




2025

Impact Report



 London, ON

Letter from *Program Manager* Jenn McCallum

Hello and thank you for supporting the
Living Cities Canada Fund in 2025!



Photo Credits: Michael Banh

We have had a year of many successes within the green infrastructure department at Green Communities Canada. Our goal is that green infrastructure be abundant, equitable, and thriving across Canada, and our 2025 initiatives have furthered these targets substantially. Thanks to **Definity Insurance** for their continued support towards our programs.

This year, we launched a new stream of the Living Cities Canada Fund. **Thriving Microgrants** address a critical funding gap by supporting the maintenance of existing green infrastructure. In 2025, Thriving Microgrants supported 12 partner organizations with up to \$5,000 in funding to maintain existing green infrastructure sites. These projects included fencing to prevent herbivory, re-planting where losses occurred, and improving watering infrastructure.

We reignited the **Mobilize Stream**, thanks to funding from the **Federation of Canadian Municipalities**. **Leading Living Cities** has involved municipalities, Indigenous governments, and environmental nonprofit partners. Fifteen participants representing these three groups participated in our cohort meetings and took our **bilingual course**. Participants examined existing green infrastructure policies and identified where new policies or targets can support green infrastructure.

Our **Demonstrate Stream** **supported 25 green infrastructure projects across Canada, with up to \$15,000 in funding each.**

Ten of the 25 Demonstrate projects were **co-funded by Trees for Life**, and supported food forests, mini forests, and tree planting initiatives across the country. Eight projects were supported thanks to a new **partnership with RBC**, something we're excited to expand in 2026.

This year, we also engaged in three research initiatives. In partnership with **Vineland Research and Innovation**, **we've been studying soil health before and after mini forest installations**. We partnered with an independent researcher to investigate urban heat inside and outside mini forests in Milton, ON. Thirdly, with Dr. Tahia Devisscher and her team from the **University of British Columbia** we studied the benefits and challenges of mini forest installations across Canada. The final report, **Seeds of Change: Cultivating Mini Forests Across Canada**, is available in English and in French.

We hosted the inaugural **Voices for Action** webinar, Growing the Mini Forest Movement in Canada, and we also hosted a second webinar about the Many Mini Solutions Urban Communities Need. We sponsored a film screening of Making a Mini Forest in Oshawa, ON where we were part of a panel discussion following the film. We also co-presented to the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects as part of their **landADAPT webinar series**. We are thrilled that the mini forest movement continues to grow across Canada, and we are pleased to provide our **free online course** to interested organizations and individuals.

Thanks again for your support, and we are excited to update you as our 2026 programming develops!






2025 Impact *At A Glance*

The **Living Cities Canada Fund** is a program of Green Communities Canada (GCC). The Fund provides local partner organizations (local and regional environmental non-profits, municipalities, conservation authorities, and First Nation governments) across the country with training, funding, and logistical support to engage their community, build public understanding, advance local policy, and implement equity-embedded urban green infrastructure projects where they are needed most.

At the heart of our work is an understanding of the intersections between environmental and social inequity - and a commitment to ensuring our projects are carried out with leadership from, and within, the communities most impacted by the climate crises.

The **Living Cities Canada Fund** has four streams that offer different levels of funding and structured processes to support organizations to implement green infrastructure in their communities.

<p>We supported</p> <p>60+ </p> <p>Green Infrastructure Project Sites</p>	<p>These projects transformed over</p> <p>33,000m²</p> <p>of urban land </p>	<p>These projects took place in </p> <p>25 different communities across 8 provinces</p>
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In 2025, we planted more than

12,100 plants

including **4,467** urban trees 

These projects engaged over

4,100  volunteers

&

2,400  youth volunteers

Project Type Breakdown

	Mini Forests	13
	Maintenance	12
	Tree Plantings	3
	Community Gardens	2
	Food Forests	2
	Depaves	2
	Pollinator Plantings	2
	Rain Gardens	1



2025 Projects

By Project Type

Mini Forests Densely planted urban plots, designed to mimic a natural forest ecosystem.

