



**Guide 11** Green economy



**Blue Dot**

**Municipal Toolkit**  
Building a Low-Carbon Future

# Blue Dot Municipal Toolkit

People in Canada take pride in this country's natural landscapes, rich ecosystems and wildlife. But Canada's Constitution doesn't mention environmental rights and responsibilities. Municipalities across the country are recognizing and supporting their residents' right to a healthy environment. By adopting the Blue Dot declaration, more than 150 municipal governments now support the right to clean air and water, safe food, a stable climate and a say in decisions that affect our health and well-being.

For some municipalities, adopting the Blue Dot declaration is a clear statement about environmental initiatives already underway. For others, it's a significant first step. Either way, after passing a declaration, many ask "What happens next?"

This toolkit provides practical ideas for next steps. Its introduction and 13 downloadable guides cover topics related to human health, green communities and a low-carbon future. Written for policy-makers, each guide shares examples of policies and projects undertaken in communities in Canada and around the world. The goal is to inform, inspire and share good ideas and great practices that will lead to healthier, more sustainable communities now and in the future.

The following guides are available:

## **Introduction to the Blue Dot Municipal Toolkit**

### **Protecting Human Health**

- Guide 1: Air quality
- Guide 2: Clean water
- Guide 3: Non-toxic environment
- Guide 4: Healthy food

### **Creating Green Communities**

- Guide 5: Access to green space
- Guide 6: Protecting and restoring biodiversity
- Guide 7: Waste

### **Building a Low Carbon-Future**

- Guide 8: Transitioning to 100% renewable energy
- Guide 9: Green buildings
- Guide 10: Sustainable transportation
- Guide 11: Green economy
- Guide 12: Climate change adaptation
- Guide 13: Ecological footprint and land-use planning

To read more about municipal actions for environmental rights, and to access all the Blue Dot toolkit guides, visit <http://bluedot.ca/municipal-toolkits/>. To read more about the Blue Dot movement and work at the local, provincial and federal levels, visit [www.bluedot.ca](http://www.bluedot.ca).

Ensuring a healthy environment requires action in communities of all sizes and at all levels of government. This toolkit helps municipalities continue to take the lead.

## Acknowledgments

This project is the product of a collaboration between authors Andhra Azevedo, David Richard Boyd and Alaya Boisvert. Many others also contributed. The authors particularly wish to thank Cheeying Ho, Deborah Curran, Don Lidstone, John Purkis, Michelle Molnar, Nina Winham, Pierre Sadik, Rachel Plotkin and Margot Venton for their helpful reviews and comments.



David  
Suzuki  
Foundation

Fondation  
David  
Suzuki

# Building a Low-Carbon Future

## Guide 11: Green economy

According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), a green economy is one “where income and employment growth are driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystems.”<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this report, green economic practices will be taken to have a narrower scope: practices are described that promote green enterprise, including job creation, investment opportunities, procurement programs and changes in current business practices. Green enterprises are defined as offering goods and services that meet human needs and reduce overall ecological footprints.<sup>2</sup> Green jobs are defined as work in agricultural, manufacturing, research and development, administrative and service activities that contributes substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality.<sup>3</sup>

### Canadian examples of good practices

#### a. Toronto: Pearson Eco-Business Zone

- i. **Background:** The program was initiated by the Greater Toronto Airport Authority and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to create the largest eco-business zone in the world through Partners in Project Green (PPG).<sup>4</sup> As of 2015, the project was 43 per cent municipally funded.<sup>5</sup>
- ii. **Initiative:** PPG discounts and incentivizes electric vehicle charging stations, facilitates sharing of resources and expertise through the Energy Leaders Consortium, and provides partially subsidized energy analyses to identify cost-saving efficiency measures. PPG facilitates material exchange programs through an online material exchange network. Water conservation is facilitated through collective infrastructure projects such as rainwater collection and use, paved surface replacement and green roof installation.
- iii. **Results:** In 2014, partners reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 5,292 tonnes through energy conservation projects. Energy-saving measures through the program include electricity and thermal efficiency audits and commitments to install 22 electric vehicle-charging stations. Companies replaced lights and upgraded systems for energy savings.<sup>6</sup> The program also coordinated 244 tonnes of materials exchanged and diverted 465.5 tonnes of waste from landfills. An example was facilitating bamboo scraps from the Toronto Zoo, Toronto and Regional Conservation Authority and Cavalerio Farms for use in landscaping, soil erosion

---

1 David Thompson and Shannon A. Joseph, *Building Canada's Green Economy: The Municipal Role*, 2011, [http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/reports/Building\\_Canadas\\_green\\_economy\\_the\\_municipal\\_role\\_EN.pdf](http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/reports/Building_Canadas_green_economy_the_municipal_role_EN.pdf).

2 Greenest City Action Team, *Vancouver 2020 A Bright Green Future* <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/bright-green-future.pdf>.

