

MassDEP Reduce & Reuse (R&R) Working Group Virtual Meeting

Topic: Working Group Input on Draft R&R Action Plan

Wednesday, June 16, 2021 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Meeting Summary

The R&R Working Group is a forum for discussion of source reduction and reuse regulations, policies, and programs in Massachusetts. The group was established to help in the development of a MassDEP Strategic Reduce and Reuse Action Plan as outlined in the 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan. To learn more about the working group and find past meeting materials, visit:

[MassDEP Reduce & Reuse Working Group](#)

This meeting was held virtually and facilitated by Erin Victor, Environmental Analyst, MassDEP erin.victor@mass.gov. A total 42 people participated in the 6/16/2021 meeting. The discussion sections reflect both written and spoken comments and questions from participants.

Link to Presentation Slides: [June 16, 2021 Slide Deck](#); Link to Recording: [June 16, 2021 Recording](#)

Agenda:

10:00 AM – Welcome & Summary of Draft Action Plan

10:30 AM – Open Discussion: Input on Draft Action Plan

11:45 AM – Next Steps

12:00 PM – Adjourn

Discussion:

Welcome & Summary of Draft Action Plan

- Erin reviewed steps taken to produce the draft plan and reiterated that this plan has not yet been reviewed by MassDEP senior management. That review will happen this summer.
- Draft Reduce & Reuse Action Plan: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/draft-reduce-reuse-action-plan-april-2021/download>
- Input on the draft plan will be accepted until **July 15** via the Microsoft Form here: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Fh2GPrdIDkqYBowE2Bt7KIJz5CPph_hLsedRnx2TmaZURERYWFRBREsyTIUwRUpVNk1ZVUc5WEdWTC4u
- Erin provided a 20,000 ft. level review of the draft plan.
- Measuring progress:
 - Performance measures (what we're doing now, i.e. "leading measures", i.e. number of grant requests, number of TA requests) vs.
 - Outcome Measures (lagging measures, what we can't measure as frequently, more like every 3-5 years, e.g. results of grants awarded, growth in tool libraries

and repair events; market research of public attitudes/behavior around reuse/repair/share; update the Tufts UEP project measuring economic health of the reuse sector (number of reuse businesses, employees and revenue).

- Reuse Action Plan: a Living Document: we've used AirTable to track participation; we plan to upload the plan and make real time updates using this tool to allow stakeholders to view the progress of action plan implementation.
- Tentative schedule: we plan to post the Action Plan in fall 2021 and will hold periodic working group meetings to update stakeholders after the plan is posted.

Open Discussion: Input on Draft Action Plan

- Erin opened the floor to input:
- Robin Ingenthron, Good Point Recycling: On Procurement, I recommend a focus on using RFP language on brand new items to reduce barriers (such as OEM license limitation, firmware updates, warranty limits) on future reuse. Actually purchasing used goods is fraught with conflict. As a potential partnership, I suggest partnering with NASPO.org. (National Assoc of State Procurement Officials). In my experience, NASPO gets "triggered" in a bad way if they think they have to comparatively price vehicle A with 13,541 mileage with vehicle B with 54,120 miles. Gay Gordon-Byrne has the same experience. It's difficult to compare the prices/value of different used goods. NAPSBO has a Research and Innovation department.
- Brian Postale, MassDEP: One of my concerns is how this information get publicized effectively. How can we partner with communities to expand knowledge to the masses?
- Kathi Mirza, Municipal Assistance Coordinator Southeast District 2: Re: general education efforts: Perhaps reuse could be added to the Green Team activities and curriculum ideas for students?
- Deb Beatty Mel, Boston Building Resources: Could local Chambers of Commerce be brought on board to help spread the word about reuse?
- Amy Perlmutter, Perlmutter Associates: @Deb Beatty Mel, I would add reduction to that as well.
- Peter Mui, Fixit Clinic: Add: Augment in-person repair events with online resources e.g. the Global Fixers Server and Zoom Fixit Clinics.
- Dana DeVeau, The Furniture Trust: What incentives can be created to encourage businesses to reuse? Other than just the high cost of disposal, most businesses don't think about alternatives to landfill/incineration.
- Jon Hart, Planet Aid: What plans do you have around incentivizing textile reuse? Profit margins within the US for textiles recovery are razor thin; there are very few repair professionals in the space and most of it is done by larger brands exclusively on their own clothing or products. About 75% of textiles are shipping to developing countries because that's where the demand is. Thrifts stores want the highest quality; that's why the lower value materials go overseas. There's no real interest in repairing clothing

because it's not worth fixing; and it's also expensive; UK does a redesign program as part of the Fashion Design industry.

