

## FACILITY STATS

**Location:** Vancouver, BC

**Began Construction:** July 1993

**Opened:** September 1995

**Seating Capacity:** Hockey (18,938) and Concert - average end stage (13,000)

**Owner:** Vancouver Arena Limited Partnership

**Operator:** Vancouver Arena Limited Partnership

**Venue Uses:** National Hockey League, Concerts, family shows, special events

**Construction Cost:** \$160 million

**LEED certification:** Pending

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## THE CANUCKS' GREENING STORY: MOTIVATIONS, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

At Rogers Arena, home of the National Hockey League's Vancouver Canucks, staff are taking major steps towards greening the arena. They have undertaken numerous green efforts, such as LEED certification and sustainable commuting. The Canucks are one of the founding members of the [Green Sports Alliance](#), and are currently implementing a program they call "Zero Waste".

They kicked off Zero Waste in late 2012, with the hopes of meeting the ambitious goal of improving landfill diversion rates from 12% in 2011 to 80% by the end of the 2014 season. For the 2013 season, the Canucks' Zero Waste initiatives yielded 47% diversion in May and 61% in June. They are well on their way to the 80% goal, but they know challenges still lie ahead.

The program saved over \$35,000 in landfilling costs in its first year and expects a full payback within 2.5 years.

## WHY GO GREEN?

Both the Rogers Arena staff and management, along with many of the exuberant Canucks hockey fans and many concert-goers, *recognize that they have a responsibility to reflect their community's passion for environmental protection*. Since Vancouver hosted the Olympics in 2010, the city has embarked on an environmental campaign. Their [Greenest City 2020](#) initiative involves significant waste reduction efforts, such as the operation of food and yard waste composting facility, along with other initiatives. The city welcomed Rogers Arena's Zero Waste program. Michael Doyle, Executive Vice President & Arena General Manager of Rogers Arena says, "It's good to have everyone on board."

In 2011, when Doyle joined Rogers Arena, one of his goals was to champion unique service strategies to enhance the fan experience. The Canucks aim to accomplish this by engaging fans and helping them do their part in this sustainability effort. More influences to the arena's new approach came from GSA, especially from members Century Link Field (Seattle Seahawks) and Safeco Field (Seattle Mariners) who have accomplished significant solid waste reductions with programs, with diversion of 81% in 2011.

## WHERE TO START

Rogers Arena management started by addressing their biggest solid waste stream: food and concessions waste. Prior to Zero Waste, much of this waste stream was tossed in solid waste at the end of events, at a rate of about seven to eight metric tons per month during the season. To deal with the waste issue Rogers Arena formalized a "green team" of staff and external partners. The team is made up of representatives from Engineering, Fan Services, Housekeeping and Aramark (their food services contractor). They have also involved their waste hauler, the city, and foodbanks when other expertise is needed. The team set a challenging goal to achieve 80% diversion of wastes by 2014.

The "green team" identified which materials could be collected for recycling or sent to the city-run compost facility or the food bank, and how to maximize proper sorting by the arena guests. The team established collection protocols for solid waste, recyclables, and all compostable concession-related wastes. Compostable wastes are now hauled to the City's composting facility, which turns the waste into quality garden compost. The team now meets monthly to evaluate and measure success, and to discuss additional improvement opportunities.

Rogers Arena applied the successful blueprints of Safeco Field and Century Link Stadium, in Seattle, for its own waste systems. Management designed and strategically placed receptacles that make it as easy as possible for fans to put waste in the right bin. Visits to Seattle also inspired the design and strategic placement of collection receptacles. The "tri-sorter" bins now used in Rogers Arena make it difficult to put a particular waste in the wrong slot.

While it's a great step to compost food wastes and scraps, the arena follows the [waste management hierarchy](#), where reuse trumps recycling and compost. Any food remaining after an event – food that will not be used in the future due to expiration or other reasons – is now donated to their newly established friends at local food banks in B.C.

