

Youth Priorities

Workshop Report

Workshop held February 26, 2010

as part of myPG: Prince George's community sustainability plan

This report contains the raw output of the workshop, edited slightly for clarity.

Introduction:

Purpose and Process

The overall goal for the youth workshop was to ensure youth priorities were instilled into the myPG process. Youth have been identified as a critical audience for myPG. The overall goal is to involve youth in decision-making today and to understand the issues that may be important to them in the future so that they will stay and help Prince George meet its goals.

Instead of focusing on just one strategy area like Land Use or Economic Development as the other strategy workshops did, youth were invited to review all community goals from any angle, considering any possible action.

The youth workshop was organized differently from other strategy workshops as it also served the purpose of responding to a Council Resolution to host a youth forum.

Key Points

The youth workshop provided a venue to explore sustainability with a youth lens and to consider how the community as a whole can successfully secure and maintain youth participation. Key points regarding youth engagement included:

- Systems to engage youth need to be flexible, adaptive, and convenient; utilize a “build as you go” approach
- Engage youth where they're at – in essence, “Mohammed must go to the mountain”.
- Align engagement opportunities with youth values and needs (address the “What's In It for Me?”)
- Influence organizational culture, systems, competencies and structure by placing youth in senior leadership positions.
- Ensure youth decision making roles are clear, meaningful and are accompanied by the necessary authority and accountability.

First Thoughts

What do youth love about PG?

- Friendly
- Down to earth
- Supportive
- Outdoor rec.
- Common grounds (inclusive)
- Arts and culture
- Dynamic community
- Meaningful relationships
- Parks & green space
- Variety of activities – community initiatives
- Volunteer opportunities
- Size
- You can make a difference

Comment on community vision / goals:

No goals are actually missing, but don't forget that together, these goals are all-encompassing and we need to recognize the links between them.

How do we secure and sustain youth involvement?

- Facebook page, include photos from youth workshop
- On the community/local radio, TV, word of mouth, 'door-to-door'
- Promote local youth celebrities and hometown heroes
- Schools – work sustainability into the curriculum
- Connect with Church groups and other community youth groups
- Internet
- Use networks of friends to build
- Recurring workshops, returning facilitators
- Follow-up visits – “one offs” don't cut it!
- Youth Sustainability Work Project – make it count as volunteer hours or job experience
- We need to improve (face to face) communication
- Youth ambassadors
- Events need to be accessible, green (on the transit route)
- Social marketing – “apathy is boring”

Vibrant and Safe Community

Strategies and Actions: Look at safety and security in combination with the goals social connections and sense of place

Social/Community involvement to foster security / increase safety

- Busy events
- Increased support from city officials, RCMP (where needed)
- Opportunity to help provide a safe community
- Revival of block watch
- Block leaders, block parents
- Increase multicultural community programs
- Increase community outreach programs
- Get those with mental disabilities more engaged in the community
- Create community groups (neighborhoods) to keep each other accountable for our actions (social capital)
- Community enforcement/ neighborhood policing
- Have more resources for homeless people
- Active and involved community where families interact
- More on-foot police officers downtown
- Businesses open later
- More lighting so people feel safe to walk
- Decrease emphasis on foot police and ensure police accountability for harassment - so all people feel safe

Infrastructure dual-purpose: beautiful, accessible and safe

- Help phones (like at the university), more public telephones
- Trash cans/recycling bins downtown
- Benches
- Public washrooms
- Encourage pedestrian use, more sidewalks so people can walk more
- Lights - light trees at night, multi-use, make 'it' fun! Ex. Glow in the dark or neon bus stops
- Parks

Social events and arts to gather people together

- Create evening events to bring people downtown
- More free entertainment downtown
- More people out and about makes me feel safer
- Shutting down George St. on Saturdays for farmers market
- Create vibrancy through festivals and open squares
- More affordable events - ex. Going to see the opera, people want to go but too expensive for youth! Hard to be 'cultured'
- Recreation opportunities:



- More free events for youth
- Celebrate culture and celebrate winter
- Do more things like Candy Cane Lane – that's just one part of PG, do things encompassing more of PG
- Sports tournaments
- Music!! Regular events
- Community arts centre
- Look at Cold Lake AB
- Build linkages b/t community groups ex. Bands, groups
- Here's PG... document or other w/ info contact info for organizations
- Busker program – free entertainment
- Bring arts and culture out into the public – out of their regular environments
- Increase accessibility
- Family oriented events
- Ab. Arts & culture incorporated into community events
- Ab. Culture downtown, new segment & gallery
- (city) institutions/gathering places with Ab. Art and other cultures
- Use Ft. George Park bandshell! Weekly shows
*Saturday at the park

- Café Late night alternative to the bar/club
- Community boards - Where do I find out about community events?
- Room booking waived for groups
- Empower cultural groups to celebrate
- Ask groups if they want support – “How can we (community of PG) aid your organization”
- ACCESS for eco-friendlies
 - Bus, *SUNDAY bus
 - Zones for carpoolers

Big moves

- Housing, Housing downtown = eyes in the street
- Densify downtown to create a safer culture
- Improved education
- Opportunities for community to use public facilities – partnerships between the city and other local businesses
- Reduce racism in PG
- Increase awareness & acceptance

