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A GUIDE TO ADVANCING CLIMATE EQUITY THROUGH PLACE-BASED COLLABORATION

TAMARACK INSTITUTE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Land Acknowledgement:

Turtle Island (North America) is the ancestral home of Indigenous Peoples of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit descent. We recognize that across this land, Indigenous rights holders have endured historical oppression and continue to experience inequities that have resulted from widespread colonialist systems and ideologies that perpetuate harm to Indigenous Peoples to this day. These include being disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis and losing Traditional Knowledges, ceremonies, and ways of living. We acknowledge that individuals from across Turtle Island contributed to this guide, which emphasizes the importance of centring Indigenous Peoples in climate action in an authentic way that contributes to reconciliation.

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FOREWORD

In London, Ontario, a diverse group of organizations, institutions, and residents have come together around a shared concern about climate change and a shared desire to co-create a more sustainable and equitable future. Since joining the Tamarack Institute's Community Climate Transitions (CCT) network as part of the inaugural cohort of communities in 2022, we have deepened our collaboration, better aligned ourselves around shared goals, and built support for local climate action.

Our two main goals have been implementing London's Climate Emergency Action Plan through a community-wide approach and mobilizing and engaging Londoners around climate action, including through an annual EarthFest event. In April 2024, EarthFest London celebrated the diversity of local actors committed to this work by hosting over 100 exhibitors and providing inspiration, actions, and advice to over 2,500 Londoners.

We've had more than a few learnings along the way. We've found that collaboratives need to be built on a foundation of trust between diverse groups, including

Attendees at EarthFest London 2024. Photo by Grisha Buckareff.

trusting that others will follow through on commitments and recognizing that each partner may take action in unique but equally valid ways. We've learned that successful partnerships benefit from one group that 'anchors' the project and keeps momentum going, while supporting coordination across partners. And our experience has shown that collaboration takes time, both to execute projects and to ensure broad and inclusive participation. We are creatures of habit, and until we get used to collaborating, we can fail to see the opportunities that are open to us; yet, like a muscle, collaboration skills get stronger with use.

Attendees at EarthFest London 2024. Photo by Grisha Buckareff.

While place-based collaboration may be hard, it is essential to tackling an issue as complex and multi-faceted as the climate crisis. Working in partnership helps engage wider audiences and leads to more meaningful, equitable, and long-lasting results.

This guide shares many inspiring stories to draw from and adapt based on your local community's context, as well as easy ways to get started, no matter where you are on your climate action journey. We hope that it helps other climate collaboratives get off the ground and achieve impact.

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INTRODUCTION

Since 2021, the Tamarack Institute's Community Climate Transitions network has been supporting community-led climate action across Turtle Island (colonially known as North America) that builds more just, equitable, and sustainable futures. Through our work with municipalities, community organizations, resident-led groups, and others forming multi-actor collaboratives, we have learned a lot about what it takes to address the climate crisis in a collective way that ensures no one is left behind.

Throughout Tamarack's work with communities dating back to 2001, we have also witnessed the power of place in driving transformational change. Whether that place is a town, a city, a region, or a Nation, place-based approaches address the unique characteristics of a local context, build commitment from community members over the long term, and allow for adaptability as things change. Given the variations between the environments we live in, the time frame of the climate crisis, and the extreme weather events we cannot fully forecast, place-based work is a natural fit for advancing climate equity. While the climate crisis is a global issue, making change at the local level is critical to meeting both our mitigation (reducing emissions) and adaptation (preparing for the impacts of climate change) needs. From active transportation to building retrofits, municipalities have influence over approximately half of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions.[1] And communities are finding themselves on the front lines of climate change impacts, scrambling to adapt their built and natural environments to better handle temperature extremes, precipitation levels, and extreme weather events.

No matter the size of your place, no one actor can build a resilient, low-carbon community alone. The climate crisis is caused by and affects every aspect of our lives, demanding a whole-of-community approach. This includes not just all sectors, but crucially, equity-deserving groups

1   https://fcm.ca/en/focus-areas/climate-and-sustainability

as well. While we must get to action on mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis at a speed and scale that are proportionate to the challenge, we cannot allow this sense of urgency to crowd out the attention we give to *how* this work is done—who it involves, what roles they play, and how these roles are fulfilled. The issue already does not affect all of us equally. We should not repeat the same mistakes in the solutions we create, perpetuating or even exacerbating the inequities in our communities. This means working with people with lived/living experience to co-create these solutions, centring those most susceptible to climate impacts.

This guide provides a comprehensive overview of these insights, as well as examples of communities across Turtle Island leading the way. Whether you are a resident, a small business owner, or a leader in your local government, this guide can help you begin to make sense of the relationships to build, steps to take, and lenses to consider.

Section 1 poses 10 key questions to reflect upon to help assess how ready you are to advance climate equity through place-based collaboration in your community.

Section 2 outlines 10 ideas for how to take local climate action in an equitable, collaborative way. From the people you bring together to form a collaborative to the long-term sustainability of their efforts, these ideas collectively capture the key points in your journey.

Section 3 tells 10 stories of communities across Turtle Island that serve as inspiration for how the 10 ideas can be implemented.

Section 4 provides 10 additional resources to deepen and apply your knowledge on climate action, equity, and collaboration.

Section 5 suggests 10 ways to get started, bringing together the questions and ideas from sections one and three.

We hope that this guide provides direction, inspiration, and motivation, no matter where you are in your climate action journey. Embedding equity into this work not only addresses those most impacted by the climate crisis, but creates more just, resilient, and healthy communities for all.

DEFINING CORE CONCEPTS

Climate equity: Climate equity is the goal of recognizing and addressing the unequal burdens of climate change, while ensuring that all people share the benefits of climate protection efforts. Achieving equity means that all people—regardless of their race, colour, gender, age, sexuality, national origin, ability, or income—live in safe, healthy, fair communities.[2]

Collaborative: A group of actors in a community (the municipality, community groups and non-profits, individuals with lived/living experience, businesses, etc.) working together towards a common goal.

Community: While there are many kinds of communities in today's world, here, we refer specifically to those groups of people defined by a particular place, whether that be a neighbourhood, town, city, or district.

Equity: Equity recognizes that people have different needs and that treating everyone the same may not lead to fair outcomes. Equity involves giving everyone what they need to be successful, even if that means giving some people more resources or opportunities than others. Equity leads to equality of opportunities.

Equity-deserving groups: To be an equity-deserving group means to be excluded, ignored, or pushed to the outer edge of a group, society, or community. Equity-deserving groups have historically been denied equal access to employment and education opportunities, social services, and housing, among other barriers faced.

Indigenous: Indigenous refers to the original peoples of any given land who have been adversely impacted by colonization, imperialism, and capitalism through displacement and settlement of their traditional territories. In Canada, the Indigenous Peoples of this land include First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

Lived/living experience: People with lived/living experience have first-hand knowledge of an issue or topic. In the context of this guide, this includes people who have experienced the impacts of the climate crisis and the inequities associated with it themselves.

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2   https://www.epa.gov/climateimpacts/climate-equity

Photo from a 2024 Tamarack gathering in Ottawa.

SECTION 1

10 Questions to Assess Readiness

Before you dive into the content of this guide, we encourage you to think about these questions to get a sense of how ready you are to advance climate equity in your community. You may not have answers for all of these questions at this time, and that's okay. They serve as a starting point for identifying what you already have/know, and what you might want to pay particular attention to as you begin this work.

Score:
0 = I don't know
1 = Not yet
2 = Just getting started
3 = We are part way there
4 = We are doing this
5 = We are there!

Question	Score
1. Is your community aware of how it contributes to and is affected by the climate crisis?	
2. Are there people/organizations in your community interested in taking climate action?	
3. Do you have access to data on local emission sources (e.g., through a greenhouse gas inventory) and current/future impacts of climate change (e.g., through a vulnerability assessment) in your community?	
4. Do you know which individuals and groups within your community are most affected by extreme weather events and other climate impacts?	
5. Do you have an understanding of the social and ecological histories of the lands you are on and whose traditional territories they are?	
6. Do you have strong, diverse relationships across sectors and with equity-deserving groups in your community that could help advance climate equity?	

Question	Score
7. Do you and/or your network have an understanding of the resources (funding, capacity, etc.) you will need to engage in taking equitable climate action?	
8. Has your community already committed to or done work related to advancing climate equity, either directly or indirectly?	
9. Do you have a strong understanding of the political opportunities and challenges (both on a local and provincial level) to advance community-led climate equity?	
10. Do you have a process to collectivize your climate equity work and decision-making (e.g., processes to welcome people into this work and build their capacity to participate)?	

Add up your score to assess how you are doing:

0–20 points – Do you see some ways that you could increase your score? Let us know how we can help!

21–40 points – You are doing well. Keep going!

41–50 points – We want to learn from you!

What have you learned from taking this assessment?

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Participants at a local meetup in Ottawa for CCT's annual gathering in 2023 share their reflections. Photo by Claire Lewis.

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SECTION 2

10 Great Ideas

1 Create a **diverse roundtable**, which can serve as the backbone for your work.

2 **Collect data** to inform who and what you prioritize.

3 **Engage with your community** from the beginning and throughout the process.

4 Identify a **shared vision and a common agenda** for a brighter future.

5 Bring Indigenous and Western worldviews together through **braiding knowledges**.

6 Take a holistic, **multisolving approach** that advances both mitigation and adaptation, while addressing other issues in your community.

7 Create space for **continuous learning and improvement**, using feedback mechanisms throughout the process.

8 Develop a **shared measurement system** so that all partners are aligned in how they define and track progress.

9 **Communicate** about climate equity in a way that relates to the everyday priorities of residents and centres the voices of equity-deserving groups.

10 Consider the **long-term viability** of your climate equity work from the beginning, both in terms of the people and financial resources that make it possible.

1 CREATE A DIVERSE ROUNDTABLE, WHICH CAN SERVE AS THE BACKBONE FOR YOUR WORK.

Why:

Whether it is your local government, community organizations, or small businesses, everyone in your community has a role to play in advancing climate equity. Bringing together actors from across sectors into this work comes with several benefits. No one individual or organization has all of the skills, relationships, and financial resources needed to achieve population-level outcomes. Each partner you invite in has a unique and valuable contribution to make to the various aspects of the bigger picture, including community engagement, data collection, funding, and more.

Creating a diverse roundtable also contributes to the long-term sustainability of the work. Mitigating and adapting to climate change will not happen overnight, and there will be challenges that you cannot forecast. Instead of relying on a select few to lead this work and overcome these challenges, collaboration enables the involvement of many, creating a network of support and minimizing burnout.

Finally, building a wide, cross-sector base of support can be instrumental to getting the attention of and garnering support from people in positions of power. Working with your local government paves the way

Photo from a 2024 Tamarack gathering in Ottawa.

for policy and systems change, bringing together the bottom-up and top-down approaches that both have roles to play in equitably addressing the climate crisis.

How:

Both to build a coalition and to recognize how climate equity ties into existing missions, mandates, and priorities in your community, a good starting point is to connect with groups that are already organized. These include neighbourhood associations, unions, faith groups, and more. Such potential partners have already established relationships and built trust in the community, which form the foundation upon which change happens. Not having to start from scratch—that is, learning to recognize that there are existing networks, communities, and collectives you can and should tap into—can help make advancing climate equity at a community-wide level feel less overwhelming. Approach these groups with a sense of humility, understanding their priorities and finding common ground before coalition-building. In some cases, limited resources and/or differing priorities may impact your ability to form partnerships, and this should be respected.

