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# **City “for the Children”: Lessons from Richmond California**

**How Y-PLAN Youth Planning Initiative is  
Creating and Measuring Civic Impact in  
Richmond, California**

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## **Abstract**

When young people are invited to participate in Urban Planning processes, they have shown a powerful and unique ability to generate real change in their communities. Despite this, there is limited research on the civic impact of youth based urban planning initiatives. Working in conjunction with UC Berkeley's youth planning initiative (Y-PLAN) this research seeks to document the civic impact young people have had in nearly a decade of youth planning projects in Richmond, California. Case study based results lend themselves to a discussion on the different levels of civic impact that youth participation can have on an urban community. Ultimately, research provides recommendations on how Y-PLAN's work in Richmond can be used as a model for understanding what makes youth planning most impactful.

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## Introduction

“There was this one city manager in San Pablo and he’s passed away, but he always used to make a joke that if you talk about something and you say “it’s for the children” that immediately gets support for it. I remember when they developed the casino he used to talk about how it was very controversial and then he would say “it’s for the children.” Building something for young people has to be genuine, it can’t be “for the children.” You have to bind to the fact that you’re going to get some real usable information and keep an open mind about it, don’t say it’s for the children, say this is for us.” (B. Lindsay, Richmond City Manager, Personal Communication, 2017)

Young people’s lives are governed by policy and planning decisions, yet there is a disconnect between policymakers and urban youth. Young people are rarely taken seriously as urban citizens or included in the community decision-making processes that impact their lives and opportunities. The marginalization of urban youth, specifically low-income urban youth of color, in many ways represents the inaccessibility of planning processes. Young people have demonstrated the ability to contribute in meaningful and innovative ways to community development, and it is now the responsibility of planners to harness the creativity and unique knowledge urban youth offer to planning processes. Involving young people in the planning process offers an invaluable opportunity to planning professionals, who struggle with community engagement. This research seeks to investigate the question: *How can youth based urban planning initiatives create lasting civic change?*

In Richmond, California for the past eight years, city planning agencies have been challenging the status quo and seeking the unique knowledge of low-income urban youth in planning processes. Through Y-PLAN, UC Berkeley’s award-winning educational strategy and action research initiative, Richmond High School students are learning about the inner-workings of healthy city planning processes and using their education and creativity to develop innovative solutions to local urban problems (McKoy, 2015). This model represents an alternative and inclusive strategy for sustainable community development. This research will look closely at the ongoing relationship between Y-PLAN, Richmond schools, and professional planning agencies with a focus on the capacity young people have to make meaningful change in planning processes. Through case study, observation, and analysis this research seeks to evaluate the potential marginalized young people have to create healthy and equitable cities.

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This research poses the questions:

*How can youth based urban planning initiatives create lasting civic change?*

- *Does student's' input influence proposals, policy, and plans?*
- *Does Y-PLAN lead to physical changes in the built environment or other tangible results?*
- *How does Y-PLAN affect civic partners' perceptions of young people as community contributors?*

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## **Background**

### **The Historical Development of Youth Inclusion in Cities**

Until the 1960s, young people and their diverse needs were largely ignored in the urban planning process (Gleeson, Sipe, 2006). During the Industrial Revolution in America, urban planners conceptualized the city as a capitalistic unit, rather than developing the city for the needs of the individual. Those who were not considered economically beneficial were ignored in the planning process--including women, minority groups, and young actors (people). To this day many planning practices reflect those of the Industrial Revolution (Rakhimova, 2011).

During the 19th century there was a new interest in the well being of children. Research conducted during this period, often by Christian charity groups, recognized the need for moral education in children. Additionally, the connection was made that deficient children became deficient adults. Thus, efforts to prepare children to be productive adults were developed by schools and religious institutions. This period coincided with the abolition of child labor laws. At this time children were beginning to be seen as a unique part of society's structure, yet the concept of youth as a distinct group with their own needs was not well developed or researched (Rakhimova 2011). Bremner's research on parks and playgrounds, which was presented in a Chicago exhibition in 1911, was "one of the first attempts to systematically investigate and present material on urban children's welfare." Bremner's work informally began the consideration of children's interactions with the urban environment. Much of the research on children and the environment at this time was centered on playgrounds and play spaces (Rakhimova, 2011).

In 1960, The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in the United States (NICHD), which focuses on the learning processes and development of children was established within the National Institute of Health. This project was unique for its time in that it recognized the important impact the built environment has on children by including the collaboration of architects, engineers and environmental planners (Rakhimova, 2011). During, and after the development of this project, other research initiatives began to look at the relationship between young people and the built environment through a variety of disciplines (Rakhimova, 2011).

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## **The United Nations: Development of a Policy Framework for Child Friendly Cities**

The United Nations has remained a crucial player in the establishment of child friendly cities and processes (Malone, 2002). During World Summits over the past two decades the United Nations has contributed to important documents, frameworks and discussions regarding the necessity to include children in the sustainable development of cities. The *Plan of Action (UNICEF 1990)* and Agenda 21 are products of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (UN 1992). Agenda 21 importantly notes: ‘The creativity, ideals and courage of the youth of the world should be mobilized to forge a global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and ensure a better future for all’ (UN 1992) hereby, advocating the active participatory role of youth in planning processes.

In 2002 at the Rio+10 conference in Johannesburg, important commitments to youth inclusion in sustainable development were made. Throughout the conference there was an overall acknowledgement that youth are needed in the development of healthy cities. This summit also resulted in the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in 2005. This declaration focuses on the role of active participatory processes and the inclusion of youth and all community members in developing healthy and equitable cities.

At the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements at Istanbul in 1996, conversation centered on the relationship between quality of life and urbanization. Habitat Agenda, originally created in 1976, was revisited and resulted in the creation of Habitat II Agenda. This updated version of the agenda included a preamble dedicated to a focus on youth. This meeting also marked the beginning of UNICEF’s ‘child friendly cities’ movement with UNICEF’s first presentation of ‘Children’s Rights and Habitat.’ UNICEF focused on the necessity of policies and frameworks that take the relationship between youth needs in regard to their living environments into consideration. At this conference the UN claimed:

*“Special attention needs to be paid to the participatory processes dealing with the shaping of cities, towns and neighbourhoods; this is in order to secure the living conditions of children and of youth and to make use of their insight, creativity and thoughts on the environment”* (UNCHS 1996).

## **The Convention**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is perhaps the most important document in establishing a ‘rights based approach’ to youth inclusion in cities and planning. The



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convention lays out key principles to acknowledging the unique needs and conditions of urban youth. The 'International Convention on Children's Rights', was adopted by the United Nations in 1989. The CRC created a new language and way of discussing and evaluating the needs of urban youth. The CRC addresses the modern flaws with children's relationships to the urban environment. The principles of the CRC (UNICEF 1992) reinforce the responsibility of the government to maintain healthy and safe cities and respect the rights of young people. The CRC recognizes that a child's quality of life is the "ultimate indicator of a healthy environment, good governance and sustainable development" (UNICEF 1992; UNICEF 1997). The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a governing document for the Child Friendly Cities Movement.

### **Child Friendly Cities Initiative**

The Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) was officially launched in 1996 in response to discussions during the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). Child friendly cities are one way to enact the child rights agenda through policy and action. In 2000, the International Secretariat of CFCI was established at the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) in Florence, Italy. The CFC Secretariat works to promote research and analysis of the strategies and practices to implement children's rights at the local level.

According to the CFCI:

A child friendly city is a city or any local system of governance that is committed to fulfilling children's rights, including their right to:

- Influence decisions about their city
- Express their opinion on the city they want
- Participate in family, community and social life
- Receive basic services such as health care, education and shelter
- Drink safe water and have access to proper sanitation
- Be protected from exploitation, violence and abuse
- Walk safely in the streets on their own
- Meet friends and play
- Have green spaces for plants and animals
- Live in an unpolluted environment
- Participate in cultural and social events

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- Be an equal citizen of their city with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability

### **Growing Up in Cities**

UN policy regarding urban youth is clearly put into action with Kevin Lynch's 1976 Growing up in Cities (GUIC) initiative conducted through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Following the discussions and decisions of the Child Friendly Cities Initiative, a revival of UNESCO's GUIC project was conducted by Louise Chawla in 1995. GUIC focused on the impact of urbanization on children's lives. The project worked with young people living in cities (in Argentina, Australia, Mexico, and Poland) and networks of "child-friendly" municipal officials to identify design elements of the built environment that are valued by youth (Knorr, 2012). The goal of this initiative was to design and establish a global model of participatory research and action (Malone, 2002). To do so, it was necessary to understand what currently exists in each urban community in terms of resources and risks and how young people perceive these. GUIC project directors used a variety of creative processes to engage youth in evaluating their environments. These procedures included reviewing maps, photos, and demographic data about a given community; in person observation of community life and young people's interactions with urban space; drawing and creating artwork that regards place, child-led tours, and interviews with children who reflect their community's diversity in terms of age, gender, culture and ethnic background. Additionally, GUIC incorporated the opinions of families, parents, community leaders, and city government officials through interviews (Chawla, 1997).

In Chawla's 1997 revival of GUIC, after identifying aspects of the environment that were important to young people, participants engaged in collaborative projects with local officials to generate change in local urban environments. A team of multidisciplinary professionals and researchers worked with youth to interpret the results of GUIC to help develop an official set of qualitative indicators of quality of life. The indicators developed were seen as having the potential to aid local government officials in their attempts to evaluate the child friendliness of cities (Malone, 2002).

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## **Youth Inclusion in Action:**

Kevin Lynch's execution of GUIC represents a frontier effort to include youth in planning processes: following this project many cities globally began to adopt youth councils and participatory projects with youth. From competition style inclusion in Las Vegas' Youth Neighborhood Association Partnership Program (YNAPP) in which children seek to win funds to implement their own urban projects, to Seattle's Youth Involvement Network (SYIN) youth planning collaboration that gives children the opportunity to act as 'mayor for the day,' city planning officials have begun to develop creative projects that recognize the value of youth in planning (Knowles-Yáñez, 2005). As youth inclusion in planning has become more common, a body of research and best practice guidelines has been developed. Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation, developed for UNICEF in 1997, is now used widely to develop and evaluate effective and authentic youth-inclusion projects (Knowles-Yáñez, 2005).

