



Together, we can create vibrant, sustainable and joyfully enriched communities in our neighbourhoods.

GREEN BLOC TOOLKIT



Working together to achieve a one-planet ecological footprint

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Introduction – About this Guide

GREEN BLOC NEIGHBOURHOODS: VANCOUVER

Cities are buzzing with ideas for change. There is a shift to building cities that are resilient to changing climates, growing populations, and ever-increasing infrastructure costs.

Many governments are keen to embed change into planning and policy, but need the support of their residents to make real change a reality. At the same time, the pressure to change your lifestyle as an individual can be overwhelming. That’s where Green Bloc Neighbourhoods: Vancouver comes in.

This project toolkit sits at the intersection of individual action and community policy, providing direction for community groups and neighbourhoods looking for inspiration and to support one another in creating safer, healthier, more sustainable neighbourhoods that account for diverse values and needs.

No matter your level of experience with organizing, or environmental action, the resources in this toolkit can help you and your neighbours plan and build community projects to lower your ecological footprints in a way that works for you. This toolkit contains advice, practical tips and case studies drawn from our experience working with various organizations and program partners to create tangible change in neighbourhoods. Please use what you like from it and leave what you don’t! Add your own ideas, flair and style!



ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

In 1992, the University of British Columbia’s Bill Rees and Mathis Wackernagel published their first article on the ecological footprint — a groundbreaking new way to measure human impact on the planet.

Almost 25 years later, the ecological footprint is widely used by municipal and national governments, community organizations, and academics to evaluate resource use and human impact in a consistent and effective way.

The ecological footprint is a measure of the productive area required to provide the renewable resources we use and absorb our waste. In other words, it’s a measure of how fast we consume resources and generate waste, compared to how fast nature can absorb our waste and generate new resources.

It includes all the components of day-to-day life, including food, buildings, consumables, waste, transportation and water. Behaviour that produces no footprint is not counted (e.g., biking does not increase or decrease your footprint so it is not counted). Ecological footprint is measured in global hectares (gHa)—about the same size as a football field. If we divide the whole surface area of the Earth by the total population, we get the theoretical maximum ecological footprint that each individual should have—and that’s 2 gHa, or “one planet living”.

Currently, humans are using roughly 1.5 planets, or 3 gHa per person globally to provide the resources we consume, and to absorb our waste. According to the UN, with current population and consumption trends, by the 2030s, we will need two planets.

The Canadian footprint average is 7.1 gHa per person. The average ecological footprint for a Haligonian is 8.4 gHa. The average for a Calgarian is 9.4 gHa. The average for a Vancouverite is 6 gHa. That means that the average Vancouverite lives three times beyond their fair share. Or in other words, if everyone in the world lived like the average Vancouverite, we would need 3 Planet Earths.



What’s the alternative? Lighter footprint living!

So, what can we do about this? How can we go about reducing our footprint? Strategies to reduce our footprint not only will benefit our planet, saving resources for future generations, they will also improve your quality of life in many ways. If you haven’t watched it yet, check out [The Story of Stuff](#). Small and simple changes in our day-to-day lives can help slow the effects of climate change and move us to have a smaller ecological footprint. These can include reducing our energy consumption, choosing to travel sustainably, and being conscious of what we purchase.

Let’s work together — imagine what our lives could look like if we transformed our thinking and behaviour on how we consume and produce things. Instead of thinking of doing more with less as a negative, let’s conceive of lower footprint living as making choices that could

enrich all aspects of our lives — our ecologies, economies, and social life. What would it take to make this happen and what would that look like? Participating in a Green Bloc Neighbourhoods project is a chance to experience this in real time!

NEIGHBOURHOOD ENGAGEMENT – CHAMPION ROLE

There is an important truth to creating neighbourhood-level change: People are way more likely to take the time to listen to someone who is their neighbour as opposed to a complete stranger.



Seems obvious, right? Champions actually live in the communities they are representing. Which is why the champion plays a more important and more central role in making a collaborative neighbourhood project happen than you might realize. Personal connection to residents is key.

What is your role?

Put simply, the role of the champion is to motivate their neighbours and act like the glue to keep the whole thing together. No small feat! The champion acts as a steward for the project, and keeps it and its collaborators on course. This could include helping to educate your neighbours on all things to do with their ecological footprint in order to help them lower it; emailing and knocking on doors to find those neighbours that need a little more motivation to join in a project; hosting fun and inviting events to engage people; organizing small-scale projects; providing easy-to-implement action ideas; and answering questions that your neighbours are bound to have!

The idea is that by getting the community involved as a group, a sense of accountability is created. This leads us to another idea: When people around you are engaging in a certain behaviour, you're way more likely to do it yourself.

People can be incentivized to engage or not engage in behaviours in any number of ways, but ultimately it is seeing their peers, friends, or in this case neighbours, act in a certain way that will encourage them to do the same. All it takes is one champion to start the trend to organize inclusive events to simultaneously connect neighbours and lower a community's footprint.

Over the course of a project, champions will:

- » Connect with neighbours and educate them about the Ecological Footprint
- » Organize a launch event
- » Encourage neighbours to measure their ecological footprint through surveys and provide them with the tools to do so.
- » Organize workshops or other skill-building events with a sustainability focus
- » Organize a project or event to build a sense of community



Burnout Happens

We're not going to lie to you, there are going to be times when a champion, and likely other participants, will ask themselves why they are doing this; why should they care so much when others around them don't seem to care at all. But, truly, and sincerely, we promise that engaging in a project that helps to reduce their ecological footprint is worth the time and energy.

And, if you're still feeling discouraged, here are a few more things to remember:

We are all a part of something bigger

There are people like you all over the place, and without people like you, the world will never change for the better.

You started this for a reason

Even if you can't put into words why you decided to do this, there was something inside of you that led you to this project.

The end result is worth it

There are few things better than knowing that your community is a leader in terms of only using its fair share of the Earth's resources, and your neighbours feel more connected to each other than they ever have before. They couldn't have done it without each other.

