

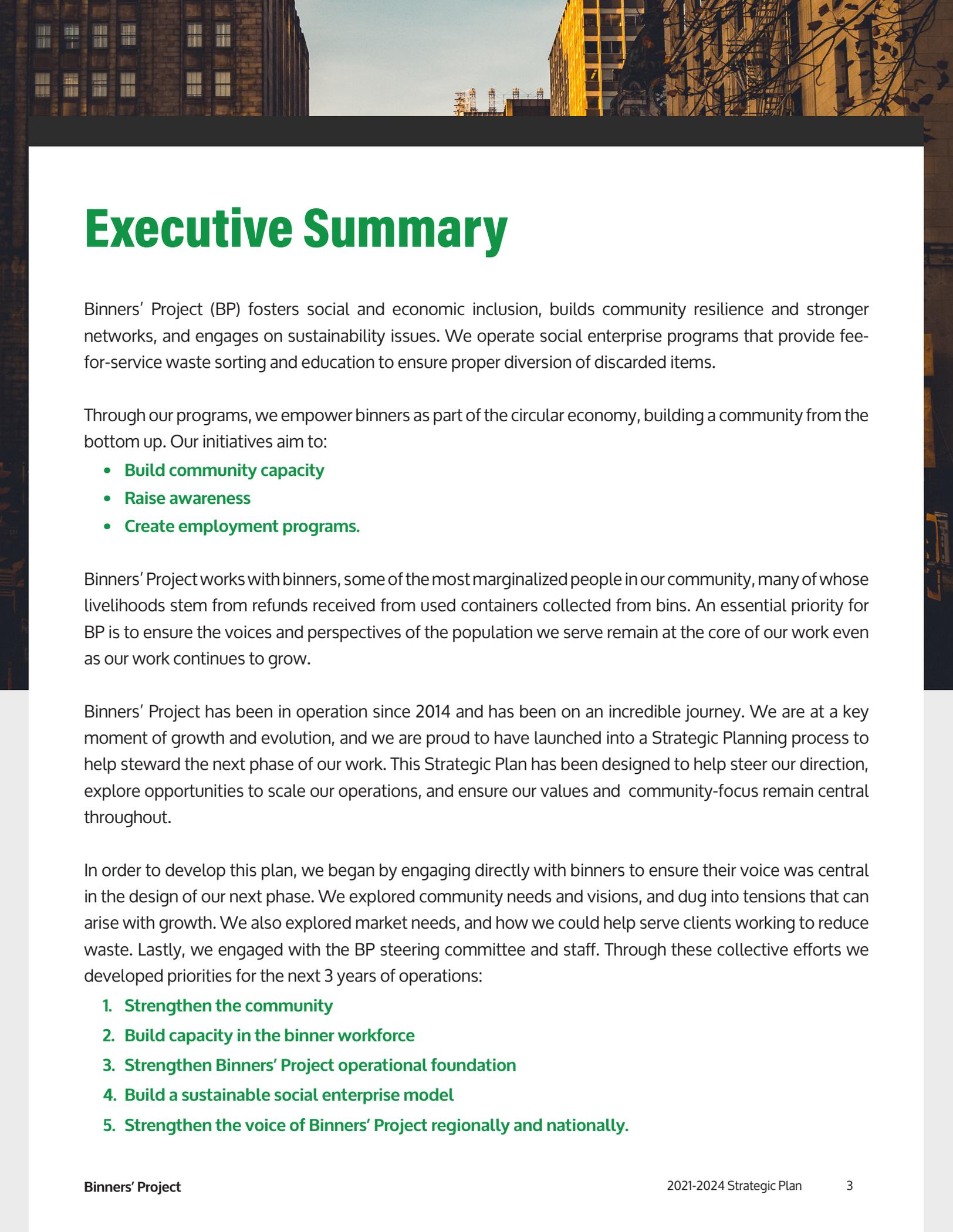


# Binners' Project

2021-2024 Strategic Plan

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# Executive Summary

Binners' Project (BP) fosters social and economic inclusion, builds community resilience and stronger networks, and engages on sustainability issues. We operate social enterprise programs that provide fee-for-service waste sorting and education to ensure proper diversion of discarded items.