- Peter Mui, Fixit Clinic: Patagonia has a Worn Wear program, Fixit Clinic has participated in this: <https://wornwear.patagonia.com/>
- Jackie King, SMART (Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles): agrees with John Hart's points; but also the fast fashion problem is underlying a lot of the textile issues. There needs to be incentives to get manufacturers to be responsible for their products at end-of-life. Down the road chemical recycling may be an option; Jon Hart thinks we are decades away from getting to profitability for chemical recycling; H&M pilot is losing a lot of money on their recovery efforts. This is a big nut to crack. Patagonia is a great example, H&M too but both only repair their own stuff.
- Peter Mui Fixit Clinic: Correction: Patagonia's traveling program was open to fixing anything, that's why Fixit Clinic participated. Textiles is beyond clothing, it's all sorts of soft goods like luggage, tents, and backpacks. In addition, zipper repair, sewing machine repair and maintenance, etc.
- Melissa Eusden: Is it possible to mandate towns/cities to do curbside textile recycling along the same lines as mandating food waste collection?
- Jon Hart, Planet Aid: If we can identify passionate local officials to help promote it. Or even local environmental commissions
- Robin Ingenthron: One dilemma I can see with the waste ban on textiles is that Salvation Army, Goodwill, etc may actually be the #1 source of textiles at disposal sites. For legitimate reasons - for example damp or moisture damaged donations are deadly mold magnets.
- Veronique Blanchard: From the textile recycling perspective I gather that petroleum based textiles are problematic to reuse/recycle and thus worth less. Is there any thought to promoting natural fibers?
- Joyce Losick-Yang, Andover Sustainability Coordinator: great draft plan, thank you. Andover is developing a climate action plan but waste is such a small slice of the climate impact, but that's because the raw energy use of buildings and transportation are SO energy intensive; waste is only a small part because we're not adept at capturing the full embodied carbon in the stuff we buy and use. The draft R&R plan should discuss what Mass is doing really well: decarbonizing certain sectors; would MassDEP be willing to work with DOER to focus on the wastes with the highest carbon footprint?
- Robin Ingenthron: Reuse impact on climate is not primarily at disposal, but in avoidance of mining and extraction, which are giant in carbon footprint. Electronics incidentally have among the highest embodied carbon (like autos).
- Jon Hart, Planet Aid: There's a growing IT Asset Disposition (ITAD) market (especially with chip and supply chain shortage) and a few interesting models around using nonprofits to collect electronics.

- Cindy Arens, Lexington Green Teams: echoing Joyce Losick-Yang: could MassDEP help on education (working with advocates) to provide talking points on GHG emissions from waste? An emissions calculator? Reuse vs. recycle, compost, dispose? MassDEP needs to connect with advocates/local volunteers to share a message; mapping of impacts (like the trash map of pride, PAYT, etc) to map the waste impacts and carbon impacts. Do we need different education for public vs. municipal staff?
- Hien Nguyen, Lexington Zero Waste Collaborative: Yes, Joyce! +++
- Van Du, MAPC: Regarding MassDEP's research/information gathering on building deconstruction/reduce ordinances and programs in other parts of the country, when do you anticipate starting this effort? And is there opportunity to get involved?
- Michael Orbank, Commodore Builders: Could there be a requirement for Green Communities (DOER program) to adopt better waste practices? To keep your Green Community status, more of these best waste reduction practices would need to be implemented by municipalities? Like the adoption of ordinances like minimum construction waste diversion requirements? I know that's more on the DOER side but it may be a good way to introduce basic baseline waste practices for communities who show they want to be better.
- Michael Orbank, Commodore Builders: It isn't easy, but unless there is a force telling construction industry what to do, many won't do it. By mandating waste diversion, the materials going into the job sites will need to be recyclable and reusable. My eventual hope is that MA/Boston adopt a deconstruction ordinance like Portland OR so that the materials and structures going into buildings are able to be deconstructed and reused, so that there is very little leaving sites as comingled waste Some of our customers are asking us to meet diversion standards; about 75% of material can be diverted with some effort; would MassDEP issue a standard for higher diversion?
- Amy Perlmutter: I agree with @Michel Orbank wholeheartedly re: green communities.
- Deb Beatty Mel - Boston Building Resources: I know it's a tough one, but will there be any recommendations for building materials that have lead content? We regularly turn away old doors, etc., that are reusable, but contaminated.
- Peter Mui: Cal Recycle's statewide commission report on C&D management is coming soon; suggests we take a look at Calif's report/study <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/PublicNotices/Details/4455>
- Steve Changaris, National Waste and Recycling Association: if C&D is source separated at job site, what comes to the C&D processor is the dregs and it's really hard to separate materials; reaching 70% is not really feasible.
- Robin Ingenthron: I urge MassDEP to keep mentioning the General Mining Act of 1872. The U.S. interior Committee doesn't have reps from Mass b/c we have no federal lands in Mass. If we were to get even a penny an acre from mining conducted on federal lands, it would fund a massive amount of waste diversion. The raw materials

