



TRCA Youth Council 2018/19 Report

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Summary

Youth Councils are being deployed around the world as a means to engage and inspire youth. Following suit in this growing trend, TRCA's 2017 Community Engagement Strategy recommended the development of a youth council. The program framework of the Youth Council was developed by TRCA staff and Regional Watershed Alliance members. The ultimate goal of the Youth Council is to build healthy communities. This will be achieved through four program objectives:

- a) Build capacity and engage youth by providing youth across the Toronto region with learning opportunities;
- b) Build a youth network/strengthen existing networks through creation of a broad network of youth in the region that is interested in environmental and sustainability issues;
- c) Identify youth perspectives by developing an understanding of youth opinion around current environmental issues and how these might be incorporated in the work of TRCA and its partners; and
- d) Create fun opportunities for youth through entertaining and engaging learning opportunities.

Recruitment for the Youth Council began during the fall of 2018. Participants could sign up as a general member or apply to be on the Youth Council Executive. Executive members serve as the guiding body for the Council for a one year term, and are responsible for the development of program activities and priorities that fit within the objects defined in the program framework. All new members are required to complete a survey that asked them to identify which environmental/sustainability topics were most important to them out of a list of 25 (an open-ended option was also included). The 2018/19 Executives also carried out a survey of members to determine engagement preferences. This information, in combination with the entrance survey helped to determine the selection of activities and topics.

Overall the Youth Council was able to make progress towards achieving program objectives through the delivery of three events: a guided walk, an Earth Day Clean-up, and a Free Documentary Movie night. They built strong partnerships with Evergreen, Patagonia and Swim Drink Fish, and continue to engage the general membership through a series of newsletters. The first term of the Executive has now drawn to a close. Recommendations to improve program delivery next year include: extending the term for up to four executives to ensure program continuity, booking meetings further in advance, defining clear roles for executives, and expanding work with the general membership.

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INTRODUCTION

Around the world, youth councils have been created by governments, community groups, and non-profit organizations as a means of providing local youth with an opportunity to gain important skills, build capacity and network, while providing the sponsoring agencies with important input and perspectives from youth stakeholders. The long-term success of efforts to advance environmental protection and sustainability in the Toronto region depend on the support of the region's youth, both now and into the future. TRCA's Community Engagement Strategy (2017) recommends more focused engagement of youth to enhance the reach of TRCA programs and activities and prepare the next generation of conservation leaders (Actions 6.1 and 6.2). Activities of the Youth Council build on existing engagement programs while deploying tools and strategies to develop a strong network of youth driven to take active ownership of their local environment.

The Youth Council reports directly to the Regional Watershed Alliance. The mission, mandate and goals, along with the Terms of Reference for the Youth Council, were developed by TRCA and the Regional Watershed Alliance (RWA) in consultation with relevant stakeholders. At Regional Watershed Alliance Meeting #1/2017, held on November 15th, 2017, Resolution #R002/17 was approved, in part, as follows:

WHEREAS THE Terms of Reference of the Regional Watershed Alliance proposes the establishment of Watershed/Working Groups, Youth Council, and Indigenous Liaison Committee;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT the following members of the Alliance [the RWA Working Group] work with staff to lead the establishment of Youth Council including development of Terms of Reference:

a) Lisette Mallet; b) Amory Ngan; c) Rui Felix; d) Mick Malowany; and e) Karen Lockridge.

This report provides a summary of program development, Terms of Reference, work planning, and an evaluation of the first year of the Youth Council's operation.

PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

Youth councils, and similar youth engagement groups, are being utilized around the world as a means of engaging and empowering youth. Examples such as the City of Toronto's Youth Cabinet and others were used in the development of TRCA's Youth Council. Consultations with Ontario Nature's Youth Council Program Coordinator also took place during the fall of 2018. A common factor in the development of these different councils was the provision of opportunities for youth to have active leadership in the development of the program. For a Youth Council to be effective, the participants must be actively engaged and empowered through mentorship.

The Youth Council framework was developed using a program development and evaluation approach, which outlines clear connections between program goals, objectives, activities, outputs and deliverables, and ultimate program outcomes. By breaking down large-scale goals into defined objectives, activities can be identified that directly address those objectives, creating a clear pathway between goals and outcomes. Figure 1 illustrates the Youth Council's logic model. The framework for the Youth Council has the goals and objectives of the TRCA Community Engagement Strategy at its foundation (identified by the blue boxes). More specific goals and objectives were identified and agreed upon by staff and the Youth Council RWA working group (identified by the orange boxes).

The primary goal of the Youth Council is to “**Build healthy communities through improved connection to greenspace and nature.**” The most meaningful type of connection to nature and greenspace may differ from one community or individual to the next; however, the RWA Youth working group and staff agree that enhancing that connection through diverse and appropriate initiatives will improve community health and wellbeing. A healthy community will inspire empowered and engaged youth, which is the second program goal, laying the groundwork for youth to have an integral role in the discussion of environmental and sustainability issues. On the TRCA Youth Council, this engagement began with the planning and shaping stages of the Council itself.

There are four objectives that guide program activities for the Youth Council:

- a) Build capacity and engage youth by providing youth across the Toronto region with learning opportunities;
- b) Build a youth network/strengthen existing networks through creation of a broad network of youth in the region that is interested in environmental and sustainability issues;
- c) Identify youth perspectives by developing an understanding of youth opinion around current environmental issues and how these might be incorporated in the work of TRCA and its partners; and
- d) Create fun opportunities for youth through entertaining and engaging learning opportunities.

A preliminary set of activities for the TRCA Youth Council was also outlined in the framework, including the following:

- Convening an annual event (an action item identified in the TRCA Community Engagement Strategy);
- Holding regular council meetings;
- Advocating for key environmental and sustainability issues;
- Providing feedback on key TRCA projects and initiatives; and
- Creating a framework for youth network interaction.

The above framework of goals, objectives and activities notwithstanding, the Youth Council was provided the opportunity to identify their *own* priorities, and the activities to address those priorities. In other words, the highest-level goals and outcomes were determined prior to convening the Youth Council, but the Youth Council was provided with the opportunity to determine the pathways (i.e., Activities, Outputs, and Immediate Outcomes) to achieve those goals.

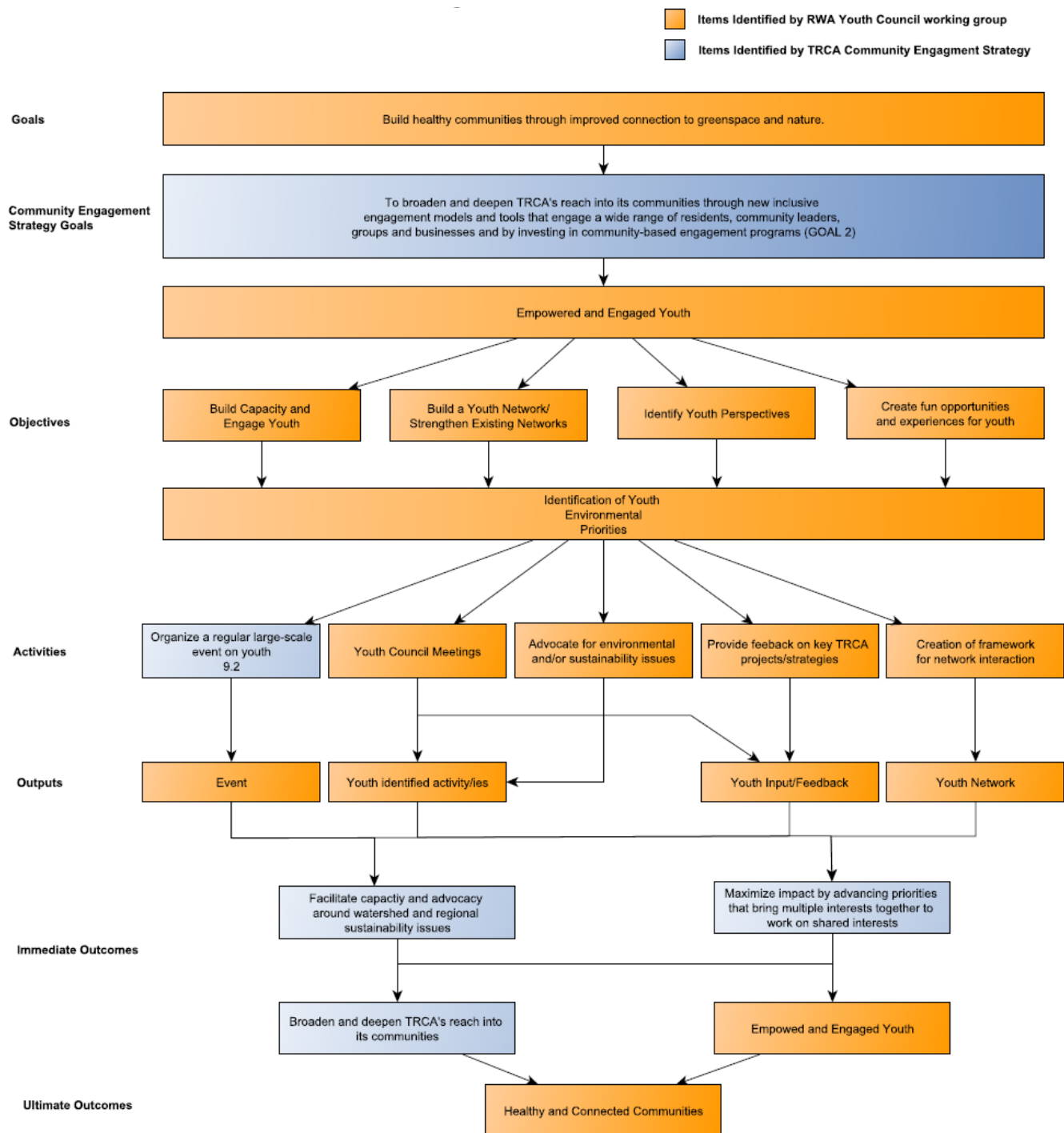


Figure 1 Youth Council Logic Model

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

The definition of “Youth” is not consistent across disciplines. The definition of youth was investigated in other examples of youth councils, consultations with project managers from other organizations, academic literature, and through discussion with RWA steering group members. Based on that investigation, youth was defined as 16-24 (the

same as the City of Toronto's Youth Council). That category was later revisited when recruitment seemed to be skewed towards more female participation and was subsequently changed to 16-30 years old at the recommendation of the RWA and Education and Training Staff. The rationale for this change was that older male youth are more likely to engage than younger males. It remains to be seen if this is indeed the case.

