



Scaling Reuse Study

Metro Vancouver Recycling and Waste Centres

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Executive Summary

Metro Vancouver contracted **Share Reuse Repair Initiative (SRRI)**, a project of Makeway Charitable Society, to conduct a study on scaling the existing Reuse Days events at the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre to more Metro Vancouver recycling and waste centres. Based on observation of a 2023 Reuse Day event, feedback from staff involved with the reuse events, and interviews with 14 reuse organizations, the researchers developed four potential reuse models aimed towards increasing public awareness of reuse and scaling up reuse to all Metro Vancouver recycling and waste centres for all operating hours. These draft models were presented at a workshop which brought together municipal staff and reuse organizations to provide further refinement of potential scale up approaches. From this robust process, the researchers shared five short-term and four long-term opportunities for Metro Vancouver’s consideration (table 1). Overall, participants in the process encouraged Metro Vancouver to continue with reuse events and to continue scaling reuse at recycling and waste centres.

Table 1: Summary of short-term and longer-term opportunities

<p>Short-Term Opportunities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustain and expand reuse events at recycling and waste centres. 2. Add donation drop-off locations for small household items at recycling and waste centre sites for reuse. 3. Have onsite attendants that are trained in assessment of items for reuse. 4. Continue developing education materials and programs to encourage reuse. 5. Continue publicly prioritizing reuse.
<p>Long-Term Opportunities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand collection of reusable items to sites beyond recycling and waste centres. 2. Design future recycling and waste centres to include reuse. 3. Expand reuse metrics. 4. Support reuse of items before they reach recycling and waste centre sites.

Introduction

OBJECTIVES

Metro Vancouver is interested in expanding reuse at their recycling and waste centres across the region. Metro Vancouver trialed Reuse Days with a local non-profit reuse organization, Urban Repurpose, at the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre. In 2023, reusable materials were accepted in the recycling depot on the last two Saturdays of every month from May to October.

Metro Vancouver's goal is to provide reuse options at all recycling and waste centres during all operating hours. As a step towards this goal, there are plans to build upon and adapt the Reuse Days model with new partner organizations at a greater number of recycling and waste centres across the region. In doing so, Metro Vancouver aims to educate residents around opportunities for reuse, increase reuse rates, and improve reuse metrics.

SCOPE OF WORK

The objectives of the project were met through the completion of three work phases:

- » Phase 1: Research and understand the 2023 Reuse Days pilot;
- » Phase 2: Identify potential new reuse partner organizations and understand their capacity and interests; and
- » Phase 3: Develop options and opportunities for scaling reuse.

The work undertaken in each phase is described in the methodology section that follows. This report presents insights from the three phases. First, an overview of the 2023 Reuse Days pilot model is presented and its strengths as a reuse option for residents of Metro Vancouver are discussed. Based on interviews and a workshop with key stakeholders and potential partner reuse organizations, four models are outlined for consideration in scaling reuse in Metro Vancouver. Finally, options and opportunities are presented for scaling reuse in the region both in the short and longer term.

Methodology

PHASE 1: UNDERSTAND 2023 REUSE DAYS PILOT

In Phase 1 of this project, existing materials on the 2023 Reuse Days pilot model were reviewed. Interview questions were developed and reviewed by the Metro Vancouver team. In-depth interviews were conducted with six Metro Vancouver staff, two reuse organizations involved in prior Reuse Days events, and four site operator staff from three Metro Vancouver recycling and waste centres, including the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre, to understand and evaluate the Reuse Days model. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Members of the SRRI project team also conducted a site visit to a Reuse Days event at the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre to gain a better understanding of logistics and how the event functions.

Criteria for successful approaches to scale reuse

Based on insights from Phase 1 interviews, the following three components were proposed to identify a successful approach to scale reuse:

1. Provide a full hierarchy of options at each recycling and waste centre (i.e., reuse as a complement to recycling and disposal).
2. Aim to make reuse options available at all recycling and waste centres during all operating hours.
3. Provide opportunities for public education to build awareness about the multiple benefits of reuse and the role of Metro Vancouver and partner organizations in doing so.

PHASE 2: IDENTIFY AND UNDERSTAND POTENTIAL NEW REUSE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

In Phase 2 of this project, interviews were conducted with 14 reuse organizations to explore potential interest, opportunities, and key considerations for scaling reuse in the region. Organizations interviewed include national charitable and for-profit thrift organizations, junk removal companies, and local non-profits focused on some aspect of reuse. Organizations dealt with a broad range of items and materials, including textiles, household goods, books, electronics, and furniture. Some dealt primarily with one category of items; for example, two organizations specialised in the collection and refurbishment of digital technologies. Organizations with a diversity of sizes and operations were selected for interviews to understand different needs, priorities, and possibilities among potential partners. Factors such as previous interest, existing contacts, and local relevance were also considered when selecting organizations.

