Circular Economic Regional Market Assessment

CONSTRUCTION, RENOVATION & DEMOLITION WASTE MATERIALS

ALBERNI-CLAYOQUOT REGIONAL DISTRICT

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Prepared by

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SYNERGY FOUNDATION

This report was prepared by Light House (www.light-house.org) for the Synergy Foundation to support the Circular Hubs Project serving the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, the City of Port Alberni, and the broader community. Light House works with government and industry to create regenerative and circular built environments that nurture ecological and human health.

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1 Introduction

Construction and the built environment play a significant role in the economy of Vancouver Island. This report focuses on the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD), where construction activity reflects broader economic transitions, a legacy of resource-based industries, and shifting population trends. The recent closure of the region's largest forestry mill has contributed to unemployment and underemployment, reinforcing the need to explore new business models and pathways for job creation.

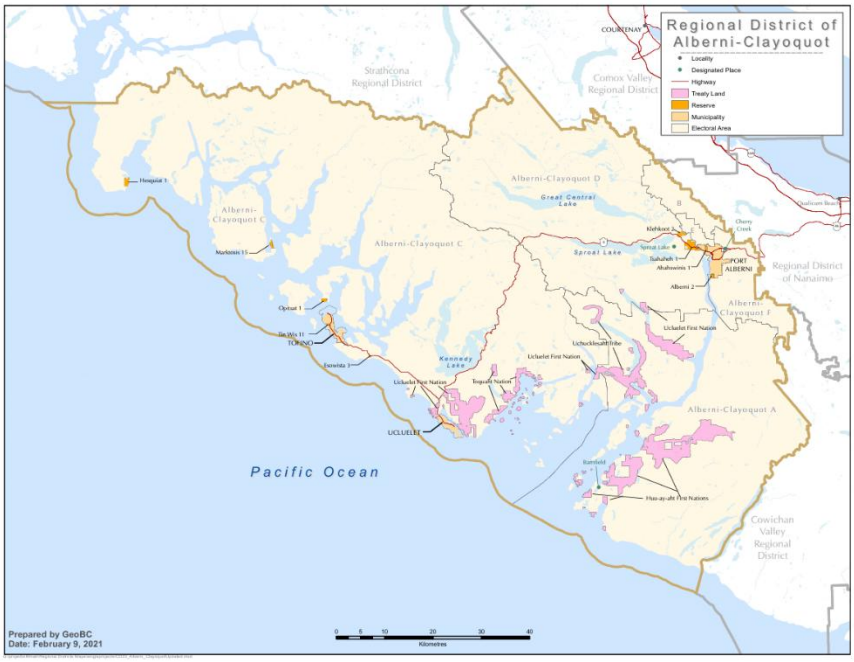
With support from the B.C. Government's Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP) and PacifiCan, the Synergy Foundation commissioned this Regional Market Assessment to better understand the ACRD's construction, renovation, and demolition sector; identify opportunities to advance circular economy practices; and assess regional gaps that could be addressed through the development of circular hubs.

The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District consists of Port Alberni and Electoral Areas A, B, C, D, E, and F as shown in Figure 1[1]. As of 2021, the ACRD had a population of 33,521, with Port Alberni as the primary population centre.[2] Prior to the mill closure, Port Alberni experienced modest population growth of approximately 5% between 2016 and 2021, compared to the provincial average of 8%.[3] Indigenous peoples, with the majority identifying as First Nations, comprise approximately 17% of Port Alberni's population, nearly three times the provincial average. The population is also older than the provincial average, with nearly one-third over the age of 65 and a median age of 50. This growing, diverse and maturing population combined with reduced employment opportunities underscores the need for economic diversification that can support existing residents while attracting youth and newcomers.

Construction, renovation, and demolition (CRD) activity is closely tied to the age and condition of the local housing stock. Over the past ten years, housing starts in the region have averaged approximately 122 dwellings per year. This consistent level of housing activity provides a reliable source of materials for recovery and circular economy initiatives.

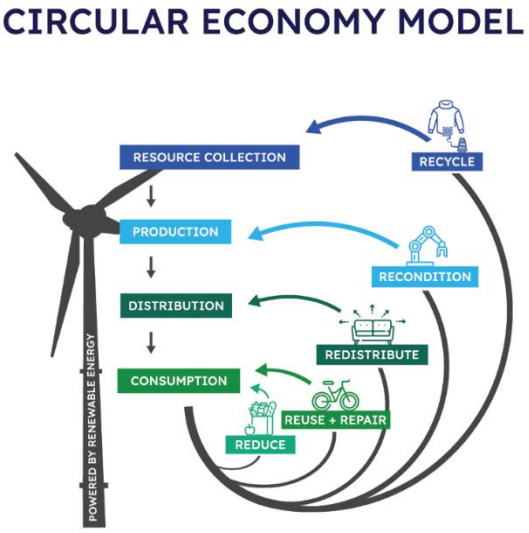
[1] Government of British Columbia, Map of Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (2021)
[2] Statistics Canada (2022), Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - Alberni-Clayoquot, Regional district (RD) [Census division], British Columbia
[3] Qatalyst and Synergy Foundation (2025), Port Alberni Circular Economy Labour Market Study.

Figure 1: Map of Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District



Within the built environment, CRD activities consume significant amounts of materials and energy while generating a substantial share of the region's waste stream. These materials flows represent both an environmental challenge and an untapped economic opportunity.

A circular economy emphasizes keeping materials in use for as long as possible through reuse, repair, recycling and recovery, while designing out waste and pollution. In this context, circular economy approaches present an opportunity to create local economic activity and jobs, retain material value, and reduce reliance on costly virgin materials. Circular economic strategies have particular resonance in rural communities like the ACRD, leveraging regional construction and manufacturing skills, while also strengthening local economic resilience against market and resource disruptions.



1.1 Study Purpose and Objectives

Funded through the BC Government's Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP) and PacifiCan, the primary goal of this Regional Market Assessment is to inform the development of a regional circular economy hub in the ACRD. A circular economy hub model has the potential to revitalize local economies through the creation of high-quality skilled jobs, value-added production, repurposing of underutilized infrastructure, technical innovation, and stronger local supply chains. It envisions fostering deeper partnerships among construction-related businesses, local governments, Indigenous peoples, social enterprises, artists, entrepreneurs, and educational institutions.

See the Circular Hub Best Practices Report for supporting research on Circular Economy Hubs and an overview of C&D material recovery strategies.

Local government, industry, and community organizations all have a role to play in shaping a circular hub.

- Policy and infrastructure create the enabling conditions
- Businesses and trades innovate and operationalize solutions
- Community level efforts generate participation and cultural uptake.

This report speaks to these diverse groups, offering a shared foundation for advancing circularity in the ACRD.

1.2 Project Scope and Methodology

The scope of this assessment included evaluating current and future market capacity for reuse, reprocessing, and recycling of CRD materials within the ACRD. The study was designed to reflect the region's size, economic context, and infrastructure realities, drawing on insights from a targeted group of informants and providing actionable insights for businesses, government, and supporting organizations.

A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining desktop research, primary and secondary data collection, and quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Key sources include:

- Statistics Canada (population, employment, industry trends)
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) (housing starts, renovation activity)
- Regional district solid waste management data, annual reports, waste composition studies (private and public facilities) and demolition permits
- Provincial policy and regulatory documents relevant to waste management and circular economy initiatives

Study activities included:

- Conducting targeted interviews with local contributors.
- Hosting a community workshop to capture perspectives of local contributors and identify barriers and opportunities.
- Analyzing data on construction trends, existing housing stock, renovations and demolitions.
- Documenting existing material management infrastructure and processing capacity.
- Reviewing existing disposal, reuse, and recycling practices.
- Estimating current volumes and potential impacts of CRD waste by material type (e.g., wood, concrete, asphalt shingles, drywall) and building sector (residential, industrial, commercial, institutional).
- Estimating the economic value and untapped potential of diverting CRD waste, and potential beneficial uses for each material type.

A key component of the study was engagement with construction, demolition, and manufacturing businesses, along with organizations and community members, to identity priority material streams, infrastructure needs, and partnership opportunities for CRD materials. This included a Waste to Resource Community Session (workshop) held in Port Alberni on November 18, 2025.

