2024



MAYOR'S YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP

DESIGN COMMITTEE REPORT

PREPARED BY
COMMON CAUSE CONSULTANTS

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OVERVIEW OF THE DESIGN FOR THE PITTSBURGH MAYOR'S YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP



MAYOR ED GAINEY

The Mayor of Pittsburgh wants to involve its youth more directly in the official business of city government, and to get behind the idea that the successful implementation of youth-focused initiatives can create a more "livable" and thriving city. To that end, a diverse group of youth leaders were recruited from various programs: school leadership initiatives, community-based programs, and non-profit organizations focused on youth empowerment. These young people were sought out to participate in the Mayor's Youth Advisory Group Design Committee because of their expertise and insights, recognizing that relevant and sustainable changes to a community's health, safety, and wellbeing are all possible through the empowerment of its youth.

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Group design sessions provided an open and fair platform for these youth consultants to 1) share their perspectives on governance, 2) envision the commission's structure, and 3) highlight key priorities.

The youth envisioned an youth commission that would reflect their needs, particularly in areas like education reform, violence prevention, and community engagement. This report aims to summarize the results of those design sessions. All recommendations shared here were designed by youth.

Mission Statement

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Group aspires to encompass diverse representation and perspectives of youth. Relevant and sustainable change can be built to improve community health, safety, and well-being **by promoting youth agency and power.** Through the successful implementation of youth-focused initiatives and insights, a more "livable" city can emerge - a city that welcomes and prioritizes the needs of historically marginalized groups.

Mayor's Youth Advisory Group Principles

- Enabling people to have the power and agency over their livelihood and desired outcomes from their choices.
- Be motivated and use our dedication to make the advisory group flourish and thrive.
- Have "care and compassion" for our communities and "be passionate in aspects of work"
- Meet people where they are to create accessible paths for participation.

Mayor's Youth Advisory Group

Theory of Change

Impact

Positive City Change: Pittsburgh becomes a more youth-friendly city with policies and initiatives that reflect the needs of its young population.

Empowered Youth: A generation of youth equipped with leadership skills, civic knowledge, and the ability to bring about meaningful community change.

Results

Youth influencing city policies and advocating for issues relevant to their communities.

Tangible changes in local policy, particularly in education, youth violence prevention, and economic opportunities.

Lasting improvements in community safety, public spaces, and youth engagement in civic activities.

Outcomes

Increased understanding of city governance, public policy, and leadership roles.

Increased Civic Engagement: Greater youth participation in decision-making processes through direct interaction with city officials.

Enhanced skills in project management, public speaking, and teamwork.

Diverse Representation: Broader inclusion of youth voices from different Pittsburgh neighborhoods in city governance.

Activities

Youth Meetings: Regular biweekly Zoom meetings and monthly in-person sessions for research presentations and proposals.

Training Programs and Leadership Opportunities: Leadership, city government operations, communication, and civic engagement training for Youth Commissioners.

Subcommittees: Focused subcommittees on topics like Youth Violence, Education, Arts & Culture, and Economic Opportunity.

Outreach and Marketing: Social media campaigns and community outreach to engage more youth and promote the commission's initiatives.

Inputs

- Youth Participation: Engaged youth ages 13-19 that are city of Pittsburgh Residents
- Adult Support: Coordinators, city officials, and mentors providing guidance and oversight.
- Resources: Learning materials, guest speakers, city government training, and data on city planning.
- Existing Youth Commission Models: Best practices from cities like Boston, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Sacramento.
- Budget: Financial and administrative support from the city, including compensation for youth and event budgets.

Vision

A more livable city that welcomes and prioritizes the needs of underrepresented groups



RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The recruitment process for the Mayor's Youth Advisory Group design sessions took an approach that drew on as wide and diverse a population as possible. Initially, a specific invitation letter was crafted and distributed to a curated list of local organizations, teachers, and school principals. The list was compiled in collaboration with the City of Pittsburgh and included organizations that had previously attended the Youth Thriving Summit and were grant recipients of the Stop the Violence Program. Outreach also included social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Instagram, and a promotional video was created to engage potential participants visually.

To be inclusive and reach marginalized populations, there was a deliberate focus on connecting with organizations serving LGBTQIA+ youth and youth with disabilities. Information was also shared with contacts from youth participating in the Youth Enrichment Services (YES) symposium. To complement these broader outreach efforts, more direct and personal approaches were employed. Consultants and City Leadership were encouraged to share the recruitment information directly with prospects within their networks.

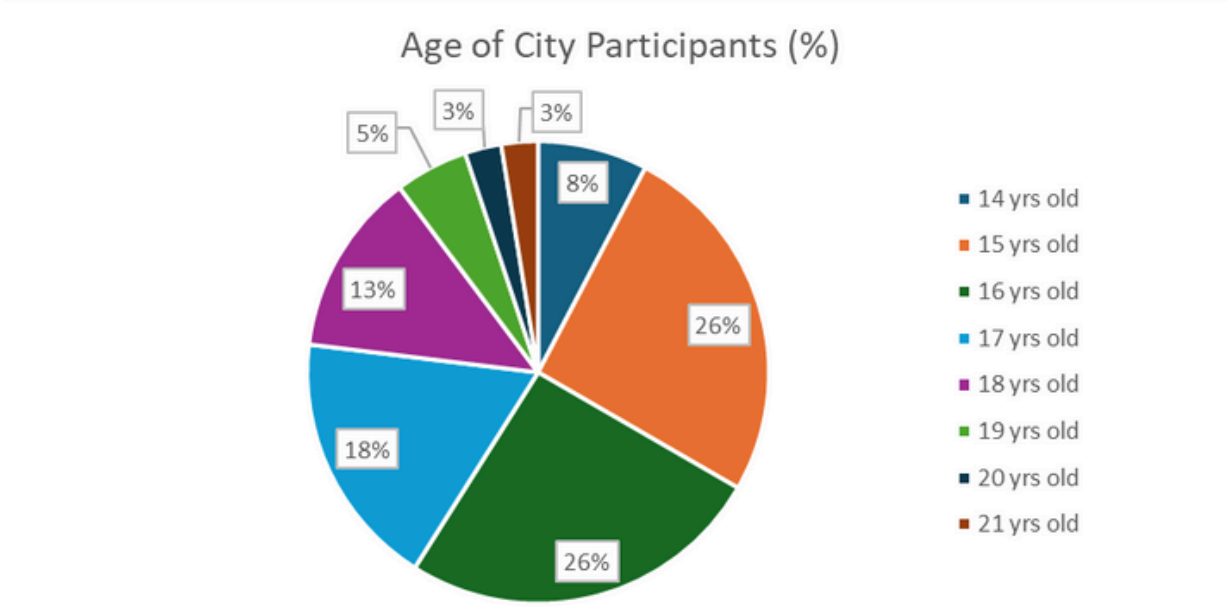
The recruitment process also included the creation and circulation of an interest form for potential participants. This allowed for an easy expression of interest and data collection. Additionally, phone calls were made to prospective participants and organizations, adding a more direct and personalized touch to the recruitment efforts. This comprehensive approach aimed to cast a wide net while also ensuring that key demographics and organizations who were aligned with the goals of the design sessions were targeted.

