



The Canadian Flowers for Food Society  
[www.flowersforfood.com](http://www.flowersforfood.com)

Addressing Environmental – Homelessness – and Unemployment Issues

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

November 2008

The proposed **Canadian Flowers for Food Society Composting** project (CFFSC) is a not-for-profit program designed to immediately divert floral (organic) waste from Metro Vancouver landfills to its clients and composting facilities.

The existing proposal is a three phase introduction beginning with, phase one: pick up and delivery of floral waste from CFFS floral donors and delivering the organic waste to clients and existing composting facilities and stations in Metro Vancouver. Phase one also includes public promotions and awareness campaigns. We are currently expanding on phase one and moving into phase two.

The second phase adds on the implementation and management of composting bins by our clients in metro community gardens and other regionally and/or municipally designated areas.

The third phase is a full scale outside underground composting system owned and/or managed by CFFS and its clients, capable of processing millions of tons of organic waste annually. This will provide immediate and direct benefits to our socio-economic infrastructure with helping marginalized people including the homeless, other local charities and businesses, plus the numerous positive economic and environmental impacts, including:

1. Reducing organic waste and greenhouse gases contributing to global warming;
2. Providing opportunities to feed and empower homeless people in our communities;
3. Producing a viable, nutrient-rich compost product, to be sold to the GVRD and its municipalities for both commercial and private use, in support of charities and homeless people; and
4. Promoting environmental stewardship.

Compost is a safe substitute for chemical fertilizers and adds nutrients, texture, and porosity to existing soils while accelerating root growth, increasing aeration, improving moisture retention and water absorption. Nitrogen-rich compost also reduces soil compaction and erosion.

## FLOWERS FOR FOOD CHARITY – TODAY

[www.flowersforfood.com](http://www.flowersforfood.com)

Flowers for Food is a not for profit organization that collects floral waste from major floral distributors and facilitates their delivery to other charitable programs or services. Flowers for Food also gives floral discards to homeless people throughout the region who then use the flowers as a means to encourage donations on the streets. One hundred percent of Flowers for Food's proceeds are delivered to the identified charities and beneficiaries listed on the website. Flowers for Food was founded in Vancouver, BC, Canada in the summer of 2005.

***“Flowers for Food has already proven itself incredibly successful for us at the Mom Agape Street Ministry. And we are very excited to learn of the potential for composting. This will certainly help the downtown situation even more by providing these positive opportunities. We are 100% in favour of this project, and are committed to helping it grow to its potential.”***

**~Mike Osborne, Shop Manager  
Mom Agape Street Ministry**

## FLOWERS FOR FOOD COMPOST PROJECT (CFFSC)

***"Make Scents Flowers was one of the original donors and we are glad to see how the program is expanding and helping others less fortunate. We believe the composting addition to this non-profit is a good idea considering all the positive impacts and we would be willing to explore this further by giving all our floral waste to Flowers for Food Composting project."***

**~Darcy Krep, Owner  
Make Scents Floral Distributors**

According to GVRD information in 2003, 1.17 million tonnes of municipal solid waste was disposed in our landfills, and of that it's reported the organic waste deposited in landfills each year could fill BC Place Stadium three times, or pave a 25-kilometer stretch of a four-lane highway one foot deep.

There are currently no composting programs or practices at any level of government that specifically address the untold tonnage of floral waste being sent to GVRD landfills every year from industry, specifically the waste from regional flower growers, importers and distributors.

CFFSC proposes to divert the organic waste from the floral industry to composting stations throughout the city, to in turn produce nitrogen-rich soil compost that can be used commercially or privately on gardens, lawns or for landscaping.

To illustrate the organic waste material potential, one established grower producing millions of stems a year will discard as much as four industrial size dumpster bins of floral waste daily. There are estimated to be hundreds of flower growers and distributors in the GVRD alone.

Studies reveal organic waste in landfills contributes as much as 80 per cent of the greenhouse gases being emitted into the atmosphere.

## **FLOWER FOR FOOD COMPOSTING – OPERATING MODEL**

Within phase two, CFFSC is proposing composting with worms. Worm composting is reported to be superior to other composting techniques because of the nutrient-rich soil and tea produced as a byproduct of the process. Worm composting is simple, hassle-free, it can be done indoors or outdoors, it is odor-free, and poses no risk to human health.

Considering the sheer volume of floral waste entering GVRD landfills (perhaps hundreds of thousands of tons/annum) CFFSC envisions final composting operations evolving to an outside underground composting system. However, we recognize that diverting this volume of floral waste and establishing one location operations infrastructure, including equipment, will take time to develop. Our proposed preliminary infrastructure for this project launch are composting stations throughout the city community gardens, to be managed by CFFSC and participating levels of government.

The CFFSC project will reduce the amount of methane being released into our atmosphere and any possible leachate from the landfills entering the earth and possibly our water systems. CFFSC will also reduce the number of trips needed for trucks transporting the organic waste to GVRD landfills.

## **MARKETS**

As a sustainable region, the GVRD recognizes compost for all of its benefits. Because of its many attributes, compost is extremely versatile and beneficial in many applications.

Compost has the unique ability to improve the properties of soils and growing media physically (structurally), chemically (nutritionally), and biologically. Although many equate the benefit of compost use to lush green growth, caused by the plant-available nitrogen, according to experts the real benefits of using compost are long-term and related to its increased content of living-organic matter. These benefits are of course just as valid in both commercial and private applications.