This workshop brought together 16 local contributors representing a range of sectors to discuss potential hub models and economic opportunities tied to CRD waste recovery. Participants engaged in facilitated discussions, shared insights, and proposed solutions that would address regional assets and gaps.

See Appendix A – Engagement Summary for an overview of the interviews and workshop.

The study's findings are informed by data of varying quality, age, and completeness, including reliance on some 2021 datasets where more recent or local information was not available. Accordingly, the data is used to illustrate trends and to contextualize regional material flows, rather than to provide precise quantitative estimates. The assumptions underlying this analysis are documented in the relevant sections of the report.

2 Current State Assessment

This section provides a snapshot of the ACRD's construction sector and related building materials associated with construction, renovation and demolition activities. It also details the existing circular and waste management infrastructure in the region.

2.1 Sector Profile

The construction sector in the ACRD is the fifth largest employer generating 1,100 jobs, ahead of forestry, logging and tourism.[4] The sector is comprised of a mix of local businesses and regional operators, supported by waste management services, haulers, specialized contractors, and social enterprises that undertake material reuse, and value-added manufacturing. Complementary industries such as forestry, wood manufacturing and port operations also play a role in shaping material flows, although these sectors have seen significant declines in recent years.

Local operators have demonstrated expertise in deconstruction and on-site sorting, particularly for commercial projects, enabling some recovery of higher value materials like clean wood and metal.

[4] City of Port Alberni, Jobs by Industry – Alberni Local Area.

These practices often integrate workforce training, providing skills development and employment opportunities. Partnerships between businesses, nonprofits, and Indigenous organizations offer additional potential for innovation.

2.2 Construction, Renovation & Demolition Activity


CREDIT: TECTONICA

New construction, renovations, and demolitions are all sources of potentially recoverable materials. Each activity should be considered separately because they generate different material volumes, compositions and quality, which impact diversion opportunities.

Residual materials from construction activities are post-industrial virgin material (higher quality), whereas demolition activity produces post-consumer material (lower quality). Renovation activities can generate both post-industrial and post-consumer waste.

Identifying the sources of CRD waste also supports the development of policies, incentives, and collection and processing strategies that can capture the highest value from these material streams.

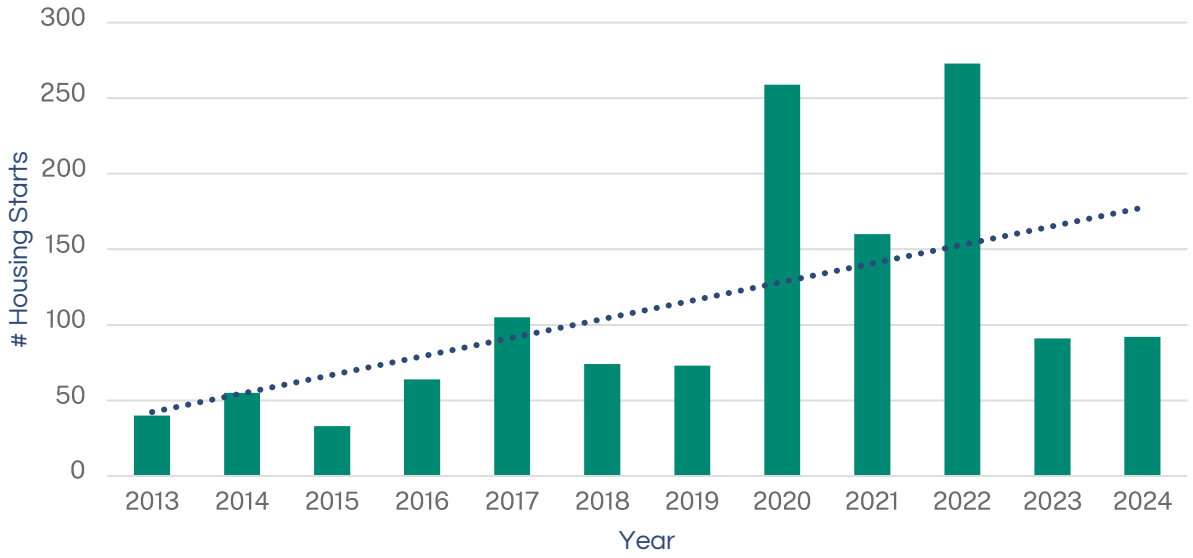
NEW CONSTRUCTION

Housing starts (new builds) data indicate a slow increase in residential development over time in Port Alberni, with construction spikes between 2020-2022 (see Figure 2).[5] Construction activity coupled with renovations, generate ongoing supply of CRD waste streams.

Port Alberni Census Agglomeration (CA) includes: Areas A, B, D, E, F, and the City of Port Alberni plus 'other' (which may include First Nation reserves).

[5] BC Stats, (2013 to 2023) and (2014 to 2024), British *Columbia Housing Starts for Urban Areas and Communities*

Figure 2: Housing Starts in Port Alberni Census Agglomeration (2013-2024)



Studies estimate that as much as 10 per cent of all materials by weight that are brought on site are wasted during a traditional stick-frame construction project.[6] **Assuming that the average 1,300sq ft home contains 65.4 tonnes of building materials[7] and that on average 175 units were started over the past five years, it is conservatively estimated that 1,144 tonnes of building materials are wasted in construction annually.**

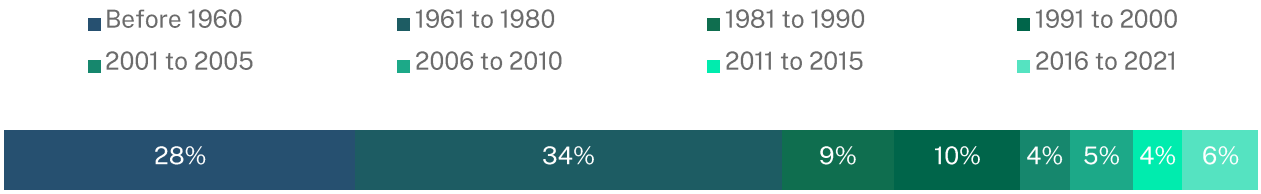
RENOVATIONS

Housing condition is a key driver of CRD waste generation, particularly through renovation and repair activities. Of the 14,610 dwellings in the ACRD, approximately 62% were built before 1980 (see Figure 3). Statistics Canada estimated that 13,250 dwellings in the region needed regular maintenance and minor repairs, and 1,360 needed major repairs, representing 9% of the total housing stock in the region.[8]

Figure 3 includes the City of Port Alberni and Areas A-F.

[6] Department of Trade and Industry. 1998. *Rethinking Construction*. P.15; Bossink & Bouwers. "Construction Waste: Quantification and Source Evaluation". March 1996. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*.
[7] Metro Vancouver. Demolition Waste Generation Rates Calculator.
[8] Statistics Canada (2022), Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - Alberni-Clayoquot, Regional district (RD) [Census division], British Columbia

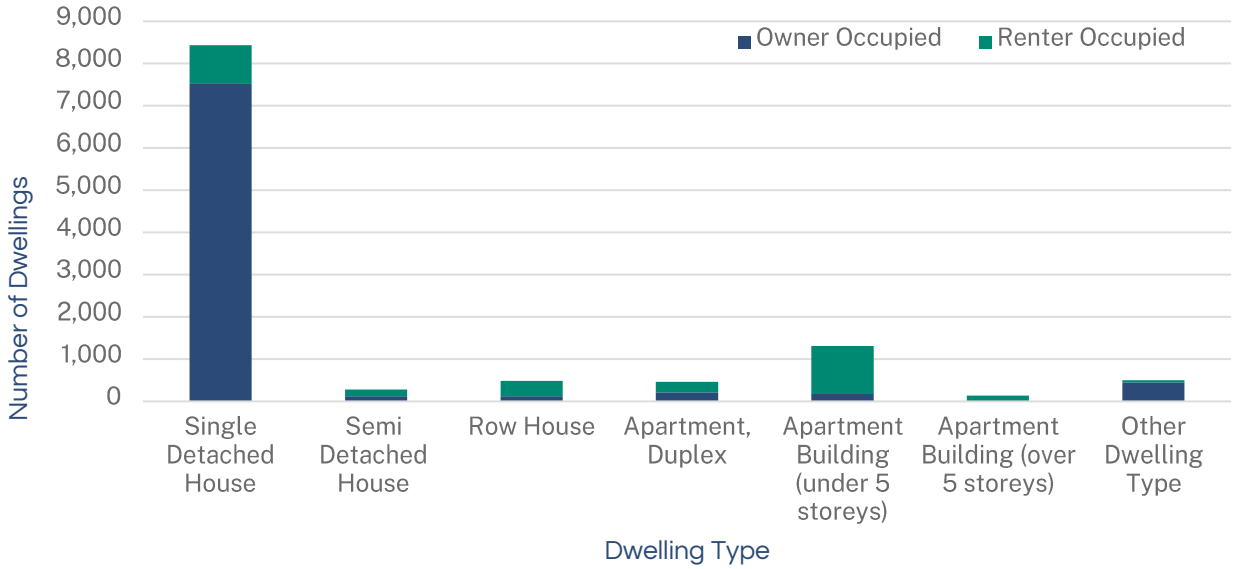
Figure 3: ACRD Housing Age Breakdown (Stats Can 2021)



