

fACTivist

Edmonton Across the Ages

*How the City of
Edmonton Youth
Council Helps Shape
Municipal Policy*

*YRAP Mentorship:
By Youth, for Youth*

#EPLAslan

*What is
Edmonton's
NextGen?*

*The Way
We Live:
Edmonton's
People Plan*



Summer 2016

The fACTivist is published four times a year by the Edmonton Social Planning Council. The ESPC is an independent, non-profit, charitable organization focused on social research. Articles, quotes and commentaries reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policy of the Edmonton Social Planning Council.

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2016, Issue 1

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the *f*ACTivist

has gone digital

To make it easy on our online readers, our citations and resources have been formatted as hyperlinks. Each reference is just a click away!

For those who are reading our paper version, we've saved space in our articles by adding endnotes. You can check out complete weblinks at the back of the newsletter!

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YRAP Mentorship: By Youth, For Youth

Jihan Sharifi

The Youth Restorative Action Project (YRAP)¹ is a youth founded and run (with the support of lawyers, social workers, law enforcement officers, teachers, and other community members) organization working to help young people who have caused harm in society while being affected by adverse social circumstances. YRAP does this through restorative justice measures and through long-term strategies that provide youth with necessary supports. One such support provided to youth is [mentorships](#)² which allow youth to establish relationships of trust with a young person similar in age to them. This relationship also provides youth with a positive role model.

YRAP's mentorship program is run by volunteer youth for youth who themselves volunteer to participate in the program. Youth may be referred to the mentorship program through several different avenues. First, youth may be referred through the courts, or by a lawyer or probation officer, in order for them to be aided outside of the traditional court system. In addition, youth may be referred by school personnel for extra supports if they are struggling in school. Finally, youth may approach YRAP themselves to get involved in the initiative.

The mentorship initiative provided by YRAP offers youth opportunities for both professional and personal skill development. Such opportunities range from mentees having a peer to speak to or socially interact with, to mentors helping a mentee with academic and career development opportunities. The youth-led approach of this initiative allows for young people to claim for themselves the tools they need for success, rather than having an outsider mandate what they need.

Landon Turlock has been volunteering as a youth mentor with YRAP since 2014. He believes that the youth-led approach to YRAP's mentorship program is one of its benefits. In addition, Turlock sees value in the program being run by volunteer mentors, stating that the voluntary nature of mentorships translates to "genuine supportive relationships."



"We had a chance encounter with a man who used to be caught in the system and was supported by social workers and advocates and the like. He sold tickets for a paintball centre and felt so grateful that he gave us enough cheapened coupons for us to afford taking our youth out for paintball."

"A lot of youth may have youth workers or social workers who are being paid for their time with the youth. Having a mentor that is genuinely interested in being there is valuable to youth, so they can get to know them and support them," he said.

"I am constantly blown away at how resourceful our youth are"

Turlock also identified the benefits to mentors who devote their time supporting youth. He stated that his personal experience mentoring youth was rewarding because it not only allowed him to assist youth and be appreciated for that assistance; but to learn the background and stories of youth.

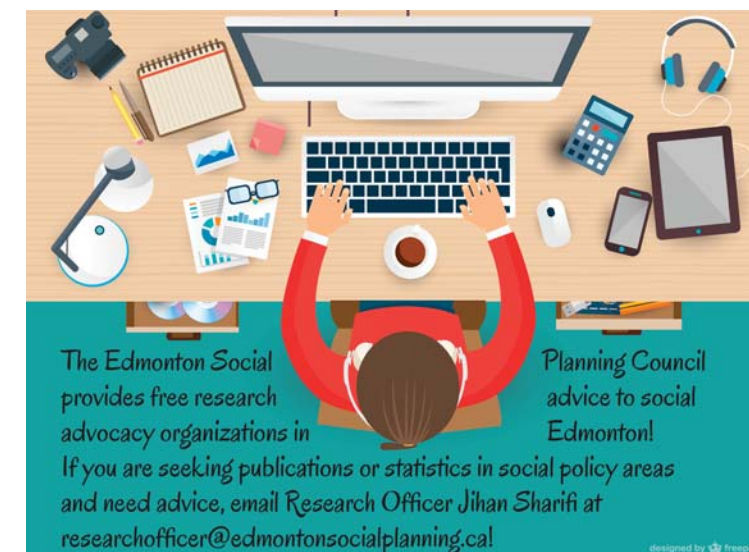
"I am constantly blown away at how resourceful our youth are," he stated.

Indeed, Turlock believes that youth mentorship opportunities are equally valuable for both mentees and mentors. He stated that these opportunities teach important skills such as listening skills and peer-support skills; and that ultimately, "we all have the skills to be mentors."

"I really encourage youth to explore that side of volunteering, so they may get to know people in different ways."

To get involved in YRAP's mentorship program please contact yrap@yrap.org.

ESPC's 2015 Social Justice Intern completed a report based on the perspectives of individuals at YRAP. You can view that report here: <http://bit.ly/1OmcNUp>³



An Interview with Edmonton's Next Gen Rebecca Fletcher

Edmonton's Next Gen is a committee of volunteers dedicated to articulating the unique concerns of the next generation of Edmontonians. I spoke with Jodi Goebel and Kairi Pawlick, Next Gen's co-chairs, to get a quick taste of what they're all about. Be sure to see Next Gen in action on [June 9th at PKN 25!](#)

ESPC: What do you want every Edmontonian to know about Next Gen?

ENG: We believe that Edmonton will be a better place if we nurture and empower young leaders to play an active role in shaping our city. Whatever your passion, NextGen wants to encourage you to be engaged with your community, give you a platform to share your ideas, and support you in playing an active role in the future of Edmonton.

