

Elements of meaningful youth engagement

Youth-Friendly Processes:

Youth-friendly is people-friendly. Here are some examples of what youth-friendly processes could look like:

- i. Fun and easy to understand handouts and materials (no jargon)
- ii. Plan meeting times for after-school and weekends
- iii. Meeting locations usually held in a youth-friendly space (i.e. local community centre, school, youth organization meeting room, and sometimes even City Hall)
- iv. Hire youth staff as co-facilitators/coordinators/contractors

Resources for Youth Participation:

Meaningful youth participation can happen when young people have sufficient resources to participate. The following is a list of things you may want to provide:

- v. Bus tickets for transportation
- vi. Food at meetings
- vii. Honoraria for participation
- viii. Training & skills building opportunities

Youth-Adult Partnership:

A youth-adult partnership exists when the youth and the adult have the opportunity to make suggestions and decisions, and the contribution of each is recognized and valued equally.

Tapping into passions:

A good place to start to get young people excited and involved in civic issues is to:

- ix. Ask young people what they care about in their community and what ignites their passion
- x. Go to where you know the young people are who would most likely be interested in the issue you are working on

Checklist to Involving Youth in Public Processes

Interested in involving youth in a public process, but don't know where to start? The Youth Outreach Team (YOT) can help! YOT helps connect City of Vancouver staff to the youth community, provides access to facilitation and the tools and techniques to ensure a meaningful process, and assists planners in the development of youth engagement process. To get you started we've listed some tips below. Not every project will require every tip listed here. Use the checklist only as a guide and contact YOT for assistance ☺

Contact the City of Vancouver Youth Outreach Team (YOT)

The Youth Outreach Team will walk you through a youth involvement strategy that suits the needs of your project and sparks the interest of youth.

Contact the Youth Outreach Team:

- Email: debbie.anderson@vancouver.ca
- Tel: 604-871-6032
- Website: <http://vancouveryouth.ca/>

Resources

Ensure that a budget is put aside to engage youth in the planning process. When drafting a budget, consider things such as:

- Youth contractors/facilitators
- Food for meetings
- Bus tickets for transportation
- Honoraria for youth participation

Youth-Friendly

- Handouts and other material is easy to understand, looks appealing and is a fun layout
- Variety of activity formats are used in public processes:
 - Youth-only consultation
 - Intergenerational workshop
 - Focus groups
 - Written feedback

- Interviews
- Participatory research

- Meeting space is safe, comfortable and familiar
- Icebreakers and energizers added to process

- Logistics**
 - Meeting times are after-school or weekends
 - Meeting location close to a transit line

- Support**

Adult allies are important for youth to participate meaningfully. City staff are allies to young people when they work with, connect, partner and unite with young people. Adult allies are serious about sharing decision making power.

- Shared decision making power

- Training**

In order for young people to feel prepared to fully participate, training should be offered.

- Orientation session
- Educational component of the issue
- Opportunity to debrief the experience

Additional training (if interest and resources allow):

- Facilitation skills building
- Presentation and public speaking skills building
- Conflict resolution training
- Tap into youth passions