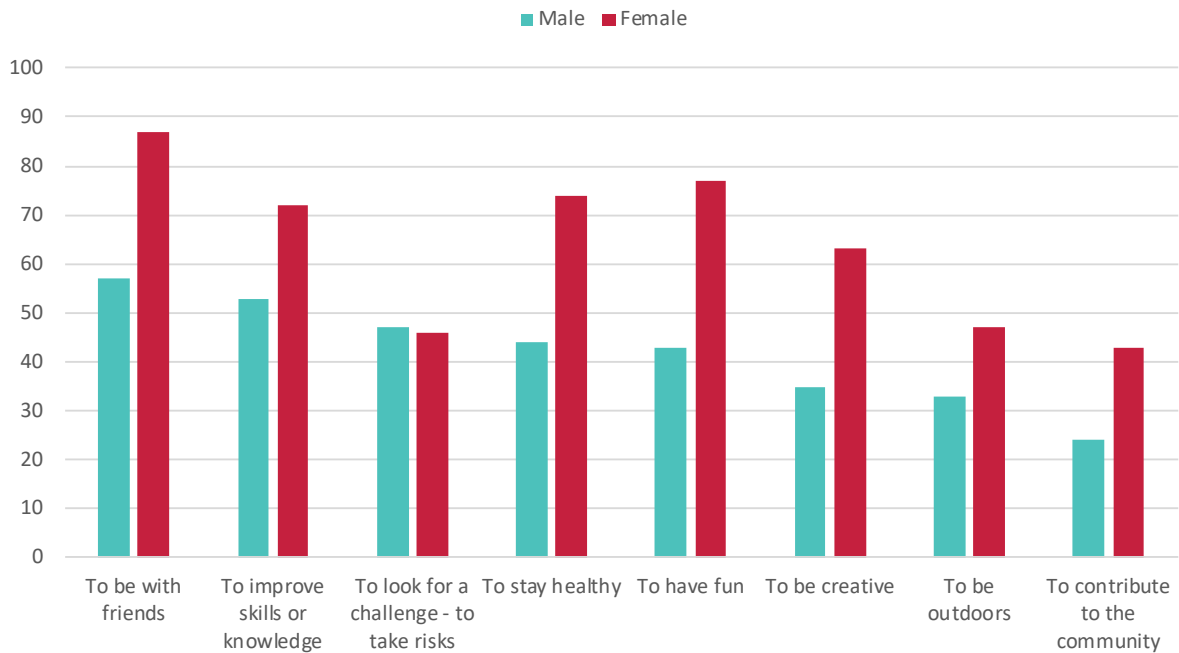
Of the 52 males who responded to question 10, 60% rated computer gaming as very important, with 58% wanting more. This was in contrast to the female respondents where only 18 responded to this question, showing an interest of 54%.

APPENDICES

2.6.2 PARTICIPATION

Another interesting comparison was in the motivation to participate. The subtle nuances in this graph indicate interesting perspectives: parallels such as looking for a risk (50% and 48%), to be with friends (67 males answered, 87 females answered...a high percentage of both genders answering the question compared to others): and in the differences such as to be creative; to contribute to the community; to stay healthy (with males half as interested as females in these three).

JOINT COMPARISON OF QUESTION 10



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APPENDIX C: ADULT SURVEY

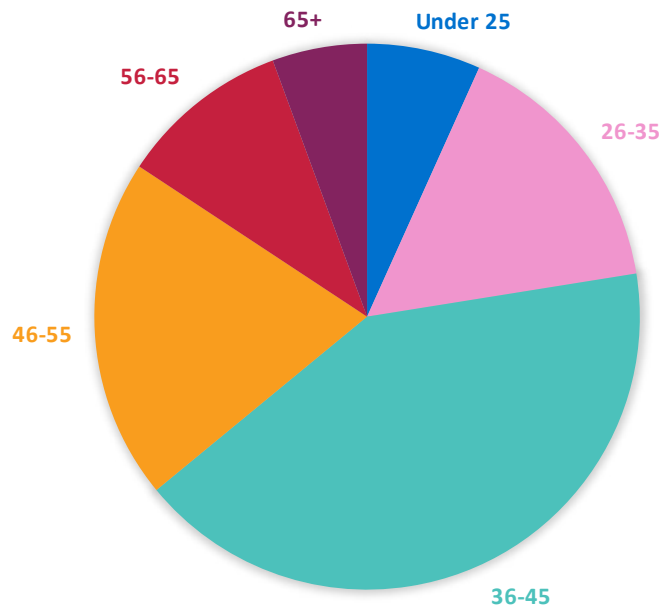
Appendix C offers some interpretations gleaned from the adult surveys about trends and priorities. The [full survey](#) can be reviewed as a PDF download on the website.

2.7 Demographics

64% of the adult respondents had children under the age of 18 and were a resident of the Town of Ladysmith. There was only one adult respondent from the Stz'uminus community. A mix of diversity in the respondents represented business owners, youth organization affiliates, employees, and other (showing as grandparents, retirees, volunteers, nannies, residents from elsewhere, teachers).

Age group respondents were mostly from the 36-45 range, followed by the 65+.

WHAT AGE GROUP DO YOU BELONG IN?



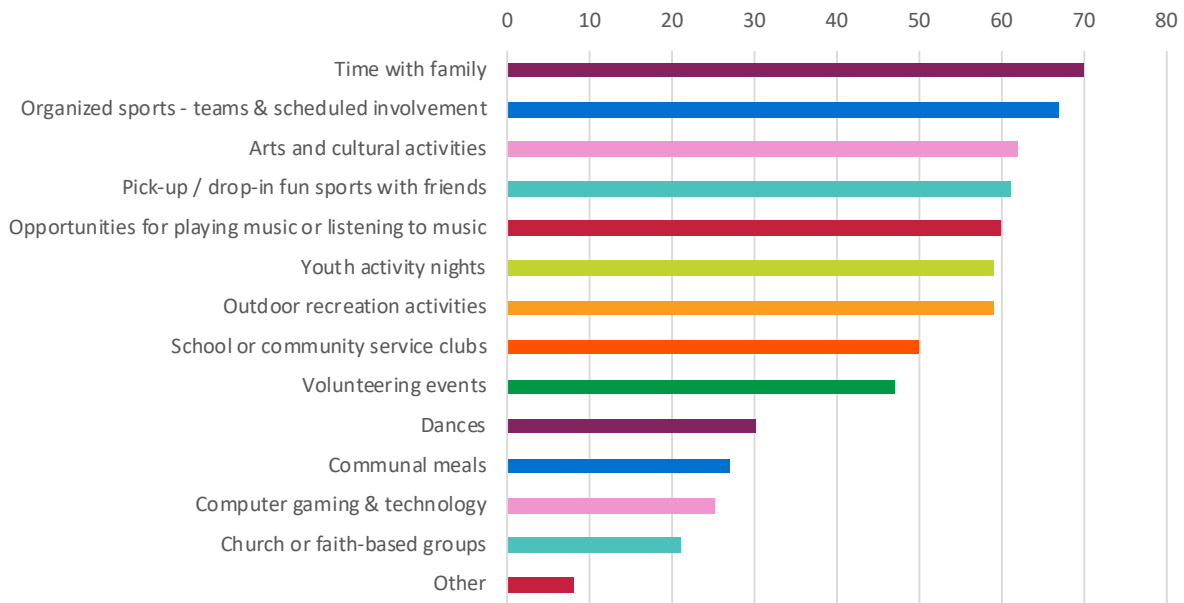
APPENDICES

2.8 Activities

As seen by the graph below, the adults correctly reflected the youth’s opinion that there was an interest in a great variety of different activities; documented in the theme of Increasing Participation and Variety. All adult age groupings chose the top five activities believed most important to youth: time with family, organized sports, arts and cultural activities, drop-in fun with peers, and music jamming; some in slightly different order but unanimous in choice.

Interestingly, in the graph above in the youth survey, time with family supports this premise as well. It suggests that youth are satisfied with the time spent with family and only 22% reported needing more.

WHICH ACTIVITIES DO YOU BELIEVE ARE IMPORTANT FOR OUR YOUTH?



In the above graph, adults believed that more organized sports would be second most important to youth. Youth reported similarly; except that their wish for more informal settings to meet with friends (drop-in settings, fun) had a higher priority than organized sports.