The concept of diversity extends beyond working across sectors and includes engaging individuals with lived/living experience, particularly from equity-deserving groups. These individuals bring the context expertise that is essential to effective climate action. This includes their experiences of how climate change is affecting their community, wisdom captured in traditional and cultural knowledge systems that can complement and rightfully challenge Western science, and so much more. A purely top-down approach would both not have the support of the community that is needed to achieve meaningful impact and leave out knowledge and ideas that enhance the work.

A Transition en Commun Espace Quartier event on sustainable food in Montreal. Photo by Antoine St-Germain.

2 COLLECT DATA TO INFORM WHO AND WHAT YOU PRIORITIZE.

Why:

There are two main reasons why it is important to take a data-driven approach to taking climate action. The first is that each community's context—and therefore, its priorities—are different. Demographics, geography, economics, and more all influence how your community is impacted by and can contribute to addressing the climate crisis. With an understanding of these factors, you are better equipped to take climate action in a way that leverages the specific assets and meets the specific needs of your community.

The second reason is that there are variations not only between communities, but within them as well. A key principle of climate equity is that the climate crisis does not impact all of us equally. Our age, race, gender, income level, health status, and more all shape what we are affected by and how deeply we are affected by it. Without disaggregated data that captures these nuances, you risk taking a "one-size-fits-all" approach and continuing to leave people behind. Ideally, data collection should be a community-involved process. Community
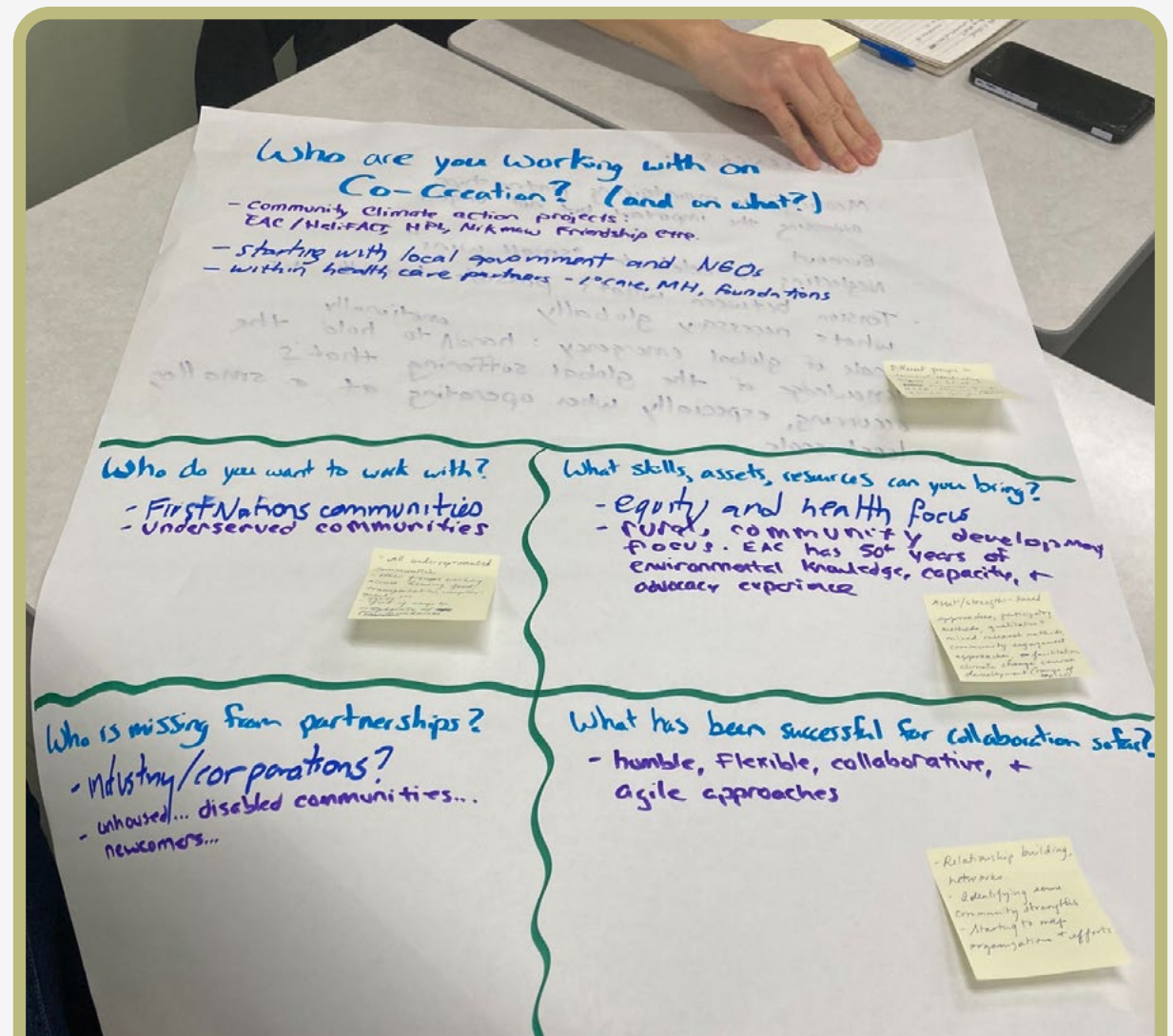
Participants at a local meetup in Halifax for CCT's annual gathering in 2023 identify how they want to co-create local climate action. Photo courtesy of Nova Scotia Health Authority.

members should also be at the centre of your effort to identify local assets, needs, and aspirations.

Such data includes information on climate risks (precipitation levels, temperature extremes, natural disasters, etc.), greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (by source and type), energy poverty, and other areas. While there might be several

sources that you can use to paint a picture of climate inequity in your community, it is likely that there are also data gaps. You may want to explore how these can be filled—for example, through engaging with the community (the topic of the next idea) or partnering with local academic institutions to conduct research. ClimateData.ca is a great place to start.

Filling such gaps may be essential to taking an equitable approach to climate action. On a global level, those that are or will be most impacted by climate change are also those that have contributed the least to it. On the scale of our communities, this is no different. For example, the same lower-income neighbourhoods that may produce limited GHG emissions often also have less green space (parks, forests, etc.), which serves as a cooling mechanism, especially during increasingly frequent and intense heat waves. It is critical to unveil these discrepancies in the causes and effects of climate change through collecting data.

How:

Just as quantitative data is an important part of community climate transition efforts, you also need qualitative data that helps contextualize these numbers for your particular community. For example, you may learn that energy consumption is less in a particular neighbourhood and infer that its residents are more energy efficient than others. Only through engaging with them might you come to realize that they do not have enough money to meet their energy needs. As the saying goes, "no numbers without narratives, and no narratives without numbers." Stories add depth to quantitative data and may even help fill gaps that exist in it.

This is one of the many instances in which advancing climate equity means not just focusing on who is disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis, but also who is uniquely positioned to solve it. Indigenous Peoples—who have looked after these lands for generations—have invaluable insight into how a place and its climate have changed over time.

Ethical data collection is incomplete without considering data governance. How will we collect the data we seek to collect? How will it be managed with its owners in mind? How do we avoid a one-way, extractive relationship with them? For example, an exercise like a Data Walk can be used to share the data back with the community and ensure that it is interpreted and applied in a way that aligns with its owners' interests.

3 ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY FROM THE BEGINNING AND THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS.

Why:

Community-level climate action is only as impactful and sustainable as your community's commitment to this work. This comes from approaching community engagement not as a "nice-to-have," as an obligation, or as a step to take only later on in the process, but as essential to successfully advancing climate equity. Collecting data on climate risks, GHG emissions, and other areas mentioned in the previous idea will deepen your understanding of who is most impacted by the climate crisis in your community and the full spectrum of equity-deserving groups that you should engage with. (See the definition for *climate equity* in the introduction for a comprehensive list.)

How:

Meaningful community engagement requires creating opportunities to participate that are as diverse as the people you are working with. To the greatest extent possible, try to offer different platforms

Participants at a Transition en Commun event in Montreal. Photo by Audray Fontaine.

(virtual as well as in-person), methods of communication (talking, writing, creating), and ways of processing information (reading, watching, listening).

It is also important to identify and address barriers to participation. This is particularly relevant in the context of climate equity, given that the very people whose lived/living experience needs to be reflected in climate action the most may also be the ones who face the most challenges to being meaningfully engaged in this work. Failing to consider this paves the way for those with the most power and privilege in your community to dominate the conversation, perpetuating climate inequity.

Removing (or, at the very least, lowering) these barriers can and should take shape in different ways, ensuring that they are fit for purpose. Childcare needs, accessibility of physical/virtual spaces, transportation options, and other factors all affect the extent to which people are able to show up and participate meaningfully.

Particular attention needs to be given to engaging with Indigenous Peoples, as this requires an understanding of what is culturally relevant and contributes to Truth and Reconciliation. For example, free, prior,

and informed consent (FPIC) is a right of Indigenous Peoples through the UN Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) that requires obtaining consent for any activities on their lands. Learn more about implementing an FPIC process here and about engaging with Indigenous Peoples and communities here.

While community engagement may feel overwhelming, a good rule of thumb is to not make assumptions. Instead, ask:

- Why is climate action important to you?
- How would you like to get involved?
- What would you need to be able to meaningfully participate?

Making this an iterative process helps ensure that—from design to implementation—your community can see themselves and their perspectives in this work. Following up with people to share back what you heard from them and validating whether it aligns with what they contributed signals that you recognize the vital role they play, setting the stage for a deep, wide, and long-lasting commitment from the community to create a brighter future for all.

4 IDENTIFY A SHARED VISION AND A COMMON AGENDA FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE.

Why:

In the face of an issue as big and complex as the climate crisis, it can be easy to lose hope and/or direction along the way. Given that many actors—each with their own aspirations, concerns, and values—are coming together to advance climate equity, it is essential to take the time up front to unite around a shared vision for your work. Doing so helps ensure that partners are aligned on what they are working towards in collaboration with each other, and to avoid scope creep as the work evolves. This is not to say that everyone involved will agree on every decision, or that opportunities and challenges will not come up over time. Consider your shared vision and common

agenda as living documents that serve as reminders of the bigger picture.

They also provide inspiration. When challenges arise—as they inevitably will—a positive vision for the community reminds everyone of why they are committed to advancing climate equity. It is important for this vision to be rooted in opportunity, abundance, and vitality, rather than sacrifice, scarcity, and disruption. Values like being able to stay in the place people have called home for generations, having access to clean air and water, and enjoying natural beauty help us move forward from a place of inspiration for what could be, not fear of what couldn't be.

Participants at a local meetup in Halifax for CCT's annual gathering in 2023 reflect on their key takeaways. Photo courtesy of Nova Scotia Health Authority.

How:

It is important to have short-term, winnable milestones that build momentum and keep everyone engaged. Establishing short-term, medium-term, and long-term SMARTIE goals (**S**trategic, **M**easurable, **A**mbitious, **R**ealistic, **T**ime-Bound, **I**nclusive, and **E**quitable) as a collaborative ensures that your work is sustainable by providing opportunities to appreciate what has been accomplished so far and remind everyone of what you are ultimately working towards.

