ADDRESSING YOUTH (DIS)-ENGAGEMENT
IN THE CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER

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Abstract

This study explores youth engagement in New Westminster, asking why some youth participate in municipal planning and decision making, while others do not. It employs primary survey data from the Youth Engagement Survey to examine youth perspectives on community belonging, interest in civic participation, belief in the value of civic participation, intention of future civic engagement and tests individual civic knowledge. Survey data indicates particularly important factors within New Westminster affecting youth engagement include socio-economic status, gender, and minority status. Further analysis demonstrates that youth become less enchanted with political involvement as they become older; boys are less likely to be engaged in municipal planning and decision making as compared to girls; visible minorities have a lower rate of participation in many dimensions, and the socio-economic quality of low income translate to lower civic engagement. This study suggests several policy alternatives to the City of New Westminster to aid in addressing the disengagement in the youth population.

Keywords: youth; civic engagement; participation; City of New Westminster

Dedication

For Tosh Hirowatari.

Your love, courage, and determination has taught me that anything is possible.

Acknowledgements

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Glossary

YOT   Youth Outreach Team

YAC   Youth Advisory Committee

YFTF   Youth Facility Task Force

NWSS   New Westminster Secondary School

YES   Youth Engagement Survey

ITC   Internet and communication technology

SES   Socio-economic status

CGI   Civic Knowledge Index

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1: Introduction

1.1   Policy Problem Definition

Youth participation in planning and decision making has positive impacts on population health (Howe and Covell, 2000), as well as impacting positive psycho-social outcomes such as open-mindedness, personal responsibility, civic competence, moral development, and a sense of self esteem and self efficacy (Checkoway, Finn, and Pothukuchi, 1995). In addition, youth engagement is linked to social capital as it fosters an understanding of citizenship, responsibility, and stewardship for the community (Putnam 2000; Fahmy 2006; McCreary 1996). For Putnam, key components of social capital include the social trust, mutuality, and reciprocity found in community networks that enables collective action: "By 'social capital' I mean features of social life- networks, norms, and trust- that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (Putnam, 1995: 664-5). Many municipalities, such as the City of New Westminster face the reality of high rates of youth disengagement in civic planning and decision making, which implies an erosion of social capital at the community level.

This study understands Youth Engagement in terms of the definition developed by the McCreary Centre Society as:

> The meaningful participation and sustainable involvement of young people in shared decisions in matters which affect their lives and those of their community, including planning, decision making, and program delivery. (McCreary, 2006: 8)

Youth engagement is a complex concept with many degrees of participation. A continuum, ranging from non-participation to participation is illustrated in the "youth engagement ladder"[1], which the McCreary Centre Society (2009), Gurstein, Lavoto, and Ross (2003), and Hart (1992), cite to identify the degree and purpose of participatory action of engagement. This

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[1] Please see Appendix A to reference the McCreary Ladder of Participation

model acknowledges the marginalization youth experience from the process of planning and decision making, specified by 'non-participation' which includes *manipulation, decoration and tokenism*. The 'degree of participation' outlines different roles of youth in engagement, institutional arrangements between youth and adults, and purpose of participation.

Youth disengagement suggests that youth issues are unrepresented on the political agenda due to exclusion of young people from decision making and planning. To Cote and Allahar (1996), young people constitute a class without power, disenfranchised economically, politically and socially (25). Youth engagement is primarily about reinstating this power to youth, thus building capacity of individuals to view themselves as engaged citizens in the processes that influence the development of society. This study analyzes the specific problem of insufficient youth engagement in New Westminster, BC, and investigates why some New Westminster youth are engaged in municipal planning and decision making while others are not.

1.2 Municipal Trends

Lower Mainland municipalities offer youth programmes in which the level of youth engagement ranges from non-participation (informal/ sporadic/ tokenized roles for youth) to varied degrees of participation (structured youth driven and meaningful engagement) opportunities. To date, there is no standard of youth engagement between municipalities, and the approaches used vary in success to attain youth representation in planning and decision making.

It is difficult to compare municipalities due to the large differences in structure, size, and resources with respect to youth engagement. I have identified five municipalities, including New Westminster, to discuss various methods used to encourage youth participation. Please see Table 1, which orders the profile municipalities from largest to smallest by youth population.

Table 1: Youth Populations per Municipality

Municipality	*Youth Population (15-19 years)*
City of Vancouver	29 490
City of Surrey	28 255
City of Burnaby	12 790
City of Maple Ridge	5200
City of New Westminster	2840

Data obtained from 2006 Census (www.statscan.gc.ca)

I conducted a web review of the above municipalities with respect to available youth outreach services, presence of a youth advisory body, and number of municipally operated youth designated facilities.

Surrey, Vancouver, and Maple Ridge have municipally operated youth outreach services. In Surrey and Maple Ridge the outreach staff members are mobile and travel to popular youth hangouts to encourage youth participation in recreational and leadership opportunities while also providing youth with helpful resources. While these staff members are part of the Parks and Recreation departments, the City of Vancouver houses their outreach team within the Social Planning Department. The Vancouver Youth Outreach Team (YOT), well known for their advocacy of youth and their part in the development of the Vancouver Civic Youth Strategy, have a decided focus on youth engagement in the municipal planning and decision making process. The Civic Youth Strategy is a policy document outlining the role of youth in the city and the commitment from city council to seek their advice regarding youth related matters. It has raised the profile of Vancouver youth, legitimizing their participation in many aspects of planning and decision making.

The Vancouver YOT works around a strong policy focus with the following four guiding pillars:

1. To ensure that youth have **a place** in the city
2. To ensure a strong youth **voice** in decision-making
3. To promote youth as a **resource** to the City
4. To strengthen the **support base** for youth in the city (Source, www.vancouveryouth.ca)

Under the leadership of the Vancouver YOT, youth are also given the opportunity to impact Council decisions through participation in a program called Youth Politik. This program gives youth the skills, background knowledge and etiquette to meaningfully participate in the planning and decision making around important municipal issues. Similarly, the City of Surrey and New Westminster have Youth Committees which function to advise council with a youth perspective on municipal issues. Burnaby and Maple Ridge do not have youth advisory committees.

Youth centres and drop-in facilities are important community resources to youth, as they provide designated spaces to participate and become engaged. The number of municipally operated youth facilities are counted based on the information provided by the official website of each respective municipality. The City of Vancouver has the highest number of youth centres at 24, which includes youth designated "lounges" found in community centres. The City of Vancouver has the lowest ratio of facilities to youth with one facility per approximately 1200 youth. The City of Surrey, with a comparable youth population to Vancouver has only 3 municipal youth facilities, giving it the highest ratio of space to youth, with 9418 youth per centre.

The City of Burnaby and Maple Ridge have comparable ratios with 3198 and 2600 youth per respective facility. To date, the City of New Westminster does not have any youth designated facilities run by the municipality. A new Youth Centre is currently under construction and

expected to open in New Westminster in the spring of 2010. The value on figure 1, represents the ratio of youth to facility space pending the completion of this new facility.

Figure 1: Ratio of Youth Population per Municipal Youth Facility
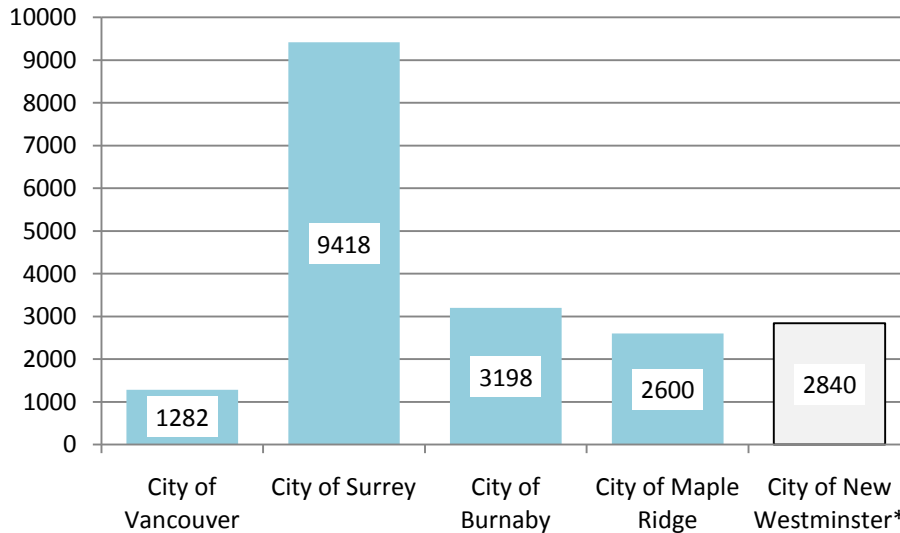
*City of New Westminster Youth Facility is not yet in existance. Ratio represents new centre with expected completion date of Spring 2010

1.3   Youth Engagement in New Westminster, BC

The City of New Westminster experiences insufficient youth participation in governmental affairs, particularly in planning initiatives. For example, in a consultation for the 2009 revisions of the Downtown Municipal plan, 1000 community members were consulted for their opinions/ priorities with respect to development with less than 1% being youth between the age of 14-25. The population of youth aged 14-25 in New Westminster is approximately 6430, which represents 11% of the city's population. The lack of youth engaged in consultation indicates a role for city staff to pursue the involvement of young people in the planning process and create opportunities in which youth can contribute.

The City of New Westminster also operates a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), which is comprised of 15 voting members between the age of 13-21. The mandate of the YAC is as follows:

1. To act as a resource to city council on issues affecting youth in New Westminster
2. To provide the youth viewpoint to city council on issues such as community safety, health, recreation, employment and environment.
3. To take any action in accordance with council's request regarding youth in the community.
4. To encourage an understanding by youth of municipal government, and
5. To provide the opportunity for the community to become aware of the positive elements of youth (Youth Advisory Committee Terms of Reference)

Although the committee is currently active, it encounters little success with engagement efficacy as initiatives undertaken by the committee are sometimes outside of municipal jurisdiction. When this happens, City Council is unable to utilize YAC contributions as they are situated outside of municipal responsibility. For the YAC to function as a municipal advisory committee they need to connect with current local issues, advise council on relevant matters which affect the youth community and obtain efficacy by limiting the scope of initiatives to that of municipal jurisdiction.

The YAC has no channel in which to disseminate information regarding committee initiatives or relevant community issues. This is problematic as the youth viewpoint provided to council is unrepresentative of the youth community at large, and takes into account the perspectives of few. Additionally, the broader youth population is left uninformed of the engagement youth have via the committee and miss opportunities arising from this engagement. For the YAC to increase the meaning of their participation a communication strategy is required.

As mentioned, the City of New Westminster is currently constructing a new designated youth facility that will be the first municipally operated, designated youth space in the city. In the time leading up to the construction, the Youth Facility Task Force (YFTF) was mobilized in order to involve youth in every aspect of planning and decisions with respect to the centre's conceptual development and physical construction. The task force is comprised of five youth representatives (including a youth chair), parks and recreation staff, planners, city councillors, builders and other stakeholders. The committee model of youth engagement was largely successful in introducing youth ideas and perspectives into the planning process of the new youth facility. This committee

was temporary, and has since dismantled with the completion of construction expected in summer of 2010. For youth engagement to be maintained in the City of New Westminster, sustainable solutions need to be acquired which will increase trust in its institutions such as government.

The Department of Youth Services, a division of Parks and Recreation, houses the only municipally designated youth staff in New Westminster. This department consists of one full time position: the youth co-ordinator who oversees four subordinate youth workers (averaging 15-20 hours/week) and approximately fifteen additional program support staff (averaging 4-12 hours/ week). Youth workers are assigned to one of four regions of the city: West, Central, East, and Queensborough, and conduct programming and drop in activities. Several youth workers facilitate neighbourhood youth councils within their regions, however these groups are highly informal and have a decided recreation vs. policy focus.

The Youth Advisory Committee and the Youth Facility Task Force are the best examples of municipal youth engagement in New Westminster. In addition to adult oriented consultation, other engagement initiatives are less formal/ad hoc, with a recreation rather than a policy focus. This study addresses youth disengagement in the City of New Westminster by conducting background research on the problem, collecting survey data from local youth, and proposing policy alternatives based on data analysis in hope of increasing youth participation rates.

2: Background

The trend of disengaged youth is troubling because the exclusion of youth in the decision making process with regards to policy systematically leaves young people unrepresented and voiceless. The need for intervention by local governments to address the problem of insufficient youth engagement is evident in the potential gains of social capital such as community cohesiveness, trust, mutuality and collective action.

2.1 Factors Affecting Engagement

Youth are a complex category of the population that cannot be homogenously addressed with one particular policy or framework. Many studies conclude that youth need to be further distinguished into subgroups based on age, ethnicity and socio-economic factors to better address youth needs and issues (Molloy, Bell, Cote and Allahar, and Turcotte). Age is only one element of youth identity, and many other factors contribute to willingness and capacity for civic engagement. For example, the factors of lifestyle effects, gender, neighbourhood location, socio-economic status, and minority status have been found to stratify youth populations. Thus, youth communities are diverse and maintain unique needs that are not effectively addressed by one overarching inclusionary framework. The following sections outline important indicators of social capital affecting youth engagement.

2.1.1 Lifestyle Effects

The large amount of literature on the political participation of young people indicates that age is a key variable in explaining the variation in political attitudes and levels of engagement. The lifestyle effect on political participation can be explained as the impact that a particular life phase has on civic engagement. The transitions faced by youth going from a state of adolescent dependency, to semi-independent young adults, to full independence in the future, will be

correlated with greater levels of civic participation. Blais et al. (2002) describe that these transitions "may enhance people's sense of having a stake in the political process and may also expose them to social pressures that reinforce their sense of civic duty" (4).

Common social factors in youth culture at present, such as social marginalization, consumerism, and individualism are believed by Cote and Allahar (1996) to "withhold the responsibility of adult roles from youth and thus impact political identity and civic citizenship" (82-83). This "withholding" of responsibility is observed in Canada by the fact that the high proportion of adult children living at home between 1981 and 2001 doubled from 12-24% (MacKinnon, Pitre, and Watling, 2007: 8). Also, the number of 20-29 year olds living at home increased from 41.1% to 43.5% between 2001 and 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2007).

The rate of maturation by youth is variable and affects their capacity to become engaged in their communities and governments. Due to the lifestyle effects that youth experience it is likely that older youth or young adults will be more highly engaged than their younger counterparts.

2.1.2   Gender

Gender is an increasingly important factor in youth studies as boys and girls are beginning show differences in educational attainment and social prosperity. Richards (2009) finds that the high school drop-out rate for Canadian boys is high relative to girls, which implies less male civic engagement. Richards predicts that "failing to complete high school has dire economic and social consequences for those who drop out" (Richards, 2009:5). In a labour force survey conducted by Statistics Canada in 2004-2005 the drop-out rate for boys in Canada was 12.2%, compared with a 7.2% drop-out rate for girls. The high drop-out rate for boys implies that male youth are likely to experience higher rates of civic disengagement. This is confirmed by Young and Cross' (2007: 8) finding that "young women are more inclined than men toward social movements and advocacy-type activities". Hall and Coffey (2007) argue that the gendered

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identities of youth play a large role in the way youth engagement is pursued, as boys and girls experience different lifestyle effects (i.e. the transition of youth to adulthood) at varying rates. Also, the way the in which girls and boys experience their gender can affect their rate of participation.

For example, the historical trend of "women [being] systematically excluded from both the theory and practice of citizenship" (Hall and Coffey, 2007: 282) has been argued by Lister et al. (2003) and others to have increased the tendencies of girls to engagement. This observed increase in engagement by girls is explained by Camino and Zeldin's (2002) finding that many youth are setting out to enact change in their communities in the face of inequality or oppression, which commonly revolves around gender, economic, or racial issues.

Stolle and Cruz (2005) describe that gender research has traditionally indicated that women are less engaged than men, but current findings imply that women and men participate in politics differently. For example, in Canada, according to Gidengil's 13 point political knowledge scale, women average lower scores than men. In addition, men make up the majority of members in political organizations and political parties. Women however, volunteer more frequently than men and belong at a higher rate to community service groups, and women's organizations. (Stolle and Cruz 2005.)

The gender divide in the study of youth engagement is primarily explained by feminist theories of historic marginalization and the concept of lifestyle effects, and should be considered an important factor affecting levels of civic participation.

2.1.3   Socio-economic Status and Neighbourhood

Molloy et al. (2002) identified that youth from low income backgrounds reported more difficulty engaging in local government. Youth homelessness, unemployment and addictions were found to be important issues among low income youth who felt that their opinions and input "carried less weight than those of people from better circumstances because [they] were

perceived as less important by the local authority" (Molloy et al, 2002: 66). Similarly, O'Toole et al. (2003) identifies a link between social exclusion and political participation which is exhibited by "differential responses across class lines among the respondents, with better-off and better educated young people more likely to be engaged in politics" (49). Income is a major determinant of youth engagement which is exacerbated by youth tendencies to work for minimum wage, in part time, low skill jobs (Cote and Allahar, 2002). O'Neill (2007: 22) explains that "for young Canadians, the opportunity, motivation and resources that enable engagement are directly dependent on economic capacity". Differences in class status based on economic capacity are a legitimate barrier to youth political participation.

2.1.4   Minority Status

Minority status of Canadians has been identified by Bevelander and Pendakur (2009) to be an important determinant of voting behaviour. Their research finds that "increased ethnic belonging and ethnic identity have little negative impact on voting participation, [but the factor of] having a sense of belonging to Canada correlates with higher voter participation" (Bevelander and Pendakur, 2009: 6). The belonging that immigrants feel is dependent on the degree of socialization within the host country. Research on immigrant civic engagement by Stepick and Stepick (2002) found that second and third generation immigrants in the United States are more likely to engage in political participation than first generation immigrants. They also find that engagement is highly dependent on duration of stay and ability to speak English. (Stepick and Stepick, 2002, 247-248)

Sanchez-Jankowski (2002) explains a theory of youth engagement in which two groups exist: the minorities which constitute an exclusionary group, and the non-visible minorities which constitute a privileged or inclusionary group (5-6). Minority youth are situated in the exclusionary group due to historical trends of marginalization, social class (socio-economic status) and social orders (within the minority group). The type of engagement which is expected

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by Sanchez-Jankowski in the exclusionary group of minority youth is focused mainly on the issues and interests of their specific group. Conversely, the privileged group is expected to engage in issues which have a more national or societal focus. This theory implies that civic engagement to different youth is relative, depending on the history of their minority marginalization. The way they view this marginalization is dependent on the class status and social order of their family and immediate community. The group that minority youth belong to: being either privileged or exclusionary, will perpetuate the way and types of engagement in present and future.

While an in-depth analysis of aboriginal youth was outside the scope of this study, it is important to note some important differences between aboriginal youth and other visible minorities. Alfred, Price, and Pitawanakwat (2007) find that indigenous identity is central to Canadian aboriginal youth and influence their ideas and actions with respect to political participation. In a variety of contexts, culture affects civic engagement with respect to the ethnic values placed around participation. Metzger and Smetana (2009) describe that "adolescents' conceptions of civic engagement also may draw on different moral or social concepts" (434), which implies that the concept of citizenship is subjective and variable between cultures.

2.1.5 Adult Allies

The lack of adult understanding of youth poses a significant barrier to meaningful engagement and inclusion. Watts and Flanagan (2007: 782) argue that "youth" as a social group commonly experience stereotypes in society captured in terms such as "immature, impulsive, self centred, naive, reckless, and silly". A paradigm shift away from these types of generalizations allows youth to be seen as assets to the community and resources in terms of planning and decision making. Similarly, Ginwright, Cammarota and Noguera (2005:29) argue that many studies on youth engagement are guilty of "conceptualizing youth primarily as objects of policy rather than actors who possess the rights and abilities to shape policy".

Camino and Zeldin (2002) acknowledge that successful youth engagement rarely relies on the youth alone. They note that when "adults serve as allies or partners to the youth; young people gain the support and institutional power that help them to achieve individual and collective goals" (Camino and Zeldin, 2002: 216). Many successful youth engagement initiatives have built their program on the premise of youth and adults sharing responsibility and working as partners rather than in hierarchy.

2.1.6   Summary

This section has demonstrated that engagement varies within the youth population depending on factors such as lifestyle effects, gender, socioeconomic status, minority status, and the support of adult allies. Homogenization of young people poorly represents the issues of youth society, pointing to the need for tailored responses at the local level to distinct youth populations instead of centralized overarching youth policies.

2.2   Community Belonging

There is a significant disconnect between young people and local politics which is emphasized by trends in community belonging. Molloy, White and Hosfield (2002) find that young people report feeling connected to their communities and care about local issues, but experience barriers when it comes to participating in local government. Barriers identified include: the perception that local government does not adequately address youth issues, and that youth see little opportunity to get involved in municipal government.

The McCreary Society's study (as cited in Gurnstein, Lavato, and Ross, 2003: 253) showed that through youth engagement, young people "gain their own understanding of citizenship and develop roles for themselves as part of a democratic society, which subsequently promotes a conscious sense of responsibility and stewardship toward the community". In light of

this argument, it is evident that youth engagement is deeply intertwined with community belonging.

Currently in Vancouver the majority of people who vote are white adults over the age of 60 (Vancouver Sun exit poll, November 17, 2008). Because youth and young adults are less likely to vote, political parties are not held accountable for their failure to address youth relevant policy, which intensifies youth disenfranchisement. One reason that youth issues are consistently overlooked, suggested by Molloy et al. (2002), is that city councillors and officials are diversely distributed by gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status, but do not represent the population by age. The wide age gap between representatives and youth deepens the disconnect between the needs of young people and political action/ policy. Consistent with this, MacKinnon, Pitre, and Watling (2007) explain that youth are not necessarily disconnected from politics; it is the political institutions, practice and political culture that are disconnected from youth. The lack of belonging is intensified because youth find difficulties in identifying opportunities to get involved. Thus, youth are not apathetic; it is the downfall of politicians, parties and political structures to interest youth and make politics relevant and inclusionary.

Research by Stolle and Cruz (2005), utilizing the 2003 General Social Survey, found that approximately 78% of Canadians reported "strong" or "somewhat strong" feelings of belonging to Canada. Analyzing this strong sense of Canadian belonging by age, they found that youth (15-19 year olds) feel the least amount of belonging at only 40%. The sense of reported belonging by Canadians increases through the age spectrum with 52.8% of 45-54 year olds and 71.5% of Canadians over 75 years. This indicates that community belonging is strongly related to age which is confirmed by Stolle and Cruz's (2005) expectation that "younger generations [will] develop feelings of belonging and attachment as they grow older" (90). Community belonging is an important measure with which to gauge the potential for youth to engage in municipal processes.

