

City of Edmonton Youth Council

2021 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 of city-building leadership.

City-building is intergenerational work, and we are lucky to have the City of Edmonton Youth Council as part of it. Their forward-looking perspective and their role as both "leaders of tomorrow" and "leaders of today" make them a relevant and powerful voice in local democracy.

CEYC continues to dive right in to understand complex issues and build new insights, pushing our city forward. Recently, this has included work on community safety and wellbeing, mental health and opioids, food waste and security, and healthy environment and safe spaces.

I thank the members of the City of Edmonton Youth Council for empowering our next generation and strengthening our city. Edmonton is young, educated and growing, and you represent the energy, caring and confidence that we need to thrive.

Best wishes for the year ahead!

Yours Truly,



Don Iveson, Mayor



Message From Chair Ricky Liu

Over the past 5 years, I have witnessed CEYC grow tremendously as an organization and the individual members grow alongside it. This past year has been one like no other. As we have adapted to the unprecedented challenges over the past year, our members have adapted, persevered and innovated in extraordinary ways.

I am incredibly proud of everything that this committee has achieved over this past term. From tackling key social issues, such as vaping and food insecurity, to fighting misinformation to examining policing and community safety, we have become a pointed-to example of advocacy, change-making and inclusivity.

It has been a privilege to serve as the Chair of CEYC for the 2020–2021 term and work alongside my fellow committee members and youth-at-large members. I am certain that CEYC will continue to grow to never-before-seen heights, tackling difficult issues and advocating for the future of Edmonton.



Message From Vice-Chair Anuj Krishnan

I have been honoured to serve as part of CEYC for the last three years and it has truly been a transformative experience witnessing the immense power and passion of youth all across Edmonton. I am tremendously grateful to have the opportunity to lead CEYC as it's youngest Vice-Chair throughout it's 26 year history. If there is anything I have learned in the last year is that youth voices matter, and that ensuring they are truthfully represented is paramount and required in our municipal process. This year was abundant with challenges but youth have persevered and spoke up on issues close to heart, continuing to demonstrate our value to the political and decision making process. As Edmonton continues to grow and face new and emerging obstacles it is imperative youth remain in the discussion. CEYC will continue to empower these voices.

I am incredibly proud of our members and am astonished by the leadership and selfless initiative they possess. CEYC only continues to grow and it's impact follows suit. I encourage any youth with ideas to improve Edmonton to get involved. Change can come from anywhere, it just needs a little dedication.



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 65 Youth-at-Large (YAL) volunteers, CEYC is comprised of youth between the ages of 13 and 23 with diverse backgrounds and experiences. This year's council is our biggest in our 26 year history. 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.

Mission

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

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.



2021 Committee Members & YALs

Appointed members for this term

Pram Thennakoonwela
 Ryan Jacques
 Sarah Freeman
 Lakshmi Peddi
 Cherry Chen
 Kasey Enokson
 Fajr Khaliqdina
 Reetu Arvikar
 Anuj Krishnan
 Zaharadeen Jimoh

Avanideep Ladhar
 Achyutha Surukanti
 Irshad Sayed
 Quynh Anh Nguyen
 Ricky Liu
 Irmen Dhani
 Manujitha Herath
 Ahdithya Visweswaran
 Robyn Taylor
 Dominika Goetze



Outgoing members

Dominika Goetze
 Ahdithya Visweswaran
 Quynh Anh Nguyen
 Kasey Enokson

Fajr Khaliqdina
 Anuj Krishnan
 Zaharadeen Jimoh
 Avanideep Ladhar



Newly appointed members for the 2021–22 term

Sayem Ali Ahmed
 Thomas Beschell
 Daniela Carbajal Velez
 Ayesha Irfan
 Anwi Patel
 Hansen Shu
 Jasmine Virk
 Alice Yang



