



GREENEST CITY

2020 ACTION PLAN



VANCOUVER HAS PROVEN THAT A CITY CAN GROW AND PROSPER AND STILL BECOME A GREEN CAPITAL —A GLOBAL LEADER IN ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE.

- Vancouver is set to bring our community-based greenhouse gas emissions down to **5% below 1990 levels**, even as our population has grown by over 27% and jobs have increased by over 18%.
- Vancouver's electricity is generated in British Columbia—93% of it from **renewable sources**. We are also developing neighbourhood-scale **renewable energy projects**. Conversion to renewable sources will create **new green jobs**.
- The City has implemented the **greenest building code** in North America.

Vancouver is rising to meet the **green transportation challenge** by creating compact neighbourhoods with **higher density** to provide easy access to work, shopping and recreation. The City has **shifted investment** to walking, cycling and transit infrastructure instead of building new roads.


...AND THIS GREENEST CITY ACTION PLAN DETAILS HOW WE WILL BECOME THE GREENEST CITY IN THE WORLD BY 2020...

GREENEST CITY 2020

ACTION PLAN

The Greenest City Story.....	5
Goal 1: Green Economy.....	10
Goal 2: Climate Leadership.....	16
Goal 3: Green Buildings.....	22
Goal 4: Green Transportation.....	28
Goal 5: Zero Waste.....	34
Goal 6: Access to Nature.....	40
Goal 7: Lighter Footprint.....	46
Goal 8: Clean Water.....	52
Goal 9: Clean Air.....	58
Goal 10: Local Food.....	64
A Conclusion & A Beginning.....	71
Acknowledgements.....	72





“It’s up to everyone to do their part,
to rethink, re-evaluate and re-imagine
the way Vancouver works and how
we lead our lives.”

Vancouver’s Greenest City Action Team
Vancouver 2020: A Bright Green Future



THE GREENEST CITY STORY

Ambitious, necessary, and possible—this is the *Greenest City 2020 Action Plan (GCAP)* for Vancouver. It is our road map to becoming the greenest city in the world by 2020.

This plan sets the course toward realizing a healthy, prosperous, and resilient future for our city. It calls on us all to rise to the challenge of transforming our community to create a better life for future generations.

As with other cities around the world, Vancouver faces challenges that call for decisive action and innovation, and every resident and business will play a crucial role in helping us, as a community, to reach our goals. A growing population, climate uncertainty, rising fossil fuel prices, and shifting economic opportunities are just some of the challenges that now call on us to work hard to remain one of the best places in the world in which to live.

In the 1960s, Vancouver's Strathcona neighbourhood residents stopped the construction of a massive freeway into downtown that would have levelled their community and altered the shape of the city forever. Today, Vancouver is one of a very few cities in North America that does not have a major highway cutting through its core. And our city was one of the first in the world to recognize the importance and gravity of climate change. In 1990, the groundbreaking Clouds of Change Task Force recommended the city begin reducing its carbon dioxide emissions.

Today, Vancouver has the smallest per capita carbon footprint of any city in North America. We have been able to achieve this in collaboration with our energy utility providers, senior levels of government, and innovators in the business and non-profit sectors who see new opportunity in responding to this challenge. Because of these achievements, Vancouver is quickly becoming a new green economy hub.

Vancouverites have consistently made choices that have turned our home into one of the world's most livable cities. There's much to love about Vancouver, from magnificent natural surroundings to strong environmental values, from a diverse cultural mix and innovative economy to our vibrant neighbourhoods. It's now up to all of us to help make Greenest City 2020 a reality. Vancouver is well positioned to achieve this plan's 10 greenest city goals in the coming decade. Indeed, as you'll see, we're already well on our way.

HOW DOES VANCOUVER COMPARE?

There is some debate about the usefulness of ranking cities, and about the methods used to determine the sustainability or livability of a specific place. However, it's important to know how Vancouver stacks up against other municipalities around the world as we learn to build more prosperous, healthy, and green cities.

Vancouver does well on national and international rankings that relate to the Greenest City goals. Organizations such as Corporate Knights and the Economist Intelligence Unit are increasingly recognizing Vancouver's efforts to be greener, more livable, more sustainable, and more resilient.

THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT

Why are we working towards becoming the Greenest City and why now?

Vancouver residents have an ecological footprint three times larger than the Earth can sustain. The decisions we make every day about how we move around the city, what we buy or eat, and how we deal with our waste means that we currently use far more than our fair share of the Earth's resources.

Fortunately, there are many solutions that address climate change and other environmental challenges while creating green jobs, strengthening our community, increasing the livability of our city and improving the well-being of our citizens.

In particular, the green economy is rapidly expanding and Vancouver is ready to take advantage of this opportunity. The former Chief Economist for the World Bank, Sir Nicholas Stern, has estimated that failure to tackle the climate crisis could cost the global economy \$6.6 trillion a year. This is an important lesson. Although there are investments required to become the Greenest City, there are also real risks associated with ignoring the issue.

This action plan sets out a clear vision, with concrete targets and the steps required to achieve each one of them. Between now and 2020, there will be a lot to learn and do to achieve the Greenest City goals. But there is little doubt that the results will improve our quality of life and make us even more globally competitive, while helping us live in better balance with the Earth's natural systems.

CREATING THE GREENEST CITY 2020 ACTION PLAN

The *Greenest City 2020 Action Plan* (GCAP) builds on the 2009 work of Mayor Gregor Robertson's Greenest City Action Team. This group of local experts researched best practices from leading green cities around the world, and established the goals and targets that would make Vancouver the world's Greenest City. This work was published in *Vancouver 2020: A Bright Green Future*.