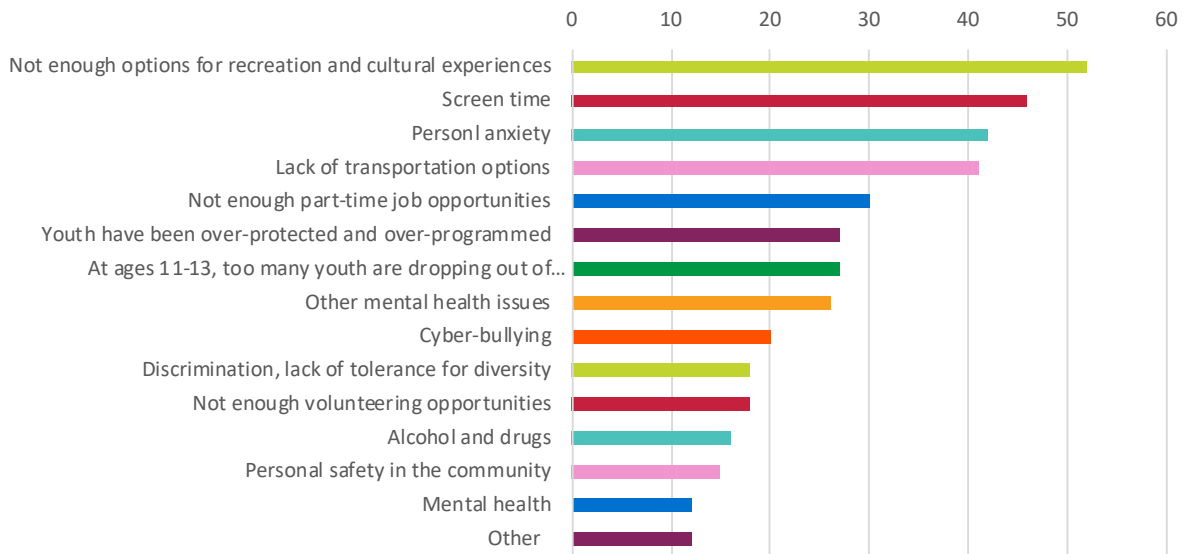
The youth surprised the adults by showing great interest in more communal meals, more challenge and risk adventures; more wish to do outdoor activities. Other than these, the adults read the youth’s thoughts quite accurately.

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2.9 Barriers

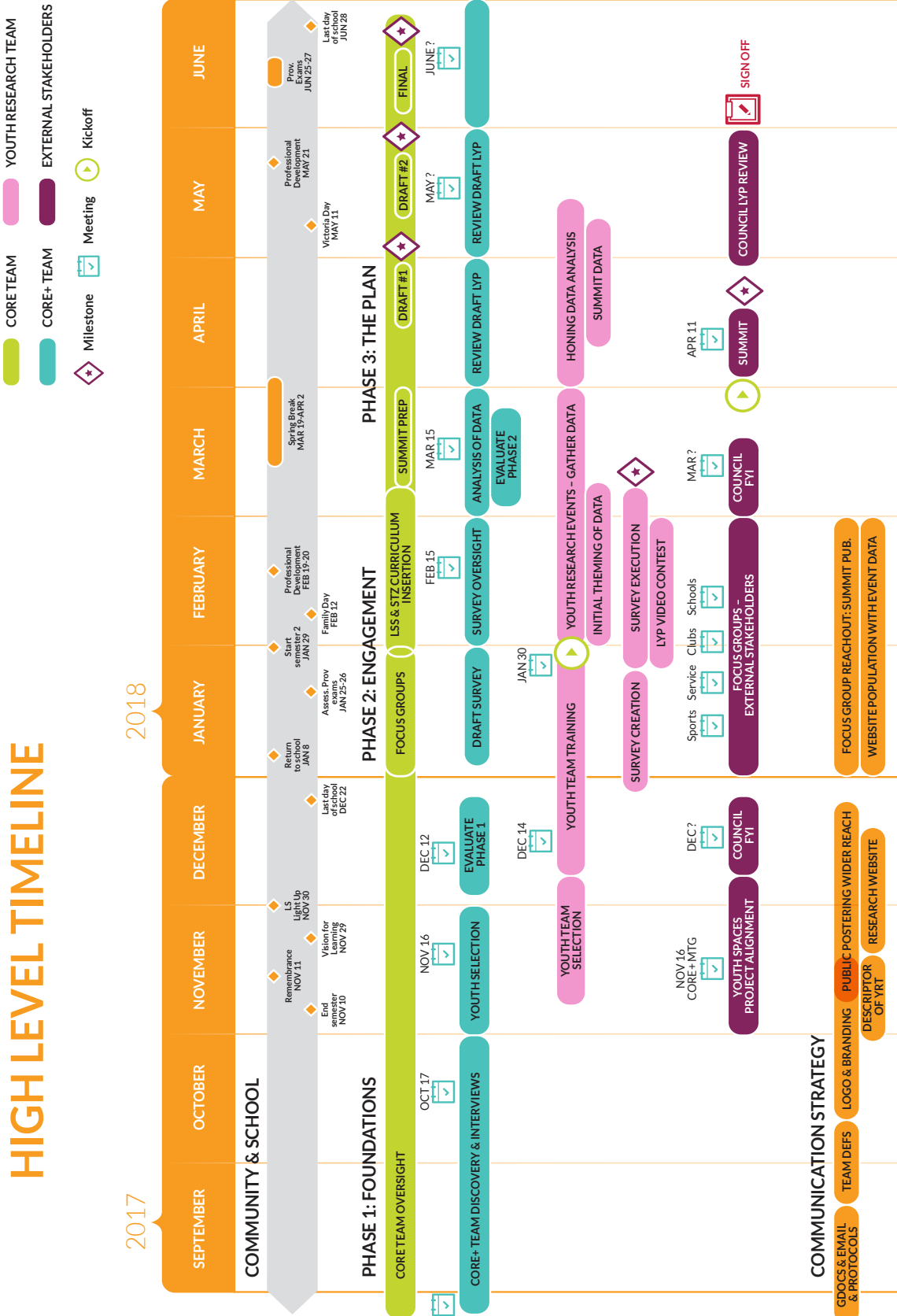
The adult surveys reported a slightly different picture than the youth when responding to the question of barriers. Personal Anxiety was a list topper for youth yet judged with less importance by the adults. Inversely ScreenTime was not shown as a barrier by youth to a high degree, yet sat in second place on the adult survey.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BARRIERS MAKE IT DIFFICULT OR CHALLENGING FOR YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES?



APPENDICES

APPENDIX D: TIMELINE



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APPENDIX E: THEMES

The website <https://lsyouthplan.wixsite.com/youthplandev> displays the THEME posters from the Open House which summarize them. Below are the themes in full detail and justification.

Please note that quoted text throughout these themes in orange is extracted from the documentation of participants' feedback in focus groups and interviews.

1. ADVOCATING FOR YOUTH VOICE

1.1 What is working?

Youth have demonstrated commitment in involving themselves in leadership and collaboration related to many local initiatives involving social change.

By way of example: In the fall of 2017 and spring 2018, a team of LSS youth, under the guidance of Christy Villiers of Cowichan Social Planning and LSS leadership teacher, Taunya Lechthaler, successfully designed and implemented a months long PlaceMaker project. This culminated in a comprehensive presentation to Ladysmith Mayor and Council calling for the creation of a new youth space in town.

The Ambassador program, involving many students in special projects, has been a success in the community as noted by both youth participants and community representatives. Toastmasters offers another possibility for youth learning leadership.

An immediate example of youth voice is found in current commitment and leadership demonstrated by the Youth Research Team, a group of 12 dedicated and talented Grade 8 - 12 students from LSS and Stz'uminus, who

have guided and assisted in most of our public engagements over the past 4 months in creating the foundations of the Ladysmith Youth Plan.

1.2 What are the Challenges?

Christy Villiers of Cowichan Social Planning recently stated *"Finding youth voice involves having them seek voice of others through training them on leadership and research inquiry. Engage youth in research projects where they seek to involve others and create connections to community."* Teaching leadership and research inquiry demands the full commitment of dedicated mentors and teachers.

Youth often feel that they are not welcomed in the decision-making processes, or are unaware that there are adults genuinely interested in having them involved in a meaningful way. We need to prove that adults are interested.

When youth gain a foothold in committees and groups that have a positive influence in their school and community, the influence often fades as students "age-out" and move on to different places and experiences. Often there is not enough attention paid to succession of youth representation and leadership.

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Connecting the youth voice of the Town of Ladysmith town with the youth voice of Stz'uminus community will be an important part of building a unified voice for all local youth. Ladysmith has typically relied on community organizations for input: *"We don't have a venue to research that (Issues) with youth – we mostly obtain our information from community groups. The Town is looking for ways to bring youth to the table."*

We need a connection to access the power of youth. *"We (Parks Rec Culture staff) were impressed during the focus groups for the recent PRC Master Plan by their out-of-the-box thinking." "We need to value their input, find ways to listen, find ways to get feedback from them ..."*

How can the opportunities found in the Ambassador program be expanded to more students in varied grade levels?

1.3 What are the Possibilities?

- *"Build a strong youth council that provides input to community decision-making. We need to build into future advisories a strong foundation of purpose; that includes involvement and leadership of youth, supported by a clear definition of protocols, roles and responsibilities, as well as resources, that will guide the council or decision-making coalition to a strong and sustainable focus on youth."*
- If Ladysmith remains open and willing to explore options for increased youth participation in its governance and services, we will be able to create a sustainable model for youth representation on town committees, developed with Ladysmith Parks Recreation and Culture taking the lead. This might involve giving youth voting rights on key governance bodies. Or the creation of a Youth Council where a youth is appointed to each TOL committee.
- Involvement of youth could be issue-based. For example, when the Town does a project, a policy would include engagement of the youth and some way for them to gain access to that information. *"In the terms of reference for Parks committees, there is (currently) no allowance for a youth rep. We have for example Seniors, FN but not youth."*
- Review existing decision-making bodies in the community, and determine how youth voice could be embedded into regular practice. *"Find the right venue ... find a way to use youth feedback; e.g., in conversations? annual check-ins? Facebook? or via a certain group? Maybe one answer will not fit all...to drive information back and forth between the Town Council and the youth."*
- *"Create more opportunities and programs that train and support increased number of youth in developing confidence and skills in decision-making. Provide specific training for youth leaders including Inclusive Leadership Training programs and summer camps for youth which supports giving voice to the vulnerable. Can connect LYP through this organization"*
- If youth feedback points to needing job experience, *"We could involve them in different businesses or town projects such as trail clearing, or beach clearing. Even though it may only be volunteer, still gives work experience."* Youth also indicates wish for more participation in existing events like Maritime Society, Ladysmith Days, or Festival of Lights...to be a part of helping, to add new ideas.
- Build a community where youth have access to support or participation in all areas.
- Adults need to follow-through on supporting youth initiatives; we need to cut through bureaucracy.
- Go where youth are to engage them in active contribution to decision-making.
- Provide accessibility and availability beyond a token commitment. Be a real, authentic, and committed model that youth can count on to follow through on promises.
- Work to get approval and funding for meaningful projects.