STRATEGIC
MESURABLE
AMBITIOUS
REALISTIC
TIME-BOUND
INCLUSIVE
EQUITABLE
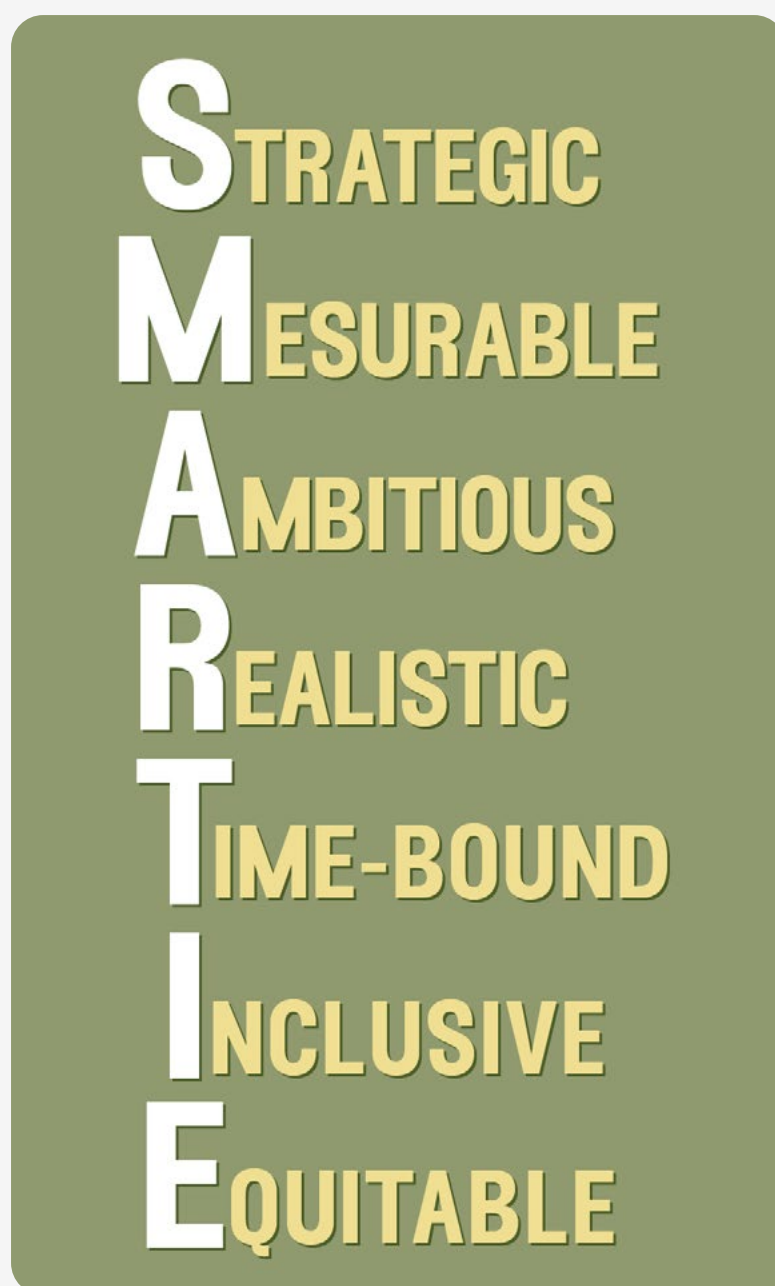
As with any step in this process, there is great value in engaging with the community to identify a shared vision and create a common agenda. People are more likely to support this work long term if they see themselves in the vision for their community and the plan to get there. Such engagement also helps ensure that your vision and agenda reflect not just taking climate action broadly but advancing climate equity specifically. To serve as a constant reminder of who to centre in this work and why, it is important to name in these living documents that equity-deserving groups are disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis but also have unique gifts to contribute to addressing it. Framing this in a positive way could look like committing to everyone in the community—regardless of their identities—having a chance at a safe, healthy, and prosperous future.

This idea in particular lends itself well to leveraging the power of art in socio-ecological change. Visually communicating what a better future for the community could look like helps everyone more easily grasp what exactly it is they are working towards. Consider engaging with local artists to capture your shared vision and common agenda in ways that are visible, accessible, and radical.

5 BRING INDIGENOUS AND WESTERN WORLDVIEWS TOGETHER THROUGH BRAIDING KNOWLEDGES.

Why:

Before taking any sort of action to advance climate equity in your community, it is important to interrogate the settler-colonial context we work within and challenge the colonizing mental models and practices that can be embedded in work that concerns our relationships to these lands. Any efforts to build more equitable and sustainable communities in Canada must recognize that Indigenous Peoples have stewarded these lands—originally known to many Algonquian- and Iroquoian-speaking peoples as Turtle Island[3]—since time immemorial. Much of Turtle Island is unceded, meaning that it was never legally transferred to European colonizers, while other areas were done so under duress and/or misinformation. Those of us who are settlers on stolen lands have a responsibility to do our part to meet the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action**, which chart a path for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples.

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3   https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/turtle-island

Maamwi Anjiakiziwin partners at a turtle release ceremony. Photo courtesy of Georgian Bay Biosphere.

Centring First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and their ways of knowing, being, and doing is critical to applying an equity lens to climate action. While they are and will continue to be disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis, Indigenous Peoples are not only affected by the problem—they also have the strengths and skills we need to solve it. As the first caretakers of Turtle Island, they have skills and practices that have been cultivated over time through their relationships with all living and non-living beings, including ecological stewardship and adaptive resilience. At the same time, Western science can offer its own methodologies, technological innovations, and principles.

How:

There are different conceptualizations of bringing together these worldviews—known as braiding or weaving knowledges—across Indigenous Peoples and their languages. For example, Etuaptmumk (Two-Eyed Seeing) is a concept introduced by Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall in 2004 that "refers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and

ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing…and learning to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all."[4] Dr. Brian McInnes of Wasauksing First Nation has shared the similar concept of Edwi-waabndamang, or "Seeing Both Sides."[5]

Using such an approach can start with researching the lands you are on and the Indigenous population/s in your community. This should be done *before* reaching out to build relationships with them, whether it is to explore their interest in co-leading your climate equity work or to support their own climate action. More information on Indigenous engagement can be found in idea 3 on .

Photo from a 2024 Tamarack gathering in Ottawa.

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4   Learn more about Two-Eyed Seeing here.
5   https://stateofthebay.ca/

6 TAKE A HOLISTIC, MULTISOLVING APPROACH THAT ADVANCES BOTH MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION, WHILE ADDRESSING OTHER ISSUES IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

Why:

While more people than ever before know and care about climate change, the reality is that other issues can often feel more immediate or pressing—affordability, mental health, and food security, to name a few. To some, the effects of climate change might even still feel far away, in terms of space and/or time.

Another reality is that both mitigation and adaptation in your community are important—it should not be an either/or decision. This is particularly the case in the context of Canada, which is one of the highest producers of GHG emissions per capita in the world but also borders three oceans and is home to almost 9% of the world's forested land.[6] This means that our communities are uniquely positioned to reduce our global carbon footprint but are also particularly susceptible to climate change impacts like floods and wildfires. Focusing exclusively on mitigation fails to

An EcoVillage tour in Ithaca, NY, in the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region. Photo by Omar Aponte.

address how the climate crisis is impacting your community in real time, while addressing only adaptation would only make the impact even worse in the future.

Both of these realities point to the value of taking a more holistic approach to climate action—one that moves the needle forward on various priorities in your community. This is known as the concept of multisolving, which is based on the idea that, since the issues we face are connected, so should

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6   https://www.ccfm.org/healthy-forests/vast-and-abundant-forests/#:~:text=Canada's%20forests%20cover%20347%20million,in%20the%20world%20by%20area.

the solutions we create to address them. This results in co-benefits, or non-climate-related impacts that come out of taking climate action. One example is community gardens, which—while reducing GHG emissions from transporting food across the world—also increase food security, reduce grocery bills, and build belonging between neighbours. An emphasis on equitable climate action is highly conducive to multisolving. Reducing energy bills, improving air quality, and increasing access to healthy food are all outcomes that particularly impact equity-deserving groups.

Taking a holistic, multisolving approach not only addresses the pressing issues that your community is dealing with and

acknowledges the need for both mitigation and adaptation, but also increases and sustains support for your work. People in your community need to feel like the crises they are dealing with are seen and addressed in order to make advancing climate equity a priority in their lives.

How:

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework for understanding how advancing climate equity supports other objectives, including zero hunger, good health and well-being, and gender equality. Learn more about advancing the SDGs in your community here.

7 CREATE SPACE FOR CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT, USING FEEDBACK MECHANISMS THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS.

Why:

With the sense of urgency that comes with addressing the climate crisis, it can be tempting to move full speed ahead. However, as you begin to take action, you will be reminded that things do not always go as planned or have the intended impact. Furthermore, extreme weather events, political shifts, funding opportunities, and other factors all might affect your priorities and/or resources. This is why it is essential that you intentionally build in time to reflect as a collaborative on what is working, what is not, and how you might evolve.

This exercise should extend beyond the collaborative itself to include the wider community, particularly equity-deserving groups. Doing so helps prevent an extractive process—one in which you take the community's input and never share with them the progress being made towards incorporating it or the challenges that have come up. Providing opportunities for feedback deepens the community's support for this work, since people feel included and valued throughout the process, not just at the beginning.

How:

A necessary condition for providing feedback is being transparent about what you are doing and when, where, and how you are doing it. Without this information, people do not have the context they need to meaningfully contribute, risking a performative approach to the process. Providing regular updates on progress and lessons learned in ways that are accessible to everyone (see idea 3 on page 18 for more information on inclusive community engagement) paves the way for authentic feedback.

Identifying opportunities for process improvements, such as bringing additional groups into the fold, adjusting timelines, or collecting more data are as important as the learning that shapes the content of your shared work. Broadening the scope of your reflection is particularly important to taking climate action in a way that is equitable. It might occur to you—or you might even be told—that your work is not supporting equity-deserving groups or is even further harming them. Building relationships and sustained engagement with these groups

makes it easier for them to provide input on your equity-related goals.

Looking beyond your community for ideas, best practices, and lessons learned is a great way to broaden your horizons for what advancing climate equity can look like, particularly in moments when you get stuck. There is something to learn from communities that are both similar to and different from yours. The former can relate more to your specific context and perhaps provide more relevant input, while the latter might bring a unique perspective that you would not have otherwise considered. Learning from peers can also help make the case for political support, as local governments are often more likely to pursue ideas that have been tested and succeeded elsewhere. This can help establish the viability of adopting policies, amending bylaws, and more.

Community dinner discussing collective climate action. Photo courtesy of Transition Salt Spring.

8 DEVELOP A SHARED MEASUREMENT SYSTEM SO THAT ALL PARTNERS ARE ALIGNED IN HOW THEY DEFINE AND TRACK PROGRESS.

Why:

Your collaborative needs to align not only on what you hope to achieve, but also on your plan to measure progress towards your goals. Having a shared measurement system ensures that everyone is in support of and aware of what information they need to collect throughout your community's efforts to advance climate equity. Take the time to identify which indicators are most relevant and meaningful to your specific community, depending on its unique characteristics.

