

Empowering Youth

City of Brantford Youth Strategy
2025-2027



Table of Contents

Message from the Mayor	3
Message from the Brantford Youth Council	4
Introduction	5
Establishing Priorities	6
Complementary Strategies & Plans	7
Empowering Youth Strategy: Priorities & Actions	8
Metrics & Milestones	10



Message from the Mayor

The City of Brantford is committed to being a place where youth can grow, learn, and thrive. Our continual success in being a community where individuals of all ages can live a prosperous life, hinges on the direct input and involvement of our future leaders.

On behalf of City Council, I want to sincerely thank our partners, staff, and the Brantford Youth Council for their ongoing support of Brantford's youth.

The Empowering Youth Strategy represents the City of Brantford's commitment to delivering high quality, youth-informed programs and continuing to collaborate with local youth-serving agencies to support our City's future.

With Kind Regards,

Mayor Kevin Davis,
City of Brantford

Message from the Brantford Youth Council

Brantford Youth Council cares about making sure youth in our city are heard and have a sense of belonging.

Our 2023-2024 cohort helped consult on the Empowering Youth Strategy (2025-2027), giving us the chance to advocate for this document to reflect the interests and diversity of our community.

Brantford Youth Council has been a great way to make friends with other youth living and going to school in this city. Last year was a busy one for us. Through the work of our three subcommittees: Social and Environmental Impact, Communications and Marketing, and Art/Sports/Events, in 2023-2024 we planted youth community garden beds, ran booths at local events, created a program called “Bad at Sports!”, and developed events for each day of Brantford Youth Week.

Everyone on Brantford Youth Council is a passionate leader, we are young people who really care about our community, and who want to see things improve and be more inclusive for all youth. We are the future of Brantford.

We are so happy to see Brantford Youth Council growing and that our ideas are being highlighted in the community in new ways. It is important to us to be able to continue to represent the unique experience of being a youth in Brantford.

Brantford Youth Council is looking forward to seeing this strategy in action, and to future efforts the City of Brantford will make to work with us and to amplify and celebrate the perspectives of the youth who live here.

Sincerely,



Hanna Gyorki

Brantford Youth Council, Interim President 2023-2024



Introduction

The Empowering Youth Strategy 2025-2027 demonstrates the City of Brantford's ongoing commitment to engaging and supporting youth.

Youth perspective helps identify new and diverse ideas in our communities. According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' handbook on Municipal Youth Engagement, municipalities are encouraged to actively engage youth in the design of municipal programs and policies. This handbook also noted that youth in Canada often do not see their interests being represented by their local governments¹, and highlighted the importance that municipalities engage in establishing creative, accessible and interactive pathways to challenge this perception.

Building on Success

The Empower Youth Strategy 2025-2027 represents the City's ongoing commitment to prioritize youth wellness through programs, services and community-based initiatives. This strategy builds on the success of the "Together for Youth: Coordinated Youth Services Strategy" (2015-2022) and "Empowering YOUth Strategy" (2022-2024), and includes 20 Actions within 4 Priority Areas intended to support and empower youth within our community.

Youth are identified as a priority area within the City of Brantford's [Community Safety and Well-Being Plan](#) (2021-2025) with commitments to engage in work to update the City's youth strategy, as well as create violence prevention initiatives for youth.



1 https://data.fcm.ca/documents/reports/FCM/Municipal_Youth_Engagement_Handbook_EN.pdf

Establishing Priorities

There is no universally agreed upon definition of “youth”. Different stakeholders throughout Canada define youth across a range from ages 10 to 35. To best align with the Canada Youth Policy and State of Youth Report, the City of Brantford recognizes youth as being people aged 15-29.

In 2016-17, 885 residents in Brantford were aged 15-29. In 2021, that number grew to 19,250, representing a growing segment of Brantford residents. Additionally, each year Brantford welcomes over 5,000 post-secondary students to our community.

This strategy intends to guide, shape, and inform the City of Brantford’s progress and collective efforts towards remaining a youth-friendly community. Actions and metrics for this strategy have been informed through the review of the following frameworks:

- [For Youth, With Youth, By Youth: Canada’s First State of Youth Report](#)
- [Canada’s Youth Policy](#)
- [Stepping Up: A Strategic Framework to Help Ontario’s Youth Succeed](#)
- [Federation of Canadian Municipalities Youth Engagement Handbook](#)

Community Engagement

City staff engaged with over 100 youth, parents/caregivers, and people who work in Brantford’s youth service sector to ensure local voices and unique perspectives were embedded into this strategy.

Youth Surveys

Survey questions were developed by staff in collaboration with the Brantford Youth Council.

Surveys were circulated through the City’s “Let’s Talk Brantford” platform throughout June 2024. Promotional posters with QR codes were circulated through local high schools, post-secondary schools, community organizations, youth groups, the Brantford Neighbourhood Associations, Brantford Public Library, local businesses, and social media. Staff additionally facilitated promotional booths, with iPads that had survey access and QR-code posters, at the Child and Youth Strategic Collaborative’s Community Professionals Networking Forum, the 2024 Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration, 2024 Brantford Pride in the Park, and the 2024 Canada Day Celebration at Lion’s Park.

