

# Solid Waste Management Plan Update Options Analysis Phase

## Engagement Summary Report



# Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback into the options analysis phase of public engagement for the solid waste management plan update. Metro Vancouver embraces collaboration and innovation to identify and plan for sustainable regional services, contributing to a livable and resilient region, and a healthy natural environment for current and future generations.

The options analysis engagement phase referenced the [vision and guiding principles](#) established in a previous phase and evaluated ideas gained through the [idea generation engagement findings](#) to help inform draft actions and strategies to be included in the updated solid waste management plan. We appreciate your time as well as the insights and feedback you shared with us during the options analysis phase.

## 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 made up of four separate legal entities, each governed by its own Board of Directors. Board directors are elected officials from member jurisdictions.

4515 Central Boulevard, Burnaby, BC, V5H 0C6

[metrovancover.org](http://metrovancover.org)

February 2026

# Contents

- About the Solid Waste Management Plan Update \_\_\_\_\_ 4
- Executive Summary \_\_\_\_\_ 4
- About the Engagement Process \_\_\_\_\_ 8
- Engagement Promotion \_\_\_\_\_ 11
- Engagement Participation \_\_\_\_\_ 12
- Detailed Engagement Feedback – Online Questionnaire \_\_\_\_\_ 15
- Engagement Feedback – What We Learned and How We Are Responding \_\_\_\_\_ 27
- How Feedback Will Be Used \_\_\_\_\_ 39
- Next Steps \_\_\_\_\_ 39

# 1. About the Solid Waste Management Plan Update

Metro Vancouver is responsible for planning for waste prevention, reduction, reuse, and recycling, and operating a series of solid waste facilities across the region. This work is guided by a commitment to environmental stewardship, and affordable and accessible waste management services.

Metro Vancouver is updating its solid waste management plan, building on the strengths of the *Integrated Solid Waste and Resource Management Plan (2011)*, to continue progressing towards a thriving region where nothing is wasted, and resources are valued. Metro Vancouver is actively engaging with First Nations, government agencies, waste and recycling industry, waste producers, businesses, communities, and Metro Vancouver residents to guide updates to the plan. The plan update is a multi-year process, with options analysis recently being completed. Review of the draft plan will be the final phase of engagement before the plan is submitted for approval to the Minister of Environment and Parks.



The objective of the options analysis phase was to evaluate strategies and actions developed from ideas generated in the previous phase by applying decision-making criteria grounded in the vision and guiding principles for the updated plan. The feedback received in the options analysis phase helped to determine what actions and strategies are included in the draft plan.

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

## 2. Executive Summary

This report details the options analysis phase of engagement as part of Metro Vancouver’s solid waste management plan update. This phase focused on receiving feedback from First Nations, member jurisdictions, advisory committees, neighbouring regional districts, non-profit organizations, industry, the public, and other interested parties to evaluate ideas that were generated in the previous phase to help determine what actions and strategies would be included in the draft updated plan.

*Options analysis* builds on the previous *idea generation* phase which focused on listening to and learning from feedback on ideas and potential actions to guide the solid waste management plan. The potential actions and strategies identified through idea generation were reviewed through options analysis by applying decision-making criteria grounded in the updated plan’s vision and guiding principles.

Metro Vancouver's process for developing the updated solid waste management plan aligns with provincial guidelines and considers engagement input and feedback received during all phases of engagement. The options analysis engagement process began in spring 2025 by engaging First Nations, member jurisdictions, neighbouring regional districts, and advisory committees.

Public engagement was held from August 16 to October 31, 2025, and included an online questionnaire, outreach at four community events, interviews and small group meetings with representatives from various sectors, and community outreach at the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE). In addition, Metro Vancouver worked with 16 not-for-profit organizations through the Collaborative Engagement program. These organizations represented communities interested in solid waste or environmental issues, as well as equity denied and under-represented communities. Participating organizations were invited to connect with their existing communities and engage audiences who otherwise may not be aware of, or may have experienced barriers to, Metro Vancouver's engagement processes.

The purpose of public engagement was to receive feedback on potential strategies and actions to be included in the updated solid waste management plan.

## **Feedback from Engagement Meetings, Workshops, Interviews, Events**

Summarized below are the themes that emerged based on the input gathered across engagement activities conducted during this phase including meetings, workshops, interviews, community events, and qualitative feedback from the Collaborative Engagement initiative. Findings from the public online questionnaire and Collaborative Engagement questionnaires are summarized separately in section six of this report.

- **Circular Economy and Waste Prevention**

Preventing waste at the source by prioritizing reuse, repair, and reduction over disposal-focused options like landfilling or waste-to-energy. Feedback called for system-level shifts towards a circular economy to keep materials in use for longer and make waste prevention a core priority.

- **Cost, Funding, and Economic Feasibility**

Emphasis on the need for clear economic rationale, transparent budgeting, incentive mechanisms, and well-defined approaches for funding and financial responsibility across governments, businesses, and households.

- **Data, Metrics, Reporting, and Transparency**

Generation and access to clear, reliable data and transparent reporting for tracking and measuring progress, evaluating program performance, and building trust in waste reduction and circular economy initiatives. Feedback emphasized improving data accuracy and calculations, openly sharing financial and program information, and strengthening monitoring systems so decisions are evidence-based, transparent, and demonstrate accountability.

- **Education, Engagement, and Behaviour Change**

Education, engagement, and behaviour change with clear, practical guidance and repeated, targeted outreach that helps people build confidence and new habits. Feedback emphasized tailoring education to different groups, using diverse engagement methods, and supporting learning with policies and incentives so behaviour change is sustained and meaningful.

- **Equitable and Accessible Approaches to Waste Management**

Waste management strategies designed to be inclusive and accessible, addressing cultural, language, financial, physical, and structural barriers so all community members can participate. Feedback called for community-led and inclusive approaches multilingual and culturally responsive resources, and tailored support for newcomers, seniors, people with disabilities, people in multi-family residences, low-income households, multi-generational residents, and others facing systemic obstacles to equitable participation.

- **Human and Environmental Health**

Waste management strategies that minimize risk to people and ecosystems by addressing contamination, toxicity, emissions, and the safety of food and organics across the full lifecycle of materials. Feedback emphasized the need to consider climate impacts, biodiversity protection, and long-term public health to ensure systems remain safe, resilient, and environmentally responsible.

- **Managing Complex Materials**

Clear, consistent, and material-specific systems to manage complex materials so households, businesses, and sectors can properly manage items such as textiles, plastics, bulky goods, electronics, healthcare waste, and construction and demolition materials. Feedback called for standardized regulations, expanded producer responsibility take-back programs, and more accessible, user-friendly collection systems to ensure responsible end-of-life management and reduce confusion, contamination, and improper disposal.

- **Operations and Infrastructure**

Operations and infrastructure that are purposely planned, adequately resourced, and well-coordinated to ensure waste reduction and circular economy strategies are practical, scalable, and aligned with regional goals. Feedback highlighted the importance of accessible facilities, sufficient processing capacity, and strong collection, logistics, staffing and maintenance systems supported by land-use planning, innovation and technology to deliver efficient and reliable services across the region.

Feedback included calls to phase out or reduce reliance on the Waste-to-Energy Facility, including from the Fraser Valley Regional District, citing concerns about air quality and cost. Participants noted phasing out the facility would help redirect resources toward circular solutions.

- **Plan Scope, Clarity, and Definitions**

A clear and well-defined plan with defined targets, consistent terminology, and transparent priorities so interested parties understand what each action is intended to achieve, who it applies to, and how it aligns with circular economy and waste hierarchy principles. Feedback emphasized the need to clearly define key terms, reduce overlap through improved plan structure and readability, and identify each action's intent, expected outcomes, level of commitment, and timing, so roles, responsibilities, and expectations are clear.

- **Policy, Regulation, and Enforcement**

The role of policy, regulation and enforcement in shaping consistent and effective waste reduction and circular economy outcomes across Metro Vancouver. Feedback highlighted the need for clear and well-defined regulatory tools, consistent regional guidelines, and enforceable requirements

particularly for disposal bans, extended producer responsibility, zoning, and regulation of the commercial and institutional hauling sectors to ensure accountability and consistent implementation across jurisdictions.

- **Roles, Responsibilities, and Collaboration**

The importance of clearly defined roles, shared accountability, and strong collaboration among Metro Vancouver municipalities, First Nations, industry, governments, non-profit organizations, communities, and individuals to advance waste reduction and circular economy actions. It highlights the need for aligned oversight, coordinated decision-making, and cooperation to build buy-in, avoid duplication, and support integrated, community-focused regional solutions.

- **Standardization, Convenience, and Simplification**

Consistent, simple, and user-friendly waste and recycling systems across all municipalities, including standardized accepted materials, clear signage and colour coding, and reliable curbside collection coverage and frequency. Feedback emphasized that harmonized systems, centralized, and easily accessible information, and simple, streamlined processes reduce confusion, increase participation, and make it easier for residents and businesses to sort materials correctly.

## **Feedback from Questionnaires**

Summarized below are themes that emerged based on feedback received during this phase of engagement across both the public and Collaborative Engagement questionnaires. Respondents demonstrated strong alignment with the waste hierarchy, particularly upstream actions focused on rethinking consumption, reducing waste, and extending product life.

- **Overall Insight**

Engagement findings show strong alignment with the waste hierarchy and clear public support for prevention-first, system-level solutions. While individuals are willing to change behaviours, respondents consistently emphasized that meaningful progress depends on clearer systems, upstream action, and shared responsibility across governments, producers, and institutions.



### 3. About the Engagement Process

In fall 2025, Metro Vancouver engaged members of the public, member jurisdictions, neighbouring regional districts, and advisory committees to receive feedback and create opportunities for dialogue around defined potential strategies and actions to include in the updated solid waste management plan. Public engagement occurred from August 16 to October 31, 2025, including an online questionnaire, workshops, small group dialogue sessions, interviews, and community events. The purpose of public engagement was to receive feedback on a set of actions and strategies developed based on input received in the previous engagement phase, idea generation.



Objectives for options analysis engagement included:

- Receive feedback on potential strategies and actions for the updated solid waste management plan.
- Increase understanding about the approaches and potential changes required to implement potential strategies and actions.
- Continue to promote confidence and education about Metro Vancouver’s role in waste reduction, recycling planning, and operation of solid waste facilities in the region and to motivate and inspire community members to take actions that will decrease garbage going to disposal.

Metro Vancouver shared information about:

- The engagement process, including how feedback from previous phases helped to inform this phase and the draft strategies and actions.
- How interested parties could engage in this phase of the process, and where to learn more about how to participate.
- The potential strategies and actions
- Intended objectives of the phase and how feedback received will be used to develop the draft solid waste management plan.

The many ideas heard during the idea generation phase were consolidated into approximately 200 potential actions, combining similar ideas with shared methods and outcomes. This list of potential actions was provided during options analysis engagement, for review and feedback. The potential actions were organized by draft strategies (categories reflecting common themes). Strategies were organized by goal and the waste hierarchy – two elements previously approved by the GVS&DD Board. Ideas were also assessed using criteria based on Board strategic priorities, provincial guidance, and the vision and guiding principles previously approved by the GVS&DD Board. For transparency, a full list of ideas received during idea generation was published on the Metro Vancouver website, along with other supporting information such as an assessment of all ideas completed by a consultant using a rubric.

The table below provides a summary of engagement activities including intended audience(s).

