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**To:** Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee  
**From:** Kate Sparrow  
Director, Recreation and Cultural Services  
**Re:** **Youth Strategy Update**

**Date:** September 12, 2005  
**File:**

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**Staff Recommendation**

1. That staff work collaboratively with community partners and stakeholders to proceed with the development of a 3-year Youth Service Plan and report back to Council with the completed Plan.

Kate Sparrow  
Director, Recreation and Cultural Services

Att.

<b>FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY</b>		
<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>		
<hr/>		
<b>REVIEWED BY TAG</b>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>REVIEWED BY CAO</b>	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

## Staff Report

### Origin

At the January 24, 2005 Council meeting, the following motion was carried:

*That a review of the City Strategy for Youth Services document be referred to staff with input by the Richmond Community Services Advisory Council and that the updated document be presented to Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee prior to submission to City Council for endorsement.*

This report provides an update on the 1995 City Strategy for Youth Services, discussions with the Richmond Community Services Advisory Council (RCSAC) and the process for updating the Strategy.

### Analysis

The City Strategy for Youth Services (herein referred to as the Strategy) was approved by Council on June 26, 1995 (Appendix 1). The Strategy commits the city to the meaningful involvement and contribution of resources for youth. As a planning tool, it has effectively shaped the way the city generates recreation, cultural and social experiences for its youth. What has significantly evolved from our commitment to youth involvement has been an increased level of youth engagement and tools to measure outcomes. Many of these outcomes are best expressed within the Developmental Assets framework, added to the Strategy in 2001 .

The 40 Developmental Assets (Appendix 2) are concrete, common sense, positive experiences and qualities essential to affecting youth. These assets have the power to influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults.

The intentionality to create opportunities for *Asset Building* in each and every action taken with youth is key to fulfilling the City's vision to "*Be the best place in North America to raise children and youth*" which was adopted by Council in February, 2005. The Asset Building philosophy looks beyond singular "programs" and involves an entire community's capacity to build, bridge and nurture positive relationships with its young people. Asset building changes our language to refer to youth as *low asset* as opposed to *at risk*. This significantly alters the thinking to be less "fixing problems" to more building of individual assets. The long term potential of Developmental Assets is to establish qualities such as *social responsibility and personal wellness* so that they are ranked with the same priority as educational benchmarks of academic achievement.

### PRCS Role

This Assets framework is helpful in defining our role as a complimentary service to address existing needs in the community. Youth, that are in the care of school counsellors, mental health workers and social service agencies, for example, have a need to be placed in mentoring situations with a secondary goal to transition them to a broader range of skill building and positive social structures.

In 2003 Council approved the hiring of 2 Youth Outreach Workers to enhance the commitment to supporting low asset youth. The outreach workers and city-supported facility based youth

workers have made significant gains in establishing these relationships that bridge the movement of youth with positive role models, safe environments and positive peer supports.

### Aligning with Service Providers

A concentrated effort has been put into establishing working relationships with other community based organizations. To date, some of our external partners include: RCMP Youth Intervention Team, Station Stretch/Crossroads/McMath/McNeil/McRoberts and McNair Secondary schools, Touchstone Family Services, Richmond Addiction Services, Vancouver Night Hoops and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. These partners are in addition to the Community Associations. Of note is a very successful partnership with the RCMP and the "+ POS" positive ticketing program. To date over 10,000 tickets have been issued by RCMP members to youth being "caught" doing good things. The tickets are redeemable for a free admission to the City's aquatic, arenas and pitch and putt facilities. One factor key to these successful relationships is a shared understanding of outcomes based on the developmental assets framework. The language, which is becoming more and more universal, allows service providers to look at managing and measuring their work with youth from similar perspectives.

### Investing in Youth

Youth involvement is commonly sought out for a host of opportunities such as Youth Week planning, late night programming, parks stewardship and special events such as the City Centre Celebration, Multi-Fest and Salmon-Fest. Youth are being afforded opportunities to develop leadership skills through initiatives based in community service and program planning (Appendix 3). The City is also pleased to have hosted its 7th annual youth recognition awards each May during International Youth Week. These awards, celebrated with friends and parents, serve to acknowledge those youth that make an impact in their community who would otherwise receive little or no recognition for it.

Common practices of soliciting youth input for instances of facility renovations, problem solving local issues and in human resource processes have become important steps in creating and sustaining a culture of youth excellence in the City.

### Measuring Outcomes

The design of the Outreach or Roving Leader service is to target low asset youth, many whom are already in the care of existing service providers. These workers function as professional mentors in 1-1 and group settings. Baseline information is established with the referring agency to determine which assets the Roving Leader can best affect. All interactions are then geared towards influencing those assets. Progress reports indicate the responses and changes in developmental assets that occur over time with each youth. A wide and imaginative array of interactions are designed, usually with input from the youth. Anything from watching the shark feedings at the pet store, life skills sessions and even a knitting group are known to be big hits with youth. Significant events and progress are debriefed with each referee in order to maintain consistency in supporting that individual.

