

May 5, 2015

# **Municipal Organic Waste Diversion and Composting in Metro Vancouver**

Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions and  
Credits for Climate Action Reporting

**2014 Reporting Year  
(Amended Final Report)**



This report was prepared by the staff of the Air Quality and Climate Change Division of Metro Vancouver, with input from staff of the Solid Waste Services Department.

Questions on the report should be directed to [AQInfo@metrovancover.org](mailto:AQInfo@metrovancover.org) or the Metro Vancouver Information Centre at 604-432-6200.

**Contact us:**

Metro Vancouver  
Air Quality and Climate Change Division  
4330 Kingsway, Burnaby, BC V5H 4G8  
604-432-6200  
[www.metrovancover.org](http://www.metrovancover.org)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides an overview of the greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction calculations for the additional diversion of organic material from the solid waste stream in 2014 (compared to the 2006 baseline), attributable to organics collection programs run by municipalities in the Metro Vancouver region. All municipalities in the region except for the City of Burnaby are signatories to the B.C. Climate Action Charter, and as such have made a voluntary commitment to make progress towards carbon neutrality. To balance their carbon inventories, they require “GHG reduction credits” (or “carbon credits”) each year from projects such as this one.

**Metro Vancouver’s Role:** The final disposal of municipal solid waste from all municipalities in the region is managed at Metro Vancouver disposal facilities and the Vancouver Landfill located in the Corporation of Delta. Metro Vancouver’s Solid Waste Services Department maintains records of the solid waste flows throughout the waste management system, up to and including final disposal at two landfills and a waste-to-energy facility. This means that the organization is uniquely positioned to conduct the emission reduction calculations associated with organics diversion. This report has been prepared on behalf of the region’s municipalities to fulfill the reporting requirements associated with the Climate Action Charter and the Provincial Carbon Neutral Local Government Program.

**Project Overview:** This emissions reductions project comprises the collection of municipal organics (yard waste and/or food scraps) through residential “green bin” programs, thereby avoiding methane emissions that would have occurred had the organics undergone anaerobic decomposition in a landfill. Municipalities provide residents with green bins for their household organic material. Municipal fleet vehicles (either owned or contracted) then collect the organics in parallel with the regular household waste and recycling collection programs. The collected organics are brought to a composting facility, where controlled aerobic composting processes ensure that GHG emissions are minimized. Co-benefits of organics diversion include the production of useful compost, and reduced volume of waste landfilled.

**Baseline and Additionality:** The baseline year for this project is 2006. Therefore, a municipality can only receive carbon credits for additional tonnes of organics that are collected in a subsequent year, beyond the amount collected in the baseline year. Although some municipalities have been diverting and composting organic material since before the Climate Action Charter was signed, there have been significant increases in organics collected as existing programs are expanded and some new programs are initiated. There is currently no Provincial or Federal regulatory requirement for municipalities to collect and compost organics.

**Methodology and Estimated Emissions Reductions:** The project uses the methodology outlined in the Option 1 Project Profile on Household Organics Waste Composting provided by the Green Communities Committee, in conjunction with the accompanying calculator. Metro Vancouver has prepared this report in accordance with the Green Communities Committee’s Becoming Carbon Neutral Guidebook. The estimated GHG reductions credits for 2014 are based on the reported additional organics diversion undertaken by municipalities in 2014. **Total GHG reduction credits (“carbon credits”) for all eligible municipalities have been calculated to be 35,110 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, which can be used to balance municipal carbon liabilities for the 2014 reporting year.**

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## 1.0 COMPLIANCE WITH GREEN COMMUNITIES CARBON NEUTRAL FRAMEWORK OPTION 1 PROFILE

### 1.1 Household Organics Waste Composting – Option 1 Profile Summary

Municipal curbside organics collection programs have been successful in diverting increasing quantities of organic waste (yard trimmings and food scraps) from landfills. Organics diversion activities have environmental benefits, including avoided emissions of landfill gas (which contains methane, a potent greenhouse gas). The Provincial Green Communities Committee (GCC) has developed a profile and calculator to allow municipalities to calculate GHG reductions attributable to organics diversion. The resulting carbon credits can be used towards Municipal Carbon Neutrality goals, under the Climate Action Charter framework.