RECRUITMENT

There are two participation streams for the Youth Council. Executive members are an application-based year-long term position responsible for the development of a workplan and attending monthly meetings. General members, by contrast, have no application and recruitment is open year-round. General members are provided opportunities to participate in activities selected by the executive, but their participation is completely voluntary.

Recruitment materials were developed by the RWA Youth Council Working Group in consultation with staff. The final list of questions to be included in all applications can be seen in Appendix 1. In addition to those questions, applicants for the executive membership were also asked to answer two out of the four following questions:

- 1) Why are you interested in joining the Executive Council?
- 2) What would you like to accomplish as part of the Youth Council?
- 3) What would make you a good candidate for the Youth Council Executive?
- 4) What do you think is the biggest challenge faced by your neighbourhood or region right now? What would you do to help people understand and address that challenge?

Executive applicants were also invited to attach a resume, though this step was optional. Recruitment for both tiers of the Youth Council began online in mid-September 2018, and applications for executive membership closed on October 15, 2018. Advertisement for the recruitment was published on Instagram and YouTube, and was circulated and communicated through relevant TRCA networks (e.g., Education and Training's Conservation Youth Corps, and University Mailing lists).

In total, 19 applications for executive membership were received. These applications were evaluated by the Youth Council Working Group and TRCA staff. Considerations for the selection of executive members included: representation from across the jurisdiction, demographic factors, and merit based on the quality of application. It was decided not to hold interviews, as the role is volunteer based, and it would be difficult and time consuming to schedule. Age was also factored into the assessment of their experience and writing level, as applicants ranged from high school to graduate level students. Generally, most applicants were either nearing the end of undergraduate/college degrees or had recently graduated.

Ten individuals were selected. Of those ten, one declined the position and their spot was then offered to the next runner up. One individual never returned any of the emails offering them the role. After multiple attempts it was decided to simply keep the group at nine rather than ten.

FIRST MEETING AND GUIDED WALK

Executive members were invited to an initial meet and greet event at Evergreen Brickworks in November 2018. At this meeting they were introduced to TRCA staff and RWA working group members, and were provided with a brief introduction of TRCA and the goals and objectives of the Youth Council. After this meeting, a guided walk took place

around Evergreen Brickworks. General members were also invited to this walk as an opportunity to meet their Executive Council members. Nine executive members attended this event, and 10 general members.



Figure 2 Mick Mallowany (RWA Member) provides a guided tour to youth council executive and general members at evergreen brickworks

RETREAT – ALBION HILLS FIELD CENTRE

A retreat for executive members was held on a Saturday in January 2019 at the Albion Hills Field Centre. The date was chosen in an effort to avoid exam time for university students, as well as the holidays. This retreat was facilitated by TRCA staff (led by Raysha Carmichael from Education and Training and Daphne Paszterko from PAIE). A copy of their presentation/agenda can be found in Appendix 2. The goal of this retreat was to a) agree on a Terms of Reference, b) start a workplan, and c) provide an opportunity for the executive members to get to know each other. The morning was spent undertaking team building activities outdoors (facilitated by Albion Hills Field Centre Staff) and introducing the group to a draft Terms of Reference and workplan template. Lunch was provided by the Field Centre, and in the afternoon the executives were given time to begin drafting their own work plan based on the Terms of Reference they had drafted that morning. The Terms of Reference is attached in Appendix 3 and workplan is attached in Appendix 4.



Figure 3 Executive members undertake team building activities at Albion Hills Field Centre



Figure 4 Executives attempt marshmallow team challenge at Albion Hills Field Centre

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monthly in-person meetings were held at different locations at the convenience of executive members. If a member was unable to attend in person, they were invited to participate online through Google Hangouts (provided the location had access to Wi-Fi). Meeting agendas were drafted a few days prior to the meeting and were circulated online via Google Docs. Executive members adopted a rotating Chair system, where members would volunteer to chair each meeting. Minutes and action items were recorded during the meeting via a Google Doc spread sheet. If warranted, a follow-up online meeting was scheduled two weeks after the in-person meeting. This meeting would take place via Google Hangouts.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The 2018/19 workplan for the Youth Council was designed to achieve the goals and objectives set out in the program framework. The following section provides a summary of each of those objectives, and what work was carried out to address them.

Build youth capacity and learning opportunities

The creation of the Youth Council itself arguably contributes to building youth capacity among members. Executives were provided with the opportunity to create their own workplans, engage in their own networking, and help to organize their own events and programs. These activities were all carried out with support and mentorship from TRCA.

Build youth network

One of the primary goals of TRCA's Youth Council is to build and strengthen the youth environmental network across TRCA's jurisdiction and beyond. To achieve this goal, Youth Council Executives were encouraged to network with other environmental and sustainability groups. To facilitate the communication between executives and general members, the executives drafted a quarterly newsletter. This newsletter provided links to volunteer opportunities both with TRCA and with external agencies. By the end of their 2018/19 term, the Youth Council had broadened their network through:

- Delivering a presentation at the Regional Watershed Alliance
- Partnerships with Brickworks (hosting inaugural meet and greet)
- Partnerships with Swim Drink Fish and Patagonia (year-end movie night and volunteer opportunities)
- Shared communication with the Youth Biodiversity Network (volunteer opportunities)
- Shared communication with Youth Challenge International Innovate MY Future Program (volunteer opportunities)

Learn about what is important to Youth

Youth Perspectives have been measured in two ways: via a survey of all Youth Council Members and via a survey to the general public (where youth were invited to join the Council, but were given the option to complete the survey without joining). This information will be used to tailor activities targeting youth for both TRCA and for the Youth Council.

Survey Methods

A list of 25 topics was created through consultation and discussion with the Regional Watershed Alliance working group and TRCA staff. Topics were intentionally chosen to reflect a diversity of topics including environmental, social, and sustainability issues (Table 1). The list of topics was then placed into a random order to prevent selection bias on the part of the respondent. Some topics, such as "Climate Change," could be placed in more than one, or even all, of the categories described in Table 1.

Table 1 Topics Listed on Survey

Environmental	Sustainability	Social	Planning
Climate change	Greening the Economy	Education	Farmland protection
Biodiversity	Renewable energy	Accessibility	Sustainable development
Urban forest	Green Buildings/Architecture	Food Security	City-building
Air quality	Carbon pricing	Immigration	Waste management
Wildlife and Habitat Conservation		Indigenous Reconciliation	Land-use planning
Water quality and source water protection		Recreational activities	Flood risk and stormwater management
		Access to Green space, parks and natural areas	
		Heritage	
		Urban agriculture	
		Arts and culture	

Individuals who elected to join the Youth Council as a general member, or as an executive member, were asked to select the top five issues from the list of 25 that were most important to them. An open-ended question followed for respondents to add any issues they felt were missing.

To measure perception of environmental health, respondents were also asked to indicate how healthy they considered their local natural environment on a scale of five from “very unhealthy” to “healthy”. Finally, respondents were asked to fill out demographic information, including: age, gender, postal code, and first language.

Results

Demographics

Out of 116 responses, 78 indicated they identified as female (67%), and 20 indicated they identified as male (17%), the remainder opted to leave the question blank or selected or “prefer not to say”. A “not identified here” option, including an open-ended space for respondents to add their preferred gender identify, was offered but no respondents selected this option.

The average age of respondents was 20.6 years old, but some difference in average age were noted across gender and geographic area (Table 2). Blank responses were omitted from analysis.

Table 2 Age of Respondents by Municipality

Category	Average Age	Min	Max
All Responses (n=113)	20.7	16	25
Durham (n=2)	18.5	16	21
Peel (n=18)	19.2	16	23
Toronto (n=63)	21.3	16	25
York (n=26)	20	16	24
Female (n=75)	20.4	16	25
Male (n=20)	20.3	17	23

Respondents were divided into their resident municipality based on postal code. Most respondents reside in Toronto (n=66), followed by York (n=26), Peel (n=18), and Durham (n=2). Three respondents listed postal codes outside of TRCA's jurisdiction; this is likely because Youth Council members must be either residents or attend school in TRCA's jurisdiction (Table 3).

Table 3 Respondent Municipalities

Region/Community	Number of Respondents	% of total responses
Durham	2	2%
Oshawa	1	1%
Pickering	1	1%
Outside TRCA Jurisdiction	3	3%
Milton	2	2%
Oakville	1	1%
Peel	18	16%
Brampton	12	10%
Caledon	1	1%
Mississauga	5	4%
Toronto	66	57%
Etobicoke	3	3%
North York	12	10%
Scarborough	11	9%
Toronto	40	34%
York	26	22%
Maple	2	2%
Markham	8	7%
Stouffville	2	2%
Thornhill	2	2%
Vaughan	5	4%
Woodbridge	7	6%
Grand Total	115	99%

First language was used as an indicator that the respondent is either new to Ontario, or part of a family who immigrated to Ontario within the last generation. It is an imperfect measure but does provide some insight into the difference between multi-generational Canadians and recent immigrants. Most respondents (81%) indicated that their first language was English (Table 4).

Table 4 Reported First Language

Language	Number of Respondents	Proportion of Non-English Speakers
Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese)	6	32%
Russian	2	11%
Arabic	2	11%
French	2	11%
Portuguese	1	5%
Korean	1	5%
Urdu	1	5%
Tagalog	1	5%
Marathi	1	5%
Finnish	1	5%
Filipino	1	5%

Topics of Interest

The most frequently selected topic was “Climate Change” with 59% of respondents. Figure 6 summarizes the distribution of topics selected by all respondents (n=116).

There are some differences in the reported most important issues between English and Non-English speakers (Figure 8). Most notably, 27% more English than Non-English speakers selected “Education”, 18% selected “Water Quality”, and 16% selected “City-building” as well as “Indigenous Reconciliation”. Likewise, 14% more Non-English than English speakers selected “Climate Change”, 11% selected “Arts and Culture”, 9% selected “Renewable Energy” and 9% selected “Air Quality”.

There are notable differences in reported important issues between residents of different municipalities (Figure 9). The majority of all respondents selected “Climate Change”, but a larger proportion of York residents (73%) and Peel residents (78%) selected this option compared to Toronto (50%). “Wildlife and Habitat Conservation” was also selected more frequently among York (69%) and Peel (67%) residents, compared to Toronto (36%). “Access to Green Space, Parks, and Natural Areas” was selected more frequently by Toronto (42%) and Peel (44%) residents, compared to York (15%). Interestingly, “Biodiversity” was selected by the majority of Peel residents (61%) but was selected by a much small proportion of Toronto (23%) and York (31%) residents. Due to the small number of respondents, those responses from outside of TRCA’s jurisdiction and from Durham Region were omitted from further analysis.

