



Share Reuse Repair

ACTION GUIDE

April 2025

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Environment and
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Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada



Share
Reuse
Repair



A project of
MakeWay

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About SRRI

Founded in 2018, SRRI is a nonprofit organisation with a mission to make sharing, reuse and repair a cornerstone of everyday life for Canadians.

We connect the four corners of the economy – government, business, nonprofits and communities - so they can actively engage in, and benefit from, a sustainable circular economy that creates lasting environmental, economic and social benefits. SRRI is on the MakeWay shared platform.



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Introduction

This guide provides Canadian local governments¹ with practical, accessible resources to help identify and implement strategic share, reuse, and repair (SRR) initiatives that fit their unique context. By embracing these strategies, local governments can reduce environmental impact while achieving a range of other community benefits.

¹ In this guide, the term local government refers to both municipal and regional governments.

Why Share, Reuse, Repair?

SRR initiatives can be a powerful opportunity for local governments to build more circular and resilient communities while reducing waste and emissions.

Circularity means closing product and material loops to maximize economic, social, and environmental value. Practices like sharing, reuse, and repair reduce landfill waste while also cutting upstream resource use and emissions from production (see below: “SRR Can Dramatically Reduce Upstream Emissions”).

At a time of economic uncertainty, SRR can also enhance community resilience, providing low-cost goods to meet residents’ needs, support existing business and creating new opportunities that support new local jobs.



SRR Can Dramatically Reduce Upstream Emissions

SRR initiatives reduce both upstream emissions (from production and shipping) and downstream emissions (from disposal). While only 10-20% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions come from disposal on average⁴, the majority are released upstream from manufacturing and transportation.

In many communities, textiles, plastics, and electronics contribute the most to emissions associated with household goods due to their high production impacts (particularly textiles and electronics) and large waste volumes (particularly plastics).

By buying less “new stuff”, extending product lifespans and enhancing their usage, we can significantly reduce demand for virgin resources and cut lifecycle carbon emissions meaningfully across supply chains and in our communities.

Tackling the waste challenge in a circular way

Canada generates more garbage per capita than any other country, burdening local governments with high waste management costs—the City of Toronto spends \$1 million daily to keep waste moving², while Metro Vancouver spends \$3.6 million annually on illegal dumping cleanup³.

Current consumption is largely linear—goods are bought, used, and discarded—depleting Earth’s resources, filling landfills, and creating harmful carbon emissions and pollution. Circular solutions like SRR offer ways to reduce waste and emissions in Canadian communities.

² Charles Wilkins. (2017, November 4). [Canada’s dirty secret](#). Canadian Geographic.

³ Metro Vancouver (2021). Zero Waste Committee: [Rethink 2gether Presentation](#).

⁴ BCIT Centre for Ecocities (2025), [CBEI and Ecological Footprint Archetype Tool](#), and [Consumption and Consumption-based Solutions for Climate Action Guide](#).

Community Benefits from Sharing, Reuse and Repair

Sharing, Reuse and Repair can bring a range of environmental, economic, and social benefits to your community, including:



Reduces waste management burden and cost: By lowering demand for new goods and waste disposal, sharing, reuse, and repair reduce landfill waste, extend landfill lifespan, and cut waste management expenses.



Lowers environmental impact: Less waste and demand for new items conserves resources and reduces emissions from their production.



Enhances affordability: Free or low-cost access to clothing and household goods, and repair opportunities, helps mitigate rising living costs due to inflation and economic pressures.



Supports local economy: (Reuse & Repair) Creates opportunities for employment and skill-building, including for individuals with special needs; provides revenue-generating potential for individuals or charities; fosters and supports businesses with SRR practices.



Expands awareness and access to sustainable choices: Provides residents access to sustainable practices in their everyday lives while enabling local governments to play a role in education and engagement



Strengthens community resilience: Fosters community connections, intergenerational learning, skill-sharing, and community resilience.



**Bold steps
toward meaningful
circular innovation**
demonstrate what's
possible and inspire
others to join
this path.

What's in this Guide?

The guide is structured into four steps:

Step 1:

Learn about share, reuse, and repair - gain a basic understanding of share, reuse, and repair activities, and the various organizations you can partner with to support your efforts.

Step 2:

Assess your starting point - evaluate your current capacity for taking on, or expanding SRR initiatives, and use guiding questions to identify actions that could be well suited to your community and learn where to find them in the Guide.

Step 3:

Explore actions - delve into a comprehensive set of potential actions, organized by the share, reuse, repair categories. Each action has options based on level of effort, and provides steps, resources, and inspiring examples of initiatives already happening in Canadian communities.

Step 4:

Formulate a **Plan** - receive guidance about key considerations and steps for getting started on your SRR journey, whether it be starting from scratch, or integrating into existing efforts.



Step 1.

Learn About Share, Reuse and Repair

What is Share, Reuse, Repair?

Sharing, reusing, and repairing are practical approaches that enable individuals to extend the lifespan of products and maximize their use. These collectively contribute to a more circular economy, offering a valuable opportunity to reduce lifecycle waste and carbon associated with products and services.



Sharing minimizes the need for individual ownership by providing shared access goods and services. This can take various forms, from informal neighbor-to-neighbor exchanges and non-monetized sharing, to fee-based membership models and for-profit leasing systems. Through sharing, the use of products and materials are maximized, reducing the overall demand for new goods and minimizing idle resources.

→ **Examples:** lending libraries; clothing and goods swaps; clothing subscriptions; furniture leasing; and goods sharing platforms.



Reuse encourages people to access existing products over purchasing new ones. This includes goods that are resold in their original form as well as those that are repurposed into something new. Through reuse the lifespan of products and materials are extended before they are recycled or landfilled.

→ **Examples:** thrift stores; online resale platforms; refillable containers; donating second goods; and upcycled products made from salvaged items or “waste” materials.



Repair extends the useful life of products, addressing the waste inherent in consumer products with increasingly short life spans. Repair also enhances the potential for sharing and reuse. Repair initiatives range from grassroots, volunteer-led efforts to policy measures that encourage or require manufacturers to design products with repairability in mind.

→ **Examples:** repair cafés; local repair businesses; online repair platforms with guides, parts, and training resources.



Who's Involved with Sharing, Reuse and Repair

SRR initiatives are gaining momentum across the country, driven by a diverse network of stakeholders, including all levels of government, businesses, nonprofits, and individuals. Each group brings unique strengths, resources, and expertise to the table, making collaboration important for scaling up these efforts and maximizing their impact.

SRR initiatives are gaining momentum across the country, driven by a diverse network of stakeholders, including all levels of government, businesses, nonprofits, and individuals.

- **Local governments** serve as community enablers and leaders, by developing policies, providing infrastructure, and delivering or supporting community programs.
- **Regional and provincial governments** serve as coordinators, regulators, and funders by coordinating programs, funding initiatives, and setting regulations to promote circularity.
- The **federal government** serves as policy drivers and funders by setting ambitious targets, funds research, and aligns policies with circular economy priorities.
- **Businesses** serve as innovators and circular economy champions by integrating circularity principles into business models.
- **Nonprofits and community organizations** are often at the forefront of SRR efforts, providing hands-on solutions and community engagement.

The following table explores these roles in more detail. You will note that actions at the end of the table do not have a role for local government but still support the transition to a more circular economy.

Who's Involved with Sharing, Reuse and Repair

Roles	Local Government	Regional and Provincial Government	Federal Government	Business	Nonprofits and Community Orgs
Develop comprehensive SRR programs, including embedding into broader sustainability, circular economy, and zero waste initiatives.	X	X	X		
Zoning and bylaws to enable repair cafés, tool libraries, and community swap events.	X				
Funding and grants to support local nonprofits and businesses focused on SRR, and incentives to encourage adoption of circular economy practices.	X	X	X		
Provide spaces for community-driven SRR initiatives, such as hosting repair workshops in libraries or community centers.	X	X		X	X
Lead by example through procurement policies that prioritize durable, repairable or refurbished goods, or those that have recycled content.	X	X	X	X	X
Education and public awareness campaigns.	X	X	X	X	X
Organize repair cafés, tool libraries, clothing swaps, and upcycling programs.	X				X
Advocate for (or lead) policy changes that support the right to repair and reuse.	X	X	X	X	X
Develop and support extended producer responsibility (EPR) programs that include reuse and repair targets and practices.		X	X	X	
Implement right-to-repair legislation to ensure access to spare parts, repair manuals and address digital and warranty barriers.		X	X		
Invest in research and development to advance circular product design and material innovation.			X	X	
Offer repair services, rental models, and product take-back programs.				X	



Step 2.

Assess Your Starting Point

Selecting the most effective SRR initiatives for your community will depend on its unique characteristics—what works in one context may not fit another.

This section will help you assess your community's starting point for adopting or expanding SRR initiatives. It explores issues around internal and external capacity and helps you identify opportunities that fit with your community's needs, existing SRR activities and waste and materials management infrastructure. It will also direct you to places and examples in the Step 3: Explore section of this guide.

Assess Capacity for Action

To get started, consider these questions to help assess your starting point for action. Answer low, medium or high to the following questions:

Low – Limited experience with SRR, support, activity, or resources. SRR is not yet a priority. Staff capacity and budget are minimal, and elected officials are not engaged or aware.

Medium – Some experience with SRR, moderate level of support, and some existing SRR events or activities. There is some staff awareness with at least one internal champion, modest budget or time allocated to SRR, and interest from one or two elected officials.

High – Strong experience, active support, and regular SRR activities. There is some dedicated staff and budget, strong community involvement, and clear support from some elected officials and internal champions.



TIP Build awareness amongst staff and council by sharing this guide, or information available on the [Share Reuse Repair Initiative website](#) and the [Circular Innovation website](#).

	L	M	H
What is your local government's level of experience supporting or hosting SRR initiatives?	☐	☐	☐
How would you characterise your staff's level support for SRR initiatives, as a whole?	☐	☐	☐
How much SRR activity do you think is already present in your community that is led by community organizations or businesses?	☐	☐	☐
How would you characterise your elected officials' level support for SRR initiatives, as a whole?	☐	☐	☐
What is your staff capacity or available budget for working on SRR activities?	☐	☐	☐

If you answered mostly **low** on these questions, focus on **building internal awareness** and then start with **lower-effort actions** such as providing support for existing community-led swaps, repair cafes, neighborhood-wide yard sales or reuse centres/fairs, if they exist in your community.

