

2013

# Lemons into Lemonade



Transition Toronto

Green Neighbours 21

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## Summary

Global forces such as reduced environmental quality and declining resource availability pose serious threats to the quality of life in Canada's cities. In an effort to head off the local impact of these threats, Green Neighbours 21, with the help of Transition Toronto, consulted with a group of Ward 21 residents on how the ward could operate within its resource and environmental constraints and continue to be a community whose members could live fulfilling, satisfying lives. Faced with the prospect of some exceptionally sour lemons in the form of climate change, resource decline, and global economic instability, participants chose to make lemonade by developing a resilient local economy and culture. The consultation described here (held January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013), was one in which participants rose to the challenge of imagining pathways to a resilient, environmentally responsible, satisfying way of life in their community.

Participants considered five aspects of their community: food, energy, education and the arts, the built environment, and transport. Sub-groups were tasked with envisioning an ideal version of their neighbourhood in the year 2030 with respect to these aspects of their community, given growing constraints on resources such as fossil fuel and the desire to live in coherence with the natural environment. This visioning task required answers to questions like, "Where would most of the food consumed in Ward 21 come from, given that international imports will be more expensive in the year 2030?" and "How will goods be transported to and from Ward 21 in a post-or-low-carbon 2030?"

Once participants established and presented their visions for the future, they were asked to develop lists of actions and projects that would commence today to ensure that their envisioned positive and viable future would be possible. Lists of actions that could be completed within one and three year/s were generated. Participants were given eight votes each to distribute among the actions to indicate how important and viable they felt the actions were. The following document presents the visions, actions, and number of votes for each action developed through this community consultation process.

## Food

Re-localization of the food supply and development of urban agriculture were central elements to the vision of food in Ward 21's future. Food-related skills development in the community and in schools was also seen as important. Suggested actions reflect this vision by offering practical avenues for developing local, sustainable food and food education.

### Food: Vision

The future of food in Ward 21 should include:

- Use of land-partnering, community gardens, development of businesses cultivating private land (e.g. Not Far From the Tree).
- Edible cityscapes
- Communal gardens and cooking
- Food-related skills building
- Gardens and food education in schools

### Food: Actions

Table 1 lists the actions for Ward 21 to be taken over the next year; Table 2 lists the 3-year actions.

Table 1: 1-year actions for food in Ward 21

Scale of action	1-year actions	Votes
Individual	Inviting/hosting events in homes and taking food for people who can't go out	3
Individual/Groups	Commitments to eating lower down the food chain	8
	Get involved in canning/storing	3
Neighbours/Community	Lobby government on issues such as GMO labeling	2
	Join and create food co-ops and CSAs (e.g. Karma food co-op)	1
Wider community/Ward	Engage in dialogue with community organizations for public space re-use and community food growing	3
	Promote balcony gardening	2

Table 2: 3-year actions for food in Ward 21

Scale of action	3-year actions	Votes
Individuals/Groups/Community	Help develop more community gardens	7
Groups/Community	Embed food into education system using resources for awareness	10
	Plotting space/re-purpose lands	2
Groups/Community/Ward	Start local buying club (e.g. Karma Co-op)	2
	Technological innovation: Organize local food via internet	0

## Energy

Ward 21 resident's vision for energy captured critical aspects of a viable, low-carbon future including a focus on energy conservation, efficient use of energy, community cooperation and financing on energy issues, along with the importance of the energy-economy nexus. It also captured how fundamental energy awareness is to all aspects of society. Actions range from thinking and planning for lower energy use to lobbying government for a carbon tax.

### Energy: Vision

The future of energy in Ward 21 should include:

- Renewable energy generation as a requirement in any new building.
  - E.g. Geothermal, green roofs, passive solar
- Incentives for retrofits
  - E.g. recapture of waste heat
- Community geothermal and heating
  - E.g. New condo development between Winona and Atlas offers neighbours access to its geothermal heating system.
- Interest-free loans to improve energy performance (as exist in North Dakota)
- Different thinking about money/value as it pertains to energy
- Community Initiatives
  - For energy conservation
  - For solar investment (solar energy cooperatives)
- Encouraging white roofing
- More bike lanes
- Improved public transit
- Offshore wind power in Lake Ontario

### Energy: Actions

Table 3 lists the buildings-related actions for Ward 21, and Table 4 lists the 3-year actions.