AUDIENCE	ENGAGEMENT METHOD/DESCRIPTION
<p><b>Member jurisdictions</b></p>	<p>Metro Vancouver launched options analysis engagement by sending a letter to mayors and councils of member jurisdictions. Member jurisdiction staff engagement focused on the development and review of proposed member jurisdiction actions.</p> <p>Metro Vancouver engaged the following member jurisdiction staff committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regional Administrators Advisory Committee (RAAC)</b> shared project presentation.</li> <li>• <b>Regional Engineers Advisory Committee (REAC)</b> shared project presentation during regular REAC meeting, workshop at MV Conference Day, and invitation to member jurisdiction workshop.</li> <li>• <b>Regional Engineers Advisory Committee Solid Waste Sub-Committee and the Regional Waste Reduction Coordinators Committee</b> project information shared and feedback opportunities at regular committee meetings.</li> <li>• Member jurisdiction workshop with multiple member staff advisory committees invited.</li> <li>• <b>Regional Planning Advisory Committee</b> presentation at a regular meeting with invitation to provide comments</li> <li>• <b>Regional Communications Advisory Group</b> shared information at a regular meeting</li> <li>• <b>Invest Vancouver Advisory Committee</b> presentation at a regular meeting with invitation to provide comments</li> <li>• <b>Agricultural Advisory Committee</b> brief presentation and invitation to provide comments</li> <li>• <b>Indigenous Relations Committee and Air Quality Committee</b> forwarded Zero Waste Committee reports for information</li> </ul>
<p><b>Neighbouring regional districts</b></p>	<p>Metro Vancouver sent letters to regional district boards and met with staff including Fraser Valley Regional District, Sunshine Coast Regional District, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, and the Thompson-Nicola Regional District. Metro Vancouver also presented at a Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Board meeting on request.</p>
<p><b>Solid Waste and Recycling Industry Advisory Committee</b></p>	<p>Metro Vancouver staff shared project information and received feedback and insights on draft hierarchy and goals, proposed options analysis criteria, and potential strategies and actions.</p>
<p><b>Solid Waste Management Plan Public/Technical Advisory Committee</b></p>	<p>Metro Vancouver staff shared project information and received feedback and insights on draft hierarchy and goals, proposed options analysis criteria, and potential strategies and actions.</p>

<b>Waste Management Association of BC</b>	Provided updates at meetings
<b>Youth and Education Advisory Panel</b>	Metro Vancouver staff facilitated a discussion with members of Youth and Education Advisory Panel (YEAP) and received feedback on proposed actions and strategies.
<b>Key sectors</b>	Metro Vancouver staff participated in four facilitated virtual dialogue sessions with representatives from four key sectors, including healthcare, tourism, food, and construction and demolition. 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 attended the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE), prior to the active public engagement phase, to engage and educate the public on the updated waste hierarchy, recycling and waste management, and to share information on the options analysis phase of the project.
<b>Online questionnaire</b>	An online questionnaire was shared on the project webpage to gather feedback to help understand what actions are needed to address identified issues and opportunities.
<b>Community events</b>	Metro Vancouver participated in four community events in various areas of the Metro Vancouver region to share information, seek feedback from the public and create opportunities for dialogue and feedback around draft strategies and actions to include in the updated solid waste management plan.
<b>Collaborative Engagement</b>	Collaborative Engagement program 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 engagement materials, was provided to organizations to support engagement with their audiences. Each organization provided feedback from their audiences which was then incorporated into the analysis.
<b>One-on-one interviews</b>	One-on-one interviews were offered for individuals and organizations that were unable to attend scheduled engagement sessions so they had the opportunity to share their insights and feedback. Two interviews were completed with representatives from the textiles and rental housing sectors.
<b>Public presentations to the 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 how to participate in the engagement process was shared with the public and interested parties via various channels, as described below.

### Website

The dedicated project webpage for the solid waste management plan update was updated for options analysis engagement to provide project background information, promote public engagement events, and to share the online questionnaire. The calendar of engagement events was also shared on this webpage to encourage public participation. There were more than 2,730 webpage visits during the options analysis phase.

### Social Media

The options analysis phase of the solid waste management plan was promoted on social media from August 16 to October 31, 2025. The social media posts provided project information and encouraged public participation and input and reached more than 175,000 people.

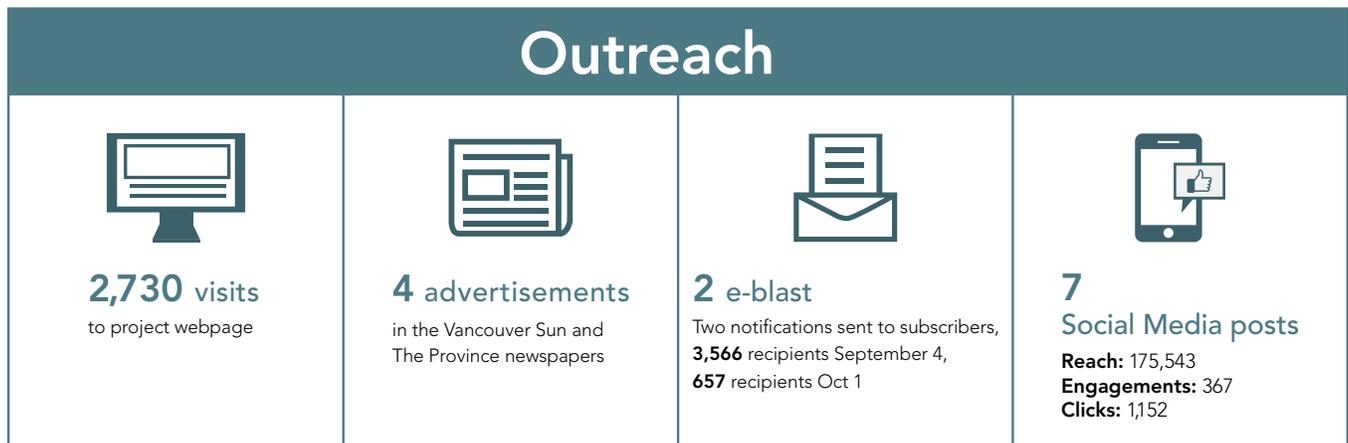
### Print Ads

Print ads were published twice in each of the Vancouver Sun and The Province newspapers. These ads provided project information and shared details on public engagement opportunities.

### E-blasts

Engagement opportunities were promoted via email to 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.



# 5. Engagement Participation

The table below summarize participation across the engagement opportunities offered during options analysis. Metro Vancouver staff facilitated 31 meetings and received over 390 responses to the online questionnaire with an additional 657 responses through the Collaborative Engagement questionnaire. There were over 855 participants at community events and 11,700 participants in the engagement activities held at the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE). Metro Vancouver also worked with 16 not-for-profit organizations who coordinated engagement with their networks, reaching over 250 individuals through these organizations through engagement activities such as meetings, workshops, and questionnaires.

Engagement			
 <p><b>11,748</b> votes At SWMP Engagement Voting tubes</p>	 <p><b>1,036</b> responses received to the questionnaire</p>	 <p><b>855</b> engaged at community events</p>	 <p><b>16</b> organizations participated in collaborative engagement</p>

ENGAGEMENT METHOD	PARTICIPANTS	DATE
<b>Meetings and workshops</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member jurisdictions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Administrative Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Regional Engineers Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Regional Engineers Advisory Committee Solid Waste Sub-Committee</li> <li>• Regional Communications Advisory Group</li> <li>• Regional Waste Reduction Coordinators</li> <li>• Member jurisdiction staff workshop</li> <li>• Regional Planning Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Agricultural Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Invest Vancouver Advisory Committee</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Neighbouring Regional Districts - staff</li> <li>• Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Board</li> <li>• Solid Waste Management Plan Public/ Technical Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Solid Waste and Recycling Industry Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Youth and Education Advisory Panel</li> <li>• Waste Management Association of BC members meeting</li> </ul>	April – October 2025

<b>Community outreach at the PNE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 11,700 participants participated in the engagement activity.</li> </ul>	August 16 – September 1, 2025
<b>Outreach at community events</b>	<p>There were 855 participants at four events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Port Coquitlam Car Free Day (226)</li> <li>• Car Free Day – Main Street (328)</li> <li>• RiverFest, New Westminster (175)</li> <li>• Diwali Festival, Surrey (126)</li> </ul>	September – October 2025
<b>Sector engagement meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Authorities</li> <li>• Destination Vancouver</li> <li>• Canadian Food and Beverage Association</li> <li>• Homebuilders Association Vancouver</li> </ul>	September – October 2025
<b>Collaborative engagement organizations hosting engagement activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BC Apparel and Gear Association</li> <li>• Binnars' Project</li> <li>• Bioloop Foundation</li> <li>• CityHive</li> <li>• Coast Waste Management Association</li> <li>• Food Stash Foundation</li> <li>• Fraser Basin Youth Council</li> <li>• Hong Kong Cultural Society</li> <li>• Langley Environmental Partners Society</li> <li>• Mind Your Plastic – Vancouver</li> <li>• Recycling Council of BC</li> <li>• SPEC – Masters Recyclers</li> <li>• Surrey and White Rock Board of Trade</li> <li>• Threading Change Foundation</li> <li>• Vancouver Food Runners</li> <li>• Young Naturalists' Clubs of British Columbia Society (NatureKids BC)</li> </ul>	September – November 2025
<b>Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two interviews (textiles and rental housing sectors)</li> </ul>	October 2025
<b>Online public questionnaire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 390 participants</li> </ul>	August – October 2025
<b>Metro Vancouver feedback form</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five responses</li> </ul>	August – October 2025
<b>Emails</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 emails with feedback, including from member jurisdiction staff, neighbouring regional districts, advisory committee members, and the public</li> </ul>	June – December 2025



## Collaborative Engagement Program

The Collaborative Engagement program is an inclusive public engagement initiative that Metro Vancouver introduced during the vision and guiding principles phase of engagement. This program supports not-for-profit organizations to engage their communities in regional planning by offering up to \$5,000 in funding, staff support, and other resources. The purpose of the program is to promote diverse, equitable, and inclusive public engagement by working with groups that may experience barriers to participation such as equity-denied or underrepresented communities, youth, seniors, urban Indigenous people, and environmental groups. During the options analysis phase, Metro Vancouver worked with 16 organizations that facilitated their own engagement activities, including questionnaires, focus groups, workshops, interviews, webinars, and online outreach. In total, these efforts reached more than 900 residents, with 250 participants contributing feedback that helped shape the strategies and actions in the updated plan. This program remains an important way for Metro Vancouver to ensure that voices and organizations historically underrepresented in government engagement could contribute meaningfully.

## Facilitated Sessions

Metro Vancouver staff facilitated workshops or interactive dialogue and feedback sessions with the Solid Waste Management Plan Public/Technical Advisory Committee, Solid Waste and Recycling Industry Advisory Committee, Regional Engineers Advisory Committee, Regional Engineers Advisory Committee, Regional Engineers Advisory Committee Solid Waste Sub-Committee, Regional Waste Reduction Coordinators' Committee, neighbouring regional districts, and the Youth and Education Advisory Panel. Project information was shared, and participants were provided with an opportunity to share feedback and ideas on the draft strategies and actions for inclusion in the updated plan.

## Sector Engagement

Metro Vancouver facilitated four virtual dialogue sessions with representatives from health authorities, Destination Vancouver, BC Food and Beverage Association, and the Homebuilders Association

Vancouver. In addition, representatives from the textile and rental housing sectors were engaged through interviews. These sessions provided an opportunity to gather feedback on the proposed actions and strategies within the defined priority areas for each sector.

