



Community Hubs & Climate Change

A Feasibility Assessment

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Toronto Community
Benefits Network



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We hope the stories of these hubs will inspire you as much as they have inspired us!



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Executive Summary

Project Context

In early 2018, Enviromentum, a project of Tides Canada, the Toronto Community Benefits Network, and the Toronto Environmental Alliance launched a feasibility assessment to explore the role of community hubs in addressing climate change. This exploration was based on the core assumption that community hubs can play a significant role in building the foundation of complete, low-carbon communities. The project team was interested in the hub 'one-stop' service model, and the unique opportunity for amplifying the impact of climate-friendly practices and projects by engaging the staff and residents who deliver programs and services at the hub and in the community.

This feasibility assessment was designed to inform the implementation of the City of Toronto's TransformTO climate plan. TransformTO outlines long-term goals and strategies for significantly reducing Toronto's greenhouse gas emissions, and achieving other positive benefits such as improving social equity, health and prosperity, while building a low-carbon society. The plan contains an acceleration campaign, *Mobilizing Low-Carbon Neighbourhoods*, which focuses on catalyzing resident engagement and seeding solutions at the neighbourhood level. This exploration was specifically planned to generate insights on how the work of community hubs can contribute to community and neighbourhood-level engagement in climate solutions.

Methods

Seven established community hubs and two emerging hubs participated in the feasibility assessment. From March to September 2018, the project team engaged hub staff and residents through a variety of consultation methods including: meetings, focus group discussions, an online survey, and an Inter-Hub Climate Forum.

"Hubs can serve as a centralized area that community members can come to when they're looking for help with starting initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change."
- Participant, Inter-Hub Climate Forum, July 2018

Key Findings

What is the role of community hubs?

The feasibility assessment explored the core question: *how can hubs serve as launch points for wider community engagement in developing low-carbon communities?* Overall, the response from hub stakeholders was overwhelming positive. Hubs are viewed as convening spaces for involving residents in civic issues, which can be immediately leveraged for building greater climate-focused engagement. The hub environment is perceived as fertile ground for stimulating ideas and sharing knowledge through both capacity-building programs and modelling good practices. Hub stakeholders felt that community hubs offer resources such as supportive staff, engaged residents and physical space, which can be developed and leveraged to support climate initiatives.

What are community hubs are doing now?

Hubs are engaged in a wide range of initiatives that generate positive outcomes for climate change and related co-benefit areas.

Several hubs use their **building infrastructure and grounds** to model climate-friendly practices and host low-carbon projects. Examples include hub buildings that have been designed or retrofitted to be energy efficient, water conservation systems, and onsite green space. Residents have been engaged in the planning and implementation of these initiatives, which are designed to build local capacity and create opportunities to experience sustainability concepts.

All hubs deliver **programs and services** in climate co-benefit areas such as food security, waste diversion, green space and transportation. Food, in particular, was perceived as a promising entry point for engaging community members on climate change. Community gardens are at the heart of this programming, many of which are initially seeded and supported by the hubs, but are led by highly active residents. These gardens serve as key platforms for launching initiatives with broader social equity aims.

Resident engagement is a core focus for all hubs, and is largely delivered through the United Way Greater Toronto's *Action for Neighbourhood Change* (ANC) program. ANC focuses on nurturing resident leadership, building civic engagement, and planning and implementing neighbourhood projects. Several of the hubs have already integrated climate change into their resident engagement initiatives (e.g. preparing residents for extreme weather and educating residents about climate impacts and solutions).

What would community hubs like to do in the future?

The majority of new climate projects that hub stakeholders would like to start are already being done by other hubs. They identified the value in facilitating cross-pollination and knowledge transfer across hubs. This can be complemented with targeted external support in some key areas to plan, kick-start or implement new projects (e.g. renewable energy projects or customized climate

change training for resident leaders). Hub stakeholders articulated a clear future vision for the role of community hubs in advancing climate initiatives at the hub and in the community.

What resources do community hubs need?

Hub stakeholders identified the ways in which current hub resources, such as human capital and physical spaces, can be enhanced and supported to enable hubs to become more engaged in climate solutions. Staff and residents were clear that deepening these efforts is conditional on accessing additional resources, such as funding as well as training and capacity-building for residents.

Recommendations

Based on feedback from hub stakeholders, recommendations have been generated on how hubs can be better supported and resourced to seed, grow and deepen climate initiatives:

- *Leverage the engagement capacity of community hubs;*
- *Catalyze inter-hub collaboration on climate action;*
- *Amplify the reach and impact of inspiring practices;*
- *Prioritize localized entry points and co-benefits;*
- *Invest through flexible and sustained funding.*

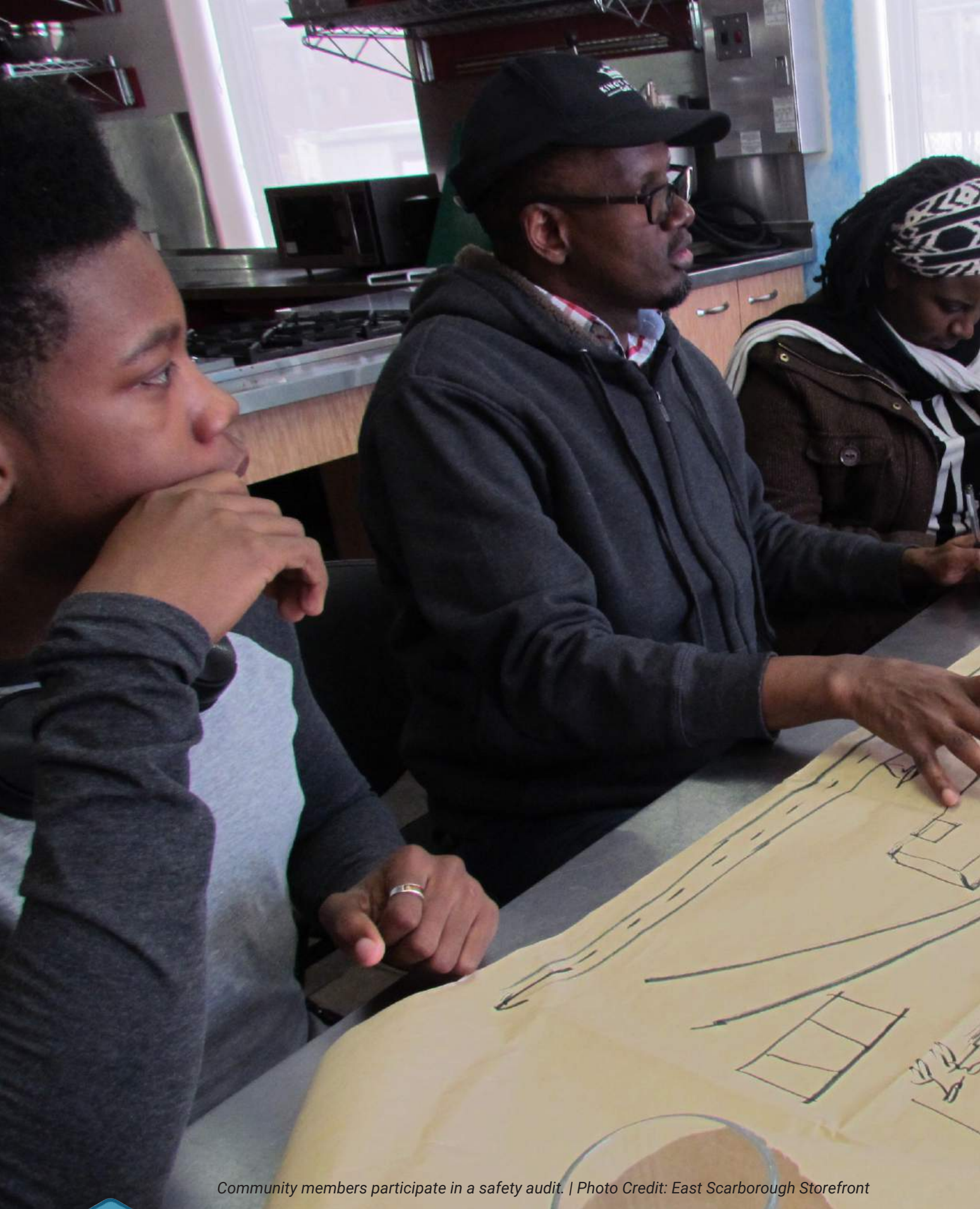
1. Solar Panel Installation
- Building

2. Proper Waste/Rec

3. Retrofitting Resources
- Affordable Heating
- work w landlords
- New sustainable bu

4. community engagement
- Education

Photo Credit: Jennifer Reilly



Community members participate in a safety audit. | Photo Credit: East Scarborough Storefront

1. Project Context

What does a low-carbon community look like? Who is leading the way and how do we get there?

As Toronto works to prevent and adapt to the growing impacts of climate change, activating both city-wide and local strategies will be essential. Neighbourhood-level initiatives will play a key role in reducing our emissions and building community resilience to extreme weather and other climate-related challenges. These initiatives will also be integral to creating prosperity, improving social equity, and generating other benefits on the way to becoming a low-carbon city.

