

Townhall Event May 29, 2024 Table Discussion Summary



Thank you for taking part in our recent Town Hall discussion on Climate Action, and for your interest in this summary of the discussions that took place at the tables. This overall summary was drawn from the written summaries created at each table. We have tried to highlight themes, and to combine comments for brevity and clarity. We hope that you find these useful, and hope that you will continue to be engaged and involved with this, arguably the most consequential issue to face humanity in many thousands of years.

Conscious Consumption

Food Related

- Reduce meat consumption – move to a more plant-based diet
- Compost, home or green bin
- Eat seasonally
- Grow your own food – at home, in community gardens
- Set up or take part in school and communal gardens
- Do your own canning, freezing, dehydrating
- Grow adaptable, resilient crops
- Plan meals to reduce waste; make multiple meals; reduce amount of food
- Buy less food
- Store food properly to maximize its longevity
- Stop drive-throughs & disposable dishes, cups etc – Lug a mug
- Reduce purchases of processed foods
- Use less water; use rain barrels
- Shop at food co-ops
- Develop agricultural awareness – where and how things are grown, industrial farming etc
- Animal welfare
- Avoid using water bottles – tap water is excellent
- Congregate Living Spaces (Retirement homes, long term care, etc) produce a lot of waste – advocate to change that
- Cook in an energy efficient way – small toaster oven, induction etc
- Talk to your store about excess packaging
- Measure your packaging waste by the week or month
- Measure your cost savings – food budget reduction before and after change

Consumer Items

- Buy less stuff, especially luxury items, things not made well, fast fashion
- Recycle, repurpose, reuse

- Clothing drives – circular economy, Thrifting
- Purchase items that are repairable
- Repair things (or get them repaired), Borrow
- Purchase products with better energy guide ratings
- Assess needs vs wants – reflect before buying
- Avoid excess packaging – reuse packaging
- Bring your own containers, use refillable stores, bring your own “doggie bag” containers
- Make your own cleaning products using less damaging chemicals – vinegar, baking soda, borax
- Use cleaning cloths, sponges, rags that do not require chemicals
- Make conscious decisions about flying, vacations- combine trips
- Send complaints to head offices/ business leaders
- Purchase carbon offsets – a last resort, but research first - there are lots of bad offsets on offer
- Change investment portfolio away from fossil fuels to sustainable energy
- Advocate for seeing the real cost of our choices – disposal, clean up, climate change

Smart Energy Choices

Transportation

- Use the bus, train, walk, bike, car pool whenever possible
- Advocate for more robust public transportation system
- Advocate for free public transit
- Work from home
- Hide the keys – “Is this trip necessary?”
- Bundle errands/activities to drive less
- Use more efficient transportation – smaller cars
- Purchase electric vehicle or hybrid

Homes

- Advocate for financial assistance for home climate solutions like solar panels, heat pumps
- Get a greener homes energy audit & renovate to a more energy efficient home
- Turn down the thermostat – dress up or down to reduce heating/cooling, time of day use/zone heating
- Insulate home
- Switch to heat pumps, geothermal or air-source
- Passive & low-energy temperature control: Open windows, use fans, close the blinds, wear a sweater etc
- Turn off the lights – use light sensors, timers, LEDs – and the TV when not in use
- Build moderately sized homes – downsizing is not affordable as we age
- Plant trees/landscape to reduce A/C & heating needs
- Buy electric appliances – lawn mower, leaf blower, trimmer, vacuum, etc or use unpowered ones e.g. broom, clippers
- Cut grass less frequently
- Hang clothes to dry
- Advocate for enhanced building codes, e.g. walkable communities, building more energy efficient home – net zero

Activism – Getting the Word Out

Benefits of Taking Action

- Change does happen when people take action
- Participation increases personal and collective power
- Taking action can improve wellbeing and peace of mind; it can be uplifting, fun, energizing and make you proud
- In addition to mitigating climate change, reducing emissions is often cheaper, faster and healthier

Barriers to taking action

- Cost – may be hard to foresee the savings
- Convenience, lifestyle, comfort – may need to give something up; hard to leave what you know
- Denial and avoidance
- Frozen from fear or overwhelmed - what can one person do?
- Little education about climate change in schools – many young people are not talking about climate change
- Lobbyists have strong influence
- Short term vs long term goals
- Banks, universities, pension funds continue to invest in fossil fuels
- Perception that environmental efforts will slow down economic growth and new home builds
- Lack of infrastructure to support broad electrification: charging networks and electrical grid

Activism – Getting the Word Out

The survey responses indicate that people want to participate in getting the word out:

- 23 % of participants said they would join a protest
- 23% of participants said they would join CANA
- 32% of participants said they would write to a government official

Suggestions on getting the word out

- Find credible sources for information & do personal research
- Use your voice – oral, written and social media to enlist your personal circle of contacts to support your cause (if you tell one person, then they'll tell one person,....)
- Support outreach activities initiated by agencies/organizations that you share common concerns and values
- Trust yourself – you don't have to be a scientist!

Political Activism

- Attend events, rallies, demonstrations – as individual or in a group
- Engage early in community planning to help guide decisions to be climate-sensitive
- Write letters, phone and visit politicians at all levels
- Create & display lawn signs
- Sign petitions, including online (clicktivism)
- Vote, and encourage other to vote, for parties that support “green” initiatives
- Advocate for research into hydrogen energy

Community Activism

- Get known as a climate resource in schools and the community at large
- Build groups to share strategies, work and success stories
- Build relationships with local media
- Donate – show how much you care; help groups with expertise & resources to do their work
- Advocate for change through social media; collect & use hashtags
- Talk to friends and family, even strangers – create your own elevator speech on why you care
- Meet people where they are at; be curious
- Hold/host neighbourhood climate gatherings & events

Potential Advocacy Topics Noted

- Lobby government to create net-zero housing requirements on new home builds – based on percentage or house size/price
- Stop building gas plants
- Carbon Pricing
- Fix exclusionary zoning
- Housing affordability