

Lighter Living ACTION PACK for Neighbourhoods in BC

*A fun guide to engage with your neighbours
in climate- and planet-friendly living for all*

1

BUILDING
ON THE
BLOCK
PARTY

2

GOOD
STUFF

3

BIG
WINS

4

NEXT-LEVEL
FOOD

5

LIFE
CHANGES

6

CULTIVATING
CONNECTION

7

LIGHTER
LIVING
SUPER
CHALLENGE

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OneEarth

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Vancity



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Guide at a Glance

This guide supports neighbourhood action to advance lighter living. You can do this by taking five basic steps:

1. Get to know lighter living (see definition).
2. Gather a few (or a lot) of your neighbours.*
3. Pick one of seven lighter living action packages.
4. Take action!
5. Share and repeat.

* or your friends, family, school, co-workers, etc. — your community!

In this guide, you'll find resources to help you and your neighbours identify the assets in your community, work together well, gather support, and overall, have fun! Share your experiences and get in touch with the OneEarth team at info@oneearthweb.org.

LIGHTER LIVING MEANS...

meeting the everyday needs and aspirations of everyone in ways that make us and Earth's living systems happy and healthy. This includes:

- Living within ecological and climate footprints
- Being inclusive of diverse needs and experiences
- Working to increase justice and wellbeing for all.

The 7 Action Packages

In each package, you'll find fun and inspiring actions that you and your neighbours can take to have the highest impact to advance lighter living. Priority areas include how we eat, how we move around, how we live in our homes and the stuff we buy.

1 • **BUILDING ON THE BLOCK PARTY** – Have fun hosting your neighbours, with a lasting impact on everyone's lighter living practices.

2 • **GOOD STUFF** – Extend the lives of everyday things and enjoy less waste, more sharing and more meaningful experiences.

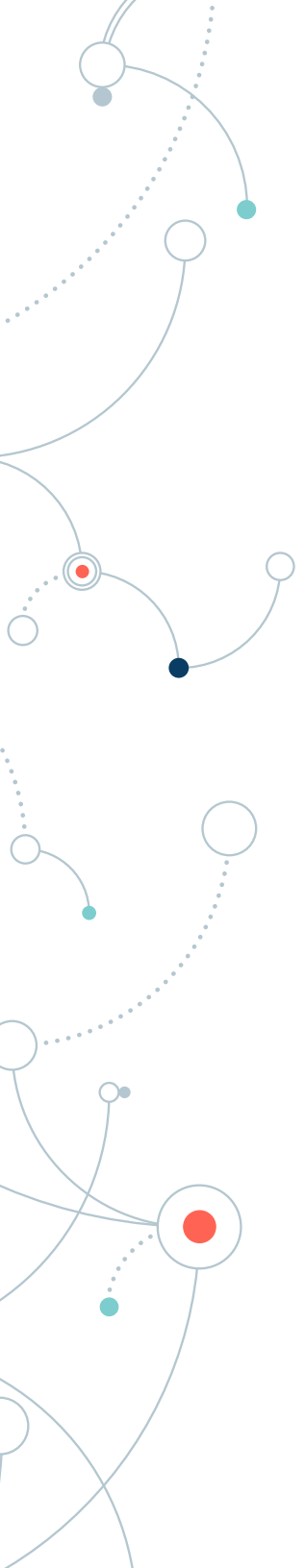
3 • **BIG WINS** – Support long-term choices that have the greatest impact in reducing our ecological and climate footprints.

4 • **NEXT-LEVEL FOOD** – Fuel healthy eating practices that are better for the planet through plant-rich meals and less food waste.

5 • **LIFE CHANGES** – Foster new habits and traditions during periods of big life transition, from moving to retiring to having kids.

6 • **CULTIVATING CONNECTION** – Build a fairer, more inclusive community, inspired by both new and traditional living practices.

7 • **LIGHTER LIVING SUPER CHALLENGE** – Be bold! Commit to sustained, multi-year, lighter living action in your neighbourhood.



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WELCOME!

Welcome to the Lighter Living Action Pack for Neighbourhoods in British Columbia!

This guide helps you take steps to advance lighter living in your neighbourhood, with the people who live near you or even on your street! Lighter living means meeting the everyday needs and aspirations of everyone in ways that make us and the Earth's living systems happy and healthy.

The guide is based on the view that when we join up with others and take bold and inspired action, we can really make a difference in our communities for the long term.

We want to make sure you're having the biggest impact possible. That's why this guide is based on the latest science and research on our local footprints in Southwest BC.

This guide points to the highest-priority actions we can take locally to reduce our impacts on climate change and the environment, while also keeping in mind the need to support fair, healthy and meaningful lives for all residents.

We hope you're inspired by the possibilities — and most of all, have fun together!

It's About Footprints, Justice and Wellbeing

Reducing footprints

The actions in this guide are designed to reduce both carbon and ecological footprints. These metrics are useful in helping us see how close (or far) we are to living within the limits of our planet, and what we need to do to get on track — as individuals and as communities.

Carbon Footprint

- Our **carbon footprint** measures total emissions of greenhouse gases, the gases released into the atmosphere that heat up our planet. The more we can lower our carbon footprints, the faster we can get to stabilizing climate change and minimizing harm.

Ecological Footprint

- Our **ecological footprint** goes one step further: measuring the overall impact we're having in terms of depleting (or replenishing) the Earth's resources. A lighter ecological footprint means a healthier planet for all living things and the systems that support us.

LEARN MORE!

Want to learn more?
Visit onearthweb.org
for resources on:

- ✓ Why footprints matter
- ✓ The differences between carbon and ecological footprints
- ✓ How to calculate your own footprint
- ✓ Footprint campaigns worldwide
- ✓ Lighter living and social justice

Advancing justice and wellbeing

This guide also puts social justice at the forefront. We want to help you connect the dots between your efforts to achieve lighter living and the broader movements in our communities to support diversity, equity and inclusion. The seven action packages prioritize shifts that lead to better living and greater wellbeing for everyone, not just for a select few.

We encourage you to learn more about and tap into the diverse insights, skills and experiences that exist in your neighbourhood. We also invite you to explore the ways that your own lived experience intersects with how you pursue lighter living.

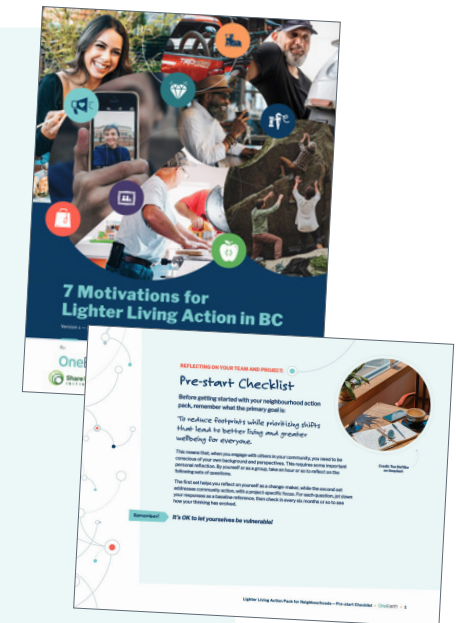
Ultimately, lighter living is about living better lives — with a focus on respecting our planet and each other and prioritizing more of what matters, not just more stuff or harmful consumption. Let's build what matters—including health, security, belonging, trust and joy.



UBC Climate Strike, 2019
(credit: Ubysssey)

YOU ARE A KEY PLAYER — AND YOU'RE NOT ALONE!

The climate movement needs you — and everyone! Whether you realize it or not, you are an agent of change and bring a unique perspective and strength to this work. You are part of a movement of many working on climate, justice, nature and healthy communities. Use the guide, [7 BC Motivations for Lighter Living Action](#), to engage your neighbours in ways that speak to their diverse needs and values. Join forces with others and reflect more on how your own lived experience informs your capacity to be a lighter living champion. Turn to our [Pre-start Checklist](#) to reflect on your role and the work ahead (p. 49).



Lighter Living Priorities

Some actions matter more than others in addressing our climate and ecological crises. This guide draws from the latest science and research on our local footprints here in Southwest BC. It identifies the highest-priority actions you can take locally to move the needle on climate change and the environment.