In July of 2017, Toronto City Council passed the TransformTO climate change strategy which outlines long-term, low-carbon goals, and the strategies for achieving them. The plan sets out bold targets for the City to achieve by 2050 including:

- retrofitting 100% of existing buildings;
- using 75% renewable or low-carbon energy; and
- diverting 95% of the waste we produce.¹

Another major focus of the plan is ensuring that climate actions are executed in a way that generates co-benefits such as improving our health, growing our economy, improving social equity and reducing poverty. This is reflected in the fact that TransformTO leverages and aligns to the work of other City divisions and strategies, such as the Toronto Neighbourhood Strategy, Tower Renewal, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and plans to expand cycling and transit infrastructure.²

To achieve TransformTO's goals, broad-based and deep engagement of city's diverse neighbourhoods will be necessary. The plan contains an acceleration campaign focused on *Mobilizing Low-Carbon Neighbourhoods*, which focuses specifically on catalyzing resident engagement and seeding solutions at the neighbourhood level. Applying a neighbourhood lens to this work can support the development of innovative, place-based initiatives that emphasize co-benefits and tangibly improve the lives of community members.

Community hubs, one of the principal elements of United Way Greater Toronto's *Building Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy*, are physical centres which bring essential community supports and vital community space to underserved neighbourhoods in Toronto's inner suburbs.³ Community hubs provide a central access point for a range of health and social services, along with cultural, recreational, and green spaces to nourish community life.⁴ Through this work, hubs are uniquely positioned to bring new voices into Toronto's climate discourse and develop climate-related projects that have a strong emphasis on creating co-benefits.

In early 2018, three local organizations - Enviromentum, the Toronto Community Benefits Network, and the Toronto Environmental Alliance - launched a feasibility assessment to explore the role of community hubs in addressing climate change. It was based on the core assumption that community hubs can play a significant role in building the foundation of a complete, low-carbon community.

How can hubs serve as launch points for wider community engagement in developing low-carbon communities?

Over the past year, the project team has engaged in exploratory conversations with hub staff and residents to gain better understanding of how they perceive this potential role. We engaged seven established hubs and two emerging hubs with a range of consultation methods including small and large group discussions and an Inter-Hub Climate Change Forum. We asked hub stakeholders what they were already doing in relation to climate solutions and co-benefits. We also asked them what they hoped to do in the future, and what resources and support they would need to start, sustain and deepen their climate initiatives. This report outlines key findings on hubs' current climate-related initiatives, their future aspirations and plans, and the project team's recommendations.

2. Methods

Outreach

The initial outreach goal of the feasibility assessment was to engage three to four community hubs. The project team reached out to hubs across the city via email, explaining the purpose of the feasibility assessment and requesting an initial meeting. In some cases, the project team had prior relationships with contacts at the hubs, and in others, it was the first point of contact. As such, participation was essentially determined by the community hubs through an opt-in, self-selection process.

Participating Hubs

Seven “established” community hubs, which have physical buildings and have been operating for several years, participated in the feasibility assessment: Bathurst-Finch Unison Hub, Dorset Park Community Hub, East Scarborough Storefront, Malvern Family Resource Centre, Mid-Scarborough Hub, Rexdale Community Hub, and the Victoria Park

Hub. The project team also engaged “emerging” hub initiatives based in the Jane-Finch and Parkdale neighbourhoods, which are still in the planning phase.

Engagement Methods and Approach

The project team engaged staff and residents linked to the hubs through a variety of consultation methods (Figure 1). The form and depth of the engagement depended on staff and residents’ availability and interest, and varied from hub to hub. The project team tried to maintain flexibility, and where possible, adapt the consultation process and tools to accommodate hub stakeholders needs. All of the engagement tools were based on a core set of consultation questions developed by the project team (Annex A), which were modified to fit the parameters of the different engagement opportunities offered by the hub stakeholders (e.g. length and format of community and staff meetings; number of participants).

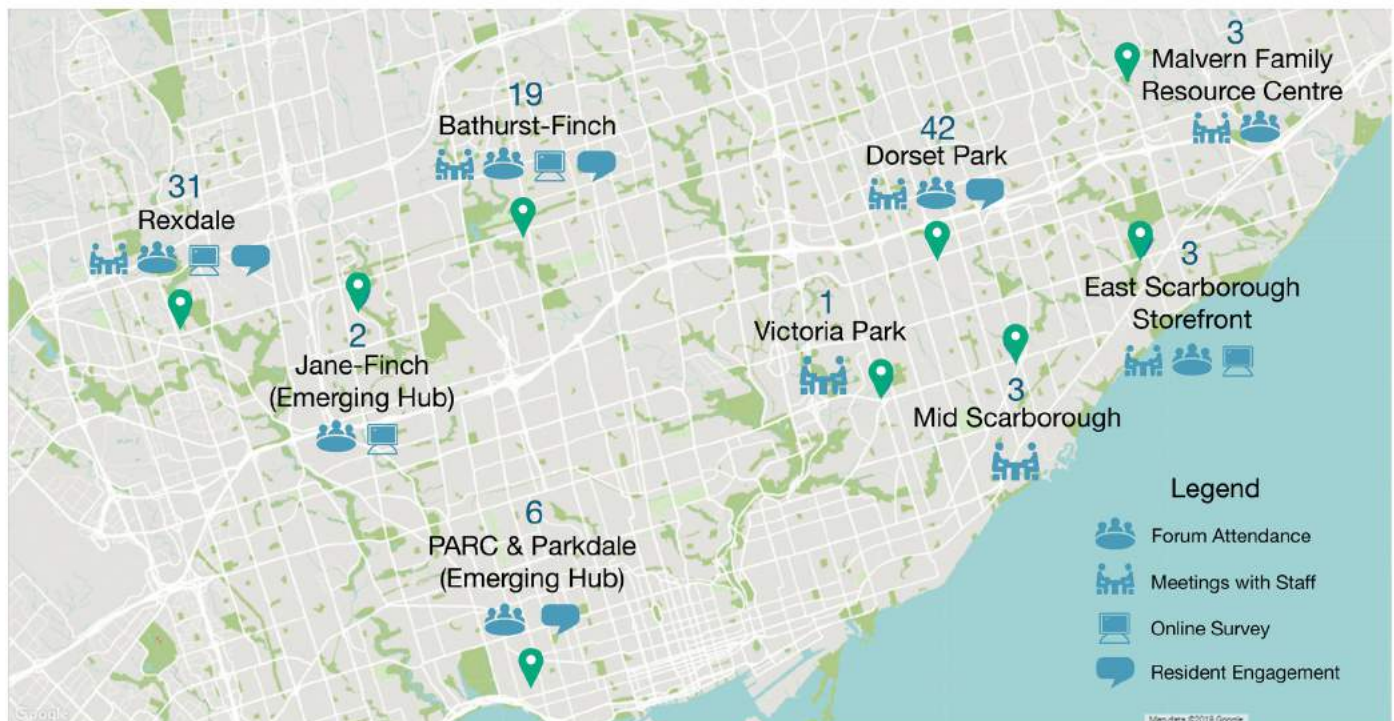


Figure 1: Consultation methods and number of participants engaged per community hub.



A resident talks to hub partners at Dorset Park Day. | Photo Credit: Dorset Park Community Hub

The consultation process took place from March to September 2018. The first point of engagement generally started with meeting hub staff for an initial discussion, which was documented in note form. Hub staff described climate-related initiatives, future plans and goals, challenges and lessons learned. In some cases, staff completed a follow-up online survey. The Bathurst-Finch Unison Hub team organized a “lunch and learn” and short consultation session with staff from partner agencies operating at the hub.

Staff at several hubs helped the project team to connect with local residents groups:

- Bathurst-Finch Social Action Group (linked to the Bathurst-Finch Unison Hub) - the project team conducted a focus group discussion with this residents group.
- North Etobicoke Resident Council (linked to the Rexdale Community Hub) - the project team facilitated a short questionnaire at a regular meeting, which was completed through discussions in small groups.
- *Dorset Park Day* - the project team was invited to have a booth at this annual community event organized by the Dorset Park Community Hub. Residents visiting the booth participated in activities where they voted on

their preferred climate-related initiatives and a visualized a climate-friendly future by posting cut-out images on to a vision board. The team was able to connect with several members of the Dorset Park gardening group at this event.

- In addition, members of the Parkdale community reached out to the project team and had a phone discussion.

Inter-Hub Climate Forum

The core consultation process for the feasibility assessment was conducted at an Inter-Hub Climate Forum organized by the project team. The forum convened 22 participants representing seven hubs, who self-identified as followed: 11 staff (working for the hub or an agency based at the hub) and 11 residents (participating in community groups linked to or supported by the hub).

The project team used a variety of facilitation methods and exercises to gather feedback at the forum including: small and large group discussions documented by table facilitators; voting prioritization (dotmocracies); and a future visualization exercise. The forum concluded with a participant survey, which sought feedback on the workshop and asked participants to rate their level of agreement with the core feasibility assessment question.

3. Key Findings

3.1 What is the role of community hubs?

What We Heard

This feasibility assessment was designed to explore the question:

“How can hubs serve as launch points for wider community engagement in developing low-carbon communities?”

The assessment sought feedback from hub stakeholders to determine whether or not hubs can play this role, and if so, how this role can be defined, developed and resourced.

This question was explored in a number of consultation settings including meetings and focus group discussions with hub staff and residents, and during the project’s Inter-Hub Climate Forum held in July 2018. At the end of the Forum, participants were asked to individually respond to a survey question rating their level of agreement to the assessment question (in the form of a statement), and explain their answer.

How much do you agree with the following statement?

“Community hubs can serve as launch points for wider community engagement in developing low carbon (climate friendly) communities.”

