



Wastech Delegation to the April 2, 2026 ZWC Meeting
Executive Summary

The biggest financial risks in the SWMP are associated with infrastructure and disposal options — areas that require clear, option-level analysis of costs and risks before direction is set.

As drafted, the Plan provides assumptions, generic studies, and future technical criteria for decisions but not explicit diversion/disposal options with costs — effectively a “plan to plan” the most consequential elements.

Once approved, that direction becomes binding. To strengthen the Plan, we offer the following comments:

1) Definition of Diversion & Waste Combustion

Classifying any waste-derived fuel that offsets fossil fuels as “diversion” pre-judges’ outcomes without comparing the embodied-carbon and energy savings from reuse and recycling.

2) EPR Expansion & Calorific Value

As EPR adds soft plastics, non-residential packaging, furniture, carpet, and textiles, many energy-dense materials leave the residual stream, reducing calorific value and eroding the economics for waste combustion.

3) Option Comparisons

Assigning transfer-station system costs to disposal options misstates the comparisons. Transfer stations are sunk, system-wide services established under the 1985/1995 SWMPs and are required regardless of disposal options.

4) Economies of Scale

Scale reduces unit costs. The plan makes no mention of this when comparing disposal options. With corrected analysis for sunk costs and economies of scale, WTE and contingency landfill are likely within ~20% on unit cost—and with the forecasted capital program, WTE may equal or exceed landfill costs.

We support Metro Vancouver’s leadership on waste reduction and offer these comments constructively to assist the ZWC in making informed, affordable decisions for residents, industry partners, and member municipalities.

ThTo: Zero Waste Committee
 From: Alison Schatz, Senior Communications Specialist, Corporate Communications
 Date: February 9, 2026 Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
 Subject: **2026 Behaviour Change Campaign Update**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Zero Waste Committee receive for information the report dated February 9, 2026, titled "2026 Behaviour Change Campaign Update."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Behaviour change campaigns are part of a suite of education, enforcement (policy), and engineering efforts by Metro Vancouver to reduce waste in the region. Four campaigns that support waste reduction and recycling goals will run in 2026 — these include "Food Scraps Aren't Garbage" (food scraps recycling, March to May), "Repair and Re-Wear" (textiles waste reduction, March to April), "Love Food Hate Waste Canada" (food waste prevention, summer TBC), and "What's Your Superhabit?" (single-use item reduction, summer TBC). As part of the 2025 Services and Cost Efficiencies Review, the holiday waste reduction campaign, "Create Memories, Not Garbage," was discontinued due to high competition for paid media space and consumer attention during the holidays, combined with challenges in measuring change in behaviour. The four campaigns for 2026 are planned to continue in 2027 with similar budget allocations.



PURPOSE



To update the Committee on behaviour change campaigns planned for 2026 that support waste reduction and recycling goals as outlined in the 2022–2026 Board Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND

Behaviour change campaigns are part of a suite of education, enforcement (policy), and engineering efforts by Metro Vancouver to reduce waste in the region. Metro Vancouver's behaviour change campaigns are evidence-based. Market research (such as surveys and focus groups) is used to understand the specific behaviours, target audience, barriers, and motivators to achieving the desired/promoted behaviour. Strategies and creative are developed using a behaviour change methodology like social marketing. The campaigns reach a regional audience via paid media placements like billboards, television, radio, and digital ads, as well as through owned, earned, and social media.

OVERVIEW

	Campaign Name and Topic	Timing	2026 Budget
	"Food Scraps Aren't Garbage" Food Scraps Recycling	March to May	\$183,000
	"Repair and Re-Wear" Textiles Waste Reduction	March to April	\$161,450

	Campaign Name and Topic	Timing	2026 Budget
	“Love Food Hate Waste Canada” Food Waste Prevention (Metro Vancouver is a partner in the national campaign)	Summer (TBC)	\$70,000
	“What’s Your Superhabit?” Single-Use Item Reduction	Summer (TBC)	\$210,100
		Total	\$624,550

As part of the 2025 Services and Cost Efficiencies Review, the Zero Waste Collaboration Initiatives budget was moved from General Government to the GVS&DD. The budget for behaviour change campaigns was reduced from \$824,000 in 2025 to \$624,550 in 2026 to more closely align with the campaign budgets for Water Services and Liquid Waste Services. To maintain effectiveness across campaigns, one campaign was discontinued for 2026, rather than reducing the budget and reach across all campaigns. The holiday waste reduction campaign, “Create Memories, Not Garbage,” which had a budget of \$194,00 in 2025, was removed for two reasons. First, this campaign ran at a time of year when there was high competition for paid media space and consumer attention. Second, among all the solid waste campaigns, it was also the most difficult to measure any change in behaviour. The “Create Memories” message and resources will continue to be promoted through owned and social media, and will remain available to member jurisdictions.