## Public Engagement Events

Public engagement events for this phase took place from August 16 to October 5, 2025. Metro Vancouver received feedback from the public on specific draft strategies and actions to understand their level of support and what would help them to implement these strategies in their day-to-day life. Attending community events provided an opportunity to reach a broader audience, share project information, and to listen and learn from the public.

In this phase of engagement, Metro Vancouver participated in community events in four areas of the Metro Vancouver region. Participants were encouraged to share their sentiment by placing a coloured dot in one of three columns to represent either green (supportive), yellow (neutral), or red (not in support). At all events, the response from the participants showed a continued curiosity for Metro Vancouver and the work it oversees in the region, as well as a general appreciation for engaging the public and seeking feedback on waste, organics, and recycling in the region.

## Online Questionnaire

Close to 400 participants responded to an online questionnaire. The online platform provided the public and interested parties the opportunity to share their feedback on the proposed strategies and actions. The questionnaire was open from August 16 to October 31, 2025. A link was shared on the Metro Vancouver solid waste management plan update project web page, social media, email promotions, and at engagement meetings and workshops.

## Feedback Form Responses

As part of the engagement, staff received five feedback form responses providing feedback on proposed strategies and actions for the updated plan.

# 6. Detailed Engagement Feedback – Online Questionnaire

## Methodology

An online questionnaire was open to the public between August 16 and October 31, 2025. It was hosted by Metro Vancouver.

390 participants engaged in the questionnaire.

As part of the Collaborative Engagement initiative, participating organizations were encouraged to recreate the Metro Vancouver public questionnaire and adapt language to better suit their specific audiences; as a result, Collaborative Engagement questionnaires were closely aligned with but not exact replicas of the public questionnaire. Across all participating organizations, 657 questionnaires were completed. Metro Vancouver provided these organizations with a comprehensive engagement toolkit that supported the facilitation of engagement activities with their members. The organizations that participated in Collaborative Engagement were as follows:

- BC Apparel and Gear Association
- Binners' Project
- Bioloop Foundation
- Coast Waste Management Association
- Food Stash Foundation
- Langley Environmental Partners Society
- Mind Your Plastic
- Nature kids BC
- Recycling Council of BC
- Society Promoting Environmental Conservation (SPEC) – Master Recyclers
- Surrey and White Rock Board of Trade
- Vancouver Food Runners

Questionnaire findings from the Collaborative Engagement organizations listed above were analysed but are discussed separately from the public questionnaire accessed through Metro Vancouver's website.

## Key Findings

The following is a summary of findings, with charts, from the public questionnaire that was available through Metro Vancouver's website. Results from the parallel surveys conducted by Collaborative Engagement organizations are also discussed in the text.

### Rethink

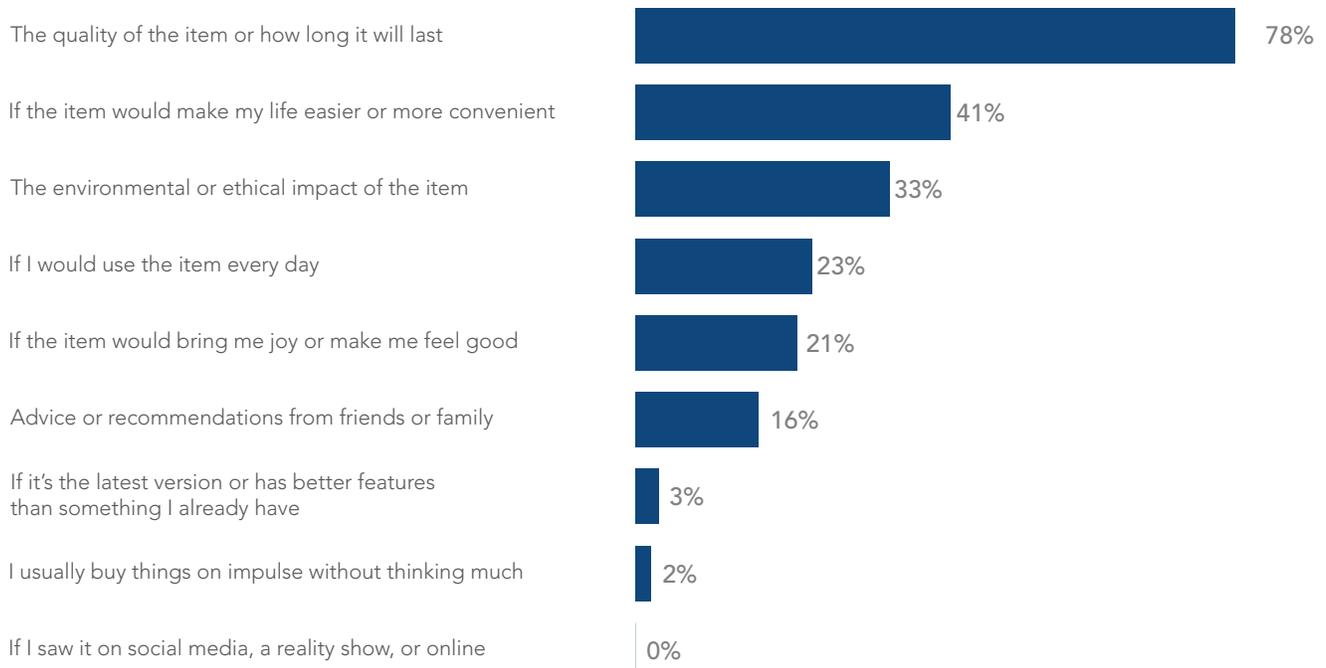
How do you decide what you really need before buying something?

When making purchase decisions, the top factor when considering needs was the quality of the item or how long it will last.

Eight in 10 respondents (78%) said this was among their top three considerations. About half as many (41%) said that they considered whether the item would make their life easier or more convenient, while a third (33%) considered environmental or ethical impacts of the item.

Fewer respondents base purchase decisions on whether the item would be used daily (23%) or if it would spark joy (21%); 16% say that word of mouth recommendations are a factor. Very few said they look for better versions of something they already have (3%) or are impulse buyers (2%).





When asked if there was anything else that is important to them when deciding whether they want to purchase something, many respondents added other considerations or expanded on the list provided. Main themes included assessing necessity and replacement (questioning whether an item is truly required or simply a want), seeking reuse or second-hand alternatives before buying new, including if they could borrow it instead of buying it. Others described making decisions based on sustainability and lifecycle considerations such as repairability, recyclability, and packaging waste, and preferring locally or Canadian-made products was also mentioned. Practical considerations like cost and budget, storage space, and brand ethics also emerged as smaller themes, alongside more personal factors like reflection before buying and aesthetics, fit, or functionality.

Collaborative Engagement respondents were also asked this question. It is however important to note that the questionnaire questions differed slightly between the public questionnaire and the Collaborative Engagement questionnaire. In particular, cost and budget considerations were included as a response option only for Collaborative Engagement participants.

Among Collaborative Engagement participants, cost and budget was the most influential factor when deciding whether something is being purchased. Just over three-quarters of respondents (77%) selected cost as one of their top considerations, making it the clear number one factor for this group.

Beyond cost, Collaborative Engagement participants expressed priorities that were largely consistent with those of the broader questionnaire population. Quality and durability remained a central consideration, selected by just under six in 10 respondents (58%), reinforcing the shared emphasis on buying items that last longer. Convenience also featured prominently, with just over a third (35%) indicating that making life easier or more convenient influenced their decisions, which is a level similar to the results of the public questionnaire.

Collaborative Engagement participants were more likely than public respondents to consider how often an item would be used, with 38% identifying regular use as a key factor. This suggests a stronger focus on practicality and everyday value among this group. Consideration of environmental or ethical impacts (33%) closely mirrored the public questionnaire results, indicating alignment in sustainability-related values despite differences in question framing.

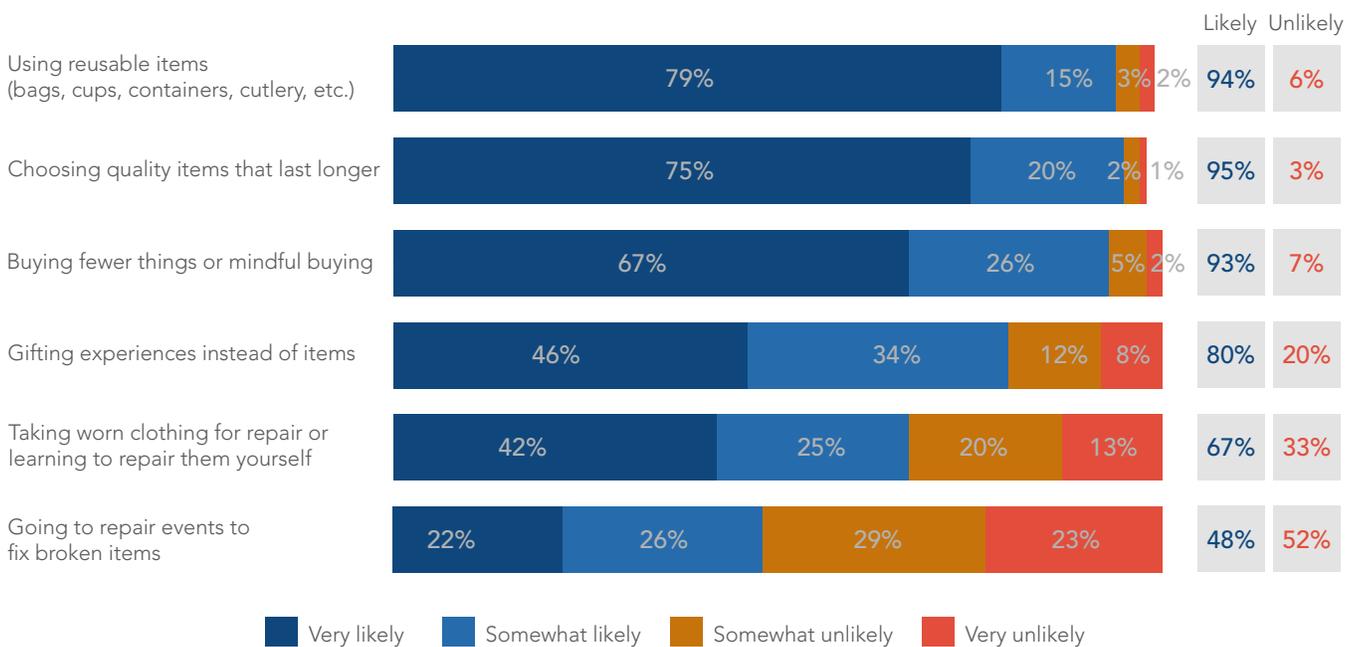
Open-ended responses from Collaborative Engagement participants reinforced these patterns and added further nuance. Many described a deliberate decision-making process focused on questioning necessity, avoiding impulse purchases, and prioritizing repair, reuse, or second-hand options before buying new. Sustainability and lifecycle thinking, including durability, repairability, and waste reduction, featured strongly, alongside reflections on overconsumption and the importance of making intentional, values-based purchasing decisions.

## How likely are you to try the following in the next year?

Many questionnaire respondents indicated they were likely to make changes in the next year to prevent waste.

The most popular actions amongst respondents were choosing quality items that last longer (95% saying they're likely to do that, among whom 75% very likely) and using reusable items such as bags, cups, containers and cutlery (94% likely; among whom 79% very likely). Somewhat less popular but still ranked high overall, was buying fewer things or mindful buying (93% likely; 67% very likely).

