



Youth Climate  
Innovation Lab

# PROGRAM REPORT

**COHORT 1**  
*Fall 2022*



**CityHive**

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CityHive would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the x̣ẉməθḳẉəỵəm (Musqueam), the Sḳẉx̣ẉú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and the sə́liḷẉətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations on whose lands we work, learn and engage with youth.

We also recognize and honour the Katzie, Kwantlen, Kwikwetlem, Qayqayt, Semiahmoo, S'ólh Téméxw (Stó:lō), Stz'uminus, scəwaθenaʔ təməx̣w (Tsawwassen), and all Coast Salish peoples across whose lands we do our work.

This acknowledgement recognizes our ongoing commitment to exploring better avenues to decolonize and Indigenize our approaches to civic and climate education. We are deeply grateful to these Nations for their stewardship of these lands and waters, and look to them as ongoing leaders in conversations about the environment, climate, and relationship to land. We recognize that the systems of power we explore in our programs (municipal government, civic institutions) are inherently colonial and continue to perpetuate violence. It is through understanding our own unique relationship to the land, its host nations, and Indigenous communities working to make change that we are able to reflect and act on decolonizing and pushing forward systemic change.

This is only a beginning to our wider organizational and programmatic work and we invite you to join us in this process of unlearning and relearning together.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Youth are facing an ongoing and acute climate crisis, and are eager to be involved in developing solutions and co-creating a better future. After five cohorts of CityHive's Envirolab program (2019-2022), and an in-depth research project exploring How Municipalities and Youth Can Co-create Climate Solutions, the Youth Climate Innovation Lab (YCIL) was born. Evaluation of past programs and this research enabled us to redesign our lab programs to create more room for experimentation, deeper community partnerships, and more real-world impact for youth-led projects.

The Youth Climate Innovation Lab (YCIL) is a knowledge and capacity-building program for youth ages 18-30 from across so-called Metro Vancouver. YCIL is a project-based program in which youth collaborate with municipalities, civic institutions and community organizations to work on real-life climate action projects, all while learning, upskilling, and creating bold actions to advance a just climate transition.

This very first cohort brought together 22 youth cohort members who were enthusiastic about taking climate action in local and regional contexts, and who were also on journeys to learn about their own stakes in the climate crisis. This cohort had a strong interest in exploring climate action through an anti-colonial and anti-oppression lens, rooted in the diversity of their own lived experiences.

In partnership with community organizations and local municipalities, the YCIL team introduced six climate projects to our cohort. In small project groups, cohort members provided unique insights and youth perspectives to climate problems faced by our project partners. These youth-driven ideas culminated in presentations at a final Community Showcase on December 7th, 2022. You can learn more about this cohort's projects on pages 11-17.

The following pages include details on the program design, its cohort members, overviews of the projects, as well as key learnings and insights from program participants. We greatly appreciate the generous financial support of the Houssian Foundation, Vancity Credit Union, and the Trottier Family Foundation, as well as the support of our Steering Committee members and partners that made this program possible.

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"Oftentimes the media and people only focus on new international climate commitments and federal climate policies. Although these large-scale climate agreements are important, I believe local climate efforts are equally if not more important because these efforts will impact me and my community directly."

*–YCIL participant*

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# ABOUT CITYHIVE

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

## OUR 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.

In just 6 years, CityHive has run over 100 programs and workshops throughout Metro Vancouver and educated and engaged with over 25,000 youth. CityHive partners with many organizations and institutions across Metro Vancouver to make our programming meaningful. Our work centres on building youth's capacity, connections and skills to tackle complex, systemic challenges from climate change to housing to civic engagement.

Click [here](#) to read our 2022-2024 Strategic Plan.

