

Capital Regional District

Meeting Minutes

Solid Waste Advisory Committee

Friday, June 3, 2022

12:30 PM

CRD Boardroom
625 Fisgard Street
Victoria, BC V8W 2S6

PRESENT: F. Baker, C. Blanchard, M. Coburn, J. Collins (EP), B. Desjardins (Chair), S. Gose (EP), M. Kurschner, E. Latta, N. Macdonald, D. Monsour, R. Newlove (EP), J. Oakley (EP), D. Paul Jr., R. Pirie, J. Shaw, K. Siefried (EP), R. Tooke (Vice-Chair),

STAFF: A. Chambers, Senior Administrative Secretary, Environmental Resource Management (ERM) (Recorder); K. Masters, Communications Liaison, ERM; R. Smith, Senior Manager, ERM; M. Tromp-Hoover, Supervisor, Communication & Education Development, Environmental Protection; T. Watkins, Manager, Policy & Planning, ERM

GUESTS: Bob McDonald, Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy (ENV), Michael Wadeson (ENV)

REGRETS: M. McCullough, J. Rintoul, K. Siefried, D. Thran, S. Young Jr.

EP - Electronic Participation

The meeting was called to order at 12:32 pm.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

2. Introductions

A round of introductions were made.

3. Approval of Agenda

Agenda for the June 3, 2022 Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting.

MOVED by D. Monsour, SECONDED by J. Shaw
That the agenda be approved as circulated.
CARRIED

4. Adoption of Minutes

Minutes from the May 6, 2022, 2021 Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting.

MOVED by J. Shaw, SECONDED by E. Latta
That the minutes of the May 6, 2022, 2022 Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting
be adopted as circulated.
CARRIED

5. Chair's Remarks

Lara Jenson, Sarah Gose and Michelle Coburn's terms on the committee have expired. A Call for Applications was issued and appointments will be made by the CRD Board at its June 8, 2022 meeting.

6. Committee

- a. Presentation from Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy (ENV) on Extended Producer Responsibility

Staff from ENV presented on the expansion of Extended Producer Responsibility products. The presentation is attached as Appendix A. Some of the key points discussed include:

- Confirmation that audits are done to ensure correct management of materials.
- Program expansion includes these items: mattresses, compressed canisters, medical sharps, electric vehicle batteries, etc.
- Possible expansion of regulation to include industrial, commercial and institutional sector

- b. Environmental Services Committee May 18, 2022 Staff Reports (for information):

[Curbside Blue Box Recycling – 2024 and Beyond](#)

R. Smith spoke to this report and noted the new contract will run from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2029. Staff are working on drafting the tender for this contract and will be posted in July 2022.

[Disposal of international Cruise Ship Waste at Hartland Landfill](#)

There will be a follow-up staff report on cruise ship waste going to the June 15, 2022 Environmental Services Committee that will be brought to the July 8, 2022 Solid Waste Advisory Committee for information.

- c. Staff Report: Multi-Family Dwelling Market Research on Solid Waste Communications and Education Opportunities

T. Watkins introduced this staff report. A discussion ensued on the following:

- Importance of messaging to multi-family dwelling residents/strata's
- Regulatory options for multi-family, there is currently nothing in place
- Marketed "compostable" items that don't in fact break down

The staff report is attached as Appendix B.

- d. Actual and Projected Monthly Refuse Tonnages at Hartland Landfill (standing item)

T. Watkins spoke to the graph. The tonnage graph is attached as Appendix C. A discussion ensued on the following:

- The increase shows signs of a strong economy and also highlights changes due to COVID-19.
- Staff will add notes to the graph that highlights what the increases are (i.e. construction, etc).
- Staff are working on diversion opportunities are part of implantation to the Solid Waste Management Plan
- Suggestion made to publish the tonnage graph
- Suggestion made to have a thermometer graph going up to the landfill that shows the progress of waste diversion from the landfill.

7. Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Next Meeting

The next Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting will be July 8, 2022.

9. Closing Comments

There were no closing comments.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 14:46.

**MOVED by D. Monsour, SECONDED by D. Paul Jr.
That the Solid Waste Advisory Committee be adjourned.
CARRIED**

Expansion of Extended Producer Responsibility in B.C.

Solid Waste Advisory Committee
Capital Regional District

Bob McDonald – Director, Extended Producer Responsibility

June 3, 2022

EPR Expansion Drivers

- Supports the CleanBC Plastics Action Plan
- Local Government priority requests – increased diversion from landfill and safe management; meeting provincial waste reduction targets
- Canadian Council of Ministers for the Environment
 - Canada-Wide Action Plans for EPR and Zero Plastic Waste
- Recycling Regulation Policy Intentions Paper engagement (2020)
- EPR Five-Year Action Plan 2021-2026 – expanding to include more product categories

Projected Implementation Timeline

- 2023 – Amend Recycling Regulation to include:
 - EV batteries and other batteries, mattresses, compressed canisters, and medical sharps
- 2025 – EPR programs operational for:
 - Mattresses, compressed canisters, and medical sharps
- 2026 – EPR programs operational for:
 - EV batteries and other batteries
- 2026 – Amend regulatory definitions for:
 - Electronics and moderately hazardous (residual) product categories

Projected Implementation Timeline (Cont'd)

- Stakeholders and key partners identified the ICI sector as a large contributor to overall waste in B.C. and expressed a desire to increase recycling in this sector
- 2021-2025 – Developing options for packaging and paper from the Industrial Commercial and Institutional (ICI) sector
- **This is a large undertaking and requires a phased approach:**
 - 2021-2022 – data collection and research to better understand the management of packaging and paper in the ICI sector
 - 2022-2025 – data evaluation, engagement & policy development
 - 2025 – policy approach finalized

ICI PPP Study: details and next steps

Objectives:

- Establish baseline ICI PPP generation and management by source
- Gather and consolidate existing data to inform that baseline
- Identify context that explains the data (e.g., gaps, barriers)

Next steps:

- Webinars (June 14 & 16th) to share initial findings with local and Indigenous governments, and industry organizations
- In Fall, engagement on approach to developing interim and long-term policy solutions



REPORT TO SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF FRIDAY, JUNE 03, 2022

SUBJECT **Multi-Family Dwelling Market Research on Solid Waste Communications and Education Opportunities**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To present the Multi-Family Dwelling (MFD) Market Research – Solid Waste Communications and Education Opportunities (Appendix A), which outlines opportunities and challenges facing MFD residents and stakeholders with regards to effective waste diversion.

BACKGROUND

The newly completed Capital Regional District (CRD) Solid Waste Management Plan has identified MFDs (e.g., apartment and condo buildings) as a focus area for enhanced outreach and education to help increase diversion of waste from the landfill. Market research was used to gather insight into individuals' experiences to aid staff in designing a strategy to address MFD waste diversion challenges. This study identified key MFD stakeholders, their values and motivations, and recommends outreach and communications channels and strategies to aid in educating and supporting behaviour change and increasing waste diversion.

In Q1 2022, Metroline Research Group conducted focus groups and one-on-one interviews with MFD residents (owners and tenants) and building decision makers (strata council members and property managers). Discussion and interview guides were developed in collaboration with CRD staff to help steer conversations.

Through this qualitative research with residents, strata council members and property managers, the following common themes emerged:

- The CRD should first focus on supporting rental buildings over stratas. The research indicates strata buildings are typically better organized, already have some systems in place, and have residents who are more likely to sort and separate waste;
- The CRD has an opportunity to provide better communication and direction about how to properly sort waste, and the reasons why we need to divert waste, to reduce confusion, especially to new building residents;
- There is confusion among MFD stakeholders surrounding the roles and responsibilities of governments, individuals and private waste collectors for determining waste diversion offerings. Individuals commented on the lack of consistent rules and policies, which causes confusion for property managers, and for residents who move between properties.

Based on this research, the report recommends the CRD look into the following education and communication initiatives to better support MFD stakeholders:

- Develop consistent signage to use in waste collection areas, or to stick on collection bins to help direct proper sorting. Signage should be made available to any interested stakeholders, including MFD residents, strata councils, building managers and private haulers;

- Improve online tools and resources, such as guidelines/instructions about how to sort and recycle in MFDs, and enhance the ability to search for specific items on the CRD website to see what can be recycled;
- Develop new resident welcome packages that provide guidance or instructions on regional waste diversion options, as well as information on the various waste streams and the rationale behind them.