Perception of Environmental Health

Respondents were asked to identify what they considered to be the best description of the health of the natural environment in their neighbourhood on a scale from poor to excellent. Most respondents selected “Good”, but some regional differences were noted. 6% of Toronto respondents selected “poor”, and no respondents from any other

region selected this option. Most Toronto and York respondents selected “Good”, and most Peel respondents selected “fair”. The same analysis was carried out looking at English and non-English speakers, but little difference between the groups was noted and thus the results have been omitted from this report.

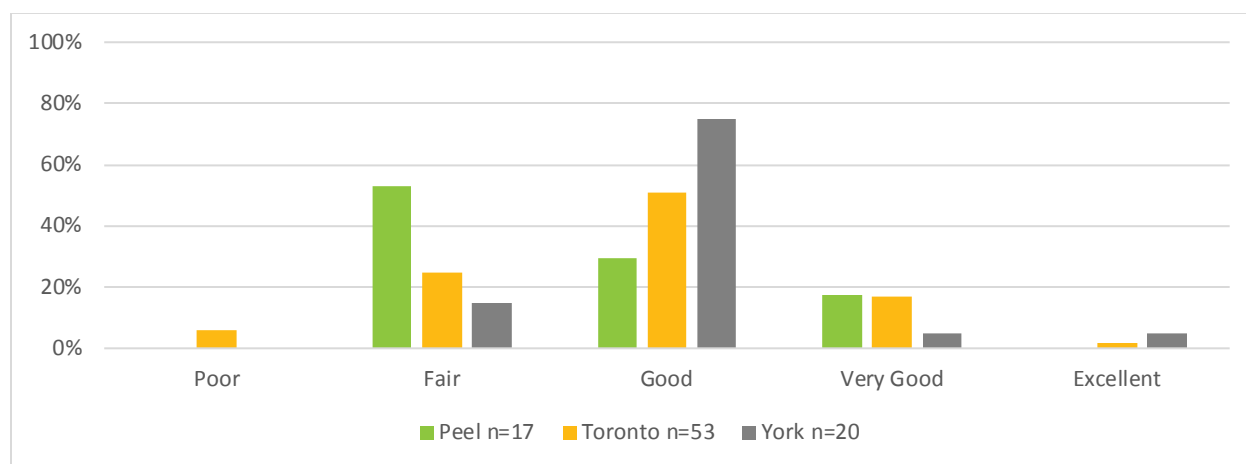


Figure 5 Reported Perception of Environmental Health by Municipality

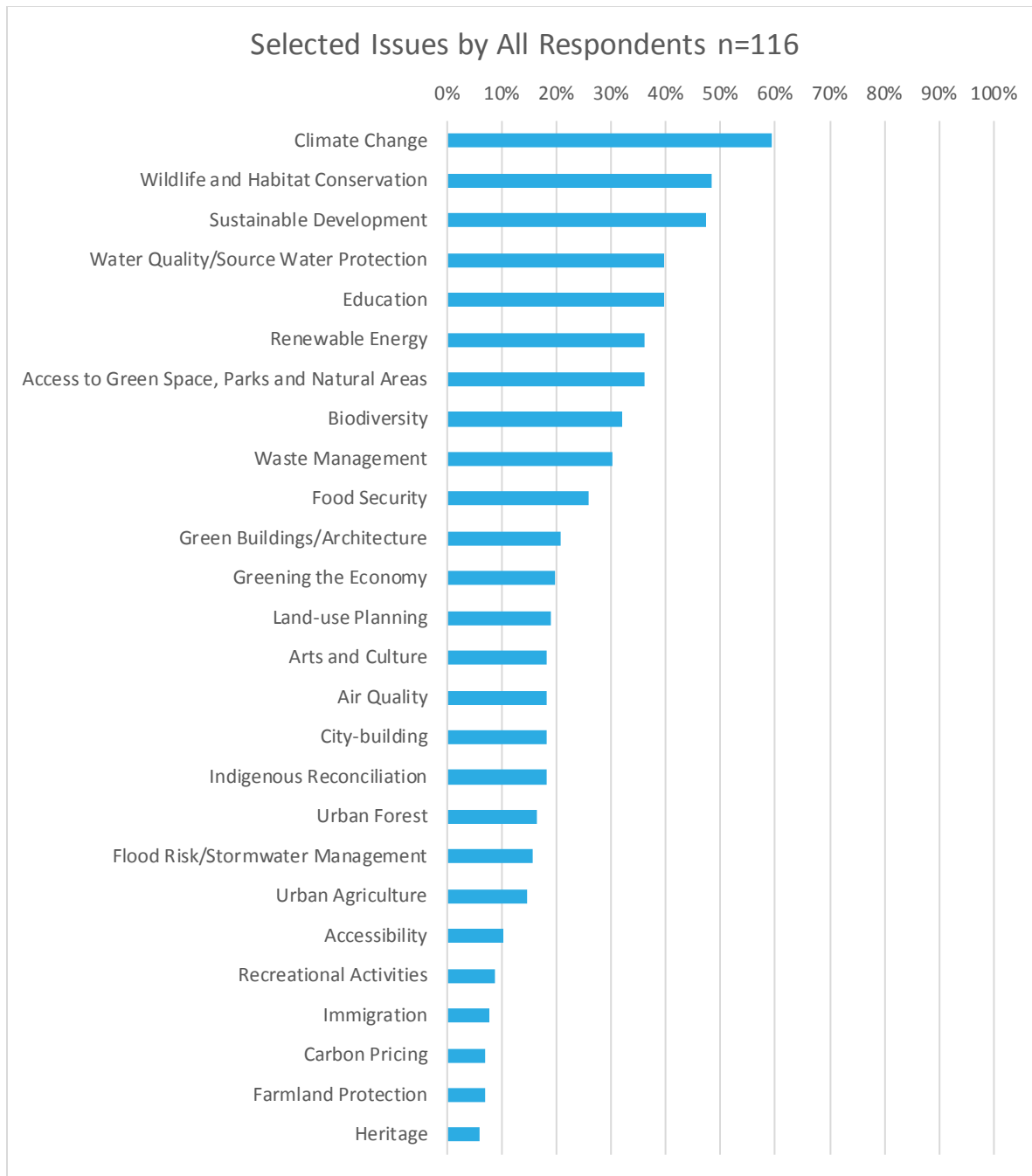


Figure 6 Issues Selected

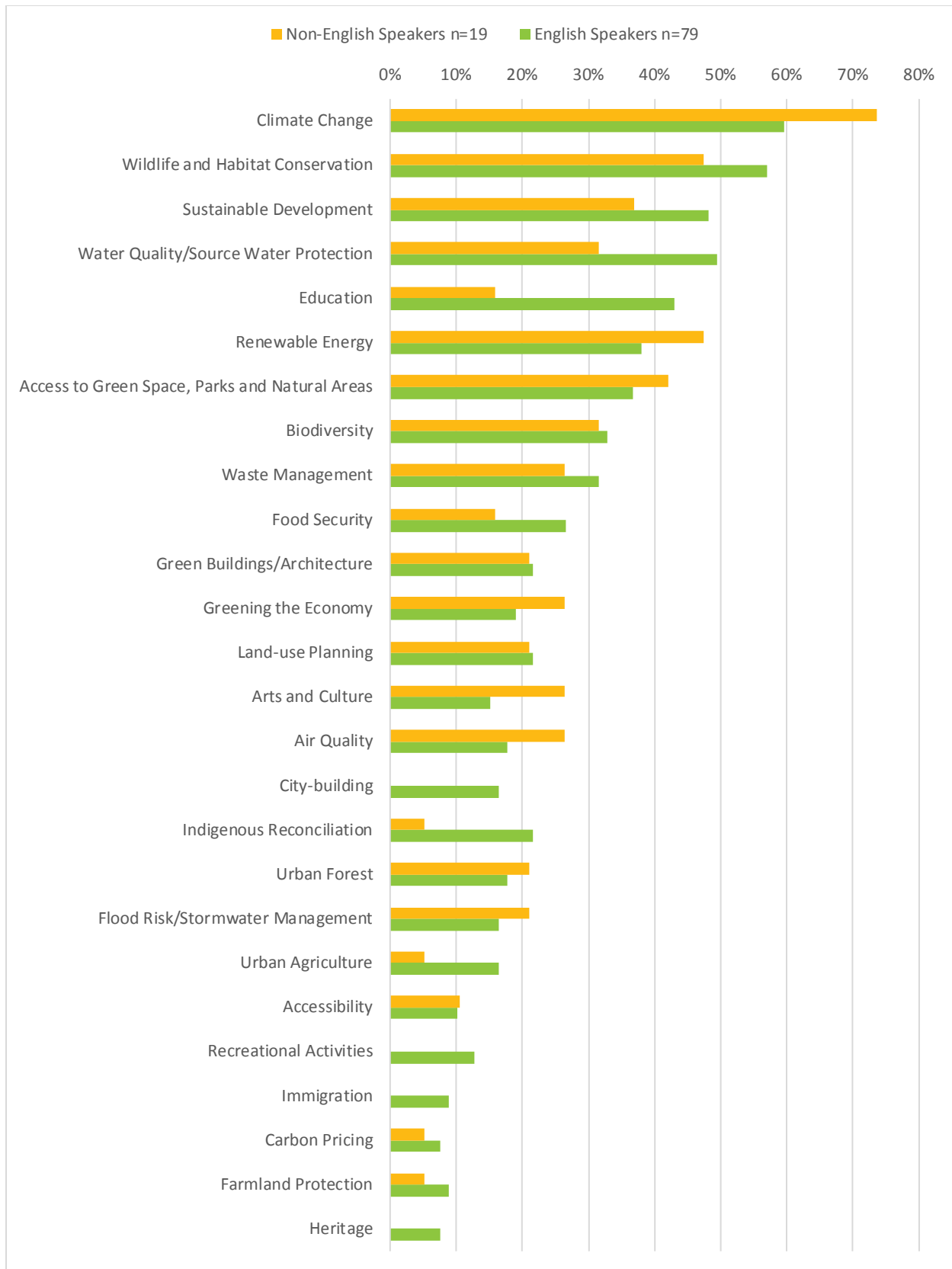


Figure 7 Topics Selected by English and Non-English Speakers

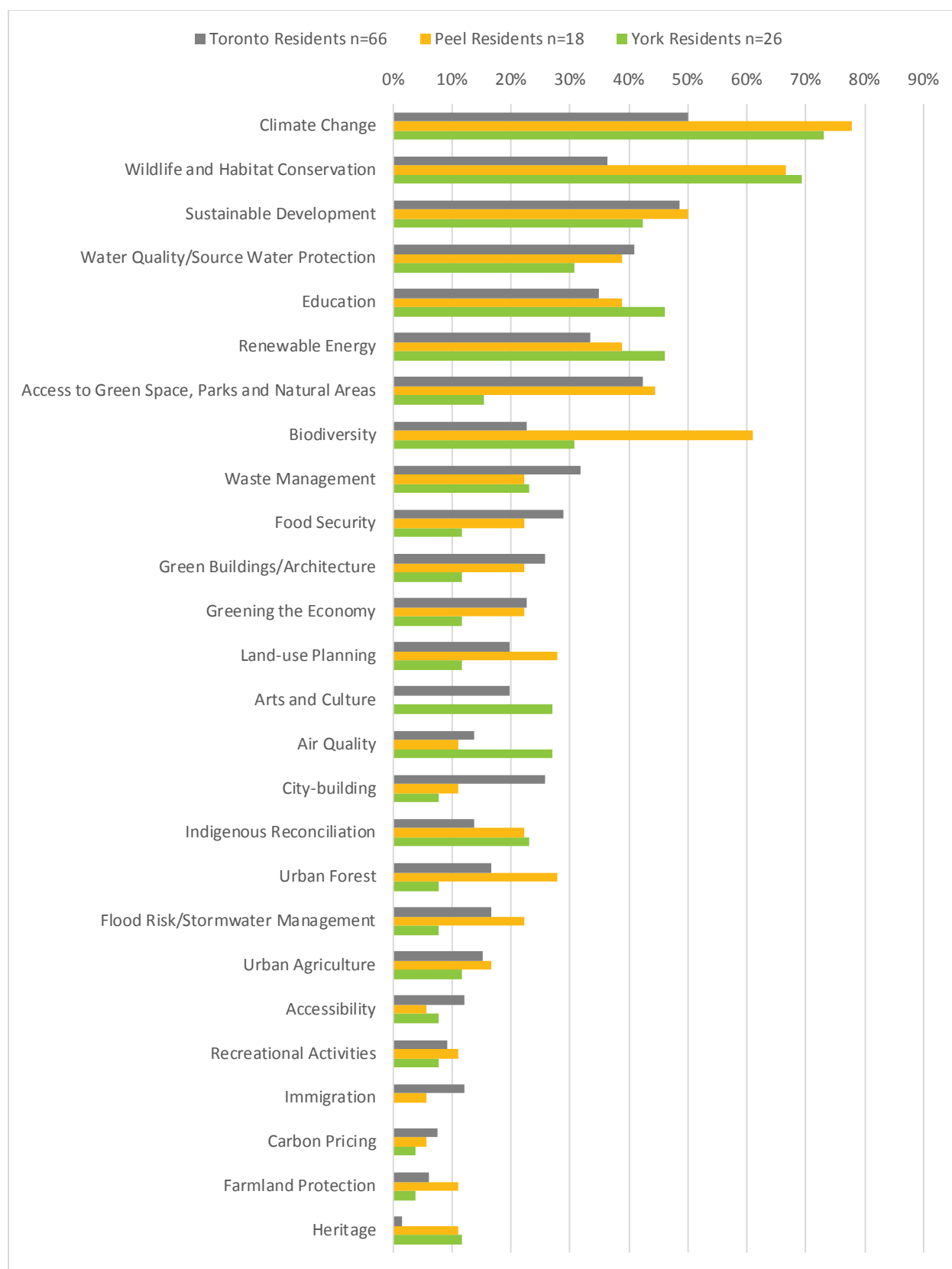


Figure 8 Topics Selected by Municipality

Online Email Campaign

To engage current members, recruit new members, and encourage individuals to complete the survey, an email campaign was developed by TRCA's Marketing and Communications team. Ten emails were drafted, each with a different theme. The themes were chosen based on the results of the survey of youth interests. Individuals could sign up for the series and would receive each e-mail ten days apart. Each email also encouraged participants to visit the Youth Council YourSay page and to complete the survey.

The series was advertised on Gmail. with a \$100 budget the Youth Council gained 18 new subscribers. The ad received 6,006 impressions and 1,076 clicks. A click is simply when someone expands the ad within Gmail and is when a cost-per-click charge is applied. On average, the cost per click (to expand the ad in Gmail) was \$0.10. From this, there were 18 clicks to the landing page with the same number of new subscribers to the email series. This means that each new subscriber acquisition cost about \$5.55. This cost is considered quite good, as there is considerably more value in having someone join your email list rather than simply gaining web page views. Furthermore, the Youth Council will be able to continually engage these new subscribers through email and continue to build relationships with them.

Create Fun Opportunities

Youth Council Executive investigated the engagement preferences of the general membership. They wanted to determine if members were interested in being actively engaged (e.g., hand on tree planting event) or more passively engaged (e.g., webinar). These results would help to determine the kinds of activities that would be most appealing to the general membership.

A short survey of engagement preferences was sent to general members and 18 responses (15% response rate) was received. This is a low response rate but is considered to be within the acceptable range for a one-time survey link. Generally, respondents were more interested in active engagement opportunities. A summary of the responses can be found in Figure 9; for analysis the scale of "completely disagree" to "completely agree" was transferred to numerical values from -2 to 2. The mean for each response was calculated to provide an indication of how strongly respondents agreed (positive score closer to 2), or disagreed (negative score closer to -2) with a series of statements:

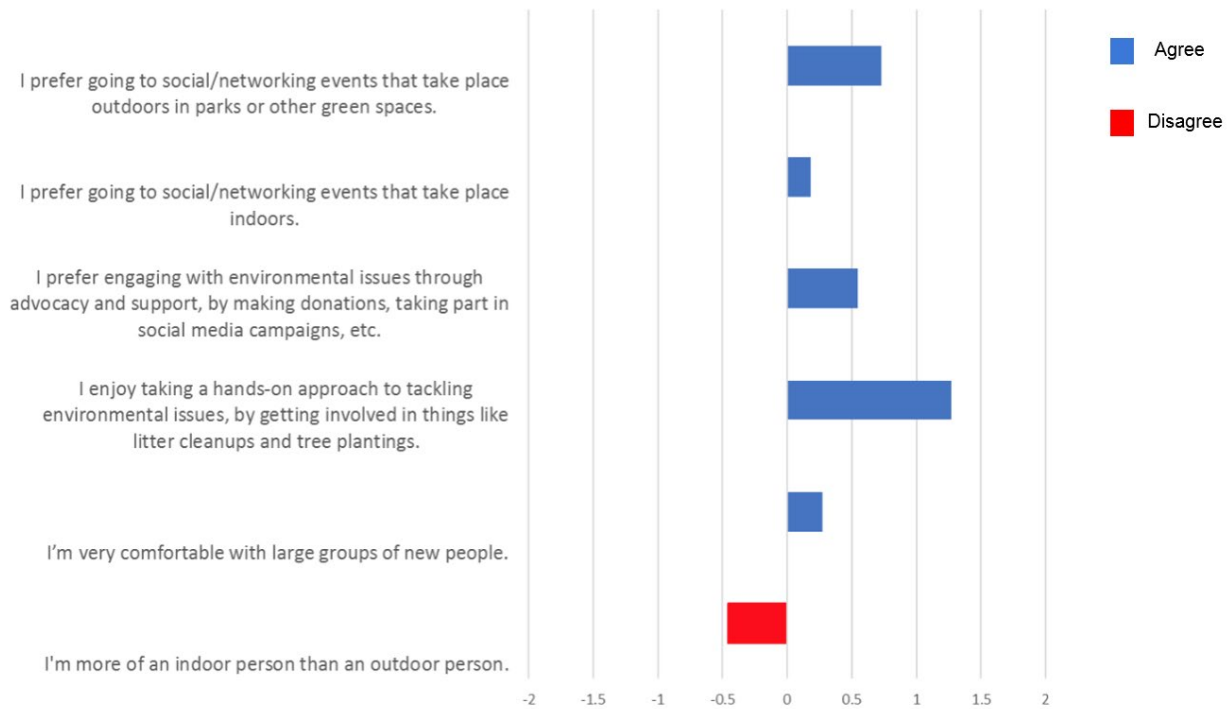


Figure 9 Engagement Preference of Members

The Youth Council Executive expressed interest in The Meadoway project. Corey Wells, Project Manager, TRCA Project Management Office was invited to a Youth Council meeting to present on behalf of the TRCA Meadoway team. Through discussion with TRCA staff, it was determined that one of the best opportunities for a volunteer event would be a litter clean up around Earth Day. This work would help contribute to restoration work in the Meadoway, as litter clean-ups must be carried out prior to any seeding or mowing. The Youth Council Executive held a clean-up event on April 28th 2019. They advertised via the spring newsletter and through a posting to TRCA's social media account. There were fewer participants than anticipated (nine in attendance). This low attendance was attributed to having a selected a location that is not easily accessible by transit, having many competing Earth Day events that weekend, and by not pushing sufficient advertising through social media (which is thought to be the best way to reach youth). That said, participants were able to collect an impressive 271 lbs of litter.



Figure 10 Earth Day litter clean up in The Meadoway

Youth Council Executives looked to broaden the scope of “fun opportunities” and decided to include a book review in the newsletter. Books selected would fit into the category of environmental/sustainability but contained both fiction and non-fiction.

A year-end culmination event was also organized. This event was a documentary screening of three films: Swim Drink Fish, Fix and Release, and Hidden Rivers. The movie night was free and was held at Patagonia Toronto in partnership with Swim Drink Fish and Patagonia. There were over 140 participants at the event.



Figure 11 Youth Council Movie Night at Patagonia

PROGRAM EVALUATION

At the end of the one-year term, Youth Council executives were asked to reflect on the work they carried out over the course of their term. They were asked to consider the following questions first as individuals, and then brought their answers to a subsequent discussion:

1. What was your favourite part of the Youth Council?
2. What was your least favourite part of the Youth Council?
3. Do you think we accomplished our goals? Were the goals reasonable/attainable? (goals: build network, fun opportunities, understand youth perspectives)
4. What about procedures? Meetings (location and times), Executive structure (e.g., role of the chair etc), TRCA staff support, communication (whats app, email, text, FB)?
5. Do you think you benefited from your experience?
6. What would you do differently next time?
7. Do you have any suggestions to get more people out to our events/workshops/etc?

Structure

By and large, the executive members enjoyed their experience, especially being given the freedom to present their own ideas and determine the pathway to achieve those ideas. They found the networking experiences with external partners, RWA members and TRCA staff, as well as learning about the diversity of environmental themes from their peers, from partners and from TRCA, to be beneficial. They also enjoyed networking on a more personal level with other executive and general members.

