

Youth Component of the Community Plan

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Youth Planners 1997-2009

Will Bane
Jacob Berg
Michael Bock
Donnie Brookman
LaKeisha Brooks
Nate Cherry
Rashida Costley
David Halliday
Ivey Hawkins

Anna Hogg
Patrick Johnson
Ben Joseph
Harmonie Mason
Courtney Meredith
Sheena Patrick
Kathryn Price
Danielle Phillips
Sarah Rodriguez
Alicia Tundidor

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Section I

Background: Youth Engagement in Community Planning

a. Collaboration & Inclusiveness – How Young People Became Involved In Neighborhood Planning

The City of Hampton has, since 1990, placed a high priority on engaging young people in community decision-making and the overall life of the community. This focus on youth began with the creation of the Coalition for Youth, a group of City leaders convened by City Council to develop a plan of action to ensure that Hampton's youth would become productive members of the community and workforce. Some of these leaders believed that this planning would be enhanced by inviting youth to participate. Through an extensive community outreach process these youth and adults contacted over 5,000 of their peers to determine the most strategic City investments to ensure the long term health and success of Hampton's youth.

The Plan of Action resulting from the Coalition's work was the first City plan addressing the needs of young people in the community. Included was a policy statement with six commitments – Appreciation of Diversity, Care and Nurturing, Safety, Health, Education, and Partnership in the Community. This last commitment has become the foundation of the city's youth civic engagement. It states:

“All young people in Hampton are entitled to be seen, heard, and respected as citizens of the community. They deserve to be prepared, active participants in community service, government, public policy, or other decision-making which affects their lives and their well-being.”

The plan also recommended four strategic areas of focus for City government: supporting strong families, building healthy neighborhoods, developing youth as resources to the community, and creating a long-term city-wide investment in youth. The focus on neighborhoods evolved into the Hampton Neighborhood Initiative, which supports residents as they engage in an inclusive planning process to identify and tackle neighborhood issues. The focus on youth as resources led to the creation of a community-wide initiative to train youth and adults to work in partnership to build caring communities within neighborhoods and schools, and to create opportunities for youth to serve the community. By recognizing youth as an important stakeholder group in inclusive planning and working together, these two initiatives created the first roles for young people in city planning.

Alternatives, Inc., a local non-profit youth development agency, was given responsibility to recruit, train, and support young people to participate. In the Aberdeen neighborhood a leadership group was formed of youth who wanted to make a difference in their neighborhood. These youth were invited to join some adult

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neighbors who were working with City staff on a neighborhood plan. The Aberdeen youth proved that young people could play a valuable role in planning. They improved the process, helped make difficult decisions, and even had ideas that saved the City money. The Director of Planning was so impressed; he decided that young people should have an ongoing role in city planning.

b. The Developmental Asset Approach

One of the fundamental principles that allow Hampton to engage youth in planning is the City's focus on the 40 Developmental Assets. Developmental Assets are the qualities and experiences, identified by Search Institute's research that help all youth succeed. Included in the Assets are the importance of the community's view of youth as resources and young people serving meaningful roles in their neighborhoods, schools, and communities. The Asset framework focuses on the importance of adults caring about the youth of the community and becoming active parts of a web of support that will ensure their success.

The Developmental Assets look at the strengths of youth and help the community determine how to build opportunities for youth to contribute and experience success. Instead of seeing youth as problems to be fixed, adults are trained to see youth as resources as well as experts who understand the unique needs of young people. Hampton's mobilization to increase the Developmental Assets of young people is linked closely to the City's Youth Engagement Initiative. This ensures that adults focused on asset-building are supportive of all aspects of the City's efforts to include youth in neighborhood, school, and community-based planning efforts.

c. Youth Planners and the Hampton Youth Commission

With this firm base of support and through some re-allocation of resources, two young people were hired in the Planning Department as the first Youth Planners. Beginning in January 1997 they started to design their initiative. Their first task was to contact hundreds of youth in focus groups to determine what young people believed would improve Hampton for youth. From this discussion, the Youth Planners determined two essential methods of youth involvement – the development of a Youth Component to the City's 2010 Comprehensive Plan (1989), and the creation of a Youth Commission with the authority to represent youth issues and the power to appropriate funds. In the fall of 1997, Hampton City Council endorsed these two recommendations.

The Youth Planners designed the new Youth Commission to be an effective voice for the youth of Hampton and to serve as a board of youth who would be responsible for the Youth Component of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan (1989) developed by the Youth Planners. The preface to the first Youth Component summarizes how the Youth Planners believed the whole initiative would work.

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“The youth of the City of Hampton wish to have a voice. They would like a voice in the way their city grows and develops. The plans put into place now will influence the entire community, but for the most part, will affect the youth of today who will be tomorrow’s adults. A partnership between city leaders and youth would create a progressive, harmonious environment in which the youth would have the convenience to give their input. The city leaders could use this opportunity to teach the youth, in a more in-depth method, about city government. This partnership will help each understand and respect the role of one another. Together, youth and city leaders can mold Hampton into a more enjoyable city for all its citizens.”

d. The Youth Component of the Hampton Comprehensive Plan

The Youth Planners began their responsibility of creating the only component of a city’s comprehensive plan written entirely by youth anywhere in the country. From the issues identified by the focus group research, the Youth Planners developed four major topics for the plan: Youth Space, Transportation, Employment, and Community Interaction. Under each topic, community youth had surfaced almost 100 issues, so the task of the Planners and the Commission was to prioritize issues and create strategies to address them.

This became an annual event – each year the Youth Planners led the Commissioners through a consensus process to identify one or two issues under the four topics to research and create strategies. The Youth Planners researched the topics and prepared information for Commissioners to understand the issue. The Commission’s Comprehensive Plan Committee surveyed their peers, held public meetings, and solicited input in order to develop recommendations to address the year’s issue. Youth Planners then developed the document which is subject to public hearing and Youth Commission approval. When the annual installment of recommendations was finally presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption into City policy, it represented countless hours of extensive youth research, deliberation, and consensus. Commissioners also monitored the recommendations from previous years to ensure implementation. This involved working with the boards or organizations responsible for implementation, and identifying projects to further the plan’s goals.

e. Youth engagement in the new Hampton Community Plan

In 2003, when it was time to update the 2010 Comprehensive Plan (1989), city officials envisioned a plan that would combine all of the City’s existing planning efforts. City officials also acknowledged the importance of continuing to include youth as an important stakeholder group.

As city officials identified the strategic issues that would drive the plan, they discussed whether the “youth agenda” would be included within another issue, or if it

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should stand alone. Due to the success of the Youth Component within the previous Comprehensive Plans, and the importance the city continued to place on youth planning, the decision was made to maintain a separate section within the plan devoted entirely to youth issues. This decision successfully reinforces the role of youth as planners within the community and their ability to have an impact on issues that are important to them.

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Section II

The Hampton Community Plan: Vision and Goals

Key Issue Areas

The Vision and Goals portion of the Hampton Community Plan (2006) provides guidance for the action plan that will implement the goals of the Community Plan.

In developing the goals, eight community based focus groups were created to generate the contents of the Vision and Goals.

The seven original focus groups derived from the City's 1998 Strategic Plan were made into eight with the inclusion of the Youth focus group, meant to capture the youth perspective in its own body.

However, as young people are concerned citizens just as adults, the topics of the other seven focus groups are equally pertinent to young people. By outlining the eight key issues, a connection between the youth agenda and the City's planning process can be made.

Customer Delight

Vision: "Hampton will provide unparalleled public education, neighborhood, city, and community service that will exceed its customers' expectations."

Any business or public agency knows that without a high degree of customer satisfaction, there is no way to be successful. Long term success can only be attained by meeting or exceeding these expectations.

Young people are an important part of the customer population, and for many businesses, especially those that cater to young people as their primary customer, to not seek to satisfy their expectations would be disastrous. A good impression brings customers back time after time, and by striving to improve their services and skills, businesses can easily flourish in Hampton. Additionally, a business atmosphere that makes a positive impression on young people will help to draw them back to the city later in life.

Healthy Business Climate

Vision: "Hampton will be the community of choice for businesses seeking an environment that maintains, expands, and attracts investment."

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In order for Hampton to continue to prosper as a city, it must be a great place to live and its economic foundation must remain solid and sustained. The key factor is having a well trained and educated workforce. The best communities attract the “best and brightest” by offering them opportunities to thrive in the community. This fuels the local economy with an abundance of highly skilled workers which, in turn, attracts more businesses.

Healthy Growth and Development of Children and Youth

Vision: *“Hampton’s children and youth will thrive and succeed in a caring community.”*

Young people are the next generation of active citizens in any community. If their development is ignored by their community, the young people would just as soon leave the city when they come of age rather than stay where they do not feel there were sufficient career opportunities, an excellent quality of life, etc.

Hampton has identified that by paying attention to the specific needs of young people, from the time they are born until they graduate high school; the young people have the best possible chance of becoming strong community members.

Healthy Neighborhoods

Vision: *“Hampton neighborhoods: the best places to be.”*

The neighborhood is a microcosm of the city in which it is located. The focus groups quickly identified that the neighborhoods in Hampton reflect the city itself. Neighborhoods are places where youth and adults work to invest their time and energy into creating a caring and developmental asset-based environment.

By making sure that every neighborhood in Hampton is economically viable, civically functional, and diverse, the City can be sure to create locations where young people want to live and grow.

Healthy Diverse Community

Vision: *“Hampton will thrive as a diverse community which celebrates, supports, and encourages positive people-to-people relations as a foundation for community success.”*

As a city that is tremendously diverse in terms of ethnicity, Hampton has a unique opportunity to harness the benefits of such diversity. The first step taken by the focus group was recognizing that inclusiveness and tolerance are key to the city’s future.

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The global economy is by definition a diverse “place.” To succeed socially as well as economically our community and its citizens must be able to thrive in this type of environment. Young people grow up with the values that are instilled in them by their parents, by their community, and by their friends. The City has many resources at its disposal for the promotion of multicultural appreciation. By continuing to encourage these assets, especially in the youth of the community; we can continue to make our community stronger.

Healthy Region

Vision: *“Hampton Roads will be a thriving economically competitive region.”*

Hampton is just one city in a booming economic region known as Hampton Roads. While Hampton’s first obligation is to provide for its own citizens, it would be short sighted to not recognize that Hampton’s success as a city is dependent on the successful development of Hampton Roads.

By collaborating with other communities in our region on the subject of long term community planning, and by pooling ideas and strategies across cities, the Hampton Roads region can increase its standing and reputation across the country as a viable social and economic region. By having young people from across the region collaborate, they can be exposed to a multitude of opportunities for engagement and involvement not only in their city but their region as well.

Strong Schools

Vision: *“Hampton City Schools, the first choice for academic and lifelong success by every single student.”*

One of the defining aspects of the Community Plan is the incorporation of the Hampton City Schools’ Strategic Plan along with the City’s Comprehensive and Strategic Plans. This combination strengthens the connection among school and civic officials in terms of goals and strategies.

Hampton City Schools strives for both personal and academic excellence in its students. By constantly looking at how to improve not just the educational opportunities, but life skills and workforce opportunities as well, the school system can readily prepare young people for entering the world beyond high school.

Overarching Themes

Through the process of creating the Vision and Goals, certain concepts were commonly held by all of the focus groups. These concepts did not seem to fit into any specific category, so these recurrent thoughts were labeled as “overarching themes,” and as “directions for moving forward.” While not involved in the first phase of the

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Community Plan, these concepts will be included in the second, action-oriented, phase.

Economic Sustainability

As with any other developed community, the viability of the City's economy is crucial to its continued success and expansion. The 1998 Strategic Plan mentioned numerous times "challenges of being a mature city." The theme of economic sustainability seeks to create a clearer definition for addressing these challenges.

Community Partnerships & Engagement

The focus groups were made up of a variety of citizens ranging from young people to city/school employees, to parents and to public officials. Hence, it was not difficult for them to understand the need for full community participation in the planning process. Only by including the voice of all those affected - - be it young people, adults, students, teachers, parents, etc. - - can a policy be truly successful. Additionally, when groups seek out specific individuals to harness their talents and make sure they are put to use, a better solution is created.

