



WASHINGTON COUNTY
OREGON
Solid Waste & Recycling

2022



Beyond the Bin

Presentation to the Garbage & Recycling Advisory Committee

May 19, 2022

Presented by Heather Robinson - *Recycling Project Specialist*



Washington County Recycles

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1. Rethink recycling and composting – the ‘bin’ mindset.
2. Lean into prevention, reuse and repair.
3. Question our relationship to stuff.



What is a 'bin' mindset?

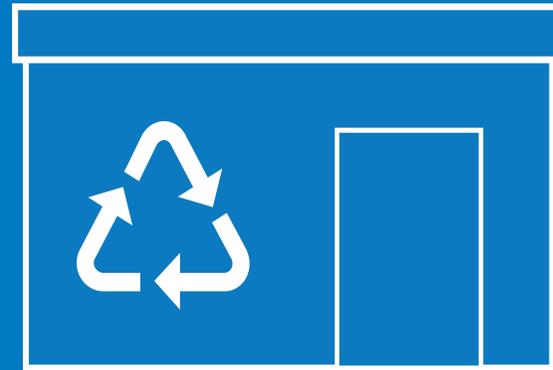
Mixed
recycling &
glass
recycling



Yard debris
& food
scraps



Drop-off
recycle
center



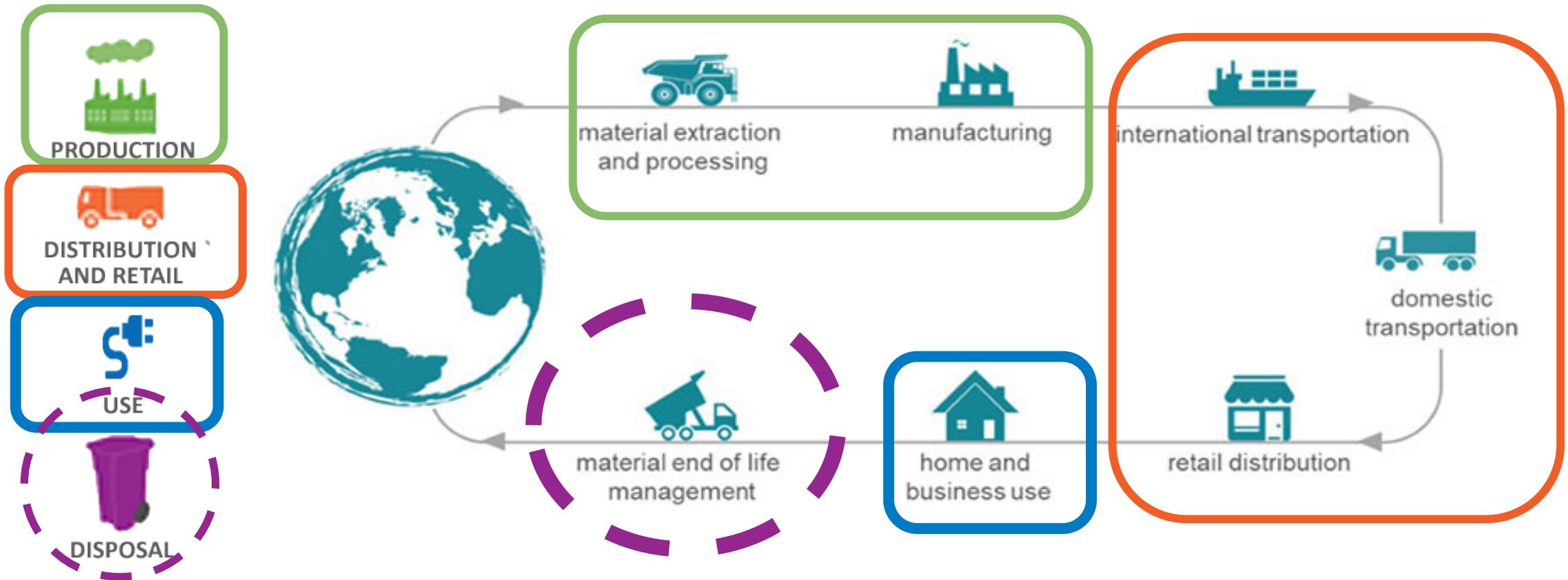
Drop-off
donation
center





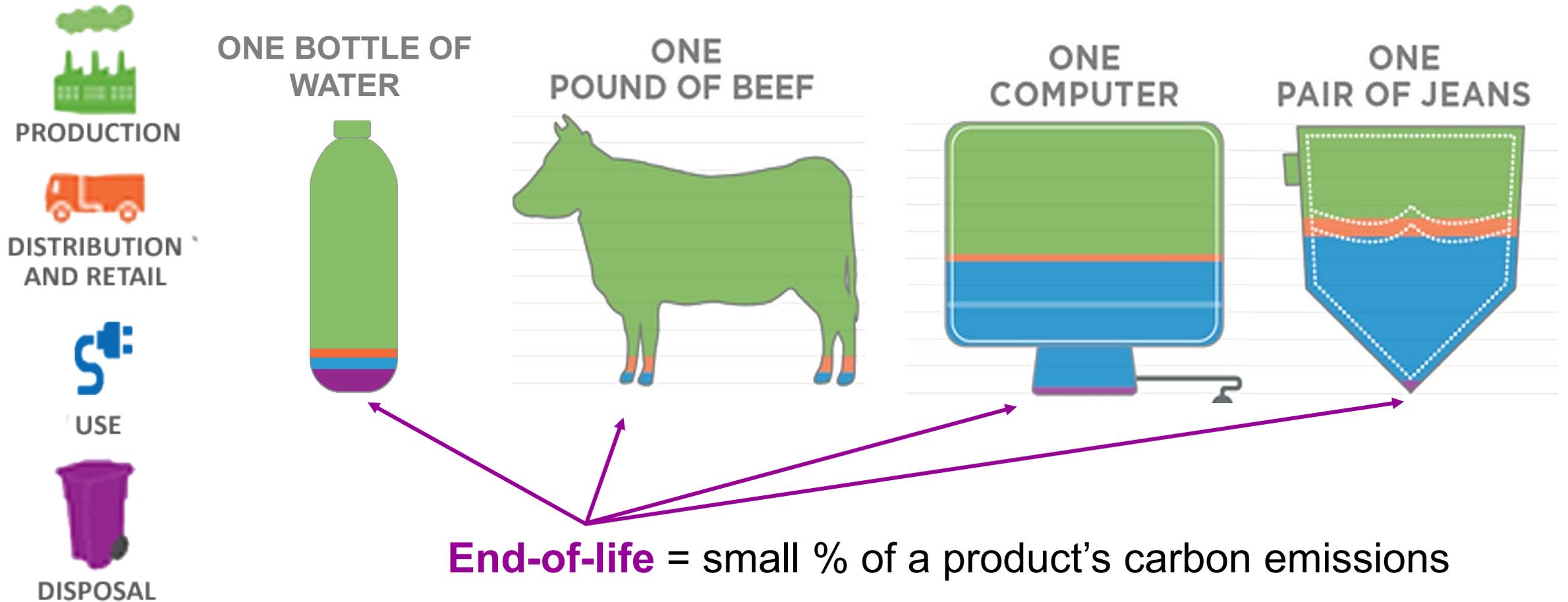
Why think beyond the bin?

Upstream: The impacts from extracting materials, producing or manufacturing the product, and transporting and storing or displaying the product.