While the report was focused on education and communication activities in MFDs, it also identifies, as participants in the research often brought it up, policy initiatives such as incentivizing building owners and property managers to make capital improvements to waste sorting areas, such as providing a covered area or enlarging the footprint of the area so more source-separated waste streams can be incorporated.

CONCLUSION

The CRD Solid Waste Management Plan has identified multi-family dwellings (MFD) as a focus area for enhanced outreach and education to help increase diversion of waste from landfill. In order to aid staff in designing an MFD waste diversion strategy, a market research study was undertaken to aid staff in designing a strategy to address MFD waste diversion challenges. The resulting report provides a number of recommendations for consideration to support MFD waste diversion, which will be used to guide the creation of communication and education materials for MFD stakeholders. Recommendations include developing consistent waste collection and recycling signage, improving online resources and developing new resident welcome packages that provide waste diversion guidance.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

Submitted by:	Russ Smith, Senior Manager, Environmental Resource Management.
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P. Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: Multi-Family Dwelling Market Research – Solid Waste Communications and Education Opportunities – Detailed Findings (May 2022)

Multi-Family Dwelling Market Research

Solid Waste Communications and Education Opportunities

ERM2021-007

May 2022

Detailed Findings

Prepared for:

**Capital Regional District
Environmental Resource Management Division**

625 Fisgard Street
Victoria, BC V8W 2S6



With



dave@metroline.ca
www.metroline.ca
+1 519 584 7700

kirk@economics.com
www.economics.com
+1 250 590 8143

Contents

Glossary.....	3
Purpose	4
Executive Summary.....	4
Conclusions/Recommendations	6
Background and Objectives	8
Research Methodology	10
Residential Focus Groups.....	10
Strata Council/Building Manager Interviews	11
Notes on Reading this Report	12
Residential Focus Groups.....	13
1. Motivations for Diverting Waste.....	13
2. Waste Collection Process in Buildings	15
3. Barriers/Challenges Regarding Waste Collection in your Building	18
4. Communications from Building Management.....	20
5. Notices from Building Management.....	22
6. Media/Sources of Information.....	23
7. Education Gaps and Learning More.....	25
8. Attitudes towards conservation and the environment	27
9. Biggest Takeaways for Focus Group Participants	28
Other Stakeholder Interviews.....	29
10. Property Managers	29
11. Strata Councils	34

Glossary

These terms will be found in the report.

Multi-family dwelling (MFD) – for the purposes of this research, a building that has five or more units, and a contract for private garbage and recycling collection.

Non-resident – someone who is not a resident of the property.

Rental apartment – a building of five or more units, where residents are not owners, paying a monthly rent.

Strata – apartment-style housing, where residents own their unit and share responsibility for common areas and contribute financially to the maintenance and repair of the building and grounds through strata fees.

Private hauler/waste hauler – private company hired to provide solid waste and recycling collection services.

Purpose

Solid waste management in the capital region is based on the 5R hierarchy of Reduction, Reuse, Recycling, Resource Recovery and Residuals Management, with the goal of extending the life of Hartland Landfill by minimizing waste disposal and maximizing diversion opportunities. The newly completed Capital Regional District (CRD) Solid Waste Management Plan has identified multi-family dwellings (MFD) (e.g., apartment and condo buildings) as a focus area for enhanced outreach and education in order to help increase diversion of waste from landfill. This research identifies key MFD stakeholders, their values and motivations, and recommends outreach and communications channels and strategies to aid in educating and supporting behaviour change.

Along with waste diversion and reduction, other CRD Environmental Services programs such as water conservation and source control may also use results from this research to inform outreach and education initiatives in MFDs tailored to their objectives.

Executive Summary

MFDs have varied organizational structures. Notably, some buildings are established under strata ownership arrangements, wherein residents own their individual unit but share responsibility for common areas, for example waste storage and sorting areas. Other buildings are set up as rental apartments, wherein residents are tenants who pay monthly rent. In both bases, many stakeholders are involved in decision-making processes around waste disposal, recycling, and other environmental practices. This can include building owners, property management companies, building managers, strata councils, condominium owners, and tenants. The result can be confusion, and potentially reduced participation in waste reduction and effective recycling practises, as well as water and energy use efficiency.

We researched these barriers and challenges by conducting two focus groups with strata unit owners, and two focus groups with tenants of rental apartment buildings, plus nine interviews with property managers and strata councils.

The vast majority of residents and other stakeholders in this research participate at some level in recycling and organics separation from the garbage.

Owners of units in strata buildings seemed more 'engaged' in the issue:

- waste collection is included in their strata fees, so keeping costs down matters
- building management and the strata council seem to be more proactive on communication and enforcement
- pride of ownership likely plays a role over a rental building
- the average age of residents in the building could be older; based on participants in this research, those who are older appear to be more committed (or perhaps have more time) to fully participate in proper recycling
- the waste collection area in strata buildings are often secure and protected (partially indoors, or in the covered parking) making it easier for residents to access, and to have less worry about encounters with rats, other animals, poor weather, and non-residents

Rental apartment buildings are in more need of support and encouragement:

- a more transient population
- likely to have a greater proportion of new Canadians and new residents to the region who may not be as familiar with recycling practices and requirements
- tenants may not have the same pride of ownership as strata unit owners
- fees for waste collection are included in the rent so are not incurred as direct charges
- more likely to have an outdoor waste collection area, particularly if the building is older, with perceived risks such rats, other animals, and non-residents. Such areas also seem more likely to be away from the building and uncovered, making it more difficult for to access.

More research or audits could provide more definitive insight in these areas, in particular the average age of residents and does that impact their participation, differences between indoor and outdoor collection areas (for things like participation levels and contamination levels), and wayfinding/signage strategies and postings impact on participation.

Property managers, particularly those who manage buildings across multiple municipalities, speak about challenges related to waste collection policies and practices among different private waste haulers. There is also a perception that different local government policies across the capital region is the reason for these differences, which is not the case. They can be frustrated by lack of space and about the costs associated with building and maintaining enclosed waste collection areas. This is especially the case when rules change or new waste diversion streams are added, meaning they need to add more bins.

Residents and property managers alike expressed some confusion about what can be recycled and what cannot and about how the waste system works in general. They would like to have clearer direction.

Residents in rental apartment buildings rarely pay for any of their utilities. Residents and council members at stratas we interviewed are sub-metered for electricity use, but not for natural gas or water. As a result, it is widely expected that they will tend to pay more attention to their energy use over their water use.

In some cases, where units that have a primary electric heat source but also a natural gas fireplace, strata owners are more likely to use their fireplace than their baseboard heaters, as they don't receive a natural gas bill.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Through this qualitative research with residents and stakeholders, a few common themes emerge:

- The CRD should focus more on supporting rental apartment buildings over stratas. Our research indicates strata buildings are typically better organized, better communicators, already have systems in place, and are populated with residents who are more likely to try and separate their waste.
- Buildings that have indoor (or covered) spaces for their dumpsters and bins seem to have residents who are more willing to take the time to properly separate their waste.
- Buildings, particularly in Victoria or areas near downtown, who do not have a simple way (due to space, cost and other reasons) to enclose or lock up their waste bins, have difficulty with illegal dumping, visits from non-residents, and sometimes challenges with rats and other animals.
- There is a perception that there is a lack of consistent rules and policies regarding waste collection from the private waste haulers in the capital region. This causes confusion for property managers, and for residents who move between properties.
- The CRD has an opportunity to provide better communications and direction about how to properly sort waste, and the reasons why we need to divert waste, to reduce confusion. This is especially important for new Canadians and new residents of the capital region.

Based on this research we offer three recommendations to improve the waste collection stream at multi-family buildings in the capital region:

1. Support building management and residents, particularly in apartment buildings with:

- new resident welcome packages that provide guidance or instructions on the various waste streams and the rationale behind them, a single sheet of tips or directions that someone could post on their fridge. This could also include specific swag to help residents such as fridge magnets, sorting bags, discounts/coupons for compostable organics bags
- signage to use in waste collection areas, or to stick on collection bins to help direct proper sorting
- best case practices and success stories for multi-family buildings about systems and setup of waste collection areas
- financial support/incentives to improve the waste collection area, to reduce abuse, and to encourage residents

2. Improve online tools and resources (such as the CRD website and solid waste management apps)

- provide clearer guidelines/instructions about how to sort and recycle
- provide clearer guidelines/instructions about what is, and is not, garbage
- help residents understand the importance of waste diversion
- help residents understand how to reduce contamination in the recycling streams
- further promote the ability to search for specific items on the CRD website to see if they can be recycled
- provide information about what happens 'downstream' after items are picked up; for example, this could include short videos/animations (15-30 seconds) that are easily digested, and easily distributed by social media

3. Offer staff resources

- conduct a pilot project that provides site visits to offer advice and resources on best practices and setup for the waste collection area

Background and Objectives

In late 2021, the Capital Regional District (CRD) engaged Metroline Research Group and Econics to design and execute a market research study. The primary objective is to inform development of strategies to engage residents and management of multi-family dwellings on environmental stewardship.

