

Tackling Climate Change Series

How waste is contributing to climate change

BIG MOVES

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Close the Loop on Waste

What's the deal with waste?

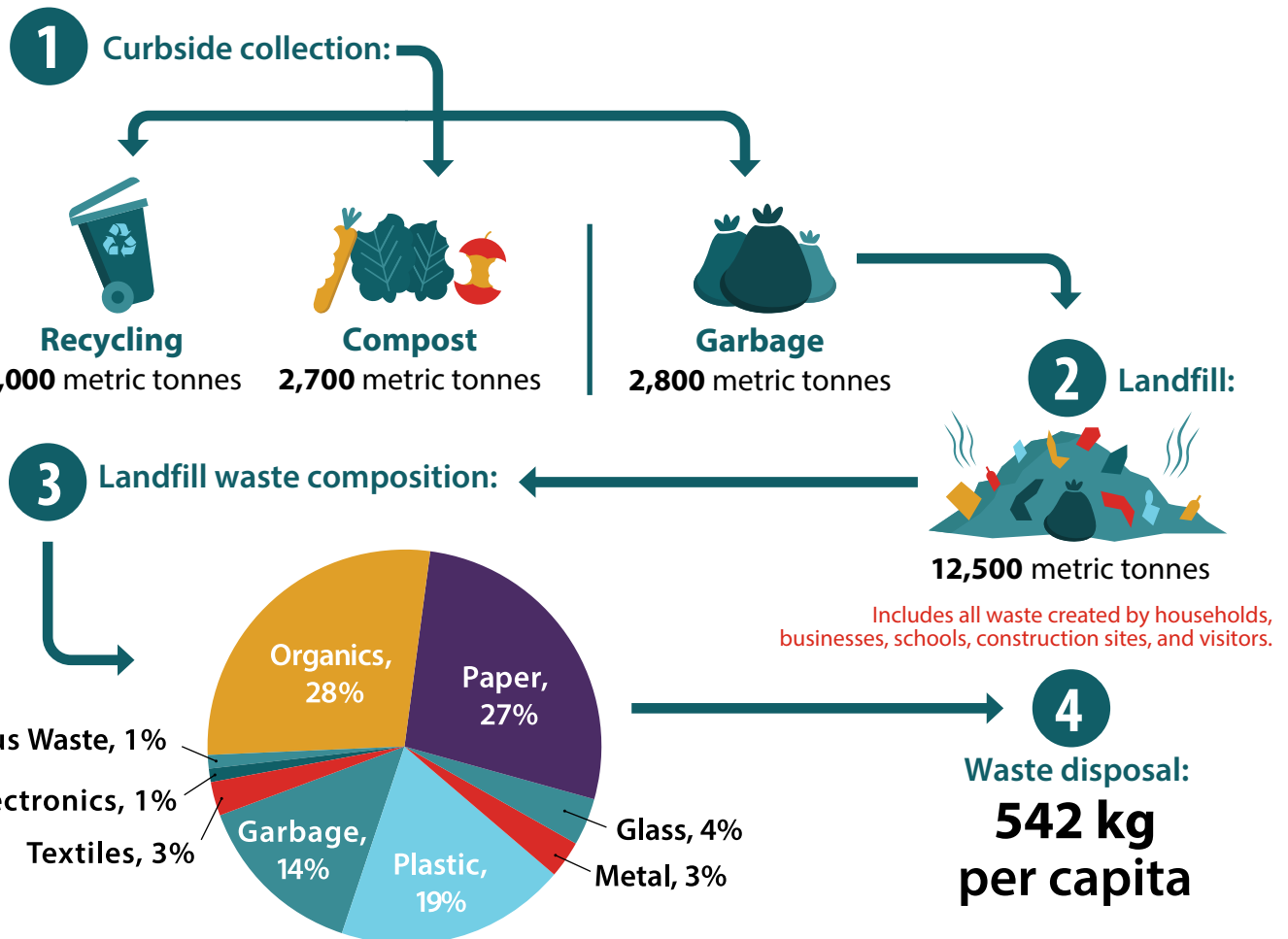
We know that **landfill waste accounts for 20% of our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions** in Squamish. But, how exactly does our garbage contribute to climate change? The short answer is that methane gas forms when organic waste like food scraps, wood, and garden cuttings are left in a landfill to decompose without oxygen. Methane is 26 times more powerful than carbon dioxide at trapping heat, so when released, it is a major contributor to global warming. While non-organic waste in the landfill doesn't contribute directly to greenhouse gases, every item we purchase has an emissions footprint to begin with. On a broad level, we can lower our emissions simply by reducing the amount of waste we create.



We need to close the loop on waste to reduce our community emissions.