ENG: One recent example surrounds Breathe: Edmonton's Green Network Strategy, which is a transformative strategy currently under development to ensure that as the city grows, each neighbourhood is supported by a network of open space. It's a good example



“We’re a group of young, passionate, and community-minded individuals who are taking the future into our own hands by creating a city that attracts and gives voice to the 18-40 year old generation by connecting people, places, communities, and ideas”

ESPC: What was the inspiration for Next Gen?

ENG: NextGen started as a task force of Edmonton City Council to address the fact that too many young people were moving away from Edmonton. So that's a part of the story, but we think that the real reason we've had so many passionate volunteers over the years is that, even in 2006 when we started, the young people involved in NextGen had hope and faith that Edmonton can be the very best City in Canada for young people.

Everything that we do comes back to making sure that the voices of our demographic are helping to shape our City in pursuit of that vision. Whatever their passion, we want to motivate young people to be involved in their community, to connect with others who can support their dreams and aspirations, and to use their own voices to shape all facets of our city.

ESPC: Next Gen has been around for 10 years now. Describe the impact of Next Gen in five words (if you can!).

ENG: Creating dialogue; inspiring young leaders.

ESPC: Your website states, “We’re creating opportunities for you to share your feedback, opinions, and ideas and have them influence the decisions and actions of Edmonton City Council and other municipal decision-making bodies”—what are some of these opportunities?

of a City of Edmonton project that our committee thinks young people need to take an interest in and lend their voices to, so that building a life in Edmonton means a future with convenient access to open spaces that let them play outside, connect with nature and celebrate life.

We’ve worked with the project team to help create opportunities for young people to provide input to the strategy, and at the same time we’re doing as much as we can to encourage our network to take an interest in the strategy and share their ideas about the future of our city’s open spaces.

ESPC: How can someone get involved?

ENG: The best first step is to [sign up for our newsletter](#)² or find us on social media ([Twitter](#)³, [Facebook](#)⁴, [Instagram](#)⁵). We’ll connect you with a whole bunch of information about events and issues in the city, and you’ll be in the know about the next chance to come and meet us in person. We can’t stress enough that NextGen is powered by volunteers, and talking with any one of them will make it easy for you to understand why we’re passionate about what we do. You can also reach out to us through our website and we’ll help you better understand how to get involved, whether you want to join us in a group volunteering day at a local charity, help with a specific event or project, join one of our working groups, or become a committee member and shape the future of NextGen.

The Way We Live: A Profile

of Edmonton's People Plan

Rebecca Fletcher

If you've been living in Edmonton for a while, you may have noticed some of its strategic plans without realizing it. The City has chosen catchy and simple titles, so you have probably heard of at least one aspect of [The Way Ahead](#)¹, Edmonton's vision for 2040. Does The Way We Green sound familiar? It's the City's strategic goal for environmental sustainability. How about The Way We Grow (municipal development), The Way We Move (the transportation master plan), and The Way We Finance (financial stability). The sixth part of the Way Ahead Plan, The Way We Live, is also known as Edmonton's People Plan.

The Way We Live contains six goals within itself, and each goal has specific performance measures that the city will use to monitor progress on these goals.

Each goal is intended to help continue Edmonton's growth as a livable city: in fact, the overall goal is to turn Edmonton into one of Canada's most livable cities by 2040.

The six goals included in The Way We Live are Edmonton is a vibrant, connected, engaged and welcoming city;

Edmonton celebrates life!; Edmonton is a caring, inclusive, affordable community; Edmonton is a safe city; Edmonton is an attractive city; and Edmonton is a sustainable city. You can download the entire The Way We Live plan on the [City of Edmonton website](#)².

Connectedness

The City summarizes the first goal as Connectedness: connecting with each other, government, nature, and history. These relationships are necessary to creating an Edmonton that is vibrant, engaged and welcoming, across age groups, cultures, and geography (whether that means the next neighbourhood over or across the globe). The City asked Edmontonians

what was important to them in building connectedness, and Edmontonians responded: public spaces filled with activity, showcasing the best of Edmonton, with an ethos that allows newcomers to immediately feel at home.

Leisure

Goal two is all about having fun.

Edmonton is known in Alberta as the Festival City. This part of the People Plan addresses arts, games, retail, entertainment, sporting events, fitness activities, and, well, anything else

you can think of to do for fun. It also emphasizes Edmonton's many histories: civic, natural, Aboriginal, and immigrant.

Affordability

At ESPC we keep a close eye on goal three, "Edmonton is a caring, inclusive and affordable community," because it so closely mirrors our vision statement.

The city government uses this goal as an umbrella to address racism, families, diversity, inclusivity, Aboriginal issues, and affordability in housing and other sectors.

Safety

Safety is more than enjoying a walk in your neighbourhood at night. While living without fear is a distinct part of life in a safe city, goal four includes public health initiatives such as safe drinking water, waste management, and disease control. Additionally, the city looks to this goal to ensure that sidewalks are well-maintained and accessible to those with special needs, whether that's a stroller or a walker. The city links this goal to goal one: "Connected communities are safer communities."

Attractiveness

Every year that I live here, I see Edmonton become more beautiful. The North Saskatchewan River Valley Parks System is the largest urban park in North America. The city has created the [WinterCity](#)³ initiative to take the edge off the gloom of the long winter months.

Returning once again to connectedness, the City engages with citizens to keep Edmonton clean, through education and programs such as [Capital City Clean Up](#)⁴.

Sustainability

Because sustainability is so important to Edmontonians, a specific goal for sustainability, related to [The Way We Green](#)⁵, is included in the People Plan to meet the needs of individuals. For the People Plan, though, sustainability goes beyond environmental measures



ESPC staff and members celebrate winter using resources supplied by the WinterCity initiative.

to include social, economic, and financial sustainability. Creating caring communities requires social sustainability: the curating of future leaders, volunteerism, and grit, or the ability to face down adversity.

Implementation

To track the City's progress, pop over to [Edmonton's Citizen Dashboard](#)⁶, where it uses open data to keep citizens informed. For more information on open data, download our [Naming Edmonton and Open Data fACT Sheet](#)⁷.



