

“Empowering **youth** to take **action**”

Annual Report

2017



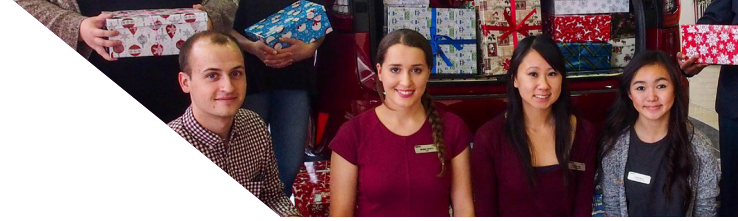


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Who is CEYC?

We're an advisory body to City Council whose work is underpinned by two pillars: policy and advocacy, and the production of initiatives and events. We've been representing the views, perspectives and aspirations of Edmontonians ages 13–23 since 1995. In accordance with our mandate, we engage in varied work to serve young citizens. We want your help to keep the heart of Alberta beating strong. We want to hear what you think about your city. Join us in building a brighter municipality. The CEYC meetings are open to the public and occur in the Heritage Room at City Hall on the first Wednesday of every month.



Our Mission

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

Our Mandate

Provide information and advice to Council in relation to issues involving or affecting Youth.

The goals that CEYC's sets out to achieve its mandate through are:

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



Membership

The City of Edmonton Youth Council consists of seventy volunteers, twenty of which were appointed Youth Councillors for the 2016–2017 term. Building on past years' success, CEYC retained Youth At Large members to support subcommittees and project teams on an ongoing or project based role. CEYC Chair Genna DiPinto and Vice-Chair Alex MacRae-Korobkov were elected to serve as the spokespersons and form the executive. Many exciting ideas and discussions followed, outlining the scope of work for the term.

This term, the CEYC included six subcommittees: Health and Wellness, Engagement and Outreach, Urban Planning Social Equity, Arts and Culture and Internal Affairs. Throughout the term there were approximately fifty Youth At Large (YAL) members who volunteered co-leading subcommittees and projects.

Membership for 2016–2017

Brianna Abboud, Saba Al Hammouri, Ravina Anand, Thomas Banks, Amy Boyd, Navneet Chand, Noella Chu, Genna DiPinto, Kasey Enokson, Jeffrey Fafard, Logan Fechter, Tina Gill, Kaelin Koufogiannakis, Tianna LeBlanc, Alex MacRae-Korobkov, Vivian Mak, Jainish Mehta, Joanne Picard, Armaan Somani and Alanna Yee.

Thanks to outgoing members for their valuable contributions to the community and CEYC: Saba Al Hammouri, Amy Boyd, Noella Chu, Jeffrey Fafard, Tina Gill, Tianna LeBlanc, Alex MacRae-Korobkov, Jainish Mehta and Alanna Yee.

Membership for 2017–2018

We welcome and congratulate new members who will commence their term on September 1, 2017: Hania Aamer, Shilar Bakayula, Kunal Chander, Madison Dube, Samuel Goertz, Sonia Lal, Sarah Lavimizadeh, Cheyenne Neufeld and Amber Sayed. CEYC received 40 applications for the vacant committee member positions in the Spring 2017 recruitment period.

City Council Liaison: Councillor Andrew Knack

City of Edmonton Project Team: Ian Smith, Elaine Betchinski

“Working with the CEYC was a very valuable experience. It provided me with a platform to make a difference in my community, and for that, I am grateful. I learned many new and important skills, and as such, believe that the CEYC is an excellent initiative.”

– Sophie Sigfstead, Youth-at-Large member

Message from CEYC Chair, Genna Di Pinto



A city that supports its citizens in times of need, celebrates diversity, and encourages new ways of thinking is one that thrives. Our city's youth are not only deserving of a thriving city but are some of the main drivers of this progress towards a better Edmonton.

This year, the City of Edmonton Youth Council focused on implementing

meaningful project work, gathering input from hundreds of our city's youth and taking action on important issues.