**25,000+**  
**YOUTH**  
**ENGAGED**

**100+**  
**PROGRAMS**  
**RUN**



**CityHive**

# PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Envirolab program (2019-2021) was a series of labs that equipped youth with the skills and tools to tackle complex urban climate challenges by developing unique and youth-led solutions to pressing climate challenges.



envirolab

Each Envirolab cohort focused on a different theme. Cohort themes included:

- Fall 2019: Lighter Footprint
- Spring 2020: Climate Emergency
- Fall 2020: Zero Waste & the Circular Economy
- Summer 2021: Climate Adaptation
- Fall 2021: Activating our Climate Community

While the Envirolab program was successful at bringing together youth in solutions-oriented spaces, we recognized the need for co-creative spaces for youth to work alongside decision makers to tackle complex problems and have a real world impact. This realization was bolstered by research we conducted with support from the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions. We determined that since municipalities and civic institutions need broad based citizen support, and youth are feeling more climate anxious than ever, both youth and municipalities need co-creative spaces to take climate action.

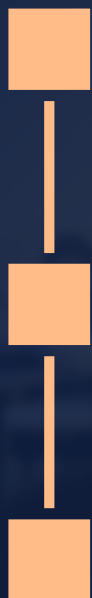
By incorporating these insights and building on all the successful components of Envirolab's past, CityHive has introduced a new climate action cohort program, the Youth Climate Innovation Lab.



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Youth Climate Innovation Lab (YCIL) is a 3 month-long cohort program for youth ages 18-30 in Metro Vancouver. The program encourages collaboration, creativity and innovation, and invites youth to bring their unique experiences, perspectives and passions into the climate movement. Whether they're an artist, storyteller, designer, communicator, climate activist, tech whiz, outdoor enthusiast, engineer, nurse practitioner, dog walker, etc, they have important and unique roles to play in climate action locally. The YCIL creates space for participants to unpack the scales of impact that are possible – from personal, to community to systems change.

Rooted in CityHive's Knowledge-to-Action framework, the youth participants get to:



**Learn:** The participants learn about local climate action and explore questions like: what can our cities & local governments do to advance climate action? What kind of policies and strategies exist in different levels of government? What do our community members know about climate change and climate action?

**Investigate & Ideate:** Participants work collaboratively in teams to investigate a climate challenge presented by a project partner. In YCIL 1 they practiced key skills including researching current practices, conducting environmental scans, and using design thinking tools and methodologies to problem-solve.

**Apply & Take Action:** Working in teams, the participants work on projects with support and mentorship from their community project partner. In YCIL 1 these partners presented key issues representing civics, community or business groups while bringing an interdisciplinary approach to solutions design. All challenges put forward in this cohort were linked directly to a local municipal climate action.

The Youth Climate Innovation Lab is not only a space for participants to work on projects, but also an opportunity to become a part of a diverse community of youth who are eager to take action to drive climate action forward across so-called Metro Vancouver. Youth are challenged to bring their boldest ideas forward and create new opportunities to bring them into reality.



# PROGRAM MODULES



## Program Kickoff

Session 1- Placing myself in Climate Work



## Learning & Foundations

Session 2 - Understanding Climate (Climate Change 101)

Session 3 - Understanding my Community (Civics 101)



## Investigate & Ideate

Session 4 - Project Kickoff

Session 5 - Understanding Design Thinking

Session 6 - Imagining Our Projects (Radical Imagination)

Session 7 - Building Our Network

Session 8 - Developing Our Project Plan



## Apply & Take Action

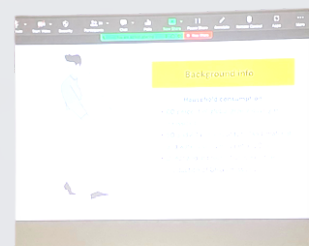
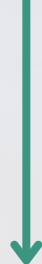
Session 9 - Understanding Our Impact

Session 10 - Presenting Our Project

Session 11 - Climate Justice 101

Session 12 - Refining Our Project

Session 13 - Cohort Wrap-Up + Celebration



## Community Showcase Event Night

Participants shared their learnings from the program as well as the projects that they worked on. Our cohort members have **brought youth perspectives to the forefront of climate work happening across Metro Vancouver**, hoping to bring positive changes to our cities and our future.



