



Summary Report:

# **Toronto Climate Action Community Engagement Workshop**

January 2019

groundswell 

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# Overview

In July 2017, Toronto City Council unanimously adopted TransformTO – the City’s ambitious climate action strategy. TransformTO lays out a set of long-term, low-carbon goals and strategies to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions, and improve our health, social equity and grow our economy. As a part of TransformTO, the City adopted three long-term greenhouse gas emission targets, including an overall target of 80% reduction by 2050. TransformTO identified that to reach these targets, Toronto’s residents, diverse community groups and organizations all need to work together.

As a part of TransformTO implementation, a network of multi-disciplinary stakeholders was brought together in mid-summer 2018 to help support city-wide community engagement in climate action. The purpose of the stakeholder engagement was to develop a Climate Action Engagement Framework that could identify short-term action areas for engaging residents in climate action, building on work that is being undertaken by existing community

partners. This process aimed to establish shared community engagement goals, objectives and targets; identify priority collaboration areas and pilot projects; and inspire and support collaborative stakeholder relationships.

On January 10, 2019, the Environment and Energy Division (EED), with input from the key stakeholder group, convened over 80 community partners in a collaborative workshop (list of participating organizations is provided as an Appendix). Community engagement and strategy consultancy, Groundswell Projects, designed and led the facilitation of the workshop.

The objectives of this Climate Action Engagement Workshop were to:

- inspire direction for community engagement on climate action and TransformTO;
- foster a network of community partners to support the engagement; and
- identify and explore opportunities for collaboration around climate action community engagement.

Workshop design was informed by: stakeholder engagement throughout the summer and fall of 2018, stakeholder research conducted by Groundswell Projects, and the findings of the City Wide Climate Change Perceptions Study commissioned by EED. The findings of this study were presented at the workshop.

Workshop participants recommended five main areas of focus for climate action engagement:

- support bespoke resident-led climate action
- build climate literacy and motivation
- engage youth in meaningful ways
- establish shared measures for climate action engagement
- foster connections across sectors.

In each of these areas participants identified engagement needs and opportunities for collaborative initiatives to address those needs. Participants also identified support and resources that would be required from the City to further develop and implement these initiatives.

# Summary of Workshop Proceedings

The TransformTO climate action community engagement approach aims to mobilize a bottom-up collective impact process where community partners work collaboratively together and with the City of Toronto to engage residents in climate action. Collective impact is an approach for solving social problems at scale through cross-sectoral collaboration. Accordingly, the workshop invited community partners to address the strategic question: *What can we achieve together that we could not on our own?*

The workshop focused on inspiring participants with existing case studies of collaborative projects and engaged them in exploring how lessons from these projects would be useful for climate action in Toronto. This was achieved through three activities:

1. **Inspiration:** presentations and posters of collective impact, climate action and community engagement case studies,
2. **Discovery:** exploring existing work among stakeholders and analyzing the case studies, and
3. **Ideation:** identifying new collaborative opportunities for Toronto inspired by the case studies.

The detailed workshop agenda is attached as an Appendix.





# Climate Action & Resident Engagement Case Studies

Since climate action is about lifestyle and behaviour change, it includes both individual and community elements. The themes of the inspiring case studies and the corresponding action areas for small groups discussion reflected this

## 1. Awareness & education:

Mississauga Climate Action Campaign: 2050 Escape Room

## 2. Deeper discussion and conversations:

Zero Waste Conference Toronto

## 3. Household and individual-level action:

Project Neutral

## 4. Community and neighbourhood-level actions:

- a. Community hubs: Enviromentum Community Hubs research
- b. Community organizing: Vancouver Green Bloc Neighbourhoods Toolkit

## 5. Cultivating local leadership:

City of Toronto Social Development Finance and Administration  
Division Local Champions program

## 6. Capacity building and training:

City of Toronto Environment & Energy Division workshops

## 7. Strategic focus & measuring the impact of resident engagement:

Raising the Village

## 8. Synergy with Climate Resilience:

Resilient Conversations Toolkit

## 9. Youth engagement:

City Studio Vancouver

The posters of the case studies are attached as an Appendix.

