Guidebook to Beyond 34

A guide to enable cities and communities to create a more sustainable future using a three-phased model that supports increasing the diversion of valuable resources from landfills and accelerating the shift to a circular economy.

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BEYOND 34

GUIDEBOOK
OVERVIEW + PURPOSE

This narrative provides an overview of the Beyond 34 model that enables cities and communities to create a more sustainable future using a three-phased model that supports increasing the diversion of valuable resources from landfills and keeping them flowing in continuous, profitable, and sustainable loops. It provides a blueprint for developing strategies to increase the overall diversion rate, support local economic development, and transition to a more circular economy through enhanced materials recovery and product and service innovation.

The purpose of this document is to provide interested stakeholders an outline of the templates designed for the tasks and subtasks of the Beyond 34 process that is structured to inform the planning, execution, and evaluation of potential projects that will have a positive impact on increased diversion in the region.

The Beyond 34 templates and the underlying process provide a framework for the systematic identification, analysis, visioning strategy, and implementation that can lead to an increased diversion rate in cities across the United States. Projects developed in the framework are created from a holistic perspective, including direct engagement with stakeholders, alignment with municipal goals, economic feasibility and impacts, societal and institutional considerations, and physical material and system flows.

Beyond 34, a multi-stakeholder initiative led by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, is aimed at increasing the baseline 34% recycling rate in the U.S. by providing a scalable model to optimize recycling and recovery systems and shift to a circular economy in regions nationwide. To learn more, visit beyond34.org.

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BEYOND 34 CHECKLIST

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UNDERSTANDING YOUR LANDSCAPE

✓ Start with a **CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT** which includes:

✓ System Flow Map

✓ Institutional Analysis
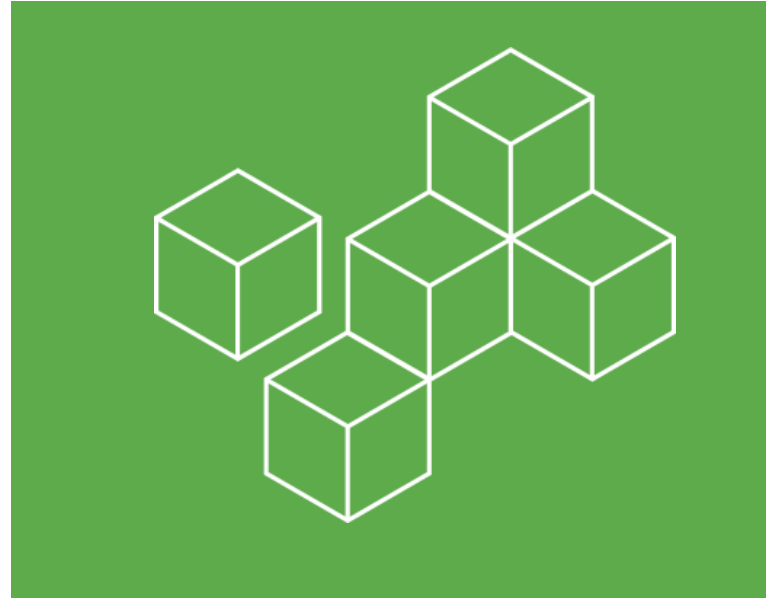
✓ Economic Impact Analysis

EVALUATE YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

✓ Begin with exploratory workshops to identify opportunities

✓ Complete an **OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS**

PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

✓ Facilitate exploratory workshops to prioritize solutions

✓ Develop a **ROADMAP** for the implementation of projects

✓ Monitor and evaluate project impacts to ensure success

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IMPORTANCE OF
COLLABORATION +
INNOVATION

The tasks outlined suggest a pathway toward a circular economy, recognizing that all municipalities and regions are unique in their way. Stakeholders implementing this process will need to be fully aware of the local social, economic, environmental, and political conditions and attitudes concerning recycling, economic development, innovation, and local and regional governments' role to support these efforts.

Throughout this process, engaging local stakeholders is critical to the circular economy's long-term success in the region. Continuous engagement with municipal, private sector, residential and non-profit stakeholders throughout the process will result in solutions that address the local community's specific needs and is critical in ensuring political support and establishing a culture that supports long-term diversion goals.