Words of encouragement

You started this for a reason, and the end results are worth it. We promise!

Phase 1 – Measuring your Footprint and Setting Goals

OUTCOMES

At the end of Phase 1 you'll have:

- » a group of neighbours committed to taking the steps toward lighter footprint living
- » completed your ecological footprint surveys
- » held two workshops: an introductory workshop about the ecological footprint and survey and; a target-setting workshop based on your ecological footprint results

RECRUITMENT

Finding other people that might be willing to join in the fun can be challenging, but also exciting. People are busy and might have a hard time thinking about taking up something new. Recruitment will take persistence and a network as you won't be able to do it alone; find others that will assist in the effort. It is said that 80% of the work is done by 20% of the people. Finding those motivated and enthusiastic neighbours will go a long way in helping to collect your other neighbourhood bloc members, and will also keep you motivated as you can support each other along in the process.

Ideas for recruiting include using social media and asking your networks to spread the word about what you are up to. You can print flyers and put them up at your local community centre, library, schools, in the building elevator or by the co-op main entrance, neighbourhood grocery stores and coffee shops, etc. Does your neighbourhood have a shared bulletin board or a free little library where you can tape or pin up a notice? You could set up a table at your local Farmer's Market or craft fair, if you live in a condo building you could set up in the lobby, have a lemonade stand in the local park on a hot day - the options are endless! Have some easy to read information about Green Bloc Neighbourhoods with a way to contact you, ask people for their email if they'd like to find out more. Likely the most effective way to recruit is to door knocking. Yes — gasp — face to face interactions! Start with the people you know to build your confidence and hone your script, and then move on to strangers.



Recruitment Strategies

Likely the most effective way to recruit is to door knocking and other face to face interactions.

Sample script

“Hi, my name is [NAME], and I live in your neighbourhood. I just wanted to stop by, introduce myself and let you know about a project that I am working on, and how you can get involved if you would like. Green Bloc Neighbourhoods is an initiative that works to bring residents together to forge a strong bloc of neighbours, willing to take action individually and collectively to create a safer, happier, more sustainable neighbourhoods by working collaboratively on projects that mitigate climate change and unsustainable levels of consumption. I am holding an information drop-in night at the park/community centre/library on [DATE] and it would be great if you joined us. Here is my contact information. Thanks for taking the time to listen. Have a great day and I hope to hear from you.”

Inspiration!

It's really important to get your neighbours excited about what's possible with lighter footprint living, and to inspire them with stories and examples rather than focusing on removing things from people's lives. A good way to get people coming together to learn about stories and examples, and start talking to each other about their own possibilities, is to host a fun and engaging event, possibly with an inspiring speaker. This event could also be a good opportunity to describe the ecological footprint and how to measure your own.

Ideas on how to engage the community

- » Host an event
- » Share stories and case studies
- » Measure your own ecological footprint

WORKSHOP 1 – OUTLINE

Who are we? What is this all about anyway?

This kick-off meeting should have as many of the neighbourhood participants as possible in attendance, and should be approximately 2 - 3 hours long. This is a vitally important first step in building the group culture and sense of camaraderie and accountability. It's always a great idea to have some food and beverages to serve up, or you could suggest a pot-luck style - where the neighbours each bring something to contribute. It is also useful to have a sign-in sheet to collect names/contact information/social media handles (optional), and to keep track of who attended, also have nametags for people to fill in to help the each other learn who is in the group.

As the meeting facilitator, your primary role is to host and hold the space for the conversation—a conversation where everyone feels like they can learn, share ideas and contribute their own insights. You will want to create a space that is warm and welcoming such that people feel comfortable. It's important to set that tone as soon as people walk in the door. To help create that tone, ensure that you have completed all of your preparations 15–30 minutes before you expect people to arrive so you are relaxed and ready. Your job also is to provide information, so have some overview material about *Green Bloc Neighbourhoods* to help deepen attendees understanding of what they are signing up for. It would be very valuable to have a collaborator take notes on the outcomes of the meeting to share back with the group. Ideally the facilitator is not also taking notes, but in a pinch will have to. The point being — make sure to capture the useful bits of the conversation!

Here is a checklist of things to do to set up the room:

- Set out chairs so that everyone can see each other
- If you are serving refreshments, place them in a space that is easily accessible
- Post the agenda on the wall or put copies of the agenda at each place
- Ensure that any supplies you will be using are within arms reach of where you will be seated; if you will be using post-it notes and pens, place these in front of each seat or in an easily accessible location
- Put the sign in sheet and/or name tags close to the door

Here are the key objectives for the first workshop:

- » Building community and connections; allow the neighbours to meet each other and to create a network and peer support system
- » Introduce the Green Bloc Neighbourhoods toolkit
- » Inspiring practices, including learnings from the Green Bloc pilot projects
- » Introduction to ecological footprint and lighter footprint living
- » Instruction on using the ecological footprint measurement tool
- » Identification of ways to share information and collaborative strategies
- » Educating participants about project goals, desired outcomes and project timelines
- » Introduction to website and social media sites, resources and other information sharing tools

Sample Agenda (feel free to mix it up)

- » **10 min** - Welcome and Opening Remarks - Who you are and why is this important to you
- » **10 to 20 min** - Participant Introductions - Who are you, where do you live, how did you find out about today?
- » **15 min** - As a group, create a set of “Groundrules” of working together. Capture these and have them visible at all meetings if possible.
- » **20 min** - What is the ecological footprint and the idea of a lighter footprint? Have a discussion with the group.
- » **10 min** - BREAK
- » **30 min** - Share the history of Project Green Bloc and discuss the Green Bloc Neighbourhoods project. Teach how to fill out the ecological footprint survey. Use the toolkit and website, social media sites, and the survey as a reference.
- » **35 min** - As a group, discuss what it means to part of a Green Bloc Neighbourhoods project: clarify goals, co-create desired outcomes, and timelines.
- » Break the group up into smaller pods of people and have them talk about what they are hoping to get from being involved. Each pod will report back briefly on their conversations.
- » **15 min** - Closing discussion - recap with the group: what decisions did we make tonight, what are our next steps, what happens at the next meeting, set next meeting date. Finally, go around the room and ask each person to respond to the question: what did you like about tonight, what are you most excited about?
- » Make sure you share the notes (cleaned up, action items and responsibilities etc clearly highlighted) back with the group within a couple of days. Send them a note, thank them for coming, and tell them how excited you are to be working with them and include the link to the Ecological Footprint Survey Tool with directions or a link to directions, explaining again how to do it. Provide them with a phone number/contact of who they can call to get help if they need it, have questions, etc.



ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

The first step in creating a community engaged in the ecological footprint is to find out what your ecological footprint measurement actually is! This can be done very quickly online, but we have a much more accurate tool that you can use.

Because the ecological footprint measures all of your food, waste, energy and transportation, measuring it can be an onerous process. For the best data, you'll want to measure your consumption for a full 28 days. However, if you can't commit to a whole month, we have 1- and 2- week surveys as well.

While the components that make up your ecological footprint can be complex, breaking it down into the following categories can help you and your neighbours understand where changes can be made.

Buildings

Your building footprint accounts for the built area and materials in your home based on standardized data as well as the energy required to heat and operate everything in your home. Retrofitting an older home to be more energy efficient is much better for your footprint than discarding an entire home and building a new one with all new materials!

Food

Your food footprint is calculated based on the different kinds of land required to grow/harvest/feed the food you eat—both the land and energy required to grow that food, and the energy average for transporting that food. For example, tropical fruits will impact your footprint more than food that can be grown locally. One of the largest contributors to your footprint is the amount of red meat you consume. The cattle industry is the most energy and resource intensive food industry. Pork and chicken are better alternatives, and a vegetarian/plant-based diet is one of the easiest ways to reduce your ecological footprint, let alone have lower risks to your health.

Transportation

Your transportation footprint accounts for the fossil fuels required to propel your travel, as well as the materials contained in your vehicle. The travel component of your footprint accounts for how you travel, how much you travel, and with how many people. Each form of transportation—car, bus, bike, train, airplane—has an average energy requirement per km. Air travel has the biggest impact on your footprint, and is often the factor that takes someone from a below average footprint to an above average footprint. While it can be difficult to cut air travel due to work or far away family members, reducing your air travel each year will have the biggest impact on your ecological footprint.

Consumables and Waste

This measures what goes out your door, either as recycling or garbage, the materials and energy required to produce it in the first place, and the energy required to dispose of it. Many Project Green Bloc participants were surprised that recycling didn't have a big impact on lowering their ecological footprint. The key is to consume less overall to reduce any kind of waste.

The easiest way to collect data is to hand out the Survey + Consumption Diary (MS Word format) to your neighbours at a launch event or introductory engagement session where you can explain how to effectively fill out the survey and answer any questions (see Neighbourhood Meeting #1 above).

COLLECTING DATA

Collecting accurate data is one of the most challenging and meaningful parts of being a champion. By helping your neighbours measure their ecological footprint you will be able to reflect to them what their impact on the earth is in a very tangible way.

For the Project Green Bloc case study, participants wanted to be as accurate as possible in measuring household and neighbourhood scale footprints. Working with local researcher Dr. Jennie Moore, residents of the Bloc completed a 14- or 28-day survey where they inputted daily data on food consumption and transportation. For your neighbourhood, we'll be creating an easy (MS Excel) template, ready to launch in the Spring of 2017.

The bare-bones calculation of the ecological footprint can be done simply online at footprintnetwork.org. Although this tool is useful in many ways, it isn't very thorough in the way it collects data. We also have a simple [Survey + Consumption Diary](#), which is easy to use, yet comprehensive, and it's a fun challenge for neighbours! The combination of a one-time survey and a diary of daily consumables like food and transportation harnesses the most crucial information in the cleanest way.



The daily consumption diary is an easy way to track your ecological footprint. Extracting the results from the data couldn't be much easier. Just plug the totals from the survey into the Excel sheet and you're basically done. The total numbers for each category and the overall Ecological Footprint number can be presented in many different ways but we always suggest using a thoughtful infographic. [Piktochart](#) is an easy to use online template that you can use for free!

Make sure you understand the survey before handing it out to residents—they will have lots of questions! Once you've got everyone's results, you can compare to see whose houses, families and lifestyles have the most, or least, impact—if you feel like sharing, of course! Knowing your collective ecological footprint will help you to establish a baseline, set goals and create a common bond.

TIP: For the most accurate results, survey participants will need a simple kitchen scale to measure their waste and consumables.

Another way to easily get results from neighbours is to email them a copy of the survey and then check-in a couple of days later. Measuring the ecological footprint of your neighbours is tough but rewarding. When people realize the small things they can do in their every day lives to lighten their impact, it really does kick-start them to change.

Once you and your neighbours have done your ecological footprint survey and have a baseline of your footprint, it's time to set some goals and targets, and to identify the assets in your community that you can build on to reduce your collective footprint.

Questions about the data tool?

Contact us by email
greenbloc@lighterfootprint.ca

WORKSHOP 2 - OUTLINE

How'd we do on the survey? Now what can we do together to improve our results?

Once the results of the ecological footprint surveys have been calculated, it is time to bring the neighbourhood team back together again for a fun, engaging and inspiring workshop to discuss the Ecological Footprint Survey results. Once the neighbours understand their results, both at the individual and the neighbourhood level, they will be ready to set personal and collective goals and targets, as well as to map the neighbourhood assets and key opportunities for action.

Similar to the kick-off meeting, you should try to have as many of the neighbourhood participants as possible in attendance, and should be planning for a meeting of approximately 2 - 3 hours in duration. Bringing the group back together helps to build connection and buy-in to keep participating. If possible, plan to have some food and beverages. Maybe a neighbourhood cafe could sponsor, or you could suggest a pot-luck. Similar to last time, have a sign-in sheet to collect names/contact information/social media handles (optional), and to keep track of who attended. Have nametags for people to fill in to help the each other learn who is in the group.

