



Quick Action Guide: Municipal Action on Climate Protection

*20 steps you can take
to curb greenhouse gas
emissions—now!*

Quick Action Guide

Municipal Action on Climate Protection

20 steps **you** can take to curb greenhouse gas emissions—**now!**

Start your action plan for
climate protection!

What's in it for you?

- **Save money** *by cutting energy costs*
- **Be a leader** *in energy efficiency*
- **Improve air quality** *and citizen health*
- **Create more jobs** *by investing in alternative energies, and*
- **Enhance corporate image** *and community relations*

What are greenhouse gases?

Our atmosphere is a complex mixture of gases that trap the sun's heat near the earth's surface, similar to how the glass of a greenhouse traps the sun's warmth.

As human societies adopt increasingly sophisticated and mechanized lifestyles, the amounts of heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere have been increased. By increasing the amount of these gases, humankind has enhanced the warming capability of the natural greenhouse effect. It is the human-induced enhanced greenhouse effect that causes environmental concern. It has the potential to warm the planet at a rate that has never been experienced in human history.

Increasing temperatures will lead to changes in many aspects of weather, such as wind patterns, the amount and type of precipitation, and the types and frequency of severe weather events that may be expected to occur. Such climate change could have far-reaching and/or unpredictable environmental, social and economic consequences.

Reference: Government of Canada website:

www.climatechange.gc.ca

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The first steps—what your community can do today

Municipal governments across Canada are creating momentum on climate protection through simple, cost-effective activities that also improve quality of life.

Presented here are lists of the top ten corporate and community activities implemented by municipalities in their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These actions are easy to implement and proven to generate significant reductions. Links to websites offering more information are also provided to help you get started.

The city invested \$125,000 since 2000, and as a result, natural gas consumption has been reduced by over 935,000 cubic meters between 2000 and 2005. This represents a decrease of 1,747 tonnes of GHG emissions and a savings of more than \$450,000 for the five-year period.

Related website:

http://www.ville.drummondville.qc.ca/images/pdf/mai_2005.pdf (in french only)

In the Corporate Sector

Ten steps your municipality can take to reduce emissions from corporate facilities and operations:

1. Buildings Retrofit

Municipal buildings account for an average of 48% of the GHG emissions generated by municipalities.¹ The City of Drummondville has invested in the remote management of its main buildings, reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) to save energy and money. Through its Energy Saving and Sustainable Development Project set up in 2000, the city implemented retrofit measures at six main buildings including: the installation of a remote management system of controls, the management of set points, shutdown of the ventilation system during periods when the building is not used, temperature control when equipment is in use, the control of an engine block heater for heavy and light machinery, and the replacement of older equipment with high-efficiency units.



Municipal Library – Setting up the Remote Management System.

2. Change traffic lights to light-emitting diode (LED) fixtures

Lighting accounts for an average of 15% of GHG emissions from the corporate sector, with traffic lights accounting for approximately 10–25% of the total energy used for lighting. LEDs (light-emitting diodes) are 80–90% more efficient and last ten times longer than ordinary lights, reducing energy and maintenance costs. Replacing traditional traffic lights with LEDs will generate savings in energy, labour and material costs while reducing GHG emissions. In 2005, for example, the City of Saskatoon (SK) will implement a three-year program to replace all traditional traffic lights within the city with LED fixtures. This program will result in GHG reductions of more than 1,500 tonnes per year.

Related website:

City of Richmond and the BC Hydro Power Smart Traffic Intersection Program
<http://www.bchydro.com>, click on **Services** and choose **Get Connected** from the scroll down menu, or click on **For Business** and then choose **Power Smart Success Stories**, City of Richmond

¹ PCP Inventory Compilation and Analysis. April 14, 2000. ICLEI Energy Services.

