



BC Healthy Communities
People. Place. Potential.

CRESTON AND AREA YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Submitted to: Town of Creston
Submitted by: BC Healthy Communities Society (BCHC)
Date: March 2015



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Acknowledgements	4
Overview.....	4
Barriers and Assets of Youth Engagement.....	4
Synopsis of General Survey Results	4
Synopsis of Youth-Related Results.....	5
Youth Amenities and Services.....	8
Conclusion.....	11
Appendix A - Parents Survey Questions	12



Introduction

In 2013, with the support of the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) Areas A, B, and C, the Lower Kootenay Band, youth stakeholders, and area youth, the Town of Creston successfully applied for Columbia Basin Trust's (CBT) "Community Directed Youth Funds", a \$100,000 grant to be awarded over 4 years at \$25,000 annually.

This process started with a CBT facilitated Youth Forum held on January 28th, 2013 at Creston's Prince Charles Secondary School (PCSS). This Forum helped identify 3 youth-driven priorities:

- 1) Investigating a possible youth space/center;
- 2) Hiring a teen coordinator; and,
- 3) Coordinating more activities and programs for Creston area youth.

The Forum was the best attended across the entire CBT region. Following the Forum, the Town of Creston was awarded the \$100,000 Community Directed Youth Fund (CDYF) grant. To fulfill the CBT guidelines, a committee of local youth (Teen Action Committee) and a separate committee of service providers (Community Advisory Committee) were established to oversee the funding and pursue the goals prioritized at the Youth Forum.

In April 2013, following the success of the CDYF application, the Town of Creston also applied for CBT's \$15,000 Community Youth Engagement Funding (CYEF), to be used to complete a more thorough community-wide "strategic plan" for youth engagement.

With the awarding of the funding in July 2013, the Town of Creston contracted BC Healthy Communities Society (BCHC) to develop a youth engagement strategy. Over the consultation period, BCHC assessed youth and service provider surveys, held youth asset mapping sessions, hosted key informant interviews, and conducted consultations with youth, service providers, and the community to collect data and information in order to analyze current youth engagement in the Creston area.

This report outlines the results of the survey of parents of youth and other community members. For the purpose of this report and the engagement strategy, 'youth' is defined as a young person between 13 and 19 years of age.



Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Bhar Sihota, Town of Creston, and Jesse Willicome, Youth Liaison, for their important leadership role in distributing this survey to the hands of family and community members. We also acknowledge the time and valuable input from people who completed the surveys. Without your input, your important feedback would not have been incorporated. We appreciate your efforts and engagement.

Overview

During this phase of the project and leading up to the final consultation in March and April of 2014, we completed a survey of parents and community members regarding the Creston and Area Youth Engagement Strategy. We completed a total of 70 surveys in the area. The survey questions can be found in Appendix A of this report. The intention of this survey was to help support convergence of the learning and themes we had heard throughout the project to help identify priorities for action moving forward.

Below, we report on the central themes identified in the survey. It is important to note that 56% of the respondents were parents and 44% of the respondents were community members. This is important, as parents are more likely to be familiar with the places that youth access and may be more able to readily identify youth needs based on their own experiences. This does not infer that community members do not have observations about youth, they simply must be considered through a different lens.

Barriers and Assets of Youth Engagement

Using the BC Healthy Communities Capacity Building Framework and model of engaging the whole person in the whole community, we designed the survey using the four quadrant Integral Map approach and a convergence of previous themes to understand all of the dimensions of youth engagement in the Creston Valley.