Calgary Climate Hub | Calgary, AB
Carleton University | Ottawa, ON
City of Richmond and Garden City Conservation Society | Richmond, BC
City of St Thomas | St. Thomas, ON
City of Welland | Welland, ON
Craig Kielburger School | Milton, ON
Eastview Public School | Toronto, ON
EnviroCentre | Ottawa, ON
Fundy Biosphere | Moncton, NB
Langley Environmental Partners Society | Langley, BC
London Environment Network | London, ON
REVE Nourricier | Sherbrooke, QC
Toronto Green Community | Toronto, ON

Maintenance Volunteer-led maintenance, including weeding, pruning and replanting on existing GI sites.

ACAP SJ | Saint John, NB **2 sites**
Black Environmental Initiative | Toronto, ON
EcoSuperior | Thunder Bay, ON
Forêt Capitale Forest | Ottawa, ON **5 sites**
Green Venture | Hamilton, ON **11 sites**
Les Colonnes Housing Coop | Montreal, QC
Oakvillegreen | Oakville, ON
Petitcodiac Watershed Alliance | Moncton, NB **7 sites**
Saskatchewan Environmental Society | Saskatoon, SK
Spence Neighbourhood Association | Winnipeg, MB
Sustainable Waterloo Region | Waterloo, ON **3 sites**
Walter Murray Collegiate | Saskatoon, SK

Depave removing pavement and replacing it with permeable surfaces to restore natural land.

Conseil régional de l'environnement de l'Estrie (CREE) | Sherbrooke, QC
GRAME | Montreal, QC

Tree Planting Transplanting tree seedlings to restore or create forests.

Buena Vista Garden Collective | Saskatoon, SK
GreenUP | Peterborough, ON
LEAF | Toronto, ON

Pollinator Plantings Planting native species that support bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.

Ecosource | Mississauga, ON
Sundance Commons | Toronto, ON

Food Security Projects where volunteers grow, produce, or support access to food.

Community Gardens:
Teulon & District Métis Association | Teulon, MB
Stewardship Pemberton | Pemberton, BC

Rain Gardens Collect and filter stormwater from hard surfaces like roofs, driveways, and sidewalks.

Bluenose Coastal Action | Mahone Bay, NS

Food Forests:
Halton Environmental Network | Halton, ON
Wolseley Residents Association, Trees Committee | Winnipeg, MB



LIVING 2025 Project

CITIES *Impacts*

Canada | Fund

33,200m² combined site size

4,100 volunteers

60% youth volunteers

4,470 trees planted

12,100 plants



LIVING **Thriving Microgrant** CITIES *Stream* Canada | Fund

The Thriving Microgrant Stream fills a key gap in the sector by providing small-scale grants of up to \$5,000 to community-based organizations across Canada to support volunteer-led monitoring, maintenance, and stewardship of existing green infrastructure projects so that these sites continue to function well and thrive over time. In 2025, this stream supported 12 partner organizations, enabling stewardship activities at 35 green infrastructure sites.

2025 Thriving Microgrant Stream Participants

- ACAP SJ** | Saint John, NB • 120 m² • 138 plants • 36 Volunteers *2 sites*
- Black Environmental Initiative** | Toronto, ON • 50 m² • 130 plants • 153 Volunteers
- EcoSuperior** | Thunder Bay, ON • 600 m² • 6 plants • 20 Volunteers
- Forêt Capitale Forest** | Ottawa, ON • 608 m² • 30 Volunteers *5 sites*
- Green Venture** | Hamilton, ON • 2,017 m² • 66 plants • 506 Volunteers *11 sites*
- Les Colonnes Housing Coop** | Montreal, QC • 9.7 m² • 36 plants • 17 Volunteers
- Oakvillegreen** | Oakville, ON • 21,500 m² • 755 plants • 321 Volunteers
- Petitcodiac Watershed Alliance** | Moncton, NB • 536.5 m² • 310 plants • 42 Volunteers *7 sites*
- Saskatchewan Environmental Society** | Saskatoon, SK • 235 m² • 100 plants • 4 Volunteers
- Spence Neighbourhood Association** | Winnipeg, MB • 991 m² • 21 plants • 60 Volunteers
- Sustainable Waterloo Region** | Waterloo, ON • 1,600 m² • 50 plants • 12 Volunteers *3 sites*
- Walter Murray Collegiate** | Saskatoon, SK • 235 m² • 102 plants • 63 Volunteers