Our ecological footprint – Southwest BC

FOOD = 50%

Key contributors: meat and dairy consumption, wasted food

MOBILITY = 25%

Key contributors: fossil fuel use in private vehicles and other modes of transportation (e.g., air travel, buses and trucks)

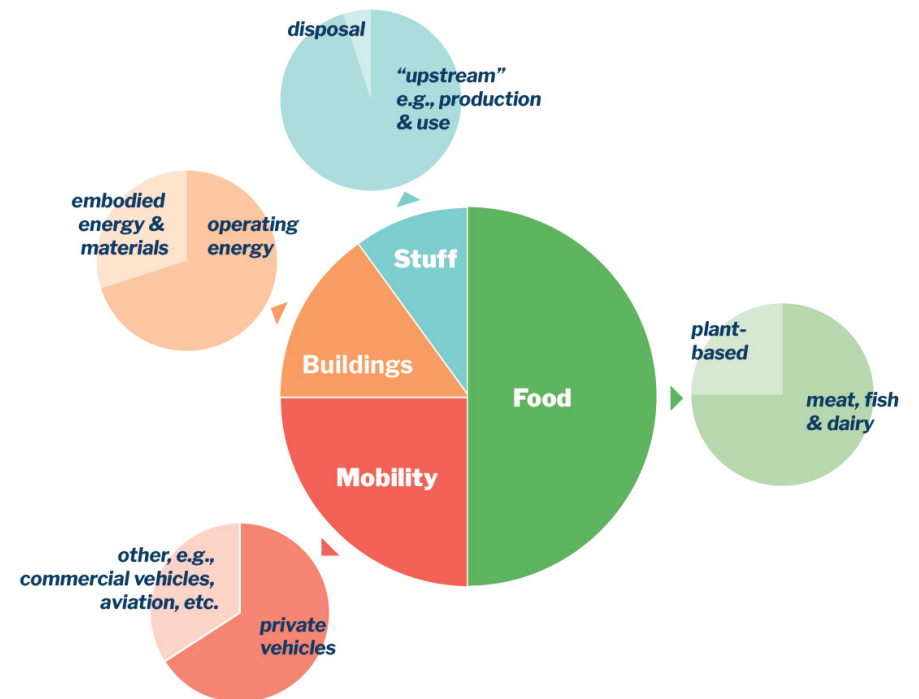
BUILDINGS = 15%

Key contributors: gas heating, energy and materials used for construction, inefficient energy use

STUFF = 10%

Key contributors: resource extraction, manufacturing, transportation, waste

Source: BCIT Centre for Ecocities



Priority areas for reducing our ecological and carbon footprints

We need to reduce our ecological footprints to ensure that we can meet our needs now and in the future. This also helps reduce our climate impacts. From an ecological footprint perspective, the highest impact area is food. From a climate perspective, it's mobility. The bottom line? We need to focus on all of these action areas to bring down our footprints.

A climate priority!

HOW WE MOVE AROUND

- Shifting away from fossil fuel transportation, especially private cars and air travel, and towards lower-carbon options like public transit and electric vehicles (charged using renewable energy).
- Developing walkable neighbourhoods and providing services and infrastructure for transit, car sharing and biking.
- Combining trips and carpooling.

A key driver!

OUR MONEY

- Supporting sustainable or local businesses, withdrawing personal investments from fossil fuel companies and supporting climate-conscious banking institutions.

WHERE WE LIVE AND WORK

- Shifting away from fossil fuels to heat and cool our homes and buildings and towards renewable energy and electrified options such as heat pumps.
- Making our buildings more efficient – including living and working in smaller spaces, increased space sharing, undertaking retrofits and using low-impact building materials.

WHAT WE EAT

- Reducing wasted food and shifting to more plant-rich diets, especially eating less red meat and dairy.

OUR STUFF

- Favouring sharing, reuse and repair to extend the life of our stuff and buying new only when needed.
- Rethinking purchases of textiles, paper and plastic products and boosting their reuse and recycling.

LEARN MORE!

Dive deeper into the impact of our lifestyles (and solutions!) through our partners:

- ✓ [BCIT Centre for Ecocities](#)
- ✓ [Hot or Cool Institute](#)
- ✓ [Global Footprint Network](#)
- ✓ and on our [OneEarth website](#)

THE 7 ACTION PACKAGES

Here's where you get to pick your action pack! In each of our seven packages, you find fun and inspiring actions you and your neighbours can take to advance lighter living here in British Columbia. The packages focus on actions that have the highest footprint impact, covering priority areas like how we eat, how we move around, how we live in our homes and the stuff we buy.

TIP!

START WITH WHATEVER PACKAGE SEEMS LIKE THE BEST FIT FOR YOUR COMMUNITY. ONCE YOU'VE FINISHED ONE, TAKE ON ANOTHER — OR COMMIT TO THE LIGHTER LIVING SUPER CHALLENGE!

We're here to guide you on your journey. Share your experiences and get in touch anytime at info@oneearthweb.org

The 7 action packages are:



1

BUILDING ON THE BLOCK PARTY

Have fun hosting your neighbours, with a lasting impact on everyone's lighter living practices.

2

GOOD STUFF

Extend the lives of everyday things and enjoy less waste, more sharing and more meaningful experiences.

3

BIG WINS

Support long-term choices that have the greatest impact in reducing our ecological and climate footprints.

4

NEXT-LEVEL FOOD

Fuel healthy eating practices that are better for the planet through plant-rich meals and less food waste.

5

LIFE CHANGES

Foster new habits and traditions during periods of big life transition, from moving to retiring to having kids.

6

CULTIVATING CONNECTION

Build a fairer, more inclusive community, inspired by both new and traditional living practices.

7

LIGHTER LIVING SUPER CHALLENGE

Be bold!

Commit to sustained, multi-year, lighter living action in your neighbourhood.

1

BUILDING ON THE BLOCK PARTY

Block parties are a popular, fun and appealing neighbourhood activity. And there are lots of ways to take these great community events even further, with a lighter living twist.

It's time to build on
the block party!



Why block parties?

Across Southwest BC, block parties are a common way that neighbours create community, and for residents to stay connected. Many block parties have been running for 25 years and have never missed a year!

Kids that grew up playing at block parties in their neighbourhood have grown up to be the adults organizing those same events. The regularity, dependability and appeal of block parties creates an opportunity to engage residents in the lighter living conversation in new ways.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are 100s of block parties every year in Metro Vancouver — and more across BC. You can apply for a \$500 Neighbourhood Small Grant to support a local project: neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca



Car Free Day 2016:
Main Street from Broadway
to 30th Avenue, Vancouver.
(credit: Car Free Day Vancouver)

LIGHTER LIVING OPPORTUNITY

You can build lighter living into your block party by:

- Making it zero waste
- Giving it a broader lighter living theme
- Showcasing lighter living opportunities available to local residents
- Highlighting the value of block parties for helping neighbours connect, build understanding and boost community resilience

How to take action

You may already be doing things in your daily life that model the change you want to see. Practicing these at home and starting a conversation with your neighbours is powerful. But remember, to have an even bigger impact, you'll want to engage others as well!

JUST YOU

- Bring reusable dishware and decorations to the party
- Use active transit (walking, cycling, etc.) to get there
- Volunteer to help plan a sustainable event
- Share your own lighter living experiences and stories with neighbours at the event

Check off the things you're already doing or are inspired to do!

YOU & A FEW OTHERS

- Supply water coolers and reusable dishware to reduce disposable items
- Shop for party food in bulk, then shrink portion sizes to reduce waste
- Arrange for recycling options
- Provide maps of local cycling infrastructure or rideshare options to help reduce car use
- Conduct an audit of the walkability of your neighbourhood to improve transport options and safety concerns
- Create a competition to reduce home energy or water use

YOU & YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Theme your party around lighter living (e.g., energy savings), or align it with Car Free Day or Buy Nothing Day
- Make the event zero waste
- Invite sharing, reuse and repair businesses to showcase their services
- Share lighter living skills in person (e.g., vegetarian cooking) or have a sign-up for starting a skills exchange.
- Use the event to organize neighbourhood improvement campaigns (e.g., a green team)
- Celebrate lighter living stories and local champions (e.g., housing efficiency retrofits)

USE THIS SPACE TO ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS!