3 United Nations Environment Programme and International Labor Organization, *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World* (New York, 2008).

4 GTAA Partners in Project Green, "Partners in Project Green."

5 GTAA Partners in Project Green, "Financials," 2015, <https://www.partnersinprojectgreen.com/2015financials/>.

6 GTAA Partners in Project Green, "Energy Performance," 2015, <https://www.partnersinprojectgreen.com/your-needs/energy-performance/>.



mitigation and bee habitats.<sup>7</sup> Water conservation efforts directly saved 58.3 million litres of water annually with partners achieving another 125.5 million litres of savings. This included installation of rainwater capture and upgrade of equipment to achieve higher efficiency.<sup>8</sup>

## b. Green procurement policies

- i. **Background:** A number of cities across the country have adopted several forms of green procurement policies and bylaws to invest in a green economy and reduce environmental impacts. The Greater Toronto Area Clean Air Council community of practice has facilitated and tracked the development of green procurement policies within and outside of the GTA.
- ii. **Initiative:** Municipalities such as Burlington and Oakville have developed sustainable procurement policies, which have been incorporated into municipal purchasing bylaws.<sup>9</sup> For example, Burlington requires the purchase of EnergyStar, EcoLogo and GreenSeal certified appliances where available.<sup>10</sup> Both municipalities have also developed comprehensive staff training manuals to guide staff, including life-cycle analysis and avoiding greenwashing when making purchases. The City of Toronto has had an environmentally preferred procurement policy since 1999 and incorporates this policy into its requests for proposals and requests for quotes. Other communities such as Vancouver, Ottawa, Thunder Bay and Calgary have developed independent procurement programs that include tools such as supplier codes of conduct.

## c. Vancouver

- i. **Initiative:** The city has launched a green and digital demonstration program with the Vancouver Economic Commission. The program has granted use of City-owned assets to an initial eight green entrepreneurs and start-ups. Vancouver is working on creating a green enterprise zone in False Creek Flats.
- ii. **Results:** The city has increased green jobs by 19 per cent from 2010 to 2013.<sup>11</sup>

## International examples of good practices

### d. San Jose: Clean tech job creation

- i. **Initiative:** The Prospect Silicon Valley (ProspectSV) non-profit uses space provided in the city's Environmental Innovation Center and supports emerging technology companies. The

---

<sup>7</sup> GTAA Partners in Project Green, "Waste Management," 2015, <https://www.partnersinprojectgreen.com/your-needs/waste-management/>.

<sup>8</sup> GTAA Partners in Project Green, "Water Stewardship," 2015, <https://www.partnersinprojectgreen.com/your-needs/waste-management/>.

<sup>9</sup> Clean Air Partnership, Environmental Progress through Collaboration, 2015, [http://www.cleanairpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CAC\\_StoryBook\\_Report\\_0216.pdf](http://www.cleanairpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CAC_StoryBook_Report_0216.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> City of Burlington, "Green Procurement Guidelines," 2014, <https://www.burlington.ca/en/your-city/resources/Green%20Procurement/GreenProcurementGuidelines.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> City of Vancouver, "Green Economy," 2015, <http://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/green-economy.aspx#economy-actions>.



San Jose Office of Economic Development provides monthly office hours at ProspectSV for consultation and assistance with start-ups. San Jose has also adopted a demonstration partnership policy, which provides laboratories for early stage product development.<sup>12</sup> The city is planning to launch a Transportation Innovation Zone in partnership with ProspectSV and technology companies to test and showcase sustainable technology such as smart streetlights and pedestrian safety technology on city streets. The city was designated as an iHub in collaboration with research laboratories, universities and the private sector. An essential part of San Jose's strategy is to also engage with industry groups and other stakeholders to support state and federal legislative priorities that support clean technology for funding and grants.

- ii. **Results:** The city set a goal to create 25,000 clean tech jobs by 2022 in 2007 and is already 48 per cent toward that goal.<sup>13</sup>

#### e. Amsterdam investment fund

- i. **Initiative:** Amsterdam designed a financing instrument of €75 million (\$107 million CAD) to be invested in sustainable energy projects, some of them focusing on small businesses. The fund is unique in that it provides loans, backing or equity capital to anyone in the city, from small start-ups to large commercial projects.
- ii. **Results:** In 2010, the city had already achieved a 20 per cent reduction in GHG emissions, compared to 1990 levels. The fund won in the Finance and Economic Development category of the C40 City Climate Leadership Awards.<sup>14</sup>

#### f. Other interesting ideas

- i. Sacramento Area Regional Technology Alliance CleanStart program stimulates development and success of early stage clean technology companies by supporting entrepreneurs to assemble management teams, secure funding and promote Sacramento's clean tech economy. The program's sponsors include the City of Sacramento and several local universities and private enterprises.<sup>15</sup>
- ii. San Francisco Green Business is a city-run program that helps San Francisco businesses adopt sustainable practices by setting stringent criteria, providing technical assistance and awarding Green Businesses with a seal that helps to promote green businesses to customers. The program has strict sectoral standards developed with industry, utility companies, pollution-prevention experts, city inspectors and trade associations. The standards include water and energy conservation, waste management, pollution prevention

---

12 City of San Jose, Council Policy: Framework for Establishing Demonstration Partnerships, 2008, <http://ca-sanjose.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/1344>.

