

# Solid Waste Management Plan Update Idea Generation Phase

## Engagement Summary Report



# Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who provided input into the idea generation phase of public engagement for the solid waste management plan update. Metro Vancouver embraces collaboration and innovation in providing sustainable regional services that contribute to a livable and resilient region and a healthy natural environment for current and future generations.

The purpose of the idea generation phase of engagement was to gather ideas for potential strategies and actions to include in an updated solid waste management plan, while aligning with the vision statement and guiding principles developed in the previous phase of plan update engagement. We appreciate your time as well as the insights and feedback you shared with us during the idea generation phase. We invite you to participate in the next phase of engagement in the fall of 2025: options analysis.

## About Metro Vancouver

Metro Vancouver is a diverse organization that plans for and delivers regional utility services, including water, sewers and wastewater treatment, and solid waste management. It also regulates air quality, plans for urban growth, manages a regional parks system, provides affordable housing, and serves as a regional federation. The organization is a federation of 21 municipalities, one electoral area, and one treaty First Nation located in the region of the same name. The organization is governed by a Board of Directors of elected officials from each member jurisdiction.

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# 1. About the Solid Waste Management Plan Update

Metro Vancouver is responsible for waste reduction and recycling planning, and operating a series of solid waste facilities in the region.

Metro Vancouver is updating its solid waste management plan, building on the strengths of the current plan and identifying opportunities to further reduce waste and increase recycling, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote a circular economy. Updating the plan is a multi-year process, with the most recently completed phase being the idea generation phase. Metro Vancouver is actively engaging with governments, including First Nations, government agencies, waste and recycling industry, waste producers, businesses, communities, and Metro Vancouver residents to guide updates to the plan. Below is a graphic showing the phases of the solid waste management plan update process.



The idea generation phase builds on the vision and guiding principles established in the previous engagement phase, helping inform a set of potential strategies and actions. The ideas generated will be evaluated in the next phase of the project: options analysis.

**This report provides a summary of what was learned through engagement during the idea generation phase.**

## 2. Executive Summary

This report details the idea generation phase of engagement as part of Metro Vancouver's solid waste management plan update. This phase focused on listening and learning from the public, First Nations, and interested parties on potential strategies and actions to include in an updated solid waste management plan.

Idea generation builds on the previous phase which engaged on values and priorities that informed development of the vision and guiding principles. The results from the idea generation phase will inform the final phase of engagement which is options analysis. Potential actions and strategies identified through idea generation will be evaluated using criteria, and presented for further feedback during options analysis engagement. Draft goals and a draft waste hierarchy will also be developed considering feedback in this phase and previous phases.

Metro Vancouver's process for developing the solid waste management plan update involves following provincial guidelines and consideration of engagement input and feedback received during all phases. The idea generation engagement process began in spring 2024, engaging First Nations, member jurisdictions, neighbouring regional districts, and advisory committees.

Public engagement was held from September 16 to December 13, 2024, and included an online questionnaire, outreach at seven community events, interviews, and community outreach at the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) from August 17 to September 2, 2024. In addition, Metro Vancouver worked with 16 not-for-profit organizations with interest in solid waste management or environmental issues, as well as organizations representing equity denied and under-represented communities.



These not-for-profit organizations were invited to leverage existing connections within their communities and engage with audiences on solid waste topics, to reach those who may not be aware of or have access to provide input to Metro Vancouver.

The purpose of public engagement was to build on the vision and guiding principles established in the previous phase to help inform a set of potential strategies and actions for the plan, which will be further assessed and evaluated in the options analysis phase of the project.

Summarized below are potential actions and strategies identified in the engagement feedback, organized into categories. The categories are presented in alphabetical order:

- **Accessibility and Inclusivity**

Emphasized the need for equity by addressing barriers related to language, mobility, income, and cultural relevance. Suggestions included culturally responsive outreach, support for equity-deserving groups (e.g., seniors, newcomers, people with disabilities), and stronger partnerships with underserved communities.

- **Accountability and Transparency**

Highlighted public desire for clearer definitions, accessible performance data, and transparent processes around recycling outcomes. Participants called for greater responsibility from producers, haulers, and governing bodies, with Metro Vancouver encouraged to lead in standard-setting and public reporting.

- **Affordability, Convenience and Consistency**

Stressed that ease of access and cost are key drivers of participation. Recommendations included consistent recycling systems across municipalities, better infrastructure in multi-family buildings, expanded curbside and drop-off services, and volunteer-led supports.

- **Circular Economy**

Focused on shifting to a reuse-based system with circular product design, packaging reform, and expanding infrastructure and programs for repair and reuse. Feedback supported policy change, and community-level reuse spaces.

- **Collaboration**

Called for stronger partnerships across sectors, jurisdictions, and disciplines, ranging from municipalities and industry, to academia, and First Nations. Suggestions included shared data platforms, joint working groups, and global knowledge exchange to scale solutions and drive systems change.

- **Education, Engagement, and Awareness**

Underscored the importance of multilingual education, gamification, and school and community-based programming to foster behavior change. Participants called for improved access to information, industry engagement, and coordinated public awareness campaigns.

- **Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action**

Linked waste to environmental and climate concerns such as greenhouse gas emissions and pollution. Comments called for incorporating traditional Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices, corporate accountability, and integration of climate considerations in infrastructure planning.

- **Infrastructure and Capacity**

Identified lack of infrastructure for waste and recycling processing as both a barrier and opportunity, especially in urban settings. Key ideas included decentralized systems, expanding organics and construction waste processing capacity, and long-term planning for future needs.



- **Innovation and Technology**

Expressed excitement about artificial intelligence, smart tools, and data-driven solutions. Participants advocated for policy and business partnerships to support innovation and build a sustainable waste economy.

- **Markets and Economy**

Emphasized the economic potential of sustainable waste systems. Suggestions included tax incentives, workforce development, and promoting business cases for circular practices.

- **Policy and Regulation**

Called for stronger, consistent regulations across jurisdictions. Ideas included expanding extended producer responsibility programs to cover more product categories and hold manufacturers and retailers accountable. Packaging restrictions, penalties for excess packaging, better enforcement, and improvements to construction and demolition waste policies and procurement rules were also raised.

