

part e

tools 'n tips

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Frank Zupan

“

I am a renter and don't feel much ownership in the community or where I live, but the neighbourhood street reclaiming gave me a feeling of ownership and connected me with other people who were active and cared about the issues. Therefore I too became motivated.

”

*-Karen Hawbolt,
Neighbourhood Traffic
Group member*

skill building – leadership tips

This section offers some suggestions for how you can work cooperatively as a team and effectively carry out some of the key functions of community organizing. It can be helpful if a few people show leadership in using these skills, set the tone for cooperative group interaction, and encourage others to learn and use them as well.

getting people involved ¹

- ask group members to invite others – 80% of volunteers doing community work say they began because somebody invited them to
- go to where people are - to meetings of other groups, events, places people gather - particularly to involve people of different ethnicities, youth, seniors, and others who may not come to you.
- make it easy and fun for people to participate and give input; for example, a coffee clatch in a neighbour's living room or front yard is a fun social activity that will attract people
- hand-deliver invitations to events - personal connections make a huge difference in getting people to remember and attend a meeting or event!
- create detailed membership lists that include name and contact info, personal interests, skills, what the person is willing to do and what they do not want to do
- never miss a chance to collect names, addresses, email, phone numbers - have a sign-in sheet at every meeting and event and add these to your group contact list on an ongoing basis; in exchange, hand out an info sheet explaining the nature of your group
- try to include those who are under-represented, who may have barriers that prevent them from contributing their perspective and skills to your group
 - ask people in the group you are trying to reach how they would like to be approached
 - address their issues

- use your connections - who knows someone in the group you are trying to include?
- identify a group as people you want to work with, not as a target group you want to “bring on side”
- organize activities that focus on children - this is a great way for people of all ethnic backgrounds and income levels to meet one another.
- include activities that youth will be interested in helping with or participating in
- do surveys to gather new ideas and get people interested
- door-knock
- create newsletters, leaflets, or a bulletin board to inform people of your group’s activities on an on-going basis
- use other organizations’ contact lists to reach people in your neighbourhood



Kim Hendess

keeping people involved

- welcome newcomers - introduce people to others in the group, invite them to events, pass on information, and help them find a place in the group where they can use their skills and interests; assign this role to an individual or committee.
- pay attention to group process - ensure that decision-making processes, roles, and healthy behaviours are understood by those involved
- discuss the group “contract” - review what people expect of the group, and what the group expects of volunteers in terms of time and responsibility
- act more, meet less - activities that aren’t meetings attract more people and are a heck of a lot more fun!
- keep time demands modest - only hold meetings if they’re necessary, respect peoples’ busy schedules, expand the number of people involved to share the workload, and set realistic time commitments for projects

- do things in twos – motivation to get work done is higher, and ethnically or gender mixed pairs can benefit from the different perspectives, communication styles, and personal networks
- provide social time and activities – just the reason that fun street reclaiming activities can be such a community-building organizing tool
- provide skills and training - increase your group's effectiveness while providing people with a personal benefit for getting involved; skills such as leadership, group facilitating, and conflict resolution are important enough to warrant a special day or weekend workshop



Kim Hendess

how to make decisions

A key to effective group process is discussing and agreeing on decision-making guidelines, and making them known to all group members. Different methods for making decisions are:

- show of hands to informally gauge how the group feels about an issue
- voting – perhaps using a two thirds majority to avoid contentious decisions
- consensus – coming to mutual agreement by addressing all concerns
- live with disagreements – agree on the big picture and get on with it

how to reach consensus:

Many groups prefer to use consensus to ensure that everyone feels heard and part of the decision. However, many people and groups are unclear about what consensus actually is. Consensus is a process whereby agreement is reached through voicing and addressing all concerns. It can be very time consuming, but in the end, it will result in more people “buying in” to the decision. Here is a brief guideline for how to reach consensus.

- state the proposal
- group discussion and clarification of proposal
- discussion of “legitimate concerns”, recorded and listed for the whole group to see
- presenter of proposal has chance to clarify the proposal, change it, explain why it is not in conflict with the group's values, or ask those with concerns to “stand aside”

- group attempts to resolve concerns; those who agree to “stand aside” agree to live with the proposal, even if their concerns haven’t been addressed
- if concerns remain unresolved, the group examines these concerns in relation to the group’s purpose and values
- those with concerns are again asked to stand aside or state that their concerns have been addressed; if they don’t:
- continue asking for suggestions to resolve the concerns until everyone finds the proposal acceptable or stands aside.

If concerns persist, it may be necessary to vote, requiring a strong majority, or to ask the presenter to withdraw the proposal. At the end of the process, the facilitator should state the outcome clearly.

For this process to work, everyone must understand that a “legitimate concern” is a possible outcome of the proposal that would adversely affect the organization or the community, or is in conflict with the purpose or values of the group.

If your group uses consensus, it can be useful to empower individuals or committees to make certain decisions. It should be clear what kind of decisions need to be made by consensus and which can be made by individuals or committees.

good agenda setting ²

A good meeting is guided by a good agenda. Unfortunately, when most people plan a meeting, they only think about the agenda topics, and don’t give thought to the outcomes they want to achieve. Here are a few tips for setting a productive agenda:

- for each topic on the agenda, list a desired outcome that you want to take place before the end of the meeting, e.g.:
 topic: next street reclaiming activity
 outcome: decision about which activity to carry out and delegation of tasks
- for each desired outcome, design a process to reach it - what steps can take place to achieve this outcome?

“

Get agreement on the big picture, then turn to action. Don’t exhaust yourself trying to achieve consensus on details...

You can (and should) empower individuals, committees, or task forces to make certain decisions.

”

*-Charles Dobson,
 Citizen’s Handbook*

“

I joined the Neighbourhood Traffic Group because the first meeting I went to was so well run, the facilitator was excellent, and everyone took turns listening to the opinions of others. It seemed like a great group that I would enjoy working with.

