

Urban Climate Alliance

Activist How-To Guide

2018

Environment Hamilton
Citizens Environment Alliance
Oakvillegreen Conservation Association
Toronto Environmental Alliance
Ecology Ottawa

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Introduction

We are the Urban Climate Alliance, a group of five urban-based environmental groups in Ontario: Citizens Environment Alliance, Environment Hamilton, Oakvillegreen Conservation Association, Toronto Environmental Alliance and Ecology Ottawa.

The Urban Climate Alliance focuses on local engagement and solutions to climate change. We've been learning from each other for over three years. We've exchanged best practices, taught each other new skills and helped each other solve problems.

What keeps us working together is the strong belief that our five organizations can get more done in our local communities and at Queen's Park by working together.

At a 2017 meeting, we were talking about the challenges we all face getting our local communities engaged, specifically to get local governments to adopt and implement effective low carbon policies.

We realized the biggest barrier is that concerned residents and local environmental groups often simply don't know the steps required to organize and mobilize to get local governments to act.

This Activist How-To Guide is our response.

It's designed to make it easy for small groups and local residents in any city in Ontario to start a local campaign designed to get their city government to act on climate change.

Each section outlines a few basic actions you can take to get local action on climate change. Like you, we don't have lots of money or resources. So we've kept things simple and doable.

What can cities do to fight climate change?

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Ask your neighbour what level of government is most important when dealing with climate change and they will likely say the provincial or federal government. Ask them what actions are needed to deal with climate change and they will likely point to stopping pipelines or shutting down the tar sands.

Chances are few will say municipal governments are important or that what we do in cities matters.

Yet the numbers tell a different story.

What we do in cities matters. How we move around, what type of energy and how much energy we use in our buildings, and how we design our communities has a huge impact on the size of our carbon emissions. And municipalities have a big hand in shaping how we move, use energy in buildings and how our cities are planned.

That's why the Urban Climate Alliance focuses on what we do in cities and on city governments. We know that if we reduce carbon emissions where we live, we will have a huge positive impact on reducing our carbon emissions in Ontario and Canada.

To make this happen, we need to make sure all levels of government are acting and enabling municipal governments to put in place plans designed to reduce carbon emissions permanently.

This guide is designed to help local environmental groups to get city hall to do its part. It contains ideas and actions that have been tested and successfully used by members of the Urban Climate Alliance. What follows is our collective wisdom that we think will help you work with your community to help create a low-carbon city.

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Communicating Climate Change

Communicating about the climate crisis is a challenging undertaking. Social media and other forms of online communication provide ideal opportunities, if done right, to raise awareness and to engage and inspire action. Social media also expands your organizational reach in a significant way - so it's worth determining how best to use social media tools to promote your organization and your climate campaign goals.

When it comes to the climate crisis, the news is often bad. It is important to reflect on how best to share information with people in a manner that effectively raises awareness and understanding of the severity of the crisis, but does not leave people feeling completely immobilized. Combining bad news with ideas about how people can make a meaningful difference is always a good approach to take!

Make use of social media tools to provide your followers with opportunities to make change in their own lives. Share tips for everything from simple things - the low-hanging fruit - to larger lifestyle changes people can make to reduce their own greenhouse gas contributions. It is always a good idea to share a spectrum of ideas as not everyone is at the same stage of action. Every little bit of change helps and, at the same time, those who are ready for bigger climate commitments need to be considered as well.

Remember to keep your climate messages simple and as visual as possible. Great visuals can tell a very powerful story and text-heavy messages are not very engaging. If the post is about a great article, pull out a teaser sentence and combine it with a great visual to grab your audience's attention - and encourage them to click to read more.

Never assume your audience knows everything. Sharing 'Climate Crisis 101' information periodically is a great way to ensure that you are bringing more and more people on the journey with you.

Be sure to stay true to your 'organizational voice' by making sure that the content you share with people reinforces the goals of your climate action campaign.

Always take advantage of opportunities to use your virtual information-sharing to get people out to an event or active in a hands-on effort to address the climate crisis. Engaging with the public virtually should not be just about sharing information - it should be about strategically mobilizing people to take action locally!

Combined with some basic savvy around when best to post to reach the most people / widest audience, your social media efforts will reap benefits on many levels.

