

4.

COMMUNITY SHARING



Community Sharing innovators offer hope to amplify the best aspects of the Sharing Economy. These innovators work at the local scale embracing sharing in the more traditional sense of the word, with many explicitly adopting practices that enhance sustainability goals such as waste or ecological footprint reduction, social connection, and affordable living, amongst others.

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What role can local governments play to enable and help scale Community Sharing innovators who advance urban sustainability?

This key question was explored by the LGSE's Community Sharing Working Group (CSWG), which formed as a result of discussion at "The Role of Cities in Advancing Sustainable Consumption" workshop co-hosted by the USDN and SCORAI in late October, 2014. Membership in the CSWG include local government representatives from Denver, CO; Flagstaff, AZ; Portland, OR; Vancouver, BC as well as the Center for a New American Dream who works with cities across North America on Community Sharing. The work of the CSWG was supplemented by additional primary and secondary research by the LGSE project team.

While the Community Sharing Working Group discussed a range of topics, the following five questions were key:

1. Why should local governments enable Community Sharing?
2. How can local governments enable Community Sharing that advances sustainability?¹
3. What are the most effective, cost-efficient roles for local government?
4. How can local governments measure the impact of Community Sharing on relevant city priorities?
5. How can local governments scale up the actions and benefits of Community Sharing innovators who are advancing sustainability?

BOX 4.1 WHAT IS COMMUNITY SHARING?

Community Sharing is a subset of the broader Sharing Economy highlighted in the LGSE Project because of its

particular relevance to local government. It includes a diverse set of individuals and organizations focused at a local or neighborhood scale that publicly align themselves with the Sharing Economy and some of its beliefs.

The following are key traits that distinguish Community Sharing:

- Focused at a local or neighborhood scale
- Use of digital technology to lower transaction costs is more modest and less sophisticated
- Varied structures - non-profit or informally organized models dominate but can also be for-profit, cooperative or social enterprise
- More emphasis is placed on in-person connections
- Non-monetized transactions are more dominant e.g. swapping and bartering
- Greater, explicit emphasis placed on meeting local needs and sustainability goals

Some of the most common types of Community Sharing include:

- Community swap meets of clothing, toys, crops, seeds, clothing, baby food, media and more²
- Community festivals, such as PorchFest
- Local lending libraries for tools,³ clothing, toys,⁴ seeds, cars
- Timebanking⁵ - a reciprocity-based work trading system in which hours are the currency.
- Repair Cafes/Fix-It Workshops⁶ where people bring broken appliances, clothes, computers and more to be repaired by volunteer 'fixers'
- Food-related sharing⁷ such as food-buying clubs,⁸ kitchen shares and community gardens.

Many of these are described in more detail in the Center for a New American Dream's Guide to Sharing.⁹

Local Government Enabling Community Sharing

Q1. Why should local governments enable Community Sharing?

The motivation for local government to enable and support Community Sharing will vary depend on the priorities of each city's elected officials, senior management, community and other stakeholders. While the LGSE Project uses "living within ecological means" as a first filter for prioritization, Community Sharing has benefits that cut across multiple dimensions of sustainability, so it's easy to link with, and act upon a range of city priorities.

CLIMATE ACTION, WASTE REDUCTION AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

In Portland, Oregon the motivation to start the Resourceful PDX¹⁰ program which includes a focus on reusing, borrowing, sharing and repairing goods was linked to a 2009 Climate Action Plan with key goals by 2030 to: (1) reduce total solid waste generated by 25%; and (2) motivate all residents and businesses to change their behaviour in ways that reduce carbon emissions.

Under Portland's more recent Climate Action Plan, the Resourceful PDX program is an action in support of a new focus on Sustainable Consumption (see Consumption and Solid Waste (pp 89-98)¹¹ backed by a new consumption-based carbon emissions inventory – the first of its kind ever in a North American sustainability plan.¹²

AFFORDABLE LIVING AND ECONOMIC NECESSITY

Flagstaff, Arizona based their "Be Resourceful"¹³ program on Portland's but did so in response to a community priority around affordable living. Arizona Public Radio did a podcast

series on the high cost of living in Flagstaff, called "Poverty with a View",¹⁴ which drew attention to the issue. A 2015 study found that Flagstaff has the lowest hourly wages in the United States when adjusted for cost of living. Then local government staff noticed there was a really active re-use market in Flagstaff with multiple Goodwill and thrift stores, and re-use events being held by almost every type of community group - baby swaps, sport exchanges, school materials and uniforms and more. This was mirrored in the online world with high levels of activity on craigslist, and up to 18,000 people involved in various Facebook groups focused on buying, selling and bartering.

BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Fix-It Tech Clinics in Minneapolis are incubated by the City of Minnesota's IT Department in partnership with a range of partners including non-profit and educational organizations, private sector businesses and foundations.¹⁵ The goals of the Clinics are:

- IT workforce development – students gain experience in tech support volunteering alongside IT professionals who together answer residents' tech questions, provide tips to maintain and protect personal devices, and provide hands-on technical repair.
- Raise awareness of technology programs: the event provides a venue to promote free digital literacy training resources, low cost computer and Internet options, local IT education programs, and IT careers.
- Community (and small business) education - offering hands-on technical experience that helps residents, including small business owners, with technical knowledge and repairs.

HEALTHY, CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

The CSWG felt that priorities around healthy, connected communities could be an important leverage point in some places. We know, for example, that Seoul, South Korea's primary motivation to become a Sharing City was to restore community connections and rebuild trusting relationships.

