

## Why is recycling PPE important?

- PPE such as blue disposable medical masks and isolation gowns contain plastic that breaks down into plastic particles that contaminate our world, our wildlife and our bodies causing health effects such as hormone changes, infertility and probably many other bad health effects
- 50,000 masks are discarded every second and end up in landfill
- Technology is now available to recycle most of these products (if not contaminated) and repurpose for a sustainable environment

## What is project “Finish the Task: Wear and Recycle the Mask”

- This is a project by the Rotary Club of Stratford to recycle clean personal protective equipment from community sources (Stratford locations only to start)
- These sources include Nursing Homes, Dental offices, Doctors offices, One Care and other Health Care related facilities
- It involves education, cooperation and training within those facilities for the operation to run smoothly.

## What about safety concerns?

- Recyclable PPE is mainly disposable masks, face shields and goggles, and isolation gowns; only what we consider “clean” PPE
- No products in contact with COVID-19 patients or soiled with any bodily fluids will be collected. That will be disposed of under usual guidelines for hazardous biowaste.
- Collections will occur in clear compostable garbage bags and sealed at source for collection by Rotary.
- These bags of PPE will be stored at a collection site and transported to the processing facilities on a regular basis in Kitchener.

## What is the processing facility and is there a cost?

- The sealed bags are transported to Kitchener for the first stage of process. The metal and elastic bands are removed, and it goes through a sterilization process.

- The product is then shipped to Brantford (Lifecycle Revive) where it is processed into blue plastic pellets for resale to manufacturers. Plastic in some circumstances can be reprocessed up to 12 times before being processed permanently into products like shingles and building bricks.
- The technology is fairly new and entrepreneurial, so there is a cost to be worked out to make this a viable manufacturing process.

## What about the hospital?

The Rotary Club of Stratford is also working with our local hospital to do a similar plan under their control. Disposable hospital supplies become a bit more complicated to recycle, but every bit as important!

## What about other medical plastics?

- In time we hope to be able to recycle other medical plastics and gloves as we strive to become sustainability and Net 0 by 2050.

## What can we the public do?

- Recycle your disposable masks at designated sites. See the Rotary website for a current list of sites.
- Donate to the Rotary Club of Stratford Environmental fund to help fund this important project and reduce the world burden of plastic.