

CITY OF EDMONTON YOUTH COUNCIL

2019 Annual Report



Edmonton

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MESSAGE FROM HIS WORSHIP MAYOR DON IVESON

On behalf of City Council and the people of Edmonton, congratulations to the City of Edmonton Youth Council on another successful year.

Edmonton continues to be one of the youngest major cities in Canada, with more than 22 per cent of our population under the age of 25. This fast-growing demographic will play an important role in shaping the future of our city with their passion, enthusiasm and unique perspectives.

The City of Edmonton Youth Council is valuable because it brings the diverse views, experiences and aspirations of young Edmontonians to light. Over the past year, the Youth Council has demonstrated its commitment to engaging our city's youth in important conversations on topics such as mental health, sustainability, social equity and nutrition. In doing so, the Youth Council has helped our city's youth grow as active and engaged citizens who are connected with their municipal government, local organizations and each other.

I thank the members of the City of Edmonton Youth Council for educating and empowering our next generation. Your efforts encourage young Edmontonians to take on important municipal issues and build a brighter future for our city.

I look forward to seeing what you will accomplish in the year ahead!

Yours truly,



Don Iveson, *Mayor*



MESSAGE FROM CHAIR KAELIN KOUFOGIANNAKIS

For over 20 years, the City of Edmonton Youth Council (CEYC) has been providing a strong voice for youth interests in Edmonton, and has been instrumental in empowering youth to connect with their communities. Awareness of CEYC is growing, and so are we. With over 60 volunteers working on projects with a wide range of topic areas, CEYC has continued to grow each year in both scale and impact.

I have been honoured to be a part of CEYC for three years, during which my eyes have been opened to the incredible diversity and strength of Edmonton's youth community. With open minds, fresh ideas, and unique experiences, the perspectives of youth are incredibly valuable and need to be included in political decision making processes. As future city builders, homeowners, parents, civil servants, business owners, and political leaders, youth voices represent not only a unique perspective on today's city, but that of tomorrow. CEYC aims to empower this voice.

We are pleased to present our work from the 2018-19 term in this annual report. I encourage any youth who have ideas to improve their city, big and small, to get involved. You too can make change happen.



WHO WE ARE

The City of Edmonton Youth Council was first approved by City Council in the early 1990s. It is an advisory committee to City Council which provides youth perspectives and advice on municipal issues. With 20 appointed volunteer members and over 30 Youth-at-Large (YAL) volunteers, CEYC is comprised of youth between the ages of 13 and 23 with diverse backgrounds and experiences. CEYC contributes to building a society of active and engaged citizens by creating opportunities to connect youth with municipal governance, local organizations, and each other.

OUR MISSION:

Educate and empower youth to provide meaningful input and take action on local issues and municipal politics in Edmonton.

OUR GOALS:

- 1** Mobilize youth on local issues through community, events, and projects.
- 2** Empower youth through education, skill building, and experience to be active citizens.
- 3** Provide opportunities for meaningful participation in Edmonton's local government.



2018-19 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

APPOINTED COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

20 members were appointed to CEYC committee for the 2018-19 term:

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Hania Amer | Kasey Enokson | Joanne Picard |
| Shilar Bakayula | Logan Fechter | Stephen Raitz |
| Thomas Banks | Samuel Goertz | Amber Sayed |
| Shannon Bertrand | Abigail Isaac | Armaan Somani |
| Seth (Cree) Brown-Cardinal | Kaelin Koufogiannakis | Robyn Taylor |
| Navneet Chand | Rajah Maggay | Ahdithya Rajan Visweswaran |
| Michael DeMarco | Ananya Muralidharan | |

OUTGOING MEMBERS

We thank our outgoing members for their volunteer service and wish them well in future endeavours:

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Shilar Bakayula | Logan Fechter | Stephen Raitz |
| Shannon Bertrand | Samuel Goertz | Armaan Somani |
| Seth (Cree) Brown-Cardinal | Kaelin Koufogiannakis | |
| Michael DeMarco | Ananya Muralidharan | |

NEWLY APPOINTED MEMBERS

We welcome and congratulate new members who will commence their term on September 1, 2019:

| | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Lekhini Bhatt | Fea Jerulen Gelvezon | Ricky Liu |
| Haja (Adama) Bundu | Nesochi Ihejirika | Grayson Thate-McKendry |
| Cherry Chen | Ryan Jacques | |
| Alexander Cheung | Anuj Krishnan | |



CITY COUNCIL SPONSORS

Two City Councillors were actively involved in CEYC this term:

Councillor Andrew Knack

Councillor Michael Walters

CITY OF EDMONTON PROJECT TEAM

Members of City Administration supported CEYC through the term:

Ian Smith, Coordinator, Child Friendly Edmonton

Leslie Tanzi, Coordinator, City of Edmonton Youth Council

Shelley Kwong, Acting Director, Citizen Access & Inclusion

Elaine Betchinski, Former Director, Citizen Access & Inclusion

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The City of Edmonton Youth Council is structured into an appointed committee and several supporting subcommittees which provide opportunities to committee members and YAL members to lead and contribute to project work and Council reports.