Of the total housing stock in the ACRD, approximately 70% are single-detached dwellings. Port Alberni accounts for about 80% of the region's housing stock, 74% of which are owner occupied (see Figure 4).[9]

Figure 4 includes Port Alberni and Areas D, E and F.

Figure 4: Port Alberni Dwellings by Type: Owner versus Renter Occupied (CMHC 2021)



[9] Note: The Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) does not publish renter versus owner counts at the regional district level, or for communities smaller than 10,000.

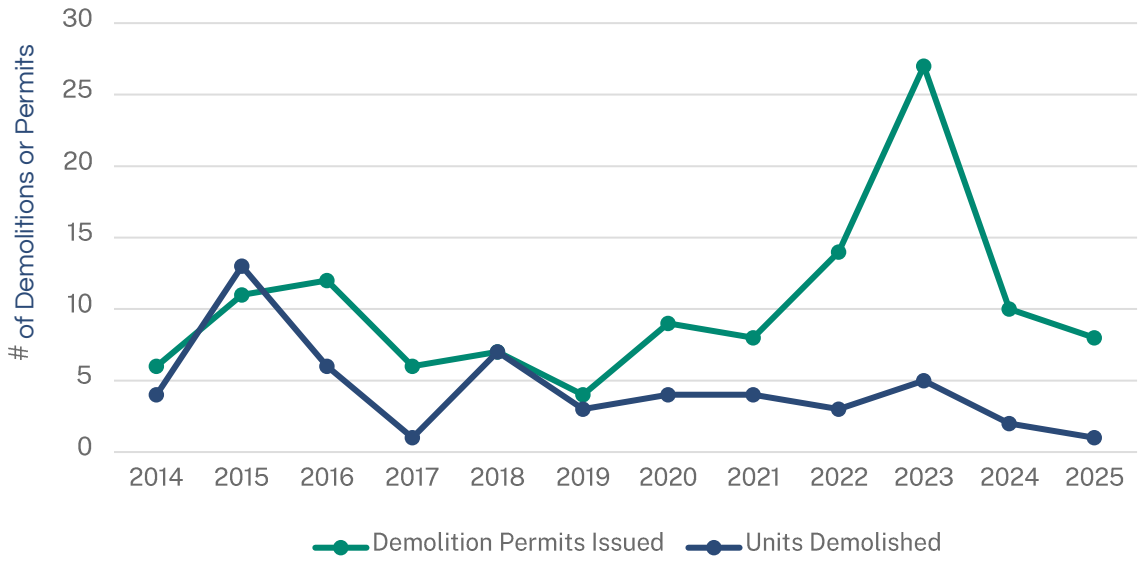
While it is difficult to accurately estimate the volume of material wasted during renovations, the high proportion of single-detached, owner-occupied dwellings indicates that most renovation activity is driven by individual homeowners. This dynamic can create more opportunities for material salvage, as homeowners have direct control over renovation decisions and may be more willing to separate and retain usable materials.

DEMOLITIONS

In addition to ongoing renovation activity, the aging housing stock also contributes to modest but consistent demolitions. Figure 4 shows historic demolition permits issued and units demolished in the City of Port Alberni.[10] Permit data is useful for forecasting potential waste generation, while the number of units demolished helps quantify the actual material diversion potential.

To illustrate the impact of one single demolition, it is estimated that the average 1,300 sq ft wood-frame, single-family home contains 65.4 tonnes of material (including 16.4 tonnes of concrete associated with the foundation). **Based on an average of 4-6 residential demolitions per year in the ACRD, this equates to approximately 262 tonnes – 392 tonnes of material generated annually.**

Figure 5: Number of residential demolitions in Port Alberni between 2014-2025



[10] Port Alberni, Building Services - Annual Statistics | City of Port Alberni

Shifting from demolition to deconstruction enables the recovery of a significant share of these building materials. Examples include carefully removing doors, windows, wood beams and flooring for reuse, as well as dismantling interior walls to separate materials (e.g., drywall and insulation). **In a typical residential deconstruction, between 16-25% of materials can be reused and between 30- 70% recycled.**[11][12] Recoverability during deconstruction is influenced by material quality, construction methods, the condition of the structure, and proximity to buyers and end-markets. Reuse practices are often prioritized over recycling, and some municipal deconstruction bylaws provide higher diversion credits for reuse (e.g., Metro Vancouver).

See Appendix B-Residential Deconstruction Case Study.

2.3 Waste Management Infrastructure

Based on the calculations in Section 2.2, it is conservatively estimated that more than 1,500 tonnes of building materials are wasted each year in the ACRD from residential construction and demolition activities; approximately 30 percent of the CRD materials received at the waste facilities in 2024 (see Table 1).

The ACRD's waste management infrastructure includes the Alberni Valley Sort'nGo Centre and the West Coast Landfill serving Ucluelet and Tofino.[13] The Sort'nGo Centre has landfill capacity projected to last until 2089, which means that landfill space is not a significant driver of waste diversion, as much as it is in other regions with less or no landfill capacity. Other CRD waste infrastructure includes hauling and waste disposal services by private operators, most of which is landfilled at the Sort'nGo Centre.[14]

Source separation of materials on construction sites is rare due to space constraints, limited awareness, and tight project timelines. As a result, materials are typically received in mixed loads of lower quality.

Current recycling practices include metal recycling through local haulers, recycling of paint, lighting and lighting fixtures and smoke and carbon monoxide alarms through

[11] Delta Institute. (May 2018). Deconstruction & Building Material reuse: A Tool for Local Governments & Economic Development Practitioners. Deconstruction-Go-Guide-6-13-18-.pdf
[12] Drawing on industry interviews regarding current deconstruction practices.
[13] Alberni Valley Landfill. 2018 Operations & Monitoring Annual Report.
[14] From phone correspondence with GFL Environmental

extended producer responsibility programs, and mattress deconstruction via social enterprises, alongside reuse applications such as wood briquette manufacturing from post-industrial wood. However, collection and processing capacity for other material streams, such as clean wood, drywall, asphalt shingles, masonry and ceramics and other building materials remain limited. CRD waste management and associated circular opportunities remain constrained by linear-oriented policy, infrastructure, and market forces. Key contributors emphasized the need for shared sorting spaces, improved logistics, and policy support and enforcement to drive diversion and recovery.

Despite these challenges, the region benefits from some local deconstruction operators, value-added manufacturing initiatives, and Indigenous partnerships; factors that present clear opportunities for further developing a circular economy hub tailored to the region's ongoing Solid Waste Management Plan.[15]

2.4 Waste Composition

Based on volume data provided by the ACRD Solid Waste Management Division's annual report, CRD waste accounts for approximately 25% of all material managed at the Sort'nGo Centre and West Coast Landfill, with an estimated 5,192 tonnes reported in 2024 (see Table 1).[16] [17] [18] To date, an estimated 1,066,734, tonnes of solid waste has been disposed of across these two facilities. If approximately 25% of this landfilled material was CRD waste, this represents a large volume of potential resources that could have been recovered. Waste composition and total volumes have fluctuated over the years, with higher proportions of CRD material reported during the COVID period, followed by a gradual tapering aligned with regional economic activity.