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3. Replace streetlights with more efficient bulbs

By replacing older, less efficient light bulbs with newer, more efficient types, municipalities can significantly reduce emissions attributable to their streetlights. Between November 2002 and July 2004, the City of Calgary (AB) retrofitted 28,300 of its 37,500 streetlights with low-energy flat lens fixtures. The new lights cost less to operate and will pay for themselves in six to seven years. The city estimates that the new lights will result in an annual GHG reduction of 16,000 tonnes.²

Related website:

Calgary's EnviroSmart Street Lighting Retrofit Program <http://www.calgary.ca> and follow the links: City Hall - Business Units – Roads - Street Lights

4. Start a water conservation program

Even in water-rich areas, conservation is key to reducing GHG emissions. Water and sewage treatment accounts for an average of 21% of corporate emissions.³ Development and promotion of a community-wide water conservation strategy can achieve significant emission reductions, resulting in cleaner air, better quality water and financial savings. The City of Kamloops' (BC) community-wide Water Smart conservation program was introduced in 1991 in response to high water use and demand on pumping facilities during summer months. Since then, the combination of public education and improved water treatment technology (a membrane filtration system) has contributed to a 21% decrease in water use during summer months. City staff conducts visits to schools and other community groups to share lessons about the benefits of water conservation in a fun and informative manner.

Related website:

City of Kamloops Water Smart Program <http://www.city.kamloops.bc.ca>, click on Environment

5. Plant trees

Trees provide shade for buildings and streets. They also cool the air with moisture, reducing the amount of energy required to cool buildings. In June 2002, the City of Laval passed a by-law to encourage tree planting and property improvement to promote a greener environment. The by-law provides for a financial incentive, which consists of a one-time refund for each tree planted in the front of a building or on a lateral courtyard adjacent to a public space. The by-law allows for a maximum of \$50 for each tree, to a maximum of 10 trees. Another innovative measure is a grant (to a maximum of \$250) for the maintenance of trees situated on public land between the road and the front of buildings.

Related websites:

<http://www.ville.laval.qc.ca> and click on the pdf document entitled Tree Code 2005

Tree Canada Foundation Green Streets Canada Program

<http://www.treecanada.ca>, click on Programs and follow the links: Green Streets Canada – Previous Recipients

6. Implement an anti-idling program to reduce emissions from municipal fleet vehicles

Municipally-owned vehicles account for an average of 15% of corporate greenhouse gas emissions. Municipalities can achieve reductions in the fleet sector by including information on climate-friendly actions in driver instruction procedures and encouraging employees to use alternative transport. In 2001, the City of Mississauga (ON) partnered with Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) to deliver a pilot anti-idling program. NRCAN's online tool kit of anti-idling ideas and promotional materials was used in



The Anti-Idling Tool Kit from Natural Resources Canada is a free ready-to-use set of graphic images and downloadable materials to launch an anti-idling awareness campaign.

² EnviroSmart Street Light Retrofit. City of Calgary. <http://content.calgary.ca/CCA/City+Hall/Business+Units/Roads/Street+Lights/EnviroSmart+Street+Light+Retrofit+Program.htm>
³ PCP Inventory Compilation & Analysis. (2000) ICLEI Energy Services

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combination with personal interventions to address idling issues with residents, the private sector and professional drivers (including GO public transit staff and school bus drivers). The campaign reached 69% of the city's residents; a survey of those reached reported a decrease in idling times by three to four times, compared to citizens who had not been exposed to the project. School bus drivers achieved similar idling time reductions and the city's public transit company adopted a policy to decrease its maximum bus idling time from 15 minutes to five minutes.⁴

Related websites:

Natural Resources Canada Anti-idling Tool Kit
<http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca>, click on OEE Programs and then follow the links: **Transportation – Personal Vehicles - Idling**

City of Mississauga's Anti-idling Program
<http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/home>, and follow the links: **Residents – Environment – Air Quality – Idle Free**

In Montreal (QC), the Saint-Laurent Commuter Management Centre has developed several employer programs to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles in the community. Through employee car-pool programs, workplace educational programs and co-operation with local transit authorities, the Center has helped local employers reduce the costs associated with new parking spaces.

