



# OAK BAY COOLKIT PROGRAM

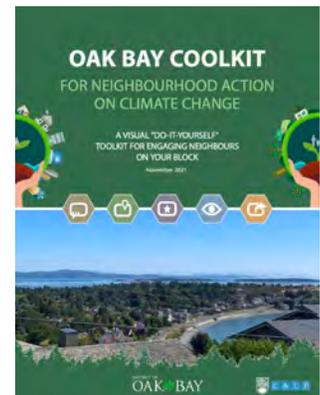
## YEAR 1 EVALUATION REPORT

Dec 2022

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Oak Bay Coolkit Program is designed to engage residents on climate-change solutions in the community. The **goal** is to reduce carbon footprints and create climate-proof, resilient neighbourhoods in Oak Bay, by:

- Engaging the Oak Bay community on local climate change impacts and the role that urban forests, renewable energy and other actions by residents can play in mitigating and adapting to climate change in their own neighbourhoods
- Empowering local climate champions in developing community-led climate action plans for implementation on private and public land working closely with District staff and aligned with local climate policies
- Building a self-supporting grassroots resident activation program reaching across the community, coordinated by the District and community organisations, and aligned with CCAWG recommendations and 2030 climate targets)
- Raising the media profile and visibility of local climate action in Oak Bay.



The Oak Bay Coolkit program is a joint initiative between the District of Oak Bay and the Collaborative for Advanced Landscape Planning (CALP) at the University of British Columbia's (UBC) Faculty of Forestry. It uses the Oak Bay Coolkit as a guide and framework for mobilizing individual and neighbourhood climate action, through participation in a **five-step process** of fun and interactive engagement activities:

1. Chatting - neighbourhood conversations
2. Mapping - vulnerability & asset mapping, carbon footprint calculators
3. Ranking - household and block sustainability rating, and
4. Visioning - visualizing practical climate solutions.
5. Acting - developing initial local climate action plans

The current Coolkit program is a three-year initiative, beginning in 2021 and completing in 2024. Key activities in Year 1 included:

Sept, 2021	Customization and distribution of <b>Oak Bay Coolkit</b> , communication plan, resident recruitment
Sept 28, 2021	Staff Training Workshop: a full day <b>staff workshop</b> facilitated by UBC on the Coolkit and proposed engagement process
May 14, 2022, June 4, 2022, June 25, 2022	Three <b>Community Workshops</b> : co-facilitated in-person by UBC and Oak Bay staff, where participants received training to act as community champions through the Oak Bay Coolkit process and activities, with input from local experts
July, 2022	Summer check-in on progress with District staff and UBC team in each neighbourhood
Nov 6, 2022	Tree Appreciation Day and Coolkit Celebration Event to acknowledge Coolkit Champions' progress

In Year 1 of the Coolkit program, residents and community groups were invited to receive in-depth training via these community workshops and one-on-one support from UBC and District staff, culminating in the development of individual and neighbourhood climate action plans. The program is geared towards micro-neighbourhoods where residents care the most, can take practical action, and can work collectively to achieve the greatest impact.

## 2. EVALUATION APPROACH

The purpose of this report is to summarize results and assess the effectiveness of the Oak Bay Coolkit Year 1 Program. This report also provides initial recommendations for next phases of the Coolkit Program.

The evaluation approach is based on a variety of data sources, including:

- Workshop observation notes & recordings
- Pre-post surveys of champions' learning, capacity, and suggestions
- Carbon footprint calculations
- Workshop assignments and climate action plans submitted by groups
- Check-in discussions and email correspondence with champion groups
- Meetings with staff



## 3. YEAR 1 RESULTS

While the Coolkit program experienced COVID-related delays, the impact of 2021's heat dome and other climate extremes in BC has elevated both the conversation among residents and media attention around climate change anxiety and preparedness in Oak Bay.