# CITYHIVE STAFF



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# SUPPORT FACILITATORS



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she/her



# MEET THE COHORT

Together, this cohort of 22 youth have created a community that values and celebrates their diverse backgrounds while being connected by a shared interest in climate action.

**22**  
participants

ages  
**18-30**

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Land stories shared by participants
- Collaboration with organizers that work on real climate action projects
- Getting to know each other and connecting over projects and activities
- Having municipal and regional government professionals as guest speakers
- Exposure to local climate policies and strategies

## RESIDENTS OF

Vancouver, Burnaby, Coquitlam, New Westminister, North Vancouver, Port Moody, and Richmond

## INTERESTS

- Environmental Sustainability
- Law & Policy
- Sustainable Outdoor Education
- BIPOC Centered Actions
- Decolonial Actions
- Community Building
- Zero Waste
- Design & Technology
- Food Security & Systems



# COHORT MEMBERS



**Alex**  
he/him



**Alicia**  
she/her



**Archita**  
she/her



**Bryan**  
he/him



**Chris**  
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**Danielle C.**  
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**Emily**  
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**Frederick**  
he/him



**Georgina**  
she/her



**Jasmin**  
she/her



**Julia**  
she/her



**Kim**  
she/her



**Lydia**  
she/her



**Madeline**  
she/they



**Pierce**  
he/him



**Sammi**  
she/her



**Scarlett**  
she/her



**Shirley**  
she/her



**Solé**  
she/her



**Yasi**  
she/her



**Yiming**  
he/him



# PROJECTS SUMMARY

The Youth Climate Innovation Lab was designed to ensure that participants had the opportunity to work on hands-on, real-world projects in partnership with community organizations and local governments.

For this first cohort of the program, the YCIL Steering Committee were invited to suggest project ideas and were matched with participants based on the youth's identified interests. Participants were provided overviews of the project's problem statement before being grouped based on their preferences. Project partners provided ongoing mentorship, support, and feedback by way of a contact person. Project groups regularly connected with their project partners through email updates and meetings. Finally, the projects culminated in a Community Showcase presentation where partners, local decision-makers, and the public were invited to learn more about their ideas and ask questions in an interactive forum. You can watch the recording of the event [here](#).

1. City of Vancouver
2. City of Coquitlam
3. Community Energy Association
4. Vancouver Economic Commission
5. OneEarth
6. Climate Caucus/District of Squamish



# CITY OF VANCOUVER

by Alex, Emily, Frederick, Lydia, Sammi

## SUMMARY

As youth are facing increasing impacts from climate change, this project team has created a youth engagement strategy to help shape the City of Vancouver's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy to include youth perspectives on local climate issues. The content of this strategy is based on an evidence base on domestic and international youth engagement strategies, as well as the knowledge and experiences of the project team's participants as youth in Vancouver.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

The city of Vancouver is refreshing their 2012 Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, and they need youth perspectives on climate local issues.

## OUTCOMES

The team's youth engagement strategy includes:

- An issue statement
- An inclusion and accessibility lens, to ensure marginalized youth voices are heard
- Best practices for youth engagement in climate
- Additional guidance on using this youth engagement strategy outside of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, including:
  - Guidance on leveraging social media to gain attention to climate issues in Vancouver or gather attention to specific Council meeting dates, etc.
  - Actions to take to drive up attention and attendance
  - Accessibility tips
  - Focus on joy, community, and imagining a better future

**PROJECT PARTNER**



# CITY OF COQUITLAM

by Jasmin, Shirley, Solé, Yiming

## SUMMARY

This project team worked with the City of Coquitlam to better understand, track and report contract greenhouse gas emissions in order to meet the targets set in the City of Coquitlam's Environmental Sustainability Plan.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Each year, the City of Coquitlam asks contractors to report vehicle and equipment fuel use to estimate greenhouse gas emissions from contracted services, however, there are challenges to the current process of GHG emissions reporting from contractors as it relies on self-reported data.

