



2011-2012 Commission de la Jeunesse d'Ottawa Youth Commission Report
Submitted to: Community and Protective Services Committee



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Purpose of the Report:

This report was compiled to report on the activities of commission de la Jeunesse d'Ottawa Youth Commission (CJOYC) over the years of 2011-2012 to the Community and Protective Services Committee of the City of Ottawa.

About Youth Ottawa:

Youth Ottawa, formerly Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa, has evolved over the years and our new name and programming reflect that evolution, growth, and refined focus. Our new name maintains a strong link with our proud history but marks the start of a new chapter in our organization's commitment to inspiring Ottawa's youth.

As the umbrella organization for CJOYC, Youth Ottawa continues to encourage young people to take centre stage by providing them with opportunities to make positive contributions to the world around them. Through programs like the Spirit of the Capital Awards, la Commission de la Jeunesse d'Ottawa Youth Commission and FYBY News, we provide opportunities to celebrate and recognize the vibrancy, creativity, passion, voice and leadership of today's youth.

A dedicated group of youth volunteers and adult mentors are working together to ensure our programs build a strong community. As we begin this next chapter, we are excited to announce our partnership with Rogers TV, community producers of YouthEffect, a show highlighting the stories of past Spirit of the Capital Youth Award Finalists.

About CJOYC:

With funding from the City of Ottawa, the Commission de la Jeunesse d'Ottawa Youth Commission (CJOYC) has been in existence since June 2006. This funding enables us to be a platform for youth to exercise leadership and meaningfully contribute to the community by participating in activities that help them become active citizens. CJOYC members make youth an integral part of the agenda at City Hall and push Ottawa toward reaching its full potential as a youth-friendly city.

We are an open membership group of engaged Ottawans between the ages of 15 and 25. We listen to youth concerns in our community and reflect them to City Hall through presentations to City Council and senior staff and research reports. We also believe in creating opportunity for youth to represent themselves; we host fun and engaging events that bring decision makers and youth together in social settings.

There are two principle ways youth are involved with CJOYC; firstly, youth attend our monthly general meetings, where decisions regarding CJOYC are made. Through this forum, youth have organized to make recommendations to City Council, written a new constitution, and set the direction for CJOYC moving forward.

Youth also attend our standing Events, Outreach, or Research Committees. This is where we offer youth a chance to hone in on their skill-sets and interests. Our framework also provides flexibility to create new committees if what we're looking for doesn't fit in the existing standing committees.

CJOYC 2011, At a Glance:

Based on 2009 research, CJOYC selected three themes as priority areas:

- i. Transportation
- ii. Recreation
- iii. The Environment

In the summer of 2010, it was decided that in order to focus on actionable items, CJOYC would select an annual focus area. The focus of 2011 was selected to be transportation because transportation was both identified as youth's top issue and it is integral in relation to suggested other themes of recreation and environment.

2011's accomplishments include the #YouOttKnow conference held at City Hall, the execution of a civic engagement workshop series, hosting several social events, and the collection of data for the two transit reports written and presented to Mayor Jim Watson in 2012.

CJOYC 2012, At a Glance:

As noted, in 2012 CJOYC successfully crafted two reports themed on transportation. CJOYC also hosted recruitment Meet and Greet in November that attracted new members from across the city and helped refocus CJOYC.

CJOYC youth were active in the planning process of the Mayor's Youth Summit, including leading a session at the summit and creating a video highlighting what Ottawa means to youth. The information we gained from the Mayor's Youth Summit encouraged us to select the broad theme of "Improving Communication with Youth" for a research project in 2013 that will inform a forthcoming Digital Youth Strategy to be presented to City Councillors and senior City staff.

Action & Achievements Summary 2011-2012:

Outreach:

Increase in French-Language Capacity and Francophone Outreach:

Since 2011, Youth Ottawa has strived to make CJOYC inclusive of populations from both official language groups in Ottawa. Efforts began with updating and translating the

Civic Engagement Kit into French (2011), recruiting Francophone community organizers to the Youth Ottawa Board of Directors (2011), and placing a bilingual imperative on new employment postings (2012). 100% of the Youth Ottawa staff and the sitting Chair of CJOYC are fluent in both French and English. Since October of 2012, all CJOYC materials have been produced bilingually. A fall 2012 recruitment drive helped us connect with a now dedicated CJOYC member who sits as a student representative on the French Catholic School Board.