### Year 1 Program achievements included:

- An accessible and attractive Coolkit package customised to Oak Bay, available as a DIY resource free to all residents on the Oak Bay website, with a reasonably high media profile across the community
- District staff from across departments trained in the Coolkit process and involved in community workshops as co-facilitators and/or advisors to champions
- Program promotion through: tree-planting events attended by Council members, staff, & Coolkit champions; support from Oak Bay Neighbourhood Association; media coverage from CBC & local media; and presentation/workshop at ICLEI's national Livable Cities Forum in Victoria in 2022
- Well-attended week-end workshops and climate walk, with much collaboration within and between neighbourhood groups, resulting in a network of trained Oak Bay Coolkit champions and multiple local climate action plans,

### What we heard from participants:

- Enthusiasm for the Coolkit Champion program and collectively-developing local climate action plans
- Strong support and advice from existing community orgs., eg, Community Association of Oak Bay

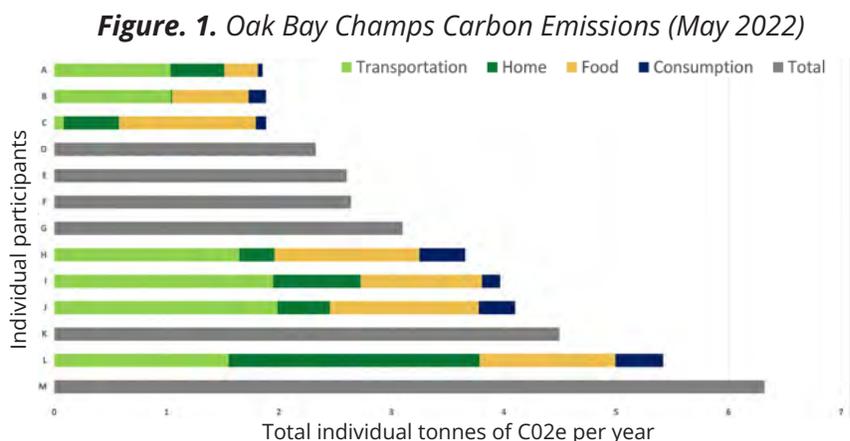
## 3.1 Who participated?

A total of 46 participants registered for the Oak Bay Coolkit program, representing most Oak Bay neighbourhoods, with 23-25 people attending each of the 3 Workshops (plus District staff, Council members, and other observers). A range of participants took the program, including:

- Several skilled community leaders/organizers (with different levels of experience),
- Many who were predisposed towards greener lifestyles
- Some with previous volunteer experience
- Neighbours and family members of other participants
- Members of community organisations