- **Recycling and Composting**

Focused on barriers to participation and high contamination rates. Solutions included clearer labelling, education, incentives, and improving composting programs. Participants emphasized the importance of source separation and called for improved infrastructure, mandatory sorting, and incentives to support early intervention across sectors.

- **Waste Prevention**

Advocated for waste prevention as a top priority, with strong support for addressing overconsumption, excess packaging, single-use items, and food waste through regulation, education, and addressing cultural barriers and understanding.

## **First Nations Engagement**

Metro Vancouver acknowledges that the region's residents live, work, and learn on the shared territories of many Indigenous peoples, including 10 local First Nations: ǵiǵǵ (Katzie), ǵʷǵ:ǵǵǵ (Kwantlen), kʷikʷǵǵ (Kwikwetlem), mǵthxwi (Matsqui), xʷmǵθkʷǵǵ (Musqueam), ǵiǵǵt (Qayqayt), Semiahmoo, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), scǵwǵθǵn mǵtǵyǵxʷ (Tsawwassen), and sǵlilwǵtǵ (Tsleil-Waututh).

Metro Vancouver respects the diverse and distinct histories, languages and cultures of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, which collectively enrich our lives and the region. The solid waste management plan update presents an opportunity for Metro Vancouver to advance collaboration and strengthen relationships with First Nations.

In summer 2024, letters were sent to 49 First Nations and Tribal Councils whose consultative areas interact with the Metro Vancouver region, and Métis Nation of BC, inviting feedback on the idea generation phase of the plan update. On July 26, 2024, Metro Vancouver met with representatives from four local First Nations to discuss potential strategies and actions and priority goals for the updated solid waste management plan:

- ǵʷǵ:ǵǵǵ (Kwantlen)
- kʷikʷǵǵ (Kwikwetlem)
- Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish)
- Semiahmoo

Feedback received at the July 2024 meeting included questions about the regional recycling rate, increasing services for repurposing materials and reducing plastic packaging, tracking the effectiveness of the plan update implementation and transparency of data, options for expanding existing solid waste facilities, and investment into new technologies for innovative solutions in renewable energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Detailed feedback from First Nations will be provided to the Ministry of Environment and Parks.

### 3. About the Engagement Process

In fall 2024, Metro Vancouver engaged First Nations, member jurisdictions, neighbouring regional districts, and advisory committees to gain their insights and ideas on potential strategies and actions for the plan, through in-person and virtual meetings and workshops. Public engagement occurred from September 16 to November 8, 2024, including an online questionnaire and community events.

The purpose of public engagement was to build on the vision and guiding principles established in the previous phase to help inform a set of potential strategies sand actions for the plan, which will be further assessed in future phases.



The table below provides a summary of engagement activities for the idea generation phase including intended audience(s).

AUDIENCE	ENGAGEMENT METHOD/DESCRIPTION
<b>Member jurisdictions</b>	<p>Metro Vancouver launched idea generation engagement by sending correspondence to mayors and councils of member jurisdictions. Metro Vancouver engaged the following member jurisdiction staff committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Administrators Advisory Committee– shared project information</li> <li>Regional Engineers Advisory Committee– engaged / received feedback during the Metro Vancouver Conference Day event</li> <li>Regional Engineers Advisory Committee Solid Waste Sub-Committee and the Regional Waste Reduction Coordinators’ Committee – received input through a workshop and regular committee meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Neighbouring regional districts</b>	<p>Metro Vancouver sent letters to regional district boards Fraser Valley Regional District, Sunshine Coast Regional District, and Squamish-Lillooet Regional District. Metro Vancouver staff met with regional district staff and provided a presentation to the Fraser Valley Regional District Board.</p>
<b>Solid Waste and Recycling Industry Advisory Committee, Solid Waste Management Plan Public/ Technical Advisory Committee, Youth and Education Advisory Panel</b>	<p>Metro Vancouver staff shared project information and received feedback and insights on potential strategies and actions to address identified issues and opportunities.</p> <p>The Public/Technical Advisory Committee formed working groups to develop ideas for the updated plan on three topics: food waste and organics, construction and demolition waste management, and plastics.</p>

<b>Key Sectors</b>	Metro Vancouver facilitated virtual dialogue sessions with representatives from four key sectors. These sessions provided an opportunity to identify options and proposed strategies for identified issues and opportunities.
<b>Public outreach at the PNE</b>	Metro Vancouver staff engaged residents at the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE), prior to the active public engagement phase, to engage and educate the public on recycling and waste management, and to share information on the idea generation phase of the project.
<b>Online questionnaire</b>	An online questionnaire was shared on the project webpage to gather feedback about potential barriers to participation in waste reduction and recycling efforts and learn about the public's priorities when thinking about solid waste management actions and opportunities.
<b>Community Events</b>	Metro Vancouver participated in seven community events around the Metro Vancouver region to share information, and to gain feedback and insights from the public on recycling and waste management.
<b>Collaborative Engagement</b>	Collaborative engagement provided an opportunity to engage with 16 not-for-profit organizations, including organizations with an interest in solid waste management or environmental issues, and/or organizations representing equity-denied and underrepresented communities. A comprehensive toolkit of resources, including facilitation guides and meeting materials, was provided to organizations to support engagement with their audiences or communities. Each organization provided a feedback report which was incorporated into the idea generation analysis.
<b>One-on-one interviews</b>	One-on-one interviews with representatives from local organizations.
<b>Public presentations to the Zero Waste Committee and the Solid Waste Management Plan Public / Technical Advisory Committee</b>	Members of the public were invited to provide presentations to the Zero Waste Committee and Public/Technical Advisory Committee, to share ideas for strategies and actions that could be included in an updated plan.
<b>Public presentations to the Solid Waste Management Plan Independent Consultation and Engagement Panel</b>	The public was invited to present directly to the Independent Consultation and Engagement Panel to provide feedback on the engagement process.



# 4. Engagement Promotion

Information on the engagement opportunities was shared with the public and interested parties multiple ways.

## Website

The dedicated project webpage for the solid waste management plan update was updated for idea generation engagement to provide project background information, promote public engagement opportunities, and host the online questionnaire. The calendar of engagement events was also shared on this webpage to encourage public participation. There were more than 5,500 web page visits during the idea generation phase.

In addition, QR codes linking to the solid waste management plan web page were printed on the bottom of weigh scale receipts issued at Metro Vancouver solid waste facilities.