Table 2: Phase 2 Interviews Conducted

Interview	Organization	Interview	Organisation
1	The Salvation Army	8	1-800-GOT-JUNK? (Fraser Valley franchise)
2	Value Village	9	Habitat for Humanity Greater Vancouver
3	ReBOOT Canada	10	Keep It Green Recycling
4	1-800-GOT-JUNK?	11	HSR Zero Waste
5	BC Technology for Learning Society	12	Tech for All Society¹
6	Renew Crew, Big Brothers of Greater Vancouver	13	Diabetes Canada
7	Green Coast Rubbish	14	Revivify

¹ Formerly Dougie's Device Donation Society

PHASE 3: DEVELOP OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCALING REUSE

Insights from Phases 1 and 2 informed the development of four potential models for scaling reuse. These models were presented at the “Building a Model for Scaling Reuse in Metro Vancouver” workshop (henceforth “Scaling Reuse Workshop”), which was held in October 2023. The workshop had over 40 attendees, representing Metro Vancouver staff, member jurisdiction staff, and a range of local and national reuse, recycling, and junk removal organizations. The workshop used a “challenge and build” approach in which participants reviewed proposed draft models and then discussed how to improve on them. This approach provided a way for different stakeholders to discuss and further develop the proposed models.

In groups of five or six, workshop participants were asked to develop and pitch their preferred model to the other attendees. A handout providing a description of each model alongside potential pros and cons was provided to attendees (Appendix 1). The four reuse models presented for discussion are further discussed in the *What We Heard* section of this report.

What We Heard

REUSE MODEL PILOT: REUSE DAYS

What are Reuse Days?

The 2023 Reuse Days events were piloted at Metro Vancouver’s North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre by [Urban Repurpose](#). Urban Repurpose is a north shore-based non-profit organization that collects, upcycles and resells household items, including furniture, furnishings, building materials, and homewares. Urban Repurpose’s commitment to promoting reuse, as well as their wide selection of valuable and unique items, has made them a circular economy champion in the region. During Reuse Days, Urban Repurpose representatives position themselves at the entrance to the recycling area at the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre, and at the queue before the weigh scales. They ask visitors to the site if they have anything that could be donated for reuse. Materials are assessed by Urban Repurpose staff before they are accepted. Items collected are loaded into the Urban Repurpose truck, which is parked on site, and taken to their nearby storefront for sale or given away for free. Certain materials such as textiles, books, and bicycles have existing reuse collection at the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre and were not a point of focus for Urban Repurpose.

Reuse Days at the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre

Share Reuse Repair Initiative gathered the following key insights about Reuse Days from the Phase 1 interviews, as well as observing a Reuse Day event at the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre.

The Reuse Days at the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre:

- » **Receive positive feedback from the public.** Both recycling and waste centre staff and Urban Repurpose reported receiving consistently positive feedback from the public about Reuse Days. Site employees heard from the public that they would like to see more reuse programs at recycling and waste centres. Customers appreciate the “one-stop-shop” convenience of

being able to donate items for reuse at recycling and waste centres, rather than travelling to multiple locations.

- » **Support education and awareness about reuse.** Reuse Days fit into Urban Repurpose's mandate to promote and educate about reuse. Interaction with members of the public at Reuse Days is a positive opportunity to demonstrate that many items have the potential to be reused.
- » **Provide a new engagement opportunity for recycling and waste centres.** Some site managers mentioned that the Reuse Days bring more customers to the site, providing opportunities for site employees to improve engagement and education about the role of recycling and waste centres.
- » **Have minimal interference with site operations.** Site employees feel that the existing Reuse Days events run smoothly, with little impact to traffic flow.

The Reuse Days at the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre are currently not formally advertised to the public, and there were varying views on whether to advertise Reuse Days. Concerns were expressed that advertising the pilot events could result in volumes beyond the capacity of the reuse organization. However, some site managers are welcoming of more visitors and say it is key to positive engagement and education about the role of the recycling and waste centres. To advertise events would require ensuring sufficient capacity of the recycling and waste centres and external reuse organization(s) engaged as partners.

Overall, those currently involved in Reuse Days at the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre reported that the events run smoothly, with strong public support and little impact to site operations. Participants in the Scaling Reuse Workshop expressed unanimous support for Reuse Days to continue and expand to other recycling and waste centre sites operated by Metro Vancouver as part of any plan to scale reuse in the region. Considerations for scaling Reuse Days events across the region are provided in the *Options and Opportunities* section below.

