Breakout 1: Relationships and Networking: Building Connections To Expand Coalition Impact

Clean Cities and Communities

Agenda

- Welcome
- Peer presenter lightening round
- Networking opportunities group brainstorm
- Activity: Connecting coalition strengths with organizations
- Wrap-up discussion



Today's Goals



Identify coalition strengths



Discover potential partners



Identify collaboration opportunities



Develop new peer connections



Relationships Lead to Impact

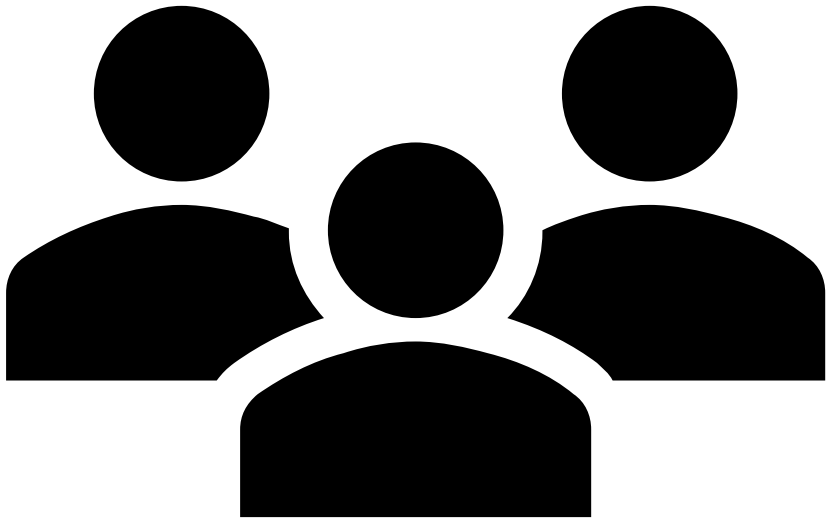
Effective coalitions leverage relationships to extend their reach, strengthen their work, and create opportunities that would be difficult to achieve independently.

How Do You Approach a Potential Partner?

What do we need from a partner?

What do we bring to a partnership?

What can we achieve together?



Networking Tips and Tricks

Relationship-building formula

Connect → Learn → Identify opportunities → Follow up → Collaborate



Lead with curiosity



Share your strengths



Look for mutual benefit



Follow through

Coalition Perspective 1: Megan Upchurch, Centralina Clean Fuels



Identifying Collaboration Partners

- Subject matter experts/trusted resources
- Strong understanding of your stakeholders needs/interests
- Common and attainable goals/interests among collaborators
- Leverage various skillsets
- Gap-filling opportunities
- Peer to peer information/resource sharing

Potential Barriers To Work Through

- Staff capacity/turnover
- Funding availability/opportunities
- Housed organization mission alignment
- Differing policies at state and local levels
- Competing timelines



Impactful Types of Collaborations Over the Years

- Ride and drives
- Tabeling at stakeholder/partner events
- National Drive Electric Month Events
- Training opportunities
- Presentations and panels (in person and virtual)
- Private and public educational campaigns
- Stakeholder advisory meetings
- Regular check-ins with neighboring coalitions



Annual Charlotte Ride and Drive



Charlotte Auto Show/Drive Electric Month events



Local, State, and national presentations



CPCC and UNC Charlotte partnerships

Coalition Perspective 2: Joy Gardner, Empire Clean Cities

Stakeholder Relationships and Networking

Strong relationships are at the heart of successful Clean Cities and Communities coalitions.
Empire Clean Cities brings together public agencies, fleets, industry partners, and community organizations through a mix of formal convenings and informal networking opportunities.



Annual Stakeholder Meeting

Our flagship annual convening brings together coalition stakeholders to share project updates, highlight successes, recognize partners, and identify opportunities for collaboration.



Empire Clean Vehicle Festival

A public-facing showcase connecting fleet operators, technology providers, policymakers, and the community through vehicle demonstrations and networking.



Multi-Agency Fleet Council (MAFC)

Co-organized with New Jersey Clean Cities, MAFC convenes public-sector fleet leaders across the region to exchange best practices, discuss challenges, and foster interagency partnerships.



Informal Networking

Casual, low-pressure gatherings help strengthen existing relationships, welcome new stakeholders, and spark collaborations outside traditional meetings.

Key takeaway: Not every gathering needs a formal agenda or a large budget. Consistent opportunities to connect, share knowledge, and celebrate partners build trust and create the relationships that lead to **future projects, funding, and coalition growth.**

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Empire Clean Cities

THANK YOU!

Joy Gardner

Executive Director

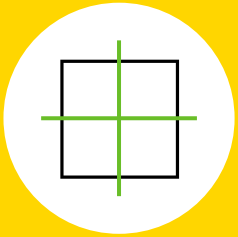
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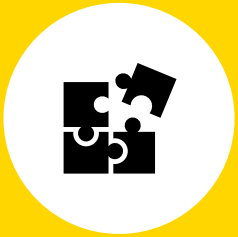
www.empirecleancities.org

Three-Part Activity



Coalition value mapping

10–15 minutes



“Find your match” networking opportunity

10–15 minutes



Collaboration action planning

5–10 minutes

Part 1: Coalition Value Mapping

Use provided worksheet to identify the following potential strengths of your coalition:

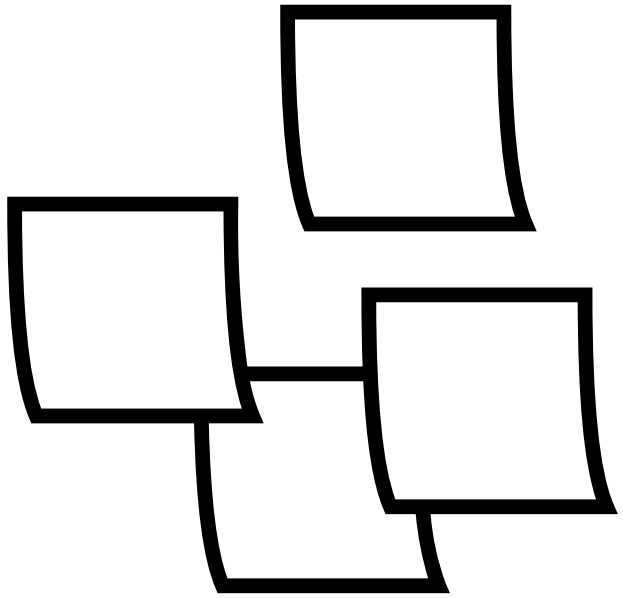
- Expertise
- Key partnerships
- Resources/assets
- Successful projects
- Community connections
- Unique strengths

Talk to your neighbor if you feel stuck!

Part 2: “Find Your Match” Networking Opportunity

- Move around the room and add sticky notes to organizations around the room.

- Use your sticky note to describe what you can offer OR what you are looking for from a partner. You might need multiple sticky notes!



Part 3: Collaboration Action Planning

Use the back of your worksheet to summarize actions you identified today:

- What organization could you partner with?
- What will you engage with them on?
- What is your first step toward connecting?
- When can you take the first step?

Wrap-Up Discussion

Share one relationship you formed today that could help expand your coalition's impact.

