

NEW 2008 EDITION – COMPLETELY REVISED

HOW TO GROW A GREEN COMMUNITY

A INTRODUCTORY GUIDE

Green Communities Canada
November 2008



NEW in 2008: Appendix on Green Community
partnerships, including success factors and case studies.

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How to Grow a Green Community

by Clifford Maynes, Green Communities Canada

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PREFACE

*preface to the 2008 edition by Clifford Maynes, Executive Director,
Green Communities Canada.*

WELCOME TO THE all new 2008 edition of *How to Grow a Green Community* - a long overdue update of a document first published more than a decade ago.¹ Thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for funding this update.

With the passing of time, I am increasingly impressed by the absolute necessity of Green Communities and what we do, as summarized in these pages.

I am even more impressed - and perpetually inspired - by those who make it happen in each community: the managers, program staff, boards, partners, and others who contribute. These are inventive, skilled, and persistent people - carrying on with good humour despite ongoing challenges of financial sustainability, and occasional setbacks.

It's an honour and a privilege to work with such amazing people.

► PERSONAL
ACTION
~ COMMUNITY
TRANSFORM-
ATION

FOR MOST OF US, going green, far from being easy, is frustrated by a host of daunting obstacles and barriers: -

- the relative scarcity of green goods and services in the marketplace
- the complexity of selecting the truly green option instead of the one that's got an attractive "ecologically friendly" label
- the often higher cost of the green option and subsidies to the polluting option (did someone say "free parking"?)
- the structure of the built environment (think car-dominated urban environments where walking is a life-threatening choice)
- the hassle factor and labour-intensity of going green in a busy world (how much time do you spend dutifully separating excess packaging for recycling?) a culture that still encourages unthinking consumption, waste, manufactured convenience, and obliviousness to the natural consequences of the way we live.

Enter Green Communities, a growing pan-Canadian movement of non-profit organizations with a mission to help households,

¹ We have added a valuable new appendix, Partnerships Done Right. Thanks to research-writer Thom Oommen, and all those who assisted.

businesses, and institutions go greener - *right now, today* - by providing practical assistance to overcome these and other obstacles. We provide people with information they can trust, access to goods and services, incentives and discounts - solutions. This is the stuff of community-based social marketing (CBSM), a sensible and useful approach to changing the world one household at a time.

But we don't stop at overcoming barriers to enable individual/household action. We also work to reduce and eliminate those barriers, through market transformation, institutionalized solutions, and culture change. Our vision: a future in which going green is no longer a painful sacrifice, but instead becomes convenient and rewarding.

In the coming years, I trust this transformational objective will become an increasingly prominent part of what we as Green Communities do at the community, regional and national level. Not that we will neglect our efforts to "green Canada, one household at a time," but that we will also pursue ways of creating a world in which going green is no longer punishingly difficult, but becomes the easy option - *the natural thing to do*. I look forward to it.

*Clifford Maynes
November 2008, Peterborough*

Thanks to:



1. INTRODUCTION

- ▶ **ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION** HOW TO GROW A GREEN COMMUNITY has been written for people who want to start a new organization based on the Green Communities model, and for existing non-profit community-based environmental organizations who want to know more about our model.

This is an introductory guide that certainly won't tell you everything about how to grow *your* Green Community - every community is different. But it should be a helpful distillation of what we've learned so far from the Green Communities experience.

- ▶ **CONTENTS** **Chapter 2: *About Green Communities***, explores the defining characteristics of GCs as community-based non-profit environmental organizations.

Chapter 3: *What Green Communities Do*, summarizes the many services and programs Green Communities offer.

Chapter 4: *Serving Our Customers*, introduces the business strategy of Green Communities: to identify and meet the various needs of partners, trade allies, end-use clients, community organizations and other supporters.

Chapter 5: Organizational Basics, addresses fundamentals such as incorporation, staffing, structure, and governance, and suggests early steps in establishing a Green Community.

Appendix A: Partnerships done right, takes a closer look at how best to develop and maintain successful partnerships

- ▶ **QUESTIONS, FEEDBACK** We welcome comments and suggestions on this guide and the ideas and approaches we describe. Please address comments to:

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2. ABOUT GREEN COMMUNITIES

GREEN COMMUNITIES ARE community-based, non-profit environmental organizations that achieve environmental results by mobilizing community partnerships and providing practical services and advice.²

We work to create an ecologically sustainable world by helping to conserve resources, prevent pollution, and protect and enhancing natural ecological processes.

► COMMUNITY-BASED

Green Communities are firmly rooted in their local communities. Each Green Community is locally planned and managed, with its own staff, office, budget, and board of directors. Each is independently incorporated. Each chooses its own name and establishes its own identity.

Each Green Community develops its own mix of programs and services, based on local needs, priorities, opportunities, inspiration, and initiative.

► BUILT ON PARTNERSHIPS

Green Communities are built on partnerships - a broad term that encompasses everything from moral support to contractual relationships.

Partner support can take the form of cash and/or in-kind contributions of goods and services, marketing, coordination and integration of services, advice, endorsements, and links to other partners.

Many and varied sectors of the community – governments, utilities, businesses, community organizations, and others – work together through Green Communities for shared and complementary goals.

Partners integrate their resources, skills, knowledge, and activities through Green Communities, generating efficiencies of scope and scale and creating a more effective delivery vehicle than any organization could develop on its own.

² See: www.greencommunitiescanada.org for more information, including a list of current members.

Partnerships help to ensure broad-based and active support for Green Communities. They help to ensure credibility and independence from any one interest or perspective, thereby maximizing public trust and media buy-in. They help to ensure that the organization is truly community-based in the broadest sense, rather than tied to a single sponsor.

A broad partnership base also helps to maximize organizational stability, resilience, and adaptability.

Partners can include:

- electric and gas utilities
- municipal governments, including their various departments (waste, water, transportation, etc.)
- government agencies at the provincial and federal level

... all of which recognize that Green Communities provide cost-effective delivery of their conservation and environmental activities.

Partners can also include financial institutions, manufacturers, and retailers, who find that Green Communities help to market their products and services.

Finally, partners include a host of community organizations — groups, associations (trade, professional, social, labour, business, etc.), agencies, institutions, and individual businesses as corporate citizens — that support Green Communities for the good of the community and the environment.³

Strong municipal partnerships, often with multiple departments, is one success factor. The local Green Community should be seen as a preferred vehicle for municipalities to deliver on a variety of environmental mandates and objectives.⁴

Diversification is another success factor - revenues will ebb and flow, so having multiple programs and partners is prudent.

► NON-PROFIT BUSINESSES

Green Communities are non-profit and mission-driven. We provide useful services that, generally speaking, the private marketplace cannot or will not provide.⁵

³ See Chapter 4, *Serving Our Customers*, for more on partners and their involvement in Green Communities. And see Appendix A, *Partnerships Done Right*, for a more in-depth look. We also recommend that you download *Working Partnership: Recipes for Success*, from Alberta's Wild Rose Foundation.

⁴ Selling points to municipalities: Green Community expertise in community program delivery, credibility as a source of environmental messages, cost effectiveness (we do good work cheaply), ability to leverage additional resources and partnerships not always available to municipalities (e.g., grants, free publicity).

⁵ This failure of the market to meet needs is due to a number of barriers, including imperfect knowledge of problems and solutions, competing priorities for limited resources available to make environmental improvements, and externalization of costs and benefits — that is, the fact that households and businesses don't pay the full costs of the environmental damage they cause, which are borne by the environment, the community as a whole, and future generations.

At the same time, we are “business-like” - customer-driven and entrepreneurial. We are flexible, responsive, innovative, constantly developing new services and programs to better meet the needs of our partners and customers in ways that help fulfil our environmental mission.

Green Communities are sensitive to market realities and the need for effective marketing. We often charge user fees where appropriate, and form strategic alliances with private sector firms. We pride ourselves on being light on our feet, able to respond quickly to opportunities as they arise.

In short, Green Communities are non-profit businesses, combining some of the best qualities of the public sector, the private sector, and the traditional voluntary sector. We are social entrepreneurs.⁶

► GREEN COMMUNITIES CANADA

Green Communities have established a national association to facilitate sharing and cooperation among members.

Green Communities Canada (formerly the Green Communities Association) was launched as an informal network in 1995 and incorporated in 1996. We have also established a charitable affiliate, the Green Communities Foundation.

Green Communities Canada:

- promotes Green Communities through our websites, a free weekly electronic newsletter, and media and outreach;
- promotes Green Communities and our interests to senior partners;
- represents and showcases Green Communities and our in various forums;
- facilitates information-sharing and cooperation among member organizations, through the newsletter, annual conferences, list-serves, and member-to-member meetings and teleconferences;
- develops skills and knowledge among member organizations by sharing resources, organizing capacity-building workshops, and offering services;
- builds Green Communities by supporting new and evolving member organizations;
- coordinates locally delivered joint programs, such as our home energy efficiency and private well stewardship programs

Green Communities Canada is governed by a national board of directors elected by full member organizations at our Annual General Meeting.⁷ The Board is a mix of member representatives

⁶ See Wikipedia for a definition of this apt term.

