



**CityHive**

# Strategic Plan

2022-2024



## Message from the Executive Director

When Tesicca and I first founded CityHive five years ago, we could only imagine what it would become today.

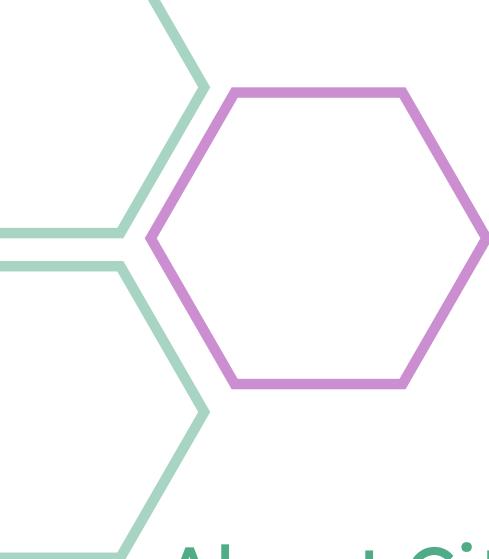
We've grown from a team of two to an incredible full time team of four, regularly supported by 6-10 part-time staff and a talented Board -- all youth-led. We have 500+ cohort program alumni, have engaged 2,500+ youth in municipal engagement processes, and worked with dozens of community partners and municipalities.

We still stay true to our roots: we exist to bridge the gap between cities and youth. With increasingly urgent and complex challenges facing our cities and communities, we know that including youth in decisions is more important than ever to build equitable, climate-friendly, resilient cities.

It was from this place of impact and growth that we embarked on developing a new Strategic Plan to guide our work through the coming years. All this work was built on the foundation of developing a new Theory of Change that will support us to deepen the systems change we seek to enact. We are thrilled with how far we've come but we are also so excited for what's yet to come.

Veronika Bylicki  
Executive Director & Co-founder





## About CityHive

CityHive is a Metro Vancouver-based non-profit organization on a mission to transform the way that young people are engaged in shaping their cities: in city planning, decision-making processes and urban sustainability issues. As a youth-led and youth-run non-profit, we harness the energy, experiences, and perspectives of youth to create solutions to make our cities more just, sustainable and resilient. We work with civic institutions to make their youth engagement more meaningful and inclusive.

## Vision

We envision cities where youth are actively involved in civic planning, shaping, and decision-making. A youth-engaged city is a resilient, sustainable, and livable city—not only for young people, but for all current and future generations.

## Mission

CityHive's mission is to transform the way young people shape their cities and the civic processes that engage them.



# Our Values

## Youth-centred engagement

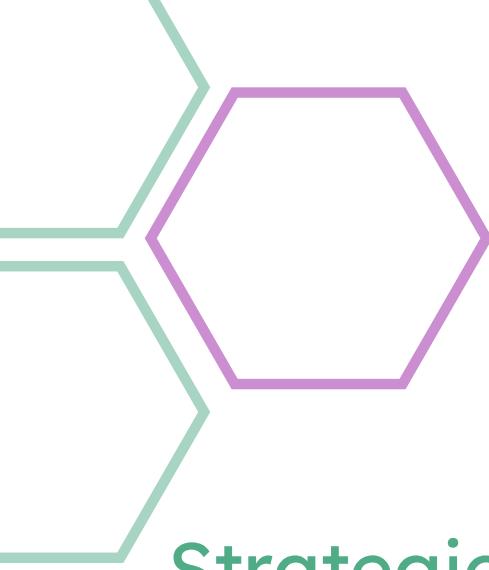
We build meaningful relationships with youth, understand and support needs of youth, and centre youth in the leadership of our organization and in all programming.

## Collaboration first

We are informed by past and ongoing work in our broader community, and we actively seek out opportunities to support and work with other organizations and individuals to strengthen our impact.

