

SMART SHIFT:

COMMUNICATING ABOUT SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Framing and Engagement Research &
Recommendations for Local Governments

Climate Access on behalf of the
Urban Sustainability Director Network

January 2019

Report Author – Cara Pike
Project Advisor – Babe O’Sullivan

SECTION ONE: PROJECT BACKGROUND

Project Purpose

Cities committed to sustainability and acting on climate change are finding it increasingly important to turn their attention to the issue of consumption and the impact the products that city residents buy have on a range of indicators, including resource and energy use, carbon emissions, and the creation of waste. Given the pervasiveness of consumption in the culture and economy, gaining support within municipal governments to initiate programs can be a challenge as well as with the public.

Through the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN), cities have come together to foster innovation in sustainable consumption and from that, the *Sustainable Consumption Toolkit* has been created and is being used to advance programs in dozens of communities. USDN commissioned Climate Access to expand on the strategic communication guidance available in the toolkit by developing framing and engagement approaches that can help generate buy-in and advance programs to shift consumption patterns. Many cities are just starting to research and establish initiatives and as a result, the focus was on identifying barriers and opportunities to advance programs within city governments. At the same time, consideration was given to communicating with the public. Additionally, while some cities include reducing energy use (i.e. through energy efficiency or public transit initiatives), and waste reduction programs under the sustainable consumption umbrella, this project focused on efforts that aim to address the impacts of the production and consumption of consumer products such as building materials and contents, electronics and tools, vehicles, clothing, and food.

Project Approach

Climate Access worked in partnership with Babe O'Sullivan, Lead Consultant on Sustainable Consumption in Cities for USDN, to develop a working group of USDN member cities to help shape and provide input on the project. The working group was composed of members from Austin, TX, Eugene, OR, Iowa City, IA, Minneapolis, MN, Portland, OR, San Antonio, TX, San Francisco, CA, Toronto, ON, San Jose, CA and Vancouver, BC who shared background information on their sustainable production programs, offered insights on barriers and opportunities to effective communication via working group calls, and provided comments on the final report.

Climate Access reviewed website and communication materials on sustainable consumption from participating cities and with help from the working group, interviewed staff representing a range of city departments and programs (climate, public works, waste management, public health, energy, city management, finance) as well as elected officials. Ten of these interviews were one-on-one phone conversations and the remaining were conducted via two online discussion groups with a total of seven participants. Climate Access also analyzed polling, focus group and social science research to inform the recommendations.

SECTION TWO:

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Eight key trends emerged from the review of program and communication materials, working group calls and interviews that shed light on the barriers to address and opportunities to leverage when developing sustainable consumption framing and engagement strategies.

1. There is Buy-in for Sustainable Consumption Yet it is Still a Low Priority

There is some support for working on sustainable consumption within municipal governments, yet it remains a low priority for most cities. What falls into the category of sustainable consumption is widely defined. This unfortunately limits understanding of the need to reduce the production and consumption of goods and materials as a way to achieve sustainability and other city goals. Instead, the default is to view the issue as being about waste reduction and recycling, buying green or local, or energy and water conservation, rather than moving upstream to address resource use and emissions.

When it comes to efforts aimed at shifting consumption patterns, there is hesitation among many city staff. Influencing individual behavior change is considered an ambitious goal and there is discomfort in “telling people what to do” versus working at the systemic/structural level, such as on product bans or incentives. Even in cities with consumption goals and programs, the issue is not a top priority compared to areas where there is more experience and/or proven methodologies. It is important to note that funding is as much or more of a barrier than willingness to act, given limited funding for sustainability departments and projects.

2. Goal Setting and Integration

The sustainable consumption field is still emergent and as a result, there are not well-established parameters, processes, or benchmarks of success. This can make it challenging to set goals to address consumption, yet cities are finding it still must be done to achieve buy-in and alignment with other programs. For example, the City of Vancouver, British Columbia set a goal of reducing its ecological footprint by 33% (over 2006 levels) as part of its Greenest City Plan.