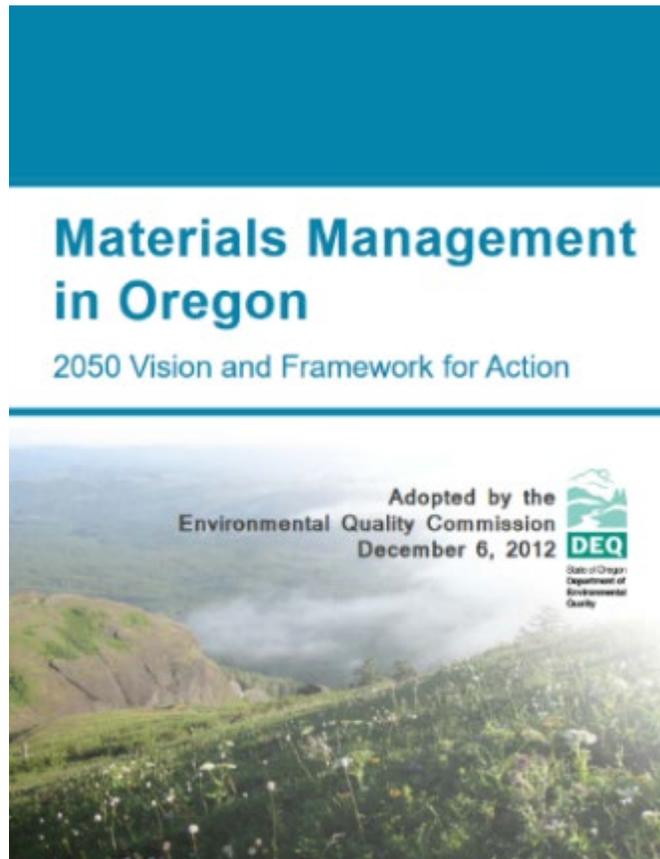


Downstream: The impacts after product is used or discarded.

Carbon impact



DEQ Framework for Action



Oregonians in 2050 produce and use materials responsibly

- Conserving resources
- Protecting the environment
- Living well

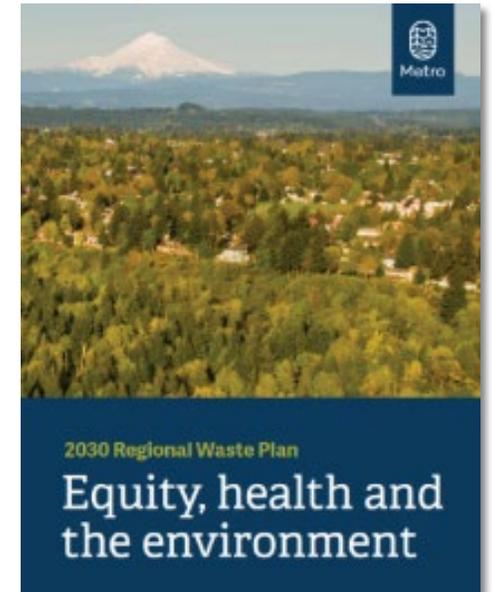
2030 Regional Waste Plan

Goal 8: Increase the reuse, repair and donation of materials and consumer products

- 8.4 Expand the collection of reusable items at public and private transfer stations, in partnership with reuse and repair organizations
- 8.5 Invest in neighborhood-scale reuse and repair services and infrastructure
- 8.6 Support implementation of Oregon DEQ's Reuse, Repair, Extended Product Lifespan Strategic Plan

“ The region has a growing network of reuse and repair initiatives, organizations and businesses such as...neighborhood repair fairs that help residents fix items rather than discard and replace them. . . Metro and local governments need to increase investment in these services and advocate to formalize what are now informal and voluntary practices.”

- 2030 Regional Waste Plan, p. 72



Mixed recycling and glass recycling



Yard debris/food scraps collection



Drop-off recycle center



Drop-off donation center





- **Bottled water is 3,000 times more expensive than tap water.**
- **50 billion water bottles purchased yearly in U.S.**
- **Bottled water consumption is increasing.**

Upstream impacts

- 17 million barrels of oil needed annually for U.S. bottled water.
- Water taken from community groundwater and aquifers.
- Impact on ecosystems is 1,400 times higher than tap water.



Downstream impacts of recycling

- Recycling contamination.
- Wish-cycling contributes to ocean plastics.
- Plastic scrap import bans.





- **Agriculture, food, and related industries contributed \$1 trillion to the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP).**
- **30-40% of the US food supply is wasted.**
- **In the U.S., a household typically spends 10-30% of their budget on food.**

Upstream impacts

- 1/3 agricultural land used for wasted food.
- 45 trillion gal of water for wasted food.
- Farm workers exposed to chemicals and exploitative working conditions.
- Imported foods threaten biodiversity abroad.