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WHO CAN YOU TEAM UP WITH TO MAKE A BIGGER IMPACT?

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DID YOU KNOW?



Car Free Day Vancouver started in protest to a highway widening project that would have increased traffic in the Grandview-Woodland neighbourhood.

Key questions to ask

Add your
thoughts →

- ❖ How can you make the block party (and similar events) accessible to all neighbours?
.....
- ❖ What information, services, skills and opportunities could you showcase at the party to celebrate local lighter living initiatives?
.....
- ❖ How could the event be more than a one-day party, serving to support new actions, behaviours and cultural norms?
.....
- ❖ Can you build on an existing community event, such as Car Free Day, with an add-on for your neighbours?
.....
- ❖ What does a “block party” look like when you live in a rural community? Can you link to existing community events?
.....
- ❖ How can your neighbourhood stay connected throughout the year — to remain focused on lighter living efforts and maintain the social benefits of working as a community?
.....

Explore and get inspiration for your own journey

Green event planning guides, like those from the [City of Vancouver](#) and [Zero Waste Vancouver](#), help you rethink the amount of waste, energy and materials consumed during event prep and activities.

Bike repair services could be a fun block party feature. Check out [Bike Kitchen at UBC](#), [Kickstand in Vancouver](#) and [HUB Cycling](#), which could also help run a bike valet for the event.

Want to power your event sustainably? Check out the solar-powered generators from [Portable Electric](#), or offer a [pedal power station](#) where attendees can hop on a bike to generate electricity.

Car Free Vancouver organizes artisan markets and other festivals at the neighbourhood scale that encourage lighter living practices like leaving your car at home and going zero waste.

For help with waste management, you can work with groups like the [Binnars Project](#) (waste-pickers) to hire folks to monitor disposal stations and make sure items are sorted correctly.



Richmond
Night Market
(credit: RNM)

SPOTLIGHT

Leveraging Car Free Day

By holding their block party the same weekend as the Car Free Day festivities, Kitsilano residents were able to build on the momentum to enjoy the neighbourhood car free, but also create family-friendly spaces tucked away from the larger festivities where neighbours could connect with one another.

The block parties served as a time for neighbours to enjoy time with one another and featured fun activities like skills sharing and a potluck meal, as well as music, games and a talent show.

The Neighbourhood Small Grants team assisted organizers in applying for permits from the City of Vancouver, coordinating street barricades, featuring the local business improvement association (BIA) in gift baskets, and creating a space that encouraged connection and community.



*Kitsilano Neighbourhood
Block Party on Car Free Day
Vancouver Weekend, 2019.
(credit: Kitsilano.ca)*

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white tank top, is smiling and looking down at something in her hands. She is in a crowded indoor setting, likely a clothing swap event, with other people and clothing items visible in the background. A large red arrow-shaped graphic points downwards from the top left, containing the number 2 and the text 'GOOD STUFF'. Below this, a white box contains text about consuming differently. The background image is a photograph of the woman at the clothing swap.

2

GOOD STUFF

Consuming differently means questioning the impacts our consumption has on other people and the planet — and whether we even need certain things at all.

Find fun ways to share, reuse, repair and repurpose your stuff instead!

Why “good stuff”?

Everyone needs to consume enough to survive and thrive, but we also want to shift towards healthy, happy lifestyles that have less impact on the planet.

The energy and materials that go into making the goods we use have the greatest impact on our ecological footprints. So while recycling is great, it’s more important to reduce our overall consumption of goods — through re-thinking, sharing, repairing and reusing. This applies to clothing, sports gear, appliances, tools, toys, cars and *so much more*.

DID YOU KNOW?

In Southwest BC, 90% of the total impact of our “stuff” comes from the energy and materials used to make and ship products.

— THE THINGERY



The Thingery, a community-owned lending library of things. (credit: The Thingery)

LIGHTER LIVING OPPORTUNITY

You can embrace “good stuff” by:

- Borrowing, reusing and sharing items instead of owning them
- Repairing your things so they last longer
- Choosing pre-loved items and passing things on to others
- Supporting businesses and products with lower ecological footprints
- Enjoying low-impact experiences instead of owning lots of stuff

How to take action

You may already be doing things in your daily life that model the change you want to see. Practicing these at home and starting a conversation with your neighbours is powerful. But remember, to have an even bigger impact, you'll want to engage others as well!

JUST YOU

Check off the things you're already doing or are inspired to do!

- Reduce your use of high-footprint materials like paper, plastics and textiles
- Limit unneeded purchases (like fast fashion) and wear clothes for longer
- Choose second-hand items, and donate/swap what you don't need
- Give gifts of low-impact experiences, not stuff
- Avoid single-use plastic items
- Repair rather than replace items
- Choose durable goods / furnishings and natural materials
- Use efficient, long-lasting appliances

YOU & A FEW OTHERS

- Offer used items to neighbours or resale shops, or list them online
- Initiate local collection points to recycle batteries, textiles and appliances
- Start sharing stuff with some neighbours — from bread makers to lawnmowers
- Celebrate Buy Nothing Day together
- Support and recommend companies that use renewable materials, provide parts for repair, and take back their items for resale or recycling
- Advocate for and support city government leadership (e.g., banning single-use items, zero waste policies)

YOU & YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Organize a regular neighbourhood-wide swap or garage sale where people can trade or buy second-hand goods.
- Set up repair cafés or skill shares to teach people how to fix clothing, appliances, etc.
- Create sharing systems in your community — e.g., group woodshops or sewing facilities, apps and share sheds
- Take advantage of services instead of owning goods (e.g., community kitchens, party rentals)
- Lobby local restaurants, offices and retail outlets to reduce packaging waste and single-use plastics.

USE THIS SPACE TO ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS!

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WHO CAN YOU TEAM UP WITH TO MAKE A BIGGER IMPACT?

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DID YOU KNOW?



The average consumer bought 60% more clothes in 2014 than in 2000, but kept each garment for half as long.

(SOURCE)

Key questions to ask

- ❖ Are there ways to talk differently about consuming – with your family, friends and neighbours – to shift away from a focus on material wealth towards other ideas of wellbeing and progress?
.....
- ❖ How can your neighbourhood make meaningful changes in the overall level of stuff consumed? How will you measure that?
.....
- ❖ How can you be inclusive of community members whose basic consumption needs aren't being met?
.....
- ❖ Which aspects of the local economy could be transformed to move away from emphasizing continuous growth and harmful consumption?
.....

Add your thoughts →

Explore and get inspiration for your own journey

Online sharing apps and sites like [Bunz](#) and [Ruckify](#), as well as [Facebook Marketplace](#) and [Buy Nothing](#) groups, help you trade, buy and sell unwanted items for things you need. These apps can facilitate meetups for swaps and sales.

Refillable product suppliers are skyrocketing in popularity, empowering engagement in zero waste lifestyles. Check out [Fulfill Shoppe](#), [Nada](#) and [The Refillery](#) in the Fraser Valley; [West Coast Refill](#) and [Nezza Naturals](#) in Victoria; [The Soap Dispensary](#), [Greenworks Building Supply](#) and [Refill Road](#) in Vancouver, and [Port Moody Refillery](#).

Clothing donations and swaps help people breathe new life into old clothes, reducing fast fashion. Check out [Think Thrive](#) and the City of Abbotsford [Fix-It and Swap Events](#).

Lending libraries like [The Thingery](#), and shared spaces like [Makerspaces](#), are fun ways to borrow things when you need them and to acquire repair knowledge and other skills. [Victoria's Tool Library](#) enables you to borrow rather than buy tools.

Zero waste campaigns like [Trash Is For Tossers](#) and [My Plastic-Free Life](#) promote engagement with low-waste lifestyles, while strategies like the City of Vancouver's [Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy](#) provide government support for minimizing waste.



Refillable products.
(credit: Fahim Kassam, courtesy of Scott & Scott Architects)

SPOTLIGHT

Metro Van Repair Cafés

These days, it's often cheaper to replace broken items than to repair them. But as we seek to live lighter and reduce our footprints, we need to rethink how we value our "stuff." This includes investing in durable, longer-lasting goods while maintaining existing items as long as possible.