Shared measurement systems are also a means of operationalizing your commitment to continuous learning and improvement (see idea 7 on page 26). The qualitative and quantitative measures you track and the processes used to capture these can help forge real accountabilities between your work, your desired outcomes, and the agendas of the communities involved. Strong shared measurement systems help create the structures you need to remain responsive and adaptive in your climate equity work. When designed well, these systems build in the necessary feedback mechanisms to evaluate process- and outcome-related progress, listen to real-time feedback, and course correct as needed.

How:

These indicators should be diverse in a few ways. The first is that they should include both process- and outcome-oriented metrics. For example, how many people were you able to reach through your engagement efforts? Do your data sources reflect both Western and Indigenous ways of knowing? Tracking process-focused metrics signals to everyone involved that

the *how* of this work is just as important as the *what*—and that it is being done in a way that is inclusive, authentic, and equitable. This captures the idea that equity can and should be both a process for and an outcome of taking climate action.

Another way is to use both quantitative and qualitative measures. Both have a role to play in telling the story of progress, particularly in the context of advancing climate equity. Purely quantitative measures might hide or leave out information that illustrates the extent to which an action is benefitting different equity-deserving groups.

This leads to the last strategy: going beyond purely technical concepts to include equity-related measures. For example, it is just as important to track the rate of energy poverty by neighbourhood as it is to track the amount of GHG emissions reduced or the number of buildings retrofitted. Such measures should be informed by and align with how equity-deserving groups would measure the success of your work. Gathering climate data in idea 2 on page 16 will help you identify which sources are available to help track progress, and which ones you may need to seek support on beginning to measure.

Photo from a 2024 Tamarack gathering in Ottawa.

9 COMMUNICATE ABOUT CLIMATE EQUITY IN A WAY THAT RELATES TO THE EVERYDAY PRIORITIES OF RESIDENTS AND CENTRES THE VOICES OF EQUITY-DESERVING GROUPS.

Why:

How you communicate about your efforts to advance climate equity plays a key role in its success because it can influence the number and diversity of individuals and organizations that you are able to bring into this work. Stories, statistics, and visuals all have roles to play, collectively telling a comprehensive and compelling narrative that garners and sustains commitment. Different messages will resonate with different actors, and this should be reflected in your communications strategy. For example, residents will be keen to hear how building a more equitable and sustainable future relates to their everyday priorities like housing, health, and food security. Places of worship may be interested in understanding how taking climate action is a means to build community. Business owners want to know how taking measures like shifting to renewable energy will reduce their overhead costs. Understanding these various priorities and reflecting them in your messaging ensures that as many community members as possible see a place for

themselves in climate work, building their commitment and sense of responsibility to do their part. Learn more about what Canadians think about climate change in 2024 and how to incorporate this into your communications [here](#).

How:

Your community engagement work should help identify which channels are most effective to reach the various parts of your community. Some may get information primarily from social media, while others watch the local news. In particular, rather than expecting equity-deserving groups to seek out information about you, it is important to make an effort to identify how they learn about what is happening in the community. After all, they cannot engage with opportunities they never learn about.

Regardless of the platform or type of content you choose, it is essential to amplify the perspectives of equity-deserving groups and centre their voices in your

Participants at a Transition en Commun event in Montreal in 2023. Photo by Audray Fontaine.

communications. It is possible—even likely—that many people in your community will not be fully aware of the ways in which the climate crisis disproportionately impacts equity-deserving groups, and/or how they themselves are disproportionately contributing to it. Raising awareness of these discrepancies helps ensure that any efforts to take climate action are made with them in mind.

10 CONSIDER THE LONG-TERM VIABILITY OF YOUR CLIMATE EQUITY WORK FROM THE BEGINNING, BOTH IN TERMS OF THE PEOPLE AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES THAT MAKE IT POSSIBLE.

Why:

When you think about your long-term sustainability, you might first think of the financial aspect. This is undoubtedly important. Funding that reflects that this work takes months and years to advance ensures that your collaborative has the resources it needs to sustain its work. The more long-term your funding, the less occupied you will be with seeking resources to be able to do the work and the more you can focus on the work itself. Two useful starting points for accessing financing for local climate collaboratives are Community Climate Start-Up – Thinking Like an Entrepreneur (for early-stage grassroots groups) and Collective Climate Action Funding (for groups seeking core and project funding at any stage of growth). The latter includes a list of funding opportunities across the federal, provincial, and municipal levels, as well as philanthropic foundations.

However, sustainability extends beyond financial resources; it must also include the people that use these resources, and from the very beginning of their involvement.

For example, making sense of the climate crisis, equity, and community work can be overwhelming. It can be helpful to set up an onboarding and capacity-building process for new individuals. This both sets them up for success and encourages others to join, knowing that they will be caught up to speed.

How:

Taking time to identify what everyone's roles and responsibilities are, how conflict will be resolved, and the values that you will uphold are all important steps towards setting up a group that is committed to working with each other in the long run. This commitment needs to be complemented by ongoing upskilling and capacity-building, collectively identifying skill and knowledge gaps and creating plans to fill them.

Furthermore, consider what you will do if and when people leave the collaborative. How will the relationships they have built and the efforts they have made be

Photo from a 2024 Tamarack gathering in Ottawa.

sustained? Planning for turnover helps minimize its impact on your work's momentum.

Resources on eco-anxiety and burnout:

- [Understanding and Coping with Eco-Anxiety](#) (Mental Health Commission of Canada)
- [Activist burnout](#) (Activist Handbook)
- [The Work That Reconnects](#)

While the climate crisis is an urgent issue, it cannot be meaningfully addressed if the people responding to it are burnt out. Eco-anxiety and eco-grief need to be recognized, validated, and addressed to make sure that your community feels seen, heard, and supported as they carry out this work. Reminding people of your shared vision and common agenda is a powerful way of sustaining people's commitment to advancing climate equity, approaching it with a sense of care for your community and hope for a brighter future for everyone.

Sherrill Judge Midwewekamigokwe turtle release. Photo by Steven Kell.

TAMARACK INSTITUTE

SECTION 3

10 Inspiring Stories

1 **Montreal –** A large-scale alliance to engage residents on climate action

2 **Georgian Bay –** Deepening First Nation–municipal partnerships and braiding knowledges

3 **Edmonton –** Encouraging collective climate action while strengthening community at the neighbourhood level

4 **Vancouver –** Where student creativity meets the climate crisis

5 **Genesee-Finger Lakes Region, US –** Taking community-wide climate action

6 **Ottawa –** Building bridges across the climate and social inclusion spaces for equitable climate action

7 **Regina –** Deeply embedding equity into energy and climate planning

8 **Salt Spring Island –** Advancing systemic change at the local scale

9 **St. James Town, Toronto –** Centring residents in resilience efforts

10 **Green Resilience Project (cross–Canada) –** Exploring connections between climate, income security, and resilience at the community level

1 MONTREAL – A LARGE-SCALE ALLIANCE TO ENGAGE RESIDENTS ON CLIMATE ACTION

In developing its Climate Plan 2020–2030, the City of Montreal formed a consultative committee to gather input from residents and then created the Montreal Climate Partnership to get the city's major institutions working in the same direction. Over time, partners saw a need for an organization focused on engaging residents around Montreal's climate action, which would be complementary yet separate from the Montreal Climate Partnership. This idea was emerging in other spaces too, including in the Rosemont neighbourhood where Solon was doing deep resident engagement at the hyper-local level and saw opportunities to scale out.

Transition en Commun event participants cool their feet. Photo by Audray Fontaine.

Idea(s): Community engagement, shared vision and common agenda

Indigenous land: Tiohtià:ke is the traditional and unceded territory of the Kanien'keha:ka people.

Province/Territory: Quebec

Learn more: https://transitionencommun.org/en/

The result was Transition en Commun (TeC), an alliance between Montrealers, the City, and civil society organizations focused on collectively advancing a socio-ecological transition. Its mission is to mobilize around a shared vision of what the transition could look like and provide the means to implement it through participatory, democratic, and inclusive processes that centre neighbourhoods and social justice. The alliance is organized around

thematic working groups (e.g., participatory democracy, living with fewer cars, housing in transition), committees, and bodies providing neighbourhood-level governance. Justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion is a transversal theme that shows up across TeC's work.

TeC is unique in its structure, scale, and processes. Through *visites de quartier* or neighbourhood visits, it is meeting local organizations and residents in their communities and looking to develop authentic relationships—something that is quite rare for organizations of its size. The seven visits hosted since early 2023 have been very successful, with around 50-70 residents attending each.

TeC pursues various strategies to integrate the voices of populations that are particularly vulnerable to climate change and thus bring valuable lived experience, including through their involvement in the working groups. The working groups also include the City itself, which has been actively involved in TeC's everyday activities, committees, and bodies.

Lessons learned

Through its involvement, the City is moving away from a culture of being a service provider and problem-fixer to one of collaborating and co-creating solutions with residents and civil society. Entering this new territory has prompted the City to offer clarity on the role of civil servants in community settings and to have clear expectations among staff and residents.

Another learning has been that celebrating smaller milestones along the path to long-term systems change is helpful in maintaining momentum. Similarly, holding a long-term vision while remaining flexible and agile is important.

Looking ahead

TeC will continue to solidify its links to Montreal's neighbourhoods and co-create climate solutions with neighbourhood actors. It is also keen to explore how it can deepen democratic practices through new tools and a first general assembly that will be held in fall 2024.

2 GEORGIAN BAY - DEEPENING FIRST NATION-MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIPS AND BRAIDING KNOWLEDGES

Idea(s): Collecting data, braiding knowledges

Indigenous land: Mnidoo-gamii, Great Lake of the Spirit, is one name for a part of traditional territory of the Anishinaabek that includes the eastern shores of (what is now called) Georgian Bay. The UNESCO biosphere region is situated within the pre-confederation Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850 and the Williams Treaty of 1923.

Province/Territory: Ontario

Learn more:
https://georgianbaybiosphere.com/

The **Georgian Bay Mnidoo Gamii Biosphere** (GBB) is taking a holistic approach to environmental stewardship through merging Indigenous knowledge with Western science and supporting collaboration between First Nations and local municipalities. This is exemplified through three key sustainability and climate initiatives in the Georgian Bay region, traditionally known as Mnidoo-gamii, the Great Lake of the Spirit.

Since 2008, the State of the Bay program has brought together diverse sources to report on environmental changes in the

Minwewe singers at the State of the Bay gathering. Photo courtesy of Georgian Bay Biosphere.

region. This initiative collects information on water, wetlands, fisheries, and habitats and shares it with those invested in the health of Georgian Bay. The [2023 State of the Bay magazine](#) marked a significant shift, incorporating stories from Elders, Knowledge Holders, researchers, and scientists. Cultural Advisors, including youth, helped blend Indigenous knowledge with Western science, enriching the magazine with ethics, teachings, and values on sustainable living.

