

**RESILIENT
COMMUNITIES**



**CITY
SHAPERS**

YOUTH VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

**CITY SHAPERS:
RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**
MAY-JUNE 2020



CITYHIVE

CityHive is a youth-led and youth-run organization on a mission to transform how young people are engaged in cities, including planning, decision making and other civic processes. We do so through education, and by providing opportunities for civic-minded youth to get involved in shaping their cities. We also help institutions and organizations create meaningful engagement opportunities, through youth engagement consulting and implementation services.

PARTNERS

Founded in 2000, the **Simon Fraser University (SFU) Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue** acts as a hub for dialogue and engagement initiatives. As a trusted convener, we create a space for respectful conversations between diverse stakeholders, where mutual curiosity and collaborative inquiry act as alternatives to adversarial approaches.

The **Strengthening Canadian Democracy Initiative** is researching what is driving views of democracy and what is shaping our democratic culture for better or for worse. We develop collaborations with institutions, practitioners, and citizens, including CityHive's City Shapers program. We then evaluate the results of these collaborations to identify what works, when, and how to improve democracy.

The City Shapers program is delivered with support from the **Vancouver Foundation**.



CITY SHAPERS

City Shapers is a cohort-based civic education program for young adults ages 18-30. This program was created to provide participants with a better understanding of civic processes through the exploration of a specific urban issue.

Through May and June 2020, the City Shapers: Resilient Communities cohort delved into what it takes to create resilience in our economy, democracy, and society.

Over the first four weeks of the program the cohort heard from a variety of guests from academia, community organizing, business, and elected office. In the second half of the program the cohort switched gears to develop their own vision statements and policy recommendations for resilient cities.

On June 24th, 2020 they presented their visions and recommendations for resilient post-COVID cities to decision makers from across the Metro Vancouver region.

These are their visions for the future.

YOUTH & SPACE

We envision a city where youth feel connected and empowered, physically, culturally and socially in their urban and natural environments.

We recommend and support improved access to youth organised programming, which provide youth with connections, skills, and empowerment that allow youth to take care of themselves as well as their environments.

Short-term policy recommendations:

- Providing a platform for current resources related to wellness activities in green spaces (yoga, running clubs, volunteering, gardening, etc.)
- Creating a map of parks and their outdoor resources to reference (trails, fields, flowers, etc.)
- Recognizing and supporting organizations that are already working in the intersections of physical and intellectual access to green spaces and environmental issues.
 - EYA, Hua Foundation, Shades of Sustainability
 - Our Community Bike, UBC Bike Kitchen

Long-term policy recommendations:

- 'Youth Oriented Planning'
- Foster the creation of more organizations
 - Funding like small neighborhood grants
 - Toolkit
- Collection of intergenerational stories related to green spaces (tree planting, outdoor protests, drum circles)
- Partnerships with organisations that can help support programming both digitally and in person (talks and lectures about indigenous plants and their traditional uses, art or poetry sessions that contribute to place belonging and building, etc.)

THE ECONOMY

We envision cities where equity is essential to economic resilience.

We envision a city where barriers keeping people in poverty are removed so that the most vulnerable are assisted in economic self-determination.

Policy recommendations:

- TRANSIT: Implement #AllOnBoard campaign in Metro Vancouver
 - Free transit for students and youth
 - Sliding scale monthly pass based on income
 - Restorative justice options as an alternative to fare evasion tickets
- UTILITY: Free wifi access

We envision a city where people working in the gig economy have protection and opportunity to earn a liveable income.

Policy recommendations:

- Support and fund programs to educate workers on workers rights
- Establish an overarching agency to oversee ALL gig workers, regardless of industry or sector.
 - e.g. non-industry specific version of BC Arts Council
- Disability designated rental units must be rented at the PWD shelter rate to all persons with income under \$35,490.
- Request research on both above and under-the-table gig work performed by all persons with disabilities in Metro Vancouver.

THE ECONOMY

We envision a city where local businesses are thriving and are able to stay resilient through community partnerships.