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2. BUILDING YOUTH SPACES

Corroborating the findings of the Youth Space Project in Cowichan (developed in 2017/18, presented to Mayor and Council) garnered from 500 youth surveys, our LYP research and surveys revealed a similar priority with Ladysmith Youth; That is, youth need their own space. We have chosen this theme as the top priority for the LYP.

Note: Information for this theme has been collected from the Focus Groups, from one-on-one interviews, in the LSS classrooms, the Open House on April 11, and from the Online Surveys.

2.1 What is working?

The Town of Ladysmith is committed to fostering communities that value and include youth in decision-making processes especially when designing and developing youth friendly spaces. This is evident in their Master Plan for the town which gave priority to the creation of this Youth Plan, placing the activities of youth as a top priority.

FJCC has numerous spaces for youth. Currently there is a well-equipped rec room at the FJCC which has a youth program available on Friday nights for youth to hang out. A skateboard park was built and is used by youth. The gym at FJCC is popular with youth.

A small corner store located near the school was mentioned by all youth as a destination to gather for lunch and after school. It has since been closed. Youth reported their sadness at the loss of this location as a gathering place. When asked what made it such a successful hub for youth, they listed:

- Respectful of all students and expected respect back
- Knew their names and asked about their activities
- The food was inexpensive
- A place to be/close to the school/accessible to all

2.2 What are the challenges?

“We don’t exactly need activities for youth in the community with supervision and ‘youth leaders’. We need another place like Tim Hortons where we can just hang out, eat, no pressure. Just more hang out places.”

“Way of thinking - Seems that any opportunity or venue designed to allow teens to ‘hang out’ is viewed by the public as an invitation for trouble.”

Youth have no indoor place that is non-institutional which provides a healthy, casual environment to meet with others. Youth also do not have an outdoor space where they can hang out with permission except the skateboard park. They are looking for safe, relaxed and comfortable places to spend time with each other without shame or rejection, not isolated from the community, open 7 days a week from early morning until late at night.

As researched by and stated in the [Youth Spaces Project, Safe Youth Cowichan, Final Report April 2017](#), “Youth use public spaces more than any other subset group in our society however public spaces are almost never planned with youth in mind (Millard 2015) and youth often are not included in the process of designing or developing public spaces. Youth are further excluded from public

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spaces when they are labelled as loitering while using these spaces unless they are seen to have a structured task or activity they are engaged with. This stigma is applied to youth and this can be particularly damaging to youth at risk.”
“By creating positive social networks and places where youth are welcome to go, it contributes to a sense of belonging which is a vital development milestone for youth” (Prevention Institute, 2015).

2.2.1 YOUTH AT FJCC

“Drop-in at youth centre at FJCC, not many people are interested and we could use that money for different youth activities in the community.”

- The FJCC Youth Program is not meeting the need as it is only available once a week in the evenings. It is hard for youth to make it their own as it is part of a larger complex.
- The gym at FJCC is too small, but is used consistently by numerous youth.

2.2.2 YOUTH AROUND TOWN

- Youth have reported some issues with the skateboard park being used for drug transactions.
- Youth hanging out at Transfer Beach is frowned on by adults.
- Unnecessary judgements arise from the community such as kids around a beach bonfire or late night play at the skatepark. The RCMP receives “noisy” call complaints that are not really problems.

2.3 What are the possibilities?

2.3.1 YOUTH HUB

“Have a place, a hub, a youth drop-in centre similar to the Youth Lounge in Nanaimo. A place for themed activities and dances, fun, food, board games. Movie theatre, bowling alley, Carlos restaurant as examples of fun places.”

“A safe and fun environment for youth to connect with peers, friends, other youth, and mentoring adults. (For example: a youth lounge, youth centre, or youth house that is run, organized, and supervised by adults-either paid or volunteer). The town needs a place for youth to go, a place that’s fun, exciting, connects them socially, and is safe. I think a youth centre or lounge specifically could be an opportunity for optimal growth and success among the youth demographic of Ladysmith that we are currently lacking. It’s unfortunate to watch the youth disconnect, become very isolated and lonely, and have no social outlets or support outside of school (or home – since often that is not an option for support either).”

- Examine examples of other youth-related spaces for reference
- Provides a fun place to relax and hang out with friends (as per PlaceMaker Project).
- Attending adults build safe, caring, respectful environment, “lite” oversight.
- Needs to be located within walking distance of LSS for lunch and after school.
- Offers food to buy that is not expensive (can use Interac).
- Provides safety for all forms of diversity.
- Has places to sit comfortably, table games, board games, a quiet area for reading.
- Provides venues for open mic and music jamming and other cultural events.
- Allows creation of a youth art wall in it.
- Is part of communication hub networking information on current activities, job and volunteering opportunities.

2.3.2 OUTDOOR AND OTHER SPACES

- Other Spaces – Assign for longer term use (Include access to other spaces including SD 68 facilities, outdoor, etc. Possibly facility use agreements).
- Provide a waterfront area for youth.
- Tie this to a water transport system to/

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from Stz'uminus to provide access for youth from both communities.

- Have benches in town with a food truck designated OK for youth to hang out at.
- Expand the gym at FJCC as it well attended by youth.
- Renovate the skate park to include underground loops and runs.
- Provide more trails for motorized dirtbikes and ATVs. Teach trail etiquette as part of a license to ride them. Include trail maintenance as part of the license.
- Have a movie theatre (widely requested by many youth).
- See **Theme Increasing Participation and Variety** for more researched ideas.

2.3.3 SURVEY ANALYTICS

This theme is best supported by the research done through the Youth Spaces Project, Safe Youth Cowichan project, where 500 youth in this region were consulted about the importance of having a safe space to all their own. Several members of the Youth Research Team of the LYP are also the representatives for the Youth Spaces Project. The concept has been approved through the TOL Council.

3. Strengthening Partnerships

This theme addresses how community organizations and parents working together to share and maximize their services, vision, and resources can show youth that they are cared about and valued..

“Parents need to get involved; businesses and organizations need to step up and work together to provide for the youth in our community.”

Note: Information for each theme has been collected from the Focus Groups, from one-on-one interviews, from the LSS classrooms, from the Open House on April 11, and from the Online Surveys.

3.1 What is working?

During the development of the PRC Ladysmith Master Plan, the town council, service groups and community groups worked together to bring their vision into an actionable plan for the future of Ladysmith. Arising from this plan, the Town gave priority and importance to specifically support the youth in developing their own plan. This up-swell of collaboration of services, organizations, and agencies can also provide the scaffolding for youth to realize

their own vision of the future.

Nine service organizations, 2 churches, 5 sports teams, and 7 youth service professionals took part in the focus group meetings for this youth plan. All of them provided enthusiastic and insightful contributions as well as offering more support and a commitment to the LYP implementation.

Youth rated family life highly in the survey. This shows the work of committed parents in enriching the lives of their children.

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3.1 What are the challenges?

Service clubs and other community groups have much to offer youth but they often work in silos rather than together to maximize positive impacts on youth. There is no unified strategy in working with them or their programs. There are gaps and redundancies in youth services in some areas, and not enough support in others. Each professional has been working in their own capacity with programs but separately. Youth report that there are few opportunities to (1) contribute in meaningful ways to the community and to (2) gain valuable work experience that will increase eligibility for good part-time jobs.

“Because we need to build relationship, it takes time. Time is key to relationship building. Relationship before resources.”

“How can we ensure that our community organizations are working TOGETHER to maximize the positive impact on youth?”

“Public awareness of each community agency’s services is often fragmented.”

3.3 What are the possibilities?

3.3.1 JOIN FORCES

- Explore a conjoined approach by service clubs in funding sports and cultural activities, in holding events, and in creating volunteering opportunities.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of the agencies in the community; who is responsible for what and what they should be involved in.
- Ensure that representatives of organizations serving youth are included throughout the implementation of LYP to build shared commitment.
- Use the long-established organizational structures to host events where youth can practice leading, such as a community meal.
- Unite under a common community goal e.g. , “become Canada’s best town in xxx” .
- Maximize funding strategies by planning together.

3.1.2 POOL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Pool resources to make the most of professional services for youth.
- Assemble a team of professionals from the town working together to address at-risk youth.

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4. Creating a Communication Hub

This theme is about ensuring that both youth and adults are apprised of what is offered in the town for youth. People identified the need for a central resource point or hub in the community that can come to be well-known by youth and families in order to inform them of ALL activities from sports to volunteering; and through which they can access needed funding in ways that respect their dignity and privacy.