Facilitating exploratory workshops with local stakeholders throughout each of these tasks will:

- Provide the opportunity to co-create a common vision
- Expand stakeholder knowledge in diversion and circular economy practices
- Help to develop an environment that facilitates public-public, public-private, and private-private collaborations
- Ensure support from the local community

Innovation is essential to the success of increased diversion in a region. Including local entrepreneurs in the workshops, advocating for local efforts that promote innovation, and supporting municipal efforts to innovate will enable the development and growth of technologies that ensure increasing diversion and circular economy activities in the region. Additionally, these efforts will prepare the region with a foundation to support increased diversion even as the waste stream continues to evolve.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF A MUNICIPALITY
THAT SUPPORTS HIGH DIVERSION

+ Recycling education programming (online and outreach)

+ Breadth of recycling options

+ Local policies that support diversion

+ Sufficient and dedicated funding (recycling program and education)

+ Participation among households and businesses

+ Local government leadership and capacity

+ Measurement systems

Source: Resource Recycling Systems, & Public Sector Consultants. (2016, January). Recycling in Michigan: Successful Recycling Programs, Best Practices, and Diversion Potential (Rep.).

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Task 1: Understanding Your Landscape

Current State Assessment (CSA)

The purpose of the Current State Assessment (CSA) report is to give a holistic overview of the current recycling system in the targeted region while considering historical factors that have led to the current state.

Elements of the CSA may include:

- The make-up and flow of the waste and recycling material streams

- Current diversion and participation rates

- The history of impactful policy changes

- Existing public and private waste and recycling infrastructure

- Initial stakeholder identification

- A knowledge gap analysis

It is recommended that a CSA be as holistic as possible as it will inform the tasks that follow. Establishing an awareness of local bias and the self-interest of local stakeholders will ensure inclusivity and the development of shared goals.

Additionally, identifying characteristics of the municipality that are traditionally strengths or opportunities for improvements will help future stakeholder engagement and document development.

Task 1.1 System Flow Map

The purpose of the system flow map is to identify the physical material flow stream in the region. The System Flow Map will determine the tonnage of materials that are being landfilled and recycled. The output from this analysis will inform the Opportunity Analysis by identifying the specific materials streams that could have the most significant impact on increasing the diversion rate.

Task 1.2 Economic Impact Analysis (EIA)

The purpose of the Economic Impact Analysis is to trace the economic impact of circular economy activities (Reuse, Repair, and Recycle) in the targeted region. The EIA should comprise direct, indirect, and induced forms of economic impact, and may also consider other factors such as opportunity costs. The EIA will capture circular economy activities measured in variables such as gross domestic product, employment, labor income, or government tax revenues. The EIA will provide a systematic analysis to establish the economic validity of increased recycling and other circular economy activities in the region. The EIA can give evidence to key governmental, business, and community stakeholders to garner support for increasing diversion in the region.

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Institutional Analysis (IA)

The purpose of the Institutional Analysis is to identify and analyze the institutions that have a bearing on increasing the region's diversion rate. Building from the stakeholder identification in the CSA, stakeholders should be analyzed to understand priorities, opportunities, barriers, and social norms that have led to actions in the region's recycling system. Examples of analysis topics may include education regarding recycling, infrastructure challenges, or political considerations, both locally, county, state-wide, and globally. This analysis will support the development of strategies and actions that can be employed by key actors that will increase diversion in the targeted region. These findings provide a deeper understanding of supporting and barrier conditions in the local environment and should be incorporated into the Opportunity Analysis report.

Task 2: Evaluate Your Opportunities

Opportunity Analysis (OA)

The purpose of the Opportunity Analysis task is to identify intervention points in the targeted regions recycling system that will increase the diversion rate. The OA should be informed by all prior reports, where potential solutions are developed based on various factors. These factors can include percent impact on diversion rate, identified barriers in the current recycling system, continuation and expansion of recent efforts in the region, and most economically feasible interventions. Additionally, visioning for each of the identified potential solutions includes elements such as what is the potential increase in diversion rate, which stakeholders will be engaged for the solution, what systemic changes will occur (physically, societally, etc.), what is the financial cost and performance of the potential solution, and what are potential barriers to overcome.

Task 3: Planning for Implementation

Roadmap

The final task in this process is developing a roadmap for implementing projects and initiatives that will support a culture of increased diversion and the implementation of new and the support of existing circular economy activities in the region. The roadmap will include, but not be limited to, circular economy and increased diversion opportunities identified in the OA. Additional items included in the roadmap should incorporate the ideas generated from stakeholder workshops and the team's general knowledge within the team executing this process.