Monthly meetings were agreed to be necessary. They agreed that booking meetings in the summer was challenging, and there was a noticeable drop in participation among executive members. This was in part due to summer jobs, vacation and summer jobs abroad. As a result, one suggestion is to consider having monthly meetings (including locations) booked well in advance so that they can be made a priority for members, in contrast to finding times that worked for a majority.

In the Terms of Reference, executive members had agreed to a rotating Chair structure, whereby the Chair could change from meeting to meeting. Members acknowledged that this was positive in that multiple people had a chance to chair meetings, but in practice it proved to be too onerous. Few executives volunteered, and it made it challenging to create consistent agendas and minutes. Therefore, it is recommended that positions such as Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary be term-length positions. Likewise, to help boost participation, roles and responsibilities for executives must be more clearly defined. One suggestion to achieve this is to assign roles to executive members; in this way two people would be responsible for events, two for newsletters, two for building networks etc.

Goals and Objectives

Generally, executives agreed that the Youth Council was able to make progress towards achieving program goals but agreed that more work should be done.

Build youth capacity and learning opportunities

The Youth Council itself is a mechanism to build youth capacity. This was achieved for executive members through their own identification of activities and programs. That said, the level of participation among executive members was varied—some members were actively engaged, while others participated infrequently. This was a source of frustration among members who were actively participating. Since the positions are voluntary it is difficult to enforce participation, but to mitigate this problem, greater care in the selection of executive could be taken. Interviews may provide more insight into whether prospective executives would be committed to actively participating.

At this early stage of the Youth Council, there has been limited interaction with the general membership. This interaction must be increased in subsequent years so that general members feel that they are being heard and have the means to provide input into Youth Council activities.

Build youth network

Creating a network is a long-term and ongoing process that will take longer than one year to achieve. That said, work towards establishing that network was carried out and has laid the groundwork to continue the development of a strong network. The newsletter serves as a means to connect the Youth Council Executive to the general membership, and also provides a platform to share upcoming volunteer opportunities with TRCA or with other groups identified and approached by the Executive.

Executive members agreed that some work had been carried out but felt that they could have done more to build that network utilizing their own personal networks. They also cited that having the opportunity to present at the RWA meeting provided them with important networking opportunities.

Measures:

5 Networking Opportunities (Evergreen Brickworks, Swim Drink Fish, Patagonia, Youth Biodiversity Network, Youth Challenge International)

2 Newsletters sent to all members

3 Events (guided walk, Meadoway clean-up, Movie Night)

1 YourSay Engagement Website

Learn about what is important to youth

A survey of members has provided some insight into youth perspectives and has been able to illuminate some regional and demographic differences in opinion. This is valuable information that will be used to guide future development of Youth Council activities and can be used by TRCA to guide education and community engagement activities.

Executive members pointed out that surveys are one means of collecting data regarding youth perspectives and suggest that more should be done to reach out to general members on a personal level.

Measures:

1 Entrance Survey delivered to all participants (n=116, 100% response rate)

1 Engagement Preference Survey to members (n=18, 15% response rate)

1 YourSay Engagement Website

Create fun opportunities for youth

The Youth Council was able to organize two events: an Earth Day litter clean-up and a free documentary movie night. While few people attended the litter clean up, the movie night was very well attended. The success of the movie night can be attributed to utilizing networks to advertise and to provide free fun opportunities for youth. Patagonia (contacted by Youth Council executives) hosted the event, and through their own network was able to secure donated refreshments. Swim Drink Fish (also contacted by Youth Council Executives) also attended and provided screening rights for their film and advertised the event through their networks. In sum, the event was both a fun opportunity for youth and a capacity-building opportunity for the executives.

Executive members would like to have been able to hold more events, but also said that as this was the inaugural year of the Youth Council, they were satisfied with what they were able to accomplish. They also agreed that it was a learning experience in the kind of work required to put together fun networking opportunities and engaging events.

Measures:

3 Events (guided walk, Meadoway clean-up, Movie Night)

1 YourSay Engagement Website

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Keep four spaces on the Executive open for returning Executive members. This will help facilitate knowledge transfer and provide continuity to the program.
2. Consider holding interviews for new Executive members
3. Consider breaking over the summer (unless Executive is committed to continuing)
4. Book meetings well in advance at an agreed-upon location
5. Stream-line communication between executives and TRCA utilizing one method (to be agreed upon by Executive)
6. Encourage executives to reach out to their own networks
7. Create more specific roles, beyond Chair and Vice-Chair, for executive members (e.g., events, network, newsletter)
8. Prioritize connecting Executive to general membership and increasing communication between both groups.

CONCLUSION

Overall the first year of the Youth Council was successful. While not all goals were achieved in their entirety, significant strides toward achievement were made. The Youth Council will open recruitment for new executives in October 2019. By implementing the recommendations provided by RWA working group members, former Youth Council Executive members and TRCA staff, the program will be able to make considerable progress toward goal achievement.

Appendix 1: Recruitment Questionnaire

What issues are the most important to you? Please select your top five from the following list

- Biodiversity
- Greening the Economy
- Education
- Farmland
- Protection
- Accessibility
- Sustainable Development
- Food Security
- Immigration
- Climate Change
- Indigenous Reconciliation
- City-building
- Recreational
- Activities
- Access to Green Space, Parks and Natural Areas
- Waste Management
- Renewable Energy
- Heritage
- Urban Forest
- Land-use Planning
- Air Quality
- Green Buildings/Architecture
- Flood Risk/Stormwater Management
- Urban Agriculture
- Wildlife and Habitat Conservation
- Carbon Pricing
- Water Quality/Source Water Protection
- Arts and Culture

Is there anything we missed?

How would you describe the natural environment in your neighbourhood?

Poor Fair Good Very Good Excellent I don't know

Did you grow up in the Toronto region? Yes/No

If no, where?

What year were you born?

What is your first language? English/French/Other please identify

Do you identify as First Nation, Métis, and/or Inuit? Yes/No/Prefer not to answer

What is your gender? Male/Female/Not Listed Here/Prefer not to say

What is your Postal Code?

Name?

Email?

Yes! Send me news and information by email.

By clicking the checkbox above, you provide consent to Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to send newsletters and other emails to the email address provided. You may unsubscribe at any time by using the link at the bottom of every email, or by contacting TRCA at info@trca.on.ca, 416.661.6600, or mailing 5 Shoreham Drive, Toronto, ON M3N 1S4.

TRCA is committed to respecting your personal privacy and will never share your private information with a third party. For more information, please see our Privacy Policy

Appendix 2: Youth Council Executive Retreat Presentation

Youth Council Executive Retreat

Albion Hills Field Centre

Presented by:

Kate Goodale, Project Manager Humber Watershed

Raysha Carmichael, Coordinator, Peel EcoSchools

Daphne Paszterko, Coordinator, Newcomer Youth Program

January 12, 2019

Agenda

9:00 AM -12:30 PM

- Breakfast, Intro and Icebreakers
- Low Ropes
- Marshmallow Challenge
- Framework and Terms of Reference

LUNCH 12:30 -1:30 PM

1:30 – 5:15 PM

- Data Presentation, Develop Objectives
- GPS Activity
- Develop Workplan

DINNER 5:15- 6:15 PM

CAMPFIRE 6:15 -7:15 PM



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Introductions – Famous Duos

- Pick a card from the hat
- Once everyone has their label, place yours on your chest
- Walk around the room to find your other half

Learn more about your partner:

1. What is your name?
2. What do you think the biggest environmental challenge your community faces is?
3. What is one thing you hope to achieve through the Youth Council
4. If you were an animal what would you be and why?



Introduce your partner to the group

Ice Breaker – The Story of Your Name

Explain to your partner what your name means (if anything) and where it comes from.

You can also discuss the following questions.

1. Who gave you your name? Why?
2. What is the origin of your name?
3. What are your nicknames, if any?
4. Do you like your name? Why or Why not?
5. What do you prefer to be called?

Take some notes if you like – we will be asking you to share information about your partners' name at the end of the discussion period.

HI!
my name is...



Low Ropes Activity

Get ready to go outside to try out Albion's Low Ropes Course!



The Marshmallow Challenge

Aim: Construct a spaghetti tower that has a marshmallow on the top. The tallest tower standing unassisted wins!

Rules:

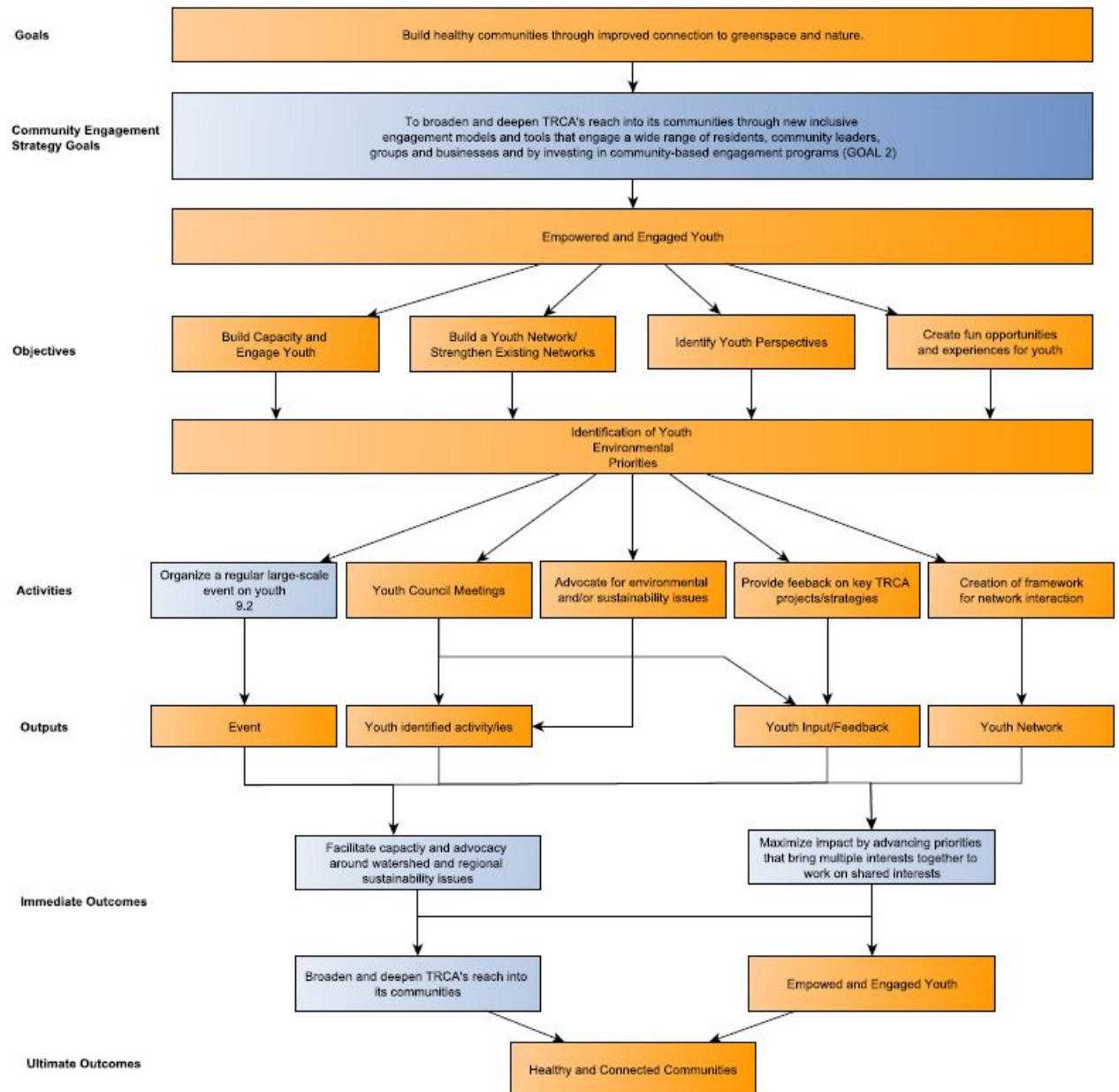
- Only use materials provided: yard of masking tape, 25 sticks spaghetti, marshmallow
- Time limit: 20 minutes
 - Marshmallow must be on the top
 - Tower must be standing unassisted.
- Measurement is a vertical measurement from the table top up
- You may stick masking table tape to the table top
- Spaghetti may be broken into smaller pieces
- Once broken, pieces may not be replaced