Note: Information for this theme has been collected from the Focus Groups, from one-on-one interviews, in the LSS classrooms, the Open House on April 11, and from the Online Surveys.

4.1 What is working?

The Town has an extensive website with event announcements and links to the PRC to showcase activities, sign-ups, and participation at the Frank Jameson Community Centre as well. A Ladysmith Youth page exists on Facebook. Posters of happenings are distributed throughout the Town. The FJCC offers a Leisure Access membership for reduced fees.

4.2 What are the challenges?

Youth consistently reported not being aware of the various cultural, recreational, job and volunteer opportunities in the community. Youth are generally not aware of how to get funding or subsidies for activities. There is a need to make it easy to discover what is available and what is happening given there is no central location, service, or online hub site to keep up with, assemble, and publicly notify youth of what is available.

Youth report that they normally hear about opportunities and events only through word-of-mouth which includes peer-to-peer media messaging. The school, community and survey research revealed that youth were largely unaware of what was available to them to participate in, usually missing time-sensitive opportunities. As a result, services are discontinued rather than increased due to lack of participation....a downward spiral.

Youth overwhelmingly use Instagram for communication. Youth say that Facebook is dated, and rarely mentioned the town website. Email is rarely used by youth. The latter 3 appear to be used more by parents.

A large proportion of the adult population is working, often outside the Town, and has limited spare time. A barrier as simple as not being able to instantly put their finger on what is available for their children, could be a deterrent to participation. Further, parents may be unaware of available financial support or how it could be discreetly accessed.

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4.3 What are the possibilities?

“Access information on youth opportunities, services and programs – there is a ‘one-stop-shop’, posted in easily accessed place and format, that everyone knows about. There would be an updated inventory on all resources available to support youth.”

4.3.1 ELECTRONICS COMMUNICATION HUB

- Set up a virtual online Central Communication Hub which constantly displays EVERYTHING offered in the town for youth including:
 - o volunteering opportunities
 - o service club opportunities
 - o youth services opportunities
 - o job opportunities
 - o camps of different kinds
 - o mental health support access
 - o sports teams and schedules and sign-ups
 - o recreation activity schedules
 - o arts and cultural events and courses and sign-ups
 - o upcoming youth events like open mic, and music jamming
 - o public events
 - o youth participation in town decision-making
 - o happenings at the new youth space (when launched)
- Use student councils at schools to help disseminate information through the hub to the youth community.
- Appoint a dedicated centralized liaison to update the site constantly, and to maintain and network the many relationships with service groups and offerings throughout the Town and area.
- Use youth student council to help disseminate information through the hub to the youth community.

- Make the youth centre (see Theme Youth Spaces) a communication distribution hub.
- Work together in community to develop this youth communication hub.
- Include financial info on subsidies, funding, scholarships with a discreet application process.
- Ask Service Clubs to consider funding this concept where the hub can facilitate financial support of youth participation.

4.3.2 INSTAGRAM AND E-BULLETIN BOARDS

- Use Instagram as the social media tool (83% prefer it over Facebook or email). Keep on top of the latest social media tool...Don't rely on any one specific tool – as marketing/communications methods changes frequently, especially among youth (as they are often on the forefront of change in this area)
- Also or instead of, interactive e-bulletin boards at the schools could be kept updated with this information.

4.3.3 YOUTH SERVICES, ACTIVITIES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FAIR

- Hold a Youth Services, Activities and Opportunities Fair twice a year which brings together all the possible service providers of the activities listed above. This would be a marriage between possible support/provision with much needed services for young people.
- This event would promote another key theme, Strengthening Partnerships. Services working together to produce these fairs might consolidate their offerings, their volunteers, and share common resources, possibly reducing costs.

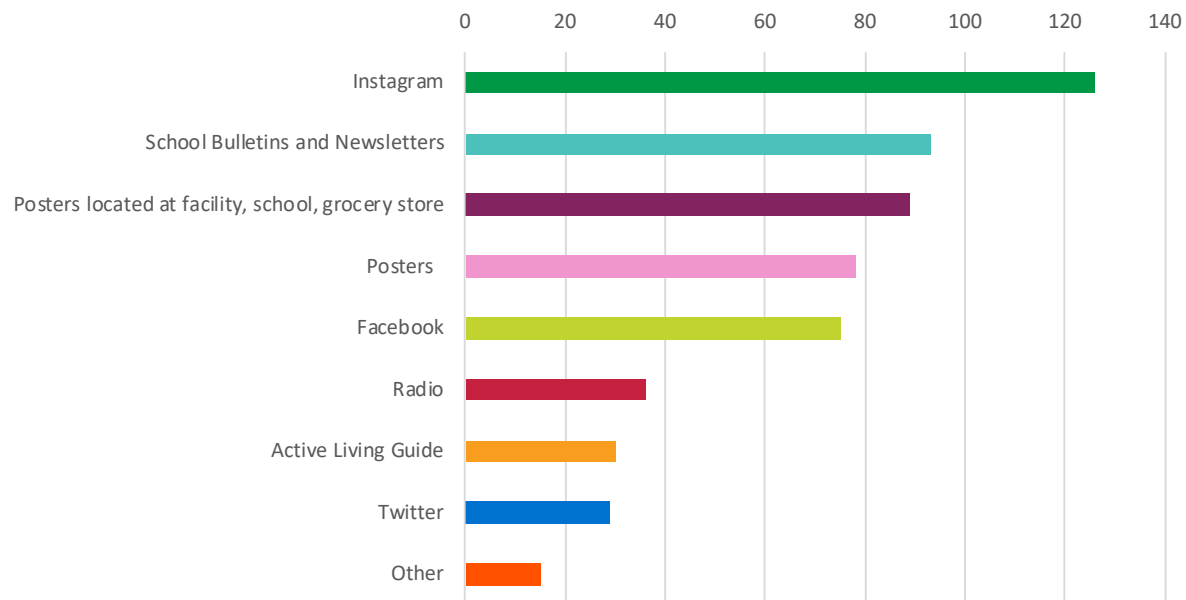
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4.3.4 SURVEY ANALYTICS

Interestingly, in the Youth Survey, Instagram and School e-Bulletins appeared to be the best ways to inform youth about activities, while Facebook took fifth place.

Always keep the communication hub as a consideration for future planning.

WHAT ARE THE BEST WAYS TO INFORM YOUTH OF THE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS?



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5. Accessing activities: Transportation and Funding

Note: Information for this theme has been collected from the Focus Groups, from one-on-one interviews, in the secondary classrooms, from the Open House on April 11, and from the Online Surveys.

5.1 What is working?

Of the youth who are actively participating in Ladysmith activities, dedicated parents are making this possible by driving them and providing the entrance fees. The Frank Jameson Community Centre is close to the schools so that access to recreational activities is facilitated. Many of the activities at the FJCC are low to no fees required. Several of the service groups provide sports equipment and other financial support. In the case of the Air Cadets, the Canadian government and Kinsmen fund the youth cadet program. The ocean, Transfer Beach, and surrounding forested nature trails are accessible on foot or bike to enjoy.

5.2 What are the challenges?

Transportation has been identified as a huge issue across the board. A large percentage of youth's participation in activities, events, or jobs is dependent on accessibility. Due to the absence of public transportation in and around Ladysmith and Stz'uminus, youth are dependent on parental pick-up/drop-off and in some cases, friends with cars. After school activities are bounded by the availability of a ride home. Opportunities for work and recreation are available in Nanaimo and Duncan but bus service is limited or non-existent. Youth who live on the outskirts of Ladysmith such Yellowpoint, Cedar, and Cassidy are isolated from town activities. Parents often work out of town or have long working hours so are unable to provide rides.

Many families experiencing limited financial capacity are unable to participate in cultural and recreational activities. Where is the funding for activities? The more specialized the activity, the more costly it is e.g., Rep soccer - fees, equipment and travel costs \$1500+ per year, plus full parental time commitment.

"Many struggling to meet basic needs, reducing the possibility of knowing about, and engaging in special services and programming. Many families - sometimes but not always - single parent families see their children becoming "latchkey kids" at ages 6-7, alone in the before-school and after-school times primarily due to increasing cost of care. (Cost for one child, pre and post school care is \$400 per month.)"

"Youth agency professionals often see this aloneness of younger children extending into teen years, where precarious home life leaves them one short step from homelessness. Many youth become resourceful and resilient, couch surfing at friends, but the situation becomes more chronic as they get older, with all the community shelters currently often over-subscribed."

5.3 What are the possibilities?

5.3.1 TRANSPORTATION

- Provide strategically scheduled bus service, van, car pool or other.
- Include local public transportation to Stz'uminus, Yellowpoint, Cassidy, Nanaimo, and Southgate Mall.
- Include local public transportation to sports fields, and other identified activity or job sites.

