



**Reducing Clothing Waste**  
**IN THE METRO VANCOUVER REGION**

**Karen Storry**  
SENIOR PROJECT ENGINEER

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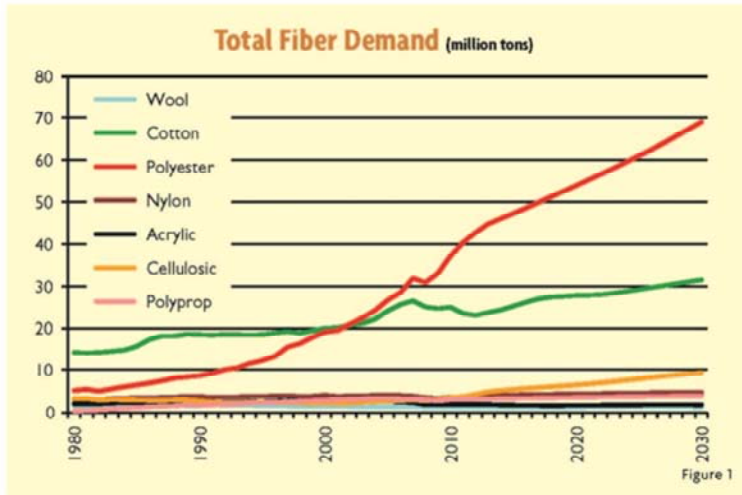


Through the Chair. Thank you for having me here to talk about reduction clothing waste in the metro Vancouver region

In this presentation I'll go over

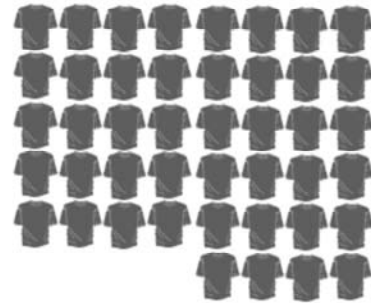
1. The impacts of take-make-waste fashion
2. What currently happens to donated clothing
3. What initiatives Metro Vancouver is taking to reduce clothing waste

# Increasing Quantity of Clothing Waste



Source: Textilesworld.org

## Regional Clothing Waste:



17lbs per person per year (equivalent to ~44 t-shirts)

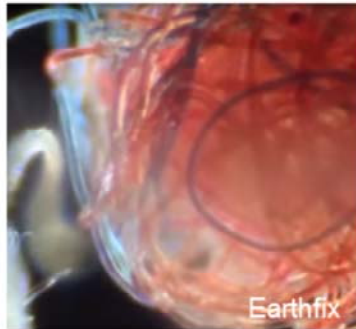
Global fibre production started to skyrocket in 2002 when China entered the World Trade Organization. Since 2002 we have seen an increase number of fashion seasons, cheaper clothing, faster turnover in fashion trends and overall an increase in consumption clothing. The result? More clothing waste!

In 2016, Metro Vancouverites threw out 17lbs of clothing per person. That is equivalent to the weight of 44 t-shirts!