Downstream impacts of composting

- Increased food costs
- Hunger persists
- PFAs in 'compostable' service-ware





- **3.5 billion people use a smartphone**
- **On average smartphones replaced every 2 years**
- **17 critical rare earth metals; 99% cannot be recovered**

Upstream impacts

- 85% of emissions impacts are in production.
- Mine tailings pollute waterways.
- Mining fuels political conflict.



Downstream impacts of recycling

- 1/3 of material cannot be recovered during recycling.
- Grinding, burning, melting causes health problems.
- Leftover piles burden communities and waterways.





- **80 billion clothes purchased yearly.**
- **80-90% of clothing donated to the Goodwill is exported or sold to the rag market.**
- **84% of U.S. clothing discards still end up in the landfill.**

Upstream impacts

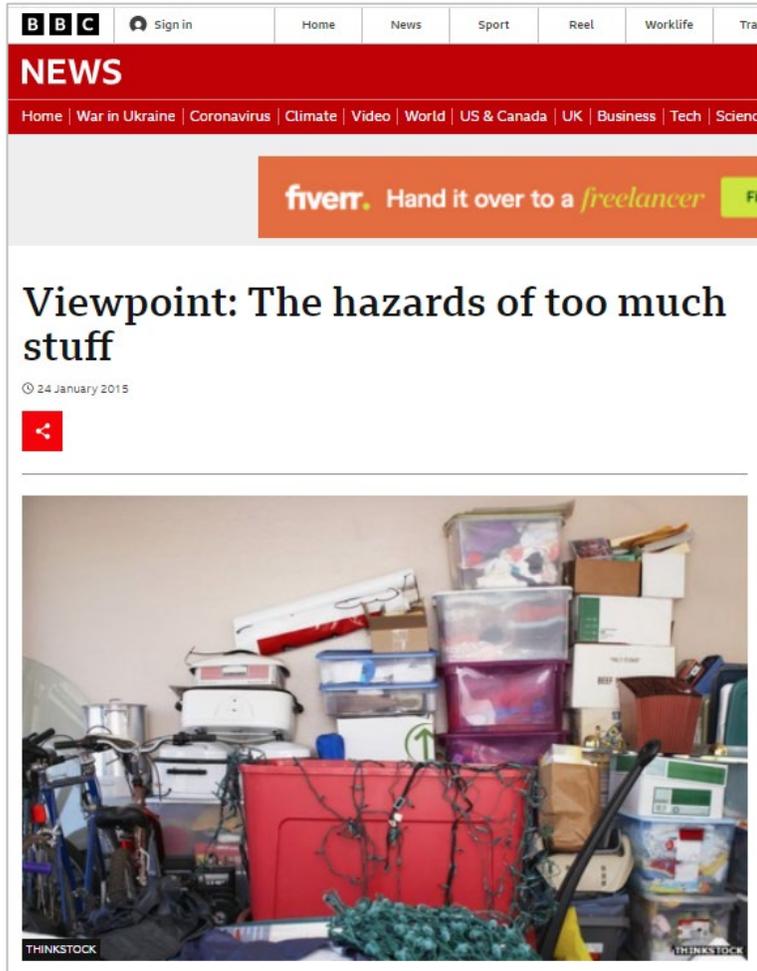
- A pair of jeans requires 1,000+ gallons water.
- 20,000 chemicals pollute waterways
- Cotton is land, water and chemical intensive.