In-Person Consultations

Staff facilitated consultations with youth participants during their existing involvement with the following community organizations and their affiliated groups:

- **BGC Brantford**
- **Brantford Youth Council**
- **SOAR Cornerstone House**
- **Why Not City Mission: Youth Centre Drop-in**
- **Why Not City Mission: Charlie’s Place**
- **Woodman Community Centre: Youth Drop-in**
- **Woodview Mental Health & Autism Services: Fortitude Youth Group**
- **YMCA of Hamilton Burlington Brantford: Fusion Youth Group**

Complementary Strategies & Plans

The Empowering Youth Strategy is just one example of the work being undertaken by the City of Brantford to improve the quality of life for youth in the community. This strategy aligns with and supports the actions of several municipal and community plans, each of which plays a key role in the broader efforts to support youth in Brantford:

- **Active Transportation Master Plan**
- **Brant Community Healthcare System Strategic Plan**
- **Brantford Accessibility Plan**
- **Brantford Customer Experience Strategy**
- **Brantford Downtown Master Plan**
- **Brantford Immigration Partnership Action Plan**
- **Brantford Police Service Strategic Plan**
- **Brantford Public Library Strategic Plan**
- **Brantford-Brant Community Drugs Strategy Action Plan**
- **Brantford-Brant Housing Stability Plan**
- **Building Safer Communities Action Plan**
- **City Grants Program**
- **City of Brantford Official Plan**
- **City of Brantford People Master Plan**
- **Community Climate Change Action Plan**
- **Corporate Climate Change Action Plan**
- **Inclusive Community Plan**
- **Intimate Partner & Gender-Based Violence Community Action Plan**
- **Municipal Cultural Plan**



Empowering Youth Strategy: Priorities & Actions

The following priorities and action items were informed by local youth, advocates and community partners. The City of Brantford is committed to working collaboratively with youth, and will support, advocate and provide leadership in areas within the municipal scope.

1. Leadership & Engagement

Action 1.1: Enhance community awareness about existing City leadership and engagement opportunities for youth—such as Brantford Youth Council, the Community Changemaker Program, and Youth Leadership Development Programs—through direct promotion to local youth committees/ collaboratives, tabling at youth events, and social media

Action 1.2: Increase opportunities for youth to provide feedback about new and existing municipal programs, services, and initiatives through feedback surveys (e.g. student job exit interviews, post-event surveys, follow up surveys for services accessed, etc.)

Action 1.3: Celebrate the accomplishments of youth leaders in Brantford through continued collaboration with Brantford Youth Council to host the annual Brantford Youth Excellence Awards, and Brantford Youth Week

Action 1.4: Explore ways to increase opportunities for Brantford City Council to connect and engage with youth

Action 1.5: Create an annualized report for the Brantford Youth Council to update City Council about their goals and achievements

Action 1.6: Support community partners around the development of new volunteer, mentorship, and leadership opportunities for transitional-aged youth¹ in Brantford

2. Access to Supports

Action 2.1: Promote City-led youth supports, and other available resources provided by local youth-serving organizations through social media and networking events to enhance awareness of these supports in the community

Action 2.2: Work closely with community partners to develop or enhance support resources where youth can be included throughout the development process

Action 2.3: Recruit youth from Indigenous, Black, racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, low-income, and disability communities to be included in City and community-led resource development processes

Action 2.4: Support youth-led groups to identify and apply for funding opportunities focused on increased well-being and access for youth

Action 2.5: Collaborate with community partners to identify barriers in access to youth resources in order to gain a better understanding of what causes youth to become isolated from available supports

¹ Transitional-aged youth are individuals between the ages of 16 and 25: <https://kmb.camh.ca/uploads/482ef335-d956-44f0-903e-2c66b309b7e2>

3. Safety & Belonging

Action 3.1: Celebrate cultural awareness and inclusion alongside youth in the community through social, recreational, and event-based programming in connection with the City of Brantford's Inclusive Community Plan

Action 3.2: Explore opportunities to enhance outcomes related to equity, diversity and belonging in City-led youth programming

Action 3.3: Support efforts to reduce youth involvement with violent and/or hate-related crimes and its impact by working closely with experts and community partners in the anti-violence sector

Action 3.4: Increase youth consultation and feedback data to ensure new programs being developed are appealing to youth

Action 3.5: Animate green spaces, sports facilities, and local social venues through developing low-barrier arts and culture, sport, and craft opportunities with community partners and City departments to increase youth use of these spaces

Action 3.6: Streamline processes to share feedback about youth perspectives related to safety and belonging across strategic initiatives such as the Inclusive Community Plan, Community Safety & Well-being and the Housing Stability Plan

4. Training & Employment

Action 4.1: Support community partners around working to identify youth barriers to accessing training and employment in Brantford

Action 4.2: Support projects by City departments and community partners that improve access to training and employment opportunities for youth from diverse social locations

Action 4.3: Identify successful municipal models and community grant opportunities to incentivize businesses to further support local employment opportunities for youth

Action 4.4: Continue gathering feedback from youth employees at the City of Brantford about their experiences to inform next steps towards reducing barriers and enhancing youth outcomes in these roles



Metrics & Milestones

Targets

In addition to seeking out youth feedback on an ongoing basis, the following metrics will be utilized to evaluate and measure the success of the Empowering Youth Strategy:

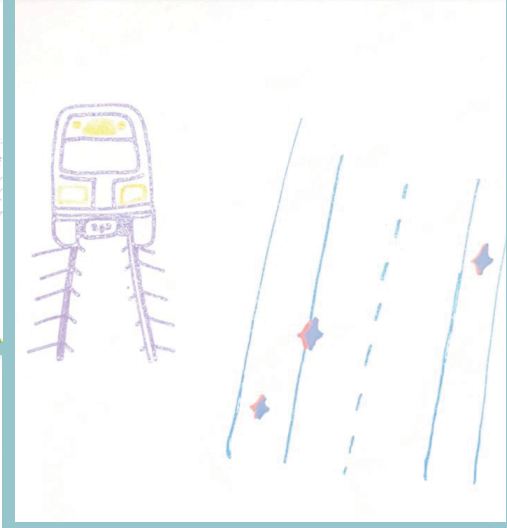
Metric	Target (Total 2025-2027)
Number of City-supported projects created in collaboration with youth	15
Number of youth participating in City-run recreational, social and cultural programs	2,000
Number of youth participating in City-supported leadership programs or projects	200
Number of City-supported community-based initiatives to address and prevent youth violence	15
Number of City-supported community initiatives specifically designed to engage youth from diverse backgrounds within this strategy's priority areas	20

Ongoing Engagement & Evaluation

The City of Brantford will continue to work with our dynamic network of community partners to enhance opportunities for youth, including opportunities to contribute to the development, implementation, and evaluation of various projects and programs. Evaluation will be focused on a project-by-project basis.

Learning resources will be created to support City staff's engagement with this strategy and to enhance applicable knowledge of community and City-led: youth well-being and access supports, youth-focused equity, diversity, and inclusion resources, youth leadership and engagement opportunities, and youth training and employment opportunities.

The Empowering Youth Strategy 2025-2027 will be reviewed on an annual basis in collaboration with the Brantford Youth Council. Brantford City Council will receive update reports on the progress towards the priorities and objectives annually.

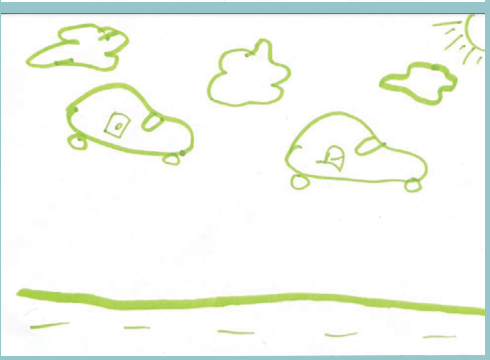
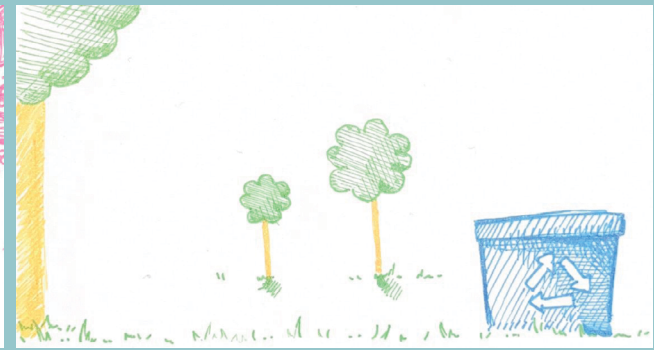


more Academic resources.
 more Scientific resources.
 Less art (visual) based programs for youth
 Less sport based programs for youth
 More academic based programs for youth
 Safer downtown

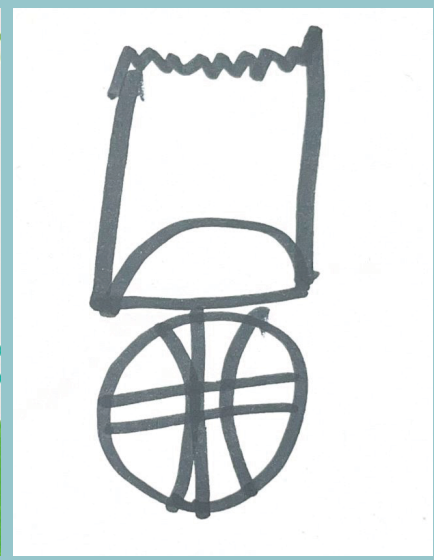
Stem!



• Lots of greenery (more)
 - forests
 - paths/trails
 - gardens



Protected bike lanes
 with grass and trees



Stuff for Tens
 Cost
 Metall boxes
 The river





 [@brantfordyouthcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/brantfordyouthcouncil)

 brantford.ca/youth

