

Sustainable built environment best practices

For Local Government Units (LGUs), construction & demolition landfills, and transfer stations

In Minnesota, there's growing demand for smarter, more sustainable ways to manage materials—and LGUs, and landfill & transfer station operators are well-positioned to meet it. By offering reuse and recycling as part of their core services, LGUs and landfill & transfer operators can provide added value to residents and customers, strengthen their business models, and contribute to the state's environmental and climate goals. Expanding material management services helps meet community expectations, supports local reuse and recycling markets, and reinforces Minnesota's leadership in building a more circular economy.

Introduction: Why sustainable built environment practices matter

Minnesota is leading the way toward a circular economy by embracing smarter and more sustainable approaches to managing construction and demolition (C&D) materials. Landfill and transfer station operators, builders, and local governments are in a unique position to extend the life of materials through reuse and recycling — creating jobs, reducing emissions, and saving money. This guide outlines best practices, tools, and real-world examples to help your community or organization take action.

Section 1. Reuse: Maximizing the lifespan of building materials

Why it matters

Promoting reuse reduces landfill waste, conserves embodied energy and resources in building materials and supports a circular economy. For landfill and transfer station operators, incorporating reuse into operations offers a low-barrier, high-impact way to meet environmental goals and community needs.

NOTE: Companies and organizations in the metro area often can serve communities across the state.

Practical starting points

- Cities and counties: consider material exchanges or collection events. Collected items can be donated to nearby reuse retailers
- Inform customers to bring usable materials to reuse organizations
- Set up temporary storage or distribution points
- Pilot single-material reuse efforts (e.g., wood, doors)
- All of the Habitat for Humanity Restore locations welcome your used quality building materials or surplus new materials. Reach out in advance of a project of what they accept. Then divert, donate, and get a tax deduction receipt.

Tools and examples for reuse

Reuse marketplaces and maps

Use these resources to showcase your organization or excess building materials, commercial and office furniture and supplies, leftover paint, new surplus items, etc.

- [University of Minnesota's Materials Exchange](#)
- [Rheaply \(used by Allina Health\)](#)
- [ReCapturit \(used by Architectural Antiques\)](#)
- [All for Reuse Map/Matrix: listing of reuse retailers, deconstruction organizations, etc.](#)

Deconstruction organizations

- [Better Futures MN](#)
- [Birch Group](#)
- [LumberStash](#)
- [West Metro Salvage](#)

Habitat for Humanity ReStores

Donation locations serving MN

Donate your surplus or used building materials, commercial and office furniture and supplies, leftover paint, new surplus items, etc.

- Alexandria, MN: [Habitat for Humanity of Douglas Co. MN ReStore](#)
- Brooklyn Park: **Opened September 2025!** [Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity ReStore](#)
- Bemidji, MN: [Northwoods Habitat for Humanity Restore](#)
- Mankato, MN: [Habitat for Humanity of South-Central MN ReStore](#)
- Marshall, MN: [Habitat for Humanity of Redwood River Restore](#)
- Minneapolis, MN: [Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity ReStore](#)
- New Brighton, MN [Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity ReStore](#)
- Rochester, MN: [Two Rivers Habitat for Humanity ReStore](#)
- Willmar, MN: [Habitat for Humanity of West Central MN ReStore](#)
- Winona, MN: [Habitat for Humanity serving Winona County](#)
- Hudson, WI: [St Croix Valley Habitat for Humanity Restore](#)
- Brookings, SD: [Brookings Area Habitat for Humanity ReStore](#)
- Eau Claire, WI: [Chippewa Valley Habitat for Humanity Restore](#)
- Mason City, IA: [Habitat for Humanity of North Central Iowa ReStore](#)
- Saint Croix Falls, WI: [Wild Rivers Habitat for Humanity ReStore](#)

Donation locations with deconstruction services:

- Brainerd, MN: [Lakes Area Habitat for Humanity Restore](#)
- Grand Rapids, MN: [Itasca County Habitat for Humanity ReStore](#)
- Moorhead, MN: [Lake Agassiz Habitat for Humanity Restore](#)
- La Crosse: [Habitat for Humanity La Cross Area Restore](#)
- Sioux Falls, SD: [Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sioux Falls ReStore](#)

Local Government Diversion and reuse programs

- Becker County's [Diversion and Reuse Program](#)
- Carver County's [ReClaim-It Program](#) **Live Sept 2025!**
- East Central Solid Waste Commission: The [Cambridge Transfer Station](#) is establishing a reuse center **Coming soon!**
- Dodge County's [Renovation Reuse Program](#) **Newly expanded!**
- Hubbard County's [Reuse Center](#)
- Linwood [Recycling Center's Re-Use Area](#) (Anoka County)
- **Just opened:** [Obaashiing Transfer Substation reuse center](#) (Red Lake)
- [Western Lake Superior Sanitary District](#) (WLSSD) *new name: Resource Renew*
- [WLSSD Reuse Guide available to start your program](#)

Counties that provide deconstruction, structural moving, and/or material reuse grants:

- [Carver County](#) (deconstruction)
- [Hennepin County](#) (deconstruction, structural moving, and material reuse)
- [Ramsey County](#) (deconstruction and structural moving and material reuse)
- [Washington County](#) (deconstruction and structural moving and material reuse)

Logistics and event models

Storage solutions

- On-site examples: [WillScot](#), [Big Blue Box](#)
- Partner/co-lease warehouse with existing reuse retailers

Building material collection events

Ask your local government unit or tribal nation to host a building material collection event.