## Other Impacts of 'Take-Make-Waste' Fashion



Polluted Waterways  
from Dyes and  
Chemicals



Oceans Plastics  
From Washing



Business Risk

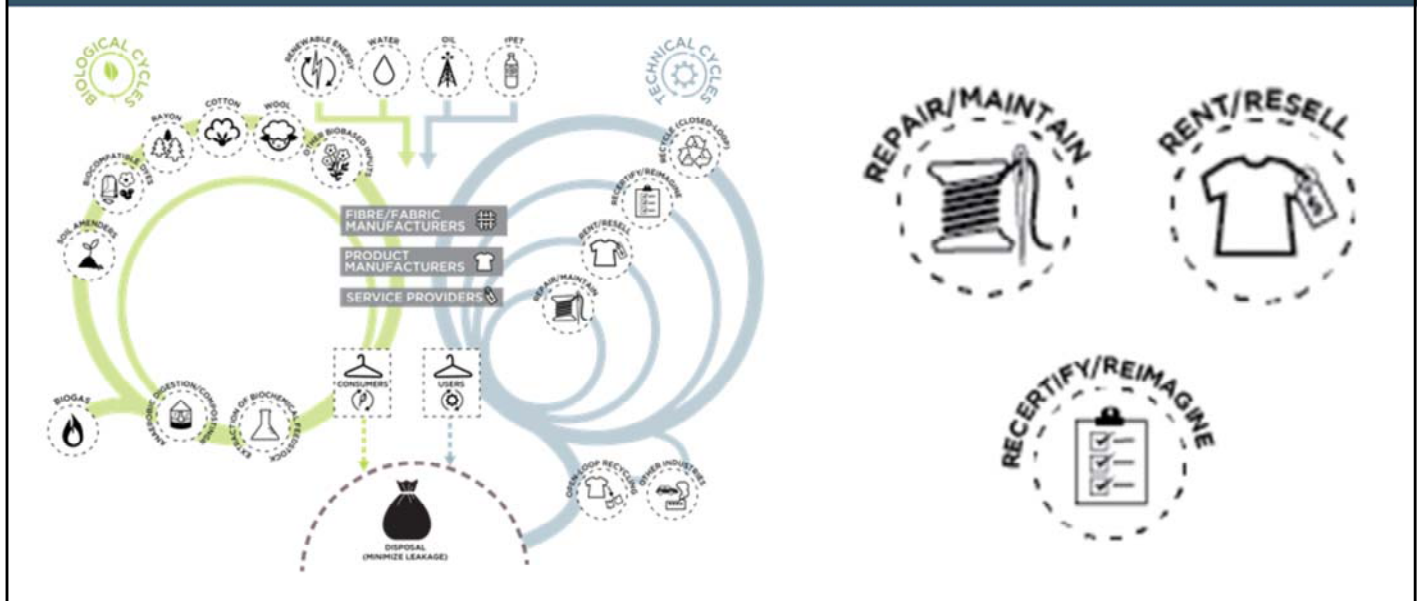
In addition to increasing clothing waste, take-make-waste or linear fashion also results in a number of other concerns:

Dyes and chemicals are a major source of water pollution in the communities where our clothing is made

Over over 60% of clothing we wear are plastic (e.g. polyester, nylon or rayon). As a result we are starting to see clothing fibre microplastics in our oceans. These microplastics are starting to impact the health of the marine life which we depend on for food.

The costs for the inputs inputs such as water, energy, oil and cotton needed to sustain the take-make-waste fashion business are increasing. As a result take-make-waste fashion is becoming less profitable.

# Circular Economy Fashion Models



Apparel waste and the other impacts is the symptom of people not wearing their clothes as many times as they used to. A survey of 2000 women in the UK found women wear an item of clothing an average of only 7 times.

In order to effectively reduce clothing waste we to focus on increasing circular fashion – which, increases the number of wears per item.

Circular Fashion calls for us all to rethink clothing by:

1. Increasing wears per clothing item by making them last longer through design for durability
2. Increasing wears by following the care instructions and repairing clothes
3. Buying used. Or renting instead of owning clothing. Perfect for things like fancy dresses and suits that you may not wear as many times as your jeans.
4. Recertifying clothes that were delivered with a crooked pocket and resewing the pockets on. And taking clothing that is out of style and giving it a second life by re-dyeing it or re-sewing it into something new.

What about recycling clothes into new clothes?

1. Currently less than 1% of clothing are recycled into new clothes so the closed-loop recycling isn't a commercially viable option just yet.

# Research Highlights



Unraveling Apparel  
Waste in the  
Greater Vancouver  
Area



Regional Scholar  
Recycling Research



Microplastics

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Metro Vancouver collaborated with several organizations to publish a baseline study to help, government, academia and business better understand the current system, its impacts and the opportunities to shift towards circular fashion. The report has over 1000 reads and there has been positive feedback from the fashion and used clothing collection communities.

We hired a regional scholar to look into recycling technologies to better understand the opportunities for recycling to help reduce apparel waste. Her report is now available online

Our liquid waste department is working with apparel brands to better understand the issue of microplastics from apparel at our Annacis research centre.