Review Youth Council Framework

Attachment 1: Youth Council Program Framework

- Items Identified by RWA Youth Council working group
- Items Identified by TRCA Community Engagement Strategy



Review Youth Council Terms of Reference

- Review existing TOR
 - Decide on the STRUCTURE of the Youth Council
 - Decide on MEETING schedule
 - Other revisions
- Brainstorm during this exercise on objectives
- Compile questions for RWA Youth Council Committee for feedback (if needed)

Data Presentation

Learn more about Youth Council Network:

- Demographics
- Priorities

Consider how these could influence:

- Objectives
- Workplan

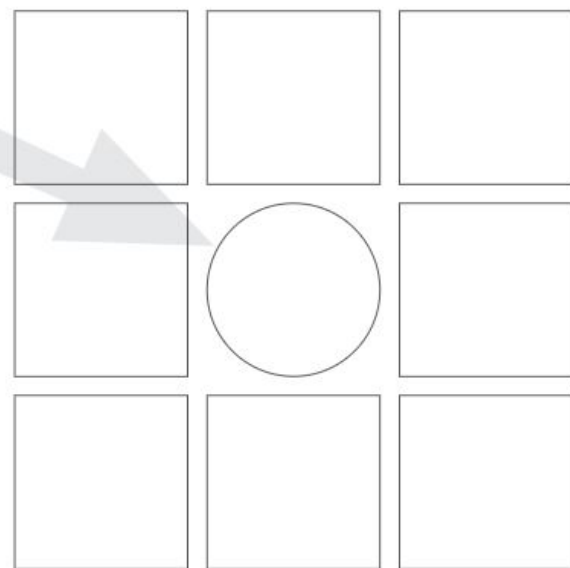
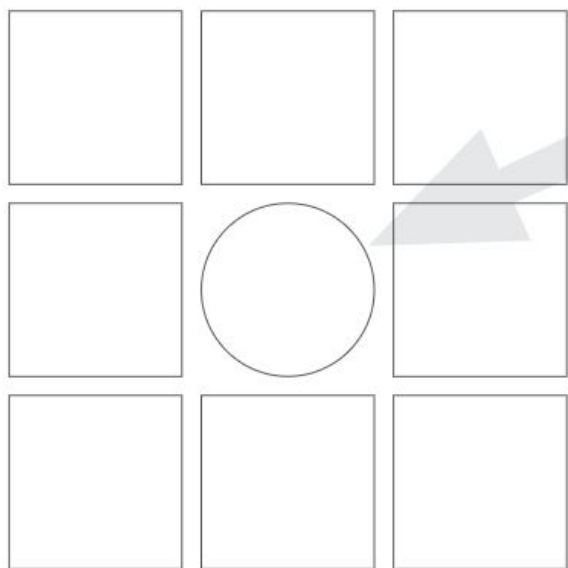
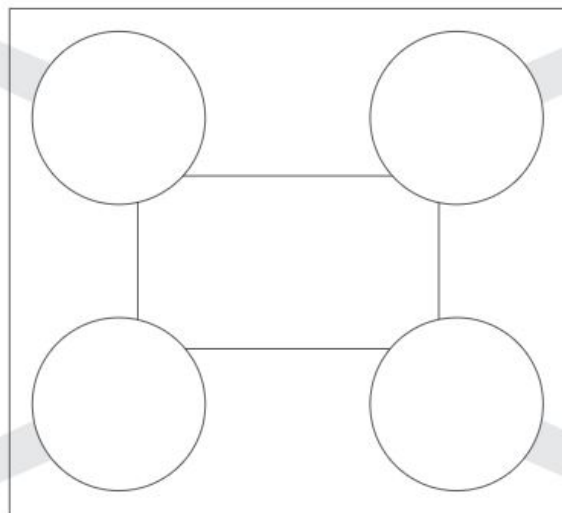
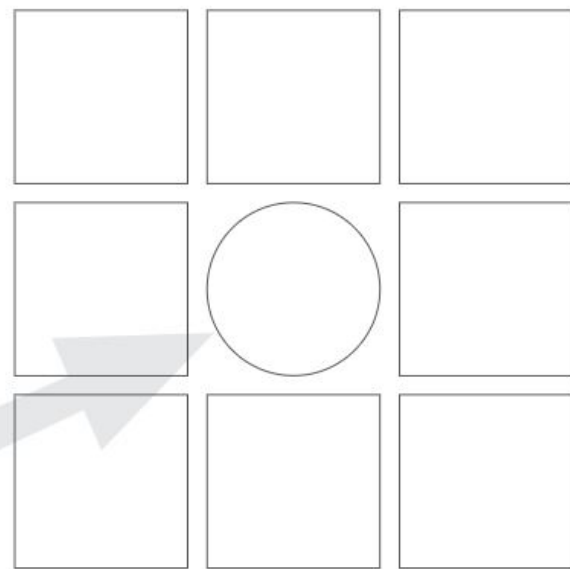
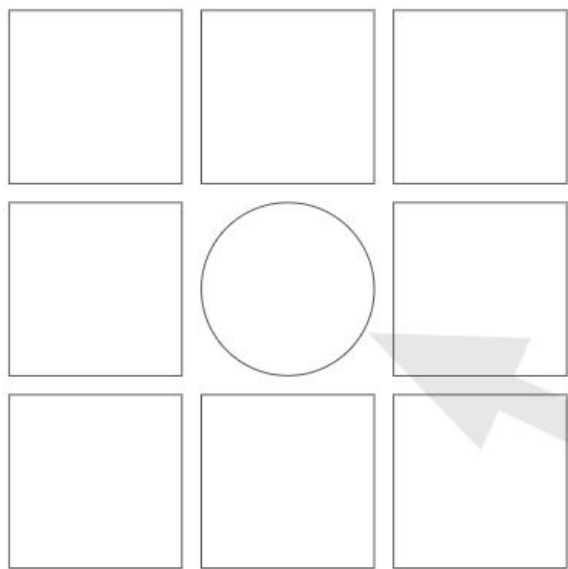


Take Action. Make Change. Do Good

Developing Objectives



LOTUS BLOSSOM DIAGRAM



Developing a Workplan

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Workplan - Template				
2					
3	Milestone	Step	Activity	Start Date	End Date
4		1. Format Project Plan	Meeting with Mentor, October 8, 2018		
5			Clarify expectations for deliverables re: length, layout and format of report, final deliverable format		
6			Clarify expectations for communication with mentor (eg main team member responsible to be liaison with mentor, best method for reaching mentor (phone, email, text?))		
7			Obtain examples of similar deliverables from organization and discuss what aspects should be retained		
8			Clarify expectations for success with mentor		
9					
10	Technical Report	2. Researching Report	Determine sections of report and divide amongst team members	October 9, 2018	October 11, 2018
11			Background research on Section I		
12			Background research on Section II		
13					
14					
15		3. Writing Report	Introduction		
16			Section 1 - Use of hot water return systems in Unionville		
17			Section 2		
18	Technical Report		Recommendations		
19	Technical Report	4. Editing and Formatting Report	Read report for grammar/spelling/inconsistencies		
20			Format report, insert graphics etc.		
21					

Appendix 3: Terms of Reference

Youth Council Terms of Reference

1.0 BACKGROUND

Since the 1980s, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) watershed and waterfront committees and task forces have been instrumental in supporting the development and implementation of TRCA's watershed management activities. The Rouge Comprehensive Basin Management Strategy (1988), was TRCA's first initiative supported by a citizen based "public committee." The 1989 Greenspace Strategy committed to a program of watershed strategy development for each of TRCA's watersheds in cooperation with a public advisory committee for each watershed. Over the past two decades, the Duffins-Carruthers Watershed Resource Group, Rouge Park Alliance, Don Watershed Regeneration Council, Humber Watershed Alliance and Etobicoke-Mimico Watersheds Coalition have played a significant role in building community stewardship capacity to help TRCA deliver on priorities of watersheds and waterfront. Watershed and waterfront residents and stakeholders are also engaged through Conservation Lands stewardship committees and integrated/multi-objective or sector-based programs such as Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plans (SNAP) and Partners in Project Green: A Pearson Eco-Business Zone (PPG).

TRCA's 2013-2022 Strategic Plan highlights regional sustainability challenges of increasing scope and scale - such as preparing for the impacts of climate change, transitioning to a low carbon economy, managing urbanization and growth pressures. The Plan also calls for regional engagement of a broad cross-section of the population at both local and regional scales within TRCA's jurisdiction. As such, in 2015, upon the completion of the existing terms for the Don, Humber and Etobicoke-Mimico watershed committees, the Authority directed staff to update TRCA's community-focused engagement model in light of new trends and opportunities in civic engagement and to facilitate the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

On June 23, 2017, at Authority Meeting #8/17, The Community Engagement Strategy along with a new citizen governance model was adopted. The new citizen governance model includes the Regional Watershed Alliance (RWA), and its subcommittees; Youth Council, Watershed/Waterfront Working Groups. An Indigenous Liaison Committee to the Authority has also been approved as part of the proposed governance model (Figure 1). The RWA is a formal citizen advisory board of TRCA which will report to the Authority on regular basis.