At free repair café events, people bring in their broken or damaged items, and experienced "fixer" volunteers (often older people) share their skills to help repair them. Repair cafés support community members who may not be able to invest in new purchases, and also eliminate the need to own a lot of tools.

In Vancouver, Metro Van Repair Cafés offer fixing stations for items from small appliances to textiles, jewellery and bikes. At the Tinkerbell Station, kids can tinker with broken items, highlighting that curiosity and creativity are at the heart of repair. In 2020, MetroVan Repair Cafés engaged 136 volunteers and repaired 230 damaged or broken items (a 62% average repair rate). They hope to bring the events to all communities across the city.

REPAIR CAFÉS "BRING BACK REPAIR AND BRING TOGETHER COMMUNITIES."

www.metrovanrepaircafes.ca



"People around the world are discovering that they'd rather spend time making social connections than buying new stuff."

NO IMPACT EXPERIMENT

*Metro Van Repair Cafés Community Event, 2019.
(credit: Metro Van Repair Cafés)*

3

BIG WINS

Some of the lighter living actions we can take have a huge impact on reducing carbon and ecological footprints. Priority areas for "big wins" include our homes and how we get around.

Be a lighter living winner with these big actions.



Why “big wins”?

While some lighter living efforts involve smaller decisions — like what to have for dinner, or whether to buy a new shirt — others involve bigger choices that have sustained, long-term impacts on our carbon and ecological footprints. These include things like where you live and the size and type of your home, upgrading your heating system or replacing a vehicle.

By rethinking your options in these “big win” areas, you can have a huge impact on shrinking your overall footprint. Your choices in these impactful areas can also influence broader initiatives by governmental and civic actors (for example, in the areas of transportation or housing).

JUST A REMINDER...

The top carbon and ecological footprint reduction priorities for BC are:

- ✓ Fossil fuel-free mobility options
- ✓ Plant-rich food options and reducing food waste
- ✓ Fossil fuel-free energy for our homes
- ✓ Lower-impact choices for our stuff through rethinking purchases and sharing, reusing and repairing more
- ✓ “Low-carbon” and ethical investment choices



Installing a heat pump can lead to big wins for the climate. (credit: City Green Solutions)

LIGHTER LIVING OPPORTUNITY

You can make big wins by:

- Adding home insulation, installing a heat pump or solar panels
- Downsizing or sharing your home, and choosing a location that enables cycling or walking
- Choosing good-quality, long-lasting appliances
- Shifting your commute to take the bus, bike or walk
- Shifting your investments away from fossil fuels
- Supporting low-carbon businesses through your purchases or investments
- Pushing for government climate action and supporting bold policies

How to take action

You may already be doing things in your daily life that model the change you want to see. Practicing these at home and starting a conversation with your neighbours is powerful. But remember, to have an even bigger impact, you'll want to engage others as well!

JUST YOU

- Install a heat pump or solar panels
- Shift your transportation habits to drive less — or not have a car at all
- On your next move, downsize and choose a home that enables walking or cycling if you can, or share your home
- Choose good-quality appliances that are energy efficient and last longer
- Buy sustainable furnishings and appliances that are good-quality, durable and made from renewable materials like wood

Check off the things you've already doing or are inspired to do!

YOU & A FEW OTHERS

- Organize a clean-up to make walking and biking paths safer, more accessible and beautiful through lighting, art, gardening and/or benches
- Coordinate a walking school bus (see p. 36) or a carpooling initiative for trips to the store
- Set up a learning group to explore investing in ways that are better for people and the planet
- Rally a group to speak on "big win" topics at local council meetings
- Start petitions and educate your neighbours about policies that are controversial but needed

YOU & YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Organize an energy retrofit challenge and get sponsors on board to offer prizes and subsidies for participating households
- Design a bike- or car-sharing program where people can lend or donate vehicles
- Highlight cycling infrastructure in the neighbourhood to increase awareness of routes
- Promote rideshare options for neighbours to limit car use and get to know each other
- Use media to showcase your neighbourhood climate action progress

USE THIS SPACE TO ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS!

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WHO CAN YOU TEAM UP WITH TO MAKE A BIGGER IMPACT?

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DID YOU KNOW?



In 2019, more than 1,200 jurisdictions worldwide declared a climate emergency.

— CITY OF VANCOUVER CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Key questions to ask

❖ Take another look at the priority areas for reducing carbon and ecological footprints. Which seem to have momentum in your neighbourhood? Are people talking about their commutes, their heating bills or renovations? This could guide where you start.

Add your thoughts →

❖ Are there sports clubs, faith communities, schools, community centres / spaces or libraries in your area that can take big-win actions?

❖ How can you be strategic with your communications to make sure you reach all potential residents that would benefit from big-win shifts?

❖ Can you and your neighbours advocate your government, businesses or others to do more? Are there local Council resolutions you can support? Petitions to sign? Public consultations to add your voices to?

Explore and get inspiration for your own journey

Sustainable Lifestyles: Options and Opportunities, a guide from OneEarth and the United Nations, gives lots of ideas for community-based action on food, mobility and housing.

For information on home retrofits and energy efficiency, check out [Better Homes BC](#) and [Bring it Home 4 the Climate](#), which also provides advice about various rebates available.

Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program (SNAP) Toronto offers an example of how to examine and develop the process for a neighbourhood-wide sustainable retrofit.

Temple Sholom's Shomrei Ha'Adamah initiative in Vancouver has encouraged more than 100 families in the Jewish congregation to pledge to reduce their household environmental footprints by 18% within a year.

E-bikes for cargo transportation started as a pilot in Vancouver in May 2021 to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution from trucks. The pilot will have e-bikes transporting cargo from micro hubs to their final destinations.



Groundswell Cohousing at the Yarrow Ecovillage.
(credit: Groundswell Cohousing)

SPOTLIGHT

Vancouver Civic Engagement

Big wins come through the commitments to take action both individually and collectively. That commitment to change is sometimes tested by various challenges, requiring champions within different spaces.

Vancouver's City Hall heard the demands of its citizens following the September 2019 Climate Strike, and within a year of the strike, they released their Climate Emergency Action Plan that included six big moves. Among those big moves were commitments to reduce building emissions from heating and hot water; since 54% of Vancouver emissions come from natural gas heating and hot water systems.

In April 2021, the Canadian Institute of Plumbing & Heating wrote a letter to the City Council asking them to delay the plan for all homes to be built with zero-emissions heating and hot water systems, which was scheduled to start on January 1, 2022. The letter asked the City Council to delay the bylaw by up to two years. City staff recommended a delay of 12 months to help speed up the permit processing times.

The proposed delay drew a big response. Hundreds of Vancouver residents wrote emails to the City Council asking them to stay with the original timeline. City Council also heard from a range of speakers — industry leaders, scientists, medical professionals, seniors, parents and teenagers — in favor of maintaining the January start. This response and strong testimonies led the City Council to vote in favor of maintaining the original start date for the bylaw.



"Climate delay is climate denial."

CHRISTINE BOYLE,
VANCOUVER CITY COUNCILLOR

Vancouverites take to social media and build momentum for the campaign to pass the Climate Emergency Action Plan. (credit: Christine Boyle)

4

NEXT-LEVEL FOOD

Food is one of the most powerful ways to reduce footprints, and it brings us together.

There's a big opportunity for action that connects the dots across how we produce, transport and consume the delicious food we depend on.

Let's go to the next level on food!



Why “next-level” food?

When we talk about “next-level” food, we’re talking about going beyond the common things we do at home. You can influence behaviour in your neighbourhood through fun initiatives that transform people’s outlooks, habits and relationships with food – and with each other.

This includes efforts to reduce food waste, a major part of our footprints. There’s a lot of room for improvement: from the energy and resources used in food production, to packaging and plastic bags, to our own expectations about how perfect our food should look in the supermarket.

While not all of us need to suddenly go fully vegan or vegetarian or grow a productive home garden, there are positive steps each neighbourhood can take to reduce our food footprints.

DID YOU KNOW?

About a quarter of all residential garbage in BC consists of spoiled and uneaten food – the largest of all waste streams.