LIVING CITIES 2025 Project Highlights

Central Natural Environment Gardens

EcoSuperior • Thunder Bay, ON • 600 m² • 6 plants • 20 volunteers

EcoSuperior conducted essential maintenance at Central Natural Environment Gardens, including weeding, pruning, shrub replacement, and installing deer protection for cedar trees. Five volunteer events engaged 20 community members and were complemented by workshops and a preschool nature program that deepened community connection to the site.



Hamilton Urban Depave and Demonstrate Sites

Green Venture • Hamilton, ON • 2,017 m² • 66 plants • 506 volunteers

Green Venture supported the ongoing stewardship and maintenance of 11 urban depave and demonstration garden sites across Hamilton's lower city. Through approximately 37 stewardship sessions, volunteers and community partners carried out invasive species removal, replanting, mulching, seed sowing, litter clean-up, and site restoration at sites established between 2017 and 2024.



Waterloo Region

Sustainable Waterloo Region • Waterloo, ON • 1,600 m² • 50 plants • 12 volunteers

Sustainable Waterloo Region completed targeted maintenance at three microforest sites totaling 1,600 m², including replanting 50 trees and shrubs, invasive species removal, mulching, pruning, and site clean-up. Four maintenance sessions engaged volunteers, students, and partners, while addressing vandalism and other maintenance challenges. The microgrant strengthened long-term stewardship planning for over 50 regional microforests.





Project *Spotlight*

Maloca Community Garden Black Environmental Initiative Toronto, ON

The **Black Environmental Initiative** (BEI) maintained the Maloca Community Garden at York University through 16 community-led maintenance sessions that combined urban agriculture, stewardship training, and youth engagement. Through its Roots for Resilience program, BEI engaged more than 170 Black and Brown youth in hands-on activities including weeding, mulching, watering, pruning, and food cultivation.

A diverse mix of crops including tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, cucumbers, squash, and carrots were grown alongside companion plants such as marigolds and nasturtiums, arranged in straight and spiral mound designs to support soil health and ecological balance.

Workshops on food preservation, ecotherapy, and medicinal plants further deepened participants' understanding of sustainable land care and cultural relationships to food systems.

The project also addressed persistent maintenance challenges, particularly invasive bindweed and extreme weather events such as heatwaves and storms.

Through consistent stewardship and proactive planning, BEI is sustaining site productivity while strengthening community ownership and long-term care of the garden. The microgrant reinforced the importance of shared stewardship in ensuring the vitality and resilience of urban green infrastructure.

Project Impact

130
plants

50
m² site size

153
volunteers



Through the **Mobilize Stream** of the Living Cities Canada Fund, we delivered the 2025 **Leading Living Cities (LLC)** Training Program. Delivered bilingually and co-led by the **Centre d'écologie urbaine**, the program brought together municipalities, Indigenous governments, and community partners from across Canada to advance equitable green infrastructure planning.

As part of this cohort, participants applied Green Communities Canada's Pathways to Living Cities Framework to:

- evaluate existing local green infrastructure policies and programs;
- set strategic short-, medium-, and long-term goals toward becoming a Living City; and
- develop locally tailored policy pathways to guide implementation.

Participants received planning templates and resources, climate equity mapping support through **HealthyPlan.City**, facilitated training and peer-learning opportunities, and access to GCC's **Mobilize Your Living City** asynchronous online course.

