

The Opportunity of Here and Now

Local Governments and a Green
Recovery

Breakout Room Dialogue
Summary

May 14, 2020



Community Energy
Association

Dialogue Summary on Local Governments and the Green Recovery

Background

On May 14th, Community Energy Association (CEA) and the BC Municipal Climate Leadership Council (BCMCLC) hosted an online dialogue called *The Opportunity of Here and Now: Local Governments and a Green Recovery*.

The online dialogue was a forum for local government elected officials, staff, and others to discuss the opportunities for leveraging local climate action for a green recovery. CEA is developing a supplement to the [BC Climate Leaders Playbook](#) that highlights several action areas that contribute to economic recovery while supporting bold climate action, improving equity, health, and resilience.

During the dialogue, participants were split up into Breakout Groups. They were tasked with two questions:

- How do you know when your community has recovered?
- What is one opportunity that could make the biggest impact on recovery in your community?

In this document, you will find some of the topics and findings from these discussions.

A “Crowd-sourced” Vision of the Recovered Future for Communities

Ideas from Dialogue Participants

Zero Carbon – Communities that are thinking long-term and planning for the climate by taking action that reduces GHG emissions. The new normal is not business as usual.

Resilience – Our future communities will exhibit economic and climate resilience.

Affordability – We can see a future where people can feel better than they did in life before the pandemic. We will also see unemployment rates are low once again.

Equability – The new normal will see more equitable communities with a reduction in the homeless population and food bank dependence. We will see an integration of women into areas of work where they may be less represented.

Public Spaces – People can once again gather and connect. Less fear and more connection. We will see spaces that encourage activity and food security.

Healthy Communities – We will have found solutions to social isolation.

Tourism – Our future communities see businesses and tourist attractions open to travellers.

Rural Broadband – A key indicator of recovery.

Engagement – People will be more engaged with democracy and governments. As well, we will see more opportunities for youth to help us make change. Equal access to internet and the digital world.

Collaboration – A recovered future will see better relationships between, families, neighbours and communities. A collaborative vision also means cooperation between governments, sectors, and silos. Not only are the communities strong, but we will see a sustainable, clean, and competitive British Columbia.

Compassion – Well being is core to decision making and compassion and connection allow for better learning and working.

Awareness – Communities should strive to a new normal that includes a broader awareness of ongoing change.

Highlighting Local – The resulting communities will see local producers and crafts highlighted.

Specific Next Steps and Opportunities

Actions that would have the Greatest Impact on Recovery

A significant proportion of the dialogue focused on the building and transportation action areas. Adaptation and green spaces also came up frequently. Below are some of the specific solutions that came up in the breakout rooms.

- **Buildings**
 - Home energy retrofits with simple installations that can be supported virtually
 - Retrofits that focus on education work with incremental steps
 - Building retrofit skills training and incentives
 - Innovative financing for retrofits
 - Building capacity with a focus on low income and a social lens
 - Incentives for wood construction and buildings
 - Deep home energy retrofit programs and an emphasis on high-performance, low-carbon buildings
- **Energy and Resource Recovery**
 - Woodstove exchange with financial savings
 - Clean energy coaches
 - Invest in organics diversion programs
 - Community-wide district heating projects
 - Biomass as a resource
- **Adaptation and Green Spaces**
 - Prioritize FireSmart Treatments and link to bioenergy/pellet industry
 - Develop programing around wildfire mitigation
- Zoning for zero – smart growth – green infrastructure
- **Transportation**
 - Investment in active transportation and autonomous transit
 - Support new work dynamics and increased telecommuting
 - Reallocating road space to create more active transportation options
 - Create a transit levy in other areas of BC to fund regional transportation networks
 - “Pop up” road closures
 - Address internet capabilities to promote remote working. Especially rural areas
 - Green public transportation and electric vehicles
- **Local Food Production**
 - Revisit local food production
 - Reallocation of roads and polices around food security
 - Promote collaboration between elderly and youth populations. Youth could farm land not being used by elderly people