## Community & neighbourhood-level action

### A. Community Hubs

**The Enviromentum Community Hubs assessment demonstrates how community hubs can play a role in mobilizing low-carbon communities.**

Enviromentum, a project of Tides Canada, conducted a feasibility assessment to gather insights on the potential for hubs to seed climate-related initiatives in their communities. The assessment results envision hubs as a launch point for developing community solutions to climate change by modelling and engaging residents in low-carbon initiatives. It identifies entry points linked to hubs' current work focused on civic engagement and resident capacity building programs.

### Collaborators:

Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA),  
Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN)



### Target audience:

Hub staff and residents engaged in hubs' community programs.

### Climate action & co-benefits:

The assessment identified opportunities for hubs to support actions in areas of renewable energy, green space, food security, green jobs, waste diversion, and active transportation. These actions connect to community co-benefits and community building initiatives.



### Why it's compelling:

Activate an existing community resource hub to support climate action.  
Supports actions that reflect the needs of individual neighbourhoods.

### Experience Design Cycle



### How might these ideas support collaborative work in Toronto?

What insights can we learn and use from this research?  
How does this resonate with the work you're currently doing?  
Is there something that surprises you about this project?

### Your thoughts....

# Climate Action Frameworks

## climate action & co-benefits

TransformTO defines climate action as the intersection of efforts to address the City's low carbon goals and to create co-benefits that align with TransformTO's guiding principles. These principles include:

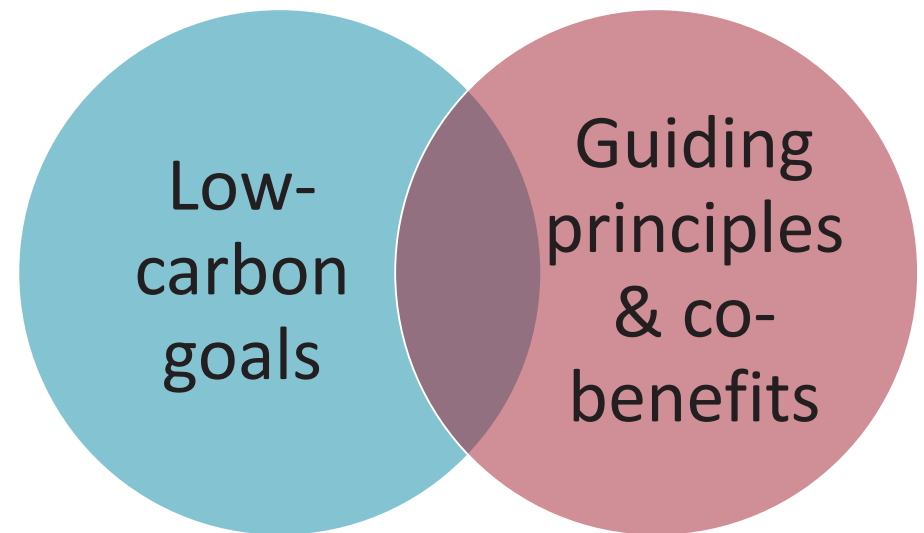
- advance social equity
- protect low income residents
- improve affordability, particularly for vulnerable populations
- enhance and strengthen the local economy
- maintain and create good quality jobs
- improve public health
- contribute to poverty reduction
- create resilient communities and infrastructure.

The workshop adopted this definition of climate action to delineate the scope of issues that could be addressed through climate action engagement work. By including co-benefits as part of climate action this approach recognizes the synergy and inter-relationships between climate action and other community development objectives. Using this approach as part of stakeholder analysis for the workshop created an opportunity to bring a broader group of community partners into the conversation. Many stakeholders that attended the workshop have not been included or have not seen themselves as part of the climate action conversation previously.

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### Climate Action

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# Climate Action Frameworks

## experience design cycle

The workshop adapted the **Experience Design Cycle** as a framework for thinking about resident engagement. It helps consider a person's journey towards taking climate actions or adopting behavioural changes. The Experience Design cycle is used in Service, UX and Product Design to shift a user into new behaviours. It was adapted to climate action engagement as illustrated.