In April, I had the honour of speaking at the National Capital Commission in Ottawa about CEYC and was pleased to see how our council was perceived as an exemplary youth-representative body in Canada, and North America, in general.

As can be seen by our council's many and wide-ranging works that are outlined in this report, the benefits of including young people in governance are far-reaching and important to Edmontonians of all ages. Our successes this year can be attributed to the dedication and tireless efforts of our over 70 volunteers. Among these volunteers, a common vision and desire to make Edmonton a better place is what drives, and will continue to drive the City of Edmonton Youth Council in future years to come.

Message From Mayor Don Iveson

Being a community leader carries a heavy burden of responsibility. To be powerful advocates, representatives must always be looking to deepen their own understanding of the many issues at play in the community. This year, Edmonton's Youth Council has demonstrated its commitment to fulsome representation and advocacy by engaging our city's young people in important conversations on topics ranging from mental health to transit options to social equity. This team's dedicated efforts help to support the work of Council and empower Edmonton's young people to take on important municipal issues and shape the future of our city.





Initiatives

Go Edmonton

GO Edmonton was a social media campaign using a multi-faceted approach to educate Edmontonians, particularly youth, on the benefits of walking and biking and the use of streetscapes in Edmonton.

The campaign ran from January to June 2017 with the #GOyeg team meeting several times a month to discuss strategies. Go Edmonton combined educational posts and a survey to start a dialogue across social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

YegByYouth

YEGbyYouth is an online platform for youth across the city to share their stories and inspire others to make a positive difference. This year, dozens of stories were featured with a wide variety of themes ranging from community leadership to mental health to disability. The stories are profiled and shared on a public Facebook page. YEGbyYouth also creates opportunities for youth to network and learn more about the work of the Youth Council. This year marked a milestone for the project as the Facebook page surpassed 1,000 likes.

Instrument for Teens

This year, a project focused on music as a great way to express oneself, explore new ideas and to relieve stress. Unfortunately, music can be a costly activity and we as a committee wanted to reach out to youth who are unable to access music lessons or even have the opportunities to play. With help from our partners we created a drop-in night that allowed anyone, regardless of musical experience or financial situation, to come and learn some basic skills on the keyboard!

Ticket to Ride

On March 23rd, the Urban Planning Committee hosted the second Ticket to Ride fundraiser at Latitude 53. The evening featured live music, catering, prominent community members and a successful silent auction.

All of the proceeds from ticket sales and donations went towards purchasing ride fare for use by Youth Empowerment and Support Services (YESS), providing secure transportation for their clients to get to work, school, appointment or any other daily trips many take for granted.

Over two years, Ticket to Ride has received approximately \$11,000 in ticket sales and silent auction proceeds, which equates to 3,385 bus tickets for YESS' at-risk youth.

"Being part of CEYC is a memorable experience as you get to not only learn how to work together to improve our city, but also we get to be together as youth and express our voice. As a member at large of this council, I have been able to express myself and grow as person with the support of my colleagues!"

– Arnold Gihozo, Youth-at-Large member

NamastYEG

NamastYEG stemmed from a desire to provide students with techniques to deal with stressors – especially during exam season – and connect them to their individual physical and mental health. Yoga was chosen as it's something everyone can do, whether at a gym or at home. In addition to promoting the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, the instructor explained the cultural importance of yoga, providing historical context and appreciation. This free event in Churchill Square was attended by 40 people and garnered much attention by passersby interested in joining and finding out more about CEYC. The feedback received was very useful in evaluating the project and included inclusion of partnerships and ideas to raise awareness of youth health and wellness.

Affordable Recreational Pass Survey

The Affordable Recreation project is an initiative encouraging youth input on the affordability and accessibility of recreation in Edmonton. The goal was to create a survey and get a large number of diverse youth responses so we could draw valid conclusions. More than 500 responses were received and prioritized into three main categories: frequency of attendance, barriers to attendance and affordability. The survey was promoted via social media, at various youth events and schools. The findings were summarized to determine future focus areas for the City of Edmonton Youth Council.