MAYOR'S YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP'S DEMOGRAPHIC MAKEUP

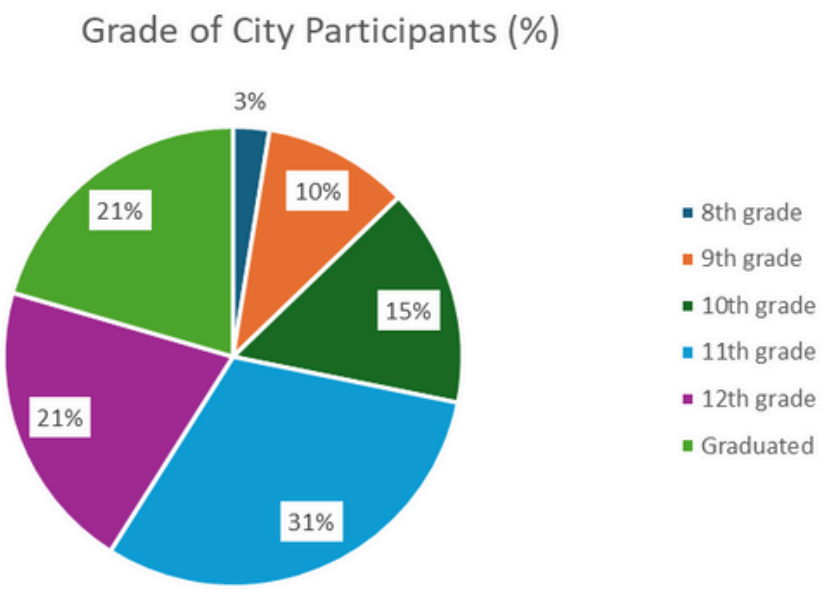
The Mayor's Youth Advisory Group design efforts hoped to reach participants who identified as one of the following:

+ a member of a single-parent household
+ an immigrant and/or refugee
+ a member of the LGBTQIA+ community
+ a member of the Stop the Violence Grantee program
+ reside in Extreme and High Needs Neighborhoods as identified by Allegheny County Neighborhood Needs maps.

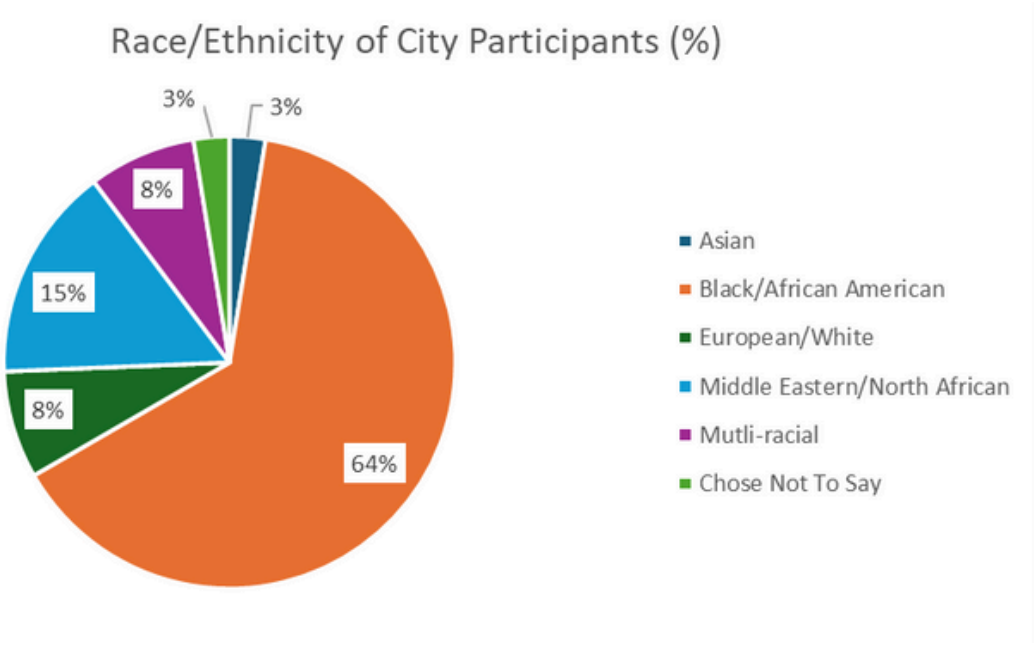
The hope was that with this demographic balance, participants would feel more empowered to speak to their lived experience as being underrepresented in the region. Below is a more detailed breakdown of the demographics of its participants:



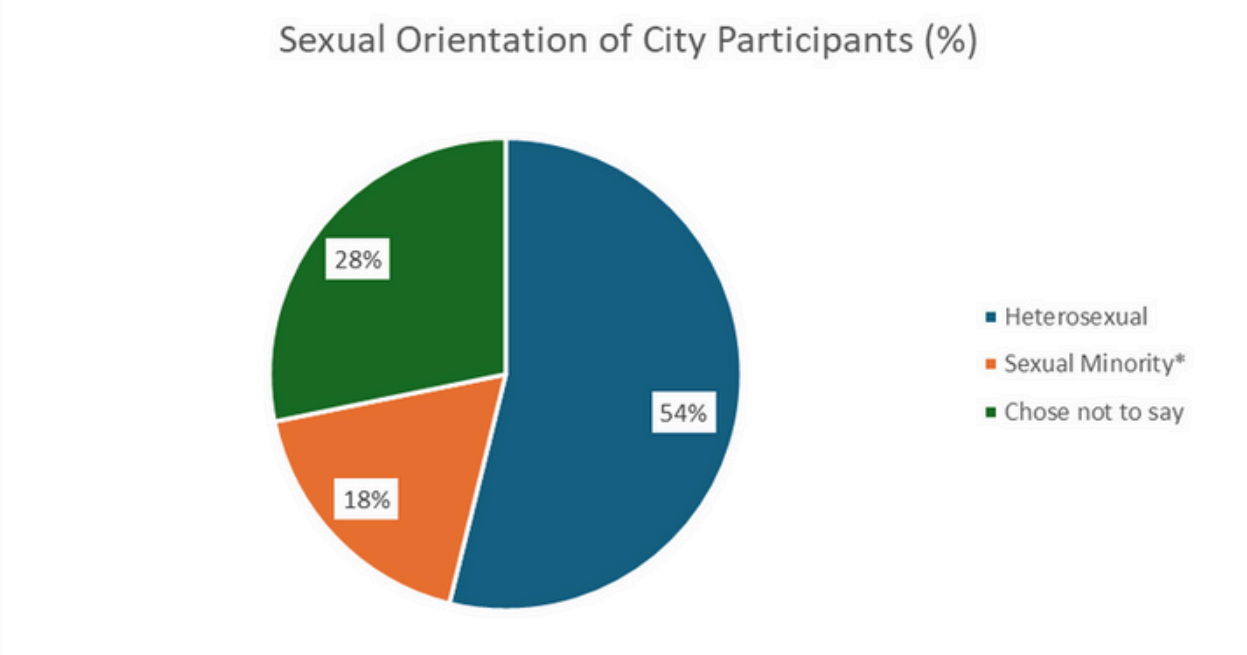
More than half of the participants (52%) were 15 or 16 years old.



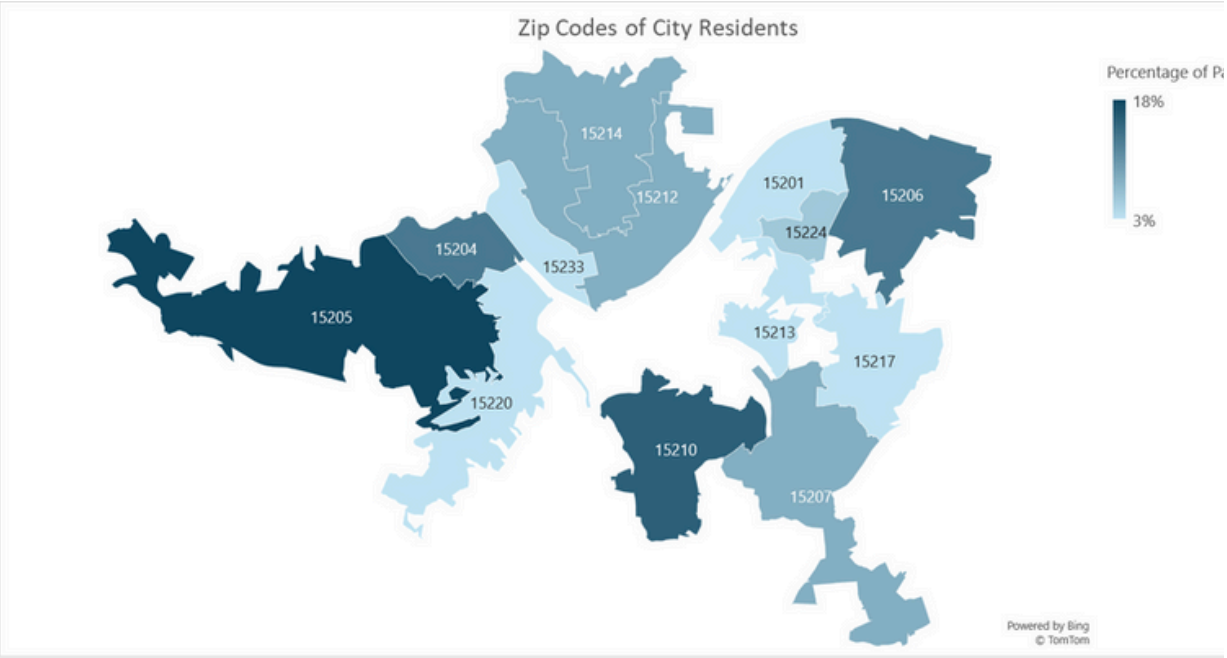
The vast majority of the participants (80%) were in high school, while the remaining members of the group were high school graduates.