The upside is that the infancy of sustainable consumption provides room to experiment as compared to other areas where practices and expectations are well established, such as transportation or energy planning. Developing tangible pilot projects (e.g. offering small community grants for repair or sharing initiatives) is key to increasing awareness of what sustainable consumption is about and the benefits. Pilot projects can also generate preliminary metrics and measurements that can be used to set or refine goals. For community members, pilot projects are important as well. In some cases (e.g. plastic straw bans) pilots may not generate a substantial environmental return but can help illustrate that some products are not necessary. At the same time, city staff tinkering with pilots are finding it is important to embed successful approaches into city operations.



Whether sustainable consumption programs should be stand-alone or integrated into other areas is a question for cities. Some find it helps with implementation if tied to other programs where sustainable consumption can make a tangible contribution to established goals such as zero waste, reducing carbon emissions and increasing resilience to climate change. In cities that have been working on the issue for some time, staff have an understanding of the benefits (e.g. reduced waste management costs, GHG reductions, community cohesion) yet in others where work is being considered or just getting underway, there is a desire for a clear business case and an understanding of the return on investment.

3. The Climate Change Lens

Cities that have undertaken consumption-based emission inventories are starting to see the importance of advancing sustainable consumption efforts given emissions that result from the consumption of certain carbon-intensive products and services (e.g. meat and dairy, building materials). Adding the climate change lens onto sustainable consumption can help set clear, measurable goals and an additional justification for working on the issue. For example, emissions from the production of building materials and furnishings are significant and as a result, promoting auxiliary home ordinances and/or zoning for smaller homes along with density measures can not only help address resource use, growth and affordability challenges but also cut carbon. Programs that reduce red meat consumption also increase in priority due to emissions from production. Factoring in embodied carbon in construction materials can provide a driver for the reuse of concrete and steel from buildings. In some cases, cities are starting to look at consumption-based emissions by sector and the benefits of focusing on reductions in areas such as health and education.

4. Food Programs Gain Momentum

Municipal staff consider food programs part of sustainable consumption and these efforts are gaining momentum across all ten cities that participated in this study. Farmers' markets, community gardens, composting, and waste recovery and rescue are most common; they deliver multiple benefits and are accessible to and popular with a broad range of community members. Some cities are adopting programs to prevent wasted food, using behavior change models that have been tested in other jurisdictions (e.g. Love Food, Hate Waste).



While these efforts touch on consumption, they do not directly aim to reduce it. Given the resonance of food programs, however, they can provide a bridge to the issue. For example, in a municipality that launched a program to help restaurants measure food waste, once there was awareness of how much waste was being generated, restaurant owners chose to cut back portion size and saved money doing so.

The emissions associated with meat production are motivating some cities to consider launching meatless meal initiatives. This can provide an avenue for working at a structural level while also promoting individual behavior change. For instance, cities with institutional food providers under their jurisdiction (e.g. school and hospital cafeterias) are looking at ways to incorporate meatless meals to help meet sustainability, climate, and health goals and provide an avenue for education on the benefits of making a shift.

5. Waste Management as an Inhibitor and Driver of Action

Many city staff view sustainable consumption as a waste management issue and refer to recycling or waste diversion as examples of the work that is underway. In some cases, consumption programs fit within the waste management department or are connected to them in city communications. There are advantages to this as waste management is a large, well-established component of city operations with clear goals, protocols, etc. On the other hand, the predominance of the waste management frame can limit thinking about the need for and ways to shift the current models of production and consumption.

There is growing recognition within city governments of the limitations of recycling and this could provide an opening to advance sustainable consumption. For example, as recycling programs have grown, so too has the belief that most items can be diverted, therefore making it okay to choose takeout or buy products with excessive packaging or short life cycles. Disruptions in recycling markets are also a concern as communities are paying more to recycle or are unable to offer service for products that were recyclable in the past. Some are considering ways to push back on packaging either through product bans or advocating for policies that put the responsibility on product producers to use more durable materials or those that can be reliably recycled. While this does not get to the root of avoiding a purchase in the first place, some municipal leaders feel these efforts could lead to re-evaluating consumption. This however, remains untested.