## **Existing Forms of Youth Participation**

Since GUIC there have been many new developments to the field of youth planning, while this research focuses specifically on youth participation through education, it is important to understand the context of the field in which Y-PLAN is a member.

### **Participatory Budgeting**

Participatory budgeting was developed in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989. In Porto Alegre, as many as 50,000 people take part in the city's participatory process each year in order to decide how to spend as much as 20% of the city's annual capital budget (Russon Gilman, 2016). Since then, more than 1,500 cities have used participatory budgeting to inspire democracy and participation. Participatory budgeting in the United States has been used to empower traditionally marginalized residents, including non-citizens, seniors, people of color, and youth. While children and young people have been included in some of these efforts, In 2014 Boston became the first US city to conduct an exclusively youth centered participatory budgeting initiative (Russon Gilman, 2016).

Boston's effort titled, "Youth Lead the Change," engaged Boston's youth in creating ideas for capital projects that will bring long-term improvements to the city and make it a better place for young people to live. With one million dollars of the city's funds allocated towards the

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youth decisions, youth worked to conceptualize projects and bring them to life creating budgets and proposals, which they then vote on annually (Grillos, 2014). Many of Boston's youth-led projects focused on recreation, safety, and education, with projects ranging from park upgrades to the provision of chrome books to high school students (Grillos, 2014).

After the program participants were surveyed, youth from this survey identified increased motivation for civic action, feelings of empowerment, and a stronger sense of community as important benefits (Grillos, 2014).

### **Youth Councils**

While not specifically focused on planning decisions, youth councils are a popular way for cities to include young people in civic decision-making. Youth Councils (YCs) are community groups of young people that are connected to local decision-making authorities (Flanders, Vliet 2015). The National League of Cities is often tied to Youth Councils as they have historically advocated for them, providing tips and templates (Flanders, Vlie, 2015). Youth Councils are used across the globe, specifically in Europe, which formed a trans-national network of Youth Councils in 2011. Youth Councils are more common recently in the United States, with a majority of councils forming since 2000 (Flanders, Vlie, 2015). The motivation for establishing YCs in the United States is multifaceted. While aiming to include young people in civic engagement, youth councils in the United States are also designed to aid youth in developing leadership and decision-making skills. Councils are most commonly funded directly by government funds, followed by grants.

There is wide variation in terms of specific responsibilities of Youth Councils, however they often involve participation in community service efforts, organizing community events, and seeking input from other youth. It has been noted that in the United States, despite the symbolic role of Youth Councils, there is a lack of concrete involvement in formal civic decision-making efforts. Youth Councils engage young people in conversation and ideally direct action in improving their cities (Flanders, Vlie, 2015).

### **Youth Participatory Action Research**

YPAR (Youth-led Participatory Action Research) is a multidimensional approach to positive youth and community development that uses research as a vehicle for social justice.

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Through YPAR initiatives, young people are invited to research meaningful social topics, searching for the root causes of problems that directly impact their lives, and then take action to influence policies. YPAR focuses on the development of young people's research and problem solving skills. This process allows young people to become experts on social issues that are relevant to their lives. Youth work with their peers and adult allies to research and generate community change by identifying problems that they want to improve, conducting research to understand the nature of the problems, and advocating for changes based on research evidence (Ozer, 2016).

Power sharing is at the heart of YPAR as it acknowledges the inherent inequality of adult-youth relationships. The youth-led structure allows young people to have agency over key aspects of the research and action process with adults in a support role. Issues tackled by YPAR initiatives often focus on improvement of community settings and resources (e.g., schools, neighborhoods, programs). YPAR processes can be utilized by social agencies, civic institutions, youth groups, etc. to promote youth empowerment and inclusion (Ozer, 2016).

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## **Literature Review**

There is a variety of literature relating to the role of young people in the built environment. The majority of literature can be divided into three categories. i) young people's perception of the built environment, ii) the impact the built environment has on young people's lives, and iii) the role young people have in planning and changing the built environment. For the sake of this literature review, I will be focusing on the third category, which views young people as active participants in the built environment. The purpose of this literature review is to provide context on the research that has been done regarding young people and the planning process, specifically in the United States and other Western countries. This literature review aims to establish the importance of youth involvement (while acknowledging barriers) in urban planning through highlighting case studies and the historical development of inclusionary frameworks. Additionally, I will discuss the gap in literature surrounding the capacity for change in the planning process through the inclusion of young people.

### **Planners' Current Relationship to Youth**

While there is a growing body of research that acknowledges the important nature of including young people in the planning process, American urban planning and design practices have had “relatively little involvement with youth in scholarship and practice; especially in comparison to work done with other vulnerable groups” (Knorr, 2015)(Knowles-Yáñez, 2005). In *Creating Child Friendly Cities: Reinstating Children in the City*, Claire Freeman acknowledges planners and other professionals in the field admit they feel “ill equipped in terms of their training and resources” when it comes to addressing youth specific issues in the built environment (Freeman 2002). It is necessary for planners to develop a more comprehensive understanding of young people and their role in the urban environment in order to support youth centered policies (Freeman, 2002).

Kathryn Frank exclaims that, “traditional planning is failing youth” (Frank, 2006). According to related research, youth in developed Western nations report feeling “alienated from their communities” (Frank, 2006). The manifestation of this alienation is often seen in public spaces, which fail to incorporate youth-specific needs into their design, thus designating these spaces and processes as ‘adult spaces’ (Knorr, 2015) (Knowles-Yáñez, 2006) (Gleeson and Sipe, 2002). Much research has been done on the relationship between youth and the city, yet there is a

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disconnect between research and policy implementation (Malone, 2002). Current planning policies tend to lean towards ‘adultism,’ ‘protectionism’ or ‘exclusion,’ none of which have been shown to benefit urban youth (Gleeson and Sipe, 2002) (Knorr, 2015).

Literature shows that engagement with youth remains a ‘low priority’ for most planners. When planners focus on youth issues, the emphasis is often exclusively on recreational and educational domains (Freeman, 2002). Knorr echoes this sentiment, in *Youth in Cities*, she states: “master plans make few references to youth, beyond the identification of facilities, such as schools, and therefore do not take into account the diverse and unique ways that young people interact with their communities” (Knorr, 2015). Planning professionals across the board desire new approaches to avoid limitations of current adult-oriented methodologies, yet it is not common practice to engage youth in the process (Freeman, 2002) (Gillespie, 2012) (Frank, 2006). According to the literature, some of the reasons planners do not regularly pursue youth involvement despite proven value, are as follows: “assumptions about who has an interest in planning, historical conceptualizations of the child, specific laws that regulate the use of urban space by children, the exclusion of children from the idea of public participation” (Knowles-Yáñez, 2005), the bureaucratization of the planning process, politics, time, and self interest (Frank, 2006).

### **Youth Inclusion Rights Based Approach**

The concept of a young person’s ‘right’ to participate is discussed thoroughly in many disciplines of literature. The concept of a ‘rights-based’ approach to youth inclusion in planning processes became a large topic of discussion with the 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* (Unicef Innocenti Centre, 2004). The CRC remains a central aspect of rights-based approaches to involving young people in planning processes (Knowles-Yáñez, 2005). A crucial aspect of the CRC in the context of planning is its acknowledgement that it is “the right of young people to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives, in accordance with their capabilities” (Frank, 2005).

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## **Citizenship and Civic Engagement**

Citizen participation in urban planning and community development decision-making has begun to encourage the inclusion of those who are affected by decisions (Arnstein, 1969).

Regardless of changing perceptions of planning and civic engagement, scholars have identified what is referred to as a ‘civic empowerment gap’ in American planning and politics (Stewart, 2013). This gap is a result of long-term exclusion, marginalization and disempowerment. People who have been historically discriminated against due to their social class, race, or immigration status continue to be excluded from participating in civic processes. This exclusion is demonstrated in the “disparity in political participation between low-income urban youth and adults of color and their white, middle and upper class counterparts” (Stewart, 2013).

Despite making up thirty percent of the global population, the citizenship of young people is often ignored (Knorr, 2015) (Frank, 2006). The connection between cities and citizenship is undeniable and long researched, according to the Oxford Handbook of Urban Planning (Miraftab, 2012). In order to achieve active citizenship, ordinary people must have a voice in the planning and policies of their cities. It is through forms of active participation that people develop the “skills and civic awareness necessary for self-government” (Stewart, 2013). Since the 1960s there has been a great deal of research that determines the importance of citizen participation in community redevelopment and planning decisions. It has been widely acknowledged that, “public participation is at the heart of good planning process, and is universally...a ‘good thing’ for planners” (Freeman, 2002). Despite this literature, planning remains largely inaccessible to marginalized groups (Stewart, 2006).

Young people’s health, lives, opportunities, and identities are specifically impacted by their environmental “place,” despite powerlessness in this decision. This is especially true of low-income urban youth of color who are the “recipients of negative stereotypes, stigma, and the worst externalities of place-based inequality that confine them to neighborhoods with underperforming schools, crime and violence.” (Stewart, 2013) Involvement in planning decisions can empower youth through validating their citizenship, and ability to impact their environments (Stewart, 2013). Roger Hart describes participation as “the fundamental right of citizenship” (Hart, 1992). Because youth are often the most vulnerable population, inclusion of young people can prompt questions about who is included in public participation and who may be ignored (Stewart, 2006). In this light, Freeman observes youth participation has the potential



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to pave the way for broader community participation and an overall “shift in the focal point of planning and decision-making towards people at the local level who are most affected by the decisions made” (Freeman, 2002).