Community Perception/Marketing/Image

Oftentimes the media can play a large part in the public's perception of a certain community. The focus groups identified that many assets that were present in Hampton were not being properly portrayed in local media sources. The groups simply recognized that by harnessing the mass outreach power of the media, the visions and goals of the Community Plan would become potentially easier to attain.

Preparing Citizens for Future Success

While the training of our young people in work force ethics and life skills has been outlined by Hampton City Schools, the focus groups noted that it is important for these opportunities to be open to any and all citizens. A community cannot exist without its citizens, and by providing educational opportunities that can last a lifetime, Hampton can expect to see a stronger base of people living in the City in the years to come.

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Section III

Youth as a Strategic Issue

The eighth focus group formed during the first phase of the Hampton Community Plan (2006) process was the Youth Focus Group. The facilitators of the process recognized that through Hampton's continued support of youth engagement in the community; young people were becoming a unique constituent group. By having young people outline their visions and goals for themselves and their peers, the Community Plan would become more inclusive.

The vision statement for the Youth Focus Group sums up the necessity of involving young people in a process that is meant to help sustain and improve the city through the next few decades.

Vision: "Better Youth, Better Hampton, Better Future"

Although the youth of Hampton already had a document that expressed their vision for the city, the Youth Component of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan(1989), the Youth Focus Group decided to revisit issues deemed most important by young people in the city and came up with six new goals for the Youth Section of the Hampton Community Plan (2006). However, because of the transient nature of young people in Hampton, these issues were revisited, once again, by the 2008 Youth Component Survey and the 2008 Youth Component focus groups. According to this input, the six goals of the Youth Component of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan (1989) were enhanced and expanded to include eight goals.

Caring Relationships Within the Community

- Every young person grows up with positive examples from their family and community.
- Youth perceive the need for strong, positive youth/adult and the community at large.
- Neighborhoods and public places in which youth meet and recreate—are safe, and perceived as such.

Youth Share Leadership

- Youth have opportunities on both the local and regional levels to share leadership and participate fully in decisions that affect them.
- Youth engagement in civic activities, such as service learning, input and consultation, and shared leadership, while prevalent in Hampton, continues to increased.

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- Hampton youth are in contact with young people from other communities in the region and work together to address regional youth issues.

Youth Acquire Essential Life Skills

- Youth have plenty of educational, social, civic, and recreational opportunities that provide essential life skills.
- Youth have sufficient resources to learn and apply essential life skills.

Every Young Person is Prepared for a Career

- Teens are knowledgeable about job opportunities in their community.
- Teens feel they are equipped with the proper skills to succeed in a job.
- Youth have access to employment opportunities that provide training and work related skills.

Places to Go and Things to Do for Youth

- Youth have a place specifically set aside for them.
- There are plenty of places and activities to entice teens and young adults to choose Hampton as a place to live.
- There is a variety of age appropriate activities in neighborhoods.

Getting Around

- Youth are knowledgeable about transportation accessibility and options available both locally and regionally.
- Youth know how to get around using public transportation.
- Youth are informed about car safety.

Bring Them Back

- Youth are knowledgeable of the benefits of returning to Hampton as young adults.
- Adult city leaders and individuals actively support and recognize that Hampton needs to improve its efforts to retain its young population.
- There are ample and diverse job and employment opportunities that appeal to young people.
- There are ample and diverse places and activities that entice teens and young adults to choose Hampton as a place to live.

Going Green

- Young people are aware of their environmental impact.

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- Young people incorporate environmentally friendly practices in their everyday lives that showcase their knowledge of their impact on their environment.
- Young people actively support the maintenance and improvement of Hampton's natural resources.
- Young people incorporate green practices in the places that they frequent.

Since the 2010 Comprehensive Plan (1989), there have been several updates that have evolved as the populations of young people have shifted and the document has been updated to reflect the changing priorities of shifting generations. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan included 4 goals, as young people continued to identify ways to improve Hampton, we were able to further understand the consistently identified issues, thus the 2006 Community Plan identified 6 goals. The 2009 Community Plan identifies 9 goals. As expected, parts of the original four goals from the Youth Component of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan can be seen in the eight new goals for certain issues that are of importance to young people. When the goals from the Comprehensive Plan are placed alongside the current goals, the evolution of the youth agenda in the city can be illustrated.

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Youth Space

2010 Comprehensive Plan (1997)

Youth Space

- There is no place specifically set aside for teens.
- There is a lack of recreational opportunities.
- Existing community retail/entertainment are not “youth friendly.”
- There is not a wide variety of entertainment.

Community Plan (2006)

Places To Go and Things To Do for Youth

- Due to a lack of affordability and adult awareness/support of youth space, youth believe there is no place specifically set aside for teens.
- There is a lack of places and activities to entice teens and young adults to choose Hampton as a place to live.
- There is not a wide variety of age appropriate activities in neighborhoods.

Comparison of Youth Space Issues

-Reasons youth space is not available in Hampton (lack of affordability, awareness, etc.) are given, and not simply left at “there is no youth space.”

-The importance of young people as a vital part of Hampton’s future and not just as a single interest group is better expressed in the Community Plan.

-Neighborhoods and their fundamental importance to young people and growth are mentioned in the Community Plan.

Transportation

2010 Comprehensive Plan (1997)

Transportation

- Hampton is oriented for auto traffic, not pedestrian or alternative transportation, so youth are overly dependent on cars.
- There is a lack of knowledge as to how to get around using public transportation (including school buses).
- There is a perception that bus stops are not safe.
- Public transportation (as an alternative to cars) is too expensive.

Community Plan (2006)

Getting Around

- Youth are not knowledgeable about transportation accessibility and options available both locally and regionally.
- Youth lack knowledge as to how to get around using public transportation.
- Youth are not informed about car safety.

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-Many of the specific issues concerning public transportation (other than general knowledge) have been at least partially resolved because of the recent focus on this issue by youth groups within the City of Hampton.

-Regional concerns about transportation are expressed in the Community Plan, not just City concerns.

Employment

2010 Comprehensive Plan (1997)

Employment

- Youth are not knowledgeable about opportunities.
- Youth do not have/realize they have job skills.
- Youth are not always viewed positively by business.

Community Plan (2006)

Every Young Person is Prepared for a Career

- Are teens knowledgeable about job opportunities in their community?
- Teens do not feel they are equipped with the proper skills to have a successful career.
- Youth cannot access employment opportunities that provide training and work related skills.

Comparison of Employment Issues

-These two objectives are quite close in both wording and meaning, except that the Community Plan offers a solution in the form of being able to access employment trainings and opportunities. Many of the same youth employment problems that existed when the 2010 Comprehensive Plan was written still exist today and the youth position on this issue is evidence of that.

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Caring Relationships

2010 Comprehensive Plan (1997)

Caring Relationships

- There is a lack of cooperation/participation from the school system.
- There is still a need to improve youth/adult partnerships to benefit the entire community.
- There is a lack of involvement in neighborhood concerns.

Community Plan (2006)

Caring Relationships Within the Community

- Does every young person grow up with positive examples from their family and community?
- Youth perceive the need for strong, positive youth/adult relationships with police, city leaders, businesses, and in the community at large.
- Neighborhoods and public places in which youth meet and recreate lack the perception of safety.

Comparison of Caring Relationships

-The importance of neighborhoods in the growth and development of youth is highlighted in both objectives.

-The need for businesses to have caring environments is mentioned in the Community Plan, reflecting the more inclusive horizon of the community planning process.

While the preceding four goals of the Community Plan fit nicely with the four outlined goals of the Comprehensive Plan Youth document, that still leaves two objectives from the Community Plan unmatched.

Youth Share Leadership

Since the Youth Component of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan was written, youth engagement within Hampton has dramatically increased (ex. Hampton Youth Commission, Uth Act, Neighborhood Youth Advisory Board, Superintendent's Advisory Group, and specific school and neighborhood youth boards, etc.). The Youth Focus Group determined that while youth engagement is an accepted concept in the city, it needs to be promoted and expanded across the region.

Youth Acquire Essential Life Skills

While the Employment objective of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan mentions that job skills are essential to young people in the city, there is no mention of life skills that are not necessarily work oriented. The Youth Focus Group concluded that these skills

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are just as important as those offered in employment trainings, and that they deserve their own category for improvement and progression.

Bring Them Back

While the concept of bringing Hampton's young people back to the region does not exist in the four goals of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan (1989), it presents itself in a previous version of the Hampton Community Plan (2006) in Goal 6, Places to Go and Things to Do. However, the issue seemed to expand beyond creating places and activities that would be appealing to young adults. In 2004, a Bring Them Back committee was created in order to strategize how the City can expand its efforts to recruit and retain young adults to the area. The strategies that this committee developed shaped this goal of the Hampton Youth Component.

Going Green

This issue has never been a part of any version of the Youth Component or the Community Plan, however, it has certainly been a subject on the minds of many people for years. In 2008, the City of Hampton finally developed a Green Initiative to call for the community's active involvement in going green. The Hampton Youth Commission, among other commissions and councils, endorsed the Green Initiative, agreeing to support it.

Conclusion

Since Hampton has included a Youth Component to the documents that guide Hampton's improvement, four major issues have continuously been identified as concerns for Hampton youth, while updates to the Youth Components have yielded another four issues that are concerning for young people in Hampton. Since the Youth Component of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, young people have identified issues relating to *Caring Relationships, Transportation, Employment, and Youth Space*. As updates have been made, the concerns teens have around these issues have become more defined. Since the Youth Component of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, young people have also identified new issues such as *Youth Share Leadership, Youth Acquire Essential Life Skills, Bring Them Back, and Going Green* which have been incorporated into the Youth Component of the Community Plan. The issues that youth face in Hampton, including both the original four goals of the Youth Component of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and the concerns young people have identified since then are included in Section V of the Youth Component to the Community Plan.

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Section IV

Goals and Objectives

Goal Y-01: Caring Relationships Within the Community

Caring Relationships Within the Community is one of eight “Youth” goals adopted in the updated Hampton Community Plan (2006). Caring Relationships can include adult to youth relationships, youth to youth relationships, government to youth relationships, and business to youth relationships in the community. Because these types of relationships can exist throughout all aspects of a community, they are vital to the healthy development of young people in that community. According to a 1999 Community Interaction Survey conducted by the Hampton Youth Commission and the Youth Planners, 83% of the students surveyed agreed that it is important for young people and adults to be able to work well together.

Caring Relationships are important because young people perceive that working together with adults will open up more opportunities for youth. To improve Caring Relationships in the community, youth must grow up with at least 30 of the 40 Developmental Assets, and have positive youth to adult relationships with the businesses, community organizations, neighborhood and city leaders, and the police they encounter. Finally, the neighborhoods and public places in which they meet and recreate must have the perception (and actuality) of safety.

Objective Y1.1: Every Young Person in Hampton Grows Up with 30 or More Developmental Assets.

As they develop, young people are highly influenced by their surroundings. Young people need to grow up with positive examples around them to increase the chance that they will become successful. One method of categorizing and identifying these examples is through a system known as Developmental Asset-Building.

The 40 Developmental Assets were originally developed by the Search Institute, a national organization based in Minneapolis and dedicated to providing leadership and research about young people across the country. Since 1989 they have surveyed nearly 2 million young people across the United States and Canada leading to the creation of a tool known as the Developmental Assets. These assets were further divided into two broad categories, external assets and internal assets.

External assets deal with the positive experiences young people receive from the world around them. These 20 assets are about supporting and empowering young people, about setting boundaries and expectations, and about positive and constructive use of young people's time. External assets identify important roles that families, schools, congregations, neighborhoods, and youth organizations can play in promoting healthy development.

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Internal Assets are the twenty assets that identify those characteristics and behaviors that reflect positive internal growth and development of young people. These assets are about positive values and identities, social competencies, and commitment to learning. The internal Developmental Assets will help young people make thoughtful and positive choices and, in turn, be better prepared for situations in life that challenge their inner strength and confidence. These assets include categories relating to: commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity.

According to Search Institute's surveys, 64% of young people in Hampton have fewer than 21 of the Developmental Assets. Overall, the average young person in America has only 19 assets!