”

*-Josette Vigneux,
Neighbourhood Traffic
Group*

e.g. brainstorm & agree on which street reclaiming activity your group will organize next, agree on the tasks that need to get done & by when, then assign people to do these tasks and report back to the group

- keep the desired outcomes realistic - you can only pack so much into one meeting
- if work can be done between meetings or in preparation for the meeting, assign people to do this work
- instead of having open discussion for each agenda item, try using other “thinking activities” such as brainstorming, visioning, questions and answers, pros and cons, or giving feedback
- for best results, have an agenda planning session before every meeting
- review the agenda at the beginning of every meeting, ask for amendments or additions, prioritize items, agree on a time limit for each agenda item, and ensure that it is possible to cover the agenda in the time allotted
- respect everyone’s time - stick to the set meeting time and if you must go over, seek everyone’s permission first

how to run an effective meeting

- set a convenient time, date, and place to meet
- agree on the agenda beforehand
- start the meeting by choosing a facilitator, a recorder, and a timekeeper
- begin with a round of introductions if necessary
- agree upon and follow a set of discussion guidelines such as: listen to others, do not interrupt, ask clarifying questions, welcome new ideas, do not allow personal attacks, and treat every contribution as valuable
- review the agreements of the previous meeting
- ask for amendments or additions to the agenda, then begin working through it
- record actions that get decided on, who will carry them out, and how much will be accomplished before the next meeting
- set a time, place, and agenda for the next meeting

brainstorming ³

When brainstorming, it is best to have a flipchart or chalkboard to record all ideas where people can see them, so they know their idea is being heard. Have one person facilitate the brainstorm (introduce, call on people to speak, clarify what people have said, keep ideas on track and free of judgement) and another person to record all ideas as they are called out.

Be sure to introduce the brainstorming exercise by explaining that all ideas are good ideas – you want to get as many ideas out as possible, without judging them or ruling any out. Once people start calling out their ideas, encourage them to think creatively. Some guidelines:

1. Every contribution is worthwhile.
 - Even weird, way-out ideas
 - Even confusing ideas
 - Especially silly ideas
2. Suspend judgement.
 - We won't evaluate each other's ideas
 - We won't censor our own ideas
 - We'll save judgement for later discussion

When you think people have run out of ideas, allow a bit more time for last minute inspiration – this is often when the most creative ideas come out. When you are finished brainstorming, debrief the activity by sharing reflections on the list as a whole. Value all ideas and thank everyone for their input.



Kim Hendess

“
... *facilitating a meeting is more than merely an occasion for solving a problem or creating a plan. It is also an opportunity to support profound personal learning, and it is an opportunity to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of the group as a whole.*
”

-Sam Kaner, *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*

facilitating ⁴

Every meeting should have a facilitator. The role of the facilitator is to help everyone do their best thinking, and help the group make progress. A facilitator encourages full participation, promotes mutual understanding, cultivates shared responsibility, and enables the group to search for inclusive solutions and build sustainable agreements. Some tips for facilitating a meeting are:

- watch group vibes - respond to the mood of the group; if people seem tense because of unvoiced disagreements, bring these concerns into the open for discussion
- ask open ended questions that seek constructive suggestions from group members
- summarize what others say to help them feel heard
- make sure everyone gets a chance to speak - e.g. initiate a round so all group members, even quiet ones, have a chance to speak and present their views without fear of being interrupted
- inject humour - helpful in dealing with cranky or petty behaviour
- learn to deal with difficult dynamics - treat these as a group situation rather than individual behaviour that needs to be fixed
- suggest options when time runs out - identify areas of partial consensus, suggest tabling the question until next meeting, suggest having a committee deal with the issue and report back
- try a closing round at the end of the meeting - this allows everyone to bring up matters that weren't on the agenda, or to evaluate some part of the meeting

For excellent, easy to understand strategies and tools for effective facilitation, see the *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* by Sam Kaner, 1996

dealing with difficult dynamics ⁵

In dealing with difficult dynamics (and every group has them!) it can be helpful for the facilitator to treat them as a group situation rather than as individual personalities that need to be fixed.

Flare-ups

If two people get into a heated discussion, summarize the points made by each and then ask others if they have other opinions or issues. Focus on the majority rather than the dominant minority.

Grand standing

When one person is over-participating, everyone else is under-participating. Focus your efforts on the majority and encourage them to participate more. Trying to change the dominant person merely gives that person all the more attention.

Low participation by the entire group

Switch from large-group discussion to a different format such as a brainstorm or small group activity that may make people feel more comfortable participating.

Broken recording

If someone keeps repeating the same point, assure them their point has been heard. If necessary, ask the group if they want to allow the person to finish making their point.

Interrupting

Step in immediately with “Hold on, let X finish what they have to say.” If necessary, ask the person who tends to interrupt to act as the recorder for the next meeting.

Continual criticizing

Ensure that the critical person feels their concerns are legitimate. For example, “Yes, it will be difficult to slow and reduce traffic on our street, but we’re exploring some great ideas that may just work”. If necessary, ask the critical person to take on an achievable task so they feel some level of success.

Poor follow-through on assigned tasks

Have people do assignments in teams. Build in a report-back process at a midpoint before the task must be completed. This gives anyone having trouble a chance to get help.

fundraising

You don't necessarily need to raise funds to begin organizing your neighbourhood or carry out a street reclaiming activity. As much as possible, "beg and borrow" your materials and just use what you and your neighbours have lying around.

However, if you'd like to raise some funds for producing a newsletter or other activities, here are some tips:

- Ask for **individual contributions** - this can build community and support for your group; can be through memberships, voluntary subscriptions to newsletters, collections at meetings, door-to-door canvassing, donation jar at events...