CAMPAIGN SNAPSHOTS

Food Scraps Recycling Campaign — “Food Scraps Aren't Garbage”

Problem: 2024 waste composition data showed that compostable organics remain the largest component of multi-family waste (32%). When food scraps end up in the garbage, they take up valuable landfill space and produce greenhouse gas emissions.

2025 Performance: 45.1 million impressions, 2.1 million reach, nearly 5,000 social media engagements, and 12,700 visits to the website (Reference 3).

Impact: Campaign has helped increase green bin usage among residents from 79% after the Organics Disposal Ban was introduced in 2015 to 85% in 2024. The campaign has won behaviour change awards from the Social Marketing Association of North America, and is used internationally, including in the US EPA’s behaviour change toolkit.

2026 Campaign: The campaign will be in market from Monday, March 23 to Sunday, May 17 and will continue to use the googly-eyed food face characters. The target audience is once again people who live in apartments and condos, with a focus on younger adults who tend to use their green bin less consistently. A secondary objective in 2026 is to prevent contamination by keeping all plastic bags out of the green bin, even those labelled “biodegradable” or “compostable” (Reference 4).

Textiles Waste Reduction Campaign — “Repair and Re-Wear”

Problem: Textiles, including clothing and household fabrics, are one of the top four components of residential and commercial/institutional garbage, and make up four per cent of the region's garbage by weight, according to Metro Vancouver's 2024 waste composition study (Reference 1). Once in the garbage, textiles take up valuable landfill space, despite the fact that many items could be repaired, reused, or recycled.

2025 Performance: 22.4 million impressions, 3.7 million video views, and over 22,000 website visits. Compared to the previous year, the revamped campaign received a seven-fold increase in click throughs on Facebook/Instagram and website sessions more than doubled. (Reference 2)

Impact: A post-campaign survey will be conducted in 2026.

2026 Campaign: The 2026 campaign is planned for March 16 to April 26.

Food Waste Prevention Campaign — “Love Food Hate Waste Canada”

Problem: 63% of the food Canadians throw away could have been eaten. For the average Canadian household that amounts to 140 kilograms of wasted food per year — at a cost of more than \$1,300 per year.

2025 Performance: The national campaign is managed by Food Mesh, and Metro Vancouver promotes it regionally. The regional campaign had five million impressions, a reach of 880,000, 6,000 website visits, and nearly 10,000 social media engagements (Reference 7).

2026 Campaign: In 2026, Metro Vancouver will participate in Food Waste Action Week (March 9–13) and run a region wide campaign in August.

Single-Use Item Reduction Campaign — “What’s Your Superhabit?”

Problem: Single-use items have a lasting impact on our environment long after being used for a short period of time. In 2023, over a billion single-use items (bags, containers, cups, straws, utensils) were disposed in the Metro Vancouver region — equivalent to 358 items per person per year.

2025 Performance: 33.3 million total impressions, 3.1 million video views, and over 5,000 likes, comments, and shares on social media (Reference 5).

Impact: Post-campaign research in 2025 showed that 37 per cent of residents recall seeing the campaign, and 57 per cent of those say that they’ve reduced their use of single-use items as a result of the ads. The campaign has won behaviour change awards from the Social Marketing Association of North America. 2024 waste composition findings showed an increase in single-use items compared to 2023, and future studies will help confirm the trend. Findings from this study also suggest a shift from plastic single-use items toward paper or wood, particularly for retail bags and utensils (Reference 6).

2026 Campaign: The campaign will run again in 2026, using the same creative platform with refinements informed by learnings from 2024 waste composition study and 2025 post-campaign survey. Planning is in progress, and the timing may shift to later in the summer/fall.

2027 BEHAVIOUR CHANGE CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

Campaign priorities are based on solid waste data and campaign performance. The four paid campaigns for 2026 are planned to continue in 2027 with similar budget allocations.

External Relations also develops and runs communications that support Solid Waste Services programs and goals on no-cost media placements, such as owned channels (website, newsletter), social media, and earned media. These communications aim to build trust and encourage waste reduction and recycling. Examples include promoting reuse days, encouraging the proper disposal of nitrous oxide cylinders, and promoting recycling and waste centres.

MEMBER JURISDICTION UPDATES

Campaign updated and materials are shared with members through the Regional Communications Advisory Group and the Regional Waste Reduction Coordinators Committee (RWRCC). Updates and results are shared with RWRCC and the REAC Solid Waste Subcommittee, in alignment with updates to the Zero Waste Committee.