Policy recommendations:

- Create strategic partnerships between businesses and NGOs to enable talent sharing in times of crises.
- Link businesses and residents to essential services being provided in the community.
- Turn to locals to use historic buildings for new businesses.
 - Collaborate with tech and creatives
 - BC Film industry
 - Dedicated office space is a luxury

Economic equity in building housing to boom local talent

Policy recommendations:

- Focus on who are in communities now that need housing
- Rent rates tied to lowest average income in Metro Vancouver
- Human centered design based on community, green space, and happiness
- Effective on Transit Oriented Development



DEMOCRACY

Community Connections

We envision a city ecosystem where the government works collaboratively with the community to build and nurture democracy into the fabric of our societies.

Policy recommendation:

- We recommend inclusive democratic participation in community issues through consultation and project collaboration with diverse community ambassadors.

Creating a Sustainable Democracy

In order to have a sustainable and resilient democracy, we envision cities where municipal officials take a "proactive" approach to governance wherein they actively try to understand what challenges will be emerging in the next 10-20 years in their local communities rather than taking a "reactive" approach to governance wherein they solely respond to the challenges that they see arising in the community.

Policy recommendation:

- Cities must conduct studies into the potential challenges to ensuring a community survives through a crisis and be required to set in motion achievable strategies to alleviate them. These achievable strategies should be trust-based and could be in domains such as pandemic response, infrastructure resilience, economic security, public trust and confidence, and limiting the disproportionate impact of crises on marginalized communities.

DEMOCRACY

Ensuring Public Engagement

We envision a city where governments actively try to prioritize the recruitment of young adults to serve on city council and committees/advisory bodies in order to diversify the age groups which are represented in the respective population.

Policy recommendation:

- Mandate governing bodies to provide relevant information about campaigns for city council to younger audiences and advise/encourage them on joining committees with the help of active support systems and mentorships to ensure engagement, callouts asking for applications from young adults, honorarium or stipend benefits for the youth and young adults active in city councils.

We envision a city where a healthy trustworthy relationship exists between the citizens and government that follows the model of an “open democracy”. Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany described this being “about explaining our political decisions and [making] them transparent. That we do all we can to justify and communicate our actions, so they are understandable.”

Policy recommendation:

- Mandate policies enforcing open democracies, where governments are open and transparent about their political decisions to justify and effectively communicate their actions social media tools, simple language, and practical examples.

DEMOCRACY

Civic Education

We envision a city where there is a strong emphasis on fostering democratic values and knowledge of the democratic process at a young age. Specifically, we envision a society where there is adequate civic education in secondary schools, where youth are taught about and encouraged to participate in democratic systems. We hope this will generate strong cohorts of informed and empowered young citizens that are willing and able to engage with their municipal governments and the democratic process throughout their lives.

Policy recommendation:

- Mandate school boards to develop and deliver a civic education curriculum for secondary school students that is municipality-specific and which can enable students to have an understanding of the composition of city governments and ways they can participate in it.
- Ensure that teachers are well-supported to deliver this curriculum with appropriate professional development in the subject matter and resources to access throughout the teaching process

We envision a city where civic education can be fostered through everyday social institutions (ex. schools, community centres, libraries, and public space).

Policy recommendation:

- We recommend increased investments in civic education programming in our everyday social institutions such as: schools (which can foster civic literacy in young people), libraries (free access to knowledge), community centres (community/recreational programming, meeting new people in the community), and public spaces (facilitates knowledge exchange, activates participation).

DEMOCRACY

Transparency and Accessibility of Government

We envision a city where information about the workings of government (and local public good administrators e.g. school boards) are easily available and provided in an accessible format to encourage greater participation from constituents/ the public in the decision making process.

Policy recommendation:

- Provincial and municipal governments ensure that relevant information that are deliberated amongst elected representatives and the administrative body (civil service) are accessible to the general public. Governing bodies ensure that information is presented in a clear manner which is easily discernible by the public. This includes translating information into the various languages that are spoken by the population as well as presenting information in an appropriate format for those who are differently abled.

We envision a city where greater accessibility to government and larger participation amongst the public in the decision making process is prioritized.

Policy recommendation:

- With information pertaining to the background/ context of issues/ concerns supplied in advance, the public will be provided the opportunity to weigh in on discussions held in council/ boards. Adequate time should be provided for this and accessibility needs (i.e. translators, interpreters, child minders, transit tickets, wheelchair ramps) accommodated.
 - Efforts will be made to host hearings, consultations at a time and place that many members of the public are able to gather. Where a member of the public is unable to attend in person alternative methods to voice concerns/ provide feedback must be provided.