Community Sharing has the strongest emphasis on in-person connection and the most explicit focus on building community and social capital [16] of any area and sector of the Sharing Economy. Evidence of this focus in Community

Sharing activities is mostly anecdotal and has not been widely measured, although there is some initial research to draw upon. Building relationships and community are, however, often explicitly stated objectives that influence Sharing Economy activities in Community Sharing. Consider the following examples:

- The Vancouver Tool Library is: “dedicated to taking a proactive and responsive approach to managing our organization, and adhering to the values of inclusivity, empowerment, community building, member participation, and sustainability in all that we do.”¹⁷ The VTL takes this mission so seriously that they designed their space to consciously encourage interaction between members and are seeking further to provide a workshop that facilitates further membership connection.¹⁸ Similarly the Halifax Tool Library notes that “we need places to congregate socialize and learn” and the library “provides the opportunity for people to build new relationships as they learn how to build and repair their objects.”¹⁹
- Community swap meets involve person-to-person interaction and often also consciously include potlucks food, music and crafting to promote social interaction. In Detroit, sharers combined a clothing and goods swap with a DJ, music and dance floor as well as opportunities for skillsharing and conversations on developing alternative currencies.²⁰ When swaps are facilitated through on-line platforms, there are usually efforts to encourage off-line interaction. For example, the volunteers on the food exchange team of the Portland Food Exchange “try to meet up for a few microbrews every couple of weeks to go over ideas. The Internet definitely has a place in all of this, it is so much more meaningful to talk to someone about the Portland Food Exchange while standing waist deep in a pumpkin patch!”²¹
- The mission statements and goals of community gardens often include building a strong sense of community and promoting community health. As the City of Kelowna’s Community Gardens webpage states: “Community gardens help grow healthy communities”.²² Research confirms that community gardens do, in fact, build a sense of community, promote enhanced trust and social networks, and promote more healthy lifestyles.²³ A study of a Melbourne, Australia urban community garden called “Dig In” is representative of research findings in this area.²⁴

“benefits include increased social cohesion (the sharing of values enabling identification of common aims and the sharing of codes of behaviour governing relationships), social support (having people to turn to in times of crisis) and social connections (the development of social bonds and networks).”

Cities for whom addressing the creation of healthy, connected communities with enhanced social capital are priorities should view Community Sharing as a priority area.

RECOMMENDATION:

Align Community Sharing with priority areas such as climate action, waste and ecological footprint reduction, affordable living, workforce development and building healthy, connected communities. This can help elected officials, key departments and staff to recognize the value of Community Sharing in order to build the necessary shared ownership, responsibility and funding for supportive actions.

Q2.

How can local governments enable Community Sharing that advances sustainability?

The LGSE Project is focused on helping local governments understand how the Sharing Economy can help their cities live within ecological means while also advancing related aspirations of resilience, equity, local economic prosperity and quality of life. So while Community Sharing can contribute to many city priorities, we are interested as a starting point in how it can contribute to the goal of living within ecological means.

Portland’s Resourceful PDX program proves particularly instructive in this regard as it has been fine-tuned over time to focus consciously on areas that support actions to reduce carbon emissions, waste and consumption levels, while also advancing equity.

Resourceful PDX is a program designed to help the residents of Portland make simple changes in their everyday choices so that they consume in ways that save money, support the

community, conserve natural resources and allow people more time to spend with family and friends. It is focused on four key categories:

1. **Buy Smart**²⁵ – create memories instead of excess stuff by planning ahead e.g. tips, ideas and links to relevant local organizations, events and businesses in key areas of life and its transitions - food and health; holidays; back-to-school; having a baby, etc.
2. **Reuse**²⁶ – choose second hand, salvage and vintage or repurpose something old into a new creation e.g. tips on home remodelling using salvaged materials; links to second hands goods stores or reuse web platforms
3. **Borrow and share**²⁷ – cut down on clutter by borrowing, sharing, swapping and renting items e.g. community collection events; swap n plays; tool, kitchen and other local lending libraries
4. **Fix and maintain**²⁸ – extend the life of what you have with basic maintenance and repair e.g. Repair Cafes; blog entries with tips on buying shoes that be easily repaired and how to maintain them

All but the first category include specific examples that are part of Community Sharing yet the “Buy Smart” category is key because it encourages people to plan ahead so that they purchase less stuff or stuff that is made locally or more durably.

BOX 4.2 RESOURCEFUL PDX BUY SMART PROGRAM EXAMPLES

Blog entries for key life transitions and life areas:

- **Holidays** – how to give gifts of time, service, experience, local food or gifts made with re-used material
- **Back to School** – waste free lunches; setting up bike or carpools;
- **Food** – how to shop to reduce food package waste, join a bulk food buying club or Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Buy Smart inventory:

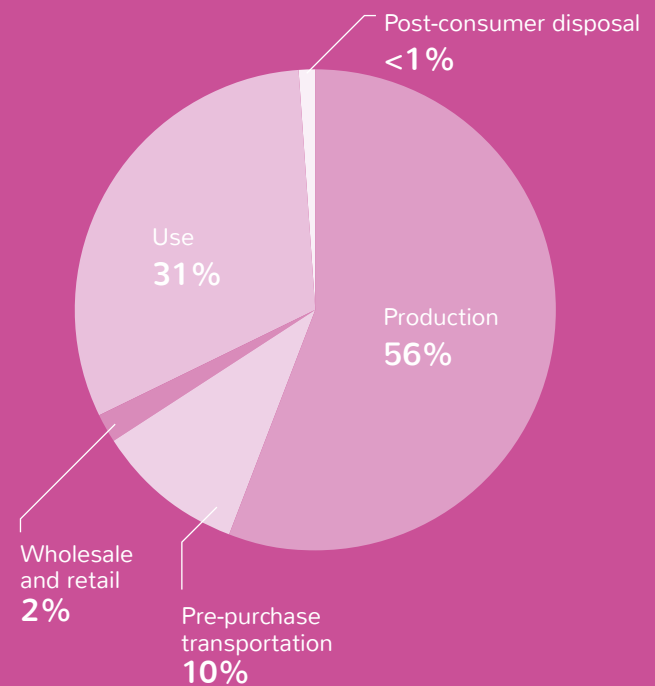
- **Green Baby Guide** – website and book focused on how to save money and the planet when you have a baby.

- **SoKind Registry**²⁹ – create customizable online gift registries that include homemade gifts, charitable donations, secondhand goods, experiences, time, day-of-event help, and more.

Portland’s 2015 Climate Action Plan demonstrates that their Buy Smart focus is a critical category needed to achieve absolute carbon reductions. Portland’s lifecycle emissions chart illustrates (see diagram) that “more than half of all consumption-based carbon emissions are generated during the production phase of the lifecycle. The transportation and sale (wholesale, retail) phase adds an additional 12 percent. On average, 68 percent of a product’s lifecycle emissions are generated before a consumer begins to use it.”³⁰

It is clear then that any focus on community sharing of goods needs to be complemented by an effort to reduce the production of new goods in order to contribute to deep carbon reductions.

