

## Building Materials Reuse on Vashon Island

Locally recycling good condition,  
reusable items, keeping them out  
of the landfill while empowering  
our community



Welcome and thanks for coming. We're meeting today to discuss a plan to reduce sending good, reusable building materials to the landfill. None of us like seeing this stuff dumped into the pit at the transfer station. Instead, we want these items to have a new home and start on life. It's the right way to honor the materials, the work, and the planet. ZWV has been learning about options and we're here today to share what we've learned. We're ready to get started on some exciting prospects for the future.

## Vashon's #1 Export Is Garbage

Vashon has a large amount and wide variety of used unwanted goods that end up in the waste stream because people are unable to find an alternative use or home for them. These items range from small appliances, to textiles, to furniture, architectural items, and building materials from remodeling and building projects. Most end up going to the Cedar Hills landfill.



This is where we started out in 2014. Vashon's #1 export is garbage. Zero Waste Vashon has worked for 10 years on reducing the amount of waste we send to the landfill. In a nutshell, our mission is turning waste into resource on island.

## Our Community is Creative



Some used items find new life in art projects. Others can be reused in construction and remodeling. Many items are offered on social media such as Buy Nothing Vashon or similar sites and end up finding a new home. Our community likes to recycle. It is respectful to our island, its ecology, life, and the resources it took to make the item.

But what about the rest of the stuff that still has great value?  
What is still getting dumped at the transfer station and  
landfilled?

## Our Community Wants Solutions



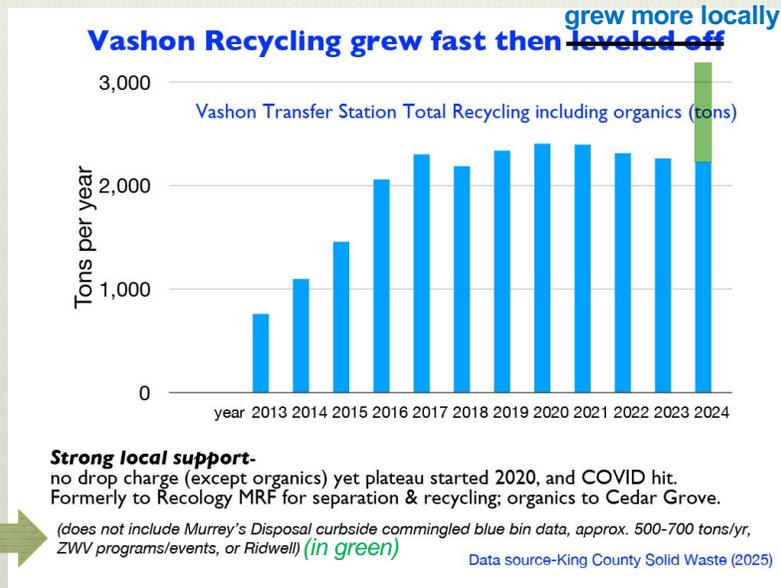
- ❖ Zero Waste Vashon has collected over 5 tons of electronic waste from the island per year for the past 7 years. Many of these items are repairable and could be returned to service for students, low or fixed income families, and seniors.

- ❖ The Sunday Styrofoam and Plastics program was exceptionally popular. Serving hundreds of Vashon households and also businesses, it helped keep several tons of plastic out of the landfill every month. Ridwell now collects these hard to recycle items.



We've had many successes. These programs are popular.

## ZWV Works to Provide Solutions



Within the first 4 years since ZWV, the island's recycling rate has more than tripled. ZWV championed yard waste collection to turn into compost. The StyroRecycle program was a huge success. The annual electronics event continues to overfill a large truck with tons of electronics. Ridwell has over 500 subscribing households on island. ZWV advocated for and finally got the blue recycling bins added to residential collection. These added collections plus ZWV events and the introduction of RidWell collections are making a notable difference. The trend continues. We are recycling leaders in the county. This year we took over the No Bash Trash Stash and started the Dish Library which is very popular. We also partnered to purchase the stainless-steel cups for events and gatherings. These efforts make a difference.

## The Next Step- Research

In Western Washington there are several successful, community-led, non-profit Re-Use stores. Here are some examples:

- ❖ Vashon, Granny's Attic

<http://grannysattic.org>

- ❖ Sequim, Around Again

<https://www.aroundagainstore.org>

- ❖ Lopez Island, Take It Or Leave It (TIOLI)

<https://www.lopezsolidwaste.org/take-it-or-leave-it>

3. years ago, ZWV started looking into what are possible ways to keep good, usable items out of the landfill. How do other communities address this issue?

