

21.0 Youth Friendly City

Goals

Provide greater opportunities for young people to remain in the community post high school graduation through the provision of housing, transportation, recreation and employment options.

Foster an environment whereby youth are engaged, respected and productive members of Vernon.

Support youth engagement in formal decision making processes, as well as informal participatory processes, as appropriate.

Guiding Principles Met

Foster prosperity for people, business and government

Housing meets the needs of the whole community

Create a culture of sustainability

Create strong, compact and complete neighbourhoods

Provide alternative transportation

Revitalize the Downtown

Create a youth friendly city

Context



Vernon's population has a markedly higher percentage of people aged 65 years and over, at some 23.1% of the population (compared to 15.6% on average for the province). While this has implications for the planning and delivery of services for seniors, it also means that without specific direction and supporting policies, the youth of the city may be overlooked. It is of interest that the majority of respondents to the survey on Guiding Principles were adults, and that the respondents prioritized the creation of a youth friendly city as one of the nine Guiding Principles for the OCP. Clearly, there is a recognition that youth play a vital role in the community and that their voices should be recognized and included in the growth and development of the community.

A youth friendly city may be characterized as one that provides opportunities for youth regarding housing, education, employment, recreation, entertainment and community involvement. It is important to stress that goals pertaining to

housing, sustainability, compact communities, alternative transportation and downtown revitalization all support the creation of a youth friendly city, and the needs of youth have expressly been considered in the creation of these goals. The development of youth friendly policies is an investment in the long term health and well being of the community, and the ongoing success of the community is dependent upon meaningfully involving youth in the development of these strategies.

The youth of the community have enthusiasm, ideas, creativity and a knowledge of the community unique to their experience. Engaging this resource can bring benefits to both youth and the broader community. Engaged youth can develop resourcefulness, a strong commitment to the community and a sense of purpose with regard to their role in the community. The broader community benefits when all voices participate in creating the community's vision, thereby ensuring that policies, programs and services meet everyone's needs.

Supporting Policies

- 21.1 Identify and maintain opportunities to include youth in City decision making processes, including the investigation of informal participatory processes. This may include representation on committees of Council, the development of youth specific groups or other models that seek to gather input and foster participation and advocacy from youth.
- 21.2 Work with community groups and agencies to support youth oriented initiatives, including needs identification and service planning, and advocating to the appropriate senior level of government for establishment and funding of needed services and programs, where applicable.
- 21.3 Actively engage youth in stewardship opportunities in the community and identify other methods to include youth in community endeavours.
- 21.4 Identify mechanisms to promote and celebrate the contributions of youth in the community.
- 21.5 Support the creation of public and private spaces for youth to gather and socialize, with the City Centre as the highest priority location.