— RESIDENTIAL FOOD WASTE PREVENTION TOOLKIT, BC MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT



West End cooking workshop
(credit: Evergreen's Green Bloc)

LIGHTER LIVING OPPORTUNITY

You can take food action to the next level by:

- Promoting a shift to more plant-rich diets
- Setting up food rescue options for still-edible items
- Starting community gardens and composting
- Supporting local, organic farmers

How to take action

You may already be doing things in your daily life that model the change you want to see. Practicing these at home and starting a conversation with your neighbours is powerful. But remember, to have an even bigger impact, you'll want to engage others as well!

JUST YOU

- Shift to a plant-rich diet (and minimize meat and dairy)
- Prepare meal plans at home to prevent wasted food
- Compost or reuse food scraps
- Reduce use of processed foods
- Purchase from local farms
- Choose local, in-season vegetables and fruits

Check off the things you're already doing or are inspired to do!

YOU & A FEW OTHERS

- Promote Meatless Monday challenges with your neighbours
- Measure how much food is being wasted to show the scope of the problem, and develop solutions with your neighbours
- Use apps like OLIO to make it easier to share rather than toss excess food
- Promote composting on your street
- Organize a zero waste potluck
- Organize joint bulk buying of food on your street
- Increase knowledge about food expiry dates and good storage practices

YOU & YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Plan events with plant-rich menus and smaller portion sizes
- Host a Love Food, Hate Waste neighbourhood challenge, with prizes
- Lobby local grocers, restaurants and hotels to supply and serve meat alternatives, and to deal with food waste
- Ask grocery store managers how they're dealing with food waste / expired goods
- Organize a sustainable "Big Lunch" to get the neighbourhood eating together
- Promote shared kitchen spaces where neighbours can swap recipes

USE THIS SPACE TO ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS!

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WHO CAN YOU TEAM UP WITH TO MAKE A BIGGER IMPACT?

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DID YOU KNOW?



As much as 63% of the food Canadians throw away could have been eaten.

— LOVE FOOD, HATE WASTE

Key questions to ask

Add your thoughts →

- ❖ Do you know how much food your community wastes in an average week? How could you go about finding out?
.....
- ❖ Who tends to eat what? Are there opportunities to replace traditional meals high in red meat and dairy with other culturally appropriate alternatives? (e.g., at church, events or other community gatherings)
.....
- ❖ Is there food insecurity (or “food deserts”) in your neighbourhood? Are there ways the community can come together to support those in need? How can we connect growers with people in need?
.....
- ❖ Is organic food affordable in your neighbourhood? Are there ways to make it more accessible?
.....
- ❖ Are local farms and gardens connecting neighbours with homegrown food options (e.g., through markets), or does your community’s food mostly come from elsewhere?
.....
- ❖ Are there opportunities to come together around food to learn about one another’s culture, traditions and identities?
.....

Explore and get inspiration for your own journey

Share food through sites like [OLIO](#) and [Nextdoor](#) and learn about food waste through [Love Food, Hate Waste](#).

For package-free grocery shopping, check out [Nada](#), [PickEco Refills](#) in Chilliwack and Vancouver Island’s [Zero Waste Emporium](#), as well as zero waste grocery delivery services like [Jarr](#) and [Livlite](#).

To reduce food waste, social enterprises like [Luv the Grub](#) employ new immigrants and refugees to make chutneys and spreads from produce seconds. Organizations like [FoodMesh](#) and [Vancouver Food Runners](#) help connect excess local food with those in need.

Networked hubs like the [BC Food Hub Network](#) offer food producers and processors access to shared equipment and tech.

To support access to culturally appropriate groceries for those facing barriers, the [Chinatown Cares Grocery Delivery Service](#) was created during COVID-19 to deliver groceries to isolated, Chinese-speaking seniors.

Planet-friendly recipes abound: for example, the [EAT-Lancet Commission on Food, Planet and Health](#) shares [recipes](#) based on the science in its report [Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems](#).

Community education, skills building and incubators such as [CRFAIR](#), [Haliburton Farms](#) and [Food Eco District](#) offer fresh ways to engage with vibrant sustainable food communities.

Start volunteering, e.g., [Fraser Valley Gleaners Society](#), a faith-based organization reducing food waste by working with volunteers, collecting produce and processing it for distribution to developing countries.



Vancouver Island residents turn their front yards into food gardens amid COVID-19. (credit: CBC)

SPOTLIGHT

Il Centro

For many, food is a cultural practice. This is evident at Vancouver's Italian Cultural Centre, Il Centro. A priority for Il Centro is to connect the local community with Italian food traditions, local food systems and sustainability. As a result, they offer a number of workshops and events to engage people with food in both new and old ways.

Among the events Il Centro has organized are the "Head to Tail" dinners, where the entire animal is consumed (even the less popular cuts and parts). These dinners highlight how the less popular parts of an animal can still be used rather than thrown away while simultaneously creating an opportunity to engage in Italian culture. On the plant-based side of things, Il Centro hosted a number of vegan cheesemaking workshops for the community, showcasing how cultural practices can be held even through less traditional means.

The Italian Cultural Centre also boasts a rich food landscape at their community garden, Il Giardino, in Beaconsfield Park. The garden includes an orchard of fruit trees, an apiary housing Italian honey bees managed by the local nonprofit Hives for Humanity, and a community oven — Il Forno — not far from the garden beds. Historically, community ovens acted as gathering spots for communities in Italy. Workshops at the garden include information on what plants work in this climate and what plants are beneficial to the bees, as well as how to make bread and pizza using the oven.

Food often acts as an enticing invitation into culture at Il Centro, and they serve it up in a way that engages their community in lighter living at the same time.

www.italianculturalcentre.ca



In 2019, the Italian Cultural Centre engaged 900 people in a variety of workshops, including vegan cheesemaking and raising Italian honeybees.

Community members gather for an al fresco feast at Il Centro's East Van Long Table Dinner (credit: Il Centro - Italian Cultural Centre of Vancouver)

5

LIFE CHANGES

Key life transitions and times of big societal change can be challenging, but they also present opportunities to introduce new lighter living habits and practices.

Build on times of change and create long-lasting impact!



Why focus on life changes?

Key life changes include things like moving houses, immigrating, transitioning to middle or high school, starting university, getting married, having a baby, retirement and dealing with the end-of-life.

These periods, as well as times of big societal upheaval (like the COVID-19 pandemic), can be stressful and uncertain. But they're also times of great potential, when people can be supported to adjust their daily patterns and behaviours — sometimes for the long term.

By triggering important conversations and providing support during these special times, we can help people in making long-term investments in habits and behaviours that are aligned with lighter living practices. We can also shift to low-impact celebrations and events that mark these changes.

"Frequently, the desire for human connection isn't what comes to mind when we think of the typical celebration. From baby showers to sweet sixteens, extravagant events seem to have become a cultural expectation."

— NEW DREAM



Amma Vancouver
Annual Garage Sale.
(credit: Amma)

LIGHTER LIVING OPPORTUNITY

You can support lighter living during key life changes by:

- Helping neighbours sell or donate items when they move or downsize
- Supporting people to take “big win” high-impact actions (see Package 3) during life changes
- Renting rather than buying items like formal attire and kitchen supplies
- Choosing zero waste food items, invitations and decor
- Creating new traditions that celebrate the joy of being together over giving stuff

How to take action

You may already be doing things in your daily life that model the change you want to see. Practicing these at home and starting a conversation with your neighbours is powerful. But remember, to have an even bigger impact, you'll want to engage others as well!

JUST YOU

Check off the things you're already doing or are inspired to do!