In another effort, the [Maamwi Anjiakiziwin](#) (meaning Together, Land, Renewal, Life) initiative seeks to improve conservation of at-risk species. This collaboration involves First Nations, not-for-profits, and municipalities, including the Magnetawan, Shawanaga, Moose Deer Point, and Wasauksing First Nations; the Georgian Bay Land Trust; and the GBB. The project emphasizes cross-cultural learning and braiding knowledges, which brings together Indigenous and Western perspectives. By fostering mutual respect and understanding, the project supports making better decisions for the conservation and stewardship of coastal lands and waters, ensuring a sustainable future for all species.

The [Integrated Community Energy and Climate Action Plans](#) (ICECAP) initiative, launched in 2019, focuses on energy management and reducing greenhouse gas emissions at a regional scale. Through ICECAP, each municipal member creates a climate action plan through FCM and ICLEI's Partners for Climate Protection program, while Indigenous members develop Community Energy Plans through the Independent Electricity System Operator's Indigenous Community Energy Plan program. This collaborative effort recognizes the independence of each partner while working towards shared regional goals.

Lessons learned

A key lesson thus far has been the importance of developing trust-based relationships for such partnerships to be successful. Building these relationships requires time and cannot be rushed. The process of building relationships and sharing knowledge and perspectives is essential for meaningful and effective outcomes.

Together, these initiatives illustrate the power of trusted community partners like GBB facilitating long-term First Nation–municipal collaboration, and of weaving together multiple ways of knowing in fostering sustainability and resilience in the Georgian Bay region.

3 EDMONTON – ENCOURAGING COLLECTIVE CLIMATE ACTION WHILE STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY AT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

Buttons to promote the City of Edmonton's Neighbouring for Climate initiative. Photo by City of Edmonton.

Idea(s): Community engagement, continuous learning and improvement

Indigenous land: Treaty 6 Territory and within the Métis homelands and Métis Nation of Alberta Region 4, this land is the traditional territories of many First Nations such as the Nehiyaw (Cree), Denesuliné (Dene), Nakota Sioux (Stoney), Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), and Niitsitapi (Blackfoot).

Province/Territory: Alberta

Learn more: https://bit.ly/3XRnNH6

When the City of Edmonton released its Climate Resilient Edmonton: Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan, it wanted to create a shared sense of ownership and engage residents in its implementation. Drawing inspiration from initiatives in other cities such as Building Resilient Neighbourhoods in Victoria, BC, and the Ready & Resilient project in Saint Paul, Minnesota, the City launched the Neighbouring for Climate initiative in 2022 to bring neighbours together to take action at the street and block levels and within multi-unit residential buildings such as apartments and condos.

A series of resident engagement sessions revealed a desire for action-oriented tools that were inclusive, shareable, and fun, and that supported residents in advancing sustainability while increasing their resilience in the face of extreme weather. Based on this input, the City developed a toolkit including a deck of climate action cards with actionable steps for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting neighbourhoods to a changing climate.

Action cards in the City of Edmonton's Neighbouring for Climate initiative. Photo by City of Edmonton.

The cards are organized into six categories: starter actions, emergency prep, nature and plants, food security, energy and fuel savings, and waste and water. The actions are designed to be flexible and adaptable, so residents can choose which strategies are best suited to meet their neighbourhoods' needs.

Lessons learned

The toolkit was piloted in 2023 and Edmontonians provided feedback that enabled the City to make improvements before a wider rollout in spring 2024. For example, there were suggestions to make the toolkit more accessible by adjusting some of the language for residents whose first language is not English and to make it more inclusive of those living in multi-unit residential buildings. The City is now focused on promoting the cards through presentations and workshops at local events, social media, and connecting with organizations like Community Leagues.

The initiative aims not only to equip residents with practical tools but also to foster a culture of collective action and community support. Yet one of the challenges the team has encountered with some residents is moving from an individualistic mindset towards a more collective one in which neighbours are supporting one another to take climate action. On the other hand, some neighbourhoods have come together to collectively determine which actions they would like to focus on, highlighting the toolkit's adaptability and potential to facilitate collective decision-making.

The "neighbouring" aspect of the initiative is threaded throughout: it is better to know your neighbours before an emergency arises, so you know who you can count on. As climate change brings more extreme weather events, these neighbourly connections become even more important.

Looking ahead

As Neighbouring for Climate continues to grow, the City remains committed to supporting and engaging Edmontonians in the face of climate change, demonstrating the power of community collaboration in building resilience and driving meaningful climate action.

4 VANCOUVER - WHERE STUDENT CREATIVITY MEETS THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Idea(s): Community engagement, continuous learning and improvement

Indigenous land: Unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Province/Territory: British Columbia

Learn more: https://citystudiovancouver.com/

Post-secondary students bring significant creativity, knowledge, and lived experience to real-world issues like climate change, yet traditionally have not been given meaningful opportunities to co-create local solutions. CityStudio, an applied learning program founded in Vancouver in 2011 that has since expanded to other cities, is changing that. Each year, around 1,000 students from five post-secondary institutions

Spyglass Mural Painting project. Artist Emily Gray. Photo by CityStudio.

collaborate with the City of Vancouver to advance the City's goals across a wide range of issues, including climate change, equity, and affordability. Students and City staff collaborate through pilot projects, design jams, and student showcases to bring new ideas to local challenges. While the City benefits from additional support and fresh ideas, students strengthen their employability and community connections.

As CityStudio entered its second decade, it faced the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic instability, and the social implications of these crises. Public institutions, including schools and cities in Canada, continue to grapple with severe debt. Amid this turmoil, CityStudio has expanded its mission to meet the evolving needs of academic institutions and municipal governments, highlighting the importance of a backbone like CityStudio to continuously learn from and address the priorities of the community.

Students studying the spawning of Pacific herring in False Creek. Photo by CityStudio.

Lessons learned

While it continues to run its project matching program, CityStudio has created three new services for cities to work with local post-secondary institutions. First, CityStudio facilitates knowledge mobilization, connecting academic

expertise with City needs, based on where strategic plans need the most support. Second, it creates avenues for students, faculty, and researchers to engage with municipal governance through civic activities—for example, by learning about voting and democracy, and how to present at council meetings. This responds to a growing demand among young people to participate in decision-making processes and have real-world impacts before graduation. Finally, CityStudio supports workforce and skill development through career placements, recruitment, and identifying professional opportunities within the City and other civic organizations.

Wheel Change Makers is an example of a successful partnership facilitated by CityStudio. The program involved having University of British Columbia geography students work with the City on an idea for a youth-led biking community that makes cycling more accessible to all through workshops, resources, and increased connectivity of schools to protected bike lanes.

Looking ahead

With the intensification of the climate emergency, increasing social inequities, and declining trust in democracy, CityStudio will continue evolving and responding to a rapidly changing world. One emerging area it is exploring is how municipal youth climate councils can deepen intergenerational collaboration and result in better decision making. These youth-organized movements that focus on climate action and policy have been successfully piloted in Europe by Climate-KIC and hold much potential in Canada. CityStudio's adaptive approach and expanded services demonstrate a commitment to addressing pressing challenges while empowering future civic leaders.

5 GENESEE-FINGER LAKES REGION, US – TAKING COMMUNITY-WIDE CLIMATE ACTION

Genesee-FLX Climate Collective is a leading example of a climate-focused collective impact initiative, having put in place all five conditions of the approach and seeing impressive results.

The **Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region** (the Accelerator), which serves as the backbone organization and facilitator for the Collective, is a nonprofit dedicated to catalyzing large-scale climate mobilization in the nine-county Genesee-Finger Lakes Region in west-central New York State. Its mission is to create a healthier, more equitable, and regenerative community by catalyzing local efforts to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions and address the effects of climate change.

The Accelerator's first step was to establish a shared vision across the region. To do this, it formed a multi-sector Steering Committee with over 18 organizations represented and four lived experience experts, which undertook a community engagement process that was both broad and targeted. A survey was developed to seek input from the general public, and focus groups (both

Idea(s): Diverse roundtable, collecting data, community engagement, shared vision and common agenda, multisolving approach, shared measurement system

Indigenous land: Traditional, unceded homelands of the Gayogo̱hó꞉nǫ' Nation (known as the Cayuga Nation), one of the six sovereign Nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

State: New York

Learn more: https://www.climategfl.org/collective-impact

sector-specific and population-specific) were organized to solicit views from groups such as high school students, Indigenous communities, farmworkers, urban Black residents, and rural residents. Over 90 organizations engaged in stakeholder meetings or individual conversations, while over 500 individuals responded to the survey or participated in focus groups. Participants in the Indigenous focus group

wanted to stay involved with the Climate Collective, so they formed the Indigenous Advisory Committee.

Alongside the community engagement process, the Collective developed and evaluated scenarios to assess the emissions reduction potential of diverse climate mitigation pathways and identify ambitious yet feasible targets. From this, the Genesee-FLX Climate Action Strategy was developed to outline short- and medium-term actions that will enable long-term systemic change and maximize co-benefits (equity, economic development, public health, and ecological stewardship) through a multisolving approach.

Establishing accountability and shared systems of measurement across the partners involved in the Collective was a critical next step in tracking progress and learning. Working groups were tasked with measuring outcomes from the action plan. Meanwhile, partners were successful in getting 10 climate indicators integrated into the ACT Rochester Community Report Card, a data dashboard run by the Rochester Area Community Foundation to track wellbeing across the region and drive data-informed decision-making.

Click to watch the Genesee-Finger Lakes Climate Action Strategy Vision video.

Looking ahead

The Collective will continue to implement the Climate Action Strategy and mobilize the community to take action towards the shared goals. One promising initiative is [Color Your Community Green](#) (CYCG), which connects and organizes residents to form a network of action teams that identify and move forward local solutions using the CYCG Toolkit and advocate for just and equitable climate solutions at the local level. There are currently 12 active teams and over 170 individuals participating across four counties.

Eastern Service Workers Association members at the 2023 Climate Solutions Summit, hosted by the Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region. Photo by Greg Hollar.

6 OTTAWA - BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS THE CLIMATE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION SPACES FOR EQUITABLE CLIMATE ACTION

Idea(s): Multisolving approach, climate communications

Indigenous land: Unceded Anishinaabe Algonquin territory.

Province/Territory: Ontario

Learn more: https://www.ocaf-faco.ca/news-post/ottawa-climate-equity-initiative/

A participant at an Ottawa Climate Equity Initiative workshop. Photo courtesy of Ottawa Climate Action Fund.

In Ottawa, as is the case in many cities, climate action organizations and those fostering social inclusion have traditionally operated in different spheres and had limited interaction. This separation makes it challenging to advance climate equity, which relies on an integrated and holistic approach.

The **Ottawa Climate Equity Initiative** was launched in 2021 by Ottawa Climate Action Fund (OCAF) and Ecology Ottawa with funding from the federal government to break down silos and foster collaboration. The Initiative brought together leaders from six climate groups and seven social inclusion groups to build and strengthen relationships and trust. The hypothesis was that increased interactions between the groups could lead them to identify common values and shared priorities; form new partnerships on projects, campaigns, and fundraising; and co-create communications and outreach strategies to reach diverse audiences. Ultimately, this increased collaborative capacity would accelerate equitable climate action in the city, in line with Ottawa's commitment to achieving a carbon-neutral future and improving social outcomes.

Participants at an Ottawa Climate Equity Initiative workshop. Photo courtesy of Ottawa Climate Action Fund.