Downstream impacts of donation

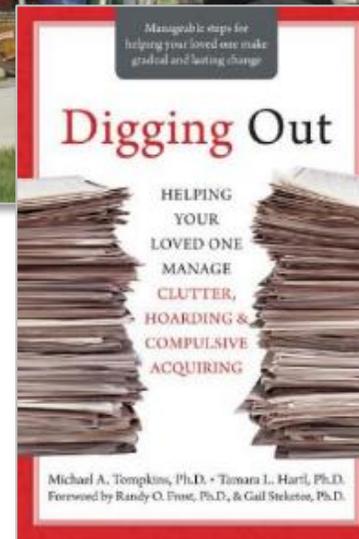
- Disposal of clothing in rivers, burn pits
- Used clothing import bans
- Undermining local textile industries



Closer to home



The image shows a screenshot of a BBC News webpage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'BBC' and 'Sign in' on the left, and 'Home', 'News', 'Sport', 'Reel', 'Worklife', and 'Tra' on the right. Below this is a red banner with the word 'NEWS' in white. Underneath the banner is a secondary navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'War in Ukraine', 'Coronavirus', 'Climate', 'Video', 'World', 'US & Canada', 'UK', 'Business', 'Tech', and 'Science'. A prominent orange advertisement for 'fiverr' is visible, with the text 'Hand it over to a freelancer'. The main article title is 'Viewpoint: The hazards of too much stuff', dated '24 January 2015'. Below the title is a red share icon. The article's main image shows a cluttered interior space with various items like boxes, a bicycle, and a red storage bin.