⁷ See www.greencommunitiescanada.org for a listing of current GCC Board members.

and directors-at-large chosen for a combination of qualities, including specialized skills and geographic representation.

GCC has adopted a package of policies outlining most aspects of what we do and how we conduct ourselves, including a Code of Conduct. Members are required to sign off on the policies. Some of our policies are posted on the website, and the rest of the package is made available to prospective members on request.

► JOINT PROGRAMS

Green Communities have developed a unique model in which an environmental program is delivered jointly by Green Community member organizations. This model features:

- **central coordination and program support**, including some combination of program and resource development, senior partnership development, revenue development and sharing, training, how-to manuals, program coaching, fund-raising support (e.g., local funding templates), peer networking and resource-sharing, external communications, quality assurance, monitoring and reporting
- **local program delivery**, adaptation and innovation, and partnership and revenue development.

It is a powerful model.

A joint program draws on the strengths of community-based delivery in reaching people where they live, tailoring delivery to local conditions, and mobilizing local partnerships. Community-based delivery is the essential element in the success of our approach.

At the same time, the joint program model eliminates the need for each Green Community to re-invent the wheel. Centrally coordinated training, technical support and quality assurance increases credibility. Funders and partners get easy one-stop access to a number of communities.

Some examples of joint programs include our home performance services, Well Aware, ecoDriver, Pesticide Free Naturally, and Active & Safe Routes to School.

► GCC MEMBERSHIP

The membership policy of Green Communities Canada defines the prerequisites of membership:⁸

- incorporated non-profit
- sign off on Green Communities Canada policies
- strong community-base - community board of directors, local partnerships, endorsements, profile, reputation
- delivery of environmental programs and services, preferably over a range of environmental program areas, focussed on action and measurable results - track record

⁸ see www.greencommunitiescanada.org for full, current membership policy and application form.

- demonstrated organizational capacity - permanent paid staff and management, an *independent* board of directors⁹

Prospective members need to apply and be approved by the GCC Board of Directors. Annual fees apply.

There are currently two levels of membership: full and associate. Full membership includes voting rights, first right of refusal to deliver joint programs within their defined territory, and full access to GCC support and services. Associate membership is intended for organizations expected to meet the full membership requirements in the not-too-distant future. Associate members are non-voting and are entitled to more limited benefits and services.

⁹ that is, the board of directors is independent of senior management.

3. WHAT GREEN COMMUNITIES DO

► CHANGING BEHAVIOUR

GREEN COMMUNITIES DELIVER environmental programs and services that address real-world barriers and incentives to behaviour change and action. Based on the principles and practices of Community Based Social Marketing (see below), we provide:

- information and advice
- engagement, inspiration, motivation, leadership
- assistance, to facilitate action
- goods and services

We deliver dozens of different programs, depending on:

- community needs and wants
- the skills, resources, and ideas we can bring to bear
- what our partners, end-use clients, funders, and supporters will fund and support¹⁰

Many Green Communities deliver home energy audits that provide professional advice on the most effective energy-efficiency retrofit investments. We also deliver and/or facilitate home energy retrofits, especially for low income households. We develop and operate demonstration homes open to the public. And we deliver energy efficiency advice and installation services to the small commercial sector and social housing.

Our transportation programs promote walking, including walk-to-school, cycling, public transit use, and ecologically responsible automobile use (e.g., anti-idling, eco-driving, car use reduction).

Water conservation programs include promotion of low-water yard and garden maintenance, installation of water saving devices, and disconnection of rainwater downspouts from sanitary sewers.

Water protection programs include private well stewardship,

¹⁰ See chapter 4, *Serving our Customers*, for suggestions about potential markets for your services.

groundwater and surface water protection, and reduction of stormwater run-off.

Waste reduction programs promote low/no-waste alternatives (reduce, re-use, recycle), composting (demonstration, education), and proper stewardship of toxic waste and electronic waste.

We promote responsible consumption, including purchase of fair trade, organic, and non-toxic alternatives. We promote purchase of locally grown food (buy local, community shared agriculture, farmers markets).

Many Green Communities deliver greenspace/sustainable landscaping programs that promote pesticide-free yard and garden maintenance, naturalization, regeneration, and urban forest improvement. Some operate demonstration ecology gardens.

Green Communities offer school and youth programs, including summer camps, offer training, give awards for green businesses and environmental citizenship, distribute factsheets, provide newspaper columns and television spots, provide telephone and email advice, host information-laden websites, and operate resource centres with information and green products on sale.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of the programs Green Communities deliver. The list is constantly growing and changing. For more detail, see our catalogue of programs (contact Green Communities Canada), and visit the websites of Green Communities Canada member organizations.

► COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL MARKETING

Green Communities work to achieve behaviour change, with real and immediate benefits for the environment.

To achieve this objective, education and information alone is not adequate. Instead, based on the principles and practices of Community Based Social Marketing,¹¹ we seek to understand and address the real-world barriers and incentives that influence what people actually do.

Lack of information may be a real barrier, for example, but it isn't sufficient to merely issue a brochure, mount a website, or run a radio ad. We need to take care that the information is presented in a manner that is both useful and respectful, and that the source is credible and engaging.

We carefully craft key messages, wherever possible testing them with focus groups to ensure that the language works for target audiences. We work to get partners on board with established messages and supporting information, recognizing the need for people to hear the same message - and get the same advice - from all angles. We engage neighbours to talk to neighbours,

¹¹ See: www.cbism.com.

peers to talk with peers.

We get endorsements from experts in the field - for example, our home energy audit is government-approved based on extensive technical research; and our private well stewardship program has been endorsed by a long list of relevant experts, from farm organizations to professional hydrogeologists. We take care that our staff get science-based training (e.g., training of energy auditors in building science) and respect the limits of their expertise.

We get a multitude of community partners on board, to add support, and to engage with people through channels of communication that are personally compelling: their workplace, school, club, faith community, neighbourhood.

We don't talk down or lecture to people in our communities. We praise positive efforts, use humour, and steer clear of finger-pointing. We adopt the attitude of a concerned, friendly neighbour - a peer - and encourage people to engage with their own neighbours in the same way. So, for example, our driving program is driver-to-driver; and our well water guides are presented as "ideal well owners".

We put a premium on personal interaction, in small groups and one-on-one. The face-to-face interaction of a home energy audit, well visit, shoreline, or yard and garden visit (with trained auditors and guides) builds a trusting relationship that is much more likely than a brochure, website, or TV ad to result in real action, including in some cases substantial financial investments.

We talk to people about what actually moves them - their "hot buttons" - instead of what we think they need to hear. Point number one for eager environmentalists: not everybody is motivated first and foremost by the urgency of saving the planet. Other common priorities: comfort (eliminating drafts), money (reducing energy bills), family health (ensuring safe well water), safe streets (creating walkable communities), and so on. The point is to understand what really matters to real people. Environment is likely in the mix as a serious motivation, but not sufficient on its own to mobilize the change we seek.

Experience tells us that the traditional model (education => awareness => action) seldom holds true. People take action first, for whatever reason, then become more interested in information. For example, people dutifully sort recyclables in their blue boxes because they are asked to - and because their neighbours visibly do it. When they begin to recycle, they are more open to hearing about why recycling and waste reduction are environmentally important.

Talking to people allows us to identify and address misconceptions - e.g., the driver who thinks driving faster reduces gas consumption and emissions by reducing time on the

road. (Wrong!) Talking to people also identifies what they care about - and what problem you need to help solve if you are going to motivate action.

Wherever possible, the advice we provide to people is not generic, but is tailored to their particular reality - an assessment of *their* yard, *their* house, *their* transportation needs. This is more effective in achieving results.

But that's not all. Community Based Social Marketing goes beyond information and advice to practical problem-solving. If money is a barrier, we need to provide access to financing, discounts, or subsidies. If access to goods and services is a barrier, we need to address that by providing referrals, or offering goods and services. Other barriers include split incentives (e.g., where a landlord has the ability to upgrade energy efficiency, but the tenant pays the bill), or authority (e.g., where the tenant pays the bill, but doesn't own the appliance or have the authority to alter the building envelope).

A common barrier to action is the hassle factor - everybody is busy and has a thousand competing priorities for their scarce time. How do you make it easy for them to take action? This question has led some Green Communities to offer a bundled home energy retrofit service, because the market doesn't offer a one-stop-shopping service and the hassle of finding the right combination of contractors to complete an optimum home energy retrofit is a barrier to action. In a fully-bundled service, you could get advice, financing, contracting, and quality assurance all in one package.

► COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

Green Communities think of themselves as focused on action at the personal/household level. But there is a broader dimension to what we do.

We create "Green Communities."