Each one of these stores has been in operation for over 10 years. Some are going on their 40<sup>th</sup> or 50<sup>th</sup> year of operation. They are all creatively providing useful materials another chance in life. Another common bond is that they all contribute strongly to their community. There are many other examples in the San Juans, the Methow Valley, etc. These organizations empower the community to tackle waste issues in creative and fun ways.

# Granny's Attic



I start close to home with Granny's Attic, because it's a remarkable success story that's happening right here. The store started as an offshoot of a greater plan to improve healthcare on island. Early fundraisers like bake sales brought in a few hundred dollars. This helped buy necessary parts like an X-Ray bulb, which was needed for a fledgling health clinic that began in a small house in Burton. The store was a success and has grown and refined itself over 4 decades.

# Granny's Attic

- ❖ Established in 1975
- ❖ The mission of Vashon Granny's Attic, a non-profit organization, is to contribute to health care for residents of Vashon Island by fostering the health-related charitable and educational needs of the community.
- ❖ Strong volunteer staff of 150 people
- ❖ Wed-Sat operation
- ❖ Thrift store model. Sells a diverse lot of household goods and clothing at affordable prices, over 200,000 items a year

Granny's Attic is most notable for its strong social equity position. It's pricing makes items available to all budgets. Since 1976, Granny's Attic has donated over \$4 million in funded projects and rent, and through the Vashon Health Center it greatly benefits the entire Vashon community.

# Around Again



Around Again is owned and run by Gavin Wuttkin, an amazing and inspiring entrepreneur dedicated to reuse. What he has accomplished is amazing. He writes:

**This is your store. Our mission is to keep stuff out of the landfill. If I could find a way to give it all away and keep the doors open I would, trust me. Money is not my motivation for this enterprise.**

# Around Again

- ❖ Established in 2009 in Sequim, WA
- ❖ Mission: The more used stuff that gets another life, the less new stuff has to be made. That means less new materials are used, less carbon ends up in our atmosphere, and less good, usable stuff ends up in landfill.
- ❖ They have kept over 3 million pounds of items out of the landfill. In terms of carbon they have sequestered over 147 thousand metric tons of CO2 out of the atmosphere.

Tuesday – Saturday, 10:00 am to 4:30 pm

The store sells used building materials, furniture, tools, paint, collectables, diverse home furnishings, garden and yard supplies.

Offers creative ideas, recommendations and guidance about all things for reuse, re-purpose and recycling. Will do deconstruction and hauling.

10 employees, 5 volunteers. Up to \$250,000 revenue per year

Supports a small tool library, artist works, classes

Also recycles shoes, eyeglasses, paint, and CFLs/fluorescent bulbs

# TIOLI - Take It Or Leave It



The Take it or Leave it store is another extraordinary accomplishment of a small community.

# TIOLI - Take It Or Leave It

- ❖ Established in 2013 as part of the Lopez Island Solid Waste Disposal District
- ❖ The mission of TIOLI is to provide a community space for the free exchange of reusable items and to divert what cannot be reused into recycle streams and kept out of landfill.
- ❖ TIOLI is volunteer run, with LSWDD providing the space, a 4000 sq. ft. open-ended pole building.
- ❖ Processes over 5,000 lbs. of material a week.

I visited this “store” prior to the pandemic and was awed by what they have accomplished. There is only one paid employee, the rest is done with a team of volunteers, mostly retirees. Together, they take in, organize, and move an incredible amount of goods every week.

There are common threads with all of these facilities:  
they serve a larger purpose than just being thrift stores.

- ❖ They offer employment and training
- ❖ All are focused on social equity and returning value to the community
- ❖ All help reduce our carbon footprint, turning waste into resource
- ❖ The best successes started out small and often were an offshoot of a larger plan
- ❖ How do we measure our success?



# On Vashon?

- ❖ Vashon currently has several entities that are part of the confluence of the circular repair and reuse economy.
- ❖ Parts of this ecosystem are:
  - ❖ Granny's Attic
  - ❖ Zero Waste Vashon
  - ❖ The Tool Library/Makerspace/Fix-It Café
  - ❖ Ridwell

We do this because it's right. It honors the value of items made from our planet's finite resources.