The Youth Council will be comprised of community youth champions, existing youth group representatives and new recruits. The Youth Council will report to the Regional Watershed Alliance.

The mission, mandate and goals, along with the Terms of Reference for the working groups, and Youth Council will be developed by TRCA and the Regional Watershed Alliance in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Authority Direction

Resolution #A178/17 from Authority Meeting #8/17, held on October 27, 2017.

2.0 YOUTH COUNCIL MISSION AND MANDATE

Mission: Build healthy communities through improved connection to greenspace and nature.

Mandate: Reporting to the Regional Watershed Alliance (Figure 1) and working closely with TRCA and the RWA, the Youth Council will be established as a subcommittee to the RWA with the purpose of:

Build Capacity and Engage Youth	provide youth across the Toronto region with learning opportunities;
Build a Youth Network/Strengthen Existing Networks	create/enhance a broad network of youth in the region who are interested in environmental and sustainability issues;
Identify Youth Perspectives	develop an understanding of youth opinion around current environmental issues and understand/investigate how these might be incorporated in the work of TRCA and its partners; and
Create fun opportunities for youth	provide entertaining and engaging learning opportunities.

3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Youth Council shall:

- 1) Through events and on-line engagement, provide a forum for communication by maintaining and enhancing contacts within the wider youth community. Mobilize and empower networks of that community to build capacity and influence people's behavior;
- 2) Adhere to the basic principles of sound ecosystem management and sustainability that recognizes the interrelationships between cultural heritage, physical characteristics, biological conditions and economic needs, and the integration of conservation, restoration, social and economic activities necessary for the health of the watersheds;
- 3) Work with staff in setting regional and local priorities that help advance TRCA's and its municipal partners' objectives of sustainable communities, recommendations of TRCA's 2017 Community Engagement Strategy, watershed plans, watershed report cards and The Living City Report Card;
- 4) Advocate on regional and local environmental policy issues through discussion papers, briefs and comments etc. and providing advice and comments to staff and the Authority on relevant programs and policies impacting TRCA watersheds and communities. Examples include: TRCA's Terrestrial Natural Heritage System Strategy; Sustainable Near-urban Agriculture Policy; watershed plans; TRCA Trails Strategy; and TRCA Greenspace Strategy;
- 5) Act as a resource to TRCA, TRCA's municipal partners and The Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation by providing advice on matters of community interest;
- 6) Work with TRCA and Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation to identify priorities, seek new partnerships, public sector investment and other sources of funding;
- 7) Where appropriate, and when requested, serve as a spokesperson for media and government relations on behalf of staff;
- 8) Seek political support at all levels of government;
- 9) Collaborate with other conservation authorities, municipalities, environmental non-government organizations (ENGO) and groups on opportunities that transcend TRCA jurisdictional boundaries;

10) Maximize the collective impact of TRCA and other environmental and sustainability champions in the region through resource and data sharing, measuring, and reporting on regional priorities; and

11) Report to the Regional Watershed Alliance on a regular basis.

4.0 STRUCTURE

Supported by TRCA staff, the Youth Council Executive will have a rotating Chair, rotating Vice Chair, and will be comprised of approximately 10 voting members.

4.1.1 Voting Members

The Youth Council Executive members will be recruited based on a diverse skill set, sector and community specific expertise, network connections, demonstrated leadership, experience, and knowledge of the watersheds within TRCA's jurisdiction.

4.1.2 Non-Voting General Members

Youth Council membership will be open to all youth (aged 16-24) who reside in or attend school within TRCA's jurisdiction. Members will be invited to attend Youth Council events, and provide input to Youth Council Executives, but will not have voting privileges.

4.1.3 Guests

The Youth Council meetings are open to the public. Municipal or other agency staff may be invited as guests to offer presentations or participate in discussions on relevant issues. Guests will not have voting privileges nor be eligible for travel expenses to and from meetings.

4.1.4 Chair or Vice Chair

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Youth Council will be selected on a monthly rotating basis from amongst its executive members for the term.

The Youth Council Chair and Vice Chair will provide leadership in building a shared vision and commitment for moving forward with the Regional Watershed Alliance's mission, mandate and responsibilities.

The Chair will have the following additional responsibilities:

- Presiding over Youth Council meetings, setting the agenda and generally ensuring the effectiveness of meetings

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair will perform the above functions.

The Vice Chair will have the following additional responsibilities:

- Taking notes, and circulating meeting minutes.

4.2 Executive Membership Appointment Process

Watershed Residents and Students of Schools within Watersheds

Applications from watershed residents and students attending school within TRCA's jurisdiction will be solicited through direct recruitment, announcements in newsletters, local newspapers, web sites, volunteer networks, and through various social media platforms. A committee of TRCA staff and RWA members will select the Youth Council Executive members through the application process using a set of criteria to ensure suitability and eligibility.

4.3 Term of Appointment

Youth Council Executive members will be established with a revolving term of one year. Members will be appointed for a one-year term with a possible extension of up to two years. This will allow for a staggered replacement process maintaining a balance between new and experienced members. The membership will be reviewed on an annual basis. Members unable to fulfill their commitments may be replaced as per TRCA's Roles of Conduct.

Notice of resignations and recommendations for new members will be presented to TRCA for approval on an 'as required' basis.

4.4 Meetings

Executive Members are required to attend monthly evening meetings. Meetings are expected to be approximately three hours in length, at the discretion of the Youth Council. An agenda will be circulated one week in advance of meetings.

The Executive will have the discretion to call additional meetings, if required. Additional meetings may be required to deal with specific issues from time to time. Some meetings may be held during regular work hours depending on the preference and availability of members and staff or via conference call or online meetings.

Light meals and refreshments will be provided at evening meetings.

4.5 Reporting

The Youth Council is considered an Advisory Body of the Regional Watershed Alliance. The Youth Council will report to the RWA on projects and progress through their meeting minutes or seek RWA approval as necessary on specific initiatives.

The Youth Council is not a formal commenting body regarding review and approval of planning applications or permits.

4.6 Quorum and Governance

A quorum will consist of voting members in numbers greater than or equal to one-third of the total number of voting members on the Youth Council Executive.

Consensus-based decision making will be the preferred procedure. Formal decisions will be based on a simple majority vote. In the event of a tie, the vote fails.

4.7 Rules of Conduct

The Regional Watershed Alliance will adhere to TRCA's Rules of Conduct as adopted by Resolution #A34 at Authority Meeting #2/86, held on March 21, 1986, and as amended periodically or superseded by any bylaws enacted as per the Conservation Authorities Act. Other policies and legislation may be applicable in regard to code of conduct, conflict of interest and Volunteer Policy.

4.8 TRCA Staff Support

The Youth Council will be supported by a team of staff from the Community Engagement and Outreach, and the Education and Training Divisions including:

- Director, CE and O;
- Government and Community Relation Specialists;
- project managers;
- coordinators;
- administrative support staff.

Staff will provide the following support functions:

- Coordination of Youth Council meetings;
- Administrative and financial support;
- Strategic guidance on alignment of Youth Council work plan priorities with other strategic opportunities;
- Coordination of work with The Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation;
- The Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation support for management of any funds collectively raised by the Youth Council or any of its subcommittees that support the implementation of their work plans; and
- TRCA technical expertise on projects and initiatives of the Youth Council and its subcommittees.

4.9 Funding

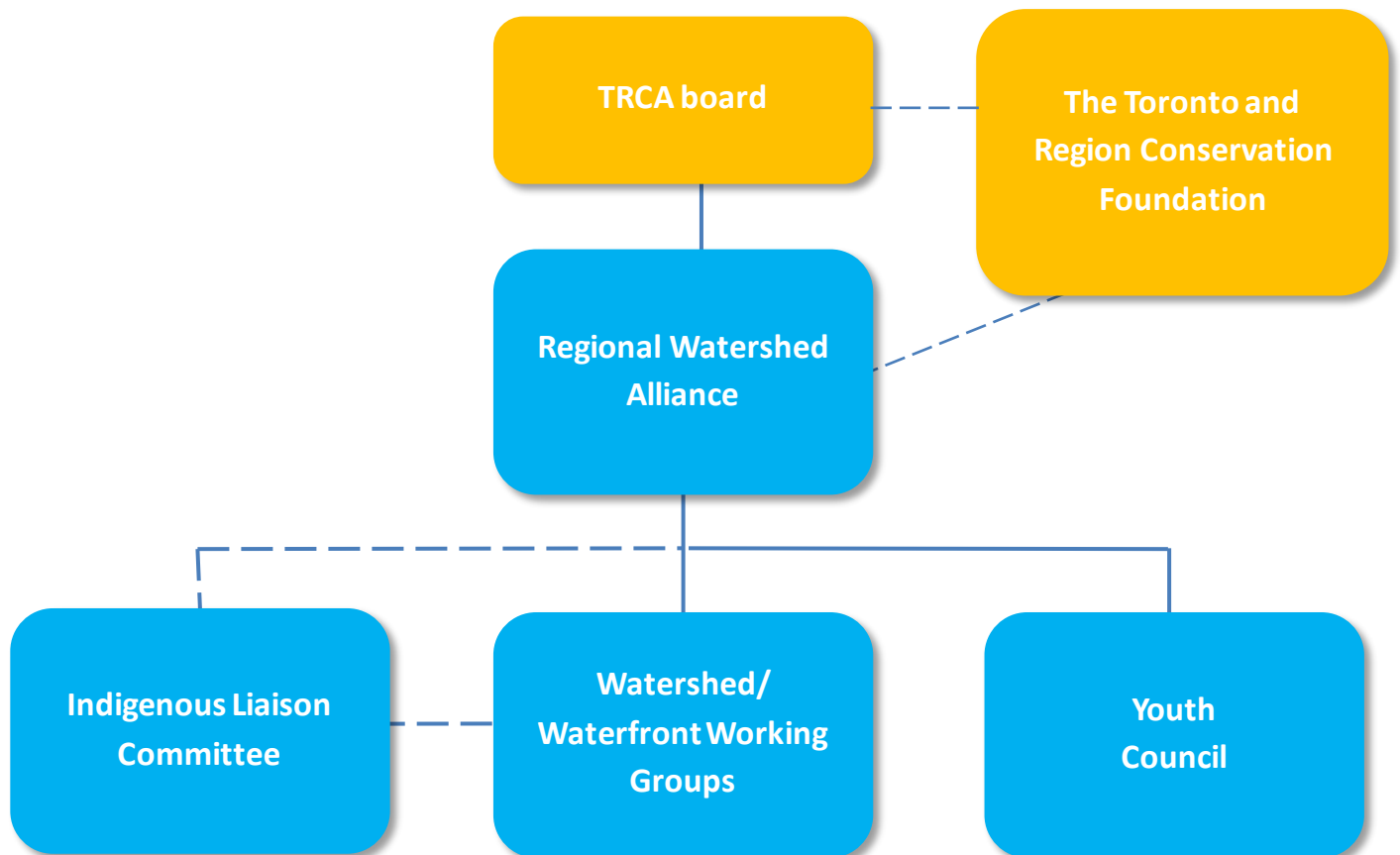
Funding will be available for projects and activities of the Youth Council based on approved work plans and available TRCA budget. Members are encouraged to assist in securing other resources and partnerships for Youth Council projects and activities, whenever possible through collective public investment opportunities. In-kind or other support for the projects and activities of the council are welcome from businesses, industries, government agencies, private foundations, educational institutions and others in accordance with TRCA policies. In-kind or other support will be coordinated with the assistance of The Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation, where appropriate.