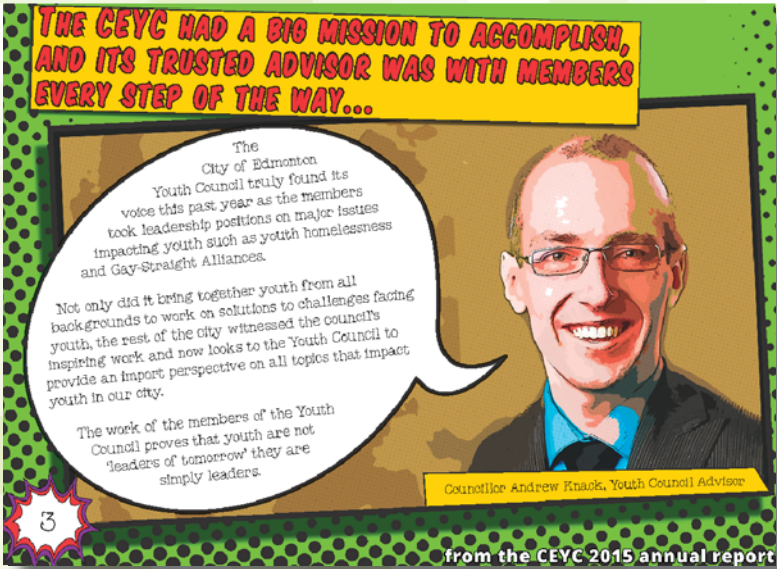
Daniel Calder and Sam Dougherty celebrate life as they participate in kinetic art on 104th Street in June 2015.

The City of Edmonton Youth Council: Shaping Municipal Policy

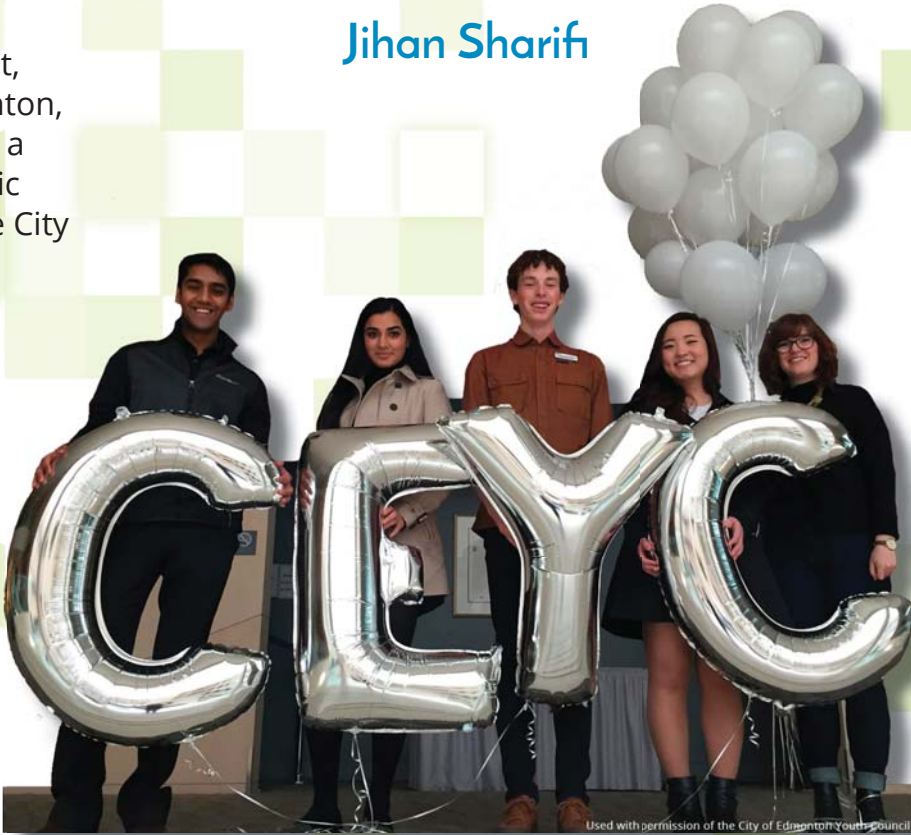
Jihan Sharifi

When we think of youth, we don't often think of their roles being in government, influencing politicians and bureaucrats, and shaping policy decisions. In Edmonton, the city's Youth Council is redefining what it means to be a young person, to be a leader, and to be a policy changer. Through multiple initiatives—including public consultations with Edmonton's youth, and policy proposals to City Council—the City of Edmonton Youth Council is changing how policy decisions are made.

In the past year alone, the city's Youth Council has influenced several policy outcomes in Edmonton. Early last year, City Council members unanimously [adopted](#)¹ the Youth Council's stance against Alberta's Bill 10, a piece of



legislation that allowed school boards to [reject](#)² student requests for Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs). A few months later, the province amended that same bill to [allow](#)³ GSAs in any school whose students request them, indicating the impact of the Youth Council's [advocacy](#)⁴ efforts.



The policy recommendation was put forward at an apt time, as city officials were then seeking information on barriers people face to voting.

Moreover, the Edmonton Youth Council is giving a voice to under-represented and marginalized youth in the city. This is evident in their leadership role in the film *Through My Eyes*. In their [own](#)⁷ words, the Youth Council states that the film is a call for government and community service organizations to alleviate the problem of homelessness. This project demonstrates that even through creative mediums, the Youth Council is pushing forward equitable policy solutions in Edmonton.

Edmonton's Youth Council challenges our notions of youth as apathetic. It demonstrates that given the opportunity, youth have valuable input to share and meaningful solutions to the public policy challenges facing our society today.

The Youth Council is also working to move forward Edmonton's role as an energy efficient city. In late April of this year, City Council members [approved](#)⁵ the Youth Council's call to install six kilowatts of solar panels on the rooftops of City Hall. The initiative would also include a public display that showcases energy production and environmental savings. Such an undertaking would not only demonstrate Edmonton's role as an energy efficient city, but would increase public engagement on energy efficiency, including allowing Edmontonians to learn more about solar energy.