6. Leading by Example is Not Straightforward

Cities recognize that leading by example is important for internal and external communications yet when it comes to sustainable consumption, it is not easy to do. Focusing on municipal procurement policies is one logical starting point yet a number of barriers exist. Encouraging staff who make purchasing decisions to see sustainable consumption as something beneficial and central to their role can be a challenge. When policies are introduced they are often ignored, participation can wane over time, and/or new staff are unaware of them if there is turnover. Changing existing policies requires education and a focus on internal behavior change. Purchasing guidelines are often out of keeping with the life span of certain products that get rotated out of use before it is necessary to do so, and municipal staff can view receiving new goods as a reward. Creative solutions are emerging such as moving vehicles from police fleets to other departments that place less of a priority on having access to the latest editions (i.e. parks departments).

7. Equity and Inclusion is Critical

Currently, much of the framing for public audiences is about choosing to consume less as a way to have a lighter footprint on the planet, make life easier by spending less time dealing with stuff from shopping to cleaning or decluttering spaces. While this can appeal to the environmentally minded, particularly given the potential to reduce emissions, it can leave out and ignore the reality of community members who struggle to meet basic needs. Instead of talking about consuming less, it is important to acknowledge inequities and the need for a level of consumption that is socially just and environmentally safe. Some cities are finding that emphasizing benefits such as increasing access to services, saving money and improving quality of life through sharing, repair and reuse can serve as better entry points.

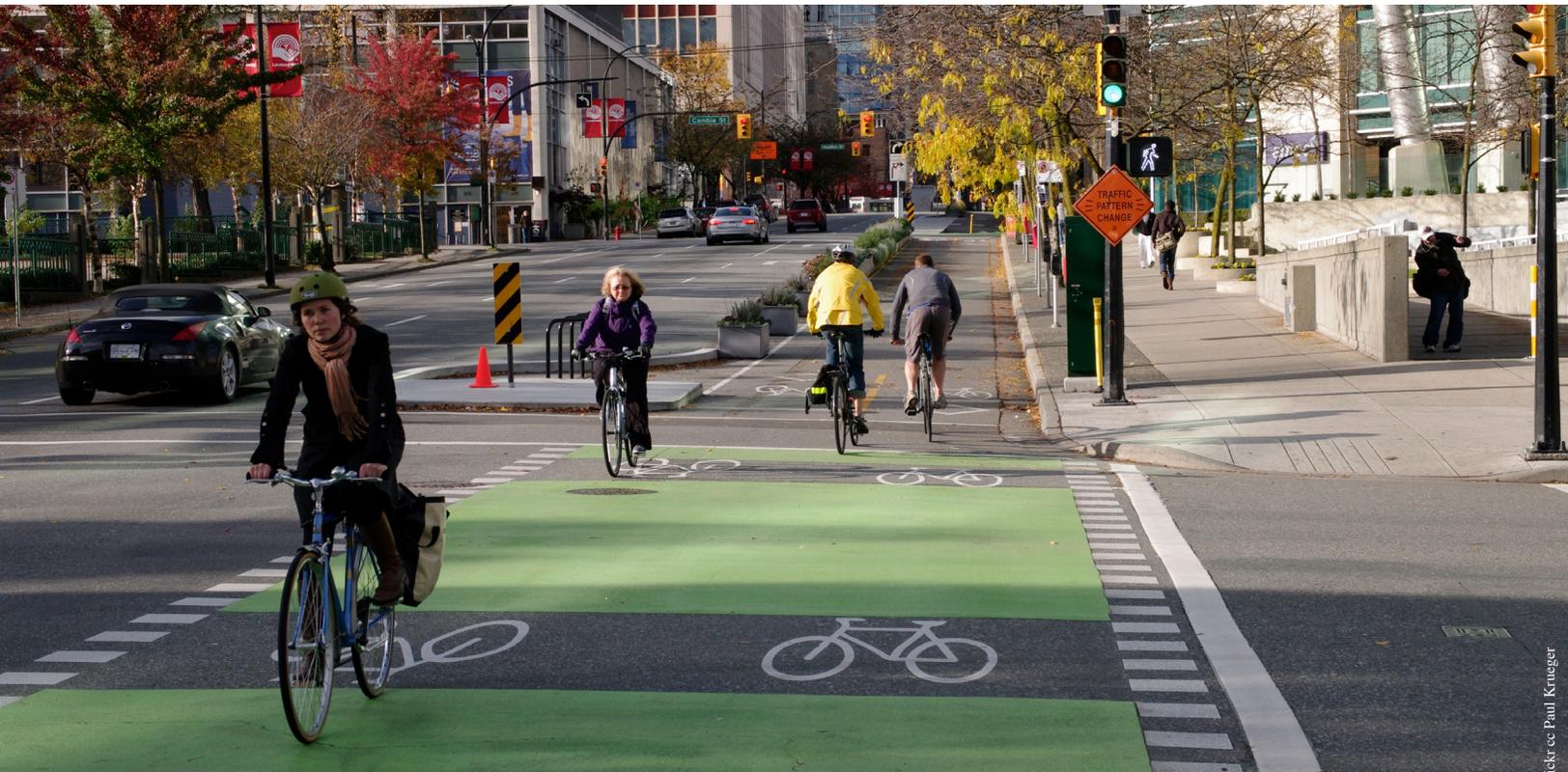
Taking steps to ensure programs are easy to access is critical as well. For example, in Portland, reuse centers make it more convenient to find used building materials, electronics and other items. In Toronto, the city hosts a community environment day in each of the 25 wards on an annual basis where community members can pick up finished compost, drop off hard-to-recycle items such as electronics and textiles, and access reuse items (i.e. art supplies). The city has also set up community repair and reuse hubs in its neighborhood improvement areas where investments are being made to strengthen the economic, social and physical conditions.