Related websites:

Town of Markham S-M-A-R-T program
<http://www.markham.ca/markham/channels/default1.htm> click on Latest News section, **more news and Markham Transportation Planning**

City of Ottawa/Nortel Networks
Green Commute Program
<http://www.toolsofchange.com>, follow **Case Studies**

Transport Canada Urban Transportation
Showcase Program
<http://www.tc.gc.ca/en/menu.htm>, and from **Environment** scroll down menu choose **Climate Change**

Saint-Laurent Commuter Management Centre
<http://saintlaurent.ville.montreal.qc.ca>, click on **Business Services** and then on **Commuter Management Centre Saint-Laurent**
<http://www.sodec.qc.ca>, click on **Laissez-vous transporter!** (in French only)

7. Provide parking incentives to carpoolers

Your municipality can provide parking incentives for vehicles with two or more passengers. Some municipalities offer increased incentives for multiple passengers (e.g. waiving parking fees for vehicles with four passengers). Incentives can also be created for those who drive vehicles that do not use fossil fuels or that meet a higher standard of reduced emissions. This program is relatively easy and inexpensive to implement in those communities where employees pay for parking at work and where there is interest in carpooling. The Town of Markham (ON) provides preferential parking to carpoolers at its Civic Centres as part of its S-M-A-R-T Movement Program. A carpool matching service and new bike racks are also provided as part of the program.⁵

8. Purchase alternative fuel for corporate fleets

Alternative fuels such as ethanol, biofuel or natural gas can be used in existing engines with little or no modification. The level of emission reductions and associated costs depends on the fuel type (e.g. ethanol from wood or agricultural materials would result in a 6–8% reduction in GHGs compared to gasoline, or upwards of 75% fewer emissions with cellulose derived ethanol). Generally, the cost of alternative fuels is competitive with traditional fuel types. In 2003, the City of

⁴ *Towards an Idle-Free Zone in the City of Mississauga*. (2003, February) Lura Consulting.

⁵ *York Region Fighting Smog*. (2004, January 13) York Region Publications. <http://www.region.york.on.ca/Publications/News/january+13+-+fighting+smog.htm>

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Brampton (ON) committed to fueling its entire corporate fleet— more than 200 vehicles—with biodiesel. Similarly, the City of Guelph (ON) and the Halifax Regional Municipality (NS) run their transit systems on a 20% mix of biodiesel, which will result in approximately 20% reduction in GHGs.⁶

Related websites:

Natural Resource Canada's Vehicle Fuel Website <http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca>, click on OEE Programs and follow the links: **Transportation – Vehicle Fuels**

Clean Energy Canada (List of Biofuel Retailer's websites) <http://cleanenergy.gc.ca>, select **Canada – Activities**, and then from **Technologies** select **Biofuel**

9. Purchase green energy

Municipalities can commit to meeting a portion of their energy needs with green power. Green power, or low-impact renewable energy, is typically electricity that is produced with zero GHG emissions. Energy providers sell green power in blocks of energy to interested customers. Examples of green power production include wind turbines, photovoltaic cells and small hydro-electric generators. In 2001, Calgary (AB) Transit won the FCM-CH2M HILL Sustainable Community Award for its commitment to the purchase of wind-generated electricity to run its trains, which represent approximately 18% of the city's energy use.



Calgary's C-Train is powered by wind energy.

Photo courtesy of Calgary Transit.

Related website:

Calgary Transit "Ride the Wind" Program <http://www.calgarytransit.com>, under Site Content select **CT & Environment**, then follow the link to **Ride the Wind**

10. Create guidelines for green buildings and sites

The energy performance of municipal buildings within the community can be improved through the development of guidelines for green sites and building design. In order to fulfill the energy needs of its Rivière-des-Prairies Eco-centre, the City of Montreal has built a clean power energy system. Most of the Eco-centre energy needs are met by solar panels installed on the roof and by a wind turbine on a 10-meter tower. The centre is also connected to the Hydro-Quebec grid to meet demand for energy in periods of high consumption. Energy generated by the Eco-centre is first used to meet their energy needs, and in periods of low internal demand, excess energy is sent to the utility grid for general consumption. The wind turbine and tower cost \$6,000 and the solar panels \$10,000. This system reduces energy consumption by 20 per cent, which represents a reduction of three tonnes/year in greenhouse gases, equivalent to 8,700 km driven in an SUV or 14,000 km in a compact car.

Related websites:

<http://www.matrixenergy.ca> (in english and french)
<http://www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/cmsprod/fr/arr19/document/40.xml> (in french only)

Canada Green Building Council (CGBC)

<http://www.cagbc.ca>, choose **Building Rating System** from menu



The Eco-Centre of Rivière-des-Prairies.