Gift-giving experiences rather than physical gift items, was also quite popular, with eight in 10 overall likely (80% likely; 46% very likely). While two-thirds said they are likely to repair worn clothing (67% likely; 42% very likely), this was among the least popular actions, with a third saying they'd be unlikely to do this (33% unlikely; 13% very unlikely). The least popular action was going to repair events, with half saying they're likely to do this (48% likely; 22% very likely) and the other half unlikely (52% unlikely; 23% very unlikely).



Findings from Collaborative Engagement respondents largely reinforced the overall patterns observed in the public questionnaire, particularly in terms of the order of actions participants were most likely to try in the next year.

As with the public questionnaire, everyday prevention behaviours ranked highest among Collaborative Engagement respondents. Using reusable items and choosing better quality items that last longer emerged as the two most likely actions for this group, with 91% and 95% respectively indicating they were likely to take these steps.

Buying fewer items or practising mindful purchasing followed closely, with nine in 10 (90%) reporting they were likely to try this approach, mirroring the open questionnaire.

Where the Collaborative Engagement respondents began to diverge was in their relative openness to repair-related behaviours. While repair actions still ranked lower than prevention-focused behaviours, Collaborative Engagement respondents expressed stronger overall willingness to engage in these activities. Nearly three-quarters (73%) said they were likely to repair worn items or learn to repair at home, and more than two-thirds (68%) indicated they were likely to attend repair events.

Gift-giving experiences instead of physical items occupied a middle position for Collaborative Engagement respondents, with 77% reporting they were likely to do this. This placement is consistent with the public questionnaire, where gift-giving experiences ranked below core prevention behaviours but above repair activities.



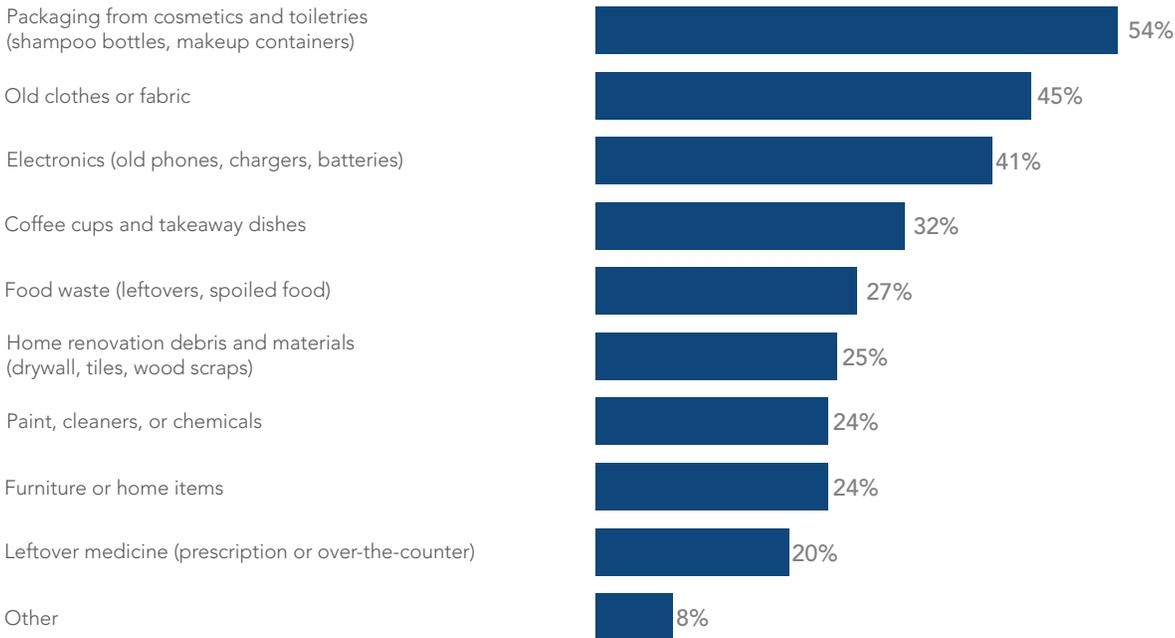
## Reduce

### What types of waste do you find challenging to avoid?

When looking at waste items that respondents found the most challenging to avoid, there was one that the majority found challenging: packaging from cosmetics and toiletries. Just over half (54%) selected these items from the suggested list.

Rounding out the top three were old clothes (45% saying they're a challenge to avoid disposing) and electronics (41%). A third said the same of coffee cups and takeaway dishes (32%) and approximately a quarter reported having a difficult time with food waste (27%), home renovation waste (25%), paint, cleaners and chemicals (24%) or furniture (24%). Fewer said the same of leftover medicine (20%).

Among the 8% of respondents who mentioned other types of waste as challenging to them, the most mentioned difficulties were related to other plastic and product packaging, including molded plastics and films, and non-refundable or non-recyclable materials. Respondents also cited issues with other household items such as toys or tool. Several noted challenges with paper and gift wrapping, pet waste, and bulky or specialized waste such as tires, broken glass and aerosols.



Collaborative Engagement respondents also identified a clear set of waste types that they found challenging to avoid, with the most frequently cited challenge plastic packaging, such as food wrappers and plastic wrap, selected by 81% of respondents. Note that this was not an item asked about in the public questionnaire. This placed packaging well above all other categories, reinforcing the strong emphasis this group placed on upstream materials and system-level waste challenges.

Electronics, including old phones, chargers, and batteries, ranked second, which was higher than seen in the public questionnaire, with half of participants (51%) identifying them as difficult to avoid. Packaging

from cosmetics and toiletries followed closely at 48%, again highlighting frustration with packaging choices that offer few low-waste alternatives. Old clothes or fabric were identified by 38% of respondents, while coffee cups and takeaway containers were cited by a third (33%), indicating ongoing challenges with single-use food and beverage items.

Roughly three in 10 participants reported difficulty avoiding paint, cleaners, or chemicals (30%) and home renovation debris and materials (28%), while a quarter identified leftover medications (25%) as a challenge. Fewer respondents pointed to furniture or household items (19%) or food waste (11%).

## What types of waste reduction programs would you be most interested in?

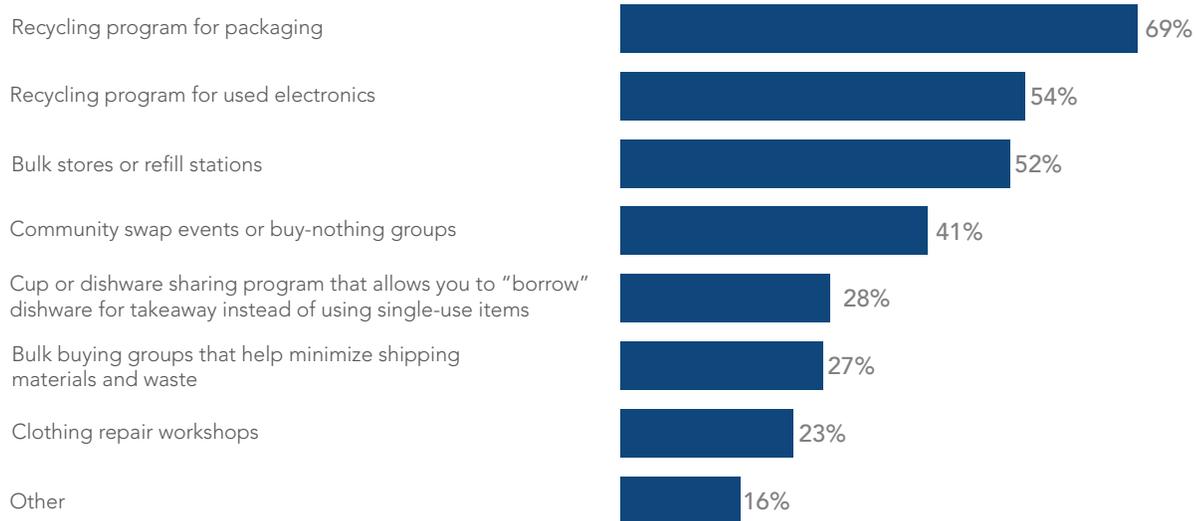
The majority of respondents indicated an interest in recycling programs for packaging (69%), with just over half also interested in electronics recycling (54%) or buying in bulk or from refill stations (52%). Fewer were interested in community events or buy-nothing groups (42%).

Less popular were cup or dishware sharing programs (28%), bulk buying groups (27%) or clothing repair workshops (23%).

Among the 16% who mentioned other types of waste reduction programs they'd be interested in, many expanded on the list by giving examples or more specific program examples, expanding the range and accessibility of recycling, repair, and reuse programs. For example, some respondents

supported community-based reuse initiatives such as free stores and shared tool sheds, as well as food waste and organics solutions, including bring-your-own-container programs for restaurants. Common suggestions called for broader or more convenient recycling opportunities, including drop-off or curbside collection for hard-to-recycle items, dedicated textile and fabric recycling, and specific repair programs for electronics, appliances, and household goods.

Many also wanted manufacturers and retailers to take greater responsibility for packaging waste, through take-back, standardized materials, or bans on problematic plastics. A few respondents emphasized the need for government leadership, financial incentives for low-waste households, and public or industry education to reduce overpackaging at the source.



Among Collaborative Engagement respondents, interest in waste reduction programs reflected a similar emphasis on reuse, sharing, and packaging reduction. However, recycling programs for packaging were not the top choice among these respondents. The most appealing options were community swap events or buy-nothing groups (53%) and bulk stores or refill stations (52%). Interest was also high in recycling programs for used electronics (44%) and clothing repair workshops (43%), reinforcing the earlier findings around repair and reuse.

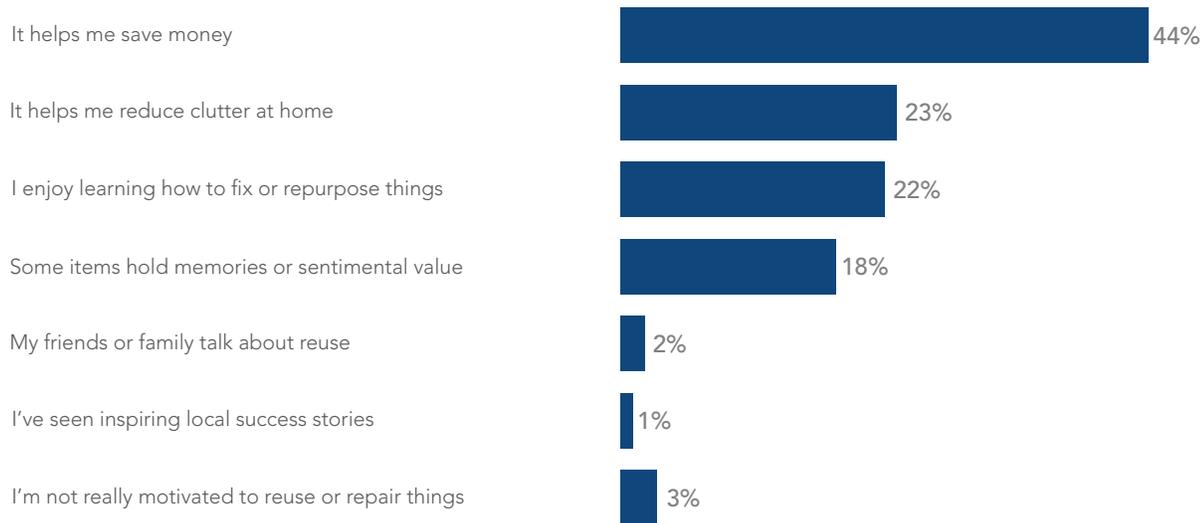
Just over four in 10 participants expressed interest in recycling programs for packaging (42%) and bulk buying groups that help minimize shipping materials and waste (41%). Cup or dishware sharing programs attracted lower, but still notable, interest at 31%. No additional program types were identified in open-ended responses.



