

# Climate & Ecosystem Action (Part 2): Suggested GTCA Priorities

Compiled by the GTCA's *Climate & Ecosystem Group*

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## Introduction

In order to address our global climate and ecological crises effectively, we humans need to make dramatic, deep and wide-ranging changes in all areas of our lives.

Climate scientist Diana Liverman has written about the need “to steer the Earth System away from a potential threshold and stabilize it in a habitable interglacial-like state. Such action entails stewardship of the entire Earth System – biosphere, climate, and societies – and could include decarbonization of the global economy, enhancement of biosphere carbon sinks, behavioral changes, technological innovations, new governance arrangements, and transformed social values.”

These changes have also been described as transformations or cultural shifts towards land-based, regenerative ways of living -- ones that acknowledge the inherent limitations imposed by our planet’s resources and processes and the need for us to redefine our relationship with the planet so that we can live within these boundaries. (See, for example, *One Planet Living* at <https://www.bioregional.com/one-planet-living>.)

This is a lot of work, the full scope of which is well beyond the capacity of the GTCA. We can, however, contribute to the process. Above all, our efforts should focus on avoiding defeatism by finding useful and achievable lines of action.

In *Climate & Ecosystem Action (Part 1): A Framework*, the companion document to this one, we listed a range of action options that we think ARE within the realm of possibility for the GTCA. Drawing on that list, in this document we suggest options the Board might start with as well as options the Board might subsequently pursue -- all depending on current conditions and available resources. [Note (a) that there are clearly quite a few items in the list below that are already being addressed by the GTCA and (b) that the question of who might carry an action forward, and which specific strategies might be used, is not addressed in this document.]

In doing our work, let’s keep in mind that:

- The need for action is urgent
- Climate and social chaos needs to be countered by climate activism, solutions, and finances
- In order to be successful, we’ll need to (amongst other things):
  - Educate ourselves and others and develop and maintain strong relationships (the soil feeding our actions)
  - Gather, talk, listen, walk the neighbourhood, and more -- sharing information, experiences, stories, perspectives, and support
  - Consider who -- people and organizations -- has agency (the ability / power to make things happen)
  - Identify funding sources (where appropriate)
  - Promote, support, advocate for actions of our own and/or of others
  - Select actions that address everyone’s needs and well-being -- including those of local Indigenous Peoples, people experiencing homelessness and food/economic insecurity, seniors, refugees and new immigrants
  - Understand that what we create needs to be: (a) appropriate to our area; and (b) something that emerges from conversation, relationships, trust, engagement and participation over time

- Take the time to develop thoughtful strategies for the selected actions before proceeding with them
- Provide support to people in order to bring about behavioural change -- help make it easier for them to make the changes
- Understand that we're engaging in an iterative process, one in which we'll need to be flexible and open to adapting whichever avenues we're pursuing in response to ever-changing circumstances

The **types of actions** we might engage in would include:

- Conversation, education & information sharing
- Advocacy (lobbying) -- by phone, email, presentation, etc. (Saanich staff & council, etc.)
- Review of proposed and pending plans, projects and actions initiated by other actors (developers, Saanich, etc.)
- Project creation and engagement -- our own projects, collaborations with others, support for others, etc.

In addition to addressing our own operations, the **constituencies** with which we'd work would be:

- Local residents (owners and renters)
- Local businesses and other organizations (including schools)
- Builders and developers operating in our area (new buildings as well as retrofits)
- The District of Saanich, CRD, Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, BC Transit, BC Hydro, Province, etc.

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## Suggested Actions -- Initial

To maximize the effectiveness of our efforts we need to maximize participation and collaboration -- we need to build relationships, build support for action, and work with the wider community. That being the case, we think it's important that our earlier actions include ones whereby we host events that bring people together to consider our current situation and our potential responses. Furthermore, we suggest that the options in bold text below might be good places to focus on in the immediate future.

### **GTCA Operations** (For the Board's consideration)

- 1. In general, ask the Board, its Working Groups, and the ongoing Climate & Ecosystem Group to look at both the Framework document and this one and to consider what they might do over and above what's currently being done.**
- 2. Continue sharing relevant information -- whether from Saanich or from elsewhere -- about workshops, rebate opportunities, action tools, and more.**
- 3. Work to strengthen the GTCA's communication infrastructure**
4. Support initiatives by, and host workshops with, other organizations -- One Planet Saanich, Sustainable Saanich, Saanich Emergency Program, Saanich Urban Forest Strategy, etc.
5. Seek opportunities to partner with, or otherwise support, (climate) initiatives and (climate-related) priorities of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and the Victoria Native Friendship Centre
6. Host local walking tours to visit relevant sites (homes with climate features, etc.)
- 7. Host a booth at the picnic -- focusing on community resilience, etc. -- together with Sustainable Saanich and other groups / organizations**
8. Host an annual climate fair where progress and success are celebrated, key lessons are shared, cross-pollination of ideas is encouraged, and citizen-led networks are strengthened.