We address the barriers to green behaviours by working to create a world in which these behaviours are convenient, and rewarded instead of punished.

In this way we reach further than programs that facilitate immediate action, undertaking research, planning, legislative policy development, advocacy, and community development.

We do this locally where the opportunity presents itself. For example, we support the establishment of *walkable communities* through land use and transportation planning policies - including the creation of pedestrian-friendly streetscapes - that make walking safe and pleasant instead of risky and miserable.

Other examples:

- working to establish local contracting capacity for home energy retrofits and availability of green products in local

stores (market transformation)

- improving transit service and establishing high occupancy vehicle lanes so carpools and buses are rewarded with faster service
- working to ensure that renewable energy is supplied to the grid
- promoting efficiency standards and labelling for cars, appliances, heating systems
- promoting tax incentives for green activities
- promoting laws governing green behaviour - e.g., tree saving bylaws; food security policy at national/provincial level, building codes with energy targets
- training and mentoring youth, and promoting national/provincial youth employment programs
- improving funder practices
- communicating benefits of national/provincial residential energy audits, retrofit incentives
- working to establish national, provincial, and local low-income energy efficiency partnerships.

4. SERVING OUR CUSTOMERS

► COMPLEX BUSINESSES

THE ABILITY OF GREEN COMMUNITIES to maintain an adequate flow of revenues depends on how well we meet the needs of our “customers,” that is, all those who benefit from the work we do and the services we provide - our end-use clients, funders, and partners.

Our revenue streams are often remarkably diverse: any one activity may be supported by a combination of direct sales, grants, and a multitude of partners in different sectors participating for different reasons. Contributions sometime take the form of cash or in-kind donations, but often they are business transactions in which we are paid for a specified service.

Success requires multiple pitches to multiple customers, featuring the selling points that work for each. Sometimes the hot button is environmental improvement, pure and simple, but often motivations are more complex. To succeed in this business, we’ve got to understand our customers and speak to their interests.

For example, we know from years of addressing residential energy efficiency that only a few “high green” customers are *primarily* motivated by a desire to reduce their ecological footprint - though much larger percentage see environmental gains as an important benefit. For energy consumers, bill savings are obviously a leading goal; but often as not the primary goal is comfort - eliminating drafts, or solving a home performance problem like ice dams on the roof or a room that’s too hot in summer and too cold in winter.

Energy utilities are often motivated by regulatory obligations to conserve energy - an opportunity for us to meet their needs and get paid to do it.

An introductory overview of potential customers and opportunities follows. The chart below is by no means exhaustive, but it will help you to think strategically about who in your community will support your work and what will bring them to the table.

<u>CUSTOMER</u>	<u>OUR PROGRAMS</u>	<u>CUSTOMER BENEFITS</u>
► MUNICIPALITIES	recycling education, promotion waste reduction toxics reduction, safe disposal urban water protection private well stewardship home energy audits, retrofit facilitation commercial energy efficiency naturalization, re-vegetation, ecological restoration on public and private lands pesticide reduction car use reduction, promotion of transit, cycling promote walking, walkable communities eco-driving	diversion from landfill - obligations, savings reduced stormwater flows, reduced contamination of waterways protection of sewage treatment facilities and employees groundwater protection climate protection, energy efficiency poverty reduction economic benefits, competitiveness improved natural beauty, wildlife habitat, air and water quality reduced shoreline erosion implementation of pesticide by-laws transportation demand management transit ridership reduced congestion avoided cost for new roads smog, CO ₂ reduction avoided capital, operating costs freed up capacity to supply new development
► WATER UTILITIES	low flow shower heads, aerators, toilet change outs low water yard and garden maintenance	conservation, demand side management goals reduced disconnects and losses among low income customers
► ENERGY UTILITIES	advice, installation, services, residential, commercial	GCs offer professionalism, partnerships, credibility, measurable results ¹²
► FUNDERS (FEDERAL PROVINCIAL OTHER)	all	environmental benefits
► HOUSEHOLDERS, BUSINESSES, INSTITUTIONS	all	dollars savings, e.g., from energy conservation comfort, health, safety real estate value education, of employees, members

¹² A word of caution: most (though not all) funders impose high requirements and obligations for a relatively small amount of short term funding. They tend to undermine rather than build capacity. We need their money to deliver programs, but the experience is often draining and frustrating.

► SUPPLIERS, MANUFACTURERS, BANKS ...	all	corporate responsibility public relations sales of goods and services
► MEDIA	provide interesting content from all programs provide articles, columns	public service obligations readership free content
► POLICE	Active & Safe Routes to School bike programs	safe streets bike safety
► SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS	low-income energy retrofits community gardens	reduction in low-income energy burden
► COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STAKEHOLDERS	all	community greening, improvement green image - eco-tourism appeal business opportunities, job creation economic benefits of energy and other resource conservation ("reduced leakage")
► EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	presentations, workshops field trips (e.g., to ecology garden, demonstration house) co-op placements research projects schoolyard naturalization, waste reduction, energy efficiency	educational content, experiences school greening
► HEALTH	walking, cycling, gardening toxics, pesticides, smog reduction	healthy activity, fitness healthier environment - improved air/water quality
► HORTICULTURE	demo gardens pesticide-free education naturalization tree planting native species	community greening Communities in Bloom
► SERVICE CLUBS	projects	opportunity to invest in a popular activity, public recognition

Also, see Appendix A to this document on Partnerships Done Right, new in 2008, which includes success factors, obstacles and solutions, and 14 case studies from our members. And download Working in Partnership: Recipes for Success, from Alberta's Wild Rose Foundation.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL BASICS

THIS CHAPTER SUMMARIZES some key considerations for the planning and development of a successful Green Community, including a brief outline of a start-up process.

- **TERRITORY** A Green Community should have a large enough territory to build effective partnerships and develop a sustainable, professional operation, but not so large as to become distant from its community base. Regional government or county lines are often chosen as service boundaries (rather than an individual municipality within the region), in part because the upper-tier government is often an important partner.

A regional population base of 100,000 is generally the minimum to ensure a sustainable scale of operations.

Our vision is that all populated areas across Canada be served by shoulder-to-shoulder Green Communities. Green Communities Canada generally aims to define the territorial boundaries of its member organizations in a way that gives each member exclusivity within its territory and therefore avoids competition between members.¹³

- **UNITED WE STAND** In some communities, there may be two or even several pre-existing environmental non-profits that deliver programs. This can lead to turf wars, which confuses the public and alienates partners and funders, who always like to see evidence that their investment decisions will have broad-based support.

Competition among organizations can also make it difficult for any one organization to develop the necessary economies of scope and scale to achieve organizational sustainability (i.e., permanent staff, a solid board, profile, credibility, access to partnerships).

Ideally, a Green Community should bring together everyone who is doing this kind of work in your community under the umbrella

¹³ There are some exceptions in which territories overlap. We help to ensure cooperation through multilateral agreements.

of one strong organization.

This may not be an easy sell. However, the arguments in favour of doing so are compelling for everyone: by pooling our efforts we can access more resources and make a much bigger impact than we can separately. Options include amalgamation, or absorbing the work of one group as a project of the other.

If formal unification cannot be achieved, try to establish collaborative relationships, so groups are working together and seen by the public, partners, and funders to be complementary rather than competing. Groups should write support letters for each others activities.

- ▶ **INCORPORATION** A Green Community must be incorporated to enter into contractual obligations with other bodies (including funders), incur potential liabilities, protect board members and staff, and send a message of stability and persistence.
- ▶ **CHARITABLE STATUS** All Green Communities are non-profit. Some have charitable status, which enables them to receive foundation funds and issue tax receipts to donors. To become a registered charity, plan for this at the outset. Get legal advice. Revenue Canada is very reluctant to hand out charitable registration, and objects have to be carefully structured to ensure success.
- ▶ **INCORPORATE INDEPENDENTLY** The Green Community should be self-incorporated, with its own board of directors. At the outset, Green Communities are sometimes launched as “a project of” another organization, which has the advantage of being quick and easy. However, we recommend separate incorporation as soon as possible. Separate incorporation ensures an independent identity in the community and dedicated, independent governance. It avoids common problems associated with the sponsored project model, including confused public identity, unclear lines of responsibility, inadequate managerial and governance attention, and tension between the board and “the project,” e.g., a feeling on the part of the project that it is being neglected or constrained; and a feeling on the part of the parent organization board that the tail is wagging the dog.
- ▶ **IDENTITY** Each Green Community develops its own identity. A few suggestions:
 - Define mission, vision, values. Clarify whether your organization is focused on partnership-based program delivery as opposed to politically charged advocacy. There may be difficulties in doing both, e.g., it is hard to develop cooperative relationships with your municipality if you are strafing your local council in the media for a bad planning decision.¹⁴

¹⁴ There are ways that Green Communities can and should advocate, but you need to be careful about how this is done.