## Reuse & Repair

### What motivates you to reuse items?

By far the most important factor that motivates respondents to reuse items is financial: 44% selected this as one of their top two motivations. Many also said they liked reusing because it reduced clutter (23%), they enjoy learning how to fix things (22%) or they have items of sentimental value they hold onto (18%).



Many also mentioned other motivating factors. The most frequent additions were a strong sense of avoiding waste and moral responsibility, an appreciation for quality, longevity, and durability, and the influence of family or cultural values around thrift and stewardship. Others described personal fulfillment and enjoyment, or a desire to reject consumerism and convenience culture. Additional motivations included convenience and effort avoidance, community sharing and exchange, economic necessity, and social norms.

Findings from Collaborative Engagement respondents reinforced the public questionnaire results, while adding further insight into the motivations behind reuse and repair and the types of shared resources that are most appealing to this group.

Financial considerations emerged as the strongest motivator for reuse, with just over half of Collaborative Engagement participants (53%) indicating that saving money was a key reason to reuse items. Environmental values were also prominent, with 46% citing concern about reducing their environmental impact. Practical considerations followed, including reducing clutter at home (29%) and enjoying the process of learning

how to fix or repurpose items (27%). A quarter of participants (25%) also noted that sentimental value motivates them to keep and reuse certain items.

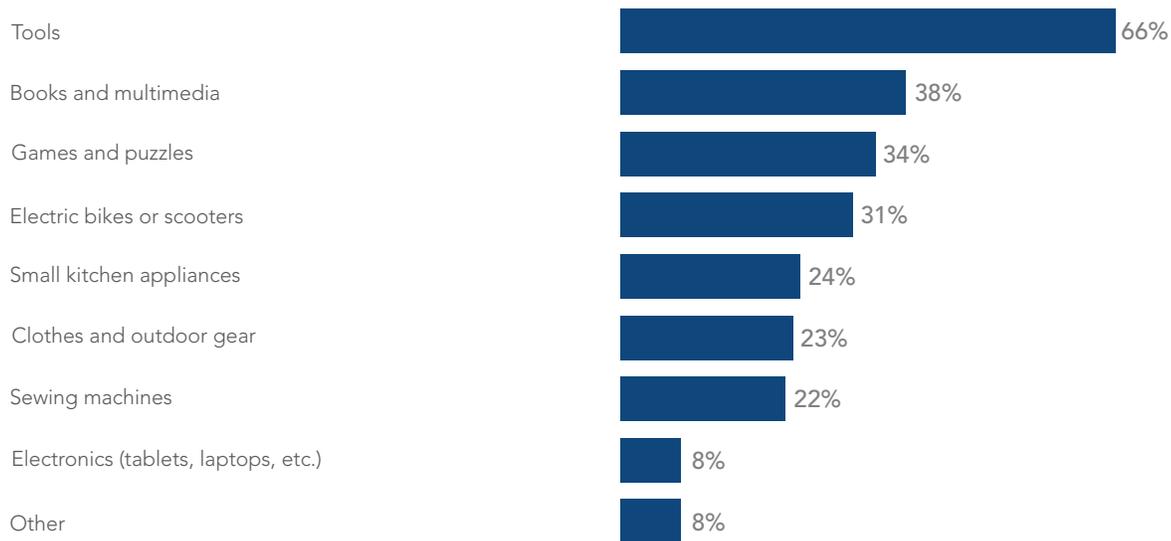
Social influences played a more limited role. Fewer than one in 10 respondents (9%) said they were motivated by friends or family, and very small proportions referenced inspiring local success stories (4%). Only 3% indicated that they were not really motivated to reuse or repair items, suggesting broad openness to these practices within this group.

Open-ended responses further reinforced these findings. Respondents frequently described reuse and repair as part of a values-based mindset, emphasizing stewardship, reducing waste, and making better use of existing resources. Several highlighted cultural or family norms around thrift, fixing items rather than replacing them, and avoiding unnecessary consumption. Others emphasized personal satisfaction, skill-building, or independence gained through repair, while some noted that reuse is often driven by convenience and availability rather than ideology alone.

## If there was a 'sharing library' in your neighbourhood, what would you borrow?

Sharing/lending libraries were explored, with the majority of respondents expressing an interest in borrowing tools (66%). Books came in second place (38%), followed by games/puzzles (34%) and electric bikes or scooters (31%). Fewer, yet sizable proportions were interested in borrowing small kitchen appliances (24%), clothes and gear (23%) and sewing machines (22%). Of least interest were electronics lending libraries (8%), and one in 10 said they're not interested in a lending library (9%).

Those mentioning other items cited a variety of examples, including gardening tools and equipment, camping and outdoor gear, children's bikes and bike trailers, sport gear, cleaning equipment, art supplies and furniture (such as for events).



Interest in sharing/lending libraries among Collaborative Engagement respondents further illustrated this orientation toward reuse. Tools were again by far the most commonly selected item, with nearly two-thirds of participants (65%) indicating they would borrow them if available. Books and multimedia were also popular (53%), followed by games and puzzles (42%) and electric bikes or scooters (39%).

A notable proportion expressed interest in borrowing sewing machines (34%), reflecting interest in repair and maker activities. Smaller but still meaningful shares selected electronics such as tablets or laptops (29%), small kitchen appliances (27%), and clothing (24%).

Open-ended comments related to sharing libraries largely expanded on these selections, with participants providing specific examples rather than introducing new categories. Frequently mentioned items included gardening tools and equipment, camping and outdoor gear, sports equipment, children's items, cleaning tools, and event-related items that are used infrequently. Several respondents emphasized that sharing/lending libraries are most useful for items that are expensive, bulky, or rarely needed, reinforcing the appeal of shared access over individual ownership.



## Recycle

### What would make it easier for you to recycle more?

When asked what would make recycling easier, the majority of respondents (66%) said that more materials being accepted in residential recycling pick-up programs would be an important factor. Almost half of respondents (47%) said that clear instructions on what can be recycled and how would make it easier for them to recycle more, while four in 10 (42%) said the same of having more recycling bins in public areas would do the same.

Three in 10 would like to know what happens to recycled items (30%) and a similar proportion would like to see more drop off locations (28%). A quarter said that tips on how to prepare recyclables would help them. The least popular recycling aid was having more space or larger bins to collect recyclables (11%).



When asked what else would make it easier to recycle more materials, many expanded on existing categories from the list, while others introduced new solutions or priorities. Respondents highlighted system improvements and broader policy changes. The most common suggestion was to simplify and expand residential collection, with calls for harmonized collection systems, single-stream recycling, and curbside pickup for hard-to-recycle materials such as soft plastics and Styrofoam. Many also wanted greater trust and transparency, expressing skepticism about whether recycling actually occurs and calling for transparent reporting and accountability from government and industry.

A main theme involved shifting responsibility upstream, with respondents urging manufacturers, retailers, and restaurants to use recyclable packaging, provide clear labelling, and participate in take-back programs. Others emphasized better access and convenience, including integrated drop-off depots at grocery stores, small neighbourhood centres, and more equitable access for multi-family housing

residents. Some respondents also pointed to the need for consistent education and communication, including clear terminology, standardized rules, and visible information at public facilities and transit hubs.

For Collaborative Engagement respondents, the top priority, selected by 57% of respondents, was clear instructions on what can be recycled and how. This contrasted with the public questionnaire, where system capacity and access ranked more prominently as a barrier. For the Collaborative Engagement participants, clarity and consistency in messaging was seen to be a primary barrier to increased recycling.

The next highest priorities for Collaborative Engagement respondents focused on access and convenience, though in a different order than the general population. Just over half (52%) indicated that more drop-off locations would make recycling easier, followed by more recycling bins in public spaces that accept a wider range of materials (47%). Accepting more types of materials in residential recycling pick-up ranked lower at 45%.

Transparency also emerged as a more prominent factor for this group. More than a third (38%) said that knowing what happens to recycled items would help them recycle more, which reflects a higher relative priority than in the public questionnaire, where this factor ranked lower. This finding aligns with other feedback from Collaborative Engagement participants about trust, accountability, and the effectiveness of recycling systems.

By contrast, tips on how to prepare recyclables were of moderate importance (34%), and having more space or larger bins at home ranked lowest (21%), reinforcing the idea that household storage constraints were less of a barrier for this group than system complexity and information gaps.

Open-ended responses reinforced these distinctions.

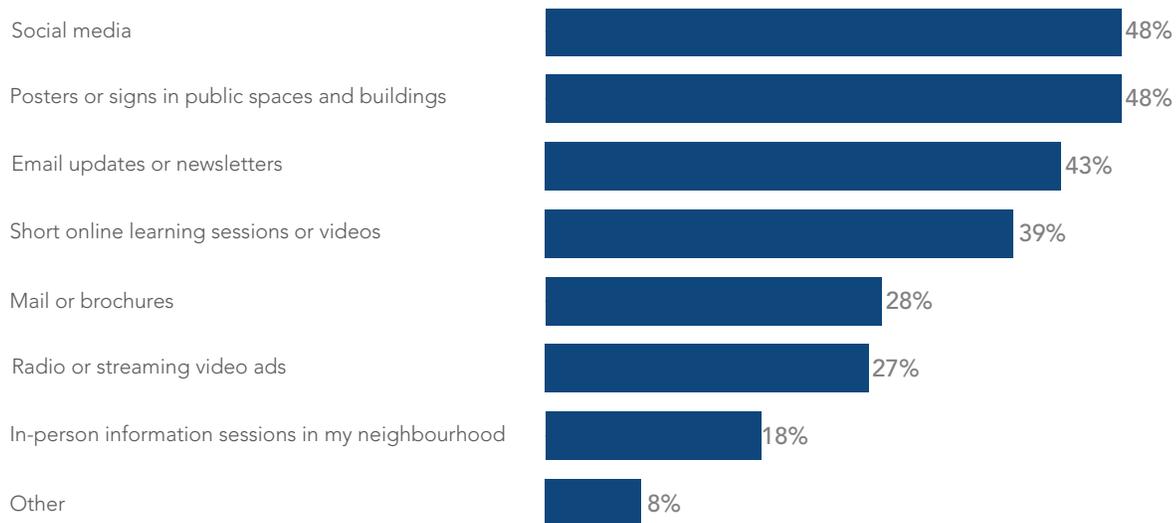
Collaborative Engagement respondents frequently emphasized the need for simpler, more standardized recycling systems, with fewer exceptions and clearer labelling across products and jurisdictions. Many called for consistent rules, improved communication, and visible confirmation that materials are actually recycled. Others highlighted the importance of integrated drop-off locations and equitable access for people in multi-unit buildings.

## Education and Resources

How would you like to learn more about recycling, reuse, and repair programs?

For the most part, respondents wanted to learn about recycling, reuse and repair programs through social media and posters or signs in public spaces. Half of respondents (48% each) selected those as their preferred information channels. Many would also like to receive emails on this topic (43%) or attend short online learning sessions or watch videos (39%). There was slightly less enthusiasm for mail/brochures (28%) and radio or streaming video ads (27%), with in-person neighbourhood information sessions the least popular.