2.3 Civic Knowledge

According to research by Sanchez-Jankowski (2002), civic knowledge is central to youth engagement, and is acquired primarily through education, media and government (239). This study will discuss the role of municipal governments in fostering the civic knowledge necessary to increase youth engagement. This knowledge is a necessary precursor to the meaningful participation of youth in community development: Gurstein et al. (2003) explain that "starting at a very young age, all people need to be provided with outlets for realizing skills and knowledge that can serve in the work of community building (254). Bell (2005) also argues for the involvement of municipalities in developing civic knowledge among youth because they find that engagement programs are less effective if they are not given a planning and policy making focus. This supports the notion that municipal governments do have a role in the fostering of youth political agency, and civic knowledge.

Stolle and Cruz (2005:86) find that when "compared to other Western democracies, Canadians have a relatively low level of civic literacy, or the knowledge necessary for effective participation in the political system". In a time series study conducted by Paul Howe (as cited in Stolle and Cruz, 2005: 86), it was found that "young Canadians are less knowledgeable about politics than any other age group in the country". More strikingly, his data shows that the political knowledge of young people is decreasing over time. The 1956 cohort of respondents showed a 23% rate of high political knowledge, which dropped to only 11% in 1984. Although this finding affects present day adults, MacKinnon, Pitre, and Watling (2007: v) find that "today's youth have less formal political knowledge than previous generations".

Similarly to Canada, American researchers are troubled by low civic knowledge among citizens nationwide, with 62% of Americans- in a 1987 civics survey- being unable to identify the three branches of government (Dudley and Gitelson, 2002, 176). Civic knowledge has been cited in many studies (Dudley and Gitelson, Stolle and Cruz) to be strongly related to the propensity of

individuals to vote. Civic knowledge is thus an important measure in which to investigate civic engagement as political literacy and political participation rates seem to be correlated in their decline.

2.4   Youth Interest in Civic Participation

Youth interest in civic engagement is a natural precursor to the actual rate of engagement experienced in communities. Consistent with the decrease observed in civic knowledge, youth interest appears to be on the decline. Youth interest in politics is observed to decrease over time, and youth are reported as the least interested age as compared to adults and seniors populations (Stolle and Cruz, 2005: 86). Stolle and Cruz expect that youth disinterest in civic participation is a lifestyle effect and will increase with age.

There is also a strong argument about the types of engagement youth are interested in. Bell (2005) argues that youth are disinterested in traditional concepts of political activity but found that "if young people are given the chance to discuss politics in their own terms… they are very much engaged and interested in things "political" (9). O'Toole et al., 2003: 51) supports this claim and argues that while some "survey data reveals that whilst some young people are politically inactive, they are not uninterested in politics per se, but feel that politicians or political parties do not address their concerns or views. This evidence implies that political apathy by youth is overstated and uncharacteristic of this population. In fact common research trends of dichotomizing this problem into participation vs. apathy may be responsible for the observed decline in youth political interest.

2.5 Engagement Efficacy

Poor trust in engagement efficacy by youth is a factor which decreases the motivation to participate in municipal planning and decision making. Camino and Zeldin (2002: 219) are critical of the efficacy levels achieved as they describe that "contemporary pathways for youth civic engagement are often transient and difficult to sustain at the local level". The instability of many youth engagement initiatives compromise youth trust in the process and decrease the meaning attached to participation. In this way youth-adult partnerships (adult allies) are critical to the efficacy of youth engagement.

To increase motivation for youth involvement adult allies need to act on youth input and demonstrate that youth voices are being heard. One way suggested by several researchers is to incorporate the use of internet and communication technology (ITC) to facilitate and sustain the communication and engagement of youth.

Bell (2005) argues that although youth are possibly the most tech savvy generation in the population, little research has "examined the opportunities that new technologies such as the internet provide for communication, identity, and participation" (13). In her research, Bell conducted a review of technology based initiatives aimed at increasing youth engagement. Four key elements were identified in the projects:

- Projects demonstrate how technology is used as a tool to fight apathy
- Projects providing youth with different ways of being citizens
- Projects combining online and offline forms of civic participation
- Projects focused on providing youth with political/ social agency (Bell, 2005:14)

In the 2003 federal election an Ottawa based campaign called Youth Vote 2003 implemented a text messaging program for 18-24 year olds to gain information about the election, which proved to be a successful method of information dissemination (Kushner and Siegel, 2008: 38).

Without evidence or feedback on the impact youth have on planning or decision-making, motivation towards continued engagement waivers. Key factors in increasing engagement efficacy are motivation to continue engagement, the sustained commitment of adult allies to promote intergenerational partnerships, and the incorporation of web based engagement components which target both online and offline forms of participation.

2.6 Summary

Civic youth engagement is a complex concept affected by many social, economic, and demographic factors. Of those, gender, lifecycle, socioeconomic status, minority status, and availability of adult allies were highlighted as particularly important influences. The measurement of youth participation rates received criticism in many studies due to the measurement of engagement based on formal political participation such as party membership, voter turnout, and political activism. Bell (2005) and others suggest that research definitions of civic engagement should be broadened to include forms of participation that are removed from the political sphere, and that measurement of civic participation needs to correspond with everyday experiences of youth. Such measures found to capture youth activity are community belonging, civic knowledge, youth interest in engagement, belief in the efficacy of youth engagement, and motivation to participate. These measures used in concert have the potential to address data limitations of previous studies and reveal new knowledge about contemporary realities in youth engagement.

3: Research Approach

The data is primarily quantitative, collected through a survey tool, and analyzed critically. The reasoning for the methodology in this study is deductive as I utilized theories of youth engagement found in my literature review to draft hypotheses, which are then translated into survey questions. The conclusions and policy options resulting in the analysis of the data collected are primarily objective. However, I recognize that subjectivity in individual responses gives way to limitations in the objectivity of this study. Youth participants were encouraged to answer the survey questions independently, honestly, and in whatever way which felt comfortable. This freedom added a variable component to the responses (e.g. notes in the margins, comments, and further question expansion) that will be commented on in future sections, but not quantified.

The remainder of this section will explain the methodological approach used to analyze the problem of insufficient youth engagement in New Westminster.

3.1 Methodology

This study began with an interest in the youth community of New Westminster and the observation of too little youth engagement or participation in municipal planning and decision making. I identify the policy problem to be insufficient youth engagement in the City of New Westminster. There is a supply side understanding to this problem, which encompasses the lack of effort and/or capacity of city planners and decision makers in the outreach and subsequent engagement of local youth. Although there have been several youth engagement initiatives within the City of New Westminster, as previously discussed, I am critical of the depth of youth engagement, diversity of participating youth, and the extent to which youth input has impacted planning/decision making.

The problem also has a demand side component, which includes the lack of effort, interest, and/or capacity of New Westminster youth to seek opportunities for youth engagement. It is important to address the possibility that provided with municipal engagement opportunities, youth may choose to stay disengaged.

To gain a deeper understanding of this problem, I developed the Youth Engagement Survey (YES) in collaboration with youth feedback, city planners, and academics[2]. The goal of the survey was to generate data about youth engagement in New Westminster in a representative way that could address observed youth disengagement through the development of policy. Youth Engagement studies commonly use interview data gathered from service providers, program funders, and youth focus groups. In my literature review, I have not found any current/local studies that have implemented the tools of youth surveys in a representative manner with a participatory focus.

The following are the specific objectives of the Youth Engagement Survey:

1. To test the civic knowledge of young people to investigate the impact of individual knowledge on level of engagement.
2. To explore the reasons and ways youth are currently engaged in civic activities.
3. To understand the ways that youth communicate with each other, and receive information.
4. To understand the perspectives of youth toward civic youth engagement.
5. To gauge the reactions of youth to possible policy alternatives aimed at increasing youth participation in the City of New Westminster.

Due to potential vulnerabilities which exist within the youth population, extra ethical scrutiny of the Youth Engagement Survey was received. It was determined by the City of New Westminster, The New Westminster School District, and the Simon Fraser Ethics Review Board that this study posed low risks to participating youth, and that parental consent to voluntary participation was unnecessary. Three grades were selected to participate in the Youth Engagement Survey. They were grade 10, grade 11, and grade 12 students at New Westminster Secondary School (NWSS). NWSS is the sole public high school for the City of New

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[2] Please view the Youth Engagement Survey in Appendix B

Westminster (with a citywide catchment area) which provided the opportunity to obtain a representative sample of youth.

The surveys collected during class time were not randomly distributed as participation depended on the volunteering of class time by teachers. I initially aimed for twelve classes to participate. The first week of advertising to teachers was unsuccessful through the recruitment strategies of posting sign-up sheets, distributing information to a school wide staff meeting, and targeting department heads via e-mail. After seven days of minimal return correspondence, I had three classes signed up for survey participation. I decided a more aggressive approach to survey marketing was necessary and visited NWSS during the lunch hour to approach teachers in the four staff lunch rooms. Given permission by the vice-principal, I presented my research and provided sample survey hand-outs to teachers and asked for class time appointments of 10-15 minutes for survey administration and collection. I did not refuse any volunteered class times and obtained 19 scheduled class visits.

The survey was administered in grade 10, 11, and 12 classes, taking on average 10-15 minutes to complete. In many instances, youth were able to complete all 26 questions in under 10 minutes, and most classes had one or two youth struggling to complete by 15 minutes. If the teacher had limited time for class interruptions (as was found in many grade 12 classes), the students were terminated from survey work after 15 minutes. Only 2 classes required me to ask students to hand in their surveys in incomplete and the number of students affected is 6. If students had inquiries regarding the survey questions, they were directed to answer the best they could.

Additional clarification was not given regarding question meaning, or word/ concept definition. The most common questions I received were regarding neighbourhood boundaries for question E, and around the definition of visible minorities for question Y[3]. Similar method of minority classification of the census was utilized, in which respondents were directed to self-

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[3] Please find the Youth Engagement Survey in appendix B

identify themselves as belonging to a visible minority or not. Youth were not asked to specify ethnic origin.

Currently there are 2025 students enrolled in the school with approximately 1526 being grade 10, 11 or 12 students. The total number of responses collected was n=332 surveys, which represents 21.7% of students in question. Table 2 illustrates the population representation of youth by grade.

Table 2: Population Representation of Youth Engagement Survey

Grade	*Total Enrolment at NWSS*	*Survey Responses*	*%*
10	478	92	19.2
11	584	77	13.2
12	464	163	35.1
TOTAL	1526	332	21.7

Data from completed surveys were entered into SPSS which was also used to analyze the frequency and cross tabulations of variables. Specific variables and additional methods used will be discussed in the following section.

3.2 Summary

The research approach in this study is to use a survey tool to generate local youth engagement data which currently does not exist. The aim of data collection was to understand youth engagement from a) a youth perspective, and b) in a representative manner that can be used to inform policy options at a municipal level. The development of the survey was informed by a variety of literature and sought to proxy the complex concept of youth engagement through a serious of participatory variables which include: community belonging, civic knowledge, youth interest in engagement, belief in the value of participation, and intention of future engagement. The participatory variables will be analyzed by several factors found to affect civic youth engagement including: grade, gender, neighbourhood location, socio-economic status, and minority status.

4: Variables

Youth engagement is a complex and multi-faceted concept, which is commonly misunderstood in studies which proxy it through the quantification of formal political involvement by youth. MacKinnon et al. (2007) identify that "today's youth are not disengaged from associational and small "p" political life but are increasingly disenchanted with formal political institutions and practices" (vi). This finding implies that voter turnout, party membership, and traditionally identified political activities are poor measures of youth engagement. This research recognizes these limitations in quantifying youth engagement and uses other measures of youth engagement including:

- Community belonging
- Civic knowledge
- Interest in civic participation
- Belief in the value of youth engagement, and
- Intention of future engagement

I argue these measures of engagement offer a more complete picture of the realities of youth engagement, as well as have a greater capacity to capture the trends in which youth are participating. Each measure of youth engagement is named as a "participatory variable" (please see table 3) on which the research question and policy problem of this study is focused. The participatory variables are analyzed which the subsequent sections as the dependent variables. . I have identified five participatory variables in which to analyze Civic Youth Engagement in New Westminster: community belonging, civic knowledge, youth interest in engagement, belief in the value of civic participation, and intention of future engagement. These participatory variables serve as the dependent variables of this study

Table 3: Proxy Variables used to measure Dependent Variables

Participatory Variable	Measures	Survey Question Reference
Community Connections	Feels a sense of belonging to the community	N
Civic knowledge	1. Knowledge of who to contact in the community regarding change	R
	2. Knowledge of elected officials	L, M
Youth Interest in Engagement	Interest in becoming involved with the City of New Westminster	J
Believe in the Value of civic participation	1. Belief that youth should be involved in decision making	S
	2. Belief that youth input can impact council decisions	K
Intention of participating in the future	1. Intention of voting when eligible	I
	2. Willingness to participate in activities to inform decision making	W

Each participatory variable is analyzed with respect to the independent variables of grade, gender, neighbourhood, socio-economic status, and minority status to gain a more complete picture of youth engagement in New Westminster. The following section will present and define the independent variables used in the research, and from the survey results, report on their measure's and expected influence on the participatory variables.

4.1 Independent Variables

4.1.1 Grade

The Youth Engagement Survey includes respondents from Grades 10, 11, and 12. Approximately half the surveys collected were from grade 12 students, giving this study the ability to look at the survey population as a whole, and to isolate "young adults" and analyze how their preferences may differ from their younger counterparts. Cote and Allahar (2006) believe that age distribution in youth populations matter, due to the concept of lifestyle effects. This implies that the way youth experience their particular age relates to the stage of their transition into adulthood. For example, a young person in grade 12 may experience different lifestyle transitions (i.e. graduating high school and moving on to college or careers) than a youth in grade 10 who may still be more focused on juvenile aspects of youth.

Figure 2: Grade Distribution of Survey Respondents
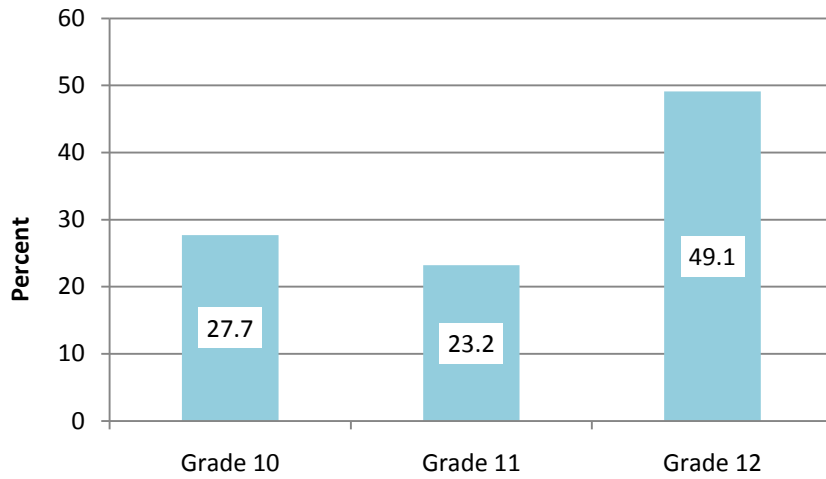
4.1.2 Gender

The gender distribution for the Youth Engagement Survey was relatively even with 52.4% of respondents being female, and 47.6% of respondents being male. Gender is an important factor in the study of civic engagement because it is found in many studies that boys are graduating from high school at a lower rate than girls.

Figure 3: Gender Distribution of Survey Respondents
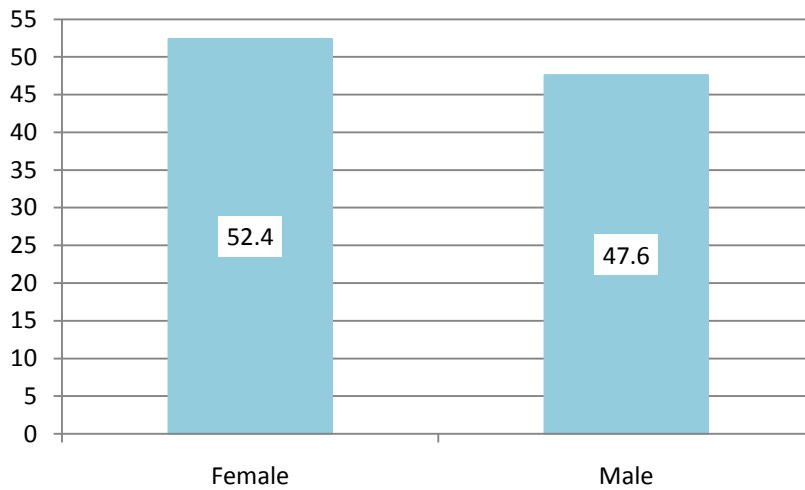
4.1.3 Neighbourhood Location

The City of New Westminster is comprised of 12 neighbourhood areas by the municipal planning department, as listed in Figure 4. The particular location in which youth survey respondents live is hypothesized to affect their aptitude toward civic engagement.

To effectively highlight the diversity found within the city due to neighbourhood boundaries I will profile the prominent areas of Downtown, Sapperton, Queensborough, Brow of the Hill, and Queens Park. These neighbourhoods were chosen to demonstrate the diversity within the city by using characteristics such as income, age, type of housing, and immigrant population. In addition, the five neighbourhoods profiled in this study give a good geographic representation of the city (see Appendix C for neighbourhood map).

Figure 4: Neighbourhood Distribution of Survey Respondents
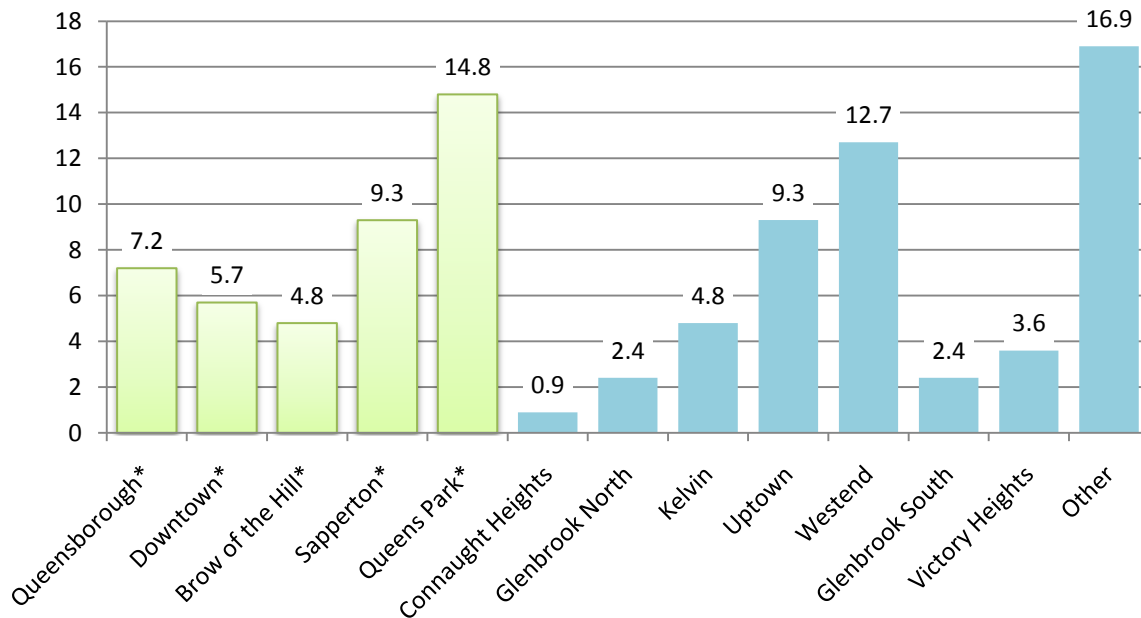
The first five neighbourhoods indicated in green equate to 41.8% of the survey population and are profiled in this study

The Downtown neighbourhood is located on the south side of New Westminster, and borders the Fraser River. A large seniors population, and fewer children and youth characterize the Downtown neighbourhood. Housing in this area is dense with residents predominantly living in apartment buildings and condominiums. When compared to the rest of the city, the median income is 6% higher, with comparable prevalence of low income at approximately 19%. Of Youth Engagement Survey respondents, roughly 6% reported living in the Downtown neighbourhood.

Queensborough is isolated from the rest of New Westminster due to its physical location separated by the north arm of the Fraser River. Access to other areas of New Westminster from Queensborough requires the use of the Queensborough Bridge which is difficult for youth who often walk or take transit. The Queensborough neighbourhood represents a fast growing part of the city demonstrated by a population increase of 21% between 2001 and 2006. This population is largely characterized by children and youth with fewer people over 50. A diverse immigrant population characterizes the population with the most prevalent ethnicities being South Asian, Chinese and Filipino. On average, Queensborough residents report lower educational attainment, and significantly higher incomes as compared to the rest of the city. Of Youth Engagement Survey respondents, 7.2% reported living in the Queensborough neighbourhood.

The Sapperton neighbourhood is located on the east side of the City of New Westminster and has grown only 2% between 2001 and 2006. The community is well rooted with fewer families that have moved in the last 5 years. There is approximately the same percentage of youth in the Sapperton neighbourhood as the rest of the city, with fewer young children under the age of 4 as well as older adults over the age of 70. The median income in Sapperton is 3% higher than the rest of the city and has fewer lower income households (2% less than the city rate). Of Youth Engagement Survey Respondents, 9.3% reported living in the Sapperton neighbourhood.

Brow of the Hill neighbourhood is located on the West Side of the City of New Westminster, partially bordering the Downtown neighbourhood. Youth constitute approximately 11% of the population in this neighbourhood which is the same percentage for the City of New Westminster overall. As compared with the rest of the city, more people live in single family households and there are fewer households with children. Approximately two thirds of households moved between 2001 and 2006 and are characterized predominantly by renters with 44% reporting struggles with affordability. Additionally Brow of the Hill neighbourhood faces a 12% higher incidence of lower income than the rest of the city and a 6% higher incidence of immigrants. Of the Youth Engagement Survey respondents, 5% reported living in Brow of the Hill neighbourhood.

The Queens Park neighbourhood is located in the heart of the city and is characterized by large heritage homes. There are more single-family homes than any other type of residences with some low rise apartments and suited mansions. The median household income of the Queens Park neighbourhood is $74, 029 which is over 1.5 times larger than the median income of New Westminster overall. Approximately 77% of the population in this neighbourhood are non-immigrants, and 85% are considered non-visible minorities. Comparable with the rest of the city, the percentage of youth is 11%. Of the Youth Engagement Survey respondents, 14.8% reported living in the Queens Park neighbourhood.

New Westminster neighbourhoods are diverse, and vary by income, age, diversity, and growth. The variable of neighbourhood location will be included in the analysis of each participatory variable to determine the possible effects of region on youth engagement.

4.1.4   Socio-Economic Status

Many youth being out of the labour force do not have an accurate perception on the household income determined by their parents. Therefore, the Youth Engagement Survey income

variable is based on youth perception of household wealth using a linear scale from one to ten, one being poor and ten being rich. Responses are categorized based on the following breakdown in Table 4.

