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## METRO VANCOUVER EXPANDS MULTI-FAMILY RECYCLING PROJECT

The lessons learned from a pilot project that almost tripled the recycling rate at one large apartment and townhouse complex in Port Coquitlam will be applied at all other Metro Vancouver-owned housing facilities.

Metro Vancouver made the announcement today, during Waste Reduction Week.

In privately and publicly owned multi-family buildings across the region, the average waste diversion or recycling rate is just 16 per cent.

That's far lower than the 46 per cent average recycling rate for single-family homes.

"With some time, effort and small investments, virtually any apartment or condominium can implement the lessons learned during this pilot project to reduce waste and maximize recycling," said Metro Vancouver Board Chair Lois E. Jackson.

"A higher recycling rate at multi-family homes will help the region achieve its aspirational goal of a 80 per cent waste diversion rate by 2020," Jackson said.

Greg Moore, the Chair of Metro Vancouver's Waste Management Committee, underscored the need to increase the recycling rate in multi-family homes.

"We need to make it easier to recycle in these kinds of homes by setting aside twice as much space for recycling and composting as we do for garbage," Moore said.

In November 2008, Metro Vancouver announced it would be testing new ways to increase the low recycling rates at multi-family homes.

Since the launch of the pilot project at two Metro Vancouver-owned housing facilities, residents have been throwing away less and recycling more. The two facilities are owned and operated by the Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation, which provides affordable housing at more than 50 sites for about 10,000 people across the region.

Using a four-month average to even out the seasonal variations of garbage generation, the recycling rate at Kingston Gardens, a 196-townhouse facility in Surrey, increased to 21 per cent from 14 per cent.

At Meridian Village, the 202-unit apartment and townhouse facility in Port Coquitlam, the recycling rate went up more dramatically. The recycling rate at Meridian Village almost tripled, increasing to 28 per cent from the old recycling rate of 10 per cent.



Focus groups found many residents had given up on recycling because the recycling totes were often overflowing. Simply providing more totes, cardboard bins and food scrap collection totes greatly increased the amount of material diverted from the landfill. The common areas used for recycling were also expanded to provide more room for recyclables.

Language was another potential barrier to recycling. People who live at the two housing facilities have 22 different mother tongues. To overcome the language barrier, Metro Vancouver staff developed a recycling booklet that uses pictures or graphics, not text.

In five months, seven tonnes of cardboard was diverted from the two sites, representing about 240 trees worth of fibre. In the past year, Meridian Village has diverted a total of thirteen tonnes of compostable material.

The lessons learned from the pilot project will be rolled out at five more Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation facilities over the coming months, and then to its other facilities.

Metro Vancouver also encourages privately-owned multi-family housing facilities to take steps to reduce waste and increase recycling.

Metro Vancouver has already been working with Gateway Property Management, a rental property management company, on several pilot projects to increase recycling at its rental buildings.

Mandatory recycling in apartments, townhouses and condominiums is one of several dozen waste reduction initiatives outlined in Metro Vancouver's new Integrated Solid Waste and Resource Management Plan, which is currently awaiting provincial government approval.

***For more information please contact the Information Centre at 604-432-6200.***