In addition, the Youth Council is illustrating the importance of youth in the political process by calling for policy changes to the voter age. In March of this year, Edmonton's Youth Council received unanimous [support](#)⁶ (with two abstains) by City Council members on a request for the Government of Alberta to lower the voting age in municipal and school board elections to 16 years of age.



Social Justice Events Review

This new column in the fACTivist highlights social justice events in the community. Each issue will feature a review of an event and recommended reading.

Edmonton Public Library Presents #EPLAslan Jihan Sharif

On May 18 the Edmonton Public Library (EPL) officially launched their new literary club *Anthology*¹ with its *Forward Thinking Speaker Series*. They hosted Reza Aslan, renowned scholar and critically acclaimed author. If you are not familiar with Aslan’s works, you may remember him from an interview with *Fox News*² that went viral a few years ago, where he put to rest the station’s outrageous questions in an eloquent and intelligent manner. Having seen his interviews in the past, I was not surprised to show up to a sold out and large crowd of people awaiting Aslan to speak on “Fear Inc: Confronting Islamophobia in North America.”

Aslan began his lecture by discussing the fears people have of terrorism. He went beyond simply accepting the word “terrorism” for what it is and tackled our perceptions of terrorists and terrorism. Through media representations and government practices, Aslan made clear that terrorist acts today are only “terrorism” when a person who happens to be Muslim commits them, and does not apply when any other group or person commits acts of terror, making the word void of meaning. Such factors have contributed to unfounded societal fears of Muslims, and policies and practices that are detrimental for a cohesive society. These unfounded fears, Aslan demonstrated, are alive and strong in our own land here in Canada.

So what is the solution to this problem?



Dr. Reza Aslan
(continued on page 14)

ETS Mobility Choices

Susan Morrissey

In an attempt to make Edmonton a city that encourages everyone, regardless of age or ability to use public transportation, Edmonton Transit (ETS) offers a program called Mobility Choices which is designed to help Edmontonians learn how to use public transit through a number of ways.

This helps the driver to understand your need, and protects your privacy and dignity. In addition, they provide free, customized travel training for seniors and persons with mobility challenges, and for agencies or organizations that work with seniors and persons with



The ETS bus fleet is 100% accessible, with ramps, a lowering front entrance, priority seating with flip-up bus seats for those with reduced mobility, accessible stop request buttons and stroller, scooter, and wheelchair access.¹

They offer customized group presentations or individual instruction to help people gain an understanding of the various transportation options available including bus, Light Rail Transit, or Disabled Adult Transportation Services (DATS). They can even arrange to have someone come out to your residence to provide hands-on practice sessions and advice on getting on and off low-floor buses. ETS also offers printed materials and customer tools including mobility cards, communications cards, and bus hailer kits. For instance, if you are someone with hearing impairment, you can use a communication card to advise the driver of the stop where you will get off.

mobility challenges. Whether going online, using your mobile phone/landline or accessing social media, ETS has established ways for everyone to plan their trips, find out information about routes and schedules, learn more about special events and contests and become informed about accessibility, safety and security. ETS is definitely leading the way to encourage inclusivity regardless of age or ability. For more information, phone 780-496-3000, email etscustomertraining@edmonton.ca², or visit the [ETS website](#)³.

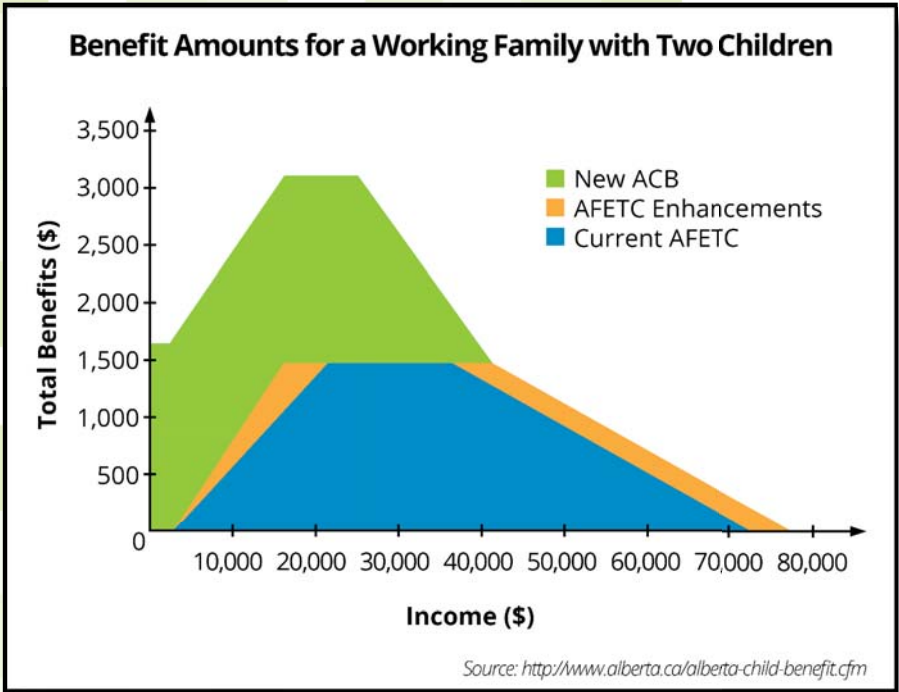
Child Benefit Enhancements Are Poverty Game Changers

John Kolkman

Viewed through a social policy lens, the biggest story coming out of the federal and provincial budgets were the enhancements made to child benefits. Starting in July this year, Alberta’s lowest income families with two children will receive \$3,300 more per year from the federal and provincial governments. These enhancements to child benefits are game changers and will make the biggest difference to date in reducing child poverty.