5.0 COMPENSATION FOR YOUTH COUNCIL MEMBERS

At regular Youth Council meetings executive members will be eligible for travel expenses and any other expenses approved in advance by TRCA's Director, CE and O, according to TRCA policy, where these are not covered by their agency or other source. The TRCA policy on volunteers is also applicable and can be accessed at: <http://trca.on.ca/get-involved/volunteer/volunteers-and-interns.dot>. Members shall not receive a per diem or honorarium for attendance at meetings and functions. General members are not eligible for

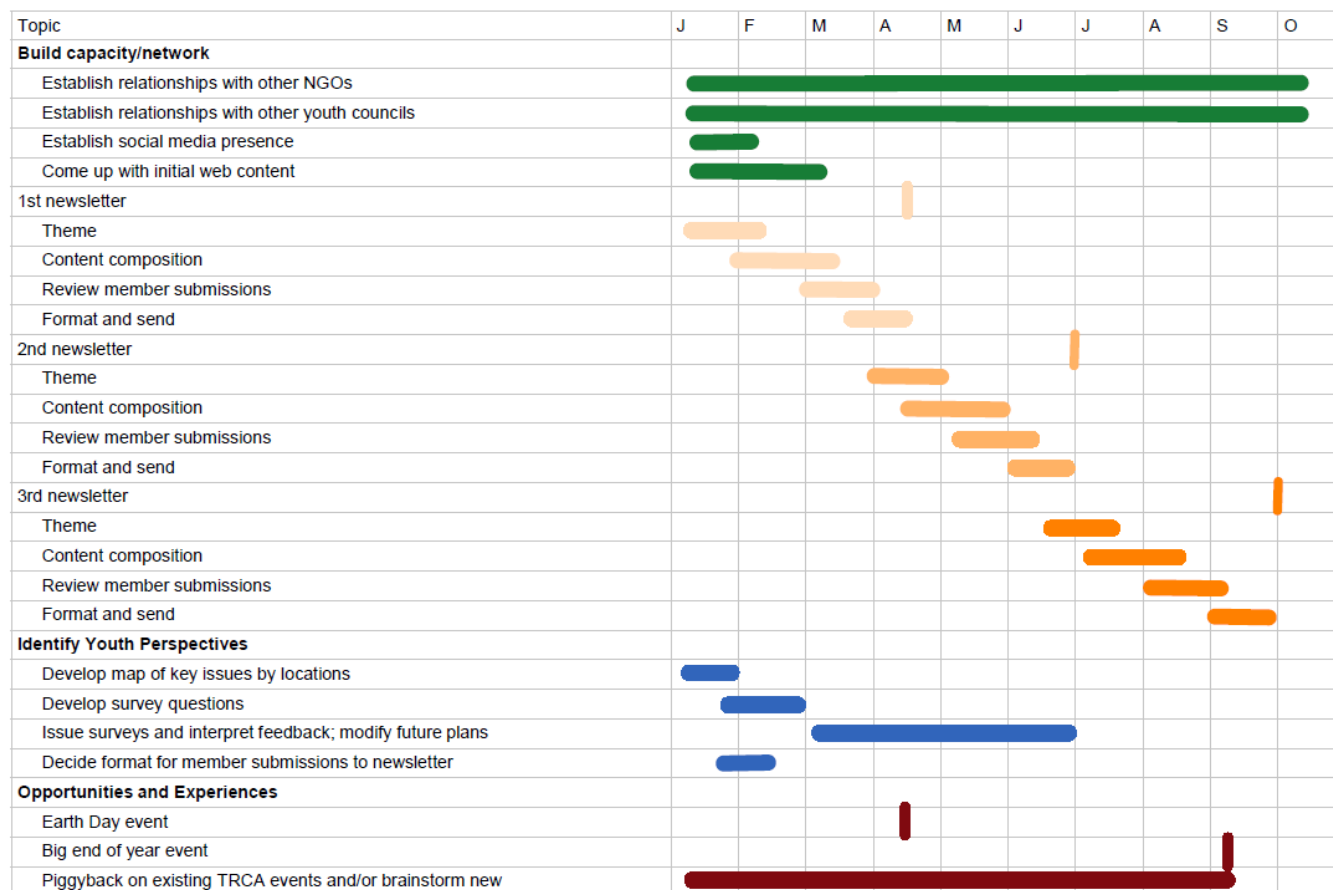
reimbursement of expenses (including travel expenses).

Figure 1: TRCA Citizen Governance Model



Appendix 4: Workplan

Gantt Chart Developed by Youth Council Executive at Retreat

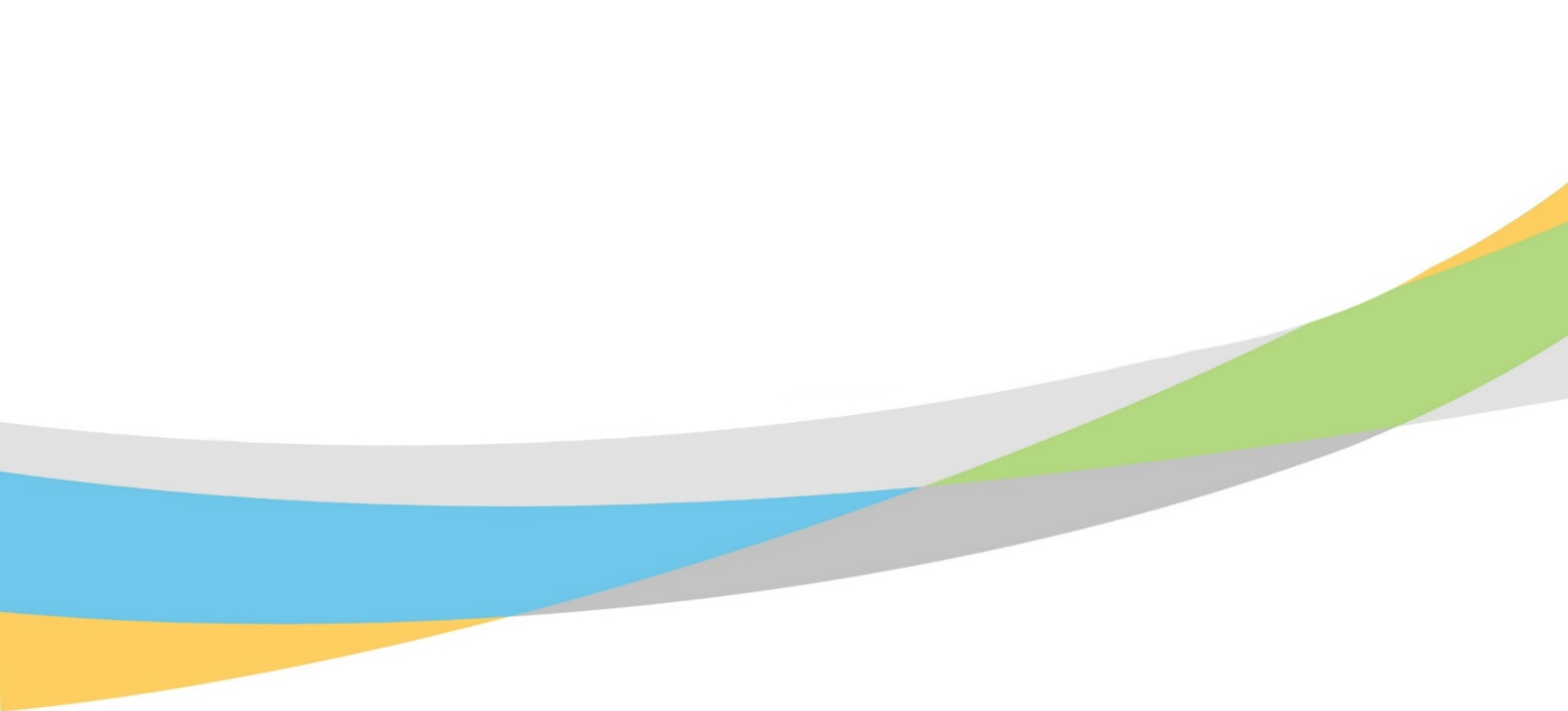


Formal Workplan:

Youth Council – Work Plan 2019

PROJECT NAME	TRCA Staff Lead
Regional Watershed Alliance (Working Group)	Kate Goodale, Project Manager, CE & O, TRCA

ACTION	TASK	STATUS	NOTES
Objective #1 : Build capacity among youth and build/strengthen youth network			
Establish relationships with other NGOs/Youth Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share opportunities with the YC network - identify synergies with potential partner organizations 	On going	External volunteering/networking opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Swim Drink Fish - Youth Challenge International, Climate Action Catalyst - Evergreen
Create social media presence	Use hashtag #TRCAYouth in lieu of social media accounts	On going	Working with marketing to develop materials
Create Web Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your Say website - TRCA landing site 	On going	Working with marketing to develop materials https://yoursay.ca/youth-perspectives
Create three newsletters	e-blasts to go out in April, July, September	On going	Working with marketing to develop materials
Objective #2: Identify Youth Perspectives			
Develop a map of key issues by locations	Google map of primary interests of members based on postal code	Complete	
Develop survey for wider public to better understand youth priorities across jurisdiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop survey - Push survey through network and TRCA social media - Analyze data 	In progress	- Survey has been developed and deployed
Present at Latornell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create Abstract - Create Presentation 	In Progress	Abstract has been submitted
Objective #3: Create fun opportunities and experiences for youth			
Earth Day event	Clean Up in the Meadoway	Complete	Event held April 28 th 2019
Create big year end event	Free Movie Night with Patagonia and Swim Drink Fish	Complete	Survey to YC members to determine interests, will inform the development of this event



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