



# Media Release

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For immediate release

## RDCK composting program on track to launch in 2021

Nelson, BC: Since 2016, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) has been consulting with the public and working with solid waste experts to design a cost-effective organics diversion strategy to meet provincial targets for waste reduction, lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and preserve landfill space. Through detailed analysis of compost technology options and data from comparable programs, the RDCK has a sustainable road map to a robust organic waste diversion program that will be launching in 2021.

The RDCK's organics strategy is initially focused on processing food waste and food-soiled paper from the Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) sector and municipalities with existing curbside collection programs as these represent the greatest organics diversion potential in the RDCK waste system. In the future, the RDCK will be looking to further expand organics programs into rural areas, either through supporting smaller community composting projects and/or in-home and backyard systems or through curbside collection where feasible. Expansion of curbside organics collection into rural communities will be going to public consultation in the coming months.

Currently, the RDCK is finalizing the detailed designs for two centralized, large-scale composting facilities. One facility will be located at the closed Central Landfill (Salmo) and the other at the Creston Landfill. The RDCK received funding to cover 2/3 of the eligible costs of facility design and construction through the Low Carbon Economy Leadership – Organic Infrastructure Program.

The RDCK will also be upgrading the Grohman Narrows Transfer Station and the transfer area at the Ootischenia Landfill to accept organics from Nelson and Castlegar's curbside programs, the ICI sector, and rural residential self-haul. Construction of these sites will be completed with minimal impact expected to site operations. The program is being developed such that the composting facility construction, operations, and transfer costs would be entirely paid by tipping fees. Current estimates expect organics tipping fees to be 15-20 percent less than mixed waste. However, to incentivize organics diversion, each sub-region could decide to subsidize organics through taxation to make them less costly to dispose of than garbage. Where diversion opportunities exist, many jurisdictions in BC utilize organics bans to maximize diversion and create a level playing field for the ICI sector.

The Creston Landfill Composting Facility will be operational in the fall of 2021 to support the launch of a weekly organics curbside collection program in the Town of Creston. The Central Landfill Composting Facility is anticipated to be operational in the spring of 2022 to support weekly organics curbside collection programs launching in the City of Castlegar and the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary (RDKB) greater Trail area as part of a cross-regional composting partnership. The facility is also anticipated to process dehydrated food waste from eight annual curbside collection events through the City of Nelson's own pre-treatment program utilizing the FoodCycler.

Rural residents and businesses that currently self-haul their waste to the Creston, Ootischenia, and Central Landfills, or Grohman Narrows Transfer Station will also be able to drop-off their organics once the composting facilities are operational.

Organics processing and curbside collection programs have the following benefits:

- Curbside collection of organics would be a new service within the RDCK and partnering municipalities. As a result of the increased convenience and large material acceptance, a curbside collection program represents the greatest diversion potential and the largest waste-related GHG reduction. The average household can divert approximately 120 kilograms of food waste per year.
- The program will provide the commercial and agricultural sectors with an opportunity to divert a wide variety and large volumes of organic wastes, something not consistently available in the RDCK.
- These facilities can dependably process a much wider variety of organics than traditional systems, such as meat and bones, breads, fats, and food-soiled paper. The RDCK program will supplement other composting methods by processing organic waste that can't go in backyard or in-home systems like the FoodCycler, which will also help reduce rodent and bear problems associated with backyard composting.
- The facilities will produce a useful product in the form of pathogen and weed-seed free compost. In the coming months, the RDCK will develop a plan for how this material may be distributed. The RDCK is considering providing the compost to partnering municipalities, non-profits for general use and fundraising opportunities and/or making the compost available for purchase at composting facilities.
- These projects will significantly reduce GHG emissions and leachate production at our landfills. They will also help conserve landfill space which will reduce long-term costs. Once these facilities are fully operational, the RDCK expects to see an average annual reduction in GHG emissions of 3,393 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, a big step towards meeting the RDCK's Climate Action commitments.
- Composting experts designed a system specific to the RDCK's needs and volumes that is scalable and ideal for accommodating future growth in a cost-effective manner. The composting technology that was selected will also limit odors, effectively compost in freezing temperatures, and meet the requirements of anticipated upcoming changes to composting regulations.

As the RDCK moves towards compost facility operations, residents in areas with weekly curbside organics collection and those that self-haul to the four organics locations can expect educational materials to roll-out in mid-2021. The RDCK will be working with the RDKB, the Town of Creston, and the City of Castlegar to develop consistent educational materials and messaging as these facilities and collection programs near their launch. Residents can expect to receive information regarding what can go in your green bins, collection schedules, and what can be dropped off for those that self-haul. The RDCK will also be reaching out to ICI sector business to discuss options to ensure successful organics diversion. As the City of Nelson's program will accept different types of organic waste, they will be developing their own educational material for residents.

The RDCK looks forward to this exciting initiative and new services launching in the region in 2021 and 2022.

*Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, water services and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit [www.rdck.ca](http://www.rdck.ca).*

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