YALs for this term

Abdullahi Mohamed
 Abheet Chaudry
 Abhinav Dhillon
 Alex Joseph
 Alice Yang
 Amy Leah Visscher
 Andi Superceanu
 Anwi Patel
 Arindi Sadwena
 Aryan Bhardwaj
 Ashwin Anand
 Ayesha Irfan
 Aditi Sharma
 Callum Laroi
 Catherine Li
 David Yao
 Divsha Pillai
 Edward Yan
 Eisha Arvikar
 Emily Yang
 Eric Yan
 Esther Victoria
 Fairly Wong
 Gurpreet Bolina
 Hansen Shu
 Harsim Randeo
 Heather Mark
 Heril Saha
 Hermon Afowork
 Ishrajot Chahal
 Jai Roy
 Justin Kim
 James Tuyishime

Julianna Galiano
 Karina Banerji
 Kian Kyars
 Krishna Trivedi
 Luka Zvonkovic
 Manan Swrangpate
 Mason Radies
 Mehrnaaz Teja
 Michael Zhang
 Michelle Roy
 Mitchell Moore
 Mohammud Abusteit
 Mudra Shah
 Niam Bashir
 Noshin Atiah
 Paul Lifota
 Rachel Jacques
 Sanaa Bhaidani
 Sayem Ali Ahmed
 Sheryl Xue
 Sohail Bomar
 Swati Jolly
 Seniha Gulluk
 Shreya Malpuri
 Shweta Malpuri
 Sithara Naidoo
 Sohaib Omar
 Tiffany Phan
 Tina Kim
 Vinesh Rao
 Yael Orsot



City Council Sponsor

Councillor Andrew Knack

City of Edmonton Administrative Team

Samim Lambrecht: CEYC Coordinator

Christine Causing: Coordinator, Council Initiatives

Kaylin Betteridge: Coordinator, Council Initiatives

Mike Chow: Director, Social Identity and Inclusion Section

Committee Structure

The City of Edmonton Youth Council is structured into an appointed committee with three broad subcommittees which provide all members with opportunities to lead and contribute to various forms of initiatives.

Subcommittees

Policy

Projects

Internal

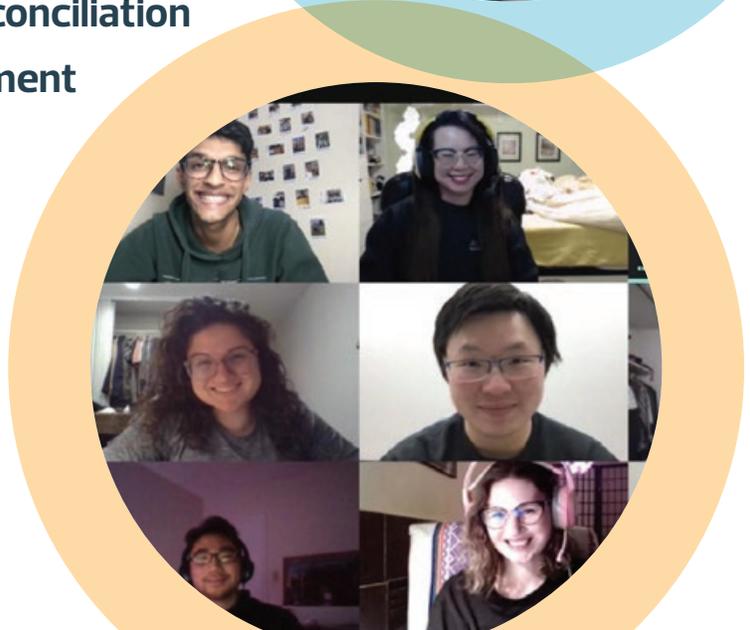
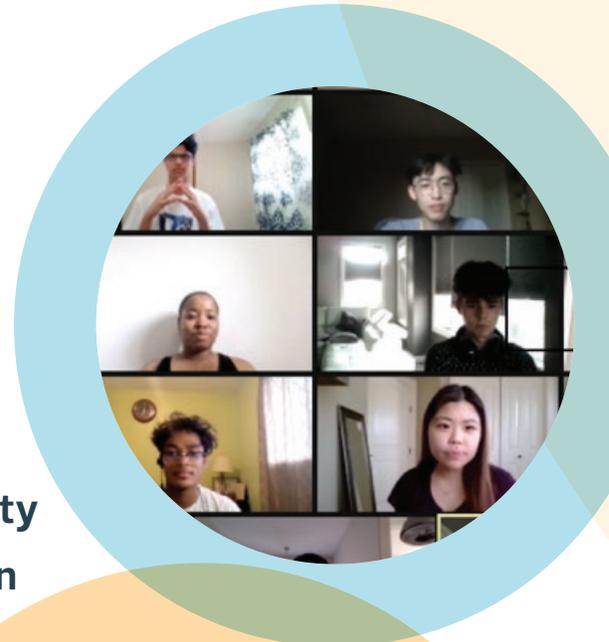
Strategic Priorities

Health

Environmental Sustainability

Social Equity & Reconciliation

Advocacy & Engagement



Admin Team
 Samim Lambrecht
 Mike Chow
 Kaylin Betteridge
 Christine Causing



City Council

Admin



Chair **Ricky Liu**

Vice-Chair **Anuj Krishnan**

Admin

Admin

Admin

Internal
 Chair **Anwi Patel**

Projects
 Chair **Cherry Chen**
 Vice-Chair **Eric Yan**

Policy
 Chair **Robyn Taylor**
 Vice-Chair **Heather Mark**

Strategic Priorities

Health



Environmental Sustainability



Social Equity & Reconciliation



Advocacy & Engagement



Projects

With its large and highly dedicated membership, the Projects Subcommittee has managed to address many of the CEYC strategic priorities over the course of the 2020/2021 term. The Projects Subcommittee consists of 30 volunteers that have worked to accomplish 6 initiatives and 1 task force, with over 3,000 volunteer hours.

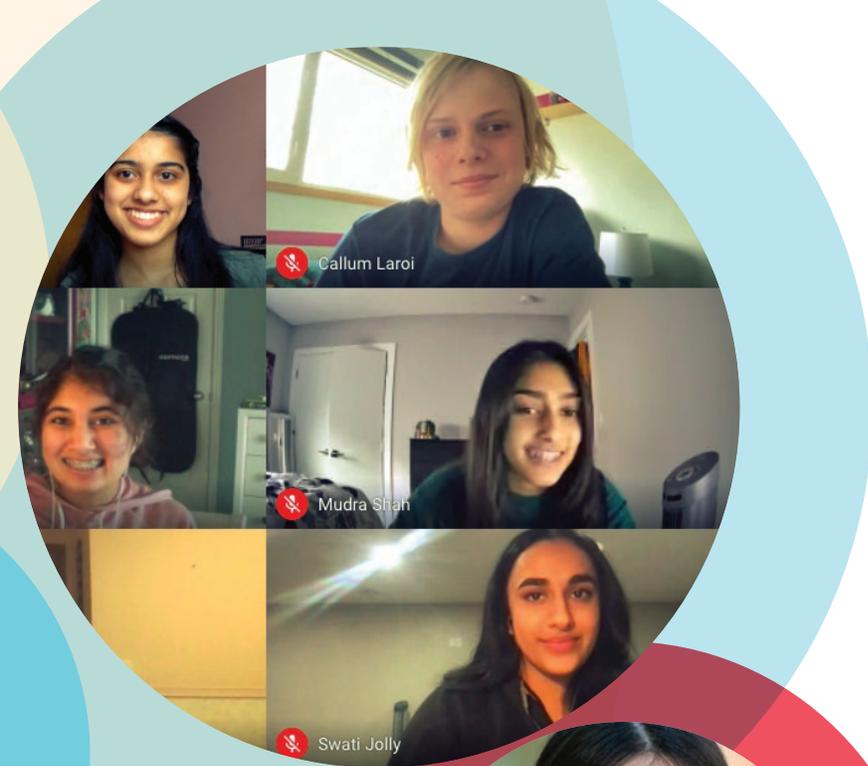
Youth Tackling Covid-19 was undoubtedly the most fitting project for the past year; it aimed to educate youth regarding the physiological and mental effects of the pandemic. In this webinar, 3 experts presented to an audience of 42 regarding the mechanism of the vaccine, discerning truth from misinformation, and maintaining mental health. This initiative addressed an urgent and immediate issue that affected all youth in Edmonton, truly meeting the intent and purpose of CEYC.

On the same topic, the Environmental Awareness Webinar held a similar virtual event to educate youth on environmental issues and ways to preserve the environment. By having interactive breakout rooms, the team not only adapted, but took advantage of the online platform; participants were given the choice to learn about the topics that interested them in smaller-format discussions. This project invited leaders in sustainability to directly inspire youth in ways to take initiative on this very important issue. As well, the team researched and presented the impacts of human culture and consumerism on the environment to bring greater awareness to the issue.

Through intense collaboration with the Internal Subcommittee, the Scholarships and Volunteer Opportunities Webpage initiative has created a central hub of both extracurricular opportunities and financial aid for Edmonton youth. While it is possible to utilise these resources independently, this project created an invaluable resource tailored specifically for Edmontonians. This increases the accessibility and outreach of opportunities for youth, especially those with less experience in seeking extracurricular activities. As opportunities come and go quite frequently, the webpage will be continuously updated both to remove expired opportunities as well as to update with new ones.

The Clean Water initiative was also an excellent learning experience for both the Projects Subcommittee and CEYC as a whole. The team completed an investigation into the accessibility and quality of drinking water in Edmonton. Incentivized by the water crises from First Nations reserves, Clean Water assessed whether youth experienced similar water problems in Edmonton. Although the team concluded that CEYC action would be unviable for this situation, members nevertheless gained valuable investigation skills.





This term we also had a task force dedicated to building a working relationship with Paths for People, an organization advocating for safe streets for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike. They collaborated to hold a day of programming for members from both groups and both learnt about and created more vibrant street spaces. We hope to continue building this relationship throughout the transitional period and move forward with a response to the Bike Plan Implementation Approach.

Our final two projects are still under way at the current time of writing. The Photo and Writing Contest has asked youth to reflect and express their thoughts about Edmonton. Through this contest, CEYC stands to gain a more extensive understanding of the youth perspective and priorities for the future. Furthermore, this initiative allows the council to engage and support the arts pioneered by youth, as is often neglected by CEYC. On the other hand, the City Cleanup has approached this term's environmental strategic priority in a highly straightforward fashion. By having CEYC members pick up litter, City Cleanup pushes individuals to take practical, firsthand action on an important issue. After navigating an unpredictable amount of administrative hurdles, the initiative team has begun the cleanups and will soon complete a brief social media campaign to share their process.

Policy

During a year of pandemic-induced distance and exclusively virtual proximity, the twenty-one youth volunteers of the Policy Subcommittee focused and reflected on what it means to meaningfully engage with community from a place of privilege. Despite being physically-distant, members of the Policy Subcommittee navigated ethics of community proximity and how to integrate emotional intelligence into the work of legislative governance.

This past term was a year of continuity and playing the long game. To address the strategic target of promoting healthy youth and lifestyle choices, the Vaping Information Report Team wrapped up its two-term initiative researching the effects and attitudes surrounding youth vaping. Using accessible and engaging info-graphics, the collected information was disseminated with a social media campaign. Over 70,000 people viewed the information that youth councillors disseminated across CEYC social media platforms.

The first of two initiatives that started the term off and continued right until the end, the Community Safety and Well-Being Initiative team took it upon themselves to make sure that the stories shared by community members during the June 2020 public hearings on community safety were honoured and acted upon. To this end, the Initiative Team liaised with members of the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee (ARAC) to strategize about how to respond to the #BelieveUs Report brought before Council in April of 2021. In addition to the social media campaign that this initiative team generated, they also created a video of their findings and responses to the Report as part of their commitment to accessibility. The members of this initiative provided an opportunity for community members that are often excluded from structures of governance to take part in decision-making by honouring lived experiences and navigating the extractive nature of traditional stakeholder engagement and outreach.