Table 4: Income Intervals of Youth Survey Responses

Income Interval	*Income Category*
1-3.5	Low
4-5	Medium-Low
6-7	Medium
7.5-8	Medium-High
8.5-10	High

The particular breakdown of income intervals illustrated in Table 4, were chosen in order to roughly organize the data around the median income which was 6.5 with a normal distribution. The median income in New Westminster is $48 700 while the average income is just over $60 000. Because Youth Engagement Survey responses were not reported in dollar units, this study will not compare reported wealth to regional or municipal trends. Instead, I will use the wealth variable to proxy the concept of Socio-economic status to determine the relative power youth feel they have with respect to youth engagement, municipal planning, and decision making.

Figure 5: Income Distribution of Survey Respondents
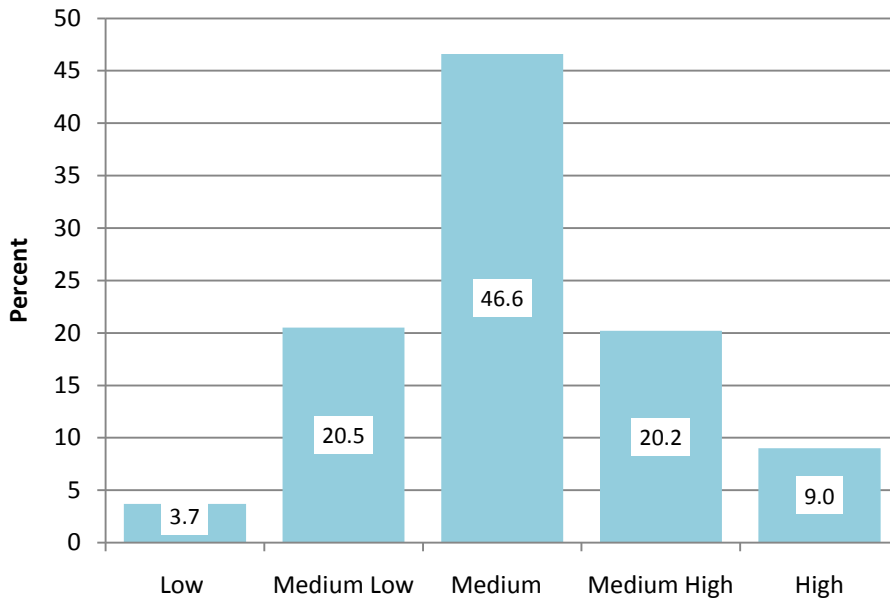
4.1.5 Minority Status

Minority status is considered when investigating youth engagement because social capital and institutional trust by visible minorities are thought to affect feelings of empowerment and therefore civic engagement in communities.

The question of belonging to a visible minority was determined in this survey by self-declaration of the youth involved. Participants needing further clarification during survey administration of what constituted visible minority status, were encouraged to answer the question based on individual perception of belonging to minority. 33% of youth respondents identified as belonging to a visible minority. This is comparable to the community profile according to Statistics Canada which finds 29.6% of New Westminster Residents are of visible minority status (2006 Census). The gap between the community profile and the survey responses could be a sampling discrepancy or be explained by the perceptions of some minorities being more visible based on factors such as language or culture.

Figure 6: Visible Minority Distribution of Survey Respondents
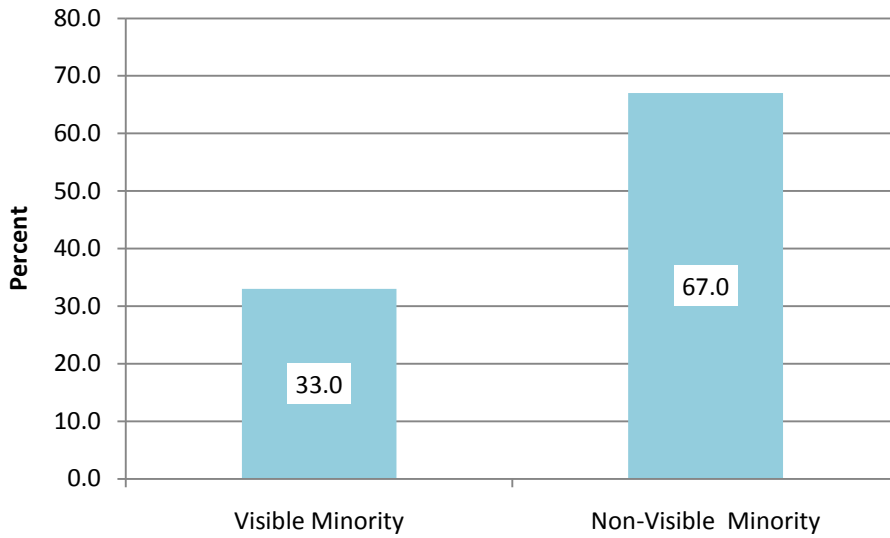
4.1.6 Summary

There are five measures used to proxy the dynamic concept of youth engagement used in this study. I argue that by including the participatory variables of community belonging, civic knowledge, interest in civic participation, belief in the value of participation, and intent to participate, an accurate picture of youth engagement in New Westminster can be determined. The independent variables of age, gender, neighbourhood, socio-economic status, and minority status are shown to be contributing factors to civic youth engagement and will be analyzed to determine their effects in New Westminster.

5: Survey Results

The data collected in the Youth Engagement Survey will be described in this section with more in-depth analysis to follow in the subsequent data analysis section. It is important for planners and policy makers to address the lack of municipal engagement among the youth population.

5.1 Community Belonging

Community belonging is an important factor contributing to youth engagement in communities. In the case of New Westminster, 67% of youth surveyed feel a sense of belonging to the community, while 33% do not. The one third of New Westminster youth feeling a lack of belong to the community are likely to feel disengaged from municipal planning and decision making.

Figure 7: Distribution of Community Belonging by Survey Respondents
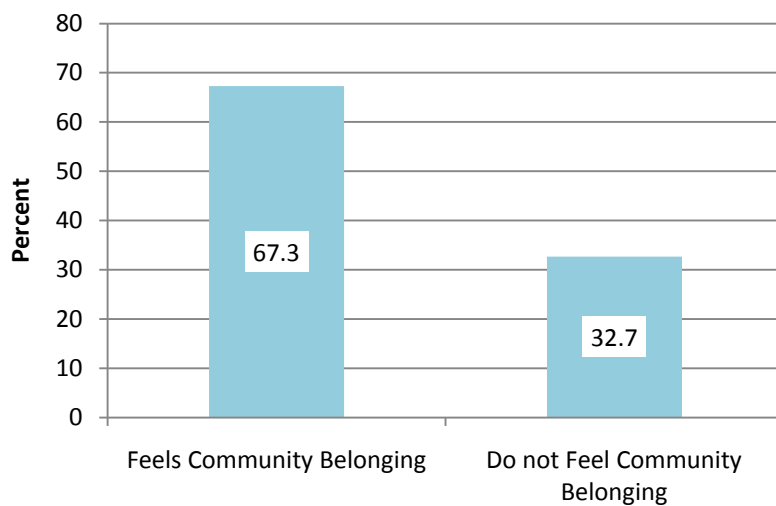
Table 5 shows the cross tabulation of the community belonging variable by grade. Grade 10 students feel the greatest degree of belonging at 73.6% , while grade 11 and 12 students show

a decline in community belonging that is approximately 10% lower than that of grade 10's. The drop in feelings of community belonging among older youth may be attributed to the uncertainties that arise with the transition to adulthood.

Table 5, Analysis of Community Belonging by Grade

Grade	Feels a sense of Community Belonging (%)	Does not feel Community Belonging (%)
Grade 10	73.6	26.4
Grade 11	61.0	39.0
Grade 12	66.7	33.3
n=330		χ^2=3.055, sig=0.217 (2df)

Overall, those who feel a sense of belonging to the community are 69.4% female and 45.9% male. The levels of community belonging in girls is much higher than that of boys.

Table 6, Analysis of Community Belonging by Gender

Gender	Feels a sense of Community Belonging (%)	Does not feel Community Belonging (%)
Female	69.4	30.6
Male	54.1	49.1
n=330		χ^2=0.722, sig=0.395 (1df)

When breaking the community belonging variable down further by grade we see that males and females in grades 10 and 11 feel comparable levels of belonging. However, in grade 12 girls feel a much stronger sense of belonging (62%), while boys decrease to only 38% participation.

Figure 8: Respondents feeling a sense of belonging to the Community, by Grade and Gender
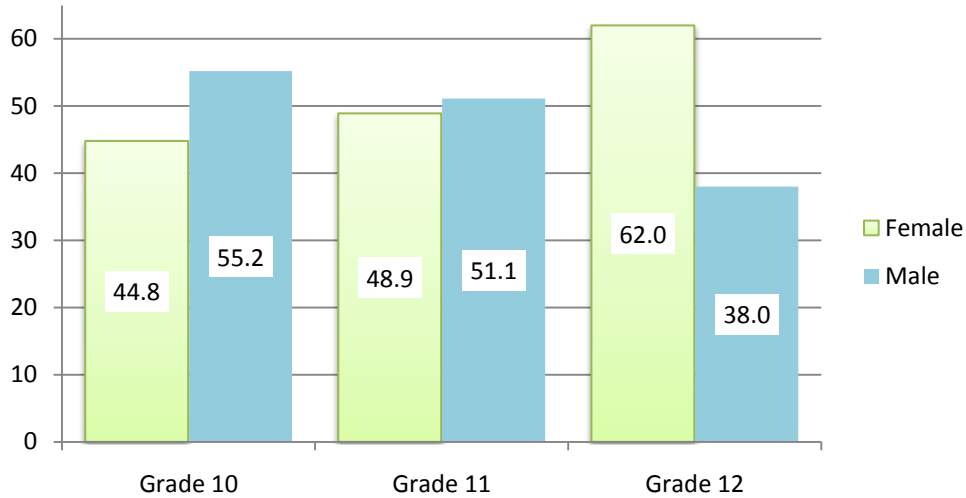
This demonstrates that minimal differences exist between boys and girls in younger grades, but gender matters with respect to community belonging for young adults in grade 12.

Youth in the majority of neighborhoods reported a strong sense of belonging to their communities. Sapperton, which is the most established profiled community, had the highest level of belonging at 87%. It is interesting that youth living in Queensborough, which is a more isolated neighborhood would feel more community belonging than those living in the affluent neighborhood of Queens Park. This may demonstrate the influence of cultural factors in a largely immigrant community. The neighborhood which yeilded the lowest sense of belonging was the Downtown neighborhood where only 31.6% of youth reported a sense of belonging to their community.

Table 7, Analysis of Community Belonging by Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood	Feels a sense of Community Belonging (%)	Does not feel Community Belonging (%)
Downtown (*Central Urban*)	31.6	68.4
Queensborough (*Geographically Isolated*)	75.0	25.0
Sapperton (*Established community*)	87.1	12.9
Brow of the Hill (*Low Income*)	56.3	43.8
Queens Park (*Affluent*)	68.8	31.3
	n=330	χ^2=24.374, sig=0.018 (12df)

On average in the medium income categories of self percieved youth wealth, 65% of respondents felt a sense of belonging in their communities. The rate of belonging increased in the high income category to just under 80% of youth feeling a strong sense of community belonging. The low income category is concerning, however, as only 41.6% of these youth feel community belonging. This implies that youth in lower income brackets of society feel less empowered to impact the community and therefore become engaged in municipal planning and decision making.

Table 8, Analysis of Community Belonging by Wealth

Wealth	Feels a sense of Community Belonging (%)	Does not feel Community Belonging (%)
Low	41.7	58.3
Medium Low	63.6	36.4
Medium	68.5	31.5
Medium High	65.6	34.4
High	79.3	20.7
	n=320	χ^2=5.993, sig=0.200 (4df)

Both minorities and non-minorities were found to feel a predominant sense of belonging to the community. The rate of non-minority youth reported belonging at a higher rate than did minority youth and were more divided. Youth who self identified as visible minorities reported 57.7% feeling community belonging while, 42.3% did not feel a sense of belonging. This ratio,

although favorable to belonging, is more balanced than for the non-minorities. For youth

identifying as a non-minority the divide was greater as those feeling a sense of belonging to the

community represented 71.8%, while those who felt no sense of community belonging

represented 28.1%.

Table 9, Analysis of Community Belonging by Minority Status

Minority Status	*Feels a sense of Community Belonging (%)*	*Does not feel Community Belonging (%)*
Visible Minority	57.7	42.3
Non-Visible Minority	71.7	28.3
	n=316	χ^2=6.199, sig=0.013 (1df)

The variable of community belonging is a key component of civic youth engagement.

The components with the largest effect on community belonging are the grade/ gender divide

with grade 12 girls emerging as having the highest levels of community belonging; the

neighbourhood effect on community belonging was also notable with the greatest knowledge

disparity found in the downtown neighbourhood. Finally, it is troubling that visible minorities

reported a belonging in the magnitude of 14% less than did non-visible minorities.

5.2   Civic Knowledge

The tendencies of youth to engage in politics are highly related to the level of knowledge

they have regarding important issues, elected officials, and government structure. To test levels of

civic knowledge of survey respondents in this study, the following three questions were asked in

the Youth Engagement Survey:

1. Who is the Mayor of New Westminster?
2. Who is the MLA in the New Westminster riding?
3. Do you know who to contact with your ideas and concerns about the community?[4]

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[4] For the question asking the youth if they knew who to contact with a question or concern, a secondary
question was required to identify who it was they would contact: teacher, parent, elected official, police
officer or other.

To analyze the responses in a composite manner, a Civic Knowledge Index (CKI) was created which will be the variable used to analyze knowledge in this section. As seen in table 10, the following categories represent the indicated knowledge measures:

Table 10, Categorical Breakdown of Civic Knowledge Index

Category	*Description*
No civic knowledge	Could not answer any of the three knowledge testing questions correctly
Limited civic knowledge	Could only answer one of the three knowledge testing questions correctly
Good civic knowledge	Successfully answered two or three of the three knowledge testing questions correctly

As the literature predicted, most youth had no civic knowledge, that is, could not answer any of the three questions correctly. The percentage of youth who answered zero or one question correctly combines to a total of 74.1% of the survey sample. The remaining 25.9% of youth could answer either two or three of the questions correctly.

Figure 9: Distribution of Civic Knowledge Index
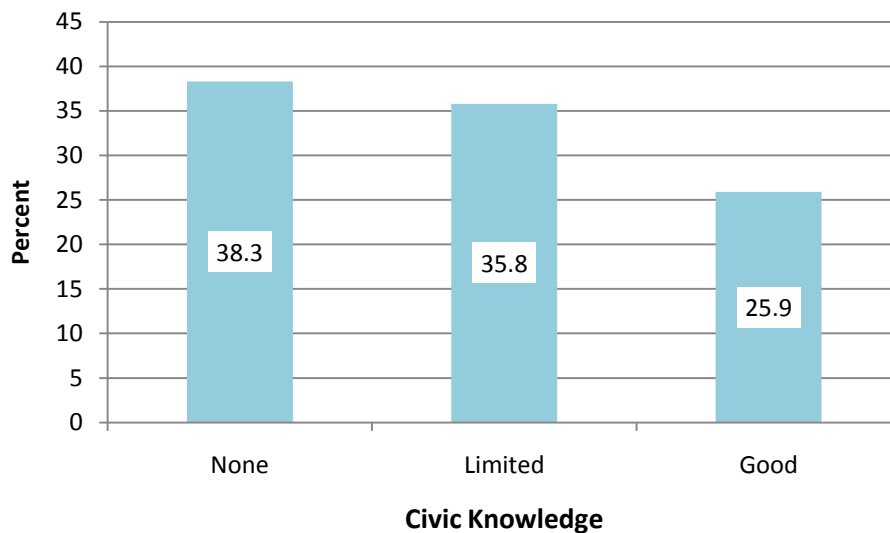
When analyzing knowledge levels by grade, good civic knowledge increased steadily. Grade 10 students have the least "good civic knowledge" at 20.7%, while grade 11's fall in the middle with 24.7%, a number that rises to 29.4% of students with good civic knowledge in grade 12. The observed increase may be influenced by lifestyle effects that older youth face as they transition out of high school, causing them to be more civically aware. In addition, grade 12 youth are likely to be of legal voting age, which makes political issues more relevant to them, increasing civic knowledge needed for making informed political decisions. Lastly, the higher proportion of grade 12's with good civic knowledge could be indicative of having spent more time in the education system, although it is in the grade 10 curriculum in which the "civics" unit is taught in BC.

Table 11, Analysis of Civic Knowledge by Grade

Grade	No Civic Knowledge (%)	Limited Civic Knowledge (%)	Good Civic Knowledge (%)
Grade 10	39.1	40.2	20.7
Grade 11	40.3	35.1	24.7
Grade 12	36.8	33.7	29.4
n=332		χ^2=2.708, sig=0.608 (4df)	

In each category of civic knowledge, boys and girls had comparable outcomes. The differences in knowledge were approximately a one percentage point difference for each category of knowledge. It is interesting to note that girls have a relatively better knowledge base across the board, and appear less frequently in the "no civic knowledge" and "limited civic knowledge" categories, and more frequently in the "good civic knowledge" category.

Table 12, Analysis of Civic Knowledge by Gender

Gender	No Civic Knowledge (%)	Limited Civic Knowledge (%)	Good Civic Knowledge (%)
Female	37.9	35.6	26.4
Male	38.6	36.1	25.3
n=332		χ^2=0.055, sig=0.973 (2df)	

The analysis of respondents with "good civic knowledge" is interesting because of the knowledge variability between grades. In grade 10, the boys report a much higher level of knowledge (63.2%) than girls. The knowledge gap narrows for grade 11's, with girls taking the lead at 52.6%. The numbers nearly reverse for grade 12 students as the girls continue to lead in the category of "good civic knowledge" with a percentage of 60.4%, while boys drop further to only 39.6%.

Figure 10: Respondents with Good Civic Knowledge by Grade and Gender
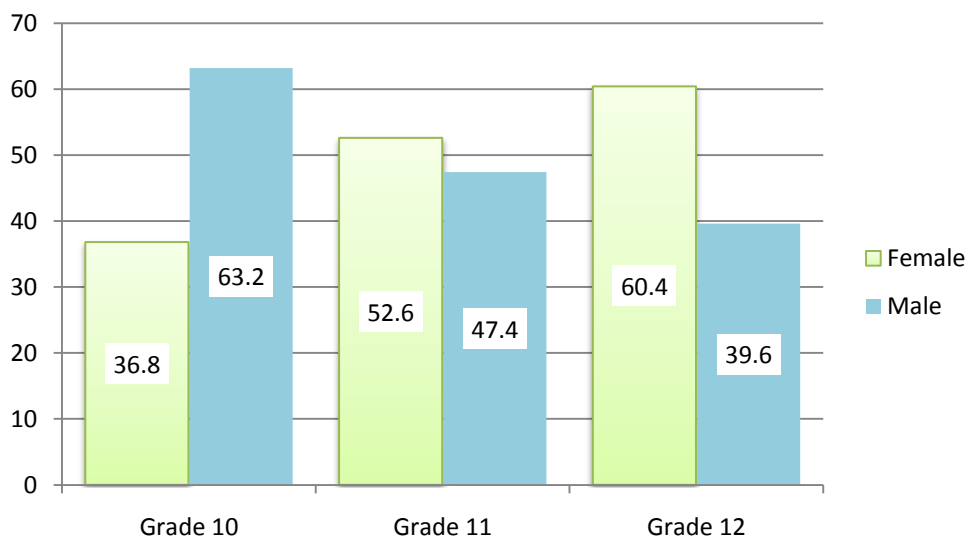
As with community belonging, Sapperton neighbourhood has the highest percentage of youth with "good civic knowledge" at 45.2%. It is surprising that Brow of the Hill, characterized as low income has the second highest degree of "good civic knowledge at 43.8%. Relatively low in the standings of "good civic knowledge" were the three neighbourhoods of Downtown, Queensborough, and Queens Park.

Table 13, Analysis of Civic Knowledge by Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood	No Civic Knowledge (%)	Limited Civic Knowledge (%)	Good Civic Knowledge (%)
Downtown (*Central Urban*)	59.7	31.6	10.5
Queensborough (*Geographically Isolated*)	54.2	33.3	12.5
Sapperton (*Established community*)	29.0	25.8	45.2
Brow of the Hill (*Low Income*)	43.8	12.5	43.8
Queens Park (*Affluent*)	26.5	44.9	28.6
n=332		χ^2=55.055, sig=0.000 (24df)	

The factor of wealth showed pronounced effects on civic knowledge as the low and medium low categories of wealth accounted for 68% of the youth who had no civic knowledge. The medium, medium high, and high categories of wealth proved to have the greatest percentages of good civic knowledge, although the lowest income category had the highest percentage of good civic knowledge, surpassing the highest income category by 2.4%.

Table 14, Analysis of Civic Knowledge by Wealth

Wealth	No Civic Knowledge (%)	Limited Civic Knowledge (%)	Good Civic Knowledge (%)
Low	16.7	50.0	33.3
Medium Low	51.5	27.3	21.2
Medium	37.3	35.3	27.3
Medium High	33.8	38.5	27.7
High	27.6	44.8	27.6
n=332		χ^2=9.584, sig=0.295 (8df)	

Visible minorities showed similar levels of civic knowledge as compared to those who identified as non-minorities. Overall, for non-minorities, the percentage of "good civic knowledge" was greater than that of visible minorities.

Table 15, Analysis of Civic Knowledge by Minority Status

Minority Status	No Civic Knowledge (%)	Limited Civic Knowledge (%)	Good Civic Knowledge (%)
Visible Minority	37.1	38.1	24.8
Non-Minority	37.1	35.2	27.7
n=318		χ^2=0.389, sig=0.823 (2df)	

Civic knowledge is a precursor to civic youth engagement, qualifying it as a participatory variable. The level of knowledge indicated by boys and girls varied greatly by age with grade 10 boys and grade 12 girls reporting the greatest degrees of knowledge based on the CKI. With respect to neighbourhood, the two more established and affluent neighbourhoods of Sapperton and Queens Park were shown to have the lowest degree of knowledge. However, income was an important factor with the lower income categories having notably less "good civic knowledge" than high income. Minority status made a smaller impact on civic knowledge as minorities trail non-minorities in "good civic knowledge" by approximately 3%.

5.3 Interest in Civic Participation

Interest in civic participation is a natural precursor to youth engagement. The Youth Engagement survey found that youth are divided when it comes to their interest in becoming more involved. 47% of youth reported they were interested in becoming involved with the City of New Westminster, while 53% stated no interest.