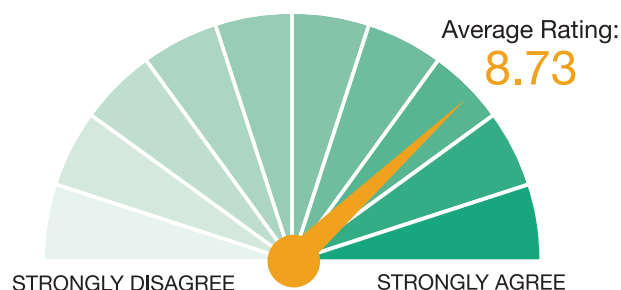



Figure 2: Survey results from 21 participants, Inter-Hub Climate Forum, July 2018.

Figure 2 shows the results of this exercise, which was done anonymously. The response from participants to the survey question was overwhelmingly positive, which echoed the sentiment expressed during the Forum’s discussions and other consultation interactions with staff and residents. Several themes emerged from participants’ explanations for why hubs can play an effective climate engagement role.





“Community hubs can be a great asset to further helping communities in becoming climate friendly.”

A community garden in Rexdale. | Photo Credit: Halyna Zalucky

Themes

Convening space for engagement - Hubs are a place where residents come together with the specific purpose of engaging in civic issues. This convening role is perceived to be very successful and as a strong foundation upon which to build greater climate-focused civic engagement.

“Community hubs are in a central location where residents can be engaged. Pooling of resources and services is an advantage.”

Stimulating exchange of ideas & knowledge - Hubs are well positioned to share knowledge on climate change with residents. Beyond purveying knowledge, hubs create space where different ideas can be stimulated and exchanged among residents.

“Where else can we as community members share our thoughts?”

Leveraging and building on resources - Hubs have resources such as staff support, services and space, which can be used to help residents start projects to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Resources can be pooled and leveraged to raise more funding, with hubs acting as “patrons” to residents’ initiatives.

“There is definitely potential, but I cannot imagine this work will happen without added funds and resources.”

Many hub stakeholders indicated that growing the role of hubs in climate-focused engagement is conditional on adequate, and potentially new, funding and resources. In conversations with hub staff, they cautioned against adding new work onto overstretched human and financial resources. The theme of resources is explored further in section 3.4.

3.2 What are community hubs doing now?

The co-location of essential services is a foundational element for building dense, walkable, complete, low-carbon communities. The community hub 'one-stop' service model is low-carbon by design. The carbon footprint of individual agencies is significantly improved by being housed under one roof, and residents reduce their transportation emissions by accessing these services closer to home. It also creates a unique opportunity for amplifying the impact of climate-friendly practices and projects with the staff and residents who deliver and access hub services.

The consultation process revealed that hubs are engaged in a wide range of initiatives that directly address climate change objectives and co-benefit areas. These initiatives are described according to three categories:

- Building Infrastructure and Grounds
- Programs and Services
- Resident Engagement

It is important to recognize that in practice, these categories are often interrelated and mutually-reinforcing in the context of delivering community programming.

Building Infrastructure and Grounds

The physical infrastructure of hub buildings and grounds can be used to model low-carbon practice and develop demonstration projects. While projects such as renewable energy installations on hub grounds and building retrofits can achieve real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, they also have the potential to inspire and engage the residents visiting the hub. These initiatives can be harnessed to help residents of all ages visualize and contribute to building the elements of a low-carbon community. Residents can acquire new knowledge and skills by participating in the planning and implementation of such projects, ultimately building local capacity that can be leveraged for future climate-related initiatives. For example, the East Scarborough Storefront's initiative to redesign its building and grounds has generated insights on how hubs can engage

residents in developing initiatives that model sustainability principles (Case Study pages 14-15).

The capacity to implement climate-friendly infrastructure projects varies from hub to hub, and can be impacted by a number of factors including if the hub building is:

- leased or owned;
- occupied by the hub and its partners or shared with other tenants;
- a free-standing structure or in a commercial space; and
- specifically built to green standards and/or designed to promote green behaviours amongst its occupants.

The Bathurst-Finch Unison Hub enjoys the unique advantage of being a custom-built hub with environmental features. For example, the roof collects rainwater that is channeled to a cistern under the hub, which holds up to 6,000 gallons of water. This water supply is used for the community garden, and meets the watering needs for the entire gardening season. The building was designed with energy-saving features to optimize the use of natural light and minimize the use of electricity. The hub roof was built to host solar panels; a project which local residents and hubs staff are keen to fund.

Since not all hubs enjoy the same level of decision-making autonomy over their premises, some may find it more difficult to undertake green initiatives related to the building or physical grounds. This can also impact sustainability practices inside the hub building. Staff from one hub expressed that they found it challenging to reduce waste when the building landlord was not obligated to participate in proper waste diversion (due to being located in a commercial plaza).

However, even within the context of differing access to building space and grounds, all of the hubs consulted have found ways to integrate "green" concepts into their physical environment. For example, while the Mid-Scarborough and Rexdale Hubs do not have onsite gardens, they have created green space within their buildings by installing green walls. While these projects are less interactive than a community garden, such initiatives can still help to create a feeling of connectedness to the natural world for residents and staff.



CASE STUDY

East Scarborough Storefront *Community-led Building & Grounds Design*

SNAPSHOT

The East Scarborough Storefront has been celebrated for its *Connected Community Approach* in facilitating grassroots neighbourhood transformation.⁵ Through a community design initiative, the Storefront engaged and empowered local residents to transform previously underutilized land into dynamic community spaces.^{6,7} Sustainability and green design principles were a key focus of this work. Through ongoing community transformation work, the team has worked with residents, including local youth, to redesign and retrofit the hub building, construct the sky-o-swale™ and provide resident engagement support for local Tower Renewal projects. The Storefront is an excellent model for greening hubs infrastructure with strong community engagement and involvement.

THE DETAILS

The Storefront first began serving the community in Kingston Galloway/Orton Park in 2001. In 2007, the hub relocated to an old police station and began the long process of redesigning the building and grounds to better serve the community's needs. The community design initiative used by the Storefront to engage residents in the redesign and retrofit process offers local best practice learnings.⁸ Through a community-led design process, the Storefront engaged local youth with architects, planners and designers in the conception, design, fundraising, approvals process, and construction of the building.⁹ Through engaging in these activities, the youth experienced mentorship and hands-on learning in design, construction, project management, and leadership skills. Storefront has taken a modular approach to the retrofits as funding has become available, and over 3,000 square feet of renovations to the existing structure have been completed.¹⁰

Sports Court and Sky-o-swale™ | Photo Credit: East Scarborough Storefront

As part of the redesign and retrofit process, sustainability and green design principles were a key focus. Some of the design process goals included: adaptive reuse of the robust existing building and site; re-connection of the building and site to the surrounding community and green spaces; resource and energy-efficiency; creative rainwater harvesting and shade structures; optimization of renewable energy sources; local food production; shade and naturalization strategies; and accessibility for all.¹¹

The community design initiative also resulted in the design and construction of the Sky-o-swale™ onsite. The Sky-o-swale™ is a shade-water structure that filters rainwater through a green roof and into an underground cistern, which is used to irrigate the community garden on site.¹² As part of the design and construction work, the Storefront engaged a broad spectrum of partners and stakeholders including ERA Architects, Sustainable.TO, Architext, the City of Toronto Tower Renewal and Neighbourhood Revitalization Unit and other sustainability experts.

These partners were crucial in providing the design expertise needed to complete the projects. The Storefront case study offers a robust example of how environmental issues and concerns can be intertwined in efforts to serve the community's immediate needs.

TAKE-AWAYS

- The hub building infrastructure and surrounding grounds offer an opportunity to develop and model green projects that help to raise awareness of sustainability issues in the community.
- Hubs are often local community engagement experts. Hubs can play an important convenor and activator role by demonstrating onsite sustainability initiatives with co-benefit opportunities, which help build greater community interest and engagement.
- The right partners are essential. Hubs need partners that can provide technical, resource and training support to undertake projects that are linked to green design and sustainability.

Programs and Services

In order to fulfill their purpose and mandate, community hubs are located in underserved communities that experience high rates of poverty, marginalization and other socio-economic challenges. Many hubs are engaged in delivering programs and services that contribute directly to the goals of high priority initiatives such as the City of Toronto's Tower Renewal Program and the TOProsperity Poverty Reduction Strategy, both of which are leveraged by TransformTO.^{13, 14} As such, there is an opportunity to build on the relationships and experience that hub service-providers have gained through delivering programs to communities that are increasingly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. This approach can help with the development of more effective climate engagement strategies based on neighbourhood-specific needs and priorities. Hub staff and residents proposed that climate engagement can be integrated directly into existing initiatives, particularly those that are focused on co-benefit program areas such as food security, waste diversion, green space and transportation.

Food Security

During the consultation process, hub staff and residents repeatedly identified food security as a potential entry point for engaging community members on climate change. Hubs are very involved in delivering food security-related programs, and many of the most active residents are engaged in these initiatives. Community gardens are at the heart of this programming, many of which are initially seeded and supported by the hubs, but are led by residents. These garden initiatives serve as a key platform for launching initiatives with broader social equity aims. For example, the produce from the Bathurst-Finch Unison Hub's garden is used to support a local food bank. It also contributes to a farmers' market organized by the hub to address the lack of fresh produce available in the neighbourhood. Similarly, the Dorset Park Community Hub supports a residents group engaged in a composting and community garden initiative that contributes to a local food bank. These initiatives address a vital element of a complete, low-carbon community: local access to healthy food (Case Study pages 18-19).