Traditionally, MFD have higher rates of recycling contamination as reported by recycling service providers, improper sorting, and more waste per capita sent to landfill. MFD have varied organizational structures and many stakeholders involved in the decision-making process, including building owners, property management companies, building managers, strata councils, condominium owners, and tenants.

The general scope of work for this market research, as outlined in CRD's Request for Proposals, is as follows:

- design, plan and conduct the research
- identify and recruit research/focus group participants as required
- analyze results, and
- prepare a report with recommended strategies

The different steps in this research project were as follows:



Before working on the project, data from Statistics Canada was reviewed to determine the proportion of MFDs throughout the capital region (using the two columns defined by Statistics Canada as apartment in a building with more/less than five storeys)

Almost 3 in 5 multi-family dwellings (57%) are in Victoria; almost 1 in 5 (17%) are in Saanich. As a result, these two municipalities were the primary targets for market research participants. Four additional local municipalities with more than one percent of the multi-family dwellings are Esquimalt (8%), Langford (5%), Oak Bay (4%), and Sidney (3%).

Type of Dwelling Highlight Tables, 2016 Census for Victoria CMA. Statistics Canada

	Structural type of dwelling						"Apartment" (more/less than five storeys) proportion by community
	Total	Single- detached house	Apartment in a building that has five or more storeys	Apartment in a building that has fewer than five storeys	Row house/ Semi- detached/ Duplex	Other	
Victoria CMA	162,715	64,230	10,405	44,285	41,800	1,995	
Victoria	45,760	6,545	8,195	23,040	7,895	95	57%
Saanich	46,650	22,145	545	8,840	15,045	70	17%
Esquimalt	8,495	1,995	555	3,915	2,010	25	8%
Langford	14,175	5,655	330	2,645	4,945	605	5%
Oak Bay	7,740	4,900	310	1,725	795	10	4%
Sidney	5,600	1,990	135	1,625	1,835	15	3%
Central Saanich	6,890	3,750	20	775	2,315	25	1%
Colwood	6,590	3,360	120	590	2,500	15	1%
View Royal	4,155	1,655	85	620	1,780	10	1%
Sooke	5,255	3,440	5	365	1,145	300	1%
New Songhees	895	340	95	0	155	300	0%
North Saanich	4,625	3,740	0	85	790	10	0%
Metchosin	1,815	1,420	0	40	320	40	0%
Highlands	830	785	0	10	30	5	0%
Juan de Fuca	1,995	1,715	0	5	165	95	0%
Becher Bay	45	35	0	0	0	10	0%
Cole Bay	90	75	0	0	10	0	0%
East Saanich	770	440	0	0	10	315	0%
South Saanich	225	140	0	0	40	50	0%
T'Sou-ke	80	80	0	0	5	5	0%
Union Bay	35	25	0	0	10	0	0%

Research Methodology

This research project utilized qualitative research methodology.

Qualitative research allows the moderator to explore the ‘why’ behind answers, to better understand the thinking process and level of understanding that people have. It is a much more flexible approach that does a deeper dive, allowing the ability to pivot during the group or interview depending on the answers provided by the participants. The drawback to qualitative research is that it does not allow you to ‘quantify’ the results and project to the population. Further research, using probability sampling (such as a telephone survey) can build on the learning from this project and provide you better numbers and percentages.

All focus groups and interviews were conducted virtually using Zoom meetings due to COVID conditions in the community at the time of the research.

Residential Focus Groups

Four focus groups of 7-8 participants were conducted with CRD residents:

- two focus groups with tenants in rental buildings of 5+ units
- two focus groups with owners in strata buildings of 5+ units

Respondents:

- are the head of household
- are 21-64 years of age
- are a full-time resident of the capital region
- using questions asked during the screening process, were segmented into one of two groups per building type (renter vs. strata) based on how they identified as active or less active in waste diversion
- rented or owned a unit and lived full-time in a multi-family dwelling, and
- lived in municipalities reflective of the distribution of multi-family dwellings, primarily Victoria and Saanich

<i>Participants per community</i>	Rentals	Stratas
Victoria	6	8
Saanich	3	3
View Royal	1	
Esquimalt	1	1
Oak Bay	1	
Langford		1
Total Buildings	12	13

- indicated whether four types of recycling/collection are available at their building

<i>Types of recycling offered at the building</i>	Rentals	Stratas
Paper recycling	12	13
Plastic/metal recycling	12	13
Glass (bottles, jars, etc.)	6	9
Organic waste	10	13

Strata Council/Building Manager Interviews

Nine one-on-one interviews were conducted with stakeholders with a decision-making role in the waste management function of multi-family buildings:

- four interviews with members of strata councils who have some responsibility regarding the waste collection in their building
- five interviews with property managers who oversee strata or rental apartment buildings in the capital region

Discussion and interview guides were developed beforehand to help steer conversations. These were developed in collaboration with members of the CRD team. The focus groups and interviews were led by a professional market researcher and moderator. The discussions started with an introduction to the topic, basic ground rules about allowing everyone to voice their opinion during the discussion, and introductions. Participants were encouraged to be active listeners, and to be open and honest in any feedback they provided. The discussion was split into several topics (similar to the flow of this report). Questions asked were mostly open-ended to spark discussion, and to see what insights could be attained without directing the conversation.

After the focus groups and interviews were completed, extensive data review and analysis was completed, including the following steps:

- review of recordings from each focus group and interview
- review of researcher notes from each focus group and interview
- identification of themes raised by residents in the focus groups, and by the strata council representatives and property managers in the stakeholder interviews
- using meeting transcripts to code and identify the keywords/themes to support thematic analysis and report development

Notes on Reading this Report

A study such as this, based on four focus groups and nine interviews generates a wealth of qualitative information.

In effect, this approach provides research and management groups with an opportunity to learn about the range and nature of the factors that are linked to a given realm of interest. It also fosters understanding of the reasons for their occurrence.

However, because of the type of study conducted, the observations which emerge from this research must be viewed as tentative and directional. The precise extent to which phenomena occur in the total target group universe can only be accurately determined via statistically representative quantitative research.

Residential Focus Groups

This section provides detailed learning about focus groups with residents of stratas and rental apartment buildings. A second section later in the report will discuss learning from interviews conducted with property managers and strata council representatives.

1. Motivations for Diverting Waste

When asked, all residents (rental or strata owner) have a good level of understanding that it is important to divert waste from the landfill. It is better for the environment to recycle and reuse instead of throwing things out.

1.1 Environmental

- Recycling is good for the environment.
 - *"We only get one Earth and we should be trying to take care of it. We should be trying to reuse and repurpose."*
 - *"There was a time in the past that I was reusing because we were poor, but now I do it because it is better for the environment."*
- Some items take a very long time to decompose, if ever.
- Landfill waste can leach into the surrounding environment; toxic chemicals can affect water supplies.

1.2 Societal

- Recycling is something that society has been trying to deal with, and educate people about, for a long time.
 - *"I think at this point most people know we need to stop growing landfills. We have a lot of ways to recycle stuff now. There are so many accessible ways to recycle. If you aren't already doing it, it makes you wonder what people are thinking?"*
- Learning about the importance of waste diversion can make a difference in the level of effort.
 - *"A couple years ago my friend set up a tour at Hartland. We saw what was being dumped and what was being diverted at the macro level. They have volunteers that fix bikes and donate them to community groups. Prior to that I was conscious but after that I realized that we can make a difference individually."*

1.3 Retain Valuable Resources

- Clean compost can create nutrients and keep waste out of the landfill.
 - *"Composting and putting it back in the food chain. It's a powerful thing to keep it out of the landfill"*
- Items that have residual value should not be thrown away.
 - *"There is a lot of value for things we traditionally just put in the landfill. They are big and expensive, and it cuts into a lot of real estate and it is expensive to build a new one. To get the most out of what we have recycling is important."*

1.4 Skepticism

Some are skeptical about the efforts they make to divert waste from the landfill.