Here are some helpful links to articles that provide basic advice for not-for-profits about how to make effective use of social media tools:

- <https://fundraisingcoach.com/2013/05/06/21-social-media-tips-for-nonprofits-from-top-experts/>
- <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/nonprofit-social-media-guide/>
- <https://www.canva.com/learn/social-media-for-nonprofits/>

04 Engaging volunteers

If we're hoping to take on a problem as large and as daunting as climate change, we'll need a lot of help. Many grassroots organizations adopt a volunteer-driven model in order to maximize their reach and effectiveness, but doing this well involves continuous effort and practice.

The first task is recruitment – finding people who share your organization's concerns and then engaging them on meaningful work. There are a few important aspects of recruitment that are worth unpacking here.

First, don't be afraid to ask for help. Many people want to get involved but don't know where to start or how to plug in. It's our job to identify the tasks that need doing and then identify the right people for those tasks. On this point, we should not be afraid to ask for help on the hard things. Some volunteers will be more likely to help with one task – for example, research – than another – say, knocking on doors to raise awareness about an environmental issue. Knowing that some tasks are often harder to get help with but also contribute more to an organization's objectives, we should be clear in prioritizing our volunteer asks.

To this end, consider staggering your asks. Although this is somewhat dependent on the situation and on the person you're asking, you should generally ask for the hardest thing first. If the person cannot commit, you ask them for the next hardest thing, and so on. In many cases, organizations have more volunteers offering to help than time to organize them efficiently and effectively. This makes it critically important to know your organizational priorities ahead of time, and to ask for volunteers to fulfill key roles accordingly.

The idea that people are to be engaged in meaningful work goes two ways – you need volunteers to help your organization in a way that benefits your organization, but also results in a meaningful experience for them. It's good practice to delineate specific roles that benefit your organization, and wherever possible list the actual tasks that need doing.

Think about creating point-form volunteer job descriptions with a fixed hourly commitment. The aim is to avoid open-ended or highly vague volunteer positions. At any given time, your volunteers should know where they are plugging in and why it's of use to the broader organization. You will know that Eli comes in for two hours on Wednesday morning to help with research, while William is helping with data entry every other Thursday evening for four hours at a time.

Especially in cases where the volunteer task seems small, it's important to spell out why it's important that it get done, and to thank your volunteers for making whatever contribution they can. Ideally, some of your volunteers will help out for an extended period of time, and will gain valuable experience over the long term. You can translate this experience into tangible benefits for your organization's mission by fostering a culture of volunteer leadership. The most important and effective role an experienced volunteer can play is learning how to take responsibility for leading others. As such, one of the ultimate goals of the volunteer recruitment process is to impart the skills and knowledge needed for volunteers to replicate the process themselves.

Finally, it's important to know your volunteers. Everyone who offers to help your organization will come to it with different skill sets, interests and possible time commitments. Your task is to navigate these different factors while filling the roles necessary to accomplish your organization's goals. While it's important to take personality traits and interests into consideration, it's also critical not to let these detract from your organization's overall objective. If you only need door canvassers and your prospective volunteer only wants to help with report writing, you should thank them for their interest but suggest that they engage with another organization instead. Ultimately, our time is wasted if we're catering to volunteer needs without serving organizational priorities.

When we think about what the word “mobilization” means, we think about change, movement and action. Ultimately, our task is to move large numbers of people in the right direction at the right time – enough to indicate a groundswell of support or opposition to a policy objective, or to influence the public conversation, or to appear at an important event.

Databases and lists are the tools we use to mobilize effectively. Nowadays, many organizations make use of sophisticated databases called CRMs, or customer relationship management systems. Popular CRMs in the world of organizing include NationBuilder, CiviCRM and Salesforce, although there are many different systems at a variety of price points. While there are key differences from system to system, each one is designed to manage your organization’s relationships and interactions with people.

A good database will help you organize your network of people in a way that makes mobilization as clear and easy as possible. Imagine that you would like to organize a community town hall on climate change to raise awareness of an issue at a strategic time. You know you have a big mobilization effort ahead of you, so you’re aiming to use the town hall as an occasion to do more than just raise the level of community awareness of the issue – you’d also like to recruit volunteers to take further action in the near future. Depending on your database, you could filter a search for your prime audience: people from a specific neighbourhood who have expressed some interest in volunteering, as well as interest in – and willingness to engage on – climate change issues. Next, you would reach out to this list by whatever means are available, with the understanding that different forms of interaction have different trade-offs in terms of time requirements and impact. For example, while phoning is often more impactful than email, it takes more time per person and should therefore be used selectively as a tool.