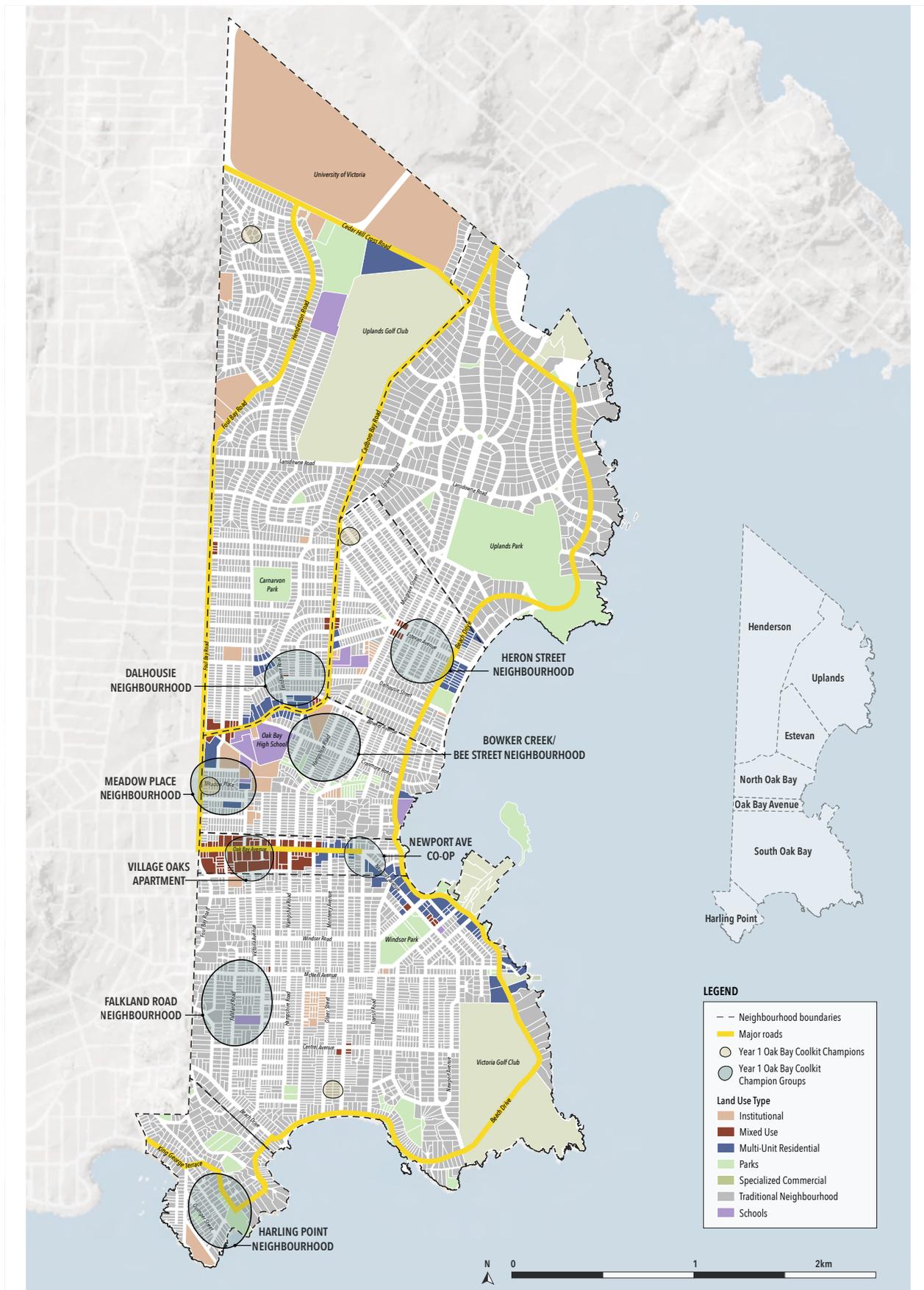
13 participants completed the **Saanich Carbon Calculator** to measure their carbon footprints, many for their first time. The sample's average individual emissions was 3.2 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e per year (see Fig. 1). This is low in comparison to averages from:

- Saanich - 6.7 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
- Canada - 14.3 tCO<sub>2</sub>e



The Coolkit champions self-organized into 8 neighborhood groups, in addition to 4 individual champions in other neighborhoods. Fig. 2 shows that collectively this represented all of Oak Bay's official neighborhoods (except Uplands), but were clustered mostly in the central and south parts of the District. Two groups represented multi-family housing, and 6 represented residential blocks with mostly single family homes, ranging in scale from one to several blocks. We estimate that collectively, the champion network in Year 1 represents approximately 12-15% of all residential blocks in the District.

**Figure. 2. Map of Oak Bay Champions and Champion Groups**



### 3.2 What did participants learn?

- Improved understanding of the “Big Moves” on climate actions by residents that align with the Oak Bay Climate Action Working Group (CCAWG) recommendations to Council
- Improved awareness of their individual carbon footprints
- Recognition of the value of collective climate action at the local scale
- Capacity-building skills gained in understanding local climate impacts and how to engage others: several groups designed and implemented innovative events and workshops, using visual learning tools like mapping and visualizing solutions to stimulate & record residents’ ideas.
- Bonding with neighbours and community through fun, social, hands-on activities
- Increased agency and motivation to make changes and collaborate with the Oak Bay District on climate issues/solutions addressing both private and public land.
- Champions acquired improved insights on other residents’ perceptions (pros and cons) of climate action.