## Centre underrepresented and systematically excluded experiences

Systemic racism, colonialism, ableism and other oppressive systems exclude many people from civic engagement on the basis of their identities. We commit to challenging the status quo and creating opportunities for youth that have been most systematically excluded in all of the work that we do.



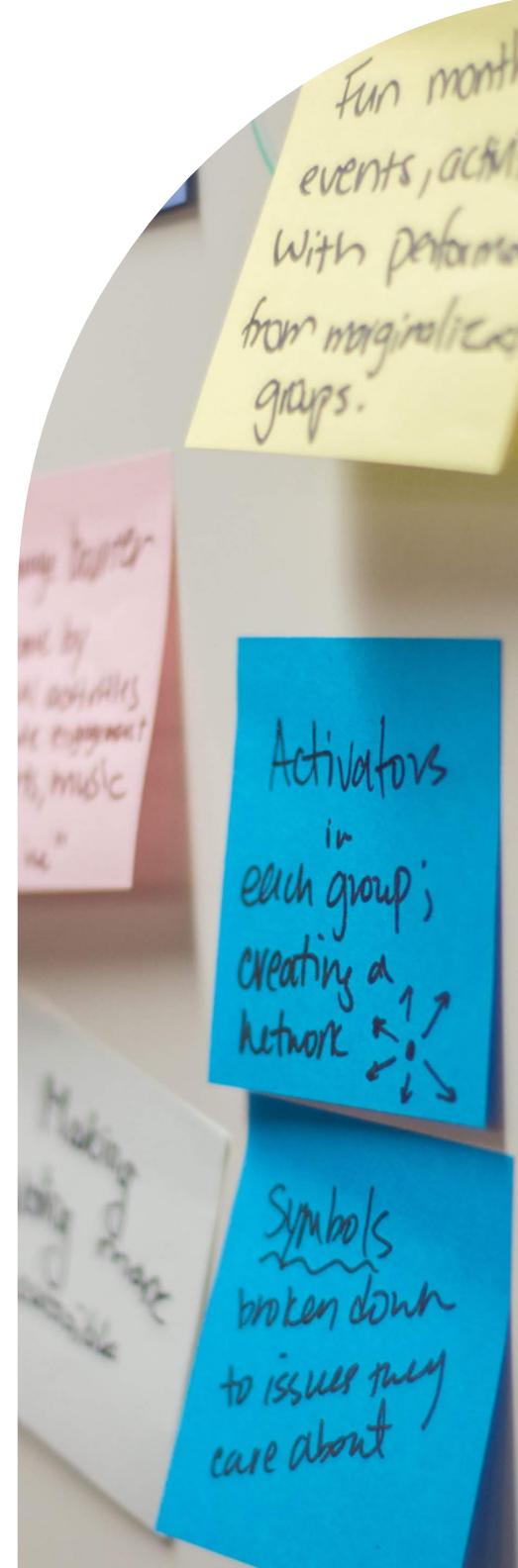
# Strategic Planning Process

Since our founding five years ago, CityHive has continued to grow and remain responsive to the ever-changing environment we operate in. In order to step back and both evaluate our programmatic impact, and plot a course for the future, in 2021 we set out on an in-depth impact and strategic clarity process.

We started out the year by doing in depth impact measurement from all our years of programming to understand what impact we were having and which youth we were and were not reaching. We then embarked on an intensive impact and strategic clarity process that included deep community input, research and team work. Over the course of the year we heard from over a hundred youth about how our programs have impacted them, and received their input on our strategies moving forward. We conducted surveys, interviews, and focus groups. We also spoke with our community and institutional partners to hear about their needs.

In the fall, we embarked on putting this all together as a Board and staff team into a strategic plan.

This document brings together this enormous effort into one cohesive plan - that we are excited to say will guide our organization for the next three years, while also allowing us to remain responsive to the ever-changing environment for youth and cities.



