

## #5

### Build Community Assets by Eliminating Waste

#### Yesterday's waste, tomorrow's jobs and economic development

Diverting usable material from the waste stream is an old idea. Charity resellers, like Goodwill, scrap dealers and flea markets are fixtures of American life and our economy.

Converting this old idea into a coordinated strategy for broader community benefit, however, is a new twist that promises double dividends for enterprising communities. *Resource recovery parks* and *deconstruction* are two approaches through which communities can eliminate waste and build community assets.

#### Resource Recovery Parks

A *resource recovery park* is a new development in recycling and local economic development. In the broadest sense, a resource recovery park is the co-location of reuse, recycling, compost processing, manufacturing and retail businesses in a central facility. Also called integrated resource recovery facilities, serial recovery facilities, and discard malls, resource recovery parks provide a one-stop "drop and shop" location where the public can bring wastes and recoverable materials at one time.

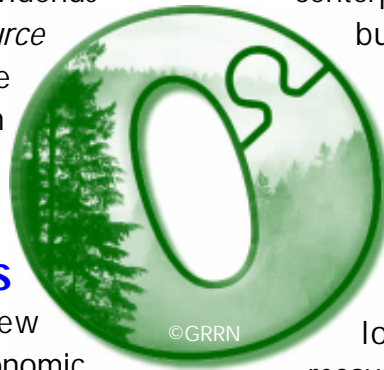
Resource recovery parks enable local governments and their constituents to:

- Save money by reducing the amount of wastes going to landfills or incinerators;
- Realize value and revenue from the sale of recovered materials;
- Buy and sell items and materials from reuse, recycling, and composting vendors.

Resource recovery parks can be the core of a comprehensive strategy for local resource management. When combined with incentives for recycling, disincentives for wasting, and a commitment to gradually phase out reliance on waste facilities, such an arrangement can be the centerpiece of a Zero Waste community. These businesses seek competition on a level playing field with the historically-subsidized waste industry, on the undeniable premise that returning discards to commerce beats dumping, burying, and burning them.

Developing resource recovery parks requires collaboration and planning by local government officials. Resource recovery parks can be privately financed, or local government can create an authority whose role is to secure the land, build the core facility and lease space to private entrepreneurs – as is frequently done for airports.

**Urban Ore Development Associates** (Berkeley, California), is a consortium of international leaders who have pioneered the resource recovery park concept. Urban Ore's principals consult with local governments and recycling professionals to design facilities to maximize waste diversion and create a resource stream for local commerce. For more information contact [Urban Ore](http://www.urbanore.com) at 510-559-4454 or visit their web site at [www.urbanore.citysearch.com](http://www.urbanore.citysearch.com).



# Salvaging yesterday's buildings for tomorrow's sustainable communities

## Deconstruction

*Deconstruction* is the process of carefully dismantling buildings in order to salvage components for reuse and recycling. Deconstruction is the very opposite of traditional demolition. Where demolition is highly mechanized and generates little more than waste, deconstruction is labor intensive and environmentally sound. Demolition incurs costs; deconstruction, on the other hand, generates a return on investment.

Deconstruction is a strategy for community improvement and development with significant economic, environmental and social benefits, including:

- Providing materials to used building supply stores and re-manufacturing enterprises, most of which are small and locally-owned and operated;
- Creating job training and employment opportunities, including self-employment and small business development;
- Reducing the amount of waste going to landfills and incinerators;
- Conserving natural resources;
- Inspiring creative collaboration between local governments, state and federal agencies, non-profit community organizations, and for-profit enterprises.

A growing number of communities across the country are using deconstruction to generate locally-based, environmentally-sound community economic development. Without exception, these programs and projects are *saving money* by keeping waste from landfills and incinerators while *creating community assets* in the form of materials for resale, local contracts, and trained workers ready to enter the skilled workforce.

*Federal funding* through the Department of Housing and Urban Development has been used to cover deconstruction program costs with monies intended for building demolition.

The **Institute for Local Self-Reliance**, a founding member of the GrassRoots Recycling Network, is a leading advocate for community development through deconstruction. ILSR's expertise has guided deconstruction projects – like Stowe Village public housing in Hartford, CT – and has created a wealth of *informative resources for local governments* seeking environmentally-sound local economic development.

For more information contact the [Institute for Local Self-Reliance](#) at 202-232-4108 or visit their web site at [www.ilsr.org](http://www.ilsr.org).

## Advocating Zero Waste: *GrassRoots Recycling Network*

The GrassRoots Recycling Network is a North American network of recycling professionals and waste reduction activists promoting [Zero Waste](#). GRRN is ready to help your community get on the road to Zero Waste... or darn close. GRRN works with communities and businesses across the country to encourage adoption of [Zero Waste Resolutions](#) and development of [Zero Waste Plans](#). GRRN believes that producer responsibility and Zero Waste will happen because local communities and their citizens can make it happen.

*For more information, visit [www.grrn.org/localgov/](http://www.grrn.org/localgov/)*