

Our Manifesto

YOUNG —  
URBANISTS

## Who are we?

The Young Urbanists is a platform for open dialogue, engagement and action aimed at challenging the apartheid legacies we face in our cities. We stand for economic, social, environmental, and spatial justice; and strive to empower members to be change agents within their chosen professions. Young Urbanist membership is free and open to all regardless of discipline, class, race, gender, or religion. The platform is an inclusive space that facilitates dialogue and seeks innovative solutions that challenge the status quo of how our cities are built and operate.

We live and operate in a city desperate for change, and through this platform, network of practitioners and events we aim to foster change within South Africa. Change that encourages multi-racial and mixed income neighbourhoods; change that drives a radical change in the physical form of our city; that sees the creation of fun, safe public spaces; and change that shifts mindsets and enables community members to become active citizens.

We, the Young Urbanists, hope to instil these changes through active learning, sharing and networking; through the facilitation and encouragement of dialogue; and through the continued dissemination of knowledge. The Young Urbanists' platform allows for the cross-pollination of ideas and collectively we will take a stand on pertinent issues within our city. With both technical and academic support, the Young Urbanists group will strive to produce public objections, and or recommendations as and when they are called for.



We, the Young Urbanists of South Africa,  
seek to instil positive change for a happier urban future!

## Core Objectives

- Support and nurture progressive young practitioners and advocates to accelerate the implementation of evidence-based and equitable urban development.
- Communicate the importance of ethical planning and design, by emphasizing the role of effective urban governance to the wider public.
- To broaden the discussions of urban issues and create opportunities for critical dialogue between all affected disciplines: spatial practitioners, engineers, specialists, NGO's, advocacy groups, economists etc.
- Provide a safe and productive space for students, young professionals and experienced urban practitioners who are overwhelmed by the state of practice.
- Provide easily accessible resources, research and tools to aid, support and nurture a new generation of practitioners determined for positive change.

## Recent achievements

In the last few months we have had major public events and advocacy wins that shows we play a critical role in civil society to create a more inclusive and just South Africa. We have achieved the following with help of our members and vast partners in academia, government and the private sector:

- First ever live-streamed Mayoral Debate between two mayoral candidates around urban planning. We hosted it via Zoom and had over 300 viewers tune in. Both speakers made admissions usually unheard of in traditional media. Cooperation and evidence was key to the discussion facilitated by, Lorenzo Davids.
- Formal meeting with the now elected Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis with the aim to establish an open forum called the Mobility and Urban Design Forum. We are currently at an advanced stage of negotiations. We have been instrumental to the Forum Initiative as an open public interface where we have invited other stakeholders like Open Streets Cape Town, the Western Cape Economic Partnership and key professionals in the built environment. The Forum will be announced publicly in late February.
- Highlighting #CapeTownTransportDayZero through multiple events:  
Online talk with Our Future Cities on the crisis. Article in Daily Maverick with Open Streets Cape Town.
- Panel discussion with a diverse group of experts on how the City of Cape Town can transition away from private car-dependency.

## Recent achievements

- Produced a report titled “Six ways Cape Town can truly be the best run city in the world”. This report was the cornerstone of our Integrated Development Plan (IDP) submission and is the main document we fall back to when meeting with government and other stakeholders.
- Hosted multiple events as part of Urban Festival Month with South African Cities Network and Our Future Cities around The Rebuilt City to give a voice to the youth on these key issues pertaining to the built environment.
- Our Interim Coordinator (Roland Postma) was invited to present on Cape Talk on the role of Street Design to produce a more just, equitable and climate-friendly society. The narrative is that this is all within the ambit of our Metros and Municipalities to make a positive impact.
- Meetings with the newly elected Mayco members to make sure the youth voice is represented in city-making decisions. We are well connected and have been recognised as a serious player in civil society and in the built environment.
- Have presented suggested improvements to how the City carries out street closures.. Through our briefings and consistent advocacy efforts to the Mayor’s office we’ve helped the City roll out a number of urgent street closures. This initiative was part of our report titled “Six ways Cape Town can truly be the best run city in the world” to repurpose streets for hospitality users and the public. The aim is everyday urbanism that we highlighted in our interview with Cape Talk on the role of street design.
- Multiple Zoom events to give students a voice around their research. We will continue through 2022 to provide a safe space for young practitioners.