64% of those who participated were Black/African American, with 28% of the group identifying as Asian, Middle Eastern or multi-racial. 8% of the participants identified as White/European.



Regarding sexual orientation, one third chose not to answer, half identified as heterosexual, and 18% identified as a sexual minority.



As this map shows, while most areas of the city were represented, the bulk of the participants came from the city's outer rings. For example, 20% of the participants came from Crafton, Ingram, Green Tree, Pennsbury Village, and Robinson Township. Another 20% hailed from the Pittsburgh or Sharpsburg area. The same proportion was from the Mount Oliver, Knoxville, Beltzhoover, Carrick, and Arlington areas of Pittsburgh, while a slighter lower percentage were from the Hazelwood, Greenfield, Glenwood, Glen Hazel, Hays, and Lincoln Place areas of Pittsburgh. Likewise, 20% of the group are from the northern neighborhoods of Summer Hill, Brighton Heights, and Manchester.

THE MECHANICS OF THE DESIGN SESSIONS



The design sessions for the Pittsburgh Mayor's Youth Advisory Group were structured to encourage participants to actively shape Pittsburgh Youth Commission's overall vision and structure. The sessions were essentially collaborative workshops where young leaders from across Pittsburgh could share their ideas, learn from each other, and develop meaningful proposals that aligned with the proposed commission goals, values, and operational framework.

DESIGN SESSIONS' KEY FEATURES

- **Collaborative Workshops:** The youth engaged in brainstorming and problem-solving exercises that encouraged them to think critically about the advisory's purpose and structure. These workshops were youth-led, ensuring that their voices shaped the outcome.
- **Guest Speakers and Facilitators:** Throughout the design process, adult facilitators, including city officials and experts in governance and youth engagement, were invited to provide guidance. They offered some helpful insights into how the city operates and how this advisory could integrate itself into the broader structure of Pittsburgh's government.

- **Breakout Discussions:** Youth participants engaged in smaller group discussions to explore specific topics, such as education reform, youth violence prevention, and economic development. This allowed for deeper dives into areas of interest and led to the generation of more focused proposals.
- **Drafting of the Advisory Group's Framework:** The sessions culminated in the youth 1) drafting a proposed mission statement, 2) defining leadership roles, and 3) identifying subcommittees. This framework was intended to reflect the values and priorities that emerged during the discussions, ensuring that the advisory group would serve as an authentic and effective voice for Pittsburgh's youth.

THE DESIGN SESSIONS: DISCUSSION TOPICS AND TAKEAWAYS

Throughout the various design sessions, youth participants engaged in active, meaningful dialogue about what the Mayor's Youth Advisory Group mission, structure, and priorities would be. The sessions occurred within a highly structured agenda, and included breakout sessions, idea generation, and problem-solving exercises. What follows is an overview of each session and a summary of its key highlights:

Design Session #1 — Kick off Session

For the launch session, the focus was for the members to get to know each other. To that end, the participants were asked to compose a short poem, in which each stanza was the vehicle to help elicit various details about their lives. For example, the youth were asked to name familiar sights, sounds, or smells of their respective neighborhoods, list out familiar foods and sayings, or recognize people who have positively influenced their lives.

Design Session #2 — Structure and Leadership

Participants recommended the creation of distinct subcommittees on issues such as education, youth peace, and economic opportunity. They proposed leadership roles within the commission, such as committee chairs and project leaders. They also saw each of their roles within the commission as advisors who would ultimately consult with city officials on budgets, policy-making, and city projects . Furthermore, the consensus among the youth was that all of the participants be required to attend all of the commission meetings. To that end, there was agreement that one's compensation should be tied to perfect attendance. Lastly, the students stressed the importance of working hand-in-hand with the city government to develop a comprehensive tracking system for the work that the commission undertakes, whether it's community canvassing, outreach/recruitment, or public events/hearings.

Design Session #3 – The Workings of City Government - Civics 101

As the title suggests, this design session shed some light on the fundamentals and raw mechanics of a municipality's operations. For example, they were able to drill down to the granular level on 1) how ordinances and codes are created, 2) the role its residents play in effecting change (e.g. referendums), 3) the relationship between the mayor, councilmembers, and other city administrators, and 4) how those official positions work together to make progress.

Design Session #4 — The Mayor's Youth Advisory Group in Philadelphia

This session started with a video presentation on what the Mayor's Youth Advisory Group looks like in Philadelphia. After the video, the participants were asked to share their thoughts, comments and questions. The young men and women pursued a whole host of issues; in particular, they wanted to know if any leadership roles were undertaken by the Philadelphia Mayor's Youth Advisory Group, and if so, what subsequent impact did those roles have on voting rights for Philadelphians.

Design Session #5 — What Pittsburgh Youth appreciated most from the models in other U.S. cities

The Boston Mayor's Youth Council stood out for its structured approach to youth leadership, offering young people meaningful roles in city governance. Boston's "Youth Lead the Change" initiative, where youth voted on how to allocate public funds for community projects, was particularly admired. The Pittsburgh youth saw this as an empowering model — a prime example of how young voices can directly influence decisions in their city.

In Philadelphia, the Mayor's Youth Advisory Group focused on advocating for legislation and building partnerships with other community organizations. Pittsburgh participants appreciated how the Philadelphia commission worked closely with lawmakers to push forward policies related to education and violence prevention—issues that closely resonate with Pittsburgh's youth.

The Seattle Mayor's Youth Advisory Group was noted for its strong advisory role, regularly consulting with the Mayor and City Council on youth issues. Pittsburgh youth admired how Seattle created tangible opportunities for youth to connect directly with policymakers through annual events and other engagement activities, making sure their voices were heard at the highest levels of government. The youth were impressed by the formalized channels for engaging with city officials, where those commissions had clear processes for regular reporting, policy critique, and collaboration with lawmakers.

In Sacramento, the focus on mental health initiatives and environmental sustainability made a lasting impression. The city's youth-led mental health events and environmental cleanup projects mirrored Pittsburgh's youth emphasis on community well-being and the importance of addressing both mental and environmental health.

Design Session #6 — Identifying Key Priorities and Focus Areas for the Mayor's Youth Advisory Group

Education is imperative: Many youth expressed concerns about equity in education and proposed that the commission advocate for better resources for schools, partnerships between schools and local colleges, and improved extracurricular opportunities.

Violence remains a concern: The participants identified violence as a significant issue affecting their communities. They suggested initiatives like peer mediation programs, restorative justice practices, and social development projects aimed at reducing youth violence. Moreover, the group felt that its work with peers, partners, and city staff should base the development of any advocacy project on the relevant needs of the community. One such example would be a campaign which highlighted the impacts on the community of youth violence and what community organizations could do to collectively combat these issues. It was noted that any efforts in those areas would be buttressed by Common Cause Consultants' curriculum and learning objectives.

The importance of using relevant outreach strategies to peers: The youth recognized the potential of social media as a means to engage their peers and promote the commission's work. They discussed strategies for using platforms like Instagram and TikTok to increase visibility and participation.

Youth Recommendations

Specific recommendations from the youth included member criteria, Mayor's Youth Advisory Group sub committees + committee descriptions, leadership roles, required trainings, and key words the youth choose to describe the Mayor's Youth Advisory Group. These are shared in the appendix.