The Malvern Family Resource Centre (MFRC) has food-related projects that aim to build social and economic empowerment, and community cohesion over the longer term. The MFRC is part of the Community Engagement and Entrepreneurial Development (CEED) initiative that is establishing urban farm space in the city's hydro corridor. The concept is to address the barriers that urban residents experience in accessing land for growing food in their communities, and to create a model for other initiatives. The project is designed to generate opportunities for newcomers and people of colour to apply the agricultural skills that many bring from their communities of origin. It also aims to deliver fresh, culturally appropriate and affordable produce to the local community. The team hopes to create a space for skills development and experiential learning for kids, which will promote the enjoyment of nature and being outside.

The MFRC currently has three other resident-led community gardens, including one where a resident successfully advocated with her building management to secure space in between her building and parking lot. Produce from the gardens helps to supplement the costs of a local meal program: a restaurant-style initiative serving 180 community members who come together to enjoy a weekly meal. The future vision is to make this program entirely green by employing youth cyclists from the community to deliver produce using canvas delivery bags made by a local women's sewing group. This would provide an opportunity to model environmental and circular economy concepts (by reusing materials and repairing the bikes) and to build capacity in the local community.

Green Space

Hub staff and residents pointed out that relatively simple activities provide opportunities to seed ideas or conversations about climate change. Several of the hubs engage residents in conservation-type activities in green spaces such as tree-planting (in public spaces and on their own property), planting and understanding the benefits of native plant species, and annual park clean-ups. These family-friendly activities provide residents with the immediate, hands-on experience of contributing to the protection and upkeep of their local green spaces, and can promote intergenerational knowledge-transfer. Staff and

residents felt that such activities could be used as a platform to support more in-depth environmental engagement.

Waste Diversion

Many of the participants consulted identified waste diversion practices in the workplace and at community events as an important opportunity to encourage climate-friendly behaviour change. Hub staff were often very mindful of the need to improve their own office practices such as going paperless, and both staff and residents expressed pride in what was already being done to recycle, compost and use reusable plates and cutlery. They were also very concerned that they were not doing enough to model best practices. There was a strong desire to use community events held at the hubs to promote a more intentional message around the positive climate impacts of waste diversion.

Active Transportation

Active transportation was identified as an area of interest, but not many of the hub stakeholders consulted were involved in existing programs. Two initiatives delivered through hubs were identified in the feasibility assessment. Scarborough Cycles is a collaborative project led by the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation in partnership with Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services, Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre, CultureLink Settlement and Community Services, the Toronto Cycling Think & Do Tank, and Cycle Toronto.¹⁵ This initiative has opened up bike hubs at multiple locations that provide access to bicycles, tools, do-it-yourself repair clinics, workshops, group rides, a bike mentorship program for newcomers, and civic engagement opportunities for residents.¹⁶ The Malvern Family Resource Centre hosts the 42 Rides Skateboard & BMX Drop youth program, offering skateboard and BMX sessions for youth of all skills levels, ages 6 and up, as well as bike repair workshops.¹⁷

The “living wall” at Rexdale Community Hub. | Photo Credit: Emmay Mah

CASE STUDY

Rexdale Community Hub & Rexdale Community Health Centre *Programming for Community Priorities*

SNAPSHOT

The Rexdale Community Hub has taken a variety of approaches that demonstrate how community engagement and education initiatives can advance environmental objectives. As a climate co-benefit, food security has a dynamic presence in the Hub's programming, and the staff and residents work towards this goal in innovative ways. The Hub has facilitated initiatives to address locally identified needs by leveraging investments and funding for Tower Renewal, waste and climate action. The *Urban Harvest: Rexdale* project, and other initiatives facilitated by Big on Green and Recipe for Community, have spun-off innovative blueprints for projects that can serve as additional entry points to local climate engagement.

THE DETAILS

The Rexdale Community Hub serves the neighbourhood of North Etobicoke which includes the following communities: Mount Olive-Silverstone-Jamestown, Thistletown-Beaumont Heights, Elms-Old Rexdale, Kingsview Village-The Westway, Humber Summit and Humbermede. The goal of the Hub is to "provide innovative, client-centred, integrated health, social, legal, employment, and cultural services by working with the strengths of our residents and community."¹⁸ The Hub hosts a satellite site for the Rexdale Community Health Centre (CHC) which emphasizes health promotion through community capacity-building programming that is delivered to parents, children, youth, seniors and caregivers.¹⁹ The CHC has been the Hub's primary partner for climate-related outreach and program delivery. This work was seeded through partnerships with the City of Toronto's Tower and Neighbourhood Revitalization Unit, Toronto Public Health, Big on Green, Community Microskills Development Centre, Rexdale Women's Centre, North York Harvest and the Toronto Foundation.^{20, 21, 22}

Entering Through a Co-Benefits Approach

Deepening resident knowledge of public and private local green spaces and waste diversion has been a focal point of both the Hub's and CHC's initiatives, which aim to build community capacity and develop community assets. For example, CHC's *Urban Harvest: Rexdale* project worked to harvest and redistribute the community's food surplus. Through this initiative, youth were trained to educate their neighbours about the City's Long Term Waste Management Strategy.²³ The youth became community animators, going door-to-door in both multi-residential buildings and to single family homes to educate their neighbours on principles such as swapping and sharing. Households were asked if they had excess food that they could donate to local food banks, shelters and breakfast clubs for kids, with emphasis being placed on perishable foods like fruits and vegetables growing on their properties. Through this project, a hundred pounds of food was donated and preserves made through canning.

Through the Big On Green and Tower Renewal initiatives, community gardens were developed that built resident capacity and collaboration, and introduced environmental concepts. While Big on Green began work in Rexdale with a project that brought a "living wall" to the Hub, it adopted a responsive community engagement approach and supported residents' desire to establish a community garden. The garden became a space where residents were able to connect to the environment and created opportunities to sell and share produce. Tower Renewal's Recipe for Community program facilitated vital conversations around the principles that guide healthy multi-residential neighbourhoods.²⁴ This program highlighted the ways in which retrofits and building envelope repairs contribute to positive environmental outcomes, while supporting residents' community garden initiative.

Next Steps

The Rexdale Community Hub and CHC have an innovative vision for a "social supermarket" that builds on their food security, health promotion, and community development programming. The social

supermarket will bring stakeholders together to support food access in Rexdale through the wrap-around service model. The Hub hopes to source good quality food from a partner grocer and sell food at a lower price to community members that experience food insecurity. Unique populations impacted by food insecurity will be supported through this initiative. The Woodbine Racetrack, for example, hosts seasonal employees that reside on the site temporarily and are surrounded by a food desert for a significant portion of the year. Presently, the CHC offers a weekly clinic to these employees and also includes health promotion demonstrations to encourage better nutrition using items grown in the community garden at the Racetrack. Ultimately, while this project is not explicitly about climate change, it has potential to significantly increase local access to healthy food, health promotion services, and employment, all of which are core elements for building a complete, low-carbon community.

TAKE-AWAYS

- Food access is a major entry point that connects climate action to people's everyday concerns. The Rexdale Community Hub and CHC food security and waste diversion initiatives demonstrate important co-benefit approaches that can be leveraged to build community interest and support for climate action.
- By using a non-prescriptive approach to engaging residents, service providers can be responsive to community priorities and needs. This creates opportunities for locally-relevant programming to introduce important low-carbon concepts such as conscious consumption, food miles, and the sharing economy.
- The type of service delivery model matters. Programs and services that address multiple goals, and build community capacity, assets and resilience, are better entry points for engagement. A social supermarket has the potential to activate community members on climate-related food concepts that the passive act of going to a food bank does not.

Resident Engagement

Community hubs have a strong focus on activating and collaborating with residents groups and community organizations. Through these structures, hubs engage members of the community in civic action as well as in planning and implementing neighbourhood initiatives. Hub staff and residents overwhelmingly identified this work as the core strength of community hubs, and a critical foundation upon which climate engagement could be built. Rather than trying to build parallel structures or processes, climate initiatives can be seeded through existing platforms and structures.

“Action for Neighbourhood Change is about transforming from ground up.”
- Hub staff member

The established hubs that participated in this assessment were implementing *Action for Neighbourhood Change* (ANC) as their central resident engagement program. ANC is a community development initiative supported by the United Way Greater Toronto, and a core part of its *Building Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy*.²⁵ By design, ANC looks different from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, and hub to hub, but the program generally nurtures resident leadership, supporting them to plan and deliver initiatives that bring positive change to their communities. For example, in the Bathurst-Finch neighbourhood, ANC is implemented by Unison Health and Community Services (Case Study page 21), and provides opportunities for residents to:

- Get to know one another and their neighbourhood better;
- Come together, create a shared vision, and take collective action to improve the neighbourhood;
- Work on neighbourhood issues in partnership with other residents and agencies;
- Develop leadership skills in all aspects of life;
- Plan community events for residents to attend and enjoy.²⁶

The Dorset Park Community Hub facilitates a variety of resident engagement activities. During election time, the Hub conducts sessions to educate residents to help them understand issues across party campaign platforms and hosts all-candidates meetings. The Hub also holds

family-friendly events that convene community members with hub partners. For example, the Hub organizes *Dorset Park Day*, an event where residents of all ages enjoy food, fun activities, entertainment as well as visiting partner booths to learn about local initiatives and programs.