MAKING THE GOODS WE USE GENERATES THE MAJORITY OF THE EMISSIONS FROM CONSUMPTION



Multnomah County consumption-based carbon emissions by lifecycle phases (2011). Source: Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.

RECOMMENDATION:

In order to promote living within ecological means, local government can prioritize efforts to enable Community Sharing in areas that promote reuse, borrowing and swapping, repair and maintenance of goods – together with education that promotes buying less and smarter. Local governments can also link this to other city goals such as affordable living, workforce development and building healthy, connected communities.

Q3.

What are the most effective, cost-efficient roles for local government?

The majority of Community Sharing innovators are either informally organized grassroots organizations or non-profit organizations that rely significantly on volunteers and may have paid staff. This reality sparked questions in the CSWG such as:

- How can local government be supportive and enabling of Community Sharing without sustaining their organizational model?
- How can partnerships or agreements be formed when there are significant funding and human resource uncertainties?
- Should local government take on the role of incubating Community Sharing activities? Or is it the role of community innovators to initiate, with local government playing a support role?

Our answers to these questions draw from cities across North America. While each of these places enables Community Sharing with varied budgets and staff commitments, there are remarkable similarities in the key roles and approach taken by local government.

1. COMMUNITY SHARING INVENTORIES AND WEB PLATFORMS

A consistent role for local government to play is to inventory sharing assets and bring them together on a publicly accessible web platform. In order to lighten the load for

local government, partnerships are a key strategy:

- An intern helped the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) with their sharing assets inventory, which included placement into the four program categories - Buy Smart, Reuse, Borrow and Share, Fix and Maintain. The inventory, combined with a blog about community resources, tips and ideas, was developed into a BeResourceful website placed on the BPS web platform. Due to issues with local government promoting selling specific local businesses, it was relocated to a separate web platform with BPS as one of three presenting partners. Renamed Resourceful PDX, it is now co-administered together with Chinook Book (who develop an app and book of sustainable local coupons) and the Oregon Chapter of the Reuse Alliance.³¹
- The City of Flagstaff conducted their own BeResourceful sharing inventory based on Portland's four program areas and set up a basic webpage on the city's web platform with a listing of sharing assets. Rather than focusing a lot of resources on the webpage, Flagstaff set up a Facebook page for the City Sustainability Program,³² which has 4000 followers and provides resources for reducing consumption.
- Eugene, Oregon, set up a web resource that highlights their sharing assets and links with the help of the Center for a New American Dream, an American non-profit dedicated to improving well-being by inspiring and empowering all of us to shift the ways we consume. The City now manages and maintains the new web platform.³³

CHALLENGES AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

- **Updating and maintaining the sharing inventory and web platform** – when start-up grants end, this becomes an ongoing cost so new approaches and partnerships are needed. Portland reduced their website administrative costs by partnering with two external organizations. Another option discussed in the CSWG was to partner with Sharing companies who have a small staff who could help with the inventory, although this would likely require an open source agreement.
- **Make the Sharing inventory more interactive and dynamic** – the City of Portland is currently exploring other options including a map or another interactive feature.

2. FUNDING, PROMOTING AND FACILITATING COMMUNITY SHARING

The following are three key roles that local governments have played in enabling Community Sharing:

- **Grant funding** – when Community Sharing innovators are getting started, or at a critical stage in their development, the infusion of some modest funds can make all the difference. For example, the North Portland Tool Library received grant funding over a two year period from the city and region of Portland in its early stages. Grant funding has been provided for other tool libraries, community gardens, MakerFaires, neighborhood gear swaps and more.
- **Promotion** – Community Sharing innovators may lack the means to promote their activities effectively so this another key role that local governments can play. Websites, blogs, event calendars, municipal publications, as well as social media have all been used by local governments to promote Community Sharing events and ideas. The City of Flagstaff, for example, uses Facebook to talk about sharing and reducing consumption, posting articles about the Sharing Economy, and putting out new ideas -- which frequently others will take and run with.
- **Facilitator and connector** – local government often has access to a range of resources and is linked to a variety of internal and external people and organizations that can help Community Sharing innovators. For example, Alicia Polacok, Residential Outreach Coordinator from BPS, sits on the steering committee of the Reuse Alliance Oregon and is integral to connecting city resources to the larger reuse community through the organization. BPS uses the role of facilitator and connector effectively also with the neighborhood coalition offices. Rather than coordinating clean-up events themselves, they partner with the neighborhood coalition offices, providing links to valuable resources and helping with promotion.

3. REPAIR WORKSHOP OR FIX-IT CLINICS

Another common role for local governments concerned with sustainability is to support repair workshops or fix-it clinics. The roles taken, however, vary significantly, from partnering and promoting to actually incubating and coordinating.

CITY OF PORTLAND - PARTNER AND PROMOTE

Portland's role is to partner and promote Repair Cafés but not to coordinate them. Repair PDX - a volunteer run grassroots organizations - coordinates the repair events, maintaining a pool of volunteer fixers and list of interested host partners. BPS promotes Repair PDX and their repair events through the Resourceful PDX website, event calendar, and related publications. Alicia Polacok, Residential Outreach Coordinator, who plays this role also volunteers on her own time for Repair PDX where she helps with volunteer organization, event registration and set up.

Using this approach, Portland has had many successful Repair Cafés that involve volunteers who fix bikes, computers, small appliances, clothing or niche stuff. Space to host the events has never been an issue. They're hosted at tool libraries, cafe, coffee shops, community centres, bike shops, realtor offices, schools, and seniors' centers in different parts of the city.

