

# 2018 FINAL REPORT 30NETWORK ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



CO-HOSTED BY

## CITYHIVE & YOUTHFULCITIES



CityHive





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# ABOUT THE 30NETWORK

The 30Network is a pop-up think-and-do-tank for 30 young Metro Vancouverites under 30 to learn more about a civic issue and build creative solutions to address it in collaboration with key partners in the region. In Spring 2017, CityHive and YouthfulCities cohosted the first 30Network on Housing and Affordability in Metro Vancouver. This report tells the story of the second 30Network run in Metro Vancouver during Spring 2018, this time focussed on the issue of civic engagement.

Youth and young adults are impacted by municipal governments and political decisions they often have little influence in shaping. They can be negatively labelled as apathetic and disengaged from civic life, particularly from political processes. When digging into the reasons why young people are one of the demographics that vote the least, the most reported barriers include a lack of knowledge on the issues, being too busy, and direct conflicts with work and school commitments. With the Fall 2018 municipal elections in BC rapidly approaching, there was no better time to build literacy around civic engagement and to catalyze collective action.

By empowering 30 young people to co-create projects that will impact civic engagement in their communities and the region, we challenged the narrative of apathetic youth and sought to engage and inspire all citizens to have agency in municipal affairs. We each have ideas and experiences that can help build our community connections with cities, and the intent of the 30Network was to catalyze these ideas into action with the support of community partners.



# ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS



**CityHive**

CityHive is on a mission to transform the way that young people are engaged in shaping their cities, including planning, decision making, urban sustainability issues and other civic processes. We are a Metro Vancouver-based non-profit that works with municipal governments and city-shaping institutions to create meaningful youth engagement practices, and simultaneously works with young people to provide opportunities to address urban challenges.

With a knack for convening, community-building and tackling complex challenges, we act as a bridge builder between institutions and young people, to harness the immense untapped energy, talent and brilliance of young people.



YouthfulCities strives to engage youth ages 15-29 and other urban influencers to create cities that have strong youthful infrastructure and a positive youthful attitude to increase both prosperity and happiness. To achieve our mission, Youthful Cities has designed programs that build a unique base of urban knowledge while engaging youth to design and develop innovative solutions. The Urban Index measures the youthful infrastructure of cities through more than 120 credibly sourced comparable empirical indicators. The Urban Survey brings the voice of youth to their cities through an authoritative and comprehensive opinion survey. The Urban Decoder Lab enables youth through a pop-up “think and do tank” co-creation model to affect change in their cities. Having conducted 30 Networks in Toronto, London, Caracas, Bogota, Quito, and Johannesburg, they are experts in engaging youth to solve local problems and come up with local solutions.



# THE PROCESS

## Looking Back at 2017

While various iterations of the 30Networks have been held in Toronto, London, Caracas, Bogota, Quito, and Johannesburg, 2017 was the first year CityHive & YouthfulCities co-hosted a 30Network in Metro Vancouver, BC. The conversations with participants and feedback shared through our post-program survey from alumni of the 2017 network were invaluable in the planning and shaping of this year's 30Network. In early 2018, we formed a steering committee with alumni from the 2017 30Network cohort who met several times to advise on the planning of the 2018 program. We heard that that project teams felt rushed, and would have benefitted from having more time, mentorship and support mechanisms to develop their projects. We also heard that having up to 3 weeks between sessions made it difficult to keep momentum on the projects. Finally, there was an expressed need for ongoing support post-30Network. To address these needs, we made the following programmatic adjustments to our 2018 30Network:

**We added an extra session and brought in many mentors and thought leaders.**

**We condensed the program so that each session was no more than 2 weeks apart from one another.**

**We developed an ongoing Youth Hub model that provides engagement and support.**



# THE PROCESS

## 2018 Program Design

The 30Network on Civic Engagement took place over 6 sessions from March to May 2018, including a kick-off evening, four full-days Saturday sessions, and a public launch event. Each session was designed sequentially to walk the cohort from understanding the issues to producing relevant, solution-oriented projects that could then land on the ground, using an A to D framework:

### A-D

1. Where are we **At** and where do we want to **Be**?
2. What can we **Create** together?
3. How to **Develop** these projects?
4. How do we **Deliver** it?

# THE PROCESS



## Selection

We selected our 30 under 30 through an extensive application process which included shortlisted interviews. We selected candidates based on interest and commitment to the issue as well as diversity in age, gender, race, life experience, field of interest, and education. The result was 30 extraordinary, diverse urban leaders who you can learn more about at [www.cityhive.ca/30network/cohort](http://www.cityhive.ca/30network/cohort).