Developing a Climate Action Engagement Framework could focus on supporting residents at each of the steps in the cycle and with moving along the cycle to the next step.







# Summary of Findings





## NEED

### Organizations, groups and individuals need support to develop climate actions that address resonant issues

Throughout the workshop, conversations underscored that climate action connects to diverse social, economic, and environmental issues, which are experienced differently by people in different neighbourhoods. Using the Experience Design Cycle to understand how people connect with climate action emphasizes that people first need to feel concerned about the issues and understand the benefits of taking action.

Community partners recognized that in both of these steps people begin with what matters most to them, based on their day-to-day experiences in their households, workplaces and neighbourhoods.

Participants envisioned a climate action engagement strategy that supports resident-led actions suited for the many specific contexts and needs of people in diverse communities. In some neighbourhoods this approach would prioritize socio-economic needs and co-benefits, while in others it may focus more directly on carbon emissions reduction.

Participants agreed that this approach would embolden residents and leave room for emergent issues and opportunities that have not previously been identified.

## PROPOSED INITIATIVE

Neighbourhood-based social gatherings to explore personal and local issues, identify opportunities for positive change, co-create community-driven climate action, learn about and connect with local organizations and initiatives they can engage with, and celebrate local achievements. Local champions can be employed to convene and facilitate these gatherings.

**“We need to create a space where local people identify what their needs are and then find a way to connect these needs to climate actions.”**

**participant**

## NEED

### **Make equity a priority for climate action engagement**

Equity and inclusion emerged as a central theme across all conversations at the workshop. Participants recognized that equity-seeking residents and communities are the most affected and most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. At the same time, they felt that the benefits of climate action are still not reaching these most affected communities. There was a sense that climate action initiatives often target groups with capacity to adopt new solutions and these groups tend to be from more affluent communities. In addition, participants felt conversations around climate action are often not inclusive of challenges or priorities of equity-seeking communities.

Participants emphasized locally-driven actions in order to recognize the value of diverse experiences and needs and create space for diverse expressions of climate action and the types of initiatives included in the conversation. To support the value of equity in climate action, participants identified the importance of developing inclusive metrics for climate action engagement reflective of the priorities and goals of equity-seeking communities. In addition, participants agreed that in order to support more equitable and inclusive participation there is a need to recognize and address persistent systemic and structural barriers that prevent this outcome. Unanimously, participants called for equity to become a core priority for Transform TO climate action engagement.





## NEED

### Build local leadership and support peer-to-peer outreach

Workshop participants identified peer-to-peer referral as one of the most effective engagement methods. It enables individuals to learn about climate actions that are most relevant to their lifestyle in a familiar language from people who they know and perceive to be similar to them. Participants noted that a number of existing organizations support networking and community building among residents who are taking climate action. They identified the need to build connections among these residents and those who are not yet involved in climate action to share experiences and inspiration. They also recognized the importance of documenting, sharing and celebrating diverse stories of change and impact through climate action in order to build hope and inspire others.

Discussions further highlighted the key role of community leaders in building momentum around local issues. Participants envisioned an engagement strategy that would activate current and nurture new local leaders, who could provide authentic grassroots voices on climate action and champion the development of relevant and creative responses.

## PROPOSED INITIATIVE

Online peer-connections platform that links people taking climate action with residents who aren't sure about how to get involved and promotes sharing of ideas and benefits. The target audience is the “hopeless” people, those who do not feel enabled to act. This responds to a finding from the City-Wide Climate Change Perceptions Study that one quarter of Toronto residents express outright helplessness when it comes to climate change. This initiative would particularly focus on building new relationships and social capital among residents.

**“There is so much more power when people do things together. We would like to benefit from local leadership and find points of collaboration.”**  
participant



## NEED

### **Make resourcing (financial and in-kind) flexible to support diverse needs**

Organizations involved in resident engagement, community development and climate action are primarily not-for-profits and rely on funding to fulfill their mandates. These organizations provide backbone support, such as project management, coordination, etc., in support of resident engagement and local actions. Backbone support is one of the five key requirements of collective impact frameworks. However, community partners already feel stretched for resources and struggle with accessing stable funding. In order to create meaningful and lasting impact in climate action engagement organizations need to have funding for dedicated staff time to support the development and implementation of new initiatives. They noted that adequate resourcing for project staffing and compensation of participants time is important to ensure equitable opportunities for engagement in community-based actions in low-income neighbourhoods.