The Neighbourhood Traffic Group has raised substantial funds by collecting a suggested \$5 donation from every household "table" selling goods at their annual neighbourhood-wide sidewalk sale.



- **In-kind donations** - seek in-kind or non-monetary contributions such as printing, equipment, furniture, space, services, food, and time. Local businesses are usually quite willing to make in-kind donations.
- **Auctions** - consider auctioning off goods or services at a block party to the highest bidder. These can be donations from local businesses or from neighbours such as babysitting, home-baked cookies, 4 hours of house repairs, gardening assistance, etc.
- **Grants** - neighbourhood houses and municipal governments may have grants that small community groups can apply for; provincial or federal grants usually require the applicant organization to be registered as a charitable society.

For more information about seeking and obtaining grants, see: *Grassroots Grants – An Activist's Guide to Proposal Writing* by Andy Robinson, Chardon Press, Berkeley California 1996.

evaluating

Some tips for evaluating:

- don't evaluate when trying to create or generate ideas
- make honest evaluation part of your group's culture - do it often!
- check on benefits to members - did you learn anything? did you have fun? did you feel part of the group?
- compare results with objectives - is what happened, what you wanted to happen? if not, why?
- incorporate lessons learned in your future activities

qualities of "participatory" groups and conventional groups: ⁶

Everyone participates, not just the vocal few.

The fastest thinkers and most articulate speakers get more air time.

People give each other room to think and get their thoughts all the way out.

People interrupt each other on a regular basis.

Opposing viewpoints are allowed to co-exist in the room.

Differences of opinion are treated as conflict that must either be stifled or "solved".

People draw each other out with supportive questions. "Is this what you mean?"

Questions are often perceived as challenges, as if the person being questioned has done something wrong.

Each member makes the effort to pay attention to the person speaking.

Unless the speaker captivates their attention, people space out, doodle, or check the clock.

People are able to listen to each other's ideas because they know their own ideas will also be heard.

People have difficulty listening to each other's ideas because they're busy rehearsing what they want to say.

Each member speaks up on matters of controversy. Everyone knows where everyone stands.

Some members remain quiet on controversial matters. No one really knows where everybody stands.

Members can accurately represent each other's points of view - even when they don't agree with them.

People rarely give accurate representations of the opinions and reasoning of those whose opinions are at odds with their own.

People refrain from talking behind each other's backs.

Even in the face of opposition from the person-in-charge, people are encouraged to stand up for their beliefs.

A problem is not considered solved until everyone who will be affected by the solution understands the reasoning.

When people make an agreement, it is assumed that the decision still reflects a wide range of perspectives.

Because they don't feel permission to be direct during the meeting, people talk behind each other's backs outside the meeting.

People with discordant, minority perspectives are commonly discouraged from speaking out.

A problem is considered solved as soon as the fastest thinkers have reached an answer. Everyone else is then expected to "get on board" regardless of whether s/he understands the logic of the decision.

When people make an agreement, it is assumed that they are all thinking the exact same thing.



research tool: Walking Security Index (WSI) ⁷

The Walking Security Index (WSI) is a tool which residents in any neighbourhood can use to measure and better understand the nature of pedestrians' security (ie. safety, comfort, and convenience) at intersections in their neighbourhood. It can be tailored to the characteristics and needs of each neighbourhood.

Using the WSI, residents can measure various factors such as the number of vehicles and pedestrians using an intersection, direction of traffic flow, physical characteristics of the intersection, and behaviour of drivers. Identifying the specific problems associated with an intersection may help you determine what strategies you will use to address these problems.

The WSI uses variables, organized into three main categories, to measure pedestrian security. It was developed for a particular context (signalized intersections) in Ottawa, and will need to be adapted to the situation in any given neighbourhood, depending on the priorities set by residents. Residents may add or delete variables, or give variables more weight, depending on local conditions. For example, in the vicinity of a school, you may want to give a lot of weight to stop signs and crosswalks.

This tool can be valuable in raising awareness among residents about issues facing pedestrians. It can also be used by community groups or City officials to set priorities about where and when changes are needed that serve and promote pedestrians' safety, comfort and convenience.

Below is a list of variables that you and your neighbours can measure. All you will need is a few people to track and record these variables, and simple math skills to convert your observations to "walking security ratings" using the WSI conversion table. Contact Barry Wellar or Paige Dampier for the conversion table (see next page).

See the pilot study report on the web for information about "critical failures" that should be addressed immediately.

The Walking Security Index is a tool that residents can tailor to measure pedestrian security (safety, comfort and convenience) at intersections in their neighbourhood.

Intersection Volume and Design Index

- | | |
|--|--|
| V1 = number of passenger car | V5 = intersection geometry rating equivalents ² /hour |
| V2 = number of pedestrians/hour | V6 = intersection slope rating |
| V3 = number of lanes rating | V7 = direction(s) of traffic flow rating |
| V4 = number of turn lanes by type rating | V8 = number of channels adjacent to intersection |

Quality of Intersection Condition Index

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| V1 = Sidewalk corner capacity | V10 = Channel island (refuge) capacity |
| V2 = Height of curbing * | V11 = Crosswalk capacity |
| V3 = Condition of curbing | V12 = Crosswalk signed and painted |
| V4 = Sidewalk width capacity | V13 = Stop bar painted and signed |
| V5 = Sidewalk condition | V14 = Pedestrian signage |
| V6 = Crosswalk surface condition | V15 = No sight line obstruction |
| V7 = Median (refuge) capacity | V16 = Street furniture proximal to corner |
| V8 = Median (refuge) condition | V17 = Ice/Snow/Slush removal |
| V9 = Traffic calmer(s) | V18 = Water drainage |

* Note the orientation of a curb cut...does it point to the crosswalk, or to the middle of the intersection? For anyone pushing a stroller, or watching a child on a training bike, or who relies on a wheelchair for mobility, this is an important consideration.