Through our programs, we empower bidders as part of the circular economy, building a community from the bottom up. Our initiatives aim to:

- **Build community capacity**
- **Raise awareness**
- **Create employment programs.**

Binners' Project works with bidders, some of the most marginalized people in our community, many of whose livelihoods stem from refunds received from used containers collected from bins. An essential priority for BP is to ensure the voices and perspectives of the population we serve remain at the core of our work even as our work continues to grow.

Binners' Project has been in operation since 2014 and has been on an incredible journey. We are at a key moment of growth and evolution, and we are proud to have launched into a Strategic Planning process to help steward the next phase of our work. This Strategic Plan has been designed to help steer our direction, explore opportunities to scale our operations, and ensure our values and community-focus remain central throughout.

In order to develop this plan, we began by engaging directly with bidders to ensure their voice was central in the design of our next phase. We explored community needs and visions, and dug into tensions that can arise with growth. We also explored market needs, and how we could help serve clients working to reduce waste. Lastly, we engaged with the BP steering committee and staff. Through these collective efforts we developed priorities for the next 3 years of operations:

1. **Strengthen the community**
2. **Build capacity in the bidder workforce**
3. **Strengthen Binners' Project operational foundation**
4. **Build a sustainable social enterprise model**
5. **Strengthen the voice of Binners' Project regionally and nationally.**

# Message from the Director

## Landon Hoyt

Bidders have been at the forefront of our meetings, programs, and advocacy, building since the Bidders' Project began in 2014; Bidders bring forward their lived experience and their extensive knowledge as waste-pickers to all of our work. In recent years, we witnessed exponential growth in our social enterprise programs, combined with greater impact on the livelihoods of bidders. In order to manage this growth, we needed a forward-looking strategy to ensure any further expansion and change in the project remains sustainable and bidder-focused. The need for steady income and vital community support became even more apparent when COVID-19 struck bidders and the larger community, which was already facing devastating overdose and housing emergencies. Because of this, the need for Bidders' Project to have a strategic plan for the future, including COVID-19 recovery, became even more important.

In Fall 2020, with the support of the McConnell Foundation and Roots & Rivers, we hosted conversations and engagement sessions with bidders, core staff, key partners, and our Steering Committee, where we strategized what Bidders' Project could look like over the next 3 to 5 years. From further capacity building and advocacy for bidders to refining our structure, this plan is ambitious and results-oriented. I am proud of this work and those who contributed, and I look forward to the continued impact Bidders' Project will make in the community.

# Message from the Steering Committee Chair

## Jeanette Ageson

Since its inception, Bidders' Project has been a highly innovative, grassroots project that is changing the conversation about waste picking in our city. In its first six years of operations, the team has launched many successful initiatives like the Coffee Cup Revolution, a strong network of support among bidders, and a thriving social enterprise. The time is right to consider how best to build on the project's early successes and plan for a thriving Bidders' Project well into the future.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare what has always been true – we all need connection, support, and decent work that is valued by our community. Bidders' Project is making the material conditions of work better by organizing tangible economic opportunities, but they are also reframing how our community talks about and values binning. This plan is meant to aid Bidders' Project to continue its strong growth trajectory while continuing to keep the fundamental mission and values of the project at the core of everything we do.



# Our Mission & Mandate

## Mission

Binners' Project is dedicated to improving economic opportunities and reducing stigma faced by informal recyclable collectors.

## What We Do

Binners' Project delivers programs to help achieve the triple benefit of:

- **Social Inclusion:** Binners feel connected to the wider community while building job skills, routine, and a sense of dignity.
- **Economic Development:** Binners earn a reliable and fair income through participating in our programs.
- **Waste Diversion:** Binners use their expertise to sort waste and help organizations and businesses achieve their sustainability goals.