# SESSIONS

## Session 1: 30Network Kick-Off

March 28th, 2018 (6-9pm) @ HCMA Architecture & Design

Our 30Network kick-off was designed to unite the cohort with a shared sense of purpose by co-creating a community agreement about how they wanted to work together and by building strong connections between cohort members. Each participant brought two items—one old, one new—and shared a story about something that has been with them for a long time and something that has come to them recently. We spent some time sharing personal understanding and connection to civic engagement and hopes for the program.

We quickly learned that we had different experiences of belonging and community, as well as different ideas about whether it mattered to vote and participate in civic issues. Overall, the consensus was that youth voices mattered in civic discourse and decision-making, even though we did not always feel treated that way. Finally, there was an expressed desire to examine the privilege and positionality of folks in the room and to reflect on those who were not there. Recognizing that there were many missing voices in the room, we invited each cohort member to interview 3-5 people from different living situations and socio-economic backgrounds in between the first and the second session. The questions in the survey or interview process were built together by compiling suggestions from each of the cohort members, so each interview explored the same 10 questions.





## Session 2: Where Are We At and Where Do We Want to Be? Saturday, April 7th (9-5pm) @ City of North Vancouver City Hall

After Session 1's group discussion, cohort members conducted surveys or interviews. By Session 2, 153 interviews were conducted, the responses were analyzed, and the key findings were reported back to the group. The cohort then gave their edits to the key findings, which are summarized here (please contact us for the full interview questions and result data):

78% of individuals surveyed were born between 1988-1996, 56% lived in Metro Vancouver, 20% were Caucasian, and the gender split was equal.

People rated voting in a federal and provincial election as a more important form of civic engagement than voting in a municipal election.

When asked what gave the largest feeling of belonging, participants rated community events as the largest factor, followed by volunteering and work.

When asked to agree or disagree with the statement 'I feel my city government listens to me', only 10% responded yes.

The biggest barrier among this group to being civically engaged was a lack of time (119/154), although other barriers exist for marginalized folks.

56% of respondents said they sometimes find the city a lonely place.



# SESSIONS

'Transparency' was deemed the most important factor that builds trust in city governments; a 'lack of transparency' and 'broken promises' were deemed the most important factors that erode trust.

72% of respondents said they are planning on voting in the next municipal election.

\* Please note that a sample size of 153 is by no means representative of the region and therefore, we have not shared the results of this survey publicly. This exercise was meant more as a tool to demonstrate to our cohort that while they are not "experts", their shared lived experiences were equally valuable and would help inform the development of their projects.

Through thought leaders, insights from the interview process, and the cohort's lived experiences, the first part of Session 2 was designed to explore the current civic engagement landscape and present a snapshot of where we were at. Our selected thought leaders including Juliana Buitenhuis from the City of North Vancouver, Alexander Dirksen from the BC First Nations Tech Council, Tara Mahoney from Gen Why Media, and Paul Hendren from the City of Vancouver Elections Outreach Team shared their personal understanding of civic engagement. They covered ongoing and pre-election civic engagement from a variety of perspectives, including the city, community organizing, academia, and reconciliation. Our cohort then had the chance to chat with the speakers in smaller, more intimate groups and to dig deeper into the challenges raised. The cohort had a chance to reflect individually on their conversations and then map out collaboratively "the good, the bad, and the ugly" of the current reality for several target audiences.

Building on the morning's activities, the second part of the day challenged the cohort to ask ourselves: where do we want to be instead? If we had the chance to reimagine the civic engagement landscape in the city, what would it look like for various audiences? The target audiences identified by the group to discuss further were youth including: first-timers, pre-voting age youth, busy Millennials, folks with mental and health barriers, immigrants and refugees, and racialized and other marginalized groups. The vision of a civically engaged society was then created with these target audiences in mind.



# SESSIONS

## Session 3: What Do We Want to Create Together? Saturday, April 14th (9-5pm) @ CityStudio

In this session, participants moved to creative idea generation, building off of the discussions of the previous sessions. The cohort generated several hundreds of ideas in the matter of an hour through an 'idea blast'. Smaller teams were responsible for refining the ideas into their top five, which were all pitched back to the group. Those top ideas were voted on through an interactive dotmocracy activity to narrow down the list to the top 10.

After lunch, 30Network participants self-selected into the projects and groups of their choice and had the rest of the afternoon to identify their problem framing, refine their ideas to a basic concept, and present it back to the group for feedback. By the end of the day, eight teams had formed—each with three to seven members, a solid idea, and next steps.