The program for increasing the total number of Developmental Assets among youth has been embraced by the City of Hampton over the past decade. Organizations such as Alternatives, Inc. and the Coalition for Youth utilize and refer to the Developmental Assets when working with groups of young people. Materials related to the Assets are always prevalent in either of these organizations as they are an integral part of many of their programs, such as the Hampton Youth Commission and the Neighborhood Youth Advisory Board.

Implementation Strategy:

- *Create programs through partnerships and grants that work to build upon the assets currently held by Hampton youth.*

Objective Y1.2: Improve Youth/Adult Relationships.

In order to have a truly caring environment in which young people can thrive, caring youth/adult relationships must be prevalent in all aspects of the community. These relationships include, but are not limited to, those within schools, businesses, neighborhood community organizations that cater to young people, as well as with police officers and city leaders.

Strong, positive youth/adult relationships are harder to attain at the business level than at the community level. These relationships in the business community are especially important to young people; past surveys have shown that 82% of those surveyed thought that improved youth/adult relationships would benefit businesses by providing responsible youth for jobs, and 78% of those surveyed agreed that improved youth/adult relationships would increase the number of youth-friendly businesses.

The Youth Friendly Guidebook is a document created by young people to help businesses and service organizations understand how youth friendly they really are.

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The Guidebook lists several criteria for determining whether or not a business is youth friendly. The youth-friendly rating is decided by a team of youth evaluators entering the business and scoring the business on the specific criteria. The list of youth friendly businesses will be available to young people across the city.

In a 2008 survey of Hampton high schools, 90% of youth surveyed felt that there were not strong relationships between youth and police. In focus groups, youth expressed frustration with the Police Department. Youth felt that police stereotype them, based on other encounters with young people, but admit that often they stereotype police based on accounts of previous youth and police encounters.

In order to strengthen the relationship between youth and adults, it's important that the existing stereotypes be broken down. Often this can be done by informal relationship building, such as Police Athletic Leagues, and Police Mentorship Programs. These programs also build a connection between youth and police, discouraging young people from committing crimes.

In the same 2008 survey, 85% of youth responded that they did not feel they had strong relationships with city leaders, and 80% did not feel as though they have sufficient opportunities to discuss issues of concern with city leaders. This breakdown in communication has caused many youth to feel as though local government does not understand teen issues. 80% of youth also felt as though adult leaders did not act upon issues concerning youth, and that adult leaders had poor attitudes regarding youth in leadership positions.

By creating opportunities for young people to network with youth and adult neighborhood, district, and city leaders, youth will be given an opportunity to voice their concerns with city leaders. From these encounters adults can gain an understanding of the issues facing young people, and how they can address these issues. These opportunities will also improve the attitudes and relationships of those involved.

A survey about community interaction was conducted in Hampton's high schools. In this survey, youth were asked how they view the School System's involvement with the rest of the community. One finding from the survey showed that young people do not see a strong connection between their school and their neighborhood. Another popular theme found in the survey was that most youth would like to increase school/community involvement. Youth also indicated that they are not usually able to find out at school what events are occurring in their neighborhood and vice versa. From these findings, we have identified the need to assess the connection between the school system and the community in Hampton.

Implementation Strategies:

- *Evaluate all businesses and organizations in the city of Hampton according to the standards set in the Youth Friendly Guidebook.*

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- *Publicize the list of Youth Friendly businesses and organizations in the media by the end of each calendar year, and encourage patronization of these businesses.*
- *Create opportunities for youth and police to engage in positive interaction that breaks down existing stereotypes between the groups.*
- *Increase opportunities for different generations of young people to contact both youth and adult city leaders, and increase understanding of the issues important to youth.*

Objective Y1.3: Improve Perception of Safety in Neighborhoods and Other Public Places in Which Young People Tend To Meet And Recreate.

When a person enters a neighborhood or public place and initially feels uncomfortable or unsafe, this is a lack of perception of safety. If a certain place is generally associated with crime, there is a high possibility that young people will not perceive the location as safe. The Youth Friendly Guidebook used to evaluate businesses and service organizations lists safety as one of its vital criteria.

There are several factors involved in creating a safe environment for youth to recreate, some of which include the reduction of gang activities, the reduction of violence, and the elimination of substances, such as drugs and alcohol.

In a 2008 survey, 56% of youth identified a need for improvement in the safety of Hampton neighborhoods, schools, recreation, and shopping areas.

In the same survey, 81% of those surveyed reported that they are not satisfied with the gang reduction efforts in the Community, and have identified these efforts as a focus for improvement. A 2008 40 Developmental Assets survey showed that there are still significant numbers of young people who are illegally using alcohol, tobacco, and narcotics.

Some young people have linked substance abuse to the lack of structure in young people's lives, particularly a job. Jobs keep young people occupied after school hours, reducing the time they have to become involved in negative activities. Some youth also cite a lack of income as a motivator for young people to begin selling illegal substances. In some communities, adults have enlisted the help of youth in addressing these issues. Some communities have involved youth in community efforts such as gang, narcotics, or violence task forces, while others have instituted youth courts where young people have the option to be tried by their peers for misdemeanors.

All citizens, including young people, enjoy the ability to spend their leisure time in the community. Often young people do not consider the safety of the places where they recreate, in which case the responsibility falls on the community to ensure that young people are safe regardless of where they recreate. The creation of a safe

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environment across the community can only come from partnerships with law enforcement, legislators (on the local, state, and federal levels), and neighborhood-based organizations.

Implementation Strategy:

- *Increase youth involvement in the efforts of the community to improve safety, and reduce gang activity.*
- *Encourage young people's involvement as decision makers in enforcing safe and healthy behavior, discouraging them from becoming (further) involved in criminal activities.*
- *Provide incentives to Hampton businesses for hiring young people.*

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Conclusion:

The caring relationships in our City are a building block for the development of healthy and successful young people. Making sure that developmental assets are present in the lives of our youth is fundamental to shaping a well rounded individual with knowledge of, and involvement in their community. Caring relationships must be carried out throughout the entire community, meaning that neighborhood organizations, businesses, civic organizations, local government, police and school related programs must all work to increase these caring relationships. The perception of safety in our neighborhoods and our city as a whole is important to not only safeguarding the well-being of our young people, but also insuring that they grow up and develop in an environment that is caring and safe, so they may carry on that value to their children.

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Goal Y-02: Youth Share Leadership

Youth sharing leadership is another one of the eight goals that youth believe should be met. Youth sharing leadership means that youth should have the ability to participate in decisions that affect them. One day, these same youth will assume leadership positions throughout the community. It is never too early to get involved in civic activities and to learn how to interact on the business and city management level. Youth should be able to help decide what their future is going to look like. Young people are able to offer a different perspective because, while adults can only guess as to what the young people are passionate or concerned about, youth sharing the leadership can bridge that gap by acting as the voice of all their peers to those who make the decisions. When given a chance to take action and gain these vital leadership skills, most people feel empowered. Young people tell the Youth Planners that they care more about their community because they were more involved.

Objective Y2.1: Enable Youth to Participate Fully in Decisions Involving Youth.

In order for young people to become the leaders of tomorrow, the community must offer opportunities for young people to learn about leadership allowing them to later become successful members of the community. Unfortunately, adults who make decisions affecting youth are not often aware of the issues that are important to young people; the solution to this problem is the involvement of young people alongside the adults to create a more inclusive outcome.

The Hampton Youth Commission is an excellent example of how the youth voice can fully impact decisions that affect young people. The Commission's mission statement is:

"To provide an opportunity for youth to have a formal role in the City's decision-making through a representative Commission that addresses youth issues."

The Hampton Youth Commission has risen to a level in the City government where they are closely listened to by City officials, and are the obvious liaisons of the youth issues within the government.

Other opportunities to share leadership on the local level can be found in the Planning Department where young people are hired as Youth Planners, or on any committee/board where young people are not a separate entity from the adult group, and their vote weighs equally with adults. Recently, the School Investment Panel was created to come up with a recommendation for capital expenditures related to schools. Young people were commissioned to help advise and steer the committee towards the issues that young people find to be important.

The School Board is a panel of adults that makes decisions about schools in the

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though they are not students within the local school system. The Superintendent's Advisory Group was formed and a youth advisory role to the School Board was created to involve students in the School Board's decisions. The Superintendent's Advisory Group is composed of young people who inform the Superintendent on what is going on and what needs to be addressed in schools. The Superintendent's Advisory Group, and the youth advisor roles, are not examples of shared leadership but are examples of civic activity. Full participation in decisions that affect them would mean that the youth vote would not be an optional factor that can be ignored. In shared leadership, young people would have the same level of influence as adults in decisions involving them. This should not just happen at the local level, but should also occur regionally.

Implementation Strategies:

- *Create a youth-friendly process for including youth-related items in the Capital Improvement Plan and Budget.*
- *Provide Youth opportunities to gain an understanding of how to utilize the current civic engagement opportunities to improve their neighborhoods, schools, and community.*

Objective Y2.2: Increase Youth Engagement in Civic Activities.

Civic activities can be broadly defined as the interaction of citizens with their community and government. They can also be described as activities which reinvigorate the public purpose and civic mission, such as developing civic skills, inspiring engaged citizenship, promoting a civil society, and working closer with the government and the government working closer with the community.

The idea of civic engagement centered on youth has been broken down into an easy-to-understand visual created by young people in Hampton, referred to as the "Youth Engagement Triangle." The triangle that follows is divided into three pathways of youth engagement:

-Pathway I: Project, Tasks, and Service Learning

This pathway is integral to the creation of a successful youth engagement system because it is used to begin involving young people in their community, even in small ways, such as in a road cleanup or working at a local food shelter. The first pathway is appealing because it is a short-term project; adults often organize the entire event, and young people take away a positive experience when they are finished.

-Pathway II: Input and Consultation

In the second pathway, the young person begins to enter into more complicated partnerships and requires more training to work effectively with adults or other young people. This is an opportunity for young people to influence the decisions that affect them. The defining factor of the second pathway however, is that the youth are utilized

strictly in an advisory role; while their opinion is valued, the adult will ultimately make the decision.

-Pathway III: Shared Leadership

In the third pathway, young people work alongside adults and hold the same amount of responsibility as their adult counterparts, as well as the same rights. This pathway of the triangle usually requires greater amounts of training for the task of working side by side with adults to create a better solution for the community.



While there are obviously many opportunities for youth to participate in civic activities, they are not presented this way. It is not always that the groups are not there, but often youth do not know of the group or do not have a reasonable grasp of the purpose of the group. Youth are interested; they just do not have access or knowledge about these activities.

Implementation Strategy:

- *Fund an organization or community group that will publicize frequent notices of opportunities for youth by arranging a system of communication with media resources (such as television, newspapers, websites, etc.).*
- *Increase the number of monthly visitors to www.areyouinthegame.com by 25% through advertising and partnerships.*

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- *Institute a location in each of the four public high schools, as well as other areas with a high concentration of youth, that provides young people with a hub of information regarding involvement in their community.*

Objective Y2.3: Explore Opportunities and Vehicles for Collaboration between Young Leaders and Youth Leadership Organizations on a Local and Regional Level.

Winston Churchill once said “If we are united nothing is impossible, if we are divided we fail.” This concept has held true to the major changes that have been seen in the 20th century. While young leaders within Hampton and throughout the Hampton Roads region have never been divided, there has been little collaboration, if any, between these leaders and their groups. In order to maximize their influence and efficiently address issues in the community or the region, it is necessary that leaders, both young and old, work together.

In the past several years, Hampton has received numerous awards for our youth involvement and youth leadership opportunities. Hampton has several highly recognized boards which work to involve youth in leadership in the schools, community, and government. Each group has capabilities they use to be effective in their areas of influence. Some have the ability to influence policy, some work in grassroots organizing, others have power as activists. These groups provide insightful leadership into the concerns of young people, and work to address these concerns using the authority they have. The diversity offered in collaboration between these groups would be beneficial in determining the root causes of issues and finding ways to address major issues simultaneously in schools, neighborhoods, and the community at large.

Unfortunately, there is little communication between these groups. In order to maximize the effectiveness of certain projects, collaboration is needed between young leaders and the organizations they are involved in both within Hampton and throughout the Hampton Roads region.

