



STRATEGIC  
PLAN

**Green**   
**Communities**  
CANADA

2022 - 2026

# Acknowledging, Honouring, Acting.

Green Communities Canada acknowledges the treaty and traditional territories of Indigenous Nations throughout Canada.

We are grateful for the continued work of many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples who are the original caretakers of the Land and Waters.

In our work, we have a responsibility and a desire to respect Indigenous perspectives and elevate Indigenous voices.

As Treaty People, we will acknowledge our histories, honour our commitments and sovereignty, and do our best to care for each other and for all of creation.



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# INTRODUCTION

Sustainable and climate-ready communities are needed.

## **We know this need is urgent.**

At Green Communities Canada (GCC), our work moves beyond the question **'why'** and focuses on collaborative solutions to the challenge of **'how'**.

**GCC is leading a community-based climate action movement**, working together with our members from across the country to advance transformative, equitable, and lasting change.

As a membership-based organization, our goal is to support and sustain grassroots-led action through leadership, connection, training, and funding. GCC is celebrating more than 25 years of collective impact, and as we look toward the next decade, we do so recognizing how pivotal this time is for the future of humanity and the planet.



Shannon Costigan  
Chair, Board of Directors

Over the next five years, our aspirational strategic plan will guide our work as an organization, directly impacting our membership and rippling outward into the communities that they, and we, belong to.

Between 2022 and 2026, GCC will not only grow and diversify our membership, but will broaden the funding, resource-sharing, training, and backbone supports we provide to our members, because we know investments in community are essential to deepening their impact and ours.

Fundamentally, we believe our model, which honours, mobilizes, and builds the knowledge and capacity found within communities, is and should be rooted in an environmental justice framework. We understand the climate crisis is also a crisis of inequity and disparity. Through this plan, we are recommitting to a path that is inclusive, humble, and contributes to reconciliation through action.



Brianna Salmon  
Executive Director

# MISSION

We connect community-based climate action groups through a national network to share resources, co-create innovative programs, and elevate our collective impact.

# CORE VALUES

## Appreciative

Deeply appreciative of this planet and the living systems that sustain all those that call it home.

## Community-Based

Driven to pursue community-based solutions and to support the people and organizations acting locally.

## Humble

Open, humble, and always learning from others and from the land in this complex and dynamic world.

## Collaborative

Creative and collaborative in our approach, recognizing the strength to be found in diverse experiences.

## Inclusive

Determined to be inclusive and to take active steps toward supporting greater equity in our work and in the sector.

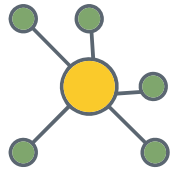
## Accountable

Committed to evidence-based decisions, transparency, and dialogue, ensuring accountability is centered in our approach.

# VISION

**Communities working together for a vibrant, equitable, and sustainable future.**

## NETWORK



**GCC is a network of members who are advancing local climate action.**

### Why do we do this?

The scale and complexity of the climate crisis requires that we work together. Community-based action is vital, but local organizations are stronger when they can share resources, knowledge, and a sense of purpose.

### How do we do this?

We provide valuable resources, collaborative opportunities, and a sense of community for our members. We bring change-makers together to learn, share, and grow.

## IMPACT MODEL

As a network, funder, backbone, and innovator, our goal is to broaden and deepen our collective impact. Transformative change to address the climate crisis requires collaborative, impactful, and sustained action across all levels of society - the need and potential for GCC to propel communities toward a just and resilient future has never been greater.



## FUNDER

**GCC is a funder that enables critical programming in local communities.**

### Why do we do this?

Investments in community-based climate action are currently insufficient to build or maintain the capacity required for transformative change. We have identified a critical need for additional funding at the local level to resource the people on the ground.

### How do we do this?

GCC works collaboratively with members to secure grant funds. We also work with governments and foundations to deliver strategic funding programs.

## We CONNECT

By growing partnerships and establishing common goals, we are better allies and advocates.



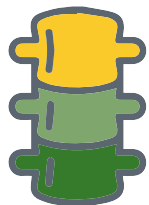
## We SHARE

By sharing resources and investing in each other, we increase our capacity for impact.



## We CREATE

By working together openly and transparently, our voices and actions are more inclusive.