# THEORY OF CHANGE



## The Continuum of Youth Engagement:

youth facing systemic barriers to participation/ don't want to engage

youth who want to engage but don't know how

alumni & youth who are actively engaged and interested in civic processes & systems

# Our Key Strategies



# 1) Changing Engagement Practices within Institutions

In order to create long-term systems change, we recognize that we need to work both within and outside of existing institutions. We work alongside municipalities and other city-shaping organizations to emphasize the importance and value of youth engagement in decision-making. We both model and educate other practitioners on the best practices of good, reciprocal, and trust-building youth engagements processes.



## Our priorities:

- Model and champion inclusive, accountable youth engagement processes
- Equip youth engagement practitioners with the knowledge, skills, and resources to do youth engagement meaningfully
- Build internal capacity of institutions to reflect and adapt their engagement practices

## Ways we will achieve these priorities:

- Continue delivering youth engagement consulting on a fee-for-service model - including the delivery of youth engagement projects such as public workshops, youth advisories and the development of youth engagement strategies
- Offer workshops and educational resources to municipal and institutional staff looking to improve their youth engagement skills

## 2) Advocacy, Research, & Storytelling on Youth Engagement

One glaring gap in the current youth engagement landscape is an easy answer to the question: What happens when youth are meaningfully engaged? We know from our own interactions with both youth and institutional partners that good youth engagement is transformative for cities. We are excited to begin sharing out our and others' success stories to truly emphasize the value of youth voices to those who may not yet recognize it. We are also committed to continuing to learn and share alongside other community and research partners.

### Our priorities:

- Advocate to city-shaping institutions and organizations for better youth engagement practices and to share decision-making power with youth
- Enhance Metro Vancouverites understanding and appreciation for youth input, perspectives, and experiences
- Amplify and celebrate the work and initiatives of youth in Metro Vancouver

### Ways we will achieve these priorities:

- Work alongside other engagement organizations to create and disseminate research and materials that center youth needs and experiences
- Share out success stories from youth engagement we are a part of - including our consulting work, civic education programs, and innovation labs
- Amplify other youth-led local initiatives using our communications channels



## 3) Improving Youth Civic Literacy

A critical gap that leads to low levels of youth engagement is a lack of civic literacy. BC's school curriculum does not teach students about cities, nor does it emphasize the many ways that residents can engage with their communities. Our civic education programming is central to CityHive's mandate, and we are excited to continue offering programs that ensure youth have the knowledge, skills, and agency to affect change locally. We are also committed to ensuring that youth facing barriers to civic participation receive a relevant civic education. These programs are all for youth, by youth, ensuring that young people are involved in every step of the program: from ideation to delivery and evaluation.



### Our priorities:

- Leverage the public education system and community partnerships to ensure that a wider range of youth have access to civic education, in particular systemically excluded youth
- Equip youth with the knowledge, skills, and agency to engage with civic systems and processes
- Provide opportunities for youth to create, facilitate, deliver and evaluate civic education content while working with institutional and community partners

### Ways we will achieve these priorities:

- Continue to deliver cohort programs (like City Shapers) in partnership with community organizations, targeting youth facing systemic exclusion and additional barriers to participation
- Continue delivering Cities 101 workshops with community groups and local partners to reach youth in low-barrier settings - connecting where they are already at
- Develop and launch a K-12 workshop program that brings civic education into classrooms

## 4) Supporting Youth as Civic Changemakers

When alumni leave our programs, or young organizers are working to implement change on an issue they care about, many continue to encounter hurdles that can prove insurmountable. Our civic changemaker programming - including our Innovation Labs - will support youth hands-on skill-building opportunities and support them to carry forward solutions to some of our cities most pressing urban challenges. We work collaboratively with local municipalities to embed projects and recommendations within current policy priorities for long term impact.