- Hennepin County (2020, 2023, [2025](#))
- [Dakota Valley Recycling 2-day furniture swap](#) (2025)
- [Dakota County building materials collection](#) (2025)
- [Anoka County 2-day reuse event](#) (2025)

Reuse Minnesota's 10-minute [building material collection event planning video](#) is a great resource

Specialized reuse: Material specific diversion and reuse

- Mattress Donation (example: [Bridging](#)'s 3 locations)
 - Plymouth
 - Bloomington
 - Roseville
- Lumber salvaging for reuse: MN [LumberStash](#)
- Used door collection & remanufacturing for reuse: PA's [Doors Unhinged](#)

Barnwood reclamation:

- [Benoit's Barnwood](#), Crookston MN
- [Coteau Reclaimed](#), Statewide; located in Peever, ND (close to Browns Valley, MN)
- [Heritage Barnwood Products](#), Cambridge, MN
- [Minnesota Barnwood](#), Lonsdale, MN

- [Old Wood New Use](#) Statewide; located in Blue River, WI (not far from Jefferson, MN)
- [Rustic Revival Barnwood](#), Brooklyn Park

Whole building reuse

Structural movers:

- [Anderson Building Movers](#)
- [CB Movers](#)
- [Goldschmidt House Movers](#)
- [Otting House Movers](#)
- [Prodger House Movers](#)
- [Spencer Heavy Movers](#)
- [Thein Moving](#)

Building reuse success stories

- Schools: Rethos 2022 [Reuse in Action: Historic Schools Around MN](#) article
- Buildings: U of MN [Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings in Rural Minnesota](#) report
- Explore historic preservation programs:
 - Rethos [state/federal funding](#); proposed 2025 [Conversion of Underutilized Tax Credit](#) bill
 - [Northern Bedrock AmeriCorps program](#)

Section 2. Recycling: Turning waste into resources

Why it matters

Recycling C&D materials reduces raw extraction, cuts emissions, and builds green economies. It also allows for resource recovery of high-value commodities that would otherwise be buried or burned.

Practical starting points

- Provide separated roll-offs or bins for common recyclables or offer roll-offs with dividers.
- Have customer inform material hauler of what reusables or recyclables are in the roll-off for hand-sorting
- Work with material processors or nearby specialized facilities
- Promote cost comparisons showing landfill vs. recycling
- Use signage and training to support contractors onsite

Material-specific recycling options

Gypsum/Drywall

- [Innovative Gypsum Products](#)
- **COMING SOON:** Second company: GypCycle (opening 2025 – contact [Lou Nanne](#))

Ceiling tile

- Nationwide [Ceilings Recycling Program](#)

Mattresses

A growing number of local governments are contracting with mattress recycling programs for residential mattress recycling opportunities.

- [Advance Recycling](#) (Marshall)
- [Certified Recycling](#) (Burnsville)
- [Linwood Recycling Center](#) (Stacy)

- [Mudek Trucking & J & J Recycling](#) (Saint Paul)
- [Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center](#) (Newport)
- [Second Chance Recycling](#) (Minneapolis)

Concrete, Asphalt, Pavers, Rocks, Sand

- Anoka Recycling & Disposal (Anoka)
- Dem-Con (various locations)
- Fra-Dor (Little Canada)
- J & J Recycling (Saint Paul)
- KD & Company Recycling, Inc. (Medina)
- Martin Marietta Materials (various locations)
- SKB Environmental (Minneapolis)
- Twin City Refuse & Recycling (Saint Paul)

Metals

- Ferrous metals
- Non-ferrous metals accepted at most recycling stations

Shingle recycling

Check [Shingle Recycling's website](#) for the latest organizations:

- Beltrami County Solid Waste (Bemidji)
- Bituminous Roadways (Inver Grove Heights)
- Dem-Con (multiple locations)
- Omann Brothers (Albertville)
- SKB (Blaine, Minneapolis, Rosemount)
- Southern Minnesota Construction (Owatonna & Mankato)

Untreated Wood

- Prioritize reuse
- Recycle:
 - [LRS \(formerly Atomic Recycling\)](#) (Minneapolis)
 - Dem-Con (various locations)
 - [Dunham Inc.](#) (Lakeville)
 - Waste Management (various locations)

Tips for increasing diversion

- Use divided roll-offs or multiple bins (Article: [Freedom Waste Services](#))
- Inform contractors about financial and environmental benefits of diversion, reuse, and recycling opportunities
- Work with companies like [Wastecap Resource Solutions](#)
- Contract with consulting companies like [RRT Design and Construction](#) (works with Olmsted County) or [Resource Recycling Solutions](#) for project-specific or city/county-wide sustainable building material management.

Building material processors

- [Dem-Con](#) (Shakopee)
- [LRS \(formerly Atomic Recycling\)](#) (Minneapolis)

Section 3. Tools and support

Technical assistance & staffing

- MPCA's [Retiree Environmental Technical Assistance Program](#): FREE consulting
- Sandy Gunderson, first built environment consultant hired
- [U of M Intern Program](#): Request an intern for a short-term waste diversion program project
- [Minnesota GreenCorps](#): Apply for member placement to support local reuse & recycling opportunities

Planning & policy tools

- [Project Manager's Guide to Material Reuse in Commercial Buildings \(PDF\)](#)
- MPCA [Building Material Management Plan Tool](#)
- [Deconstruction RFP Template](#)
- [Build Reuse Wiki](#): Resources and guidance for reuse professionals

Research & innovation

- [Capstone Projects at the U of MN](#): Propose real-world reuse/recycling challenges for students to research within their Sustainable Systems Management degree
- Past examples include [cost analysis of C&D landfilling](#), [comparisons of demolition, deconstruction, and restoring of a building](#), and [building material reuse impact assessments](#)

Statewide networks

- [GreenStep Cities/Tribal Nations](#): Share best practices and track sustainability progress

Do you have additional suggestions or resources? Please send an email to: demo.mpca@state.mn.us.