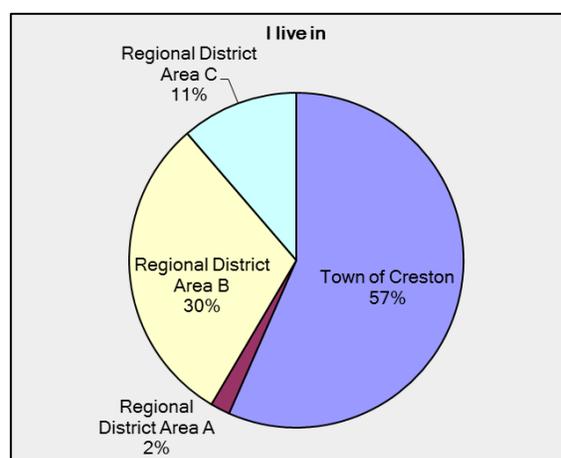
Synopsis of General Survey Results

Number of youth living at home with parents:	
One youth	17.6%
2 youth	17.6%
3 youth	5.9%
4 youth	2.0%
More than	2.0%

We hoped to gain the perspectives of parents of **four youth** and other community members who responded to the survey. We learned that most parents were parenting youth between the ages of 13 and 16 years of age (44.1%) and far less parented older youth aged 17 or 18 years (10.2%). This is an important finding as we are helping design a strategy for the future that will more likely impact the younger youth identified in this survey. Forty-four percent of respondents were not parents.

Forty-four percent of people who responded did not have children living at home and replied by saying, “zero” or “not applicable”.

We also asked people where they resided in the Creston area. We did not get an equitable reply from all regions; unfortunately Regional Districts A and C were under-represented in the survey. Most respondents were from the Town of Creston.



Synopsis of Youth-Related Results

We asked families and community members questions about how to improve youth attendance at community events. Youth engagement and attendance at youth events is an important factor that arose during the youth consultation process as numerous youth cited one of more of these factors (see below) as a barrier to attending events. We have included the most important to medium important answers.

Answer Options	1-Most Important	2	3-Medium Importance
Improved availability of youth events	28	18	8
Affordability of events	28	15	4
Improved youth safety	11	11	11
Transportation	10	11	11
Times of events	7	7	11
Age restrictions on activities	6	10	14



The most important factors were availability and affordability of youth events; these were followed by youth safety, transportation and age restrictions on activities for youth. Many youth indicated they were either too young or too old to access some activities they were interested in.

When asked when youth activities should be offered, both the first and second priorities were identified as weekends, followed by after school and evenings as the next best choice.

If we want to maximize the likelihood that youth will attend activities when should activities be offered?				
First Priority	Weekends 22	After School 16	Evenings 8	School Holidays 6
Second Priority	Weekends 17	Evenings 17	After School 8	School Holidays 8

Respondents were asked about the top four priorities for youth safety in the community. Most parents and adults agreed with the youth assessment of safety, and focused on the need for walking trails and sidewalks (31%), lowering drug and alcohol use (30%), reducing the impact of social issues like poverty on youth (26%) and more use of crosswalks and lights (13%).

When taken together, active transportation modes for youth (e.g. walking trails, sidewalks, crosswalks and lights) were a concern to 44% of parents and community members. This exceeded the number of respondents concerned about drugs and alcohol. This is an important finding for the Town of Creston, as the Town is responsible for infrastructure that may promote walkability and active transportation within Town limits. For youth, in particular, this is very important as most youth walk, longboard, skateboard or bicycle to get where they want to go. This may also relate to development of meaningful youth employment or volunteer opportunities that arise later in this survey.