Table 16: Distribution of Interest in Civic Participation of Survey Respondents
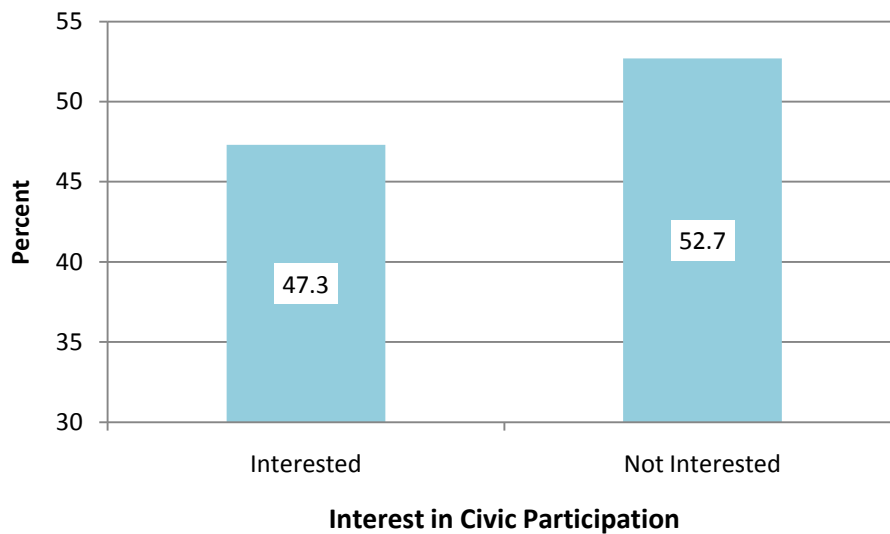
Grade 11 students were found to be the most interested in becoming more involved in municipal process, while grade 10 and 12 students on average reported only 45% of the time, feeling an interest to become involved.

Table 17, Analysis of Interest in Engagement by Grade

Grade	Interested in Youth Engagement (%)	Disinterested in Youth Engagement (%)
Grade 10	45.1	54.9
Grade 11	55.3	44.7
Grade 12	44.8	55.2
	n=330	χ^2=2.531, sig=0.282 (2df)

Out of those who reported an interest in youth engagement, 51.7% were female, and 42.4% were male. The indicated interest in youth engagement by girls is almost 10% higher overall than for boys.

Table 18, Analysis of Interest in Engagement by Gender

Gender	Interested in Youth Engagement (%)	Disinterested in Youth Engagement (%)
Female	51.7	48.3
Male	42.4	57.6
	n=330	χ^2=2.882, sig=0.090 (1df)

In addition to girls showing a higher overall interest in youth engagement, the grade breakdown shows greater interest in youth engagement by girls than boys in every grade. In grade 10 and 11, the girls lead only slightly with 53% and 52% respectively. However, in grade 12 the percentage of interest in youth engagement by girls spike to 61.6% whereas boys only report 38.4% engagement interest rate.

Figure 11: Respondents Interested in Youth Engagement, by Grade and Gender
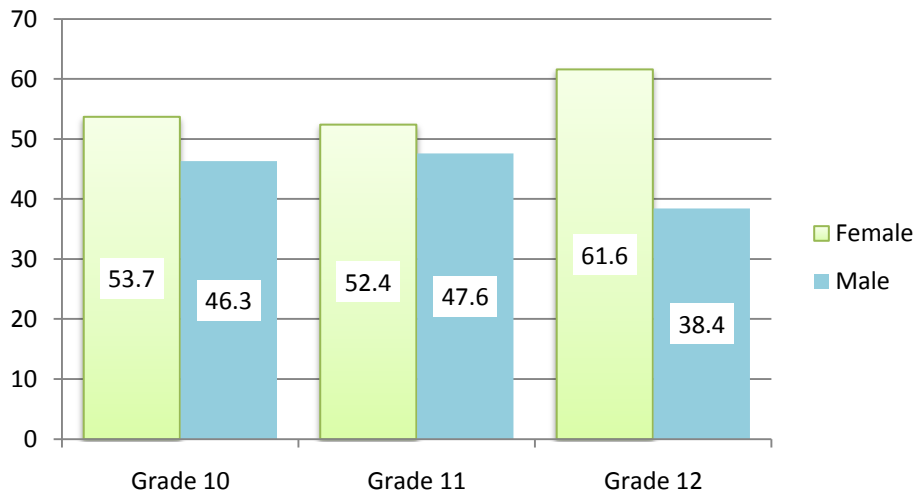
The neighbourhood distribution of engagement interest was generally even among the four profile neighbourhoods of this study. Brow of the Hill showed a greater divide in responses as only 37.5% of youth were interested in engagement. Interestingly, the Downtown

neighbourhood, which has been disparate in other measures of engagement, showed the greatest interest in youth engagement with nearly 58% of respondents identifying interest.

Table 19, Analysis of Interest in Engagement by Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood	Interested in Youth Engagement (%)	Disinterested in Youth Engagement (%)
Downtown (*Central Urban*)	57.9	42.1
Queensborough (*Geographically Isolated*)	50.0	50.0
Sapperton (*Established community*)	48.4	51.6
Brow of the Hill (*Low Income*)	37.5	62.5
Queens Park (*Affluent*)	51.0	49.0
	n=330	χ^2=13.555, sig=0.330 (12df)

Analysis of wealth reveals that the lowest income youth are least interested in youth engagement. Only 25% of youth in the low-income category reported an interest in youth engagement. The second lowest was the medium low category, which reported an interest of 38%, while the more privileged categories of medium, medium-high, and high-income youth report an average of 52% interest in becoming more involved in the City of New Westminster.

Table 20, Analysis of Interest in Youth Engagement by Wealth

Wealth	Interested in Youth Engagement (%)	Disinterested in Youth Engagement
Low	25.0	75.0
Medium Low	37.9	62.1
Medium	50.0	50.0
Medium High	50.8	49.2
High	55.2	44.8
	n=320	χ^2=6.212, sig=0.184 (4df)

Visible minorities indicated a much higher rate of interest in youth engagement than non-visible minorities. Of those who reported they were interested in youth engagement, 51.9% represented visible minorities, and 44.8% did not.

Table 21, Analysis of Interest in Engagement by Minority Status

Minority Status	Interested in Youth Engagement (%)	Disinterested in Youth Engagement (%)
Visible Minority	51.9	48.1
Non-Visible Minority	44.8	55.2
n=316		χ^2=1.416, sig=0.234 (1df)

Interest in youth engagement is an important measure of participatory potential for youth. An important finding is the large interest in engagement indicated by grade 12 girls which is higher than any other grade, and higher than any level of interest indicated by boys. Also notable is the low level of interest indicated by low-income wealth categories when compared to more affluent areas, which was not captured in the neighbourhood distribution. Minorities showed a 7.1% greater interest than non-minorities in youth engagement.

5.4 Belief in the Value of Youth Engagement

Belief in the value of participation is measured through via the following three survey question proxies:

- Belief that young people should participate in municipal planning and decision making,
- Belief that youth input can affect council decisions, and
- Belief that city staff will take youth input seriously

This section analyses each proxy separately based on the independent variables.

5.4.1 Belief that Youth Should Participate in the Municipal Planning and Decision Making Process

Youth respondents reported whether they thought youth ought to be included to participate in the planning and decision making process at the municipal level. This section will first outline quantitative data results from the survey, and then analyze voluntary data and qualitative themes.

The overwhelming response to this question was positive with 77% of youth believing they should have a say in important community issues. In addition to the belief statement of yes/no for youth engagement, a qualitative component of the survey asked youth why this was their belief. This section will first discuss survey data, and second, delineate some of the voluntary responses to the follow-up question, "why".

Figure 12, Distribution of Belief in Youth Engagement by Survey Respondents

Belief that Youth Should Be Engaged in Municipal Planning and Decision Making
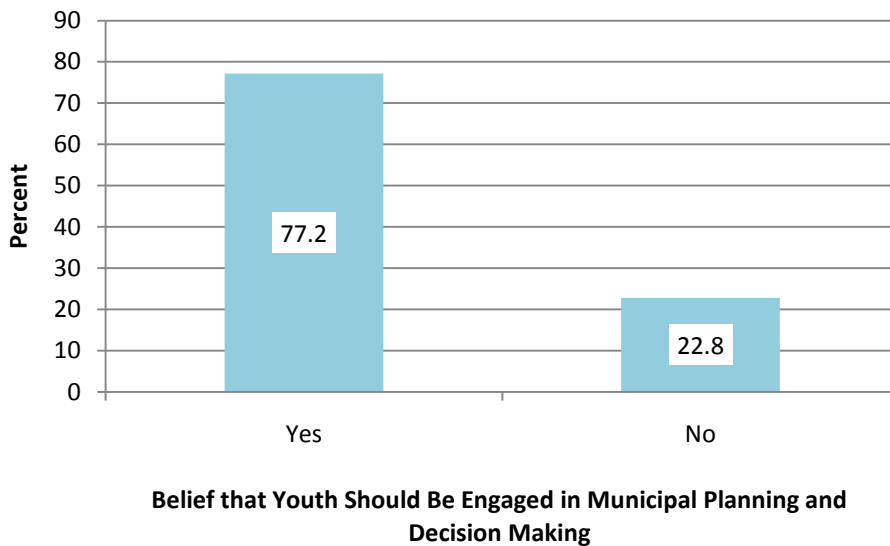
The majority of youth in each grade category felt that youth should participate in municipal planning and decision making. The most pronounced observation is with grade 11 students who believe in the magnitude of 86.8% that youth should be involved.

Table 22: Analysis of Belief in Youth Engagement by Grade

Grade	Youth Should participate in Municipal processes (%)	Youth Should not participate (%)
Grade 10	67.0	33.0
Grade 11	86.8	13.2
Grade 12	78.4	21.6
	n=329	χ^2=9.491, sig=0.009 (2 df)

The rate of girls believing in civic youth engagement is much higher than that of boys. Nearly 87% of girls believe that youth should have a say, while 66% or two thirds of the boys agree.

Table 23:Analysis of Belief in Youth Engagement by Gender

Gender	Youth Should participate in Municipal processes (%)	Youth Should not participate (%)
Female	86.8	13.2
Male	66.5	33.5
n=329		χ^2=19.251, sig=0.000 (1df)

The trend of girls keen on engagement is continued when looking at the belief in youth engagment by grade and gender. Girls in every grade exhibit a greater percentage of belief in youth engagement than boys, with the largest gender gap in grade 12. Grade 10 and 11 students are slightly more evenly distributed.

Figure 13: Respondents who Believe in Youth Participation, by Grade and Gender
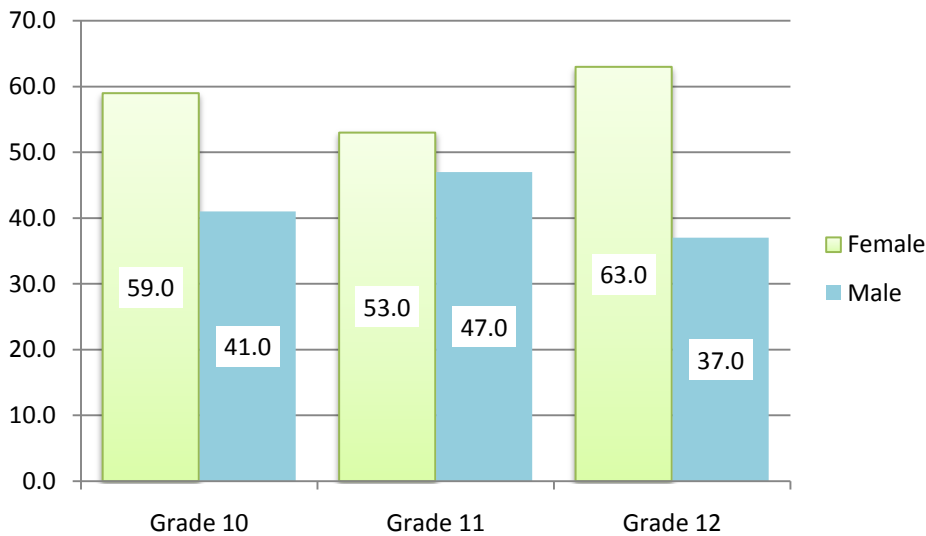
The neighbourhood breakdown of belief in youth engagement showed the highest rates in the Downtown neighbourhood and Brow of the Hill. These neighbourhoods being the two lower income neighbourhoods of New Westminster are showing more interest than the other, more established neighbourhoods in becoming involved in municipal planning and decision making. Youth were divided in the neighbourhood of Queensborough with 54.2% believing in youth engagement and 45.8% believing youth should not be involved in the planning and decision making process.

Table 24:Analysis of Belief in Youth Engagement by Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood	Youth Should participate in Municipal processes (%)	Youth Should not participate (%)
Downtown (*Central Urban*)	89.5	10.5
Queensborough (*Geographically Isolated*)	54.2	45.8
Sapperton (*Established community*)	67.7	32.3
Brow of the Hill (*Low Income*)	87.5	12.5
Queens Park (*Affluent)*	78.3	21.7
	n=329	χ^2=14.662, sig=0.260 (12df)

The highest income category of wealth yielded a higher percentage of youth who believed in youth engagement. The lower income categories of wealth were comparable, ranging from 69.2% to 78.7%. The greatest divide in belief in youth engagement was found in the medium high category, where 69.2% felt youth should participate while 30.8% did not.

Table 25: Analysis of Belief in Youth Engagement by Wealth

Wealth	Youth Should participate in Municipal processes (%)	Youth Should not participate (%)
Low	75.0	25.0
Medium Low	75.4	24.6
Medium	78.7	21.3
Medium High	69.2	30.8
High	86.2	13.8
	n=321	χ^2=3.895, sig=0.420 (4df)

The rate at which youth belonging to visible minorities believe in youth engagement is over 10% less than that of non-visible minorities. The Youth Engagement Survey found that 71.2% of minority youth believe that youth should be engaged in municipal planning and decision making, while 81.6% of non minority youth believe in youth engagement.

Table 26: Analysis of Belief in Youth Engagement by Minority Status

Minority Status	Youth Should participate in Municipal processes (%)	Youth Should not participate (%)
Visible Minority	71.2	28.8
Non-Visible Minority	81.6	18.4
	n=316	χ^2=4.464, sig=0.035 (1df)

The survey data demonstrates the importance of interest as a crucial participatory variable in the measurement of civic youth engagement. An important finding was the gender differences found between grades. Girls, although having higher belief in youth engagement in all grades, the rate for girls in grade 12 exceeded that of boys by 26%. Region seemed to matter for this variable as the characteristically isolated neighbourhood of Queensborough showed a much lower belief in participation than any other neighbourhood. Also minorities reported a lower believe in participation than non-minorities by a factor of nearly 10%.

Voluntary answers to the reasons of why youth should be involved in the planning and decision making process varied by perspective on "should" or "should not" be involved. For each sentiment, the survey answers were recorded and categorized based on re-occurring themes. Some youth respondents did not complete this open ended section. For those who answered that yes, youth should be involved, 218 (85.8%) also indicated a reason. For those who answered no, youth should not be involved, 68 (90.6%) volunteered a reason. The total number of responses in the open-ended component was 283, equating to 85.2% of the survey population.

Figure 14 shows the thematic distribution of responses indicating why youth ought to be involved in municipal planning and decision making. Eight themes were identified from the responses. References to the future are the most predominant theme with 25% of youth indicating that "youth are the future" and should therefore be involved in decision making now. Similarly to this theme was the impact of decision making. Youth indicated at a rate of 13.3% that they bear the consequences of many decisions made on important local issues. The lack of youth

representation creates decision outcomes unfavourable to youth, making participation important. Some youth recognise that they can be seen as resources to the municipal planners and decision makers citing that youth often have different ideas than adults, and fresh perspectives on issues. Overall, the reactions to youth believing that youth ought to participate, capture feelings of ownership, inclusion, and equality of youth.

Figure 14: Thematic review of why youth should be involved in planning and decision making

- Youth are the future
- The decisions made affect us too
- We are part of the community too
- Youth have different ideas/ fresh perspectives
- Everyone has a right to give their opinion
- So that decisions made are representitave
- Our opinions are equally as important as adult opinions
- Youth have community insight and knowledge of relevant issues
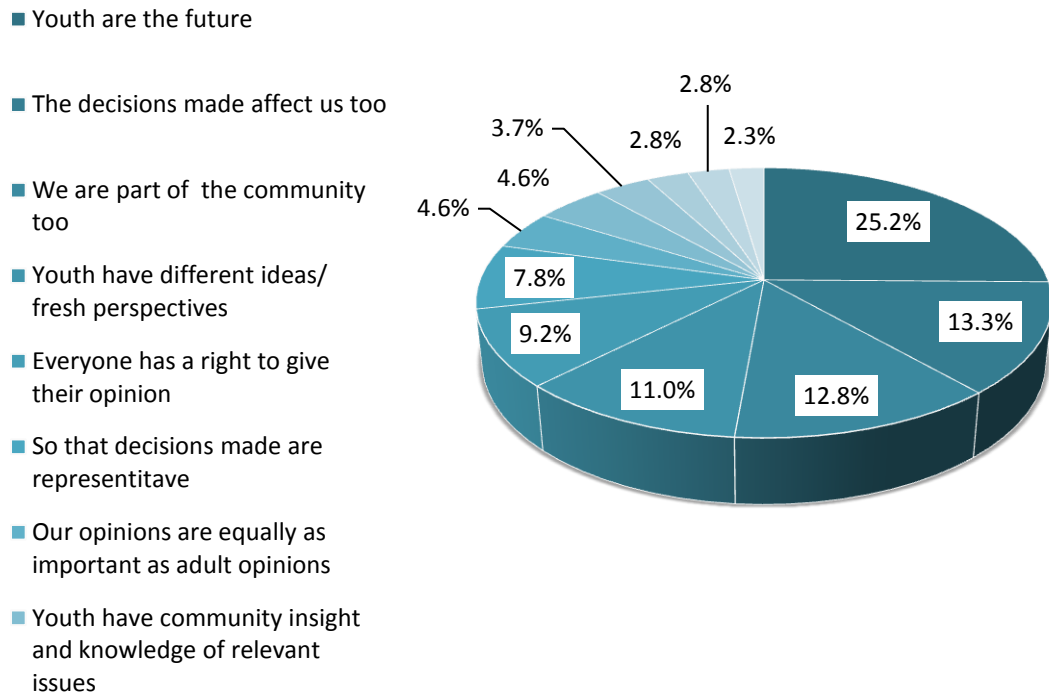
Figure 15 illustrates the thematic distribution of responses indicating why young people believe they should not be involved in municipal planning and decision making. The research identified seven reasons from youth responses. The most common sentiment among the negative responses, were that youth were unequipped with sufficient knowledge and skills to meaningfully be involved in the process. This indicates the lack of civic knowledge youth have with respect to important issues and government operations.

Secondary themes captured the opinions that youth were too young, would be unable to take inclusion seriously, not interested enough and too immature. The common thread between these themes is the notion of social capital. Youth are indicating feelings of disempowerment and lack of value with respect to municipal planning and the decision making process.

Figure 15: Thematic review of why youth should NOT be involved in planning and decision making
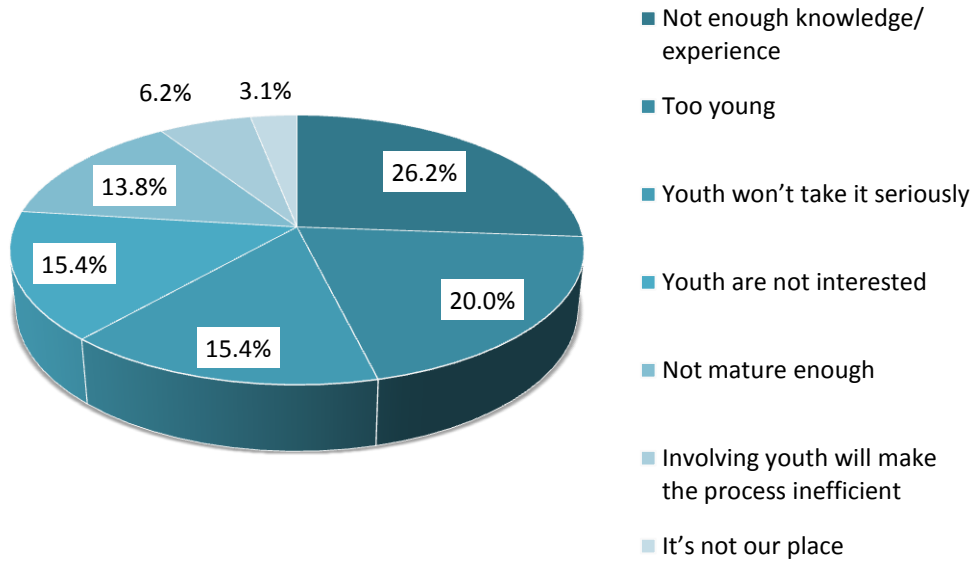
The negative responses to the question of youth involvement, indicates reasons why youth should not be involved are cleaved between lacking civic knowledge and lacking social capital. The positive responses however, demonstrate that youth are looking to the future, feel they can be depended upon as resources within the process, and have new and valid ideas to contribute.

5.4.2   Belief in the Ability of Youth to affect Council Decisions

The Youth Engagement Survey finds that over half of the youth sampled believe that youth input into important municipal issues will make no impact on the outcome of council

decision making. This finding is important because it shows that youth perceive low engagement efficacy to their participation, which can serve as a disincentive to engagement.

Figure 16: Percent Distribution of Belief in Youth Impact on Council
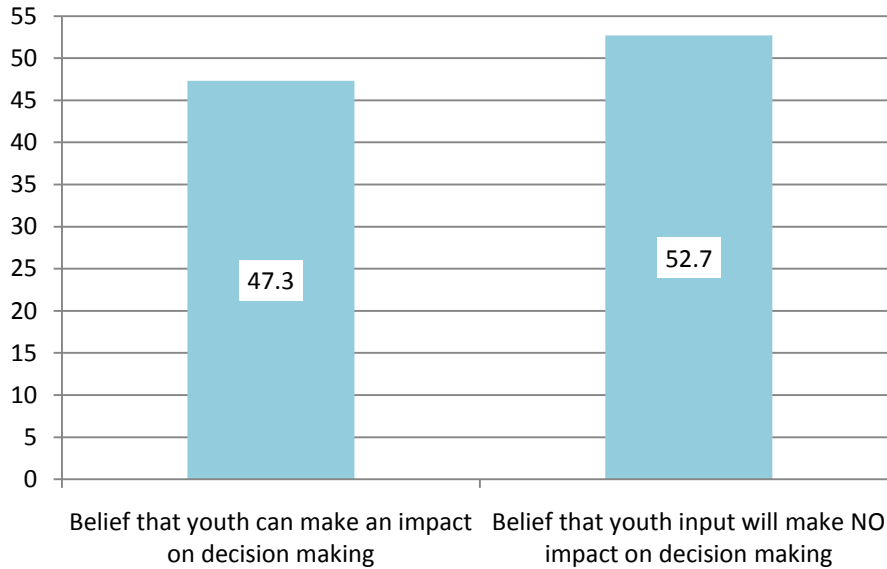
The impact of grade on the variable of youth impact on decision making was less pronounced than other measures of engagement. The majority of youth believed that youth input would not have an impact on decision making, and the values between grades varied at most by a magnitude of 1%.