Other significant outcomes can be seen in the late night programming and the strength of the respective youth leadership groups in the community centres. Richmond has a reputation in the region for its support of performing artists including freestyle competitions, live bands and break dancing. Creating safe, supported environments provide youth with realistic alternatives to other negative risk taking activity.

### Process for updating the Youth Services Strategy

The City met with the RCSAC to provide an update on the Youth Strategy and the impact that it has had on the delivery of youth recreation services since its implementation. Staff elaborated on the proliferation of its recreation, social and cultural opportunities for youth. The City expressed that there was a need to further establish common language and benchmarks among agencies to better serve youth. It was agreed that there is a continued need for a City wide policy to efficiently guide a range of services.

Members of the RCSAC also provided these comments:

1. That the RCSAC needs to determine its role in the future delivery of youth services
2. That the committee would like to have annual updates from the City
3. That the RCSAC be included in the Master Plan process
4. There is a need for a continuum of response to meet the needs of youth across the city

As part of the 2005-15 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Master Plan, there are a number of outcomes specifically related to youth services. The Master Plan specifically refers to youth services as follows:

#### Youth Services

*The City of Richmond has declared that Richmond will be the “best place in North America to raise children and youth”. The City is committed to building service capacities that can effectively address a range of recreational, social and cultural needs of youth to develop life long skills. Five strategic goals are critical ingredients to realizing a comprehensive and holistic model of service delivery:*

1. *Building relationships with youth that are grounded in mentoring, role modeling and engagement*
2. *Creating a diverse range of recreational, cultural and social experiences*
3. *Investing in the recruiting and training of youth workers*
4. *Working effectively with other government and non-government agencies*
5. *Implementing intentional and standard approaches to influencing Developmental Assets*

*The City is committed to working with other agencies delivering services to youth to update the Youth Strategy and provide a coordinated approach to Youth Services.*

The current Strategy's influence around youth engagement and Developmental Assets will benefit the process in realizing the desired outcomes.

In the fall of 2005, PRCS will begin the process of facilitating the first Phase of the Master Plan to develop its 3 year Service Plan. Staff will work with internal and external partners and stakeholders to ensure the Youth Area plan reflects a service-based approach built upon priorities and trends that meet community need.

This process has been discussed with the RSCAC who have expressed interest in being involved in this process.

### **Financial Impact**

No financial impact

## **Conclusion**

The City's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services has forged many new alliances where our defined role is one among numerous others that are aligned to provide opportunities for youth. These serve to develop youth to work toward being problem free, prepared and engaged individuals.

To achieve the LIVE-CONNECT-GROW quality of life outcomes outlined in the PRCS Master Plan, there will be an emphasis to develop the Youth Service Strategy in collaboration with other agencies. The goal is to achieve service capacities that can influence more youth with less reliance on pilot programs and quick fixes that benefit only a small percentage of youth. The foundation created within the 1995 City Strategy for Youth Services strongly positions us to move toward this goal.

Wayne Yee  
Advisor, Youth Services

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### Appendix 3

#### **Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services**

Examples of Opportunities Created for and with Youth

Richmond Youth Basketball League  
Tickle Me Pickle – Improvisational Drama Group  
Plat-Phorm - Art-mentoring program  
Girls Groups – Life skills group at McRoberts and McNeill Secondary  
After school hip-hop – McNair Secondary  
One to one Mentoring – City Wide  
After school ice hockey – Richmond Ice Centre - free program  
Youth dances –ages 9-12 and 13-18

#### Leadership Groups:

YTC – Youth Taking Charge – Cambie  
MOSAIC – South Arm  
SWAT – Steveston with Active Teens  
YIA – Youth In Action – West Richmond  
BLISS – Being Leaders in Super Spirit – Thompson  
McNeill Leadership Group – McNeill Secondary

Mountain Biking Club – Thompson  
STK – After school art drop-in  
ACS Skateboard Competition  
Night Hoops Basketball League  
Band Nights – all community centres  
Youth Lounge Renovations – South Arm, Steveston, Cambie  
International Youth Week Celebrations – all community centres  
Mayor’s Task Force on Substance Abuse – Film Festival  
Community Service Scholarships  
Youth and Minoru Seniors Intergenerational opportunities  
Hip-hop dances  
Youth Culture Fest  
Break dance and Freestyle competitions  
Surgin’ Sturgeons – Richmond Dragonboat Team (placed 1<sup>st</sup> at Richmond Festival!)

Night Shift – Friday and Saturday late night program  
Young Adults Workshops  
Environmental Youth Corps  
Summer Camps  
Free fitness training – West Richmond  
Swing Dancing  
Warm Clothing Drives