Recognizing the importance of working toward the goals and targets right away, the team also recommended more than 75 quick-start actions that City of Vancouver staff could begin to act on immediately. The team then tasked City staff to come up with a more robust plan to outline what would be needed to achieve the goals and targets. The result is the *Greenest City 2020 Action Plan*.

During the development of the GCAP, many people gave their time and ideas. More than 35,000 people from around the world participated in the process online, through social media, and in face-to-face workshops or events. More than 9,500 people, most of whom lived in Vancouver, actively added their ideas, insights, and feedback to help determine the best path to achieve this plan. Participants often asked how they could begin to take these ideas and make them real in their own backyards, in their neighbourhoods, and in their businesses.

With over 60 City staff, more than 120 organizations, and thousands of individuals contributing to the creation of the GCAP, we've set the example for best practice in citizen collaboration and built the kinds of partnerships required for achieving the Greenest City goals and targets. These efforts will need to continue, with each of us contributing in our own way and in our own lives to becoming the Greenest City.

VANCOUVER, WE HAVE WHAT IT TAKES

The race to become the Greenest City in the world is both a friendly and fierce competition. It's friendly because when one city succeeds, we all benefit from the shared knowledge and improved health of our planet, as well as the new opportunities that emerge in the green economy. The race is a fierce one because the stakes are so high. In fact, the kind of change needed for all of us to thrive in healthy and prosperous communities requires a world full of Greenest Cities.

There are four key ingredients required for us to succeed: vision, leadership, action, and partnerships.

Vision

The *Greenest City 2020 Action Plan* is a strategy for staying on the leading edge of city sustainability. Our vision is to create opportunities today while building a strong local economy, vibrant and inclusive neighbourhoods, and an internationally recognized city that meets the needs of generations to come. This is a vision that has an important role for each of us.

Leadership

Leadership is required from City staff and elected officials, from organizations operating in diverse sectors across the city, and from Vancouver residents—many of whom have already contributed to the development of this plan. The City will need to lead the way in its own operations as well, demonstrating what a Greenest City looks like in City-run buildings, facilities, and operations. Leadership from other levels of government and other public sector agencies will also be critical to our success.

Action

A plan like this is only useful when it is acted upon. The GCAP gives clear targets to work towards, with baseline numbers to indicate our current level of performance. The highest priority actions for the next three years have been identified, as well as strategies and actions that will help to achieve our targets by 2020.

Partnerships

The City of Vancouver can't achieve the GCAP by itself, with its limited sphere of influence and resources. That means partnerships will be the key to achieving this plan. The process of developing the GCAP, as well as the implementation of the many quick-start actions, has demonstrated the power of partnerships in building our future city.



WE HAVE AN AMBITIOUS AND MEASURABLE ACTION PLAN

The Greenest City 2020 Action Plan is divided into 10 smaller plans, each with a long-term (year 2050) goal and medium-term (year 2020) targets. Together, these 10 plans address three overarching areas of focus: carbon, waste, and ecosystems.

Summaries of each plan are provided in the following pages. They include the current status of each target, the highest priority actions from each plan, and the key strategies that will take us to our goals. They also contain some useful definitions and contextual information, as well as stories about some of the Greenest City actions that are already underway in our city.

Although the GCAP is organized into 10 unique goals, the actions work together to form one integrated plan. For example, increasing composting and gardening helps achieve the Green Economy, Zero Waste, Access to Nature, and Local Food targets. Improving transit services supports the Climate Leadership, Green Transportation, and Clean Air targets.

While City Council approved the GCAP in July 2011, some elements of the plan will require further policy development or additional resources as well as Council approval before they can be implemented.

WALKING THE TALK: HOW VANCOUVER IS BECOMING THE GREENEST CITY INSIDE AND OUT

One of the things heard loud and clear during the public engagement process was that the City needs to set an example in its own operations. Four high-priority actions in City operations have been identified in response.

1. Plan and implement a comprehensive corporate waste reduction and diversion program for all City facilities.
2. Develop a procurement policy and practice that supports the purchase and use of local food in City-run facilities, including community centres and Park Board restaurants and concessions.
3. Look for opportunities to green community events that the City runs, sponsors, and permits.
4. Plan and implement a program to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as fossil fuel use in City-run buildings and vehicles, and achieve carbon-neutral operations.

“You join a multitude of caring people. No one knows how many groups and organizations are working on the most salient issues of our day: climate change, poverty, deforestation, peace, water, hunger, conservation, human rights, and more. This is the largest movement the world has ever seen.”

You Are Brilliant, and the Earth is Hiring
*The Commencement Address by Paul Hawken
to the University of Portland Class of 2009*

WE ALL HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY

The City can do a lot to ensure Vancouver achieves our Greenest City goals and targets. But there are also limits to the scope of the City's influence. That's why we need strong and effective partnerships with all of the organizations in Vancouver that have a key role to play in greening the city. This includes other levels of government, non-profit organizations, businesses, and social enterprises. Most importantly, it includes every citizen—and that includes you.

IDEA BAGS

→ WRITE YOUR IDEA FOR GREEN ACTION ON YOUR BAG....

→ PEOPLE WHO LIKE YOUR IDEA AND WANT TO ASSIST PUT THEIR CARD/CONTACT IN THE BAG.

→ COLLECT YOUR BAG AT END OF DAY!
MAKE IT HAPPEN!!