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Public Spaces

We envision a neighbourhood community in which every planning detail is illustrative of citizen equity, where new urban policy and design show equal representation and consideration of all users within the space. Utilizing universal design principles, public spaces are created through inclusive and meaningful community consultation in order to fully reflect the unique needs and wants of the community.

We envision a neighbourhood community that prioritizes innovative public spaces and facilities that are inclusive, open and accessible to all. These truly public spaces are built around creative and engaging new uses of social infrastructure and foster connection between people with no required financial commitment to access, recognizing the value of social profitability over an exclusively economic perspective. Neighbourhoods built on walkability and convenient access to transit services allow community members to access all needs within a walkable/rollable radius and encourage spontaneous interactions between residents.

Communication

We envision a neighbourhood community that is empowered to support each other during crises and recovery, through pre-built relationships and local knowledge sharing.

We envision a neighbourhood with a communication channel that provides equal access to information, consultation, and resource sharing on both online and offline platforms - with the capacity within community members to identify and help the vulnerable group without internet access on time.

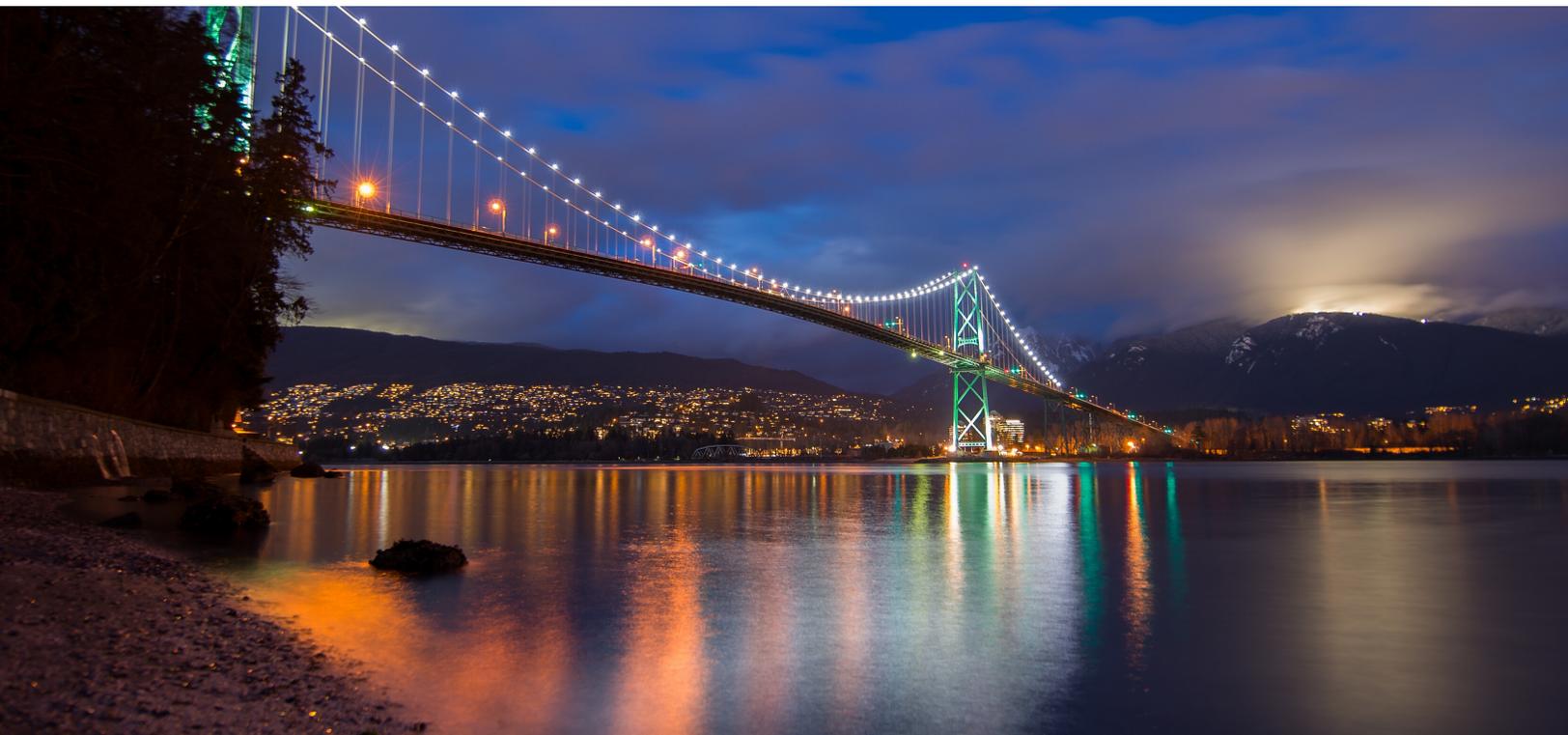
NEIGHBOURHOODS

Resource Sharing

We envision a neighbourhood where all individuals have access to healthy, culturally appropriate, fresh food through different avenues within their neighbourhood, while access to emergency food support in times of crisis is available to individuals based on principles of dignity, equity and respect.

These avenues of access can include community gardens to foster connection and land-based learning, neighbourhood community food programs, affordable grocery stores, mom and pop shops, and more; ultimately moving away from a corporate charitable emergency food model towards a community-based, social support model.

We envision a neighbourhood that forms a resource network through physical establishments and an online portal, allowing for resource sharing amongst community members as well as between neighbourhoods. This network will offer permanent opportunities for community engagement, workshops to improve skills and knowledge on self-sufficiency, and a space for local goods and craft exchange.



SOCIETY

Healthcare

Massively expanded public coverage of mental health services, particularly for underserved communities