Another challenge identified by community partners is that existing funding mechanisms can be restrictive and exclusionary due to complex or fixed requirements. They called for flexible resourcing that can support a variety of actions at different scales in order to engage a diversity of groups and voices. While funding was the top need identified by community partners, they noted that in many cases other support would be equally as useful, such as access to space, outreach, networking or facilitation assistance.



## NEED

### Improve access to existing resources

While there was consensus around the need for new resource investment into climate action, community partners noted that there are underused opportunities to leverage existing resources, including space, programs, incentives, networks etc. Barriers include lack of awareness of what is available, and a lack of clarity around the benefits of these resources or how to access them. Community groups and organizations need support with navigating resource access processes.

## PROPOSED INITIATIVES

**A. Nurturing resiliency:** an inventory of local physical and social assets that can support households and communities to undertake climate action and to build resiliency. The inventory would be presented as a map and provide examples of precedents from around the city that connect climate action to diverse local needs.

**B. Retrofit awareness campaign:** an infographic about different rebates that can be accessed by households when considering a home renovation and their benefits (eg. a rebate from utility for furnace replacement).

**C. Community of Practice on Hubs:** define, map and activate a network of community hubs to engage residents on shared community development challenges that intersect with climate (eg. food security, tower renewal, transportation, etc).



## NEED

### Build climate literacy through free, fun, hands-on, quick and inclusive activities

Given the results of the City-Wide Climate Change Perception Study, participants felt it would be important to support climate literacy among residents, which would include:

- better understanding of climate terminology;
- better understanding of different climate actions and how they relate to individual or household scale; and
- better understanding of how to get involved in climate action.

The challenge participants identified is that language and messaging around climate change is not always accessible for residents and can feel overwhelming. To address this, they emphasized that climate literacy efforts should focus on learning experiences that feel more organic rather than imposed (i.e. “being talked to”), in order to provide opportunities for accidental discoveries or ‘aha’ moments. This type of learning is often achieved through play-based, fun and hands-on activities. Discussions also underlined the value of shared learning experiences and safe learning spaces, where it feels ok not to know all the answers and to make mistakes.

## PROPOSED INITIATIVE

**Toronto Fest:** City-wide climate festival – a fun day to bring together different people and create accidental learning opportunities about climate change and citizen engagement. Examples of activities include competitions, games that demonstrate new technologies, or demonstrations from existing climate action projects. The activities at the festival would be led by community groups, this is similar to the model used by the [Open Streets](#) festival.





## NEED

### Skills development to support youth to succeed as future change-makers

A general sentiment at the workshop was that climate action is about creating a more sustainable, healthy and equitable society. Participants felt that climate action engagement for youth should create learning experiences that would embolden youth to lead this transition and enable them to succeed in a changing economy and society. This includes developing 21st Century skills (collaboration, creativity, communication and critical thinking) as well as leadership skills, confidence building and critical inquiry of the democratic process.

**“Providing opportunities to gain new skills are key to getting youth engaged. We can provide them with the skills they need and an opportunity to use them to do something specific that is actually required.”**

**participant**



## NEED

### Create pathways for youth to build agency and engage with the City

The conversation around youth engagement recognized that while there is an increased focus on youth engagement, there are still limited opportunities for youth to gain civic education, learn about how policies work and get involved in meaningful civic action. Participants noted that to become involved in climate action, youth need inspiration but they also need to believe they are welcome at the table and their actions will make a difference. Youth engagement should bring youth into the civic process, help youth learn about how and where they can impact change, and lead to visible impacts. Community partners identified that one opportunity to do this would be through practical climate action projects in schools that connect with existing City-based processes.

## PROPOSED INITIATIVE

**Youth Take City Hall:** official program to bring youth into policy making at the City. The program would be developed in close collaboration with the City and organizations that work in the space of civic engagement and literacy. The program would take youth through the complete process of taking a motion to Council: coming up with an idea with their community, learning about relevant processes within the City and identifying barriers, further refining the idea with their community, and presenting it back to the City. The goal is to help youth to learn about the policy development process through action.



