

# City of Victoria Youth Council: Year in Review

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The following is a summary of the main achievements of the CVYC during the 2006-2007 term. More detailed reports are available from February to July 2007.

## About the CVYC

The City of Victoria Youth Council (CVYC) is a unique youth leadership and engagement program directed at enabling young people in Victoria to enable youth to actively get involved in civic issues through action within the municipal system or within the community.

## Accomplishments

The CVYC accomplished a great deal during the 2006-2007 term. Here are the highlights categorized as per the outline provided by the program's Supervisory and Evaluation Committee.

### *Accountability*

- The CVYC met each month a minimum of two times as a group – each meeting was co-facilitated and delivered by the CVYC coordinator and a council member
- The CVYC completed the following reports and documents:
  - Completed report and launched to public the 2005-2006 CVYC Youth Survey
  - Five Month Timeline and Activity Plan
  - Three bi-monthly CVYC Activity Reports to the City of Victoria Mayor and Council, City Department Manager and SEC
  - Two Summary and Follow-Up reports for the two Youth Forums – Open Discussion and the Youth Forum on Homelessness
  - A comprehensive Report to Council as per request by Council on January 11<sup>th</sup> 2007 – Report presented and delivered June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007
  - A year in review final report for City Staff and SEC
- Developed and completed 2006-2007 CVYC Budget
- Developed and completed anticipated 2007-2008 CVYC Budget Forecast
- CVYC Coordinator was accountable to the Supervisory and Evaluation Committee this year by:
  - Completing bi-monthly activity reports to the SEC as per outlined in their evaluation criteria
  - Attending SEC meeting and reporting on requested areas further and as needed
  - Ensure timelines and report to council were met sufficiently and successfully
  - Requested a three month performance review and a six month performance review for October 2007, including salary review
  - Managed within agreed guidelines budget for CVYC and reported as requested

### *City Benefit*

- Increased awareness and visibility of the CVYC has brought positive attention to the city and enhanced community perception of City Hall, Mayor and Council as youth-friendly, interested in youth issues and committed to involving youth in decision making and strategic development processes
- CVYC has been involved in three consultation processes with City Staff including
  - Community Services and Recreation Department
  - Parks Master Planning
  - Child & Youth Parks Planning / Consultation
- Two community youth consultations and discussions took place during the year and the City Staff and Council were present to hear youth voice and opinions regarding issues affecting themselves, their families and the community – including Youth Homelessness
- CVYC members helped with a variety of hands-on city initiatives including Community Gardens and Quadra Village Day
- The CVYC Youth Survey brought forward an academically sound research paper indicating top priorities for action and issues according to youth to City Staff and Council

### *Youth Benefit*

- Participants received training and skill development in the following areas:
  - Communications – written and verbal
  - Report presentation
  - Community Building and Projects
  - Anti-Oppressive Practice
  - Group facilitation
  - Project development, implementation and evaluation
  - Survey: creation, gathering information, analysis and written reporting
  - Meeting facilitation and meeting minutes
  - Developing multigenerational networks and community contacts
  - Working within municipal political structures
  - Engaging with City Staff
  - Learning about process and practice in community development at a Municipal level
- Here are some comments from youth participants over the past year – in terms of their work with and through the CVYC:
  - “Personally, I think that my involvement in the CVYC has capacitated me to maximize my ability to achieve my goal of helping other youth and promoting equity, diversity, and social justice. I have acquired some important and practical skills required for effective social activism. Lastly, it broadened my horizons and extended my peer network.”
  - “I feel that as a result of my involvement with the CVYC I have gained knowledge and passion about municipal politics and learned more about the intricacies of building relationships between different age groups. I have also felt the amazing feeling of uniting with peers different from myself with a powerful common goal”
  - “I feel that I have benefited from my involvement in the council by getting energized with all the new ideas to engage youth more directly. I also feel like I have learned a lot from the multi-faceted experiences every member of the executive team brings to our meetings”

- “I have learned a great deal about what it requires to pull together the many different aspects of the community for one event. I have discovered how difficult it is to reach the different demographics of youth, especially those who are homeless, but yet how important it is to do so. From an organizational standpoint, I have learned the importance of giving people sufficient time and notice to plan or deliver something, and the challenges that can come from a lack of time due to poor planning. Our forums were not perfect, but we have certainly progressed as a group and will learn from our mistakes. We have also moved past the stage of transition when switching facilitators, and I am extremely happy with how our group is working forward with Katie as a facilitator. I have personally benefited from the youth council... by not only building on my facilitation skills, but by gaining new friends and new perspectives. It has been a busy time, but also fun and productive.”