### **Beyond Rights: Young People as Urban Planners and Agents of Change**

While there is a strong body of literature highlighting a ‘rights-based’ approach to inclusionary planning, other sources begin to expand and recognize that integration of young people in the planning process is not only a right of young people but is also beneficial to communities and planning processes due to the unique assets young people provide (Frank, 2006). Many of the benefits seen through youth inclusion in the planning process are similar to those observed when adult community members are included in decision-making; however according to Frank, “the benefits..are amplified because youth are undergoing rapid psychosocial development and have had few opportunities for participation in the past” (Frank, 2006).

Young people interact in a unique way with the built environment. Driskell states: “children are intimately familiar with the local environment, and are often the most knowledgeable on how the local environment and development decisions will impact their own lives and that of their community” (Driskell, 2002). Youth often must rely on public services to a greater degree than adult counterparts. This factor makes youth more attuned to the needs of other citizens who may need access to public services, such as low-income and elderly individuals (Frank, 2006). Freeman reiterates that most planners are out of touch with children’s specific experiences with the environment; therefore planners need the firsthand accounts of young people’s experiences with the urban domain in order to develop appropriate policies. (Freeman, 2002). Young people have important and innovative views on why some environments are more ‘child-friendly’ than others, and they are able to articulate these ideas to teachers and planners (Macnaughton, Hughes, Smith, 2007).

In addition to offering a distinct environmental experience, young people introduce original ways of thinking about processes in the professional realm of planning decisions. Freeman explains: “children and young people offer different perspectives and have different needs. Bringing them together with other adults, and with professionals, facilitates understanding of their differences. It also allows for the exchange of views and an understanding of what constitutes a good environment” (Freeman, 2002). Young people can see beyond bureaucratic

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procedures as they are not yet inhibited by “traditional parameters of what is possible” (McKoy and Vincent, 2007). A commonly expressed obstacle in urban planning is the bureaucracy and lack of transparency in decision-making processes (Frank, 2006). In planning projects that have incorporated youth, Frank observes young people find this bureaucracy particularly troubling (Frank). Adopting successful youth collaboration in planning requires planners to practice greater degrees of transparency through implementation of clear objectives and plans (Stewart, 2006).

As mentioned before, children are a particularly vulnerable population, as such Frank predicts if “planning were to focus on meeting the needs of the child, the needs of all will be heard and taken into consideration” (Frank, 2006). Children have the ability to represent an ‘outsider’ group because planning of urban spaces often ignores the specific needs and values of children (Alparone and Rissotto, 2001). Literature discussing youth involvement in the built environment sees youth involvement as a bridge towards social inclusion in decision-making processes (Frank, 2006) (Freeman, 2002) (Macnaughton, Hughes, Smith, 2007). (Hart, 1992). MacNaughton sees youth inclusion in planning processes as a way to access and strengthen often excluded families and communities. These “positive relationships between children, their families and strong communities can counter the adverse effects of economic and social disadvantage” (Macnaughton, Hughes, Smith, 2007). Elaborating on this concept, Hart claims young people can become agents of change in contexts where adults have little opportunity to influence community decisions (Hart, 1992). Collaboration to change the built environment can be particularly empowering to communities, as the results are often physical and lasting (Hart, 1992).

### **Authenticity in Youth Participation**

Throughout the literature surrounding youth involvement in planning, Roger Hart is famously noted for his research and theoretical “Ladder of Young People’s Participation” framework regarding levels of participation (Appendix 4). Hart broadly refers to participation as “the process of sharing decisions which affect one’s life and the life of the community in which one lives” (Hart, 1992). Hart’s Ladder of Young People’s Participation which is modeled after Sherry Arnstein’s “Model of Citizen Participation,” lists levels of participation starting with the least authentic ‘manipulation’ to the most authentic, “Child Initiated, Shared Decisions with

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Adults.” In his Unicef Innocenti essay, Hart lists examples of each level of participation. The first level of authentic participation is referred to as “Assigned but Informed” what distinguishes this category from ‘non-participatory’ models is that the children understand the intentions of the project and have a meaningful role (Hart, 1992).

Scholars building on Hart’s framework observe that young people see the value in working with adult professionals, however they only prefer to do so if they are treated with respect and their ideas are heard (Gleeson and Sipe, 2002). Additionally, upon observation of multiple youth participation initiatives, Knowles-Yáñez notices young people respond well when they are in activities that are usually the domain of adults if young people feel valued. Positive and shared participation with youth has been seen as successful when activities are social, dynamic, interactive, expressive, constructive, clear and challenging (Frank, 2006).

### **Problems and Adaptations to Hart’s Ladder of Participation**

Hart’s ladder of participation has been widely regarded as the standard for measuring the authenticity of youth engagement. However in 2008, Hart published a critique on the usage of the authenticity ladder as a universal tool for measuring the success of youth participation.

*Stepping Back from ‘The Ladder’: Reflections on a Model of Participatory Work with Children* invites those who study and evaluate youth participation to reconsider how we measure the success and authenticity of youth involvement.

Hart states, “In some ways the ladder metaphor is unfortunate for it seems to imply a necessary sequence to children’s developing competence in participation.” Today, after observing the wide adoption of the ladder and discussion surrounding the problematic nature of varying ‘levels’ of participation, Hart offers criticism. While Hart understands the value in his tool, he acknowledges these ‘levels’ seem to imply an implicit hierarchical nature in participation. He encourages the criticism of scholars and the development of new ways to measure youth participation.

While Hart does believe there is some distinct variation in quality of participation which is not necessarily captured by the ladder metaphor, he does not advocate that all forms of participation are equal, rather he does “think of the upper rungs of the ladder as expressions of different ‘degrees’ of agency or participatory engagement by young people. But again, the ladder

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metaphor may be a problem in that it seems to some to suggest that in all cases the higher rungs of the ladder are superior to the ones beneath” (Hart, 2008).

### **Gap in Literature: Capacity to Change the Planning Process**

The benefits youth participatory planning has on young people is highly researched and widely advocated, yet there is a gap in research when it comes to the results surrounding the second “bottom line” (Mckoy and Vincent, 2007). This second bottom line refers to the community and professional benefits of youth participatory processes, or as I will refer to it in this research, the *Civic Impact*. While the literature begins to identify the potential benefits young people can have in changing the planning process, the body of research does not go in depth. More research is needed to determine the capacity youth inclusionary projects have to make change, not only in the sphere of education, but also in the communities, built environments and decision making processes that govern and develop our cities.

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## **Methodology**

### **Research Question:**

*How can youth based urban planning initiatives change the practices of city planning agencies?*

- *Does students' input influence proposals, policy, and plans?*
- *Does Y-PLAN lead to physical changes in the built environment or other tangible results?*
- *How does Y-PLAN affect civic partners' perceptions of young people as community contributors?*

### **Participants:**

Participants in this study include Bill Lindsay (City Manager at City of Richmond), Lena Velasco (Senior Planner at City of Richmond), Adam Lenz (Environmental Manager at the City of Richmond), Shasa Curl (Administrative Chief at the City of Richmond), Gabino Arredondo (Health and Wellness Coordinator at the City of Richmond), and LaShonda White (Senior Management Analyst at the City of Richmond). All have been Y-PLAN clients, professionals involved in the urban planning and policy world who worked with groups of Richmond students to develop collaborative planning projects. An additional interview was conducted with former Y-PLAN client, Alicia Gallo of Mainstreet Richmond over email communication.

Additionally research includes conversation with Y-PLAN staff and former staff. Interviews were held in person at Richmond City Hall. Deborah McKoy, the director of Y-PLAN and Myrna Ortiz Villar, Y-PLAN Richmond Coordinator, accompanied the majority of interviews. Deborah Mckoy contacted the participants. Participants agreed to have interviews recorded.

### **Materials**

Prior to interviews, participants were shown a brief slideshow about Y-PLAN's current work. This interview introduced the research lens. Additionally, participants were given a list of Y-PLAN projects in the past 10 years in Richmond California. Questions asked were a part of Y-PLAN's civic impact research question guide.

### **Procedure**

The research design of this study was a focused qualitative evaluation of Y-PLAN projects located in Richmond, California schools. The research is mixed methods. The primary methodology consists of semi-structured interviews lasting around 45 minutes. Interviews utilized Y-PLAN's developed research questions for analyzing adult and community benefits of

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Y-PLAN's work. In addition to interviews, this study includes analyses of Y-PLAN artifacts, including previous interviews with civic clients, student exit surveys, final presentations, and policy briefs. All sources are property of the Department of Cities and Schools, UC Berkeley College for Environmental Design

### **Limitations**

Y-PLAN's work in Richmond California is extensive. Although this research covers a large period of time and includes review of all available resources, it is impossible to include all relevant information about Y-PLAN's work in Richmond. Additionally, as many as nine years have passed since projects were completed. I was able to make two trips to Richmond to speak with city staff, however timing was limited during interviews.

### **Methods for Analysis of Results:**

The 4 Ps (explained below) are the guiding framework for Y-PLAN's evaluation of success and impact in youth-centered planning projects. This framework is based on over a decade of research specifically centered on youth engagement.

The 4 Ps evaluate the multiple areas in which Y-PLAN projects have the capacity for change on a civic level. Each category embodies a different component of the planning process, the Ps are listed in order of quality of impact.

### **Participant**

Participant change is the first level of civic impact for a Y-PLAN project. Change in participant marks the impact of a project on the individual. If a Y-PLAN project changes the way participants think, specifically in terms of civic partners changing their perceptions of young people as legitimate community contributors, then it is noted that there has been change on this level. There has been participant change as a result of a Y-PLAN project if the civic partner: learns new things about the way space is used, develops an appreciation and ability to use youth insight as important "local knowledge" to inform decisions, thinks differently about their profession and practice (Who are primary users of place? Who are we planning for? How do we engage the community whom plans affect?), distills "jargon" and technical concepts/projects into terms young people and general community can understand, or is re-inspired by the potential and value of diverse, community-wide engagement.