The City of Hampton is one of 15 localities considered to be part of the Hampton Roads region. At such a close proximity, one would assume that communication between these cities would be very active, especially between the young people, as there are specific advantages that attract youth in all the cities. There is the beach and boardwalk in Virginia Beach, the theme parks in Williamsburg, the mall and music venues in Norfolk, and many others. Unfortunately, this communication does not exist. In terms of shared leadership, the young people in Hampton are very out of touch with members of similar organizations in other cities within the region.

The benefits of an open line of communication among young people within the region are numerous. First, different ideas could spread among the cities, helping to improve the overall aspects of youth involvement. In addition, the combination of

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different ideas brought to a meeting between these organizations would bring about even better solutions. Different cities have young people with different interests, and the diversity resulting from such a conglomeration of young people would be very desirable. The strength and bonding between cities in the region, both civically and economically, would be increased.

While young people involved in leadership opportunities in a city benefits that city only, it is another matter to create regional opportunities for young people to share leadership. These types of opportunities would help young people branch out from their city and interact with peers from other areas in the region, perhaps exchanging ideas or creating new ones for youth engagement. This could occur at regional youth leadership conferences, as well as in more focused partnership meetings between youth leaders from other communities.

Implementation Strategy:

- *Involve the youth leadership groups in Hampton in a coalition, through which they can network and offer support to each other's initiatives.*
- *Create a partnership between youth leadership groups in different localities through which regional youth issues can be addressed.*

Conclusion:

The concept of youth sharing leadership is not a new one to the City of Hampton, but it has by no means reached its full potential. It is important for both the development of young people and the future of the community that teens feel they are connected to their community. Young people need opportunities presented to them on a local and a regional level so they can experience all their community has to offer, while simultaneously offering a unique perspective to community leaders. It is also important that young people from all around Hampton, and the Hampton Roads Region are aware of each others' initiatives and ideas, in order to create a larger pool of youth engagement possibilities for the future of the entire region.

Goal Y-03: Youth Acquire Essential Life Skills

The time when a person is young is the time in which that person should be preparing to enter the "real world." From things such as balancing a checkbook to interviewing for a job, these practical life skills are just as important as a young person's formal education. However, the opportunities to learn these essential skills are often overlooked or are not readily available to all young people. Young people have a need to know how to manage themselves in the future. Life skills like these are often not learned through what we call "traditional education" and must be obtained in other places. Sometimes parents have the resources and the time to teach their children these valuable skills, but regrettably, sometimes they do not, and that is where it becomes the responsibility of the community to offer these skills to young people.

Objective Y3.1: Youth Have Access to Educational, Social, Civic, and Recreational Opportunities That Provide Opportunities for the Development of Strong Life Skills.

Life skills do not have to be found in a seminar or book entitled "How to Succeed in Life." Many times life skills can be acquired simply by participating in activities, attending after-school programs, or can be learned through mentorship with parents or other knowledgeable adults. Along with everyday life skills such as balancing a checkbook, teamwork, leadership, and innovation play an important role in living a successful life. Life skills such as these are important for young people because they are necessary in the real world, such as when applying for a job or assuming a leadership position. It is essential for young people to learn the basics of survival outside their home while also learning about and developing personal skills that will help youth thrive and become successful as adults.

Life skills can be learned in an educational environment as well. The chance to learn life skills can be presented in the classroom during the school day in the form of educational programs that encourage the development of life skills within a curriculum. The opportunities already available in the Hampton City Schools Curriculum include Life Skills and Independent Living.

Opportunities to learn life skills outside of the traditional classroom are also in abundant supply in Hampton. A good example of this non-traditional education can be found at New Horizons Regional Education Center, a facility created to train a skilled workforce and offer technical courses to students. Some of the classes offered at New Horizons are Auto Painter, Nursing Assistant, and Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement. The New Horizons Center is located in Hampton with a branch campus in Newport News; it is open to students from any of the nearby cities provided that their respective school system will offer transportation should it be needed. Nearly a half day is needed out of the regular school day to participate fully in a class at the New Horizons Regional Education Centers. Many students' schedules do not permit such a long time away from their traditional education. However, if a young person knows what field

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they wish to enter after high school, the New Horizons Regional Education Centers allow for development in the skills needed for their particular career choice, making it a good avenue to pursue.

Another way you can obtain life skills is through recreational opportunities in the community. Recreational opportunities provide a strong opportunity to build life skills such as leadership and teamwork. The inclusion of those vital life skills into a recreational activity is an ongoing goal in the City of Hampton. Starting with students in elementary school and continuing all the way through high school, youth have numerous opportunities to be involved in recreational programs that are beneficial to them in many ways. One of the major champions of this type of program is the Hampton Parks and Recreation Department. They offer a variety of programs such as the A+ School Age Program that focuses on developing young people's academic skills. Hampton Parks and Recreation also offers fun and enriching recreational activities that focus on personal skill development (cooking classes), fine art (various art classes), and physical fitness (Tae Kwon Do).

Implementation Strategies:

- *Develop a mandatory financial skills unit to be included in school curriculum.*
- *Fund a series of college bound workshops that will provide instruction and training on a variety of skills (including test taking, filling out applications, etc.).*
- *Hold a Youth Vote for each local, state, and federal election with opportunities for youth to learn while expressing their voice in the community.*

Objective Y3.2: Youth are given the resources needed to succeed and excel in their everyday lives both now as youth and later as adults.

In order to succeed at life, youth are going to need more than life skills thrown at them. They will also need the resources to learn those skills and put them to use. There are two different types of life skills; the first being the skills you need when interviewing or applying for a job--knowing what to say and how to say it. The second type of life skills are those that you use when doing laundry, depositing money, or cooking; the skills that require physical resources to accomplish. A young person can be taught how to do their laundry, but in order to accomplish this task on their own they will need to use laundry detergent and a washer. If the young person never gets a chance to use their new skills, the opportunity to learn and retain the new found skills is lost. Part of learning how to succeed at life is experiencing it.

The community can play an active role in supporting youth in their venture to both build life skills and retain them by putting them to use. One of the ways the community can support youth is by making funds available for programs that emphasize the importance of essential life skills (as seen in the Hampton Youth Commission's Grant Program). Besides granting money to organizations, the community can pair young people with mentors that can provide those physical resources that are required when learning certain skills. Applying skills to everyday life

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before a young person is on their own will certainly prepare them for when that day arrives.

Another way the community can support its young people is by creating ways for youth to be involved in the City's efforts to make Hampton a great place for youth to live and work (as seen in the many community youth groups such as Hampton Youth Commission, Neighborhood Youth Advisory Board, and Youth ACT). When a young person is involved in civic opportunities, it builds their character in many ways. Whether they chair a committee or participate as an active member, there are numerous opportunities for personal growth. At some point in a person's life they will have to take charge and at another point they will have to follow someone else's lead. Being involved in the community, especially at a young age, gives youth a sense of accomplishment and importance and teaches them invaluable lessons in anything from financing to leaderships that can be applied now as youth and later as adults.

Civic opportunities for youth that build essential life skills are numerous in the City of Hampton because of its long-standing support of youth engagement. The involvement of young people in civic organizations offers them insights into the workings of a community, and allows them to make partnerships with adults in the community as well. There are many commissions and organizations in the City utilizing young people in an advisory capacity or in an equal voting member capacity. The School Board with the Superintendent's Advisory Group as an advisory panel and one non-voting youth member on the School Board, Citizen's Unity Commission, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board are all attempting to connect with youth in the community and the input they have. The Neighborhood Commission has made efforts for youth to share leadership with adults and gain skills by having both a Neighborhood Youth Advisory Board and two voting members on its Commission. Neighborhoods participate in the engagement process as well. Unfortunately, space is often limited on boards and commissions, allowing only a few young people to serve, so a very small percentage of the youth population actually experiences this form of civic engagement. Creating more and advertising the existing opportunities for youth to be positively engaged in their community is essential for the growth of the coming generation.

Implementation Strategies:

- *Create or fund an ongoing program that promotes the learning of life skills and also the active use of them.*
 - *Example: The program could take participants on field trips to a Laundromat to learn how to do laundry, a bank to learn how to deposit/withdraw money, an apartment office to learn how to shop for and sign on an apartment, etc.*
- *Create a program that pairs young people with mentors that can equip them with skills they will need when they are on their own.*

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Conclusion:

For teenagers, the developmental need for life skills is great. The community is an essential provider of life skills to those young people who can't obtain them anywhere else. One of the jobs of the community is to provide opportunities through educational, civic, and recreational activities/organizations. With the increasing call for technologically fluent individuals in today's workforce, access to technological apparatus such as computers is fundamental for all young people in Hampton. Should more and more young people begin to acquire these essential life skills, there may be a decrease in destructive activities that lead to juvenile detention and/or school suspensions, and an increase in more positive, constructive activities such as community engagement and volunteerism.

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Goal Y-04: Every Young Person is Prepared for a Career.

Throughout the life of a young person they are faced with the important decision of what they are going to be as an adult. During this time of contemplation, a young person should be given the opportunity to learn about, explore, and, if desired, prepare for a certain career. Even if a specific career field is not chosen, the young person should, at a minimum, be learning basic career skills such as typing, phone etiquette, interviewing skills, etc. The young person's community can combine its efforts with those of the young person to help ultimately prepare them for their professional future. If the young person chooses to continue this education at a higher level these skills will still prove useful at some point in the future. No matter the ultimate career choice of the young person, they still have the responsibility to be a productive member of society as a young person and adult.

In addition to learning essential life skills for holding a job, the young person should be taught how to *obtain* a job. Finding the right job or career can prove difficult even for adults. If the young person is taught how to navigate through job listings and find the career that is the right fit, then he will find his endeavor to be easier. Landing the right job could be the thing that sets the young person up for success. As an adult, holding a stable career and doing well at it is the best thing someone could do for their resume. Showing young people this and stirring their passion for excellence early is a great way to lead them down the right avenues toward adulthood.

Before a young person can go on to achieve excellence in their career field, they may choose to hold a part time job during high school. At a 2005 public meeting of the Hampton Youth Commission, most of the participants said they wanted a job, but could not or did not know how to go about obtaining one. In a more recent survey given to nearly 800 students, the lowest scoring question in the *Preparing for a Career* category was, "How would you rate the information available about part-time job opportunities available for youth?" With the average rating being 2.13 out of 4.00, this shows that even in more recent times, youth feel the task of getting a part-time job to be daunting. By aiming to improve the access to the existing job opportunities for youth, the community can work to improve the perception of a lack of job opportunities.

Objective Y4.1: Increase the Level of Formal Education and Training Among Young People and Improve Partnerships with the School Board and a Trade School Outreach.

Although workforce readiness has become an increasingly necessary asset for young people, the vital importance of a thorough and strong formal education must not be overlooked. While many employers in the past would not care about the status of their employees' formal education, high school diplomas are now common place in the working world. The Youth Focus Group recognized that while vocational training needed to be addressed, it could not be done at the expense of improvement of the secondary education system in Hampton. For this reason, the Youth Focus Group

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specifically identified a partnership with the Hampton City School Board and a trade outreach school (such as New Horizons) as necessary to the eventual accomplishment of the goal of preparing young people for a career.

The School Board has the power and the capacity to effect change on a citywide level from within the schools, definitely the place where young people in Hampton spend a lot of their time. By constantly seeking to increase and improve upon education in the schools, the chance of success in the real world for the students is similarly increased. Along the same line, trade outreach schools such as New Horizons can help young people quickly develop specific skills that interest them, even before they graduate from high school. This way, should a young person not have an interest in continuing their formal education, the community still offers that person a chance early on to become involved in their trade of choice.

Implementation Strategies:

- *Partner with Hampton City Schools as well as youth friendly businesses and organizations to research and develop mentorship and internship programs.*
- *Promote and increase partnership and mentorship opportunities in the community.*

Objectives Y4.2 And Y4.3: Increase and Improve Employment Opportunities That Provide Training/Work-Related Skills And Improve Access to Information About Career and Job Opportunities for Youth.