The waste volumes presented in Table 1 reflect publicly reported data only. Materials managed by private sector entities (including contractors, haulers, waste management) may be diverted to alternative facilities or regions and are not captured in the reported volumes.

[15] Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, *Solid Waste Management Plan* (November 2007), Prepared by Gartner Lee Limited https://www.acrd.bc.ca/solid-waste-management-plan.
[16] Volumes and waste composition reported by ACRD staff.
[17] Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (May 2025), West Coast Landfill 2024 Annual Report.
[18] Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (May 2025), Alberni Valley Sort'nGo Centre 2024 Annual Report.

Table 1: Annual CRD waste volumes landfilled by facility (2024)

Facility	Total (tonnes)	CRD (tonnes)	CRD (%)
Alberni Valley Sort'nGo Centre	14,769	3,413	23
West Coast Landfill	6,057	1,779	29
Total ACRD	**20,826**	**5,192**	**25**

Mixed CRD waste accounts for 73% of the waste stream in the region, with asphalt shingles, drywall, and clean wood representing smaller but notable fractions (see Table 2).

Table 2: CRD waste composition data (2024)

Material Category	Volume (tonnes)	Percentage (%)
Mixed construction/demo materials	2,593	73
Asphalt singles	594	16.7
Drywall	162	4.6
Wood materials (clean/painted)	110	3.1
Commercial land clearing debris	51	1.4
Asbestos containing materials	40	1.1
Metal	<1	<0.1
TOTAL	**3,551**	**100**

Table 3 outlines the current CRD management practices in the ACRD as reported by key contributors in interviews and the workshop.

Table 3: Current management practices in ACRD for common CRD waste

Material stream	Current handling in the ACRD
Clean wood	Limited source separation: some reuse/upcycling initiatives (referenced in Sections 4 and 5).
Metal	Recycled via local scrap dealer where separated; limited data on recovery rates.
Concrete	Concrete for recycling is accepted at a lower price than the landfill tipping fee through a concrete business.
Glass	Glass/aggregates crusher owned by a local business.
Plastics	Some plastics are processed into new products (e.g., lumber) through the Alberni Valley Makerspace.
Drywall	Handled as a regulated stream; technical capability in the region but regulations are not favorable for local processing.
Mixed CRD	Predominantly landfilled due to space and sorting constraints.

3 Policy and Regulatory Review

Effective policy frameworks are essential for advancing circular economy practices in the CRD sector. In ACRD, current regulations provide a foundation for waste management but lack the specificity and enforcement mechanisms needed to drive significant diversion of CRD materials. This section reviews current federal, provincial, and local policies, identifies gaps, and highlights opportunities for improvement.

3.1 Federal and Provincial Policies

At the provincial level, British Columbia has introduced Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs for various material streams, signalling a commitment to reducing waste and driving recycling rates. However, these programs are typically focused on residential packaging, and do not address CRD waste materials.

Interviewees emphasized that most green standards and diversion requirements are "still just on paper," with minimal enforcement at the project level. Building codes also present barriers to reuse, particularly for structural applications. Salvaged lumber and steel often cannot be reintegrated into new builds because they lack engineering certification, even if they meet basic quality criteria.

Federal policy plays a more indirect role, primarily through funding programs and sustainability targets. While these initiatives encourage innovation, they do not impose mandatory requirements for CRD waste diversion. Key contributors expressed a desire for stronger alignment between federal sustainability objectives and provincial building regulations to create consistent expectations across jurisdictions.

3.2 Local Policies

Local policy frameworks in the ACRD currently lack mandatory measures for CRD waste management. Waste management plans are not required on construction projects; no bylaw exists to prioritize deconstruction and material salvage over demolition and limited financial drivers to encourage material separation at regional waste facilities and material reuse. As one interviewee noted, "At the moment, most policy is still voluntary; as long as you deal with hazardous materials, you can landfill the rest." This regulatory gap limits the effectiveness of tipping fee surcharges, which, while intended to discourage disposal of clean materials, are insufficient to drive large-scale change without complementary infrastructure and enforcement.

Workshop participants and interviewees repeatedly called for new bylaws mandating deconstruction and material separation, paired with adaptive building code changes to allow approved reuse of salvaged materials.

Washington State was cited as a model, where code revisions permit certain reclaimed wood to be "assumed structurally sound" under defined conditions.[19]

[19] State of Washington (May 2021), State Building Code Council.

Similar adjustments in the ACRD could unlock significant potential for high-quality lumber and other materials. However, it is important to note that there are many non-structural applications for salvaged wood, and a lack of robust building code is not a barrier to reuse.

Local governments also have an opportunity to leverage procurement policies to stimulate demand for recovered materials. Requirements for green standards in municipal projects would create market signals that support investment in recovery infrastructure. Financial and scheduling incentives, such as refundable deposits or expedited permitting for deconstruction projects, were identified during the workshop as practical tools to encourage compliance and participation.

The following are examples of local policies from other regions that may be relevant to ACRD:

- **Early Green Removal and Move-On Permits:** This municipal policy offers expedited permits for the relocation/deconstruction of homes (early green removal permit) and resituating of moved homes (move-on permit) to disincentivize demolition. The District of North Vancouver offers an expedited permit process for its green demolition permit. The Town of Comox has a move-on permit.
- **Clean Wood Landfill Ban:** This initiative involves creating pathways to salvage, de-nail, process, and resell reusable wood. The Capital Regional District banned clean wood from landfill in January 2024 and established an on-site processing facility where clean wood is received and processed into refuse derived fuel (RDF). Fees for clean wood at the Hartland Landfill are $80/tonne.
- **Deconstruction Bylaws:** Many municipalities in BC and across Canada have updated their solid waste bylaws to require building deconstruction. These bylaws vary in scope, including differences in building type, age, and salvage requirements. They typically require contractors to provide a refundable deposit that is returned once proof of meeting the salvage quota is submitted. The City of Victoria requires all single-family homes or duplex built before 1960 to be deconstructed. A $19,500 refundable deposit is taken with the demolition permit application and returned once the contractor provides evidence that 40 kg of wood has been salvaged (for reuse, sale or donation) per square metre of liveable floor space.

4 Summary of Successful Diversion Programs

Successful diversion programs demonstrate that targeted policies, infrastructure investment, and collaborative partnerships can achieve significant reduction and diversion of CRD materials while creating economic and social benefits. This section highlights examples from the ACRD and other jurisdictions, illustrating strategies that could inform local implementation.

4.1 Regional Examples and Emerging Practices

Several initiatives within the ACRD showcase the potential for circular solutions:

- INEO Employment Services is a social enterprise that operates Recycle Matters, mattress recycling program. Since 2019, INEO has processed over 53,000 mattresses, diverting textiles, metals and wood from landfill while providing job training for marginalized groups. Some of the wood recovered from dismantled bed frames is upcycled into tables, stools and planter boxes. This model demonstrates how material recovery operations can deliver environmental benefits while providing workforce development opportunities.
- Timber Tiles, a majority First Nations-owned enterprise, produces decorative tiles from low-value lumber, demonstrating an innovative end-use for underutilized wood. In parallel, the company upcycles sawdust and offcut residuals generated during tile production into briquettes, creating additional value from secondary material streams. Through its "Wood for Warmth" program, Timber Tiles donates briquettes to community organizations, reinforcing the social value of circular practices. These activities illustrate how value-added manufacturing can transform both low-value wood inputs and production residuals into marketable products while supporting local employment.
- Coastal Restoration Society (CRS) has advanced deconstruction practices through commercial building projects, prioritizing careful dismantling to maximize salvageable materials. CRS integrates hands-on training into its operations, equipping workers with ticketed skills and creating pathways to employment in the green economy.
- Alberni Valley Makerspace is a not-for-profit organization and innovation hub that initiated Vancouver Island Plastics, the first PLA micro-recycling facility on the Island. PLA and HDPE plastics is collected and processed into recycled materials for building and household applications. They are piloting plastic recycling from CRD waste.

These examples underscore the importance of pairing technical solutions with community engagement and workforce development. They also highlight the role of capacity building and partnerships between diverse organizations to launch and scale circular initiatives.