Composting for market can be ready for sale as soon as 3-4 months from commencement. It is hoped that the sale of compost will assist in off-setting any set up and operational costs.

## **MILESTONES - TO DATE**

1. Summer of 2005
  - a. Begin intro phase one
  - b. Started Flowers for Food with one beneficiary, TJ, and one donor, Make Scents Floral Distributors
2. Fall of 2006
  - a. New donor: Action Floral Brokers Inc.
  - b. New beneficiary: The Mom Agape Street Ministry (serving 600 people nightly)
  - c. New donor: Kirby Floral
3. Winter of 2006
  - a. Officially launched Flowers for Food
  - b. New donor: Hollandia (commencing Sept. '07)
4. Spring of 2007
  - a. New donor: Cambrian Flower Distribution
5. Summer of 2007
  - a. Featured in Street Corner newspaper
  - b. Nominated for BC Health Award
  - c. First expulsion of (two) clients from CFFS program for inappropriate actions
6. Spring of 2008
  - a. New donor: Capers Whole Foods Market, Limelight Flowers
  - b. Featured on CTV, Breakfast television, and Globe and Mail Docs.
7. Summer of 2008
  - a. New donor: Oakridge Mall Centre
  - b. Featured on Westend.ca
8. Fall of 2008
  - a. New program: Office Outreach Floral Program
  - b. Featured on Westend.ca

## LEADERSHIP

The Flowers for Food team is lead by **Mr. Marrett Green, MA.**

**Marrett** is a social scientist earning his first postgraduate in Mass Communications Research. He is an award-winning former news anchor, journalist, producer, university / college professor (<http://www.ratemyprofessors.com/>) and published writer. He has taught Electronic Media Strategies and Oral Communications for the School of Business and the Public Relations Department at Kwantlen University. Marrett has also developed a Media Relations Associate Certificate program for the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT). He also reviewed the First Canadian Edition of Lucas, *the Art of Public Speaking* for McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd. Marrett also worked closely with many elected officials and GVRD Board members while working as the Media Relations Officer at the GVRD.

2003, Marrett wrote the memoirs, "Home on the Canal," for Doctor Yolande Mousseau-Gershman while living at her home (hotel) in Ismailia, Egypt.

2003, Marrett founded Pets & Apartments.com, North America's #1 Pet-friendly apartment listings, which has grown to team of six professionals offering an essential service to millions of pet owners across Canada and the United States

[www.petsandapartments.com](http://www.petsandapartments.com)

2005, Marrett wrote his third book, "The Original Message"

[www.theoriginalmessage.com](http://www.theoriginalmessage.com)

2006, Marrett founded Flowers for Food, a charity for the homeless

[www.flowersforfood.com](http://www.flowersforfood.com)

2007, Marrett founded Lasting Glances.com and the U&Me.com compatibility system expanding on behavior pattern research pioneered by leading personality and social psychologists, including Goldberg and Allport.

[www.lastingglances.com](http://www.lastingglances.com)

2007, Marrett founded StarBoard monitoring: personal cell phone security

[www.starboardmonitoring.com](http://www.starboardmonitoring.com)

## **THE PROPOSAL**

We are currently accepting donations and funding support from the GVRD's Sustainable Region Initiative: Ensuring that our garbage is disposed of in an environmentally safe manner, to assist us to recycle this waste into compost.

Funding for:

Set-up, including administration and License application, By-law #181, 1996

Transportation

Mulching equipment (garbage can and weed trimmer)

Composters (bins)

Securing indoor compost space

Composting expertise and counsel

Quality inspections

Marketing and Communications support

Through CFFSC, large volumes of GVRD industry organic waste will be diverted from landfill sites while we work toward determining the best waste and compost management approach that will yield the greatest diversion rate and recycling of industrial floral waste within the region.

## **SUMMARY**

### **FLOWERS FOR FOOD COMPOSTING (CFFSC)**

#### **BENEFITS RECAP:**

1. CFFS provides opportunities for recovering, homeless, and marginalized people to generate additional income for better living including medications, food, accommodation, clothes etc.
2. CFFS provides many opportunities for Metro Vancouver residents take notice and positive action toward addressing homelessness, environmental stewardship, and poverty.
3. Even in phase one, CFFSC already addresses the undetermined tonnage of organic waste from the floral industry now being sent to Greater Vancouver landfills.
4. CFFSC will significantly reduce the amount of methane being released into our atmosphere by organic waste, which contributes as much as 80% of Green House Gases (GHG) produced in landfills.
5. CFFSC will reduce chances of possible organic waste leachate from the landfills entering the earth and possibly our water systems
6. Further reduction of GHG as CFFSC will reduce the number of trucks on roads transporting the organic waste to GVRD landfills

Flowers for Food presents an excellent opportunity for all levels of government to get involved in the bettering of Canadian cities by supporting these simple yet effective programs and initiatives. Initiatives such as this, targeting the growing homelessness situation while improving the environment and benefiting a number of local charities and our economy.

Flowers for Food's innovative approach and initiatives helping homeless people, the environment, and economy with the production of compost as a viable commodity, positions this non-profit organization considerably well for innovative growth and ability to make a real difference in Canadian communities.