# SESSIONS

## Session 4: What Do We Want to Develop?

Saturday, April 21st (9-5pm) @ City of Vancouver City Hall

This was a full-day working session for the teams to further define and refine their projects through the use of a project framework and with the support of project mentors from the community and 30Network advisory committee.

Each team pitched their further refined project and got feedback from their peers, the project mentors, and the 30Network Organizing Team.

### ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Jeremy Stone (SFU)
- Murray Mollard (North Shore Community Resources)
- Paul Hendren (City of Vancouver)
- Juliana Buitenhuis (City of North Vancouver)
- Aaron Lao (30Network Alumni and City of Vancouver)
- Emily Rennalls (30Network Alumni and DIALOG)
- Julia Gellman (EvergreenBC)



# SESSIONS

## Session 5: How Do We Deliver It?

Saturday, May 5 (9-5pm) @ HCMA Architecture + Design

New to the 2018 cohort, this additional session was provided for teams to further refine their project and pitch. A new group of project mentors circulated to give feedback based on their expertise, and included:

### PROJECT MENTORS

- Tamara Connell (SFU RADIUS)
- Alan Chen (City of Vancouver)
- Leah Bae (Global Shapers and Civic Tech)
- Fiona Jones, Joshua Potvin, and Rob Thompson (HCMA Architecture + Design)
- Aaron Robinson (Metro Vancouver)



# LAUNCH EVENT

## Here To Stay: Youth Solutions for an Engaged City Wednesday, May 16th (6-9pm) @ SFU Segal

At the conclusion of our 30Network process, we convened Here to Stay: Youth Solutions for an Engaged City to launch the 8 projects emerging from the 30Network. Audience members from across the community learned more about the 30Network process, heard each team pitch their projects and answer questions from the judges (selected community leaders), voted for their favourite team, and celebrated their accomplishments.

Two projects—MentAlly and accessCITY—were selected by the panel of judges, and the CityHive Fellowship was selected for the People’s Choice. Each judge had an opportunity to provide feedback and support. The night ended with a social with the 30Network and partners, and opportunity for projects to connect with community members and experts who could support teams in carrying their projects forward.

The evening was a resounding success with powerful conversations, a diverse audience, and strong momentum in favour of the 30Network to continue the important work they’d initiated in the cohort.

**170  
attendees**

**3 project  
winners**



# THE PARTNERS

## Presenting Partner



## Major Partners



## Event Partners





# THE PARTNERS

Pulling off this 30Network was truly a community effort. CityHive and YouthfulCities co-lead the planning, development, and implementation of the entire 30Network process. We convened a group of stellar partners including our presenting partner, the City of North Vancouver, and our major partners: Generation Squeeze, the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association, Landlord BC, the Landlord Registry, and the Real Estate Foundation of BC. We also had event partners including HCMA Architecture + Design, City of Vancouver, CityStudio, SFU RADIUS and SFU Public Square, who offered mentorship, space, and/or other forms of in-kind support.

Beyond their financial contributions, partners were also invited to participate in various ways during the process. Some talked about their civic engagement work to the cohort on behalf of their organization, others mentored the teams as their projects developed, and some partners helped judge the projects at the public launch event in mid-May. We are so grateful to each of our partners for their involvement throughout the 30Network process!

Each of our partners was actively highlighted throughout the 30Network process via Facebook, Twitter, our in-session content, media interviews, branding, the Launch Event, and in thanks after the cohort. Through sharing our supporters and modelling collaborative work, we hope to be collectively shaping the narrative around meaningful youth engagement in urban issues. Our story-telling and sharing of our partners reached approximately 15,500 people, with 18,900 post engagements.





# THE PROJECTS

In total, eight projects emerged from the 30Network process.

1. **CityHive Fellowship** is a 1-year paid leadership program for underrepresented youth in Metro Vancouver that's grounded in an intersectional, indigenizing, and intergenerational framework. This Fellowship aims to demystify civic institutions and center relationship-building.

3. **accessCITY** is an interactive wayfinding tool that empowers people with accessibility needs to feel more confident in their daily commutes. By clearly identifying sidewalk infrastructure deficits, accessCITY allows users to visualize their walking routes and navigate their city's walkways based on their own mobility concerns.

2. **MentAlly** is a youth-supporting-youth relationship that provides those facing mental health barriers with tools and services that solidify their ability, autonomy and confidence to vote independently during federal, provincial and local elections. The design, construction, deployment and improvement of these low effort, high impact tools and services are managed by the youth in our community with the knowledge and oversight of local mental health organizations and post-secondary institutions.

4. **Vancity Snaps** are community animators that implement creative interventions to engage jugglers (busy bodies in their 20-30s with multiple interests and commitments) on their day-to-day journeys on topics that impact their community.