The more used stuff that gets another life, the less new stuff has to be made. That means less new materials are used, less carbon ends up in our atmosphere, and less good, usable stuff ends up in landfill.

# On Vashon?

- ❖ Commercial enterprises on Vashon also are part of this repair and reuse economy
  - ❖ Vashon Estate Sales
  - ❖ Treasure Island
  - ❖ Recycled clothes store?
- ❖ Many other businesses here are active recyclers
- ❖ What is not being addressed and what can we do about it?

We are fortunate to have some really successful non-profit and for-profit solutions for rehoming household goods on island. They're doing a good job. Our research showed that the largest unanswered need is the reusable building materials market.

## **A Reusable Building Materials Store?**

- ❖ Many questions need to be explored and answered before a Re-Use project could start. There are a variety of options to address the issue. We don't want to duplicate or compete with existing solutions, though there could at times be overlap.
- ❖ A large, unanswered need is a place for reusable building materials. This is our current focus. There are several ways to turn this "waste" into resource. It's up to the community to decide what fits best. We sought out working examples of what's possible.

A popular solution for recycling reusable items is a Re-Use store. These businesses come in many forms. Some are single purpose, focused on one waste stream like construction materials. Others cover a wider range. In Lopez Island's case, ferrying waste is very expensive so they do their best to find a purpose for almost everything. But that's closer to a Granny's attic model. To sharpen our focus and learn more, we started researching businesses that have used building materials as their primary product.

## Reusable Building Material Stores

- ❖ Bellingham, The RE Store  
<https://re-store.org>
- ❖ Second Use  
❖ <https://www.seconduse.com>
- ❖ Ballard Reuse  
❖ <https://ballardreuse.com>
- ❖ Earthwise  
❖ <https://ewsalvage.com>
- ❖ Habitat for Humanity  
❖ <https://www.habitat.org>

There are great examples of Washington Re-Use stores that focus on building materials

Each one of these stores has been in operation for over 10 years. Some have been around for over 30 years. They are all creatively providing useful materials another chance in life. They all contribute strongly to their community, with employment, social equity, and an improved sense of doing the right thing. There is great satisfaction in giving new life to goods.

# The RE Store



The Re Store is in Bellingham. It's a great success story and an incredibly popular place.

# The RE Store

- ❖ The RE Store was founded in 1993 and is a program of RE Sources, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. RE Sources' vision is to see people living satisfying lives in accord with the ecosystem we depend on – generation after generation.  
<https://www.re-sources.org>
- ❖ In the 1990s, a group of dedicated community members got together to brainstorm ways to keep valuable reclaimed building materials from ending up in the landfill. From their ideas, The RE Store was born. Each year they:
  - ❖ Save the community over \$1 million in building materials costs,
  - ❖ Divert nearly 3 million pounds of quality building supplies from the landfill, (~50 million pounds since 1993) and
  - ❖ Provide more than 1,500 hours of accessible on-the-job training opportunities.

In over 3 decades the Re Store has grown into a regional recycling powerhouse. As they grew, they expanded services to statewide salvage operations, education and training. They also helped jump start reuse in Seattle by seeding new stores in Seattle like Ballard Reuse.



The core of this ecosystem is a drive towards creating a local circular economy. Wanton waste is disrespectful to the planet. It shows a disregard for the resources extracted and used to make the product. It also deprives many from affordable alternatives for repair, construction, creative design, and domestic use. Reuse honors these products with a renewed life and value.

# Second Use



As part of our research, we visited several stores in Seattle. They have been very supportive and helpful in helping us understand the business of reuse. One standout has been Second Use. We are fortunate to have an island connection to one of the co-owners, Calyn Hostetler, whose family still lives here. She has provided a tremendous amount of information and help. We are very grateful for her continued support.

## Second Use

- ❖ Located in SODO, now with additional stores in Tacoma and Shoreline.
- ❖ In the 1990s, a group of dedicated community members got together to brainstorm ways to keep valuable reclaimed building materials from ending up in the landfill. From their ideas, The RE Store was born. Each year they:
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Second Use is an example of a well-organized successful Re-Use operation. It has expanded to become the region's primary reusable building materials supplier. They have been super helpful in sharing best practices and knowledge with us and we are grateful for this assistance.

