

Original SUN Article: *Disputed eco-centre gets Metro Green Light*

# Don't throw your trash in our backyard: New recycling eco-centre planned for Surrey

BY KELLY SINOSKI, VANCOUVER SUN MAY 8, 2014



Metro Vancouver hopes the new eco-centre will cut down on the illegal dumping of mattresses and other garbage.

**Photograph by:** Gerry Kahrman, Vancouver Sun

Metro Vancouver will go ahead with plans for a controversial eco-centre in Surrey as part of its bid to boost recycling rates and reduce illegal dumping across the region.

The residential drop-off facility, expected to be built in Newton at a cost of between \$8 and \$14 million, is the first of several one-stop recycling depots that Metro would eventually like to see across the region as it tries to achieve an 80-per-cent diversion rate in its landfills by 2020. The facility would collect all residential blue-box recyclables — along with paint cans, electronic waste, renovation materials and yard waste — in one place.

Metro is also in the midst of upgrading its Coquitlam transfer station — and enhancing other facilities across the region — to allow residents to drop off recyclables without having to go through the scale and pay a tipping fee.

Residents would still have to pay a fee for certain items, such as mattresses, yard trimmings or clean wood, which are costly to recycle and already have disposal fees, said Paul Henderson, manager of Metro's solid waste division, but "our goal is to make it really convenient to people if they have multiple materials (to recycle)."

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The Surrey facility was first promised by Metro Vancouver in 1995 when it closed the Port Mann dump. It has taken nearly a decade to move forward, partly because of concerns by other mayors in communities such as Burnaby and Vancouver, which have been running their own stand-alone recycling depots for years without a cent of regional funding.

Burnaby Mayor Derek Corrigan said Wednesday he supports the new eco-centre because he was told Surrey would front most of the costs with the region responsible for the garbage portion.

Henderson said Metro is working with Surrey as well as other municipalities to determine the best and most equitable model for the eco-centres, and no decisions have yet been made.

But Surrey's Rob Costanzo, deputy operations manager for engineering, said the facility will likely be a 50-50 operation with Metro, with Surrey developing the recycling portion.

The city is expected to narrow down its preferred sites and go to public consultation on the proposed facility later this year. He maintains the eco-centre is desperately needed because the transfer station in Port Kells is so far away for residents in the rest of the city, particularly south Surrey. The city is looking at building another eco-centre in south Surrey later on.

Costanzo noted illegal dumping, for things such as mattresses or entire suites, has been escalating across the region as residents ditch them on country roads or alleys rather than pay the disposal fees. He said the facility won't eliminate the problem but will make it easier for people to recycle their garbage rather than tossing it.

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