

# Creating a Youth-Friendly City: It's Not Just About the Money

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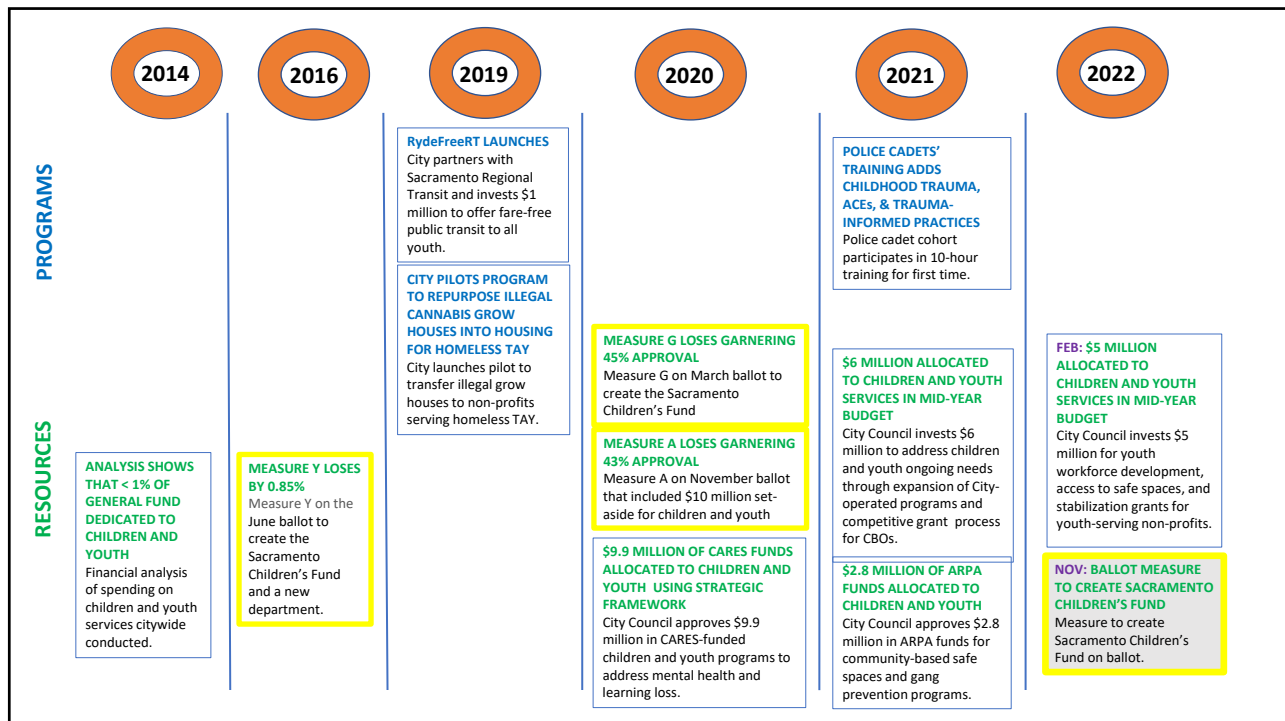
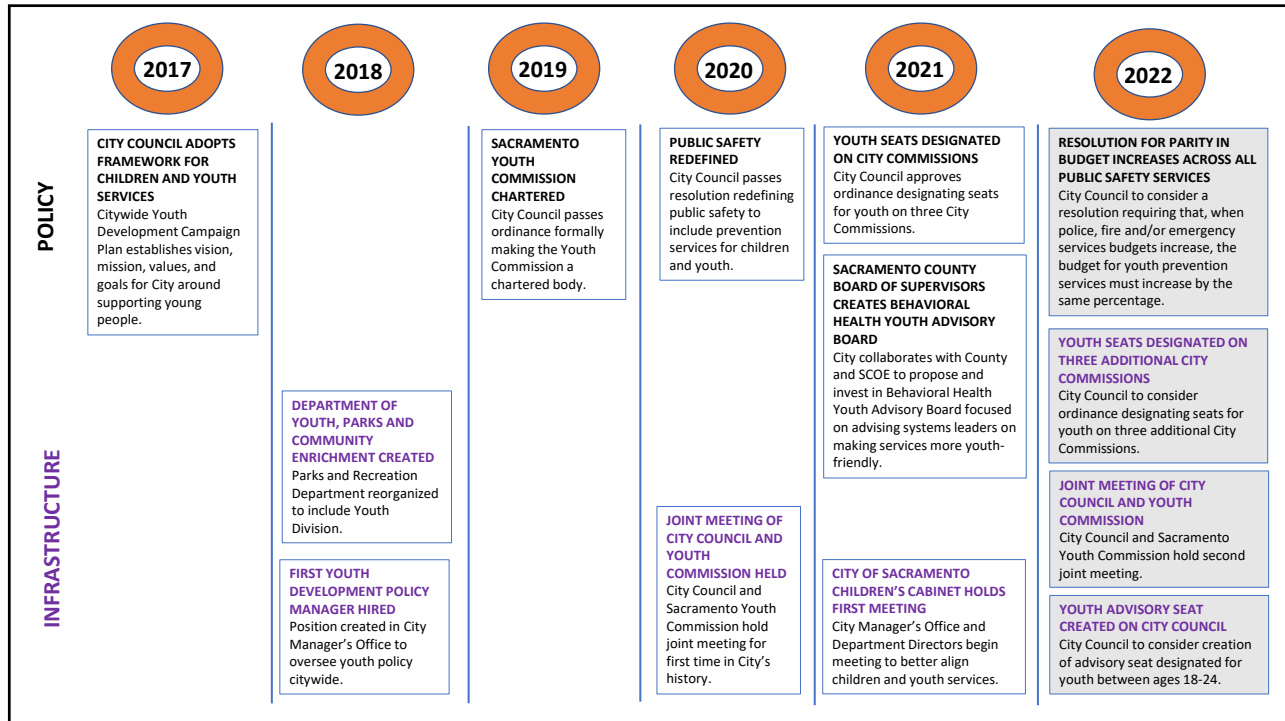
Sacramento City Councilmember Jay Schenirer