Again, your primary role is to host and hold the space for the conversation and to create a space that is warm and welcoming. Ensure that you have completed all of your preparations 15–30 minutes before you expect people to arrive so you are relaxed and ready. Try to have a

collaborator take notes on the outcomes of this meeting to share back with the group as you want to capture the useful bits of the conversation, and this meeting will be churning out a fair amount of data. Review the checklist from Meeting #1 for set up.

Here are the key objectives for the second workshop:

- » Building community and connections; allow the neighbours to meet each other and to create a network and peer support system
- » Review and understand the results from the Ecological Footprint Survey
- » Set individual and collective goals and targets
- » Map the specific assets of the neighbourhood
- » Consider the neighbourhood specific opportunities

Your primary role is to host and hold the space for the conversation and to create a space that is warm and welcoming.

Sample Agenda (feel free to mix it up)

- » **10 min** - Welcome and Opening Remarks - Welcome the neighbours back again (you came back!), review what happened at last meeting
- » **10 min** - Brief Participant Introductions - Who are you, where do you live, one word to describe how you felt about filling out the ecological footprint survey.
- » **25 min** - Break the group up into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss what they found surprising about the results, what were their challenges and successes in taking the survey, what did they become more conscious about as a result? Have each of the groups report back a couple of the most interesting findings.

40min (for complete exercise) - Asset Mapping Activity

- » **Step #1** – Individual - Hand out an individual mapping chart and ask everyone to fill in their page with the following: What I can offer/What I'd like to learn. Ask everyone to write legibly as you will be collecting them at the end. After 10 minutes of writing, spend 10 minutes as a group debriefing.
- » **10 min** - BREAK
- » **Step #2** – Local Associations/ Businesses/ Organizations - Put a large post it note in the middle of the circle of chairs with the words "Green Bloc Neighbourhood" and ask everyone to identify the local assets in their community that might be relevant to the project/work that they might do together. They can write down individual ideas on post it notes and stick them around the one in the middle. Patterns will likely start to emerge

and groupings can be made. After 10 minutes of writing, spend 10 minutes as a group debriefing.

- » **Step #3** – Local and Regional Institutions - On a second large paper or on the other side of the white board place Green Bloc Neighbourhood in the centre and ask participants to identify the various institutions, (e.g. local government, philanthropy organizations, utilities, post-secondary institutions etc.) that are potential assets for the group. After 10 minutes of writing, spend 10 minutes as a group debriefing.
- » **10 min** - Inspiration! Share a Top 10 List on *how to reduce your ecological footprint*. Many tips and strategies can be found (see Resources on our website). This is an important element to start the neighbours thinking about what they may do together and not feel overwhelmed! It is possible to make change.
- » **15 min** - Follow this with a period where the neighbours can talk together about what strategies they have tried. Then ask each individual to think silently about their top 3 individual actions they could take to reduce their eco footprint – how would this be monitored? The group will then move in pairs to share their top 3 actions with someone else, and then they will all write their top 3 actions on post it notes and put on a wall or the floor. There is a sheet of paper for participants to fill out indicating ONE action they will take over the period between now and the next meeting. Have a quick group discussion on the results.
- » **15 min** - Closing discussion - recap with the group: what are our next steps, what happens at next meeting, set next meeting date. Finally, go around the room and ask each person to respond to the question: what did you like about tonight, what are you most excited about?

Make sure you share the notes (cleaned up, action items and responsibilities etc clearly highlighted) back with the group within a couple of days. Send them a note, thank them for coming, and tell them how excited you are to be working with them and remind them about the next meeting — where you will decide on your project!



Phase 2 – Neighbourhood Project Action Planning and Implementation

OUTCOMES

At the end of Phase 2 you'll have:

- » a neighbourhood project action plan, with ideas and budget
- » neighbourhood working groups

WORKSHOP 3 - OUTLINE

Let's get busy!

Community projects are a sure-fire way to engage residents and get people on board with reducing their footprint. Projects can be small, individual ones, or large, collaborative neighbourhood ones. By engaging your neighbours with a larger scale project they will feel like part of a community, care more about what goes on in their neighbourhood and feel a greater sense of accountability. This is a critical element of the project, as it strives to build capacity for all the participants, enabling them to feel more confident and equipped to engage in collaborative or self-directed projects in the future, fueling the potential for further social innovation.

Similar to the kick-off meeting, you should try have as many of the neighbourhood participants as possible in attendance, and this time should be planning for a meeting of approximately 3 - 4 hours in duration. This is an important meeting as this is the meeting that will see the group decide on their collective project. Plan to have some food and beverages, maybe sponsored by a neighbourhood grocery store or restaurant. Similar to previous meetings, have a sign-in sheet to collect names/contact information/social media handles (optional), and to keep track of who attended, also have nametags for people to fill in to help the each other learn who is in the group.

Review the checklist from Meeting #1 for set up.

Here are the key objectives for the final workshop:

- » Reviewed neighbourhood goals and targets
- » An agreed upon collaborative project
- » Identified smaller projects/initiatives
- » A plan of specific tasks that will move the project(s) forward
- » A clear line on roles, responsibilities and timelines
- » A high level project budget and identified resources/support

- » Strategy for measuring success and impact!