## Social Media

The idea generation phase of the solid waste management plan update was promoted on social media from September 16 to November 8, 2024. Social media posts provided project information and encouraged public participation and input and reached more than 100,000 people.





## Print Ads

Print ads were published in the Vancouver Sun and The Province newspapers, in September and October 2024. These ads provided project information and public engagement opportunities.

## E-blasts

Engagement opportunities were promoted via email to over 1,300 recipients who are subscribed to receive notifications on Metro Vancouver solid waste topics, including the solid waste management plan.

Engagement opportunities were also promoted to several Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce (with the Burnaby Board of Trade sharing information through their newsletter), and by Landlord BC (questionnaire sent to members).

Outreach			
 <b>4 advertisements</b> in the Vancouver Sun and The Province newspapers	 <b>5,520 visits</b> to project webpage	 <b>2 e-blast</b> Two notifications were sent to database of over 1,300 contacts, and forwarded to advisory committees and other interested parties	 <b>20 Social Media posts</b> <b>Reach:</b> 117,867 <b>Engagements:</b> 289 <b>Clicks:</b> 852

# 5. Engagement Participation

The graphic and table below outline the level of participation in each of the engagement opportunities offered.

Overall, Metro Vancouver staff facilitated 29 meetings, received over 200 responses to the online questionnaire, reached over 1,300 participants at community events. In addition, 6,500 participated in the engagement activities and nearly 23,000 participated in an educational activity at the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE). Metro Vancouver also worked with 16 not-for-profit organizations who coordinated engagement with their networks and communities, reaching approximately 650 individuals through these organizations.

Engagement			
 <p><b>8,602</b> QR code scans</p> <p>from newspaper ads, solid waste facility receipts and e-blasts</p>	 <p><b>228</b> responses</p> <p>received to the questionnaire</p>	 <p><b>1,385</b> engaged</p> <p>at community events</p>	 <p><b>16</b> organizations</p> <p>participated in collaborative engagement</p>

Engagement Method	Participants	Date
Meetings and workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member jurisdictions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indigenous Relations Committee</li> <li>Regional Administrative Advisory Committee</li> <li>Regional Engineers Advisory Committee (at Metro Vancouver Conference Day)</li> <li>Regional Engineers Advisory Committee Solid Waste Sub-Committee</li> <li>Invest Vancouver Advisory Committee (report only)</li> <li>Regional Communications Advisory Group</li> <li>City of Coquitlam staff (on request)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Neighbouring regional district staff</li> <li>Fraser Valley Regional District Board</li> <li>Sunshine Coast Regional District Board (report only)</li> <li>Solid Waste Management Plan Public / Technical Advisory Committee</li> <li>Solid Waste and Recycling Industry Advisory Committee</li> <li>Society Promoting Environmental Conservation – Master Recyclers Zero Waste Committee</li> <li>Youth and Education Advisory Panel</li> <li>Youth4Action</li> <li>Waste Management Association of BC members meeting</li> </ul>	March – November 2024

<b>Community outreach at the PNE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 6,500 participants in the engagement activity, and nearly 23,000 participants in an educational activity</li> </ul>	August 17 – September 2, 2024
<b>Outreach at Community Events</b>	<p>1,385 participants at seven events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SFU Vendor Expo (190)</li> <li>Car Free Day – Main Street (450)</li> <li>Metro Vancouver Housing – Heather Place (1)</li> <li>North Shore Shipyards Festival (430)</li> <li>RiverFest, New Westminster (140)</li> <li>Tsawwassen Mills Shopping Centre (18)</li> <li>Diwali Festival, Surrey (156)</li> <li>In addition, Metro Vancouver hosted an information booth at the Coffee Cup Revolution event, organized by the Binners' Project, and at the SWANA Day conference.</li> </ul>	September – November 2024
<b>Sector Engagement Meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canadian Beverage Association</li> <li>Retail Council of Canada (Food Retailers)</li> <li>Health Authorities (Lower Mainland Health Organization Waste Management Teams)</li> <li>Destination Vancouver</li> </ul>	October – December 2024
<b>Collaborative engagement organizations hosting engagement activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BC Apparel and Gear Association</li> <li>BC Hotel Association</li> <li>Binners' Project</li> <li>Bioloop Foundation</li> <li>CityHive</li> <li>Coast Waste Management Association of BC</li> <li>Fraser Basin Council</li> <li>Hong Kong House Cultural Society</li> <li>Master Recyclers (Society Promoting Environmental Conservation)</li> <li>Mind Your Plastic</li> <li>Ocean Wise</li> <li>Recycling Council of BC</li> <li>Surrey Board of Trade</li> <li>Vancouver Food Runners</li> <li>Women Transforming Cities</li> <li>Zero Waste BC</li> </ul>	September – December 2024
<b>Interviews/Meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metro Vancouver Regional Planning and Housing</li> <li>IGA (Retail)</li> <li>Strandberg Consulting</li> </ul>	October – December 2024
<b>Online questionnaire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>228 participants</li> </ul>	October – December 2024



## Collaborative Engagement Program

The Collaborative Engagement program is an inclusive public engagement program that Metro Vancouver initiated during the vision and guiding principles phase of engagement. The program offers funding (up to \$5,000), staff support, and resources to not-for-profit organizations to conduct engagement with their members, communities, or networks. The goal of this program is to address the issue of advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in Metro Vancouver's engagement processes by collaborating with and hearing from audiences and organizations who otherwise may not be aware of or have access to opportunities to provide input to Metro Vancouver. This includes organizations that represent underrepresented or equity-denied communities, youth, seniors, urban Indigenous people, and environmental groups.

During the idea generation engagement phase, Metro Vancouver worked with 16 organizations, who led and facilitated engagement activities with their networks. These activities included workshops (virtual and in-person), in-person and online questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, email newsletters, a shoreline clean up event, virtual forums, and social media engagement. Each organization submitted an engagement summary report to Metro Vancouver that included feedback to be considered while identifying potential strategies and actions. Over 650 residents were engaged through the collaborative engagement program for idea generation. Feedback from the organizations indicated that participants would likely not have been involved in the solid waste management plan update engagement process without the Collaborative Engagement program.

