

20 Best Practices for Pursuing Sustainable Materials Management

By Bob Gedert

- Adopt and policy of the Highest and Best Use hierarchy
- City Council adopts a Sustainable Materials Management Plan (or Zero Waste Plan)
- Council establishment of High Diversion goals and benchmarks with funding support
- Above 75% capture focus on residential sector, based on waste composition studies
- Utilizes the Sustainable Materials Management framework where applicable for the waste management sectors serviced
- Procurement practices that support buying recycling content and minimizes waste
- Recycling & Composting Ordinance requiring access and collection of recyclables and compostables
- Support for local non-profit reuse collection systems
- City promotes “Reduce, Reuse, then Recycle” as a practice
- Public / Private cooperative ventures toward regional Zero Waste support
- Regional cooperation with local communities toward regional Zero Waste support
- Encourage collaboration and not duplication of infrastructure
- Green Building Code synergies through Construction & Deconstruction Ordinance
- City Government Construction Recycled Content Ordinance requiring recycled content materials to be used in public works and improvement projects
- Resource Conservation Ordinance requiring city departments to prevent waste, maximize recycling, buy products with recycled content and appoint a Zero Waste Coordinator to lead these efforts
- Use of local economic development tools to encourage growth of recycling related businesses and industries
- Hire a Recycling Economic Development Liaison to focus on supporting expansion of local recycling infrastructure and development local recycling/reuse markets
- Support of Research & Development in technologies (e.g. Design for recyclability)
- Remanufacturing Hub to host companies that reprocess locally generated recyclables
- Support for Producer Responsibility and engaging in local take back efforts for batteries, sharps, pharmaceuticals, carpet, etc.

*Best practices from 10 US cities with above 50% recycling / compost diversion from landfill.