

MAYOR'S YOUTH FORUM - November 2011

Infrastructure - Preliminary Report

Submitted - December 1, 2011

Overview and summary

The City of Kelowna Mayor's Youth Forum is a unique opportunity for local youth (grades nine through 12) in the City of Kelowna to share their thoughts, concerns and ideas about local social planning issues. The focus of this eleventh forum, held November 16th, 2011, was about City infrastructure.

Methodology in brief

- the Steering committee met between September and October, 2011 to choose a topic and to design the youth involvement processes. Youth were involved in the creation of the on-line survey used to measure student future desires and evaluations of current services.
- each of the eight participating schools created a leadership team.
- on-line surveys (over 1090) were completed representing about 33% of all grades 9 students in middle schools and 9% of grades 10-12 students in the school district.
- over 70 youth took part in the full day forum November 16th, 2011 at the Hollywood Ed. Centre.
- Each school team participating in the forum day created a video project design that will showcase their preferred Kelowna of 2021. Team topics include: pedestrian safety, public transit, lake pollution, park design, potential employment and civic building GHG pollution.

Findings

The challenge with this forum topic was to have youth relate to infrastructure issues (roads, water, drainage, streets, etc.) Youth were asked to imagine a Kelowna 10 years from now that they are living and working in. In this scenario, 55% of youth would choose to work in an office, or home office, 13% in a store (that they either work in or own), 11% would stay at home with children and work part time, while the balance would work in construction, ranching, or community service. Their living preferences were: 22% small apartment, home (11% small single family home, 26% medium, 30% large), 11% farm.

When asked to rank the services "most important to them" the top three choices were: water systems, transportation systems, and energy systems. The least valuable to them were: recreation and cultural facilities, parks, and flood protection systems. More detailed rankings of City infrastructure are being compiled for the final report of this project.

"I learned all about infrastructure; before this, I basically knew nothing on the topic." Youth participant

Preliminary conclusions

Not unlike most adults, youth have limited knowledge about civic infrastructure, other than what they can see or have been exposed to in school lessons. Areas of interest to them include any services that relate to limiting pollution (GHG emissions), personal transportation (public transit, bike lanes), and future employment opportunities (reasons to live in Kelowna). Of less interest to them are: waste water systems, land management (agricultural, sensitive habitats, flood protection, parks), and community buildings (protection, recreation, culture).

"Encourages civic mindedness. What an amazing opportunity to engage in our future." Youth participant