Among the 8% of respondents who suggested other ways to learn about these programs, the most commonly mentioned was online (website or clear search results), through an app, or through school or other educational programs.



Preferences for learning about recycling, reuse, and repair among Collaborative Engagement respondents aligned with results from the public questionnaire with a strong emphasis on visible, accessible, and digitally supported communication channels.

The most preferred learning channel was social media, selected by half (50%) of participants, followed closely by posters or signs in public spaces and buildings (48%). More traditional information formats also remained relevant, with 38% indicating a preference for mail or brochures and nearly one-third (32%) selecting email updates or newsletters. Fewer participants expressed interest in radio or streaming ads (27%) or in-person neighbourhood information sessions (26%), while short online learning sessions or videos ranked lowest among the listed options (21%). Very few respondents (1%) suggested other learning methods.

Open-ended responses reinforced these preferences and emphasized the importance of clear, centralized, and easy-to-find information. Respondents frequently noted that information is most useful when it is concise, consistent, and available at the point of decision-making. Several respondents suggested toolkits, workplace-based education, or sector-specific guidance tailored to organizational or professional settings, reflecting this group’s interest in applying waste-reduction practices within institutional contexts rather than solely at the household level.

Overall, while the preferred channels closely mirrored those of the general population, Collaborative Engagement respondents placed particular emphasis on communication that is practical, visible in everyday spaces, and adaptable to organizational use.

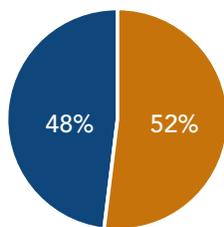
### If you live in an apartment, condo, or townhouse, would you be interested in a short learning series about recycling and waste if it was offered online?

Among respondents who live in multi-unit dwellings, eight in 10 said they’d be interested in a short learning series about recycling and waste if it were offered online, were either definitely interested (49%) or maybe interested (31%).

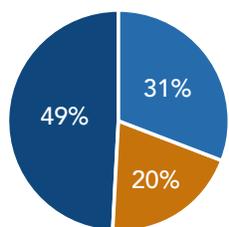
Respondents living in a multi-unit dwelling were also asked for ideas on how to make it easier to recycle food waste in their building. Respondents shared many practical ideas. The most frequent suggestions focused on clearer education and signage, including multilingual materials, welcome kits for new residents, and reminders in shared waste areas. Many emphasized cleanliness and maintenance, requesting leakproof or pest-proof bins, regular cleaning, and convenient access to facilities. Providing free or affordable compostable liners was one of the strongest recurring ideas, as was ensuring that every building has suitable organics collection infrastructure and visible management support.

Several respondents also wanted building-level waste champions or on-site composting programs that connect food waste to community gardens, while others recommended enforcement for contamination or policy incentives for compliance. A smaller number noted that reducing food waste at the source through food literacy, smaller packaging, and community sharing would help more than focusing solely on collection systems.

Do you live in an apartment, condo, or townhouse?



If yes, would you be interested in a short learning series about recycling and waste if it was offered online?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Maybe

A substantial proportion of Collaborative Engagement respondents (55%) reported living in a multi-unit dwelling such as an apartment, condo, or townhouse.

More than half of those participants (56%) said they would be interested in a short learning series about recycling and waste if it were offered in their building or online, while nearly one-third (32%) indicated they might be interested. Only 13% said they would not be interested. This pattern is consistent with the broader questionnaire findings and suggests strong receptiveness to low-barrier, accessible learning opportunities in multi-unit settings.

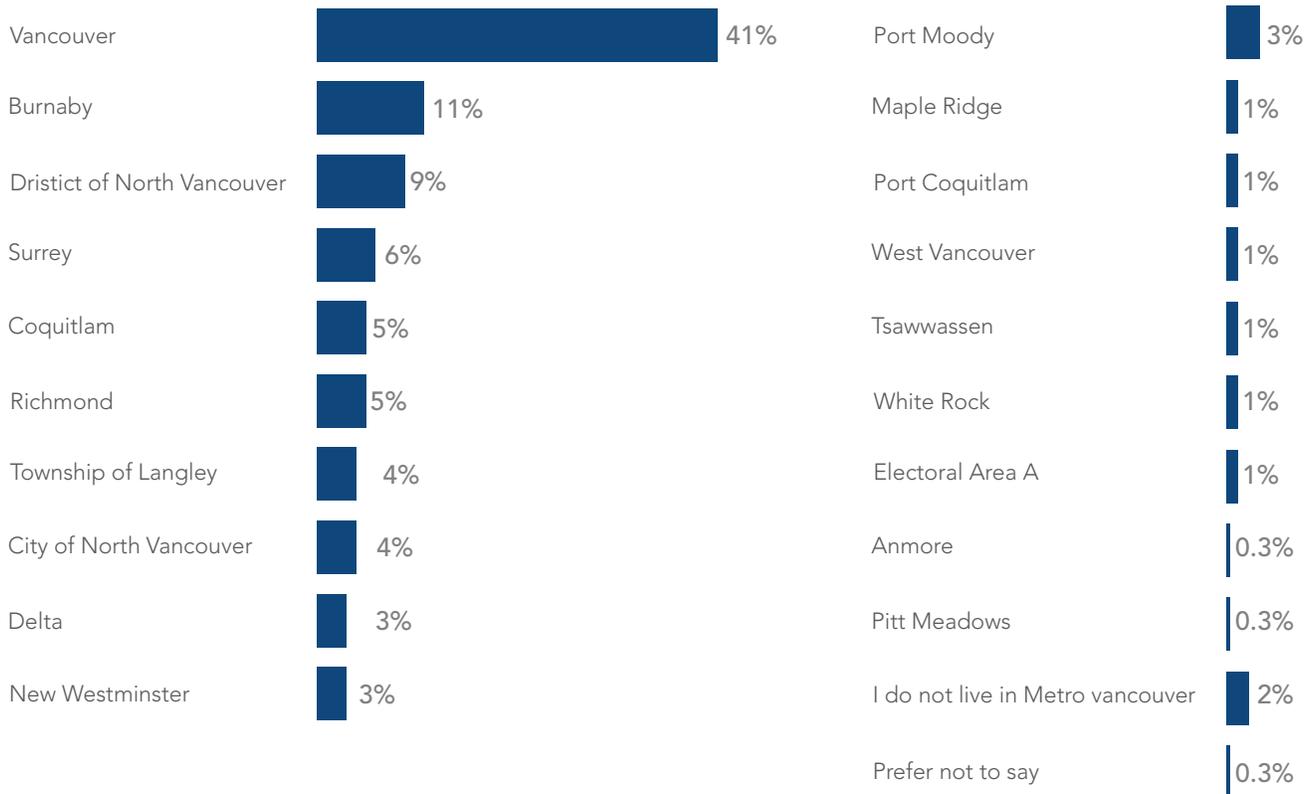
Open-ended responses about improving food-waste recycling in buildings closely aligned with overall questionnaire themes and emphasized practical, system-level solutions. Participants most

often highlighted the need for better signage and education, including clear instructions and reminders in shared waste areas. Clean, pest-proof, and well-maintained infrastructure was another recurring theme, alongside reliable access to compostable liners. Many also stressed the importance of clear responsibility for maintenance and oversight, noting that food-waste diversion is more successful when expectations are supported by consistent building-level management.

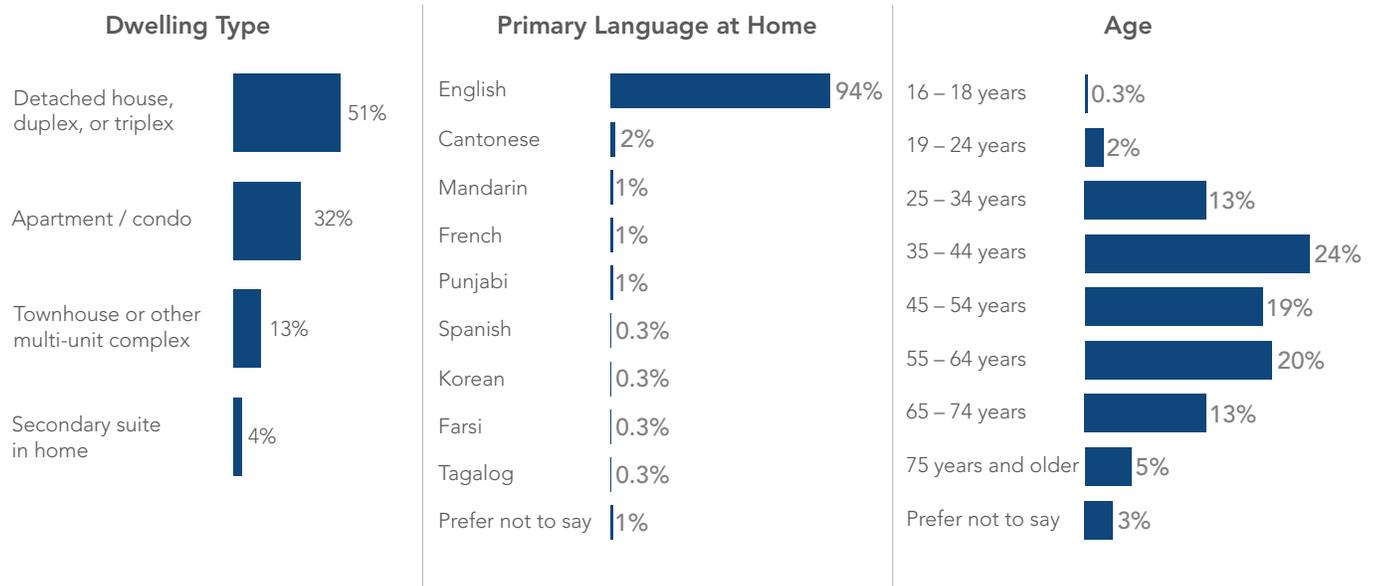
Several respondents went further to emphasize the role of organizational leadership and policy, suggesting that successful food-waste recycling in multi-unit settings depends on visible support from building managers, strata councils, or employers, and not just individual resident behaviour. These insights reinforce the importance of pairing education with operational support and accountability in multi-unit environments.

## Who Responded

Respondents to the public questionnaire available on Metro Vancouver website came from across the Metro Vancouver region, with the largest group from Vancouver.



Half of respondents lived in a detached house (51%), three in 10 in an apartment/condo (32%) and 13% in a townhouse or multi-unit complex. The majority were Anglophones (94%). Most age categories were represented, with 39% being 44 years of age or younger, 39% between 45 and 64, and 18% 65 years of age or older.



Collaborative Engagement respondents also came from across the region, with four in 10 (43%) from Vancouver and the rest from other areas. They were mostly divided between those living in detached houses, duplexes or triplexes (41%) or in apartments or condos (40%), with many (8%) living in social or supportive housing, or SROs.

Most (84%) were English speakers, with the next-largest group citing Mandarin as their primary language (5%).

Note that some Collaborative Engagement organizations requested translated versions of the questionnaires, which they used to receive feedback from participants in multiple languages including Chinese, Russian, and Spanish.

When looking at age, younger respondents were significantly more represented among Collaborative Engagement respondents, with 16% between 16 and 18 and another 5% between 19 and 24. Three in 10 (29%) were between 25 and 44; almost half (45%) were older.

# 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 groups, excluding the questionnaire findings as reported above. The table below also includes Metro Vancouver’s intended response to each area of priority, describing how the feedback has been considered to define the strategies and actions included in the updated solid waste management plan.