- *"I don't know if it is something that can be taught any more. It is one of those things we have heard so many times."*
- *"We all know to recycle but we have also seen the video of the stuff going to the Philippines. There are issues that aren't being addressed within recycling. We all know it's about the profit and not saving the planet."*

1.5 Summary

After many years of education, residents understand that diverting waste from the landfill is important. There is recognition that this benefits the environment, that some items take a long time to decompose, that food waste can be turned into compost, and that some items can be recycled and reused.

There is a sense that some people will not change their behaviour if they haven't been reached to this point, and some skepticism that items that they take time to sort and recycle end up in the landfill or are improperly disposed of.

Some opportunities for the CRD to consider:

1. show residents reasons to divert waste from the landfill via recycling and organics collection, for example showing how cardboard/paper/plastics/cans are recycled, and also illustrate how long things like single use plastics or plastic bags will 'live' in the landfill
2. continue to promote ways that individuals can make a difference if they make the effort to recycle properly, and compost organics
3. illustrate the waste journey, and how it works
4. residents mostly did not talk about the benefit of extending the life of the landfill as a reason for diverting waste. Educating residents about the costs and difficulty of identifying a suitable new landfill location can be motivating

2. Waste Collection Process in Buildings

2.1 General

There was little consistency across focus group participants about the waste and recyclables collection available in their buildings. All participants, rental or strata, had paper, plastic and metal recycling. All strata buildings offered organic/food waste collection, and this was offered in ten rental buildings among the people we spoke with. Glass recycling is offered by only slightly more than half of the buildings (6 out of 12 rental buildings, 9 out of 13 strata buildings).

Two of the strata buildings offer 'private' glass recycling. The building provides a space for glass beverage container recycling, but a resident or building manager returned the items for their own benefit or it is returned to the strata council. The waste collection provider does not pick up the glass.

All interviewees spoke about waste collection providers having different policies and requirements for how recycling should be sorted, and what is included.

Buildings typically have one of three types of facilities for garbage and recycling collection. In some cases, there may need to be a combination of these (for example, keeping the garbage indoors, and having the bins for recycling outdoors.) This depends on the building and the space available.

- an indoor waste collection room
- dumpsters and bins covered in the parking garage
- dumpsters and bins outdoors, away from the building

Residents living in or near Downtown Victoria expressed additional concerns:

- illegal dumping by outside parties in their dumpsters and bins
- having to deal with non-residents who search through dumpsters and bins for items to recycle for cash or other reasons, and often leave messes behind for building managers to clean up

Some rental buildings have a garbage chute available to residents on each floor. However, recycling and organic/compostable items cannot be managed through these chutes and need to be carried to specific waste collection areas.

Some buildings keep the garbage and organics inside the building, and the recycling outside.

- *"We have big plastic bins. Our compost and garbage are in building, but for recycling we have to walk out to the recycling area."*

2.2 Strata Buildings

Generally speaking, we found that residents living in a strata building seemed to have a more organized waste area, more systems and signage in place, and better rule enforcement.

- *"Our recycling and dumpster and compost waste is all outside in the back of the building. Tin cans, plastics and papers and compost and garbage are all separate bins. The residents have a key for garbage."*

- *“There is a waste floor. There is over 100 units in my building. Strata is in charge of having it picked up.”*
- *“The caged downstairs parking lot has all the bins. Twice a week the recycling is picked up. Garbage is I think three times a week.”*
- *“We have a single room that services my entire building. Garbage is taken out 3 times a week and the other twice and we have 115 units in the building.”*
- *“We are able to recycle glass. I hear a lot of the areas don’t do glass.”*

Residents in strata buildings also seem more willing to participate sorting their waste.

- *“Our building is very easy and I would add that it never smells. The second there is any odour the maintenance guy is on it. It’s very organized and lots of signage.”*
- *“My building is fine. Strata left information sheets in the laundry room and front hallway as well. It breaks down where you can take your glass and what goes where. They have suggestions for batteries and cans of paint. They did a good job educating us. It may not be obvious to some people. They emailed us as well.”*
- *“I now use my organics bin all the time. I bought the proper bags that can be thrown out, the biodegradable ones. Then your garbage is so clean and smell free because there is nothing in it.”*

2.3 Rental Buildings

In rental apartment buildings, it was much less consistent.

- *“There are bins out the side but it is kind of confusing because they have this bin called recyclables that I guess just everything goes in. But then they have a cardboard bin and I am, like, should I be putting the paper in the cardboard bin? I think everyone is confused. In general, there isn’t a lot of information about recycling. At bottle depots, I have heard there is more recycling options like Styrofoam. There isn’t enough information.”*
- *“We have a garbage chute with massive dumpsters. They have one big dumpster for cardboard but we put paper in there because there is nowhere else to put paper.”*
- *“In my building they have provided [recycling] on every floor and make sure that every person puts it in the right place. They know lots of immigrant people are in the building and they want to make sure they do it. That is why they have it on every floor. The building manager empties the bins and puts it in the big dumpster outside the building.”*

We heard from several residents in rental apartment buildings that the system in place is confusing and does not work very well. This stems from a lack of information about how to properly sort, intermittent and inconsistent communications from the building, and a lack of effort from some residents to do the right thing.

- *“Where I live its chaos. It’s a nightmare. There are signs everywhere, but they are not consistent. They just put a new one over the old one if there has been a change and it all says different things. It’s honestly a little bit frustrating. They move the bins around all the time. The whole experience is kind of rough.”*
- *“It is pretty consistent. It is neat and tidy. It depends on the mood of the other tenants. A new tenant might pay less attention and that is when we get the email from the building.”*

- *“They just recently switched to having a cardboard bin to a separate paper bin and that is confusing for some people, as there was no information circulated. We went down one day and there were different bins.”*
- *“For us for us anything that is not paper or cardboard gets thrown to one side. I guess that it would get sorted later but I don’t know what to do with glass. If one person doesn’t read the sticker it doesn’t work. It’s just a mess anyway.”*

2.4 Glass Recycling

Out of all recyclable items, glass appears to create the most confusion:

- *“In my building glass has to be put in the recycling bin. They don’t have a different bin for that kind of thing.”*
- *“I still have no idea where to dispose of glass. When I have to throw out glass, I lay it on the ground somewhere since I don’t know where to put it and there are no markings on where I need to put glass.”*
- *“My building has glass recycling, and it is all labeled, which is nice. I have been to other apartments that didn’t have glass or paper recycling options available.”*
- *“We don’t recycle glass, so I leave the bottles out for others to collect. I live downtown and there is always someone out there collecting bottles.”*

2.5 Summary

Space availability and age of building dictate different locations to take garbage and recycling in buildings. Newer buildings seem to be better equipped with dedicated, purpose-built recycling areas. In older buildings, there can be different locations for garbage and recycling, sometimes located inside (e.g., in parking garages) and sometimes outside. This can cause confusion, especially to those new to the building.

Opportunities the CRD can consider include:

1. Continue to encourage and support all residents in multi-family dwellings, with emphasis on how to improve compliance and enforcement at rental buildings
2. Produce documentation that can be delivered to new tenants/owners by the landlord/property manager. Coordinate and cooperate with private waste haulers to standardize as much as possible. For example, a templated electronic document where landlords/property managers could insert some specifics related to their building, such as collection dates, frequencies, locations, policies.
3. Work on ways to help individuals without access to glass recycling in their building to reduce, reuse or find alternative ways to recycle their glass.
4. Make information available about best case practices and success stories for multi-family buildings about systems and setup of waste collection areas.
5. Offering financial support/incentives to property owners, such as strata councils or property managers/landlords to improve the waste collection area, to reduce abuse, and to encourage residents.

3. Barriers/Challenges Regarding Waste Collection in your Building

Residents were able to identify a number of barriers that they experience with their buildings. This was more so for rental apartment residents than strata buildings, but both had some challenges.

There were hints at some level of apathy about making extra effort to sort and recycle properly. Some residents who are apathetic do not make the effort to overcome even minor barriers and challenges, perhaps due to not understanding the importance, or perhaps simply a lack of time or energy.