In addition to these offerings, our programs support binners by:

- Building community resilience,
- Building stronger community networks,
- Engaging on sustainability issues, and
- Creating innovative employment programs.

# Our Programs

Our work is composed of social enterprise and mission-based components. We are continually striving to ensure these two components support and build on one another. The following sections detail the key programs across the Binners' Project.

## Social Enterprise Programs:

The social enterprise side of our initiative serves as both a revenue generating program for the initiative, and provides income and capacity building opportunities for binners. The opportunities outlined below support binners to continue providing waste diversion services to organizations and businesses, while being properly recognized rather than stigmatized for the work they do:



Back of House  
Sorting



Public Waste  
Education



Waste  
Auditing



Community  
Engagement

## Mission-based Programs:

The mission-based components of the initiative include all the work we do around advocacy, fostering an inclusive community, training and capacity building, and supporting our binner members. These programs include:



Infrastructure  
Programs



Universal  
Carts



Binners  
Meetings



Coffee Cup  
Revolution



Binners'  
Hooks



Community  
Programs

# Who We Serve

Binner \`bin-ner\ – noun:

**“A person who collects redeemable containers and other things from bins to sustain their livelihood and to divert waste from landfills; a dumpster diver”**

Bidders are among one of the most marginalized groups in urban areas. Their livelihoods stem from refunds received from used containers collected from bins. All bidders we work with are low income and face various obstacles to mainstream employment. For example, all of them report either a history of mental illness or addiction, living with a physical or mental disability, and/or being currently or formerly homeless. Above 60% of our members identify as Indigenous and 40% are women. Most rely on social assistance for their income, topping it up with regularly canvassing the city for refundable cans and bottles and other objects of value. Through this work, they demonstrate considerable self-reliance while also making a substantial environmental impact by diverting a huge volume of recyclables from waste streams.

## Binner Profile: Ed

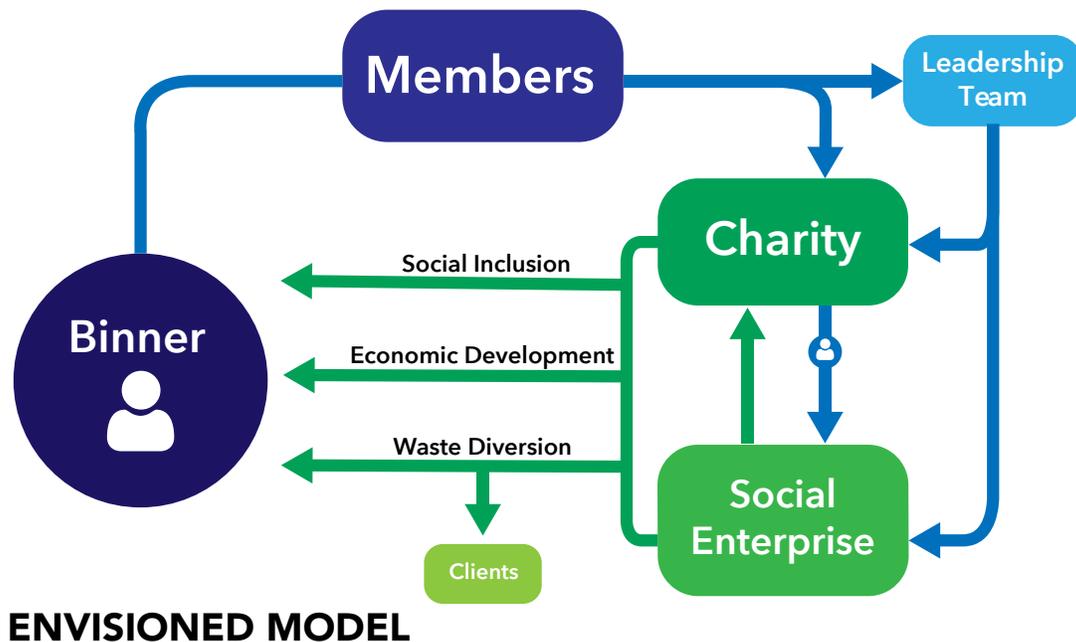
Ed joined the Bidders’ Project staff team in early 2019 as a Team Lead. At the time, he was couch-surfing and living out of his van after having a small stroke that left him out of work. 2019 was a challenging year for Ed as he continued to live in his van, but he soon became one of Bidders’ Project’s most reliable members, eventually earning a promotion to Community Coordinator.