PROPOSED REUSE MODELS

Based on the insights generated in Phase 1 and 2, four reuse models were developed and presented as options for consideration at the Scaling Reuse Workshop in October 2023. During the workshop, these models were used as the foundation of discussions by breakout groups composed of staff from member jurisdictions and reuse organizations from the non-profit, charitable, and for-profit sectors. Metro Vancouver staff that were involved in the Reuse Days pilot guided the group discussions and answered questions.

Model #1: Expand reuse collection events at recycling and waste centres.

The current Reuse Days model is expanded to a larger schedule and at more sites with more reuse organizations. Reuse organizations assess items for their reuse value and collect according to their needs. The events continue to run at defined times (e.g., Saturday mornings).

Benefits	Potential Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Public profile for reuse organizations.» Educational opportunity for the public.» Minimal additional responsibilities for recycling and waste centre staff.» Although required space on site is still a challenge, this model requires shorter use of space than on-site containers.» Allows screening of materials for reuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Reuse only available during select hours.» Volume of items triaged for reuse is small compared to potential.» Model may not benefit reuse organizations financially once labour costs are accounted for.

Model #2: On-site collection of homewares (dishware, cutlery, knick-knacks).

On-site containers or designated spaces are available for residents to drop off some homewares, which are then regularly collected by contracted reuse organizations. Drop-off areas would be available during recycling and waste centre operating hours, and items would be deposited according to container signage (e.g., dishware, cutlery, knick-knacks).

Benefits	Potential Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Reuse option available for all hours that facilities are open.» Self-service - no need for organization staff to be on site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Risk of dumping if there is no onsite materials assessment.» Use of bins would limit donations to small household items.» Requires permanent space on site.

- » Reduced educational opportunities for the public.

Model #3: Reuse organizations assess items on-site during recycling and waste centre hours.

Reuse organizations are contracted to collect items for reuse directly from recycling and waste centre sites. This follows a similar model to Reuse Days, but with a contracted reuse organization stationed on site through all recycling and waste centre hours, rather than only for reuse collection events.

Benefits	Potential Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Potential to divert a larger volume of materials for reuse. » Reuse option available for all hours that recycling and waste centres are open. » Potential to divert bigger items. » Educational opportunity for the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Requires reuse organization to have more capacity and warehouse space than other methods. » May disrupt or require redesign of traffic flow at recycling and waste centres. » More adaptable than on-site containers, but still requires longer use of space on site than scheduled events.

Model #4: Recycling and waste centre site staff assess and collect select items for reuse.

Recycling and waste centre staff are trained by reuse organizations to assess specific categories of items for reuse, which are stored on-site for collection by reuse organizations.

Benefits	Potential Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reuse options available all operating hours. » Volume of items for reuse greater than Reuse Days and potentially donation bins. » Can take all sizes of items vs. just small housewares. » Educational opportunity for the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Additional responsibilities and training required for recycling and waste centre staff. Potentially requires additional staff. » Quality of materials selected may not align with the needs of reuse organizations. » Requires permanent space onsite.

SCALING REUSE WORKSHOP

Guest Speaker: Urban Ore

The Scaling Reuse Workshop was kicked off by a presentation from Urban Ore, a reuse organization located in Berkley, California, which diverts materials from the Berkeley Transfer Station for reuse. Participants gained insights into reuse at facilities and the evolution of the program since its inception in the 1990s. The presentation highlighted several factors that the store manager found to be key to the success of their reuse program:

- » **Private and public sector support** for the diversion of materials to the reuse store.
- » **A reliable, well operated, and well-known location** next to a high traffic disposal site which allows contractors to easily drop off items for reuse and save money on their tipping fees.
- » **On-site staff with training and expertise** to recognize and intercept the items that can be resold.
- » **A large site** which allows them to manage a variety of material and decreases the pressure of requiring items to sell within a short time frame of receiving them at the store.
- » **Heated tents for treating materials** such as upholstered furniture and mattresses for bed bugs.

Workshop Feedback on Proposed Reuse Models

Using a “challenge and build” approach, each breakout group at the Scaling Reuse Workshop was asked to consider how the four models fared against the following criteria for success developed in advance by Metro Vancouver staff and SRRI.

1. **Scales up reuse in the region.**
 - a. Compatible with recycling and waste centre sites.
 - b. Increases collection of items for reuse compared to the existing model.
2. **Feasible for all parties.**
 - a. Accounts for required labour and resources, space, and logistics.
 - b. Viable for reuse organization(s) and provides benefit.
3. **Adheres to current regulations, bylaws, etc.**
4. **Supports public education on reuse** and encourages residents to reuse.