- *“Our building does encourage us to do it right. People put items in the wrong bins and it drives the land lady nuts. She then puts up a poster and sends out messages about it. Even if it says DO NOT DO THIS, they just do whatever they want.”*
- *“Our bins are physically separated by ten meters from my building. We have to go out in the rain to put [recycling] out and there is no compost bin provided, so not everyone makes an effort when the weather is bad.”*

This list synthesizes what we heard:

3.1 Signage

Residents cited a complete lack of signage, or signage that is inconsistent or incorrect

- *“A lot of our signage is very negative. Don’t put this in here. Underlined. And people still put garbage in the compost and compost in the garbage.”*
- *It’s a real struggle in my building. We have a lot of those “yelly” signs. One of my biggest pet peeves is going in after the bins have been picked up and shortly after there is a giant Amazon box not broken down that takes up half the bin.”*
- *“If people aren’t already doing the right thing, I don’t think signs are going change their behavior.”*

3.2 Lack of information

Residents not knowing how to use the waste collection and sorting system for the building, especially for new residents (and new Canadians)

- *“I can see that people want to learn the things, but we don’t have the sources or accurate information. We don’t have full information.”*
- *“When I moved in and signed the lease there was nothing that explained how we throw away garbage and what goes where. I was completely unaware that we needed to separate plastic and paper. There is signage, but I didn’t notice it when I first encountered it. I had to ask my neighbours where to throw what.”*
- *“People in my building would be more than willing to do it if it was separate the clear and maybe colour coded about where glass should go.”*

- *"I think some of it boils down to which municipality you are in and even what building you are in. My last rental was just garbage and cardboard and that was it. I have even had times I had to try and figure out where to recycle something. You do a Google search. It is hard to know what is the standard is."*
- *"Where do we put Styrofoam? Do we put it in the paper and cardboard bin? I don't know where to put it."*

3.3 Lack of enforcement

In places where systems and signage are in place, there are still some residents who do not make the effort to properly sort their recyclables, contaminating bins. More so in rental buildings, it seems there is little oversight and residents can place items where they do not belong without consequences.

- *"Where we are located downtown, its active and chaotic things happening. By virtue of the landlords being quite busy, I think making sure people are recycling properly is not high on their list."*

3.4 Location

Residents having to take garbage to multiple places on property. Some buildings have a garbage chute, some do not. Some have indoor spaces, some must go outside

- *"Where I live there is only two recycling areas for multiple buildings and if you have accessibility issues, it's not easy. Not conveniently located."*
- *"In my building you had to walk 30-45 seconds from the front door, which kind of deters people if it's raining or they get lazy. It's mentally blocking them from sorting it out."*

3.5 Other barriers

Some other barriers expressed by residents in MFDs were as follows:

- Space – having to sort garbage, recycling and organics in their unit, which takes up a lot of their kitchen area.
- Pests – more of a concern for the garbage, but also for food waste/organics collection. This includes rats and other animals.
- Dumping – contractors, cleaners and others using outdoor dumpsters to dispose of garbage that is not generated by the building.
- Non-residents – in downtown Victoria particularly, having people doing 'dumpster dives', which creates a mess and can startle residents who go out there.
 - *"In my building the dumpster and the recycling are located in a really gross part of the parkade. Often people who live on the streets hang around wanting to try and get in and it's an uncomfortable place to go to."*
- Infrequent collection – Residents finding bins overflowing as they are not picked up frequently enough.
 - *"We have that problem at my building. We need triple the amount of bins or to have it picked up more often."*

3.6 Summary

The lack of oversight or consequences in a multi-family dwelling can lead to tenants/owners not taking the time to sort properly, contaminating different streams by disposing of items in the wrong bin.

Even those who want to do the right thing, and take time to sort their waste, can struggle to do so properly when there is a lack of information, direction, or signage.

It is important to make sorting and disposing of waste as simple as possible, as some residents will not make the effort (or do not care) to find out the proper way of doing it.

Opportunities for CRD to consider:

1. Work with multi-family dwelling facility managers and collection service providers, particularly at rental buildings, to streamline the process by educating residents and improving signage.

4. Communications from Building Management

There is little consistency across different buildings about levels of communication from building managers and/or service providers about how to properly sort waste and dispose of it.

4.1 Strata Building Communication

Generally, management of strata buildings are clearer and more consistent in messaging, but not always.

- *“Our council is pretty ‘on’ it. Someone didn’t wash their plastic chicken container out and they sent an email out to everyone in the building about it.”*
- *“Most of ours can be boiled down to please don’t “blah blah blah” this or that.”*
- *“Someone in our building put a carpet in the dumpster, and that is not garbage. That stuff has to go to the landfill. And we got a message about it.”*

4.2 Rental Building Communication

In several cases of rental apartment buildings whose residents we spoke to, messaging was not clear even within the same building. For example, in some cases messaging or signage related to what residents should not do, rather than educating them on what they should do.

- *“Our signs are all scolding ones. ‘Do not put here and here.’ If you have glass don’t bring it to the recycling area, with no direction on what we should do with it.”*
- *“They do encourage it in my building. People put it in the wrong [places] and it drives the land lady nuts and [she] puts up posters and sends out messages about it. Even if it says DO NOT DO THIS [tenants] just do whatever they want.”*

Some building managers seem to do a better job of encouraging residents than others, and that applies to both strata and rental buildings.

- *“We have common signage for what to put in where and we do get emails that remind us to separate their stuff.”*
- *“We get emails that say ‘here is what we have, here is what to do’.”*

4.3 New Resident Info Packages

Several residents indicated they would appreciate, or at least be open to reading, a handbook from their building on how to properly dispose of waste. In particular, this was something suggested for new residents.

- *“I think building management can provide us a welcome book with instructions. After that they need to provide more notices of changes and signs. Then we can remind ourselves when we are in the room.”*
- *“A few years ago, I was on [the] strata [council] and something changed in the system and the company sent out a chart that showed what should go in plastic and paper. I posted that in the elevator and down by the bins. It disappeared and nothing like that has happened again. Since then, we have started composting but it’s voluntary. Apparently the glass thing has changed again, but I don’t know how.”*
- *“A friend who lives in another strata receives a monthly notice that talks about all of this in a positive way, and says things like ‘thank you for carrying your compost in a leak-free container’. Every time I see it, I think that would be effective elsewhere.”*

4.4 Consistency of Sorting Rules

In a few situations, the discussion evolved to research participants wondering how to make the rules consistent regardless of where you are in the capital region, or on Vancouver Island.

- *“There is a lack of consistency from building-to-building and from municipality-to-municipality. Everybody has a different thing. It is a lack of a cohesive plan. We live on an island we should at least have cohesion on an island.”*
- *“I have heard of several instances of houses, [where] if you don’t sort it properly, the garbage collectors don’t collect it and they leave a pamphlet. Maybe there is something similar that can be done for apartment buildings.”*
- *“I think some actions can be taken by our government and municipalities. They now have three separate huge entities for garbage. Before I couldn’t recycle the paper sleeve when I composted my coffee cup but now I can. So there are these education components that you are all talking about but there are also these systematic things that need to change. I think some of those actions can change how we interact with our consumption.”*

4.5 Summary

This research indicates that much of the communications from building managers to tenants or owners is reactive – in other words, telling residents what they should not do, after something has been done incorrectly. We heard far more about that kind of message over proactive communications that focus on educating residents about what they should be doing.

Opportunities for the CRD to consider:

1. Work with stakeholders within the regional solid waste system (e.g. private haulers, municipalities, MFD) to develop collection programs that are more standardized and consistent regardless of who has the contract.
2. Develop and produce signage that can be posted in buildings to encourage residents and direct them to the correct bins for garbage and sorted recycling
3. As mentioned earlier, provide information for new tenants/owners when they move into a building that explain the waste collection/sorting process.

5. Notices from Building Management

5.1 Email

Although there was no consistent finding, most buildings lived in by research participants do send messages to residents via email.

However, in most cases, the messages relate to one-time issues, like unit inspections. In rental apartment buildings, communication is more sporadic. There was little mention of a scheduled newsletter for residents.

- *“If it’s really important we get an email. If it is kind of important, we get a message on our door if its “meh”, it’s on the bulletin board by the laundry room or garbage room that nobody reads.”*

5.2 Signage

Most, if not all, buildings have some type of bulletin board in the lobby, the mail room, or near the elevators to provide updates. As noted above, in more urgent or important situations, notices are placed on residents’ doors or slid under the door.

- *“We usually get an email and notices by the elevator in the lobby. Sometimes [we get] notices on the door, but that is for bigger issues.”*
- *“There is not a lot of signage anywhere. There is a bulletin board, but it doesn’t have much information.”*
- *“They have a bulletin board in the lobby and on every floor. If it is more important, they put it where you will push the button for the elevator. They will put notices in envelopes and tape it to everyone’s doors.”*
- *“There is signage at the entrance. If it is really important, we get an email. Mostly we have signage.”*

However, residents also indicated the messages can be easy to miss.