- When moving, look for a location that can meet all your needs with limited travel
- When job searching, explore the options closest to you
- Register non-material wishes for birthdays and weddings
- Mark meaningful moments with a staycation vs. travel abroad
- Hire event companies that are committed to sustainability
- Rent or borrow formal and specialised attire instead of buying it for an event
- Save and reuse event decorations

YOU & A FEW OTHERS

- Support friends in periods of transition to take "big win" actions (see [Package 3](#))
- Evolve traditions to reduce waste, and rethink meals to be climate-friendly
- Focus on the joy of being together vs. the stuff associated with events
- Rent dishes for large gatherings, or invite people to bring their own
- Revive traditional ways of celebrating that have lower footprints
- Go paperless for invitations and RSVPs, and wrap gifts with reusable, recyclable and compostable materials
- Arrange joint celebrations, like a party for all kids born in the same month

YOU & YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Arrange a neighbourhood "welcome wagon" for immigrants and new residents that showcases lighter living options (e.g., a transit pass).
- Solicit donations of used home and baby items to support newlyweds or parents
- Create a map showing local walking, cycling and transit routes to commercial centres, to help residents and newcomers to the area
- Organize skills exchanges instead of presents to support local gift-giving
- Host a fund drive to build up an inventory of neighbourhood celebration supplies
- Create a "new parent" package showcasing low-impact ideas and resources.

USE THIS SPACE TO ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS!

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WHO CAN YOU TEAM UP WITH TO MAKE A BIGGER IMPACT?

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DID YOU KNOW?



Parents typically spend thousands of dollars on new things in preparation for their baby. They could save a lot if they embraced more secondhand, sharing and borrowing.

Key questions to ask

Add your thoughts →

- ❖ How do you traditionally celebrate milestone events in your culture? Are there ways to reduce the waste in these events?
.....
- ❖ Can you challenge expectations (your own, and those of friends, family and neighbours) to make these celebrations more sustainable?
.....
- ❖ What steps can you take to prepare for big life moments in advance? What support (from neighbours, governments, businesses) can you get to make these transitions also a transition to lighter living?
.....
- ❖ Do you communicate your wishes when it comes to lighter living and how you'd like others to mark important occasions in your life?
.....
- ❖ Can you create a plan for staying true to your values, even when you're busy and distracted?
.....
- ❖ Are there local rental and community sharing initiatives that can help significantly reduce waste at your events?
.....

Explore and get inspiration for your own journey

Rent baby gear to get you through parenting phases that require specialized items. [Babyquip](#) in Langley and Surrey, and [Wee Travel](#) in Vancouver and Victoria, deliver insured gear to your door and will even meet you at the airport!

Health care equipment rentals help you avoid buying costly items for single-time use. Check out [Canadian Red Cross Health Equipment Loans](#), which serves BC, as well as [Abbey Medical Supplies](#) in Abbotsford, [LifeCare Medical](#) in Maple Ridge and [Island Mediquip](#) on Vancouver Island.

Rent electronics, outdoor gear, and home and garden goods through [Quupe](#), an insured platform available across Canada.

When celebrating big life moments, consider dish rental services like [Mt. Pleasant Dish Box](#) and [Clark Park Party Box](#), or Trout Lake Community Centre's [Party in a Box](#) (p. 43 in the Recreation Guide).

Simplify the holidays, from Christmas to birthdays and more, with resources from the US-based Center for Biological Diversity.

Get tips for having a sustainable wedding from [Trash Is For Tossers](#).



Nature Grove green burial area in Parksville, BC. (credit: Yates Memorial Services)

SPOTLIGHT

Walking School Bus

Key to lighter living is shifting our transportation choices away from high-impact modes that increase our climate and ecological footprints. This means embracing safe, accessible and enjoyable alternatives to car ownership, including increasing the share of trips by walking, cycling and public transit.

The walking school bus is a fun neighbourhood-based solution. Chaperoned by an adult volunteer (often a parent), children walk to school together along an established route, picking up new passengers (kids) at scheduled “stops” along the way. This has the potential to shift long-term commuting patterns in the neighbourhood.

Once the walking school bus is set up in the neighbourhood (across age groups), the leadership of organizing it can be passed down. It can then become a program that parents enroll their kids in as they enter the school system.

Benefits of the “pedestrian bus” for children include: a chance to make new friends, pleasure and sense of belonging to a group, learning to become a good pedestrian, better concentration in class, and increased daily physical activity. Benefits for communities include: fewer cars, since families walk more to get around; a greener neighbourhood; citizen involvement in an intergenerational project; and strengthening the social fabric.

walkingschoolbus.cancer.ca
(includes a Start Up Guide)



“58% of parents say that they always walked to school when they were children: only 28% say that their children are doing it today.”

WALKING SCHOOL BUS

Walk n Roll to School Celebration Week: Encouraging BC's youngest residents (and their parents!) to choose active transportation and promote a safe and walkable community. (credit: UTownUBC)

6

CULTIVATING CONNECTION

Neighbourhoods that are aligned, collaborative and deeply connected can take more effective action towards a healthier, sustainable and more just future for all.

So let's build together and learn from each other!



Why a connected neighbourhood?

By fostering connection in our communities, we're able to better support each other in pursuing lighter living. Greater connection allows us to serve the needs of all residents, including people of diverse races and incomes, the elderly or isolated, the homeless or poorly housed, people with disabilities and anyone facing systemic barriers to justice and wellbeing.

Through connection, we're able to share knowledge, experiences, and resources, extend a helping hand and show solidarity. Connected communities thrive on elevating diverse perspectives, multi-generational communication, mutual aid, collective values and social equity. By becoming more aware of the unique needs around wellbeing and lighter living in our communities, we can find ways to address these needs together.

Creating connection and a deep sense of community is a key part of impactful change towards lighter living and equitable wellbeing for all.



Members of the South Vancouver Food Network (SVFN) prepare a meal. (credit: Vancouver Food Network)

LIGHTER LIVING OPPORTUNITY

You can nurture and support a connected neighbourhood by:

- Reaching out to neighbours directly to provide support
- Connecting those who can give with those who need help
- Learning from residents already engaged in lighter living cultural practices, and supporting their leadership and decision making
- Buying from local family- and minority-owned businesses
- Leveraging community spaces like town halls, mutual aid networks and community fridges or pantries
- Advocating for folks facing barriers to wellbeing and supporting movements to remove these barriers

How to take action

You may already be doing things in your daily life that model the change you want to see. Practicing these at home and starting a conversation with your neighbours is powerful. But remember, to have an even bigger impact, you'll want to engage others as well!

JUST YOU

Check off the things you're already doing or are inspired to do!

- Reach out to neighbours directly to offer your help, support and resources
- Learn about the active movements, initiatives and interest groups in your neighbourhood and how to get involved
- Join local online groups to connect with community members and to coordinate actions
- Buy from local, minority-owned businesses and encourage others to do the same
- Engage in conversations in your household around social justice, equity, mutual aid and cultural awareness

YOU & A FEW OTHERS

- Start group conversations around social issues, cultural awareness, equity, justice
- Form a pod to engage in group service projects, like shopping for the elderly, food sharing, dog walking, etc.
- Record the needs of your community through anonymous surveys and interviews with people taking action
- Gather local artists to spread messaging about mutual aid and community building
- Create a database of local businesses and services where residents can share resources, actions or news
- Revitalize outdoor spaces that provide access to nature for community use.

YOU & YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Organize a mutual aid sign-up for people to offer skills or resources, and ask for things they need
- Coordinate an accessible community space that can host regular gatherings like town halls, celebrations and events
- Advocate for free mental health services where residents can receive support
- Coordinate shared office space where people can collaborate and share resources (at a local business/company?)
- Design a bike- or car-sharing program where people can lend/donate vehicles
- Create spaces that encourage intergenerational leadership and knowledge sharing

USE THIS SPACE TO ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS!

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WHO CAN YOU TEAM UP WITH TO MAKE A BIGGER IMPACT?

.....

.....

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DID YOU KNOW?



45% of BCers want to be more involved in their communities. 30% of Canadians feel disconnected from their neighbours. Time for change!

(SOURCE: VANCOUVER FOUNDATION AND MACLEANS)

Key questions to ask

- ❖ What identity groups or demographics are represented in your area? What needs and barriers to participation might these groups face? Can you provide support with, e.g., bus passes or childminding?
- ❖ How might you cultivate a deep understanding of the experience of historically marginalized communities?
- ❖ What broader approaches to lighter living are evident in your neighbourhood? (e.g., growing your own food, swapping toys/books)
- ❖ What language is used to talk about these actions? How could you connect and mobilize more people around them?
- ❖ How might you and your neighbours re-imagine your neighbourhood with greater mutual support? What might this mean for the wellbeing of all?
- ❖ How could you learn more about neighbours' skill sets, lived experiences, passion points and interests?