## NEED

### Define meaningful measures for climate action engagement that have relevance for multiple sectors and diverse groups

Setting shared outcomes and measures is a key to developing a collective agreement among diverse stakeholders of what they are trying to achieve together. It is one of the five pillars of the collective impact framework. Shared outcomes and measures help to build a common language and tell the story of change that groups are working towards, to focus the work of organizations from different sectors around common goals, and to clearly communicate priorities to policy makers.

Participants agreed that meaningful shared outcomes and measures for climate action engagement need to address issues important to diverse cultural, economic and geographical communities and be inclusive of a variety of climate actions and co-benefits. Using holistic and cross-sectoral measures would help to demonstrate how climate change connects to other issues such as community development and highlight multiple benefits that can be gained from climate action. This can inspire unexpected collaborations among diverse stakeholders and build reinforcing actions.

## NEED

### Enable collaboration for data collection and sharing across sectors

In order to support shared outcome measurement, participants identified the need to develop strategies for improving data sharing and collaboration around data collection. This presents an opportunity for organizations and institutions to examine collaboration barriers, to identify gaps in data access and create space for bringing new voices and collaborators to the table.

## PROPOSED INITIATIVE

**Climate collect:** multi-stakeholder data collection group that will establish shared key performance metrics for climate action engagement and develop processes for collecting data across the city.





## NEED

### Convene diverse groups to find intersections among different sectors and to create unexpected collaborations

Community partners recognized that climate change is a complex challenge that connects to all aspects of our existence as a society. The case studies shared at the workshop demonstrate that collaboration among unlikely partners, for example among musicians and scientists, or a popular attraction and a city, can create new ways of understanding and tackling this shared challenge. Conversations and ideas generated at the workshop further demonstrate that there is appetite for multi-sectoral collaboration, and that inviting diverse groups to share their work with each other and generate solutions together is a good way to inspire and envision new opportunities for action. Over 86% of participants from the climate action workshop expressed an interest in participating in further collaboration through multi-stakeholder working groups. 97% of participants expressed interest in being part of a mailing list that would be shared with the group.

## PROPOSED INITIATIVES

A. Community of practice network on climate action engagement including community partners who attended the workshop and others who would like to join.

In addition, participants identified the following areas where there is potential for synergy:

B. Focusing on resilience can help to bridge conversations and actions focused on mitigating and adapting to climate change.

C. There are opportunities to connect resident engagement to other TransformTO campaigns, in particular the *Develop the Workforce for High-Performance Buildings* acceleration campaign.

# Recommendations:

## stakeholder convening

### Convene thematic stakeholder conversations

A follow-up survey conducted by the City of Toronto asked participants to identify action areas where they would like to be involved further. These answers demonstrate the areas where there is considerable interest and energy among stakeholders. Follow-up conversations that focus specifically on these themes would support further development of collaborative initiatives identified at the workshop and will help maintain and build momentum for action in these areas.