CITY OF FLAGSTAFF - INCUBATE AND COORDINATE WITH A PARTNER

The City of Flagstaff has incubated and coordinated Fix-It Clinics using a partnership approach. The Clinics are held at LocalWorks - a community workshop offering equipment for its members to design, construct, and improve creations. They have also involved STEM - a non-profit dedicated to promoting literacy and businesses in science, technology, engineering and math. The City issues a call for volunteers who can fix things and local businesses donate food for the volunteer fixers. Through the Fix-it Clinics, community members learn how to extend the life of their items and reduce landfill waste. At the event, City staff provide recycling outreach and run a kid's station where children can deconstruct items that cannot be fixed into their recyclable components. Future events will engage Habitat for Humanity ReStore to find broken items to be fixed and provide free workshops on skills like basic clothing repair.

Challenges and Potential Solutions

Volunteers get busy and things fall through - a challenge for Portland, for example, is that Repair PDX is totally volunteer-based and sometimes people get busy and things fall through. Repair PDX is a grassroots organization and not a non-profit so Portland can only help through providing some staff time and is not able to fund them directly. Potential solutions include:

- Connect the grassroots Community Sharing organization with someone to help them gain non-profit status so that they are eligible for some local government and other funding.
- Consider other models such as those taken by Flagstaff, AZ, and Hennepin County, Minnesota, where local government staff play a role in coordinating Fix-It Clinics.

Lack of funding for Fix-It Clinics or Repair Workshops - Approach ifixit.com - a wiki-based site that teaches people how to fix almost anything - because they may be willing to help fund other fixing events around the nation.

CITY CASE HENNEPIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA – COORDINATING FIX-IT CLINICS

While the City of Portland has had success supporting volunteer-led fix-it workshops by serving as a partner and promoter, there are challenges with depending on community volunteers as they are not always able to commit to delivering the workshops and events can be cancelled. Recognizing the value of goods repair to their waste management goals, the local government of Hennepin County, Minnesota, takes a different approach – it serves as coordinator of monthly Fix-it Clinics.³⁴

THE INSIDE STORY

Nancy Lo, who is the Environmental Partners Coordinator with the Department of Environment and Energy's Waste Reduction and Recycling Unit, spends about 25% of her time coordinating Fix-it Clinics. She sets up the dates and locations for an ongoing stream of monthly Clinics, helps with some Web and other promotion such as short radio pieces, and leads set-up and takedown at each event. "The volunteers are the heart of the program," Lo says.

In addition to paying for Nancy's time, the only other cost to the County is for snacks and refreshments. The Clinics are held in places such as libraries, city buildings and churches so there is usually no building rental cost.

For Hennepin County, the Fix-it Clinics offer a good return for time and money invested. They have a consistent set of workshops with a regular group of volunteer "fixers." Because there are many possible dates, residents can wait for workshops that are closest to home or fit their schedule.

How does the County track the impact? Because Lo's job is focused on waste reduction she weighs everything that comes into the workshop – broken hair dryers, bread machines, toys, DVD players, clothes with broken zippers and more. And then she conducts a simple survey to track participant satisfaction and to determine what was wholly or partially repaired. This allows her to estimate the number of pounds of waste diverted and collect a stream of comments from happy, grateful people in informal participant surveys. Participants have said:

"What a fabulous concept. It's cool to be surrounded by such a collection of clever people."

"It was wonderful. I have more confidence that I can fix things myself. (Score!)"

"It's great! Keep things out of landfills and saves money!"

"Thank you so much for providing this service!"

As Nancy Lo says: "you can make a really good case in support of the Fix-It Clinics. They're low cost, reduce waste, promote community engagement – and foster such good, positive feelings."

RESULTS TO DATE

Since starting the monthly fix-it clinics in September of 2012, just fewer than 2,000 people have attended bringing with them 2,956 items to be repaired, of which 73% were successfully fixed. The final outcome: 13,946 pounds of waste were diverted from the landfill – all while creating community and teaching basic repair skills.

CHALLENGES

The most frequent question Nancy Lo is asked by other city government staff and interested stakeholders is 'what if you get sued?' The County developed a liability waiver that all

volunteers and Fix-it Clinics attendees must sign. As Lo points out: “When you come to a Clinic, you see how incredibly happy people are, and it’s hard to imagine anybody suing.”

See the Appendix in this Roadmap for copies of the Hennepin County Fix-it Clinic Release Form, Informed Consent Form and Sample Participant Survey.

KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

- Low cost approach with impressive results

- Simple survey to track waste diverted and participant satisfaction
- Staff (Nancy Lo) dedicated and passionate about waste and with a flair for working with people effectively
- A focus on FUN too!

TO READ MORE

<http://www.hennepin.us/fixitclinic>.

http://www.twincities.com/ci_23404870/at-free-fix-it-clinics-st-paul-volunteers.

Q4. How can local governments measure the impact of Community Sharing on relevant city priorities?

All local governments must justify the use of local government resources – and it is no different with Community Sharing. The City of Portland, for example, must show how its Resourceful PDX program moves the dial on climate, lowering waste and consumption while advancing equity. But how can they know if somebody goes to a ‘swap n’ play’ event to swap toys and childrens’ clothes and consumes less as result? Many cities who are members of the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) are also concerned with climate action and related goals such as waste or ecological footprint, in addition to goals for equity, community connection, affordability and more.

Many ideas were discussed by the CSWG and the following were put forward as key recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Incorporate measurement into Community Sharing pilots
- Engage Community Sharing innovators in measurement efforts
- Intentionally incorporate measurement into Community Sharing pilots - when local governments get involved with enabling Community Sharing, set it up as a pilot that involves establishing an intentional baseline at the

beginning, do the pilot and then measure desired benefits in terms of reduction of waste and carbon emissions, enhancing social connections, equity, fun and other important city priorities.

One idea discussed among the CSWG was an analysis of other successful behaviour change measurement tools. For example, the Washington DC’s Going Green Today³⁵ approach uses an on-line tool to measure whether 10% of the population shifted their behaviour by at least 30%.

Measurement can also be relatively simple and low cost yet still remarkably effective. Consider how Hennepin County weighs all of the goods to be fixed before a Fix-It Clinic and then uses a simple 10 question survey to determine how many goods have been partially or wholly repaired to estimate waste diversion, plus asking questions about participant satisfaction (See Appendix for the sample participant survey).