4.2 Best Practices from Other Jurisdictions

Case studies from other regions offer additional insights:

- **Victoria Deconstruction By-laws:** Similar to the ACRD, CRD materials comprise more than one-third of the Capital Region's landfilled waste. In response, the City of Victoria has adopted a Demolition Waste and Deconstruction Bylaw that prioritizes salvage and reuse over conventional demolition.[20] Bylaw implementation followed a phased approach increasing the scope of dwellings captured under the bylaw and delayed implementation of refundable deposits. As of May 12, 2025, the bylaw applies to pre-1960 single-family homes and duplexes and is being phased in to avoid negative impacts on housing supply, with a $19,500 refundable permit fee linked to achieving material salvage targets.[21]

  Since implementation in September 2022, two home relocations and 14 deconstruction projects have been completed under the bylaw, with an additional 19 deconstruction projects underway at the time of publication, resulting in the salvaging and recycling of more than 112 tonnes of wood and hundreds of tonnes of other building materials.[22]

- **Hennepin County's Building Reuse Grant Program:** Hennepin County's Building Reuse Grant Program in Minnesota offers up to $5,000 and $15,000 top-ups for residential and commercial deconstruction projects, respectively. In 2025, the program was oversubscribed with $80,000 in grants awarded to 18 projects. Similar grants are also available for relocating homes and subsidizing the purchase of reused materials for new construction and renovation projects.[23] Based on deconstruction activity in the ACRD, a similar program would cost the region approximately $20,000-$60,000 per year.

[20] City of Victoria. Demolition & Construction Waste.
[21] City of Victoria. Bylaw No. 22-062 (Deconstruction and Demolition Waste Bylaw).
[22] Correspondence with Rhiannon Moore, Circular Economy Specialist, City of Victoria. December 29, 2025.
[23] Hennepin County, Building Reuse Grants.

- **Whistler Transfer Station Salvage Program:** A pilot program launched in the summer of 2025 allowed contractors and residents to drop off reusable wood at a reduced rate and pick up materials for free through a designated drop off and pick-up area at the waste transfer station. This program illustrates how low-barrier access to recovered materials can stimulate local reuse markets.[24] The municipality is continuing its reduced tipping fee for reusable wood, now set at $135 per tonne below the clean wood rate.[25]
- **Regional Wood Reuse Ecosystem:** The ReUse People developed a circular hub at the Malahat Industrial Park in the Cowichan Valley Regional District. The hub pre-processes reclaimed wood through activities such as denailing, trimming, grading, and quality control, standardizing materials for local reuse applications. DL Bins, which operates both hauling services and the wood diversion program at the Hartland Landfill, is now diverting pallets of clean wood to the hub. This hub can also serve as a destination for high-quality wood generated through deconstruction activities (e.g., City of Victoria's Deconstruction bylaw). This is an example of how municipal policies and contracts; local businesses and non-profit organizations can work together to incentivize and drive wood diversion and upcycling.[26]

These best practices share common elements: enforceable policies, supportive infrastructure, and incentives that make recovery economically viable.

5 Market Analysis

Understanding current and future market dynamics for salvaged and recycled CRD materials is critical to designing effective circular economy strategies. This section examines demand trends, identifies systemic barriers, and quantifies the economic potential of material recovery in the ACRD.

[24] McDonald, L. (June 20, 2025). Whistler inches toward zero-waste goals. Pique News Magazine. Whistler's landfill waste down, but 2030 zero waste goal questioned - Pique Newsmagazine
[25] Whistler Staff Report to Council. Wood Waste (page 3). Solid Waste Amendment By Law (2026 Tipping Fees) No. 2502, 2025. RMOW Report to Council
[26] Information provided through interviews with key contributors.

5.1 Current Demand for Salvaged and Recycled CRD Materials

Demand for salvaged and recycled CRD materials in the ACRD is highly variable and largely project dependent. Interviews with local businesses indicate a strong interest in materials such as structural steel and dimensional lumber. These materials are relatively easy to resell or repurpose when available in sufficient quantities and quality. Clean wood, for example, is sought after for reuse in flooring, beams, and furniture manufacturing, while steel retains high market value for recycling and fabrication.

Other material streams such as concrete, asphalt shingles, and drywall have more limited and inconsistent demand. While crushed concrete and asphalt can be used as aggregate in road base or drainage applications, these markets are often constrained by transportation costs and lack of local processing capacity. Drywall recycling is challenging because of regulatory restrictions and minimum volumes required to make it economical to process. Currently, drywall from Vancouver Island that is recycled is shipped to New West Gypsum in New Westminster, which increases costs and reduces feasibility.

5.2 Future Demand for Salvaged and Recycled CRD Materials

The concept of a regional circular economy network is viewed as a key enabler for aggregating material volumes, improving source-separation and material quality, connecting the value chain and creating predictable supply chains for recovered materials. Key contributors see potential for growth in several areas:

- **Value-Added Wood Products:** Regional innovators are expanding the use of reclaimed wood and diverse wood species in both decorative and structural applications. Timber Tiles applies value-added processing to low-value lumber to create design and architectural elements. UrbanJacks transforms building wood waste into high-quality lumber, and First Growth reclaims old-growth Douglas Fir from old buildings to create sustainable furniture and home décor.
- **Plastic Recycling Hub:** Organizations like the Alberni Valley Makerspace are processing plastic waste into lumber and benches. Initiatives like this have the potential to drive more consistent waste-to -value applications for CRD plastic.

- **Glass Reuse:** Local glass crushing equipment could create a processing opportunity for CRD glass that is currently landfilled. Pilot projects could explore its use as landfill cover (low-value application), as well as the cleaning and sizing requirements to enable higher-value applications, such as construction materials, sandblasting (e.g., marine and shipyard applications) and filtration media. Other reuse opportunities include incorporating glass into composite countertops, tiles, and flooring applications, as well as "glassphalt" (asphalt mixes containing crushed glass).

A circular economy hub in the ACRD could draw on established models such as the Building Materials Exchange Marketplace (BMEx), which supports business-to-business exchange of surplus and salvaged materials. With appropriate partners and programming, BMEx could expand or a similar platform could be explored in the ACRD.

5.3 Identification of Gaps & Barriers

Despite these opportunities, interviews and workshop discussions revealed multiple systemic challenges that hinder increased diversion and circularity in the ACRD. In general, participants noted operational challenges such as limited on-site sorting space, high transportation costs from remote areas, and inconsistent markets for salvaged goods. Additionally, the prevalence of hazardous materials in older buildings complicates deconstruction efforts. These constraints highlight the need for innovation in waste collection practices, exploring reverse logistics, supporting market development for salvaged materials and working with other regions to consolidate materials for creating economies of scale (e.g., drywall).

The absence of mandatory CRD waste management plans and deconstruction bylaws represents one of the most significant barriers to improving diversion rates in the ACRD. Key contributors expressed strong support for policies that move beyond voluntary compliance to enforceable standards.

In addition to regulatory and policy barriers, other themes identified are listed below.

Market Infrastructure Gaps

- No centralized hub or standardized marketplace for CRD salvage, or other safe areas accessible to the public.
- Limited regional processing infrastructure for plastic, glass, drywall, engineered wood, and painted materials.
- Lack of awareness and alignment around digital tools for material exchanges.

Economic and Operational Constraints

- High labour and time costs for material separation make deconstruction less competitive compared to traditional demolition.
- Limited space for sorting and storage at construction sites.
- Transportation costs from remote communities reduce the economic viability of recovery.
- Tipping fees are in place to discourage landfilling of certain clean materials. However, without adequate sorting infrastructure and policy drivers, these fees are not sufficient to drive large-scale diversion.

Material Quality and Risk

- Concerns about contaminants (e.g., lead paint, asbestos) create liability and operational challenges.
- Inconsistent availability of materials in usable condition and quantity undermines market confidence.

Labour Market Challenges

- Project-based nature of deconstruction work leads to workforce instability.
- Difficulty retaining skilled labour for deconstruction due to cyclical demand, insufficient wages and lack of long-term contracts.
- Skills gap in woodworking, heavy equipment operations and material sorting/grading

These barriers collectively constrain the development of a robust circular economy for CRD materials in the ACRD. Addressing them require innovative, systems-based thinking and coordinated action across sectors addressing policy, infrastructure, partnerships and market development.

5.4 Economic Opportunity Quantification

Current disposal practices represent lost value that could be captured through improved diversion systems.