# BACKBONE

**GCC is a high-capacity organization that provides backbone supports to members.**

### Why do we do this?

Developing the systems, tools, and capacity required to effectively implement local programming can be difficult. Facilitating shared programs and services reduces duplication, streamlines administration, and reduces barriers to entry for local grassroots community organizations.

### How do we do this?

Building upon our strong reputation, we offer the expertise, training services, delivery scaffolding, and evaluation supports needed to achieve collective impact.



# INNOVATOR

**GCC is a diverse and creative team that innovates to achieve greater impact.**

### Why do we do this?

Designing, evaluating, and scaling up our work is best done in collaboration. Piloting new ideas, refining our approach, and expanding successful program models allow us to evolve our shared programming to address diverse needs and achieve the greatest impact.

### How do we do this?

We learn from our members, identify critical opportunities, test new ideas, and work across sectors to offer a strategic response to emerging issues.



# CLIMATE ACTION IN FOCUS

In Canada, household energy use and transportation are the two biggest sources of GHG emissions.

**GCC's programs target those high emitting sources, offering supports that enable our members to mitigate emissions in their communities.** GCC has extensive experience and expertise in residential energy efficiency. We designed the first homeowner energy retrofit incentive program in Canada and are the longest operating EnerGuide Service Delivery Organization in Canada. GCC has also led active transportation programming for over two decades, championing Canada Walks and Active School Travel Canada coalitions, and more recently, launching the Ontario Active School Travel Fund in partnership with the Government of Ontario.

**Many communities are already experiencing the impacts of climate change. GCC's programs address key risks, reduce local vulnerabilities, and help cities to adapt.** Our green infrastructure projects, such as Depave Paradise, give communities the training and resources needed to transform impermeable and underutilized sites into naturalized spaces that reduce flooding and provide social and ecological benefits. Living Cities Canada addresses barriers to green infrastructure at the policy-level, providing communities with the research and peer-leadership needed to collectively and strategically implement it.

# STRATEGIC GOALS

As an organization, we are committed to advancing the *Truth and Reconciliation Committee: Calls to Action*. This calls upon organizations to adopt the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policies and core operational activities.

Through our strategic goals, we commit to reconciliation not as a single objective but as an ongoing process in which we are invested. Our actions and approach will respect Indigenous rights, jurisdiction, and perspectives, and as we move forward, we will work to build stronger and more caring relationships.

GCC also commits to accountability around our progress. We will publish an Annual Report that includes key indicators related to our Strategic Goals. We will identify where we are succeeding, where we are encountering challenges, and how we are adapting and growing.





# GOAL ONE



## Strengthen Our Vibrant Collective

GCC is a growing national network that connects community-based non-profit climate action groups from across the country. GCC empowers and amplifies the work of our members through relationship building, knowledge and resource sharing, and collective advocacy.

## MEASURES of SUCCESS



## STRATEGIC APPROACH

### RESPECTED VOICE

**Our contributions and expertise are sought after by decision-makers, effecting policy change at all levels.**

To achieve this by 2026, we will:

- Support our members' advocacy efforts at the local, municipal level
- Lead collaborative advocacy efforts at the provincial and federal level
- Strengthen relationships with key elected representatives through personal communication

### EXPANDED NETWORK

**Our network is larger and more representative, bringing together groups from diverse communities and geographies.**

To achieve this by 2026, we will:

- Increase our membership outside of Ontario
- Engage with groups representing BIPOC communities, building mutually supportive relationships
- Actively strengthen our relationships with Indigenous-led organizations, uplifting their voices and supporting their work

### EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

**Our member forums, online tools, and strong interpersonal relationships enable productive and responsive collaboration.**

To achieve this by 2026, we will:

- Organize consistent opportunities for members to gather, share, learn, and work together
- Build our online resource library and collaboration tools, responding to member priorities and feedback
- Commit to ongoing improvement guided by member feedback and structured evaluation

### IMPACTFUL STORY-TELLING

**Our collective impact is effectively measured and broadly communicated through compelling publications.**

To achieve this by 2026, we will:

- Establish metrics and data collection tools to measure what matters
- Publish annual reports that aggregate community-based metrics, building a national narrative
- Strengthen our online presence through strategic investments in our website and social media
- Offer as much content as possible in both French and English

# GOAL TWO

## Accelerate Transformative Climate Solutions

GCC provides strong national leadership to help communities take meaningful local action to address the climate crisis. GCC's programs and services are evidence- and member-informed, providing the supports necessary to accelerate grassroots solutions.