Driver Behaviour Index**

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Amber-Light incidents | Failure – to – yield incidents |
| Red-Light incidents | |

** For non-signalized intersections, create variables to suit your need, such as ‘vehicle stops past stop-bar’ or ‘vehicle rolls through intersection.’

The Walking Security Index is the joint property of the City of Ottawa and the University of Ottawa. Copies of the WSI reports and publications are available for reference through the library at Vancouver City Hall. See also <http://www.cip-icu.ca/English/conference/landuse.htm> or <http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~wellarb/main.htm>.

For further information on how to apply the WSI, or how to adapt it to a local situation, please contact Professor Barry Wellar (University of Ottawa) at wellarb@uottawa.ca, or Paige Dampier in Vancouver at paige_dampier@hotmail.com.

planning activities and guides

This section offers outlines for activities you can use to plan street reclaiming activities with your neighbours. They are designed to encourage participation by lots of people, and to lay a bit of groundwork for you to take action.

Three guides are also provided to help you plan, publicize, and evaluate each action you or your group carry out. Photocopy and fill one out for all your actions to help you keep track of what you've done and lessons you've learned. Keeping these together and accessible to group members can help you pass information on to newcomers and share the workload.



Kim Hendess

brainstorming and prioritizing activities

Brainstorm in the street⁸

You'll need:

- chalk board or bulletin board
- chalk or paper & markers
- chairs & a few neighbours to participate
- decorations or something to draw attention

Gather in the street or on the sidewalk & brainstorm; have a board up that passers-by can add their ideas to. Move your brainstorming party to other corners or streets and collect more ideas from people there. Try doing this brainstorming as part of a walking tour of your neighbourhood – e.g. walk around with clipboards & brainstorm ideas for different areas. Be sure to record all the ideas that come up.

brainstorm during a meeting or neighbourhood gathering

(45 minutes)

Outcome: visions, ideas prioritized, names of who wants to do what

You'll need:

- recipe cards 1 per person
- sticky note paper 5 per person (large enough to write one idea on)
- pens or pencils
- sticker dots 3 per person or coloured markers
- wall or rolling bulletin/chalk board to post sticky notes on
- 1 facilitator
- 1 person who'll compile this info and report back at a later date

You may also want:

- to show a Street Reclaiming video clip
- Street Reclaiming materials, poster, or book to show or hand out

1. Vision on Recipe card (5 minutes)

- Hand out a recipe card to everyone
- Ask them to write down: "What do you want your street to look like in 20 years?"
- After a few minutes, ask a few people to read theirs out
- Collect the cards & record these visions – this will give you a set of values held by residents

2. Presentation about Street Reclaiming (10 minutes)

- Talk briefly about Street Reclaiming – why is it such a great way to build community and slow traffic? Give some of your favourite ideas to inspire people. Show some photos.

3. Brainstorm on Sticky notes (15 minutes)

- Hand out 5 sticky notes to everyone
- Ask everyone to write one idea on each sticky note: "Write down an action that you would be willing to do to reclaim your street." Have them write their name on the note. (5 minutes)

- Have everyone arrange their sticky notes in groups on wall, so that similar ideas are clustered together (10 minutes)
4. Choosing favourites (5 minutes)
- Briefly review the categories that have formed
 - With sticky dots or markers, ask everyone to choose their 3 favourite ideas
5. Summarize (5 minutes)
- Briefly review the some of the most popular ideas and tell the group that you (or somebody) will report back with the list of ideas & the number of votes for each
 - Be sure to record all the ideas and report back so that the ideas brainstormed in this exercise get used.

brainstorm & prioritize with your neighbours in a living room “Coffee Klatch”

(1 1/2 hours)

Outcome: informed & interested neighbours, big list of creative ideas to reclaim your street, list of people who want to help

As part of the Street Reclaiming Pilot Project in one neighbourhood, BEST helped community leaders to organize “Coffee Klatch” discussions – small, informal, and fun gatherings in peoples’ living rooms to discuss the traffic problems and potential street reclaiming solutions.

Invitations:

Coffee Klatch host hand delivers invitations to neighbours on their block. Knock and try to make personal contact. Call a few neighbours you know and invite them to come – ask them to invite their friends too.



Hint: the invitation should look fun, emphasize the social aspect of the gathering, and can give a few examples of street reclaiming ideas you want to brainstorm

“

I thought the coffee klatch went really well... Some people are really spontaneous with fresh ideas. The street reclaiming video was great. And I love getting to meet new people in the neighbourhood. I'll be glad to host the next one.

”

*-Diane Dufour,
Neighbourhood Traffic
Group member*

You'll need:

- coffee, tea, snacks
- flipchart & markers

You may also want:

- materials to show & hand-out with info about your group and about street reclaiming
- Street Reclaiming video (cued to start) & TV/VCR

Agenda

1. Welcome (5 minutes)
 - Why you're here, what you want to accomplish
 - Introductions
2. Brainstorm - what are peoples' goals? (10-15 minutes)
 - Ask everyone to call out what they would like to see happen in the neighbourhood streets; or,
 - Ask everyone to call out what they see as a problem with traffic & safety in the neighbourhood
 - Explain that all points are valid – no analyzing anyone's ideas or concerns
 - Keep conversation about problems to a minimum – list an idea and move on
 - Record all ideas on a flipchart so everyone can see
3. Presentation about your group and / or Street Reclaiming (15-20 minutes)
 - Give background about your neighbourhood group's activities; or,
 - Talk briefly about Street Reclaiming – why is it such a great way to build community and slow traffic? Give some of your favourite ideas to inspire people. Show some photos, and maybe a clip of the Street Reclaiming video to inspire people to think of creative ideas.
4. Brainstorm - Street Reclaiming Ideas (15 minutes)
 - Again explain that all ideas are good ones – no analyzing or shooting down ideas
 - Ask people to call out any idea that comes to mind – what kinds of art projects, parties, gardening, special events, or every day activities can you do to bring community out into the streets and to address some of the concerns that were raised in the first brainstorm?
 - When the ideas slow down, ask a few more leading questions... and wait patiently. This is when the best ideas will come out!