We envision a post-COVID city where all people are able to actively cultivate and participate in their own social lives because their physical and mental health needs are met, regardless of their ability to pay. These people live in a province with robust coverage of culturally-informed, anti-oppressive physical and mental health services, services that do not only treat illness but prevent its emergence. The city's culture takes mental health seriously, and its residents are largely educated about the prevalence and long-lasting impacts of trauma. Further, disparate health providers of all different scales (e.g. health authorities, sexual health clinics, detox centres) work together seamlessly so that no one, no matter how marginalized, slips through the cracks and goes untreated.

Social Services

Increased funding for social services, particularly for underserved communities

We envision a post-COVID city where all people feel psychologically and physically safe wherever they go. Enjoying this foundational sense of safety and security, residents hold high levels of social trust and can walk, play, and gather wherever they please. This city is home to a broad array of community-led health and safety initiatives that effectively respond to many of the needs and calls that were once directed toward the police. Multiple outreach and prevention programs* are instituted that redirect vulnerable youth and provide more chances for adults, thereby supporting reductions in crime, interpersonal violence and unsafe drug use. As well, restorative justice programs provide opportunities for people convicted of crimes to work with a support team and victim(s) of crimes to find a way to make the situation better.

SOCIETY

Work & Livelihood

Increased initiatives to support people's livelihoods and create healthier, safer workplaces

We envision a post-COVID city in which people receive a living wage so that they can support themselves financially while working in emotionally, mentally, and physically healthier workplaces. This will allow them to have more time to connect with each other and pursue resilience-boosting activities such as education and recreation. Additionally, we recommend that the city top up the financial support given by the province to persons with disabilities, seniors, and individuals who are otherwise ineligible for social programs.

Housing & Physical Spaces

Improved access to housing and resilience-boosting community spaces

We envision a post-COVID city in which everyone has access to affordable, liveable housing regardless of ability, race, ethnicity, and class. Within communities, there are universally-accessible public spaces that include green space, are appropriate year-round, and are conducive to community relationship building as well as positive mental health. These public spaces must be safe for all, and supportive of people from all backgrounds and life circumstances, so that differences will not be barriers to fostering connections within the community. Communities are designed as mixed-use such that local shops, services and amenities are accessible by foot/bike/wheelchair. To connect communities and support household's ability to access work and other spaces, public transportation should be affordable and usable. Accessibility to basic services will be increased to improve equity, and conditions will be created to foster social connections within and across communities.

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