The CRD material reported in 2024 were used to inform estimates of the potential economic impacts of waste diversion activities. **Diverting the reported 272 tonnes of key material streams could support one direct job and generate approximately $31,912 in direct economic contribution** (gross value added), with wood identified as the most valuable material.


CREDIT: STOCK

This is for illustrative purposes; because contamination, processing losses, and downcycling are part of the recovery process, not all collected materials will be fully diverted. See Appendix C - Economic Analysis for more details.

See Appendix C - Economic Analysis for more details.

The gross value added covers the collection, sorting, and preparation of CRD materials for reuse or further processing, as well as some associated economic activity. However, it represents only a portion of the waste value chain; greater social, economic, and environmental value could be achieved through downstream processing and value-added manufacturing.

In addition, it is important to distinguish direct from indirect jobs. Direct jobs are the positions created within the waste recovery activities themselves, such as workers who collect, transport, process, and remanufacture materials. These roles exist because the recovery activity is happening.

Indirect jobs, which are more difficult to estimate, are created in the industries that support waste recovery, including equipment suppliers, maintenance services, logistics providers, professional services, and entrepreneurship. These roles further amplify economic value and are enabled because recovery activities create demand in the wider economy.

The market analysis underscores that source-separated and high-volume material streams offer the greatest economic return and should be prioritized for recovery efforts. Supporting these efforts will require complementary measures, such as targeted policy reforms, infrastructure investments, value-added solutions and market development that enhance the revenue potential of specific materials.

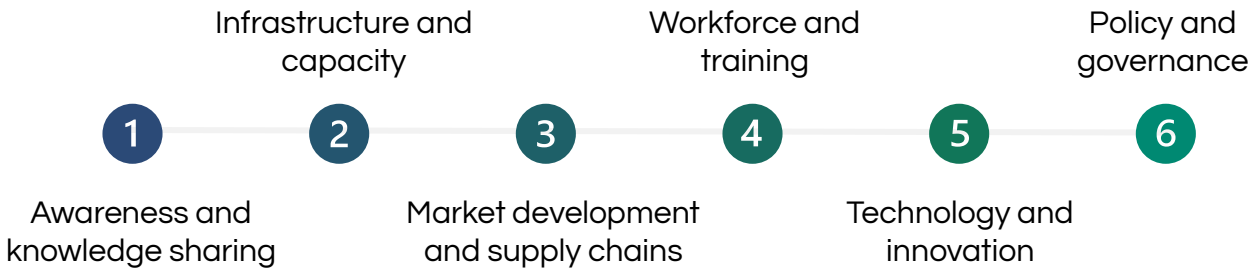
Additionally, more frequent waste composition studies and improved source separation for key waste streams will provide the data and material quality needed to develop tailored regional solutions. Waste audits undertaken by local governments, businesses at their own sites, and non-profits through community events—including volunteer-led efforts—can expand the evidence base and support more adaptive and effective reuse and recovery.

The next section explores opportunities and recommendations for how these measures can transform CRD waste from a cost burden into a source of economic opportunity and environmental benefit for the ACRD.

6 Opportunities and Recommendations

A circular economy works best when industry-level systems and community-level actions reinforce each other. Community engagement contributes to CRD material recovery and cultural momentum, while industry and government provide investment, infrastructure, expertise and market development. This synergy enables communities to maximize material value, drive sustainable practices, and strengthen both conversation and action around circularity.

The opportunities and recommendations provided below build on the regional context (Section 2), policy insights (Section 3), case studies and best practices (Section 4), and market analysis (Section 5). They are also informed by feedback received from key contributors during the interviews and workshop. Opportunities and recommendations are grouped into six categories:



For each recommendation, business, government or NGO collaborators are identified as a lead ("L") or supporter ("S"). Each recommendation is also assessed for ease of implementation from the perspective of the lead contributor, highlighting where easy wins may be achieved and where collaboration or support may be beneficial. In some instances, we have indicated where different or multiple lead contributors are possible. Finally, each recommendation is assessed based on is collective economic, social and environmental impact.

6.1 Awareness & Knowledge Sharing

Context: Providing multiple awareness raising channels is critical to the success of any circular economic strategy, highlighting the economic social and environmental benefits of programs and initiatives. In addition, individuals and industry need access to practical and accessible technical guidance on circular techniques, such as how to separate and prepare CRD materials for reuse.

Opportunity: Leverage existing resources (e.g., Regional District of Nanaimo's Construction Waste Best Practices Guide) to support initiatives and opportunities for recovering, separating, processing and reusing CRD materials within the community.

Actions	Effort	Impact	Who		
			Bus	Gov	NGO
6.1.1 Establish a Circular Business Innovation Group to identify common needs and opportunities amongst businesses, entrepreneurs and interested community members in the region.	Low Convene interested businesses together, potentially through the four chambers of commerce.[27]	High Creating social cohesion while driving local business opportunities and knowledge sharing.	L	N/A	S
6.1.2 Create online information sharing platform (e.g., Facebook Group) to discuss and amplify circular practices in the region.	Low An evolving and flexible online space for community-based information sharing.	High Low-cost method to support exchange of ideas and materials and build community.	L	S	S
6.1.3 Building on existing guides, develop a circular construction toolkit, including sorting best practices, deconstruction checklists, and grading templates.	Medium Modify similar guides to local context.	Medium Provides tool to engage community.	S	S	L
6.1.4 Host Builder Breakfasts and other events designed to mobilize industry around material salvage and reuse.	Low Host morning sessions bringing industry together to learn and share ideas. Potential part of existing morning events hosted by industry associations.	Medium Builds communities and catalyzes initiatives.	S	L	L
6.1.5 Coordinate information about available CRD materials through common online interface (e.g. Sort'nGo app).	Low - Medium Depending on ability to modify Sort'nGo app.	Medium Provides information on where to take materials, and how to access to access them.	S	L	L

[27] Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District. Chambers of Commerce

6.1.6 Create design guide to share examples for material reuse projects (e.g., greenhouses, raised garden beds, saunas).	Medium Depends on scope of project – online/print, etc.	Medium Supports local innovation and community awareness.	L	S	L
6.1.7 Promote local value-added and Indigenous businesses that are manufacturing products from salvaged materials (e.g., decorative tiles, recycled CRD plastic for lumber or benches, engineered wood).	Medium Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development departments leverage local and regional relationships. Involve media.	Medium Builds markets, reputational capital of businesses and interest in circular economics.	S	L	L

6.2 Infrastructure & Capacity

Context: Physical infrastructure for sorting, storage, and processing of CRD materials is limited. Building site-level constraints, lack of local processing, and insufficient shared facilities restrict recovery and reuse and inhibit economies of scale.

Opportunity: Developing regional infrastructure can increase source separation, support small businesses, and create local processing capacity for high-value materials.

Actions	Effort	Impact	Who		
			Bus	Gov	NGO
6.2.1 Establish network of locations in key population centres to collect, sort and store CRD materials, (wood, glass and plastics), designed for safe public access, small-business salvage, and contractor staging.	Medium A standard operating procedure ensures consistency across sites. The network can be implemented using existing or underutilized spaces.	High Critical component to facilitate local material exchange. Potential community economic benefit.	L	S	S

6.2.2 Establish and expand material-specific processing hubs and value-added wood, glass, and plastics (e.g. Alberni Valley Makerspace).	High Ideally business enterprises supported through government incentives (land, tax incentives) and industry support.	High Represents clean economy transition opportunity for the region.	L	S	S
6.2.3 Facilitate sharing of equipment, provision of micro-grants, and identifying end markets.	Low Provide financial incentives to catalyze innovation and economic activity. Support industry in finding buyers for products made from salvage.	High Depends on the incentive. Key is to sustain the support over long-term.	L	S	S
6.2.4 Codify procurement preferences for salvaged materials on public projects.	Medium Amend municipal procurement policies to support material reuse.	High Provides leadership in stimulating market demand.	N/A	L	S
6.2.5 Improve source separation of mixed CRD materials at Sort'nGo.	Medium Depends on creating and processing infrastructure (2.3).	High Strong material diversion potential.	S	L	S
6.2.6 Convert legacy industrial sites to provide processing options for materials currently sent outside the region.	High Seek public/private partnerships to build circular material processing options.	High Key driver for circular economic activity in the region.	L	L	L

6.3 Market Development & Supply Chains

Context: Effective circular economy systems rely on connecting recovered materials to end users at scale. Coordinating supply chains, including reverse logistics, ensures materials flow efficiently and opportunities for reuse are maximized.