9. Develop a means of establishing a baseline and monitoring success of reducing emissions and/or enhancing biodiversity in the community, possibly through collaborations with UVic grad students and regular (every 2 years) community surveys.

### **Mobility & Transportation** (Primarily for the Mobility and Transportation WG)

1. **Continue our current work promoting: a shift to alternative (active) modes of transportation; a shift away from fossil fuel use; and the redesigning of transportation and mobility corridors (notably Tillicum Rd and Gorge Rd W.)**
2. Work with Saanich to improve pedestrian and cycling safety for school children (via the “Safer Routes to School” project) and improved enforcement of necessary sidewalk and pathway snow clearance
3. Host public meetings for residents, businesses, and others to discuss mobility, transportation and parking in the neighbourhood and, in particular, the advantages of active transportation
4. Host local walking tours to identify pedestrian impediments and gaps in pedestrian infrastructure
5. Advocate for better bus service in GT area -- including starting the proposed route 40 sooner rather than later
6. Promote improved parking practices, on public and private property, for cars, bikes and other vehicles

### **Buildings & Infrastructure (Water, Energy)** (For the Buildings WG and the Board itself)

1. **Continue our current work in support of: increased density, of various kinds, in selected areas of the neighbourhood (including Tillicum Centre, Gorge Tillicum Village, and along Tillicum Road); low-carbon new developments (buildings, on-site mobility options, solar power generation; etc.); and maximal use of green infrastructure (permeability, etc.)**
2. Promote the crucial retrofitting of existing buildings in order to: minimize the use of fossil fuels; maximize resilience in the face of heat waves, storms, smoke, drought and water shortages, and other such events; maximize active transportation infrastructure; and maximize potential green energy production (solar panels, etc.)
3. When the opportunity arises, work with Anthem on plans for the redevelopment of Tillicum Centre -- promote the inclusion in the design of: (a) a pub overlooking Cuthbert Holmes Park; and (b) various arts features that would contribute to the site being a strong arts hub (e.g. artist work spaces, a gallery, art display and performance spaces, etc.)
4. Host public meetings to discuss local development, building retrofits, and increased density

### **Economic Activity: Food & Other Materials** (Food-related actions could be considered by a GT food group whose creation we might facilitate. The rest of the items would be for the Board to consider.)

1. **Host a Community Food Collaborative involving local residents, businesses and organizations to advise, monitor progress, and be ambassadors and partners for community food resilience. (This process could result in the formation of a non-GTCA group with a food-resilience action focus.)**
2. Promote street or neighbourhood level garage / plant sale days during the spring/summer
3. Promote alternative options for small scale vendors -- e.g. boulevard and driveway sales

### **Natural Ecosystems** (Primarily for the Natural Areas WG)

1. **Continue our current work: on boulevards (through the Boulevard Brigades); on pollinator habitat; on Gorge Park cleanup and invasive removal; with Pulling Together in Walter Park and Gorge Park; and in support of Cuthbert Holmes Park stewards**
2. **Build a group to promote and support tree planting efforts through Saanich programs and other avenues**

3. Advocate for improvements to our existing parks and for new (pocket) parks
4. Host a public meeting to discuss local parks and green spaces

**Community Wellbeing** (Primarily for the Community Connections WG and the Arts, Culture & Celebration WG)

1. **Launch the Community Connections Working Group that we supported in principle some time back.**
2. **Promote personal connections and networks within the community through building- and street-based groups and events, Block Watch, welcome programs for new residents (including immigrants and refugees) & businesses, use of street and park furniture, neighbour-to-neighbour digital platforms and programs, etc.**
3. Promote accessible communication, collaboration, and engagement opportunities for the full range of local residents, businesses, schools, and other organizations
4. Promote access to information, resources and services within the local community (health, education, food, repair, material items, funding/rebates, projects, climate mitigation and adaptation resources, etc.)
5. Work with the arts community to install public art pieces (short-term or durable) that awaken, inspire, and remind people of climate risks and opportunities for climate action while potentially providing functional benefits to address climate mitigation and/or adaptation.
6. **Continue hosting a range of celebrations and events that bring people together -- like the Picnic, the pumpkin parade, the pollinator day, Lights on the Gorge, Theatre Skam on a truck, Curb Appeal, etc.**

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## Suggested Actions -- Subsequent

**GTCA Operations** (For the Board’s consideration)

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**Mobility & Transportation** (Primarily for the Mobility and Transportation WG)

- Promote the redesign of the Burnside Road transportation and mobility corridor

**Buildings & Infrastructure (Water, Energy)** (For the Buildings WG and the Board itself)

- Reintroduce the concept and development of a Burnside-Harriet Village

**Economic Activity: Food & Other Materials** (Food-related actions could be considered by a GT food group whose creation we might facilitate. The rest of the items would be for the Board to consider.)

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**Natural Ecosystems** (Primarily for the Natural Areas WG)

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