## OUTCOMES

This team began by conducting a jurisdictional scan and best practices literature review of scope 3 GHG emissions data collection, tracking, and reporting. Then, through interviews and written surveys to four other municipalities, including the City of West Vancouver, New West, Port Moody and Abbotsford, the team identified how other municipalities: select vendors for fuel use data collection, collect vendor data (and assure data quality), motivate vendors to comply with annual fuel use submission requests, and influence vendor fuel choice (or GHG emissions management). Based on their findings and results, the team provided a set of recommended next steps for the City of Coquitlam, hoping to streamline the process for both municipalities and vendors throughout the region or province.

**PROJECT  
PARTNER**

**Coquitlam**

# COMMUNITY ENERGY ASSOCIATION

by Chris, Madeline, Danielle G.

## SUMMARY

This project team created a set of recommendations for Community Energy Association to inform regional and municipal governments on best practices for youth engagement related to climate action and increase the opportunity for youth to be involved and create change in their communities.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is a gap in youth engagement in civic processes, especially related climate change, on the local, regional and provincial level in both rural and urban contexts.

## OUTCOMES

To inform their recommendations for Community Energy Association, this team conducted an analysis of case studies and interviews of programs and organizations engaging youth across British Columbia, as well as a literature review of different local, regional and provincial engagement strategies and toolkits for youth both within the climate movement and beyond.

**PROJECT PARTNER**



# VANCOUVER ECONOMIC COMMISSION

by Bryan, Danielle C., Scarlett

## SUMMARY

This research and outreach project worked to identify the perspectives of hardware stores on climate, educate hardware stores on climate products and impacts, provide accessible climate action to customers and developers, and accelerate progress on climate ambitions for Vancouver Economic Commission.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

With 54% of natural gas pollution in Vancouver coming from buildings, retrofitting needs to be accelerated to meet the CO2 emission targets needed to combat climate change. However, there is a knowledge gap between home hardware stores and organizations like Vancouver Economic Commission in improving sustainability in hardware store businesses.

## OUTCOMES

The team provided a list of recommendations based on an online survey and 5 in-person interviews with large and small hardware stores for Vancouver Economic Commission to provide the background necessary for VEC to bridge the gap between hardware stores and climate action. These recommendations included:

- Providing training to staff about climate communications and business
- Improving customer education and awareness about climate products,
- Understanding systemic challenges for renters vs. homeowners
- Creating a plan to navigate corporate barriers around store engagement
- Focus on services that empower stores as independent actors
- Support programs that reduce financial barriers for climate customers

**PROJECT PARTNER**



**VANCOUVER ECONOMIC COMMISSION**



# ONE EARTH

by Julia, Yasi

## SUMMARY

This project tackled the "life transition" of immigration, and explored the opportunities, resources and structures that could support sustainable habits, practices and context for young people during this transition. The result of this project was the development of a social media campaign to support sustainable lifestyle choices of new immigrants, specifically international students, as they adapt to their new life in so-called Canada

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Life transitions are often overlooked as climate action opportunities - it is in the moments in which our lives and habits are already changing that hold great potential in redirecting our daily practices towards more sustainable ones.

## OUTCOMES

The project team began by identifying household consumption as a key contributor of greenhouse gas emissions and total land, material, and water use. They then conducted a series of surveys and interviews to better understand the barriers and concerns to sustainable consumption by new immigrants and international students in Vancouver, and whether a sustainable delivery service might benefit this demographic in making second-hand shopping more accessible. From the surveys and interviews, affordability was identified as a major barrier in accessing second-hand goods. The group shifted their focus - kickstarting a social media campaign to raise awareness of Vancouver-based second-hand stores, connect newcomers to these stores, and promote the culture of second-hand shopping!