The project profile on Household Organics Waste Composting (the Profile) provides guidance on estimating the amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that can be reduced by diverting household organic waste into a centralized community composting system rather than sending it to a landfill. When organic waste is placed in a landfill, methane emissions occur gradually over 100+ years as the material decays (Baseline Emissions). In contrast, placing the same amount of organic waste in a centralized composting facility involves a rapid aerobic decay that generates far fewer emissions within a single year (Project Emissions). So when organic material is composted instead of going to a landfill, there is a reduction of emissions that would have occurred at the landfill in the future. The project profile and accompanying organics diversion calculator (the Calculator) provides an accounting approach to measuring these reductions over time in each year that they would have occurred. GHG reduction credits are allocated to the year in which the organics diversion occurred.

### 1.2 Baseline Year and Project dates

The baseline year is 2006 and any additional organics diversion (i.e. the amount beyond that which was collected in the baseline year) that occurred post signing of the Climate Action Charter (September 2007) is eligible for credits. This Project Report accounts for additional organics diverted by municipal governments between January 1 and December 31, 2014, and calculates credits that apply to the 2014 reporting year based on the GCC Household Organic Waste Composting project profile.

### 1.3 Project Eligibility Statement

Metro Vancouver asserts that the 2014 Project Report for the crediting period meets all eligibility requirements of the BC Green Communities Committee's (GCC) "Becoming Carbon Neutral Guidebook".

#### *Project Eligibility Requirements:*

1. Emission reductions are outside the local government corporate emissions boundary, as defined in the Carbon Neutral Workbook:
  - Emissions associated with solid waste disposal sites (including landfills and composting facilities) are outside the corporate boundary, according to the Workbook.
2. Emission reductions have occurred before they are counted:
  - The emission reductions being claimed for 2014 are associated with additional organics diversion activities that have occurred by the end of that year. The GCC Organics Diversion calculator uses a landfill-specific methane generation model to determine the avoided

methane emissions due to diversion over the 100 year period after the year in which the diversion occurred.

3. Emission reductions are credibly measured:
  - Option 1 (GCC Supported Projects) are considered to meet this Project Eligibility Requirement. Emission reductions have been calculated using the Organics Diversion Calculator provided by the Green Communities Committee.
4. Emission reductions projects are beyond business as usual (BAU): projects must have started after September 26, 2007; must not be required to fulfill a federal or provincial government's legislated or regulatory requirement; and meet one of three tests (financial, other barriers or common practice):
  - Option 1 (GCC Supported Projects) are considered to meet this Project Eligibility Requirement.
  - There is currently no Provincial or Federal regulatory requirement for municipalities to collect and compost organics. Metro Vancouver is currently working with its member municipalities to implement an organics disposal ban (to be phased in over 2015) that aims to encourage additional food scraps recycling in the region. Since this ban is at the local government level, it does not affect the additionality of this project.
5. Accounting of emission reductions is transparent:
  - This public report provides details of the emission reduction accounting.
6. Emission reductions are counted only once:
  - Metro Vancouver has calculated the emission reductions from municipal organic waste diversion based on the regional waste flow data that it is responsible for collecting (and validating) from the municipalities in the region. The emission reductions claimed in this report have not been previously committed or sold as emission reductions.
7. Project proponents have clear ownership of all emission reductions:
  - The local governments claiming emission reductions under this profile assert that they have exclusive rights to the legal and commercial benefits of reductions associated with municipal organic waste diversion. Metro Vancouver makes no claim of ownership to the emission reductions associated with municipal diversion of organic waste.

## 1.4 Contact Information

Contact information for the Project Designate and Project Developer are provided in Tables 1 and 2 below.

**Table 1** Project Designate Contact Information

Contact Name and Title:	Roger Quan, Director, Air Quality and Environment
Company:	Planning, Policy and Environment Department Metro Vancouver
Roles and Responsibilities:	Project Designate
Address:	4330 Kingsway, Burnaby, BC V5H 4G8
Telephone:	604-436-6770
Fax:	604-436-6701
E-mail:	<a href="mailto:Roger.Quan@metrovancover.org">Roger.Quan@metrovancover.org</a>

**Table 2** Project Developer Contact Information

Contact Name and Title:	Conor Reynolds, Senior Project Engineer
Company:	Air Quality & Climate Change Division Planning, Policy and Environment Department Metro Vancouver
Roles and Responsibilities:	Project Plan Developers
Address:	4330 Kingsway, Burnaby, BC V5H 4G8
Telephone:	604-456-8811
Fax:	604-436-6701
E-mail:	<a href="mailto:Conor.Reynolds@metrovancover.org">Conor.Reynolds@metrovancover.org</a>

## 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 GHG Assertion

This Project Report summarizes the regional household organic waste diversion activities, as reported to Metro Vancouver by the Municipalities, during the crediting period from January 1 to December 31, 2014. Project activity in 2014 resulted in a total GHG emissions reduction of 35,110 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.