Hubs can also play a role in convening residents to support community engagement processes with other partner organizations. For example, East Scarborough Storefront facilitated community processes for a Tower Renewal project with two multi-residential towers close to the hub. As part of the project, the Storefront team engaged residents in an extensive capacity-building and mentorship process to help them set a vision for the project, and worked with the landlord and other partners to achieve their vision. By working with building residents, Storefront was able to support the creation of a resident-driven site plan and set up a tenant council to represent the interests of tenants in the building.²⁷

Lastly, community emergency preparedness initiatives were identified as an area to engage residents in both climate mitigation and adaptation concepts. The Victoria Park Hub has worked with Community Resilience to Extreme Weather (CREW), a local organization, to engage residents in emergency preparedness initiatives. In response to the 2013 ice storm that impacted many community members, the Hub worked with local residents to plan for future events and provide training around emergency management. CREW worked with the City's Office of Emergency Management to provide support for these trainings and helped local residents develop emergency management plans and kits. Leveraging the Hub's relationships, CREW was able to work with resident leaders to provide basic emergency management training in multi-residential buildings with a high concentration of seniors. The partnership with an environmentally-focused organization enabled the Hub to engage residents in activities with synergistic goals in the areas of climate adaptation, neighbourhood resilience and emergency preparedness.

CASE STUDY

Bathurst-Finch ANC, Unison Health & Community Services *Resident-led Civic Engagement*

SNAPSHOT

The Bathurst-Finch Unison Hub has a dynamic Social Action Group (SAG) led by highly engaged residents, and supported by a dedicated Community Engagement Worker, who spearheads the ANC initiative at the hub. The SAG has organized a range of activities that promote civic engagement among residents including community town halls on topics such as housing, transit and food security, and preparing residents to depute before City Council committees on locally-relevant issues. The group has also started organizing climate change initiatives through two different approaches: 1) integrating climate into non-environmental community events; and 2) designing events for residents with a specific climate focus.

THE DETAILS

Integrating Climate into Non-Environmental Events

The ANC program at the Bathurst-Finch Unison Hub held a Community Fun Day. This family-friendly event featured food, dance and music performances by local groups, and included a civic engagement activity organized by the SAG. The purpose of this activity was to introduce the TransformTO climate plan to community members through conducting a dotmocracy and future visualization exercise.²⁸ For the dotmocracy, residents voted with stickers on menus of options under the headings of transportation, behaviour change, green space, energy and buildings. The menus of options were based on the ideas and themes that emerged from the City's TransformTO community engagement process, and residents prioritized the areas where they would like to see a positive change.²⁹

For the second activity, residents were asked to envision the Bathurst-Finch community in 2050. Residents selected foam stickers with visual icons from different categories including: community spaces, homes, jobs, food, accessible streets, services, education, green spaces and renewable

energy, and placed them on a map of the community. Upon completion, the residents had collectively built their "complete community" of the future. Both activities had full participation from the 50-60 residents of all ages who were in attendance for the Community Fun Day, including the local City Councillor.

Climate Change Engagement Events

Building on their previous success with community town halls, the SAG organized a Climate Change Forum hosted in the hub. This was their first event fully dedicated to the issue, which offered an introduction to a broad range of concepts and initiatives: climate impacts, justice, solutions, co-benefits, resilience, and related municipal and local initiatives. These topics were delivered through short videos and presentations by representatives from organizations, community groups and the City, and included audience Q&A discussions after each topic. Each participant pledged to take a personal climate action by signing their name on a poster. The event was attended by about 30 participants.

TAKE-AWAYS

- With its resident-centred focus, the ANC program provides a strategic platform for launching climate-focused, civic engagement activities. In neighbourhoods where there are active ANC programs, it makes sense to build on this foundation, rather than start from scratch.
- Both integrated and stand-alone approaches can be effective in engaging residents in climate change, depending on the audience. Adding climate engagement elements to family-friendly community events is a great way to reach residents of all ages and backgrounds, especially those that don't participate in traditional civic engagement activities. Events with a specific climate focus can be effective for residents who wish to deepen their engagement with the issue.
- Methods matter. A combination of engagement tools such as discussion, voting, prioritization, public pledges and visualization, can enable participation by residents of different ages, backgrounds and levels of knowledge and familiarity with climate change.

3.3 What would hubs like to do in the future?

During the feasibility assessment, hub staff and residents were asked if there were climate-related initiatives they would like to see at their community hub in the future. They described growing initiatives that have already been seeded as well as starting new projects. **Notably, the majority of the new projects that hub stakeholders would like to start are already being done by other hubs**, with the exception of major renewable energy projects and customized climate change training and capacity-building for residents. This points to the value of enabling cross-pollination and knowledge transfer across hubs, complemented with targeted external support in some key areas to plan, kick-start or implement new projects.

The most in-depth feedback from hub stakeholders on their climate goals and aspirations was gathered at the Inter-Hub Climate Forum held in July 2018. Prior to the Forum, the project team developed a menu of options based on discussions with hub staff and residents about the climate-related projects they were already undertaking and what they hoped to do in the future (see Annex B for the full menu of options). As participants entered the forum, they were asked to participate in a “dotmocracy” using the menu of options entitled “Our Future Climate-Friendly Hub: What would you like to see at your hub?” Climate initiatives were categorized into five general headings: green space; transportation; energy; civic engagement and education; and sharing economy and green jobs. Each of the 22 forum participants was given three dots and asked to select their top three priorities across all the options. Figure 3 shows the top results of the “dotmocratic” voting.

Coincidentally, the voting resulted in each of the five categories having two top-rated options. The options receiving the most votes were: community/rooftop garden, renewable energy at the hub, skills development programs for green jobs, programs promoting walking/cycling, and climate change education. These initiatives featured prominently in the group discussions that followed, with climate change education, training and capacity-building for residents coming to the forefront of many discussions.

Top Dotmocracy Results: What would you like to see at your hub?

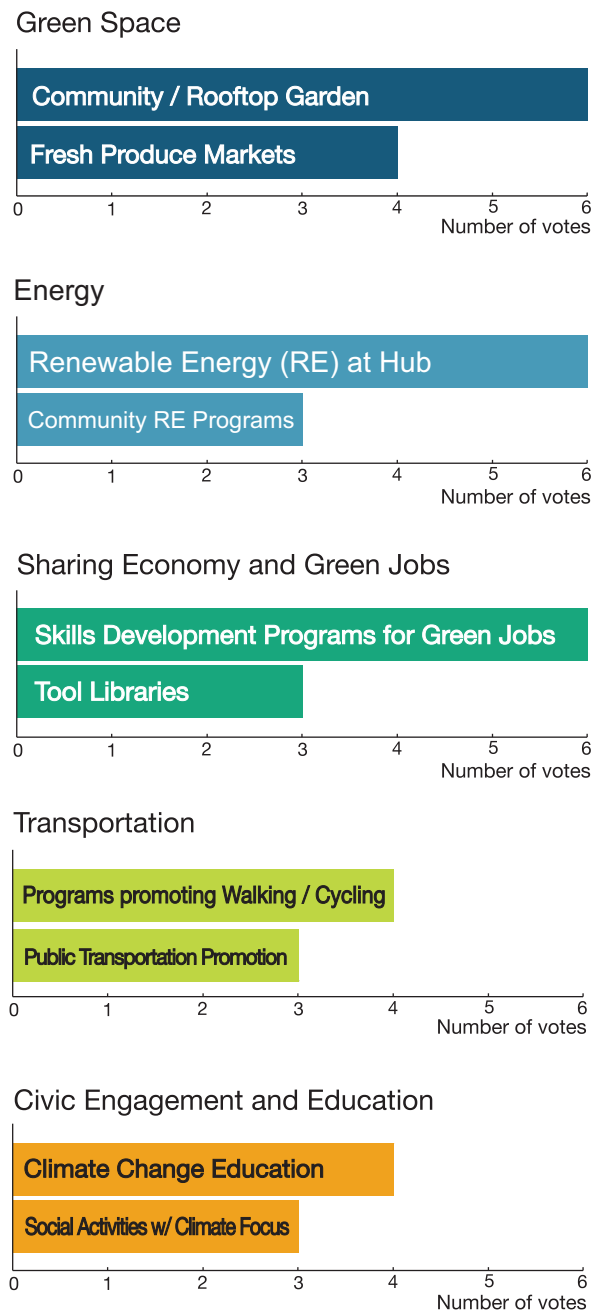
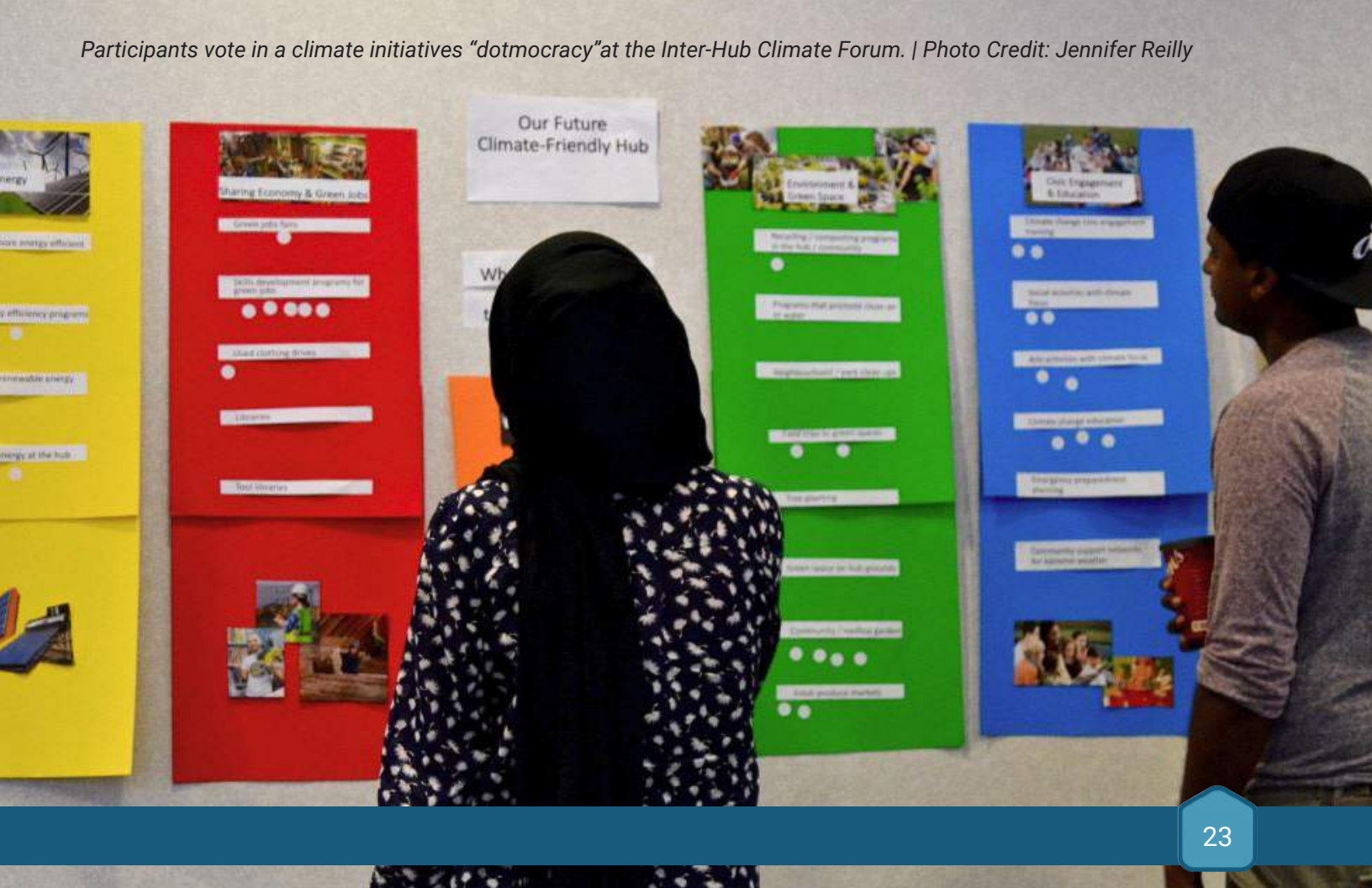