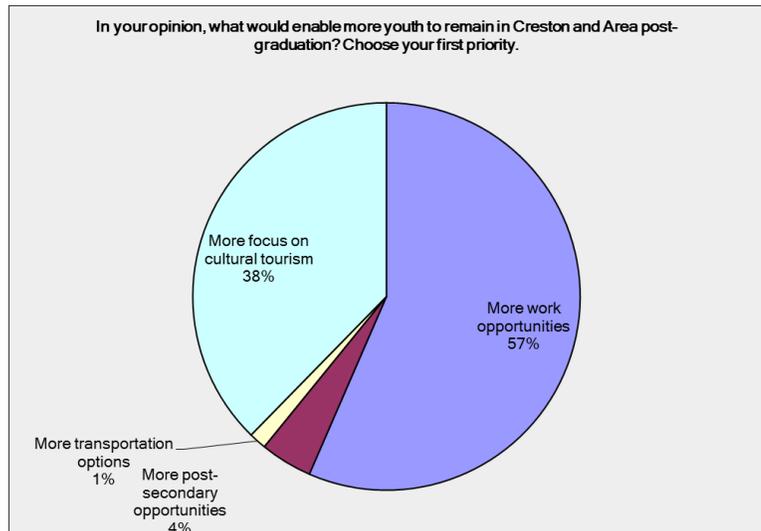
Communication and Youth Outreach

When asked “What is the best way to get the word out or learn about youth related events?” respondents indicated the following:

Top Priority	Second Choice	Third Choice	Results across BC ¹ (for comparative purposes)
Facebook	Local Newspaper	Local Newspaper	Facebook- 55%
Local Newspaper	Facebook	Library	You Tube-13%
School Newsletter	Library	College	Tumblr-10%

Youth engage frequently with various social media platforms. Local youth service providers, the Town of Creston and the Regional District should consider this as an important means of communication for youth outreach efforts.

Post-graduation, most survey respondents indicated that more work opportunities for youth was the most important priority to retain youth in Creston and area; this was followed by more focus on cultural tourism.



Inclusion in Creston and Area

What are the most important actions needed to support a more inclusive youth culture?			
Level of Importance	Most Important	Medium Importance	Least Importance
Enhanced collaboration youth service providers	14	9	4
Focus on accepting differences	13	9	8

¹Darren Laur, *What Social Networks/Apps Are Trending With Youth in BC (2013)*.
<http://thedigitalsheepdog.ca/what-social-networksapps-are-trending-with-bc-youth/>

Inclusion PCSS and Mormon Hills	10	9	9
Increased role for Teen Action Committee	10	6	8

Most respondents agreed that enhancing collaboration amongst service providers is a really important step in supporting more youth inclusion. Collaboration helps service providers move from a singularly focused approach to a systemic approach that would benefit all Creston area youth. This does not negate the fact that service providers may have niche areas of expertise. This is still desirable and necessary; it simply means all service providers are working towards a common vision for youth.

Additionally, sensitivity or cultural competency training that focuses on exploring and learning about overall differences specific to youth who attend Prince Charles Secondary and Mormon Hills School is also very important, followed by the important role that the Teen Action Committee can play in supporting an inclusive youth culture.

Youth Amenities and Services

Community members were also asked to rate their priorities for youth amenities and services, the results of the most important priorities are noted below:

What additional youth amenities would you like to see offered in Creston and Area?	
Answer	Most Important
Youth Space	26
More accessible hours for the recreation centre	12
Youth Arcade	11
Youth Skate Park	9

What additional youth services would you like to see offered in Creston and Area?	
Answer	Most Important
More youth employment opportunities	18
More intergenerational opportunities	11
More arts activities	10
More sports based activities	9

Having a safe space for youth to congregate in the community is important. There are many creative options regarding how to address the need for youth space in the community. This does not have to be a dedicated physical building, but it could be. If service providers and local



government collaborated, there could be youth spaces made available on a rotating basis throughout the community. This way the responsibility of creating and funding a dedicated youth space does not rest entirely with one agency.

It is helpful to have the youth decide what spaces in the community might work best for them and what modifications might be necessary to make the youth space more youth-oriented. The other important issues to address relate to the operational hours of the recreation centre. It would be helpful to research and review how many youth access the facility and when they do so. This will help determine high usage hours and may provide answers as to when youth would like to use the facility outside of standard operational hours. A dedicated survey could provide these detailed answers.

The need for more youth employment opportunities is high and it may be helpful to reach out to the high schools to determine what arrangements and relationships are already in place with employers. Perhaps offering a youth job bank with subsidies or incentives would help encourage local employers to hire more youth.