If you answered mostly **medium** on these questions, begin with **medium-effort actions** such as co-hosting SRR events or providing permanent spaces for tool/lending libraries with a community partner(s), or by contracting SRR services through an external party.

If you answered **high** on most of these questions, you're ready for **higher-effort initiatives** such as local government-led SRR events or places, adding reuse to your transfer station(s) or securing a partner to redirect bulky items programs to those in need. At the highest level, you might consider initiating new SRR programs or a comprehensive set of SRR programs embedded in waste management and other local government plans and policies.

There are some unique circumstances that might change where you decide to focus. For example, if you have high support from elected officials and staff - particularly staff in leadership positions, you might consider choosing SRR actions with medium or higher levels of effort.



TIP There are icons throughout the Explore (Step 3) section of this guide that highlight SRR initiatives with low, medium and higher levels of effort, time and resources. Highlight the actions that you think you might like to explore implementing or supporting in your community.

Identify Priority Needs and Opportunities

Consider the following questions to identify action areas that could have a positive impact in your community. Each action has options for low to higher levels of municipal effort. We also provide some suggestions for actions suited to communities of various sizes.



TIP Highlight your answers below to refer back to later.

Community Assessment

Are there already swap events for goods or clothing in your community?

YES / NO

See [Free Swaps](#)



Potential SRR Actions

IF YES



Particularly if affordability is a key concern, consider:

Providing light support for existing swaps - grants, promotion, free community space (like [Toronto Free Markets](#))



Partnering with community organizations and providing funding or helping with event logistics (like [Squamish's Reuse-it Fair](#))

IF NO



Consider initiating a swap with community partners or (like [Grand Prairie's Drop & Swap](#))

Are there already lending or tool libraries in the community?

YES / NO

See [Lending and Tool Libraries](#)

IF YES



Consider:

Promoting existing lendaries, providing a grant or waive business or permitting fees



Helping to incubate a social enterprise lending library in larger multi-family developments or high rises like Vancouver's [Thingery](#)



Helping to incubate and providing long-term support like the [Halifax Tool Library](#)

IF NO



Consider starting a lending library in collaboration with a public library like [York Region's Lendary](#)



Community Assessment



Potential SRR Actions

Do you have a transfer station or other waste facility with extra space?

YES / NO

Or one that is due for redesign?

YES / NO

IF YES Consider:



Adding a free store to your transfer station if you're a smaller community (like [Mt. Lorne](#))



Providing space and bins for residents to donate items for pick-up and reuse by a charitable partner - (like [Leduc](#)) and [Metro Vancouver](#)



Redesigning your transfer station to allow space for reuse

IF NO

Then focus on off-site opportunities like [swaps](#), [reuse drop-off events](#), [community yard sales](#) and [repair cafes](#) that prevent waste from coming into municipal waste systems.

See: [Reuse at Municipal Transfer Stations](#)

Is your landfill nearing capacity?

YES / NO

See:

[Community Yard and Garage Sales](#)

[Bulky Household Reuse](#)

[Comprehensive SRR Programs](#)

IF YES Then focus on diverting items that take up lots of space in your landfill, by:



Supporting community yard sales where residents can sell bulky and other items from their homes like the [Great Glebe Garage Sale](#).



Initiating and leading a regular community-wide yard sale like [Coquitlam's Yard Sale and Giveaway Events](#) or if you live in a colder climate consider something like [Yellowknife's Annual Indoor Garage Sale](#).



Finding a charitable partner to collect and redistribute bulky household items for reuse like [Drummondville, Quebec](#)

IF NO

Developing a comprehensive set of SRR Programs like [York Region, Ontario](#), to significantly reduce waste to landfill.

Are there permanent reuse centres or stores in your community?

YES / NO

See: [Reuse Stores and Centres](#)

IF YES Consider:



Promoting them or providing modest grants or logistical support like [Raven ReCentre](#), Yukon.



Providing space, funding, organizing collection events, and integrating them into waste management plans like [Hodge Podge Lodge](#).

IF NO

Consider:

Events that bring reuse to your residents - [swaps](#); [lending libraries](#), and [community yard sales](#).

Reaching out to provincial recycling or circular economy organizations to support reuse centres across your province like in [Quebec](#).



Community Assessment



Potential SRR Actions

Are there existing repair cafes or repair opportunities in your community?

YES / NO

See [Repair Cafes](#)

IF YES



Consider:

Providing a venue or light support so community-led repair cafes that can be run consistently, like [Saskatchewan Repair Cafes](#)

IF NO



...and particularly if affordability is a key concern, consider:

Organizing a municipal-led repair cafe embedded in the community like [City of Toronto repair cafes](#) with community partners

Are you seeing diminishing returns from existing diversion efforts and want to avoid costly new infrastructure?

YES / NO

IF YES



and particularly if you anticipate population growth placing more burden on already strained waste infrastructure, consider:

Embracing a [comprehensive set of SRR Programs](#) integrated into waste management and other municipal policy like in [York Region](#)

Do you have SRR events, places and businesses dispersed through your community?

See [Virtual Hubs](#)

IF YES



and particularly if you want to also promote local businesses with SRR practices, consider:

Providing some funding to join [Circular Innovation Council's SRR Virtual Hub](#) - a searchable inventory of SRR events, businesses and other opportunities to enhance access by residents



See if your Provincial recycling entity has, or is, planning to add SRR to searchable databases like the [Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Hub](#)



Step 3.

Explore
Share, Reuse
and Repair
Actions



This section provides a range of actions that local governments can implement categorized into three key areas: **Share, Reuse, and Repair**. Each action includes the following content:

- Description of the Strategy
- Benefits
- How Does it Work? (who, where, when, and how)
- Local Government Roles - ranging from low effort to highest effort options
- Challenges and Solutions
- Examples (of existing actions by local governments)
- Resources
- Icons indicate the level of effort for each action



Low

Requiring minimal planning and resources, such as promoting or supporting existing efforts by community organizations.



Medium

Requiring more coordination and community engagement, such as co-hosting SRR actions with a community partner, or contracting an external organization.



Highest

Requiring more extensive planning, management and engagement, with local governments in a leadership role while, often engaging community partners to support.

Share

Sharing minimizes the need for individual ownership by providing access to shared goods and services.

Actions for local governments to consider in this section include:

- Free Swaps
- Lending and Tool Libraries



Free Swaps

Free swaps are events where participants bring and exchange reusable clothing and household items they no longer need.

Clothing swaps that involve local governments in Canada tend to be larger events held at public venues that often involve hundreds of participants. Some swaps also include household items and education about the environmental impacts of wasteful consumption practices. Swaps are still primarily run by nonprofits and community organizations, but there are examples where local governments are key partners and some where they lead.

Benefits:



→ **Unique benefits: provide residents an opportunity to responsibly declutter.**

Research by SRRI indicates that clothing swaps, which range from small and localized to community-wide events, **can divert anywhere from 250 to over 1180 kgs of textiles from landfill disposal per event⁵.**

⁵ Based on interviews conducted for this report.

Free Swaps

How does it work?

Who? Organized by citizens, nonprofits, community organizations, and/or local governments in various combinations. Attended by individuals seeking affordable clothing or goods or those wanting to declutter responsibly and see items passed directly to others.

Where? Venues may include community centres, other local government venues or public spaces.

When? Typically organized as annual or biannual events. Consistency allows participants to plan in advance and thus store items for reuse.

How? Participants bring unwanted clean clothing (and household items where relevant) to exchange with others. A ticketing system can be used to signal priority shopping status, track attendance and stay within space capacity. Events may incorporate education on sustainable consumption, repair opportunities, and donation or recycling options. Effective promotion is essential for a successful initiative.

Local Government Roles



Low effort

Provide small grants, free community space and/or promote through social media, newsletters, and community boards, while a non-profit or community group organizes and runs the swap.



Medium effort

Co-host with an external organization, assisting with event logistics, provide free or low-cost space like a community center, and/or help to recruit volunteers while the partner manages the event.



Highest effort

Lead organization and promotion, coordinate volunteers, and manage drop-offs and pick-ups.

Free Swaps

Challenges and Solutions

Acceptable goods – Participants may bring poor quality items not suitable for reuse.

- **Solution** – Clearly communicate the desired quality of accepted items during event promotion and involve a charity to collect leftover goods for repair, recycling or disposal.

Space – Securing a suitable venue.

- **Solution** – Local governments can offer community spaces themselves or partner with libraries, schools, and community groups that have suitable venues.

Staffing/resourcing – Community-led swaps often rely on volunteers but may falter if a key volunteer steps away or they cannot find enough volunteers.

- **Solution** – Local governments can provide funding for volunteer coordination or offer some staff support.

Limited funding – Community-led swaps often lack stable funding, relying on one-time grants, out-of-pocket volunteer contributions or entrance fees.

- **Solution** – Local governments can offer multi-year grants after a successful pilot, improving efficiency while increasing community participation and impact over time.

Timing – Not everyone can attend at the given time.

- **Solution** – Extend the swap over multiple days or host subsequent swaps at varying times, or direct people to online buy nothing or swap sites (like Bunz or Rehash Clothes), where available.

Local governments can offer community spaces themselves or partner with libraries, schools, and community groups that have suitable venues.

Free Swaps



EXAMPLES

**Support Existing Swaps****City of Toronto Promotion of Neighbourhood Association Swap**

Local governments can provide space, promotion and permitting for community-led swaps such as for the [St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association \(SLNA\) “REmarket” events](#).

**Co-Host Swaps with Community Partners****Squamish Reuse-It Fair (BC)**

The [Squamish Reuse-It Fair](#) enables the free exchange of clothing, household goods, and large items in good condition or needing minor repair. It serves as a solution for bulky item management and diverts waste from landfill.

Squamish Climate Action Network (CAN), contracted by the District, leads event planning and execution, logistics, and volunteer coordination. The municipality provides the venue, traffic control, waste handling and promotion. They also waive landfill tipping fees and \$20,000 annually for outreach and education.

Held multiple times per year, the fair attracts up to 1,000 attendees. While donations are not filtered for quality, only two 40-yard bins are discarded. Big Brothers takes 90% of excess items, while electronics and metals are source-separated. The District is exploring a weighing system to better track landfill diversion impacts.

Originally held at the Brennan Community Recreation Centre with space for large furniture outside, the event currently consists of small separate swaps for clothing, books, and toys.

The Fair is a community fixture and will continue, complemented by the Squamish Public [Library of Things](#) and [Repair Cafes](#), as long as it is self-sustaining.

