

# **Attachment #1**

April 11, 2016

Members of the Selection Committee,

Sustainable Connections is excited to submit this application for funding through the Commercial Waste Reduction and Recycling Technical Assistance and Education Program. Our proposed project, Toward Zero Waste – Whatcom County as a Gold Standard, will provide training and technical assistance to businesses throughout Whatcom County in order to help them meet the counties objective of reaching a 50% reduction in total waste.

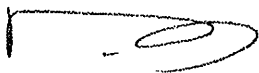
Working primarily with food industry and construction businesses, we will contract with each business to do an initial waste audit and then help devise a waste reduction plan tailored specifically to each individual companies' situation and needs. Throughout the term of the project we will maintain frequent contact with all participating businesses and will engage in regular follow ups to make sure that waste reduction goals are on track and to trouble shoot areas that prove to be a challenge.

This project will build on our prior successful Toward Zero Waste Initiative which has already helped over 375 Whatcom County Businesses significantly reduce their total waste. In addition to the businesses directly participating in this new phase of the project, we will use these activities as leverage to further raise awareness of waste reduction activities and resources within Whatcom County. Increased public awareness of our Toward Zero Waste Initiative, and waste reduction efforts in general, will spread the potential impacts of this project farther throughout the community multiplying the potential waste reduction impacts of this funding.

Sustainable Connections has an extensive history of successfully working with local business communities to produce outstanding results. We have successfully completed dozens of complex, grant funded projects, and have an experienced team ready to implement and manage this project. With the additional resources this contract would provide, we can help area businesses reduce the waste they are sending to our landfills and help Whatcom County take another significant step towards its overall goal of a 50% reduction in waste.

Thank you for your consideration,

Derek Long



Executive Director  
Sustainable Connections

## **Management Proposal:**

Established in 2002, Sustainable Connections has grown to a membership of 600+ local businesses, an annual budget of nearly \$1,000,000, a staff of sixteen, 100 volunteers, and an active board of directors.

Through education, connections, and market development opportunities, Sustainable Connections supports a community of innovators in green building, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, supporting independent businesses in town centers and mentoring a new breed of entrepreneurs that have designed their business with a sustainable vision. Sustainable Connections' members have led Bellingham to becoming the nation's top EPA-certified green power community (2008), and a leader in green building, in fostering hundreds of new relationships between farmers and food-buyers.

Sustainable Connections program activities are divided into five program areas – Sustainable Business Development, Think Local First, Food and Farming, Green Building and Smart Growth, and Energy Efficiency. Each of these program areas is under the management of an experienced program manager that reports directly to Sustainable Connections executive director Derek Long. Program managers work in conjunction with multiple support staff that provide specialized skill sets including a communications manager, office manager, development manager, events manager, multiple program assistants, and a contracted accountant. A 12-member board of directors comprised of business and community leaders oversees organization wide procedures and provides outstanding governance.

Our Toward Zero Waste initiative falls under the heading of our Sustainable Business Development program headed by Mark Peterson. Toward Zero Waste has been active and successful in the larger population centers within Whatcom, Skagit, and Island Counties. We have worked with hundreds of businesses over the last 6 years each of whom have committed to reducing their waste stream by at least 50%

Through our Food and Farming Program Sustainable Connections staff has been working with agricultural producers and restaurants throughout Whatcom County for more than 7 years. During this time, we have developed close relationships and a significant level of trust with a significant percentage of the food and agriculture based businesses throughout the county. Our Food and Farming Program is headed by Sara Southerland.

Our Green Building and Smart Growth program provides training and education on waste minimization and cutting edge conservation trends to developers, architects, and builders throughout the region. It has been actively influencing construction trends in Whatcom County for over a decade.

The individual staff members that will be working on this project bring extensive area expertise and project management experience.