## Facilitated Sessions

Metro Vancouver staff facilitated workshops or feedback sessions with the Solid Waste Management Plan Public/Technical Advisory Committee, Solid Waste and Recycling Industry Advisory Committee, Regional Engineers Advisory Committee (at Metro Vancouver Conference Day), Regional Engineers Advisory Committee Solid Waste Sub-Committee, Regional Waste Reduction Coordinators' Committee, neighbouring regional district staff, Society Promoting Environmental Conservation Master Recyclers Zero Waste Committee, Youth and Education Advisory Panel, and Youth4Action. Project information was shared, and participants were provided with an opportunity to share their feedback, ideas, and potential solutions to address identified issues and opportunities.

## Sector Engagement

Metro Vancouver facilitated four virtual dialogue sessions with representatives from the Canadian Beverage Association, Retail Council of Canada (food retailers), Health Authorities, and Destination Vancouver. These sessions provided an opportunity to identify ideas and proposed strategies for identified priority areas.

## Online Questionnaire

A total of 228 participants responded to an online questionnaire. The online platform provided the public and interested parties the opportunity to self-select their participation in particular components of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was open from August 23 to November 8, 2024, and aimed to explore public practices, ideas, and priorities in waste reduction and recycling, as well as barriers to participation.

A link was shared on the Metro Vancouver solid waste management plan project web page, social media, email promotions, and at engagement meetings and workshops.

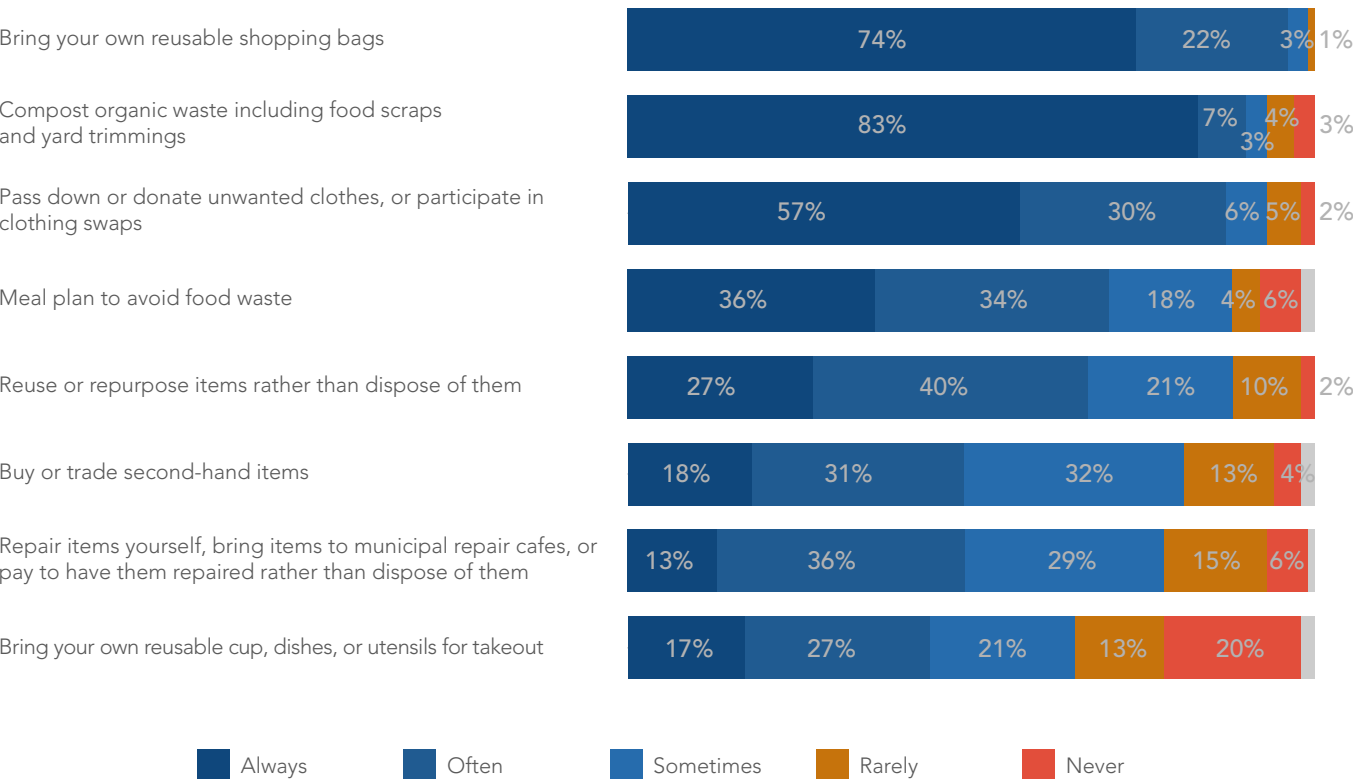
# 6. Detailed Engagement Feedback – Online Questionnaire

An online questionnaire was launched to gather feedback about potential barriers to participation in waste reduction and recycling efforts and learn about the public’s priorities when thinking about solid waste management actions and opportunities. Below is a detailed summary of the feedback received through the online questionnaire that was completed by 228 individuals. The key themes from the questionnaire are incorporated into the overall engagement feedback summary in the following sections.

## Waste Reduction Practices

Many respondents noted that they are buying only what’s needed, opting for second-hand or longer-lasting products, and avoiding unnecessary items. Recycling and reuse were key strategies, with respondents sharing their approach to taking hard-to-recycle materials to proper facilities, finding creative ways to repurpose items, and advocating for improved recycling systems. Education and community involvement play a strong role, as individuals share knowledge and support local waste-reduction initiatives. Thoughtful packaging choices — like buying in bulk or selecting products with minimal or sustainable packaging — were seen to help reduce waste at the source. Repairing and maintaining products is another common practice among respondents, although the desire for better access to repair services was a common sentiment.

Question: How often do you do the following to reduce waste?

