LIVABLE CITIES FORUM

BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES THROUGH RESILIENCE

OCTOBER 28-30, 2019
VICTORIA, B.C.

INTEGRATIVE & COLLABORATIVE
We hosted 24+ sessions and hands-on workshops which wove together themes of climate change and health; low carbon resilience; and the role of infrastructure in building better neighbourhoods.

IMMERSIVE LEARNING
Delegates discovered the creative dimensions of resilience through music, Indigenous performance, visual art, and multi-modal study tours.

A CALL TO ACTION
50+ North American Mayors and Councilors endorsed a Call to Action on community resilience, while delegates individually committed to short and long-term actions.
EVENT SUMMARY

Cities and towns across North America are on the front lines of floods, fires and other climate-related disasters. Now more than ever, collaborative local action is required to build sustainable, healthy, and equitable communities that are resilient to the risks posed by a changing climate. Fortunately, actions that transform and protect our communities can also create more livable, prosperous future conditions.

The Livable Cities Forum was designed to showcase the importance of taking a holistic, community-focused approach to climate change planning and implementation. The Forum is known as a boutique Canadian event with high-caliber interactive sessions and diverse speakers on climate change action. The 2019 Forum was hosted by the City of Victoria in partnership with ICLEI Canada, SHIFT Collaborative, and ACT (the Adaptation to Climate Change Team) SFU.

Three themes were interwoven throughout the event to highlight how synergistic climate action can enhance the social capital, economic security, equity, and vitality of our communities.

MULTI-SOLVING

At the opening of the Forum, multi-solving was introduced as a strategic approach to address the interconnected problems that are facing human society and our communities.

By focusing on the interconnection between issues, a multi-solving approach looks for opportunities to solve two or more problems with the same budget and resources, and focuses on cutting across silos in order to get more people involved using their political power, voices, resources and passion – offering an opportunity to bring in other perspectives and move further faster.

- the climate change & health nexus
- the role of infrastructure in building better neighbourhoods
- advancing low carbon resilience
PARTICIPANTS

We brought together over 350 North American delegates to be a part of the conversation on building community resilience. More than 83 local and regional governments were represented!

CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

Forum attendees included local, provincial, and federal government staff, First Nations, public health and healthcare providers, community service organizations, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, grassroots community groups, and the private sector.
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

CLIMATE CHANGE REPRESENTS OUR BIGGEST HEALTH RISK AND OUR BIGGEST HEALTH OPPORTUNITY

Only 20% of our health is determined in healthcare facilities - the rest is determined by our surrounding environments and our social structures. Emergency-room Physician Dr. Courtney Howard gave us an important reminder about the interaction between people and the places that surround us.

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS ARE GOING TO EXPERIENCE THE MOST SEVERE HEALTH IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Dr. Howard spoke to the need for health care infrastructure with direct co-benefits for mitigation and adaptation. Healthcare providers need to be trained in the social and ecological determinants of health in order to respond to changing climate risks and save lives.

PLANETARY HEALTH AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Mayor Lisa Helps and Dr. Howard both identified a planetary health approach for bridging silos in our complex era of climate emergency. Solutions must balance the need for both human health and the health of our planet, as they are inextricably connected.

GOVERNMENTS MUST ENGAGE WITH HEALTH-CARE PROVIDERS AND CONSIDER HEALTH AND WELL-BEING WHEN WE THINK ABOUT AND PLAN FOR CLIMATE RISKS.
PLACE IS EVERYTHING. PEOPLE CARE ABOUT PLACE.

MARY ROWE, PRESIDENT AND CEO, CANADIAN URBAN INSTITUTE

EQUITY MUST BE PART OF THE CLIMATE CONVERSATION

Climate impacts are disproportionately impacting Indigenous people, low income families, people of colour, and other marginalized groups. Climate change worsens the gaps that have historically prevented the inclusion of whole communities in building resilience. Councilor Sharmarke Dubow spoke about the vulnerability of those who have been displaced due to discrimination, war, and violence, who are forming newcomer and refugee communities.