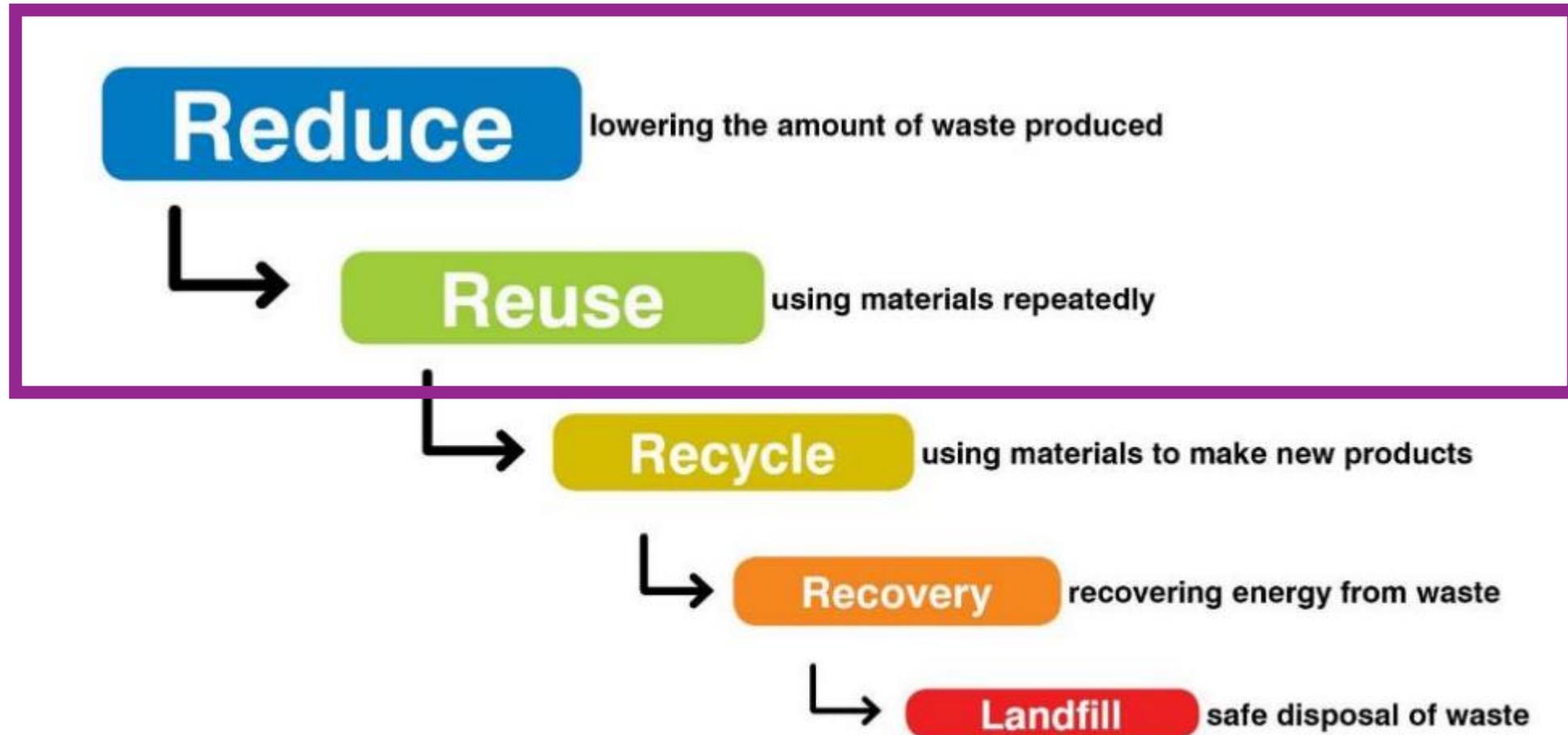


- U.S. homes, on average, contain 300,000 items.
- The U.S. has 3% of the world's kids but 40% of all toys.
- 54% of Americans feel overwhelmed by clutter.
- 2.3 billion square feet of self storage space in the U.S.



How do we think
beyond the bin?

Waste hierarchy



Reduce: Refuse



Avoid the impact of materials by **refusing things you don't need.**

Reuse: Extend the life

- Reuse
- Repair
- Refurbish
- Remanufacture
- Repurpose



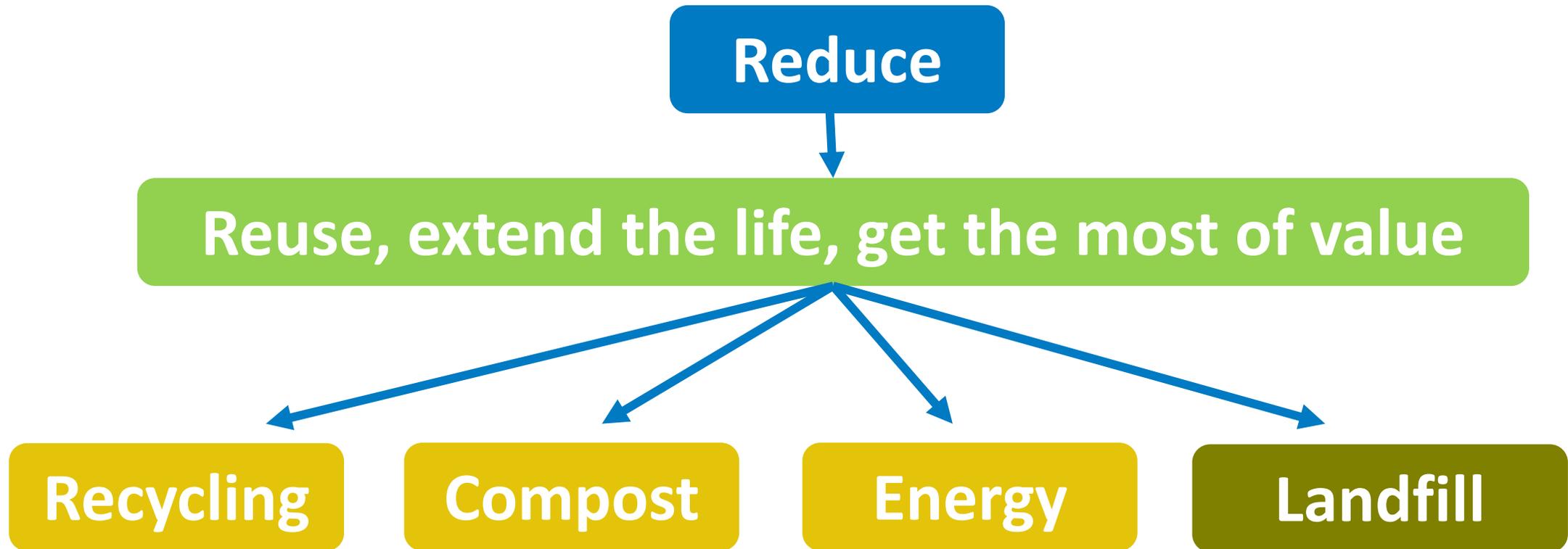
Recycle: Breaking it down



Break a product down via **chipping, shredding, grinding, melting, other reprocessing.**

The original material is transformed into a feedstock for manufacturing or other process before it becomes a new product.

