

# PIVOT Society Youth Forum Report - Empowering Youth Voices for Positive Change

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## Executive Summary

On Wednesday, September 27th, 2023, [PIVOT Society](#) hosted a Youth Forum in Sechelt, aiming to amplify the voices of regional youth and spotlight their experiences and challenges. The event sought to inspire the community to address these challenges and ensure that youth feel seen and valued by their community. PIVOT Society, in line with its values of collaboration, accurate representation, responsiveness, and confidentiality, collaborated with several regional youth initiatives, including the Youth Action Team, to establish connections with vulnerable youth.

## Event Highlights

The forum featured various segments, which included:

**Dramatic Reenactments:** To protect the confidentiality of the youth interviewed, dramatic reenactments of their stories and interview themes were performed by local youth actors, comprising songs, poems, and script readings.

**Youth-Led Initiatives:** Two youth presented initiatives during the event: a card game design and distribution project and the renovation of the local skate park.

**Community Engagement:** Approximately 100 community members, including key leaders from the school board, city council, local businesses, law enforcement, and Rotary Club attended the event. It received coverage in the local newspaper and garnered overwhelmingly positive feedback for its emotional impact and the initiatives presented.

**Discussion Groups:** After the presentations, participants were organized into nine discussion groups. Each group addressed various topics related to youth concerns, as identified during interviews.

## Discussion Topics

The following table summarizes the valuable feedback received from our community members during the youth forum. The input gathered covers a wide range of topics, from community engagement and safety to transportation and mental health. This comprehensive overview aims to highlight the key themes discussed and the corresponding actions suggested by our

community members, offering valuable insights into the concerns and aspirations of Sechelt's residents, especially its youth.

Discussion Topic	Challenges	Actions
<b>Having Your Say in Your Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are afraid to use public resources like the skateboard park.</li> <li>• Public resources don't provide training or workshops to help with engagement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite youth to submit proposals to the District of Sechelt for activities and include them in the selected initiatives.</li> <li>• Develop outreach materials (stickers, flyers) to increase youth participation with initiatives.</li> </ul>
<b>Beating Youth Isolation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing to do for older kids.</li> <li>• Bullied into isolation.</li> <li>• Entrenched in a cycle of isolation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More youth events.</li> <li>• More classes or meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>Taking on Bullying Together</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media.</li> <li>• World events.</li> <li>• Loneliness.</li> <li>• Cliques and exclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More parental attention.</li> <li>• Youth mentoring programs.</li> <li>• Anti-bullying and self defense programming.</li> <li>• After school programming.</li> <li>• Cross school programming.</li> <li>• No cellphone policy in schools.</li> <li>• Parental training.</li> </ul>
<b>Fun Activities for Youth</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fix the skate park.</li> <li>• Youth activity centre (Gamepoint)</li> </ul>
<b>Getting Around - Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited BC transit bus times.</li> <li>• Limited service area.</li> <li>• No bus shelters or lighting.</li> <li>• No shoulders on the highway.</li> <li>• Fees are high.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Later operating hours.</li> <li>• More weekend routes.</li> <li>• Service to Pender or further.</li> <li>• Better lighting and coverage.</li> <li>• Drivers are sensitive to youth.</li> </ul>
<b>Navigating Addiction Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited community resources.</li> <li>• Limited safe youth hangout spaces.</li> <li>• Discoordinated efforts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community centre for youth.</li> <li>• Outdoor activities.</li> <li>• List of regional resources.</li> </ul>
<b>Mental Health and Well-being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural living.</li> <li>• Lack of housing.</li> <li>• Counselling waitlists are long.</li> <li>• Bullying and racism at school.</li> <li>• High cannabis use among youth.</li> <li>• Family separations and misunderstandings.</li> <li>• Economic pressure on families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A youth center designed by youth that is safe, accessible, and provides outreach services.</li> <li>• A street theatre to deliver empowering messages.</li> <li>• More sports in schools</li> <li>• Free youth bus passes.</li> <li>• Peer counsellors or mentorship programs.</li> <li>• Deeper family involvement.</li> </ul>

<b>Safety and Security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of evening and late night activities.</li> <li>• Parents not home.</li> <li>• Transportation is limited and roads aren't safe for walking (no shoulders).</li> <li>• Not enough street lights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundry</li> <li>• After school club.</li> <li>• Keep the pool open later.</li> <li>• Boys and Girls Club.</li> <li>• Parenting classes.</li> <li>• More street lights.</li> </ul>
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**Youth-Related Initiatives and Actions**

In addressing the concerns and aspirations articulated by the community, a series of strategic initiatives and actions have emerged. These initiatives are categorized into three distinct timelines: short-term, mid-term, and long-term. Each category outlines the proposed actions and strategies that aim to enhance the Sunshine Coast community's response to the challenges faced by its youth population.

**Short-Term Initiatives (0-1 year):**

- Develop outreach materials (stickers, flyers) to increase youth participation with initiatives.
- Develop youth mentoring programs and peer counseling.
- Organize more youth-focused events, classes, and activities.
- Provide free or subsidized youth bus passes for transportation.
- Develop a comprehensive list of regional addiction resources for youth.

**Mid-Term Initiatives (1-3 years):**

- Encourage deeper family involvement and connections.
- Implement comprehensive anti-bullying and self-defense programs.
- Extend the operating hours of community facilities and provide parenting classes.
- Invite youth to submit proposals to the District of Sechelt for activities and include them in the selected initiatives.

**Long-Term Initiatives (3+ years):**

- Establish a youth-designed and accessible youth center like Gamepoint and Boys and Girls Clubs.
- Expand mental health support with reduced counseling waitlists.
- Enhance public transportation services, including more routes and extended hours.
- Invest in transportation infrastructure, including bus shelters and better lighting.

**Conclusion**

The Youth Forum surpassed its primary goals, providing a platform for youth voices to be heard, fostering active community engagement, and outlining concrete actions for the future. Despite the limited youth attendance at the event, the expressed desire for more such gatherings in the future indicates the value of these discussions. The Youth Forum's success in amplifying youth voices, inspiring community action, and forging connections among stakeholders highlights its significance. Moving forward, the community is committed to sustaining this dialogue, with the goal of ensuring that the voices of our youth continue to play a pivotal role in shaping a brighter future for the Sunshine Coast.