lobby is so strong; and it seems like it's an impossible nut to crack. But we have to tackle this multi-million give-away, otherwise we'll never stop our throw-away culture. Make, use, dispose is ingrained into the foundations of our tax code and our country. How many more generations will go by without taking a serious crack at this? Just because it seems hopeless, doesn't mean we should remain silent. General Mining Act of 1872:

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/mining-and-minerals/about>

- Robin Ingenthron: Earthworks.org is the biggest mining reform nonprofit. They are currently involved in used automobile electric battery REUSE. The batteries have to be replaced in cars when they won't go 150 miles, but they still have a lot off reuse value if they only go 75 miles, as backup for solar generation for example in emerging markets. I can help you get Hans Melin as a guest speaker.
- Ray Pfau, Repair Café Ambassador: where is EPR in the draft plan?
- Steve Changaris, National Waste and Recycling Association: If there's a solar or wind energy project coming to your town, local officials should include end of life management in the plan; make the manufacturers and installers cover this as part of their installation.
- Robin Ingenthron: Steve is right and is making my point about procurement. To sell solar panels to MA, vendor cannot require destruction.
- Claudine Ellyin, MassDEP: MassDEP is also currently working with the MassCEC and Mass DOER on a data analysis for end of life solar panel tonnage in MA and has drafted a solar recycling/recovery white paper.
- Peter Mui, Fixit Clinic: Beware the pending crisis as we rush to adopt solar: the manufacturers are now producing low-cost low-quality "builder grade" panels to satisfy requirements to add solar. Even the solar industry is reporting that modern panels are crappy: <https://www.pv-tech.org/built-solar-assets-are-chronically-underperforming-and-modules-degrading-faster-than-expected-research-finds/>
- Robin Ingenthron: "Builder grade" solar is another Procurement Language opportunity/issue.
- Claudine Ellyin, MassDEP: Another note on reuse of "renewable energy sector", some pretty cool stuff happening with the reuse of wind turbines on a national/global level. There is Project Re-Wind, an American-Ireland-Northern Ireland partnership seeking to bring new life to retired wind blades. This includes research in "upscaling" the polymer components into infrastructural products, ranging from soil stabilizers to light poles to pedestrian bridges.

I think this concept of used materials in a structural application is quite interesting from an engineering perspective as simply put, wood in construction is an example of using a material in its second life (because obviously woods' first life is in a tree).

Also, the logistical and storage challenges of wind turbine decommissioning are enormous to say the very least, as turbine blades can reach the length of a football field!

This solution is described as a "complex multifactorial challenge with the need for transdisciplinary solutions." Additional info can be found at: www.RE-WIND.INFO

