

RDN Approves Grants for Innovative Zero Waste Projects

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is pleased to announce \$300,000 in grants for four local organizations through the Zero Waste Recycling Funding program have been approved for 2021: Gabriola Island Recycling Organization (\$103,044), Loaves and Fishes Community Food Bank (\$95,000), Habitat for Humanity (\$52,973) and Nanaimo Recycling Exchange (\$48,983). The grantees will be using the funding to target the recycling of materials that are currently not part of a stewardship program or an established commercial market and would otherwise end up in the landfill.

“We were impressed with the quality and diversity of all proposals that were submitted for consideration,” said Chair Tyler Brown. “The four projects selected to receive funding will best contribute to the RDN’s goal of 90 per cent diversion of waste from the landfill by 2029.”

The Gabriola Island Recycling Organization will establish a textile recovery and clothing recycling program to divert up to 23,600 kilograms of textile waste from the landfill. Loaves and Fishes Community Food Bank will carry out an infrastructure and facility expansion to divert 50,000 to 120,000 kilograms of food waste annually. Habitat for Humanity will initiate their ReVive program that will aim to repurpose and fix donated items, both of which will generate revenue and divert material from the landfill. Nanaimo Recycling Exchange will carry out waste audits in the industrial, commercial and institutional sector and educate participants about waste diversion alternatives.

“All applicants presented innovative ideas and we appreciate the thought put into each project proposal,” said Director Ben Geselbracht, Solid Waste Committee Chair. “Ultimately, the four projects receiving funding will have the greatest impact on the development of a circular economy in our region.”

Projects were evaluated using several criteria including maximizing waste diversion, encouraging innovation to develop markets and processes, improving convenience for recycling materials, and potential as a catalyst for a future sustainable program that does not rely on ongoing funding. The proposals were ranked on a comparative basis and eligible funds were then distributed amongst the highest ranked successful proposals in the order of their ranking until the funds were drawn down.

The Zero Waste Recycling Funding program is an initiative of the Solid Waste Management Plan which proposes that grants be available through 2023. Further information on continuation of the program is expected to be posted on the RDN website in the last quarter of this year.

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