CJOYC Ambassadors:

CJOYC members were given many opportunities to participate in external events and activities as ambassadors of the program in the larger community. These opportunities included:

- City's Equity and Inclusion Lens Evaluation Group, (2011)
- Hosted a kiosk at the RecNet Child and Youth Services Providers event at Britannia Boys and Girls Club (2011)
- Children and Youth Agenda Leadership Table (2011)
- "Youth it Up" group of youth organizations (2011-2012)
- FYBY News Summit (2012)
- Junos held at the National Arts Centre (2012)
- Spirit of the Capital Youth Awards (2011-2012)

Additionally a CJOYC member sought membership on the Transit Commission, but was not accepted. The CJOYC has made a recommendation for the creation of a youth liaison position with the Transit Commission.

Social Media Growth:

Since 2011 to February, 2013 our Twitter following has grown from 800 to over 1000, and our Facebook "likes" have increased from 380 to 450.

Engagement Initiatives:

Outreach Activities undertaken by CJOYC included youth presentations at Youth Ottawa's (at the time CAYFO's) Annual General Meetings in 2011 and 2012. This exercise is a great public speaking opportunity for our youth, and the best way to convey the success and importance of CJOYC to members of the community-at-large.

More recently, CJOYC submitted an application for a United Way Youth Action Grant (YAG) application. The program we proposed was a youth led micro-financing initiative called the (Pro)Activate! Fund. Our proposal was to act as a micro-funder (up to \$250) for small-scale youth initiatives that fit into one or more of the following categories:

- Art Appreciation
- Social Justice
- Health Promotion
- Community Engagement

Regrettably, there was a sluggish community response to this granting process and the deadline was pushed from December 1st, 2012 to February 22, 2013. We are still awaiting the results of the application.

Events:

Civic Engagement Workshop Series (2011):

A CJOYC Civic Participation workshop was delivered to:

- Over 90 students at the FYBY Summit
- 20 participants at the M McCann Boys and Girls Club in the Vanier
- 3 groups of 15-25 members at the #YouOttaKnow Conference

#YouOttaKnow: Youth in Ottawa in the Know (2011) was a full day, youth-oriented conference held at Ottawa City Hall, which engaged youth in transportation conversations taking place in Ottawa. Positioned right after the route optimization of OC Transpo bus routes, the launch of the Laurier bike lane project, and planning for Ottawa's Light Rail Transit commences, #YouOttaKnow offered a well-timed setting for discussions on transportation in Ottawa.

#YouOttaKnow brought together 150 youth and transit professionals for a cross-generational look at transit in Ottawa. This engaging, educational day gave youth the chance to express their opinions on key transit issues in their lives, and allowed them the opportunity to hear about upcoming transit initiatives and plans.

Meet and Greet held April 2011: Was a means to build on the relationship with newly elected Mayor Jim Watson with a specific emphasis on youth engagement in public policy and decision making. This event was attended by members of City Council as well as City staff.

CJOYC youth collected over 200 letters from students aged 13 – 23 years directed to City staff members and delivered them to Mayor Jim Watson, and Councillors Eli El-Chantiry and Marianne Wilkinson at this event. The conversations from this event inspired the planning process of the Mayor's Youth Summit.

Mayor's Youth Summit (2012): Mayor Jim Watson, together with Honorary Chair, Councillor Mathieu Fleury, hosted a Youth Summit. This important event brought a diverse group of over 180 youth together to discuss and provide suggestions on a number of relevant topics including civic engagement, employment, entrepreneurship, mental health, volunteering, and safety. The day was filled with inspiring speakers, discussion groups, networking and mentorship opportunities, and community resources geared towards youth. It was also a forum for youth to come together, be inspired by successes of other youth, and to offer ideas on improving our city. (Source: <http://ottawa.ca/en/youth-summit>)

CJOYC's contribution to the Mayor's Youth Summit was the facilitation of the "Youth Voice" break out session. This bilingually facilitated session asked youth in small groups of 5 – 8 to discuss the municipal issues they experience in their diverse lives. The data collected at this session is being incorporated into the forthcoming Mayor's Youth Summit Action Plan. CJOYC was also a member of the Youth Summit planning committee and organizer for the photo and video contest leading up to the event.