### Organize multi-stakeholder task forces

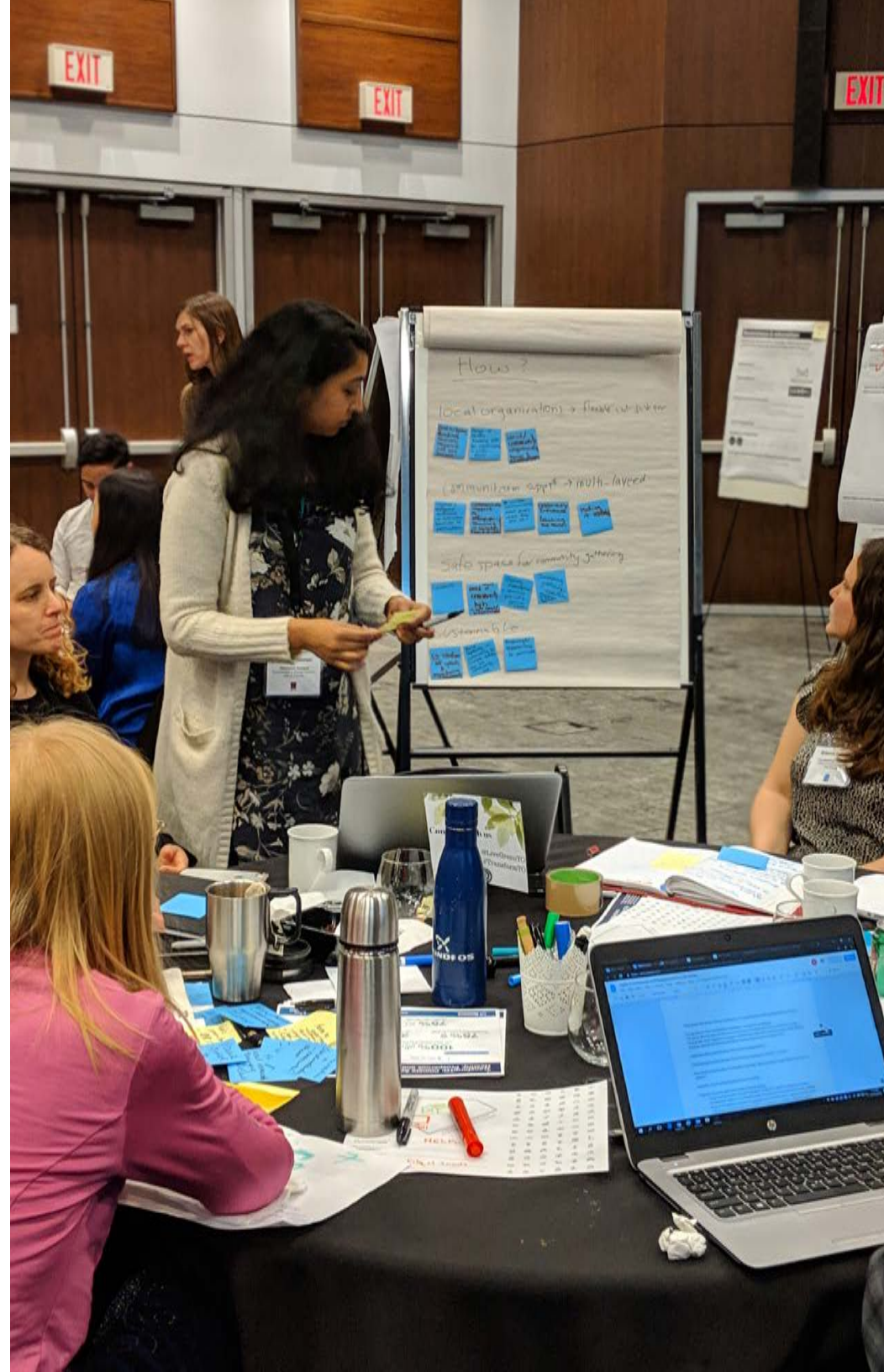
Workshop discussions identified two areas that would require further investigation and input from stakeholders in order to support new modes of engagement in climate action. It is recommended that formal multi-stakeholder task forces be established for these areas.

1. **Shared Measurement:** this group would focus on establishing shared outcomes and measures for climate action engagement as well as coordinating data sharing and collection among community partners.
2. **Flexible Resourcing:** this group would engage in a deeper conversation about resourcing for community-led climate action initiatives. It would examine the barriers experienced by organizations with accessing resources and identify solutions for creating more flexible resourcing mechanisms and processes that would be responsive to local needs.

# Recommendations: required project support & resources

Workshop participants identified the following resourcing and support needs for local projects that could be provided by the City of Toronto:

- Flexible funding
- Convening spaces (safe spaces)
- Facilitation support - engage facilitators from the local community
- Project management
- Toolkits & templates
- Support with permits (for events)
- Connections to potential partners
- Translation services
- Support with navigating the government funding system
- Marketing
- Best practice research