Add your thoughts →

Explore and get inspiration for your own journey

Food support projects that advance equity and social justice include [FoodShare Emergency Good Food Box](#), Toronto's [Cooking for COVID](#) and [FridgeShare](#), which provides community fridges.

Sharing initiatives for people in need include the [Disability Justice Network of Ontario](#) and [VALU CO-OP x Coming Together Vancouver](#). [Caregivers Action Centre](#) provides support to migrant women doing essential work. [OneEarth's Local Governments and the Sharing Economy](#) also helps local communities advance sharing.

Accessible transport initiatives include [Cycling without Age](#), which offers free bike rides to the elderly, and [Nice Ride](#), which makes bike sharing more accessible for the low-income and marginalized.

To take your concerns to your local government, see the David Suzuki Foundation's [tips for mobilizing local government climate action](#).

Local databases in BC include [Mutual Aid Vancouver \(MAV\)](#) and [bc211](#).

Bioregional's One Planet Cities program, including Saanich, outlines 10 principles and a common language for participants to reduce footprints.

Global examples of low-footprint living include New York's [Penn South](#); [Kislábnyom](#) from [GreenDependent](#) in Hungary; and low cost innovations in [India](#).

Futuring exercises inspire us to live differently: see [African Alternative Post-Fossil City](#), [A Day in 2030](#), [SPREAD Sustainable Lifestyles 2050](#).



Take what you need, leave what you can from [The Local Access Fridge \(LOAF\)](#). (credit: [Local Open Access Fridge](#))

SPOTLIGHT

Hives for Humanity

Hives for Humanity, a Vancouver-based non-profit, set up its first beehive in 2012 in the Hastings Folk Garden in the Downtown Eastside. The goal was to help residents connect to nature, but the garden did that and more: it created deeper connections within the community. Hives for Humanity has since grown to create a network that is inclusive, caring, collaborative and sustainable.

Hives for Humanity invites community members to care for the bees and take part in an activity that's nurturing to themselves and the environment. The care of the community extends to other organizations, through projects including beautifying the area through planters, reclaiming wood for beekeeping and using beeswax for wood conditioning, and working with fiber artists and weavers. The connections that Hives for Humanity makes ripple throughout the community.

Wood Shop has been able to employ residents who would normally face barriers, totalling over 7,800 work hours and resulting in more than \$93,000 in compensation. Hives for Humanity has helped outline informed consent processes for working with community members in the Downtown Eastside among larger organizations who seek to do research or make a product from the community's culture.

www.hivesforhumanity.com



"We support at-risk populations of people and pollinators. And we do so with respect and joy."

HIVES FOR HUMANITY

Ali and Sarah from Hives for Humanity in front of the Gallery Gachet artist-painted hive sets holding the Honey Flights. (credit: Hives for Humanity)

7

LIGHTER LIVING SUPER CHALLENGE

It's time to bring it
all together!

This cross-cutting Super Challenge is the perfect way to connect the dots between the themes and high-impact actions we've been exploring.

It's all about integrating sustained lighter living across your neighbourhood over time.



Why a super challenge?

For this challenge, we've identified neighbourhood-wide activities that touch on areas we've already discussed (mobility, food, housing and "stuff"). The idea is for your neighbourhood to take on one big commitment from each of these areas over a two-year period, in order to shift norms and behaviours well into the future.

We suggest you start by forming a neighbourhood team to lead the way on the Super Challenge over the next two years. Pick a diverse and representative group – various ages and backgrounds, and living in different types of housing. Together, you'll build on your successes and eventually become a shining example of lighter living that other neighbourhoods will want to model!

TAKE THE SUPER CHALLENGE!

Yes, we realize it's a big commitment – but the results also have the potential to be so much greater. We can't wait to hear all about what you accomplish.

Please let us know if you're taking on the Super Challenge! Email us at info@oneearthweb.org



The St George Rainway Project, a community driven initiative that seeks to surface a historic waterway in Mt. Pleasant. (credit: The St. George Rainway)

LIGHTER LIVING OPPORTUNITY

This action package is a little different than the others. Get ready to dive deep!

- It encourages you to take on one specific action from each of 6 areas over a two-year period.
- Grant money is available to help! Or, you can raise funds and other resources in your community. See, e.g., [Vancity's EnviroFund Program](#), [Neighbourhood Small Grants](#), [Wayblaze crowdfunding](#) and others.
- Don't stop one action once it's time to start another! The idea is to focus on one high-impact area at a time, setting it up to continue on its own before you move on to the next.

How to take action

The more people who see lighter living in practice — and the easier it feels to them — the more likely they are to join the movement and see their own lighter living actions as mainstream.

Focus Area	YEAR 1 <i>Months</i> 1-4	YEAR 1 <i>Months</i> 5-8	YEAR 1 <i>Months</i> 9-12	YEAR 2 <i>Months</i> 1-4	YEAR 2 <i>Months</i> 5-8	YEAR 2 <i>Months</i> 9-12
Stuff	<p>Set up a monthly repair café to promote fixing broken items instead of replacing them. From phones and electronics to bikes and household appliances — build neighbourhood capacity and make it cool (and more affordable) to keep things for longer. Check out: MetroVan Repair Cafés</p>					
Food	<p>Champion the Love Food, Hate Waste campaign and make the most of the food we love by following tips like meal planning and canning. Set up a food rescue program to divert food from composts or landfills and share it with those in need. Check out: Love Food, Hate Waste</p>					
Housing	<p>Work together to increase the energy and water efficiency of households in your neighbourhood. Rent a thermal imaging camera as a block to identify heat loss and air leaks from your homes. Stick bricks in your toilets to save water or share info about low-flow toilets! Create a resource list of where to get low-flow showerheads and existing subsidies. Set up a bulk buy of supplies like insulation tape to share with neighbours — the sign-up could be at your block party. Check out: BC Home Energy Coach</p>					
Mobility	<p>Support alternatives to personal car ownership by promoting existing car-sharing services and carpooling apps like Poparide. Set a goal of getting 50 new households to sign up! Check out: Modo, Evo and Zipcar</p>					
Rooted in place	<p>Restore the habitat right where you live — the local stream, back lane, schoolyard. Map your block: what creates shade? where does water drain? what else helps as we adapt to climate change? Connect with your community centre to ask for, participate in or create programming like a repair workshop or plant-based cooking class. Check out: Citizen's Coolkit (interactive PDF)</p>					
Celebrate! and campaign	<p>Wow, you did it! You completed the Lighter Living Super Challenge! Celebrate by launching a 4-month campaign to tell your stories and showcase local people and businesses that are living lighter and making change possible in your neighbourhood every day. Profile how they're enriching the community, help them get media attention and nominate them for awards to increase exposure. Share your experience with politicians and push for climate justice for your community and beyond.</p>					

Key questions to ask

Add your thoughts →

- ❖ What will keep your momentum going for this Super Challenge? What plans can you put in place now to enjoy the two-year journey and keep going to the end?

- ❖ What kinds of support are available to you to resource these activities? Can you apply for grants, rebates, or subsidies, or hold a fundraiser to kick things off?

- ❖ Can you invite a guest or organization with special expertise on lighter living, or another community that's been successful in lighter living practices, for learning and inspiration?

- ❖ Who should be on your neighbourhood team? Start by mapping your community's assets and focus on a diversity of perspectives.

- ❖ How can you host regular conversations or sessions in your neighbourhood around lighter living? Who can you partner with to make this happen (e.g., local library, business)?

Explore and get inspiration for your own journey

Sustainable Lifestyles: Options and Opportunities, an action guide from OneEarth and the United Nations, provides more ideas for a build-your-own, multi-year Super Challenge. A companion guide offers ideas for advancing lighter living in workplaces.

Neighbour conversations on diverse topics are being held through Vancouver Island's Kitchen Table Conversations, the Vancouver Foundation's On the Table platform and Conversations for a One Planet Region in Greater Victoria.

Faith-based initiatives show the role that other communities we belong to can play in advancing lighter living. The First Unitarian Church of Victoria's Environmental Action Team supports congregants to live lighter on the planet. Greater Victoria Acting Together is an alliance of faith-based and secular groups addressing issues like climate change and ecological overshoot.

