



## Green Bloc Project Ideas

Ver. 3 May 2017

These project ideas were assembled by the Green Bloc / Lighter Footprint team including Evergreen, the Whistler Centre for Sustainability, and One Earth. Some are described in more detail in the workshop handout. We encourage you to see this as an evolving document, inspiring our work together. We welcome you to send us more ideas!

### INCREASE RE-USE AND REPAIR - AND REDUCE WASTE

---

#### **Hold a Neighbourhood Bike Repair Workshop:**

Getting out of your car and onto your feet, bike, or public transit is a great way to reduce your ecological footprint, and stay active. However, if your bike needs a tune up, or has a flat tire, it may be holding you back! By learning some simple bike repair skills, you'll feel more empowered to jump on your bike, rather than into your car. <http://www.pedalpower.org/>

#### **Host a Zero Waste Potluck:**

Picnics and block parties build community and connect neighbours - why not take these activities to the next level? Host a zero waste potluck: attendees bring their own plates, cutlery, and cups, and meals are made from whatever is in your fridge! Reducing the amount of paper and food waste is a vital component of lowering your ecological footprint. <http://www.trashisfortossers.com/2014/01/hosting-zero-waste-dinner-party.html>  
<https://myplasticfreelife.com/2007/08/how-to-host-plastic-free-potluck-summer/>

#### **Make Celebrations Greener :**

Brainstorm a list of celebrations and then invest to find ways to make them more sustainable, e.g. joint purchase of green catering materials (e.g., wine glasses, etc.) that everyone can borrow / use.

#### **Create a Pop-Up Clothing Exchange:**

This activity is a good way for people to swap their unwanted clothes and find new pieces for their wardrobe. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/stuff-to-do/create-pop-shop> and <http://www.oprah.com/style/clothing-swap-how-to-host-a-clothing-swap>

#### **Host Community Swaps for a range of goods :**

It's not just clothes! Organize community swap meets of toys, crops, seeds, baby food, media and more. This can be online or in person. <http://www.localgovsharingecon.com/community-sharing.html>

#### **Love Food, Hate Waste together :**

Jointly commit to the Love Food, Hate Waste challenge. Explore the resources on the website, including meal-planning ideas and ways to better organize one's fridge. Organize



your activities as a competition within the neighbourhood.

<http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.ca/>

### **Host a No Impact Week:**

Commit a group of households to participate in No Impact Week or even a year-long No Impact Experiment. <http://noimpactproject.org/experiment/register/>

## **WORK AS A COLLECTIVE**

---

### **Organize bulk buying programs:**

Bulk buying programs are a way to offer members access to more healthy foods at a lower cost by purchasing products in bulk with reduced packaging. This can include bulk discounts for residents with local farms (ZedLife). Engage in bulk buying and sharing of, e.g., shampoo, flour, etc.

Resource: <https://gwfoodconnection.wordpress.com/2010/05/31/britannia-bulk-buying-club/> <http://www.ubcsprouts.ca/bulk-buying-club-1/>

### **Do a Household Waste Audit:**

What's in your waste? Book a Waste Watchers workshop with Be the Change Earth Alliance. The program provides educational resources to households who plan and take action to help their homes get to zero waste.

[http://www.bethechangeearthalliance.org/waste\\_watchers](http://www.bethechangeearthalliance.org/waste_watchers)

### **Coordinate food deliveries and facilitate storage :**

Coordinate organic supermarket internet delivery (ZedLife) and / or coordinate mainstream supermarket internet delivery (ZedLife) (to reduce car use) and / or bulk food buying of staples (e.g., flour, etc.). Make a communal fridge / shed in the neighbourhood for daytime food deliveries so that they can be "safe stored." (ZedFactory)

### **Collectively show your purchasing and investment power :**

Join the Carrot (or Cash) Mob Movement by supporting a number of business that have sustainable practices and redirecting the neighbourhood's resources. You can also go to a credit union together: <http://www.moneysense.ca/columns/guide-to-socially-responsible-investing/>

### **Schedule neighbourhood Return-It Depot / Transfer Station Visits:**

Did you know that you can recycle things like plastic bags and Styrofoam at any Return-It-Depot in Metro Vancouver? If you don't live close by, or don't have a car, it can be easier to just toss those things in the trash. Setting up a neighbourhood recycling schedule can reduce the number of trips you have to take, and will make it hassle free to recycle as much of your waste as possible.