Sample Agenda (feel free to mix it up)

- » **10 min** - Welcome and Opening Remarks - Welcome the neighbours back again (you came back!), review what happened at last meeting
- » **10 min** - Brief Participant Introductions - Who are you, where do you live, one word to describe what you love about living in your neighbourhood
- » **15 min** - Brief review of neighbourhood footprint results, identified goals and targets, neighbourhood assets
- » **20 min** - Gallery walk on some neighbourhood project ideas (some neighbourhood examples as well as the ideas from Workshop 2 printed up on posters and posted on wall)
- » **10 min** - Individual time - brainstorm actions/projects that can be done in the neighbourhood
- » **30 min** - Small group time - discuss actions
 - *Each person to present their actions; then the group discusses and prioritizes*
 - *Post top ideas from each group on wall*
- » **10 min** BREAK
- » **45 min** - Large group (everyone together)
 - *Each small group present their top ideas*
 - *After hearing from each group, everyone has a chance to prioritize (e.g. with sticky dots) according to identified criteria. A major collaborative project will be agreed upon, and a number of smaller actions/projects.*
- » **10 min** - Confirm agreed upon projects
- » **30 min** - Group discussion re tasks, roles, responsibilities, resources and timelines
 - *Separate the group into smaller groups, each tackling a project, and identifying: specific tasks, roles/responsibilities, resources, deliverables*
- » **20 min** - Sharing - each small group present their draft action plan
- » **15 min** -Closing discussion - recap with the group: what are our next steps, what happens at next meeting, set next meeting date. Finally, go around the room and ask each person to respond to the question: what did you like about tonight, what are you most excited about?

CREATE A BUDGET

All projects need resources to complete them. Creating a simple budget for your project will help you understand the costs and resources needed up front, and can help you determine where you'll find your essential items.

Consider all the resources you'll need from start to finish, and possible sources of these items. Don't forget to include the time it will take to complete the project — your time is a vital piece of the puzzle!

You may find that you can complete your project using resources already available in your community — from donated items, to volunteer hours, to guidance provided by your neighbours. By all means, use what already exists rather than buying new things! A key principle of reducing your ecological footprint is avoiding new purchases when you can share with your neighbours. This is where your community asset map will come in handy — you already know who has what tools, knowledge, and relationships that can help you to complete your project at little to no cost.

If you can't find the materials and professional services you need within your neighbourhood, try reaching out to local businesses for in-kind donations. In-kind donations are gifts of products, time and services. For example, you may be able to get seeds, seedlings and soil from a local garden store, lumber from a local hardware store, or a poster design from a local graphic designer.

In addition to getting in-kind donations, you may be able to get financial support from your local municipal government, businesses, or community foundations. Often, these groups will require that you have a charitable tax registration number to receive funding. You can partner with a local non-profit or community organization, who can act as a 'charitable sponsor' for your funds. Once you've got your project idea in place, get in touch with local groups such as environmental non-profits, neighbourhood houses, or other small societies who may be able to support you.

Don't be afraid to reach outside of your community! There are probably plenty of local non-profits, consultants and businesses who can help out through providing information or volunteering some of their expertise.



If you can't find the materials and professional services you need within your neighbourhood, try reaching out to local businesses for in-kind donations.

COMMUNITY PROJECT IDEAS

Here are some examples of other workshops or events you can host as part of your neighbourhood action plan, to help keep your neighbours engaged and learning/trying new things that can help to reduce their ecological footprint. For more ideas, check out the Appendix.

Host a vegetarian cooking class

Meat & dairy make up around 50 percent of the Food category of the population's Ecological Footprint. Eliminating or even reducing meat, especially red meat, can make a big difference.

Try hosting a vegetarian cooking class (you can use [these two delicious recipes](#)) to inspire residents to eat more vegetarian centered meals. Reach out to local restaurants and sustainable chefs and see if they will donate some time to teach a cooking class. Approach some grocery stores and ask if they are willing to donate ingredients. At the end, hold a community meal for all to enjoy!

Helpful Hints

- » Keep it seasonal! Stick to cooking with foods that are local and in season
- » Take it to the next level: Look for local celebrity chefs to teach or have a cook off

We've got two vegetarian recipes to get you started:

- » [Ramen Noodles with seasonal vegetables and dumplings on pumpkin soup](#)
- » [Vegan Butternut Squash Soup](#)

Host a bike repair or bike riding workshop

Transportation is a large contributor to our ecological footprint. Another idea is to offer a bicycle repair workshop to get those bikes tuned up and ready to use! There might also be adults or children within the area who do not know how to bike ride or are feeling apprehensive to ride on the streets, so partnering with an organization like [HUB Cycling](#) to run a Ride the Road class for your neighbourhood might be beneficial. Or, if there are people in your community who are avid cyclists have them partner up with those feeling a little nervous.

Helpful Hints

- » Reach out to local bike stores for donation of time and bikes
- » Reach out to bike repair stores
- » Get pocket bike lane maps
- » Give away bike bells/reflectors/locks at the event as prizes

- » First ask neighbours! Someone around might be a bike pro
- » Use our sponsorship letter template to craft donor requests

Home Improvement

Do you and your neighbours want to think bigger? Why not brainstorm some individual, energy saving actions each household could take? Some effective retrofits include insulation, draft-proofing, and installing low-flow toilets and showerheads. Check out the appendix for more ideas and resources.

RE-MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

Congratulations, you've created change in your neighbourhood! The last step is to re-measure your neighbourhood's ecological footprint. As much as possible, try to have the same people take the survey again (you'll be able to compare their results to see their progress). This is also a great opportunity to engage new participants as well.

Once you've compiled the survey results, it's time to celebrate!

The celebration serves to recognize all the neighbours' efforts and accomplishments. The party should involve a short recap/presentation of the project itself (with photos if possible!), and its successes and impacts, as well as the exciting results of the neighbourhood level followup ecological footprint surveys and the decrease in the neighbourhoods footprint!

You'll want to figure out how to continue to stay in touch, steward the project if required, and maybe even start thinking about your next project.



Congratulations, you've created change in your neighbourhood!

Once you've compiled the survey results, it's time to celebrate!

Appendices

PROJECT GREEN BLOC

The Project Green Bloc pilot involved two ecological footprint surveys, with the goal of reducing the neighbourhood's collective footprint by 25%. The first survey was done in the fall of 2013, and the second was done in the fall of 2015. Using the two surveys, participants were able to track their progress and see where they had succeeded, and where they had challenges.