In order for young people to have access to the job market in Hampton, they have to know where to start their job search. Employment opportunities are available through many sources such as walk-ins, references, newspaper and/or internet advertisements, and school advertisements. Theoretically, with all these sources, most teens should have no problem finding a place of employment. However, in the same 1998 Teen Employment survey, the question was asked, "Do you feel knowledgeable of job opportunities in your community?" The split was right down the middle, with 50% of those surveyed in the high schools saying they did feel knowledgeable of job opportunities, and 50% saying they did not. This data appears to be slightly inconclusive; therefore, the Youth Planners revised the survey to target young people with jobs and those without jobs. When asked the same question again, 57% of those with jobs responded that they felt knowledgeable about job opportunities, while only 37% of those without jobs said they felt knowledgeable.

At a Youth Commission forum held in 1999, the youth were asked what would make finding a job easier. Below are some of the answers that were given, along with more updated information

- Place a bulletin board in schools and/or the mall with a list of jobs that are of interest to teens.

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- Have job fairs (either in the schools or other frequented teen areas) at least twice a year.
- Place an insert in the Daily Press that lists jobs that are of interest to teens, as well as in the school newspapers.
- Utilize the Youth Commission's website to advertise job opportunities.

The Hampton Youth Commission is attempting to help meet the needs of these teens by funding a "one-stop-information-station," also known as the Youth Booth. The Youth Booth is, among other things, a place to post job opportunities, mentorship opportunities for youth, and upcoming events. By the 2009-2010 school year there will be Youth Booths at three of the schools in Hampton: Hampton High, Kecoughtan High, and Phoebus High. Through this tool, it is hoped that teens will find it easier to stay updated on what is going on in their community.

Implementation Strategies:

- *Create and market a youth job opportunities website or a link/area on a youth website with those job opportunities listed.*
- *Have a City department such as Human Resources hold workshops on how to build skills in the workplace (similar to the Lunch and Learn seminars they hold for adults).*
- *Create or enhance a youth employment program based in departments of the City of Hampton.*
- *Create a support network of youth that work for the City of Hampton. Hold social outings and meetings where young City employees can connect and network.*

Conclusion:

It is a fact that young people need more opportunities to look for and obtain jobs to both gain work experience and to help them zero in on their true talents in the work place. Preparation for a career is not only found within part-time jobs, but also within the school system as formal education. Shadowing and mentorship opportunities also play an important role in developing a young person for their future career. With the rise of youth jobs and volunteer opportunities within the City of Hampton departments, there is a hope that local businesses will see the value of young employees and follow suit. It is never too early to learn career skills, even if a young person decides not to work during their high school years.

Goal Y-05: Places To Go and Things To Do for Youth.

The availability and appeal of places and activities dedicated to young people has been an issue in Hampton for over a decade. Young people desire a place or group of places to go where they can be among other young people, peers from their schools or neighborhoods, and other community members to whom they can relate.

Objectives Y5.1 and Y5.2 Create and Support More Public Spaces and Businesses Dedicated To Youth/Increase Adult Awareness and Support for Youth Space.

There are two main components from which this objective derives: the existing public spaces and the desired public spaces. Both components address the issue of youth space, the existence of a place—or places—that is specifically for teens. For over a decade, this issue has been on the youth agenda, and it has been demonstrated in both surveys and focus groups conducted in 2008 that youth space is still a hot topic.

The 2008 Youth Component survey and focus group indicated that young people are not satisfied with the number of activities that Hampton offers. Another survey conducted by the Hampton Coalition for Youth in 1998 indicated that young people would like a facility to call their own. The survey asked 1,099 young people such questions as: “Where do you go? Would you go to different places if new ones were available? Where should those places be located?” Some of the results from the survey were:

- Most teens spend their time at home or at a friend’s house. Other than sports, few are involved on a regular basis in positive extra-curricular activities.
- Most young people do not believe that there is a place in their neighborhood where they can go after school. (One might point out the community centers located in various neighborhoods, but their activities are mainly geared towards elementary and middle school age children.)
- Young people have definite opinions about the activities they would like to have in their space and ways to make that space “youth friendly.”
- The majority of young people would like a place for youth filled with a variety of activities. Older teens overwhelmingly prefer a centralized location, accessible to all teenagers. Teens also stress the need for safety.

Over ten years ago, after conducting extensive research regarding places and activities available to young people, the idea of a Teen Center became a favorable solution to the issue. This Teen Center would be a facility used not only for music and dance parties, but also for other activities that are youth oriented such as sports, a “coffee house” type atmosphere, job training, computer and internet availability, and a

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recording studio, just to name a few. The Hampton Teen Center would be fully staffed by young people and youth-friendly adults, and young people would also drive its program development and site improvement.

However, the initial problem encountered by supporters of the Teen Center was the lack of adult awareness and support of the issue of youth space. It became clear that it was necessary to obtain the support of adults in order to advocate for any new place or program dedicated to young people. So, from the commencement of the Hampton Youth Commission in 1997, young people have advocated the need for a facility dedicated to young people to City Council and other boards. With the support of the adult city leaders, the Sentara Health and Fitness Center at Butler Farm Road and Magruder Boulevard was finally purchased in 2007 to be renovated and refurbished as the Hampton Teen Center.

However, the creation of new activities and places is not the only concern of young people. According to the 2008 Youth Component survey and focus groups, young people are also dissatisfied with the appeal of the existing places and activities available to young people. Furthermore, the young people in the focus groups saw value in enhancing those places and activities already available to them.

One of the ways that the existing businesses in Hampton can improve—with respect to their ability to attract young people—is to become youth friendly. While earlier efforts of the Youth Friendly Business campaign have successfully identified those Youth Friendly Businesses, the results have not been utilized to their full potential. Little has been done to promote those identified Youth Friendly Businesses or to market the concept of being youth friendly in the community. In order to allow the Youth Friendly Business campaign to reach its full potential, both young people and businesses must be aware of youth friendliness as an asset and a benefit.

Implementation Strategies:

- *Establish programs and services for the Teen Center.*
- *Implement a marketing strategy for the Teen Center.*
- *Facilitate/plan fundraising events for the Teen Center.*
- *Conduct meetings between youth and the City department of Economic Development concerning how to attract and retain Youth Friendly Businesses to Hampton.*
- *Partner with Youth Friendly Businesses to market the importance and benefits of being youth friendly.*

Objective Y5.3: Enhance the Number And Breadth of Age Appropriate Activities in Every Neighborhood.

Neighborhoods are usually communities that house all different ages of people, whether they are young, middle-aged, or elderly. However, many neighborhoods do not offer many activities that lend themselves to the interests of the teenage

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generation. There are currently four community centers in Hampton, but most of their programs are either geared towards younger children—such as day care, arts and crafts, and sports camps for young ages—or the programs provided are not appealing to teens. While these community centers do employ teenagers to help staff the centers, there are little to no appealing recreational opportunities for teenagers in the neighborhoods. While working in their neighborhood is an admirable job, and an excellent way to begin making money, teens need a place to “hang out” with their ~~own~~ peers without judgmental adults and/or fear of being accused of loitering.

A 1998 survey on youth space asked students at four pairs of schools, a high school and a corresponding middle school, respectively, if there was a place to go after school. Three of the pairs answered “no” for the majority, while the other pair, Phoebus High School and Spratley Middle School, had 58% answer “yes.” However, when broken down by age brackets, only two of the age groups answered “yes” more than “no,” and that was the under 12 and over 18 age groups. From this survey we can deduce that the teenage population of the 8 schools felt that there was no place to go after school. The same survey asked young people where new facilities for youth should be located. Mostly younger youth answered “in a neighborhood area,” while mostly high school-aged youth answered “in the Coliseum area.”

Implementation Strategies:

- *Establish a youth program geared toward high school students in each of Hampton’s community centers.*
- *Enhance youth programs offered to high school students in each of the community centers.*
- *Establish a youth program geared toward middle school students in each of Hampton’s community centers.*
- *Enhance the youth programs offered to middle school students in each of the community centers.*

Objective Y5.4: Encourage Affordable Prices for Youth.

While many young people acquire minimum wage jobs in the city, some young people say that they don’t have time to get a job, don’t have the transportation, or their parents simply won’t let them get a job. Whether a young person has a job or not, most young people cannot afford to pay for places or programs that are expensive. However, it would be unreasonable for a city to set out to lower the price of consumer goods because of the needs of a single constituency. Instead, it would be more practical and beneficial to encourage affordable fees for young people in places they frequent (movie theaters, skating rinks, the Teen Center).

Nonetheless, it would be unreasonable to say that young people do not have any money at all. Young people have a great deal of spending power in the city, but they only have a finite amount of money. Expensive events or programs greatly reduce the number of events or programs in which youth can participate. By

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incorporating affordable prices in the places that teens frequent, young people will be able to do more with the money they have.

Furthermore, along with a rise in youth affordability, many young people would be more likely to find something to do in the city instead of “hanging out” or loitering. The young people could no longer say they had nothing to do because everything was too expensive. Thus, affordable prices for young people could help to increase youth involvement in asset-building activities and other positive behaviors.

However, what exactly is considered an affordable price for a place or an activity? Affordability itself is a relative opinion, so how can one really measure affordability? Affordability can be determined by the spending power of an individual, and, with a representative sample of the young people in Hampton, a fairly accurate price range can be determined. This price range would be determined by the number of young people who are employed, their wages, their average hours per week, and an average of their regular expenditures. Determining a quantifiable value for an affordable event or activity is crucial to promoting or marketing Hampton’s youth spending power because it sets a tangible goal for which businesses in Hampton can strive.

Implementation Strategy:

- *Research, promote, and market Hampton’s youth spending power to Hampton’s businesses.*

Conclusion:

Youth space is an extremely important issue to the young people of Hampton, and solving the many obstacles involved is not an easy or quick process. First and foremost, the creation of a true youth space, a Teen Center, will play a vital role in bringing about awareness of youth space and City support. A Teen Center will give teenagers a place to call their own, possibly reducing juvenile crime and increasing the amount of dedicated, committed young people in our city. Second, the improvement of Hampton’s existing places and activities available to young people will improve young people’s perception of “what we have.” Furthermore, while the City is looked at on a large scale, it must be remembered that Youth Space begins in the neighborhoods. The creation of more age-appropriate activities, especially for teenagers, will help to solve that problem; however, there is no point in providing additional places, programs, and activities throughout the city for young people if young people cannot afford them.

Goal Y-06: Getting Around

A majority of a young person's life is spent in several places—at home, at school, at work, or out with friends. However, transportation is required in order to get from one place to another. Whether a young person uses public transportation or a car, every young person must get around. Transportation takes many forms, such as a bus, car, bicycle, and even walking. However, these options are not always easy or efficient to use, and transportation accessibility is sometimes not as accessible as it sounds.

Objective Y6.1 and Y6.2: Improve Transportation Accessible to Youth/Increase Knowledge of How to Use Transportation Accessible to Youth.

The most common form of public transportation in Hampton is the bus system, represented by Hampton Roads Transit, or HRT. Bus routes run throughout Hampton Roads, along the Peninsula and the South-Side. These routes provide relatively extensive coverage of the city, yet young people are still hesitant to ride the bus. Part of this hesitation is due to a transportation system's accessibility to youth. The accessibility of a transportation system is determined by a variety of factors such as affordability, convenience, safety, and many others.

When comparing the results of the 2007 Transportation survey and the 2008 Youth Component survey, a correlation between ridership and a system's accessibility became evident. In the 2007 Transportation survey, young people were asked to circle one of five choices—never, rarely, sometimes, often, or frequently—that best described how often they utilize a given form of transportation. In the 2008 Youth Component survey, young people were asked to rate Hampton's different forms of transportation according to different qualities.

2007 Transportation survey:

- 1a. 48% of teens frequently drive.
- 2a. 18% of young people frequently carpool, and 20% of young people carpool often.
- 3a. 56% of young people indicated that they never bike around the city.
- 4a. 25% of young people indicated that they rarely walk around the city.
- 5a. 83% of young people indicated that they never use taxis.
- 6a. 58% of young people indicated that they never use HRT.