- Engage Community Sharing innovators in measurement efforts - for example, some tool libraries send out an annual survey to their members. A discussion with the tool library could result in the addition of a few additional questions asking members whether they purchased fewer tools or used the tools to undertake green projects. The responses could lend valuable information to local governments and help justify their efforts to enable tool libraries and related efforts like fix-it workshops.
- Review the recent USDN report - “Sustainable Consumption and Cities: Approaches to Measuring Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts in Cities”³⁶ which summarizes key literature and case studies and presents approaches for understanding and quantifying the scope and impact of sustainable consumption activities, including a focus on repair, reuse and rental of household goods and clothing; as well as tool-lending libraries.

Q5.

How can local governments scale Community Sharing that advances sustainability?

The CSWG had broad discussions about how to advance sustainability through Community Sharing and narrowed recommendations down to the following short-list deemed to have the greatest potential.

RECOMMENDATION:

Shift the focus from individual to community-based behaviour change.

The CSWG felt that focusing on individual change is not sufficient to scale up Community Sharing to a level that would reduce consumption to advance sustainability. There was also a question about whether focusing on behaviour change at a broader scale – such as geographically based communities and communities of interest– could use local government time and resources more efficiently.

There are many communities that are physically based such as neighbourhoods, apartments, offices and universities as well as communities of interest such as people getting married or having a baby who have shown engagement in Community Sharing and have a natural potential for expansion. The following three examples serve to show how local governments might play a role in enabling Community Sharing in a manner that is potentially more efficient and scaleable:

- **Universities** – students lack the funds to purchase high quality new goods and may only need goods for relatively short periods of time. Sadly, many purchase cheap goods that wear out and end up in the waste stream quickly. Reuse, sharing and borrowing targeted at specific university campuses can meet student need for inexpensive goods and address a natural market.

BPS is exploring this potential by bringing together Portland State University who have a re-use room, together with the nearby SoMa EcoDistrict and the Neighborhood Coalition.

The question they are exploring - is it possible to scale use of the re-use room by linking it to university residences and possibly multi-family buildings? And, if so, what role does each entity play in making this a reality?

BOX 4.3 UK SPACE FOR GROWTH

A recent report from November, 2014, entitled “Unlocking the sharing economy: An independent review,” written by Debbie Wosskow,³⁷ CEO of the peer-to-peer travel Club Love. Home. Swap and founder of the Collaborative Consumption European network, highlights an innovative program undertaken by the UK government to share underused office space:

“The government has taken a lead in sharing underused office space through the Space for Growth programme, which I commend. This allows start-ups, SMEs, charities and social enterprises to use empty government-owned space for free. This makes the most of what would otherwise have been wasted space, at the same time as helping businesses and social enterprises cut costs and grow.”³⁸

While Wosskow recommends that the UK government simplify the registration process by reducing the security vetting in less sensitive government buildings and by improving the online booking, she also notes:

“local authorities should follow the example set by central government and share their spare spaces with local residents, communities and businesses. This could either be through the existing Space for Growth website, or through their own online presence.”³⁹

- **Multi-family buildings** – particularly larger ones such as high-rises have a significant number of people in close proximity who can share kitchen gadgets, tools, camping gear and more.

Could Vertical Living Libraries (VLL) be brought into new multi-family building developments drawing from the approach taken with carsharing agreements?

A Vertical Living Library (VLL) as defined and proposed by Ryan Dyment, Co-Founder of the Toronto Tool Library, is a “shared space within a condominium or housing development where tenants can access a wide range of hand and power tools -- including high-powered vacuum and steam cleaners, ladders, power drills, hand tools, hosting equipment (folding tables and chairs for example), and entertainment products.”⁴⁰ A VLL would be accessible to all members of a housing development and products could be signed out using a digital application located on a tablet inside each dwelling unit. Products could be borrowed for up to 24 hours (depending on demand) and items would be maintained on a regular basis or on-demand by VLL staff.

The VLL addresses several issues experienced by city dwellers including limited storage space and the high cost of owning and maintaining items used just a few times each year. Developers could realize green marketing potential by incorporating VLLs and might even be given some relaxation on permit or other city requirements for showing a commitment to meeting goals of reducing waste, ecological footprint and/or consumption.

A first step towards incorporating VLLs into new multi-family development would likely be a pilot to test the waters and gather statistics on the positive benefits. Given the cost savings to residents of sharing a range of VLL goods, a pilot involving affordable housing developments on City-owned lands could be a good opportunity.

- Communities linked to major life transitions – Communities are not just physically based but can also be communities of common interest. One of the success factors of Portland’s Resourceful PDX program is the way in which it ties behaviour change to major life transitions such as having a baby, buying a house, or getting married. Portland sees a potential effective next step as tapping into transition messengers

-- midwives, wedding planners, real estate agents through their associations – and equipping them with good messages and then supporting them to engage their clients and communities.

RECOMMENDATION:

Link municipal infrastructure, particularly public space and libraries, to the needs of Community Sharing innovators.

The need for affordable space is a common need expressed by Community Sharing innovators. Whether it’s space for a new workshop for a tool library, somewhere for a community kitchen to locate or affordable space for hosting Board and volunteer meetings.

Local government has a history of providing space for Community Sharing. Some of the longest running tool libraries are located in public spaces - community centres, old firehouses and public libraries. Community kitchens can also be found in community centres. There are community gardens located in parks, at community centres and in vacant lots.

Public libraries received special attention as a topic of discussion in the CSWG. Could libraries extend beyond lending books to also lending seeds, toys, kitchen gadgets, tools and more? With branch library locations peppered throughout city neighborhoods, libraries offer the local access deemed very important in expanding sharing:

“People don’t want to travel far in order to borrow, preferably staying within their own neighbourhood.”⁴¹

The role of public libraries in enabling Community Sharing appears poised for growth. The Center for a New American Dream was an early leader in recognizing the scaleable sharing potential of libraries. They conducted a CommunityShare workshop in November, 2013, with over 50 librarians from Maryland inviting representatives of tool and seed libraries and more. Many ideas were discussed from making meeting rooms available or convening community stakeholders interested in a sharing project, to possibly modifying a community database into a time bank database.