Solid Waste

Strategies and Actions: Reduce solid waste going to the landfill by focusing on education, access to landfill alternatives and local production

Local production controls

- Provincial cooperation to create policy or regulations on food waste ex. Leftovers from restaurants, bread from Costco – feed the community!
- Portion control at restaurants to reduce amount of food served
- Alternate packaging at restaurants for take-out containers ex. Recyclable and biodegradable packaging
- Short-term business incentives – promotion for good businesses
- Government intervention – taxes
 - Fees for garbage bins, downgrade sizes
- Food production, produce locally
- Stop useless printing – flyers, handouts, not double-sided documents
- Electronic billing
- Create 'eco' jobs

Access to landfill alternatives

- Curbside recycling, municipal compost pickup ex. Garbage pickup every 2 weeks, recycling pickup on the alternate week
- Put the cost of waste back to the companies creating the waste with packaging (reduce packaging)
- Convenient recycling & compost at restaurants
- “Freecycle” opportunities ex.– value village, community sharing
- Community swapping ex. Children’s toys
 - Spring/fall event: bring your garbage to be someone else’s treasure & then donate/recycle what is left
 - Stop & Swap
 - Don Mann Excavating – container ship full of used goods sent to Uganda
- Make garbage cans smaller, increase number of recycling bins
- Database – “KNOW PG”, make info more available
- Gift – packaging: social movement towards recycled reusable materials
 - Community movement to stop gift-giving of consumer goods with lots of packaging
 - Tickets, food gifts instead
- Trash cans/ recycling bins downtown



Education focused on payback of waste reduction

- Awareness raising offices (elementary & secondary schools)
- Reduce waste programs:
 - Buy less/use less
 - Awareness campaign – which materials do we use?
 - -packaging, food choices, home trends, 'what is garbage'

- Review daily schedule – food consumption, etc
- Garbage audits ex. In schools, community waste audit
 - Acts as a visual, get the message across
- Campus gardens
- Packaging to be biodegradable
- Anything recyclable cannot go into garbage
- Make garbage pickup bi-weekly

Air Quality

Strategies and Actions: [Improve air quality through alternative transportation strategies, education and regulation](#)

Alternative transportation

- Alternative transportation/public transportation in key corridors
- Change the drivers licenses – N restrictions
 - They could carpool, except for the fact that they are only allowed to drive one passenger!
- Make walking and taking transit more convenient
- Support better local food system – reduces transportation requirements – so impact poor air quality caused by vehicles
- Smell is a deterrent to community, how do we get rid of it? Support Canfor's "stop stink" program
- Give incentives to use public transportation – tax breaks from feds, but what can provincial or local gov't do?
- "FREE ZONES" – if you live in a certain area, bus pass is close to free (or free) this will concentrate people
- Reduce drive-thrus and therefore emissions
- Ecological footprint: ex strawberries transported our using green houses? Eat within season
- Eat locally – sustainable (winter is a barrier)
- Have bus routes, increase bus routes & frequency
- UNBC carpooling program (incentives)
- Low parking fees for people who can't make use of U-Pass

- Free transit, encourage transit ex. Non-instructional days have free transit to encourage youth engagement and activity throughout the city

Education

- What is causing air quality issues & identify costs & barriers
- Education – the smell isn't the bad air damaging your lungs, the wood stoves are damaging, road dust, comes down to individual/personal responsibility
- Educate public on the cost of driving vs. bus – numbers can influence!

Regulation and infrastructure changes

- "polluter pays"
- Have permanent data collection on air quality in PG
- Residential wood heating
- Incorporate aesthetically appealing, hardy landscaping elements (e.g. plants, trees) to contribute to cleaning up the air?
- Pass clean air act bylaw – awareness in order to reduce wood dependency
- Tax incentives for fuel efficient vehicles
- Bus pass- reduced cost for high school students

Ecosystem Health

Increase green spaces in city

- City parks
- Turn city-owned empty lots into green space
- No skyscrapers
- City park rangers, Neighborhood associations
- Trees!!! More trees!

Planning prioritized for ecosystem health

- Balance
- Urban growth boundary – sprawl.
- Densify downtown, build up, stop developing on green spaces
- Zoning
- City audit on regulations
- Incentives

Green buildings

- Free energy audit programs
- Weather-proofing homes – city provide education, supplies
 - renovate, not just upgrade
- Incorporate ecological design principles aimed at building:
 - Grid patterns
 - Widen sidewalks
 - Encourage alternatives (we need opinions to be convinced)
 - “expert home” = where an expert would show them how to upgrade etc. & ecologically

Water & Energy

Water: reduce, conserve, educate

- Japanese-style toilets that conserve water! Toilets that use grey water for flushing instead of fresh water and different buttons for how much water is used to flush
- Water meters
- Reduce water use:
 - Stop watering lawns in winter
 - “neighborhood water ambassadors” – holding each other accountable
 - Rain barrels
 - Motivate people not to have grass
 - Remove introduced species of grass & utilize indigenous species
- Paint symbols to highlight where the water drains are – ex. Salmon - get neighborhoods to do this, street competitions to keep people involved
- Educate people on the reservoir systems, pesticides = bottom up movements
- Protection from pollution
- Incentives to homeowner doing renovations to consider appliances that use less water