- *“Our building just puts notes up all the time, and they all have the same heading and format so there could be nine notes and they don’t look different. I don’t think anyone actually reads these things.”*
- *“In my building, they provide information. They slide notices under the door and most are concerned about rent. I don’t recall ever seeing a notice about garbage.”*
- *“My building does it all by paper. Usually everyone gets one for upcoming inspections, [things] like that. Then there are public notices put up and they look the same, even though it is only one at a time. But when [they were] updated, I didn’t notice for a while.”*

5.3 Summary

This need for better signage and communications provides two opportunities for the CRD:

1. Work with property managers and strata councils to produce and/or post signage that stands out from other building memos through better graphic design, messaging and creative execution.
2. Developing educational content about waste management and recycling for landlords and strata councils to include in their regular newsletters if they produce them.

6. Media/Sources of Information

Participants were asked where they would look for information regarding recycling if they needed it. The two sources of information mentioned most often were word of mouth and Google or Internet search.

6.1 Word of Mouth

Participants mentioned getting their information from friends and family the most, with one or two mentions of reaching out to their strata or building managers directly.

- *“I think asking people who grew up around here helps.”*
- *“I would ask my building management and that one girl at my work who is really smart.”*
- *“My first point of contact would be the building manager, then I would probably look at the Saanich website.”*
- *“This one is kind of a tough one for me. I get most of my media from word of mouth. I work one-on-one with people all day. So I get pieces of gossip all day and all week long.”*

6.2 Google Search

One of the most popular answers was conducting a search in Google. For example, opening up a browser window, and type in “Can I recycle...?”

- *“I do an online search. Google will give you the answer.”*

Some residents indicated they have either tried a Google search in the past and found it difficult to sort through, or perceive that it would be difficult.

- *“I feel like it would be the biggest nightmare of information. If I wanted to find information about recycling, I would think about googling the things specifically that I wanted to recycle. Then I would hope a government website would come up.”*

6.3 Website

There were a few mentions about referring to CRD online sources, such as the CRD website, myrecyclopedia.ca, and the RecycleCRD app. Others mentioned their local municipality website over the CRD website.

- *“I would expect to find some kind of city webpage that would tell me what’s available and what the different programs are. Maybe different companies that you can contract out.”*
- *“I go to the CRD website first. If it’s not there, they should know who is responsible.”*
- *“[I use the] Myrecyclopedia page that the CRD provides. It has vague categories. It has some example products. They try and break it down. But, they don’t say what not to do. It leaves a lot of people in the lurch I think.”*

6.4 Social Media and Traditional Media

Social media and traditional media were other sources of information mentioned by research participants.

- *“Social media and newspapers – Facebook and Instagram I use to get city updates and housing updates. But if it happens in the local community there is a neighbourhood feature on Facebook. And breaking news sites on Facebook news as well.”*
- *“For me social media is the fastest way to collect information. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Tik Tok.”*
- *“I go to Facebook and Twitter and search the municipalities.”*
- *“I use social media. Reddit and Facebook, and I read some online papers for more in depth.”*
- *“I read the Capital Daily e-newsletter.”*

7. Education Gaps and Learning More

At the end of each session, residents were asked what information they would like to know more about related to waste collection. What would help them participate more effectively in the program? The primary response was they would like to know more about the waste system

7.1 Recycling System

- How does the system work?
 - *“Where does the various types of waste end up? How long, time-wise, [does it take for items] to decompose - looking at the final outcome of what you are putting away, the footprint of it. It would be interesting.”*
 - *“The journey, what happens after the truck picks it up. I think that would be good to know so you know the impact of what you are doing. That would be cool.”*
- What is the journey for recyclables? Where do recyclables go?
 - *“I want to know where it goes. What happens with it? I would like to recycle glass more easily.”*
 - *“I would like to see proof that it actually gets recycled into something, not just dumped somewhere.”*

7.2 Sorting

- Residents need to more education and assistance to better understand the importance of properly sorting, including what happens when the various waste streams are too contaminated
 - *“Are we shipping our stuff out to Malaysia so it becomes someone else’s problem? If there is some version of hope, then people tune into doing it. But if they think they are doing it for no reason, it’s hard to get them on board.”*
 - *“Maybe some short videos of the ‘dos and don’ts’. Some people are visual. That way people don’t need to read tons of paragraphs. Quick and accessible.”*
 - *“Clear up the idea that using water to wash out the tins is wasting water. Which is better? I know some people who use that as a reason to not recycle. It would be nice to have clarification on that.”*
- Why is glass recycling is different?
 - *“I would like to know if the CRD or the Province has a long term plan to create a regional solution for recycling glass. It’s so strange.”*

7.3 CRD Website and App

- Updating the solid waste web page on the CRD website, to make it easier to find information about what can be recycled
 - *“Big green bar with a recycling icon right at the top that says Recycling help. That is a high concern for people going to the website. The bottle depot told people to go there a lot, and I don’t find it very user friendly.”*
 - *“The CRD is pretty boring in terms of what it looks like. It’s very administrative. It comes off as a government agency, which it is, but not one that comes across as cool and*

connected, or with a good user experience like our municipalities can be and some of the nonprofits that work alongside those groups.”

- *“The CRD has a lot of interesting and on topic programs that are running and a lot of information on recycling. But 100% it is boring to look through and hard to find at times.”*
- Promotion of myrecyclopedia.ca, and make it easy to search for specific items or categories of items, to determine if they can be recycled.
 - *“Have a good database of what you can recycle. What is “Soft” plastic? You can get really outdated or vague answers. “*

7.4 Outreach

- More education and outreach to the buildings, provide information that the strata council or building manager can share
 - *“Create something that makes it as easy as possible to use, like a packet of information that we can post around the building.”*

7.5 Summary

Other than word of mouth and imitating observed behaviour by other building residents, all respondents discussed looking for information online. Offering the most robust information and tools possible on the CRD website is critically important.

Online opportunities for the CRD include:

1. Provide clearer guidelines and instructions about how to sort and recycle in the MFD setting
2. Provide clearer guidelines and instructions about what is, and is not, garbage
3. Help residents understand the importance of waste diversion
4. Help residents understand how to reduce contamination in recycling streams
5. Further promote the ability to search for specific items on the CRD website to see if they can be recycled
6. Provide information about what happens ‘downstream’ after items are picked up; for example, this could include short videos/animations (15-30 seconds) that are easily digested, and easily distributed by social media

8. Attitudes towards conservation and the environment

Generally speaking, top of mind in efforts related to conservation tend to be related to the wallet. There is a difference between those renting and those living in strata buildings, because the strata owners pay their own electricity bill. Most units were heated by electric baseboard. Several had central heating.

- *"If I have to pay for something, I am more conscious of it. I tend to take long showers but at the same time I tend to avoid using lights when I don't need to. If I have to pay for it, I'm careful [about] what I use."*

MFD residents typically do not receive or pay a water bill. Some residents do pay attention to conserving water. For example, we heard this sentiment specifically from some new Canadian participants and from people who are more alert to water shortages elsewhere. However, most participants did not report being particularly concerned with water use efficiency.

- *"I pay Hydro and not water. I do tend to be more careful with the Hydro and not water. I might even decide to take a hot shower when I am cold versus turning on the heat."*
- *"You could run the water all day and it doesn't cost you anything."*
- *"Definitely some conservation of water on my part. If I am cleaning dishes, I don't leave the sink on all the time, and if there was a drip, I get the building to fix it."*
- *"Back in India I experienced water scarcity for most of my life. I understand the importance of water conservation. I don't use water more than I am supposed to."*
- *I grew up in a rural community on wells. So my habits are reflected in consumption here. My new girlfriend who grew up in Victoria just lets the tap run."*
- *"It would be great if we could get water consumption reports. It would help me regulate my use."*
- *"If I had to pay for my water, I would probably give my son a harder time for his long showers."*

Overall, residents do think about recycling and cutting down on packaging. The level of effort does vary, as does the emphasis on proper sorting and use of the waste collection streams.