For the 2018-19 term, five subcommittees were created with the following focus areas:

- 1 Engagement and Outreach
- 2 Health and Wellness
- 3 Internal Affairs
- 4 Social Equity
- 5 Urban and Regional Planning

While subcommittees meet biweekly, the CEYC committee meets on a monthly basis on the first Wednesday of each month from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. in City Hall. All meetings are open to the public.

SUBCOMMITTEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Continuing with the momentum from the 2017-2018 term, the Engagement and Outreach subcommittee built a well-functioning and cohesive team over the 2018-19 term. With 16 dedicated members, they operated five projects: the second annual CEYC Awards, the Future of Edmonton Essay Contest, the CEYC Blog, a relaunch of YEGbyYouth, and School Visits.

Three major events – the 2018 and 2019 CEYC Awards, and YEGbyYouth Relaunch – reached over 150 people combined. The subcommittee also helped develop the Parkland Consumption of Alcohol Information Report which was presented to City Council in June 2019.

The subcommittee also facilitated another year of School Visits wherein members visited schools and inform young Edmontonians about CEYC and how they can get involved. This year, CEYC reached nearly 40 schools, an eightfold increase over the previous year. The schools visited included some Francophone schools, with the presentation conducted in French.

The second annual CEYC Awards recognized nine exceptional youth in Edmonton across five categories; fine arts, athletics, academics, community service, and perseverance. The inaugural Future of Edmonton Essay Contest gave Edmonton youth the opportunity to think about the future of their city and their role in its development, in a creative and inspiring manner. Ten submissions were received for the contest and winners of the junior and senior category were recognized at the CEYC Awards ceremony.

The CEYC Blog Revitalization Project set out to transform CEYC's blog into a living resource that Edmontonian youth can use to establish a meaningful link with various

“I became involved with CEYC in September 2017, but this term was my first experience as a project lead, for the Future of Edmonton Essay Contest. Serving as the lead for a new project was an invaluable opportunity – I was responsible for utilizing the skills and abilities of my team and collaborating with them to make the essay contest a success. I can say with great certainty that the skills and friends that I have gained through CEYC will benefit me for years to come.”

Ryan Jacques
YAL member, Engagement and Outreach

youth communities, CEYC, and the City of Edmonton. Over the past year, the blog launched a trial series, the Blog Budget Breakdown, to discuss some features of Edmonton's new budget. This series received genuine excitement and engagement from readers and writers alike and offered many lessons for the upcoming year.

YEGbyYouth was relaunched this term with a new vision. Engagement and Outreach held a relaunch event to reintroduce the Facebook-based project to a new cohort of Edmontonians. The principal change to YEGbyYouth was the expansion of the roster of photographers and a new direction whereby subjects are photographed at their favourite place in Edmonton. YEGbyYouth also has plans to expand beyond Facebook moving forward.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

This year, the Health and Wellness subcommittee focused on the importance of policy work and cooperating with other organizations in the city to establish new relationships. With a solid group of 15 volunteers, the subcommittee worked on four projects this term, in addition to some that will be continuing into the next term.

The Opioid Crisis Information Report project aimed to analyze the state of opioid addictions among youth in the City of Edmonton. The subcommittee engaged with the City, Alberta Health Services, and many other organizations to discuss the importance of harm reduction actions. An information report will be presented to City Council, encouraging increased support for supervised consumption sites that cater to youth and increased education on opioid addictions and access to Naloxone kits.

Another project, the Wellness Challenge, promoted both mental and physical coping strategies and self care. 100 copies of the Wellness Challenge zine were handed out to youth in Edmonton and the zine will continue to be available to anyone on the CEYC website.

Health and Wellness also had the opportunity to support the Engagement and Outreach subcommittee with CEYC Awards, and established the Mitchell Moore Resilience Award, named for a CEYC volunteer. The award honours and recognizes youth of Edmonton who have endured hardships and used their experience to do better for others.

Over the course of the 2018–19 term, the Health and Wellness subcommittee engaged with Edmonton Public Schools, ACCESS Open Minds Clinic, Councillor Walters, Mental Health Foundation, and the City of Edmonton to create a survey that analyzed the state and effectiveness of mental health services among youth in Edmonton. The survey captured the unique perspectives of 538 Edmontonians and their suggestions for an improved and youth-led approach to youth mental health services. Results will be presented to City Council, recommending support of collaboration with the Mental Health Foundation's work on Integrated Youth Hub services in the city. The subcommittee's work on the survey was featured on 630 CHED radio and other news platforms.