In early 2020, just as Ed secured a new place to live in a social housing building he found through one of our partnerships, we selected him for the position of Head Coordinator: A new, permanent part-time salaried position on our core staff team. He has shown excellent leadership in this role, particularly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and is a great asset to our team.



# Our Model

Our model starts with Binners. Each of the social enterprise and mission-based components of our initiative contribute towards social inclusion, economic development, and waste diversion which feed directly back into wellbeing and support for Binners.



Key elements to note around our model:

- Binners' Project always revolves around a Binners-first philosophy.
- Both members and the leadership team engage with both the mission-based and social enterprise components of the initiative.

Many of the components of the envisioned model captured are already in existence, but this model highlights a few key nuances and helps us progress as an initiative:

- The mission-based and social enterprise components of the initiative are equally important to the success of Binners' Project. Both provide complimentary support to one another in order to reach the common goals of social inclusion, economic development, and waste diversion.
- The envisioned model hopes to develop a social enterprise financially sustainable enough to provide funding for the overall initiative. The current funding relies on grants to support the operations of both social enterprise and mission-based programs.

# History

<p><b>2014</b></p>	<p>First Binners Meeting</p> 	<p>Coffee Cup Revolution launch</p>  <p>30,000 cups collected</p>	
<p><b>2015</b></p>	<p>First major contract (FIFA Women's Soccer)</p> 	<p>Pick-up program launched</p>	<p><b>156</b> Binner members</p>
<p><b>2016</b></p>	<p>Public Waste Education program launch</p>  <p>Hooks program launched</p>	<p>Received SFU Interfaith Centre Laudato Si Award</p>  <p>Hired 2 Binners as core staff</p>	
<p><b>2017</b></p>	<p>Launched Back of House Sorting program</p>	<p>Received Greenest City Leadership Award</p> 	
<p><b>2018</b></p>	<p>Launched Binners Universal Cart prototype</p> 	<p>Supported waste pickers in Victoria, BC with a needs assessment</p>	<p>First Fundraiser</p> 
<p><b>2019</b></p>	<p>Secured Convention Centre contract</p>	<p>Secured Waste Audit contract with SFU</p>	
<p><b>2020</b></p>	<p>Supported advocacy efforts to increase bottle returns from 5 c to 10 c</p> <p><b>\$</b></p>		

# Developing the Plan

## Timing of Development

Bidders' Project is a dynamic grassroots initiative that is constantly evolving to best serve the bidders. Many of our programming and operations have come from emerging partnerships and opportunities and we continue to innovate on programs and initiatives. Part of the strategic planning process involved assessing successes, and capturing learnings from the past 6 years. Our success has grown to a point where we must decide how to grow in a way that is sustainable, and best achieves the mission and vision of the bidders and the Bidders' Project. This plan was also developed in the midst of the covid-19 pandemic in an effort to bring clarity and stability to help support the initiative in navigating this complex and challenging time.

## Engagement Process

In order to develop this plan, we engaged directly with bidders to ensure their voice was central in the design of our next phase of growth. Throughout this process, we identified community needs and visions, and dug into tensions that might arise with growth. The strategic planning happened in tandem with a Market Research Study being conducted by KPMG, and as such, we included market needs in our assessment, and mapped out how we could help serve clients working to reduce waste.