Key takeaways: Strong promotion, volunteer coordination, and clear signage are essential to support long-term success.



Local Government-led Swap

Grande Prairie Drop & Swap (Alberta)

The [Grande Prairie Drop & Swap](#) is an annual clothing exchange organized by the municipality in partnership with Aquatera and Goodwill. The event occurs during Waste Reduction Week in October to expand promotional and engagement opportunities. Residents drop off gently used clothing for two days and swap on the third day, with remaining items donated to Goodwill.

City staff initiated the event. It gained Council support as a way to address high living costs and raise awareness about the environmental impact of fast fashion. In addition to staff time to coordinate the event, the City provides event space, advertising, and volunteer insurance. Aquatera handles promotion and Goodwill provides logistical support and manages leftover clothing for resale and recycling (estimated at 5% of donations). Data on attendance and donated clothing (weight) are tracked as a measure of event success.

Feedback highlights the event's broad appeal and positive impacts, supporting reuse and providing affordable clothing to those in need. Staff are particularly proud that some children, who rarely get new clothes, can choose their own, adding dignity to the experience.

Organizers are exploring expanding to include household goods, senior-focused swaps using retirement home donations, and creating a guide to help other municipalities replicate the model.

Key takeaways: Organization, efficient sorting, and clear signage are essential to minimize wait times and create a successful event.

In 2024, over 500 residents attended the swap, and **4,683 kg of clothing were donated and diverted from landfill.**

› Resources

City of Guelph, [Guelph Goods Exchange Weekends](#)

City of Saskatoon, [Curbside Swap page](#) (provides information on community wide swaps and guidance for residents seeking to set up their own)

David Suzuki Foundation, [Clothing swap guide](#)

National Association for Charitable Textile Recycling, [Community Toolkit for Clothing Swaps](#)

National Association for Charitable Textile Recycling, [Webinar: Cultivating best practices in community-led textile reuse](#)

City of Vancouver [Free Swap toolkit](#) + [City of Vancouver Free Swap events](#)

UK "Give or Take" [Community Swap Guide](#)



The Thingery at Collingwood Village. Vancouver, BC

Lending and Tool Libraries

Lending Libraries are generally community-based initiatives that extend beyond traditional library models by offering a range of goods. In some jurisdictions, they are known as Library of Things (LoTs).

Lending libraries offer items like kitchen appliances, camping gear, sewing machines, tools, toys, and more that are costly or impractical to own. Many also host workshops on repair, upcycling, and reuse, and some are paired with repair cafes.

Benefits:



→ **Unique benefits:** provide residents access to household items, tools and equipment, while reducing financial strain.

Finland's Library of Things avoided an estimated 5,800 kg of CO₂ emissions in its first year⁶ by replacing new purchases. **Since 2014, the UK Library of Things has saved users over £4.5 million through affordable rentals** of household and garden garden appliances⁷.

⁶ Vanhamäki, Susanna. "Sustainability Perspectives of the Sharing Economy: Process of Creating a Library of Things in Finland." Sustainability, MDPI AG.

⁷ Library of Things (UK) website, viewed March 2025 at: <https://participate.libraryofthings.co.uk/mission>

Lending and Tool Libraries

How does it work?

Who? Most operate as community non-profits or cooperatives, with some led by local governments. They often start as passion projects by residents, with local government grants and in-kind assistance providing key support particularly in the early stages.

Where? Can be self-contained, self-serve units with minimal staffing or integrated into traditional library systems. The model depends on community needs; stand-alone libraries are placed anywhere there is a community desire to borrow items.

When? Lending libraries operate on an ongoing basis once established.

How? Residents sign up for memberships, with a low-cost joining fee and annual fees which may be tiered based on borrowing frequency. Public library-based programs may not require extra registration. Members reserve, borrow, and return items like lending books from a library. Some operate self-serve, with borrowing limits based on membership level e.g. sewing machines only for higher-level members. Trained volunteers maintain items to keep them in good condition.

Local Government Roles



Low effort

Promote community-led lending libraries to residents; provide in-kind support, such as meeting space for nonprofit organizations operating lending libraries; waive fees like business licenses.



Medium effort

Offer more substantial operational or capital grants to nonprofits; contract a third party to manage lending libraries on behalf of the local government.



Highest effort

Directly manage and operate a lending library, either in partnership with the public library or as a stand-alone entity.

Lending and Tool Libraries

Challenges and Solutions

Financial sustainability – Membership and borrowing fees may not fully cover operating costs like rent, maintenance, staffing or volunteer coordination, posing a challenge for nonprofits.

- **Solution** – Local governments can provide free or low cost space and ongoing grants to ensure long-term viability.

Limited resident uptake – Despite media attention, some citizens may hesitate to embrace lending libraries due to concerns about hygiene or reliability.

- **Solution** – Ongoing education campaigns on the benefits of borrowing can normalize borrowing rather than buying.

Availability of Affordable Alternatives – There are many low-cost household goods, particularly from big-box stores, which provide people access to affordable new items.

- **Solution** – Lending libraries can position themselves as a “try before you buy” option and highlight this in public messaging

Lending library integration into existing library - Incorporating a lending library into an existing library space can present challenges, including storage space, staffing, and equipment maintenance.

- **Solution** - Library master plans should consider space and capacity for expanding non-traditional lending services as communities grow and libraries evolve.

Ongoing education about the benefits of borrowing can normalize borrowing rather than buying.



EXAMPLES



Help Incubate a Social Enterprise Lendary

The Thingery, Vancouver (BC)

The Thingery is a social enterprise that began as a cooperative operating out of modified shipping containers on city streets with space and permitting provided by the City of Vancouver. Due to financial challenges, it shifted to a pilot project with Concert Properties in 2024 located at Wessex Gates, a high rise in Collingwood Village with 1,800 residents.

The Thingery consists of storage lockers with a self-serve kiosk located in the lobby. It offers about 110 items across four seasonally rotating categories: events and entertainment, tools (for bike, cars, and woodworking), recreation, and household with educational resources on item usage. It is free for residents, with late fees. It also functions as a potential community node for emergency response.

Data is being collected to assess the sustainability and affordability impacts of this new model, with plans for expansion into other multi-family developments and other spaces like libraries and community centers. Partnerships with developers and local governments will be key to scaling The Thingery.

Key takeaways: Local governments can help incubate Thingeries by providing introductions to developers seeking sustainable community amenities and by considering their inclusion in community plans, particularly those involving multi-family developments, as a way to support waste reduction, circular economy, and affordability.



Incubate and Provide Ongoing Support

Halifax Tool Library (NS)

The Halifax Tool Library (HTL), founded in 2013, is a non-profit offering members access to 2,500+ tools for car maintenance, carpentry, electrical, and home projects. It includes a workshop space for members to work with larger tools like bandaws and professional-grade SawStop table. Educational sessions help residents learn to use tools safely and effectively.

Run by volunteers, HTL offers various affordable membership options with discounts for seniors, students, and those facing financial barriers. Active volunteers earn free memberships.

The City of Halifax helped launch HTL with capital grant funding and logistical support. It continues to provide space, promotional support, and volunteer coordination. The City also works with HTL to align services with community needs and promote waste reduction through tool reuse. Future plans include expanding the tool inventory and offering more community workshops.

Key takeaways: HTL shows how volunteer-driven, city-supported models can become community hubs that foster sustainability, skill-building, and affordable access.



Partner with Libraries

York Region Lendaries (ON)

[York Region's Lendaries](#) are integrated into public libraries, allowing residents with a valid library card to borrow tools, kitchen appliances, sports gear, and more for 14 days on a first-come, first-serve basis. Vaughan's Lendary also offers an online [catalogue](#).

The first Lendary launched in 2019 at Markham Public Library's Milliken Mills branch, in partnership with York Region and York Region Makers. [Vaughan](#) and [Newmarket](#) lending libraries have since followed, with the latter also lending bikes in partnership with Newmarket Cycles.

The program aligns with York Region's broader sustainability initiatives, particularly the [SM4RT Living Plan](#), which promotes waste reduction through reuse and sharing. By aligning with local sustainability goals and fostering municipal partnerships, Lendaries are better positioned for long-term impact.

Key takeaways: Libraries are ideal hosts for Lendaries due to their lending infrastructure, member base, and trusted service. Collaborations across municipalities (Markham, Newmarket, Vaughan) support scaling and knowledge sharing. York Region's approach shows the power of leveraging existing infrastructure to advance waste reduction and sharing.

› Resources

Tool Libraries

[Calgary Tool Library](#)

[Hamilton Tool Library](#)

[Halifax Tool Library & Workshop](#)

[Ottawa Tool Library](#)

[St. John's Tool Library](#)

[Vancouver Tool Library](#)

[Tool Lending Libraries](#), Initiative in the [USDN Sustainable Consumption Toolkit](#)

Lending Libraries

Bicycle Alliance of MN, Cyclehoop and Lyndale Neighborhood Association, [Minneapolis Cargo Bike Lending Library](#)

District of Squamish, [Library of Things](#)

Finland, [Mansikkapaikka Library of Things](#)

New Zealand, [Musical Electronics Library](#)

Upstream, Center for Biological Diversity, and Shareable, [Libraries of Things how-to guidance](#)

Capital Regional District and local libraries, [Climate Action To Go Kits](#)

City of Port Moody and Port Moody Library, [Bat Packs](#) (equipment to conduct a bat count)

Reuse

Reuse encourages prioritizing existing products over buying new ones. This includes goods resold in their original form and those repurposed into something new.



Actions for local governments to consider in this section include:

- Reuse at Municipal Transfer Stations
- Reuse Drop Off Events
- Community Yard and Garage Sales
- Reuse Stores and Centres
- Bulky Household Items Reuse

Reuse at Municipal Transfer Stations

A reuse collection program at municipal transfer stations diverts usable goods from landfills through partnerships with charities that collect donated items at designated drop-off areas for resale or redistribution to those in need.

These programs offer a convenient option for residents by allowing them to drop off household items suitable for reuse at municipal facilities they already visit for recycling and waste disposal—minimizing the need for significant behaviour change.

Benefits:



→ **Unique benefits:** offers residents a simple waste diversion option while providing free or low-cost goods to communities in need and supporting charitable causes.

Reuse at Municipal Transfer Stations

How does it work?

Who? Local governments typically manage the program, often in partnership with charities or nonprofits who collect, sort and redistribute items collected. Some programs involve social enterprises who provide employment and skills training.