- *"I agree with others said. I have been trying to cut down on packaging. I try and recycle whenever I can so it's not going to the landfill. Same with donating things and not just tossing it into the garbage."*

There is some consideration given to the reuse side as well, with buildings offering a specific bin to put items that can be reused, or having some specific days of the year associated with allowing residents to put out items they no longer need. We heard some mention of social media groups dedicated to reuse as well.

- *"I am a member of the buy nothing project. You build a sense of community in your micro neighborhood. I love that people post they need things and I look through my stuff and can give that."*

More research would be needed to properly quantify groups who are more or less engaged in conservation. In this research we identified a few possible trends between those who rent and apartments versus those who live in a strata, the size of the family living in the unit, and new Canadians or new residents of the capital region, versus those who have lived here for a longer time.

For new Canadians, it can be difficult to learn how to properly sort waste, as systems may be very different than where they come from.

- *“In India we don’t have recycling policy or sorting for garbage. When I came to Canada and [learned] that we needed to sort out our garbage ... I feel too lazy and don’t always do it.”*
- *“At home, we had a festival dedicated to burning old stuff - plastics or tires. Our background is just throwing garbage everywhere. When I moved to Canada and had to separate everything, it was a huge learning curve for me. [I am] still in the learning process of what goes where.”*

9. Biggest Takeaways for Focus Group Participants

Participants in these type of groups are always asked what stuck with them most from the session - the thing they will take away from the research. In no particular order, a sampling of responses include the following.

- *“Throwing out your food is probably a bigger deal than I think it is and I could be doing more. And that I have too long showers.”*
- *“Being more involved in what is up with the CRD and the programs and look more into where it is going.”*
- *“More joy and engagement around recycling.”*
- *“That the problems I experience are the same across the board.”*
- *“[I am] surprised how confusing the process is, and that they didn’t have it regulated better.”*
- *“I don’t have any problem doing my part and sorting things out but when I look in the big bins and see something I think ‘do I sort this out’? Does my property manager sort it out? Does the recycling person come and sort this out when they pick it up?”*
- *“Most people have varying knowledge about what they should do. I think the community as a whole needs to be better informed on how to properly recycle and better practices. Better job educating.”*
- *“I really like the idea of the CRD providing the information on the journey of a recycled item so that people can be more informed about what actually happens with that. It would be nice to have some truth. Follow the CRD on social media and inform myself.”*

Other Stakeholder Interviews

10. Property Managers

Five property managers were interviewed in this project. Four of the five respondents represented larger property management companies, with responsibilities for many properties throughout the capital region, including both purpose-built rental buildings and strata-owned buildings. One was an owner of a large company who manages many properties. The other three have responsibility for a portion of their company's total property portfolio. The fifth person worked for a smaller company that owns and manages a complex of three older apartment buildings. In some cases, these companies manage commercial units as well.

Summary of Properties Managed by Interviewees

Interview #	Company-wide	Units where Interviewee has direct responsibility		
		Rentals	Stratas	Municipalities
1	12,000+ units	7,000+ units	5000+ units (127 buildings)	All municipalities in CRD (for entire company)
2	10,000+ units	--	150+units (4 buildings)	All municipalities in CRD (for entire company) Victoria, Langford (for direct responsibility)
3	1,000+ units	--	300+ units (3 buildings)	Victoria, Saanich (for entire company) Victoria (for direct responsibility)
4	40 units	40 units (3 buildings)	--	Victoria (smaller company, all in Victoria)
5	10,000+ units	200+ units (3 buildings)	300+ units (5 buildings)	All municipalities in CRD (for entire company) Victoria, Saanich, North Saanich, Colwood, Langford, Oak Bay (for direct responsibility)

Types of Waste Collection and Recycling Offered by Property Managers Interviewed

Interview #	Garbage chutes	Garbage room on each floor	Central garbage room	Recycling options	Organics collection
1	Do not offer	Do not offer	All properties	All properties	All properties
2	Do not offer	Do not offer	All properties	All properties	All properties
3	Do not offer	Do not offer	All properties	All properties	All properties
4	Do not offer	Do not offer	Most properties	Most properties	Most properties
5	Few properties	Do not offer	All properties	Most properties	Few properties

Typically, companies negotiate a waste collection and recycling contract with one provider, and that company takes care of collection at all buildings they manage. On rare occasions, there may be overlap with multiple service providers if they take over management of a building with an existing contract, and they work with that provider until the contract runs out. However, interviewees report that they find it easier to negotiate and interact with one private waste hauler.

One representative from a larger property management company was currently in market to set up a new collection contract. They reported a lack of consistency in what companies offer, making negotiations more difficult.

- *“One of the difficult things when you're potentially switching from one company to another is some have the cardboard and paper mixed together and others say corrugated cardboard in one container, and paper has to be separated.”*

Pickup frequency varied across their portfolio and was less consistent than with residential collection. Factors included the number of units in the building, size of collection bins, space available for collection bins, and indoor versus outdoor location of the collection bins.

When we asked what the frequency would be for an ‘average’ building in their portfolio, the typically answer was garbage pick up twice a week, and recycling once a week to every two weeks.

10.1 Rules and Regulations

- Interviewees report that there are different policies regarding waste and recyclables collection depending on who the service provider is, and that lack of consistency creates problems with collection.
 - *“I can tell you with our rising costs, the last thing any landlord wants to hear right now is that the city or the CRD is going to require something new. Because we're just getting hit from every corner, but we can't get rent increases.”*
 - *“From one municipality to the other, the rules are different. You're mixing plastics and cans in recycling in Saanich, for instance, and in Oak Bay you can't do that.”*
 - *“I live in central Saanich and I work in Downtown Victoria, and I also look after units in another part of Saanich. They're all part of the CRD, but they've got their own rules.”*
- When rules for waste collection change, it can be complicated for older buildings to accommodate new requirements based on the space they have available.
 - *“The different municipalities and certainly the CRD have made it very difficult for long term existing stratas to be able to follow any of the new bylaws and rules, and create space to have more totes for different things because they just weren't there when the building was constructed.”*
- It is complicated to switch contracts with private collectors, as they seem to offer recycling services differently.
 - *“Things are done differently. For example, one says cardboard and paper should be mixed together. Others say to put corrugated cardboard in one, and paper has to be separate. Now you run into other problems as well. Are tenants going to do that? How do you retrain them? But the bigger problem is space. Now you need to have either another tote or bin, depending on the size of the complex you're talking about.”*

10.2 Compliance

- Compliance and effort is different between strata and rental units
 - *“Certainly owner occupied buildings are much more willing to sort and follow the rules. Mainly, because they pay for it. Their strata fees are paying for the cost of the garbage removal, the cleanup of the site around the garbage or recycling bins, and all of these things. Pride of ownership. In the rental, they know that it doesn't matter what happens or rent is going to be what it is. Garbage is included in it, so they don't pay as much attention to it.”*

10.3 Space Allocation

- Depending on the age of the building under management (strata or rental) the setup and space allotted for waste collection can vary significantly, and may be indoors or may be outdoors. Newer units - those built in the past 10 years - are more likely to have a better setup.
 - *“The setup in each building is very custom. It depends on the size and space available. Certainly, it depends on the number of units. And then [it depends on] what space do you have for the bins.”*
 - *“For a couple of our properties, there's limited space outside the building. Having a place to locate the waste bins that is convenient for the tenants, but also convenient for collection is a challenge.”*
- If the waste area needs to be outdoors due to space constraints, managers have to build locked structures to hold everything. This includes non-residents dumping illegally and is particularly a concern where there is more concentrated populations, for example around Downtown Victoria.
 - *“Without having a proper garbage structure built, your garbage is spread out every morning all over the place, the recycling is spread out, because there's been three or four different homeless [people] that have gone through it. Some are even sleeping in the cardboard bins every night. So, you know, it's difficult, but they won't let us build anything or the requirements of what they want are so expensive that, you know, especially in our rental properties, the owners are not willing to do it.”*
 - *“One strata we manage has made big changes as a result of the homeless problem. They took out their 3-yard bin and went to all totes and have them dumped daily. They started locking them inside by a stairwell, which likely means a problem with the fire department if they inspect. But they're tired. They're running out of money. And that's been their solution and it's been working for them for the last few months.”*
 - *“We looked into building structures, but they take room as well. These older buildings, they have enough parking spots there for one for each unit from when it was built, and you start building a structure? So, where do you build it?”*
- There is an opportunity to support and encourage landlords with accommodations for waste collection areas that would improve participation
 - *“Landlords are really not apt to do anything, but something does have to happen because we're also spending money to clean up the mess every morning.”*

