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Youth Vision for Green & Thriving Neighbourhoods

Competition Regulations

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Overview

In partnership with the Ove Arup Foundation, C40 is marking the 10-year anniversary of the Paris Agreement by inviting youth across C40's Youth Programmes to share their bold, creative visions for transforming their neighbourhoods into **green and thriving places to live**, improving quality of life and reducing emissions.

Neighbourhoods are at the heart of this competition, offering a powerful scale for climate action, community involvement, and innovation in urban planning. As cities face growing climate and health inequity crises—driven by past models that prioritised car-oriented sprawl, segregation, and the unchecked consumption of natural land—there is a critical need to reimagine our urban environments. Students are encouraged to design green and thriving neighbourhoods that address challenges such as polluted air, poor access to nature, long commutes, and fragmented communities. By creating integrated, district-scale solutions that promote active lifestyles, connected food systems, and equitable access to services, participants can help shape resilient, inclusive, and sustainable urban futures.

Participants will propose future-focused neighbourhood designs rooted in **sustainability, inclusivity, and community well-being**, with a chance to have their work featured globally and connect with city leaders.

As we approach key climate milestones, this is a powerful moment for young people to share their vision with city leaders and demand the future they want to see.

Who Can Enter

This competition is open to **youth engaged in C40 Youth** Programmes globally:

- Members of C40's Youth Hub and/or;
- Individuals who registered or participated in any Students Reinventing Cities competition.

Participants can only apply **individually**.

Theme

In their vision for their **green and thriving neighbourhood**, submissions must address the following four core principles, with a focus on improving **air quality and quality of life**.

1. Complete Neighbourhoods

Complete neighbourhoods are where essential services like schools, shops, and transit are accessible locally, reducing the need for car travel and thus improving local air quality. Unlike single-purpose areas dominated by large retail stores,

office blocks, or housing towers, complete neighbourhoods offer a balanced diversity of activities, making streets more active and inclusive. They integrate residential, commercial activities, office, community services, and other essential services, creating a vibrant, human-scale environment. Compact, mixed-use neighbourhoods also optimise infrastructure use and generate more balanced energy and transport demand throughout the day.

Example of actions to consider:

- Prioritise building within existing urban areas and reusing underused spaces to help solve housing shortages, save land, and limit urban sprawl.
- Encourage mixed-use and community-led projects.
- Develop temporary uses in empty buildings or plots through creative processes.
- Support local shops and activate ground floors, creating hubs for shared services or co-working.

2. People-centred Public Spaces

People-centred public spaces prioritise active travel, reclaim areas from private vehicles, and create vibrant places that serve as the “living room” of the neighbourhood. Welcoming and accessible environments encourage walking, cycling, and social interaction, while helping to reduce traffic and air pollution. Well-designed public areas such as streets and parks form the heart of urban life. By investing in pedestrian-friendly spaces, cities can boost active travel, cut emissions, and improve both health and economic outcomes.

Example of actions to consider:

- Redesign streets to prioritise walking, cycling, and public transport. This includes wider pavements, bike lanes, slower traffic, and car-free zones.
- Add greenery, seating, and people-friendly features to turn streets into lively community spaces.
- Make sure new developments include high-quality, accessible public areas for everyone.
- Use temporary solutions—like pop-up parks or tactical urbanism—to quickly improve underused spaces and respond to changing needs.

3. Inclusive Communities

Inclusive communities are built on diversity and equality, ensuring that all residents, especially those most affected by poor air quality, are included in neighbourhood design and share in its benefits. City planning should focus on providing equitable access to essential services and green spaces, particularly for underserved communities, while actively addressing social divides and inequalities. Stronger communities emerge when diverse residents and stakeholders are engaged in decision-making.

Investments should be prioritised in lower-income and underserved neighbourhoods, with policies that prevent displacement through gentrification. This includes supporting affordable housing initiatives, increasing housing supply, and diversifying housing options to preserve neighbourhood diversity and meet climate goals.

Example of actions to consider:

- Develop a strong community engagement process during the planning phase.
- Provide access to vacant spaces for local organisations to use.
- Create participatory budgets or local democracy platforms to involve residents in decisions about their neighbourhood's transformation.
- Set up community hubs in public spaces, offering multiple services in one place for residents.
- Install community facilities that encourage positive behaviours, such as second-hand shops, reuse and repair hubs, and composting stations.

4. Urban Nature & Climate Resilience

Urban nature, such as trees, parks, and gardens, plays a vital role in cleaning the air, supporting biodiversity, and enhancing climate resilience. These green spaces also contribute to physical and mental well-being. From tree-lined streets to rooftop gardens and urban farms, cities must integrate greenery into neighbourhoods, making it a core part of urban infrastructure, not just an add-on. To maximise their impact, these green spaces should be well-maintained, community-driven, and designed for multifunctionality. They should offer recreation, promote climate adaptation, and strengthen social cohesion.

Example actions to consider:

- Allocating road and footpath space for street vegetation and greenery.
- Investing in pocket parks to transform small or underutilised areas into green spaces.
- Incorporating green roofs or walls that suit the building's structure.
- A diverse mix of green solutions—such as parks, wetlands, green roofs, and permeable surfaces—helps manage heat, flooding, and air quality.

Submission Requirements

Please follow the format highlighted below and the technical specifications based on the type of visual you choose to submit. Note that clear, visually appealing presentations will help the jury better understand your concept — make sure your submission is easy to interpret and engaging. C40 reserves the right to use materials submitted by participants for public communication purposes.

Participants must submit the following two **mandatory components**:

1. Visual Representation

Choose **one format** to visually present your idea:

Sketch / Drawing / Rendering / Artwork
- Accepted formats: **.PDF**, **.JPG**, or **.PNG**
- Recommended size: **Landscape 16:9 format**
- Minimum resolution: **300 DPI**

Poem / Written Creative Work
- Accepted formats: **.PDF** or **.DOCX**
- Length: Maximum **200 words**

Video
- Maximum duration: **30 seconds.**
- Portrait format (selfie style)
- Accepted formats: **.MP4**, **.MOV**, or upload via **private YouTube/Vimeo link**
- Recommended resolution: **1080p (HD)**

2. Project Description

A **one-page** written description (max. 2000 characters including spaces) explaining:

- The concept behind your idea.
- How does it align with the four green and thriving principles?
- The expected impact on climate, community, and quality of life.

Selection Process

A panel of judges will select **10 top projects**, from which **4 winning entries** will be chosen based on the following overall criteria:

Criteria	Description
GREEN	Environmental and climate impact
THRIVING	Social impact and benefit to the local community
CREATIVE	Originality, creativity and innovation of the concept
ACTIONABLE	Feasibility and potential for implementation or scalability

Jury Panel

The jury will include:

- Representative from the **C40 Cities.**
- Representative from the **Ove Arup Foundation**.
- External expert in architecture or urban design.

Prizes & Opportunities

Winners will receive the following recognition and opportunities:

- Feature on **C40's social media platforms**, as part of a global digital campaign linked to the C40 World Mayors Summit.
- Exchange opportunity with the **Ove Arup Foundation.**
- Feature on the **C40 Reinventing Cities website.**

Timeline

Date	Milestone
10 June 2025	The competition is open to youth in C40 networks
1 September 2025	Submission deadline
September 2025	Evaluation of entries by the jury
October/November 2025	Announcement of winners with a digital campaign linked with the C40 World Mayors Summit
December 2025	Potential Additional prize opportunities for winners

How to Apply

Please enter your submission by **Monday, September 1st at 5.00 pm GMT** by completing this Google Form. Please email studentsreinventingcities@c40.org should you have any questions about this process.

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