Every database is only as good as the lists that make it up. If we want to be smart and systematic, we will be incorporating list-building into many aspects of our work. We will have opportunities on our website and social media for people to get engaged with our organization's activities. At events like the hypothetical climate town hall mentioned earlier, we will have a sign-in form that asks for contact information for participants.

And we should be willing to ask for multiple means of contact with prospective supporters and volunteers. At a minimum, we should be asking for first name, last name, email address and some form of address identifier, such as postal code. We can also ask for a full address, phone number, thematic area of interest, whether or not the person wishes to volunteer, and whether or not the person wishes to donate. After the event, we will upload this content into our database. As a result, we will have more detailed profiles of the people who attended, and we can fill in any gaps on means of contacting them.

Databases and lists are essential to our work, but don't let them stand in the way of the overall purpose: mobilization. You don't need a million-dollar database to do effective work in your community. In the history of community mobilization, great work has been done with nothing more than pens and paper. Also, a database is only as good as the people who use it. If you start using a database, it's important to make sure your team is aware of the system and is trained in how to use it. You should also constantly try to systematically incorporate the use of the database into your work. With good planning, volunteer training and preparation, your online interactions and real life events will both generate useful information that will feed into the same database.

Understanding the players

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Climate change affects everyone. But not everyone will support the actions needed to get our cities ready for climate change. There are many players who will be involved in climate change discussions at city hall. Knowing about these players and their interests is crucial to succeed in convincing City Hall to act on climate change.

The most obvious players are councillors and the mayor. Their job is to represent their constituents and get re-elected. Their actions will often be shaped by what they perceive their constituents want. As well, their actions will be shaped by other special interests, who may hold economic and/or political power in the city.

The next key player is the business community, usually represented by a local Chamber of Commerce. Sometimes businesses that employ lots of local people are also influential at city hall. The business voice is usually very strong at city hall because businesses are perceived as key drivers in making a strong local economy. And keeping business happy is seen as good for city hall (and many constituents).

Local community groups are other important players. These include ratepayer groups, cultural groups, service-based groups and issue-based groups. Like local environmental groups, these groups typically have supporters and volunteers and put pressure on city councillors and the mayor to act in ways that help their causes.

Labour groups may also be active at city hall. These include unions that represent workers at city hall, unions that represent workers in city businesses and labour councils. Unions and labour groups are obviously concerned about jobs for their members. But some labour groups also get involved in social justice issues.

It's important to know about these key players. They can become important allies in your efforts to get climate action at city hall, or they can become powerful opponents if they believe their interests are being threatened. The best outcome is to have them as allies and that means getting to know them and finding a way to connect their issues to climate change.

Engaging the community

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Propelling community action on climate change forward and moving our municipal climate change planning from humdrum to heroic will require engaging our community broadly and deeply. Just as we need volunteers and a network of supporters to push for bold municipal climate change planning, we also need to engage our community to identify and implement climate change solutions.

As groups and organizations working at the grassroots level we are probably all familiar with engaging the community using various tools, including community dialogues, film events, panel discussions, municipal planning processes, community surveys, outreach pop-ups, social media campaigns and on-the-ground action projects. These engagement tools or a combination of tools are important for climate change action as well.

However, because climate change causes, impacts and solutions are so intertwined with other issues in our communities, and often feel far removed from everyday and other pressing social problems, we should pay attention to two things. First, we know that we need to reach beyond the usual suspects in our climate change engagement to find ways to ensure diverse groups in our communities consider climate impacts and feel empowered and part of the solution.

Local groups and organizations that are not focused on 'environmental' issues can also be engaged in climate change organizing and action. Engaging beyond the usual suspects requires understanding a group's pressing issue or problem – from poverty reduction to arts and culture promotion – and understanding how climate change impacts and solutions are connected to that problem. In the 'Lessons from the Field' section below, Toronto Environmental Alliance describes how talking about issues that mattered most to community leaders spurred conversations about the community benefits of climate action.

Second, climate change engagement requires special attention to messaging and framing. While we may ultimately wish to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions, we may not want to lead with that message. Engagement itself can help you to craft a message that resonates with community members about why climate change is important, how it will affect your community, and what groups and individuals can do to make a difference.

Best practices for climate change communication and engagement suggest: 1) linking climate change to other quality of life issues; 2) engaging coalitions of diverse local organizations; and 3) incorporating and relating community concerns and impacts.

Community organizations primarily focused on poverty reduction, active transportation, or food security can keep working on the issues that matter most to them, as they consider climate change impacts and action within their current work. This ensures that many more voices are calling for meaningful municipal climate action and that many more organizations are mobilizing their networks to reduce emissions and cope with climate change impacts.