The survey was developed using a formula from Dr. Jennie Moore. Dr. Moore is the Director of Sustainable Development and Environmental Stewardship at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT). With her Master's supervisor Bill Rees—co-founder of the Ecological Footprint—Moore has been working closely with the City of Vancouver to achieve the lighter footprint targets of the [Greenest City Action Plan](#).

Twenty households signed up for either 14- or 28- day surveys, and the final results were shared anonymously. 8 households completed the **28-day survey**, while 10 completed the **14-day survey**. Two households dropped out.

The survey involved one-time-only questions, including annual energy use and air travel. For the remainder of the survey, participants were required to track food consumption and transportation daily, and record their garbage and recycling once a week.

Although individual results varied, with anywhere from 1.78 to 5.28 planets needed to sustain individual households, the average total planets needed to support the neighbourhood was 2.79. The goal for 2015, then, was to lower the footprint of the neighbourhood to 2.09 planets needed.

The 2015 survey had 11 participants; two households took part in the 28-day survey, and nine households completed the 14-day survey. Two households started, but did not complete, the survey.

Prizes were solicited from local businesses that focus on sustainable and local goods. These were given out in a random draw, following completion of the survey.

CITYSTUDIO – LIGHTER FOOTPRINT PROJECT

The Lighter Footprint Project (PDF) evolved from a CityStudio project group that aspired to further Vancouver's Greenest City Action Plan's 'Lighter Footprint' Goal by empowering everyday citizens to take action. The idea was inspired by Project Green Bloc, but instead of implementing a project on a street of detached single family homes, this version tested the model in the multi-family housing complex of Vera Co-op in Marpole. Because of time constraints the project was condensed into a span of 2 weeks, with participants answering

only one ecological footprint survey, and a short end survey to assess whether they enjoyed the pilot and how it could be improved.

The Lighter Footprint Project used the same formula that Dr. Jennie Moore created for Project Green Bloc to measure the resident's the ecological footprints. The survey was slightly modified by inserting proxy data for the waste.

Unlike Project Green Bloc's survey that required participants to track various factors that influence their footprint daily, the Lighter Footprint Project asked resident's to reflect on their week and report estimations of their consumption, travel and waste. A challenge with this model is that resident's evaluations of their daily consumption seemed to be inaccurate when comparing it to the local average.

Although individual results varied, with anywhere from 1.10–3 planets needed to sustain individual households, the average total planets needed to support the neighbourhood was 2.10.

Twenty-one households out of 69 in Vera Co-op participated in the project. This means that the household either completed their ecological footprint survey, attended an information event, or completed both of the activities.

Every person who completed the survey received a customized bookmark that broke down their ecological footprint, show where they placed compared to their neighbors, and indicated where they needed to improve. Prizes were solicited from local businesses. These were given out in a random draw, following completion of the final survey.

MEASURING YOUR FOOTPRINT AND SETTING GOALS

Dialogues Case Study – Project Green Bloc

Project Green Bloc held three dialogues in the first few months of the project. They covered the foundations of the ecological footprint and what was being measured, established connections to the neighbourhood and to each other, and developed concrete ideas to collectively address the neighbourhood ecological footprint.

Key to the process was having local experts attend the dialogues. Dr. Jennie Moore, one of the pre-eminent ecological footprint scholars in Vancouver attended the first and second workshops, answering participants' questions and offering achievable suggestions. Dr. David Suzuki, former colleague of a PGB participant, also attended the first dialogue to offer his support for the initiative.

While the first dialogue was based on creating a knowledge baseline and connecting as a neighbourhood, the second dialogue allowed participants to start developing ideas that could make their neighbourhood healthier, both at a household and at a 'block' scale. Ideas were generated and then voted upon, with participants then choosing to work on the idea that they liked best.

Finally, at the third workshop, committees were formed around the three major projects that neighbours wanted to initiate:

1. Street greening: remove part of a street to create a park/community meeting area. The park would incorporate greening to maximize food production, beehives or mason bees and other gardening.
2. Creating a neighbourhood renewable energy project and energy audits for participants' homes.
3. Creating a system of material and expertise sharing, based on a local listings website and community bulletin board.

Recruiting Participants Case Study – Lighter Footprint Project

Getting residents on board was the first step to a successful pilot. The Lighter Footprint Project used a variety of methods to engage residents, each with varying degrees of success. The first method used was an email campaign sent out to all households encouraging them to attend a launch event. This email was distributed with assistance from the board of Vera Coop, who forwarded the message onto the recipients.

Secondly, printed flyers were also hung on doors and pinned up around the complex, which encouraged people to come out for the launch event.

For the closing event, more emails were distributed to residents, and the group members went around in person to knock on doors and speak directly to people in the complex. This direct communication method proved to be the most valuable in recruiting participants.

Another point to note is that to promote the closing event, prizes and freebies (such as food) were heavily advertised. A focus on incentives helped to increase the number of attendants.

Anyone who participated in the first round of surveys also earned an 'earth badge', which they were able to hang on their door as a sign that they were committed to reducing their ecological footprint.

Event Case Study – Lighter Footprint Project

The first event of the two-week project took place one weekday evening in the Vera Community Building over desserts and tea. 11 households were in attendance, and there was a brief 30-minute presentation where residents could learn about the following:

1. Ecological Footprint
2. The project itself
3. Actions that have the biggest impact on reducing an ecological footprint.

After the presentation there was a question and answer period, where residents had the opportunity to ask for clarification points raised in the presentation. This transformed into a dialogue to discuss strategies around implementing the priority actions into day-to-day life.

It was through this self-led dialogue that residents also discussed community needs, and resulted in the decision to start a soft plastic recycling station.

Because of the two-week time constraints, instead of attending a vegetarian workshop, attendants of the launch event also received a butternut squash—a seasonal vegetable—with a [soup recipe](#).