# Eastside Rebuild



A recent discovery is Eastside Rebuild, located in Cashmere, WA and serving the greater Leavenworth area.

# Eastside Rebuild

- ❖ Eastside Rebuild started in April 2024 in Cashmere, WA. Open 4 days a week.
- ❖ The non-profit's focus is repurposing constructionware to keep it out of the landfill.
- ❖ In 2024 they reported 20 tons diverted, 194 material donors, 1,527 store visitors.
- ❖ They also do salvage, repair workshops, and run a tool library.
- ❖ <https://www.wasteloop.org/eastside-rebuild>

Here is a smaller WA state non-profit that is close to what we would like to achieve. **Mission Statement:** Eastside Rebuild provides economically and environmentally sustainable building materials, along with the tools and knowledge needed to empower all communities of the Wenatchee Valley to rebuild and repair the world around them. They also have a tool library and a fix it workshop as part of the business. I've been in touch with Luke Dixon, who is running ERS. He has been very willing to share with us his knowledge, budgets, and experiences with this young business. This is a great help for estimating requirements, startup needs, and best practices.

YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1TSVwhYcJc>

## Building Materials Collection Event



K2 parking lot

September 7, 2025



To get a sense of what is in the community, ZWV partnered with Second Use on 9/7/2025 at K2. The Collection event lasted in 5 hours (10am to 3pm). The event was focused on good condition, reusable building materials (doors, windows, fixtures, etc.) We collected 84 tracked items and 45 low value items (\$20 and less) The total collected items valued at over \$2500. Most unusual item – Walnut countertop. Overall, it was a great learning experience. One takeaway was that having a weekday collection for contractors may help. The successful results show us we are on the right track.

## Vashon Reusable Building Materials Store or ...?



What would be the long-term goals for a Re-Use store? Would it be a store, a facility, a center (hub)?

What materials would be sold? How would it be run to maximize social equity?

How to maximize community involvement? How to finance it sustainably and equitably?

How does it tie in with other components of the Vashon repair, construction, and arts economy?

## **A Reusable Building Materials Store?**

- ❖ What materials?
  - ❖ Accept the kinds of materials one might find on a construction or deconstruction site, including doors, windows, cabinetry, fixtures, flooring and tile overages, and perhaps, even some appliances.
  - ❖ Must be in good, clean, reusable condition
  - ❖ Flooring, tile, etc. should be enough for finishing a small room (100 sq ft minimum)
  - ❖ Should be items that are currently in demand. Cabinets and flooring sell well.

Turnover is important. Unlike urban areas, we have a limited market. Items need to be resalable with minimal or no preparation. We looked at and spoke with some Seattle RE-Use stores to find out best practices. Some suggestions were that flooring and tile should be in lots large enough for a small room, at least 100 sq ft. Building materials are often bulky. They take up a lot of space. This means one needs to be careful to carry items that sell well and not fill up the store with rarely purchased items or too many of the same items that have gone out of style, like 1960's oak kitchen cabinets. Learn to say No, stopping wish cycling is a challenge.

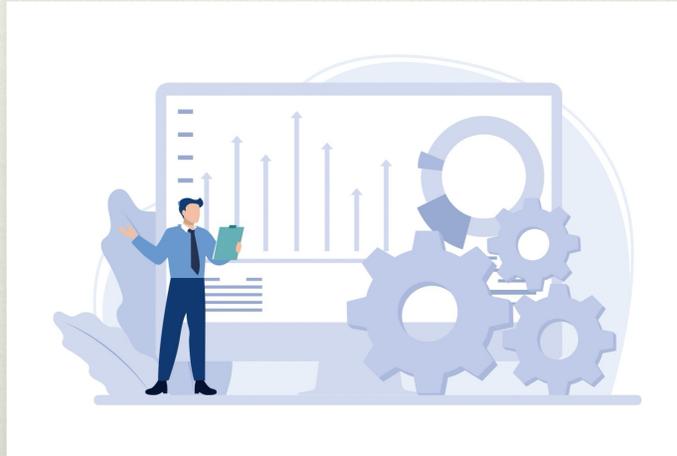
## A Reusable Building Materials Store?

❖ What materials?



These are some examples of items that show up as donations. Cabinet sets and flooring packages are quite popular.

# Vashon Reusable Building Materials Store as a Business



As research progressed, a whole lot of questions surfaced. What size building? Where is it located? Is it a part-time or full-time business?