THE DESIGN SESSION DELIVERABLES

The design sessions provided a welcoming and safe platform for the youth to collectively create a youth commission that would both represent them and help to make Pittsburgh a more equitable and inclusive city for young people. The design sessions were highly productive, resulting in a clear vision for how Pittsburgh's Youth Commission should operate.

Its key deliverables included the production of:

- **A draft mission statement focusing on youth empowerment, equity, and community well-being.**
- **A proposed infrastructure for the commission, including a detailed list of possible leadership roles and a wide range of subcommittees dedicated to specific issues such as education, public safety, and economic opportunity.**
- **An understanding of what their respective roles would be within the various committees. For example, a youth outreach team would assess representation and inclusion, and then implement strategies for further recruitment.**
- **A wish list for the commission's possibilities, with the youth aiming to do everything from being a part of the school budgeting process to playing a direct role in improving safety in their communities, e.g. using mediation.**
- **A set of guiding values emphasizing inclusion, transparency, and collaboration.**

WHAT YOUTH LEARNED FROM THE DESIGN SESSIONS

The design sessions were a genuine learning experience that opened their eyes to various city governance and leadership aspects.

Understanding City Governance: Many youth understood how the City of Pittsburgh is structured and grasped the roles of its city council members, the mayor, and other city departments. These details were highlighted during the discussions about Pittsburgh's city planning and budget processes.

Leadership Skills: The design sessions provided youth valuable opportunities to develop public speaking, teamwork, and collaboration skills. The sessions allowed all participants to collaborate, share ideas, and collectively draft valuable proposals.

Civic Engagement: Through these sessions, the youth gained real insight into how they could make a difference in their communities by advocating for issues that matter to them, such as education reform, violence prevention, and economic development.

Values The participants engaged in a group exercise to produce a list of the core values they believed should guide the Pittsburgh Mayor's Youth Advisory Group. Here are those results, the values that reflected their vision for a more inclusive and equitable city:

- **Youth Agency:** Youth leaders were clear that the advisory must empower young people to take an active role in shaping the future of Pittsburgh. They wanted their voices to be heard in the government and cared if their advisory had a measure of influence on policy-making.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** The youth envisioned an advisory that would prioritize the needs of historically marginalized groups, ensuring that all youth, regardless of background, would have equal access to any and all opportunities. They also stressed the importance of diversity in representation and programming.
- **Community Health and Safety:** The participants highlighted community well-being as a top priority, advocating for initiatives that promote mental health, prevent violence, and improve public safety in Pittsburgh's neighborhoods.
- **Collaboration:** A recurring theme was the need for the advisory to foster collaboration between the Mayor's Youth Advisory Group members and city officials. The youth wanted to be able to work together with the government to solve problems, with each group drawing on their own experiences and skills.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Youth leaders emphasized that the advisory should operate with transparency and accountability, lending credibility to the advisory and helping to ensure its decisions and initiatives are communicated clearly to the public.

KEY MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

1. What might the budget be for the advisory group?
2. What certifications might the participants of the advisory group earn?
3. Should there be focused connection time to learn from other cities' youth councils?
4. How might this work connect to the City's Comprehensive Planning Process?



EVALUATION AND IMPACT

To measure the effectiveness of the design sessions, youth participants completed a post-program evaluation survey. Among the 53 youth who participated in one or more sessions, 44 completed the survey (83% completion rate), providing valuable insights into the program's impact on their development and experience.

EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS

The evaluation assessed four key areas using validated measures: Civic Engagement, Future Orientation, Psychological Empowerment, and Self-Efficacy, along with overall satisfaction.

- Overall Satisfaction: 91% of participants reported being generally satisfied with their experience in the design sessions.
- Psychological Empowerment: An impressive 98% of youth demonstrated positive psychological empowerment and self-efficacy after participating in the program. For those who attended 4 or more sessions, this figure rose to 100%.
- Civic Engagement: 95% of participants showed high levels of civic engagement, with this percentage increasing to 97% among those with high program engagement.
- Future Orientation: 95% of youth expressed excitement about their future, rising to 100% among highly engaged participants.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

In open-ended questions, youth highlighted **several positive aspects** of their participation:

- Pride in teamwork and effective communication with peers
- Satisfaction with their involvement and the resulting deliverables
- Appreciation for the inclusion of diverse perspectives and collaborative approach

Challenges and suggestions identified by participants included:

- Scheduling conflicts for meeting times
- Technology and internet connectivity issues
- Greater youth involvement in planning the agenda
- Interest in holding in-person meetings
- Requests for additional opportunities such as guest speakers and collaboration with youth commission members from other cities

The evaluation results clearly demonstrate that the design sessions not only produced valuable deliverables for the Mayor's Youth Advisory Group structure, but also positively impacted the youth participants themselves, fostering their sense of empowerment, civic engagement, and optimism for the future.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATON

As we consider the future development of Pittsburgh's Youth Commission, several important strategic questions emerge from both the design sessions and evaluation results. The youth participants have successfully established a vision, structure, and priorities for the commission, but implementing and sustaining this vision will require thoughtful planning and consideration of various factors. The following questions are designed to guide city officials, community partners, and youth leaders as they work together to transform the design committee's recommendations into a lasting, impactful institution that authentically elevates youth voices in Pittsburgh's governance. Addressing these questions proactively will help ensure that Pittsburgh's Youth Commission not only launches successfully but continues to evolve and thrive as a vital component of the city's commitment to inclusive governance and youth empowerment.

- How can we develop a long-term sustainability plan that ensures the Youth Commission continues beyond its initial implementation and maintains institutional knowledge through member transitions?
- What comprehensive impact measurement framework would effectively track both the participants' development and the concrete policy changes resulting from youth recommendations?
- How might we address the technology barriers identified in participant feedback to ensure equitable participation regardless of a youth member's access to devices or reliable internet?
- What would an effective cross-generational mentorship program look like that pairs youth participants with city officials and community leaders while still respecting youth autonomy and leadership?
- How can we create professional development pathways that help youth translate their advisory group experience into tangible future opportunities in education, employment, or civic leadership?
- What structures would facilitate meaningful partnerships with youth commissions in other cities to enable knowledge exchange and collaborative advocacy efforts?
- How can we implement a public recognition strategy that appropriately highlights youth contributions while maintaining their privacy and comfort levels with public visibility?
- What is the appropriate level of parent and guardian engagement that supports youth participation without diminishing youth leadership and independent voice?
- How might we incorporate trauma-informed practices into the commission's structure to ensure all participants, especially those from marginalized communities, feel safe and supported?
- What specific strategies would help youth successfully balance their advisory responsibilities with academic demands and other commitments, potentially through coordination with schools or flexible scheduling options?



SHAPING PITTSBURGH'S YOUTH COMMISSION — THE BOTTOM LINE

By doing a deep dive into youth councils in other American cities, Pittsburgh's youth participants were well-equipped to produce their own vision for a Youth Commission —one that combined leadership development, structured engagement with city government, and a focus on community improvement. They sought to create a commission where youth would not only have a real seat at the table but would also be ready to take on leadership roles, influence policy, and implement initiatives that would leave a lasting, positive impact on their city. A Theory of Change which highlights the activities and inputs needed to create such a commission can be found on page 5 of this report.

As they saw it, Pittsburgh's Youth Commission would empower young voices, provide structured avenues for them to engage with city officials, and properly equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to make meaningful contributions to their communities. Through leadership, policy influence, and direct action, they aimed to ensure that the future of Pittsburgh was shaped by the ideas and needs of its youth.

APPENDIX

FOLDER OF DESIGN SESSION DOCUMENTS

FINAL REPORT PRESENTATION

SURVEY SUMMARY

Youth Commission Recommendation Report

By Mayor's Youth Advisory Group

October 15, 2024

Welcome

Meeting POPS

Purpose: The purposeofthis event is for participants from the Youth Commission Design Committee, with direction from the Project Team, to present a “Youth Commission Recommendation” report of their findings following the completion of the Youth Design Sessions.

Outcomes

City Leadership will have clear and shared understanding of:

- The capacity of city government to sustain a Youth Commission?
- The specific needs, challenges, and aspirations of youth in the Pittsburgh community

Process:

See Agenda

Agenda

1. **Welcome - 5 Minutes**
2. **Youth Commission Recommendation - 35 Minutes**
3. **Mayor Office Executive Q&A - 20 Minutes**
4. **Closing Remarks - 5 Minutes**

Overview of the Process

- Youth metfrom July-September 2024
- 6 virtual meetings were held
- Youth received $25/hr for their participation.