The implementation of a new Alberta Child Benefit and increases in federal child benefits, both on July 1, 2016, will be key elements in reducing child poverty. These new and enhanced benefits go some distance toward guaranteeing a basic income to all Alberta families with children.

Refundable child benefits are the most effective way to reduce poverty because they put money directly into the pockets of the lowest income families. They do not discriminate based on source of income so low income working families receive the same amounts as those on government income support. Administrative costs are negligible because there is no eligibility requirement other than filing an income tax return.



(continued on page 18)

Ending Poverty in a Generation: The Road Map

Rebecca Fletcher

The city of Edmonton is committed to ending poverty, and they have set themselves the bold goal of doing so within a generation. In order to set and reach this goal, the city created the EndPovertyEdmonton task force. Their first step in ending poverty was to set up seven working groups to analyse the issues contributing and stemming from poverty, and to develop recommendations based on their areas of expertise. These working groups contributed 80 recommendations and 400 actions, which were pared down to 28 key priorities to use as starting points for ending poverty. These [priorities](#)¹ “address poverty by responding to urgent and immediate needs, removing barriers to change, and tackling the root causes of poverty.” After talking to the experts, EndPovertyEdmonton reached out to regular Edmontonians both in-person and through an online survey to get their feedback on the strategy, ensuring that the public was engaged in the process, so they’ll be engaged in the solution.

The strategy was unanimously approved by City Council in December 2015.

The next step for the task force was to create an implementation road map. How exactly will poverty be ended? How will they measure successes? How will they measure failures and learn from them, ensuring they become future successes?

Co-chairs Mayor Don Iveson and Bishop Jane Alexander drew on lived experience and solid research—the sort the ESPC provides—as well as input from experts. “I don’t think it’s going to be easy but we actually believe it’s possible—what might we bring to the table to make it work? It’s a fantastically courageous conversation to be having,” said [Alexander](#)².

The end result is *End Poverty in a Generation: A Road Map to Guide Our Journey*. It guides the first five years of the strategy, which aims to lift 10,000 Edmontonians out of poverty.

ESPC is a proud contributor and partner to the *Road Map*. We are listed as a potential partner for [Action #15](#)³, “Actively encourage local employers in all sectors to learn about and implement living wage policies.” We are also listed as one of their [leverage partners](#)⁴, and we’re looking forward to helping them as they build on “strong research and evaluation partnerships ... [creating] a robust evaluation and measurement framework.”

Many of the priorities in the *Road Map* are recommendations our research has supported over the past years: low-income transit passes, a living wage, and affordable housing. In fact, on May 26, the [province announced](#)⁵ it will be contributing \$6.2 million over three years to a new low-income transit pass for Edmonton, which will be available in 2017. It looks like the *Road Map* is already becoming a *Road Map to Success*.

“I don’t think it’s going to be easy but we actually believe it’s possible”

(continued from page 10)

Aslan's answer: relationship building. While most believe that education is key to dismantling bias and fears, Aslan argues to the contrary, stating that data sets do not help in these situations. In fact, *knowing* a Muslim—whether that is your barber, your grocer, your colleague, or your neighbour—Aslan stated, is the most effective way to dismantle the fears and the othering of Muslims. This is not very surprising, and conceptually, makes sense. We understand that our relationships with other people are what change our minds and hearts. Seeing someone who is facing the same struggles you are, and that has the same fears and joys you have, is more likely to make you relate to that person on a human level than reading about them would.

Aslan's lecture left me feeling moved, and more aware of myself and my personal impact in my society. His words sparked several questions in my mind, and made me ask myself: How am I striving to build relationships with people outside of my social circle? What am I doing to open hearts and minds of the people around me? How are my own actions and thoughts contributing to unfounded biases? And, what can I do right now, in this moment, to change that?

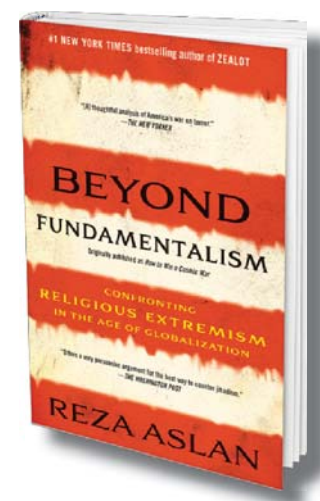
As human beings, as neighbours, and as citizens of this beautiful land, we all have an obligation and a duty to ask these questions of ourselves, and to confront the barriers within us that impede a cohesive and harmonious community and society. I hope that you will join me in taking the time to ponder these questions in your daily life.

Recommended Reading:

Aslan, Reza. (2014, December 19). Praying for common ground at the Christmas-dinner table. *The New York Times Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/21/magazine/praying-for-common-ground-at-the-christmas-dinner-table.html>

Aslan, Reza, and Stedman, Chris. (2014, October 19). 'Violent' Muslims? 'Amoral' atheists? It's time to stop shouting and start talking to each other. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/oct/19/muslims-atheists-relationship-experience>

Aslan, Reza. (2010). *Beyond fundamentalism: Confronting religious extremism in the age of globalization*. New York, NY: Random House.



News Briefs

Low Income Transit Pass

The first initiative from 2016's End Poverty Edmonton Report has been met in a combined effort by the City of Edmonton and the Province of Alberta. The province is contributing \$6.2 million to the 3-year \$12.4 million investment.

The non-taxable passes will be available starting in September 2017. For more details, [download the Alberta Government's fact sheet](#)¹.

Walkability and Wayfinding

Edmontonians will see 86 new pedestrian signs in August. These signs will be temporary, but the design is final: when the permanent signs go up in 2017, they will be also be lit, "which was really critical for the Winter City strategy folks. [It was important that they] would stand out from a distance," said Ian Hosler, project manager for the Wayfinder Project. He expects the project to improve overall accessibility for the City. [Read the whole story in the Metro](#)².