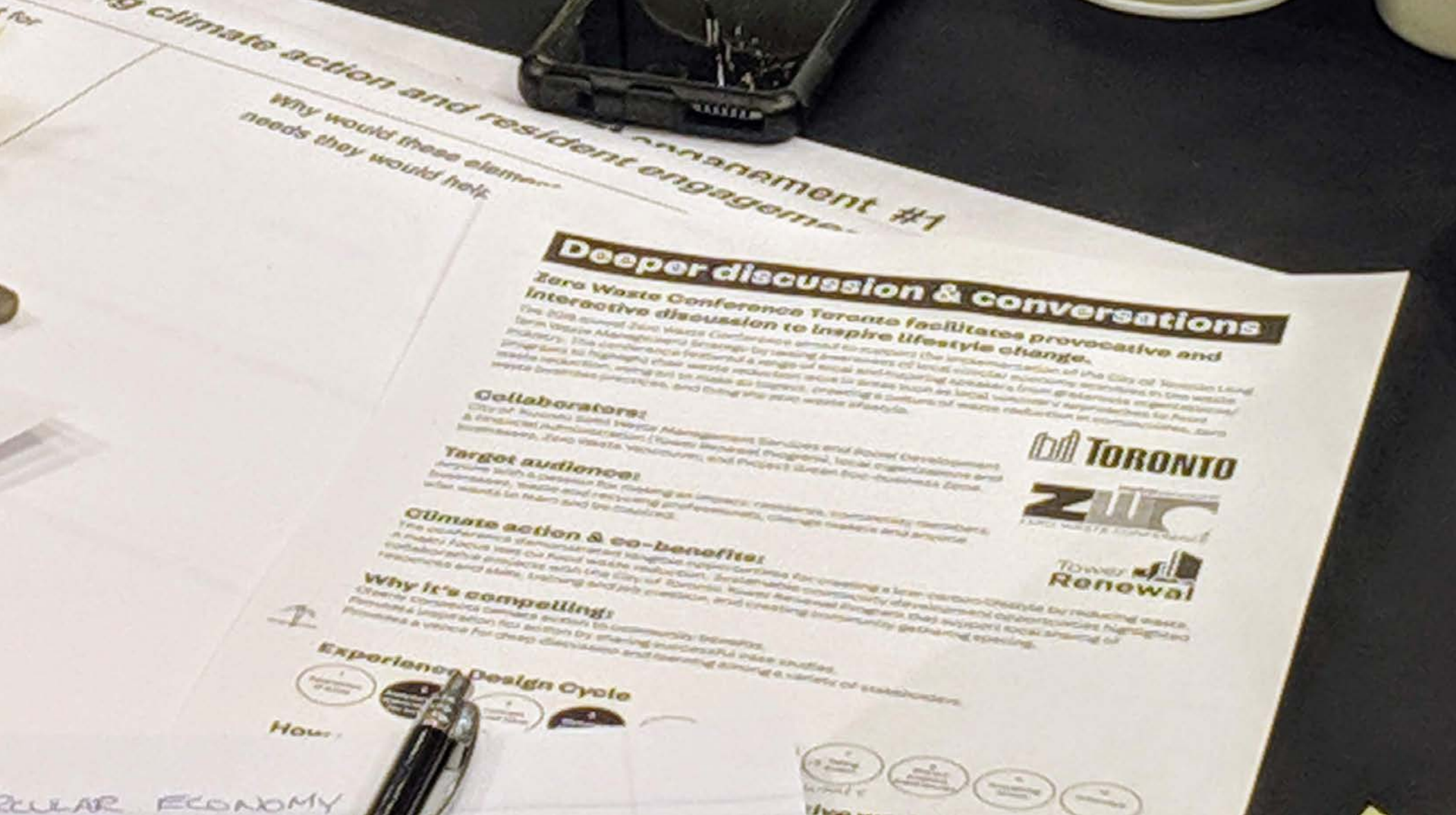
# Recommendations:

## potential City-led projects

As a part of the TransformTO Climate Action Engagement, the following initiatives could be led by the City in partnership with community partners:

- Climate action festival
- Online platform & campaign on easy actions
- Youth civic engagement program
- Local champions training
- Adapting community organizing resources
- Nurturing & expanding the network of community partners (via mailing list or online platform)
- Convening & logistical support for task forces and stakeholder gatherings
- Improve access to existing resources