Where? Waste facilities and transfer stations. Some local governments offer online tools like Facebook groups to allow people to give away reusable items without visiting a transfer station.

When? Reuse collection is generally available during peak transfer station hours.

How? Residents drop off reusable items—such as furniture, clothing, and household goods—at designated collection points. Items are sorted by municipal staff or partners, then picked up by charities for redistribution. Regular tracking ensures efficiency and measures impact.

Local Government Roles



Medium effort

Provide ongoing support once the program is established such as maintaining drop-off locations and bins, community outreach and education, and program monitoring, while reuse partner(s) assess items for reuse, collect and redistribute them.



Highest effort

To launch the programs it's necessary to identify and establish a partnership with a suitable reuse organization - and potentially hire a consultant to help with program design. Redesign transfer stations may require some redesign to include reuse drop-off areas and improve traffic flow.

Reuse at Municipal Transfer Stations

Challenges and Solutions

Infrastructure Limitations- Limited space at transfer stations can hinder reuse collection setup.

Solution: Optimize available space with designated bins or compact collection areas. Start at transfer stations with more space and expand to adapt to other transfer station layouts. Consider design for reuse with new transfer stations.

Regulatory constraints – Regulations may prohibit item salvage at transfer stations..

• **Solution** - Use designated reuse bins that comply with bylaws, with clear signage indicating only approved nonprofit partners may collect items, along with guidelines for accepted items and proper handling.

Operational issues – Ensuring safety during collection and sorting.

• **Solution** – Implement safety protocols, train staff and volunteers, and demarcate collection areas clearly.

Quality Control: Ensuring donations meet quality standards of reuse partners.

• **Solution:** Work with reuse partners to set clear donation guidelines and have partners or trained staff evaluate items upon arrival.

Finding suitable reuse partner(s) - With the capacity and financial stability to manage collections and redistribution.

• **Solution:** Identify and engage potential partners to assess fit, then collaborate to develop a reuse model that aligns with both partner and municipal needs.

Public Awareness - residents may be unaware of the program or how to participate.

• **Solution:** Launch educational campaigns through various communication channels and use clear signage at drop-off locations.

Work with reuse partners to set clear donation guidelines and have partners or trained staff evaluate items upon arrival.

Reuse at Municipal Transfer Stations



EXAMPLES



Municipal-Led with a Charitable Partner

Leduc County Reusable Item Drop Off (AB)

The [Leduc and District Regional Waste Management Facility](#) partnered with Goodwill Industries of Alberta to replace its former Take-it-or-Leave-it program with a household donation initiative. Residents donate reusable items for Goodwill to collect and resell. The year-round program employs one Goodwill staff in winter and two in summer.

In 2024, the program diverted **89 tonnes** of reusable items

Previously, a site attendant managed the program, but their retirement raised concerns about unequal access to items by individuals. New rules, including restrictions on taking items directly, addressed these issues. Donations are now assessed at a designated Goodwill drop-off area and transported weekly off-site for processing.

Goodwill repairs items at a specialized Edmonton facility that employs people with special needs. While this limits direct local benefits for Leduc, the program still boosts community engagement and supports Goodwill's mission. The program slightly reduces landfill revenue but extends its lifespan and lowers disposal costs. A five-year contract ensures continuity.

Key takeaways: Clear public communication is vital during program transitions, as residents initially opposed losing direct access to donated items. Strong legal agreements are essential for long-term success.

Reuse at Municipal Transfer Stations



Local Government-Run with Charitable Partner

Metro Vancouver Reusable Item Collection at Waste and Recycling Centres (BC)

Metro Vancouver provides designated bins at Recycling & Waste (R&W) Centres for residents to drop off small household items, which Big Brothers collects for redistribution. This approach expands upon Metro Vancouver's successful Reuse Days pilot, where Urban Repurpose collects and resells items at the North Shore R&W Centre on select Saturdays. Metro Vancouver contracted SRRI to help identify a scalable model through market research and by engaging municipal staff and external reuse organizations to build awareness and develop their support.

A suitable partner needed the capacity to efficiently manage collections, assess resale value, and operate within regulatory constraints. Due to safety and data privacy concerns, Metro Vancouver's tipping fee bylaw prevents salvaging, but designated reuse bins offer a safe, compliant alternative. Two Big Brothers staff manage collections during peak hours, while Metro Vancouver tracks tonnage, resale value, and community benefits.

The program is starting at a single transfer in Surrey with sufficient space, with plans for expansion to more R&W centres as space, legal and operational issues are addressed while remaining accessible to smaller organizations as potential partners. Enhancements will also improve financial and environmental impact tracking.

Key takeaways: A pilot helped improve program implementation and gain leadership and staff support. A phased approach is key to addressing operational constraints. Flexibility in partnerships and trust-building with R&W Centre staff are critical to long-term success.

Reuse at Municipal Transfer Stations



Local Government-Run

Mt. Lorne Transfer Station Free Store (YT)

The Mt. Lorne Transfer Station in Yukon, Canada, operates a [Free Store](#) where residents can drop off donations for a \$1 fee per bag and \$10 for larger items like couches and mattresses. The store also has a virtual platform via Facebook, allowing residents to post details about items they wish to give away.

The facility is municipally operated, with staff managing donations and ensuring items are suitable for reuse. The Free Store accepts a range of household items, clothing, and e-waste. Unusable textiles are sent for recycling in Vancouver or Edmonton.

The Free Store occasionally experiences capacity issues, requiring temporary restrictions on donations.

Key takeaways: Quality control of donations requires diligent staff monitoring. Seasonal events, such as renovations or extreme weather, can disrupt service delivery, requiring proactive communication and promoting online options.

› Resources

Share Reuse Repair Initiative for Metro Vancouver, [Scaling Reuse Study: Metro Vancouver Recycling and Waste Centres](#)

[Urban Ore](#) (this initiative was incubated by the City of San Francisco, and served as the

inspiration for the Metro Vancouver reuse program)

US EPA, [Transforming Waste Tool](#) (includes case studies and resources on reuse initiatives)



Reuse Stores and Centres

Reuse stores or centers are permanent spaces for the donation of goods and materials for resale or free exchange, reuse, repair and creative repurposing - distinct from spaces provided at transfer stations or events.

Reuse centres offer a convenient solution for extending the life of goods, often with proceeds supporting charitable programs. Many centres host special drives, such as collecting winter jackets for shelters, and some also accept construction materials and hazardous items, ensuring their safe reuse or recycling.

Benefits:



→ **Unique benefits:** provide affordable goods to residents while some create local jobs and support local reuse and repair businesses.

Reuse Stores and Centres

How does it work?

Who? Reuse centres are operated by local governments with community partners or led by non-profits with funding or other support from local governments. Employees assess donations, repair items when possible, and manage sales.

Where? Permanent reuse stores are operated out of store fronts with some located adjacent to transfer stations or facilities.

When? Permanent reuse centres operate during facility hours or with set hours in dedicated retail spaces.

How? Residents drop off unwanted goods to a designated location for staff assessment for reuse. Some items are sold cheaply, others are free, and/or a small fee is charged for drop-off. Items needing repairs are fixed or refurbished before resale or donation. Many hubs offer educational programs, repair workshops, or upcycling initiatives. They can be funded in part by local government, sales or other donations.

Local Government Role



Low effort
Promote existing reuse stores centres to residents.



Medium effort
Support community non-profits that are setting up a reuse centre/store.



Highest effort-
Operate a dedicated reuse centre, either near a waste facility or as a storefront, with sorting, repair, and resale components. Hire staff, manage inventory, run repair workshops, and reinvest proceeds into waste diversion and community programs.

Reuse Stores and Centres

Challenges and Solutions

Low-Quality Donations – Residents may drop off damaged or non-reusable items.

- **Solution:** Clearly communicate donation guidelines, provide on-site staff to assess items, and set up designated bins for non-reusable materials.

Space & Storage – Limited space can make inventory management difficult, especially with seasonal fluctuations.

- **Solution:** Implement a rotating inventory system, partner with charities for regular pickups, and explore temporary storage solutions for overflow.

Safety & Liability Concerns – Handling large, heavy, or hazardous items can pose risks to staff and visitors.

- **Solution:** Train staff on safe handling procedures, enforce clear drop-off policies, and restrict certain hazardous or bulky items from being accepted.

Coordination Between Local Governments & Charities – Differing priorities or operational challenges can lead to inefficiencies.

- **Solution:** Establish clear agreements outlining responsibilities, hold regular meetings for coordination, and create a shared inventory tracking system.

Low Public Awareness – If residents don't know about or trust the centre, participation may be low.

- **Solution:** Promote the centre through social media, community events, and signage at waste facilities, and offer incentives like discount vouchers for thrift stores.

Implement a rotating inventory system, partner with charities for regular pickups, and explore temporary storage solutions for overflow.

Reuse Stores and Centres



EXAMPLES



Support Non-profit Reuse Centres

Raven ReCentre, Whitehorse (YT)

Raven Recycling Society, a Yukon non-profit, operates a reuse centre as well as supports education, and advocacy through the Zero Waste Yukon (ZWY) program. Its Reuseful Program runs a [depot](#) and [second-hand store](#), selling donated items for \$1–\$5, with some proceeds benefiting the local Firefighters Charitable Society.

Local governments, schools and nonprofits partner with the Centre on reuse days, fairs, indoor community garage sales, and clothing swaps and repair workshops - often paired with education on the impacts of fast fashion and opportunities to repair and reuse items.

Callout: Raven partners with Lumel who does glassblowing to create art from reused jars. Since glass recycling is not feasible in the Yukon, this diverts the glass from the waste stream.

Grants and logistical assistance from local government has been essential to Raven, helping to host events and promote community participation. Challenges such as promotion, staffing, accessibility, and space remain key hurdles, yet flexibility and local knowledge are crucial to the initiative's success and scalability.

Key takeaways: Strategic partnerships broaden the scope and reach of reuse and repair programming at Reuse Centres, reducing waste particularly helpful in regions with limited recycling infrastructure. Ongoing municipal support and funding are critical to long-term success.



Local Government-led Reuse Centres

Hodge Podge Lodge Free Store, Strathcona County (AB)

HodgePodge Lodge, a Strathcona County initiative, is a space for the free exchange of items that are hard to recycle for reuse or repurposing. It grew from an outdoor take-it-or-leave-it area into a 1,500 sq. ft. facility run by volunteers and seasonal staff.