Fort McMurray Fire

Despite Alberta's outpouring of generosity after the devastating fires in Fort McMurray and other northern Albertan communities, there is still a "desperate need" for more donations for evacuees from the fires in northern Alberta. Edmonton Emergency Relief Services Society (EERSS) spokesperson Nicole Geoffroy stated that 17,500 evacuees were helped between May 10–13, demonstrating how great the need still is.

To volunteer or donate, [visit the EERSS Facebook page](#)³.

Michael Phair Park

A small park, formerly wasted land, has been named after former city councillor and long-time ESPC supporter Michael Phair. Michael Phair Park, on 104th Street just north of Jasper Ave, was built to recognize Phair's service to Edmonton and his years of work in bringing park space to the downtown.

Says Phair, who is grateful both for the honour of the naming and for all those who helped along the way, "I'm absolutely delighted, but I'm really delighted for the downtown and the people that are part of 104th Street. It's really quite an honour to have a park with my name on it." [Read the whole story on the CBC](#)⁴.

Get to Know an ESPC Staff Member

Each issue, one staff member will interview another. This is your opportunity to find out what drives the ESPC staff in their efforts to create positive social change in their community. In this issue, Research Officer Jihan Sharifi dives deep into Communications Officer Rebecca Fletcher’s psyche (possibly explaining why her social media campaigns are so goofy, yet effective!).

- JS:** You’re a new addition to the crayon box. What colour would you be and why?
- RF:** I would be one of those multicoloured ones, because I have many sides to my personality. I am fun and I’m serious.
- JS:** If you were to get rid of one state in the U.S., which would it be and why?



Rebecca Fletcher, Communications Officer

- RF:** Uh, duh, Alaska. Because then we could have it.
- JS:** What is the funniest thing that has happened to you recently?
- RF:** Besides the Alaska question?
- RF:** Describe the colour yellow to somebody who is blind.
- JS:** The colour yellow is the feeling of heat on your closed eyelids, and it’s when you taste something and it tastes ten times better than you were expecting.
- JS:** What is your proudest moment at ESPC in the last six months?
- RF:** I have been able to support the work of my peers through social media, and I have been able to see first-hand the impact of their research. It is a second-hand pride knowing that I am working with such outstanding individuals. My work helps spread the word about the great stuff we do here and I am very proud of that.

Board Member Profile

Alexandra is an Edmonton-based lawyer with a practice focused exclusively on criminal defence work and defending the rights of individuals who have been charged by the state at both the trial and appellate level. She graduated from the University of Alberta’s Faculty of Law in 2012 after receiving a B.A. from the University of Calgary in Political Science with a minor in History.

Alexandra Seaman

During law school, Alexandra’s academic and extracurricular focus was on criminal law, advocacy, and constitutional issues. In all three years at the Faculty of Law, Alexandra was extensively involved in Student Legal Services, representing low-income individuals charged with criminal offences and dealing with criminal justice issues facing the low-income community. Alexandra was the vice-chair of the Board of Directors for Student Legal Services until June 2015.

Alexandra’s criminal law practice involves extensive research and writing as she conducts appeals at all levels of court, including arguing at the Supreme Court of Canada. She is strongly committed to the mandate of the ESPC and believes in the value of research and advocacy in social policy. She was pleased to join the ESPC Board of Directors in 2016.





(continued from page 12)

The new Alberta Child Benefit will provide an annual benefit of up to \$1,100 per child, and up to \$550 per child for each of the next three children. Benefits will begin to be phased out at \$25,500 of net family income, and be fully phased out at \$41,220 of net family income. The new Alberta Child Benefit will complement an enhanced Alberta Family Employment Tax Credit (AFETC). Maximum benefits under the AFETC are provided between \$25,500 and \$41,220 of net family income, and will begin to be phased out thereafter.

235,000 of Alberta's lowest income children will benefit from the new ACB. This means that all of the 144,850 children living in poverty and whose families file a tax return will receive the benefit. In addition, the families of an additional 90,000 children who live just above

the poverty line will also receive some of the benefit. When combined with the enhanced AFETC, which phases out more gradually, 380,000 of the lowest income children (about one in three) will receive additional benefits.

The federal Liberal government is repealing income splitting and several other measures mainly benefiting higher income families and replaced them with a progressive new Canada Child Benefit (CCB) aimed at low and middle income families. The new CCB will benefit the lowest income families though the largest benefit increase will be to families with about \$45,000 to \$90,000 in net family income. This design is in part due to federal child tax benefits being about more than fighting child poverty, but also about supporting middle income families with the substantial costs of raising children (Canada, 2016). The new CCB is designed such that families with up to \$157,000 in yearly income will receive more from the new benefit than they received previously. The lowest income families will also see sizable increases in their benefits of up to \$1,100 per year for each child.



The only unfortunate aspect of the new CCB is the federal government's failure to index it to inflation until 2020. This matters because the real value of benefit will be reduced as living costs rise. Over the years, these reductions in real value really add up.

Alberta's new child benefit, which is fully indexed, is heavily weighted to the poorest families and phases out fairly rapidly at higher levels of income. While also benefiting low income families, the new Canada Child Benefit will maximize benefits at just about the same family income level as the ACB is phased out. This will help reduce the welfare wall effect of having too many family benefits phase out at the same level of income.

The federal government estimates that once fully implemented, there will be 300,000 fewer Canadian children living in poverty in 2017 compared to 2014 (a reduction of about 25%). The new ACB will further reduce child poverty for low income Alberta families.

Federal and provincial child benefit enhancements come at an opportune time. Many Alberta families are facing reductions in

earning in paid employment due to the current economic downturn. The increases in child benefits should more than off-set decreases in employment income. Otherwise, economic conditions would likely have caused child poverty to rise due to the loss in working income. As a result of the timely enhancements to federal child benefits, and the introduction of an Alberta Child Benefit, child poverty rates will instead go down.

For more information on these benefits, visit the [Alberta Government website](#)¹ and the [Government of Canada website](#)².