### 2.2 Data and Calculations

#### 2.2.1 Organic Waste Diversion Data

Metro Vancouver's Solid Waste Services Department receives information from municipalities on solid waste diversion activities annually, including tonnes of municipal solid waste (MSW), recycling and organics (yard trimmings and food scraps) collected by municipal programs. These data are combined with data from Metro Vancouver's transfer stations, private recycling processors, extended producer responsibility (EPR) stewards and the three regional final disposal sites (Cache Creek Landfill, Vancouver Landfill and the Waste to Energy Facility), to provide a complete picture of waste management activities in the region.

The critical factor determining whether a municipality receives carbon credits is whether they collected (i.e. diverted) additional organics in 2014, above and beyond the amount collected in the 2006 baseline year. Attachment A provides the diverted organics by municipality, as reported to Metro Vancouver by the municipal solid waste coordinators, for 2014 compared to the baseline year, and the proportion that is eligible for carbon credits (in 2014) based on the GCC’s additionality criteria. Local Governments maintain auditable records of their organics diversion programs, including the quantity of organic waste collected in 2006 (the “baseline year”) and each year since that time, whether food scraps collection was included in the program, and the type of composting facility that receives the diverted organics.

**2.2.2 Regional Approach to Carbon Credits**

Metro Vancouver and its member municipalities have worked collaboratively to develop a regional approach to calculating carbon credits related to organics diversion because such an approach provides collective benefits, including data accuracy/integrity, the efficiency with which the process is conducted, and also because it reduces the likelihood that any municipality in the region will have a geographic advantage. This regional approach has been endorsed by Metro Vancouver’s Regional Engineers Advisory Committee’s Climate Protection Subcommittee and Solid Waste Subcommittee, and has been agreed to by the Green Communities Committee.

The organics diversion calculator spreadsheet requires information about the final disposal of municipal solid waste (MSW) in order to determine avoided emissions. Only organic waste diverted from landfills are eligible to earn credits, whereas organic waste that is diverted from a Waste-to-Energy facility does not. Metro Vancouver has the Provincially-delegated responsibility (BC Environmental Management Act) for the management of all of the municipal solid waste for the region, whether it is dropped off at a Metro Vancouver transfer station or direct-hauled to a disposal facility.

Given the complexities of the solid waste management system in the Metro Vancouver region, individual municipalities do not decide which final disposal facility their solid waste would go to – this decision is based on system efficiencies related to the operations of the transfer stations and disposal facilities. Likewise, tipping fees are based on system-average costs, and are the same throughout the region. Individual municipalities generally cannot stipulate or trace where the solid waste they collect is disposed of. The only three exceptions are the City of Vancouver, the Corporation of Delta and the City of Richmond, each of which uses the Vancouver Landfill as their exclusive disposal site for municipally collected waste.

Table 3, below, shows the proportions of waste sent to each of the three final disposal facilities. For municipalities other than Vancouver, Delta, and Richmond, the average fractions of solid waste (including municipally collected waste) sent to the three final disposal facilities have been calculated using 2014 total waste flow data for those municipalities in the region.

**Table 3** Proportions of Waste Sent to Each of the Three Final Disposal Facilities for the Region

<b>Year</b>	<b>WTEF</b>	<b>VLF</b>	<b>CCLF</b>	<b>Applies to:</b>
2014	0.0%	100%	0.0%	Vancouver, Delta and Richmond
2014	42.9%	15.8%	41.4%	All other Metro Vancouver municipalities

Note: WTEF = Waste to Energy Facility (Burnaby); VLF = Vancouver Landfill; CCLF = Cache Creek Landfill



### 2.2.3 Using the Green Communities Organics Diversion Calculator

The Provincial Calculator was used to calculate the carbon credits by municipality, by year. In accordance with guidance from the Province, the ratio of food scraps to yard trimmings in the additional diverted household organic waste was assumed to be 50:50. The composting facilities used by Municipalities in Metro Vancouver during the Project Period are all categorized as “Forced Aeration Compost (Optimized)”.