At the same time, effective framing and providing access to services is not enough. Low-income communities and communities of color who are historically left out of wealth that comes from the production and consumption of goods. They must be part of driving the creation of new economic alternatives, have access to workforce development and resources to prepare for new opportunities, and gain economic, health and other benefits.

8. Going Against the Grain, Reimagining the Economy

Consumption, not surprisingly, is viewed as pervasive and hard-wired in the culture. Communicating about the topic essentially goes against the grain and requires inspiring people to reimagine the economy and change the conversation about the meaning of a good life. This can be at odds with the priorities of and messages related to economic development and as a result, there is often hesitation to work on the issue directly and instead, buying green or local is the focus. While this does not directly address the issue of cutting consumption, buying local can offer an experience of a different type of economy that is more relational rather transactional and enhance climate resilience by creating stronger local supply chains.

Tools are emerging for reimagining what is possible (i.e. Doughnut Economics) and setting benchmarks for progress and planning that considers the relationship between a lower-carbon future and economic growth and can move the discussion into a new paradigm. Some positive trends are emerging which staff are taking note of, such as increased density in urban cores as millennials look for a car-free life or the appeal of tiny homes that can result in less hassle, fewer costs, and provide a pathway to ownership.



SECTION THREE:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Climate Access analyzed public opinion and social science research related to sustainable consumption to inform the framing and engagement strategies. Much of the research that is available was captured in the *Sustainable Production and Consumption Framing Research Summary*¹ that was completed in 2015 and is part of the *USDN Sustainable Consumption Toolkit*. New insights emerged from research conducted in 2016-2018 that are important to note.

Limits to The Green Appeal

Americans care about the environment, but they prioritize other issues such as strengthening the economy, defending against terrorism and improving education. At the same time, the percentage of people who place importance on economic issues is in decline while those who list the environment as a priority is on the rise (62% in 2017 as compared to 55% in 2016).² Unfortunately, this doesn't necessarily translate into action. Only one in five Americans report making an effort to live in ways that help the environment on a regular basis.³ More affluent Americans are most likely to say they take personal action while others cite lack of time and money as barriers.