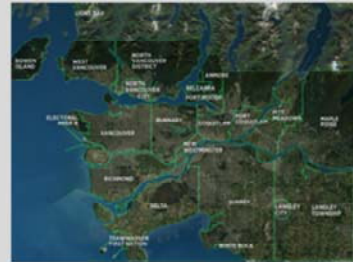
# Outreach and Collaboration Highlights



Behaviour Change Campaign



National Zero Waste Council



Collaboration

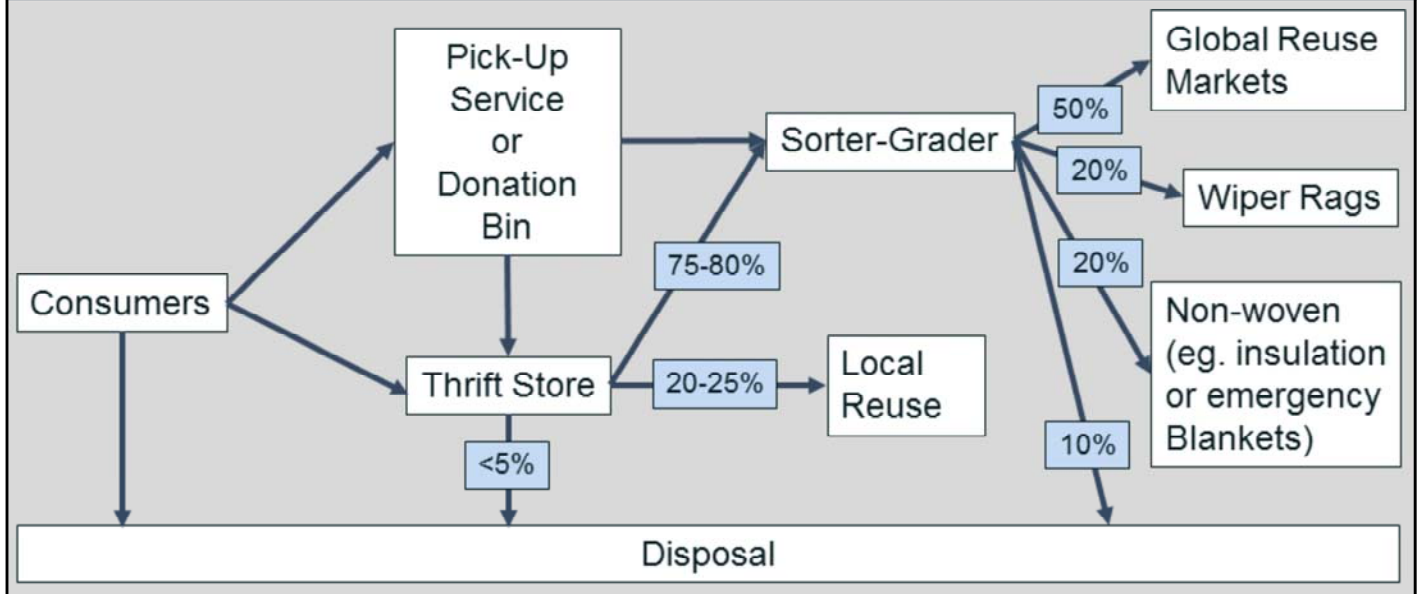
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With the goal of reducing apparel waste, Metro Vancouver solid waste and communications experts are working together to create a behavior change campaign. We are currently gathering insights from industry and key stakeholders and we are aiming for the campaign to go live early 2019.

Metro Vancouver is collaborating with the National Zero Waste Council to scale up the conversation on clothing waste reduction to the national level. In those conversations it is exciting to hear that some retailers and brands are interested in trying to work towards circular fashion.

As we work towards reducing apparel waste Metro Vancouver will work collaboratively with member jurisdictions to promote behavior change campaigns and explore additional programs and policies that can support reduction of clothing waste in the region.

# The Journey of Clothing Donations



In our research we found that some of our apparel waste is diverted through local reuse.

However, the volume of clothing donated is higher than the demand for local reuse.

Instead of disposing of what doesn't sell locally; the material is sold to used clothing brokers, known in the industry as sorter-graders.

The sorter-graders then, sort the clothing and sell:

50% to global reuse markets

20% to wiper rags for industrial cleaning; and

20% to non-woven manufacturers of materials like insulation and emergency blankets.