The primary staff involved in this project will be:

**Mark Peterson:** Mark is a LEED AP, achieved his Low Impact Development Certification and is a certified Project Management Professional. He joined Sustainable Connections in 2012. He has overseen the successful growth of the Toward Zero Waste Initiative since joining the organization and has extensive experience working with businesses from all sectors on finding ways to reduce waste streams. He believes in volunteerism and has served as President of the Whatcom Mountain Bike Coalition, Co-Chair - Bellingham Public School Citizen Advisory Committee, The Bellingham Public School Facility Task Force, The Lake Whatcom Watershed Advisory Committee and is former Chair of the Bellingham Park and Recreation Advisory Committee. Currently, Mark is the Chair of the Whatcom County Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

**Sara Southerland:** Sara Southerland is the Food & Farming Program Manager at Sustainable Connections. Through her six years in the Food & Farming Program, she has helped start the Eat Local First Campaign, facilitated the start-up of the NW WA Chefs Collaborative, Demo Days at the Market, the Farm Fresh CSA Fair, a Food & Farming Business Development group, grown the Farm-to-Table Trade Meeting to nearly 200 businesses, and connected food & farm businesses of all kinds. With a background in communications and marketing, Sara has nine years of experience implementing outreach and behavior change campaigns across the Puget Sound region, producing valuable publications, hosting community-based and business to business events, facilitating groups and public speaking.

**Rose Lathrop:** Rose Lathrop joined the Sustainable Connection staff in 2012 as a local leader in the green building movement. Rose has a versed background in sustainability practices from both the public and private sector and is transforming local building practices. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts in Planning and Environmental Policy from Huxley College for the Environment, Western Washington University. She is also a LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Accredited Professional and a CSBA (Certified Sustainable Building Advisor). She has been running the Green Building and Smart Growth program since 2012.

**Amy Vergillo:** Amy moved to Seattle after graduating from the University of Minnesota Duluth with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in graphic design. When the chaos of the big city drove her North, she found her roots in Bellingham. Previous to becoming the Communications Manager at Sustainable Connections, she worked in the corporate world as sales support, in the non profit sector at The Downtown Bellingham Partnership, and even owned her own design firm, Fidalgo Designs.

She was instrumental in helping Sustainable Connections develop their Toward Zero Waste Campaign, volunteered on the Whatcom County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, served on the board of directors at Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services, and is a certified Carbon Master.

Sustainable Connections has an outstanding track record for successfully completing grant funded programs. Over the past five years we have completed dozens of projects that received funding from a wide variety of sources including City, County, State, and Federal Contracts. On every one of these contracts we successfully met all funder requirements and have continued to receive additional funding from all of these sources.

All Sustainable Connections contracts and grants are overseen by the program managers, Executive Director Derek Long, Development Manager Sam Gearhart, Business Accountant Barbara Werner and our experienced Board of Directors. Our board meets monthly to oversee organizational progress and finances and provide guidance on programs as necessary. Additionally, a Board Finance committee meets quarterly to do an in depth review of organizational finances and ensure that all programs are on track as expected. We have robust and thorough accounting procedures in place and do an annual internal review following from which we submit an annual 990 to the IRS outlining organizational income, expenses, and activities.

## **Program Proposal**

Sustainable Connections Commercial Sector Toward Zero Waste (TZW) Initiative will build off of the already strong brand awareness and recognition of Sustainable Connections existing TZW program and will work in concert with Whatcom County's Resource Management approach to the solid waste challenges and opportunities facing our community in the coming years. Independent reports issued as part of the update for Whatcom County's solid waste plan show there are areas where Sustainable Connections is uniquely suited to help Whatcom County meet its goals.

As a business organization with a proven track record of success in Toward Zero Waste in addition to other important sustainable business practices, the opportunity for an even greater impact toward the triple bottom line for our community can be achieved. The Triple Bottom line is an increasingly common business and management practice that moves away from a single bottom line approach based solely on financial performance. Instead, the triple bottom line assesses performance in three areas – people, planet and profit. Many times the process of addressing people and planet contributes to better resource management impacting the financial bottom line in a positive way – in this case the resource that can be better managed is solid waste.