**PROJECT  
PARTNER**

**OneEarth**

# CLIMATE CAUCUS + DISTRICT OF SQUAMISH

by Alicia, Archita, Georgina, Kim, Pierce

## SUMMARY

This project team was tasked with revising the District of Squamish's adaptation strategy, the "Adapting to Climate Change in Squamish: Backgrounder Report 2016", to match the current climate crisis. This was done by analyzing the near and long-term priorities, assessing climate risks to those priorities and then offering some recommendations based on sister communities' response to similar priorities, and also offering some overarching recommendations to better inform the district of Squamish's Community Plan for 2040.

## OUTCOMES

This team conducted a fulsome review of the strategy's short- and long-term priorities, considering evidence-based climate change impacts and sister communities' innovative responses to managing similar priorities. The recommendations offer fresh ideas that are relevant and in line with the most up-to-date climate science and are comparable with sister cities.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Squamish is a small but rapidly growing community that is vulnerable to many climate impacts, including sea level rise, wildfires, increased precipitation, water-supply vulnerability, extreme heat, and health. In 2016, Squamish created an adaptation strategy, the results of which were incorporated into the Squamish Community Plan for 2040. The District of Squamish has continued to work diligently on climate change adaptation, but a review of the adaptation strategy is needed to better inform the community plan moving forward.

## PROJECT PARTNERS



# PROGRAM IMPACT

93%

of participants now believe they can have an influence on the issues they care about

93%

of participants would recommend this program their friends or colleagues

79%

of participants have a greater understanding of climate change initiatives in Metro Vancouver post-program

71%

of participants felt they had the opportunity to provide youth input on real world projects and initiatives

79%

of participants felt they gained access to a collaborative network of youth leaders addressing environmental challenges

“

"After just a few months, my ability to investigate climate action challenges, lead a project with diverse team members, and communicate with various community agents has skyrocketed. This new confidence is a result of strong YCIL program leadership and their indestructible optimism"

-YCIL participant

”

# PROGRAM IMPACT

In an effort to track our program's ongoing feedback, we collect a pre-program and post-program survey from participants to gauge their change in knowledge, connections, and skills. Here are some of the impacts highlighted by the participants:

- 1** **Connections:** Youth who completed the program gained a sense of connection to other young leaders in the region who care about the issues they care about, as well as access to a collaborative network of young leaders addressing environmental challenges to collaborate in their continued climate action and learning.
- 2** **Local Knowledge:** The participants reported that their understanding of climate change and climate action initiatives across Metro Vancouver has increased throughout the program. They have learned what kind of climate frameworks are implemented by municipalities and institutions across Metro Vancouver through the learning phase of the program as well as through their projects.
- 3** **Access to Decision-makers:** YCIL has become a platform where connections between youth and decision makers, community organizations, and thought leaders. CityHive's was able to act as a bridge between the youth in our city and institutions as well as decision makers through this project-based program.
- 4** **Dynamic Action:** Youth are eager to continue taking community- and human-centered climate action. Working on projects that connect real life activities of residents in Metro Vancouver with climate action, they have critically explored keeping a focus on topics such as justice, accessibility, anti-colonial action, and equity in the face of climate emergency.

# LESSONS LEARNED

Through the very first cohort of the Youth Climate Innovation Lab, we have identified four main takeaways based on our experiences, reflections among staff and facilitators, and feedback from partners and participants:

## **Youth are climate anxious and need hopeful spaces for innovation and solutions.**

While it's not new information to CityHive, this YCIL cohort was a great reminder that youth are experiencing acute anxiety related to climate change, as well as other local and global uncertainties. At the same time, youth are eager to do something to make our city and futures better. What we've seen is a need for safe spaces to express and exchange these anxious feelings where youth can also focus on what they can do, and the power they do have, rather than feeling overwhelmed by what they don't have power over.