ALTERNATIVES

This is an information report. No alternatives are presented.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2026 solid waste behaviour change campaigns have a budget of \$624,550, supported under the 2026 Solid Waste Communications Program budget managed by the External Relations Department.

As part of the 2025 Services and Cost Efficiencies Review, the Zero Waste Collaboration Initiatives budget was moved from General Government to the GVS&DD. The budget for solid waste behaviour change campaigns was reduced from \$824,000 in 2025 to \$624,550 in 2026. The holiday waste reduction campaign, "Create Memories, Not Garbage," which had a budget of \$194,00 in 2025, was discontinued for 2026.

CONCLUSION

Behaviour change campaigns contribute to waste reduction and recycling goals as outlined in the 2022–2026 Board Strategic Plan. Metro Vancouver's behaviour change campaigns are evidence-based and developed using the social marketing methodology. Campaign performance data will continue to be used to refine and improve campaigns, and their impact on the target behaviour is measured directly and reported whenever possible. Four campaigns that support Solid Waste Services will run in 2026, including "Food Scraps Aren't Garbage" (food scraps recycling, March to May), "Repair and Re-Wear" (textiles waste reduction; March to April), "Love Food Hate Waste Canada" (food waste prevention, summer TBC), and "What's Your Superhabit?" (single-use item reduction, summer TBC).

ATTACHMENTS

1. Presentation: 2026 Behaviour Change Campaign Update.

REFERENCES

1. Du, K. (2025 June 23). *2024 Waste Composition Data* [Staff report to Metro Vancouver Zero Waste Committee on 2025, July 3]. <https://metrovancover.org/boards/ZeroWaste/ZWA-2025-07-03-AGE.pdf#page=64>
2. Schatz, A. (2025, September 4). *2025 Textiles Waste Reduction Campaign Results* [Staff report to Metro Vancouver Zero Waste Committee on 2025, September 11]. <https://metrovancover.org/boards/ZeroWaste/ZWA-2025-09-11-AGE.pdf#page=50>
3. Ritzman, S. and Drinkwater, A. (2025 may 22). *2025 Food Scraps Recycling Campaign "Food Scraps Aren't Garbage" Results* [Staff report to Metro Vancouver Zero Waste Committee on 2025, June 5]. <https://metrovancover.org/boards/ZeroWaste/ZWA-2025-06-05-AGE.pdf#page=9>
4. Henderson, P. (2026, January 22). *Manager's Report* [Staff report to Metro Vancouver Zero Waste Committee on 2026, February 5]. <https://metrovancover.org/boards/ZeroWaste/ZWA-2026-02-05-AGE.pdf#page=56>
5. Schatz, A. (2025, October 8). *2025 Single-Use Item Reduction "What's Your Superhabit?" Campaign Results* [Staff report to Metro Vancouver Zero Waste Committee on 2025, November 6]. <https://metrovancover.org/boards/ZeroWaste/ZWA-2025-11-06-AGE.pdf#page=35>

6. Du, K. (2025 September 3). *Single-Use Item Waste Composition Results* [Staff report to Metro Vancouver Zero Waste Committee on 2025, September 11]. <https://metrovancover.org/boards/ZeroWaste/ZWA-2025-09-11-AGE.pdf#page=60>
7. Henderson, P. (2026, January 5). *Manager's Report* [Staff report to Metro Vancouver Zero Waste Committee on 2026, January 15]. <https://metrovancover.org/boards/ZeroWaste/ZWA-2026-01-15-AGE.pdf#page=17>

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Food Scraps campaign materials in the SkyTrain station

2026 Behaviour Change Campaign Update

Alison Schatz

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Zero Waste Committee, April 2, 2026

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REGIONAL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE CAMPAIGNS

Behaviour change campaigns — along with education, policy, and enforcement — contribute to achieving the objectives identified in to 2022–2026 Board Strategic Plan

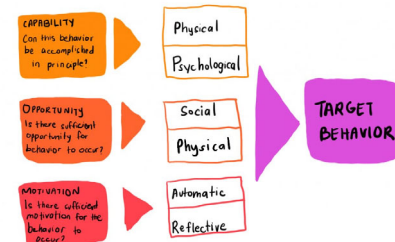
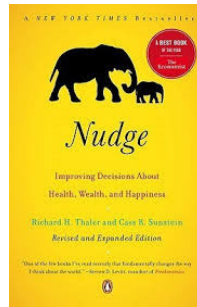
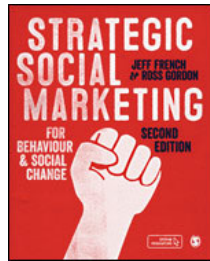
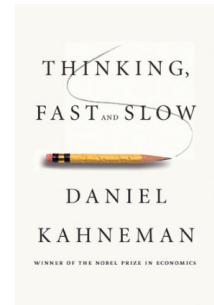
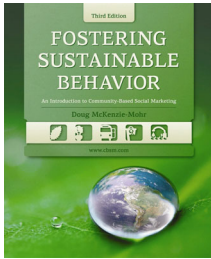
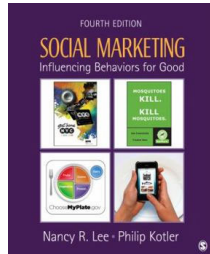
-  Liquid Waste: Prevent pollution from entering the wastewater system
-  Water: Sustainable use of water resources
-  **Solid Waste: Waste reduction and recycling**