You can also try out the [benefits calculator](#)³ to determine how much you will receive under the new benefits starting July 1st, 2016.

For a quick but complete analysis of the federal and provincial budgets, download our fACT Sheets today! Find the [2016 Alberta Budget Analysis fACT Sheet here](#)⁴ and the [2016 Federal Budget Analysis fACT Sheet at this link](#)⁵.

Upcoming Social Justice Events

To have your event featured here, please email Rebecca Fletcher at commofficer@edmontonsocialplanning.ca. The fACTivist is published quarterly, so we are now accepting events for September through November.

20th Annual Older, Bolder, Better: Living & Learning Symposium	June 9, 2016 9:30 AM–2:30 PM	9629-176 Street	http://bit.ly/20RRLn4
YESS: Homeless for a Night	June 10, 2016 6:00 PM	Telus Field	http://bit.ly/1UbPq1N
Edmonton Pride Run & Walk	June 11, 2016, 10:00 AM–3:00PM	Emily Murphy Park	http://bit.ly/1Y1qSyj
Forging Reconciliation Stories: Literature and Aboriginal Peoples	June 11, 2016 4:00 PM–6:00 PM	Stanley A. Milner Library Theatre	http://bit.ly/1VtApxf
Kita no Taiko and Friends Red Cross Fundraiser	June 11, 2016 6:00 PM–9:30 PM	6750 88 St NW	http://bit.ly/1XdcW5f
2016 Homeward Walk Run	June 12, 2016 9:00 AM–12:00 PM	Whitemud Park Picnic Site #1	http://bit.ly/1Y1qLCO
Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Information Night	June 16, 2016 6:00 PM–7:00 PM	14135 128 Ave	https://www.hfh.org/volunteer/vin/
Golden Girls Tribute Show and Fundraiser	June 18, 2016 7:00 PM–8:30 PM	Auditorium, 11111 Jasper Avenue	http://bit.ly/1UfENKY

20th

ANNIVERSARY

Living & Learning Symposium

Older Bolder Better!

Refresh Your Retirement - Updating Your Plans!

Thursday, June 9

9:30 am to 2:30 pm

FREE ADMISSION



New Mission and Vision Statements

In 2016, the ESPC board approved a new strategic plan including a new mission and vision statement to build on its strong history, and to guide future success. The Framework defines a bold, new organizational vision that positions the ESPC as the community's go-to organization for relevant, quality research on social issues. Two major components of the new strategic plan are new mission and vision statements.



Mission Statement

Through rigorous research, detailed analysis, and community engagement, we deepen community understanding of social issues, influence policy, and spark collaborative actions that lead to positive social change.

Vision Statement

A community in which all people are full and valued participants.



Albertans gather on the steps of the legislature to celebrate 100 years of Women's Suffrage on April 19, 2016

Links, Resources, and Credits

YRAP Mentorship: By Youth, For Youth

- 1 About the Youth Restorative Action Project: <http://www.yrap.org/about.html>
- 2 Youth Restorative Action Project webpage: <http://www.yrap.org/activities-and-programming.html>
- 3 Shortened download link for *Issues in the Treatment of Youth in Conflict at the Youth Restorative Action Project*: <http://bit.ly/1OmcNUUp>; permalink: <http://edmontonsocialplanning.ca/index.php/resources/digital-resources/a-espc-documents/a06-newsletters/a06c-research-updates/707-issues-in-the-treatment-of-youth-in-conflict-at-the-youth-restorative-action-project>

An Interview with Edmonton's Next Gen

- 1 Pecha Kucha Night 25: <http://edmontonnextgen.ca/events-calendar/2016/6/9/pkn-25>
- 2 Sign up for the NextGen newsletter: <http://edmontonnextgen.ca/contact>
- 3 NextGen on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/EdmNextGen>
- 4 NextGen on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/edmnexgen>
- 5 NextGen on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/edmnexgen/>

The Way We Live: A Profile on Edmonton's People Plan

- 1 City of Edmonton. (2016). The way ahead. Retrieved from http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/city_vision_and_strategic_plan/the-way-ahead.aspx
- 2 City of Edmonton. (2012, July 10). The way we live implementation plan: Edmonton's people plan. Retrieved from http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/TWWL_report_may2012_59_web.pdf
- 3 WinterCity Edmonton webpage: <http://wintercityedmonton.ca/>
- 4 Capital City Clean Up webpage: http://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/capital-city-clean-up.aspx
- 5 The Way We Green webpage: http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/city_vision_and_strategic_plan/the-way-we-green.aspx
- 6 Edmonton's Citizen Dashboard, Livability Page: <https://dashboard.edmonton.ca/live>
- 7 Edmonton Social Planning Council. (2016). fACT sheet—Naming Edmonton and open data. Available at <http://edmontonsocialplanning.ca/index.php/our-work/espc-fact-sheets/239-fact-sheet-naming-edmonton-and-open-data>

The City of Edmonton Youth Council: Shaping Municipal Policy

- 1 Mertz, Emily, and Pratap, Vinesh. (2015, January 27). Council votes unanimously to support Edmonton Youth Council's Bill 10 opposition. *Global News*. Retrieved from <http://globalnews.ca/news/1781311/edmonton-youth-council-takes-bill-10-concerns-to-city-hall>