Opportunity: Mapping material flows and strengthening market pathways can increase efficiencies, reduce transportation impacts, and foster industry collaborations.

Actions	Effort	Impact	Who		
			Bus	Gov	NGO
6.3.1 Map supply chains from waste to value, assessing economic viability, identifying key partners and end markets.	Medium Involves detailed mapping. Could engage support of local academia.	High Critical to establishing main sources of materials and economics of reuse.	S	L	S
6.3.2 Leverage resources available (e.g., Vancouver Island Building Material Exchange) to aggregate supply and broker transactions.	Low Tie into existing reuse programs (e.g. Building Material Exchange, Habitat for Humanity Restores) in neighbouring regions.	High Direct access to regional markets for excess and salvaged materials.	L	S	S
6.3.3 Access financial incentives that support material reuse (e.g. charitable tax receipts from a qualified donee.)	Low Build incentives into business model. Government and NGOs can build awareness of these opportunities.	High Provides cost-saving to business and clients, and market advantage against competing industries (e.g. deconstruction over demolition).	L	S	S

6.4 Workforce & Training

Context: Port Alberni has a strong base of trades and applied-skilled occupations, providing a solid foundation for circular economy activities. Recent mill closures and shifts in legacy industries have created a need for retraining and skills development.

Opportunity: Integrating circular economy principles into training programs can build local capacity, support economic diversification, and provide the local workforce with clean economy, high wage transition options.

Actions	Effort	Impact	Who		
			Bus	Gov	NGO
6.4.1 Adapt existing skills training programs or introduce new modules, certificates, and micro-credentials that embed circular economy principles and hands-on, project-based learning.	Medium - High Engage with local and regional colleges to promote existing circular constructure courses and develop local programs.	High Redirects training opportunities toward circular industries and processes. Supports circular economic development.	N/A	S	L
6.4.2 Offer retraining programs for workers impacted by mill closures and transitions in legacy industries.	Medium Depends on availability of existing courses. Ties into 4.1. Government provides bursaries.	High See 4.1.	N/A	L	L
6.4.3 Promote training opportunities through high schools and community employment centres (e.g. waste characterization audits, deconstruction, etc.)	Medium Present at high school job fairs and workshops with employment centres about employment opportunities and circular business ideas.	High Builds general awareness about circular economy, as well as skilled labour pool to support local businesses entering the market.	S	S	L

6.5 Technology & Innovation

Context: Traditional resources industries and solid waste sector have generally not leveraged technology and artificial intelligence to its full potential.

Opportunity: Emerging technologies and innovative approaches can improve material tracking, characterization, and processing, enabling higher recovery rates, more efficient circular economy practices across the region and economies of scale.

Actions	Effort	Impact	Who		
			Bus	Gov	NGO
6.5.1 Explore options for improving material sorting at municipal and private facilities.	Medium Capital investment/ funding may be required depending on the innovation.	High Innovations in material sorting are key to achieving cost-effective diversion.	S	L	N/A
6.5.2 Develop inter-regional partnerships to manage complex material streams (e.g., construction plastics, glass, drywall, painted/engineered wood), harmonize standards, and reduce reliance on exporting materials.	Medium Collaborate on engaging with business and regional governments to generate economies of scale.	High Given modest material volumes in rural communities, consolidation is key to making circular strategies economically viable.	L	L	L
6.5.3 In partnership with North Island College (NIC), establish the region as a test centre for new innovations and technologies supporting CRD material extraction, processing and reuse.	Medium Bring NIC and local businesses together to forge an initiative like UBC's Multi-Material Resource Initiative.	High Innovation between local collaborators is best approach to support local circular solutions.	L	S	L

6.6 Policy & Governance

Context: Current policy aligns with a linear economic model, promoting extractive industries, incentivizing the use of virgin materials and subsidizing waste disposal.

Opportunity: Regulatory frameworks and incentives play pivotal roles in encouraging deconstruction, material recovery, and circular economy practices across CRD streams. Strategic policy interventions can stimulate markets for recovered materials send signals to industry.

Actions	Effort	Impact	Who		
			Bus	Gov	NGO
6.6.1 Require waste management plans for all new builds that include material tracking and diversion requirements. Public housing projects can lead by example.	Medium Adopt best practices of other municipalities requiring WMPs for new construction and major renovations.	High Provides data source for material use and construction waste generation. Builds industry awareness about their waste impacts and diversion options.	N/A	L	S
6.6.2 Pilot a deconstruction by-law for selected building types, drawing on successful initiatives in other communities.	Medium Use precedents from leading municipalities (Victoria, Burnaby).	High Significant material diversion potential given age of housing stock and preservation of embodied carbon.	N/A	L	S
6.6.3 Introduce minimum recycled/reused content requirements in public project procurement.	Medium Requires municipal commitment and dispelling concerns about increased associated costs.	High Can stimulate market demand and signal support for circular industries and reduced GHG emissions on projects.	S	L	N/A

6.6.4 Offer financial and tax incentives (e.g., reduced property tax, financial top-ups and subsidies) to incentivize circular practices (e.g. relocating homes, deconstruction, use of salvaged materials in new construction). support material reuse.	Medium Employ proven incentive programs offset by reduced municipal costs. (e.g. Building Reuse Grants)	High Proven catalyst to drive material diversion and commercial innovation.	N/A	L	S

7 Conclusion and Next Steps

The findings of this Regional Market Assessment demonstrate that ACRD is at a pivotal moment in its transition toward a circular economy for construction, renovation, and demolition materials. Aging housing stock and ongoing renovations will continue to generate significant material flows. Without intervention, these waste streams remain a cost burden and environmental liability. However, with targeted and coordinated action, the findings suggest that they can become a source of economic opportunity and resilience for the region.

The analysis highlights three critical imperatives:

1. Prioritize high-value and high-volume streams for recovery to maximize economic, environmental and social returns.
2. Aggregate material volumes through circular hubs and exchanges to generate sufficient volumes to make it economically viable to reprocess. Foster collaboration across the value chain to pilot and scale key materials.
3. Enable structural reuse and scale diversion through policy reforms, infrastructure investment, and workforce development.

These priorities align with the Synergy Foundation's Circular Hubs Project, which aims to develop regional hubs that support collaboration, shared infrastructure, and capacity-building to accelerate the transition to a circular construction economy across British Columbia.

Next Steps for the ACRD

1. **Validation and Engagement:** Share this report with key contributors and host a follow-up session to confirm priorities and identify early adopters for pilot projects.
2. **Generate some "quick wins" by adopting recommendations in this report** that are easy to implement.
3. **Pilot Implementation:** Conduct pilots of various recommendations to demonstrate the viability of the various strategies.
4. **Policy Development:** Implement proven incentives to stimulate material diversion practices and begin developing a circular regulatory framework.
5. **Funding and Partnerships:** Co-invest and/or secure resources through programs like REDIP and FCM Green Municipal Fund to support infrastructure and workforce initiatives.
6. **Integration with Circular Hubs Network:** Position ACRD as a leading region within the provincial Circular Hubs initiative for select material streams (e.g., CRD glass and plastic), leveraging shared learning and scaling opportunities.

Progress in CRD waste management depends on shared action across local government, community organizations, Indigenous partners, artists, social enterprises and businesses, working collectively to unlock economic value and support broader climate goals.

Appendix A - Engagement Summary

The Material Market Assessment Study for Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) involved extensive engagement through a variety of methods. Activities included development of a long list of key contributors in the community and broader region, a series of interviews, and a community session. This engagement took place between June and November of 2025, and results were used to inform the Market Assessment and the broader Synergy Foundation Circular Hubs project.

List of Key Contributors

The list included 41 organizations in the ACRD, and a total of 108 in the broader Vancouver Island-Coast Region. Organizations were categorized into the following groups to ensure a range of perspectives were captured.

- Local Government
- First Nation
- Business
- Industry Association
- NGO / Social Enterprise

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with five organizations within the ACRD, and four organizations serving the broader region. Whenever possible, questions were shared in advance and consent was acquired before recording. Interview notes and transcripts were analyzed and summarized as input into the research effort.