ACTION MENU OF BIG MOVES	
1	Healthy ecosystems & resilient green infrastructure
2	Energy-efficient, low-carbon, healthy homes
3	Low-carbon, safe, healthy transportation
4	Healthy, sustainable gardening & local food
5	Sustainable lifestyle changes

Table 1. Local Climate Action Plans by action groups

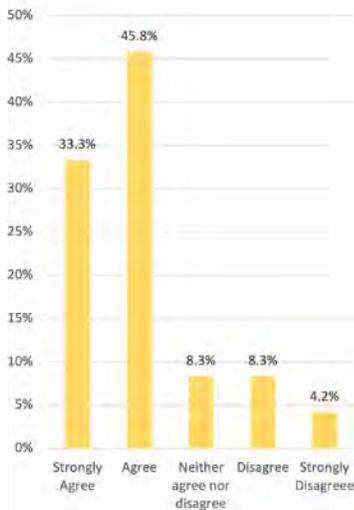
		ACTION MENU OF BIG MOVES					GOALS, Climate Action Plan
		1	2	3	4	5	
<b>INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONS</b>							
Champ #1		●	○				Climate conversations, protect existing tree canopy, energy-efficient home retrofit
Champ #2		●					Meadowscaping, lobby for municipal/building code changes
Champ #3		●	○	○	○	○	Maintain low-carbon lifestyle: micromanage waste, yard maintenance, transportation, diet
Champ #4		●					Engage with local neighbors in new North Henderson location
<b>MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING</b>							
Newport Ave Co-Op			●	○		○	Engage building residents, plant trees, green carport roofs, collect rainwater, switch to pale roof
Village Oaks Apartment		●					Low-carbon lifestyle, promote community walks, lobby for cool roofing for condo
<b>RESIDENTIAL BLOCK</b>							
<b>COLLECTIVE ACTION</b>	Bowker Creek/Bee Street	○		◐			'Ice-cream social' to engage w/ community and vision future for creek restoration, shading parking area
	Dalhousie	●			◐		Plant trees, install traffic calming structures, engage others in annual block party
	Harling Point	◐					Boulevard & private trees, car share, raingardens, bike racks, market pavilion/walkability, chickens etc.
	Heron Street	◐			◐		Plant trees, adaptive ground cover, install rain garden & barrels, pollinator garden
	Falkland Road	◐					Tree planting (one per lot in gardens), public tree stewardship, traffic calming, engage with local school
	Meadow Place	●					Greening cul-de sac

○ Mitigation ● Adaptation ◐ Mitigation + Adaptation

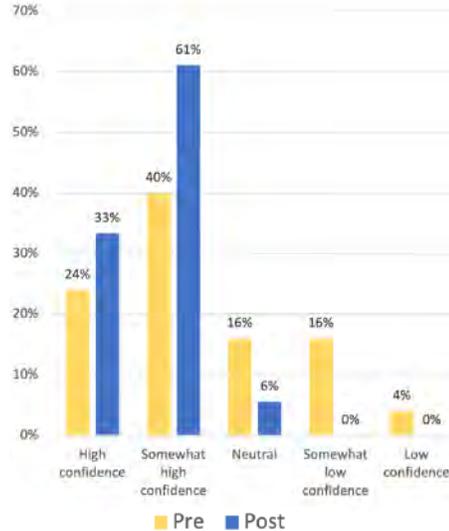
Specific post-workshop survey results are shown in Figures 3-6, including:

- **79%** of participants indicated that they had **experienced climate anxiety** before the workshops.
- Participants' **confidence in talking about climate change** to their community increased from **64% to 94%** (high/somewhat high level)
- Participants' **familiarity with climate action recommendations** developed by Oak Bay's Community Climate Action Working Group (CCAAG) increased from 42% to 61% (very/somewhat familiar)
- **94%** of participants indicated that the workshops met their expectations in learning **how to address climate change impacts within their neighbourhood** and **networking with others interested in climate action**
- **70%** of participants felt the workshops met their expectations in learning **how to talk to their friends, family and community about climate change**, but almost 30% felt their expectations were only somewhat met, suggesting this is an area for improvement.