Group trips to City Functions: As a group CJOYC members attended the Transportation Committee meeting (June 1, 2011), the OC Transpo announcement at City Hall (July 11, 2011), and the Transit Commission meeting (August 17, 2011).

Youth Recruitment Meet & Greet held November 2012: Fall 2012 was a reboot for CJOYC as Devyn Stackhouse was hired as Youth Ottawa's new Engagement Coordinator. Our recruitment night was a huge success that saw 25 youth, including 18 previously uninvolved youth, mingle and discuss youth issues in a fun semi-structured environment. A bilingual "New Friend Bingo" served as an effective ice-breaker, and the on-going sticker vote we held, where members were asked to vote on issues with colour-coordinated stickers over the course of the event, decisively laid out the ground work for CJOYC governance reforms detailed below.

Research:

Over the years of 2011-2012, CJOYC updated and translated the Civic Engagement Kit and produced two transit-related research reports for public consumption.

Civic Participation Kit:

The Civic Participation Kit is a comprehensive guide kit and workshop series to empower youth with skills and knowledge to take their ideas and issues within the city and make things happen through constructive vehicles. Beyond the associated workshop series, the Civic Participation Kit was distributed to:

- Over 50 students at Sir Robert Borden's "Reach Ahead" Program
- The OCDSB summer school program
- Ottawa Public Health, who planned to integrate the CJOYC Civic Participation Toolkit into their training for student members, staff, and at their in school programming
- Green Communities Canada who are using the Civic Participation Toolkit for their in school program, including at Ottawa's Francophone school

#YouOttaKnow: Youth & Transportation Conference Report and Youth On Board Report

This report collected data over the various sessions of the #YouOttaknow conference proceedings. Ultimately five recommendations were put forth as result:

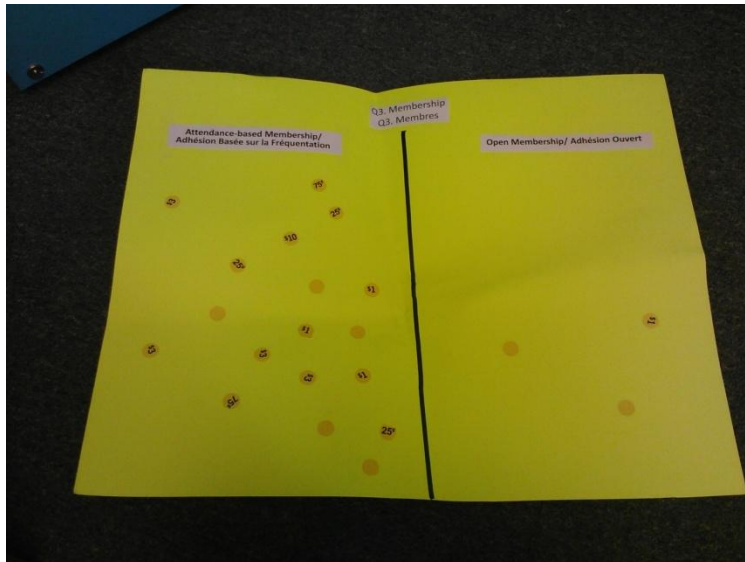
- Create a Young Riders Guide for OC Transpo
- Update to City of Ottawa's 'Youth Zone' (website)
- Increase Youth Representation in Transit Planning

- Adopt the Youth On Board Program (piloted by York Regional Transit)
- Hold more youth focus groups concerning transit