Getting city hall to act

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As groups trying to ensure climate action is planned and implemented in our local communities, it's vitally important to be aware of what is happening at the policy level, and to do our best to influence decision-makers at that level. Obviously, having a champion - or multiple champions - for your issue of concern at city hall can't hurt.

So how do we get city hall to act? Let's think about how to influence politicians first.

All politicians care about our issues to varying degrees. Some are strongly inclined to act because they understand the urgency of climate change and have a clear idea as to what their city can do to show leadership. In fact, some politicians might even be willing to take political risks for our issues of concern. They may have a sense that climate change is not well-understood among the general population, or that while a majority supports action on the issue, a vocal minority will be opposed to the cost of taking action. In these rare cases, politicians will be committed enough to the issue to use up some of their political capital in an effort to make a difference.

But this is an exception to the rule. You'll probably encounter a more mixed bag: some politicians who might be willing to act but don't know enough about the issue; some who are mildly opposed but are willing to be convinced; and some who aren't interested in any meaningful action whatsoever.

The good news is, one basic strategy will help with all but the most intransigent politicians: showing them that dozens, or hundreds, or even thousands of your fellow citizens agree with you and also demand action.

You can do this by submitting petitions with multiple signatures, by using an email list to encourage coordinated action from your supporters at critical moments like city hall votes, or by arranging a meeting with your politician and inviting a number of community leaders that share your concerns and represent larger constituencies.

Another way to get to politicians is through their staffers. Try your best to cultivate good relationships with staffers when you see them at events. As we all know, politicians lead busy lives, and even if they are on-side they might not be able to answer your calls or emails very regularly. A good staffer can provide you with key information - such as the date of a critical vote at an upcoming city hall session. They might also help refine your messaging or approach before speaking to their boss or another politician. Knowing that Councillor X tends to use an economic frame when discussing issues might lead us to focus on the costs of failing to act on climate change, for example.

Finally, know that politicians don't make their decisions in a vacuum. The bureaucrats who work on key issues often have more issue-area expertise than the politicians themselves. As with staffers, it's important to foster good relations so you can get the inside scoop. Good city staff people can provide a wealth of knowledge on policy, which can help you refine or properly frame your ask or your approach.

- ***Ecology Ottawa***

Compared with many other environmental organizations, Ecology Ottawa spends a disproportionate amount of its time conducting community organizing – organizing volunteer teams to knock on doors, attend or hold events, and maintain a focused presence in the community. Over the years, we've learned a thing or two about how to do this well, and what common challenges stand in the way of attaining our objectives.

First, prioritize your volunteer asks. If you know that you need field canvassers, and you know people are less likely to want to help with this than with other tasks, make your need for help in this area a clear priority in much of your communications. Volunteers are the life-blood of so many great organizations, but if you're designing your work flow around your volunteers rather than around your mission, you will never succeed. If your volunteers don't like door canvassing, thank them for their service and move on; there's no sense keeping someone around who is not benefitting the organization, and a dysfunctional organization does no benefit to prospective volunteers.

Second, if you have a door script, drill it home. This includes data collection methodologies. The worst thing you can do before a full season of door canvassing is under-invest in the time and training needed to make it a success. Work closely with your volunteer leads to ensure they understand the various dimensions of a door script and are recording information correctly. You should check in regularly to see if volunteers are asking the same questions, and recording data in a consistent way. It's frustrating to check in after months of canvassing to find out that the data you're collecting isn't as valid as it could have been.

Always train your staff and volunteers to think about getting others to work them out of a job. Don't worry – we've never seen anyone lose their job as a result of this procedure. The point is to think about what you're doing and how best to get volunteers to take ownership on various parts of it. If we all think systematically about where and how volunteers can plug in to make a difference, we will be more proactive in designing meaningful volunteer roles and more diligent in giving volunteers the training they need to become leaders.

Make sure your volunteers understand their roles. It sounds simple, but one of the standard mistakes that early organizers make is failing to make volunteer roles clear to the people who are performing them. You might consider Jane a volunteer leader, and you might be thinking of ways to engage her on directing other volunteers in the field, but Jane might think of herself merely as a helper, and doesn't have the time or the energy to commit to a leadership role. It's best to check in regularly to make sure you're all on the same page. Check-ins also provide the opportunity for one-on-one discussions that could lead to increasingly meaningful volunteer leadership commitments.