An opportunity for youth employment may be available in relation to trail development. Considering both youth employment and trail development were common themes in this process, youth could help design and develop the walking trails. The Town of Creston could also play a leadership role by recognizing both businesses and youth employed by them or other local employers.

In regards to additional youth services, it appears there are numerous youth/senior or intergenerational opportunities in the community. Creston could include youth in several desired outcomes in the Age-Friendly Action Plan developed by the Town of Creston in 2013.

For example:

1. “Creston’s streets are people friendly, accessible, safe, visually appealing and enjoyable, offering places for people to rest and interact with others” (p.3)².
2. “Creston’s economy provides employment, entrepreneurial and volunteer opportunities that retain and attract people of all ages” (p.8)³.

Based on a short review of the Creston Valley Age-Friendly Action Plan, there were at least four areas that potentially overlap with these survey results, including transportation,

² Whistler Centre for Sustainability, *Creston Valley Age-friendly Action Plan 2013*.

<http://www.creston.ca/files/File/Creston%20Age-Friendly%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

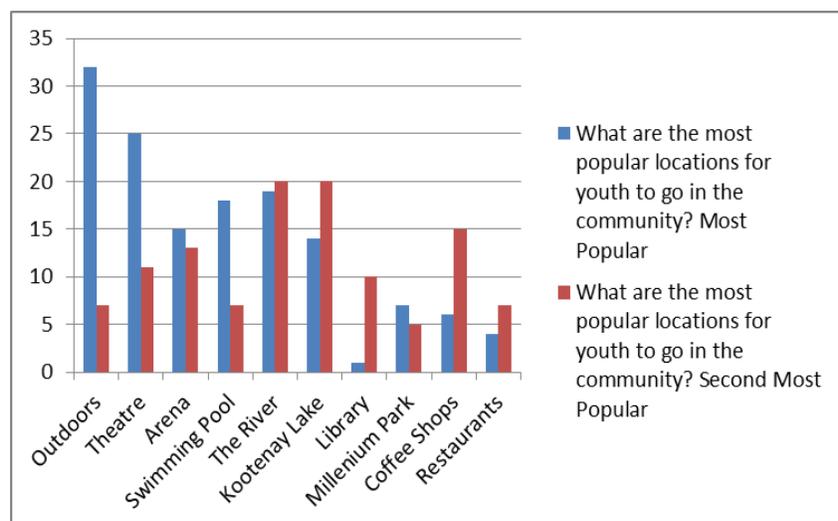
³ Ibid

communication, collaboration and social inclusion. The arts and sports community could also be consulted to determine the need and ability to provide for additional arts and sports programs in the community.

The next survey question asked which local groups were having a positive impact on youth in Creston and area. There were several groups and institutions highlighted, including the recreation centre, the library, the HomeLinks program, the Snoring Sasquatch as well as community groups like guides, scouts, air cadets and 4H. The Teen Action Committee is also having a positive impact on the community. Initially it may be helpful to bring these groups together to share information as an important first step and then determine if and how they could effectively collaborate. The schools, recreation centres and sports groups are also the groups/institutions that are most frequently in contact with youth and community members.

What are the preferred places youth frequent in the community?

When parents and community members commented on the most popular locations for youth, they noted outdoor spaces, the theatre, and the swimming pool and arena as the most popular. Outdoor locations including Goat River and Kootenay Lake were also popular second choices, followed by coffee shops.



It appeared that most youth are using these locations to spend time with friends, socialize, and engage in fun physical activities, or in some cases to party and use alcohol and drugs. Coffee shops were a popular site to use Wi-Fi.



Conclusion

This survey of parents and community members has helped converge some of the important themes we have heard throughout the youth engagement strategy consultation process and will play an important role in helping to formulate the final recommendations for the Youth Engagement Strategy and Action Plan in the Creston area.



Appendix A - Parents Survey Questions

Creston and Area Community Youth Survey

Over the past several months, The Town of Creston and Regional District CK have been working on developing a YES (Youth Engagement Strategy) with the assistance of BC Healthy Communities. We have completed numerous key informant interviews, youth and service provider surveys as well as a youth forum.

