The volume of garments facing end-of-life increased significantly between 2020 and 2021 as more residents cleaned their closets and updated home spaces, and thrift stores are at capacity for managing products their highest and best-use. And while they are not trained waste managers, thrift stores have become the stewards for pre-sorting unwanted items without much support for repair and upcycling damaged goods to ensure they are kept out of the landfill.

Meanwhile, an entire infrastructure for garment repair exists that includes local dry-cleaners, tailors, designers, upholsterers, artists, and other innovators. This CPSC pilot seeks to connect this infrastructure with thrift stores to expand markets for textile products. For this collaboration, Goodwill staff will be trained on recovering eligible products, which will be processed through repair partners, and these products will ultimately be sold at one of Goodwill’s established retail channels. Information, lessons learned, and recommendations from the pilot will inform future programs.

Funded through a grant from the San Francisco Department of the Environment, this project will identify best practices, identify gaps in funding, and recommend gaps in systems to increase textiles waste diversion, while expanding opportunities for regional textile reuse, repair, and renovation, and allowing recycling business to thrive.