



Reduction and Reuse Key to Zero Waste Victoria

Date: Wednesday, December 16, 2020

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — The City and the community will work to reduce waste sent to landfill by 50 per cent in 2040 thanks to *Zero Waste Victoria*, a plan recently approved by Victoria City Council.

“Even pre-pandemic as a community we were throwing over 13,000 paper cups per day into public garbage cans,” said Mayor Lisa Helps. “And this is just the tip of the iceberg. *Zero Waste Victoria* is a comprehensive approach to waste management in the city which will save materials from going into the landfill and will save Victorians money.”

Zero Waste Victoria guides the city’s transition to a future where products and materials are avoided, reduced and reused instead of disposed in the landfill. The City plans to reduce waste and increase reuse across the community by following 40 strategies that eliminate unnecessary products, make reuse an everyday activity and improve our current recycling system.

Every day across the City of Victoria over 120 tonnes of materials are disposed and sent to the landfill. These materials include demolished buildings, uneaten food, plastic and paper packaging and old clothes and furniture. Eliminating waste and capturing the value of these resources is one of the city’s biggest opportunities to preserve natural resources, reduce pollution and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

Stakeholders representing 57 businesses and organizations ranging from environmental organizations to local businesses to waste haulers convened virtually between July and October of this year to guide the pathway for zero waste across the community.

Jeff Bray, Executive Director the Downtown Victoria Business Association, was part of this planning and engagement process.

“It’s good to see the City is looking to take action on all kinds of waste, while including businesses in the conversation,” said Bray. “Based on the successful track-record engaging businesses during Victoria’s checkout bag bylaw in 2018, I’m confident that the current challenges faced by businesses will be incorporated into their decision making.”

As Victoria moves towards zero waste, businesses and residents can expect to see more options for reusable alternatives and new services across the city to ensure materials are managed responsibly, such as the recent installation of 25 new zero waste stations across the community.

Construction waste is a particular challenge, making up close to 40 per cent of the material that Victoria sends to landfills.

“There is a huge loss of invaluable old growth lumber, building materials and history when we demolish buildings and treat these materials as waste instead of resources,” said Adam Corneil, CEO of Unbuilders, a Vancouver-based enterprise that deconstructs houses and resells the materials. “It’s not waste, it’s just wasted.”

With the approval of *Zero Waste Victoria*, City staff will prioritize the reduction and salvage of construction waste, implement requirements for source separation at multifamily and commercial properties, and introduce new single-use item reduction bylaws.

Key waste facts:

- Victoria is responsible for one-third of the waste sent to Hartland Landfill
- Victoria generates over 45,000 tonnes of garbage a year
- 25,000 single use items a day are collected from city streets and parks
- Landfilled organics are responsible for 6 per cent of Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions (27,000 t/CO2e)
- Together, multifamily and commercial properties are responsible for 90 per cent of the organic material sent to landfill
- Construction waste makes up 37 per cent of materials sent to landfills, two-thirds of which is wood

To learn more about *Zero Waste Victoria*, visit: victoria.ca/zerowaste

— 30 —

For More Information:

Bill Eisenhauer
Head of Engagement
City of Victoria
250.858.1061
beisenhauer@victoria.ca