## #Change

As critical thinkers, we the members of the Young Urbanists, have identified the major issues that are keeping our cities from being integrated, just, and inclusive spaces we strive for. The biggest changes we would like to see in South African cities are:



- 1 Radical Shifts in the Physical Form of the City:  
Through shifts in zoning, form, and space - we would like to see radical changes in the physical form of our city. We recognise the impact and role that the physical urban environment plays, and will work towards creating physical spaces which enable a more diverse and inclusive city. We would like to see shift away from the low-income, sprawled urban development model, towards an urban form that responds to human density and economic opportunities.
- 2 Neighbourhoods that are multi-racial and mixed income:  
Through our work, engagement and space of dialogue, the Young Urbanists' hope to see the 'race map' of our city more integrated over time; we would like to see the rising of a middle class, and an increase in the number and diversity of mixed income neighbourhoods through the city.
- 3 Public Spaces that are more inclusive, safe and fun:  
To be an agent of change within our context we strive to be productive and proactive, rather than reactionary; and to act as a diplomatic organisation. We recognise the potential of the position that the Young Urbanists' group holds, and as such will capitalise on this power and privilege wisely to influence change within the city.
- 4 Community engagement which is strengthened and more meaningful: The Young Urbanists would like to engage more with communities and networks outside of our own to encourage the growth of; community capital, a greater understanding of the daily decisions we make, and the number of enabled, active citizens within our city.
- 5 A change in the mindsets of the public:  
We would like to see a change in the mindsets, preconceptions, and perceptions of people from all spheres of our city. "Where you're born doesn't determine who you become".

How?

As a group living and operating in South Africa, we strive to have a positive and lasting impact on the urban and social landscape of our cities through our work, our events, dialogue and debates on the Young Urbanists' platform.

## Learn, Connect, Change

The Young Urbanists' will remain a space for learning, sharing and networking, from both each other as members, as well as through lectures and workshops with outside voices. The Young Urbanists' Steering Committee will continue to host, initiate and facilitate events that allow for contact between members.

Through the sharing of information, and building of a strong network of urbanists, we strive for a collective growth in knowledge, empowering members to continue work which moves South Africa closer to the changes we would like to see in our cities.

## Facilitate & Encourage Dialogue

To demonstrate that members of the group have agency within our city, the Young Urbanists' will strive to facilitate and encourage open dialogue between developers, the city, activists, and other stakeholders. The intention of the YU is to call upon people with diverse knowledge and expertise to challenge pressing issues, and problematic policy.

## Take a Stand

With both technical and academic support, the Young Urbanists' contribute towards specific advocacy efforts and campaigns. The essence of these objections or recommendations will always be rooted in our core values; they will be in alignment with realising the urban ideals we continue to strive for in South Africa; and will be drafted in a constructive manner.

## Partnerships

We seek to work with all sectors of society to bring about positive change for young Urbanists.

## Conclusion

Together we can facilitate an optimistic future of passionate urbanists, citizens and institutions to create a country that provides a better living condition for all.

Yours sincerely,

### The Young Urbanists South Africa

#### Board

Janine Herholdt  
Sean Dayton  
Tessel Pool

#### Operations

Roland Postma  
Steercom  
Sean Dayton  
Tessel Pool  
Roland Postma  
Lucia Schlemmer  
Ayanda Made  
Tristan Sandwith

#### Past Elders

Sean Cooke  
Claire Du Trevou  
Rashiq Fataar  
Jodi Allemeier

#### Organisation Partners

Our Future Cities  
Open Streets Cape Town  
Open Cities Lab  
Open City Architecture  
All of Architecture  
All of Sketches  
University of Cape Town  
Western Cape Economic  
Development Partnership  
City of Cape Town  
Yes & No Studio

#### Media Partners

Daily Maverick  
Cape Talk  
Talking Transformations



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## Membership

Together we can facilitate an optimistic future of passionate urbanists, citizens and institutions to create a country that provides a better living condition for all.

Please sign below that you agree with the content of the Manifesto and understand any violation will be received with swift action. We are proud to support your ideals and dreams.

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YU Member

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Roland Postma (Organisational Coordinator)

### **Benefits**

Free  
Join Whatsapp & Facebook  
Free Resources  
Tap into our network  
Join a local Chapter  
Be part of our mentorship  
Update on all things urbanism

### **Advocacy**

Able to nominate a project  
We provide support,  
resources and networks