Session Overview:

Kick Off meeting with the Mayor Answered what does Pittsburgh 2050 Look like?	Got to know each other Benchmarked other cities	Learned about other efforts to get center youth in leadership from past Mayoral administrations Civics and Government 101	Reviewed our progress and final plan proposal	Planned for report out

Overview Design Sessions

To facilitatethe designand content creationof the Youth Commission, the City hosted the series of Youth Design Sessions utilizing the below strategies:

- Utilization of Human-centered design to facilitate sessions and get feedback from young people
- Google slides helped us to collaborate both asynchronously and synchronously with youth
- Youth could complete makeup work if they were unable to participate in the live zoom sessions

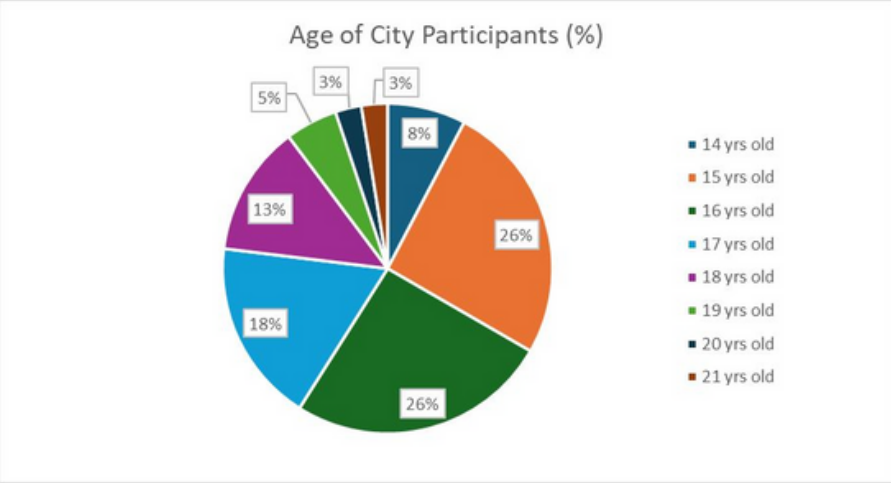
Recruitment

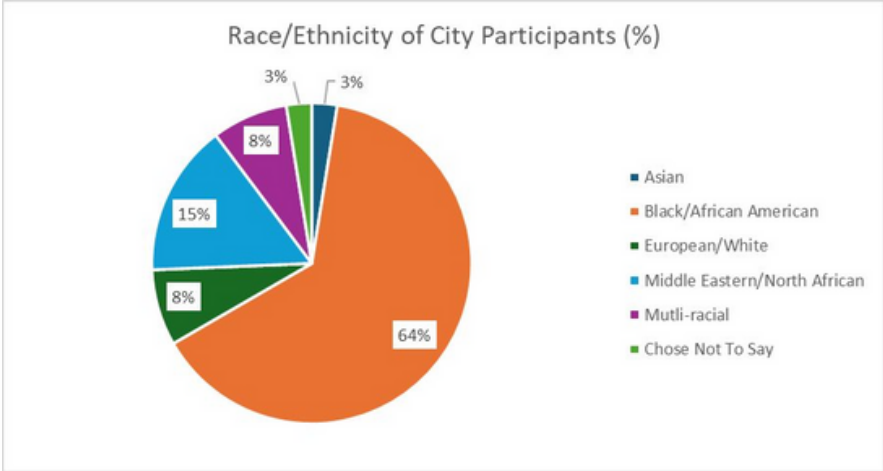
Utilized a multi-channel approach including **targeted invitations to youth serving organizations cultivating youth leadership**, social media engagement, and collaboration with the Mayor's Office to reach the Stop the Violence Grantees

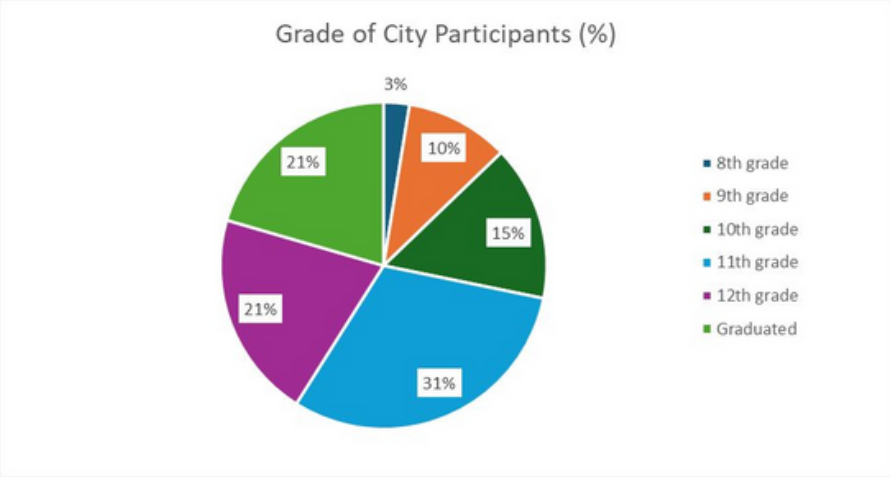
Focused on engaging **marginalized populations, particularly LGBTQIA+ youth and youth with disabilities,** by intentionally targeting organizations serving these communities.

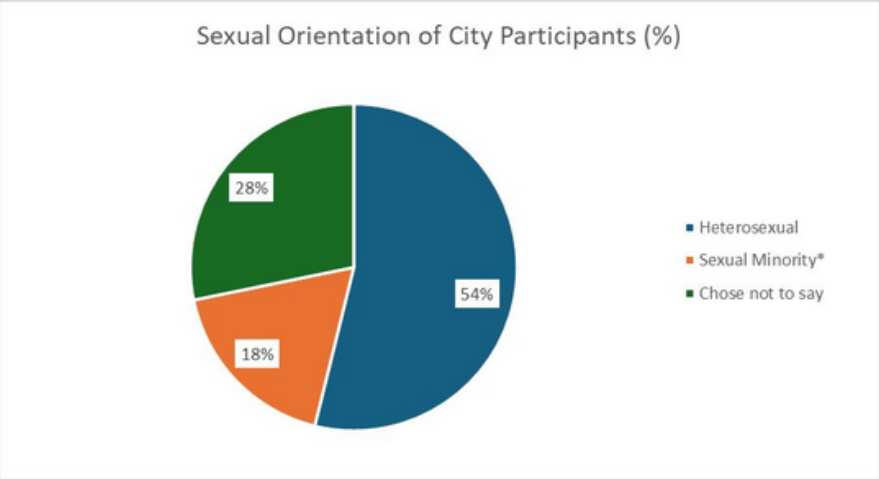
Complemented broad outreach efforts with personalized methods, including direct communication through phone calls, text messages from staff and leveraging professional networks for wider dissemination.