## **Community was created and enhanced throughout the program.**

We've all spent the last three years experiencing a global pandemic and lockdowns, but this is magnified for younger folks for whom this has been a significant portion of their lives. Not only did they need a space to express their anxieties and work on climate action, they also needed to feel connected to one another. We have received an overwhelming amount of feedback from participants that the YCIL became a community that they belonged to rather than just a group of individuals—they are now aware of the fact they can rely on each other and work together towards this shared vision of climate conscious cities and futures.



# LESSONS LEARNED

**There are huge benefits and notable challenges of bringing together a cohort of youth at different stages of climate learning.**

The YCIL program is open to any local youth ages 18-30, which means that participants are coming from varying levels of knowledge and experience in climate action. While those with a deeper background in the field were able to take leadership roles (especially in group projects), the program coordinator team recognizes the need to continuously adapt content to meet and challenge participants at all stages of their learning and development journeys.

**In-person programming remains challenging.**

The YCIL was CityHive's first in-person program since the onset of the global pandemic. While we were excited by the prospect, navigating through this uncertain time while keeping everyone's health and well-being a top priority was a challenge. In order to create a program that allowed the youth cohort and partners to participate while staying home sick meant adapting to create a hybrid format which led to technical bumps in the road. For future cohorts we will continue to experiment balancing access and maintaining program momentum.



# NEXT STEPS

Moving forward, we are focused on advancing the relationships and networks we have built while continuing to provide a safe space for youth in our communities to work together with local decision-makers. Some of the next steps we're exploring to continue improving the YCIL

## 1 Cohort Themes

We are exploring having themes to help guide the cohort learnings and projects, connecting various interests with climate action. We hope to reach out to communities that may not play visible roles in mainstream climate action but that are interested getting involved (ie. arts, sports, faith-based).

## 2 Expanding Out

We are looking forward to trying new outreach methods and bringing a new level of intentionality to our program recruitment in order to reach different demographics of youth for our upcoming cohorts. We saw a large range of diversity in our first cohort, however we also recognize that there are still many groups we fail to attract (including those without post-secondary education). We have several strategies in mind to reach these additional audiences.

## 3 Hearing from Professionals

We are expanding our connections with possible guest speakers and climate justice practitioners. While we continue to face challenges in securing guest speakers due to COVID and flu precautions, we recognize the importance in bringing in thought leaders from a wide range of backgrounds to create learning opportunities for the cohort about what it means to take climate action and how we can take action justly.

We're excited to implement these next steps in our 2023 cohorts of the Youth Climate Innovation Lab. Next cohorts! The details will be live shortly—we cannot wait to share more information with our community members and beyond soon! Stay tuned to find out more about the upcoming cohorts.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Youth Climate Innovation Lab is made possible with generous support of:

THE  
**HOUSSIAN**  
FOUNDATION

**Vancity**



This program wouldn't be possible without the guidance and support of our Steering Committee:



Cohort 1 of the Youth Climate Innovation Lab is also pleased to have welcomed a dynamic set of collaborators to the program to support the knowledge and inspiration of program participants. A special thanks to our project partners, guest speakers, community partners, and steering committee representatives:

- Alex Lidstone (Climate Caucus)
- Amanda Mitchell (City of Vancouver)
- Brad Badelt (City of Vancouver)
- Carly Johansson (Community Energy Association)
- Ciara Torrance (Climate Caucus)
- Claudia Salazar (CityStudio)
- Dagmar Timmer (OneEarth)
- Edna Catumbela (OneEarth)
- George Benson (Vancouver Economic Commission)
- Ian Pickett (District of Squamish)
- Karin Johnson (City of Coquitlam)
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- Mirium Esquitín (CityStudio)
- Paige Sanford (CityStudio)
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- Tamsin Mills (City of Vancouver)
- Tessa Vanderkop (Social Purpose Institute)
- Tina Barisky (City of Vancouver)
- Vanessa Sun (Vancouver Economic Commission)
- Vanessa Timmer (OneEarth)