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**Process**

Process change is the second level of civic impact. This level indicates that Y-PLAN has created change in the process of city planning and policy making. This level is still on the individual level, however indicates that multiple individuals in an institution have acknowledged the value of youth participation enough that their overall process is changed. Process change is seen when projects lead to new strategies for sustained, informed, solution-oriented community engagement, if the community engagement process is diversified, when parents and other community members are brought to the planning and policy-making table, when projects act as a catalyst for cross-sector collaboration, and when trust is built between traditionally disenfranchised or marginalized communities and government/civic institutions.

**Place**

Place change considers the physical outcomes of Y-PLAN projects on the built environment. A Y-PLAN project has changed place if there is concrete physical outcome in plans and design that incorporate youth insight, considering diverse users of space and reflecting intergenerational and universal design. When Y-PLAN projects are able to generate ‘good to great’ improvements to the built environment then it can be considered that the project created change in place.

**Policy**

Like with place change, policy change involves direct change to policies as a result of youth-driven data and insight. Additionally, policy change occurs if projects are able to highlight critical community issues and move the needle on policy discussion, or if projects are able to garner grants and policy that formalize youth and school participation as critical to community planning process.

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## **Findings**

### ***Case Study Context:***

#### **Y-PLAN**

Grounded in over a decade of research, Y-PLAN (Youth, Plan, Learn, Act Now!) is an innovative educational and action-based research initiative created through UC Berkeley's Center for Cities + Schools. Y-PLAN methodology fosters collaboration between young people and professional planners in transforming policy landscapes and built environments by providing students with the resources and space to take on planning projects focused on improving their built environments. Y-PLAN connects young people with professional city agency 'clients.' This relationship is at the core of Y-PLAN's mission as it is through this unlikely connection that students are able to see the inner-workings of governmental agencies and work directly with civic leaders to understand local decision-making.

Y-PLAN is a flexible and interactive curriculum that works primarily within underserved schools in a classroom setting. The traditional model follows a five-step methodology aimed to build critical thinking and college/career-readiness (McKoy and Vincent 2007). Y-PLAN inspires youth civic engagement in city planning through education and inclusion by allowing youth to contribute to the development of public buildings and spaces. Through Y-PLAN, youth are able to utilize their unique understanding of the environment to make valuable and positive suggestions to planning professionals. Y-PLAN is guided by the theory of "community of practice," where adults and young people learn together. Y-PLAN strives for genuine participation and inclusion of youth - students are intended to be involved actively throughout the planning and decision-making process (Stewart, 2011).

The projects Y-PLAN participants become engaged with must present a "youth friendly" question that students and teaching partners agree upon (McKoy, and Vincent, 2007). The subject matter involves questions of healthy and equitable city making. Projects are often within the realm of one or more of the following categories: transportation, school services/amenities, housing, and public space. The subject matter is selected based on relevancy to students, curriculum, and place.



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## **5-Step Methodology**

Once a question is decided upon, Y-PLAN is broken up into a “roadmap” (Appendix 1) of five core steps: 1) Start-up: Project Definition & Relationship Building; 2) Making Sense of the City: Community Mapping, Research & Analysis; 3) Into Action: Charette & Development of Proposal; 4) Going Public: Public Presentation 5) Looking Forward & Looking Back: Individual & Collaborative Reflection (McKoy,2012). Y-PLAN projects follow three main conditions that have been proven crucial for success in including youth in community projects. 1) Y-PLAN problem is authentic, and diverse stakeholders create a “community of practice” 2) Adults and young people share in decision making. 3) “Projects build on individual and institutional success” (McKoy and Vincent, 2007).

## **The Double Bottom Line of Outcomes**

Y-PLAN seeks to create results in both the realm of students’ educational experience as well as the generation of community change. Y-PLAN refers to results in both of these areas as the double bottom line. In terms of student benefits, Y-PLAN seeks to empower and educate young people to “effectively contribute youth-driven data and insight to the planning and policy making process; develop college, career, and community readiness skills.” For community benefits Y-PLAN seeks to teach civic leaders to “value and use youth insight to create better plans, policies, and more healthy, sustainable, and joyful places for everyone” (McKoy, 2005).

## **Y-PLAN Challenges and Room for Growth**

While Y-PLAN has comprehensively documented student and community outcomes, there has been less success documenting and analyzing outcome specifically related to the process of the professional/client. Y-PLAN has developed two rubrics (Appendix 2, 3): one rubric outlines methods to evaluate student outcomes, while the other outlines ways to evaluate overall community outcomes. Currently, professional processes are included in community outcomes; however there is not yet a rubric devised specifically to analyze the changes and outcomes in the realm of professional processes.

## **Y-PLAN’s Work in Richmond, California**

Y-PLAN has been working with Richmond schools and civic partners to build a healthy and equitable city for the past eight years. Over 500 low-income Richmond high school students and 30 city planning officials have engaged with a variety of projects focused on urban health and well-being, these projects have included: “park development, improving public housing,

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addressing transportation safety and connectivity, and adopting more equitable school funding” (McKoy, 2015). The City of Richmond, located along 32 miles of shoreline in the eastern region of the San Francisco Bay Area, is home to a Chevron refinery. In 2014 with the adoption of the first-ever Health in All Policies (HiAP) ordinance and strategy, the city of Richmond recognized the impact of environmental factors specifically on residents who are socially and economically disadvantaged (McKoy, 2016). HiAP focuses on issues of health equity and social determinants of health. This document recognizes the way community health is impacted by where we live and the policy decisions that govern our built environments (McKoy, 2016). Y-PLAN has worked closely with the city of Richmond to examine causes of health inequity and seek youth generated solutions. In 2015, the city partnered with Y-PLAN to receive youth insight from Richmond High School Health Academy students on how to develop an effective Climate Action Plan (CAP). During this phase, students from every grade level of Richmond High worked through the Y-PLAN methodology to focus on implementable CAP projects (McKoy, 2015).

The City of Richmond is undergoing a renaissance. Located 16 miles from San Francisco, its neighboring cities have some of the most robust economies in the Bay Area. Once home to WWII-era shipbuilding, in the 80’s and 90’s much of Richmond became rundown and overrun with high crime rates and poverty. For years, Richmond has struggled to overcome its post-war industrial legacy, experiencing underperforming schools and a workforce struggling to meet the demands of a rapidly changing economy. Y-PLAN projects seek to engage the youth of Richmond in addressing urban problems and redevelopment.

### **Y-PLAN as a Unique of Youth Participation**

What distinguishes Y-PLAN from other forms of youth participation is its strategy of connecting young people with local city agencies, through the classroom. It is based on a decade of education research. Y-PLAN includes a rigorous, five-step methodology that builds critical thinking and college/career-readiness. It is closely aligned with contemporary school reform initiatives such as the Common Core. Y-PLAN can be made applicable to a variety of subjects, with its flexible place-based curriculum. Y-PLAN staff works alongside educators, providing them with everything they need to succeed in implementing customized Y-PLAN projects.

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## **Case Study Profiles: Four Y-PLAN Richmond Projects in Review**

This research focuses specifically on Y-PLAN projects conducted in Richmond, California. The four projects profiled were selected for the unique insight they provide on the capacity for youth planning initiatives to generate genuine, civic change. Information about all projects comes through review of Y-PLAN artifacts (policy briefs, student presentations, publications, and interviews)

### **Nystrom United Revitalization Effort- 2008**

How can young people increase participation and ownership in the design improvements and programming of MLK Community Center?

The Nystrom neighborhood of Richmond centers around Nystrom Elementary School and Martin Luther King Jr. Park and Community Center. The neighborhood consists of a 5-block by 4-block portion of Richmond that contains the Iron Triangle, Santa Fe and Coronado neighborhood councils. NURVE is a city-based revitalization effort developed to address some of “the complex issues that face the Nystrom neighborhood such as physical and economic blight, crime, at-risk youth, unemployment, and poverty. NURVE aims to address these community needs through programs and services, capital improvement projects, and greater community participation” (City of Richmond). This initiative was multi-stakeholder and included support and funding from the city of Richmond, Richmond Community Foundation, LISC, and East Bay Foundation.

In 2008, Y-PLAN partnered with the city of Richmond to explore the question: *How can young people increase participation and ownership in the design improvements and programming of MLK Community Center?* LaShonda White, Management Analyst for the City of Richmond, worked with Kennedy High School Students acting as Y-PLAN’s client.

After spending a semester learning about healthy communities and reflecting on the research question, students presented Richmond City Council with their plans for the MLK park. In students’ presentations, they requested safety amenities, sports facilities, and spaces for community collaboration. After work on MLK Park, Y-PLAN continued to work with NURVE on different aspects of the project. The year following MLK park, students answered the question: *What ideas do young people have for programming for preserved WWII-era Nystrom Village houses, overall campus connectivity, heritage, and history?* Following this project

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students concluded their work with NURVE by answering the question *How can community gathering spaces, pathways, and art, contribute to connection to and preservation of, City's history?*

**Participant:**

Student presentations for the first NURVE project, which focused on MLK pPark and community center, had a particularly powerful role in affecting change in participants. Richmond city manager Bill Lindsay recalls that this presentation “was probably the most impactful because it was the eye opener to the notion that we could get so much good information by going away from the architects and planners and by going to the youth and people that are touching the facilities and using things” (B. Lindsay, personal communication, 2017). This project in particular garnered an emotional reaction from attendees. White recalls the impact of youth engagement on community partners, “at the final presentation the engineering director for the community center, he cried, he had a tear in his eye, I will never forget. He was so moved by the presentation by the young people, and their passion and their thoughts it was really special.” (L. White, personal communication, 2017).