# THE PROJECTS

5. **Bring Your Own Suitcase** is an interactive series of events which aims to use storytelling as a means of building community and helping migrants collectively contribute and pull from a community of knowledge, resources and wisdom. BYOS aims to show and share not just what was in the suitcase, but all the invisible wealth of knowledge, resources and wisdom newcomers and migrants have brought with them.

7. **Count Me In** is a project that aims to inform people between 24-35 about civic engagement opportunities by reaching them at the workplace and third place.

6. **Icebreakers** is an event series that fosters dialogue and understanding on pressing municipal issues through nostalgic board games.

8. **Young Arrivals** paves the way for international students to feeling included and becoming civically engaged in Metro Vancouver. The project seeks to be the first point of contact for international students arriving in Vancouver—welcoming them at YVR Airport with an umbrella, a symbol of Vancouver to jumpstart their life in beautiful British Columbia. Connection to key resources, along with ongoing engagement through a peer mentorship model, will empower international students as vital members of a multicultural community.

For full details about each project, please visit our CityHive 30Network projects page: [www.cityhive.ca/30network/projects](http://www.cityhive.ca/30network/projects).



Another legacy of the 30Network is how we reshaped the narrative around Millennials being leaders, rather than apathetic, through media that we generated and co-produced. The story of the 30Network lives on our CityHive Facebook page photos, our tweets, through our video, and on our blogs about the sessions. Our 30Network story was also featured on Business in Vancouver, Roundhouse Radio & CBC.

**“[Youth are] going to be a major demographic in the years to come, making up 75% of the workforce in the year 2025. Those are critical numbers. That gives us seven years to engage and make sure we have that leadership.”**

Charles Gauthier, President of the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association, in *Business in Vancouver* article about the 30Network



# FEEDBACK

The primary purpose of the 30Network was to educate, support, and amplify the 30 young leaders from across the Metro Vancouver interested in tackling civic disengagement. The program was set up to support their learning and development, and enable their work on this issue. In order to evaluate the impact of this program on the individuals involved, we conducted a follow-up survey with the option of having an in-person discussion instead for those who were interested.

74% said that they would recommend the 30Network to a friend or colleague (the remaining 21% said depending, only 1 person said 'no').

On average, each participant reported having gained 7 strong connections to their peers and community after the program.

**84% of them wanted to stay involved with CityHive.**

Written answers from the survey questions include:

“My relationship with my community feels stronger. I feel a greater responsibility for the community in which I live and a greater sense of ability to affect change there. I feel more confident discussing civic engagement with my peers and acting upon these discussions. I also feel like I know my city better. I think I have a better understanding of what local organizations can further support my civic engagement and which ones I can help.”



# FEEDBACK

“I feel more connected to the city. Through the new peers I met, I'm more engaged with their habits and activities. I actually bumped into Paul Hendren the other day while he was helping out at a booth. We had a good chat about our work which otherwise wouldn't have happened if I didn't participate.”

“I came into the Network thinking that civic engagement had to look a certain way and involve specific types of people. I was reminded over and over by my peers that civic engagement is truly about the redistribution of power. That is how I now see civic engagement.”

## When asked if the program met their expectations:

“Above and beyond. I've done think tank and design builds before but there was always a looming sense of apathy during the process. I felt that no matter what I came up with I knew the others involved would not be interesting in seeing the design, initiative etc through to fruition. 30Network was different and so so refreshing! I can actually see my initiative existing in the near future!”

We acknowledge that the scope and timeline of impact extends beyond what can be captured in a survey completed directly after the 30Network process. Already from the 2017 30Network, we continue to receive feedback anecdotally of connections leading to work opportunities, new collaborations and projects, community-based initiatives, breaking down silos between sectors and a new sense of civic agency, capacity and skills. In our ongoing evaluation of our work, we will continue to monitor the progress of 30Network participants and projects.



# WHAT'S NEXT?

Each of the eight project teams is launching their project, with the support of partners and key stakeholders. Four of the eight projects have already received \$1,500 each in funding for their projects from TakingITGlobal, and the City of North Vancouver has committed to supporting two of the projects. We've invited each of our partners to consider which projects might be relevant to their work, or which project they might be interested in supporting in some capacity, and to reach out to us to be connected with them.

## Contact Us

If you are interested in hearing more details, insights or information about the 30Network process, or you're keen to be a part of a future 30Network or other youth engagement initiative with CityHive and Youthful Cities, feel free to reach us at [tesicca@cityhive.ca](mailto:tesicca@cityhive.ca) and [veronika@cityhive.ca](mailto:veronika@cityhive.ca).

We're always happy to chat.