2008 Youth Component Survey:

- 1b. No corresponding data in this survey.
- 2b. 45.2% of young people rated the safety of carpooling with other youth as good.
- 3b. 36.5% of young people rated the safety of using their bicycle to get around Hampton as fair.
- 4b. 38.9% of young people rated the safety of walking to get around in Hampton as fair.
- 5b. 28.7% of young people rated the safety of taking a taxi as poor.
- 6b. 36.5% of young people rated the safety of using HRT as fair.
- 7b. 39.1% of young people rated the

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HRT city bus system as fair.
8b.38.9% of young people rated the convenience of HRT as fair.

These results indicate that, overall, the accessibility of Hampton's transportation systems could be improved upon. With these improvements, the use of the existing transportation systems by youth could increase drastically. However, in order to encourage the use of alternate forms of transportation, young people must first know how to use them. Part of the reason why young people are hesitant to utilize existing transportation systems is inexperience with other types of transportation. It is necessary to make that information available and readable in order to even begin to encourage their use.

Implementation Strategy:

- *Partner with an existing transportation system to establish and implement a plan that will improve its accessibility to young people.*
- *Partner with HRT to design a new user friendly bus route map geared towards youth.*
- *Partner with HRT to create a user friendly online bus directory.*

Objectives Y6.3: Encourage the Use of Safer, Affordable, and More Convenient Means of Transportation for Teens and Young Adults.

Along with the obvious safety concerns of driving, the monetary costs of owning a vehicle are extensive. While the convenience of driving one's own vehicle is very appealing, the affordability often rules it out as an option for young people. According to the 2007 Transportation survey conducted by the Hampton Youth Commission, 27% of young people do not own or have access to a car, and 22% of young people only sometimes have access to a car. Young people could benefit from the use of the safe, affordable, and convenient forms of transportation that the community offers.

One of the reasons why teenagers do not utilize other forms of transportation is because they have a negative perception of the transportation. In focus groups conducted by the Youth Planners in 2007, young people were concerned with HRT's safety, cleanliness, reliability, image, and many other things. However, these opinions are not necessarily based off experience, for many of the focus groups participants rarely ever used the bus. Furthermore, in the 2007 Transportation survey, 52% of young people revealed that they never use HRT, 83% said they never use taxis, 56% said they never bike, 25% said they rarely walk, but 48% of young people said that they frequently drive.

There are many benefits to encouraging the use of Hampton's accessible forms of transportation. First, it will demonstrate to young people that there are affordable, safe, and convenient forms of transportation that the city offers. Second, it has

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environmental benefits. Cars have a detrimental impact on the environment because it causes the emission of greenhouse gases, ozone depletion, decreases in water quality, and the increase of pollutants. Walking or biking are good alternatives to avoid these detrimental effects, however, if the destination is not relatively close—according to the 2007 Transportation focus groups—young people are generally not willing to walk or bike. Furthermore, some focus group participants indicated that their parents will not allow them to walk because of safety concerns. HRT is presents a more convenient means of getting around, and research has shown that it is more environmentally friendly than driving. An HRT full-sized bus is more efficient than a single-occupancy vehicle with just six people on the bus.

Implementation Strategies:

- *Research successful incentives and advertisements that influence teens to use alternate forms of transportation.*
- *Partner with HRT to launch an effective youth friendly marketing plan.*

Objective Y6.4: Diversify and Increase Transportation Options Available to Youth (Middle School Through College) Both Locally And Regionally.

While the public transportation system created by local bus routes is an available means of getting around, young people do not consider it to be extremely efficient, and while it is the only practical means of long range public transportation, young people who do not drive are left with few other options. It is important that young people from middle school age to college age have a variety of options for transportation. Not only does it make living in Hampton more convenient for young people, it also makes the City a more attractive place where young people can return.

Hampton is just one part of the larger Hampton Roads region, and as young people grow, their interests branch out to the neighboring localities. The activities offered in each of the cities of the Hampton Roads region are all unique, and in order to promote intercity cooperation and to help young people utilize Hampton Roads as a region, it is important to look at transportation options on a regional level as well as a local level.

An example of an additional youth friendly transportation system from which young people and our community could benefit is a light rail system. HRT is currently expanding its efforts to transport the Hampton Roads community by building a light rail system connecting the seven cities. The Tide is expected to be completed in 2010 in Norfolk, and then it will expand to the other cities in the Hampton Roads region. In the future, the young people of Hampton could have the opportunity to become involved in the process of establishing this new transit system.

Implementation Strategies:

- *Based on previous research, implement a transportation system that transports young people to Youth Friendly Businesses and the Teen Center.*

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- *Secure funding for a transit system to transport young people to Youth Friendly Businesses and the Teen Center.*
- *Partner with HRT to establish and implement a plan for maximizing the youth ridership of the light rail system.*

Objective Y6.5: Increase Awareness Among Young People to Reduce Car Accidents Among Youth.

Another concern dealing with the issue of transportation is the safety factor of young people when they or their peers get behind the wheel of an automobile. According to national statistics, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death in young people age 15-20. In 2002, 8,278 drivers in the 15-20 year old age bracket were involved in fatal accidents, which was a 12 percent increase from 1992, only ten years earlier. According to the Department of Motor Vehicles in 2007, there were 3,654 licensed teen drivers (ages 15-18) in the city of Hampton, making up 4% of all drivers in Hampton. However, 24% of all crashes in Hampton involved teen drivers in 2007.

Tenth graders in the state of Virginia are required to take and pass a full nine week course of Drivers Education, to take and pass a ‘Behind the Wheel’ driving course, and to complete 40 hours of behind the wheel driving with a parent or guardian before being issued their drivers license. Not only do young people read about safety, but they hear it from a driving instructor as well as their parents. One would think that in these three sources of driving instruction, the issue of safety would be taken care of; however, the statistics around car accidents involving youth tell us otherwise. Perhaps another method should be implemented in order to be successful in communicating to young people about driver safety.

There are few or no campaigns or rallies organized in the schools where nearly 100% of the teenage driving population of Hampton can be found, to help inform and educate young people about the risks involved in driving. It can also be pointed out that the only formal education young people ever get about driving is in that nine weeks of driving instruction in the schools. While some and hopefully many parents will take the initiative to instruct their children in proper driving skills, it is questionable why there is so little time given to something so important.

Implementation Strategies:

- *Research new successful methods of communicating driver safety to young people.*
- *Regularly fund a driver safety workshop and campaign.*

Conclusion:

Young people often keep very busy schedules that require them to move frequently from place to place. Public transportation, mainly the bus system, is available to them but the majority utilizes other methods. Young people are affected by the stereotypes of buses and often forego riding buses completely based on a simple misconception of bus safety, whether it is safety while on the bus or waiting at the bus stop.

Four percent of Hampton's population is made up of high school individuals who can drive. Young people are often ill-informed of the real dangers of driving, and when they are informed in school, they are sometimes less than eager to listen given the environment in which it is taught. New methods of promoting teen driver safety are necessary in order to be more successful, because the statistics around car accidents involving young people demonstrate the current methods' failure.

Goal 7: Bring Them Back

In 1990, the Coalition for Youth, at the request of the City Council, embarked on a vision-oriented, long-range planning process to develop recommendations that would make Hampton a better place for youth and their families. Their question—“Are we doing all that we can to ensure that our youth today can be productive members of our workforce and community of tomorrow?”—began the search for solutions to creating a stronger workforce through meeting the needs of youth and families in the city. One of the strategies to accomplish this goal was to maximize the number of highly developed youth who choose to live or work in Hampton once they become adults.

The City of Hampton invests a great amount of time and money in its young people, helping them grow into successful young leaders. However, it often occurs that young people do not return that investment, moving to other localities to begin their lives as young adults. While some of this transition is understandable and unavoidable, some of this loss is due to Hampton’s low capability to “Bring Them Back.”

Objectives Y7.1 and 7.2: Increase Youth Awareness of the Appeal of Hampton as a Place to Live/Increase Adult Awareness and Support for Initiatives that Entice Young People (high school through college) to Choose Hampton as a Place to Live.

In a survey conducted in 2007, about 75% of young people revealed that they were not at all likely or slightly likely to live in Hampton as adults. This attitude is accredited greatly to the overriding appeal of other regions, however one could also consider that these results demonstrate that young people are not aware of the attractiveness of living in Hampton. The first step to increasing youth awareness of Hampton’s attractiveness as a place to live is to uncover what aspects of Hampton young people find attractive and to market them. According to Richard Florida’s Rise of the Creative Class—an insight to the changing values and lifestyles that is transforming the force behind the 21st century economy, technology, and social structure—the characteristics that young people look for in a community include many employment opportunities, an appealing lifestyle, social interaction, diversity, innovativeness, and the quality of place. Florida quantifies a region’s capability to attract the creative class—according to the characteristics identified—with a device known as the Creativity Index. Among the 49 large regions (regions containing over one million people) evaluated according to the Creativity Index, the Hampton Roads region was ranked number 48; and out of the 268 regions of all sizes, Hampton Roads was ranked 132.

While it is important to increase young people’s awareness of the appeal of returning or remaining in Hampton, it is also important to gain the support of adults in order to expand the efforts of the City. When young people do not return or remain in Hampton, the City loses the money it had invested in those young people to other

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communities. On the other hand, when young people return or remain in Hampton, they can return the investment that was put into them.

Implementation Strategies:

- *Develop a marketing plan to influence young people to return or remain in Hampton as young adults.*
- *Establish a committee of young people (high school through college) and young adults to develop strategies for recruiting and retaining young people in the city of Hampton.*

Objective Y7.3: Encourage/Support the Creation and Enhancement of Job Opportunities Which Entice Teens and Young Adults to Choose Hampton as a Place to Live.

All young people who are either recent graduates of high school, college, or graduate school have one thing in common: they have to find a job. In recent studies made by Michigan State University, finding the right job is very important to young people. After surveying over 10,000 young people, several factors that influence the importance of finding the right job became clear: 1) many young people feel that they are not bound to an organization, especially if the organization is not offering them what they want/need; 2) there is a general perception among young adults that they are superior to others, leading to their lack of compromise with unsatisfactory jobs; and 3) there is a lack of concrete career goals or plans among young adults, thus causing young people to constantly search for different experiences.

Since Hampton is focusing on bringing back and retaining previous young residents, there are several overall strategies that could help young people in their quest for the right job. The first and second factors require that Hampton enhance its existing job opportunities. Improvements to existing jobs or careers should focus on showing young adults that their employers are conscious of their wants and needs. While it is not always possible to satisfy all people, employers can demonstrate a better understanding of its young adult employees. The third factor is largely attributable to a lack of experience with employment, and therefore there is very little that a community can do to address it. However, presenting to young people a variety of appealing job opportunities would allow young people to have options. So, should a young person wish to search for a new experience in their given expertise, Hampton could offer them other options. Expanding Hampton's job opportunities is necessary to diversify the options available to young people, and such expansions should occur according to demand.

Implementation Strategies:

- *Create a job opportunities catalogue that identifies, quantifies, and evaluates the local job market in Hampton and the Hampton Roads region according to its youth friendliness and its retention/recruitment of young adults.*

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- *Partner with businesses and organizations in Hampton and the Hampton Roads region that are willing to participate in an ongoing local recruitment of young adults.*
- *Create and implement a marketing plan that will showcase the job opportunities that Hampton and the Hampton Roads region offers to young adults.*
- *Research popular employment for young adults both nationally and regionally.*

Objective Y7.4: Encourage and Support the Creation of Places and Activities Which Entice Teens and Young Adults to Choose Hampton as a Place to Live.

The places and activities that a community offers is another important aspect of a community that influences a young person when choosing a place to live. As consumers, young people are able to choose those places and activities in which they wish to partake. However, if there are no appealing activities or places from which they can choose, then the chances of a young person staying in Hampton, much less returning to Hampton, are low. Just as young people do not hesitate to leave a job because it does not offer them what they want, young people do not hesitate to leave a community because it does not offer them stimulating or appealing activities and places. In order to attract or retain young people to the region, Hampton must adjust its quality of place to the wants and needs of young people.

First and foremost, the city should shape its policies around those communities that are successful in recruiting and retaining young people. Some of the top ranking regions in achieving the task of “bringing them back” include San Francisco, Austin, San Diego, and Boston. A major factor that affects these communities’ capability to accomplish this task is the quality of place, which is distributed among three components: 1) the setting of the community, including its natural and built environment; 2) a diverse community of people in which anyone can live their given lifestyle; and 3) the concentration of exciting and stimulating culture of activities.