**Process:**

Y-PLAN’s work with NURVE generated a high quality of participation as this collaboration brought together a wide range of stakeholders, civic leaders, CBOs and community partners invested in local youth participation. Among these were the city of Richmond, Richmond Community Foundation, LISC, and East Bay Foundation. These organizations worked together to support Y-PLAN’s work with NURVE. Additionally, local sports teams provided funding for the construction of sporting facilities. A wide range of funding was collected for the development of MLK park as a result of community partnerships.

Expanding the community engagement process from one individual organization and Y-PLAN brought the community, students, and support for this project to move forward. After each phase of the park was completed, White recalls, “every time we did something there was a huge celebration. It was a big deal and the community came out” (L. White, personal communication, 2017).

**Policy:**

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While this project was not focused on creating policy change. It is notable that as a result of Y-PLAN's work on MLK park, a youth advisory group was created in order to allow the City of Richmond to continue to receive input from young people throughout the construction of the park.

**Place:**

The place change in this project is significant, as MLK park was constructed using the input provided by Y-PLAN students. White reviews a list of young people's suggestions for the park and notes, "I would say we met a majority of those needs and we really looked at this when we were planning and deciding what we could do and what we could go after funding for to meet our financial needs to get these things done. So what they asked for I think we did a pretty good job now that I'm looking back on it" (L. White, personal communication, 2017). Today, White acknowledges, MLK park is more greatly utilized by community members.

**Lessons:**

Y-PLAN's partnership with NURVE is unique because of its continuation and multi-year relationship. Whereas most Y-PLAN projects last only for the duration of a school year, Y-PLAN remained involved with NURVE for three academic years. While the group of students and focus of each question changed, the relationship and continued youth involvement on this project allowed for more meaningful and interrelated impact. LaShonda White, the main point of contact for all NURVE related projects, says NURVE was a particularly well matched project for youth engagement as it provided the opportunity to receive input from those who would most likely utilize these recreational facilities, "It was the perfect time to have some youth input on the park and the community center."

The place change that occurred as a result of this project is also an important case study, as it is valuable to review scenarios in which young people successfully affect place change in their communities. An important distinguishing factor in this project was in the wide network of community funding and support.

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## **Improving Transportation + Connectivity to Richmond's South Shoreline- 2014**

What kinds of transportation improvements would make it easier, more enjoyable, and safer for people of all ages and abilities to get to the south shoreline from the rest of Richmond?

Richmond's south shoreline is a district with access to businesses, shoreline parks, the marina, the Bay Trail, and beautiful views of the Bay. Because of the placement of railroad tracks and freeways, much of Richmond is separated from this area. The amenities of this area are inaccessible to a large portion of Richmond's population, specifically those who cannot drive or do not have a car. Between September-December 2013, 10th grade history students at Richmond High School's Health Academy were commissioned by the City of Richmond to create a community survey to identify community transportation barriers and opportunities to inform the South Richmond Connectivity Plan (SRTCP) in order to answer the question: *What kinds of transportation improvements would make it easier, more enjoyable, and safer for people of all ages and abilities to get to the south shoreline from the rest of Richmond?* Together with city planners, students created, distributed and analyzed over 600 community surveys and presented findings at City Hall for their final presentation. Richmond city officials were surprised to learn that the majority of students had never been to the south shoreline area, only miles from Richmond High School. Students presented recommendations regarding improved public transportation services, including availability of shelters, lights, restrooms, maps, and an app for the bus schedule. This project was significant for Y-PLAN because it allowed youth participation to be included as a formal task written into the Caltrans-funded South Richmond Transportation Connectivity Plan, and provided insightful data for city planners.

### **Participant:**

The city manager was impacted by the information provided by youth. He was shocked that students had not been to the south shoreline. Planner Shasa Curles states, "the manager says the reason this is so important is when the kids said they had never been to the shoreline area of Richmond and how that connectivity is so important." (S. Curl, Personal Communication, 2017). He continues to reference the importance of connecting with youth input for projects involving transportation and connectivity.

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**Process:**

The city manager referenced the value of youth involvement with this project as a way to demonstrate the importance of including a variety of voices in projects that involve transportation and connectivity.

**Policy:**

Curl credits this project for its role in implementing “an agreement, a community investment agreement, that was negotiated and that has some funding for transportation.” This project made civic partners formally recognize the importance of youth participation by requiring youth input as a task written into the Caltrans-funded South Richmond Transportation Connectivity Plan.

**Place:**

No place changes have been implemented.

**Lessons:**

The South Shoreline Connectivity project demonstrated an area of planning in which youth voices are particularly valuable since young people often utilize public transportation more often than their adult counterparts. This provides further opportunity for youth planning initiatives to tap into planning areas specifically relevant to young people.

**Youth-Driven Data for Climate Action- 2015**

How can youth driven data and insight inform the development of the Richmond Climate Action Plan?

In 2015 The City of Richmond recognized environmental health as the Mayor’s top priority. Environmental health is critical to building a strong, resilient community in the face of a changing climate. Hundreds of thousands of California residents, many of who are physically, socially, or economically disadvantaged, live in areas that are especially vulnerable to climate change. With 32 miles of shoreline, and the home to the Chevron refinery, Richmond is one of these places with the opportunity and responsibility to take proactive steps to plan for resiliency. The City of Richmond is dedicated to working with community members to understand risks,

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and identify adaptation solutions. Incorporating the insight of young people, who will be the recipients of future policies, decisions, and plans, is key to this strategy. In April 2012, the City of Richmond adopted General Plan 2030, a 20-year roadmap for growth and development. Richmond is one of the first cities in the nation to include a section specifically dedicated to Energy and Climate Change and Community Health and Wellness. This is what is called a “co-benefits” framework – policies that help the environment will also help health, and vice versa. From February-May 2015, each grade level conducted community research to generate specific proposals for mitigation and adaptation strategies that were ultimately included in the Richmond CAP. The overarching question was: *How can youth driven data and insight inform the development of the Richmond Climate Action Plan?*

**Participant:**

In this project clients acknowledged the large amount of valuable and “fresh” information provided by students. “Y-PLAN pushes us to open our minds – to get youth who are students of color, who have families that live in the community, who are representing a different generation to the planning table, to hear what reality is for them and to incorporate that in the process” (Lindsay, Persona ?)

**Process:**

This project was unique in the direct connection it established between youth and planning processes. The city specifically asked for youth input on the Climate Action Plan. This is perhaps a testament to the already strong relationship between young people and the city, established through previous success with Y-PLAN projects.

**Policy:**

The CAP was particularly successful in generating policy change, as youth recommendations were directly incorporated. “I think it's important that young people did provide input in the climate action plan because as we're operationalizing it's like their recommendations really are embedded in the document ?

**Place:**

No short-term place change observed. As a project focused on long-term environmental impact, any place-change is likely to occur down the line as a result of policy and behavior change.



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**Lessons:**

Y-PLAN's involvement with CAP is an example of youth engagement successfully impacting policy. The CAP was a top priority of the city manager during the period that Y-PLAN was working on the project, this proved highly beneficial, as Richmond city staff were able to designate a significant amount of time to working with youth to generate successful recommendations. Additionally, having the direct platform of the CAP to work towards, guaranteed that the city staff would consider the youth voices.

**Downtown Richmond- 2016**

What can the City of Richmond/Richmond Main Street Initiative do to address the need for access to healthy food and encourage healthy living in downtown? How could young people and schools be involved?

How can youth help downtown businesses bridge the digital divide now and in the future? What is the role of technology in achieving a healthy, vibrant, youth-friendly downtown? What do businesses need, and what infrastructure is necessary?

Richmond's downtown district was formerly considered the heart of Richmond's cultural and business life. However, economic conditions post-WWII and the development of a large mall (Hilltop Mall) brought about an economic downfall. During this period, downtown Richmond saw a decrease in activity in its businesses district. During the 1980s and 1990s the city suffered from exceptionally high crime rates resulting in a negative perception of the area, further decreasing the quality of the downtown district. Today, downtown Richmond is attempting to reinvent itself through revitalization efforts. The city is partnered with Richmond Main Street Initiative (RMSI), a non-profit organization that is building on existing assets to make downtown a safe, vibrant, thriving destination for arts, entertainment, businesses, and residents with an easily accessible transit center. In 2012, RMSI successfully rallied city government, property and business owners, residents and other community partners to form the Downtown Richmond Property Business Improvement District (DRPBID)—the first and only in the city of Richmond.

Y-PLAN's work in downtown Richmond was a collaboration between two specialized Richmond high schools. Richmond High School's Health Academy focused on 'Building a

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Healthy Downtown Richmond’ exploring the question: *What can the City of Richmond/Richmond Main Street Initiative do to address the need for access to healthy food and encourage healthy living in downtown? How could young people and schools be involved?*

While DeAnza’s Tech Academy worked on “Bridging the Digital Divide how to use Tech within the Downtown District” with the question: *How can youth help downtown businesses bridge the digital divide now and in the future? What is the role of technology in achieving a healthy, vibrant, youth-friendly downtown? What do businesses need, and what infrastructure is necessary?*

Kennedy High School students focused on the issue of a lack healthy, fresh, affordable food options. Through research, and evaluation of current food options, population demographics and community surveys, students created proposals aimed at incorporating healthy options to current local menus.

Meanwhile, at DeAnza, students focused on using current technology resources to expand the reach of local businesses. Students did this by contacting local businesses about their social media usage. Their final presentations demonstrated the ways in which technology could help bring life back to Richmond’s downtown district.

**Participant:**

When thinking about how to make downtown Richmond more youth-friendly and digitally connected, young people from DeAnza focused on the importance of wi-fi access and public transportation. City agents noted this as an important finding from a unique youth angle.

**Process:**

Process included youth in high level-data collection, allowing young people to reach out to local businesses and generating greater community connection and understanding.

**Policy:**

No policy changes were fully implemented. Alicia Gallo, of Mainstreet Richmond states: “we were able to move one of the recommendations into action: One of the Health team’s recommendations was to increase outreach and education about EBT, the Market Match program, and the farmers’ market... we were able to support work in this area. Barriers to fully implementing this recommendation were funding and staff.” (A.Gallo, Personal Contact, 2017).