To celebrate the completion of the two-week pilot, a Pancake Breakfast was held at the community building. Residents got the chance to spend a sunny Saturday morning together, while also having the opportunity to give any feedback with a closing survey. Prizes were also distributed to residents at that point. Residents were able to continue discussing the community project and solidified their decision to launch a soft plastic, battery and light bulb recycling station.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT ACTION PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Working with People

Bulletin Board Case Study – Project Green Bloc

In the fall of 2014, Evergreen and Project Green Bloc decided to build a community bulletin board. The bulletin board would be a place where neighbours could share information, set up material and skill swaps and communicate with their broader community.

Materials and Construction

The bulletin board was made from reclaimed wood and vintage doors.

The City of Vancouver encourages community bulletin boards as a way to foster connections. In its 2013 Engaged City Task Force Report, bulletin boards were specifically mentioned as an easy, and relatively low-cost, place making tool for neighbourhoods. Using regular permitting channels, the permit for Project Green Bloc's bulletin board took about one month, and cost \$275.

Street Mural Case Study – Project Green Bloc

A final community place making project happened in September 2015, with the painting of a street mural at the intersection of Columbia St and 23rd Ave. Funding was provided through the City of Vancouver's Neighbourhood Matching Funds, and covered artist's fees, materials and street closure permits.

The mural served not only as a physical legacy of Project Green Bloc, but as a chance to tell different aspects of the project's story. A design charrette was held in the neighbourhood, where participants shared their ideas. They were asked which parts of Project Green Bloc were most important to them, and what kind of aesthetic appeal they wanted the street mural to have. In the end, the design of the street mural ended up highlighting food and

gathering, a connection to local water systems and a commitment to non-automobile transportation.

Materials and Construction

Paint was supplied through a City recommended paint store. The mural was painted using outdoor latex paint, mixed with grit to prevent slipperiness and help with longevity. However, the mural is only intended to be short-term, as per City guidelines, and so the paint wears away relatively quickly. Barricades to close the surrounding streets and the intersection were rented through a local tools supply company.

Permits were provided through the Department of Transportation and Viva Vancouver. Although costs were covered through the Neighbourhood Matching Fund grant, they still totaled \$205, a barrier for some neighbourhoods. Street closure planning was done through the city at the cost of \$170.

Painting was done by local neighbours, primarily parents and their children. Prep started at 8 in the morning, with sweeping and chalking the mural outline. Then, a paint-by-numbers outline was done, so that painters could easily contribute, even if they had little-to-no artistic skill. Over 40 people came out to paint over the course of several hours.

Wake and Shakes

Connect with neighbors before work and start your day off right! Have a healthy smoothie potluck while blasting some great tunes.

Documentary screening

Hold a movie night on a topical film, and perhaps even hold a debrief discussion after!

Nature in Your Backyard

Pollinator Pathway Case Study – Project Green Bloc

Our flowers, fruit and food plants rely on bees and other bugs and birds to pollinate them. Due to pesticides and habitat loss, bee populations are in decline. To support healthy bees, Project Green Bloc built a Pollinator Pathway—a collection of planters with variety of pollinator-friendly flowers. With funding from the City of Vancouver’s Neighbourhood Matching Fund, work was started on eight planter boxes that would provide seasonal sustenance for bees.

Materials and Construction

The project was spearheaded by one neighbor in particular, who had bee colonies in his backyard. Design was done by an Evergreen employee, creating eight large honeycomb-shaped boxes. Solid oak lumber was sourced from a local supplier, and pollinator-appropriate plants were bought at local nurseries. The construction work was done by a local contractor.

The planters were installed along 23 Ave, between Columbia and Yukon streets. Permits were needed from the City of Vancouver, who approved the dimensions and placement of each

planter. Approval was also needed from the neighbours whose house the planters sat in front of. Changes were made to the design due to concerns about benches being attached to the planters, and their potential use as spots for loitering.

Lighter Footprint Food

Kitchen Tables Case Study – Project Green Bloc

Two kitchen tables were held, that taught participants how to cook delicious vegetarian meals. Funding was given by the Sitka Foundation. Two chefs from local restaurants gave their time at a reduced rate. 12 neighbours participated over the two sessions. One of the kitchen tables was held at a local community space, while the other was held in the house of a Project Green Bloc participant. The total budget for both kitchen tables, including the chef's time, ingredients, space rental and some wine was \$500.

Gardening & Food Growing Workshop

Get a local gardening expert or a neighbour with a green thumb to lead a session on how to start a garden, how to grow food indoors, microgreens, or another food and gardening themed workshop!

Zero Waste

Community Project Case Study – Lighter Footprint Project

The Lighter Footprint Project wanted to make a lasting impact on the community, despite the short time period, so they were insistent on the implementation of a community project that would better the neighborhood.

Residents within Vera Co-op addressed the need for a soft plastic, battery and light bulb recycling station. A closing community project will be different in each neighborhood, shifting to fit the needs of that area.

No Junk Mail Sign making

Reduce paper waste and your annoyance at junk mail and clutter.

Zero Waste workshop

Get a Zero Waste expert to share tips on how to reduce common household waste such as plastics and packaging or food waste. Or better yet, have neighbours share tips.

Energy

Home and Building Retrofits

There are lots of resources and incentives for anyone who wants to install green retrofits in their home. Check out the [City of Vancouver](#), [BC Hydro](#) or [Fortis](#) for more information.

FUNDRAISING

As mentioned in Phase 2, there are lots of opportunities to seek funding for your neighbourhood projects and workshops. Below are some national funders:

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation (TD FEF)

- » Founded by TD Bank, TD FEF is a national charity that funds environmental projects across Canada. The Foundation supports a wide range of environmental initiatives, with a primary funding focus on environmental education, urban greening and enhancing biodiversity and energy conservation

Community Foundations of Canada

- » Community Foundations of Canada is the national network for Canada's 191 community foundations. Together we help Canadians invest in making our communities better places to live, work and play.

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXAMPLES

There are lots of communities and neighbourhoods around North America, and indeed internationally, that have innovative programs in place that support individual and collective action to reduce our ecological footprint. Here are some of the ones we found that use a variety of different tactics to engage households, local government and other community partners.