⁶ Guelph Transit switches to bio-diesel starting Monday. (2003, July). City of Guelph. <http://www.city.guelph.on.ca/document.cfm?documentid=4380&category=513>

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In the Community Sector

Ten steps you can take to encourage emission reductions in the residential, institutional, commercial, industrial, transportation and solid waste sectors:

1. Start a community-wide composting program

In 1999, the Halifax Regional Municipality (NS) initiated an organics green cart composting program. Each household was provided with a green cart for food and organic waste that is collected every second week. During the fiscal year 1999/2000, residents diverted 36,000 tonnes of organic waste away from the region's landfills, reducing their GHG emissions by approximately 1.4 tonnes per person or 502,755 tonnes for the entire community.⁷



Photo courtesy of the City of Hamilton.

Other communities, such as the City of Hamilton's (ON) Green Cart Program, also provide community-wide composting programs.

Related websites:

Halifax Regional Municipality Solid Waste Resources <http://www.halifax.ca>, click on **Business** tab; under **Start a New Business**, click on **Garbage, Recycling and Composting**; under the **Residential** section, click on **Organics Green Cart**

Achieving 50% Waste Diversion: The Region of Halifax Leads the Way (Climate Change Solutions website) <http://www.climatechangesolutions.com>, select **Municipalities** and then click on **Waste** tab and choose **Success Stories**

2. Sell rain barrels at reduced prices

The City of Vancouver (BC) manufactures and sells rain barrels at 50% of their cost. Made of recycled plastic, the barrels not only serve the practical purpose of collecting rainwater for use in home gardening, but

they are also useful in raising public awareness of wasteful irrigation practices. Using collected rainwater means residents are better able to reserve potable water for drinking and other household uses. Less water pumped means fewer GHG emissions.

Related website:

City of Vancouver's Rain Barrel Program

<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca>, click on **Services** and then follow links to **Water – Water Conservation – Rain Water Barrel**



Photo courtesy of Sharon Boddy.

Many municipalities offer programs that offer residents rain barrels, at a subsidized price, to promote water conservation.

3. Use financial incentives to reduce waste

Many communities have developed financial incentives to encourage community members to reduce waste, thereby reducing the amount of methane and other GHG emissions generated at landfill sites. Households in the Town of Markham (ON) are limited to three garbage bags each collection day. Those who wish to put out more garbage must purchase tags from the Town. Residents are given 12 free tags per year and allowed two tag-free days a year when they can put out as many bags as necessary. Bag limits send a message aimed at changing behaviour and setting community standards for waste.⁸ Other programs could include special taxes and tipping fees or advance disposal fees (e.g., a pre-sale tax placed on items that are packaged in non-recyclable materials). Communities implementing “pay as you throw” (PAYT) and bag limits have seen reductions in residential waste generation by as much as 50%.

Related website:

City of Markham Waste Management

<http://www.city.markham.on.ca>, click on **Services** and from the alphabetically organized links, click on **Garbage**

⁷ Municipal Governments and Sustainable Communities: A Best Practices Guide. (2000) 5

⁸ *The Waste Diversion Impacts of Bag Limits and PAYT (Pay as you throw) Systems in North America.* (2001) Submitted to the City of Toronto Policy and Planning, Works and Emergency Services Dept. by Envirostris, Toronto ON.

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4. Launch an awareness program on the importance of clean water

More than 220 Canadian communities have joined an awareness and outreach initiative called the Yellow Fish Road Program. Working with volunteer groups like the Girl Guides of

Canada, your municipality can co-ordinate this education and outreach program designed to raise awareness of the importance of clean water, the water supply process, and the need to protect water sources by keeping

harmful chemicals out of storm sewer systems.

Volunteers use a special stencil to paint yellow fish beside storm sewer drains and hand out literature to remind residents not to dump chemicals down the storm sewer. If residents can be taught the importance of protecting and conserving clean water, these lessons may translate into reduced water use. Improved water conservation means reduced water treatment and pumping requirements, less energy use at treatment facilities and a reduction in associated GHG production. The City of Calgary (AB) employed the Yellow Fish Road Program as part of its campaign to teach thousands of the city's children about clean water issues.⁹

Related website:

Yellow Fish Road Program

<http://www.yellowfishroad.org>



Kids learn all about their local water supply with the Yellow Fish Program and paint yellow fish near storm drains to remind people that materials going down the drains effect us all.

Photo courtesy of Trout Unlimited Canada (TUC).