Lessons learned

At the end of the one-year pilot, an impressive list of activities was being pursued with concrete and measurable results. Several workshops were hosted, including one on the intersection of housing and transit and another on green jobs and economy. A communications working group was formed, which developed an accessibility toolkit; amplified the voices of young, racialized climate justice advocates through an initiative called Climate Stories Ottawa; and conducted interviews to better understand opportunities and barriers for newcomers to Canada to participate in the green economy. Other activities covered topics such as food waste, seniors' inclusion, and Indigenous-led climate action.

Some participants stayed in touch to continue to explore potential avenues for collaboration. ACORN Ottawa came to OCAF with the idea to engage renters in retrofits. This resulted in an initiative where

it educated and empowered tenants to work with their landlords to identify building retrofit opportunities to improve living comfort and energy savings. ACORN had not previously worked on climate issues, and their participation in the pilot showcased the links between the social issues they care about and climate change.

Looking ahead

OCAF launched a climate equity granting program after identifying a need for flexible funding that supports integrated action on climate and social equity. The program is designed to support projects that reduce Ottawa's greenhouse gas emissions and have tangible benefits for equity-deserving communities.

The success of this work underscores the importance of dismantling traditional silos to create comprehensive solutions that address both climate and social challenges.

A participant at an Ottawa Climate Equity Initiative workshop. Photo courtesy of Ottawa Climate Action Fund.
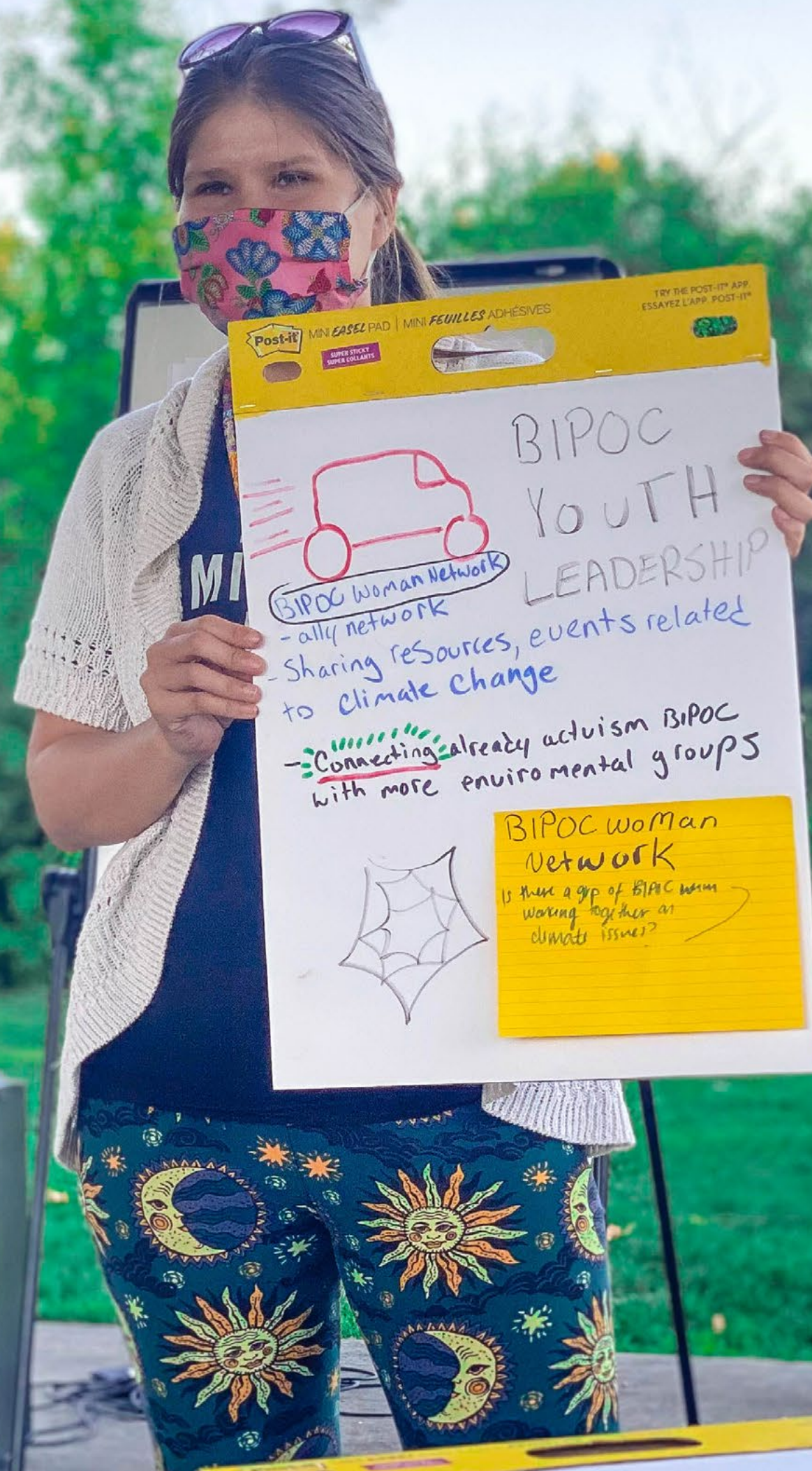
7 REGINA – DEEPLY EMBEDDING EQUITY INTO ENERGY AND CLIMATE PLANNING

Regina, a city committed to achieving 100% renewable energy status by 2050, has positioned itself as a leader in integrating equity into energy transition planning. This process has been marked by extensive community engagement and strategically incorporating an equity lens into climate action frameworks.

In 2019, several months after the City set its bold climate target, researchers from the University of Regina and EnviroCollective initiated a comprehensive engagement process involving diverse local organizations representing equity-deserving groups. Through focus groups with community-based organizations and union representatives, the researchers gathered insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by marginalized communities related to the City's renewable energy commitment. These consultations resulted in a **set of recommendations** spanning fare-free public transit, energy security, financial support for transition costs, green space accessibility, and ensuring a just transition for workers.

The City then set up an advisory group made up of diverse community members and organizations to provide input on the guiding principles of the framework and feedback on the deliverables created along the way. This was critical in ensuring community perspectives were reflected in the plan. Crucially, the City also ensured that a clear focus on equity was embedded into the procurement process, prioritizing the principle of "no one left behind." This made equity a common thread of discussion in every stakeholder engagement session, regardless of the focus.

Idea(s): Community engagement, multisolving approach

Indigenous land: Traditional lands of the Treaty 4 Territory, a Treaty signed with 35 First Nations across Southern Saskatchewan and parts of Alberta and Manitoba, and the original lands of the Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota, Nakota, Lakota, and the homeland of the Métis.

Province/Territory: Saskatchewan

**Learn more:** https://bit.ly/3L9A4z7

Building upon this groundwork, the City of Regina unveiled its [Energy & Sustainability Framework](#) in early 2022, setting a new standard for integrating equity into energy planning. The framework, consisting of seven "Big Moves" ranging from building retrofits to renewable energy generation, incorporates equity "co-benefit indicators" to gauge the impact of policies on equity-related outcomes. This approach helps demonstrate to what extent each policy not only reduces emissions and supports economic prosperity but also advances equity.

Looking ahead

Two years into the plan's implementation, Regina's focus has shifted to the challenging task of effective execution. One notable early success connects to the Big Move on increasing active transportation and transit use, with the City approving fare-free transit for youth aged 13 and under in July 2022. This was a big win for community groups concerned with transit accessibility and equity, which was achieved in large part thanks to the advocacy efforts of [Regina Energy Transition](#) and [Better Bus Youth](#), a youth-led organization championing accessible transportation for all.

Regina's story serves as a model for other communities striving to embed equity as a cross-cutting consideration in their climate plans. By prioritizing inclusivity and justice early and often, and ensuring that the development process regularly circles back to listen to community, Regina is not only forging a path towards a greener future but also fostering a more equitable society for all of its residents.
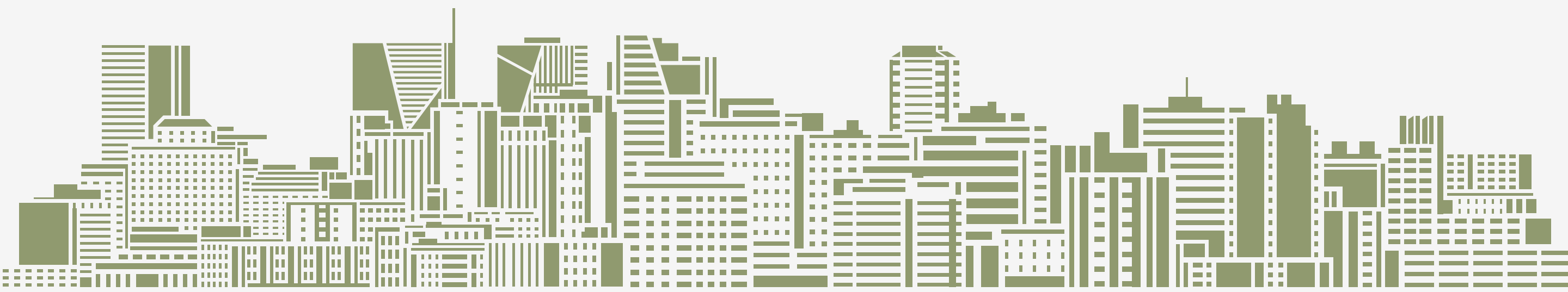
8 SALT SPRING ISLAND – ADVANCING SYSTEMIC CHANGE AT THE LOCAL SCALE

On Salt Spring Island, residents, community organizations, and the municipality are demonstrating how working at the hyper-local scale can affect systemic change, perhaps in even more meaningful ways than through working at regional, provincial/territorial, or national scales.

Through several initiatives focused on responding to climate change, restoring ecosystems, and reimagining community, local partners are shifting old ways of working and dismantling colonial structures. One example is the **50 Farms Project**, a grassroots effort led by the Farmland Trust to ramp up local food production and enhance food security. The goal is to have a network of 50 new and existing farms spread across the island that can leverage the networks forged by an existing **Community POD system**, which is a neighbourhood-based emergency response system on Salt Spring Island.

The hope is to support these farms by strengthening their ability to grow more food both now and for future emergencies. With only 2–3 days of food available in local

Idea(s): Diverse roundtable, community engagement, multisolving approach, climate communications

Indigenous land:
The unceded territories of Hul'qumi'num and SENĆOŦEN speaking Coast Salish Peoples.

Province/Territory:
British Columbia

Learn more:
https://transitionsaltspring.com/

grocery stores and increasing disruptions to ferry travel due to extreme weather events, islanders are coming together to take care of each other as climate impacts mount in very tangible ways.

This initiative and others such as repair cafés and clothing swaps are the ways in which Salt Spring residents are interacting with and supporting the local **Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan 2.0**. This plan was released in 2021 by **Transition Salt Spring** (TSS), a charity that has catalyzed climate action on the island and serves as the backbone organization for local collaborations around climate. Its development was informed

by an engagement process that reached over 2,000 islanders (more than 10% of its population). The plan includes 250 recommendations that aim to help Salt Spring Island halve its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and prepare for climate

Unveiling the Climate Action Report Card. Photo courtesy of Transition Salt Spring.

change. Two years later, TSS released the [Climate Action Report Card 2023](#) that points to several wins (e.g., electric transportation, forest protection, improved food security) alongside a need for accelerated action to reach the plan's targets.