The County provides staff, volunteer recruitment and coordination, access to the facility, and \$15,000 annually (excluding staff time), making it a cost-effective waste diversion strategy. A low-tech weigh-in, weigh-out system, tracks reuse and the Lodge supports 12 social agencies, including Goodwill and the Strathcona Youth Justice Program, offering materials to schools, charities, and upcycling projects.

Since 2023, **556,973 kg of items have been diverted from landfill**, and distributed throughout the community.

Future plans include more digital tracking and enhancing community outreach. The initiative has inspired similar programs elsewhere and is complemented by school visits and waste reduction events like “Trash Fest.”

Key takeaways: Challenges included managing hoarding, reselling, and sustainable procurement, leading to new policies including a sole-source contract for salvaged materials and regulating how long visitors can stay and how often they can take items to ensure fair access.



Co-deliver Reuse Centres

Quebec Reuse Centres - Reemploi and Réseau des Ressourceries (QC)

In Quebec, Reuse Stores are led by external partners, and are promoted and supported by local governments, for example [Réemploi](#) and [Association des Ressourceries du Québec](#) (ARQ).

Réemploi+, based in the Lac-Saint-Jean region of Quebec, is a social economy business dedicated to the reuse of construction materials. It was created with the support of various partners including Régie de gestion des matières résiduelles du Lac-Saint-Jean, an intermunicipal waste management authority, and RECYC-QUÉBEC which operates at the provincial level. The initiative supports efforts to promote the circular economy through reuse and extending the life cycle of products. Their main initiative is a network of specialized hardware stores called “[Quincailleries R+](#)”, where citizens can purchase second-hand building materials and items in good condition at affordable prices. These stores also serve as training centers, providing local workers with skills in reuse and waste management. The initiative aims to divert 5,000 tonnes of waste annually from landfills through local circularity. In 2023, it successfully diverted 375 tons of building materials from landfills.



[Association des Ressourceries du Québec](#) (ARQ) is a network of social enterprises that collect, repair, and resell items such as furniture, electronics, and clothing. The social enterprises that are part of the Réseau des Ressourceries du Québec (RRQ) are managed by independent, local organizations or non-profit entities. These entities are typically responsible for the day-to-day operations of the individual social enterprises.

Local governments work closely with these groups and are instrumental through providing access to space / collection points (some also provide transportation to help with redistribution for reuse), funding, awareness and promotion campaigns, and organizing special collection events for bulky items. Municipalities also collaborate to ensure the reuse initiatives successfully reduce landfill waste and contribute to the circular economy, and some also integrate these initiatives into their waste management plans.

Key takeaways: By combining government support, economic incentives, specialized infrastructure, and public education, Quebec’s reuse programs demonstrate a successful model for integrating reuse into municipal waste management strategies while fostering job creation and sustainability.

› Resources

City of Edmonton, [Reuse Centre](#)

Share Reuse Repair Initiative for Metro Vancouver,
[Scaling Reuse Study: Metro Vancouver Recycling
and Waste Centres](#)

Strathcona County, [Hodge Podge Lodge](#)
(additional case study)

Whistler Community Services Society, [Whistler
Reuse Centre](#)

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Municipal Drop Off Events

Drop off events allow residents to donate gently used household items—such as clothing, furniture, electronics, books, and kitchenware—for redistribution, repurposing, or recycling, diverting landfill waste and also benefitting local charities.

These events are led by municipalities, in partnership with charities or recycling entities organizations who redirect items for reuse or recycling. Municipal leadership ensures events are run regularly and consistently over many years, diverting significant volumes of material from landfill. Some municipalities are adding swaps and education about the benefits of reuse.

Benefits:



→ **Unique benefits: an opportunity to make household goods available to communities in need while providing an easy way for residents to responsibly declutter**

Municipal Drop Off Events



How does it work?

Who? Local governments, nonprofits, and community groups, in partnership with charities, thrift stores, and repair initiatives. Volunteers and staff help sort, collect, and distribute the donations.

Where? Community centers, local government facilities, or designated collection sites.

When? Seasonally, annually, or during sustainability events (e.g., Earth Day, Waste Reduction Week).

How? May operate out of permanent spaces that accept donations, or as pop up events where donations received are directed to appropriate charitable partners or recycling enterprises.

Local Government Roles



Higher effort

Reuse drop-off events are led and managed by local governments with charities, non-profits, and social enterprises as partners or contractors to collect, sort, and redistribute the items for reuse and recycling.

Municipal Drop Off Events

Challenges and Solutions

Unpredictable Donation Volume – Estimating item quantities can be difficult, causing space and staffing issues.

- **Solution** - Set item or bag limits, require pre-registration for large items, or partner with multiple charities to handle overflow.

Sorting & Storage Constraints – Limited space and volunteers can hinder donation management.

- **Solution** - Pre-sort items at drop-off events, designate bins for different types of items, and schedule staggered drop-off times.

Low Community Awareness & Participation – Without strong promotion, turnout may be low.

- **Solution** - Use social media, community networks, and tie events to public gatherings (e.g., farmers' markets).

Leftover & Unclaimed Items – Not all donations are taken, leaving excess materials.

- **Solution** - Pre-arrange pick-ups by charities or recycling organizations for leftover items.

Limited Funding & Resources – Local budgets and volunteer availability may limit event scope and frequency.

- **Solution** - Seek local business sponsorships, apply for grants, and partner with nonprofits to share costs and responsibilities.

Set item or bag limits, require pre-registration for large items, or partner with multiple charities to handle overflow.

Municipal Drop Off Events



EXAMPLES



Local Government-led Reuse Events

Saint John Reuse Connections Events (NB)

ReUse Connections events in Saint John, New Brunswick, are organized by the Fundy Regional Service Commission (FRSC), a municipal entity. Held in a large tent at the exhibition centre with centralized drop-off points where residents can donate gently used furniture, household goods, clothing, and electronics. Donated items are either redistributed to charities or recycled if beyond repair.

FRSC manages event promotion and organization, provides event space and volunteer insurance, while partnering with local charities to distribute goods to food banks, thrift stores, and shelters. The events also serve as an educational opportunity to promote the benefits of donating reusable items.

The event's success has prompted expansion plans, including the potential addition of more household goods and senior-focused events.

In 2024, **148 vehicles** dropped off enough furniture, small household goods, and clothing to fill **five 26-foot** truckloads. Items were donated to **ten local charities**, and **450 kg** of used electronics were diverted to recycling.

Key takeaways: Hosting events in a single, well-known location simplifies donation logistics and increases participation. Partnering with multiple organizations ensures donated goods reach those in need.



City of Vancouver Reuse and Recycling Drop Off Events (BC)

For over a decade, the City of Vancouver has hosted [Reuse and Recycling Drop-Off Events](#) to help residents responsibly dispose of and recycle items not accepted in regular curbside collection. The program is delivered in partnership with a range of local organizations to increase convenience by providing various drop off locations, including reBOOT Canada, Encorp, Call2Recycle, LightRecycle, ElectroRecycle, Product Care, and other charitable organizations.

These events provide recycling and reuse options for electronics, textiles, and other household goods that would otherwise end up in the garbage. They also raise awareness and encourage behaviour change to support waste reduction and the circular economy. and promote behaviour change to advance waste reduction and the circular economy.

Following a successful pilot, the City of Vancouver is permanently incorporating Free Swaps into its [Reuse and Recycling Drop-Off Events](#) as part of its Zero Waste 2040 Strategic Plan. Residents can now bring 1–2 small items (that fit in a regular grocery bag) and take as many items as they like. Items for swapping must be clean and in good working order, typically including books, clothing, accessories, toys, electronics, art, and other household goods (a list of acceptable and non-acceptable items is on the City's [website](#)). Leftover items are donated to The Salvation Army.

Key takeaways: Adding free swaps to reuse and recycling drop-off events enhances direct reuse opportunities for residents. Pursuing a variety of partnerships increases the number of drop off events held across the city, making them more accessible to residents.

› Resources

City of Toronto, [Community Environment Days](#)
(reduces the amount of reusable or recyclable waste going to landfill)

Environment Lethbridge, [Reuse Rendezvous](#)

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Bulky Household Items Reuse

Bulky household items like furniture, mattresses, electronics, and in some cases construction and demolition “waste”, are collected curbside and diverted from landfill for reuse or recycling.

Benefits:



→ **Unique benefits:** helps address illegal dumping, and can extend the lifespan of the landfill by diverting bulky items that take up a lot of space.

Bulky Household Items Reuse



How does it work?

Who? Organized by a municipality or regional district, bulky household collection is generally contracted out to partners.

Where? Items are collected curbside and transported to local organizations that refurbish, reuse or repair the items, or dispose of the item.

When? Programs are often scheduled at regular intervals throughout the year (e.g., spring and fall); the 'by appointment' program will have a collection window.

How? Curbside pickup by a reuse, repair or waste collection partner.

Local Government Role



Low effort

Promote or expand existing programs, coordinate bulky household item pick up days with non-profits and other community organizations.



Medium effort

Develop partnerships with local social enterprises and waste diversion companies to support reuse.



Highest effort

Develop a new bulky item collection program including a reuse focus.

Bulky Household Items Reuse

Challenges and Solutions

Awareness – Many municipalities offer bulky item curbside pick-up, but resident awareness is limited.

- **Solution** – Promote the service regularly through utility or tax bill inserts, in recreation guides, and on social media—consistent reminders are key to success.

Ease of program use – a user-friendly reservation system is essential.

- **Solution** – Offer a simple online reservation system with clear instructions and direct residents to other organizations for items not accepted through the bulky item pickup program.

Quality of bulky items – Declining repairability of furniture or appliances and weather damage can impact suitability of items for reuse.

- **Solution** – ‘By appointment’ pick-ups can help avoid weather damage. On declining repairability, see [Right to Repair Resolutions and Advocacy](#).

Multifamily Units – Limited curbside space and operational challenges hinder bulky item pickup in higher-density developments.

- **Solution** – Work with strata and rental building managers to promote the service and find on-site collection space. Consider aligning with community-wide yard sales for multi-family developments

Offer a simple online reservation system with clear instructions and direct residents to other organizations for items not accepted through the bulky item pickup program.

Bulky Household Items Reuse



EXAMPLES



Municipal-led Bulky Item Programs

Drummondville Bulky Item Collection (QC)

The City of Drummondville's 'at home, by appointment' [collection service for bulky household items](#) diverts waste and supports reuse. Drummondville found that nearly 70% of the bulky items it collected had the potential to be repaired, reused, or recycled.