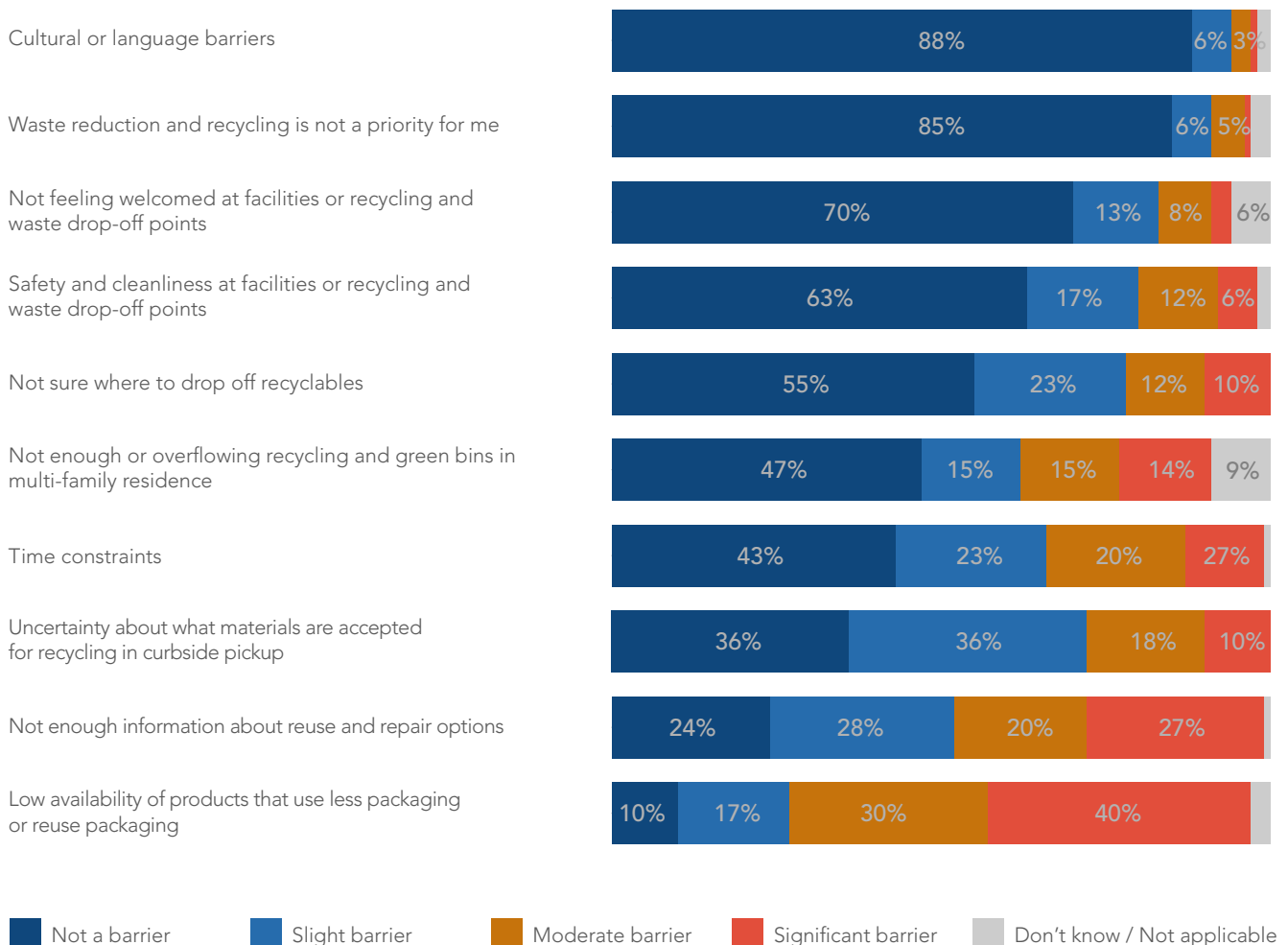




## Accessibility and Inclusion

Questionnaire respondents identified numerous barriers to effective waste management, including limited access to recycling facilities, space constraints in small or multi-family homes, and confusion about sorting and disposal rules. Inconsistent policies across the region, high costs of sustainable options, and lack of trust in the recycling system were identified as further hindering participation. Groups such as seniors, low-income households, non-English speakers, and those without vehicles face added challenges due to accessibility, language, or physical limitations. Suggestions included improving infrastructure, offering multilingual education, enhancing clear and accessible signage, expanding curbside services, and enforcing clearer, standardized policies to make waste reduction more inclusive and manageable for all members of the public.

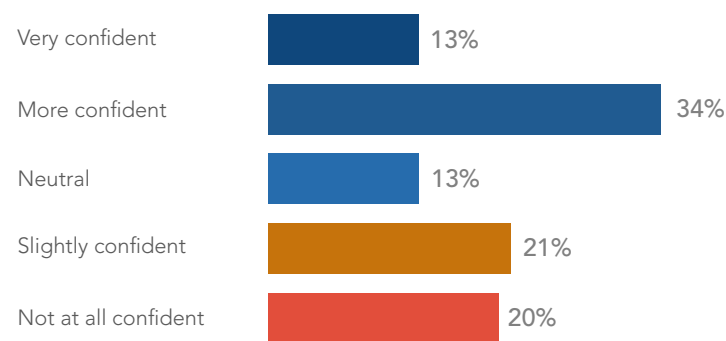
Question: To what extent do the potential barriers below prevent you and your household from participating more actively in waste reduction and recycling efforts?



# Confidence in the Waste System

When asked what could be done to increase confidence in current recycling systems, respondents highlighted a strong desire for greater transparency in the recycling process, with calls for clear information, videos, and success stories to build trust. Education was a major theme, including the need for multilingual outreach and school programs. Many suggested the need for regular reporting on recycling outcomes and contamination rates, as well as easier access to recycling services. There were strong calls for accountability, including enforcement measures and producer responsibility, along with systemic changes to eliminate non-recyclable packaging. Respondents emphasized hands-on learning, better communication through digital channels, and practical guidance to reduce contamination.

Question: How confident are you that the items you recycle are being recycled into new products instead of ending up in disposal?