2025 Leading Living Cities Training Cohort Participants

Municipalities

- Halifax Regional Municipality** | Nova Scotia
- City of Peterborough** | Ontario
- City of Guelph** | Ontario
- Town of Lincoln** | Ontario
- Ville de Sainte-Brigitte-de-Laval** | Québec
- Ville de Marieville** | Québec
- Ville de Baie-D'Urfé** | Québec

Indigenous governments

- Otipemisiwak Métis Government** | Alberta
- Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke** | Québec

Local ENGOS

- Coastal Action** | Nova Scotia
- GreenUP** | Ontario
- Reep Green Solutions** | Ontario
- Land Care Niagara** | Ontario
- l'Organisme de bassins versants Charlevoix-Montmorency (OBVCM)** | Québec
- Conseil régional de l'environnement de la Montérégie (CRE Montérégie)** | Québec
- Groupe de recommandations et d'actions pour un meilleur environnement (Le GRAME)** | Québec

This project was carried out with funding from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Green Municipal Fund and the Government of Canada.



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Our **Demonstrate Stream** supported 25 on-the-ground green infrastructure projects across Canada, with up to \$15,000 in funding each. Ten of the 25 Demonstrate projects were **co-funded by Trees for Life**, and supported food forests, mini forests, and tree planting initiatives across the country.

2025 Demonstrate Stream Participants

- Bluenose Coastal Action** | Mahone Bay, NS • 100 m² • 141 plants • 71 Volunteers
- Buena Vista Garden Collective** | Saskatoon, SK • 100 m² • 13 plants • 190 Volunteers
- Calgary Climate Hub** | Calgary, AB • 200 m² • 775 plants • 79 Volunteers
- Carleton University** | Ottawa, ON • 200 m² • 600 plants • 40 Volunteers
- City of Richmond & Garden City Conservation Society** | Richmond, BC • 200 m² • 476 plants • 30 Volunteers
- City of St Thomas** | St. Thomas, ON • 100 m² • 400 plants • 55 Volunteers
- City of Welland** | Welland, ON • 1,100 m² • 1700 plants • 79 Volunteers
- Conseil régional de l'environnement de l'Estrie (CREE)** | Sherbrooke, QC • 100 m² • 172 plants • 260 Volunteers
- Craig Kielburger School** | Milton, ON • 250 m² • 600 plants • 500 Volunteers
- Eastview Public School** | Toronto, ON • 100 m² • Planting in 2026
- Ecosource** | Mississauga, ON • 100 m² • 356 plants • 27 Volunteers
- EnviroCentre** | Ottawa, ON • 200 m² • 600 plants • 20 Volunteers
- Fundy Biosphere** | Moncton, NB • 250 m² • 850 plants • 25 Volunteers
- GRAME** | Montreal, QC • 100 m² • 174 plants • 108 Volunteers
- GreenUP** | Peterborough, ON • 200 m² • 352 plants • 544 Volunteers
- Halton Environmental Network** | Halton, ON • 100 m² • 150 plants • 82 Volunteers
- Langley Environmental Partners Society** | Langley, BC • 100 m² • 288 plants • 60 Volunteers
- LEAF** | Toronto, ON • 100 m² • 356 plants • 239 Volunteers
- London Environment Network** | London, ON • 100 m² • 290 plants • 34 Volunteers
- REVE Nourricier** | Sherbrooke, QC • 150 m² • 330 plants • 40 Volunteers
- Stewardship Pemberton** | Pemberton, BC • 100 m² • 173 Volunteers
- Sundance Commons** | Toronto, ON • 100 m² • 613 plants • 39 Volunteers
- Teulon & District Métis Association** | Teulon, MB • 100 m² • 156 plants • 74 Volunteers
- Toronto Green Community** | Toronto, ON • 100 m² • 1,097 plants • 59 Volunteers
- Wolseley Residents Association, Trees Committee** | Winnipeg, MB • 100 m² • 103 plants • 44 Volunteers



LIVING CITIES 2025 Project Highlights

Canada | Fund



Buena Vista Boulevard Garden

Buena Vista Garden Collective • Saskatoon, SK • 540 m² • 13 plants • 190 volunteers

The Buena Vista Garden Collective transformed a 540m² boulevard into a thriving native and edible garden, planting fruit trees, shrubs, and pollinator-friendly species while building healthy soil through community-led composting and mulching. The project supported community members to organize a celebratory planting event featuring local artists, youth musicians, and family activities, creating a vibrant, inclusive neighbourhood gathering space.