- Norma Chanis Wachusett Earthday: Transportation and storage of goods until they can be moved to a new owner is a challenge. Each organization is doing its own thing as best they can but can we come together in some way to have a few statewide 'hubs'?
- Hien Nguyen, Lexington Zero Waste: Education/behavior change: not sure whose purview this is but I suggest a successful ad campaign akin to what the National Ad Council did with the anti-littering campaign in the 1970s (the crying Indian). Can't we use the same playbook but in reverse; develop a PSA/ad campaign that celebrates reuse/repair/share. Even with textile repair there's still a stigma around visibly repaired items; it's not mainstream; how can we change people's perceptions about used stuff? Education tools (i.e. maps) are useful; could we map incinerators and solid waste facilities in EJ communities?
- Jon Hart, Planet Aid: I'm from Texas and in marketing, so the "Don't Mess with Texas" campaign reminds me of this. It transformed the landscape for waste in the state.
- Dana DeVeau: For education, the public needs simple messages; i.e. turn the water off when you're brushing your teeth. Simple actions; a one-pager or simple PSA about reusing items; a check list to help people make better decisions about what to do with something they no longer want or need. We've been educating furniture manufacturers about the amount of furniture that goes to landfills and they are blown away when they learn this. Can we make some shock and awe info available?
- Erin Dyson-Enamorado, More Than Words: our population needs accessibility to reuse outlets; trend for resellers (books, clothing) – affordable, reused items are becoming out of reach for low income people especially in the city of Boston (elderly, disability (seen or unseen); so they default to trash can b/c they can't get help getting their old books or clothing to a reuse outlet (no one can come into homes, due to Covid). Many professional resellers hit thrift stores every day and cherry pick the best stuff; this leaves lesser value items for lower income. Need to improve accessibility.
- Norma Chanis, Wachusett EarthDay: Moving companies can help move used stuff at a cut rate; or neighbors can help; we try to match folks up with a moving company that will provide help at lower cost.
- Jon Hart Planet Aid: low income folks: we've seen growing entrepreneur trend with young people buying the choice items and reselling (FB marketplace – acquire cheap stuff then resell at higher price). Landfill images work well, but ad campaigns are expensive. Teenage mutant ninja turtles told me to turn off my water when brushing my teeth. We need to start young with messaging; a narrative on the positive aspects of wearing thrifted/used stuff. Would need underwriters for a campaign though. Don't Mess with Texas – not a lot of \$, but they shared the images/slogans with local orgs.

- Dana: Green Team contests – have them create a campaign ad to show how cool wearing reused stuff is, buying reused stuff is!
- Jon Hart, Planet Aid: I meant to mention that Minnesota was mentioned earlier and they're driving this through young people with campaigns like their Green Corps.
- Michael Orbank, Commodore Builders: Really good idea @Dana, young people want to make change. Lower level employees coming into the workforce are begging for change. Pushing ideas and campaigns with millennials but more importantly gen z would be highly effective, and they can run with it, get creative and spread it without much extra money from MassDEP.
- Susan Morris/Wellesley CAC: What are other communities doing about black plastic and/or alternatives for more eco friendly take out containers?
- Cindy Arens: Lexington ZW Collaborative: I've tried to collect black plastic and find reuse options for them; gave some to food pantries; problem is all these orgs that want to reuse them means they have to wash them.
- Hien Nguyen, Lexington Zero Waste Collaborative: Susan Morris, we're partnering with local restaurants to implement a reusable takeout pilot program.
- Rachel Smith, MassDEP: See Recycling Works related resources: <https://recyclingworksma.com/reducing-waste-from-restaurant-takeout-and-delivery-meals/> ; Case Study: <https://recyclingworksma.com/century-kitchens/>
- Brooke Nash, MassDEP: <https://upstreamolutions.org/reuse-vs-single-use-economics>
- Peter Mui, Fixit Clinic: Re: "Black" Plastic: see the .pdf of the California Statewide Commission on Recycling Markets and Curbside Recycling preliminary recommendations report downloadable from here: <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/markets/commission>
- Molly Ettenborough, City of Newburyport: GoBox app – for reusable containers at restaurants. Another topic: "highest waste impact" should be in the report. Composting is a highest waste impact. Newburyport is piloting a low income and affordable housing [organics diversion program](#). DOER and DEP need to work together; I do all the reporting for the DOER Green Communities program; we should add waste to Green Communities; look at LEEDS' waste reduction tools section; adapt this to Green Communities.
- Peter Mui, Fixit Clinic: California Bill that requires in-school food service composting: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB1383CA
- Jon Hart, Planet Aid: Are there at-home composting incentives? That doesn't address the accessibility issue for so many people, but could reduce the strain on the public composting efforts.
- Robin Ingenthron: As a former 4-year food service worker (Carleton College), I know that "shrinkage" (theft of silverware etc) was a major cost factor. It makes me wonder if there is a bike-share model where silverware is so available that the food services stop fretting about theft that happened in the past