- 2 Giovannetti, Justin. (2014, December 4). What you need to know about Bill 10 and Alberta gay students' rights. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/alberta/what-you-need-to-know-about-bill-10-and-alberta-gay-students-rights/article21964421>
- 3 Bill 10 to allow gay-straight alliances for any student in Alberta schools. (2015, March 10). *CBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/bill-10-to-allow-gay-straight-alliances-for-any-student-in-alberta-schools-1.2989399>
- 4 City of Edmonton Youth Council page on GSA Advocacy. <http://www.ceyc.ca/projects/bill-10-advocacy-gsa>
- 5 Stolte, Elise. (2016, April 26.) Edmonton youth push for City Hall solar project. *The Edmonton Journal*. Retrieved from <http://edmontonjournal.com/business/local-business/edmonton-youth-push-for-city-hall-solar-project>
- 6 Tumilty, Ryan. (2016, March 7). Edmonton youth council wants 16 year olds to vote. *Edmonton Metro*. Retrieved from <http://www.metronews.ca/news/edmonton/2016/03/07/edmonton-youth-council-wants-16-year-olds-to-vote-.html>
- 7 City of Edmonton Youth Council Annual Report. Available at <http://www.ceyc.ca/about-ceyc/annual-report>

Social Justice Events Review

- 1 Information on Anthology. <http://www.yeganthology.com/events/formal-launch>
- 2 Reza Aslan on Fox News. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jt1cOnNrY5s>

ETS Mobility Choices

- 1 City of Edmonton. (2016). Accessibility. Retrieved from <http://www.edmonton.ca/ets/accessibility.aspx>
- 2 Email address for training on mobility tools: etscustomertraining@edmonton.ca
- 3 Mobility Choices Training Program page on the Edmonton Transit website: takeETS.com/mobilitychoices

Child Benefit Enhancements are Poverty Game Changers

- 1 Alberta child benefits on the Alberta Government website: <http://www.alberta.ca/alberta-child-benefit.cfm>
- 2 Child and family benefits on the Government of Canada website: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/gncy/bdgt/2016/qa01-eng.html>
- 3 The child and family benefits calculator: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/clcltr/cfbc-eng.html>
- 4 The 2016 Alberta Budget Analysis fACT Sheet: <http://bit.ly/1YrTvN>
- 5 The 2016 Federal Budget Analysis fACT Sheet: <http://bit.ly/1UIE4O6>

Ending Poverty in a Generation: The Road Map

1 EndPovertyEdmonton. (2016). The end poverty Edmonton strategy. Retrieved from <http://www.endpovertyedmonton.ca/new-page-1/>

2 Bishop Jane Alexander, quoted in the About Us section of the End Poverty Edmonton webpage. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.endpovertyedmonton.ca/about/>

3 EndPovertyEdmonton. (2016, May). End Poverty in a generation: A road map to guide our journey. p. 31. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/1sQk8aS>.

4 EndPovertyEdmonton. (2016, May). End Poverty in a generation: A road map to guide our journey. p. 49. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/1sQk8aS>.

5 Osman, Laura. (2016, May 26). Province contributes \$6.2M to Edmonton low income transit pass. CBC News. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/province-contributes-6-2m-to-edmonton-low-income-transit-pass-1.3602188>

News Briefs

1 Alberta Government Fact Sheet: Low Income Transit Pass: City of Edmonton. <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/low-income-transit-pass-edmonton.pdf>

2 Islam, Sanam. (2016, May 5). Sign of the times: Edmonton working on new wayfinding system for pedestrians. Edmonton Metro. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/1O0kj2L>

3 Edmonton Emergency Relief Services Society Facebook. <http://bit.ly/1UgqWqK>

4 Neufield, Lydia. (2016, May 26). Reclaimed downtown park named for former city councillor Michael Phair. CBC.ca Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/1VkDBvk>

Credits

Front cover photograph © Tom Young 2010.

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All other photos are as credited. Every attempt has been made to apply appropriate credit. Please email Rebecca Fletcher at commofficer@edmontonsocialplanning.ca with any questions or with corrections.

Volunteer now!

Are you concerned about social issues? Do you want to give back to the community? The Edmonton Social Planning Council is always looking for volunteers to help with its research and outreach endeavours. We will do our best to align your interests, availability and skills with the tasks we offer. We occasionally call on our volunteers to act as note-takers, photographers, and fund-raisers.

Visit our website (<http://edmontonsocialplanning.ca/index.php/about-us-2/volunteer-opportunities>) to learn more about our volunteer opportunities and to sign up today. You may also contact our volunteer coordinator, Jihan Sharifi, directly at researchofficer@edmontonsocialplanning.ca to be added to our volunteer list.

If you'd like to join our ranks but don't see your perfect task, please consider becoming a member or writing to our volunteer officer to put your name down as a volunteer-at-large.



About the Edmonton Social Planning Council

2016-2017 Board of Directors

- Madeleine Baldwin
- Candas Jane Dorsey
- Gwen Feeny
- Maxwell Harrison
- Erin LaRoque
- Doug Meggison
- Ashley Salvador
- Peter Schalk
- Alexandra Seaman
- Cody Spencer
- David Trautman
- Ben Whynot

Staff Members

- Susan Morrissey, Executive Director
- John Kolkman, Research Coordinator
- Stephanie Haar, Executive Assistant
- Rebecca Fletcher, Communications Officer
- Jihan Sharifi, Research Officer

The Edmonton Social Planning Council is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan social research organization, with registered charitable status. Our focus is social research, particularly in the areas of low income and poverty. ESPC is a source of knowledge and expertise on social issues within our community.

We are dedicated to encouraging the adoption of equitable social policy, supporting the work of other organizations who are striving to improve the lives of Edmontonians, and educating the public regarding the social issues that impact them on a daily basis.

Our Vision

A community in which all people are full and valued participants.

Our Mission

Through rigorous research, detailed analysis, and community engagement, we deepen community understanding of social planning issues, influence policy, and spark collaborative actions that lead to positive social change.

Membership

Become a member! As a member, you:

- support our efforts to remain on the forefront in dealing with social issues
- are free to borrow books and other publications from our resource library
- make it possible for us to distribute our materials freely and widely to all
- receive our newsletters, fact sheets and other publications on a regular basis via email or regular mail
- can vote at ESPC annual meetings and have a say in the direction of the organization
- become eligible to serve on the board of directors

Join today at <http://edmontonsocialplanning.ca/~edmont65/index.php/membership-fees>

Connect with us on
social media!



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