Decision hierarchy



Investment and Innovation (Metro) and Materials Management (DEQ) Grants

Building materials salvage
Deconstruction.
Food rescue
Food waste prevention
Tool libraries
Repair events
Repair Finder
Repair training
Furniture banks
Arts and crafts materials
reuse



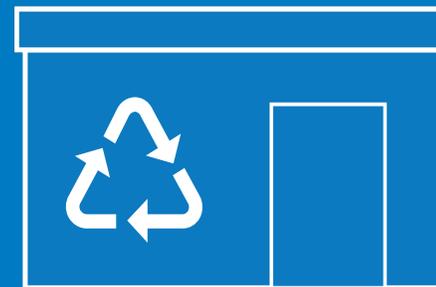
Mixed
recycling
and glass
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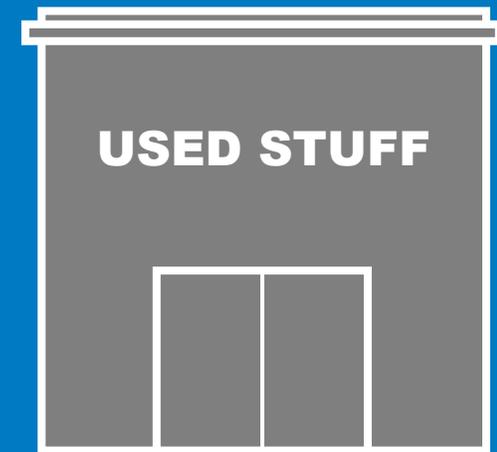
Yard debris/
food scraps
collection



Drop-off
recycle
center



Drop-off
donation
center





Paper, metal, plastic and glass

Reduce.
Reuse.
Reconsider.
Buy well.
Maintain.
Give away.
Repurpose.





Edible food

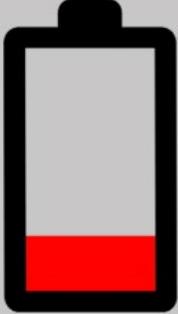
- Reconsider.
- Plan meals.
- Shop smart.
- Prep foods.
- Choose imperfect.
- Keep it fresh.
- Donate.
- Give away.
- Get creative.



Electronics



Reconsider.
Borrow.
Buy used.
Buy well.
Maintain.
Repair.
Donate.
Sell.
Give away.

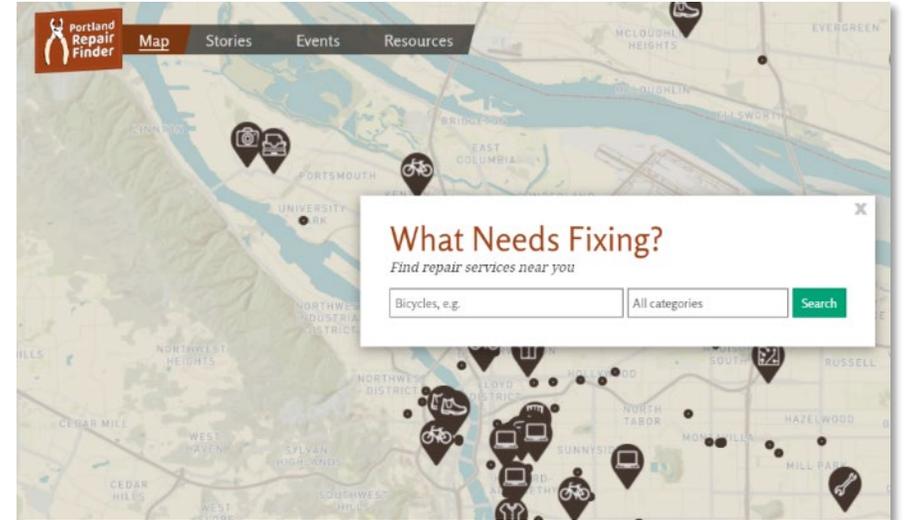


EXTEND THE LIFE OF YOUR DEVICE

BATTERY LIFE

- Avoid excessive heat.
- Don't drain battery completely before charging.
- Reduce screen brightness.
- Use energy saver settings.
- Replace battery instead of whole unit.