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- Devise a transportation system that works for both major communities e.g., ferry system to/from Stz’uminus/Ladysmith; or a bus system using school buses.
- Suggest an eBikeShare program.
- Access ocean adventures at Shell Beach, river swimming at Cassidy, zip-lining and other fun adventures around the area.
- Allow a legitimate ATV, motorbike, and mountain bike trail to Nanaimo to provide another form of youth transportation for a small fee. A trail already exists but is gated, yet it emerges close to Southgate mall in Nanaimo. Make the youth responsible for its maintenance.
- Make Ladysmith a bike friendly town with a bike share program and a bicycle route promoted
- For all future program and services creation and implementation, this theme would be a consideration

- Seek private partnerships with local businesses to provide free activities and workshops.
- Create central access to scholarships, funding, and subsidies (see Theme Communication Hub).
- Create low cost/no cost social, educational as well as recreational and cultural activities.
- Identify the criteria, of financial means “cut-off” mark, at which families tend to withdraw from participation.
- Provide transportation means at no cost to families who apply for funding i.e., a “pass” for riding local buses.
- Work with service clubs and youth organizations to communicate clearly the financial support systems that are available to families (See Theme Communication Hub).
- Develop life skills and literacy strength for youth of highest need so they can navigate applications and community information that could provide subsidies and scholarships.

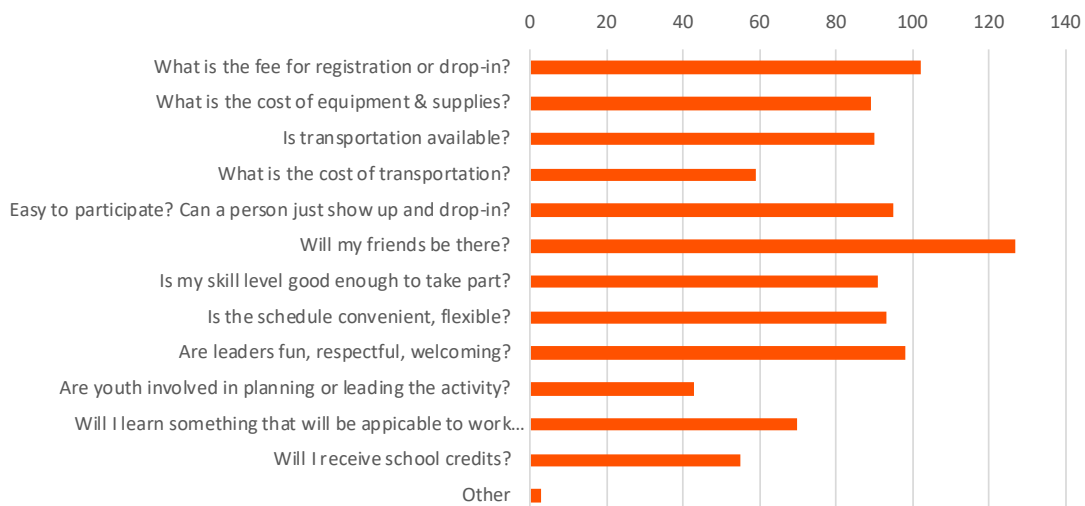
5.3.2 FUNDING

“Provide a clearly defined program of subsidies and financial support for youth and families who otherwise cannot afford services; plus a communications network that ensures that struggling families are aware of what is available.”

5.4 Survey Analytics

In this question about deciding to participate or not, youth identified fees and transportation as important considerations.

WHAT QUESTIONS SEEM TO BE MOST IMPORTANT WHEN YOU ARE DECIDING ABOUT YOUTH RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES?



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6. Increasing Participation and Variety

This theme supports the premise that more involvement in a variety of recreation, cultural, and community events and activities help youth to feel a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose, and builds confidence.

Note: Information for each theme has been collected from the Focus Groups, from one-on-one interviews, from the LSS classrooms, from the Open House on April 11, and from the Online Surveys.

6.1 What is working?

Ladysmith has many activities and support services for families and children:

- Youth reported that in general the organized sports in the Town were well done and there was a great deal of enthusiasm about them.
- Many of these sports and activities require youth to move around province to events. Youth reported this as positive. Physical movement and social connections together are positive.
- Locally supported tournaments was emphasized by participants.
- Youth reported exemplary adult mentors in sports, dance and drama had made a difference in their lives.
- There is an active body of volunteers of older adults available in the Town.
- Eagles hold camps for 100 kids around age 11.
- Rotary Club sends exchange students for an international experience. Rotary also runs the successful Ambassador program. All youth who reported participating in the Ambassador program were positive about it.
- Ladysmith Little Theatre and an LSS teacher hold drama camps.
- Lions Club champions the individual uniqueness of children, provides support for parents, concession stands at sports activities, weekly pizza. Offers more.

- The sports and cadet activities have a long history of kids helping kids in mentoring and volunteer coaching, and the tutoring of younger students
- Kinsmen provide funding for underprivileged kids who want to be involved in sports.
- Rhythmic dance, soccer, baseball are all very positive and popular activities.
- Improv drama program at LSS is very popular.
- The LAFF program, 20 years old, committed to modeling community to children at a young age together with their families has been very successful. Although this is for younger children, it was reported that the service had a long term positive influence on whether youth felt part of the community in later years.

6.2 What are the challenges?

“People should feel welcomed to come and do activities and not have to think if they are good enough to participate”

There seems to be a drop-off after age 10 where youth no longer have as much variety in what is available and where they also lose interest in participation. The service organizations and programs are geared to younger children. Parent volunteers explained the phenomenon. As children reach age 9-10, parental attendance, participation and support diminish, leaving

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a big burden on the shoulders of a few volunteer parents to make things happen. One coach in attendance, for example, coaches three different teams (minimum four days per week commitment) as well as taking on admin role in the organization. They expressed their frustration in trying to get more parent volunteers on board. "It is harder getting people involved"

The sustainability of the programs is affected and often terminated by generations growing up and moving on.

Youth reported that they preferred contributing to and taking part in community activities or events with a variety of engagement options rather than having to sign up for weekly activity schedules (exception was competitive sports programs).

Volunteer opportunities seem limited to the Thrift Store and visits to seniors' homes.

6.3 What are the possibilities?

6.3.1 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

"Create a clearly articulated framework that includes regular review and assessment of programs, a process for ensuring sustainability of programs that are deemed effective, and a system for adopting innovation."

"Creating a structure that stands for youth programs/services even as youth age out. Making sure programs and services are in place depending on the need, having adults advocating for what youth in the Ladysmith community want/need. Creating a Hub for youth services and a plan on what is being delivered."

6.3.2 SPORTS

- See more variety in sports offered, e.g., rugby, a boxing club (even just a punching bag for de-stressing!), a wrestling club, floor hockey, jiu-jitsu.
- Hosting the sports tournament in town as experienced in the recent past was positive in creating a community project.

"TOL Tournaments - Soccer and Baseball, bringing in 1000+ participants with their families. Huge event for a town the size of Ladysmith; and significant positive impact on local businesses."

- Bring back drop-in basketball, and drop-in sports programs of all kinds.
- Offer opportunity for novices to try sports and activities at entrance level without embarrassment.
- Sports providers reported it was hard to get volunteer coaches while youth expressed the wish for better, more skilled coaching in order to be able to compete better.
- Expand the number of sports fields.
- Involve service groups in supporting new initiatives.

6.3.3 RISK AND ADVENTURE

- Include activities that involve risk, adrenalin-enhancing activities.
- Encompass a wider radius of activities e.g., river swimming at Cassidy, ocean canoeing off Shell Beach, ATViing on allowed lumber roads.
- Provide access to aggressive games like paintball and war ball.
- Have a boxing bag available so the youth could just 'hit it'.
- Renovate the skate park to include underground loops and runs.

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- Provide more trails for motorized dirtbikes and ATVs. Teach trail etiquette as part of a license to ride them. Include trail maintenance as part of the license.
- Have a horsemanship program, a program to work with and ride horses (Equine Facilitated Learning)

6.3.4 COMMUNITY ARTS AND CULTURE

- Expand drama to community-wide drama classes and projects, travel with drama tour to compete. Maybe Interactive Theatre with theatre workshops
- Have more arts-based courses and projects in the community for this age group.
- Need a bigger stage than LSS – collaborate with Ladysmith Little Theatre.
- Assign an art wall for legal graffiti such as in the tunnel to Transfer Beach.
- Hold a Community Art Wall event assigned to an unpainted cement wall in town.
- Have more camps with cultural themes.
- Have informal music jamming events.
- Have a chess club (could be competitive).
- Have youth take part in organizing and learning the setup of town events such as musicals, technical set-up and electricals, props and sets, drama, performances, waterfront events, sports tournaments.
- Involve youth in more community projects, supported by an effective mentoring network that helps them with self-directed learning projects, e.g. boat-building, arts
- Work with environmentalists to build and maintain trails and other natural settings.
- Increase the camps available such as arts,

drama, Eagles, Scouts for older youth.

- Involve service groups in supporting new initiatives.

6.3.5 VOLUNTEERISM

- Provide more volunteering jobs to experience different kinds of real-life work. *“If their feedback is more about needing job experience, could involve them in different businesses or town projects such as trail clearing, or beach clearing. Even though it may only be volunteer, still gives work experience.”*

- Use a volunteer sign-up app. Maybe 10 people are needed to help for an event. In Saanich, youth would sign up to fill these positions off the app, making it easy to participate.
- Volunteer in one-off projects where youth are intensely involved for a period of time. This was preferred over a weekly commitment to an activity for an indefinite period.
- Expand the volunteering in nursing homes and seniors' homes.
- Volunteer youth to teach dance, or arts and other volunteering for graduation credits. This could help build friendships and relations in the community.