<https://www.return-it.ca/recycling/>



## SHARE MORE – SKILLS, SERVICES, TOOLS...

---

### **Organize a skills exchange:**

Get to know your neighbours, and access existing skills and services in your neighbourhood, by setting up a neighbourhood skills list. Know how to play guitar? Offer lessons in exchange for gardening help. Or, offer to walk a pet in exchange for some babysitting time. Asset map the “services” being offered in the community, e.g., baking skills, that can be the basis of non-material gifting.

<http://www.bhg.com/health-family/finances/tips/swap-skills-with-your-neighbors/>

**Share meals** within the community on a regular basis, e.g., create a plan to support elderly or sick neighbours or young families with healthy meals.

### **Set up a Neighbourhood Lending Library:**

Lending libraries are a great way to reduce the amount that we consume. By setting up a neighbourhood lending library, you’ll be able to share the household items you don’t use very often, and have access to tools and equipment you may only need occasionally. Plus, it is a great opportunity to meet your neighbours! To start, you may wish to develop a neighbourhood inventory of shareable tools, sports equipment, etc.

<http://thesharingproject.ca/>

<http://neighborgoods.net/>

<http://citystudiovancouver.com/projects/shareable-neighbourhood/>

### **Join a time bank :**

"Think of a time bank like a community ATM where you can deposit and withdraw "hours" of skills like cash. If there’s not one near you, the documentary Time as Money highlights several successful programs around the world and provides inspiring resources."

<http://www.curbed.com/2016/9/22/13019420/urban-design-community-building-placemaking>

## SUPPORT DIETARY SHIFTS

---

One of the biggest things your household can do to reduce its ecological footprint is reduce the amount of red meat (beef and pork) that you eat – and increase the “whites and greens.”

### **Hold a Vegan / Vegetarian Cooking Worskop:**

By learning to cook a few simple vegan and vegetarian recipes, you’ll be much less intimidated to make the switch to legumes!

<http://shrinkthatfootprint.com/food-carbon-footprint-diet>

### **Commit to an increase in “yard farming” :**

Grow a neighbourhood herb garden, shared garden, community garden. Raise livestock like chickens and share the egg harvesting within the community.



<http://www.collective-evolution.com/2015/08/08/8-reasons-to-become-a-yardfarmer/>

**Share food growing infrastructure :**

Invest in communal food growing and communal composting, where the residents' group pools together land, tools, seeds, information packs, equipment (ZedLife).

**Develop a community kitchen.** A community kitchen is a place for people to gather and prepare meals together. Groups often meet in community facilities, such as churches, neighbourhood houses, and community centres.

<http://vancouver.ca/people-programs/community-kitchens.aspx>

<https://www.foodbank.bc.ca/our-programs/community-kitchens/>

**Encourage a group of households to take the Meatless Mondays pledge.**

This can include developing a neighbourhood recipe book for meat-free / less meat diet, including lunches. <http://www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca/campaigns/meatless-monday/>

**Host a farmer's market on site (ZedLife):**

This can even be hyper local and include only neighbourhood harvested produce, grown in people's yards or on their balconies.

---

## RE-WILD YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD & GROW MORE LOCALLY

**Support Rewilding** such as collective tree planting in the street and taking action on priorities in the Metro Vancouver Ecological Health Action Plan.

<http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/conserving-connecting/about-ecological-health/Pages/health-action-plan.aspx>

**Make a bee hotel for your neighbourhood:**

<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/stuff-to-do/make-bee-hotel-your-neighbourhood>

**Support grass alternatives :**

Transform gardens from grass by sharing plants / seedlings across neighbours.

---

## REDUCE PAPER CONSUMPTIONS

**Support paperless bills:** Encourage neighbours to commit to paperless bills.

**Wrap presents differently:** Host a demonstration evening to show how to reduce paper wrapping by wrapping presents in fabric.