The online reservation platform for residents optimizes collection routes for pick up. In 2023, approximately 30 tonnes of waste were diverted, saving around \$30,000 in waste management costs.

The City contracts an external waste management company who directs items to local social enterprises for reuse and proper recycling, including Ressourcerie Transition who specializes in the recovery and resale of a wide range of household goods to promote reuse.

Key takeaway: Reuse can be integrated into existing bulky waste programs through partnerships with local reuse organizations.



CurbUp Program, City of Oceanside (CA)

In May 2016, the [City of Oceanside](#), launched its [CurbUp](#) program based on the results of a pilot program which found that 60%-70% of bulky items collected were salvageable. Bulky items are collected from residents by Waste Management, a private company, and then sent to a Goodwill location to be assessed for resale before landfill disposal. Resale proceeds support Goodwill's charitable mission.

The City ensures program success through public education and by requiring the highest and best use for collected materials in their waste hauler agreements. The program also provides job training and employment opportunities for item assessment.

Key takeaway: Engaging a charity who triages items for reuse is a simple way to add reuse for a bulky item pick up program.

› Resources

City of Oceanside, [Zero Waste Program](#)

Share Reuse Repair Initiative for Metro Vancouver,
[Reuse and Recycling of Bulky Household Items](#)
[Metro Vancouver Recycling and Waste Centres](#)

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Community Yard and Garage Sales

Community yard and garage sales allow residents to sell or give away unwanted household items and textiles from their yard, garage, sidewalk, or another designated space.

The focus here is yard and garage that involve multiple households at a neighborhood or community-wide scale. Some community yard sales also involve street merchants selling goods, opportunities for residents to donate items to charities,

Benefits:



Reduces waste & costs



Lowers environmental impact



Enhances affordability



Supports local economy



Expands sustainable choices

→ **Unique benefits:** strengthen community connections as neighbors engage in sustainable practices together. Residents can earn money and responsibly declutter.

Community Yard and Garage Sales



How does it work?

Who? Sales can be organized by individuals, community organizations (e.g., neighborhood associations), or local governments. Participants include community members looking to donate, sell, or acquire household goods.

Where? Sales can be held outdoors (on residents' lawns, garage or sidewalks) or at a centralized community space, both outside and indoors (e.g., community halls or gyms).

When? One-time events or regularly scheduled (annually or biannually). Consistency encourages participation.

How? Key steps include: (1) Select an appropriate location and date; (2) collect items, ideally, in advance to ensure a well-stocked sale, and to enable organizing, pricing and labelling for easy browsing with free items grouped separated, where applicable; (3) Prepare promotional materials including use of social media, local bulletins and word of mouth. Consider including music or community activities to enhance the experience; and (4) Have a plan for unsold items, including donations to charities, second hand stores or recycling programs to minimize waste.

Local Government Role



Low effort

Promote, provide grant funding, secure permits for existing community-led yard sales and community space for centralized sale.



Medium effort

Co-host with a community partner by providing some funding, staff support, traffic management (often for larger sales), volunteer recruitment and help coordinate unsold item donations going to charities for reuse.



Highest effort

Provide funding and directly oversee event management, promotion and execution, including recruiting sellers;

Community Yard and Garage Sales

Challenges and Solutions

Limited Space – Finding sufficient space, particularly for centralized sales in multi-family neighborhoods without garages or yards.

- **Solution:** Local governments can provide community spaces like parks, gymnasiums, parking lots, or repurpose ice rinks in summer.

Managing Unsold Items – Items may remain after the sale.

- **Solution:** Provide centralized donation bins or coordinate with charitable partners for pickup at multi-home sales.

Logistical challenges – Larger events may require assistance with permits, road closures, or traffic management.

- **Solution:** Partner early with community groups to support these logistical needs or have the local government serve as the lead organizer.

Limited Funding – Financial support for community-led yard sales can be uncertain.

- **Solution:** Provide grants, community space, and/or staff support to community partners on a multi-year basis, which can increase certainty and increase participation, positive benefits and administrative efficiencies.

Provide centralized donation bins or coordinate with charitable partners for pickup at multi-home sales.

Community Yard and Garage Sales



EXAMPLES



Community-led Garage Sales with Local Government Support

Great Glebe Garage Sale, City of Ottawa (ON)

The [Great Glebe Garage Sale](#) is a long-standing community event held annually in May since 1986. Run by a community association, the event receives support from the City of Ottawa, which issues a general permit for yard sales. The City also provides space for a first aid station outside a community centre, permits for street parties, food inspectors to ensure vendor food safety, as well as water stations and public bathrooms for attendees.

In addition to yard sales at individual homes, local merchants participate in a sidewalk sale, and local organizations—including neighborhood houses and churches—accept donated goods for resale on the day of the event. All participants are encouraged to donate a portion of their proceeds to the local food bank. A [detailed guide](#) on where and how to donate unsold items is provided.

Key takeaways: By providing necessary space, permits and services, the City of Ottawa has supported a community association in creating a successful and inclusive event to reduce waste and foster community engagement.



Local Government-led Garage Sales

Annual Indoor Garage Sale, Yellowknife (NWT)

The City of Yellowknife's [Annual Indoor Garage Sale](#) is held at an accessible municipal community centre, allowing residents to rent tables and sell household items. The event is a key waste reduction strategy, helping to lower landfill costs and extending its lifespan, while also offering residents a chance to earn extra income and buy affordable goods.

The City staff handles planning, logistics, and promotion via its website and social media, with support from local media. Residents rent tables for a small fee to sell their used goods.

The event is highly popular, often **attracting 1,000 to 2,000 attendees.**

Key takeaways: The sale reduces landfill waste, cuts waste management costs, and fosters community engagement. Its success is driven by strong promotion and active community participation.

Community Yard and Garage Sales



Coquitlam City-Wide Garage Sale and Giveaway Event (BC)

The City of Coquitlam hosts a biannual [City-Wide Garage Sale and Giveaway Event](#), allowing residents to register to sell or give away unwanted items. This initiative began in 2006 as a spring cleanup with residents placing unwanted items on curbs. However, there were too many items left behind. So, the City transitioned to an annual citywide garage sale combined with a curbside giveaway event with registration package providing donation and recycling tips to encourage responsible disposal. The City also now uses recreation centre spaces so that residents in multi-unit buildings could participate more easily.

The City coordinates and promotes the Events, providing a map, event booking and list of participating addresses on its website - all for under \$6,000 without external funding or partnerships. Residents register through an app, selecting the day they will participate and listing available items. Event planning begins months in advance, with promotion through the website, press releases, and an app.

Key takeaways: The integration of GIS mapping and app-based coordination has reduced staff effort. Offering space at recreation centres allows for multi-family residents to participate.

› Resources

City of Guelph (ON), [Guelph Goods Exchange Weekends](#)

Environment Lethbridge, [Reuse Rendezvous](#)

Government of Canada, [Facts for Garage Sale Vendors](#)

National Association for Charitable Textile Recycling, [Community Toolkit for Yard Sales](#) and [Cultivating best practices in community-led textile reuse](#) (webinar)

Resort Municipality of Whistler (BC), [Whistler Community Garage Sale](#)

Shareable, [How to Organize a City Wide Garage Sale](#)

[City of Toronto Secondhand Sundays \(ON\).](#)

Repair

Repair extends the useful life of products and supports reuse and repair, addressing the waste inherent in consumer products with increasingly short lifespans.



Repair actions for local governments in this section include:

- Repair Cafés and Hubs
- Right to Repair Resolutions and Advocacy

Repair Cafés and Hubs

Repair Cafés are community events where volunteers offer free repair services to help individuals fix broken items, from electronics to clothing.

Items repaired at these events often include small appliances, clothing, electronics, toys and sometimes bicycles and smaller furniture. Some repair cafes support residents to learn how to fix their own items.

Benefits:



→ **Unique benefits:** makes repairs more accessible and affordable to citizens; builds community resilience by providing repair skills; fosters connections and intergenerational learning.

Repair Cafes and Hubs

How does it work?

Who? Run local governments, nonprofit organizations, or groups of volunteers in various partnerships. Local government can help ensure regular offerings and long-term viability. Volunteer “fixers” with repair skills are key for success.

Where? Repair Cafés are typically held in public spaces like libraries, community centers, or other local government facilities - and sometimes at sustainability-minded retail businesses.

When? On a monthly or seasonal basis. The more regular and frequent they are, the greater likelihood residents will hold on to broken items for repair instead of disposing of them.

How? Local governments often provide venues and promotional support, nonprofits help with coordination and funding, and volunteers contribute their repair skills and knowledge. Tactical steps involve recruiting and coordinating volunteer fixers, coordinating what tools and repair supplies are needed, and setting up a registration system for participants.

Local Government Role



Low effort

Promote or provide a list Repair Cafes in community event calendars and other communications channels. Provide permits, as needed, and toolkits on how to run a successful repair cafe for community organizations.



Medium effort

Co-organize regular Repair Cafés with community partners, providing community space, seed funding, logistics support and develop policies to recognize and integrate Repair Cafes within local government waste reduction initiatives.



Highest effort

Host and fund a Repair Café program as a key strategy for integrating repair culture into community life.

Repair Cafes and Hubs

Challenges and Solutions

Recruitment and retention of volunteers - It can be challenging to retain skilled volunteers, particularly “fixers”.

- **Solution** – Offer incentives such as volunteer recognition, meals at events, or gift certificates. Ensure flexible scheduling for volunteers and involve them in event planning and decision-making.

Financial sustainability - Repair Cafés often operate on tight budgets with unreliable funding.

- **Solution** – Diversify funding sources, including local government grants, local business sponsorship and crowdfunding campaigns. Consider a donation model (money or supplies), or a small fee-for-service charge.

Public awareness and access - Not everyone knows about or can attend repair cafes.

- **Solution** – Promote events widely via social and traditional media, and consider mobile Repair Cafes at busy locations (e.g., community centres, grocery store parking lots). Use accessible venues and ensure promotions and services are multicultural and multilingual.

Limited scope of repairs - from lack of tools or expertise for specialized repairs.

- **Solution** – Partner with tool libraries, repair professionals or businesses willing to offer mentorship or repair services in return for community profile. Offer workshops to build volunteer repair skills. Manage residents expectations by clarifying repair limits and [advocate for Right to Repair](#).

Liability and safety concerns - particularly from electrical items, sharp tools and fragile materials that may break.

- **Solution** – Use liability waivers and insurance, safety training for volunteers and clear guidelines for what is to be repaired to minimize risk.