The development of the strategic goals was undertaken through comprehensive design sessions with the BP steering committee and staff, and feedback from bidders and key partners was sought to refine and finalize this plan. Bidders and key stakeholders will continue to be engaged as we work towards the successful implementation of this strategic plan.



# Our Strategic Goals and Objectives

## Goal Setting

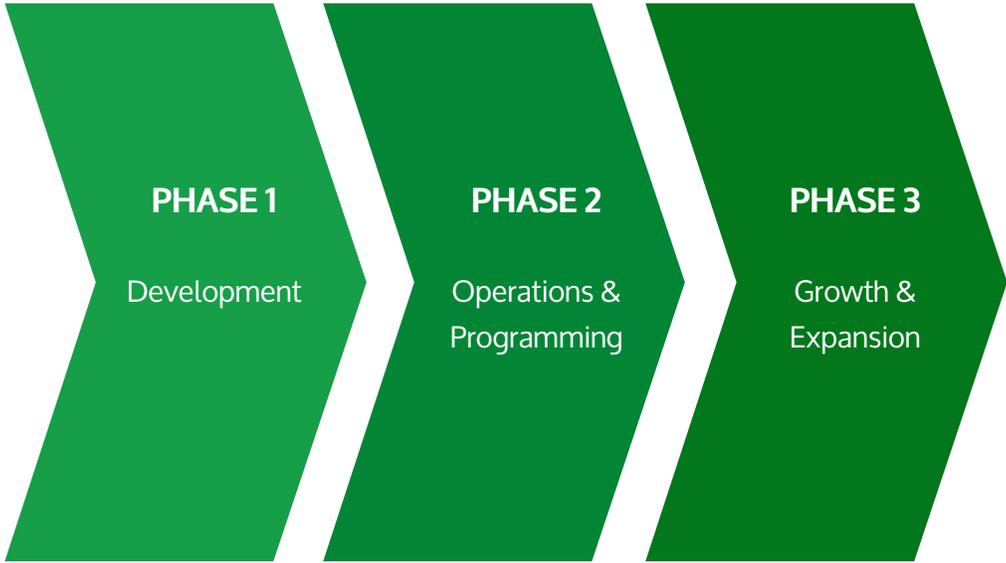
Through our community engagements, we developed five bold and broad-reaching goals to focus on for the next 5 years. We will keep these consistent to maintain continuity, but will remain adaptable and responsive to changes or emerging trends in the community.

The following are the goals outlined for the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan:

- Strengthening the community
- Building capacity in the binner workforce
- Strengthening Binnners’ Project operational foundation
- Building a sustainable social enterprise model
- Strengthening the voice of Binnners’ Project regionally and nationally

## Phased Approach

The strategic plan has been developed using a phase approach to detail how Binnners’ Project will progress towards reaching these goals over the next 3 years. Phase 1 (Year 1) will be a development phase where insights will enable key strategic decisions for subsequent phases. Phase 2 (Year 2) will help solidify operations and programs, and Phase 3 (Year 3) will focus on growth and expansion.



# GOAL 1 - COMMUNITY

*Strengthen the community of binners to address issues of social isolation and stigma in the binning industry.*

## **We will do this by:**

- Continuing to offer connection opportunities (like our weekly meetings) where binners can build relationships, and provide support to one another.
- Capture the Binners' Project membership model (including identifying values and community connection features that are core to the operations).
- Developing a recruitment strategy and support system to grow our binner workforce.
- Refining an engagement strategy to involve binners in future planning of the initiative.
- Developing a strategy to help support the social enterprise scaling without compromising on the binners-centered approach.

## **Success looks like:**

- The binner community is connected and supports one another.
- The culture of Binners' Project is maintained as the initiative scales.
- Binners feel empowered to be at the center of the BP strategy.
- We have captured the BP model to support potential scaling opportunities.
- We have a large enough binner workforce to meet the needs of our social enterprise.
- Binners have decreased incidences of stigmatization in their work.