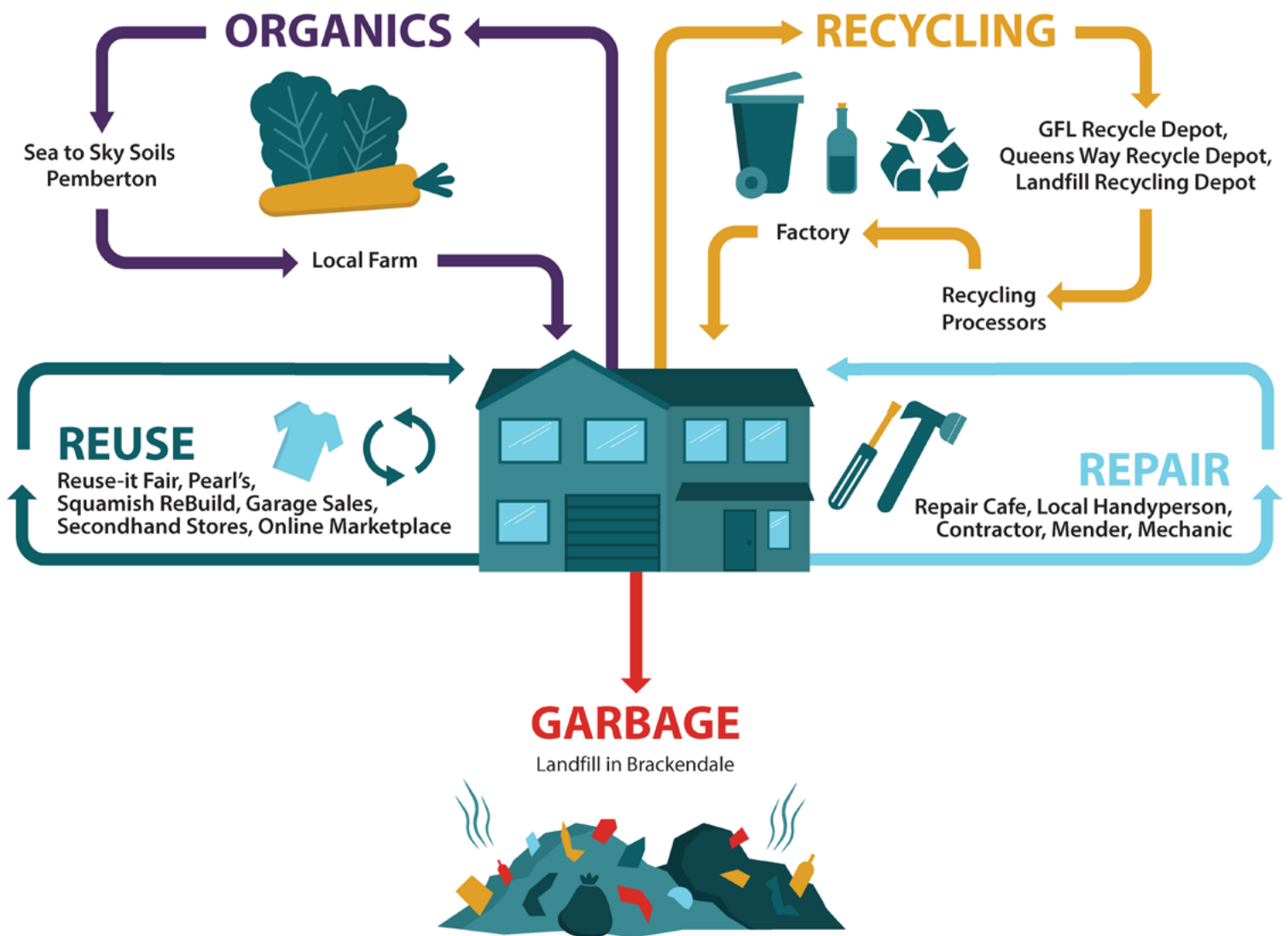
2020 waste by the numbers

The District of Squamish has completed an annual study to better understand our community waste usage. See some of the high-level results below.



Working towards zero waste

The District of Squamish has developed a [Zero Waste Strategy](#), which outlines guidelines for how the District, residents, and businesses can divert waste from the landfill and work towards a waste-free future. The target is to achieve a 120 kg waste disposal per capita in 2040, down from 610 kg in 2017. The strategy includes organic waste collection for businesses and homes, reducing single use plastics (like plastic bags), increasing recycling capabilities, public education, and guidelines for industries and the construction sector.



The goal is to divert as much waste from the landfill as possible, moving from a linear system to a circular economy.

How to help reduce waste in squamish:

- 1 Compost organic waste.
- 2 Give kitchen scraps a second life in sauces, soups or stocks.
- 3 Bring reusable shopping bags.
- 4 Buy second hand instead of new.
- 5 Start a recycling and compost program at your work.
- 6 Use reusable diapers.
- 7 Recycle all of your waste paper.
- 8 Use the Recycling Depots for your soft and flexible plastics.
- 9 Divert wood waste through the wood waste recycling program.
- 10 Remember - Reduce, Reuse, Repair before Recycle and Dispose.

Additional resources

- [The Story of Stuff](#)
- [Stop Trashing the Climate](#)
- [Queen of Green](#)

Review the [What Goes Where Guide](#) and [Waste Wizard](#) resources to learn how to properly dispose of your waste.