The following key insights had strong agreement across the breakout group discussions:

- » **The preferred reuse model is a combination of the options presented.** Workshop participants combined elements from different models and saw benefit in pursuing multiple reuse strategies concurrently. The benefits of this approach were seen to be added flexibility to adapt reuse strategies across different sites and provide more reuse opportunities for the public.

- » **Reuse events are desirable and should continue.** There was universal support to continue and expand reuse events like those at the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre. There was also support for events hosted by member jurisdictions and reuse organizations, which may increase accessibility for those unable to commute to Metro Vancouver’s recycling and waste centres.
- » **It will be necessary to scale reuse over time.** Participants emphasised the need for a phased approach. Scaling up over time was seen to be necessary to build the capacity of recycling and waste centres and reuse organizations concurrently with public expectations and awareness.
- » **The capacity of some reuse organizations is a constraint.** While several reuse organizations stood out as having excess capacity, many were smaller operations limited by the cost of space and labour. Participants discussed the potential role for local and regional governments to support the growth of the reuse sector alongside the scaling of reuse initiatives over time, for example by providing grants, partnership opportunities, or access to space.
- » **There are opportunities for positive synergies involving reuse organizations and recycling and waste centre operators.** For example, training staff in the basic assessment of items for reuse could complement the assessment done by reuse partner organizations, potentially allowing for the expansion of reuse options beyond defined event times and improving the efficiency of materials assessment on busy days. Similarly, coordinating communication between reuse organizations and recycling and waste centre staff could support more education for the public about reuse.
- » **Recycling and waste centres can be sites of education about reuse.** This could include raising awareness about Metro Vancouver reuse events and initiatives, as well as reuse opportunities by member jurisdictions and those offered by charities, social enterprises, and non-profit organizations that reduce the flow of items arriving at recycling and waste centres.

There were divided opinions about two matters discussed:

- » **The value of on-site collection bins.** While some groups strongly advocated for introducing more collection bins (as described in Model #2), others felt that this option did not allow for adequate materials assessment by trained staff, which may lead to the donation of low quality or unsuitable items.
- » **The emphasis on recycling and waste centres as reuse centres.** Whereas some groups hoped for a shift towards centering reuse activities at recycling and waste centres, other groups were in favour of diverting items before they reached recycling and waste centres by encouraging residents to use the range of reuse options already available off-site.

Options and Opportunities for Scaling Reuse

Based on interviews and a generative workshop involving Metro Vancouver member jurisdictions, recycling and waste centre staff, and reuse organizations, options and opportunities were identified for scaling reuse that could reinforce Metro Vancouver’s role as a circular economy leader. It was clear from the research and engagement conducted that a phased approach is necessary to scale

reuse in the region. Metro Vancouver can support such a “journey to scale” by growing programs, partnerships, and infrastructure for reuse across the region over time. The size and number of accepted items for reuse can also grow larger.

The following options and opportunities for consideration by Metro Vancouver range from those that are short-term to broader, more systemic, and longer-term changes.

SHORT-TERM OPPORTUNITIES

The following short-term ideas focus on what Metro Vancouver might consider doing over the next one to two years to support reuse. The following criteria were used to identify these short-term opportunities:

- » **Ease of implementation.** Builds upon the existing capacity and infrastructure of Metro Vancouver and reuse organizations.
- » **Centred on, or strongly connected with, recycling and waste centres.**
- » **Broad support across key stakeholders** based on interviews and views of participants who attended the Scaling Reuse Workshop.
- » **Builds capacity for medium and longer-term actions to scale reuse in the region.** Builds knowledge, relationships, public awareness and the foundation for Metro Vancouver to advance other actions to scale reuse that are more complex or require more time to develop.

1. Sustain and expand reuse events at recycling and waste centres.

As demonstrated by the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre Reuse Days, reuse events have proven to be popular with the public and run smoothly on site. Reuse organizations such as Urban Repurpose benefit from the increased public profile, as well as collecting items for potential resale. Items for reuse are collected efficiently in a small window of time and the events align with both Urban Repurpose and Metro Vancouver's goals to increase education around reuse and waste reduction. Several reuse organizations have expressed an interest in serving as new Reuse Days partners at new locations across the region. The interviews conducted during Phases 1 and 2—as well as views expressed by participants at the Scaling Reuse Workshop—show strong support for scaling Reuse Days events to more locations across the region.

The following are considerations for implementation as Metro Vancouver determines if and how to expand the Reuse Days model in the region.