Lessons learned and looking ahead

In developing and implementing the climate plan through a collaborative approach and deep community engagement, TSS has learned that leading with climate is not the most effective way to instigate action. Instead, bringing people together to build a strong social fabric and trust while also addressing issues such as waste reduction, food security, and emergency preparedness and resilience are better ways to engage. They are finding that most people are much more able to take small, tangible steps that have immediate impacts and then move up the ladder of engagement towards more active support for systemic and transformational changes.

This is where partners will be focusing much of their energy going forward, demonstrating the power of hyper-local action to change our hearts and minds and bring everyone along for the ride.

Transition Salt Spring members at the annual retreat. Photo courtesy of Transition Salt Spring.

9 ST. JAMES TOWN, TORONTO - CENTRING RESIDENTS IN RESILIENCE EFFORTS

St. James Town, a highrise community in Toronto, is among the country's most densely populated and ethno-culturally diverse neighbourhoods. Around 32% of residents are below the Low-Income Cut Off threshold, 56.6% report a mother tongue that is neither English nor French, and 60% were born outside of Canada.[7] Given that a majority of residents identify as being racialized, as recently arriving in the country, as experiencing poverty, or as a combination of the three, they are highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, including more frequent and intense heat waves and storms. Yet residents and partner organizations are demonstrating the power of a "neighbours helping neighbours" model to promote local climate resilience and preparedness.

In 2022, Community Resilience to Extreme Weather (CREW) partnered with Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) and St. James Town residents to launch a pilot project to test community-led approaches to increasing resilience. With capacity-building and leadership development at the core of its model, CREW has held workshops

Idea(s): Community engagement, long-term viability

Indigenous land: Traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples.

Province/Territory: Ontario

Learn more: https://crewresilience.ca/

with residents and stakeholders to train 20 volunteers aged 15-82 on how neighbours can prepare for emergency events and prevent heat-related illnesses and deaths. These residents have since organized themselves formally as the St. James Town Climate Action Crew, acting as a collective voice for stronger climate preparedness while mobilizing neighbours to get involved.

Partners and residents co-created a Heat Wave Protocol as an awareness and outreach tool to support residents during

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7   https://www.toronto.ca/ext/sdfa/Neighbourhood%20Profiles/pdf/2016/pdf1/cpa74.pdf

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extreme heat. The Protocol focuses on communicating effectively before and during a heatwave, ways to keep homes as cool as possible, information about cool areas and cooling stations in each building and the neighbourhood, a contact system to promote mutual support and identify and help those most vulnerable, and ensuring access to basic services.

Through their climate resilience work, residents are also strengthening relationships with one another and building social cohesion and belonging, which is critical to tackling the crisis of loneliness that has accelerated in recent years. CREW is exploring how to leverage existing local spaces to create resilience hubs that would strengthen preparedness and resilience while also offering opportunities for intercultural exchange and community building.

CREW Emergency Volunteers Anushen Selasegar and Zouahl Kayoumi. Photo by Lidia Ferreira.

Looking ahead

CREW and partners are now adapting their initial pilot in four other buildings and working with residents to develop emergency preparedness plans that are specific to their own buildings. They hope to further scale this model to additional highrise buildings in St. James Town and/or other neighbourhoods, while continuing to recognize that residents' invaluable knowledge and lived experience needs to be the foundation of co-created plans for specific buildings and communities.

10 GREEN RESILIENCE PROJECT (CROSS-CANADA) – EXPLORING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CLIMATE, INCOME SECURITY, AND RESILIENCE AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

At a time when affordability issues dominate public attention, support for climate action is declining, and populist politicians exploit the situation, the Green Resilience Project (GRP) is creating space to connect the issues that matter most to people, helping shape policies and solutions that benefit both communities and the climate.

In March 2021, the GRP was launched to explore and document links between climate change, income security, and community resilience as identified by community members in a series of conversations facilitated by local partners.

Following this, 29 local partners—working in diverse areas such as the environment, arts, healthcare, and anti-poverty work— hosted 33 community conversations across Canada. GRP partners were offered a framework of open-ended questions and a listening approach, encouraging them to design the project experience to meet their communities' unique needs. Community partners reported their findings, which were summarized in a final report published by the GRP team in April 2022.

Lessons learned

The final report highlighted a crucial takeaway: people in Canada, especially those experiencing income insecurity or other forms of financial precarity, are increasingly vulnerable to climate impacts. At the same time, this population is often unable to proportionately participate in climate solutions due to systemic barriers. While people are interested in tangible solutions that improve their lives, they remain skeptical of their ability to take meaningful action on climate change and income insecurity because of their limited influence on structural and systemic issues compared to governments and corporations.

Idea(s): Community engagement, multisolving approach, long-term viability

Indigenous land: Multiple across Turtle Island.

Province/Territory: Multiple

Learn more: https://greenresilience.ca

Looking ahead

The GRP launched a second phase in May 2024. This phase identifies local partners already engaged in efforts related to climate change, housing, transportation, anti-poverty initiatives, income security, anti-oppression work, food security, or similar issues. The GRP seeks opportunities for conversations or engagement activities to bolster this existing work by incorporating a climate lens and/or an affordability/income security perspective.

GRP conversations and engagement activities support the development of climate solutions that meet people where they are, prioritize equity, and offer tangible benefits. They seek to integrate climate change considerations and support effective responses on income security, housing, food security, transportation, mental health, systemic oppression, and other issues affecting community resilience.

Photo from a 2024 Tamarack gathering in Ottawa.

Photo from a 2024 Tamarack gathering in Ottawa.

SECTION 4

10 Useful Resources

1. Equity Strategy for Municipal Climate Action Planning

2. HealthyPlan.City: A tool for understanding climate equity in your city

3. How to Develop a Common Agenda for Collective Impact

4. Community Engagement Planning Canvas

5. Peer-to-Peer Community Engagement Guide

6. For Our Future: Indigenous Resilience Report

7. Participatory Community Building Guidebook

8. Small and Rural Communities Climate Action Guidebook

9. Low Carbon Resilience Planning Tool

10. Toolkit for Equitable Impacts

1 EQUITY STRATEGY FOR MUNICIPAL CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING

Idea(s): Multisolving approach

Developed By: David Suzuki Foundation

Year Released: 2023

Who This Is For: Primarily for municipalities, but is equally useful for community groups and others that are collaborating with municipalities on climate planning and action.

Highlights: The majority of climate action plans in Canadian communities do not include an equity lens, in large part because many municipalities simply do not know where to start. The Equity Strategy for Municipal Climate Action Planning aims to remedy this by diving into the different equity pillars (recognition, procedural, and distributive equity) and exploring how these can be tied into both climate planning and implementation. It explores the challenges that municipalities face to integrating equity in climate action and presents a framework that addresses each one in turn, providing concrete steps and timelines for actioning the strategies.

2 HEALTHYPLAN.CITY: A TOOL FOR UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE EQUITY IN YOUR CITY

Idea(s): Collecting data, multisolving approach

Developed By: HealthyDesign.City, a partnership between the Canadian Urban Environmental Health Research Consortium (CANUE) and the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto

Year Released: 2024

Who This Is For: City staff, community groups, students and researchers, residents, business owners, and others.

Highlights: The HealthyPlan.City tool is an interactive map to explore block-level data on equity and the built environment in the 125+ cities currently included. It enables filtering by indicators of a healthy city (e.g., average summer temperature, parks, and transit stops) and populations (e.g., low-income individuals, immigrants, and older adults). One limitation of the tool at the time of this publication is that it does not include persons with disability or those impacted by health conditions that make them especially vulnerable to climate impacts.

3 HOW TO DEVELOP A COMMON AGENDA FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Idea(s): Diverse roundtable, community engagement, shared vision and common agenda, shared measurement system

Developed By: Tamarack Institute

Year Released: 2017

Who This Is For: Communities that are bringing together diverse partners to identify a common agenda or plan.

Highlights: The five steps outlined in How to Develop a Common Agenda for a Collective Impact help guide communities through the challenging and messy collective impact process. The paper clarifies what a common agenda is and isn't and unpacks the pre-conditions of collective impact before diving into the five-step process: forming a staff team, bringing your 'top 100' together, listening to your community, developing short-term action teams to test quick win ideas, and developing your common agenda and shared measurement system. The resulting agenda may take the form of a five-year community plan that includes the partners involved, shared goals, a data report, a listening report, key strategic directions, a governance plan, and a budget.

4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLANNING CANVAS

Idea(s): Community engagement

Developed By: Tamarack Institute

Year Released: 2020

Who This Is For: Any municipality, organization or collaborative that plans to engage the broader community.

Highlights: When it comes to community engagement, having a solid understanding of why you are engaging in the first place, who you are engaging and how you will reach them, and how you will know if you are successful is critical. Tamarack's Community Engagement Planning Canvas helps place-based collaboratives to think through these questions and develop a concrete plan for how to roll out engagement. It helps communities focus on engagement goals before landing on methods, and plan ahead when it comes to resources required and evaluation questions.
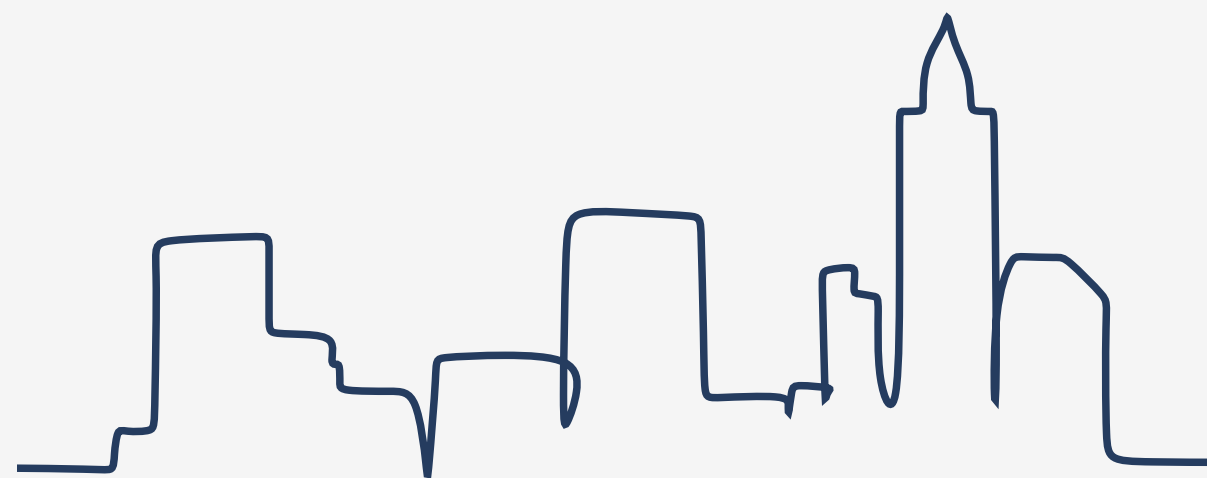
5 PEER-TO-PEER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

Idea(s): Community engagement

Developed By: The Youth Harbour (a project of the Foundation for Environmental Stewardship) in partnership with Regenesis

Year Released: 2023

Who This Is For: Primarily for youth in the movement-building space who are looking to do collaborative work built on a foundation of strong relationships.