École Ste-Famille

CREE • Sherbrooke, QC • 100 m² • 172 plants • 260 volunteers

Conseil régional de l'environnement de l'Estrie (CREE) transformed an asphalt schoolyard into a green, functional learning space by depaving and planting over 200 trees, shrubs, and perennials. More than 260 students from kindergarten to Grade 6 actively participated in the planting, fostering environmental awareness, equity, and a strong sense of ownership over their newly green schoolyard.



Logan Park

City of Welland • Welland, ON • 1,100 m² • 1,700 plants • 79 volunteers

The City of Welland converted a vacant parcel of land at Logan Park into a 1,100 m² mini forest with 1,700 native plants including 1,025 trees. The forest was planted over two days with students, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA), and community volunteers. Strong engagement and extensive media coverage have encouraged future mini forest projects and continued stewardship with NPCA.



Craig Kielburger Secondary School

Craig Kielburger SS • Milton, ON • 250 m² • 600 plants • 500 volunteers

Craig Kielburger Secondary School (CKSS) planted 750 native trees to create a mini forest that will become part of an outdoor classroom, with every Grade 9 and 10 student at the school participating in the planting. The students were involved in the site design and planning, and the school plans to expand the site next year, supported by curriculum-linked learning and student-led maintenance.





LIVING CITIES 2025 Project Highlights

Fundy Biosphere Nursery

Fundy Biosphere Region • Moncton, NB • 250 m² • 850 plants • 25 volunteers

Fundy Biosphere Region established a mini forest at its new tree nursery as a demonstration and education site for native, climate-resilient forestry. The site was prepared by composting and mulching, and planted with a diverse mix of 750 trees. Over twenty volunteers from Eco360 and biosphere staff participated in a hands-on planting day and training, and the site will support ongoing public workshops and long-term stewardship.



Teulon Community Garden

Teulon & District Métis • Teulon, MB • 100 m² • 156 plants • 74 volunteers

Dozens of community volunteers came together over multiple days to construct raised garden beds and plant a diverse selection of vegetables, herbs, and Indigenous medicines at the Teulon & District Métis community garden. The project emphasized inclusive, intergenerational participation and created a shared space for food growing, learning, and cultural connection.

Fanshawe Conservation Area

London Environmental Network • London, ON • 100 m² • 290 plants • 34 volunteers

The London Environmental Network transformed a former Safety Village site at Fanshawe Conservation Area into a mini forest and outdoor learning space. Following sheet-mulching site preparation, 290 native trees and shrubs were planted with support from university students, community volunteers, and conservation authority staff. The site will be stewarded by Upper Thames River Conservation Authority.



Humber River Lodge

Toronto Green Community • Toronto, ON • 100 m² • 1,097 plants • 59 volunteers

A community celebration and planting event was held along the Humber River in partnership with members of the local Indigenous community, bringing together participants of diverse ages and backgrounds. Together, volunteers planted native species, sowed hundreds of additional seeds, and rebuilt protective fencing to support long-term ecological restoration. Guided by an Indigenous Elder, the event fostered learning, connection, and stewardship.

Project *Spotlight*

Rocky Ridge Royal Oak Community Association Calgary Climate Hub Calgary, AB



Calgary Climate Hub planted a new mini forest at the Rocky Ridge Royal Oak Community Association (RRROCA) lands in northwest Calgary, Alberta. The mini forest was designed as a curved planting strip along a main pedestrian pathway and contributes to increasing native tree and shrub cover in the Foothills Parkland subregion of Calgary.

The planting event brought together approximately 50 volunteers, including local residents, youth, seniors, and members of equity-deserving communities.

The day began with a land acknowledgment, blessing, and smudging ceremony led by Elder Marilyn Shingoose, followed by orientation and hands-on planting activities.