PRIORITY / INTEREST	WHAT WE LEARNED	HOW WE’RE RESPONDING
<p><b>Circular Economy and Waste Prevention</b></p>	<p>This theme focuses on the need for the plan to shift from disposal-focused systems toward preventing waste in the first place. Feedback emphasized that real circularity starts with how products, packaging, and systems are designed, making reuse, repair, and conservation the default rather than relying on solutions like incineration or waste-to-energy. The focus is on keeping materials in use longer and avoiding waste before it is created.</p> <p>Feedback highlighted the need to apply this approach consistently across planning and policy, prioritizing waste reduction over disposal. This includes reducing packaging, strengthening producer responsibility, and expanding reuse and sharing initiatives such as repair cafés, refill programs, item libraries, and buy-nothing groups.</p> <p>This theme also highlighted embedding circular practices in buildings and public purchasing by supporting durable, repairable products, right-to-repair efforts, and construction practices that enable reuse of materials. While there were differing views on how to manage remaining waste, prevention and circularity must be central to future waste and resource policies.</p>	<p>The waste hierarchy for the updated solid waste management plan emphasizes the importance of rethinking waste, with a goal of transitioning to a more circular system. Strategies and actions under this level of hierarchy, as well as some under reuse and recycle, reflect the themes heard during engagement. For example, Draft Strategy 1.2 is “Help lead the transition to a more circular regional economy through waste prevention” and Draft Strategy 3.5 is “Increase access to and foster the broad adoption of reuse, refill, and repair”.</p>

PRIORITY / INTEREST	WHAT WE LEARNED	HOW WE'RE RESPONDING
<p><b>Cost, Funding, and Economic Feasibility</b></p>	<p>This theme highlights questions about how the proposed actions and strategies will be paid for and whether they offer good value for money. Feedback emphasized the need for clear information on total costs, available funding, and how expenses would be shared among governments, businesses, and households. Keeping programs affordable over time was seen as critical to public support and successful implementation.</p> <p>Feedback also highlighted the importance of market viability, demand for recycled materials, local end markets, and job creation, particularly models that support both high-skill innovation and low-barrier employment. Businesses were clear that participation depends on bottom-line impacts: actions must save money, reduce risk, or provide tangible incentives. Particularly for small and medium-sized businesses, incentives, grants, deposits, rebates, and procurement levers were generally preferred over additional regulation. At the same time, some cautioned against over-regulation, administrative burden, unfunded mandates for municipalities, and programs that shift costs onto those least able to pay. The overall message received is that there is an expectation that waste and circular economy strategies be financially realistic, fair, and supported by transparent funding mechanisms.</p> <p>Within this context, some participants raised questions about governance and delivery models, including whether continued public ownership of waste and recycling infrastructure represents the most cost-effective and risk-balanced approach. While some agreed with staff that privatization is unadvisable, others argued that a regulated private model could achieve comparable performance while shifting financial and operational risks away from taxpayers. Concerns were raised about the absence of a transparent cost-benefit analysis comparing public and private approaches, particularly given the scale of planned capital investments and long-term financial commitments.</p>	<p>The draft solid waste management plan includes a financial overview outlining the process by which plan initiatives will be considered by the GVS&amp;DD Board. Expenditures beyond the existing solid waste budget will be business cased prior to implementation, considering impacts to Metro Vancouver as well as other organizations who are involved or impacted. Initiatives and their accompanying expenditures will be prioritized according to their ability to meet the plan targets. The suite of secondary metrics that will be reported on during implementation of the plan includes the number of circular jobs, and strategies such as 4.2 “Encourage the development of new recycling infrastructure”, speak to demand and end markets.</p> <p>The current solid waste system includes a series of recycling and waste centres owned by Metro Vancouver. The private sector plays an important role in operating those facilities under contract, as well as operating numerous private facilities across the region. Metro Vancouver remains dedicated to delivering a cost-effective system available to all residents and businesses, with consistent rules across facilities such as disposal bans to encourage recycling. Metro Vancouver is open to receiving any information demonstrating other systems or models that have performed well and achieved high recycling rates.</p>

PRIORITY / INTEREST	WHAT WE LEARNED	HOW WE'RE RESPONDING
<p><b>Data, Metrics, Reporting, and Transparency</b></p>	<p>This theme focusses on the need for clear and reliable data to track progress on waste reduction and circular economy efforts. Feedback emphasized that consistent data collection, simple performance measures, and easy-to-access public reporting are essential to understand what is working and where changes are needed. Transparent information helps hold governments, businesses, and service providers accountable and builds public trust.</p> <p>Participants want better tracking of where materials end up, how programs perform, and whether projects should be improved, expanded, or ended. This includes clear records of decisions and outcomes, not just high-level summaries. Concerns were raised about unclear methodologies, inconsistent metrics across municipalities and sectors, and limited visibility into how diversion, recycling, and disposal figures are calculated.</p> <p>This theme also underscored the need for financial transparency and strong monitoring. Reporting on budgets, fees, funding decisions, and compliance helps people understand how the system works and how money is spent. There was general support for standardized regional metrics, clearer decision criteria, and pairing actions with monitoring frameworks. At the same time, some cautioned against excessive administrative burden and “reporting for reporting’s sake,” stressing that data must be actionable, comparable, and clearly tied to outcomes, accountability, and continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Metro Vancouver’s methodology for calculating and sharing solid waste statistics is provided as part of its annual reporting process. The draft plan includes an updated suite of metrics which will help create a more fulsome understanding of waste management in the region, such as the number of circular initiatives implemented by Metro Vancouver and its members, recycling rates by sector, and contamination in organics recycling. These metrics, and others, will be reported as part of the plan monitoring process.</p>



PRIORITY / INTEREST	WHAT WE LEARNED	HOW WE'RE RESPONDING
<p><b>Education, Engagement, and Behaviour Change</b></p>	<p>This theme highlights the need to focus on actively fostering new habits, actions, and long-term behaviour change. Feedback emphasized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• waste reduction and circular economy success depends on people feeling confident, supported, and motivated to act — not just informed</li> <li>• the need for clear, consistent education paired with practical tools and ongoing engagement</li> </ul> <p>Participants stressed the importance of simple, clear guidance, especially about “what goes where” to reduce confusion and frustration. It was also noted that while information exists, it is often fragmented, overly complex, poorly promoted, or disconnected from everyday decision-making, leading to confusion, apathy, or defaulting to disposal. Education should be tailored to the unique needs of different groups, including youth, newcomers, renters, businesses, and specific sectors, and delivered in ways that are accessible and inclusive. Education was seen as most effective when delivered through familiar and trusted channels such as schools, community centres, libraries, workplaces, and social media and when paired with real-world examples, demonstrations, and local success stories. Youth-centred and school-based education was strongly supported as a long-term strategy to normalize waste prevention and influence household behaviours.</p> <p>Feedback also emphasized that education should not replace but support policy, infrastructure, and incentives. By combining targeted outreach with practical tools and broader systemic support, communities and organizations can build lasting behaviour change that supports waste reduction and circular economy goals.</p>	<p>Many initiatives in the updated draft plan correspond to these themes, including strategies for providing tailored education and simplifying information on recycling. The plan also includes a section on education and outreach which highlights the importance of behaviour change campaigns.</p>

PRIORITY / INTEREST	WHAT WE LEARNED	HOW WE'RE RESPONDING
<p><b>Equitable and Accessible Approaches to Waste Management</b></p>	<p>This theme emphasizes the need for waste reduction and circular economy strategies that are inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of communities. Effective systems must remove barriers to participation by accounting for cultural practices, language needs, disability and age-related accessibility needs, as well as differing levels of access to information and services. Ensuring that programs work across all housing types, income levels, and community contexts is essential to avoid placing disproportionate burdens on specific groups.</p> <p>During public engagement, there were some comments that the plan should explicitly emphasize Indigenous inclusion and reconciliation. Suggestions included highlighting Indigenous knowledge systems such as land-based teachings, food sovereignty, and permaculture as foundations to waste reduction and circular practices. There were also mentions of practical barriers in First Nations communities, such as reliance on private haulers and limited infrastructure, creating gaps between regional plans and implementation, and comments pointed to the need for dedicated resources, culturally grounded education, and Indigenous-led pilots to ensure meaningful, community-driven outcomes.</p> <p>Comments underscored the importance of offering multilingual and plain-language resources, culturally responsive communication, and community-based delivery models that meet people where they are.</p> <p>Concerns were centered on practical accessibility challenges that are embedded in current systems. It was noted that many waste programs assume access to a car, flexible schedules, or certain forms of housing — conditions that often disadvantage low-income residents, newcomers, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, and people living in multi-family buildings. Suggestions included providing more local drop-off points, transportation support, help carrying items, accessible facilities, honoraria or childcare for participation, consistent and predictable program timing, and clearer guidance for landlords and tenants to enable simplified and fair participation in multi-family settings. There were also calls for Metro Vancouver to act as a regional leader in developing translations and accessible templates/tools so municipalities can apply them consistently.</p>	<p>Inclusive solid waste programs and services is a guiding principle of the draft plan, to be considered in implementation of all the plan's actions and strategies. The draft plan also includes an accessibility section which builds on feedback provided during engagement to provide examples of how Metro Vancouver can continue to strive for accessibility in solid waste management, such as providing clear visual indicators at Metro Vancouver recycling and waste facilities. Draft action 1.4.7 is "Explore ways to measure diversity, equity, and inclusion in solid waste starting with current practices and gaps".</p>



PRIORITY / INTEREST	WHAT WE LEARNED	HOW WE'RE RESPONDING
<p><b>Human and Environmental Health</b></p>	<p>This theme focuses on reducing risks to people and ecosystems throughout every stage of the waste management lifecycle. Feedback emphasized concerns about toxicity, contamination, emissions, and overall hygiene, highlighting the need to manage waste in ways that protect both immediate public health and long-term environmental well-being. Some stressed that meeting existing regulatory standards does not necessarily mean avoiding harm, and called for updated health-based thresholds, continuous emissions monitoring, and transparent public reporting, particularly for facilities that burn or process mixed waste.</p> <p>Monitoring air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and other pollutants was identified as essential when making waste management decisions.</p> <p>This theme also points to the need for waste systems that are resilient and prepared for emergencies such as flooding, extreme weather and infrastructure failure and emphasizes the need to plan for climate impacts, natural disasters, aging infrastructure, and debris management during crises. Food waste prevention, compost quality, and food security were also linked to long-term health and environmental protection. This includes ensuring the safety of food and organics systems, maintaining clean handling practices, and preventing pests, allergens, and other hazards that can arise from poorly managed waste streams.</p>	<p>The Vancouver Landfill and the Waste-to-Energy Facility serve the region as cost effective and environmentally responsible disposal options. All air emission related parameters monitored in 2024 were well below regulatory limits specified in the Waste-to-Energy Facility Operational Certificate, issued by the Province. The facility's contributions of nitrogen dioxide, fine particulates, and anthropogenic (human caused) greenhouse gases are less than 1% of regional emissions. Emission data is reported to regulatory agencies and posted on the Metro Vancouver website. Continuous emissions monitoring results are also posted on the website in real-time. Disaster debris management is not part of the solid waste management plan, since it is the scope of the Joint Municipal-Regional Disaster Debris Management Operational Plan.</p>