Through a one-week "carbon cleanse", the No Impact Experiment helps you progressively build on lighter living behaviours over a seven-day period.

Vancouver's Go by Bike Week supports alternative commutes.

Explore great resources from Green Bloc, a project that brought together neighbours to find innovative and creative ways to reduce ecological footprints, from their households to their "bloc."



Welcoming new neighbours for Mother's Day at Riverside Gardens. (credit: Neighbourhood Small Grants)

SPOTLIGHT

HUB Cycling's Bike to Work / Bike to School Weeks

Given the importance of mobility in our lives, and its contribution to overall carbon emissions, “how we move” is a key action area in the City of Vancouver’s Climate Emergency Action Plan. HUB Cycling supports Vancouverites in adopting healthy, accessible and planet-friendly ways to get around.

Through Hub Cycling’s week-long Bike to Work and Bike to School challenges in the spring and fall, individuals can either register their own commitments to cycling, or join together in teams for greater collective impact.

HUB Cycling offers prizes, social media competitions and other incentives — like free bike tune-ups along popular bikeways — to get people to join in. It also hosts a virtual dashboard so individuals and teams can track their progress throughout the week and get a better sense of the collective benefit they’re bringing to Vancouver by helping to reduce the city’s transportation footprint.

Through its Bike to Work and Bike to School weeks, HUB Cycling amplifies our individual choices and preferences into a collective effort to push for better.

bikehub.ca/bike-events



“Bike to School Week was the opportunity we needed to reach out and reconnect with families.... [It] focused on the importance of physical health, green initiatives and community culture.”

WOODLAND PARK
ELEMENTARY,
SURREY

Mt. Lehman
Elementary School
in Abbotsford.
(credit: HUB Cycling)

ACTION TIPS

Ready to take action? Here are a few things to consider before getting started with your lighter living action package:

- ✓ You can build on the many assets that already exist in your community. Consider creating an asset map that includes elements like people, relationships, knowledge, skills, tools, perspectives and physical/financial resources.
- ✓ Build on existing momentum and harness who and what are “ready to move.” Pay attention to where there’s already energy and passion around an issue – but make sure you’re also reducing footprints and ensuring justice and wellbeing. See example on the next page of "Going beyond the garden."
- ✓ Take time to ground your team and project before you get going. Use our Pre-start Checklist (p. 49) for a list of questions to consider, at both a personal and a community level.
- ✓ Learn about effective ways to work together. Find out best practices for organizing meetings, fundraising, writing invite letters, and communicating with neighbours, businesses, media, organizations and government officials (e.g., [Future Ground Network resources](#)).

For resources, tips and more, visit www.oneearthweb.org

HARNESSING MOMENTUM FOR LIGHTER LIVING ACTION

Going Beyond the Garden

Let's say there's a lot of momentum in your neighbourhood to build a community garden. Converting grass or unused plots into shared garden space is a great thing to do: it attracts bees, increases local food production and builds community, among many other benefits.

But keep going! You may be able to identify even more impactful actions to reduce your neighbourhood's food footprint and ensure justice and wellbeing. By going beyond the garden, you can amplify your impact.

Ways to amplify your impact...

- ✓ Connect to a group that may not be immediately linked to your project but that may be interested and benefit. For example, set up a skills workshop where new immigrants and other neighbours can exchange knowledge about local produce, how to access community garden spaces, and local rules on urban gardening. Together, share knowledge on how to make a garden thrive.
- ✓ Connect with other gardens to set up a weekly food market. Or, organize food donations or set up a community fridge so excess food is redirected to those in need. This helps build resilience and neighbourhood connections for emergencies.
- ✓ Leverage funds! With a Neighbourhood Small Grant, members built a Food Share Stand at the entrance of Vancouver's Brewery Creek Garden to share their harvest and increase food security for their neighbours.
- ✓ Try out Package 4: Next Level Food (p. 27) to use the garden as a springboard for taking action on plant-rich diets and food waste.



*Richmond Food Recovery Network.
(credit: FoodMesh)*

REFLECTING ON YOUR TEAM AND PROJECT

Pre-start Checklist

Before getting started with your neighbourhood action pack, remember what the primary goal is:

To reduce footprints while prioritizing shifts that lead to better living and greater wellbeing for everyone.

This means that, when you engage with others in your community, you need to be conscious of your own background and perspectives. This requires some important personal reflection. By yourself or as a group, take an hour or so to reflect on the following sets of questions.

The first set helps you reflect on yourself as a change-maker, while the second set addresses community action, with a project-specific focus. For each question, jot down your responses as a baseline reference, then check in every six months or so to see how your thinking has evolved.

Remember!

It's OK to let yourselves be vulnerable!



*credit: Toa Heftiba
on Unsplash*



Reflecting on yourself: the personal work

To ground yourselves as change-makers while remaining aware of your own personal context, footprints and daily life, consider:

Add your reflections →

◇ When I imagine my thriving neighbourhood, what does it look like? Who/what do I see?

.....

◇ What are the priorities and focus areas of this thriving neighbourhood? What is important to its community?

.....

◇ Who/what is being left out of this image? Why might that be?

.....

◇ What (un)conscious biases might I have that influence how I see people, my community and the world?

.....

◇ What privileges, resources and access do I have and bring to this work?

.....

◇ What barriers do I face to living lighter? (could relate to housing type, neighbourhood, influence of family/friends, etc.)

.....

◇ What opportunities are available to me (in my life/community) to help me live lighter?

.....

◇ What is my personal ecological footprint? Find out about your footprint at oneearthweb.org

.....

◇ What is my vision for my own life with respect to lighter living? What is important to me and what actions am I committing to?

.....

◇ What lived experience, skill sets and qualities do I bring to this work?

.....

◇ When I think about wellbeing for all people, what does this look like and what needs have to be addressed?

.....



Reflecting on your project: the community work

To approach neighbourhood work in a way that maximizes positive impact and invites participation, consider:

Add your reflections →

❖ Is my project advancing the footprint and climate priorities in BC (pp. 8-9)? How do I decide across multiple action options?

.....

❖ Does my project advance environmental objectives at the cost of justice and wellbeing?

.....

❖ Is my project accessible, and are the activities held in accessible locations? (consider physical, mental, language and communication barriers)

.....

❖ Does the outreach include connecting with groups/communities that are harder to contact or that face barriers to participation? How might everyone feel welcome and cared for?

.....

❖ Does my project/event require a monetary commitment or fee? How are low-income community members being invited to this space?

.....

❖ How could I maximize co-benefits (e.g., support wellbeing and health by providing nutritious, sustainable food options; contribute to indigenous reconciliation)?

.....

❖ Have I fully explored (and addressed) potential negative impacts? (e.g., waste generation, increased travel demands, noise, etc.)

.....

❖ Does the design of my project appeal to multiple audiences? Is it culturally aware and inclusive?

.....

❖ Are there opportunities to bring new people and perspectives into the project's organizing/design?

.....

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OneEarth is a nonprofit 'think and do' tank imagining and creating sustainable ways of living in cities and around the world. We are a global leader on sustainable lifestyles through the Beacon for Sustainable Living co-led with the Hot or Cool Institute and through the UN Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme. In Canada, OneEarth leads a Lighter Living initiative in British Columbia in partnership with Vancity, supporting action, collaboration and leadership at the community level, building capacity around footprint priorities, and advancing systems-level changes. We work with cities to enable sustainable living in partnership with C40 Cities and BCIT Centre for EcoCities.

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OneEarth (October 2021), *Lighter Living Action Pack for Neighbourhoods in BC: A fun guide to engage with your neighbours in climate- and planet-friendly living for all* (short form: *Lighter Living Action Pack — Neighbourhoods in BC*). Vancouver, Canada: OneEarth.

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SHARE WHAT YOU'RE UP TO!

Did you implement one or more of the action packages in this guide? It's worth sharing, and we want to hear about it!

- Reach out and let us know at info@oneearthweb.org — we might also have tips and other neighbourhood ideas for you!
- Tag us with your photos on Twitter or Facebook @oneearthweb.
- We're in this together with you, and would love to see your photos, hear your stories and help you make a difference where you live.

We'll also do our best to amplify your success and profile your hard work through our networks!