Concern about climate change is also on the rise yet remains near the bottom of the list of policy priorities. Polarization is a challenge and growing with Republicans who are far less likely than Democrats to support environmental and climate policies and take personal action. In addition, 65% of Republicans prefer to live in communities with large houses that are spaced far apart and not close to services, while 61% of Democrats prefer smaller homes within walking distance to schools and shopping.⁴ As a result of these challenges, framing sustainable consumption primarily as an environmental issue (e.g. lighter footprint) can have limited appeal.

Complexity, Guilt and Fatalism

Sustainable consumption is a complex, systemic issue that many Americans find difficult to process, given their greater comfort in dealing with issues where there is simple (versus complex) causation. Making the connection between consumption and its impact on the environment and climate change can be overwhelming and lead to a sense of guilt. Also, many Americans feel fatalistic about climate change and society's willingness to address the issue as well as the inequities in the economic system.⁵ Aspirational framing about the benefits of a more sustainable lifestyle is important to employ to overcome these barriers.⁶

Some Changes in Consumer Values

Most Americans are not yet curtailing consumption habits and in fact are buying some products more than ever, such as watches, clothing, luggage and electronics due to online shopping and low prices. With low prices often come products that wear out or break quickly and need to be replaced.⁷ The good news is that there is a small-yet-influential segment of trendsetters keeping and using products longer and rejecting consuming products with fast

cycles due to novelty or status. Instead, products that endure provide symbols of distinction by reflecting sustainability values and life experiences. "Given conditioning to expect frequent change, the long-term ownership of objects that age and evolve through use appears new."⁸

Support for Sharing and Belief it Helps the Environment

Americans support a range of sharing services for transportation, accommodations and products and view sharing as a way to reduce waste and resource use, increase access to unaffordable goods, and foster community cohesion. Their support, however, hinges on convenience, affordability and hygiene. Most believe it is also important to foster social equity (access to the opportunity and the benefits), encourage strong and independent local communities, and ensure the adoption of fair business practices in the sharing economy.¹¹ Ecological concern is a motivation for both green consumerism and consuming less through sharing, repair and reuse, yet the latter is driven by the pursuit of frugal approaches as much or more than by environmentalism.¹²

Wealth Doesn't Define the American Dream

Most Americans say they have either achieved or are on their way to achieving the American Dream and being wealthy doesn't define it. Instead, freedom of choice in how to live and having a good family life are most important, followed by being able to retire comfortably, make a valuable contribution to the community, own a home and have a successful career.⁹ At the same time, one in five Americans say consumer debt is placing the American Dream at risk.¹⁰ These are trends that can be tapped in framing and engagement approaches.



SECTION FOUR:

ENGAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Effective issue framing relies on understanding audiences and shaping messages and outreach approaches based on what they care about. It involves moving beyond one-way communication to strategies that engage stakeholders in an exchange of values and ideas and as partners in implementation. Here are recommendations for how cities can build internal support and alignment as well as involve the public in making a smart shift to more affordable, rewarding and sustainable ways to living.