- Michael Orbank, Commodore Builders: Can Cambridge's city-wide composting service be studied and duplicated in other municipalities?
- Melissa Eusden: Cambridge's food waste goes to a waste to energy plant.
- Brooke Nash, MassDEP: Correction: Cambridge's food waste goes to an anaerobic digestion facility. Not waste to energy. There is a big difference between waste to energy and Anaerobic digestion.
- Erin clarified that organics are not included in R&R. That composting and food waste are addressed in the Organics Action Plan, see the MassDEP Organics Subcommittee: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massdep-organics-subcommittee>
- Robin Ingenthron: The reuseable bags discussion reminds me of another opportunity / pet peeve - recycling conference swag. I have tried refusing swag (bags, cups, etc) that I do not want or need, only to be told that whatever doesn't get given away is going to get dumped in the conference dumpster. We should have an "opt in - opt out" of conference swag when conferences resume.
- Ray Pfau: For film plastics, Trex is running campaigns to get plastic bags and wrap which they can use as raw materials in their building products. Check out <https://recycle.trex.com/> for school and community programs.
- Robin Ingenthron: FYI after the last one of these Zoom conferences, I went and reserved the URL PUNTRRR for "Post User Neutral Territory Reuse Repair and Recycling", to explore avenues for manufacturers to allow export to markets outside of their direct sale competition ("market cannibalization" view of reuse).
- Robin Ingenthron: I recommend this paper by Yuzo Takahashi on how Japan's culture of repair, reassembly, and reverse engineering created their economy. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25147538?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
- Claudine Ellyin: Current solar photo voltaics data analysis with MassCEC and MA DOER includes an analysis of tonnage available for recycling or preferably of course, reuse.

Next Steps: Accepting Input on Draft R&R Action Plan

- Draft Reduce & Reuse Action Plan: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/draft-reduce-reuse-action-plan-april-2021/download>
- Link to Input Form: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Fh2GPrdlDkqYBowE2Bt7KIJz5CPph_hLsedRnx2TmaZURERYWFRBREsyTIUwRUpVNk1ZVUc5WEdWTC4u
- **Accepting Input through July 15, 2021**

Announcements:

- **New Report:** No Waste To Spare: An Economic and Spatial Analysis of Massachusetts's Reuse Economy, 2021 Tufts UEP Field Project
 - a. See Full Report: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/no-waste-to-spare-an-economic-spatial-analysis-of-massachusetts-reuse-economy-may-2021/download>

- **Now Accepting Reduce & Reuse Micro-Grant Applications**
 This grant program provides small amounts of funding (up to \$5,000) for eligible for-profit and non-profit organizations for innovative, short term waste reduction initiatives. Initiatives must focus on promoting source reduction, reuse, or repair in Massachusetts.
 - [Micro-Grant Online Application](#)
 - [Grant Guidelines](#)
 - Contact Erin Victor at erin.victor@mass.gov or Janice Paré at janice.pare@mass.gov
- **Reuse Directory**
 - Tell us about the reuse/repair/share retailers in your city, town or neighborhood: <https://airtable.com/shritqRieYZI54YQ5>
- **Next Meeting:**
 - Fall 2021, TBD
 - The R&R working group will reconvene once the Reduce & Reuse Action plan is approved and published
- **Networking Resources:**
 - [R&R Workgroup Contacts](#)
 - To join the R&R workgroup or update your information using this [form](#) or by emailing erin.victor@mass.gov or brooke.nash@mass.gov
- **Upcoming Public Hearing:**
 - Cindy Arens, Lexington: FYI, state legislature public hearing on EPR/recycling/plastics next week: <https://malegislature.gov/Events/Hearings/Detail/3695>
- **Upcoming Zoom Fixit Clinic:**
 - Peter Mui Fixit Clinic: Whether you want to fix or just observe you're heartily invited to this Saturday's Zoom Fixit Clinic where we're fixing and celebrating Swedish Midsommar and Father's Day.
 - WHAT: Intergalactic Fixit Clinic DLXXII (572) Lund/Malmö Sweden
 - WHEN: Saturday June 19, 2021 2PM EST (18:00 GMT/UTC/19:00 BST/20:00 CET/14:00 EDT/13:00 CDT/Noon MDT/11:00 PDT)
 - IMPORTANT: Please sign up ASAP at <http://bit.ly/fixitcoachsignup> to get the Zoom link.
 - Also: -Please join the always-on Global Fixers Server where we're performing around-the-clock around-the-world repair: <https://discord.gg/WZd4xWd>
 - Ray Pfau: Also see: Repair Care Foundation Connects: new online match connecting people with items needing fixing to those who can help. They can work online on a fix or if they live close together, do a drop off.