The largest interest was in holding swap events at libraries, because they are deemed an easy entry point. For example,

at Calvert Library, the librarians developed a SWAP team that has partnered with community organizations to host and promote swaps for baby stuff, flower bulbs, seeds, tools and kitchen items, back-to-school gear and many other items. [42] Since this initial meeting in 2013, Maryland libraries continue to explore new Sharing ideas and to branch out further in the activities they are considering.

The Toronto Public Library has followed Maryland's lead and recently entered into a partnership with the Toronto Tool Library (see Power Tools Now Available at Toronto Public Library in this chapter).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Link underutilized local public space including community centres, libraries, parks, institutional buildings and more with the needs of Community Sharing.

Local governments in North America can consider adopting a more systematic, on-line approach to sharing space for Community Sharing innovators (as well as non-profits, social enterprise and SMEs advancing local sustainability goals) modelled on the UK Space for Growth programme.

BOX 4.4 POWER TOOLS NOW AVAILABLE AT TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

As a result of a new partnership with the Toronto Public Library (TPL), the Toronto Tool Library (TTL) opened a third branch in the Downsview Public Library Branch in North Toronto in April, 2015.⁴³ While there is a tool library located in the Berkeley Public Library in California, this is the first such collaboration in Canada – and could be a sign of things to come given the potential mutual benefits.

Housing its newest division at a public library branch is seen as a big step by the Toronto Tool Library in terms of expanding public awareness and access. For a cost of \$50, anyone can join the new branch in order to access a wide range of hand, power and gardening tools. Members of the TPL receive a \$5 discount on the TPL membership rate. Memberships from the new branch are expected to cover the TTL's operational costs, including a part-time salary and rent with the possibility of a small profit by year end.

The new TTL branch is seen as a positive addition by the TPL who are embracing innovation and technology more broadly. For example, the TPL have Digital Innovation Hubs at three branches that provide free access to technology and training such as 3D printing and new design software. They also hosted a Maker Faire / Festival at the Toronto Reference Library in the summer of 2014 that attracted 10,000 people.

For the Downsview Branch, the TTL was seen as a particularly effective way to reinforce their role as a community hub and boost membership of those in their late 20s and early 30s, and a review of new library memberships suggests that this is happening. The library already reduces the cost barrier of access to media and information so doing the same for tools – especially those with prohibitive costs – is as a logical extension of their mandate.

The new TTL branch is part of a one year pilot that allows both the TTL and the VTL to test it out. The pilot is low cost and minimal risk for the TPL. The TPL receives rent from the TTL, which is located in a secondary staff room which was seldomly used. The TTL took on the renovation of the space using their own tools and volunteers.

For the TTL, locating at the Downsview Branch represents a unique expansion into a suburban location, where people are less familiar with tool libraries and the Sharing Economy in general. As a result, they anticipate it will take them more time to get out the word out. Fortunately they have some grant money from the Ontario Trillium Foundation that includes a modest marketing budget.

If the pilot is successful for both parties, the new Downsview TTL could prompt potential expansion to more public library branches. With over 18 million visits in to the Toronto Public Library in 2013 – and over 70% of Torontonians using the public library – this has potential to scale up TTL's activities and boost its waste reduction potential significantly both in terms of using existing space and lowering the need for people to buy their own tools.

Our discussions with LGSE advisors suggest that the willingness of libraries to embrace Sharing Economy opportunities can vary significantly. Those libraries who are interested in innovating, proving their value, boosting membership – or simply interested in adding more to their offerings – show the greatest interest.

What Americans Think of the Sharing Economy



Nearly **1 in 3** Americans would like to **SHARE MORE THINGS** like tools and household items



64%
of Americans think sharing lowers
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



76%
of Americans think sharing
SAVES MONEY



72%
of Americans think sharing
BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS

In 2014, the Center for a New American Dream conducted a national survey to determine American attitudes on wealth, sharing, materialism, and more.

View the complete results: www.newdream.org/poll2014

the center for a new
american dream
more of what matters

RECOMMENDATION:

Explore how to scale Community Sharing into neighbourhoods of varied compositions.

The motivations for Sharing may change depending on the makeup of neighbourhoods, varying in urban form, income levels, age profile and ethnocultural composition. More information about the motivations of people to share based on different personal characteristics would help programs such as Portland's Resourceful PDX understand how to scale their efforts into neighbourhoods of varied compositions.

There is very little research on people's motivations to engage in Community Sharing beyond analyzes focused on age. Research undertaken by the Center for a New American

Dream is one exception. In 2014, they conducted a national survey that found that, not surprisingly, "millennials make use of the Sharing Economy services at more than double Baby Boomers and Gen Xers - and are more interested in expanding their sharing practices."⁴⁴

A second finding worthy of further exploration is that non-white Americans are interested in sharing more than white Americans. The specific reasons for this are unclear and the means through which to tap into that motivation requires further exploration.

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide facilitative partnerships or seed funding to add or enhance web platforms to support Community Sharing.

A major reason for the scaling of the broader Sharing Economy is that information technology has made sharing easier, more convenient and less costly. Information technology has historically been used much more modestly by Community Sharing innovators and, in some instances, is shunned for fear that it might erode the ability to build new relationships and enhance social connection.

Local government could potentially assist Community Sharing innovators through facilitative partnerships or seed funding to add or enhance existing web platforms. This can enhance the ease and convenience of sharing at the community level. Libraries with their already sophisticated web catalogues and related expertise are obvious partners with entities such as tool libraries to provide assistance or even to bring tool library inventories into their existing web catalogue systems.

RECOMMENDATION:

Help Community Sharing innovators get better organized and/or networked.

The largely volunteer nature of Community Sharing entities can make it difficult for local governments to engage with them effectively. They may not have a consistent contact person, lack a clear or consistent mandate, have regular meetings, or have an organizational structure that allows them to receive grants. Volunteers may wane in their engagement over time.

Local governments can help build the capacity of Community Sharing innovators in a number of ways such as:

- linking them with an agent to help them acquire non-profit status;
- providing grants to hire a part-time person or seek advice on critical tasks including building / organizing their volunteer pool, transitioning leadership, and developing effective operations; and
- providing a grant, and potentially some input, into the forming of an effective local Community Sharing Network.