Kim Hendess

5. Choose favourites ideas and identify volunteers (15-20)

- Ask everyone to write down the 3-5 favourite ideas that they would be willing to help carry out.
- Ask those with similar interests to chat about how they can start to make those ideas happen.

6. Next Steps (10-15 minutes)

- Decide on next steps – how will the group move forward to carry out these ideas?
- Have people pair up to start organizing their actions, or suggest another meeting to discuss ideas further. Encourage people to carry out any ideas that can be done right away.

7. Wrap-up

Mapping

(1 hour)

Outcome: map of where and what street reclaiming ideas can be carried out

One technique that can help inspire people to think creatively and take their ideas beyond the brainstorming stage is to have them envision it – by drawing on a big map of the neighbourhood. Mapping can also help people find out the special places and qualities of their neighbourhood that they would like to highlight through street reclaiming. This activity can be done after a brainstorming exercise.

You'll need:

- Photocopies of a map of your block, street, or neighbourhood
- Coloured pencils, crayons, or markers

“

The street reclaiming workshops gave us an opportunity to build understanding, work together with our neighbours, and plan lots of great new ideas. It's been a real community-building process.

”

-Neighbourhood Traffic Group member

1. Introduce activity (5 minutes)

- Explain that the purpose of this mapping exercise is to get people to put their ideas down on paper, and start to imagine what they want to do, where, and what their “reclaimed” street will look like once these ideas start happening. This exercise is meant to inspire action!

2. Review of ideas (5 minutes)

- Briefly go over some of the ideas that have been brainstormed – ask people to go around in a circle and name one idea they remember. Keep going around a few times until people have been reminded of a lot of their brilliant ideas.

3. Mapping (15 – 20 minutes)

- On their map, ask people to draw or describe 2 – 3 street reclaiming ideas they’d like to do in their street.
- Have them draw or write notes with as many details as possible. For example, a street banner hung across this block from this tree or this post, using these materials, done by these people. Answer who, what, where, when, how.
- Encourage people to work in pairs or small groups, but make sure everyone is drawing or writing something on their own map.

4. Share maps & plans (10 minutes)

- Ask everyone to show their map and describe some of the activities they’ve depicted, and briefly what they plan to do to make these ideas a reality.

5. Next Steps (10 – 15 minutes)

- Decide on next steps – how will the group move forward to carry out these ideas?
- Have people pair up to start organizing their actions, or suggest another meeting to discuss ideas further. Buddy up with others to do these ideas together. Encourage people to carry out any ideas that can be done right away.

6. Wrap-up



Kim Hendess

action planning – creating a timeline

(20-50 minutes)

Outcome: a timeline of who will do what, where, and when

A concrete timeline can help ensure that all your great ideas actually make it onto the street. Creating a timeline, or action plan, can help people commit to do their actions within a certain timeframe, and can help everyone understand what the group is aiming to achieve, and how they can contribute. This activity is designed assuming you have already brainstormed and chosen your favourite ideas.

You'll need:

- a flipchart
- a big chart with columns: When (month), What (activity), Who (volunteers)
- a wall or board to put the chart on
- markers
- paper & pen for each person

1. Identify actions to be carried out (10 minutes)

- Ask everyone to write down one action that they commit to carrying out – ask them to read these out in turn & write them up on the flipchart
- Ask if there are any other actions that people want to carry out that haven't been mentioned – write these on the flipchart

2. Plot onto a Calendar (10-20 minutes)

- Decide when each idea should take place – consider holidays, personal constraints, weather
- Write each action on the chart and identify who will do what and when
- Have a column for actions that can be done anytime, all the time

Stop there, or:

3. Next Steps (10 minutes)

- Have people pair up to start organizing their actions, or suggest another meeting to discuss ideas further. Buddy up with others to do these ideas together. Encourage people to carry out any ideas that can be done right away.

4. Wrap-up

recording your plan – a sample outline

sample outline for a STREET RECLAIMING ACTION PLAN

Background

- Describe the goals, structure, and history of your Neighbourhood Group

Why Street Reclaiming?

- Describe the motivation behind starting your street reclaiming – what are your goals?
- Describe the transportation situation, any problems, and any related actions your group, other residents, or City officials have taken in the past.

What is Street Reclaiming?

- Explain the concept behind Street Reclaiming
- Give some examples

Highlights of the planning process

- Any ways you have collected input from neighbours (e.g. at block parties, meetings, flyers, etc.)

Goals, Resources, Actions

Summarize the goals, resources, and most popular actions your group will carry out

Include information or ideas you've collected:

- Describe or list the problems that people identified
- Identify the goals that have been agreed-upon
- List all ideas that were brainstormed
- Describe how these ideas were prioritized
- List any actions that have been selected, and details about who, what, where, and when these will take place

Next steps

- Encourage people to get involved – give them many opportunities to get involved in various ways
- Provide an avenue for feedback

street reclaiming action planning guide

This guide is meant to help you plan your event or action, and to organize your thoughts, tasks, and fellow street reclaimers! It can also serve as a record for future use, so that similar actions can benefit from your lessons and experience.

the action

What we are going to do:

When it will take place, & for how long:

Where it will take place:

Who the main Coordinators are:

Any other groups / organizations that we will partner with:

why we're doing this

big-picture goals:

- Slow down traffic
- Reduce traffic
- Build community
- Other: _____

specific objectives (how we will reach our goals):

- Make car-drivers aware of us and our action
- Make people aware of alternative routes & modes of transportation
- Get more neighbours' names for contact list
- Inform neighbours of something specific
- Get new people involved in the action
- Other: _____
- Other: _____
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

guidelines:

- Be Safe
- Have Fun
- Be considerate of neighbours
- Action is aesthetically pleasing & interesting
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

who we're doing this for

Who we want to take part:

Who we want to see or hear about the action:

- Primary audience =
- Secondary audience =

what's our point?