# GOAL 2 - CAPACITY

*Build the capacity of the binner workforce to empower leadership and meet the social enterprise needs.*

## **We will do this by:**

- Developing and implementing a comprehensive and replicable training program to support binner leadership development.
- Evaluating and refining the training program to ensure it is meeting the needs of binners and helping build skills that will support client satisfaction among social enterprise clients.
- Strengthening wrap-around services and supports to binners including providing in-house peer support and/or outreach workers.
- Piloting binner-specific roles in the core staff.

## **Success looks like:**

- Binners report tangible increases in their skills and leadership.
- Binners are empowered to engage as leaders of the Binners' Project and to provide input into strategic planning and operations.
- Social enterprise clients report an increase in satisfaction with waste sorting.
- Retention of binner leadership and progression to increased levels of responsibility.
- The 8-month Binner Leadership Training Program is able to be offered to the broader binner membership and scaled to other communities.



# GOAL 3 - FOUNDATION

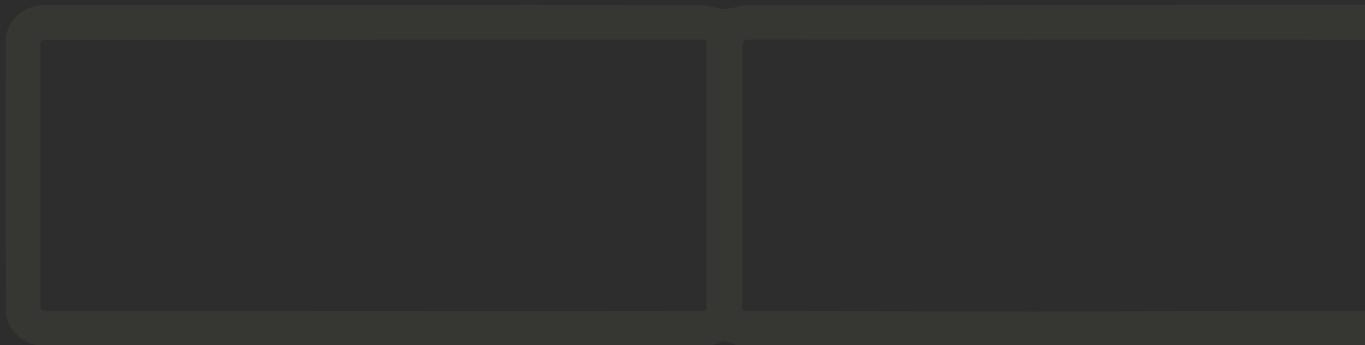
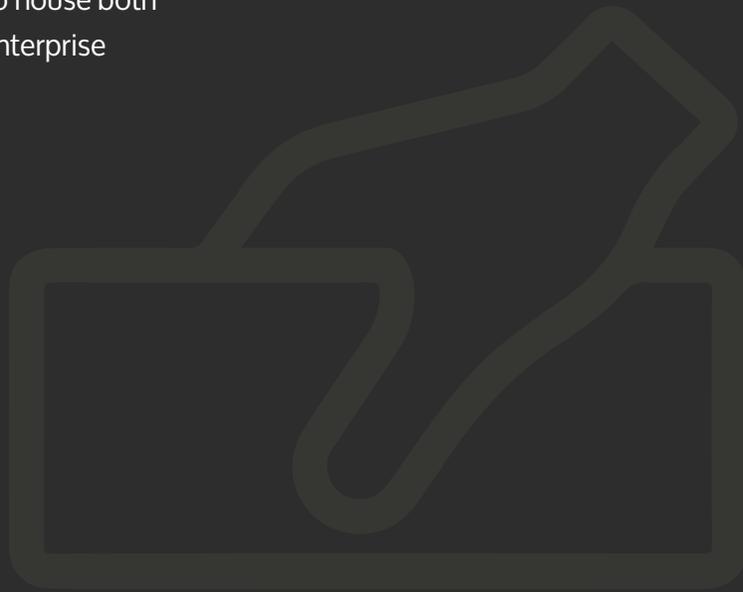
*Strengthen Binners' Project foundation to ensure financial sustainability, and operational excellence.*