Figure 3: Top Results from the Climate Initiatives Dotmocracy, Inter-Hub Climate Forum, July 2018.



Participants envision future climate initiatives at the Inter-Hub Climate Forum. | Photo Credit: Jennifer Reilly



Participants vote in a climate initiatives "dotmocracy" at the Inter-Hub Climate Forum. | Photo Credit: Jennifer Reilly

Visualization Exercise: *Looking into the Future*

After sharing and discussing their present climate-related projects, forum participants engaged in a visualization exercise to reflect on and discuss what their hubs would look like in the future.

Imagine 10 years from now. Hubs have become the main launch point for supporting residents to develop community solutions to climate change. What does this look like? What is happening at the hub? In the community?

Forum participants imagined:

- The hub building is **net-zero**. It is built or retrofitted to be energy efficient with a passive design that enables easy, low-cost ways of minimizing energy use and adapting to the natural world, such as having a rain water reservoir on site. **Green space** is integrated into the building in the form of indoor green walls and a rooftop garden. This space is used to engage community members of different ages through innovative projects such as “bee hotels”. The hub is powered by **renewable energy**, hosting solar panels on the roof and in the parking lot, which support charging stations for the electric vehicle rideshare.
- The hub grounds host a **transportation hub** that is connected to local transit, and part of broader infrastructure supporting dedicated bike and bus lanes. With the exception of the rideshare, the parking lot has been converted into bike parking, since the hub’s programs promote **active modes** such as cycling and walking. Residents are able to easily borrow or rent from the bike-share facility, which helps people to learn how to ride, maintain and repair bikes.
- The prevailing culture at the hub **prevents waste** and embraces **sharing and circular economy** principles. Everything from desks to pens are made from natural materials. With a full system of recycling, composting (in the hub garden), and using reusable materials for operations, the hub is free of garbage bins. These principles are also integrated into the hub’s programs. The hub hosts onsite initiatives such as repair cafes, where residents can fix their electronics and appliances; tool libraries to lend items to residents; and markets specifically for upcycling. Community-based initiatives, such as social supermarkets, are also expanded to include used clothing and other upcycle exchanges.
- There is a growing movement in every hub to grow and share **healthy local food**. The hub houses a resource centre for community food programs and facilities such as a community kitchen and fridge that promote food exchange. The hub’s community garden has evolved into a micro-farm, and residents are cultivating plots on local community farms. These initiatives generate produce for regular farmers’ markets and a mobile food market, which improve residents’ access to healthy, fresh food. Systems are in place to eliminate food waste, wherein residents share, exchange and redistribute surplus food to other residents in need.
- The hub’s programs help more residents to access **green jobs** in the local economy. The hub provides space to green businesses and social enterprises, and skills development training on insulation and building maintenance. By providing informational resources and working with landlords, the hub creates demand for retrofits of multi-residential buildings in the community.

- **Residents are empowered** to act on climate change and work on low-carbon initiatives. Residents access regular workshops on climate solutions and green practices, as well as how to communicate about climate change. Special attention is given to communicating using accessible language and visual aids so that everyone is included in the conversation. The hub supports **innovative ways of learning**, including using the space to help community members interact with green practices and harness technology to elicit their ideas. **Partnerships** have been formed that integrate knowledge from Indigenous people, promote intergenerational and intercultural collaboration, and link with the public education system to promote lifelong learning.
- The hub, like all others across the city, has a resident-led climate community that started with a small group of residents and grew. The group is part of a broader **inter-hub network** linking residents across the city. Residents access training, and peer-based learning and support, giving them the confidence to engage in **civic advocacy** on climate issues. Residents participate in processes at municipal, provincial, and federal levels, and host community town halls and forums on local climate change concerns. They also advocate for other issues related to climate such as housing insecurity and homelessness. Lastly, the hub provides important wrap-around services such as child care, services for seniors, and mental health and wellness programs, which play a vital role in supporting residents to lead climate initiatives in their neighbourhoods.

Youth participate in a design charrette. | Photo Credit: East Scarborough Storefront



3.4 What resources do community hubs need?

Community residents and hub staff provided feedback on the resources that hubs need to sustain and grow efforts focused on climate change. They identified the ways in which current hub resources such as human capital and physical spaces can be enhanced and supported to enable hubs to become more engaged in climate solutions. Staff and residents were explicitly clear that deepening these efforts is conditional on accessing additional funding and resources.

Current Strengths & Resources

Hub staff and residents were asked to identify which of their hub's strengths and resources could be leveraged to engage residents in climate solutions. Participants defined resources in varied ways, and frequently cited space, service delivery and people-power as key resources. These resources were highlighted not only because they are a benefit of the one-stop service model, but also for the ways in which they support community mobilization and capacity development around local issues. From technological resources such as screen projectors, computer access and Wi-Fi connections, to larger resources such as community kitchens and access to plots for gardening, space and facilities were highlighted as important assets. Many residents were aware of the improvements to the building systems and the steps taken to make the hubs more climate-friendly such as waste diversion practices.

Staff and residents noted that hub programs make effective use of the space to convene residents to organize community outreach. The hub staff and partners support capacity-building processes and facilitate engagement that is locally-focused. Residents are able to draw on these resources to respond to the challenges in their neighbourhoods.

The leadership of highly engaged residents was identified as one of the most valuable resources on which to draw. Hub stakeholders identified *motivation, passion for change, empathy and knowledge* as key characteristics of dedicated individuals making significant contributions to the

hubs and broader community. These attributes were seen as underpinning the strategic community engagement that happens through hub initiatives.

Resources Needed

During the Inter-Hub Climate Forum, hub stakeholders participated in a "resources dotmocracy" prioritization and voting exercise based on a list of resources developed through prior discussions with hub staff and residents.

Participants were asked to reflect on the following question:

If your hub was to become more involved in engaging residents in climate change solutions, what additional resources would you need to support your work?

Each participant voted for their top three resource priorities (Figure 4). The results demonstrated a desire to see investment in areas identified as important strengths and assets to leverage for climate initiatives.

The top five priorities selected were: funding; training/capacity-building for hub residents; resident/community support for initiatives; human resources (hub staff); and training/capacity-building for hub staff. In discussions, participants overwhelmingly cited the lack of consistent funding as a key impediment to mounting an effective local response to climate change. Much of their climate-related engagement work is project-based and dependent on grants being secured.

The consequence of piecemeal or insufficient funding is that broad and sustained engagement suffers. It also hampers opportunities to monitor and track their progress towards achieving engagement outcomes. In between projects, hub staff and residents work hard to ensure relationships are maintained between stakeholders, and that assets, both tangible and intangible, are nourished.

