



ACTIVATE YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Getting Neighbours Involved! A Guide for Community Leads/MPALs

Increasing physical activity levels, including daily bouts of movement, is an important way for Nova Scotians to improve their physical, mental, and social health. The goal of this project is to Activate communities - one neighbourhood at a time - by encouraging neighbours to re-think, re-imagine and re-purpose their neighbourhood spaces to be more active.

The Tactical Guide takes as its premise Tactical Urbanism which encourages low-cost, deliberate grassroots initiatives to temporarily alter the built environment to improve local neighbourhoods and public gathering places. These temporary alterations can sometimes lead to permanent changes over time.

Supporting Your Work

When thinking about how to recruit and support neighbours and neighbourhoods, it's important to keep in mind that the Activate Your Neighbourhood Project is meant to help Nova Scotians think about movement within their own neighbourhoods. Focusing on neighbourhoods means having low-barrier, unstructured movement opportunities right outside one's door, at times convenient to each person. It encourages people to find and use the assets that neighbourhoods offer, rather than seeking out distant spaces and places. And it provides you, as community leads, with opportunities to deliver on your mandate.

The project also aligns with, and supports, Let's Get Moving Nova Scotia in a number of ways, including:



Goal 3: Advance quality community leadership – the Tactical Guide aligns with all of the actions listed in this goal, including offering supportive physical and social environments.



Goal 4: Enhance opportunities and address inclusion – the Tactical Guide provides ways in which to look at each neighbourhood through the lenses of equity, diversity, inclusion, access, age, community size/type and characteristics.



Goal 5: Measure Progress – the pilot-test will include the implementation of an evaluation to determine the project's, and the Tactical Guide's relevance, uptake and other metrics associated with awareness, knowledge, attitudes and to some extent (in the period of time allotted), behaviour change.

Promoting the Project

In order to get neighbours engaged in the project, here are a few ideas to get started.



Identify priority neighbourhoods in your community to approach about getting involved.

- These neighbourhoods might be those that have been involved in other activities in the past or may be comprised of neighbours from equity-seeking groups, such as newcomers, the LGBTQ2S+ community, older adults, etc.



If you have personal contacts in these neighbourhoods, reach out directly to them to tell them about the project.

- Provide them with flyers, 'infographics', and other promotional tools.
- Set up a time to follow-up to answer questions about the project.
- Provide assistance as required.



If you don't have personal contacts, consider the following ways to reach neighbours

- Contact neighbourhood, community improvement, or business associations
- Place flyers/infographics in neighbourhood places such as building/condo mail rooms or on super mail boxes, local coffee shops, the library, residences for older adults, shelters, on bulletin boards in grocery stores, at municipal/town hall, on lamp posts in neighbourhoods. Or work with Canada Post to deliver flyers to people's mailboxes
- Use Neighbourhood social media groups (e.g., Facebook)
- Send flyers home with children through schools
- Place information in local newspapers, in community recreation guides (if timing allows) or on local cable shows or radio
- Work with local influential / well-known people in the community who will promote the project on your behalf. This could be a business leader, local politician, media personality, musician, or artist, engaged volunteer, or well-known neighbour
- Promote during already-established activities and events taking place in your community such as kite festivals, food festivals, Halloween activities, Holiday markets, concerts, etc.

Supporting the Project

I. Supporting the Pilot

You will be the conduit between the Project Team and the neighbourhoods. Primarily your role will be to provide access to the Tactical Guide to neighbours, support them in implementing the Tactics (see below), and assisting with the evaluation of the project.

II. Supporting neighbours

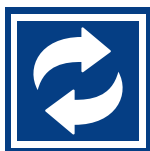
There are three ways that you can help neighbours realize their placemaking goals:

1. Catalyze

2. Support

3. Lead

Catalyze



Catalyze can be characterized as introducing community members to, in this case, the concept of Tactical Placemaking and the Tactical Guide, inspiring them to make a difference in their neighbourhood, and then stepping back as they take the lead.

To catalyze and inspire action, community leaders might:

- Gather information about the concept of Tactical Placemaking
- Become familiar with the resources available
- Take steps to understand the neighbourhoods in the community and what may or may not already be happening there
- Determine who the key contacts are in community neighbourhoods
- Hold introductory meetings and establish relationships and trust with groups and individuals
- Undertake activities that strengthen community ownership
- Get out of the way!

Support



Supporting individuals or groups consists of stepping with them to ensure they have the tools and resources to achieve their goals and successfully implement their chosen activities. It is about setting people up for success and finding ways to say “yes” to ideas and requests. It’s about having a “green tape” mind set. Often, we (leaders and neighbours) start with a “red tape” mind set: “we can’t do this because...”, “we need permission or ...”. One of the most important things in Placemaking is to, rather than defaulting to the red tape answer, move straight to the green tape answer (or perhaps some yellow tape is needed along the way). It’s important to think about how you can go from red tape to green tape and encourage community members to do the same.

In supporting neighbours, community leaders might:

- provide ideas to help neighbours re-think, re-imagine and re-purpose their neighbourhood
- provide information about how they might get started or address challenges
- provide information related to municipal practices including how to navigate by-laws, seek permits, the different municipal departments that they may need to engage with
- provide services or assistance that goes beyond just providing the information but that actually provides step-by-step help with implementation
- provide advice about different ways to accomplish the desired outcome of an activity
- provide funding opportunities to support neighbourhood activities
- address policies that placemaking efforts seek to challenge
- encourage neighbours to think about the full lifecycle of their activity (inspiration-plan-execute-clean up) and how to avoid any unintended consequences (e.g. environmental impacts)
- find out if they really need assistance or if staying out of the way is the best support
- deal with neighbour requests and needs with a “yes, and ...” approach. That is, saying “yes” when asked for assistance and going beyond with additional solutions and supports
- sometimes, the right guidance is to say “no” if it will be met with frustration, ill-will between neighbours and or neighbours and municipalities or does not achieve the intended purpose (of getting people active)
- encourage their work throughout the journey, express gratitude, and celebrate their success.

Lead



Although the concept of tactical placemaking puts the responsibility for desired change in the hands of community members, it is sometimes appropriate for community leaders to take the lead or step in to the process.

In leading neighbourhood placemaking efforts, community leaders might:

- Implement larger-scale initiatives that inspire smaller-scale versions in neighbourhoods.
- Help address resistance to change and encourage buy-in.
- Identify spaces in the community that need attention and provide the activities required to address the situation.
- Engage with neighbours in actual settings and in their daily lives rather than through plans, reports, and other bureaucratic processes.
- Build momentum to continue the positive things that happened in neighbourhoods (during the pandemic) such as many of the ideas in the Tactical Guide.
- Identify policies and practices that could readily change as a result of work done at the neighbourhood level either led by community members or community organizations.

For recruitment, refer to the following tools created for Activate Your Neighbourhood Community Leads and MPALs.