A. Recommendations for Building Internal Support and Alignment

- **Align programs that promote a smart shift in consumption with core city priorities.** Align shifting consumption with the core priorities city staff and elected officials already care about such as waste management, preserving recycling opportunities, reducing emissions, increasing equity and social capital, or strengthening local supply chains.
- **Work with other departments to set and implement goals.** Set clear goals to reduce consumption in partnership with staff from departments across city government. This can be difficult yet helps build an understanding of what the issue entails and creates a process for defining the best way for cities to approach it. Look for opportunities to make progress on structural changes that connect to behavior change. For example, partner with schools to launch meatless meal programs in cafeterias, educate students about the benefits and provide tips for taking the practice home.
- **Build and communicate the business case.** For cities with well-established sustainable consumption programs, the business case may be obvious. However, in communities that are just starting to work on the issue, developing such a case is beneficial. It should lay out the financial costs of programs and benefits such as savings in waste management and recycling budgets. The business case should also address how sustainable consumption can achieve other goals including reducing carbon emissions, increasing access to services for community members (e.g. tool, car, ride sharing), affordability through reuse and repair programs, contributing to health goals (shifting away from meat, moving from cars to more active transit modes), and increasing social cohesion and resilience. The case and program outcomes should be regularly communicated via internal communication channels (i.e. newsletters, new employee orientation).
- **Create pilot projects to illustrate the possibility.** Start with concrete efforts that provide staff with a way to conceptualize the issue and what's possible both within the city (e.g. shifting purchasing in one department) and the community (e.g. community grant programs to spur sharing). Develop "ribbon cutting" moments for elected officials to

create excitement and signal that a change is possible and underway. This could include launch events for new tool lending libraries or inviting elected officials and the media to attend repair workshops.

- **Tap outside experts to support and validate.** Work with universities, community-based organizations, business leaders and other experts from outside city government to help develop the strategy and communicate the business case including inviting these experts to present to staff or council members.
- **Share stories and celebrate reduction and reuse innovation.** Given that staff tend to feel rewarded by receiving new stuff (computers, cars, etc.), celebrate and reward those who take steps to reduce consumption through recognition in newsletters, at events, or via awards and competitions.

B. Recommendations for Engaging External Stakeholders

- **Place equity at the center.** Invite leaders from community-based organizations and the public via dialogues, design charrettes, and polling or focus groups to help design programs at the outset and inform the framing approach and tailoring for different audiences. Include environmental benefits but consider leading with or incorporating the ways in which sharing, repair, and reuse can save money, improve services and strengthen the community based on what is heard.
- **Tailor the approach based on what different segments of the public care about.** Some community members may be ready to dive directly into reducing consumption while for others it may be necessary to link from other issues such as food or recycling. For example, hosting food events or recipe exchanges in a community garden or other neighborhood setting can provide an opportunity to share meat-free options in a nonjudgmental way that bridges across cultures. Committed recyclers might respond to a campaign aimed at pushing back on products with excessive packaging or that can't be recycled, and this could provide a building block to choosing alternatives to consumption as the next logical step in doing the right thing. Fostering the development of local businesses and local business clusters may not directly cut consumption but has the potential to illustrate another model is possible that is more relational than transactional and contributes to community connectedness and resilience.
- **Start small and build on behaviors.** With skepticism and fatalism about changing the economy and tackling environmental and climate issues, it's important to begin with concrete steps that generate tangible results. For example, help foster the creation of one tool lending library or repair workshop. One meatless meal per week makes a bit of a difference when it comes to cutting carbon, but more importantly can lead to reducing meat consumption on a regular basis when people start experiencing that it's easy to do, tastes great, can save money, and is good for you.
- **Make it easy, fun and accessible.** Some community members participate in repair events because they want to avoid creating waste or buying something new. But people are just as likely to attend because it seems like something fun to do and a good way to connect with others. It's an important reminder to design outreach programs so it is both easy and enjoyable to make a shift in consumption. Bring repair services into farmers'

markets, local business hubs and other settings where people already go to seek out and support alternatives. Also, consider how everyone can win. In cities with universities, holding “move out” days, where people pick up items that otherwise would be thrown out, makes students feel better, eliminates waste going to the landfill, offers community members affordable or free goods, and can replace the need to purchase new products. Take steps to ensure that outreach channels are accessible. Apps that promote local businesses and reuse services are great but for those without smartphones, low-tech options are needed. Partner with community organizations, farmers markets, churches, etc. to bring efforts to reduce consumption into spaces people already gather in and trust.

SECTION FIVE: FRAMING RECOMMENDATIONS

Frames are constructs that help people shape meaning based on their values and worldviews. Effectively communicating about sustainable consumption requires presenting the issue in a way that resonates with what people already understand and prioritize.

