

**APPENDIX D.
AUTHENTIC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN**

Mission: Building a community where young people are valued and have meaningful opportunities to make a difference.

Vision: Youth and Adults Building a Thriving Community TOGETHER.

Teen UP Goals

- *Educate community on the value of youth*
- *Build opportunities for youth voices to be heard*

Teen UP Principles

- *Strength-based solutions*
- *Reinvent systems not individual change*
- *Proactive vs. reactive*
- *Inclusive*

Teen Up Themes

- *Focus on enhancing youth-related systems rather than improving youth.*
- *Young people are viewed as resources rather than recipients of services.*
- *Youth and adult partnerships are key.*
- *Skill building for both youth and adults is essential.*
- *Youth with leadership experiences and meaningful opportunities to contribute tend to return to the city that valued them.*

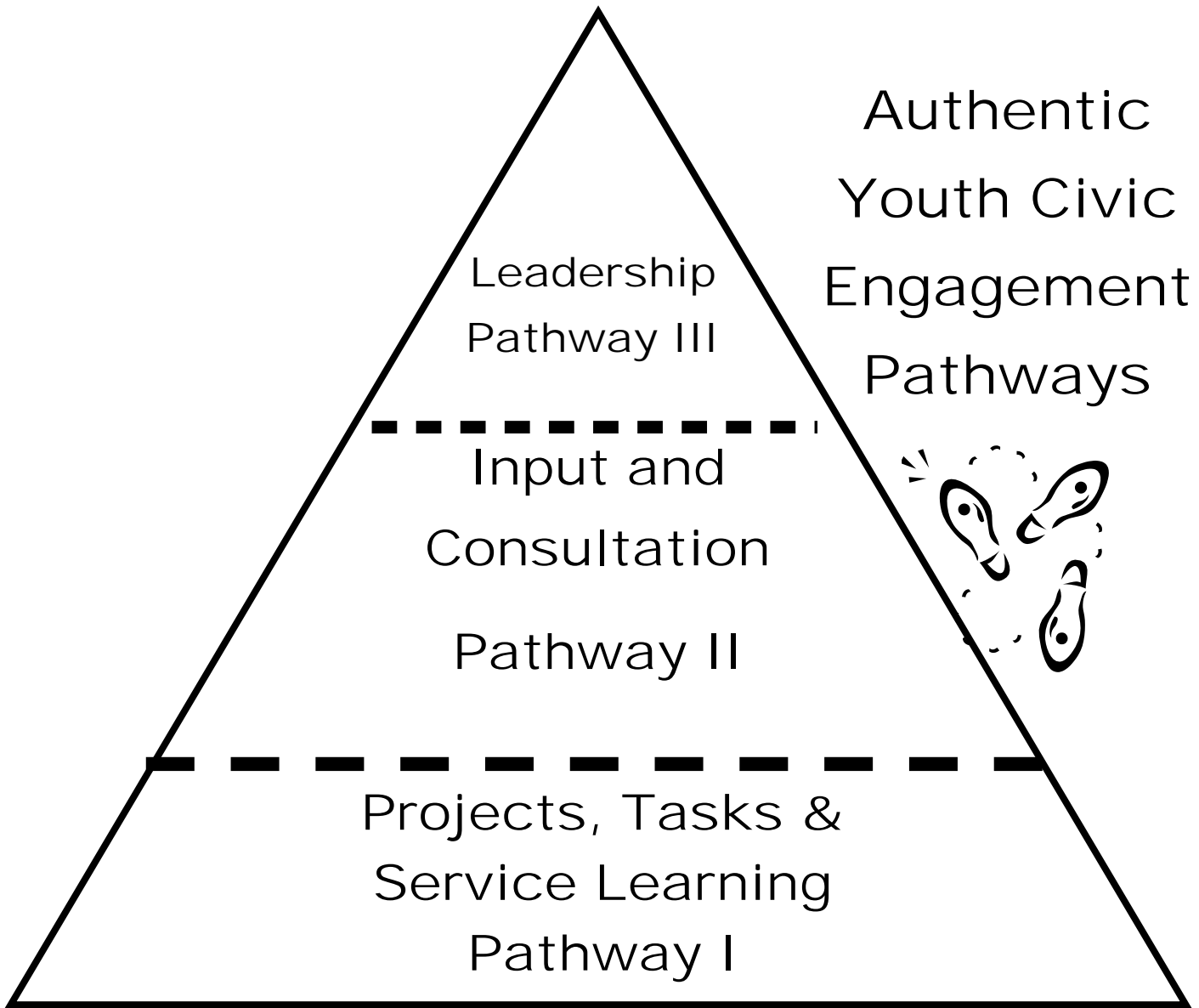
Elements Needed for Reaching Outcomes

Civic Environment – *Municipal, educational and organizational leaders should view meaningful youth engagement as a significant contribution to a young person’s learning and to the success of the community and its institutions.*

Support for Participation – *There needs to be a wide variety of adult allies willing to support young people as resources within their neighborhoods, schools, youth serving organizations, and the community as a whole.*

Opportunities – *There need to be as many opportunities for youth to serve, as there are young people wanting to serve. Partnership Rapid City, should play a key role in the implementation of the recommendations, but additional partnerships and support will be needed.*