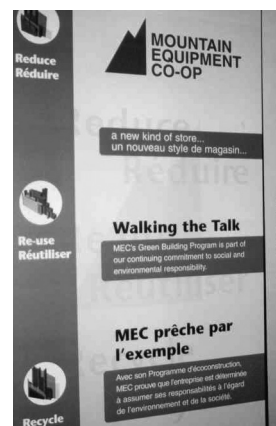
5. Promote energy efficiency in the industrial sector

Industrial sector energy use represents an average of 20% of total community GHG emissions among most municipalities. Many communities, including Toronto (ON) and Sudbury (ON) are working with local industry to promote building retrofits and energy efficiency standards to achieve reductions in GHG emissions from their buildings. The City of Sudbury built partnerships with local industry to share information and ideas to promote energy efficient business practices such as building retrofits and green designs for new buildings. In 2000, the Sudbury District Heating Corporation—the region's first district energy system—was created as a partnership between the city and Toromont Industries. The project improves the efficiency of energy delivery in the area, saves partners money on energy and operating costs, and reduces GHG emissions.¹⁰

Related website:

Co-generation and District Energy Systems – Sudbury (Climate Change Solutions Website)

<http://www.climatechangesolutions.com>, select **Municipalities** from scroll down menu and then follow the links **Buildings – Success Stories**



Mountain Equipment Co-Op's Green Building Program advocates the 3Rs as part of its commitment to social and environmental responsibility.

Photo courtesy of Sharon Boddy.

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6. Create incentives for public transit use

Several municipalities provide transit passes at discounted prices to encourage high school, college and university students to use public transit. This incentive plan can benefit all parties by providing a high-volume of stable ridership for transit, together with an affordable means of transportation for cash-strapped students. By getting students on buses, emissions from individual car rides are reduced, along with the need for parking spaces. Furthermore, expanded bus services for students can lead to the development of student communities



Photo courtesy of the City of Whitehorse.

Bicycle racks on Whitehorse transit buses are part of the solution to the city's transportation challenges.

in new neighbourhoods, alleviating housing pressures close to schools and producing economic benefits in new areas. Similar discount incentives can be offered to corporate groups to encourage employees to take transit.¹¹ The City of Victoria (BC) implemented a Universal Bus Pass (U-Pass) for college and university students in its communities in September 1999. As a result, car traffic on campus decreased by 15–20%.¹² Kingston (ON), Windsor (ON) and Edmonton (AB) are just a few of the many other communities that have implemented U-Pass programs.

Related website:

BC Transit's Profile of Victoria's U-Pass program
<http://www.bctransit.com>, click on **Corporate** and then follow the links to **Victoria Regional – Service Highlights**

7. Support and encourage local residential energy efficiency initiatives

Municipalities promote residential energy efficiency in many different ways. Several communities host non-profit organizations that provide residential audits of waste, water and energy use under Natural Resource Canada's EnerGuide for Houses Program. Once evaluations are completed, staff provides residents with recommendations for infrastructure and lifestyle changes they can make to generate financial savings and reduce their GHG emissions. The Town of Okotoks (AB) has undertaken a groundbreaking project by developing a 74-home subdivision that will demonstrate solar seasonal storage technology. Through the winter, homes will be heated with solar energy collected during the spring, summer and fall and distributed by a district heating system. The project is the first of its kind to employ solar seasonal storage in North America. It will lead to GHG reductions of approximately 2.4 tonnes per year, per household, along with a reduction in water use of 200 litres per household, per day as a result of added water conservation measures.

Related websites:

Residential Energy Efficiency Project
<http://www.thereep.ca>

Peterborough Green-Up
<http://www.greenup.on.ca>

¹¹ *Universal Transit Pass Project*. City of Edmonton. www.edmonton.ca/.../CMS/Server/NR/rdonlyres/A181EF67-7324-4808-A0E2-597D3755A7F1/0/UPassQandAJune2004.pdf

¹² Walker, Heather. (2000, July 21.) Fewer Parked Cars on Campus as New Bus Pass System Catches On. *The Ring The University of Victoria's Student Newspaper*.
<http://ring.uvic.ca/00jan21/buspass.html>

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8. Develop and maintain a bike-friendly infrastructure