## MEASURES of SUCCESS



## STRATEGIC APPROACH

### EXPANDED SUPPORTS

**Our member services and programs support a growing network and strengthen the capacity of local communities.**

To achieve this by 2026, we will:

- Engage our members in the participatory evaluation of services and programs
- Evolve supports to meet emergent needs and expand impact
- Actively identify opportunities for training, resource sharing, and other backbone supports
- Strengthen our technological capacity to efficiently deliver services to a broader membership

### INCREASED INVESTMENT

**Our funding and joint-delivery programs provide an effective conduit for national investments in local climate action initiatives.**

To achieve this by 2026, we will:

- Prioritize larger, national funding opportunities that support broad member participation
- Work to secure funding that sustains core capacity and supports cross-cutting initiatives
- Broaden the benefit of community funding by supporting collaboratives that include members and their local partners

### COLLECTIVE INNOVATION

**Our members and partners actively participate in the co-creation of programs and proposals, ensuring our work remains grounded in community.**

To achieve this by 2026, we will:

- Facilitate regular discussions with our membership to establish and confirm development priorities
- Collaborate with Indigenous-led organizations and equity-seeking groups to identify opportunities for mutual benefit
- Partner with members in the creation and submission of proposals as opportunities arise

### SCALED-UP IMPACT

**Our pilot and scale-up projects advance innovation and establish replicable models and tools for diverse communities.**

To achieve this by 2026, we will:

- Identify and leverage opportunities to pilot and expand successful program delivery models
- Cultivate the internal and network capacity needed to provide the expert and peer-to-peer support needed for scale-up
- Expand participation in scale-up projects beyond our network to grow our membership and include new partners and perspectives

# GOAL THREE



## Build Organizational Resilience & Equity

GCC is a resilient organization with the financial, cultural, and structural assets needed to support a strong and diverse staff, membership, and board. GCC demonstrates an ongoing commitment to reconciliation, anti-oppression, and environmental justice.

## MEASURES of SUCCESS



## STRATEGIC APPROACH

### EQUITABLE APPROACH

**Our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is emphasized in our approach, structures, and interactions at all levels.**

To achieve this by 2026, we will:

- Engage our staff and board in the co-design of an EDI framework
- Review all organizational policies through an equity lens
- Refine our recruitment, hiring, and retention approaches to create a welcoming and inclusive environment
- Engage in dialogue with our members to ensure we grow together

### ENGAGED GOVERNANCE

**Our members, board, and staff contribute in accountable and collaborative ways to good governance.**

To achieve this by 2026, we will:

- Commit to decolonization through institutional change, creating space for Indigenous rights and perspectives
- Update our core governance documents to reflect best-practices anti-oppressive approaches
- Explore new governance models and structures to deepen relationships between the members, board, and staff

### DIVERSIFIED FUNDING

**Our organization maintains stable and diverse funding, enabling us to make long-term investments in our staff, membership, and organization.**

To achieve this by 2026, we will:

- Invest in fundraising capacity and establish relationships with new funders and major donors
- Maintain strong relationships with foundations and government partners and grow our staff capacity to write grants
- Build our financial reserves to ensure long-term viability

### EXCEPTIONAL EMPLOYER

**Our staff are compensated fairly and have a work culture that embeds reconciliation practices, honours diversity, and allows for growth and joy.**

To achieve this by 2026, we will:

- Continue paying living wage or better
- Fairly compensate everyone who supports us as we learn
- Maintain the 50/30 diversity targets
- Invest in staff growth through personalized development plans
- Formalize participatory processes to engage staff in decision-making
- Strengthen HR policies to ensure they provide clear guidance and reflect our organizational values

# Green Communities CANADA

## MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS



envirocentre



London Environmental Network



ecosuperior



RIDEAU ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION LEAGUE



CityGreen



HALTON ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK



Saskatchewan Environmental Society



Toronto Green Community



ecosource



Oakvillegreen



ENvironment network



ALLIANCE DU BASSIN VERSANT  
PETITCODIAC  
WATERSHED ALLIANCE

GCC's work is made possible thanks to our committed staff and Board of Directors.  
To learn more about our people and our work, visit

[greencommunitiescanada.org](http://greencommunitiescanada.org)