“After joining the Health and Wellness subcommittee, I realized that CEYC provided an opportunity to improve the state of mental health in this city. In Health and Wellness, I could tackle many mental health problems from the perspective of a youth and have the power to enact useful and effective change. That’s what is most appealing to me about CEYC: power to change this city resolving the issues important to youth one at a time.”

Eric Yan
YAL member, Health and Wellness

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Over the 2018–19 term, the Internal Affairs subcommittee made significant steps to integrate YAL members into key discussions that have an important impact on the operation of CEYC. A new role entitled Youth-at-Large Representative was created, to allow YAL members to have a stronger voice through a representative who would be committed to offer perspectives of YAL members on the Internal Affairs subcommittee. Our elected YAL Representative for this term was Ricky Liu, who has volunteered with CEYC for three years and has demonstrated great insight into how CEYC can best work with all volunteers. His focus project for the term was the creation of the YAL Handbook, a resource to guide and support new YAL members.

The Internal Affairs subcommittee also began a redesign of the CEYC website to make it more accessible, adaptable, and comprehensive for years to come. They further played a large role in improving recruitment and membership procedures to ensure that CEYC upholds fair, equitable, and diverse practices that best serve all of Edmonton's youth.

“Serving as the first-ever YAL Representative on Internal Affairs was a truly honourable experience. As volunteers who invest their time leading projects and organizing events, YAL members are vital to the functioning of CEYC. The YAL Representative position is important because it allows YAL members to contribute to discussions that will make the CEYC better for them in the future, allowing them to feel more involved and connected to both the Committee and the city.”

Ricky Liu
YAL Representative 2018–19

SOCIAL EQUITY

The Social Equity subcommittee had quite an action-packed and eventful year! From hosting three different events to engage with multiple youth groups and individuals from across the city, Social Equity was successfully able to create long lasting and meaningful relationships with the youth of Edmonton. With a group of over 15 individuals and ongoing drop-in members, the subcommittee undertook the planning and execution of the Speaker Series project and a multicultural celebration. The Speaker Series included an online campaign for Accessibility Awareness Month, an event for Black History Month titled Melanin Roots, and an event for Pride Month titled United We Grow.

Melanin Roots was successful in celebrating African diaspora histories and cultures among Edmonton youth, while also discussing current issues in the community and developing methods to address them. It also had the effect of mobilizing youth to get involved in local issues, CEYC initiatives, and community projects, as over 110 individuals attended. Melanin Roots has since encouraged other local initiatives, such as the recent Glitter Brunch series, created by a Melanin Roots volunteer and attendee who wanted to continue the discussions had that evening.

United We Grow had 40 attendees and was effective in honoring Edmonton's LGBTQ2S+ youth communities while also promoting an intergenerational theme throughout the evening. It sparked discussions concerning issues facing the LGBTQ2S+ community today, such as disconnect within the community, the power in representation, and how to get involved locally. The night also featured podcast discussions in partnership with Age Friendly Edmonton, and introduced the need for intergenerational dialogue and connections.

Social Equity's multicultural celebration called Rhythm and Rhyme was extremely well received with 165 attendees, including Mayor Iveson and MP Amarjeet Sohi. This event had 24 volunteers, 11 sponsors, and 5 youth groups. Rhythm and Rhyme showcased the importance of sharing the diversity within Edmonton and providing a platform to exhibit youth talent.

One more upcoming project that Social Equity is working on is a video series featuring women and non-binary individuals titled the Mariposa Movement. This entire year was incredibly successful and allowed for important discoveries that will assist in the future to make CEYC events even better.

URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING

The Urban and Regional Planning subcommittee had a very successful year creating meaningful engagement and learning opportunities for youth across Edmonton. With a committee of 18 volunteers, the committee was able to plan and execute three large projects that engaged nearly 500 youth and created new opportunities for involvement.

The Urban Design Workshops project reached nearly 230 youth across Edmonton in their own classrooms. Valuable feedback about what youth want to see in Edmonton's future was collected through hands-on workshops that visited youth communities of a wide range of ages.

A Sustainability Campaign was advertised to our 1,245 Instagram followers and reached hundreds of youth. The campaign was focused on finding small ways in which youth could make active changes to the way they live and how they can introduce sustainability into their lives. A litter cleanup in Victoria Park concluded the project, demonstrating one way to bring people together for small but meaningful change.

The Ticket to Ride fundraiser was held for the third time and raised thousands of dollars to buy transit tickets for at-risk youth while bringing awareness to the struggles of a marginalized group in Edmonton. The event brought out many people in the community who are not typically engaged by CEYC events, demonstrating that CEYC continues to broaden its impact on Edmonton.