Repeat top-level themes about making a smart shift while at the same time tailor messages to resonate with different stakeholders. For example, with the climate concerned lead with a focus on reducing carbon emissions from consumption, and with those more motivated by economic issues emphasize cost savings and strengthening local business and supply chains. All messaging should include a clear challenge (imperative for action), choice (what can be done) and opportunity (benefits of taking action). In the framework described below, the opportunity leads, followed by the challenge and finally the pathway for action.

A. Internal Stakeholders

The following narrative framework can be used to build support and alignment with internal stakeholders.

Opportunity: A STRONG, CONNECTED COMMUNITY

- Healthy environment, reliable services, community wellbeing
- Cutting pollution and eliminating carbon where it can matter most
- Access to services, cost savings and community connections through reuse, repair and sharing

As a city, we work hard to ensure we have a clean, healthy environment, offer reliable services, and promote community well-being. Providing recycling, and waste diversion and disposal is a critical part of this and yet we can have an even greater impact and gain efficiencies by looking upstream for solutions. Programs that reduce the need to

buy new goods eliminate the pollution, waste and carbon emissions that come from production and consumption, and they cut costs at the same time. Repurposing, reusing, and sharing programs also increase access to products and services, and strengthen local supply chains. As importantly, these efforts can help people connect with other community members and contribute in a meaningful way to sustainability and climate change goals.

Challenge: CONSUMPTION IS COSTING US

- The costs of consumption are adding up
- Significant upstream pollution, waste, and carbon emissions
- Affordability/cost of living

Consumption is costing us more than we think. It's often at the production stage where the most damage is done in terms of resource use, water and air pollution and carbon emissions. Our city puts a lot of time and money into waste management and is facing rising costs and limitations on what can be recycled. And we, along with our community members spend a lot buying new products that often don't last or become obsolete, adding stress to already challenging affordability and cost of living issues.

Choice: A SMART SHIFT IS POSSIBLE

- Shifting consumption is core to our agenda
- True leadership means addressing upstream impacts
- Cities are launching successful programs that we can learn from

It's time to look at ways to reduce the production and buying of new goods in order to achieve our goals rather than just focusing our efforts downstream. Cities leading on sustainability and equity are developing programs that promote the reuse of items such as building materials or electronics; repair of consumer products; sharing of tools, bikes, cars and other items; and shifts to smaller homes, more walkable and transit-friendly communities and meatless meals. We can make a smart shift in our city by learning from these successful efforts and adopting practices best suited to our values and needs.

TIPS FOR TAILORING

FOOD: If food issues are gaining momentum in your community, focus on health, emissions and waste reduction, and cost-saving benefits

Reducing and diverting wasted food helps our city achieve zero waste and cut carbon but it's important to keep in mind there is more we can do to promote sustainability and well-being. The major resource use and carbon emissions happen at the production phase, so we need to find additional ways to reduce impacts. A strategy working in other cities is to focus on consumption issues. For example, working with restaurants to measure wasted food can lead to changes in portions size once restaurants realize how much food is being thrown out and that there is an opportunity to address the problem and save money. In other communities, cities are partnering with cafeterias to help them adopt meatless meals as a way to cut carbon and promote healthy living.

Climate Change: Emphasize the connection between consumption and climate change and the untapped potential to make significant strides in emission reductions.

Our city is committed to cutting carbon emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change. We're already taking steps to reduce emissions through energy efficiency and renewable energy, expanding transit options, electrification of vehicles, and other measures. If we want to accelerate progress, we need to look at reducing emissions that result from the production and consumption of goods given how significant they are. In other leading communities, calculating emissions from the production of building materials and furnishings, food, and electronics is becoming increasingly common. Cities are taking steps to reduce these emissions and starting to see results through reuse, repair and sharing. Auxiliary and/or small housing measures, walkable community initiatives, and meatless meal programs in city government and school and hospital cafeterias are also becoming critical in the climate action toolkit. These efforts along with supporting farmers markets and promoting local businesses can help increase our resilience to the impacts of climate change by building social capital and strong local supply chains. Programs that shift consumption also give us new ways to engage community members who are looking to make a meaningful contribution to sustainability and tackling climate change.