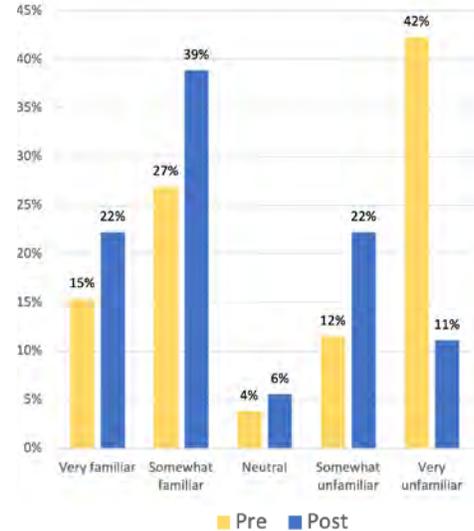
**Figure 3. Pre-Survey,**  
Have you experienced climate anxiety?



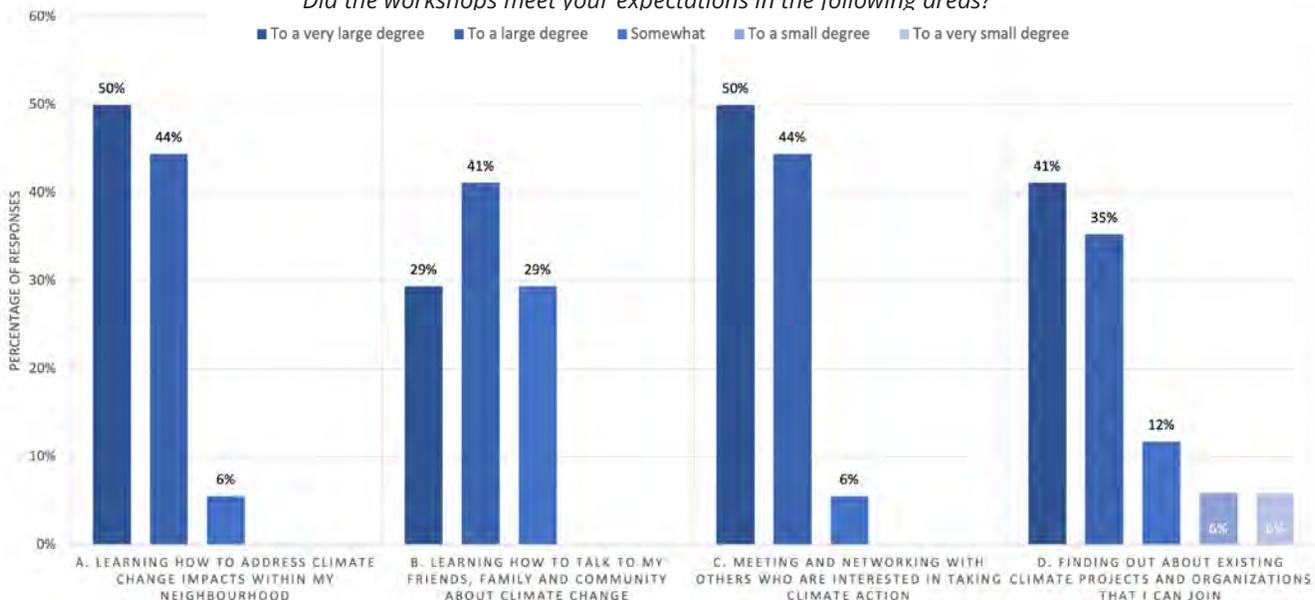
**Figure 4. Pre vs. Post Survey,**  
How confident do you feel talking to your community about climate change?



**Figure 5. Pre vs. Post Survey,**  
How familiar are you with Oak Bay's CCAAG's climate recommendations?



**Figure 6. Post-Survey,**  
Did the workshops meet your expectations in the following areas?



### 3.3 What climate actions are they planning?

All individual champions and groups developed climate action plans, as summarized in Table 1. Several champions also submitted individual goals or pledges for their own carbon footprints and behaviours, and longer-term ideas for continuing climate action beyond their immediate climate action plans.