13 City of San Jose, Green Vision 2014 Annual Report. <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/42557>

14 C40 Cities, "Amsterdam: Amsterdam Investment Fund," 2014, <http://www.c40.org/profiles/2014-amsterdam>; City of Amsterdam, "Amsterdam Awarded Prize for Sustainability Fund," Press Releases, 2014, <http://www.iamsterdam.com/en/media-centre/city-hall/press-releases/2014-press-room/amsterdam-sustainability-fund-award>.

15 SARTA, CleanStart Progress Report 2015 (Sacramento, 2015), <http://www.sarta.org/cleanstart/documents-reports.html>.



and purchasing requirements. San Francisco also has green job programs such as the Environmental Justice Grant program, which has awarded more than \$11 million in grants in low-income neighbourhoods, including funding for green job training and sustainable development projects.<sup>16</sup>

- iii. Chicago GreenCorps is a green job training and placement program that hires 40 to 75 people from disadvantaged areas (up to 90 per cent ex-offenders) to work in a nine-month program that rotates employees through different program sectors to receive several professional certificates. By 2010, GreenCorps had graduated 300 students in 16 years with 75 per cent of graduates between 2008 and 2010 going on to employment placements or advanced positions within GreenCorps.<sup>17</sup> Oakland, California, began a similar Green Job Corps program in 2008.<sup>18</sup>
- iv. Portland's economic development strategy has focused on four main industries that were already thriving due to economic attributes of the city: clean technology and sustainable industries, active wear, software and advanced manufacturing. The city set a goal to organize industry clusters and focus recruitment to support these clusters and manufacturing by identifying sites for acquisition and remediation. Each cluster has a set of policies and programs developed specifically for attracting and retaining development in those industries.<sup>19</sup> Successes of this strategy include the development of 2,750 new jobs between 2009 and 2012.<sup>20</sup>

## Good practices documents and links

- o **Building Canada's Green Economy** – from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

---

16 SF Environment, "History & Achievements," 2015, <http://sfenvironment.org/article/ej-grant-program/history-achievements>.

17 Institute for Sustainable Communities, Case Study: Chicago, IL, 2010, <http://community-wealth.org/sites/clone.community-wealth.org/files/downloads/tool-ISC-green-job-creation-guide.pdf>; City of Chicago, "Greencorps Chicago," City Services, 2013, [http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdot/provdrs/conservation\\_outreachgreenprograms/svcs/greencorps\\_chicago.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdot/provdrs/conservation_outreachgreenprograms/svcs/greencorps_chicago.html).

18 City of Oakland, "Oakland Green Job Corps - Training and Jobs," accessed October 9, 2015, <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/PWA/o/FE/s/SO/DAK024387>.

19 City of Portland and Portland Development Commission, Economic Development Strategy, 2009, <http://www.pdxeconomicdevelopment.com/docs/Portland-Ec-Dev-Strategy.pdf>.

20 City of Portland and Portland Development Commission, Economic Development Strategy: Three Year Status Report, 2012, <http://www.pdxeconomicdevelopment.com/docs/Portland-EcDev-Strategy-3-Year-Status-Report.pdf>.

A background image showing a field of wind turbines under a blue sky. The turbines are white with three blades each, and they are arranged in a line across the horizon. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

## Advisory services

The **Natural Step Canada (TNSC)** is a national charity whose mission is to tackle climate change and accelerate the transition to a truly sustainable society that thrives within nature's limits. Its academy, advisory services and Sustainability Transition Labs use best-in-class science, systems thinking and facilitation to help individuals and organizations collaborate, solve complex problems, foster innovation, optimize performance and drive systems change.

TNS Canada offers a **Service Cycle for Sustainable Communities** to help municipal governments plan for long-term sustainability and resiliency, embed sustainability into their culture and operations, and engage community stakeholders in their sustainability plans.

To learn more go to: <http://naturalstep.ca/>

The **Whistler Centre for Sustainability (WCS)** is a non-profit organization with the mission to "inspire and facilitate effective planning and meaningful conversations for a better world." WCS provides innovative community engagement, planning and implementation services to local governments across Canada, drawing on its expertise and experience in more than 40 communities. The Centre's work is rooted in future-focused social, environmental and economic values, so that final deliverables embed sustainability throughout.

To learn more go to: <http://whistlercentre.ca>