Hub stakeholders emphasized that staff currently have limited time and competing priorities, making it challenging to fully dedicate efforts to climate initiatives. Hub staff cautioned against stretching limited resources with additional work.

Some stakeholders suggested that there is a need for core funding to support key staff and community animator positions to deliver climate programs. If given the opportunity, some resident leaders could be employed to facilitate and animate local climate initiatives. With sufficient funding, this largely untapped resource could sustain resident-led engagement activities linked to local priorities.

Building resident capacity, expanding outreach and engagement efforts, and scaling up promising projects were all identified as important priorities by hub stakeholders. With strong partnerships and community assets in place, stakeholders feel that there is a solid platform on which to build climate engagement efforts. They are seeking tangible commitments from policymakers and funders to invest in community-level climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives.

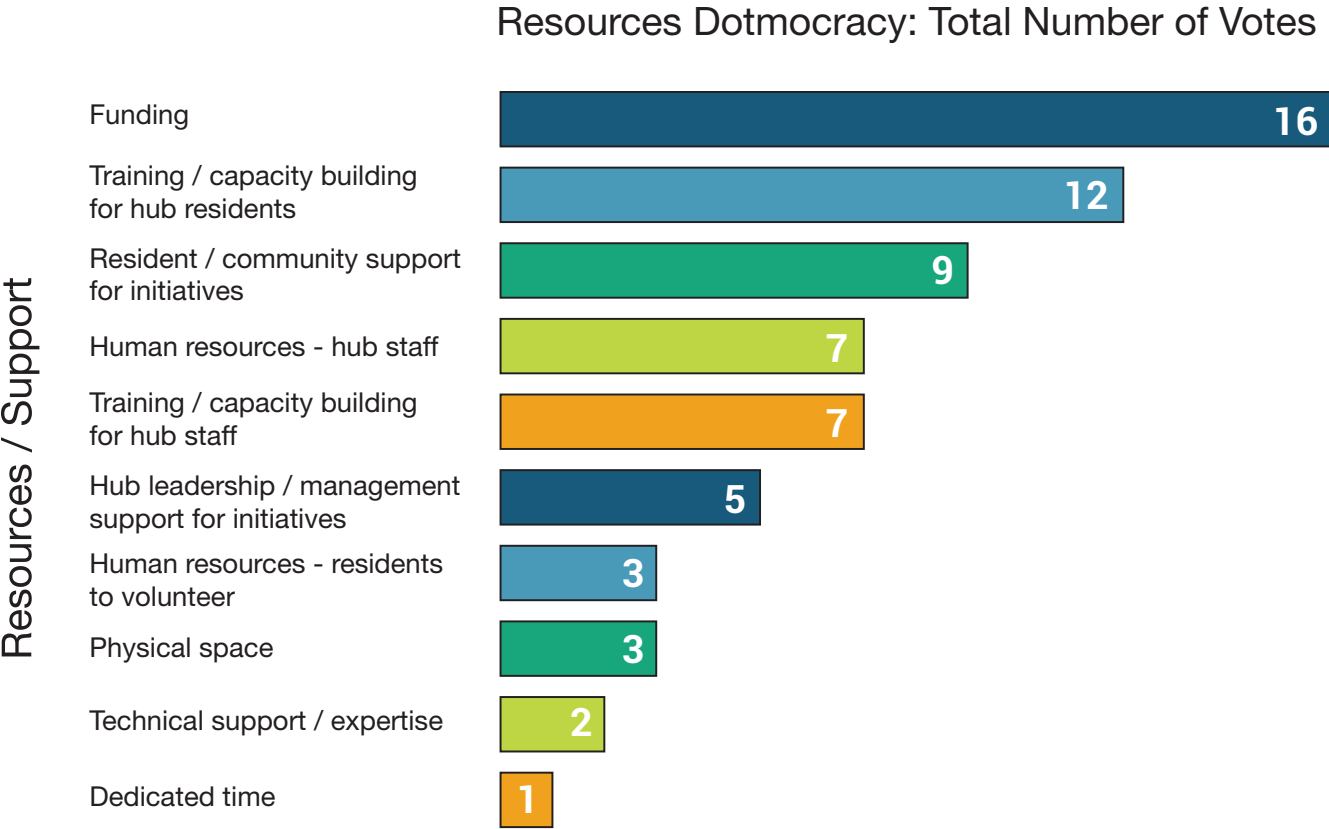


Figure 4: Results from Resources Dotmocracy, Inter-Hub Climate Forum, July 2018.

4. Recommendations

Through multiple points of engagement and consultation with hub stakeholders, this feasibility assessment established that there is a high level of support for growing and deepening climate initiatives. Many of the hubs have already planned and implemented programs, services and practices that generate positive environmental and climate outcomes. The following recommendations have been developed based on the learning and experiences from these initiatives, and the future aspirations and goals shared by hub stakeholders. These recommendations propose how hubs' climate-related projects can be better supported and leveraged to engage residents in building equitable, low-carbon communities across the city.

Leverage the Engagement Capacity of Community Hubs.

Community hubs are experienced in facilitating localized community engagement and supporting resident-led initiatives; both of which are core ingredients for activating local climate solutions. This work provides a foundation for seeding and supporting neighbourhood and community-level climate initiatives. While hub staff and stakeholders are not experts in climate action, many have expertise in community engagement, which is critical for developing initiatives that are responsive to community priorities and needs. Hubs can engage partners with different skill sets and resources in developing and executing climate projects, who complement their community expertise.

Proposed Actions:

- **Capacity-building training on climate communications and low-carbon solutions for residents groups.** These groups can be equipped and supported to transfer their knowledge and engage their peers.
- **Civic engagement and education programs as an immediate point of integration.** There is an opportunity to introduce climate (e.g. hosting community climate conversations) into existing programs that convene new and diverse residents.

- **Partnership brokering to help hubs achieve their climate-related goals and projects.** Partners can provide hubs with a range of technical skills and expertise required to undertake climate initiatives (e.g. environmental communications, workplace and program practices, and infrastructure development).

Catalyze Inter-Hub Collaboration on Climate Action.

One of the key insights that emerged from the Inter-Hub Climate Forum was the appetite from hub stakeholders for more Inter-Hub collaboration and knowledge sharing. Many of the hub stakeholders were not aware of the depth or range of the climate-related projects led by other hubs in the city. The majority of the new projects that hub stakeholders would like to start are already being done by other hubs. Facilitating knowledge sharing and collaboration between hubs can help encourage peer-to-peer learning to seed and grow climate initiatives.

Proposed Actions:

- **Inter-Hub knowledge sharing forums, workshops and other learning opportunities for hub staff and residents.** These opportunities can be delivered on a peer-to-peer basis or facilitated by partner organizations with the specific purpose of promoting knowledge transfer and exchange for climate initiatives.
- **Exposure trips, case studies and other “how to” tools.** These can be used to spark interest, garner support and build confidence for starting climate initiatives. Developing a customized “good practice” toolkit focused on climate-friendly programs and practices may be helpful.
- **Peer mentorship and knowledge transfer for emerging hubs.** Formal or informal mentorship arrangements can be made among established hubs and new, emerging hubs. There is a huge opportunity for emerging hubs to benefit from learning about sustainable design and implementation processes while still in the planning stage.



Youth bring down the fence. | Photo Credit: East Scaborough Storefront

Amplify the Reach and Impact of Inspiring Practices.

As a co-location space for a wide range of agencies and programs, hubs offer a unique opportunity to engage diverse service providers and their clients in climate initiatives. In addition, as a place where residents convene for meetings and events, hubs are ideal for housing pilots and demonstration projects that help community members to experience and participate in low-carbon solutions. By modelling best practices and innovative projects, hubs can help to seed and mobilize support for initiatives within the neighbourhood, community and city.

Proposed Actions:

- **Low-carbon projects designed to facilitate resident participation in planning, implementation and evaluation.** Climate projects that promote meaningful resident engagement not only build valuable skills and capacity, but can result in better outcomes.
- **Climate-related upgrades of the hub building, interior space or grounds.** These projects can be optimized for climate impact and engagement, and can be done as infrastructure work becomes necessary, and/or as modular projects for which funding is sought.
- **Redesign of spaces, processes or systems within the hub.** Residents' experience of the hub environment can serve as an important learning and engagement opportunity (e.g. waste diversion systems can be designed to motivate and reinforce behaviour change).

Prioritize Localized Entry Points and Co-Benefits.

Working with community-centred approaches on a neighbourhood scale, hubs are often well-versed in local key priorities and needs. Hubs are already working on the climate engagement entry points and co-benefit areas that are important to their catchment communities. These entry points can be critical in informing the design of future low-carbon initiatives to support broader and more diverse engagement in climate solutions.

Proposed Actions:

- **Community food activities and events as an entry point for climate engagement and education.** Most hubs have dynamic community garden programs that are led by highly engaged residents who understand the interrelated nature of food production and climate change.
- **Waste reduction and diversion initiatives as an experiential learning opportunity.** This is a tangible way to reinforce personal climate-friendly behaviours in the hub and community by enabling residents to gain firsthand experience of good practices at the hub and through community outreach programs.
- **Strategic identification and development of co-benefit projects.** With support from funders, partners and residents, hubs can plan and implement projects that align with community priorities and generate climate and other social and economic benefits (e.g. renewable energy, green jobs and transportation initiatives).

Invest through Flexible and Sustained Funding.