**Table 3: 1-year actions for energy in Ward 21**

Scale of action	1-year actions	Votes
Individual	Walk more, drive less, use less energy	5
	Plan ahead	1
Individual/Groups	Buy shares in community power	0
	Car sharing	1
	Continue HEET	7
Neighbours/Community	Build network for improving energy performance through education	1
	Keep coming to GN21 to learn	1
Wider community/Ward	Promote tree planting	7
	Extend network	0

**Table 4: 3-year actions for energy in Ward 21**

Scale of action	3-year actions	Votes
Individuals/Groups/Community	Promote energy efficient cars/appliances	0
Groups/Community	Educate on horticulture/agriculture and overlap	0
	Revive WISE	1
Groups/Community/Ward	Lobby for improved energy requirements	5
	Lobby for carbon tax and higher electricity prices	7

## Education and the Arts

Education in a post-carbon Ward 21 will need to expand far beyond the conventional curriculum to allow community members to share skills and ways of living so that future residents can meet the necessities of life on their own more locally. Abundant local arts will play a large role in providing quality of life. Actions focus on educating communities about the environment and local production of goods and art.

### Education: Vision

Education in Ward 21's future will need to include:

- Community childcare and education
- Knowledge and skills sharing by the community
- Hands-on learning and places to experiment and create art
- Practical, artisanal re-skilling
- A place for all-ages learning (e.g. seniors continued learning)
- A place for seniors to share their knowledge

Arts in the future of Ward 21 will allow for

- Increased amateur community theatre and stage productions
- Beautification and cleaning of the neighbourhood
- Everyday arts that helps re-awaken our connectivity to nature

### Education and the Arts: Actions

Table 5 lists the buildings-related actions for Ward 21, and Table 6 lists the 3-year actions.

**Table 5: 1-year actions for education and the arts in Ward 21**

Scale of action	1-year actions	Votes
Individual	Undertake mapping exercise of existing projects/programs in Ward 21	3
	Research other communities that are successful	0
Individual/Groups	Unplug our TVs	2
	Provide information and resources for people interested	2

	in environment	
	Develop an environment resource centre on GN21 website	1
Neighbours/Community	Initiate events	0
	Create community hubs	3
	Make community inventory of skills/possessions	0
Wider community/Ward	Go to open mics – organize them at local businesses to also support the business	3

Table 6: 3-year actions for education and the arts in Ward 21

Scale of action	3-year actions	Votes
Groups/Community	Maintain an environmental resource and information centre	2
Groups/Community	Create repair cafes and “maker spaces”	15
	Create community inventory	2
Groups/Community/Ward	Create community hubs in community spaces and condos	2
	Use/enliven existing spaces (e.g. unused library space)	2
	Encourage local amateur arts	0

## Buildings

The vision for buildings included improving the environmental impact and resource consumption of both new and existing buildings as well as a focus on multi-use buildings and integration into other aspects of city infrastructure. Actions proposed included acceleration of improvements to building performance and working together/with local government to improve required building standards.

### Buildings: Vision

The future of new buildings was envisioned to include:

- Environmental standards beyond those required by LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), with standards being closer to the passive house standard
- Multi-purpose/use buildings
- Sustainably sources building materials
- Affordability
- Weather protection
- Bike racks and facilities encouraging auto-share
- On-site composting
- Construction designed to last through the long term

The future of existing buildings was envisioned to include:

- On-site compost

- Re-use wherever possible
- Upgrades for energy efficiency (such as those in the proposed Mayor’s Tower Renewal Project)
- Long-term loans for retrofits
- Multi-purpose/use

## Buildings: Actions

Table 7 lists the buildings-related actions for Ward 21, and Table 8 lists the 3-year actions.

Table 7: 1-year actions for buildings in Ward 21

Scale of action	1-year actions	Votes
Individual	Worm composting in individuals’ apartments	1
	Increase insulation, use energy efficient lightbulbs in individuals’ homes	0
	Use less water at home, purchase a rain barrel	1
	Plant a tree	3
Individual/Groups	Speak up at the Feb. 5 <sup>th</sup> Salon	0
	Convert “personal” concrete/impermeable spaces into green spaces (e.g. driveways/parking lots into green space)	2
Neighbours/Community	Organize more green roofs/walks	0
Wider community/Ward	Articulate our visions to councilors	4
	Become knowledgeable about the development process	5
	Promote building development to incorporate vertical farming	0

Table 8: 3-year actions for buildings in Ward 21

Scale of action	3-year actions	Votes
Individuals/Groups/Community	Talk with neighbours about our successes	4
Groups/Community	Learn about trades required for retrofits	1
Groups/Community/Ward	Work toward all condos/apartments having on-site compost	10
	Work with councilors to change building standards	3
	Become more involved in the development process	0

## Transport

The future of Transport in Ward 21 would include much stacking of functions, from using streetcar tracks to transport goods as well as people to re-developing transport corridors to encourage public transit, walking, biking, and even horses. Actions include making public transit more appealing, and more effectively engaging with government on the development of accessible, lower carbon transit.