Make sure your volunteers understand their contribution. Especially after a few hours of door-knocking, your volunteers might feel a bit worn out. Sometimes it's challenging to engage the general public on environmental issues, especially when we know how urgent these issues are but are met with indifference at the door. One way to make your volunteers feel valued and get them to come back for more is to help them understand how their contribution fits into a larger organizational or campaign effort. Count the number of doors and conversations, and add up the various contributions from your volunteer teams. Point out the victories – what are the recent campaign successes that show momentum towards the larger goal? In terms of motivation, knowing that a person's relatively small volunteer contribution fits into a larger initiative that can truly drive change is inspiring and rewarding. Don't hesitate to make this clear, and don't forget to thank the volunteers for their service – however small or large it may be.

• *Environment Hamilton*

At Environment Hamilton, if there is one critically important thing we have learned, it is that not everyone will be mobilized to act or inspired to make behavioural changes based on concern about the climate crisis alone. This reality presents a challenge when you think about the fact that effectively tackling the climate crisis is going to require widespread social change. Encouraging people to reflect and act requires figuring out how to appeal to their enlightened self-interest. As environmental activists, we shouldn't be put off by this reality - we need to embrace it!

The people we encounter in our community all face different opportunities and challenges every day. Someone struggling to make ends meet might not be motivated by campaign messaging focused on the ecological threat of the climate crisis, but may be extremely interested in learning more about how to make their home more energy efficient. You might fail to convince someone to leave their car at home and make more sustainable transportation choices, but that same person might consider a modal shift to realize the health benefits that active transportation choices bring. Framing a climate campaign in a way that presents a variety of reasons - environmental and otherwise - for why taking action makes sense is the wisest approach if you want to have an impact on as many people as possible.

We learned this in a very direct way with a campaign focused on working to convince our municipal government to introduce a 'local improvement charge' that would take the form of low interest loans to homeowners interested in making home energy improvements. We easily recruited a city councillor as a champion when we framed the program in terms of the benefits it could bring to the many Hamiltonians who own their homes but are on fixed or limited incomes. Facilitating their ability to make their homes more energy efficient would mean not just lower greenhouse gas emissions, but lower energy bills too. The initiative would bring a number of benefits - all contributing to the creation of a more climate resilient community. The councillor bought in right away and helped to get a motion passed to get the municipality looking at the feasibility of this program for Hamilton.

• *Oakvillegreen Conservation Association*

Oakvillegreen Conservation Association is a small, action-oriented environmental organization. You won't find 'climate change' on our website, or as the focus of any of our campaigns or programs. However, we have spent a lot of time 'working' on climate change. We plant trees in public parks (over 25,000 to date), we steward urban forest patches with volunteers, we restore creek edges by removing invasive plants and adding native ones, we plant pollinator patches, and we help schools, faith communities, and homeowners plant for biodiversity on their properties.

Basically, we invite people to come and plant things and people show up. We don't focus on climate change, but we do talk about how planting trees improves our urban forest, absorbs carbon, scrubs the air of other pollutants and generally makes our community healthier and happier. As people plant things and help us steward trees and natural areas, we see three things happening. People feel good! They've taken a small, but concrete action to help improve their community.

The other important thing that happens is that people are exposed to our group – a grassroots group – not a government, not an agency, not a consultant, but just a bunch of folks who want trees for our children to sit under. Community greening and growing begets more community greening. If we can set up the community tree planting pins, so to speak, we find that diverse groups in the community are ready to knock them down.

People also want to do more. There's a sense of ownership and pride for the place, the trees, or the ravine and there's a recognition that more needs to be done. Our tree planters have become our school stewardship leaders, board members, and volunteers delegating to Council on the importance of tree protection bylaws or tree planting strategic plans. By having boots on the ground, and taking action to address climate change, our policy recommendations have credibility that community members can get behind.

Our challenge now, with climate change impacts splashing at our doorsteps, is to harness that satisfaction, pride, sense of ownership and motivation that comes from taking on-the-ground action to bringing more voices together to advocate for municipal climate change policy action. In these early days of climate action campaigning, we have been getting familiar with various plans and municipal activities (planned or otherwise) related to climate change and comparing these to other municipal plans and best practices. We'll also be thinking about adding climate change language and carbon sequestration data to our nature-based climate change actions.

- ***Citizens Environment Alliance***

Many projects may comprise a climate campaign and may take a long time to get a positive outcome, let alone the overall climate campaign. Therefore, it becomes important to prepare for a long campaign and prepare to use multiple tools of outreach, communication and advocacy to push the project forward or at least to prevent entropy.