The message(s) we want to get across to the above audiences are:

-
-

We're going to do this by:

lessons learned from past events

Things that worked well:

Things that didn't work well (that we should avoid or do differently):

tasks

The main things that need to get done are:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> get volunteers to help organize, & thank them afterwards | <input type="checkbox"/> consider & ensure safety, including traffic control |
| <input type="checkbox"/> promote the action | <input type="checkbox"/> set-up & clean-up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> book & prepare the space (book a room, block party permit, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> community liaison – outreach with other organizations (schools, churches, businesses, etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prepare food & beverages | <input type="checkbox"/> media outreach & liaison |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prepare other supplies | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> coordinate entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prepare display materials, hand-outs, etc. for neighbourhood communications | |

the to-do list - including all tasks listed on previous page

	What needs to get done	Who's taking the lead	Who's helping	When it needs to be done by	Notes
One month in advance					
Two weeks in advance					
One week in advance					
Day before					
Day of					
Follow-up					

getting publicity for your street reclaiming action or event

Chances are, one of the reasons for organizing a Street Reclaiming Action is that you're trying to persuade people to change their behaviour in some way – drive slower, don't short-cut on neighbourhood streets, stop at the stop sign, etc. You're trying to sell people an idea, and you hope they buy into your message.

To ensure your action has the impact you want, here is a guide to help you:

- Choose who you are doing the action for (your target audience);
- Develop the key messages that you want people to remember;
- Get the word out to various audiences through various means.

the action

What we are going to do:

the audience

The **participants** of this action are:

The **primary audience** we want to see/hear about our action is:

The **secondary audience** we want to see/hear about our action is:

Tip:

- In selecting your messages, think about who it is that you want to see change their behaviour, how you want them to change, and how you will most effectively get them to do this.
- Develop one Key Message that you can say in 30 seconds or less – your sound byte.
- Develop a few more Secondary Messages that elaborate on your Key Message
- Target the “persuadables” – those who are neither strongly opposed to, nor strongly supportive of, your message. Get those who haven’t made up their minds.

the message

Audience	Key Message	Secondary Messages

the medium

How will you most effectively get your message out to each audience listed above?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posters (where?) | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlets | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Door-knocking | <input type="checkbox"/> TV |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Roadblock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Phone-calls | <input type="checkbox"/> Signs & banners along the street |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mail-out | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Email

Other: _____

Website

Other: _____

Audience	Medium	Who will take the lead?

the reaction

How were your messages received by the audiences you identified?

Were there any other audiences you hadn't anticipated?

Is there anything you would change in the way you deliver your message next time, either to improve your communications or to build on the "learning" your audience has done this time?

street reclaiming action evaluation guide

This guide is meant to help you evaluate your street reclaiming action, and build upon your successes and lessons in future actions.

post-action evaluation

Hooray, pat yourself and other volunteers on the back! Now, to make future actions as successful as possible, take a moment to evaluate this action.

On a scale of 1 – 10 how easy was this action to organize? _____

On a scale of 1 – 10 how well do you think this action achieved your goals? _____

How did you feel about taking on this action?

How well did you achieve your goals and objectives, & follow guidelines? List any successes and challenges regarding these.

What worked well?

What could have been better?

What else did you learn (about our strategy, our neighbourhood, etc.)?

Do you think this action (or a similar one) should be done again? Explain.

Make sure to keep a copy of these forms in your Group's records for future reference.

Congratulations to everyone involved!

working with the media ⁹

why work with the media?

Transportation issues have taken over the headlines. Barely a day goes by when you won't see transportation-related items on the TV news, hear them on the radio, or read about them in the daily newspapers and community periodicals.

The problem is that the headlines often focus on problems, rather than solutions. If you are reclaiming your street because you have concerns about certain aspects of your transportation system, a media strategy can help you bring your solutions to the attention of the public and the politicians. As advocates of healthy neighbourhoods and sustainable transportation, we must know how to work with the media in order to make change happen.

Good media and communications strategies are important because:

- The media define the significant issues of the day for most of society; they determine what and who is important and newsworthy – and a good media “hit” can bring your message to a huge audience
- Transportation issues are frequently misrepresented or underreported – with increased coverage, more people will be exposed to transportation issues
- A heightened media profile gives a group credibility and impact in the public eye, and attracts more supporters and members
- Getting your issue out through the media signals to your elected officials that your issue is important

How to find out who to contact

- Call local stations and newsrooms and ask how to get your issue covered
- Keep files or a database of names of media and reporters that have contacted you
- Read the newspapers, listen to the radio, watch television
- Keep a clipping file
- Ask your members and colleagues – if another group is working on similar issues, ask them who their media allies are.

How to get media to cover your issue

- Frame your issue in a way that is attractive to the media - there is enormous competition for coverage and you want them to choose your story
- Target your efforts – different television stations and daily and community newspapers all have different audiences. Identify your main target audience and find out what media they tune into
- Keep the message simple!
- Have a media kit ready to hand out to reporters – this will give them background information to create an interesting story
- Get to know media personnel. Find out who covers your issue and develop a relationship with them
- Communicate only when you have something to say (a story)
- Send information for their files:
- Use a range of possible channels, including:
 - Letters to the editor
 - News release (follow up by phone)
 - Media advisory
 - Guest/opinion editorials
 - Backgrounders/fact sheets to brief select reporters/media
 - Media interviews

hints on developing your message in sound bytes

The most important result of strategizing for media is to develop media lines in simple and clear messages. For television and radio interviews, you will need articulate responses in 10, 30, or 60 second answers. For background briefings with reporters, you should develop longer, more substantive analyses.