Another facet of the program design involved purchasing compostable food and beverage containers as well as other food wares. Compostables go beyond food scraps remaining on fans' dishes. They include napkins, plates, bowls, and flatware, which is more expensive than the conventional plastic ware. Doyle says that it is worth it, and that increasing demand for the compostable flatware is bringing down the price point.

### Sustainable Transit

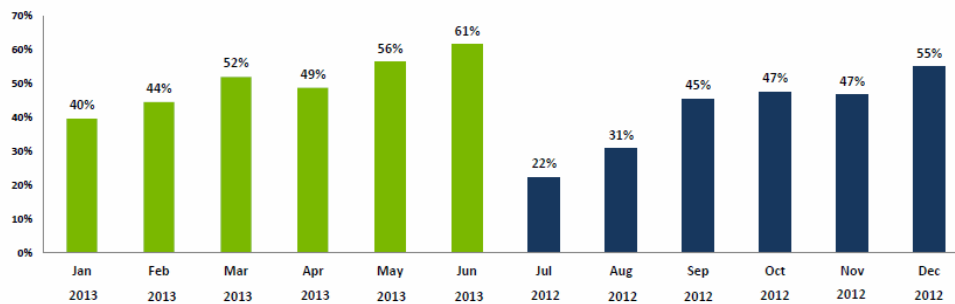
Prior to the Olympics in 2010, about 80% of Canucks fans arrived in cars. After the new transit systems were made in preparation for the Olympics, and widespread promotion of public transit by the Canucks, only about 25% of fans come to the arena via their own cars.

To maximize fan participation, the team brainstormed ways to engage fans in green efforts. Starting with the puck-drop of the 2012-13 hockey season, which runs September through June, the stadium started integrating their fan-fave mascot, Fin, in green messaging. Fin promotes proper sorting during events, and is featured in a video played overhead for all audiences, reminding fans to pitch in. View Fin’s video [here](#).

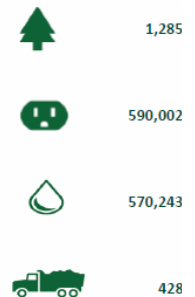
Involving full-time staff is another way to increase diversion. Staff training promotes Zero Waste goals. And staff workspaces have “tri-sorters” along with a bulletin board showing overall efforts and progress towards 80% diversion.



Diversion Rate Over Time



Recycling Benefits



Above: An example of a progress tracking display that helps motivate staff to participate in Zero Waste efforts.

## CHALLENGES: OVERCOME AND ONGOING

It is a challenge to design a program to achieve 80% waste reduction within a short time span (less than two years). Achieving the goal requires constant assessment and refining of the program. If a venue lacks management support, or motivators such as GSA membership, it may be more challenging to move forward with waste diversion efforts. Thankfully, Rogers Arena staff easily convinced management to embrace the opportunity.

One of the Canucks’ bigger challenges has been getting some of their suppliers on board to switch from non-recyclable plastic cups to recyclable ones. Engaging fans, especially the ones who aren’t on board, is another challenge. But staff believe that Canucks fans will accomplish waste goals with the support of Fin’s messages and the stadium’s waste-proof tri-sorters.

Their self-imposed challenges are to implement Zero Waste, meet their diversion goals, and become LEED certified by 2016. This

## Facility & Energy

Rogers Arena is working toward LEED certification by 2016. The next steps are to: decrease electricity output; maintain efficiency in the energy used towards heating and cooling the arena; and replace refrigerators and freezers in the kitchens with more energy efficient appliances. The facility is also considering renewable energy installations. The facility’s age, almost twenty years, makes installing renewables more challenging than installing them in newer facilities.

effort is pushing them toward their goal “to become the premier sports entertaining arena in North America.”

## **LESSONS FROM THE FIELD**

Doyle says, “GSA is a great motivator and support structure – everyone is learning from each other.”

The fan-base for the Canucks is huge, and Doyle believes that Rogers Arena’s Zero Waste project will encourage and influence fans to move towards a greener lifestyle – inside and outside the arena.