## Transport: Vision

Transportation in Ward 21’s future would be characterized by

- Using the dedicated streetcar lane for transporting goods as well as people
- Multi-use roads
  - Bike, horse, and scooter lanes with cement dividers
  - Infrastructure for motorized wheelchairs
- Wider sidewalks
- PRT (Personal Rapid Transit)
- Fewer motorized vehicles
  - Incentives via taxes
  - Increased cost (of fuel and energy)

## Transport: Actions

Table 9 lists the buildings-related actions for Ward 21, and Table 10 lists the 3-year actions.

**Table 9: 1-year actions for transport in Ward 21**

Scale of action	1-year actions	Votes
Individual	Walk, bike and ride TTC	3
	Car pool	2
	Research alternative transport	0
Individual/Groups	Help make others' rides on TTC more enjoyable/positive through engagement with strangers	9
Neighbours/Community	Petition/Lobby government on the topic of public transit investment and carbon tax	13
Wider community/Ward	Create bicycle sharing network (and cargo wagons)	0
	Support the Toronto Climate Network	3
	Develop public liability indemnity for hitchhiking commuters	1

**Table 10: 3-year actions for transport in Ward 21**

Scale of action	3-year actions	Votes
Individuals/Groups/Community	Recruit others to build/join a network	0
Groups/Community	Create online calendar of public consultations on transit developments	3
Groups/Community/Ward	Create local businesses to employ local people (and thereby create alternatives to commuting)	1
	Create a lobby group to attend public consultations regularly and advocate for walkability and cycling	2
	Vote out Stephen Harper and support progressive minds	11
	Develop transit along hydro right of ways	
	Reduce cost of public transit	1



## Conclusion

The people have spoken! The exercise showed that many residents of Ward 21 are well aware of the threats that face their personal and community well-being and are motivated by the possibility for positive change. Great visions for the future were drafted for each topic area- food, energy, education and the arts, buildings, and transport- followed by creative and tangible actions that could be implemented to start bringing these visions to life. The following ten actions are the top selections in each topic area:

### *One year actions:*

- 1) Food: Commitments to eating lower down the food chain (8 votes)
- 2) Energy: Continue HEET (7 votes) and promote tree planting (7 votes)
- 3) Education and the Arts: Undertake mapping exercise of existing projects/programs in Ward 21 (3 votes), create community hubs (3 votes) and go to open mics – organize them at local businesses to also support the business (3 votes)
- 4) Buildings: Become knowledgeable about the development process (5 votes)
- 5) Transport: Petition/Lobby government on the topic of public transit investment and carbon tax (13 votes)

### *Three year actions:*

- 1) Food: Embed food into education system using resources for awareness (10 votes)
- 2) Energy: Lobby for carbon tax and higher electricity prices (7 votes)
- 3) Education and the Arts: Create repair cafes and “maker spaces” (15 votes)
- 4) Buildings: Work toward all condos/apartments having on-site compost (10 votes)
- 5) Transport: Vote out Stephen Harper and support progressive minds (11 votes)

Of these, the following five actions emerged as the top selections:

1. Education and the Arts: Create repair cafes and “maker spaces” (15 votes)
2. Transport: Petition/Lobby government on the topic of public transit investment and carbon tax (13 votes)
3. Transport: Vote out Stephen Harper and support progressive minds (11 votes)
4. Buildings: Work toward all condos/apartments having on-site compost (10 votes)
5. Food: Embed food into education system using resources for awareness (10 votes)

Now the real work begins. A follow up session is anticipated to provide Ward 21 members with the opportunity to carry some of the suggested actions forward. Members will be notified.

Thank you all for your energy and compassion towards your community and beyond. We can, together, through faith, courage and action, become the visions we create.

The Transition Toronto Team