“Creating more volunteer opportunities for teens would be great. Doing more « clean up Transfer Beach » days as a reminder of the impact we’re having on our environment. These clean up programs should be occurring once a month. These kinds of activities also help build confidence in youth and gives them a sense of accomplishment. The effects that being in nature has is also the greatest benefit.”

- Involve service groups in supporting new initiatives.

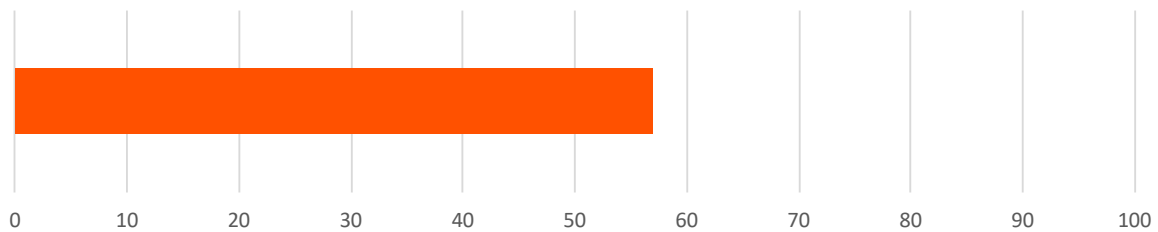
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6.4 Survey Analytics

In both the youth and the adult surveys, the average on the Likert scale was the same on how well Ladysmith provided activities for youth.

6.4.1 AS PER YOUTH

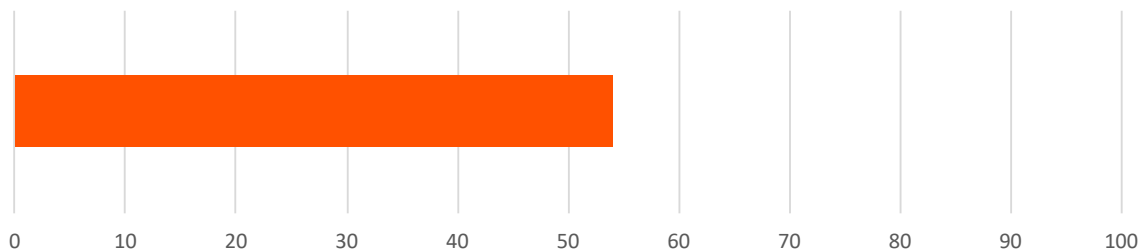
HOW WELL DOES OUR COMMUNITY PROVIDE POSITIVE THINGS FOR YOU TO DO BEYOND SPORTS AND SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES?



AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
57	10594	187

6.4.2 AS PER ADULTS

DOES OUR COMMUNITY OFFER POSITIVE THINGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO DO BEYOND SPORTS AND SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES?



AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
54	3920	73

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7. Responding to Diversity

Responding to diversity is the understanding, acceptance, and respect for individual and group differences within the youth population as defined by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, social groupings, physical abilities, and beliefs.

Note: Information for each theme has been collected from the Focus Groups, from one-on-one interviews, from the LSS classrooms, from the Open House on April 11, and from the Online Surveys.

7.1 What is working?

We learned that the majority of the youth population feel they live in a friendly, accepting and safe environment. A typical comment regarding life at LSS:

“Most students are respectful of identity differences. Pretty good environment ... everyone gets along okay.”

We also learned that many who identify as ethnic minorities do not share that same sentiment. They pointed out that being nice to one another does not necessarily mean respect or acceptance of difference. These perspectives are noted below under Challenges.

In our public engagements, we found strong examples of programs that build intercultural understanding and respect. Local service clubs, for example, have offered International student exchanges (Rotary) that have expanded students' horizons. At Ladysmith Secondary there have been many recent changes designed to build cultural understanding of Stz'uminus First Nation ways and traditions, including the new Land & Language program in which

students learn of the Aboriginal ways of learning and Hul'q'umin'um. At LSS there is regular acknowledgement of traditional Stz'uminus territory at school events; as well as art projects - school-based cedar-carving with students working with a Stz'uminus artist.

Within Stz'uminus First Nation (SFN), there are strong role models in sport and cultural activities that are actively reinforcing the strength of the culture for youth, as exemplified in regularly scheduled community-based cultural sessions that welcome multigenerational participation.

To respond to the needs of youth whose families are financially-challenged, most of the organized sports programs that participated in our sessions described inclusionary policies that welcome all youth to participate. Air Cadets appears to be one of the local organizations that openly promotes the cost and relative affordability of their programs.

Youth reported that there has been improved accommodation and understanding of LGBTQ youth needs in the community, both at LSS and at summer camps.

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7.2 What are the challenges?

"All lives matter not just one single race. In today's western society people are given the same opportunities whether you start rich or poor... is not related to race but choices that are made throughout life."

We are living in a world where the tone of open hostility and negativity toward "difference" has recently intensified. In politics, mainstream media, and social media there is increased polarization of views and accentuation of those whose cultural identity and social practices are different. It seems that permission has been given to be outwardly intolerant.

Both Ladysmith Secondary School and Stz'uminus Secondary have given us the clear message that the communities, while they share positive experiences and activities, are divided on many fronts. Stz'uminus Secondary students are seeking ways to gain experience and confidence in the non-Aboriginal world.

"Can't combine two cultures without easy transportation to/from..."

First Nations and students of minority cultures at LSS acknowledge while things have changed for the better since their parents and grandparents schooled in Ladysmith, practices of exclusion and racism live on at LSS and in the community. Members of a large student group at LSS, largely made up of Aboriginal students, shared their stories about what it is like to be in their shoes, outside the majority culture in Ladysmith. They described themselves as outsiders, and explain why they find safety in numbers walking the halls. (Please see stories in NOTES section...)

Youth from financially vulnerable families are prone to exclusion from activities and events. They are also more apt to be bullied; some also need a basic food program. Youth whose families are financially-challenged can participate. As one youth put it: *"I think (activities) should just be cheaper. I barely have enough to live."*

Some members of the LGBTQ youth community describe a state of discomfort in a small town where everyone knows one another; where dating is difficult.

7.3 What are the possibilities?

In addition to the ideas presented on poster, there were other ideas shared in sessions:

- Build new ways of sharing culture between Stz'uminus and Ladysmith to help us move from our history of racism toward real cultural understanding. Bridge the divide by bringing the two sides together to discuss new ways to learn and live together; for example, initiate "Reconciliation" or "Reconciliation."
- Create classes at LSS and Stz'uminus that move back and forth between the two communities.
- Focus effort on Ladysmith website to increase presence of Aboriginal perspectives - to be consciously inclusive.
- Build connection of youth needs of the two communities into new waterfront plans.
- Link the communities via Bike and Water transportation to Stz'uminus.
- Develop a powerful and compelling VISION that will harness imagination and energy.
- Build more support for diversity issues in community; reduce bullying and

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negativity on social media platforms; continue to reinforce the standards for anti-bullying established at LSS. *“We need to learn to support uniqueness. Where do “ugly ducklings” and outcasts go?”*

- Make programs and experiences for youth fully inclusive – affordable and accessible - designed to support and strengthen youth identities.
- Build plans around Aboriginal Day in mid-late June, in creating participating in activities, cultural tours, experiential activities e.g., Walk of Nations.
- LSS programs that promote cultural awareness, particularly with Stz’uminus FN have interesting experiences that youth look forward to: special outings for youth, traditional dance, tribal journey, and activities like spear fishing.

7.4 Background Notes & Quotes related to Diversity

“We have a divide: a strange dynamic exists; some exclusive groups; some dope users, some not; everyone seems to get along okay as mentioned above, but they are separate. We have the preps (academics); athletes; stoners; geeks, techies... but these are also divided into the Games kids then we have the computer geeks. Some are never in groups; there is one boy who comes to mind; he spends most of his time on his own focusing on his screen.”

Evidence of youth whose diversity invokes bullying found that standing up for each other can provide protection and lifelong friendships.

How to draw out youth hiding family issues, e.g. lack of money to participate?

Family influence not easy to change?

Racism: Growing or disappearing?

7.4.1 NOTES FROM LAND AND LANGUAGE CLASS - GRADES 10-12 @ LSS

This was a large class with about 70-80% Aboriginal students, most of whom are based in Stz’uminus community. The session lasted two hours. Many students who had attended previous class sessions, who were notably quiet on key issues, opened up when their peers shared their experiences in the school and the com. We started the question “What does it feel like in this community - at LSS and Ladysmith - to be different than the majority culture?”

The session began with the acknowledgement *“THAT THINGS HAVE GOTTEN BETTER OVER THE PAST YEARS - BUT THERE STILL IS A LONG WAY TO GO.”*

The first speaker, a grade 12 student, member of the Youth Research Team, kicked things off speaking from her experience of being a cultural minority at LSS and town: *“We have come around to accepting more people but we still have that separation between communities, individuals, religion ... I think it is (people) not wanting to understand, to have sympathy or empathy towards the way I view my life, the way I was brought up, my background and everything. You can see that in in the separation of individuals. It is hard. You feel kind of defeated, with wanting to branch out to different kinds of people but you are not getting it back from others.”*

Another student, a male Grade 12 who is heading to VIU next year, offered another view: *“The school really hasn’t changed at all. There are many who are still kind of racist and that hasn’t changed at all. It is the same now as when my parents, and my uncle went here”... Pretty much the same stories, and for my older sister.”* When asked what needs to be changed, he responded: *“Less judgement.”*

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When things are working well in school, what does it look like? What makes the difference?