The key inputs to the calculator were:

- The regional proportion of MSW sent to each of the three final disposal sites in 2014, as determined by Metro Vancouver; this applies to all municipalities except City of Vancouver, Corporation of Delta and the City of Richmond (Table 3, above);
- The landfill gas collection efficiencies for the Vancouver Landfill and Cache Creek Landfill in 2014, and projected for 2015, as provided in the facilities’ public reports (Table 4).

**Table 4** Landfill Gas Collection Efficiency, by year, for Vancouver Landfill and Cache Creek Landfill.

Year	VLF	CCLF
2014	60%	75%
2015*	75%	75%
2016*	75%	75%

\* Landfill gas (LFG) collection efficiencies up to and including 2014 are based on modeled LFG generation and actual LFG collection data; while efficiencies post 2014 are estimated from modeled generation and projected collection. Collection efficiencies greater than 75% are reported as 75%, according to the guidance in the GCC Organics Diversion Profile.

The factors presented in Tables 3 and 4 were used in the Organics Diversion Calculator to determine the GCC carbon credits from diverting one tonne of additional organic waste from disposal at the three facilities (Table 5).<sup>1</sup> This “carbon credit factor” (i.e. amount of credits per tonne organics diverted) decreases over time because of improvements to the landfill gas collection systems at the two landfills.

**Table 5** GCC Carbon Credits (tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e) per tonne of diverted organic waste.

Year	GCC Carbon Credits (tonnes) per tonne of diverted organics	Applies to:
2014	0.531	Vancouver, Delta and Richmond
2014	0.279	All other Metro Vancouver municipalities

Using the factor for 2014 presented in Table 5, the number of carbon credits available to each municipality for the 2014 reporting year was calculated, and these are presented in the table in Attachment B. The number of new GCC carbon credits available in 2015 and future years will depend on the amount of eligible organics diversion activity in those years and the 2015 inputs to the calculators (i.e. updated versions of Tables 3 and 4).

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<sup>1</sup> The calculator has been updated for 2014 to change the global warming potential of methane from 21 to 25, which brings British Columbia accounting framework in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Canadian Federal Government. The impact of this change is to increase the carbon credits per tonne of organic waste diverted.

### 3.0 OWNERSHIP OF CREDITS

The member municipalities of Metro Vancouver are solely responsible for the household organics diversion programs in their jurisdictions, and are hence identified as the owners of the corresponding GHG reduction credits. GHG reduction credits are similar to market “carbon offsets” but cannot be bought, sold or traded. Individual municipalities will choose whether to include these credits in their final Carbon Neutral Reports as part of the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program. Metro Vancouver does not claim rights to the credits associated with this organics diversion GHG reduction project.

### 4.0 REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

B.C. Climate Action Toolkit. “Carbon Neutral Local Government”. Available at:  
<http://www.toolkit.bc.ca/resource/becoming-carbon-neutral-workbook-and-guidebook>

Green Communities Committee. 2012. “Becoming Carbon Neutral: A Guidebook for Local Governments in British Columbia”. Version 2, July 2011. Available at:  
[http://www.toolkit.bc.ca/sites/default/files/CNLG%20Final%20July%202011\\_0.pdf](http://www.toolkit.bc.ca/sites/default/files/CNLG%20Final%20July%202011_0.pdf)

Green Communities Committee. 2012. “The Workbook. Helping Local Governments Understand How to be Carbon Neutral in their Corporate Operations “. Available at:  
[http://www.toolkit.bc.ca/sites/default/files/CarbonNeutralWorkbook.V2\\_noapdcs\\_03.12\\_0.pdf](http://www.toolkit.bc.ca/sites/default/files/CarbonNeutralWorkbook.V2_noapdcs_03.12_0.pdf)

Green Communities Committee. 2012. “Green Communities Carbon Neutral Framework Option 1 Profile: Household Organics Waste Composting”. Available at: <http://www.toolkit.bc.ca/resource/becoming-carbon-neutral-workbook-and-guidebook>

Province of British Columbia. 2007. “Climate Action Charter”. Available at:  
<http://www.livesmartbc.ca/community/charter.html>

## APPENDIX A: TONNES OF COMPOSTABLE ORGANIC MATERIAL DIVERTED

**Table 6** Mass of Household organics (tonnes) diverted by Metro Vancouver Municipalities in 2014, compared to 2006 baseline organics.