## **We will do this by:**

- Solidifying the vision, mission, and values of the initiative.
- Clarifying roles and structure for current and future project needs.
- Strengthening internal operational excellence.
- Evaluating and streamlining programs so they are having the largest impact and being run as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- Identifying a project structure to house both the mission-based and social enterprise components of the model.

## **Success looks like:**

- Staff and member retention and satisfaction.
- Increased collaboration between binners and core staff members.
- Clear initiative model that effectively fulfills the mission of the project.
- Efficient and effective programs that serve the needs of binners.



# GOAL 4 - SCALING

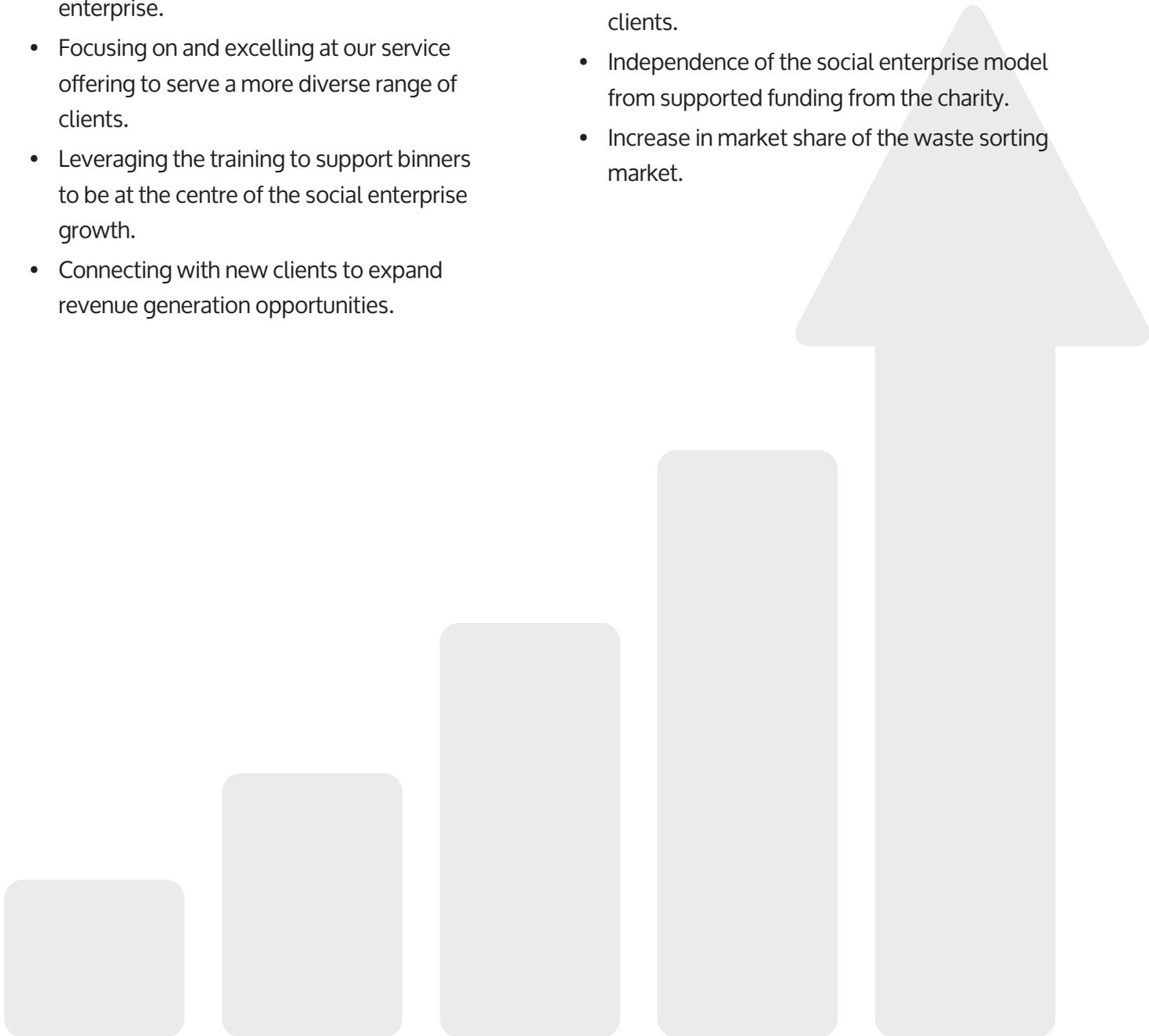
*Develop, sustain, and grow a sustainable social enterprise model.*