One idea discussed at the CSWG was to expand the Center for a New American Dream's Community Share workshop process with a second phase to help Community Sharing innovators form an effective network structure. The

Community Share workshops help local governments engage with local sharing actors in order to develop an inventory of local sharing activities and actors and related web platform.

BOX 4.5 TOP 5 CHALLENGES TO SCALABILITY FOR COMMUNITY SHARING INNOVATORS

Community sharing innovators across Canada consistently cited the following five challenges to growing their organizations in interviews conducted in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Toronto, Montréal and Halifax. These innovators are individuals instrumental in the development of sharing activities in their communities such as tool libraries and maker spaces.

1) REGULATIONS OFTEN LACK FLEXIBILITY

While community sharing organizations did not mention any reticence on the part of municipal governments to support their projects in theory, they often encountered difficulty complying with regulatory requirements, which they found to be overly rigid or cumbersome.

EXAMPLE: Maker spaces often fall outside of standard zoning definitions, particularly because light industrial areas are generally not permitted to draw more than a very few patrons. Maker spaces would benefit from flexibility in terms of zoning bylaws.

2) INFORMATION SHARING HAPPENS SECTOR BY SECTOR

While specific community sharing sectors share information readily (i.e., the national tool library listserv), information has not spread as easily amongst sharing organizations offering products or services across different sectors (e.g., mobility, spaces, goods, food, energy, community sharing). The lack of connectivity across sectors of Sharing Economy activities can lead to missed opportunities to share experiences and integrate innovations across the Sharing Economy.

3) ORGANIZATIONS ARE HIGHLY LOCALIZED

Particularly in the Canadian context, sharing organizations operate in response to unique local needs and may not see opportunities to scale across to other neighbourhoods or undertake activities at a regional or national scale.

4) ORGANIZATIONS EMPLOY DIFFERENT BUSINESS STRUCTURES

Even organizations offering the same service often have significantly different structures and governance, which can add complexity to collaboration efforts and to common strategies.

EXAMPLE: The tool libraries in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax all have different structures - a consumer co-operative, a program within a neighbourhood community association, a project of an environmental NPO in partnership with the public library, a solidarity co-operative, and a non-profit society, respectively.

5) ORGANIZATIONS HAVE LIMITED ACCESS TO TRADITIONAL FINANCING

As dictated by their organizational structures, community sharing organizations have access to different pools of funding for start-up and growth. Some structures lend themselves better to revenue-generation, while others may allow more community involvement in decision-making.

EXAMPLE: Co-operatives rely on member-equity and grants from more established co-operatives. Non-profit societies have employed crowdfunding initiatives, but often struggle to maintain adequate operating capital.

BOX 4.6 TOP 5 MOTIVATIONS OF COMMUNITY SHARING INNOVATORS

Interviews conducted with community sharing innovators in Canada found the following five forces motivate the individuals and organizations involved. The responses suggest regional differences in focus that would benefit from further study.

1) DESIRE TO BUILD COMMUNITY

EXAMPLE: In rapidly developing urban Calgary, Alberta, building community connections and addressing isolation among new immigrants was cited as the most important goal of the Calgary Tool Library and their programs.

2) NEED TO BUILD “HEALTH EQUITY”

EXAMPLE: Innovators at Station 20 West in

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan have developed their sharing economy initiatives from their work building “Health Equity,” addressing the role access to services plays in public health.

3) RESPONSE TO EMPLOYMENT REALITIES

EXAMPLE: The Social Enterprise Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba has arrived at their community sharing innovations with the aim to grow employment and training opportunities in their community.

4) CONCERN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

EXAMPLE: The Institute for a Resource Based Economy which runs the Toronto Tool Library in Toronto Ontario was in large part motivated as a response to environmental degradation and climate-change.

5) THE BUSINESS CASE

EXAMPLE: Sharing economy advocate and collaborativeconsumption.com curator Lucy Gao from Toronto, Ontario was initially driven by the rational business case for community sharing.

Conclusions

Community sharing with an emphasis on re-using, borrowing and swapping, repair and maintenance of goods – combined with educational efforts to promote buying less and smarter – can help local governments address the interrelated goals of reducing waste and consumption while advancing more affordable living and enhancing social connections.

Local governments can enable Community Sharing through supporting the creation of an inventory of shared assets, developing web pages and / or promoting events and ideas, and acting as a facilitator and connector. These roles can require a modest allotment of a portion of a staff person’s time or they can become a program with dedicated staff such as the Resourceful PDX’s program of the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.

Fix-It Clinics are one example where local governments may consider taking an active coordination role given the positive waste reduction, community building and “happiness” outcomes in return for a modest commitment of resources. There are many opportunities for local governments to scale Community Sharing in a manner that makes potentially more efficient use of local government resources than

focusing on individuals. They include:

- Linking municipal infrastructure, particularly public space and libraries, to the needs of Community Sharing innovators. This was deemed to be a highly manageable role for many local governments that could be scaled by modeling programs such as UK Space for Growth.
- Shifting the focus to partnering with community entities such as universities, churches, senior centres and multi-family buildings who have the capacity, resources and captive audiences interested in sharing community goods.
- Tapping into the associations representing life transitions -- midwives, wedding planners, real estate agents -- and arming them with good messages and then supporting them effectively.
- Exploring how to scale Community Sharing into neighborhoods with varied age profiles, income levels and ethnocultural compositions.
- Supporting Community Sharing innovators in enhancing the role of web platforms for their transactions in order to increase the ease, convenience - and scalability - of sharing assets.
- Supporting Community Sharing innovators in their efforts to become more organized and/or networked so that they have more capacity to reliably engage and partner with local government.

The CSWG recommends the development of a pilot project to explore promising area(s) to scale Community Sharing as listed above linked to an intentional measurement approach. The pilots could include outreach and dialogue with other cities in North America in order to consider the challenges and opportunities of transferring lessons learned. Ideally, the pilots should not only consider the role of local government but also consider how to foster supportive policy at higher levels of government, and in conjunction with relevant non-profits and private sector entities.