The event also served as an educational opportunity, highlighting tree equity, the Miyawaki method, and opportunities for ongoing community involvement and citizen science monitoring.

RRROCA will lead site maintenance with guidance from the Calgary Climate Hub, supported by a newly formed “Friends of the Mini Forest” stewardship group. Activities include regular weeding, irrigation supported by a drip-watering system, mulching, and seasonal plant replacement as needed.

Project Impact

136
trees planted

200
m² site size

79
volunteers



Project *Spotlight*

Reconciling with the Land GreenUP

Peterborough, ON

GreenUP supported schooyard greening with tree plantings at St. Paul Catholic Elementary School in Lakefield and St. John Catholic Elementary School in Peterborough and in partnership with Curve Lake First Nation.

Across compact schooyards with limited planting space, shrubs and native species were installed along fencelines and behind portables through a collaborative codesign process with students and teachers.

The project intentionally aligned with Anishinaabemowin language programming, incorporating cultural teachings, drumming, and origin stories.

There are also future plans for a “language path” at Curve Lake School that will feature translated signage and culturally significant plantings.

Planting days were spread over multiple sessions to allow classes to participate in rotating blocks, with support from school board staff, Camp Kawartha educators, and Indigenous knowledge holders. Students actively contributed to planting, mulching, and creative activities such as rock painting and plant naming, fostering a strong sense of ownership.

The project builds on GreenUP’s broader Reconciling with the Land initiative and has catalyzed continued partnerships with local school boards and Curve Lake First Nation.

Project Impact

184
trees planted

200
m² site size

544
volunteers

Thank you to our *Partners & Funders*

Partner Organizations:



Funders:



Partnership with TREES FOR LIFE

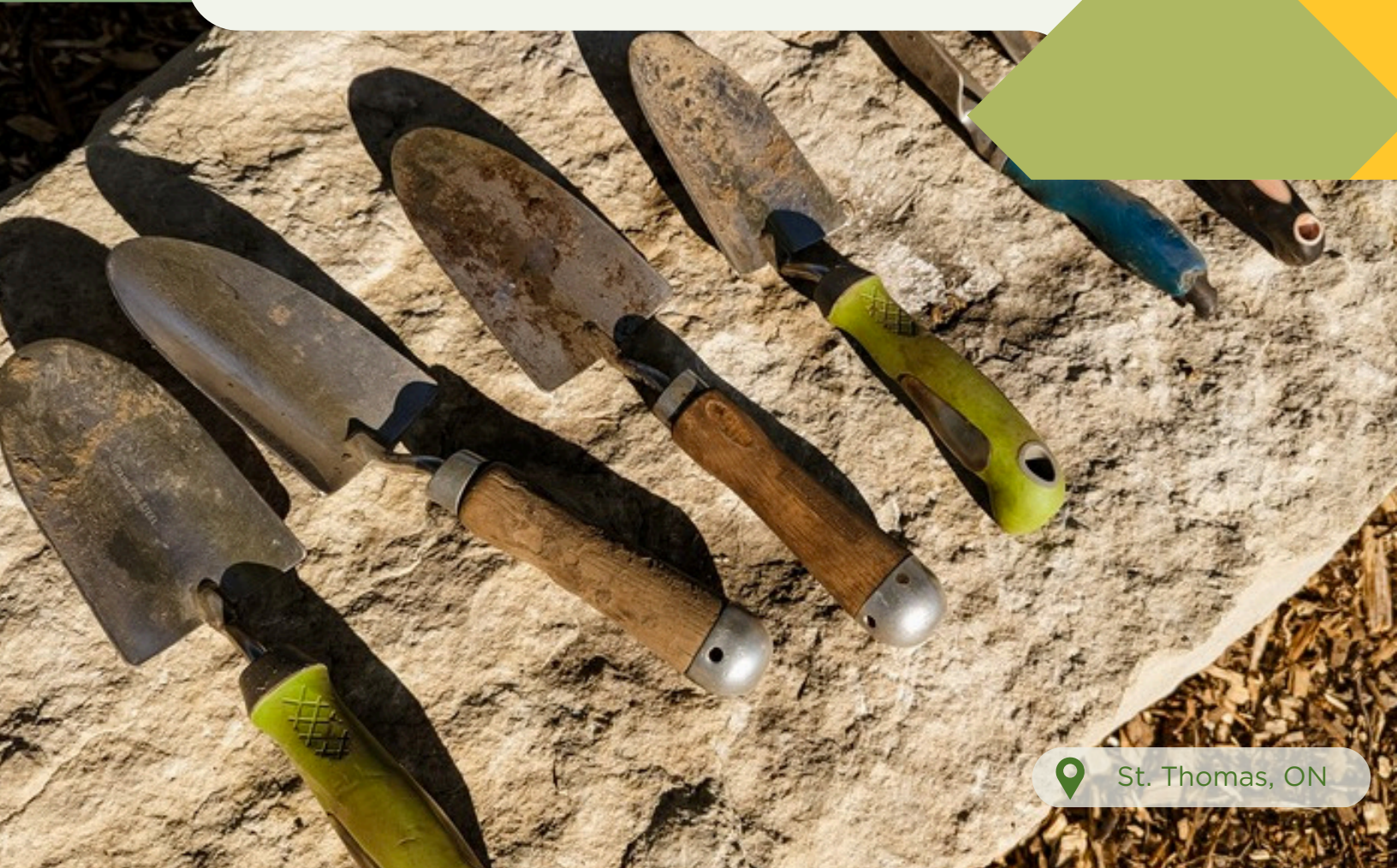
In 2025, GCC partnered with **Trees for Life**, a national charity focused on tree planting across Canada. We **co-funded** 10 tree planting and mini forest projects across Canada, including in British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, and Saskatchewan.