REUSE

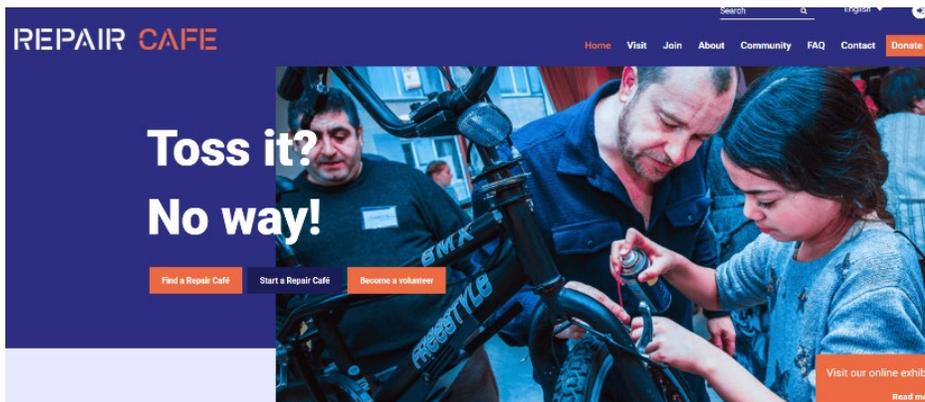


Portland Repair Finder

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What Needs Fixing?
Find repair services near you

Bicycles, e.g. All categories Search



REPAIR CAFE

Home Visit Join About Community FAQ Contact Donate

**Toss it?
No way!**

Find a Repair Cafe Start a Repair Cafe Become a volunteer

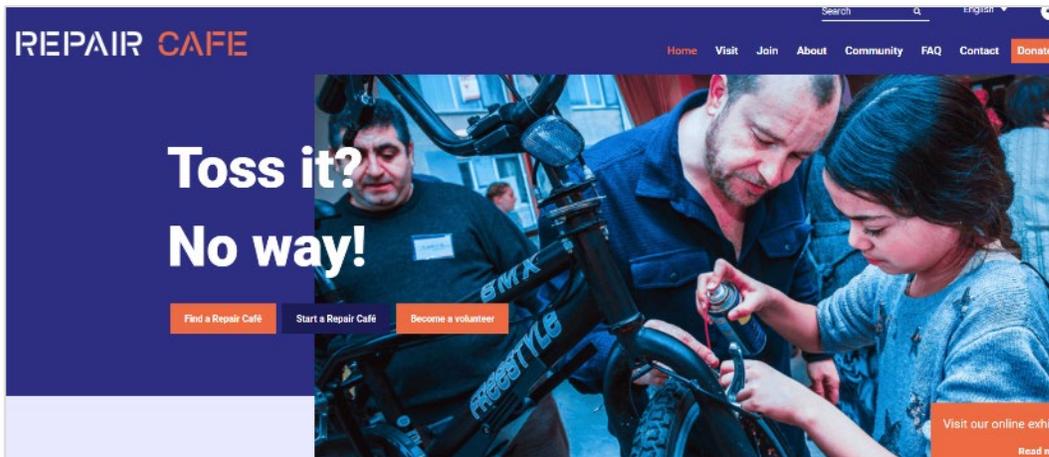
Visit our online exhibit Read more



Clothing



- Reconsider.
- Borrow.
- Buy used.
- Buy well.
- Maintain.
- Repair
- Donate
- Sell
- Swap
- Give away
- Recycle
- Repurpose



Additional opportunities

Borrow. Find used.
Refurbish. Repair. Repurpose.
Sell. Donate. Give away.



What now?

- Continue to recycle and double check the instructions.
- Keep your eyes open for opportunities to employ 'beyond the bin' waste reduction strategies.
- Think twice about the items you bring into your household.



Thank you

recycle@co.washington.or.us

WashingtonCountyRecycles.com

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