

# BASE BUILDING TIP SHEET

## What is base building?

In order to win your campaign, you need to recruit, mobilize, and support volunteers and partner organizations. **Your base is the group of people who stand to benefit from your goal.**

If your policy goals and project priorities involve expanding a trail or having a protected bike lane installed in your village or city, your base includes the people who will use and benefit from that trail or bike lane. Furthermore, organizations or businesses can be part of your base if your goal is in their self-interest. For example, a restaurant or shop along the trail or bike lane can be a helpful ally in moving your target to act on your goal.

Once you find interested individuals and partners, it is important to continue to engage your base so your network of support can grow and become more influential. Examples of engagement include holding regular meetings, producing materials, or organizing an event.



---

## How to build your base

### Find your base - Individuals

- **One-on-ones:** Talk to your neighbors, your friends, and other potentially interested individuals about getting involved. Get to know the person you're engaging and ask for their advice! Organizing is about building community around shared goals and values.
- **Think outside of your network:** Who else could you reach out to that you don't already know?
  - Talk to people on the trail or route in question.
  - Ask your network for recommended contacts who may be interested in getting involved.
- **Activate:** Give them a way to plug in right away by asking them to sign a petition or attend your next meeting.

### Partner organizations and businesses

- **Research:** Map out businesses that could be positively affected by the achievement of your goal and work to build a relationship.
- **Coordinate:** Once common interest is established, ask a representative from the organization or business to join your meetings.

- **Take action:** Work with partner organizations on outreach activities.
  - Can you put a flyer in the window?
  - Can you get on the agenda at a partner organization’s meeting to share a few words about your goal?

## Engage your base - Hold meetings

- **Engage:** Now that you’ve found your people, it is important to keep them engaged. Meet regularly to discuss campaign progress and strategy for moving forward.
- **Plan:** Make meetings comfortable and social; meetings over a coffee or beer in a quiet and comfortable atmosphere tend to be inviting to most.
- **Be organized:** Make sure your meeting has a clear objective, agenda and concrete next steps.

## Create & share resources

- **Spread the word:** Producing informational resources about your campaign can be useful for spreading the word and keeping your base informed.
- **Take action:** Bring any resources you produce to one-on-one meetings, presentations, meetings and events that are relevant to your campaign.
  - Fact sheets, flyers, videos, and petitions are examples of useful resources that can help activate your base and provide talking points that may encourage them to spread the word.
  - Producing both online and paper resources can ensure that you reach a wider audience.

## Host an event

- **Define your objective:** Events can function as base-building, outreach/awareness-building, and/or target engagement. A base-building event will help with strengthening group relationships and bring new people into your base; these could be held at a restaurant, in a living room, at a community space or out on the street.
- **Make it interactive:** Organize a group walk, bike ride, walk audit, or temporary pop-up event to demonstrate how biking and walking infrastructure can help create more livable streets. Your event can give people an opportunity to experience a comfortable route, learn traffic safety skills, and meet their neighbors. The event could also be used to highlight areas of your community that your campaign is targeting.
- **Plan:** Hold the event at a place that is easy to get to. Including food, drinks, and/or exciting speakers will entice more people to come. Keep the agenda light but informative. Make sure to leave time for networking and socializing. Invite your base but also reach out to new contacts.
- **Take action:** Make sure to give attendees something to do at the event. They could sign a petition, write a letter to the target, or post a picture of the event on social media.