Sustainable Neighbourhoods Program

Lakewood, Colorado, USA

Intended to encourage direct citizen action, the Sustainable Neighborhood Program provides support to neighborhoods in order to assist citizens in enhancing neighborhood sustainability and reducing the environmental footprint of residents. The program is credit-based. Neighborhoods in the program earn credits for participation and for achieving project goals. Depending on the number of credits earned in a given year, neighborhoods may receive designation as a "Participating Sustainable Neighborhood" or an "Outstanding Sustainable Neighborhood" from their local government.

SuN Living

Strathcona County, AB

The SuN Living framework is a collaborative process that engages diverse groups of individuals at every step of the project to encourage one planet living. Collaborative engagement allows for all unique viewpoints and skills at the table to filter into the planning and design process. Stakeholders agree to cooperate wherever possible to achieve synergies

and system solutions thereby supporting the best outcome. The framework starts with high-level sustainable neighbourhood concepts and systematically unbundles them into detailed issue areas, goals, indicators, targets, strategies and actions.

Strong Neighbourhoods: This is my neighbourhood

City of Calgary + United Way, Calgary, AB

This citizen-centric, resident-led approach to strengthening neighbourhoods encourages residents to take the "I love my neighbourhood" pledge and actively seek ways to work with the City of Calgary to make the kind of neighbourhood everyone wants to move to. Participating neighbourhoods undertake a six-stage process to identify and implement neighbourhood improvement projects, which are then reviewed by the City. The City then identified a list of projects for the neighbourhood to prioritize for implementation.

Cool Neighbourhoods

Cool North Shore Society, North Vancouver, BC

Cool Neighbourhoods is a community-based program launched by North Shore (North Vancouver and West Vancouver) residents and organized by the Cool North Shore Society. The Program fosters community engagement to support homeowners in reducing and conserving energy in their homes, understanding how simple changes affect their own lives and the world. Cool Neighbourhoods encourages participation in areas such as:

- » Simple behaviour changes;
- » Home energy management;
- » High efficiency furnaces;
- » Insulation;
- » High efficiency windows and doors;
- » Sealing, caulking, and weather stripping; and
- » Renewable energy.

Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plan (SNAP)

Toronto and Region Conservation Area (TRCA), Toronto, ON

The Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plan (SNAP) is an innovative pilot program led by Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) in collaboration with many municipal and community partners including residents, businesses, local groups and institutions. The project seeks to develop action plans to improve the local environment on the neighbourhood scale and build resiliency against climate change by greening local infrastructure and encouraging positive behavior changes among residents. Each SNAP neighbourhood features unique initiatives to inspire residents, businesses and governments to take action. Possible SNAP

retrofit projects include: energy and water conservation measures, renewable energy production, permeable pavement, rainwater management technologies and eco-friendly landscaping.

REconomy Project

Transition Network, Totne, UK

The REconomy Project is part of the Transition Network, a global grassroots movement of communities seeking to strengthen their resilience to problems including climate change, rising energy prices, economic uncertainty and inequality.

The REconomy Project works with communities to take on the exciting challenge of transforming their economic destinies – moving away from the doomed ‘business as usual’ model and towards something that helps build resilience rather than economic growth at any cost. Examples of REconomy initiatives include community owned energy companies, food businesses, local currency projects, setting up ‘buy local campaigns, or working with local businesses in some other way.

Building Resilient Neighbourhoods

BC Healthy Communities + Transition Victoria, Victoria, BC

The Building Resilient Neighbourhoods Project is about working together to increase the capacity of citizens to find new paths for taking collective action on shared priorities. Building community resilience is about addressing social, environmental and economic issues that challenge human and community well-being. Meeting our basic needs closer to home through expanding local, co-operative and self-reliant communities is a key strategy to help us reduce our impact on the environment, while enhancing community prosperity and strengthening social ties and community cohesion.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Building Resilient Neighbourhoods initiatives, and [here](#) for more resources on resilient neighbourhoods.

Cleveland Climate Action Fund

Cleveland Climate Action Fund, Cleveland, Ohio, USA

In 2008 the Cleveland Climate Action Fund was founded as the first community-based, open-access carbon reduction fund in the United States. Since then, the Fund has invested thousands of dollars in projects throughout Cleveland that both improve resident’s lives while mitigating carbon emissions. Cleveland Climate Action Fund provides a benefit to the community by funding local projects and allowing people to locally mitigate climate impact factors such as traveling, commuting and home/business utilities usage. Donor’s contributions create sustainable, positive change in local Cleveland neighborhoods.

Click here for the [Neighbourhood Climate Action Toolkit](#).

Active Neighbourhoods Calgary

Sustainable Calgary, Calgary, AB

Active Neighbourhoods is aimed at creating opportunities for citizen engagement in the planning process as well as active transportation options, with the goal of making selected communities more “liveable.” The plan is not to overhaul neighbourhoods with grand schemes, but rather to create achievable projects that will have a significant benefit in the daily lives of citizens, as identified by citizens. Examples might include advocating for bike lanes, new green public spaces or widening sidewalks.

The project is based on an approach piloted in four Quebec communities. The project is being led locally by Sustainable Calgary and further East in Canada by Montreal Urban Ecology Centre and the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation.

Project Neutral

Toronto, ON

Working at the juncture of homeowners, neighbourhoods, municipalities and the energy sector, Project Neutral is supporting local and national greenhouse gas reduction efforts. By allowing households to benchmark and compare their carbon footprint to other households at the neighbourhood and city-level, and to municipal reduction targets, Project Neutral (PN) is creating a culture of awareness around greenhouse gas emissions and connecting individuals to actions.

Project Neutral participants undertake a three-step process:

1. Benchmark (measure your carbon footprint through a survey)
2. Compare (to neighbours)
3. Reduce (set target)

Collaborating to realize the Greenest City Lighter Footprint goal:
Centre for Sustainability Whistler, Evergreen, SFU Public Square with support from
One Earth Initiative, and the City of Vancouver.



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