Table 27: Analysis of Belief that Youth Engagement will influence decision making by Grade

Grade	Youth input can affect council decisions (%)	Youth input will have no impact on Council decisions (%)
Grade 10	47.8	52.2
Grade 11	46.8	53.2
Grade 12	47.2	52.8
	n=332	$\chi^2=0.020$, sig=0.990 (2 df)

The belief that youth input can affect decision making was looked upon more favourably by girls than boys. The majority of girls at 50.6% felt optimistically about youth engagement while responses from boys were still skewed with over 56% believing youth participation would not influence decisions made.

Table 28: Analysis of Belief that Youth Engagement will influence decision making by Gender

Gender	Youth input can affect council decisions (%)	Youth input will have no impact on Council decisions (%)
Female	50.6	49.4
Male	43.7	56.3
n=332		χ^2=1.583, sig=0.208 (1df)

When youth engagement impact was analyzed according to grade and gender, data shows that girls are more optimistic that youth can influence City Council in grades 10 and 12. As observed for other participatory variables, the gender differences in grade 10 and 11 are more comparable than for grade 12. Grade 12 girls have more faith in the influence of youth engagement when compared to boys by 24.6%.

Figure 17: Percent of Respondents who Believe Youth input can Influence Council, by Grade and Gender
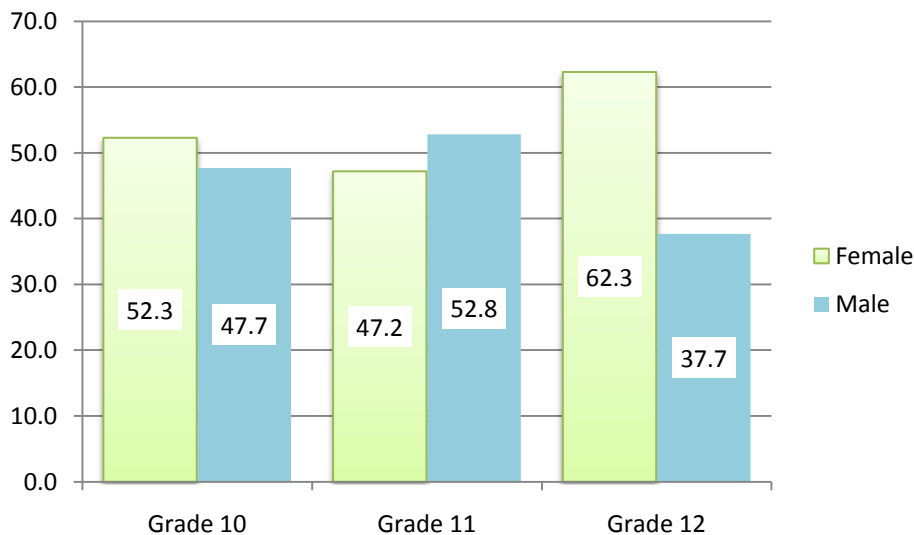
The neighbourhood breakdown shows the least belief in youth influence on council decision making is by youth in the Queensborough neighbourhood. Sapperton and Brow of the Hill characterized by very different neighbourhood traits, show a similar response rate that youth input can affect council decisions. The Downtown neighbourhood was the most optimistic at 63.2% belief that youth input can affect council decisions.

Table 29: Analysis of Belief that Youth Engagement will influence decision making by Neighborhood

Neighbourhood	Youth input can affect council decisions (%)	Youth input will have no impact on Council decisions (%)
Downtown (*Central Urban*)	63.2	36.8
Queensborough (*Geographically Isolated*)	29.2	70.8
Sapperton (*Established community*)	51.6	48.4
Brow of the Hill (*Low Income*)	52.4	47.6
Queens Park (*Affluent)*	42.9	57.1
	n=332	χ^2=19.555, sig=0.076 (12 df)

Belief that youth input will influence council decisions is strongly affected by income, as the lowest wealth category shows the lowest rate of belief at 25%. The highest rates of belief in the ability for youth to impact decision making are found in the three highest categories of wealth.

Table 30: Analysis of Belief that Youth Engagement will influence decision making by Wealth

Wealth	Youth input can affect council decisions (%)	Youth input will have no impact on Council decisions (%)
Low	25.0	75.0
Medium Low	39.4	60.6
Medium	50.0	50.0
Medium High	55.4	44.6
High	44.8	55.2
	n=332	χ^2=6.254, sig=0.181 (4 df)

Visible minorities believe that youth participation will influence decisions made by council at a lower rate than non-visible minorities. Non-visible minorities report a 7.8% higher rate of belief that youth engagement can influence decisions made by council.

Table 31: Analysis of Belief that Youth Engagement will influence decision making by Minority Status

Minority Status	Youth input can affect council decisions (%)	Youth input will have no impact on Council decisions (%)
Visible Minority	41.0	59.0
Non-Visible Minority	48.8	51.2
	n=318	χ^2=1.754 sig=0.185 (1 df)

Youth identifying as belonging to a visible minority were additionally asked if their ethnicity affects the way they can influence government. Of those who felt their ethnicity had a negative impact on their capacity to influence council decision making, 65% identified as a visible minority.

Table 32: Effect of Ethnicity on Youth Engagement

How does your ethnicity affect the way you can influence government?	Visible Minority (%)	Non-Visible Minority (%)
Positive Effect	34.4	65.6
Negative Effect	65.6	34.4
Neutral, Ethnicity doesn't matter	28.7	71.3
	n=318	χ^2=17.512, sig=0.000 (2 df)

The belief that youth have in the meaning of engagement speaks to the efficacy of the process. With a majority of youth feeling that any input offered to planners and decision makers will make no impact on the outcome of decisions indicates a sentiment of tokenism and marginalization. Grade 10, and 11 youth show comparable rates of belief that youth input will influence decisions, but grade 12 girls again, show increased optimism. Similar to the trends observed in other participatory variables, low income and minority status seem to barriers to youth engagement.

5.4.3 Belief that City Staff will take Youth Input Seriously

The belief that city staff will take youth input into planning and decision making seriously reflects the lack of trust youth have in government. Survey results point to a high level of distrust in city staff as 69.1% of youth believe their input will not be taken seriously. This finding demonstrates a need for adult allies to advocate for youth participation and help facilitate youth engagement in a meaningful way.

Table 33: Distribution of Belief that City Staff will take Youth Input Seriously
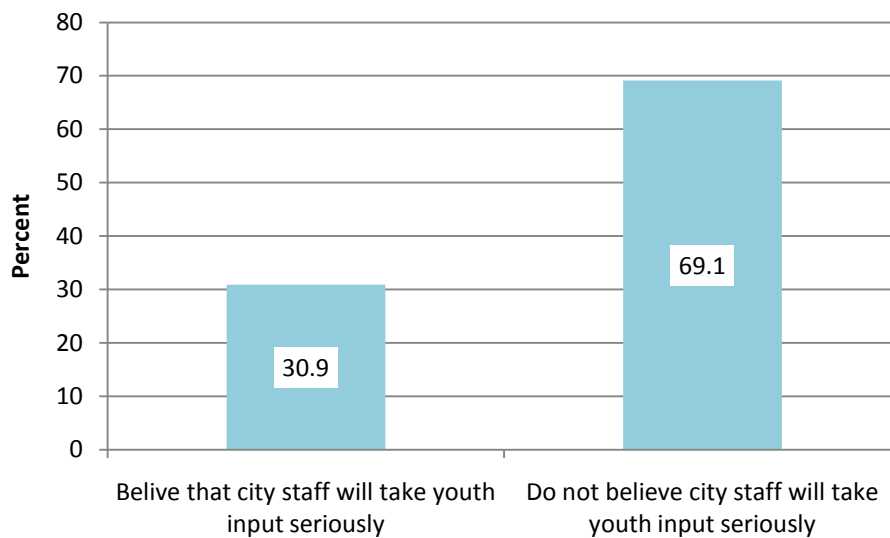
Belief that city staff will take young people's contributions to planning and decision making seriously is highly questioned by youth of all ages. The rate at which youth believe they will be taken seriously ranges from 27.6-34.8%. The grade 11 age group feels the least trust toward adults taking them seriously at a rate of only 27.6% belief.

Table 34: Analysis of Belief that Staff will take Youth Input Seriously by Grade

Grade	Youth input will be taken seriously (%)	Youth input will NOT be taken seriously (%)
Grade 10	34.8	65.2
Grade 11	27.6	72.4
Grade 12	30.2	69.8
	n=330	χ^2=1.062, sig=0.588 (2 df)

Girls are more trusting that their contributions will be taken seriously by city staff. Female respondents indicated a positive belief of 35.6% while boys were less confident in the trust of city staff at only 25.6%.

Table 35: Analysis of Belief that Staff will take Youth Input Seriously by Gender

Gender	Youth input will be taken seriously (%)	Youth input will NOT be taken seriously (%)
Female	35.6	64.4
Male	25.6	74.4
	n=330	χ^2=3.845, sig=0.050 (1 df)

Analyzing all youth who are confident that city staff will take youth input seriously, data shows that girls are more optimistic than boys in every grade. Also the belief they will be taken seriously increases as they become older, with boys showing less engagement as they proceed to grade 12. Girls may feel that as they age their maturity and experience warrants a higher degree of trust and confidence by city staff with regards to planning and decision making. Conversely, boys show the lowest rate of belief in the older grades which supports the earlier findings that boys in older age groups are more disengaged than girls.

Figure 18: Analysis of Belief that Staff will take Youth Input Seriously by Grade and Gender
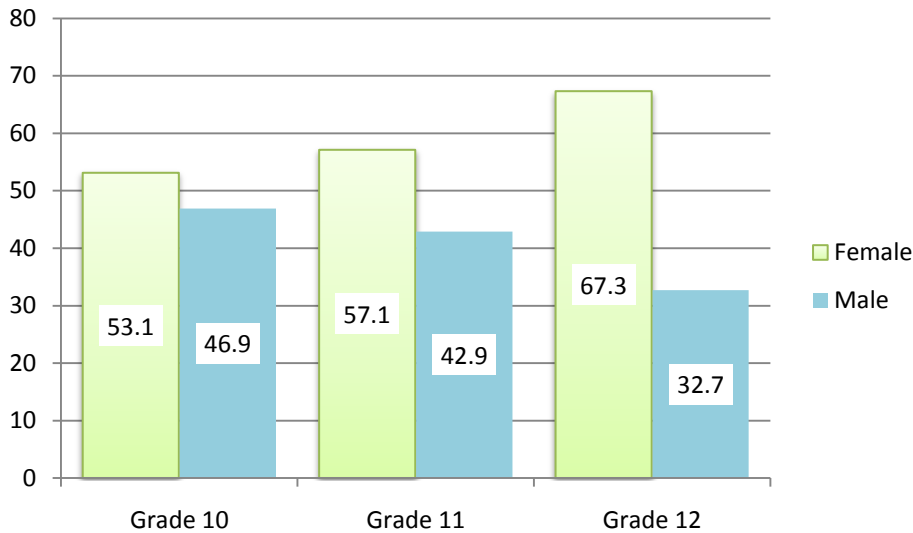
The neighbourhood distribution of belief that youth input will be taken seriously is highly variable between locations. The highest level of confidence that youth will be taken seriously is from Queensborough youth who report a rate of belief at 54.2%. The lowest indicated confidence in staff support is by Brow of the Hill youth who report a rate of belief at only 26.7%.

Table 36: Analysis of Belief that Staff will take Youth Input Seriously by Neighborhood

Neighbourhood	Youth input will be taken seriously (%)	Youth input will NOT be taken seriously (%)
Downtown (*Central Urban*)	36.8	63.2
Queensborough (*Geographically Isolated*)	54.2	45.8
Sapperton (*Established community*)	32.3	67.7
Brow of the Hill (*Low Income*)	26.7	73.3
Queens Park (*Affluent*)	36.7	63.3
n=330		χ^2=13.918, sig=0.306 (12 df)

Wealth distribution has a large impact on the distribution of this variable. The lowest income category has the least confidence that youth will be taken seriously with a belief rate of only 16.7%. The higher income levels show an increase along the spectrum with the two highest income categories approaching 40%.

Table 37: Analysis of Belief that Staff will take Youth Input Seriously by Wealth

Wealth	Youth input will be taken seriously (%)	Youth input will NOT be taken seriously (%)
Low	16.7	83.3
Medium Low	32.8	67.2
Medium	26.7	73.3
Medium High	38.5	61.5
High	37.9	62.1
n=320		χ^2=4.916, sig=0.296 (4 df)

The belief that youth input is taken seriously by city staff, is affected by the minority status of the youth involved. Visible minority youth report almost a 6% lower confidence in the ability of city staff to take their input seriously.

Table 38: Analysis of Belief that Staff will take Youth Input Seriously by Minority Status

Minority Status	Youth input will be taken seriously (%)	Youth input will NOT be taken seriously (%)
Visible Minority	27.2	72.8
Non-Visible Minority	32.9	67.1
	n=316	χ^2=1.047, sig=0.306 (1 df)

Lack of confidence in the support expected from city staff with respect to youth engagement is a barrier to participation. The vast majority of youth at 69.1% do not believe their input will be taken seriously by adults working in the capacity of planners and decision makers. This finding identifies the importance of adult allies and the lack of inclusivity toward youth in the current framework of city consultations in New Westminster.

5.5 Intention of Future Engagement

Belief in intention of future engagement is measured through two survey question proxies: a) Intention of voting in the next municipal election, and b) the intention of future youth engagement. Each proxy is analyzed separately based on the independent variables.

5.5.1 Intention of Voting in the Next Municipal Election

The Youth Engagement Survey asked youth if they intend to vote in next municipal election pending their eligibility. In this section I have only used grade 11 and 12 students because they will be the only ones eligible to vote in the next municipal election. Because respondents from grade 10 are not included, this section has 240 cases of missing data, which constitutes 27.7 % of the population.

Figure 19: Intention of Voting in the next municipal election (if eligible)
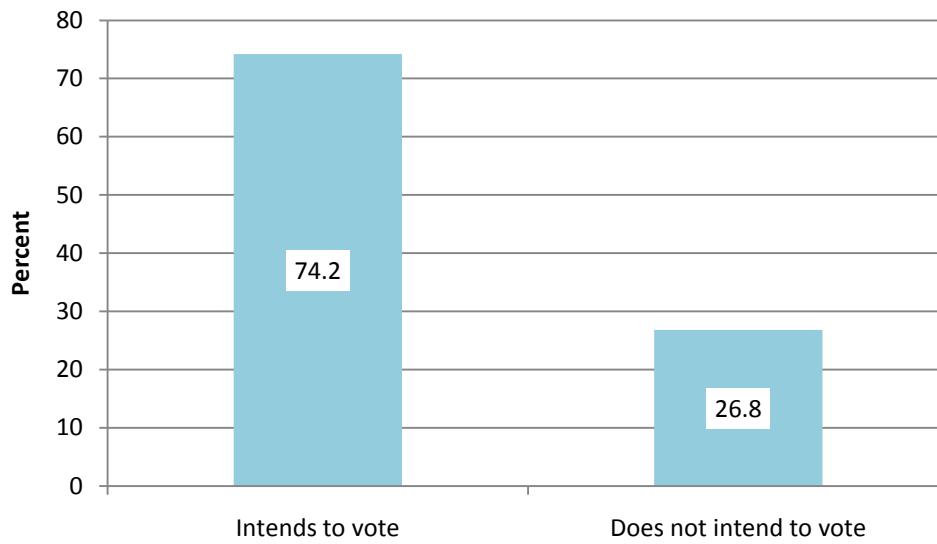
The intention of grade 11 youth was more favourable to voting in the next municipal election than grade 12 youth. Youth in grade 11 reported intention to vote at 81.6%, whereas grade 12 youth reported intention to vote at 72.2%.

Table 39: Analysis of Youth intention to vote by grade

Grade	Intends to vote in the next election (%)	No intention to vote in the next election (%)
Grade 11	81.6	18.4
Grade 12	72.2	27.8
	n=182	χ^2=1.374, sig=0.241 (1 df)

The intention of girls to vote was over 6% higher than that of boys at 76.9%. Boys show higher tendencies toward disengagement indicating no intention to vote at a rate of 30%.

Table 40: Analysis of Youth intention to vote by gender

Gender	Intends to vote in the next election (%)	No intention to vote in the next election (%)
Female	76.9	23.1
Male	70.7	29.3
	n=182	χ^2=1.512, sig=0.219 (1 df)

In grade 11 and 12, the propensity of girls toward voting was higher than for boys. The difference was greater in grade 11 with 61.3% of those intending to vote being girls, and only

38.7 being boys. Boys have a higher intention of voting in grade 12 at 41.3%, but still trail girls who intend to vote at a rate of 58.7%.

Figure 20: Eligible Survey Respondents Intending to Vote in the Next Municipal Election, by Grade and Gender
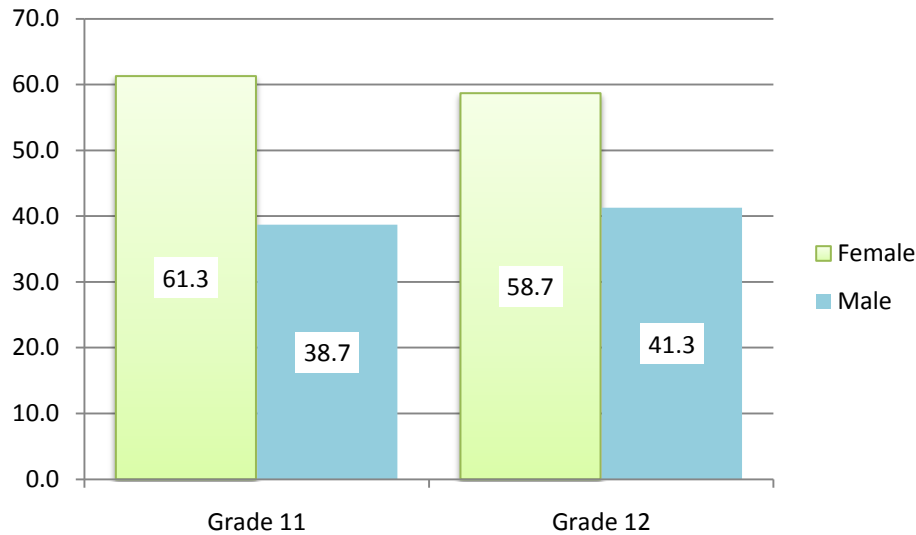
The intention to vote distributed by neighbourhood is highest in Queensborough and Sapperton neighbourhoods. Youth residing in the Brow of the Hill neighbourhood were slightly more likely to vote than youth in the Queens Park neighbourhood. The lowest rate of intention to vote is the Downtown neighbourhood.

Table 41: Analysis of Intention to Vote by neighborhood

Neighbourhood	Intends to vote in the next election (%)	No intention to vote in the next election (%)
Downtown (*Central Urban*)	58.3	41.7
Queensborough (*Geographically Isolated*)	91.7	8.3
Sapperton (*Established community*)	92.9	7.1
Brow of the Hill (*Low Income*)	80.0	20.0
Queens Park (*Affluent)*	78.6	21.4
	n=182	χ^2=18.480, sig=0.102 (12 df)

The distribution of youth intending to vote in the next municipal election distributed by wealth is alarming. The lowest income category of youth indicated no intention to vote in the next election at all. This means in all the grade 11 and 12 students surveyed, there were no responses indicating an intention to vote in the lowest category. Intention to vote steadily increases through the wealth distribution ending with an overwhelming majority of youth intending to vote in the highest bracket at 93.3%.

Table 42:Analysis of Intention to Vote by wealth

Wealth	*Intends to vote in the next election (%)*	*No intention to vote in the next election (%)*
Low	0	100
Medium Low	64.9	35.1
Medium	76.3	23.8
Medium High	75.6	24.4
High	93.3	6.7
	n=176	χ^2=13.276, sig=0.010 (4 df)

Youth identifying as visible minorities show a higher propensity to vote than non-visible minorities. Although the majority of youth in both categories intend to vote in the next election, minority youth show a 4.3% higher rate than non-visible minorities at 77.2%.

Table 43: Analysis of Intention to Vote by Minority Status

Minority Status	*Intends to vote in the next election (%)*	*No intention to vote in the next election (%)*
Visible Minority	77.2	22.8
Non-Visible Minority	72.9	27.1
	n=175	χ^2=0.374, sig=0.541 (1 df)

The intention to vote in municipal elections when eligible is an important variable in which to measure youth engagement. It gives policy makers an idea of youth intentions toward engagement allowing policy intervention in the case of high disengagement. Notable in this section, was the consistent low intention indicated by boys toward voting, and the extreme effect of wealth on intention to vote. The neighbourhood effect was less noticeable but revealed that the

Downtown neighbourhood, as with other participatory variables, showed low engagement potential. Minorities, which in other variables showed less engagement potential, have a higher indicated intention to vote than non-minorities.

5.5.2   Intention to Participate in Mechanisms of Youth Engagement

Similar to voting the intention of youth to participate in other types of youth engagement is an important predictor of youth engagement. The Youth Engagement Survey asked youth to indicate the types of engagement in which they would be willing to participate to inform local planning and decision making. They were able to indicate as many options as they would likely be willing to engage in.

Results of this question determine that youth are for the majority, unwilling to participate in most forms of engagement proposed. The least favourable option was to join the youth advisory committee. Options having to do with connecting with council members were also quite low, with attending/speaking at a council being requiring more time commitment than writing a letter to an elected official. Attending a youth event and text voting were given similar ratings at 29.9% and 27.4% respectively. Some youth indicated in the margins of their surveys that text voting was an undesirable method of engagement due to the phone billing associated with costs per text message.

The only form of youth engagement that youth indicated willingness to participate in, was the use of online polls. 63.1% of youth reported a willingness to engage via online polls while 36.9% would not. This finding suggests that interactive web components are important for getting youth engaged. Today's youth- sometimes dubbed as Generation Y- are known to be tech savvy and more interconnected via technology than any other age group. This study emphasizes the potential that web tools have for the engagement of youth.