Zero Waste/Waste Reduction: Illustrate the ways in which cutting production and consumption contribute to waste reduction goals and reduce costs.

With rising recycling costs, and limits on what we can accept in our recycling programs due to new restrictions from China, we've got to look upstream for new solutions. We can eliminate waste as well as pollution and carbon emissions through programs that reduce the need to produce and consume products in the first place such as reuse, repair and sharing. These efforts can help cut costs associated with waste management; and remove some items from materials in municipal programs that are expensive and/or difficult to recycle. For community members who want to build on their commitment to recycling, reducing consumption provides another avenue for action that can also save money.

B. External Stakeholders

The narrative framework can be applied to public communication efforts as well. Testing specific messages with key audiences is always beneficial and can be done cost effectively through interviews or online surveys and discussion groups.

Opportunity: SAVE MONEY, ACCESS SERVICES, AND MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

There's a new way to save money, access services, build strong communities, and protect the environment. Sharing products and rides, reusing building materials, furniture, technology and other products, repairing items to give them longer life is becoming easier to do. This means you don't need to buy a car to get around or expensive tools for home repairs. There are options to find repurposed computers or someone looking to pass on their couch to someone else. You've found help fixing your lamp and don't have to spend money on a new one. Making these choices keeps resources local and brings our community together. It's also one of the biggest ways to get rid of waste, pollution and carbon emissions.



Challenge: CONSUMPTION IS COSTING US

It takes a lot to afford the basics needed for life and there's pressure on top to keep up with trends and purchase new stuff. Products wear out or break faster than they should and it's back to square one with time and money wasted and lots of excess stuff to deal with. What we buy also has an impact we don't want. It's when products are produced that often the most pollution is created along with waste and the carbon emissions driving climate change. Consumption is costing us more than we think.

Choice: A SMART SHIFT IS POSSIBLE

Sharing, reusing, and repairing is something we all can do. With tool lending libraries, reuse centers, car and ride-sharing services, repair workshops, websites for reselling items, and giving gifts of experiences; it's now possible to make a smart shift away from having to buy new stuff or anything at all. It's not just about consumer products, food choices are important too. Choosing to skip meat in even one meal cuts costs, is a healthy way to go, and contributes to clean air and water and a safe climate.

ENDNOTES

1. Sustainable Production and Consumption Framing Research Summary. Cara Pike. August 2015.
2. Economic Issues Decline Among Public's Policy Priorities. Pew Research Center. January 2018.
3. For Earth Day, Here's How Americans View Environmental Issues. Monica Anderson. Pew Research Center. April 2018.
4. The Partisan Divide on Political Values Grows Even Wider. Pew Research Center. October 2017.
5. Mixing it Up. Reframing Neighborhood Socioeconomic Diversity. Frameworks Institute. October 2016.
6. Fostering and Communicating Sustainable Lifestyles: Principals and Emerging Practices. Climate Access, One Earth, Scorai, Tellus Institute. UNEP Report. 2016.
7. We are all accumulating mountains of things. How online shopping and cheap prices are turning Americans into hoarders. Alana Semuels. The Atlantic. August 2018
8. The Changing Relationship Between People and Goods. Oskar Korkman and Sharon Green. Sitra Study. May 2017.
9. Is Sharing the Solution? Exploring Public Acceptability of the Sharing Economy. C.E. Cherry, N.F. Pidgeon. Journal of Cleaner Production. May 2018.
10. Beyond Green Consumerism: Uncovering the Motivation of Green Citizenship. Meaghan Guckian, Raymond De Young, Spencer Harbo. Michigan Journal of Sustainability. Volume 5, Issue 1, 2017.
11. Most Think the American Dream is in Reach for Them. Samantha Smith. Pew Research Center. October 2017.
12. 2017 State of the American Dream Report. Hearth. August 2017.