

## **RDN Approves Grants for Innovative Zero Waste Projects**

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is pleased to announce \$300,000 in grants for five local organizations through the Zero Waste Recycling Funding program have been approved for 2022: Gabriola Island Recycling Organization (\$92,000), Loaves and Fishes Community Food Bank (\$92,000), Habitat for Humanity Mid-Vancouver Island (\$68,000), Nanaimo Recycling Exchange (\$45,500) and Island Futures Society (\$2,500). 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 couldn’t be happier with the commitment of local organizations who have developed creative and sustainable initiatives in support of a circular economy in our region,” said Tyler Brown, RDN Chair. “We look forward to another year of innovation that brings us closer to our 90 per cent waste diversion goal.”

The Gabriola Island Recycling Organization will use the funds for phase 2 of their textile recovery and clothing recycling program that diverts up to 23,600 kilograms of textile waste from the landfill. Loaves and Fishes Community Food Bank will continue their infrastructure and facility expansion to divert 50,000 to 120,000 kilograms of food waste annually. Habitat for Humanity will initiate a workspace mentorship program and continue their ReVive program that repurposes, and fixes donated items, both of which will generate revenue and divert material from the landfill. Nanaimo Recycling Exchange will deliver industry-specific best practice models and provide education and training across the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors. Island Futures Society will use the funds for their Waste Vegetable Oil Initiative to carry out research and market analysis for repurposing vegetable oil on Gabriola Island.

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 (SWMP) which proposes that grants be available through 2023. To learn more about the SWMP, visit [rdn.bc.ca/solid-waste-management-plan](https://rdn.bc.ca/solid-waste-management-plan). For tools and resources to help reduce waste in our community, visit [rdn.bc.ca/rethink](https://rdn.bc.ca/rethink).

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