## Youth-friendly cities: It's not just about the money. It's also about...

In the long-term: Shifting culture

In the medium- to short-term: Focusing on...

- Policy
- Infrastructure
- Programs
- Resources



# MEANINGFUL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



Roger Hart, *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship* (1992)

## Key elements of meaningful youth engagement

- Believe that youth are capable of helping local government create a better community
- Clearly identify the role of and level of power young people will have in the process
- Create an infrastructure that provides ongoing training and support for the youth
- Listen, listen, listen

➤ **BOTTOM LINE: IT TAKES WORK!**

**HOW TO MAKE ADULT-LED MEETINGS MORE YOUTH-FRIENDLY**

**FOR YOUTH AND STAFF WHO WORK WITH YOUTH**

**#01**

**CREATE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUTH TO PREPARE FOR THE MEETING INCLUDING:**

- reviewing the basics of Robert's Rules of Order (parliamentary procedure);
- providing background information and when, possible, minutes from the previous meeting(s) of the group;
- reviewing any jargon or acronyms that will be used during the meeting; and
- indicating when youth could share their lived experiences and when there will be space for questions and discussion.

**#02**

**ENSURE A SENSE OF SAFETY**

Ensure that there will be at least one adult in the meeting with whom youth have relationship, preferably one of the adult organizers.

**#03**

**SECURE PEER SUPPORT**

Ensure that multiple youth are present at meeting even if only to listen/support the peer who has been invited to participate in the adult-led meeting.

**#04**

**DEBRIEF**

Conduct a debrief after the meeting to make sure that youth participants are fully informed.

*#YouthVoices*

**FOR ADULT(S) HOSTING MEETING**

**#01**

**CREATE A YOUTH-FRIENDLY MEETING STRUCTURE**

- Create group agreements.
- Incorporate agenda items/activities that encourage youth to participate like ice breakers, polls, and/or using chat box.
- Have designated time on the agenda for youth to speak.
- Provide agenda to youth prior to meeting and clearly indicate when/what questions will be asked during agenda items and/or when a youth could share their experiences.
- Create spaces in the agenda for breaks ("breathers") and/or time to informally interact.
- Avoid jargon and define all acronyms.

**#02**

**ASSIGN A SET ROLE**

- Invite a young person to co-host the meeting with the adult or lead an item on the agenda.
- Consider meeting with youth prior to meeting to answer any questions as the adult organizer/host.

**#03**

**CREATE A SENSE OF SAFETY**

- Invite youth to join the meeting early for brief introductions prior to other adults arriving.
- Allow youth to bring "known adult" who can provide support during meeting.

**#04**

**HELP IDENTIFY YOUTH**

Define a term or a "name tag" for youth who chooses not to have a camera on during the meeting. Terms/tags can help identify a young person so that facilitator is conscious of their participation.

**#05**

**UPLIFT YOUTH VOICES**

In an intentional manner, encourage facilitator to uplift youth voice and to remind other adult participants to be conscious of "stepping back" during the meeting.

Developed by the Vancouver, Vancouver Health Board Health Crisis 2020  
Revised by: Victoria Health

You don't have to cede power to youth all the time nor is ceding power always a good thing!

## Summer @ City Hall



## Sacramento Youth Commission & Sacramento City Council Joint Meeting June 9, 2020

Discussion of a framework on how CARES Act funding should be allocated to address the needs of youth and children

CLIP #1: Sacramento Youth Commissioner Erickson

CLIP #2: Sacramento Youth Commissioner Galvez

CLIP #3: Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg





Meaningful youth engagement can happen at any level of government.



Sacramento Area Council of Governments

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

- Launched in 2019
- Encourages a two-way learning path for youth of the region and SACOG
- Provides participants with an opportunity to gain more in-depth knowledge about local government, planning, and an overall interest in the public sector as a possible career
- Provides SACOG with the opportunity to hear from youth on regional needs and be an avenue for more inclusive dialogues

## When do we know that we have achieved success?

When elected officials ....

- do not have to ask if city staff have consulted with youth (in Sacramento, our Youth Commission).
- are no longer surprised by the insights and abilities of youth as they engage in policymaking.

## Guiding questions for discussion

- What have you done in your city to make it more youth-friendly?
- What opportunities do you see in your city to make it more youth-friendly? What is keeping you from moving forward with these opportunities?
- How would you rate the level of engagement of youth in your city's policymaking (scale of 1-5 with 1 – poor and 5 – excellent)? (or Where would you position your city on Hart's Ladder?)
- What opportunities exist in your city to engage youth more deeply in policymaking? What is keeping you from moving forward with these opportunities?