Hubs share the common challenge of designing and delivering programs to address specific community priorities, while struggling with limited or precarious funding. Climate-related initiatives are not always conceived of as essential services, and without continuous funding, these initiatives are difficult to sustain. Hubs can benefit from long-term funding that supports the emergence and scaling of a mosaic of innovative, hyper-local climate initiatives.

Proposed Actions:

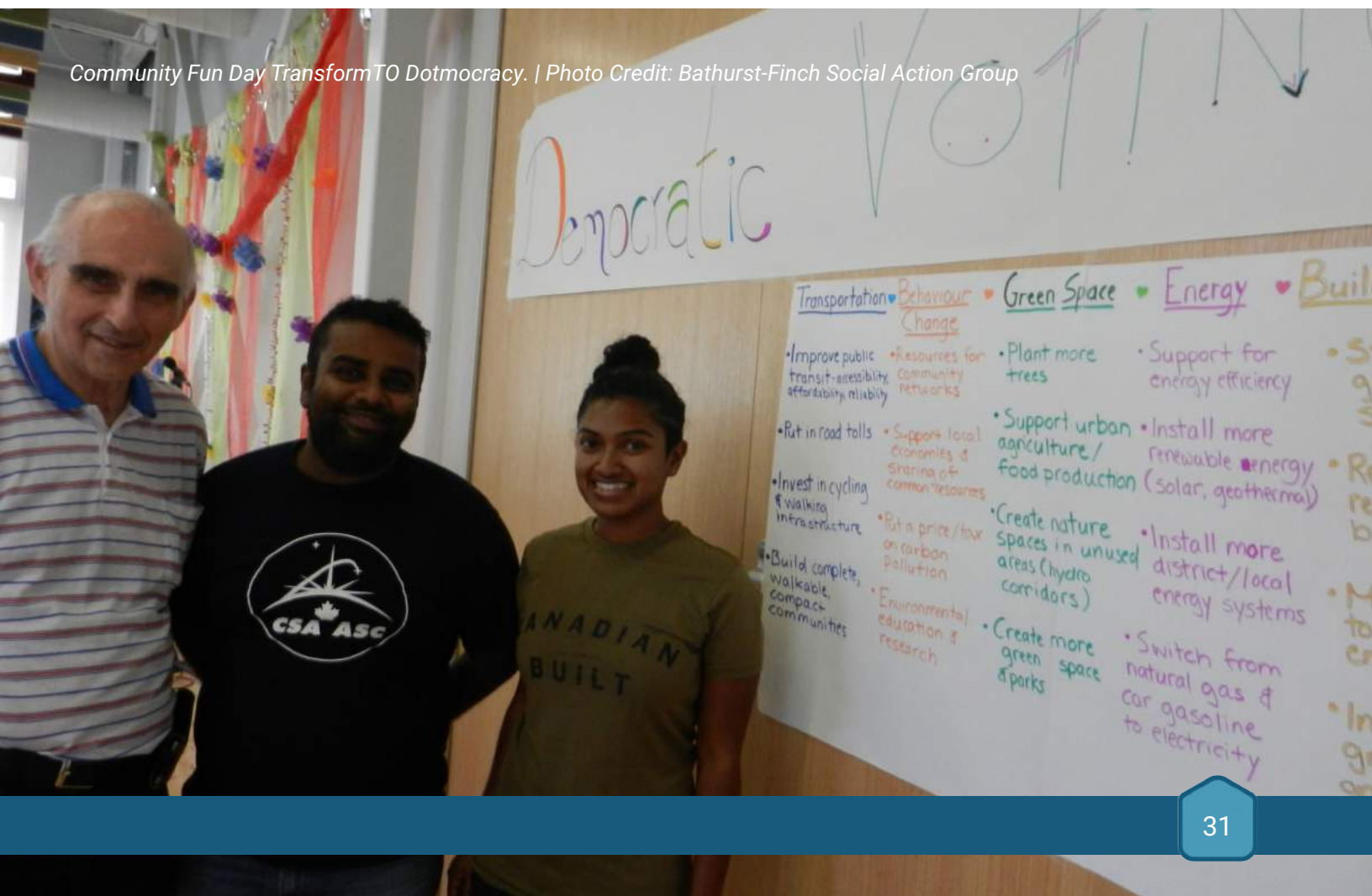
- **Non-prescriptive, engagement-focused funding pathways.** This can help to seed low-carbon initiatives that prioritize co-benefits designed to meet local needs and engage new audiences.

- Year-on-year funding streams that support projects to go from pilot to scale, and continue as core programming. This funding can provide flexibility to the hub for core costs such as staffing, training and other resources that are essential for growing and sustaining climate programs.

"In world where community is harder to come by, hubs can be the place where community thrives."

- Participant, Inter-Hub Climate Forum, July 2018

Community Fun Day TransformTO Dotmocracy. | Photo Credit: Bathurst-Finch Social Action Group



5. Annexes

Annex A: Core Consultation Questions

1. What would you say are the top priorities for residents and communities served by your hub?
2. How much do you agree with the following statement:

“Community hubs can serve as launch points for wider community engagement in developing low-carbon communities.” [visual agreement scale 0-10]

Why did you choose the number you selected?
3.
 - a. What is your hub already doing that could serve as a good entry point to engaging community members in climate change? [or]
 - b. What are some of the programs, services or initiatives that your residents group or hub already has which are linked to climate change and environmental issues?
4. Are you especially proud of a certain environmental initiative your hub is doing? Tell us a bit more about it.
5.
 - a. Are there any specific climate-related initiatives that you would like to start? What resources would you need? [or]
 - b. What climate-related programs, services or initiatives would you like to see your hub start?
6. Imagine 10 years from now. Hubs have become the main launch point for supporting residents to develop community solutions to climate change. What does this look like? What is happening at the hub? In the community?
7. What are the current strengths and resources of your hub (and residents group) that can help engage community members in climate change solutions?
8. If your hub was to become more involved in engaging residents in climate change solutions, what additional resources would you need to support your work?
9. What would you like to come out of this feasibility assessment? For example, are there specific results you would like to see or things you would like to learn?

Annex B: Climate Initiatives Menu of Options

Our Future Climate-Friendly Hub: What would you like to see at your hub?

Environmental & Green Space

- Green space on hub grounds
- Field trips to green spaces
- Tree planting
- Recycling or composting programs in the hub or community
- Programs that promote clean air or water
- Neighbourhood or park clean ups
- Community or rooftop gardens
- Fresh produce markets

Sharing Economy & Green Jobs

- Used clothing drives or swaps
- Libraries
- Tool libraries
- Skills development programs for green jobs
- Job fairs for green jobs

Transportation

- Programs that promote walking and/or cycling
- Bike infrastructure (e.g. racks and bike-share)
- Public transit promotion
- Carpooling or ride-sharing services
- Electric car charging stations

Energy

- Make the hub more energy efficient
- Home energy efficiency programs
- Community renewable energy programs
- Renewable energy at the hub

Civic Engagement & Education

- Climate change civic engagement training
- Climate change education
- Arts activities with a climate focus
- Social activities with a climate focus
- Community support networks for extreme weather
- Emergency preparedness planning

Residents explore the outdoors. | Photo Credit: Victoria Park Hub

Annex C: Endnotes

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²⁴Recipe for Community. Accessed at: <https://www.toronto.ca/business-economy/partnerships-sponsorships-donations/partner-2/community-programs/recipe-for-community/>

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²⁷The Tower Community that Could - Report by Jaime Elliott-Ngugi and Anne Gloger. Accessed at <https://thestorefront.org/2017/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/The-Tower-Community-That-Could-Nov-12.compressed.pdf>

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6. About Us

This project is a collaboration between Enviromentum, the Toronto Community Benefits Network and the Toronto Environmental Alliance. Our project team first convened together through our participation on the City of Toronto's Modeling Advisory Group, which contributed to the development of the TransformTO climate change strategy.

Enviromentum, a project of Tides Canada, uses approaches informed by behaviour change science to motivate people to adopt environmentally responsible behaviours. Enviromentum collaborates with individuals, communities, organizations, and governments to catalyze a cultural shift to a more equitable, low-carbon society. Enviromentum has worked with over 1,000 young people, and 500 environmental organizers and community leaders, to build their capacity using evidence-informed, motivation and values-based tools. To learn more, please visit enviromentum.org.

Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) is a community-labour coalition that has centred itself at the forefront of the economic justice movement in Canada by negotiating Community Benefits Agreements into public infrastructure and urban development projects. In so doing, TCBN is addressing the challenges of access to good jobs, local economic development, and neighbourhood and environmental revitalization, particularly as they impact on historically disadvantaged communities and equity seeking groups in Toronto. TCBN has made significant achievements, including negotiating Ontario's first ever Community Benefits Framework with the provincial agency Metrolinx, in addition to lobbying for the enshrinement of community benefits in provincial law. To learn more, please visit communitybenefits.ca.

Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) has campaigned locally to find solutions to Toronto's urban environmental problems for the last 30 years. As a not-for-profit organization, TEA advocates on behalf of all Torontonians for a green, healthy and equitable city and has extensive experience engaging residents on climate change issues. With more than 60,000 supporters across the city, TEA acts as an environmental watchdog at City Hall on a range of environmental issues including climate change, waste, toxics and air quality. TEA continues to broaden the scope of work on climate change by taking an intersectional approach to this work as it relates to equity, social justice and economic prosperity. To learn more, please visit torontoenvironment.org.