Bike lanes, trails and racks make cycling a safer, more attractive option for travel and commuting. For example, employers might be encouraged to provide a bicycle for employees to travel to local meetings. With a little research,

employers can determine which type of bike and equipment will be most useful to employees. In the City of Fredericton (NB) cyclists,



National Research Council employees in Ottawa have their own "Rack It Club"

Photo courtesy of Sharon Boddy.

skiers, snowshoers and pedestrians alike can enjoy some 65 km of linear trails. By giving priority to the continued expansion and development of linear trails in its Capital City Municipal Plan, Fredericton has committed itself to developing a city-wide trail network that will enhance the recreational and commuting options of its residents.¹³

Related website:

City of Fredericton Parks and Trails

<http://www.city.fredericton.nb.ca>, click on Resident and then follow the links Recreation – Parks and Trails

9. Initiate a commuter challenge, bike to work week or car-free day in your community

The Commuter Challenge is a friendly competition between Canadian communities to encourage as many people as possible to use sustainable and active modes of transportation. Environment Canada organizes the event for one week each spring. Community registration is easily completed online. Many communities promote the event

through their transportation departments and often partner with local non-profit groups to increase the awareness of the program and participation. Intercommunity

challenges between government and large business spur friendly rivalries. More than 97 communities participated in the 2004 Commuter Challenge, reducing their GHG emissions by more than 600 tonnes. Municipalities of all sizes participated in the Challenge, including: Annapolis Royal (NS), Sackville (NB) and Montreal (QC).



Biking is fun for all ages! Arn Chiste with daughter Sonya and son Eric enjoying a bike ride in Ottawa.

Photo courtesy of Sharon Boddy.

Related website:

Commuter Challenge

<http://www.commuterchallenge.ca>

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10. Support community gardening— donate surplus land, promote green roofs

Surplus municipal land can be given new life when allocated to community groups interested in gardening. These gardens provide many benefits to the community, including the fact that food is produced locally, thereby reducing emissions generated by transporting food from outside the community.

Community gardens also improve community security and spirit, and serve as meeting places and educational tools for school children.

Further, the plants in these gardens will sequester carbon, offsetting a portion of a community's GHG emissions and improving air quality. Many municipalities have established partnerships with community

groups to deliver garden programs and promote additional urban greening initiatives such as rooftop gardening. The City of Vancouver's

(BC) Parks Board allows non-profit groups to establish gardens on unused parkland. The city provides the land, clears the grass and adds compost, while community groups establish educational programs for school children and other residents. To date, ten gardens have been planted. Rooftop gardens offer similar benefits and do not require land to be set aside.



Photo courtesy of Green Roofs for Healthy Cities.

Toronto City Hall's demonstration green roof feature eight plots that showcase different green roof applications.

Related websites:

City Farmer (All you need to know about urban gardening)

www.cityfarmer.org

City of Vancouver's Community Garden Policy

<http://city.vancouver.bc.ca>, click on Departments, then choose Parks and Recreation; click on Parks and Gardens and under Activities and Programs, choose Community Gardens

Green Roofs for Healthy Cities

<http://www.greenroofs.org>

Want more ideas?

Follow the links below

Climate Change Connection

Actions Local Governments Can Take to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

<http://www.climatechangeconnection.org>, click on Emissions and Impacts; from the Municipalities section choose Local Government and Community Reduction Project Examples

Greenhouse Gas Action Guide (hosted by the British Columbia Climate Exchange)

<http://www.ghgactionguide.ca>

The Business Case for Cutting Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Municipal Operations

FCM, 2003, available online at: <http://kn.fcm.ca>, follow the links: **Partners for Climate Protection – Tools and Resources** and find the **Business Case** on the left-hand side menu

Community Engagement and Task Forces

Cool Vancouver – City of Vancouver

<http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca>, click on the Major City Projects tab, and then from Environment/Sustainability Projects, choose A Sustainable City, and then click on the Cool Vancouver tab

Earthcare Sudbury – City of Greater Sudbury

<http://www.city.greatersudbury.on.ca>, click on City Hall; from the drop-down menu click on Public Works and then select Earthcare Sudbury from Related Links

Eco Perth – Town of Perth

<http://www.ecoperth.on.ca>

Cool Caledon – Town of Caledon

<http://www.coolcaledon.org>