

EMPOWERING YOUTH

The City of Brantford's Youth Strategy

2022-2024



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Youth Engagement.....	4
Priority Areas and Actions	6
Metrics and Milestones.....	10



The Empowering Youth Strategy demonstrates the City of Brantford's ongoing commitment to fostering a community where youth can thrive, outlining priorities and actions to continue supporting opportunities for youth engagement and positive youth development outcomes.

The City will continue to work with community partners, including youth, parents/guardians, and youth-serving organizations, to enhance opportunities for youth and to reflect our official designation as a Youth Friendly Community.

Why Develop a Youth Strategy?

On August 11, 2021, the Government of Canada's first State of Youth Report was released by the Ministry of Diversity, Inclusion, and Youth. This report was developed by members of a Youth Advisory Group and informed by consultations with almost 1,000 young people across Canada. Canada's Youth Policy has informed the development of the City of Brantford's Youth Strategy, to help ensure the City is better positioned to partner with surrounding jurisdictions and advocate to higher levels of government.

Municipalities across Ontario have developed, or are currently developing, strategic frameworks to guide how they mobilize community partnerships to secure more opportunities for their local youth (including the City of Hamilton's Youth Engagement Strategy, City of Toronto's Youth Engagement Strategy, City of Mississauga's Youth Plan, City of Oakville's Youth Plan, and the City of Guelph Youth Strategy). The City of Brantford's Youth Strategy reflects the experiences of youth and outlines priority areas and actionable goals from which we will measure progress.

Brantford City Council also identified the development of a Youth Strategy as a key Council Priority for 2021-2022.



Youth Engagement

Youth Surveys

The initial discussion with the Brantford Youth Council helped determine the kind of information needed to inform the priorities and actions of the Empowering Youth Strategy. This included information about the most pressing issues that youth are currently facing, how youth already engage with these issues, what resources/supports youth need to thrive, and new ideas for youth programs and civic engagement.

In October 2021, a digital survey was circulated to encourage youth to provide their insights and ideas to guide the development of the Empowering Youth Strategy. The Let's Talk About Youth survey was completed by 1,337 participants. These surveys were circulated through local high schools, post-secondary schools, youth-serving agencies, youth groups, and social media.

Pop-Up Brainstorming

The City also facilitated pop-up collaborative brainstorming activities with local youth service providers and at public events, which included over 50 participants. Staff worked with the Youth Strategic Leadership Table, representing 20 local agencies serving children and youth, to determine safe and effective methods for consulting youth who may experience barriers to survey and group discussion-based consultations.

What Resources Did Youth Say They Need to Thrive?



Priority Areas and Actions

The City of Brantford's Role

- Lead:** The City will provide leadership in areas within the municipal scope (ex. housing, youth engagement, neighbourhood development).
- Advocate:** The City will advocate for the needed resources and policy change in areas outside of the municipal scope (ex. mental health, addictions, primary care).
- Support:** The City will continue to support the goals of existing community groups through collaborative projects and grant writing.



Priority Areas and Actions

1. Diversity and Inclusion

- Action 1.1:** Support and facilitate participation in Truth and Reconciliation through community-based programming led by Indigenous organizations and community groups.
- Action 1.2:** Collaborate with community partners to create and support opportunities for local youth to access community-led education about Indigenous history and culture, as well as the histories and cultures of other underrepresented groups in our community.
- Action 1.3:** Continue to provide leadership support on the Brantford Local Immigration Partnership Youth Action Table, enhancing the capacity of local youth to develop and implement community-led initiatives to make Brantford a more welcoming community.
- Action 1.4:** Review and assess City-run youth programs and services for opportunities to increase anti-discrimination efforts, including targeted trainings for City staff and volunteers.
- Action 1.5:** Review and assess City-run youth programs and services for opportunities to increase their accessibility.
- Action 1.6:** Continue to review and analyze the user fee structure to ensure inclusivity of community programs.
- Action 1.7:** Provide training and development opportunities to youth-serving staff and volunteers to increase cultural competency.

How Did Youth Say They Make An Impact In Their Community?



Priority Areas and Actions

3. Leadership and Impact

- Action 3.1:** Provide increased opportunities for youth to lead and make an impact in their community, including opportunities for youth leaders to engage more directly with local government.
- Action 3.2:** Engage local youth in the development of future strategic plans, committees, working groups, and community programs and projects.
- Action 3.3:** Collaborate with community partners to create mentorship and network building opportunities for local youth across municipal, non-profit, and private sectors.
- Action 3.4:** Continue to offer and expand the cohort capacity of the Youth Leadership Development Program to train volunteers and staff.
- Action 3.5:** Collaborate with employment service providing partners to increase youths' access to local programs that address barriers to skills training and employment.
- Action 3.6:** Support the capacity of youth-led groups to identify and apply for funding opportunities targeted to community-level projects.

What Did Youth Say They Care About?

Stress

Inequality
for BIPOC

I think it's the epidemic! Because the epidemic is affecting so many things right now! Like going to school, getting a job, and so on

Lack of affordable housing and drug use

Public transportation for students

Managing the pressure to succeed in every area of life and finding time to do it all

Some activities that can build self-confidence

Very limited job/volunteer opportunities. The only existing job opportunities for youth are minimum wage jobs

Lack of LGBT programming

Bullying

Uncertainty about the future

For older youth, retention. There is a significant drain in Brantford. We don't have a lot of incentives for youth who have graduated college/university to stay in the community

Increased youth mental health resources

Metrics and Milestones

Targets

The following targets will guide the City's evaluation and measurement of success. Baselines will be established and progress will be measured year over year.

- Increase the # of programs designed by youth.
- Increase the # of youth participating in municipal sport and recreation.
- Increase the # of youth participating in municipal arts and culture programming.
- Increase the # of youth participating in municipal leadership programming.
- Increase the # of youth volunteering with the City of Brantford
- Achieve Gold Designation as a Youth Friendly City.

Ongoing Engagement and Evaluation

The launch of the Empowering Youth Strategy represents an ongoing commitment to engaging with youth, parents/guardians, and youth-serving agencies. The City of Brantford will continue to work with our dynamic network of community partners to enhance opportunities for youth, including opportunities to contribute to the development, implementation, and evaluation of various projects and programs.

The Empowering Youth Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis, in collaboration with local youth leadership groups and youth-serving agencies. Brantford City Council will receive update reports on the progress towards the priorities and actions annually.