"There is respect. That makes the difference".

"Kids, especially new kids, they come to the school and they don't understand our history. They are scared of what they don't know. My mom and my grandparents came here as students. They were really badly picked on over the years. There was a lot of racism at the school back then. It is not that bad now, but you still can see racism. Some parents don't teach kids about accepting people who are different."

A student responds that they all must be aware that, *"There is a lot of work to be done".*

A student asks her what "work" means? She responds, *"Work on learning our language and cultural practice... making sure our culture does not die."* (work to be done inside culture)

Another student explained, *"There was a time when I felt really alone. Others did not understand me, or want to understand."*

Regarding experience in the hallways: *"Now and again, you can walk in the halls and for the most part things are pretty quiet, not too vulgar."* Then a few in the circle explained why they feel a need to walk in groups of three or more. *"why the separation...we only stay in groups. We are not expected to do much ... not invited to too much stuff."* Another student explains more about the feeling of separation: *"Sometimes they call us 'chugs', but we probably use the word as much as they do."*

"Teachers sometimes talk to us like we are dumb. But we are just like other kids".

"I don't think that I have experienced a lot of racism directly. But from the things I have experienced, it seems there is a lot of ignorance. The experiences I have been through have painted my view of the rest of the demographic...there are lots of people of different ethnicities, and I think that we have come a long way. It's the best it's been in the modern world. This class is an example of an egalitarian society... people who are here to learn, people from different ethnicities, who have come together to learn about my culture." (Other students ask him what "egalitarian?" - He says - "accepting").

"I feel that racism still exists in the school a lot, even though it has gotten better. For me, I look very white, but I am not. This causes a lot of people to act like they they know what I am ... and it is hard because people will say "... well you can't speak the language... that's not who you are..."

"Sometimes we get called 'not white enough' or 'not native enough.'" And other comments like "you are a credit to your race... wow, all of that. It is not fair."

Land, Language-based course at LSS is bringing to those students participating a rich understanding of Stz'uminus culture and bridging the cultural divide.

"We need to help people step outside our comfort zones... when someone called me the "N" word, and I correct them and they automatically turn around and get defensive about it, and throw more at me. That is not setting up their comfort zone, they are retreating back into themselves. So if they can apologize, then we can build a connection, a stronger bond between people."

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How can we avoid these situations?

“Teaching and learning”

“And what can we do to help us have learning conversations? Get off our phones... have some real conversations.”

When friends made a shift, what did you do?

One boy talked about a growing friendship with a Non-aboriginal student, and how difficult it was for his friend to be open to learning about Aboriginal perspectives, and how it ended badly.

How can we change things to build respect?

“In classes, it sometimes seems that our perspective is totally ignored, or, we are asked to be the spokesperson who is expected to represent Aboriginal view.”

“This is the first time that I have ever had a real class discussion about racism, and I have been going to school here a long time... since kindergarten I haven't had a talk (about racism).”

But where does this conversation go?

“People only hear what they want to hear. They don't hear the good things.” How do you bring out your brilliance, your ideas, break through the stereotype?”

“I think that the key is listening. We all start by being open, open to ourselves and the speaker. (What he learned from Brenda). People lash out at other people because they are not happy with themselves. If people are ignorant, we need to teach. All of us need to feel that we belong. We need to be patient.”

“We need to help people learn, with little steps...”

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8. Supporting Mental Wellness

Note: Information for each theme has been collected from the Focus Groups, from one-on-one interviews, from the LSS classrooms, from the Open House on April 11, and from the Online Surveys.

Anxiety and depression are on the rise in our society, not just in Ladysmith. This is a generally experienced trend, here is a report on it:

[National Trends in the Prevalence and Treatment of Depression in Adolescents and Young Adults](#)

8.1 What is working?

There is a team of dedicated youth counselling professionals with a good understanding of the Ladysmith issues. They meet monthly to collaborate. Although stretched to capacity, they maintain a positive and progressive attitude towards possibilities for youth in the Ladysmith community.

“Drugs and alcohol abuse in our town have decreased compared to 10 years ago.”

8.2 What are the challenges?

Youth with anxiety and depression challenges have difficulty finding the right counselling support which is timely and accessible, while fitting their personal level of need.

Students agreed they saw and felt increased anxiety in their world. Pressure from peers experienced through social media “comparisons” contributed to this.

In general, youth are aware of cliques and their judgments. As a result of being judged, they begin to lack confidence in groups. Yet peer interaction was rated very highly in the surveys. This creates anxiety and depression from exclusion.

Youth further expressed the belief that social anxiety was a consequence of high expectation by teachers/peers, parents and self.

Resources are stretched beyond capacity; this was an issue of concern reported in both Ladysmith and Stz’uminus communities. There are cutbacks in counselling staff rather than increases.

Youth ages 11-13 are even more under-served in counseling support than older youth.

Cyber Bullying is a society-wide issue.

Nanaimo does offer programs but there could always be more.

Youth reported a stigma if peers knew they were seeking help:

“In addition there is sensitivity related to personal privacy and seeing a counsellor in a small town (some youth feel that too many people are observing and commenting on their vulnerability). Services in nearby Nanaimo are also tapped out.”

8.3 What are the possibilities?

- Go to where the youth hang out and build relationships of trust. It starts with empowering youth. Hit the ground running interacting with youth. Drop our adult biases and really truly listen to them. Seek the underlying message that youth are trying to say.

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“Outreach is often forgotten about. Take a drop-in program to a skate park. Tend to see the outreach programs in cities but not so often in smaller towns. Meet the kids where they are to provide support.”

- Need for community education of how much pressure youth are under and the anxiety issues they face.
- Provide hotline crisis counselling 24/7.
- Increase access to trusted adult mentors, not necessarily professionals, who could just listen.
- Increase the number of mental health counsellors.

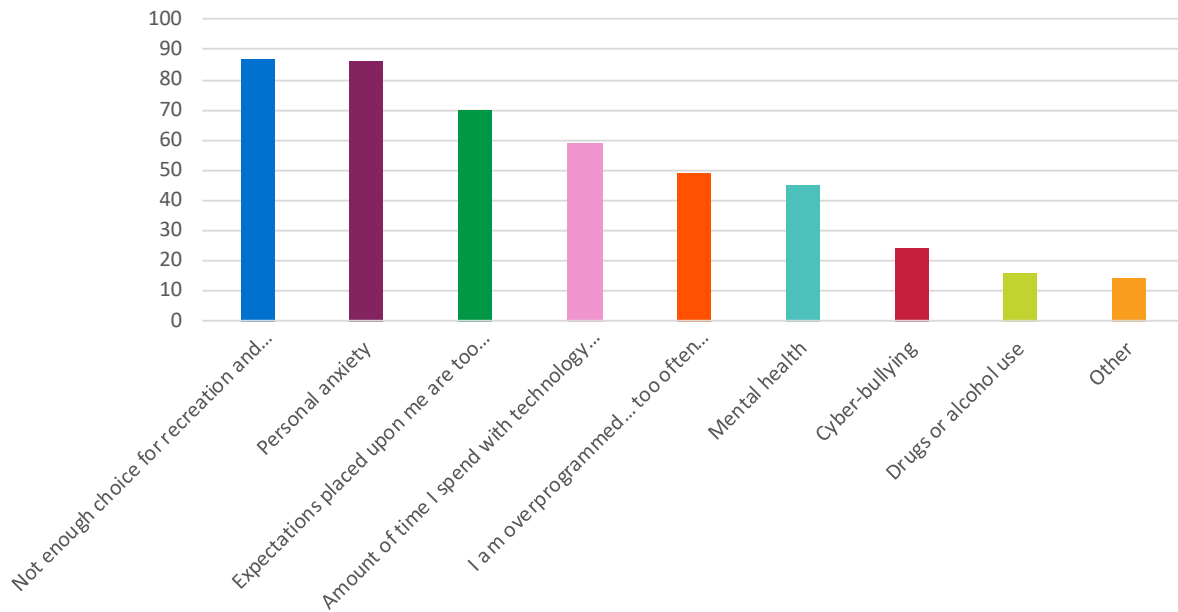
“The availability of affordable youth counsellors would be phenomenal!”

- Ensure discreet ways for youth to access counselling.
- Continue to coordinate mental health support services and counsellors within the Town.
- Ensure that youth are aware and have access to the different services available.
- Interconnect services of schools, IHA, and community resource agencies.
- Use youth friendly language - not too clinical.
- Continue to promote physical activity as an antidote to anxiety.

“Yoga programs would be great for teens suffering from anxiety or insomnia.”

8.4 Survey Analytics

HOW MUCH DO THESE ISSUES AFFECT YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE?



Interestingly the data above, in a 50/50 split between the two top choices, suggests that more recreational and cultural activities might reduce anxiety.

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9. Reframing Screen Time

We define “screen time” as time spent with TV, computers, iPads or smartphones. Our current generation of youth has superseded previous generations in the amount of time spent engaged with digital and visual media. Only a small handful of local youth described themselves as non-users. While only long-term research will reveal the impact of extensive time spent with screen, we have learned some important things about how screen time has affected our youth population - in both positive and negative ways.