Another approach to adjusting Hampton’s quality of life is further involving young people in the decisions that identify the new places and activities that Hampton recruits. This involvement will help young people have more of an investment in Hampton, and, as a result, they will be more likely to return to Hampton as young adults.

Implementation Strategy:

- *Research places that have been highly attractive to young adults and why those places have been so attractive.*
- *Evaluate the appeal of the places/activities of Hampton’s neighboring communities.*
- *Conduct meetings between youth and the City’s department of Economic Development concerning how to maintain and enhance a community that appeals to young adults.*
- *Involve young people further in land use planning and policy.*

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Conclusion:

The City invests a great deal of money in its young people; however, after young people graduate from high school, very few return to Hampton—let alone stay in Hampton. Therefore, it is important to develop recruitment and retention strategies to “Bring Them Back.” However, little research exists concerning the number of young people who stay in—or return to—Hampton or why, so very little can be done to help shape the City’s efforts in developing such strategies. Furthermore, it is necessary to gain the ongoing support of adult city leaders and individuals in order to further any initiatives that fulfill the goal of bringing our community’s young people back.

There are two major components of a community that are major influences to young people when choosing a place to live. First, after completing their education, all young people need jobs, and having a variety of appealing options is important to young people. Second, the places and activities that a community offers to its young people should be appealing, stimulating, and diverse.

Goal Y-08: Going Green

A great deal of how a community looks dictates a person's perception of it. In focus groups conducted in 2008, this issue came to the surface in the form of litter. Earlier in 2008, the Hampton Youth Commission endorsed the Green Initiative for the City of Hampton, agreeing to support it. Thus, young people join the city's efforts in going green.

Objective Y8.1: Increase Environmental Awareness Among Young People.

The environment is an integral piece of a healthy community that many people take for granted. With a better environment, people tend to have a better perception of their community. The first step in creating a better environment is being more aware of one's environment and one's impact upon it.

According to focus groups conducted in 2008, the environment was identified as a major issue. One of the chief concerns identified was that young people have no ownership of the environment in which they live, and therefore they are not motivated to treat their environment well. Along with the influence of existing trash in places which teens frequent, this attitude creates a bad perception of Hampton as a place to live. This problem can be addressed by increasing the general awareness among youth about the effects they have on their environment.

Increasing environmental awareness among young people has many benefits. By understanding their impact on the environment, young people can make better decisions regarding their everyday lifestyles. Furthermore, an increased awareness could lead to an increased youth dedication to improving the environment in which they live beyond personal conduct. Thus, more young people could join the efforts to better the environment.

Implementation Strategies:

- *Develop and implement a marketing strategy that encourages environmentally friendly practices among young people, such as:*
 - *Recycling*
 - *Re-using plastic bottles*
- *Partner with Clean City Commission to encourage environmentally friendly practices among young people.*

Objective Y 8.2: Increase Youth Engagement and Support in the Maintenance and Improvement of Our Community's Natural Resources.

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Hampton is a community rich with natural resources, including Buckroe Beach, Grandview Beach, Sandy Bottom Nature Park, Gosnold's Hope Park, and Bluebird Gap Farm. Often times, these areas are not maintained as clean environments, causing many young people to have a bad perception of them. However, there are many different programs under which young people have the ability to participate in bettering these natural resources including Adopt a Spot, and Clean the Bay Day

Becoming more involved in the maintenance and improvement of our community's natural resources is an obvious result of going green. It presents the most tangible products for all, resulting in an overall cleaner environment. Furthermore, it allows all of Hampton's citizens to enjoy Hampton's natural resources more. In focus groups conducted by the Youth Planners in 2008, young people were concerned with the effects of existing litter on the perception of Hampton as a place to live. The elimination of that litter would allow young people to have a better perception of the community in which they live, and young people would be more likely to utilize Hampton's many natural resources.

Implementation Strategies:

- *Partner with the Clean City Commission to increase youth participation in the maintenance and improvement of Hampton's natural resources.*
- *Encourage youth participation in Clean the Bay Day, Adopt a Spot, and other established programs.*

Objective Y8.3: Increase Youth and Adult Support for the Incorporation of Green Practices in Public Spaces Dedicated to Youth.

One of the components of Hampton's Green Initiative includes the incorporation of green designs and practices in Hampton's buildings. The City invested \$2.8 million in order to bring to the community a space dedicated entirely to youth—the Teen Center. Not only could the Teen Center and other youth spaces be a part of a city wide effort to convert to green designs and practices, but it is also possible that the Teen Center could actually benefit monetarily. Research shows that by incorporating a green design or green practices in a building, there is a significant reduction in water and energy consumption, thus potentially reducing costs of living and ultimately the building's impact on the environment.

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green building Rating System is a nationally accepted certification program that sets the standards for green buildings in terms of design, construction, and operation. LEED certified buildings qualify by lowering operating costs, reducing wastes that are sent to landfills, conserving energy and water, creating a healthier and safer space for occupants, reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions, and demonstrating a commitment to environmental stewardship and social responsibility. The Teen Center and other youth friendly businesses could benefit from being LEED certified.

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Implementation Strategies:

- *Obtain LEED certification in the Teen Center and other youth spaces.*
- *Partner with Hampton City Schools to encourage green practices in the schools.*

Conclusion:

Going Green is part of a larger community effort that will better the city of Hampton in terms of its impact on the environment. Educating young people about their environmental impact is important because it helps encourage environmentally friendly practices and an increased ownership in bettering their environment. It is also imperative that young people become more involved in the maintenance and improvement of Hampton's natural resources because it helps improve the overall perception of such natural resources as places to go. Another important step in going green is the incorporation of green practices in public spaces that are dedicated to youth, especially the Teen Center.

Section V

Relationship to Other Strategic Issues

While this Youth Component holds its own section within the Hampton Community Plan, the youth agenda is not confined to these few pages. On the contrary, many of the youth issues mentioned here also permeate other identified strategic City issues. The connection between the Youth Component and the rest of the Community Plan helps to bind the agenda of young people and the agenda of the community together as a whole, creating a better solution for all parties involved. Specific goals within several of the critical issues can be directly related to impacting youth, from Healthy Business Climate to Strong Schools.

Customer Delight

Goal 4: Services are User Friendly and Readily Available to All Potential Customers.

CONNECTS TO

Objective Y1.3: Improve Business and Other Community Organizations' Relationships With the Youth.

This goal is worded that “all potential customers” receive equal treatment and service at local businesses. Young people are an invaluable asset to business owners for their tendency to shop or eat somewhere after every paycheck (i.e. clothing stores, local restaurants). Businesses must treat their young customers with the same respect and accessibility with which they treat others.

In the past, there was a Community Plan Subcommittee of the Hampton Youth Commission that worked to evaluate local businesses for their “youth-friendliness.” This evaluation was based on location, overall service, affordability for youth, ambience, etc. The criteria was based on the Youth-Friendly Guidebook, an outline of how a business in Hampton can cater successfully to young people. The evaluation and publication of all of Hampton’s businesses gave young people a road map for where to go and where not to go to spend money, and gave businesses a reason to make sure they are fulfilling their pledge to render user friendly services to all potential customers.

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Healthy Business Climate

Goal 1: Jobs - Hampton will be the Community of Choice for High Wage Jobs in Targeted Industry Segments.

CONNECTS TO

Goal Y-04: Every Young Person is Prepared for a Career.

If Hampton's goal is to prepare young people for a successful career in the working world, it is only logical and practical that Hampton simultaneously sustain a working community that holds lucrative jobs that would hopefully bring back some of the young people who were initially trained here. This situation would be advantageous for industries because through connections with the educational system, they would know exactly what young people are capable of when they enter the workforce, and it would benefit young people, should they return, because they are already familiar with the region and the dynamics of the businesses and communities here.

These two goals are intertwined in that by training a motivated and empowered workforce in Hampton, a powerful group of young adults is created that can return and work to make Hampton and the region a better place to live.

Goal 2: Retail – Hampton will be a Unique Regional Retail and Entertainment Destination and the First Retail Choice for Hampton Residents.

CONNECTS TO

Objective Y5.3: Encourage and Support the Creation of Places and Activities Which Entice Teens and Young Adults to Choose Hampton as a Place to Live.

Retail in Hampton could potentially benefit greatly from the young people in both the City and in the region, but Hampton is not the only locality in the Hampton Roads region with retail and entertainment activities. Concert venues in Norfolk, the boardwalk in Virginia Beach, and Patrick Henry Mall in Newport News, all pose as competition to Hampton for the attention of youth.

The Youth Component identifies that in order to continue to bring young people and young adults into the City there must be something to draw them in, such as a unique and worthwhile retail/entertainment district.

While some businesses may try to out-do the ventures of neighboring cities in order to gain as much customer base as possible, the Community Plan suggests that Hampton become a "unique destination," focusing more on creativity and values with which young people could identify.

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Healthy Growth and Development of Children and Youth

Goal 5: Healthy Teens.

CONNECTS TO

The entire Youth Component

One of the most obvious connections to the spirit of the Youth Component can be found in the fifth goal of the Healthy Growth and Development of Children and Youth strategic issue. The vision of this strategic issue states that “Hampton’s children and youth will thrive and succeed in a caring community.” Much of the Youth Component deals with young people growing up in a caring, supportive, and productive community.

This strategic issue very simply outlines the goals that adults as community leaders are willing to take on to insure that the same goals identified in the Youth Component are being implemented by the community.

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Healthy Neighborhoods

Goal 1: Every Hampton Neighborhood will be Economically Sustainable.

and

Goal 2: Every Hampton Neighborhood will be Highly Functional.

CONNECTS TO

Goal Y-01: Caring Relationships Within The Community.

The neighborhood is a vital part in the development of all young peoples' lives. As the place where youth spend most of their time before entering secondary school, the Community Plan outlines the viability and sustainability of Hampton's neighborhoods as a strategic issue that needs to be addressed.

The Youth Component specifies that Caring Relationships within the Community are necessary to nurture healthy and productive young adults. Caring relationships in the neighborhoods are no exception. A neighborhood that cannot sustain itself economically has little use to young people and cannot possibly offer the full spectrum of caring relationships when compared to a thriving and successful neighborhood. The Youth Component and the Community Plan both agree that neighborhoods are the incubators of strong citizens and cannot be ignored.

Goal 3: Hampton Neighborhoods will Provide Diverse Choices.

CONNECTS TO

Objective Y5.2: Enhance the Number and Breadth of Age Appropriate Activities in Every Neighborhood.

The Healthy Neighborhoods strategic issue also addresses a specific point that is similarly mentioned in the Youth Component. The necessity for a wide array of opportunities for young people in neighborhoods is outlined in both documents, mainly because of the diversity of interests that come with the different ages of youth. What interests a five year old will not interest a seventeen year old, but both are classified as youth.

The Community Plan and Youth Component both say that neighborhoods must offer age-appropriate activities at all levels in order to appeal to the same young people in the neighborhood as they grow older, and not have them lose interest once they become a teenager.

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Healthy Diverse Community

Goal 3: Employers, Service Providers and Community Leaders are Culturally Sensitive, Fair and Just in Education and Neighborhood, Community, and City Services, including Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice.

CONNECTS TO

Objective Y1.2: Increase Positive Youth-Adult Relationships.

The state of youth and adult relationships in the City can often be used to indicate how well initiatives stemming from Youth Component issues are succeeding. While the Healthy Diverse Community strategic issue does not mention any specific target groups in this goal, young people should be, and are, receivers of the “culturally sensitive, fair and just” treatment. The Youth Component seeks to promote and increase positive youth-adult relationships within Hampton, and the Community Plan has outlined that all service providers in the City should have these positive relationships with citizens, so the connection between the documents can be made in this way.

Goal 5: All Areas of the City are Safe and Welcoming to all People.

CONNECTS TO

Objective Y1.4: Improve Perception of Safety in Neighborhoods and Other Public Places in Which Young People Tend to Meet and Recreate.