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BEHAVIOUR CHANGE



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2026 OVERVIEW – SOLID WASTE CAMPAIGNS

Campaign Name and Topic	Timing	2026 Budget
 <p><u>Food Scraps Aren't Garbage</u> Food scraps recycling</p>	March to May	\$183,000
 <p><u>Repair and Re-wear</u> Textile waste reduction</p>	March to April	\$161,450
 <p><u>Love Food Hate Waste Canada</u> Food waste prevention</p>	Summer (TBC)	\$70,000
 <p><u>What's Your Superhabit?</u> Single-use item reduction</p>	Summer (TBC)	\$210,100

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FOOD SCRAPS RECYCLING

“Food Scraps Aren’t Garbage”

Objective	Increase the diversion of organic waste into the green bin
2026 Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday, March 23 to Sunday, May 17 Googly-eyed food face characters Target audience is people who live in apartments and condos (focus on younger adults) Secondary objective in 2026 is to prevent contamination by keeping all plastic bags out of the green bin, even those labelled “biodegradable” or “compostable”
Website	metrovancover.org/foodscraps



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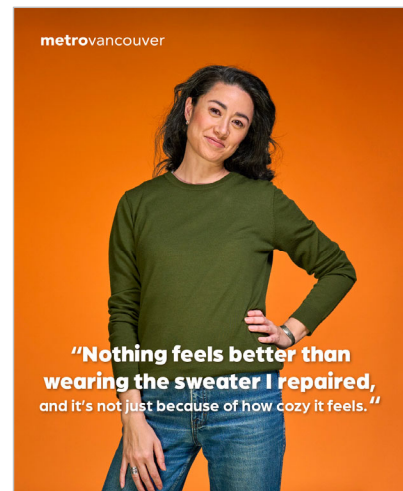
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TEXTILES WASTE REDUCTION

“Repair and Re-Wear”

Objective	Reduce the amount of textiles disposed in the garbage by encouraging people to do small, easy repairs to their clothing
2026 Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March 16 to April 26, 2026 Second year of the “Repair and Re-Wear” creative platform Post-campaign survey planned for 2026
Website	repairandrewear.ca



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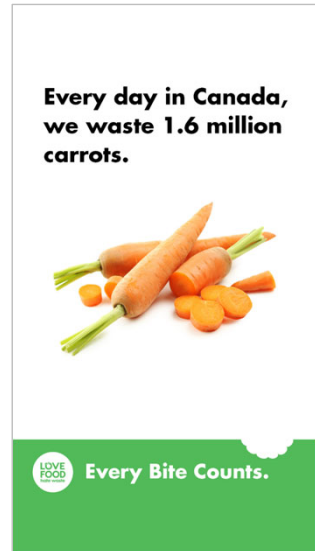
FOOD WASTE PREVENTION

“Love Food Hate Waste Canada”

Objective Prevent food waste by helping people buy only what they need, store groceries correctly, and use everything up

- 2026 Campaign**
- National campaign is managed by Food Mesh, and Metro Vancouver promotes it regionally
 - Food Waste Action Week (March 9 – 13, 2026)
 - Region wide campaign in August TBC

Website lovefoodhatewaste.ca



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SINGLE-USE ITEM REDUCTION

“What’s Your Superhabit?”

Objective Reduce the use and disposal of single-use items in Metro Vancouver through voluntary reduction

- 2026 Campaign**
- Late summer TBC
 - Continue to use the “What’s Your Superhabit?” creative platform, with refinements

Website Superhabits.ca
[#WhatsYourSuperhabit](https://www.instagram.com/WhatsYourSuperhabit)



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MEMBER JURISDICTION UPDATES

- Updates to member staff
 - Regional Communications Advisory Group
 - Regional Waste Reduction Coordinators Committee
 - REAC Solid Waste Subcommittee
- Tailor materials for members as needed
- Staff are welcome to reach out any time
 - Alison.Schatz@metrovancover.org



www.metrovancover.org/services/solid-waste/campaign-materials

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"What's Your Superhabit?" Campaign Transit Shelter Ad

Thank You

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