PRIORITY / INTEREST	WHAT WE LEARNED	HOW WE'RE RESPONDING
<p><b>Managing Complex Materials</b></p>	<p>Feedback reflected concern about managing materials that fall outside standard recycling systems. Confusion, inconvenience, and lack of access were flagged as key barriers for materials such as textiles, bulky items like furniture and mattresses, soft plastics, electronics, healthcare waste, and construction and demolition materials. Lack of clarity in the reuse, recycle and disposal processes contributes to the challenge for households and businesses to handle these materials responsibly.</p> <p>A key issue is confusion about “what goes where.” Guidance varies across municipalities and many materials lack end-of-life solutions and collection options. For textiles and bulky items, participants emphasized that reuse alone is insufficient at end-of-life and called for expanded textile recycling options, clearer separation of clothing and footwear streams, and more accessible collection models such as depot-based systems, seasonal or scheduled pickups, and pilots in multi-family buildings. Similar concerns were raised for soft plastics and packaging, with strong support for curbside or local collection and upstream action to reduce soft plastics and over-packaging. For furniture and mattresses, residents stressed the need for regionally consistent pickup programs. For healthcare items, concerns about hygiene, safety, and stigma create additional barriers.</p> <p>To improve outcomes, participants called for clearer, province-wide rules, better take-back and producer responsibility programs, stronger requirements for reuse and deconstruction, especially in construction, and more accessible collection options.</p>	<p>Strengthening extended producer responsibility programs, managing complex materials, and simplifying recycling education are all referenced in the strategies and actions of the draft plan. For example, Draft Strategy 3.2 is “Enhance extended producer responsibility programs”, Draft Strategy 4.5 is “Make recycling more effective by simplifying sorting”, and Draft Strategy 6.4 is “Monitor disposal options for waste that requires specialized disposal.”</p>



PRIORITY / INTEREST	WHAT WE LEARNED	HOW WE'RE RESPONDING
<p><b>Operations and Infrastructure</b></p>	<p>This theme focuses on the infrastructure and physical systems, land-use decisions and operational capacity required to successfully implement waste reduction and circular economy strategies. Feedback emphasized that actions must be operationally feasible and supported by infrastructure first, with many noting that education, incentives, or bans will not succeed without convenient, accessible services already in place.</p> <p>Feedback also highlighted the importance of understanding where waste and recycling facilities can be located, and ensuring that services, such as depots, curbside collection, and specialized pickups, are accessible and adequately distributed. Participants noted that physical constraints, such as available space, building design, and the capacity for additional bins or equipment, can significantly affect program success. Staffing needs, training, and workforce planning were also identified as critical operational elements that must be considered early in the planning process.</p> <p>Feedback highlighted concerns about whether the region has sufficient local processing capacity to handle current and future material streams, especially as circular economy initiatives expand. Feedback also pointed to the need for technology and automation (e.g., optical sorting, sensors, digital tools) to improve efficiency and reduce contamination and costs, as well as the importance of understanding the logistical realities of moving, storing, and processing materials across the region.</p> <p>Reconsider the ongoing role of waste-to-energy, with calls to phase out the Waste-to-Energy Facility from parties including the Fraser Valley Regional District, citing air quality and cost concerns. In addition, some participants asserted that continued reliance on incineration conflicts with prevention-first and circular economy goals by supporting disposal-driven outcomes. Feedback emphasized that waste-to-energy should be treated as disposal rather than recovery, and that phasing out the facility would help redirect resources toward solutions such as waste reduction, reuse, repair, and improved product and packaging design.</p>	<p>The draft plan contains a recycling and waste centre strategy which outlines priorities for the development and upgrading of regional solid waste infrastructure. Metro Vancouver is committed to encouraging private sector solutions to increase waste reduction and recycling in the region. Expansion of recycling and reuse drop-off services are expected to be primarily for the purpose of expanding services for customers delivering loads in small vehicles. Metro Vancouver may consider further expansion of services in some circumstances, listed in the updated plan.</p> <p>Disposal at the Waste-to-Energy Facility is classified as “disposal” rather than recovery. It is the last resort after all efforts to reduce waste and recycle. Strategy 6.1 in the initial draft solid waste management plan is “Continue to use Vancouver Landfill and the Waste-to-energy Facility as primary disposal systems. The cost of disposing garbage at these facilities is roughly half the cost of remote disposal options, and continuing to use these facilities benefits the region economically and allows Metro Vancouver to continue to maximize associated environmental benefits such as energy recovery and utilization.</p>

PRIORITY / INTEREST	WHAT WE LEARNED	HOW WE'RE RESPONDING
<p><b>Plan Scope, Clarity, and Definitions</b></p>	<p>This theme highlights the need for a waste management strategy that is well-structured, transparent, and actionable. Feedback emphasized that clearly defining the scope of the plan and the purpose of each action is essential to avoid uncertainty and to ensure stakeholders understand the plan goals. Establishing precise definitions for key terms, such as diversion, recycling, recovery, and convenience, was seen as critical for creating a shared understanding.</p> <p>For example, participants cautioned against conflating recycling with recovery, noting that energy recovery results in the permanent loss of materials and should not be counted as recycling. They emphasized that clearly distinguishing material recycling from recovery and disposal is essential to avoid misrepresenting outcomes and to keep the plan aligned with waste hierarchy and circular economy principles</p> <p>This feedback emphasizes the need for a clear, well-organized plan that follows waste hierarchy and circular economy principles. Each action should clearly explain what it aims to achieve, who is responsible, timing, and how progress will be measured. Some participants also requested clearer prioritization, reduced duplication across actions, and realistic sequencing/phasing over the 10-year horizon so the plan is implementable. By embedding these systems, the plan can track progress, report outcomes with accountability, and build public confidence. Developing a clearly written plan will help to ensure consistent and effective implementation across the region.</p>	<p>Following options analysis engagement, Metro Vancouver updated and consolidated the draft list of strategies and actions options to reduce duplication and improve clarity. The draft plan takes a dynamic approach to the scheduling of strategies and actions which uses the plan monitoring process to prioritize initiatives throughout the life of the plan.</p> <p>In response to feedback on recovery v.s. recycling, in the initial draft solid waste management plan, recycling as material has been separated from recovery. Recycling speaks to only recycling as material, while a separate target for 'diversion' includes both recycling for material and recovery. Definitions for both are provided in the glossary of the plan, based on provincial definitions from the Province's <i>Guide to Solid Waste Management Planning</i>.</p>



PRIORITY / INTEREST	WHAT WE LEARNED	HOW WE'RE RESPONDING
<p><b>Policy, Regulation, and Enforcement</b></p>	<p>This theme highlights the need for clear roles, strong coordination, and consistent rules to support waste reduction and circular economy goals. Feedback emphasized that responsibilities across Metro Vancouver, municipalities, the province, and the private sector must be clearly defined to avoid confusion or overlap. A coordinated regional approach would help ensure policies and enforcement are aligned and working toward the same outcomes.</p> <p>It is necessary to implement clear and effective policy tools, including zoning and land-use rules that support waste and recycling facilities, as well as strong enforcement and compliance systems.</p> <p>Measures such as disposal bans, material restrictions, and expanded producer responsibility programs were seen as important ways to drive change and ensure accountability across businesses and service providers. However, some pointed out that enforcement of existing rules should be strengthened before introducing new regulations, and that new bans should only be introduced once adequate reuse/recycling infrastructure is in place (to avoid waste leaving the region). Business/institutional compliance was repeatedly flagged as a priority area for stronger source-separation requirements and regulatory "teeth."</p> <p>Feedback also highlighted the need for stronger collaboration among governments, businesses, non-profits, community groups, and Indigenous communities. Indigenous leadership and co-creation were highlighted as priorities, alongside more formal structures for shared decision-making. Clear decision-making, consistent enforcement, and strong partnerships are essential to building a fair, and effective, waste and circular economy system.</p>	<p>The draft plan outlines the role of various government entities and the private sector in solid waste management. The strategies and actions in the draft plan consider improvements to existing policies and guidelines to work towards greater consistency. The draft plan also outlines a regulatory strategic approach under which any new regulations would be considered under a separate, dedicated engagement process.</p>

PRIORITY / INTEREST	WHAT WE LEARNED	HOW WE'RE RESPONDING
<p><b>Roles, Responsibilities, and Collaboration</b></p>	<p>This theme highlights the importance of clearly defining how Metro Vancouver, municipalities, and other regional and local sectors work together to advance waste reduction and circular economy goals. Feedback emphasized that clarity around jurisdictional authority, leadership roles, and areas of responsibility is essential to avoid duplication, fill gaps, and ensure efficient, coordinated implementation. A strong, shared understanding of “who does what” provides a foundation for consistent policy development and delivery across the region. Strong emphasis was placed on accountability, including alignment with international frameworks (e.g., SDGs), clear KPIs, and visible follow-through.</p> <p>Another key theme was the importance of building intentional and diverse partnerships. There was a call for strong collaboration between governments, businesses, nonprofits, community groups, and institutions to deliver integrated solutions that reflect community needs and industry realities. Public feedback also noted the importance of partnering with First Nations, and meaningful participation from Indigenous organizations and communities.</p> <p>Strengthening governance structures, decisionmaking processes, and mechanisms for shared oversight was seen as essential for building trust, ensuring accountability, and fostering long-term commitment across all sectors.</p>	<p>The draft plan outlines the role of various government entities and the private sector in solid waste management. The strategies and actions in the draft plan consider improvements to existing policies and guidelines to work towards greater consistency. A framework for reporting on plan progress is provided with key performance indicators – primary and secondary metrics – outlined.</p> <p>The draft plan also specifies a series of member jurisdiction actions, which are intended as areas of focus for members to consider, recognizing the important role of member jurisdictions and their unique goals and priorities.</p>



PRIORITY / INTEREST	WHAT WE LEARNED	HOW WE'RE RESPONDING
<p><b>Standardization, Convenience, and Simplification</b></p>	<p>This theme reflects a strong call for waste systems that are simple, consistent, and easy to use. Feedback emphasized that the waste system is too fragmented, confusing, and difficult to navigate. Inconsistent rules across municipalities, buildings, public spaces, and workplaces create frustration, reduce trust, and discourage participation especially for people who live, work, or travel across multiple jurisdictions. Many stressed that residents care less about who manages the system and more about having clear, consistent expectations everywhere.</p> <p>Convenience was seen as essential but nuanced. Participants cautioned that poorly designed “convenient” systems can increase contamination; instead, convenience should come from better infrastructure, standardized accepted materials, clear signage, and reduced decision-making for users. Strong support emerged for harmonized regional approaches to curbside collection, large and bulky item pickup, depot access, and recycling while allowing flexibility in service delivery models. Participants called for clear visual cues such as bin colours, labels, icons and plain-language signage showing both what can and cannot go in each bin. Centralizing information through a single website, app, or map was also seen as an effective way to help residents and businesses easily find clear and accurate guidance.</p> <p>Simplifying forms and processes was also highlighted as a way to remove barriers and help people participate correctly. Simple, consistent, and convenient systems were seen as essential to improving participation and outcomes across the region.</p>	<p>“Make it easier to recycle effectively” is a goal of the draft plan. Several strategies and actions under this goal area reflect making the system not only more convenient, but more effective by reducing contamination through clear education. Example strategies include Draft Strategy 4.4: “Make recycling easier by improving convenience” and Draft Strategy 4.5: “Make recycling more effective by simplifying sorting.”</p>

## 8. How Feedback Will Be Used

Feedback from this engagement phase has helped to define which strategies and actions will be included in the updated solid waste management plan. The updated solid waste management plan will be developed for consideration by the 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 in early spring 2026.

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