Habitat and natural area enhancement is an ongoing campaign of the Citizens Environment Alliance (CEA), but also a key component of a climate campaign. Some projects have multiple campaign implications, such as Ojibway Shores. Ojibway Shores is an important natural area in Windsor. It has regional and national ecological significance and offers obvious climate benefits. It also links a larger natural area with the Detroit River. So, protecting Ojibway Shores for conservation is a no-brainer for environmentalists.

As with so many land use issues in Southern Ontario, climate protection is not a key concern for private and institutional actors, in this case the Port Authority (PA), land owners and managers. The CEA had to get to know the key actors pushing for the development of Ojibway Shores. Talking to the CEO and Board members of the PA and understanding the relationship between the PA and the federal government was illuminating and frustrating. While the PA brought forward the same arguments for development of the site year after year, we developed and enhanced an alternative story.

The CEA had to tell a story, an alternative to the status quo. Along with two allied groups, the CEA prepared a prospectus for the property. The prospectus outlined significant aspects of the site, opportunities for habitat enhancement and compensation benefits. It also outlined various policy statements that conflicted with the continuing push to destroy the area through development, i.e. the status quo.

Several research studies of the area have been completed over several years, and data from those studies have been used to build the alternative story of Ojibway Shores and gather support for the campaign. Formulating an alternative story has built support for the campaign amongst the municipal government, agencies, academics, NGOs and the public.

Building and maintaining relationships with organizations and individuals has been essential to building support for the campaign. Many years of organizing events, meetings, social media and traditional media exposure has led to increased knowledge of the issue and has also increased public support for Ojibway Shores preservation.

The CEA has limited resources, so over the years we have sought allies to buttress the campaign to protect Ojibway Shores. Many organizations and individuals have contributed their expertise to the Ojibway Shores project.

Although the area has not yet been formally protected for conservation and climate protection purposes, every single day of the past twenty years that the site has not been destroyed by the owner/manager has been a victory for the environment.

• *Toronto Environmental Alliance*

Motivating people to act on climate change is one of the most challenging tasks we face.

In the past, we spent most of our efforts talking up the dire environmental consequences of climate change and the negative impact it would have on people's daily lives.

The hope was that scaring people with the facts would motivate them to change personal habits and push decision-makers to reduce carbon emissions.

While this worked with some people, it didn't work with most people. Which is why today many people still don't make it a priority to act to reduce carbon emissions.

In 2015, Toronto Environmental Alliance started a two-year project to figure out how to better motivate people to act on climate change. We started by doing research into campaigns that had succeeded in engaging a large number of people. We analyzed 15 different campaigns and came up with a list of seven actions that all these campaigns shared.

Bottom line: engage community leaders, get them involved early on in designing a campaign, focus on values and make it fun.

After we did this research, we reached out to the broader community. That is, non-environmental community leaders, including advocates for poverty reduction, better housing, decent work and immigrant settlement organizations. We asked them to help us better understand their supporters and what we could do to get them engaged in climate action.

They gave us a gold mine of information.

Most importantly, they identified some key barriers to engagement:

- The dominant language used to discuss climate change alienates people.
- Most people have little or no awareness of climate change issues.
- Climate change isn't seen as relevant to people's daily lives.
- People generally feel politically disempowered.
- People have very little time available for engagement and must focus on daily survival.
- Climate change is seen as a "for activists only" issue championed by privileged people.

Then, they identified some key solutions:

- Lead with issues that matter to your audience, not with climate change.
- Avoid jargon and overly-technical language
- The message will resonate more if it is delivered by the right messenger.
- Target your audience.
- Engagement should be ongoing rather than one-off.
- Focus on where people live and go to where they spend time.
- Leverage existing networks and activities
- Support small local initiatives on the ground that can also become a base for replicating efforts across the city
- Make engagement fun and interactive
- Facilitation is absolutely key to fund and effective engagement.
- Make it clear to people that their engagement will actually have an impact
- Develop engagement methods that take into account that people have limited time and money

Perhaps the most important lesson was that to get people motivated to act on climate change, we had to start by talking about issues that mattered to them. Then, we connected their issues to climate change and showed that climate action also solved their issue.

The good news is that solutions that reduce carbon emissions can be implemented in ways that create multiple benefits to the community, like improving housing, creating jobs and improving your health. By making these connections between benefits to the community and climate action, we motivate a lot more people to become advocates for climate action. And that helps build a low carbon city.