

# Green jobs build sustainable communities

We want to live in communities that tackle climate change. Municipalities can lead the way in greenhouse gas reduction and environmental protection by creating the green jobs of the future.

Many municipal services are already green jobs, including water and wastewater operations, garbage and recycling services, public transit, electricity conservation and urban planning that encourages walking and cycling.

Municipalities can develop new public green jobs in source water protection and water conservation, energy conservation, small-scale renewable generation, and expanded recycling and public transit programs.

Cities and towns are better off with green jobs that are public. Local purchasing policies and training and employment programs for area residents stimulate municipal economies, build socially-sustainable communities and protect the planet.

## Waste diversion: reduce, reuse and recycle

Canadians are enthusiastic recyclers, eager to do their part by putting newspapers in the blue bin and sending food scraps for composting. These are the easy parts of waste diversion. We must significantly expand municipal diversion programs to move toward diversion rates of 80 per cent and, ultimately, “zero waste” communities.

New municipal initiatives can include:

- Extending waste diversion programs, regulations and standards to the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors;

- Expanding composting programs to all municipalities and types of residences; and
- Expanding municipal reuse, recycling and collection programs to include household furniture and appliances, electronics and construction waste.

Extended producer responsibility is an important element of waste diversion. Companies must pay to recycle the excess packaging and other waste they create, helping fund comprehensive public recycling programs.

Extended producer responsibility must not lead to recycling initiatives that are fragmented between individual companies or producer associations. Publicly-delivered waste diversion programs will provide coordinated, cost-effective service.

## Water conservation and source protection

Conservation protects our water resources, reduces demand on treatment infrastructure, and lowers demand for electricity – cutting municipal greenhouse gas emissions.

Infrastructure maintenance to detect and repair leaky water mains is a good start. Municipalities can lead the way and save money by conserving water in public facilities with projects like passive solar water heating, green roofs, and rainwater collection and reuse for parks and gardens.

Local governments can encourage and educate residents to take similar action like landscaping with low-water use plants and replacing inefficient appliances and water fixtures.

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In addition, improving access to water fountains and bottle refilling stations in public spaces will help phase out bottled water and the waste and pollution it creates.

Municipalities can also partner with other local governments or First Nations to develop and operate water and wastewater treatment systems. This pooling of resources and expertise is an alternative to privatization. Public-public partnerships can help train local operators, and support community control of water and wastewater facilities in smaller, rural and Aboriginal communities.

## **Energy conservation and renewable power generation**

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Retrofitting public buildings for energy efficiency and water conservation creates good green jobs. More can be created through regulation and incentives for energy-efficient construction and retrofitting of private buildings.

Municipalities can work in partnership with local electricity distribution utilities, district heating and cooling utilities and other public bodies to install small-scale renewable electricity generation on and in public facilities.

The potential for public, renewable power is all around us. City properties, landfills, schools, hospitals and universities are all opportunities to generate electricity using solar on flat roofs, geothermal or windmill projects on large open sites and in new developments, co-generation, and methane capture. Revenue from power generated at public facilities should be reinvested in public services.

## **Public transit and beyond**

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Municipalities can cut carbon emissions by building and expanding public transit systems that encourage residents to leave their cars at home or give them up entirely. Municipalities can develop transit services for people who have limited mobility or are too ill or frail to use regular

transit. These goals need strategic and financial support from upper levels of government.

Beyond public transit, municipalities can support new industries supplying local environmental initiatives. These goods and services include green vehicles, energy-efficient construction materials to retrofit buildings, solar panels, green roofs and greenhouses.

Municipalities can also encourage local food production and the development of local food marketing and distribution systems. These measures reduce the energy used and carbon footprint created in getting food to consumers.

## **Good green jobs are public jobs**

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Green jobs must be public jobs to grow our community economies and enhance services. Public sector jobs give back more to the community than lower-paid, insecure, private sector jobs. Good green jobs build communities that are socially and environmentally sustainable.