**Place:** No place changes have been implemented.

**Lesson:**

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The most important lesson from this case study is in the role of the client. While other highlighted projects were led by those employed by the city, Richmond Main Street, a non-profit, acted as the civic client. Y-PLAN staff says this provided an obstacle, as the non-profit was unable to implement any of the long-term structural changes suggested by young people.

**Summary Table of Case Study Findings**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Participant Change</b>	<b>Process Change</b>	<b>Policy Change</b>	<b>Place change</b>
<b>Nystrom United Revitalization Effort- MLK Park 2008</b>	Strong emotional reaction from city clients at final presentation	High quality of participation from wide range of stakeholders	Youth advisory group created	The development of MLK park reflects youth recommendations
<b>Improving Transportation + Connectivity to Richmond's South Shoreline- 2014</b>	City agents impacted by youth's difficulty reaching shoreline  Notes value in including youth on transportation issues	Grant Received. RFP changed, future consultants must work with young people in order to receive grant.	requiring youth input as a task written into the Caltrans-funded South Richmond Transportation Connectivity Plan	No short-term place change noted
<b>Youth-Driven Data for Climate Action- 2015</b>	City staff impressed with quality data collected by youth	Direct connection established between youth and planning processes.	Youth insights included in Richmond Climate Action Plan	No short-term place changed noted
<b>Downtown Richmond- 2016</b>	Youth insight on technology and transportation viewed as valuable	New network of information about Downtown created	No fully implemented policy change	No noted place change

**General Findings: Lessons From Richmond**

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These findings are a result of interviews with past Y-PLAN Richmond civic clients. In interviews clients were open about both successes and shortcomings with their Y-PLAN experience. The following is a list of common findings from these interviews.

1. Y-PLAN Richmond provides civic agents with valuable opportunities for community outreach
2. Y-PLAN Richmond has fostered youth relationships to civic agents
3. Projects are most impactful when they are linked to a city's existing priorities and agenda
4. Youth projects are most impactful when partnered with powerful civic agents
5. Timing is essential when working with young people
6. Lack of funding sources and bureaucratic obstacles prevent project implementation

### **Y-PLAN Richmond Provides Civic Agents with Valuable Opportunities for Community Outreach**

Y-PLAN Richmond's city clients recognize the way Y-PLAN has provided an avenue for quality community input. Bill Lindsay describes a Y-PLAN final presentation in contrast to a community meeting,

“the worst community meeting is when you get people two minutes at a time saying what their position is and you can check it off the list and say we did community input. If we spend an hour and a half doing that or an hour and a half at a Y-PLAN presentation focused on something where the input is informed and there's a constituency you get a broad range of ideas, it's not more work it's actually better quality in the same amount of time (B.Lindsay, Personal Contact, 2017).

Clients continually note the quality information provided by Y-PLAN presentations, acknowledging that when young voices are provided a platform for informed input, the results

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are highly useful. Lindsay highlights the way young people are able to come from a more unbiased place than adult community members,

“a lot of times people go into planning processes and they have preconceived ideas for what they want the outcome to be or they view it as this is our position and we need to promote our position about something, what I’ve seen more of in Y-PLAN is that it starts from scratch, there aren’t any preconceived ideas about what it should be there’s no positions taken in advance and that’s why there’s a freshness to it” (B.Lindsay, Personal Contact, 2017).

Clients acknowledge the valuable place young Y-PLAN participants come from, as they have spent a semester researching their project and preparing recommendations, Lindsay describes,

“when we have public comment we have ,with all due respect to the people who make public comment, they’re looking at things superficially and they’re reacting to it. The input we get from the students is informed comment. At the end they know the project, they know what’s going on, so the comments are still what I would call community comment, but it’s informed community comment, so it’s really elevated in terms of its value.” (B.Lindsay, Personal Contact, 2017).

Lindsay describes taking content straight from Y-PLAN final presentations and including them in plans for MLK park. Not only does Y-PLAN Richmond provide valuable community input, but it allows city planners to reach local voices that are frequently unheard by planning departments. LaShonda White notes,

“we definitely saw the point and the value in having young people from Richmond providing their input. I was pretty new to local government, but what I could tell was that often it was grownups making decisions, they may not be from the community, they may be from the community, but they made decisions about what happened in the community...we have to go step outside our box and our comfort zone to make sure we are reaching the people we really need to reach and I felt like Y-PLAN helped provide another venue, another avenue for us to reach the community voice that I traditionally doubt we would have heard from” (L. White, personal communication, 2017).

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This value is particularly heightened when Y-PLAN projects have a focus on a space primarily used by youth,

“ Y-PLAN really provided us with that opportunity to hear from young people who lived in that community who went to the park, who used the community center, who may have gone to that school. There was a connection to that space, it wasn’t just youth it was youth from the neighborhood who know where this place is. It’s not youth from somewhere in the hills who have never been out here who have never been to that community and so it just made it that much more meaningful.”

Hearing from marginalized voices through Y-PLAN challenges civic agents to think differently about outreach,

“Y-PLAN has always made me remember the impact of making sure you hear from different voices, so always making sure we do outreach. .... We don’t want to just do emails, let’s have an outreach plan. I’m definitely always thinking about outreach now and more critical...I have my opinions in general for the city of Richmond and I’ve shared them in terms of how we do outreach for development projects. I’ve been at a meeting and they’ve mentioned outreach with neighborhood meetings, handing out fliers, and I think the traditional methods of outreach are not the only way and are not the best way” (L. White, personal communication, 2017).

Civic agents also benefit from youth participation, as it allows them to demonstrate to the community that young people are involved in the decision-making process. Shasa Curl describes “when we’re able to present the Climate Action Plan and they see, oh wow all of these young people were involved they gave their recommendations, it’s incorporated, people like that and it’s really authentic community engagement and that it’s measurable and it’s not like oh we went to this community meeting and everyone gave us 5 dots” (S. Curl, personal communication, 2017). Lindsay discussed a similar mentality, in which community members were more likely to support a project when they were aware young people were involved. Additionally youth input is valuable in advancing the city’s priorities, as explained by Arredondo,

“Another thing, I don’t know if Adam has mentioned it, but also Adam used the recommendations for students to push things within the district internally, so you know when we e-mail and stuff we say things like you know we can help you implement the bike racks, or we can help you implement the water stations we understand that this is not

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just a priority for the city but it's also a priority for the students and I think it helps our arguments” (G. Arredondo, personal communication, 2017).

### **Y-PLAN Richmond has Fostered Youth relationships to City Agents**

Y-PLAN has provided a venue for marginalized young people to create personal connections with people in power in their communities. Lindsay, city manager, states, “we’ve had stronger personal questions, and I think there's been a stronger connection between some of our staff in the city manager's office and the schools” (B.Lindsay, Personal Contact, 2017).

These relationships are both valuable for youth and for civic agents, as evidenced through interviews with Y-PLAN Richmond civic clients. Clients describe the way these relationships allow them to relate to citizens of Richmond. Gabino Arredondo shares his experience, “it grounds me, it directly connects you to the community” (G. Arredondo, personal communication, 2017). This connection to the city is mutually beneficial, as the opportunity to interact with a civic agent provides a positive experience for marginalized students. It is important to note that Arredondo, Curl, and White all live in Richmond and are people of color, making this connection that much more valuable to students who may be able to relate to these leaders. Richmond’s city staff sees this as a pathway for students to find a way to feel more connected to their city, “I think for us another big thing is for them to know that there are city staff who are people of color, that's really important and for us to explain to them how a city works and for them to tell us what are some of their concerns and also understandings of things that are going on in the city, because we might be able to clarify something or take something back” (G. Arredondo, personal communication, 2017). Curl similarly expresses, “it can change a young person’s life, because when we interact with students, the questions or the needs they have don’t necessarily have to be a city function but because we’re city staff we might know what resources are available to them or to their families” (S. Curl, personal communication, 2017).

The development of relationships also increases the opportunity for civic change. Curl shares, “I think it helps to have city staff people that work and live in the same community and if they’re connected to other organizations, like Gabino in his role also works for Building Blocks for Kids right and is a mentor just like I’m a mentor, so when you get that layering I think it creates the capacity for the work to have a different impact” (S. Curl, personal communication, 2017). The quality of each Y-PLAN project and its ability to generate authenticity and change is strengthened through partnerships between students and planners. As Curl explains, “what makes



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these kinds of programs successful is not just a template and a model but that interaction, that face time... Also it just helps people how what they're doing is connected to a larger model of change, it's like by having that different person you see everyday" (S. Curl, personal communication, 2017).

Clients similarly expressed a desire to stay connected with young Y-PLAN participants, in order to keep students up to date on the status of projects.

"I feel if there's a way students follow it and they start in the 9th grade. It could have been nice, if they were to continue even if it was a different project so we could just give them an update and say this is where we are. Just letting them know year to year, like this is what we're doing. I think that for [NURVE] it would have been special and unique. And hopefully in the future there's ways students can really connect with staff and have avenues to really do that and to maintain some sort of connection and school outreach, to make sure they understand we are here as resources..." (L. White, personal communication, 2017).

### **Projects are most impactful when they are linked to a city's existing priorities and agenda**

In terms of project selection, it was clear from interviews that civic impact is largest when youth outreach programs are centered around projects that are of a high priority to the city. Arredondo states, "in our perspective right now we have a lot of different plans that we need to implement so I think we're at a point where it should tie to some form of remaining action for the different plans we're doing" (G. Arredondo, personal communication, 2017). During interviews, civic partners were excited to update us on projects they were currently involved with that they believed would be a good fit for Y-PLAN. Curl describes this as "looking for synergies between the systems, I think is important because then you get more buy in" (S. Curl, personal communication, 2017). This concept of 'synergies' Curl explains, is a way to make Y-PLAN projects mutually beneficial. When projects are of a high priority, and community input is needed, civic agents feel more invested in pushing implementation.