What's the budget needed for the first 3 years? Is there a paid manager? How many employees? How many volunteers?

How is this financed? Expenses? Grants?

How are inputs vs outputs managed? What is most in demand?

How is it priced?

Creative options and partnerships? Growth Path?

We're getting closer and have accumulated some good ideas, practices, and suggestions.

## Vashon Reusable Building Materials Store as a Business

- ❖ Requires an owner. ZWV can support, possibly seed, help recruit volunteers for, but are not set up to own or run.
- ❖ Location must be affordable and accessible, preferably central, close to town
- ❖ It will need at least one or two, paid employees to start
- ❖ It will need seed money to get started
- ❖ Items can be bulky, a large space is required to organize materials

Some conclusions we have reached are that the business would require an Owner ( individual or business). A Reuse store is something that ZWV can support, possibly seed. We can help recruit volunteers for and help promote, but are not set up to own or run.

A location needs to be publicly accessible, affordable, and preferably central. It's going to need at least one or two paid employees. Whether this is part or full time to start with is still TBD. Seed money will be needed to secure a lease, build and buy shelving, pay wages and expenses, and build inventory. We still don't have all the answers. That's where you come in.

## Vashon Re-Use Store?



Imagine what could grow from these seeds

Vashon has an incredible wealth of talented people that contribute great ideas and efforts toward helping reduce waste and extend value of materials that often are treated as waste. There is great value in the regenerative practice of making new items from old. It eliminates the long chain of manufacturing, production, packaging, storing, and shipping and bolsters the local economy while reducing waste. .

How do we tie these efforts together and boost them so that they create something greater? Several places also have tool library and repair workshops included.

How do we support the values of repair, share, and create? How do we make Vashon more resilient in times when supply chains break down?

# Vashon Reusable Building Materials Store



This will need a team effort. How can we help you to make this happen?

You are the experts!

We recognize the need for a Re-Use store in the community.  
How can we help make this happen?

Zero Waste Vashon can be a project partner to help get this new business started.

We can leverage funding, but this project needs a team that will develop the business plan, assist with site location, and help establish this new business.

## Vashon Reusable Building Materials Store



Questions for 10 minutes then take a 5-minute break

# Going forward

Some possible alternatives we've identified:

- ❖ Reusable Building Materials Facility.
- ❖ Reusable Building Materials Collections for periodic pickup by Second Use.
- ❖ Deconstruction and salvage
- ❖ Swap meets?
- ❖ If nothing works, support for ongoing methods. (Buy Nothing, roadside piles, residential pickup?)

Establishing a building materials reuse center on island is our goal. It's the holy grail. If this is not possible right away then an alternative might be to have regular collection events. The downside being that items are taken and sold off island. Maybe the item could be locally available with overage sent off-island for resale? Another option might be to hold occasional swap meets for the exchange of reusable items. This was done for a few years in the early 1990s at the Mukai Cannery building. If nothing else, we can look for ways to enhance island-based materials exchanges.

# Going forward – Grants?

## RE+ Seed Grant requirements

- ❖ Grant period is from 1/26 to 6/26
- ❖ Contractor list and survey
- ❖ Collection Event
- ❖ Business Plan Development
- ❖ Community Meeting
- ❖ Final reporting June 2026

ZWV has applied for a \$10,000 RE+ Seed grant to cover the costs of developing a business plan. If we get the grant, we agree to develop a list of contractors and survey their needs. We plan on one more Collection Event in the Spring. We also need to estimate both the volume and value of items coming from the community. This collection of information will supply a consultant hired to put together a business plan. We will then have a community meeting to share the results and develop a final report for submission to RE+.

After June, our goal is to be ready to apply for the larger Next Cycle grant and others for seed capital and training.

## 2026 – Grants?



The Circular Accelerator Program provides...



Business and Technical Planning Support



Pitch Development



Funding Pathway Identification and Matchmaking

### What's Included

- Developing growth plan fundamentals through a multi-day intensive **Accelerator Academy**
- **One-on-one consulting** with experienced mentors and subject matter experts to improve and refine business models and project plans
- Attending **facilitated networking** opportunities to foster collaborations and partnerships
- Engaging with community voices to ensure **equitable outcomes** and generate grassroots support
- Identifying **funding pathways**
- Introducing participants to **potential investors**
- **Refining pitch deck** to help secure project funding
- Recognition and publicity

Here are a few of the several grant opportunities to watch for starting Jan 2026. Next Cycle is a county level launching platform that offers training, networking, funding advice, etc.