The words, phrases, and themes that you and your group use to describe – or position – your issues are extremely important.

When determining how to position your issues in the media, keep in mind what you are working to change (what you're "against") and what you are doing to change it (what you're "for").

Reporters often try to polarize groups or make issues seem black and white (conflict makes for better entertainment). You may want to focus on the positive alternative you're creating, rather than falling into the classic conflict between "us" (the neighbours) and "them" (all those bad people who drive so fast through our neighbourhood). You know the problem isn't that simple, so try to avoid having your story framed that way. People may be much more likely to support your efforts if you give them an alternative.

preparing a spokesperson

Picking your group's spokesperson is an important strategy. If you don't pick one, the media will. The spokesperson for your group or issue should be comfortable doing media interviews and making a good presentation on television, radio and in print. Here are some pointers for the spokesperson preparing for media interviews:

- Know the reason for your release or media contact.
- Know what you want to say in 80 words or less.
- Be truly interested in the subject.
- Know your subject intimately – forwards, backwards, inside-out!
- Believe in what you're addressing.
- If you don't know an answer, never lie or make it up.
- Prepare to answer two or three really tough questions.
- Have your own messages, clear and concise.
- Make positive statements.
- Avoid defensive comments.
- Talk in sound bytes, keep answers short, do not over-answer.
- Avoid acronyms, jargon and technical terms.
- Use your organization's or group's name, not "we" or "I".

responding to a reporter's questions

- Be polite, helpful, offer to find out the answer if you don't already know.
- Don't lie, always tell the truth; if you can't give information, tell why.
- Answer the reporter's questions but always return to the issue.
- Put the story in context.
- Stick to the facts.
- Don't bring up issues that you don't want to see in the story.
- Update your information constantly.
- Repeat messages.
- Respect the reporter's deadlines; return calls promptly.

the interview

- Have your main message in one to three quotes / sound bytes (be passionate and colourful, but calm and self-contained)
- Prepare (be issue driven, not question driven); practice by role playing questions and answers.
- Understand who you are trying to reach.

- Prepare to:
 - consistently state your issue
 - assertively bring your issue into the interview
 - answer questions but move onto your message
- get your interview back on track (that's an interesting question but the real issue is....; let's look at it from a broader perspective.....; let me give you a little bit of history....; yes, but there is another more important concern and that is....)
- Prepare examples and/or analogies.

maintaining good media relations

Establishing and maintaining good media relations is important. Being able to pick up the phone and call a reporter you already know and sell them on a story is ideal. However, building a good relationship with journalists usually doesn't happen overnight; a reliable relationship can only be developed through regular phone conversations, meetings, and correspondence over months and sometimes years.

It is a good idea to approach media outlets and even specific reporters in advance with news of what you are doing. Then follow up with another call once your release has gone out.

To build your media contacts start with a clipping file of related stories and issues. Typically, media outlets have beat reporters – journalists who cover similar issues and stories again and again. Make note of these people, their articles (and point of view), and which media organizations they work for. When you have a story you'd like them to cover, call them, or send them a press release followed by a phone call. Spend a few minutes highlighting the merits of your story and why their readers or viewers want to hear about it.

what to submit to the media

Common communication tools that may be useful are:

- Media release – to submit your story
- Media advisory – to alert media to an upcoming event so they'll attend and cover it
- Background release or fact sheet – to provide reporters with further information
- Media kit – to provide reporters with material for a story

the media release

The media release is the most common and often the most effective way of getting coverage. An effective news release is often reprinted word for word in the paper, especially in smaller community papers – if you do a good job, you can write the news yourself!

However, reporters and major news outlets receive thousands of media releases in a day, so yours must command attention.

The key to getting your story picked up is to follow up and make telephone contact with the reporter after you send the release out. Have your facts and messages straight and sell your position. If you can make their job easier when they're frantically trying to make a deadline, they'll be more likely to cover your story now and in future.

Writing it:

- Find an unusual angle to intrigue the reporter
- Make sure it's brief (one page max.)
- Use short sentences and good quotes (with permission)
- Play up the human interest angle
- Begin with "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" and include a catchy title
- Answer all the questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how
- Give one piece of information per paragraph
- Use the inverted pyramid style (the most important information at the top; editors cut from the bottom up)
- Use the past tense so it can be used to cover the event after it has taken place
- Insert a "-30-" at the end of the text that is to be published
- Always provide telephone contact information for the people who are quoted in the media release. This information goes after the -30- to indicate that it is not to be published.

When to send it:

The day of the event, slightly in advance or immediately following the event, depending on the deadlines of the particular media you are targeting.

A sample media release from the Blenheim Neighbourhood Group:

MEDIA RELEASE

September 18 2000

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SIGNS SPROUT ON BLENHEIM STREET!

150 bright yellow and white signs sprouted overnight on lawns and hedges along Blenheim Street between 16th Avenue and Marine Drive. Reading “Welcome to Blenheim – Slow Down and Enjoy Our Street”, the signs were created by the Blenheim Neighbourhood Group (BNG), a committee of residents concerned about the safety and livability of their street and neighbourhood.

“We want to give drivers a friendly reminder that Blenheim is a residential street and not just a thoroughfare for traffic,” says BNG spokesperson Lani Levine. “This is a street where people live and children play; families should be able to use and cross the street in safety.”

Many of the residents’ concerns have to do with speeding, and the signs are a great way to get the message out. Drivers don’t seem to realize how fast they’re going on Blenheim Street and residents hope that once drivers see the signs they will slow down and drive as safely on Blenheim as they would on their own street. The BNG hopes that the signs will have a spillover effect: that as drivers slow down on Blenheim so will they also slow down in other neighbourhoods.