Figure 21: Distribution of Intention to Participate in Different Mechanisms of Youth Engagement
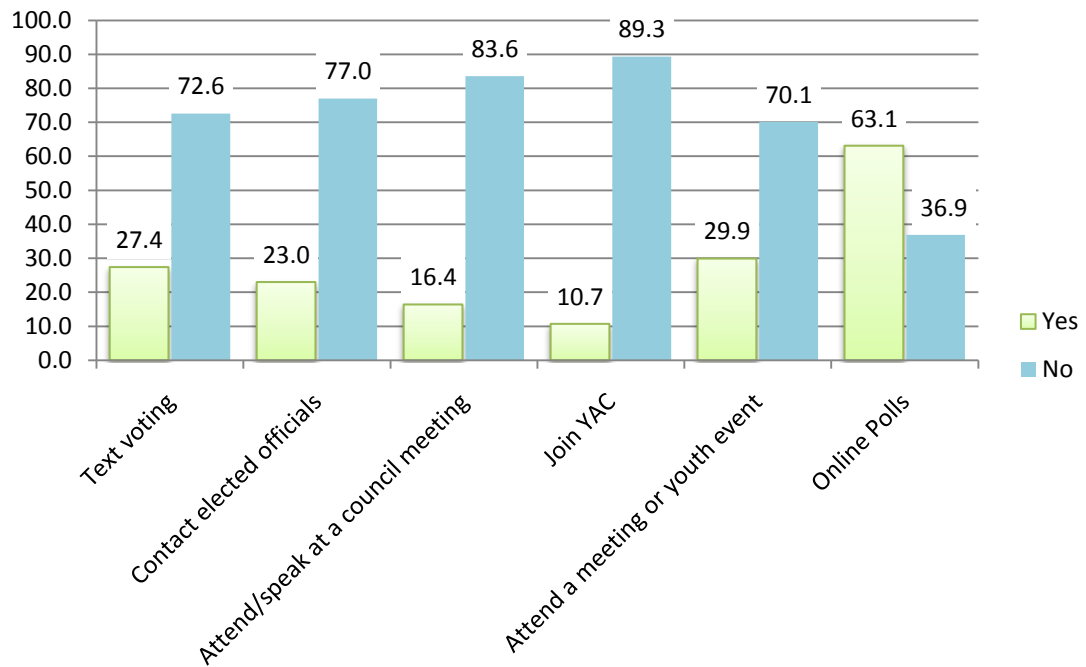
The grade distribution of youth willing to participate, varied greatly by type of engagement. The only category in which responses to participate represented the majority was for online polling. Grade 12 youth were most favourable to polling at 67.1% while the other grades were comparable at around 60% willingness. Youth were increasingly willing to attend a youth event when distributed by age with grade 10's being the least likely at 26.1% and grade 12's being the most likely at 30.3%. The least favourable option, joining the YAC showed low responses at 12% or less for all three grades.

Table 44: Youth willingness for engagement by grade

Grade	Text Voting		Write letter to elected official		Attend/speak at a council meeting		Join YAC		Attend a meeting a youth event		Online Poll	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Grade 10	27.3	72.7	26.1	73.9	8.0	92.0	9.1	90.9	26.1	73.9	60.9	39.1
Grade 11	17.7	81.3	25.3	74.7	18.7	81.3	12.0	88.0	33.3	66.7	57.3	42.7
Grade 12	31.6	68.4	20.0	80.0	20.0	80.0	11.0	89.0	30.3	69.7	67.1	32.9
	n=318 χ^2=4.263, sig=0.119 (2 df)		n=318 χ^2=0.374, sig=0.541 (2 df)		n=318 χ^2=6.339, sig=0.042 (2 df)		n=318 χ^2=0.383, sig=0.826 (2 df)		n=318 χ^2=1.030, sig=0.597 (2 df)		n=317 χ^2=2.312, sig=0.315 (2 df)	

The willingness of girls was greater for each of the youth engagement options than for boys. The greatest gender differences were found in the options for attending a youth meeting or event and online polls. For the youth event option, girls indicated a 38.2% rate of willingness to engage, while boys reported only 20.3% willingness, revealing a gender difference of 17.9% in willingness. Similarly the option of online polls as a youth engagement mechanism was a favourable option for 70% of girls while only 54% indicated willingness to participate in polls. Other types of youth engagement were comparable between boys and girls, with results largely indicative of the overall distribution.

Table 45: Youth willingness for engagement by gender

Gender	Text Voting		Write letter to elected official		Attend/speak at a council meeting		Join YAC		Attend a meeting a youth event		Online Poll	
	Yes	*No*	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*	*No*
Female	28.8	71.2	24.7	75.3	17.1	82.9	13.5	86.5	38.2	61.8	70.6	29.4
Male	25.7	74.3	20.9	79.1	15.5	84.5	7.4	92.6	20.3	79.7	54.4	45.6
	n=318 χ^2=0.394, sig=0.530 (1 df)		n=318 χ^2=0.632, sig=0.426 (1 df)		n=318 χ^2=0.133, sig=0.715 (1 df)		n=318 χ^2=3.080, sig=0.079 (1 df)		n=318 χ^2=4.263, sig=0.119 (1 df)		n=317 χ^2=8.848, sig=0.003 (1 df)	

The distribution of responses showed variation between neighbourhoods with respect to willingness to participate in the different mechanisms of youth engagement. An interesting finding was that in the Downtown neighbourhood and Brow of the Hill, zero youth indicated a willingness to participate by attending or speaking at a council meeting. This might reflect a lack of empowerment associated with their low-income characteristics. Downtown showed the highest propensity to be interested in the youth advisory committee, reporting 17.6% rate of willingness to participate. Brow of the Hill was comparable to many other types of participation but showed the highest interest in online polling when compared with other neighbourhoods.

Table 46: Youth willingness to participate by neighborhood

Neighbourhood	Text Voting		Write letter to elected official		Attend/ speak at a council meeting		Join YAC		Attend a meeting a youth event		Online Poll	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Downtown (*Central Urban*)	41.2	58.8	5.9	94.1	0	100	17.6	82.4	35.3	64.7	64.7	35.3
Queensborough (*Geographically Isolated*)	29.2	70.8	16.7	83.3	12.5	87.5	8.3	91.7	12.5	87.5	66.7	33.3
Sapperton (*Established community*)	33.3	66.7	33.3	66.4	23.3	76.7	6.7	93.3	36.7	63.3	66.7	33.3
Brow of the Hill (*Low Income*)	26.7	73.3	13.3	86.7	0	100	6.7	93.3	13.3	86.7	73.3	26.7
Queens Park (*Affluent)*	23.4	76.6	23.4	76.6	25.5	74.5	6.4	93.6	40.4	59.6	51.1	48.9
	n=318 χ^2=10.504 sig=0.527 (12 df)		n=318 χ^2=16.124, sig=0.186 (12 df)		n=318 χ^2=17.806, sig=0.122 (12 df)		n=318 χ^2=12.387, sig=0.415 (12 df)		n=318 χ^2=23.309, sig=0.025 (12 df)		n=317 χ^2=11.152, sig=0.516 (12 df)	

When the variable is distributed by wealth, the options of text voting and online polling were least stratified by income. This indicates that use of technology is an important factor in promoting equality and inclusion with regards to increasing youth engagement. Other mechanisms of engagement showed large disparities between low and high income with lower income categories showing less willingness to engage. The options of write a letter to an elected official, attend a council meeting, and join the YAC demonstrated this type of socioeconomic stratification. The option to attend a meeting or youth event showed the lowest willingness to engage in the lowest income category, but overall had comparable rates or willingness.

Table 47: Youth willingness to participate by wealth

Wealth	Text Voting		Write letter to elected official		Attend/speak at a council meeting		Join YAC		Attend a meeting a youth event		Online Poll	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Low	25.0	75.0	8.3	91.7	16.7	83.3	8.3	91.7	16.7	83.3	66.7	33.3
Medium Low	25.4	74.6	20.6	79.4	6.3	93.7	9.5	90.5	20.6	79.4	69.8	30.2
Medium	26.5	73.5	21.1	78.9	19.0	81.0	10.2	89.8	34.7	65.3	61.9	38.1
Medium High	33.3	66.7	23.3	76.7	11.7	88.3	10.0	90.0	26.7	76.3	65.0	35.0
High	25.9	74.1	37.0	63.0	33.3	66.7	14.8	85.2	33.3	66.7	53.8	46.2
	n=309 χ^2=1.304, sig=0.861 (4 df)		n=309 χ^2=4.993, sig=0.288 (4 df)		n=309 χ^2=12.141, sig=0.016 (4 df)		n=309 χ^2=0.690, sig=0.953 (4 df)		n=309 χ^2=5.665, sig=0.226 (4 df)		n=309 χ^2=2.411, sig=0..661 (4 df)	

The intention to participate in the different youth engagement mechanisms varies between visible minorities and non-visible minorities. The data finds that visible minorities are more willing to engage in text voting, attend/speak at a council meeting and join the YAC. Other than text voting the trend with visible minorities is to participate in ways which require a higher time commitment than others. Non-visible minorities were more likely to write a letter to their elected officials, attend a youth event, and participate in online polls. The greatest differences in rate of intention to participate was observed were between the youth meeting, and the text voting options.

Table 48: Youth willingness to participate by minority status

Minority Status	Text Voting		Write letter to elected official		Attend/speak at a council meeting		Join YAC		Attend a meeting a youth event		Online Poll	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Visible Minority	32.4	67.6	18.1	81.9	19.0	81.0	16.2	83.8	24.8	75.2	61.0	39.0
Non-visible Minority	24.9	75.1	25.4	74.6	15.0	85.0	8.0	92.0	32.4	67.6	64.2	35.8
	n=318 χ^2=1.990, sig=0.158 (1 df)		n=318 χ^2=2.094, sig=0.148 (1 df)		n=318 χ^2=0.833, sig=0.362 (1 df)		n=318 χ^2=4.964, sig=0.026 (1 df)		n=318 χ^2=1.956, sig=0.162 (1 df)		n=318 χ^2=0.309, sig=0.579 (1 df)	

The intention to participate in youth engagement is the best way to predict youth engagement rates. Significant findings in this section include the high favourability of youth toward the option of online polls. Additionally, it was found that the use of internet and telecommunications via text voting and online polling proved to be the most inclusive methods of youth engagement, bridging all neighbourhoods and income levels. Strategies for boys must be developed as they seemed overall, unwilling to participated in the majority of youth engagement mechanisms. Data also revealed that the best ways to engage minorities are through the use of text voting, inviting them to council meetings and making the YAC more inclusive.

6: Data Analysis

The survey results yielded interesting trends between the participatory variables with respect to the independent variables analyzed. This section will discuss notable trends between participatory variables and highlight important data findings and their implications to public policy.

6.1 Significance

The chi squared statistic measured for each cross tabulation in section 5 determines the strength of relationship between the variables in question. On the basis of chi square values, results with (p) values less than or equal to 0.05 have been identified. These are summarized in the following. In these cases there is a low probability that deviations arise from chance and thus the results are statistically significant.

The independent variable with the greatest table frequency with low significance is gender. The cross tabulations of gender with interest in youth engagement, belief in youth engagement, and belief that city staff will take youth input seriously (tables 18, 23, 35) have significant chi squared test statistics at p≤ 0.05. Neighbourhood location was found to be significant in two tables, when crosstabulated with community belonging and civic knowledge (tables 7 and 13). Minority status was found to be significant when crosstabulated with community belonging and belief in youth engagement and grade was also significant when cross tabulated with belief in youth engagement.

With respect to the various mechanisms of engagement: attend or speak at a council meeting was significant with both grade and wealth. The willingness to join YAC was significant for both gender and minority status. Willingness to participate in an online poll was also significant with the variable for gender. The participation variables with no significance in any crosstabulation was the variable of belief that youth engagement will influence decision making.

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6.2 Participatory Trends

This sections outlines major participatory trends found within the survey data. Table 48 outlines the distribution themes between the participatory variables. I will focus on the grade/ gender divide, the gap in civic education and the marginalization of youth based on socio-economic status and minority status.

Table 49: Overview of Participatory variables

Participatory Variable	Distribution		
Community Belonging	67.3% Belong		32.7% No Belonging
Civic Knowledge	25.9% Good	35.8% Limited	38.3% None
Interested in Civic Participation	47.3% Interested		52.7% Not interested
Belief in the Value of Youth Engagement Believe Youth should be involved in municipal planning and decision making	77.2% Believe		22.8% Do not believe
Belief that youth input can impact council decisions	47.3% Believe		52.7% Do not believe
Believes city staff will take youth input seriously	30.9% Believe		68.5% Do not believe
Intention for Future Engagement Intention to vote in the next municipal election	74.2% plan to vote		26.8% no plan to vote
Intention to Participate in Online Polling	63.1% will participate		36.9% will not participate

6.2.1 The Grade/ Gender Divide

When separating respondents by grade and gender with respect to the participatory variables, it is evident that interesting trends exist between male and female respondents. Please see Table 50 for the numerical display of this data. The split between boys and girls is comparable in grades 10, and 11 with the difference in percentages ranging from -10.4%- 18.0%.

However, when the respondents reach grade 12 girls report much higher frequencies of youth engagement than their male counterparts by at least 23% in nearly every case. The largest differences per variable have been highlighted in the table, you will notice that for every variable other than intention to vote, this value represents the grade 12 responses. This finding demonstrates that high school boys approaching adulthood are less engaged than girls.

Table 50: Overview of Participation Variables by Gender and Grade

	Female (%)	*Male (%)*	*Difference (Female-Male%)*
Feels a sense of belonging to the community			
Grade 10	44.8	55.2	-10.4
Grade 11	48.9	51.1	-2.2
Grade 12	62.0	38.0	**24.0**
Interested in engagement			
Grade 10	53.7	46.3	7.4
Grade 11	52.4	47.6	4.8
Grade 12	61.6	38.4	**23.2**
Believe youth should be involved			
Grade 10	59.0	41.0	18.0
Grade 11	53.0	47.0	6.0
Grade 12	63.0	37.0	**26.0**
Believe youth input will impact Council decision making			
Grade 10	52.3	47.7	4.6
Grade 11	47.2	52.8	-5.6
Grade 12	62.3	37.7	**24.6**
Believe city staff will take youth seriously			
Grade 10	53.1	46.9	6.2
Grade 11	57.1	42.9	14.2
Grade 12	67.3	32.7	**34.6**
Intention of Voting			
Grade 11	61.3	38.7	**22.6**
Grade 12	58.7	41.3	17.4

Public policy alternatives require sensitivity to the lifestyle effects that youth experience by age, maturity, and transition phase which all contribute to the interplay between youth grade and civic engagement. Girls, who exhibit high tendencies toward all measures of participation,

require inclusion and opportunities to engage in municipal planning and decision making. The increased engagement of boys requires a more targeted approach to addresses their needs and issues. Further research is needed to determine specific factors contributing and inhibiting the civic participation of boys. The disparity growing among boys with respect to the high school graduation has recently been revealed, this study has quantified the disparity among boys and girls with respect to civic engagement.

6.2.2   Social Marginalization based on SES and Minority Status

To discuss about the impact of SES on the participatory variables, data has been aggregated into Figure 22. The light green bar represents responses from youth indicating a low SES. The blue bar represents the average of all other income categories from medium low to high.

Data from the Youth Engagement Survey indicates social marginalization between different levels of socio-economic status based on indicated wealth. Several participatory variables show that SES matters such as intention to vote, believe staff will take youth input seriously, interest in civic participation, and community belonging. These variables have been found in this study to be important trends when explaining youth engagement. The disparity found in low wealth categories indicates barriers that these youth in particular are facing with regards to youth engagement.

Youth willingness to participate in an online poll and belief that youth should participate are less affected by the factor of low SES as the rates of participation in these variables show comparable levels. Similarly, the variable of good civic knowledge shows a higher rate for youth in the low SES category that the average of all other categories combined.

Figure 22: Effects of Low SES on Percent of Youth Engagement
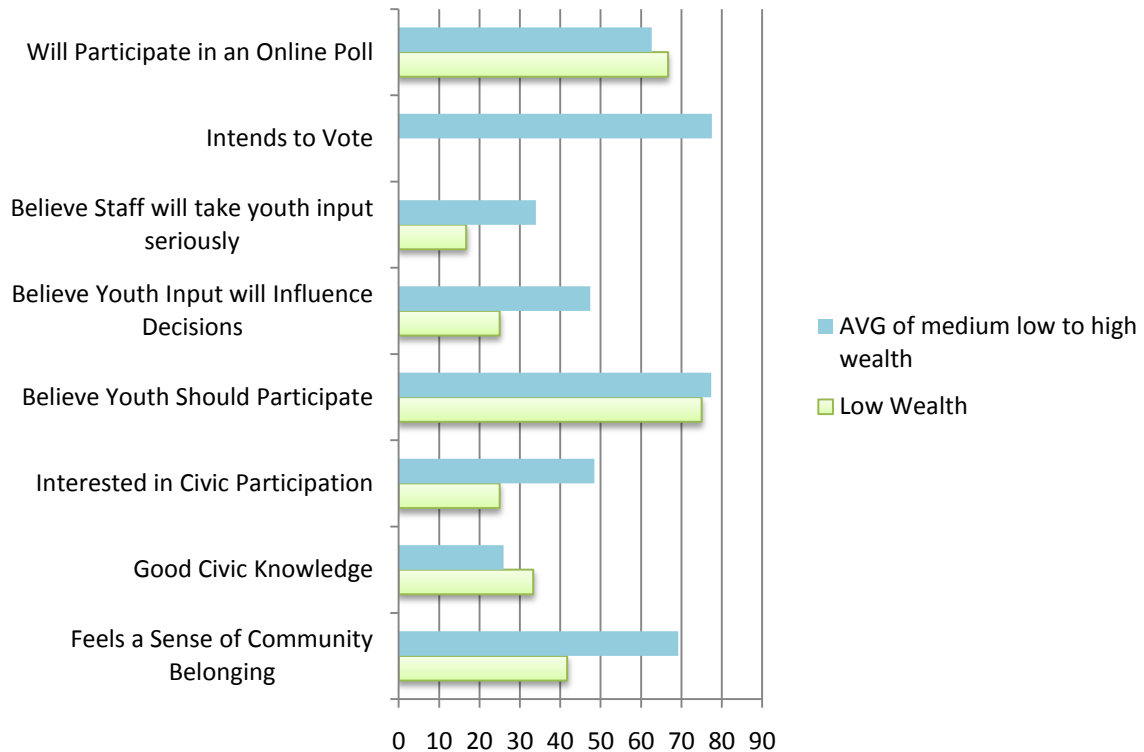
Youth engagement initiatives require an understanding of the challenges that youth face when coming from a low SES conditions. Youth from the low SES category are confident that youth should participate, and have relatively good civic knowledge concerning municipal issues, however they lack the capacity to engage due to low sense of belonging and civic confidence. The lack of civic confidence represents their reluctance to believe that youth input can make a difference, and are hesitant to trust staff who are not thought to take their ideas seriously. Also concerning is the non-existent rate of indication to vote in the next municipal election. Youth from the low SES category need to be targeted in particular to foster engagement in a diverse way. The next section will discuss diversity with regards to visible minority youth in New Westminster.

Survey data also reveals disparities between youth who identify as a visible minority and youth who do not. The areas in which minority youth are not experiencing barriers are in the

areas of civic knowledge, the intention to vote, and the interest in youth engagement. The rate of civic knowledge between minority and non-minority youth is exactly equal at 37.1%. The interest of visible minorities to engage in municipal planning and decision making and vote actually surpasses the rate for non-minorities.

In other ways, the minority youth are marginalized with respect to youth engagement. Minority youth believe that youth should participate to a lesser degree than do non-visible minorities as well as having less civic confidence in engagement efficacy, and have less trust in adults to take their ideas seriously. Another notable trend is that visible minorities feel less community belonging than do non-visible minorities in the magnitude of 10%.

Figure 23: Effects of Minority Status on Percent of Youth Engagement
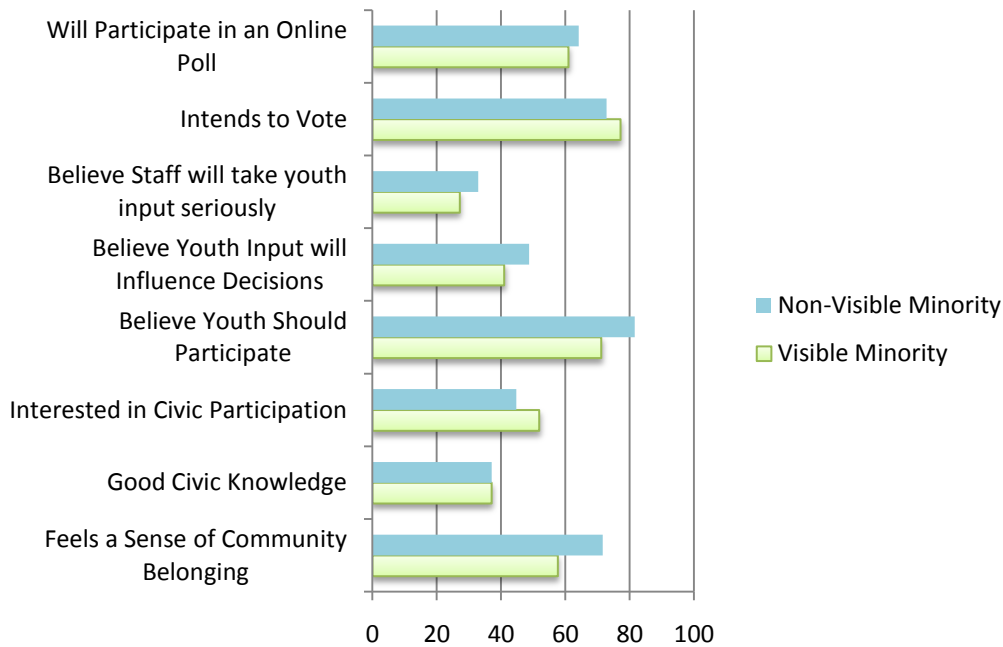
Public policy has the potential to address the needs of minority youth and make engagement more inclusive to all ethnicities.

6.2.3   Gap in Civic Education

Civic education has emerged in this study as an important measure of youth engagement. Increase of civic knowledge via education is a vital component to achieving the policy goal of increasing youth engagement in the City of New Westminster.

Based on survey findings, the way civic education in this paper is twofold. The first goal of civic education is to increase civic knowledge. This is characterized by what youth know and understand about municipal government, its processes, departments, and officials. The second goal of civic education is to build social capital, which refers to social cohesion and personal investment in the community by youth (Putnam). Effective policy regarding civic education will address the issue of both knowledge and social capital

6.3   Increasing Faith in Engagement Efficacy

Trends from the youth engagement survey show that 77% of youth believe that youth ought to participate, in municipal planning and decision making. The trouble is that youth have little faith that the time they spend participating will lead to any significant outcome. This lack of engagement efficacy is demonstrated through the high belief that staff will NOT take youth seriously in the process, and that youth input will NOT make a difference in the decisions that city council makes. These are serious flaws in the current structure of youth engagement in New Westminster and need to be remedied if youth engagement is to increase.

The youth body responsible for advising city council is Youth Advisory Committee (YAC). The problem with YAC is its lack of mandate and communication offer little inclusion to outside youth to be involved. The strongest negative reaction identified toward getting involved in planning and decision making was to join the YAC.

There is great potential for the city of New Westminster to recognise these parallel trends and make amends to YAC with respect to addressing the youth engagement efficacy flaws which are currently serving to deter New Westminster Youth from engagement.

6.4 Increasing Youth Interest and Motivation towards Engagement

The majority of youth surveyed in this study are disinterested in youth engagement compared to those who are interested. Sparking this interest is one way to reach the public policy objective to increase the rates of youth engagement in New Westminster. The least interested demographics of youth are boys, non-visible minorities, and low income youth.