# 2026 – Grants?

The screenshot shows the King County website page for Re+ (zero waste) grants. The page features a navigation bar with the King County logo, a calendar icon, and a language selector. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: HOME / NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS / PROGRAMS / RE+ (ZERO WASTE) / RE+ (ZERO WASTE) GRANTS. The main heading is "Re+ (zero waste) grants". Below the heading is a paragraph: "King County offers funding opportunities for non-profits, businesses, entrepreneurs, educational institutions, and local governments to support innovative projects that further King County's commitment to zero waste of resources by 2030." To the right of the main content is a "CONTACT" section with the following information: "Circular grants", "Phone: 206-477-4563", "TTY Relay: 711", and a link "Send us an email". Below the main heading is a large image of a recycling facility with several workers and cardboard boxes. To the right of the image is a dark overlay with white text: "Ravel" followed by "Ravel's innovative technology will transform end-of-life clothing into like-new textiles", and "Chomp" followed by "Chomp has provided biofertilizer from their food waste processing plant to over 25 farms in King County, including the Matsuda". To the right of the image and text is the Re+ logo, which consists of the letters "Re+" in green inside a pink circle.

The county has offered substantial RE+ grants annually. Locally, Impact BioEnergy was the recipient of this grant for the anaerobic digester system at the Tofu Factory.

# 2026 – Grants?

The screenshot shows the website for the Washington Department of Ecology. At the top left is the department's logo, which includes a stylized landscape with a sun, mountains, and water, followed by the text "DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY State of Washington". To the right of the logo are two menu items: "Regulations & Permits" and "Research & Data". Below the logo is a navigation bar with links for "Home", "Air & Climate", "Water & Shorelines", "Waste & Toxics", and "S". A breadcrumb trail reads: "About us > Payments, contracts & grants > Grants & loans > Find a grant or loan > Public Participation Grants". The main heading is "Public Participation Grants". Below this, the text states: "Public Participation Grants (PPG) provide up to \$60,000 per year to individuals and nonprofit organizations to increase public understanding and involvement in cleaning up contaminated sites and improve Washington's waste management practices." A second paragraph says: "These grants support the [State Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan](#), which aims to eliminate most wastes and toxics, and to safely manage what remains."

On the state level, the Dept. of Ecology offers Public Participation grants which can be used to pay wages, contractors, etc.

## Going forward - Tasks

- ❖ Team to develop contractor contact list for interviews. Then follow through with survey.
- ❖ Team for quantifying volume and value of good reusable materials (at xfer station, online, roadside piles, and contractor input) based on existing lists (Second Use, Habitat, etc.)
- ❖ Team with business planning expertise
- ❖ Team of event helpers
- ❖ Location ideas welcome
- ❖ Business needs a good name!

<<Describe tasks in simple terms. Avoid getting into the weeds with too many options or details. After descriptions ask for people to sign up on sheets. There may be cross-pollination. It's ok to sign up for multiple teams.>>

We plan on hiring a consultant to help build a business plan. This will be key toward getting larger grants for seed capital. The consultant will need data. Contractors will be an important source for donated materials. We need to get to know them and what works best for them. This team will develop a contractor contact list and will help interview them for a survey of needs. This information will be distilled into a report of the consultant that is composing our business plan.

It would be costly to have the consultant do this basic research. The team will be focused on field research to quantify an approximate volume of reusable building materials (from

provided list) between January and March 2026. The team will then determine a per item value assigned that should be 50% or less of retail value (Home Depot pricing?)

Business planning is an essential and important task. The team will help find and select and work with a consultant for the business plan by collating inputs from the teams to determine estimated volume, value, turnover, and expenses. This information will be needed for major grant proposals to help seed the first few years of operation. The business team is also needed to help determine how ZWV can help seed the business and our relationship to it.

There will be two events in the first half of 2026 – A) a second collection event in Spring, in collaboration with Second Use. This is tentatively scheduled for April and may be a 2-day event. B) a community meeting in June 2026 where we share the results of our endeavors and outline next steps.