The BNG plans to work with the City on the **City of Vancouver Transportation Plan (1997): Major Initiatives** as they apply to the neighbourhood. The City’s Plan identifies Blenheim as one of a number of low volume secondary arterials recommended for reclassification as neighbourhood collectors. The BNG would like the City to go forward with formally reclassifying Blenheim so that the group can begin working with neighbours and City staff on a street plan to be ready for implementation when the City re-paves the street.

The Blenheim Neighbourhood Group may be contacted via e-mail: <address>

Media Advisory

The media advisory is used to alert journalists to an upcoming event so that they will attend and cover it. The idea is to hook the reporter enough so they'll show up and cover the event, but not to tell them so much about it that they feel they don't need to bother going.

Writing it:

- keep it short and sweet
- list only the basics - who, what, where, when, why, and how
- use point form instead of sentence or paragraph form
- drop in a few sentences that make the event sound compelling for the reporter to cover

When to send it:

Send the media advisory a full week before the event, and follow up with a phonecall. Send it again several hours before the event.

Sample:

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

Date

NEIGHBOURHOOD STREET HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

WHAT: Street Hockey tournament for - - neighbourhood. Organized by the neighbourhood traffic group.

WHEN: date

WHERE: these streets in this neighbourhood

TIME: 6pm – 8pm

WHO: residents and friends of -- neighbourhood

WHY: To raise awareness among car drivers that these streets are to be shared with people, and to celebrate the street as a place to build community in our neighbourhood.

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Ms. So and So

Media spokesperson for the neighbourhood traffic group

333-3333

Mr. Whatshisname

Alternate media spokesperson for the neighbourhood traffic group

444-4444

Background release or fact sheet

A background sheet can give more specific information that you don't necessarily want to include in your media release. This is usually a one page information sheet that reporters can refer to for background on a particular issue. You can include expert contacts and opposition contacts to help the reporter do his/her job (to your advantage!). For example, you may want to refer the reporter to BEST (or your local sustainable transportation advocacy organization) or to David Engwicht's website for more information about street reclaiming.

Media Kit

A media kit provides reporters with material for a story. It is a valuable component in any successful publicity campaign. The media kit gathers into a folder an assortment of materials for the reporter that portrays your organization or group in such an interesting, informative, and professional manner that the reporter will feel compelled to cover your issue. Media kits should be offered to reporters whenever the opportunity arises, so be sure to carry one with you whenever there may be members of the media in attendance. A good media kit should include:

- An attractive cover
- The news release
- Informational brochures, posters
- A background release or fact sheet
- Contact information
- A cover letter or letter of explanation (if being sent to specific media)
- A photograph or high quality picture
- Background information about your group; perhaps a description of an individual's story that would give a human interest angle to your problem or activities
- Clippings and quotes of previous media coverage
- Suggested questions for media to ask

tips from the Greater Vancouver Street Reclaiming Network

Successful strategies for organizing your community and reclaiming your street:

- **build community** by connecting with community institutions & organizations such as schools, churches, community centres, etc.
- **get to know your neighbours** - people work together if they know and like each other; find out what skills & interests your neighbours have & tap into those;
- **get others involved** - distribute flyers, knock on doors, call a meeting with neighbours
- **share the work** - create a committee, break up tasks
- **have fun!** less focus on meetings, more socializing; have pot lucks or teas; use social events to get people out; have a meeting after a fun event
- **organize a block party**
- **work with the City**, use City problems & processes as an opening to address other problems; have a community meeting with the City
- do some **physical work** to get people involved
- **get businesses involved**; work with employers in the area
- **access resources** - neighbourhood enhancement can be an avenue for grants
- **use the media** to get your message out
- **no blaming** - 'welcome' traffic to neighbourhood, don't punish, but make them feel as if they're guests in your living room
- psychological aspect of Street Reclaiming is key - remind people that we are a neighbourhood;



- **broaden support** - encourage support within the larger community & general public
- **build trust**
- **be positive** - don't be antagonistic or make an enemy of cars; seek mutually beneficial solutions; seek & give positive feedback
- **be patient!** - it won't be a quick solution; keep at it & celebrate small successes

sample street reclaiming ideas to get you started

Of the hundreds of creative ideas that were brainstormed at numerous coffee clatches during BEST's Street Reclaiming pilot projects, some common ideas were:

- welcome banners reminding drivers to slow down
- decorate chairs, benches, lanterns, trees, & signs along the street
- parties in the street
- art along the street, boulevard, fences, and buildings
- temporary "speedbumps" (e.g. sods of grass)
- neighbourhood-wide community-building events in the streets
- a Block Watch Neighbours' Network
- plant more gardens along front yards & boulevards
- street hockey tournaments
- music, performances, art shows in front yards
- parties in the street
- be a pace car - drive slowly
- theme tours of neighbourhood - local history, gardens, porches, art, etc.



Kim Hendess

resources used in this section

1. Unless cited otherwise, each component in this section is largely based on the excellent resource, *The Citizen's Handbook: A Guide to Building Community in Vancouver* by Charles Dobson, Vancouver Citizen's Committee, 1995. See the updated version online at <http://vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook>.
2. *with help from: Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* by Sam Kaner, 1996 p.124-136 and Charles Dobson, 1995.
3. Sam Kaner, 1996 p.100
4. Sam Kaner, 1996 and Charles Dobson, 1995.
5. Sam Kaner, 1996 and Charles Dobson, 1995.
6. Sam Kaner, 1996, p.xiv
7. Thanks to Paige Dampier for her research and writing for this section, and to Barry Wellar for permission to use this material.
8. Thanks to Tammie Tupechka for this wonderfully simple idea.
9. Much of this material is from BEST's Advocacy Toolkit: Working with the Media for Transportation Advocacy. Thanks also to Liana Evans for help with this section.