A key component of successful refinement of our solid waste system will be appropriate balance of education and training in addition to enforcement. As our community strives to attain higher standards and larger diversion rates, investments in education and training can help increase success rates as well as reduce the costs and needs for future enforcement. Sustainable Connections has the expertise and experience to engage the business sectors identified by the Whatcom County Solid & Hazardous Waste Management Plan and help them reduce their impacts as a result of solid waste. Sustainable Connections' Toward Zero Waste program has helped over 375 Whatcom County businesses significantly reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.

Sustainable Connections is well positioned to achieve success for helping food producers reduce food waste and divert their organic waste from landfill. Our Food and Farming program provides us a direct conduit to these businesses via their current affiliation a number of Food and Farming campaigns including Food to Bank on and Eat Local First. We are also favorably positioned to provide valuable technical expertise and support to the construction industry due to long standing and well respected Green Building & Smart Growth program. We have ongoing relationships with the construction sector including large general contractors, small remodelers, subcontractors and architects.

Sustainable Connections will provide 40 food-based and construction businesses free technical assistance, workshops and educational materials to adopt the Toward Zero Waste business practice, achieve measureable waste reduction, encourage county-wide TZW brand adoption, increase public awareness and support Whatcom County in reaching Washington's solid waste

recycling and diversion targets. The project will increase participation in commercial organics recovery programs, promote construction and demolition recycling programs, and increase awareness, knowledge, and access to green building resources. To evaluate program successes, qualitative and quantitative data will be collected and interpreted. Post event evaluations, annual participant surveys and waste hauler data will document changes in attitude, knowledge and behavior, as well as identify barriers and solutions to improved TZW performance. Data will improve TZW services during the project, and best practices shared with other communities.

Sustainable Connections will:

1. Secure 40 new TZW commitments from Whatcom County food-based and construction business owners/directors:
  - a) Recruit internal TZW change agents; supplement with interns/volunteers as needed;
  - b) Sign memorandum of understanding (MOU) with each business.
2. Facilitate detailed waste assessments and action plans:
  - a) Connect businesses and waste haulers to perform waste assessments;
  - b) Evaluate waste reduction measures (including recycling, composting, and source reduction), develop action plans;
  - c) Coordinate peer learning opportunities (such as workshops, case studies, tours of model businesses).
3. Support action plan implementation:
  - a) Support businesses' employee engagement activities (including workplace signage, presentations);
  - b) Troubleshoot implementation challenges; share best practices and resources;
  - c) Provide businesses with TZW decals, posters and other materials to promote TZW activities.
4. Evaluate business performance:
  - a) Partner waste haulers and business directors will provide detailed waste/recycling reports quarterly to establish a baseline measure and allow performance tracking over the grant term;
  - b) Use annual TZW participant web based survey, phone follow up and site visits to determine changes in waste generated from the businesses' perspective: measure awareness, attitudes and knowledge of recycling opportunities; uncover barriers; and identify solutions.
5. Produce detailed food and construction industry TZW case studies, how-to kits:
  - a) Create a new Hospitality industry TZW guide;
  - b) Design, print, and distribute 2 detailed case study documenting TZW practices;
  - c) Make case studies and other resources available online and promote their availability to reduce printing impact.
6. Promote TZW brand and publicize results:

- a) Acknowledge participating businesses in media releases and Sustainable Connections' publications;
- b) Share participants' successes with other businesses interested in implementing TZW practices;
- c) Share TZW branded materials with partners to promote county-wide TZW brand across workplaces, schools, and residences.