### Our priorities:

- Build the capacity of youth to apply their civic knowledge through formal (ie City Council) and informal (ie public space activation, events) civic opportunities
- Keep alumni engaged and connected to one another and provide continual opportunities for engagement
- Support youth to build and implement projects that improve their cities
- Bring together institutions and youth to collaborate on creating solutions to specific urban issues

### Ways we will achieve these priorities:

- Continue to deliver impactful Innovation Lab programming that supports the development of youth-led solutions to some of our most challenging urban issues
- Develop a Civic Action Hub to offer ongoing programming to youth who want to continue engaging locally in hands-on ways (Speaking to Council workshops, etc)
- Create programming and channels for alumni to stay connected to each other and to continue to support their engagement journeys

## 5) Operational Excellence & Strong Foundations

In order to be able to deliver on our external priorities, we must also ensure that we are building from a place of organizational strength. We are committed to ensuring that our youth-led and youth-run organization continues to be sustainable and thriving - especially in a changing world. By building strong organizational foundations, we ensure the long term success and sustainability of our programs - allowing for more meaningful long term impact.



### Our priorities:

- Develop an inclusive and thriving workplace culture that allows us to attract and retain an exceptional young team
- Ensure that comprehensive and clear decision making, approval, and review processes; admin & program systems are in place
- Develop financial sustainability and internal financial systems

### Ways we will achieve these priorities:

- Continue to refine and adapt our organizational, programmatic, and financial systems processes to ensure they meeting our growing organizational needs
- Build in regular opportunities for team development, rest and alignment
- Diversify funding streams and explore new models for program funding in the long term

# CityHive at a Glance



6 year-round staff members



500+ cohort program alumni



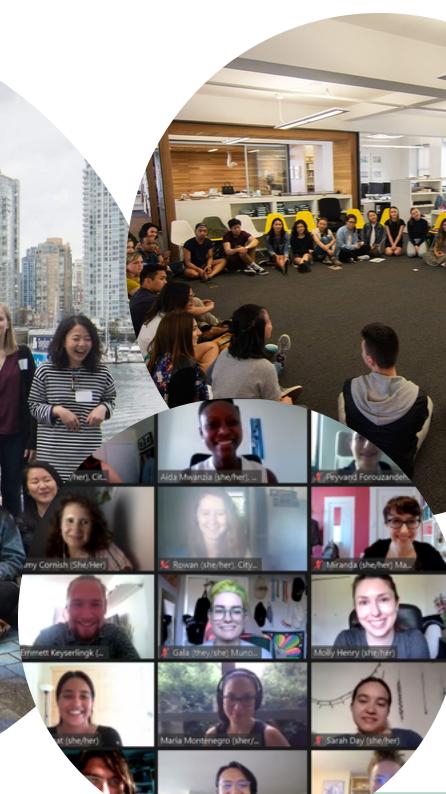
2,500+ youth engaged civic processes



Over 90% of program participants would recommend to a friend



40 youth members of CityHive Board and Advisories





## Acknowledgements

We want to thank Innoweave, the McConnell Foundation, Social Impact Advisors, and Vantage Point for their support through the process of developing this strategic plan and our new Theory of Change.

We couldn't have done any of this planning without the innumerable contributions of our 2021 staff team, all of whom supported the development of these strategies and priorities for the coming years: Aarti Kamat, Aida Mwanzia, Dina Sadeghi, Emmett Taylor Keyserlingk, Jasleen Bains, Kathryn Trnavsky, Linda Kia, Lucy Wicken, Michaela Slinger, Peyvand Forouzandeh, Rowan Gentleman-Sylvester, Rajdeep Dhaliwal, Ruby Dhaliwal, Valentina Farias, and Veronika Bylicki.

The CityHive Board of Directors also played an integral role in the development of this plan: James Infante, Jenna McNeil, Jessica Wong, Naitik Mehta, Petros Kusmu, and Precious Ile.

We were also thrilled to bring on board the CityHive Youth Advisory in 2021 and would like to thank the members: Amy Cornish, Gala Munoz-Carrier, Ismail Askin, Jay Castro, Jenric Ng, Maria Montenegro, Miranda Maslany, Molly Henry, Sameer Esmail, Sandy Wan, Sarah Day, Sayemin Azam Naheen, Tim Lam, and Uytae Lee.



## Stay in touch!

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