### **Youth Projects are most impactful when partnered with powerful civic agents**

A common theme expressed by civic clients and Y-PLAN staff is the important role of a

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powerful adult partner. Curl states, “I feel very empowered, like I can create change and try to encourage the city to adopt or do things differently, I think having the city staff people or the district staff that have that capacity within their role is helpful versus just like sort of having a plan, so then we can Y-Implement” (S. Curl, personal communication, 2017). While White did not believe she had the same power to implement, she recognized the value in alignment with powerful adults,

“I don’t have the authority to make decisions, I might be a point of contact, but you are presenting to the city manager, and the engineering director who oversees the contract for both of these projects like you’re reporting to people who do have decision making power, they’re listening to you and they’re not going to forget this experience, you’re not just doing a written report you’re doing a verbal report. It’s just special.”

As demonstrated by the above case studies, in this paper it is crucial to note that Y-PLAN projects have resulted in real civic impact when pursued by powerful civic agents.

“By the time we got to the class we had written into the RFP in the scope, that it was a deliverable they had that the consultant had to work with Y-PLAN. So for me that was my systems change piece, I was like I’m going to write in the contract that ESA has to go to these meetings, and listen to the students, so actually writing into the contract for the consultant as a deliverable to me that’s how you create the systems change piece”(S. Curl, personal communication, 2017).

### **Timing is Essential when working with young people**

Interviewees recognized the influential role of project timing and implementation when young people are involved. Adam Lenz shared, “timing is important, a long term planning effort isn’t the most ideal for high school students because they don’t see the immediate results, you know timing is critically important” (A. Lenz, personal communication, 2017). This thought was echoed by many of Richmond’s civic partners, and by the Y-PLAN team. Lindsay reflects on a less successful project, “It was a good planning project but nobody was going to see something be built from it within a couple of years time, you know who knows what the future is there...this goes to the idea that project selection is really important, that somebody will be able to kick the tires on something within a relatively short amount of time” (B.Lindsay, Personal Contact, 2017).

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In the same vein as timing, civic agents unanimously explained the importance of concrete deliverables when working with young people. Both Lenz and Curl provided similar suggestions regarding implementation. Lenz proposes, “if you can have funding from the district or for the efforts in the beginning of the partnership for each year the students will feel like at the end of it their seeing their ideas and initiatives implemented. So if there can be funding for the outcomes of the Y-PLAN policy recommendations.” Curl shares a similar opinion,

“I think it's really important, to me the biggest, the most important thing is to make sure there’s capacity to implement the recommendations and that the built environment recommendations are coupled with the policy, so we’re working on the Climate Action plan but also we can separate our different waste. To me that's what makes people really excited about planning, is to also do something from it and to have, it doesn’t have to be extremely expensive, maybe in fact in terms of the partnership, trying to get the district in their capital improvement budget to identify resources for Y-Implement like in there, if we could get the district to do that, that would be real structural change. (S.Curl, Personal Contact, 2017).

Both of these suggestions, while not focusing on the challenges of budget limitations, show an emphasis on the necessity for deliverables in a time that young people are able to see the civic impact their work has.

### **Lack of Funding Sources and Bureaucratic Obstacles Prevent Project Implementation**

Planning departments recognize the challenges in implementation of Y-PLAN projects presented by the bureaucracy of the process. The planners at Richmond discuss this challenge and how it affects Y-PLAN projects,

“We have things about having these plans and letting them be static, especially with young people if you engage them for a whole year and maybe it's bike racks and maybe its diversions that we make sure that we actually do what they request because if not it's very, it could make them feel more marginalized because its like you ask them to spend all this time coming up with recommendations and then nothing happens” (S. Curl, personal communication, 2017).

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Lenz shares a specific experience in which a Y-PLAN project was unable to be implemented despite his best efforts,

“There's a lot of finger pointing. I just want to bang my head on the table it's like can't we just get the bins in for this pilot program just send the truck over like 50 feet down the road and they pick up the bins. And I do think the school district is like working in good faith, but I think they're probably just challenged by what [the recycling company] is asking” (A. Lenz, personal communication, 2017).

While planners recognize this difficulty, they look for ways to make this a learning process.

Arredondo shares,

“I think another aspect that the students don't see or you won't see is the pace of implementation, so sometimes us internally we're pushing something with the school district or another system we expect a certain pace and sometimes we get stalled and so we might feel, not only students feel disappointed, but we feel disappointed in how they implemented what we said we were going to do, so like for us to keep following through on where they're placing the bike racks or the water stations, so this is also a learning experience for us somehow, how they implement the project or how they actually did it” (G. Arredondo, personal communication, 2017).

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## **Analysis**

Results from this in depth reflection and evaluation with Y-PLAN Richmond clients highlight some crucial findings for the greater discussion on youth participation in planning and how we measure both authenticity and civic impact. The successes seen in the relationship between the city's planners and youth shed light on the possibilities for other cities to tap into these connections. Additionally, the shortcomings provide opportunities for Y-PLAN, the city of Richmond, and youth planning initiatives worldwide to strengthen these partnerships and increase civic impact and systemic change.

In using the case study of Y-PLAN Richmond as a model for nationwide operationalizing, it is important to acknowledge certain characteristics of the relationship that may differentiate this connection from those between different cities and different youth planning initiatives. What makes Richmond different can also provide insight on the characteristics that make a city a strong ally to youth engagement initiatives. First and foremost, Richmond city staff have shown a clear interest in outreach and specifically outreach to voices that are often unheard. This interest is crucial to the partnership, and has been a key aspect to success in Richmond. While this connection may be a result of the individual politics of city staff, providing further research and evidence that it is valuable for cities to seek these opinions may inspire other city staff members, in cities across the world to tap into these often overlooked resources.

As seen in case study evaluation and general findings, the 4 Ps of civic impact (participant change, process change, policy change, and place change) are a useful tool for evaluating the changes constituted through youth participation. Closer evaluation of these elements of civic change allow for the development of a tool that points to the elements that allow for each level of civic change to occur through youth participation initiatives. While change in each P is valuable civic change, there are different levels of impact indicated by each P. Looking closely at these different levels, it is possible to draw out a model that points to key indicators that generate each phase of civic change. The following section discusses the elements necessary for change in each sector, based on research findings. It is important to note civic change builds upon itself. Each level of civic change requires not only the indicators specified, but also the indicators needed for the prior level of change.

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### **Participant Change Requires a Genuine Problem**

Participant change, the first level of civic change, occurs when a real civic problem that requires community input is proposed to young people. When a civic agent reaches out to youth with the desire for input, it is clear the agent is able to identify youth input as a source of valuable information. This, in itself, is an indicator of participant change, since it shows an adult actor challenging the status quo and recognizing young people as valuable players in the planning process. As seen in findings, each Y-PLAN project generates participant change. This phase of civic change is reached in every Y-PLAN project, as the structure of Y-PLAN projects always involve a real civic client presenting youth with a question related to a real and relevant community issue. As seen in findings, all Y-PLAN Richmond civic partners acknowledge the information provided by young people is valuable. When young people are presented with an authentic and relatable question they are able to provide input. This exemplifies that the first step to civic change through youth planning is the posing of a real problem by a civic agent. When a civic agent takes the initiative to involve youth in a real process, the process of civic change begins.

### **Process Change Requires an Invested Civic Client**

Participant change becomes process change when a civic agent becomes personally invested in implementing youth recommendations. Process change is more long term than participant change as it involves a system of agents changing the way they conduct their business. As process change involves change in the existing structure or procedures, someone who is a part of the current system must advocate for this change. In Y-PLAN projects this personal investment often comes from the establishment of strong relationships between city agents and young people. As shown in findings, one of the major outcomes of Y-PLAN projects is the facilitation of relationships between civic agents and marginalized youth. Based on results from interviews, it appears these relationships develop through face-to-face interactions between students and civic agents. Additionally, civic agents become personally invested in projects when they truly believe in the power of involving young people. The civic advocate may believe in youth planning for a variety of reasons; in the case of Y-PLAN Richmond, a history of positive experiences continues to inspire civic agents to advocate for including young people's voices in planning processes. While Y-PLAN measures process change for individual projects, more process change can be observed after a civic agency has maintained a partnership with young

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people, as is observed with Y-PLAN Richmond. Process change begins to move away from individual change as it involves more than change of opinion of a single civic actor. Process change occurs after a number of civic agents undergo participant change and acknowledge the value and importance of youth input.

### **Policy Change Occurs when Youth Work is Connected to Current City Priority should**

Policy Change is an indication that youth work has moved from impacting individuals to creating change in the overall system. Policy change occurs when there is an actual policy change formalized by a civic agency. This is systems change, as a formalized policy continues to impact the city and civic institution. In order to move from process change to policy change, the issue youth are contributing to must be a current priority of the city. When Y-PLAN worked with the city of Richmond on the Climate Action Plan for example, there was significant policy change as city staff members were dedicated to the process and genuinely needed input on the matter. While youth planning initiatives may provide useful information on issues that are not currently on the agenda, their changes are most likely to be implemented and internalized if the issue is one of great importance to the city. Additionally, when youth are contributing to a relevant issue, city staff is able to allocate more time to advocating for implementation of youth suggestions.

### **Policy Change Occurs when a Civic Agent with Power is Involved**

As discussed in relation to process change, policy change is more likely to occur when an adult agent is in support of the cause. Whereas with process change all that is necessary is the support of any civic agent, when it comes to policy change, the agent must have the power to influence change. Working alongside a powerful civic agent allows youth participants to have greater capacity for implementing changes. Ideally, young people would have the power to implement change without the aid of a powerful adult, however the reality of the planning process is that power is needed in order to create systems change. The alliance of a strong community partner, or a civic agent with the ability to enforce policy change is a valuable component that elevates youth planning from change on an individual level to change on a systemic level.