EXAMPLES



Support Community Repair Cafes

Repair Cafes (SK)

Saskatchewan [Repair Cafes](#), led by the Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council, aim to foster a repair culture across the province by empowering local volunteers and organizations to host repair events. The initiative benefits from stable funding including provincial sponsorship, \$10,000 annually from Affinity Credit Union, and support from municipalities who provide venues and promote events.

Repair metrics, such as the number of repair attempts and successful fixes, are tracked using the RepairMonitor, an online tool developed by the Repair Café International Foundation. Volunteers document repair needs and outcomes to assess the program's effectiveness. Saskatoon Public Library has incorporated repair initiatives into its makerspace.

Key takeaways: The Saskatchewan Repair Cafés empower communities to host repair events, promoting sustainability and waste reduction. Municipal support is modest yet provides high community value and fosters long-term behavior change.



Local Government-led Repair Cafes

City of Toronto Repair Hubs (ON)

[City of Toronto leads five Reduce and Reuse Programs](#) to foster a culture of waste reduction, reuse, and sharing. Sewing Repair Hubs and Bike Repair Hubs are two of these programs, which provide equipment and training to help residents repair, reuse, share and repurpose these items.

As of 2023, more than **18,000 kg of clothing** and nearly **24,000 bicycles** have been repaired.⁸

These programs, mainly located in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas with multi-residential buildings and community hubs. They offer residents opportunities to connect with their community, improve affordability, and build skills while reducing landfill waste. The City of Toronto designed the Sewing and Bike Repair Hubs program to support the Toronto Strong Neighborhoods Strategy, secured community partners, and collaborate and provides funding to a range of local agencies and non-profit organizations to deliver the programs such as Progress Place, Scadding Court Community Centre, Delta Family Resource Centre, Rexdale Women's Centre, and The Neighbourhood Organization.

Key takeaway: Embedding repair programs in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas ensures that residents in communities with greater needs can and access and benefit from them.

⁸ City of Toronto (2025). [Community Reduce and Reuse Programs](#).



› Resources

[City of Port Coquitlam Repair Cafes](#)

[Fix It Clinic](#) (blog)

European Union, [Interreg North-West Europe Sharepair](#)
(virtual sharing platform)

[Repair Cafe International](#) (resources and worldwide
listing of repair cafes)

Repair Cafe Toronto, [How to Start a Repair Cafe](#)

Ridge Meadows Recycling Society, [Repair Cafe Maple Ridge](#)

USDN, [Community Repair Events](#)





Right to Repair Resolutions and Advocacy

Right to Repair (R2R) is the legal right for owners of devices and equipment to be able to repair products. It is often focused on electronic devices, appliances, cars and farming equipment.

The goal of Right to Repair is to overcome barriers created by restrictive designs, such as the use of glue or proprietary screws, software limitations, and limited access to replacement parts. It also addresses legal obstacles, such as warranties being voided or requirements to use the manufacturer's repair services.

Benefits:



→ **Unique benefits: empowers consumers to maintain and repair their own products affordably.**

How does it work?

Who? Governments, manufacturers, and regulatory bodies play key role in implementing and enforcing policies. Advocates include consumers, repair professionals, and organizations promoting sustainability and consumer rights.

Where? Right to Repair advocacy is gaining global traction, with France and the EU leading. In Canada, legislation is being developed to allow consumers to bypass digital locks and repair products without violating copyright laws. See the Resources below section for more.

When? Advocacy can align with opportunities like public consultations, conventions, or legislative reviews. Policies will evolve over time as technology and consumer needs change.

How? The R2R movement focuses on access to repair manuals, consumer repair information (e.g., repairability scorecards), affordable spare parts, and repair-friendly product design. Advocacy includes engaging with authorities, attending conventions, and responding to feedback opportunities.

Right to Repair Resolutions and Advocacy

Local Government Role

Although local governments cannot require nor enforce the Right to Repair, they can support it in the following ways:



Low effort

Support or vote for initiatives by other communities or organizations, host petitions at repair cafes, share repair manuals on local government websites, and promote purchasing durable items.



Medium Effort

Stay engaged with R2R, provide feedback on senior government consultations, and share updates with other communities. Develop a resolution for approval by a collective of local governments or send letters to higher levels of government. Encourage libraries to include product quality rankings and repair manuals. Support local tool libraries to include disassembly tools. Ensure zoning allows repair functions.



Highest Effort

Organize support for Right to Repair, meet with local MPs or representatives and invite them to repair cafes, prioritize durable and repairable goods in local procurement, and buy refurbished items when possible.

Challenges and Solutions

Knowledge and Capacity - Staff may lack the expertise, awareness, or time to advocate for the right to repair.

• **Solution:** Local governments can partner with organizations knowledgeable about Right to Repair and collaborate with other municipalities. Staff can collect data on barriers and needs at local repair cafes.

Right to Repair Resolutions and Advocacy



EXAMPLES



Union of BC Municipalities Resolution 2021 NR37 (BC)

In 2021 a [UBCM resolution](#) was put forward by the Zero Waste/Circular Economy working group of the Climate Caucus with support of the Share Reuse Repair Initiative. (Climate Caucus is a national nonprofit network that supports local elected officials efforts on climate and sustainability action.) Various municipal councils supported the resolution, and it passed at the UBCM convention. Although the Provincial government declined to act on the resolution (see page 117 [here](#)), the initiative helped raise the profile of R2R.

Key takeaway: It may take time to achieve changes in legislation and business practices through advocacy, but all efforts help to bring attention to these issues.



France and Paris (Europe)

Local governments in Europe have been key in advocating for regulations that require manufacturers to provide spare parts, repair manuals, and diagnostic tools. The European Commission's Ecodesign Directive mandates that products be designed for easier repair, provide spare parts and repair information. In January 2021, France introduced the [Repairability Index](#), which requires manufacturers to rate products on their repairability with a score from 1 to 10 at point of sale for items like smartphones, laptops, TVs, and washing machines. Local authorities promote this index through awareness campaigns and retailer partnerships.

Key takeaway: Local governments can drive change through advocacy.



› Resources

Climate Caucus, [Circular Economy Webinar](#)
(Right to Repair component starts at 18:50)

Equiterre
[Obsolescence Of Home Appliances And Electronics](#)

[Working Towards Repairable Appliances and Electronics in Canada](#)

Government of Canada,
[Right to Repair Consultation Document](#)
(legislation -C-244 and C294 to bypass technological barriers and protection)

Federal government staff member
working on Right to Repair: [isrighttorepair-
ledroitlareparationsi@ised-isde.gc.ca](mailto:isrighttorepair-ledroitlareparationsi@ised-isde.gc.ca)

The Canadian Repair Coalition, [Repair advocacy resources](#) and [Canadian Repair Declaration](#)

European Union
Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation
(ESPR)

[Right to Repair Directive](#) (mandates manufacturers provide spare parts at reasonable prices, extend repair obligations beyond the legal guarantee, and prohibit software practices that hinder independent repairs.

France, [Repairability Index](#)

IFixIt, [right to repair resources](#)

Integrated Approaches

While local governments can roll out Share, Reuse and Repair initiatives incrementally, integrated approaches deliver greater benefits.

Integrated approaches for local governments to consider include:

- Virtual Hubs
- Comprehensive Share, Reuse and Repair Programs.

Virtual Hubs

Share, Reuse, Repair Virtual Hubs are online platforms that help residents adopt sustainable practices, save money, strengthen communities, and conserve natural resources.

These hubs typically consist of searchable web platforms or apps, some with interactive maps of share, reuse, and repair resources. They may also provide practical tips, creative ideas, and event calendars for activities such as repair cafés and clothing swaps.

Benefits:



→ **Unique benefits: scalable mechanisms that make information readily accessible to residents.**

Virtual Hubs

How does it work?

Who? Managed in-house by a municipality, outsourced, or integrated with community-led initiatives. Due to the inclusion of for-profit businesses, partnering with a non-profit is often necessary.

Where? Primarily online.

When? Anytime - not a time specific opportunity. Ideally, connect the Hub with other ongoing and existing work.

How? Key steps include:

- Assess in-house capacity to determine the best hosting and maintenance approach (e.g., in-house or external).
- Secure funding and align the hub's scope with available budget.
- Research, curate, and regularly update content to keep it relevant and useful.
- Promote the hub and actively engage residents to encourage participation.

Local Government Role



Low effort

Start small by providing lists of share, reuse, and repair opportunities on the municipal websites, or by promoting existing virtual hubs. Contract and provide funds to an entity like the Circular Innovation Council to set up a SRR Hub for your municipality, with staff providing some project management.



Medium effort

Include interactive maps and a comprehensive set of resources.

Challenges and Solutions

Platform adoption and awareness – Residents may be unaware of the virtual hub and its benefits.

- **Solution** – Promote the Hub on social media, in recreation guides, at events, and through partnerships with other local organizations; develop a comprehensive education and engagement campaign.

Digital divide – Not every resident is comfortable using or has access to digital platforms.

- **Solution** – In-person assistance can be offered at libraries or community centres to improve accessibility and equity.

Scalability and Maintenance – Without a sustainable source of funding and resources over the long term, it is difficult to maintain an up-to-date hub.

- **Solution** – Grants and revenue generation activities such as paid listings, advertising or partnerships can assist with long term maintenance. Coordinating with neighbouring governments can potentially relieve the burden.

Local governments can not promote businesses – Some SRR resources are offered by for-profit enterprises which governments can not promote.

- **Solution** – Virtual Hubs can be hosted by third party entities so that for profit businesses can be included on the hub.

Resourceful PDX: A Strategic Approach to Behavior Change

Resourceful PDX is a U.S.-based virtual hub led by the City of Portland and hosted by an external nonprofit. It offers residents various share, reuse and repair resources including event listings, a map of offerings, resources guides and tips. Its blog, timed around holidays and life transitions, promotes sustainable behavior change—not just information sharing.



EXAMPLES



Promote and Support SRR Hubs

Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Hub

The [Waste Reduction Hub](#), launched by the non-profit organization, Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council (SWRC), is an online platform that provides up-to-date information about share, reuse and repair activities, sorted by product type. It includes educational how-to videos and information on options for recycling, repairing, donating and composting, which collectively enhance waste diversion. The hub is maintained by SWRC, with municipalities providing promotion support.

Key takeaways: Saskatchewan's Waste Reduction Hubs shows how local governments can achieve high impact with minimal effort by partnering with a provincial non-profit.



