**HealthyYEG Draft Strategic Plan – August 2016**

**I. About HealthyYEG**

We all deserve the right to live in a healthy environment – to breathe clean air, to drink clean water and to eat safe food. Unlike at least 110 other countries in the world, Canada does not constitutionally recognize the environment rights of its citizens and we are lagging behind other nations in environmental standards and protections. By recognizing environmental rights we can build greater social justice, stronger economies and healthier people.

Ontario, Quebec, Yukon and the Northwest Territories have already passed some semblance of environmental rights. British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Manitoba are working on their own bills. Over 96,000 Canadians have pledged to support such rights. In addition, 137 municipalities across Canada, including Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, have passed declarations recognizing the right of their citizens to live in a healthy environment. Only two such declarations have been signed in Alberta - in Jasper and in Camrose.

HealthyYEG is a diverse, nonpartisan group of Edmontonians. We believe that Edmonton has a leadership role to play in the province and nationally in recognizing the importance of environmental rights and in promoting healthy and sustainable lives for its citizens.

**II. Intent and Desired Outcomes**

Environmental rights will be recognized and reflected in legislation at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. We have determined that our desired outcomes are as follows:

1. A municipal declaration signed by the City of Edmonton recognizing the rights of citizens to live in a healthy environment: to clean air, clean water and safe food.
2. The City of Edmonton shall advocate for provincial and federal recognition of environmental rights and legislation reflecting these rights.
3. All Edmontonians are aware of the benefits of environmental rights.

**III. Terms of Reference**

As our group moves forward, we strive to be diverse and inclusive and to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Treat each other with respect and dignity, even when we differ in opinions.
2. Speak honestly and directly to each other; also listen at least as much as we speak.
3. Accept that we must compromise and allow the will of the group to be expressed democratically.
4. Remain on task for the common goals of the group.
5. Share the credit for successes and responsibilities for failures.

**IV. Fostering Diversity and Inclusiveness**:

1. Continue to identify groups currently not represented in HealthyYEG.
2. We recognize that First Nations are sovereign entities unto themselves. As we approach municipal, provincial and federal jurisdictions, we want to learn from our indigenous communities and to understand how to honour treaties. How do we advance the right to a healthy environment for all the peoples of Canada?
3. Reach out to First Nations and other groups already identified as strategically important:
4. tech and business organizations
5. youth
6. community leagues and other community organizations
7. academic institutions
8. ALES (UofA Agriculture, Forestry, Environment) looking for volunteer opportunities

**V.** **Tools of Exposure and Public Awareness**

1. White papers outlining benefits of healthy environment (declaration) to:
   1. Municipality – how can the right to a healthy environment advance *The Way We Green* and other city initiatives?
   2. Social justice – how does recognizing the right to a healthy environment eliminate “hot spots” and build social justice?
   3. Business/economy – how do higher environmental standards build a stronger economy?
   4. Public health – how do environmental rights enhance health?
   5. Environmental groups – how can many ENGO’s benefit from environmental rights (precautionary principle)?
2. Political engagement:
   1. Mayor, city councillors
   2. Electoral candidates (civic)
3. Bureaucratic engagement:
   1. Economic and Environmental Sustainability
      1. Paul Ross
4. Key Stakeholders
5. Academic
6. Bloggers
7. Business community
8. Environmental organizations
9. Newspaper opinion pieces
10. Print articles in regional outlets (e.g.) Alberta Views, Gateway, student papers, Ehub
11. Radio or television discussion shows
12. Endorsements by well-known businesses: Chamber of Commerce, Realtors Association, Stantec, Tech Edmonton, local food movement
13. Interviews with key stakeholders
14. Presentations to small groups, Community Leagues
15. Community League newsletters
16. Church Groups
17. Signs and parade marching events
18. Conversations with friends and family
19. Petition signing
20. Online petitions

**VII.** **Timeline**

This will be adjusted regularly depending on uptake, momentum, election cycle and big wins or big needs for a critical mass of attention.  Organizers will annotate accomplishments to infer where on the awareness spectrum the issue resides.  We need time to build awareness and excitement but do not want to unnecessarily prolong the process.

**2016**

July Organizational Meeting at Riverdale House

August Individual next steps identified in July (letters or emails to councilors, community leagues, Tech Edmonton, etc.)

September Second organizing meeting: present draft strategic plan, check in to see who has done what

October Community league outreach - minimum 1 per ward

White paper on benefits of municipal declaration

Meeting with Economic and Environmental Sustainability

Commitment to engage mayor and all councillors

Letter-writing campaigns

October 20 - Campus Sustainability Meet and Greet at MacEwan University?

October 21 - Earth Common Journal Launch?

November A feature article in the newspaper or magazine

Council of Canadians Conference?

**2017**

January First drafting of a council proposal

February Planning with a councilor champion to assess support and carry it forward.

March   Put proposal on the agenda.

**VIII. Roles**

While this is a volunteer organization, some structure in terms of leadership and role description is required to ensure continuity, accountability and productiveness.

1. Meeting facilitator
2. Venue facilitator
3. Secretary
4. Outreach coordinator
5. Social media: Jake, Jenny, Tonia
6. Research/white paper creation
7. Data entry

**IX. Key Messages**

Make these available widely and repeatedly:

1. Neither the country, the province or the city has a declaration of environmental rights.
2. Environmental rights are linked to human rights and should be made explicit.
3. Many other forward-looking municipalities have done this (Toronto, Montreal etc.)
4. There are no significant costs to doing this.
5. It makes a non-binding statement of intention that can lead people.
6. We currently embrace these same rights (informally) of people to have clean air, clean water, safe food, access to nature, knowledge about risks, a voice in decision-making
7. In the spirit of working locally, municipalities are the right level of resolution to undertake this work initially but the long-term intention is to carry it up from grass roots to provincial and federal levels.  This reverses top-down government.
8. Add more key messages.