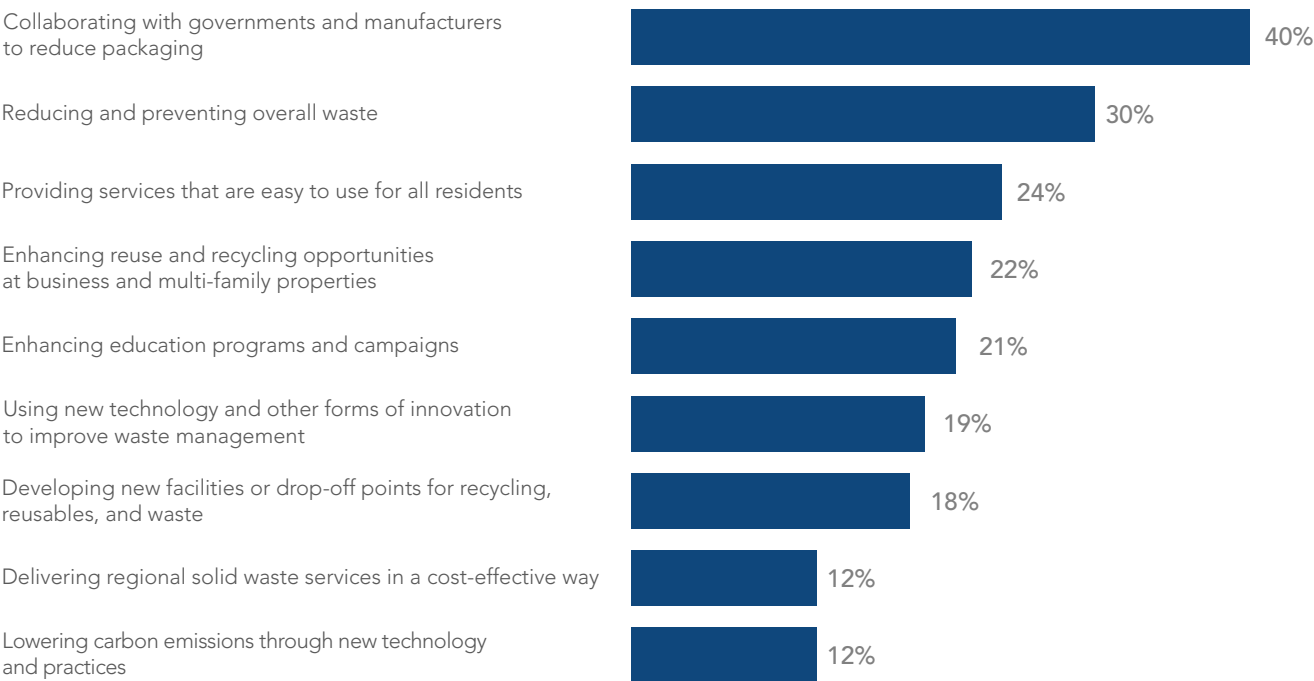


# Looking to the Future

When asked to pick Metro Vancouver’s top priorities for the future when it comes to solid waste management respondents emphasized the need to reduce packaging and overconsumption at the source, calling for bans on Styrofoam, taxes on excess packaging, and promotion of reusable alternatives. They supported expanding and standardizing recycling services, improving infrastructure, and investing in circular economy practices like repair and reuse. Education, transparency, and community engagement were seen as critical, alongside stronger policy and incentives to hold businesses accountable. Equity, accessibility, and the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge were highlighted, along with support for environmental innovation, new technology and practices, and solutions for hard-to-recycle materials and construction waste.



Question: What should be Metro Vancouver’s top priorities for the future when it comes to solid waste management?



**Idea Generation**

Question: Do you have any further ideas for Metro Vancouver to consider as it works towards reducing the amount of waste in our region?

Respondents suggested that to reduce the amount of waste in the region, Metro Vancouver should start by reducing packaging and promoting reusable alternatives, expanding and standardizing recycling services, and investing in repair, reuse, and circular economy practices. They called for stronger education, transparency about recycling outcomes, and more accessible infrastructure. Respondents also emphasized the need for legislation to hold producers accountable, incentives for waste reduction, and equitable access to services, especially for underserved communities. There was support for environmental innovation, better handling of niche waste streams.

Feedback from the questionnaire comments were included in the overall feedback analysis that has been summarized in the What We Learned and How We Are Responding section below.

## 7. Engagement Feedback – What We Learned and How We Are Responding

Below is a thematic summary, in alphabetical order, of what we learned throughout the engagement phase from all methods and audiences, along with Metro Vancouver’s intended response to each area of priority, describing how the feedback will be considered in the solid waste management plan update process.

PRIORITY / INTEREST	WHAT WE LEARNED	HOW WE’RE RESPONDING
<b>Accessibility and Inclusivity</b>	<p>This theme highlights the need for equity in waste systems by addressing barriers related to language, mobility, income, and cultural relevance. Feedback emphasized the importance of tailoring programs for equity-deserving groups, including newcomers and people with disabilities and embedding systemic equity within policy and practice. There was a strong focus on ensuring education and outreach efforts are culturally responsive, i.e., tailored to the values, lived experiences, and communication preferences of diverse communities. Feedback emphasized the need for targeted outreach strategies, culturally relevant content, and deeper partnerships with underserved and newcomer communities to improve awareness and participation in waste reduction. Further suggestions included engaging religious and cultural groups to promote waste reduction, supporting seniors and low-income residents with accessible recycling options, and collaborating with businesses to align with their sustainability goals. Overall, this theme reflects a growing recognition that inclusive and accessible waste management systems are essential.</p>	<p>“Inclusive solid waste services and programs” is a guiding principle for the updated solid waste management plan. Metro Vancouver will continue to assess how all actions that form a part of the updated plan can be implemented in an accessible, inclusive way.</p>

<b>Accountability and Transparency</b>	<p>This theme reflects public demand for clearer, more transparent, and accountable waste systems. Many participants wanted to know what happens to their recycling, how much is recycled, and who is responsible when things go wrong. There were calls for better data, clearer definitions, improved public reporting, and stronger producer and hauler accountability. Comments also encouraged Metro Vancouver to lead in setting standards and making performance data more accessible to the public. Transparency was seen as essential to building trust and motivating residents to participate in waste reduction and recycling initiatives.</p>	<p>“Transparency about what happens to garbage and recycling” and “Accountability from residents, businesses and governments to prevent waste” are guiding principles for the updated solid waste management plan. Transparency is also part of the criteria used to assess potential action options for inclusion in the updated plan, and many ideas being evaluated include providing more information about recycling.</p>
<b>Affordability, Convenience, and Consistency</b>	<p>This category included comments related to overcoming barriers to residents accessing waste and recycling services, including affordability, convenience and accessibility, and consistency of service across the region. Feedback highlighted that affordability and ease of access are major drivers of participation in waste and recycling programs. There was a call for consistent recycling and sorting systems across Metro Vancouver member jurisdictions, simplified infrastructure, and better support in multi-family buildings. Affordability of disposal, access to facilities, and public transportation barriers were commonly cited as issues that require attention and action, especially for and among low-income and equity-denied populations. There was a clear demand for expanded infrastructure and services, especially in high-density areas, and a desire for more volunteer-driven or community-led supports to bridge participation gaps. Examples include more drop-off centers, increasing public recycling bins, and offering curbside collection for hard-to-recycle items like soft plastics, textiles, and electronics. Seasonal or mobile recycling depots were also proposed for bulky or less common items.</p>	<p>“A solid waste and recycling system that is affordable, convenient, and consistent across the region” is a guiding principle for the updated solid waste management plan. Metro Vancouver is considering strategies for the plan including making it easier to recycle and encouraging development of new recycling infrastructure.</p>