Demographics of Participants

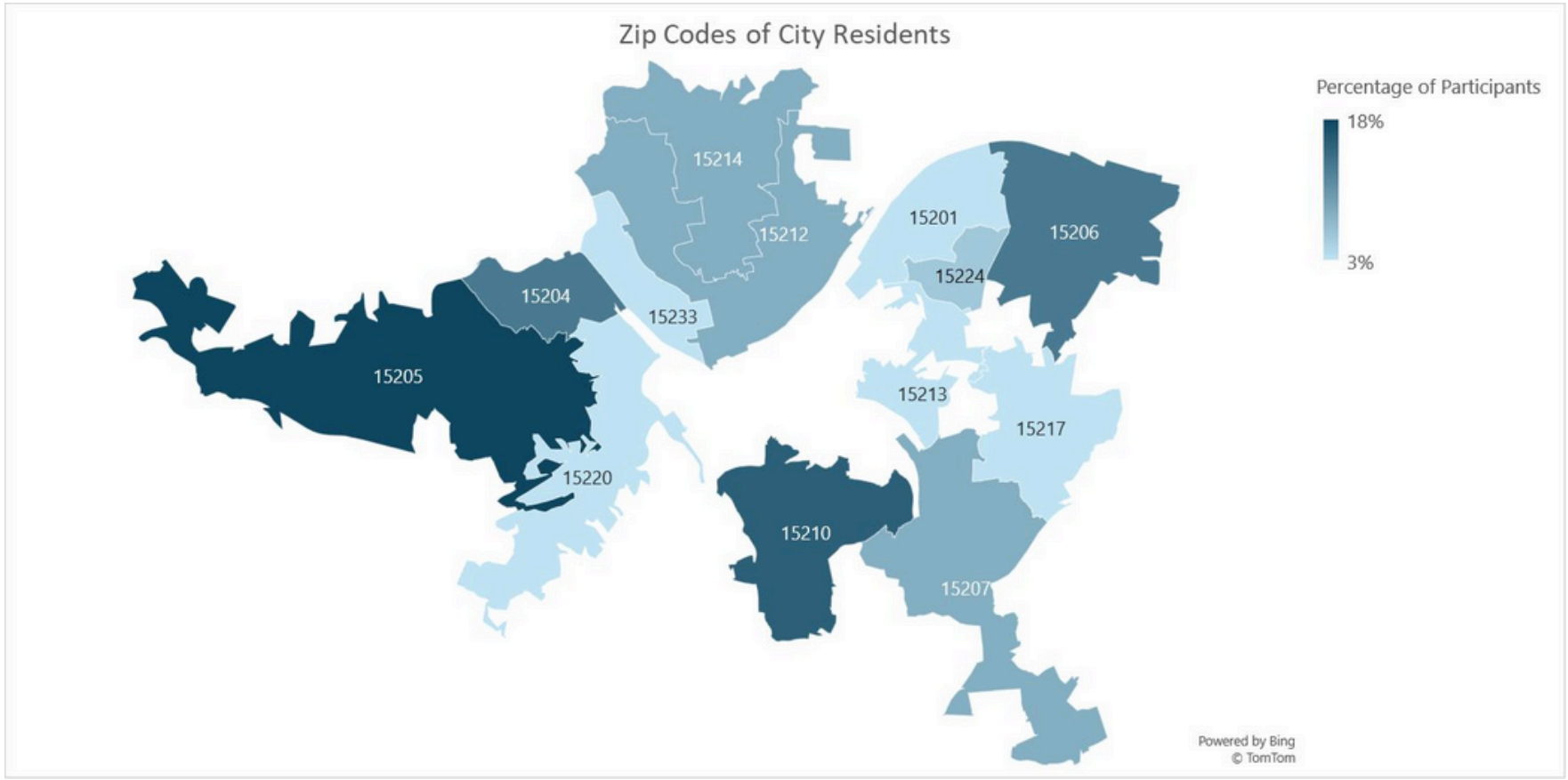








Demographics of Participants



Lessons Learned

Inclusion is paramount:

- Virtual sessions worked!
- Creating asynchronous opportunities for youth to participate
- Language translation is essential even in an virtual environment.

A team to support this helped to propel all of the pieces. Youth have a lot of questions and alot of the answers. The recruitment process could have been extended to 60 days.

Youth Perspectives

City name / Name of the youth commission	Boston: Mayor's Youth Council Names of group members: Morgan, McKenna, Makenzie, Ekow, Laila, Kyrique,Maram
What is their mission?	To provide resources and opportunities. To accurately represent youth populations around the city. MYC seeks to educate its members as well as Boston youth in general, in civics, job readiness, financial literacy, and more.
What is the role of their commissioners and what do they get a say in?	Land use, programming… Roles: Committee Chairs, Project Managers, Press Specialists, Members
What have they done? (accomplishments, initiatives, etc.)	● "A.C.E.S"(Advancing Curriculum Equity and Diversity in Schools), which advocates for a diverse school curriculum ● Recruited immigrants to work ● Working on projects/events pertaining to issues in the Boston area community including; ● Power Up: Youth Innovation and Opportunity Mixer, an event to give youth resources to start in various careers Adult-ing Fair, an event that teaches youth important skills such as resume building and voter registration Cultural Canvas Gallery, bringing together Boston artists to create community art Goal and accomplishments is to have as many partnerships with city government and officials to have MYC members have to best experience they can

Boston

Would you want to chat with them?	Yes, hearing from them about changes they were able to make in their city could be inspiring and hopefully helpful to us in accomplishing our goals. We could definitely take advice as well to see what should start working on or beneficial things they did for they're city they could recommend
Do you have anything else to add?	I was impressed with how organized their committee system was. ● Leader: There are three kinds of MYC leader roles totaling 20 youth. These youth are elected or appointed from the general membership to paid SuccessLink positions with a time commitment of 32-40 hours per month. ● Committee Chairs: 9 elected positions focused on the administrative work of MYC committees including writing agendas, managing attendance, and leading meetings. Project ● Managers: 7 elected positions focused on the leadership and execution of committee projects. PM's run for office by proposing a specific project. Press Specialists: 4 appointed positions focused on the communications and outreach work of MYC as a whole. This team is chosen through a hiring process by OYEA staff. Referred to collectively as the press team. Each committee had the responsibility of designing and implementing some form of program or initiative. Committees are parallel to our "focus groups" idea

Laila
She/they

CAPA,
Rising 11th
Grader











My name is… Laila

I am from… The faces of my family, the smell of coffee, steep hills, children playing in the park

I am from… Cornbeef sandwiches, Cajun Chicken Pasta, Greens

I am from… “If you stay ready, you don’t have to get ready”

I am from… My mom, my dad, my sister, my grandmas, my stepparents, and my cousins

Name, pronouns, school, grade
(only add what you are comfortable sharing)

Elijah, (he/him)

[Sci-Tech, 9th Grade]

Picture of me performing my speech for my 8th grade graduation



My name is… Elijah Williams

I am from… [endless amounts of trees, cars blasting music, and the smell of tonight's dinner]

I am from… [where chicken, fries, and broccoli are created]

I am from… ["be a leader, not a follower"]

I am from… [my mom, dad, relatives, and all the people I've met over the years]

What did you learn?

I learned a lot about the structure of cities.

I learned that working together is the key to success.

I learned that part of a being a youth commissioner is understanding ur cities history to move forward with ideas to help it . (T.H)

Ilearnedmore about how the history redlining has affected my own city

I learned that working together is key to success

I learned more about what the different authorities do for our city

I learned that communication skills can get as far working anywhere

I learned so much more about our city structure and that we have a newsletter

I learned more about my cities structure

I learned about how involved the City Planning Commission is (can be used as inspiration)

I learned more about the process of how youth committees operate.

How important it is to know the history of the city to move forward.

I learned a lot about the mayor and how involved our city planning is.

I learned a lot about our mayor that I didn't know before

I learned about our city structure and also our youngest mayor that we've had!

I learned about the Allegheny County government structure.

I learned about our mayor and the structure of our city

I learned that our payout system works like the branches of government

I learned about how involved our city's planning is and the structure.

I learned a lot about the cities structure and how it works. (JD)

What types of training should be required for Youth Commissioners?
What kinds of capacity building/skill building do Youth Commissioners need?

Trainingin the processes of government actions

Sufficient Resume

Passion for one's community, great leadership and work ethic, good communication

Research on the system/ structure the city uses to govern the people

DEI, Pittsburgh History – redlining, urban renewal
City Gov Chain of command/information
DataCollection

dership
ning

Knowing how funding is distributed/prioritized. Know the mayor's priorities.

Open-mindedness, desire to improve, empathy, willingness to learn

Proficient communication and public speaking skills

I think they need communication, collaboration,and problem solving skills

Basic understanding of the law

A Conflict Resolution training.

Open-minded views of perspectives (maybe like fixed mindset and open)

To understand what we can do at this time for the future

Critical thinking and problem solving training

Differences from what the county can control and what the city can.

Communication skills,

Have therapeutic and mental health teachings for the commissioners, as well as therapy programs for those that need it.