- Choose a name and logo that reflects what you are: a professional non-profit offering environmental programs and services. For ideas, check out names of existing member organizations on the Green Communities website.
- Avoid restrictive geographic references (a city name can be a liability when the service territory grows to include the surrounding county or region).
- If you must have a long name, adopt an easily recognizable short version from the outset.
- The best logos are easily recognized — keep yours simple. When choosing design and colour, remember that your logo will appear on everything from outdoor signs to letterhead to brochures and advertising.
- Every colour adds to printing costs, so don't use more than two. Ensure that the logo looks good in black and white as well as colour, and can be reproduced in small format (business card size).

► **STRONG BOARD,
STRONG
MANAGER**

To flourish, your Green Community needs to have a strong board that governs and a strong manager who manages.

Governance functions are high level. The board hires, evaluates, and sometimes fires the manager (most important function); establishes clear overall direction, policies, and plans; approves budgets and annual goals/business plans; ensures legal obligations are met; evaluates and addresses risk; and monitors progress. The board should establish the *framework* within which the manager and staff operate.

Within the framework of board policy and plans, the manager should have executive authority to pursue opportunities, write proposals, develop partnerships, hire and fire staff, and generally run the business.

That's how things should work.

They go very wrong if the board gets too involved in day-to-day management,¹⁵ and repeatedly gets involved in operational details or second-guesses management decisions.

In the most extreme case, the volunteer board chair (often the founder) is formally or *de facto* also the chief executive officer, and/or the most senior staff has a title like co-ordinator rather than manager or executive director. Under these circumstances, the board is unlikely to provide independent oversight or be seen to do so by the community (see below).

Further, when the chair and CEO are one in the same, the

¹⁵Individual board members sometimes do become legitimately involved in day-to-day GC operations — as volunteers. But like any volunteer, they take direction from management and staff and keep their two roles — board member and volunteer — separate.

organization is unlikely to flourish, because there is no real manager, or the titular manager lacks authority. At the same time, a volunteer chair and board of directors - however dedicated they might be - will eventually run out of steam, and the organization will stall. Typically, an organization with a chair/CEO functions as long as there is project funding, but when the project ends, the coordinator is laid off and the organization dies or goes into hibernation.

The opposite and equally dysfunctional circumstance is a weak board and a strong manager. If the manager is effective, an organization with a weak board can do well for a time, but when the manager leaves, the board has little or no capacity to carry on.

Strong board-strong manager is a key to organizational health.

► STRONG AND INDEPENDENT BOARD

To be effective, and provide effective scrutiny of the actions of management, your board needs to be *independent* of the manager. If the chair is the CEO that definitely can't happen. If the board comprises the best friends and close relatives of the manager, the manager will get a free ride instead of being held accountable.

The test of true independence is whether the board could and would fire the manager should circumstances warrant. An independent board needs to meet regularly *without management present*, to air concerns and take action when necessary.¹⁶

An independent board helps to ensure the internal health of the organization by reviewing the actions of management. But of equal importance, an independent board - seen by the community and partners to be competent and independent - establishes the credibility of your organization. An independent board that is respected and connected to diverse and broadly representative sectors of your community pays off in confidence, and ultimately partner contributions and other benefits. An independent, connected board tells key people in your community that your organization is sound and well managed.

► BOARD QUALIFICATIONS

Primary qualifications for board members include:

- commitment to the organization and its aims
- ability to work with others
- positive attitude, initiative
- governance experience, organizational skills
- specialized skills and knowledge of use to the organization (e.g., accountancy, law, the environment, technical issues, human resources, project development)

¹⁶ http://www.boardsource.org/dl.asp?document_id=555

- sectoral representation

Some Green Communities have established boards with fixed representation from key partners, e.g., municipality, utility, lending institution, education, small business, etc. The purpose of this approach is to maintain community support and partner involvement.

In some instances, it works quite well. There is a danger, however, that partner organizations will conscript board members who lack either the skills or the inclination for the task.

If your board is composed of partner nominees, work with your partners to identify good board members. Further, be sure they understand that their legal responsibility as board members is to the Green Community, not to the organization that nominated them.

► MANAGEMENT

Good people make Green Communities happen. They bring skills, ideas, and energy that make the improbable come to fruition.

The good news is that there is no shortage of good people eager to join in the work we do. The people who work for Green Communities bring a unique combination of commitment, entrepreneurship, and competence that ought to be the envy of the private and public sectors. Money can't buy it.

Managers drive our organizations. With a clear sense of purpose, they turn ideas into action - designing programs, making partnerships, generating revenues, delivering results.

The top responsibility of a board of directors is to hire, support, and provide overall direction to a manager. Qualities to look for in a manager:

- **Social entrepreneurship.** Managers need to see the big picture and be able to leap on new opportunities - unmet community and customer needs, new services, new alliances and partnerships.
- **Sales.** The manager has to sell partners on participation in program delivery. This requires an ability to generate support, build relationships, and close deals. It also requires an ability to work with a variety of sectors, and to market your Green Community and its activities to the broader community.
- **Collaborative leadership.** A good manager respects staff, seeks their input, works with them as a team, and delegates responsibility. But a good manager also leads.
- **Managerial skills.** Green Communities require the usual combination of organizational planning, budgeting and financial stewardship, human resources management, supervision and delegation, team-building, proposal writing

and reporting.

- **Environmental knowledge.** Specific technical knowledge is not a leading prerequisite - we can acquire this through research and partnerships. But managers need to ensure that our work is accurate and credible.

- **STAFF** Next, you need to hire great program staff. This is the responsibility of the manager. Ideally, you want to establish a strong team, including managers for each program area who will help to drive the success of their program over time by identifying opportunities, writing proposals and establishing partnerships.

To assist in hiring good staff and avoid confusion, have clear job descriptions for each position, and written agreements. Jobs in Green Communities are real jobs, and should be treated as such.

Remuneration is a difficult subject, because Green Communities (particularly starting out) often don't have the resources to pay full market salaries. You may want to ask some established GCs what they pay.

Avoid the temptation to think of environmental non-profits as low-wage ghettos: the fact is that a number of people within our organizations make a decent living. And while it would be stretching things to say that we have job security, in fact we are able to make a career out of doing what we like to do.

Consider the non-salary benefits you are able to offer: flexible working hours, unpaid leaves, friendly working conditions, recognition for a job well done (conduct routine evaluations, apply for awards). Boards and managers need to watch for signs of burn-out in staff who may be working too hard too long.

In some cases you may want to pay staff as consultants rather than take them on as employees. But be careful. Revenue Canada has rules about such things, and if it decides a consultant is really an employee, you will be liable for back taxes and benefits. See the Revenue Canada website.

- **PREMISES** Some factors to consider:

- **Location.** You want visibility and accessibility, particularly if you are operating a resource centre or store.
- **Size.** Get enough space to accommodate all the staff you might be hiring in the next three to five years, plus equipment, displays, resources. Consider working conditions.
- **Facilities.** Have a private room for meeting with staff and partners, and a small kitchen for staff. A board room is a bonus, but a partner can probably provide a suitable place to meet.

Try to get free or reduced cost space as an in-kind contribution from a partner. Sharing space with another organization may

reduce costs, e.g., for high speed internet, photocopier, fax, etc.

Demonstration home/office. Some Green Communities see an opportunity to use their office space as a showcase for energy efficiency and green products. Great idea, but look before you leap: a green renovation is lengthy, time-consuming, expensive, and very disruptive if you are occupying the building during the reno. Talk to people who have been through this already: you may avoid a truckload of headaches. Recognize the potential for conflict between the need for quiet workspace and your interest in educating the public. It's tough to write a funding proposal while playing host to a bus load of school kids.

► EQUIPMENT

Green Communities rely heavily on communications and information technology - computers, telephone systems, etc. Green Communities Canada may be able to help you decide what you need and find ways to reduce your costs.

Seek donations from your partners. Make a wish list of everything you need and shop it around. You may be surprised by what you can get for free (e.g., a vehicle, space). Don't be shy about asking.

► RISK MANAGEMENT, INSURANCE

Board and management need to evaluate the risks to the organization.¹⁷ Establish financial reserves to prepare for worst-case scenarios, e.g., paying of liabilities at shutdown, or covering salaries during a cash flow crunch.

You will require three types of insurance:

- **General Liability, or CGL.** General liability coverage protects your organization against third party legal liability related to property damage or bodily harm, such as damage to property that you don't own or rent, or injuries sustained during your programs. General liability automatically covers Directors and employees while they are acting in the scope of their duties; however, you may need to request an extension to cover volunteers.
- **Office/Property.** Property insurance is valuable for all organizations, whether you rent or own property. In addition to buildings and other structures, property insurance also covers the physical assets your organization owns such as furniture, equipment, etc.
- **Directors and Officers.** Directors and Officers coverage typically protects against risks that are not included under your organization's general liability policy, such as claims arising out of Board decisions or omissions, or

¹⁷ Download this valuable checklist: <http://www.carters.ca/pub/checklst/nonprofit.pdf>.

out of actions or activities performed directly under the auspices of the Board of Directors.