## Circular Economy

Feedback related to this theme focused on shifting from a linear to a circular model of production and consumption. Key ideas included promoting circular product design, scaling up repair and reuse infrastructure, and encouraging mindful consumer behaviour. Feedback emphasized the need for policy and leadership to support circular transitions, including incentives for business innovation, packaging redesign, and local reuse networks. Participants recommended promoting repairable products, supporting businesses that repurpose waste into usable goods, and creating community spaces to encourage the reuse of clothing, electronics, and furniture. These initiatives were seen as essential to building a circular economy where resources are kept in circulation rather than discarded. Comments also highlighted challenges to broader adoption of circular practices, including gaps in supportive infrastructure, difficulty scaling reuse models, fragmented policy, and limited financial incentives. Education and community engagement, including the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems, were mentioned as critical tools to support long-term transitions.

“Innovation and collaboration to support a vibrant regional economy that keeps products and materials in circulation” is a guiding principle for the updated solid waste management plan. Metro Vancouver is considering strategies for inclusion in the plan including advocating for circular economy regulations, facilitating the transition to a more circular regional economy through waste prevention, and improving access to circular consumer services and goods.



## Collaboration

Feedback emphasized that collaboration is essential to building a more effective, integrated, and equitable waste management system. Participants called for stronger partnerships across Metro Vancouver member jurisdictions to align infrastructure, staffing, procurement, and education efforts particularly to support smaller communities and ensure consistent service delivery. Metro Vancouver was encouraged to take a leadership role in convening cross-sector collaboration with health authorities, Indigenous communities, academic institutions, non-profits, and private industry to co-develop solutions, share expertise, and pilot innovations. Suggested actions included creating regional working groups, centralized collaboration hubs, industry-specific tables (e.g., for textiles and C&D), and shared data platforms to improve transparency and alignment. Feedback also highlighted the need for inter-jurisdictional coordination with adjacent regional districts and the Province to advance policy and infrastructure planning. Finally, participants stressed the importance of community-based partnerships with local organizations, housing providers, and cultural groups to strengthen public education, build trust, and support more inclusive and locally responsive waste reduction initiatives.

“Innovation and collaboration to support a vibrant regional economy that keeps products and materials in circulation” is a guiding principle for the updated solid waste management plan. Many ideas received for the plan that are undergoing options analysis include collaborations with industry, non-profits, First Nations and institutions.

<b>Education, Engagement, and Awareness</b>	<p>Feedback consistently highlighted the importance of clear, accessible education to strengthen public understanding and participation in waste reduction. Comments emphasized the need for multilingual resources, school-based programs, community-led initiatives, and engaging social media campaigns. There was particular interest in interactive and engaging formats, like gamified recycling challenges and storytelling campaigns. Collaborative outreach emerged as a key strategy, suggesting partnerships with schools, libraries, neighbourhood houses, and cultural organizations to deliver hands-on workshops, place-based education, and local engagement. Several comments noted that outreach efforts should be tailored to meet residents where they are both physically and culturally. Industry engagement was also viewed as critical, with calls for producers and retailers to play a greater role in educating consumers through packaging design, product labelling, and clearer disposal guidance. Participants also stressed the importance of centralized, consistent information, and addressing public skepticism and misinformation through transparency and repetition.</p>	<p>Metro Vancouver is considering strategies and actions for inclusion in the plan including educating residents and businesses on reuse, refill, and recycling. Many potential action options being considered include education and outreach components.</p>
<b>Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action</b>	<p>This theme links waste management to climate action and environmental protection. Comments highlighted the contribution of waste to greenhouse gas emissions and pollution. Participants called for corporate accountability and climate-responsive infrastructure planning. Participants also highlighted the value of Indigenous-led sustainability approaches both through leadership roles and through the integration of traditional ecological knowledge, such as the principles of zero waste, and respect for land stewardship. There was also discussion on the emotional and social impacts of climate change, underscoring the broader significance of responsible waste management and sustainable resource use.</p>	<p>“Environmental stewardship and climate action” is a guiding principle for the updated solid waste management plan. Impacts on greenhouse gas reduction and pollution prevention are key components of the criteria used to assess potential action options for inclusion in the updated plan.</p>

## Infrastructure and Capacity

Feedback under this theme focused on the need to expand and modernize infrastructure to meet the demands of a growing and diversifying population. Participants called for increased capacity to process organics, recyclables, construction and demolition (C&D) waste, and harder-to-manage streams such as bulky items, textiles, electronics, medical waste, and hazardous materials like asbestos drywall. Contamination prevention, particularly in organics and mixed C&D loads, was seen as a priority for improving diversion outcomes. There were strong calls for more localized and decentralized infrastructure solutions, including community depots, pop-up repair and reuse hubs, and textile collection sites, to improve access and reduce transportation costs. Land use constraints, especially the loss of industrial land to development, were identified as a key barrier to expanding infrastructure. Concerns around logistics, including travel distances to solid waste facilities and site accessibility, were flagged as obstacles that reduce participation from both residents and businesses. Lastly, some participants expressed a desire for Metro Vancouver to take a more visible and proactive leadership role in long-term infrastructure planning, with greater transparency and coordination to ensure the system can meet future regional needs.

“A solid waste system that is resilient to climate change and future challenges” is a guiding principle for the updated solid waste management plan. Metro Vancouver is considering strategies for inclusion in the plan including encouraging the development of new recycling infrastructure. Many of the concerns expressed by engagement participants are reflected in the evaluation criteria used to assess potential action options, including convenience, transparency, and economic prosperity.