Young People – *Passionate and prepared young people who are eagerly willing to engage themselves in the life of their community, neighborhood, school or organizations.*



When determining the strategies you will use to address the issue(s), begin by considering strategies that would allow young people to make meaningful contributions within each of the engagement triangle's pathways.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PATHWAYS

PROJECTS, TASKS & SERVICE LEARNING PATHWAY I

QUALITIES AND BENEFITS

- Youth can serve in a variety of roles
- More short-term in duration, with short-term outcomes
- Minimal amount of training needed
- Often requires extensive adult organizing
- Issues addressed are usually specific in nature
- Focus is to provide a positive experience to individuals while accomplishing a needed service
- Increases community involvement
- Allows youth to test involvement in engagement activities
- Any young person can find something of interest

EXAMPLES OF OPPORTUNITIES

- Participation in efforts to give support to others (food drives, nursing home visits, mentoring younger kids, etc.)
- Assisting within recreational opportunities (coaching, umpiring, guides at Special Olympics, etc.)
- Recruiting peers to get involved
- Help with marketing a community initiative
- Event planning and implementation

TRAINING AND SUPPORT NEEDS

- Information about tasks (don't make assumptions)
- Basic information about service learning (when applicable)
- Participants need to feel welcomed and connected
- Transportation may be needed
- Information about other opportunities and how to move among the three pathways of engagement

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YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PATHWAYS

INPUT & CONSULTATION PATHWAY II

QUALITIES AND BENEFITS

- Adults ultimately have the power to decide
- Enhances decision-making and problem-solving of adults
- Youth have the opportunity to share their perspective
- Youth and/or adults can set the agenda
- Some skill building and training may be required
- Can be a short- or long-term commitment
- Issues addressed can be broad or specific in nature
- Focus is to have a positive impact on groups
- Can produce either immediate or ongoing results

EXAMPLES OF OPPORTUNITIES

- Youth serve in an ongoing advisory capacity to adults
- Speak-outs and focus groups to identify issues important to youth
- Assist in the interpretation of survey results
- Assist in the development of strategies and opportunities

TRAINING AND SUPPORT NEEDS

- Skills and opportunities to build confidence
- Presentation and listening skills (Adults need to hear what youth have to say)
- Information and guidance on issue being addressed
- Transportation may be needed
- Information about other opportunities and how to move among the three pathways of engagement

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PATHWAYS

SHARED LEADERSHIP PATHWAY III

QUALITIES AND BENEFITS

- Responsibilities shared among all members (youth and adult)
- Greater commitment required of everyone
- Higher level of skills and training required
- Focus is on broader issues (policies, strategic plans, shared authority, system changes, organizational leadership etc.)
- Greatest potential for impacting all youth
- Outcomes tend to be long-term solutions or change initiatives
- Shifts the norm of who gets to be at the "table"
- Increases the current and future leadership pool

EXAMPLES OF OPPORTUNITIES

- Youth share leadership roles in an initiative
- Youth and adults work parallel on mutually agreed-upon agendas
- Youth engage with adults as activists, advocates, or lobbyists on a national, state, and local level
- Youth serve as co-presenters with adults
- Youth serve in paid positions within systems or organizations

TRAINING AND SUPPORT NEEDS (It is recommended that the training for this pathway be done for both the youth and adult participants)

- Training in youth and adult partnerships
- Problem-solving, decision-making, team work, active listening, public speaking
- Information and guidance on issue being addressed
- Opportunities to practice skills and gain confidence
- Emotional support during times when confidence is low
- Information about other opportunities and how to move among the three pathways

Different ways to incorporate young people into a board, commission or committee.

Some examples of how a board, commission or committee can incorporate young people and benefit from their energy, insights and commitment to the issues include:

1. Fully Integrated:

- a. **fully integrated approach young people and adults serve in similar capacities.**
- b. **Young people are equal voting members, have equal responsibilities and attend all the meetings.**
- c. **appropriate number of youth members should be determined based on the population served by the organization**

2. Parallel Process:

- a. **two equal groups, one made up of adults and the other made up of young people.**
- b. **can use for organizations to begin the process of fully integrating young people into decision-making roles.**
- c. **each group meeting separately, but in a similar time frame.**
- d. **same agenda to address and each comes to their conclusions separately.**
- e. **each group finishes their meetings then groups meet together to see where they are similar and where there are differences.**
- f. **the areas that are similar are passed, while the areas with differences are given back to each group to discuss further at their next meeting, only this time with the input of the other group in hand.**
- g. **over time, the two groups often become familiar enough with each other that they begin to meet more together than separately and eventually become a fully integrated group.**

3. Issue Specific:

- a. **adult board, commission or committee faces a decision on an issue for which the insights of young people will be critical, but the addition of young people on a permanent basis doesn't make sense.**
- b. **used primarily when dealing with issues that requires greater skills or expertise than young people possess.**
- c. **young people need to have a connection to the issue they are being asked to address**
- d. **they need to believe they will be heard, respected and valued.**
- e. **facilitator trained in working with young people.**

4. Advisory:

- a. **an ongoing group of trained youth or with focus groups that ask a set of youth-friendly questions aimed at soliciting one-time information on a specific topic.**
- b. **youth serving in advisory roles, need to understand that they are not making decisions, but helping to make the decisions made by the organization better.**