# Appendices



# List of participating organizations

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services  
ACORN  
Active Seniors Body and Mind 2. Healthy living Through Arts  
Arab Community Centre of Toronto  
Canadian Urban Institute  
Carbon Conversations TO  
Carrot Rewards  
CEE Centre for Young Black Professionals  
Centre for Connected Communities  
Centre for Social Innovation  
City of Toronto, Environment & Energy  
City of Toronto, Public Realm Section  
City of Toronto, Resilience Office  
City of Toronto, Social Development Finance and Administration  
City of Toronto, Solid Waste Management Services  
Civic Tech  
CivicAction  
Connecting Environmental Professionals Toronto  
Cycle Toronto  
David Suzuki Foundation  
Drawdown Toronto  
Enviromentum  
Etobicoke Master Gardeners  
Evergreen  
Faith & the Common Good  
FoodShare Toronto  
Friends of Parkway Forest Park  
Green Neighbours Network  
Indigenous Climate Action  
Intact Centre, University of Waterloo  
Jane/Finch Centre

LAMP Community Health Centre  
Learning for a Sustainable Future  
North York Community House  
Ontario EcoSchools  
Ontario Trillium Foundation  
Our Greenway  
Park People  
Parkdale Activiy-Recreation Centre  
Plug'n Drive  
Project Neutral  
Relay Education  
Rexdale Community Health Centre  
Royal Ontario Museum  
Social Planning Toronto  
SolarShare  
Stonegate Community Health Centre  
Sustainable Media Production Canada  
Toronto Community Housing Corporation  
TD Bank  
Toronto District School Board  
The Atmospheric Fund  
The GenWell Project  
The Roots Collaborative  
TNO - The Neighbourhood Organization  
Toronto Environmental Alliance  
Toronto Public Health  
Toronto Public Library  
Toronto and Region Conservation Authority  
Toronto Youth Food Policy Council  
University of Toronto  
York University, Conscious Minds Cooperative



**Climate Action Engagement Workshop**  
**MaRS Collaboration Centre**  
**January 10, 2019**

Workshop objectives:

- inspire direction for community engagement on climate action and TransformTO;
- foster a network of community partners to support the engagement; and
- identify and explore opportunities for collaboration around community engagement and climate action.

<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>REGISTRATION, NETWORKING &amp; BREAKFAST</b>
<b>9:30 AM</b>	<b>OPENING</b> Welcome and workshop introduction by hosts Groundswell Projects.
<b>9:40 AM</b>	<b>CONTEXT</b> Presentation from the City of Toronto, Energy and Environment Division about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Background on Transform TO</li><li>• Results of the City-Wide Climate Perceptions Study</li><li>• Climate action engagement process and next steps</li></ul> Introduction by Groundswell Projects of key workshop framing themes, climate action & co-benefits and the experience design cycle.
<b>10:10 AM</b>	<b>INSPIRATION: CLIMATE ACTION PRECEDENTS</b> Presentations of inspiring climate action and community engagement projects based in Toronto and in other Canadian cities.
<b>11:00 AM</b>	<b>BREAK</b> During the break participants reflect on precedents and themes, and move to the table associated with the topics and action area that resonated with them. They will work at these tables for the afternoon to explore collaboration opportunities in resident climate action engagement.
<b>11:15 AM</b>	<b>DISCOVERY: EXPLORING EXISTING CLIMATE ACTION AND RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT WORK</b> The goal of this activity is to discuss the climate action precedent projects presented earlier in the context of participants' own work and interests, in order to identify the needs around climate action engagement that participants would be interested in addressing.
<b>12:15 PM</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>1:00 PM</b>	<b>IDEATION: IDENTIFY NEW COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES</b> Building on the previous activity participants work on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. adapting selected characteristics of the precedent project to Toronto's context (scale, expand, build on); or</li><li>b. designing a new collaborative initiative inspired by the precedent or theme.</li></ul> Cards with descriptions of other similar precedents will be available at the table to spark more ideas and conversation.
<b>2:30 PM</b>	<b>REPORT BACK</b>
<b>3:30 PM</b>	<b>CLOSING</b>
<b>4:00-5:00 PM</b>	<b>NETWORKING RECEPTION</b>