Virtual Share Reuse Repair (SRR) Hubs (by Circular Innovation Council)

The [SRR Hub](#) is an online platform led by the Circular Innovation Council that connects residents with local opportunities to share, reuse, and repair through a searchable directory of businesses, organizations, and events. The Hub also offers educational resources, toolkits for businesses, and features profiles of Circular [Champions](#) who bring circularity into their business practices.

York Region was the first municipality to join the Hub, followed by Peel and [Durham Regions](#). Municipal participation requires an upfront investment by local governments which varies by community size, and some staff project management time. The Circular Innovation Council wants to expand the Hub across Canada through new municipal partnerships.

Key takeaways: The SRR Hub offers a low-effort, high-impact way for municipalities to support share, reuse, and repair activities. As a non-profit, the Council can promote circular businesses in ways municipalities legally cannot. Partnering with Chambers of Commerce and BIAs can help build local directories efficiently.

› Resources

City of New York, [DonateNYC](#) (a city-led platform and App that helps New York residents and businesses donate and find used good and surplus food)

Recycling Council of British Columbia, [Recyclopedica](#) (in the process of adding reuse and repair)

Comprehensive Share, Reuse and Repair Programs



While local governments can roll out Share, Reuse, and Repair (SRR) initiatives incrementally, a comprehensive approach delivers greater benefits. Integrating SRR into waste, sustainability, climate, and/or economic strategies reduces waste, eases infrastructure pressures, and lowers costs—especially for high-cost streams like textiles, furniture, and mattresses. A coordinated program can deliver long-term environmental and economic gains by fostering broad tools, systems, and behaviours that support zero waste and sustainability goals (e.g., climate action, community wellbeing, and a resilient local economy).

Successful comprehensive Share, Reuse, and Repair (SRR) programs reflect local context but share core ingredients:

Policy Alignment – Embed SRR into local policies such as those for waste management, sustainability, planning and associated bylaws. Consider developing a [Circular Economy Roadmap](#).

Resistance to adoption - build a strong business case and launch with a visible pilot, as demonstrated by York Region below.

SRR Infrastructure – Ensure long-term access to the community space for repair cafés, lending libraries, swaps etc. Integrate SRR into infrastructure upgrades (e.g., reuse areas at transfer stations, lending libraries in multi-family buildings).

Resident Engagement & Education – Focus messaging on practical, relatable benefits—like saving money, reducing clutter, and cutting waste—to inspire action and shift habits. Make SRR accessible through regular events and integration into municipal services. A [virtual SRR Hub](#) can further boost visibility.

Collaboration – Work with nonprofits, businesses, and community groups to share delivery, expand reach and reduce municipal costs.

Data & Improvement – Collect feedback, track outcomes, and adapt programs to improve results over time. See [Measuring Program Impact & Performance](#).

Comprehensive SRR Programs



EXAMPLES



York Region: A Leading Example of a Comprehensive SRR Program

York Region (Ontario) is a municipal leader in integrating reuse as a priority into its waste management approach. The region's Integrated Waste Management Master Plan, known as the SM4RT Living Plan, envisions a future where nothing goes to waste and emphasizes the 4Rs: reduce, reuse, recycle, and recover. Its comprehensive SRR program combines community-driven reuse opportunities with upstream actions that discourage unnecessary new purchases.

The region adopted this approach for strategic reasons supported by a solid business case. With high existing diversion rates, SRR offered new ways to further reduce waste and extend product lifecycles. It also was a cost-effective way to reduce pressure on waste infrastructure from a growing population without costly new capital investments. Finally, SRR could divert and reduce expenses from costly waste flows including from food, textiles, and large items like furniture and mattresses.

Key Initiatives:

[Curbside Giveaway Days](#) – Encourage residents to give away unwanted items instead of discarding them.

[Lendaries at Public Libraries](#) – Provide access to tools, kitchen appliances, and recreational equipment, making borrowing mainstream.

[Repair Cafés](#) – Teach residents repair skills, reducing waste and fostering self-sufficiency.

[Textile Collection & Food Waste Reduction](#) Initiatives – Promote material recovery and sustainable consumption.

[Share Reuse Repair Virtual Hub](#) - an online platform with a searchable directory of share, reuse and repair events, businesses, organizations and educational resources.

[Circular Economy Initiatives Fund](#) - \$5,000 to \$25,000 to non-profits for community-driven, innovative projects that reduce residential waste and advance a circular economy in York Region.

Comprehensive SRR Programs

Key takeaways from York Region:

Start with a visible flagship action - Lendaries served as a highly visible, accessible and tangible entry point, sparking community interest and leading to expanded repair and sharing programs with libraries and partners.

Tailor programs to community needs. Conduct research—like library surveys for lendaries or resident feedback for SRR hubs—to understand attitudes, barriers, and priority items desired, ensuring greater engagement and impact.

Collaborate to amplify impact – Partner with businesses and nonprofits to enhance program effectiveness, extend reach into the community and amplify impact while minimizing the cost and time for local governments.

Waste Prevention is More Effective than Waste Management – Investing in solutions that encourage residents to embrace circular practices reduces waste management costs, helping offset rising operational and living expenses.





Step 4.

Develop Your SRR Plan



Develop Your SRR Plan

Now that you've explored SRR opportunities, the roles local governments can play, and assessed your community's starting point and potential actions, it's time to develop a plan that aligns with your community's needs.

Remember, SRR initiatives offer a range of social, environmental and economic benefits. Highlighting these connections can serve as a strong foundation for engaging with or expanding SRR in your community. Given that most local government staff are already stretched thin, aligning with existing initiatives and demonstrating how SRR supports community goals can help secure support.

Key Considerations for Creating Your Plan

1. Build on Existing SRR Practices - An easy place to begin can be to identify and support what already exists—clothing swaps, repair cafés, yard sales, thrift stores, tool libraries, or SRR-focused social enterprises. Engage with these groups to understand their needs and explore ways to expand their reach.

2. Scale Programs Over Time - Starting small—by piloting an event, tracking results, and expanding gradually—can be effective for many communities. Consider beginning with one or two types of household goods (e.g., bulky furniture or mattresses) and collaborating with neighboring communities to broaden your impact. The level of local government effort—low, medium, or high—will depend on available resources, policy priorities, and community needs. Many communities start with low-effort actions and scale up as capacity and interest grow. However, a staff or elected champion may enable a higher-effort action or a more comprehensive SRR approach from the outset.

3. Use Metrics to Guide and Share Progress - Use SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) metrics to track the performance of SRR initiatives and inform program development. Prioritize simple, low-burden data collection. Measuring the impacts of SRR can be challenging due to the informal nature of many exchanges, but there are options for doing so (see Text Box: Sample Metrics: Measuring Program Impact & Performance).

Measuring Program Impact & Performance (Sample Metrics)

The ultimate measure of success of SRR efforts is the reduction of waste generation and disposal, along with the associated decrease in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions—both upstream (from production and distribution) and downstream (from waste management).

Beyond tracking overall community waste reduction and emissions, program performance metrics can help evaluate effectiveness, efficiency, and accessibility. Some governments have begun estimating reuse activity within their communities, and including these metrics in reporting. For example, [Metro Vancouver](#) has reported reuse estimates in its Solid Waste Management Plan Annual Report since 2018.

Sample Impact Metrics:

Annual community-wide waste diversion and reduction (by material type).

Annual GHG emissions from waste disposal.

Annual consumption-based emissions (by material type).

Sample Implementation Metrics:

Accessibility metrics: Geographic distribution of resources, event frequency, or permanent infrastructure.

Event participation: Attendance numbers.

Material recovery: Quantity of items collected (if weight-based tracking isn't feasible).



4. Connect with Community Priorities - Align SRR efforts with what matters most to residents—affordability, supporting local business, climate action, and more. SRR initiatives offer affordable access to goods, especially valuable during periods of economic strain.

5. Align with the Priorities of Elected Officials - Consider and align with what your elected officials are most concerned about too - easing the financial and logistical burdens of waste management, supporting local businesses, job creation, supporting local charities. Consider if there are waste streams that are particularly costly to manage and currently aren't being recycled? Addressing these can open opportunities for SRR initiatives to reduce waste and municipal costs, thus keeping property taxes down.

6. Leverage Staff Capacity - Identify staff already working on related initiatives or those who could be potential champions. Building on existing roles and interests of staff can help drive the program forward.

7. Integrate with Existing Plans - Embed SRR into updates of solid waste management plans, zero waste strategies, economic development or climate action plans or even social planning efforts linking to community building, affordability and other goals.

Appendix A: Interviewees

We want to thank the following people for their time to conduct interviews with us about their SRR initiatives and programs, or respond to our email questions. Their input was invaluable to this Guide.

Charlotte Genge, Project Manager, National Association for Clothing Textile Recycling (NACTR).

Chris Diplock, CEO and Founder of The Thingery, BC.

Christoph Schultz, Executive Director, Recycling Council of BC.

Colette Downie, Vice President, Glebe Community Association and organizer of the Great Glebe Garage Sale, Ottawa, ON.

Erin Wildeboer, Supervisor, Waste Diversion Outreach Programs at Strathcona County, AB.

Etienne Angers, Team Leader, Circular Economy and Waste Prevention, Recyc-Quebec, PQ.

Fenicia Lewis-Dowlin, Senior Project Manager (emailed to find current title)

Joanne Fedyk, Executive Director, Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council.

Joshua Hensmen, Outreach & Education Coordinator, Solid Waste Programs | Engineering Services, City of Vancouver.

Julie Hordowick, Program Manager, Integrated Waste Management Plan, The Regional Municipality of York, ON.

Karen Storry, Senior Engineer, Metro Vancouver Solid Waste Services, BC.

Kelly Okamura, Key Organizer, St Lawrence ReMarket.

Kierstyn Otterman, Environmental Program Facilitator, City of Grand Prairie, AB.

Laura Alpi, Project Coordinator, Sustainable Waste Management, Waste Management & Forestry, Public Works, The Regional Municipality of York, ON.

Lee Harris, Manager, Leduc & District Regional Waste Management Facility, AB.

Madeleine Lemaire, Solid Waste Program Specialist, City of Coquitlam, BC.

Megan McLeod, Zero Waste Coordinator, Raven ReCentre, NS.

Shannon White, Integrated Solid Waste Specialist, District of Squamish, BC.

Tonny Colyn, President and Co-Founder, National Association for Clothing Textile Recycling (NACTR),

Vaughn Bend, CEO, Aquaterra Utilities, Grande Prairie, AB.