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### **Place Change Occurs when Project has a Realistic Time Frame**

Place change involves physical changes to the built environment. Place change requires all previous contributing factors to civic impact, with the addition of resources to facilitate physical change. Timing is essential to physical change. When youth are included in planning processes which aim to generate physical changes to the built environment, it is necessary to be realistic about timing. If expectations about time frames are unrealistic, projects are unlikely to be successful in terms of concrete development.

### **Place Change Occurs when Project has Available Funding Sources**

As power is necessary to generate policy change, the need for financial resources is a reality of place change. Adult-proposed place change is limited by lack of funding resources, so too are youth-based initiatives. While youth may provide groundbreaking suggestions for place change, these dreams cannot become a reality without funding. Despite the reality of limitations, it is possible for youth-initiated place change to receive funding. For example, the suggestions of Y-PLAN in relation to MLK park was fully funded and implemented by a variety of philanthropy groups and city grants.



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## **Recommendations: Y-PLAN as a Model for Youth Participation**

### **Youth Planning Initiatives Should Involve Real Civic Problems**

Civic actors or organizations, wishing to involve young people in the process of changing their communities, must wisely select a genuine civic problem in which to involve youth. Y-PLAN facilitators and staff work with civic agents before beginning each project to develop a strong question. The structure of the civic problem as a question is well received by young people and civic agents alike, as demonstrated through Y-PLAN projects, since it prompts youth to think critically and clients to seek concrete answers. In order to receive the most valuable youth input, the civic problem should be an issue that specifically involves the lives of young people participating in the process. As demonstrated through the four Y-PLAN Richmond project profiles, civic problems involving public transportation, recreational facilities, and technology all provided spaces for young people to discuss issues particularly relevant to them. When selecting an authentic problem, organizations and adult allies should be mindful of the lifestyles of young participants in the community. As a result of strong relationships between Richmond city agents and young people in the community, civic agents have been successful at developing questions they know will relate specifically to the lives of the young people they work with.

### **Youth Planning Initiatives Should Focus on Relationship Building with Students and Civic Agents**

While many youth planning initiatives advocate for the absence of adults in genuine youth participation, Y-PLAN focuses on both student experience and civic change. While an entirely youth-led initiative may be educational for youth, in order for young people to generate genuine change it is important to partner with civic agencies. When civic agents form relationships with youth, they are more inclined to move their projects forward. Working alongside an invested partner also provides an empowering pathway for young people, as they are able to work with an adult who recognizes their potential.

In order to develop strong relationships it is important for civic agents to have face-to-face time with young people throughout the planning process. Youth planning initiatives should identify civic agents who have interest in interacting with young people. Relationship building activities between students and civic agents provide an opportunity for participants to make this connection. If both students and civic agents are afforded an avenue to share their personal goals

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and connections to the city and the specific project, relationships may be strengthened by mutual understanding, and as a result projects may operate more smoothly.

### **Youth Planning Initiatives Should Understand the Local Political Environment**

It is crucial for youth planning initiatives seeking to generate policy change to be aware of the current political priorities of the civic agency. As exemplified in interview findings, it can be particularly useful for youth planning initiatives to look for what Richmond Senior Planner; Curl referred to as ‘synergies’ places where civic agencies and youth initiatives may share goals. Again, Richmond’s CAP project is a positive example of the harnessing of this synergy. Y-PLAN educators found value in educating young people about what creates a healthy city, while the City of Richmond was in need of community input on the CAP document. In order to maximize policy impact, youth planning initiatives should observe and discuss current agenda items with local civic agencies prior to selecting a project area.

### **Youth Planning Initiatives must be Transparent**

Again, it is important for youth planning initiatives to understand the political background of the community in order to develop the most productive and powerful partnership. A power analysis is a useful tool for youth planning agencies, and may also provide a valuable lesson about the role of power and relationships in the planning world. Y-PLAN does not have a formal process for identifying the most powerful and accessible civic players, however this could be a valuable addition to client selection. It is possible to see the role of power in action when contrasting two Y-PLAN projects and the power level of civic clients alongside the impact of the project. In the Improving Shoreline Transportation and Connectivity project, Richmond youth worked directly for the City of Richmond. Richmond Planner Shasa Curl and City Manager Bill Lindsay were able to insert youth input directly into policy by requiring youth input as a task written into the Caltrans-funded South Richmond Transportation Connectivity Plan. Mainstreet Richmond, a community-based organization, acted as the client for the project Healthy Downtown Richmond. While the organization was able to provide a valuable experience for youth, ultimately the lack of influencing power of the organization prevented youth work from moving past the participant change phase. Power and strategic relationship should not be

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overlooked by youth planning initiatives, as these relationships provide greater opportunity to leverage youth participation and ultimately generate policy change.

### **Youth Planning Agencies Should Choose Projects in Which Youth Will See Place Change**

As demonstrated through interview findings, it can be disempowering to youth to work towards place change without seeing concrete place-based deliverables. That being said, place change cannot be rushed. Y-PLAN projects last for only an academic semester or year, therefore it is not surprising that place change is not seen nearly as often as change in the other realms of civic change. In the Nystrom Community Project: MLK Community Center and Park, place change is very apparent. However, this place change occurred over a significant period of time in which multiple projects were conducted in the Nystrom community. In order for Y-PLAN and other youth planning initiatives to further reach and impact in the area of place change, it is necessary to either lengthen project time frames, or seek more short-term physical change. An example of short-term physical change can be seen in the project leading up to CAP, which focused on increasing environmental efficiency of Richmond High School. In this project, students were able to see the installation of water fountains, and the implementation of a recycling program as suggested in their Y-PLAN final projects.

Mindfulness about timing is essential in the project selection process, specifically for projects with the goal of creating place change. While it is important to be open with students about the lengthy process of planning decision implementation, youth planning initiatives should also look for projects that provide concrete deliverables in a timeframe that allows youth to see that they can implement change. When projects focus on long-term place change, it could be beneficial to work in phases with concrete deliverable for each phase, or for civic agents to provide regular updates on the progress of projects.

### **Youth Planning Initiatives Should be Transparent, yet Positive about Funding**

Y-PLAN makes a point about being transparent with young people about the reality of financial limitation in creating place change. Honesty is important in providing young people with an authentic planning experience. It should not be a taboo to discuss the financial limitation of the planning process with young people, however the focus should not be on limitation.

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Limitation is a familiar concept to marginalized youth, it is important to frame the conversation around opportunity and possibility rather than on deficit.

While resources are limited, there is a wide net of organizations designed specifically to fund place change. Researching and learning about available grants and the grant request writing process would be an exercise that could be powerful in terms of education, empowerment, and civic impact. It is valuable for young people to understand how to work within limitation in order to maximize civic impact and place change.

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## **Conclusion**

The school-based participation of young people in the Y-PLAN's youth planning process presents a strategy for civic impact through youth planning. Drawing from case study research in Richmond, California, this report described and analyzed Y-PLAN as a model for the participation of marginalized young people and schools in the community planning process. This study builds on research that finds that the inclusion of young people in planning processes provides an opportunity for community empowerment, education, and change. This study focuses on the different levels of impact young people can have on the civic environment when included in the planning process, based on Y-PLAN's 4 Ps, measurements of impact (participant change, process change, policy change, and place change). Findings demonstrate Y-PLAN's ongoing relationship with the city of Richmond has provided civic agents with valuable opportunities for community outreach while fostering relationships between city staff and the community's youth. Findings suggest youth projects are most impactful when they are linked to a city's existing priorities and agenda, when they involve powerful civic agents, and a realistic time frame. Youth projects continually cause participant and process change, while policy and place change are more limited by lack of funding sources and bureaucratic obstacles. Recommendations address these strengths and challenges and are intended to guide future Y-PLAN projects or similar initiatives as they seek to expand and deepen the civic impact of youth planning initiatives.

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Appendix: (All sources property of Y-PLAN)

1)



2)

**Student Outcomes: College, Career, and Community Readiness\***

The Y-PLAN strategy builds the capacity of young people to effectively contribute youth-driven data and insight to the planning and policy-making process, focuses on core learning and the development of youth voice, leadership and career and college readiness skills. Key student outcomes:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Collaborators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with peers to recognize individual and group strengths, delegate roles, set clear goals and deadlines to produce a high quality project for a real client, on a real deadline</li> <li>Participate in collaborative discussions with diverse partners and issues - responding thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarizing points of agreement and disagreement, and justifying views with evidence and reasoning</li> <li>Use technology, including the internet, to collaborate with others</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Critical Thinkers and Problem Solvers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct community research to identify and analyze a critical community issue, and support recommendations with logical reasoning, textual evidence from primary and secondary sources such as plans, historical documents, and youth-driven data such as mapping, interviews, and surveys.</li> <li>Distinguish between fact and opinion, and evaluate author/speaker's point of view and use of evidence</li> <li>Link critical reflection to action, and move from micro to macro analysis of critical community issues of equity and opportunity as they develop proposals for change</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Community Contributors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase civic efficacy, and "student voice," to influence their own learning and communities</li> <li>Work with peers promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making</li> <li>Transfer and apply the Y-PLAN method of community development to additional contexts and issues to affect positive community and school change</li> <li>Work-based learning provides relevant skills and opportunities in preparation for internship and employment</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Creators, Designers and Innovators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct explanations and design evidence-based solutions to a real community problem</li> <li>Create maps and illustrations to spatially represent observations and findings</li> <li>Use digital media (text, graphics, audio, visual, interactive) in presentations to add interest and help the audience understand findings, reasoning, and evidence</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Communicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build reciprocal communication skills, learning to listen and incorporate diverse opinions while building capacity and confidence to advocate their own ideas and opinions</li> <li>Develop public speaking and presentation skills, presenting information, findings, and evidence clearly and logically so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning</li> <li>Accurately apply a range of academic and domain-specific vocabulary in verbal presentations, and through interactive, argumentative, and explanatory writing</li> </ul>	



3)

## The Ladder of Participation