#### *Impact on City Resources*

- The CVYC is extremely thankful to both the staff and council liaisons from the past year for their support and genuine attempts for youth engagement
- The Supervisory and Evaluation Committee have been a terrific resource for the current coordinator, in particular as there was a switch in leadership mid-year this year
- The CVYC anticipates that a strong relationship with City Staff and Council (in particular the CVYC liaison) is a key component for ongoing success and hope that the coming year includes more interactive opportunities for collaboration and mutual learning

#### *Representation*

- The CVYC's membership has been extremely diverse over the past year
- Youth from all walks of life and age participated and the outreach initiatives engaged youth from many backgrounds and with many abilities
- Please refer to Report to Council June 21<sup>st</sup> 2007 regarding the CVYC's next steps for recruitment this term and the intentional effort to create another dynamic, diverse youth council for 2007-2008

#### *Community Advisory Committee*

- As per the recommendations from SEC, the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was developed and consulted during the 06-07 CVYC term
- The CVYC recommends that a Community Advisory Committee be developed at the start of each new program 'session' (most likely every fall) to function as a champion and resource for the group. As well, the Community Advisory Committee represents an opportunity for those 'aging out' of the group to remain involved and act as mentors to new members.
- The CVYC Coordinator will work closely with the CVYC members to select, recruit, stabilize and engage the Community Advisory Committee
- The CVYC will focus on developing an advisory that represents cross-sectoral community stakeholders: private, public and non-profit and whose experience touches on the social, economic and environmental matters within the City of Victoria
- With the change of leadership in CVYC Coordination, the council consulted with CAC for its Report to Council in June 2007

- For the upcoming term two members from the 06-07 CVYC will be taking on roles for the CAC since they have aged out of the council, as well a cross-sectoral, multi-generational CAC development process has begun and the new CAC will meet in November 2007 for orientation
- The relationship between CAC and the CVYC members will also be strengthened this year with more one on one relationship building and partnership projects
- CAC will also be playing a role in the development of the Policy & Procedure Manual during the 07-08 year

#### *Transparency*

- The CVYC makes every attempt to be as open and transparent as possible
- In an effort to invite young people to participate throughout the year, CVYC meetings are open to the public and attendees are welcome to share their ideas, suggestions and raise concerns at their desire
- Meeting minutes and agenda's are posted online at the CVYC.net website (please note, this site is currently under construction and will return online in December 2007)
- During the 06-07 Term the CVYC decided that all expenditures (outside coordinator salary and office supplements) over \$500.00 be voted on by members
- For the 07-08 term the CVYC's coordinator will facilitate participatory budgeting with the group and funding sources / information will be online
- The development of the Policy and Procedure Manual this term will include a variety of transparency policies developed by the youth themselves with the guidance of the CAC and SEC

#### *Sustainability*

- In order to develop a strong foundation for this young youth council, the CVYC outlined a variety of efforts for sustainability in all areas of its program in the Report to Council – June 21<sup>st</sup> 2007
- Funding provided by the City of Victoria and Coast Capital Savings were managed effectively and distributed with strict processes
- The analysis of funding available and areas of expenditure by the new coordinator allowed for a reorganization of funding allocations, creating funding sustainability to February 2008, versus the anticipated September 2007
- A recommendation on core, ongoing, yearly funding from the City of Victoria was determined by the CVYC in the report
- Other areas of sustainability include the development of a Policy and Procedures Manual for the CVYC, and this would be a focus for the coordinator during the 2007-2008 term