Energy: Use less, use renewable

- Consider wind and solar as we move forward, on top of bio energy – diversify our strategies
- Use less power & less energy
 - Weather proofing
 - Turn heat off, Turn lights off
- Start in elementary schools – awareness, education
- Individual responsibility – reduces need for resources and internalizing the values
- Neighborhood/city competitions (most kw hours saved etc)
- Use policy to create consumer demand and make it affordable – ex. 20% of housing to use some sort of solar panels
- Publicize the good environmental initiatives to create a sense of community pride and awareness
- Create a reward program with recognition
- Find local use for Pine beetle trees – local manufacturing
- Incorporate ecological design in zoning bylaws
- Demonstration home to teach people skills around energy efficiency
- Brown bag/workplace education sessions

Healthy & Active PG

Support local food and community gardens

- Access to local food, recreation opportunities
- Fill empty lots downtown with community gardens
- Increase community garden numbers
- Provide tax incentives for producing organic food
- Multi-family recycling programs and community gardens
- Neighborhood greenhouses
- Workshops with farmers and students
- Park rangers to provide nature programs
- Gardens at all schools
- Incorporate local food plots into city planning so every community has access to growing good food
- Move farmers market to civic centre
- Tell people about the farmers market, Old Town foods etc.

Help for those who need it

- Safe injection sites
- Increase role of “welfare state”
- Social inequality programs, instead of just patching the problems

Access to recreation opportunities

- Free activities
- Knowledge
- Bicycles, bicycles, bicycles
- Make bikers feel safe
- Big sidewalk
- Green spaces

- Common spaces
- Support outdoor rink usage
 - Why can't we play on civic centre ice? Best/safest rink in town & no access
- Lighting
- Widen the sidewalk, reduce the street
- In town running trails
- Promote commuter cycling as a rec. activity
- Growing local food is recreational!
- More walking trails to connect housing to grocer stores, schools
 - With light so they're safe
- Recreation costs \$\$ - MAKE IT AFFORDABLE – spending is not an option for some people
- Better access to schools – holidays, weekends
- Community meetings in each sector: CH, D/T, the Hart, Tabor, etc.
- Better support to community associations ie. Funding
- More free swims
- Encourage more people to support each other through athletics, youth, elder homes

Foster youth, culture and art in community

- Not enough opportunities for youth sometimes causing them to move away - like jobs after you get your degree, or choices of degrees at UNBC,
- Friendly, active community with a vibrant sense of art etc.
- Miniature art and music shows (showcase local) – networking



- “PG’s got talent” type events
- Lists of free things to do in PG
- Contact list for community run organizations for new residents
- Multi generation & cultural integration
- Affordability
- Make arts & culture available outside of their traditional environment

- Utilize city centre
- Family oriented events around arts and culture
- Make events reliable (every Sat.) use the river, Ft. George park
- Winter, need a greater diversity
- Jazz café
- Cultural alternative to the night spots

Housing

- Make accessible housing (for people with disabilities) Part of the community plan! Make one house in each new development
- Mixed use housing downtown
- Accessible, affordable housing
- Apartment complexes with sustainable living options – rooftop gardens
- Clean up your own neighborhoods!
- Inclusive of surrounding residents
- Low threshold housing
- Shelters in empty buildings
- Say “NO” to developers who want to develop single-use housing
- Mixed housing with a daycare, preschool & seniors daycare
- Have volunteer work groups to build kit houses
- Low threshold housing
- No one rule housing
- More youth housing
- Use city land downtown where there are abandoned buildings for low-income housing sites
- Mixed housing developments
- More housing options, smaller lots & houses
- Have houses downtown so there are people around on the streets and going to events
- Mixed demographic in the same complex
- Stop urban sprawl
- Condensed downtown
- Commercial stores on first floor, residents on 2nd floor
- Affordable student housing downtown and a larger range of housing options for lower income seniors and families
- City zip lines

Clear Identity & Inclusion

Clear identity, (sense of place)

- Smaller sectors, neighborhoods, community groups that have regular meetings
- Build social capital – ref “bowling alone”
- Block parties
- Networking
- Individual initiative
- More public events
 - “PG day”
 - Winter events
 - Festivals
 - Multicultural
 - Different scales
 - Common meeting areas
- Trust bonds ←→ neighbors
- Celebrations (winter too! Not just Canada Day)
 - Celebrations on different scales

- Neighborhood, city-wide, streets, community organizations
- Community centers and gathering places

Education and cohesion towards inclusion

- Enhance opportunities for low income families through businesses (partnerships)
- Social culture of accepting other cultures → combat stereotypes
- Showcase aboriginal culture
- Incorporate culture in community – focused events – multicultural
- → aboriginal cultural centre, museum? Gallery? Needs to be engaging
 - Downtown, local, identity celebration
- Utilize current infrastructure – look to the community to see what *they* want
- Use their knowledge in community gardens