### **Deliverables**

Outputs include:

- 2 Toward Zero Waste Workshops - 25 attendees each (50 total)
- 1 Integrated Toward Zero Waste and sustainable practices workshop – 25 attendees
- 1 new Hospitality Industry Toolkit
- 2 case studies highlighting successful new TZW participants and industries
  
- By December 31st, 2016:

40 new business participants (including 20 food service, 5 hospitality/events, and 10 construction industry) and 100 employees will have signed the Toward Zero Waste Pledge committing to 50% waste reduction, implemented waste reduction plans, and shown measurable progress in reducing and diverting their solid waste. Sustainable Connections will collect pledge forms and verify businesses are meeting goals at regular intervals. As a result of TZW participation, 40 business project leaders and 100 employees will report significantly improved understanding of how solid waste contributes to greenhouse gases and resource depletion as measured via web-based surveys and follow up interviews. Staff will work with businesses and waste haulers to track the volume of waste diverted/recycled and progress compared to pre-pledge levels, as well as with Whatcom County to track changes in solid waste and recycling at the County level.



Whatcom County Library System (WCLS)  
Bellingham, Washington

**Sustainable Connections**  
TOWARDS ZERO WASTE PROFILE

# { 78% Reduction in Landfill Waste { Net Savings of \$800/year



Whatcom County Library System connects information, ideas, and community through cooperative community branch libraries and bookmobile services. Over 53,000 patrons regularly access an ever changing collection of books, magazines, movies, music, audio books and materials in multiple languages. WCLS experienced great success implementing Toward Zero Waste at its Administrative & Processing Center, and is now expanding the plan to 154 employees at nine locations system-wide.



## TZW Actions

Whatcom County Library System  
[www.wcls.org](http://www.wcls.org)

Waste Reduction & Recycling Efforts - 2013

*Recycles or resells books withdrawn from circulation*

*Collects & recycles plastic film*

*Recycles all rigid plastics, including CDs & jewel cases*

*Donates surplus furnishings to the RE Store*

*Donates or recycles all electronics*

Sustainable Connections' Toward Zero Waste (TZW) campaign has enlisted the partnership of local governments and over 350 local businesses that have made significant commitments to reduce waste. With these businesses' leadership, we aim to reduce the amount of waste going to the landfill, increase reuse and recycling of existing resources, and increase purchasing of recycled and environmentally preferable products. Together, we are moving this community Toward Zero Waste! For more details about how your business can participate, visit [www.sustainableconnections.org/bizdev/tzw](http://www.sustainableconnections.org/bizdev/tzw)



**QUESTIONS?** Call the Whatcom County Recycling Hotline at 360-676-5723

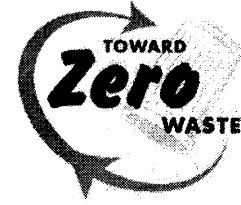
[www.sustainableconnections.org/bizdev/tzw](http://www.sustainableconnections.org/bizdev/tzw) | 360.647.7093 | 1701 Ellis St Ste 221, Bellingham, WA 98225

Christ the King Community Church  
 Bellingham, Washington



TOWARDS ZERO WASTE PROFILE

- Over 30% diversion of landfill waste
- Increased recycling and added food+ composting
- Converted to all compostable serving ware



Christ the King Church is a non-denominational Christian church in Bellingham, Washington and is home to 5,800 congregational members. Christ the King's doctrinal statement is a set of biblical core beliefs that unify and guide the way they live and conduct their congregation. Within this set of core beliefs is a call for the stewardship of our earth, and the belief in this stewardship, is what has driven their energy and waste reduction efforts.



## TZW Actions

Christ the King Community Church  
[www.christthekingbellingham.com](http://www.christthekingbellingham.com)

Waste Reduction & Recycling Efforts - 2013

Developed phone app for programs -  
 3947 users have downloaded app saving  
 this many printed programs

Moved to using compostable programs -  
 saving approx \$12,450

Eliminated two products from menu  
 saving \$26,400

Accounting department and ministry  
 are now primarily paperless

Eliminated almost all church wide  
 mailing. Prayer letters, information and  
 almost everything else is sent via email

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