Considerations for Implementation

- » **Introduce new reuse events first at recycling and waste centres with flexible space.** Reuse events require space for collection, triage, temporary storage and removal. Recycling and waste centres across the region have different layouts and available space, which has implications for how Reuse Days might work. Some recycling and waste centre site managers expressed concerns that Reuse Days might impact regular operations, such as traffic flow, at sites with less space in free recycling areas. However, newer sites, such as United Boulevard

and Central Surrey Recycling and Waste Centres, have been designed with additional flexible space that could support the implementation of Reuse Days in its current form.

» **Explore alternate configurations for Reuse Days at other recycling and waste centre sites.**

Given space requirements, holding Reuse Days at other sites may require alternate configurations, such as having a dedicated pull-off lane or setting up the reuse area and truck for collection of items nearby.

» **Consider different times and days for reuse events.** In order to broaden access to demographics that may be less likely to visit the recycling and waste centre on a Saturday morning, such as commercial customers, retired people, and others, Metro Vancouver may wish to explore offering reuse events on weekdays.

» **Identify potential new reuse partner organizations.** Expansion of reuse events across the region will require new reuse partners with the capacity and interest to assess, collect and transport items for resale at new recycling and waste centre locations. Based on the current volumes collected by Urban Repurpose at Reuse Days at the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre (300-400 kg per hour), scaling Reuse Days would likely generate a substantial quantity of items for reuse. Larger reuse organizations with space and trucks demonstrated the most interest and capacity for working with Metro Vancouver on reuse. Their ability to quickly and efficiently move items away from recycling and waste centres without overburdening is critical to ensuring consistent service. Based on insights from Phase 1 and 2 interviews, Metro Vancouver might consider the following characteristics when assessing external reuse organizations for their suitability to serve as effective partners in the expansion of Reuse Days:

1. Reliable and sufficient space to hold goods for resale, including the financial security to sustain the space.
2. Staff that are competent in assessing items for their resale potential.
3. Compliance with WorkSafeBC and site operator safety protocols.
4. An ability to provide consistent and reliable service to move materials off site.
5. High levels of customer service, and a knowledgeable and friendly interface with the public.

» **Set up contracts that have the flexibility to support the different priorities of reuse organizations.** The reuse organizations interviewed and who attended the Scaling Reuse Workshop had varied business models and thus different motivations and needs for their participation in reuse initiatives. Developing contracts supportive of these varied needs would support effective and enduring partnerships, providing benefit to both Metro Vancouver and the partner organization. Larger charities such as Salvation Army and Diabetes Canada have expectations around collecting a certain quantity and quality of textiles and household goods efficiently which they can sell as revenue to support their charitable purposes. Other reuse organizations, such as Keep It Green Recycling, have business models that charge based on volume of items collected, and give reusable items away for free, so they have less concern around item quality. Urban Repurpose placed the highest priority on enhancing the profile of their organization and promoting reuse as a desirable behaviour with less focus on the revenue they can generate from items collected.

- » **Involve recycling and waste centre staff in the assessment of items for reuse.** Assessing items quickly and effectively for their potential for reuse is a key component of successful reuse events. Currently, recycling and waste centre staff do not have the specialized skill to assess the resale value of goods collected through Reuse Days. Almost all the breakout groups at the Scaling Reuse Workshop suggested training some recycling and waste centre staff in the basics of item assessment to play a complementary, supporting role to that of reuse organizations. More details for consideration are outlined in the section below, *“Have on-site attendants trained in the basic assessment of items for reuse”*.
- » **Ensure effective communication to the public about the process for donation.** We heard from recycling and waste centre site managers and staff, as well as Metro Vancouver staff, about the need to avoid confusion about who is authorised to remove items from the recycling and waste centre sites. Salvaging items from recycling and waste centre sites violates existing regulations and is not permissible even for reuse organizations. However, the public can become confused when they see organizations working with customers to take away items at a recycling and waste centre for reuse. This has been an issue with the bicycle pick-up program, when organizations collecting bicycles are mistaken by the public as private individuals. As such, as new reuse organizations are involved in reuse events, it will be important that they are clearly identified as reuse organizations with the mandate to collect items. One idea mentioned in the Scaling Reuse Workshop was that staff from reuse organizations wear clothing or vests that clearly identify them as reuse organization partners.
- » **Ensure effective communication to the public about items accepted for donation.** Items for donation may change over time either because of their quality, the organizational capacity of the reuse organization, or a change in the items that organizations are seeking for reuse. As a result, it will be important to update communication about what items are being collected for reuse over time. Recycling and waste centres serve diverse communities across the region with potential language barriers, which may need to be considered in communication strategies both on and off site.