You may also wish to consider:

- **Abuse coverage** (including physical, sexual and other types of abuse). Organizations working with vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, or the disabled, should consider obtaining abuse coverage.

► GROWING YOUR GREEN COMMUNITY

To plan a new Green Community, or propel an existing GC forward, take a step back and consider the possibilities. Scan needs, priorities, and opportunities.

What problems face your community and potential partners that offer opportunities for a Green Community? Are there infrastructure problems, such as water or sewage treatment capacity limitations? Are there water or air quality concerns? A landfill site nearing capacity?

Consider the program options outlined in the program catalogues, and the partnership opportunities and motives outlined in this guide.

Many communities have already developed environmental or sustainability plans - review their findings and recommendations.¹⁸ Municipal councils and other partners may have made specific commitments. These could be money in the bank for your programs.

Hold a gathering of “stakeholders” - all the key players who might see your organization as a vehicle for action. Get ideas about priority opportunities. Green Communities Canada, or a neighbouring Green Community, may be able to send a representative - information about what’s being done elsewhere could be a compelling argument for doing the same or better in your community.

¹⁸ A word of caution about participating in community environmental planning processes. These plans can be useful and engaging, but they can also be dangerously time-consuming. Community environmental planning can take centre stage over a period of years, during which new initiatives are blocked awaiting the outcome of the plan and, even worse, existing initiatives wither for lack of attention and funding. Hope of something better may be the enemy of what we’ve already got. Be cautious of such processes if they are expected take more than a few months. A strength of Green Communities is our ability to leap on opportunities for immediate action that are in line with our mission - “principled opportunism.”

► JOIN GREEN COMMUNITIES CANADA

Green Communities Canada has established an Associate Membership category to serve the needs of new Green Communities and other interested organizations.

See our website for membership fees and requirements. Although GCC has limited resources, we should be able to help in various ways:

- access to additional resource materials
- connections with other people in your community, province, or territory who have expressed an interest in Green Communities
- information about partnerships and supplier deals that are available to you, and about possible funding sources, if you have identified a specific need or problem

Contact Green Communities Canada for details. Meanwhile, we have a free weekly e-newsletter that your staff and board members should receive. To subscribe, see our website.

► CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT, POLICIES

For new and existing organizations that want to assess their capacity, we have developed a quick self-assessment tool, suitable for boards that want to determine priorities for capacity development. Dimensions include:

- incorporation/liability
- board
- management
- infrastructure
- human resources
- aspirations, strategy, plans, policies
- process/systems
- resources/partners
- marketing/communications

The grid will help you take the pulse of your organization, and determine which dimensions of capacity are most in need of attention. Available from Green Communities Canada.

Also available from Green Communities Canada: policies you can use as templates: mission, vision, functions, code of conduct, governance (board functions, appointments, committees), human resources (termination, leave, etc.), travel and accommodations.

You might also be interested in our planning tools, including a strategic planning template that identifies strategic objectives and priorities in a one-page table, and a format for annual goal plans.

APPENDIX :

PARTNERSHIPS DONE RIGHT

► BUILDING PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are an integral part of what a not for profit does. Not only do they provide additional funding - which makes the wheels go round - they lend credibility to our work in the eyes of the people they service and people who already value them. They can be the bridge between us and the people we want to service.

Lynda Bausinger,
Elora Centre for Environmental Excellence

GREEN COMMUNITIES FLOURISH OR WILT on the strength of our ability to build productive partnerships. Chapter 2 introduces the importance of partnerships, and Chapter 4 provides an overview of the range of potential partnerships and strategies for making them happen. This appendix dives into the topic in greater detail, focusing on the challenge of establishing and maintaining partnerships, success factors, and barriers and solutions. We conclude with a number of case studies of partner-based Green Communities programs.

The notion of partnership implies some form of ongoing relationship. At minimum, this relationship needn't be more involved than a friendly exchange of logos and a commitment to share information and credit. On the other hand, partnerships can get highly involved, and must be treated with the appropriate level of seriousness if they are to work. Partnerships are a major investment.

Partnerships can be with virtually anybody - other non-profits and community groups, private sector businesses, or government departments or agencies.

Developing good partnerships starts with a clear understanding of your needs and boundaries - so you can decide which partner opportunities to pursue and which to shun. (For more on this and other related topics, see *Working in Partnership: Recipes for Success*, an excellent publication by Alberta's Wild Rose Foundation, available free online. Highly recommended.)

You need to investigate and screen the partnership. Will it be worth the effort? Do you have the resources to develop and maintain it? What are the consequences if it goes sour? Could the partnership damage your reputation or relationships with others? Are your objectives and values sufficiently aligned with the partner? For example, when is it right to partner with a polluter? - it's not always easy to know where to draw the line, and you need to weigh costs and benefits.

Partners can offer a long list of benefits: cash, marketing and promotion, reputation and credibility, increased access to grants and other partners, and in-kind contributions like goods, services, space, equipment, coaching, professional expertise, and volunteer labour.

In turn, we have much to offer to the partner. Think of a partnership as an exchange rather than a gift from them to us. Partners gain reputation by association with our organization and our programs. They are often able to satisfy their environmental objectives or requirements with a relatively modest investment. A partnership may have political pay-off for politicians or commercial pay-off in the marketplace for private businesses.

Landing a partnership is like making a sale. Just as you need to size up the prospective partner, they need to size you up. Make it easy for them by outlining all the reasons why you are a good bet: your track record in the community, expertise, endorsements and awards. Briefly describe your governance and financial controls - these should inspire trust. Use personal connections if you have them: a word of introduction from the right person in your community could satisfy a partner that you are credible.

You also need to sell the benefits of the specific program - but this probably matters less than selling yourself and your organization. People invest in people.

Working in Partnership, cited above, provides extremely helpful sections on establishing a partnership framework and a partnership agreement. A partnership agreement could include sections on objectives, outcomes, and activities, roles of each partner, information and reporting needs of each partner, resources required and who will provide them, recognition and public communications, timeframe, management and decision-making, conflict resolution, review and evaluation, and an ongoing process for maintaining and developing a healthy partnership.

Working in Partnership also includes sections on being a good partner, and conflict resolution.

► COMMON SUCCESS FACTORS

Here are some factors found to contribute to successful partnerships by Green Communities across the country:

1. **Get personal:** Build personal relationships with owners, managers, bureaucrats, councillors and other elected officials. Cultivate champions.
2. **Know your partner:** Research and understand their priorities and policies. Municipalities, for instance, often face financial constraints and political pressure to act on key issues. Know the gaps and offer to fill them.
3. **Be professional:** Counter the popular perception of environmentalists - deliver polished presentations and refined proposals. Know your partnership proposition inside and out so you can pitch and answer questions smoothly. To hone your presentation, do a dry run with staff or board members who can role-play and ask the difficult questions.
4. **Believe in your message:** You are offering an opportunity, not looking for a handout. Your target is lucky to be approached. Be confident - you can't sell what you wouldn't buy.
5. **Highlight value for money:** Every partner, especially a municipality, wants to know that its contribution will help get real results. Green Communities have relatively low overhead and staff costs, and we are able to leverage funding and support. Generally this means we are able to do a lot with relatively little. It's a good selling point.
6. **... but don't undervalue yourself:** We are so keen to mount programs that we often agree to do something for nothing, or very little. This means we have trouble covering program costs. Get someone who is tough-minded to critique your budget to ensure it is realistic and makes a reasonable contribution to overhead, i.e., management, office, communications, governance, etc. (If you don't want to include "administration" in your program budget, build these costs into a healthy daily rate for program staff, like a consultant or lawyer would do. We *are* professionals, with valuable skills, and should aspire to pay ourselves accordingly.)
7. **Be aware of external factors:** Look out for new opportunities - like funding programs, requests for proposals, and hot topics in your community.
8. **Be clear:** Get your relationship in writing, including payment schedule and deliverables. Don't leave your relationship open to interpretation and misunderstanding. (See *Working in Partnership* for advice.)
9. **Recognize partners:** Be generous and creative about

recognizing partners and thanking them publicly and privately. Green Communities always get more than enough credit for delivering programs, so spread it around.

10. **... but don't give away the store:** Share credit freely, but retain *ownership*. Except in unusual circumstances, be sure the program is seen by everyone to be yours, with partners in a supportive role. Your name should go above the program name, with partners below. (An exception would be a program developed and funded 100 per cent by a municipality or utility, which you have been contracted to deliver. Then it is really *their* program and they should get top billing.)
11. **Keep in touch:** Pick up the phone, arrange for a meeting, distribute a newsletter. Show partners that their money and support makes a difference. Even if they don't ask for this communication, it shows that you value the relationship.
12. **Money isn't everything:** Never forget the importance of in-kind partner contributions, like expert advice or marketing.
13. **Work at all levels:** For larger partners such as corporations or government, decide on the appropriate point of entry. Is it senior management or elected officials to get high level buy-in? Or is it frontline staff? Often, some combination of the two works best. Similarly, there may be opportunities, working with Green Communities Canada, to pursue a partnership simultaneously at a local level and a provincial or national level. A combined bottom-up/top-down strategy is more effective than either in isolation.
14. **Be involved:** Participate in forums such as municipal and business committees to demonstrate commitment and open up space to forge new connections.
15. **Be patient:** It takes time to build strong relationships.
16. **Provide references:** When proposing a new partnership, provide access to existing and past partners. Businesses especially appreciate references from other businesses.
17. **Be transparent:** Especially with new, unfamiliar partners be open to oversight and scrutiny at all times.
18. **Apply for awards:** Exposure for programs can be achieved through a number of awards locally, nationally and even internationally. A small investment of time can lead to positive recognition for your organization and its partners.
19. **Emphasise co-benefits:** For example, job creation and community economic development benefits may be a

stronger selling point than environmental benefits for some partners. See the table in Chapter 2.

20. **Establish board connections:** Link your organization to a partner through representation on your board of directors. Some Green Communities have partner reps on their boards, including city managers, councillors, utilities staff, bankers, and other community movers and shakers. This helps to establish confidence, and nurture champions who can open doors.
21. **Make it fun:** People like to have a good time. Celebrate partnerships with special events, awards, meals, humour.

► OBSTACLES, SOLUTIONS

Here are some common challenges faced by partnerships, and suggestions for overcoming them.

1. **Never approach hat in hand:** Begging doesn't work. Focus on what you can do for a partner and be professional.
2. **Maintain continuity:** In large organizations like governments, school boards and corporations, staff turnover may sever established working relationships and endanger programs. After the new appointee has settled in, arrange a meeting to go over the history of the partnership and discuss potential new directions. New staff in your organization should also reach out to renew and personalize established relationships.
3. **Prepare for changes in the political landscape:** Past changes in government that cost us not only partnerships, but entire programs, or even core funding. Some thoughts about how to manage this threat:
 - a. **diversify revenues** - don't put all your eggs in one basket.
 - b. **arrange for longer term commitments** - get agreements in place so that partnerships don't end the day government changes (but be aware that governments often give themselves an escape clause, even in legal contracts, which make the agreement null and void as soon as the money is cut off).
 - c. **make friends with everybody** - our work has broad appeal across the political spectrum, so make friends with the opposition - some day they may be in power.
 - d. **establish solid connections with civil servants** - they are less likely to change when the government changes, and they can help keep you in the game.
4. **Take care about advocacy:** Criticizing a partner publicly

- could undermine friendly relations, which is why some Green Communities avoid public advocacy work entirely. “Don’t bite the hand that feeds you,” as one executive director put it. However, some GCs appear able to take public positions and push governments while still working with them on successful programs. Sensitivity is required.
5. **Explain your needs:** Some partners may not appreciate your financial realities, including cash flow requirements (lack of reserve funds). Educate partners about your needs. Establish a payment schedule.
 6. **Be selective:** Partnering with corporations that have poor environmental records can generate criticism and drive away support. Craft the partnership to make it clear you won’t compromise your core beliefs at any price. Or if that isn’t possible, give it a pass.
 7. **Avoid the treadmill:** Funders (though usually not community partners) have a way of demanding new, innovative programs each year rather than supporting successful existing programs. Green Communities may find themselves retooling every year. Where possible attempt to forge longer term relationships.
 8. **Maintain independence:** Occasionally, funding partners will demand a hand in program delivery. This could be positive - but it could also be meddlesome. From the start, be clear about the roles of both partners.
 9. **Develop new ideas:** Sometimes an idea is so innovative that it’s difficult to find financial support. Explore new funders and partners. Demonstrate the need.

CASE STUDIES

PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK in one community may transfer well to another. Unique partnerships in a community may spur a rethink of possible partners in another. We have compiled the following case studies to illustrate the range of what is possible, and how some very entrepreneurial Green Communities have made these partnerships work.

► GREEN TEAMS – JOBS ON THE ROCK

THE CONSERVATION CORPS of Newfoundland and Labrador (CCNL) is primarily youth-focused. CCNL’s [Green Team](#) program trains and places young interns with environmental and cultural organizations. The government of Newfoundland and Labrador employment ministry contributes \$600,000 annually.

The Green Team program, in place for 16 years, came about in response to the exodus of young people from the province for

employment opportunities. The province was looking for ways to keep young people at home and the Conservation Corps proposed the Green Team model as a solution. Today, CCNL Executive Director Terry McNeill feels the program is secure: “It would be political suicide to cut the funding with people leaving the province, and with the awareness of environmental issues.”

Other program partners include the hundreds of organizations, businesses and levels of government that have hosted interns. These include municipalities, organizations like the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and the Long Range Regional Economic Development Board. Non-profit host organizations benefit from the placement of a promising young intern and are only required to contribute 20 per cent of associated employment costs. For-profit partners may be required to cover 100 per cent of the expenses.

Most marketing is word of mouth and partners approach CCNL directly.

Success factors:

- Program reflects provincial priorities and needs.
- Offers an affordable way for organizations and municipalities to increase their capacity to deliver environmental and cultural programs, thereby increasing participation levels.
- Addresses environmental and economic concerns at the same time.

► REFRESHMENTS CANADA AND WELL AWARE

CANADA’S NON-ALCOHOLIC beverage industry trade association, [Refreshments Canada](#), had a previous relationship with [Conservation Corps of Newfoundland and Labrador](#) (CCNL), having supported one of CCNL’s Green Team projects.

In 2006, the association and its membership came under intense media scrutiny for poor water management policies.

For CCNL, this was a partnership opportunity. Executive Director Terry McNeil picked up the phone and made his pitch. Refreshments Canada jumped at the opportunity to provide \$175,000 for CCNL’s [Well Aware](#) program, which focuses on well maintenance and water conservation in the province.

Refreshments Canada chose to be a silent partner, but appreciated the potential public relations benefit should the industry find itself in the public spotlight again. CCNL benefited by being able to reach more well owners in the province through increased funding.

The major challenge to this partnership and others like it is being seen to work closely with polluters. This can discourage participation and potentially damage existing

and future partnerships. Terry McNeil explains this delicate balancing act succinctly: “We don’t compromise our beliefs for anyone no matter how much money you have. We don’t promote anyone. We just stick to the facts.” In the case of Refreshments Canada, CCNL considered the positive and negative repercussions and ultimately went ahead. This partnership is ongoing, though CCNL is exploring diversified funding. Success factors:

- Understood the delicate situation of a potential partner.
- Demonstrated that existing programs work to further a corporation’s goals.
- Made use of a past connection.

► LAKE SUPERIOR TOXICS REDUCTION

TOXIC CHEMICALS FROM across the Lake Superior basin pool in Lake Superior, with potentially devastating effects on the lake’s fragile ecosystems. In response to concerns, the governments of Canada and the United States developed the Bi-national Program to Restore and Protect the Lake Superior Basin, which included the two countries’ federal governments, state and provincial governments, and various First Nations.

Initially under the Bi-National Program, Environment Canada distributed funds for pollution prevention activities. In Thunder Bay, an individual who was awarded a contract realized that [EcoSuperior](#) was already working on these issues and handed it over to avoid duplication.

In 2004, federal funding ended and the province’s Ministry of Environment (MOE) stepped in. MOE made a three-year commitment to EcoSuperior’s work, allowing it to expand beyond Thunder Bay and work with many communities in the Basin.

Ontario was required by the international agreement to demonstrate progress on reducing toxics entering the Lake. As a stakeholder in the local Remedial Action Plan (RAP), EcoSuperior sold its existing programs as a perfect fit. In addition, the former chair of Eco Superior’s board was hired by the MOE and became the organization’s point of contact.

Participating in the RAP process kept EcoSuperior in contact with the major RAP partners, who became aware of EcoSuperior’s work. Executive Director Ellen Mortfield advises: “If you’re an organization on a Great Lake, you should be active with your RAP.”

Success factors:

- Involvement as a stakeholder in the local RAP.
- Knowledge of provincial and federal responsibilities

▪ Strong board connection with funder.

► **DRIVEWISER
– DRIVER-
FRIENDLY**

NOVA SCOTIA'S [DRIVEWISER](#) program, delivered by [Clean Nova Scotia](#), brings together partners to deliver a popular and realistic program. With public transit almost non-existent outside of major centres in Nova Scotia, DriveWiser targets drivers across the province. The goal is to encourage fuel-efficient and practical vehicle purchases, and to cultivate smart driving and vehicle maintenance habits.

DriveWiser has been in operation since 2006, funded by the provincial government agency Conserve Nova Scotia. Clean Nova Scotia successfully responded to a request for proposals at a time of rising gasoline prices to pitch DriveWiser.

Conserve Nova Scotia sees DriveWiser as one of its flagship programs, and over time has grown its role in delivery, including marketing. In 2008, Clean Nova Scotia secured Natural Resources Canada funding (ecoENERGY for Personal Vehicles) to expand the program and hire two more employees.

Clean Nova Scotia has also cultivated in-kind partnerships, beginning with an invitation to the program launch and strengthened through regular communication, meetings and a quarterly newsletter.

To reach drivers when they purchase a new vehicle, Clean Nova Scotia approached individual auto dealerships and ultimately the Nova Scotia Auto Dealers Association. Dealerships are in the business of selling vehicles; providing their customers with fuel efficient options and advice adds valuable services to a sale.

The Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) has 13 campuses across the province and offers a full time course in Motor Vehicle Repair - Mechanical. A partnership with skilled instructors has allowed Clean Nova Scotia to benefit from their years of experience. As experts they want to share their knowledge. Students training to be the next generation of mechanics will be key to normalizing the messages of DriveWiser.

One challenge with the program has been creating efficient lines of communication with government. Conserve Nova Scotia vets all program materials thoroughly, which takes time, although it also helps to ensure top quality materials. Another challenge has been connecting with partners who might be suspicious of environmental groups. Face-to-face meetings helped to get over this hurdle.

By accepting the reality of driving, Clean Nova Scotia has countered the perception that environmentalists are anti-car. A driver-friendly approach combined with strong government support and enthusiastic community partners make DriveWiser

popular and successful. In Ontario, DriveWiser inspired a similar program, EcoDriver, being delivered as a joint program by Green Communities Canada and member organizations throughout the province.

Success factors:

- Expanded partnership opportunities with a focus on driving and intelligent vehicle purchases.
- Met the needs of government to deliver innovative and measurable projects.
- Took time to develop valuable community partnerships with key stakeholders.

► ECOLOGY PARK – CROWN JEWEL

PETERBOROUGH GREEN-UP'S [Ecology Park](#) has been called “the crown jewel of Peterborough,” and for good reason. In 1992, Peterborough Green-Up began the process of transforming the under-used overflow area of City-owned Beavermead Park into a world class educational garden. Today five acres of green space support a variety of activities.

Ecology Park receives roughly equal annual funding from the City of Peterborough and Peterborough Utilities. The City also provides the land free of charge. Park programs receive additional funding from partners such as the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources, and the Peterborough Horticultural Society.

Peterborough Green-Up has diversified revenues by selling “friend” memberships for \$20 annually; many friends also volunteer countless hours in the gardens. School programs charge \$3 per student. In addition, the garden sells trees, plants, rain barrels, compost and mulch on behalf of the City of Peterborough. Plant sales are extremely popular with gardeners. Finally, during the growing season, the garden supports a small market stand where local, organic and heirloom vegetables are sold.

Partners who attend events in the Park can literally see the fruits of their support. Peterborough Utilities supports innovative and fun educational programs that help meet goals for water conservation. The City promotes the Park as a local asset, and it was featured in Peterborough's application for the Communities in Bloom award.

Success factors:

- Gained reputation with key funders by getting an award.
- Offset funding requirements through sales and a small charge per student visiting the park.
- in-kind contribution of garden space by the City

► SUSTAINABLE WORKING WITH SCHOOLS and getting through to young people

SCHOOLS – CURRICULUM LINKS

is often a challenge: teachers and administrators are busy and connecting with them can be difficult. But sustainability education is appealing to partners and it is a way of reaching the next generation of Canadians.

Peterborough Green-Up is expanding its [Sustainable Schools](#) program into secondary schools in 2008-2009. Executive Director Sue McGregor-Hunter says the recipe is simple: “Curriculum, curriculum, curriculum!” In order to work for teachers a school program must help them meet curriculum expectations, ideally in more than one subject area. For instance, a writing and math component in a water program will address expectations in science and technology, mathematics, and English.

Sustainable Schools focuses on numerous areas, including waste, energy, and transportation. Lessons are fun and engaging, in part thanks to Green-Up’s super-hero: Cool Captain Climate.

Peterborough’s two school boards have joined the program. The public board’s new staff person with responsibility for sustainability contacted Green-Up to make the connection. In the Catholic school board, the participation of individual teachers got the attention of the board director, who has become a champion. These partnerships are essential, though neither board contributes financially.

Other partners include the City of Peterborough and funders such as EcoAction and the Laidlaw Foundation. The City also provides a Peterborough Transit bus, an operator to teach students about riding the bus, advertising space on buses, and printing for student poster contests.

A major challenge is securing consistent funding. As programs grow in popularity, they must constantly change to meet new funding priorities, which can mean different programs each year.

Success factors:

- Developed a fun and engaging program for both students and teachers.
- Gave teachers what they needed through strong curriculum-linked subject areas.
- Leveraged other partners, including Peterborough Transit.
- Worked at the school and board level to expand awareness of the program.

► FOSTERING

SMALL- AND MID-SIZE business enterprises are a potential new

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

audience for Canada's Green Communities. These businesses have local roots and are more approachable than their larger counterparts.

After years of fielding calls from businesses, Green-Up decided In 2007 to develop [Fostering Sustainable Business Practices](#). The goal is to “to support businesses, organizations and institutions in their desire to improve their bottom line by developing more sustainable environmental, social and economically viable business practices.” An audit tool assists businesses to set realistic goals in areas such as waste management, sustainable commuting, energy efficiency, and purchasing. Participating businesses are commended through a certification process.

Funding a business program has been a major challenge. Funding thus far has come from the Peterborough Community Futures Development Corporation and Peterborough Distribution Inc. The long term goal is to make the program fee-for-service and sustainable.

The program has attracted numerous high-profile business partners to the steering committee, including the Chamber of Commerce, the local economic development corporation, the Women's Business Network of Peterborough, Peterborough Utilities and Trent University's Department of Business Administration. Green-Up benefits from the leadership and participation of reputable business organizations, which increases access to individual businesses. Business organizations demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and augment their reputations in the community.

Success factors:

- Recognized the desire for a business-centred program and brought together numerous partners.
- Developed unorthodox funding arrangements.
- Provided participating businesses with ways to embrace sustainability and be recognized for their efforts.

► URBAN FOREST – ASSESSING TREE HEALTH

PETERBOROUGH GREEN-UP'S [Urban Forest program](#) partners with the City of Peterborough to work with citizens to provide a thorough assessment of tree health in the city. Often cities take their trees for granted, unaware that age, disease and a high percentage of one species make the canopy vulnerable. The program commenced during the summer of 2007 with \$162,500 in funding from the Trillium Foundation.

The City had a policy that for every tree felled in the city, two should be planted; however, this policy was unevenly applied. The City needed a new, comprehensive policy and created the Urban Forest Management Policy to fill in the gaps. Green-Up's program became integral to this process by bringing people on

board and gathering the required canopy information. Neighbourhood by neighbourhood, Green-Up staff and volunteers assessed the city's trees based on 12 criteria, some putting in up to 30 hours over the whole summer.

Green-Up Executive Director Sue McGregor-Hunter says "people love trees," which makes it relatively easy to build public and municipal support. The Ontario Trillium Foundation highlighted the program at a high profile provincial summit.

Success factors:

- Won the support of the City of Peterborough by addressing existing policies that were not being followed completely.
- Integrated the program into a new City strategy.
- Engaged citizens and leveraged significant volunteer contributions.

► GEORGINA ISLAND FIRST NATION

SINCE 2001, THE [WINDFALL ECOLOGY CENTRE](#) has cultivated a unique relationship with the Chippewas of Georgina Island in Lake Simcoe. This small First Nation reserve of 82 homes has worked closely with Windfall to improve home energy efficiency and build a future based on renewable wind power.

The partnership began when the Chippewas approached Windfall directly through Executive Director Brent Kopperson. In 2006, the partnership blossomed when the Ontario Power Authority and Hydro One funded a project to retrofit homes throughout the community. Homes on the island reserve are electrically heated and families stood to reap major savings.

Windfall is now working with the Chippewas of Georgina Island on an ambitious project to harness the winds that blow over the island. The 20 megawatt Pukwis Wind Park will take advantage of government support for community power generation. The community is making a major investment in this project.

In developing this partnership, Windfall faced the danger that it would be seen as an outsider. This can happen with any small community, but particularly with First Nations, given their history. Windfall encouraged the Chippewas to help develop programs in the formative stages. Windfall was also very clear about what it could and could not provide, helping to manage another challenge: expectations.

Working with First Nations is an opportunity for Green Communities. First Nations understand the ecological crisis and are open to behaviour change; they can benefit economically from programs like energy efficiency and renewables development. Green Communities like Windfall can in turn learn from First Nations that are concerned about the survival of their land base.

Success factors:

- Was clear and transparent about project goals and objectives.
- Demonstrated what could be achieved to sceptical community members.
- Helped to connect with a community-based power initiative of the Government of Ontario.
- Included the whole community from the outset.

► AFFORDABLE WARMTH BC

[AFFORDABLE WARMTH BC](#) (AWBC) provides home energy assessments, advice, and retrofits for clients in subsidized housing. The program, developed and delivered by Victoria-based City Green, benefits residents by reducing utility bills and improving home comfort. It also benefits municipal housing authorities and cooperative housing associations that lack resources to assess and upgrade their housing stock. City Green provides professional energy audits and locates funding to cover the costs of audits and retrofits, bringing together multiple partners.

Affordable Warmth BC draws on diverse partners, including Environment Canada (EcoAction) and Vancouver City Savings Credit Union (VanCity). Potential future funding may include BC Hydro and LiveSmart BC, a program of the provincial energy ministry. The Whistler Housing Authority, the Cooperative Housing Federation of BC, and the BC Non-profit Housing Association facilitate City Green's access to low-income households.

City Green has cultivated relationships with housing organizations over a number of years, enabling it to build a provincial program, reach more British Columbians, and access more funding.

Capacity limitations of housing providers are a challenge. Often these organizations have limited resources to work with programs such as Affordable Warmth BC. Securing funding for retrofits to housing stock is another challenge. Finally, getting the balance right between tenant and landlord actions is essential: the onus should not be entirely on one party to act.

As awareness of the links between poverty, energy efficiency and climate change continue to grow City Green is well positioned to continue to develop innovative programs like Affordable Warmth BC.

Success factors:

- Cultivated strong in-kind partnerships with influential groups to connect with the right clients.
- Leveraged a number of funding partners for this project.

► ECOHOUSE ~
DEMONSTRATING
SUSTAINABILITY

- Addressed environmental concerns and poverty reduction in one program.

GREEN VENTURE'S [ECOHOUSE](#) serves two functions: it houses the offices of this Hamilton Green Community organization and serves as a demonstration site for many of Green Venture's programs. EcoHouse provides a model of what visitors can aspire to in their own homes and offices.

The City of Hamilton owns the two-acre property, donated by the previous owner, and leases it to Green Venture for \$1 a year. Green Venture maintains the site, making the symbolic payment work for both parties. In addition, EcoHouse serves as a practical demonstration of City-funded programs, including Waste Watch and Wise Water Use. The grounds also demonstrate pesticide-free gardening, which is encouraged by the City.

EcoHouse hosts meetings, wedding receptions, photo shoots and other events drawing in new visitors each year. In 2008, EcoHouse welcomed 6,500 visitors, many of them young people who came to experience Green Venture's curriculum-linked educational programs.

Building on these impressive numbers and EcoHouse's reputation, Green Venture has forged a new relationship with the local Catholic school board: in 2008-09, all grade two and three students in the board will visit EcoHouse as part of a Ministry-funded pilot. This relationship developed because one young student was so impressed by his EcoHouse visit that he brought along his father, who happened to be an administrator at the board. This partnership will generate \$3 per student to support programs at EcoHouse.

The tangible nature of EcoHouse helps to develop partnerships. When partners can physically see the result of their partnership - donated fruit trees or solar panels for instance - they are impressed. EcoHouse Manager Michael Gemmel notes: "EcoHouse is the crown jewel of Green Venture. The key is to maximize visibility for your partners."

One challenge is to constantly remind key partners of the value of EcoHouse. Another challenge is to maintain partnerships and draw in visitors by adding new elements. In 2008, funded by the Ministry of Environment, Green Venture installed solar panels and a wind turbine at EcoHouse, and developed an ambitious long-term plan.

Success factors:

- Helped the city find a use for an underused property through a major in-kind donation.
- Worked with a school board to develop a curriculum-linked program to meet board needs and provide steady funding.

► THE NAKED TRUTH ABOUT LAKE SIMCOE

- Became a destination for Hamiltonians concerned about their impact on the environment.

AS DEVELOPMENT HAS encroached on Lake Simcoe, residents have become increasingly concerned. The Lake's delicate ecosystems are in trouble. A group of women known as the Ladies of the Lake took action and became a primary partner of the Windfall Ecology Centre.

This [partnership](#) was forged because one of the Ladies of the Lake was the chair of Windfall's Board of Directors.

The Ladies of the Lake are adept at advocacy, marketing and public relations. They also are consummate fundraisers. Windfall is seen as an impartial, science-based organization. In 2006, the partners produced a comprehensive report on the health of Lake Simcoe entitled *The Naked Truth*. This document provided scientific data, community input and a wealth of potential solutions to the problems with the Lake. It became the basis of popular workshops and community meetings throughout the watershed.

During the summer of 2008, Windfall in partnership with the Ladies of the Lake secured funding from Ontario Stewardship the Lake Simcoe Stewardship Rangers. These student interns were tasked with specific remediation goals such as building bird boxes and removing invasive species. In addition, they organized community meetings to include more residents in protecting the Lake.

Windfall believes advocacy and community organizing are important tools if used appropriately. Working with the Ladies of the Lake has not hampered Windfall's partnership with Ontario Stewardship, an arm of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Windfall's partnership with the Ladies of the Lake has successfully engaged the public in developing a Lake Simcoe action plan with clear measurable goals. It has expanded the profile of both organizations.

Success factors:

- Cultivated a strong relationship through a board connection between the two groups.
- Lake Simcoe Stewardship Rangers met the goals of the partners and drew on the skills of each.
- Tapped into the growing level of concern of residents about the health of Lake Simcoe.

► WELL AWARE IN SOUTH-WESTERN

[WELL AWARE](#) IS A program developed by Green Communities

ONTARIO Canada and funded by the Ontario Ministry of Environment that promotes safe and responsible well stewardship by private well owners. The [Elora Centre for Environmental Excellence](#) (ECEE) delivers Well Aware across south-western Ontario, establishing revenue-based partnerships with municipalities and regional governments.

The Elora Centre approaches municipalities with the attitude that it is offering an essential service. The Centre's Lynda Bausinger advises: "Never approach a municipality with your hat in hand," which simply doesn't work. Instead, demonstrate what you can do for the municipality with a relatively small investment and in-kind contributions.

The Elora Centre researches each municipality thoroughly before approaching staff. Eventually, the Centre delivers a professional presentation to councillors to explain the program and its benefits.

Expectations are outlined clearly. Municipal partners are expected to contribute at least \$10,000 in addition to providing access to residents through marketing tools such as tax bill notices and newsletters. In return, municipalities receive a proven effective program with the message: "Your well is your responsibility." By providing rural residents with the knowledge and skills to manage their wells, Well Aware cuts down on expensive infrastructure investments for municipalities when things go wrong.

Elora Centre also works with Conservation Authorities and public health units, increasing the value to municipalities and lending more credibility in the eyes of well owners. These partners rarely provide funding but can offer venues for meetings, subsidized fees for trade shows, advertising and website links.

By proposing and delivering a professional product, the Elora Centre is able to achieve its goal of delivering Well Aware to a new municipality every year.

Success factors:

- Approached new municipalities with Well Aware as a professional program that cannot be delivered without financial support.
- Leveraged municipal funds to support a provincially funded program.
- Sold the program as a cost saving for municipalities.

► **MANITOBA** [RESOURCE CONSERVATION MANITOBA](#) (RCM) has developed a

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

comprehensive a set of sustainable transportation programs, including Commuter Challenge, Manitoba Student Transportation Network, Active and Safe Routes to School, and Green Commute. Thanks to a strong partnership with the province's energy ministry, RCM is able to offer this mutually supportive suite of programs.

Shortly after the 1999 provincial election, RCM met with the ministry and explained that funding was inadequate to achieve significant behaviour change. The Minister, who had experience in the non-profit sector, agreed. In 2003, a funding agreement was created to provide \$100,000 a year over three years, which has been renewed once.

The partnership is rewarding for both parties. Ministers come out in support of RCM's transportation events. The province is recognized on all print materials.

A major challenge is reliance on a single funding partner: currently 73 per cent of the organization's revenues come from the Province. RCM is exploring ways to diversify funding and partnerships. One option for transportation programs is to work with Manitoba Public Insurance, which insures automobiles in the province.

Another challenge has been the level of oversight that comes with a strong funding partnership. For instance, the Province requires photocopies of all expense receipts, a heavy administrative burden.

In RCM's experience with government partners, it is essential to work out a clear schedule of payments. Governments may not understand that non-profits lack funds to cover shortfalls. One year, RCM floated a program for 11 months before receiving any funding, and then only 80 per cent arrived.

A new program, Community-Based Travel Marketing, funded by the Province and Transport Canada, focuses on working with families in a specific neighbourhood to develop sustainable travel plans.

Success factors:

- Recognized provincial desire to combat climate change and presented programs as a piece of the puzzle.
- Secured long-term funding, which enabled the growth of RCM's sustainable transportation programs.
- Expanded funding partners to include Transport Canada, which has opened up a new program area.
- Board and staff met the Minister in person to make their case.