Key aspects proposed by Oak Bay champions' in their climate action plans included:

- Priority actions covering a range of adaptation and mitigation solutions, and all the Big Moves promoted in the Oak Bay Coolkit.
- Diverse physical and behavioural solutions, such as raingardens, meadowscape, reducing air travel, traffic calming, wood stove, white roofs, etc.
- Actions already taken to engage additional community members through social gatherings and linking to existing organisations, such as two 'Ice-cream social' events, a Block Watch meeting, strata council meetings, walkability audit, block parties, etc

### 3.4 What short-term outcomes or behavioural changes have already happened?

- Expressed support for a ban on fossil fuel gardening equipment, action on 'no mow May' practices and active transportation, lobbying for traffic calming and street 'bulge-outs,' tree planting, etc.
- Active conversations in the neighbourhoods and strata councils, to include and engage others
- Participant-managed [Facebook Group](#) where Oak Bay Climate Champions can post relevant topics or events to promote Coolkit activities
- Actual decisions: e.g., Co-op decision to explore cool roofs when re-roofing
- Celebration event with certificates for Champions, tree-planting, and other champions recruited



## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YEAR 2 AND BEYOND

Based on these results and ongoing discussions with the Oak Bay Coolkit champion network and District staff, the recommendations below are provided to maintain the substantial momentum achieved, meet the agreed Coolkit program goals, and drive towards Oak Bay's urgent climate targets. These include helping to achieve and promote:

- the 40 per cent tree canopy cover by 2045 target
- 2030 GHG reduction targets (approximately halving in 7 years)
- building neighbourhood preparedness and resilience to climate extremes

#### **Coolkit Champion Cohort 1** (with District staff collaboration and support)

- Focus on implementing climate action plans wherever practical, with grant applications if necessary
- Develop attractive, visible signage to showcase local Climate Action Plans and inspire others
- Maintain and support Year 1 Champions through regular meetings (with expert talks etc), Facebook group, and email, to share progress and learnings
- Maintain messaging/media attention to keep momentum, with steady stream of engaging outreach material
- Expand neighbour participation in climate actions in the neighbourhood

## Recruiting Cohort 2 and beyond

- Target schools/youth (e.g. UVIC, Monterey School, Girl Guide ecological restoration project ) to expand and diversify other groups, with increased emphasis on younger age demographic
- Target North Henderson and Uplands areas for better geographic coverage
- Use more direct, less registration-focused outreach, with more individual interactions to identify and encourage signing up
- More focus on community hubs & existing organisations to get engaged and continue supporting champions (e.g. schools, faith groups, local businesses, etc.)
- Run initial training workshop for incoming champions/groups, led by District staff with UBC CALP support, and involving existing Year 1 champions with success stories and guidance.

## Building and Improving the Oak Bay Coolkit program:

- Develop a local grant process to stimulate and incentivize climate action projects (staff)
- Further expand staff involvement in workshop delivery and monthly meetings, to provide expert advice and help resolve issues arising with climate solutions proposed on public land
- Consider student intern from UBC Urban Forestry program as staff support in Year 3
- Design, promote and hold celebration event for Year 2 to award prizes for:
  - Year 1 Champions (trailblazers) based on significant achievements in implementing CAPs, number of new neighbours recruited, etc.
  - Year 2 groups based on climate action plans developed, innovations etc.
- Consider a friendly competition to incentivize and promote the program, early and late in Year 2

## Scaling up the Coolkit Program

The experience of presenting the Oak Bay Coolkit program at the ICLEI Living Cities Forum demonstrates that there is considerable interest in what Oak Bay is achieving on the neighborhood climate action, and that there is growing demand for such programs elsewhere. UBC's experience in offering a Micro-certificate in **Climate Action and Community Engagement**, based in part on the Coolkit approach and the Oak Bay program, suggests opportunities for Oak Bay's leadership to be leveraged in training and **collaboration with other local governments**, to help scale up similar programs in community-based climate action. Collaboration with Saanich, Victoria, CRD and other nearby municipalities present potential advantages, with for example inclusion of external staff in ongoing workshops or activities in Oak Bay.



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with strong support from District staff  
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