---

## REDUCE YOUR ENERGY USE TOGETHER



### **Organize an energy conservation challenge:**

Households sign up to reduce their energy usage. Points can be collected by the amount of energy (as measured by utilities bills) reduced, and/or by the numbers and types of energy conservation measures and retrofits implemented. Also, a challenge may be issued by asking all participating households to undertake specific actions during a specified period of time. <http://coolneighbourhoods.org/>

### **Jointly hire a contractor to increase households energy efficiency :**

Develop joint arrangements to hire a local contractor to install higher insulation in houses / winterproof houses. A contractor could also build garden boxes for the neighbourhood!

## **TRANSPORTATION**

---

### **Organize a “Walking School Bus”:**

Kids are walked together, chaperoned by a parent. A route is developed that will allow passengers (kids) to be picked up along the way, according to a timetable.

<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/stuff-to-do/organise-a-walking-bus>

### **Encourage Stay-cations :**

Change one vacation to a “stay-cation” and trade ideas (a stay-cation guide) on exciting things to do in Vancouver and the surrounding area.

### **Map a Walking Circle :**

“Map a 40-minute walking circle around your house. Measure and draw a two-mile radius circle around your house to determine your “walkshed,” the places you can easily walk. You’ll realize how many local amenities are closer than you think—most people can walk two miles in about 40 minutes—and you’ll be more likely to hoof it and support local businesses.”

<http://www.curbed.com/2016/9/22/13019420/urban-design-community-building-placemaking>

### **Explore rideshares and car club memberships:**

Map people’s commutes and extra-curricular activities and explore rideshares where trips are overlapping. Support a move from 1 or 2 car ownership towards car club memberships: “occupants who drive under 15,000km / year are financially better off as car club members than owning a private car” (ZedFactory).

### **Do a Neighbourhood Walkability Audit:**

A walkability audit is an examination/evaluation of the safety, ease and accessibility of the walking and biking environment. It can also be done using a checklist for walkability.

<http://sustainablecalgary.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Active-Neighbourhoods-Toolkit.pdf>



[http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/planning/tools\\_audits.cfm](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/planning/tools_audits.cfm)  
<http://activelivingresearch.org/active-neighborhood-checklist>

## LEARN TOGETHER

---

### **Host an educational workshop on Lighter Footprint Living Ideas:**

Expand the Green Bloc network by hosting an introductory workshop to Lighter Footprint living, and the various ways individuals can reduce their ecological footprint while living fulfilling lives. <https://www.sustainableneighborhoodnetwork.org/docs/default-source/Denver-Library/goal-areas.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

### **Host a group canning day:**

Learn about canning and organize a day to practice this skill together.  
<http://www.vancouvermom.ca/for-mom/preserving-classes-vancouver/>  
<https://vancouverfruittree.com/category/canning-workshops/>

### **Launch an oral history project :**

“From Studs Terkel to StoryCorps, there’s a rich tradition of storytelling as a time capsule of modern life. Documenting your neighbors’s stories preserves the fabric and history of a neighborhood, giving context to why this place and its people matters.”  
<http://www.curbed.com/2016/9/22/13019420/urban-design-community-building-placemaking>

### **Develop welcome packs :**

Develop welcome packs for residents (and new neighbours) with information about local farmers markets and local shops, as well as other resources for more sustainable living.

## REFERENCES

---

Many of the ideas above are drawn from resources including the following:

Be The Change Earth Alliance - <http://www.bethechangeearthalliance.org>  
BioRegional - [www.bioregional.com](http://www.bioregional.com)  
Center for a New American Dream - <https://www.newdream.org/>  
Eden Project Communities - [www.edenprojectcommunities.com](http://www.edenprojectcommunities.com)  
No Impact Project - <http://noimpactproject.org/experiment/register/>  
Shareable - <http://www.shareable.net/>  
The Story of Stuff - [storyofstuff.org/](http://storyofstuff.org/)  
The Sustainable Neighborhoods Program - <https://www.sustainableneighborhoodnetwork.org>  
Zed Factory – [Zedfactory.com](http://Zedfactory.com)