2. Add drop-off areas for small household items at recycling and waste centre sites.

Metro Vancouver currently offers residents of the region the option to drop off textiles, bikes, and books for reuse without screening at some recycling and waste centres. Small household items, such as kitchenware and bric-a-brac are in demand by some reuse organizations, and are easy to transport, collect, and store. Some larger reuse organizations expressed strong interest in expanding the range of collection bins at recycling and waste centres to include small household items. Collecting such items would allow Metro Vancouver to expand upon the existing accepted reuse material list throughout full site operating hours, thus supporting the aspiration of making reuse a default behaviour.

Metro Vancouver might give thought to the following considerations for implementation regarding new drop-off areas at recycling and waste centres for small household items.

Considerations for Implementation

- » **Undertake market sounding to determine specific household items in demand.** The success of these new drop-off areas depends on reuse organizations who are seeking specific types of household items. As such, Metro Vancouver could undertake a market sounding with reuse organizations who have stated an interest in the collection of household items to develop a refined list of specific household items they are keen to collect.
- » **Choose reuse organizations as partners who are interested in this model.** Not all reuse organizations we interviewed, or who were involved in the Scaling Reuse Workshop, were interested in this model. As such, it will be important for Metro Vancouver to identify reuse organizations with a strong interest in this model and the capacity to regularly empty and maintain bins.
- » **Use clear signage to communicate specific items accepted and donation locations.** In order to support the successful addition of new drop-off areas to recycling and waste centres, it will be important to provide clear, visible signage that allows customers to find the right location and supports their ability to know what items are acceptable for donation.
- » **Track progress and expand and/or adjust as needed over time.** As a new approach, Metro Vancouver will want to track how the new drop-off areas are working from a logistical perspective at recycling and waste centres, as well as their contribution to Metro Vancouver goals of enhancing volumes of items diverted for reuse and making reuse a default behaviour by residents. Checking in with reuse partner organizations about what is working for them and what adjustments could better support their ongoing involvement would also ensure success over time.

3. Have on-site attendants trained in the basic assessment of items for reuse.

Having on-site attendants who can assess items for reuse at a basic level was identified in interviews with stakeholders as a key factor in the success of any reuse approach. Workshop participants also strongly agreed on this. If recycling and waste centre staff to assess materials for reuse will allow them to better advise customers if their items can be dropped off and provide support for the material assessment efforts of reuse organizations on site.

Considerations for Implementation

- » **Include a teaching requirement in the reuse partner contracts.** Training provided by contracted reuse organizations to recycling and waste centre staff would take advantage of their expertise in item assessment and ensure a match with their material assessment standards and needs e.g., specific list of items accepted and in what condition.
- » **Provide training at regular intervals.** Workshop participants suggested scheduled training at quarterly or semi-annual intervals to balance the need to keep staff up to date without overburdening reuse organizations. It was also suggested that there be consideration to additional training during the implementation phase to account for staff turnover.

- » **Consider training for recycling and waste centre staff about broader reuse options.** Alongside training in materials assessment, training could also include preparing recycling and waste centre staff to provide education about other reuse options in their community.
- » **Provide feedback to recycling and waste centre staff about the success of assessment practices.** Creating a communication link back to recycling and waste centre staff about the volume and type of items that met donation requirements, as well as those that did not meet the standards of reuse organizations, could provide an ongoing learning opportunity. Item assessment is something that members of reuse organizations have honed over time and it is unrealistic to expect recycling and waste centre staff to improve their reuse assessment skills without feedback and training.

4. Continue developing educational approaches to encourage reuse.

During the Reuse Days pilots, many customers were surprised to learn that their items could be reused, suggesting that recycling and waste centre customers are unaware of reuse as an option for their items ahead of recycling and disposal. Educating residents about reuse opportunities at recycling and waste centres, as well as those by member jurisdictions and reuse organizations in surrounding communities could support the development of reuse as an easy and socially desirable behaviour.

The following considerations for implementation were derived from Phase 1 and 2 interviews, participants at the Scaling Reuse Workshop, and SRRI's own expertise in this area.

Considerations for Implementation

- » **Provide educational materials/signage at recycling and waste centres that encourage reuse as a default behavior.** This might include:
 - What items are accepted at recycling and waste centres for reuse and in what condition, as well as where items not accepted can be taken.
 - The benefits of reuse and where items collected at recycling and waste centres end up (e.g., used for community benefit or transformed into a new item).
 - Information about other reuse opportunities led by reuse organizations, non-profits, and member jurisdictions across the region. One idea suggested was that this could be done with a QR code.
- » **Apply Metro Vancouver's expertise in behaviour change campaigns for reuse.** Reuse behaviours are a departure from dominant practices of recycling and disposal currently practiced by the majority of Metro Vancouver residents. People are motivated to adopt new behaviours for a variety of reasons. Some are motivated by environmental reasons, but most people are motivated by other factors such as convenience, saving money, avoiding waste, following trends, being social or looking good to friends and family. Educational materials and events that employ messages and strategies that carefully consider behaviour change drivers are significantly more successful than simply providing information. In order to support the uptake of reuse as a default behaviour it will be important to draw on best practices used to encourage eco-conscious behaviour change by individuals. Metro Vancouver already has

expertise in this area as seen in their Love Food. Hate Waste. and Create Memories Not Garbage campaigns.