## **We will do this by:**

- Undertaking financial modelling to build out a fully financially sustainable social enterprise.
- Developing a scaling plan to grow the social enterprise.
- Focusing on and excelling at our service offering to serve a more diverse range of clients.
- Leveraging the training to support binners to be at the centre of the social enterprise growth.
- Connecting with new clients to expand revenue generation opportunities.

## **Success looks like:**

- Increased economic opportunities for binners.
- Growth in revenue of the social enterprise.
- Growth in the number of social enterprise clients.
- Independence of the social enterprise model from supported funding from the charity.
- Increase in market share of the waste sorting market.



# GOAL 5 - VOICE

*Strengthen the voice of Binnners' Project regionally, and nationally in order to advance binnners-focused policy initiatives, and spread the Binnners' Project model.*

## **We will do this by:**

- Developing a messaging strategy to clearly communicate the value that binnners and Binnners' Project bring to society.
- Developing advocacy priorities.
- Developing advocacy campaigns, and championing policy initiatives that will advance wellbeing and economic opportunity for binnners.
- Refining the binnners training and codifying the membership model to create a replicable and scalable initiative model.
- Connecting and building partnerships with other binner communities across North America.

## **Success looks like:**

- Binnners' Project is recognized and engaged as an advocate for community members in Vancouver's downtown eastside.
- Binnners' Project becomes scalable and replicable in other communities across North America.
- Policies are implemented that advance wellbeing and economic inclusion of binnners.
- Vancouverites recognize and respect binnners and Binnners' Project for the valuable contribution they are making to society.



# Making it Happen

## Operational Plans

Binnery's Project is committed to bringing this plan to life and executing on the identified goals. To support this delivery, BP will develop and implement Operational Plans that will guide annual priority setting and lay out a clear action plan to achieve the strategic goals.

## Sharing Success

Part of executing on the strategic plan will include evaluating and reporting on the success of the 5 goal areas. Binnery's Project will report on these goals and execution of the Strategic Plan through Annual Reports and community updates. As needed, data will be captured through community surveys as well as interviews to gather qualitative and quantitative evidence of successful implementation as well as learnings and shortcomings. This evaluation will support further strategic planning for the Binnery's Project and will help inform each of the Operational Plans.

# Conclusion

During this complex and changing time, we need initiatives like Binners' Project more than ever that are community-centered and bringing tangible impact to individuals' lives. This Strategic Plan has been developed to support Binners' Project to continue to grow and expand its offering to the community and to clients while keeping binners at the core of everything we do. There is substantial work to be done to grow and strengthen our work, and we are excited to dive in and hit the ground running on our 5 strategic priorities.

We would like to offer a special thanks to all the binners, staff, community members, partners, and funders who generously donated their time to help inform this process. We'd also like to thank donors, partners and funders who over the years have supported Binners' Project with their generous contributions and have helped Binners' Project achieve the impact it has to date. Here's to an impactful and groundbreaking 3 years ahead!