Locations will be a small list. We've been examining and visiting potential locations for the past 2 yrs. Some won't work out, others have already been leased or rented out. We hope to have a primary candidate narrowed down by June 2026. An ideal space would have room to grow. (5000 sq ft?) Square footage, lease terms, occupation date, cost per sq ft. all need to be determined.

## Going forward – Locations?

- ❖ Mukai Cannery
- ❖ O-Space - building 2
- ❖ Sheffield Building
- ❖ Sunrise Ridge
- ❖ Storage sheds behind Vashon Boards
- ❖ K2
- ❖ KC maintenance buildings?
- ❖ Other locations?

We started out looking for small spaces but have been cautioned to not think small. Building materials are bulky. A recommended starting size is 5,000 sq ft. We have visited and looked into the following spaces, starting with the cannery building at Mukai in 2022. The space was limited, The site was in preparation, and the tenant selection has ended up being more food oriented.

The O-Space bldg. 2 has many benefits in size and the fact that the Tool Library/Makerspace are tenants. Access is good. However, there are also complications that would need to be addressed due to no facilities, existing storage, etc.

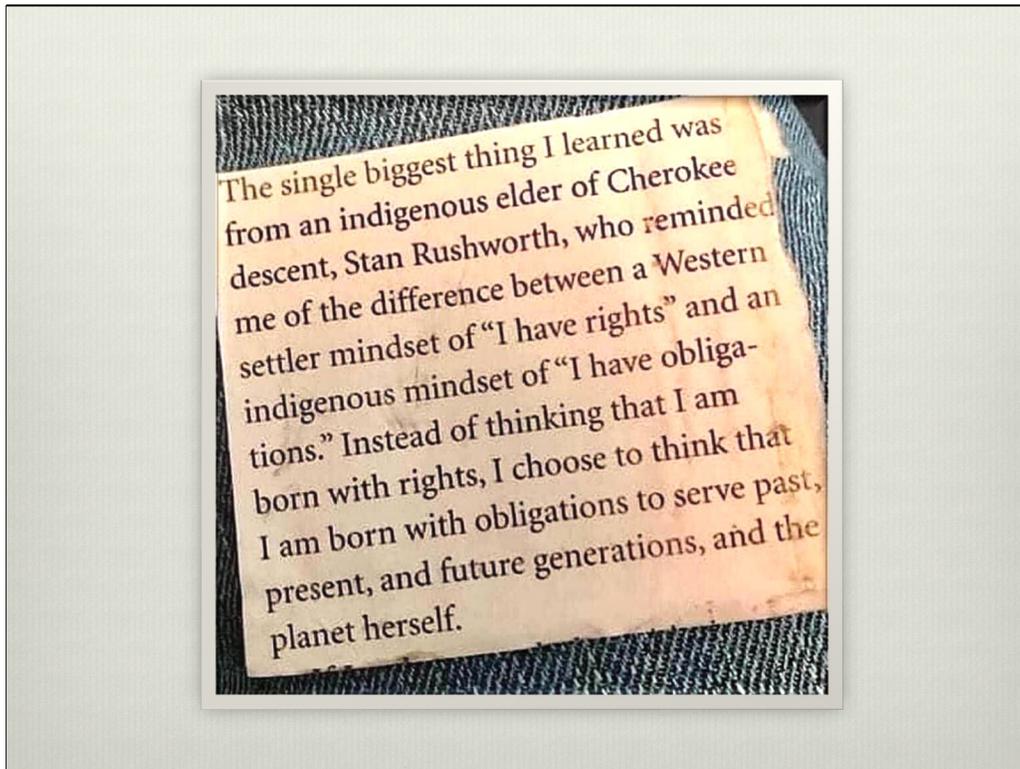
The Sheffield Bldg. is not ideal for access or retail operations, but not out of the question. Space would be limited to 2000 sq ft, necessitating vertical shelving to maximize storage and capacity.

Sunrise Ridge building 2 (old VFW) had limited space <2000 sq

ft, but did have some good pluses like a loading dock. However, the space has since been taken by the Rowing Club.

We looked at the storage sheds behind the old Kimmels but there are concerns about traffic. The area gets very wet in winter.

K2 is attractive. There is space and large parking areas. Worth considering with the caveat that one may need to vacate within 30 days if sold.



We'd like to close with this thought. It's why we do what we do. As Red Green said in closing. "We're all in this together."



**Thank You**

Signs up and if time, further Q and A at the 4 sign up stations.