## Innovation and Technology

There is strong enthusiasm about the role of technology and innovation in advancing waste management, with feedback highlighting tools such as artificial intelligence, smart bins, and data-driven apps to improve sorting, reduce contamination, and enhance user experience. Participants called for greater investment in emerging processing technologies, as well as support for pilot projects and community-led solutions. Many emphasized the importance of cross-sector collaboration and international knowledge sharing, pointing to successful practices in places like Singapore, Japan, and New York. There were also calls for regulatory frameworks and funding mechanisms, such as tax incentives or allocating a portion of generator levies to better support innovation and reduce financial risks for early adopters. Participants stressed the value of partnering with businesses, researchers, and non-profits to co-develop sustainable materials, reuse and recycling technologies, upcycling initiatives, and circular economy infrastructure. Overall, this theme highlights a desire to embrace emerging tools, creativity, and partnerships to meet the region's evolving waste challenges.

"Innovation and collaboration to support a vibrant regional economy that keeps products and materials in circulation" is a guiding principle for the updated solid waste management plan. Many of the priorities expressed by engagement participants are reflected in the criteria used to assess potential action options, including innovation and collaboration.



## Markets and Economy

Feedback under this theme highlighted both economic challenges and opportunities to advance a more circular waste system. A lack of stable markets, particularly for C&D waste, wood, plastics, textiles, and organics, continues to make recycling and reuse financially unviable compared to landfilling. Participants called for local market development, tax incentives, and pricing structures that make diversion more attractive. There were also calls for increased funding to support infrastructure and innovation, more stable commodity markets, and stronger engagement with businesses, especially subject matter experts, to scale circular solutions. Financial tools such as tax breaks, grants, deposit-refund systems, and rewards for waste reduction were widely supported, along with penalties for excessive packaging. Public-private partnerships, job creation, and support for small businesses and non-profits were seen as essential to growing the reuse and recycling economy. Many saw economic opportunity in a more circular system and encouraged more visible promotion of a business case for sustainability.

“A solid waste system that is resilient to climate change and future challenges” is a guiding principle for the updated solid waste management plan. Metro Vancouver is considering strategies for inclusion in the plan including encouraging the development of new recycling infrastructure and increasing recycled content, which helps to develop new markets. Many of the concerns expressed by engagement participants are reflected in the criteria used to assess potential action options, including resilience and economic prosperity.

## Policy and Regulation

Feedback in this theme reflected a strong demand for more consistent and enforceable policy frameworks to regulate products, packaging, construction waste, and land use. Participants called for clear, coordinated action across all levels of government to reduce confusion and improve accountability. Many emphasized the need for stronger product and packaging regulations, including restrictions on hard-to-recycle or excessive packaging, mandatory recycled content, and clearer labeling standards. There was broad support for expanded extended producer responsibility programs, with suggestions to require producers to take back packaging and products, and to impose financial penalties for non-recyclable or wasteful materials. Participants also called for greater enforcement and compliance mechanisms, including fines, inspections, and clear consequences for violations. Specific attention was given to construction and demolition waste, with feedback calling for policies that mandate diversion, support deconstruction, and remove permitting barriers to innovation. Finally, participants stressed the importance of government leadership, including the use of tax tools, procurement policies, and transparent planning processes to support circular and sustainable waste systems. Many participants expressed that without regulatory pressure and incentives; voluntary industry action alone will not be sufficient to drive change.

Metro Vancouver is considering strategies for inclusion in the plan including advocacy for policies at other levels of government. The updated solid waste management plan will include a regulatory strategy describing Metro Vancouver's regulatory authority and priority areas for potential changes to regulation considering feedback received during engagement.



<b>Recycling and Composting</b>	<p>This theme focused on participation barriers, contamination issues, and the need to restore public confidence in recycling and organics programs. Participants highlighted challenges related to inconsistent recycling options in multi-family and mixed-use buildings, a lack of clarity around what materials can be recycled or composted, and the need for standardized solutions for handling diverse material streams such as textiles, electronics, and bulky items. Suggestions included clearer labelling, targeted education campaigns, and consistent messaging to reduce confusion and contamination. Incentives were proposed to increase resident participation, along with system improvements that would make sorting and disposal more intuitive and accessible. Many expressed that boosting transparency and demonstrating the impact of recycling efforts would be key to rebuilding public trust in these systems.</p> <p>Source separation was also identified as essential. Feedback called for better infrastructure and enforcement to support early sorting, especially in construction, commercial, and multi-family settings. Participants recommended mandatory bins, staff training, and stronger incentives for source separation.</p>	<p>Metro Vancouver is considering strategies for inclusion in the plan including improving participation in green bin programs and alternatives, making it easier to recycle, and increasing data availability and reporting. Many potential action options being considered include education and outreach to reduce confusion.</p>
<b>Waste Prevention</b>	<p>Preventing waste before it's created was a top priority. Participants emphasized tackling root causes of overconsumption, excess packaging, and single-use items through regulation, education, and shifts in culture. Many supported bans on problematic materials and business licensing tied to waste reduction and reporting. Food waste prevention also emerged as a key sub-theme, with participants advocating for meal planning, food sharing, and partnerships with businesses and non-profits to redistribute surplus food. There was broad support for redirecting resources away from disposal infrastructure and toward upstream solutions that enable true prevention.</p>	<p>The draft goals and hierarchy for the updated solid waste management plan include minimizing waste generation, and waste reduction is considered a high priority. Metro Vancouver is considering strategies for inclusion in the plan including preventing food waste upstream. Enhancing disposal bans is part of the draft regulatory strategy proposed in the plan.</p>

## 8. How Feedback Will Be Used

Feedback from this engagement process has provided a set of potential strategies and actions to consider including in the updated solid waste management plan. These ideas will be sorted, consolidated, and evaluated in the next phase of engagement: options analysis. Following options analysis, an updated solid waste management plan will be developed for consideration by the Zero Waste Committee and GVS&DD Board, prior to it being submitted to the Minister of Environment and Parks for approval.

## 9. Next Steps

This engagement summary report will be presented to the Zero Waste Committee and GVS&DD Board. Further opportunities to engage on the solid waste management plan update will be available as the project transitions to the options analysis phase.

If you have any questions or comments about this project, please contact 604-432-6200 or [zerowaste@metrovancover.org](mailto:zerowaste@metrovancover.org).