Collaboration and Teamwork

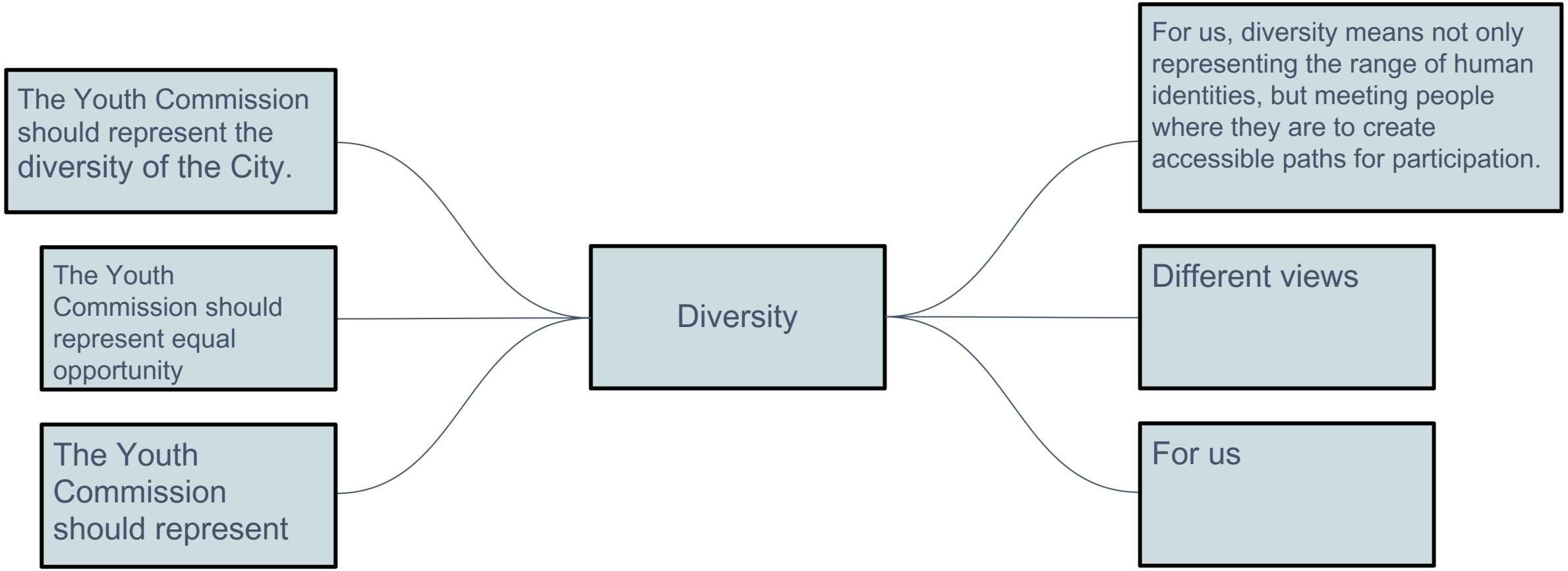
Leadership and public speaking (JD)

Ability to connect with other youth and share their voices. Interest in doing the work.

Teamwork training

Mind mapping - defining our keywords: EXAMPLE

Define the top FIVE key words.



Key Wording - think about the words that capture your vision for the youth commission

Generate as many keywords as you can think of! Start typing one keyword per box below.

Passionate	future	dedication	safety	lively	determination	integrity	philanthropic	clean	opportunity
Strive	optimistic	Open minded	Empathetic	Determined	Informed	Just		Equitable	
Empowerment	Impact	Future	Efficient	Official	Compassionate	Confident	Empathetic		
diverse		Significant	Effective	Real	Committed	Outspoken			
	Data driven								

Then, dot voting

PickONEdotanddragthe dot to your favorite key word

Proposed Structure

Application

2+ page application process adaptable for physical or online submission)

- Resume (optional, highlighting experience and activities)
- Recommendations (suggested but not required)
- Personal Statement
- Interview

Example Questions:

- What is one local problem you would want to be addressed or fixed?
- As a committee leader, how would you hold your peers accountable?
- If appointed a Project Leader, what idea would you propose?
  - (Give as many details as possible)

Membership

Membership Criteria

- Age range: 13-18
- Must attend a school in Pittsburgh city limits or be a resident

Compensation: Hourly Pay-$15 per hour, a minimum of 20 hours per month

Non-Monetary Benefits: Leadership, networking with city government and partners, and providing opportunities for professional growth.

Responsibilities

- Advise cityleadershipon youth issues and solutions
- Review decision-making with youth as the main stakeholders
- Plan and execute youth-focused events and programs
- Conduct research on youth-related topics/committees/projects
- Represent youth at city meetings
- Advise other youth that may want to join the commission and connect with other youth leadership initiatives
- Convene by committee to review and prioritize issues

Leadership Roles and Opportunities

1 Committee Leader

- Formulate meeting agendas
- Record meeting minutes
- Admin to committee group chats
- Manage member attendance
- Confer with members to retrieve availability and schedule meetings

2 Project Leader

- Define project scope, objectives, and deliverables
- Allocate roles and responsibilities
- Manage project schedule
- Coordinate reports and presentations
- Communicate with partners and stakeholders

3 Press & Outreach

- Oversee social media and newsletters on upcoming projects
- Administer surveys and feedback collection
- Manage any communication with possible collaborations
- Maintain a presence in schools and youth spaces

Proposed Committees

- Youth Peace
- Social Infrastructure
- Education
- Arts and Culture
- Economic Opportunity and Youth Resources
- Marketing and Outreach
- Events and Programing

Principles

- Enabling people to have the power and agency over their livelihood and desired outcomes from their choices.
- Be motivated and use our dedication to make the commission flourish and thrive.
- Have “care and compassion” for our communities and “be passionate in aspects of work”
- Meet people where they are to create accessible paths for participation.

Reflection

Q&A

Thank You!

WE APPRECIATE YOUR TIME

YOUTH COMMISSION DESIGNSESSIONS

Evaluation Summary

Background:

Youth who participated in the Pittsburgh Youth Commission were asked to complete a survey after finishing the program. Youth who attended one of more design sessions (n=53) were invited to complete the survey; of those, 44 youth completed the survey (83% completion rate). Ages of the youth surveyed ranged from 14 to 21 years old. Participants identified as cisgender men (49%), cisgender women (44%), and transgender or gender diverse (7%). The majority of youth reported their racial category as being either African American/Black (70%) or Middle Eastern/North African (12%). Other races represented were Asian, White, and Multi-racial.

Validated measures were used to gauge the youth's leadership and thriving through four main areas: Civic Engagement, Future Orientation, and Psychological Empowerment and Self-Efficacy as well as questions to assess satisfaction with the sessions. Youth were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of 15 questions. Responses to each individual set of questions were combined into mean scores for each participant. Youth were also asked open-ended questions seeking feedback on the program.

Results Summary:

Most youth (91%) reported being generally satisfied with their experience. Overall, and not surprisingly, the youth who participated actively in the design sessions have high levels of civic engagement (95%) and excitement about their future ('future orientation,' 95%).

Before answering a series of questions related to empowerment, youth were asked to consider how their participation in the design sessions may have shifted how they see their role in creating change. The responses to these questions revealed an extremely high level of empowerment among the participants (98% endorsed positive psychological empowerment and self-efficacy). When comparing youth who had high levels of engagement with the program (defined as having participated in 4 or more sessions or independent work), the percentage of psychologically empowered youth rose to 100%.

This trend of seeing higher percentages of youth with positive mean scores for those who were more engaged with the program vs. those who were less engaged holds true for each construct: civic engagement (97% compared to 80%), future orientation (100% compared to 80%), satisfaction (95% compared to 60%), and psychological empowerment/self-efficacy (100% compared to 80%).

Reviewing the feedback from open-ended questions in the survey revealed a common theme of pride in the way they worked as a team and communicated with each other. They were also proud of the work they did, their involvement, and the end result. Another common theme from the written feedback was the importance of valuing different perspectives, inclusion, collaboration, and cohesion within the team.

Challenges identified by participants included conflicting schedules for meeting times, internet and technology issues, and different levels of contribution from group members. Some youth suggested that they should be involved in the process of planning and setting the agenda for the design sessions. Other main suggestions were to hold in-person meetings, to involve a larger number of youth participants, and to provide more opportunities such as having more guest speakers, city program planning, and collaboration with youth commission members from other cities.