"PEOPLE IN POVERTY CANNOT BUY THEIR WAY OUT OF A CRISIS"

Councilor Sharmarke Dubow on the importance of supporting vulnerable, minority, and low income communities as a first step in community resilience.

APPLYING AN EQUITY LENS

An equity lens must be applied to determine who is most at risk from climate change and who is least equipped to adapt. When we implement climate actions, we must consider place and people. Where are we building? Who will our work serve, and who needs to access it?

DIVERSITY AND CONNECTION ARE THE CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF RESILIENCE.

Mary Rowe

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RESILIENCE GO HAND IN HAND

We must ensure that our approach to climate resilience includes measures to bring a voice to those that are often silenced or left out of planning and delivering climate action.
THE CLIMATE CONVERSATION IS FOR EVERYONE

CLIMATE CHANGE IS STILL POLITICIZED
An important but challenging conversation in the Forum's opening remarks from Barbara Turley-McIntyre of The Co-Operators, was the fear that climate change is a very politicized issue. What can be done to depoliticize the conversation?

WE AREN'T VALUING THE RIGHT THINGS
In identifying solutions to climate change, we put value on financial assets, on infrastructure assets, and protecting natural assets. While this is important work, we are failing to value the human and civic assets or capital in our communities. We need to seize the pockets of brilliance in our communities as bottom-up solutions to our collective challenges.

WE MUST DO MORE TO BRING THE FINANCIAL COMMUNITY INTO THE CONVERSATION
The question everyone asks: How are we going to pay for this? Including the financial sector and financial managers in the dialogue on building thriving and resilient communities is an opportunity to co-design and co-finance local solutions.

"INSTEAD OF JUST CLIMATE CHANGE, WE NEED TO BE TALKING ABOUT COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELL-BEING."
Mayor Lisa Helps on strategies to depolarize the conversation and challenging delegates to try substituting “public health and well-being” for “climate change.”

#SUPERWOMEN
Our morning plenaries were dominated by women working in health, finance, governance, insurance, and community resilience. They were nicknamed Superwomen on the #LCF2019 Twitter!
THE ART OF RESILIENCE

Communities that support and value local art, culture, and history are able to build stronger social cohesion and in turn, the capacity to prepare for and cope with climate impacts. We are grateful to be able to integrate music, Indigenous theatre, and graphic recording into our conference program.
ICLEI Canada and the City of Victoria are thrilled to have hosted the Leadership & Legacy session at the 2019 Livable Cities Forum. The event convened over 50 Mayors and Councillors from Canada and the US for a day-long, interactive session focusing on building social resilience, community belonging and inclusion as a key resilience strategy. The Leadership & Legacy session highlighted a coordinated story of leadership at the local level and provided a showcase of the tangible outcomes that real level action on resilience is having in cities.

"COMING FROM CALIFORNIA WHERE DESTRUCTIVE CYCLES OF DROUGHT AND FIRE CAUSED BY CLIMATE CHANGE HAVE CAUSED THE DEVASTATING LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY, IT TRULY IS IMPORTANT TO CONNECT WITH OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS TO SHARE OUR EXPERIENCES, POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS, AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE COMMITMENT TO ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE CRISIS THAT THREATENS US ALL."

Mayor Gleam Davis, City of Santa Monica sharing her thoughts on the importance of connecting with other elected officials.

Participants recognized that municipalities can and should do more to bring health and equity into the climate conversation. The day of dialogue and networking ended with elected officials finalizing a collective Call to Action for local leaders to advance work on the health, well-being and social cohesion aspects of resilience.
A CALL TO ACTION

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Our closing challenge to delegates was to develop three personal calls to action— one we can take within 24 hours, one we can take within 24 days, and one we can take within 24 months. Many participants shared their commitments on Thoughtexchange.

TOP ACTIONS

01 More engagement
Almost all participants committed to meaningful engagement with their colleagues, communities, and local stakeholders on climate resilience.

02 Health & well-being lens
Many committed to applying a health and well-being lens to ongoing and future local projects.

03 Advancing local action
Several participants committed to taking steps toward completing and/or implementing a climate action plan within their municipality.

STAY CONNECTED!

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