



Green Events Guide

Hosting a successful and sustainable event

This guide is intended to help you streamline your organizing efforts, using sustainable solutions that are suitable for your group. Please remember that these are suggestions, not all of which may be feasible for all groups. In particular, smaller organizations, or those holding smaller events, may wish to adjust some elements of this list.

The list has been updated from the original Guide to Hosting a Greener Event, created by the Stratford branch of the Canadian Federation of University Women, and augmented with ongoing work from the Rotary Club of Stratford, in partnership with the Energy and Environment Advisory Committee.

The Event

- 1. Preparation:** Develop a sustainability policy for your events. A policy helps you find new ways to follow through on your environmental commitment, track progress, and celebrate successes. Choose a person or team to set goals, identify tools for green initiatives and environmental awareness. Consider: waste reduction activities, venue selection, overall carbon footprint, supporting small business and local suppliers.
- 2. People:** Appoint an individual to make the event environmentally friendly. Consider your partnerships with contractors, vendors and municipalities, and identify processes to address the different areas of impact. What conversations are needed to get everyone working together for a greener event? Consult with event volunteers to ensure support and understanding. Vendor contracts: what wording is needed to enable a zero-carbon footprint?
- 3. Education:** Set up booth at the event to explain environmental efforts and focus. Announce greening measures to attendees. Give alternate transportation information and material reduction tips. Establish a “green ideas box” for

suggestions from participants, vendors, volunteers. Consider prizes for best suggestion, or for for most impactful “green” event practice (biking to event).

4. **Location:** How will participants arrive? Is it walkable from the centre of town? On a bus route? Is transport well serviced? Are valet bike services available? Special welcome for electric vehicles? Encourage carpooling for out-of-town travellers. Consider asking attendees how they arrived, and suggest a donation offsetting travel emissions or a ticket reduction for using sustainable transport.
5. **Waste:** What waste will be generated at your event? Knowing waste sources can help you create a management plan. Avoid laminated materials, heavily dyed paper, balloons, food wrappers, polystyrene items, styrofoam.

Dining

6. **Food:** Use local food. Less transportation is more sustainable. Plan menus using in-season fresh, local, organic produce. Provide vegetarian and vegan options. Ask caterer for Fairtrade or other certified coffee/tea, and eco-certified (organic, humanely processed) meat products.
7. **Service:** Consider getting containers (cups, etc) through a vendor like “A Friendlier Company”, use plant-based compostable dishes, or offer a discount for patrons who bring their own cutlery/dining containers. Sell reusable water bottles. The City of Stratford’s portable “Hydration Station” has fountains and refill taps. It’s available free for events in Stratford: (519) 271-0250 ext. 315.
8. **Packaging:** Avoid unnecessary packaging and plastic bags. No single-use plastics (bags, straws, containers, etc.) Avoid single-serving containers of anything (condiments, sugar, cream, etc.)
9. **Disposal:** Rather than placing waste bins throughout the venue, use waste sorting stations. Find “Green Team” volunteers to collect and sort waste. Enlist volunteers or use a rental service to wash reusable dishes, cutlery and linens. Arrange for the collection of recycling and compostables.

For a list of items currently acceptable for recycling collection in Stratford, visit <https://www.stratford.ca/en/live-here/recyclingcollection.aspx>

Promoting your event

10. **Signage:** Consider posting central display boards or signs. Make banner signs that can be reused at multiple events. Avoid printing dates on signs so they can also be re-used. Use removable/replaceable QR codes on signs directing readers to online materials.
11. **Print:** Do as little printing as possible; handouts, flyers, etc. Use recycled paper, printed double-sided, and print with vegetable-based ink. Do not use goldenrod or fluorescent-coloured paper (not recyclable). Give attendees the option to refuse/ recycle/return unwanted copies at the end of the event, and ask them to return name tags for future events.
12. **Ticketing:** digital tickets, mobile ticket reader. Digital check-in for large events, i.e. Ticketfi, Eventbrite. Consider webcast options for long-distance travellers.
13. **Marketing:** use electronic technology, new media. Advertise how to get to the event by transit, biking and walking. Consider a ticket discount or raffle if attendees arrive in an eco-friendly way.
14. **Publicize your work:** Reward “green” patrons with reduced admission, or entry in a prize draw. Post the numbers during the event and through social media. Include details in your final reports.
15. **Monitoring and end of event reporting:** review recycling goals, and measure your success, then set targets for future events. Make a plan for determining how successful your actions were, and how to improve outcomes at the next event. Start simple and plan to improve each year.