



Going Green

Winter 2012/2013

Compost Program Expands

The composting program that began years ago at the Ingram Street building is being kicked up a notch. Food waste items that staff so carefully sort into the Organics bin in the Ingram Street Staff Room are transferred to an organics tote located behind the building and picked up by BFI for composting. Starting in January 2013, paper towels collected from Ingram Street washrooms will be added to the compost pile.



Composting signs at washroom bins

The CVRD is now diverting 100% of the paper towels generated in Ingram Street washrooms away from the landfill. Instead of going to a landfill more than 300 kilometres away in Washington State, the paper towels, along with all the lunchroom food waste, are composted by the International Composting Corporation near Duke Point, Nanaimo, where they are turned into nutrient rich compost.

The 240 litre / 64 gallon organics tote behind the Ingram Street building will soon be joined by a second tote to handle the increased volume of compostables. The totes will be emptied every Tuesday by BFI. The volumes will be monitored and the pickup schedule will be adjusted as needed.

The secret to the compost pilot is using certified compostable bags, which will break down at the same rate as other materials like yard waste and food scraps, without leaving any toxic residues behind. These bags are more expensive than plastic garbage bags, but janitorial staff extend their use by emptying washroom bags into a larger compostable bag each day. Biodegradable bags will break down with sunlight in 20 years instead of the 200 years it takes plastic bags to break down, but they break down into smaller bits of plastic, and so are not compostable.

This program will be expanded to other CVRD facilities as soon as organics collection has been established. The Green Team investigated installing air wands in washrooms in place of paper towels, but decided against this noisy, expensive, and energy consuming option.

Remember, only compostable items can go in the washroom receptacles now. Use stall receptacles or hall bins for any metal or plastic items.

Coming soon: individual compost bins for each desk, and four stream bins for compost, recycling, returnables, and garbage in the main hallways at all CVRD facilities. The goal is to make composting and recycling easier, and contributing to the landfill more difficult in our everyday activities.

Electric Vehicle Charge Stations

Level 2 electric vehicle charge stations will soon be installed at all CVRD recreation centres, thanks to several successful grant applications and some funding provided by the CVRD Green Team. Stations have been installed at the Kerry Park Recreation

Centre and the Cowichan Lake Sports Arena. To qualify for the provincial grants, the remaining charge stations at the Shawnigan Lake Community Center and the Island Savings Centre will need to be installed before the end of March 2013.

The charge stations will be ready for public use as soon as Point of Sale (POS) equipment is enabled. Not only do POS units allow drivers to pay with their credit cards, they also broadcast the location of the charge station to electric vehicle motorists.



KPRC's Level 2 Electric Vehicle Charge Station, located at the back of the building.

Most of the CVRD's electric vehicle charge stations are Level 2 (240 Volt) units, which can fully charge a vehicle in six to eight hours. The CVRD will also be host to one of only thirteen 500 Volt DC Fast Charge stations in BC, which can fully charge an electric vehicle in 26 minutes. It will be installed at the Island Savings Centre beside their Level 2 station.

Coffee Funds

One of the items on the Green Team's priority list was to review the purchasing of bulk items such as coffee, sugar, and creamer.

Each facility has a unique approach. At the Ingram Street building, staff have the option to contribute via paycheque deductions to a coffee fund which is used to make bulk purchases of coffee, tea, milk, cream, and sugar. Separate coffee funds exist for staff

who use the Maintenance and Administration break rooms at the Island Savings Centre. In smaller areas such as the Shawnigan Lake Community Centre and isolated sections of the Island Savings Centre, staff bring their own supplies from home or go to nearby coffee shops.

For staff at facilities with fewer full time staff and more people who work shifts, are casuals, or only work when an event is happening, bulk purchasing of coffee break supplies is not a practical option. Pooling funds to purchase supplies for multiple facilities is not feasible either, as the CVRD's facilities are located far apart geographically, making it logistically challenging to distribute the supplies.

In short, staff are already doing what they can to pool resources and buy coffee break supplies in bulk.

Alternative Transportation Barriers

During Bike to Work Week 2012, staff were surveyed to discover what barriers might be preventing them from using alternative methods of transportation for their commute to work. The top reported reason for driving to work instead of taking the bus or riding a bike was scheduling conflicts with before and after work commitments. The full survey results can be found on the Green Team's Staffnet page under Tools & Resources: <http://www.cvrld.bc.ca/index.aspx?nid=1330>.

Allocation of Green Team Budget

The Green Team's 2012 \$10,000 budget was spent as follows:

- \$555 for local food BBQs at CVRD facilities
- \$100 contribution toward Christmas party designated driver van rental
- \$6200 for electric vehicle charging stations with POS at CVRD facilities (\$2067 each for CLSA, KPRC, and ISC)