Safety is a fundamental perception when it comes to choosing a place to live, work, or recreate, for adults and for young people. It is also a fundamental part of growing up for young people, whether or not their neighborhood and community is a safe place. The Community Plan outlines the desire to see the city perceived as a safe and nurturing place, and young people have the similar desire to feel safe in the places where they recreate and in which they grow. The city’s vision and the youth vision are united in the belief that safety will help to create a flourishing city with young people who are successful and proud to be from Hampton.

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Strong Schools

While the Youth Component does not deal directly with school issues, there are elements of the component that contribute to both the academic world and the environment of Hampton City Schools. Each of the eight goals of the Youth Component can provide guidance for the youth friendliness of the school system in Hampton. Because youth in Hampton spend a lot of time in school, it is important that their learning environment be exceptional.

Goals one and two play an important role in the everyday relationships youth have with people they come in contact with everyday. It is essential that youth develop caring relationships within the walls of their schools with friends, teachers, and counselors. One of the many outlets Hampton City Schools uses to build caring relationships is the Principal's Advisory Committee that each middle high school has. These also promote goal two, *Youth Share Leadership*. When youth are given an opportunity to play a role in the decisions that impact them, it allows them to develop their leadership skills which can be used throughout their lives. It is for this reason that there is a student liaison to the Hampton City School Board. This keeps students informed on what the school board is doing and keeps the school board informed on what direction the youth desire to go in.

Goals three and four of the Youth Component also play a key part in the academic lives of youth in Hampton. Students are given the opportunity to take courses in essential life skills and career preparation. In the course Education for Employment, youth are given opportunities to sharpen their career skills such as resume writing, interview techniques, and office skills. Essential life skills can be learned through both the Life Skills course and Independent Living course. Both courses stress the importance of learning how to succeed at life both before they leave home and after.

Having places to go and things to do is important to young people in Hampton. Equally as important is the transportation needed to get to those places. Enter goals five and six of the Youth Component. They serve to make sure that outside of school there are activities that will continually impact the young people in the community in a safe and positive way. These topics relate to school because, by working with the high schools, we are able to transport students after school to the Hampton Teen Center. The schools also play an integral part in publicizing youth events through tools such as the Youth Booth, which will be in 3 of the 4 high schools by fall 2009. The Youth Booth is a "one-stop-information-station" that serves to make the youth population aware of internship, mentorship, job, and volunteer opportunities as well as youth events.

Goals seven and eight have a lot to do with the environment in Hampton, thus it too affects the school lives of young people in Hampton. Goal seven, *Bring Them Back*, focuses on how we can prevent brain drain in Hampton. If youth enjoy growing up in Hampton and see the value of the school system, ideally they will want to return and raise their families here also. In order for this to happen, though, there needs to be value in the school system. The final goal of the Youth Component, *Go Green*, encourages the importance of healthy habits for our environment. Taking care of the school environments in Hampton allows students to take ownership in their schools.

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Implementing recycling programs and other healthy living practices increases the value of the schools in Hampton, which, as stated before, can possibly lead to the reduction of brain drain in our community.

By combining the youth driven guidance of the eight goals of the Youth Component, we can move toward a better and brighter future for Hampton City Schools. Strong schools in Hampton exhibits the youth friendliness our city so proudly boasts.

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VI. What's Next?

The City of Hampton is on a journey, and these eight goals are only possible destinations for the future of young people in our community.

In the mid-nineties, young people completed the first document that truly outlined the vision and goals of young people in Hampton. This initial Youth Component of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan brought together the work of multiple Youth Planners through surveys, research, collected data, and analysis. While the first Youth Component was a breakthrough concept, it was limited to four expansive issues. Now, the new Youth Component of the Community Plan is more specific, outlining ways in which we can measure the progress of our goals, and giving young people all over Hampton a vision statement:

“Better Youth, Better Hampton, Better Future”

The new Youth Component was written in the context of a city-wide initiative to reform the planning process, and it was truly a youth/adult relationship. One of the main differences, however, is that much of the writing of the Youth Component of the Community Plan was based on research and surveys gleaned from the earlier Component and Youth Planner files, and it was also based upon over 10 years of working experience.

However, both Components have brought about much change within the City regarding youth engagement. The Hampton Youth Commission, the body of young people that has been referred to numerous times in the previous sections, is spearheading the effort to completely engage young people in the community. Given a total of \$40,000 a year by City Council, the Youth Commission is a source for grants to local organizations dedicated to serving and involving young people in innovative and healthy ways. Using the 40 Developmental Assets and the Youth Component of the Community Plan as their guide, the Appropriations Committee of the HYC oversees the distribution of this grant money and also checks on the progress of the recipients of these grants.

In order to further the goals of youth engagement in Hampton's community, it is up to groups like the Hampton Youth Commission and the City's Youth Planners to promote and encourage youth engagement among young people and adults alike. New groups have now become prominent, such as Uth Act, an organization promoting youth activism, and various student-led advisory groups within the school system.

It is especially important to send the message of youth engagement to key stakeholders in the community. While young people's voices are powerful when united, they can only serve to influence those elected officials who engage them as they make the decisions. However, there are some promising highlights:

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- Recently, the young people of Hampton were allowed to have a private session with City Council candidates at the 2008 Commission sponsored Candidate's Youth Forum.
- Hampton was one of 6 winners of the 2005 Innovations in American Government Award for its unique approach to youth engagement.
- Hampton is one of 43 communities in America to be a *100 Best Communities for Young People* winner three times in a row, most recently in 2008.
- Most of all, the Hampton City Council has allocated the use of the Sentara Health and Fitness Center (after its purchase by the City) to the young people for their very own Teen Center.

The goals set within this document are meant to act as a guideline for the path of the young people in Hampton, and to serve as an informative guide for those seeking to learn about and implement youth engagement in Hampton. Youth engagement in Hampton is an ongoing process. It is likely that youth engagement may never fully be complete because as long as young people continue to grow in our community, new challenges and opportunities will continue to arise.

Strategies

Objective	Strategy	Page Reference
Y1.1	Create programs through partnerships and grants that work to build upon the assets currently held by Hampton youth.	18
Y1.2	Evaluate all businesses and organizations in the city of Hampton according to the standards set in the Youth Friendly Guidebook.	20
	Publicize the list of Youth Friendly businesses and organizations in the media by the end of each calendar year, and encourage patronization of these businesses.	21
	Create opportunities for youth and police to engage in positive interaction that breaks down existing stereotypes between the groups.	21
	Increase opportunities for different generations of young people to contact both youth and adult city leaders, and increase understanding of the issues important to youth.	21
Y1.3	Increase youth involvement in the efforts of the community to improve safety, and reduce gang activity. Ex. Gang Task Forces.	22

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	Encourage young people's involvement as decision makers in enforcing safe and healthy behavior, discouraging them from becoming (further) involved in criminal activities.	22
	Provide incentives to Hampton businesses for hiring young people.	22
Y2.1	Create a youth-friendly process for including youth-related items in the Capital Improvement Plan and Budget.	25
	Provide Youth opportunities to gain an understanding of how to utilize the current civic engagement opportunities to improve their neighborhoods, schools, and community.	25
Y2.2	Fund an organization or community group that will publicize frequent notices of opportunities for youth by arranging a system of communication with media resources (such as television, newspapers, websites, etc.).	26
	Increase the number of monthly visitors to www.areyouinthegame.com by 25% through advertising and partnerships.	26
	Institute a location in each of the four public high schools, as well as other areas with a high concentration of youth, that provides young people with a hub of information regarding involvement in their community.	27
Y2.3	Involve the youth leadership groups in Hampton in a coalition, through which they can network and offer support to each other's initiatives.	28
	Create a partnership between youth leadership groups in different localities through which regional youth issues can be addressed.	28
Y3.1	Develop <i>a mandatory financial skills unit to be included in school curriculum.</i>	30
	Fund a series of college bound workshops that will provide instruction and training on a variety of skills (including test taking, filling out applications, etc.).	30
	Hold a Youth Vote for each local, state, and federal election with opportunities for youth to learn while expressing their voice in the community.	30
Y3.2	Create or fund an ongoing program that promotes the learning of life skills and also the active use of them.	31
	Create a program that pairs young people with mentors that can equip them with skills they will need when they are on their own.	31

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Y4.1	<i>Partner with Hampton City Schools as well as youth friendly businesses and organizations to research and develop mentorship and internship programs.</i>	34
	<i>Promote and increase partnership and mentorship opportunities in the community.</i>	34
Y4.2 & Y4.3	Create and market a youth job opportunities website or a link/area on a youth website with those job opportunities listed.	35
	Have a City department such as Human Resources hold workshops on how to build skills in the workplace (similar to the Lunch and Learn seminars they hold for adults.)	35
	Create or enhance a youth employment program based in departments of the City of Hampton.	35
	Create a support network of youth that work for the City of Hampton. Hold social outings and meetings where young City employees can connect and network.	35
Y5.1/5.2	Establish programs and services for the Teen Center.	37
	Implement a marketing strategy for the Teen Center.	37
	Facilitate/plan fundraising events for the Teen Center.	37
	Conduct meetings between youth and the City department of Economic Development concerning how to attract and retain Youth Friendly Businesses to Hampton.	37
	Partner with Youth Friendly Businesses to market the importance and benefits of being youth friendly.	37
Y5.3	Establish a youth program geared toward high school students in each of Hampton's community centers.	38
	Enhance the youth programs offered to middle school students in each of the community centers.	38
	Establish a youth program geared toward middle school students in each of Hampton's community centers.	38
	Enhance the youth programs offered to middle school students in each of the community centers.	38
Y5.4	Research, promote, and market Hampton's youth spending power to Hampton's businesses.	39
Y6.1	Partner with an existing transportation system to establish and implement a plan that will improve its accessibility to young people.	41
Y6.2	Partner with HRT to design a new user friendly bus route map geared towards youth.	41
	Partner with HRT to create a user friendly online bus	41

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	directory.	
Y6.3	Research successful incentives and advertisements that influence teens to use alternate forms of transportation.	42
	Partner with HRT to launch an effective youth friendly marketing plan.	42
Y6.4	Based on previous research, implement a transportation system that transports young people to Youth Friendly Businesses and the Teen Center.	42
	Secure funding for a transit system to transport young people to Youth Friendly Businesses and the Teen Center.	42
	Partner with HRT to establish and implement a plan for maximizing the youth ridership of the light rail system.	43
Y6.5	Research new successful methods of communicating driver safety to young people.	43
	Regularly fund a driver safety workshop and campaign.	43
Y7.1	Develop a marketing plan to influence young people to return or remain in Hampton as young adults.	46
Y7.2	Establish a committee of young people (high school through college) and young adults to develop strategies for recruiting and retaining young people in the city of Hampton.	46
Y7.3	Create a job opportunities catalogue that identifies, quantifies, and evaluates the local job market in Hampton and the Hampton Roads region according to its youth friendliness and its retention/recruitment of young adults.	46
	Partner with businesses and organizations in Hampton and the Hampton Roads region that are willing to participate in an ongoing local recruitment of young adults.	47
	Create and implement a marketing plan that will showcase the job opportunities that Hampton and the Hampton Roads region offers to young adults.	47
	Research popular employment for young adults both nationally and regionally.	47
Y7.4	Research places that have been highly attractive to young adults and why those places have been so attractive.	47
	Evaluate the appeal of the places/activities of Hampton's neighboring communities.	47

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	Conduct meetings between youth and the City's department of Economic Development concerning how to maintain and enhance a community that appeals to young adults.	47
	Involve young people further in land use planning and policy.	47
Y8.1	Develop and implement a marketing strategy that encourages environmentally friendly practices among young people, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling • Re-using plastic bottles 	49
	Partner with Clean City Commission to encourage environmentally friendly practices among young people.	49
Y8.2	Partner with the Clean City Commission to increase youth participation in the maintenance and improvement of Hampton's natural resources.	50
	Encourage youth participation in Clean the Bay Day, Adopt a Spot, and other established programs.	50
Y8.3	Obtain LEED certification in the Teen Center and other youth spaces.	51
	Partner with Hampton City Schools to encourage green practices in the schools.	51

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VII. References

Florida, Richard. The Rise of the Creative Class. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002.

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