Mean Scores:

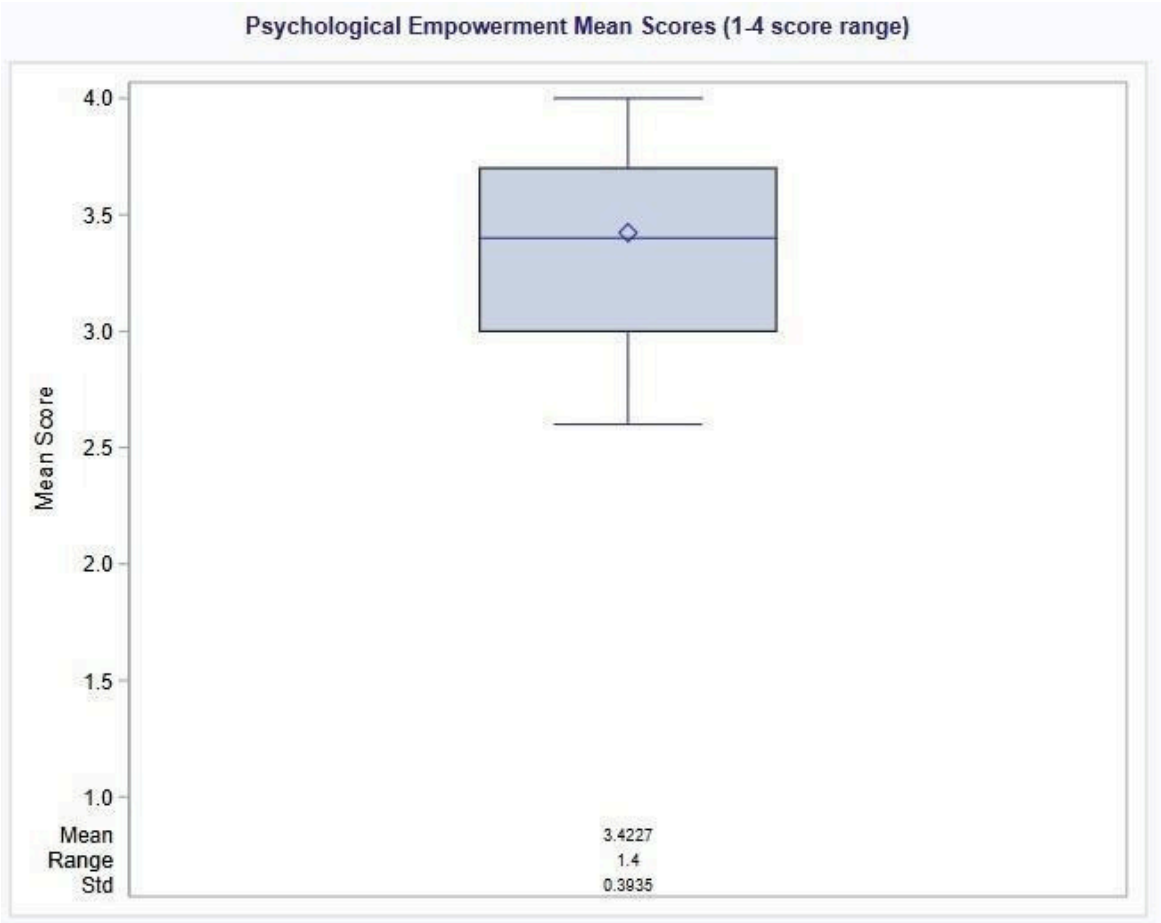


Figure 1: Psychological Empowerment Mean Scores (1-4 score range)

On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) the youth's average score for all questions related to psychological empowerment and self-efficacy was 3.42. The lowest score was 2.6, while the highest score was 4 (SD = 0.39).

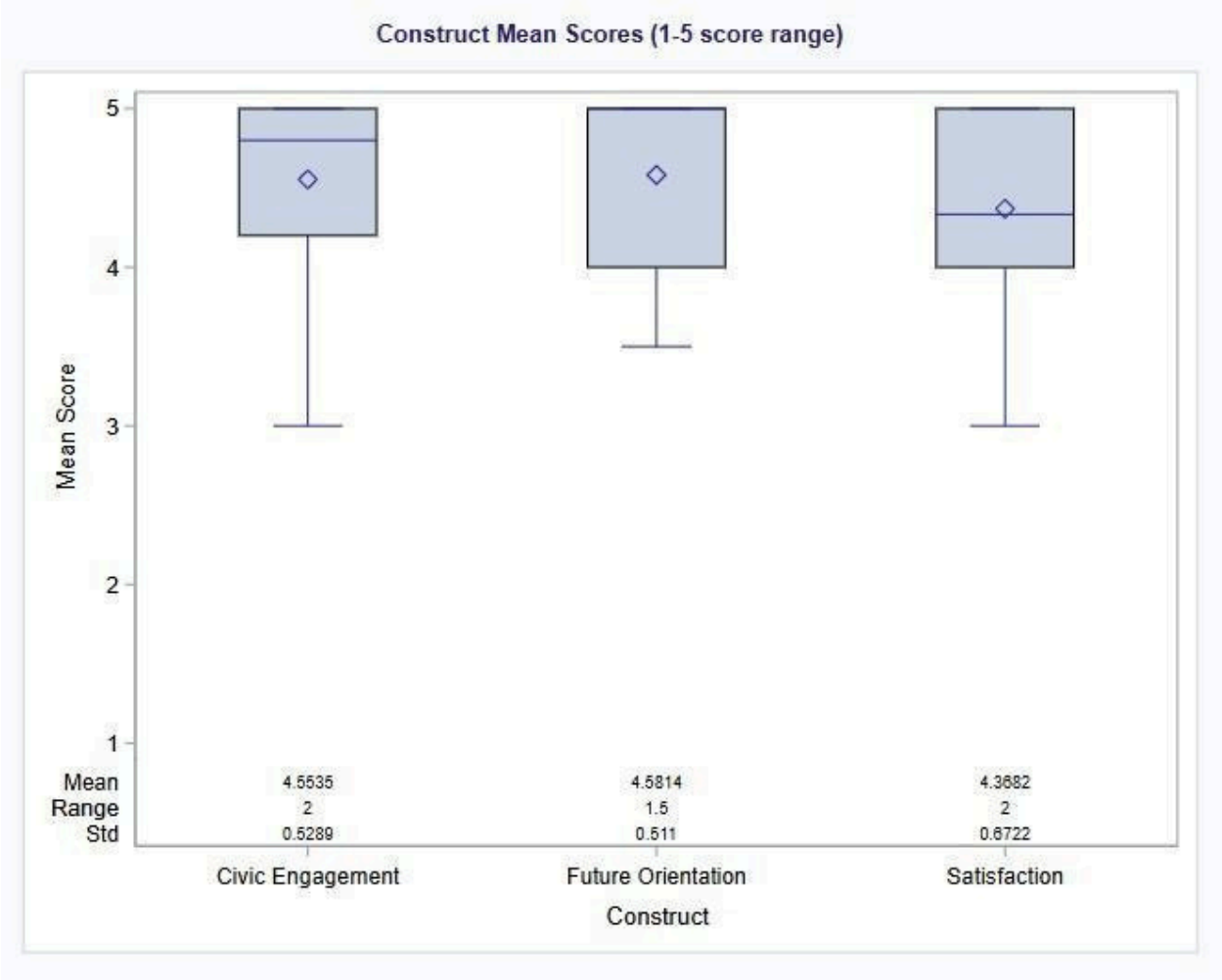


Figure 2: Other Construct Mean Scores (1-5 score range)

On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (stronglyagree) the youth's average score for all questions related to civic engagement was 4.55.The lowest score was 3, while the highest score was 5 (SD = 0.53).

On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) the youth's average score for all questions related to future orientation was 4.58. The lowest score was 3.5, while the highest score was 5 (SD = 0.51).

On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) the youth's average score for all questions related to satisfaction was 4.37. The lowest score was 3, while the highest score was 5(SD = 0.67).