Resources

- Center for a New American Dream – Webinar: How to Start a Tool Library – <https://www.newdream.org/resources/webinars/webinar-start-a-tool-library>
- Center for a New American Dream – National Poll Analysis - Center for a New American Dream - <https://www.newdream.org/resources/poll-2014>; <https://newdream.s3.amazonaws.com/19/d9/7/3866/NewDreamPollFinalAnalysis.pdf>

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- 1 Here we refer to the LGSE emphasis on local sustainability that uses living with ecological means as a first filter and then prioritizes Sharing activities higher that also achieve additional benefits such as advancing equity, prosperous local economies and improving quality of life.
 - 2 *How to Throw a Community Swap Meet.* <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-throw-a-community-swap-meet/>; "How to Stage a Media Swap." <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-stage-a-media-swap/>; "How to Throw a Toy Exchange." <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-throw-a-toy-exchange/>; "How to Host a Seed Swap." <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-host-a-seed-swap/>.
 - 3 *How to Start a Tool Library.* <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-start-a-tool-library/>.
 - 4 *How a Denver Toy Library Has Helped Kids Share for 35 Years.* <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-a-denver-toy-library-has-helped-kids-share-for-35-years/>.
 - 5 *Just in Time.* <http://www.shareable.net/blog/just-in-time/>; "How to Share Time Through Timebanking." <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-share-time-through-timebanking/>.
 - 6 *How to Start a Repair Café.* <http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-start-a-repair-café/>.
 - 7 Many examples can be found in the Shared Food section of the LGSE Roadmap [Link to Chapter 3d].
 - 8 *How to Save Big Money on Groceries by Starting a Food Buying Club.* http://www.ehow.com/how_2242161_groceries-starting-food-buying-club.html.
 - 9 Center for a New American Dream, *New Dream Community Action Kit: Guide to Sharing*, 2015. <https://www.newdream.org/programs/collaborative-communities/community-action-kit/sharing>.
 - 10 *Resourceful PDX.* <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/531984>.
 - 11 City of Portland, *Climate Action Plan*, (June 2015): 89 – 98. <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/531984>.
 - 12 A consumption-based carbon emissions inventory measures global emissions from the local consumption of goods and services by households, government entities, and also some business purchases.
 - 13 *Be Resourceful.* <http://flagstaff.az.gov/index.aspx?NID=3078>.
 - 14 *Poverty With a View.* <http://www.npr.org/podcasts/381444807/poverty-with-a-view>.
 - 15 For a good discussion, see the Technology Literacy Collaborative, Minnesota's blog post on Fix-It Tech: <http://www.tlc-mn.org/fix-it-tech-sustainable-device-repairs-for-minneapolis-residents/>.
 - 16 Social capital is the networks of mutual support, reciprocity, and trust that exist in communities.
 - 17 *What is the VTL?* http://vancouvertoolibrary.com/?page_id=15.
 - 18 Personal correspondence with Craig Massey, Vice President of the Vancouver Tool Library.
 - 19 <http://halifaxtoolibrary.ca/why-we-think-this-is-important/>
 - 20 <http://www.shareable.net/blog/inside-detroit%E2%80%99s-spring-clean-swap-skillshare-and-dj-party>
 - 21 *Portland Food Exchange.* <http://www.portlandfoodexchange.com>.
 - 22 *Community Gardens.* <http://www.kelowna.ca/CM/Page2489.aspx>.
 - 23 Megan R. Herod, *Cultivating Community: Connecting community gardens and crime prevention*, <https://uwaterloo.ca/environment-resource-studies/sites/ca.environment-resource-studies/files/uploads/files/ThesisCultivatingCommunityMay2012herod.pdf>; "Role of community gardens," <http://designinghealthycommunities.org/role-community-gardens/>.
 - 24 Jonathan Yotti/Kingsley and Mardie Townsend. "Dig in'to social capital: community gardens as mechanisms for growing urban social connectedness." *Urban Policy and Research* 24.4 (2006): 525-537.
 - 25 *Buy Smart – Resourceful PDX.* <http://www.resourcefulpdx.com/buy-smart/>.
 - 26 *Reuse – Resourceful PDX.* <http://www.resourcefulpdx.com/reuse/>.
 - 27 *Borrow and Share – Resourceful PDX.* <http://www.resourcefulpdx.com/borrow-and-share/>.
 - 28 *Fix and Maintain – Resourceful PDX.* <http://www.resourcefulpdx.com/fix-and-maintain/>.
 - 29 This is a program of the Center for a New American Dream that Portland links to which can be found at <http://www.sokindregistry.org>.
 - 30 City of Portland, *Climate Action Plan*, (June 2015): 89. <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/531984>.
 - 31 *Reuse Alliance.* <http://reusealliance.org/>.
 - 32 *Flagstaff Sustainability Program.* <https://www.facebook.com/FlagstaffSustainabilityProgram>.
 - 33 *Neighborhood Sharing.* <http://eugene-or.gov/eugenesharing>.
 - 34 *Fix-it Clinics.* <http://www.hennepin.us/fixitclinic>.
 - 35 *Going Green Today.* <http://www.goinggreentoday.com/>.
 - 36 Cascadia Consulting Group *Sustainable Consumption and Cities: Approaches to measuring social, economic, and environmental impacts in cities for the Urban Sustainability Directors Network* (2015) - http://usdn.org/uploads/cms/documents/usdn_measuring_consumption_project_files.zip
 - 37 Debbie Woskwo, *Unlocking the sharing economy: An independent review*, www.goc.uk, (November 2014). https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/378291/bis-14-1227-unlocking-the-sharing-economy-an-independent-review.pdf.
 - 38 Ibid.
 - 39 Ibid.
 - 40 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpDPjvoR030&feature=youtu.be>; http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/09/29/hammering_home_the_logic_of_pooling_our_tools.html
 - 41 The Sharing Project, *The Sharing Project: A Report on Sharing in Vancouver.* <http://ponderresearch.co/projects/the-sharing-project/>.
 - 42 *Calvert Library Swap Events.* <http://calvert.lib.md.us/swap.html>.
 - 43 <http://toronto.ctvnews.ca/power-tools-and-paperbacks-now-under-one-roof-in-toronto-as-libraries-unite-1.2351733>
 - 44 <https://www.newdream.org/resources/poll-2014>
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