- » **Consider coordinated approaches to communication about reuse.** Workshop participants suggested the opportunity for recycling and waste centre staff to coordinate with reuse organizations in their communication efforts to support reuse. This could be done for reuse events or new drop-off areas for household goods. It could also be a campaign encouraging reuse in the region more broadly. While smaller organizations may not have the capacity to handle the quantity of materials expected at Reuse Days, they could be involved with educational efforts (e.g., upcycling items from the recycling and waste centres and sharing on social media to challenge conceptions of waste and value).

5. Continue publicly prioritizing reuse as an organization.

By publicly promoting reuse as a priority in the region, Metro Vancouver's leadership in the circular economy space will become even more clear and visible to the public. It will also signal to internal and external stakeholders, that reuse is a priority for Metro Vancouver. This, in turn, can provide increased agency to staff and others to prioritize reuse in the work they do.

Considerations for implementation

- » **Consider a variety of means to communicate reuse as a priority.** Metro Vancouver could continue to communicate that reuse is a priority to all relevant staff and contractors, and to other key stakeholders. Reaffirming reuse as a priority in the updated solid waste management plan currently under development is another option for consideration. These actions would support the consideration of reuse in solid waste management decisions such as the design and allocation of space at recycling and waste centres.
- » **Draw the connection between reuse and other important regional goals.** The reuse of household goods, electronics and materials has many benefits beyond waste prevention. Reuse can also support other regional goals such as:
 - Affordability by enhancing access to less costly second-hand goods;
 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by honouring the embodied carbon in existing goods and materials;
 - Job retention and growth by supporting the sustained operations and growth of reuse start-ups and organizations; and
 - Community benefit advanced by entities such as the Salvation Army, Diabetes Canada, and Big Brothers, who use revenues from the sales of second-hand clothing and household goods to fund their community programs.

By making the connections to these broader goals, Metro Vancouver could open the door to new partnerships and collaboration, which could collectively generate more support and momentum to scale reuse activities.

LONGER-TERM OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCALING REUSE

Expanding reuse across the region will be a gradual process, requiring long-term commitment to advance opportunities. Here are some potential initiatives for Metro Vancouver to explore over the next three to ten years.

1. Expand reuse events to sites beyond recycling and waste centres.

Workshop participants, including representatives of member jurisdictions, suggested that Metro Vancouver might consider running or encouraging others to run off-site reuse events. Currently, recycling and waste centres can be difficult to access without a vehicle. Organizing satellite reuse events at a variety of community spaces across the region, particularly in locations that are walk, bike, or transit friendly and further from Metro Vancouver recycling and waste centres, could increase accessibility for those without a vehicle. Running events off-site also provides an opportunity to raise the profile of reuse options and initiatives, as well as showcasing Metro Vancouver as a circular economy leader.

2. Design future recycling and waste centres with reuse in mind.

Member jurisdiction representatives at the workshop provided feedback which emphasized challenges in allocating space for reuse at most solid waste facilities. Different reuse models discussed at the workshop require different amounts of space. For example, staff supervised on-site reuse collection would need more space to collect items in a safe manner. New expanded recycling depots at the North Surrey and Langley Recycling and Waste Centres are under development and will be located ahead of the scales to allow customers to drop off many additional materials for recycling, and to better accommodate reuse initiatives. Other recycling and waste centres have reorganized their space on site to accommodate reuse. Designing future recycling and waste centres with a designated reuse area in mind would streamline additional reuse efforts.

3. Expand reuse metrics.

Many interviewees agreed that weight alone may not be the most reliable metric to assess the full economic, social, and environmental value of Reuse Days and other reuse initiatives. As Metro Vancouver scales reuse, they may consider tracking additional metrics such as greenhouse gas emissions reduced/avoided, customer and staff satisfaction, social impact etc. in order to allow more detailed evaluation and communication about the benefits of reuse initiatives.