"Having the opportunity to be the Project Lead for GO Edmonton was an incredible experience. Working together with a team of passionate young people, GO Edmonton was able to engage other Edmontonians on the issues of walkability and bikeability in our city. I am proud of all the terrific work that the GO Edmonton and CEYC team did this year."

– Sam Goertz, Youth-at-Large member

Step Up YEG

StepUpYEG encouraged commuters to take the stairs instead of the elevator in LRT stations in an attempt to promote positive mental and physical health among all Edmontonians, with a specific focus on youth.

Through a partnership with Pattison Outdoor Advertising, the City of Edmonton and Edmonton Transit System, CEYC posted 22 digital advertising stickers on the staircase leading from the LRT pedway to the University Transit Centre. These stickers included motivational messages such as "Just keep stepping! Step Right Up!" along with engaging questions, such as "Have you thought about your health today?" By adding colourful designs and inspirational messaging to an initially dark and dull space, StepUpYEG revitalized the surroundings of the University Transit Centre.

Following the launch, surveys were conducted on-site on different days, at varying times for an hour each day. The survey evaluated the work done with respect to the stairs and their efficacy, and included questions such as "Do you feel that the design of the stairs benefit your mental/physical health?" More than 30 survey results were collected over the course of two weeks, and all the responses were taken back to the committee. The project was an overwhelming success and created a positive impact towards creating a vibrant and activated public space.





What Moves Youth

In order to gauge youth perspectives on the City of Edmonton's new Transit Strategy, the Urban Planning subcommittee set out to conduct a city-wide survey for youth ages 13–24. Spanning five months, the team worked with the Transit Strategy team, City of Edmonton Administration and the Edmonton Insight Community to craft a survey to provide valuable insights on how to evolve Edmonton's transit system with the youth perspective in mind. After an eight week social media campaign and in-person surveying, 600 responses were collected and used to create a [Memo and Findings Attachment](#).

The findings were sent and presented alongside the Transit Strategy to the Urban Planning committee of City Council.

This was the largest survey in the history of the City of Edmonton Youth Council. The findings of What Moves Youth continue to be a valuable resource for Planners, City Council and Edmonton Transit Strategy regarding youth input on the future of Edmonton's transit system.

Youth Poet Laureate

The Youth Poet Laureate brings their unique voice to the city and serves as an ambassador for the literary arts, incorporating poetry into a range of official and informal city activities. Their role is to reflect the life of a city for youth through readings of poetry at public events.

After great success from the first year, Nasra Adem was selected as the second Youth Poet Laureate for 2016–2017 term. Nasra is a multidisciplinary artist, winner of the Edmonton Poetry Slam and has performed her work at many national events. She believes the power that the youth wield, their passion for change, their newness and hope, their intelligence and fire is something Edmonton should both fear and be in awe of.

Medically Supervised Injection Services

City Council voted to seek federal approval for three proposed supervised injection sites and CEYC decided to further investigate this issue and its impact on youth. CEYC discovered these sites acted as preventative, harm-reduction spaces and reduced both youth overdose mortality rates and costs related to unsafe injections.

The CEYC created a memorandum and presented it to City Council outlining the results of its investigation into establishing safe injection sites. CEYC looks forward to being involved in the conversations surrounding supporting the well being of Edmontonians struggling with addiction.

Vote 16

The CEYC believes a lower voting age enhances the legitimacy, representation and democratic virtue of a municipal election. The CEYC is actively advocating for the voting age to be changed from 18 to 16 for municipal elections. Last term, Edmonton's City Council and Catholic School Board sent a letter in support of this to the Alberta Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and this term saw the Edmonton Public School Board follow suit. Today, City Council and both school boards stand united in requesting a reduced voter age as a result of the CEYC's advocacy.

A lower voting age is a change which would re-energise engagement in our municipal democracy. We need the support of other Albertan cities to help the provincial authorities legislate. Our call to action is to go out and consult the research and support us.

Subcommittees

Arts & Culture

The Arts and Culture Committee focuses on bringing art into the streets of Edmonton and the lives of youth. The subcommittee believes art is an essential part of one's overall well-being and wanted to ensure all youth have the opportunity to access it!



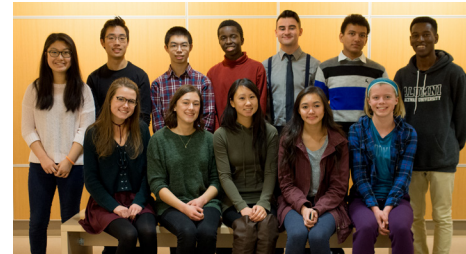
Engagement & Outreach

The Engagement and Outreach Subcommittee strives to encourage youth to become more involved in the affairs of our municipality. The committee was pleased to attend events, deliver presentations and visit schools throughout the term in the hopes that through connecting with the broader community we might all come together to build a stronger, more vibrant municipality.



Health & Wellness

The Health and Wellness Committee creates initiatives to change and increase awareness for how youth are impacted by mental and physical health. The goal is to achieve a stronger, happier and healthier city by promoting the importance of health in everyday life. By ensuring that youth are able to recognize mental and physical health issues, they become better equipped to access resources necessary to deal with these concerns.



Internal Affairs

The 2016–2017 term saw the formation of a new committee, Internal Affairs, whose members sought to progressively improve the governance and organisation of CEYC. Internal Affairs introduced standardised accountability measures, modernised the Youth Council website, reformed application processes and ensured the openness of internal materials and data. The committee will continue to advance Youth Council as an effective, accountable, transparent body which fully represents our great city and its young citizens.

Social Equity

The Social Equity subcommittee raises public awareness regarding issues facing vulnerable youth in the local community. They help empower underrepresented groups to engage in local governance and to speak up about the social equity issues they face in order to eliminate them. With the aim to utilize local partnerships and collaborations to advocate for social equity issues facing local youth, we strive for a community that is open-minded and welcoming.

Urban Planning

The Urban Planning committee focuses on engaging Edmonton youth on civic issues related to infrastructure, urban design, sustainability and placemaking. From walkable streets to City Hall solar panels to transit accessibility for underprivileged youth, the committee's past projects have spanned a wide range of topics and perspectives.

Final Thoughts

This past term, the City of Edmonton Youth Council had many accomplishments. Beyond achieving policy and project goals, the Council connected with community organizations, welcomed many new members and had representation at events both locally and nationally.

With this success has come the need to grow and adjust in order to increase efficiency and to include as many youth as possible in our work. Structural adaptations were a key focus for this past term and will continue to be in the upcoming term. Creating a new website, reviewing our application and selection processes, standardizing project proposals and streamlining timelines for subcommittee initiation and member appointments are all examples of these improvements. This upcoming term, we hope to continue this work in order to make our Council more accessible, more inclusive, and better suited to support all of our volunteers. The City of Edmonton Youth Council has proven that young people with a vision can make great change for Edmontonians both young and old. We invite all Edmonton youth to join our efforts and be a part of making our city the best city it can be.

“Collaborating with Youth Council on the What Moves Youth project was a fantastic experience. We worked together to align the Youth Council's interest in transit with our work in order to enhance the youth perspective on the Transit Strategy. The youth did a phenomenal job reaching out to a wide group of youth and interpreting the results to inform City policy decisions.”

– Sarah Feldman, Supervisor, Policy Development, City Planning, City of Edmonton

Message from the Designer

This year the CEYC and City of Edmonton collaborated to bring a unique element to the design of the Annual Report. A process was developed where a youth was selected and mentored throughout the creative design process. This resulted in a youth gathering the experience of this type of project and gaining insight from a professional designer. The designer, Ravin Perera, explained what the experience was like for him.

“It has been such a wonderful experience working on the design of the Annual Report for CEYC. During the design process, I had the opportunity to work with a designer from the City of Edmonton, where I was able to experience what design is like in a professional environment. I am grateful to CEYC for providing opportunities such as this for youth designers.”

– Ravin Perera

Come chat with us

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