



Vashon-Maury Island's Incubator for Manufacturing and Technology <http://islandgreentech.org>

Why create a manufacturing incubator on Vashon Island?

- To create new local business and employment opportunities on Vashon.
- To increase the resiliency, self-sufficiency and economic health of our community.
- To foster sustainable-values businesses and business practices.

Why create this particular model of incubator?

Island GreenTech (GreenTech) would create opportunities for Islanders to launch new 21st-century businesses that actually make stuff (!). That, in turn, would make the Island more resilient and self-sufficient, would enable more Islanders to have their livelihood on the Island, would reverse the trend of our economy toward "service businesses", and, in general, would be a part of a utopian sustainability plan.

Part of GreenTech's vision is to create a physical realization of the "long tail" phenomenon, which is to create a source for direct internet sales of low volume, relatively low-tech manufactured goods to underserved niche markets. These goods would be manufactured by Vashon-scale family businesses that successfully compete in a global market by nimble response to market demands.

GreenTech focuses on manufacturing because manufacturing is a key wealth and job creating activity, and is the worst-served by our current local economy. For decades, local manufacturing and sustainability has been implicitly discouraged by federal and state tax policies, global economics, local demographics, and local land use regulations. Traditional manufacturing and mass-marketing is not competitive at scales most likely to be achieved on Vashon. Our local economy lacks the liquid labor pool and commercial/light industrial real estate for companies to be created easily and grow sustainably here.

GreenTech is a manufacturing Incubator – not a "business incubator", *i.e.* it does not have an office condo with a shared copier and kitchen. That is not our objective.

GreenTech is a lean organization for low-capitalized, fast-responding, community-sized businesses born out of individual Islanders' ideas – not for super high tech, highly capitalized, cutting edge manifestations of applied research, where a business is considered a failure if not born to be on the IPO track in two years.

We have a "sea change" opportunity for small businesses in efficient low-volume manufacturing and direct sales made possible by equipment capable of efficient low-volume production, and the Internet's ability to connect niche buyers with niche products. While there is no reason a business must stay small, the intent is that overhead can be low enough to enable a business to remain both small and profitable.

Efficient manufacturing is enabled in part by the Island's OMAX CNC Abrasive Waterjet Machine Center and Meadow Creature LLC's co-located Machine and Fabrication Shop which are presently located in Vashon College's Sheffield Building. Other manufacturing resources can easily be added as is feasible, either at the Sheffield Building, or made accessible through special relationships between GreenTech and other facilities and companies.

Key aspects of GreenTech's strategy are to facilitate a low barrier to entry and to create low overhead for new Island businesses.

What exactly is this model?

The proposed model for Island GreenTech is a nonprofit corporation that provides access to specific facilities and acts as a clearinghouse for services and expertise that encompass most of the needs of a small manufacturing business and the incubation of idea and business concepts on Vashon. GreenTech hosts the Eklectic Round Table which meets every Tuesday at The Vashon Island Coffee Roasterie (aka Minglement) at noon. This is an open forum for discussing ideas and business concepts.

What is expected of a business member?

A business member must be fully committed to making their business work with or without the incubator. The owner must champion the business and the product and be the point person responsible for making it all work. GreenTech exists to make everything easier by providing access to work space and equipment.

GreenTech isn't a substitute for the creativity, dedicated focus, and personal commitment of time and capital of the small business owner/entrepreneur. GreenTech won't take an idea, find capital, champion it, design a product, find a market, or see it through to a successful business. GreenTech won't ensure that the idea is even viable. But, what GreenTech will do is provide guidance and assistance where appropriate.

GreenTech does not "partner" with a business owner. A GreenTech member is a fully independent business. GreenTech does not share financial risk with a member business, beyond the risk of not getting paid for contracted services. GreenTech isn't "free money", but may assist a member with applying for seed grants.

Why is Island GreenTech a nonprofit?

Island GreenTech is a community-centric organization, accountable to a large board of volunteers drawn from our community who make decisions for the good of our community as a whole.