4. Support diversion of items before they reach recycling and waste centres.

There are longer-term opportunities to support the diversion of items and materials for reuse before they reach Metro Vancouver recycling and waste centres that could also be explored. Metro Vancouver might consider a role to facilitate connections between entities in the region who have items suitable for reuse with organizations who have a need for them. Some junk removal companies, for example, expressed an interest in collaborative opportunities to divert waste from disposal by redirecting good quality items they collect from clients to those who need them. This would support their environmental and social impact goals, as well as reduce their tipping fees. The key challenge they face is making connections. During the Phase 2 interviews, SRRI identified some

charitable organizations who are seeking more household goods and textiles. There are undoubtedly more charities and social enterprises in the region seeking goods for those they serve.

Metro Vancouver could continue to look for opportunities to collaborate with others to implement community-led reuse events like larger clothing swaps or neighborhood and citywide yard sales. They may also look at options to work with entities like junk removal companies and auction houses, as well as the full range of charities and social enterprises, who are seeking good quality items for resale or direct donation to those in need. Metro Vancouver can learn more about how these reuse communities already work together. For example, Urban Repurpose provides some furniture to Shelter to Home. Metro Vancouver can also find a way to connect to more reuse organizations while keeping reuse program administration at a manageable level. For example, adding reuse and repair to MV Recycles listings may be a way to increase visibility for reuse organizations that can take more material directly. Continued support of initiatives such as repair events and reuse educational campaigns is another method of diverting items before they reach recycling and waste centres.

Conclusion

The Share Reuse Repair Initiative reviewed past reuse events and engaged with stakeholders to explore possibilities for scaling reuse activities at Metro Vancouver recycling and waste centres. SRRI developed options and opportunities to scale reuse for Metro Vancouver's consideration based on discussions with stakeholders involved in the successful Reuse Days model at the North Shore Recycling and Waste Centre, interviews with for-profit and non-profit reuse organizations, and a Scaling Reuse Workshop involving Metro Vancouver staff, representatives from member jurisdictions, and reuse organizations.

Metro Vancouver is already regarded as a Circular Economy leader in the region and across Canada. The options and opportunities presented in this report would expand this reputation by supporting the expansion of reuse as a default practice in the region. Reuse is an upstream circular practice that serves not only to reduce waste, but also to avoid embodied carbon of new goods by extending the life of existing goods, support affordability by increasing access to second-hand goods, and enhance community benefit by directing more goods to organizations who use revenues from their resale to fund a range of community programs.

Short-term opportunities identified in this report include sustaining and expanding reuse events starting at recycling and waste centres with more flexible space and adding drop-off areas for small household goods for collection by interested reuse organizations. Having reuse attendants trained in the assessment of items suitable for reuse was suggested as a key factor for the success of both opportunities. Continuing and expanding efforts to educate residents about reuse opportunities and benefits at recycling and waste centres, as well as those by member jurisdictions and reuse organizations in the region, was another short-term opportunity identified. Drawing from Metro Vancouver's existing expertise in developing behaviour change campaigns could help to ensure that such education successfully supports the development of reuse as a default behaviour by residents of the region. Reinforcing reuse as a clear and visible Metro Vancouver priority internally, as well as in plans such as the updated solid waste management plan under development, was another short-term opportunity proposed that could serve to provide increased agency to staff, contractors, and

external stakeholders to prioritize reuse in what they do.

Expanding reuse across the region will be a gradual process requiring commitment over time. Share Reuse Repair Initiative identified four longer-term opportunities for Metro Vancouver to consider, including: expanding reuse events to locations outside recycling and waste centre sites; designing future recycling and waste centre sites to factor in dedicated space for reuse activities; expanding reuse metrics to include a full range of benefits; and playing a role to support the diversion of items suitable for reuse before they reach recycling and waste centre sites. All the short-term and longer-term opportunities that were provided face various challenges in implementation, and feasibility will vary depending on site-specific details. However, as shown in the report, there are numerous social, economic, and environmental benefits to take into consideration that are realized through reuse options.

Appendix 1: Scaling Reuse Workshop Handout

Name: _____

Building a Model for Scaling Reuse in Metro Vancouver

Tuesday, October 10, 2023, Anvil Centre, New Westminster

Model #1 - Expand reuse collection events at Recycling and Waste Centres (RWCs)

The current Reuse Days model is expanded to more days and sites across Metro Vancouver.

Who? One or more reuse organisations

Where? Onsite at North Shore and other RWCs

What? Any items assessed for value by reuse organisations

When? Specific event times (e.g., Saturday mornings)

Pros	Cons
» Profile for reuse organisations	» Reuse only available during select hours
» Educational opportunity for the public	» Volume of items triaged for reuse is small compared to potential
» Minimal additional responsibilities for RWC staff	» Model has not yet benefited reuse organisations financially
» Does not require permanent space on site	

Notes:
