



Deep canvassers

# Vernon Climate Engagement Centre (CEC) Research Project

The Vernon CEC research team | Poster presented April 8 and 14, 2026, in Kelowna and Vancouver, BC.

The Vernon Climate Engagement Centre (CEC) project began in Sept, 2025 as a partnership of community climate groups and UBC faculty and students, with support from City of Vernon Climate Department staff. Our pilot project CEC will be the first of its kind in Canada

The CEC will aim to:

- provide leadership in, and opportunities for, wider community engagement in climate action; and
- strengthen community resilience in preparation for future climate impacts and other challenges.



CEC Visioning workshop

All photos taken by research team unless otherwise noted

**UK CEC Interviewing.** This project was inspired by the UK Climate Emergency Centres (CEC) Network with its more than 40 CECs. *Theresa Dearden, UBCO Solutions Scholar 1*, has interviewed community leaders from 9 UK CECs to learn from their experiences. Their advice: grow from available resources and spaces; governance and funding flexibility will help; act as a connector, not a duplicator, and **start with priority issues that are shared across socio-economic and political divides.**

map screenshot from <https://climateemergencycentre.org.uk/cec-uk-network-2/>

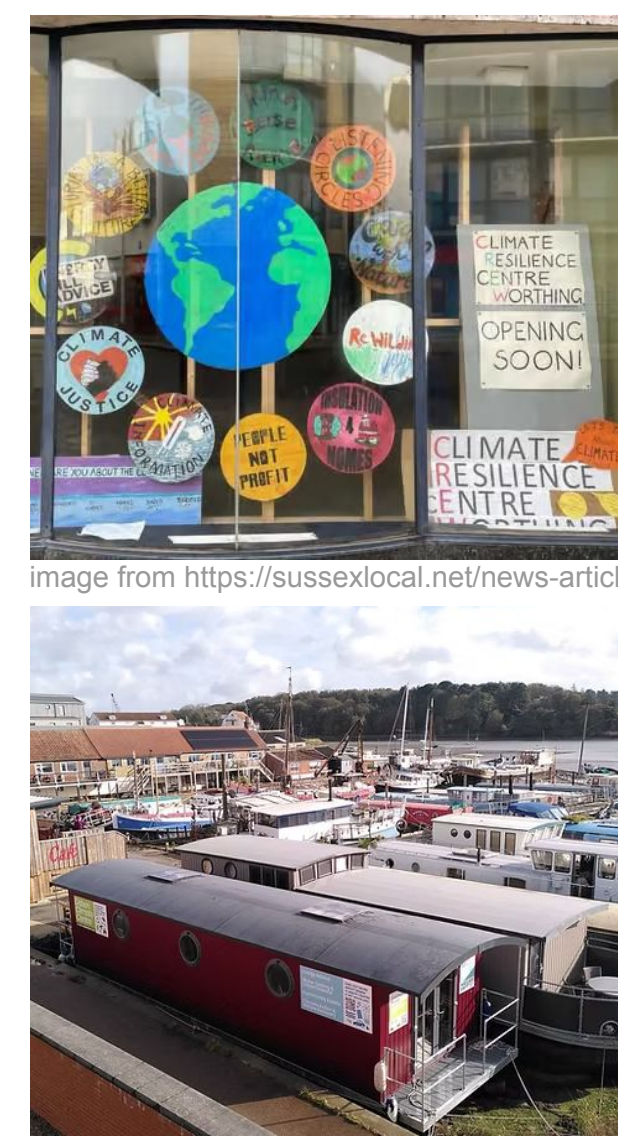


image from <https://sussexlocal.net/news-articles/crew-climate-emergency-centre/>

image from <https://www.dobornomato.org/visit-us>

**Asset Mapping.** A UBCV School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) Studio Team of 4 Masters in Community and Regional Planning students, *Izzie Bjonness-Jacobsen, Jason Eklund, Alea Mohamed and Andrew Yan*, facilitated a resilience-focused asset mapping workshop with community leaders representing 25 different organizations on Nov 22, 2025. Key ideas included the need for: accessible and relevant resources and programming, emergency preparedness, and connections across the community. **The importance of youth leadership in organizing and motivating the community emerged as a key finding.**



Asset mapping workshop



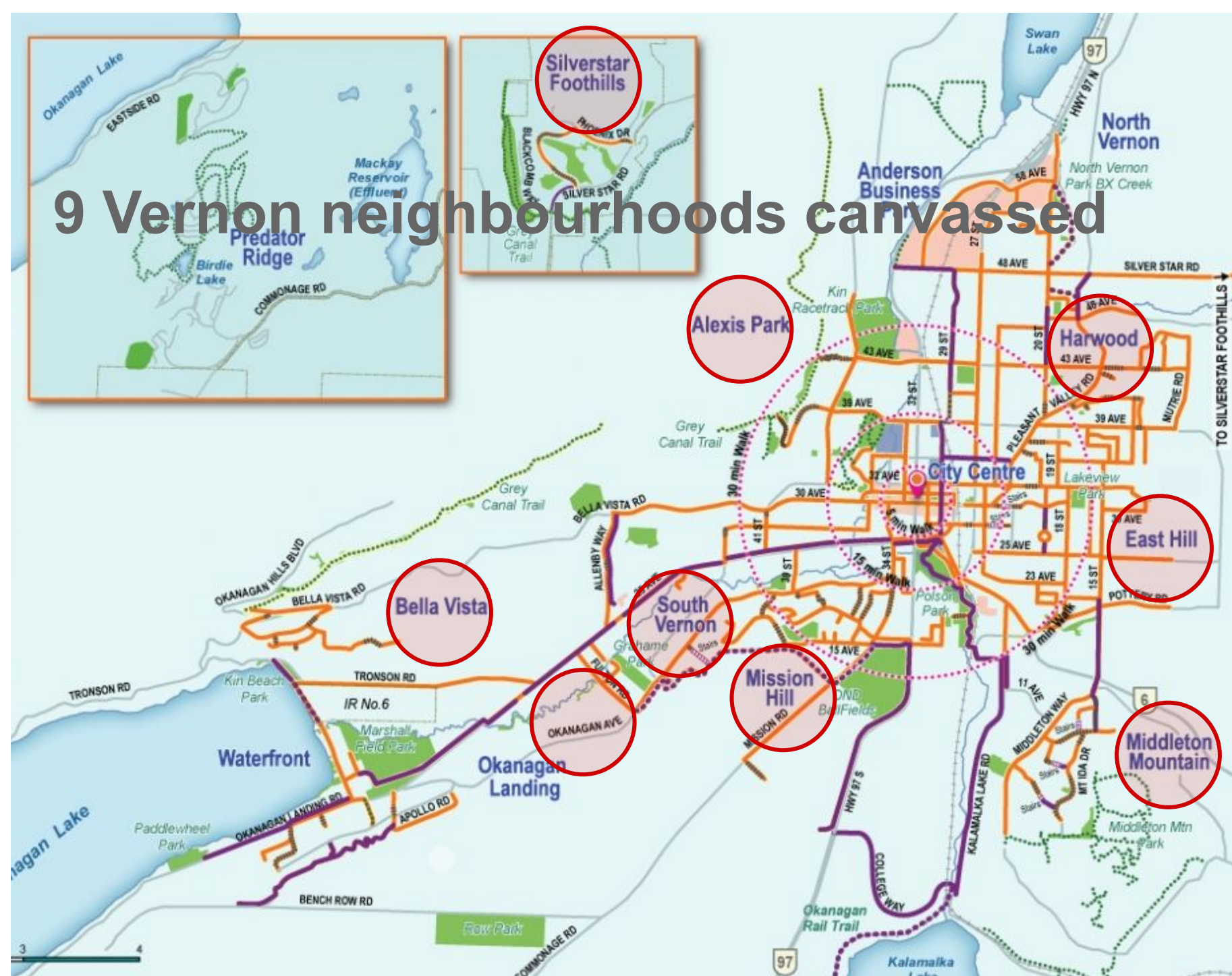
graphic created by SCARP student team

"Every conversation, every story, and every piece of feedback left a mark on this plan. Vernon is fortunate to have people who care this much - and so are we." - SCARP Studio Team

**CEC Strategic Plan.** All of these research and workshop findings are being pulled together into a strategic plan for the Vernon CEC, as well as other outputs. The strategic plan envisions a CEC that is welcoming, adaptable and self-funding, and outlines 3 streams of activities for strengthening social, environmental and economic resilience.

**What's Next.** Community core partners, Climate Action Now! (CAN!), Climate Action Ripple Effect (CARE), Youth Climate Corps - Vernon (YCC) and the City of Vernon's Climate Dept are raising funds, negotiating for a space, and hiring a CEC Coordinator. **Our goal is to launch a CEC in the fall of 2026.**

**Deep Canvassing.** *Blair Weber, UBCO Solutions Scholar 2*, has been looking at what community members are saying about climate impacts, community resilience and the kind of CEC they would like to see in Vernon. Their ideas come from 155 doorstep conversations held by a team of over 35 volunteer Deep Canvassers trained by *Liz Stewart, Deep Canvassing Organizer*. Some themes: climate awareness is real and local; conversations shift perspectives; responsibility is shared but diffuse; and appetite for community connection is strong. **Over 50% of all households rated themselves at 8+/10 level of support for a Vernon CEC.**



Map adapted from City of Vernon walking tour map

**CEC Visioning.** The UBCV SCARP Studio team also facilitated a CEC Visioning workshop that was attended by more than 80 community members on Feb 21, 2026. Ideas from the research activities and the Asset Mapping workshop flowed into an Open Space facilitation where participants were asked to prioritize suggestions on 8 topics: Naming the CEC; Aiming for resilience; Priority issues; Welcoming for all; Partnerships and resources; Space and place; Ideas for self-funding; and Programming, services and activities.

All photos taken by research team



CEC Visioning workshop

**Thank You:** to our funders: UBC's Climate Solutions Research Collective, UBC's Collaborative Research Mobility Award, Community Foundation of the North Okanagan, and the City of Vernon's Climate Department; to the UBCO Sustainability students: *Jordyn Sanche, Ria Kaeley, Muriel Kessler, Luca Grossi and Hamid Al-mahri*; to our community partners *Barry Dorval, Karine Poznanski, Sierra Lammi, Kevin McCarty, Jo de Vries and Ryan Koelwyn*; as well as all other Deep Canvassers, facilitators, volunteers and participants in the research project. The PIs on this project were *Dr. Maged Senbel, UBCV's School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP)* and *Dr. Mary Stockdale, UBCO's Institute for Community-Engaged Research (ICER)*.