Highlights: Throughout this 10 Guide, we have generally referred to community engagement as a process whereby a collaborative goes out to the community to listen and learn. However, how we engage with our peers and collaborators is equally important. The Peer-to-Peer Community Engagement Guide delves into topics such as relationship- and trust-building, conflict resolution, boundary-setting, and understanding positionality.

6 FOR OUR FUTURE: INDIGENOUS RESILIENCE REPORT

Idea(s): Braiding knowledges

Developed By: Indigenous-led report, which forms part of Natural Resources Canada's *Canada in a Changing Climate: Advancing our Knowledge for Action*

Year Released: 2024

Who This Is For: Policymakers, academics, changemakers, and business leaders at all levels—local, territorial, national, and international.

Highlights: The For Our Future report is structured around five key messages: (1) Indigenous Peoples have unique strengths for responding to environmental and climate changes; (2) Climate change is one of many crises that First Nations, Inuit and Métis face; (3) Indigenous Knowledge Systems and lived experiences are essential components of climate action; (4) The food, water, and energy nexus is central to First Nation, Inuit and Métis climate leadership; and (5) Self-determination is critical to Indigenous-led climate action. Woven into these themes are 14 case stories of Indigenous-led climate adaptation efforts.

7 PARTICIPATORY COMMUNITY BUILDING GUIDEBOOK

Idea(s): Community engagement, continuous learning and improvement

Developed By: Jeder Institute

Year Released: 2024

Who This Is For: Community changemakers across sectors who want to centre asset-based community development and social innovation in their work.

Highlights: There are numerous participatory approaches that can be used to strengthen community while tapping into the assets and gifts already present in a place. The Participatory Community Building Guidebook provides a comprehensive index of creative methods and practices that centre community. These include mapping exercises (assets, stakeholders, systems, etc.), appreciative inquiry, co-design, collective story harvest, living labs, the art of hosting, self-organized teams, and much more.

8 SMALL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES CLIMATE ACTION GUIDEBOOK

Idea(s): Collecting data, long-term viability

Developed By: The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and ICLEI Canada for the Partners for Climate Protection program

Year Released: 2021

Who This Is For: Small and rural communities.

Highlights: A significant portion of Canada's population is based in small and rural communities. These communities typically face unique challenges and opportunities when it comes to climate action, due to limited financial and staffing resources and fewer relevant guides and tools. The Small and Rural Communities Climate Action Guidebook offers small and rural communities targeted guidance on developing and implementing climate plans.

9 LOW CARBON RESILIENCE PLANNING TOOL

Idea(s): Multisolving approach

Developed By: Simon Fraser University's Action on Climate Team (ACT)

Year Released: 2023

Who This Is For: Municipalities and those collaborating with them.

Highlights: The Low Carbon Resilience (LCR) Planning tool helps communities take climate action that integrates mitigation, adaptation, and co-benefits, rather than working towards these interrelated goals in silos. The approach has been tested in many municipalities of varying sizes and at different stages of development, helping them mainstream climate action across municipal planning and decision-making processes. It includes tools, tips, and case studies that support communities from the early stages of preparing, engaging, assessing, and planning, right through to implementation, monitoring, and iterating.

10 TOOLKIT FOR EQUITABLE IMPACTS

Idea(s): Collecting data, climate communications, long-term viability

Developed By: C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group

Year Released: 2019

Who This Is For: Cities looking to build broader support for local climate action by demonstrating the wider benefits beyond emissions reductions.

Highlights: This set of tools helps cities understand and quantify the positive impact that climate action can have on people's lives, from local job creation to improved health to making life more affordable. The toolkit for equitable impacts includes guidance and Excel tools for calculating these social and economic benefits of bus rapid transit, congestion pricing, expanded waste collection and segregation, cool roofs initiatives, building retrofits, and walking and cycling.

Photo from a 2024 Tamarack gathering in Ottawa.

COMMUNITIES BUILDING YOUTH

SECTION 5

10 Ways to Get Started

1 Embed equity from the very beginning, not treating it as a side project or nice-to-have.

2 Consider the internal, individual work you may need to do to prepare for climate equity work.

3 Do research to learn about the histories of the lands you are on, particularly before engaging Indigenous communities.

4 Allow for adequate time to cultivate meaningful relationships and engagement.

5 Ask your community what it cares about and what matters most to it in the long run.

6 Conduct asset mapping to identify what resources you can leverage, what is already being done, and which relationships already exist.

7 Understand your community's momentum, constraints, and political context.

8 Explore what kind of collaborative governance structure would work best for your local context.

9 Offer mentorship and training opportunities to support people who are new to climate action.

10 Train your collaborative to strengthen its relationship-building, conflict resolution, and engagement skills.

1 **Embed equity from the very beginning, not treating it as a side project or nice-to-have.**

How your collaborative sees the relationship between equity and climate action sets the tone for how consistently and meaningfully the former shows up in the latter. As individuals and as a collective, take the time to learn about what equity is, why it is important, and how it would make your community better. You will be more likely to adopt it as a lens throughout your work and recognize it as a shared responsibility of everyone involved, rather than as its own initiative that a select few are responsible for.

2 **Consider the internal, individual work you may need to do to prepare for climate equity work.**

Advancing climate equity through place-based collaboration is a lofty goal—one that asks a lot of us as individuals and how we show up for each other. Being aware of your strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for growth allows you to develop the inner capacities you need to successfully enact outer change. The Inner Development Goals provide a framework for understanding what these skills are and how you may be able to strengthen them.

Photo from Tamarack's 2023 staff retreat.

3 Do research to learn about the histories of the lands you are on, particularly before engaging Indigenous communities.

Deepening your knowledge of the place at the centre of your place-based collaborative has several benefits. This is how you can begin to understand the value and importance of centring Indigenous Peoples and their ways of knowing in taking climate action. You will also start to see how the local climate has changed over time, informing your priority areas. Finally, building a stronger relationship with and a sense of belonging to the lands you are on serves as fuel to steward them in a way that is sustainable for generations. Visit your local library and/or academic institutions to kickstart your research.

4 Allow for adequate time to cultivate meaningful relationships and engagement.

You may have heard of the saying "Change moves at the speed of trust." Deep, trusting, and caring relationships form the foundation for meaningful climate action, particularly in the context of a community-level collaborative.

Create spaces—if possible, in-person—for people to get to know each other, building a culture of inclusion, co-ownership, and mutual support. It is important to not rush this process and instead see it as an investment of time and effort that sets your collaborative up for success in the long run. This approach is particularly significant when working with Indigenous and other equity-deserving communities.

5 Ask your community what it cares about and what matters most to it in the long run.

To initiate engaging with your community on advancing climate equity, host a community conversation. This gets people thinking and talking about climate action, building relationships and helping you identify trusted community champions who you might want to connect with further to expand your reach. What you hear from the community will help you understand what people are looking to get out of this work and what would motivate them to join or support it. This should inform future engagement and your communications strategy.

6 **Conduct asset mapping to identify what resources you can leverage, what is already being done, and which relationships already exist.**

No community starts from scratch in its journey to build a more sustainable and equitable future. Each one has its own, unique assets that can support this work, whether they be physical, economic, or cultural. There may even be people in your community who are already directly or indirectly talking about or addressing climate change. Mapping all of these assets will help you recognize what you have to work with from the very beginning, and what you can tap into as your collaborative progresses.

7 **Understand your community's momentum, constraints, and political context.**

Achieving systems change at the local level will, to some extent, be influenced by current policies, bylaws, and regulations, as well as by your local government's appetite for advancing climate equity. This should inform the scope and timeline of your short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals. For example, your community might have declared a climate emergency and/or created a climate change action plan. These can serve as powerful mobilizers for uniting around and taking action on a community-wide priority that has already been established.

While your political context may influence your work, you should not be discouraged if it is not conducive to making progress at the speed or scale that you envision. Things can change over time as you build community support and begin to see the impact of your collaborative, making the case for political support.

Participants at a local meetup in Ottawa for CCT's annual gathering in 2023. Photo by Kieran Maingot.

Photo from a 2024 Tamarack gathering in Ottawa.

8 **Explore what kind of collaborative governance structure would work best for your local context.**

Once you have identified who else is interested in advancing climate equity in your community, you will need to collectively identify how you will work with each other moving forward. This will depend on various factors, including how many individuals and organizations are interested, their desired level of engagement, what resources they have, and more. Before immediately jumping into action, have a conversation on these different aspects of your collaborative to ensure that its structure aligns with everyone's interests and capacities. Learn more about collaborative governance here.

9 **Offer mentorship and training opportunities to support people who are new to climate action.**

Most people in your community are probably not experts on the technical aspects of climate change. As you work to bring different groups into climate equity advocacy, these people should understand that they do not need to be technical experts in order to meaningfully engage. However, knowledge is power, particularly as we try to take an equitable approach to climate action. It is important for people to have a basic understanding of what has led to the climate crisis, how it affects your community, and who is most impacted.[8] They should also have opportunities to test out skills like leading a meeting, presenting to a big group, and canvassing before having to use them "for real."

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8   **Climate Reality Project** and **Climate Atlas of Canada** are great places to start.

10 **Train your collaborative to strengthen its relationship-building, conflict resolution, and engagement skills.**

To help your collaborative engage with equity-deserving groups in a way that is authentic and does not perpetuate harm, consider what skills and knowledge people might need. This could include engagement protocols, de-escalation and care strategies, and guiding principles. Doing your homework before you engage with equity-deserving groups signals that you are taking this work and their involvement seriously.

In It Together: A Framework for Conflict Transformation in Movement-Building Groups (Interrupting Criminalization)

Community care & relationship building combats burnout in political movements (Ayesha Khan, PhD)

Community Care Module (UBC Human Rights Collective)

Photo from a 2024 Tamarack gathering in Ottawa.

ABOUT

Community Climate Transitions

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Community Climate Transitions (CCT) is a movement of 40+ collaboratives across Canada (and one in the USA) that are advancing climate action and equity in their communities. Launched in 2021 and hosted by the Tamarack Institute, CCT builds the capacity of local changemakers across all sectors – municipalities, non-profits, community groups, businesses, and more – to collaborate for transformative change.

CCT supports communities to advance all of the Sustainable Development Goals, with a particular emphasis on the goals associated with equity (no poverty, zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, gender equality, decent work, and reduced inequalities) and climate change (sustainable cities and communities, affordable and clean energy, and responsible consumption and production). Multisolving approaches are at the core of CCT's work, recognizing that the deep interconnections between the environmental, social, and economic challenges we face require holistic solutions.

For more information about CCT's work and impact, see the 2021-2024 Impact Report.

The Tamarack Institute empowers communities to break free from poverty, foster sustainable climate transitions, invest in youth, and inspire belonging and purpose through coaching and collaborative partnerships.

Follow Tamarack on Instagram, Linkedin, X, YouTube, and Facebook, where we share free resources and community change news.

You can also sign up for our monthly e-newsletter *Engage!*, where we share exclusive learning opportunities, resources, community change tips and tools, and more.

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The views in this publication are the reflection of the Tamarack Institute and do not necessarily represent the views of our partners or funders.

COMMUNITY IS A VERB. EMPOWERING ACTION, INSPIRING CHANGE.

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