Note: Information for each theme has been collected from the Focus Groups, from one-on-one interviews, from the LSS and LSI classrooms, from the Open House on April 11, and from the Online Surveys.

9.1 What is working?

Involvement in healthy online communities gives youth a sense of confidence and social connection that they may not otherwise experience within their own community; can contribute to building a healthy identity. Many youth are developing invaluable technology skills.

All are able to access vast array of online resources and knowledge that contributes to their learning, supporting both in-school and outside-school pursuits.

9.2 What are the challenges?

A 2015 North American study found that teens 13-18 average nine⁹ hours a day on social media and two-thirds of them do their homework while online with friends (see reference #1 below). Many local youth in our discussions spoke of excessive amount of time spent with devices that did not generate anything satisfying.

Ages 10 -18 represent that period of life when one’s personal identity is being developed. It is a stage of vulnerability. Many youth in our sessions described the need to maintain popularity, to be judged favourably in the “likes and dislikes” column on social media, and the pressure to spend time staying connected. This can contribute to personal anxiety. It also can lead to isolation and depression.

While cyber-bullying has been addressed in a proactive way at LSS, with new expectations and standards, the more subtle impact of online interaction and communication has yet to be determined.

Addiction to gaming, as well as “staying connected”, helps deflect boredom; but this can also cause youth to sign off healthy recreational or cultural pursuits (see reference #2 below)

Some spoke of the awkwardness when they try to move from digital communication to face-to-face interaction with peers.

⁹ [1] Survey by Common Sense Media (2015)

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/about-us/news/press-releases/landmark-report-us-teens-use-an-average-of-nine-hours-of-media-per-day>

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The need to be on screen has increased with the introduction of new online courses in the 2017 BC Secondary Curriculum revisions; students not adapting well to the change.

There is a dramatic drop in youth participation in activities currently offered in the community.

[1] Survey by Common Sense Media (2015) <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/about-us/news/press-releases/landmark-report-us-teens-use-an-average-of-nine-hours-of-media-per-day>

[2] World Health Organization (2018) http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/activities/gaming_disorders/en/

[3] Andrew Reid, a doctoral researcher of serious games at Glasgow Caledonian University <https://www.bbc.com/news/amp/uk-scotland-43581660>

9.3 Background Notes & Quotes related to Screen Time

The current generation of youth acknowledges that they are fully immersed in the digital and screen culture. Should any of us be worried about the changes that it has brought in the way youth spend their time? Do the positives of the digital world make up for the downside?

Should youth and community be worried about the potential mental health challenges that might be caused by social isolation and separation from interacting with other people in a face-to-face environment?

What is the role of parents, mentors, community persons working with youth to promote healthy use of the internet?

9.3.1 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND FACE-TO-FACE SOCIALIZING

“Sometimes too much of a good thing”... “I am not able to self-regulate.”

“Good to not take the real world for granted, you want to savour every moment.”

“Better to be out and about and not spending too much time on screens.”

- Begin to lack personal, face to face connection with so much screen time.
- Much time expended on creating and monitoring an Instagram profile to garner followers and likes.
- The external response to social media posts significantly affects personal confidence and feelings of well-being.
- Many youth recognize their attention to social media as extreme.
- One youth indicated that good parental support and guidance was the main reason he is able to moderate and learn to self-regulate his use of social media and the Internet.

9.3.2 NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND ONLINE LEARNING

Online learning has been adopted in many areas of the LSS curriculum, thereby increasing the time spent on screen. While we might be inclined to believe that this would be a natural fit for “digital natives”, the general sentiment expressed by students was that online learning had a lot of disadvantages.

LSS students provided a full range of responses to this change, many of which were negative, citing the amount of time on screen and the sometimes the absence of human support:

COMMENTS:

“Self-paced? I like the independence; we are all working along at different levels.”

“When I am working on math at home, I

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get help that I need from my parents.”

“I am online the whole day, just the way my schedule turned out. Too much. I get headaches and eyeaches.”

“If doing my work at home, no online help.”

“In class, I can’t get help when I need it most.”

“I get blocked when the one way that is taught (online) or explained is not working; I need someone then who offer me different explanations.”

“I ask my friends for help with problems; teachers sometimes don’t seem to have the time.”

“I don’t ask for help; I am too shy, so I just move on.”

Perspective of a person working with youth in recreation:

“I see youth as disconnected from the community due to the advancement of technology. Cell phones and virtual gaming seem to have made kids disappear. There is a distinct decrease in involvement of young people in events. No kids on the street anymore. This summer they were particularly absent. In school hallways, every student is late because they are all lined up looking at their phones. Friday night drop-in teen centre – kids still looking at their phones and not interacting much.

Adults are now also tied to their phones no matter where. When supervising young workers, has to contract to not use their phones during work. However teachers who work at the school do not stop use of phones – it is too complex an issue.

We should explore the issue of ISOLATION... as a situation that kids and parents should know about. Excessive screen time is an issue. Not seeing teens in a community – absent from the landscape is worrying... Under 10 pre-teens for a fun Friday night, used to be many more.”

9.3.3 COMPUTER GAMING: ULTIMATELY GOOD OR BAD?

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (2018)

“Gaming disorder, with its online and offline variants, has been included in the draft of the 11th edition of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as a clinically recognizable and clinically significant syndrome, when the pattern of gaming behaviour is of such a nature and intensity that it results in marked distress or significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational or occupational functioning.”

Health concerns associated with gaming behaviour are not limited to gaming disorder, but also include other aspects of health (e.g. insufficient physical activity, unhealthy diet, problems with eyesight or hearing, musculoskeletal problems, sleep deprivation, aggressive behavior and depression) and psychosocial functioning.

Studies suggest that gaming disorder affects only a small proportion of people who engage in digital- or video-gaming activities. However, people who partake in gaming should be alert to the amount of time they spend on gaming activities, particularly when it is to the exclusion of other daily activities, as well as to any changes in their physical or psychological health and social functioning that could be attributed to their pattern of gaming behaviour.

(ICD-11 is scheduled to be released in June 2018)¹¹

Here is a different point of view: Scottish researcher, Andrew Reid, urges us NOT to move to calling gaming an addiction. He has been studying the effects of participation in games

¹¹ http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/activities/gaming_disorders/en/

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such as Fortnite, and while acknowledging that the games are hard to stop playing, says that there are “positive characteristics of play” and suggests that the word addiction stigmatizes the regular players of video games¹².

Kids spend a lot of time in the virtual world in games, movies, social media...

“Some kids just need to escape and that’s OK. Very tempting – need to turn off notifications. My sister chooses not to even have a cell phone. She still has 2 very close friends – but it is hard to get in touch with her. Hard to balance.”

9.3.4 SCREEN TIME

“World on entertainment online with kids glued to their phone. Isolation – it is easier to put our head in a hole. What are they watching? FoxNews, playing video games? A lot of fear-based programming with people in conflict with each other. People are also living in silos. On screen at 3 or 4 am, isolated from each other. Ethics are missing in online relationships every day. Anxiety and depression are on the rise.”

“We need to create a culture of youth in this town where they are engaged and come out to do these activities. Create opportunities of connection with each other away from the virtual world.”

One Gr 10 student put it this way:

“It’s like we are living two really different lives: One is managing school, work, friends and family. The other is spending time making sure my profile, or identity, on social media is right... that it looks good, that I am presenting my best... a lot of is time spent...”

Students reported increased anxiety in their world. Pressure from peers experienced

through social media “comparisons” contributed to this. Some said that time is often spent posting the “ideal” pictures of their life, that in turn causes others to feel inadequate, or less privileged.

Another student suggested that time is spent online shaping your Dream Identity. And with it comes lots of comparison and judgement. This in turn can lead to lessened self-esteem as comments, likes and dislikes build up.

One student said: *“... a lot of self-judging happens... messes with your brain and your self-confidence.”* Another comment related to the pressure of expectations; *“We are trying to meet unrealistic standards; and sometimes we don’t fit into any (social) category.”*

Others say that they ignore social media and all the comments that happen. *“I just don’t pay attention to it”* or *“I don’t like connecting with people on social media... I don’t like connecting with people in person either!”*

“You don’t even notice, but there is no privacy. Everyone knows about you!”

Reduce screen time, promote F2F interaction, real projects (8 different persons stated this) *“Screen life is taking away from reality. Causes sleeplessness and restlessness. Takes away from learning face-to-face interaction.”*

Screen time *“It’s just part of our generation.”* Many in these three groups felt that they were able to self-regulate their use of screens. Good to have WORD and PPT to help present their work and information.

“Hiding behind a screen can help build confidence, but does not build relationships.” Students

¹² <https://www.bbc.com/news/amp/uk-scotland-43581660>

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described the positive side of social media – how you are able to connect with people who are ‘your people’, a community that exists beyond your day-to-day interactions. But the downside is that you can lose your ability to communicate with the live person in front of you.

“People post just to feel good; a lot of us are addicted.”

Peer Pressure results in both positive and negative impact on confidence and well-being: Positive in that it drives you to a higher standard of activity and performance; negative in that the pressure can be overwhelming.

“More personal of a school system....more face to face communications, less emails.”

“We need more opportunities to try out new technologies related to gaming and computers”

“More computer-based art/drawing opportunities”

Offers positive interaction with friends, especially when they live away from you.

“I like it a lot. Not terrible. But I do notice that friends, when we get together, are distracted.”

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