Interview questions were structured into the following themes:

- General Information
- Existing Practices
- Material Supply
- Infrastructure / Processing Capacity
- Material Demand
- Policy
- Gaps & Barriers
- Conclusion / Next Steps

Community Session

A Waste-to-Resource Community Session was held in Port Alberni on November 18, 2025, in the Nucii Multipurpose Room of the Uchucklesaht Tribe Government. The purpose of the session was to explore opportunities for reducing CRD waste and advance circular economy initiatives locally. The session focused on identifying suitable hub models, community assets and gaps, and potential economic opportunities. Participants engaged in facilitated discussions, shared insights, and proposed innovative solutions tailored to the region's unique needs.

Of the 23 people registered, 16 people attended representing the following groups:

- Other (other includes (retirees, associations, and employment services) - 5
- Policy/Government/First Nation - 4
- Waste Hauler/Recycler - 3
- Artist/Furniture maker - 2
- Contractor/Builder - 1
- Reuse/Salvage - 1

All registrants and attendees of the workshop were asked to complete a short post-workshop survey to help inform future policy. Next steps from the sessions include the following:

- Host a validation session to share key insights from the community session, identify specific training opportunities, and establish material matchmaking connections in the community.
- Explore pilot projects and feasibility studies.
- Continue to build networks and material matchmaking opportunities.
- Ongoing community engagement.
- Provide training, BC Green Business and Green Trades certification and 1:1 support to businesses.
- Explore available grants for businesses and infrastructure.

Appendix B-Residential Deconstruction Case Study

Features

Year Built: 1929
Location: 3961 W 13th Ave. Vancouver, BC
Building Area: 3,037 sq ft.

Activity	Cost/ Savings ($)
Project Cost	61,000
Charitable Tax Receipts	-20,000
Net Cost	**41,000**

VEMA Deconstruction, based in Vancouver, recovers valuable materials that would otherwise be discarded, reducing landfill waste while providing affordable resources to the community. Their commitment extends beyond environmental responsibility, they create job opportunities and support local economies by donating salvaged items, such as appliances, cabinets, and furniture, to local organizations.

Material Composition

Material	Tonnes	%
Concrete/Plaster	52.2	43.9
Clean Wood (Recycled)	17.52	14.7
Clean Wood (Reused)	14.44	12.1
Brick/Tile	11.9	10
Garbage	11.3	9.5
Architectural Salvage*	5	4.2
Drywall	3.64	3.1
Asphalt Roof Shingles	1.7	1.4
Metal	1.3	1.1
Total	**119**	**100**

*Architectural salvage includes lumber, doors, windows, and cabinets.

90.5% **Recoverable material**

Deconstruction Timeline

1 Pre-Deconstruction

In Vancouver, a Recycling & Reuse Plan for Green Demolition & Wood Salvage is submitted with a demolition permit application if recycling/reuse minimums apply (houses built before 1950).


CREDIT: PETER COPPARD REAL ESTATE

2 Interior Deconstruction

Interior finishes and fixtures are carefully removed first, allowing materials such as cabinetry, doors, flooring, and lumber to be salvaged for reuse or recycling.


CREDIT: VEMA DECONSTRUCTION

3 Exterior Deconstruction

Exterior assemblies are methodically dismantled to protect salvageable materials and ensure proper separation of recyclable and reusable components.


CREDIT: VEMA DECONSTRUCTION

4 Material Diversion

Deconstructed materials are sent to recycling and reuse facilities. A Recycling & Reuse Compliance Report was submitted to the City of Vancouver to verify diversion. Salvaged materials for reuse (like the pictured lumber) are eligible for a higher diversion credit.


CREDIT: VEMA DECONSTRUCTION

Appendix C - Economic Analysis

The economic potential of CRD material recovery and reuse in the ACRD is significant, particularly given the region's island geography and reliance on local landfilling. Current disposal practices represent lost value that could be captured through improved diversion systems.

The economic impact highlighted in Section 5.4 was calculated using the below methodology.

Economic Impact Methodology

The economic value of salvaged materials was estimated by applying the following formula:

*(tonnes of recoverable material) * (economic multipliers) = impact to economy (GVA) and employment (jobs)*

Economic multipliers were adapted from provincial and national CRD waste diversion studies. Each community has unique characteristics that influence the specific impacts of CRD waste diversion, including the following factors:

- Quality and quantity of available materials
- Access to infrastructure, markets, and complementary industries
- Policies encouraging and mandating waste diversion

Table C1 summarizes secondary market values and tipping fees for common CRD material streams.

Table C1: Secondary market value by CRD material type (per tonne)

Material	Secondary Market Value per Tonne (CAD)	Primary Virgin Retail Value per Tonne	ACRD Tipping Fee per Tonne (March 2026)	Tipping Fee Range on Vancouver Island per Tonne [28]
Wood	$80–$155	$412–$508 (SPF lumber price)	$130 (clean) $185 (treated/painted)	$80–$265
Metal	$350–$550	$2,500 (steel bar, retail)	$0	$0–$60
Concrete / Rubble	$9–$54 (recycled aggregate, concrete / brick)	$150–$180	N/A	N/A–$60
Asphalt / Shingles	$110–$195 (recycled shingles)	$245–$333 (fresh asphalt)	N/A	$110–$155
Mixed CRD	$185–$365 (commingled /construction debris)	N/A (no direct retail comparator, treated as waste stream)	$185	$110–$205

Table C2 provides economic multipliers associated with employment gains and gross value added (GVA) for primary material streams. [29]

[28] Tipping fees from Comox Strathcona Waste Management, Capital Regional District (Hartland landfill) and Regional District of Nanaimo.

[29] Data sources for Table C1 include: Arnts, Capital Regional District, Bings Creek depot, CBM, Comox Valley Regional District, Cowichan Valley Regional District, Ecowaste, Government of BC, Groupe Bellemare, Hartland, Madison, Meade Creek depot, MetroVan, Okon, Peerless Road Recycling Centre, RDN, Scrap Metal Trade, StatCan, Statista.

This includes collecting, sorting, and preparing CRD materials for reuse or further processing, as well as some indirect economic activity ties to these actions.[30] This economic model reflects only a limited segment of the waste value chain. Additional opportunities exist to generate greater social, economic, and environmental benefits through value-added manufacturing.

For example, salvaged wood can be upcycled into design features or architectural elements that command higher market value than the original material because of its finished form and specific end use.

Table C2: Economic multipliers by material type

Material	Employment per 1000 tonnes (Jobs)	Gross Value Added per tonne (CAD)
Wood	1.5	134
Concrete	0	5.3
Drywall	1.3	106
Metal	1.8	249

Applying economic multipliers to the ACRD's 2024 waste volumes illustrates the potential benefits of diversion.[31] Table C3 provides a baseline estimate for the economic output and GVA of waste diversion by material type. [32] The economic output reflects the combined value of the secondary market revenue and the avoided landfill tipping fee for each material stream.

[30] Multipliers are adapted from the report: Economic & Environmental Assessment of Waste Diversion in Canada's Construction & Demolition Sector Study https://delphi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/CD-Waste-Diversion-in-Canada-Exec-Summary-Report-Sep-2024.pdf
[31] BC Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation. 2022. BC Circular Economy & Construction Waste Study. Provided by Ministry Staff.
[32] Note that the economic impact estimates assume that each material stream is successfully diverted from landfill to reuse, recycling, or value-added manufacturing pathways.

Table C3: Potential economic impact from 2024 volumes of sorted materials in ACRD

Material	2024 Reported Volumes (Tonnes)	Employment (Jobs)	Gross Value Added (CAD)
Wood	110	0.2	14,740
Concrete	Not reported*	-	-
Asphalt shingles	Not reported*	-	-
Drywall	162	0.2	17,172
Metal	N/A**	-	-

* Data gap
** Insignificant amount reported through public waste collection. Likely because metal recovery markets are already well established.

These figures represent a conservative baseline, reflecting only the public data currently available in the ACRD. Mixed CRD materials, which accounted for 2,593 tonnes (73% of the waste stream; Table 2), likely contain significant recoverable materials that are currently lost due to limited source separation.