Municipality	2006 [1]	2014	
	Baseline Organics (tonnes)	Diverted Organics (tonnes)	Eligible Organics (tonnes)
Anmore	0	99	99
Belcarra [2]	0	0	0
Bowen Island	50	0	0
Burnaby	9,634	15,556	5,922
Coquitlam	4,612	10,982	6,370
Delta	5,732	11,669	5,937
Langley City	504	1,768	1,264
Langley Township	3,433	9,357	5,924
Lions Bay [2]	0	0	0
Maple Ridge	0	0	0
New Westminister	0	4,578	4,578
North Vancouver City	1,152	2,673	1,521
North Vancouver District	4,511	7,223	2,712
Pitt Meadows	0	2,255	2,255
Port Coquitlam	3,186	5,809	2,623
Port Moody	1,200	3,010	1,810
Richmond	7,783	16,314	8,531
Surrey [3]	17,962	22,663	4,701
Vancouver	17,700	46,583	28,883
West Vancouver	3,184	5,101	1,917
White Rock	0	1,638	1,638
<b>Total Eligible Organics:</b>			<b>86,685</b>

[1] The "Baseline" year for organics diversion is 2006. Eligible organics are the additional amount in the project year above and beyond the baseline amount.

[2] 2014 organics diversion data for these municipalities were not provided to Metro Vancouver in time for publication of this report.

[3] City of Surrey diverted a total of 60,862 tonnes of household organics in 2014. However, since the municipality implemented a new organics collection program in 2012, and are pursuing emission offsets related to that program, they have chosen only to include their "2014 baseline" organics (22,663 tonnes, according to their emission reduction calculations), to use for the GCC local emission reduction program. This ensures that there is no "double counting" of diverted organics.

## APPENDIX B: MUNICIPAL CARBON CREDITS

**Table 7** Green Communities Organics Diversion Carbon Credits by Municipality, 2014 (tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e)

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2014 Credits (tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e)</b>
Anmore	27
Belcarra	0
Bowen Island	0
Burnaby	1,655
Coquitlam	1,780
Delta	3,150
Langley City	353
Langley Township	1,655
Lions Bay	0
Maple Ridge	0
New Westminster	1,279
North Vancouver City	425
North Vancouver District	757
Pitt Meadows	630
Port Coquitlam	733
Port Moody	505
Richmond	4,527
Surrey	1313
Vancouver	15,329
West Vancouver	535
White Rock	457
<b>Total:</b>	<b>35,110</b>

## APPENDIX C: GREEN COMMUNITIES FRAMEWORK SELF-CERTIFICATION FORM FOR OPTION 1 PROJECT – HOUSEHOLD ORGANIC WASTE COMPOSTING IN METRO VANCOUVER

<b>Project Proponent Information</b>	
Name of Local Government Project Proponent(s)	<i>Project Developer:</i> Metro Vancouver  <i>Local Governments Claiming Reductions:</i> Municipalities in the Metro Vancouver Region
Project Designate appointed to sign off on the Self-certification Form	Name: Roger Quan Title: Director, Air Quality & Environment Phone: 604-436-6770 Email: <a href="mailto:Roger.Quan@metrovancover.org">Roger.Quan@metrovancover.org</a>
Project Developer Contact	Name: Conor Reynolds Title: Senior Project Engineer Phone: 604-456-8811 Email : <a href="mailto:Conor.Reynolds@metrovancover.org">Conor.Reynolds@metrovancover.org</a>
<b>Project Information</b>	
Project Report Title	Household Organic Waste Composting in Metro Vancouver: Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions and Green Community Carbon Credits for Carbon Neutral Reporting (2014 Reporting Year)  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Copy of Project Report attached
Timing and Amount of reductions being claimed	GHG emission reductions of 35,110 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent are claimed from this project, from activities between January 1 and December 31, 2014.
Certification that the required work occurred	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I declare that the project work required to achieve the GHG reductions from this project as estimated by the project profile used, actually occurred during the years in which they are identified, and will be claimed in 2014 as per the Project Eligibility Requirements outlined in Appendix 1 of the <i>Becoming Carbon Neutral</i> Guidebook.
<b>Self Certification: Authorization and Sign off</b>	
Project Designate Statement	I declare that the information provided in this self-certification form is to the best of my knowledge correct and complete.
Project Designate Signature:   Roger Quan, Director, Air Quality & Environment	
Date: May 5, 2015	