The Food Waste Initiative spent the term researching and writing a recommendation report, titled "Food Waste and Insecurity Report: A Youth Perspective" for Council regarding solutions to food waste and food insecurity in Edmonton. The report was formally presented to the Community and Public Services Committee as a close to the term on August 25th, 2021. The presentation resulted in a unanimous motion directing City Administration to provide a report, including an analysis and possible implementations of CEYC's recommendations, due for 2nd Quarter 2022. The team took the initiative to release the report as an mp3 audio file as well as in plain-text format to augment its accessibility. The research generated to write the report was centered on community engagement following interviews with local grassroots groups from Food4Good, the WECAN food basket society, and Multicultural Health Brokers. The team took on the opportunity to liaise with national stakeholders by building a relationship with the National Zero Waste Council and the Toronto Youth Food Policy Council. The Report itself, when disseminated on CEYC social media, was one of the most engaged with posts in CEYC history, demonstrating CEYC's commitment to responding to and uplifting the concerns of persons uninformed in traditional governance and advocacy.

To greet Summer and the pending finale of the term, the Subcommittee hosted activist and lawyer Reakash Walters twice. She taught the volunteers about building healthy relationships, connecting with lived experiences, and honouring the stories of others. Her wisdom was an excellent addition to this term's focus on sustainable and ethical community outreach from positions of power. The councillors of the Policy Subcommittee are equipped to continue the good work of reflective and ethical governance praxis in the CEYC terms to come.

Internal

Over the 2020–2021 term, the Internal Affairs Subcommittee has advocated for impactful change in the processes and efficiency of CEYC, one step at a time. In the midst of the pandemic, Internal has worked hard to elevate our online presence with our website and social media accounts. Accumulating the work of 11 members, the subcommittee has gone through 5 initiatives: School Visits, Release of Voting Committee Member Rights Policy, The Demographics Survey, and the relaunch of our social media accounts and the CEYC Blog.

The 2020–21 school year has presented us with challenges due to the COVID–19 Pandemic. The purpose of the initiative was to show youth how much they can create an impact, and how to join our organization in a meaningful and impactful manner. Our presentations were available in English, French, and Spanish, and had to be done through an online setting, usually over Google Meets being projected in classrooms. Though the number of presentations had decreased this year, we were able to complete 4 presentations at McNally Composite High School and City Hall School.

Our team also created, led three readings of, and passed a policy regarding the Release of Voting Committee Member Rights. This Policy, serving as a guiding document for future terms, outlines definitions, conditions for release and appointment, and an official release procedure for Voting Committee Members unable to fulfill their role, and how to appoint an Interim member in their place. Each reading at General Assembly meetings provided feedback for our team on how to improve the language that may be misinterpreted and inefficiently worded procedures, all to result in a final policy to be implemented in future terms.

CEYC this year implemented a demographics survey for members to fill out. It's important to note that although the survey itself was mandatory, none of the questions were mandatory, and members were free to answer whichever questions they were comfortable with completely anonymously. This survey addressed CEYC's demographics in terms of age, education, employment status, Indigenous Persons identification, minority groups and languages, area of residence, gender expression and sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and disability identification. Our team then filtered through the responses, and is currently creating strategies for more diversity in future member recruitment and school visits, based on the conclusions that were made.

After the hiatus with our blog due to the COVID–19 pandemic, we consistently posted a new blog post every Saturday centered around a variety of topics, including a feature of LGBTQ2S+ restaurants in Edmonton, book reviews, personal stories, online learning, sustainability, two poems written by one of our very own members, mental health, university, highschool graduation, and the municipal elections. This summer we started a new series: The Names Narrative, where CEYC members take some time to explain the history behind their names and what it means to them.

Working on the CEYC blog this term has been so deeply rewarding. As a collective, we have been able to showcase young writers in Edmonton while creating and contributing to a sense of community. As a lover of the written word, I took a leadership position with the blog in order to share my passion for writing as well as my love for Edmonton. I am proud of the growth, the passion and the community that our writers share with Edmontonians. Furthermore, I admire the vulnerability and depth of thought that blog contributors continue to put out, and I'm very excited for what's to come.