We are now in the process of summarizing the themes that have emerged from this process and would like to solicit your input as parents of youth (ages 13-18 years). If you could take 10-15 minutes to complete this survey we would greatly appreciate your input for the next step in the process.

The results are completely confidential and will be compiled and shared in summary form only. If you have any questions about this survey or the YES strategy development please contact:

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Check the one that applies:

1. I am a parent to a youth
2. I am not a parent to a youth

3. My youth are aged (Choose all that apply):

- a) 13
- b) 14
- c) 15
- d) 16
- e) 17
- f) 18

4. How many youth do you have that live at home?

- a) 0
- b) 1
- c) 2
- d) 3



- e) 4
- f) More than four

5. I live in?

- a) Town of Creston
- b) Regional District Area A
- c) Regional District Area B
- d) Regional District Area C

6. What do you believe is the most important factor that would improve youth attending events in the community? (1-Least Important- 5-Most Important).

Area	1 (Least Important)	2	3	4	5 (Most Important)
Times of Events					
Transportation					
Affordability of events					
Age Restrictions on activities					
Improved availability of event					
Improved youth safety					

7. Overall, most youth grade Creston highly in terms of youth safety. Youth have told us that they have these safety concerns in the community, which ones would you consider the top three priorities?

Youth Safety	Priorities- Choose your top three
Crosswalks/Flashing Lights	
Improved Relationships with RCMP	
Improved police response times	
Sidewalks	
Walking Trails	
Drugs and Alcohol	
Better lighting	
Fewer social issues	



8. If we wanted to maximize the likelihood that youth would attend these activities, when should these activities take place? Choose your top three priorities.

After School		Evenings		Weekends		School Holidays		Other? Please describe	
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9. How do you currently learn about youth related activities in the community? (Order these in terms of priority- 1- Least important – 5 most important)

Source of Information	Ranking – (1 – Least Important- 5- Most Important)
Local Newspaper	
Radio	
School Newsletter	
Youth Organizations Communication	
Teen Advisory Committee Communication	
Library Communication	
Facebook	
Twitter	
Instagram	

10. In your opinion what would enable more youth to remain in Creston post-graduation?

Options	Ranking – (1 – Least Important- 5- Most Important)
More work opportunities	
More post-secondary courses	
More transportation options	
More focus on cultural tourism	

11. What actions would support development of a more inclusive youth culture?

Actions	Ranking – (1 – Least Important- 5- Most Important)
More focus on positive interactions between Mormon Hills and PCSS students.	
More focus on accepting differences (sexuality, ethnicity, genders, ages of youth)	
More focus on accepting people new to the community	
Enhanced collaboration amongst youth service providers	



An increased role for the Teen Action Committee
Increased leadership from the Town of Creston or RDCK
Other? (Please describe)

12. What additional amenities or services would you like to see offered in Creston and area?

Amenities or Services	Ranking – (1 – Least Important- 5- Most Important)
Youth Space	
Inter-Generational Activities between seniors and youth	
Youth Arcade	
Youth Skate Park	
Youth Paintball	
More music activities	
More arts activities	
More sports based activities	
More accessible hours for the recreation centre	
Youth Dances	
More youth volunteer opportunities	
More youth employment opportunities	
More opportunities for local farming	
More opportunities for youth to influence local government	
Video production	
Other	

13. What is an example of an organization, group, or place that is having a positive impact on Creston youth?

14. What youth service providers do you have the most contact with in the community?

Please list and indicate why you have frequent contact?



15. What are the most popular locations for youth to go in the community?

Places youth frequent?	What do they do there?	Ranking – (1 – Least Popular- 5- Most Popular)
Outdoors		
Coffee Shops		
Arena		
Restaurants		
Library		
Swimming Pool		
Theatre		
Millennium		
The River		
Kootenay Lake		
Other?		