Successful public policy will recognise the diversity in these populations and tailor engagement initiatives toward them. Youth are a dynamic population who thrive on change and variability. By expanding the types of engagement in which youth can participate, the involvement will appeal to a broader population of individuals. Youth consultation and engagement initiatives require planning in such a way that will anticipate the needs of youth and appeal to their interests.

This study has revealed that youth are not a homogenous population group, and need to be considered in light of factors other than age. A successful policy which captures the interest and motivation of youth toward engagement will take diverse demographic variables into consideration.

7: Policy Alternatives

The policy recommendations will analyze four municipal strategies/ tools which may be used to foster civic youth engagement. The policies are informed by the conclusions found from the Youth Engagement Survey Data, as well as by the literature review. The policy objective providing the foundation for each option is to increase New Westminster Youth Engagement.

7.1 Option 1: New Westminster Youth Engagement Guide

The Youth Consultation Guide is an engagement tool that would target city staff such as planners and decision makers. This option relies on the finding that adults as mentors are a key component in the development of successful youth engagement. The guide will build adult capacity for building intergenerational partnerships with respect to decision making and public policy by fostering adult allies and developing systematic opportunities for youth friendly participation. It will clearly outline the concept of youth engagement, and use data from the Youth Engagement Survey to inform planners and decision makers of the barriers and tendencies of youth toward engagement.

Given the use of an Engagement Guide, adults would be better equipped to educate youth via building civic knowledge and building youth capacity via social capital. The implementation of such a guide in city departments will create more inclusivity to youth, and build intergenerational trust networks within the community. The method of implementation of the Youth Engagement Guide includes its distribution to all city departments via e-mail. Additional measures will include managerial training on how to promote use of the guide within department staff and effectively utilize the strategies outlined in the guide.

The focus of this policy is the development of adult allies for the youth community. The approach to increasing youth engagement is through youth education and development.

7.2 Option 2: Implementation of a New Westminster Civic Youth Policy

The introduction of a New Westminster Civic Youth Policy will outline ways in which youth are viewed within the city and how they should be consulted/ included in the municipal planning process around issues directly affecting youth. This policy will promote a paradigm shift in both adults and youth emphasizing the potential for youth to be seen as a policy resource to the city rather than a policy problem. A Civic Youth Policy would be a legal document and need approval from City Council. Its existence would set a precedent in future planning and consultation processes to ensure youth representation on important civic issues.

The implementation of the Civic Youth Policy would include distribution to all city departments. In addition, poster copies of the policy would be posted in high traffic areas to youth such as shopping centres, NWSS, and public libraries. In addition, the City could profile the Civic Youth Policy on its website and educate youth about the policy's implications via a youth event.

The focus of this policy is the legitimization of youth inclusion by age and relevant sub-category (gender, SES, minority status etc.). The approach of this policy will be to develop the community belonging of youth by legitimizing their participation and recognising their contributions to the planning and decision making process.

7.3 Option 3: New Mandate and Communication Strategy for the Youth Advisory Committee

The Youth Advisory Committee is an existing body in the City of New Westminster which demonstrates and educates the importance of civic education. Youth face barriers in becoming involved due to their lack of political experience and undeveloped skill set political activism and municipal knowledge. The purpose of the Youth Advisory Committee should be to

break down these barriers through an education component which covers the role of city hall, meeting etiquette, and responsibility. However, the YAC has become ineffective as many projects undertaken fall outside of municipal jurisdiction, indicating a lack of purpose and unclear mandate. Secondly, the YAC has no way to communicate its initiatives to the wider youth population, thus allowing a select few to represent the broader youth voice.

The implementation of this option starts with a facilitator led workshop to re-focus the committee's mandate and develop a committee communication strategy. This component of implementation will include training of all members to understand committee purpose, general civic knowledge regarding the City of New Westminster, and the building of social capital by empowering youth to better understand their role in engagement. The communication strategy reached will include strategies to channel important policy information between the YAC and the broader youth population. Important vehicles for this communication will include web forums, online polls, texting, e-mails, and the facilitation of policy focused youth events.

The policy focus of identifying a new mandate for the YAC and developing an effective communication strategy will be to increase engagement efficacy. YAC initiatives have the potential to inform decision making and the communication of this impact on the community should be shared with other youth to perpetuate engagement interest. The approach of this policy is to alter youth beliefs in participation by the dissemination of information from the youth advisory body.

7.4 Option 4: Implementation of a City Youth Outreach Staff

This staff position would be based out of the social planning department and have a policy focus. Currently in New Westminster, all youth personnel serve the community via Parks and Recreation, Youth Services. This position would advocate for local youth engagement and disseminate information about important municipal youth issues and engagement opportunities. Another advantage of a youth outreach staff would be to provide youth engagement support to

other city staff attempting to implement changes from the Civic Youth Strategy or use tools from the Youth Engagement Guide. Youth outreach personnel would also be responsible for making public policy more youth friendly and educating young people about opportunities and advantages to participation.

Implementation of a new youth outreach position would require a human resources evaluation to determine salary and job description. The position location would be located in City Hall, in development services, which is currently responsible for social planning.

The focus of this policy will be the development of adult allies for the youth community as well as the development of civic knowledge and social capital. The approach of this policy will be to promote civic engagement to youth and provides diverse opportunities for future engagement.

8: Criteria and Measures

This section utilizes the preceding data analysis to establish criteria on which to measure the feasibility of the proposed policy options. I discuss the importance of each criterion, explain its measure, and justify its weighting.

Overall, six criterion have been developed: Effectiveness (youth acceptability), equity, youth education and development, online accessibility, cost, and administrative complexity. Effectiveness of a proposed policy is arguably the most important criterion to determine its pending success. This study has found two predominant dimensions in which effectiveness can be measured. The overall effectiveness represents the expected increase in participation for a given policy which is measured by youth survey responses. Additionally, effectiveness is measured by the policy's capacity to address specific sub-populations of youth identified in the research as important.

The criterion given the most weighting are measurable and informed directly from the data obtained from the Youth Engagement Survey. These are: effectiveness, equity, youth education and development, and online accessibility. These four criteria are each totalled out of 15 points toward the rating of proposed policy alternatives. The remaining criterion of cost and administrative complexity are equally as important but have less finite values. Due to this, they are weighted less than the criteria with concrete backing derived from the primary collection of survey data. Relative weights of cost and administrative complexity have been scaled down by a factor of 0.60. This weight gives the measures of cost and administrative complexity over half that of the other criteria and allows them to be compared due to their scalor relationship. The total maximum points any one policy alternative can receive in the criteria matrix is 75.

8.1 Effectiveness: Youth Acceptability

The criterion of youth acceptability is an important component dictating effectiveness for any strategy targeting an increase in youth engagement. The youth engagement survey proposed three of the four policy options to youth and asked them if the option were to be implemented if they would be, a) more likely to participate, or b) would continue to be disengaged in municipal planning and decision making.

The acceptability of the proposed policy options by youth is mainly positive as in all cases youth indicated a tendency to increase their participation pending the respective change. Option 1 and 2 provided the best youth acceptability measure with 64.2 and 66 % respectively willing to increase participation. Option 3 showed little success with only 21.1% of youth willing to join the YAC, but an additional 46.4% indicating that they would participate by attending a meeting. This has the potential to allow the YAC to expand via sub-committees or ad-hoc working groups. Policy Option 4 is not measured by the data because it was not considered at the time of survey creation. This option has been discussed in Section 9.4 based on data findings from other literature in order to compare it to the other options.

Table 51: Criteria measures for youth acceptability

Criterion	*Measure*	*Weight*
Low Youth Acceptability	If substantially less than a the majority (≤40%) of youth would increase engagement upon implementation of policy option	5 points
Medium Youth Acceptability	If between 41% and 59% of youth would increase engagement upon implementation of policy option	10 points
High Youth Acceptability	If substantially greater than the majority (≥60%) of youth would increase engagement upon implementation of policy option	15 points

8.2 Equity: Relevance to Youth Sub-Populations

This study determined that 5 major factors contribute to the rate of civic youth

engagement. The factors of: age, gender, neighbourhood, socio-economic status, and minority

status were analyzed as independent variables and are important youth sub-populations. In this

section, effectiveness of the proposed policy option will be determined based on how many of the

independent variables the policy will address.

Each variable is weighted equally in value of three points.

Table 52: Criteria measures for equity

Criterion	*Measure* *Effectiveness at providing and supporting engagement based on:*	*Weight*
Age (grade)	Different needs pertaining to lifestyle effects experienced by youth at in different grades.	3 points
Gender	Different gender needs, while recognising that boys are less likely to engage than girls	3 points
Neighbourhood	Neighbourhood diversity	3 points
Socio-economic Status	Disparities between youth in different income groups	3 points
Minority Status	Inclusivity for youth who identify as visible minorities	3 points
		Total Maximum Value of Criterion=15

8.3 Youth Education and Development

The concept of youth education has emerged in this study as an important factor affecting

youth engagement. The types of youth education needed for youth engagement are twofold: the

fostering of civic knowledge and of social capital.

Civic knowledge is lacking among surveyed youth respondents particularly among visible minorities and those residing in the neighbourhoods of Queensborough and Downtown. Civic education must include dissemination of municipal planning and decision making information in a youth friendly way. The education component must also aim to increase general political knowledge among young people regarding their elected officials, contact information, and city policies.

Social capital is an important quality of community that New Westminster youth seem to be lacking. This is evident from the qualitative thematic analysis of their open-ended answers asking why youth should or should not be involved in planning/ decision making. The social capital component to youth education will reveal the contributions that youth are capable of making to the planning and decision making process. Thus, shifting the paradigm of engagement to view youth as a resource and empowering them to seek new ways of engagement.

Table 53: Criteria measures for youth education

Criterion	*Measure*	*Weight*
No youth education component	Policy option has no youth education components	5 points
Civic Knowledge OR Social Capital	Policy option has the capacity to educate youth through building civic knowledge OR by instilling social capital	10 points
Civic Knowledge AND Social Capital	Policy option has the capacity to educate youth by building civic knowledge AND instilling social capital	15 points

8.4 Online Accessibility

The willingness of youth to participate in youth engagement activities largely favoured the use of online polls. In terms of approaches to engagement, an overwhelming 63.1% of youth respondents identified their preference to use online polls, which was above the other means of engagement by a difference ranging from 33-53%. Today's youth generation are tech savvy with much of their communication, socialization, and entertainment experienced online. An effective policy addressing youth engagement will harness the power of the online community and create accessibility through the web.

Table 54: Criteria measures for online accessibility

Criterion	*Measure*	*Weight*
Low	Policy option has no online components	5 points
Medium	Some online accessibility. Policy option has an information about youth engagement available online	10 points
High	Online information accessibility and interactive engagement components. Policy option includes an interactive web component in which youth can engage via online tools such as polls.	15 points

8.5 Cost

Cost is an important factor to consider when evaluating the strength of any viable policy option. At this point in the research it has not been possible to price out finite dollar values for the cost of development and implementation of each policy option. Annual expenditures versus one-time costs will be taken into consideration when ranking the policy options. Although specific policy costs in dollars will not be discussed, relative cost will be determined and contributed to the ranking system.

High cost policies being difficult to incorporate into existing budgets, are ranked the lowest at 3 points. Inexpensive policy options will be rewarded with a higher ranking score of 9 points. The two middle policies are ranked using the same scalar system at 5 and 7 points.

Table 55: Criteria measures for cost

Criterion	*Measure*	*Weight*
Highest Cost	The highest cost policy option relative to all other options proposed	3 points
Medium High Cost	The second-highest cost policy option relative to all other options proposed	5 points
Medium Low Cost	The third-highest cost policy option relative to all other options proposed	7 points
Low Cost	The lowest cost policy relative to all other options proposed	9 points

8.6 Administrative Complexity

Ease of administration will affect the sustainability and success of the proposed policy alternatives. Similarly, to the concept of cost, the quantification of administrative complexity was outside the scope of this study. General complexity is established for each option with respect to the other options, based on the magnitude of change required in daily municipal operations. Factors to be considered include the level of city personnel involved, and the driving force behind the policy. If the policy will be predominantly youth driven, the ease of administrative complexity is expected to be less than if high ranking city officials or politicians are responsible.

Policies which are difficult to manage administratively will be given a lower score, whereas more easily administrated policies will receive 6 points toward their ranking.

Criterion	*Measure*	*Weight*
Difficult	Requires structural change to municipal operations	3 points
Easy	Minimal changes to municipal operations	6 points

9: Policy Analysis

This section will discussed the proposed policy options identified in section 7 with respect to the policy criteria discussed in section 8. This analysis will allow a systematic way in which to compare and rank the policy options with respect to one another.

9.1   Option 1: New Westminster Youth Engagement Guide

Effectiveness: One reason for low New Westminster youth engagement rates described in the survey was the lack of city staff capacity to meaningfully engage young people on important municipal issues. Staff knowledge and skills with regards to youth engagement would be increased with the implementation of the New Westminster Youth Engagement Guide. Youth were asked to decide:

1. If municipal staff made it easy for me to voice my opinion I would get involved, or
2. Even if it was easier to get involved, I would still not get involved

Youth reaction to the implementation of the Youth Engagement Guide was positive with over 64% of respondents indicating that participation would increase if city staff were to make an effort to create youth friendly engagement opportunities.

Figure 24: Youth Acceptance of the Youth Engagement Guide Option
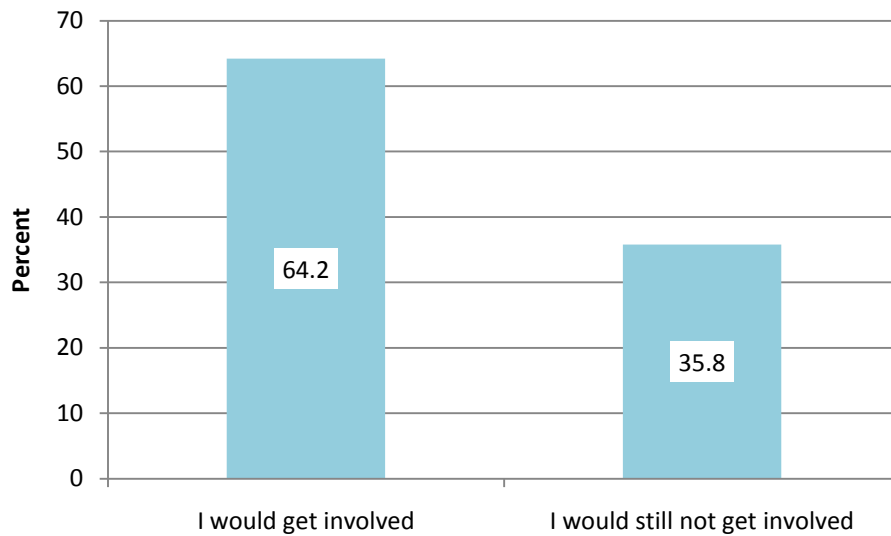
This option receives a ranking of HIGH youth acceptability as the expected rate of increased youth participation is greater than 60%

Equity: The Youth Engagement Guide's aim is providing city staff with best practices for engaging youth in an inclusive manner. Planners and decision makers will better understand the barriers that youth populations face, based on the characteristics of age, gender, SES, neighbourhood and minority status. The ability for the Youth Engagement Guide to target all sub-populations of youth identified in this study, earns it a HIGH ranking for equity.

Youth Education and Development: Currently community consultations in New Westminster are largely exclusive to youth participation as discussed in section 1.3. The Youth Engagement guide will give staff the tools and insight to increase engagement of youth on municipal issues. Correct use of the guide will allow youth more access to engagement and empower them as meaningful participants in the process; additional civic education will be obtained by involved youth as they learn about specific issues and are exposed to municipal operations. This option receives a ranking of HIGH for its capacity to increase youth education and development.

Online Accessibility: This option will have no online component for youth, as its policy focus is the increase of youth engagement via development of adult allies. Therefore it is ranked as LOW for online accessibility

Cost: The costs associated with this option include staff hours for development of the guide; the majority of the tools will be available online and via e-mail, and annual training opportunities for various departmental staff for most effective use of the engagement tools. Cost ranking with respect to the other policy options is LOW COST meaning the best cost alternative relative to others proposed. Therefore this policy is ranked highest with 9 points.

Administrative Complexity: City staff are expected to alter some aspects of their planning, consultation, and decision making in order to accommodate youth as indicated in the Youth Engagement Guide. Implications of the inclusion of youth are structural changes to their daily workload, therefore this policy option is considered to be DIFFICULT with respect to administrative complexity.

9.2 Option 2: Implementation of a New Westminster Civic Youth Policy

Effectiveness: The Civic Youth Strategy was described in the survey as a promise from the City of New Westminster that would emphasize the need to engage youth in municipal planning and decision making. The aim of this policy would be to make municipal engagement opportunities more inclusive and welcoming to young people. Youth were asked to decide if:

1. The City adopted a Youth Policy, I would be more likely to get involved or,
2. Even if the City adopted a youth policy, I would still not get involved

The response toward the implementation of a civic youth policy was very positive with 66.0% if youth indicating that likelihood of participation would increase if a youth policy were to be adopted. A youth policy would legitimize the participation of many youth and place an

emphasis on youth inclusion in a more diverse number of city initiatives.

Figure 25: Youth Acceptance of the Civic Youth Policy Option
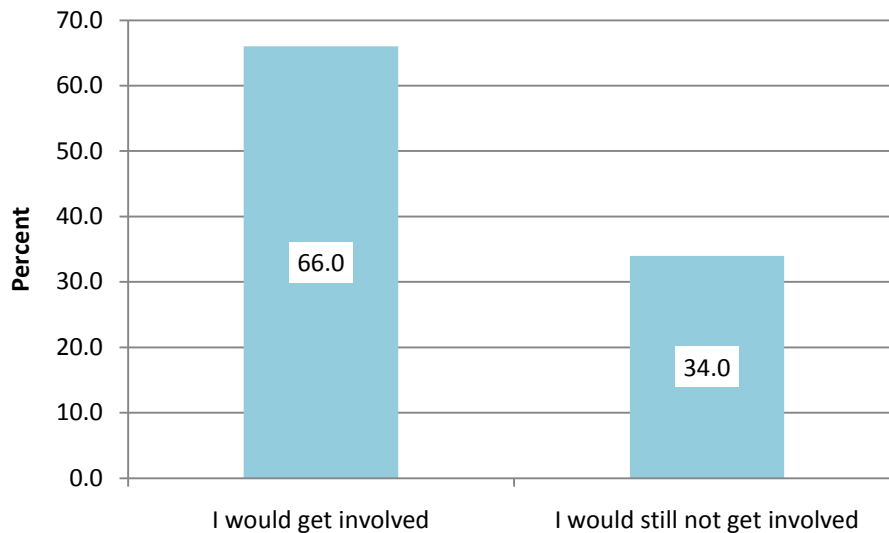
This option receives a ranking of HIGH youth acceptability, as the expected rate of increased youth participation is 66%.

Equity: Sanchez-Jankowski (2002) investigate participation styles of youth within the framework of inclusionary and exclusionary groups. They found that youth who were systematically excluded (believed to belong to an exclusive group) were less likely to engage in societal issues. The purpose of a Civic Youth Policy would be to address the differences identified in the youth population to ensure inclusive opportunities for youth engagement on a wide variety of youth issues. In addition the Civic Youth Strategy developed by the City of Vancouver has had much success in engaging different sub-populations of youth with respect to municipal issues through increased legitimization and empowerment. Due to the capacity of this policy to reach and address all sub-populations of youth identified in this study, it is given a ranking of 15.

Youth Education and Development: The focus of this policy option is to legitimize youth participation and community belonging through a municipal policy. The implementation of a

Civic Youth Policy will yield greater opportunities for youth engagement and apply pressure to city departments to increase the involvement of youth at every level. Youth Education and Development will undoubtedly result from the Civic Youth Policy, but is not defined as its purpose or focus. Therefore this option is ranked as LOW for youth education and development.

Online Accessibility: Information regarding the Civic Youth Policy as well as PDF format of the policy itself can be available to youth online. There will be no interactive engagement component via web for this policy option. Therefore, this option is ranked as MEDIUM for online accessibility.

Cost: Costs associated with the Civic Youth Policy will predominantly be in the process of creation and development of the policy. Additional costs include its dissemination and production for posting. Cost ranking with respect to the other policy options is MEDIUM HIGH COST meaning the third-best cost alternative relative to others proposed. Therefore this policy is ranked third with 5 points.

Administrative Complexity: This policy option receives a ranking of DIFFICULT for administrative complexity as it involves the highest ranking officials in city hall to develop, and pass the policy. In addition, the policy requires structural changes of municipal operations, by legally changing the way city departments deal with youth and approach future consultation and planning processes.

9.3   Option 3: New Mandate and Communication Strategy for the YAC

Effectiveness: Although many youth are familiar with the New Westminster Youth Advisory Committee, they were described in the survey as: a group of youth who advise City Council about youth related issues. One possible barrier identified from the survey is that the YAC is inaccessible to community youth, and therefore may inhibit youth engagement. Youth were asked to decide if:

1. I knew more about the YAC and how it is affecting youth issues that are important to me I would be more inspired to join the committee

2. If I knew more about the YAC and how it is affecting youth issues that are important to me I would be more inspired to attend a committee meeting

3. Even if I knew the impact youth were having on City Council, I would not get involved in YAC

Communication is a necessary but lacking component of the current New Westminster YAC committee. It was clear from the youth response that they are reluctant to join the YAC, as only 21.1% were in favour of this option. However, the 21% that may be willing to join the YAC offer new possibilities for this committee's membership. More positively, almost half of the respondents (46.4%) of youth stated that they would be interested in attending a YAC meeting if they knew more about how YAC is affecting important youth issues. The number of youth unwilling to become involved despite change in the committee's communication is comparable to the other options at 32.5%.

Figure 26: Youth Acceptance of Youth Advisory Committee Revisions
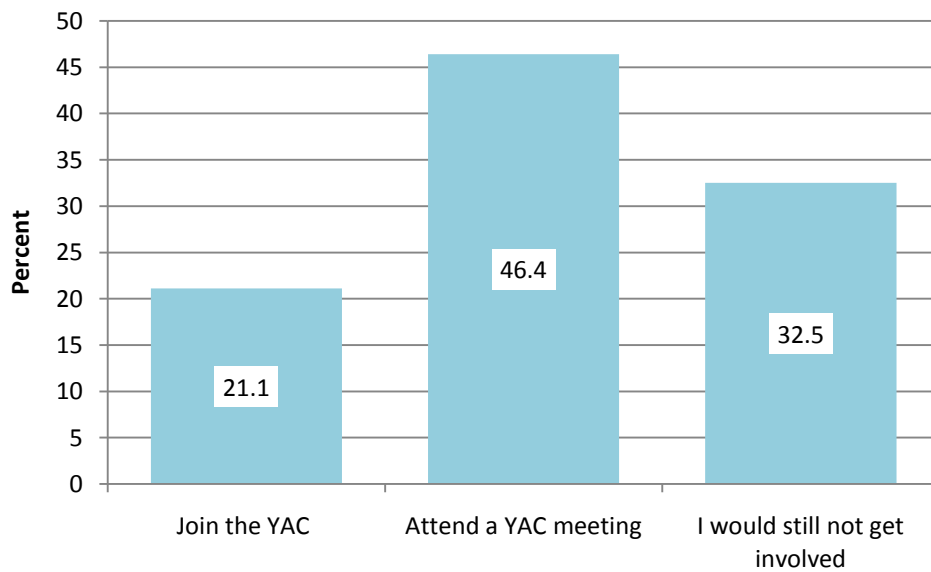
The effectiveness of this option is ranked as LOW with only 21.1% of youth willing to increase engagement given its implementation.