Sithara Naidoo

Blog Lead

Impact

33



Subcommittee Meetings



5800

Volunteer Hours

Record of groups presented to and presentations received:

- University of Alberta Students Union
- Faculty of Science, UofA
- Kickstand Alberta
- Health Law Institute, UofA
- PlantForever
- Paths for People
- Climate Justice Edmonton
- Reakash Walters
- Anti-Racism Advisory Committee (CoE)
- Utility Committee (CoE)
- Community and Public Services Committee (CoE)
- City Hall School (CoE)
- YWCA Edmonton
- Conseil Jeunesse de Montréal
- Recover Urban Wellbeing (CoE)
- Sister Cities of Nashville
- King's Centre for Visualization in Science, through Youth Empowering Greater Community Climate Solutions
- Dr. Amanda Brisebois, Medical Director at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital
- NextGen
- Slack
- Housing and Homelessness Team in the Social Development Branch (CoE)
- Future City Builders
- Community Standards and Neighbourhoods (CoE)
- Matthew Wood (Creeasian) City of Edmonton's Indigenous artist in residence
- Mayor Don Iveson
- NET Youth Liaisons
- Diplomat Consulting
- City of Lloydminster
- Edmonton Students Association
- Councillor Micheal Walters
- Councillor Andrew Knack

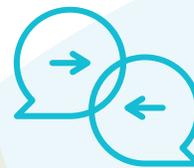
Number of Volunteers

20

VCMs

85

YALs



Policy responses to Council

2

Social Impact

Due to the pandemic the City of Edmonton Youth Council had been mandated off social media for over a year but that all changed March 14th when CEYC went live once more on our Twitter, Instagram, and Website. Since then CEYC has been active on all our accounts highlighting youth and causes close to Edmonton's heart.

Website Traffic

(March 14th - Aug 6th)

8,336 page views

3,113 site sessions

1,799 unique visitors

5 monthly newsletters with **1,815** views



Instagram

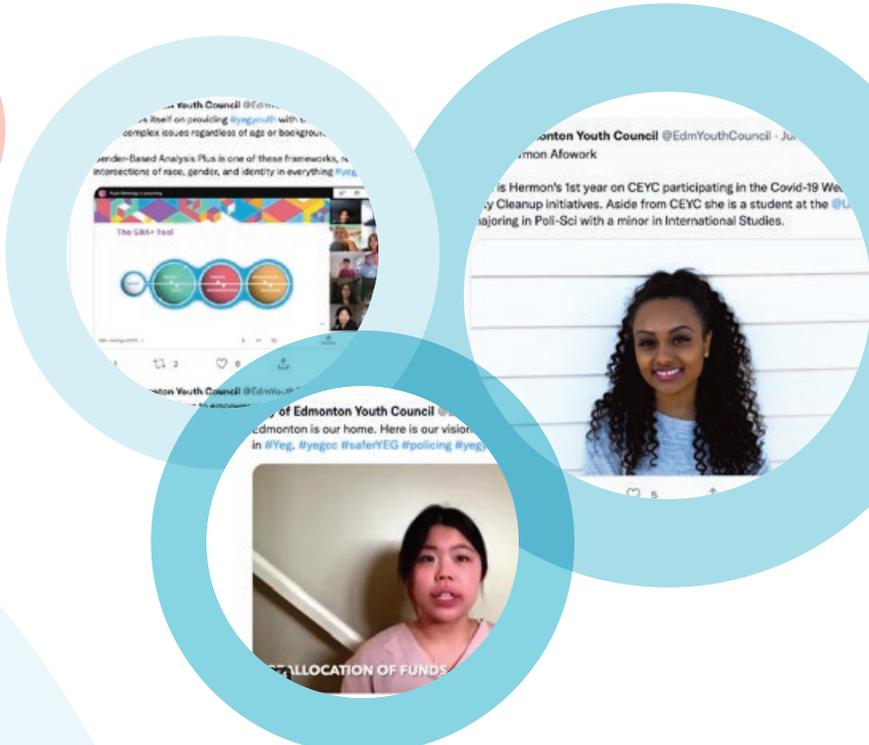
(March 14th - Aug 9th)

70 posts

19,634 accounts reached

32,920 impressions

1,680 followers



Twitter

(March 14th - Aug 9th)

666,700 impressions

285 tweets

110 mentions

14,000 profile visits

2,576 followers

Stay in Contact

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Edmonton