We're excited to grow our partnership in 2026 to include 24 co-funded projects, for a total of more than \$350,000 to be paid out to organizations across the country for tree planting initiatives.

About *Green Communities Canada*

Green Communities Canada has been leading a community-based climate action movement for **more than 30 years**, working together with our members and partners from across the country to advance **transformative, equitable, and lasting change**. As a national organization, our goal is to support and sustain grassroots action.

We do this by acting as a network, funder, backbone, and accelerator. We have a solid track record of leading community-engaged green infrastructure programming through our Depave Paradise Initiative, National Mini Forest Program, and Living Cities Canada Fund.



St. Thomas, ON

CORE PRINCIPLES

Living Cities Canada Fund Vision

Our 10-year vision is that 'Living Cities' flourish from coast to coast to coast. We will reverse the decline in green urban space by establishing a robust, strategic, and scalable framework that supports communities to replace grey urban infrastructure with nature-based solutions and prioritize green infrastructure (GI) in new developments. The Living Cities Canada Fund measurably accelerates the growth of nature-rich cities, increasing community resilience, health, and vitality.

Living Cities Canada Fund Approach

The Living Cities Canada Fund provides communities with direct financial support and a structured process to build capacity, leadership, and momentum for GI. Our approach is evidence-based and cultivates diverse participation in the planning and ongoing implementation of community-led solutions.

Living Cities Canada Fund Tactics

Key tactics of the Living Cities Canada Fund:

Develop local policy foundations and pathways

To move GI projects beyond the 'pilot phase' and into mainstream planning processes.

Cultivate strong municipal-community working relationships

To emphasize community-engaged GI development, ensuring long-term investments are made where they are most needed.

Mobilize community participation and leadership

To empower and equip citizens to take meaningful action towards climate resilience and justice.

Support knowledge transfer within and between communities

To strengthen local capacity and provide accelerated learning opportunities within communities and across our network.

Abundant

Green infrastructure becomes the default in land-use planning & transforms urban design

Thriving

Green infrastructure is installed & maintained to provide the full range of long-term benefits

Equitable

Green infrastructure is prioritized in the locations with the greatest environmental & social need

This 'tri-principle' approach is an essential part of our strategy to grow vibrant and resilient nature-rich cities that address the dual challenges of climate change and public health inequities.