The subcommittee also worked to create meaningful engagement opportunities through sessions with multiple groups working on planning projects within the City of Edmonton. Subcommittee members met with both the Edmonton Bike Plan Team and the Yellowhead Expansion team to provide valuable youth perspectives. The committee also strategically facilitated bringing youth voices to the table during early phases of the City Plan engagement. Furthermore, the Zoning Bylaw team visited the July General Assembly meeting to engage CEYC on the foundation of planning.

“This year, our committee was able to discover and enable urban planning amongst youth here in Edmonton. Our committee never failed to expand our knowledge and practice of urban planning, everywhere from learning about the Yellowhead Trail expansion to a workshop about bike lanes. As a YAL, I feel enlightened and excited about Urban Planning, and have been continually motivated to further my studies with this experience and background.”

Ashley Johns
YAL member, Urban and Regional Planning

POLICY WORK

In addition to subcommittee work, the appointed committee members worked on policy advocacy throughout the year in response to City Council items and, occasionally, provincial government policies.

BIKE SHARING PROGRAM VIABILITY

CEYC members spoke at City Council when bike and scooter share were being considered, and advocated for a permit regulated system that would include payment methods for those without credit cards, ensure access to youth-focused destinations, and provide for helmets to be easily obtained by those under 18.



FOOD HUB

CEYC sent a memo to City Council about the Food Hub report, which discussed ways to bring about more interconnectivity between Edmontonians and their food. CEYC's stance focused on ensuring food affordability for youth, including small local businesses with non-edible products, and potentially locating the food hub on the Exhibition Lands during its redevelopment. The letter also provided research conducted by a CEYC member on food accessibility in different parts of Edmonton, impacting the potential effectiveness of the food hub.



PARKING REGULATIONS

In support of the open parking option, which would minimize parking requirements for new development in Edmonton, CEYC members spoke at City Council. Ideas included increased reliance on non-vehicular transportation modes, allowing the market to determine what parking provisions would suit the needs of future users (rather than regulation), and ensuring that street parking is treated as a public good instead of a private property.



PARKLAND CONSUMPTION REPORT

CEYC advocated for City Council to designate picnic site zones, within which citizens 18+ would be allowed to publicly consume alcohol, in some parks. CEYC advocated for this change because it would make parks more inclusive and liveable, extend individual responsibility and choice, support the potential for improved health outcomes, and harmonise liquor consumption regulation with cannabis consumption regulation. City Council deferred making a decision on whether to implement this proposal, and instead decided to wait for future legislative changes from the provincial government. CEYC succeeded in inspiring considerable public debate and reached tens of thousands of Albertans by appearing on-air in radio and television programs as well as in print in the Edmonton Journal, Edmonton Sun, StarMetro, and other publications. CEYC looks forward to continuing to work on this issue.



SENIORS CENTRE STRATEGY

The seniors centre strategy topic focused on ways to support seniors centres moving forward. CEYC sent a memo to City Council which explored the ways that intergenerationalism could be incorporated into seniors centre programming, such as creating partnerships with libraries and recreation centres, starting intergenerational activity programs, and supporting intergenerational housing facilities.



YOUTH WAGE

Following the April 2019 provincial election, the new government proposed the implementation of a youth minimum wage. The policy would lower the minimum wage for those under the age of 18 to \$13/hour in most cases. CEYC released a stance in opposition to this policy, which focused on the discriminatory nature of the policy, the diversity of youth who may be impacted by having a reduced income, and the fact that the policy was planned for implementation without any consultation of those it impacts, who were also unable to vote in the election. After being published as an op-ed in the Edmonton Journal, the newspaper's Facebook post received over 1,000 comments, and CEYC members spoke with several media outlets. Although the policy was later implemented, CEYC was instrumental in raising public awareness and conversation about its impacts on youth.



IMPACT



3,850
volunteer hours
annually



64
volunteers



Over
100
meetings



21
projects



5 direct
advocacy
projects to
City Council



9 groups
presented
to CEYC



39 school visits
3 presentations to City Hall School
840 students directly engaged



SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT

INSTAGRAM

- **1,245** Instagram followers
- Revitalized our stories and highlights while also posting regularly for the first time.
- Posts averaged **60+ likes**, which surpasses the majority of pages our size.
- Brought YEGbyYOUTH to the main Instagram page, integrating our project into our general marketing.



FACEBOOK

- Passed **2,000** Facebook followers total this term.
- Our largest topic was our youth minimum wage opinion piece, which received the most impressions on our page and was the most popular post on the Edmonton Journal's page for a several month period. **1,070+** comments in the discussion, **140** shares, **450** reactions, and more reactions/shares on the shares.
- Average monthly impressions are about **2,000** over less than **10** posts.
- Hosted six Facebook events in the last year, which had **16.4k** impressions, **534** responses, and **251** ticket link clicks.

TWITTER

- **2390** Twitter followers



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