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Presentation Title: Scaling Up Local Climate Action Through The Hub To Hood Model

Abstract: Many cities have declared climate emergencies and set ambitious targets for 2030. Climate action plans have typically been developed at city-wide scales, but cutting a city's carbon emissions in half by 2030 requires substantial change in behaviour and infrastructure, in every neighbourhood and most households. Research pilots in British Columbia and elsewhere have shown that if climate action is local, visible, and engaging, citizens are more likely to join in and cut carbon emissions. However, sustained and widespread citizen-led action requires a support system. Recent research in BC has investigated new collaborative frameworks between existing organisations such as local government, school districts, faith groups, etc. This paper presents the Hub to 'Hood model as one method of scaling-up citizen engagement. This model harnesses existing community hubs, such as community centers, libraries and schools, as natural gathering points to recruit, train, and empower a network of climate champions. These volunteer champions, supported by a coordinating NGO, then work to engage, inform, and galvanize collective community action. To test the Hub to Hood model, we mapped community hubs within Vancouver, and trialled a program to train school-teachers and local residents (Cool 'Hood Champs') in fostering local adaptation and mitigation. We ran two sets of climate action workshops: 1) through regular programming at a local Community Centre; and 2) online via highly interactive webinars (during the COVID-19 epidemic). Both workshop series were fun, hands-on, and customized to participants' neighbourhoods. These novel sessions attracted, retained and trained over 30 participants to become climate champions: most later planted shade-trees in their yards and several implemented their own climate action plans. Results were consistent with earlier findings on building capacity and motivation. They demonstrate demand for such programs in neighborhood hubs (even with COVID) and for networking among champions, and appear to be readily scalable.