10.4 Communication

- Having tenants in rental buildings follow instructions, and make the effort to properly sort their garbage and recycling
 - *“Getting the tenants to conform with the recycling rules [is challenging]. Revolving around the homeless again, we get a lot of tenants that think that it’s better to put their bottles or cans outside the bin because they know that the homeless are just going to come through it. So they set it beside, which then just creates another mess for the building manager.”*
 - *“We learned the best way over time. We do have all the programs at our buildings: the compost, we’ve got the recycling for paper, or for cans and plastic and, that type of thing. We have found, if you make it easy for the tenants, like an organized garbage room, having good signage and everything, they are more likely to do it right. They won’t just throw the garbage into the recycling or the recycling into garbage, if you can make it easy for them.”*

10.5 Collection Schedule

- Creating a balance of paying for frequent organics collection against the cost of the pickups and the smells and other challenges it can create if left too long
 - *“You’ve got to deal with smell of the organics. If you don’t pick it up within a couple of days, people are going to notice it. And then, they don’t want to go into a dirty garbage room. So, at the end of the day, we need to make sure that it’s picked up often enough.”*
 - *“For the garbage it’s regular, it’s weekly. For recycling we kind of stagger that a little bit it’s either biweekly or else on demand if we fill up faster than usual.”*

10.6 Conservation

- Property managers have a role but are not typically decision makers regarding conservation initiatives
 - Property managers make recommendations regarding conservation improvements to building owners or strata councils, but need buy-in from their client in order to move forward. Some building owners and councils are more progressive and proactive than others in this area.
 - *“Over the past few years, we’ve upgraded our heating systems. We’ve moved from oil heating to natural gas and done a bit of retrofitting there. And that’s actually been quite a quite a big saver in terms of heating costs.”*
 - *“I do work with one strata who is very interested in finding ways of using rainwater for irrigation purposes or reclaiming it for secondary uses, so we’re exploring that further.”*
 - *“I have a personal stance on conservation and what that means. But from a professional standpoint, I have to care as much or as little as my clients wish to care. We make recommendations, but ultimately it’s the building owner or the strata council who are our clients and we take their direction.”*

- Providing opportunities for residents to reuse items, or donate to an appropriate organization rather than sending it to the landfill.
 - Some of the buildings these companies manage have a process or program in place for reusable items. For example, one offers a 'swap' day one or two days a year. Others have a bin for items that can be reused or donated.
 - It is important to note that, based on these interviews, it appears these kinds of programs are driven by residents, and the property managers may not be actively involved (with the possible exception of cleaning up or setting up a bin).
 - *"We have a bin for reuse in the garbage area. Sometimes it's full, sometimes it's empty. If items have been there for a while, we will take them down to one of the local thrift stores."*
- Utilities
 - In rental buildings, utilities, such as heat, water and waste collection, are typically included in the rent.
 - In strata buildings, it's typical that water and common area heating and electrical are included in strata fees. For the most part, units are sub-metered for electricity, and each owner receives an electric bill. Where there are differences in heating and/or natural gas, it appears that this usually depends on how the building is heated (central heating versus baseboards or electric heaters in each unit). Some buildings have gas fireplaces; gas is included in strata fees unless the units are sub-metered for this.

10.7 Summary/Recommendations

Many of the recommendations that emerge from interviews mirror what we learned from speaking with residents in focus groups, particularly around the need more information and education.

- Information packages for tenants
 - *"One of the reasons that we've gone with our new supplier is their information package that will go up to all the tenants. It's very good, and we negotiated that they'll put that package together every year for every one of our tenants and our stratas. But nobody else offered that to us."*
- Explain to people why it's important to sort properly, for example, why it is important to rinse out cans.
- Promote existing opportunities, or create opportunities, for both residents and property managers to identify items to see if they can be recycled.
- Provide strata owners or rental tenants with bins they can use in their unit to collect recycling and organics, rather than requiring them supply their own.
- Further research or investigation could focus on policy or business model strategies and ways to work with key stakeholders to increase diversion. For example, the CRD could work with private waste haulers for more consistency or standardization in the types of sorting and recycling they offer. Similarly, CRD could supply owners and tenants with bins they can use in their unit to collect recycling and organics.

11. Strata Councils

Three of the strata council representatives we interviewed were from buildings in Victoria, and one was in Saanich. Three are currently strata council presidents; one was a strata council member responsible for the waste collection.

All four strata buildings have a central area where all waste is taken. They do not have garbage chutes or a garbage room on each floor. Additionally, all four stratas offer recycling and organics collection options.

The number of units varied:

- Interview 1 – 82 units
- Interview 2 – 190 units
- Interview 3 – 72 units
- Interview 4 – 35 units

11.1 Sorting

Generally, strata representatives feel residents take the time to properly sort their waste, and put them in the proper bins for garbage and recycling. They also take personal responsibility.

- *“We do our best to encourage owners to put their stuff in the right containers. I won't say we go through it and sort things. But every now and again, if we see something in the wrong container, we'll move it.”*

11.2 Other Recycling and Reuse Opportunities

Strata building managers take a more proactive role, and provide more opportunities for the owners to participate, including:

- annual ‘swap’ days, where owners can bring items they no longer need to a section of the parking garage or a room in the building so other owners can pick through them. In some cases, they have seen owners invite family members and friends to come and participate as well
- separate bins in the garbage area for more difficult to recycle items, like soft plastics and light bulbs
 - *“Until COVID struck we could get rid of plastic bags fairly easily. Victoria has banned plastic bags but it doesn't stop them from using them as packaging in groceries for things like produce. I would like to see more done in the way of picking up plastic bags. I know for Styrofoam there is a couple places that owners can drop it off, but there is no pick up.”*
- in some strata buildings, owners are provided an opportunity to drop off their bottles and cans, and have a resident who sorts and returns them. In one case, that owner was the benefit of the

funds raised through the collection, and in another they contributed any funds raised to their social and entertainment fund.

- having a reference manual for owners to use as a resource, which includes a section on how to sort waste and where to put it
- in some of their buildings, it can be difficult to forecast how often to pick up the various types of waste and adjust accordingly.

11.3 Conservation

The strata council members we spoke with indicate their buildings, and their unit owners, are quite committed to being good stewards of the environment.

Conservation efforts they discussed tended to be related to common areas and the grounds/landscaping. Each unit is individually owned, which makes it difficult to mandate any requirements for every unit.

- *"We recently have been looking into electric powered garden equipment versus gas powered. British Columbia is probably a leader in recycling and green initiatives. I know Victoria is looking to implement a bylaw to eliminate gas powered leaf blowers."*
- *"We've been updating the lighting, particularly our parkade lighting - LED lights. And there are motion sensors, so they aren't on all the time. And we'd love to do that in the hallways of the building down the road."*
- *"[conservation] is important to the owners. Every light bulb in the building is now LED, and we've got a whole lot of light bulbs. And we switched the last of the building over just a little over a year ago, from compact fluorescent to LED, and they are all on automatic dimmers."*
- *"We've certainly discussed the benefits of low flow toilets and stuff like that, but we have no mandate, because they're all individually titled units. So we can't force anybody to make that change. The water costs are in their strata fees, whether they use 10 gallons or 100 gallons. They don't care as much. We encourage things like taking a five minute shower, not a half hour shower."*
- Utilities
 - As mentioned with property managers, water is included in strata fees, as are any utility costs for shared common areas. Owners pay for their own electricity, and in the case of those we spoke to, the buildings that have natural gas fireplaces in each unit include gas costs in strata fees.
 - *"The strata pays the water bill for the whole building. Yeah, all of that comes out of the strata fees. So, we have two boilers on the roof that manage the hot water so we don't have individual hot water tanks in the units. It's all fed down from the roof. And they are gas."*
 - *"Each unit pays for heating their own suites, that is electric. We also have fireplaces, which most people don't use, but the gas is included in the strata fees."*

11.4 Summary

The strata council members' portion of this research aligned with learning from the residential focus groups. Strata building owners and managers are more proactive, and residents take more care in how they dispose of their waste. This is partially because of pride of ownership and because the fee for waste collection is included in strata fees.

Interviewees offered two suggestions on how they could be better supported by the CRD:

- Make it easier to find out if an item can be recycled or not.
 - *"It shouldn't be this hard to find out what to do with some of the items. Things like plastic bags, paper, and maybe little bubble packs from pills as examples."*
- Support better signage about the importance of sorting things properly, including working with private contractors to keep the message consistent.

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