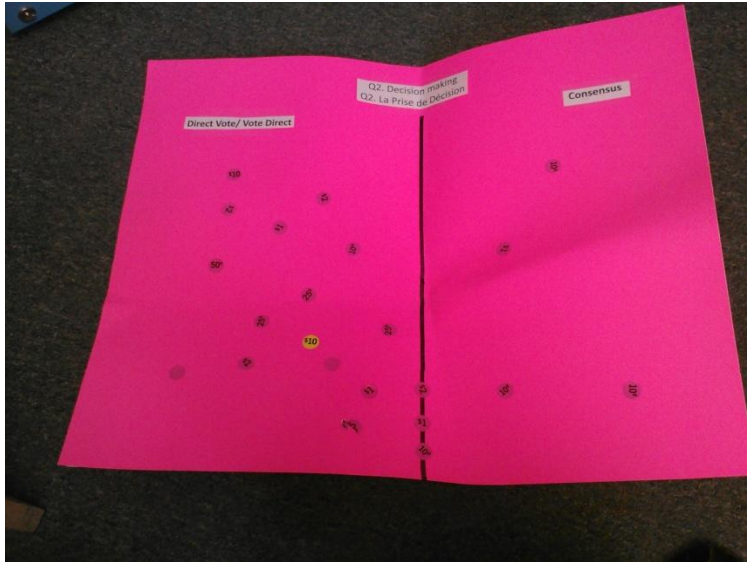
The **Youth on Board Report** took a single program recommendation from the #YouOttKnow report and provided a more in-depth review of the benefits for such a program in Ottawa. The full conference report was presented to: Councillor Mathieu Fleury and Mayor Jim Watson’s aide Brook Simpson at a special CJOYC meeting at City Hall (February 2012); Green Communities Canada, Ottawa Public Health, LRT Ottawa, OC Transpo and Transportation Planning Group (March 2012); and Councillor Katherine Hobbs (May 2012).

Governance:

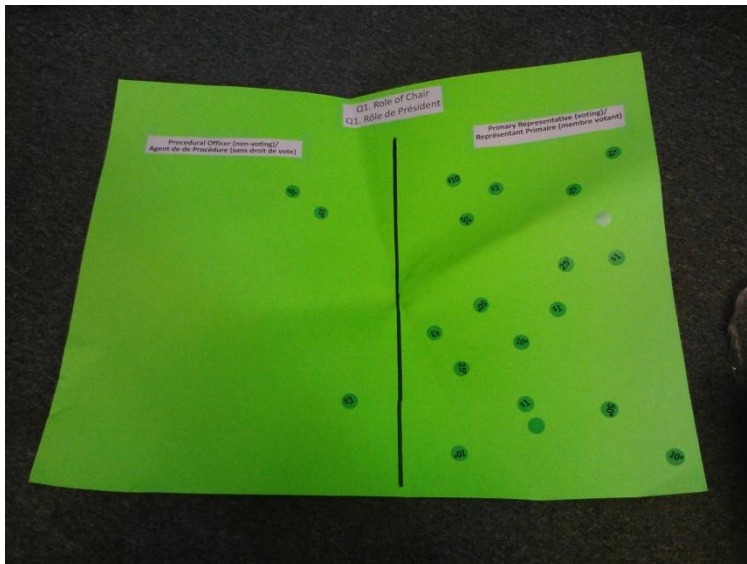
The fall of 2012 saw CJOYC embrace youth democracy with open arms. Our Recruitment Meet and Greet asked 3 important organizational questions via sticker vote:



Voted overwhelmingly in favor of attendance-based membership.



Voted overwhelmingly in favor of direct vote decision making.



Voted overwhelmingly in favor of chair as primary representative.

Acting in-line with these three decisions, the new CJOYC constitution was written then passed unanimously by CJOYC at their December meeting.

The new structure reformed the 4 previous “working groups” of Social Media, City Relations, Civic Participation, and Transportation into three standing committees: Outreach, Events, and Research. We also included a formula to form issue-specific committees in order to support the work of the standing committees.

Looking Forward:

We’re really excited for 2013 at CJOYC! We’re ramping up a pragmatic session theme of “Improving Communications with Youth”, and we’ve already begun collecting data for our forth coming Digital Youth Strategy. We’re also working with our CJOYC

membership to align the present work of CJOYC with goals of implementing the Mayor's Youth Summit Action Plan.

There are also two events in the works that will connect youth to their elected municipal decision makers. Keep checking our website (<http://youthottawa.ca>) for information about an upcoming social media event and a speed-networking session with the movers and shakers of City Hall.