Equity: Please see table 55 for information on equity ranking for this option.

Table 56: Accommodation of different youth sub-populations by YAC

Youth Sub-Population	*Accommodation*	*Score*
Grade	All grades from 8-12 are invited to sit on the committee	3
Gender	Both genders are included and welcomed	3
Neighbourhood Location	All neighbourhoods are not accommodated as meetings are only held at the Century House community Centre (which does not take distant neighbourhoods such as Queensborough and Sapperton into account)	0
Socio-Economic Status	There is no cost to join	3
Minority Status	The committee has not structural or prejudicial barriers limiting minority participation	3
		12 points

Based on the effectiveness at providing and supporting engagement based on different youth sub-populations, this policy option is given a ranking of 12.

Youth Education and Development: The youth advisory committee under its new mandate and community strategy will be a predominant facilitator of youth education and social capital in New Westminster.

Online Accessibility: This policy option will include the development of web information for youth regarding engagement initiatives as well as interactive engagement opportunities with

YAC members. Therefore, this policy option is given a criteria ranking of HIGH for online accessibility.

Cost: Many of the changes needed to implement a new mandate and communication strategy for YAC such as brainstorming and training can be included into regular meeting times. The additional costs of facilitation, and web tool design are significant costs, but which can be supported in part by their existing development budget. Cost ranking with respect to the other policy options is MEDIUM LOW COST meaning the second-best cost alternative relative to others proposed. Therefore this policy is ranked second with 7 points.

Administrative Complexity: The administrative complexity for this option is ranked as EASY as the Youth Advisory is already in existence, has a small working budget, and membership structure. The changes to the committee can easily be established through the right facilitator.

9.4 Option 4: Implementation of a City Youth Outreach Model

Effectiveness: The positive impact of adult allies and youth advocates in the literature, as discussed in section 2.15. is irrefutable. Also the trust networks that youth build with adults in the process not only builds community, but increases the efficacy of engagement as discussed in section 2.5. The City of Vancouver has a similar Outreach Model to this option, discussed in section 1.2. The staff of the Vancouver Youth Outreach team have found success in increasing community engagement through many initiatives including the implementation of a Civic Youth Strategy (similar to policy option 3), Youth Politik (civic education and advisory program), and creating online tools and resources for both youth and city staff around engagement. Based on the call for adult allies found in the literature, combined with the engagement success of the Vancouver Youth Outreach team, I rank this option as HIGH for effectiveness.

Equity: This implementation of this position would address youth equity as the youth outreach staff person would work toward minimizing youth barriers to engagement. They would be able to conduct some of the further research required around the engagement of boys, neighbourhood segregation, and visible minorities in order to maximize the diversity in city participation. The ranking of this policy option with respect to equity is HIGH as it addresses the differences of each youth sub-population in question.

Youth Education and Development: A youth outreach staff would be largely responsible for promoting civic knowledge among local youth by creating and identifying opportunities to engage in municipal planning and decision making. This role includes the creation of materials and fact sheets which youth can easily understand regarding public policy and important municipal issues. It also involves teaching youth about their engagement potential and helping them to become empowered as engaged citizens of New Westminster. Therefore this policy option is ranked as HIGH for youth education and development.

Online Accessibility: The role of a youth outreach staff to facilitate youth engagement in New Westminster will be supported by capacity for website updates of opportunities and information, as well as e-mail accessibility for youth and city staff. This position will serve to connect youth with city planners, and disseminate information about public policy in a youth friendly way. Interactive online components are not included in the immediate implementation of this policy. Therefore with respect to online accessibility, this policy is ranked as MEDIUM.

Cost: Relative to all other policy options suggested in this study, the Implementation of a Youth Outreach staff position has the greatest costs attached. This position requires the addition of a new full time salary for the introduction this new Development Services Staff Member. In contrast to the other options that also have significant costs, this position represents annual costs therefore requiring budget amendments. Cost ranking with respect to the other policy options is

HIGH COST meaning the fourth best (or worst) cost alternative relative to others proposed. Therefore, this policy is ranked third with 3 points.

Administrative Complexity: The administrative complexity of this option is considered to be DIFFICULT as it involves several levels of city personnel across different departments. Human resources, would need to develop the position, while City Council would need to approve its addition and subsequent salary budget. The department of development services will also need to spatially accommodate for this position within their department.

9.5 Overview of Policy Analysis

Table 56 summarizes the outcomes of the policy analysis. The purpose of this analysis is to determine an overall picture of the policy alternatives and identify limitations for implementation.

Table 57: Criteria Matrix

	Option 1: Youth Engagement Guide	Option 2: Civic Youth Policy	Option 3: YAC Communication Strategy	Option 4: Youth Outreach Team
Effectiveness: Youth Acceptability	15 (High)	15 (High)	5 (Low)	15 (High)
Equity: Youth Sub-populations	15 (5/5)	15 (5/5)	12 (4/5)	15 (5/5)
Youth Education and Development	15 (High)	5 (Low)	15 (High)	15 (High)
Online Accessibility	5 (Low)	10 (Med)	15 (High)	10 (Med)
Cost	9 (Rank 1=best)	5 (Rank 3)	7 (Rank 2)	3 (Rank 4=worst)
Administrative Complexity	3 (Diff)	3 (Diff)	6 (Easy)	3 (Diff)
Total Points Max 78	62	55	60	61
Relative Percentage Max 100	82.6	73.3	80.0	81.3

9.6   Policy Recommendations

My analysis shows that all four policy options are viable alternatives for addressing the problem of youth disengagement in New Westminster. Alternatives 1 and 3, and 4 are closest in ranking and represent the three top options based on scores, with option 2 scoring the lowest among all four.

Equity costs vary the least between alternatives with all three receiving comparably high scores. Options 1, 2 and 4 are able to address the differences found in each youth sub-population, which this research deemed as important particularly in terms of the grade/gender gap in participation, marginalization determined by SES and minority status, and neighbourhood isolation. Option 3 (YAC amendments), loses three points for being unable to accommodate differences arising by neighbourhood location, therefore receiving a total score of 12/15. Although option three ranks lowest in equity, it is scored highest in administrative complexity, while all other options are scored as difficult.

The four options all receive high scores for effectiveness, with options 1, 3 and 4 being the most likely to be accepted by the youth. Option 3 was the least favourable to youth with only 21.1% of youth willing to increase their participation pending implementation. The effectiveness of option 4 (youth outreach staff) was not evaluated by youth acceptability as it was not included as a survey question, however the literature combined with the success of similar models in comparable jurisdictions ranks this option as high.

Civic Education in the way of both building civic knowledge, and fostering social capital in youth were successfully addressed by the policy options. Options 1, 3, and 4 addressed both types of civic education, scoring high. Option 2 (youth policy) does not include a formal education component and was therefore scored as low. The four alternatives received varying ranks for online accessibility with option 3 (YAC amendments) ranking highest, whereas the Youth Engagement Guide ranks the lowest.

Costs for the proposed alternatives were ranked with respect to one another. The top ranked option was the youth engagement guide found to need the fewest resources to develop and disseminate. The second best option in terms of cost was option 3 which had similar costs to option 1 (Youth Engagement Guide) but additionally required the development of website and web tools. Option 2 requires the third highest cost due to the high-level personnel involved its development and implementation. The worst ranking option with regards to cost is option 4 (youth outreach staff) which requires an annual salary budget.

Given the results of the analysis, policy option 1, the Youth Engagement Guide should be implemented immediately. It ranks high among youth effectiveness and equity suggesting that it would be successful in increasing youth engagement and for a broad diversity of youth. Additionally it would both build civic knowledge through a hands-on approach of getting youth engaged in important community issues, as well as building social capital by mobilizing youth to affect change in their community. Given the advantage of being low cost, the major barrier to this option will be the administrative complexity to ensure compliance of city staff with regards to utilizing the engagement guide.

To increase the long term objectives of increasing youth engagement among New Westminster Youth, a youth outreach position should be implemented in the near future. The high scores this option has scored with respect to the most highly weighted criteria make it the best candidate for a long term solution to disengaged youth. As well as being a trusted adult ally to assist with community youth engagement, the Youth Outreach Staff person will also prove a good resource for city staff in combination with the youth engagement guide. The literature confirms that although the Youth Outreach staff option did not receive the highest ranking, it is an effective route to the increase of youth engagement which is missing within the City of New Westminster. The permanent staffing of a policy focused youth staff will also serve to facilitate the implementation of the two remaining options.

It is important for youth engagement that the four proposed policy options be implemented with the focus on the Youth Engagement Guide as soon as possible, and a permanent Youth Outreach position introduced within the next couple of years. The Youth Engagement Guide will dramatically start to increase youth engagement by teaching staff how to make participation opportunities more accessible and inviting to youth. The Youth Outreach Staff position will provide the missing resource needed for sustainable youth engagement in New Westminster. Given the correct timing and budget, all four policy proposals can be implemented together or separately because they are complimentary rather than mutually exclusive. In the long run, all four options should be implemented to increase Youth Engagement in New Westminster.

9.7   Conclusion

Currently there is insufficient youth engagement in New Westminster demonstrated by the low rate of current engagement, the lack of policy focused youth staff, and the inefficiencies observed around the mandate and communications of the Youth Advisory Committee. Municipal government should be concerned over the lack of youth engaged as community social capital is at stake. This study conducted a survey to generate local data on the local youth population to better explain youth engagement. This study is unique as a more common methodology in the study of youth engagement typically employs in-depth interviews, and focus groups. This study aimed at data informed by youth themselves in order to capture the "youth voice" while maintaining a large sample size.

Youth engagement data indicates a significant difference between boys and girls in the grade 12 cohort of those surveyed. Theory predicts that older youth will be more likely to engage in municipal decision making and planning due to lifestyle effects. Survey results show this hypothesis is true for girls but not for boys. Boys in grade 12 show a concerning level of engagement proxied by the participatory variables. In order to maintain cohesive communities

with strong relationships between community members and local government, further research is needed to investigate factors contributing to the decline in male participation.

Youth engagement data also reveals that New Westminster Youth experience social marginalization based on low socio-economic status and minority status. This study reveals the important finding that youth are not a homogenous group, and that minority status as well as low socioeconomic status are sensitive factors toward the concept of civic youth engagement.

Policy options proposed, are informed from the survey analysis and focus on the findings that adult allies, civic education, and sensitivity to youth sub-populations (gender, minorities, and socio-economic status in particular) are important for increasing youth engagement. Recommendations give the City of New Westminster viable options to increase engagement in the long and short term.

Appendices

Appendix A: Youth Engagement Ladder

Source: Hart, R.A. (1992). Children's Participation, From Tokenism to Citizenship. *UNICEF, International Child Development Centre.* Italy. Found at: http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens_participation.pdf

The Ladder of Participation

Eight levels of young people's participation in projects

8. Child-initiated shared decisions with adults

7. Child-initiated and directed

6. Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children

5. Consulted and informed

4. Assigned but informed

3. Tokenism

2. Decoration

1. Manipulation

Degree of participation

Non-participation
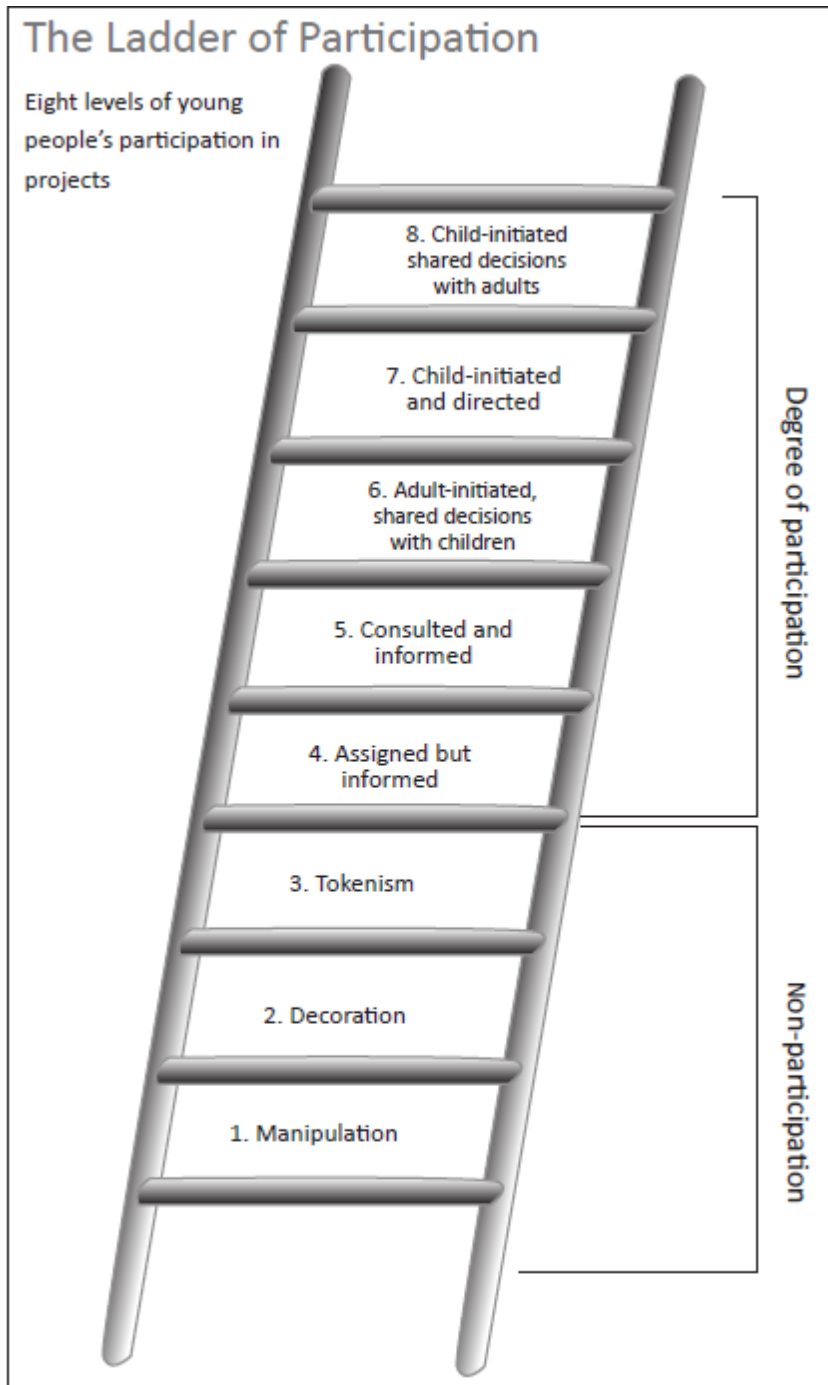
Appendix B: Youth Engagement Survey

SFU **Youth Engagement Survey for Grade 10, 11, and 12 Students at NWSS**

[A] What grade are you in?

₁☐ Grade 10   ₂☐ Grade 11   ₃☐ Grade 12

[B] How old are you? _____ years

[C] Are you   ₁☐ Female   or   ₂☐ Male

[D] Do you have a part time job?   ₁☐ Yes   ₂☐ No

[E] In which neighborhood of New Westminster do you live?

₁☐ Queensborough
₃☐ Connaught Heights
₄☐ Glenbrook North
₅☐ Kelvin
₆☐ Uptown
₇☐ Westend

₈☐ Brow of the Hill
₉☐ Downtown
₁₀☐ Glenbrook South
₁₁☐ Sapperton
₁₂☐ Victory Heights
₁₃☐ Queens Park

[F] Do you participate in any of the following Community/ School based Activities? (check all that apply)

₁☐ Organized Sports
₃☐ Youth Advisory Committee
₄☐ Music/ Art/ Drama

₅☐ School Club
₇☐ Political Group
₈☐ Other: _____

[G] In a typical week, approximately how many hours did you spend participating in Community Activities (above)?

_____
Hours

[H] Will you be eligible to vote in 2011 for the next Municipal Election?   ₁☐ Yes   ₂☐ No

[I] If yes, is it likely that you will vote?   ₁☐ Yes   ₂☐ No

[J] Are you interested in becoming involved with the City of New Westminster to influence change in your community?
₁☐ Yes   ₂☐ No

[K] Do you believe that voicing your opinion to the City of New Westminster will impact City Council decisions?
₁☐ Yes   ₂☐ No

[L] Who is the Mayor of New Westminster?
₁☐
₂☐ I can't remember the mayor's name right now

[M] Who is the MLA in the New Westminster riding?
₁☐
₂☐ I can't remember the MLA's name right now

[N] Do you feel a sense of belonging to your community?
₁☐ Yes   ₂☐ No

[O] Do you work as a volunteer for an organization outside of school?
₁☐ Yes   ₂☐ No

[P] If yes, what are the most important reasons that motivate you to volunteer? ((Rank from 1 to 3, 1 being the most used, 3 being the least used)

☐ It's fun and I enjoy it

☐ I need community hours in order to graduate

☐ I am learning a skill that will help me get hired in the future

☐ I am personally interested in a certain issue and am volunteering to help the cause

☐ Other _____

[Q] Do you feel that City Staff would take your input into planning and decision making seriously?

₁☐ Yes   ₂☐ No

[R] Do you know who to contact, with your ideas and concerns about the community?

₁☐ Yes   ₂☐ No

If Yes, Who would you contact?
₁☐ A Teacher
₂☐ A City Council or the Mayor
₃☐ A Parent
₄☐ Your School Police Liaison Officer
₅☐ Other _____

[S] Do you think youth should be part of the planning and decision making process in municipal government?
₁☐ Yes   ₂☐ No
Why or Why not? _____
_____

[T] On a scale from 1-10, with 1 being poor and 10 being rich: What number do you think describes how well off your family is?

_____

[U] Pick the three ways that you most often communicate with your friends? (Rank from 1 to 3, 1 being the most used, 3 being the least used)

- ☐ Hang out
- ☐ Talk on the phone
- ☐ Text messaging
- ☐ E-mail
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Myspace
- ☐ Other:_____

[V] Pick the three ways that you find out about youth events in the community? (Rank from 1-3, 1 being the most used, 3 being the least used)

- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Parent or teacher told you
- ☐ Text message
- ☐ E-mail
- ☐ Facebook group
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Active Living Guide
- ☐ Other:_____

[W] Would you participate in any of the following activities to inform local decision-making? Check all that apply

1. ☐ Online poll
2. ☐ Attend a meeting or youth event
3. ☐ Join Youth Advisory Committee
4. ☐ Text voting on a particular issue
5. ☐ Write a letter to the Mayor or City Councilor
6. ☐ Attend and speak at a Council Meeting
7. ☐ Other

[X] Who should be responsible for getting youth involved in City decision making?

1. ☐ Youth themselves
2. ☐ City Staff
3. ☐ City youth workers
4. ☐ Teachers
5. ☐ Opportunities to get involved should be advertised in the Newspaper/ website
6. ☐ Opportunities to get involved should be e-mailed to interested youth

[Y] Do you belong to a visible minority?
1. ☐ Yes 2. ☐ No

Do you feel that your ethnic background has an effect on the way you can influence local government?
1. ☐ It has a positive effect
2. ☐ It has a negative effect
3. ☐ Neutral, ethnic background doesn't matter

[Z] In thinking about possible options to better involve and engage youth. Please consider three options below...

Option 1: Inform Adults!
Currently, few youth are involved in municipal planning and decision making because city staff are unsure as how to meaningful engage them. This option will involve the development of a manual to inform municipal staff on how to develop youth friendly ways engagement.

1. ☐ If municipal staff made it easy for me to voice my opinion I would get involved
2. ☐ Even if it was easier to get involved, I would still not get involved

Option 2: Get a Promise from the City!
Currently, the City of New Westminster does not have a Civic Youth Strategy. Such a strategy would emphasize the need to engage youth in municipal planning and decision-making. It will also aim to make municipal facilities, programs, and services more inclusive and welcoming to young people.

1. ☐ If the City adopted a Youth Policy, I would be more likely to get involved.
2. ☐ Even if the City adopted a youth policy, I would still not get involved

Option 3: Communicate with the YAC!
The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) is a group of youth who advise Council about youth related issues in New Westminster. Greater awareness about YAC and how to share concerns and issues with this committee, would enable youth to inform municipal planning and decision-making processes.

1. ☐ If I knew more about the YAC and how it is affecting youth issues that are important to me I would be more inspired to join the committee
2. ☐ If I knew more about the YAC and how it is affecting youth issues that are important to me I would be more inspired to attend a committee meeting
3. ☐ Even if I knew the impact youth were having on City Council, I would not get involved in YAC

Comments:_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

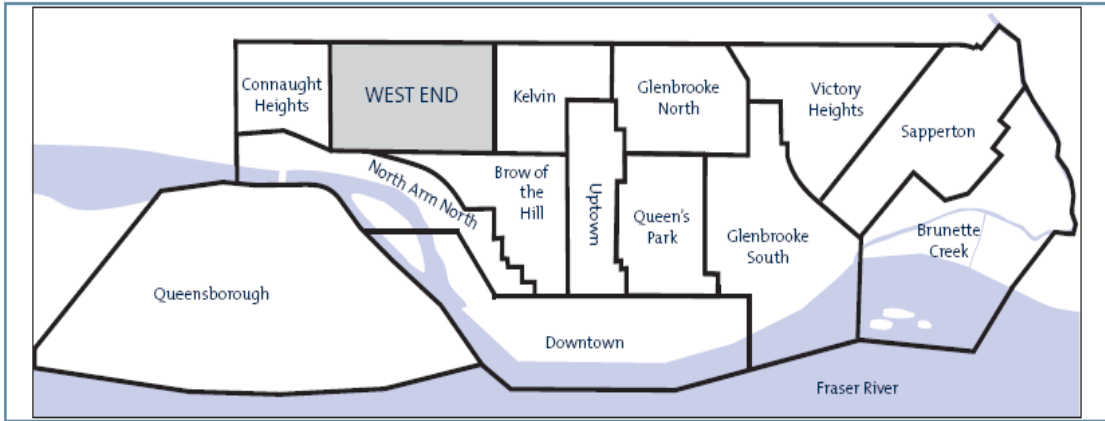## Appendix C: New Westminster Neighbourhood Map

Source: New Westminster Neighbourhood Profiles: www.newwestcity.ca

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